

HEART SONG

Written by

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A singer must choose what matters most
when temptation comes knocking.

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - NIGHT

VINCE (30 years old, undisciplined singing sensation) holds centre stage. Lights encircle him. Music surrounds him. Audience applauds him.

AMY, his 28 year old wife, sits in the front row, adoring him.

Vince reaches his top note as he concludes his song to thunderous applause.

From the wings, Vince's agent, DEZI, (vibrant, flirty) rushes onto the stage. Throws her arm across Vince's neck. Leans into the microphone.

DEZI

Our one and only... Vince Bernard!

Vince, chest out, waves at the cheering crowd. His laughing eyes scan the audience and pause on Amy. She is on her feet, hands clapping, eyes a little apprehensive as she glances at Dezi.

Then Vince and Amy's eyes connect. Hold.

He ducks away from Dezi's arm, still waving at the audience, does a showman's bow and, laughing broadly, leaves the stage.

Dezi stays at the mic. Her voice can be heard in the background.

DEZI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He says he is retiring from rock...
we're not going to let this
incredible talent go... are we?

INT. BACKSTAGE - VINCE'S DRESSING ROOM - LITTLE LATER

Amy runs into the dressing room and gives Vince a hug. He lifts her in the air.

AMY

What a way to end your rock 'n'
roll career, huh?

Dezi parades in. Nose a little high. Eyes on Vince. Ignores Amy.

DEZI

You're at the top of your game.
(glances towards Amy)
We can't stop now.

AMY
 (looking at Vince)
 Vince is going to be Head of
 Worship at Community Centre. And...
 he'll have time to produce his
 Gospel Album.

Vince's head shifts downwards. Dezi laughs.

Amy moves over to Vince, links her arm in his. She looks up to him and says softly.

AMY (CONT'D)
 We can start a family now that
 you're not traveling anymore.

Vince kisses her head. Takes her hand from under his arm.

VINCE
 You head on. I'll get a lift home.
 (apologetically)
 It's the last night...

Amy's mouth opens. Nothing comes out.

Dezi looks sideways at Vince.

Amy's chin rises. Her eyebrows lift. Her eyes fix on Vince for a long second. Then she turns and heads for the door as Dezi edges closer to Vince.

INT. APARTMENT - LOUNGE - LATER

Amy paces the floor. The room is in semi-darkness.

A standing mirror, with an overhanging lamp, shines on an empty circle in front of the mirror. The mirror blocks part of the window view over the lake and church nearby.

Amy lifts her head towards the door as a car is heard.

Her eyes move through the open lounge door, down the passage towards the front door.

Voices laugh. Front door opens. Vince stumbles in. He closes the door.

He sees Amy, waves weakly. Makes his way towards her, touching the passage wall with one hand.

VINCE
 It... w-was s-so good. I-I was s-so
 good.

He hangs a limp arm over Amy's shoulder. Amy stiffens. He laughs as he collapses into a nearby chair. His elbow hits a framed photo of them on their wedding day.

It smashes. They both look down at the broken glass.

Vince looks up at Amy.

VINCE (CONT'D)
T-they w-want me b-back...

Amy's arms swing onto her hips.

AMY
And we want a family.
(finger pointing)
You wanted to sing, to worship. You said so.
(hands lifted, shaking)
You got the head position.
(pauses, voice high)
You're letting us all down.

His head drops to the side.

AMY (CONT'D)
Oh no you don't!
(lifts his chin)
YOU wanted this... for us.

THREE MONTHS LATER

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Amy comes into the bedroom carrying two mugs of coffee. She puts one on either side of the bed.

She rubs her slightly protruding belly as she walks over to the windows.

She opens the curtains. Light floods the room.

AMY
Monday's sleep in is over! Time to wake up!

Vince rubs his eyes. Amy slides in next to him.

VINCE
 (whispering into Amy's
 tummy)
 Hello, Daddy's little girl.

AMY
 (laughing)
 How do you know it's a girl!

He tickles her tummy. She giggles.

Amy leans over and switches on the screen, scrolls. Selects last night's service with Vince leading worship.

Vince and Amy sip coffee and watch in silence.

A band plays a loud introduction. A lackluster Vince leads the worship.

The congregation is not inspired.

They shift their glance sideways from the TV to stare at each other.

VINCE
 (sighs)
 It's not working.

Their eyes hold. Tears roll down Amy's cheek. She gently nods.

AMY
 I know.

INT. APARTMENT - LOUNGE - EVENING

Amy is facing the window in the lounge, ironing clothes.

The lamp, above the mirror, is on. Light falls in a circle on the floor in front of the mirror.

Amy stops ironing midway when she hears the sound of a car arriving outside. Animated, she switches the iron off.

AMY
 (bending slightly, rubbing
 tummy)
 Listen! That's Daddy! Home from
 work!

She looks through the open lounge door. Down the passage to see the front door open. Vince comes in. He can't stop smiling.

Vince strides into the lounge. He kisses Amy, swings her around. He holds her high in the air.

AMY (CONT'D)
(cautiously)
Have you been drinking?

VINCE
(bubbling)
I got a call. The one I've always wanted.

His eyes fix on her as he lowers her to the floor. His expression serious. His voice gravelly.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Dezi says Hugo wants to sign me up for a five year contract. Some global tours, some local. Big time. Big money. This is it.

Silence.

AMY
Dezi's back, is she?
(shouts)
Lights, sound and action. Is that it, Vince?
(accusingly)
Where does YOUR fulfilling YOUR calling, using YOUR gift for his glory, come into it?

VINCE
(speaks fast)
Dezi is not, never has been, the attraction. I told you that last year. I love you. Don't you know that?

Pauses. Looks at her. Shoulders drop pleadingly.

VINCE (CONT'D)
I know I said we'd build the family now. I know. I want to do God's calling. Maybe this is it!
(pleading)
Think about the money. We could buy a house. Pay it off in no time...

AMY
(shrugs abruptly)
Don't be lured by the money.
(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)
We planned this baby because you
said you'd put us first.

VINCE
You are first.

AMY
How can we be if you're away most
of the time?

Amy moves to the window, folds arms, back to Vince.

AMY (CONT'D)
I didn't sign up for single
parenthood.

Swings around. Stares at Vince.

AMY (CONT'D)
I will be at my sister's house till
you decide.

VINCE
No, Amy. No. Don't make me choose.

Amy heads out of the lounge door. Vince stares after her.

EXT. SISTER'S DOORWAY - EVENING

Vince knocks on the door of his sister-in-law's house.

Amy answers.

VINCE
Amy, please. I can't think straight
without you.

AMY
I can't trust you to keep your word
in that environment.

VINCE
But think what we could do with the
money.

AMY
There won't be a 'we'.
(pauses)
We wouldn't be welcome anyway.

VINCE
 (grasping at hope)
 I'll ask Hugo if you can travel
 with me. That's the solution!

He takes out his cell. Amy observes. He presses Dezi's
 number. She answers. He puts her on speaker.

DEZI (V.O.)
 Hi. So good to hear from you.

VINCE
 I assume Amy can tour with me...
 (hesitates)
 It's important.

DEZI (V.O.)
 (laughs)
 Don't be daft. You'd get no sleep,
 what with the pregnancy an' all.
 We'd have no fun.

Amy moves backwards and shuts the door.

INT. APARTMENT - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Vince is back in his empty home. The windows are open. The
 lake and the church steeple are visible. The room is in semi-
 darkness.

He goes to a cabinet and starts opening doors searching for
 alcohol.

He slams the doors when he finds none.

He picks up a vase on his way to the window and smashes it.
 He looks out towards the church. He bangs the side of his
 fist against the window frame.

VINCE
 (loudly)
 WHY do I HAVE to choose?

Chokes on a sob. Hits window frame again. And again. Weaker
 each time. Turns his back to window. Slides to the floor. A
 flood gate opens. He sobs. And sobs.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 Why... can't I... keep my word?

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - LUNCHTIME

Vince is sitting at an outside table at a coffee shop.

A few people are seated at other tables.

Dezi weaves her way through the other table, grinning as she sits next to Vince.

Vince shuffles a little away from Dezi.

DEZI

I've got the papers. Let's do this!
This is big for both of us.

VINCE

I can't sign without Amy being part
of this deal.

DEZI

What do you mean? Amy has nothing
whatsoever to do with the deal.

Vince's stony silence makes her pause.

DEZI (CONT'D)

Amy can join you, if you insist,
but once the baby comes, she or he
must stay with someone while you
are away.

Vince reacts. His eyebrows knit. His face distorts.

VINCE

We can't leave our baby for weeks
on end! What are you thinking?

DEZI

(threatening)
What's gotten into you? You're a
performer...
(sarcastically)
A rather henpecked one by the looks
of it.

Dezi laughs in Vince's face.

DEZI (CONT'D)

You've got till tomorrow to sign.

Stands. Swings her bag across her shapely shoulders. Storms
off.

Vince stares after her.

INT. APARTMENT - LOUNGE - THAT NIGHT

Vince roams around his lounge.

He dials Amy's number on his cell.

The call is cut off.

Silence.

He goes over to the mirror, still standing in front of the window. Looks at his image.

Puts the light on. It falls over his head, creating a circle of light around him.

He attempts to hum. He moves his hands in front of the mirror as though he were on stage before an audience. He shakes his head slightly. Opens mouth. No sound comes.

He slumps, weak from fighting.

Childlike he starts to hum Jesus loves me, this I know.

The humming turns to soft singing.

He slowly, thoughtfully, he stands. Switches off the light above the mirror. Carries the mirror to the side of the room.

He moves back to the window in the semi-darkness.

His gentle singing shifts into prayerful songs.

Sounds of heart-felt hurt fill the darkening room with longing.

The deep, throaty notes rise from within him. The room fills with praise as darkness falls.

His silhouette raises hands and falls on knees as his worship reverberates throughout the room, the apartment.

The sound brings a sense of presence, of glory, an illuminating light as the anointing falls.

Supernatural light lingers for a little while longer as the singing comes to rest.

Peace descends. Vince fixes his eyes on the lit steeple while he whispers from deep within.

VINCE
Thank YOU, LORD.

EXT. SISTER'S DOORWAY - MORNING

Vince stands knocking at Amy's sister's doorway. Amy opens with her case in one hand. Vince moves forward and holds her in a warm, loving embrace. He kisses Amy. She laughs.

He takes her case from her.

AMY

I had an idea. I think it's time to make your Gospel Album.

They stop walking. Vince turns to look at her.

VINCE

How will we pay for it?

AMY

We'll use our savings.
(hands move excitedly)
Hear me out. Focus on using your gift to bless others. To honor God. Let's trust him in this one.

Amy hugs Vince.

They bounce towards his car. Bag in trunk. Climb in.

Vince's singing is heard as they drive away.

VINCE (V.O.)

(sings)

It's gonna be alright.

ONE YEAR LATER

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - NIGHT - GOOD FRIDAY

Vince holds the mic in the centre of the stage. A circle of light falls around him.

Band plays softly behind him.

Audience waits expectantly before him.

On the stand in front of him is a poster that reads:
Gospel Album hits record highs
with a graphic of Vince, hands up praising God.

VINCE

Life's choices are never easy.
(lifts hand)
But I discovered what matters most.
(turns to the side)
Please welcome my beautiful wife,
Amy, and our precious daughter,
Lindy.

The circle of light widens. Audience applauds.

Amy walks up to him, holding six month old Lindi in her arm.

VINCE (CONT'D)

And of course no singer worth his
salt does it alone.

He turns to the band behind him and the light widens to include them as well. He turns back to the audience, lifts his hand up to the ceiling.

VINCE (CONT'D)

And the reason we are all here
tonight is because God put us, his
family, first.

Band strikes up.

Audience applaud. They stand. Hands go up. Cell phone lights shine and move.

Vince, singing from his heart, leads them all into worship.

