

# The Young and the Rest Of Us

(A new play by Tamir Yardenne)

(Dramedy)

“Celebrity is the mask that eats the face.” – John Updike

## **CHARACTERS**

JESSE CHANDLER MONTGOMERY	48ish - Black, defying/denying his age
KIT JOHNSON	20s - Soap opera good looking
COLBY ANNE	20s - Young Ingénue
DITHERS	Old - Asian, Script Supervisor
MARYAM	30s - Muslim, Jesse’s Assistant
KAREN	50s - Head Writer
PAPI	30s - Hot Puerto Rican Detective
NADÈGE	40s - Jesse’s Manager

## **SETTING**

The play takes place in two locations: Jesse’s brownstone living room in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, and the soundstage of the soap opera, The Young and the Rest of Us.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

### **Note on Text:**

A forward slash (/) indicates where the following line overlaps. Two hyphens (--) at the end of a line indicate an interrupted thought.

### **Note on Set:**

A floor-to-ceiling section of the bar area in Jesse's living room swivels back and forth, seamlessly transforming the space into the Jean Harlow Soundstage, which instantly becomes a set from North Side General Hospital.

## ACT I SCENE 1

### PROLOGUE

*(As house lights dim, silence. Then... thunder. Rain in the distance. Out of the darkness, a voice... eerie, intimate, almost too close... cuts through the silence.)*

#### PODCAST HOST (V.O)

The Emmy goes to... Jesse Chandler Montgomery.  
(Audience cheers. Flashbulbs Applause.)

#### PODCAST HOST (V.O)

And just like that, he became a household name. Soap opera royalty. Then one day... he cracked. Some say he was pushed. For some... a legend. For others... a monster. But what he did next... No one saw it coming.

*(The sound of an old-school tape winding. Static. Then, hauntingly... An old Negro spiritual, "I've Been Buked and I've Been Scorned" plays, wrapping the room in grief.*

*The light slowly reveals a massive gold-framed portrait of JESSE CHANDLER MONTGOMERY... shirtless, oiled, cradling an Emmy like a newborn. Around him, a shrine: framed selfies, soap stills, and tabloid covers -- Jesse in every pose imaginable. And above it all, hanging slightly crooked, a picture of a white Jesus. The brownstone is decadent. A swirling chandelier glows overhead. Stage right: a stocked bar beside a hallway leading to the guest bathroom and dining area, with a basement door tucked beside it. Stage left: a staircase and coat rack hint at a second floor. French doors open into the kitchen. Behind the sofa, is a glass table laid out with caviar and champagne. The room is both glamorous and too much... a man trying to prove he still matters.*

*The stage is plunged into darkness except for a single, soft spotlight illuminating JESSE, naked and curled tightly in the fetal position on the floor, with nothing exposed... utterly vulnerable and exposed in body and spirit.)*

JESSE

No... no... it wasn't me. It was the monkey suit. They zipped me in. Shoved me out there like I was some kind of animal. Humiliated. She... she did this. She's back. My fans, my fans... they love me... But, but let it be, Horatio, I am dead / Thou livest; report me and my cause aright... I'm a good person. It was a wellness retreat. It really was. It was a wellness retreat... It was a wellness retreat... It was a wellness retreat.....

LIGHTS FADE. BLACK OUT.

*GUNSHOT. A siren wails, distant... then more shots. A woman SCREAMS. Red strobes erupt -- flashing, frantic. SHADOWS flood the stage... FIGURES in trench coats, scarves, Yankees *baseball* caps... faceless, hunting. A voice quiet but sharp... presses in.)*

PODCAST HOST (V.O)

Last night, a 26-year-old woman was found murdered in her brownstone...

*As the figures swirl, the PODCAST HOST emerges from darkness into a sharp pool of light. Headphones on. Mic in hand. Face half-hidden in shadow.)*

VOICES (overlapping, chaotic)

"Don't let that NIGGER get away!" "Get his ass!" "He went that way!"

*(The figures whirl around the stage, chasing someone imaginary. One points into the audience. Another holds up a bottle of pills, gasping for air. One brandishes a syringe and cackles. Then, all vanish.*

PODCAST HOST

Witnesses described a white male in a dark coat, gray scarf, and vintage Yankees cap. No suspects. No answers. No additional clues.....