

Jasper the Whale

by

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1.

Cast of Characters

CHARLIE:

50's

Place

Rockaway Beach

Time

4:45 in the morning, during the Spring

Setting: A large sculpture of a rusty ironclad whale rests stage left. The whale, depending on one's perspective, has a smirk of sorts and is covered with graffiti.

To the right of the whale is a trashcan with an assortment of various garbage pouring out from it to the ground.

Diagonally positioned at furthest stage right is a worn down brown bench. Resting on this bench is a case of beer, a ripped open brown paper bag visibly containing bananas and a handful of napkins scrounged up and dried with blood.

At Rise: The sun begins to rise. A beam of light from the sun's rays aims itself over the back of the whale, hitting CHARLIE poetically in his chest. He wears a dark green hooded sweater, light blue jeans that reveal his black socks when he sits and white beat up sneakers.

Charlie mumbles, "I am the candy man" to himself.

Pause of 2 full minutes.

Charlie speaks to the whale.

CHARLIE: --who knew it would be like this...there's no, shock; for a second there...disbelief, surreal but; there's more of a--once it's done, that overwhelms you, that energizes you, makes you feel like your mother does; when you are cared for...when she is there to save you from harm. (beat) Still, here. (beat) Still, present. (beat) Still...nothing's changed really. Still have my charm; still have my doubts; memories...questions. (shaking his head and mumbling "different") What could be, what is...

What have you been smirking at all these years; or is that a frown? (long pause.) Yeah, yeah...the candy man...Wanna sip? (offers the whale his beer) All them years getting shot at, this jungle of life, they never took me down, too strong for 'em--dodged all them bullets, for sure...always knew when to duck or hide behind a tree, sometimes I'd even hide in the trees. (pause.) Never thought I'd be doing this so long; it's not that it's bad, no; I've had some joyful moments, especially during the middle years, when things was good...things was together, firm and solid...like a rock; I was--Eh, it's kept money in my pocket, food in my belly and clothes on my back; even if they're not the...clothes...I just never went past it. I've tried--I've tried but I just never had the luck. (beat) Think I was always afraid of success, of being something more; of realizing, realizing... Was it the chase I was in love with all along? (beat) Crock of shit! I see that. I...see... Always have but was always too much of a--I was never--(drinks from his beer)

20 seconds pass.

--You got all kinds of stickers and shit on your body...that wasn't the way they made you, was it? (beat) Yeah, yeah...

Charlie stands up with difficulty and walks closer to the whale.

He peers over, reading one of the stickers.

...if-you-want a-good time-call... (trying to pronounce the name) F-F-F, FFFrancesca...Nine-One-

Seven, (waves his hand at the sticker) eeehhh, whatever, whichever... (reading another sticker) ...Grady and Ruth screwed here...My oh my, you poor whale; I guess that makes you a sperm whale, don't it? (Charlie chuckles) (beat) How does it feel to be the poster boy for peoples crap? (beat) My feelings exactly friend. I've had my share of slogans and name calling, plastered all over my skin my whooooooooole life. But that's okay, not trying to give you my sob story, just stating the facts. Trust me, the truth is always in the facts, ain't it? Ain't that something? What happens when you muster up enough courage to face the truth, to face those facts...what do you do then, when it's—there is no greater truth than the truth of your own imperfection. You know what I mean? (he stares at the whale as if expecting an answer) Yep!Ahhh! The scale has finally tipped...at least I know that much. Bastards! Angels? ... Both...Neither; like everything else. Unexplained. Horrible, isn't it? Gone like a breeze that brushes your face. Why? (beat) Whyyy? (barely audible) ...why...

Charlie observes the morning sky - the sun continues to slowly rise, gradually brightening up the environment.

I've been seeing yellows and blues in the sky; they've been spinning around like waves; so gentle, so nice. Do you see them Jasper, do you see the waves in the sky?? (Charlie coughs) Err, where has it all gone? (beat) When I was a young boy, I used to go to the corner store for my mother; it's funny what comes to mind...I must have been nine years old or so...it was a big deal for me to cross the street...but she would only let me cross the street if I would go to the store for her...ha! But now, what was my point? (beat) What was my fu—what was I— I forgot...maybe it will come back to me. Hate when that happens.

Pause.

Birds begin chirping.

There they are...little creatures that can fly. Incredible. You know, I always thought that birds sung in the morning for people, in order to brighten our day—always thought that, until I found out that the beautiful harmonies are actually defense. Did you know that birds are actually in battle with one another over territory...that's all the tweeting and chirping consists of...like now. Just like life...sounds magnificent, until—maybe we shouldn't know why we're here after all...why ruin the harmony.

Long pause.

It's a numbers game, it was always about the numbers. What else?

*Blood visibly seeps through Charlies
upper left pants leg.*

Yeah, yeah...yeah, yeah...I am the Candy Man...that's what told me, my son...he said, "Dad, all you ever amounted to in your life, was being a candy man." ...my son, said this to me...(beat) I don't; I'm not so sure about...so many...not enough. (he sighs) (long pause.)

*Charlie stumbles and looks at his body,
which reveals a mounting of dark blood
continuing to seep through his clothing.
He softly touches his left side and keeps
his hand pressed against the side of his
stomach.*

Where has it gotten me, Jasper? I've given everything to get nothing but to remain where I am...here. (getting amplified) Don't I deserve a crumb? A nibble, a taste...FLAVOR...to feel what it's like to be one of the big guys. To walk in a room and actually be respected without worrying what's in my pocket and how I pray that the person I'm taking out for lunch won't go over my budget. Always a budget! Always stretching the gas in my tank! Ha! Pinching pennies! Borrowing from Paul to pay back Peter. Hiding! Running! TRAPPED! Dodging the phone calls and rapid knocks on my door from bill collectors, when all I'm trying to do in my life is get ahead. Just once I want to know what it would be like to own something...to wake up in the morning and have something...THAT IS MINE! (exploding) To be able to look my son in the eyes and tell him, "YOUR FATHER IS A WINNER"!!!

*He throws beer bottle at Jasper causing
the bottle to shatter.*

*Charlie has exhausted himself. His energy
takes a rapid decline from this point forward.*

(breathing heavy)...I'm sorry...I'm so sorry...I'm so sorry, Jasper...my friend...I didn't mean to do it...all those terrible things...I didn't mean to throw my drink in your face...Are you cut, too? Did I cut you? I'm sorry...don't leave me like the others....don't.

Charlie pulls his green hooded sweater up and over his head, revealing a white t-shirt stained with blood, running down the left side of his stomach. He begins using his sweater to wipe the alcohol off Jasper.

Here...I'll clean you right up. We're in this together. I'm not like the others...I'll take care of you...we'll take care of eachother...

He stops and inspects his cleaning.

There. That's better, isn't it? You forgive me? (trying to chuckle but instead coughs) Thatta boy.
(coughs again, this time he spits out blood) Shit. Eh. Well. I got what I wanted, maybe not exactly how I wanted it but that's the story of my-

He winces in pain and walks over to the bench to sit down-he grabs a banana, peels it open and takes a bite..

I look at the kids these days...I usually get the kids who come from nothing-the kind of kids who live in trailer homes or real terrible neighborhoods. The kids that have to work to help pay the bills. Those kids. Eh, I've always been able to identify with those kids. I've always been able to connect with them-speak the same language, talk the same talk, walk the same walk...I see myself in them and always felt like it was my responsibility to help make them successful. Kids...I do, I want them all to be...all of them, even that little shit, Craig. Him, too. (beat - he nods) Him, too. Maybe one of them will grow up and make it and they will look back on their own lives and remember that I had something to give them, that helped them get where they are...in that sense... (shortness of breath) I-am a-man-who has been trying to hang on-to the fin of a plunging whale...we're both-justacoupleof guys who can't-plunnge, any further...

Charlie barely capable of standing, walks over to Jasper. He vomits behind the whale and collapses against Jasper holding on to his fin with one hand.

...So quick, Jasper...(light cough)

7.

*Charlie struggles to breathe. His hand
drops from holding Jasper's fin.*

Charlie mumbles..."I am the candy man" to himself.

Charlie dies.

END OF PLAY