



Vijay's Choice

Characters: Alysha, Vijay, Alysha's Father, Ben, Miss Lam

Synopsis: The day before the release of HKGEE results, Vijay, Alysha's brother, has struggled to decide his future. Being a science student for two years he has now gradually discovered his yearning to study literature. The disagreement with his father over his choice, however, leads to an intense altercation. Confused and dispirited, will Vijay follow his dream?

Scene 1 Alysha's Call

Alysha: Where's my mobile phone? I can't find it anywhere... I remember I put it on my desk... and now it's not there... where is it?

SFX: Phone rings

Alysha: Hello?

Ted: Alysha?

Alysha: Oh hi Ted.

Ted: Hey Alysha what's going on?... I called your mobile and a sexy male voice answered it... are you hiding someone from us?!

Alysha: Oh no... I've just been looking for my mobile phone and I couldn't find it... don't say somebody's stolen it! Did you talk to the guy?

Ted: No, I just hung up.

Alysha: I'd better call and see who's got my mobile. Bye Ted.

Ted: Wait, before you hang up, I just wanted to ask if you're joining us for dinner.

Alysha: (annoyed) Yeah, probably, but I've gotta first find out who's got my phone. I'll get back to you okay.

Ted: Hope you find your mobile. Bye.

Brief music

(SFX: Alysha pressing the keys of her phone)

(SFX: Pressing phone keys. Phone rings) (mobile phone ring tone)

Vijay: (bossily) Hello! Vijay speaking... can I help you?
Alysha: (mockingly) Vijay! what on earth are you doing with my phone?!
Vijay: (retreating) Oh... hel...lo...Al...Alysha...
Alysha: (still mockingly) What's going on Vijay? I've been looking for my mobile phone everywhere!
Vijay: Well, I was going to tell you Alysha,... I kinda.... 'borrowed' your mobile phone...
Alysha: Without my permission?
Vijay: Ah... I wanted to ask... but... but you were sleeping this morning when I left, and... and I didn't wanna disturb you.
Alysha: You should have asked... I mean do you know how much time I wasted looking for my phone?!
Vijay: Sorry Alysha... but today is an important day for me. The HKGEE results are coming out and I needed your mobile to find out how my friends did!
Alysha: Oh! So you stole my mobile just to chat with your friends?!
Vijay: This is important Ally... it's not just chatting... it's sharing our exam results... that's important isn't it?.
Alysha: There's no excuse Vijay... you should have asked... now come home and give it back to me.
Vijay: Can't I bring it back later?.... I'm busy right now.
Alysha: No... now... anyway Dad wants you home for dinner!
Vijay: Oh he doesn't does he?
Alysha: Yes he does.
Vijay: Can't you tell him I'm....
Alysha: No! Just come home Vijay and stop making excuses.
Alysha: And Remember to take care of my phone!
Vijay: OK! Bye!

(SFX: Noise of mobile phone indicating the end of calls)

Ben: Was that your sister?
Vijay: Yeah...

Ben: And that's your sister's phone.
Vijay: This?... NO. My sis doesn't have a phone!
Ben: Really? I thought I overheard you say...
Vijay: (Interrupting) Who cares what I said. All I care about right now is scoffing some food. I'm starving. Where shall we go?
Ben: Bendyburgers?
Vijay: Let's go.

Scene 2 In Bendyburgers

(SFX: inside Bendyburgers.)

Ben: (Sigh) What if I fail Maths?
Vijay: You won't.
Ben: I want to study information engineering and if I fluff my Maths I'll be nowhere man.
Vijay: Pure Maths... ugh... that subject is pure death to me...
Ben: And there were mistakes in the questions.... how can we answer questions that were incorrectly written in the first place?! Who wrote those questions anyway? They get paid enough to write question papers so how come they can make such careless mistakes?!

Vijay: You'll be okay Ben... you're great at Maths... you'll get an A no sweat.
Ben: It's unfair though!
Vijay: Don't worry, the Exam Department says they'll adjust our marks...
Ben: Adjust our marks! Do you believe that Vijay? How can they adjust them? They're just saying that to keep us quiet.
Vijay: We'll just have to wait and see.
Ben: So what do you need to get?... you wanna go on to study medicine right?
Vijay: (unenthusiastic) I dunno. I suppose so.
Ben: You don't sound too enthusiastic about it.
Vijay: Listen Ben... I gotta go.
Ben: Why? Stay here... who am I gonna talk to if you go.
Vijay: My Dad wants me to go home for dinner.
Ben: But you just eaten a Bendyburger.
Vijay: I know.
Ben: I'll go crazy if you go... I gotta talk to someone while I'm waiting for the results.

Vijay: I'll call you later okay?

Scene 3 Dad-Son Altercation

Father: Where is that boy?! The dinner's getting cold. Alysha are you sure you told him to come home?

Alysha: Yes Dad, I did.

(SFX: Door opening and closing)

Father: (Calling) Vijay?! Is that you?!

Vijay: (Calling) Coming.

Father: (Pause) You're late... the food is getting cold.

Vijay: Sorry.

Father: Now sit down and let's start.

Alysha: Can I have my mobile phone back.

Vijay: Here.

Alysha: How about saying 'thank you?'

Vijay: (Sighs) (sarcastic) Thanks.

Father: Have you seen what was written in the newspaper to-day?

Vijay: No.

Father: Listen. (SFX: Rustle of newspaper. Reading aloud) Yearly HKGEE result will be released tomorrow morning. It is expected that out of 130 thousand candidates only 30 thousand will be admitted to form 6. The Examination Department has revealed that candidates this year have done slightly better in languages when compared with last year's result. Each year there are students who get 10 straight As (stops reading) and I hope you'll be one of them Vijay.

Vijay: Dad... I only took 8 subjects...

Father: Really! I thought you took ten!

Vijay: Dad! What if I get all E's?...

Father: Vijay, what are you talking about? E's? You won't get any E's... or any B's C's or D's! I hope you'll only get As and go on to study medicine and become a famous doctor! You know you've wanted to be a doctor ever since you were three. You're my brightest child with the greatest potential. Alysha let us down by becoming a journalist...

Alysha: Daddy... don't say that... I love journalism.

Father: Alysha, don't interrupt... Vijay...you're my only hope now! Become a

doctor and make me proud!

Vijay: Okay... can we... um... change the subject now please.

Father: Change the subject?! This subject is your life Vijay and that will never change. Becoming a doctor has always been your dream!

Vijay: It hasn't Dad... not MY dream... it's always been YOUR dream!

Father: Vijay! I don't know what's got into you! You know that's not true. Now I'll... pretend you never said that.... it must be your nerves about the results... but don't worry son... you'll get straight A's... you'll see.

(Silence)

Father: Okay! So Vijay...becoming a doctor is your first choice...what would your second choice be? Lawyer? Engineer? Accountant?

Vijay: (Pause) Poet.

Father: WHAT?! A POET?! Vijay... please be serious.

Vijay: Father... (Pause) I want to study literature...

Father: WHAT?! Please Vijay, be serious.

Vijay: I... I want to study literature...

Father: You want to study that idle, useless, unprofitable subject!

Vijay: Yes.

Father: And have a career as a beggar?!

Vijay: That doesn't follow Father... there are...

Father: (Interrupts) That would be an insult to our family name! Forget! Never!

Vijay: Dad...how can you forget a DREAM! I'm a poet... I can feel it here inside of me!

Father: Poet inside of you? Where? I don't see him!

Vijay: Dad... calm down... you remember the inter-school poetry competition I entered last year?

Father: No I don't.

Vijay: Well I'm sorry you don't because I won the silver award for a poem I wrote... wanna hear it... I know it off by heart.

Father: No thank you.

Vijay: The Beauty of Flowers...by Vijay Goolarabani
Flowers are part of beauty...

Father: I said... no thank you!

Vijay: (Continues) Beauty appears when they blossom
Beauty unfolds in their colors, shapes and form,

Beauty lives in their power to express feelings.

Father: (Angry) Vijay... I said....

Vijay: (Interrupts) Flowers can bring people together
Or comfort a sad soul.

Father: (Outraged) My boy! Writing about.... (Scornful) flowers!

Vijay: But what is unique about flowers
is their way of accepting Death,

Father: (Angry) Morbid... morbid drive!

Vijay: Unlike any other living being,
they welcome Death with open arms.
What makes flowers really beautiful
Is their knowledge that death is part of life.

Father: (With contempt) Have you quite finished Vijay?

Vijay: Yes.

Father: You know what I think. You shouldn't be a poet writing silly poems
about death! You should be a good doctor saving lives!

Vijay: No! Father you are wrong! Poetry saves lives too! Medicine is a
physical cure to human sickness... poetry is about inwardness. It speaks
to human souls...nourishes them and helps them grow...poetry is
spiritual! It's a search for beauty and it's beauty itself!

Father: Poetry is a lot of hot air! Doctors help society... poets just leech off
society.

Alysha: Dad... Vijay's got a point... I interviewed some HK poets as part of my
journalism course at UUC... and they were fantastic! Their ideas,
their sensibility... believe me Dad... it's an honor to have the gift of
poetry.

Father: (shouting) I didn't ask for your opinion Alysha! It's none of your
business! Now keep quiet... this is between your brother and me!

Alysha: Dad...

Father: Silence Alysha!... (pause) Now Vijay! Listen! You have to become a
doctor whether you want to or not! You're my only hope! You've got to
bring honour to our family name! Now I don't want to discuss this
matter again. I pay for your education and all I want in return is for you
to study hard and get good grades... you can't decide your future
because it's already decided and that's my final decision.

Vijay: But Dad...

Father: I'm tired. I need to sleep.

(SFX: Big Bang of Father's door)

Interval

Scene 4 At the school (Release of the results)

(SFX: Students chatting, very excited)

Miss Lam: Ok quite please... If you don't keep quiet, you'll have to stay here all day waiting for your results.

(SFX: Students stop chatting)

Miss Lam: That's better... ok now as you can see, I've got your results slips in my hand and as soon as I call out your name, please come and get your slip. O.k. Eric... (pause for 1 second), Richie... (pause for 1 second), Vijay... congratulations Vijay, you've done really well.

Ben: Hey Vijay, what did u get?... judging from Miss Lam's smile, seems like you got straight A's. (Silence) Hey Vijay, what's wrong... you don't look very happy with your grades? Here... you can look at my grades... can I please have a look at yours?

Vijay: Here.

Ben: Wow!!!! Hey look here, Vijay's got 7 A's, and a C in Physics Hey congrats pal! Wow Vijay, ...or should I say, Doctor Vijay... you've made it. I can already see you in your white doctor's coat and your shining stethoscope around your neck.

Vijay: (Upset) Excuse me Ben.

Ben: Hey, Vijay wait... where you going pal? What's wrong? Is it because of that 'C' in Physics? That won't really make much of a difference, will it? Vijay... come back.

(After a few seconds)

Miss Lam: O.k. Guys, I'm sure you're all very excited after getting you grades back. But if you can just spare a moment, I've got an important announcement to make... O.k. for those of you who want to continue studying form 6 in this school, you will have to register at 10 p.m. in the hall downstairs. Please bring along your student I.D. and your

grade slips with you when you register. Is that clear? If you don't have any questions, you may proceed to the hall... Where's Vijay, has anyone seen him?

Ben: He's gone to the restroom Ms. Lam

Ms. Lam: Okay Ben... make sure you pass on the information Okay?

Scene 5 The School Gym

(SFX: Noise of basketball)

Ms Lam: Vijay? Vijay, what are you doing here? Um did Ben pass on the information about registering for Form 6?

Vijay: (bored) Yeah.

(SFX: Bouncing ball)

Ms Lam: Vijay... is there a problem?

Vijay: (bored) Nope.

(SFX: bouncing ball)

Ms. Lam: Vijay, what's the matter? Tell me. Are you upset with the 'Cyou're your Physics?

Vijay: Nope.

Ms. Lam: Did any of your classmates say anything to you?

Vijay: No, look it's really nothing Miss Lam.

Ms. Lam: Well, if there isn't any problem why are you here all by yourself? You should be celebrating with your friends... you did well.

(Pause for a few seconds).

Vijay: I just wanted to be alone for a while.

Ms. Lam: Is everything ok... at home?

Vijay: Well.... not exactly.... No.

Ms. Lam: Are your parents alright?

Vijay: Yes, yes they are. There's nothing wrong with them.

Ms. Lam: Then what's the problem?

Vijay: (Sighs) It's my dad... he doesn't understand.

Ms. Lam: What doesn't he understand?
Vijay: Me... I mean he doesn't understand that I have my own ambitions.
Ms. Lam: Is there an issue about your future Vijay?
Vijay: Yes, Miss Lam, there definitely is... My dad, is really stubborn. He wants me to go on to study medicine... and I don't want to.
Ms. Lam: So what do you want to do Vijay?
Vijay: Literature... I want to become a ... a poet.
Ms. Lam: A poet??!! OH!! Ok So what's wrong with that?
Vijay: Nothing.... but my dad doesn't understand. To him, poetry is an unthinkable option... and I don't see how I can convince him to allow me to study something it.
Ms. Lam: So basically your dad wants you to do something you don't want to do.
Vijay: Right.
Ms. Lam: Have you tried to talk to him about this?
Vijay: Yes, I have.
Ms. Lam: And?
Vijay: Futile... he just wouldn't listen. He says that I have to do medicine because HE is paying for my education and I don't have a say in it.
Ms. Lam: I see. Well, what do you plan to do right now Vijay?
Vijay: I dunno... I don't think I want to continue my studies anymore...! mean what's the point?
Ms. Lam: (Surprised) What's the point?'.!!! Vijay, this is YOUR FUTURE we're talking about here. You cannot give up your education just like that!!
Vijay: But what choice do I have? One the one hand there's my father's expectations and on the other hand... there's my dreams. I just don't know what to do, to obey my father and shatter my dreams or to follow my dreams and disappoint my father.
Ms. Lam: Vijay, you have to stand up for yourself. Speak to your father and tell him that you can fulfill your life by studying something you want to study not HAVE to study.
Vijay: Ok I'll give it a shot... but Miss Lam... literature isn't offered here.
Ms. Lam: Well, why not try another school.
Vijay: Another school?
Ms. Lam: Yeah, there are other schools offering literature and you can try and enroll there. I'll tell you what, here's my mobile phone number.
Vijay: Thanks.
Ms. Lam: Now think it over and then speak to your father again.... you can only start registering in other schools tomorrow so you've got time, and

once you've made up your mind, give me a call and I'll help you with the registration.

Vijay: Thanks Miss Lam. I don't know what I would have done without you.

Ms. Lam: It's ok Vijay. Now just relax and go home and remember, stand up for yourself.

Vijay: I will. Bye Miss Lam

Miss Lam: Bye Vijay.

Scene 7 Alysha's home

Father: It's already 6 o'clock, and there's no sign of Vijay.

(SFX: door opening and closing)

Father: Finally, he's come.

(SFX: door opens)

Alysha: Hi dad

Father: Where is Vijay?

Alysha: Vijay? I dunno... he's not back yet?

Father: No... Alysha, did Vijay call you up today?

Alysha: No. Why what's the matter?

Father: (Angry) Vijay is being irresponsible. It's high time he learnt a lesson.

Alysha: Maybe he's... you know... upset about that quarrel you had with him Daddy.

Father: It wasn't a quarrel.

Alysha: He loves literature Dad.

Father: I'm not saying literature is bad, all I'm saying is that is not good for Vijay to go into a profession which is not meant for him. He's a smart boy and he's got lots of opportunities to do something much better than ... (scornful) poetry. Where is that boy?! Why isn't he home?!

Alysha: He borrowed my mobile phone again to-day.

Father: I hope he asked for your permission.

Alysha: This time... he did... I'll call him.

Father: Yes, yes call him... and hurry up.

(SFX: Dialing. Play the recorded message in Cantonese saying 'he call party cannot

be reached')

Father: Well... where is he Alysha

Alysha: I dunno know dad... the called party cannot be reached... he's switched the phone off.... I... I hope he's alright.

The End