

The Choice

This play is free to download and perform. The only condition is that you must **email Alex at abroun@bigpond.net.au** and let him know **where and when you produced his script**, listing the **director, cast and theatre**. If you have any production photos send them along as well and they may just end up on this website.

a short play

by

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Cast

ROD

VINCE

Setting

Vince's Apartment

Time

5pm

The Choice

Vince's Apartment. 5pm.

VINCE sits at a coffee table. On the table pills, plastic packets, a needle.
ROD sits nearby. They both stare at the table.

Long Pause. Eventually:

VINCE: So, how can I help you ?

ROD: It's okay.

VINCE: (SUDDENLY ANGRY) Don't you – Don't you tell me it's okay ! I know it's okay. Don't – you – tell – me ... !

ROD HOLDS UP HIS HANDS.

VINCE: What now ?

ROD: Nothing.

VINCE: (HOLDING UP HAND) What is this ?

ROD: Nothing.

VINCE: Just don't tell me it's okay. I know it's okay. (PAUSE) So, once more. How can I help you ? How can I possibly justify you flying all this way ?

ROD: Just thought I'd drop by.

VINCE: Long way to just "drop by".

ROD: Just thought we could -

VINCE: Don't say talk Rod. Just don't say *talk* !

ROD: No. I actually came to give you something.

VINCE: What you gonna give me Rod ? A blowjob ? Be my guest. But don't say advice. Please don't say advice.

ROD: It was something somebody once gave to me.

VINCE: Is this like a Kenny Rogers song Rod ? When you were a little boy, out on the prairie, your daddy gave you your first bum fuck ?

ROD: (LAUGHS) You're all fired up.

VINCE: Yeah – I'm fired up Rod. All fired up. That's how I'm feeling. That's what I feel. Is it okay to feel like that – Rod ?

ROD: What do you want me to say ?

VINCE: How about sure ? Let's try *sure*.

PAUSE.

ROD: Sure.

VINCE: Perfect.

PAUSE.

ROD: Looks like your all set then.

VINCE: My one way ticket to wonderland.

ROD: And then ?

VINCE: Don't give – Don't give me that crap, Rod. If you give me that crap you can fuck off right now ! This is it. This is all that matters. This moment – right now. (HOLDING UP PACKETS) This, this and this.

ROD HOLDS UP HIS HAND.

VINCE: What is that ? What are you doing ? What is this ?

VINCE HOLDS UP HIS HAND. ROD LOWERS HIS HANDS.

ROD: All fired up.

VINCE: All fired up.

PAUSE.

ROD: How long have I known you ?

VINCE: I don't know Rodney. How long have you *known* me ?

ROD: Six years.

VINCE: That long.

ROD: All I'm asking –

VINCE: Yes.

ROD: All I'm asking is that you listen to me. One minute for each year.

VINCE: He's got it all worked out, haven't you Rod ? All worked out. A catch phrase for every convo. Mr Dial-a-Cliché.

ROD: Six minutes. Then I'm out the door.

VINCE: Mr Dial-a-cliché.

ROD: It's your choice.

VINCE: I know it's my choice.

ROD: I'm just reminding you.

VINCE: But I know. I already know it's my choice. You don't have to remind me of anything. (PAUSE) Six minutes. And then you'll piss off ?

ROD: If that's what you want.

VINCE: Leave me in peace to get down to business.

ROD HOLDS UP HIS HANDS.

VINCE: Can we please lose the hands ?!

ROD LOWERS HIS HANDS. PAUSE.

VINCE: So, do I drop a flag or something ?

ROD: Sorry.

VINCE: To indicate when you're six minutes is to begin. Your six minutes of cliché filled splendour.

ROD: As you wish.

VINCE: I do wish.

VINCE PICKS UP AN EMPTY PACKET. HE DROPS IT TO THE FLOOR. THEY WATCH AS IT FLOATS TO THE GROUND.

VINCE: The flag is dropped. Come on Rod, I'm listening. Let the magic roll.

PAUSE

ROD: What you're going through –

VINCE: Ah – hah.

ROD: What you're ... experiencing now.

VINCE: And am about to experience.

ROD: It will –

VINCE: Give it to me.

ROD: Pass. It will pass.

PAUSE.

VINCE: It will pass. (LAUGHS) Shit Rod, that's good stuff. How long did it take you to think that up ? Whole flight ?

ROD: About as long as it took you to decide to do this. Because if you stopped, if you thought about it for one second, you'd realise how wrong it was.

VINCE: Wrong ? Is that the best you can do ?

ROD: How this is not an answer.

VINCE: This is the only answer.

ROD: You know that isn't true.

VINCE: All I know is that nothing you say is true. Your words, your cliches. They don't mean anything.

ROD: Everything means something.

VINCE: A million words of love, a million words of hate. Nothing.

ROD: Listen to yourself.

VINCE: Words mean nothing. The only thing that means anything is sitting on this table. Ready and waiting.

ROD: Everything means something.

VINCE: No. Nothing. Nothing ! Nothing means anything. Except for this. This is definite. This is real. This means something. I know that if I take this pretty soon I will feel okay. I won't care anymore.

PAUSE.

ROD: Can I tell you something ?

VINCE: How much will it cost me ?

ROD: This is free of charge.

VINCE: No. I don't want anything for free.

ROD: This doesn't mean anything. And in your heart you know that. This is only going to make what you're going through worse.

VINCE: No. No !

VINCE PUSHES ROD UP AGAINST THE WALL. HE HOLDS HIM THERE. SILENCE.

VINCE: Don't you – Don't you tell me what to do ! Never ever tell me what to do.

ROD: Do you want me to go ? I'll go.

VINCE: No, I don't want you to go. I just want you not to say anything. I want you to sit there and not say a single word. No more sounds. No more words. Words are our enemies. Only actions now. Actions that mean something. That change something.

VINCE LETS ROD GO. HE SITS.

VINCE: The deal is on the table. Something is sitting on the table. Something that means something.

PAUSE. **VINCE BEGINS TO OPEN THE PACKET ON THE TABLE.**

ROD: So that's -

VINCE: No words.

ROD: You're just going -

VINCE: No – words.

ROD: Am I meant to just sit here and watch this ?

VINCE: You can stay or you can go. That's your choice.

ROD: Six years and you're just –

VINCE: Your – choice.

ROD: Throwing it away.

VINCE: Howdy doody.

ROD: Is it really worth this ?

VINCE: Something has happened. Something that requires action. This action .

ROD: Is it really that important ?

PAUSE. VINCE LOOKS AT ROD.

VINCE: How can you say that ?

ROD: People leave.

VINCE: Not her. Not – her.

ROD: It happens.

VINCE: No. It doesn't happen. I did everything – right. Everything she wanted. Moved here, bought this place. Had a fuckin' kid.

ROD: Haven't you –

VINCE: No – you listen to me. I did everything right. And then one morning, because she feels like it. She walks out on me. On us. I don't deserve this.

ROD: Bad things happen to good –

VINCE: Shut the fuck up ! For six years. I've tried, to make it work – her way. Your way. Good little boy. Behaving myself. Nine to five, eat shit, wank on Sundays.

ROD: Haven't you heard a single word I've said in six fucking years ?

VINCE: I've listened to every syllable. And you know what ? In the end they don't add up to shit. (PAUSE) I've tried and I've failed, so now I'm going back to something that I know works.

ROD: Only for a very brief time.

VINCE: Any time at all – at least I know it works. I think your time is up.

PAUSE. **ROD STANDS. HE GOES TO SAY SOMETHING.**

VINCE: Don't.

ROD: What ?

VINCE: Don't speak. I don't want you to speak anymore.

ROD: You agreed.

VINCE: And so did you. Your six minutes is up. Now, if you'll excuse me.

VINCE OPENS A PACKET. HE BEGINS TO PREPARE THE DRUGS.

ROD GRABS VINCE'S HAND.

ROD: Just ...

VINCE: Let go of my hand.

ROD: For one second –

VINCE: Let go of my hand Rod –

ROD: Think of what you're throwing away.

VINCE: Let go of my hand

ROD: Think of your son –

VINCE: Let go of my hand or I'll slice you fuckin' open.

PAUSE. **ROD RELEASES HIS HAND.**

ROD: I want you to know.

VINCE: That's great.

ROD: I just want you to know.

VINCE: So – you – said !

ROD: This means something to me. What you are about to do means something to me.

VINCE: That's great Rod. Absolutely fantastico. Six minutes. Over. Now fuck – off.

PAUSE. ROD STARTS TO LEAVE.

VINCE: So that's it ? Mr Dial-a-Cliché is all Cliched out.

ROD: I've made my choice.

VINCE: Why don't you stick around ? "Let's get this party started right."

ROD: I'm not going to sit by and watch you -

VINCE: Yeah baby !

ROD: Do this to yourself all over again.

VINCE: Ooooh baby !

ROD: That's my choice.

VINCE: Bravo.

VINCE STANDS AND APPLAUDS ROD.

VINCE: There you go Rod. You're very own standing fucking ovation.

ROD LOOKS AT VINCE. SILENCE.

VINCE: Thunderbirds are go.

ROD TURNS TO EXIT. VINCE GOES BACK TO PREPARING.

VINCE: Hey, you never gave me my gift.

ROD: Yeah ?

VINCE: You said you came to give me something. A present that somebody once gave to you.

ROD: I already did.

VINCE: Could've fooled me.

ROD: For six minutes I gave you a choice. And now – you've chosen.

VINCE: Right except for one thing. You never gave it to me. It was my choice. All along.

ROD: Right again. You know what Vince? You're always right. Fancy that.

VINCE: Fancy – that.

PAUSE.

ROD: My time is up.

ROD LOOKS AT VINCE. HE EXITS. PAUSE. VINCE CONTINUES TO PREPARE.

THE BOY ENTERS, DRESSED IN PYJAMAS. HE WATCHES VINCE.

ONLY THE SOUND OF PREPARATIONS. EVENTUALLY:

BOY: Dad ?

VINCE LOOKS UP. HE FREEZES. SILENCE.

VINCE: Go back to bed Michael.

THE BOY DOES NOT MOVE.

VINCE: I said – go – back – to – bed.

THE BOY TURNS AND RUNS OFF. VINCE WATCHES HIM GO.

HE LOOKS DOWN AT THE TABLE. PAUSE. HIS HANDS SLOWLY DROP DOWN TO THE TABLE. HE IS STILL.

FADE.