



# DEER

BY AARON MARK



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of DEER is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for DEER are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to ICM Partners, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019. Attn: Ross Weiner.

#### **SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce DEER is required to give credit to the Author(s) as sole and exclusive Author(s) of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

#### **SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS AND RECORDINGS**

For performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in these Plays, the permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained. Other songs, arrangements or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

*For Alison Fraser*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Peter, Betsey, Ron, and Jane Brown; Linda Chapman; Tom Hewitt; Zachary Isaacson; Aaron Malkin; Jim Nicola; Susan Pilarre; Alice Scovell; Rachel Silverman; Bob Stillman; Ross Weiner; Kristine Zbornik; and especially to Alison Fraser and Chip Zien, for whom these parts were written, who both brilliantly, hilariously, disturbingly read various drafts for me in various living rooms (and one rehearsal studio).

## **CHARACTERS**

CYNTHIA, fifties, a New York public school counselor

KEN, fifties/sixties, her husband, a novelist

DEER, the deer, voiced at times by both actors

## **TIME and PLACE**

The play takes place this past fall in Ken and Cynthia's car, then in the living room of their house in the Poconos.

## **ON THE BLOOD AND DIRT**

The blood and dirt in this play must be prominent; for the majority of the first act, Ken and Cynthia are covered in both. The more disgustingly filthy they are allowed to be, the more unsettling it will be later when they (and the elements around them) become cleaner and cleaner.

## **ON INTERMISSION**

Though it does make for a relatively short second act, intermission falls when it does in part so that the actors have time to wash themselves off. That said, if you think you can pull this off straight through, without an intermission, I say go for it, and more power to you.

# DEER

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

*Cynthia's car. The dead of night. She's driving. Ken's in the passenger's seat.*

KEN. My god, Cynthia, when's the last time we had a weekend alone together? Sometime in the nineties? Must've been before Sammy was born, I mean, my god ... You know what, come to think of it, last time we were alone out here may very well have been when she was conceived! Huh ...

*Cynthia just stares ahead at the road.*

So in the morning, we'll go kayaking, yes? Don't you think? Because if we get up and going, you know — We should get up and going, because then I've got to write. Not that spending time with you isn't my priority, of course, but I do have to do some work, and you could use the time to yourself, I'm sure, you — Jesus, *you*, Cynthia — My god, right? When was the last time you were alone with yourself? Sometime in the *eighties*? How remarkable to have all this time now. All this space. For *you*, I mean, it's really remarkable, don't you think?

*Silence. She just drives.*

Honey?

*A momentary blackout; the passage of time. Then:*

*Cynthia still drives, not remotely acknowledging Ken as he babbles on.*

You didn't start reading my manuscript yet, did you? Cynthia?

Because you said you'd read it last week, that's what you said. And I don't want to be obnoxious, obviously you've been preoccupied with the funeral and everything, but — If you'd read it this weekend, that would really be helpful. Because you did say you'd — Did I tell you what it's about? I don't want to give it away, but I'm anxious to hear your — Well, I'll tell you: It's just a novella, and it's inspired by that story, that thing that happened in Nebraska last year, you remember that? That woman, she's walking along, on the street, talking on the phone, and a man on a motorcycle rides by, and the noise is so loud — so violently, deafeningly loud — that the woman on the phone — without thinking — She pulls out her handgun, and she's not even a big pro-gun person, but she had an incident, I think she got mugged once or something, so she got this little thing, she carries it around for protection. Anyway, she *shoots* the guy on the motorcycle! Just — as a reflex reaction to the noise, she shoots him! And then — Well, I shouldn't give away the rest, but that's what this new book is — the novella — a sort of fictionalization of that, about a woman who reacts this way to the noise. Someone who seems perfectly normal, perfectly together, and then she just snaps. And then how the people around her deal with it, after the fact, which is to say — Well I shouldn't — Alright, I'll give it away: She got off! In real life — in Nebraska, you remember? She's a free woman, walking around with her concealed weapon! So she gets off. In the book. The novella. But it's more complicated than that, of course, it always is. God, I really hate to give it away, but since you asked.

*Beat.*

But you'll read it this weekend, yes? Maybe after the kayaking? 'Cause you don't have anything else to do. Or tonight? You could read it tonight if you want, if you're really that interested.

*Another momentary blackout; more time has passed.*

You know ... I've been doing the treadmill, Cynthia. Getting my stamina back. Feeling good, pretty good. And I haven't masturbated in, maybe ... a week? You know what that means ...

*He grins sheepishly at Cynthia, who truly does not react; she just keeps staring straight ahead at the road.*

And I've been taking zinc. I feel like a young sprite. Like a frat boy, I'm telling you. Like a horny Swedish frat boy. I don't know why "Swedish," why "Swedish"? I just said that, but I don't know what the reference

is. Do they have frat boys in Scandinavia? You don't know, you've never been there. Anyway, I am ready to make love. To make *love*. To my *love*. Okay, I lied, I did masturbate, I did it yesterday, but only because I knew this was coming, tonight, and I was so anxious, you know, because it's been so long, I didn't want it to be too, you know — For *you*, I did it for *you*, Cynthia. See? I'm always looking out for you.

*And one more momentary blackout.*

*Ken is now asleep, probably snoring, probably loudly. Cynthia's still driving. Suddenly, she screeches to a halt, gasping, and there's a jarring THUD. Ken wakes up startled, as if from a nightmare.*

What?!

CYNTHIA. Oh my god.

*Cynthia gets out of the car. A bleeding deer is on the ground in front of the car. (The animal is as disturbingly realistic as possible.) It's groaning horribly.*

Oh my god, shit.

KEN. Jesus, that *sound*.

*He gets out of the car.*

CYNTHIA. *Shit*. Shit, shit.

*Ken sees the deer.*

KEN. Oh, no. That's a shame.

CYNTHIA. Shit, it came out of *nowhere*.

KEN. At least it didn't go through the windshield, it could have killed us both.

CYNTHIA. Are you okay?

KEN. *I'm* okay, are *you* okay?

CYNTHIA. Oh my god, this is a nightmare. I'm okay. Fuck. Shit, Kenny, shit.

*She kneels down by the deer.*

KEN. No, don't —

CYNTHIA. I'm not gonna touch the blood, don't — Oh god, her eyes are open.

KEN. Oh, it's a *her*?

CYNTHIA. I can tell from the sound.

KEN. It's dying, honey. Get back in the —

CYNTHIA. Grab me the, uh — Will you get me the towel? In the back seat? There's a towel.



KEN. For what?

CYNTHIA. For the blood, to stop the blood.

KEN. No, honey, you gotta let it die.

CYNTHIA. Of course I'm not gonna let it die; who *are* you?! She's bleeding, get the towel!

KEN. Don't yell at me, you don't always have to yell at —

CYNTHIA. *Kenny!*

KEN. *Alright*, alright.

*He goes to the back seat and grabs a towel. The groaning from the deer is intensifying.*

CYNTHIA. Come on, hurry!

KEN. I'm coming, I'm getting it.

CYNTHIA. She's losing blood, she won't —

KEN. Here, here. My god, that sound is excruciating.

*He hands her the towel, which she presses down on the deer.*

CYNTHIA. Oh, Jesus, poor thing, I'm so sorry, baby, I'm so sorry.

KEN. Did it dart in —

CYNTHIA. I swear I didn't mean to, I would never —

KEN. Cynthia — Did it dart in front of the car?

CYNTHIA. Yes, out of nowhere!

KEN. Then it should be apologizing to *us*.

CYNTHIA. What?

KEN. For dragging us into its suicide attempt.

CYNTHIA. Excuse me?

KEN. I mean, look at your bumper. My god ...

CYNTHIA. Hello, do you not see the bleeding animal in front of you?

KEN. It's not our fault if it ran into the middle of the street!

CYNTHIA. Ken — Come on — Help me get her up.

KEN. Just drive around it, we don't have to —

CYNTHIA. No, we've gotta take her with us.

KEN. What? Why?

CYNTHIA. If we leave her here, she'll die, and they'll take her to the wolf preserve, Ken, they'll throw her in the wolf preserve, and she'll be eaten by *wolves*!

KEN. Well don't the wolves have to eat?

CYNTHIA. That's an asinine thing to say. Help me get her up.

KEN. Cynthia — Get back in the car, honey.

*Cynthia's again down by the deer, talking to it:*

CYNTHIA. Sshhh, I wanna take you home, but I don't think I should pick you up just yet.

KEN. Cynthia — Get back in the car.

CYNTHIA. I just want some of the bleeding to stop first, my love, sshhh ...

KEN. Cynthia.

CYNTHIA. Oh, honey, I didn't mean it, I really didn't mean it, you sweet, sweet creature, you sweet deer, you ... Doe ... Doe-Doe ...

KEN. Are you putting me on?

CYNTHIA. Doe the deer. Doe, that's what your name is.

KEN. *Doe?*

CYNTHIA. Sure, like the deer in *The Sound of Music*, "Doe the deer."

KEN. It's not — That's a song, it's a lyric, "Doe, a deer, a female deer."

CYNTHIA. Yes, that's why it's a good name, it's the female deer in *The Sound of Music*.

KEN. No — There is no deer in *The Sound of Music* — A "doe" is what you *call* a female deer.

CYNTHIA. But that was the name of their deer; didn't the kids have a —

KEN. No, they were Nazis, and the Nazis didn't —

CYNTHIA. They weren't *Nazis*.

KEN. Yes, they were Nazis, and the Nazis didn't have deer, and —

CYNTHIA. They might've —

KEN. No, and that's not a female deer anyway.

CYNTHIA. How do you know?

KEN. Because it has a penis!

*Cynthia looks.*

CYNTHIA. That's the towel, Ken, it soaked up the blood.

KEN. What? I'm looking at a penis and two —

CYNTHIA. Doe-Doe, you poor thing, you poor baby, you make me hate myself so much.

*She reaches a hand out above the deer's head.*

KEN. No, do *not* —

*She touches the deer's face.*

Oh my god, don't touch the — Cynthia — What the hell are you — Come on, get up, get back in the —

*He puts his hands on her arm as if to help her up.*

CYNTHIA. Don't touch me! *Help* me, don't touch me!

# DEER

by Aaron Mark

1M, 1W

Upper West Side empty-nesters Ken and Cynthia hit a deer while driving to their weekend house in the Poconos. Cynthia tries desperately to nurse the dead animal back to life, as Ken fights for his first weekend alone with his wife in twenty-five years. As their lifeless, bloody new pet takes over their lives, Ken and Cynthia will either rekindle their love or kill each other. DEER is a grisly, pitch-black comedy about normal people who snap.

**Also by Aaron Mark**  
EMPANADA LOCA

ISBN 978-0-8222-3478-4



**DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.**

9 780822 234784