THE ITCH

A ten-minute play

By

Joshua James
CHARACTERS

RAYMOND – Age could be anywhere from 30 to 50. Ray is fully paralyzed, can’t move his hands, feet or head and he’s very angry about it.

JAKE – Age could be anywhere from 20 to 50. Jake is also completely paralyzed, can’t move his hands, feet or his head. Jake is also blind, though it’s sometimes hard to tell.

TIME

Present

SETTING

A room in a hospital, but not a hospital room, it’s the tub room, which makes sense if you’ve been in a hospital for a long time.

NOTES

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*Special note; all of the lines by Jake that are in italics are direct quotes from the film Caddyshack, the film that Jake loves more than anything. So if you’re playing Jake and you haven’t seen Caddyshack, it’s time you did, and watch the unrated version, too, not the neutered version that sometimes runs on cable. Watch it even if you’re not doing this play, it’s a classic, man, a total classic.
Lights up on Jake and Raymond. The two men sit there quietly for a moment.

Jake
The whole thing comes down to THIS . . .

Ray
Shut up.

Jake
This is the thing . . .

Ray
I said shut up.

Jake
The thing is . . . I got an itch.

Ray
No you don’t.

Jake
Yes I do.

Ray
You can’t!

Jake
But I do.

Ray
No you don’t so shut up!

**Faye, a nurse, enters.**

Faye
Hello boys, how are you doing?

Jake
There she is!

Ray
What the hell is going on? Faye, they took me out of PT with no explanation, it wasn’t even time to go yet, they stuck me in this room . . .

Faye
I know, Raymond . . .
Ray
It’s basically a closet, stuck me here with no explanation, and worst of all, they stuck me in here with HIM.

Jake
Thank you very little.

Faye
I know Ray, I’m sorry. There seems to be a bit of a commotion over in B Wing.

**Faye sits in a chair between them.**

Ray
What is it, what’s going on?

Faye
I’m not entirely sure, but it sure is noisy.

Jake
*So what brings you to this nape of the woods?*

Ray
Did somebody die? Who died, was it Mr. Watson? Mrs. Anderson?

Faye
Nobody died. I haven’t seen you in awhile, Jake.

Jake
You missed me, didn’t you? I have an itch.

Faye
Where is it, would you like me to scratch it?

Jake
Yes please, left knee.

**Faye doesn’t move anywhere near Jake.**

Faye
How’s that?

Jake
Ooo baby, that hit the spot. Ahh. Oh Mrs. Crane, you’re a little monkey woman. Yeah, you’re lean, mean and I bet
you’re not too far in between, are ya? How you’d like to wrap your spikes around my . . .

Ray
Would you put a cork in it! Why aren’t they telling us what’s going on? If something’s happening they should tell us, we have a right to know! We have the right!

Faye
How’d it go in court the other day, Raymond?

Ray
Don’t know. Judge is reviewing my brief. Still waiting, but probably I’ll know tomorrow.

Jake
Court? Somebody finally suing you for sexual harassment?

Faye
That would be you, goofy. Raymond’s suing for the right to end his own life.

Jake
No shit?

Faye
No shit. Where’s your sunglasses, Jake?

Jake
You mean they’re not on my face?

Faye
I’m afraid not. Did you leave them in the tub room?

Jake
It is entirely possible. Would you be so kind?

Faye
My pleasure.

**Faye exits.**

Jake
So Raymond wants to end his life. Now why would you want to do something like that?

Ray
You know, in the five years I’ve been stuck in this hospital, you’ve said some monumental stupid things to me, but this one has to take the cake, it gets the big prize. You really are a mental defective, you know that?

Jake
But I’m not the suicidal one, now am I?

Ray
You dumb fucking piece of meat, I’m paralyzed from the neck down. I can’t do anything remotely useful, I am nothing! I’m a doorstop with a voice. I can’t work, I can’t play, I can’t make a family. I can’t FEED myself. I used to have a job. Car. Girlfriend. All I got now is SHIT. All I can do is sit around and wait to die. And I hate waiting.

Jake
Yes, I’ve noticed that about you.

Ray
Face up to it, we’re both paralyzed, hell, you’re blind as a bat to boot. We’re both fucked. All we do is take up space, man, that’s you and me, that’s it. We’re both frozen in place.

Jake
A flute without holes is not a flute. A donut without a hole, is a Danish.

Ray
Oh man, shut the fuck up, would you!

Faye enters with sunglasses.

Faye
Is he doing his movie at you again?

Ray
Yes. What the hell’s going on out there?

Faye
I don’t know, everyone’s still running around. We’ll know soon. Here’s your glasses, Jake.

She puts the glasses on Jake’s face.

Jake
You’re rather attractive for a beautiful girl with a great body. Ray’s depressed. He thinks that he and I are frozen in place.

Faye
What do you think?

Jake
I used to think that. Now I’m under the consideration that everyone else is frozen and I’m the only one moving. Uh-oh. I have another itch.

Faye
Where?

Jake
About two inches due north . . . of my asshole.

Faye
You know what, I have an itch in that spot myself. Would you scratch it for me?

Jake
Absolutely. How’s that?

Faye
Oh. Ah. Yes. Very nice.

Ray
Jacob, it’s not real, your arm’s not moving, your hand is not touching her. She’s here and you’re there. You’re not fucking touching her.

Jake
I am where it counts.

Ray
Shit.

Jake
I’m tickling your asshole too, Ray. Right now.

Ray
Shut up.

Jake
Oh baby. You love it.
Jake laughs, and after a moment Faye and Ray join in.

Ray
You really are a goofy bastard, you know that?

Faye
You know Jake, we rented your movie Caddyshack last weekend, my husband and me, but I fell asleep before we could watch it.

Jake
Infidel! I still can’t believe you haven’t seen it yet.

Ray
Listen Faye, you never told me what you thought about my case.

Faye
Your court case?

Ray
Yes. You’ve never said, one way or the other. What your opinion is. I’d like to know.

Faye
Well Ray, I think you should be free to do whatever you choose to do.

Ray
Really?

Faye
But I would hope, and do hope, that you would choose to stay with us. I do.

Jake
Me too. And I don’t even like you.

Short pause

Ray
Why? Do you really think life has any meaning?

Faye
Sure I do.

Ray
What do you think, Jake?
Jake

My testicles aren’t supposed to itch, but they do anyway. And that’s the whole nuts and bolts of the thing, if you’ll pardon my pun. Friends, it’s times like these that I’m reminded of the immortal words of CARL.

Faye

Carl?

Jake

Character in the movie, Carl the assistant greens-keeper, played by Bill Murray. He had this great speech.

RAY

Oh shit, here we go.

Jake

So I jump ship in Hong Kong and make my way over to Tibet, and I get on as a looper at a course over in the Himalayas. A looper, you know, a caddy, a looper, a jock. So I tell them I’m a pro jock, and who do you think they give me? The Dalai Lama, himself. Twelfth son of the Lama. The flowing robes, the grace, bald . . . striking. So, I’m on the first tee with him. I give him the driver. He hauls off and whacks one . . . big hitter, the lama . . . long, into a ten thousand foot crevasse, right at the base of this glacier. Do you know what the lama says? Gunga galunga . . . gunga, gunga-gulanga. So we finish the eighteen and he’s gonna stiff me. And I say, “Hey, Lama, how about a little something, you know, for the effort, you know,” and he says, “Oh, there will be no money, but when you die, on your deathbed, you will receive total consciousness.” So I got that going for me. Which is nice.

Very brief pause.

Ray

So do you think that’s what’s gonna happen?

Jake

I don’t know, but it would be pretty to think so. And that’s what the whole thing comes down to, isn’t it?

End of play.