

THE MASTER PLAYWRIGHT

A One Act Stage Play

by

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Cast of Characters

Bruce: Recently deceased playwright
Sabrina: Guardian Angel to Bruce
Eve: The first woman
Delilah: Long-deceased Philistine temptress
Charmeine: Angel of Harmony (pronounced Sharmeen)

Scene

Eve's office at the Pearly Gates.

Time

The present.

Introduction

As you know, this production of 24 Hour Creative is being performed in honor of Bruce Alexander, our resident playwright and friend, who passed in November. Tonight's performance of "The Master Playwright" is dedicated to Bruce.

SETTING: EVE is seated at a desk. Two empty chairs are across from her. She holds two sheets of paper. Standing by her side are SABRINA and CHARMEINE. Sabrina has a microphone within reach.

Charmeine

Eve, you have one more position to fill today. The first candidate, Delilah, needs no introduction here in Heaven.

Eve

Ah, yes. Back in the day, I was *her* Guardian Angel.

Sabrina makes it clear she is not a fan.

Eve (cont)

Then she went and cut Samson's hair off. Boy, did I have to answer for *that*. And the other candidate?

Charmeine

His name is Bruce. A recent addition. Sabrina's been watching over him for many years.

Sabrina claps. Eve turns to her and shakes her head. Sabrina stops, but makes a snide face when Eve returns her focus to the two applications on the desk. This repeats until Sabrina smiles at her.

Eve

Now, Sabrina, I know you were Bruce's Guardian Angel. And I know his passing was quite a shock to you.

Charmeine

She took it hard. Hasn't spoken a word since he passed.

Eve

Yes. But let me remind you our job is to pick The Master Playwright for Heaven based on the qualifications. Charmaine, please show the candidates in.

Charmaine escorts BRUCE and DELILAH in and they sit. Bruce looks puzzled. Sabrina is thrilled to see Bruce.

Delilah

Eve! It's great to see you again. How's Adam? And the family?

Eve

Adam got shipped downstairs some time ago.

Delilah

I'm sorry to hear that. He was always so . . . obedient.

Eve

He was, wasn't he. But who can blame him for falling for *this* body? As for the family, since I'm the mother of, well, *everybody*, it's mostly a disappointment.

Bruce

I hate to break up your chick moment, but where am I?

Eve

Why, you're at Gate #12, of course. My name is Eve. You probably read about me in the Book of Genesis.

Bruce

Yeah, right. What exactly is Gate #12?

Eve

You know. Twelve pearly gates. Revelation. The Bible. Surely you've heard of us.

Bruce

(drawn out)

Right. Who do you think I am, the Pope?

Eve

Funny you should mention that. We do have a former Pope interviewing with us tomorrow.

Bruce

Popes have to interview to get into Heaven? Aren't they sorta fast-tracked?

Eve

These days, everyone has to interview.

Bruce

I'm sorry, but this is all hard to swallow. And, if this is really Heaven, why isn't Saint Peter manning his post?

Eve

He got downsized.

Bruce

Downsized? A Saint got downsized?

Eve

Being a Saint isn't what it used to be. He was let go shortly after Human Resources took control up here.

Bruce

Human Resources? In Heaven? That sounds more like Hell to me.

Eve

You're preaching to the choir, kid. And, believe me, we have a kick-ass choir up here. You should have seen the competition for *that* gig.

Delilah

Nobody said anything to me about having to interview. I've been hanging around for centuries. Certainly, I've earned this position.

Eve

I'm afraid Human Resources insists we interview more than one candidate.

Bruce

Interview? For what?

Eve

For the position of Heaven's Master Playwright.

Bruce

Let me get this straight. You need a playwright. In Heaven.

Eve

Of course we do. Angels deserve a little fun, too. It can't all go to those rabble-rousers in Hell.

Bruce

And it comes down to me, and her? What happened to the last guy?

Eve

Ah, Shakespeare. He got sent down. Kept fooling around with his cast. The Boss warned him, but he wouldn't listen.

Delilah

Men.

Bruce

What happens to the one who doesn't get picked? We go to Hell?

Eve

Oh, no. We only send the worst playwrights to Hell.

Charmaine

That's where angels like Sabrina and I come in. Sabrina has been watching you, Bruce. She's so lucky. *I've* had to watch this playwright named Jackson.

Charmaine shakes her head.

Charmaine (cont)

Personally, I don't like his chances.

Bruce

You can go to Hell for writing a bad play?

Eve

Human Resources decided the people in Hell don't deserve a *good* play, so we send the worst playwrights there, more as a punishment to the residents.

Bruce

So, if not Heaven, and not Hell . . .

Eve

Purgatory.

Delilah

You're sending one of us to Purgatory? But I don't want to go to Purgatory.

Eve

It's not so bad. We've converted Purgatory to our unemployment office.

Bruce

You have an unemployment office?

Eve

I'm afraid so. Another "gift" from Human Resources.

Bruce

That's crazy. Didn't God create them? Can't He just overrule them?

Eve

The Boss felt having HR would help today's people relate better with the concept of Heaven and Hell. Now we can't figure out how to *gracefully* get rid of them.

Bruce

Who cares about grace? Just throw them out.

Eve

Grace is a big deal up here. We don't want to come across as hypocritical.

Bruce

Come on. Heaven? God? Seriously? I used to write comedies about this all the time.

Eve scans his resume.

Eve

Yes. Sabrina gave me a full report. Seems no subject was out of bounds for your sense of humor, which Sabrina says was the best she's ever known.

Eve glares at him as Sabrina beams.

Eve

You even made fun of *me*. You had me come across as controlling and bossy. Care to explain yourself?

Bruce

What's to explain? You made Adam bite the apple. Got us *all* thrown out of the pool. Besides, I made you a star.

Eve

Trust me, I was a star long before you came along. It also says here you once featured male body parts as the lead characters in a play.

Delilah turns to Bruce.

Delilah

That's disgusting.

Bruce

The audience loved it.

Delilah

(to Eve)

How can you consider someone who writes something offensive like that?

Eve

Actually, The Boss didn't find it offensive. Laughed her ass off.

Bruce

Her? You mean . . . ?

Eve

Of course. You didn't think a *man* could pull all this off, did you?

Delilah

This isn't an affirmative action decision, is it? Where we have to hire another man, just to keep HR happy?

Eve

Shhh. HR will hear you. Then there'll be a review. Paperwork up the kazoo.

Delilah

Men. Can't live with them . . . Say, who does your hair?

Eve

Delilah, enough with the hair fetish.

Delilah

(pouts)

If you ask me, we already have too many men around here.

Bruce

What are you talking about? All I see are women. Which begs the question, Eve, where did all the men go?

Eve

If you're looking for most of the men, you've come to the wrong place.

Bruce

I see. It sounds like I never had a chance.

Eve

Not at all. Sabrina gave you quite a recommendation. And Sabrina is one of our most gifted angels.

Bruce

Help me understand *this*. If I had a Guardian Angel watching out for me, what am I doing here?

Eve

A common misperception. Our Guardian Angels are sent to improve the lives of our best people, to help them in subtle ways. Sabrina did just that for you.

Bruce

(to Sabrina)

Thank you. You did great.

Delilah

Enough with the theology lesson. Let's talk more about *me*. You won't find a more experienced storyteller. I told the story of Samson, for crying out loud. I've earned this.

Charmeine

Technically, you *sold* the story of Samson to the Philistines. To save yourself.

Delilah

You mind your own business. Or I'll cut off those locks of yours. Don't think I've forgotten how.

When Delilah turns back to Eve, Charmeine sticks her tongue out at her.

Bruce

So what do you need from us?

Eve

Just a few clarifying questions. Bruce, it says here you've had a distinguished run as a playwright, actor, director, and mentor. You're loved by everyone.

Bruce

I worked with the best. And I loved every minute of it.

Delilah

Blah, blah, blah. Look, buster, this job belongs to me. Eve, you were *my* Guardian Angel. Certainly, that counts for something.

Bruce

Hold on. You were *her* Guardian Angel? Isn't that a huge conflict of interest? You should recuse yourself.

Sabrina nods. Eve glances at Sabrina and Sabrina stops. When Eve turns away Sabrina continues. Eve turns back and they repeat this pattern until Sabrina smiles at Eve.

Eve

I assure you I'm completely impartial.

Sabrina shakes her head, and Sabrina and Eve repeat the pattern again until Sabrina smiles.

Delilah

Eve, you *know* me. You *know* I can do this.

Bruce

Eve, I've decided I want her to get the job. I would never get in the way of someone else's dreams.

Eve considers this, nods at Sabrina, then looks at Bruce.

Eve

Congratulations, Bruce. You *are* The Master Playwright, and always will be. Do you have any instructions for us?

Bruce

Just one. The show must go on.

Sabrina
(whispers into live mic)
<Sabrina says her personal message to Bruce>.

(FADE TO BLACK)

(END OF SCENE)