

# **Welcome to the Family**

A Play by

Philip Middleton Williams

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**CHARACTERS:**

WILL KURTZ: Early twenties. Muscular.

P.J. HENDERSON-CONNOLLY: Early twenties. Well-built. Will's fiancé.

TONY DURAN: Late thirties.

JOSH DURAN: Sixteen. Tony's son.

PAUL HENDERSON: Early seventies. P.J.'s grandfather.

ADAM CONNOLLY: Late sixties. P.J.'s grandfather by marriage.

**PLACE and TIME:**

A home in suburban Miami, mid-June. The action of this play takes place five years after "All Together At Last."

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## Welcome to the Family

### Scene 1

*The scene is the living room of the home of PAUL HENDERSON and ADAM CONNOLLY. It is a comfortable place in suburban Miami. It is open and airy. The furnishings are a mixture of antique and contemporary furniture, tastefully done but not extravagant. Upstage right is the kitchen area, open to the rest of the room, with a breakfast table nearby. Upstage left is a dining area with a table and chairs for six. Downstage right is a comfortable couch, chairs, standing lamp, and coffee table. Downstage left is a reading area with bookshelves and a small desk with a phone, a laptop computer and a printer (unseen) under the desk. There is a small stack of mail on the corner of the desk. Off stage right is an exit to the rest of the rooms of the house; the front entry hall is stage left. The back wall has a large sliding glass doors and sidelights leading out to a patio and garden area visible to the audience. It is lush with plants and hanging orchids.*

*At rise, it is mid-morning on a Saturday in June. WILL KURTZ, a muscular man in his early twenties in jeans, a worn Gold's Gym t-shirt, and wire-rimmed glasses, is at the desk working on the computer. He picks up a book from the desk, leafs through it, jots down a note on a pad, and goes back to work. A moment later the phone rings. WILL answers it.*

WILL (*preoccupied*): H'lo.... No, this is Will.... I'm his grandson, sorta. ... It's complicated. ... Yeah, I heard the message you left yesterday. ... No, he and his husband are out of town.... Can I take a message? ... Okay, hold it. (*Starts to write down the message.*) Yeah, okay, I got it. ... Uh, yeah, they're due back on Monday afternoon. We're just housesitting for them... Yeah, I will. (*Listens somewhat impatiently as the person on the other end goes on.*) Yeah, I will. I will tell him. Okay. G'bye.

*(WILL hangs up the phone, shakes his head, and goes back to work. A moment later the front door opens and P.J. HENDERSON-CONNOLLY enters. He is also an attractive and well-built man in his early twenties. He is wearing jeans, a polo shirt, and sneakers. He is carrying a manila envelope in one hand and a Fed Ex envelope in the other. He drops both on the desk and gives WILL a kiss, which he returns.)*

WILL: So, how'd it go?

P.J. They want eighteen hundred, including the tent.

WILL: Did you tell them we don't need the tent?

P.J. Several times. It comes as a part of the package whether we want it or not. Something about food safety regulations.

*(P.J. crosses to the kitchen and picks up the coffee carafe. WILL follows.)*

P.J. (*cont'd*): Shit, we drank it all. You want some more coffee?

WILL: No, I'm good. Did you tell them that it's not the Biltmore? (*Gestures to the garden.*) There will be thirty people, tops. It's gonna be more like a quiet little dinner party instead of a wedding. Right?

P.J.: Right. I told them. But there's a minimum for this and that, plus a serving staff –

WILL: Serving staff? Jesus, why don't we just hire a couple of guys from Adam's gym to prance around in their Spandex pants and tank tops? It's a gay wedding, so we might as well go for all the cultural stereotypes.

P.J.: Yeah, I think the Village People are booked. Look, it's no big deal, and having a caterer do it instead of us will be worth just the hassle alone. All we gotta do is pick out the menu and write the check. (*Picks up manila envelope, opens it, and pulls out a sheaf of papers.*) Take a look. They need to know by tomorrow. That and a deposit.

WILL: The wedding's not until August.

P.J.: Yeah, but it's the busy season, they're booking up, and it's pretty amazing how fast two months can fly by.

WILL: Pick out whatever you want.

P.J.: Yeah, okay. How about half vegan and half real food?

WILL: Fine with me. Like I said, whatever you want.

P.J.: I love how decisive you are.

WILL: Hey, the important thing is that we're getting married, okay? Finally. The rest of it is just...

P.J.: You were the one that wanted to wait until we finished college –

WILL: And landed jobs. Yeah, I know. What we shoulda done is run off to that little guest house in Key West, have the lifeguard perform the ceremony on the pool deck, and be done with it.

P.J.: Yeah, I don't think they make a tuxedo version of a Speedo.

WILL: So, we go clothing-optional. If not for the guests, at least for us.

(*P.J. laughs and they embrace.*)

P.J.: You'd like that, wouldn't you?

WILL: Well, save it for the honeymoon. By the way, does the name Buddy Sykes mean anything to you?

P.J.: No. Should it?

WILL: He just called. He also left a message yesterday for Paul. Said something about going through Audrey Somebody's old files and needs to talk to him.

P.J.: Audrey Hepburn?

WILL (*looking at the message*): Audrey McMillan.

P.J. (*shrug*): Never heard of her. Probably has something to do with G-Dad's retirement account.

WILL: Okay. (*Sees the FedEx envelope.*) What's that?

P.J.: I dunno, it was leaning up against the front door when I came in. It's addressed to you.

(*WILL opens the envelope, pulls out the papers, reads, then stops and stares at it.*)

WILL: Holy shit.

P.J.: What is it, your grad school recommendation letters? Don't they do all that on line now?

(*WILL wordlessly hands the papers to P.J.*)

P.J. (*reading*): Certification of birth. (*Beat.*) Holy shit is right. Who sent this to you?

WILL: The return address is Portland.

P.J.: So, your mom. Jesus, didn't you ask her for it like five years ago? Right after you moved in here with me and G-Dad and G-Pop?

WILL: Yeah, I did. She said she'd look for it, but I never heard back... I guess she forgot, and it didn't seem like it mattered. I mean, I have my Social Security card and all the adoption papers proving that I was...

P.J.: You've never seen this before.

WILL: No.

P.J.: How'd you get your driver's license? I needed my birth certificate to prove I was old enough and my name was really Paul Jerome Henderson-Connolly.

WILL: I dunno; Gene did all that when we applied for mine. Showed them some paper. All I worried about was passing the vision test. But my license says William Kurtz, not –

P.J.: Guillermo Antonio Duran.

(*Beat.*)

WILL: Yeah.

(*Beat.*)

P.J.: So, why's she sending it to you now?

WILL: Gene's dead. Maybe she thought it was safe now.

P.J.: She thinks you still live here.

WILL: Yeah, I never gave her our address after we moved out. She knew about the whole temporary custody thing five years ago, and I told her about living with you and Paul and Adam, but...

P.J. (*drawing it out with a Spanish accent*): Guillermo Antonio Duran.

WILL: C'mon.

P.J. (*teasing*): Sounds really sexy. Guillermo...

WILL: C'mon. Here in Miami, I'm just another –

P.J.: Don't say it.

WILL: Just another guy named Will *en español*.

P.J. (*reading*): It says the father's name is Antonio Andrés Duran of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Hey, we should get Mom and Dad to look him up, see if he's in their neighborhood.

WILL: That was over twenty years ago, and he was in the military. He's probably moved somewhere else.

P.J.: Let's find out.

(*P.J. goes to the computer and starts to type.*)

WILL: No, don't.

P.J.: C'mon. Hello, Google...

WILL: I mean it. Don't.

(*P.J. stops typing.*)

P.J. Okay. Sorry.

WILL: It's just that... I mean, I didn't even know he existed until five years ago. I don't know if he knows I exist. Be a hell of a surprise to show up outta the blue and –

P.J.: In this family, that's the norm. Just ask G-Dad and my dad. That's how they first met thirty years ago, Dad showing up at that front door. "Hi, Paul, I'm Fox. I'm your kid." But, so far, so good.

WILL: At least Paul knew there was a possibility with your grandma and the IVF turkey baster. In my case, all this guy did was shoot his load and make tracks.

P.J.: You don't know that.

WILL: That's what Gene said.

P.J.: Your stepdad was a mean, homophobic asshole drunk. That bridge abutment on the Palmetto Expressway did the world a huge favor by running into him three weeks ago. The only reason anybody showed up at his funeral was just to make sure he was really dead. At least now you have a shot at finding out who your family really is.

WILL: Hey, as far as I'm concerned, you guys are it: Paul and Adam, Fox and Nancy...

P.J.: And G-Mom. But you said you wanted to know who your dad was; what your real name was.

WILL: Yeah, okay, that was a long time ago. And, well, now I know.

P.J.: So that's it?

WILL: Yeah, pretty much.

*(P.J. shrugs in exasperation and goes to the patio doors, looking out. WILL sits at the computer and starts to go back to work.)*

P.J. When we get married, are you gonna change your name?

WILL: I don't know; haven't thought about it. Why; do you want to change yours?

P.J.: I might.

WILL: To what? String ours together? Henderson-Connolly-Kurtz?

P.J.: That sounds like either a law office or a dynasty.

WILL: Well, then, what?

P.J.: When my dad was born, he was named George Fox Engstrom. Then when he moved in here with G-Dad and G-Pop, he added Henderson-Connolly. So, his full legal name is George Fox Engstrom Henderson-Connolly. It barely fits on his license, much less a credit card. So to the world he's Fox Henderson-Connolly, which is still a lot. *(Beat.)* Maybe we should start our own family name instead of sounding like some European monarchy.

WILL: Like what?

P.J.: What was your mother's maiden name?

*(WILL takes the birth certificate and searches. He smirks and snorts.)*

P.J.: What is it?

WILL: Feese.<sup>1</sup>

P.J.: You're making that up.

WILL: Read it and weep. Sheila Marie Feese.

P.J.: No way in hell am I gonna be P.J. Feese.

WILL: Or Will Feese. What about your mom's? McCormick.

P.J.: That would work. The point is, you don't have to be Will Kurtz anymore. That part of your life will be over.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhymes with "geese."

WILL: It was over a long time ago.

P.J.: Exactly. Now that we're gonna get married, you have a chance to start over.

WILL: Are you gonna stick with Henderson-Connolly?

P.J.: Depends on what you want to do. And what if we decide to have kids? What will we call them?

WILL: A miracle.

P.J.: You know what I mean.

WILL: How about Pyrex Turkey-Baster? Jesus, P.J., does it really matter? Why is it so important to you all of a sudden? It's not like changing my last name is gonna change who I am, either William Kurtz or –

P.J. (*sexy Spanish*): Guillermo Antonio Duran.

WILL: Yeah, that. I'm still just me.

P.J.: And I love you no matter what. But the family name is kinda important, too, don'tcha think? I used to listen to my great-granddad go on and on about his family history, how the Henderson ancestors came over from Scotland sometime after the Punic Wars and settled in the Midwest to grow haggis. Bored the crap outta me, but Grampy was so proud of our history and that we turned out the way we did even when it looked like G-Dad was gonna be the last of the Henderson line because his uncle Frank had nothing but girls who married guys with names like Wayne Nandermunch. So, when my dad showed up fresh outta the petri dish and was straight, it was like a sign from God: here was another kid to hear the tales of great-great-great-granddad Angus from Banffshire, and the family would carry on. That's why G-Dad and G-Pop are on their vacation over there: to see where it all began.

WILL: Banffshire? Sounds like something outta *The Hobbit*.

P.J.: It's a real place. I looked it up.

WILL: I'll bet. Look, I'm glad that your family means something to you. I mean it. But it's never really been a big deal to me. I never knew my grandparents, my mom was an only child, Gene's sister hated him, my cousin is a stoner, and... (*Sees the look on WILL's face.*) Look, if you want me to become Will Henderson-Connolly, that's fine. I move up a couple of notches on the alphabet.

P.J. (*sulking*): Do whatever you want.

WILL (*sigh*): Okay.

(*WILL starts to exit SR.*)

P.J.: Where're you going?

WILL: To the bathroom. That's what happened to all the coffee.



*(WILL exits, P.J. watching him go, almost follows. The desk phone rings. P.J. answers it.)*

P.J.: Hello. ... No, sorry, they're not here. ... I'm P.J., their grandson. Is this Buddy? ... *(P.J.'s eyes widen, a surprised look on his face.)* Oh... wow. *(P.J. looks off SR where WILL has exited.)* Uh, yeah, he's here, but he's...busy right now. You want to wait to talk to him? *(Looks off SR.)* He'll be back in a few minutes. ... I'll tell him you called. ... *(A look of surprise as he listens.)* Yeah, okay. ... Well, I guess so. *(Looks at his watch.)* Okay. ... Um, it's One-Two-Nine-Zero-Zero Southwest... Oh, you got it. Right. ... Okay. See you. G'bye.

*(P.J. hangs up the phone, stares into space, then looks off SR.)*

P.J. *(to himself)*: Holy shit. *(Calling off.)* Hey, Will. *(Louder.)* Will.

WILL *(off)*: What?

P.J.: Uh...

*(WILL enters SR.)*

WILL: What?

P.J.: Your dad just called.

WILL: What?

P.J.: Your dad. Tony Duran. That was him on the phone.

WILL: What did he want?

P.J.: He wants to come see you.

WILL: When?

P.J.: Now.

WILL: He's here? In Miami?

P.J.: Yeah. He said he'd be here in an hour or so. He knew the address and everything.

WILL: How did he –

P.J.: I'm sorry, I didn't know what to tell him. He acted like it was no big deal, like he thought you might be expecting him or something.

WILL: Jesus.

P.J.: Look, I didn't know what to say. I'm sorry—

WILL: No, it's okay.

P.J.: If you wanna take off, y'know, go back to our place, I can make up something like an emergency at work or something.

WILL: No, it's okay.

*(WILL heads for the SR exit.)*

P.J.: Now what?

WILL *(exiting)*: Gonna change. Can't meet my father for the first time in an old gym shirt.

*(WILL exits, and P.J. looks at his own clothes, and decides he's okay. He starts to move around the room, tidying up, neatening up the desk, checking the dining area and kitchen, looking out to see if the garden is in order. His cellphone in his pocket chirps. He looks at the screen, then answers it.)*

P.J.: Hey, G-Dad, how's Scotland? Finding your ancestral roots? ... Really? A castle and everything? Wow, maybe we're related to royalty. ... Oh, yeah, everything's great. *(Looks out to the patio.)* The red vanda bloomed again. Other than that. ... *(Listens.)* Oh, okay. Sure. What time do you get in? We can come get you. ... Okay. Yeah, we'll see you then. Okay. Safe travels.

*(Ends call, lets out a long sigh. WILL enters as he's pulling on a polo shirt, tucking it in.)*

WILL: How's this look?

P.J.: Huh? Oh, that's good. You and your bulging pecs.

WILL: Thanks. Who was that?

P.J.: Who was what?

WILL: On your phone just now.

P.J.: Oh! G-Dad. They're getting in this afternoon.

WILL: I thought they weren't due back until Monday.

P.J.: It's been raining non-stop in Glasgow and so they said the hell with it, they'd seen everything they wanted to see, so they got an earlier flight. He was calling from the plane. Jesus. When it rains, it pours.

WILL: What are you so worked up about?

P.J. *(sarcastic)*: Oh, nothing. Your dad, who you've never met, is about to show up here, followed by my two grandfathers. It's got all the makings of a really bad Hallmark TV classic.

WILL: No, for that you need a lonely mid-thirties career woman from Manhattan who chucks it all and moves to Vermont to open a candle shop and meets a really hot guy who makes maple syrup and has a Golden Retriever named Bailey. She falls in love with him, but it turns out he's gay, so she ends up with the widowed assistant manager of the lumberyard who has a ten-year-old daughter who hates her –

P.J.: You're really not taking this seriously.

WILL: No. Why are you?

P.J.: You're the one who changed his shirt.

WILL (*laughing*): C'mere, you goof.

(*P.J. and WILL embrace, WILL chuckling.*)

WILL (*cont'd*): Wow, you're more nervous than the first time we had sex.

P.J.: But I knew that was coming –

WILL: Yeah, we both did. Twice.

P.J.: Let me rephrase that.

WILL: Please do.

P.J.: Have you thought about what you're gonna say to him?

WILL: Not really, other than hello, nice to finally meet you.

P.J.: Then?

WILL: Then what? Show him around the house. Offer him a drink. (*Beat.*) Why, what do you think I should say?

P.J.: If it was me, I'd wanna know why he took off and left your mom alone. Why he never got in touch with you and why's he doing it now. Did he plan it all out, with your birth certificate showing up in the mail and then an hour later he's ringing your doorbell?

WILL (*making the "Twilight Zone" theme*): Do-do-do-do, do-do-do-do...

P.J.: Come on! I mean it. It's all too coincidental.

WILL: Well, so what?

P.J.: What does he want?

WILL: When he gets here, you can ask him. Jesus, P.J., when we went up to Vermont last summer for your uncle's wedding, you didn't get all squirrely about meeting all those relatives you never knew existed, including your cousin Jack who seemed way too interested in us being on the wrestling team and what it was like being pinned by a half-naked guy.

P.J.: What's that gotta do with this?

WILL: Nothing except I thought it was funny that you've got a cousin who's married with two kids and is probably gayer than both of us put together. You never know with family. So why get all worked up about it?

(*P.J. goes to the kitchen, opens the refrigerator.*)

P.J.: All we've got is a pitcher of iced tea, Diet Pepsi and those little bottles of water from the gym.

WILL: Planning on serving him lunch?

P.J.: I've got time to run to Publix and pick up some snacks.

WILL: Like what?

P.J.: I dunno, a cheese tray or something. I'll decide when I get there.

*(He heads for the SL door, pulling out his keys as he goes.)*

P.J. *(cont'd)*: Back in a few. Might want to tidy up the place a little.

WILL: It's not Martha Stewart, it's just my dad.

P.J.: Yeah, okay. Still, you might wanna, y'know...

WILL: It's fine. See you in a bit.

*(P.J. exits. WILL looks around the house, much as P.J. did, tidies up the desk, plumps up the cushions on the couch, straightens the books on the coffee table, fidgeting. Finally, he stands in the middle of the room, looks around, and lets out a deep breath.)*

WILL: Holy shit.

End of Scene 1.

**The play is not over. To find out how it ends, contact the playwright at [pmw@barkbarkwoofwoof.com](mailto:pmw@barkbarkwoofwoof.com).**