

## **OLD HABITS DIE HARD (ROUND 1)**

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Description: A man encounters his former lover, a recovering pickpocket, who is now performing as a mime in a Philadelphia park.

Setting: Rittenhouse Square, a park in downtown Philadelphia

Characters:

Christopher: A man in his late 20s or early 30s, dressed as a businessman.

Miranda: A woman in her late 20s or early 30s, dressed and made up as a mime

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MIRANDA: *(She sees Christopher, jumps into the air, throws her arms back, and then smiles broadly.)*

CHRISTOPHER: *(softly)* Miranda?

MIRANDA: *(nods vigorously, continues smiling)*

CHRISTOPHER: It's been a long time. Five? Six years?

*(He moves in for a hug with his arms open.)*

MIRANDA: *(nods and moves into his arms)*

*(They spin around several times.)*

CHRISTOPHER: After you dropped out of college, I heard you went to mime school. I guess this is what mimes do, perform in streets and parks like this?

MIRANDA: *(takes her hat off)*

CHRISTOPHER: Does this really pay the bills?

MIRANDA: *(pulls out a big roll of bills and stylishly wiggles it between her fingers)*

CHRISTOPHER: Congratulations. I see that you're making honest money now.

MIRANDA: *(bows)*

CHRISTOPHER: *(bittersweet)* I'm really happy for you. But I have to admit that even though we broke up long ago, I still find myself thinking about you every once in a while. After all, I used to be your Christo-Bear.

MIRANDA: *(pulls out a handkerchief and blots her eyes)*

CHRISTOPHER: Seriously. I've been worried about you, Miranda. You were one of the most notorious pickpockets in the city.

MIRANDA: *(sheepish, bows her head)*

CHRISTOPHER: I mean, really. I saw you actually pick a wallet from a linebacker who played for the Eagles.

MIRANDA: *(continues to bow her head)*

CHRISTOPHER: You were a part of Main Line society and Daddy gave you everything you ever wanted. So why did you take all that stuff? It couldn't have been about the money. Heck, you even stole a badge from the Chief of Police himself.

MIRANDA: *(sticks out her hands for handcuffs)*

CHRISTOPHER: *(grabs her hands)* Oh, you got by with it. You always did. You even took from me. My I-pod, my class ring, my grandfather's pocketknife. *Pauses.* I understand. I get it now. It was just a game to you. Everything you took from me you gave back.

MIRANDA: *(holds up his watch and hands it back)*

CHRISTOPHER: *(takes it and shakes his head)* As they say, old habits die hard.

MIRANDA: *(acts if she is eating from chopsticks, and then drops one and stoops to pick it up)*

CHRISTOPHER: Wait a minute. You're back at Mama Moi's aren't you? Our first date. When I dropped my chopstick and you fed me with yours.

MIRANDA: *(paddles a boat)*

CHRISTOPHER: *(sighs)* I know what you're doing. We're back on the Schuylkill River. Where I first kissed you.

MIRANDA: *(She blows him a kiss. Then she plays an imaginary piano.)*

CHRISTOPHER: There you go. I'll never forget that outdoor concert we went to – in this very park. Rachmaninoff, wasn't it? You laid your head on my shoulder the whole night.

MIRANDA: *(She makes a pillow of her hands and mimes sleeping.)*

CHRISTOPHER: Oh, our first night together. The first of many. When we were together, Miranda, I was the happiest I've ever been in my life.

MIRANDA: *(shrugs her shoulders, dips her head)*

CHRISTOPHER: You're doing well now. And I am, too. I graduated summa cum laude. I got the master's degree in accounting and now I work on Wall Street. I'm just here for a conference. But I had to come back to the square. We had so many good times here. Picnicking. People-watching. Reading Whitman.

*(looks at his watch)*

Look, I'm late. I've got to get back to the conference. *(pauses)* Hey! Wait a minute. *(pauses)* Would you like to get together tonight? Just to talk.

MIRANDA: *(opens mouth, as if she's going to say something, but then closes it again.)*

CHRIS: Talk to me, Miranda. It is so ironic that someone with the voice of an angel would turn out to be a mime. Meet me tonight. And it doesn't have to be dinner. Just drinks.

MIRANDA: *(pauses, thinking. She backs away and makes a phone with her hand and holds it to her cheek.)*

CHRISTOPHER: That's right. Call me. I'm at the Marriott. Room 3327.

*(They hug briefly and as she exits, she turns.)*

MIRANDA: Just so you know, I remember things, too, Christo-Bear. And it wasn't Mama Moi's. It was Mama Chung's down on Front Street. *(She exits, blowing a kiss.)*

CHRISTOPHER: *(He lingers, watching her leave. Pulls out his right pocket, reaching for his keys. It's empty. Pulls out his left pocket, also empty.)*

*Sound of car accelerating followed by a horn honking.*

*He throws up his hands, laughs to himself and shakes his head. Then he picks up his briefcase and walks off stage.)*

—THE END—