**Tall Ships Ten Minute play.**

*(Lights come up on the scene. There is four old looking bar tables scattered around the scene and a bar in the top corner of stage right. In the front corner of stage left there is a rocking chair and a small stool. On the stool sits a boy, about eight years old. On the rocking chair is a man of about sixty. In the bar area there is a barmaid behind the bar, she is cleaning glasses with a cloth. She looks about twenty. On the table in the middle of the stage sits four large men all aged between twenty two to fifty. At the table closest to the bar sits one small man of about thirty. He is reading a book. The other two tables remain unoccupied. The scene in the foreground is lit. The scene in the background is dimly lit, save for a single candle on each table.)*

*(The boy and the old man in the foreground begin to talk. It is a Grandfather and his Grandson. The Grandfather has an English accent, but with an Irish twang, the kind you get when you have lived somewhere for so many years and you pick up the dialect. The boy has an Irish accent.)*

**Granddad:** Why? Are you sick of my stories?

**Boy:** No. But you tell new one’s all the time. And I wonder why you tell me them.

**Granddad:** Is that a question?

**Boy:** Yes!

**Granddad:** Maybe I tell you stories because my head is so full of them. And if I don’t let them all out then I’ll explode.

**Boy:** But then I’ll explode too! I know so many.

**Granddad:** Shit yeah. Ah. Don’t be telling your Mother I said a bad word in front of you. Grown up language is for grownups.

**Boy:** I promise.

**Granddad:** Good. That daughter of mine would have my head on a plate, I tell you.

Maybe I tell you stories because I think you need entertaining?

No. You young un’s and your iP3 players. If you were entertained any more then you’d never grow up.

I don’t know why I tell you stories. I don’t have an answer for you.

**Boy:** Oh. Ok.

**Granddad:** Do you feel a bit old for these now? Is that it?

*(Pause. The Boy sheepishly nods. He doesn’t want to upset his Granddad.)*

**Granddad:** Ok that’s fair enough, so it is. You’re getting on a bit. Soon you’ll be as rickety as me!

**Boy:** I’m only eight Granddad!

**Granddad:** Time flies Boyo. Trust me on that.

Ok. How about this. I tell you one more story. Just one. But I want to make a deal with you.

**Boy:** What?

**Granddad:** You start coming home and telling me the stories instead.

That sound good to you?

*(Pause. The Boy smiles and nods.)*

Shake on it?

*(They both spit into their right hands and shake.)*

And please don’t let your Mother find out about our secret handshake neither. She’ll roast me over a pot.

**Boy:** *(Laughs)* Promise.

**Granddad:** Ok. Well if this is the last one, then I’ll make it a nice one. With a happy ending.

How about the tale of how I met your Grandma?

*(Lights dim on The Boy and his Granddad. The lights brighten on the scene in the bar. Everyone is carrying on as usual.)*

**Granddad:** Remember all my old Merchant Navy stories?

**Boy:** Yeah.

**Granddad:** Well this one started when I drifted on over to Cork.

*(Laughter gets louder and the sounds of bar ambience get turned up. In the background the sound of Irish folk music being played by a band somewhere offstage is sounding. The sounds of fiddles, banjos, accordions and pianos. The cheers of the crowd are sounding off.)*

I was the youngest of all my friends. I had stayed on at the bar that night to watch some musicians and have a song and dance. After a while, I met some fellas who worked the trawlers.

*(Guys at the central table begin to speak. Joe is a large man in his mid forties. Mick is a lean, wiry man in his early fifties. Jonathan is also large, in his mid thirties. Ryan is the youngest of the bunch, around twenty two. He is lean from hard work. They are all laughing about a story that Mick has just told.)*

**Jonathan:** Ok. Ok. I got one for you lads...-

**Mick:** -Hold up Jon.

**Jonathan:** Ahhh. What now?

**Mick:** This isn’t one of your...STORIES is it?

**Jonathan:** What do you mean?

**Joe:** You know what he means.

**Mick:** One of those disrespectful lady stories. The ones where you...what is it you say? ‘Defend their honour’.

**Joe:** Virtue.

**Mick:** What Joe?

**Joe:** Virtue. His stories are always about a ladies virtue. And he aint defending it that’s for sure.

**Mick:** Yes. That. Unless this is a story about a ladies honour and not her virtue then we don’t want to hear it.

**Jonathan:** I thought you liked hearing about my ‘Virtue’ stories.

**Joe:** We’re married men. Course we do.

**Jonathan:** Then what’s the problem?

**Mick:** Young Ryan here.

**Ryan:** Why am I a problem?

**Mick:** You aren’t lad. But you’re a bit young for such stories.

**Ryan:** I’m not.

**Joe:** You are for the way he tells them.

**Jonathan:** Ah he aint too young. He’s in his prime. I bet he’s got a few of those stories of his own.

*(Lights dim on the bar. They rise on The Granddad and The Boy)*

**Boy:** What kind of stories are virtue stories?

**Granddad:** They’re tales where gallant young men defend a ladies honour.

**Boy:** What do you mean?

**Granddad:** Oh you know. A. A little fist fight here. Putting a rascal in his place.

**Boy:** Do you have lots of virtue stories Granddad?

**Granddad:** Oh yes.

**Boy:** Can I hear some tonight?

**Granddad:** No.

**Boy:** Why?

**Granddad:** Because you’re hearing this one.

*(Lights come back up and the bar and dim on The Boy and The Granddad.)*

**Ryan:** Course I can tell you some tales.

**Mick:** Oh aye.

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Joe:** Go on then.

**Ryan:** What?

**Joe:** Tell us your own dirty story.

*(Pause)*

**Ryan:** *(Weakly)* I don’t kiss and tell...-

*(They all laugh at Ryan)*

**Mick:** Ah leave him be. You listen here lad. If you don’t wanna share those kinds of stories with us, then you don’t have to.

**Jonathan:** And if you don’t have any of these stories yet then that’s OK too.

**Joe:** Little embarrassing.

**Mick:** Oi.

**Joe:** Come on. Ryan. How old are you?

**Ryan:** Twenty two.

**Joe:** And you’ve been sailing for how long now?

**Ryan:** Four years.

**Joe:** And in those four years you’ve never known a woman?

*(There is a long pause)*

**Ryan:** No.

*(Lights dim on the bar and go back to The Boy and The Granddad)*

**Boy:** What does ‘knowing a woman’ mean?

**Granddad:** It means not knowing the name of a lady other than your Mother and Sisters.

**Boy:** You didn’t know any other girls?

**Granddad:** I was on a boat. Where are the girls on a boat?

**Boy:** Oh yeah.

*(Lights flick back to the bar)*

**Jonathan:** Saving yourself eh?

**Mick:** Oi!

**Jonathan:** There’s nothing wrong with it. Just asking.

*(Beat)*

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Joe:** Bless him. Waiting for that special girl to come along. I mean she has to be special right? Who else would you want to let down with the two most disappointing minutes of her life?

**Mick:** Joe, for all you know, this lad is a demon in the sack. Don’t listen to him. He’s just jealous because the first time he knew a ladies curves he went for ten seconds before finishing and throwing up on her chest at the same time.

*(All laugh at Joe)*

**Joe:** How the hell do you know that Mick?

**Mick:** Your drink too much Port. Which was the problem on that particular night so it was.

**Joe:** Shit.

**Mick:** So lay off him. I’d call you Minute Man, but that would be a compliment.

**Joe:** Change the damn subject will you?

**Jonathan:** You must have some old sea stories eh Ryan? You’re seasoned sailor. That much we can give you.

**Ryan:** Oh yeah, I’ve got loads.

**Mick:** Go on then lad.

**Ryan:** Well. We were out one night in a storm.

**Joe:** Come on lad, we’ve all been...-

**Ryan:** Storm force eight.

*(Silence)*

**Mick:** Jesus.

**Jonathan:** Someone up there loves you so they do.

**Ryan:** I didn’t feel like it at the time.

**Joe:** You’re lucky to be alive pal.

**Ryan:** I know that now.

**Mick:** How old where you?

**Ryan:** Nineteen.

**Mick:** And you survived that? At nineteen?

**Ryan:** I’m sat here aren’t I?

**Mick:** You’ve got bigger stones than most men in this room I’d wager.

**Jonathan:** Agreed.

**Joe:** Here here.

**Ryan:** What about you guys?

**Joe:** Yeah a few here and there.

**Mick:** To be honest lad, we prefer the stories that aren’t true.

**Ryan:** Oh?

**Joe:** Folk tales.

**Jonathan:** They’re much more interesting than real life.

**Mick:** Unless you survive a nasty storm.

**Joe:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** What kind of stories?

**Mick:** The kind with a message.

**Ryan:** Oh?

**Joe:** 'A man who is not afraid of the sea will soon be drownded, for he will be going out on a day he shouldn't. But we do be afraid of the sea and we only do be drownded now and again.'

**Ryan:** Who said that?

**Joe:** No idea. Something me Ma used to say.

*(A group of girls walk into the bar. They look to be in their early twenties, same age a Ryan. All are pretty. They take seats at the table nearest to the sailors. The man with the book looks up and stares over at one of the girls. He then starts reading again, glancing up every now and again at the young women.)*

**Mick:** Here’s trouble.

**Ryan:** Why?

**Jonathan:** Trouble? Finest ladies in Cork this lot.

**Joe:** Good for a laugh.

**Jonathan:** Good for other things.

**Mick:** Jonathan, you’ve got an acid tongue. Treat these ladies with a bit more respect.

*(Beat)*

**Jonathan:** Anyone want another drink?

**Joe:** Aye alright.

**Mick:** If you’re buying.

**Jonathan:** Ryan?

**Ryan:** Yeah, go on then.

*(Jonathan walks off to the bar to get more drinks, taking the old glasses with him. Ryan keeps glancing over at the girls sat on the table. The girl in the centre keeps looking up at him.)*

**Joe:** See something you like lad?

**Ryan:** What? No. I...-

**Mick:** Go talk to them. They’re a nice bunch of lasses.

**Ryan:** No no. I think I’ll. No.

*(The girls go quiet. They notice Ryan looking over and start whispering amongst themselves, giggling. The girl in the centre stands up slowly and walks over to their table, taking her stool with her as she goes. Mick and Joe are grinning between themselves. Ryan looks terrified.)*

*(Flick to The Boy and The Granddad)*

**Boy:** Why where you scared Granddad?

**Granddad:** Because I hadn’t known any ladies names up til that point.

**Boy:** Oh. Hadn’t you kissed a girl before then?

**Granddad:** No. Only ever got a kiss from me Mum.

**Boy:** Even I’ve kissed a girl Granddad.

**Granddad:** See what I mean? Already got interesting stories and your eight. How many eight year olds have kissed a girl?

**Boy:** I don’t know.

*(Flick back to the pub)*

**Margaret:** Hi there.

**Mick:** Hello.

**Joe:** Hi.

**Ryan:** Hello.

*(She sits next to Ryan)*

**Margaret:** My friends and I saw you looking over at us.

**Ryan:** Sorry. Sorry I didn’t mean to offend you. I...-

**Margaret:** -It’s ok. We were just wondering if you wanted to join us for a little drink?

**Ryan:** I. I.

*(Joe and Mick nod.)*

Yeah. Ok. Ryan.

**Margaret:** Nice to meet you ‘Ryan’. I’m Margaret.

*(Jonathan comes back over with drinks.)*

**Jonathan:** That barmaid is slow. I tell you, she doesn’t know her arse from her elbow.

*(He notices Margaret)*

Oh hello. Fancy seeing you here.

**Margaret:** Hello Jonathan.

**Jonathan:** Been keeping well I hope?

**Margaret:** Yeah I have thanks. You?

**Jonathan:** All the better for seeing you. Is that Catherine and Danielle sat with you?

**Margaret:** Aye.

*(He turns round to speak to them)*

**Jonathan:** Hello girls. You well?

**Catharine:** Yes thanks.

**Danielle:** Can’t complain.

**Margaret:** Ryan here was just going to join us for a little drink.

**Jonathan:** Oh aye. He’ll catch up. I just need to give him his change for his drink.

*(She sits back at her table)*

**Ryan:** It was your round. What change?

**Jonathan:** You’re in for a ride tonight lad.

**Ryan:** What?

**Jonathan:** how do you think I know those girls?

*(Pause)*

**Ryan:** Oh.

**Jonathan:** Go on. Get to it.

*(Ryan is rooted to the spot. Jonathan stands up and takes him by the shoulders and drags him over to the girls. He grabs Ryan’s stool and brings it to the table and places him in his seat. He then brings his drink over before leaving them be.)*

**Mick:** What did you do that for?

**Jonathan:** What?

**Mick:** Force him onto the table. He’s said he wants to wait.

**Jonathan:** He should at least kiss a girl for god’s sake.

**Joe:** He’s just a boy.

**Jonathan:** He’s not too young for a kiss. Lord alive.

**Mick:** Be easy on him.

*(They look over. The girls are talking and laughing at him, trying to get him to join in. He is sitting there awkwardly.)*

**Jonathan:** Sweet Jesus. *(Shouting)* Offer them a drink you fool.

*(Ryan snaps up and starts asking for drinks orders. The guys laugh.)*

**Mick:** That guy with the book has done nothing but stare at those girls all night.

**Joe:** Aye.

**Jonathan:** Keep an eye out.

*(Ryan returns with drinks. He sits with the girls and they start talking about Ryan and women.)*

**Catherine:** What do you mean?

**Ryan:** What do you think I mean?

**Danielle:** Well yeah but.

**Margaret:** Come on.

**Ryan:** Come on?

**Catherine:** You haven’t kissed a girl?

**Ryan:** No.

**Catherine:** Not ever.

**Ryan:** Not ever.

**Margaret:** Bloody hell.

**Danielle:** Why not?

**Ryan:** I’m. I’m. You know.

Saving myself.

**Margaret:** That is sweetest thing I’ve ever heard.

**Catherine:** You’re saving your first kiss or you’re saving ALL of yourself.

**Ryan:** I’m. I’m not sure.

**Danielle:** Well if you want a kiss.

**Catherine:** Danielle.

**Danielle:** What? It’s a little peck on the lips. Nothing to be worried about. What do you say Ryan? Would you like your first kiss?

**Ryan:** I. I don’t know.

*(Pause. He looks at the guys sat nearby who are pretending not to be interested.)*

Yeah. Ok. Yeah.

*(Danielle stands up. She walks over to him and he stands. She gently cups his face in her hands and kisses him on the lips. She lingers for a second and sits down. Ryan sits down with a slump. He is grinning.)*

Thank. Thank you.

**Danielle:** Told you it was just a little kiss. It was a nice kiss.

**Ryan:** Yeah it was.

**Catherine:** Would you like to kiss me?

**Ryan:** What?

**Catherine:** You heard.

**Ryan:** I. Yeah. Sure.

*(They stand. She strides over confidently and grabs his face and kisses him hard. His hands find her waist and he pulls her in for his first passionate kiss. The guys cheer.)*

**Ryan:** Shut up.

**Jonathan:** Get stuck in.

**Mick:** Not too stuck in.

*(The girls look at Margaret. She is sat next to Ryan, looking furtively at him.)*

**Margaret:** Was it a good kiss?

**Catherine:** Best I’ve had in a while.

**Margaret:** Ok.

*(She looks at him and he looks at her. They don’t stand. This time he cups her face, gently and tenderly. They kiss slowly, with intent. A loving kiss. The man with the book looks up and watches them. Ryan carries on kissing her. She holds his face with one of her hands and he strokes her hair. At this the man at the table stands up and walks over to Ryan with a glass in hand. Jonathan sees this and quickly stands to get in between Ryan and the man. Ryan is still kissing Margaret. The man goes to glass Ryan but Jonathan gets in the way. The glass breaks over the top of his head and he collapses. Ryan and Margaret break off as Mick and Joe stand up and rush the guy who glassed Jonathan.)*

**Margaret:** James? What the hell? Why are you here?

**James:** Dad knew you were out in places like this. Seeing boys. Not acting like a lady.

**Margaret:** I thought you were in Belfast?

**James:** Didn’t think you’d be looking for me. *(To Ryan)* I’m coming for you little man. You watch.

*(The Barmaid rushes out from behind the bar. She punches James in the face as Mick and Joe restrain him. She drags Jonathan to a stool. James is still trying to get at Ryan but Mick and Joe are too strong. He is ejected from the bar. Margaret goes after them, swearing at him. Catherine and Danielle follow. It is just The Barmaid, Ryan and an unconscious Jonathan.)*

**Barmaid:** Help me with him.

*(They sit Jonathan in a chair.)*

You just had to kiss Margaret O’Donnell didn’t you? Had to do it. Like everything else with a cock.

**Ryan:** What? I. I...-

**Barmaid:** Bloody idiot.

**Ryan:** I. I...-

**Barmaid:** -Bet you would’ve gone home with her too if you could’ve done. I saw you kissing. I thought I saw the table raise off the ground a few inches.

**Ryan:** I wouldn’t. I hadn’t...-

**Barmaid:** Hadn’t what? Thought about it. Course you thought about it. You aren’t the first.

**Ryan:** No. I. I. I hadn’t even kissed a girl.

*(Beat)*

That’s what they were doing. Showing me how to kiss a girl.

**Barmaid:** Oh.

**Ryan:** I wouldn’t go home with them. I’ve never.

**Barmaid:** Yeah.

*(Beat)*

I. I haven’t either.

**Ryan:** Oh.

*(Beat)*

I’m Ryan.

**Barmaid:** I’m Daisy.

**Ryan:** Nice to meet you Daisy.

**Daisy:** Nice to meet you Ryan.

**Ryan:** We need to clean him up.

**Daisy:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Go get me a bar towel.

*(Lights flick back to The Granddad and The Boy. In the background Ryan and Daisy are patching Jonathan up and administering first aid.)*

**Granddad:** After I cleaned up Jonathan and sent him to hospital she asked me to spend the next day with her.

**Boy:** Did you?

**Granddad:** It was the best day of my life lad.

**Boy:** What then? Did you ever kiss Margaret again?

**Granddad:** After I met your Grandma Daisy I never knew the names of other ladies.

**Boy:** What about when she died?

*(Pause)*

**Granddad:** No. Not even then.

**Boy:** You haven’t kissed another lady since Grandma Daisy died?

**Granddad:** No. I remember that night you see. The way she helped me patch my friend up. The way she punched that James character in the face without fear. She was kind and gentle and fierce and tough all in one night. I saw it all in the space of an hour. You normally have to know someone for a long time before you see all those sides to them. I wouldn’t want that to go away. If I kissed someone it would go in a puff of smoke.

**Boy:** Be careful who you kiss?

**Granddad:** Be very careful who you kiss.

*(Pause)*

Ok. Milk and honey before bed?

**Boy:** Yeah. Ok.

**Granddad:** Never too old for that are you?

*(The boy shakes his head. They both exit. The lights very slowly start to fade. In the background Mick and Joe come back in and grab Jonathan and take him outside. Ryan and Daisy are left standing. Daisy walks behind the bar and pours herself a glass of beer. Ryan sits on a bar stool in front of her. She pours him one. The clink their glasses and drink, never breaking eye contact.)*

*End*