

**BRB**

A short play

By

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Curtains up.

A tiny cruise ship cabin with two small beds, behind an entrance door and to the right a door to a small bathroom.

It is evening.

Sitting opposite to each other are two young middle eastern men. On the right sits KHALIFA, 30, short curly thinning hair, wearing a bathrobe with a cruise ship logo.

Opposite to him sits TAREK. Middle eastern, 27, wearing trendy tight clothes, with yeezys sneakers and a waves hair cut.

Between them is a small round table. On it is a two thirds full bottle of Vodka and two plastic cups.

In front of them is a small flat screen. The news is on.

NEWS COMMENTATOR

The ship called the Bahamas Jewel has now been quarantined off the coast of Florida for two weeks ...

TAREK

(rolling his eyes)

That's us again.

NEWS COMMENTATOR

... after fifty passengers out of more than five thousand tested positive for coronavirus ...

TAREK

(picks up the remote muting)

Mute! ... I'm sorry I need a break.

A knock at the cabin door.

KHALIFA

I'll get it.

He opens the door and in comes a MAN in a fully plastic overall mask and gloves, he is holding a small plate with a cup cake, with a few lit candles sticking out.

KHALIFA

Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to Tarek! Happy birthday to you!

TAREK covers his face with both hands, touched. As KHALIFA sings the MAN walks in putting the cupcake onto the small table next the bottle of vodka. He nods to TAREK who nods back smiling, then turns leaving.

TAREK

Dude ... you're such a great friend.

KHALIFA

Make a wish.

TAREK closes his eyes, takes a beat making a heartily wish, he then leans forward blowing out the candles. KHALIFA claps.

TAREK takes out the candles from the cup cake, then picks it up, taking a big bite.

TAREK

Mm.

(holds it to Khalifa's mouth)

Have a piece.

KHALIFA

... No man should bite into another man's cupcake.

TAREK

You don't know what this means to me. I was very depressed. I really thought no one remembered.

KHALIFA

How could I forget. All we do is stare at each other all day.

TAREK grabs the bottle pouring  
KHALIFA a drink, then himself  
one. As he hands KHALIFA the  
drink:

TAREK

Here's to my fuckin birthday quarantining on board the Bahamas Jewel!

(downs his drink)

KHALIFA sips.

TAREK

(pours himself another)

I'm so glad you're the one who ended up being my roommate! I wouldn't have chosen to be in quarantine with anyone else in the whole group! I can't even imagine being stuck with any of the other guys.

KHALIFA

Same here.

TAREK

It's like a great chance to spend more time. You've been spending so much time at home with Samira lately.

KHALIFA

Yeah ... a man is supposed to spend time with his wife.

TAREK

(puts his arm around him)

I know, I know, it's just ... I love you bro.

KHALIFA

I love you too.

TAREK

(drinks his drink down)

... To be continued.

TAREK gets up and heads to the bathroom.

KHALIFA receives a text. He reads for a beat, his face sinks. While this is happening there is the sound of TAREK taking a long piss.

KHALIFA sits up texting speedily. He receives another text. He stares at it wide eyed, holding the phone with both hands almost as if he is begging it.

The toilet is heard flushing.

TAREK

(comes out taking the remote he switches the t.v off)  
Enough news! The world's too crowded anyway. No harm in skimming off some extra fat. God's on our side bro.

(picks up his cup)

Here's to better days to come!

KHALIFA looks to him horrified.

TAREK

(drinks down)

Come on! Come on! Drink up!

(noticing something is wrong)

What's wrong? ... Did something happen?

(gets up going to him)

What happened?

(gently takes the phone out of his hand)

TAREK (cont'd)

Let me see ... BRB ... who will be right back?

KHALIFA

... It's my sister.

TAREK

... Which one?

KHALIFA

Nagwa. She texted me when you were in the bathroom ... Samira was rushed to the hospital. It seems she got the virus and ...

TAREK

Oh my God!

KHALIFA

... Her lungs just suddenly collapsed because ...

TAREK

She has asthma ...

KHALIFA

... she didn't tell me that she hadn't been feeling well for days ... didn't want to worry me ... but a few hours ago she found it impossible to breath ... She's in ICU ... Nagwa is talking to the doctor on the other line ... she will be right back to tell me what is going on.

(holds his hand out for the phone)

TAREK, dumbfounded, stands there for a beat, then hands KHALIFA back his phone, he slowly goes back sitting on the bed, pours himself a drink.

TAREK

This is crazy ... I really ... like Samira ... she's ... a rare gem.

KHALIFA

(grabs his forehead)

I shouldn't have come on this trip! I left her alone!

TAREK

No one imagined this would happen.

KHALIFA

... I shouldn't have listened to you!

TAREK

... you needed the break Khalifa ... you know I love Samira but she can be very dominating. She had taken you all for herself.

KHALIFA

What if she doesn't make it!

TAREK

She'll make it ... She's tougher than nails! I know from the outside she seems very soft, feminine and emotional and she is ... but like inside she has a very strong core.

KHALFIA

(looks to him)

... Can you stop talking about my wife like you know her more than I do!

TAREK

What ...

KHALIFA

What makes you think you know her so well!

TAREK

Bro ... she was with me in high school ...  
(pours himself another drink)  
She was in my graduation class ...

KHALIFA

I know that!

TAREK

What's up then ...

KHALIFA

I don't know! What's up with you!

TAREK

Nothing! ... I'm just being honest with you bro.  
(drinks his drink down)  
... I even had a thing for her you know ... back then.

KHALFIA  
I know that too.

TAREK  
I told you ...?

KHALIFA  
She told me that night at the bar ...

TAREK  
You mean ... the night I found out you guys had gotten together.

KHALFIA  
That's the one!

TAREK  
... That was a crazy night ... I was so drunk I can't remember most of it.

KHALIFA  
... She told me you hit on her that night.

TAREK  
... For real!

KHALIFA  
She says it's something she feels continuously!

TAREK  
(folds his arms indignantly)  
... feels Continuously ...

KHALFIA  
She said you make her skin crawl.

TAREK  
She said that ... How come you never talked to me about this?  
Why do you only hear one side?

KHALIFA  
She actually got upset when she found out that you were my roommate on the ship. She told me how come out of that whole group you have to be with him? I told her it was too late to change and ...



KHALIFA (cont'd)

(in a hostile tone, getting loud)

I said that you're a brother who was raised with me in Queens and would never have dirty thoughts for a wife of a friend!

TAREK

I always felt she was telling you stuff about me. That's not cool.

KHALIFA

She was just trying to protect me from being hurt.

TAREK

Protect you from who?

KHALIFA

You said stuff about me that night. You told her I was stingy!

TAREK

I just told her you owed me money!

KHALIFA

What money!

TAREK

I don't remember! You always owe me money! You owe me money now! You didn't refund me for that T-shirt? Remember the one I paid for on account of you forgetting your wallet?

(he pours himself another drink)

KHALIFA

You talked to her shit about me!

TAREK

You think Samira doesn't know you're stingy! Anyone who lives with you for a day would see it! Who wouldn't notice you've been walking around in that same robe for two weeks? Because you're too cheap to wear your own clothes! You'd rather look like a gigolo who's waiting for woman that never arrives!

(drinks his drink down)

KHALIFA

... she was so right about you ... You've been pretending to be my Egyptian brother! Coming with me and the guys on all those trips. Doing hooka with us on Saturday nights!

TAREK

I never pretended anything with you!

KHALFIA

And all you wanted was to get into my wife's pants!

TAREK

It's not about her pants! I was drunk! It was a moment of weakness! ... I never had anything worthwhile of my own! Never! You have a nice family. Sweet sisters. A warm mother. I never had! ... my father always just gave me the belt! My mom ... the doctor told her he had never seen such a difficult pregnancy. She couldn't have any more kids after me. She would look at me and say "You took my joy away when you were born."

KHALIFA

You're breaking my heart!

TAREK

(his speech getting slurred)

Is it so bad to want something nice! I wanted to be with her but she just wanted to be friends! And then you and me start getting closer as friends at the same time! I think this is good, man, this is what I want, this is what I need ... I mean ... I wasn't granted Samira, but you and me, man, that was good ... but then ... she like starts trying to take you away! Turning you against me! I wished she was someone else's wife so many times! But God never granted me any wishes before! ... but suddenly now he seems interested!

KHALIFA

... what do you mean?

TAREK

Nothing! I just wish I could un-wish!

KHALFIA

What the hell are you saying!

TAREK

... My birthday wish! ... Was for her to stop coming between us!

KHALIFA's eyes widen, he stand fist tightened.

TAREK grabs the bottle trying to pour out a drink but finds the bottle is finished.

KHALIFA suddenly gets a text on his phone. He snatches it off the bed.

TAREK hearing it too. Looks towards the phone wide eyed.

Khalfia reading the text falls to his knees.

Lights out.

END OF PLAY