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NORTHBOUND BOY

by James Hogan

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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King's Head Theatre is a purpose-built, wheelchair accessible theatre with a 200-seat flexible auditorium and 50-seat cabaret space off Upper St, Islington which showcases a wide range of performance styles from plays to musicals, to opera & cabaret, to drag & comedy.

Established in 1970, King's Head Theatre was the oldest pub theatre in the UK until it closed its doors in August 2023. For 53 years the theatre was housed in the back room of the King's Head Pub on Upper Street, before opening the new space in Islington Square right behind the pub theatre in January 2024.

Under Artistic Director & Founder Dan Crawford, whose tenure lasted 35 years until his death in 2005, the theatre became known as a breeding ground for new talent and great work. Renowned actors like Maureen Lipman, Hugh Grant, Jennifer Saunders, Dawn French, Alan Rickman & Richard E Grant all performed at the theatre, and a number of productions transferred to the West End and Broadway, premiering work from writers such as Steven Berkoff, Tom Stoppard, Bryony Lavery and Victoria Wood.

In 2010, the Olivier Award-winning company Opera UpClose Productions became the theatre's resident company for four years, and with Adam Spreadbury-Maher as Artistic Director, turned the King's Head into "London's Little Opera House", winning an Olivier Award for La Boheme in the Best New Opera category.

The theatre is a home for a new wave of theatre makers, with a focus on work which is joyful, irreverent, colourful & queer.

SUPPORT KING'S HEAD THEATRE – Angels of Angel Production Fund

The Angels of Angel Production fund is a fund that is specifically used to create and produce new work in our new theatre. Your donation won't just support the creation of one production, but an ongoing range of productions. All ticket income earned from the show will be put back into the fund and used to capitalise the next one.

Support us by joining our Network of Angels or Sponsor a Stair from our 53 year history.

Find out more www.kingsheadtheatre.com

KING'S HEAD THEATRE TEAM

Executive Producer	(Acting CEO) Sofi Berenger
Associate Producer & Programmer	Zoe Weldon
General Manager	Ross Chandler
Building & Production Manager	Christina Gazelidis
Technical Manager	Alex Lewer
Theatre Team Manager	Lily Bearwish
Development & Community Producer	Elinor Machen-Fortune
Fundraising & Development Associate	Hazel Kerr
Communications & Programming Coordinator	Giulia Lovreich
Digital, Content & Marketing Producer	Jack Jeffreys
Bookkeeper	Alan Mackintosh
Theatre Team Members:	Bekah Lumb, Ellie Burbeary,
	Sam McHale, Amelia Kirk, Jonny Iles, Angelo Sagnelli, Ben Clarke,
	Bessie Swan, Charlie Lovejoy, Naren P, George Brown
Script Consultant	Joe von Malachowski
HR Consultant	Lucinda Harvey
PR	ANR PR

TRUSTEES

Rutger Beelaerts, Chris Cook, Matthew Hedges, Dawn James, Robert Khan (Chair), Kate Mullen, Aaron Porter, James Seabright, Molly Waiting, Richard Williamson, Helen Williamson.

THANKS TO OUR KING'S HEAD THEATRE SUPPORTERS

Members: Manfred Kurt, Charles Lindon, Nick Perry.

Friends: Martin Feaver, Dr. Sinan Corus, Tim Matschak, David McCabe, John McCabe, Richard Pierse, Amy Southwood, Peter Thomas, Dan Webber.

Angels of Angel Supporters: Ricardo Alonso in memory of Illy Bleeding, Margie Barbour, Louise Chantal, Dugan Cummings, Tony Bonnar, Kevin Elyot's Bristol Friends, Steven Felderman, Maira Boyd Hind, Matthew Hodson in memory of David Stuart, Ashley Humphreys, Ben Kingsley, Joanna Lumley in memory of Simon Cadell, Cameron Mackintosh, Katey Turvey, Claire Monk, Mary Rensten and Martin Court in memory of Syd Golder and the women of Greenham Common, Lois Potter, Harold Sanditen and Thanasis Kalantzis in memory of Dan Crawford, Janet Suzman, John Thirlwell, Mark Vogel and William Denebeim.

NORTHBOUND BOY was first produced by Peter Darney and Northbound Productions at the King’s Head Theatre on 13th August 2024. The cast and creative team was as follows:

KEN Neil Ashton
RORY Cormac Hyde-Corrin
IVY Sarah Moyle

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer | James Hogan
Director | Alex Jackson
Producers | Peter Darney; Northbound Productions
Set and costume designer | Cory Shipp
Lighting Designer | Sherry Coenen
Stage Manager | Gwenan Bain
Production Manager | Tom Naylor
Casting Directors | Emma Sylvester and Jessica Jefferies
Cover Design | Steph Payne
Sound Designer | Sonum Batra
Associate Sound Designer | Alan Short

CHARACTERS

KEN – (43) off-duty policeman

RORY – (19) M6 hitchhiker

IVY – (65) Ken's aunt

SETTING

Motorway services area

Ken's house on the Lancashire Moors

Scene One

Motorway services on the M6

(RORY, nineteen, sitting at a table. Ken's empty cup close by.)

(Rory's rucksack and cardboard placard are on the floor. He wears military-style camos and a khaki beanie. He looks like a squaddie.)

(KEN, forty-three, approaches carrying a latte. He puts it on the table.)

KEN. Those kids up there; large this, large that, giant Pepsi. Wallops your credit card.

RORY. If you've got one.

KEN. Fast food theme park, food, drink and gambling – slot machines. How to grab your money!

RORY. Clean and dry, mate.

(KEN sits.)

KEN. Latte, right?

RORY. Mega.

KEN. Mega?

RORY. Yeah, defo. Long queue, innit?

KEN. All on camera. CCTV, easy to spot villains, see? Face recognition.

RORY. Who?

KEN. Villains. They need comfort stops like the rest of us.

RORY. Nah, *outdoor* pissers.

KEN. Really? Think about that. Take as long as you like.

RORY. Ah, you mean if they...

KEN. Exactly. Villains, robbers, fraudsters, ever among us. You're on a bus, who's sat next to you? A serial killer? Anybody!

RORY. Covid? Down my end we all know each other. If not, who are they? Wide boys. All of 'em carry tools. Machetes.

KEN. And make no mistake. All of 'em known to the police.

RORY. Where I'm stayin', all he does is lie in bed and watch Superman. D'you like sci-fi? Aliens are also among us. I believe that. Aliens from Mars and far galaxies. The Universe ain't empty. Stands to reason.

KEN. There's no life on Mars. The studios rewrote the scripts ages ago. Drink up.

(**RORY** *sips the latte.*)

I reckon you could live in 'ere. Eat, drink, shop, cash-point, toilets, change the baby, sleep in a motel.

RORY. Live on a motorway? Y'jokin'. Nightmare.

KEN. It's all laid on, no dishes, no cleaning up. Life without responsibility.

RORY. Scenery ain't much. Where do *you* live then?

KEN. Open country. No Covid, no noise, no floods, no pollution, no villains. Well, as long as you get an alarm system. I've just put one in.

RORY. Rant not over.

KEN. OK. I'll shut up. Roy, did you say?

RORY. Rory.

KEN RORY. My car's charging up, about ten minutes, OK?

RORY. Electric car chargers. Robots from outer space.
Positronic brains. Indestructable unless you nuke them.

KEN. (*Beat.*) Really? You watch too many sci-fi movies.

RORY. TV. Can't afford cinemas or the bus. I asked my
dad for the train fare. Stingy sod wouldn't breathe out
unless he has to.

KEN. Spent all your money on slots?

RORY. Wanna buy me bucket o' chicken? (*Beat.*) Just
sayin'.

KEN. (*Beat.*) Where y'from?

RORY. South London. Took ages. No one stops in this
weather. Y'can't ask in'ere. Security. I done a lap round.
Security jump out of nowhere.

KEN. Act like we know each other. (*Beat.*) Go on, talk to
me.

RORY. Oh, 'ello, 'ello, nice to meet you, Mister.

KEN. The staff here know me. I'm off duty. Keep talking.

RORY. D'you work 'ere then?

KEN. Passing through incognito.

RORY. Where's your shades? Film star? Footballer? No
you're too old.

KEN. (*Takes the hit.*) Fly-weight boxing.

RORY. Boxing champion?

KEN. Come on, talk like we're family. Ditch the Blackpool
card. *I'll* take you there if you behave yourself. I mean
that. Behave.

RORY. What have I done wrong?

KEN. I think you know!

RORY. No, what?

KEN. You took a risk back there. Don't you realise?

RORY. So did you.

KEN. You want a lift? I say cool it.

RORY. I see. Conditions apply.

(RORY bins the placard.)

(KEN pulls his cap down to cover his face.)

(Returning.) Thanks for the latte.

KEN. Drink up. Latte, cappuccino, macchiato; my dad'd think it's the Mafia. You a student?

RORY. Catering college. Wankshire. I knew most of it before I got there.

KEN. They must teach you *something*.

RORY. Yeah. How to turn on the cooker. Dad sent me for my own good. *His* good rather. He can't cook nothin'. Rubbery omelettes. Since Mam died it's me cookin' every day. 'cept I'm in deep doodoo. I made us onion soup. Well, I thought they were onions, his prize Daffodil bulbs. He should'na left 'em in the kitchen.

KEN. May I ask, have you run away from home?

RORY. Left. Left home. Dad's dip-stick. Granddad's all right, biding his time, though. Sent him home to die in my room. I'm in next door.

KEN. The dealer?

RORY. Two in a single bed. Plus he's crankin' one off three times a night watching Superman.

KEN. Superman?

RORY. The porn version.

KEN. Superman porn? I've never heard the like.

RORY. You need to get out more. Superman flies around Manhattan, dives into bedrooms for a quickie...

Moral of the story, shut the fuckin' winder. He's bi, actually.

KEN. Superman's bisexual? Gotham and Gomorrah!

RORY. Gay inclusive.

KEN. Now I've heard it all!

RORY. In tights an' all. It's not a fuckin' ballet, is it?

KEN. Talking technical, you need aerodynamic tights. You can't fly in a suit! (*Looking around.*) Mind what we say in 'ere.

RORY. Cameras can't *hear* as well, can they?

KEN. You're half my age. Keep talking.

RORY. OK, er... Them electric car chargers, I reckon they're killer robots from Planet Zog.

KEN. You don't say.

RORY. Lining up to invade Earth.

KEN. I hope you're wrong. I've no wish to be throttled by a malevolent charging cable. How many out there?

RORY. Joke, mister! There's no such place as Planet Zog.

KEN. I think I get that.

(KEN is scanning the building.)

RORY. Spiderman's got a girlfriend as well, but I dig the way he spins webs round the baddies.

KEN. Guy over there, look. The hoody. Flex-glow trainers, burger and fries, gallon of fizz, and a bag of jelly beans.

RORY. Blow out time, innit? You pay for all that ice.

KEN. Where *do* they get the money?

(They watch him pass by.)

RORY. I know what some of 'em do for cash. (*Sotto voce.*) Or maybe you don't wanna know. (*Money gesture, rubbing his fingers.*) You need a lift? Get out there and look sexy. The priest who dropped me off 'ere. First thing he says "How much?"

KEN. A priest?

RORY. A priest yeah. Dog collar, crucifix, all the kit. Ugly as a slug. Thought I'm a squaddie.

KEN. A priest cruising the M6 for squaddies. What's the world coming to?

RORY. Squaddies happy, cruisers happy, no problem.

KEN. Prostitution is no longer an offence, but kerb crawling is. They'll get him. Randy old bugger. I bet he's not the only one.

RORY. I told 'im, I'm straight.

KEN. Most squaddies *are* straight.

RORY. Gay for pay!

KEN. In this weather? How do they get it up?

RORY. They don't have to. You pay up front.

KEN. (*Pause.*) You seem to know.

RORY. Army pays peanuts. They still come in 'ere hungry, can't afford it like me...

KEN. Can I see your ID?

RORY. I'm nineteen.

KEN. Please show me your ID.

RORY. I'm an adult! Nineteen! I've got me passport.

(**RORY** digs into his rucksack for his passport.)

You're not allowed to grow up in this country. You need ID to cross the fuckin' road.

KEN. You followed me from the slot machines to the toilets, and followed me out carrying a placard. Obviously, I'm not family. Blackpool, what for holiday?

RORY. New job. Can you take me all the way?

KEN. If I've enough juice to get there and back.

RORY. Near the gay village. A mate lives there, but he's in hospital. I need the key to his flat. Silly sod got run over crossing the road.

KEN. Looking at his mobile?

RORY. Crotch watching.

(Shows his passport. Page open.)

KEN. Don't the kids go down to Manchester these days? Half an hour on the train. It's jumpin' there, like London – so they say.

(KEN gives the passport back.)

Pretty as Batman's bum boy.

RORY. Not Batman please. Face like a brick.

KEN. What work d'you do?

RORY. Cheffin'. Interview tomorrow. Just got my hygiene certificate.

KEN. Well, that qualifies you to mop floors. Congratulations. Cooking what? Burgers, steaks, pizzas, Michelin star?

RORY. Head chef. Pub where my pal works.

KEN. Pub chef? You went to catering college to make a ploughman's?

RORY. Roast beef, shepherd's pie, rhubarb crumble. The buying, storage, cooking.

KEN. Pub's don't have head chefs.

RORY. This one does. Fifty covers lunch and dinner.