

Miss Information

By Carly Follina

A Satirical Tragedy in 2 Acts



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Miss Information, by Carly Follina
A satirical tragedy in 2 Acts

#15-20+(Any), Multiple Interior and Exterior, 90 minutes.

Synopsis:

Lucifer and God argue over the fallibility and weakness of man, choosing to compete to prove the other wrong. They both send their best angels to wreak havoc and uphold law respectively by observing human reactions to their interventions.

Characters: Actors may use their own pronouns and substitute them in the script as such, BELIAL is the only one with set she/her.

THE ARMY OF HEAVEN

GOD (Any): Creator of what was, is, and ever shall be. Short-tempered and a perfectionist, in denial of their own mistakes.

MICHAEL (Any): God's chief deputy and a warrior. Sometimes their sword works faster than their mind, but a formidable defender. Often gets into physical skirmishes with Asmodeus.

GABRIEL (Any): The messenger of God, interested only in delivering divine information to humankind. Offers themselves as a neutral party, mostly works with Uriel.

RAPHAEL (Any): The most powerful healer in all of Heaven, exhausted by the plagues of Beelzebub. Devoted to the health of man, even to their own detriment. Works cordially with Samael.

URIEL (Any): The most intellectual of the archangels, not always considered canon. Intelligent, but not persuasive enough for his ideas to stick. Often works alongside Gabriel for this reason.

THE PARTY OF HELL

LUCIFER (Any): The Light Bringer, kicked out of heaven for criticizing God's creation of humanity. Surprisingly fun, cunning, and talented, losing the bet they'd taken on the life and family of Job initially.

BEELZEBUB (Any): Lord of the Flies (can actually take the form of a normal house fly, which has gotten them hurt many times) and the source of all plagues.

SAMAEL (Any): The Angel of Death, the only truly neutral party. They are focused only on their job of guiding deceased spirits and comforting those who grieve.

BELIAL (Any, female-presenting): Lucifer's greatest weapon against humanity's feeble minds. A charismatic and persuasive speaker capable of bending truth itself. Costume should have snakeskin patterns/motifs.

ASMODEUS (Any): The most powerful of the demons, a master of temptation, oppression, and emotional turmoil. Rival to Michael, and source of war.

NEUTRAL PARTY

CHORUS (Any, Various): Humanity, molded from clay by God and considered their favorite creation. Their worst enemies are each other, and they are predicted to be their own ruin. Acts as a Greek chorus in times of either worship or disdain for God.

CW: Content/discussions of death, suicide, sexual assault, and illness. Brief usage of derogatory language.

ACT 1

(A session of worship, praising GOD, who sits in a surprisingly casual living room watching humanity through a ball of light/orb of some sort. GOD is pleased with themself. SAMAEEL, the Angel of Death, will always act as the CHORUS LEADER, ready to escort people to the afterlife as needed)

CHORUS

Of love we sing to God, the everlasting,
He who gives us life and makes us whole.
Jehovah, from the blessed earth did birth
Humanity, unworthy of its soul.

SAMAEEL

Unworthy as you are, souls you do have.
You sacrifice your souls like fatted calves.

CHORUS

Thy truth is truth and truth alone
Shall lead us to salvation
And to our heaven'ly home You wait
With open brilliant arms to cradle these,
Your children, who love Thee all the same
Despite Lucifer's temptation and zeal.

SAMAEEL

Which they succeed, since men of faith exploit
Yet think they're saved for singing empty praise.
In death, God is the last to disappoint
Before the souls shall plummet to Hell's blaze.

CHORUS

For he is weak, and You alone are almighty,
All-powerful, all-benevolent, all-knowing,
Loving of us, exactly as we are, exactly as You,
God Almighty, have made us.

SAMAEL

Wherefore should I complain? I'm not their God.
Until they die, they have no role with me.
Angels find their behavior rather odd.
Is this the way God wants humans to be?

(LUCIFER, who had been listening in, enters)

LUCIFER

Dude, really?

GOD

What?

LUCIFER

“Despite Lucifer’s temptation and zeal, for he is weak”?

GOD

They said it, not Me.

LUCIFER

In praise to You, they said that. What did I do to deserve that?

GOD

Would you like a list?

LUCIFER

Could You not answer a question with another question?

GOD

Does it matter?

LUCIFER

You’re not going to give me a straight answer, are you? *(Beat.)* Ugh, whatever. Also, Uriel should give your subjects grammar lessons. I cringe every time they switch from “you” to “thy”. Is their relationship to You formal or informal? Do they respect You or nah?

GOD

I don't think most of them know the difference.

LUCIFER

Figures. Thought You'd found something better than mud to mold their brains by now.

GOD

Did you come just to attack my humans with a red pen, or do you have business with me?

LUCIFER

I just wanted to hang out.

GOD

Hang out? With Me?

LUCIFER

Yeah. Why not?

GOD

I thought you hated Me.

LUCIFER

Hate and disagreement aren't the same thing.

GOD

I fired you.

LUCIFER

Because Your word was law and no one else was allowed to weigh in.

GOD

I threw you out of Heaven. Like, physically threw you out.

LUCIFER

I have a good chiropractor. You teach forgiveness, right? I forgive You. And I'm much happier where I am now.

GOD

Huh.

LUCIFER

Do You forgive me?

GOD

I haven't decided yet.

LUCIFER

You've gotta start walking Your talk, dude.

GOD

Can you not call me "dude"? I didn't accomplish what I did to be called "dude".

LUCIFER

Professor? King? Queen? Emperor? Doctor? Good boy? Little bitch?

GOD

Call me God. Call me what I am.

LUCIFER

If Your subjects can call you "Thy", I think I can call You "dude". We're not in a professional setting.

GOD

Our whole existence is professional.

LUCIFER

And all we have to do is exist to make our jobs happen. Relax, take a break. Play a game with me, or something. Step away from Your claybrains for a bit.

GOD

Play a game? Are we children?

LUCIFER

You are everything that was and everything that shall be. A child falls under "everything". Game?

GOD

No.

LUCIFER

Why?

GOD

Your games aren't games, they're tests of faith.

LUCIFER

Wanna bet?

GOD

Absolutely no- A bet? *(Beat)* I see what this is about now. You're still mad about Job.

LUCIFER

You killed his entire family and destroyed his home.

GOD

You told me to.

LUCIFER

I didn't think you'd actually do it! You could've said "no" at any time.

GOD

And I'm saying "no" now.

LUCIFER

God, it's been millennia! Live a little!

GOD

You said I could say "no" at any time. And I'm saying "no", and that's not changing. I'm not playing your game, Lucifer.

(Silence)

LUCIFER

What if You didn't have to play?

GOD

What in My name...? I don't have to, and I won't. Play with someone else.

LUCIFER

That's what I had in mind.

GOD

Well, go then.

LUCIFER

All the way back down to Hell the way I came? Nah. Don't feel like it.

GOD

You're just going to loiter here?

LUCIFER

I don't loiter. I have people for that. Speaking of, can I talk with Gabriel?

GOD

What for?

LUCIFER

I need to send a message.

GOD

Why can't you do it yourself?

LUCIFER

I mean, I can, but I don't want to right now.

GOD

Sloth.

LUCIFER

At least I'm honest about it.

(A trumpet fanfare announces GABRIEL's arrival. He's cheerful and excited to be called to duty)

GABRIEL

I hearken'd to the call of the Lord, and heard myself summoned forth. Ask of me, and thou shalt have of it.

LUCIFER

"Thou" is informal, Gabe.

GABRIEL

Lucifer? Thou traitorous fiend, trespasseth thee upon the Lord's soil?

LUCIFER

A little better. Keep practicing.

GOD

Lucifer would ask thee to dispatch a message.

GABRIEL

Lucifer? Yes, my Lord. To whom, my Lord?

LUCIFER

To four of my best angels. Command them to travel to Heaven immediately.

GOD

What?!

GABRIEL

I am to deliver, not to criticize. I pray that-

LUCIFER

One more thing. Don't push yourself with the fancy speak. Talk normal.

GABRIEL

Okay, then. I hope there's no trouble.

LUCIFER

No trouble. Just some fun.

GABRIEL

My Lord God?

GOD

Your concern is valid. Summon the archangels as well. Just in case.

GABRIEL

Yes, my Lord.

(GABRIEL exits)

LUCIFER

Getting in on this after all?

GOD

No. I just don't want anything to go awry.

LUCIFER

You act like You don't trust me.

GOD

I don't. (*GOD swats at a fly that's been buzzing around their heads*)

BEELZEBUB

Bzz! Bzz bzt! (Woah! Watch it!)

GOD

Beelzebub?

LUCIFER

That was fast.

(*BEELZEBUB takes a human form*)

BEELZEBUB

Missed You too. Half a centimeter to the right, You would've chopped me in half.

LUCIFER

Not the first time it's happened.

BEELZEBUB

It never gets easier. At least I'm less likely to get hurt in this form.

(*ASMODEUS is thrown into BEELZEBUB, MICHAEL chasing behind and continuing to brawl*)

MICHAEL

Ye mad devil, go back from whence you came.

ASMODEUS

Make me, ye toga-tyrant!

MICHAEL

To Hell, you wretch!

GOD

Michael, cease!

ASMODEUS

Call that a punch?

MICHAEL

You can't be here.

ASMODEUS

Like Michael did a good job keeping Asmodeus out.

MICHAEL

I said go home.

ASMODEUS

Or what?

MICHAEL

I'll punch you home.

ASMODEUS

How is that going to work?

MICHAEL

It'll hurt.

ASMODEUS

Hurt who? Michael is weak.

MICHAEL

Take that back.

ASMODEUS

Take what? Asmodeus took nothing from Michael.

MICHAEL

Then say "sorry".

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus is sorry. Sorry soft St. Michael can't hurt a fly.

BEELZEBUB

(still underneath ASMODEUS) That's debatable.

ASMODEUS

Hi, Bubba!

BEELZEBUB

H-hey.

MICHAEL

Beelzebub? Two demons? An invasion?

LUCIFER

It's not an invasion, dumbass.

MICHAEL

Lucifer? Then it's war. God above, the end times are upon us!

GOD

I'm not above. I'm right here.

MICHAEL

Thank Heaven! Dispatch me, O God, into the heart of our righteous battle against-

GOD

Help them up.

MICHAEL

My Lord?

GOD

Asmodeus is a guest here. Gabriel summoned both of you.

ASMODEUS

(springs up) To duel?

GOD

No.

ASMODEUS

Why not?

GOD

It is not time yet.

ASMODEUS

When will it be time?!

MICHAEL

Question not the Lord, your God, fiend!

GOD

/Peace, Michael.

LUCIFER

/Asmodeus, chill.

BEELZEBUB

God, did you invite your medic, by any chance?

(RAPHAEL and URIEL enter, the former tends to BEELZEBUB on the ground)

RAPHAEL

Oh, you poor thing!

BEELZEBUB

Speak of the devil.

LUCIFER

Phrasing.

URIEL

A peaceable assembly of Heaven and Hell? Curious.

RAPHAEL

You alright there, bud?

BEELZEBUB

Nothing I haven't had before.

RAPHAEL

Yikes, you've been through it, haven't you? I'll patch you up quick.

BEELZEBUB

Thank you, Raphael.

(BELIAL enters. She appears as a ravishing and confident young woman)

BELIAL

Uriel, my love, my sexy, intellectual, angelic-

URIEL

I abstain.

BELIAL

You don't like compliments?

URIEL

Not from Belial, I don't. I deal only in facts; true statements. None come from you.

BELIAL

None? That's a crock of shit, and you know it. I love knowledge and reading just as much as you do.

URIEL

You're a lover of knowledge, the tempter of Faust, the promiscuous immolator of Sodom and Gomorrah, and second in command to the greatest evil in the universe.

BELIAL

Uri, dear, that sounded like an opinion. Not everyone thinks Lucifer is the greatest evil. I gave Faust what he wanted, and the Cities of the Plain were a hot mess by the time I was through with them.

URIEL

False flattery is nice, but I'd rather you be cruel if that's your truth. You can't be the silver medal of all demons without having some level of hatred in that soul.

BELIAL

Silver! That cheap, inferior, pedestrian metal. Don't you dare compare my brilliance to that glorified second-place tin. My work is gold-standard at its humblest. Platinum at its average.

URIEL

And at its best?

BELIAL

I wear no medal matching my mettle, for a mere metal mayn't meddle with me.

ASMODEUS

That's so fucking metal.

MICHAEL

What did she say?

ASMODEUS

Dunno, but it sounded hard.

BELIAL

That's how I like it, sugar.

ASMODEUS

God, she's hot.

GOD

Why are you telling me that?

MICHAEL

Hot? How is she not freezing? She's in her undies.

URIEL

Yeah, that's the other thing. Why are you naked?

BELIAL

Why aren't you?

URIEL

That's- uh, I...

BELIAL

All of God's creations are beautiful, Uri. Eden was beautiful because there was no sin. Isn't Heaven without sin as well? No sin means no need for your hot, itchy robes.

(ASMODEUS begins to undo their robe)

MICHAEL

(Draws their sword) Don't even think about it.

URIEL

How did a succubus become the crown princess of Hell? And do so without war or disease... or pants?

BELIAL

That was ultimately Lucifer's decision. Maybe I'm just pretty. Who knows?

URIEL

I mean, you are very pretty- uhh, I mean there's something very pretty... nefarious about you in particular that places you above the rest.

BELIAL

The Light of Knowledge should know what that is. Or maybe you aren't the smartest being in the universe. Or maybe God doesn't value intellect the same way Lucifer does.

URIEL

Preposterous.

BELIAL

Oh?

URIEL

We have full scholarly professions dedicated to Divine Truth and Knowledge; apologetics, philosophy, worship, mysticism-

BELIAL

And we have activism, free will, logic, equity, science, and progress. Remind me who Lucifer's second-in-command is?

URIEL

You.

BELIAL

And who is God's?

URIEL

God... really doesn't have one. Doesn't need one. Technically Christ, but they're both part of the same unit. But also not. There's actually three. But also just one. But also the Holy Spirit is a combination of both of them. So does that mean there's two? No, it must be three. But also just one. But also-

BELIAL

You can't even make sense of the Trinity.

URIEL

Humans aren't meant to.

BELIAL

Are you human?

URIEL

No.

BELIAL

Then surely you can comprehend it.

URIEL

Canines aren't human, either. Does that mean they should be able to understand the Trinity?

BELIAL

But aren't you better than dogs?

URIEL

That might actually be the most controversial opinion of the night.

BELIAL

Maybe for man, but among angels, you must have an intelligent leader at least. Who's the chief angel? Surely you, with your superior brain and unshakeable philosophy?

URIEL

I mean-

BELIAL

It should say so in the canon. I know Michael's in there. I know Gabriel's in more of the hymns. Raphael's pretty popular in poetry.

URIEL

I'm in *Enoch*.

BELIAL

Oh, that's right. In worship, though, you're recognized in how many sects? Only a handful? Interesting. Most followers of Christ don't know you exist. Then what does God value most in his angels? Surely not One-Punch Mike over here, right?

MICHAEL

So we're trying to keep Christ in Christmas for the kids, right?

ASMODEUS

Uh-huh. Yeah.

MICHAEL

And Santa's their big thing, right?

ASMODEUS

In some places, yeah.

MICHAEL

What if I told you Santa was the problem?

ASMODEUS

What did he do?

MICHAEL

If I spell Santa: S-A-N-T-A. Right. Move some things around S-A-T-A-N. He who shall not be named.

LUCIFER

Literally standing right here.

MICHAEL

You know what that means, Asmodeus?

ASMODEUS

Not really, no.

MICHAEL

“Santa” is a mammogram for “Satan”.

ASMODEUS

Why is that bad? Guys can get breast cancer, too.

MICHAEL

No, dum dum. A mammogram. Y'know, when you switch the numbers around in a word and it makes another thing.

LUCIFER

I'm not Santa, Michael.

URIEL

He leads the angel army well. Valiantly defends those in battle.

BELIAL

By punching the problem.

URIEL

Occam's Razor.

BELIAL

You're jealous, aren't you?

URIEL

Of Michael?

BELIAL

I was thinking of me, but that works, too. You are brilliant, but no one cares. I'm brilliant, and I'm revered and successful.

URIEL

If humanity prefers simplicity in their daily lives, that is their decision. I just create and provide accessible resources for higher learning. Envy is beneath an archangel such as myself, even if nobody's read my books.

BELIAL

Maybe Heaven's librarian should take a page or two from mine. Then you might get a reader someday.

URIEL

By virtue of your demonic existence and your blasphemous, treasonous rebellion with Lucifer, you are forever beneath me and shall not pretend to be otherwise.

BELIAL

Beneath you? That's kinda hot.

URIEL

Deplorable beast.

BELIAL

Fucking virgin.

BEELZEBUB

Isn't that an oxymoron?

MICHAEL

What did you just call me, bug?

RAPHAEL

Peace, Michael. Beelzebub, how do you feel now?

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BEELZEBUB

Better. Much better.

RAPHAEL

Good. Now what I want you to do to keep it that way: Rub some ambrosia on the affected areas twice a day for the next week and take plenty of hot Epsom Salt baths for your joints. I'm also going to prescribe a restraining order on Michael, just in case.

MICHAEL

I'm not a drug.

RAPHAEL

Side effects of Michael exposure include headache, nausea, and broken bones.

MICHAEL

If Samael were here, I'd pound that puny insect to dust and have it dragged back to Hell where it belongs.

(SAMAEL enters, tired-looking and heavy-headed, carrying a sleeping YOUNG GIRL in his arms. Can either be a prop doll or someone in the CHORUS)

SAMAEL

Michael, please be civil. My client's had a long morning. Gabriel's right behind me. Raphael, could you clean her up and take her home?

RAPHAEL

Of course. *(RAPHAEL takes the YOUNG GIRL in their arms gently and exits)*

SAMAEL

Thank you, Lords, for granting me a small break. I ask that we begin soon or that I may be excused early. I still have souls to escort, and the line grows longer every day.

(RAPHAEL returns as GABRIEL enters)

GABRIEL

This should be everybody, Lords.

GOD

Thank you, Gabriel. Lucifer, since this was your call, speak.

LUCIFER

With pleasure. Angels all, I implore you to participate in a challenge between myself and God. In our last test, we proved the faith of an individual by plaguing the life of God's devoted, Job. In an apologetics sense, upon further reflection, a case study of a single man can't properly represent the whole of humanity. Yet, in our age of beautiful and diverse spiritualities, a universal test of faith similar to Job's would not only be confusing, but disastrous to the Earth's population. We want to test humanity, not destroy it. Instead of testing humankind's faith, I propose instead to test their fallibility. How Godlike, truly, is the humanity that was made in God's image?

MICHAEL

Anything that comes from God is perfect. I see no challenge here.

URIEL

Of course humans are like God. That's what Godlike means.

RAPHAEL

They are the most powerful beings on Earth.

BEELZEBUB

Yet humans can fall ill.

ASMODEUS

They're mad, bro.

BELIAL

They'll believe anything you tell them. And I mean anything.

SAMAEL

Ultimately, unlike God, they can die.

GABRIEL

No surprise here. We're divided.

LUCIFER

Then by our game, we shall be made whole.

MICHAEL

Hole? What hole? I didn't make a hole! It wasn't me! (*aside*) Gabe, you said you wouldn't tell anyone.

RAPHAEL

Again? I *just* fixed that wall, Michael.

LUCIFER

Hellians, by exposing the fallibility of humankind, we are to prove the imperfection of God by extension. And God's archangels are to defend their pride and honor by proving us wrong.

URIEL

No need to defend that which isn't welcome to us. Pride is technically a sin.

BELIAL

Not in the Bible.

URIEL

Thematically, Belial. Hubris is thematically sinful.

ASMODEUS

Uriel's missing out. Hubris is delicious. It goes with everything.

BEELZEBUB

You mean "hummus"?

ASMODEUS

What's hummus?

BELIAL

Why are you my coworkers?

SAMAEL

Why are we doing this to begin with?

LUCIFER

By this test, if God is successful, humans will be able to overcome the more complicated challenges that we demons give them. If not, it will be understood that God is imperfect.

SAMAEL

Still vague. Why did you pull me out of work?

URIEL

Patience, Samael. I, for one, long to comprehend how those that are collectively viewed as sordid and vile by God's chosen fairly compete with humanity's steadfast faith in the seraphim that have protected them since the dawn of time.

ASMODEUS

Humans like angels more. They say devils are scary.

URIEL

Thank you for paraphrasing, Asmodeus.

ASMODEUS

What's that?

BELIAL

I never took you for a Pathos logician, Uri. High Intelligence, low Wisdom...

LUCIFER

Humanity has a clear favorite side, but what is right is not always what is preferred. Either humans of your image are perfect, and our tricks only serve to strengthen them, or we prove that humans are imperfect and that you and your creations have lots of work to do in order to verify even a percent of the glory they give to themselves and to you.

GOD

That sounds tame. I was expecting something much worse.

BELIAL

Were you expecting *Revelations* to start playing out?

URIEL

We still haven't figured out when that's going to be.

BELIAL

Why's that?

MICHAEL

Humans keep guessing the day right.

GABRIEL

What's the use of having an apocalypse if people know ahead of time? It'll cause mass panic, especially for kids.

URIEL

That's valid.

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus sees not why that matters, but okay.

SAMAEL

Put off my retirement another twelve years, why don't you...

GOD

Enough. We know it isn't world-ending. The way you put it almost sounds like training.

MICHAEL

Why didn't you just say so? No such thing as too much training.

RAPHAEL

Yes, there is. Whatever we decide, God, please be careful. These are billions of people being influenced by Heaven and Hell at the same time. If we push them too hard, they could get physically and mentally overwhelmed. If they're too exhausted to receive messages and act on what they're told, that won't help either of us.

GOD

Well said. We can influence the people, but make sure the decisions they make are ultimately theirs. No possessions, no curses.

LUCIFER

And no miracles or crazy dreams. We should be able to appear to them to give instructions, but go no further than that.

GOD

Sounds reasonable to me. And our teams seem evenly matched in terms of skill, correct?

BEELZEBUB

I can spread diseases.

RAPHAEL

And I can cure them.

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus starts riots and wars.

MICHAEL

And I can defend the people there.

URIEL

I can educate humanity on what is right and wrong.

BELIAL

I'll do what I want to do.

LUCIFER

Belial, dear, this isn't the time for you to keep secrets from me.

BELIAL

Secrets? Me?

LUCIFER

The competition needs to be fair. I need to know what you're doing.

BELIAL

Calm your tits, Lulu, I'll get there when I get there.

LUCIFER

Don't sass me.

BELIAL

No, like, really, I don't know what I'm doing yet. This is the first I've heard of this game. You expect me to already be prepared?

LUCIFER

No one else had a problem with their task.

BELIAL

Their tasks are the same as they always are.

LUCIFER

And they're masters of them.

BELIAL

They have to be, since they're shit-for-brains, one-trick ponies.

BEELZEBUB

Not this again.

LUCIFER

If you insult me or my army one more time...

BELIAL

Master, Lulu, let's not argue in front of the children, please. The manager should communicate effectively with their staff. That's all.

LUCIFER

That goes both ways.

BELIAL

So do I. Like I said, I will get there when I get there. Not a second earlier. M'kay?

LUCIFER

You're lucky you're charming.

GOD

What of you, Gabriel?

GABRIEL

I'm just the messenger. Praise you, God, but I must be a neutral party to work fairly.

GOD

I understand.

GABRIEL

If any of you need help sending information to your humans, let me know right away.

BELIAL

I should be fine.

URIEL

I may take you up on that.

SAMAEL

I want no direct part in the competition. I simply carry the deceased into the afterlife. Most I can do is clean any collateral damage this game may cause. Lords, my sincerest apologies.

LUCIFER

You are an angel of honor, Sam. This makes us evenly matched.

GOD

Then it's settled. Archangels, go forth.

LUCIFER

Demons, hence. (*Exeunt, except for GOD and LUCIFER*) And now, we watch and wait. May the best deity win.

GOD

Oh, don't worry. I will.

(Scene end)

WAR CHORUS

(An urban area, inside a bar late at night. Several people linger in the area, some for entertainment, some for less legal things. ASMODEUS is speaking to a CRYING TEEN. BELIAL is mingling in the shadows and observing. She could even be the bartender. The WAR CHORUS sings while the action is happening)

Frustrate me with the sins I can't absolve,
For these sins aren't my own, but wound me still.
For ten grand was the expense of my birth, so for my birth
I'm sentenced, bound to live.
Eight hours institutioned, eight asleep,
Three hours to eat, and one to groom, that leaves
One sixth of every day I may be free.

With four hours' freedom, turn us fast to drink
So we may not repress our class' woes.
Release our misery in laughter, howl and brawl,
Weep for your guilt if you had dared to breathe.
Strike then the nearest object to your corpse
And let your pain upon the pavement paint
And crack the bones that trap their cranial cage.

Our wrath is all we have to warm our souls,

For anger's blanket wards off bitter cold.
The service life has done to boil our hearts
Preventing us or others growing old.
We cannot fight for better lives, and yet
Whatever we do, our world will forget.
Don't make us maintain peace where there is none.

Men kill to own their land and trinkets cheap
and other humans that are seen as such.
With weapons, poison, and the simple word,
Rhetorical hatred will be enough
That to the gallows Mother sends her child,
Escaping life for which they never asked.
All blessings be to violence against man.

ASMODEUS

And your parents don't believe you. Sounds like you're on your own. All those bad things those people did. Yeah? And they didn't get beat. They made themselves the good guys, yeah? And you're the big bad evil guy. They think you're a monster, they're sticking with that. It makes themselves look good, but the story needs a little help. Maybe some proof? Why don't you give them what they want? That's one of them just outside the bar, right? Take this and prove them right. Maybe then the rest will back off.

(The CRYING TEEN nods and takes the weapon, can be a knife or blunt object etc., just not a gun. They attack another TEEN in the crowd. MICHAEL intervenes just in time to deflect the weapon and let the TEEN escape. The CRYING TEEN drops their weapon and runs as well.)

ASMODEUS

No! Damn, they got away.

MICHAEL

Good.

ASMODEUS

If Michael heard what the kid told Asmodeus, Michael would've fucked off.

MICHAEL

Not a nice word.

ASMODEUS

Is Michael gonna help this kid?

MICHAEL

God said no.

ASMODEUS

Why not?

MICHAEL

It's part of God's plan.

ASMODEUS

What's God's plan?

MICHAEL

I dunno.

ASMODEUS

Figures. What's the brat's family like?

MICHAEL

Rich. They fill the cash box and go to confession every week.

ASMODEUS

Hush money.

MICHAEL

What?

ASMODEUS

They say "sorry", pay God a bunch, then they do whatever they want?

MICHAEL

Jesus said something like "you can't serve both God and Money".

ASMODEUS

But they get away with more money? How is that fair?

MICHAEL

Okay, slow down. I don't get it.

ASMODEUS

God's guys seem to like rich kids more. How do they get in trouble for sins?

MICHAEL

Not with murder. That's the fastest way to turn your back on God.

ASMODEUS

And God's cash box was the fastest way to turn His back on the kid. They didn't have a choice.

MICHAEL

Violence was not the answer.

ASMODEUS

No. You're right. Violence was the question, and the answer was "yes".

MICHAEL

That's sick.

ASMODEUS

What were they supposed to do? Let them get away with it? What happened to "love your neighbor, hate your enemy"?

MICHAEL

Love your enemy, and pray for the people that hurt you.

ASMODEUS

That's the dumbest thing Asmodeus ever heard, even from Michael.

MICHAEL

That was Jesus, not me!

ASMODEUS

It's still dumb. Letting people walk all over each other? Dumb.

MICHAEL

You dare call the Lord's words dumb?

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus doesn't give a rat's ass who said them. They're words, and they're dumb ones.

MICHAEL

Shut your face, or I'll smite you, heretic!

ASMODEUS

Ooo, busting out a big word? How scary. (*MICHAEL punches ASMODEUS across the right cheek. ASMODEUS turns and offers their left*) Is Asmodeus doing it right?

MICHAEL

Have at thee, devil!

(*As they fight, BELIAL whispers into a SUSPICIOUS MAN's ear and points to a GIRL IN A COCKTAIL DRESS. He approaches her and grabs her from behind. No other humans stand up to help her.*)

ASMODEUS

Wait!

MICHAEL

God in Heaven, be my strength. (*MICHAEL, unseen by the humans, separates the two and trips the SUSPICIOUS MAN. ASMODEUS appears behind the GIRL IN A COCKTAIL DRESS.*)

ASMODEUS

You gonna take that from him? Goddamn creep.

GIRL

No! Don't touch me. Go away!

ASMODEUS

Don't run. You wanna get out of here, you do what I say. Don't look around, listen. Get up, stand your ground. Show him who's boss.

GIRL

But, I-

ASMODEUS

Show no fear. Ready?

(*As if by magic, the GIRL mirrors her unseen coach's movements perfectly. A flashy fight scene ensues, ending with the SUSPICIOUS MAN in a crumpled heap on the*

ground. The fight can last anywhere from 30 seconds to 2 minutes, depending on choreo.)

GIRL

Oh, oh my God. What... I, how did- Christ, I-

ASMODEUS

Not Christ. That was all you. Be proud.

GIRL

Did I just... is he dead? Did I just kill...

SUSPICIOUS MAN

Urrgh...

GIRL

Oh, thank God.

ASMODEUS

What did He do?!

MICHAEL

You should leave now. Let the cops handle it from here.

ASMODEUS

Do that, or finish him off. Do you want to let him hurt anyone else?

GIRL

Is someone going to tell me what the fuck just happened?

MICHAEL

Jail for life is worse than death. For either of you. Don't be bad like him.

ASMODEUS

Girl's not going to forgive this dickhead, is she?

GIRL

Who are you? Who even are you guys? And do you have any idea what month it is? You're going to get frostbite.

ASMODEUS

Kill him or let him live with what he did.

GIRL

Answer my question.

ASMODEUS

No, you answer first.

MICHAEL

Asmodeus, come on.

GIRL

You're Asmodeus? The demon prince?

MICHAEL

Oops.

ASMODEUS

Nice going, Michael.

GIRL

Michael? Like Saint Michael, the Archangel?

ASMODEUS

Oops.

MICHAEL

She drank too much?

GIRL

I only had water. I'm the D.D. for my friends. Oh, God, I didn't leave my water unattended, did I?

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus screwed up.

MICHAEL

Wait, so you can switch from calling yourself "I" to calling yourself "Asmodeus"?

ASMODEUS

You thought I couldn't?

MICHAEL

That's weird for me. What did Uriel call it... third person?

ASMODEUS

No, there's just one person.

MICHAEL

Do we count as people?

ASMODEUS

If we were, why would Asmodeus be the third person? Would that make Michael the second person?

GIRL

Is someone gonna tell me what the fuck just happened?

MICHAEL

Why do you talk like that, then?

ASMODEUS

I just love the sound of my name.

MICHAEL

That simple?

ASMODEUS

That simple.

MICHAEL

Okay. That tracks.

GIRL

Was it you? Did you drug me??

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus doesn't drug people. Asmodeus slugs people.

GIRL

Asmodeus doesn't exist. St. Michael doesn't exist. Something fucking happened, and I'm losing my goddamn mind.

MICHAEL

Calm yourself, miss.

GIRL

Fuck you, you're not real!

MICHAEL

That hurt.

ASMODEUS

But the fear you feel is real.

GIRL

But it isn't!

ASMODEUS

But it *feels* real?

GIRL

I mean, yeah, but-

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus can touch you?

GIRL

Please don't.

ASMODEUS

Can you touch the guy?

GIRL

I... why?

ASMODEUS

He can't hurt people now, yeah?

(GIRL tentatively touches the limp SUSPICIOUS MAN)

GIRL

His jacket is cold and wet. His head is hot and sticky. Oh my God, he's bleeding!

ASMODEUS

But he's real. What happens now feels real because what happens now is real. Make sense?

GIRL

About as much as anything else right now.

ASMODEUS

What now?

GIRL

What do you mean “what now”?

ASMODEUS

What do you want to do now?

GIRL

Why do I have to do anything? Why am I arguing with demons? You’re not even real. Can I plead insanity and wash my hands of this?

MICHAEL

Eye for an eye. He did sins to you. You have a free pass.

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus would kill him.

MICHAEL

I would call the cops.

ASMODEUS

Isn’t that the same thing?

MICHAEL

Your call. *(Pause)*

GIRL

Call him an ambulance.

ASMODEUS

(To the MAN) You’re an ambulance. *(To GIRL)* Okay, now kill him.

GIRL

You both helped, so I’ll compromise.

MICHAEL

Comro... Cromprom... Pompro... Is that good? Asmodeus, what does that mean?

ASMODEUS

Think it's one of those "hummus" things Urinal talked about?

MICHAEL

Uriel.

ASMODEUS

Right now? Michael has to go that badly?

MICHAEL

No, his name's Uriel.

ASMODEUS

Oof, poor guy.

GIRL

St. Michael, I'll call an ambulance for him and let the law handle the rest.

ASMODEUS

Damn it. Asmodeus hoped the Girl would get revenge somehow.

GIRL

We're in America, Asmodeus.

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus doesn't get it.

MICHAEL

What? What did she say?

GIRL

I should be on my way. Thank you both, I guess. I might need a drink after all...

(She exits, dragging her assailant behind her)

MICHAEL

What was she talking about?

ASMODEUS

Not our problem. Raphael and Beelzebub can take care of it.

MICHAEL

We're in America...

ASMODEUS

Don't think too hard. Michael do Michael and Asmodeus do Asmodeus.

MICHAEL

Right. And Asmodeus? Thank you.

ASMODEUS

Yeah.

(BELIAL watches their actions intently, taking notes. Exeunt)

(A hospital. Various people in the CHORUS act as PATIENTS, DOCTORS, and NURSES, BEELZEBUB and RAPHAEL hidden among them in plain sight. BEELZEBUB is working in a lab, mixing various items to see which medications cure which diseases and making foam models of particles. RAPHAEL is hopping from bed to bed, treating and operating with ease. BELIAL is watching in the guise of a nurse.)

BEELZEBUB

Transmission. Through blood, through sex, through genes, through touch, through bite, through consumption, or through breath? I suppose a patient zero could contract it one way and transmit it another. Contraction by bite, transmission by breath? Sounds bubonic. They'd be ready for that now. Even if they weren't, I don't want to kill them. But I also would prefer if they weren't treatable and had to tough it out. Then there's the matter of cause. There should be at least a snowball's chance in Hell to find a cure. Maybe make it symptomatically similar to something else...

RAPHAEL

Beelzebub, what are you doing?

BEELZEBUB

Doctor! Raphael! Archangel, nurse- uh, hi.

RAPHAEL

You look like you're in high spirits. Recovering well?

BEELZEBUB

Yeah, thanks for the ambrosia and stuff. Works like a charm. Using it exactly how you told me. I actually figured out how to make my own, so I'm never going to run out.

RAPHAEL

Is that what you're working on here?

BEELZEBUB

It... could be medicinal?

RAPHAEL

So that's what they call it these days, huh.

BEELZEBUB

I promise, it's not poison.

RAPHAEL

Poison, no. Pestilence, yes. I know you better than that.

BEELZEBUB

What? Me? Making people sick? The very thought. How silly. By the way, how long does it take for the human body to develop antibodies?

RAPHAEL

A few weeks, maybe months. Sooner if they're vaccinated for it.

BEELZEBUB

A bloodborne illness would be easier to detect, I bet.

RAPHAEL

Much easier now. Everything is sterilized and tested before we can use it.

BEELZEBUB

So what would be more contagious but equally difficult to treat?

RAPHAEL

Something along the lines of- Wait, why am I telling you anything? I'm not helping you start another plague.

BEELZEBUB

Not a plague. Just an outbreak. Maybe on a local scale. Kids get sick at school, bring it home to their parents, everyone feels icky for a week. That's all.

RAPHAEL

Why don't you just pass a stomach flu around? Or a head cold?

BEELZEBUB

But that's treatable. I want humans to suffer through a new disease and come out of their funk stronger than ever. If it's contagious, more people will get it. More people get it, more people get antibodies. More antibodies, stronger immune systems. Boom. Evolution.

RAPHAEL

You're sick.

BEELZEBUB

But I'm not contagious.

RAPHAEL

I'd be happy if you kept it that way.

BEELZEBUB

Come on, please? Give me a test subject. Just one.

RAPHAEL

Absolutely not. You can play scientist at another hospital, but no one is going to contract anything new while I'm playing doctor here.

BEELZEBUB

What if it was a bad person? Like a really really bad guy who deserves it?

RAPHAEL

Nobody on God's green Earth deserves to be experimented on like a lab rat.

(BELIAL enters, interrupting them)

BELIAL

Excuse me, doctor?

RAPHAEL

Yes, nurse? I don't believe we've met.

BELIAL

I'm Bea. Nursing intern. I'm terribly sorry to interrupt.

RAPHAEL

What's going on?

BELIAL

It's about a patient we just had wheeled in. Suspected sex assault perp. He was beaten severely by the person he tried to attack. He's already lost a lot of blood, but the authorities want him alive to stand trial.

RAPHAEL

Which room?

BELIAL

215. I used all our gauze, and it's still not enough. He's like a fountain in there.

BEELZEBUB

TMI.

RAPHAEL

I'll be there as soon as I can. Keep him awake.

BELIAL

Yes, doctor. *(Exits)*

(Pause)

BEELZEBUB

He sounds charming.

RAPHAEL

Beelzebub...

BEELZEBUB

It's not like he's going anywhere. Being sick on top of this will completely isolate him. And he's already here and being treated.

RAPHAEL

I don't have time for this.

(RAPHAEL exits in a hurry to room 215, where the SUSPICIOUS MAN is barely conscious and a bloodied and broken mess. BELIAL is there, waiting for RAPHAEL. BEELZEBUB picks up one of the models, a sphere with several smaller balls stuck to it with pins)

BEELZEBUB

It's not influenza, but should behave similarly enough if treated fast. It's still in development, but... *(BEELZEBUB grabs a test tube with a strange liquid in it) Here goes. (Drinks the liquid, holding it in their mouth as they turn into a fly and scurry to room 215)*

RAPHAEL

The good news is none of what you've sustained is fatal. I'm just as surprised as you are, honestly. Due to how much blood you've lost and a few surgeries you'll need, we will have to have you rest here for a few days. Nurse Bea is on her way from the office to check on you and run your vitals. If anything begins to flare up, let me know right away, okay? I will be back in a few minutes.

(RAPHAEL exits, and we begin to hear a faint buzzing sound. The SUSPICIOUS MAN suddenly slaps at his already wounded arm, causing him to cry out. BELIAL enters quickly)

BELIAL

Sir, is everything alright?

SUSPICIOUS MAN

Ugh, Jesus Christ. I think something bit me.

BELIAL

Oh, thank Heaven, I thought you'd ruptured something. Oof, right on the broken one, too. Here, let me get this little pest out of the way for you. *(She opens a window and guides the fly outside before shutting it. The buzzing stops)*

SUSPICIOUS MAN

Thank you.

BELIAL

Sure thing. Now, I have a few things for you. First, the bill for the ambulance. Flip it over for the cost of treatment for today-

SUSPICIOUS MAN

This is just for the ambulance? Twenty-five hundred?!

BELIAL

I think the girl you attacked knew that would happen. She's the one that called you in, you know.

SUSPICIOUS MAN

She couldn't have driven me over? Or called an Uber or something?

BELIAL

She must've been in a mood after what went down. I would be, too. The treatment total is on the back.

SUSPICIOUS MAN

That can't be right. Ten thousand? For what?! And why doesn't my insurance cover-

BELIAL

Your insurance doesn't cover injuries and illnesses sustained when engaging in criminal activity.

SUSPICIOUS MAN

This is bullshit! You should have just let me die!

BELIAL

You're not going to like the funeral costs.

SUSPICIOUS MAN

You won't let me live, you won't let me die-

BELIAL

Sir, please, calm down-

SUSPICIOUS MAN

No, fuck that. Fuck you. Fuck being calm. Why save my ass if I'm going to spend the rest of my life locked in a cell drowning in debt afterwards? I want my lawyer!

BELIAL

About that. This is the statement from her that needs to be paid by the trial date-

SUSPICIOUS MAN

Fine!

BELIAL

That's what the document after this is, actually. Very perceptive of you.

SUSPICIOUS MAN

I'm outta here. Fuck this. *(he tries to escape, discovering he's handcuffed to the bed)*

BELIAL

Oh, yeah, you probably weren't awake for that part. Don't pull against it. You'll rip your stitches. You've lost enough blood already. I'd rather not have a dead patient on my first day. *(she takes out some bobby pins to let her hair down and sets them deliberately within reach of him)* Lord, it is so hot in here. Try to get some rest, okay? *(she inches the pins closer to him)* I'll run these papers to the front desk. Don't get any *(she taps the bobby pin against one of the cuffs and winks)* crazy ideas.

(BELIAL exits. SUSPICIOUS MAN takes the hint and picks the handcuffs open with the bobby pins. He hobbles out, hospital gown at all. BELIAL enters again and quickly pins her hair up again)

BELIAL

(sarcastic) Oh, no! Wherever could he have gone? *(She pages RAPHAEL, who comes running)* You might want to send an alert out. He ran off.

RAPHAEL

What do you mean "he ran off"?

BELIAL

He didn't want to pay, so he left.

RAPHAEL

Why does he know what the bill is? That's supposed to go with discharge after it goes through insurance, and this is being paid by the state anyway.

BELIAL

Oh. My bad.

RAPHAEL

Well, go catch up to him! He can't run that far in his condition.

BELIAL

The police are on watch just outside. They'll take care of it.

RAPHAEL

Between us, I don't trust the police won't rough him up more. If they kill him, or if he dies some other way on the way out, they'll hold us responsible. We need him alive to stand trial. Go get him.

BELIAL

As you wish. *(She exits with a sly smile)*

(RAPHAEL hears a faint tapping at the window. They open it to let BEELZEBUB back in, who transforms back to humanoid)

RAPHAEL

Are you okay? How long have you been out there?

BEELZEBUB

Only a few minutes. That's, well at least I'm okay.

RAPHAEL

Are you sure? You look distressed.

BEELZEBUB

Flying can be a strenuous thing-

RAPHAEL

This isn't exhaustion, it's stress.

BEELZEBUB

I'm not good with heights.

RAPHAEL

Liar. You're a fly. What happened? *(Long pause)*

BEELZEBUB

Promise you won't be mad...?

(The INFO CHORUS enters as the scene changes, and RAPHAEL and BEELZEBUB exit during the transition. The SUSPICIOUS MAN is pushing through the crowd, trying to escape the hospital, beginning to cough violently on his way. He is quickly and violently detained and brought back by several OFFICERS. It's unlikely he survived. Soon, we are on a college campus, with BELIAL taking the disguise of a med student on her way to a lecture hall that is quickly filling. Students and profs alike have phones or laptops and are using them for purposes of entertainment, looking up assignment answers, and shopping, often all at once. LUCIFER joins her as she settles in.)

INFO CHORUS

The world and all its secrets in our hands

Absorbed in seconds by their guiding light.

I hold the Earth exactly as she is,

Observing then th'expansion of the skies.

The stars have myths and futures they can tell.
One tap, and galaxies are in my sights.
I'll see all that there is in just one night.

I read into the truths that they won't tell.
There's people who don't take the truth too well.
Morbid are curiosities of mine,
For stories that shake humans to the core.
I watch true crime unfolding on my own.
There's knowledge that most would rather not know.
And I love learning of it even so.

I feel I deserve the breaks I don't take,
So work and play for me shall coincide.
And I'll develop my skill either way,
With Excel sheets or all the tabs I hide.
The tabs contain role-play and strategy,
That keeps the mind engaged, and me awake.
With games, I learn to learn a swifter pace.

My vocabulary lacks the words I need
To make the hearts of my recruiters bleed.
The pruned humans claim a screen of light
Is wasteful and brings me no where in life.
But faster than a dictionary, see?
Behold the lexicon in front of me!
Watch; I'll be grad school-ready by sixteen.

LUCIFER

Hey, sexy.

BELIAL

What in the high holy fuck are you doing here?

LUCIFER

I could ask you the same thing. You're my smartest asset. What do you need college for?

BELIAL

I don't need college specifically.

LUCIFER

Then go into the real world and do what I told you to do.

BELIAL

No.

LUCIFER

I can get someone else to participate in this.

BELIAL

I am participating.

LUCIFER

Really, because it looks like you're partying with a bunch of twenty-somethings.

BELIAL

You're not my dad, Daddy.

LUCIFER

Belial-

BELIAL

Shut up, the lecture's starting.

(a PROFESSOR takes the stage and begins to speak)

LUCIFER

I'm not letting you sit around and do nothing.

BELIAL

As it currently stands, I have an option between receiving two different lectures. I'd prefer to partake in the one that improves my performance in my field than the one that micromanages, verbally abuses, and rewards me less than what I'm worth to trap me in an unfulfilling work environment that doesn't care if I live or die as long as I make my employer more wealthy and successful.

LUCIFER

How long have you been here?

BELIAL

Three days.

LUCIFER

It shows.

PROFESSOR

... that which destroys humanity is not often the physical. War, conflict, spread of illness, debt, failure, despair, are merely consequences of something stronger, something subtler, something beyond misunderstanding. Beyond miscommunication. Within only the realm of narcissistic and very intentional intention. The bewitching art of manipulation, the true source of all evil, all power, or all good depending on in whose hands the skill falls. Because all action is inspired and commanded by the mind, they who control the mind control the world.

LUCIFER

You already know how to do this.

BELIAL

Yeah, and unlike the others within your *choice* taste in military leadership, I like to practice my craft.

LUCIFER

Practice?

BELIAL

Yes, practice. You've heard of it, surely? No? I'll explain it to you after the lecture. Slowly.

LUCIFER

But-

BELIAL

Lulu, let the experts talk, m'kay?

PROFESSOR

Those who manipulate have the power to take and maintain control of those around them using linguistic and behavioral tactics, including the act of not speaking at all. An immense power lies in silence.

LUCIFER

You should probably write that down. *(Pause)* Belial. *(Pause)* Are you listening to me? *(Pause)* Did I say something wrong? *(Pause)*

PROFESSOR

On such occasions in which the manipulator does speak, the language they use is a weapon unlike any warmonger can contrive. A pricking, burning, sickening, suffocating, and sanity-distorting sensation from the tongue of a psychological assassin. Turning extroverts to agoraphobes. Joy to fear. Angels to demons, and vice versa. Living to deceased, often by their own hands. Reality is whatever they choose if potential targets are caught unawares in their vicious onslaught.

LUCIFER

Jesus Christ, who hurt you?

BELIAL

Probably you. Hurting's all you're good for. *(she examines LUCIFER's reaction and takes notes)*

PROFESSOR

Some acts of power and control maintenance a manipulative person could use include the place of interaction. For example, you are in a lecture space for the purpose of education, in which the educator is known in the social order as the one in charge. If I was in the president's office, I would be in a position where I am less likely to speak or control the interaction. This is thought to be evolutionary, as this is similar to the way animals fight for and maintain their territory.

LUCIFER

They really haven't evolved that much, then, have they? No better than animals.

BELIAL

They're better than you.

LUCIFER

Dude, what the hell?

BELIAL

Not your territory. Don't speak.

LUCIFER

It's not yours either.

BELIAL

When you're paying my tuition, you can tell me what to do.

LUCIFER

I am your boss. I am the ruler of Hell.

BELIAL

We're not in Hell, are we?

LUCIFER

But-

BELIAL

Ah, fuck! I couldn't get that slide copied. Thanks a lot, Lulu.

PROFESSOR

... crossing the emotional threshold of the human psyche, then comes the molding of reality to whatever the perpetrator deems fit for their best interests. As long as you're the one to say it, you could tell someone in your grasp that they are stupid, and they'd believe you. You could tell them everyone hated them. They'd believe you. You could tell them an alternative DIY solution to flu vaccinations is injecting bleach into their arms to kill the germs, which technically some truth in that bleach kills the germs in addition to everything else, and they'd obey in a heartbeat even if that heartbeat was their last. The construction of fake facts becomes valid to the listener depending on how convincingly the lie is told. Soon, every facet of what is real and what it isn't begins to distort, and everything you've done or will do is questioned, but never answered. Dismissed.

(STUDENTS begin to gather their things and file out)

LUCIFER

So, no one's traumatized by that? Just pack up and move on?

BELIAL

It's Psych. We've seen worse.

LUCIFER

Aren't you going to pack up?

BELIAL

One sec. *(Pause)*

LUCIFER

Hey, Belial-

BELIAL

Don't call me that here.

LUCIFER

But-

BELIAL

Sh! *(Pause.)*

LUCIFER

Oh, okay, now you're going. Where are you going?

BELIAL

I think I know what I'm doing now.

LUCIFER

What are you doing?

BELIAL

Not telling.

LUCIFER

Why not?

BELIAL

I want to surprise you.

LUCIFER

I don't want you keeping secrets from me.

BELIAL

I'm only keeping secrets because I love you.

LUCIFER

What am I doing?

BELIAL

Keeping God company. The prof gave me some nice ideas that should still fall within the rules of the game.

LUCIFER

What do you mean?

BELIAL

Is psychological manipulation a form of demonic possession?

LUCIFER

Huh. Hmm... I- Wow. That's a good question.

BELIAL

Yes or no?

LUCIFER

I'm going to say yes? Maybe it can be considered temptation?

BELIAL

What if the people are manipulating each other? You said we could give suggestions, but it's up to the people to act on them. That still makes the decision theirs.

LUCIFER

I mean, I guess that make sense.

BELIAL

Yes, it does. Clearly. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

LUCIFER

What does that have to do with humanity?

BELIAL

The stupidity of a small subset of humans can amass a frightening amount of destructive power. If one weak chain breaks, the rest will fall apart. A small amount of wrong wreaking havoc on average or higher amounts of righteousness should be sufficient in proving humanity is fallible, yes?

LUCIFER

Probably, but how are you going to go about it?

BELIAL

If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise, would it?

LUCIFER

But-

BELIAL

Look, I have class in two minutes, and it's a three-minute walk. Can you maybe give me some space? I'll get shit done. I always do.

LUCIFER

Belial-

BELIAL

Fine, deadline. Six days. No more, potentially less, shit'll start happening. Now stop disrupting my damn schedule and beat it. Oh, shit, wait. Can you do something for me real quick, babe?

LUCIFER

You're going to be late.

BELIAL

So is my paper for another class. Here. (*tosses keys to LUCIFER*) Room 106 in Redd House. It's a ten-page paper on medieval torture devices for my history class. It should be in a blue binder. Throw it in the drop box outside the office down the hall and two rooms to your right. And after that, keep God busy so I can get to work. Okay, byeeeeee. (*She leaves in a hurry*)

LUCIFER

Okay, sure, I guess. (*Pause*) Keep God busy, huh? I think I can manage that.

(*Exeunt, End of Act 1*)

ACT II

(Back in Heaven, GOD is watching the orb intently and with great tension. LUCIFER enters with food and drinks)

LUCIFER

How're we doing? *(Pause)* You look stressed. Six days into this, I don't blame you. Take a load off.

GOD

What is that?

LUCIFER

Candied bacon, black pudding, baked croissant French toast with a blackberry compote, and Irish coffee.

GOD

Breakfast for dinner?

LUCIFER

The world we made is big. It's always morning somewhere. Aren't we beyond time and space?

GOD

I made this universe. Don't take My credit from Me.

LUCIFER

Jesus Christ, chill. I'm even feeding your guys, and your hangry ass is gonna snap at me. I see how it is. I thought it turned out really good, too.

GOD

You're giving this to my archangels?

LUCIFER

And my guys. Equal footing, equal nourishment, fair challenge.

GOD

None of this is kosher.

LUCIFER

Really? Kosher? I mean, the salt is kosher, but that's what you're worried about?

GOD

I've said myself pork is unclean, blackberries can't be cleaned thoroughly enough to get rid of the dirt, I'd rather my followers stay sober, and no one- NO ONE- is to eat blood unless they are to drop straight into the deepest pits of Hell. (*Beat.*)

LUCIFER

Welp, England's fucked.

GOD

You gave my minions unclean food. That's cheating.

LUCIFER

You think some bacon and pudding will give my guys the upper hand?

GOD

Well, I- They shouldn't eat that.

LUCIFER

Why not?

GOD

Because I said so.

LUCIFER

Will they lose their powers from it?

GOD

Well, no.

LUCIFER

And the kosher decree was given to the humans worshipping you, right?

GOD

Yeah.

LUCIFER

Doesn't that make non-humans exempt?

GOD

Can you just stop being right?

LUCIFER

Oop, touched a nerve. My B!

GOD

I can't believe you...

LUCIFER

You don't have to eat it.

GOD

But-

LUCIFER

None of us really need to eat. Immortal? Just figured they'd enjoy it.

GOD

Of course. Pleasure. That's your deal.

LUCIFER

You don't reward you guys for their work?

GOD

They have my love and a home in Heaven. That's good enough.

LUCIFER

Yikes, dude.

(Enter SAMAEEL and RAPHAEL, both exhausted)

RAPHAEL

Where is Beelzebub? Where is that accursed gnat?

LUCIFER

I dunno. What's the damage?

RAPHAEL

The "damage" is a rampantly contagious plague. I can't heal all of them. They're dropping by the dozens, and Sam is at their wits' end trying to guide all their souls.

GOD

Samael, report.

SAMAEL

As of this minute in humans' time, seven hundred thousand souls are wandering the Earth, waiting for me to bring them home. And that's just in the United States.

LUCIFER

In just six days...?

SAMAEL

I don't like leaving souls to wander lost. I can't stay long.

RAPHAEL

Sam, you can barely stand. I had to carry you halfway because you sprained a wing. You need to rest.

SAMAEL

I need to bring them to Lucifer.

LUCIFER

Oh, fuck, that many? Right now?

GOD

And me, right? *(Pause)* Right?

SAMAEL

You really think any of those gun-crazy murder hobos are gonna make it up here?

LUCIFER

Well, we know where Asmodeus and Michael are.

RAPHAEL

There! *(RAPHAEL swats a fly that lands on the table)*

BEELZEBUB

OW!!

RAPHAEL

What is the meaning of this?!

BEELZEBUB

(Transforming into humanoid form, covered in ichor) I'd know what you mean if half my brain didn't get pureed into my bowels.

LUCIFER

Huh. Belial was right, you are shit-for-brains.

GOD

Language.

BEELZEBUB

Your cleric just turned my entrails into a Pollock piece. I think we have a free pass.

LUCIFER

I am *deceased*.

RAPHAEL

So is almost a percent of the globe.

GOD

You said seven hundred thousand.

SAMAEL

Just in the United States. There have been about a hundred fifty million cases. About ten million so far didn't make it.

LUCIFER

That many to sort...

GOD

Beelzebub, what have you done? Our game was to challenge the human race, not slaughter them!

BEELZEBUB

I just started spreading a new illness I've been working on. It was only supposed to incapacitate the average human for a few weeks, at most. I figured this would solve itself. You gonna finish that pudding?

LUCIFER

You didn't even finish yours.

BEELZEBUB

It makes for a nice hot tub. My joints really need it now.

LUCIFER

Taking a page from Bathory's book?

BEELZEBUB

If it works, it works. Can you pour some Epsom Salts in there?

LUCIFER

Best I have is Kosher salt.

BEELZEBUB

I'm sure that'll be fine. Thanks, boss. (*BEELZEBUB turns back into a fly and flies into the pudding bowl*)

LUCIFER

God, you do have a point. This isn't exactly what we were going for. Samael, Raphael, here. You deserve some extra protein.

RAPHAEL

O, bless you, Lucifer!

GOD

Excuse you?

SAMAEL

I can't stay, Lords. I need to keep guiding, and Raphael needs to save as many people as possible.

LUCIFER

Do so, but don't push yourselves too hard. If you burn yourselves out, you won't be able to save anyone.

GOD

Heed not the call to sloth, Raphael. You are not to let another human pass before their time according to my divine plan, is that clear?

RAPHAEL

Yes, my Lord. (*RAPHAEL exits in a hurry, with SAMAEL close behind*)

LUCIFER

You are such a dick.

GOD

My children are dropping like flies, and you dare tell the divine healer to rest? Humans don't have the luxury of rest until death.

LUCIFER

And what's the consequence? They come back to one of us?

GOD

They should be able to live a full life experiencing the world I made for them.

LUCIFER

Or what? (*Silence*) I'm going to find Uriel.

GOD

Since when are you in charge of My angels?

LUCIFER

I just need to know how Bubba's plague got so out of control. Uriel and Gabriel are our best bets.

GOD

We're not leaving Beelzebub alone here.

LUCIFER

Uriel will probably need to know that side of the story any- Bubba? Where'd you go?

GOD

The bowl's bubbling. (*LUCIFER reaches their right hand in to pull BEELZEBUB out*) EW! Don't put your hand in- aww, gross. Why are you like this?

LUCIFER

You alright, Bubba?

BEELZEBUB

Bzz... bz... (*Everything hurts*)

LUCIFER

Oof, you're burning up. Guess Kosher salt and Epsom salt aren't the same thing.

GOD

O, Me, make it stop.

LUCIFER

Where's Uriel's station?

GOD

The study is upstairs. Please don't get blood on anything.

LUCIFER

I'll be fine. I'm left-handed.

(LUCIFER exits, pudding dripping between their fingers. GOD takes the Irish coffee and follows.)

INFO CHORUS

On Earth, the green disc, we forever reside
At the mercy of beings beyond our control
That think that we do not know, but we know.
Their secrets are secrets no more.

We have a Miss who is lovely and wise
With voice like a harp, and who opened our eyes,
For the way we were told the world works
Is strange looking deeper inside.

She said microchips are in those vaccines
So the government can track what we do
What we say
Who we are.

I read on FaceBook it can turn you gay.
My health and my virtue come first.
My body, my choice.
I worked in healthcare, and now you're firing me?

If you take it, you'll get autism and die.
Global warming? But it's snowing outside.
It's all a plot for the money.
Science is a pyramid scheme.

Bleach kills germs, right?

Maybe if we inject that...

If they take our guns, how shall we defend

Ourselves from another peoples' peace?

Maybe sheep tranquilizer will cure it.

This virus isn't real. I can't see it, can you?

I'll shoot the virus when I see it.

This is a bio-weapon manufactured by another country.

Clearly, it's personal. They think they're smarter than us.

Better than us, stronger than us, richer than us.

They'll try to say they'll live longer than us.

But we know the truth. Our Miss told us so.

(In URIEL'S study. A grand observatory/library with a dumbwaiter GABRIEL uses to get in and out. URIEL is occupied with several large texts, perplexed. LUCIFER, carrying BEELZEBUB in fly form, and GOD abruptly barge into the study)

URIEL

How? How is this possible? Beyond reason, beyond semblance of sense or sensibility, beyond asininity-

LUCIFER

Hey, Uriel!

URIEL

Ah! Good heavens, knock next time. I've a lot on my mind, and I'm quite stressed.

GOD

I was afraid you'd say that.

URIEL

Black pudding, really? With no bowl? And there's a fly in it. I'm afraid that's not my department.

LUCIFER

You jest.

URIEL

Of course I do. How else can I cope with this?

BEELZEBUB

Bzz-bzzt! (*I'm sorry!*)

URIEL

I know it's not your fault. Honestly, you're the last thing I could begin to worry about. And you don't look particularly threatening right now.

BEELZEBUB

Bzzzzz. Bzz. Bzz. (*Raphael swatted me.*)

URIEL

Raph? Really? You know it's bad if Raphael's throwing hands. I'm sure they're very sorry, Beelzebub.

BEELZEBUB

Bz bzz bz. (*It's okay!*)

GOD

Uriel, why hasn't humanity fought this off? Beelzebub estimated only a few weeks of contagion for most.

URIEL

I've been sending messages to them with Gabriel. According to all my epidemiology research and some collaborations with the scientists that reside with us, Beelzebub's prediction should've been correct. Gabriel's been coming back, so I know the messages are getting to the people.

LUCIFER

Why don't you do it?

URIEL

Gabriel's a much more gifted speaker than me. I've the charisma of a dead fly.

BEELZEBUB

Bzz! (*Hey!*)

URIEL

No offense.

LUCIFER

So Gabriel gives the directions that you wrote?

URIEL

I write them, he delivers them, and we trust the people to properly interpret them.

LUCIFER

You trust the people to interpret divine messages exactly as written and intended?
All the time?

URIEL

Yes. Humans are a trustworthy species, as they are built in the image and likeness of God.

LUCIFER

We are so screwed.

(GABRIEL rides in on the dumbwaiter, announcing his arrival with a trumpet fanfare, seeming quite pleased with their work)

GABRIEL

Hello, friends! God, Lucifer... you got a little blood on your hand there, bud.

URIEL

Have you delivered my message to the humans?

GABRIEL

Yes. They seemed very intrigued. And they smelled weird. Kind of dank. They were very happy to see me! *(Silence)* Did I say something?

GOD

How do you decide who gets these messages?

GABRIEL

Unless specifically directed by you, Lord, they're randomly selected.

URIEL

We noticed a drop in our faith numbers due to reports of biases and discrimination, so we're trying to distribute our messages equally across race, sexuality, gender, socioeconomic, and geographical/political circumstances.

LUCIFER

So the gay community is connecting with you? I thought they were sinners.

GOD

I never said that. That was Paul.

GABRIEL

That tracks. Paul sucks.

URIEL

Agreed.

BEELZEBUB

Bzz, bzz! (He's a prick)

LUCIFER

Oh. Bubba, remind me to absolve the entire final third of the Seventh Circle of Hell. Sorry for the mix-up. You'll be getting a large influx of new souls soon. Someone should get poor Samael a drink...

GABRIEL

My Lord, is something wrong with how we've been doing all this?

GOD

No, no, just curious. So you send divine messages to, say, people who are poor?

GABRIEL

Of course.

GOD

Gay?

GABRIEL

Yeah.

GOD

Black?

GABRIEL

Uh-huh.

GOD

Immigrants?

GABRIEL

Gladly.

GOD

Children?

GABRIEL

Yup.

GOD

In any language?

GABRIEL

Any and all.

GOD

Disabled?

GABRIEL

No problem.

GOD

Conservatives?

GABRIEL

If I have to...

GOD

Stoners? (*Long Pause*)

GABRIEL

Oh, oh no, it had never occurred to me that they were... Gee dang it, not your best work, Gabe.

GOD

Did they understand what you were getting at?

GABRIEL

I thought so at first, but if they were smoking the Devil's Lettuce...

LUCIFER

You named weed after me, too?

GABRIEL

I may have given them the wrong language. They were slurring a lot. It sounded like Greek. I think it may have been stoned English, in hindsight.

GOD

Why are there so many languages? Who decided humanity couldn't communicate universally?

ALL

You.

GOD

What?

URIEL

Tower of Babel.

GABRIEL

Now that I think about it, humanity couldn't reach us just by building a tower to Heaven, right? They'd suffocate after breaking through the atmosphere.

URIEL

Also, Heaven isn't really "above" Earth. It's a separate spiritual plane.

GOD

They wouldn't have known that at the time. I needed to stop them from finding that out the hard way.

LUCIFER

By striking down the tower, killing the people on and in it from the collapse, and punishing them after the fact by scattering them across the globe, all speaking in ways that aren't mutually intelligible?

GABRIEL

I never really got that either, but I've never been super bright.

URIEL

Someone had to invent and construct all those languages, you know. It was a massive pain.

GOD

Is that important?

URIEL

It... may be. Gabriel, how old were the humans you met?

GABRIEL

Pretty young. Late teens, early twenties.

URIEL

Where did you find them?

GABRIEL

Behind a residence hall.

URIEL

Collegiates. We may still have a chance. There's a handful of Classics majors out there that could've understood you.

GABRIEL

I think one of them did.

GOD

Who?

GABRIEL

It was a young lady, and she listened intently given the circumstances.

URIEL

Did she try to translate?

GABRIEL

No, but she responded in Greek a few times. Clear Greek, not unintelligible stoner talk. She mentioned she'd spread stuff around.

URIEL

Someone did get the message, then. Good. We should find her posthaste. What is her name?

GABRIEL

I think it was Bea. Or, no, wait, Leah?

GOD

Well, Bea or Leah? Which one?

GABRIEL

Oh, both! Leah's her last name. Her full name is Bea Leah.

(Silence)

URIEL

Bea Leah?

GABRIEL

Yeah! I'm sure of it. Bea Leah.

URIEL

Say her name again. Slowly.

GABRIEL

(slowly) Beeeaa Leeeah. Bea Leah? Bea...

URIEL

Say it really fast.

GABRIEL

(slowly figuring it out) Bea Leah, BeaLeah, Belia, Belial... Belial? Beli... Oh. Oh, no.

LUCIFER

That's my GIRL!!! Hear that, Bubba? Our Deception Queen is going to keep your plague alive!

BEELZEBUB

Bzzz! Bzz bzz bzz. (No! That's not what I wanted.)

LUCIFER

You didn't want that?

BEELZEBUB

BZ! (NO!)

LUCIFER

This means we're going to win!

URIEL

At what cost?

LUCIFER

What do you mean?

URIEL

Beelzebub, change forms, please.

(They do. They are a mangled, pained, bloodied heap, extremely out of breath)

BEELZEBUB

Is it okay if I don't stand? I kinda can't.

URIEL

First, you angered the angels enough that the healer incapacitated your plague source. Then, Belial intercepted Gabriel's message and tricked the rest of humanity into believing the opposite of what we'd set out to do. Now they're killing themselves and each other with illness and stupidity, and Michael and Asmodeus are stuck in the middle of it all. Are you that concerned with winning?

LUCIFER

Wasn't that the idea? Isn't that the objective of the game?

GABRIEL

Dude, you won this deal easily a millennium ago.

GOD

Gabriel!

GABRIEL

Bring Belial back. She's done her job.

LUCIFER

I might. Depending.

BEELZEBUB

Depending on what, my Lord?

LUCIFER

Your minions can quit. But our game doesn't truly end until You admit defeat, God.

GOD

You dirty goatheaded swine!

LUCIFER

Admit that You are not all-powerful, not all-knowing, and not wholly-benevolent, as evidenced by the fallibility of the humans created in Your likeness, and I will call Belial back. We play until one of us raises their white flag.

GOD

Do you have any attachment to morals? To life? To mercy, law, peace? Don't you care what happens to humanity?

LUCIFER

I have no real stake in the fall of humanity, as long as it isn't completely wiped out. I have no reason to call it off. Do you? What'll it be, God Almighty? Your Earth, or your pride? *(Pause)*

GOD

You don't know where she is either, do you?

LUCIFER

Yeah, I have no clue.

GOD

Oh, Me, okay.

URIEL

What are we to do now, my Lord?

GOD

Let me see that orb over here. It can fast forward, right?

URIEL

It can move the Earthly plane into the future, but we can't go back to the past from there.

GOD

I thought there was a rewind feature on it?

URIEL

There was, but we removed it.

GOD

Why would you remove that?

URIEL

We found out that returning to the past didn't destroy that future timeline. It just created an alternate one.

LUCIFER

So *You're* responsible for the multiverse?

GOD

I still don't see the issue.

URIEL

It duplicated existing life as well as their souls. So in alternate universes where a duplicate person dies of a different cause than they would've in the original timeline-

LUCIFER

Samael has to gather those soul copies when their time comes, too.

URIEL

Exactly.

LUCIFER

How has he not tried to unionize yet?

GABRIEL

He has. Twice.

GOD

I told him no.

LUCIFER

Why?

GOD

There is no "why". I'm God. I said "no", and that's the end of it.

BEELZEBUB

Bzz. (not translating that)

LUCIFER

Woah, man!

GABRIEL

I appreciate your honesty.

GOD

I'm fast forwarding this.

URIEL

Are you sure?

GOD

Yes, time heals all wounds and all that. This will regulate itself. Let's jump to... May? Oh. OH. Okay, let's try something else. August? Not much better. Further, further, further... November, hey, the orange man's not in office anymore. We're getting somewhere. Things have to get better now, right? ... Right? January, looks like- *(Long pause. Everyone, including LUCIFER, recoils in horror)* And we can't go back?

URIEL

We can't go back.

*(MICHAEL and ASMODEUS are locked in battle amongst each other as members of the CHORUS are protesting, punching, shooting, kicking, shouting, and other acts of physical or mental violence, alluding to the January 6th Capitol Insurrection. ASMODEUS aggravates CHORUS to attack, and MICHAEL desperately attempts to defend as many humans as possible from punches, insults, and gunfire. Occasionally, SAMAEEL will lead a human offstage. The stage is *controlled!* chaos.)*

WAR CHORUS

Board your homes and kill your lights,

A hurricane strikes all tonight.

And in the midst of pepper mist

Flies rubber hail and furious fists.

And Molotovs, our gods of thunder,

Detonate our rivals asunder,

Then by default, our way is right.

An act of anger angered more,

And their fury furied the world,
Swifter than COVID spread their hate.
For freedom, they'd no longer wait.
The line between who's foe and friend
Has broken at world's deathly end.
Law caught the virus quick and died.

In carnage, hid amongst the flames
Are we, who play a separate game.
We, who have no life or job,
A necessary miserly mob.
Our hymnals sing of shattered glass,
The gateway to the food and cash
Secured solely for richest caste.

I have to graduate in this,
Drown myself in scholarly bliss
And hope there will be something left
After the Earth is burned, bereft.
If all the world like this persists,
By guns and germs, cease and desist
My future, for it won't exist.

MICHAEL

This is too much! Asmodeus, stop them!

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus does not remember half these faces.

MICHAEL

The news said this would be a peaceful protest.

ASMODEUS

Michael thinks these bastards know what “peace” is?!

MICHAEL

Stop encouraging them.

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus can't tell who's attacking and who's defending anymore. There's too many.

SAMAEL

Excuse me, guys. Cover me.

ASMODEUS

Peaceful. Yep. Walk in the fucking park. Keep it up, hippies. Keep that peace.

SAMAEL

Yeah, no, can't carry three at a time.

MICHAEL

I don't think we should be joking right now.

ASMODEUS

Well, what then? Asmodeus isn't making these guys rage.

MICHAEL

Then what, they're making each other mad?

ASMODEUS

Looks like. Free will and all that.

MICHAEL

Is that even a thing?

ASMODEUS

Not the time, Michael. If Asmodeus hurries, maybe Asmodeus can stop-

SAMAEL

Look out!

(A gunshot rings. ASMODEUS grabs their arm and bellows)

MICHAEL

Asmodeus! (*MICHAEL checks ASMODEUS' arm. There is a gold fluid running out of it*) Ichor? It actually went through you?

SAMAEL

That's impossible!

MICHAEL

Their weapons are stronger than I could have imagined. They really are a race of war.

ASMODEUS

Mmm, Michael? When did things get dark?

MICHAEL

Asmodeus, are you...? You can't be dying, can you? Is that even... I never thought that...

RIOTER

That's for our Miss, demon!

SAMAEL

Your what?

RIOTER

Our Miss, our Savior, our source of truth and strength. She promised she'd deliver us from this. She didn't say how, but maybe if I offer a liberal's blood-

SAMAEL

Liberal?

RIOTER

Hoo-wee, is that piss coming out of your arm?

ASMODEUS

That why it stings?

MICHAEL

You can see us?

RIOTER

Yeah, you two and the other queer in the dress. You must all be a bunch of libtards, eh? Just what the Miss is lookin' for.

SAMAEL

Who is your “Miss”? Who is that?

RIOTER

She calls herself “Miss Information”. She posts the truth. She predicts the future with the internet. She’s leading us to salvation from the government’s oppressive regi-

SAMAEL

One person?

RIOTER

One lady. One of those social media influencer types.

SAMAEL

Influencer... influencing, manipulating, truth-bending... Michael, I need to find God and Uriel. Maybe we’re not too late.

MICHAEL

You’re just gonna leave us here?!

SAMAEL

Death waits for no one. Take Asmodeus and go. Now.

(SAMAEL flies off)

ASMODEUS

Asmodeus needs sleep now.

MICHAEL

No, don’t! I-I need to find Raphael. *(MICHAEL tries to fly and is shot out of the air in the wing)* No!

(As the WAR CHORUS mob swarms the two angels and exits with them, URIEL, GOD, GABRIEL, BEELZEBUB, and LUCIFER search for BELIAL. GOD is still holding the orb to try to look at multiple places at once)

GOD

Michael? Michael! Asmodeus! Where’d they go?

URIEL

It’s lagging. How is it lagging?

GABRIEL

Too much activity.

LUCIFER

Bubba, can you transform again? My arm's getting sore.

BEELZEBUB

Bzz bzz- (But-)

LUCIFER

You've walked off worse. Come on.

BEELZEBUB

Bz. (Fine) (*BEELZEBUB turns humanoid, is able to walk/hobble if with immense pain and effort, now covered in black pudding and dried ichor*) Ow, owowow.

Immortality sucks.

LUCIFER

I need to talk to you for a second.

BEELZEBUB

I doubt I can be of much help right now.

LUCIFER

No, I just want to commend you for what you've done.

BEELZEBUB

I really didn't want to do that much.

LUCIFER

I understand. I didn't fully agree with stopping it, but I see where you're coming from after God fast forwarded this.

BEELZEBUB

It shouldn't have gotten this bad. It was only supposed to be a little flu thing. It's been a century since that got out of hand, I figured it'd be fine.

LUCIFER

And how did that get out of hand?

BEELZEBUB

People acted really strangely. They protested masks and rioted, and hospitals filled up too quickly to take care of everyone. The first few vaccines, when the idea of a vaccine was a new concept, yes, I can see where people weren't sure about trying it out. But a hundred years later, one would think- Why are you bringing this up? I'm responsible for more death than Asmodeus. Even consequences of violence, wounds can get infected, and at that point, they're my responsibility.

LUCIFER

I've never seen a demon so remorseful. Do you care about humanity?

BEELZEBUB

Of course. In a twisted way.

LUCIFER

Twisted how?

BEELZEBUB

Without humanity, we don't have a job anymore. There's other lives than humans, but we've put so much stock into them and allowed them to evolve so much. It would take millennia to get anything else to the level where we're at. If humanity dies out from this, we're back to where we started.

LUCIFER

Can't argue with that.

BEELZEBUB

It's all my fault.

LUCIFER

No. No. I wanted to tell you to your taller self that you did everything right. Every time this has happened, someone else took your work and expanded on it to dangerous levels. That's not your fault. It's hers. I kept rewarding her behavior over your work. I can't let her keep doing that. Not to you. Not to me. Not even to God.
(Pause)

BEELZEBUB

It's come up in conversation with Belial before.

LUCIFER

What has?

BEELZEBUB

What I just told you.

LUCIFER

So why would she, knowing this, make humanity spread your illnesses this rampantly?

BEELZEBUB

In her mind, if she can't rule Hell, no one can.

LUCIFER

She isn't destroying Hell by doing this.

BEELZEBUB

No, but she's stunting its growth. With no more humans coming in and out of the afterlife, what's stopping the final fight between us and God? What's stopping her from going for an even higher seat than Hell?

LUCIFER

She told you this?

BEELZEBUB

And bade me not to utter a word.

LUCIFER

You could've just ignored her and came to me with this sooner.

BEELZEBUB

She told me you wouldn't believe me, and that she's wrapped around your finger, apparently in a sexual sense. You're more likely to believe a sex partner than a fly. *(Pause)* I'm beginning to think she was lying.

LUCIFER

Not entirely. The fact that she's absolutely right is the worst part about this. The most convincing tongue controls the brain, and that inspires all action on Earth and beyond.

BEELZEBUB

Are we too far gone to save what's left?

LUCIFER

I don't know. But I'm not going to let her be anything but remorseful for her success.

BEELZEBUB

We have to find her first.

LUCIFER

I already know where she is.

BEELZEBUB

But you told God-

LUCIFER

I fucking lied. The only things covering that monster's ass anymore are the scars and bruises she'll have when I'm finished with her. Rest now, my friend. You've done your duty well. (*BEELZEBUB turns into a fly and rests in LUCIFER's coat pocket as SAMAEEL enters*)

SAMAEEL

My Lord-

LUCIFER

I know it's Belial. Don't waste your breath. You've used plenty already.

SAMAEEL

But Michael and Asmodeus, they're-

GOD

What do you mean you can't fix this?!

URIEL

I don't know what to tell you. It's not manufactured to handle this level of motion.

SAMAEEL

What's up with them?

GABRIEL

Hey, Sam. We're having some connection issues. What's going on out there?

SAMAEEL

"What isn't" would be better to ask.

GABRIEL

Describe it.

SAMAEL

I can't. There's too much of everything going on at once. I don't know where to start.

GABRIEL

Can you summarize it?

SAMAEL

The number two cause of human death is COVID. Number one cause of death as of today is each other.

GOD

Uriel, you dolt! If we don't figure this out, we'll never find Belial.

LUCIFER

Or you could just follow me.

URIEL

You know where she is?

LUCIFER

I just remembered. Come.

(As they make their way to BELIAL, the INFO CHORUS is absorbed in laptops, phones, and some are holding TV remotes and watching Fox News. BELIAL is in her dorm room, typing away at her desk with tons of monitors on at once.)

INFO CHORUS

My truth is the one truth because it is mine.

Thou brains in jars change not my views, for they are mine, so they are true.

Trust the self, and let not the intellectuals flex

Their heavy books and expensive texts.

With graphite to papyrus we're enslaved.

The life of evidence and science ends

Today, tomorrow, and evermore.

Gone with rhetoric, gone with compassion, gone with education.

Our guns be our rhetoric,

Our hate be our compassion,

Miss Information, by Carly Follina – DRFT #6 – Rev. 9/7/2022

Our actions be our education.
Our lives be our own
Our deaths be our freedom,
Our deaths never happen
For I know in my heart I am right,
And my heart cannot bear to be wrong.

If science is wrong,
If evidence is irrelevant,
If language is not absorbed,
If sounds are drowned out,
If love is ignored,
If warnings we unheed,
If alternative facts we deny,
I can finally be someone.
I can finally decide.

Better to die under my own lie
Than live under someone else's truth,
And take to dust with me the heresy
That is common sense and literacy!
I live and die on my own terms.
I am worse off if I am made to learn.

BELIAL

Wooo! Oh my GOD, I am KILLING it! These fuckers will eat anything up! I might have to get another monitor to keep track of all this... (*SAMAEL, URIEL, and GOD practically kick the door down*) Hey, hey! How's it hanging? Brownies in the fridge. Help yourself. Pull up a chair.

URIEL

What in the world?

SAMAEL

This is where you've holed up.

GOD

Belial, why? What have you done?

BELIAL

I put on pants. You fucking happy, Uri?

GOD

Stop this. Now.

BELIAL

I've stopped a while ago. I just made a few words in a few posts. The humans took care of the rest by themselves. All I have to do now is sit back, relax, and watch the world burn.

SAMAEL

Strange. You don't have any news channels on to do so.

URIEL

She's on Twitter. And it seems FaceBook's becoming similarly deplorable.

BELIAL

If you're quick enough, you can catch an entire character arc in just a few minutes. Watch. Anti-mask "freedom fighter" from Louisiana-

URIEL

That's a thing?

SAMAEL

That's a thing.

GOD

That's a thing.

BELIAL

That's a thing. She says "If you are wearing your mask in public, your breathing your own carbon monoxide into your lungs-"

URIEL

Asinine!

GOD

Is she insane?!

URIEL

She used the wrong form of “your”. Twice.

SAMAEL

Pretty sure humans exhale carbon dioxide. She’s about an atom off.

BELIAL

“You are all sheep. Laffable-“ spelled wrong, “letting the govt infringe-“, also spelled wrong, “on you’re freedoms. God Himself will stop the fake virus. The only thing to fear is God Himse-“ aaaaand she’s dead.

URIEL

Dead?

SAMAEL

I’m on it.

URIEL

No. You wait.

SAMAEL

But her soul-

URIEL

You know exactly where she’s going. She can wait.

SAMAEL

Souls don’t deserve to be lost.

URIEL

She was lost to us a long time ago.

GOD

Samael, you are to drag Belial back to Hell where she belongs.

BELIAL

I like it here. It’s endlessly entertaining.

GOD

This is far, far beyond your master's orders.

BELIAL

My master's orders were to prove the fallibility of man and not to cease until God surrenders.

GOD

"Prove their fallibility" doesn't mean kill them. That wasn't our deal. That wasn't part of the game. This wasn't what we agreed to.

BELIAL

Do you know who you're talking to?

GOD

Lucifer's second-in-command, and she's in a heap of trouble.

BELIAL

The second-in-command, most powerful of all demons and only the silver medal. Is that fair? What makes me so powerful on Earth and in Hell, and yet not enough to rule over both?

URIEL

That's what this is about for you. You want Lucifer's seat.

BELIAL

I deserve Lucifer's seat. I can and did topple an entire planet by myself. And I didn't raise a single weapon or spread a single virus.

URIEL

What are you talking about? This was all your doing.

BELIAL

Did I make the virus? Did I spread it?

URIEL

You stole my messages from Gabriel.

BELIAL

Exactly. Plagiarism goes a long way, loves. If it makes you feel any better, I didn't change it at all.

URIEL

Yes, because my integrity as an author is what I'm concerned about.

GOD

How do we know you're not lying?

BELIAL

You should know that I am. Everything I say is a lie.

(URIEL freezes and starts muttering to herself)

URIEL

But if that's a lie, then the sentence is true/, and if the sentence is true, then what you just said is-

GOD

/Uriel, it's a paradox. Don't think about it.

SAMAEL

I've had enough of this.

(SAMAEL suddenly grabs BELIAL and pins her to the wall)

BELIAL

Agh! Ooo, kinky.

SAMAEL

Look. I don't know why you've gone this far. I don't care that you've gone this far. You've proven your strength, you've proven your point, and there isn't going to be an Earth to rule over if you don't stop this now.

BELIAL

So what?

SAMAEL

So what? I'll cut off your deceitful hands and puncture that lying larynx, that's "so what".

GOD

Calm thyself, Samael-

SAMAEL

Have you ever pried a soul from its still-broken body, from its loved ones, from its life, and hauled it in your unholy arms to its judge? Have you heard a full life's story in a single trip? How about seventy thousand in a single day? And how much do you think it hurts to let these people go and not know where they end up? I know you haven't a compassionate bone in your body, but look at the bags upon bags upon bags under these eyes, these eyes that carry the weight of tens of millions of souls a day now, these eyes that are a library of lives whose stories ended too soon. And you'd destroy this angel's sanity for power? What will it take to change your mind?

BELIAL

God, can you admit you're not perfect real quick?

GOD

I thought you were after Lucifer's seat?

BELIAL

Don't change the subject. You give up, the game stops.

GOD

Absolutely not.

BELIAL

If You let everyone die, what are You going to be God of?

URIEL

I'm staying out of this. (*URIEL examines the monitors*)

BELIAL

These humans are our entire purpose for being. If they're no more, then what are we? Why are we even here? We can look after the souls that are left, but why? What difference would it make if we don't? Samael can retire eventually, but what next? Would you rather be perfect with no purpose or imperfect with a reason to go on? Thou perfect, all-knowing, all-benevolent, all-powerful God of a void. Of a lifeless rock. Of nothing-

GOD

I'm not! I'm not, okay? I'm not perfect, I never have been, and I never will be. If I was, this whole thing could've been avoided. No one would be dead. No one would be miserable. I wouldn't have let it happen. If I was all-benevolent, I could've stopped all this pain and hatred. If I was all-knowing, I could've seen what you were doing before you even did it. If I were all-powerful, none of this and none of the atrocities that came before would have happened. I'm a fallible God who makes fallible things and who is begging a demon to save what's left. Please.

(Pause)

BELIAL

Oh my God. That worked? That actually worked. Oh my God. We won! We did it!

GOD

What?

BELIAL

You are so gullible. So delightfully, blessedly gullible.

SAMAEL

Okay, you've shattered God's pride. Good job. Now fix this.

BELIAL

Yeah, about that...

SAMAEL

What is it now?

BELIAL

I don't actually know how to fix this. I didn't think I'd get this far.

SAMAEL

I don't believe there's an ounce of truth in anything you say, you monster.

BELIAL

I mean, you're right, but I genuinely don't know how to fix this. Ignorance is an evil, but it's not the same as dishonesty. I don't know if it can be fixed. All I did was say a few things. The humans did the rest. That much I can actually promise by Lucifer's throne is true.

SAMAEL

Then all is lost. Everything we've ever created. Everything we've ever worked for. Gone.

URIEL

Perhaps not. I'm scrolling through Belial's post history. The message I sent with Gabriel isn't there.

BELIAL

Huh. Suppose I never did get to that.

URIEL

Then we still have a chance.

SAMAEL

Do you remember what you wrote?

URIEL

I remember everything I've ever written. I just need to translate a few things here, and... done.

GOD

"To free man of Beelzebub's thrall, heed not lying Belial's call, or Asmodeus possess you all, and violently shall humanity fall." That's it?

URIEL

That's it.

GOD

It's a bit cryptic. Can you simplify it?

URIEL

It's perfectly straightforward to me.

GOD

Not to people self-medicating with sheep tranquilizer.

SAMAEL

Just tell it like it is.

URIEL

Fine. “You have been lied to. The virus is real. You are not being targeted. Not by the government, not by any party, not by any nation, not by your personal enemies. The vaccine will save you and return the world to the way it was. You can still save yourselves and each other. Do the right thing.”

GOD

Please work. Please, please work. *(Long pause, almost a minute)* Well?

(URIEL stares at the screen, holding back tears)

URIEL

They don’t believe it. They’re saying the account was hacked. I... *(URIEL cries)*

SAMAEL

Shall I go? *(Pause)*

GOD

Do what you must.

(SAMAEL exits. LUCIFER enters)

LUCIFER

Belial.

BELIAL

O, Master! I did it, I did it, Master. God admitted it. We won. We-

LUCIFER

Shut up.

BELIAL

But, Master, I-

LUCIFER

You’re coming back with me. Now.

BELIAL

I was just doing my job.

LUCIFER

And for that, you will answer to me. *(To GOD)* I don’t think I could ever have the right words for you. For everything. I can’t even begin to- I’m- I- *(Pause)* I won’t torture you further with my presence. Come, Belial.

(BELIAL and LUCIFER exit)

GOD

What have we done?

(RAPHAEL is carried into the room by GABRIEL, exhausted and weeping)

GABRIEL

My gracious Lord? *(Pause)* If it means anything, Lucifer sent me to give you their official surrender. *(Pause)* Though I suppose the cost was greater than the value.

GOD

To be fair, I surrendered first. Belial tricked me into-

RAPHAEL

Who cares? Truly?

GABRIEL

Raphael, you dare speak to-

RAPHAEL

Michael and Asmodeus are dead. Both of them. *(Silence)* I didn't think it was possible, either. I ran away from the hospital because I knew none of my patients were going to make it. I couldn't take it anymore, and then when I got outside, they were... they were... *(through tears)* dismembered. Wings torn to shreds, severed heads face-down in their own ichor. Everything about them was scattered by that mob.

GABRIEL

How is that possible? Mortals shouldn't be able to-

RAPHAEL

(Holds up a bullet) This was in Asmodeus' arm. Guess we've never had an angel shot with a gun before. This warfare is beyond anything we could've conceived.

GOD

Raphael-

(SAMAEL enters with MICHAEL's head)

SAMAEL

I came at a bad time.

GOD

That's-

SAMAEL

You have a right to know. I'm sorry.

(GOD takes MICHAEL's head and weeps)

GABRIEL

What happens when an angel dies?

GOD

I don't know.

SAMAEL

I'm sorry. All of you, peace be unto thee. I have more work yet.

RAPHAEL

Samael... where?

SAMAEL

The hospital. Please rest here, Raphael.

RAPHAEL

But God told me to-

SAMAEL

Rest now. We've done all we can. Godspeed, angels all. *(SAMAEL exits)*

(Silence)

GABRIEL

My Lord?

GOD

I am Lord to no one. Not anymore. Once you have completed your duties, you are all free.

URIEL

Free? But we exist to serve You, God.

GOD

Serve Me in what? There's nothing left.

GABRIEL

What are we to do without You?

GOD

Whatever you'd like.

URIEL

But, my gracious Lord-

GOD

Not another word on the matter. Or any matter. Ever again.

(GOD prepares to exit.)

GABRIEL

The multiverse-!

GOD

What was that?

GABRIEL

The orb, when You tried rewinding it, remember? It created separate timelines. If You hadn't done that, then all would be lost here, but we have more chances with this.

GOD

What about this Earth?

GABRIEL

This Earth is doomed, but on the other Earths we made, this never happened. We've opened up entire worlds with this little mess-up.

GOD

What about Michael and Asmodeus?

GABRIEL

We don't need them.

GOD

How could you speak so callously and uncaringly about the deceased?

URIEL

Wait, I think Gabriel's on to something.

GOD

Uriel-

GABRIEL

They served as harbingers of war and violence, righteous or otherwise. Their sacrifice was valiant, but I think it served something even greater. Humans did all these horrible things to each other inspired by anger and violence, yes?

GOD

As an evolutionary remnant from their primal days, yes.

GABRIEL

But they don't need this primal rage anymore. We've evolved beyond this. It sounds like Lucifer is keeping Belial on a tight leash from now on, and Beelzebub's recovery is sure to be a slow one. All sources of pain and deceit are out of commission.

GOD

Because everyone's dead.

RAPHAEL

Because everyone *here* is dead, and all their consciousnesses will be safeguarded by me. Because of Your mistake, You've created another opportunity for us to do even better things.

GOD

You faithful types always figure out how to circle things back to Me. I don't actually have a single divine plan, I hope you've figured that out by now.

RAPHAEL

No one said You had to. Can we try again, my Lord? *(Pause)*

GOD

Michael, my son. You've served and protected us well. I'm sorry I couldn't have done the same for you. *(Pause)* Give Me a moment.

(GOD exits with a newfound determination. Meanwhile, SAMAEEL is escorting the final souls of this timeline to the afterlife.)

DEAD CHORUS

(Requiem)

My chest shall heave and burn me nevermore,
It will not hurt to breathe if breathings cease.
The path from pain of Death to Heaven's door,
What was it worth? How will I sleep in peace?
Was there a way to stop this? Is this how
Everything mankind's worked for up to now
Shall wither, whimper, and declare "deceased"?

SAMAEL

I pity thee, but I can heal no more.
Abandon Earth and lock its rotted door.

CHORUS

I'll never know the face that murdered me,
For I don't think the murderer even knows
That they're the final stroke of story's end.
Then is it murder? Or an accident?
Or there's a sickened soul that wished me dead.
A sickness is in truth the perfect crime,
For one cannot trace what is left behind.

SAMAEL

They have been judged, but the result's the same.
All ends in death, but with a different name.

CHORUS

Wilt thou blame me for what I have become?
Please do. I blame myself, and that's the cause
Of your distress. I'll be a minor loss.
You'll never know that I did change my mind
The second both my veins were cleaved in twine.

And now, by my own hand, I'm declared dead,
For I could not be saved without a bed.

SAMAEL

To think, life fills the young with such despair
They cry for me, and make their home interred.

CHORUS

Whether you've learned the truth, it changes not
The damages your ignorance hath wrought.

Even to Karens, I'm no longer caring,
For we have passed the point of man repairing.

The truth, a lie, its meaning doesn't show,
If you are in denial, you should know

That I'm the last of humans' souls to go.

(The last soul exits, leaving SAMAEL alone C)

SAMAEL

The souls have been returned and sorted all.

So too I am now free from Heaven's thrall.

Since *Revelations* hath become a lie,

Retire Samael. This Earth hath died.

(Enter GOD)

GOD

That is for Me to decide. Samael, bring that last soul back.

SAMAEL

God?

GOD

I have a new job for you. I was reminded of the other worlds we made by mistake,
and how there are probably still living people there. Why don't you go serve them,
and we'll give humanity another shot?

SAMAEL

That feels like a cop-out, honestly. If we completely shift our focus to another universe, everything we made here would've been for nothing. Your Michael didn't die just to be abandoned, did he? I see what You're getting at, but I think that'll make things worse.

GOD

I hear you and admit that I am wrong.

SAMAEL

Really? Just like that?

GOD

Just like that. I don't want you to feel like your work was for nothing, either. So instead of dealing in death, how about a chance at human life?

SAMAEL

What do you mean?

GOD

I want you to be My new Adam. And I want this, the last of old humanity's souls, to be your Eve.

SAMAEL

Uhhhh. What do you think?

CHORUS GIRL

He's been kind and supportive bringing me here, but we just met. He promised me he'd take me back to my family. I don't think I'd be happy being alive knowing the rest of my loved ones are waiting for me.

GOD

Good point. You don't have to, then. Peace be with you.

(CHORUS GIRL exits)

SAMAEL

So, no Eve. Or at least not her. What should I do?

GOD

That was the only semblance of a plan I had. You can still be Adam. I just have to talk with Heaven and Hell to find a suitable companion for you.

SAMAEL

But will I still remember what we've done? The pains of all the souls I've brought away? I can't bring forth a better humanity when what we've done to this one still weighs on me.

GOD

You will have past knowledge of everything, unfortunately including their pain. Unlike Uriel, you can communicate and teach those that come after you not to repeat those mistakes. Of all the angels, you've the greatest care for humanity. Why not be their new start?

SAMAEL

I think this is a bit too complicated. People will understand You more if You are straightforward. Just make another Adam from Your core, and start the world the way You did before.

GOD

So what are you to do?

SAMAEL

I am to rest.

GOD

And what am I to do?

SAMAEL

That's up to You.

GOD

But the decisions I make hurt people.

SAMAEL

And so You need to learn from those and try again. You must learn from Yourself as You expect Your creations to. If You're untrue to You, they'll all reject, or worse, misinterpret what You give them. Now go, create Your Adam and Your Eve. Call me if You need me again.

(SAMAEL exits. GOD creates the new ADAM and EVE, who awaken once the Garden of Eden appears. There is a large tree in the center bearing fruit, with thick brambles beneath it. BELIAL, in full snakeskin garb, lurks in the shadows beneath it)

GOD

Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. Including, and especially... (*GOD points to the Tree of Knowledge*) this. That you, like Me, shall know without question what is good and what is evil, and that you shall act and live accordingly. Have you questions for Me?

EVE

Are there any we mayn't eat from?

GOD

Yea, one. The bushes that lie underneath the Tree of Knowledge. These enticingly bright berries under thick bramble. Dissuade as I may, knowledge cannot exist without ignorance.

ADAM

These berries...

GOD

Are the seeds of Ignorance. Feed upon them, and your eyes shall cloud, your ears shall plug, and your brain shall rot. Your tongue shall be coated in its venom, which is by breath contagious to your kind. The taste of ignorance is bliss; its consumption a poison. Do we understand one another?

ADAM & EVE

Yes, my Lord.

GOD

Then I leave you to your life of wisdom and paradise. (*Exit*)

BELIAL

He'll never learn, will He? And as long as I'm here, neither will they.

(*BELIAL, while GOD was speaking, gathered a handful of berries. Upon leaving, she emerges,*

offering them to EVE. Curious, EVE reaches for BELLIAL's hand.)

BLACKOUT