

The Ocean's End

A Play by

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Cast of Characters:

SOPHIA..... A teenager, who is fragile and depressed. She wears clothing natural for her age group. She is Caucasian. (17)

ASIF..... is a Muslim Iranian cop, who emigrated to America during the Iranian Revolution. He wears a police uniform, and speaks in an accent. His English is more than good, he is an eloquent speaker. (Middle-aged)

Time: The present. Summer. Around 1 AM.

Place: In a parking lot in front of a busy street

The Set: In a parking lot in front of a busy street. However, for a large majority of the play, ocean noises can be heard in place of car whooshing noises. This is due to character SOPHIA who is high believes she is on a beach and perceives the car noises as ocean waves.

(Let's go to a beach. It's early morning. The sound of waves can be heard. Stage right brightens. SOPHIA a young woman stands stage right facing the audience, who are the ocean, looking out upon the waves solemnly. There are two chairs spaced about a foot apart behind her. She abruptly sits on the "driver's seat" chair, the chair on the left. She curls up into a ball on the chair. Stage left brightens. There are an additional two chairs spaced a foot apart stage left. ASIF, a middle-aged Muslim cop sits in the driver's seat chair on the left. ASIF rises from his chair, does a motion suggestive of opening a car door, walks around in front of the chairs over to SOPHIA.)

ASIF

Madam?

(She is unresponsive)

ASIF

Madam, I've been told you have been parked here for quite some time.

SOPHIA

(quietly)

What do you want?

ASIF

I was called. I've been told you've been here for quite some time.

SOPHIA

I want to go home.

ASIF

You can go home. I'm here to make sure (everybody is safe)

SOPHIA

(abruptly, quickly, panicked)

I DIDN'T SAY THAT.

ASIF

I--

SOPHIA

(turns head towards ASIF for first time)

I'm waiting. Do you want to sit?

ASIF

(surprised)

Sit?

SOPHIA

(pleadingly)

Sit.

(ASIF stands a moment, thinking on what SOPHIA just asked, then walks around in front of the chairs and SOPHIA, stands for a moment, does a motion suggestive of opening a car door then sits down in the chair next to her. As he does this, SOPHIA takes a container of pills from her jacket pocket and swallows a couple. She quickly hides them as ASIF sits down, does a motion suggestive of closing a car door. ASIF does not notice the pills.)

ASIF
You left it unlocked.

SOPHIA
I'm waiting.

ASIF
For what?

SOPHIA
My sun.

ASIF
(surprised)
You have a child?

SOPHIA
No, I'm waiting for the sun. My sunrise.

ASIF
Sunrise won't be for a couple of hours. Do you want to get out
of the--

SOPHIA
(panicked)
NOOO!

ASIF
Ok.

SOPHIA
I'm waiting.

ASIF
What will you do when the sun does come up?

SOPHIA
(quietly again)
I don't know.

(brief silence)

What's your name?

SOPHIA

ASIF.

ASIF

What's that from?

SOPHIA

It's an arabian name , but I'm persian.

ASIF

Do you know what it means?

SOPHIA

I was told it translates as forgiveness.

ASIF

My name is SOPHIA. I don't know what it means.

SOPHIA

How old are you?

ASIF

17.

SOPHIA

17? What are you doing here at *this* time?

ASIF

(slight irritation)

I already said. I'm waiting for the sun.

(small pause)

ASIF

Where's home?

SOPHIA

(stressed in response)

--The sun.

ASIF

What will you do when the sun comes?

SOPHIA

(continued stress)

Tell it to go away. It burns me.

ASIF

Then why are you waiting for it?

SOPHIA

(emotionally, then panicked)

No more questions... I need to get out. I need to touch the waves.
I need..

(SOPHIA stands, does motion of opening car door, then stumbles out. The sound of ocean waves fades into car whooshing sounds. ASIF opens his car door, realizing she is headed towards the street as a car is coming her way. Car noises fade into one distinct car noise, which becomes louder as SOPHIA wanders downstage. ASIF runs after her.)

ASIF

SOPHIA!!!

(Car noise reaches its loudest volume just as ASIF pulls SOPHIA upstage out of the car's path. Car noise fades away.)

ASIF

(soothingly)

Let's get you to your car. Let's get you to your car.

(ASIF walks SOPHIA to the two chairs.)

ASIF

Do you want to sit?

(the sound of ocean waves return.)

SOPHIA

Yes. The ocean is better sitting.

(SOPHIA mindlessly takes the bottle of pills from her pocket. ASIF notices)

ASIF

Madam, could you please turn over the bottle?

(She is unresponsive.)

ASIF

Madam, could you please turn over the bottle?

(She is unresponsive. ASIF gently pries the bottle from her hand. She's too shaken to resist further.)

ASIF

Let's get you to my car.

(ASIF walks SOPHIA stage left to his car. He opens the door, on the right side and helps SOPHIA into the car, closes the door. Then he walks around the car to the left side, opens door, sits and closes it. He picks up a radio from his belt, and holds it up to his mouth.)

ASIF

Requesting an ambulance at the corner of Sycamore and Tyler. I found the car. There was a minor in it. I have her now. I think she is going to need an evaluation.

(He puts radio back on belt.)

SOPHIA

(surprisingly calm)

I don't want to go in an ambulance.

ASIF

It's protocol. I'm ensuring everyone is--

SOPHIA

Safe, ok.

ASIF

Yes.

(silence)

SOPHIA

You were told your name means 'forgiveness'. When did that happen?

ASIF

When I was just a little younger than you.

SOPHIA

What brought it up?

ASIF

It'll take a while.

SOPHIA

Ok.

ASIF

(sighs, takes some time
before speaking)

When I was a teenager, my country was going through many changes. I lived in Kolahi... It's a village on the coast of the

Persian Gulf. We lived on a hill and our houses were made out of clay, almost blending into the countryside. Every day I would go down to the water.

(ASIF stands up from chair wanderers center stage. Distinctly different ocean noises begin. Seabirds can be heard. The sound a car makes when its door is open can be heard.)

ASIF

We fished a lot where I lived. The sand always burned your feet. Every summer, you had to tiptoe as fast as you could across the sand. I made a game out of it.

(ASIF hops a little as he says 'tiptoe', mimicking his response to the sand'.)

It was at the beginning of one summer that rumors began, that a protest leader of some sort was hiding in our village. By late summer authorities came, threatening the whole town if we didn't turn in or find Mahmoud Taleghani. Everybody was at each other's throats. I heard occurrences of people who searched their neighbors homes more vigorously than the police. We were scared..... One night, one neighbor we didn't get along with, his name was Hamid led the police to our doorstep. He claimed he found Mahmoud Teleghani. My older brother who lived in the city was staying in town with us at the time, and Hamid pointed them to him.

(ASIF points off stage right as he reveals this, then lowers his arm.)

They took him. My parents had me sleeping in a corner of the closet that night. They said for now just in case. They said they'd be fine... The next day I woke up and my parents were gone... the house was wrecked... I slept *through* it I feared that when they realized our family had a second son, they would look for me too. A refugee boat was leaving that night, only half a

mile from the ocean side of my town. The waves ran through my toes as I ran through the darkness. The waves were wild with rage and fear and sorrow. I was one of the first ones to find the boat. We departed at 12:30. It was not just 10 minutes later, when we had settled into the ocean, that I remember seeing a red-orange reflection on the water. I knew we were looking at my village. When I looked up I saw the mountain side aflame, the clay crackening, becoming blackened rock. A man was sitting behind me, I didn't know he was there until he spoke. Shadows ran across his face. He was old. I think he could tell I was affected by the fire. He asked my name. He spoke in the language of the Book. Arabic. I told him. "ASIF" he said. "That means forgiveness where I come from". I looked back at the flames. The firelight now glowed on the boat. I looked back to where the man was, but he wasn't there. I was talking to a lifejacket.

(Ocean noises stop. ASIF returns to the driver's seat in the car. Doesn't mimic opening door. Car noise stops. Both ASIF and SOPHIA sit silently for a while. After sufficient silence, the sound of raindrops begin. First softly, then slightly louder-- should still be soft enough for characters to speak.)

ASIF

It rained later that night. It never rains where I come from.

(silence)

ASIF

SOPHIA, what will you do when the sun comes up?

SOPHIA

(quickly, panicky)

I'll wake up and everything will be better.

ASIF

SOPHIA.

SOPHIA

(breathes)

I'm in a car.

(inhales again)

I always knew I was in a car. I must have, right?

ASIF

I don't know.

SOPHIA

I'm in a car. This isn't my car, this is your car. I parked here at around 12:30. I was listening to music to try to calm myself. I was trying to calm myself. I can't remember why I was anxious. I wanted his brightness, his color, his heat. I thought he was going to burn me into a million ashes. I thought I was going to die. I'm waiting for the sun.

ASIF

The sun is a person?

SOPHIA

(ignores question)

I love the rain though.

ASIF

Do you?

SOPHIA

Yes, it has so many emotions. It can represent anything, and I am anything. He is the sun and I am the rain and sometimes we make a rainbow. The problem is that he kills me.

ASIF

Does he hurt you?

SOPHIA

Are you asking about the sun?

ASIF

-Yes.

SOPHIA

He burns me because he is my sun. He can't do anything but give me light, color and blisters. Not physically though, he burns me on the inside and it's worse.

ASIF

Where are you right now?

SOPHIA

I'm floating.

ASIF

In the ocean?

SOPHIA

Yes.

ASIF

Do you know where you really are?

SOPHIA

In your car.

ASIF

Good... Is it raining on the ocean right now?

SOPHIA

Yes, but it doesn't bother me.

ASIF

Do you like it?

SOPHIA

The droplets are soft on my skin.

(Rain noises cease.)

ASIF

What will you do when the sun comes up?

SOPHIA

What did you do... when you were in that boat the next morning?

ASIF

I laughed. Just as the sun came up, a pod of dolphins began porpoising, diving in and out and in and out of the water. One particular dolphin, had a certain character to him which amused me. All of us on that boat were so tired. We all had stories. I think all of us on that boat, if we are still alive, have a special place for the memory of that morning.

SOPHIA

Will I have a morning like that?

ASIF

Yes, I think you will.. *(humorously)* Tell me if you see any dolphins.

SOPHIA

(humorously)

I mean, It's still raining, so just maybe...

ASIF

It's not that cloudy. When the sun comes, we might see a rainbow.

SOPHIA

We just might.

ASIF

We just might.

(The sound waves can be heard as stage darkens.)