

Vacant/Occupied

By

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Characters:

To be performed by one person only.

Narrator Vinegar: A mix of Budweiser and apple cider brandy

Vinegar 1: Red wine

Vinegar 2: Malibu

Vinegar 3: Apple Cider

Vinegar 4: Whiskey

Vinegar 5: Cachaça

Vinegar 6: Guinness

Vinegar 7: Rum

Vinegar 8: Jägermeister

Vinegar 9: Malibu

Setting:

A Theatre in Blackpool and the town centre of Blackpool.

ACT I

SCENE 1

NARRATOR

A theatre in Blackpool. Its closed. All the actors are on stage, close to each other, but not near. The lights are on, but it's not bright. It's like when you have a dimmer switch and the light doesn't quite know if it should be on or off, the light flickers, it twitches, but it still illuminates. Outside its windy, about 8 degrees Celsius it's just after 8pm. Weather, drizzle in the centre but with a strong breeze on the sea front. A jar of vinegar starts to talk; their voice is directed towards you.

Plays audio

VINEGAR 2

How have you all been?

VINEGAR 5

Well, yeah.

VINEGAR 3

Alright really, bit stuck, yeah, a bit stuck, closed in really.

VINEGAR 9

I have this urge to go out, just a short walk, no a run, god just to scream. To breathe some fresh air.

VINEGAR 1

Its stagnating in here.

VINEGAR 7

I get that feeling from time to time.

VINEGAR 8

Yeah, its souring.

VINEGAR 4

I found myself very quickly, I really went through all the stages of grief. But I feel I managed it well and fast.

VINEGAR 6

For me personally I benefited from it. Having the time to do it, to work on my own work.

VINEGAR 9

Every thing from the same space, home schooling and work. Outdoor space, near the sea.

VINEGAR 3

I have to wear shoes to work, even if I'm not leaving the house. It's annoying, I have to plan my day around my partner, but it's also nice to have someone bring you a cuppa tea, or turn the heating on. It's these little things that I like about working from home.

VINEGAR 8

Working here you can't just go out after, with being in here. You almost have to make everything you want in here.

VINEGAR 7

I find it hard just to stay awake.

VINEGAR 1

I just need a break.

VINEGAR 2

The caffeine helps.

VINEGAR 1

I can't work interrupted. I've been drinking a lot.

VINEGAR 4

Is it messing with the circadian rhythms.

VINEGAR 9

I find waking up to the Dawn Chorus has helped me, having that connection to something else, something I am not totally a part of. Hearing that noise? No! its pleasant! sometimes other times it really is just noise, god they actual can get on my nerves sometimes, an organic alarm clock really, nothing more

VINEGAR 2

Gosh, we don't even have it that bad though do we?

VINEGAR 4

I think I stashed some food away somewhere inhere, better than most really.

VINEGAR 9

Just imagine having no internet connection in here, I don't think I would even talk to you.

NARRATOR

For sure working from home has its benefits, but only for some. Being in here all day can be hard, theirs a sense of loneliness that comes from being inside all day, everyday. Where is my work space, and I am at home whilst at work so at what point can I say that I'm no longer at work, or that its invading my private and personal space, my colleagues are almost in my home, what rights do I have to kick them out? I have a right to feel safe at home if anywhere I have the right to being able to dictate what happens in my home. Well at least we're eating well.

Plays audio

SCENE 2

NARRATOR

As the tram rumbles pasts, next stop Manchester Square. That bendy bit that connects the two carriages creeks and vibrates. The floor is soaked, a slip hazard. The conductor checks tickets, still a few more hours left of their shift, it's a little chilly for them, but they have wrapped up warm for tonight's shift. A good thermal shirt will get them through the job.

Plays audio

VINEGAR 2

I actually like it here. I like to work alone. It was tricky at first but the busier I am the better it is, I don't feel as lonely.

VINEGAR 4

I feel we can work a lot, and grow a lot, up down, side to side, with all this time. We never have to be anywhere.

VINEGAR 1

I have to do something, I can't stay still.

VINEGAR 8

The devil finds work for idle hands.

VINEGAR 5

It's just doing it over and over, I
can't stop.

VINEGAR 2

Do you want to stop?

VINEGAR 3

Can we ever stop? We just keep going
and going.

VINEGAR 1

It's never ending though, I can't get
out, I can't get away from it. It's
always in here.

VINEGAR 5

It's stuck in my head, no matter where
I go, I'm always on, always ticking.

VINEGAR 6

My head is turning, kicking in bed.

VINEGAR 9

My nights and mornings a cosmic latte
haze.

VINEGAR 5

A ray of sunshine does come through.

VINEGAR 1

It does help.

VINEGAR 3

Even if I'm on though, it's just that.

VINGAR 2

I do potter around a bit, I don't have
the best routine, but I'm always in
here so it's not like I'm running away
from the work.

VINEGAR 7

We do have to allow ourselves some
fun, time to have pleasure. Pleasure
is a part of work as well, we need to
understand that we can find pleasure
in what we do, all of what we do.

VINEGAR 5

But this space can be oppressive, yes,
we can find joy in our surroundings
and perhaps sour surroundings change
in a way to how we feel. I wish to go
out, the just have a walk, to be
outside, to see the sky, to grasp the
horizon, to walk and never see an end
insight.

VINEGAR 9

But some of us have other things
taking up our time, or for us to give
our time to.

VINEGAR 1

We don't all have the luxury to be
able to split our lives into two, our
work doesn't always fit someone else's
day.

VINEGAR 6

I'm starting to just wander around at
this point, I feel somewhere in
between things, a floating sensation.

VINEGAR 7

A sinking sensation.

ACT II

SCENE 1

NARRATOR

Update on the weather, it's now 4 degrees the drizzle is now just rain, endless rain.

Even more of an annoyance.

The café worker is just looking up. An early start again tomorrow, open for business even before you go to work, they have no time to go out tonight. Get home eat and sleep before tomorrow's onslaught.

You shuffle in your seat noticing the change in temperature, thinking they must have turned the heating off. Your attention is once again back on the stage, they are now centre stage and closer together.

Plays audio

VINEGAR 8

I love going out, meeting my mates having a drink, being social.

VINEGAR 9

I like that too, but I get drained, like I know when I've had my fill. I just need to go home, recharge you know?

VINEGAR 1

I'm kinda the same really, it's nice to meet up with people, but I only have a select few people I can really spend time with, maybe as you get older you just need there liability, the history almost.

VINEGAR 4

I'm happy to just stay in.

VINEGAR 2

Just look at all those people going by, one by one. They don't care about us in here, couped up all day.

VINEGAR 3

But I think a lot of what I do daily is really sociable, and then it doesn't always feel like work, then I go out and I'm social again. It's always fun, I'm always talking to someone. Quite loud, I think.

VINEGAR 7

I feel some people go out just to mark their territory.

VINEGAR 1

I do miss going out, maybe not going out, sort of, I miss the events I used to go to, now I'm in here I feel I miss them now.

VINEGAR 9

Homeostasis has kicked in now.

VINEGAR 5

We can always go back.

VINEGAR 1

Yeah, who wouldn't want to have a bit of fun, let your hair down once in a while will ya!

VINEGAR 4

Certainly nothing wrong with that.

VINEGAR 3

One too many.

VINEGAR 8

Never really had anything too bad happen to me.

VINEGAR 2

Might have taken a piss up against a car once. Might have had the driver in it still though. Definitely a fun talking point the next day.

VINEGAR 9

I prefer to forget those sorts of events.

VINEGAR 6

Your friends won't let you though will they?

VINEGAR 3

Not if you had a bit of fun with them.

VINEGAR 4

Well, they might just rather forget you completely.

VINEGAR 2

There are happy endings.

VINEGAR 4

I wouldn't want to get left out
though.

VINEGAR 1

But, sometimes that's a good thing.

VINEGAR 7

It's better not knowing in some cases.

VINEGAR 5

What, like just left out, left
drifting?

VINEGAR 6

It could be easier.

VINEGAR 1

Long term? Not too sure about that.

VINEGAR 9

Best to talk it through, everything
out in the open, don't shy away from a
single detail, there's nothing to
lose, were not out for glory just some
honesty, just keep going who knows
where you'll end up.

VINEGAR 6

What if we go too far? We could become
unbalanced, lodged somewhere
unpleasant with no one to help us out.

VINEGAR 2

A cuppa tea will fix the headaches,
the bad balance, the wobble in your
step.

VINEGAR 8

Bring you back to heaven, ready for
Valentines.

ACT III

SCENE 1

NARRATOR

The ticket machine eats the tickets as the excited couple watch the counter go up and up. The amusement arcade is loud the voices extent onto the street. I guess it's dark because its winter, time between when we work and have fun become closer, over lapping even. The night-time revellers move through town. The night-time economy, that one separated from the normal one kicks into action. That one who works in the office all day is now free to go about their business as they please, drinking to the early morning, the poor bouncer having to listen to their drunken ramblings until their taxi arrives, they both can't wait to be back in bed.

Plays audio

VINEGAR 1

When it comes to walking.

VINEGAR 9

No, it's about running, much clearer for the head

VINEGAR 7

I swim, but only open water. There's something about connecting again with nature, being surrounded, being in something.

VINEGAR 5

Just being able to walk is nice, well just being able to go outside.

VINEGAR 4

Sign

VINEGAR 5

Cycling, but only when the bike is comfortable.

VINEGAR 8

Just being outside.

VINEGAR 7

Being near nature, but it's a luxury just having an outdoor space. Imagine actually being inside all day, never having a chance to be outside. Not a ray of sun, or the sparks of the night sky.

VINEGAR 8

The sea.

VINEGAR 1

The Irish Sea.

VINEGAR 4

It's a pleasure.

VINEGAR 2

The Beach.

VINEGAR 1

On the edge of something.

VINEGAR 6

Being able to see things differently,
the shapes, the textures. Where the
shadows lie.

VINEGAR 1

It's aggressive. A roaring ocean.
Thundering towards you, only to back
down at the last moment.

VINEGAR 5

A crumbling sea front, held up by
human ingenuity.

VINEGAR 3

The shifting sands. The wind that
pushes you back.

VINEGAR 2

The calm. The calming to and throw of
the waves.

VINEGAR 9

The constant.

VINEGAR 4

The tides.

VINEGAR 7

A place of knowing.

NARRATOR

What will happen next.

SCENE 2

NARRATOR

Morning, the sun is rising.

Salmon coloured clouds drift by, the last dregs of the nights rain. A new day begins. I leave wondering what I've seen whilst here. Have I been honest, has the place been honest with me? The coast, a place on the edge, the peripheries a boarder and frontier. Where one ends and another begins. Tonight, we've had our conversation, we told each other stories, all true, or have we just put words in each other's mouths?

Plays audio