

Synopsis: Just You and Me

Just You and Me opens with Tom McMillan and Rick Ellis, a folk singing duo, on a bus from Indiana to Boston circa 1965 as Rick writes a song about Boston (“Boston—Short”). Tom asks Rick how long he intends to stay. Rick replies that he will stay “as long as it takes” for fame and fortune, while Tom says he will “learn my craft.” In Boston, they attend an open mic at Grendel’s Coffee House. They sit waiting as a young, heavysset woman named Wendy Rosenberg sings a song inspired by a recent trip to Cape Cod (“Collage”). Tom and Rick follow and perform the song Rick began writing on the bus (“Boston”). Soon after, Wendy approaches Tom and Rick and asks if she could perform with them. Though Tom is opposed, Rick eventually persuades him to “give it a try.”

The following day, Rick visits Wendy at her apartment, where they hammer out the opening notes and verse to a song the three play at Grendel’s (“Just You and Me”) the following week. Jeff Kaye, who hosts a radio show called Hootenanny, is in the audience. He invites the trio, now called Indiana, to perform “Just You and Me” on his show. The song becomes a major hit, propelling them to national prominence.

Julian Goodman, president of NBC television, meets with his staff to discuss the network’s dismal Tuesday night ratings. One of his assistants, Leslie Stiles, suggests giving Rick Ellis his own hour-long variety show. Goodman thinks it’s a good idea and dispatches Leslie to meet with Rick at Indiana’s next appearance, which happens to be at the Woodstock Music Festival in August 1969.

Following Indiana’s set at Woodstock (“Lost Without You”), Leslie meets Rick backstage and suggests he meet Goodman at the NBC office in New York. Questioned by Tom, Rick assures him he has no interest in leaving the group, although Tom is convinced Rick intends to betray them. Meeting Goodman in New York, Rick is offered a weekly variety show, which he readily accepts, referring to Tom and Wendy as “dead weight.”

Back in Boston, Wendy waits for Rick to return and is excited about the prospect of a weekly television show. Tom enters and together they play a song Wendy wrote in anticipation of Rick’s announcement (“Friends”). Rick arrives and tells them he’s decided to leave the group and do the television show himself. Wendy is devastated, though Tom is not surprised, knowing Rick’s singular desire for fame and fortune.

Following their final performance as Indiana (“We’ll Meet Again”), Wendy expresses her love for Rick which he rejects, as he’s become romantically involved with Leslie. Upon leaving, Rick asks Tom to join him in California. Tom refuses, choosing to stay with Wendy as Act I ends.

Act II opens with the premiere of *The Rick Ellis Show*. Rick enters and introduces Sammy Davis Jr. They sing a big band arrangement of “Just You and Me.”

By 1980, Rick has become one of the biggest names in show business, while Tom and Wendy struggle even to get a club date. They are, in fact, reduced to hosting the open mic at Grendel’s, the coffeehouse where they first got started. Tom visits Wendy at her apartment where they practice Wendy’s latest composition, “Seasons” (“Seasons—2 verses”). Tom becomes enraged when Wendy confesses that the song is about Rick, leading to a heated argument concerning their current financial and artistic situation. At Grendel’s, they open with a 1960s retrospective (“Do You Remember?”). However, upon finishing, Wendy collapses and is rushed to a hospital.

Back in Hollywood, Rick’s agent, Mel, informs Rick about what happened to Wendy and suggests he visit her to boost his ratings. Rick agrees, flies to Boston, and feigns concern at Wendy’s bedside while it’s being filmed for future use on his show. Outside the hospital room, there is a heated exchange between Rick and Tom, revealing precisely what transpired at the meeting between Rick and Goodman. As Rick is about to leave for the airport, he asks Tom for a song he could use on his show. Rick introduces a new song (“Seasons, Big Band”) the following week, without attribution.

The final scene shows Tom as a featured guest at the 50th anniversary of the Woodstock music festival. When the moderator asks what he remembers most about Woodstock, Wendy, Rick, and Hendrix appear as they were then as the play ends.