

HERE

A One Act Play

By

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CAST:

Julius – Masculine black male in his twenties. He is dressed in urban streetwear and in great shape.

Orlando – Black male clearly gay in his thirties. He is dressed in all sweat pants and a tee-shirt. He is at that age where he knows he should be exercising but doesn't.

They are both the around the same height.

TIME:

Present

SETTING:

Late night. A small urban apartment in any large city.

An * denotes dialogue that overlaps

(The doorbell begins ringing as the lights FADE UP. The apartment has an open floor plan so UP STAGE one can see the kitchen and a small dining table and chairs. CENTER STAGE there is a sofa, armchairs, coffee/side tables and various lamps. The apartment could use a good straightening up because there is random stuff (Books, cd's, knick-knacks, even clothing) lying around everywhere.)

ORLANDO

(Heard off stage)

Coming... I'm coming...

(ORLANDO enters. He had been sleeping. The doorbell keeps ringing.)

I said I'm coming... Jeez, can't you give a girl a minute to catch her breath.

(Looks around, realizing there is nothing he can do about the clutter. Goe to the door.)

Who is it?

JULIUS

(From the other side if the door.)

Juju

ORLANDO

Ju who..? Sorry you must have the wrong apartment. I don't know anybody by the name of Juju.

JULIUS

I meant Julius. It's Julius.

ORLANDO

Julius..?

JULIUS

We met in the park a few weeks back.

ORLANDO

Julius? Yes... Now I remember. What are you doing here?

JULIUS

You gave me your name and number... You told me you lived at the Briarcliff apartments, so... Remember?

ORLANDO

Yes... But what exactly does that have to do with anything? It is two in the morning, you know.

JULIUS

Listen, I know it's late and I really would've called before showing up like this but you see, the battery in my phone... It went dead. So... *(Awkward silence)* You gonna let me in?

ORLANDO

Ah, yeah... sure.

(Cautiously opens the door. JULIUS enters. He is soaked.)

JULIUS

Hey man... Thanks... Its cold as hell out there.

ORLANDO

My God, you're soaking wet.

JULIUS

Yeah, I am. It was really coming down out there for a while.

ORLANDO

Really..? I must have slept through the whole thing... Well stay right here and let me get you a towel.

JULIUS

That would be nice. (*ORLANDO exits off stage.*) I really appreciate this.

ORLANDO

(*Comes back in with towel*)

But I'm still not sure what you're doing here?

JULIUS

Well when we were in the park, you said if I was ever in the neighborhood...

(*JULIUS dries himself but his clothes are soaked so he begins to remove them.*)

You don't mind do you?

ORLANDO

Ah no... No... Go right ahead.

(*With only his white briefs on, JULIUS removes his cellphone, charger and wallet from his pants. ORLANDO tries to not stare at his body.*)

JULIUS

You live alone, right?

ORLANDO

Right! (*Picking up the wet clothes*) I'll just put these in the dryer.

JULIUS

That would be great.

ORLANDO

Have a seat on the sofa. I'll be right back.

JULIUS

Thanks..! I don't mind if I do.

(ORLANDO exits. JULIUS starts towards the sofa but realizing ORLANDA has forgotten the wet towel, picks it up and starts towards ORLANDO's exit. They almost bump into one another)

ORLANDO

Hey!

JULIUS

(Drops his cellphone)

Sorry man... *(Picking it up)* I didn't mean to startle you. I just realized you forgot the towel... It's pretty wet... I didn't wanna leave it there on the floor.

ORLANDO

Right..! Thanks... I'll take it. *(Pause)* Go ahead and make yourself at home.

JULIUS

Sure!

(ORLANDO quickly throws the wet towel off stage and rushes over to the sofa to remove some of the clutter so JULIUS can sit down.)

ORLANDO

It normally doesn't look like this.

JULIUS

What..? *(Sits down on sofa)*

ORLANDO

My apartment... You see, I've been putting in a lot of hours at work lately.

JULIUS

You don't have to explain yourself to me. *(Pauses)* Besides, I really should have called.

ORLANDO

Yes... You should have. *(Pause)* You want some water or I can make some hot tea if you're still cold... You like tea?

JULIUS

No... It's alright. *(Pause – Holding up is cellphone)* You got somewhere I can charge this?

ORLANDO

Yes, of course... Give it to me. *(Takes the phone and charger and plugs it up in the kitchen.)*

JULIUS

Thank you!

ORLANDO

No problem. *(Pause)* You sure I can't get you some water or something?

JULIUS

You wouldn't happen to have anything stronger would you?

ORLANDO

Stronger..? As a matter... *(Takes a bottle out of the refrigerator.)* I've got a bottle of pinot I've been nursing. Will that do?

JULIUS

Perfect! *(Pause)* So... You're a nurse right?

ORLANDO

(Bringing the bottle and two glasses back to the sofa.)

Uh-huh...

JULIUS

See... I remember.

ORLANDO

So you do. (*Flattered, he looks away*)

JULIUS

You know... I kept thinking I'd see you in the park again.

ORLANDO

No... As a matter of fact, I can say I haven't been back since.

JULIUS

Really... Is that because you've been putting in a lot of hours at work?

ORLANDO

No... The parks not really my thing.

JULIUS

Really? (*Pause*) Do you mind if I ask you something?

ORLANDO

Sure...

JULIUS

You're gay right?

ORLANDO

Isn't it obvious?

JULIUS

Now a days you can't be too sure... But it's cool. I was only askin' 'cause when we were in the park...

ORLANDO

What..?

JULIUS

Forget it... It's nothing really...

ORLANDO

What..?

JULIUS

Normally when I'm in the park... Guys are always coming up to try and hit on me but you.... Well... You just wanted to talk. Which was different, you know?

ORLANDO

How's your girlfriend?

JULIUS

(Laughs)

Damn shorty... How you know I got a girlfriend?

ORLANDO

Trust me... Men like you, always have a girlfriend... Or a wife.

JULIUS

Nah shorty... It's not like that...I ain't got no wife. *(Laughs)* I did have a girlfriend when we met.

ORLANDO

See... So I was right after all.

JULIUS

I said had.

ORLANDO

I'm sorry... What happened?

JULIUS

She kicked me out last week.

ORLANDO

I see...

JULIUS

See what..?

ORLANDO

That explains the unexpected visit... The wet clothes.

JULIUS

Naw... It's not like that. I wanted to see you.

ORLANDO

Yeah, right...! So, where have you been staying?

JULIUS

Oh, here and there... But mostly in the park.

ORLANDO

Sorry.

JULIUS

What are you sorry for? It wasn't your fault... But I 'preciate it though. (*Looking around the apartment.*) This is a nice apartment.

ORLANDO

Yes... I suppose it is... I like it.

JULIUS

I bet you pay a pretty penny to live in this neighborhood.

ORLANDO

No more than anywhere else now-a-todays.

JULIUS

(Gets up to have a better look around.)

How come you ain't got a boyfriend?

ORLANDO

Who says I don't... Have a boyfriend?

JULIUS

Damn shorty... I didn't mean no harm. *(Pause)* I bet you only date white guys?

ORLANDO

What are you talking about?

JULIUS

... Or let me guess, you like to dem redbone Niggers? Am I right?

ORLANDO

Ah... *(Laughs)* Has anyone ever accused you of being inappropriate?

JULIUS

(Comes and sits back down)

Yeah, all the time... But you still didn't answer my question.

ORLANDO

... And I'm not going too!

JULIUS

Why? 'Cause it's true?

ORLANDO

Because it's ridiculous! *(Pause)* You don't deserve it, but no and no... ..And no... I don't have a boyfriend.

(Awkwardly looking into each other's eyes, both men fall silent then try and pretend nothing is happening.)

JULIUS

You're funny you know that.

ORLANDO

Men like you have been telling me that whole life.

JULIUS

No not like that... I mean you're cool. You're a really cool guy.

ORLANDO

Thanks...

JULIUS

You're welcome. *(Pause)*

ORLANDO

Now, can I ask you something?

JULIUS

Knock yourself out...

ORLANDO

Have you ever been in jail?

JULIUS

Yeah... What about you?

JULIUS

No! (*Awkward silence*) Do you mind if I ask you what you were in jail for?

JULIUS

No, I don't mind... To make a long story short... When I was younger, I was what most people would call a handful, which eventually lead me to hanging out with the wrong people and before I knew it, I was being sent to juvie for stealing a car. (*Pause*) The last time I got looked up, was two years ago for dealing drugs... But I'm done wit all that... You feel me... I'm trying to change my life.

ORLANDO

I feel you...

JULIUS

I actually got a job interview on Monday.

ORLANDO

Really?

JULIUS

Yeah well... It's nothin' fancy... I'd be working at those new warehouses they just put up, you know... The ones down on Spring Street.

ORLANDO

Why Julius that's great..! Good for you.

JULIUS

Yeah well, It ain't nothin' special... Maintenance... I have to admit though... I am pretty good with my hands. (*Pause*) God, will you listen to me... Talking as if I got it already.

ORLANDO

You will...

JULIUS

You really think so?

ORLANDO

Yes, I do... Don't you?

JULIUS

I don't know. (*Pause*) I'm not the lucky type... See this is why I like taking to you...

ORLANDO

Why?

JULIUS

You always seem to focus in on the positive. (*Pause*) To be honest... Normally guys like you...

ORLANDO*

By like me...

JULIUS*

Tend to look down on a brother like me.

ORLANDO*

... you mean?

JULIUS*

College educated.

ORLANDO

Oh!

JULIUS

What did you think I meant?

ORLANDO

You know... Gay.

JULIUS

Bru, you gotta learn how to loosen up about being gay.

ORLANDO

Really?

JULIUS

Bru, I'm serious.

ORLANDO

Yeah well, you say that now, but let me walk down the street one day and try and say hello to you when you're with some of your boys...

JULIUS

Bru I'm not like that...

ORLANDO

Uh-huh!

JULIUS

You think I really give a fuck about what other people think?

ORLANDO

Most people do!

JULIUS

Well I ain't most people. (*JULIUS leans in and surprises ORLANDO with a kiss. ORLANDO jumps up startled.*)

ORLANDO

What are you doing?

JULIUS

Sorry... My bad.

(Silence)

ORLANDO

I should go check on your clothes. I'm sure they must be dry by now.

(Reentering with clothes.)

Everything's dry... Here you go. *(Hands JULIUS his clothes. JULIUS starts to get dressed – Silence.)* I really should try and get a little sleep. After all, I've got another long day ahead of me.

JULIUS

Can I sleep here tonight?

ORLANDO

Uh... Julius... *(Uncomfortable)* I don't think that's a good idea.

JULIUS

... You're right... Sorry I asked... *(Pause)* This is me trying too hard... Forget it... I understand. Really I do...

ORLANDO

Julius, I don't think you do... I mean you're...

JULIUS

Straight..?

ORLANDO

Yes...

JULIUS

You're right... ..And no... I've never been with a dude before... But I like you... I really like you.

ORLANDO

Ok..?

JULIUS

I mean... I don't know what the rules are regarding changing teams, do you? But I really would like the chance to get to know you and I'm hoping you'll give yourself the chance to get to know me.

ORLANDO

Julius, I'm not use to guys like you taking an interest in me. *(Pause)* That is, not unless they want something. *(Regrets saying the last line as soon as it comes out his mouth.)*

JULIUS

Yo... I wish I could tell you I know where this was going, but I don't... I can't speak for you, Orlando... But for me, that day in the park, I felt a connection... I felt something I know I've never felt with anyone one else before. Damn... I know I must sound crazy and shit to you, but I'm telling you, I've been taking care of myself since I was fourteen...

ORLANDO

... And look where that's got you.

JULIUS

Wow... To think I thought you were different... I should go.

ORLANDO

Julius, I'm sorry. *(Pause)* You're right. I apologize. I'm just not good at this...

JULIUS

Neither am I. So, I'd say that's as good a place as any to start... What'd you say?

ORLANDO

I don't know...

JULIUS

Ok... That's fair... But you'll see. (*JULIUS leans in and kisses ORLANDO passionately.*) Yo, I better get out of here so you can get some sleep.

ORLANDO

That would be nice. (*JULIUS is almost out the door when he realizes he doesn't have his phone.*) Hey my phone! (*ORLANDO retrieves the phone and charger.*)

JULIUS

You got a pen and paper. (*ORLANDO grabs a pad and pen from the kitchen. JULIUS writes down his number.*) Now you can't say that you don't know how to find me... I'll call you or you can call me.

ORLANDO

Ok!

JULIUS

We better talk later today... If we don't, I'll be back here tomorrow and the next day and the next day, until you give me a chance. You see, that's all I'm asking for... is a chance.

ORLANDO

Men like you have been telling me that my whole life.

JULIUS

Shorty you crazy...

(Kisses ORLANDO then exits. ORLANDO closes the door but lingers for a moment before heading off to bed.)

(LIGHTS FADE OUT)

THE END