

# Click

by

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## DESCRIPTION

When Marlin reveals to Pinto what he did in the park that night, it changes the moral universe they inhabit.

## CHARACTERS

PINTO

MARLIN

## SETTING

A room

## TIME

Now

## MISCELLANEOUS

*Pinto sits at a kitchen table, ordinary and not IKEA, with two other chairs, wooden. A mint-green vinyl table cloth, on which sit salt and pepper shakers—clear glass, with silver metal tops—next to a sugar bowl. A half-height metal paper napkin dispenser, exactly like one on a diner counter, stands next to the sugar bowl. One broken-handled coffee mug holds pens, pencils, markers, and scissors. A second broken-handled coffee mug holds scuffed flatware: spoons, butter knives, forks.*

*A small cheap transistor radio is on the table.*

**NOTE:** *The actors should use a rough-edged British, Irish, or Scottish accent. The accents can be mixed, that is, one British and one Irish, for example, but it should not be done in American tones.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*PINTO sits at the kitchen table, looking at an article in the newspaper. MARLIN is there, straddling one of the chairs.*

I did that. MARLIN

You did not. PINTO

I did. MARLIN

What's listed here. PINTO

Yes. MARLIN

I don't believe it. PINTO

Believe me. MARLIN

I don't want to. PINTO

It's true. MARLIN

PINTO  
If you really did what's listed here, then kiss me.

*Marlin kisses Pinto. Their faces separate an inch, nothing more.*

MARLIN  
Lock, stock, and barrel to his head. That's not in the article.

PINTO  
The cause of death is not in the article.

MARLIN  
Only a detail the perpetrator would know. Because I was there.

*Pinto's finger traces around the edge of the photo in the newspaper.*

PINTO

Then that means—last night I slept with—

MARLIN

Such a one that would do that, yes.

PINTO

—would do this—

MARLIN

You always knew I was capable.

*With an inarticulate sound, Pinto shoots out of his chair, paces. Marlin pivots the paper so that he can read it. He takes a pen from the mug and scribbles around the edges of the photo.*

MARLIN

No photo can ever capture, you know—two dimensions can't be three—the air, the brittle light—pixels cannot—

*Pinto leans on the table into Marlin.*

PINTO

Tell me. Why. Hard.

MARLIN

Of course. It's not without reason—a reason. I had my own business to mind—

PINTO

Faster.

MARLIN

—self-important, going through the park—

*Pinto sits down.*

MARLIN

—a mundane day.

PINTO

Then. What.

MARLIN

Not him—not at first. Jonathan.

PINTO

Jonathan?

MARLIN

I don't think he was there for you think he was there for. Hair slicked, teeth white—clean. No prowling-around for him. He had found a source.

PINTO

And of course—

MARLIN

We greeted.

PINTO

Innocent.

MARLIN

Jonathan is all done. I have told you that.

PINTO

You have told me that.

MARLIN

But still open, as befits friends—a kiss, an embrace. We are not in medieval times.

PINTO

So when did he appear?

*Marlin positions the sugar bowl behind the napkin dispenser.*

MARLIN

He must have been there, but maybe behind those concrete urns with the knackered flowers, one of those—niches—

*Marlin picks up the salt and pepper shakers, now Jonathan and Marlin.*

MARLIN

Jonathan and I, we talk—by now, dusk—the lamps splutter on—  
traffic, moist air—you know that garden—and Jonathan leaves.

PINTO

A big kiss.

MARLIN

You know his manner.

PINTO

Several—and him watching all.

MARLIN

And I am alone.

*Marlin puts the salt shaker to one side.*

MARLIN

I thought that that would be brief—that time of day—but the place  
stayed deserted. Only myself. I knew he was there, though I  
hadn't seen him. Ghost-nerves, you know, the ones that pick up  
on a breeze: they zizzed. Purple shadows, like ink.

PINTO

I have to know.

*Marlin dances the pepper shaker in front of the napkin dispenser.*

PINTO

You had no reason to stay.

MARLIN

I had no reason to stay.

PINTO

But you did.

MARLIN

Something stayed me. Danger—excitement—

PINTO

A center of gravity for you.

MARLIN

It's why you love me. I called out—"olly olly oxen free"—he didn't have to stay, either—but his voice came back: "I saw you." "I can't talk to a ghost," I say. And he, summoned, appears. Go on.

*Pinto moves the sugar bowl from behind the napkin dispenser.*

MARLIN

And when he did—I swear the air broke. Not shattered but—reconfigured.

*Marlin gets up, goes to stare what would be the kitchen window over the sink.*

PINTO

"I saw you."

MARLIN

"I saw you," he said, with a voice like ripped glass. "I saw you kiss him."

PINTO

A double-edge to that.

*Marlin turns to face Pinto.*

MARLIN

Doesn't it. "I saw you—I want" or "I saw you—I loathe." And then he brought it down to a single edge: "You faggot."

*Pinto's voice changes slightly to take on a different character.*

PINTO

I saw you, faggot.

MARLIN

Like that, yes.

PINTO

Because I need to know.

*Pinto approaches Marlin.*

PINTO

I saw you, faggot.

MARLIN

More hoarse, more outbreath.

PINTO

I saw you kiss him, you faggot.

MARLIN

And something—clicked. Brittle to brutal.

PINTO

I saw you kiss him. I did. I saw all of it.

MARLIN

“What of it?” I say.

PINTO

Do you want some for yourself?

MARLIN

I did say that, almost beat for beat.

PINTO

That’s why I said you said it.

MARLIN

“Do you want some for yourself?”

PINTO

Why do you always have to correct?

MARLIN

Because I knew what was next. I knew, even before the words I knew would come out of his mouth came out of his mouth.

PINTO

I hate you.

MARLIN

See, you know as well. The words lasering in, zeroing out. "I hate your kind."

PINTO

Your kind—

MARLIN

"I hate all of you—filth."

*Pinto sits down. He holds the pepper shaker.*

MARLIN

The air frags all around me—and something just—clicks.

PINTO

Permission.

MARLIN

Granted.

PINTO

Sit. Please.

*Marlin sits.*

MARLIN

Permission.

*Marlin indicates for Pinto to pass him the pepper shaker, which Pinto does. Marlin pulls the sugar bowl toward him, faces the two items together.*

MARLIN

"Filth," "sewage," "deserve to die" "loathe"—as these grenades come in, I am in this suspension, waiting for the permission to begin.

PINTO

Why didn't you leave? Avoid the temptation.

MARLIN

I had that choice.



PINTO

Sky failing, venom spilled—but you still intact—

MARLIN

Intact—

PINTO

The higher road to take—

*Marlin laughs.*

MARLIN

You are so delicious, you are! You would have left.

*Marlin lifts the sugar bowl up like a chalice.*

MARLIN

“I loathe you”—infection, viper—that long “o”—click.

PINTO

Click.

MARLIN

A voice in the dusk—no human tether—

*Marlin drops the bowl, and it crashes onto the table, on top of the photo.*

MARLIN

He had earned his passage out of the garden.

*Pinto moves to clean up the mess.*

MARLIN

Leave it alone—stop being who you are!

*Marlin gets out of his chair and moves around the kitchen. Pinto doesn't stop cleaning up.*

MARLIN

It was easy, actually. Stop it!

*Pinto stops.*

MARLIN

Come here. Come here.

*Pinto goes to Marlin. Marlin takes Pinto's hands.*

MARLIN

We share everything. This will out in our every touch from now on—these hands make you co-conspirator. Co-respirator.

*Marlin puts Pinto's right hand around his throat.*

MARLIN

I grab him—click, off go his words—the soft places to the sides of the larynx. Squeeze!

*Pinto squeezes, which constricts Marlin's voice.*

MARLIN

I ram him against the wall. Do it!

*Pinto, pressing against Marlin's throat, slams him onto the table. Pinto's breathing is heavy.*

MARLIN

He feels this vice tighten, tighten until—

*Marlin slides out of Pinto's grasp to the floor.*

MARLIN

He falls.

*Marlin laughs. Pinto looks crushed.*

MARLIN

At the foot of the wall, but still breathing.

*Marlin imitates thick, rickety breaths.*

MARLIN

Pick up that chair—pick it up! Over your head.

*Pinto lifts the chair over his head.*

MARLIN

The trash barrel.

*Marlin sits up, leans back, his arms supporting him.*

MARLIN

“Look at me.” Honestly, I can’t tell, but I hear him turn his head. “I want you to see what’s going to kill you”—and then I know.

*Marlin snaps his fingers.*

MARLIN

Click.

*Pinto puts the chair down. Marlin reaches out his right hand. Pinto grasps it, pulls him to standing.*

MARLIN

No good scare and give him a chance for penance—but with cold rage end his days. I hated him, friend, I hated every hatred he held for me, for you, for Jonathan—and it was no effort at all to let gravity judge.

*Pinto lets go, moves to the table, sits.*

MARLIN

Now one less hater in the world.

PINTO

They’re floating it as a possible “hate crime.”

MARLIN

How do these things get judged? How do you judge me? There is one less hater in the world.

*Pinto takes a pair of scissors from the mug and cuts out the article and picture.*

PINTO

Hate for hate.

*Marlin sits at the table.*

MARLIN

Hate for hate it was—but at least now a little bit cleaner, don't you think?

*Pinto cuts and finishes.*

MARLIN

Yes? Cleaner?

PINTO

It is not without meaning. And I am scared.

MARTIN

If they find, they find, not likely, but—

PINTO

Not that.

*Pinto turns the cutting face down, smooths it.*

MARLIN

Of me.

*Pinto half-shrugs, half-nods.*

MARLIN

But there is one less.

*Pinto half-shrugs, half-nods again. He arranges the items on the table, putting them back into order.*

PINTO

Could you turn the radio on?

*Marlin doesn't right away, but then he does. CLAIR DE LUNE plays at a low volume.*

*Marlin watches Pinto, who stares at the turned-over article.*

*Lights to black as CLAIR DE LUNE plays up rich and full.*

