

NEXT STOP!

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Matt Thompson

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SYNOPSIS: Denise and Ian attempt to read each other's minds as they romantically probe one another in this heightened romance set in the New York subway.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 male, 1 female)

DENISE (f).....(52 lines)

IAN (m).....(60 lines)

DO NOT COPY

SETTING:

New York City subway station.

AT RISE:

We hear the brakes of the screeching train as it turns a corner. IAN, a handsome man dressed in slacks and a dress shirt, sits looking at a newspaper reading the funnies. He has a small bag of groceries. DENISE sits next to him texting. IAN laughs out loud. He laughs out loud again. Beat. He laughs again having a hard time holding his laughter.

DENISE: Um—

IAN: *(With an English accent.)* I'm sorry... It's just that... Colvin and Hubbs is so darned funny.

DENISE: Colvin and Hubbs?

IAN: Yes, the comic strip. Look here.

DENISE obliges IAN who quickly reads the cartoon in the paper.

IAN: "Cheetahs will do anything for a tuna fish sandwich." That is one of the seven great punch lines in human history.

He laughs again. She just watches him for a moment. We think he will stop laughing and then he picks it up again and laughs some more. We hear the sounds of the subway doors open as the lights go to black. Sound of a subway rushing by. We hear the brakes of the train as it turns a corner. Lights up. IAN sits looking at the funnies. DENISE sits next to him.

IAN laughs out loud. He laughs out loud again. Beat. And again.

IAN: I'm sorry... I can't stop laughing. It's just that Colvin and Hubbs is so darned funny. How does he do it?

DENISE: Colvin and Hubbs?

IAN: Yes, the comic strip. Look here.

DENISE obliges IAN who quickly reads the cartoon in the paper.

IAN: "Cheetahs will do anything for a tuna fish sandwich." *(Laughing.)*

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That is a fantastic punch line, don't you think?

DENISE: (*Being polite.*) Yes, that's quite funny.

IAN: Indeed. So, where are you off to?

DENISE: Brighton.

IAN: What's your name?

DENISE: My apologies, but I'm really not into small talk.

IAN: Oh.

We hear the sound of the screeching subway as the lights go to black. Lights rise. As in the previous scene, IAN is laughing at the Colvin and Hubbs cartoon strip.

IAN: I'm sorry... It's just that Colvin and Hubbs is so darned funny. How does he do it?

DENISE: Colvin and Hubbs? The comic strip?

IAN: Yes, the comic strip. Look here.

DENISE obliges IAN who quickly reads the cartoon in the paper.

IAN: "Cheetahs will do anything for a tuna fish sandwich."

He laughs outrageously. She chuckles a little as well, sharing the moment.

DENISE: Funny.

IAN: Yes. Um...If you don't mind me saying, you have a rather attractive sense of humor about you.

DENISE: (*A little flattered.*) Well, thank you.

IAN: You're welcome. Where are you headed?

DENISE: Times Square.

IAN: Seeing a show?

DENISE: Um... meeting a friend.

IAN: What kind of friend?

DENISE: Boyfriend.

IAN: (*Reacts.*) Ah.

Blackout. Train whistle. Lights up.

IAN: What kind of friend?

DENISE: Ex-husband.

IAN: *(Reacts.)* Ah.

Blackout. Train whistle. Light up.

IAN: What kind of friend?

DENISE: A girlfriend.

IAN: *(Reacts.)* Ah.

DENISE: We've been best friends since undergrad. She's only in New York for a few days.

IAN: I see.

Beat.

DENISE: I like your buns.

IAN: Pardon?

DENISE: I mean I like your buns from the organic bread market.

IAN: *(Holding up his bag of groceries.)* Oh, yes of course. And I thoroughly enjoyed your use of the pause. It's so lost in our oral society.

DENISE: Oral?

IAN: Oral. I'm a dentist.

DENISE: An English dentist? That's funny.

She laughs a bit. IAN does not, but smiles politely with his mouth closed. She stops laughing. Lights to black. Sound of a subway rushing by.

DENISE: So, you commute?

IAN: My car was impounded.

DENISE reacts. Blackout. The train whistle blows. Pause. Lights up again.

DENISE: So, you commute?

IAN: My car was stolen.

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Denise reacts. Blackout. The train whistle blows. Pause. Lights up again.

DENISE: So, you commute?

IAN: I can't afford a car.

Denise reacts. Blackout. The train whistle blows. Lights up again.

DENISE: So, you commute?

IAN: Yes, it helps the environment and I love meeting new people.

DENISE: That's a wonderful outlook on life. You know if you don't mind me saying so, you have a lovely little English accent.

IAN: *(With an Australian accent.)* Actually I'm from Australia.

Blackout. The train whistle blows. Lights up again.

DENISE: If you don't mind me saying so, you have a lovely little Australian accent.

IAN: *(With an American accent.)* I'm an actor. Just getting into character, ya know. Audition coming up.

DENISE: Actor, huh?

IAN: Yep.

DENISE: *(No longer interested.)* Nope.

Blackout. The train whistle blows. Lights up again.

DENISE: And if you don't mind me saying so, you have a lovely little English accent.

IAN: Thank you.

DENISE: What are you doing here in the States?

IAN: I've lived here for the past ten years. I'm a dentist.

She giggles a bit flirtatiously. IAN smiles a beautiful smile.

DENISE: Your teeth are gorgeous.

IAN: Thank you. I worked on them myself.

She laughs a little.

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DENISE: So, you have a dental office here in the city?

IAN: Actually my license was revoked. Malpractice.

DENISE: Oh.

*She reacts. The scene moves even quicker and with more intensity.
Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.*

DENISE: So, you have an office here in the city?

IAN: Yes, over in Brooklyn.

DENISE: *(A bit disappointed.)* Oh.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

DENISE: So, you have an office here in the city?

IAN: Yes, here in Manhattan. Twenty-fourth floor of the Chrysler Building.

DENISE: *(Satiated with this response but not overly excited.)* Oh.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

DENISE: So, you have an office here in the city?

IAN: I run a clinic with a few other dentists who offer free health care to those that cannot afford it.

DENISE: *(Very impressed.)* That is so noble.

IAN: What do you do?

DENISE: I work for Superbank Finance.

IAN: *(Not very impressed.)* Ah.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: So, what do you do?

DENISE: I work for this non-profit organization that helps find homes for animals.

IAN: Bleeding heart liberal?

DENISE: Libertarian.

He reacts. Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

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DENISE: *(Smiling.)* Bleeding heart liberal?

IAN: Republican.

She frowns. Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

DENISE: *(Smiling.)* Bleeding heart liberal?

IAN: Presbyterian.

She reacts. Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: You know, I may be forward in my thinking but would you care to have dinner with me tonight?

DENISE: Uh... well.. I'm sort of seeing someone.

IAN: Oh. Well, nice to have met you.

DENISE: You too.

They smile at each other as lights go to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: I may be forward, but would you care to have dinner with me tonight?

DENISE: I'm married.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: I may be forward, but—

DENISE: Not into men.

IAN: Ah.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: I know you don't know me from Adam but I thought the opportunity to dine with an elegant woman mustn't go untouched. I know this wonderful little place that serves the best Thai food in town.

DENISE: I don't like spicy.

Blackout. Train whistle. Lights up again.

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IAN: I know this wonderful little place that serves the best steak in town.

DENISE: I'm don't eat red meat.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: I know this wonderful little place that serves the best lobster in town.

DENISE: I keep kosher.

IAN: Oy vey.

Lights to black. Train whistle. Lights up again.

IAN: *(Nearly on the verge of defeat.)* Ya wanna just grab a slice of pizza even though I'm—

DENISE/IAN: ...lactose intolerant.

They look at each other with newfound hope.

DENISE / IAN: Me too! You too?

IAN: This place I know makes an incredible soy cheese pizza!

DENISE: With vegetarian pepperoni?

IAN: Absolutely!

DENISE: And gluten free crust?

IAN: *(Smiling.)* I'll bet my life on it. *(Beat.)* Shall we?

He stands, offering her hand. She stands.

DENISE: *(Smiling.)* Why not?

She takes his hand. The train whistle blows as the subway comes into the station. They both exit. Lights to black.

THE END