

Acting Edition

The Visitor

Music by Tom Kitt

Lyrics by Brian Yorkey

Book by Kwame Kwei-Armah
and Brian Yorkey

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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THE VISITOR was originally developed by The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) and received its world premiere production there, opening on October 14, 2021. The production was directed by Daniel Sullivan, with orchestrations by Jamshied Sharifi, scenic design by David Zinn, costume design by Toni-Leslie James, lighting design by Japhy Weideman, co-sound design by Jessica Paz & Sun Hee Kil, and co-video design by David Bengali & Hana S. Kim. The production stage manager was James Latus. The cast was as follows:

- WALTER** David Hyde Pierce
- TAREK** Ahmad Maksoud
- ZAINAB** Alysha Deslorieux
- MOUNA** Jacqueline Antaramian
- ENSEMBLE** Robert Ariza, Anthony Chan, Delius Doherty,
C.K. Edwards, Will Erat, Brandon Espinoza, Sean Ewing, Marla
Louissaint, Dimitri Joseph Moïse, Takafumi Nikaido, Paul Pontrelli,
Katie Terza

THE VISITOR is based on the Groundswell Productions and Participant Media motion picture written by Thomas McCarthy.

CHARACTERS

PRINCIPAL

WALTER – White, middle-aged, stoic

TAREK – Arabic, mid twenties, filled with the joy of life and music

ZAINAB – Senegalese, mid twenties, does not trust easily

MOUNA – mid forties, Tarek's mother, a gentle soul

ENSEMBLE

A minimum of 12 actors are required for the ensemble: 2 women, 10 men.

CHARLES

STUDENTS

LECTURERS

NEW YORKERS

SINGER

COLLEAGUE

SPEAKER

ATTENDEES

DRUM CIRCLE

POLICE OFFICERS

MUSICIANS

TRANSIT COPS

ECONOMISTS

CONFERENCE CHAIR

DETAINEES

NASIM

GUARDS

VENDORS

ZINZI

CUSTOMERS

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

- 00. Prologue. Ensemble
- 01. Wake Up Walter
- 01A. Into Walter's Office Ensemble
- 01B. Subway (Transition #1) Ensemble
- 02. Tarek And Zainab. Tarek, Zainab
- 03. Zainab's Apology Zainab, Walter
- 03A. Subway (Transition #2). Walter, Ensemble
- 04. In The Middle Of The Middle Row. Walter, Ensemble
- 04A. Into Walter's Apartment
- 05. Two And Three. Tarek, Walter
- 06. Drum Circle Tarek, Walter, Ensemble
- 06A. The Arrest
- 07. Tarek And Zainab (Reprise). Zainab
- 08. Zainab's Song (Bound For America). Zainab
- 09. Here In The First World Walter, Ensemble
- 10. Zainab's Letter Zainab
- 11. World Between Two Worlds. Tarek, Walter, Ensemble

ACT TWO

- 12. Entr'acte
- 13. What Little I Can Do (Preprise) Walter, Mouna
- 14. Where Is Home? / No Home Mouna, Tarek, Nasim,
Ensemble
- 15. Lady Liberty Mouna, Zainab
- 15A. Detention Center 1
- 16. Heart In Your Hands. Tarek, Ensemble
- 16A. The Flea Market
- 17. Blessings (At Times Like These) . . Zainab, Zinzi, Ensemble
- 18. Such Beautiful Music Mouna, Walter
- 19. My Love Is Free Tarek, Zainab
- 19A. The Detention Center 2
- 20. Better Angels. Walter
- 21. My Love Is Free (Reprise). Zainab
- 22. What Little I Can Do. Mouna, Walter
- 22A. Such Beautiful Music (Reprise). Ensemble
- 23. Drum Circle (Reprise). Company

ACT ONE

[MUSIC NO. 00 – PROLOGUE]

(A drumroll. Then another. Then a third one which becomes a steady beat...)

*(Voices grow as **STUDENTS** and **LECTURERS** begin to appear.)*

ENSEMBLE GROUP 2.

HERE I AM

ENSEMBLE GROUP 1.

HERE I AM

ENSEMBLE GROUP 2.

HERE I AM

ENSEMBLE GROUP 1.

HERE I AM

ENSEMBLE GROUP 2.

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE GROUP 1.

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE GROUP 1 & 2.

HERE I AM!

*(**STUDENTS** sit and turn to look at **WALTER** who is concluding a lecture at Connecticut College where he teaches. He is lost, mid-lecture. The sudden silence returns him to reality.)*

WALTER. So the post-World War Two academic movement referred to as neoclassical synthesis, absorbing the macroeconomic thought of John Maynard Keynes, resulted in the theories and models termed...

[MUSIC NO. 01 – WAKE UP]

(Without pause, he sings.)

WAKE UP - YOU IN THE BACK ROW -
YOU'RE DROOLING DOWN YOUR CHIN.

...Neo-Keynesian economics. That theory was developed by John Hicks and Maurice Allais and popularized by the mathematical economist Paul Samuelson. The process...

WAKE UP - YOU, WITH THE HAIR, THERE -
SOMEONE POKE HER WITH A PIN.

...began soon after the publication of Keynes' General Theory with the IS/LM model-investment.

WAKE UP, YOU LITTLE SNOT RAGS -
PRETEND YOU HAVE A CLUE.
IF I HAVE TO LISTEN TO THIS PAP,
THIS DULL AND DREARY CRAP,
THEN SO DO YOU.

AND IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN BLAME THEM
IF THEY LEAVE THE ROOM -
THE MIND DEPARTS,
JUST UP AND DRIFTS AWAY
IT'S NATURAL TO FLEE
FROM THIS OPPRESSIVE GLOOM
THIS BOGUS INTELLECTUAL DISPLAY
THE ONLY THING THAT CHANGES
IS THE DAY.

(Lights. WALTER searches.)

I'm sorry, where was I? Hicks, of course. John Hicks continued with adaptations of the supply and demand model –

WAKE UP, YOU SLEEPY SHITHEADS –
 THIS WORLD IS SPINNING FAST.
 YOU MAY THINK YOU HAVE IT SUSSED
 THAT LIFE IS GOOD AND JUST,
 BUT IT WON'T LAST.
 BLINK TWICE IN ALL YOUR LAUGHTER
 AND YOUR HAPPY-EVER-AFTER
 FLIES RIGHT PAST.

GOD, TRY TO FOCUS, WALTER, ON THE POINTS AT HAND
 THIS COURSE THAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT FOR TWENTY
 YEARS.
 DON'T THINK ABOUT THE DAY YOU BOUGHT HER
 WEDDING BAND,
 OR THE TRIP THAT YOU TWO MADE ONCE TO ALGIERS,
 OR THE WAY THE TIME BETWEEN JUST DISAPPEARS...

A specific example of this is the consumer theory of individual demand. That's it. See you next week.

*(A **STUDENT** approaches him tentatively and holds out a paper. The **STUDENT** is wearing a kufi – a brimless cap worn by men in many Muslim communities. He gives the paper to **WALTER**.)*

They were due two weeks ago.

STUDENT. But...

WALTER. I'm sorry, I can't accept it now.

STUDENT. I...

WALTER. I'm sorry.

*(As the **STUDENT** turns to go.)* You know – there are resources, on campus. For foreign students. Who need extra help.

STUDENT. I was born in Trenton.

WALTER. Oh. I'm sorry.

STUDENT. You're sorry I was born in Trenton? Yeah, me too. You know, it's almost April and you still haven't given us the syllabus.

WALTER. I know.

(The STUDENT goes.)

WAKE UP - YOU WITH THE LECTURE -
THE DAY'S NOT OVER YET -
NO TIME FOR REMEMBRANCE OR REGRET.

[MUSIC NO. 01A – INTO WALTER'S OFFICE]

ENSEMBLE GROUP 2. *(Offstage.)*

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE GROUP 1. *(Offstage.)*

HERE I AM...

(A knock at the door.)

CHARLES. There you are, Walter, you got a minute?

WALTER. Sure.

CHARLES. Shelley can't make it down to the NYU conference to present your paper. I'm going to need you to cover for her – she's been put on bed rest until she has the baby.

WALTER. I wish I could –

CHARLES. Come on, Walter. You only have to be there for the week.

WALTER. Now is not a very good time, Charles.

CHARLES. You co-authored the paper and the dean wants it presented. He wants to keep Shelley on track for tenure.

WALTER. I just don't think I can, with finals, and my book...

CHARLES. The dean wants you to present it. You are only teaching one class.

WALTER. So I can stay focused on my book.

CHARLES. Well – if the research is getting in the way – maybe you should think of a sabbatical –

WALTER. I don't believe in sabbaticals. You know that.

CHARLES. I know. I tried to get you to take one after Sarah.

WALTER. I know.

CHARLES. Maybe now that it's been a couple years...

WALTER. Don't!

CHARLES. ...being back in New York again might...

WALTER. Charles, the truth is this is really Shelley's paper. I just agreed to put my name on it because she asked me to. I'm not remotely prepared to present it.

CHARLES. It's microfinance, it's how you made your name. Look. Walter. You can take it up with the dean if you want, but as your friend, I wouldn't advise it.

WALTER. Fine.

CHARLES. Great.

(CHARLES goes.)

[MUSIC NO. 01B – SUBWAY TRANSITION #1]

(Transition to:)

(New York Penn Station.)

(WALTER gets off the subway. A BUCKET DRUMMER is doing his thing. Some NEW YORKERS stop to watch. WALTER notices the DRUMMER fleetingly but keeps it moving without pause.)

ENSEMBLE. (*Offstage.*)

HERE I AM...

HERE I AM

(*Lights.*)

(*Walter's apartment.*)

(*Keys still in hand, WALTER enters his apartment. He notices immediately that the lights are on.*)

(*Before he can take a step to investigate, ZAINAB, in a dressing gown, enters the room.*)

(**ZAINAB** screams. **WALTER** shouts.)

ZAINAB. (*Covering herself hurriedly.*) Stay away from me!

(**WALTER** turns away.)

(*Overlapping WALTER.*) Stay away!

WALTER. (*Overlapping.*) It's okay. It's okay. I'm not –

ZAINAB. My boyfriend is coming home!

WALTER. I'm not going to hurt you.

ZAINAB. Who are you? How did you get in?

WALTER. My name is Walter Vale. I have keys. It's my –

(**TAREK** has entered, unseen to **WALTER**, and grabs him.)

TAREK. What the fuck? Are you okay?

ZAINAB. I'm fine. He was just –

TAREK. (*Shaking WALTER.*) Did you touch her? Did you touch her?

WALTER. No! No!

ZAINAB. He didn't touch me! But he has keys.

WALTER. It's my apartment.

TAREK. What do you mean, it's yours?

WALTER. *(Holds up his keys.)* I've owned it for twenty-five years. I live in Connecticut. I haven't been down here in a very long time.

TAREK. Are you Ivan's friend?

WALTER. Ivan? Who is Ivan?

TAREK. He rented us this place. He said it belonged to his friend who was out of town.

WALTER. I don't know who Ivan is, but this is my apartment. I assure you.

(TAREK pauses. Fear hits. He looks to ZAINAB. He readjusts.)

TAREK. Oh! Alright look, there must have been a mix up, we'll get out right away.

WALTER. Alright.

ZAINAB. I told you –

TAREK. We don't want to cause any trouble.

WALTER. Okay. I'll...let you gather your things.

TAREK. Right.

WALTER. Okay.

[MUSIC NO. 02 – TAREK AND ZAINAB]

(TAREK hurries into the bedroom, and ZAINAB follows.)

(Split stage:)

(WALTER stays in the main room.)

ZAINAB. I knew this would happen!

(They pack furiously as they continue the argument.)

(In the main room, WALTER looks around, finds a throw on the couch, folds it -)

ZAINAB.

JE VOUS L'AI DIT

TAREK. I know you have.

ZAINAB.

JE VOUS L'AI DIT TOUJOURS...

TAREK. I know, I know.

ZAINAB.

YOU NEVER LISTEN TO ME.

TAREK. *(Spoken, in rhythm.)*

I DO, I SWEAR, I DO.

ZAINAB.

QU'EST-CE QU'ON PEUT FAIRE?

QU'EST-CE QU'ON PEUT FAIRE?

TAREK.

WE KNEW THIS PLACE WOULD NOT BE FOREVER

WE HAVEN'T FOUND THAT YET

WE SAID WE'D STAY 'TIL WE HAD TO GO -

DON'T FORGET

(WALTER notices some of their items. He gathers them.)

ZAINAB.

YOU ALWAYS MAKE THIS PROMISE

YOU ALWAYS SAY TO TRUST YOU

AND STILL, WE'RE ALWAYS ON THE RUN

THIS CITY IS HEARTLESS

THIS CITY IS COLD

THE SECOND WE LET OUR GUARD DOWN WE'RE DONE.

(TAREK pauses in his packing.)

(WALTER pauses, staring at one CD in particular – the picture of a smiling woman at a piano on the cover.)

TAREK.

SOMEDAY, SOME PLACE WILL BE OURS FOREVER –
LET'S JUST SURVIVE THIS NIGHT

WE'VE ALWAYS LANDED UP ON OUR FEET –

SO – ALL RIGHT?

ALL RIGHT?

ZAINAB. *(Finally.)* All right.

(As they finish packing, lights rise on WALTER.)

(The piano refrain plays gently. Amid gathering Tarek and Zainab's stuff, WALTER notices a few of his wife's CDs on the table. He picks them up and looks at them almost unemotionally.)

(TAREK and ZAINAB drag all their worldly possessions into the next room, toward the door. TAREK hoists two djembes.

(WALTER hurriedly sets the CDs aside. TAREK sees this.)

TAREK. Sorry about the mess. You have so much great music here. You've got a lot of her.

(Points to the CD in WALTER's hand.)

Who is she?

WALTER. Umm...

TAREK. She's amazing.

WALTER. Yes. She is... You're a musician.

TAREK. Yes. Are you?

WALTER. No.

TAREK. Oh – I thought, with all the piano music maybe –

WALTER. I am not a musician.

TAREK. Oh. Well. Again, Walter – our apologies.

[MUSIC NO. 03 – ZAINAB'S APOLOGY]

ZAINAB. We would be very grateful – if you would not call the police.

WALTER. Alright, but who is this Ivan?

TAREK. He's the guy that we –

ZAINAB. (*Cuts him off.*) You don't have to worry about him. He is no longer around.

WALTER. I do have to worry about him. Miss, he's renting my apartment to strangers.

ZAINAB.

I APOLOGIZE, WALTER,
FOR OUR TRESPASS IN YOUR FLAT
FOR YOUR HURT, AND CONFUSION,
OUR UNTHINKABLE INTRUSION,
I APOLOGIZE FOR THAT.
WE SHOULD HAVE MADE MORE COURTEOUS AMENDS,
AS WE PACKED AWAY OUR LITTLE ODDS AND ENDS –
THAT WASN'T RIGHT.
SO I APOLOGIZE, WALTER –
GOOD NIGHT.

WALTER. Do you know where you are going to go?

ZAINAB.

WE'VE HAD SEVEN HOMES IN A YEAR...
NUMBER EIGHT WILL SOON BE NEAR

WE'RE QUITE GOOD AT KNOWING HOW TO DISAPPEAR
WE BOTH KNOW HOW TO FLEE IN FEAR -

(Stops herself.)

I APOLOGIZE, I DO -
FOR WHAT WE'VE PUT YOU THROUGH -
GOOD NIGHT,
GOOD LUCK, TO YOU...

TAREK. Take care, Walter.

*(TAREK and ZAINAB leave the apartment.
WALTER picks up the CD case again.)*

WALTER.

WE KNEW THIS PLACE WOULDN'T BE FOREVER -
A YOUTHFUL HOME FOR TWO -
IT SEEMS NO MORE THAN SOME EMPTY ROOMS WITHOUT
YOU.

(Split stage:)

*(TAREK and ZAINAB appear out on the street.
ZAINAB is finishing a phone call.)*

TAREK. Wait, maybe you should call your Auntie Marieme.

ZAINAB. Auntie Marieme? *(Re: their relationship.)* She hates this. Think she'll let us shack up there?

*(WALTER moves to an open window - it is clear he can hear them. He's trying to catch their attention, but they cannot see him.
WALTER has Zainab's sketchbook in his hand.)*

TAREK. Well, call your cousin, the fun one.

ZAINAB. The fun one is in jail.

TAREK. Again?

ZAINAB. Tarek.

(WALTER has left the window and now approaches the couple, just as they are moving off. He stops them.)

WALTER. Hello.

TAREK. Oh. Hello.

WALTER. You left your sketchbook.

(He holds it out although unsure whose pad it is. Warily, ZAINAB takes it.)

ZAINAB. Thank you.

WALTER. These are your designs?

ZAINAB. Yes, I make jewelry.

TAREK. Here look at this – isn't she talented?

(He shows his bracelet.)

WALTER. It's quite beautiful.

ZAINAB. Thank you.

(They stare at him unsure what he is about to say.)

WALTER. Do you have a place to stay?

TAREK. Yeah, yeah, we will...

ZAINAB. It won't be a problem.

WALTER. Stay at my apartment. For the night. Some time to sort the situation out. Look, it's late, it's cold out.

ZAINAB. No. Thank you.

TAREK. Habibti –

ZAINAB. *(Turns away from WALTER.)* Tarek, we don't know that we can trust this man.

TAREK. Trust him? We could be in jail already.

ZAINAB. This could be a set up. The police could be waiting.

TAREK. This is no setup. Look at him.

*(They turn to **WALTER.**)*

Thank you, Walter. We'll stay just for the night.

WALTER. Okay. I'll help you with your bags.

*(**WALTER** goes.)*

ZAINAB. Tarek...

TAREK. Habibti. What choice do we have? Besides, I think he likes us.

ZAINAB. You, perhaps.

TAREK. Everyone likes me.

ZAINAB. Yes. I know.

**[MUSIC NO. 03A – SUBWAY TRANSITION
#2 (ASHHAD)]**

(They go.)

*(Lights change to the next morning, the street below Walter's apartment. From the subway, we hear the beautiful sounds of a **SINGER** chanting, accompanied by a **BUCKET DRUMMER.**)*

SINGER. *(In Arabic.)*

| | |
|-----------|------|
| AMAN | آمن |
| AMAN | آمن |
| AMAN | آمن |
| AMAN | آمن |
| ASHHAD... | أشهد |
| ASHHAD... | أشهد |
| ASHHAD... | أشهد |

(WALTER enters the platform and stops to look at the SINGER and DRUMMER as they vibrate beautifully together. He watches and listens intently.)

(An academic COLLEAGUE enters the platform and stops beside him, but WALTER doesn't notice him until he speaks.)

COLLEAGUE. Walter, hey, heading to the conference?

WALTER. Yes.

COLLEAGUE. Are you presenting today?

WALTER. No, no, Thursday. It's Caroline Vance this morning, on microfinance in China.

COLLEAGUE. Of course. She's great. Walter, second car from the front puts you right at the exit. Boom, first out of the station.

WALTER. Okay, good to know.

(WALTER lingers with the MUSICIANS, watching, then sings quietly.)

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE.

HERE I AM...

WALTER.

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE.

AM...

(Lights.)

[MUSIC NO. 04 – IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE ROW]

(Hotel Ballroom.)

(WALTER is in his seat in the middle of the middle row, a three-ring binder in his

*lap, surrounded by other ATTENDEES as a
SPEAKER presents at the lectern.)*

SPEAKER. In spite of the remarkable economic growth which China has experienced over the past three decades, more than one hundred and fifty-three million of its inhabitants still live on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars per day. That's less than your morning latte folks...

*(The SPEAKER fades into the music as
WALTER's attention drifts.)*

WALTER.

THAT ZAINAB TERRIFIES ME -
SHE'S BRILLIANT, YOUNG, AND FIERCE.
THOSE LOOKS SHE SHOOTS ME PIERCE ME TO THE QUICK,
AND I FEEL THICK,
AND I DEFER,
BUT HE LOVES HER.

(The SPEAKER fades back in.)

SPEAKER. When I checked with the oracle, Twitter, this morning, Chinese policy still restricts microfinance.

*(...but fades away again as WALTER's
attention shifts.)*

WALTER.

THAT TAREK HAS A SWEETNESS
HE FILLS A ROOM WITH LIGHT
MY GOD, TO BE THAT BRIGHT AND BE THAT FREE -
WAS THAT ONCE ME?
THE WAY WE WERE -
THE WAY HE LOVES HER...
HE LOVES HER.

AND HERE I AM,
HERE I AM,

WALTER.

IN A SUIT, IN A BALLROOM
OF A TASTEFUL, WELL-LIT, BROWN-AND-BEIGE HOTEL,
PRETENDING THAT I'M HERE TO LISTEN WELL,
KNOWING THAT NOBODY ELSE CAN HEAR
THIS RHYTHM IN MY EAR...

SPEAKER. These conservative regulations have a very serious effect on wealth creation.

WALTER.

IN MY EAR...

(WALTER begins to drum, out of rhythm, on the binder. It is as if he is recalling a dynamic rhythmic passage of a classical piece.)

SPEAKER. Let us compare this to other countries with looser regulations.

(WALTER goes away again.)

WALTER.

THE TWO OF THEM SEEM FEARLESS,
AND BURNING WITH THEIR YOUTH,
WITH PASSION AND WITH TRUTH AND WITH DESIRE.
THAT BRIGHTEST FIRE
MAY SOMEDAY DIM,
BUT HE LOVES HER,
AND SHE LOVES HIM.

BUT HERE I AM,
HERE I AM,
MAKING EV'RYTHING ROMANTIC,
WHILE TWO STRANGERS HAVE THE RUN OF MY SMALL FLAT
I GAVE THEM KEYS - AND WHY DID I DO THAT?
THEY'RE STEALING ALL I HAVE IN THERE, I BET -
OF COURSE, THEY HAVEN'T DONE THAT YET -

AND HERE I AM,
HERE I AM,
IN A SUIT, IN THIS CONFERENCE,
IN THE MIDDLE SEAT INSIDE THE MIDDLE ROW,
WITH NOWHERE MUCH OF NOTE THAT I CAN GO,
BUT WISHING I WERE ANYWHERE INSTEAD,
WITH THIS RHYTHM IN MY HEAD...

(He drums, a bit harder, and is shushed by a few ATTENDEES.)

ATTENDEE.

SHHH!

WALTER.

IN MY HEAD...

THREE ATTENDEES.

SHH!

TWO ATTENDEES.

SHH!

WALTER.

HERE I AM...

ATTENDEE.

SHH!

TWO ATTENDEES.

SHH!

WALTER.

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE.

SHH! SHH! SHHH!

WALTER.

HERE I AM...

ENSEMBLE.

SHH! SHH! SHH!

(**WALTER** resumes drumming, oblivious to the room...)

SPEAKER & ENSEMBLE.

SHH!

(Until they all, **SPEAKER** included, give him the biggest shush yet. Music stops, the drumming stops. A moment.)

(Then, under his breath:)

WALTER. Assholes.

(Lights.)

[MUSIC NO. 04A – INTO WALTER’S APARTMENT]

(The musical instruments gradually fade until all we are left with is a single drum – **TAREK**, practicing, in his underwear. **WALTER** enters, and **TAREK** finishes with a flourish.)

TAREK. Hey Walter. I didn’t know you would be home so soon. Sorry about the pants, I’ve been practicing like this since I was a kid.

WALTER. Really? Where was that?

TAREK. Michigan.

WALTER. Oh, you’re from Michigan?

(**TAREK** does not answer. **WALTER** can see that he won’t, but he keeps gently digging.)

TAREK. Where you from, Walter?

WALTER. Me? Oh, um, upstate New York.

TAREK. I heard it’s pretty up there.

WALTER. Oh well...um, thank you.

(Beat, as neither know what to say next.)

Well, I don't want to interrupt your practicing.

TAREK. It won't bother you?

WALTER. No, it's fine.

TAREK. Great. Thanks. I'll keep my pants on.

WALTER. Oh even better.

(TAREK's cell phone rings – he checks it.)

TAREK. Ah – my mom. Calls every week to make sure I'm okay.

(TAREK goes to the other room. WALTER sits, trying Tarek's drum. Hits it once or twice. Then again. And again. Closes his eyes as he finds some odd sort of almost-groove that is almost-recognizable. Opens his eyes and TAREK stands in front of him.)

WALTER. Oh. Hi.

TAREK. Sounds good, Walter.

WALTER. I'm sorry.

TAREK. Don't be sorry, that's what it's there for. I heard you from the other room and I was like, "what's the crazy rhythm?"

WALTER. Jingle Bells.

TAREK. *(Takes out another drum and sits.)* Sit. Let me show you how. I'll show you how. Just put your feet flat on the ground. Now take the drum between your legs. Like this. Now you want to lift the inside edge off the ground with your ankles. Like this. Now, chest up, shoulders back. Feel relaxed? Great. Feel okay?

WALTER. Okay.

TAREK. Okay. Now, Walter, I know you're a very smart man but with the drum, it is not JUST about thinking, you have to feel it at the same time. Just thinking screws it up. Okay?

WALTER. Okay.

TAREK. Now just give it a couple of bangs.

(WALTER hits a few, hard.)

You're not angry at it.

WALTER. Oh. Right. Sorry.

(He tries again.)

TAREK. Better. Did you feel anything?

WALTER. I think so.

TAREK. Okay, now Walter, you listen to classical music, so you think in a very steady beat. One-two-three-four-one-two-three-four. Now this is an African drum, Walter, so you have to feel the syncopation, like a three inside of four.

[MUSIC NO. 05 – TWO AND THREE]

I had to learn to hear it too.

(TAREK's drumming becomes music under, though the song is not at full feel yet.)

LET GO THE FOUR AND THINK IN THREE -

COME, NOW, AND TRY WITH ME.

(He drums a pattern and WALTER tries to follow by drumming on his chest. Quite badly.)

Come on. Ta ta ta.

(WALTER tries again. Better, still bad.)

DON'T DO THE THING YOU THINK YOU SHOULD -
THINK OF THE THREE, NOW, THERE THAT'S GOOD!

(WALTER transfers his chest drumming back to the djembe.)

Yeah! There it is. Okay. Good. You keep that up and I will do this.

(He adds a rhythm, and that throws WALTER completely off.)

Okay, okay, no problem. Back to this.

(TAREK returns to the first rhythm, and WALTER settles back in.)

Now just feel that. Keep that going. There.

(He gently adds in the new rhythm. The song starts to build in feel.)

TAKE UP THE SQUARE AND MAKE IT ROUND,
TASTE OF THE RHYTHM, TRY TO SEE THE SOUND.
DO EV'RYTHING YOU DON'T EXPECT -
DO WHAT'S RIGHT, NOT WHAT'S CORRECT.

I FEEL THAT YOU FEEL THE FRICTION NOW,
FINDING THE THREE WHERE THERE WERE TWO.
TRY LIVING WITH THE CONTRADICTION NOW -
DRUM OUT THE OLD AND HIT WHAT'S NEW.

WALK THE PARADE, BUT NOT IN STEP...
MAKE YOUR OWN RHYTHM, LET THE REST GET HEP.
THIS IS THE SOUND OF LIFE, THESE DRUMS:
THIS IS THE FABRIC LIFE BECOMES.

AND RHYTHM IS NOT A THING YOU FIND
RHYTHM IS NOT A THING YOU DO
NO, RHYTHM IS IN BODY, BREATH, AND MIND
FIND ALL YOU NEED INSIDE OF YOU.

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