How it all begun

**Synopsis: After being offered a cup of warm beverage by a person on the street, Lucas is asked how he ended up homeless. He begins to explain his life’s story – his childhood, his family and his long-lost aspirations.**

**Lucas: Eccentric, Traumatised, Lonely.**

Scene 1

(Opens in the bustling streets of a city. A man is sitting in the center of the stage covered up with a worn-out blanket)

(Lucas exhales in the palms of his hands and then

rubs his hands together)

LUCAS It’s cold today…

(Lucas covers himself tightly with the blanket)

Ha ha! Well, at least it ain’t raining.

Wait. (Pause.) Why is that man looking at me? He’s walking towards me now… Is he coming to cause trouble? B-but he doesn’t look angry. Hmm.

Ye-yes? Hello sir… Yes, it truly is a cold day… And busy too! Oh, what is this? For me? Ahh, thank you very much!

(Lucas reaches his hand out to grab a cup and holds it with both his hands)

Oh, it feels nice and warm! My name? Oh, it’s Lucas. What about yourself? Nice to meet you too! Of course, sir, ask away! Well… (*Pause*.) No, no, it’s not a difficult question, don’t worry. It is a rather long story though, sir. Do you have time? I see… Where do I start…

Well, was… born in a big family. Two brothers, two sisters and, of course, my parents. Never was close to them to be honest. You could say I grew up well, we had money that is. A family of lawyers were we. Lawyers…

(Lucas gazes into the distance in deep thought

before shaking himself back to reality. He puts the cup to the side and stands up)

I… (Excitedly.) I was a good student! Ha ha, I may not look like it, but I was at the top of my class. My teachers loved me, though my classmates, not so much.

(Lucas starts pacing around)

I wasn’t really a social butterfly though you see. My parents never really allowed me to go out much. They demanded we spend our time studying. Yes… Yes! We studied, all of us. All of us studied.

I-I still remember the day I went to a party without letting them know. They were furious when they realised I left the house of course. I was grounded for a week. Wasn’t allowed to leave my room except for school…

‘How are you gonna become a lawyer if you never study’ they’d always say. They’d also use my grandma in order to make sure I’d study. “Your grandma would be very sad if she knew you weren’t studying right now!” Looking back, it was really just an attempt to emotionally manipulate me and my siblings… (Sigh.) I didn’t want to become a lawyer, but they never really asked what I wanted to do. Nor did they care. Middle school, high school, everything was the same… Just studying, studying, STUDYING.

(Lucas stops walking to catch his breath)

Where was I? Oh yeah. I wasn’t allowed to have friends even. They… said that friends were simply distractions. Anyway… After high school, I went off to study. Law degree of course if you haven’t guessed it already. It was a great experience. Getting to live on my own, away from my family. It was…

(Lucas stretches his hand towards the sky)

Freeing. I felt like I could do anything I wanted.

(Start pacing around faster than before and fiddles with his hands)

It didn’t last long though. That feeling of freedom. I neglected my studies. I was doing the bare minimum; I didn’t want to study anymore I didn’t want to study I WANTED TO REMAIN FREE.

(Lucas curls down onto his knees and starts sobbing)

Was that really too much to ask? To be free? To be… free?

(Lucas takes a few deep breaths, wipes his eyes and stands up once again)

First year of uni, truly felt like bliss. I got through it with bad grades, but I was happy just to make it through the year. I… I even tried to make friends. Ha ha, I must sound like a kid, but I was very excited to do that. I wasn’t really used to going out though… So, after turning them down continuously, they never really asked again. We-we were still talking in class though! I wonder what they’re doing now…(Shrug.) Better than me, I hope!

Second year was not as fun sadly. I just, didn’t have the energy. I wasn’t really eating though, so it kind of makes sense. I… Wasn’t doing well mentally. I had… long lost myself. I did try to continue. I was never one to give up after all! But (Pause.) In the end it was all in vain. I was failing assignment after assignment and ultimately failed the year.

My parents… When my parents heard that I failed the year, they did not take it well. They were furious… I-I still remember that phone call. They called me stupid and lazy… T-they called me an embarrassment. Never did they ask why that happened or how I was feeling. It just didn’t matter to them. After arguing for a long time, they kind of gave me an ultimatum. They said that I had to choose between continuing to study, or them not providing financial support… How COULD THEY. THOSE SNAKES. Had I not been a good son? Was I not somebody who always listened to them? And they dared give me an ultimatum?

(Lucas takes some time to collect himself)

I… I ended the call. They’ve tried to call me several times since then, you see, but I just couldn’t bring myself to talk to them again.

(Lucas starts pacing around)

I tried to make a living after that. Waiter, retail, heck I even walked dogs! But I was finding it hard to make enough to sustain myself. With the funds I had from before and the income from the jobs, I survived for 2 years before I started having financial problems. My landlord. (Pause.)

(Lucas stands still and looks up to recall his memories)

That poor old man, tried to help and be understanding. That’s why I lasted for so long. But month after month of not being able to pay the rent…He ultimately had to kick me out. (Pause.) He cried for me. I could tell he really cared, so I couldn’t even blame him nor argue back. I just, nodded and by the end of that month, I had packed my stuff and left.

(Lucas starts pacing around)

I did try to look for a place to live at, you see, but I could not find anything to rent with how much I was making at the time. Well, within a month I kind of ended up homeless. I even lost my job at the time…

I was working in retail and upon explaining my circumstances, they decided to let me go. Without an address to give them, they said that it’d be impossible to work there. Nobody else took me in either, so it was kind of a viscous cycle I could not escape.

(Lucas gazes into the distance trying to think if he missed anything)

Well, sir, that is how I ended up here. That was 3 years ago, and to be quite honest, I don’t regret anything one bit.

(Lucas sits down, covers himself with the blanket and picks up the cup)

Ha ha, I must’ve been rambling for quite a while for the drink to go cold.

(Lucas takes a sip)

But it’s still delicious. Thanks for the tea once again!

**THE END**

**Annotated Bibliography**

Beckett, S. (2011). *Waiting for Godot*. Grove Atlantic.

The character Lucky from the play *Waiting for Godot* had a major influence in the building stage of my character’s (Luke) background. Lucky being a slave of Pozzo for years, seems to have lost his sense of self exhibiting ‘robopathic’ behaviour. I turned down the severity of Luke’s trauma and adapted the idea of slavery to a more current problem, which is parents forcing their children to follow a family tradition or to take over the family’s business. The characters Vladimir and Estragon influenced the way Luke speaks, like recalling random memories such as going to a party. With these changes, I tried to bring forth a thought-provoking element to my play, to help bring more awareness to homelessness and to the effects of bad parenting as a child grows up.

Greig, N. (2005) *Playwriting: A Practical Guide*. Abingdon: Routledge

*Playwriting: A Practical Guide* helped me with elements of the play. With the exercises suggested in the book, it helped me build my character and set the theme, in a way that I’d be able to better tackle the issues presented in the play. Originally thinking of introducing a musical instrument, it helped me realise that that could possibly serve as a distraction from the main issue which should be the impact of parenting. The structure of my play has been adapted from the examples shown in the book.