



CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?

BY GINA
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DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?
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For Peter DuBois

CAN YOU FORGIVE HER? was originally produced by Huntington Theatre Company (Christopher Wigle, Producing Director) in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 25, 2016. It was directed by Peter DuBois, the scenic design was by Lauren Helpern, the costume design was by Mary Lauve, the lighting design was by Philip S. Rosenberg, the sound design was by Daniel Kluger, and the production stage manager was Emily F. McMullen. The cast was as follows:

GRAHAM Chris Henry Coffey
TANYA Tanya Fischer
MIRANDA Meredith Forlenza
DAVID Allyn Burrows
SATEESH Theo Iyer

CAN YOU FORGIVE HER? was produced Off-Broadway by the Vineyard Theatre (Douglas Aibel and Sarah Stern, Co-Artistic Directors; Suzanne Appel, Managing Director), opening on May 23, 2017. It was directed by Peter DuBois, the scenic design was by Allen Moyer, the costume design was by Jessica Pabst, the lighting design was by Russell H. Champa, the sound design was by Daniel Kluger and Lee Kinney, and the production stage manager was Terri K. Kohler. The cast was as follows:

GRAHAM Darren Pettie
TANYA Ella Dershowitz
MIRANDA Amber Tamblyn
DAVID Frank Wood
SATEESH Eshan Bay

CHARACTERS

GRAHAM, 40

TANYA, 27

MIRANDA, 28

DAVID, 50s

SATEESH, 24

TIME & PLACE

Present day, Halloween night in a New Jersey beach town.

CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?

Scene 1

Halloween weekend.

The living room of an old beach house. Just a few blocks from the beach on a quiet residential street, this is prime beach real estate in bad disrepair. The house was a beloved weekend/summer home in the 1970s and '80s, but then Mom and Dad split up and no one showed the house much love after that. Mom kept the house and rented it out for income. Design-wise, we are stuck in time... 1970s cabinetry, wallpaper, dining room table, coffee table, etc., still intact. Mom took a lot of care in decorating this place way back when. After the divorce, though... Mom would hear from the realtor when some item in the house absolutely had to go—a mildewed rug or couch, a dead TV. Hence we have the occasional IKEA item or flat-screen TV that doesn't fit. The house has been kept up in rentable condition, but just barely.

We are in the living room, which is full of file boxes.

A man, Graham, 40ish, stands opposite Tanya, 27. It's Graham's house and Tanya may or may not be his fiancée. She's in costume for the night ahead: a medieval serving wench.

A silence as each waits for the other to begin.

Tanya takes a piece of paper from her apron pocket and starts...

TANYA. OK, I'm just gonna...I wrote this thing to, like, make sure I say everything I need to say. (*Reading.*) Graham. In my life...

GRAHAM. What is that—some kind of a statement?

TANYA. Sort of...

GRAHAM. So the answer's no?

TANYA. Please just let me read. (*Reading.*) Graham. In my life, I have had a propensity—

GRAHAM. In your life? You're 25 years old.

TANYA. I'm 27 and that's a life.

GRAHAM. I'm sorry. Go 'head.

TANYA. (*Reading.*) Graham. In my life, I have had a propensity to do things the hard way. Time and time again, given the choice between a road well traveled and reliable and some risky off-road adventure, I have thumbed my nose at the collective wisdom...

GRAHAM. I'm sorry. You've lost me.

TANYA. I'm saying I've made bad choices. And I've made them... knowingly. Like if life is a horse race... I keep betting my savings on a horse with bad odds.

GRAHAM. I'm not a horse with bad odds.

TANYA. You've been divorced twice and you haven't worked in six months.

GRAHAM. My mother just died...

TANYA. Please! Let me finish.

Looks to her statement, then ditches it.

Shit! I worked really hard on this. OK, here's the deal. I'm pretty sure I'm in love with you.

GRAHAM. And I'm in love with you.

TANYA. If I didn't have a kid, I would say yes...

GRAHAM. But I love Emily!

TANYA. I know. And she loves you. You are magic with her. And there is no one else in our life who... (*Swooning, stopping herself...*) I need to read this...

GRAHAM. Don't read. Look at me. Let's just talk.

TANYA. I make bad choices! Going to school to be a TV newscaster? Bullshit. There are no jobs. And everyone told me that. When I started dating Derek... Derek told me he only did heroin at

parties. And all my friends said there is no such thing as a casual heroin user—

GRAHAM. It's very rare.

TANYA. Right. But of course I didn't listen. And the heroin wasn't casual and now I have a kid with a drug addict. There is something in me that wants to kick and scream that I'm exceptional, you know, like... Fuck you. Against all odds, I can be a TV newscaster married to a casual heroin user. And I have to stop that, you know? I have to stop thinking I'm exceptional!

GRAHAM. You are exceptional. You're sexy and you're good. Sexy and good almost never go together...

Graham moves in to get physical, but Tanya pulls away, not wanting the attraction to derail her.

TANYA. My aunt just like... She nailed it. She said I keep choosing the road less traveled and that road is less traveled for a reason. It's a total dead end.

GRAHAM. That's not what Robert Frost meant.

TANYA. Fuck Robert Frost! Derek promised me he'd stop doing drugs if we had a baby and... Look at me. I'm a single mother. I work in a bar. (*Indicating her outfit.*) I'm trying to stand up to you and I'm wearing a serving wench costume.

GRAHAM. You don't have to stand up to me.

TANYA. I do, though. Because what you did to me here is very... What you did is very mind-fucking and you know I'm trying not to swear.

GRAHAM. Asking you to marry me...that's mind-fucking?

TANYA. Yes. When the job in Florida came up, I told you...I told you if you want me to turn down amazing money and stay here with you, then you have show me you're serious—

GRAHAM. Right! That's why I'm asking you to—

TANYA. But that's not what I meant!

GRAHAM. You said show me you're serious and I won't go to Miami.

TANYA. Right, but I meant serious about your future. Not serious about me.

GRAHAM. OK, well...I decided you're my future.

A beat. That almost stumps her.

TANYA. No. You can't... A person is not a future.

GRAHAM. The right person can be.

TANYA. By future I mean livelihood and you know that.

GRAHAM. Right... And by livelihood you mean job. So I was thinking—

TANYA. No. Livelihood does not mean job. If you read the book I gave you, you would know that.

GRAHAM. I have the book. It's over there.

TANYA. Why didn't you read it?

GRAHAM. Because... It's written for women. It even has a pink cover...

TANYA. I told you when I gave it to you. If you want to be with me, you have to read the book and commit to being on board with it.

GRAHAM. How about you summarize? What do I have to do to be on board?

TANYA. For the nine thousandth time, you have to have a livelihood. Drinking and being afraid to go through your dead mother's stuff is not a livelihood.

GRAHAM. And babysitting. I babysit...

TANYA. Yes, and I'm really grateful. But babysitting Emily is also not a livelihood.

GRAHAM. It could be. I could do home day care...get a few more kids in here...

TANYA. This isn't funny, Graham. When I met you six months ago, I thought you were this...successful, together guy in town temporarily to settle his mother's estate.

GRAHAM. That's right! That's me!

TANYA. But you haven't done that. In six months. You still have all these boxes.

GRAHAM. Just her papers. I got rid of everything else—her clothes, her shoes, her shampoo...

TANYA. I understand you feel super stuck on the papers, but it's been six months and you have to get unstuck. I told you my idea—

GRAHAM. I liked your idea, but first...I have to read them, Tanya. Bottom line. She left me all her papers and I have interpreted that as a request that I read them.

TANYA. You can't read them until you open them, Graham.

GRAHAM. I opened...one. Over there.

TANYA. Where?

GRAHAM. Over there. The one marked "datebooks." I opened that one.

TANYA. That whole box is datebooks?

GRAHAM. Yes. Forty-six of them. I've got forty-six of my mother's datebooks and I'm working through them...

TANYA. Why do you have to read her datebooks?

GRAHAM. Because...Tanya, truthfully, I don't know. But she left them here for me...and she labeled the box with a big...Sharpie...

TANYA. OK! If you're not ready to move forward, just say that and let me go to Florida with, like...closure.

GRAHAM. No. No closure. I want you to stay. What do I have to do?

TANYA. You need to choose a livelihood.

GRAHAM. OK...I mean...I kind of have a livelihood out West...

TANYA. Right. I think that's one of two plans that make sense for you.

GRAHAM. Two plans? Great. I have choices. What are they?

TANYA. Plan number one is you go back to Colorado and back to your job. You're overpaid to do what you do. I've worked in restaurants my whole life. Trust me. You will not find a job that good again.

GRAHAM. OK...

TANYA. Other option is you stay here and fully commit to renovating this house so that you can (a) sell it or (b) keep it as a rental property...

GRAHAM. It already is a rental property.

TANYA. It's barely inhabitable. Your mother was renting it out for pennies compared to what you could be making if it was fixed up.

GRAHAM. OK, I choose that option.

TANYA. You're choosing it because it sounds easier. But it's not.

CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?

by Gina Gionfriddo

3M, 2W

It's Halloween night, and Miranda is desperate for a way out. She's drowning in debt, may be falling for the man who pays her bills, and is on the run from her date who has threatened to kill her. When Graham and his fiancée Tanya offer her a safe haven, a door opens for all of them... but is the promise of a better life a treat or a trick? Two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist Gina Gionfriddo brings her unforgettable dark humor to this timely, ferociously funny story of lost souls grappling with emotional and financial dependence, and the costs of the American Dream.

"Gionfriddo...break[s] new ground on the topics she writes so well. ...[CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?] shows off Gionfriddo's sharp wit... Gionfriddo raises interesting questions about the rules that govern these tangled webs. What does a parent owe a child? What does a child owe a parent? Does anyone or anything in this world owe us anything?"
—**TheaterMania.com**

"[A] devilish screwball comedy...[with] colorful, quirky characters... it's delightful to spend an hour and a half with these zany folks... [CAN YOU FORGIVE HER?] addresses substantial themes like love, money, work, commitment and parenthood. By giving it the 'black comedy' treatment, Gionfriddo takes us for a wild, entertaining ride and at the same time gives us a meaningful moral."
—**TheaterPizzazz.com**

"CAN YOU FORGIVE HER? is a sharp dissection of the American dream...in the guise of a dark comedy. ...The dialogue is witty and well crafted... [The] complicated web of characters keeps the drama high at an almost farcical pace...but underneath the antics of Halloween night is a deeper meditation on money, class, and the choices we make."
—**Theasy.com**

Also by Gina Gionfriddo

BECKY SHAW
RAPTURE, BLISTER, BURN
U.S. DRAG
and others

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