

Cast Iron (23 Skidoo)

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(Excerpt)

Characters

The Flatiron Building (it/it)

Duncan (he/him)

Jamie (he/him)

Mel (he/they)

Chorus (chorus/chorus)

Setting

New York, NY

Style

This is a weird play. Not a pretty one.

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My Neighbors Have a Benign Conversation.

*The set is brought to our attention, and it is alive:
There is probably a tomato plant tantalizingly onstage,
Or several
With fruit that so overripe,
It could fall off the vine at any moment.
Maybe, in fact, some does fall off
But if it does, none of the characters notice
Or care
About tomatoes
Enough.*

*These tomato plants remain,
And droop
And hang
And fall
Throughout the play.*

*The set is also alive the way the city is alive.
There are people bustling out there,
Maybe even right out the window
Or below it.
Maybe we hear a screaming match or busker sometimes.*

*Duncan and Jamie are on a couch
Or living room furniture
And chat lazily like
This is a routine for them,
To be sitting on a couch basically in the middle of the day.*

*The question, this first question that Duncan asks
Comes from a place of deep curiosity,
And love and fraternity.
There is no judgement here.
Rather, the pursuit of knowledge
And further understanding
And experience.*

Duncan
You've never?

Jamie
What

Duncan

You've never, like

Jamie

No! Never.

Duncan

Never even
Just a finger
Like a wee finger up-

Jamie

No, never. Never.

Duncan

The little one?
Pinkie?

Jamie

Can we stop talking about this?

Duncan

I'm surprised.

Jamie

Sur-

Duncan (*affronted*)

I thought you were a progressive.

Jamie

I am! I am.

Duncan

A communist.

Jamie

I am! Card-carrying!

Duncan

And yet...

Jamie

What?

Duncan

You...

Jamie

Me...

Duncan

Don't...

Jamie

Say it.

Duncan (*shrugging*)

I just find it strange.

Jamie

That I haven't?

Is that it?

You're surprised that I haven't ever?

That I don't?

Duncan

You haven't even thought about it?

Jamie

I think about it.

Pause.

I think about it all the time.

Mel enters.

Mel's pants are covered in dirt.

Caked,

Like he has just been out gardening

For a long, long time.

During the scene,

He wipes his brow dramatically from time to time.

Duncan

Mel!

Mel

I was thinking that
Maybe today is the day that I harvest the tomatoes.

Duncan

No shit?

Jamie

Seriously?

Mel

Growing season's over.
It ends so quick,
Just *boom*.
Like that.

Jamie

Wow.

Mel

What were you guys doing?

Duncan

Talking.

Jamie

Ask him the question.

Duncan

Me ask? You ask.

Mel

Ask me what?

Duncan

Ask, ask.

Jamie (*rolling his eyes*)

(God.)

Duncan

Hey, have you ever-

Jamie

No, no!
I'll do it.

Alright.
Uh, well,
Um...
Friend.
Have you ever, like
You know
Ever
A finger maybe
Put
Perhaps a friend's finger or partner's or
Put it
You know
Have you ever tried the other way in?
Right?
Do you know what I-?
No? Ok.
Um.
Into your-

Mel
Me...?

Duncan
Not even a finger?
It's small enough.
You've done that, right?

Pause.
Then, encouraging.

You hardly notice.
But the difference it can-

Mel
A finger? No...
Not a finger.
But sometimes, sometimes...

Mel's mind travels off to somewhere else.

Duncan
What?

Jamie
What?

Duncan

What is it, friend?

Jamie

Yes, friend?

A long pause.

A Long Pause (The Flatiron Building)

*The Flatiron Building walks in.
The Flatiron Building is a human being.
It might be unclear
If the Flatiron Building is real
Which is to say,
If they are corporeal
Which is to say,
That Duncan and Jamie can see them.*

*What is very clear
Through the use of looks,
Gestures
Undressing, redressing, bowing, scraping, foot-stamping, dancing
All the normal things one does
Usually
When they see the Flatiron Building
All of these things make it clear that
The Flatiron Building
Is very real
To Mel.*

The Flatiron Building says

The Flatiron Building

Sometimes it's not a finger,
But a building.

Sometimes you stand at the corner
The pointy end
With your ass against the side of the thing
Where it's sharp
And you lean back
Wiggle
Stretch
And you take the building inside of you

Like nobody else has ever done.

Afterwards, sometimes
The building holds you.
It tells you that it's never felt this way before,
That it's never felt this
Until now,
This moment,
And it's realized something:
It hasn't been living a full life.
Not as a building,
Not as a person,
And you have opened up a new
Plane
Of existence
A new dimension
A new reality
To it
In a way that...
How would one describe that?
Makes it feel
Not more *human*,
But more *like itself* than before.

It opens space for it to allow
As such
The possibility for a new
Sense of completion.
Even more than the day
When the last brick was laid
And the last socket wired
And the last desk installed
And the last bulb changed
And the last floor waxed
And the last tenant evicted
And the last window washed
And the last crime scene hidden
And the last turnstile turned
And the last boiler bubbled on
And its doors opened to the world
To live and work
In all their productivity.

Sometimes a building is a whole ecosystem
Not for the world outside
Or the people inside of it

But for itself.
People are its gut bacteria
And to be present in life as a building is to be present with time itself
Until
That is
Until you leaned back
Against it
Until you brought it inside of you
(It says)
Until you showed it
A new way
Of presence
That it hadn't felt before.
You transcended,
The two of you
Transcended the relationship
Between object and subject
You went beyond grammar
Beyond animation
And for this,
It will be forever grateful.

Buildings are not infallible,
They need maintenance.
Especially this one
For whom scaffolding is the norm.
Weather beats down on its façade and roof
The windows are washed once a year,
The same hands run over it
Top to bottom
Following the drips
The soap
The squeegee
The ropes strung through pullies
Up and down its sides
Scrubbed until clean,
Ready for next year's soot.

What I am trying to say is:
Instead of asking each other
What to do
About a finger
Or about an asshole
Or about leave
Or remain
Or tariffs

Or the Holy Roman Empire
Or Caprese salad
Or the Green Monster
Or the Dells
Or the Fens
Or the Rustic Highways
Or the dogs
Or the cats
Or the children
Or the families
Or the family men
Or the neighbors
Or the roommates
Or the coffee mugs
Or the beans
Or the roasters
Or the baristas
Or the consultants
Or the graphic designers
Or the
People
Or things
Of this world.
Ask yourself,
Each of you, now,
How you make
Love
To the buildings
In your life.