

**TIDAL**  
*A One Act Play*

By Hope Villanueva  
*Last Updated 07-14-18*

805-708-4111  
1070 Travis Lane  
Gaithersburg, MD 20879  
stagewoozle@gmail.com

## **CHARACTERS**

Clype            A hermit crab in heavy, decorated shell  
Rugo            A hermit crab who has just shed his shell  
Tini            A neurotic sea anemone that lives on a discarded shell

## **SETTING**

The shore at low tide. It is sandy and the tide is on the rise.

## **ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

TIDAL was commissioned and originally produced by Honolulu Theatre for Youth in 2011 as a part of the production, Where Do Things Go? Previously, titled RENOVATIONS for that production.

Directed by Eric Johnson, the original cast was as follows:

Clype            Maile Holck  
Rugo            Moses Goods  
Tini            Junior Tesoro

The playwright is extremely grateful to this team of artists and the entire HTY Ohana for their continuing support. Mahalo.

## **PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES**

The characters' names are derived from the scientific names for hermit crab and anemone species. Refer to this for pronunciation; *Coenobita clypeatus*, *Coenobita rugosus* and *Actinia equina*.

Casting is color and gender neutral and the playwright encourages the actors to bring their personal perspectives to the roles. Gender has been assigned in the script for convenience, as per the original casting.

The pacing should be fast and punchy. All characters are over the top and cartoony, until they aren't. If the play stops, it comes to a screeching halt.

## TIDAL

*Two shells. One is small and fairly plain, coated only in algae, seaweed, sand, small stones and such. The other shell is spectacularly covered in man-made refuse – pieces of colored plastic, glass and foil. Its crowning glory is a plastic circle sticking out from the top – a ring from a six-pack of soda. The sea is rolling in and out gently nearby.*

*The small shell begins to tremble and cry out. There is the sound of exerted effort coming from the large shell as its occupant comes into view. CLYPE emerges from the shell that happens to be his home. CLYPE reaches over to the small shell with great effort and rolls it over to reveal TINI. TINI is stuck to the shell with sand all over his face.*

CLYPE

What's this yelling?

TINI

Rugo! He's left, Rugo!

CLYPE

No, he didn't -

TINI

Rugo's left me behind!

CLYPE

Calm down, Tini. He's just shedding.

TINI (panic)

Whatever will I do? Whatever will I do? Whatever will I -

*CLYPE clamps a claw over TINI's mouth.*

CLYPE

Here, look... Look at what I have!

*CLYPE waves a metallic candy wrapper in front of TINI.*

TINI

Ooh, shiny!

CLYPE

Nice, huh?

TINI

Shiny!

*TINI reaches out a tentacle and is slapped away by CLYPE.*

CLYPE

It's not all that impressive, but... you know. I do try to keep my shell up to date.

TINI

You keep a good shell!

CLYPE

And... I found this.

*CLYPE reveals a gold beer bottle cap.*

TINI

Shiny! I never see those. And it's gold!

CLYPE

I'm not sure where I'm going to put it. Hmm...

*CLYPE holds up the cap against her shell, testing. TINI giggles and greedily manages to snatch the disc out of her claws. CLYPE whacks TINI on the head, taking the disc. TINI's mind goes blank. He resets.*

TINI

Clype?

CLYPE

Tini.

TINI

Hi.

*TINI flops over sideways and dozes off. Typical. RUGO enters from the water. He wears a shell that is undecorated.*

CLYPE

Hey, Rugo.

RUGO

Hey, Clype.

*TINI pops up.*

TINI (to CLYPE)

He's left me!

CLYPE

He's right here.

TINI (to RUGO)

You left me!

RUGO

I'm right here. I told you I had to get a new shell. I outgrew the last one.

TINI (calmer, but sad)

You left me.

RUGO

I'm back now.

*RUGO rests a reassuring claw on TINI's tentacles. TINI calms down.*

CLYPE (feigned politeness)

How's the, um... new shell?

RUGO

I had to walk three tide pools over to find this shell. Three! Shell shortages!

CLYPE

Shorewalkers?

RUGO

Shorewalkers! They take all the shells.

TINI

They don't fit inside.

CLYPE

Nope.

*TIDAL, by H.Villanueva (version 07-14-18)*

RUGO

I don't take their stuff. Don't they realize that we need those shells?

CLYPE

Probably not. (*Admiring her shell decorations*)

TINI

It isn't right.

CLYPE

It does make it harder to find new homes when the shorewalkers are taking the shells, but look what they give us. It's like... a trade.

*RUGO scrunches his face in disagreement. Pause as they ponder.*

TINI

Tide's coming in.

CLYPE

Yup.

*CLYPE tips the cap on her head, purposefully drawing attention to it.*

RUGO

What is that?

TINI

Shiny!

CLYPE (greedily)

Go and find your own. This one's mine.

RUGO

I don't want it.

CLYPE

Well, you can't have it.

RUGO

Well, I don't want it.

CLYPE

Good.

RUGO

Good.

*Awkward.*

TINI

Tide's coming in.

CLYPE

Hmmm...

*Awkward.*

CLYPE

You're not keeping that shell like *THAT* are you?

RUGO (defensive)

I like it.

TINI

Shiny?

CLYPE

Well, I guess it's about the potential. Right, Rugo?

TINI

Can I live on your new shell?

RUGO

Didn't think I was going to leave you behind, did you? (*to CLYPE*) You never said anything about my shell before.

CLYPE

I didn't want to be rude.

RUGO

Oh.

CLYPE (analyzing the small shell)

At least your old shell... There was some color. Some algae. An anemone is cliché –

TINI

Hey!

CLYPE

- But it's something.

RUGO (shrugging off TINI)

Using that shorewalker stuff... I don't know. It looks good on you, it does. Just never seemed natural to me. And you remember what happened to Bill and his shell, right?

TINI (very sad)

Bill...

CLYPE

Bill. (sigh)

*They nod their heads in acknowledgement of Bill. CLYPE changes the subject.*

CLYPE

Thought you might have been going for a retro look.

TINI and RUGO

Retro?

CLYPE

You know? *Retro*. From before we had all these nice, shiny things from the shorewalkers. Back in uncivilized times, crabs didn't have the neat things we have now. They had to make do with what was available to them. So, they only had plants and nudibranchs on their shells.

Retro.

RUGO

Oh.

CLYPE

Coulda been better. That's all I'm saying.

TINI

Shiny.

*A big wave rolls onto shore for the first time. TINI pulls in his tentacles, RUGO jumps, and CLYPE, with her heavy shell, doesn't go anywhere.*



TINI

Tide's coming in.

CLYPE

Yup.

RUGO

I don't think we can stay here, Clype.

CLYPE

Why not?

RUGO

Did you see that wave? Did you see those rocks get dragged out to sea?

TINI (worried)

Isn't right.

RUGO

The sand will get pulled out from under us. We have to go further up the shore to the cliffs where we can hang on.

CLYPE

I'm not going anywhere. You know my shell is too heavy to carry. I'll just wait it out.

RUGO

You can't wait it out. You'll be swept out to sea!

TINI

Isn't right.

*They are struggling, when another wave comes, catching the shell TINI is on. TINI starts to drift, but RUGO pulls him to safety. TINI is terrified.*

RUGO

The waves nearly took Tini out to sea! Just like Bill!

TINI (sad)

Bill's gone.

RUGO

Bill had all those things on his shell. And the tide came.

TINI (very sad)

Bill's gone. Bill's gone.

CLYPE

We're crabs. We collect. It's what we've always done.

RUGO

Right. We sit here and we wait for things to wash up on the sand. We don't even know what half this stuff is. We stick them to us and stick them to us until we can barely move.

TINI

Isn't right.

CLYPE

We're CRABS.

RUGO

We have to move up to the rocks or we'll wash out to sea. Come on, Tini. You're coming with me.

*RUGO helps TINI detach himself from the old shell and adhere himself to his new, larger shell. CLYPE doesn't move.*

TINI

Tide's coming! Tide's coming!

*An even bigger wave comes up and tears at the sand below their feet with a fearsome sound. RUGO scrambles with TINI to higher ground.*

TINI

What about Clype? Clype!

RUGO

Look, I'll help you. Let's just go.

*Together they try to lift the shell to allow CLYPE to walk. It is too heavy.*

RUGO (CONT')

Just leave it here. Get a new shell later.

*TIDAL, by H.Villanueva (version 07-14-18)*

CLYPE

No! I've been collecting these things forever. Try again.

*Again, they fail to move CLYPE.*

CLYPE (CONT')

I can't leave my things here, Rugo! Rugo!

RUGO

Just leave it all behind! All that stuff... The shorewalkers don't want it. Can't you see, Clype? Shorewalkers don't care about us. It's not a trade! They use all that stuff and when they're done they throw it away into our ocean. They don't care!

TINI (certainty)

Isn't right. Isn't right.

CLYPE

We're crabs!

RUGO

It's just garbage. It doesn't belong here and you don't need it.

*CLYPE holds onto her shell defiantly. RUGO turns to leave.*

RUGO (CONT')

Let's go, Tini.

*Together, BILL and TINI take brave steps up the shore as a huge wave rumbles its approach. CLYPE calls after them, angrily and greedily.*

CLYPE

It isn't right! Rugo! We're crabs, Rugo! Crabs!

RUGO (glancing back sadly)

It isn't right.

*RUGO and TINI continue and CLYPE is left behind, stubborn and alone. She sees the final, deadly wave approaching and she clutches her treasures more tightly. Blackout.*

**END OF PLAY**