

Heaven Only Knows

By Corey Sprague

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Heaven Only Knows

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DEDICATION

For Beth, with Love

“An apology for the Devil: It must be remembered that we have only heard one side of the case. God has written all the books.”

- Samuel Butler

STORY OF THE PLAY

A messenger of the Devil is sent to destroy the world but when he reaches Earth, he encounters a girl with ideas and problems of her own. Then we find out that the girl has been sent by ... you know who! One easy set.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (2 m, 1 w)

GUY:

GIRL:

OFFICER:

Also... VOICE FROM BELOW

VOICE FROM ABOVE

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in a small section of Central Park in New York City. A park bench, a garbage can, a street lamp, a few small trees and a small bridge are visible. The time is the present.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Concerning the trap door: if a stage with a trap is unavailable, the same effect can be achieved with a garbage can placed somewhere in the vicinity of the park bench. GUY is in the can during the opening dialogue and makes his appearance from there.

The self-destructing document is managed with use of "paper-flash." It is available at better magic and novelty supply stores everywhere. A small, disposable lighter is then attached to a standard magician's gimmick, which will pull the lighter to the back of the actor's coat. Or a piece of black elastic and a safety pin will work just as well. At the given moment, the actor ignites the lighter and sets off the flash-paper. In the flash, he lets go of the lighter, where it is pulled behind the coat, safely out of his way.

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(AT RISE: As the audience files in, curtains are open, but there is no light on the set. The house LIGHTS fade out and when the audience is in complete darkness, the sound of THUNDER is heard. The lights on the cyclorama are red and a devilish VOICE FROM BELOW is heard.)

BELOW: Very well, my dear friend, I'll make myself perfectly clear! I've sat by patiently for ages. I've practically never interfered – you know that. But I can't ignore it any longer. Can't you see you're making a perfect botch of things?

(The LIGHTS change to a deep blue to accommodate the VOICE FROM ABOVE.)

ABOVE: How do you mean, sir? I don't believe I catch your drift.

(LIGHTS back to red.)

BELOW: Good heavens, sir, are you blind as well as daft?! When was the last time you took a good look at this world of yours? Heaven only knows you must have a good view.

(LIGHTS back to blue.)

ABOVE: You know, Lucifer, I think you're overworked. Why don't you take a few weeks off?

(LIGHTS back to red and continue to flip-flop.)

BELOW: All right. Here's my proposition: total destruction – just like before. Another flood or one of those ghastly plagues you're so very good at. Now, what do you say? Give you a chance to start all over again. Start fresh, you see?

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ABOVE: But I promised I'd never do that again.

BELOW: So, this would be the first time you ever went back on your word? *(Pause.)*

ABOVE: Goodbye, Lucifer.

BELOW: *(Outraged.)* All right! Go ahead and close your eyes! You just can't admit that you failed! Well, I'll show you! I don't need you anyway! I've never needed you! You'll be sorry, I warn you! YOU'LL BE SORRY!

(The VOICE echoes out as the LIGHTS dim. Then the lights come up on a small section of New York's Central Park, at night. Visible are a park bench, a garbage can, a street lamp, a few small trees and a small bridge. After a second, a trap in the floor opens and through the fire and smoke, GUY comes out. He is a fairly average, slightly attractive looking fellow. He is dressed maybe a bit too formally for Central Park. He yells down into the hole.)

GUY: I still don't understand. If you're so all powerful, why did I have to take the stairs? *(HE slams the lid shut and takes a deep breath.)* Jeez, I can breathe again. They're always saying New York is so polluted. I could tell them where to go. *(From his coat pocket, he takes out a document of some kind.)* Well, let's check the old orders here. *(Reads.)* "Operation Destruct, Dear agent, you have been selected for the glorious mission of destroying the world. You may choose any method you wish and take as much mortal time as you consider necessary to complete the job. You have been given temporary mortality and are subject to all the usual effects of pain, emotion, etc." Eh! "Good luck. Hate and kisses, Satan. Satanic Productions, Incorporated. Copyright Day 4 All Rights Reserved P.S. – this document will self destruct ..."*(The document vanishes in a puff of flame.)* What a showoff! Well, to business. Where to begin, where to begin. I have such glorious feeling of power. It's marvelous! *(At this point an OFFICER walks by.)* Good evening, Officer.

OFFICER: Whadda ya mean by that?

GUY: Huh?

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OFFICER: Are you tryin' ta start somethin'?

GUY: No, No, I just said, good evening.

OFFICER: Oh. Well, you can't be too careful around here, know what I mean?

GUY: Uh ... Yeah.

OFFICER: Sure, I been on this beat for five years now, and I seen the weirdos, know what I mean? Why, just last week ... no, it was ... Let's see, today's Friday so that makes it ... well, anyway. I was comin' out on the West Side and here's this Jocko in his birthday suit standin' in the middle of the fountain recreating the Gene Kelly "Singin' in the Rain" number. Right? So I says to him, real polite like: "What ya doin up there, guy?" Well, he took to runnin' like you wouldn't believe. I chased him for two blocks 'til he jumped into a sewer and swam away.

GUY: The devil you say!

OFFICER: Yeah, so what are you up to tonight, Bub?

GUY: You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

OFFICER: Hey, well, don't be too sure. I meet all kinds in this park, you know?

GUY: Do you really want to know?

OFFICER: Well, that's my job. Keep your park clean, know what I mean?

GUY: Suppose I were to tell you that I was going to destroy the world; what would you say to that?

OFFICER: Yeah? Yeah? That's real interesting, you know? Real interesting. Don't you suppose you want to tell me how you're gonna do it?

GUY: Well, I really haven't decided.

OFFICER: Sure. No reason to rush into these things half-cocked, so to speak, you know what I mean?

GUY: Yeah.

OFFICER: Sure. Well, I gotta get movin' along. You know, there's a serious crime committed every fifteen seconds in this city. And let me tell you, when one happens, I'm gonna be there. *(Looks offstage.)* Hey! You! Drop the pineapple.

(OFFICER runs out blowing his whistle. GUY watched him.)

End of Freeview

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