

PERUSAL SCRIPT

STREETWISE



by
James Arrington



Newport, Maine

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STREETWISE

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ORDER #3355

CAST

Hendrix — male

Off-stage Voice — male

Drunk — male

Woman in Line — female

3-10 others in Line — mix of genders

STREETWISE a 10-minute play by James Arrington. 3m, 1f, 3-10 mix of genders. Simple setting. Contemporary costumes. The streetcars of San Francisco witness more than just people getting on and getting off. They witness those times in people's lives where a connection is made and a life — thought not to be worth anything — is proven otherwise. Late at night a young man encounters a belligerent drunk while waiting for a streetcar home. Whether by instinct, quick-thinking or a happy accident, frightening things oddly workout. Miracles never cease! This strange, off-beat play is based on an incident experienced by the playwright. Who'd a thunk? **ORDER # 3355**

James Arrington — Retired former Associate Professor, Former Department Chair at Utah Valley University. James Arrington was schooled professionally at The American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and then earned a master's degree in Theatre from Brigham Young University. He has worked professionally for 30 years became a sensation on the Utah theatre scene when he returned to create and star in his one-man show *Here's Brother Brigham*. It toured the U.S., Canada, and the British isles. He went on to write and produce numerous theatre pieces including several one-man shows: *J. Golden*, *Tumuaki! Matthew Cowley of the Pacific*, and co-wrote *Wilford Woodruff: God's Fisherman*. He wrote and starred in a quirky TRIPLE *The Farley Family Reunion*, *Farley Two: The Next Gyration*, and *Farley Family Xmas* and a charming musical *Christmas Without Christmas!?* He co-wrote the pioneer musical *The Trail of Dreams* and was granted a commission by the Sesquicentennial UtahWar Committee to co-write and tour *March of the Salt Soldiers: The Utah War*. He has written for stage, screen, outdoor pageant, radio drama, and puppet shows.

STREETWISE

(At rise: Night. A not so noisy downtown Market Street, San Francisco. It is 11:30 pm. A small line of approximately 10, wrapped and jacketed against the cold, stand beneath a sign indicating the stopping point for a streetcar line. The DOWN RIGHT CURTAIN LINE is used as the gathering point.)

(As in any big city, the people stay in their own separate universes. No one speaks. They continually look into the audience to see if the streetcar is coming. NIGHT TRAFFIC SOUNDS occasionally play behind the entire scene. Suddenly a young man, HENDRIX, 20ish, enters sporting a small knapsack bag and SHOUTING BACK OFFSTAGE LEFT to an unseen friend.)

HENDRIX: I'll see you tomorrow... and none of that "couldn't fight the battle of the bed" stuff, okay?

VOICE: (O.S.) You sure you don't need a ride, Hendrix? It's only another block to the garage.

HENDRIX: Nah. Trolley stops right in front of my house. Looks like it'll be probly before you get to your car!

(Laughs)

I'm fine, dude, take off.

VOICE: (O.S.) Looks like you got plenty of help if you get in any trouble.

(HENDRIX looks at the little line for the first time.)

HENDRIX: Right.

VOICE: (O.S.) Till tomorrow.

HENDRIX: *(falsetto)* Ta-ta till tomorrow.

(HENDRIX laughs then quickly quells it as the rules of late night behavior take over. He rearranges the bag on his shoulder. Coughs and moves up to line up with the others. He looks at his watch and off for the streetcar becoming just any other faceless person in the dark streetlight-lit night. A long moment as everyone shifts... waiting. Suddenly a ruckus demands their attention offstage left.)

DRUNK: (O.S.) *(Shouting)* AY! GIMME A DOLLAR!

(Short pause)

AY! A SHY GIMME A DOLLAR, DAMUT!

(Mumbling)

AYYOULISEN! QUITCHER walknaway frme!!

(As all who live in big cities do, those in the line casually but alertly look back in the direction of the disturbance to check for any imminent danger to themselves. This is done furtively so as not to attract undue attention.)

*(**PRODUCTION NOTE:** The drunk's lines are mostly indecipherable. He shouts them, screams them, and mumbles them according to his wide mood swings. It's very nearly a foreign language. Though occasionally it's clear what he's saying, the object is to be unclear except in the plot points as written.)*

(Shouting) AY! AYYY YOU!! ASGIMMIE A DOLLAR!!

(Mumbling)

Dmsnbches. Sdflky jlkd jf fsldk. Dmsnbiches.

WOMAN IN LINE: *(To her date quietly)* Oh, gees, here he comes!

(The DRUNK enters stage BACKSTAGE LEFT. He is very sturdily built and stumbles backwards into the scene. He is dressed in P-coat with dark blue knit cap on his head. He SCREAMS back left as he enters.)

DRUNK: Ycnsda your flipn tosplp, yahear?!

(He teeters dangerously for a moment pondering what to do next. He looks around and spots the little line of streetcar waiters.)

Ay! AY, ya dmsynminbches!

(He lurches sideways and finally forward toward the little group that, though extremely alert, all but ignore his approach.)

AY! Immtaknyou. AY! AY!!

(They are sitting ducks but no one bolts as yet.)

Ygttabusyerby! Aestrtnworld, yahatta? You gotta dah-er?

(Unfortunately HENDRIX is at the end of the line and therefore first for the DRUNK to approach directly.)

Juhr ME?! Nobuzz paintshun! Wehyawill now!!!! AYYY!

(He's now shouting right in Hendrix face.)

Youlssn tme? Lzngd. GI-ME-A-DAAAAAAR!!!!

(The smell alone nearly knocks HENDRIX over as the DRUNK staggers a bit. HENDRIX is hugely unsure of what to do. The line is looking to take off but hasn't as long as HENDRIX is between them and the Drunk.)

Ahrit... WAH MOR TINE...

HENDRIX: *(Interrupting)* Uhm. UHM. Sorry, dude, I, uh, need my dollar for the streetcar.

(HENDRIX hasn't more than glanced in the Drunk's direction. An uncomfortable pause while the DRUNK tries to process this information. Another loud explosion seems menacingly near. The DRUNK GROWLS and grabs Hendrix's jacket to speak straight into his face.)

HEY! So... how you been, man?

(A moment of astounded silence as the DRUNK, with Hendrix in his grasp, considers the question in confused silence. The LINE is TENSE.)

DRUNK: Say Wuh?!

HENDRIX: No, man, been a long time. How ya been?

DRUNK: *(Considering)* Ygta beshbuhme?

HENDRIX: Yeah.

(laughing nervously)

Yeah. But, hey, you're lookin' pretty good, dude. You lost some weight?

(There is a panic-stricken pause while all await the outcome. Suddenly the DRUNK straightens his own coat a bit and stands a little taller.)

DRUNK: Yuhdamstrt!

(He laughs a little snort)

Tryabbask ona tegerthi.

HENDRIX: Right. Gotcha, dude. Helps with the ladies, right?

DRUNK: Mbctehllemmtaateyah!

HENDRIX: Right. Absolutely. Right. Say, who was that girl I saw you with the other night?

DRUNK: Wuh?

HENDRIX: That one... you know... she was a blonde. A blonde or whatever?

DRUNK: Shdidn'... way... wazzat duhone...

HENDRIX: Well, you had so many around you, I thought you liked the blonde though.

DRUNK: Wuh?

HENDRIX: That one... you know... she was a blonde. A blonde 'er... whatever?

DRUNK: Shdidn'... way... wazzat duhone...

HENDRIX: Well, you had so many around you, I thought you liked the blonde though.

DRUNK: Wuh?

HENDRIX: Or was it the redhead?

DRUNK: (*Confused but trying*) Ayontnnowhddateya.

HENDRIX: Hey, you been holding out on me... I didn't catch her name.

DRUNK: Ernamm?

HENDRIX: The name of the blonde...er, the redhead...

DRUNK: Ya ya...(trying mightily) Yu-ooo? Dnmممmemmbername.

HENDRIX: (*Laughing*) Ah man, that is just so like you, dude. Good lookin' chick, though.

(He pops the DRUNK on the back. For a moment all the levity halts as the LINE waits to see what the DRUNK will do.)

DRUNK: (*finally*) Ya... reeegoodlkin...

HENDRIX: You want her all to yourself, now don't ya. Just admit it. That's the kinda guy you are. Bet you don't even remember her name.

DRUNK: (*Picking up the humor*) nah...nahdntmmbr. Bushezza damgdlnilltllbctck! Yep!

HENDRIX: Yeah, well, we can just say she was that blonde chick, right?

DRUNK: Rye!

HENDRIX: I mean, the light was bad. Who could tell?

DRUNK: Srye! Ya, thbestliltlpsnuhbsns...

(he shouts)

BUZZHE WZZGGRRAAATLAAAAAMAN!!!!

HENDRIX: Yeah... that's what they all say, right?

DRUNK: Ryyy. Auzbsaldsheciyfferhad! WOOOOOO!!

(As the DRUNK howls he bursts into a fit of horrendous coughing but ends up laughing.)

Scsme,man, ahgddacough.

(He coughs again.)

HENDRIX: Yeah, yeah, I know...

DRUNK: Anseysabessltll bacashbererbr! EBR!

HENDRIX: I hear ya.

DRUNK: 'NShezzpxldmbldebr! Ebr! Ebr!

HENDRIX: I'll bet...

DRUNK: *(full of emotion)* Annnowacnmmmmemberrr name! Wassamttsmmmeeeee!

(DRUNK is angry and near tears. Another frightening moment.)

THREE AND A HALF MORE PAGES TO THE END