

*The Porch Room presents*

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# *Coffee Break*

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A Short Play

By

John P. Dowgin

THE  
PORCH  
ROOM

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# Coffee Break

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*An office coffee nook. A water cooler stands center stage. Vending machines stand stage left, a small refrigerator to the left of the machines. A small table and chairs stage right. A clock above the water cooler reads 10:05.*

*Jesus Christ enters stage left. He wears long, white flowing robes and a halo. He moves to the cooler plucks a cheap paper cup from the dispenser and begins to fill it.*

*The Devil enters stage right. He wears an expensive suit over a bright red polyester Halloween devil outfit, complete with cheap horns and a pointy tail. He crosses downstage of Jesus on his way to the coffee machine.*

Devil: Morning, Jay.

Jesus: (looks up) Hey, how's it going Lou?

Devil: It's Monday, son, it's Monday. What do you expect?

Jesus: I hear that.

Devil: Had to pull some serious OT this weekend.

Jesus: I thought the volcano was on next week's worksheet.

Devil: It is, it is. But there's that big senate vote coming up this week, and we just weren't ready.

Jesus: (Frustrated) Don't even get me started on that. (Finishes filling the cup and moves to the fridge).

Devil: What's the matter? I thought your guys had that wrapped last week.

Jesus: We did. It was good, too, I think it may have been the best batch of miracles we've put out since Lourdes 3.2 (opens fridge). Then Gabriel tried to download a recipe from Martha Stewart's Web site, opened up a virus, and bam, lost the file.

Devil: No shit!

Jesus: No shit, and don't pretend that you're disappointed.

Devil: I resent your implication. Fuckin' Gabriel. (The devil sits at the table. Jesus removes a yogurt from the fridge.)

Jesus: Well, computers were never his strong suit. He wanted to be a musician, my fault for making him an analyst. Want milk for that?

Devil: No, I take it dark.

Jesus: That's right. (Closes fridge and crosses to sit at the table)

Devil: So what are you going to do? Three days till the hearings.

Jesus: We're trying recreate the batch as fast as we can, but it's going to be a rush and we may just end up digging some old unused visions out of the database.

Devil: Well, that'll fly in the south at least. They eat that shit up down there.

Jesus: I know, but I was banking on some points in the midwest and New England this month too.

Devil: Did you market towards New York at all?

Jesus: (groans) What's the point anymore.

Devil: That's true, that's true. You just can't trust those people. That's a key demographic, though, maybe marketing could help you out.

Jesus: Why would they? They all work for you.

Devil: That is such a lie! You have the Seligman kid.

Jesus: (stirs his yogurt) Yeah, he is pretty good, but I can't pull him off the big project now. It was all his idea to begin with.

Devil: That's exactly what I'm talking about, though. That kid has vision. Remember back in 85? He saved you.

Jesus: Well, once Travolta came on board it solved itself.

Devil: Yeah, but that was still huge. My California office is still pulling their hair out about that. Celebrity endorsement of organized religion? Best publicity your office has had since Godiva, and you didn't even have to show any skin.

Jesus: (laughs) You remember that? The old man threw such a fit!

Devil: Jay, I'm telling you, you put Seligman on the senate job and I guarantee it rights itself within the week.

Jesus: Seligman's leaving.

(Pause)

Devil: What are you talking about?

Jesus: He's leaving. Got an offer from another department.

Devil: (whistles lowly). That's bad news.

Jesus: You're telling me.

Devil: Did he tell you this? Give notice?

Jesus: No.

Devil: So how do you know?

Jesus: Well, you know, I could sense he was troubled, so I took some time last week, went into the garden, and communed with him inside his immortal soul. After a while I located the source of his suffering and tried to help him ease it.

Devil: (Pause) Cut the shit.

Jesus: He left his transfer paperwork on the copier.

Devil: But he hasn't given it to you yet?

Jesus: No.

Devil: Maybe he hasn't made up his mind.

Beat.

Jesus: It's not like the old days, is it, Lou?

Devil: (chuckles reflectively) It most assuredly is not, Jay, it most assuredly is not.

Jesus: It's not even the same company we started out with.

Devil: Times change, man, times change.

Jesus: Ain't that the truth though.

Devil: It's not the old days. 2000 years ago, remember? One of your deals kicks out, you were on the scene that day, that day! And you'd sit down with them, you'd sit down and talk, then badaboom-badabing, water into wine, fish for a thousand, you're back on your feet, it's like the whole thing never happened.

Jesus: It just got too big.

Devil: It got away from you.

Jesus: Ain't that the way, though. (Pause) Don't take Seligman, Lou.  
Devil: What are you talking about?  
Jesus: Take back the offer.  
Devil: You and Paul hitting the wine again?  
Jesus: I know you're after him, I'm asking you to back off.  
Devil: I did no such thing! One of the other departments must...  
Jesus: Oh, for my sake, cut it out! We only have three departments and Purgatory runs on temps!  
Devil: (Pause). I keep forgetting that. (sips). I didn't have to push too hard, Jay. I didn't have to push at all, really. It was just the basic package.  
Jesus: He's got a kid.  
Devil: (Makes a buzzer sound) Try again.  
Jesus: (Pause) Take the offer off the table and I'll ignore senate hearings this week.  
Devil: (Smiles) This is why you never got promoted, Jay. You can't think big picture.  
Jesus: We have a deal?  
Devil: Well, Gee, I don't know, I'll have to think about it, you got it. (Devil begins to exit stage left).  
Jesus: Lou?  
Devil: (stops) Jay?  
Jesus: Thanks.  
Devil: Don't mention it.  
Jesus: Just tell Martha to clear that virus off her site, okay?  
Devil: You'll have to ask her yourself. I can't control her anymore.  
Jesus: You going on the fishing trip this weekend?  
Devil: Nope. Got Red Sox tickets.  
Jesus: Oh, just leave them alone already, would you?  
Devil: See you around, Jay. Don't work too hard. (Exits)  
Jesus: Don't work too hard, Lou.

*Lights fade*