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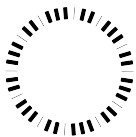
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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

The View UpStairs

by Max Vernon

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||
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THE VIEW UPSTAIRS premiered at the Lynn Redgrave Theatre on 45 Bleecker St., New York, New York, produced by Invisible Wall Productions. This production played 105 performances. The cast was as follows:

WES Jeremy Pope
PATRICK Taylor Frey
BUDDY Randy Redd
WILLIE Nathan Lee Graham
HENRI Frenchie Davis
FREDDY Michael Longoria
INEZ / REALTOR Nancy Ticotin
RICHARD Benjamin Howes
DALE Ben Mayne
COP Richard E. Waits
SWINGS Anthony Alfaro, April Ortiz

THE VIEW UPSTAIRS was developed with support from NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, Rhinebeck Writer's Retreat, and New York Stage and Film.

THE VIEW UPSTAIRS received its European premiere at the Soho Theatre, London on Thursday 18 July 2019, produced by Jack Maple & Brian Zeilinger for Take Two Theatricals, Ken Fakler and Creative House Productions. The team was as follows:

WESTyrone Huntley
PATRICKAndy Mientus
BUDDY John Partridge
WILLIE Cedric Neal
HENRI Carly Mercedes Dyer
FREDDYGarry Lee
INEZ Victoria Hamilton-Barritt
RICHARDJoseph Prouse
DALEDeclan Bennett
COP / REALTORDerek Hagen

Director	Jonathan O'Boyle
Choreographer	Fabian Aloise
Musical Director	Bob Broad
Set & Costume Designer	Lee Newby
Lighting Designer	Nic Farman
Sound Designer	Adam Fisher
Orchestrations	James Dobinson
Casting Director	Will Burton CDG

General Manager	Patrick Gracey Productions
Production Manager	Seb Cannings for Gary Beestone
Associate Producers	Kitty Fahey, Ben Lockwood, Susan Marks, & Club 11 London
Associate Choreographer	Ruthie Stephens
Costume Supervisor	Jessica Rickson-Smith

Stage Manager	Vicky Zenetzi
Assistant Stage Manager	Zoe Pillar
Dance Captain	Garry Lee

Marketing	JHI Marketing
Press	Amanda Malpass PR
Graphic Designer	Rebecca Pitt
Production Photographer	Darren Bell
Artwork Model	Jason Winter

CHARACTERS

- WES** – (mid/late twenties) Up-and-coming fashion designer. Has a following.
- PATRICK** – (early twenties) Young, runaway hustler. Sex, magic, whimsy, bell-bottoms.
- BUDDY** – (fifties) Resident pianist. Elton John-coulda-been. Married.
- WILLIE** – (forties-to-sixties, Black) Might know all the secrets of the universe, might be in the early stages of dementia.
- HENRIETTA** – (thirties/forties) Bartender. Tough as nails, no-nonsense, old-school butch lesbian.
- FREDDY** – (twenties/thirties, Latino) Construction worker by day, drag queen Aurora Whorealis by night.
- INEZ** – (late-forties-to-sixties, Latina) Freddy's mother, makeup consultant, and cheerleader.
- RICHARD** – (forties) Priest of the Metropolitan Community Church.
- DALE** – (thirties/forties) Hustler, homeless, hungry for acceptance. Means well. Burns down The UpStairs Lounge.
- COP / REALTOR** – (thirties/forties) Seventies Cop is corrupt, homophobic, violent. Present-day Cop is just a guy doing his job, with awkward-but-nice dad vibes. As Realtor – the human equivalent of an uplifting pharmaceutical commercial with horrible side effects.

SETTING

The UpStairs Lounge, a gay bar in New Orleans, LA.

TIME

The show starts and ends in the present day; the rest takes place back in 1973.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

A slash (/) indicates overlapping dialogue. Generally speaking, it's a bar and people aren't waiting for their turn to talk.

Generally, Wes speaks at a faster quip than the other patrons in 1973.

Wes is someone whose point of view shifts rapidly, to the extent of almost seeming ridiculous at times. Within a couple sentences he can lurch from jubilation to depression, fury, arousal, comedy, and back. For much of the show he is more personality than person, which gradually gets stripped away, but is something he can snap back into on a dime. He is allowed/meant to be funny, and the actor playing him can enjoy how horrible he is.

I think each character in the show is the star, in their own minds if nothing else. So – actors should take risks, make big, bold choices, and assert their presence in the room in their own unique ways.

It's the seventies, pre-AIDS, and all homosexual activity is illegal. We need to feel both the tension and release of that. Most modern audiences don't know/remember what real cruising and sexual exploration felt like, so remind them!

While it's important to carve out true emotional beats for the characters, never let the piece veer into melodrama. For example, Patrick has theoretically been dead for forty years by the time he tells Wes about the fire at the end of the show, so he's had time to process in a way Wes has not; the Cop at the end hears/sees horrible things every day, so learning about the fire in an abstract way isn't going to make him start crying, but he might respond to Wes' vulnerability in a human way.

Please find a way through costume/hair/makeup to make it clear that the cops in the past and present are different people, even though they are played by the same actor.

In the script, Wes' leather jacket with yellow neon flowers is referenced – a design by our original costume designer, Anita Yavich. Whatever subsequent designers come up with for Wes' hipster-fashionista attire, please have Patrick reference that instead.

While there is no specific ethnicity indicated for Wes or Patrick, I *strongly* encourage theaters to employ diverse casting and not end up with two white leads. I think the love story between these two characters is more powerful with heightened contrasts; they are meant to yin-yang each other in energy/physicality/vocal tone/appearance, rather than being generational parallels. Also, chemistry between these two actors is important!

Because *The View UpStairs* is about gay history and community, I think working with queer-identified performers is valuable to the authenticity and artistic viability of the show. If that isn't available in your community and you've got a talented actor who is game to play and serving rough trade realness, go for it.

There is a good deal of action that can take place in the bar that is not indicated on the page. The bar should feel like a vibrant, high-energy, dangerous, exciting place to be, and we should get the impression that there are other unspoken stories and narratives occurring throughout the night. When characters are not in a scene, they're still living their lives – cruising, drinking, dancing, etc. I leave it at the discretion of the director to build these moments in, especially in the case of a “pre-show” before Buddy starts to sing.

Buddy can/should play light piano underscoring whenever it's useful. Band should rock tha f*ck out. Singing > singing. Get that Rodgers & Hammerstein vibrato outta here!

The View UpStairs was originally performed in an intimate, immersive setting, casting the audience as patrons in the bar when they walked into the theater. This allowed for actors to ad-lib with audiences in a way that was often hilarious, and also made the fire sequence more immediate and terrifying. While it's possible to do the show in a proscenium, I think a semi-immersive or fully-immersive staging is a better fit for the material.

The UpStairs Lounge was “home” for many of the patrons who went there. I think it's important to find ways for the actors, creative team, and crew to feel at home in the set. For our first production, everyone brought in their favorite kitschy knick-knacks and we hid them like Easter eggs throughout the room.

Willie's grand monologue holds up the action of the show for no reason other than to be f*cking fabulous. For it to justify its existence, it has to be EVERYTHING. Scene-stealing. Insane, physical comedy, high drama, camp. Epic. It needs to feel like we're going to gay church and this is the sermon, even more so than the actual sermon. The “that's all” should only be added in if the audience is gagging, in which case the actor should throw his hands up, take a bow, and bask. Otherwise, get on with it.

For Freddy's drag show, if you ain't got a cone bra that can shoot confetti, just do something similarly fun at the climax.

Some of you might have heard Patrick's song “And I Wish” from our cast album. We cut it from the original run because after the fire, having another ballad so late in the show was killing the forward motion of the

piece. Please do not attempt to restore the song without permission from the author.

Finally, many of these characters are composites of real people who frequented the UpStairs, but out of respect and creative license I've changed names and certain details. It's super important, however, that audiences be given some kind of sheet with the hard facts of the UpStairs Lounge fire and names of those who died. I would prefer this be given out after the show rather than before so that audiences don't go into the experience anticipating tragedy.

[MUSIC NO. 0 "DEAD CENTER"]

[MUSIC NO. 0A "I WAS MEANT FOR MORE"]

[MUSIC NO. 0B "THEME SONG"]

[MUSIC NO. 01 "SOME KIND OF PARADISE"]

*(1973. The UpStairs Lounge, a New Orleans gay bar with eclectic décor at once elegant and extremely tacky. The atmosphere is a bit seedy, men in various states of intoxication cruise each other, dance, commiserate, laugh, etc. For most of the patrons, this is home. After a while, **BUDDY**, the resident pianist, heads over to the piano and sits down to play. He flirts back with the men cat-calling him, takes a shot of whiskey, and sings.)*

BUDDY.

IN THE SUMMERTIME HEAT
DOWN ON IBERVILLE STREET,
SEX AND INCENSE MIXED IN THE AIR.
I MET A MAN WHO SHOOK MY BONES
WITH ONE PENETRATING STARE.
HE SAID, "NO REASON TO FEAR,
BOY, YOUR MAMA AIN'T HERE -
COME HOME WITH ME INSTEAD."
IT WAS HEAVEN ON A LOAN.
I WOKE UP IN A STRANGER'S BED
AND I SAID:

I THINK I FOUND SOME KIND OF PARADISE -
NO ANGEL WINGS OR FAIRY DUST,
JUST THE RUSH OF LUST,

BUDDY, FREDDY, WILLIE, PATRICK, HENRI, RICHARD & DALE.

BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT.

BUDDY.

I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE THEN
 BUT I'D BEEN BORN AGAIN:
 THE WORLD WAS DANGEROUS AND NEW.
 I CHOSE A FAMILY OF MY OWN
 WHO SHARED MY BRAND NEW POINT OF VIEW.
 NOW YOU'RE -

BUDDY & WILLIE.

ALL GATHERED 'ROUND
 IN THIS KINGDOM WE'VE FOUND
 WHERE THE QUEENS AND CLONES COLLIDE.

BUDDY.

AND THOUGH IT REEKS OF CHEAP COLOGNE,
 IT'S MY FAVORITE ESCAPE FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE.

BUDDY & CAST

I THINK I FOUND SOME KIND OF PARADISE -
 NO ANGEL WINGS OR FAIRY DUST,
 JUST THE RUSH OF LUST, BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT.
 AND THOUGH THIS PLACE IS FAR FROM HEAVENLY -
 NO GOLDEN THRONE, THE ECSTASY
 IS JUST TEMPORARY, BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT.
 IT'S ALL RIGHT.
 I THINK I FOUND
 I THINK I FOUND
 I THINK I FOUND SOME KIND OF -

(The songs ends and the patrons applaud.)

[MUSIC NO. 01A "PARADISE PLAYOFF"]

(The lighting shifts as WES, a blasé hipster from 2019, enters the room. He is accompanied by a REALTOR. Both carry flashlights, which they shine on the walls and ceiling. 1973 and 2019 continue to co-exist without being aware of each other. WES notices burn marks on the wall, with growing outrage.)

WES. What the hell happened to this place?

REALTOR. Oh.

(The REALTOR giggles.)

A *tiny* fire. Nothing to worry about.

WES. The photos you sent look nothing like this! I've already spent a small fortune –

REALTOR. So – you'll go to Bed, Bath & Beyond and get some new curtains –

(WES starts panicking.)

WES. This is a disaster. I can't un-send the press release.

REALTOR. Why would you?! Front page of the *Times-Picayune*? “*Trendsetter or Troublemaker? A Prodigal Son Returns.*”

(WES buries his face in his hands, makes tragic noises.)

And this location? The French Quarter for your first flagship?

WES. I *had* to get out of New York; so cliché, so five years ago.

REALTOR. You're an influencer, a *force* –

WES. Hellooo! It's __ (*year*). Why sell couture out of a utility closet in Williamsburg, when N'awlins is vibrant –

REALTOR. Edgy!

WES. Soulful.

REALTOR. Rustic!

(WES shines the flashlight around, sees more damage.)

WES. Beyond rustic. This is a nightmare. I want my deposit back.

REALTOR. Maybe we can do a little better – five percent off the listing price?

WES. My followers will annihilate you on Twitter. Not to mention my team of lawyers. Thirty.

REALTOR. This building is already way undervalued.

WES. And how long has it been on the market? Should we Google?

(WES takes out his phone menacingly. The REALTOR changes tactics.)

REALTOR. Look – if you want to change your mind I understand. A building like this requires vision – only someone *overflowing* with creativity and style –

WES. And you think I'm not??

(The REALTOR shrugs, feigning ignorance.)

Okay fine. Give me the keys!

(The REALTOR's demeanor immediately turns bubbly.)

REALTOR. Great.

(The REALTOR digs out the contract, speaks lightning fast, as if listing medication side effects.)

I just need your signature saying you've seen the property in its current state, we're not responsible for any injuries which might occur – falling beams, head trauma, toxic mold, yada yada. And then we'll be good to go.

(WES signs. The REALTOR hands WES the keys and bolts for the exit.)

It's been a pleasure meeting you Wes. I wish you the greatest success.

WES. Thanks. Bye...

(WES pulls out his phone and begins to film a video for his followers.)

Hi sluts, it's your girl, Wesley. I'm down in the south, yes it's all very tragic see?

(He quickly films the destroyed curtains sadly clinging to the windows. He flashes a big smile at his phone, then frowns.)

Ugh!

(He immediately resets his pose and face, hits record again.)

Hey bitches! It's me! Wuh-wuh-wuh-Wesley! So many of you keep asking me. "Wes. How is your skin so goddamn smooth?" Well. I've been using this new serum made of hyaluronic acid and elephant cum. Just kidding, I meant snail mucus. It's from Korea and *very* hydrating – WRONG! You sound like a loser!

(He makes a noise of pain. Stops, takes a deep breathe, then resets his pose and face. He hits record again.)

Hi everyone, it's your favorite failure. I don't know what the hell I'm doing with my life, but my cheeks are bronzed for the gods and I just bought a building.

(WES looks around the room, depressed.)

Oh my god. What have I done?!

[MUSIC NO. 02 "#HOUSEHOLDNAME"]

(Throughout this song, WES continues to explore the space, having unintentional encounters with the past – a patron dances on a chair, WES takes a photo of its charred remains, someone sets down a beer mug on the bar, WES jumps off of it, etc. There is fun and ethereal beauty to be mined from the two eras not seeing each other.)

I HAVE A VOICE THAT TALKS TO ME
 IN MY HEAD SOMETIMES
 THAT SAYS "WHY NOT DO SOMETHING EXTREME –
 SHAVE YOUR EYEBROWS OFF, MAYBE BUY A BUILDING."
 AND THIS VOICE THAT TALKS TO ME
 IN MY HEAD SOMETIMES
 SAID "THAT'S FUCKIN' BRILLIANT, BUY A BUILDING!"
 SO I BOUGHT A BUILDING...

WHERE THE MOLDY WOOD IS A DOG SHIT BROWN
 AND EVERYTHING HAS TO BE TORN DOWN

AND PLASTERED OVER DESP'RATELY
 THERE'S NO PLUMBING, NO WI-FI, NO FIRE ESCAPE,
 JUST AN ANCIENT DAMAGED VELVET DRAPE
 THAT'S OLDER THAN ME.

YOU CAN CALL ME DELUSIONAL
 BUT I'VE KNOWN SINCE I WAS EIGHTEEN
 THAT I WOULD ONE DAY BE THE FACE
 OF EVERY MAJOR MAGAZINE
 I DON'T NEED COMMUNITY
 I DON'T HAVE TO BELONG
 'CAUSE MY HUNDRED THOUSAND FOLLOWERS
 ON INSTAGRAM JUST CAN'T BE WRONG

*(WES pulls out a tiny vial of cocaine from his
 pocket and snorts a bump off his hand.)*

I AM TOUCHED BY FATE
 TO HELL WITH THE PAST, MY FUTURE'S GREAT
 IT ALL STARTS TODAY
 I'LL BE A HASHTAGHOUSEHOLDNAME

*(WES takes a series of selfies, rapidly changing
 poses.)*

I HAVE A THERAPIST
 WHO TALKS TO ME SOMETIMES:
 "THE VOID YOU FEEL CANNOT BE FILLED UP
 WITH RESTYLANE, OR BUYING A BUILDING."
 AND THE THERAPIST WHO TALKS TO ME SOMETIMES
 ASKED "DO YOU FIND YOUR LIFE FULFILLING?"
 SO I BOUGHT A BUILDING!

(WES smiles and rubs cocaine on his gums.)

AND IT'S NOT THE LAP OF LUXURY
 BUT A STEPPING STONE TO THE FANTASY
 OF PARIS COUTURE FASHION WEEK
 IF YOU SQUINT ENOUGH IT'S ALMOST QUAIN'T
 IT JUST NEEDS A HUNDRED COATS OF PAINT
 IN ORDER TO LOOK LESS...BLEAK.

AND THE REST IS HISTORY
 I'LL LAUNCH LIKE A CANNONBALL

AND I'LL MAKE A MILLION DOLLARS
 AND I'LL PROVE ONCE AND FOR ALL
 THAT I'M NOT JUST A "BASIC BITCH,
 ANOTHER WANNABE NOUVEAU RICHE,
 TIPPING TOWARD A BREAKDOWN"
 WITH MY HUNDRED THOUSAND FOLLOWERS LIVE-
 STREAMING ME
 WHO'S LAUGHING NOW??

(WES takes another selfie.)

I AM TOUCHED BY FATE
 TO HELL WITH THE PAST, MY FUTURE'S GREAT
 IT ALL STARTS TODAY
 I'LL BE A HASHTAGHOUSEHOLDNAME
 A HASHTAGHOUSEHOLDNAME
 I'LL BE A HASHTAGHOUSEHOLDNAME
 A HASHTAGHOUSEHOLDNAME
 I'LL BE A HASHTAGHOUSEHOLDNAME.

[MUSIC NO. 02A "WALTZ ECHO"]

(WES rips the curtain off the wall. Light streams in, and suddenly the PATRONS in 1973 become aware of WES.)

HENRI. HEY! GET THE FUCK OFF MY CURTAIN!

(WES screams. Some of the PATRONS scream back.)

FREDDY. Are we being raided?

HENRI. Are you a cop?

WES. What?

HENRI. ARE YOU A COP?

WES. No!

BUDDY. Where you from?

WES. New York.

BUDDY. Well how'd you get here?

WES. I don't know!

HENRI. I didn't hear the buzzer. Who let you in?

RICHARD. Who'd you come with?

WES. Um...Uh –

(WES looks to the staircase where REALTOR left, is confused.)

WILLIE. Are you trade?

BUDDY. Not with that costume he ain't.

HENRI. Did anyone see you come in?

WILLIE. Are you in the life?

WES. What life?

HENRI. Shake him down!

(FREDDY and WILLIE start searching WES' pockets. FREDDY pulls out WES' iPhone and holds it up curiously.)

FREDDY. What is this??

(Presses a button. FREDDY gasps.)

Oh my god it just lit up!

WILLIE. Quick Freddy! Give it here.

(WILLIE throws the phone on the floor and smashes it under the heel of his boot. WES screams in horror.)

WES. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!!

(WES picks up the pieces of his phone and looks at them in disbelief, distraught. He tries to turn it on. No luck.)

WILLIE. Destroying your surveillance technology! I'll have you know I was once interrogated in the Kremlin for thirty-eight days straight. And did I reveal any secrets? NEVER.

RICHARD. Son, you're here for the church service, right?

FREDDY. I bet he's a figure skater – Look at those pants!

WES. Okay. I think my cocaine was laced with M-Cat and now I'm tripping BALLS; is there a bathroom? I need –

(WES pantomimes splashing water on his face.)

Water!

HENRI. I'm afraid we can't let you in there 'til we know you're safe.

WES. What do you want?

RICHARD. A few more questions: Oscar Wilde? Or Arthur Miller?

WES. Um. Wilde?

WILLIE. Sonny...or Cher?

WES. Cher!

(RICHARD calls out to the room:)

RICHARD. He's safe!

(Everyone breathes a sigh of relief. To WES:)

Bathroom's that way.

(RICHARD points to the bathroom. WES runs in.)

[MUSIC NO. 02B "BUDDY'S LITE UNDERSCORE"]

(BUDDY starts to lightly play piano again as life in the bar returns to normal.)

HENRI. Just what I need. First I get woken up at three am by some guy, screaming on the phone saying I turned his precious Betty Crocker housewife into a bull dyke, I go downstairs to make a pot of coffee – spill it all over my favorite shirt, stepped in dog shit on the way here, and now I got *this* delusional fairy –

FREDDY. I think he's cute!

BUDDY. Are you sure he's safe. We've already got Dale, who we just barely tolerate. Last thing we need is another crazy.

HENRI. Who tolerates you?

BUDDY. Oh Henri. You know you couldn't live without –

HENRI. Without what? Having to watch a bunch of demented nellie queens getting drunk all day? Breaking up fights every Sunday Beer Bust, bribing cops from coming in here and bashing all your pretty faces?

FREDDY. What about Diana Ross night?

(WILLIE drapes the velvet curtain around himself like a dress.)

WILLIE.

TOUCH ME IN THE MORNING.

HENRY. Lord! I need to sell this bar and move somewhere far, far away!

(Suddenly, we hear WES scream from the bathroom. He runs out, followed by DALE.)

WES. This person just sexually assaulted me!

HENRI. That's strike one, Dale. You know the rules. I told you if I caught you hustling again I'd have / to throw you out.

DALE. I wasn't hustling –

WES. You said you'd suck my dick for five dollars!

BUDDY. Five dollars? Dale, are you having a sale?

WILLIE. What do you expect? With this Nixon economy –

HENRI. Those pigs are begging for an excuse to shut us down. It's bad enough we're queer. And we're the only bar 'round here with black and white people in the same room talking, and they sure as shit don't want that either. Go ahead and prostitute yourself at any other bar on this block, but don't bring that crazy shit in here.

WES. Hold up. Nixon?? What year is it?

(Beat. HENRI sighs.)

HENRI. 1973 wiseass.

WES. 1973?! OHMYGOD I gotta text my dealer. These drugs are fucking brilliant.

HENRI. Drugs ain't allowed either!

WILLIE. Unless you share.

(HENRI shoots WILLIE a look.)

WES. But why 1973? Why this?

(WES takes a deep breath.)

You know what? This is like that time I got my Aspirin confused with Ecstasy and woke up on a park bench in a zebra print caftan with a bag full of cat food. I'm okay! I'm just gonna roll with it.

DALE. See Henri? The guy's crazy. You can't trust a word he says.

WES. At least my face ain't serving third-generation trailer park realness.

(WES snaps.)

DALE. Huh?

WES. The library's open!

(WES makes a performance of putting on a pair of sunglasses.)

In your experience, what receded first? Your dreams or your hairline?

(DALE touches his hair, confused.)

Did you ever think of becoming a janitor? Because you're great at clearing a room.

(People in the bar start laughing, whistling.)

It's too bad they destroyed my phone because there's an app on it I'd love to show you. It makes you look ugly. It's called camera.

(Some patrons laugh and applaud, DALE lunges at WES. He is restrained by the other patrons. HENRI to DALE:)

HENRI. Hey! That's strike two. Pull yourself together.

(DALE skulks off. WILLIE triumphantly drapes his arm around WES.)

WILLIE. *(Ecstatic.)* OH. I love New Yorkers! They're so bitchy. Henri! One shot for the newbie.

BUDDY. And bring me a beer while you're at it.

HENRI. Why don't you get it yourself, Mary?

(BUDDY gives a knowing look to the other guys, then struts over to her.)

BUDDY. Henri. Can I get a kiss?

(BUDDY points to his cheek, makes smooching noises.)

HENRI. I'm gonna hit you. Maybe it'll feel like one.

BUDDY. Come on Henri...etta!

(BUDDY grabs the drinks as HENRI throws a glass of water at him. He moves out of the way just in time and laughs triumphantly. HENRI growls in disgust, then goes to grab the mop. BUDDY hands WES the shot.)

Drink up.

WES. What's that for?

WILLIE. *(Innocently.)* A rite of passage.

BUDDY. A little bathtub hooch'll put some hair on your chest.

WES. No – I lasered it off. It's gone forever.

BUDDY. Live a little.

(BUDDY clinks his shot glass with WES', then downs it nonchalantly, like drinking water. WES eyes his shot suspiciously, then tries to shoot it back. A wave of shock ripples through WES. It burns like hellfire. He makes the noise of a dying cat, coughing. BUDDY slaps his back and laughs.)

Rumor has it Henri soaks the booze in an old boot Willie stole from some trick back in the fifties. Gives it that special flavor.

WILLIE. *Fleet week.*

(We hear the loud buzz of the front door. HENRI sets aside her mop and goes down the stairs to let the person in.)

WES. What is this place anyway?

[MUSIC NO. 03 "LOST AND FOUND"]

BUDDY. (*Sensually, with grandeur.*) Only the shittiest low-rent flea-ridden dive on the lavender line. In other words, home.

(**BUDDY** grabs **WES** and drags him across the room.)

BUDDY.

WILLIE THE WISE, IS OUR RESIDENT SAGE
AND HE AIN'T SHY ON GIVING ADVICE.
HE'S THE BIGGEST DIVA TO COME FROM THE SOUTH
SINCE GOOD OL' LEONTYNE PRICE.
NOW WILLIE MIGHT SEEM LIKE A SHADY-ASS QUEEN
BUT HE'S REALLY GOT EVERYONE'S BACK.
AND HE'S A DAY YOUNGER THAN JESUS,

WILLIE.

BUT YOU CAN'T TELL 'CAUSE BLACK DON'T CRACK.

WILLIE & FREDDY.

BLACK DON'T CRACK!

BUDDY. Amen!

NEED A SHOULDER TO CRY ON?
SOME DRUGS TO GET HIGH ON?
TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE LOST
BUT NOW YOU'RE FOUND.

BUDDY, WILLIE & FREDDY.

YOU CAN FIND A NEW MOTHER
A FRIEND, OR A LOVER
STICK AROUND AND SEE!
JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE LOST
BUT NOW YOU'RE FREE.

(**HENRI** walks back up the stairs, with **PATRICK** trailing not far behind. **WES** and **PATRICK** lock eyes for a moment before **PATRICK** goes to sit by himself at the bar.)

WES. Who's that?

BUDDY. No one worth knowing...

FREDDY. Buddy, you're evil. I can't imagine what you say about me when I'm not around.

(**FREDDY** *flutters his eyelashes.*)

BUDDY.

FREDDY MOVED HERE FROM PUERTO RICO
TO TASTE THE AMERICAN DREAM.
HE'D SPEND HIS DAYS WORKING IN CONSTRUCTION
AND NIGHTS TRYING ON MOM'S MAYBELLINE.
IT WASN'T TOO LONG BEFORE HE GOT CAUGHT.
AND HIS FATHER CALLED HIM A DISGRACE.

FREDDY.

BUT NOW MY MOM COMES TO EVERY SHOW!

BUDDY.

TO MAKE SURE HIS TITTIES STAY IN THEIR PLACE.

HENRI, WILLIE & FREDDY.

TO MAKE SURE THOSE TITTIES STAY.

BUDDY.

IF YOU DESIRE A STRANGER,
A LITTLE BIT OF DANGER -

BUDDY, WILLIE, FREDDY & HENRI.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE LOST
BUT NOW YOU'RE FOUND.
YOU CAN FIND A NEW MOTHER
A FRIEND, OR A LOVER
STICK AROUND AND SEE!
JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE BOUND
BUT NOW YOU'RE FREE.

HENRI. Hey! You forget about me?

BUDDY. You, Henri? Never. Shall I speak of your cheery disposition?

HENRI. Don't bother! I can speak for myself.

I BUILT THIS PLACE TO FINALLY HAVE A HOME
AND I WORK HARD TO CARE FOR IT
I LOVE THIS WHOLE COMMUNITY
EVEN THO YOU'RE ALL FULL OF SHIT.
'CAUSE THE SECOND TROUBLE COMES A'KNOCKIN'

ALL YOU FAIRIES'LL FLY OUTTA VIEW.
 BUT I DON'T RUN, I GOT A MEAN RIGHT HOOK
 AND MORE BALLS THAN ANY OF YOU!

WILLIE, FREDDY & (HENRI).

SHE'S (I'VE) GOT BALLS.

BUDDY. That's true!

WANNA GO ON A BENDER
 WITH A BULLDAGGER BARTENDER?

BUDDY, WILLIE, FREDDY & HENRI.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
 JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE LOST
 BUT NOW YOU'RE FOUND.
 YOU WANT A GLORY HOLE TROLL

RICHARD

OR TO SAVE YOUR SOUL?

BUDDY, WILLIE, FREDDY, RICHARD & HENRI.

STICK AROUND AND SEE!
 JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE BOUND
 BUT NOW YOU'RE FREE.

BUDDY.

THEN THERE'S ME, STUCK HERE PLAYIN' FOR TIPS
 BUT ONE DAY YOU'LL SEE ME ON
 JOHNNY CARSON, OUT AND PROUD,
 UNLIKE THAT CLOSET CASE ELTON JOHN.
 I'VE GOT MORE TALENT THAN TEN OF THESE QUEENS
 COMBINED
 AND THE TRUTH IS I LOVE MY LIFE.
 I'M AT PEACE WITH WHO I AM -

WILLIE.

BUT YOU'VE NEVER TOLD *THAT* TO YOUR WIFE.

*(Everyone laughs. BUDDY gives him some
 side-eye.)*

NEED A SHOULDER TO CRY ON?
 SOME DRUGS TO GET HIGH ON?
 TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
 JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE LOST
 BUT NOW YOU'RE FOUND.

YOU CAN FIND A NEW MOTHER
 A FRIEND, OR A LOVER
 STICK AROUND AND SEE!
 JUST A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE BOUND
 BUT NOW YOU'RE FREE.

FREDDY. Free to tell the world outside to kiss my –

(FREDDY leans out the window and moons the people walking by on the street. People in the bar, laugh, point, gasp, etc. HENRI snaps.)

HENRI. That's strike three, Dale. You can waltz your bony ass outta here.

DALE. Oh calm down. It's free advertising.

BUDDY. There ain't gonna be a show if the cops come.

(FREDDY rolls his eyes. A phone behind the bar rings. HENRI picks up – she code-switches to a more feminine tone.)

HENRI. UpStairs...

(HENRI switches back to butch.)

Oh! Inez. Thank god it's you. I thought you were a law-abiding citizen calling to complain about the ASS hanging out our window. Yeah. He's here.

(Shouts to FREDDY:)

Freddy it's your mother. *Again.*

(FREDDY laughs apologetically and hurries to pick up the phone.)

FREDDY. ¿Dónde estás?

[MUSIC NO. 03A "BUDDY'S TERRIBLE PLAYOFF"]

You were supposed to be here an hour ago with my dress. Okay okay! I'm coming.

(FREDDY hangs up. While he's walking to the door, BUDDY goes back to the piano and begins playing some New Orleans jazz. HENRI turns back to DALE, disapprovingly.)

DALE. (*stammering*) I'm sorry, p-please. Don't throw me out.

HENRI. I'm only giving you one last chance.

DALE. Thankyouthankyouthankyou –

(*DALE kisses HENRI's bar.*)

HENRI. I expect you to be on your best behavior from her on out.

DALE. Scout's honor. Only the best! Cross my heart and hope to die?

(*HENRI wipes the spot DALE kissed on her bar and walks away from him. The other men in the bar dance, drink, flirt, cruise, converse, etc. WES spots PATRICK again by the bar, who smiles at him. WES snaps his fingers at the bar and makes a big show of flashing his cash. HENRI walks over.*)

WES. Here's a hundred. Let's have a round for everyone. Keep the change.

(*This stops FREDDY in his tracks at the doorway. "A hundred?!?!"*)

HENRI. HEY! Everybody. Drinks on New York!

[MUSIC NO. 03B "BUDDY'S HAPPY SONG"]

(*Everybody cheers, BUDDY plays a rollicking pop tune à la Jim Croce's "Bad Leroy Brown". Everyone gathers around WES in celebration. They admire him like a shiny new toy.*)

FREDDY.

My hero!
Are you
single?

HENRI.

Finally
some
respectable
clientele!

(*HENRI prepares drinks. RICHARD tells an audience member a secret.*)

FREDDY.

My mom
would love
you.

RICHARD.

I knew
those
flyers'd
work.
All the
young
kids are at
the baths
these days.

*(WILLIE crosses to WES.)***BUDDY.**

Hey Dick,
bring me a
beer?

WILLIE.

If only
all the
children
could be so
respectful
of their
elders.

*(RICHARD crosses to WES.)***RICHARD.**

That's how
you found
out about
us right?

FREDDY.

And that
bicep! /

Do you
work out?

WILLIE.

No
Freddy!
He's mine!

I saw him
first!

BUDDY.

A beer!
Are you
hearing me
or not?

HENRI.

I'm going
as fast as I
can!

WES.

Ladies
please one
at a time!

(BUDDY slams his hands on the piano abruptly, stops playing, and gets up.)

BUDDY.

FINE! I'll
just get it
myself.

(RICHARD grabs a beer for BUDDY to calm him down. They head off.)

FREDDY. To be continued!

(FREDDY hands WES a bar napkin with his number on it.)

Call me baby!

(WILLIE chases FREDDY out of the room for stealing a potential date from him. WES and PATRICK are alone at the bar.)

PATRICK. Hey big spender.

WES. What can I say? I'm very generous.

(PATRICK misunderstands the implication, flirts back.)

PATRICK. Yeah... I can tell. I'm Patrick by the way.

(PATRICK holds out his hand for a shake.)

WES. Wes.

(WES touches it flaccidly, like it might lower his stock value.)

Love your bell-bottoms. Very retro.

(PATRICK matches WES' playful snark.)

PATRICK. And where'd you get *this* jacket?

WES. I made it.

PATRICK. Really??

(PATRICK touches WES' blazer, a little amazed.)

WES. Do you like it?

PATRICK. It's incredible. I've never seen anything like it. It's so –

WES. Equestrian meets nineties rave meets Upper East Side housewife divorces her husband and eats pussy for the first time?

(PATRICK laughs, a little shocked:)

“Uh –” I'm ahead of my time.

(PATRICK flirts back, playing to WES' narcissism.)

PATRICK. Creative, handsome, ahead of your time. Sign me up.

WES. You think I'm handsome??

(PATRICK gives him a look – “Obviously.”)

Trust me, I've spent enough time fixing my face on Photoshop. If my eyes were any farther apart I'd be a fucking hammerhead shark. Don't even get me started on my nose.

PATRICK. I'm sure the boys go crazy for you.

WES. Well I guess you've never heard the golden rule: No fats, no femmes, NO imperfections.

(DALE comes over. He tries to hand WES a beer.)

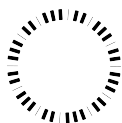
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