

Synopsis:

Two men find themselves locked in a gas station bathroom, but only one of them planned on leaving. In one unbroken stream of conversation, these strangers learn more about each other, but their perspectives on their hardships begin to clash. In this day in age, can one good interaction bring someone back from the brink of death?

Cast:

The Raven- A former lawyer. Age 43

The Finch- A failed writer. Age 27

(casting can be gender neutral. Pronouns and titles can be changed.)

*The stage is illuminated deep blue. On stage right is a door, and a pair of sinks. On stage left, a bathroom stall and a pair of urinals. THE RAVEN walks through the door. He is clearly holding a revolver and a flask. He takes a swig from the flask and puts it in his coat pocket. He crosses the stage and enters the stall. He stares at the gun then closes the door. THE FINCH enters. He is on the phone. As he talks he crosses to center stage.*

FINCH

I'm not going to keep arguing with you, I'm not going back there! I just can't do it! \*sigh\* I'm about 3 hours away, I'll see you tonight. (beat). If you need anything for dinner I can pick it up on my way there. Hello?

*He checks the phone, seeing the call has been dropped, he holds it up to try and get service but gives up quickly. He turns to use the urinal, muttering as he walks. After he's done he washes his hands and attempts to leave. The door doesn't budge.*

FINCH

Huh?

*Finch continues to budge at the door, making no progress. After a while the stall door swings open, revealing Raven. The gun is gone.*

RAVEN

Doing ok?

FINCH

Wha- Oh ya I'm doing fine. Just (pulls at the door) the door's locked.

RAVEN

\*sigh\* Let me take a look.

*He crosses to Finch and tries to open the door. He's unsuccessful.*

RAVEN  
Well shit.

FINCH  
"Well Shit" indeed.

*Finch takes out his phone and tries to call someone, holding it up to get a signal. Raven looks around, he finds a pipe on the floor. He grabs it and lodges it in the door. He gestures to Finch, who grabs the other end and they both pull. The pipe snaps and the pair falls over.*

RAVEN  
Well son, looks like you're stuck.

FINCH  
(visibly stressed)  
Don't call me that.

RAVEN  
Why not?

FINCH  
Dude it's just...You're not my dad, and I'm not your son. It's a little weird that's all.

RAVEN  
Ok..Well "Dude," looks like you're stuck.

FINCH  
Thank you.

*Finch remembers the situation. He punches the door.*

FINCH  
Damn it, I really don't have time for this.

RAVEN

Why? (Mockingly) Does Mommy have dinner waiting for you?

FINCH

Ya, she does actually.

RAVEN

Oh... Sorry about that.

FINCH

Nah, you're good.

*The two sit in silence for a moment.*

FINCH

So where are you headed?

RAVEN

Nowhere.

FINCH

Ok... Do you have a name?

RAVEN

I'm nobody. A shadow.

FINCH

It's a bit boring to be locked in with a shadow.

RAVEN

Why do you want to know so badly?

FINCH

Just wanna know who I'm locked in with that's all! Wouldn't you?

RAVEN

Not really.

FINCH

Come on! I'll go first, I'm 27 from Albuquerque, I was moving back there from Los Angeles before I got locked in here.

RAVEN

Why would you ever move back to Albuquerque?

FINCH

Rent.

RAVEN

Ah...A tale as old as time.

FINCH

And well...My plans weren't quite working out.

RAVEN

What do you do?

FINCH

I'm a writer, a poet to be exact.

RAVEN

Good thing you failed, we have enough of those.

FINCH

Ya, I guess they got to make the cut somewhere.

RAVEN

But you still tried?

*As he talks, Finch slowly starts to match Raven's energy.*

FINCH

Well all my life my mom has been telling me how amazing I was.  
Fooled me into thinking I'd be different. That I was special.  
Guess it was a lie.

RAVEN

(Completely unfazed)  
Your Mom sounds nice.

*Finch looks at Raven confused. Raven realizes what he said and elaborates.*

RAVEN

On the phone, sounded like she didn't want you to quit.

*Finch gets in Raven's face.*

FINCH

Ain't you nosey? Well, no matter what she thinks, I was gonna shoot myself if I spent another second in Los Angeles.

RAVEN

Shoot yourself? Ha! You're way too young to be suicidal. It only gets worse from here kid. You might as well live it up while you have people that are supportive of you.

FINCH

Oh really? How's your mom then?

RAVEN

Very dead, but she was a wonderful woman when she was alive.

*The tension dies.*

FINCH

Oh. Sorry. Ah...When did you lose her?

RAVEN

Ah...About 14. First of my many struggles, but you don't have to know all of that.

FINCH

Oh come on, I told you my deal now it's your turn.

RAVEN

Well I didn't ask you to tell me your "deal."

FINCH

Well life doesn't always work out the way we want it to.

RAVEN

Tell me about it.

*Raven takes the flask out of his pocket and places it in front of Finch. Finch looks hesitant, Raven gives him a look of assurance.*

Finch

Well I guess I'm not going home anytime soon.

*Finch shrugs, then takes a swig.*

RAVEN

Where do I begin? Ah. Mom died, I graduated, married my highschool sweetheart in law school, passed the bar, joined a firm, had a kid who became my everything, then got greedy and lost it all.

And that's that.

*Finch chokes a bit on his drink.*

FINCH

You lost me with that last part. Whatta you mean by greedy?

*Raven seems ashamed to talk.*

RAVEN

I had an affair, and I didn't hide it very well. Now I can't see my daughter anymore. I didn't take it very well; made some mistakes; lost some clients, and then the firm didn't want me representing them...

Now are you happy?

FINCH

Huh. Why'd you do it?

RAVEN

What do you mean?

FINCH

Like, could you not control yourself, or did you really love  
this girl?

RAVEN

Guy.

*Finch is taken aback.*

FINCH

What?

RAVEN

He was a man.

FINCH

Oh.

RAVEN

And yes, I loved him, I loved him a lot, maybe more than I  
loved anyone else.

FINCH

OH! Oh shit.

RAVEN

Oh shit indeed.

FINCH

What happened to him?



RAVEN

I never told him I was married, turns out that part was pretty important. You know it's funny; even with the person I felt the most true with, I still couldn't help but lie. When he found out he left me too, and that's what hurt the most... Isn't that a poetic tragedy? I'd love to see you write something better.

FINCH

I probably have something similar.

RAVEN

Show me then.

FINCH

I don't know...

*Raven looks at Finch intensely.*

RAVEN

Kid, I just shared with you my deepest and darkest sorrows. The least you can do is read me some poetry.

FINCH

Ok, ok, fine.

*Finch digs through his bag and finds some paper.*

FINCH

"I've become sick with dread  
My mind at full bloom  
Thoughts bursting from my head  
And falling to their doom  
take up knife  
And carve away my pain  
Coating my life  
With bits of brain"

RAVEN

Huh, that's not bad at all.

FINCH

That's what everyone says.

RAVEN

Give me another.

FINCH

You sure?

RAVEN

Serious.

FINCH

O.K.

*He finds more paper and reads another poem.*

FINCH

How about a haiku?

"They will all leave soon  
And I shall stay in sorrow  
Till my end doth come."

*Raven counts the syllables on his fingers.*

RAVEN

Man, you're a natural.

FINCH

Now that's a little much.

RAVEN

How'd you even think of that stuff?

FINCH

I just write what I know, Mark Twain said that.

RAVEN

Sound advice. Got anything else?

*Finch looks through his backpack again.*

FINCH

Let's see...I wrote this one a long time ago, I just like to keep it on me.

"When I was young he used to say  
That nothing would take him away  
He lies through his breath  
I stand before death  
My empty heart now left astray."

*Both are quiet.*

RAVEN

"Write what you know?"

FINCH

Yes.

RAVEN

Who was it?

FINCH

I wrote that after my dad passed away...I was 16. He was a novelist but never got anything published. I always wanted to follow in his footsteps, except get published, but everyone wants to get published... He meant a lot, ok! Non-artists just don't get it, Mom included. They see you as a wizard for simple words, but Dad understood. He was always there.

RAVEN

I get it. My Mom was the only one who understood me. The only one who loved me for who I was, and not who they wanted me to be. You know, like most gay kids in highschool I wanted to be an actor. I guess it was just beaten out of me.

FINCH

For real? Perform something for me!

RAVEN

Sorry kid, I don't see any script.

*Finch digs in his bag and pulls out a pocket copy of  
McBeth.*

FINCH

Here, I started reading this since I couldn't afford cable, but  
it's lost on me.

RAVEN

Well you're not supposed to read Shakespeare, you're supposed to  
listen to it.

FINCH

Then let's hear it!

RAVEN

Fine.

*Raven stands up and performs McBeth. As he acts the  
monologue comes back to him, and he is able to perform from  
memory.*

RAVEN

"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing."

Birdcage

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*Finch gives applause for a while. Raven is a little embarrassed.*

FINCH

You never should have quit, I think you really had something there.

RAVEN

Maybe if I hadn't, things would have gone differently.

*They each take a swig of the flask. They sit in silence. Finch fidgets, unsure what to say.*

FINCH

Man, I really gotta use the bathroom.

RAVEN

(mocking)

Kid, "we are literally locked in a bathroom" Just use that stall.

FINCH

Oh...I'll be right back.

*Finch enters the stall. Raven sits there alone. He's smiling for once. He grabs his jacket and realizes he left the gun in the stall. Finch emerges from the stall holding the revolver. Raven turns towards him. Finch looks at the gun, then at the flask, then at Raven.*

RAVEN

Hey- Whoa.

FINCH

You were gonna-

RAVEN

It's not what it looks like.

FINCH

Then what is it?

RAVEN

Well... ya I was.

FINCH

All that advice-

RAVEN

You can still follow it-

FINCH

In a gas station restroom?

RAVEN

(beat)

Yes.

FINCH

You're a hypocrite.

RAVEN

Well if...Yes, I guess I am.

FINCH

Well...You're not gonna now, right?

*Raven hesitates.*

RAVEN

I...I guess not. Just calm down son.

*Finch puts the gun in his pants pocket.*

FINCH

Alright. Just making sure-

*Suddenly knocking is heard from the door.*

FINCH

No way. We're saved! Hello! We're locked in here! Me and my friend here-

*Raven grabs the gun from his pocket and backs up. Finch is shocked.*

RAVEN

Well shit, looks like your way out is here.

FINCH

What? I'm not leaving you.

RAVEN

Please, just go. You have your entire life to live. You're an artist, a writer, it's in your blood, so don't try to deny it. Don't steal your impact from the world just because you wanted to help some sad old man!

*Keys are heard from the door.*

FINCH

Then don't deny the real you. Don't steal that life from yourself.

RAVEN

The real me died with my mother! It's just been one big performance since then.

*Raven clicks the hammer.*

RAVEN

So can you let this shadow take his bows. Please son?

FINCH

Stop being so damn dramatic. Come on. You're going through that door whether you like it or not! (beat) You're not making your child grow up without a father.

RAVEN

I've already lost her! So just go home and make your dad proud.

FINCH

I am.

*Raven starts to tear up. He points the gun at Finch.*

RAVEN

Don't make me shoot.

FINCH

Then leave.

RAVEN

Get away!

*Finch tears up too.*

FINCH

No.

*As the keys get louder, Finch approaches Raven. Suddenly he wraps him in a hug. Both men start crying. Raven drops the gun, and they fall to the floor in embrace. The lights go out and the door swings open illuminating the stage.*

End of Play