

SEA WORTHY

A Play in Ten Minutes

SETTING: the port outside a small town. TIME: sunrise or sunset.

(As the lights rise, GARTH and RICK are looking outward toward the horizon.)

GARTH
Is it what you expected?

RICK
Hadn't thought about it, really.

GARTH
What are you thinking?

RICK
Don't want to think about it now.

GARTH
You've been watching it go for a while. No thoughts at all?

RICK
Am I supposed to have some?

GARTH
No. Well, yes. People usually do.

RICK
What are you thinking?

GARTH
That you're being too quiet.

RICK
Not about me. About this.

GARTH
It's sad.

RICK
Why?

We may never see them again. GARTH

Says who? RICK

People. GARTH

They worry you? RICK

They don't worry you?
(*Beat.*)
What are you thinking? GARTH

It's chilly. RICK

Yeah, it is. Wanna go? GARTH

Very much so. RICK

(*He doesn't move.*)

Why didn't you go with them? GARTH

I'm too old. You can't trust someone like me to hold the line. RICK

We're the same age—you're not that old. GARTH

You didn't go, either. RICK

My son isn't onboard.
(*Beat.*)
I'm sure he'll make a great bosun. GARTH

I have no doubt. RICK

He has your wit. GARTH

And my stubbornness. RICK

He'll learn a lot. GARTH

Not as well as he should. RICK

He'll send money home. GARTH

Until he starts drinking it. RICK

The work will toughen him up. GARTH

Then he won't listen to anyone. RICK

He'll come back a real sailor. GARTH

One hell of a pirate. RICK

What's your problem? GARTH

What do you mean? RICK

He's doing something with his life. Something great. Something fantastic! He's seeing the world, meeting new people. GARTH

He doesn't need those things. RICK

Learn how to be a man. GARTH

Being a sailor doesn't make you a man. RICK

He has to grow up. GARTH

He can do that here. RICK

It's not the same. GARTH

It's better. RICK

Says who? GARTH

Says me! RICK

(Beat.)

What are you thinking? GARTH

The clouds are red. RICK

Yeah, they are. GARTH

They're going to be hit by a storm. RICK

Yeah, they are. GARTH

He won't know what to do. RICK

You didn't tell him? GARTH

Of course I told him. RICK

He didn't listen? GARTH

He listened. RICK

Then he'll be fine. GARTH

He's not experienced enough. RICK

And he never will be! At least not to you. GARTH
(Beat.)
What are you thinking?

They should have used a newer ship. RICK

Ah! I'm leaving... GARTH

(Gets up to leave. Grabs his coat.)

"Leave it behind." RICK

What? GARTH

I told him to leave it behind. RICK

Leave what behind? GARTH

The sea. It changes a man. RICK

It certainly does. GARTH

RICK

I told him, “If you go, you’ll fall in love with it. “

GARTH

Everyone does.

RICK

You get used to the waves, the rolling and pitching, the endless horizon. You weather one storm, you feel invincible. Only you don’t know you’re in the eye, about to be struck again. Next thing you know, you’re fighting to stay afloat, taking on Poseidon himself. Behind you, the maelstrom winds tear your sail to shreds; knocks you off the stern to hang onto the figurehead for dear life. The bosun drags you up as the deck collapses beneath you. Next thing you know, you wake up to bright skies and cheerful smiles.

GARTH

Rick—

RICK

You’re so full of yourself, thinking you just survived the worst storm in history. The captain asks if we should turn back but you insist the ship sails on, out for another adventure. You have the time of your life, going from port to port, besting death, tasting the flavor of every tavern you come across. Finally, you come home two years later than planned. Your family is so happy, they welcome you with a nice dinner. Amidst the festivities, you can’t help but ask why one chair sits empty. It’s your father’s. He died the year before. Cremated—ashes spread out to sea.

(Beat.)

I sailed on him, Garth.

GARTH

Not surprising. He was a sailor, too. But you move on and care for your own son.

RICK

You do. Hoping he doesn’t decide to leave, too.

GARTH

He knew the chances in going.

RICK

He thinks he knows the chances.

GARTH

He’ll be fine.

RICK

He doesn’t listen.

GARTH
You taught him well.

RICK
I told him not to go adventuring.

GARTH
He needs a good adventure.

RICK
He needs to be with his father!

GARTH
He's not you.

RICK
I know that.

(Beat.)

GARTH
(GARTH laughing)
If he was you, he'd be wearing an eye patch and lying about how he lost his eye dueling a pirate captain.

RICK
I suppose he would.

GARTH
You had the worst stories I'd ever heard. Like how you skewered the great-grandson of Blackbeard with his own sword while keeping his entire crew at bay with your left foot.

RICK
The tavern crowd enjoyed that one.

GARTH
After six rounds, sure. By then, they believed everything you told them.

RICK
Except for the night we started that brawl.

GARTH
We? There was no "we" that night. I remember saving your poor ass from that con with the tattoos, who—if I remember correctly—was offended when you referred to his girlfriend as "that Billy goat in the corner."

Swanson said that! I just laughed.

RICK

(They both laugh. Beat.)

What are you thinking?

GARTH

I suppose it was worth it.

RICK

They were good times.

GARTH

That they were.

RICK

Your father would've been proud. You had fun, but, as I remember, you were also the only one the captain trusted to man the mast at night. It took a good sailor for that.

GARTH

You think so?

RICK

I know so.

GARTH

(Beat.)

He'll be one hell of a sailor. Have adventures of his own.

RICK

He'll be back one day.

GARTH

One day. And it's all right if I'm gone. He has his own life to live.

RICK

Indeed he does.

GARTH

(Beat.)

We should go inside.

RICK

Yeah. Go on ahead. I'll be in.

GARTH

Are you sure? We can both watch the horizon some more.

RICK

Go ahead. I'll be right behind you.

GARTH

All right.

(GARTH exits.)

RICK

Leave it all behind you, son. Live your life and have fun. I'm proud of you already—nothing left to prove by coming back.

(He sighs. Then speaks, as if saying "I love you.")

Leave it behind.

(The lights fade out on RICK watching the horizon.)

END OF PLAY