

343 Union Street

A One-Act Play

by Greg Urbaitis

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

GARY: Male, 20's, Lives in Brooklyn with his best friend/roommate C.J.

C.J.: Male, 20's, Lives in Brooklyn with his best friend/roommate GARY.

VINNY: Local guy who's out aimlessly.

OLD LADY: Elderly woman from GARY and C.J.'s building who mostly keeps to herself, though displays a nasty demeanor.

HOMELESS GUY: Unknown male of undetermined age who happens by.

SETTING

The stoop out front of GARY and C.J.'s apartment building in Brooklyn, NY, on a hot summer early Saturday night, after their air conditioner has stopped working, and as they consider what to do for the night.

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ACT I SCENE 1

GARY and CJ have just taken their places on the stoop in front of their building. They've brought a cooler full of beer, from which C.J. has just gotten them both a beer.

GARY: Stupid air conditioner is always breaking down. And the stupid landlord won't do anything about it.

C.J.: Yea. We may just have to suck it up and buy a new one ourselves.

GARY: Yea. Probably. Since it only seems to stop working on weekends when we can't get hold of him.

C.J.: Yea. And really *hot* weekends.

GARY: So what do you wanna do then?

C.J.: I don't know. I wanted to just chill and watch a movie.

GARY: Yea, well, 'chill' is the last thing we're gonna do in that apartment.

C.J.: Make any more bad puns like that and I'll take the hot apartment over sitting out here with you.

GARY: Ha ha ha. Seriously, what do you want to do?

C.J.: Well, Holly's got a play being done at that little theatre. You know, the one right across from where the bike racks are outside the park.

GARY: Eh, I don't know. Her plays are always so bad. What was that last one we went to – something about this young girl who falls in love with this

older guy and they say age doesn't matter, and of course it's her who ends up dying, and he like plants her body and grows a tree from it and, and I forget, makes a cane out of one of the branches so she's still supporting him, and then he dies or something. I forget. I wished I was dead by that point.

C.J.: Not exactly. But something like that. The tree costume was pretty bad.

GARY: Really bad. I can't believe she gets them done. Hell, I could write one just as stupid.

C.J.: Yea, well I won't argue with you there!

GARY: Ha ha ha. Seriously. If they want bad plays at that theatre, we should write one. We could do costumes. How about a costume party where everyone is dressed as a ghost so no one can tell who anyone else is?

C.J.: Brilliant. But not as good as a costume party where everyone comes as a different color and they realize if they get together they make a rainbow.

GARY: God. That's *terrible!*

C.J.: Terribly excellent. And it's got a message.

GARY: Wait wait wait. I've got it. You have this costume party and everyone comes as . . .wait .. they're all . . .wait ... they're all naked, and they have these potatoes ...

GARY can't finish his idea, he just starts laughing. C.J. starts shaking his head and laughing too.

C.J.: You're an idiot.

As they're laughing their neighbor VINNY approaches.

VINNY: What're you ma-rooms doing outside? You're spoiling the neighborhood!

C.J.: It's such a joy to see you too Vinny. [Pauses] Too bad you can't stay to hang out. I'm sure you got big plans tonight.

VINNY: Damn Straight! The V-Man's gots plans!

C.J.: Well that's just wonderful. Don't let us keep you.

C.J. waves his hand to usher Vinny off.

VINNY: That's cool. I can spare a moment for you losers.

VINNY sits down on the steps.

VINNY: Besides, if people see me here with you it'll up your standing in the neighborhood.

C.J.: Well, aren't we the privileged ones!

VINNY: Damn Straight!

VINNY looks at them drinking.

VINNY: So you gonna offer me a beer or what?

GARY: Uh, yea, we would, but we're kinda busy. So don't let us keep you.

VINNY: Busy? Doing what? Waiting for your boyfriends?

C.J.: You Sir are Hil-AR-ious!

GARY: (to C.J.) If we were trying to write a comedy he'd be perfect.

VINNY: What's that supposed to mean?

C.J.: If you must know – and it looks like you do – we’re trying to write a play.

VINNY: A play? Yea? So what’s it about?

C.J.: We haven’t figured that out yet.

GARY: Yea, so if you don’t mind . . .

VINNY: How can you write a play if you don’t know what it’s about?

GARY: We’re mulling over ideas.

VINNY: Yeah? Well mull me over a beer and I’ll help you out.

C.J. looks at GARY and shakes his head, silently laughing. He gets up and goes to grab a beer for Vinny.

C.J.: Sure, I’ll get you a beer. I’d love to hear your ideas.

VINNY slaps his knee..

VINNY: Now you’re talking!

C.J. hands VINNY a beer and then sits back down. VINNY opens the beer and takes a long slug.

VINNY: What is this crap? (*VINNY looks at the label*) Oh well, it’s free.

VINNY takes another swig.

VINNY: So, what's the play about?

GARY: I thought you said you had an idea?

VINNY: Oh, I got lots of ideas. I'm an idea man!

C.J.: Well, don't keep us in suspense, let's hear what you got.

VINNY takes another swig of beer

VINNY: What made you want to write a play in the first place?

GARY: Our friend Holly is doing one down the street tonight, and we just got to thinking if we could write one.

VINNY: I know that girl. I think. Maybe not. But I know her type.

C.J.: I bet you do.

VINNY: Yea. All those artsy plays. You need to do a play guys would like. Something with balls. With action. Like . . . like . . .

VINNY gets up and starts shadow-boxing.

VINNY: Like what's the greatest movie ever? Rocky! Why don't you do a play like Rocky?

C.J.: It's been done.

VINNY stops shadow-boxing

VINNY: Yea, but okay, what if you had Rocky having to fight *all* his opponents at once! Clubber Lang, Apollo Creed, Mr. T – all at the same time. How badass would that be!

GARY: That might be a little hard to do.

VINNY: Hard? You want hard or you want good?

VINNY spits some beer and laughs to himself.

VINNY: Haha. Hard and good!

C.J. goes along with it in jest.

C.J.: Yea. He's right. Like you could get these life-sized cut-outs of Rocky's foes and he could beat them all up at once!

VINNY: Yeah! Now you're talking!

VINNY resumes shadow-boxing

VINNY: Bang! Pow! Everyone goes down!

C.J.: That's brilliant!

VINNY: Damn Straight!

C.J.: Gary, I think that's it! Rocky against cut-outs!

VINNY goes and grabs his beer and finishes it.

VINNY: Well ladies, don't forget to tell everyone who gave you the idea!

VINNY shakes his empty beer to show them it's gone, but neither of them move to get him another.

VINNY: Well, like I said, the V-Man's got plans. Later.

VINNY walks off, punching at the air.

GARY: God. What a tool!

C.J. gets up and grabs more beer for both of them.

C.J.: Yea. But you know, considering all the crap he's been through, he's not a bad guy. Really.

Gary laughs while C.J. hands him a beer.

GARY: What's he been through. A lobotomy?

C.J. sits back down and opens his beer.

C.J.: Well, actually, yea, in a way.

GARY: What do you mean?

C.J.: He's really an okay guy. You don't know his deal?

GARY: No. What?

C.J.: I thought everyone knew. You really don't know why he's obsessed with Rocky?

GARY: No.

C.J.: Well, when he was younger he actually wanted to be a boxer. He wasn't that bad apparently, either. But he wasn't that good. Not good enough to make it. He found that out after a bunch of fights – so he was gonna pack it in. And then his mom died. And his dad – well, no one had seen his dad in years – his dad wasn't there. And he has these younger sisters, and so to support them he kept fighting, basically as a journeyman. He was good enough for that. He made enough money to take care of them, but he got hit in the head a lot.

GARY: Damn!

C.J.: Yea. That's why I cut him some slack. Like I said, he's basically a good guy. How many people do you know who would keep at it, keep getting hit, just to take care of their sisters?

GARY: Wow. That's wild. I never knew that. Hell, we should do a play about him. Make him the hero! Like in 'Predator' – I just saw that the other night again. He can be the Arnold Schwarzenegger character, but we can set it in the city!

C.J.: That's called 'Predator 2'.

GARY: Damn! That woulda been such a good idea!

C.J. points across from where they are.

C.J.: You could make one about Mister Wang at the parking lot over there.

GARY: His name's not Mister Wang!

C.J.: Whatever. He'd make a better alien than Vinny.

GARY: Uh, next.

C.J.: Okay. You've got these two hot girls . . .

GARY: Wait wait wait. They say you're supposed to write what you know about. Since when do you know anything about hot girls?

C.J.: Ha ha ha. Okay. Kinda like that Doritos commercial idea we had. But two guys. And this time they're filthy rich and they're in a yacht race and a storm comes up and wrecks their boats and they wash up on this desert island.

GARY: How you gonna do a play with them washing up on a desert island?

C.J.: Easy. You have the stage set like an island, with a palm tree and all, and they play the sound of surf, and the guys just roll onto the stage.

GARY: Yea, you could do that.

GARY pauses to think; sips on his beer.

GARY: Wait a second. If it's this big yacht race there are gonna be people in other boats and helicopters and stuff watching it. How do they just disappear and end up on an island? I don't buy it.

GARY gets up to get another beer

GARY (to C.J.): Want one?

C.J. shakes his head yes. GARY grabs two beers, hands one to C.J., and sits back down.

GARY: I know. Two people trying to get sober so they can go back to school and do something with their lives.

C.J. laughs.

C.J.: Yea, like we'd know anything about that!

GARY starts laughing as well.

OLD LADY carrying two grocery bags approaches the steps and tries to walk between GARY and C.J.

OLD LADY: Why do you rotten kids always have to block the way? There are other people to think about besides yourselves!

OLD LADY starts shoving them over with her feet.

OLD LADY: Get! Now!

GARY and C.J. scoot over to let her pass.

GARY: Okay 'Killer'.

OLD LADY is about to open the door but stops and turns around.

OLD LADY: If you believed all those stories you wouldn't be saying that to me.