

JUMPING THE LEAGUE

a one act play

by James Campbell

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CAST

MIKE..... A young Catholic priest
Pat..... A young aspiring actor
Msgr. DUDLEY..... An elderly pastor

(The study of a Catholic priest in the early sixties. The room is furnished with two easy chairs, bookcases, a desk and a portable TV set. There is a passageway leading OFF RIGHT to other rooms in the apartment. There is a closet door, UP RIGHT. Another door, DOWN LEFT, leads to a hallway and staircase leading to the lower floor of the building. The room is slovenly, the walls festooned with weapons and athletic gear. There are some religious artifacts. Dusty piles of books and papers adorn the shelves and the desk. There is evidence of someone getting ready for a hunting trip. The TV set is on. It sits on the desk, the screen is turned away from our view, but the volume is up enough that we can hear a movie in progress as the play begins: Suspenseful music swelling down, SFX: heavy slam of a doorknocker, a door opening. A woman's voice.)

TV WOMAN

"Who are you, sir?"

TV MAN

"I am Turam Bey, Miss, from the Cairo Museum. I work with Professor Carstairs, your father. You must come with me at once."

TV WOMAN

"Are you sure you work with my father, Mr. Bey? I've never heard him mention your name."

TV MAN

"Miss Carstairs, you sre so lovely, but your father is a fool."

TV WOMAN

"You are impertinent, sir. Go at once or I shall summon my manservant. -Korfu! Korfu!"

TV MAN

"Do not trouble yourself, Miss. Both Korfu and the foolish Professor Carstairs have been disposed of."

TV WOMAN

"What have you done to them?"

TV MAN

"They have incurred the wrath of Annubis, who smites all who disturb the sleep of the old ones."

TV WOMAN

"You've harmed Father. I shall call the police. Help! Help!"

TV MAN

"Nay, hold, my Darling. Look into me eyes. Look back into time, thirty centuries into the past. You were once the fair Princess Tukhtemnati and I was your lover and slave, Nomentutem. Ours was a forbidden love and when we were found by the priests of Annubis, you were slain and I was buried alive, cursed to remain forever among the ranks of the undead. Thus it has been for these many ages, but now I have been summoned by your spirit to walk again into the light..."

TV WOMAN

" ... I remember now ..."

TV MAN

"It is I, Tukhtemnati, your beloved Nomentutem. Come with me now to our ancient resting place, where I shall dress you in the robes of immortality and we can love again for all eternity ..."

TV WOMAN

"I am coming ... I obey ..."

TV MAN

" ... Tukhtemnati ..."

TV WOMAN

"... Nomentutem ..."

(Swelling music. The DOORBZZER sounds, harsh and loud, several times. MIKE's voice is heard approaching in the passageway OFF R.)

MIKE (OFF)

Just a fucking minute, will you? Just a goddam fucking minute! .

(MIKE enters, buttoning his jeans. He wears a Tee shirt with the US Marines emblem on it. He goes to the closet. He opens the closet door and various things fall out of it, most notably a female mannequin, wearing a black cassock. MIKE removes the cassock from the mannequin and puts it on. He

replaces the mannequin in the closet and closes the door. He turns down the TV set.)

MIKE

... Shazam! ...

(DOORBZZER again.)

... Coming, Mrs Gonzales!

(MIKE exits. PAT's voice, OFF.)

PAT

Hey, Mike?

MIKE

Shit. It's you. Stay right there. I got something to show you.

(MIKE enters, crosses to the desk, opens one of the drawers, and takes out an Army .45. He cocks it, and exits again.)

PAT

Hey, a .45. Is it loaded?

(GUNSHOT OFF, a crash of falling plaster. MIKE enters, exuberant.)

MIKE

I could stop a Mack truck with this, a regular Mack truck.

(PAT enters. He is dressed for a hunting trip. He carries a six pack of beer in a paper bag.)

PAT

Hey, are you crazy?

(MIKE waves the gun around carelessly, more or less focusing on PAT. PAT makes nervous evasive maneuvers.)

MIKE

Isn't it a honey? I could hold off a whole platoon.

PAT

Don't point that. It's loaded.

MIKE

I wouldn't point it if it wasn't loaded.

PAT

You put a hole in the wall. What are you going to tell the Pastor?

MIKE

Screw him. Tell him it just fell out, just like that. Cheap job, lousy materials, slam a door and the whole thing goes kaplooney!

PAT

He'll see this bullet sticking in the middle of this crater.

MIKE

He's blind as a bat and deaf as a post. He won't notice anything. If he does, I'll tell him it was burglars. Got to defend the Church, right? What'cha got there, Patsy, me boy? Beer? Very nice. I shall put this kind offering in the cold place.

(MIKE takes the beer and gives PAT the .45.)

Here, hold this. Don't point it.

(MIKE exits R, continues talking OFF.)

... Jes' make yerself t'home, ponder, an' I'll be with you quicker'n you can say, "Black Bart bangs buffalos!" This here's the best durn bunkhouse on the whole durn ranch an' I'll tell you why. The foreman went and put in one of them new-fangled ice-boxes what they calls 'frigidaters' an' that's whar I keeps all my grub, namely beer, yuk, yuk. Close the door, will you?

PAT

Sure.

(PAT closes the door.)

... Closed. What's the matter, are you afraid of Russian spies or something?

(MIKE enters. Now he wears a six-gun and holster, and a sombrero.)

MIKE

Spies. You got it, Patsy-boy. There are spies about and I'm ready for them.

PAT

Where'd you get the hat?

MIKE

Doesn't it go nice with my six-gun? I only wears it 'cause it helps my draw.

(MIKE demonstrates his draw.)

... Watch it, Patsy. Never let anybody point a gun at you...

(MIKE cocks the six-gun.)

... You better draw, friend. Defend yourself.

PAT

Stop fooling around. We've got to get going. This thing is loaded.

MIKE

Draw, friend. This is your last chance.

(PAT does not move. MIKE pulls the trigger on his weapon. The hammer falls on an empty chamber.)

PAT

I thought you never pointed it unless it was loaded.

MIKE

I cannot tell a lie. I told a lie. Give me that.

(MIKE takes the .45 from PAT and puts it back in its drawer. He puts the sombrero on PAT's head.)

Now we can talk serious.

PAT

C'mon, we've got to get going. You're not even dressed.

MIKE

Don't take off the hat. I like you in it. Have a seat.

(PAT sits. MIKE goes to a little cabinet, takes out a bottle and two glasses.)

MIKE

My brother sent me three of these for my birthday last week. Johnny Walker Red. Only nice thing he's ever done for me, the fathead. This is the last one. We'll finish it together.

(MIKE pours drinks. Hands one to PAT.)

PAT

We've got to be out hunting by six in the morning.

(They sit back and watch the silent TV while they converse.)

MIKE

I know that, Patsy my boy, but I'm kind've half stuck with the duty tonight.

PAT

I thought you had the night off.

MIKE

It's only for an hour or so. That new priest from Italy Really has it tonight, but he had this stag dinner at some ginny sports and religion club on the other side of town. Mafia Holy Name, or something like that. Don't worry, we'll make it. You like this stuff? This is good stuff. There's two kinds, see? Black and Red. Red is better, smoother.

(They drink quickly. MIKE refills the glasses.)

PAT

Nice.

MIKE

You know what they used to say out west when they thought a cowpoke was ok? They said, "He'll do to ride the ridge with."

PAT

Show me a ridge and I'll get right on it.

MIKE

You'll do.

PAT

Thanks, so will you.

MIKE

Thanks.

PAT

What's this we're watching?

MIKE

A mummy in the basement. He has a crush on this broad who lives in the museum. He wants her to come and live with him in the basement. Good old tube. You can depend on it to rot your mind.

PAT

What else do you have to do, for the next couple of hours, besides hang around?

MIKE

Nothing much, just watch the store, basically. Answer the phone, talk to anybody who comes around.

PAT

You expect anybody to show up?

MIKE

This Mrs. Gonzales called up. She wants to come over and talk about her husband, or some crap.

PAT

What's wrong with her husband?

MIKE

Nothing. They don't screw enough. Married people have only one problem. Either they screw enough or they don't screw enough. They tell you a lot of other crap. Alcohol, money, he beats her, he doesn't say, "may I?" But the real problem is "no-screw" or "under-screw".

PAT

What about "over screw"?

MIKE

Excepting gang-rape, there is no such thing as "over-screw". I encourage people to screw more. Married people who screw more don't come to me for advice and that leaves me more time for getting drunk with you, old pal...

(MIKE pours more drinks.)

...Drink up, you old celibate. We've known each other for two years now and there's something I've wanted to talk about, but I never got around to it.

PAT

What's that?

MIKE

Sex.

PAT

What do you want to know?

MIKE

What do you do when you get a hard-on?

PAT

What do you suggest? The legal outlets are limited.

MIKE

You could take a piss, that helps.

PAT

A cold shower.

MIKE

Stay away from showers, my lad, hot or cold. There's danger in wet, naked bodies, slippery soap. No, for you it's either urination or ruination. This is personal, but how many times a week do you starch the sheets?

PAT

What?

MIKE

Wet dreams.

PAT

Two, three times, I guess.

MIKE

Have you ever noticed, in your dreams, just before you let out the cream, you begin to wake up?

PAT

Yeah.

MIKE

That's it. You have to learn to manage your wet dreams, train yourself to wake up sooner. If you could wake up just as you started to come instead of just before, you'd find yourself wide awake and pleasantly coming away and not guilty of anything.

PAT

Is that what you do?

MIKE

Nope. I haven't got that much discipline. Top physical shape is required to do that and I don't feel like working out to have good wet dreams. Besides, you have to be subtle. If you have any kind of planning or goal in mind, you're guilty, see?

PAT

So this whole thing is pretty theoretical.

MIKE

Not at all. It's quite possible, but you have to be a Jesuit to work it out.

PAT

We all have this problem sex...

MIKE

More specifically, "no-screw".

PAT

Everybody, the whole Church, even he...

MIKE

Most assuredly...

PAT

He had to. It says he was a man, so he had to have organs and all that and if he had that, he had to have erections, in the morning, I mean...

MIKE

Kind of makes you think, doesn't it?

PAT

If he had all those things, how do you think he handled it?

MIKE

Watch it, brother, thin ice there, thin ice.

PAT

What's wrong?

MIKE

Your choice of words is dangerous. You must never impute the Lord handles a sex problem, especially his own sex problem. Sex and the saints is a sticky subject.

PAT

Still, what did they do about it?

MIKE

Beats me. You know Saint Peter was married?

PAT

Yeah.

MIKE

But I can't picture him getting laid, or taking a crap, or anything like that.

PAT

But he had to do those things.

MIKE

Not necessarily. We know he was married and he had to go to the john unless he was a spook, but nobody can prove he got laid. See what I mean? Sticky subject.

PAT

But if he was married, he had to have sex.

MIKE

Not necessarily. I know lots of people in this parish who are married and have no sex and they're not saints. Besides, look at Saint Joseph. He was married without sex. Remember the Virgin Mary?

PAT

You know what they did to me in high school?

MIKE

Don't tell me.

PAT

They beat me up when I asked about her.

MIKE

Tell me about it.

PAT

It was in religion class in my freshman year back at Saint Polycarp's.

MIKE

That's not true, you know that?

PAT

What?

MIKE

That's just a myth, that Polycarp crap. No Greek was ever a saint.

PAT

Polycarp was Greek?

MIKE

You went to school there. Don't you know?

PAT

No, was he?

MIKE

Must've been, with a name like that. Keep going, we need some beer.

(MIKE exits.)

PAT

I'll wait 'til you get back.

MIKE (OFF)

No, go ahead. Talk loud and I can hear you.

PAT

I was just fourteen and real innocent.

MIKE (OFF)

I got Schlitz and Budweiser. What was that crap that you brought?

PAT

It's in the bag.

MIKE (OFF)

Oh yeah, Schaeffer. You want Schaeffer?

PAT

I don't know, anything. Start with the oldest first.

MIKE (OFF)

Budweiser. So what happened then?

PAT

Wait 'til you come back.

MIKE (OFF)

Got to find a church key.

PAT

We have one out here.