

Alone

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Cast

- Mark - (Male, 25-90)
- Theo - (Male, 25-90)
- Voice - (Can be just a voice or a third actor)

Intro

Two men stuck in a VERY small windowless room. Room is as dimly lit as possible. Names are never mentioned. They are both filthy, dehydrated, hungry, weak and sick. Pauses / blackouts as long as possible to give sense of time passing and lend the piece inertia. Apologies to directors and actors for disjointed style of dialog.

SCENE ONE

Two men (MARK & THEO) sit in the corners of the same wall of a small room, facing the audience.

MARK: Hey... Hey... wake up... WAKE UP... *(No response from THEO so he shuffles over and nudges him).*

THEO: *(Jumping back)* NO! No I didn't...

MARK: *(Interrupts)* Woa, woa there, it's OK, it's fine... it's just me...

(THEO remains petrified for some seconds even after MARK's explanation above)

THEO: *(Calming)* Sure... I know... sorry... I was just dreaming and then...

MARK: Hey, no problem, don't even think about it... no problem...

THEO: My turn is it?... my turn now...

MARK: I think so, hard to tell down here... no light, no noise, no... well... anything...

THEO: Yes, OK, I know, you don't need to go through all that again...

MARK: Sorry, I didn't mean to...

THEO: Its fine, really, not much else to..., anyway, any food or drink whilst I was out?

MARK: *(Hesitates)* Sorry, no... but they'll probably bring some soon; you know our sense of time is all messed up...

THEO: *(Head drops at the news, Pause)*... yes, of course they will... of course...

MARK: *(Hesitates)* Anyway, in case no food turns up another... rat... wandered in whilst you were out so I, well... it's better than the creepy crawlies... so dinner is served! *(Pause)* If you fancy it... or we could wait... Oh and that water is dribbling down the wall again, so you'd better get some as soon as possible in case it dries up again, I tell you, we probably get all the minerals we ever need from that water!

(PAUSE, THEO looks ahead emptily, MARK looks at THEO.)

THEO: *(Snapping out of it)* Yes... yes, anyway, your turn now, get your head down, I'll stay up as long as I can then I'll let you know...

MARK: Thanks, I will, we'll talk after this turn, yes, when I wake up, if you've got enough energy that is...

THEO: Yeah, that would be good... go on, get some sleep now... seriously...

(LIGHT FADE, time passes, long pause, LIGHTS UP MARK and THEO have moved a little)

MARK: *(Stirs)* Huh, *(Rubs eyes)* What time is it?... *(Tuts)* Sorry, sorry about that I...

THEO: Don't say sorry, its fine, seriously... no food or water yet tho.

MARK: OK, well not surprised about that anymore... Heard anything since I've been out?

THEO: Nope, nothing, not even... the cries we used to hear, not heard a single thing this time... so no change there... glad you woke up actually, thought I was going deaf, you know when the silence gets too silent... too quiet, you know, when the silence is... well... too loud, too thick, anyway, enough of that, I'm shattered, wake me when I'm done...

MARK: Sure... *(Long pause)* Hey?... Hey?...

(THEO does not respond, he's already fast asleep)

(LIGHT FADE, time passes, LIGHTS UP MARK and THEO have moved a little)

(MARK's head begins to nod, he is falling asleep, he wakes himself, digs his fingers into his other hand, hard, winces, shakes his head, looks at THEO.)

(LIGHT FADE, time passes, LIGHTS UP MARK and THEO have moved a little)

(MARK's head begins to nod, he is falling asleep, he falls asleep, slumps a little against the wall.)

(LIGHT FADE, time passes, LIGHTS UP MARK and THEO have moved a little)

(THEO wakes slowly, MARK is asleep)

THEO: *(Frightened)* HEY!

(MARK wakes with a start)

MARK: WHAT? What? *(Looks around wildly)* What's the problem?

THEO: The problem? It was my turn... except you were asleep as well. Seriously we can't do that. You know that!

MARK: NO WAY! If I was asleep then it must have been my turn! You KNOW I wouldn't do that!

THEO: I know what I saw! Wait... are you implying I was asleep on MY watch!

MARK: You must have been! It's OK I understand, it's easy to do...it's...

THEO: What? WHAT? You're serious! Don't be ridiculous! Of course it wasn't me. I WOKE UP remember so it MUST have been my turn last!

MARK: Sorry!? What kind of logic was that? "He who wakes up first is right"? Where did that come from? That doesn't mean anything? Besides when you...

THEO: Logic? Well at least I don't fall asleep on my watch!

MARK: Prove it!!!

THEO: I JUST DID!

MARK: Unbelievable! The only person you proved it to was... wait a minute... *(Pretends to think to himself)*... was... YOU!

THEO: Shut up! Just cause you can't understand it! Bit beyond you isn't it! Like EVERYTHING else! Typical! Stuck in a matchbox with an IDIOT!

MARK: IDIOT? I'm sorry I can't follow your RANTINGS! But at least I'm honest!

THEO: HONEST? Scared more like! Scared 'cause you KNOW you fell asleep, just admit it and we can get back to... well... erm... *(Trails off)*.

MARK: STOP SAYING I FELL ASLEEP WHEN YOU KNOW IT WAS YOU! I MEAN how can you... *(Trails off)*.

(Long pause)

THEO: Sorry.

MARK: (*Quickly*) No, NO! Sorry. It was my fault I... I...

THEO: Stop. Just stop OK. It's not anyone's fault... well... except maybe theirs... (*Gestures out over audience*)... I mean we're arguing about who was asleep... I mean, it's not like either of us knows anymore is it? Seriously any idea, honestly whose turn it was?

MARK: ... no... no, of course not... (*Bows head*)

THEO: (*Puts hand on MARK's shoulder*) Exactly (*Smiles at him, checking to make sure he's had eye contact, gets a weak smile back from MARK when they make eye contact, long pause, both look away blackly towards audience*) Anyway... why can't we both just sleep?

MARK: (*Incredulously*) Because!... (*Looks a little confused*)

THEO: Because?

MARK (*Long pause*) ... Because... because they might come!

THEO: Who?

MARK: You know! They! THEM! (*Gestures towards audience*).

THEO: Them? Who's "them"? I can't remember "them", sure someone must have stuck us in here, I don't spose we volunteered or anything, but "them"? Who's that?... exactly...

MARK: Well they're the ones who put us in here and... and... you know the ones who used to... take us... you know... take us away... one at a time... to...

THEO: (*Shudders, fear flashing across his face*) STOP! OK... OK... (*Long pause*) Well, honestly, I can't remember them... I can remember... the fear... the **fear** of them, yes... (*Very quiet*) I'll never forget that... (*A little louder*) but "them"... (*Back to normal volume*) can you seriously remember "them"?

MARK: (*Drops head*) No... no I can't remember... but we mustn't BOTH sleep OK...

THEO: OK.

MARK: Remember we said... imagine if one of us woke up and the other was gone. Remember?

THEO: Yes, yes, OK.

MARK: (*Fear builds in voice*) Then, then... we'd... be... alone... I mean REALLY alone... no one else, nothing... no...

THEO: YES OK! OK! But we're not going to let that happen are we... because??

(*MARK begins to rock gently*)

THEO: Oi! (*No response*) Oi!

MARK: (*Snaps out of it, scared*) What!?

THEO: Sorry, erm... we erm... lost you for a bit there...

MARK: (*Head drops, quietly*) Sorry, sorry I was just...

THEO: No problem, (*Quickly moving on*)...erm... anyway... we were just talking about what we would do when we got back out... I was saying that (*Fake cheery*) I would buy the fastest car I could afford, convertible of course, and we'd...

MARK: Stop, it's OK... I know we weren't talking about that...

THEO: (*Embarrassed*) Oh, yes, sorry...

MARK: It's OK, don't be embarrassed, I'd have done the same if I thought you were losing it...

THEO: Losing it? LOSING IT? Who said anything about losing it? You're not losing it! Ha! If you're losing it then what about...

MARK: Stop. It's fine... seriously.. I mean one of us was going to crack first, obviously... well it's me... sorry...

THEO: Hey, don't be silly, we're both in the same boat, I've erm... daydreamt before, loads of times! So anyway... what were we saying?

(*Short pause, they look at each other*)

MARK: (*Sighs*) Well, we were talking about what we'll do when we get out... weren't we?

THEO: (*Looks at MARK, MARK looks back and nods gently at him, smiling a little.*) Oh yes! Of course, yes, well I'm buying a fast car so we can drive across... erm... (*Goes blank, scared*)

MARK: Drive across... anywhere... anywhere we like! Or around... around anywhere we like! Or up, or down!

THEO: Yes, yes... in a fast car, ... a convertible one... of course...

(Both smiling at each other... smiles fade as they both look out blankly across the audience again)

(Long pause)

MARK: **Can** you remember where you come from?

THEO: Of course I... (*Slumps, pause*) Why do you ask?

MARK: Because I can't... I REALLY can't...

THEO: Well we're both a bit disoriented... you know... it'll come back to us when we get out...

MARK: Yeah... sure...

(Long pause)

THEO: Can you erm... well...

MARK: Remember any family? Friends? (*Pause*) Nope... no... I can't... (*Shakes head*).

THEO: Well at least it's not just me then...

MARK: No, no it's not...

(Long pause)

MARK: (*Horror creeps over his face*) Can... Can...

THEO: What?

MARK: Never mind... forget it!

THEO: Don't say that! I've forgotten everything else!

MARK: Sorry... sorry I meant...

THEO: I know... now what was it...

(Pause)

MARK: Can you... remember... your... own... name?

(Long pause, both heads drop, quiet tears? LIGHT FADE, time passes, LIGHTS UP; MARK and THEO have moved a little)

THEO: You know, It's not really surprising, considering what we've been through, it's probably a self defence mechanism, you know to block out the... erm... well... stuff... that's... well... happened to us...

MARK: Sorry?

THEO: The... the forgetting thing?

MARK: The what thing?

THEO: The forgetting thing, the reason we can't... can't remember...

MARK: So we can't remember things because we are protecting ourselves?

THEO: And each other.

MARK: Really? So how exactly could my inability to remember anything be protecting you?

THEO: Well, because... because then we don't remember anything... unpleasant... you know the...

MARK: YES, OK! No need for details! But why can't it be selective?

THEO: What?

MARK: Our "amnesia", why can't we forget the... bad stuff... and remember the good stuff.

(Pause)

THEO: Maybe there is no good stuff...

MARK: What! Of course there is good stuff!

THEO: How do you know?

MARK: Well... without the good stuff... how would we... know the bad stuff was bad?

THEO: (*Quickly*) Well obviously because... the...

MARK: Yes?

THEO: (*Hesitates*) Because... because...

MARK: EXACTLY... so there MUST be good stuff... good... there you go... feel better? I do.

THEO: Why?

MARK: We KNOW there is good stuff.

THEO: So there's good stuff... it doesn't mean we'll ever be able to get any.

MARK: Come on! Of course we will!

THEO: How do you figure that?

MARK: Well, we have survived this long, we'll be able to survive however long it takes them to find us!

THEO: Oh really?

MARK: Yes really!! Come on, let's not get into this... we'll make it... OK?

THEO: Look, seriously... it's not fair... look at us! We are wrecks, we're wasting away, mentally and physically, I have no idea how long we've been here, but you know if that water leak (*gestures at wall*), or whatever it is, dries up we'll be dead in... hours... oh and the rats... if they stop... visiting... we'll have precious little longer if we lose the water... we're not going anywhere... in fact we're just prolonging the inevitable...

(*Pause*)

THEO: Aren't we?

(*Pause*)

THEO: (*Angry*) AREN'T WE?

(Long pause)

MARK: *(Head still down, still empty tone, slowly)* YES, OK! Yes... we're not getting out...

THEO: What?

MARK: You're right, of course... we're stuck... here... forever... however long that lasts for us.

THEO: WHAT?

MARK: You were right... we're not going anywhere.

THEO: What? NO! NO of course we'll get out.

MARK: WHAT! Come on this is ridiculous! Make your mind up!

THEO: What do you mean?

MARK: Are we dying here?

THEO: NO!

MARK: Sure?

THEO: YES!

MARK: But you sounded pretty sure we were DEFINITELY NOT getting out.

THEO: I didn't really think that! I was just... just... testing your resolve.

MARK: My resolve? Why?

THEO: Why? Why? Well, it's... it's perfectly logical! Anyway! You passed... erm... well done... ANYWAY Let's DO something rather than... than... wallow in our own self pity... OK let's...

MARK: Logical? What are you talking about! The last thing we need is to be tested! Aren't we being tested enough!?

THEO: Sorry... "test" was a bad word to use, "exercise" that's what I meant, I was exercising you, not testing you... I'm just trying to keep us from mentally... well... dying in here, you know we need some fire, some passion. It's the only way we're going to get through this.

MARK: Seriously?... Well can you find a better way of “exercising” our minds? I don’t really see what “exercise” we can we do? I mean we’re in a tiny little cell, ALONE, what can we DO?!?

(Long pause)

THEO: Word games.

MARK: You WHAT?

THEO: *(Enunciates clearly)* W O R D G A M E S.

MARK: Yes, I heard you, I’m not deaf!

THEO: Good... that would complicate matters... being deaf I mean.

MARK: What? No it wouldn’t! I could... lip read your words... in this... game...

(Pause)

THEO: Not if my head were turned...

MARK: *(Incredulously)* “Not if my head were turned...” ??? “Not if my head were turned...”??? We are in a cell smaller than most broom cupboards!!! Why would you turn your head? WHY?

THEO: *(a little embarrassed)* Well... to... erm... increase the difficulty of the game a little... you know make it a bit more interesting...

MARK: WHAT! How could you! I’m deaf you insensitive bastard!

THEO: Sorry... sorry... of course... I wasn’t thinking...

(Pause, they smile at each other, subtly)

MARK: Anyway... how does this stupid game of yours work...

THEO: *(Quickly)* Well, I’m glad you asked, it’s really a simple little game... a bit of word association.

MARK: OH, OK, I’ve got it... You say “car”, I say... “wheel”... that sort of thing?

THEO: Yes, great, you’ve played before... good, good, I’d hate to humiliate someone who’s never played before! But a seasoned pro? Well you’re fair game!

MARK: Yeah, OK... whatever...

THEO: SPANNER!

MARK: What? Spanner? You're a spanner more like! With your silly little game!

THEO: (*Quietly*) That was the first word... of this round... (*Patronising*) should I choose another?

MARK: Choose another? Don't patronise me! I knew that... I was just... joking... you know... it's just a game!

THEO: (*Knowingly*) Oh... I see... just joking... sorry... how SILLY of me...

MARK: Alright, enough of that... now... spanner wasn't it... OK... ... NUT.

THEO: (*Knowingly*) Clever... like that is it...

MARK: Like what?

THEO: You think I called you an idiot so you slip in a reference to me being a loon... great! Thanks! A bit insensitive considering our...

MARK: What? NO! I just said the first thing that came into my head! I didn't mean it to be...

THEO: Sure, sure whatever! That's fine! FINE! LOSER!

MARK: Wait! LOSER? So what? You've given up already?

THEO: No, no... Loser... is connected to nut... because... squirrels always lose their nuts! Yes, they are always losing their nuts once they've buried them! Aren't they! They FAMOUS for it!

MARK: (*Incredulous*) Nut to loser... how tenuous is THAT? The only nut losing that's going on is you losing yours...

THEO: WHAT? Any better ideas? Come on Mr. Constructive?

MARK: OK... OK... let me spare you the embarrassment of trying to squirm out of the game AND the rubbish association... loser?... loser... BOOZER...

THEO: Boozer? How is that connected to loser?

MARK: What? Who's deaf now... say it with me... loser... boozer... see...

THEO: (*Sarcastically*) Oh, yes I see... they are both words that have nothing in common with each other at all...

MARK: They RHYME YOU loser!

THEO: Rhyme? What's that got to do with it? This isn't a poetry contest its word 'association' I thought I made that clear before we started...

MARK: Fine. Well maybe I associated loser with boozer... so now... they... are... associated.

THEO: What?

MARK: If I say boozer, what is the first thing that pops into your mind...

THEO: los... (*about to say "loser"*) Wait a second I see what you are doing! Of course it 'pops into my mind'! We've just been arguing about those two words!

MARK: So they are associated then, for both of us... (*Smug*) works for me!

THEO: What! No! You can't just... damn... just forget it alright... you were right this WAS a stupid idea...

MARK: NO it wasn't! It's my new favourite game!

THEO: Shut up.

MARK: EWE.

THEO: Why should I shut up?! I wasn't the one who...

MARK: NO... no! Female sheep... ewe...

THEO: That was deliberate, and you know it...

MARK: ... erm... yes... OK... but I don't remember anything in the rules against deliberateness...

THEO: Deliberateness? You take freedoms with our language that I find chilling...

MARK: Deliberateness IS a word.

THEO: As is angryated which is how I feel now...

MARK: Don't be facetious.

THEO: Oooooohhh... facetious... get you...

MARK: (*Goading*) Now you're just being pernicious!

(*Pause*)

THEO: (*Stutters angrily, Sulks*) I've had enough of this... (*Pause, calms down*) but at least we haven't thought about, well, you know... for a while.

MARK: True... except now we are again...

THEO: Sorry...

MARK: (*Earnestly*) Hey, stop it, alright, we both know, as YOU said, that this sort of thing is the ONLY thing that has kept our brains from... decaying...

THEO: Yes.. I know...

(*Smile gently at each other, briefly*)

THEO: What would we have done without each other?

MARK: Don't go there.

THEO: OK. But...

MARK: NO. Seriously, don't go there...

THEO: OK, OK, you're right.

(*Pause*)

MARK: Anyway... my watch wasn't it?

THEO: Sure...

(*Pause, THEO begins to fall asleep*)

THEO: You always seem to get watch, well a lot more than I do anyway...

MARK: It's OK... don't worry about it, its all OK... Guess I'm just the stronger one!

THEO: (*Falling asleep*) Shut it... (*Laughs a little*)

(MARK Smiles and moves over to THEO resting THEO's head on his shoulder LIGHT FADE, time passes. Sudden lights up, MARK is NOT on stage anywhere, with door breaking sound, spotlight over THEO who wakes suddenly. THEO shouts twice, standing, but trying to escape back as if through the solid wall, from this point on radio crackling can be heard and footsteps outside the corridor.)

VOICE: *(Deliberately)* It's OK sir, it's OK...

THEO: *(Stares around wildly)* Where's...? Where's the other guy?

VOICE: Other guy?

THEO: *(Panicking)* There was another man in here with me... where is he?

VOICE: I'm sorry sir, there was no one else in this facility, we have searched the entire place, this is the last cell.

THEO: What?

VOICE: Sir, this facility has been locked down for over 3 years...

THEO: *(Interrupts)* What? *(Frozen, struggling, then slowly)* Three years?

VOICE: Please, it's OK, it's over now, but we do need to leave immedi...

THEO: But the other guy. THE MAN WHO WAS IN HERE WITH ME!

VOICE: Sir, please. It's quite understandable; you've been alone for...

THEO: *(Angry)* NO! NO! I HAVEN'T BEEN ALONE!

VOICE: *(Seriously)* I am sorry, but the records we've found indicate that when this place was abandoned all prisoners were... well... except, apparently, you. Sir, we must go. NOW. I don't know how long we'll be safe here. We didn't even consider there might be a survivor. Sir... it's a miracle, YOU'RE a miracle, how you survived down here, completely alone, with no food and water for...well... your mental strength... is... well... anyway... let's get you out of this hole and get you some real food and drink... and a proper bed...

THEO: *(Still lost in another place)* and a car?

VOICE: a car?

THEO: *(Still lost in another place)* Yes, a car. A two seater... convertible.

VOICE: *(Trying to get them both out of there)* Erm... of course sir... no problem... whatever you need...

(Lights and sound fade, as THEO limps off very slowly).

END