

**WALKIKNG MOLLY**

A Play

By

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## WALKING MOLLY

### Characters

John Sullivan	An attractive man in his mid-thirties, who works as a social worker for the City.
Frank Marchetti	An attractive man in his mid-thirties, who works on Wall Street.
Peter Nash	An attractive man in his late twenties.
Sophia Sullivan	A woman in her late sixties from Queens, New York.
Molly	A black Scottish terrier.

ACT ONE

Scene one

**Time -** Early evening. Late fall. Mid-eighties.

**Place -** A sidewalk in front of a city park in Manhattan. A bench, small street trees and a trash receptacle are seen.

(The song, *You Made Me Love You*, is heard as the lights go up, and then the audience hears the usual high volume street noise. John enters the stage, walking Molly, a lively Scottish terrier dog. John is dressed as if he has just returned from a day at the office; his tie is loosened and he looks as if he needs a stiff drink. Meanwhile, the dog is busy sniffing at every scent and has been remised in her outside responsibilities. Even though John is a very patient man, he is about to lose it.)

JOHN

(Becoming impatient. Talks to the dog.) Come on Molly....find a spot and just do it. Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about because you do. Now let's go. (Complains.) Oh come on. It's really easy. You've been doing this at least three times a day for the last four years. So what's taking you so long? Huh?! You know it all smells the same. You should know that by now. In New York, one spot smells the same as the next. (Admits.) Okay...so it varies a little with the neighborhood you're in, but it's still the same. (No response. To himself.) At times like this, I wish I had gotten a cat. Cats aren't stubborn like dogs. (To the dog.) You don't have to walk cats like you do dogs. And they're much easier to take care of. (Pause.) Well, they are. All you have to do is to throw some sand in a box. That's all. Like I said...it's very easy. You put food out in the morning and the cat does the rest. (Pause.) I know...I know. You've got to clean out the box occasionally. Big deal. (Pause.) What?! What do you mean. "How can I manage to clean out a cat box when I have a hard enough time just cleaning my bathroom?" (Defensive.) And what's wrong with my bathroom? (Pause.) Don't answer that! (Admits.) Okay...so I'm not the cleanest person in the world. (Thinks for a moment.) Well, you're not the cleanest thing either. You know what I'm talking about! (Pause.) Yeah, well...if I wasn't spending all my free time walking you, I could spend more time doing household chores like cleaning out bathrooms. (Pause.) What do you mean...excuses, excuses. It's the truth. I would have a lot more time if you would only cooperate when I'm walking you. But no. We've got to revisit every spot, every tree and hydrant in a four block radius....just to make sure you're not missing out on any action in the neighborhood. That's why a cat would make more sense. Another advantage, I wouldn't have to run home after work to see whether or not you left me any surprises on the rug because cats don't leave surprises. (Pause.) Okay...I'll admit that cats have their off-days. Some days, cats forget and miss their box. Okay...not everybody is perfect. (Becoming suspicious.) By the way...have you been watching the television when I haven't been home? Huh? (Not believing it.) Yeah...I bet. (Pause.) Why?! Because it sounds like something you

would see on the **Oprah Winfrey** show..."Delinquent cats and the trouble they leave behind."

(Frank walks by and looks at John and Molly. He stops and looks back at John as if he is interested in finding out who John is. After several moments, John suddenly realizes that Frank is looking at him and it makes him feel very self-conscious.)

JOHN

(To the dog.) Molly...don't look now but there's this man...this really attractive man...standing behind us. (Pause.) Which one?! (Tries to point at Frank without pointing at him.) The one that's standing over there. Do you see him? Well...what do you think? (Pause.) What do you mean that "they all look the same to you"? They do not! He's very attractive and what's more, I think he's looking at us. (Pause.) What do you mean he's probably only interested in you? How can you say that? Maybe he's interest in me. (Somewhat defensive.) Well...he could be! (Pause.) Okay so it has been couple of months since I've been with anybody. (Pause.) What do you mean it has been three years?! Has it been that long? It can't be. (Thinks to himself.) Maybe you're right. (Somewhat self-defeated.) Oh well...he's probably not interested in me and even if he was, I wouldn't have anything to do with him. No..I wouldn't. There's too much risk involved. Talking or being friendly to a complete stranger. Are you kidding? I don't care how attractive he is. This is New York City. You don't do things like that. If you don't even acknowledge the people that you do know, why would you talk to people that you don't know. So what if he's attractive. That's doesn't mean anything. Because I'm not that kind of person. And even though it has been a long time, I'm not that desperate. (Pause.) What do you mean...I am? (Senses that Frank is coming closer to him.) Oh God! I think he's coming toward us. What am I going to do if he says anything to me? (To the dog.) Molly...whatever you do, hold it and don't do it now. (Pause.) I know..I know. But nothing turns off a man's interest quicker than having a dog take a dump in front of him. If you don't believe me, ask Oprah Winfrey. She'll tell you. So...please Molly..do me a favor and hold it for a few more minutes.

FRANK

Hi.

JOHN

(Looks around and talks to the dog.) Do you think he's talking to us? (Apprehensive.) I know...I know that there's no one else around but you and me.

FRANK

(Not getting a response, he walks over.) Hello.

JOHN

(Surprised.) Oh...you mean...me?!

FRANK

(Puzzled.) Who else would I be talking to? Huh? Your dog?

JOHN

You would be surprised by the number of strangers who will come up, start talking to her and ignore me.

FRANK

(Somewhat confused.) Excuse me?

JOHN

(Tries to explain.) All she has to do is to get on her hind legs, bark and wag her tail... and people fall in love with her. If I tried a stunt like that, do you know what would happen to me?

FRANK

No. I give up.

JOHN

(Continue.) Well..I would probably be arrested and locked up in Bellevue in no time.

FRANK

(In disbelief.) You don't say. (To himself.) Jesus...another crazy one! All I said was "hello" and I get this Andy Rooney essay on the lifestyles of today's dogs. (Starts to walk away.) Some people....

JOHN

(Disgusted with himself.) Ah shit! (Suddenly realizes what he has just said. To the dog.) No. I didn't mean it, Molly. Don't do it now. Forget what I just said. (Calls after Frank.) Excuse me. Could we try that again...please?

FRANK

(Stops and turns around.) Try "what" again?

JOHN

(Awkward.) The "hello"? It isn't everyday that someone...like you...comes up and says something to me and I don't how to respond back.

FRANK

(Somewhat hesitant.) I...I don't think so....

JOHN

I promise I'll do it right this time.

FRANK

Do what "right" this time? What are you talking about?

JOHN

You know...the "hello" back to you. I promise I won't screw it up this time.

FRANK

(Thinks for amount. Reluctant.) Okay. We'll try it again. But I'm warning you. This is it!

JOHN

(Agrees.) Okay.

FRANK

I don't know. This whole thing is so crazy to me.

JOHN

(Pleads.) Please.

FRANK

Okay...Okay. (Pause. Clears his throat.) Hello.

JOHN

Hello.

FRANK

(Laughs.) That was better.

JOHN

Thanks. I knew I could do it right if I tried.

FRANK

(Laughs and shakes his head in astonishment.) You're cute. A little neurotic..but cute.

JOHN

(Doesn't know what to say.) Yeah...well...one out of two isn't so bad.

FRANK

What's your dog's name?

JOHN

Molly.

FRANK

Molly?! That's a girl's name.

JOHN

I know. She's a girl..I mean she's a female dog.

FRANK

You mean a bitch, don't you?

JOHN

(Agrees and laughs.) Well...there are days when she fits the description.

FRANK

Why did you name her, "Molly" and not "Rover" or "Spot"?

JOHN

Because she's not a "Rover" or "Spot." She's a "Molly." And besides, everybody names their dogs "Rover" or "Spot" and I didn't want to be like everybody else.

FRANK

What's wrong with that?

JOHN

Because I'm not like the rest of them and I didn't want to pretend that I was.

FRANK

(Agrees.) Well..you're certainly not like anybody I've ever met.

JOHN

Thanks.

FRANK

You're welcome. (Pause.) So what about the dog's name?

JOHN

Well...when I got the dog, I wanted a name that exemplified her uniqueness as well as mine. And besides...she also reminded me of a "Molly".

FRANK

(Puzzled.) She reminded you of a "Molly"? (Looks at the dog closely.) Come to think of it, she does remind me of a girl I used to know in high school, whose name was Molly.

JOHN

See. Maybe she was the same one that I knew. You never know.

FRANK

(Looks up and laughs.) You're probably right. Where did you grow up?

JOHN

(Points the direction.) Flushings. In Queens.

FRANK

I know where Flushings is located.

JOHN

What about you?

FRANK

Bensonhurst.

JOHN

(Surprised.) You're kidding?

FRANK

Why would anybody want to kid about being from Bensonhurst?

JOHN

I don't know. You don't seem like the type.

FRANK

I don't? Maybe its because my parents got a divorce when I was ten and neither parent wanted me, so I went to live with an aunt in Staten Island.

JOHN

(Laughs.) That's explains it.

FRANK

What kind of dog is she?

JOHN

Scottish terrier.

FRANK

Really?! (Goes down to pat the dog's head but stops in mid-way and pulls back.)

JOHN

You can pet her. She won't bite you.

FRANK

I rather not.

JOHN

Don't you like dogs?

FRANK

No...not really. They're too much responsibility. You got to walk them and feed them...and then walk them some more. It's too much work.

JOHN

It sounds as if you used to have a dog.

FRANK

I did. I used to have a dog once when I was a kid.

JOHN

Bensonhurst or Staten Island?

FRANK

Bensonhurst. Why do you ask?

JOHN

(Thinks for moment.) I don't know. What kind of dog was it?

FRANK

A mutt but he was a great mutt...and my best friend for a long time. And then one day, he got really sick and there was nothing they could do for him. So my parents had to put him to sleep.

JOHN

(Tries to comfort.) I'm sorry.

FRANK

(Brushes off and backs away.) Why are you sorry? It happened over 25 years ago. And besides, you didn't have anything to do with the dog getting sick.

JOHN

No...you're right; I didn't. But I can still feel for you.

FRANK

After my dog died, my parents got a divorce. For the longest time, I believed that it was the dog that kept them together. They said they didn't love each other any more and I suddenly became a painful reminder to them of a marriage that shouldn't have been. Neither one of them wanted me, so I was shipped out to Staten Island to live with aunts. And it was there that I said to myself "no more." I would never get that involved with another dog or anything or anybody else like that ever again. It's not worth it. There's too much risk that something will happen and they will leave you.

JOHN

But you get so much back in return from them.

FRANK

Like what?

JOHN

Like love. And the opportunity of loving somebody else besides yourself.

FRANK

(Shakes his head in disagreement.) No. It's too much work for me. Oh..by the way...(Extends his hand.) My name's Frank....Frank Marchetti.

JOHN

(Flustered.) Hi...My name is John Sullivan. Marchetti?! You must be Italian, right?!

FRANK

(Disbelief.) What do you think? Japanese?! Of course I'm Italian. (Somewhat defensive.) Do you have something against Italians?

JOHN

(Ever more flustered.) Oh no...I like to eat pasta. (Realizes what he has said.) I mean....

FRANK

(Shakes his head and laughs.) Sullivan is Irish, right?

JOHN

Thanks to my father.

FRANK

That explains the Flushing connection.

JOHN

Right. But my mother's Italian.

FRANK

No kidding.

JOHN

(Jokingly.) Why would I kid you about having an Italian mother? Huh? You have something against Italian mothers?

FRANK

(Plays along with the joke.) No..no. Some of my best friends have them. I knew that there was something about you I liked. What do you do?

JOHN

I walk this dog a lot.

FRANK

Besides that.

JOHN

I work for the city as a social worker. Not much money but all the human grief you can handle. What about you?

FRANK

I'm an investment banker down at Wall Street. The only time when we have "human grief" is when the market goes down.

JOHN

(Interested.) Wall Street, huh?

FRANK

Are you impressed?

JOHN

No...not really. Are you?

FRANK

My parents are. Both sets. I don't have much to do with people; just money.

JOHN

Do you want to trade?

FRANK

No, thanks. I'm happy with my computer terminal. Too much involvement is risky.

JOHN

With dogs or people?

FRANK

Both.

JOHN

Oh...I see. I hope that I'm not keeping you from doing anything.

FRANK

No...nothing special. I was on my way to meet a friend for dinner.

JOHN

Where are you meeting your friend?

FRANK

At a restaurant...about a block...or so away. I was supposed to be there...(Looks at his watch)...about a half hour ago.

JOHN

Half hour?! You're already late.

FRANK

I know.

JOHN

So why are you standing here, talking to me and playing with my dog...and you don't like dogs...when you should be meeting your friend?

FRANK

(Walks closer.) Because I want to...that's why. Is that okay with you?

JOHN

Sure....In fact, I'm flattered by it. But what about your friend?

FRANK

What about him?

JOHN

He's going to be very upset at you, isn't he?

FRANK

(Somewhat flippant.) He'll get over it. And if he doesn't, that's too bad. There are plenty of others where he came from.

JOHN

You're not very sensitive about other people's feelings, are you?

FRANK

Whose feelings are we talking about?

JOHN

Your friend's.

FRANK

Why are you so concern about his feelings? You don't even know him! And who said anything about him being a friend? I met him at a bar last night. (Direct.) So what are you doing tonight?

JOHN

(Taken off-guard.) Me?!

FRANK

Yes..you.

JOHN

Nothing...I don't think I have anything planned. Why?

FRANK

Would you like to do something with me?

JOHN

I don't know. Two's company; but three's a crowd.

FRANK

There would just be the two of us.

JOHN

But what about your dinner date?

FRANK

I'll break it.

JOHN

Just like that?