

13 Seconds with Lin-Manuel Miranda
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CAST: 2 female

Sandra (female) 15, wanna-be playwright

Linda (female) 15, Sandra's kind-of helpful best friend

SET: Park

TIME: A nice day; maybe even today

SYNOPSIS: Sandra's aunt has moved into the apartment building where Lin-Manuel Miranda lives. Omigosh! Sandra desperately wants to have a chat with the successful playwright. It could be life-changing. But what can you say in a thirteen second elevator ride?

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13 Seconds with Lin-Manuel Miranda

(LINDA'S waiting for her friend in a park. Maybe she's doing some stretching of her limbs. LINDA and SANDRA often jog together after school. Today is a jogging day. SANDRA rushes on.)

SANDRA

Omigosh omigosh. I'm sorry I'm late. Omigosh omigosh. I can't breathe.

LINDA

Should we go to the emergency room?

SANDRA

No, I'm fine.

LINDA

Except for the breathing part.

SANDRA

Right.

(SANDRA intently breathes.)

Am I breathing? I think I'm breathing.

LINDA

Looking good. Ready?

SANDRA

No. *(Beat.)* Omigosh. I was in an elevator with him. You know how Aunt Eliza moved to the same apartment building as Lin-Manuel Miranda? And how I visit her every week because I am her only niece and she adores me and spoils me and reads everything I write and/

LINDA

/Sandra! Finish the story

SANDRA

I took the elevator down to meet you and he got on.

LINDA

Lin-Manuel?

SANDRA

Miranda!!!

LINDA
Omigosh! Omigosh! And?

SANDRA
And I looked at my shoes.

LINDA
And?

SANDRA
That's it. I felt like I was going to sneeze because when I get nervous I sneeze and I didn't want to sneeze all over him so I kept my head down and looked at my shoes for thirteen seconds and then he got off.

LINDA
Did he even smile or anything? Because he always smiles.

SANDRA
I don't know. I was looking at my shoes.

LINDA
You didn't hold your nose or anything. Sometimes you do that and that would have been bad.

SANDRA
No I didn't – oh no – do you think he thinks/

LINDA
/you're sure you didn't hold your nose?

SANDRA
Pretty sure.

LINDA
Than I don't think he thinks what you are thinking. Geez, if only you spoke to him. That could have been life-changing.

SANDRA
I know.

LINDA
You could have told him about how he changed your life and now you only write about boring people from history.

SANDRA
I know. I know. Wait, what? Excuse me but I write about seemingly boring people like he did but bring out fascinating facts to tantalize the audience. Just like he did.

LINDA

Nobody cares that Benjamin Harrison belonged to Phi Delta Theta at Miami University.

SANDRA

People from Miami University might care. You never know who's in the audience.

LINDA

You need to show him your play. Maybe he can write that thing writers write at the beginning of the play.

SANDRA

The "Foreword."

LINDA

Yeah, that.

SANDRA

It's not ready. Mr. Lazarus says three-hundred pages is too long for a play – especially a play about a boring president - and I need to get rid of two hundred pages. Or more.

LINDA

Get rid of the goat.

SANDRA

No. Goats are cute. Plus, it's the perfect place for a heart-warming number.

LINDA

If only we could go back in time and you could hand him your play.

SANDRA

I'll never be that lucky again.

LINDA

You know what they say about luck – it's just preparation plus opportunity. You need to get back on that elevator and ride it until he gets on again.

SANDRA

There's like a doorman.

LINDA

You're visiting your aunt.

SANDRA

People will think it strange if I just ride the elevator. I'll get reported and thrown in jail for stalking.

LINDA

You won't have to. I can figure out when Mr. Miranda will be coming home and then you can get on the elevator.

(LINDA searches her phone.)

Mr. Miranda is having lunch with old friends. He expects to be home for dinner before 6 p.m.

(LINDA shows SANDRA her phone.)

There's an app for that.

SANDRA

Now, that's stalking.

LINDA

It's ... following. Okay, let's make a plan. We can't run because then you will be all sweaty and disgusting and nobody will want to talk to you.

SANDRA

I don't get all sweaty and disgusting.

LINDA

You're my best friend so I can tell you this. You do. I wonder if there's time for you to have business cards made. There's an Office Depot a few blocks away.

SANDRA

I don't have a business.

LINDA

You're a playwright who just finished a play – what's it called?

SANDRA

“Benjamin Harrison Was not a Boring President.”

LINDA

Maybe you should just call it Harrison!

SANDRA

And open with a song titled “Benjamin Harrison?”

LINDA

Not a bad idea.

SANDRA

That would be ripping him off.

LINDA

You need to do something today! It says here that he goes to Puerto Rico and then to California tomorrow. It'll be months before he's back. Carpe diem and all that jazz!

SANDRA

I'm not the type of person who can seize the day. I just sneeze.

LINDA

(Checking her phone.)

Oh no – he's leaving his friend's house. We need a plan. You go back to your aunt's building and get on the elevator. Scrunch in a corner until he gets on and then tell him something – really profound.

SANDRA

Such as?

LINDA

“Mr. Miranda, you changed my life.” What do you think he will say to that?

SANDRA

He's very polite. So probably he'd say, “thank-you.”

LINDA

Wrong. If someone said that to you, what would you say?

SANDRA

Uhhh //// thank-you?

LINDA

Wouldn't you want to know *how* you changed someone's life. I think he'll say, “Thank-you. How?” Okay, let's practice. I'm Lin-Manuel Miranda. Who are you?

SANDRA

Dizzy from riding the elevator up and down for fifteen minutes.

LINDA

Wrong! You are Sandra Livingston, future Pulitzer prize winner of the hit-musical, “Benjamin Harrison Was not Boring.”

SANDRA

Excuse me but it's titled “Benjamin Harrison Was not a Boring President.”

LINDA

Not important. Now tell him how he changed your life.

SANDRA

So, I guess I'd have to thank him for taking someone like Alexander Hamilton who did all these boring things with the treasury and created this musical loaded with passion and war and affairs/

LINDA

/You're rambling. Be specific. How did his work affect what you are doing?

SANDRA

He made me realize that all lives can be interesting if you dig into them enough.

LINDA

Whoa.

SANDRA

What?

LINDA

That's a good answer. Maybe you really will be a writer.

SANDRA

Thanks?

LINDA

He's getting off the bus. Run! But don't get sweaty. Tell him what you told me. Make a connection. Maybe even take a selfie. Go! And don't sneeze!

(SANDRA runs off. LINDA looks at her phone. She stretches. If there's a bench she lies down. For a moment. She gets up. She paces. She looks at her phone again. She looks off to where SANDRA went. She paces. She shakes her hands – you get the picture. Do whatever looks like she is impatiently waiting. Finally, what feels like a lifetime but is a scant minute, SANDRA runs back on. Out of breath again.)

LINDA (cont'd)

Tell me! Did you see him?

(SANDRA nods "yes.")

Did you make contact?

(Sandra nods "yes.")

Did you sneeze?

(Sandra nods “no.”)

LINDA

Yay! So what did you say? What did he say? Tell me!

SANDRA

Nothing.

LINDA

Nothing?

SANDRA

He was with his kids and there are rules about that.

LINDA

Did you even say, “hello?”

SANDRA

No. But.

LINDA

Don’t make me wait for it.

SANDRA

I smiled at his kids. And they smiled back at me. And then Mr. Miranda smiled at me for smiling at his kids and I smiled back at him for smiling at me and then they got off.

LINDA

That’s it?

SANDRA

There’s more. The kids said, “Have a good evening.”

LINDA

Maybe we can play with that. Maybe your kids will remember you and the next time you ride the elevator/

SANDRA

/Linda. What happened was enough.

(They exit arguing.)

LINDA

I think this could snowball into a great opportunity if the kids take a shine to you. Maybe they need a nanny, maybe you ...

(The lights start to dim.)

SANDRA

I'm telling you it was enough.

LINDA

Wait! I'm still thinking...

(And the friends are gone as the lights fade to black.)

END OF PLAY (A note follows.)

NOTE:

There is no app for finding Lin-Manuel Miranda in real time. Please don't develop one. That would be stalking.