

CRIMSON

a play

by

Michael Perlmutter

Michael Perlmutter
1719 N. 6th St
Port Hueneme, CA 93041
805-469-2897
lmjdj@msn.com

CHARACTERS

- JEFF PEARSONS - a dock worker, in his early twenties
- KIM THARP - in her mid twenties
- STEVEN HOFFMAN - Kim's boyfriend, in his late twenties

The action takes place in various locations of Southern California between Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

ACT I

- SCENE 1 - a beach in Ventura
- SCENE 2 - Kim's apartment
- SCENE 3 - Kim's apartment
- SCENE 4 - Kim's apartment
- SCENE 5 - Kim's apartment
- SCENE 6 - a cafe in Ventura
- SCENE 7 - Jeff's apartment

ACT II

- SCENE 1 - Kim's apartment
- SCENE 2 - a parking lot in Topanga / a dock in Ventura
- SCENE 3 - Kim's apartment
- SCENE 4 - Jeff's apartment
- SCENE 5 - a nightclub / Jeff's apartment
- SCENE 6 - Jeff's apartment
- SCENE 7 - Jeff's apartment
- SCENE 8 - a beach in Ventura

"The right to live is abused whenever it is not constantly challenged."
- *G.B. Shaw 'Man and Superman'*

A NOTE ON THE NOTATIONS:

Although some of the formatting seems more standard than not the following legend outlines how grammatical characters are being used in this script--specifically as used in dialogue: an ellipse (. . .) suggests a thought trailing off. Or being picked up (depending on its placement):

Why do I even bother . . .

. . . And this is a good thing?

And if I say . . . I love you . . . again.

A double hyphen suggest a sudden break in dialogue. Such as a change of thought or interrupted dialogue between two characters:

I couldn't believe you the way you acted out there--talking like some crazy man. And what the hell did you--

Don't talk like that.

**--mean by that? Don't talk like what--?
Raising your voice. Who're you to raise--**

Oh my god.

--your voice to me?

Within a phone call a hyphen (or dash) signifies the unheard dialogue of the party on the other end of the line:

What do you want Mother? - I do not. - No, I don't. - I'm not mad. -

What do you mean I call you mother only when I'm--I'm not mad. - I am not mad, mother.

And a new toy is the forward slash or oblique (/) which suggests the entry point of overlapping dialogue:

Can we please just / have a civil conversation for a change?

Screw you.

Really? How adult / of you.

Oh give it a break!

ACT I

(At Rise:

The set is minimal.

A mic stand, typical of any two bit night club on free mic night.

Beyond this, in an unlit area on the stage, a sleeping bag and blankets have been spread out. Two figures lie undisturbed in the bag.

STEVEN HOFFMAN, late twenties/early thirties, in casual business dress, stands at the mic.

Although an amateur, you can tell he's done this a few times before.)

STEVEN

Well, that's my time. You've been fantastic.. Thank you. Have a great night.

(On second thought:)

Time for one more? No? OK. Thank you. Thank you, and have a great night, Pasadena!

(Lights cross fade from Steven to the couple in the sleeping bag.

A beach in Ventura, California:

JEFF PEARSONS, in his mid twenties, sits up in the bag, looking out past us at the water--he looks all over his surroundings--finally behind himself taking in the sunrise.

KIM THARP, a few years older, lies with him. Her eyes are still closed. STEVEN quietly leaves stage)

JEFF

(Quietly:)

Isn't it beautiful?

(To Kim, just as softly:)

Look at that.

KIM

What?

JEFF

The sun.

(Pause. KIM opens her eyes. She grows white. Pause.)

KIM

. . . oh my god . . .

JEFF

What is it?

KIM

The sun . . . oh my god.

(She gets up and starts collecting her clothes. She is wearing Jeff's jacket and pants. JEFF remains in the bag.)

JEFF

So, it's the sun--big deal.

KIM

Big deal to you: I've got to get to work . . I've got to get / home;

JEFF

I'll take you.

KIM

(Continuing: searching thru her purse)

I've got to wash up; get some clean clothes on--oh shit.

JEFF

What?

KIM

Gas. I didn't get any gas. Where's my car? / And my phone's dead.

JEFF

I'll buy you some.

KIM

Where? What's open at--What time is it?

(JEFF shrugs.)

KIM

Don't you have a watch?

JEFF

Nope: never seem to need / one.

KIM

Try your phone.

JEFF
Sorry. I've got a clock at--

KIM
Great.

JEFF
What's the problem?

KIM
I've got to get to work; I've got to get home.

JEFF
(Enjoying the moment:)
You're married.

KIM
What?

JEFF
I didn't realize it last night: you're married, aren't you?

KIM
No.

JEFF
Engaged?

KIM
What in the hell--

JEFF
You're acting guilty as sin.

KIM
I don't feel guilty.

JEFF
OK.

KIM
Will you help me find my shoe?

JEFF
Sure, what's it look like?

KIM

Black; it's a small bla--

(Showing him the shoe in her hand:)

It looks just like this one.

JEFF

(Pointing out the same shoe:)

There it is.

KIM

It's the left one.

JEFF

Maybe you 'left' it somewhere.

KIM

(Oh my god, please don't tell me you're a comedian.)

JEFF

Sorry.

KIM

Are you always this happy when you wake up in the morning?

JEFF

You always act this guilty when you wake up on a beach?

KIM

This is my first time waking up on a beach, I couldn't tell you.

JEFF

Oh . . well, yes.

KIM

"Yes", what?

JEFF

"Yes: I'm always this happy." I figure it's a choice. And an easy one when I find myself waking up next to a--

KIM

Save it.

JEFF

OK.

(He takes her shoe out of the sleeping bag.)

You want your shoe?

KIM

Thank you.

JEFF

You want your bra.

KIM

. . . Keep it.

JEFF

(Tosses her the bra. He starts to get dressed.)

Listen, there's a mom and pop coffee bar down the road 'bout a mile; if you want to grab something--

KIM

I don't have the time.

JEFF

You know, I don't know what you're so nervous about if you're not married or something.

KIM

I'm late for work, alright? And I've never done this before. I wake up on some strange beach with a man I don't even know and I haven't the slightest remembrance--but a pretty damned good idea--of what happened / last night.

JEFF

And being the good girl you are, you feel guilty about it.

KIM

I don't feel guilty! I feel . . . strange.

JEFF

You want me to fill you in?

KIM

No.

JEFF

You sure? Just to jog back the memory.

KIM

(Keeping her distance:)

Whatever happened last night happened last night, OK? Now, can you just finish getting dressed and I'll finish getting dressed and you can take me home?

JEFF

Sure.

(Pause: they both continue to dress. KIM takes the bra and turns her back to Jeff to put it on [under the jacket].)

JEFF

You want some help?

KIM

No.

(She finishes with her bra. She takes off the jacket and pulls on her blouse: she is badly bruised on her back.)

KIM

You know, I don't even know your name.

(Before he can answer:)

No, I don't want to know--it's better that.

JEFF

Jeff. Jeff Pearsons. And you're Kim.

KIM

Thank you.

JEFF

You're welcome.

(Slight pause.)

JEFF

You really don't remember what happened last night?

KIM

I really don't.

JEFF

Yeah? Well, 'not surprised; you were a little wasted.

KIM

I don't want to talk about it.

JEFF

(Getting up:)

OK. Well, to be honest with you, I don't remember parts of it either.

(He shakes off the bag, opens it up and looks inside.)

You leave anything else in here?

KIM

My pants.

JEFF

Trade you.

(He reaches in and pulls out her pants.)

KIM

Sure.

(She takes the pants and drops them in front of herself. She turns her back to him.)

JEFF

Really?

KIM

If I remembered things it might be different. I don't; so . . .

JEFF

(As he does so:)

I'll turn around.

KIM

Thank you.

(Continuing to undress:)

So, what do you do, Jeff?

JEFF

For a living?

KIM

Yeah, for a living.

JEFF

I work the docks. I pull in the fishing lines when the boats--

(KIM throws him his pants. JEFF starts to put them on. KIM reaches down for her own pants: She sees her legs: they are also badly bruised.)

JEFF (Continued:)

--come in. / Sort out the fish and that kind of thing. What do you--

KIM

. . . oh my god . . . oh my god . . .

JEFF

What is it?

KIM

My god.

JEFF

Can I turn around?

KIM

No . . . yes--what the hell happened to me?

JEFF

(Turning around, fastening his pants:)

What?

KIM

Look at me.

JEFF

What?

KIM

What the hell do you mean, "what"? My legs.

(Sees her arm now:)

My arm.

(Pause: they share a look.)

KIM

What the hell happened last night?

JEFF

You really don't know?

KIM

No, I don't know, goddamn it, what the hell--Did I--Did you do this?

JEFF

Kim . . .

KIM

My face . . my face . . .

(KIM grabs her purse and reaches in. JEFF pulls away, not knowing what she is going to take out of it. She pulls out her phone and checks herself in its reflection.)

KIM

oh, thank god.

(She falls to the sand, looking at her face.)

thank god, thank god, thank god . . .

JEFF

(Moving in a little:)

Kim?

KIM

What the hell did you do to me?

JEFF

Nothing.

KIM

Nothing; bullshit. Look at me.

JEFF

You asked . . .

KIM

For what? For this?

JEFF

No . . I don't--

KIM

You're full of it. You're just--

(Gets up and starts hitting him with her fists:)

You son-of-a-bitch.

JEFF

Kim, I'm sorry. Kim. Kim, don't hit me. Kim. KIM? KIM!

(He restrains her:)

I'm telling you the truth.

(Continuing to hold her down as she continues to struggle:)

The truth is: I don't remember either; I told you that--I just . . . You asked me to take you to the beach . . . we set up the bag and . . . that's all I can remember. You--we were both hammered. I--

KIM

Don't.

(Slight pause: she stops struggling.)

JEFF

(Offering to let go:)

You're not going to hit me?

(No reply.)

Look, I'll let go if you're not going to hit me.

(No reply.)

You're not, are you? OK. I'll let go and you're not going to me.

(He lets go. Pause. She slaps him across the face. Pause.)

JEFF

You done?

KIM

I think so.

JEFF

Alright.

(Slight pause. She turns away from him.)

JEFF

I'll finish packing this up then we'll go to my car.

KIM

Where's my car?

JEFF

You left it at the bar.

KIM

Great . . . just take me home.