

BODY ODOR: THE PROACTIVE PEOPLE REPELLENT

By Bradley Walton

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BODY ODOR: THE PROACTIVE PEOPLE REPELLENT

A Ten Minute Comedy Duet

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: What do you do when you notice somebody smells bad? Do you risk mentioning it to them so they can freshen up and save themselves some embarrassment? But what happens if they take offense? Or worse, what happens if they tell you...*they're doing it on purpose?*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 either; gender flexible)

- 1 (m/f) A well-meaning person who's just trying to be nice. *(41 lines)*
- 2 (m/f) A misanthrope who uses his or her body odor against other people. *(40 lines)*

PROPERTIES

- 2 cell phones (can be mimed for forensics competition)

AUTHOR NOTES

I wrote this in the summer of 2013. At the time, I thought it was an okay script. Ten months later I pulled it out and re-read it. Not only was it better than I remembered, it was kind of profound...way more than I would have expected given the subject matter. The last sentence was kind of a "whoa" moment.

It's nice to surprise yourself, and occasionally, it's a little weird.

AT RISE: 1 and 2 on a bare stage. 1 is nicely dressed and well-groomed. 2 is rather slovenly in appearance. THEY are standing a few feet apart, facing away from one another, each looking at a cell phone. 1 looks at 2, sniffs, and taps 2 on the shoulder.

1: Um, excuse me?

2: (*Looking at 1.*) Yeah?

1: Hey, uh...not wanting to be rude or anything, but first chance you get, you might wanna maybe use some deodorant.

2: Deodorant?

1: Yeah.

2: Why?

1: You smell a little.

2: Really?

1: Yeah.

2: What do I smell like?

1: Um...like body odor.

2: In a good way or a bad way?

1: I don't think there's such a thing as good body odor.

2: So you're telling me I smell bad?

1: Yeah.

2: (*Putting phone away.*) Why would you walk up to me—a complete stranger—and tell me that I smell bad?

1: (*Putting phone away.*) Look, I didn't walk up. I just happened to be in close proximity and I *noticed* that you smell bad. I mentioned it to you because I was trying to be nice.

2: Nice?

1: Yeah.

2: You have a funny way of being nice.

1: I wasn't trying to insult you. I was trying to point out something that I thought you might not be aware of.

2: And you thought it was something that I *should* be aware of?

1: I thought that the knowledge might be beneficial, yeah.

2: Beneficial? To whom?

1: To you.

2: Are you sure about that?

1: Sure I'm sure.

2: I'm not so sure.

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- 1: (*Confused.*) What?
- 2: Think. Are you telling me this for my benefit, or for the benefit of everyone else that I encounter today? When you say you're just being nice...are you being nice to me, or are you potentially embarrassing me in order to be nice to everyone else?
- 1: I'm trying to be nice to you. I wasn't trying to embarrass you or create some big thing like you're making it out to be.
- 2: How is this knowledge to my benefit?
- 1: Because the way you smell is going to bother people.
- 2: If it's bothering other people, then that's not my problem.
- 1: If you smell bad, people aren't going to want to be around you.
- 2: Maybe that's the idea. Maybe I don't want to be bothered. Maybe this is an intentional effort to keep people away. Ever think of that?
- 1: Are you really so antisocial that you'd use body odor as a form of people repellent?
- 2: Maybe.
- 1: I'd say *definitely* based on this conversation. You have people problems.
- 2: I have people problems? You're the one telling me—actually saying to me—that I smell bad. Do you know how tactless that is? Nobody *ever* tells me that I smell bad.
- 1: What? Do you do this on a regular basis or something?
- 2: Of course I do.
- 1: What? Nobody tries to smell bad on purpose!
- 2: Well, I do it all the time.
- 1: Why?
- 2: You means besides the fact that I'm antisocial?
- 1: Yes!

- 2: Okay...you go to the grocery store and the checkout lines are a mile long. You stand there and wait. And wait. And wait. You maybe mess with your phone, or watch the person in front of you playing with their phone, or maybe they're staring into space looking as bored as you feel. But if you smell bad, then that person in front of you, they pull their eyes off of their phone, or break their concentration away from the empty space they were gazing into. Their head lifts up just a little. And they don't look at you. Not directly. But you can see their eyes dart to the side in your direction, and then back to whatever they were looking at before. And then back to you, but only for a second. They're trying to figure out if it's you they're smelling, but they're trying to be polite about it. They don't want to be obvious. And then when they're pretty sure that the smell is coming from you, they want to get a good look at you, but they don't want to be obvious about that either, because they're still trying to be polite. So they turn and look towards something in the back of the store, like maybe they forgot something and they're trying to figure out if it's worth going back to get. Or maybe they'll just stretch and turn their head. Either way, they don't look right at you. They look past you, but in looking past you, they're passing you through their field of vision, and their eyes linger on you for just an instant too long. And when they turn towards you, they can smell you that much more distinctly, and they're trying so hard not to make a face, because they are so desperate not to appear rude or obvious. And mostly they're successful, except for that tinge of a squint they just can't completely repress. In that moment, they're assessing the situation. They're trying to figure out if their place in the checkout line is worth the discomfort you're causing them. And nine times out of ten, they'll magically decide that another checkout line looks like it's moving faster, or that they forgot something and head to the back of the store to find it. You then get to move up a place in line and repeat the process with the customer who's standing in front of the person that just left.
- 1: What happens when you're down to the person the cashier is actually ringing up? Do they just run away and leave their groceries there?

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