

## **Be More 282**

### **A ten minute play**

#### **Characters**

BETH, 20's, white, female  
YOUNG MAN, 20's, black, male

#### **Time**

Late one night

#### **Place**

Under a bridge in a city

**Synopsis:** *Be More 282 is a play about a young black man and a young white woman who have been murdered in very different circumstances. It takes place under the bridge where their bodies have both been dumped. Both characters want very much to be discovered. The play begins when Beth asks the young black man to take her picture so that the media will make sure a search for her is continued. The play ends when Beth succeeds and the young black man fails.*

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**Be More 282**

*(Lights up on a dismal scene underneath an urban bridge. There are newspapers, bushes, dead branches, some trash. There is graffiti on the bridge abutment. It's dark. A YOUNG MAN, black, in his 20's, in a dark long T-shirt, jeans and bare feet sits there picking at one of the branches. BETH, white, is in her 20's and is attractive. She's pregnant, in dressy clothes, and she holds her cell phone.)*

**BETH**

Leon? Leon? Excuse me, Leon? I have an idea.

**YOUNG MAN**

I'm not Leon.

**BETH**

I thought you said...

**YOUNG MAN**

My name is Rodney.

**BETH**

I'm so sorry. Well, anyway, Rodney, I was thinking if you take a picture of me with my phone here -

**YOUNG MAN**

What do you need another picture for?

**BETH**

I thought if I could get a new picture to the news outlets...

**YOUNG MAN**

Right.

**BETH**

Rodney...

**YOUNG MAN**

My name is Marcus.

**BETH**

Marcus, then...

**YOUNG MAN**

Now it's Gregory. No wait, now it's Antoine.

**BETH**

Whatever.

**YOUNG MAN**

It's been a rough month, bitch !

**BETH**

My name is Beth! And it's been a rough month for me, too.

**YOUNG MAN**

Yeah, I know. I know.

**BETH**

So if I can just somehow send them another picture...

**YOUNG MAN**

Your picture's all over this paper.

**BETH**

They're going to need -

**YOUNG MAN**

Ain't nobody out there don't know what you look like.

**BETH**

They're going to need another one.

**YOUNG MAN**

What for?

**BETH**

To keep the story fresh... to carry it through to the next cycle the public wants ...they NEED...look, I worked in media. Please, Antoine -

**YOUNG MAN**

Richard!

**BETH**

Just take my picture! Please.

**YOUNG MAN**

You need one so bad take it yourself.

*(BETH takes a picture of herself with her phone.)*

**BETH**

It looks awful.

**YOUNG MAN**

Lemme see.

Blonde, check. Boobs, check. White, check.

**BETH**

It's obvious I took it myself.

**YOUNG MAN**

So?

**BETH**

A selfie looks...self-indulgent. The public won't empathize. Someone else takes your picture you look like a friend, a sister, a daughter. Please... I'd call you Richard, but I have a feeling...

**YOUNG MAN**

Dante!!

**BETH**

Please, Dante. We're running out of time.

**YOUNG MAN**

Oh, you got time.

**BETH**

That's not what I meant.

*(YOUNG MAN refuses. BETH tries again. She's disappointed. YOUNG MAN looks at the picture.)*

**YOUNG MAN**

There ain't nothing wrong with that picture. Like my grandmother says, "What you think you look like?"

**BETH**

Look, for the story to go viral –

**YOUNG MAN**

Go viral?

**BETH**

To really take off –

**YOUNG MAN**

I know what it means, Beth Peterson. You already like Ebola, HIV and the bird flu rolled up into one!

**BETH**

REALLY viral, then they need a picture of me...that reminds everybody about the baby.

**YOUNG MAN**

Then point the damn thing at your belly.

**BETH**

My arms are not long enough to get both my face and my baby! Dante!

**YOUNG MAN**

Michael!

**BETH**

Michael!

**YOUNG MAN**

David! Vernon! Ronald! Kevin! Jamal! And I ain't gonna do it! The last thing the world needs is another damn picture of Miss perky, blonde, knocked-up Beth Peterson!

**BETH**

I need this.

**YOUNG MAN**

Why? Why do you need this?

**BETH**

I don't want them to stop looking for me.

**YOUNG MAN**

You all they can talk about! Anything there about me?

**BETH**

I don't know.

**YOUNG MAN**

You know. You know damn well.

**BETH**

Well maybe -

**YOUNG MAN**

Motherfuckin' mainstream media.

**BETH**

I have every right –

**YOUNG MAN**

You ain't got no more right than nobody else! You think nobody else maybe wants their picture out there? Huh? Nobody else wants their fifteen minutes? Yeah, you got yours. Only you stretchin' into fifteen days, weeks, months, maybe even years you play your cards right -

**BETH**

You think I LIKE this??

**YOUNG MAN**

You are lovin' it!

**BETH**

I did not ask for this! I most certainly did not ask for this!!

**YOUNG MAN**

That makes two of us.

**BETH**

How can you even think I would be enjoying this? Do I look like I belong here?

**YOUNG MAN**

Do I? (*beat*) I say, "Grandma, I'm getting' out. I'm getting' out and never goin' back." She says, "I'm real proud of you, Baby. Real proud." Shit. Look where getting' out got me to.

**BETH**

That makes two of us again.

**YOUNG MAN**

What you try to get out from?

**BETH**

"Doug, why are you late every night? We're going to have a baby and I need you here." "You're too needy, Beth. When did you become so needy?" I open his laptop. "Who is she, Doug? Who the hell is Tiffany?" "Don't you ever do that again, Beth! Do you understand? Do you??" And there's a hand. A slap. A fist. Tumbling backward down the basement stairs. Concrete. Crack! Blood all over the floor...and then here. Here. And Doug acts so worried... "Oh, please help us find her...if you have any information..."

It stinks here. Garbage and sewage and...I didn't think it would smell so bad, did you?

**YOUNG MAN**

Here, tell you what. I will take your picture. Yeah, I will take it. But first you take mine.

**BETH**

Fine, I don't mind taking –

**YOUNG MAN**

And just as soon as they run my picture, then I will take yours. Paper, TV, CNN dot com, don't matter.

**BETH**

Fine.

*(BETH takes his picture.)*

Let's try another one.

**YOUNG MAN**

What's wrong with that one?

**BETH**

You should try to look less...

**YOUNG MAN**

Less what?

**BETH**

Or more...try to look more...to be more...

**YOUNG MAN**

Be more what?

**BETH**

Smile. Try to smile.

**YOUNG MAN**

Shit.

**BETH**

Do you want them to use it or not?

*(YOUNG MAN smiles. BETH takes his picture.)*

**BETH**

Better. I'll see if I can send it around. I need to caption it with your name.

**YOUNG MAN**

How about Isaac? No, wait. Darnell. Hang on a minute. Dwight.

**BETH**

Stop it! Just stop it!

**YOUNG MAN**

Stop what?

**BETH**

Playing games!

**YOUNG MAN**

Maybe I can't remember.

**BETH**

Your own name?

**YOUNG MAN**

Christopher. Eddie! Tavon!!

**BETH**

How do you expect anyone to take you seriously?

**YOUNG MAN**

Troy.

**BETH**

Last chance!

**YOUNG MAN**

Troy. It's Troy.

**BETH**

Troy. (*SHE tries to send it.*) OK, my turn.

**YOUNG MAN**

It's always your turn.

**BETH**

Come on, take it. You promised.

**YOUNG MAN**

I said not till they use mine. Not till they show me.



**BETH**

That could take a while.

**YOUNG MAN**

Then you send it around until somebody picks it up.

*(BETH works her phone trying to send the picture.)*

I used to work in the media, too, you know. Sales. Used to sell this piece of crap paper on Pratt Street every morning. My grandmother, she woke me up every day last summer four o'clock. She say, "Bryant, you get yourself up, you hear –"

**BETH**

Dammit.

**YOUNG MAN**

What?

**BETH**

It won't send.

**YOUNG MAN**

What are you talking about?

**BETH**

It won't send your picture.

**YOUNG MAN**

Let me see that.

Dammit!

You sent yours.

**BETH**

I tried to send yours right after. I did!

**YOUNG MAN**

Yours the only one went through.

*(YOUNG MAN tries to send his picture. More newspapers blow in or fly in. Maybe there are some images of BETH that appear on the walls, too. YOUNG MAN is aware that the images are all of BETH.)*

**YOUNG MAN**

Listen to me, my name is Paul Andre Ryan and I been bangin' since I was thirteen right, only I dropped my flag, see? Watched a couple of my boys and my cousin go down, and then my two-year old niece gets hit with a stray bullet and I say enough of this, man, enough of this! Time to make a change. Get my tats removed, drop my flag, and what do I get for that, man? What do I get? They say, "Tyrell, he boned out." So they box me out, right, and it don't go my way exactly and I end up under this stankin' bridge, man, and ain't nobody looking! Ain't nobody looking for me! (*to BETH*) So you figure out a way to send that picture and get it on the air or in the paper or they ain't never gonna find Beth Peterson, you hear? You hear me?!

**BETH**

I can't fix things!

**YOUNG MAN**

You wanna stay pretty, perky, Beth Peterson all in one piece you better fix this or there ain't gonna be nothing left anybody want to see a picture of!

**BETH**

You can't hurt me.

**YOUNG MAN**

Yeah, I might not have my nine and I might not have a knife but I can still rip you apart with my bare hands!

**BETH**

No, you can't.

**YOUNG MAN**

Why not? WHY NOT? You think I can't jack you up? You think I ain't got the balls to bust you? Or maybe you think your perky blond head and the baby in your belly gonna melt my gangsta heart?

**BETH**

No.

**YOUNG MAN**

Then why not?

**BETH**

Because that's all over. It's all all over. And all we do here is wait. All we do here...is wait. Did you forget that, too?

**YOUNG MAN**

No! (*beat*) Yeah. (*beat*) Shit. Shit. I'm gonna rot under here.

**BETH**

Your grandmother – you said your grandmother –

**YOUNG MAN**

What about my grandmother?

**BETH**

She's looking for you.

**YOUNG MAN**

She's looking for Nathaniel. I'm Brandon. And I'm gonna rot.

**BETH**

No, you won't. Look, if they find me here, they'll find you, too. They have to. So take my picture. Me and the baby. The picture makes them keep caring. They keep caring they keep looking. They keep looking they find me. They find me, they find you. **THEY HAVE TO!!** Trust me, they will see you.

**YOUNG MAN**

Will they really see me, Beth?

**BETH**

They will see you, Brandon.

**YOUNG MAN**

It's Terrence. But whatever.

*(YOUNG MAN takes the camera phone. BETH poses – a happy smile with hands on her belly. YOUNG MAN takes the picture. He hands BETH the camera phone. She sends it. Police sirens are heard. A searchlight is seen. BETH and YOUNG MAN each assume a pose and face the audience. BETH poses as in her photograph – smiling with hands on her belly. YOUNG MAN poses as in his first photograph. The light grows on BETH. It fades on YOUNG MAN. BETH is in bright light; YOUNG MAN is invisible.)*

**BLACKOUT**

End of Play