

Timber

A twenty minute play for four characters

TIMBER

Synopsis:

A cliff top hike to find love is never going to be a smooth path. To find it, you're going to need to be prepared to fall from a great height.

A twenty minute play for four characters.

Characters:

Josie - Late 50's, divorced. Doesn't suffer fools.

Logan- Late 50's, divorced. A nice guy, but a bit gullible. Awkward around the whole dating process.

Carla - Early 60's, divorced. Josie's sociable and meddling cousin.

Charlie - Early 60's, four times divorced. Logan's party loving older brother.

Setting:

The play is set at the Sunshine Paradise Resort in the middle of summer. The stage is set up with a park bench that appears to be overlooking a cliff top. There is a sign saying "Sunshine Paradise Resort Viewing Platform. Where Heaven on Earth begins each day". There is a second sign saying "For your own safety, please keep away from the edge". There is also a medium size shrub at the side big enough to hide behind.

Music:

The opening of the song 'Danny Boy' is included in the script. Please note that this song is in the public domain so no copyrights are necessary.

SCENE ONE

The play begins with Josie sitting on the bench reading a book, enjoying the solitude. She has a small back pack and water bottle on the seat next to her. Logan enters a bit puffed from the hike.

LOGAN

Wow! What a view.

Josie pretends to be absorbed in her book.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Quite a hike to get up here. But worth it for that.

She gives a polite nod before continuing to read.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Yep. What a view.

He stares out for a bit longer then moves to the bench.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Mind if I sit down?

JOSIE
(reluctantly)

Of course.

She moves her gear to the floor then goes back to her book.

LOGAN

Thanks.

Logan awkwardly sits down at the other end of the seat. Pause. He then nervously moves slightly closer to her. He waits for a reaction. There is none. He moves closer again. She notices, but chooses to feign ignorance. Pause. Logan then nervously starts singing out to sea.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

...OH DANNY BOY.

His voice catches with nerves, but he forces himself to continue. This time a bit louder.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

THE PIPES THE PIPES ARE CALLING.

Pause. Josie lifts her head slightly, which Logan takes as a sign of encouragement.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

FROM GLEN TO GLEN AND DOWN THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.

He waits for a further response but gets nothing. He tries once more.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
THE SUMMER'S GONE, AND ALL THE ROSES FALLING.

Pause, then Josie finally joins in.

JOSIE
IT'S YOU, IT'S YOU, MUST GO AND I MUST BIDE.

He smiles.

LOGAN
Good song.

JOSIE
I guess.

She gives a small smile back then continues with reading. Pause. Logan moves closer to Josie again. She chooses to ignore this. He starts quietly humming the song. Pause. He then nervously puts his hand on her knee. She leaps up.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
What are you doing!?

LOGAN
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

JOSIE
How dare you!

LOGAN
I...I...

JOSIE
You grabbed my knee!

LOGAN
I know... but..

JOSIE
What?! What on earth were you thinking?!

He's too overwhelmed to respond.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
Say something!

LOGAN
I...I thought you wanted me to!

JOSIE
What?!

LOGAN

I thought you wanted me too.

She looks at him furious. He goes to speak again.

JOSIE

Don't. Don't say another word. I'm reporting you to...to reception! You're not getting away with this.

She starts quickly packing up her things.

LOGAN

No. Please!

JOSIE

Stay back!

LOGAN

I'm...I'm not that kind of guy.

JOSIE

What? A pervert? Who preys on innocent women?

LOGAN

I'm...I'm not...

She gives him a final shake of her head as she starts to exit.

JOSIE

You disgust me.

LOGAN

But you sung the song! You sung the song!

JOSIE

I said stay away from me!

LOGAN

Please! You sung the song.

JOSIE

What the hell are you talking about?

LOGAN

You sung Danny Boy.

JOSIE

So?

LOGAN

So...so I thought that meant you were interested.

JOSIE

In what?

LOGAN

...in me.

JOSIE
Oh you are a piece of work. I-

LOGAN
I was only following the rules.

She looks at him blankly.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
The rules of 'Timber'.
(pause)
The resort dating programme?

JOSIE
The resort doesn't have a dating programme.

LOGAN
Yes it does. Timber.

JOSIE
I don't think so.

LOGAN
It's true. I swear. My brother started using it yesterday and he's already met someone.

JOSIE
No, I-

LOGAN
Please, just let me explain... or try to. Please.

JOSIE
(pause)
Fine.

LOGAN
Thank you.
(pause)
So this bench here is the meeting site. If you see someone up here between the hours of 12 and 2-

She checks her watch. It's within the time.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
And if they are alone and reading a book then it's the first sign.

She looks at him questioningly

LOGAN (CONT'D)
A sign that they're interested in meeting someone.

JOSIE
A bit presumptuous.

LOGAN
That's why there's more. Sign two is singing.

Singing? JOSIE

Danny Boy. LOGAN

Oh. Right. JOSIE

LOGAN
And if they join in, then it means they're still interested and you go to the final stage - sign three. You...you reach out and touch their hand.

JOSIE
But you grabbed my knee.

LOGAN
Touched! I did not grab. And I... well...you were busy with reading, so I kind of panicked and grabbed, I mean touched, your knee instead.

JOSIE
Yes, you certainly did.

LOGAN
Sorry.

(pause)
You're not part of Timber, are you.

JOSIE
I'm afraid not.

LOGAN
Oh God. What was I thinking? I never do these kind of things. Never. It's just, well my brother's been on my case since my divorce to 'put myself out there'. I thought that if I at least gave it a go, it might shut him up.

JOSIE
People need to learn to mind their own business.

LOGAN
You try telling my brother that.
(pause)
But you see, it worked for him. On the first day! He said this resort is 'a treasure trove' for divorcees. And he should know. He's on his fourth - divorce that is.

JOSIE
I heard that too. It's why my cousin dragged us here for a 'sad women's' holiday.

He looks at her.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

She calls it a 'bad girls' week away, but I beg to differ. We're all over 50, divorced and too old to act like we're at a Club Med. But try telling that to Carla.

LOGAN

Carla? Ha. Must be a popular name here.

JOSIE

Why?

LOGAN

That's the name of the woman my brother met through 'Timber'. Nice enough. A bit loud for my liking, but it suits him.

Josie starts getting suspicious.

JOSIE

Wait. This Carla, what does she look like?

LOGAN

She's...well...loud, but I already told you that. Um...about your height. Red hair...

JOSIE

Busty?

LOGAN

I er...well...yes.

JOSIE

(pause then to herself)

That bitch.

LOGAN

What?

JOSIE

I can't believe her. Who the hell does she think she is?

LOGAN

What are you talking about?

JOSIE

My 'dear cousin Carla', the one who dragged me on this stupid trip, also met a man yesterday. Is, by chance, this brother of yours named Charlie?

LOGAN

Yes. Yes he is! How-

JOSIE

Charlie's Carla and MY Carla are the same person. And this whole meeting has been their little set up.

LOGAN

But they met using the programme. They met using Timber.

JOSIE

No. They met at the Lagoon Bar over half price cocktails, where they both insisted on only ordering 'sex on the beach'. And then they had it. Thank God I pretended to be sick for the evening.

LOGAN

But...Timber...?

JOSIE

There is no such thing as Timber. They made it up.

LOGAN

But you're here...how would they know-

JOSIE

I come here everyday at this time. It's my escape from Carla. She doesn't do hills, or read, so I know I'm safe. Well.. until today.

LOGAN

So this whole thing....was just 'them'?

JOSIE

Exactly.

LOGAN

I can't believe...Timber...

(pause as the penny drops)

I thought the name was a 'nature thing' - meeting in the great outdoors, you know. But it's not is it? It's just 'Tinder' - with an m.

JOSIE

Aha.

LOGAN

Tinder with a damn M. I can't believe I fell for it. I'm so stupid!

JOSIE

No you're not.

LOGAN

Yes I am! I'm 57 and I'm still falling for my big brother's dumb tricks. Logan the Loser, alright.

(pause then remembering)

And I sang that song! What was I thinking?

JOSIE

Well I joined in to. But Carla knew I would. Cow.

LOGAN

How-

JOSIE

My son, his name is Danny. And I used to sing that song to him all the time when he was little.

JOSIE

Wait! Don't.

(an idea is forming)

Logan is it?

He nods.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Well, Logan. What if we really give them something to talk about.

LOGAN

What are you saying?

JOSIE

I haven't got time to explain. But I need you to hide.

She looks around and spots the shrub.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

There. Behind that shrub.

LOGAN

What? Why?

JOSIE

Just go! They're nearly here. Trust me.

She pushes him towards the shrub where he reluctantly hides behind it.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

I'll teach her to play drunk cupid with me.

She moves towards the cliff edge. Carla and Charlie enter. Josie starts weeping and shouting out to sea dramatically.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Oh God. What have I done? What have I done?!

CARLA

Josie?

Josie doesn't respond. She just continues to shout over the edge.

JOSIE

I didn't mean to. I promise I didn't!

CHARLIE

(to Carla)

Is she okay?

CARLA

(more firmly)

Josie. Come away from the edge.

Josie turns, as if finally realising Carla is there.

JOSIE

Oh. Carla. What are you...? You can't imagine what I've done. It's bad. So very bad. I was only trying to stop him. But I...oh I can't go to jail!

CARLA

Jail?!

CHARLIE

Jail?!

She turns and takes a step closer to the edge.

JOSIE

Maybe I should just...

CARLA

No! Wait. Just stay where you are. Stay where you are! We're coming to get you.

(turning to Charlie)

Help me.

Together they very carefully move towards her.

CARLA (CONT'D)

We're coming to get you, sweetheart. Don't move. Just don't move.

Once they reach her they delicately inch her back from the cliff edge.

CARLA (CONT'D)

You're okay, darling. We've got you.

CHARLIE

Keep going. Just like that. That's it, love.

They finally reach the safety of the bench. Carla collapses next to her.

CARLA

Oh, thank God.

Josie starts crying again. Charlie hands her a handkerchief from his pocket.

JOSIE

Thank you. It's awful. Just so awful.

CARLA

What's awful?

JOSIE

What I've done. I...I just came up here to read my book. Like you suggested, remember?

(pause)

But then this man came.

CARLA

What man?

JOSIE

Just this man.

CHARLIE

What was his name?

JOSIE

I... I can't remember. He told me... but I...I don't remember. I...I think it began with a J...no it was L...definitely an L.

CHARLIE

L?!

He gives Carla a worried look.

JOSIE

Yes. L. This man...he...he came and sat next to me. He asked me about the weather - you know, that kind of thing. And then....then he...he grabbed me!

CARLA

What?!

JOSIE

It started with my knee. I was so shocked I just froze. He then started moving his hand further and further until...

Carla glares at Charlie accusingly. Josie starts her fake crying again.

CARLA

Oh, Josie!

JOSIE

And when he reached...

(she indicates 'certain areas'
then jumps up dramatically)

I leapt up and struck him right across the face.

CHARLIE

You hit him?!

JOSIE

I certainly did. I can still feel the tingling in my hand. But then he started shouting at me. Saying it was all my fault. That I had led him on. But I hadn't. I know I hadn't.

CARLA

It's okay, honey.

JOSIE

He kept talking about some sort of resort dating service. What did he call it? Um...tender...tumbler...

CARLA

Timber?

JOSIE

Timber! Yes that's it. Such a stupid name. Of course it couldn't be real. Could it?

CARLA

Er...of course not.

CHARLIE

So where is he now?

JOSIE

Well, that's the thing. He wouldn't stop talking about 'Timber'. He kept going on and on. Getting angrier and angrier. Louder and louder. Oh, Carla, I was so scared.

She reaches out her hand dramatically for Carla.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

His face was getting closer and closer to mine. I could feel the spit from his accusations. And then, without realising it, we had ended up right on the edge.

They all look towards the cliff edge.

CARLA

Oh God. Please say you didn't...

JOSIE

I thought he was going to push me, Carla. I...I had no choice.

She starts to sob again.

CARLA

Oh, Josie. What have you done?!

CHARLIE

What has she done?

Carla indicates the edge.

JOSIE

I thought he was going to kill me. It was self defense.

Charlie jumps up and races to the edge of the cliff.

CHARLIE

Logan? Logan!

JOSIE

Yes! That was his name.

He searches but sees nothing.

Carla shrieks in shock. Charlie goes back to the edge.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Logan!

CARLA

It could still be okay.

CHARLIE

How can it ever be okay?!

CARLA

I don't know. Maybe...maybe he didn't fall the whole way. He could have landed on a ledge somewhere.

CHARLIE

You think so? I... I don't see anything.

JOSIE

Maybe you could try around the other side. See if there's a better vantage point.

CARLA

It's worth a try.

They race to the other side just off stage. During that time Logan sneaks out.

LOGAN

This is brilliant!

JOSIE

Isn't it.

LOGAN

It's just what that smug bastard deserves.

JOSIE

And her. She's as guilty as he is. Did you see their faces?

LOGAN

Yes!

JOSIE

And when they found your watch. Ha! Nice touch.

LOGAN

I thought so.

JOSIE

I swear they both looked as though they had seen a ghost

There is the sound of Carla and Charlie coming back.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

So what do you say? Is it time we brought you 'back to life'?

LOGAN

Er...not just yet.

Logan takes off his jacket and throws it over the cliff.

JOSIE

What are you doing?!

LOGAN

Let's really give them something to talk about.

He quickly hides again just as the others return. Josie moves towards the edge and starts shouting.

JOSIE

I...I see something!

They race to join her.

CHARLIE

What? Where?

JOSIE

There!

She points towards the jacket.

CHARLIE

That's...that's his jacket. Oh God.

He falls on his knees scrabbling.

CARLA

What are you doing?

CHARLIE

Going after my brother! There must be a way to climb down there.

CARLA

It's a cliff edge!

CHARLIE

I don't care. I have to find a way.

CARLA

Charlie, wait! Look. The jacket. It's moving. Maybe he's swimming down there. Alive and swimming?

CHARLIE

You think so?

JOSIE

If he is, he won't be for long.

CHARLIE

What do you mean?

JOSIE
Well, it's shark mating season.

CARLA
Josie!

JOSIE
What?

CHARLIE
Oh God!

CARLA
It'll be okay. I'm sure he's just...just...

JOSIE
Bad timing, I guess.

Charlie turns on Josie menacingly.

CHARLIE
You!

JOSIE
What about me?

CHARLIE
You did this. You KILLED my brother.

CARLA
She didn't mean to.

CHARLIE
She pushed him off a cliff.

JOSIE
Because he attacked me!

CHARLIE
My brother wouldn't attack anyone. She's lying.

CARLA
Charlie.

JOSIE
You weren't there. You don't know. He wouldn't stop. He kept yelling Timber. Timber!

CHARLIE
Liar!

JOSIE
I'm not! He kept-

CHARLIE
You're a liar and a murderer and you're going to rot in jail.

JOSIE
Carla, help me.

CARLA
Charlie, please.

CHARLIE
You're going to rot in jail for the rest of your life. I'm going to make sure of it.

JOSIE
No. No I can't. It was Timber. I swear it. It was all Timber's fault. It was all Timber's fault!

She dramatically collapses to the ground, sobbing.

CHARLIE
It can't have been.

JOSIE
It was. I-

CHARLIE
Stop! Just stop!

JOSIE
But-

CHARLIE
It can't have been Timber because there's no damn thing.

Pause.

JOSIE
What?

CHARLIE
There's no such thing as Timber. We made it up.

JOSIE
Carla...?

CARLA
It...it was just a little joke.

JOSIE
Why would you-

CHARLIE
Because we wanted to get my brother laid.

CARLA
We thought it might be nice to set the two of you up.

JOSIE
So you made up a fake dating service?

CARLA
Just a bit of fun.

JOSIE
(pause)
So he was right?

CARLA
What do you mean?

JOSIE
He wasn't trying to attack me. He...he was just trying to explain?

Carla and Charlie look at each other.

CARLA
Yes. Yes I guess he was.

JOSIE
Oh God.

CARLA
It will be okay. You wont-

JOSIE
You killed him!

CHARLIE
What?

CARLA
What?

JOSIE
You two. You killed him.

CARLA
We did not!

CHARLIE
You're the one that pushed him off the cliff.

JOSIE
In self defence. But you two, you knowingly set him up. That's...that's manslaughter.

CARLA
But-

CHARLIE
This is ridiculous.

JOSIE
What have you done, Carla?

CHARLIE
She hasn't done...WE haven't done anything!

JOSIE
I think a court of law would see it differently.

CARLA
Charlie?

CHARLIE
I...it was just a joke.

JOSIE
A joke that got your brother killed.

CHARLIE
No...I...

JOSIE
Yes.

CHARLIE
But...Oh Lord. What have I done?
(running to the edge)
Logan!

CARLA
Logan!

They stare out to sea with no response.

CARLA (CONT'D)
What do we do now?

Josie brushes herself off, much more relaxed.

JOSIE
Well, I don't know about you two, but I could use a drink.
(checking her watch)
Oh, look at the time. Happy hour is starting. Cocktail anyone?

They turn and look at her as if she's gone mad.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
I'll take that as a no?

Logan comes out from behind the shrub.

LOGAN
I wouldn't say no to a cocktail.

CHARLIE
Logan?

LOGAN
Oh. Hello, Charlie. Carla. Great view from up here, isn't it?

CHARLIE
But...
CARLA
You're...

LOGAN

What's wrong, Charlie? You look as though you've seen a ghost.

JOSIE

Close your mouth, Carla, or you'll end up eating a bug.

CHARLIE

I thought you were... I found your...

CARLA

But the sharks..they...

LOGAN

Oh good, you found my watch. Don't want to lose that. Sentimental value and all.

He takes the watch back and puts it on.

JOSIE

Oh, what a lovely watch.

LOGAN

Especially when it's showing happy hour. Shall we?

He holds out his arm which she takes.

JOSIE

I would love too.

They start to leave.

LOGAN

Oh, and Charlie, I'm going to need to borrow a jacket. I seem to have lost my best one.

JOSIE

Don't wait up.

They exit smirking. Carl and Charlie just stare after.

CHARLIE

He's...

CARLA

But...

Pause then the sounds of them singing Danny Boy can be heard, followed by laughter. They look at each other.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Have we just been...Logan!

CARLA (CONT'D)

Did they just...Josie!

They race after them. Lights down. THE END.