

In the Heights Production Preview Guide

Many people have different ideas about what material is appropriate, both for themselves and their families. This production preview guide is provided to give you the necessary information to determine if the content of our production is suitable for you and your loved ones. Please be aware that this document is provided with the intent of full-disclosure, and therefore contains plot spoilers. Also, because all of our productions are locally produced, there may be cases where minor changes occur as the director prepares the show for the stage. In such cases, this guide will be updated accordingly. Once the show is open and on stage, there will be no further changes.

VERSIONS AVAILABLE TO PREVIEW

There are no movie versions of this show to preview, however the script is available through the Box Office should you wish to read it. The CD of the music from the Broadway production is available for purchase.

SCRIPT CONTENT DETAILS *(Please note the following information contains plot spoilers.)*

In The Heights is a modern musical that takes place over the course of three days in the largely Dominican-American neighborhood of Washington Heights in New York City. There is quite a bit of language in the show, ranging from mild (“hell,” “ass,”) to moderate (“shit,” “damn,”). There are also several instances of sexual jokes between characters, though nothing is shown but a few onstage kisses. In addition there is reference to drugs, drug use, and alcohol. One scene takes place in a night club where characters are drinking.

SHOW SYNOPSIS

The following synopsis is provided to give you a full account of the story of *In The Heights* without ornamentation and with as much information as possible. *This synopsis contains many plot spoilers.*

ACT I

The show begins in the Washington Heights neighborhood in Manhattan. Usnavi is just opening his bodega (store/mini-mart) for the morning after chasing away a graffiti artist. As he opens the store, the audience is introduced to this Latino community and each of the prominent characters through the number “In The Heights.” Nina Rosario enters as the song ends, back from her first year at Stanford University. She came to Usnavi’s store to say hello to her friends that she hasn’t seen for a year. They briefly catch up with pride that Nina has completed her first year at such a prestigious school, before all exit off stage except for Nina. Nina reflects on her time away from the Heights (“Breathe”) and reveals that she is nervous to be back at home. As it turns out, after all of her work to get into the school (she sings she “got every scholarship, saved every dollar”), she feels she is actually a disappointment to her proud community. She readies herself to speak with her parents about some bad news regarding school.

Nina's parents, Kevin and Camila, are seeking an emergency loan to keep their struggling taxi dispatch business (Rosario Car Service) afloat. They temporarily leave one of Nina's friends, and a non-Latino employee of theirs, in charge of the dispatch while they sort things out ("Benny's Dispatch"). Nina enters, looking for her parents, and ends up hanging out with Benny and helping with the dispatch.

In the meantime, Vanessa is at the hair salon across the street with Daniela and Carla, trying to straighten out a bill situation. She gave half of her pay check to her mom for her mom's rent, however her mom "drank it away" instead. After Daniela and Carla leave, Vanessa reveals that she is longing to leave the Heights ("It Won't Be Long Now"). Usnavi enters, flirting with Vanessa, followed by Usnavi's younger cousin, Sonny. Sonny asks Vanessa out on a date on Usnavi's behalf. She agrees and Usnavi is elated.

Back at the dispatch booth, Camila and Kevin finally enter and welcome their daughter back with happiness. Nina requests to go out to coffee with her parents, but they decline, not noticing her distress and wanting to celebrate her return. After Benny exits the room, Nina reveals to her parents that she lost her scholarship. Her grades were below the cutoff, so Stanford put her on probation. She explains that she was essentially working two jobs to pay for books she didn't have time to read. She also admits that she took her leave of absence in March, four months ago. Her parents argue that they could have helped her pay, but Nina argues back that they laid off half their drivers that year and they don't understand what college is like. Nina leaves in frustration, heading to Vanessa's salon for comfort. Kevin is devastated that he cannot provide for his daughter, and reflects on his own father not believing in him ("Inútil").

At the salon, Nina finds out from Daniela the salon is closing tomorrow due to the high rent. The girls (Carla, Daniela, Vanessa and Nina) catch up ("No Me Diga") and gossip about Benny, then find out that Nina dropped out of Stanford. All of the girls are shocked, as Nina has never been a quitter nor dropped out of anything in her life.

The scene shifts to Usnavi checking lottery numbers with Benny and Sonny. During the check, Usnavi finds out that he sold a winning lottery ticket yesterday ("96,000"). They all talk about what they would do if they won that much money when Abuela Claudia, Daniela, Vanessa, and others enter. Once they find out about the mysterious winning lotto ticket, they start fantasizing about what their lives would be like with that money. Daniela says she would move elsewhere, Usnavi claims he would take the money to save himself from financial ruin and give Abuela Claudia the rest of it, and Sonny says he'd change the station and get new computers. Usnavi comes back and says that he'd "invest in a protest" and have the city notice the Heights' poverty level "because the ghetto has a million promises for me to keep!" Vanessa stuns everyone by kissing him on the cheek, then exclaiming that if she won the lotto she would leave the Heights for good.

Later, Abuela Claudia finds herself reflecting on her journey from Cuba to New York in 1943 (“Paciencia Y Fe”). During this reflection, Abuela Claudia reveals secretly to the audience that she actually has the winning lottery ticket, yet she’s unsure what the right course of action is.

That evening, Nina goes to Abuela Claudia’s stoop to visit her, but she doesn’t answer. Benny enters and they reminisce about the neighborhood, their friendship, and how their lives have changed (“When You’re Home”). They eventually admit their romantic feelings for each other.

The neighborhood is gathered at the Rosario household later that night. Camila and Kevin enter and then Kevin makes the announcement that he has sold the taxi dispatch business to pay for Nina’s tuition. Nina objects that she’ll find another job and take up night classes, Benny questions whether he still has a job or not, and Camila is angry with Kevin for selling without even talking to her about the decision first. Usnavi points out that their business is half of his store’s customers—without the business, he loses customers. Everyone is affected in some way. Nina claims she will never touch the money from her father’s sale and promises Benny (much to Kevin’s chagrin) that she will fix this.

The friends (Usnavi, Vanessa, Benny) all end up at the local dance club, where arguments over the situation break out as soon as Nina enters. She tries to make amends, but Benny is absolutely upset, saying that Kevin is constantly reminding him that he’ll never be good enough for Nina or her family. Everyone in the club starts to dance as tensions run high. Suddenly the power completely shuts off (“Blackout”). Chaos erupts as everyone tries to use their cell phone lights to see and exit the club. As a distraction to keep looters away, Sonny sets off fireworks with his friend Graffiti Pete. Benny and Nina eventually find each other in the street, along with Usnavi and Abuela Claudia. Abuela Claudia hands Usnavi a paper bag and Usnavi is shocked to see that it is filled with money. Meanwhile, Nina and Benny argue. Nina runs away from Benny, but he catches up from her and they kiss; illuminated by the fireworks.

Act II

The scene opens the next morning. Benny and Nina have spent the night together. As the sun rises, Nina teaches Benny some Spanish phrases (“Sunrise”), and he begins to worry what Kevin will think of his relationship with Nina. Nina and Benny both promise they will stay true to each other, no matter what happens next. Meanwhile, Usnavi discovers that while the power was out, his bodega had been looted. One of the windows is broken, the register was broken into, and the bodega is in disarray. Sonny, Vanessa, and others come to comfort him. Lights shift to the Rosario fire escape where Camila and Kevin are both worrying about where Nina is. Usnavi goes to visit Abuela Claudia to make sure she is OK after the commotion during the black out. Abuela Claudia shows Usnavi the money again and tells him that a third of it is for him. The two dream up a plan to move to Usnavi’s homeland of the Dominican Republic (“Hundreds of Stories”). Usnavi is hesitant at first, thinking of Vanessa, but soon warms up to the idea and agrees to pursue his lifelong dream at last with Abuela Claudia.

Kevin, Camila, and Nina finally find each other. Benny enters alongside Nina and, seeing that both parents are already furious, requests a word with Kevin. Kevin refuses, saying: “I’ll say this

nicely. Please stay away from daughter.” Kevin and Benny argue—Kevin insisting that Benny knows nothing about the Latino culture and doesn’t deserve his daughter. Camila finally interrupts the argument (“Enough”) and tells Kevin that decisions—any kind of decision—are made by the family, not individually. She points out that Kevin sounds just like his father, trying to throw Benny out. She then turns to Nina, telling her that she should have let both of them know where she was and she should also listen to Kevin when he says he wants to help her with school. She also adds: “Leave Benny, take Benny, it doesn’t make any difference, as long as you come home.”

It is now high noon and the whole neighborhood of the Heights is growing frustrated with the heat and the power outage (which keeps everyone from having air conditioning). The neighborhood, led by Daniela, muster enough energy for a gathering (“Carnaval Del Barrio”), in which Usnavi tells everyone that Abuela Claudia won the lotto and the two of them will be heading for the Dominican Republic. The neighborhood erupts in celebration, but it’s soon decided that this announcement changes everything—from relationships (Vanessa is heartbroken), to the salon, bodega, and dispatch closing forever.

The scene shifts and Kevin is heard on the dispatch radio announcing that Abuela Claudia has suddenly died (“Atención”). Abuela Claudia was found lying in bed and her heart had given out overnight. Seen as the matriarch of the block, everyone is heartbroken over the loss. A vigil is held for her. Later that afternoon, Nina and Usnavi are going through Abuela Claudia’s things, reflecting on her life (“Everything I know”) and their own. As Nina discovers photographs from her own high school graduation, Kevin and Camila enter. They look at the photo, then talk about Nina returning to Stanford and her relationship with Benny. After some discussion, she decides to accept Kevin’s sacrifice of selling the dispatch company and return to Stanford; asking Kevin how she can pay him back. Kevin responds with: “I always had a mind for investments. Nina Rosario, Bachelor of Arts. When that day comes, we’ll call it even.”

Across the street, as Daniela closes her salon, she reveals to Carla and Vanessa one last juicy piece of gossip: she will co-sign on Vanessa’s dream apartment in the West Village, thanks to a little convincing from Usnavi. Vanessa is confused at first, but then is touched by Daniela’s gesture. They lock up the salon for the last time, then exit.

Vanessa buys a bottle of champagne, then pays a visit to Usnavi, who is cleaning up his bodega. She flirts with him, telling him they need one last celebration before they both go their own ways (“Champagne”). Usnavi falls short of noticing Vanessa’s attempts though, too flustered from Abuela Claudia’s death and the crazy day it has been. Vanessa tries to convince him to stay in the Heights, only confusing him further, then kisses him and leaves the bodega. Meanwhile, Benny is worrying about his relationship with Nina and what will happen between them now that she is going back to school. They swear they will try to make the relationship work despite the distance (“When The Sun Goes Down”), but are both uncertain about how well this will work.

The next morning, with the power still out, Kevin and Camila close down the Rosario Car Service. Simultaneously, Usnavi begins to close down his bodega. In just a few weeks, Usnavi imagines the neighborhood will be completely different from what it used to be. As the neighborhood wakes, Graffiti Pete reveals that he has made a huge mural of Abuela Claudia outside of Usnavi's bodega. Usnavi is so touched by this gesture, he tells Sonny and Graffiti Pete to spread the news that he isn't leaving after all. He decides to use the lottery money to fix up the bodega and start new, and promises to pursue Vanessa. In the end, he realizes that the Heights is his home, and he can't just leave for the Dominican Republic. The show ends with the neighborhood gathered in Washington Heights: the one place that will always be home for all of them, no matter where each of their journeys takes them.