

The Big Funk

by John Patrick
Shanley

I shouldn't a said nothing.

AUSTIN. Fuck you making out like you're a prophet. You're the deadbeat. It's you that's holding us back from ... (Goes mute.)

OMAR. Changing the world?

AUSTIN. That's right.

OMAR. But see, you didn't have the guts to say it. That's cause you're holding on to something wasteful that you're gonna have to dramatize. (Stands abruptly.) Come by for dinner tonight. Fifi's making steaks. (Omar exits.)

AUSTIN. So Omar left. I stood there and thought he was an arrogant asshole for presuming to know something about me. Then I felt lonely. I had another beer. And another beer. And then I saw this woman at the bar. (Jill enters. Covered with grease. She looks a fright. She is humming "Gregory's tune.") She was very ... greasy. (Calls to her.) Excuse me? Join me for a beer? (Jill cautiously approaches. She's traumatized.)

JILL. Why not?

AUSTIN. Sit down. (She sits.) How you doin'?

JILL. I'm doing fine.

AUSTIN. You coulda fooled me.

JILL. What's that supposed to mean?

AUSTIN. I'm no fortune cookie. Figure it out. Listen. Are you alright?

JILL. I don't know.

AUSTIN. A man do this to you?

JILL. Yes.

AUSTIN. What's your name?

JILL. Jill.

AUSTIN. Austin. (Sticks out his hand.) Nice to meet you. (She shakes his hand briefly.)

JILL. Austin?

AUSTIN. That's right. (He surreptitiously wipes his hand with a handkerchief.)

JILL. Sure. Wipe it off.

AUSTIN. Jill. That's a nice name.

JILL. Get your own. It's mine!

AUSTIN. I know, I mean, yeah, okay. (Pause.) Can I be hon-

est with you?

JILL. Why?

AUSTIN. What?

JILL. Why do you want to be honest with me? Somebody was recently honest with me and I didn't like it.

AUSTIN. Don't you think it's always better to be honest?

JILL. No.

AUSTIN. But if you don't want to lie, what else is there to say?

JILL. Small talk. I like it!

AUSTIN. But life is so short.

JILL. I haven't noticed that.

AUSTIN. You've got an answer for everything.

JILL. You've got to be kidding. — to attack

AUSTIN. I'm not attacking you.

JILL. I don't know you.

AUSTIN. But you shouldn't assume attack.

JILL. Yes, I should.

AUSTIN. Let's try to get into like a casual track.

JILL. I wish I had a gun.

AUSTIN. What for? (Jill throws mug of beer in Austin's face.) Hey, look! Chill out! You're acting like I ate your kids or something. All I did was buy you a beer.

JILL. That was your first mistake.

AUSTIN. What's wrong with you?

JILL. What do you care?

AUSTIN. Just relax, sugar.

JILL. What are you calling me sugar?

AUSTIN. Oh, so what?

JILL. I'm no sugar.

AUSTIN. Yes, you are. Listen, I know what's the matter with you.

JILL. You do?

AUSTIN. Yeah.

JILL. (Struck by paranoia.) Don't try to psyche me out!

AUSTIN. I'm not trying to psyche you out.

JILL. These guys. I keep running into these guys who're game players. They're playing with my head like it was a football. My

brain's cooked. I feel like I've been bit by a snake. I can't take anymore games!

AUSTIN. What kind of games?

JILL. Any kinda games, all kinda games. I feel like I've been through the scumbag olympics. *(Calms down.)* Alright. Alright, lemme assume you're a nice guy.

AUSTIN. That might be a good idea.

JILL. If you're a nice guy, what are you doing talking to me?

AUSTIN. Why shouldn't I talk to you?

JILL. Because I'm a Two Face, a Liar, a Whore, my mother was totally right about me, AND I'M ALL GREASY.

AUSTIN. I was gonna ask you about that.

JILL. I'm greasy. I'm greasy.

AUSTIN. How'd you get so greasy?

JILL. I'm greasy.

AUSTIN. Because?

JILL. Because I listened to some guy, some snakecharmer named Gregory. And the next thing I know he takes out this big jar.

AUSTIN. What kind of jar?

JILL. *(Paranoid seizure.)* You don't have a jar, do you?

AUSTIN. No.

JILL. If I even see a jar, I'm screamin.

AUSTIN. I don't have a jar! No jar. *(She subsides.)*

JILL. Alright.

AUSTIN. Listen, Jill. I can help you.

JILL. Why would you?

AUSTIN. Cause I'm in good shape myself, and I'm a little idle at the moment. And because I like to be constructive.

JILL. What did you have in mind?

AUSTIN. My apartment's not far from here.

JILL. What are you saying?

AUSTIN. I want you to go there with me.

JILL. I'm listening.

AUSTIN. I want to give you a bath.

JILL. What's in it for you?

AUSTIN. I'd like to get something done today. I have no work right now. There's a lot of things wrong with the world.

It's wrong that you're greasy. I'd like to help you fix that. Then when I went to sleep tonight, I'd know I at least tried to correct a problem today. And listen, if everybody did that, attempted to accomplish something every day, fix something they saw was a problem every day, I think we could really turn the world around.

JILL. You do?

AUSTIN. Yeah.

JILL. I don't.

AUSTIN. Fair enough. But you see where your beliefs have gotten you, Jill. Maybe it's time you allowed yourself to be taken in hand by somebody who doesn't share your view of the world. You've got nothing to lose. Except your grease. Now I don't wanna tell you what to do. I believe in live and let live. I'm just speaking to you as one citizen to another. But listen. Come on. Take a little walk with me and see where it leads. I'm not taking you to a church or a cult or a political meeting. I'm taking you to a bathtub. I've never done this before either. But that's what'll make it a day that was worth living.

JILL. Things couldn't be any worse. Alright. Take me. Take me to the tub. *(They exit. Omar enters singing something noble and uplifting like Some Enchanted Evening* or Born Free,* then breaks off and addresses the audience.)*

OMAR. Meanwhile, I had gone home to be given news by Fifi. *(Enter Fifi, on the opposite side of the playing area from him.)*

FIFI. Omar, I'm pregnant.

OMAR. What?

FIFI. I'm pregnant.

OMAR. Fifi!

FIFI. Are you happy about it? I hope you're happy about it.

OMAR. I am happy about it. It's just, you know, a revelation.

FIFI. Omar?

OMAR. Yeah?

FIFI. It's twins.

OMAR. What do you mean?

* See Special Note on copyright page.