

Limelight

Info Sheet

Book, Music, and Lyrics by **Casey Lyons**

Cast Breakdown

5m, 5f with optional ensemble

Orchestration

Piano, Vocal

(orchestrated tracks and specific instrumentation available upon request)

SETTING

Chicago, IL, but specifically and most often at:

Limelight Cafe, a multigenerational, family owned cafe in the heart of Chicago. A friendly place where anyone and everyone feels at home. Think good old small town cafe/diner in a made-for-TV rom com.

TIME

Present Day.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JANE, 24, waitress at Limelight, assertive, but soft and kind. Jane will eventually inherit Limelight, but has to prove she's willing to Suzy. She loves reading and writing and feels as if she's missed her calling because of her obligation to the family business. She has a great fear of letting go, and persists until there is nothing left.

NATE, 26, waiter at Limelight for three years leading up to our show. Nate is a pianist and plays at the cafe occasionally. He loves music and is a masterful songwriter, but is afraid to share his work. Soft and loving, with a sense of humor.

WILLOW, 23, aspiring actress, singer, and dancer. Willow is a relentless optimist with spunk.

BRAD, 22, photographer and graphic designer. Brad is relaxed, fun, and outgoing but never really knows the right time to stop talking. He is a photographer who believes in the beauty of a moment, who hasn't caught his big break yet.

SUZY, 58, owner of the Limelight. Suzy is no-nonsense most of the time, but has the potential for sarcasm and also has a light side to her. She is Jane's aunt and has taken care of Jane ever since her sister (Jane's mom) and brother-in-law died in a tragic car accident.

Early on in the story, Suzy is diagnosed with terminal cancer, but doesn't want Jane to know. This adds to her slightly mysterious air and stress.

JOHNNY, 60, head cook at Limelight. Johnny is harsh and easily irritable, but later in the show his concealed, lighter side shows. Doubles as Don.

DON, 60, artistic director of the Lions Den Theatre, a theater near the Limelight. Dramatic and expressive. Don is always looking for the next big thing for his slowly fading theater company and sees promise in Nate. Doubles as Johnny.

ELLE, 20, waitress at Limelight. Elle is lovable and endearing, but always late for everything. Elle is just trying to find her way. Should have good comedic timing.

NATALIA, 23, Willow's best friend in college and current roommate. She knows Chicago like the back of her hand and comes to the Limelight regularly.

See next page for detailed synopsis...

ACT ONE

(Prologue) We open on the rooftop of where some of our main characters live. Jane is writing the opening words to her novel when Nate interrupts her. They peacefully look out at the city before Nate reminds Jane that she has to get to work at the Limelight. Jane hurriedly leaves and starts to sing with the other characters about their daily struggles and big picture goals. *(Same as Always)*.

At the cafe, we meet Brad, Suzy and Johnny. Brad evades Suzy over some missing payments as he hurries to an important meeting. Willow enters with Natalia and we are introduced to her dreams of becoming an actress. At the cafe, Suzy, Johnny, Brad, Nate and Jane discuss the new commercial cafe that just opened up down the street. Jane is worried, as business has been slow to start with, but Suzy reassures her. Willow and Natalia enter the cafe. Willow is introduced to Suzy and within a few minutes, she has a job at the Limelight while she auditions for different shows. After everyone leaves to start their days, we hear Suzy on the phone with her doctor and start to get hints of something being amiss.

Later that night, Jane and Nate talk about the joys and trials of the day. This shows even further their interest and mutual respect for each other. Jane closes up, leaves, and Nate sits down at the piano to play and professes his unsaid love for Jane. *(Closing Time (You Are The Reason))* As he sings, Don passes the window and listens. Once Nate is done, he bursts in, to Nate's surprise and offers him the job of composing for his new show at a nearby theatre, The Lions Den. Nate is at first hesitant, but accepts this opportunity.

To prove her responsibility to Suzy, Jane gets to the cafe early the next morning. Brad and Willow's appointments are at the same building the next day and they talk. It becomes the first of a few awkward interactions for them. At the Limelight, Nate talks to a reluctant Jane about her writing and they make a deal to see each other's work when they're both ready. *(Same as Always (reprise))* Brad enters shortly after Willow starts her first day and they are *definitely* taken with each other. He is dejected from a bad interview. Willow sings to cheer him up. *(Glass Half Full)* When asked to see some of his pictures, Brad is protective and compelled to explain his love for photography. *(Capturing a Moment)*. After both Jane and Willow leave, Nate teases Brad for liking Willow and Brad says the same of Jane right back at him. They decide to ask their respective crushes in tandem. They both stutter and don't do too well, but Jane and Willow both accept, though Nate is pushed to the friend zone by Jane.

At Willow's apartment, Jane and Willow get ready and talk to Natalia. They proceed to go out, and end up enjoying themselves. *(Moment)* Nate walks Jane back to her apartment. Jane realizes her keys are at Limelight and as they walk in their separate directions, they echo each other's pleasant sentiments.

Back at Limelight, Suzy is up late paying bills. Jane notices and becomes afraid for their finances. This is only the start, however, as Jane also sees that Suzy has cancer. Suzy promises that things will get better. *(I Could Never Leave You)*

The next weeks pass, seemingly slowly and quickly all at the same time. (*Weekday Sequence*) Suzy is issued a foreclosure notice and Jane reflects on her time at the cafe and tries to process what's happening. (*If These Walls Could Talk*) A curt Suzy lectures Johnny on their need for economic growth and becomes tired. A hopeful Jane comes in to talk to Suzy and finds her in very poor condition in the kitchen. She is taken by ambulance to the hospital.

Jane is greeted at the hospital by her Limelight friends who all try to support her. Jane says her final goodbye to Suzy, who succumbs to her cancer. (*I Could Never Leave You (Reprise)*)

A few days later, they all sit at Limelight, sharing stories from people at the funeral. Once everyone leaves, Jane stands in the cafe and looks to it once more, feeling somewhat hopeless. On her contemplation, she starts to realize that she needs to save this place that has practically been her home for her entire life. She decides to keep going, in Suzy's memory. (*If These Walls Could Talk (Reprise I)*)

ACT TWO

(*Entr'acte*) Jane sifts through bills at Limelight, amid the complaints of her employees. Morale is very low, and Willow tries to lift it, but is abruptly stopped by Johnny, who really brings down the mood. (*Glass Half Full (Reprise)*). Everyone starts to argue and Brad intervenes by telling them his plan to save the cafe, which involves a new menu and new decor/graphic design. He also launches a social media page where he shares street photos from in and around Limelight. The page blows up and they decide to launch a fundraiser gallery. (*Rewind, Revamp, Repeat*) Jane notices her lost notebook, which has been in Nate's possession for the last few weeks. He asks her if he can use it in his new musical, but to no avail. Johnny is visited by a vision of Suzy and reminisces about his time with her. This is the first time we see him truly happy. (*What I Never Said*) Willow, Brad, and Nate ask Jane out for pizza and she reluctantly tags along. (*Closing Time (Reprise)*)

Jane starts the next day with her beloved late mother's typewriter, on a roll with her new novel. The cafe is bustling with energy as the workers prepare for the Gallery, and Nate reveals one of his songs. (*The Limelight Waltz*) During the gallery opening, Brad gets a deal with an art gallery and Nate asks Willow to be the lead in his new musical, inspired by the Limelight and using Jane's poetry (which he was told not to use). Willow accepts and sees it as a sweet gesture, but has her doubts.

They don't raise enough money to save the cafe and Jane is persistent in her quest to save it, against what Johnny, the realist has to say. She is told to move on. She goes to the roof of the Limelight, her favorite spot in the city. Nate greets her and they sing about the view, though things turn to his love for Jane. (*The View From Here*)

Nate decides to go through with his new musical, as a fundraiser for the Limelight. Don agrees and they go into rehearsal. The Limelight is officially closed, to the deep disappointment of Jane. (*If These Walls Could Talk (Reprise II)*)

Nate comes to her and tries to explain his idea, but she just argues with him. She dejectedly tells him that he can take her poems because she wouldn't write anymore. However, she still doesn't know of his plans. Their interaction gets heated, and Nate quietly storms away. Jane is left alone, walking through Lincoln Park. She ponders the recent events and declares it's "*Time to Move On*".

Nate gathers the usual suspects at the theater and explains his plan to produce the show. Everybody plans to pitch in and they all are very excited. (*For Limelight*)

Willow goes to Jane's apartment, where she drowns her sorrows in chocolate ice cream. She invites a hesitant Jane to the show and they go together. (*Time to Move On (Reprise)*)

Things get awkward as Nate greets Jane in Willow's dressing room and they proceed to sit next to each other. As the lights go down, Jane notices her contribution, confusedly. (*The Limelight Waltz (reprise)*)

The show is a smash hit! The next morning, Nate visits Jane, who is still angry at him, despite loving the show. Nate gives her the money - enough to save the Limelight. Jane is ecstatic. In exchange, she gives Nate her novel, chronicling the entire adventure. She dedicates the book to him and the rest of the group. They celebrate at the grand reopening of Limelight. (*Finale*)