

TIDES OF THE HEART



FORMAT: Feature

PROJECTED RATING: PG-13

GENRE: Romantic Comedy / Heartfelt Drama

TONE: Playful, heartfelt, sexy-sweet, emotionally resonant

LOGLINE: To speed up her wedding date, a controlling anxiety-prone city girl agrees to a deal given by her career-focused boyfriend and learns to scuba dive, but plunges into an underwater whirlwind of self.

STORY TYPE: Buddy Love – Rom Com Love

WORLD: Breezy, sun-soaked Key West vs. tightly wound New York City

COMP: *Room with a View* (1985)

TREATMENT

ACT 1: THE CHECKLIST

MARYCLAIRE HAVEN (30) is the kind of woman who organizes her vitamins alphabetically and uses Excel to track ovulation. A Type-A Manhattan marketing exec – She is the embodiment of control from her spotless apartment to her 5-year-plan:

1. Get engaged.
2. Get married.
3. Freeze eggs if necessary.
4. Own matching luggage by 31.

Her boyfriend, CHAD STRAIGHTVIEW (36), is a polished, Rolex-wearing sales executive who has been promising a ring for years, but over time their chemistry has fizzled along with their sex life. It is more theoretical than physical now. But they still look good on Instagram, and that must count for something, right?

In addition to the lack of romance, Maryclaire cannot help, but find she is being invited to more and more of her friend's baby showers... and if they are not pregnant, other couples have joint tax returns, and attend book clubs that drink more wine than read. This sparks a moment of desperation within Maryclaire – She is not going to be the last one standing at the bouquet toss.

So, when she confronts Chad about getting married, again... He comes back with a creative challenge – a deal if you will where if she joins him in Key West for a sales conference and learns how to scuba dive before it is time to get back on the airplane home, he will propose.

It is classic Chad: dangling commitment like a carrot on a string, but anxious to get her life started, she makes the deal.

And the first thing Maryclaire does the day after they land is sign up for lessons. She will soon learn – to no surprise of Chad that her structured life is will be dismantled by sand, salt, and sun.

ACT 2: UNDERWATER AWAKENINGS

Key West is paradise for people who do not schedule things. So, of course, Maryclaire hates it. The heat ruins her hair. Her phone dies hourly. Her planner gets soaked. The scuba shops are filled with half-naked hippies and if that is not enough, after scuba instructors see that she suffers from manic anxiety – she is denied left and right due to liability purposes.

Then when all hope is lost, she meets OLIVER CAP (35), a rugged, inked-up dive instructor with an ex-navy build and a surfer's soul. He owns a dive shack hidden behind a coconut grove and radiates a slow, sultry kind of confidence. His hands are calloused. His grin is criminal. Oliver offers her free lessons. Normally, Maryclaire would be skeptical of men like this, but again – she is a woman on a mission!

On their first dive, she freaks out underwater...

“You’re holding your breath,” he tells her. “No, I’m not,” she lies. “You are. Even on land.”

As Oliver teaches her to let go of control underwater and become one with nature, Maryclaire begins to apply the same tactic on land.

Back at the hotel, feeling good and free, Maryclaire tries to make love to Chad after a long business day, but he says he is exhausted...

In the ocean and along Oliver’s boat however, there’s laughter, clumsy flirtation, and moments that linger too long – hands guiding her waist, gazes that flick between lips and eyes. She tries to ignore the ache in her heart... and in her between her thighs – she is committed to her plan... but nature has a different plan.

During another deep-sea dive, a sudden current panic hits Maryclaire. She spins, flails until Oliver grabs her. Holds her. Calms her. Underwater, their faces inches apart, the silence swells with heat.

Trying to scratch her itch, Maryclaire seduces Chad, but again, his schedule will not allow it with work calls, private dinners, and client pitches. But then when Maryclaire goes on a long walk within the town, she spots Chad at a poolside bar, whispering into the ear of a leggy blonde in a red dress. His hand slips somewhere it should not. He does not see her. But she sees enough.

Shaken, she says nothing. Adds “Confront Chad?” to her checklist. Leaves it unchecked.

Later that night, Oliver finds Maryclaire knocking on his boat door drinking a bottle of tequila.

“Rough dive?” he asks. “Rough life,” she replies.

He invites her in. He drinks with her and their tipsy conversation becomes sensual; “You deserve someone who dives in. Not someone who dangles.” The tension ignites like fire on dry leaves. Maryclaire lunges onto of Oliver and kisses him passionately. They roll around, takes off each other’s clothes, he touches her and then Maryclaire sobers up – pulls away, breath ragged. “No, I have a plan. I’m committed.” “Why? Your plan isn’t committed to you.” Oliver counters. “You don’t understand. How could you understand when you have no goals?” She declares. “I do have a goal.” Oliver while shirtless says. “Yeah, and what’s that?” Maryclaire asks gather her pants from the floor. “To love you.” Maryclaire looks at Oliver... She drops her clothes and comes at him with all that is her – The boat wobbles with the coming tide.

ACT THREE: THE FINAL DIVE

The next morning, she wakes up to find Chad waiting for her to wake up. He’s charming. Repentant. “Stress made me stupid,” he says. “Let’s start fresh.” He presents her an engagement box and proposes. Maryclaire is speechless...

Maryclaire wakes up screaming. It was a dream – maybe a nightmare. But Oliver is there to comfort her. She realizes she did not make it to the hotel last night and rushes out.

When she returns to the hotel, an argument arises between Maryclaire and Chad. He wants to know where she has been – scuba diving she tells him. Then she asks where he has been already knowing the answer. But of course, he has an alibi – that it was not him she thinks she saw. Maryclaire asks what was he doing then... Chad shows her the wedding ring he bought, “So?” he grins. “Check that box?” Torn between the life she planned and the one calling to her, Maryclaire says “Yes.”

Chad then declares another impulsive idea – they should not wait and get married here on the beach. He wants a beach ceremony – romantic, spontaneous, just like Maryclaire always dreamed. She agrees, but there is something in her voice holding back her excitement.

Oliver the next day, all prepped to dive waits for Maryclaire to show...

Maryclaire all dressed up in a white gown walks down the sand in high heels. Her friends even fly in. The priest arrives at the altar cues for her vows and something catches Maryclaire’s eyes in the ocean... It is Oliver’s boat.

Her heartbeat pulses like a drum and turns to Chad, “I’m sorry.” She hands the ring back. Then, in a stunning moment of rom-com rebellion, she hikes up her dress, throws off her heels, and runs barefoot down the beach.

She commandeers the nearest boat and speeds toward Oliver. She sees him plunge into the water. She calls his name, but he is already beneath the surface.

Without hesitation, she strips off her veil and dives in – wedding gown and all.

Underwater, she struggles – the dress grows heavy, and pulls her down... panic rising, Maryclaire tries to swim up, but cannot... She stops trying and closes her eyes... finds peace.

Hands grab her, Oliver yanks off the gown and he swims her to the surface. “What were you thinking?” Maryclaire just smiles, “I wasn’t.” She wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him there in the middle of the ocean – floating with the water.

EPILOGUE: A NEW TIDE

Six months later, Maryclaire is running the dive shack with Oliver. Her hair is sun-streaked. Her inbox is ignored. Her new checklist is messy and half-finished:

1. Sleep on a hammock till noon.
2. Learn to fillet a fish.
3. Have sex on the beach (again).
4. Say yes when it feels right.

THE END.