

VIRGIN ROCK

a play in one act by

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VIRGIN ROCK

Cast of Characters

ADAM at ages eighteen and twenty-five

CHARLIE at ages eighteen and twenty-five

Setting

The shore of a lake in rural Virgin Rock, Florida.

A summer day at noon.

Seven years ago and today.

SCENE: A SECLUDED LAKE SHORE.
A hot summer day. CHARLIE, 18,
races in from the woods, whooping
and laughing. Slung over his back
like a piece of meat is ADAM,
also 18.

ADAM
No!!! Put me down, put me down, put me down!

CHARLIE
You want down?

ADAM
Yes!

CHARLIE
Down into the water?

ADAM
No!

(CHARLIE dumps ADAM onto the ground.)

CHARLIE
Look at my big blue beauty, Adam. Sun's like a million shards
of mica dancing on her surface. The Old Girl's showing off.
Reckon she knows I'm leaving?

ADAM
How would a lake know that?

CHARLIE
'Cause it's my lake.

ADAM
It's not your lake. It's county property.

CHARLIE
Listen to how that water's singing to me and tell me that's
not my lake. She's crying and I ain't even left.

ADAM
So leave.

CHARLIE
Aren't we the little sass-pot today? I guess someone doesn't
want my once-in-a-lifetime going away present.

ADAM
You got me something?

CHARLIE
Yup.

ADAM

What is it?

(CHARLIE gestures to the lake.)

CHARLIE

Ta-da!

ADAM

What? What am I looking at?

CHARLIE

The lake, Adam!

ADAM

(disappointed)

Oh.

CHARLIE

Now that I'm leaving, someone's got to look after her. And just so it's all "legitimate," you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna swim out to the very center of the lake. When I get there, I'm gonna dive all the way to the bottom. And you know what I'm gonna bring you?

ADAM

A fish?

CHARLIE

A rock - a rock from the center most deepest part of the lake. That way, for the rest of your life, you'll know this lake belongs to you.

ADAM

No, thanks.

CHARLIE

Ingrate!

ADAM

You'll just want it again when you come back.

CHARLIE

I'm not coming back.

ADAM

You might.

CHARLIE

Adam... Tomorrow I'll be in Tallahassee. After that - I don't know. But pinky-swear to hell I'm not coming back. You hear that Virgin Rock? Charlie Green is breaking free!

(CHARLIE hollers and lifts ADAM over his shoulders and spins him in a circle.)

ADAM

No!!!

CHARLIE

I! Am! Never! Coming! Back!

(The boys collapse to the ground. They lie breathless and disoriented.)

ADAM

I don't feel so right.

CHARLIE

If you felt right there'd be something wrong with you.

(CHARLIE rests his head on ADAM'S body.)

My uncle's got this car - when I get to Tallahassee - says if I fix her up she's mine. Takes corners kind of funny, but other than that it rides like rain.

(He points to a cloud.)

Gator missing its tail.

ADAM

Charlie?

CHARLIE

What do you think of engineering? Figure I might pick up some night courses at the university. Engineering or electronics.

(points)

Panther with only three paws.

ADAM

What time do you think it is?

CHARLIE

Relax, I ain't going for another nineteen hours.

ADAM

No, it ain't that. If Tilly wakes up and I'm not home - she doesn't like not knowing where I am. I'm supposed to be practicing my typing.

CHARLIE

Adam?

ADAM

Yeah?

CHARLIE

Seagull missing a wing. You're now three points behind. If you don't make one hell of a comeback, you're carrying me all the way to Gillespie's and ordering me the biggest mint pistachio sundae in the history of Virgin Rock.

ADAM

It's just Tilly doesn't like me out of the house when it's so hot.

CHARLIE

'Cause you'll melt?

ADAM

'Cause of my fits.

CHARLIE

Are you having a fit?

ADAM

No.

CHARLIE

You plan on having a fit?

ADAM

'Course I don't plan to. It's just heat and open spaces. Or heat and confined spaces. Or heat in general.

CHARLIE

If you're so delicate that you're gonna faint, you'd best run home to Aunty. I'm going for a swim in my lake.

(CHARLIE removes his shoes.)

ADAM

I thought it was my lake.

CHARLIE

Changed my mind.

ADAM

It's just the heat, Charlie. And Tilly not knowing where I am. Maybe later, when the sun's gone down you could come over for supper and we could play "Go Fish?"

CHARLIE

Bye, Adam.

ADAM

I don't want to go.

CHARLIE

Have fun typing.

(CHARLIE removes his shirt. ADAM remains.)

Thought you were going?

ADAM

Well, maybe, I could stay a little longer.

CHARLIE

What about the dogs?

ADAM

What dogs?

CHARLIE

The great big bloodhounds your aunt's going to send snapping after your heels.

ADAM

Tilly sleeps pretty hard after church.

(CHARLIE smiles and swats ADAM with his shirt.
He looks out at the lake. ADAM notices a
bruise on his chest.)

CHARLIE

I should've been a fish. That's what I'd like to be. Always cool. Always quiet. Eating worms.

ADAM

Did you get in another fight?

CHARLIE

What?

(ADAM points to the bruise.)

Oh, yeah. Dobbs.

ADAM

Floyd Dobbs?

CHARLIE

No, his old man. Yeah, Floyd.

ADAM

Oh.

CHARLIE

Told him to watch what he says about you.

ADAM

What'd he say?

CHARLIE
Stuff.

ADAM
Was it... "Bad?"

CHARLIE
He ain't gonna say it again.

(ADAM thinks.)

ADAM
Isn't Floyd in Gainesville?

CHARLIE
Why do you think he's there? After the bruising I gave him, his face ain't fit to be seen in "polite society."

ADAM
I thought he left last week? After graduation?

CHARLIE
Adam?

ADAM
Yeah?

CHARLIE
Get undressed.

ADAM
Get what?

CHARLIE
If I'm leaving you in charge of my lake, I'm making damn sure you learn how to use it.

ADAM
Oh. No. You go ahead.

CHARLIE
Adam, we live in a state three-quarters surrounded by water. Don't you think it's about time you learn to swim?

ADAM
Aunt Tilly says I could have one my fits if I exert myself.

CHARLIE
When are you going to stop being so boring?

ADAM
I don't know.

CHARLIE
You're unnatural.

ADAM
I know.

CHARLIE
Sitting up on this shore every Sunday. Watching me.

ADAM
I don't watch you.

CHARLIE
No? What do you do, then?

ADAM
I read.

CHARLIE
Well, you don't got a book today, so you don't got any excuse to stay sitting on shore.

(ADAM fidgets.)

Adam, tell me that on our last day together you did not bring a book?

ADAM
No...

(CHARLIE grabs ADAM and rummages through his pockets. He pulls out a book.)

CHARLIE
Edgar Allan Poe on a summer's day? Morbid and unnatural.

ADAM
Be careful! That's not mine.

CHARLIE
You steal it?

ADAM
No. Library.

CHARLIE
Do yourself a favor. If you don't want Dobbs and everyone else in this town pissing all over you, the next time someone asks if you stole something, tell 'em you're the best pickpocket in the Florida panhandle.

ADAM
Why would I do that?

CHARLIE

To show you've got some spine underneath all that jelly. I swear, Adam, when I'm gone, I shudder to think what'll become of you. Who's gonna teach you how to be a man?

ADAM

Aunt Tilly?

CHARLIE

Adam!

ADAM

She could. Maybe.

CHARLIE

Could she show you how to throw a right hook? Huh? How to get out of a half-Nelson?

ADAM

I don't want to do stuff like that.

CHARLIE

You don't want to do anything! On the "Voyage of Life" you and Motivation have yet to meet.

ADAM

Yes, we have.

CHARLIE

Oh, yeah? What are you going to do tomorrow? Huh? School's done, you've got no job, and I'll be gone. What are you gonna do?

ADAM

I don't think about stuff like that.

CHARLIE

Stuff like "the future?"

ADAM

Stuff I can't do nothing about.

(ADAM sulks.)

CHARLIE

Fine. You want to sit on shore and feel sorry for your gimpy self, go ahead. Mr. Poe here is joining me for a dip.

ADAM

Charlie, no!

CHARLIE

Stuffed in your back pocket all day, I bet he's aching real bad for those cool, dark depths.

ADAM

It's a library book!

CHARLIE

Here's the deal. I'll leave Mr. Poe high and dry if for once in your unnatural life you stop being God's most boring creation and get yourself into that water.

ADAM

Tilly says there's gators.

CHARLIE

There aren't gators.

ADAM

And snakes.

CHARLIE

They don't bite.

ADAM

Thank you very much, I'd prefer to stay here.

CHARLIE

Then Mr. Poe better find himself a bathing suit because-

ADAM

Okay! Maybe I could stick my feet in!

CHARLIE

Your feet?

ADAM

I'll wade. On the shore.

CHARLIE

How far out?

ADAM

How far?

CHARLIE

Up to your chest?

ADAM

I was thinking more like my ankles.

CHARLIE

Stomach.

ADAM

Knees?

CHARLIE

Knees?

(considers)

Okay.

ADAM

Okay?

(CHARLIE hands ADAM the book. He sticks it in his back pocket.)

CHARLIE

But take that shirt off. Last time I saw something that pale was in Old Dobb's funeral parlor.

ADAM

'kay.

(ADAM starts to unbutton his shirt. CHARLIE heads for the lake. He stops.)

CHARLIE

Maybe, once I'm settled in Tallahassee, maybe you could join me.

ADAM

Really?

CHARLIE

If you wanted. 'Til you figure out what you want to do.

ADAM

I'd like that.

(They smile. CHARLIE strips down to his underwear. He rushes off to the lake, whooping with excitement. ADAM removes his shirt and folds it into a perfect square. He removes his shoes and socks. He stacks his clothes into a neat bundle.)

I'm coming, Charlie!

(ADAM goes to the water. He rolls his pants high above his knees. He cautiously sticks his toe in. He looks skeptical and backs away.)

CHARLIE

(off-stage)

Unnatural!

(ADAM swallows his fear and puts his whole foot in. When nothing terrible happens, he smiles.)

ADAM

Okay, Charlie, here I come!

(ADAM exits down the shore. CHARLIE, now an adult of 25, enters from the forest. He wears a dark suit. In the seven intervening years the light of youth has drained from his eyes. His face is tired and his demeanor world-weary. He loosens his tie and mops his brow. He notices the scattered clothing and inspects it. He looks out forlornly at the lake.)

CHARLIE

Hey, Old Girl. You miss me? You miss your Charlie? I bet you did. I bet you died of a broken heart. Is that why you've lost your shimmer? Guess your days of showing off are through. Me too. Me too.

(ADAM, 25 and dressed in a black suit, enters from the forest. He watches CHARLIE. The passage of time has done nothing to improve his awkwardness; rather, more than ever he evokes an air of strangeness. He is the sort of person with whom one is never comfortable being in the same room.)

ADAM

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Jesus!

ADAM

Sorry.

CHARLIE

What are you doing out here?

ADAM

Followed you from the reception.

CHARLIE

It's hotter inside that funeral parlour than out here.

ADAM

Yeah. Hurricane Mabel knocked out their A/C last month - right after Floyd took over the business from his dad. Floyd says he don't mind the heat. Says it's a practice round for where the corpses will be spending eternity.

CHARLIE
I thought that's what Virgin Rock was.

(Silence.)

ADAM
I'm glad you're back.

[END OF SAMPLE. CONTACT AUTHOR FOR THE COMPLETE SCRIPT.]