

Last-ditch Effort

by

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Cast of Characters

SHELLY:

Teens

NICKY:

Teens

Place

Shelly's backyard

Time

Night

2.

Setting: The play takes place outside in the backyard of Shelly's house in Queens. It's a plain old yard with not much care ever put into it. A garage for tools and an above ground pool, with a sheet of frozen ice covering it.

At Rise: The play opens up during winter with Shelly and Nicky sharing a cigarette and talking.

MARTIN: You showed up.

CINDY: Why wouldn't I show up?

MARTIN laughs.

MARTIN: You dressed appropriately, too.

CINDY: Fuck off.

MARTIN: Wait.

CINDY: I don't need your insults.

MARTIN: It's good you came.

CINDY: He's my father too, you know.

MARTIN: He is.

CINDY sits on bench.

You were leaving?

CINDY: Honestly?

MARTIN: Yeah, honestly.

CINDY: I was gonna take a walk to the cigar shop I spotted a few blocks from here. I was in the mood for one of those big fat cuban type cigars...never tried one, dad used to smoke 'em, so, what better day than today to smoke the shit out of one and see what it's all about? Then I was gonna decide...if I liked the cigar, I'd keep walking to the train station and head back home to enjoy the rest of my day...maybe go to the beach...feels like a beach day, not a funeral parlor day...if I didn't like the cigar, I was gonna march back on over here and put it inside dad's casket as a last-ditch effort. I would have approached the coffin, all nonchalantly with the cigar in my hand and I would have placed it inside his suit pocket...maybe he'd find time to smoke it, maybe not...not like he didn't already smell of cigars, that's all he ever did passionately anyway...consider it a parting gift he'd probably appreciate.

MARTIN: That's fucked up.

CINDY: Is it?

MARTIN: You are repugnant.

CINDY: And you are an ugly person.

MARTIN: Is that why you showed up here, to start your drama? Our father is dead and all you can think about is yourself...have you even thought about hugging our mother? I watched you, you didn't even look her way. The woman is shattered in the front row and you walk right past here like you didn't notice her. What do you call that? What is someone like you even called? No empathy, no compassion...in your own world, cause everything exists only for Cindy. Right? Cindy's world. Cindy's agony. Cindy's miserable life. What have you ever done for anyone else? Huh? Have you ever done anything for anyone else on planet earth? HAVE YOU??

CINDY: I came to this lousy place, didn't I?

MARTIN: Let's break out the party ribbons. It's your father, why wouldn't you be here? How is that...oh, fuck it, forget it, I can't talk to you. Why don't you head home or go back to whatever rock you crawled out from?

CINDY: Don't talk to me that way!

MARTIN: Or what? You gonna have another one of your tantrums? Do it. Go ahead, scream and shout and make a ruckus. I want you to.

CINDY: Leave me alone.

(pause.)

MARTIN: You think you're the only one with problems...

CINDY: What's your problem?

MARTIN: Like you even give a damn.

CINDY: I wouldn't have asked.

MARTIN: You wouldn't understand it.

CINDY: See? That's what I mean. The moment I show any sort of concern or interest I get shut down as if I can't comprehend an issue. You criticize me for not showing any compassion and the second I do, you block me off. Who's the idiot now?

MARTIN: I didn't say you were an idiot.

CINDY: You're an idiot.

MARTIN: I didn't call you an idiot.

CINDY: I'm calling you one...idiot.

MARTIN: ...Rebecca can't have children...

CINDY: Since when?

MARTIN: We found out two days ago...we've been trying and knew something wasn't right and we did all the tests and were told that she can't...it's, she can't become pregnant, so...

CINDY: You have bad sperm?

MARTIN: Christ...it's not my fucking sperm Cindy.

CINDY: It's Rebecca's fault.

MARTIN: It's not about blaming anyone.

CINDY: Yeah, well if she can't have a baby, who---

MARTIN: Shhh! Just SHHH before I blow a gasket in my brain. (beat) I wanted to have children...anyway, forget it, I'm gonna go back inside.

CINDY: Wait.

CINDY grabs water from a cooler and hands it to MARTIN. He drinks.

MARTIN: ...Thanks...

CINDY: I never knew you wanted to have kids.

MARTIN: I evolved into it...for the longest time I wasn't into it and then...what can you do?

CINDY: Adopt?

MARTIN: WE thought about that but it's still so shocking that we can't even, it's not an option on the table, so...

CINDY: Sorry.

MARTIN rubs his sister's shoulder in appreciation.

I mean, it must be tough, I know...it really must be.

MARTIN: Don't say anything to Rebecca, no one knows and she's really fragile about this...can you keep quiet about it?

CINDY: I won't tell a soul.

MARTIN: Please, don't. Rebecca will claw my eyes out if she knows I told you.

CINDY: Why?

MARTIN: She's private.

CINDY: I'm your sister, I'm not some--

MARTIN: It's a sensitive matter.

CINDY: Yeah, but, it's okay for you to tell me.

MARTIN: Cindy, I did tell you.

CINDY: She shouldn't be so hard, like I'm some kind of poison.

MARTIN: No one is saying that.

CINDY: I have a right to know.

MARTIN: I didn't, I wasn't trying to make you feel bad.

CINDY: She's always trying to keep us apart.

MARTIN: Is she?

CINDY: That's why we don't talk anymore.

MARTIN: You're blaming Rebecca for that?

CINDY: Yeah.

MARTIN: She has nothing to do with you and me.

CINDY: Ever since you---

MARTIN: You don't return my calls. How many times have I reached out to you?

CINDY: I don't get the messages.

MARTIN: Cause you don't care to check your phone I'm sure.

CINDY: So blame me, if it makes you feel better.

MARTIN: It doesn't, it's just the truth.

CINDY: I want to smoke a cigar.

MARTIN: Go. Smoke a cigar.

CINDY: Cause you put it on me, cause it's your way of, of not being nice to me, after we haven't seen one another in such a long time and all and, and---

MARTIN: Cindy, please, you're working yourself up for no reason.

CINDY: Always critical of everything I do or say. I might as well not exist.

MARTIN: Don't embarrass us in front of our family. They can hear you. Lower your voice.

CINDY: I want to be heard. I deserve to be heard. Tired of being put on mute for everyone else's happiness.

MARTIN: Get me a cigar, too.

CINDY: You want one?

MARTIN: I'll take one.

CINDY: Which one?

MARTIN: Get me whichever one you get, here.

MARTIN pulls out money.

I'll treat us. Grab one for both of us.

CINDY: I'm smoking mine now.

MARTIN: That's fine.

CINDY: I might not come back or I might come back.

MARTIN: You told me.

CINDY: And if I don't come back I don't want to hear about it from you cause I have a right to be my own person on my own terms without you influencing me or telling me what I can or cannot do, I'm a grown woman and can make my own choices. I've worked hard for my own free will and not you or anybody can stop my own choices. Understand?

MARTIN: Cindy, get the fucking cigars.

CINDY: Fuck off.

MARTIN: Cindy...Cindy.

CINDY: What?

MARTIN If you don't come back...

MARTIN hugs his sister and kisses her on her forehead.

Be safe and...

CINDY: Yeah.

CINDY breaks off and walks away.

MARTIN smiles as he watches his sister.

CINDY exits offstage right.

MARTIN enters the funeral parlor room.

END OF PLAY