

Acting Edition

FAUN

by Vinnie Heaven

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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ISBN 978-0-573-02401-6

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FAUN was co-produced by Cardboard Citizens, Alphabetti and Theatre503. The show premiered on 28 March, 2023 at Alphabetti Theatre. The cast was as follows:

ACE Aitch Wylie (they/them/he)
PAIGE/DOE Nyah Randon (she/they)
ANT/STAG/PLANT Afton Moran (they/them)

Writer – **Vinnie Heaven (they/them)**

Director – **Debbie Hannan**

Assistant Director – **Pia Richards-Glöckner (she/they)**

Movement Director – **Chi-San Howard (she/her)**

Designer – **Jacob Lucy (he/him)**

Lighting Designer – **Laura Howard (they/she)**

Sound Designer – **Mwen**

Sound Associate – **Nat Norland (they/them)**

Production Manager – **Tabitha Piggott for eStage (she/her)**

Stage Manager – **Chloe Astleford (she/her)**

Interim Stage Manager – **Livvy Lynch (she/they)**

Dramaturg – **Emma Williams**

Costume Co-Designer – **Sophia Khan**

Production Electrician and Relighter – **Ariane Nixon**

Interim Relighter – **Ash Copeland**

Citz Futures Trainees

Wolf D. Knox-Hooke

Ra'eesah

Jamie T

FAUN toured the UK between 28 March and 13 May 2023, visiting Newcastle, London, Plymouth, Birmingham, Salford and Bristol. Throughout the tour, tickets were available for £1 or on a “pay what you feel” basis to people with experience of homelessness and poverty.

FAUN was supported by the Citz Futures Traineeship; providing paid opportunities for people with experience of homelessness, inequity or poverty to work in theatre alongside industry professionals. Three trainees for *FAUN* were placed in a variety of backstage and production roles, with support from across the creative team.

CHARACTERS

ACE – They/He – Trans Masculine, Nonbinary, early twenties. Charming to the point of people-pleasing. Secretly sarcastic and line by line becomes drier in tone rather than earnest.

PAIGE – She/Her – Cisgender female, early twenties. Social media marketer, high status, bold and strong. Loves candles and tea and is pretty good at doing life. Also plays **DOE** and **POSH**.

ANT – He/Him – Cisgender male, mid-twenties. A bar manager who likes video games. He is a loveable idiot. Kind and gentle to the best of his abilities. Also plays **STAG**, **PLANT**, and **BITCHY GAY**.

DOE – They/She – Early thirties. Blunt and honest, says it how it is. Takes all who need support under their wing and fiercely defends them. Practices tough love because they know that life requires it.

STAG – He/They – Early thirties. Softly masculine with lashings of femme. We don't know if we want to be them or be with them. A pair of glitter antlers and a dazzling glitter beard. High heels and probably a cape. A comic. Sarcastic and thinks on his feet. They ooze charisma. A born master of ceremonies.

PLANT – A giant plant with pleasing leaves like a Monstera/Calathea type. Comforting but poised to be cheeky. Big enough to both hug a person and give them a good, necessary slap.

BITCHY GAY – A male/masc bitchy gay person.

POSH – A cisgender, very posh girl.

*This play was written for three actors, but could be performed by up to six.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The cast where possible should consist entirely of Trans/Nonbinary/GenderQueer actors. This play is an opportunity to let trans artists shine, casting a broad spectrum of trans and nonbinary existence is a must. The cast should reflect the diversity of the world.

Notes on the text

The cast should resist the temptation to play the suffering: these characters speak about hard things in light ways and use humour to cope.

When faun parts are referenced they are similar visually to that of a baby deer. The full transformation of Ace should resemble a Faun, the mythical half human-half deer/goat creature, but in this case very much deer and not goat! They should always have a human face. The same for Doe and Stag: they have the antlers and ears etc. of deer but remain half human at the same time. No character is ever fully an animal.

When alone Ace speaks directly to the audience.

Text in **bold** indicates an aside during a conversation that is spoken directly to the audience.

“/” indicates a character being interrupted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Chris, Clare, and the whole team at Cardboard Citizens for commissioning and delivering this play. Thanks to Alphabetti and Theatre503 for giving these words a home.

Thanks to The Outside Project for their help with early research. Thanks to Zachary Hing and Reece Lyons for your creative input on early drafts.

A massive thanks to the cast: Afton, Aitch, and Nyah, for offering all of your beautiful selves to this project.

Thanks to the team; Jack, Jacob, Laura, Mwen, Chi-San, Tabitha, Chloe, Pia, Sophia, Nat, Livvy, Alex, Ra'eesah, Wolf, and Jamie.

Thank you to Jamie Lee for encouraging my writing for so many years.

Thanks to Kit Spoonsy Springer for your endless and unwavering love and support.

Thank you to Emma Williams, for your love, guidance and encouragement. Thanks for telling me that I am good enough. Sorry that someone once thought you were my Mum in a corner shop in Oxford, I know you hated that, luckily no one else knows... Anyway, I hope to never be without your creative wisdom.

Thank you to Debbie Hannan for lending your immense talent to this play, I am honoured to have your name attached to it. Thank you for your resilience, your brilliance and constant support. Thank you for teaching me the power that imagination holds and for using mine to rebuild me. You truly dazzle me. My love is on you.

This is dedicated to Bash, who taught me that life is magic and for living!

One

(The edge. This is a liminal space that sits between two worlds, the world that contains the house share and the world of the Queer Forest. A large IKEA bag sits in the middle, it is clearly on neither side, but between.)*

*(From inside the IKEA bag appears **ACE**, twenty-two, Trans Masculine. On the top of their head is a pair of small, velvety fawn-like antler nubs.)*

(They step out of the bag and stretch, deer-like, it's quite pleasing to watch.)

(They directly address the audience.)

ACE. It's cramped in there. I get sore glutes.

(They shake their hips about for some relief. They notice a new tail.)

Ugh.

(They feel it.)

Great.

I'm as confused as you are.

I'm Ace, twenty-two, Leo sun, Aquarius moon, intuitive, creative, risk-taker – but I'm said to be more like

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double Libra...a peacekeeper. Bet you were thinking Capricorn, because of the – clear personal ambitions but no.

I'm sofa surfing – currently – just for now – only at the moment. I've actually just sorted out the next one, it's Sofa Number Thirteen. It's Paige and Ant's sofa. A straight couple.

Now, sofa owners are delicate creatures, skittish. You need to lure them in. Like a horse with a sugar cube. A sugar cube for example, in the form of a small succulent – three for one pound. Flat palm, extended, calm voice, some compliments – your hair looks great, love your shoes, speaking of, mine are already off, ready for your sumptuous carpet. Reassure them – put them at ease, talk casually about the importance of cleanliness in communal areas. Watch for subtle changes in their behaviour, a nose huff grows into an eye roll, grows into, um I just need the living room back, my sister is visiting.

Always know you've overstayed your welcome before they do. This is key.

Now there might be some cis-hets amongst us who I should say at this point can probably skip the next step here. But for my fellow queers, listen up. An offer of someone's sofa to stay on does not mean instant equality is being gifted. In situations of precarity you're going to need to smile, not too much, that's creepy. You need to be ready with your please and thank yous. They want gratitude from us, so excessive gratitude must be provided. You should always feel like you're on the edge of a curtsy. There's no room for embarrassment, mould on the walls? no problem, cockroach? they're older than the dinosaurs, they deserve to be here, leak in the ceiling? no really, thank YOU. Trust me on these, I'm a pro.

Now, if you mess up – panic – really panic – But remember you can't go wrong with cheap ingredients for a fancy meal, half-price wine and a big old grin. Charm not smarm – that's what you need.

*(From the Queer Forest there is a sound. It startles **ACE** – they peer fearfully into the forest before snatching up their bag.)*

So, cue the “charm not smarm” offensive.

Here goes...

*(The doorbell to the house appears, glowing. **ACE** remembers their tail and nubs just in time. They tuck the tail in and whack a hat on.)*

Two

(The house.)

(This is a house share setup. The living room has one of those cheap, chunky, black leather sofas that they all seem to have. It's worn out and yet somehow still spectacularly solid and uncomfortable. On a side table sits a giant three wick candle that for all we know will burn for eternity, or at least until the tenancy is up.)

(PAIGE is stuffing an old pillow into a pillow case.)

(ANT is in the way, no matter where he moves. He is trying to get an ancient Hoover to turn on.)

PAIGE. It's too late now, I've said they can /

ANT. / this Hoover stinks.

PAIGE. They'll be here in /

ANT. / It smells cheesy, don't you think?

PAIGE. Because you hoovered up coffee Ant. You got it wet, on the inside, and then just left it to get gross.

ANT. I think you should maybe email the landlord about it.

PAIGE. I /

ANT. / actually don't, in case she wants to do an inspection and she finds Ace here.

PAIGE. You're okay with it then?

ANT. Is that my bottom pillow?

PAIGE. I don't know, I just grabbed one.

ANT. It's mine. I can tell from the stains.

(ANT reclaims his pillow.)

PAIGE. I didn't want to say this. I didn't. But I pay more towards the rent, don't I? And I'm saying he's staying.

ANT. G won't like it.

PAIGE. G has been in the living room once in a whole year – and that was only because she was confused.

She won't care. She's like, never here – which I get, because she lives in a box room at thirty-two – depressing.

ANT. By thirty-two I'm gunna have a two-bed house in Camden and a sausage dog, probably called like, Midnight Beast or Warren.

PAIGE. As I was saying, Ace won't be here long.

ANT. Warren the midnight beast! He'll have all the bitches drooling.

PAIGE. It's just like a stop gap type thing.

ANT. Yeah but people always say that just to get a foot in the door. Then a year later we'll be sat here vibing three abreast, thinking, well this is shit.

PAIGE. Three abreast? *Abreast?*

(The doorbell goes.)

ANT. Paige, we're already in a house share without also having to hold someone who's life is in crisis, it's just long.

(The doorbell goes again.)

PAIGE. It's fine. You'll survive.

ANT. I just don't want any bad vibes, I feel like we're getting back to a good place and this could /

PAIGE. Not now Ant –

(**ACE** appears.)

PAIGE. Ace! Oh my God it is so good to see you. Welcome, welcome. Would you mind taking your shoes off /

(**ACE** is one step ahead.)

ACE. Way ahead of you. Not that I think I'm better than you. I don't, because I'm not.

PAIGE. Okay then...

Aww It's been so long, we need a proper catch up.

(**ANT** is subtly dazzled by **ACE**.)

ANT. (*Hyper-masculine, offering his hand.*) Hey mate, Ant.

ACE. Ace.

ANT. He him, (*Winks.*) you?

ACE. Oh, uh, they, them, he, him.

PAIGE. I already told you that Anthony.

ANT. I know. (*To ACE.*) But it's nice to be asked isn't it.

ACE. Sure.

(*To the audience.*) **It's not.**

PAIGE. We can get the rest of your stuff in.

(*They leave momentarily. ACE takes in the room and the old sofa.*)

ACE. Is it me or does it smell cheesy in here?

(**PAIGE** and **ANT** return – there is no other stuff. **ACE** only has one bag.)

This is all so great. Look at this place, love it. That sofa, wow.

It looks like they made it without removing the cow from the leather.

ANT. Is this all you've got?

ACE. Sorry, I should have said. Yeah, just – just this.

PAIGE. Is the rest still at your Mum's?

ACE. Yeah.

ANT. Wait, so you do have a Mum and all that?

PAIGE. Anthony.

ANT. You can't live there? Too small? Or don't get on or something?

ACE. Something like that.

Nothing like that.

ANT. I'm sure you'll make up mate.

ACE. Mm.

We won't. I did a tiny shit in all her commemorative royal tea pots.

ANT. Positive attitude.

ACE. Yeah, definitely.

Including the Princess Diana one.

ANT. If it was me I'd give her a call, take charge of the situation, have it out.

PAIGE. Ant that's enough, go and sort some drinks or something, you're upsetting them.

ACE. No, that's okay, you're good. Honestly. It's fine.

ANT. We're all good, see.

*(He holds **ACE** who is clearly uncomfortable.)*

ACE. I bought you a succulent.

(They produce a shit-looking cactus in a small glittery pot.)

PAIGE. That's so cute, thank you. Aww, it's so small.

ACE. Told you, works a treat.

PAIGE. I've made up the sofa for you.

ACE. Looks perfect, thanks – so, so comfy, leather is great.

And my tears will roll straight off.

PAIGE. Just try not to puke wine down the back of it like you did at my eighteenth.

ACE. Oh no, don't. I bet you still hate me after that.

ANT. So *that's* why your Mum doesn't allow drinks in the lounge.

PAIGE. No, I think that's just because she doesn't like you.

ANT. I'm not good enough, apparently she'd be better off with some dickhead banker.

PAIGE. Instead of a dickhead bar manager.

Joking baby.

(ANT doesn't take it well and busies himself.)

ACE. Thanks for this Paige. I'm – look, I'm, really – embarrassed – that I'm having to do this, and, I – I am one hundred percent going to stay out the way, keep everything tidy, keep the noise down.

I'm grateful to you guys, I honestly have tried everywhere else that I could.

ANT. So will you be in a lot do you think or?

PAIGE. Stop talking.

It's going to be so fun having you here. The only thing we wanted to say, was that like, we get things are pretty shit for you right now but we obviously have our own life stuff as well and –

ACE. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I totally respect that. I absolutely won't, I won't, pile all my shit onto you or anything.

ANT. Cool.

ACE. I don't even have any shit, to be honest.

I left it all in my Mum's teapots.

This is just a shortage of money thing.

PAIGE. You don't have to explain.

ACE. No, right, yeah, I just want to reassure you that I'm all good. I'm actually manifesting getting some more shifts and finding a cheap room – and that is actually meant to work.

PAIGE. Yeah? Good for you. Put your stuff under the sofa or on the drinks trolley bottom shelf.

Oh, and G lives in the box room, second door on the left, next to the bathroom.

ACE. Got it. Thanks.

PAIGE. She's not very social.

ACE. Lucky her.

PAIGE. She lives off toast and never wipes up the crumbs.

ACE. A loner and a criminal, well, well.

PAIGE. A few weeks a year she makes shit flans and sourdough because *Bake Off* is on.

ACE. Fair enough.

PAIGE. Also she can get quite aggy if you use her things.

ACE. Right.

ANT. Gluten free flour is expensive, apparently.

PAIGE. So don't be like G.

ACE. Privileged? Couldn't be if I tried mate!

Yeah, God, no.

ANT. Do you lift?

ACE. (*Confused.*) No.

ANT. I'll teach you. It'll be sexy.

ACE. ...will it?

ANT. Two topless bros – lifting. That'll be lit.

ACE. Great! Let's do it!

I'd rather die.

PAIGE. We're picking up pizza Ace, you want some?

ACE. Uh-nah. I'm okay. Money.

PAIGE. I guess we could /

ACE. / No. No, you've done enough – too much if anything.

PAIGE. We'll see you in a bit then, if you need anything
just text me okay.

ACE. I won't, you definitely won't hear from me.

*(They leave. ACE is alone. A beat of stillness.
Listening for G upstairs, nothing. They take
a tiny branch out of the bag and slowly
nibble off the leaves.)*

I said I was good at this... I didn't say it was easy.

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