

The Big Finish

a musical comedy by Sean Sancel

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ACT I, SCENE 1

*The lights go up slowly . It is the Oval Office. The president's desk is center stage, facing the audience. A large picture window is behind it. An American flag stands beside the window. We can see **PRESIDENT BEN STORM** standing in front of the window, head down, hands clasped behind back in a classic pose. He appears to be deep in thought with the weight of the world's problems on him. But as the music fades out and time goes by, we wonder whether he may actually be sleeping. Especially when he starts to snore. Suddenly, three men burst through the door. They are members of the president's cabinet. DEFENSE SECRY. **HANK POWERS**, SURGEON GENERAL **LLOYD BRETHMORE**, and **LARRY DANFORTH**, SECRY. OF TECHNOLOGY. They are all yelling for the president, but he remains sleeping through the commotion.*

THREE MEN

Mr. President! Mr. President!...I need to see you! ...Just a moment of your time, Mr. President...Mr. President?..(etc.)

Larry notices the president - still sleeping over by the window. He motions to the others. They rush towards him and begin again...

ALL THREE

Mr. President! Mr. President!...I need to talk to you!..(etc.)...

He does not wake up. Their commotion dies down in intensity.

HANK

Well, what's the matter with him?

LARRY

It would appear that the man is sleeping.

HANK

Yea, but he really sleeps soundly.

LLOYD

Oh my God..or...he's dead!

LARRY

No, I really don't think he's dead...

HANK

Man, do you always have to overreact? Would he be *dead and standing here?*

LLOYD

Oh, sure, but your way, he's *sleeping* and standing here. What do you think he is, a horse? Y'know, I can't say anything around here...

HANK

Well, you're the surgeon general, check his pulse if you think he's dead!

LLOYD

Ewww... I don't want to check his pulse. What if I wake him up?

HANK

Then you'll have cured him! You're like the friggin' head doctor in the whole country, and you can't tell if this man is dead?!

LLOYD

No, a "head doctor" is what you need...!

LARRY

Well, I guess we've pretty much exhausted all our options at this point, so if he isn't dead and no one wants to wake him up – I guess we'll have to sit here and wait.

HANK

Sounds fine to me.

LLOYD

Me, too.

They all sit and stare at the president. The sudden silence seems to bring him around. He stirs, yawns...then slowly looks around and smiles sleepily at the three men surrounding him. When they are convinced of his consciousness they begin their shouting anew.

THREE MEN

Mr. President! Mr. President!..Please, I need to talk to you!..etc....

This scares the hell out of the president. His eyes widen and dart back and forth from man to man as he cringes away like a scared animal trying to find an escape. But he is cornered with his back to the window. He grabs the flagpole and uses it to defend himself as they continue relentlessly.

PRESIDENT

(finally) WAIT A MINUTE!! *(They all quiet down.)* Everyone just shut up!

LLOYD

But Mr. President, what are we going to do?

PRESIDENT

The first thing you're going to do is get the hell away from me! I mean it! The next person who makes a move towards me is gonna get stars & stripes forever!

He juts out the flagpole threateningly. They all move slowly back as if he had a gun.

PRESIDENT

That's better. *(He composes himself)* Now, what's the matter with you guys? I thought I told you to play outside for awhile. Can't you see I'm trying to have my portrait painted?

They all begin to look around for the artist.

LARRY

Getting your portrait painted, sir?

LLOYD

But, where's the artist?

PRESIDENT

Say, where *is* the artist? See, that's the problem with this country, today. No one takes their job seriously anymore.

LLOYD

I'm sorry, sir.

PRESIDENT

Ahhh, forget it. So what, right? It'll just be one of those unfinished portraits like that other guy had – who was he? Who was the guy with the wooden teeth?

LLOYD

Howdy Doody?

PRESIDENT

No, teeth. He had these wooden teeth...

HANK

Ah, Mortimer Snerd...

PRESIDENT

No. He wasn't a puppet, all right? Come on, he's like a legend in this country. He cut down a cherry tree or somethin'...

LLOYD

Paul Bunyan?

PRESIDENT

No, no, no.

HANK

Well, we don't know it.

PRESIDENT

Well, forget it then. Now what did you boys want to see me about?

They all start shouting at the same time again.

PRESIDENT

WAIT A MINUTE! What are you guys, the Andrew Sisters? Look, unless you guys are gonna start harmonizing, talk one at a time. Hank!... *(He makes his way over to a coffee machine.)*

HANK

(very stiff) Thank you, sir! Sir, it's this situation in the middle east. It's a powder keg over there, sir.

PRESIDENT

(pouring coffee) Whooopeee! Tell me something I don't know, Hank.

Lloyd lets out a stifled laugh. Hank glares at him.

PRESIDENT (CONTD.)

Coffee, Hank?

HANK

What?...Oh, no thank you, sir. You see, the situati...

PRESIDENT

You mean you don't drink coffee in the morning, General?

HANK

Oh..yes, sir. I mean I do, Mr. President, but...it's not morning, sir. It's..two o'clock in the afternoon...

PRESIDENT

This is good stuff. They have it flown in for me from Hawaii. It's made from Arabica (a-ruh-bíc-a) beans. Those are the best. Is that how you say it? A-ruh-bíc-a?

LARRY

It's pronounced arábica, sir.

LLOYD

No, I think he was right with arabíca.

LARRY

Believe me, it's arábica.

PRESIDENT

Arábica...hmmm. Wait a minute .. two o'clock? Get on with it, Hank, I'm a busy man...

HANK

Right. Yes, sir, well as I was saying, we have a real problem out there. The fighting is a lot more widespread, it's getting way out of control...

PRESIDENT

I know, I know...they're fighting. That's all they ever do over there. Don't you see, Hank? They like to fight. They don't think like you and I. Well, *you* I don't know. But I don't like to fight. You know what I like to do? I like to drink arabíca coffee...

LARRY

Arábica.

PRESIDENT

Arábica coffee.

HANK

But, sir....

PRESIDENT

Okay, so what are they fighting about, anyway, Hank? What?

HANK

Well, it's pretty complex, sir. Would....would you like me to explain the whole situation to you?

PRESIDENT

(making a face) Emmmmmmm.....no.

HANK

Mr. President, if I could just have you alone for an hour I could *fully* debrief you.

PRESIDENT

(stops and stares at him) Oh, I – don't – think so. I think you're time is up, Buster...

HANK

No... I didn't mean to say...I mean...

LLOYD

You heard him Mr. Hot Pants. you're time's up.

PRESIDENT

All right Lloyd, you're up. What's the problem?

LLOYD

(startled) Oh, me? Oh, good, okay...we've got some real problems here, sir. I sincerely believe we're on the verge of a national health crisis. And statistics are showing that all major diseases are up by at least 35% including AIDS, cancer and gunshot wounds...

PRESIDENT

(looking out window) How can it be two o'clock? It's so dark outside. Why is it so dark?

LARRY

Well, I don't want to alarm you, sir. but it looks like we're in for some bad weather.

HANK

(under his breath) Hmph. You ain't shittin'...

LLOYD

(trying to stay on course) Our records are now showing that in another eight months, not a single man, woman or child will be covered with health insurance. *(Proud of his point)* Now, *that's* pretty bad, isn't it?

LARRY

(consulting his clipboard) And speaking of the weather, Ben, there's still massive flooding in the midwest. The entire southern citrus crop was lost to frost this year—and there are two major rivers that we know of that have inexplicably turned into what can only be described as.....blood. *(closes clipboard notebook)*

PRESIDENT

Blood?

HANK

Aha! Probably from the widespread fighting! I bet those rivers are in the middle east!

LARRY

No, actually, they're in South America.

LLOYD

Phht! Nice try...

PRESIDENT

Oh, Larry, that reminds me (*he pulls Larry aside*). What's the last title we came up with for you?

LARRY

I believe it was Secretary of Technology, sir.

PRESIDENT

Well, forget that one. Wait'll you hear this one...“Chief Science Officer.” Isn't that cool? How do you like that one? Chief Science Officer!

LARRY

It's okay.

PRESIDENT

It's okay? It's a brand new cabinet post I came up with for ya. It's brand new! Do you know where it's from?

LARRY

Yea, I know. Star Trek.

PRESIDENT

Yea! Just like Kirk and good ol' Mr. Spock. That's us, y'see? My most trusted advisor and friend. Plus, you know a lot about science stuff and the way things work and junk.

LARRY

I guess so.

PRESIDENT

You guess so! Come on, aren't you the one who masterminded my whole write-in campaign? Me, a simple weatherman?...

LARRY

A simple weatherman with a 10 share nationally, Ben, don't forget...

PRESIDENT

Still, here I sit. I still don't know how you pulled it off....

HANK

President Storm, please, what are we supposed to do?

PRESIDENT

Huh? About what?

HANK

(*sheepishly*) About...y'know...

PRESIDENT

All right, everyone calm down. ...Boys, just look at the great jobs we have! We're in a swell income bracket, now. This is the strongest nation on Earth and we're all standing in the Captain's bridge. (*quick wink to Larry; Captain's bridge*) You guys have got to learn to enjoy yourselves a little. Yea, ya got your Middle east and your health care and the rivers turning to blood...yadda, yadda, yadda. All those things were here when we came and they'll be here after we're gone. Personally, I'm just glad to be here.

Let's enjoy it while we can! Now, I'm sorry but I have got to get something more to eat! Who's hungry? I can have some really great food sent in.

LLOYD

I could go for a bite...

PRESIDENT

That-a-boy. *(calls on intercom)* Ms. Hope? We're hungry. I want you to send in some food...and make sure it's something worthy of a president. *(winks at others)*

LLOYD

So, sir...what do we do then?

HANK

We can't just do ..nothing. ...Can we?

PRESIDENT

I'll tell you what I want you to do. I want you to sing bass...

LLOYD

I beg your pardon sir, you want me to...sing..? But, but....why?

PRESIDENT

Because I'm your president and I said so, that's why.

Hank begins singing a bass line.

LLOYD

Like that?...

PRESIDENT

Yea, that's good, but you need some rhythm. *(calls on intercom)* Ms. Hope. do you have a pencil handy?

MS. HOPE (OFF)

Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT

Good. I want you to tap on the intercom like this *(does rythm)*

MS. HOPE (OFF)

(unquestioning) Yes, sir. *(She taps the rythm.)*

PRESIDENT

Okay, Lloyd go ahead... *(He sings the bass line.)*

PRESIDENT

(to others) Well, don't you guys just sit there and watch him. Let's hear something...

They join in with surprising harmony. The President walks out and addresses the audience directly while the men continue to sing behind him.

PRESIDENT

Get a load of this. Can you believe I got the Secretary of Defense, the Surgeon General and not to mention the Chief Science Officer *singing* for

me? I got a woman in another room tapping a pencil and she doesn't even know why. Can you believe it? Sometimes I can't even believe it myself...

I CAN'T BELIEVE

PRESIDENT: I can't believe...Everything they'll do for me
I got my very own jet and a guaranteed place in history
There was another guy running but everyone decided to
Cast their vote for me, and I can't believe, I can't believe...
And I can't believe... That I'm even sitting here
I got a big oval office and I'm pulling down a couple hundred grand a year
I know I should be doing something special
But it's not exactly clear, But just look at me
This job's a breeze and I can't believe!
Would you believe I used to be a weatherman?!
Everyday on the national morning news
People really learned to put their faith in me
'Cause I was witty....and charming... so how could I lose...
But I don't see why, I'm just some ordinary guy
Looking good on T.V. really didn't teach me how to be...
The leader of the free world getting all the pretty girls
Lucky, lucky me, And I can't believe it
OTHERS (He can't believe..)
I can't believe it! (He can't believe...)
I can't believe!
But there's some things that I still believe in
Things that I can see every day
I believe in the power of man!...
To put their faith in a fool like me but it's all the other stuff that I can't believe
Hey, hey!
OTHERS (He can't believe that he gets to be here. He's got a great, big office—
he's just sitting there..)
I got no troubles on my mind, my head's completely clear, and I cant believe
(He can't believe...) I can't believe it! (He can't believe...) And I can't believe!
(Song Ends)

PRESIDENT

Okay, boys. Break it up. Let's eat...

They all make their way to the big table of food that was wheeled in during the song.

LLOYD

So, what you're saying is...we should all just enjoy ourselves while we can,
and don't worry about, like....consequences, and stuff?

PRESIDENT

(sarcastic) Ummm.....Yes! What the hell is that tapping noise? *(He realizes it's still Ms. Hope on the intercom. He walks over to it)* Ms. Hope, you can stop tapping the pencil now.

MS. HOPE(OFF)

Oh, thank you, sir. Sir, The Secretary of Morality is here to see you.

HANK

Secretary of Morality? What the hell's that?

PRESIDENT

Oh, I met him at a party. I was drunk...you know how it is. One thing led to another and I wound up giving him a cabinet post.

LLOYD

Yea, but Secretary of Morality?

PRESIDENT

Well, we were talking about morals and good and evil and all that stuff. He really knew what he was talking about. All of a sudden I was thinking, 'Yea, that's what this country needs.' Like a moral advisor to get us back on track, and everything.....and I was drunk.

HANK

You're so easy...

LARRY

You little tramp.. (*They all laugh quietly.*)

PRESIDENT

He's been calling me every damn day since then. Well, I guess I better let the guy in...(*trying to control his laughter*) All right, Ms. Hope, you can send him in...

MS. HOPE

Yes, sir, but we already heard, sir. You must remember to take your finger off the button when you're done talking , sir.

They all stop laughing and go straight face.

PRESIDENT

Oh...right. Thanks, Ms. Hope...(*he yanks his finger off the intercom*) All right boys - beat it. You heard the lady. I got an important meeting in here.

*As the cabinet members leave, **ERNIE**, SECRETARY OF MORALITY comes in. He is a young man with a baby-ish face. He is carrying many books and loose papers. He looks dishevelled and like he works very hard.*

PRESIDENT

Hello, Bernie...

ERNIE

"Ernie", sir. Mr. President, it's a great honor to see you again. And I've really uncovered a lot. I think I really have some answers here for ya, Mr. President...

PRESIDENT

..answers?...

ERNIE

Yes, remember everything we talked about? Well, I've been doing a lot of in-depth studies, sir. The problem is a lot bigger than we thought. I mean, divorce, suicides, depression...everything. *No one* is happy. And in all my

research and interviews, the main thing I see missing — is a sense of hope.

PRESIDENT

Okay, so we're low on hope. All right, well fix it.

ERNIE

Well, I really don't know how to fix it. I wish it were that easy. Well...like here's an example: That bill that you signed into law last year - the one requiring that the words "right and "wrong" be taken out of all school text books. I have to say I think that was a huge mistake.

PRESIDENT

Now wait a minute, that law is designed to boost kids self esteem. How can kids learn anything with people shouting "wrong" at them all the time?...

ERNIE

Excuse me, sir, but screw their self esteem. They got self esteem shooting out their ears. Don't you see, by telling people there is nothing considered "right" and nothing considered "wrong" we're also saying there are no answers. Nothing to look forward to... and there goes hope, right out the window.

PRESIDENT

Look, Franklin....

ERNIE

Ernie, sir...

PRESIDENT

Whatever. Look, what do you want me to do? Go out there and start telling people what to do, and teach 'em about right and wrong? Don't you know people hate it when politicians do that?

ERNIE

Yes, but, sir.. without hope, people can become one scary group of animals. We should do *something* — haven't you read the newspapers lately? It just seems like everytime I turn around there's more... *(as he says this he turns to see a shadowy figure in the window behind the president)*

PRESIDENT

There's more what?...

ERNIE

Um, there's someone out there...

PRESIDENT

Someone out where? *(the president turns to look, but the shadowy figure ducks away. The president looks back at Ernie and the figure returns)*

BAD PEOPLE

ERNIE

Listen very carefully to what I'm trying to say
There's someone standing right behind you... Don't look now!...
Just pretend that we are talking and perhaps they'll go away
It's scary how some people act that way...

PRESIDENT Now listen , Bernie, I...
ERNIE You don't believe me? What can I say?
But everytime you turn around
They duck away...
Bad people, Bad people, They're so bad...

More shadowy figures gather at the window (in silhouette)

ERNIE They do the most horrendous things
And they don't make a sound
There seems to be more of them every time I turn around
What makes them think like that?
How can they be so mean?

PRESIDENT I don't know, perhaps they have some really nasty dreams...
ERNIE Let's not protect them, making all their excuses
That's not the cure
'Cause they're multiplying, Doc, and we're gonna be in trouble
When they're knocking down the door!
Bad people!

The shadowy figures start to dance around outside the window.

PRESIDENT Maybe they can't help themselves. They've had it so hard...
ERNIE I don't wanna hear about their childhood when they're sneaking through my
yard!

The bad people outside the window start singing backup.

ERNIE Bad people, Bad people ...They're so bad....
(Like the worst nightmare that you've ever had)
Bad people...etc...

ERNIE

I'm just saying, people in power to address the entire world have to show a
little responsibility towards the basic truths of right and wrong.

*At the moment the door bursts open, hiding Ernie behind it, and **MS. CHARITY** rushes in.
She rushes towards the President, smothering him with hugs & kisses.*

MS. CHARITY

Oh Ben! Benny, Benny, Benny! At last! Some time alone.... How is my bwig,
stwong pwesident...? Who wants a big swoppy pwesidential seal...?

PRESIDENT

(to Ernie) This woman is drunk.

MS. CHARITY

Don't be a big siwwy man... Me's not drunk.. me is frissssky...

PRESIDENT

Meezy and yoozy has company....

ERNIE

Mr. President!

MS. CHARITY

(snapping to attention) Oh dear God!..

ERNIE

Mr. President! You're a married man...!

PRESIDENT

Yea, well... I'm not a fanatic about it....

ERNIE

Oh, Mr. President....!

PRESIDENT

My press secretary, Ms. Charity. Ms. Charity, I'd like you to meet my Secretary of Morality...

MS. CHARITY

(completely embarrassed) Ohhhhh... of course you would....be... Nice to meet you, Father... *(they shake hands)*

ERNIE

I'm not a priest.

MS CHARITY

Did you know the president wrote plays? He wanted me to rehearse this crazy thing and I said, 'Well.. sure...' Did you like it? Did it ring true?

ERNIE

Oh.. it rang true all right...Mr. President, what about Faith? Faith Storm, you're first lady?

PRESIDENT

Well, she wasn't my *first* lady, actually...

ERNIE

You know what I mean!

PRESIDENT

Yea... Well, I gotta level with you, Bernie... She walked out on me. I lost my Faith. So now I'm giving it to Charity.

Charity whacks him in the stomach.

ERNIE

Walked out on you? When?

PRESIDENT

Before I even took office. I was still a weatherman. She shows up for the photo ops, but that's about it.

MS. CHARITY

She couldn't take it when he got famous. The most trusted weatherman in the country. 'Cause who predicted that big storm when no one else knew what was coming? You did, you big puddy tat....

ERNIE

Oh, Mr. President, I'm so sorry. All this time without your Faith. That must be so hard...

PRESIDENT

No, its surprisingly easy, actually....

MS. CHARITY

Well, I better be going and let you two get back to your talk...

CHARITY exits.

ERNIE

Well, she seems nice...

PRESIDENT

Yea, she's nice. She is a little needy, though.

ERNIE

Well, don't worry, Mr. President. Your secret is safe with me.

PRESIDENT

That's good to hear, 'cause... well.. I hate to bring this up right now, but I'm afraid we're gonna have to let, you go, Bernie....

ERNIE

You're firing me...?

PRESIDENT

Well look. Don't take it so hard. You're not a bad kid. I'm sure you really mean well. It's just that well, you're kinda bringing everyone down, y'know?

ERNIE

I'm..I'm bringing everyone down?

PRESIDENT

Yea, you're like a big wet blanket. C'mon, "people aren't happy"..They never are. But, believe me, they're not looking to Washington to make them happy. We don't even promise people they'll be happy, we promise them the right to *try* to be happy. I know that much, it's right there in the constitution. Go on and pursue happy, and good luck to ya. And that's what people really want. To *look* for happiness. Y'know, the thrill of the chase. Nobody's ever happy with happy, they want to go out and find the next happy.

ERNIE

(suddenly a little tense) Sir, I... I feel I should tell you something...

PRESIDENT

What? What is it?

ERNIE

Well, it's kind of dumb.. but, well, last night, I had a dream... and, uh – well, it wasn't good.

PRESIDENT

A dream? Gees, that's terrible. – Well... goodbye.

ERNIE

The thing is it seemed pretty realistic. And, and I kind of got the idea what we should do... about things...

PRESIDENT

Okay, well how about you tell me what the hell you're talking about. What did your dream tell you we should do?

ERNIE

Well, ...pray. Yea, that's all.

PRESIDENT

Pray. Uh-hmm. Okay, well I'll pray and I'll see you later...

From outside the oval office window, we hear a TRUMPET BLOWING (offstage). A somewhat sad but majestic line.

PRESIDENT

Now what the hell is that?

ERNIE

What?

PRESIDENT

That noise? Listen..someone is playing a damned trumpet out on the lawn!

He goes to window.

PRESIDENT

Hey! Knock that off! Can't you see I'm trying to fire someone in here?! Man, people can be so insensitive...

ERNIE

Well, who is it?

PRESIDENT

I don't know. Some lunatic in a bird costume..he ran into the bushes..

ERNIE

Well, I can see you have important things to take care of, so I've got to go look for a job now. Maybe I'll read depressing novels to the elderly and see if I can bring them down, too.

PRESIDENT

Oh, knock it off you big baby. I knew you'd take it personally.

ERNIE

Well, if you'll excuse me, Mr. President Ben Storm, I'll just be leaving now...

*He heads for the door with all his papers tucked under his arm. **Hank** and **Lloyd** come in arguing and knock **Ernie** down. His papers scatter all over the floor, but **Hank** and **Lloyd** don't seem to notice him at all.*

LLOYD

(to Hank) I'm telling you, you don't starve a fever, everyone knows you feed a fever and starve a cold, you idiot...

HANK

How about if I feed you my knuckles?...

PRESIDENT

Gentlemen, I wonder if you've noticed that you knocked down poor Lenny over there? Help him pick up his things...

HANK

(to Lloyd) Who the hell is Lenny?

ERNIE

(on the floor, picking up his papers) He means me. Forget about it. I just want to get out of here...

PRESIDENT

Hank? Are you here for a reason?

HANK

Oh, yea, I have something important to tell you...Sir, our radar systems have detected a large mass moving towards Earth at a very fast rate of speed. We're not really sure at this point what it is, of course on a radar screen it just looks like a bright, green blotchy thing.

PRESIDENT

Wait a minute.. What?! Whatever it is is headed *here*? Do you know where it's supposed to hit?

HANK

(checking his notebook) Well, given the current tracking, and remember our estimates aren't completely precise...it should be hitting1204 Bertram Street, Apt. B.

PRESIDENT

It's gonna hit right here in Washington?! What will that do?...

HANK

Well, if it's asteroids, they'll leave a hole in the earth roughly....the size of two earths and twice as deep – if it's comets we're talking about, they'll completely scorch and burn every building on Bertram Street, and the rest of the world fifteen seconds later...

ERNIE

Good Lord, is he serious? He's not serious is he?

HANK

(snaps book close) ..and that's pretty much the scenario...

PRESIDENT

I don't believe what I'm hearing....Holy shit...!

LLOYD

Is there anymore grey poupon?

HANK

Hey, save some of that ham, I'm coming over there...

ERNIE

Wow..does this sort of thing happen every day around here? I feel kinda naive but this sounds kinda...I don't know.. *scary*...

PRESIDENT

Hell yes, it's scary! *(to Hank and Lloyd)* Hank! Are you serious or not? You guys aren't even phased by this or what?

HANK and LLOYD

(together - with food in their mouths) Yea, but...but, you told us...not to worry about things...relax a little...etc...

PRESIDENT

Well, forget all that! I think we should be getting a little worried now, don't you?

HANK

You're right, I'm sorry, sir. See, after we left here this afternoon, me and Lloyd here had a couple of drinks and...

PRESIDENT

Well, straighten up! Jeez, How am I supposed to deal with all this? How long do we have before all this happens, anyway?

HANK

Ummm... roughly an hour.

PRESIDENT

An hour?!! Are you kidding me?!

ERNIE

(not quite knowing what to do) Welllll, I guess I'll just be going. This is a little too much for me..so...

PRESIDENT

Oh, I hope this is a joke! Where the hell is Larry?

*As **ERNIE** turns for the door the door flings open and **LARRY** enters hurriedly, knocking all the papers out of Ernie's hands once again.*

ERNIE

Damnit!...

PRESIDENT

Oh, Larry! Thank God, you're here...Where the hell have you been?

LARRY

Mr. President, I know what's happening. I've already been on the phone with the Air Force and the National Weather Bureau...

ERNIE

(very annoyed) Um...an "excuse me" would be nice!...

LARRY

(to President) Who's the pansy?

ERNIE

Hey! Now, wait a minute...!

PRESIDENT

That's Leonard, he doesn't work here anymore. What else?!

LARRY

Anyway, NASA's also aware of the situation. I told them to send over some satellite photos as soon as possible so we can get a look at what we're dealing with. They should be here any minute.

PRESIDENT

There! See? *(to Hank and Lloyd)* At least someone around here is on top of the situation. *(on the intercom)* Ms. Hope, I want you to bring in those satellite photos as soon as they get here...

MS. HOPE (OFF)

They're here, sir...

PRESIDENT

They are? Terrific, bring them right in.

Ernie has picked up all his papers again by this time and starts towards the door. But as he hears the president on the intercom he stops short...

ERNIE

Oh no you don't... not this time... *(he gives the door a wide berth)*

*The door opens and beautiful music starts playing. The lights start to dim and in this dreamy scenario walks MS. HOPE. She walks in gracefully with the satellite photos under her arm. The **President, Hank, Larry and Lloyd** are oblivious to this change of mood. They go right on talking (silently). This scene is played out for Ernie. As she waltzes around the room he watches her wide-eyed and mouth agape. She waltzes past him maybe stroking his cheek and says "hello" dreamily. He can say nothing. She drops the photos on the president's desk. The President is saying something to Ernie and the lights shoot back up, the music stops and all returns to normal...*

PRESIDENT

Bernie!! What's the matter with you? Can't you hear?...

MS. HOPE

My goodness, what's the matter with him?..

LLOYD

He looks like he's in a trance. Maybe he's having some sort of seizure...

MS. HOPE

My aunt told me once you should stick a pencil in the person's mouth if they're having a seizure, so they don't swallow their tongue...

HANK

You heard her, Lloyd, stick a pencil in his mouth..

LLOYD

Eww, gross, I'm not sticking anything in his mouth!

ERNIE

(snapping out of it) No, no...I'm okay. I was just sort of daydreaming...

LLOYD

Y'know, just because I'm a doctor everyone thinks they can ask me for medical attention whenever they want. Sometimes I'm sorry I ever got my medical license.

HANK

You and the rest of the country.

PRESIDENT

Thank you, Ms. Hope. That'll be all. And no phone calls – we don't want to be disturbed...

MS. HOPE

Yes, sir. *(she starts to leave, stopping for a moment at Ernie. She strokes his face tenderly)* I'm sorry you're not feeling well, Mr. Bernie...

ERNIE

(unable to speak) Bah, beh, buh buh..... *(She leaves and Ernie drops his papers once again)*

PRESIDENT

Oh for Christ's sake, would you pick up those papers and go? What's the matter with you?

LARRY

(back to the photos) Well. here they are... in all their glory.

PRESIDENT

Oh my God! There's so many of them..and look how bright they are...

LLOYD

They're almost beautiful.

HANK

They're not beautiful. They're gonna destroy the planet, you think that's beautiful?

LLOYD

I'm just saying, they're aesthetically pleasing to the eye, not that I want to marry them..

PRESIDENT

Oh, shut up, shut up, shut up! Well, what are they, asteroids? Comets? What?...

LARRY

Well, NASA told me they were trying to get a magnetic field chemical analysis. There should be a report in here... Ah, good here it is. This is the complete chemical breakdown.

PRESIDENT

Well, let me see it! No wait...I don't want to see it. Lloyd, you look at it...

LLOYD

Me? Why me? I don't want to look at it!

HANK

Oh, what else is new? Here, give it to me...

PRESIDENT

No, never mind. Larry, you look at it. Tell me what those damn things are made of.

LARRY

(looking through report) Well, wait a minute.. they're not asteroids at all. Apparently, they're made of fire. Fire and...and..brimstone.

PRESIDENT

Brimstone? What the hell is brimstone?

LARRY

Well, I...I don't really know.

PRESIDENT

(to Hank) Do you know what brimstone is?

HANK

Sure, that's uh...y'know...no, I don't know what that is.

LLOYD

Wait, isn't that the stuff they roll out fudge on...?

PRESIDENT

No, I don't even know what the hell you're talking about! Great. We're about to be destroyed by somethin' - we don't even know what the hell it is!

ERNIE

Excuse me, I don't want to butt in, sir, but are you talking about "brimstone"?

HANK

Yes, what do you think we're talking about, "gallstones"?

PRESIDENT

What do you think we've been talking about for the last ten minutes?

ERNIE

(lost in thought).. brimstone...

LARRY

(grabbing Ernie by the shoulders) Ernie,...do you know what brimstone is?

ERNIE

Well..kinda. It's more of a Biblical reference. It's one of the ways the Bible says the Earth will be destroyed in the last days...It's fire really, ...like burning sulfur....

PRESIDENT

Oh great! Fire. They're made of fire and fire. Why the hell didn't they just say that instead of freakin' brimstone? Who wrote that analysis anyway? I want them fired. Or better yet, I want them brimstoned!

Hank and LLOYD laugh supportively at the president's joke.

LARRY

No one wrote it, sir. It's a computer analysis. And believe me, it's accurate. If it says fire and brimstone, then fire and brimstone is what is now hurtling towards the Earth.

ERNIE

Oh my God...don't you see? This is it. Nobody's used that term seriously in hundreds of years. This is it! ..the actual foretold end of the world!

LLOYD

Oh, listen to Mr. Gloom and Doom over here. Lighten up, Mr Gloom and Doom, don't you...

PRES, LARRY and HANK

(together) Shut up, Lloyd!

PRESIDENT

Look, kid, what are you saying?

ERNIE

What do you think I'm saying? This is it....The End....Armageddon....The Apocalypse!

LARRY

The Apocalypse? Now?

ERNIE

I mean, take a look around you. The signs are everywhere!

LARRY

What signs? There are no signs...

ERNIE

No signs? Are you nuts? Look outside, do you realize it's three o'clock in the afternoon and it's pitch black? You're a weatherman Mr. President, doesn't that strike you as a bit odd ...and here *(they look out the window)* Isn't that the moon out there, and isn't that a unusual shade of red?

PRESIDENT

It is odd...

LARRY

And the fact remains that there are huge fireballs heading towards Earth...

HANK

Okay, so who's doing this? Is it the Russians? Are they back on their feet again? The North Koreans? Terrorists...!

ERNIE

No, it's....y'know....God.

LLOYD

God who?

ERNIE

(sarcastic) Well, God, y'know..I don't think he has a last name.

PRESIDENT

Are you talking about *thee* God? He's doing this to us? Isn't he supposed to be a good guy? Why would he want to destroy the world?

ERNIE

Well, I don't know. But this is the way it happens in the book. Believe me gentlemen, before this day is over we're all gonna be face to face with our creator, the Lord God almighty - and lots of other scary things...

PRESIDENT

(falling to his knees) Oh whhhyyy! Why is this happening to me?!

ALL OTHERS

To you?

PRESIDENT

Yes, me..! Why does this have to happen while I'm president? Why couldn't the end of the world happen to one of those other guys...like Taft or,...or Harding? No, all they had to worry about was World War II...

ERNIE

No, they didn't...

PRESIDENT

Are you telling me they didn't worry about World War II?

ERNIE

(irritated) No, see..y'know what you're problem is, President Storm? You don't know enough about the past to learn anything from it. You're... rude and arrogant and... the only thing you put your faith in is yourself...which believe me, sir, is the wrong place to put it.

PRESIDENT

Well, that's real nice. You could have warned me about this sooner! You're the one who's supposed to know about these things!

ERNIE

Well, I told you I had a dream!..

PRESIDENT

Yea, you told us to pray! Not to bend over and kiss our asses goodbye! Hey, wait a minute...that's a good idea. We'll pray! He likes that sort of thing, doesn't He?

ERNIE

Well, yea...but it's this desperation thing that I don't know if he goes for...y'know....

PRESIDENT

Well, we're doing it. *(he drops to his knees)* Come on, we're all doing it. Kneel down everybody, we're gonna pray. We're gonna pray like the wind... *(They all do, except Larry)*

PRESIDENT

Come on , Larry, we're praying now...

LARRY

Ben, I don't see how...

PRESIDENT

Would you kneel down! We have to pray now!

They're all kneeling, facing the audience.

PRESIDENT

All right..Who wants to start?

HANK

Well, I think it should be you, sir.

PRESIDENT

Well, I don't really know any prayers...

ERNIE

Oh, brother...

LLOYD

Wait, I remember one from when I was a kid. Okay, here goes: Bless us oh Lord, for these our gifts which we are about to receive, from thine bounty...

ERNIE

Wait a minute...

PRESIDENT

What are you doing? That was sounding good.

ERNIE

No, you say that prayer when you're about to eat something.

HANK

Well, we already ate...

ERNIE

Right. Sooo...

PRESIDENT

All right, forget it. This situation calls for a special made-up-on-the-spot kind of prayer. *(looking upwards)* Lord, Heavenly Father, All-forgiving Supreme Being of the universe...please don't burn us all up. Please don't drop big balls of fire on us so the only way they can identify us is through dental records...

ERNIE

(not looking up) Okay...remember, not too desperate.

PRESIDENT

(whispering) What?

ERNIE

Try a little more humility...

PRESIDENT

Okay, right.... Lord, I know I'm not the nicest person in the world and I'm certainly not the best president...

ALL OTHERS

Amen.

PRESIDENT

(looking around) What do you mean “amen”?! I wasn’t done yet!

ALL OTHERS

(mumbling) Oh...sorry...sorry...I thought...

PRESIDENT

Ohhh.. I’m all alone here! Completely alone!

MS. CHARITY bursts through the door and rushes the president.

MISS CHARITY

Alone at last! Oh darling..

PRESIDENT

Sweetie, listen...

MS. CHARITY

Ohh, do you know how I feel about you, miwster pwesident?

Music starts guitar riffing....

CHARITY’S SONG

Ms. Charity I know, he thinks he gives enough
But it never ever really seems like too much
I need so much more, than I could ever ask him for
Just give it to me.. Give it to Charity
Give it to me... Give it to Charity
And I really, really, really, really, really, really

PRESIDENT

(cutting her off) Darling.. I’m sorry. We really don’t have time for that...

MISS CHARITY

(hugging him) Oh but still, we’re alone. Finally. I thought you’d never get that creepy little guy out of your office and there he is standing right behind you.

ERNIE

Believe me, you don’t know anybody who wants to leave more than me.

PRESIDENT

Look muffin-face, we’re having a bit of a crisis here.

LARRY

Perhaps you should tell Ms. Charity what’s going on.

PRESIDENT

But, she’ll tell everyone!

LLOYD

She’s the press secretary!

PRESIDENT

That’s what I mean! Oh all right. Darling... don’t get scared. No big deal.. but it’s the end of the world.

MS. CHARITY

(long pause) Oh my God. Did I even ask for a ring? You will say anything to avoid marrying me.

She leaves angrily.

PRESIDENT

All alone.

LARRY

Sir, those fireballs are headed here and we should be thinking of a way to stop it.

PRESIDENT

Larry, I'd love to, but stop it *how?! What do you want me to do?*

ERNIE

Yea, how do you think you're gonna stop it? There's no way to stop God's will...

HANK

(cautiously) Welllll...actually, Mr. President. There may be a way to stop it.

PRESIDENT

What? *(All eyes are on Hank now...)*

HANK

Well... we have the technology. President Storm, do you remember a while back when the United States was working on the Star Wars program? *(the President doesn't remember)* Think hard, now...

LARRY

The Star Wars program. It was a missile defense system that was supposed to "shield" the country in case of nuclear attack.

HANK

That's right. Y'know my father worked on that original plan...

LARRY

Okay, so yea. But the program was abandoned a long time ago, General. The cost, the feasibility of actually shooting moving objects out of the sky...

HANK

Welllll...it wasn't actually abandoned, okay? I guess I have to tell you now...the research has been, let's say "discreetly" continued. And, believe me, the technology we have now is far superior to what they were working with. It really is like an actual "shield".

PRESIDENT

Ohhhh... Star Wars. The movie.....

HANK

Bah, an unfortunate mistake in naming.

PRESIDENT

Well, I can't believe I didn't know about this. What's this new program called?

HANK

(proudly) The Empire Strikes Back!

PRESIDENT

Hank, what are you telling me? Can this thing actually protect us?

HANK

Believe me, sir, it can shield the entire planet...

LARRY

General, there's not much time..is the system operational?

HANK

Well, not against nuclear missiles and all, but come on, what are we really talking about here? Fire and brimstone? We're not exactly a bunch of chimpanzees. I mean, I don't know when the Bible was written..but we have superior technology now...

ERNIE

President Storm, please... I don't know about all this....

PRESIDENT

(thinking) Yea... me either...

LLOYD

What do you mean? Don't tell me you're thinking about *not* using this thing...

LARRY

Now, that would be a mistake. Is there a problem, Ben?

ERNIE

Yes, there's a problem! If you put up those shields it would be like proclaiming war on God Almighty himself! Is that what you want to do?

PRESIDENT

No, I don't want to do that...!

HANK

Well, technically, sir..I mean, God started it...we will be destroyed if we do nothing...

ERNIE

God started it? What are you—five? Please, Mr. Storm....

LARRY

That's *President* Storm, Ernie...

ERNIE

Mr. President...I'm not really sure myself, but please take some time to think about all this...

LARRY

We don't have time. Ben, what's he still doing here?

LLOYD

Yea, he doesn't even work here anymore..

PRESIDENT

Well, he's not going anywhere....we need him, now...

LARRY

General, how long will it take to get the system up and operational?

HANK

It's already been in test mode. About a half hour to fully deploy it.

LARRY

Well, get on the phone and do it.

HANK

Now, wait a minute, Bub, I don't work for you, My boss is President Storm here. And he's the only one who can throw the actual deploy switch.

PRESIDENT

Well, where is it?

HANK

I can have it delivered immediately, Mr. President. This system was designed to go up on a moments notice.

PRESIDENT

All right, well send for it, and at least get things ready. I just don't know yet...

HANK

(on the phone) Yes, General Powers, get me the Pentagon, Dept. E.Hello?, Yea, listen closely, this is Darth Vader...send over the princess...I repeat send over the princess.... *(hangs up)* There you go, gentlemen. The ball is rolling.

PRESIDENT

Now wait a minute. God is sending down fire and brimstone to destroy the world, right? But, surely, He must know we have the technology to stop it...

HANK

Maybe it's a test, even. He wouldn't want us to roll over like a bunch of panty waists and give in... it's a test to see how well we defend ourselves...

LLOYD

Yea..he wouldn't have given us the brains to come up with the technology if he didn't want us to use it, right?

LARRY

It's our human nature to defend ourselves. And He's the one who gave us human nature, y'know..

HANK

That's right, we must defend ourselves. It's our nature...It's not like we're French...

PRESIDENT

But defend ourselves against who...God? What a way to go down in the history books...the president who took us to war with our own God...!

LLOYD

Better than no history books at all....

ERNIE

It's not right, I tell you. It's not right.

LARRY

What's "right" got to do with it?

Music starts with military drums.

PRESIDENT

I don't know, I just don't know...

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

LARRY

You love your best friend's girlfriend
Since you can't remember when, don't ya?

HANK

One day you take her in the back, give her a surprise attack

LLOYD

But don't feel bad 'cause it's okay she was probably tired of him anyway

LARRY

And who knows, she may love you, too...

CHORUS

ALL

Because all's fair in love and war
And everything's fair in love and war
Doesn't matter who it is you love
Or what you're fighting for
Because everything is fair in love and war..

HANK

You got some piss-ant country wants to take over the world

LARRY

You can't sit on your hands and play nice like a little girl

HANK

'Cause when they're flying overhead and dropping bombs

There aint nothing left to do but a call to arms

LLOYD

And defend yourself no matter what you do

REPEAT CHORUS

LARRY

You want power! You want fame!
You want all those people to remember your name
Well words like "right" and "wrong" just get in the way!
And words lose something in the translation
You gotta think about the entire nation
And get off your high horse and do what you've got to do today!

ALL

CHORUS

Sometime during the song, a messenger wheels in a great big metallic box. It has a huge, ridiculous looking switch (like a light switch) on it. Hank takes the thing from the messenger kid and the kid waits there until Hank gives him \$5. Song ends.

HANK

Well, here it is, Mr. President. This is the actual switch to deploy the defense shield. The most sensitive piece of equipment in the country's arsenal...

LLOYD

And it was brought here by a \$5 messenger...

HANK

So what? Why do you think it says right here (*above the switch*) "Do Not Touch"?...

LARRY

Well, I think it's time. Mr. President...

PRESIDENT

Oh.....all right..... (*looking up*) If anyone is listening up there, I'm just doing this to protect my people. It's my job..I think, and, well anyway, if - by throwing this switch I'm somehow doing the wrong thing - please, just give me any kind of small sign..

At this point, another TRUMPET BLAST is heard from outside.

PRESIDENT

(*listns nervously, and then*) Well, no sign, okay, good enough for me! (*He quickly throws the switch, the machine makes a ridiculously comic sounding "PING!"*)

LARRY

Congratulations, Mr. President, you threw the switch...

PRESIDENT

(*worried*) Yea, and God help us all...

The rest of the men look at him uneasily, half shaking their heads...

PRESIDENT

...well, you know what I mean....

The music comes back up. Blackout. End of Act 1, Scene 1

ACT 1, SCENE 2

The stage is black. We hear angelic music and a choir of angels sing "Later, that same day..." Ernie, the only one on stage, is standing in the oval office, pretending to be president. Have fun - ad lib. He eventually makes his way to sitting behind the president's desk, when suddenly he is rudely surprised by something under the desk.

ERNIE

YAAAAH!

MS. CHARITY *climbs out from under the desk.*

ERNIE

Ms. Charity! Wh-what are you doing down there..??

MS. CHARITY

Oh, I heh heh.. (*suddenly angry, too*) well, what are you doing up here?..

ERNIE

I was just waiting for the president...!

MS. CHARITY

Well, what a coincidence...

ERNIE

Well... I'm sorry, but...

MS. CHARITY

Fine. You're forgiven. Well, where is he anyway?

ERNIE

He's holding a press conference. He'll be back.

MS. CHARITY

Right. Then I'll just be going.

ERNIE

Ms. Charity... You.. um... you like him, don't you?

Ms. Charity stops at the door while her music swells up, then..

MS. CHARITY

Like him...? No.... (sings)

I love him, and he gives all he can I know...

But what he gives is not a lot, and I really just want more...!

The music stops very abruptly.

Press conference?! Without me? What the hell's he doing? They'll eat him alive!

CHARITY runs out of the room. **MS. HOPE** enters.

ERNIE

Miss Hope!

MS. HOPE

Wow. She was in a hurry...

ERNIE

Well, that's 'cause we weren't doing anything in here, if that's what you meant.

MS. HOPE

Um, ..no. I was just looking for the president.

ERNIE

Yea, that's uh.. that's going around. Heh heh.. but no, he should be back soon...

MS. HOPE

Oh, okay, then... (she starts to leave)

ERNIE

(struggling desperately to start a conversation)

Yea, real soon.. ..Y'know, didya ever....(she's leaving) ...(screams) WAIT!

MS. HOPE
(turning back)

My God.. what happened?

ERNIE

I was just thinking maybe you wanted to wait for him. I mean... (takes a deep breath) I mean he should be back any minute....y'know...

MS. HOPE

Oh... I guess I could wait for a few minutes. Oh, I meant to ask you, Ernie.. how are you feeling? Any better?

ERNIE

Better than what? Oh! You mean, before with the.. no, no, I'm fine. In fact I'm freakishly healthy.

MS. HOPE

Wow.. that's uh...

ERNIE

Well, not "freakishly". I'm sure I have germs and, y'know.. all kinds of stuff... Well, not *lots* of germs, it's not like I'm loaded with germs.. y'know, just the normal amount. I'm normal. Why? Don't I seem normal?

MS. HOPE

Well, those things are so subjective. This is the longest amount of time I ever spent in this room. It's so ...

ERNIE

Oval-ly?

MS. HOPE

(little laugh) You're funny. But, you're in here while they're actually working, huh? The cradle of world power, right here in this room. It must be so interesting. What do they talk about?

ERNIE

Mostly they sing songs and discuss little points of grammar.. the weather figures in big....

MS. HOPE

Oh yea! The weather is crazy today! Have you been out there?

ERNIE

Oh! I know it's horrible and dismal, but don't be...

MS. HOPE

I was going to say beautiful...

ERNIE

Oh, me too.. horribly,dismally .. beautiful...

MS. HOPE

I love right before a storm. This big, unusual cold wind sweeps in from out of nowhere. It suddenly gets all dark like the curtain is about to go up... It's like this big promise of something exciting...

ERNIE

(half to himself) Well, exciting is one thing, but this is ridiculous.

MS. HOPE

Where I'm from in Pennsylvania, sometimes you could see lightning shooting from one mountain to another. It's amazing. I really miss my hometown. I'm thinking about moving back there, actually.

ERNIE

Oh... well, I guess I don't blame you. Washington is just terrible... every city is, I guess...

MS. HOPE

No, I like the city. I just...well...

ERNIE

I know. It's the people. The less people the better. People can really be terrible. God knows what terrible things people have done to you while you've been here...

MS. HOPE

Gosh - wow. No. I like people. I am one.

ERNIE

Yea, it's hard to believe...

MS. HOPE

I just miss.. well, I don't want to sound dumb.. but I miss nature. Don't you like people, Ernie? Or.. or things...?

ERNIE

I guess I haven't had that many good experiences with people. I'm usually horribly surprised and let down if there's a person involved.

MS. HOPE

What about "things"?

ERNIE

Same for "things"... But nature - y'know.. now there's something that - gives me asthma....

MS. HOPE

Well, maybe you're just looking at it all wrong. You just gotta learn to stop and notice and enjoy life while it's here...

ERNIE

I better be a quick study...

The Litte Things

by Sean Sancel ©2004

MS. HOPE Every little thing we take for granted

ERNIE Well, I know what you're saying but....

MS. HOPE Every little duckling on the pond

ERNIE Well, sure, everything sounds nice when you say words like "duckling"...

MS. HOPE Sometimes you have to stop tryin' to understand it...

ERNIE 'Cause I.. I don't...

MS. HOPE And take those little moments as they come along...

ERNIE ..ducklings...?

MS. HOPE I like the little things in life
The little things that see you through
Just take those little things in life
Maybe that's all you have to do...
And everyday it starts and things become brand new...
Well, feel the wind. and touch the grass and yes, the ducklings
that's the thing to do

ERNIE I really don't see how touching a duck is gonna make things any better -
certainly not for the duck anyway....

MS. HOPE Look at those little things all around
the little chipmunks on the ground

ERNIE It's all chipmunks and ducklings with you...

MS. HOPE Don't waste a second on the past
Just try to make the present last
And if it all came down and today was all we had
Little giggles, little sighs

ERNIE Little bullets, little white lies

MS. HOPE Little gestures from your friends

ERNIE Little chances in the end

MS. HOPE Little glimmers in the wake are little chances you just have to take...

Sometimes I don't know how to soak it all in....

To let my senses all fill up, sometimes its hard to get enough

If it should come to pass, today was my last

I'll take those little things right now...

the things that make me feel so much (somehow...)

It's all those little things, the little things in life....

ERNIE

(a huge sigh, then half to himself) Ms. Hope.....Ms. Hope. You have got to
be the one of the nicest people I have ever met in my entire life...

MS. HOPE

I'm sorry, Ernie. What did you say?

ERNIE

Ms. Hope...would, would you like to...um,...Um, would you like to go for a
walk.. with me?

MS. HOPE

Oh. Um, sure, okay...

ERNIE

(as they're walking out) I mean, it doesn't have to be a long walk or any-
thing...

Music starts. An announcers voice comes over the loudspeaker introducing the president. It is a hoaky introduction like it was the start of a news report. And you can tell they just used the president's old weatherman intro and spliced in the word "president" in the appropriate places.

ANNOUNCER

And now, it's time for the 5 O'clock (*different voice*) "press conference" with your host "President Storm" and the weather with "President" Bennn Stormmmmm...

*The **PRESIDENT** walks out and stands behind the podium. He is looking worried but trying to smile.*

PRESIDENT

Hi there folks. I just wanted to say that everything is fine. Couldn't be better. Your government is still here takin' care of everything, so everyone can just relax and have a good time. Well, that being said...

REPORTER #1

Mr. President, why, if you can tell me, sir - why is it so dark outside?

PRESIDENT

Yes. Well, that's a good question. Very perceptive. So, now I think is a good time to move onto the weather...

A weather map of the United States drops down from the ceiling. (Or it is just set up next to him.) He turns to the map and does the next bit like a weatherman.

PRESIDENT

Well, let's move right on to the local front and the forecast...Here in the D.C area, we're experiencing a bit of a "high-pressure" situation. And, unfortunately, we'll be getting some light flurries of fire and brimstone across the area. (*He slaps some pictures of fireballs on to the map*) So, it'd be a good idea to stay indoors for awhile. Oh, and also the Sante Fe area..(*he sticks a picture there*) ...and, um...the rest of the world, too, will also be seeing these flurries....of fire and brimstone. Yes. Well, that about does it.

The reporters are stone silent for a moment. Then...

REPORTER #2

What's brimstone?

PRESIDENT

Burn...ing stuff. Yes. Burning sulphur stuff. And if there aren't any more questions, then...

REPORTER #1

Mr. President, let me see if I got this straight. Are you telling us fireballs and burning sulfur are going to be raining into the Washington area...?

REPORTER #2

..and Sante Fe...?

REPORTER #3

..and the rest of the world?

PRESIDENT

Um..let me see, did I say Sante Fe? (looks at map) Oh, yes. Sante Fe and the rest of the world , too. Okay. Ohhh this is ridiculous! This will never work...

MS. Charity appears SR.

MS. CHARITY

Well, what the hell do you think you're doing? And Larry - you should know better than this...

PRESIDENT

Hiya Baby.....

LARRY

We were just practicing...

Larry, Lloyd, Ernie were in reporter costumes. Everyone now walks back into the oval office.

MS. CHARITY

Practicing for what? Total mass hysteria? I can't believe you were going out go out there without me! Are you nuts? You need a professional with you!

PRESIDENT

Well, I don't want to go alone! Where were you, anyway?

MS CHARITY

(becoming very girly and drawing little circles on his chest)

No-wheeeere... me was hiding.....fwum big bad you....

PRESIDENT

Charity, please...

CHARITY

Right. Well, you can't just do a weather report about the end of the world. We need to put the right spin on this.

LARRY

Yes, Charity! That's exactly what this war needs! Spin!

CHARITY

Here's what I'm thinking: Big posters everywhere! Support Storm! Say no to the new dictatorship!

ERNIE

Wait a minute — God's not a dictatorship!

LARRY

Well, I didn't vote for him.

ERNIE

Nobody votes for God!

LLOYD

Then how does he keep winning?

PRESIDENT

Oh, we're all goin' to hell. Charity, I thought you were religious!

CHARITY

Well, I am. but I still have to make a paycheck. I'm just doing my job!

PRESIDENT

I am not starting a propaganda campaign against the Almighty!

MS. CHARITY

(starts crying) You think I'm stupid!

PRESIDENT

(holds her) Nooo, no I don't. I just think you're insane. Just kidding, Baby...

MS. CHARITY

I have to go...!

CHARITY *exits.*

LLOYD

You are sooo mean.

ERNIE

That girl is crazy about you!

LLOYD

Maybe your life would be better if you learned to give a little! Give!

PRESIDENT

Lloyd, why don't you give yourself a shot of sodium pentathol? I can't believe I let you guys talk me into this mess. Its crazy... We don't even know if Hank's shield thingy is gonna work!

LARRY

Oh, it works, sir. The first wave already hit us a half hour ago. The defense system is reacting superbly.

LLOYD

Well, I guess the argument can be made for skimming all that money out of education after all.

PRESIDENT

All right, where's Hank? I want someone to tell me what the hell is going on up there..

*At that point Hank walks in. He has a prisoner of war with him. He has his gun aimed at the prisoner. The prisoner is none other than **FAMINE** - one of the horsemen of the Apocalypse. He is extremely thin and has a long white beard. He is dressed in nothing but some tattered rags. He is holding an old fashioned weight measurement scale.*

HANK

Mr. President, our problems are over. There's someone here who I think you'd like to meet! Our first prisoner! We got one, sir, we got one!

PRESIDENT

What the hell..?

LLOYD

Hank, quit foolin' around and let this poor homeless man go...

HANK

Oh shut up. A couple of the Air Force boys nabbed him, Sir! There he was, up there in the sky flittin' around with his buddies liked he owned the place...

PRESIDENT

Flitting around? ...In the sky?

LARRY

What kind of plane was he in?

HANK

No, he wasn't in a plane. He was on horseback, y'know. Riding a horse...

PRESIDENT

In the sky? How tall was this horse?

HANK

How tall?

PRESIDENT

Maybe I don't get what you mean...

HANK

Regular horse height, you know, just a regular horse...

PRESIDENT

Well, it wasn't a regular horse if you found him up in the sky!

HANK

President Storm, I know it sounds nuts, but there he was, having a great time flying around in the stormy skies on his horse! Him and his friends! That's why we thought to shoot him down.

LARRY

There were others?

HANK

Yea, there were four of 'em. The others managed to get away but we grabbed this one...

ERNIE

(taking interest suddenly) This sounds familiar. Is there a bible in this room?

PRESIDENT

I don't know. Look around..

HANK

(to Famine) Couldn't get away from us, could ya?

PRESIDENT

Must have been a great chase, Hank... Fighter Jets against a guy on a horse..Of course he didn't get away! And look at him, he's malnourished or something..

FAMINE

(scratchy voice) I am Fam... *(stops to cough and clear his throat, then continues)* ..sorry, I didn't realize I'd be doing any speaking....I am Famine! Rider of the black horse! The horse with breath of fire and sulfur!

PRESIDENT

(reacting to the old man's breath) He aint the only one...

ERNIE

(by this time he has found the bible and leafed quickly through the pages)
Aha! here it is, I found it! This must be Famine!

PRESIDENT

Well, he just said that...

ERNIE

He's one of the horsemen of the Apocalypse! I mean, as near as I can tell....
(reading) He's supposed to have a scale with him...

Famine holds out the scale and shakes it a little so everyone can see. Ernie looks and seems to be satisfied and then looks back to the book.

ERNIE

Yea..I guess he's Famine..

HANK

Well, thank you, Ernie...

FAMINE

(starting over) I am Famine!..

PRESIDENT

(to Larry) How many times do we have to hear this?

FAMINE

Mighty horseman of the Apocalypse!

PRESIDENT

(impatient) Uh-huh, uh-huh...

FAMINE

I represent one of the woeful plagues that will befall mankind in the last days. And when the seventh trumpet blast is heard, I will unleash my deadly duty on one-third of the people of the Earth. ...Is that ham over there?

HANK

What do you mean, "Unleash your deadly duty?"

FAMINE

Yea. that's what I'm gonna do. Boy, that ham smells really good. Smoked....unless my nose deceives me. Am I right?

LLOYD

I think he's hungry. Are you hungry, mister? Is that what you're trying to say?

PRESIDENT

Well, of course he's hungry, look at him. He's wasting away. Do you want some food?

FAMINE

Oh, no. I really shouldn't. Still, it's just that I saw it over there, and you know. But anyway,...

HANK

I don't think we should be feeding the guy. He was just talking about whackin' a third of the planet...

PRESIDENT

Hank, look at the guy. Let him eat. Go ahead fella, get something to eat...

FAMINE

Oh, no, really. Welll... *(walking over towards table)* I don't want to eat, really..I just want to taste.

PRESIDENT

Sure, taste all you want...

FAMINE

Yea, just a taste would be okay.. *(he starts tasting food, slowly and then starts shoving it in, eating ravenously)*

HANK

Oh, this is ridiculous. He's a prisoner of war! We have to find out what he knows! We should be interrogating him right now!

FAMINE

(with his mouth full, almost indiscernable) What do you have to interrogate me for? I already told you everything I know!..

PRESIDENT

What's he saying?

LARRY

I have no idea...

HANK

This is stupid. We're not finding anything out this way.

LARRY

Well, we know He's using fireballs and men on horseback...

LLOYD

Yea. Who does He think we are, anyway? A bunch of vikings?

ERNIE

Well, I guess I'll go get some fresh air. *(he starts towards the door)*

PRESIDENT

Oh, by all means... have some fresh air. Nothing important going on in here.

ERNIE leaves.

PRESIDENT

No one else leave this room. You know, I wish I knew if you guys were with me or not. Jeez! It's times like these I start thinking I should've hired some people who actually had some experience in politics. *(At that point* **FAMINE** -

still eating - mutters something indecipherable.) Huh? Oh, yea... *(he hands Famine a jar of Grey Poupon)* Anyway...please! Let's get together on this! Could I get a little help, here?

Just then we hear another trumpet blast from outside. FAMINE stops to listen, checks his watch, and then goes back to eating.

PRESIDENT

And now I got this damn guy playing trumpet on the lawn again! *(He goes to the window)* Hey! Knock it off! We're trying to have a crisis in here! I'm the frickin' president of the United States of America! *(he leans back in)* He's not listening to me... *(he starts to look around on his desk)*

HANK

What are you looking for?

PRESIDENT

(finding a paperweight) This! This'll stop him, by God! *(he throws the paperweight out the window at his mark. We hear it hit it's mark offstage and the trumpet screeches, then silence. The president puts his hand over his mouth)* Whoops! Well, I got him.

HANK

Good shot, Sir!

LLOYD

What's he doing? Is he all right?

PRESIDENT

Well, he's just sort of laying there.

LARRY

(to Lloyd) You better get out there and see if he's all right. The last thing we need now is a scandal...

LLOYD

Ewww... I don't wanna go out there...

PRESIDENT

Wait...he's getting up! Yes! He's up he's all right. *(They all get closer)* Okay, he's picked up the paperweight and he's rubbing his head. Now, he's looking around to see who threw it.....Quick! Everybody get down! *(They all duck down beneath the window)*

Music for "It's A Good Thing" starts.

HANK

(half-whispering) Let's turn off the lights!...

PRESIDENT

(getting back up enough to see) Wait a minute, what's he doing. Oh, there he is...Oh Shit! He's coming in here! Here he comes!

LARRY

Perhaps we should call the secret service....

PRESIDENT

No time! Oh, man, here he comes! I wonder who he is?

At that point the music gets much bigger and GABRIEL, THE ANGEL kicks open the door. He has large angel wings and he's wearing a black suit with a tie. He carries his TRUMPET. There is light and a little smoke coming through the doorway, silhouetting him. he sings "It's A Good Thing".

IT'S A GOOD THING

GABRIEL

(spoken): Be not afraid!....

Have you lost your mind? Because I think so...

You're hanging from a very thin line

And you haven't got a very long way to go

There's a rough road up ahead

You better listen to me or you're better off dead!

CHORUS

Let go, it'll be okay, What are you running from anyway?

And it doesn't have to be this way

'Cause it's a good thing.. It's a good thing...

Look at you! Hiding in the shadows of your bad dreams

You're hanging on to what you knew

But come on you never knew what it all means

You can't see the show unless you go to town

So don't be a fool, let your defenses down!

CHORUS

Let go, it'll be okay, What are you running from anyway?

And it doesn't have to be this way 'Cause it's a good thing..

It's a good thing...

GABRIEL

Thank you very much. Well. that's it boys, sorry I had to come down and break up the little party, but now that you're set straight I'll see you in the funny papers....

PRESIDENT

Stop that guy!

The other men, HANK taking the lead, throw themselves in front of the door, blocking Gabriels exit.

GABRIEL

Um..heh, heh...okay guys. You're kinda in my way, there. Let's not get silly.

I'd like to be leaving now...

HANK

Listen, bub. You're not going anywhere! There ain't a chance in hell you're gettin' out of this room...

GABRIEL

(a little confused) ..Be not afraid! Be not afraid!

LLOYD

Um..we're not afraid. *(to Hank)* Are you afraid?

HANK

Hell no, I'm not afraid! Afraid of what? *(to Gabriel)* Look, who do you think you are, anyway, Birdman? Do you realize this is the oval office?

GABRIEL

Birdman?

PRESIDENT

You can't just waltz in here and sing! Larry, for cryin out loud..turn the shields back on! Hank you watch him.

GABRIEL

Wait a minute! You're gonna turn the thingy back on? But...but what about my song? Didn't you listen to what I was saying?

PRESIDENT

Big deal. We've been singing songs all day; it doesn't mean anything.

GABRIEL

Wait a minute.... You guys don't know who I am, do you?

PRESIDENT

Well, I hope you don't plan on saying you're Famine, 'cause we already got one.. *(pointing to Famine; still eating)*

GABRIEL

I'm an angel! See the wings? All our research says you guys think angels have wings, so I'm wearing the wings...

PRESIDENT

You mean...God sent you here to tell us to turn the shields off?

GABRIEL

Yes!

PRESIDENT

Well, there you go... Okay, Hank - turn the shields off. I knew we were gonna get in trouble...

LARRY

Now wait a minute, sir. I don't think we should go shutting everything down the first time an angel asks us to...

HANK

I'm gonna agree with Larry, sir. We don't even know who this joker is....

GABRIEL

Y'know – *you* I don't like, tough guy....

LARRY

There are angels who have...well, shall we say... gone bad. We don't know exactly which side of the fence this one sits..

GABRIEL

So, you don't know which side of the fence this one sits, doth you not? Well, let me enlighten you, bub. I happen to be Gabriel! That's right..Gabriel!

PRESIDENT

(unimpressed, but polite) Okay..Gabriel. Good...

GABRIEL

And I'm not just an angel, y'know. I'm an *arch* angel. I go on special missions for the Lord God himself. What do you think of those potatoes?

LLOYD

Oh, wait a minute. An arch angel? I know, like Michael!..

HANK

Oh, you mean the guy who fought the big fight with Satan and drove him and his army of demons out of Heaven, yea I know this one...

GABRIEL

Okay, yea, but wait a minute...

PRESIDENT

Cool! I heard this one, too. Is that who you are, Mr. Arch Angel? Are you Michael? The angel who...

GABRIEL

(peeved) No! I am not Michael the angel who blah blah blah..

LARRY

He already told us he was Gabriel...

GABRIEL

(interrupting) I already told you I was Gabriel! Oh sure, everybody always thinks of Michael. Michael, Michael, Michael. Just because Michael kicked Lucifers behind...big deal. And I'll tell ya something else, Michael don't look like no John Travolta in that movie, either.

PRESIDENT

All right so you're Gabriel. So what did you do?

GABRIEL

What did I do? Well, lots. For instance - I was the angel who told Mary that she was gonna have a baby. Y'know, little baby Jesus. I was the one who told her. That was me.

PRESIDENT

Well, that's pretty neat...

LLOYD

Yea, that's good.

GABRIEL

You're darn tootin'. You try tellin' a woman thats she's gonna have a baby; Oh boy! They go through all kinds of emotions...Especially given the fact that she had never... *(gets very childish)* y'know....well, ...y'know.. *(starts snickering to himself)*

LARRY
Yea, yea, we know..

LLOYD
What?

PRESIDENT
I'll tell ya later.

GABRIEL
I'm just generally known as an ambassador, is all. That doesn't mean I couldn't kick Satan's rear end, too, you know.

HANK
Oh suuure you could...

GABRIEL
Oh, yea, Eisenhower? You wanna find out? Let's go.. just somethin' friendly...

PRESIDENT
Look, no one's saying you couldn't. Okay, so what are we supposed to do, then, um..Gabriel?

GABRIEL
Jeesh!..Turn off the defense shields.

PRESIDENT
Well, we don't want to do that.

GABRIEL
Well, why not?

HANK
Because it would be the end of the world!

GABRIEL
So what!

LLOYD
Sure, what do you care? You don't live here...

GABRIEL
Listen, I got news for ya. It's the end of the world whether you guys like it or not. Goll-ee it was right in the book. Didn't you guys see the book?

HANK
What book?

LARRY
I believe he's talking about the Bible.

GABRIEL
Yea, whatever. Everyone calls it somethin'... It's like the manual. You got one around here?

PRESIDENT
As a matter of fact we do.. where is it?

LLOYD

Oh right! Ernie was reading it... here it is!

GABRIEL

Anyway, like I was saying it's filled with information for you people. Go ahead Doc, open it up to any page and I bet it will have a great morsel of wisdom for the good people of Earth. Go ahead, open it up and read the first thing you see...

Lloyd opens up the Bible to a random page somewhere near the beginning and reads...

LLOYD

..“Please do not remove from the Watergate Hotel”...

GABRIEL

There you go! Good information... I'm not sure exactly what that means but probably that it wouldn't be a good idea to remove things from the Watergate Hotel!...

LARRY

Oh, you don't even know what you're talking about...

GABRIEL

Oh, don't I, Mr. Smarty-Pants? Okay, it's the end of the world anyway, I guess I could let you in on a few secrets, Mr. Smarty-Pants...

LARRY

Y'know, that's very annoying...

LLOYD

What are you talking about “secrets”?

GABRIEL

You know, secrets of the universe... little things. Nothing important. But, you think you're so smart... Did you know, for instance, y'know when you boil water?..

The others look at each other slightly confused.

PRESIDENT

Um...yes...

GABRIEL

You know how it lets off steam when you do?

LARRY

Uh-hmm...

GABRIEL

Well, did you know that you could convert that steam into energy?.. Huh? Did you know that?

PRESIDENT

What are you talking about? Of course we knew that!

LARRY

Oh for cryin' out loud. Big secret..even Hank knew that..

HANK

What are you insulting me for?!

PRESIDENT

Come on, this isn't exactly planet of the apes, y'know. We're all ready for this big secret...

GABRIEL

All right, all right... so you got that far already! Good for you. Jeesh, what egos you guys have. Tsk tsk. Big sin...

HANK

Oh look who's talking! Mr. I-can-take-anybody-in-the-room!

GABRIEL

All right, all right... okay, you guys know you can communicate verbally over little wires?

LLOYD

You mean telephones?

GABRIEL

Yea..

PRESIDENT

Yes, we have telephones! You think we don't have telephones?

GABRIEL

Okaaaaaaay!...

LARRY

This is ridiculous...

GABRIEL

Just give me a minute. Okay, I suppose you know that you can split an atom...

LARRY

As a matter of fact we do. It's one of our more advanced accomplishments.

GABRIEL

Good, good. Okay! So you know how it makes fresh water and all that...okay, good.

LARRY

Fresh water? ...Did you say it makes fresh water?

GABRIEL

Yea, fresh water. You know. 'Cause there's not exactly enough fresh water down here.

LARRY

Oh...

GABRIEL

Why? What did you think splitting the atom was for?

PRESIDENT

Oh, it's not important. Let's talk about something else.

GABRIEL

No, I'm just curious. What did you think splitting the atom was for?

HANK

Well, we were making bombs that way. Um..nuclear bombs.

PRESIDENT

Thank you Hank.

GABRIEL

...Bombs? From nuclear energy? How weird is that? Let me think for a minute...Yea, okay. I can see how you'd do that. But that's not what that was for. Jeez leave it to you guys to make bombs out of such a pure concept.

PRESIDENT

Look, Gabriel...are we gonna get in trouble for this nuclear bomb thing? That was a pretty big mistake...

GABRIEL

Hey, don't worry, pal. This ain't exactly Judgement Day, y'know. – That's tomorrow.

PRESIDENT

Oh boy.

GABRIEL

Oh, and by the way, here's a little tidbit you might be interested in. The animals... You weren't supposed to *eat* the animals!

PRESIDENT

What?! We.. we weren't?

GABRIEL

No, why would you eat the animals? Anything that ran around down here on four legs you found some way to shove in your mouth.

LLOYD

Well, we didn't know we weren't supposed to eat them.

HANK

Oh, don't be ridiculous! Animals are delicious!

GABRIEL

I don't care how good they are, you weren't supposed to *eat* them. We left fruit and vegetables; plenty of food. You hardly touched that stuff.

PRESIDENT

Well, maybe you should have made it taste more like animals.

LLOYD

We didn't know we weren't supposed to eat the animals. You should have put some sort of warning label on them!

GABRIEL

Poor little guys. And animals are always so cute, too...

PRESIDENT

Well, well, some of them ate us, too...

GABRIEL

Oh, good argument..

HANK

Wait a minute, are you sure about this? This doesn't sound right...

GABRIEL

(laughing) Ah-Ha, ha..I'm just kidding. Go ahead and eat them, that's what they're there for. Like Hank said, they're delicious...

LLOYD

Well, what was that? That was supposed to be funny? I almost threw up...

GABRIEL

No, well, I was just kidding. Except for him..*(pointing to Famine)* he's not supposed to eat the animals. *He's* not supposed to be eating anything.

PRESIDENT

What, him? Why not? Look at the guy, he's starving.

LLOYD

I know why he doesn't want him to eat. It's because he's not eating a nutritionally balanced meal. He should be eating more of the greens...

GABRIEL

The greens don't have anything to do with it. He's supposed to be an ominous symbol of the end. Now look at him. What kind of Armageddon are we gonna have with a fat famine running around?

FAMINE

(food in mouth) I'm not eating, I'm just tasting...

GABRIEL

Yea, yea, I know... Now get going and get that pudgy little body back on your horse. I know someone who wouldn't be very happy to know you're down here eating everything in sight...

Famine grabs some food for the road and leaves.

HANK

Oh, look at this. Why don't you leave him alone? It looks like you eat anything you want.

GABRIEL

That does it! Okay, soldier-boy, let's go! Me and you, right now! *(he's doing footwork around the General)* ...Watch out! Come on leatherneck...

HANK

(a little cautious)

Okay, okay..back off, or there's gonna be feathers all over the place.

PRESIDENT

All right, everyone just calm down. Hank could you stop picking fights with the heavenly apparition already?

GABRIEL

Yea, you war monger.

HANK

Me?! It's him!

LLOYD

I don't know how you can say that nutrition isn't important. This country is in dire straits nutritionally speaking. That's the real emergency if you ask me.

GABRIEL

Oh, the real emergency... Would you shut up about the nutrition and the warning labels? No one cares what you eat. Why do you worry so much about how you look and what you eat?

LLOYD

Well, we want to live...live as long as we can.

GABRIEL

Oh, for Pete's sake. You got people living longer than ever down here. And what do you wind up with? A bunch of old people you don't even treat nice.

PRESIDENT

Well, we don't wanna die, that's all.

GABRIEL

Oh, get out of here. You're scared of dying? But, you do it so well. You've been doing it since time began.

We All Gotta Go Sometime

GABRIEL You've had your fun, Sometimes you think your life has just begun
But don't feel bad, you're not the only one, 'cause
We all gotta go sometime
Birds do it, and they don't make a peep, bees do it with a sting so deep
You could even do it in your sleep!
We all gotta go sometime
Look around you, underground you stick all the people that you
used to know
You got friends, but in the end they'll do it to you when it's your time to go
Whoops, there goes grampa, Uncle Dick
You kidding me? I didn't even know he was sick!
You can't leave until you do your last trick
We all gotta go sometime
(Solo & Break)
(Repeat Bridge)
You can go easy or put up a fight,
You can kick and scream with all your might
The last one out would you please hit the lights?
We all gotta go sometime (everybody)

We all gotta go sometime (just a little louder, now)
We all gotta go-o-o-o – sometime...

Song ends.

LLOYD

Well, I don't get it...

HANK

Me either, does God even like us or not?

LARRY

Good question. He lets terrible things happen so He must not like us...

GABRIEL

He's crazy about ya! *He* doesn't let terrible things happen, *you guys* do. You're supposed to be watching out for each other down here. It's all about free will. You think He wanted me to wear the black suit? He didn't, He thought it looked too serious, He told me. But He let me wear it. Free will, see?... so you guys should just take down the shield and let's get this show on the road...

PRESIDENT

Y'know..Gabriel.. I gotta tell ya, I really haven't done that much in my life to be proud of. Never even tried, But I took an oath a couple of years ago, I gave my word to the American people that I would do my best to protect them. And suddenly, ..and maybe for the first time in my life.. I feel compelled to keep it. And try to do the right thing...

GABRIEL

Are you kidding me? But I'm trying to tell you what the quote, unquote "right" thing to do is!

HANK

(to Lloyd) The best speech of his entire career and it's gonna land him right in hell...

PRESIDENT

But what about my oath? I gave an oath.. And I'm sorry, but I just can't simply turn off the defense shield. I have to protect the American people. It's my job.

GABRIEL

Protect them from God, huh? Even if that's not what they want, you're gonna do that? *(to the others)* And you guys.. you guys feel this way, too?

OTHERS

(all mumbling and shy) Well, we work for him...He's the boss...We gotta do what he says...etc.

GABRIEL

It's like draggin' a bunch of screamin' kids to Disney World.*(pause)* You mind if I use the phone? The Man I work for likes to get bad news right away.

HANK

The phone? What are you going to do with it?

GABRIEL

I'm going to make a phone call with it. I thought you said you guys knew how to work these things... *(He's dialing)* I'm calling God.

PRESIDENT

You mean you can call God?! All this time, we could've just picked up the phone and called God?

GABRIEL

Well no. You gotta have the number. Now, everyone just be quiet. I'm gonna put it on speakerphone so you can all hear. Oh, shoot the machine is gonna pick up.

OTHERS

(together)

The machine?!

GABRIEL

Sshhhh!

During the following, Gabriel listens to the outgoing message disinterestedly. He's heard it before. The message is like one that someone who is uncomfortable with answering machines would leave. Maybe a much older person, with scuffling noises and pauses and long waits for the beep. The others listen astonished. It is God's voice.

GOD

(on machine)

Hi... wait a minute ..okay..Hi. I'm not at my desk right now, but if you leave a message I'll get right back to you...(hmmm, what the..) okay..wait for the beep....Okay, hold on a minute... Okay here it comes...and then leave a message..... *(beep)*

LARRY

Is he kidding us or what?

GABRIEL

(covering the phone and shooting a look of intense anger at Larry)
Sssshhhh! *(into phone)* Um, hi, Sir, it's me, Gabriel. Just uh..calling to check in. Yea, as you can see, they got the phones working down here. *(half covering the phone)* But, Sir, wait till you hear what they thought splitting the atom was for, phhht! Hee, hee! But anyway...we uh..we hit a little snag so if you could just call me back whenever it's convenient for you, of course. Thanks a lot. Okay bye. I love you...bye. *(he hangs up)* *(to Larry)* And **you** have to be quiet when I'm on the phone!...

LLOYD

Does this mean there's no such thing as God...?

PRESIDENT

What are you talking about?

LLOYD

Well, he wasn't there and.. y'know, He wasn't there...

HANK

If God didn't exist, would he leave a message on His machine saying He wasn't there?

GABRIEL

Hey, that's good. What about this one: If a tree falls in the forest and...

PRESIDENT

Wait a minute.. So what are we supposed to do now?

GABRIEL

We just wait. He'll call back.

LARRY

Oh yea? Well the last time He said He'd be right back it was a coupla thousand years before we heard again, okay? So you guys might as well grab a magazine or something.

Just then the door opens up and in walks ERNIE. He is still dazedly in love and a little depressed. He walks right by Gabriel without noticing him.

PRESIDENT

Ernie, where the hell have you been? I needed you around here...

ERNIE

Oh, sorry. Hi, President Storm. Hi everybody. Hi Gabriel. Did you guys ever....*(suddenly realizing)*..Gabriel!

GABRIEL

Hey there, Ernie. I was wondering about you.

PRESIDENT

Do you two know each other?

ERNIE

No, it's just that...well, he was in my dream last night. I dreamt about him.

GABRIEL

You didn't dream about me. I appeared to you in a dream. You were supposed to tell everybody not to be scared and what was gonna happen.

ERNIE

Gabriel, do you know what they do in this day and age if you tell everyone you had a dream about an angel who told you it was the end of the world? They put you right in the looney bin.

GABRIEL

Really? Jeez, it used to be so effective...

Just then the phone rings. Everyone stiffens up and has a scared look. No one moves to answer the phone. Ernie just looks around not knowing what is going on.

GABRIEL

I'll get that...

ERNIE

I'm right here. I'll answer it...

ALL OTHERS

No!...

Gabriel pushes Ernie out of the way and answers the phone.

GABRIEL

(into phone) Hello? Who? Oh..okay.. yea, yea, yea.. Here Hank it's for you...

HANK

Hello? Oh, hello Gen. Wesley. How's everything on the front?...*What?*
You're kidding...All right, Gen. Thanks - I'll be in touch. *(he hangs up)* Oh boy.

PRESIDENT

What is it, Hank? Are we winning?

HANK

Not exactly. But we have another little problem. It seems we have a huge volcano erupting right in the middle of California.

PRESIDENT

A volcano?! Oh, that's beautiful! What're we doing about it?

HANK

We're doing everything we can, Mr. President. We're trying out some experimental technology with nuclear charges in the ground.

GABRIEL

Oh, brilliant. Why don't you just throw a virgin girl into it while you're at it?

HANK

Well, we thought of that - but it's in L.A. and..well, you know...

LARRY

Please, sir.. we really should hold a press conference...

PRESIDENT

All right, all right, let's go. *(they start to leave)* ... You guys stay here, And Hank, no fighting with the angel...

The **PRESIDENT** and **LARRY** leave.

GABRIEL

Hear that? He likes me. I knew he would.

HANK

Yea, good for you...

GABRIEL

We angels like to be liked. We think it's cool. Don't you like to be liked?

ERNIE

I don't know. No one's ever liked me and no one ever will....

HANK

(mocking voice) What I really like is ice cream! What is this? Mr. Rogers neighborhood?

GABRIEL

Obviously the guy has a problem. Instead of makin' fun, you should be trying to help him. This is exactly what I was talking about.

ERNIE

Ahh, no. It's nothing. Maybe I'm crazy...

LLOYD

Go ahead, Ernie. He's an angel. Maybe he can help. And we're listening...

ERNIE

Oh, this is ridiculous. All right.. the thing is, there's this girl...and I kinda like her - well, I really like her. But I just walk around depressed and moody... It's like I'm losin' it. I feel like I'm trapped in a little box and no one can hear me screaming...

GABRIEL

Well, see now you're sounding a little crazy...

LLOYD

No, no. He's just in love. Sounds normal to me. That's how I fall in love.

HANK

Well, it doesn't sound normal to me. Trapped in a box? What is he? A mime?

GABRIEL

Well, it's not really a criticism, mind you.. But I always thought God maybe turned up the reproductive love thing just a tad bit too high. I bet insane asylums are filled with people who are actually just in love.

LLOYD

How does she feel about you?

ERNIE

How am I supposed to know? I don't know how she feels...

HANK

When you go up to her and say "I'm in a box and you can't hear me screaming" and all that junk, what does she say?

ERNIE

She doesn't say anything, because I don't say anything like that to her.

Music for "Act Like The Man" starts...

LLOYD

You didn't tell her anything?

ERNIE

No, but I only met her today!

ACT LIKE THE MAN

LLOYD

You see a girl that you think that you'd like to know better

GABRIEL

And yet you walk around feeling so sad and forlorn

LLOYD

I hate to say but if you want to get under her sweater

HANK

You've got to climb in the ring

And just grab the bull by the horns

Chorus

ALL And so you'd like to know if she could be your partner
You'll never know lest you stand up and hold out your hand
The woman, she don't like to make all of the decisions...
You've got too (Strap on a set of cohonos...)
And act like the man.

LLOYD I know it feels like a disease with which you are afflicted
HANK The only cure is to walk up and just tell her so...
LLOYD And even though she's like a drug to which you are addicted
GABRIEL Its your job to ask her, it's her job to just say no

REPEAT CHORUS

Tag

You've got to strap on a set of cohonos and act like the man!

As the song is ending the three of them are dancing around and getting into it, but meanwhile the phone is now ringing in beat with the music so it is almost unnoticeable.

GABRIEL seems to hear something. He holds up his hands and says, "Shh-sh-sh!". The music stops and they all listen.

GABRIEL

The phone is ringing!

HANK

(non-chalantly) Oh, I'll get it... *(he picks it up, very playfully)* Hellooo, dere? What? Hello?...Look I can't hear you with that music playing. *(to the others)* It sounds like an orchestra. *(back to phone)* And a storm... Look, I can't... *(his face softens suddenly and he looks very happy - almost in a daze)* It's...It's pretty. Why, it's the most beautiful music I've ever heard...

GABRIEL

Oh my God, it's Him! Here, Hank, I'll take that...

Gabriel takes the phone from Hank, who stumbles happily dazed towards the others.

GABRIEL

Hello? Yes, hello, sir. Oh, yea that was. That was Hank. No, he's all right. You got my prayer? Oh, good...etc.etc..

LLOYD

(to Hank) Are you all right?

ERNIE

What did he say to you? Can you tell us what He said?

HANK

(singing a little) L-I-I-Life could be a dream, sh-boom, if I could take you up to paradise up above, sh-boom and tell me darlin' I'm the only one that you love..Life could be a dream, sweetheart...

LLOYD

That's what he said?

GABRIEL

All, right then, Sir. Yes, okay...goodbye. *(he hangs up)*

LLOYD

That's it? You're done talking? What'd He say?

HANK

Let's call Him again...

GABRIEL

Well... He said, .. He's....um, coming here. He's on His way.

LLOYD

Here? Oh my God.

GABRIEL

Yea, mine, too.

LLOYD

What are we gonna do?

ERNIE

Let me get this straight, you're saying I should just walk up to her and let her know how I feel?

They all look at Ernie and the music fades back up. Lights fade out.

Act II

*The lights slowly fade up on the interior of the oval office. The place is pretty messy from the food and going's-on in the previous scenes. The **PRESIDENT** enters...*

PRESIDENT

(surveying the room, he is panicky)

Oh my God. Would you look at this place! *(calling back through the door)*

Come on! We're gonna start in here...

HANK, LLOYD, and LARRY enter. *They are wearing flowery aprons and rubber gloves for cleaning. Lloyd is holding a pail and someone has a featherduster, etc.*

PRESIDENT

Well, take a look around, boys. This place is a disaster area. I want this room to be spic and span, get me? Look at this place! ...I can't believe it...

LARRY

You heard him boys, "I Can't Believe". Here we go..

They start singing the back up part in harmony from "I Can't Believe" from the first act.

PRESIDENT

(stopping them) No! Hold it! Not now! We're not doing that now. We've got to get this place cleaned up!

LLOYD

Well, why don't we let the cleaning staff get this? I don't understand why we have to do it.

PRESIDENT

You heard the angel. *He's coming...* He's coming *here..*

LARRY

Yes, but...

PRESIDENT

And Hank! Hank here heard the telephone call.

LARRY

Yes, I understand. But that doesn't necessarily mean...

LLOYD

Yea, look at him, he hasn't been himself since. Not the same old gruff, mean-spirited Hank that I know.

HANK

(He strokes Lloyd's cheek gently) You're funny. I like you.

LLOYD

Now cut that out!

PRESIDENT

(panicky) No bickering! That's it. Lloyd, you and Hank get that table of food out of here. Larry, dust something will ya? *(Larry half-heartedly dusts while Hank and Lloyd take the table.)* That's it, boys. Take it and throw it out. No! Wait. Take it and give it to poor people. That's it... Give it to all the hungry people of the world.

LARRY

Mr. President, please...

LLOYD

All of 'em?

PRESIDENT

You heard me. Get goin'!

LARRY

Ben, what are you doing? You can't fix things by throwing a tableful of half-eaten food at the poor.

PRESIDENT

Excuse me, are you finished dusting? I still see dust.

LARRY

Sir, would you just listen to me? This is pointless. You can't redeem yourself in some 11th hour spring cleaning!

PRESIDENT

Larry, are you actually talking to me? Or are you just killing time until God almighty himself kicks down the door?

LARRY

Oh, how do you know that's even gonna happen? Let's be rational.

PRESIDENT

Look, I just know, okay?

MS. CHARITY enters. *She is also dressed for cleaning.*

MS. CHARITY

Okay, here it is... Press release: God has weapons of mass destruction. And this time, we know exactly where they are...

PRESIDENT

Yea, just look up. Baby, just clean okay? No more spinning right now...

HANK and **LLOYD** enter.

PRESIDENT

Did you give it to all the poor people?

LLOYD

Ummm, yea, we gave it to all the poor people.

LARRY

And even if He is coming so what? I mean, have a little pride! A little dignity and faith in the human spirit! We can beat this thing!

PRESIDENT

Larry, listen to me. Now, I've done some pretty stupid things but I'm not gonna let God Himself walk in here and catch me with my pants down. As you can see, this is not the best day of my political career.

LARRY

But, you've got nothing to be ashamed of. You're human, and so you're fallible. So there you go, everything is excused anyway!

MS. CHARITY

Darling, I know you're very busy right now, but my parents are coming into town next weekend and I promised we'd have dinner with them..

PRESIDENT

Honey, we're gonna have dinner in a pit of fire if we don't get to work! Now please, go clean the Lincoln Bedroom...

MS. CHARITY

Ohhh (*she winks at him*).. the "Lincoln Bedroom" huh? Okay I'll be cleaning and waiting in there, then... you little devil....

She exits.

PRESIDENT

And take that mirror down!

Just then GABRIEL and ERNIE walk in.

PRESIDENT

And where have you been, angel? Aren't you supposed to be here talking to me?

GABRIEL

I tried talking to you. You don't listen. I was taking a walk with Ernie.

LLOYD

Mr. President, I think Hank's coming around...

HANK

(groggy now) Yea, comin' around the mountain....

PRESIDENT

Hank, do we have you back with us?

HANK

Mr. President, I'm sorry for my temporary lapse. I hope I was taking your orders.

PRESIDENT

Look, forget it. We're running out of time. We've got to hit some of the other rooms. Lloyd grab that pail.

GABRIEL

What are you doing? Cleaning up?

PRESIDENT

Yes. Why? Is that stupid?

GABRIEL

No. No, I think it's kind of cute.

PRESIDENT

Well, I'm glad you think it's cute. C'mon men. *(They all start to leave except Gabriel and Ernie)* And bring that feather duster, Larry, and don't give me any lip.

LARRY trails behind with the feather duster, looking very annoyed. They're gone.

GABRIEL

All right, so go on with what you were saying...

ERNIE

The problem is I'm really just kind of a boring jerk. I guess that's why I haven't talked to her yet.

GABRIEL

What?! *(looking at his watch)* Man, you really like playing it down to the wire, don't you? Why don't you get the lead out, chicken-boy?

ERNIE

There's too much pressure! What do I say? "Hey, you want to go out?", and she says, "Sure, how about next Friday night?". And I say "No, it has to be tonight! Next Friday night there won't be a Friday night! And we have to go all the way, too, because there won't be a second date!" I suppose I should say all that!

GABRIEL

Well, better late than never...

ERNIE

And I've never even done it! Looks like I'll be a virgin to the end of time!

GABRIEL

Get out of here.. really? That's hysterical.

ERNIE

Well, have a good time with it... Can you even have sex in Heaven? I bet a lot of people would want to know that.

GABRIEL

(slyly) Oh, would a lot of people like to know that... What do you care? You're not having sex here, either. Ha, ha..just kidding. Look, let me just tell you this.. everything that you think feels good here... is just a little taste of what's it like in heaven....a mere hint...

ERNIE

But what about love? Can you break up, if you make a mistake? I'm sure there's no divorce up there so some people are bound to be unhappy, and can you be unhappy in Heaven? Wait a ,,,,minute...Have you ever even been in love? ...You haven't, have you?

GABRIEL

Look, Ern, the truth is... I can't give you all the answers. You found yourself in love, poor baby? Well, welcome to the human race. And now, you're gonna have company so I'm goin' for a walk...

ERNIE

You're leaving? You can't just leave me... *(Gabriel is leaving.)* Wait! What am I supposed to do?

GABRIEL

Live your life, Ernie...

He exits.

ERNIE

(calling after him) Oh no! I'm not doing that! You live my life, you're so smart... Mr. scared-of love! *(He is alone on stage facing the door where Gabriel left)* You can't even talk about it! Well, I'm talking about it, baby! Love! There! See? I can say it, tootsie-pie angel! *(singing-yelling voice)* Looooove! Ha, ha!

While he's ranting, Ms. Hope herself walks in from the other door. Ernie doesn't notice her and is facing the other way. She is standing behind him.

ERNIE

(now singing andf doing a little dance) Love, love, ha, ha, love, love, love, de-doo, de-dah...

MS. HOPE

Hi, Ernie...

ERNIE

(startled and embarrassed) Oh! Hey there...hi, I mean.

MS. HOPE

Boy, you're really in a good mood! I like that. You always seem so happy...

ERNIE

Me? Oh yea, well.... kinda happy-go-lucky I guess. I was just singing'... a Beatles song, I think. Isn't it?

MS. HOPE

I just thought I'd drop in 'cause I wanted to tell you something. I... I really liked taking a walk with you before.

ERNIE

You did? Oh, Ms. Hope... *(he gets very dreamy and turns to her to kiss her but she is facing the other way now and doesn't notice him)*

MS. HOPE

Yea, and I've been thinking about some of the things we were talking about, and... *(she turns and sees him standing there with his eyes closed and all puckered up)* ...hey, are you all right? What happened to your mouth?

ERNIE

(very embarrassed) Oh, nothing... I just had a lemon candy. ...and someone put salt on it.

MS. HOPE

(confused) Oh, that's all right. Well, anyway, I've decided I'm gonna move back.

ERNIE

Move back? Move back where?

MS. HOPE

To the country. I think you were right, sometimes we take things for granted and we have to remember what's important and do what it takes to be happy. Anyway, you helped me realize it, so I guess that's why I wanted to tell you...

ERNIE

(a little panicky) I made you realize it? Now, wait a minute, there's a lot to be said for taking your time, too. I mean, let's not be all hasty...

MS. HOPE

(sweetly) Oh, you're funny. I don't think it's too hasty, I...

ERNIE

(burst of panic) You're like a crazy woman running off into the wild screaming! What are you gonna do? Kick off your shoes and play banjo all day?

MS. HOPE

Now, wait just a minute!

ERNIE

(realizing himself) Oh, jeez. I'm sorry...I....

MS. HOPE

Y'know... I thought you understood, of all people. It's just Pennsylvania! It's not like I'm going to live with the gorillas in the mist!

ERNIE

I'm sorry. I know..

MS. HOPE

(calmer) And, besides. It's not like - y'know, there's anything keeping me here. (is she insinuating something?)

Music starts for "You Could Be The One".

He thinks wide-eyed about what she just said. The door seems to be open a bit, but he can't seem to walk in. Finally, she puts her hand lightly on his shoulder.

MS. HOPE

Ernie? ...Hey, you're shaking a little, are you okay?

ERNIE

Oh, yea. I'm fine. Just like..um, a chill. Tell me a little about where you're going, cause it sounds really nice...

MS. HOPE

Oh, it is nice. You would like it. I know you would. It's really kind of mountainy around where I'm from and the people are really great. There's this lake where... (etc.)

She goes on talking silently while the music swells up. She lightly touches his arm while she talks and Ernie sings..

YOU COULD BE THE ONE

ERNIE:
You touch me and it feels so good
My heart flies around the neighborhood
And I can't hear a single word you're saying
You're filling up my mind...
I want you so much that it hurts inside
Let's just get in my car and take a ride
There's no way there'd ever be enough time
But you could be the one...

At this point in the song, the music swells up and he takes her in his arms and dances with here. She goes on talking silently to him, oblivious to the dancing.

I feel so lucky that you'd look at me
And I can't stop my knees from gettin' weak
So much against us, I can hardly speak
So much against us... But, you're the one...

The song ends and is violently interrupted by the entrance of The President, Hank, Lloyd and Larry. The president looks bad and has his arms around Hank and Lloyd. they are dragging him in.

LARRY

All right, bring him in here boys! Be careful.

PRESIDENT

(babbling) B-be-bah, b-b-b..no, no, no...

ERNIE

My God, what's the matter with him?

LARRY

Oh, these two idiots did something to him!

HANK

We did not!

LARRY

Then how come I turn around to dust for awhile and when I turn back, he's like this?

LLOYD

I don't know, Larry! He was fine cleaning the toilet and then he just started freaking out!

HANK

Well, who the hell used the toilet last?

LLOYD

Oh, don't be a moron! That doesn't have anything to do with it..

HANK

Aha! It was you, wasn't it!

LLOYD

I haven't pooped in two years! Not here anyway. I don't use public bathrooms, you can't trust them!

HANK

Oh, likely story..

MS. HOPE

(to Ernie) Well, I guess I better be going. It looks pretty busy around here.

HANK

(to Ms. Hope, a little proud) We're in the fight of our lifetime...

ERNIE

You mean you're leaving now? Right *now*, now?

PRESIDENT

(babbling) Now, now. Now, now....

MS. HOPE

Yea, I've got to get going. I've got a lot of loose ends to tie up..

PRESIDENT

Loose ends...loose ends..very loose...

ERNIE

Yea but. But-but-but...

MS. HOPE

It was really nice talking to you, Ernie. Maybe we'll see each other some-day. Bye everybody...*(she's leaving)*

ERNIE

Yea, but... *(She's gone)* ...Wait!

PRESIDENT

I can't breathe! Bernie, my friend.. get me a nice glass of water..

ERNIE

Mr. President, um... I have to go! I have to go somewhere right now!

HANK

What are you talking about? You're not going anywhere! Go get him a glass of water!

LLOYD

I'll get it for you, Sir.

PRESIDENT

NO!!! I want Bernie to get it!!

ERNIE

Mr, President, I have *got* to get out of here right now!

LLOYD

Ernie! Get him some water! He's whackin out, I'm telling ya!

ERNIE

Oh, God. I feel like I'm coming apart!

LARRY

Ernie, you're president needs you right now. You can come apart when he's done. Whatever it is can wait.

ERNIE

All right, all right, all right! I'll get the damned water! But, then I have got to go!

He hurriedly exits.

LARRY

Mr. President...Benenny... can you hear me little fella?

PRESIDENT

(coming around) Hi ...Larry. What time is it? *(stretching a little)* Oohhh, I had the worst dream. You wouldn't believe it. And you were in it, and Hank here...

HANK

Hi, Mr. President...

PRESIDENT

And Lloyd, you were in it, too!...And there was this creepy little fella, named Gertrude...

Just then Ernie walks back in with the water.

ERNIE

Here you go! You happy?

PRESIDENT

AHHHH! It's him!

ERNIE

(spilling water all over himself) What the hell?!

LARRY

Ben, relax!

*The president scampers over to the other side of the stage where **GABRIEL** enters.*

GABRIEL

(happy) Well, he's on his way! I just got word.

PRESIDENT

(on seeing Gabriel) AHHHHH!! It's this one! They're both really here!

LLOYD

Mr. President, you have got to calm down. This isn't good for you!

PRESIDENT

Lloyd, shut up or it's not gonna be good for you either! And if you're pregnant or have back problems, you may not want to experience this attraction!

HANK

What the hell is he talking about?

PRESIDENT

And don't use foul language, Potty-mouth! Don't you understand God is coming here? *(to Gabriel)* Is God still coming here?

GABRIEL

That's what I was trying to tell you, looney toons. He's on his way right now.

Hank goes to the phone and gets on it, talking silently.

HANK

It's all right, sir. I have the men out front with their sights on Him in case He tries anything.

PRESIDENT

No, you idiot! No sights on Him! What are ya, nuts?

HANK

(into phone) Correction! Do not aim at God.

PRESIDENT

What're you trying to do? Get me a giant, God-size spanking? But they can see Him? Where is He?

HANK

He's in the front gardens on His way here.....Wait! he's stopped to smell some flowers...

GABRIEL

Aww, that's Him all right...

PRESIDENT

(freaking out again) Oh my God! I can't take it! I don't want to be in charge! Someone else be president! Lloyd, you be president! Quick, now you're the president!...

LLOYD

Um, you can't do that, sir. You have to be incapacitated and in my professional opinion, you're still ...capacitated.

PRESIDENT

What do you mean, "I'm capacitated"? Screw you! Look at me! I'm a raving lunatic!

LLOYD

Well, that's subjective. Maybe yes, maybe no...

PRESIDENT

(grabbing Lloyd by the collar) I can't do it I tell you! I can't!

GABRIEL

For cryin' out loud, would you relax?

PRESIDENT

You relax!! Stay outta my way angel! *(He steps over to Hank who is still talking into the phone and grabs the gun out of Hanks holster)* Gimme that thing, soldier-boy!

LLOYD

Mr. President! What are you doing?

PRESIDENT

Everyone stay back!

HANK

(into phone) Um..I'll call you right back. *(He hangs up and moves away)*

PRESIDENT

I'll show you capacitated!

He takes the gun and points it at his foot and pulls the trigger. The gun goes off and the President falls to the floor, unconscious.

HANK

Mr. President!

LLOYD

Oh my God! He shot himself!

Hank and Lloyd run over and kneel beside him.

GABRIEL

Oh, the dramatics...

HANK

I can't believe he did that! What's the matter with him?

LLOYD

What do you mean, what's the matter with him? He's your president. You were supposed to protect him!

HANK

Protect him from who? What did you want me to do? Shoot him before he shot himself?

LLOYD

Well, *something!* Now look at him, he's dead!

LARRY

He's dead?! He shot himself in the foot!

LLOYD

Well, I don't know! He looks dead!

HANK

Look, are you a doctor or not? 'Cause before the end of the world, I'd really like to know...

LLOYD

Well, whatever he is, he's definitely incapacitated now.

GABRIEL

Well, a fine time for it. He's gonna walk in that door any second.

LLOYD

We'll need a new president. I mean an acting president. Who's second in command?

LARRY

It's me, so I guess I'll assume control. And as my first official act, I'd like to...

Ms. Charity burst through the door.

MS. CHARITY

Oh my God! What happened? *(she rushes to the president)* What have you idiots done to him?

HANK

He shot himself.

GABRIEL

In the foot.

MS. CHARITY

Oh my poowr widdle baby.. the turmoil he must be in... I'm here, my boy.. and *(she sings)*...

The president reaches up and puts his hand over her mouth stopping her from singing....

PRESIDENT

No time for that Darling....

MS. CHARITY

(with fingers in her mouth) Oh, my baby!

They sit the president up.

PRESIDENT

What happened?

LLOYD

You had a little accident, sir.

GABRIEL

Yea, accident.

LLOYD

(examining his shoe) He didn't even hit his foot. It went right through the sole.

GABRIEL

That's poetic.

MS. CHARITY

Darling, do you know what day it is?

PRESIDENT

Wednesday?

HANK

(looking at Lloyd) ...Close enough.

LLOYD

Who's the president of the United States?

PRESIDENT

..I am?

LLOYD

(covering his mouth and snickering) Isn't that cute? He thinks *he* is!

HANK

(slapping Lloyd's shoulder) He is, you dope!

LLOYD

Oh, yea. ...I know. I just never got that answer before...

PRESIDENT

(getting up) I'm fine, I'm fine....just great.

LARRY

Are you sure, Ben, because I had things pretty much under control, and if you don't feel up to it...

PRESIDENT

No, I'm okay. So I panicked, so shoot me. Well, you know what I mean.
(Hands Hank the gun) By the way, Hank - here. Thanks. Anyway, I started this mess. So that's it. I'm ready to face the music now.

The phone rings and Hank answers it.

HANK

Um... He's here.

God's opening music starts.

GABRIEL

(like a Las Vegas emcee)

Ladies and gentlemen! Tonight in this very room, all the way from Heaven above, a good friend of mine and yours, the One who once made a rock so heavy that even He couldn't move it...the Lord God Himself! And here's

some great gals to introduce Him – and if you ever want some angels to sing your praises you'll want to get these girls... The Amageddonettes!

Here Comes God

If you've ever felt the power of a big, black storm a-blowin'...
Here comes the one who makes a tornado seem like it
Spins real slow
And if you feel kinda desperate and you got no place to go-o-o
Well sit up straight, fix your tie get your hands ready
'Cause your really gonna wanna applaud...
Here comes God (Halleluia) I feel a miracle comin' on
And don't feel bad if your feeling like a super celestial clod...
'Cause you're standing in the presence of the one and only God

*After the song ends, the Amageddonettes flank the door with their hands up and in walks - who else - **GOD**. He has huge, rolled up blueprints under one arm. He comes walking in almost like a Groucho Marx; walking very quickly, a little stooped over with much purpose.*

PRESIDENT

(offering his hand like he would to a diplomat) Mr. God, sir... It certainly is a pleasure to...

God breezes right past him. Not seeming to notice him. The others aren't sure what to do. God kind of surveys the room and then stops in front of Lloyd.

LLOYD

(the fear apparent on his face) Eh...heh, heh, ...hi.

GOD

(handing him the blueprints) Here... hold these.

Lloyd takes the blueprints. God walks over to the presidents desk and sweeps all the papers off, clearing the desk. He then kind of half whistles for Lloyd, who comes running over. He takes the blueprints from him and starts rolling them out on the desk. He then starts pouring over them and examining the room. Seems to be making plans.

GABRIEL

Well, it certainly is good to see you, sir. I guess you know what...

GOD

There's no light in here. Can't we get any more light in here, Gabriel? Let there be more light!

HANK

Let me. I'll get it! *(going to the light switch and turning up the lights)*

PRESIDENT

Well, like I was saying. Welcome to Washington. I hope that you'll enjoy our fine...

GOD

(pointing) Over there, that's where we'll put a big lake. That's gonna be nice. With lots of trees around it...know what I mean?

PRESIDENT

Huh? Okay, I guess...

GOD

And I'm thinking of adding a few more mountains in this area...

PRESIDENT

(to Gabriel) Um... is there a problem here? He won't..y'know..

GABRIEL

(leaning over to God) Um, sir? I'm not trying to bother you, but this is kind of thrill for them and..well, they're just standing here waiting...

GOD

Hmm? Oh, right. I forgot they're not as used to me as I am to them. *(to the rest)* Ohhh! Come here everybody...*(holding out his arms. he grabs the President in a hug)* Come on. The rest of you...Hank, Charity- everyone.

They all trot over and get a big group hug from God, like little kids.

GOD

(as they break out of the hug) How's that foot, Benjamin? That was kind of silly, wasn't it? Heh, heh... Shootin' yourself in the foot...

PRESIDENT

Oh, no.. See, I was just cleaning it, cleaning the gun, that is, and...

GOD

(looking at him coldly) Who do you think your talking to, kid?

PRESIDENT

Well.. I...

GOD

(hitting him lightly in the back of the head) Tryin' to shoot that nice foot I gave you... What's the matter with you?

MS. CHARITY

He didn't mean to, Sir. He's just a little stressed. I'm Charity.

GOD

I know you are, Princess....

HANK

I talked to you on the phone, sir. That was me on the phone..

GOD

(grabbing Hank's cheeks) Yes, that was you, you rascal.

HANK

Sorry I was a little nervous...

GOD

Oh, don't you worry about that, little soldier...

LLOYD

(smiling) Gees, and now here You are... in the flesh. So this is what You look like, huh?

GOD

Why? Are you disappointed?

LLOYD

No, I was just expecting a long white beard or something...

GOD

In this heat? Don't get all hung up on appearances, kid.

LARRY

(Loud)

I don't get it.

GOD

Who said that?

LARRY

God is a middle-aged man? Is that what you're telling us?

GOD

No, I didn't say that...

PRESIDENT

Larry, what the hell are you doing? We want to keep these talks nice and friendly. Let's not anger the God.

LARRY

Well, I'm not trying to do anything. I just think we should be cautious about who we are calling "God." I mean, if there is a God.

GABRIEL

What do you mean, "if there is a God?" Who do you think signs my checks every week?

PRESIDENT

In any case, I don't think we should be having this argument right in front of Him.

GOD

Oh, it's all right. I suppose you guys have a lot of questions and all that.. so, come on. Everyone gather around.

They all move chairs over or sit on the floor or whatever. Except Ernie who only half-heartedly slides his chair while sighing deeply.

GOD

What's the matter with Ernie?

MS. CHARITY

Oh, he's in love with a girl.

GOD

Oh. Poor guy. I always wondered if I turned that reproductive love thing up too high.

LLOYD

That's what Gabriel was just saying..!

GABRIEL

(through clenched teeth) No, I didn't...

GOD

Well, boys, I gotta tell you.. I'm really kind of peeved at this whole situation. I had a plan, y'know. I don't know what's the matter with you people. I really don't appreciate having to come down here like this.

LLOYD

Yea, but we're scared! It's scary.

GOD

Phht. Scared. You're supposed to be scared. Scare a little sense into ya, that's what you need.

ERNIE

And some of us were just plain in the middle of something. I mean it's the timing, is all.

GOD

Oh, well, excuse me. I really didn't want to mess up anybody's day. but when it has to be done, it has to be done.

MS CHARITY

Yea, but, do things change completely now, or...

PRESIDENT

Yea, like am I gonna get to keep being president?

GOD

No, I'm sorry. You don't get to be president. No more governments like that.

PRESIDENT

Well, what if they elect me?

GOD

They won't.

HANK

But I get to be secretary of defense still, right?

GOD

(hitting him lightly in the back of the head) No, you don't get to be secretary of blah, blah, blah...

HANK

Gees, why?

GOD

Well, because.. that's sort of Michaels job.

ERNIE

(a little weepy) You just don't like us, do you? That's the real problem.

GOD

(stands up and motions like He's gonna backhand Ernie, Ernie flinches) Of course I like ya, ya mope. Aww, come on. I know you know better, Ernie. You're just a little confused right now. I understand...

LARRY

How do we even know who you are?

GOD

(standing up and walking around to the front of the desk, Larry flinches) How do you know? Well, maybe you have a little point. I don't usually like to be tested, but... Let me show you a little trick.

PRESIDENT

What do you mean? You're gonna do a miracle?

GOD

Wellll.. miracle - I don't know. It's a little trick. Now watch closely... See my thumb? *(He puts His left hand up and the covers his thumb with his right hand exposing his right thumb. It appears he's separating His left thumb at the joint.)*

LLOYD

(has never seen this one) Oh my God! He's pulling his thumb off!

GOD

That's right, your God is pulling his thumb off, heh, heh...

PRESIDENT

Wait a minute!... That's no miracle. My dad did that all the time.

GOD

Well, I didn't say it was a miracle.

LARRY

Oh, that's ridiculous. What are you trying to pull here anyway?

GOD

My thumb. Ha, ha, you think God has no sense of humor?

LARRY

Oh, if I were you Mr. President, I wouldn't turn off those shields under any circumstances. We still have free will, even if he is God.

GOD

I'll show you something else. *(to Lloyd)* Here, pull my finger.

LLOYD

Oh.. no thank you.

GOD

Go ahead, don't be afraid.

HANK

Do it, Lloyd. This could be important.

LLOYD

I don't want to pull His finger! *(to Larry)* You pull His finger!

LARRY

I'd really rather not.

HANK

Oh you bunch of pansies. Here, I'll pull it...

Hank pulls God's finger and as he does, there is a HUGE THUNDER CLAP and LIGHTNING. Very loud. Scares the hell out of everybody. God laughs uproariously.

GOD

Ha, ha, ha..! I love that one! That's a doozy....

God goes on talking to the others while Gabriel pulls Ernie aside.

GABRIEL

Ernie, psst! C'mere. He's in a pretty good mood. Now's your chance. Why don't you ask him?

ERNIE

Ask him what?

GABRIEL

Y'know.. about your problem. Ask Him about being in love and stuff and if you get to be with Ms. Hope after...

ERNIE

Oh, I don't think I want to bother Him..

GABRIEL

Oh, why not?

ERNIE

Because he hits...

GABRIEL

Ohhhh, not hard.

ERNIE

I don't know. Maybe later..

GABRIEL

Oh, brother...

As they turn back towards the others, God is trying to make noises by putting His hand under his armpit and flapping His arm. With limited success.

GOD

Well, anyway.. that's how it's supposed to work...

PRESIDENT

Tell us some secrets.

GOD

What do you mean secrets?

LLOYD

Aw, come on. There's questions that man has pondered for centuries. I'd like to hear a few secrets, wouldn't you guys?

OTHERS

Yea...yea..just a couple...

GOD

Secrets, huh? A few mysteries of the ol' universe, eh? Heh, heh.. well, all right. Maybe just one or two. Now, let's see... Here's one: "the chicken"..

PRESIDENT

"The chicken"? What does that mean?

GOD

The chicken came first. Y'know, before the egg...

ALL OTHERS

Ohhhhh..!

PRESIDENT

Oh, right. Well... that's cool.

GOD

Personally I thought that one was a bit of a no-brainer. And, let's see... Oh! Jimmy Hoffa is buried under home plate in Yankee stadium...

LLOYD

I knew it..

HANK

I really thought so, too. But I was thinking Shea stadium..

GOD

Well, come on. We better get this show on the road. We'll have plenty of time to talk.

ERNIE

So, this is the end of everything - just like that?

GOD

No. This is the beginning of everything.

ERNIE

(a little sniffly) Yea, but it's the end of everything else...

GOD

You know, I don't get you guys. Why are you so sad about this?

LLOYD

Well, sometimes it's hard to let go of the things you know. No matter how bad they may seem, sometimes.

GOD

Ohhh. You guys just don't get it...

PRESIDENT

All right, so what's it gonna be like then?

GOD

Well, it's hard to explain. Do you ever remember being able to stay home from school? Maybe you were a little sick or it was a snow day or something?

PRESIDENT

Oh, yea..

GOD

And your mom brought you soup and you got to stay in your pajamas..

MS. CHARITY

Yea, the footie pajamas with the trap door?

LLOYD

The really comfortable ones?

GOD

Yea, exactly! Remember how special you felt? And loved and cared for?

PRESIDENT

Yea, yea! It's like that?

GOD

Welllllll..... sort of. It's kind of hard to explain.

HANK

Yea, but if you got to stay home everyday, it wouldn't seem as special, would it?

GOD

Well, yes it would..

HANK

Why? How do you know it would?

GOD

Because I'm God and I said so, okay?

LARRY

I don't get it.

GABRIEL

Oh, you don't get anything..

LARRY

Yes, I do. I don't get this.

GABRIEL

Well, you're an idiot.

HANK

Don't yell at him! There's nothing wrong with asking questions.

GABRIEL

Oh, you want to start with me again, leatherneck? Let's go!

ERNIE

So.. Even if it's gonna be nice - what was it all about?

LLOYD

Yea, why were we here in the first place? What did it all mean?

Music for GOD'S LOVE SONG starts..

PRESIDENT

(half singing w/music) We've been spinning around the universe rotating on our axis...

LLOYD

We're stuck here on this planet and we never could understand it...

GOD'S LOVE SONG

GOD
There is just one thing I'd like to say
Do you think of me while I'm away?
I can't make you love me even if I tried
Do you think of me? While you go
Spinning' around the universe rotating on your axis
All across my sky

OTHERS:
Spinning around the universe rotating on our axis
We're nestled among the planets
Even though we don't understand it

GOD:
I keep my hopes up as the years go by
Hoping you don't fall for some other guy
Maybe it was just a dream
But it's the best damn dream I ever had
Can't make you love me, do you think of me?
While you go spinning around the universe
Rotating on you axis and you don't know why!

OTHERS:
Spinning around the universe rotating on our axis
We're nestled among the planets
Even though we don't understand it

They waltz around God as they sing...

We keep our hopes up somewhere up there
Someone is watching Who really cares
Maybe it was just a dream
But it's the best damn dream we ever had!

They go into a rhumba type dance. Then back to original...

GOD:
Maybe it was just a dream
But it's the best damn dream I ever had!
I can't make you love me! Can't make you love me!

At this point, A voice interrupts God's singing. It is Larry. He seems very aggressive and different now.

LARRY

Awwwwww - shut up!

Everyone gasps and looks at Larry. The music changes to You Can't Stop Me Now.

PRESIDENT

Larry! What the hell are you doing?

LARRY

(pushing his face) Outta my way, you idiot! You're done here. It's time for me to make my move...

You Can't Stop Me Now

LARRY

Stop! Enough! I can't stand it!
I can't take it no more...
You call yourself a God? You never call, you never write
And what the hell should all these people love you for?
And you don't really even want to be loved
What you really want's to be adored!
Well wait a minute, sit right there, Pops
And listen everybody
'Cause I got somethin' more!

CHORUS

And you can't stop me now!
I put a lot of time inside
Forget about your foolish God-sized pride
And you can't stop me now!
I'll take your Catholics, I'll take your Jews
All you Hindus say Holy Cow!
And you can;t stop me now
I don't care how you feel.. I'm unreal.

PRESIDENT

Don't just stand there, Hank! Stop him!

HANK

But, but it's Larry!

PRESIDENT

That's not Larry! Something's wrong with him!

HANK

Then who is it?

GABRIEL

It's him! It's the devil! I don't blame you for being fooled, soldier boy.
Believe me, I thought it was *you* all this time...

LARRY:

You're just an old story, a jilted lover
And they don't want you no more!
They run every time that they, they see you coming

Don't you ever get tired? Don't you ever get bored?
And don't you think it's time to give up this plan?
Do you really want to *live* with Man?
Well wait a minute, sit right there, Pops, and listen everybody
'Cause I got somethin' more!

CHORUS

And you can't stop me now!
I put a lot of time inside
Forget about your foolish God-sized pride
And you can't stop me now!
I'll take your Catholics, I'll take your Jews
All you Hindus say Holy Cow!
And you can't stop me now
I don't care how you feel.. I'm unreal.

PRESIDENT

Hank, he's messing up everything. Shoot him!

LARRY

That's right, Hank. Go ahead and shoot me! I dare you! You can't hurt me, you stupid mortal. Who do you think you're dealing with?

PRESIDENT

Hank!

HANK

Yes, sir. Gladly.

LARRY faces **HANK** with his hands on his hips and very defiant. He is laughing. Hank takes aim and shoots. Larry screams out an "Ouch" and winces with pain for a minute.

LARRY

Oooh! Yow! Okay, wait a minute. I wasn't ready! Okay, *now* I'm ready go ahead and shoot!

Hank aims and fires again. It hurts Larry again.

LARRY

Yeee! Would you wait a minute! Not yet! When I say go! Okay go!

Hank fires again. This time Larry grits his teeth and takes it but it is obviously uncomfortable for him.

LARRY

Okay! All right! That's enough! See, I told you you can't hurt me...

LLOYD

Wait a minute. So you're telling me that you're really the devil?

LARRY

Well, the devil... I have many names. Beelzebub, Satan, El Diablo... I got "Ol' Scratch" from some of my pool shootin' buddies...

GOD

Well, I named you Lucifer.

LARRY

Yea, well, I don't like it. It didn't denote enough...I don't know.."power". So I don't go by that no more, bub...

PRESIDENT

No, you go by "Larry"..

LARRY

Yea, so what's wrong with that? It's a good name...

PRESIDENT

Yea, but "Larry The Devil" sounds kinda stupid.

LARRY

To you! I don't care what you say anyway. I do what I want to do. What makes me happy!

GABRIEL

He's always like this...

LARRY

And I say what happens now. *(To president)* You make me sick, you weak piece of shit. You know how hard it's been to take orders from a moron like you? Boy, I thought I knew what eternal suffering was until I met you.

PRESIDENT

Now, there's no need for name-calling.

MS. CHARITY

Yea! You leave him alone!

LARRY

I put in my time and now I'm in charge see? I'm taking over this burg!

GABRIEL

(stepping forward) Yea? Says you! Come on, devil! Put 'em up. I've been waiting for this for a long time.

LARRY

Oh, look at this! Here's comes the angel. Come on trumpet-boy! You'll be cryin' for Michael in a second...

GABRIEL

Yea? I'll kick your ass all the way back to the netherworld...

The two dance around a little. Gabriel's got his dukes up. Larry lunges and gets Gabriel in a headlock.

LARRY

Pheww! That was pathetic. You ain't no Michael, that's for sure.

GABRIEL

Um, wait a minute... Let's start over...

PRESIDENT

Come on, Gabriel! What are you doing?

HANK

Um, would you like a little help there, angel?

GABRIEL

No, I don't want a little help. I got him right where I want him. Just, um, just hand me my trumpet, would ya?

LARRY

You're gonna play trumpet now?

GABRIEL

No, I'm gonna smash you in the head with it...

GOD

Oh no you're not, Gabe. We just had that thing replated!

GABRIEL

Ow.. ow.. ow... I give!

Larry laughs and lets go of Gabriel. He falls to the floor. God and the angels help Gabriel to his feet.

GABRIEL

I'm sorry, sir.

GOD

It's all right. It was a good effort. Ya feisty little guy. *(musses his hair)*

LARRY

You just ain't no Michael....

Gabriel goes to the phone.

GABRIEL

I tell you what I'm gonna do! I'm gonna call Michael right now! How do you like that!

LARRY

Oh, no you don't! No one's calling anyone! *(He pulls the phone cord out of the wall)*

GOD

All right, Lucifer. Fun's over. Stop acting like a jackass, now.

LARRY

Oh, I know it's over.. But it's over for you! Come on! It's you and me, 'Ol Man. This is the day I make things right!

GOD

You don't know what "right" is anymore...

LARRY

Whatever! I'm tired of being walked all over! I'm taking this world and you're gonna have to stop me!

GOD

Oh, boy. I hate to do this....

GABRIEL

(becoming a ring announcer) And here it is folks! The big moment in history you've all been waiting for. The final battle between good and evil!

Suspense music plays as Larry prepares on one side of the stage and God stands very calm and cool on the other. The music builds and builds as Larry goes through a lot of dramatic arm movements preparing to strike. The music climaxes to a stop and God suddenly lifts his hand. Larry, on the other side of the stage crashes to the floor in a heap.

GABRIEL

And there you have it, folks. It's over! God in the white trunks wins it easily! The crowd is going wild.

PRESIDENT

That's it? That's the big battle between good and evil?

GOD

Well, I'm God. What'd you expect? Evil is not the equal and opposite of good. Good is good. Evil is just a bad little decision against it.

HANK

Yea, but what a glass jaw...

GOD

Besides the real fight was never against evil. The real enemy is indifference. It always has been.

PRESIDENT

Well, whatever. Who cares? The devil is defeated!

LARRY

(groggily sitting up) What happened? Did I win? Am I in charge?

GABRIEL

No, you wuss! You fell like a sack of potatoes.

GOD

All right, now. Be nice.

PRESIDENT

I thought he was dead. What's going on?

GOD

No, I don't kill my spirits. He was one of my favorites, weren't you Lucifer?

LARRY

(getting to his feet) Whatever. Leave me alone.

GOD

Lucifer...

LARRY

I said leave me alone!

GOD

Now is a great chance for you. Why don't you come home?

LARRY

Everyone leave me alone. I don't need You! I don't need any of this! I'm getting outta here! *(He starts to leave)*

GOD

I could forgive you, you know...

LARRY

I don't want your forgiveness! Take off! I don't owe you nothing! You're nuts! *(to the others)* You fools! You're all just the afterthought of a crazy God!

GOD

All right. I know you feel that way. You'll go again, I guess. But just do me one favor... don't go too far. Just don't go too far...

LARRY

(looks a little unsure of what to do, then gets defiant again) I'm outta here. These animals don't want you! They don't even want you! Admit it, you made a mistake... *(He runs out)*

MS. CHARITY

He can't just leave, can he?

GOD

He already did.

PRESIDENT

Sir, I feel like I should say... It's just that... Well, I thought I was doing the right thing. I thought I was protecting the people. I really did. And to be honest, a lot of us just don't know who you are or what you're trying to do... They just don't know.. And maybe because they don't know, they just don't care anymore..

GOD

(a little dejected) Welll..... you may be right.

PRESIDENT

Anyway. I guess you could blame me for this whole fiasco. I guess I just wanted to say... Well, I'm sorry.

GOD

(a glimmer of hope) What'd you say?

PRESIDENT

Just that I'm sorry. I'm sorry I caused you any grief at all.

God puts his hand on the president's shoulder and smiles at him. Suddenly we hear distant music and singing coming from outside. Sort of like a march. It is Our Father.

LLOYD

What's that music?

PRESIDENT

It's sounds like singing.

HANK

It's coming from outside..

God listens intently. Hank and Lloyd rush over to the window. The music and singing grows louder.

Do you see anything? LLOYD

Oh my God! HANK

Yes? GOD

No, I mean oh my God. Look down there! There's hundreds of people coming up Pennsylvania Ave.! HANK

More like thousands! They're coming right up on the White House lawn! LLOYD

Well, what are they doing that for? We just re-sodded... PRESIDENT

There could be millions of them! LLOYD

It could be a reaction to your press conference. Didn't you just go on TV? ERNIE

No, he never went on.... MS. CHARITY

Larry told me it wasn't a good idea at the last moment. What are they singing? PRESIDENT

It's the Our Father. The only prayer we were given from God himself. ERNIE

(*looking out window*) Oh my God! It's incredible. I've never seen so many people. Maybe it can work, do you see this, God? PRESIDENT

As the president turns around to talk to God, he sees that Hank and Lloyd and Ernie are all kneeling before God. God is smiling.

Come, come now... Everybody up. Come on, give God a big hug. GOD

They all hug.

I guess I was wrong, sir. I was wrong. But do you see? It can work. Everything can be all right now. I think I almost get it. If you could just give us one more chance, maybe we could do it right. PRESIDENT

Oh, Benjamin... GOD

PRESIDENT

It could be different, now. Please, just give the human race one more chance...

GABRIEL

Don't you understand this is your chance?

GOD

Ben, a man can understand all mysteries and have the faith to move mountains, but it means nothing if he has no love in his heart to give...

PRESIDENT

... Ms. Charity...? But... I do love her. *(to Ms. Charity)* I do , Baby...

MS. CHARITY

Oh Benny..... You think it's gonna be that easy, huh? A woman likes to be romanced, a woman likes to be wooed. I need! I need! I need!

PRESIDENT

So this is Judgement Day....

GOD

I tell you what, Ben. I'm very happy right now. Very happy. I'm proud of all of you. I know you can't really understand what's going on now.. but... well, let me think about it. I'm willing to give it some thought, the mood I'm in right now.

PRESIDENT

Yea, that's it. That's all I'm saying. Just a few more years, even. Like until I finish my term.. or whatever. You know what I mean. I'll turn off the shields...

He turns them off.

GOD

Come on, Gabriel. Let's go.

GABRIEL

We're going?

GOD

For now...

GABRIEL

(to president) I don't know if you know what you're doing. But I gotta hand it to ya. That was pretty brave.

GOD

Okay, Ben. I'm not making any promises.. but I'll give it some thought.

PRESIDENT

Thank God..

GOD

You're welcome. But, believe me, in the end, I'll do whatever is best for you people.

PRESIDENT

How will we know what you decided?

GOD

Oh... you'll know..

GOD, GABRIEL and the ANGELS all leave.

HANK

Well, now what?

PRESIDENT

Well, now we wait...

LLOYD

What do you think of that, Ernie?

ERNIE

What do I think? I think I miss Ms. Hope.

LLOYD

Oh brother...

MS. CHARITY

You said you wuuuuv me...

PRESIDENT

I can't just sit here. Come on Hank, let's go find out if those comets are still headed here or not!

HANK

Yes, sir.

Hank, Lloyd and the President run out of the room, leaving Ernie alone.

The music for "God's Love Song" comes back up.. Ernie sings very melancholy..

Ernie There is just one thing I'd like to know
 Did she ever think of me? Why did she go?
 I couldn't make her love me - Did I even try?...

Suddenly, Ms. Hope enters. Ernie stands up, shocked.

ERNIE

Ms. Hope!....What...what are you doing here?

MS. HOPE

(trying to be non-chalant) Oh... Hi Ernie...nothing. I'm not doing anything.

ERNIE

But I thought you went to home to Pennsylvania...

MS. HOPE

Yea, um, I'm going. I just... well.. Oh! Here it is.. *(she picks up a pencil off the president's desk)* I was looking for this. I really started to like this pencil, and... I came back for it.

ERNIE

It must be a pretty special pencil....

MS. HOPE

Oh, it's the most special pencil I've ever met...

ERNIE

You've ever met?

MS. HOPE

Sharpened. You know what I mean.... Well, I've got my pencil, now, sooo.....

ERNIE

Ms. Hope, please don't run out again... Okay, I have to tell you something....

WHY I LIKE IT HERE

ERNIE

Here you are, just another angel
And suddenly I can't breathe so well on my own
And who are you anyway, I don't even know you
But whenever you're not around I feel so alone
And I have to tell you something, And I hope you care
You're the nicest girl I've met anywhere

CHORUS

So please don't go I want you so badly
You'll never know Just how much I care
And I realize I may never know why things in this life have to go so sadly
But I finally realize why I like it here

Ms Hope

So here we are facing each other
It might surprise you to know how I feel deep inside
And where have you been? I thought I never would find you
But here you are and now I know I want to spend the rest of my life
By your side and I have to tell you something you might like to know
If you want me to stay just tell me so

CHORUS

I'll never go because I love you so madly
You'll never know just how much I care
And I realize I may never know
Why things in this life have to go so sadly

ERNIE

MS. HOPE

BOTH

But I finally realize why I like it here
I finally realize why I like it here
I love you so much and that's why I like it here!

At the last big crescendo of the song, they are in each others arms and end with a passionate kiss. As they do, a huge explosion interrupts the end of the song. God has made His decision and it is the end of the world. The stage lights flash an ominous red, and the noise is deafening as the two lovers remain kissing, frozen in the bitter-sweet horribleness of the moment. After a few seconds all goes black. Music for "The Big Finish" starts in the darkness. When the lights come up on stage, all cast should be present - except for Larry The Devil, and Ernie and Ms. Hope. Everyone else is on stage and dressed in children's pajamas. The comfy kind with the footies in them and the trap door in the back. They are all

dancing to the music and seem to be incredibly happy. Gabriel is playing the trumpet to the music.

THE BIG FINISH

PRESIDENT What's on your mind when you're only four
 And you're pushing your peas onto the floor
 Well, dessert's the thing you've been waiting for, annnd...
ALL THE BIG FINISH!

HANK So, you reach high school and you got a date
LLOYD Dinner and movies and, gee that's great
PRESIDENT But her parents are home, so you gotta wait foor...
ALL THE BIG FINISH!

PRESIDENT Everybody's looking for a lot
 But the thing they want the most is Something they haven't yet got!

GABRIEL You always want to be where you don't belong
 The grass is always greener in the other guy's lawn
 You try to be happy, but before too long
 There's got to be something out there, There's got to be...

At this softer point in the song, one of the female angels yells...

LLOYD

Hey, look everybody! Here they come! Here comes Ernie and Ms. Hope!

They all split to one side and the other forming a corridor. Ernie and Ms. Hope come walking down the middle dressed in wedding clothes. As they walk in the music changes to the Wedding March. Everyone shouts their congratulations.

PRESIDENT So, you get a little older and you look to the skies
 Waiting for the day all the stars will collide
 But don't wish away time. 'cause by and by
ALL THE BIG FINISH!

As the music continues to play God Himself walks out. He is dancing and enjoying himself. He shouts above the music.

GOD

Hey, everybody! What'd I tell you? Is this fun or what?

ALL

(all smiles, very enthusiastic) Hell yes!

Music plays out. Bows.

THE END