

MEN and WOMEN
(a One-Act Play)
by Abbey Khan

Cast of Characters

Hannah, a pretty female in her mid-30's; John's girlfriend; best friends with Julie.

John, a very handsome male with a relaxed demeanor in his late-30's; Hannah's boyfriend; best friends with Marty.

Julie, a somewhat nagging female in her mid-30's; Marty's girlfriend; best friends with Hannah.

Marty, a somewhat overweight male in his late-30's; Julie's boyfriend; best friends with John.

Scene

In Julie and Marty's upscale apartment.

Time

The present.

JULIE

Men can't handle it when women make more money than them.

HANNAH

That's because in the back of their mind they think of us as their assistant rather than their partner.

MARTY

That's not true, there are men who are okay with women making more than them-- they're called lazy. Is that what you want, a bum around the house?

JULIE

That's not what she's saying.

(then)

A man would rather get two jobs or embezzle money just so he can show that he can provide for his girlfriend or wife.

MARTY

(to JULIE)

Well, I want you to know that you'll never have to worry about me embezzling money to afford you, you're just not worth the price.

JOHN

Real nice Marty.

JULIE

No, that's good to know actually. That means our relationship is solid. If I'm making him feel like he needs to embezzle money to keep me or if he feels like I'm that type of girl that only loves him for his money, then there's something wrong with our relationship.

MARTY

Yeah, that's exactly what I mean.

JULIE

Don't push it.

MARTY

Thankfully, we do have a solid relationship because honestly, I'm relieved not to be dating anymore.

JULIE

So is every woman out there.

HANNAH

Oh, I wish I could have seen you guys in action.

JOHN

Why?

HANNAH

Because we all met through mutual friends, so that took the pressure off you guys to come up with some line to get our attention.

JULIE

Yeah, I'm curious too. What kind of ridiculous pick-up lines did you guys use?

MARTY

Well, a buddy of mine and I didn't have so much of a pick-up line. It was more like a plan.

JOHN

Actually, it was more like a scheme.

HANNAH

Really, do tell.

JULIE

Let me guess. He'd hold a gun to her head and make her choose between you and him.

MARTY

Not quite. But close.

JULIE

It's scary how well I know you.

HANNAH

So what would you two do?

MARTY

So let's say he was interested in a certain girl. I would go up to that girl and try to talk to her and if she wasn't responsive or kept trying to blow me off, I would, for lack of a better word 'harass' her.

JOHN

No, I think that's the right word.

MARTY

Anyway, he would come along and tell me to back off, but not in a violent way, just in enough of a threatening way that it would make me leave. And wah-lah, he would have is in.

JULIE

And that actually worked?

MARTY

Maybe 6 or 7 out of 10 times.

HANNAH

Seriously? How?

MARTY

Because women like to be rescued.

JOHN

Oh boy.

HANNAH / JULIE

No we don't!

HANNAH

The last thing we need is to be rescued.

MARTY

I said 'like' not 'need.' Yes, I know, women today are strong and independent and blah, blah, blah. But you still like us to come to your rescue and we like doing it.

JOHN

(tries to stop this from going any furthur)

Okay, so now you know our methods. Now it's your turn to share. What excuses did you two use to blow off a guy?

JULIE

Not so fast John, you never told us any of your pick-up lines or schemes.

JOHN

I didn't really have any. I would just say 'hello.'

MARTY

And that was only after they would come up to him. All he had to do was sit there and look pretty.

JULIE

And what, you were his sidekick?

MARTY

Pretty much.

JOHN

(embarrassed)

Okay c'mon. Now it's your turn.

JULIE

You know, Hannah was the master at this stuff.

JOHN

Really. What would you do?

HANNAH

Let's see, well, one time I pretended I was mute.

MARTY

Hmmm, that's innovative. I like that.

HANNAH

And what else? Ah, sometimes I would also pretend that I didn't speak English.

JULIE

Oh, that was one of my favorite ones to use.

HANNAH

Yeah, but you have to be careful with that one.

(then)

This one time this guy overheard me speaking perfect English after I blew him off, so he confronted me and said, "Why would you pretend you don't speak English?" And I just said because it was too late to pretend to be blind.

(They all laugh except for MARTY
who is preoccupied.)

JOHN

(to MARTY who is typing furiously on his smartphone)

Marty, what are you doing?

MARTY

Taking notes.

HANNAH

For what?!

MARTY

(reluctant)

Just in case.

JULIE

Just in case what?!

MARTY

You know, just in case we ever break up, I'll be prepared to turn the situation around in my favor when I'm out there again.

JULIE

If we ever break up, I'd badmouth you so bad, no woman in this city will touch you.

MARTY

Okay, let's just say that we don't break up and instead you meet your untimely demise, wouldn't you want me to be happy and find love again?

JULIE

That depends with who and how long after I die.

HANNAH

Yeah, let's say we die before you guys, how long would you wait until you started dating again?

JOHN

Well, that depends on a number of factors, don't you think?

JULIE

Like?

MARTY

Like if we murdered you.

JOHN

That's not exactly what I meant.

MARTY

But if that were the case, then we would have to wait a while not to draw suspicion to ourselves.

JULIE

(sarcastic)

I'm glad you've thought this through.

MARTY

What, I follow the news.

HANNA

Be serious you guys.

JOHN

(to HANNAH / puts his hand on top of hers)

Okay, for one, if we were an elderly couple, like say in our seventies or eighties and we really loved each other, I doubt I would date again, not only because I wouldn't want to, but I'd probably die soon after from a broken heart. My life ended when I lost you forever.

(MARTY laughs loudly.)

JULIE

Why is that funny?

MARTY

Man, you've gotta be kidding me.

JULIE

Why? 'Cause it's poetic. Why can't you ever be that poetic?

MARTY

Because he's a sap. I'm a realist.

JULIE

Oh really! Then tell me *realistically* how long it would take you to date after I croak?

MARTY

Considering I don't kill you first, and you die of natural causes or cancer or get hit by a car, or--

JULIE

Okay, I get it. Just answer the question.

MARTY

I'd give it six months until I started dating again, and three months until I started having sex again.

JULIE

What?!

JOHN

Here we go.

MARTY

Like I said, I'm a realist.

JOHN

Six months?

JULIE

I'm stuck on the three months?!

MARTY

Hey, you can't blame me. I have needs.

JULIE

You wouldn't be able to hold out a little longer?!

MARTY

No!

(looks at JOHN)

Hey, at least I wouldn't hire a prostitute.

JOHN

What are you looking at me for?

HANNAH

(releases her hand from JOHN'S hand)

Have you been with a hooker?

JOHN

No!

MARTY

Not yet he hasn't.

JULIE

(hits MARTY on the arm)

You jerk, why are you trying to start trouble between them?

MARTY

I'm not. I'm just saying that he's a boy scout. And boy scouts like him have to protect their image. But he's still a man and men have needs. So yeah, maybe he can hold out on dating until six months, maybe even a year, but I don't think he can hold out on having sex for that long.

JULIE

He can masturbate.

JOHN

Whoa, whoa, whoa.

(JULIE and MARTY just ignore JOHN.)

MARTY

He can do that now. But he still needs a woman's touch. Right now, he has Hannah, but if she goes first, it makes sense for him to hire a prostitute. And I'm not saying just any prostitute off the street, he's a classy guy, he would go to a high-end escort service. See this way, his image is still intact with everyone he knows, but all that time, he's really getting laid. It's a win-win situation for him.

JOHN

(dumbfounded)

Wow... I don't even know what to say.

HANNAH

Neither do I.

JULIE

I do. He's an idiot, don't pay any attention to him.

(JULIE slaps MARTY on the arm.)

MARTY

Owww! That's the second time you've hit me tonight. That's abuse, you know.

JULIE

Then go ahead and call the cops.

(MARTY doesn't budge)

Yeah, just as I thought. You'd be too embarrassed to give a statement. The only time a man can call the cops on a woman is if she's pointing a gun at him or if she's stalking him. And who's going to stalk you?!

MARTY

Oh, like you have so many suitors.

JULIE

Hey, people ask me all the time what I'm doing with you.

JOHN

I'm asking that very question right now.

HANNAH

So am I.

JULIE

And you know what I tell them-- it's because I love you. I don't know why, but I just do.

MARTY

And I love you too.

(MARTY kisses JULIE on the cheek.)

HANNAH

It's amazing how you two can argue one minute and be so lovey-dovey the next.

JULIE

What can I say, that's just our relationship. Maybe that's why he doesn't feel the need to pop the question.

MARTY

I will when I'm ready Mrs. Lipschitz.

JULIE

Mrs. Lipschitz-- that sounds so--

JOHN

Shitty?

JULIE

And strange.

MARTY

Well, if we're going to be husband and wife, I just assumed you would take my last name.

JULIE

I don't know. I guess I never really thought about it.
(to HANNAH)

Have you?

HANNAH

Oh no, I'm not taking Marty's last name either.

(Everyone but MARTY chuckles.)

MARTY

No really, would you take John's name if you two got married?

HANNAH

I don't know. Maybe. Maybe not. But, I don't think it's necessary to do so.

JOHN

Well, would you at least hyphenate it?

HANNAH

Of course you would say that.

JOHN

What is that suppose to mean?

HANNAH

It means that if I had just said, "Absolutely, I'll take your name honey," you would have just left it at that and wouldn't even have suggested that I hyphenate my name.

JOHN

That's not true.

HANNAH

Yes it is and you know it.

JULIE

I gotta go with Hannah on this one. I don't understand why it's so important to them that we take their name.

HANNAH

Because men love to hear the sound of their own name. It's about making their mark on the world. And to some men, whether or not we take their name can be an indicator about the outcome of the marriage.

JOHN

And that is?

HANNAH

Well, I think for a woman, a hyphenated name means compromise. Changing our name means possession and keeping our name means equality.

JOHN

And for men?

HANNAH

Or as you guys see it, keeping our name means divorce. Hyphenating our name means the marriage has a 50/50 chance. And taking your name means the marriage will most likely last.

(MARTY thinks about HANNAH'S statement for a second and it makes him kind of nervous.)

MARTY

(to JULIE)

Well honey, it's not like you have to take my name right away. You can ease into it and then maybe you'll think differently once we start a family.

HANNAH

No offense Marty, but I never really took you for a family man.

JULIE

Are you kidding, he actually likes kids. They just don't like him very much.

MARTY

Well, my kids are going to like me. They'll have to.

JULIE

Okay, let's say we do get married and have children. You know how much I love my job, well, would you be okay with me going back to work or would you prefer that I stay at home and be a full-time housewife?

MARTY

Honey, you don't need my permission. Stay at home, go to work, whatever makes you happy.

JOHN

Yeah right!

MARTY

What?!

JOHN

Be honest with the lady.

MARTY

I am. It makes no difference to me.

JOHN

Okay, if you're not going to be straight with her, then I will. He would want you to stay home with the kids. Why?