

test. I'm going to give you something to sell and we're going to see how well you do. Clear so far?
LULU. Totally.

BRIAN. You understand that I am *entrusting* you?
LULU. I understand.

BRIAN. I am entrusting you to pass this important test.
LULU. I'm not going to let you down.

BRIAN. Good.

(BRIAN reaches for his briefcase and starts to open it.)

COMMENTARY: This darkly comic drama presents a desolate world in which sex, drugs and junk food take precedence over relationships and conventional morality. The two characters in this scene are both obsessed and desperate, but in quite different ways. At this point in the play, Lulu seems prepared to do anything to make some money and Brian exploits her eagerness and vulnerability. When Brian asks Lulu to take off her top she is more concerned that her stolen heat-and-serve meals will drop out from under her jacket than she is about revealing her breasts. Do you think Brian ever really intended to offer Lulu a job or is the interview merely a front? Brian's interview technique is somewhat unorthodox and has the intensity of an interrogation. Brian is a consummate manipulator whose smarmy manner is tingled with an aura of menace. There is something comically sinister in his obsession with *The Lion King*. For this scene to work in performance you must find a way to make your audience both laugh and squirm. This scene starts in the middle of the conversation between Lulu and Brian; how do you think they got to this point?

Simpatico

Sam Shepard

Act 3, scene 1. Living room of Carter's Kentucky mansion, very simple set with the impression of wealth.

Vinnie (40s) is 'dressed in a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, dark slacks with no belt. Everything very rumpled as though he's been sleeping in his clothes for weeks . . . with a "Redwing" shoebox tucked under his arm.' Rosie (late 30s) is 'slightly hung over and rumpled'. She is still wearing her robe. Rosie's husband, Carter, and Vinnie have known each other since they were kids. Fifteen years ago they were business partners involved in a California race-track scam that involved the swapping of two racehorses and the gross sexual blackmail of Simms, the local commissioner of racing. Vinnie still holds the vital evidence that could incriminate his one-time partner and over the years Carter has paid Vinnie to keep him quiet. At the time of the scam Vinnie and Rosie were married but she then eloped with Carter and married him. Vinnie and Rosie have not seen each other since that time. Rosie now leads a life of wealth and comfort with a nanny to look after her two children. Over the years, as Carter has prospered as a horse breeder, Vinnie has become an increasingly reclusive bum, indulging in fantasy detective games. Vinnie summons Carter to his rundown apartment in Cucamonga in California. He lures him with the pretence that he needs his help to deal with a 'major crisis' involving a girlfriend who had him arrested for assault. However, it transpires that Vinnie has decided that the time has come to revenge himself on Carter and this is all part of his warped plot. In this scene, having abandoned Carter in Cucamonga, Vinnie comes unannounced to Carter's house to visit Rosie. This is their first encounter in fifteen years.

ROSIE. Would you like me to take your coat and uh — your package?

VINNIE. No thanks.

ROSIE. If you're wearing a sidearm under there it doesn't matter. We've seen that before around here. Kelly's seen it. It's old hat.

VINNIE. I'm not.

ROSIE. So, you haven't come to do me in then? Splatter my brains all over the carpet in a fit of jealous rage? *(Pause.)* You're a long way from home, Vinnie.

VINNIE. Yeah. I am.

ROSIE. Carter just went out to see you. Did you know that? That's what he said he was up to anyway. You didn't somehow miss him did you? 'Ships in the night'?

VINNIE. No. I saw him.

ROSIE. Oh, good. Did you work things out? I know it's been a long and bitter negotiation.

VINNIE. He said you two were on the outs.

ROSIE. Who?

VINNIE. You and him.

ROSIE *(laughs)*. Is that what he said? Just like that? 'On the outs'! Those were *his* words? *(Pause)*.

VINNIE. Is it okay if I — sit down?

ROSIE. Help yourself! *Mi casa es su casa*, Vinnie. You know that. Just like the old days. Nothing's changed. *(VINNIE sits on edge of sofa, clutching shoebox under his arm.)*

ROSIE. So, what've you got, a bomb in the box or something? Gonna blow us all to Kingdom Come?

VINNIE. I'm not going to hurt you.

ROSIE. You're not still harboring something, are you Vinnie? That's not healthy. That's the kind of thing that leads to cancer and insanity.

VINNIE. I just wanted to see you.

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ROSIE. Well, here I am! Still in the bloom of things. I never would've recognized *you* though, Vinnie. You've let yourself go. I was watching you from the window and I was asking myself, 'Now who is this? Who in the world could this be, arriving by taxi, with a package under his arm?' It's not roses, is it, Vinnie? Roses for Rosie?

VINNIE. No.

ROSIE. I didn't think so. Too short for roses. Too compact. Unless you've cut the stems off. Out of spite or something. Wouldn't that be a shame.

VINNIE. So, how did you know?

ROSIE. What.

VINNIE. How did you recognize me?

ROSIE. Oh. The voice. Something in the voice rang a bell. A kind of apologetic menace. I don't know how else to describe it.

VINNIE. I'm not going to hurt you.

ROSIE. I'd feel a lot more reassured if you didn't keep repeating that.

VINNIE. I just want you to know. I didn't come here for that.

ROSIE. Good. That's good news. Now we don't have to talk about it anymore, do we? *(Pause.)* So you met up with Carter then? How did that go?

VINNIE. All right.

ROSIE. He said you were in some kind of an emergency again. He left here in a big rush.

VINNIE. I am.

ROSIE. Still?

VINNIE. Yes. I'm at the end of my rope. I may not look like it but I am.

ROSIE. Well, actually, you *are* looking a little rough — around the edges, Vinnie. I didn't want to say anything — **VINNIE.** I got arrested.

ROSIE. Oh. That's too bad. When was that?

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VINNIE. A while back. Couple weeks ago.
 ROSIE. Well, I'm sorry to hear that, Vinnie. What was it this time?
 VINNIE. Assault with a deadly weapon. Attempted manslaughter.
 ROSIE. You've escalated.
 VINNIE. It won't stick. Just - hysterical reaction, is all it was.
 ROSIE. It wasn't Carter, was it?
 VINNIE. What.
 ROSIE. Did you assault Carter?
 VINNIE. No. He's safe.
 ROSIE. Where is he?
 VINNIE. Out there. My place.
 ROSIE. How come he's out there and you're here? What's going on, Vinnie?
 VINNIE. He's - He took up with a woman out there.
 [(Pause. ROSIE stares at him. KELLY re-enters with a tray and drinks. Pause, as she sets the drinks down on glass table then turns to go. ROSIE stops her.)
 ROSIE. Kelly?
 KELLY (stops). Yes, mam?
 ROSIE. What time are you picking up the kids today?
 KELLY. Three o'clock. The usual time.
 ROSIE. Doesn't Simon have band practice?
 KELLY. No, not today. That's Thursdays.
 ROSIE. Oh. Right. Well, look, Kelly, why don't you take them to have ice cream and then go to Toys 'R' Us or something. All right? Just find something to do with them for a little while.
 KELLY (looks at VINNIE). Okay.
 ROSIE. I need to talk with Mr Webb here.
 KELLY. All right.
 (KELLY starts to go, then stops. She eyes VINNIE then turns to ROSIE.)

KELLY (to ROSIE). Is everything - Are you sure you'll be all right, Mrs Carter?
 ROSIE. I'm fine, Kelly. Just go get the kids now. Do as you're told.
 (KELLY eyes VINNIE again, then exits. Pause as ROSIE and VINNIE sip their drinks.)
 ROSIE. So - he's run off with a woman. Not that I'm shocked or anything. He's been carrying on behind my back since day one.
 VINNIE. When was that?
 ROSIE. What?
 VINNIE. 'Day One'.
 ROSIE. We're not going to drag that back up out of the dirt, are we, Vinnie? Things happened. One thing led to another. I don't know. It was a long time ago.
 VINNIE. But now it's over, right?
 ROSIE. What.
 VINNIE. You and him?
 ROSIE. Apparently so! What're you trying to tell me? He's shackled up with a woman at your place and you've come all the way out here to give me the good news?
 VINNIE. He met this girl -
 ROSIE. A girl! A girl! It's always a girl. Never a woman.
 VINNIE. He met this girl in a bar out there.
 ROSIE. What a surprise!
 VINNIE. I guess she got infatuated with him.
 ROSIE. Oh, she got infatuated with *him*!
 VINNIE. I guess.
 ROSIE. And you, very generously, donated your bed to the cause!
 VINNIE. No -
 ROSIE. And now you've gone out of your way, as a friend, to make sure I understand all the sordid details!
 VINNIE (sudden burst). HE STOLE MY BUICK,

ROSIE! HE STOLE MY BUICK AND HE STOLE MY WIFE!

(*Pause. ROSIE stares at him.*)

ROSIE. You know, for a long time I kept dreading this confrontation. I had little nightmares about it. But now that it's here, it seems dull actually. Stupid.

VINNIE. You could've left me a note or something.

ROSIE. A note!

VINNIE. Something.

ROSIE. Oh you mean like: 'Gone to the 7-11 to get a six-pack. Be right back'?

VINNIE. Something. Not just -- disappeared.

ROSIE. We were *all* checking out of there, Vinnie! *All* of us. That was the plan. Remember?

VINNIE. Yeah. I remember.

ROSIE. No contact. No trace of any connection between us.

VINNIE. That was the plan.

ROSIE. It's a little late for regrets.

VINNIE. I just thought maybe you'd --

ROSIE. What?

(*Pause.*)

VINNIE. Come back.

ROSIE. To what? Life on the backstretch? Fifteen-hundred-dollar claimers? I could've set up house in the back of a horse trailer, maybe?

VINNIE. We had fun. We had some fun.

ROSIE. Fun!

VINNIE. Read the Form 'til two in the morning sometimes. Picking long-shots. Clocking works.

ROSIE. Fun.

VINNIE. Slept in the truck bed. Listened to the tin roof flap on that shedrow.

ROSIE. Fun, fun, fun!

VINNIE. You could've called me or something.

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ROSIE. What about *you*? Where have you been all this time?

VINNIE. I had no idea where you went.

ROSIE. Come on. You knew where the checks were coming from. You knew the phone number well enough.

VINNIE. I didn't want to -- interrupt your life.

ROSIE. Get outa here.

VINNIE. I thought you and Carter were --

ROSIE. What.

VINNIE. Getting along. I mean --

ROSIE. *You're* the one who disappeared, Vinnie. *You're* the one who vanished.

VINNIE. I'm here, now.

ROSIE. Well, isn't that great! Isn't that dandy! Fifteen years later you sneak through my back door with a dumb box and a hang-dog look on your face.

VINNIE. I wasn't sneaking.

ROSIE. What'd you come here for?

(*Pause.*)

VINNIE. I thought maybe I could set things straight.

COMMENTARY: In *Simpatico* Shepard portrays the dissolution of the American dream into a web of lies, corruption and rootless frenzy. Vinnie is a loner fuelled by vindictive vengeance. He is festering with a deep sense of betrayal and isolation and he wants his retribution now. Why do you think he has waited so long to confront Carter? For Vinnie the past overshadows the present. Vinnie, in his warped plan, aims to play on Carter's guilt and fear. What does he really want to get from blackmailing Carter and confronting Rosie. Imagine how Vinnie's pent-up rage and menace have distorted his grasp of reality. Over the years Vinnie's obsession with Rosie has grown as has his sense of betrayal and resentment towards Rosie and Carter. Rosie now leads a cosseted but washed-up existence; like a character from Sartre, she is locked in a hell of her own

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