

Ferry in High Tide

A Short Drama

By Avery Baker

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CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

MIKA (22):

Loving and selfless. Loyal to a fault. A ticking time bomb.

TANNER (23):

Energetic and lively. Has become impulsive and ignorant.

PLAY SYNOPSIS

A couple boards a ferry where they are forced to confront a past trauma. This is a story of healing, strength, and growth.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play has moments of naturalistic, fast-paced dialogue, balanced with intentional silence. There is not much in-between. *TRIGGER WARNING* -- themes of abuse and abortion.

FERRY IN HIGH TIDE

(Open on the sound of the ocean, waves crashing on the shore. Sounds of a ferryboat engine and horn fade in. It is cloudy outside. MIKA and TANNER are sitting on the ferry by the edge of the ship. They are a few feet apart. MIKA curled up away from TANNER.)

TANNER:

(Sarcastic.)

Quite the destination wedding.

MIKA:

I love green water.

TANNER:

Just like Sandals, Jamaica.

MIKA:

Yeah, well oil spills are the key to any beautiful ocean.

(TANNER and MIKA chuckle. MIKA catches herself and stops laughing. Beat.)

TANNER:

I'm sure Shay is excited.

MIKA:

Shit, I'd hope so.

TANNER:

They met when you were still in school right? I remember you said you saw them kissing at the library or something.

MIKA:

I think they were just friends then. Or I mean "friends." I didn't know the architecture books got people so hot.

TANNER:
How long have they been together?

MIKA:
Uh, I think a year. I know they moved in together after like four months or so. I gave her girlfriend some old books and a table.

TANNER:
Damn, talk about a "U-Haul."

(Silence. MIKA shivers. TANNER crosses to drape his sweatshirt over her. She continues to face away. He sits on the other side to face her. He Grabs her hand.)

Mika. TANNER:

Yes, Tanner? MIKA:

You said you'd try... TANNER:

(MIKA says nothing. Beat.)

Okay I have an idea. Let's play our game.

(MIKA hesitates. She nods to TANNER.)

MIKA:
Okay, fine. Um...okay. I have my word.

Okay, 1...2...3... TANNER:

Pot. (Simultaneously.)

Cat. MIKA:

TANNER:
Hmm...shit. Wait. Okay, okay, ready?

Okay, 1...2...3...

MIKA:

(Simultaneously.)

Weed.

TANNER:

Meadow.

MIKA:

Meadow? How do you get that from cat.

TANNER:

I don't know, cats sleep in meadows I guess.

MIKA:

Huh, okay I have my word. 1...

TANNER:

2...3...

(Simultaneously.)

Catnip.

TANNER:

Catnip--Shit! We got that on the third try.

MIKA:

Yeah, well, I know you pretty well.

(TANNER smiles. MIKA crosses to the edge of the boat to look at the fish in the ocean.)

TANNER:

Oh, I forgot to ask, did you check into the hotel yet?

MIKA:

The hotels were all booked up, but I was able to find a motel near the beach.

TANNER:

Wait--we're staying in a motel? Why didn't you call the hotel earlier?

MIKA:

I don't know, I forgot.

TANNER:

Motels are gross, plus we'll have to get ready for the wedding there.

MIKA:

The motel is all that's available in Port A.

TANNER:

Great well we can hang with the drug dealers and the prostitutes at Motel 6.

MIKA:

Okay, you don't have to be a classist dick.

TANNER:

It was a joke.

MIKA:

I must not have a sense of humor.

(Beat.)

Sorry.

(TANNER crosses to sit next to MIKA near the edge of the ship.)

I think you can see some radioactive fish in this water.

TANNER:

Yeah? I can see a yellow fish down there. I think he pissed himself on accident.

MIKA:

Haha ew.

(Beat. She searches for fish.)

I can see a fish shaped like the letter 'Z'.

TANNER:

A fish? That's gotta be an eel or something.

MIKA:

Maybe a skinny baby shark.

(TANNER and MIKA smile. She hardens again. Beat.)

TANNER:

Um. I--Can we talk about it now?

(Beat.)

MIKA:

I can't.

Come on.

TANNER:

No.

MIKA:

You promised.

TANNER:

I'm trying.

MIKA:

Well you're not doing a good job. I'm busting my ass here--

TANNER:

Okay? I am trying, Tanner. THIS is me trying.

MIKA:

Then could you stop acting like you despise me for one goddamn day.

TANNER:

Seriously?

MIKA:

I mean we're going to your fucking sister's wedding--

TANNER:

And maybe I can't handle it, stop acting like such a victim--

MIKA:

A victim? If I'm acting like a victim, you're acting like a fucking martyr.

TANNER:

(A long silence.)

MIKA:

Did you really say that?

TANNER:

You act like you're so goddamn perfect, as if you're not the reason--

(TANNER stops himself. MIKA turns to him.)

MIKA:

What. Say it.

TANNER:

Nothing. It's nothing.

MIKA:
Say it.

(TANNER says nothing.)

You think I'm a whore?

TANNER:
Stop it.

MIKA:
You think I'm a baby murderer?--

TANNER:
What if I wanted to have that kid? Did you ever think of that? What if I wanted to have a family with you because I love you--

MIKA:
Are you kidding? You never fucking loved me.

TANNER:
I have sacrificed SO much for you, so yeah, I do love you.

MIKA:
Seven years we've been together. SEVEN. And do you realize all the bullshit you put me through?

TANNER:
I'M SORRY, okay? I didn't mean to hit you, how many times do I have to say that? I was trying to hit the wall-er-I don't know, I wasn't thinking--

MIKA:
You really think that makes it okay?

TANNER:
No, I never said it did. I just blacked out for a second cause it's-I don't know, Mika. You really don't feel guilty? All of our dreams of someday having a family gone because you fucking killed it and didn't even tell me.

MIKA:
Oh okay, here we go again. Wanna remind me how the wage gap "isn't real" or how I'm some fucking "commy snowflake" again?

TANNER:
Don't do that. And I didn't even say that. I just--I just don't get it. I love you so much, Mika. You are all I have. Think of all of the things I've done for you.

I could be back home right now, smoking weed and playing games with Jake and Paul. But I followed you to school because I love you. Because I want to start a family with you. I don't have any other passions like you do, all I wanted was to be with you and to be a dad--

MIKA:

You didn't have a fucking say in it.

(Beat.)

Have you even considered how it impacted me? How difficult of a decision it was? How badly it hurt-in every way.

TANNER:

You should have told me, we could have discussed the options--

MIKA:

I'm sorry that you're so pro-life that you don't give a fuck about your girlfriend--

TANNER:

Why do you always bring politics into everything?

MIKA:

Because it's not about politics? You've never respected me, and the fact that you're bringing this up proves that you don't give a shit about bodily autonomy--

TANNER:

Bodily what?

MIKA:

You can't compare me having an abortion to you hitting me.

(A long silence. MIKA crosses to the edge again.)

I remember when I first you. We were seventeen. I was sitting in the courtyard by the film lab, crying. I had lost all of my friends. Lost my relationship with my dad.

(Chuckle under breath.)

Had an Adderall problem.

(Beat.)

I didn't have an—I don't know—enthusiasm for living. And then you came along. You were sweet, reserved, dorky. I thought you'd be a safe bet. I didn't feel so alone anymore. And then I got the scholarship to go to school and everything just happened so fast. I didn't ask you to follow me. I mean yeah, it sounded nice when I was eighteen.

But you made that decision on your own. Then you became like-someone else, I guess. By then I was trapped. Everyday you threatened me, guilt-tripped me. I'm scared of you, Tanner. This may have been the first time you hit me, but don't act like this was your first incident of violence.

(Beat.)

Then I got pregnant. Part of me wanted to keep it. Just run away with no money or plan and have this baby alone.

(Looks at TANNER.)

But I couldn't do it. What did I have to offer for this--this potential for life? How could a bring a baby into this fucked up life we've created for ourselves? So, I did it. And I did it alone because it wasn't about you.

TANNER:

Why did you stay with me, then.

MIKA:

I was scared. I'm still just a kid. I've been convinced that my happiness has already peaked. Maybe it was the religious trauma or something...I don't know. I guess I felt like staying with you absolved some of my guilt--from the abortion and from the regret. Like you were safe.

(A long silence.)

TANNER:

I'm sorry. I wish I could go back in time. Change things.

(Beat.)

I don't know what else to say.

(Beat.)

So, is this it?

MIKA:

Yeah, yeah I think it is.

TANNER:

Is there--um--is there anything I can do?

MIKA:

Not anymore.

TANNER:

Okay.

(Beat.)

I guess I'll just take the ferry back.

(Beat.)

I really hope you find what you're looking for. I'm sorry.

(Beat. TANNER, shaken up, begins to cross to the opposite side of the ferry.)

MIKA:

You were never a safe bet. My biggest regret is believing that you were.

(TANNER stops and looks at MIKA. Beat. He exits. MIKA sits by the edge of the boat near the fish. Ocean and seagull sounds fade in. Crashing waves fade in. MIKA turns to look at the shore and smiles.)

BLACKOUT.