

CHRISSEY'S REVENGE

by Sal Anzalone

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Running Time: 45 minutes

Synopsis: Joy Diamond's son, Christopher, wants money for his sexual reassignment surgery. When the wealthy and famous icon refuses to give him the money, Christopher—or Chrissy, as he prefers to be called—hatches a devious scheme to publicly shame his renowned mother.

Cast of Characters

Joy Diamond, a vain, egotistical actress, who shows signs of mild dementia

Mike DiMarco, a diplomatic, supportive screenwriter and director

Vito DiMarco, Mike's father, a bigot

Chrissy Diamond, Joy's transitioning son

This play has never been produced.

Joy Diamond ENTERS, holding a script. She sits. Her living room includes a couch, three arm chairs, a coffee table and a coat rack. Mike DiMarco ENTERS carrying a pink cake box.

MIKE

I hope you have room for this cake in your fridge.

(Mike EXITS offstage; We presume it's to the kitchen)

MIKE *(V.O.)*

Thanks for hosting. My father hasn't been well. I didn't want him to be alone on his birthday.

JOY

You've been keeping him under wraps for so long. What kind of person is he?

(Mike REENTERS holding Joy's cellphone as Joy continues to read script)

MIKE

He's obnoxious.

(Joy notices her cellphone in his hand)

How did your phone wind up in the vegetable crisper?

JOY *(flustered)*

Never mind. If it's away, I'm not curious about who tasted me.

MIKE

Tasted you or texted you?

JOY

I said texted!

MIKE

My bad. I could've sworn you said *tasted*. Between you and me, when was the last time someone *tasted* you?

JOY

I'd rather not discuss it. If I become aroused there's nothing you can do to . . . accommodate me.

(Joy takes her phone from him)

JOY *(Cont'd)*

It needs some defrosting.

MIKE

Did you put your phone in the fridge on purpose or did you . . .

JOY

Did I what?

(Doorbell sounds)

Would you get that? I want to finish this script.

(Mike opens door. Vito DiMarco ENTERS. He looks glum. He removes his coat, placing it on the coat rack)

MIKE

Happy birthday, Pop!

VITO *(to Mike)*

I thought for sure she'd have a maid and a butler. *(Sighs)* Guess not.

(Vito collapses on couch. Joy continues to read)

MIKE

I'll make your birthday drink. What'll you have?

VITO

Scotch, whiskey-anything to get my mind off of my cancer.

MIKE

I'm sure you don't have cancer.

JOY *(Smiles superficially)*

Welcome, Vito! I'm Joy Diamond. You have a very talented son. He wrote and directed me in "Sensitive People" Did you see it?

VITO

I've seen it more times than *The Godfather* and *Casablanca*. When you walked into the gas chamber for a murder you didn't commit, I cried- and I *never* cry. You should've won the Oscar.

JOY

I agree. *(Beat)* I'm reading a play by a writer not half as talented as your son. Give me one minute, I'm almost finished.

(Mike hands Vito his drink and sits beside him on couch)

VITO *(to Joy)*

Most afternoons I watch "*Joy to the World*" reruns. I don't know why people fuss over Lucy. I think you're much funnier.

(Joy ignores his praise. She's preoccupied with what she's reading)

MIKE

My friend Angelo might stop by. You'll like him; he's Italian.

VITO

Who's he?

MIKE

He was my A.D. on "Suicide Hotline, Please Hold" We still keep in touch, even now that he's married.

VITO

To a woman?

MIKE

Yes, to a woman. In fact, he has two sons. Angelo's a bisexual.

(Mike's cellphone rings, he answers)

MIKE *(On phone)*

Hello *(Beat)* I was just talking about you. *(Beat)* I'm not exactly alone right now. *(Smiles)* That'll be great. Bye.

VITO

Was that your bisexual?

MIKE

Yes.

VITO

Do you have sex with him?

MIKE

Not really your business, but yes.

VITO

What about his wife?

MIKE

No, I don't have sex with his wife. Any more questions?

VITO

Does his wife know about you?

MIKE

Oh, yeah. I should add that uh, she's also bisexual. The two of them have what's called an "open marriage."

VITO

Do you say these things just to shock me?

MIKE

I'll never lie to you, Pop.

VITO

Sometimes I wish you would.

(Joy stops reading. Signs of her mild dementia are apparent.)

JOY *(to Vito)*

When did you arrive?

VITO

We spoke a minute ago. I said you should've won the Oscar.

(Joy looks confused, she continues reading script)

VITO *(to Mike)*

How can you be friends with a man who doesn't appreciate his wife?

MIKE

He appreciates his wife!

VITO

If he sees *you*, no way does he appreciate his wife. Queers I get. But I don't get men who have sex with guys *and* dolls. *(Beat)* Did you ever meet his wife?

MIKE

You're obsessed with the subject. No, never met her.

VITO

This guy sounds like a real scumbag for cheating on his wife.

MIKE

It's not cheating if she knows about me-and she *does* know about me.

(Joy senses an argument)

JOY

Is anything wrong?

MIKE

Not at all. While you're reading I'll entertain Vito with two of his favorite songs: *YMCA* and *It's Raining Men*.

VITO

You're shittin' me, right?

MIKE *(mocking him)*

Yeah, Pop. I'm "shittin' you."

JOY

I like the way you talk, but I *love* the way you write-unlike Barry Miller who mailed me his absurd play. No one writes like you. We should team up again. Even after 20 years, everyone still remembers “Sensitive People”

VITO

Miss Diamond: I could watch “People” over and over. Your performance was no less than magnificent.

JOY

I screamed so much in that film I couldn’t talk for one week. I scream better than any actor.

(She screams; Mike and Vito applaud)

JOY (tossing script aside)

The hell with this. I’m returning to the silver screen. Do you know the best thing about movie-making? Four hours to learn three lines. I have an idea: why don’t I---

(Vito’s cellphone rings-much to Joy’s dismay)

JOY (Cont’d)

That sucking-fucking phone is a distraction!

VITO (On phone)

Hello? *(Beat)* Speak louder. *(Beat)* Yes, I can. I was hoping you’d-

JOY

Take you and your fucking phone into the next room this instant!

(Following Joy’s suggestion, Vito EXITS)

JOY *(Cont'd)*

“Sensitive People” earned me my first and only Oscar nomination. I remember it well. On Oscar night, when my name wasn’t announced I smiled but inside I withered and died.*(Beat)* Write me another hit screenplay.

MIKE

You know dozens of writers. Why me?

JOY

I want an expert writer/director so I’ll be nominated again and this time I’ll finally win. I can feel it in my bones.

MIKE

But isn’t it true-about “it’s an honor just to be nominated”?

JOY

No! No one remembers nominees, only the winners. Being nominated is like foreplay, but winning is an orgasm. Say yes to writing a screenplay for me. ICM pays you very well.

MIKE

I’d be lying if I said I couldn’t use the money. I need a liver transplant. I’m 22 on the donor list. With luck and money I could be in the top 10. *(laughs)* Sounds like a hit song.

JOY

Or a hit movie. *(Beat)* A liver transplant would be money well spent-unlike my Christopher, who wants to squander my money for superficial reasons.

(Vito REENTERS, putting away his cellphone)

VITO

I'm not dying. Doctor said I have an enlarged prostate. I feel reborn! Who needs another drink?

JOY

I'll take a vodka and cranberry with three ice cubes.

(Vito prepares the drinks)

VITO

What time we eatin'?

JOY

When my son arrives. As usual, he's late.

VITO

In all your interviews you deflect questions about your son. *(Beat)*. What's his name?

JOY

Christopher is, or *was*- his birth name. Lately he's made some discoveries about his identity.

VITO

What do you mean, identity?

JOY

He was born male but he identifies as female.

VITO

What are you saying- that he thinks he's a girl?

MIKE (*looking up, hopelessly*)

Here it comes.

JOY

He knows he's not technically a female, but he identifies as one.

VITO

Does he dress like a male or a female?

JOY

He wears dresses, gowns and sometimes pants. It depends on the mood he's in or *she's* in ... whatever.

VITO

Is he attracted to men or women?

MIKE

I predict this'll be a memorable night.

JOY

He's attracted to men.

VITO

So he's a fag who dresses like a dame.

JOY

I'd prefer that you not use that word.

MIKE (*to Vito*)

You get nasty whenever you have more than one drink.

VITO

Guys that dress like women are mentally ill. Case closed.

MIKE

What's closed is your mind.

VITO

It's simple. If you're born a man, you stay a man. I hate that word: "Identify" (*scoffs*) The world sees me as a man-whether I "identify" as Spiderman, The Lone Ranger or Mickey Mouse. Furthermore-

MIKE (*interrupting*)

-Get to the point.

VITO

Identifying is another word for impersonating. (*looks at Joy*) You're an actress. Say you identify as black. Would they let you play Billie Holliday? Imagine Denzel Washington playing John F. Kennedy because he "identifies" as a white man.

MIKE

Denzel would never identify as a white man.

VITO

Right. And people should never "dress up" like their opposite sex. The world sees us as we are, not what we aspire to be. Capische?

(*Vito EXITS*)

MIKE

My father was fired yesterday. He made a serious mistake at work. He had just two months to go before receiving his pension. The new supervisor fired him-and that new supervisor just happened to be a trans woman. I'm not condoning his transphobic opinions, I just thought it might help explain his mindset these days.

JOY

His opinions are shared by most people. *(beat)* Including me.

(Joy pours herself another drink and sits)

If truth be known, I'm ashamed to have a son who's a drag queen-- a cross dresser, a transwoman-whatever it's called. For the last several weeks , in order to please him... not please. To placate him *(looks at Mike)* What word do I need here?

MIKE

To appease him?

JOY

To *appease* him I'm forced to refer to him as Chrissy. Ugh! I walk on eggshells whenever he visits. It's a huge emotional burden.

(Vito REENTERS)

VITO

What's a huge emotional burden?

JOY

To accept Christopher as female. I have trouble remembering he and she. What are they? Proteins? *(sighs)* Pronouns!

VITO

What's between your son's legs-a cock or a twat?

MIKE

Stop being vulgar!

JOY

Sex assignment... Sexual “reassignment surgery” hasn’t happened because he can’t afford the operation. It costs more than 30 thousand dollars.

(Vito whispers in Mike’s ear)

MIKE *(to Vito)*

Chrissy still has a penis

(Vito gives him a “how do you know” look)

MIKE *(Cont’d)*

We have mutual friends.

VITO

Chrissy has a dick but he wears dresses and gowns?

JOY

Sometimes pants. Very tight pants, I might add.

VITO

What happens if he gets aroused? I’ve never seen a woman in tight pants with a boner.

MIKE

You don’t say boner, you say erection.

VITO

Don’t give me no vocabulary lesson. A man should stay a man for his whole life-even if he isn’t happy about it.

MIKE

Luckily we live in a time when men and women have unlimited options.

JOY

I know I'm supposed to be supportive but it's hard to pretend I'm okay with his new identity when I'm *not* okay with it.

VITO (*rising*)

I'm having another screwdriver-with *nine* ice cubes.

(*Doorbell sounds*)

MIKE

Since you're already up, wanna answer the door?

VITO

No way. I'm gonna avoid him like he was a jury notice.

(*Joy rises to open door. Chrissy ENTERS. She's a transgender with a semi-masculine appearance. She removes coat, placing it on coat rack. She wears colorful boots*)

CHRISSY (*to Joy*)

You remember Parker? Well, he returned from Atlantic City and he said that Lazlo, the hot, new celebrity impersonator- he's *doing* you!

JOY

"Doing me"? I beg your pardon!

CHRISSY

His usual repertoire includes Judy, Cher and Barbra. Now he does *you* from your party scene in "Sensitive People." You've actually become a gay/trannie icon! Kudos, mother!

JOY (*Making introductions*)

I should be flattered, I suppose. (*Clears throat*) Mike you already know. This is Mike's father, Victor. No. Vito. And Vito: this is Christopher or Chrissy, I should say. Today happens to be Vito's birthday.

CHRISSY

Happy birthday! (*sits beside Vito*) I must take off these boots. They look great but oh, how they pinch my poor toes.

(*Chrissy removes boots. Vito looks at her as if she has two heads*)

VITO

Now that you're finally here, we can eat.

CHRISSY

Not until I've had some cocktails. (*looks at Mike*) Are you a parking ticket? I say that because you have FINE written all over you. Playing bartender, cutie?

MIKE

Sure. What'll you have?

CHRISSY

I think I'll take a greyhound.

MIKE

What's that, aside from a bus line and a dog breed?

VITO

Greyhound's grapefruit juice and vodka. (*to Chrissy*) You ought to be ashamed, going out in public dressed like a damn hooker.

CHRISSY

I'm guessing you're from Istanbul because you sound like a real turkey. So, how old are you on this birthday of yours?

VITO

I'm proud to be 66.

CHRISSY

Ugh! How does anyone get so old?

VITO

By not dying, that's how.

(Mike, who's been fixing drinks, hands one to Chrissy)

CHRISSY

Thanks. I'd love to jump your bones; you're *hot*.

MIKE

Speaking of hot, I better check dinner. Pop, I need your help in the kitchen.

VITO

I'm nice and relaxed. I don't feel like getting up.

(Before Mike exits he puts his finger over his lips-signaling for Vito to be silent. Mike EXITS)

CHRISSY

Sorry you're unable to get it up. That's an affliction old men usually come down with. Oh, did I say come *down*? Forgive me, the words came out so natural.

VITO

What would *you* know about natural?

CHRISSY

If you have something to say, raise your hand and place it over your mouth.

VITO

You're very outspoken.

CHRISSY

Have you something against outspoken women?

VITO

Not against *genuine* women. Comments from *artificial* women, yeah, I do. I think you're a freak. You look 20 percent female and 80 percent male.

CHRISSY

You better die on a weekday because no one will break their weekend plans to attend your funeral.

(Chrissy signals Joy so she can speak to her privately. Joy and Chrissy stand away from Vito. They speak in stage whispers.)

JOY

He's vulgar and crass. I'll never invite him again.

CHRISSY

Did you decide about the 35 thousand dollars for my operation?

JOY

Why must you have such a drastic operation?

CHRISSY

I don't want to spend the rest of my life trapped in a man's body. I need to go all the way.

JOY

Can't you just remain a female impersonator?

CHRISSEY

I need the surgery. Since I have a female mind, I may as well have everything else that constitutes womanhood. I want to have it all.

JOY

Christopher, I'm not . . . *(sighs)* I can't go along with this. I'm sorry.

CHRISSEY

So you're refusing me the 35 thousand?

JOY

I'm against that type of surgery. You *must* know that.

CHRISSEY

I didn't know that.

JOY

You'll have to find a way to earn the money yourself. I'm sorry.

CHRISSEY

I'm sorry too.

(Chrissy and Joy return to their seats)

VITO

I just figured out what makes you a freak: nobody wants to be around you.

CHRISSEY

Don't let your mind wander; it's too small to be let out on its own. How do you figure nobody wants to be around me? This I got to hear.