



# THE INHERITANCE

PART TWO

BY

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DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



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THE INHERITANCE was originally commissioned by Hartford Stage (Darko Tresnjak, Artistic Director; Michael Stotts, Managing Director).

The world premiere of THE INHERITANCE was performed in London at the Young Vic, PART ONE on March 2, 2018, and PART TWO on March 9, 2018. It was directed by Stephen Daldry, the executive producer was David Lan, the designer was Bob Crowley, the lighting design was by Jon Clark, the sound design was by Paul Arditti and Christopher Reid, the music was by Paul Englishby, and the dramaturg was Elizabeth Williamson. The cast, in alphabetical order, was as follows:

YOUNG MAN/JASPER ..... Hugo Bolton  
YOUNG MAN 5/CHARLES/PETER/AGENT ..... Robert Boulter  
YOUNG MAN 10/TOBY DARLING ..... Andrew Burnap  
YOUNG MAN 3/YOUNG HENRY/  
TUCKER ..... Hubert Burton  
HENRY WILCOX ..... John Benjamin Hickey  
MORGAN/WALTER ..... Paul Hilton  
YOUNG MAN 1/ADAM/LEO ..... Samuel H. Levine  
BOY ..... Sam Lockhart, Joshua De La Warr  
YOUNG MAN 6/TRISTAN ..... Syrus Lowe  
YOUNG MAN 2/JASON 1/  
PAUL/DOORMAN ..... Michael Marcus  
MARGARET ..... Vanessa Redgrave  
YOUNG MAN 9/ERIC GLASS ..... Kyle Soller  
YOUNG MAN 4/YOUNG WALTER/  
CLINIC WORKER ..... Luke Thallon  
YOUNG MAN 8/JASON 2/  
OTHER AGENT ..... Michael Walters

This production was supported by Nattering Way LLC and Sonia Friedman Productions.

THE INHERITANCE transferred to the Noël Coward Theatre in the West End of London, with a first performance of PART ONE on September 21, 2018, and of PART TWO on September 28, 2018. The following cast changes were made:

BOY ..... Harrison March-Ward, Anthony Zac Moran,  
Joshua De La Warr  
YOUNG MAN 4/YOUNG WALTER/  
CLINIC WORKER ..... Jack Riddiford

The Young Vic production was presented in the West End by Tom Kirdahy, Sonia Friedman Productions and Hunter Arnold with Elizabeth Dewberry & Ali Ahmet Kocabiyik, 1001 Nights Productions, Greg Berlanti, Brad Blume, Shane Ewen, Rupert Gavin, Robert Greenblatt, Marguerite Hoffman, Mark Lee, Peter May, Arnon Milchan, Oliver Roth, Scott Rudin, Tulchin/Bartner Productions, Bruno Wang, Richard Winkler, and Bruce Cohen/ Scott M. Delman.

The Broadway premiere of THE INHERITANCE opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York, with a first performance on November 17, 2019, with the same creative team. The production stage manager was Jill Cordle. The cast was as follows:

YOUNG MAN 6/TRISTAN ..... Jordan Barbour  
BOY ..... Ryan M. Buggle, Tre Ryder  
YOUNG MAN 5/TOBY'S AGENT/  
CHARLES WILCOX ..... Jonathan Burke  
TOBY DARLING ..... Andrew Burnap  
YOUNG MAN 2/JASON #1/TOBY'S  
DOORMAN/AGENT ..... Darryl Gene Daughtry, Jr.  
YOUNG MAN 4/YOUNG WALTER/  
TUCKER ..... Dylan Frederick  
YOUNG MAN 7/JASPER/PAUL WILCOX ..... Kyle Harris  
HENRY WILCOX ..... John Benjamin Hickey  
MORGAN/WALTER POOLE ..... Paul Hilton  
ADAM/LEO ..... Samuel H. Levine

YOUNG MAN 3/YOUNG HENRY ..... Carson McCalley  
 MARGARET ..... Lois Smith  
 ERIC GLASS ..... Kyle Soller  
 YOUNG MAN 8/JASON #2/  
 CLINIC WORKER ..... Arturo Luís Soria

The New York production was presented on Broadway by Tom Kirdahy, Sonia Friedman Productions, Hunter Arnold, Elizabeth Dewberry & Ali Ahmet Kocabiyik, 1001 Nights Productions, Robert Greenblatt, Mark Lee, Peter May, Scott Rudin, Richard Winkler, Bruce Cohen, Mara Isaacs, Greg Berlanti & Robbie Rogers, Brad Blume, Burnt Umber Productions, Shane Ewen, Greenleaf Productions, Marguerite Hoffman, Oliver Roth, Joseph Baker/Drew Hodges, Stephanie P. McClelland, Broadway Strategic Return Fund, Caiola Productions, Mary J. Davis, Kayla Greenspan, Fakston Productions, FBK Productions, Sally Cade Holmes, Benjamin Lowy, MWM Live, Lee & Alec Seymour, Lorenzo Thione, Sing Out, Louise! Productions, AB Company/Julie Boardman, Adam Zell & Co./ZKM Media, Jamie deRoy/Catherine Adler, DeSantis-Baugh Productions/Adam Hyndman, Gary DiMauro/Meredith Lynsey Schade, Ronald Frankel/Seriff Productions, John Goldwyn/Silva Theatrical Group, Deborah Green/Christina Mattsson, Cliff Hopkins/George Scarles, Invisible Wall Productions/Lauren Stein, Sharon Karmazin/Broadway Factor NYC, Brian Spector/Madeleine Foster Bersin, Undivided Productions/Hysell Dohr Group, UshkowitzLatimer Productions/Tyler Mount.

## CHARACTERS

YOUNG MAN 1 / ADAM McDOWELL / LEO

*Early 20s, any race/ethnicity*

YOUNG MAN 2 / JASON #1 / DOORMAN 1 / OTHER AGENT

*Late 20s–early 30s, Black*

YOUNG MAN 3 / YOUNG HENRY / HENRY’S ASSISTANT

*Early 20s, any race/ethnicity*

YOUNG MAN 4 / YOUNG WALTER / ASSISTANT

*Early 20s, any race/ethnicity*

YOUNG MAN 5 / CHARLES WILCOX / TOBY’S AGENT

*Late 20s–early 30s, any race/ethnicity*

YOUNG MAN 6 / TRISTAN

*30s, Black*

YOUNG MAN 7 / JASPER / DEALER / DOORMAN 2

*30s, White*

YOUNG MAN 8 / JASON #2 / CLINIC WORKER

*Late 20s–early 30s, Latin/Hispanic*

ERIC GLASS

*30s, White*

TOBY DARLING

*Late 20s–early 30s, any race/ethnicity*

E.M. FORSTER (“MORGAN”) / WALTER POOLE

*50s, any race/ethnicity*

HENRY WILCOX

*50s, White*

MARGARET

*70s, any race/ethnicity*

TUCKER

*Played by either YM3 or YM4*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

My PART ONE note about speed also applies to PART TWO but, in addition, my advice is to not let your emotions get the better of you. Stoicism is your friend in PART TWO. If you start crying, you'll never get to the end. The only character to whom this doesn't entirely apply is Leo, and even then you'd better have a good reason for it and an exit strategy to stop. No tears in the Obituaries, no tears in the Epilogue. That's the rule we established for ourselves early in the process in London and it works. You'll hate me for this rule, but the audience will be grateful. And they're the ones who matter.





# THE INHERITANCE

## PART TWO

### Prologue

ERIC. The house...

The house was...

YOUNG MAN 6. The house was...

YOUNG MAN 5. The house was definitely...

YOUNG MAN 1. The house was built in 1790. It was as old as the nation. Henry Wilcox was its sixth owner.

YOUNG MAN 3. It was built by a veteran of the Revolutionary War—

YOUNG MAN 4. —a farmer, who once briefly served in the New York State Legislature.

YOUNG MAN 2. It later belonged to an abolitionist family in the mid-nineteenth century—

YOUNG MAN 5. —and was briefly used as a safe house for escaped slaves along the Underground Railroad.

YOUNG MAN 6. The family's oldest son was killed at Antietam—

YOUNG MAN 8. —and their youngest a year later at Gettysburg.

YOUNG MAN 7. Franklin Roosevelt once attended a party here while campaigning for governor.

YOUNG MAN 2. The family who owned it at that time later lost a son in Bastogne—

YOUNG MAN 4. —but his two brothers survived the war.

YOUNG MAN 1. Henry Wilcox bought the house in 1987 from the youngest of those brothers,

YOUNG MAN 4. And in the fall of 1988, Henry's partner, Walter, brought their friend Peter West to die in the house.

YOUNG MAN 6. Across two centuries, countless wars—  
YOUNG MAN 8. —booms and busts—  
YOUNG MAN 2. —births, funerals—  
YOUNG MAN 3. —weddings, christenings.  
YOUNG MAN 4. Peter's death was the very first inside its walls.  
YOUNG MAN 5. It would not be the last.  
YOUNG MAN 7. In the intervening years, countless more men followed in Peter's footsteps.  
ERIC. How could this house not be haunted?  
YOUNG MAN 1. Eric stood in the front hallway, reeling from what he had just seen—  
YOUNG MAN 5. —what he had just experienced.  
ERIC. What he had just imagined?  
YOUNG MAN 2. Was it possible?  
YOUNG MAN 7. Had he seen them?  
YOUNG MAN 8. Felt their presence?  
YOUNG MAN 3. Eric had built this place up so much in his mind—  
ERIC. Could it all just be his imagination?  
YOUNG MAN 1. Then, before Eric had time to answer that question, Henry appeared in the doorway.

## ACT ONE

*Spring 2017–Summer 2017*

### Scene 1 Spring 2017

#### 1. Walter's House

HENRY. You got in.

ERIC. The door was unlocked.

HENRY. That figures. Is it what you thought it would be?

ERIC. I don't know anymore.

HENRY. It's not all that much to speak of, as far as houses go. More an accumulation of problems at this point. The stairs need to be rebuilt. The furnace replaced. Probably a new roof soon enough.

ERIC. Do you look for flaws in people the way you do in houses?

HENRY. Houses hide their flaws much better than people.

ERIC. Do I have flaws, Henry?

HENRY. Oh boy, do you ever.

ERIC. What are my flaws?

HENRY. You want me to tell you your flaws?

ERIC. I could tell you yours, if you'd like.

HENRY. No, I wouldn't.

You can't take a compliment.

ERIC. I don't think that's true.

HENRY. You undervalue yourself.

ERIC. Isn't that the same thing?

HENRY. It's the reason for the thing.

ERIC. Is that all?

HENRY. You're overly romantic, you're wildly impractical, you're stubborn as hell.

ERIC. That last one is rich coming from you.

HENRY. And, worst of all, you refuse to believe that you're beautiful.

Listen, Eric... I know how hard these last few months have been for you.

ERIC. You have no idea how much you've helped me.

HENRY. I think, in fact, I do. Because you've helped me just as much. And I've been thinking: What role can we play in each other's lives going forward?

ERIC. You've been thinking that?

HENRY. I think about you more than you know.

And...I wondered...if you would want to marry me.

YOUNG MAN 8. Twist!

HENRY. My God, I've rendered Eric Glass speechless.

ERIC. You want to marry...me?

HENRY. Yes.

ERIC. But...why?

HENRY. You make me smile. Contrary to what most people think, I do like to smile.

ERIC. I think you have a very nice smile.

HENRY. I'm glad you think so because you've been the author of all my recent smiles. I want you in my life, Eric.

ERIC. I *am* in your life.

HENRY. I want you fully in it. I can provide you with the freedom to find meaning in your life. To become the man you're meant to be. All I ask is that you share your spirit with me.

*Gentle, rolling thunder in the distance.*

ERIC. Can I think about it?

*If Henry's disappointed, he covers it up.*

HENRY. Of course.

ERIC. It's just that it's a big decision and you caught me by surprise.

HENRY. You don't have to explain yourself, Eric. Take all the time you need.

*More thunder.*

We should probably head back.

ERIC. But we just got here.

HENRY. I saw what I needed to see. That tenant is definitely not getting his deposit back.

ERIC. I was hoping we could spend the day here. Walter told me so much but it feels—

HENRY. I'd like to beat the storm.

ERIC. Okay, Henry. We can go.

*Eric exits. Henry stands there a moment, looking at the house. Then: YM3 becomes Young Henry and YM4 becomes Young Walter.*

YOUNG HENRY. I can't see the house.

YOUNG WALTER. Almost there!

YOUNG HENRY. I think we're lost.

YOUNG WALTER. No, it's—

Yes! Here—just beyond these trees.

Oh wow! This isn't at all what I expected.

YOUNG HENRY. It's smaller than I thought it would be.

YOUNG WALTER. Yeah, but just look at it! It's perfect. Look at that cherry tree—isn't it beautiful? And wow—that meadow! Come on! Let's go explore the property.

YOUNG HENRY. We should probably wait here.

YOUNG WALTER. I'll be right back.

YOUNG HENRY. Don't go too far.

Walter!

HENRY. Walter.

*Young Walter runs off. Henry and Young Henry are alone.*

YOUNG HENRY. It is beautiful, isn't it?

*Young Walter comes running back on, carrying a bundle of wildflowers in his hands.*

YOUNG WALTER. Look at these flowers. And there's an old barn. We could turn it into a dining pavilion.

This is it, Henry. This is our house. I can feel it. Don't you feel it, too?

*Young Henry does not—or cannot—answer.*

Is this what you want, Henry?

YOUNG HENRY. I want to live.

YOUNG WALTER. We can do that here. Look—

*Young Walter shows Young Henry his bouquet. Young Henry sneezes.*

You'll get used to it.

*Henry sneezes.*

ERIC. Henry!

HENRY. Coming, Eric.

YOUNG MAN 1. And so Henry Wilcox locked the door to Walter's house and walked away from it, determined he would never see it again.

## Scene 2 Spring 2017

YOUNG MAN 6. Eric decided to introduce Henry to his friends.

YOUNG MAN 8. He planned one of his famous Sunday brunches in Henry's sumptuous new West Village townhouse—

YOUNG MAN 6. —privately fretting that Henry might not do well under the glare of their careful inspection.

YOUNG MAN 7. And so when Jasper asked if he could bring his new boyfriend—

TUCKER. Tucker!

YOUNG MAN 7. —Eric happily agreed.

YOUNG MAN 2. They arrived an hour late.

### **1. Henry's Townhouse**

*Eric, Henry, Tristan, Jasper, Jason #1, Jason #2, and Tucker.*

JASPER. Tucker's an artist. We met at Coachella. He makes the most incredible... Tell them what you call it.

TUCKER. Faux-art.

TRISTAN. What is “faux-art”?      JASON #2. Like out of Vietnamese noodles?

TUCKER. False art.

TRISTAN. Meaning what?

TUCKER. Meaning that it isn't real.

ERIC. Like an illusion?

TUCKER. You could say that.

JASON #2. Like David Copperfield?

JASPER. It's real in the sense you can see it, touch it.

TRISTAN. Are we talking sculpture? Paintings?

TUCKER. Paintings.

ERIC. (*Attempting to understand.*) False paintings.

TUCKER. Yes.

TRISTAN. But what makes them false?

JASPER. Ah! Here's the genius part. Tell them.

TUCKER. You can tell them. They're your friends.

JASPER. Yes, but it's your art. You should tell them.

TUCKER. I want to hear you describe it. It turns me on.

*Jasper and Tucker start to make out.*

TRISTAN. Oh for fuck's sake, just tell us!

JASPER. It's false because he doesn't mean it.

*A beat, then:*

ERIC. What do you mean “he doesn't mean it”?

JASPER. They're false.

TRISTAN. You've lost me.

JASPER. Okay here: Take a look at Tucker's Instagram.

*Tucker hands the Jasons his phone.*

JASON #1. But these are beautiful.      JASON #2. Wow, look at that one.

TRISTAN. That's incredible.      ERIC. Henry.

HENRY. Let's have a look.

*They hand the phone to Henry.*

You painted this?

TUCKER. Which one are you looking at?

HENRY. This landscape.

TUCKER. Yeah, I did that last week.

HENRY. And this portrait...?

TUCKER. My grandmother.

HENRY. You're a Rembrandt, kid. The shading, the depth of color.

*They get to one that's—*

ERIC. Whoa!

HENRY. Is that you, Jasper?

TRISTAN. Jasper?

JASON #2. There's a portrait of Jasper?

ERIC. Not a portrait.

HENRY. A nude.

TRISTAN. What?

JASON #2. Let me see.

JASON #1. You're kidding.

*They all gather around Henry.*

Oh my.

That's—

TRISTAN. Jasper, your dick is not that big.

ERIC. Who's your gallerist?

JASPER. Tucker doesn't sell them.

HENRY. So what does he do with them?

TUCKER. I burn them.

JASON #1.

TRISTAN.

ERIC.

JASON #2.

You're kidding. Stop.

You burn these?

Why?

ERIC. But they're beautiful.

TUCKER. Beautiful but meaningless.

ERIC. Now wait...you cannot tell me there is no meaning in this portrait of your grandmother. Her eyes are so soulful, her face so kind. How is that untrue?



TUCKER. Because my grandmother's a fucking cunt, dude.

JASPER. False art!

TRISTAN. So all of your paintings are...

TUCKER. The world as you would like me to show it to you.

TRISTAN. I *knew* Jasper's dick was not that big.

HENRY. Why not just paint what is true?

TUCKER. Because no one wants the truth anymore.

ERIC. People are desperate for the truth.

TUCKER. People want the illusion of truth. They want a story that validates their beliefs: about themselves, their nation, the world.

HENRY. "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

ERIC. *Man Who Shot Liberty Valance!*

HENRY. Gold star!

Why do you take a picture before you destroy the painting?  
And more to the point: Why do you then post it on social media?

TUCKER. To show the world / what is false and—

HENRY. Nah, I'm not buying it. I think you want the credit for having made it without taking responsibility for what it means. That portrait of your grandmother may not be "true" but it certainly is beautiful and / in painting it—

TUCKER. That's not who / she is, though.

HENRY. Let me finish, Tucker. And in painting it, you've taken something that is ugly to you and you've made it beautiful. If that doesn't demonstrate the genuine power of art, I don't know what does. I don't think you mistrust beauty, Tucker. I think you mistrust the truth. I think you mistrust yourself.

TUCKER. Hot!

ERIC. The conversation continued as Eric went to the kitchen to make coffee. He listened as Henry engaged his friends about their lives, their work, their passions. In that moment, Eric glimpsed the future that was opening to him. But as he returned with dessert—

JASON #1. Wait, wait, wait! You're a Republican?

JASPER. Eric, did you know about this?

ERIC. Well, I mean... I knew that Henry was relatively conservative, / but—

JASPER. And that he gave money to the party last year, including to the nominee?

ERIC. You donated to his campaign?

HENRY. I did.

ERIC. Why?

HENRY. He asked.

TRISTAN. You know him?

HENRY. Yeah, of course I do.

ERIC. And you gave him money?

HENRY. I'm a Republican. This can't be such a surprise.

ERIC. Well, I figured you were—

HENRY. A “good” Republican?

ERIC. Well...yes.

HENRY. I *am* a good Republican. I gave money to the nominee. As I do every four years.

JASON #1. Why are you a Republican, Henry?

HENRY. Lots of reasons. I'm a businessman. I believe in low taxes, free markets. Why shouldn't I be a Republican?

JASON #2. Hello, *maricón*, you're gay!

JASON #1. But what about the Republican's age-old hostility to the LGBT community?

HENRY. Compared to the minutes-old embrace by the Democrats?

TRISTAN. Or the Reagan administration's willful inaction during the epidemic?

HENRY. I bet you can't guess which U.S. president was the first to make meaningful progress toward attempting to stem the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa?

JASON #2. Bill Clinton.

HENRY. George W. Bush, your former favorite bogeyman.

JASPER. Yes, but PEPFAR was aimed at the straight epidemic, not the gay one—

ERIC. So Tucker, when you burn the paintings, is it like a kind of ritual?

TUCKER. I'm completely naked when I do it. Sometimes I cum afterward.

TRISTAN. You're not actually suggesting that Republicans have done more to fight the spread of HIV than Democrats, are you?

HENRY. I'll throw a real curveball at you, Tristan. The story of the epidemic is mostly told as a triumph of activism and direct action. But I believe it can just as accurately be told as a triumph of free market principles—and of innovation.

TRISTAN. Please, Henry, do pitch that ball.

HENRY. When the epidemic began, we knew absolutely nothing about the virus, right? And, within a period of roughly thirteen years, we had identified it, learned its pathology and begun successful drug treatments. You'd have to look at the Manhattan Project to find a faster timeline. And how was it accomplished? It—

JASPER. It was accomplished because activists / fought for—

HENRY. Forgive me Jasper, that was a rhetorical question—it was accomplished because scientists and pharmaceutical companies / took the initiative despite intransigent gridlock within the FDA—

JASPER. Pharmaceutical companies!

(*After "FDA."*) It was the activists who pressured the FDA to relax standards to fast-track drugs.

HENRY. —which unleashed the drug companies to begin innovating in ways they'd never been allowed to before. The activists, whether they realized it or not, employed libertarian principles in order to free the drug companies / from onerous government oversight—

JASPER. The drug companies were forced into action / by activists.

HENRY. No, they were *driven* into action by profit motivation, which ultimately led to the introduction of drug cocktails and—a mere twenty years after the start of the epidemic—to Truvada. We went from absolute ignorance to reliable treatment and the prevention of transmission within twenty years! Those drug companies, like all companies, wanted to make a buck. And in doing so, they ended up saving tens of millions of lives.

JASON #1. Yeah, but that's only half the infected population, Henry. And it ignores the fact that if you're a Black gay man in America, your chances of contracting HIV in your lifetime are one in two.

And the numbers are almost as bad for trans women of color, sex workers, homeless queer youth. Look, I'm a science teacher. I take your point about innovation. But the truth is that the very people who are most in need of access to Truvada can't afford it, thanks to the same pharmaceutical companies you champion, Henry. Come on, let's be honest—when people talk about the epidemic being over, what they really mean is that it's over among middle-class white men.

HENRY. Jason, my God—one in two?

JASON #1. You won't read about *that* in the *Wall Street Journal*.

JASON #2. You know, I don't think gay people should have to pay taxes.

HENRY. You don't, huh?

JASON #2. Absolutely not! Why the fuck should I pay taxes to a government that wants to deny me all my rights? Same for women, transfolk, immigrants, and all people of color.

TRISTAN. (*To Jason #2.*) We could get a double rebate for that.

JASON #2. Walk into your accountant's office: "Oh yes, I'll take two oppression exemptions, please." Actually, we should be able to choose where our tax money goes every year. They could make it look like a dim sum menu, you know? And there should be a comments section! "Dear Mr. Government—you may not spend my tax money on war, discrimination, or to build any motherfucking walls."

HENRY. Jason—I hate to break this to you, but that was spoken like a true libertarian.

JASON #2. I'm vers, Papi.

HENRY. Ultimately what we're talking about here is a difference in philosophy.

JASPER. No, what we're talking about here is a difference in morality.

ERIC. I think what we're discussing is the divide between the responsibility to community and the responsibility to the self, are we not? I mean, I do think it's possible to effect real change in the

world by concentrating on the personal sphere and letting the global sphere take care of itself.

JASPER. “Let the global sphere take care of itself”? Have you been reading Ayn Rand in addition to watching old Westerns?

ERIC. No, I’m just trying to find a link between what you’re saying, Jasper, and what Henry is saying.

JASPER. There is no link.

ERIC. But we have to look for one. Our nation, since its founding, has lived in tension with itself. But that tension has never been our weakness—it’s been our greatest strength. Our national character has been forged by our ability to bridge our differences, to find compromise wherever possible, and to change hearts and minds when it is not. You know, when I was a kid, I used to stare at the map of the United States in class. And I always thought that America was shaped like an animal in a way. Maine is the head and Florida is the front legs.

JASON #2. Ooh! What are the back legs?

ERIC. Well, it didn’t really have back legs, baby. I was seven. Anyway, it’s always caused me to think of America as a living, breathing organism. America is a body. And you could break down the metaphor all the way to the cellular level if you want. The cells are the American people. And in order to maintain the health of the American body, we have to maintain a healthy relationship with each other. The Constitution starts with “We the People,” not “I the person.”

HENRY. God, I love how you think. Heal the cells and the body will become healthy. Correct me if I’m wrong, Tristan—but isn’t that exactly how HIV is treated?

TRISTAN. Basically, yes. You know, I’m not just a physician, Henry, I’ve also been living with HIV for eleven years.

If America is a body and its citizenry are its cells, then my question would be: What is its immune system? What protects the health of those cells in relationship to each other?

JASPER. Our laws.

JASON #2. Our free press.

JASON #1. Our courts.

ERIC. Our democracy.

TRISTAN. Yes. Our immune system is our democracy. Does everyone remember taking Bio 101 in college?

TUCKER. My degree was in individualized study, so...

TRISTAN. Okay, so you've got your T cells.

TUCKER. What are T cells?

TRISTAN. So T cells are the first defense against infection.

JASPER. It's like on *Game of Thrones*, baby. And the T cells are the Night's Watch.

TUCKER. Oh!

JASPER. (*To Tristan.*) Go on, he's caught up.

TRISTAN. T cells buzz around the bloodstream, looking for trouble, sounding the alarm at the first sign of infection.

JASPER. Calling for Daenerys Targaryen and her dragons!

TUCKER. Oh yes I see!

TRISTAN. Now unlike most other viruses, which attach themselves to all different kinds of human cells, HIV attaches itself exclusively to the T cells—the very cells that are meant to be guarding against such infections. Now with the T cells compromised, the body's autoimmune system shuts down. So, getting back to Eric's analogy—if America is a body and its citizenry are its cells and its T cells are its democracy, then what about that man you gave money to? Where would he fit in this analogy? You could say that he is HIV. And, like HIV, he's replicating his genetic material from tweet to tweet, from person to person, institution to institution, across the entire nation. Consequently, America is now falling prey to opportunistic infections its immune system had once at least been able to fight: fear, propaganda, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, white nationalism. And so, like any person with untreated HIV, this nation has developed the *American* Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Maybe we should just call it what it is and diagnose it properly: America has AIDS.

HENRY. Tristan, you are brilliant! Will you come work for me? I want to pay you to think for a living.

TRISTAN. Oh Henry! You can't afford me.

ERIC. Okay, I think we've had enough politics for one afternoon. Would anyone like some cake?

TUCKER. I'd love some, thanks!

JASPER. How much money do you make a year, Henry?

ERIC. Jasper! You do not need to answer that, Henry.

JASPER. Why not? For the sake of debate.

HENRY. I don't mind, for the sake of debate. It's hard to answer too accurately.

JASPER. Ballpark it.

HENRY. Let's say a quarter of a billion dollars a year.

TUCKER. Wow. That's a lot of money.  
ERIC. There, Jasper: You have your answer. Who wants coffee and cake?

JASPER. Do you think it's possible you might care a little more about what happens to powerless people in this country if you weren't a wealthy, white, privileged male?

HENRY. I wasn't born wealthy, Jasper. And certainly not privileged. Although I confess you do have me on white. My father was a car mechanic and my mother was an elementary school teacher. What do your parents do for a living?

JASPER. But surely you agree that there's a difference between being born to the white working class in the 1950s and being born into poverty now. Economic inequality is expanding in this country at an exponential rate.

HENRY. What do you propose I should do about that?

JASPER. You could start by paying your fair share of taxes. The Constitution starts with "We the People," not "We the People who have good accountants."

HENRY. Okay, let's suppose for the sake of argument that I took all my surplus money and gave it to the poor. Let's suppose that every American does—yourself included. Who gets it? Is everyone included in this scheme or only the pure of heart?

JASPER. I wouldn't place an ideological litmus test on it.

HENRY. So you're willing to make sacrifices—

JASPER. Absolutely!

HENRY. —even for a rural white Southern bigot who hates every single one of us in this room but who is just as much in need of economic assistance as the United Colors of Benetton ad you most likely see in your head when you think so romantically of the poor? When you say “We the people,” Jasper, do you really mean that? Or do you mean “We the people who agree with me”?

JASPER. We could start with the people who have lost their homes so you can build your high-rise condos all over the city.

ERIC. Jasper, come on.

JASPER. Or with the homeless people living in the condemned buildings you routinely grab up for pennies on the dollar.

HENRY. Jasper, it isn't my responsibility as a real estate developer to end homelessness. Nor is it my job as a billionaire to fix income inequality.

JASPER. No, it's your responsibility as a human being.

HENRY. I am responsible to my family, to my employees, my investors. If homelessness, if income inequality is your passion, then it should be your fight. You and I have different philosophies and therefore different priorities. Just because I don't share yours doesn't make me a villain. No one opened any doors for me nor did me any favors.

JASPER. Yes, but what you're ignoring is that, while you may have had humble beginnings, you have been on a glide path to success from the day you were born because you're a white male in America and because of that, doors were in fact open to you that have been resolutely sealed to so many other people in this country.

ERIC. Jasper—

JASPER. You don't give a fuck about our community or this nation because for a man like you, being gay is just a speed bump on your journey. You've arrived at your station in life without ever once understanding suffering or the meaning of adversity.

HENRY. I pray, Jasper, that you never learn the true meaning of adversity. I pray that you never know what it is like to live in fear for



your life. I sincerely hope you're forever shielded from misfortune. But you see, my boy, I wasn't. No one saved me. I saved myself. Whether you realize it or not, whether you like it or not, you are the man you are today because men my age paid for your rights with their lives.

JASPER. I didn't mean that gay men your age / didn't—

HENRY. THERE ARE NO GAY MEN MY AGE!

Not nearly enough.

*A moment, then:*

Gentlemen, it has been an enjoyable if pugnacious afternoon. A pleasure to meet you all.

ERIC. Henry, please don't go.

HENRY. I'll be upstairs if you need me. I have some calls to return. Tucker, if you ever want to sell me one of your paintings, I promise I'll never look at it.

*Henry exits. Seething silence, then:*

ERIC. Jasper, I don't even know what to say to you right now.

JASPER. You don't know what to say to ME? Eric, do you see the person you're mixed up with?

ERIC. That "person" has a name. He also has a home and you are inside it. You searched his political contributions online and then threw it in his face.

JASON #2. You were pretty nasty about it, Jasper.

JASPER. Guys, he is part of the problem.

ERIC. So then leave his fucking house.

JASPER. Fine. Come on, Tucker.

TUCKER. But there's cake still.

JASPER. Look, Eric, I know you've been through a lot / this past year or so—

ERIC. Henry asked me to marry him.

JASPER. You're not actually thinking about it, are you?

ERIC. I don't have to explain myself to you.

TRISTAN. Do you love Henry?

ERIC. In a way, yes.

TRISTAN. "In a way"?

JASON #1. Is that enough, Eric?

JASON #2. Are you two fucking?

ERIC. We haven't yet.

TRISTAN. So what is Henry offering you that you believe you need?

JASPER. Besides a billion dollars.

ERIC. He's offering me happiness and comfort and peace. Why shouldn't I want that?

JASPER. Because you'd be throwing away your life, Eric.

TRISTAN. Ignore Jasper.

JASPER. No, don't ignore Jasper!

TRISTAN. I'm not saying this because I don't want you to be happy. I'm saying it because I don't want you to be hurt. I'm talking right now about your gorgeous, compassionate heart. Will Henry care for that?

ERIC. He already does!

TRISTAN. You and Henry are very different people. He's prose and you're poetry.

JASON #1. He's logic and you're passion.

JASPER. He's evil and you're not.

ERIC. I cannot ask you to like Henry, but goddamnit Jasper, you will respect him. Because he deserves your respect.

JASPER. What makes him so deserving of my respect?

ERIC. The fact that he's won mine.

JASPER. Eric, if you marry this man, don't expect me to come to the wedding. And don't expect your job to be waiting for you when you come back from your honeymoon.

JASON #1. Jasper, come on.

ERIC. You would end our friendship over this?

JASPER. I am fighting for our nation's soul. For its very survival. I do not have room in my life for anyone who doesn't agree with that basic truth.

# THE INHERITANCE

## PART TWO

by Matthew López

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