

LUCK IS FOR SHALLOW MEN

A short play

by Sterling Arthur Leva

Dramatis Personae

MICKEY: Twenty-seven years old, tall, thin, and boyish.

CASSANDRA: MICKEY's ex-girlfriend, twenty-five years old, thin and pretty.

Place

Mickey's Bedroom

Time

Present (Saint Patrick's Day)

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: A bedroom. There is a bed, a desk, a chair, and bookcases.

At Rise: CASSANDRA is sitting in the chair facing the bed. She is holding a revolver and there is a bottle of liquor on the desk next to her. MICKEY is in bed and CASSANDRA is staring at him sleeping. MICKEY awakens and sits up, seeing CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA

Good morning, sunshine.

MICKEY

(Rubbing eyes and stretching.)

Cassandra? Oh, man. I really shouldn't have had that cake before bed. What strange nightmares! Ex-girlfriends and revolvers, huh?

CASSANDRA

You're not sleeping, Mickey.

MICKEY

I'm not... Then what the hell is this, Cass?

CASSANDRA

This is Saint Patrick's Day, Mickey.

MICKEY

I'm not Irish. What are you doing here?

CASSANDRA

Have you ever seen *Deer Hunter*?

MICKEY

I'm not Russian either. Have you ever seen *Single White Female*?

CASSANDRA

Haha! You're just as clever as I remember you, Mickey. And yes, I have. We watched it together. Don't you remember?

MICKEY

I'm afraid I don't remember much of our time together.

CASSANDRA

Haha! I wonder why that is...

(Picks up the bottle and takes a swig before holding it out to MICKEY.)

CASSANDRA (Cont.)

Would you like a drink?

MICKEY

I would but I won't take one. Thank you.

CASSANDRA

So it's true then?

MICKEY

What's true?

CASSANDRA

You've gone straight.

MICKEY

I wouldn't go that far. I don't drink anymore.

CASSANDRA

Ha! Slick Mickey on the wagon! I never thought I'd live to see the day.

MICKEY

Yeah, neither did I.

CASSANDRA

You shouldn't have.

MICKEY

Maybe so. Did you come here to talk about my sobriety or what?

CASSANDRA

No. I came here to get drunk and reminisce about the good old days.

MICKEY

I already told you, I don't remember much. From what I *do* remember, they weren't very good.

CASSANDRA

You're right. They were horrible.

MICKEY

Then what are we doing here, Cass? I'm sorry but...

CASSANDRA

No you're not. You're not sorry. You're gonna be though.

MICKEY

I get it. Is that what the gun's for?

CASSANDRA

No.

(Spins the chamber and points the gun at MICKEY.)

Take a drink.

MICKEY

Have you lost your god damn gourd?

CASSANDRA

(Cocks hammer.)

No, but you might if you don't drink.

MICKEY

I don't drink.

CASSANDRA

Ok.

(Pulls trigger and nothing happens.)

Lucky. One for me then.

(Takes a drink.)

MICKEY

Have you gone completely sideways? What's the idea, storming in here and pointing an unloaded handgun at me?

CASSANDRA

You're half right: half the chambers are loaded, half of them aren't. Haha just like us, I guess: half of us are loaded, half of us aren't.

(Takes another drink.)

MICKEY

Jesus, Cass. Maybe you oughtta lie down...

CASSANDRA

I didn't come here to lie down. I came here to get drunk and reminisce. Let's take a stroll down Memory Lane, shall we?

MICKEY

I'd really rather...

(CASSANDRA levels gun at MICKEY.)

What would you like to talk about?

CASSANDRA

Do you remember the day we met?

MICKEY

I...vaguely.

CASSANDRA

Tell me what you remember.

MICKEY

I remember the pub. I remember it was Saint Patrick's Day. I remember I had been drinking Irish Car Bombs all day. I remember...seeing you across the bar. I remember your fishnet stockings. They were green. I remember going up to you and talking to you and then leaving with you...

CASSANDRA

You don't remember shit.

MICKEY

I'm sorry, I already told you I don't remember much from those days.

CASSANDRA

You're not sorry and you don't remember shit. You don't remember what you said to me, do you?

MICKEY

I... I don't know. "Nice fishnets, can I be your fish?"

CASSANDRA

Haha. No. *I* remember exactly what you said. But you're forgetting the frat boy.

MICKEY

The frat boy? What frat boy?

CASSANDRA

There was a frat boy trying to hit on me. He was almost as drunk as you were, but not nearly as *charming*. He handed me this four-leaf clover made out of paper and he asked me if I wanted to get lucky. That's when you made your move. I'll never forget it as long as I live. You walked up, took the four-leaf clover, handed it back to the frat boy, and said, "Only shallow men believe in luck. I, on the other hand, am a *man of substance*." And then, before he or I even knew what was happening, you took me by the arm and led me away.

MICKEY

Jesus Christ...

CASSANDRA

No. Ralph Waldo Emerson.

MICKEY

What?

CASSANDRA

“Shallow men believe in luck.” Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, but I didn’t know that *then*. At the time, I just thought you were so *clever*, so *charming*.

MICKEY

I guess I must have read it somewhere and...

CASSANDRA

That’s what I liked about you. You were so *well-read*. And a writer! You were so *interesting*. I wouldn’t figure out until later that you never actually wrote much.

MICKEY

Yeah, I guess I mostly just drank in those days.

CASSANDRA

Mostly.

(Takes another drink.)

But back to Memory Lane. What else do you remember about that time?

MICKEY

Um, we left together and then it’s kinda hazy and then... I remember waking up at your apartment. I think we talked for a bit and I got your number and I left.

CASSANDRA

Any other details stand out in your mind about that morning?

MICKEY

Uh...I think I asked you if you had any beer and you thought I was joking.

CASSANDRA

I *did* think you were joking. Anything else?

MICKEY (exasperated)

If there’s something important I’m leaving out then feel free to fill me in anytime, Cass.

CASSANDRA

You always were direct. I used to like that about you. That morning, I got up to use the bathroom. When I came back, you were doing something. Do you remember what that was?

MICKEY

I...I don’t know. Throwing up, maybe? I did a lot of that back then.

CASSANDRA

You did, but not on this occasion. You were going through my purse.

MICKEY

I...I remember that.

CASSANDRA

Good. I thought you were trying to steal my money, but then I saw that you were looking at my driver's license. Do you remember what you told me?

MICKEY

I told you that you were... so young and good looking that I needed to be sure you were legal.

CASSANDRA

Yeah, that's what you said. Now tell me what you were really doing.

MICKEY

I don't know what you're talking about.

CASSANDRA

(Spins chamber.)

I think you do, Mickey. *I* know too. I knew *then*. I just want to hear you say it, to admit to something for once.

MICKEY (angry)

I was seeing what your name was, ok, Cass? I was fucking drunk and I didn't remember your name.

CASSANDRA

I know, Mickey. Now drink.

(Points gun at him and cocks hammer.)

MICKEY

This isn't funny.

CASSANDRA

No, it's not.

(Pulls trigger and nothing happens.)

Luck is a cold gun then.

(Takes a drink.)

MICKEY

I'm getting real tired of this. What makes you think I won't take that gun out of your hand and throw your ass outta here?

CASSANDRA

You won't do that.

MICKEY

And why the hell not?

CASSANDRA

Because you know you deserve this. You owe it to me.

MICKEY

I don't owe you shit, Cass.

CASSANDRA

Haha! Now *there's* the Mickey I know! Not so straight after all!

MICKEY

You need help.

CASSANDRA

Help! Help! Hahaha. I need help? Now I'm the one that needs help all of a sudden? Where was your help when we were together, when you were drinking yourself to death and taking me along for the ride?

MICKEY

So is that what this is about?

CASSANDRA

No. This is about getting drunk and reminiscing.
(Spins chamber and holds gun at MICKEY.)

Drink.

MICKEY

No.

CASSANDRA

(Pulls trigger and nothing happens.)
Shooting blanks! You don't shoot blanks though, do you, Mickey?

MICKEY

You're a lunatic.

CASSANDRA

Maybe so. Do you remember *A Doll's House*?

MICKEY

Ibsen? What, you wanna talk about the theater now?

CASSANDRA

No, I want to talk about the abortion clinic.

MICKEY

I... I don't want to do this anymore.

CASSANDRA

(Spins chamber and points gun at MICKEY.)

Too fucking bad! Tell me what you remember about that summer, Mickey.

MICKEY

Jesus Christ, what summer?

CASSANDRA

You know what fucking summer I'm talking about!

(Takes a drink.)

Now tell me.

MICKEY

You...you were late, so I went to the drugstore and I--

CASSANDRA

No! No, *you* didn't do anything! *You* sent *me* to the drugstore.

MICKEY

I...*I* sent *you* to the drugstore. The pregnancy test came back positive. We both decided that you couldn't...that we couldn't...we made an appointment.

CASSANDRA

That much is true. A *consultation* appointment at the abortion clinic. Do you remember the consultation?

MICKEY

I had a headache that day. I remember it was really sunny and hot out and it made my head feel like it was going to burst. I remember the waiting room was painted this...sickly yellow color. I...don't know where you're going with this.

CASSANDRA

A Doll's House, Mickey.

MICKEY

What the fuck does a play have to do with abortion, Cass?!

CASSANDRA

Exactly! That's what *I* want to know! That's what *I* wanted to know that summer!

MICKEY

I don't know what you're talking about!

CASSANDRA

I remember that sickly yellow waiting room too, Mickey. You know what else I remember? I remember you sitting there next to me, reading *A Doll's House*. I was terrified and sick to my stomach and you wouldn't even look at me. You didn't say one fucking word to me the entire time. You just sat there reading that god damn play.

MICKEY

Look, I'm sorry, ok? I don't remember that and...what does it matter anyways?

CASSANDRA

What do you mean, "What does it matter anyways?"

MICKEY

We both know how things turned out, Cass.

CASSANDRA

Why don't you tell me how they turned out, Mickey?

MICKEY

You...didn't end up needing an abortion anyways.

CASSANDRA

Say it.

MICKEY

Say what?

CASSANDRA

Say what *happened*.

(Points gun at MICKEY.)

MICKEY

It...it was a miscarriage.

CASSANDRA

A "miscarriage." That's not what you called it back then.

MICKEY

I don't know what you're talking about.

CASSANDRA

I bet you don't remember that part either. But I do. You called it our "fortunate little misfortune."

MICKEY

Jesus, Cass, I was just a fucking kid!

CASSANDRA

And what do you think I was?!

(Pulls hammer back.)

Drink.

MICKEY (looks down)

I...I'm so sorry, Cass. I'm so sorry.

CASSANDRA

No. Not yet you're not.

(Pulls trigger and nothing happens.)

Misfortunate little fortune for you, Mickey.

MICKEY (looks up)

Cass, I'm sorry. I'm not that person anymore.

CASSANDRA

And *now* we get to it! Finally!

(Takes drink.)

MICKEY

Get to what?

CASSANDRA

The real reason we're here.

MICKEY

I thought it was to get drunk and reminisce.

CASSANDRA

It is, it is... But there's more. Do you remember when we broke up?

MICKEY

That I remember perfectly.

CASSANDRA

Tell me about it.

MICKEY

You called me and said you wanted to talk. You asked me to meet you at the library. So I did. We sat under a maple tree on the side of the parking lot. I...I didn't say much. I didn't say what I wanted to say. I wanted to apologize, but I couldn't.

CASSANDRA

Ha! Apologize! Isn't that what you're doing now? You're sorry *now*, aren't you?

MICKEY

I'm sorry, Cass.

CASSANDRA

Not yet you're not. Do you remember what *I* said that day?

MICKEY

You said you couldn't stand by and watch me drink myself to death anymore. You said that I could be a great man if I let myself, but I wouldn't let myself. You were crying, but I couldn't. I wanted to so badly, but I couldn't. I just couldn't.

CASSANDRA

(Tearing up.)

Do you remember what you said before you walked away?

MICKEY

"I'm sorry, I can't change."

CASSANDRA

You can't change! You said you *couldn't change!*

MICKEY

Yeah, that's what I said.

CASSANDRA

You lied to me!

MICKEY

What?

CASSANDRA

You lied to me! You said you *couldn't change!* That you would *never* change! So what the hell is *this?*

MICKEY

What the hell is what?

CASSANDRA

You put me through hell, Mickey! Absolute hell! And I stuck by you as long as I could. I watched you self-destruct and sell yourself short and be a monster until I couldn't take it anymore. And then I leave, I finally leave, and you go off and *change*.

MICKEY

Cass, I...I was just a kid.

CASSANDRA

You're not a kid anymore, Mickey! You're a man now. You're all grown up and...you've finally let yourself become a *great man*. And what about me?

MICKEY

I'm not a great man, Cass. I'm not.

CASSANDRA

It's not fair, Mickey. All I ever wanted was to see it. To be a part of it. I loved you and all I wanted was for you to be what I knew you could be. But what do I get? I get you at your *worst* and then you go off and straighten out and become this *great man*.

MICKEY

I'm not a great man! I am not a *great man*! I'm a *sorry* man. I'm a *sorry* man with a *sorry* past and if I could do it over again, I would.

CASSANDRA

I loved you so much, Mickey.

(Puts the gun down and picks up the bottle. She takes a drink.)

MICKEY

Do you know *why*, Cass?

CASSANDRA

Why I loved you?

MICKEY

Why I changed.

CASSANDRA

I don't know anything.

MICKEY

You.

CASSANDRA

Me?

MICKEY

I kept reliving that day, under that maple tree in the library parking lot, over and over again. I couldn't get your words out of my head. It was the first thing I couldn't drink away, Cass. The first god damn thing. It got to the point where...I just couldn't live with myself anymore.

CASSANDRA

So what? You decided to just disappear? To move away and become a ghost?

MICKEY

I put you through enough. I...I didn't want to hurt you anymore. It was the only way I knew how to make it up to you.

CASSANDRA

Make it up to me? You could have *said* something, Mickey. You could have called me. I didn't hear anything about you for two years! *Two years!* I had to read about your fucking book and what a great man you are in the fucking paper!

MICKEY

Did you read my book, Cass?

CASSANDRA

Are you being serious right now?

MICKEY

Yes.

CASSANDRA

No, I didn't read your fucking book, Mickey.

MICKEY

I want to show you something. Don't shoot.

(Puts hands up and walks over to bookshelf. He grabs a book and hands it to CASSANDRA before sitting back down.)

Read the inscription.

CASSANDRA

What?

MICKEY

Read the inscription.

CASSANDRA

(Opens book and reads.)

To...To Cassandra, whose words made a shallow man want to become a man of substance.

(Looks up at MICKEY.)

MICKEY

(Sticks his hand out.)

Give me the bottle, Cass.

CASSANDRA

I don't want you to drink, Mickey.

MICKEY

I'm not going to.

(CASSANDRA hands him the bottle. He pours it out on the floor.)

MICKEY

Now give me the gun.

CASSANDRA

(Hands it to him.)

I didn't really want to shoot you.

MICKEY

No, I know you didn't.

(Puts gun down.)

I'm so sorry, Cass.

CASSANDRA

I know you are, Mickey. It's empty anyways.

MICKEY

What?

CASSANDRA

The gun. It's not really loaded. I told you, I didn't want to shoot you.

MICKEY

Ha. Haha! It must be my lucky day.

CASSANDRA

No, Mickey. Luck is for shallow men...

CURTAIN