

THE BRIDGE

by

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# THE BRIDGE

By Michael Burns

The scene opens to a darkened stage, two figures appear dimly lit. One is a young man, Rolf, the other figure is older, male or female and shall be referred to as the Interpreter.

INTERPRETER

Rolf... Rolf, do you want to talk about it?

ROLF

About what?

INTERPRETER

About why you're here.

ROLF

I know why I'm here, we both know why I'm here, why should I talk to you about it?

INTERPRETER

Because I'm the I only one here to talk to right now.

ROLF

But I don't even know you.

INTERPRETER

And I don't know you, but I'd like to know you, that's what I'm here for, to get to know you and find out why...

ROLF

But what if I don't want to talk to you? What if I decide it's better left unsaid? What if I decide what I did is none of your business?

INTERPRETER

Oh but it is, it is my business, this is what I do, I talk with, people like you, and we keep talking until they can't think of anything else to talk about and I just keep on asking why and they start running out of reasons why, and answers why, and then they finally start to talk, really talk.

ROLF  
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

INTERPRETER  
I thought I, just told you.

ROLF  
I mean what's the point? It's over  
isn't it? I mean I thought what's  
done is done right?

INTERPRETER  
But what has been done? A crime has  
been committed, yes, but the crime  
must also be solved.

ROLF  
What's to be solved? The solution  
is obvious, at least it was to me,  
the victim was the perpetrator of  
this... crime, so you call it.

INTERPRETER  
So you admit there is a victim?

ROLF  
NO! . . .Well...

INTERPRETER  
Or even victims? Involved?  
Affected? Maybe even changed,  
forever, because of what happened?

ROLF  
Look, it had nothing to do with  
them, I swear it was just me,  
that's all... just me.

INTERPRETER  
You don't really believe that.

ROLF  
Hey, you don't have any idea what I  
believe. You never had to walk  
across that bridge late at night.  
You never had to walk home alone at  
three in the morning across it. I  
mean, you weren't the one who would  
sprint across he wouldn't stop in  
the middle. Man, it used to scare  
the hell out of me.

INTERPRETER  
Why?

ROLF

What?

INTERPRETER

Why did the bridge scare you?

ROLF

Are you kidding? Don't bridges scare you? They scare me, the bridge between youth and adulthood, life and death... trying to close a gap, trying to reach another plateau, bridges are built to span the crevasses and ravines, they're precarious paths across dangerous drops, most of them dark and deep... but all of them crossable... if you just don't stop in the middle.

INTERPRETER

What would happen if you stopped in the middle?

ROLF

What?.. No, when I said middle I meant, you know, middle of doing something, or getting somewhere, or...

INTERPRETER

But what would happen when you would stop in the middle of the bridge, on your way home?

ROLF

Well I wouldn't always stop...

INTERPRETER

But when you did, what made you stop? What would you think about?

ROLF

Well, I'd usually think about how nice it was, how quiet it was, how peaceful... and I'd look over the bridge and see how high it was and how I knew this ravine would look in the light of day... but right now it was deep and dark and endless... and I'd think about what I was and what I wasn't... and what I wasn't or ever would be... was...

INTERPRETER

Was what?

ROLF

WAS WHAT! WAS WHAT! WAS WHAT! I don't know "was what" all I know is I was the youngest of six kids and when I came along my father was old and my mother was drunk and there was nothing left for me.

INTERPRETER

Do you really think that's true?

ROLF

No... I don't know, but that's why I would stop on the bridge. Sometimes I would think about my mother and father and sisters and brothers... and they would be the happiest thoughts in the world, but then I would think of me and my life and I would think that I had nothing to give to these memories... I had no accomplishments to add and I wanted to quit while I was ahead so I would have nothing but those memories. I was afraid I couldn't live up to them, live up to my brothers and sisters and mother and father, I was afraid of failing and spoiling the success and goodness we shared as a family, I was afraid of failing in life.

INTERPRETER

People can't expect to be given their gait just, because they are born to this world, it takes all you're given to forgive that frustration that, "all to this world is to die" but there is so much to do in this life that is given, that to take it is surely a lie.

ROLF

That was very poetic... I used to write poetry.

INTERPRETER

Why did you stop?

ROLF

(Laughs) You figure it out...

. INTERPRETER

Oh... I thought you meant you stopped before that.

ROLF

No, as a matter of fact I wrote a poem on the bridge that night. I never wrote it down but I remember it. Would you like to hear it?

INTERPRETER

Yes

ROLF

O.K., um, here it goes,  
 Oh god what a beautiful night  
 and I do mean you god  
 not some figure of speech to try to  
 emphasize,  
 for be this your might  
 it needs no emphasis.  
 For the moon is low and quartered  
 and bright  
 but lets the stars share its light  
 and all comes deep on a blanket of  
 blue  
 carried to me...  
 on the chill that I breathe  
 echoed in darkness of shadows and  
 tree's  
 in me comes all... silent and  
 great...

INTERPRETER

Is that when you...

ROLF

I was on the bridge, see...

INTERPRETER

It's just we need to know why...

ROLF

And when I spoke that poem I wasn't the only one who heard it, there was the bridge and this time I knew I could cross it.

INTERPRETER

So you....

ROLF

I knew this bridge would lead me  
across...

INTERPRETER

So you jumped?

ROLF

Yes...

FADE TO BLACK