

THE ARCHANGEL'S VOYAGE

A One Act Play

by

Theodore J. Nottingham

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CAST

ARCHANGEL (the regal Gabriel)

GODFREY (a many-sided, sharp-tongued fellow)

WIZARD (a somewhat senile, kind-hearted old star-gazer)

SOLDIER (a lost, confused, and terrified young man)

MR. SILVER (a wealthy, self-assured business man)

SERVANT (a submissive domestic to Mr. Silver)

DRIVER (an interplanetary traveler)

SETS

Wizard's observatory

A forest

Mr. Silver's sumptuous dining room

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Upstage right is a small door at the top of a short stairway. Stage left is a table covered with old tattered manuscripts and mathematical instruments -- rulers, compasses, etc...There are two chairs on either side of the table. A crooked door stands stage left.

A spotlight FADES UP center stage on a large homemade telescope mounted on a giant tripod and aimed over the heads of the audience. A rickety stool allows the observer to reach the aperture.

An old, eccentric WIZARD hurries through the door stage left. He bears the characteristic long white beard and is dressed in a flowing nightgown and slippers.

He takes spectacles from his pocket and adjusts them on his nose in order to find his way to the telescope.

With great difficulty, he climbs onto the stool. His aged limbs are not made for this type of acrobatics anymore. Out of breath, he stares through the telescope.

After a moment --

WIZARD: Godfrey! Godfrey!

GODFREY enters stage left through the door. He is a timid little fellow who wears thick glasses,, greases his hair back, and walks pigeon-toed. A "Jerry Lewis" character.

WIZARD: Help me down! My back is stuck again!

With great effort, the loyal Godfrey manages to get his master down from his perch.

WIZARD: I want you to keep an eye on the heavens, Godfrey. I need some rest. I think I overdosed on the magic potion this evening.

GODFREY: I don't see anything, master.

WIZARD: All you have to do is look through it, Godfrey!

GODFREY (doing his best): I still don't see anything.

WIZARD: That's because your closed eye is in the aperture, nitwit! Put the open one in it.

GODFREY: Oooh! Why, it's lovely out there.

WIZARD: As soon as the blaze appears, come and wake me.

Godfrey does not hear him. He is enthralled by the beautiful sight.

WIZARD: Godfrey! Did you hear me?

GODFREY: What? Yes, master.

(Wizard exits stage left. Godfrey watches him disappear. He snickers and turns to audience.)

GODFREY: The old wizard doesn't know who he's talking to! (He steps down from stool) I'll bet I didn't fool you for a second, did I? Beneath this mild, debonair exterior lurks the chief of staff and top adviser to the Prince of Darkness! (He mimicks a Dracula-style laugh, amazingly deep for his meek frame) I went to work for this third rate Merlin three weeks ago when it was announced back home that one of the planets in this solar system was about to blow. I've always been a sucker for fireworks. That senile old star-gazer has somehow gotten word of this colorful event, and since he owns the nearest observatory, I thought I'd sit it out with him and make sure he doesn't record anything incorrectly. (Suddenly passionate) No sir! I want it clearly understood that this holocaust which is about to blast planet Earth into ten trillion golf balls is the artwork of the Creator, not ours! Those human beings were his idea. All we ever did was go down there and watch the show to have a few laughs. How my boss ever got caught up in their fantasies, I'll never know. The whole southside of the Nether regions went into hysterics when I showed them

the funny-looking statues they were making of us. (Approaches curtain line) Do I look like a goathead to you? (Turns backside to audience) Do you see a tail here? (Walks along curtain line) And this is just a disguise. In my birthday suit, I'm a magnificent creature of light and shades.

(He crosses stage right to table, picks up manuscript, leafs through it, blows a cloud of dust off of it, and tosses it back in the pile)

GODFREY: I kinda liked the horns and mustach, though. They had a look which I found most flattering. (Suddenly angered) But then, to turn around and blame us for all their dirty work, that was inexcusable! I was so insulted, I filed a complaint with the Hierarchy. That's right! I told them -- look, we're minding our business out there in the pits and suddenly these arrogant little humans start calling us names and accusing us of the most disgusting activities. So you know what they did? They have a sense of fair play, I'll grant them that. They gave me a temporary leave of absence from the infernal regions and allowed me to take a first hand look at what was going on. They have more important things to do than fool around with absurdities, so they must have figured it would serve those human creatures right if one of us actually did show up! (With innocent sincerity) I swear I did not meddle with anything or anyone on my trip down here. I could not have made things worse if I had wanted to. I've never seen a species so self-destructive.

(He pulls up one of the chairs, sits, takes a cigar out of nowhere and puts it up to his mouth)

GODFREY: It's always the same old story...Some hot-tempered bug wants to rule a certain clod of dirt, so he gathers the largest mass of insects he can find and sends them off to crush, eat, or otherwise mutilate another group of insects. (He jumps up and walks around stage, gesticulating) This nonsense has gone on to the point where there is no more dirt to crawl over and conquer, so now some particularly vile vermins have calculated how to blow up everybody's clods and forever obliterate the glorious history of clod-hopping. (He puffs on his cigar and returns to the telescope, looking into it) I wonder what will happen to this solar system's equilibrium when little Earth goes pop. The other planets may come crashing back into the sun. Sounds like an exciting show!

(He snickers wickedly. The wizard enters stage left, holding a teddy bear against his chest and wearing a nightcap. Godfrey quickly hides his cigar.) **WIZARD:** Would you kindly quit mumbling to yourself, Godfrey. I can't get to sleep.

GODFREY: My apologies, master.

WIZARD: If you need to blabber, you should have gone to work for the innkeeper on the slopes of the volcano. You could have made plenty of overtime.

GODFREY: I will be silent, master.

WIZARD: Have you seen anything out there yet?

GODFREY: Well, I'm almost certain I saw a rather strange looking bird fly by.

WIZARD: Impossible. There are no birds on Neptune. You are the only bird here.

(He chuckles at his wit)

GODFREY: It had a long, colorful tail, and piercing eyes...

WIZARD (suddenly concerned): Was it all shiny and fiery?

GODFREY (excited): Yes! Yes, it was!

WIZARD: That was a comet, you fool!

GODFREY: A comet? Where do they live?

WIZARD (outraged): You stated on your application for employment that you had studied astronomy! Do you mean to tell me that they never taught you about comets?

GODFREY: Maybe I was absent that day...

WIZARD (suddenly deep in thought): A comet...Then Earth is truly doomed. Its influence will only intensify their already maniacal state of mind. What a pity...

(Wizard exits stage left, greatly concerned.)

GODFREY: Pity, hah! This shoulda happened two thousand years ago when they murdered in such a monstrous way the highest Being ever sent down here to help them out. Even the lower depths shivered with horror when we got the news. A dreadful silence froze every inch of the universe. Everything was mute with cosmic shock! (He pauses for a moment, as though reminiscing) This planet may be a pleasant reflection of the Creator's power and artistic talent, but it is overrun by conceited bipeds who somehow think they own the place. What a joke! Some of them even think they own each other!

(He looks into the telescope absentmindedly)

GODFREY: I think I see something! It's moving this way!

(The SOUND of an approaching space ship is heard.)

GODFREY: Yep, it's a space ship! But it looks like it came from the other side of the sun. I've never seen anything move so fast in...

(The loud SOUND of a landing ship is heard. Lights flicker as though the building were shaking under its weight. Wizard runs in stage left, putting on his slippers.)

WIZARD: They did it! They did it! Those sickoes! Let me see!

GODFREY: Uh, master...No, they...

(Wizard pushes him out of his way and looks through scope.)

WIZARD: Where's the smoke?

(There is a KNOCK at the door.)

GODFREY (worried): Are you expecting visitors, master?

WIZARD: I don't see anything. Clean the lens, Godfrey.

(Another KNOCK is heard.)

GODFREY: Uuuh...Someone's at the door.

WIZARD: Clean the lens! I'm going to miss the explosion!

(Godfrey crosses in front of telescope, breathes on lens, rubs it with his sleeve while Wizard looks through it.)

WIZARD: You moved it, you fool! I don't even know which galaxy I'm looking at now!

(He adjusts the telescope, mumbling. Godfrey shrugs and crosses to the door at the top of the stairs, stage right. He opens it and, suddenly frightened, backs down the steps. The DRIVER enters, dressed in a flashy uniform. He wears goggles and the "Red Baron's" scarf.)

DRIVER: Is this 2448 Hollow Hill Lane?

GODFREY: Yes...Yes, it is.

DRIVER: Does Ebenezer the witch-doctor live here?

GODFREY (looking back at Wizard, concerned): Don't let him hear you call him that! He's a wizard. A mighty wizard!

(The Driver is unimpressed.)

GODFREY: Who may I say wishes to see him?

DRIVER: I am a driver for Intergalactic Travel Unlimited. My passenger has journeyed fifteen light years to come here. I am his fifteenth relay, from Andromeda. (He turns to someone offstage) This is the place, your Grace.

(A tall, dignified, regal old man enters. The ARCHANGEL wears a flowing white tunic and moves slowly with great calm. He is gentle, even-toned, with a permanent soft smile but also with an air of supreme authority. Godfrey is stunned. He bows to the floor.)

GODFREY: Your Grace...

ARCHANGEL: What are you doing here, you little devil?

GODFREY: I...I'm just...

ARCHANGEL: Never mind the excuses. But tell me, why did you choose such a silly disguise?

GODFREY: Do you find it really that silly, your Grace? **ARCHANGEL:** Enough gibberish. Where is old Ebenezer?

GODFREY: Right over there. I'll fetch him. (He crosses to Wizard and taps him on the shoulder.) Oh, Ebenezer...I mean, oh master!

(The Wizard responds with a snore. He has fallen asleep while staring into the telescope. Godfrey whistles loudly and the Wizard jumps up.)

GODFREY: Master, there is someone to see you.

WIZARD: Some one? What is he one of?

(Godfrey points. Wizard turns and, seeing the Archangel, falls off the stool.)

WIZARD: Your Grace! L..I am overwhelmed...

(Archangel crosses to him and helps him up from his kneeling position.)

ARCHANGEL: No formalities, please, Ebenezer.

WIZARD: What do I owe this extraordinary honor to, your lordship?

ARCHANGEL: The Hierarchy has sent me to personally witness the tragic end of Earth. I take it you know of this event?

WIZARD: Well, my calculations have led me to conclude...It is still a theory...

ARCHANGEL: As long as you can see her dancing out there with her brothers and sisters, it will have to remain a theory. Unfortunately, some of us have inside information.

WIZARD: Godfrey, bring a chair over for our guest.

ARCHANGEL (amused): Godfrey?

(Godfrey shrugs, embarrassed.)

ARCHANGEL: Would you be kind enough to bring me a glass of water, Godfrey?
(With his back to Wizard) You seem surprised, Ebenezer. The form I am wearing requires certain chemical combinations for the functions to operate smoothly. I have found H₂O to be a fine lubricant. (He crosses to telescope) May I peek through your contraption?

WIZARD: Oh, it isn't much, your Reverence.

ARCHANGEL: Hardly a precise instrument. An Archangel could see this with his eyes closed. That is, if an Archangel had eyes.

(He smiles merrily. Godfrey places a chair center stage. Archangel sits.)

ARCHANGEL: So tell me, Ebenezer, what do you know about this little catastrophe?

WIZARD: Uuuuh...

(Wizard looks through papers on table. He finds Godfrey's cigar and holds it up with great surprise. He puts it in his pocket for later examination. Godfrey is perturbed that the old man has confiscated his cigar. Wizard finds a large parchment and crosses to Archangel.)

WIZARD: According to my latest chart, Earth is about to explode any moment now.

ARCHANGEL (pensively): Any moment...That could mean within the next ten years by human time cycles. There may still be time...

GODFREY: Time for what?

(Archangel gives Godfrey a mildly domineering look, disapproving of his audacity to question him. Godfrey looks down, ashamed.)

ARCHANGEL: There may still be time to save a few souls, as they say down there.

WIZARD: How could that be possible?

ARCHANGEL: Why, you know all possibilities exist for us, Ebenezer.

WIZARD: Yes, yes of course. **ARCHANGEL:** We would need to send someone down there to awaken the sterile hearts of a few of our unfaithful children.

GODFREY: No way!

WIZARD (utterly shocked): Godfrey!!!

GODFREY: Forgive me, your Grace, but as you know, my hobby has been in that field for quite awhile. The spiritual awakening of a human being requires time that is no longer available.

WIZARD: Have you gone mad, Godfrey? Go to your room!

GODFREY: Ah, go jump off the planet, Ebenezer!

ARCHANGEL: Please, gentlemen. I'll have no violence in my presence. You both no better. Now, as I was saying, it has been ordained that a handful of souls can still be harvested before the grand finale.

GODFREY: Is it really worth the trouble? An immortal spirit more or less, no one will ever know the difference.

ARCHANGEL: Someone will, Jeffrey.

GODFREY: Godfrey.

ARCHANGEL: Ah yes, Godfrey. Someone will. And His will is not to be resisted, as you know so well.

WIZARD: I think I've missed something. Aren't you Godfrey, my nitwit servant?

GODFREY: Not hardly, you old bookworm.

ARCHANGEL: Your servant is a little troublemaker who helps to harmonize the balance of Creation. Light is better defined by shade. Our friend here is just a flickering shadow.

(Godfrey crosses downstage and pouts.)

WIZARD: But he came highly recommended.

ARCHANGEL: You should always check your references, Ebenezer. You never know who might make his way to your doorstep. (He turns to Godfrey) We have no time to lose. That is, they have no time to lose. The Hierarchy has chosen me to make this last effort, despite my position.

WIZARD: You, your Grace? They are not worthy of your presence.

ARCHANGEL: I know, but they are His children, though far removed. This is a final manifestation of His love.

WIZARD: But such an adventurous journey is not befitting your state!

ARCHANGEL: I will have a companion with me.

GODFREY: Who is that?

ARCHANGEL: Why, you, Godfrey.

GODFREY (horrified): ME?

WIZARD: HIM?

ARCHANGEL: You do not think that you found yourself here on your own volition, do you? You were chosen long ago for this role.

GODFREY: That's not fair! I was not asked! I didn't volunteer!

ARCHANGEL: I personally volunteered you.

GODFREY: Why? I don't know anything about helping!

ARCHANGEL: You know humans. You understand their insanity better than most spirits. You can stand witnessing their way of life. I need a being with a strong stomach, so to speak.

GODFREY (frightened): But what happens if we get down there and the planet blows up?

ARCHANGEL: Then we will become radioactive. Where is the interest if there is no risk?

GODFREY: But then we'll never be able to go home! We'll be exiled on some desolate globe somewhere. And we'll spend the rest of Eternity in radioactive solitude!

ARCHANGEL: The higher the stakes, the greater the reward if we succeed. Why do you think I agreed to travel so far down in Creation? Most of my fellow archangels have never heard of this obscure corner of cosmic wilderness.

WIZARD: Your Grace, may I ask a great favor of you?

ARCHANGEL: What is that, Ebenezer?

WIZARD: May I join you on this adventure?

GODFREY: Are you still looking for thrills at your age? You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

ARCHANGEL: Now Godfrey, try to restrain yourself, or I will be forced to make you swallow your own venom. (He turns to Wizard) What would you hope to gain out of this, Ebenezer?

WIZARD: To see this beautiful planet up close before it disappears into star dust and hydrogen clouds. To understand why...why humans lost sight of their spiritual source.

ARCHANGEL: Your presence is welcomed, Ebenezer. It will be a joy to share your delightfully eccentric energy.

WIZARD: Thank you, your Grace.

ARCHANGEL: Let us depart then.

Lights FADE OUT. The **SOUND** of a spaceship rising and taking off is heard offstage.

SCENE 2

The SOUND of birds whistling in woods fades up. Nature's peaceful song is suddenly disturbed by the SOUND of distant gunfire. Lights FADE UP. The set is a simple representation of a forest. One large tree stands stage right. There are bushes upstage left. A ragged SOLDIER stumbles in from stage right. He is obviously lost and terrified. He wipes the sweat from his muddied face, then takes out a map from his pocket and examines it. Suddenly, he hears a SOUND of branches cracking in nearby bushes. He grabs his rifle and takes aim. The Wizard appears from behind the bushes. He is dizzy from the trip and stares at the soldier in astonishment.

SOLDIER (in a trembling voice): Stick 'em up!

WIZARD (not understanding): I beg your pardon?

He approaches, curious. Soldier backs away, ready to pull the trigger.

WIZARD: So this is what you humans look like up close. Not at all what I imagined, I must say.

SOLDIER: Don't pull that trick on me, old man. I know a spy when I see one. You're a red, aren't you?

WIZARD (looking at his hands): I turned rather pinkish, actually. Must be the atmosphere. Oxygen gives me rashes.

SOLDIER: Don't play senile with me! I've been trained to deal with your kind.

WIZARD: You mean...you've met my compatriots? Must have been ol' Archibald. He always swore he'd come down here some day. I didn't think he was nuts enough to do it.

SOLDIER: Sit down and be quiet!

WIZARD: Not a very hospitable species, are you?

SOLDIER: I'll ask the questions! Sit down!

(Wizard shrugs and sits.) WIZARD: I wonder where his Reverence is...

SOLDIER (terrified): Are there others of you?

WIZARD (insulted): There is only ONE Ebenezer, mighty wizard of the Northern peaks!

SOLDIER: You're lying!

WIZARD: Certainly not! There may be two others in my party, but they are not green-blooded Neptunians! You haven't seen them by chance? A little nitwit with greasy hair and a tall..

SOLDIER (looking around): Two others, eh? This is my lucky day. They'll make me a sergeant if I bring in three spies in one morning's work.

WIZARD: Would you mind telling me what a spy is?

SOLDIER: Don't play dumb with me, grandpa! (He throws map at Wizard) First of all, I want you to show me where we are.

WIZARD: I haven't the slightest idea.

SOLDIER (pointing his rifle): I have ways of making you talk!

WIZARD (noticing rifle for the first time): What have you got there?

(The rifle flies out of Soldier's hands into Wizard' arms. Soldier is horrified and falls to his knees, hands high.)

SOLDIER: Don't shoot! Please don't shoot! I've got two little girls back home!

(Wizard scrutinizes rifle, paying no attention to Soldier.)

WIZARD: Odd little contraption. (He looks into barrel) The lens must be broken.

(Wizard turns rifle around, inadvertently aiming at Soldier. Soldier closes his eyes.)

SOLDIER (in a frenzy): Hail Mary, full of grace...Darn, I don't remember it!

(Wizard points rifle in air to look through other end. It fires. Soldier falls with a grunt, face to the ground.)

WIZARD (amazed): Wow...

(He notices Soldier, arms outstretched before him, immobile.)

WIZARD: I had heard you were superstitious creatures. So this is what you worship...Noise. Loud noise. Very interesting.

(He takes out notepad and writes down his observation. Archangel and Godfrey enter stage right.)

GODFREY: His Highness told us ot to attract attention, Ebenezer! I knew you would only cause trouble.

(Soldier looks up, stunned that he is still alive. He is terrified at the appearance of the others and raises his hands.)

SOLDIER: Corporal Arthur M. Chosen, third Division, from Sharon, Pennsylvania. That's all you'll get from me.

GODFREY (to Archangel): What's his problem?

ARCHANGEL (offering hand to Soldier): Rise, young man. No one will hurt you.

(Soldier rises, shivering like a leaf.)

ARCHANGEL: You must be hungry.

(Archangel pulls a hot dog out of nowhere and offers it to Soldier who is stupefied at its magical appearance. He snatches hot dog and hurries off toward the bushes where he sits and devours it.)

GODFREY (mumbling in disgust): Animal!

ARCHANGEL: Come now, Godfrey, show a little charity for once.

(Archangel approaches Wizard who is still trying to figure out how rifle went off.)

ARCHANGEL: Beware, Ebenezer. That is a dangerous gadget.

WIZARD: I've never seen anything like it.

ARCHANGEL: They use it to destroy each other. (Wizard looks up, horrified) It is an instrument of death. One of their "scientific achievements."

WIZARD (throwing rifle aside in disgust): But...why?

ARCHANGEL: This is a world of darkness here below. They have many such things.

WIZARD: Do they actually put holes in each other?

GODFREY: They are about to put a hole in the planet. That's why where here, remember?

WIZARD: I...I had been told that they were an evolved form.

GODFREY: Form of what, that is the question. (He snickers and points to Soldier who is still devouring his hot dog) Look at him. The pride of the Creator!

ARCHANGEL: No cynicism, Godfrey. You are not one to point a finger at anyone! Did you bring my luggage by the way?

(Godfrey takes off a napsack he carries on his back and hands it to the Archangel who pulls out a large trumpet and cleans the mouth piece. He puts it to his lips.)

GODFREY (full of anticipation): Already?

ARCHANGEL: Merely a rehearsal. Sorry to disappoint you.

GODFREY (excited): What's the point in waiting? You'll have to do it sooner or later. (The SOUND of gunfire is heard offstage) Something's gonna blow anytime now.

WIZARD: I did not know that you were musically inclined, your Lordship.

ARCHANGEL: I see that you are not familiar with all the literature concerning me, Ebenezer. This is part of my job.

WIZARD: Oh...You know any good tunes?

GODFREY: Boy, does he know a tune!

(Archangel pulls a soda out of nowhere and hands it to Godfrey.)

ARCHANGEL: Why do you not offer our friend a drink?

(Godfrey reluctantly takes soda and crosses to Soldier.)

SOLDIER (ecstatic): A sodapop! I haven't had one of those since I left home. Say, you got any cigarettes on you? I'll give you five bucks for a pack.

GODFREY: Sorry, I only smoke sulfur.

(He grins an evil grin and walks off. Archangel puts trumpet back in sack and hands it to Godfrey.)

ARCHANGEL: Take good care of this, Godfrey. It is on loan. (He looks around, taking in the sights) Lovely place. It deserves better caretakers... (He turns to his companions) Well, my friends, shall we take a look around?

(Soldier chokes on his drink and jumps to his feet.)

SOLDIER: Hey! Wait for me!

(Archangel turns back to soldier.)

ARCHANGEL: Why do you want to join us, young man?

SOLDIER: I...I have no one else to talk to...All my buddies have been killed.

GODFREY: How did you manage to miss the fun?

SOLDIER: I guess I was the lucky one.

GODFREY: You don't look so lucky to me. There are humanoids all around you who can't wait to blow your...

ARCHANGEL: Godfrey, behave yourself. You are beginning to try my almost infinite patience.

GODFREY: I'm just being honest with this frail mortal, your Grace. Why shouldn't he know that his life is hanging on a thread?

ARCHANGEL: That thread makes all the difference...It is by hanging onto this thread that he will find the faith and courage to have hope.

GODFREY: Hope? In what can this half-starved, confused creature have hope?

ARCHANGEL: If you could answer that question, Godfrey, you would not be the non-entity you are today.

WIZARD: Hear, hear! (He crosses to Soldier and studies him closely) However, this phenomenon causes me to wonder...

ARCHANGEL: What is it that you wonder, Ebenezer?

WIZARD: If my ex-assistant is the non-entity you have suggested, from where springs this madness which so demobilizes the common sense of these Earth dwellers?

ARCHANGEL (pointing to Soldier): Ask him.

WIZARD: From where springs this madness which so demobilizes...

SOLDIER: It isn't my fault! I was always told that joining the army would make me a man!

WIZARD: You mean, you were not originally part of the human species?

SOLDIER: My friends, my football coach, my president -- they all said that if I put on a uniform and learned to kill in a patriotic way, I'd be doing the right thing for my country.

WIZARD (turning to the others): Does that make sense to anyone? (to Soldier) Isn't planet Earth your country?

GODFREY: He thinks that a certain number of rocks on the right face of the globe are more his property than the rocks on the other side.

WIZARD: How does he know which side is which since it is always rotating?

GODFREY: Don't try to figure it out, Ebenezer. You'll just tire your grey matter

for nothing.

WIZARD: Do you mean to tell me that you kill other humans because they don't live on the same rock pile?

SOLDIER: I'm only trying to do my duty.

WIZARD: What about your duty to the universe?

GODFREY: Are you kidding? He thinks the universe is nothing but a lot of other rocks floating around in circles for no apparent reason out in the middle of nowhere.

WIZARD: Your Grace, I would like to request your permission to take this specimen back to my laboratory and expose him to the cosmic harmony of the spheres which can be seen from my rear window. If he could see that order and unity, he might wake up from this dreadful blindness.

ARCHANGEL: You know that is against the rules, Ebenezer. Humans must awaken within themselves, through their hearts and minds and wills. They must make the effort to undertake their own search for meaning. We cannot interfere.

SOLDIER: What are we searching for, Sir? I've always been curious about that.

ARCHANGEL: You are searching for that which is searching for you. You'll find out what that drive is within you when "It" finds you. But you have to know that you are lost before you can know that you are being found.

SOLDIER: Well, I'm lost alright. I don't know what the right direction is anymore.

ARCHANGEL: Good. Now you may be ready to receive new "information."

SOLDIER: I'd do anything for new orders, Sir. I don't think I'm made for this war business.

ARCHANGEL: No one is made for that, young man. It was never the purpose of your creation. Consider it a terrible fever which attacks those who have lost sight of the real meaning of their lives. War is a manifestation of the darkness of the human soul when it relies only upon itself. It is the result of falling into the darkness of separation from the Creator which so many of you seem to be in the habit of doing.

SOLDIER (earnestly): How do I get out of this darkness?

ARCHANGEL: You don't...Unless you remember the light which created you. (He turns to the others) Let us be on our way, dear companions.

SOLDIER: Don't leave me all alone! Please!

(The Archangel turns to Soldier with a warm smile.)

ARCHANGEL: You are never alone, young man. Never.

(The three companions exit stage right. Soldier stands motionless, struck by the Archangel's statement. The SOUND of gunfire explodes offstage. Soldier doesn't react. His fear has left him. He relaxes and calmly crosses stage to exit as gunfire is heard all around him.)

SOLDIER (deeply moved): I'm not alone...I am not alone!!

Lights FADE OUT.

SCENE 3 Lights FADE UP on impressionistic set of a wealthy man's living room. There is a table and three chairs center stage, a lazyboy chair and lamp stage right. A spotlight focuses attention on the table where MR. SILVER, an obese, self-satisfied man is eating a sumptuous meal. There is a KNOCK at the door. After a moment, a SERVANT -- a kindly old lady -- enters stage left.

SERVANT: Mister Silver, there are two men and a strange youth at the door.

MR. SILVER (mouth full of food): What do they want?

SERVANT: The young man said you would know...

MR. SILVER: I'm busy. Tell them to call my secretary.

(The three companions enter stage left and cross to center stage.)

ARCHANGEL: Good day, sir.

MR. SILVER (angered): Who invited you in? Get them outta here, Mabel!

SERVANT (respectfully): Mister Silver is a very busy man...

GODFREY: Tell him he is due for a heart attack in about five minutes. We have no time to lose.

(Servant's mouth drops open in shock. Mr. Silver has overheard and explodes with laughter.)

MR. SILVER: A smartaleck, eh? I like your style, son. Come on in. Bring us a bottle of scotch, Mabel.

(They sit at the table. Mr. Silver offers Godfrey the seat nearest to him.)

MR. SILVER: I could use a man like you. Have you ever sold anything before?

GODFREY: I have indeed. Got anything of value?

MR. SILVER (chuckling): Just look around you, boy. There's a hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of junk from all over the world in this room alone.

(Wizard hesitantly tastes the food which Servant places before him. He is quite fond of the chocolate cake.)

MR. SILVER: What have you sold? Vacuum cleaners, rugs...?

GODFREY: Souls.

MR. SILVER: Shoes, eh? What brand?

GODFREY: Premium quality. Anything infested with power and greed.

MR. SILVER: That's good copy, boy. You been in advertising?

GODFREY: Sure! That's my forte.

MR. SILVER: Well, maybe we can do business. What's your price?

GODFREY: I'm reasonable. (He turns to Archangel) Wouldn't you say so, Mister Horn?

(Archangel gives him a surprised look, then smiles.)

ARCHANGEL: Quite reasonable. You could not find an easier deal.

WIZARD: Very low rate.

(Godfrey glares at him.)

MR. SILVER: You're just what I need. What d'you do? Fall outta the sky?

GODFREY: Funny you should say that. **(He winks at the others.)**

MR. SILVER (pouring drinks): So how much are we talking about? **(He offers glass to Archangel who refuses)** No? Good man. **(He offers glass to Wizard)** How 'bout you, sir?

WIZARD (hesitating): I...Why not?

(He accepts glass and takes a big sip. He chokes violently.)

MR. SILVER (leaning toward Godfrey): I just bought a couple mountains on this island out in the Pacific. My people tell me there's oil up there. Soon as we clear out the local farmers, we'll start drilling.

ARCHANGEL: How are you going to accomplish that?

MR. SILVER: I got friends in high places, know what I mean?

ARCHANGEL: So do I.

MR. SILVER: Great! They got any armies at their disposal?

ARCHANGEL: Oh yes!

MR. SILVER: Maybe I can cut you in on a piece of the action. Fifteen percent?

ARCHANGEL: Is that all?

MR. SILVER: Hey, that ain't bad. We're talking in the millions.

ARCHANGEL: I usually go for all or nothing.

MR. SILVER: Now, that's not reasonable business, Mister Horn.

ARCHANGEL: Perhaps not. But the return on your investment is incalculable.

MR. SILVER: Are you some kind of joker? How can I give you one hundred percent of my business?

ARCHANGEL: It is not yours to begin with.

MR. SILVER: What are you talking about? Those farmers didn't pay for that land!

ARCHANGEL: You have touched on the central point. Just what are we talking about?

(Mr. Silver looks at them in bewilderment. The three stare at him stoically.)

MR. SILVER (slowly): What do you people want from me?

GODFREY: I already told you. Your soul.

MR. SILVER: My what?

WIZARD (innocently): Maybe he doesn't have one.

ARCHANGEL: Certainly he has. But it has been hybernating for too long.

MR. SILVER (angrily): I'm a man of plain words, I'll have you know. What is all this nonsense?

GODFREY: Have you noticed the state of affairs outside?

MR. SILVER: Of course. I read the Wall Street Journal every day. So we're going through a slight depression. It's not the end of the world.

WIZARD: We're not so sure about that.

MR. SILVER: The stock market has taken the proper measures in order to...

GODFREY: What about your stocks? Are they insured?

MR. SILVER: Against what?

GODFREY: What time is it?

MR. SILVER (looking at his watch): Twelve forty-four.

GODFREY: Since you're a man of plain words, Mister Silver, I'll give it to you straight. You're going to kick the bucket in approximately forty-five seconds.

MR. SILVER: Is that a threat? I can sue you for that!

ARCHANGEL: You've taken stock in the wrong market, my poor man. You'll have no income where you are going.

(Mr. Silver jumps to his feet.)

MR. SILVER: I get it! You're terrorists! Well, I don't deal with terrorists! They'll be no ransom!

GODFREY: You said it, pal.

(Mr. Silver pulls a gun from a desk drawer which lamp is sitting on.)

MR. SILVER: I'll fight you to the bitter end!

(They look at him unimpressed.)

GODFREY: Another one who wants to die with his boots on. They won't do you any good where you're going.

(Wizard snaps his fingers. Mr. Silver pulls the trigger and water trickles out. Wizard looks at others, triumphant.)

WIZARD: I've been working on it all morning. Simple operation, actually.

(He chuckles to himself. Mr. Silver drops the gun. He suddenly begins to feel pangs of a heart attack. Godfrey helps him to a chair.)

MR. SILVER: I can't breath!

GODFREY: Take it easy. This won't take long. You all gotta go sooner or later, you know.

MR. SILVER: Where...Where am I going?

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

ARCHANGEL: It is not too late to bargain, Mister Silver. Take a quick look at your life and tell me what it is worth.

(A look of despair comes over Mr. Silver's face.)

MR. SILVER: Nothing...Nothing...

ARCHANGEL: What is your dearest memory?

(Mr. Silver closes his eyes and becomes peaceful. He smiles.)

MR. SILVER: A stream...In the country...I use to sit there as a child for hours...and watch the fish...and the frogs... (He suddenly opens his eyes, horrified) Where did I go wrong?

WIZARD: Did you ever bite into an apple?

MR. SILVER: I wanted money, fame, power! It was the thing to do...All it gave me was ulcers and nightmares...

ARCHANGEL: Would you go back to that stream and start over if you could?

MR. SILVER: Yes! Yes!

(Archangel raises his arm.)

GODFREY: Hey! That's too easy. It doesn't work that way!

ARCHANGEL: I know. I was just showing off a little.

The three companions cross stage right as spotlight fades out over Mr. Silver and another colored spot fades up on them.

WIZARD: Apocalypse or no apocalypse, they are all casualties.

ARCHANGEL: Casualties of their own misguided ways, Ebenezer.

WIZARD: But have they a choice, your Grace? There are not many signposts on this planet of theirs pointing to an understanding of their true nature.

ARCHANGEL: The signposts are within, my friend. They must listen to the whispers of their heart. It is there that the Creator speaks to them.

GODFREY: He shoulda built a loud speaker instead. It's too noisy down here to hear anything softer than a brass instrument. Speaking of which, is it time yet?

ARCHANGEL: No.

GODFREY: Why not? The place is about to go up in flames any moment now. It's all over.

GABRIEL: He remembered the stream, did he not? It still trickled through him despite the frost in his heart.

GODFREY: So? A stupid little stream won't give him eternal life.

ARCHANGEL: That little stream could have flooded his heart and shown him the way to the infinite Ocean which is home to us all.

(Wizard pours himself another glass of Scotch.)

WIZARD (somewhat intoxicated): This is a most interesting chemical. I'll have to write down its ingredients. **(He turns to Archangel)** Did you mention home, your Grace? How much longer do we have to hang around down here?

ARCHANGEL: Until we find all the streams. There might even be enough of them to put out the fires of this premature Apocalypse.

GODFREY: I doubt it.

ARCHANGEL: Doubt is what makes you such a pathetic little shadow, Godfrey.

(Archangel walks to curtain line and looks out as though looking through a window.)

ARCHANGEL: This is not such a bad place, even though there much to be done...But the clouds do clear sometimes. Perhaps there is still time. After all, time is weaved from Eternity... as we are. **(He looks up at spotlight as though staring at the sun)** And those threads are made of Hope.

GODFREY (sarcastically): That makes a lot of sense, your Amazingness.

WIZARD: Can't we get any promises that everything will work out, your Grace?

ARCHANGEL: Oh, everything works out as it is meant to, Ebenezer. Our all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good Creator is everywhere present in His creation. Everything works out according to His Divine Will.

GODFREY: Well, He's made an all selfish, all cold-hearted, and all ungrateful species from what I can tell.

ARCHANGEL: Since when were you right about anything? May I remind you that humans have not been cast away into exile, unlike some folks we know, but are blessed with a Mediator sent to them by the Lord of Hosts Himself!

GODFREY: Doesn't look to me like they remember much of what He said to them and did for them.

ARCHANGEL: Really? Just listen...Listen to their song.

(MUSIC fades up: Beethoven's "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee.")

WIZARD: I hear nothing.

GODFREY: It's all that hair in your ears, you old goat.

ARCHANGEL: Silence! (softer) Listen to the silence.

GODFREY: That's a good one. **(Archangel gives him a thundering glare.)** Sorry, your Grace.

(They listen. MUSIC crescendoes slowly.)

GODFREY: Why...I think I do hear something...What can it be?

ARCHANGEL: It is the song of beloved children calling out to their Maker.

(Archangel smiles. They all listen.)

ARCHANGEL: Do you hear the joy? Do you hear the strength? Do you hear the hope? That is the music of faith coming from the human heart! As long as we hear it sing thanksgiving for its creation, we may hope that the Creator will not abandon such satisfying handywork. (He turns to his companions) Let us go home, my friends. The end is not yet come. (With serene joy) Hallelujah!

(They exit as lights FADE OUT. MUSIC crescendoes triumphantly.)

THE END