

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE NORMAL

A Ten Minute Play In One Act
Victoria Jerde

Cast of Characters

Tristan Cayo: A woman. 22 years old.
Josiah Hickey: A waiter. 23 years old.
Hank Agarva: Bar owner. 31 years old.

Scene

On a calm New York City street. There are many bars and restaurants on the street.

Time

Present day. Around midnight on a Saturday night.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: The front of a cafe. There are

large glass windows on the front of the store, and metal tables and chairs in front of the cafe. There is also a sidewalk curb in front of the cafe.

AT RISE:

TRISTAN is seen sitting on the edge of the sidewalk, smoking a cigarette. Her makeup is running from crying. Her hair is messily put into a bun at the top of her Head. JOSIAH is whipping tables and closing the coffee shop up. A woman is seen exiting the stage, drunken with another man. HANK is locking up the cafe.

HANK

(Turns away from the doors of the cafe to look at JOSIAH.)

Alright, Jo, you have a nice night, young man. I'll see you bright and early Monday morning, right?

JOSIAH

(Keeps whipping tables.)

Yes Sir. Five A.M. sharp.

(JOSIAH smiles.)

HANK

(Laughs.)

JOSIAH

(Continues wiping the table.)

TRISTAN

(Taking long drags from her cigarette. Crying softly.)

JOSIAH

(Looks up at TRISTAN.)

Excuse me, ma'am. Are you all right? It's a bit late. Are you waiting for someone?

TRISTAN

(Takes another drag for her cigarette. Wipes the tears from her cheeks.)

Oh, (light chuckle.) yes, I'm fine. I'd just rather sit here for a bit and let myself sober up. It's been a very long night.
(nervously chuckles)

JOSIAH

Okay. I'm sorry to bother you. I was just making sure you were okay.

TRISTAN

Ah, thank you. It means a lot. Say, do you think a taxi is going to come around here anytime soon?

JOSIAH

(Stops wiping tables and makes his way closer to her. Looks around in thought.)

Um, at this time at night, on this side of town, probably not.

TRISTAN

(In defeat and frustration.)

Shit.

JOSIAH

I mean, if you need a ride I could give you one. I'm sure you don't live too far from here, right?

TRISTAN

(Sighs.)

My apartment is in Brooklyn, which is on the opposite side from here.

JOSIAH

Hey, it's okay. I've got nowhere to go tomorrow. I'll drive you to your apartment.

TRISTAN

(Looks up at him for the first time.)
Are you sure? I mean I can call my friend back.

JOSIAH

Was your friend that drunk girl that got into that cab with that man?

TRISTAN

(Pauses for a moment to think.)
Yes.

JOSIAH

Judging from the many drunk men and women that I have encountered in the year of me working here, I'd say it's safe to say she isn't coming back. Or, picking her phone up anytime soon.

(Both laugh.)
(Pause.)

TRISTAN

You aren't a serial killer, are you? (chuckles.)

JOSIAH

Oh, most definitely. It's a big hobby of mine. (laughs.)

TRISTAN

(Laughs at his sarcasm.)
I guess you can give me a ride (Smiles up at him.)

JOSIAH

Okay. Let me just finish up wiping these tables down, and then we can get going.

TRISTAN

(Smiling.)

Sounds good.

(Lights dim, and curtain closes.)

ACT I

Scene 2

(Inside JOSIAH's car. Traffic sounds can be heard in the background. JOSIAH is driving. TRISTAN looks a bit nervous and is doodling on a receipt. Both are silent for several moments.)

JOSIAH

So-

TRISTAN

Savannah.

JOSIAH

(Looks at TRISTAN with confusion.) What?

TRISTAN

You're gonna ask me where I'm from, right?

JOSIAH

(Laughs) Yes, I was. Savannah?

TRISTAN

Yes. Savannah, Georgia.

JOSIAH

(laughs.)

Well, how did you end up here?

TRISTAN

Well, I didn't want to be dependent on my parents for the rest of my life, which would have ended up happening if I would have stayed. (Says in a mocking tone.) I would have worked for my father at his multi-million dollar company. I wouldn't have a care in the world, but I wouldn't be self-made. I would have had it all just given to me. It would have been easy, and I don't want to go down like that, you know?

JOSIAH

I can't exactly relate. (glances over at her.) I grew up in a low middle-class family my entire life in the outskirts of New York City, but I definitely see where you're coming from.

(Pauses.)

So, why New York?

TRISTAN

(Sighs.) At first, I didn't know why. I got accepted into NYU which was the best and farthest college I got accepted to, so I decided this was the place. I mean can you blame me?

(gestures towards the streets.)

JOSIAH

Not at all. I guess I'm not that fascinated by this place because it's all I've ever known. I've never been outside of the states that surround New York.

TRISTAN

Wow, that's crazy.

JOSIAH

Yeah, but I'm comfortable, so I guess it's not bad.

(Pauses.)

So, what did you major in?

TRISTAN

Fashion Design. What about you?

JOSIAH

(Hesitates.)

I didn't exactly go to college. I got out of high school and decided to take a year-long break, but then I just lost my want for going back to school. I also had a really good paying job at the time.

TRISTAN

Not going to college is not a bad thing. It's really not for everyone.

JOSIAH

(Sighs.)

That's not what my mom used to tell me.

(Both are silent.)

So, what was your reason for being on the opposite side from where you live in Brooklyn?

TRISTAN

(Pauses to think.)

My friend, Clio, that drunk girl, she insisted that I come and that I would have fun. I went and ended up sitting on the sidewalk crying, smoking cigarette after cigarette.

JOSIAH

May I ask why you were crying?

TRISTAN

(Pauses.)

I'm an...

(Hesitates.)

I'm an alcoholic.

(Both fall silent.)

And Clio seems to always want to take me to the very place I shouldn't be going to.

JOSIAH

Damn. That's so fucked up, man. I'm so sorry.

TRISTAN

I mean, it's my fault. I don't know why I give in to her and let her influence me like that.

JOSIAH

That's not your fault.

TRISTAN

I mean, I tell her all the time that I don't want to go drinking because of what it does to me. And I've gotten so far from where I was a year ago. She just doesn't get it.

JOSIAH

It doesn't sound like she is a friend.

(Both are quiet.)

TRISTAN

Well, she's all I got here.

JOSIAH

Both my parents were alcoholics. I saw them drunk more times than I ever saw them sober. They never got help. They never even wanted help, and it was because their drinking buddies told them they didn't need help.

(Both fall quiet.)

TRISTAN

What happened to them?

JOSIAH

They were killed in a car accident.

(Both fall silent.)

Because they listened to their friends and believed that if they said something was okay, it was.

TRISTAN

I'm so sorry.

JOSIAH

You know the owner of the bar, Hank?

TRISTAN

Um, I'm not sure.

JOSIAH

The one I was talking to before I started talking to you?

TRISTAN

Oh, yes, I remember.

JOSIAH

Well, he is a recovering addict himself. I've seen that man struggle just in the year I've worked for him, but he always comes out strong. (Pause.) He's nine months sober. He sticks around the bar even when he doesn't have to just to encourage addicts to get help. (Pause.) I know I don't know you, but please, whatever you do, surround yourself with people that want to help your addiction, not feed into it.

TRISTAN

(Tears fall down TRISTAN's face.)

Yeah. Yeah, you're right.

JOSIAH

Is this your place?

(Points out the window.)

TRISTAN

(Looks that way.)

Uh. Yes. That's me.

JOSIAH

I'm glad we met.

TRISTAN

Yeah, me too.

(TRISTAN smiles at him and gets out of the car. She circles around to his window and places a cigarette between her lips.)

Hey, you got a light?

JOSIAH

Yeah.

(JOSIAH pulls a lighter from his pocket and leans out the window to light TRISTAN's cigarette.)

TRISTAN

(TRISTAN gets a long drag from his cigarette.)

Hey, thank you for tonight.

(takes another drag.)

I needed that.

JOSIAH

I'm just a normal person.

TRISTAN

You saved me from doing something horrible.

JOSIAH

(Looks at her with confusion.)

What do you mean?

TRISTAN

(Takes out folded up piece of paper from her jacket. She unfolds it.)

April 3, 2018. To whom this concerns. For the past five years, I've been struggling with addiction. I've sought help, but rarely got it. In turn, all I got was one friend who never gave a shit and this feeling of defeat deep within me. I am making myself free. I am saying goodbye now..."

(TRISTAN'S voice fades off.)

(Curtains close.)