



# THE VANDAL

BY HAMISH LINKLATER



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THE VANDAL  
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First produced in New York City by  
The Flea Theater  
Jim Simpson, Artistic Director; Carol Ostrow, Producing Director

*For Jack*

THE VANDAL was presented by The Flea Theater (Jim Simpson, Artistic Director; Carol Ostrow, Producing Director; Beth Dembrow, Managing Director) in New York City, opening on January 31, 2013. It was directed by Jim Simpson; the set design was by David M. Barber; the lighting design was by Brian Aldous; the costume design was by Claudia Brown; the original music and sound design were by Brandon Wolcott; and the stage manager was Michelle Kelleher. The cast was as follows:

WOMAN ..... Deirdre O’Connell  
BOY..... Noah Robbins  
MAN ..... Zach Grenier

# **CHARACTERS**

WOMAN

BOY

MAN

# THE VANDAL

## Scene 1

*Night, cold, a bus stop in Kingston. A woman waits. A boy comes up.*

BOY. Has it come yet?

WOMAN. No.

BOY. Late. (*Woman nods.*) Always late. (*Woman nods.*) Unless you miss it. Then you're late, you're the one who's late. Not the bus.

WOMAN. Yeah. I guess.

BOY. I guess. I guess if it came, if it weren't late, you wouldn't be here, right? I mean, like, why would you be here if it had come on time? You would be on the bus, and not here, keeping me company. (*Pause.*)

WOMAN. It may have, I was, I was a little late, so it may have already come ...

BOY. Then we're in trouble, we are in trouble! It's like 20 minutes till the next one, right?

WOMAN. I think —

BOY. Oh my God, we're gonna freeze! We're gonna have to totally huddle together for warmth, just to survive. (*Woman looks at boy.*) Kidding, I'm kidding. (*Pause.*) Where you headed?

WOMAN. Home.

BOY. Where's that? (*Beat.*) Sure gets dark early, huh ... You come from the cemetery?

WOMAN. What?

BOY. The cemetery? (*He points off.*) That's where I was. I had a friend who died, about a year ago. I like to visit sometimes after school, say a prayer, check in, y'know, if it's a mess I clean up a little, get rid of the leaves.

WOMAN. Oh.

BOY. Is that where you were?

WOMAN. No. The Hospital. (*She points off in another direction.*)

BOY. Oh right! I think that's hilarious, I always do, that, like, the hospital and the grave yard are right next door, it's like, what genius city planner...?

WOMAN. I know.

BOY. I mean, I guess it's practical, it's like economical, if things don't go well in one place it's a short drive to the next, but still, if you're going to the hospital and you're really sick, which you probably are because you're going to the hospital, it's not very —

WOMAN. Encouraging.

BOY. Ha! Exactly. Or even if you're not sick, if you're like having a baby, you can't get too psyched cuz there's the cemetery as you drive up, you're like, "Yay, New Life! Oooooooo right, we're all gonna die, shoot almost forgot. Thanks, city planner."

WOMAN. (*Pointing off.*) And then there's the liquor store around the corner.

BOY. I know! That's like the one thing the city planner got right, like if you have to go to one or other of the other two places, and you're able to stumble out alive, at least there's the liquor store waiting for you. We're at the center of the triangle. (*Points at the hospital.*) Dying. (*Points at cemetery.*) Dead. (*Points at liquor store.*) Drunk. Are you sick?

WOMAN. What? No, why?

BOY. Is that why you were at the hospital?

WOMAN. No, my friend. I went to see a friend.

BOY. A friend, a-ha. Are you the friend, or do you really have a friend? Like when people say, "I have this friend who likes you," or "I have this friend who had a gay experience, but he's totally straight," or "I have this friend who pretends he's clumsy, but his dad beats the shit out of him," or "I have this friend who's freezing his ass off right now" but it's really you who's the friend —

WOMAN. I have a friend. An actual friend.

BOY. Oh no, I bet you do. Me too. I just told you about like five friends of mine, except the last one, the freezing one, that was me. No, I bet you have lots of friends.

WOMAN. What's that mean?

BOY. You're pretty. You're a little cold, but that might just be the weather. But I think you're probably nice too, when you warm up.

So I bet people want to be friends with you.

WOMAN. Okay. Well. Thank you.

BOY. Hey, would you buy me a beer?

WOMAN. What?

BOY. I was, while we wait, could you buy me a beer, from the liquor store?

WOMAN. Why can't you buy your own? (*Boy looks at her.*) I don't think you can just drink beer outside, on the street.

BOY. Why not?

WOMAN. It's the law.

BOY. I'm the law.

WOMAN. Well then why can't you buy a beer for yourself, Law Man?

BOY. Because the Liquor Man has a bat and he doesn't believe me.

WOMAN. That you're 21?

BOY. That I'm The Law.

WOMAN. (*Laughs.*) How old are you?

BOY. How old are you?

WOMAN. Rude.

BOY. Why? Why is it polite to ask young people their age? Why is that gracious and charming?

WOMAN. You look 17.

BOY. You look old enough to be my sexy aunt.

WOMAN. How old's your sexy aunt?

BOY. I don't have one — yet.

WOMAN. If you are 17, I'm old enough to be your mother.

BOY. My mother's dead. She's up there too. That's not who I was visiting just now, that was my friend.

WOMAN. I'm sorry.

BOY. It's ok, it's not bad, she died before I was born. Or like, she had died, and they had to do an emergency c-section to save me, but so, I never knew her. It's not so bad missing someone you never knew, though, y'know what I mean? It's not so bad.

WOMAN. Still, I'm very sorry.

BOY. So, will you buy me a beer? I'll pay.

WOMAN. I don't think so.

BOY. You're not conservative, are you?

WOMAN. What do you mean, politically?

BOY. Temperamentally. Not "a conservative," my dad's "a conservative," I just meant "conservative."



WOMAN. Because I wouldn't buy a kid alcohol? If that's ... then, yeah, I guess I'm like your dad on that one.

BOY. You don't wanna be like my dad.

WOMAN. Oh no?

BOY. What about when you were younger? I bet you were more liberal.

WOMAN. When I was younger? I don't remember.

BOY. Because you were drunk all the time?

WOMAN. Sure. People were much nicer than me in my day. They'd buy beer for you at the bus stop no problem.

BOY. I miss the old days.

WOMAN. You're funny.

BOY. We both are.

WOMAN. I'm not. I'm not.

BOY. I bet you're hilarious when you get your drink on.

WOMAN. Well that's not happening tonight, so I guess we'll just have to live in the ... I can't remember —

BOY. Why not tonight? Because of your friend? (*Pause.*) I had a teacher just like you.

WOMAN. Oh, now I'm your teacher, I thought I was your sexy aunt.

BOY. I told you, I don't have an aunt. But I had a teacher, Mrs. Bluh — Wait, you might know her. Do you live in the area?

WOMAN. I do. I live here.

BOY. Why don't you have a car?

WOMAN. It's at the mechanic.

BOY. You can't afford it?

WOMAN. It's at the mechanic.

BOY. You had to sell it?

WOMAN. It's at the mechanic.

BOY. When'll it be ready?

WOMAN. Soon.

BOY. Is that why you can't afford to buy me beer? I told you, I'll pay —

WOMAN. You had a sexy teacher?

BOY. I didn't say that she was sexy, I said you reminded me of her.

WOMAN. Oh.

BOY. She had sex with a senior at my school, Matt Hoop — wait you might know him too.

WOMAN. I don't, I mean why would I —

BOY. He killed himself. It was in the paper.

WOMAN. If it was in the paper, why can't you say their names?

BOY. You might not have bought the paper that day; they've gotten expensive, newspapers. She got pregnant, Mrs. Bl — and she wanted to keep it because she was — how old are you again? Doesn't matter. She was much older than you and she didn't think there was any way, I mean there probably wasn't, this was her shot, it wasn't that she was ugly, she had dated this French guy, I don't know his real name, we called him Pierre, and they had been together for like ten years, he didn't believe in marriage, maybe his father had fucked around, like Mitterrand, so he didn't believe in it —

WOMAN. How do you know?

BOY. My friend Tim Ross' mom was talking, or drinking wine and guessing, and Pierre was either against having kids because of coming from a broken home, or just sterile, and then Mrs. Bl — , the teacher, when she turned 40, he left her, just went back to France, or met someone else, Tim Ross' mom didn't know for sure, anyway Pierre was suddenly gone and the teacher was suddenly 40 and crying all the time in class which was just embarrassing for the kids, it was so pathetic, and as a result we had like, as a class, the lowest AP French scores in the county —

WOMAN. She taught —

BOY. French, so it was like torture, every word she said was part of a conversation with Pierre she would never have again, just *bleh, bleh, bleh*, blub, blub, blub all the time, I even went to the principal to get her fired, or sent on sabbatical till she got her shit together, not because I loved French so much, though I am pretty good at it, "*On n'apprend pas aux vieux singes à faire des grimaces,*" (that's a French proverb), but no, I wanted her fired because it was just so disgusting, the sob fest, and then, so, when she got pregnant and it was Matt Hoop — who was only in AP French because his dad was an undertaker and had like a chain of funeral homes, started with nothing but a shovel and a pair of black pants, put himself through Wesleyan, he was determined Matt would go to Wesleyan too, (but then Matt was a legacy so it shouldn't have been that hard, maybe he just needed an AP attended on his admissions.) anyway Matt got like straight F's, he was always zonked out in the back of class, Zoloft probably, all in black like his dad, but ironically, I think, to piss his dad off, but so that's why — I mean I thought it even

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2M, 1W

Night, cold, a bus stop in Kingston, New York. A woman waits. A boy comes up.

*“Mr. Linklater writes tart, often friskily funny dialogue. All three characters are effectively drawn with sharp contours ... [Their] antagonism gives way to a growing sense of camaraderie in their mutual acceptance of life’s sadness, and the long, inescapable shadow of mortality.”* —**The New York Times**

*“Wistful ... It’s about the unbreakable bond between life and death and the little pleasures and huge hurts along the way ... Linklater could take the narrative anywhere. He leads it to the Twilight Zone.”* —**New York Daily News**

*“Intimate ... dryly funny ... [with] a final twist that lands halfway between O. Henry and M. Night Shyamalan.”* —**The New York Post**

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