

BLACK WATERS

Written by

Sean Oyer

Inspired by true story.

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Logline: A young man is confronted by his past younger selves to help him make sense of his life choices leading up to this special day.

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FADE IN:

INT. BAR (BLACKBOX THEATER) - LATE NIGHT

Dark walls. Void. Dim gold light. No one is there but a BARTENDER and MIKE (21) black, who's hunched over with a rum and Coke.

Mike stares at the glass. Bartender cleans in front of an empty stool.

BARTENDER  
Drinking alone tonight?

MIKE  
That's the plan.

BARTENDER  
Well, happy birthday, Micky. Root beer float's on the house.

MIKE  
Micky? No, it's Mike. What float--?

DOOR BELLS CHIME. LIGHT FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. FLOOR SCRAPES.

He glances over to see MICKY (7), black and short. Mike glares at him, annoyed. It's his younger self. Mike scoffs.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Jesus, you've got to be kidding me.

Bartender brings Micky a root beer float. Micky smiles.

MICKY  
Thank you.

MIKE  
Thought you didn't exist anymore.

MICKY  
What are you drinking?

MIKE  
Don't be annoying.

Micky stares at Mike, looks off, drinks the float.

MICKY  
How come you look so mopey?

MIKE  
I'm not.

MICKY  
Why aren't you happy?

MIKE  
I am.

MICKY  
Don't look it --

MIKE  
Would you please stop bugging me!?

MICKY  
But it's our birthday.

MIKE  
So shut up and drink your goddamn float.

After a moment, Micky mutters-

MICKY  
Dad would've been nicer.

MIKE  
Please, Dad was only nice to you so he didn't have to listen to you.

MICKY  
But he got us root beer floats --

MIKE  
Yes, to shut you up.

Micky's taken aback.

MICKY  
Why're you so mean?

MIKE  
I'm not. I just grew up.

MICKY  
Well, I don't have to be like you.  
I can be happy.

MIKE  
No, you can't so just shut up,  
Micky.

Mike drains the glass and thuds it on the counter. Bartender trades him a new one.

Now Micky mopes, sipping on the float.

Mike sighs, lifts the rum and Coke to drink, when --

MICKY

How come you got rid of me?

Startled, MIKE drops his drink, SHATTERING the glass. Micky stares at him, innocent. Mike doesn't know what to say.

Bartender brings him a new rum and Coke.

MIKE

I'm not answering that.

MICKY

Why can't you just tell me --

MIKE

You don't need to worry about it.

MICKY

But, aren't I you?

Mike stares off. Micky's right. Mike clenches his eyes shut, then gestures at everything around them.

MIKE

Take you head out of your ass, kid!

Mike gestures at everything around them.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Look, where I -- we are! Does it look like I remember how to love or how to smile?

Micky shies away.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I drowned you out for a reason, and so did Dad!

MICKY

But, Dad loved us!

MIKE

No, he didn't!

MICKY

You don't know that!

MIKE

Yes, I do. He didn't want us! When I called him out on it, he never denied it!

Mike leaps out of his chair.

MIKE (CONT'D)

So, do me a favor and grow the fuck  
up!

Micky is speechless. His optimism can only go so far. He  
stumbles out the chair.

Mike looks off. Bartender puts a glass of water down.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I didn't order --

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Who said it was for you?

Bartender gestures to where Micky was sitting.

Mike looks over to see MICHAEL (40), black, Mike's future  
self. He now sits in Micky's chair.

MIKE

Great -- there's more of you.

MICHAEL

More of us. I don't remember being  
that much of a belligerent ass to  
the kid --

MIKE

What's your point?

MICHAEL

You blamed a kid for being a kid.

MIKE

No. I blamed him for being naive.

Michael drinks his water as Mike starts another rum and Coke.

MICHAEL

I seem to recall someone else being  
naive later in life.

MIKE

That was different.

MICHAEL

How's being naive in love any  
different?

MIKE

I wasn't naive, I was --

MICHAEL

You were too blind to see all the love you've given has only been one-sided.

MIKE

Is this the part where you tell me it's not my fault?

MICHAEL

No, it's the part where I remind you of the one person who showed love, but yet... you never gave it back.

Mike glares at him: *you can't be serious.*

MIKE

The kid!? Please, you're not the one who has to sit across an empty chair and explain to the kid why no one ever shows up for him --

MICHAEL

Actually, I -- we did, but I don't think that's why you got mad about seeing Micky last time on our birthday, when you tried to kill yourself.

Mike drains the glass, slams it down, and glares at Michael.

MIKE

You go senile old man? You don't know shit about me -- or that night.

MICHAEL

Like hell I don't know you. Damn it, I was you. Bitter. So goddamn alone that the whole world went dark.

Bartender brings Mike a rum and Coke. Mike drinks and scoffs:

MIKE

Right, and I guess next you're going to tell me that it's all some sort of undealt with trauma and neglect --

MICHAEL

No.

Mike waits. Finally:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You -- We both shut the kid out, so much to the point, we forgot what it was like to just feel; or experience life for what it was -- what it was like to be happy.

Beat. Michael drinks.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

We're still trying to figure it out, but I think the reason you get mad when you see Micky is that he's a reminder of what you forgot -- how to feel: Pain. Love. Forgiveness.

Mike stares at the glass as Bartender pours Mike water. It's black, an opaque void of clarity.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You drown him out for too long, once you come back up for air, you forget to bring the kid back up with you.

(beat)

Then again, I only know that because that's what I did, what you're doing.

Mike looks at Michael. Considering. Lost.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Maybe the whole world doesn't care, but it only takes one or two people to, shouldn't it?

Mike stares off as everything around him goes dark. Just him and the glass. After a moment, he turns to face Michael.

Only it's not Michael. It's Micky... in the same seat, concern all over his face.

MIKE

Just us then, huh?

They stare off at the bar. Micky leans on his shoulder. Mike lets him.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Mike sits on a couch across from DR. MORALES, who has an open manila folder clipped with papers in her hand.

MORALES  
Is everything alright?

Mike takes a moment. He exhales, about to speak, when he looks out the window.

MIKE'S POV - THROUGH WINDOW

An ice cream truck is swarmed by children. They scatter to reveal one kid, eating an ice cream cone.

It's Micky. He smiles and waves at Mike.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike's breath catches in disbelief. Mike comes back to his senses. He turns to her and nods.

MIKE  
Yeah...

MORALES  
Great. Where do you want to start?

After a moment...

MIKE  
Lets start with Micky.

MORALES  
Who's that?

Mike cracks a smile.

MIKE  
He's me.

FADE OUT.

**THE END.**