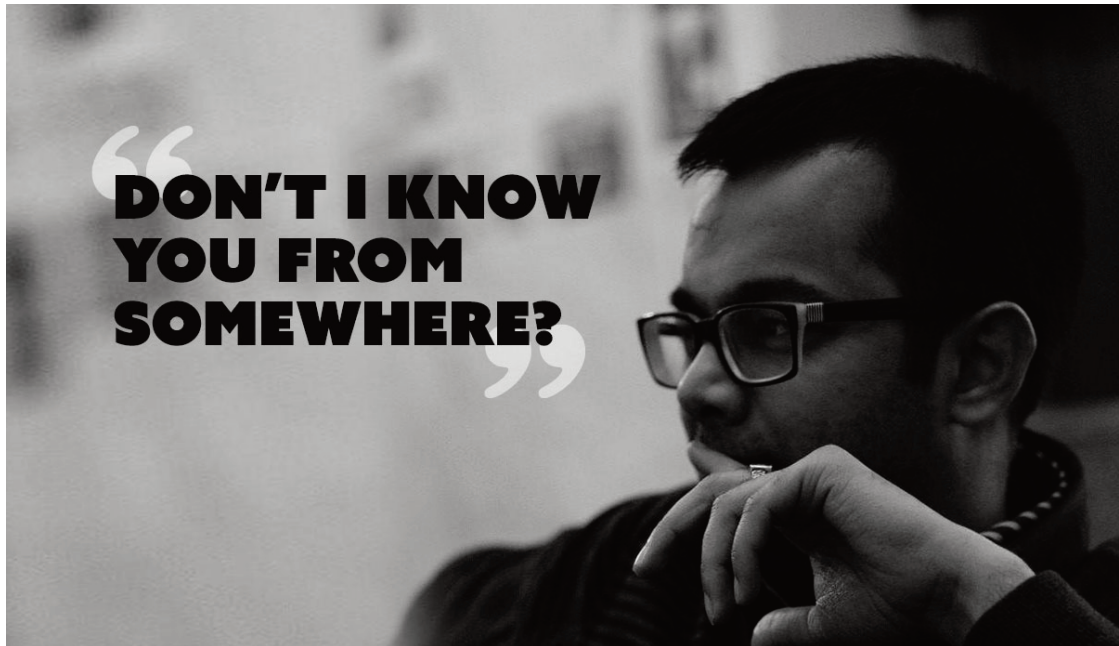




DON'T I KNOW YOU  
FROM SOMEWHERE?  
(OLD FRIENDS)  
V3

A short play by Rebecca Tasker  
(with minute tinkering by Nick Miller)

CHARACTERS (3 - 2 female, 1 male):

JESS – early 30s, primary school teacher  
JOE – early 30s, Jess' fiancé, IT specialist  
MOIRA – early 30s, PR guru

*A pub. Jess and Joe enter. They are carrying shopping bags emblazoned with the logos of several top London attractions – Madame Tussauds, The Tower of London, London Dungeons etc. Joe has an expensive camera around his neck.*

JESS: Quick, grab a table!

*They both sit down and sag into their chairs visibly exhausted. Jess checks her watch*

JESS: We're a little early. Moira will be here in a bit.

JOE: God, we must have walked around half of London.

*He removes one of his shoes and massages his foot.*

JESS: Don't do that, we're in a restaurant.

JOE: We're in a pub.

JESS: You wouldn't do this in a pub in Milton Keynes.

JOE: I don't walk this much in Milton Keynes.

JESS: Joe! Don't embarrass me, please! This is the first time I've seen Moira in three years. She's my oldest friend. I don't want her to think that I'm engaged to a complete idiot.

*Enter Moira. She's dressed in a designer suit with a designer handbag. She walks with confidence in designer heels and immediately steps in something sticky.*

MOIRA: Ew

*Jess waves over to Moira.*

JESS: Moira! Moira! Over here! We got a table!

MOIRA: Hello, gorgeous! How are you doing?

*Moira gives Jess an air kiss on each cheek.*

JESS: And this is my fiancé, Joe.

*Moira shakes Joe's hand firmly.*

JOE: Don't I know you from somewhere?

MOIRA: I don't think so.

JOE: You sure? You've not visited Milton Keynes recently?

MOIRA (*Laughs*): No

*She pulls up a chair.*

MOIRA: Can I ask? What made you choose this pub?

JOE: We wanted to be near the West End because we got tickets to Hamilton at 7. And y'know it's an authentic independent London pub, we wanted to soak in the local atmosphere.

MOIRA (*Laughs again*): You do know this is a Wetherspoons right?

JOE: What? But the dark wood finish, the rug..?

MOIRA: It's literally on the drink's coasters.

*She tosses a coaster at Joe. She turns to Jess.*

MOIRA: Well, let's see the ring!

*Jess beams and presents the gaudiest ring on her finger.*

MOIRA: Wow, very...traditional.

JESS: It's platinum.

MOIRA: Wow.

JESS: Well, platinum plated.

JOE: Still platinum though. I'm going to get drinks. What do you girls want?

MOIRA: Firstly, I'm a woman. And I'll have a Hendricks Gin with slimline tonic. And ice and lime.

JESS: I'll have a prosecco, thank you babe.

*Joe walks to the bar.*

MOIRA: Have you set a date for the wedding?

JESS: Well, there's so much going on and with our schedules and how long the waiting lists are for venues, we're thinking 2024.

MOIRA: It must be a special venue for you to wait that long.

JESS: Yeah...it's, uh, Milton Keynes Guildhall. Joe's mate, Chubs, runs the bar and he gave us a deal on the booze.

MOIRA: Y'know, I've never understood the fuss about weddings. The dress. The ring. The venue. The alcohol. All that money for one day. Surely, if someone is in love – like you two are – then it doesn't matter. Why not just elope?

JESS: Well, to some people, the ceremony, and the importance of family are integral to the marriage bond.

MOIRA: How is your old mum by the way? Is she on her fourth or fifth husband now?

*Joe returns with the drinks. He's got himself a pint of lager.*

JOE: Are you sure we haven't met before?

JESS: Yes, enough about us. How are you? Seeing anyone?

MOIRA: Not currently.

JESS: God, it must be so hard being single right now. The idea of going on a dating app again and having to endure endless mediocre dates and all the failed talking stages. God, I think I'd shoot myself in the head if I ever had to be single again.

*She reaches over and holds Joe's hand. Joe burps.*

MOIRA: I'm happy being single. I'm not beholden to anyone. I can do what I want when I want. I have a beautiful flat all on my own.

JESS: You don't have to put on a brave face in front of me.  
I'm one of your oldest friends! I know it can be lonely out there  
for single people.

JOE: And you don't want to wait too long before you find someone.  
Otherwise, you'll be left on the shelf. You can't be picky,  
at your age.

JESS (*Hissing*): Joe!

MOIRA: Would you say the same thing to a man of "my age"?

JOE: Alright, alright, no need to get political.

MOIRA (*to Jess*): Are you still teaching at the same school?

JESS: Yes.

MOIRA: God, it's so noble of you to stay there after so many years.  
I know they don't pay you enough.

JESS: I get fulfillment from educating the minds of the next generation.

MOIRA: And I suppose you'll start having kids of your own soon enough.

*Jess and Joe answer simultaneously.*

JESS: Of course!

JOE: Well, it's something we'll think about.

MOIRA: Well, I see you're still figuring it out.

JESS: The most important thing is, it's not a no.

MOIRA: Uh huh.

JOE: Yeah.

*Joe takes a large sip from his pint.*

MOIRA: I don't understand how you do it, I can't stand kids.  
Y'know I was flying back from San Francisco, I'd just closed this big deal with Amazon, and there was a kid screaming his lungs out the whole flight. If I was his mother, I would have pushed him out the airlock over Nevada.

*Joe drinks heavily.*

JESS: Well I guess not everyone has a maternal instinct.

MOIRA: Or paternal.

JOE: Wait, have you ever been on TV? Ever done a quiz show.

MOIRA: I earn too much money to ever go on a quiz show.

JESS: I think you would do well; you were such a swot in school.

MOIRA: Well, one of us had to be. I don't think you looked at a textbook the entire time. Too busy staring at boys. It's probably a relief for you to only teach at a primary level.

*Jess stands up abruptly.*

JESS: I'm going to the toilet.

*Jess leaves. Moira takes out her phone and begins checking her emails.*

JOE: I don't mean to offend you but you two are very well, bitchy, with each other.

MOIRA: Oh, don't worry about it. I've been called far worse. That's just how old friends are. Sorry, I just need to make a quick call.

*Moira put her phone to her ear.*

MOIRA: Hi, yeah, I just got your email. Yeah. So, tell Mark that we've orchestrated hundreds of successful marketing campaigns for many multinational tech companies. If that asshole thinks he knows better than us, he's more than welcome to go to one of our inferior competitors. But he can't come crying back to us when they've taken all his money and delivered a piss poor product.  
Obviously, word it differently. Okay. Okay. Bye.

*Joe slams his hand on the table.*

JOE: The 2018 British Tech Expo.

MOIRA: What?

JOE: That's where I remember you from!

MOIRA: Oh, did you see my talk?

JOE: Yes, but also, I think we hung out in the bar afterwards.

MOIRA: Oh my god. No way.

JOE: Yeah, you'd ordered those tequila slammers for a big group.

MOIRA: But I lost them.

JOE: So, you offered them around.

MOIRA: To you.

JOE: We had some deep chats and then...oh shit.

MOIRA: Oh no.

JOE: Oh, wait. Did we go back to yours or mine?

MOIRA: Mine. Which is where we...y'know. Just to be clear, I don't do one night stands often. That was a one-time thing.

JOE: Yeah, same. We were both a bit drunk.

MOIRA: I haven't had a tequila slammer since.

*Jess re-enters. She stands out of Joe and Moira's sight.*

JOE: You're not going to tell her.

MOIRA: Of course, I'm going to tell her. She's my oldest friend.

JOE: No, c'mon.

MOIRA: What's the problem? We're all adults here.

JOE: Of course. Jess can't know about this. She'd lose her mind.

JESS: What can't I know about?

JOE: A wedding surprise! Sorry I was telling Moira

MOIRA: Actually, no. Look, Jess

JOE: And it's important you don't know about it.  
We don't want to ruin your big day.

MOIRA: Joe and I slept together.

JESS: What? I was only gone for two minutes.

MOIRA: No, we've slept together. Before. Before you two met.  
In 2018, at some conference. It was a one-night stand that  
meant nothing. And obviously happened before you two met.

JESS: 2018...

MOIRA: It did happen before you two met right?

JESS: That expo was in August 2018. I stayed up the whole night  
before helping you prepare your stupid presentation.

MOIRA: Just to clarify. I had NO idea Joe was with anyone... let alone  
you. Even if I was raging drunk... which I have to confess...  
I mean he wasn't about to say "by the way, just before we do  
the deed... I've got a girlfriend." Probably would have spoiled  
the mood right?

JESS *(to Joe)*: Is that true?

JOE *(stuttering)*: Well no... but yes... but no... I didn't sort of... mention it  
at the time...

*Jess grabs her drink and throws it in Joe's face.*

JESS: Bastard!

*She sobs into her hands. Moira and Joe jump up to comfort her. Moira  
beats Joe and tries to put her arms around Jess. Jess pushes her away.*

JESS: Leave me alone!

MOIRA: C'mon, Jess. Look at me. Look at him. Do you really think I'd risk it all for that?

*Moria gestures to Joe.*

JESS: Yeah, I guess he's not really your type.

JOE: What's that supposed to mean?

JESS: Our relationship is over and that's what you're focusing on.

JOE: I can explain. It was a stupid mistake.

JESS: Leave me alone!

*Jess tries to pull her engagement ring off.*

JOE: See, it's staying on! It's a sign! We're meant to be together.

JESS: It's only staying on because you were too cheap to get it properly sized.

MOIRA: You need to ice your finger. Hang on!

*She grabs her G&T and dunks Jess' finger in it.*

MOIRA: Hopefully that should bring any swelling down.

JESS (*tearfully*): Thanks. You're so clever.

MOIRA: And you're so kind! If I was in your shoes I would have decked me by now.

JESS: You really didn't know?

MOIRA: Of course not

JOE: Let's not be too hasty here. We live together, remember!

JESS: Actually you moved into my flat. That I paid for.

JOE: But I still have like...tenants rights.

JESS: Do you know this whole time you haven't said that you love me?  
Why is that?

MOIRA: Yeah, why is that?

JESS: Was Moira the only woman you cheated on me with?

JOE: Look, I, why don't we discuss this at home?

MOIRA: That's not a no.

*Jess takes out her finger and pulls off her ring. She throws it at Joe.*

JOE: Ow!

JESS: Rot in hell.

MOIRA: Let's get out of here. I know this really cool sushi bar.  
The california rolls are such good value - only twenty pounds.  
My treat.

JESS: I'm so lucky to have you as my friend. My oldest friend.

*The two women gather their bags and flounce out arm in arm. Moira turns back at the last second and dumps Joe's pint over his head. They exit.*

JOE: Wait! Jess... please. It meant nothing...Don't let this ruin what we have now...

*(He gets louder as she disappears out of site)*

You mean EVERYTHING to me....  
I can't go on without you...  
You're the only one for me...

*(He waves the Hamilton tickets and turns to a girl on the nearest table even if she's with someone else)*

... I don't suppose you fancy a night out? Hamilton?  
Couple of ice cream tubs? ... Maybe not...  
Joe runs out.

*The End.*