

DARKEST WATERS

A short play
by
Alan Stolzer

Alan Stolzer
400 W. 43rd St.
Apt. 45J
New York, NY 10036-6308
alstol@verizon.net
212-629-0609
347-703-1103

SETTING: A cruise ship at sea

TIME: The present

CAST; Man (52)
Woman (47)

DARKEST WATERS

A Nocturnal Romance

An inebriated man approaches a lone woman aboard a cruise ship on a Spring night, late. The woman stands at a railing looking down into the water. The man advances, holds railing, also looks into water.

MAN

Dark, ain't it ... Could swallow you whole before you knew it. Wouldn't even find a trace - that's how dark it is ... I see you're not the talkative type.

(Offers cigarette, quickly withdraws pack as woman doesn't acknowledge it.)

... Oh, sure, sure, I forgot. Bad habits shouldn't be passed around. A lousy way to break the ice for sure ... Hey, I really don't know how else to begin a conversation. Just trying to be friendly ... You don't seem to be one of those aloof types. As a matter of fact you look familiar.

(Throws empty pint bottle overboard)

WOMAN

Be careful of the railing. It might break.

MAN

(Steps back awkwardly)

Can't say I ever thought of that ... Oughta be a pretty good lawsuit if it happened.

WOMAN

What good would it do if you don't survive?

MAN

There's a point if I ever heard one ... All it would do would make your relatives rich.

WOMAN

You're alone.

MAN

(Straightening up)

If you must know – I am.

WOMAN

I mean all alone.

MAN

What a clearly eyed little person we are.

WOMAN

Is everything a joke?

MAN

Sure seems like it after all these years ... I know I've seen you before.

WOMAN

There's so many people to forget and so few to remember.

MAN

Here, here.

WOMAN

Do you drink every day?

MAN

As a matter of fact.

WOMAN

Does that explain your courage in approaching me?

MAN

It does.

WOMAN

An honest man.

MAN

You don't beat around the bush do you. I usually like that in a woman – but you're another matter somehow.

WOMAN

You can always approach someone else.

MAN

I don't seem to be desirous of that – at the moment.

WOMAN

Would you like to come to my place?

MAN

My lucky night.

WOMAN

That might depend upon how you look at it.

MAN

Really?

WOMAN

You don't know where I live.

MAN

It appears I'm going to find out.

WOMAN

A commitment.

MAN

That's a strange way of putting things. But if you frame them in such manner ...

WOMAN

There'll be no return.

MAN

Kidnapping? I must say that's a novel experience.

WOMAN

If not a lonely one.

MAN

Lonely?

WOMAN

Your life.

MAN

See here. I'll have you know I approach women all the time.

WOMAN

But never sober.

MAN

What fun would that be?

WOMAN

A badge of honor?

MAN

A commitment.

WOMAN

To?

MAN

(Looks down into water)

The dark I guess.

WOMAN

Honesty in a man has always attracted me.

MAN

Dammit, I know I've seen you.

(Takes her face in his hands, steps back quickly.)

... Please forgive me ... I've never done that before.

WOMAN

What was it like?

MAN

(Steps further away)

Damn strange.

WOMAN

Enough to sober you up?

MAN

Close.

WOMAN

You don't like that, do you.

MAN

Who the hell asked you!

WOMAN

You do know me you know.

MAN

It's tough remembering.

WOMAN

Alcohol can create haze.

MAN

It isn't that, no.

WOMAN

Then?

MAN

(Frustrated, looking over railing)

Somewhere around. But for Christ's sake I can't place it.

WOMAN

Perhaps I can help.

MAN

You know?

WOMAN

I should.

MAN

Dammit if I'm not dreaming.

WOMAN

What difference would it make?

MAN

Help me then.

WOMAN

That would have to be at my place.

MAN

A point of no return you say.

WOMAN

It's where I went after all.

MAN

The dark.

WOMAN

That's right.

MAN

How inviting.

WOMAN

I thought you might think so.

MAN

But I sense your trip wasn't voluntary.

WOMAN

No.

MAN

You were taken rudely from yourself. Torn to pieces by unwelcome forces. I can feel it.

WOMAN

Now who intrudes?

MAN

Fair is fair ... It seems I'm not the only lonely passenger.

WOMAN

It was horrid. Too horrid to speak of.

MAN

Now it comes to me. Your face in the papers!

WOMAN

I achieved instant fame.

MAN

That murder a while ago! The publicity was relentless ... But they never found the body.

WOMAN

My husband had a yacht after all. So easy to dispose of evidence.

MAN

That younger woman he wanted ...

WOMAN

The hell with them! I have a right to seek companionship! ... After all, the dark gets lonely.

MAN

I can well understand.

WOMAN

Then perhaps we can reconcile things, my honest friend.

MAN

Whoa there ... I'm not sure I'm ready for that.

(Stumbles, woman grabs him)

WOMAN

Why not?

MAN

Why? ... It's just ...

WOMAN

The abruptness is over very quickly.

MAN

And then?

WOMAN

No more loneliness.

MAN

You make too much sense.

WOMAN

You wouldn't want me lost forever would you?

MAN

There's no rhyme or reason to that is there.

WOMAN

Thank you.

MAN

Davy Jones Locker ... whaddya know about that.

WOMAN

Still joking I see.

MAN

Ha, ha.

WOMAN

Perhaps the alcohol is wearing off.

MAN

For a last hurrah

WOMAN

It needn't be.

(Man looks back toward ship and then to water. She takes his hand.)

I like poetry. Do you?

MAN

When I can get it.

WOMAN

My shelves are lined with it.

MAN

Promise?

WOMAN

Cross my heart and hope to die.

MAN

Then we'll sleep well tonight won't we.
(Darkness)

END OF PLAY