

ACT I

SCENE 1

Tyrone Jenkins (Ty) is on the patio overlooking the ocean with a wine glass. He is black, late thirties, polished, with boyish good looks, and is dressed in pajama bottoms, a robe, and slippers.

TY

It is an honor and a privilege to stand before all of you today. Not to mention a shock.

Ty laughs to himself, toasts the air, and sips from his glass. He looks out at the ocean wearing a smile of great satisfaction. Jillian enters from the hallway and walks toward the patio doors, stopping a few feet in front of them. She is white, in her late twenties, shapely, with blond hair and blue eyes. Her hair is held in a ponytail by a hair clip, and she is dressed in an over-sized Villanova University sweatshirt.

JILLIAN

Ty come inside and close those doors. It's freezing.

TY

Fresh air, girl. You have to breathe it in while you can.

JILLIAN

You can breathe it in when its warm out, it's not going anywhere.

Ty laughs, and enters from the patio. A gust of wind rushes through the patio doors, causing Jillian to shiver.

JILLIAN

Ty, you have got to close those doors.

Ty laughs, and then turns to close the doors.

JILLIAN

So, are you excited about tomorrow night?

TY

Excited, why? Because Robert Sturges, one of the most respected, not to mention powerful lawyers, in all of Manhattan, wants to have dinner and drinks with me to discuss my future, one that in his words possesses "limitless possibilities." No, I'm not excited, just another Saturday night as far as I'm concerned.

JILLIAN
You are so arrogant.

TY
But you know you love it.

Ty hugs and kisses Jillian, who feigns annoyance, before surrendering with a smile.

JILLIAN
You really are an ass.

They both laugh. Jillian walks over to the coffee table and pours herself a glass of wine, then cuddles up on the sofa under the blanket.

TY
So, you like the place, huh?

JILLIAN
It's beautiful, Ty, it really is.

Ty walks around and takes a seat on the sofa next to Jillian. He places his wine glass on the table.

TY
You know, today was one of the biggest days of my life, and you being here tonight; it was the perfect ending. Thank you.

Ty kisses Jillian.

JILLIAN
Tonight wasn't only for you.

Ty laughs.

TY
I'm just saying that it was really nice to spend tonight with a friend.

Jillian puts her wine glass down.

JILLIAN
A friend? Interesting choice of words.

TY
I didn't mean--

JILLIAN
No, I think that's a good place for us to start this time around, as friends.

Ty sits up on the couch, trying to hide his nervousness. He picks up his glass of wine and takes a sip. Jillian immediately senses his uneasiness, and begins to giggle.

TY

What?

JILLIAN

I'm joking, Ty. I'm not asking you for anything, calm down.

TY

Calm down? What are you talking about?

JILLIAN

All I'm saying is that I had a good time also, so thank you. Jillian kisses Ty, then shivers from the cold that is still lingering in the room. She pulls the hair clip from her hair, tossing it on the coffee table, and wraps the blanket tightly around her.

TY

Are you still cold?

JILLIAN

I'm freezing.

TY

I could a, warm you up.

JILLIAN

Oh, now you want to warm me up, huh?

TY

Hey, just one friend taking care of another.

Jillian laughs. Ty puts his glass on the table. He kisses Jillian, first on the lips, then on the neck. She undoes his robe, sliding it off of his shoulders. Ty lays Jillian back on the sofa, and crawls on top of her. There is a loud knock at the door.

JILLIAN

Who could that be this late at night?

TY

I have no idea.

Ty stands to answer the door.

JILLIAN

Wait a second, I need to put something on.



JACKIE ALEXANDER
PRODUCTIONS

Jillian exits up the stairs. Ty goes to the door, looks out of the peephole and quickly opens the door.

TY

Willie?

WILLIE

Bootsie!

Willie Jenkins enters the house grabbing Ty in a bear hug. He is black, late thirties, slim but muscular, hardened yet handsome, and dressed in a blue work jumpsuit with the sleeves cut off, and black work boots. Hanging from his shoulder there is a green army bag that appears to be holding only a few items. Ty laughs.

TY

What are you doing here, Man?

Willie

I'm a refugee, Baby! Haven't you been watching the news? Damn it's good to see you, Bootsie.

TY

It's good to see you too. But when did you...why didn't you tell me you were coming?

WILLIE

I ain't had no number for you.

Jillian enters from the stairs, now wearing sweat pants.

JILLIAN

Hello.

Willie freezes, eyeing Jillian from head to toe. Jillian self-consciously pulls down on her sweatshirt.

TY

Willie, this is Jillian. Jillian, this is my cousin, Willie, from New Orleans.

JILLIAN

New Orleans?

WILLIE

Yes ma'm.

Willie shakes Jillian's hand.

JILLIAN
Were you there during Katrina?

WILLIE
You better believe it.

JILLIAN
When did you leave?

WILLIE
I left on Wednesday.

JILLIAN
Well, come and have a seat, make yourself comfortable.

TY
Yeah, yeah, man, drop your stuff and have a seat.

Willie drops his bag by the door, and all three walk into the living room. Willie takes a seat in a chair, and Ty on the sofa. Jillian turns on the lamps, and takes the blanket from the couch.

JILLIAN
Baby, hand me my hair clip.

Ty hands Jillian the hair clip. Jillian quickly folds the blanket, puts it in the upstage closet, and then takes a seat next to Ty on the sofa.

TY
Can I get you anything? Are you hungry?

WILLIE
No, no, I'm fine.

TY
So, how did you find the house?

WILLIE
This here.

Willie pulls a letter from his jumpsuit pocket.

WILLIE
This letter you sent to Mama came in the mail last Saturday. I don't know why, but for some reason I took it with me when I left the house. Of course now this here got your address in Manhattan on it, so I went there first.

Willie hands the letter to Ty, who studies it closely.

WILLIE

Dude at the door wouldn't tell me nothin' for a while, but when I told him who I was, and how I was a refugee and everythang, he was real nice. He let me wash up in the bathroom over there, and even got me somethin' to eat. Yeah, he was real nice. He said he had your address out here on file, and he'd look it up for me; got directions for me and everythang. I'm just glad you was home. My truck started runnin' hot on the way out here, I couldn't a made it much further.

TY

Aunt Hilda didn't mention anything about you staying with her.

WILLIE

You talk to Mama?

TY

Of course. She told me she was going to stay with Joe in Houston.

WILLIE

Yeah, she left New Orleans on Friday 'fore I had a chance to talk to her. You know Mama, she don't play with them storms.

JILLIAN

So where were you during the storm?

WILLIE

I was at my Mama house. Did fine the day the storm hit. There was a whole bunch of wind and rain, and the house lost power and everythang, but wasn't nothin' out the ordinary; you get that kind'a stuff every year with them storms. But the next mornin', let me tell you, that water caught me and everybody else by surprise.

JILLIAN

You mean when the levees broke.

WILLIE

Yes, ma'am. There was a great big ole' noise, sound like a explosion or somethin', and before I knew it, Big Mutt and Reddy B. was knockin' on the door. They sisters that live in the apartment downstairs. Reddy B. say that water had slammed through they back wall, and the whole apartment was flooded. Of course, she ain't need to tell me that, cause by that time water was creepin' up the stairs to my floor.

JILLIAN

Oh my God, that sounds horrible.

WILLIE

We was able to stay there that night, but by the next morning, that water was at the door. I knew we had to get out of there, or else we was go'n drown. Then about noon, guy came by in a boat, and took us to the Interstate. They dropped us right over there by the 610 split.

After a while, some busses started comin' by pickin' up folks and takin' them over there to the convention center. The garage where I worked wasn't but a few exits up the highway, and I knew it was on some pretty high land, so I figured I'd make my way over there instead, see if I could get one of them trucks. Ain't think Big Mutt and Reddy B. could make that trip, so I put them on one of the busses.

TY

Have you heard what went on at the convention center?

WILLIE

Yeah, I heard about it on the radio drivin' up here. Sound like things were pretty bad over there, but it still had to be better than bein' out there on that Interstate; they wouldn't last much longer in that heat, had to be over a hundred degrees out there, not to mention the humidity. So anyway, I made my way over to the garage, and like I figured, it wasn't under water.

TY

And after going through all of that, you then decided to drive fifteen hundred miles to New York.

WILLIE

Well, I packed a few things I had in my locker, took one of the trucks, and managed to get on the Interstate and make my way over to the west bank. Like I said, I had your letter with me and all, and I don't know, might sound crazy, but I wanted to get as far from New Orleans as possible.

JILLIAN

I can imagine. Well, it's very nice to meet you, Willie. And I'm happy to see you're safe. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go up and get dressed.

Jillian stands to leave, and Willie, being a gentleman, does also.

WILLIE

No need to get dressed on my account, you look just fine to me.

Jillian giggles.

JILLIAN

No, that's not it, I need to get home.

WILLIE

Get home?

JILLIAN

Yeah. Ty's got a big day tomorrow, and I'm sure you two have a lot to talk about.

WILLIE

Where you live?

JILLIAN

I live in Manhattan.

WILLIE

You go'n drive all the way back there this time of night? It took me about two hours to get out here from Manhattan. Now I don't understand that, it just don't make no sense. I know you ain't go'n let this pretty lady get on the highway at this time of night, Bootsie.

Jillian giggles.

JILLIAN

Bootsie?

WILLIE

(To Ty) Come on now. Don't tell me folks up here don't know who Bootsie is?

JILLIAN

It's okay, Willie. That's very sweet of you, but I've got an early day tomorrow also. Besides, Ty and I never have been able to get a good night's rest when we sleep together.

WILLIE

I bet you don't.

Jillian giggles, slightly embarrassed.

JILLIAN

That's not what I meant, but just the same. It was really nice meeting you, Willie. And I hope we get to spend some more time together.

Jillian shakes hands with Willie, and exits. His eyes follow her as she walks up the stairs. He then turns to Ty and smiles.

TY

What?

WILLIE

Boy, what that white girl doin' in here?

Ty laughs.

TY

Come sit down, Willie.

Ty motions for Willie to take a seat on the sofa, but Willie decides to give himself a tour of the house instead, turning on lights, and poking his head into different rooms.

WILLIE

Of course, with a crib like this, don't surprise me. She probably forgot what color you was soon as she walked in here.

Willie pulls open the patio doors.

WILLIE

Oh shit! This the Atlantic Ocean, right?

Ty smiles at his cousin's excitement.

TY

Yeah.

WILLIE

Must cost some money to live out here, huh. What the name that dude at your buildin' called it, the Hamptons?

TY

This is actually East Hampton.

WILLIE

"East Hampton," ha! That name even sound expensive. I'll be damned. Man, you doin' alright for yourself, hell, you doin' better than alright.

Willie walks out onto the patio deck, and is awe-struck by the view. Ty watches him from the living room, and then once again studies the letter. He then goes out and stands next to Willie on the patio deck.

TY

So, when did you get out?

WILLIE

You wasn't listenin' when I told Buffy back there? I left on Wednesday.

TY

Her name is Jillian, and you know that's not what I'm talkin' about.

WILLIE

Not now, Man. Got plenty of time to talk about that. Let me take in this fresh air.

The lights go down on the scene.

END SCENE 1.

SCENE 2 (NEXT MORNING.)

Ty, dressed in the same outfit from the night before, is seated on the sofa drinking coffee and reading the newspaper. Willie enters from the stairs dressed in jeans, a T-shirt, and his black work boots.

WILLIE

Good mornin'.

TY

Hey, Willie. How did you sleep?

WILLIE

Like a baby.

TY

I'm surprised to see you up this early.

WILLIE

Oh, I can't stay in the bed past eight, no matter what.

TY

It's after ten.

WILLIE

How long you been up?

TY

A few hours; had some laundry to do, cleaned up a little bit.

WILLIE

Man, I hope you ain't take the day off from work for me. I would a been fine here by myself.

TY

Not a problem. It's Saturday.

WILLIE

What I'm thinkin'. I guess a big shot like you don't do no work on the weekends.

TY

Actually I do work most weekends, but like I said, it's not a problem. You want some coffee or something?

WILLIE

Yeah, yeah, that sound good.

TY

Have a seat, I'll get it for you. How do you like it?