

FREEDOM
BY: ANTHONY REDDIE

THE SCENE... WE SEE A SEMI CIRCLE OF CHAIRS, ON WHICH ARE SAT FOUR YOUNG ADULTS/TEENAGERS. AT THE APEX OF THE SEMI CIRCLE SITS AN ADULT/TEACHER. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEMI CIRCLE, THERE IS A SMALL TABLE/CHAIR ON WHICH IS PLACED A SMALL PORTABLE STEREO/TAPE RECORDER. THE SKETCH BEGINS WITH A VOICE OFF STAGE SPEAKING. THE EFFECT IS TO GIVE THE PRETENCE THAT THE VOICE IS COMING FROM THE RADIO. ALTERNATIVELY, THE VOICE COULD BE PRE-RECORDED ON TAPE AND PLAYED ON A CASSETTE PLAYER.

VOICE: (Off stage) This is a historic day. One that many people here never expected to witness in their lifetime. The crowd is swarming all around this slight, dignified, elderly gentleman. The atmosphere is excited. The people are jubilant. This is a day many have dreamed, prayed and hoped for... Nelson Mandela is free.

THE ADULT RISES FROM HIS/HER SEAT AND TURNS OFF THE CASSETTE PLAYER. HE/SHE TURNS TO THE YOUNG ADULTS.

ADULT: It will be Easter Sunday in a few days time. You've heard the tape, about Nelson Mandela. What do you think the two events have in common?

JOANNE: (After some silence) In common? (Pause)... Nothing!

ADULT: (Looking at the others) What does everybody else think?

MARLON: Of course they've got nothing in common. At least most people care about Nelson Mandela. Easter doesn't mean that much to anybody these days.

ADULT: Is that what everybody else thinks?

THE YOUNG PEOPLE LOOK AT EACH OTHER, NOD TENTATIVELY AND THEN ALL NOD IN AGREEMENT.

ADULT: Why do you think Easter is not that important? You all heard what the Minister said last week. Jesus died for our sins. On Easter Sunday, we remember the time he rose from the dead. You don't think that is important?

ALICIA: Well it is, but people have other things to think about when Easter comes.

MARLON: Like watching videos on T.V.

JOANNE: Going out raving with your friends.

DAVID: Niaming a big chunk of bun and cheese, washed down with some sweet carrot juice. That's what Easter means to me.

ADULT: I see... Like that is it?

ALICIA: You upset with us for saying that?

ADULT: It's your prerogative to believe what you wish to.

MARLON: Are you for real?

DAVID: Don't believe a word of it... He's/she's well vex, you can tell. Look at his/her nostrils; they're all flared up, like a horse... (To the adult)... You're vex aren't you?

ADULT: I promise you... I am not vex as you put it... If that's what you think, then fair enough.

DAVID: I don't buy any of this.

ALICIA: Neither do I... It's your job to make us believe in Easter, and think it's important.

ADULT: No. You're all intelligent people. You can think for yourselves. If you say that Easter is not important, then fair enough. If you say that Easter and Nelson Mandela have nothing in common, then fair enough again.

THE ADULT RISES TO THEIR FEET... THERE IS SILENCE. THE YOUNG PEOPLE LOOK ON SUSPICIOUSLY... THE ADULT TURNS AND SMILES.

ADULT: Can I ask you all to do this one thing for me?

JOANNE: (Looking at the others) Hmm... Yeah, sure.

ADULT: Alright... This is what I want you to do... Just sit here.

DAVID: Come again star?

ADULT: Sit here...

ALICIA: And do what?

ADULT: Nothing... Simply sit and wait.

MARLON: For what?

ADULT: You will see.

JOANNE: Is that it?

ADULT: Trust me.

DAVID: I've heard that one before.

ADULT: Trust me... Just sit here. You can talk, sleep, whatever, but you have to sit here.

ALL THE CHARACTERS SIT QUIETLY, QUITE STILL. A YOUNG CHILD WALKS ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE STAGE, WITH A WHITE CARD HELD ABOVE THEIR HEAD. ON THE CARD ARE WRITTEN THE WORDS, "20 MINUTES LATER".... THE CHILD THEN EXITS THE STAGE. THE

SCENE COMES TO LIFE AGAIN. ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RESTLESS AND FIDGETY.

MARLON: How much longer do we have to sit here?

ADULT: Not long.

ALICIA: How long is that?

ADULT: As long as a piece of string.

JOANNE: What does that mean?

DAVID: This is pure wrenkness... When can we go?

ADULT: Not long now. Just a little while longer.

ALL CHARACTERS SIT QUIETLY AND STILL ONCE AGAIN. ANOTHER YOUNG CHILD WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE, WITH A PIECE OF CARD ABOVE THEIR HEAD. ON THIS CARD ARE WRITTEN THE WORDS “ANOTHER 20 MINUTES HAVE GONE BY”. THE CHILD LEAVES THE STAGE... THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE STILL DRAPED OVER THEIR CHAIRS, LOOKING VERY DISPIRITED AND FORLORN.

DAVID: This is slack.

JOANNE: Out of order. You can't keep us here like this. I'm hungry. I want to go.

MARLON: I need some food...My belly 's painin' me....

ADULT: I know... It won't be long now.

ALICIA: You said that twenty minutes ago.

ADULT: It won't be long. Trust me.

JOANNE: You said that as well.

DAVID: You can't hold us here like this. We have rights. You can't hold us. I want to be free.

ADULT: Don't worry, it will soon come.

MARLON: My Dad always says that as he's leaving the house to go out. All eight hours later, he ain't set foot back in the house.

ADULT: Trust me.

ALL CHARACTERS ARE STILL AND QUIET AGAIN... ANOTHER CHILD WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE WITH A WHITE CARD ABOVE THEIR HEAD. ON IT ARE WRITTEN THE WORDS, "ANOTHER 40 MINUTES HAVE GONE BY". THE CHILD WALKS OFF THE STAGE. ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LYING PROSTRATE ACROSS THEIR CHAIRS. THERE ARE WHINES, SOBS AND SNIVELS. ALL OF THEM ARE DISPIRITED AND ANGRY. THEY ARE DESPERATE TO LEAVE. THE ADULT IS STANDING IN FRONT OF THE GROUP.

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE: (In unison) Let us go.

ADULT: Soon... Not long now!

ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE: It's not fair.

ADULT: I know... But just be patient.

ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE: How long?

ADULT: Not long.

DAVID LEAPS TO HIS FEET AND RUNS TO AN IMAGINARY DOOR AND ATTEMPTS TO OPEN IT... WE SEE HIM STRUGGLING, BUT HE CANNOT ESCAPE... RELUCTANTLY HE RETURNS TO HIS SEAT.

DAVID: Please... Let us go.

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE: (Shouting) Please!

ADULT: (Pacing around) How do you all feel?

JOANNE: Tired.

MARLON: Hungry.

DAVID: Vex.

ALICIA: Imprisoned.

ADULT: Imprisoned... You're right... You were imprisoned. Denied your freedom... We all need our freedom. Freedom to think, freedom to speak. Freedom to move where you choose, freedom to be yourself. Why is Easter important? Why is Easter Sunday important?

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE: Not sure.

ADULT: Jesus came, gave up his position as the Son of God, died, and rose again on Easter Sunday, that we might be free. We all need to be free. Don't we?

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE: Yes.

ADULT: Very true. Now for the second question! What about Nelson Mandela? What has he got in common with Easter?

ALICIA: Hmmm. He's tried to set people free.

MARLON: Spent nearly thirty years in prison, trying to win Black people's freedom.

JOANNE: I suppose they do have a lot in common.

ADULT: God has called many people. From Harriet Tubman, through to Martin Luther King. God still calls people. People like Nelson Mandela, people who have made sacrifices and struggled to bring freedom for all people. On Easter Sunday, we remember

the sacrifices and triumph of Jesus, to win our freedom. One day, you may be called upon to make such sacrifices and struggles for your freedom... (Pause) ... One last question.

What about the wait?

MARLON: Terrible.

JOANNE: Unfair.

ALICIA: Frustrating.

DAVID: Slack... Totally out of order.

ADULT: Looking forward to leaving?

YOUNG PEOPLE: Yes.

ADULT: Of course... You've waited for it. It was a long time coming. God is faithful and will always keep a promise. Sometimes, the wait makes the freedom all the more appreciated. Never forget that!

YOUNG PEOPLE: We won't.

ADULT: Good... You can go.

YOUNG PEOPLE: (Shouting) ... Yes...

ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE RISE FROM THEIR SEATS AND CHARGE OFF STAGE, LEAVING THE ADULT STANDING ALONE.

THE END