

DRUM CIRCLE
(BOP Sharing Extract)

By Aisha Josiah

CHARACTERS

VICK, *mid-forties, a movie producer*

ROMY, *mid-twenties, a former assistant*

NOTE

This dialogue runs *fast*. Think Aaron Sorkin's *West Wing*.
Characters speak over each other constantly.

/ indicates an interruption

... is a continuation (not a pause)

– an interruption where the speaker is stopped short

THE SCENE

At rise:

VICK, sitting. Her office. Her ergonomic chair. Her desk, littered with scripts.

ROMY, standing. Hovering. Seeking a response.

A sense that something momentous has been said;

We are waiting for the fallout...

1.

VICK

...heroin.

ROMY

Huh?

VICK

Is this how it feels?

ROMY

I never... / well, not *heroin*, exactly...

VICK

The rush, the fucking— Are you?

ROMY

Am I...?

VICK

Fucking. With me.

ROMY

No. No, / no...

VICK

This isn't / some sort of...

ROMY

No... I promise...

VICK

... “vengeance” thing?

ROMY

No, no, no, this is...

VICK

As you say? This just...

ROMY

Happened. As I said.

VICK

Just fell into...

...into my lap...

ROMY

Call it “kismet”?

VICK

Sure. Or, no, cause it wasn’t without *effort*. I had a hunch / and...

ROMY

You set it in motion...

VICK

I pitched it to him...

ROMY

A script?

VICK

The script. I knew he’d love / it...

ROMY

When was this?

VICK

Bout a month back? And then yesterday...

ROMY

What script? Do I know it?

VICK

...yesterday, he calls and says...

ROMY

A script from *where*?

VICK

Uh, from the file. But listen...

ROMY

Wait, wait, wait...

VICK

...he calls, he’s *raving* about it....

ROMY

A script from the file? / You mean...

VICK

I...	ROMY
...from this office?	VICK
	<i>Pause.</i>
I may have bent some, some rules. I was following my gut.	ROMY
Am I to understand that you stole / property...?	VICK
I, due respect, I found it. Discarded.	ROMY
Found. You're <i>serious</i> ?	VICK
You passed on it.	ROMY
She's serious...	VICK
You did, last year.	ROMY
One: I doubt that...	VICK
I mean, you did.	ROMY
I wouldn't pass on / a...	VICK
It was October, I remember...	ROMY
...if it had any merit...	VICK
I wrote the coverage...	ROMY

VICK
Look, I think I would / remember—

ROMY
I REMEMBER. Oh, god, I'm so sorry. I / didn't...

VICK
So. You remember.

ROMY
Yeah. I wrote the coverage. It was recycled, / but I, I, I recovered it...

VICK
...what, you went through my *trash*?

ROMY
I...

VICK
Oh my / god...

ROMY
I know it's not the "done" / thing...

VICK
This is insane...

ROMY
I had a hunch—

VICK
Oh, a hunch. I see, you just "knew". I'm here, fifteen, twenty years in the trenches, building up an *expertise* but you...

ROMY
I never / meant...

VICK
...you "knew", you thought, better than me...

ROMY
No!

VICK
No, I understand: you're *ambitious*.

ROMY
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, well, yes, but I... I was just thinking about what you said.

VICK
Something I said?

ROMY
At the time. When you passed on the... You said, it was, it struck me as profound...

VICK
What script are we even talking about?

ROMY
(reverent)
The Tease.

VICK
The what?

ROMY
The rom-com...?

VICK
A rom-com?

ROMY
(taking out the script)
Remember? The philosophical...

VICK
...philosophical rom-com?

ROMY
(handing it over)
...sort of..?

VICK
(skims)
I passed on this?

ROMY
Yes.

VICK
Really?

ROMY
Yes.

VICK
Really? Some pretentious, wordy piece of pseudo-intellectual bullshit, the coverage of, I don't even *remember*, and I passed on it? Someone call a doctor, nay, *lock me up*...

ROMY
But you, you read it, last year...

VICK
...Thumb up my ass...

ROMY
You said it had merit...

VICK
...I mean, why are they *paying* me?

ROMY
You must / remember...

VICK
Oh, I *must*? / Well, then, excuse me...

ROMY
No, of course not, just... You said at the time...

VICK
Yeah? What did I say?

ROMY
You said, "There are no more artists."

VICK
(beat)
I said that?

ROMY
Yes.

VICK
I did? / Huh.

ROMY
I was standing right here... There, there were tears in your eyes...

VICK
No, there / weren't.

ROMY
...or maybe not.

VICK
There are no more artists. I said that, well. I would. It's true. There aren't anymore. There are wannabes and copycats and hacks...

ROMY

“Except, every so often, a script comes along and / redeems...”

VICK

The *rom-com*, I remember...

ROMY

...you do...?

VICK

The smart one...

ROMY

A little wordy, yes, but genius...

VICK

...with the, the, the Professor and the Ingénue and the adult diaper, I remember...

ROMY

...and that’s why, when you passed / on it...

VICK

Of course I did! That kid director they were pushing for? Packaging them with a script like that? It was too nuanced...

ROMY

I agree...

VICK

It was too subtle! Too true! It was— can you believe it? Potentially art! Don’t tell me some second-rate Zach Synder knock-off with a degree from Pick-A-Grad-School, who read Jane Austen one time will get it. They wouldn’t!

ROMY

I agree...

VICK

What’s the kid’s name, / again?

ROMY

The director? Blaze.

VICK

Blaze what.

ROMY

Just / Blaze...

VICK

Doesn't matter, they'd destroy it. They'd, they'd dice it up, make it look pretty, add a moral, some "redemption" speech, tack on a cliffhanger, turn it into a Franchise, all that instead of just doing the thing, because that's the only thing they can't do, these...

ROMY

(guessing; any "buzz" words)

Liberals. Radicals. Vegans?

VICK

...you know what I mean? They're trendy, sure. They can CGI the apocalypse onto a pinhead but they can't just *tell the fucking thing*, not without giving you a goddamn helmet and training wheels.

ROMY

(sitting)

...I agree.

VICK

I didn't say sit.

ROMY

(standing)

Sorry.

VICK

I remember now. *Lolita* / but funny...

ROMY

...but funny...

VICK

...the knee socks, the Polaroid, the ambiguous kiss...

ROMY

...*Will they? Won't they? Is it incest?*

VICK

No easy answers. No answers at all...

ROMY

The *wrong* answer, even...

VICK

Yes! Exactly! A travesty! That's what it would be... To gut, to *disembowel* a script like that? Make it *Disney*? I couldn't do it. I'd rather pass.

ROMY

...which is why I took it...

Stole.

VICK

...Yes. I'm sorry.

ROMY

No, never apologise.

VICK

Sorry—I mean—I took it to Him...

ROMY

You mean, to his people?

VICK

No, no, to him.

ROMY

...You know him?

VICK
(stunned)

Well, I don't really know him...

ROMY

Wait a second...

VICK

I crashed this afterparty. He was there. We went halvesies on.../ Not *heroin* exactly...

ROMY

And you, you were slogging away here?

VICK

I don't know him. We talked ten minutes, he gave me his number. I think he thought I had friends in low places...

ROMY

That's crazy... You Know People...

VICK

I don't, not really. I'm not on the *inside*...

ROMY

You sure?

VICK

ROMY

I'm just peering through the window... That's why I was slogging. To get somewhere. One day. To make something, I don't know. Beautiful, maybe.

VICK

That was the plan?

ROMY

Yeah. Yes. Before... everything.

VICK

I see.

ROMY

...I fucked this up, didn't I?

VICK considers. She picks up the office phone.

VICK

(phone)

I need— Dale, yes, good morning, I need— No, no coffee, thank you— I need to talk to Harold. I don't care how, just get him. Soon as he walks in.

(hangs up)

Dale is the new you. He's almost adequate.

ROMY

You're... You're taking this to Harold?

VICK

If it's what you say...

ROMY

It is...

VICK

...then it's going straight to the top.

ROMY

...Holy Shit!

VICK

Uh huh.

ROMY

Oh My God! I mean... You don't understand. At night, I dream about this...

VICK

...we all do...

ROMY
And I, and I will...?

VICK
You'll be in the room.

ROMY
But will I...? Is my name...? Will I be...?

VICK
What are you asking? If I would steal this from you?

ROMY
I know you wouldn't...

VICK
No, you don't.

ROMY
I... No.

VICK
But. You trust me.

ROMY
Yes...

VICK
That's why you came to me. Not Kevin, not Nassir, not Garth...

ROMY
Because we're women together...

VICK
Oh, come on...

ROMY
We're not?

VICK
If you must, go ahead. Identify the *tribe*. But it's more than that, isn't it? You came to Me.

ROMY
I did...

VICK
You dug through my trash like a crackhead...

ROMY
Not quite...

VICK
...You prostrated yourself, yes? And why?

ROMY
(searching)
Because...

VICK
Because, we appreciate, you and I...

ROMY
Yes...

VICK
There is something Higher, huh? Something Beyond...

ROMY
Something...

VICK
...beyond “Entertainment”...

ROMY
Beyond, yes...

VICK
Call it “God”, call it “Art”, call it “Cinema”. It is real. It is endangered. It desperately needs caretakers...

ROMY
And that’s what we are...

VICK
Are we snobs...?

ROMY
No!

VICK
...Probably...

ROMY
...Oh...

VICK
But you’re right. I’m not a thief.

ROMY

Thank you.

VICK

Your name... Yours... Will be right up there alongside...

ROMY

Thank you...

VICK

Big co-producing credit...

ROMY

Thank you, Vic. I appreciate it. I do... Cause I know you don't have to. And I know, I know, I broke some rules...

VICK

(gestures for her to sit)

You followed your gut...

ROMY

(doesn't get it; stays standing)

...and I know it's not the "done" thing...

VICK

You saw an opportunity. To nab an Artist... One of the few...

ROMY

One of the last...

VICK

You're not wrong... And he's— I just need to hear this, for me— he's certain?

ROMY

I have it in *writing*.

VICK

Christ... Alvin Wood...

ROMY

Alvin Wood.

VICK

(briefly awed; a fan)

Alvin, Shit, he's one of the last. The Giants. Still making Pictures. And you pitched him?

ROMY

I did!

Check out the balls on you!	VICK
I know!	ROMY
She's a monster!	VICK
I am!	ROMY
This bitch will Fuck. You. Up the ass, take a number!	VICK
I will!	ROMY
Take a seat!	VICK (gesturing again)
That's right!	ROMY (not getting it again)
No, take a <i>seat</i> .	VICK
Oh! Sure, sorry, sorry...	ROMY <i>She sits. VICK rummages, finds a bottle of liquor and two highballs.</i>
Do you drink, anymore?	VICK
Not since the—	ROMY
You're drinking now.	VICK
Yep, okay...	ROMY
We're celebrating. The eve of the conquest.	VICK