

Ocean (2018)

By Paula Stenström Öhman

Duration Two acts, approximately 3 hours, including one intermission

Cast size 21. At least 5 actors.

Excerpt

OVERTURE

Violence, sex.

1A. BREAKUP AT THE RESTAURANT

A neighborhood pub by the sea. Close up Tom and Iben, both middle-aged, who are sitting at a table in silence. Her eyes are shiny; he is sympathetic. A lone man, Steven, is sitting with his back to them a few tables away.

IBEN
Tom...

TOM
Iben...are you all right?

IBEN
It felt...I thought...

TOM
Shh...

IBEN
Is there someone else?

TOM
No! No, there's only you... This is hard for me too, but if we break it off now I can survive this...

IBEN
But Tom...you're the one who

TOM/ *(to himself)*
yes I can

IBEN

You didn't mean it, then?

Tom buries his face in his hands. Is he pretending to cry?

TOM

I'm feeling so guilty here

IBEN

No, please...you don't need to, I

TOM/

for Daniella's sake. *(looking up)* Aren't you? What about your family? Oh my god, Becki...for fuck sake Iben, the girls are in the same class.

IBEN

But what about us?

TOM

Mother is getting worse, too.

IBEN

Is your mother sick? You never mentioned that.

TOM

No...it's pretty serious...there's a lot going on right now...Becki would never forgive me...and what will they say at school? After all, I'm on the parental night patrol, imagine all that talk, everyone would hate me.

IBEN

Why would they hate you?

TOM

And Daniella... she'd never survive this happening again.

IBEN

Again?

TOM

What?

IBEN

You said: this happening *again*.

TOM

No, Iben...I didn't.

IBEN

But I heard you, loud and clear.

TOM

Maybe that's what you thought you heard... Babe...is that where you're at? () I'm so glad we cleared this up. So. How about a hug? (*They're just about to hug when Tom's phone rings.*) Hi, I'm just finishing up here... (*shushing Iben*). It's Daniella. (*into the phone*) Just calm down, what's going on? Which hospital?! I'll be right there. (*to Iben*) It's Becki! (*pats Iben's shoulder, hurries out*) THIS IS FOR REAL!

IBEN (*cursing a blue streak in Danish*)

YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE!!! GOD DAMN YOU, MAN

Iben sits down, crying. A server serves her wine. When Iben looks up, Steven is facing her.

STEVEN

Hi...

Iben looks down, then back up at Steven again, this time with a smile.

IBEN

Hi there...

SERVER (*to the audience*)

Welcome, welcome to Ocean.

Server exits.

2. BECKI & CATFISH 1. SOMETHING YOU NEVER WANT TO FORGET

We see only Becki, a slightly odd, shy fourteen-year-old girl. She is chatting with an anonymous new friend online. The responses are projected as text, or in some other fashion, with no name attached. (Later on we'll find out it's Firus, a boy in Becky's class.)

BECKI

A memory? That's tough...

CATFISH

Something you never want to forget, anything.

BECKI

Okay...when I got to go down to the ocean with my grandma at night, when I was little, and she was like...oh, I don't know...we just stood there and looked at it. Not the most exciting memory, I guess.

CATFISH

No, it sounds nice.

BECKI

It's so weird, even though we don't know each other it feels like I can tell you anything.

CATFISH

Same here.

BECKI

I've like never talked about my grandma with anyone before. No one at school would even care. The Holocaust, like, what's that?

CATFISH

I know. There are so many stupid idiots everywhere.

BECKI

For real.

CATFISH

I just hope you don't think I'm one of them?

BECKI

No...she was sick for a long time afterwards, her stomach was messed up because they were starving in the camps, and her legs...but she was lucky to survive, they took most women and children right away.

CATFISH

Shit. (That's awful.)

BECKI

Then they got put on a bus to a little fishing village, and she met Grandpa, and they had my dad. She took off a bunch of times when Dad was little, no one knew where she was. They thought she had gone home, that she missed it, but she never talked about it, or about the war, not with anyone. But there are a thousand things that remind her: burning leaves and candles, you know, when you blow them out? The weird thing is that the smell makes Dad and me gag too. And she's super anxious. I was at the co-op where she lives the other day, and I was sitting by her bed, telling her this weird little story, about some turtles and an underwater world, one she used to tell to Dad, and then he told it to me, you know—and suddenly she was so quiet. At first I thought she was dead, but she was just sleeping, even then she shooked... wait, is that right?

CATFISH

She was shaking, I get it.

BECKI

I'm all: "shooked."

CATFISH

She was having a nightmare.

BECKI

Dad says it was like living with an iron box that could explode at any moment, when he was little. I'm like: oh, you mean just like at our house, well

CATFISH

I know: "Everyone should be happy."

BECKI

But no one is. No one talks about it.

CATFISH

Exactly! You should come over to my place sometime.

BECKI

Too bad you live like six thousand miles away...I'm sorry, I keep babbling.

CATFISH

I think it's interesting. It's like we're getting to know each other for real now... Hello...Becki?

BECKI

I just got this totally unreal feeling...like you only exist in my head.

CATFISH

No, I exist.

BECKI

Okay.

Becki exits.

3. FIRUS WORRIES

Firus, a 14 year old boy, enters. He is worried, addresses the audience directly.

FIRUS

Hi. Is something wrong?

I mean, I was just wondering, since you're here. Because, you're not from the police, are you? I mean, I didn't think you were, I just thought maybe you knew something? No...okay.

Firus exits.