

CRIMSON

a play

by
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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 DIALOGUE:

1. A slash “ / “ indicates the character with the next line of dialogue begins his or her speech (overlapping dialogue).
2. Dialogue in brackets “ [] ” is unspoken, although the character is thinking it.
(please note these passages will also be highlighted in grey in this script)
3. Dialogue in parenthesis “ () ” is spoken aloud but is an aside.
(also note that these passages are NOT highlighted and SHOULD BE read aloud)
4. Grammatical errors; sentences beginning in lower case; or UPPER CASE; used in place of common punctuation (even a few misspellings), were, indeed, intended.

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

(To Kim, softly:)

(Look at that.)

KIM

What?

JEFF

[The] sun.

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

KIM

... oh my god...

JEFF

What?

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—oh my god—I gotta get to [work]—I gotta get home.

JEFF

I can take you.

KIM

(Continuing: searching thru her purse:)

I've gotta get washed 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 (wonderful).

JEFF

I'll buy you gas.

KIM

Where? What is open at—What time is it?

(JEFF shrugs.)

KIM

Don't you have a watch?

JEFF

.. Not on me ..

KIM

Try your phone.

JEFF

Sorry. [not on me].

Great. KIM

Is there a problem? JEFF

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

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

What? KIM

I didn't--you're married, right? JEFF

No. KIM

Engaged? JEFF

What in the hell— KIM

Sorry, you're just acting like you're feeling guilty—. JEFF

I'm not feeling guilty. KIM

OK. JEFF

Will you help me find my shoe? KIM

Sure, what's it look like? JEFF

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

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

JEFF

Sorry.
What?

KIM

Nothing; just I'm not feeling guilty but you're the one saying I'm sorry.

(A moment. JEFF almost says 'Sorry' for saying 'I'm sorry'. Kim catches on: they share smile at the irony of it all.)

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

JEFF

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

KIM

[This is my] first time waking up on a beach, I'll let you know next time.

JEFF

Oh.. well, yes.

KIM

"Yes"?

JEFF

"Yes: I'm always this happy." I think of it as a choice. And an easy one to make 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

How do you know?

KIM

I know I'm late for work, alright? And not even home and I've never done this before, alright?. I know—I know how that sounds but it's true—I've never woken up on a beach with .. anyone and .. II .. 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 just feel.. off.

JEFF

You want me to fill you in?

KIM

No.

JEFF

You sure?

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

Right.

(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

Ok, you know, I don't even know your name—no, no, okay, I think it's better that way.

JEFF

Jeff. Jeff Pearsons. And your name is Kim.

(Slight pause.)

JEFF

You really don't [remember what happened last night]?

KIM

I really don't.

JEFF

Yeah .. You were a little wasted.

KIM

I don't want to talk about it.

JEFF

(Getting up:)

OK. Well, to be fair, 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:)
You want me to turn around?

KIM
Thank you.
(Continuing to undress:)
So, what do you do, Jeff?

JEFF
For a living?

KIM
(*"Of course, for a living"*)
No, what're your dreams and ambitions.

JEFF
I work the docks. Commercial fishing. [I] pull in the 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?

KIM
my god.

JEFF
Can I turn around?

KIM
No... yes—what the ...?

JEFF
(Turning around, fastening his pants:)
What?

(KIM just stares at him.)

JEFF
What?

KIM
(Sees her arm now:)
Oh my god, my arm.

(Pause: they share a look.)

KIM
What the hell happened last night?

JEFF
You you really don't know?

KIM
No, I don't know, goddamn it, what the hell—Did ...

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

.. 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.

I don't—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?

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

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... call me an uber ...just take me home.

(JEFF says nothing. They both finish getting dressed; JEFF puts on his shoes; KIM her pants.)

JEFF

Look, I'm sorry...

KIM

I don't want to hear about it.

(Slight pause.)

JEFF

Where do you live?

KIM
On Peachrose.
North end of Topanga Canyon.

JEFF
oh.

KIM
What?

JEFF
We're in Ventura.

KIM
Boulevard?

JEFF
The city.

KIM
oh my god.

JEFF
I'm sorry.

KIM
What are we doing in Ventura?

JEFF
I live here. You drove...

KIM
Oh christ.

JEFF
I'm sorry.

KIM
Will you stop saying you're sorry.

JEFF
Fine.

KIM
What the hell am I doing beat up on a beach with a man I don't even know in Ventura?

JEFF
Jeff.

KIM
I know your name, goddammit. What the hell did you do to me?

JEFF
I told you: I don't—

KIM
Why?

JEFF
I'm sorry.

KIM
(Hitting him:)
Don't tell me you're sorry.

JEFF
(Grabs her with force: making her hear it:)
Don't hit me.

(Pause. He lets go. KIM pulls away slowly—finally realizing her potential danger. Pause. JEFF picks up the bag and blankets.)

JEFF
I'll take you home now. We'll need to pick up some gas.

KIM
Is my car in Ventura?

JEFF
(Remaining calm:)
I'm taking you home.
(No reply. He starts offstage.)
C'mon.

(Slight pause. KIM follows.)

(The lights fade as an 8 am news show is heard fading on.)

2

(Lights come up in Kim's apartment:

STEVEN, almost dressed for work, sits at the table, watching the news on TV, drinking coffee and jotting down notes, while his used breakfast dishes sit beside him unattended.)

(The door opens and KIM enters; dressed from the previous scene. Their eyes accidentally meet; STEVEN shifts his attention to his notes—KIM looks to the TV and exits into the bathroom.)

STEVEN

Morning, stranger.

KIM (offstage)

Sorry, my phone died. I got drinks with Chris, she's having this whole thing with her baby-daddy and ... we lost ...

STEVEN

... Yeah.

(He rises and through the following dialogue crosses into the kitchen, fixes Kim a cup of coffee, puts away his breakfast dishes, milk and cereal, ending up at the bathroom door, talking to Kim thru the doorway.)

You want some breakfast?

(The sound of the shower comes on.)

STEVEN

[Your] coffee's going to get cold.

Make it quick. Your boss called. 'Said you weren't answering your phone. Wants you to call him 'soon as you get in. I told him I wasn't expecting you back—you'd already left before I got up. 'Prob'ly caught in traffic.

That was an hour ago.

Kim.

KIM (offstage)

I'm taking a shower.

STEVEN

Where were you?

KIM (offstage)

I'm taking a shower.

STEVEN

You want your coffee?

(No reply. He goes back to his morning routine.)

I'm going to be late for work and—oh and your mother called again last night.

KIM (offstage)

Which one?

STEVEN

The one who pushed you out into the world.

(Crossing into the kitchen with his coffee:)

Drunk on her ass—kept me focused on my own [path]--talked me ear off for the better part of an hour—OK, ten minutes, but it felt like eternity.

(Takes a last gulp of coffee before capping the mug for the road.)

KIM (offstage)

Wha'd she want?

STEVEN

(Putting on his jacket as he shuts the TV off.)

Who knows? Just rambles. Then she switched over to pilot mode and started apologizing for not being the mother you deserved when you were a kid--you oughtta tell her to go to hell.

KIM (offstage)

She's my mother.

STEVEN

By blood only.. and god knows she showed enough of it to you.

KIM (offstage)

Steven.

(The sound of the shower goes off.)

STEVEN

(Exiting into the bedroom:)

Alright, alright, I'll drop it. (doesn't change the fact she's still a bitch.)

(No reply; slight pause.)

Hon, you know where my blue tie is?

KIM (offstage)

No / you prob'ly left it in the car.

(Slight pause. STEVEN comes out of the bedroom with another tie. He puts it on as he crosses into the kitchen.)

KIM enters from the bathroom, in a towel, crosses into the bedroom. STEVEN picks up a bag in the kitchen and heads for the bathroom.)

STEVEN
You done in here?

KIM (offstage)
'ts all yours.

STEVEN
Missed you at the club.

KIM (offstage)
Sorry. Chris needed me.

All night?

How'd it go?

STEVEN
I've had better nights. Need to / work on a new set.

KIM (offstage)
Haven't we all?

(STEVEN has now exited into the bedroom. There is a pause.)

STEVEN (offstage)
What the hell happened to you?

(Pause.)

KIM (offstage)
I had an accident.

STEVEN
With the car?

KIM (offstage)
No..

(Re-enters in an oversized T-shirt, moving away from him.)
I fell down some stairs, I'm fine. Chris' baby-daddy drama, we had too much to ./.
and I—I fell down some stairs—three steps—I missed a—I'm fine.