

# Good Luck

## Scene 1.

*The play is set in a small studio. In the studio is a mattress laying directly on the floor, a bedside table made out of bricks and wood, a shelf made of the same, and a sink. The bedside table lays between the audience and the bed and on it is a lamp and a phone.*

*Mark is sitting on the bed and reading a book by the light of the lamp. He is a man in his late twenties. Mark turns a page in his book. A loud thump comes from offstage. Mark looks up and then back at his book. A series of hammer thuds comes from offstage. Mark looks up again. Silence. Mark looks down. The silence continues. Mark turns the page. There is a knock at his door.*

**Mark:** Fuck! What is it?

**Man (offstage):** Pest control.

**Mark:** Pest Control?

*Mark rises and opens the door. The pest control man is wearing a white pest control get up and carrying a large vat of pest spray.*

**Man:** Hello. I'm sorry to bother you. I've come to check for pests.

**Mark:** I haven't got any pests.

**Man:** Can I have a quick look around?

**Mark:** Let me see some identification.

*Pause. Pest control man points to ID label on his breast pocket. Mark examines it.*

**Mark:** Alright. Go ahead.

*The Pest Control Man begins searching.*

**Man(still searching):** Do you know the restaurant downstairs?

**Mark:** Of course.

**Man(still searching):** Oh yes?

**Mark:** I eat there all the time.

**Man(still searching):** Well, you see they're renovating downstairs.

**Mark:** So that's what all that noise is.

**Man**(still searching): And they've had...an infestation.

**Mark:** An infestation?

**Man**(still searching): An ongoing infestation. A case of unwanted residents.

**Mark:** What kind of residents.

**Man**(looks up): Cockroaches.

**Mark:** Cockroaches.

**Man:** *Blattodea Gigantus*.

**Mark:** Giant cockroaches.

**Man:** Exactly.

**Mark:** An infestation of giant cockroaches.

**Man:** Oh yes. A great many.

**Mark:** That's fantastic. Any more good news.

**Man:** Well...you see, they're renovating and...

**Mark:** Yes, I got that.

**Man:** Well, the roaches don't really like that. It's a bit of a "species" thing. You see, when we say "renovating" the cockroach hears "demolition." And, while we as a species enjoy renewing our surroundings from time to time, a cockroach prefers decomposition on a grand scale. While we like smooth surfaces and fresh foundations, a cockroach prefers nooks and crannies and a crumbling infrastructure in which to make its home. While we prefer...

**Mark:** Yes, I understand. I've been to Beirut.

**Man:** Beirut?

**Mark:** Beirut. Plenty of cockroaches. Crumbling foundations. All that.

**Man:** (*Thinks for a moment*) Beirut, eh? Is that far from here.

**Mark:** Five hours.

**Man:** Is that all.

**Mark:** By airplane.

**Man:** Oh, it's not in England, then.

**Mark:** No.

**Man:** That's too bad. *(Pause)* Anyway. They're renovating and the cockroaches don't like that.

**Mark:** Well, I guess they'll have to go, won't they.

**Man:** Exactly.

**Mark:** Exactly.

**Man:** Exactly.

**Mark:** Yes.

**Man:** So you understand?

**Mark:** What?

**Man:** Why I'll have to spray.

**Mark:** Why?

**Man:** Because the cockroaches will have to "go" as you say.

**Mark:** YOU said that.

**Man:** Yes...and you agreed.

*Pause.*

**Mark:** Can I just ask you what we're talking about.

**Man:** Well, I'm sorry to break the news, but in all likelihood, all of the roaches are going to move in here.

**Mark:** All of them?

**Man:** Yes. Their home is being destroyed and right upstairs is a perfectly suitable alternative.

**Mark:** Oh God.

**Man:** So it's really best to spray now.

**Mark:** Alright. How long's it going to take?

**Man:** Well...it's not a very big place is it?

**Mark:** No.

**Man:** I'll just start and see how I get on.

*The **Pest Control Man** begins spraying the room. Ideally a large cloud of mist will form in the room. **Mark** begins coughing.*

**Mark:** That stuff's not poisonous, is it?

**Man:** (*reads label*) All done.

**Mark:** Great. Thanks for your help.

*The **Man** hangs around, looking at **Mark**.*

**Mark:** Yes?

**Man:** Well, I'll have to collect payment for that now, as you're not a regular customer.

**Mark:** You didn't say anything about payment.

**Man:** No, you're right on that point.

**Mark:** Isn't the restaurant paying you?

**Man:** Well, I agree it is there fault, but you see... It's just...

**Mark:** Yes.

**Man:** Well, I hate to sound...negative. I mean...the world's a horrible place, but, you know, one must accept it for what it is.

**Mark:** What about "renovating" and "renewing?"

**Man:** Well, yes, there's that, but, I'm talking about human nature.

**Mark:** What about it?

**Man:** Well, to be frank, the restaurant doesn't care if the roaches come up here or not.

**Mark:** God. I hadn't thought of it. All those times I've eaten dinner there. All those smiles. You think you really know people.

*Pause. **Mark** thinks for a moment, shaking his head, and then looks suspiciously at the **pest control man**.*

**Mark:** Who sent you up here?

**Man:** I took the liberty of letting you know about the potential problem myself. I thought it was the honourable thing to do.

**Mark:** Well. Thanks. Thank you very much, I mean. The problem is that I can't pay you now. Tell you what. You send me an invoice, and I'll pay it as soon as I am able (*escorting the pest control man to the door*). I really appreciate what you've done for me and if it weren't for honourable men like you, this world really would be unbearable. I mean, look at this place! It's hardly fit for a dog and even less so for such an honourable man as yourself. (*slams the door on pest control man*).

*Mark returns to his bed and begins reading in silence. He turns the page. There is a knock on the door.*

**Mark:** I said I'll pay you when I can!

**Sam** (offstage): It's me.

**Mark:** Oh sorry, Sam.

*Mark rises and opens the door to Sam. Sam is a girl in her late twenties. She enters looking miserable.*

**Mark:** God am I glad to see you.

*Mark gives Sam a long hug. Sam reciprocates half-heartedly. Sam is obviously upset.*

**Mark:** I've had a terrible day. My first client was a complete half-wit. It took me half an hour to explain the idea that metal wire was necessary to carry electricity. And then my mother called and I sat there feeling guilty for about an hour afterwards. What is it about mothers. She's always making me feel guilty.

**Sam:** You hit her.

**Mark:** Oh come on. That was years ago.

**Sam:** Did you apologize?

**Mark:** You don't have to apologise to mothers. That's why they're...mothers. Besides, I hit her with a bit of paper. Anyway, as soon as I started reading, the guys downstairs start hammering away, and then to finish it all off, a pest control man came in and told me I'd have cockroaches moving in from the restaurant. So he sprayed around and tried to get ME to pay him.

**Sam:** Cockroaches. That's disgusting. Why didn't you pay him. You mean to tell me that to save money you're going to have cockroaches in your house!

**Mark:** Of course not. He did the work. Can't you smell it?

**Sam:** This place always smells.

**Mark:** You mean you can't smell that chemical odour?

**Sam:** I thought it was your cologne.

**Mark:** Ha ha. Anyway, it was obviously a trick on his part. There aren't going to be any cockroaches moving in. He was just making it up so he could cap his day's earnings with a little bonus.

**Sam:** I hope so.

**Mark:** The only good thing I've got right now is you.

*Mark hugs Sam.*

**Sam:** What was that!

**Mark:** What?

**Sam:** There! You see it! *(she points behind the bed)* It's a cockroach, isn't it! That's it!

**Mark:** Calm down.

**Sam:** I'm leaving.

**Mark:** Alright, alright. I'll get my coat.

**Sam:** No, Mark. That's it. I'm leaving you. Look at you. I'm obviously upset and you don't even ask how I'm doing.

**Mark:** It's just a cockroach. They're admired by some cultures.

**Sam:** That's not why I'm upset. I was upset as soon as I walked through the door and you didn't even notice. Right away it was "me, me, me."

**Mark:** I'm sorry.

**Sam:** There you go again. YOU'RE sorry. I don't care if YOU'RE sorry. It doesn't change anything. You're selfish. That's your problem. You think the world and everyone in it owes you something. Me, your mum, we're all the same to you: slaves. Even the pest control man. He does you a favour and what does he get? You probably treated him the same way you treat everyone else. When are you going to realise that it's YOU who owes the WORLD? When are you going to stop thinking about how everything revolves around you, and start making a go of things? You think you can go on waiting for someone to come pat you on the back just for being yourself, for being a you: Mark? You can't. Because sooner or later you'll wake up and realise you've got nothing but yourself, and then it'll be too late. I've had enough. I'm leaving and you're not coming with me. You can stay here and hang out with your new friends.

*Sam walks out of the room and leaves the door open. Mark walks around the room to deliver his monologue.*

**Mark:** She's right. I'm a selfish bastard. Ha. What does she know. So what if I'm selfish. The world does owe me! Look at this cockroach infested shoebox. What do I have to be thankful for? *(Pause Are you listening to me up there, big guy!* All those hours wasted in church: "I believe in the father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, all that is seen and unseen." You see what I've got engraved on my brain thanks to you. Space I could easily fill with more interesting things, like...like...like...why I'm stuck in this hole! If you're the creator of heaven and earth, you haven't done a very good job, have you. I mean, cockroaches? What's that about? And why stick people in holes? Well? Hah. You haven't got an answer for that, have you?

*There is a thud from downstairs. There is a series of hammer thuds that continues until the end of the scene. The bedside light begins to flicker and Mark, cursing, searches to find the source of the problem. He fumbles with the light switch (located near the bulb as is usual in those types of lamps) and burns himself, cursing again. He follows the mains lead from the base of the lamp and eventually reaches the mains outlet. He fools around for a few seconds and his electrocution is marked by a large electrical short circuit noise during which Mark convulses and, finally, falls backward immediately followed by total blackout.*

## Scene 2.

*After several moments, the lights go up to reveal Mark still laying where he was electrocuted. On his bed is Luke.*

**Luke:** Mark.

*Pause*

**Luke:** Mark.

*Mark lifts head.*

**Mark:** Oh God.

**Luke:** Yes.

**Mark:** I must have electrocuted myself.

**Luke:** Are you alright?

**Mark:** Strangely enough, I feel good. Are you the electrician?

**Luke:** I'm a jack of all trades, really.

**Mark:** Well. Good to see the lights are working. Heavens.

**Luke:** Yes.

**Mark:** The place is quiet as well.

**Luke:** No more cockroaches either.

**Mark:** Well, you are good.

**Luke:** I do have some bad news.

**Mark:** What's that?

**Luke:** You're dead.

**Mark:** What?

**Luke:** Why don't you sit down here for a minute. There you are. Now, my name is Luke. I'm a messenger from God and it's my job to explain a few things. Now, as I said, you're dead.

**Mark:** Dead?

**Luke:** Dead.

**Mark:** I don't feel dead.

**Luke:** How would know?

**Mark:** I just thought it would be black. Either black or a bright white light.

**Luke:** Strange. In any case, dead you are and unfortunately you're not quite good enough to go heaven, nor evil enough to go to hell. So I'm here to ask you a few questions and determine once and for all where your future residence will be.

**Mark:** Dead?

**Luke:** My first question is, where did it all go wrong?

**Mark:** Just give me a second.

*Mark gets up and walks around the room scratching his chin.*

**Luke:** Well?

**Mark:** I'm sorry, are you in a hurry?

**Luke:** I don't have all day.

**Mark:** Will my hesitation reflect poorly upon me?

**Luke:** Alright, alright. Take your time.

*Mark continues to rub his chin.*

**Luke:** Shall I come back in half an hour?

**Mark:** What was the question?

**Luke:** Where did it all go wrong?

**Mark:** You want a list of grievances?

**Luke:** Just answer the question.

**Mark:** I thought things were getting better, to tell you the truth.

**Luke:** Roaches, a hovel.

**Mark:** You should have seen my last place.

**Luke:** Left by your girlfriend.

**Mark:** Plenty of fish in the sea.

**Luke:** Hopeless optimism?

**Mark:** Well, now you're just getting personal.

**Luke:** Fine. Can you describe your ideal world.

**Mark:** Picture it. I've just been paid for the work I love. I've earned enough to move out of my hovel and take my girlfriend with me.

**Luke:** What about Heaven?

**Mark:** I've just moved out my hovel and taken my harem with me to the palace between the two peaks?

**Luke:** And what about Hell?

**Mark:** I've just been kicked out my hovel and I have to move back...home.

**Luke:** Do you love life?

**Mark:** What is life?

**Luke:** Just a simple "yes" or "no" is fine.

**Mark:** I mean, isn't life enjoying things? Isn't it about changing the things you don't enjoy?

**Luke:** I suppose.

**Mark:** Life is a choice, and death is the absence of choice?

**Luke:** I don't know.

*Pause.*

**Mark:** Do you like your job?

**Luke:** Well, being God's right hand man did have its benefits at the beginning, but...it's become monotonous.

**Mark:** Well, why don't you quit.

**Luke:** Quit! Just walk up to God and say, "I quit?" Ha. That's a good one.

**Mark:** It's your choice.

**Luke:** No it isn't.

**Mark:** Well, I guess you're dead as well.

*Pause.*

**Luke:** I prefer to call it limbo.

**Mark:** Sounds like my life.

**Luke:** You're ex-life.

*Pause.*

**Mark:** How am I doing?

**Luke:** Even. Shall we continue?

**Mark:** OK.

**Luke:** Why are you such a bastard?

**Mark:** I'm not a bastard.

**Luke:** I'm afraid you are.

**Mark:** I am not!

*Luke takes note.*

**Mark:** Alright, I'm a bastard. I'm a fucking bastard. There you go. Are you happy?

**Luke:** Forget it. It's too late.

*Pause.*

**Mark:** How many of these have I got?

**Luke:** I can't say.

**Mark:** Jesus Christ.

*Lucy takes note.*

**Mark:** What? Look, isn't there any way of forgetting about all this and just going back to my little hole. I don't need heaven.

**Luke:** There is a way.

**Mark:** What is it?

**Luke:** Just kidding.

**Mark:** Very funny.

**Luke:** No, unfortunately, hindsight is always twenty-twenty. Supposing you'd been messing about at your job and then you got fired. You think you could go to your boss and say, "I've seen the light." I don't think so.

*Pause.*

**Mark:** How about fifty quid?

**Luke:** Money's no good here.

*Pause.*

**Mark:** Maybe I could....

**Luke:** Don't be disgusting.

**Mark:** Well then what the hell do you want me to say! What's the point of this? You're offering me heaven or hell and all I want is to live again. Is this some kind of joke? Let's see if we can get the man to crack?

**Luke:** You don't know...

**Mark:** Don't interrupt me. What right have you got to come and ask me these impossible questions? Send me to heaven! Send me to hell! I don't care which one you pick. Just quit taunting me.

**Luke:** I see. You started out well. You were at least civil, and...

**Mark:** Spare me!

**Luke:** Alright.

*The lights fade and **Mark** takes up his supine position again. After a few moments, there is a knock on the door. The lights go back on. Again there is a knocking on the door.*

**Mark:** Who is it.

***Mark** rises slowly and answers the door.*

**Voice:** It's the landlord. Look, everyone's got to get out of the building as soon as possible.

**Mark:** What?

**Voice:** Sorry about that. The fellows downstairs have really messed things up. I've gotta get everyone out of the building.

**Mark:** Alright.

*Pause. **Mark** picks up the phone and dials.*

**Mark:** Mum. Hi. It's me. Look, I have to move back home for a while.

*Lights fade.*