

# **The Devil and a Pink Slip**

A Play

by

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## **ACT I**

A dive bar, late afternoon/early evening. There are a few other patrons, but it's not full or bustling.

Lucifer, dressed somewhat flashy but fashionably, is waiting at the bar, chatting up the bar tender, who is visibly enjoying the conversation.

Jesus, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, and looking somewhat cranky and tired, enters

Lucifer JD!

Jesus How you doing, man.

[They shake hands. Lucifer pulls Jesus in for an embrace.]

Lucifer God, it's good to see you.

Jesus [Warming up a bit.] Good to see you.

Lucifer It's been what, a couple K's?

Jesus Give or take.

Lucifer Two thousand years. Holy shit.

Jesus [With a smirk] You could say that.

Lucifer I was beginning to think you were never coming back.

Jesus        Apparently you're not the only one.

Lucifer     Well, you did say it would be "soon".

Jesus        That's not what I said.

Lucifer     Sure, blame the media.

Jesus        [to the bartender] Jack. Neat.

Lucifer     So, what are you up to these days?

Jesus        I'm sorry not to write or anything.

Lucifer     It's all good. I figured that was just part of the banishment deal.

Jesus        I don't know. Maybe it was.

Lucifer     Hey, I deserved it. I totally deserved it.

Jesus        I don't even remember what it was about.

Lucifer     You got a minute?

Jesus        No. I mean, yes, but really...

Lucifer     I think Mike was still pissed off about the Moses thing, and then we got into it, and I didn't realize he had a thing for this angel I was seeing... [goes into reverie about the angel]

Jesus        [looking down at his drink] Dammit!

Lucifer     What?

Jesus        I said "neat" didn't I?

Lucifer     I don't remember. Here, I'll drink it.

              [to the bartender] Excuse me?

Jesus        No, no. It's fine. It's fine.

Lucifer     You're sure?

Jesus        It's not the end of the world.

Lucifer Hey oh!

Jesus I hear Gabe came around a few years back.

Lucifer Oh yeah. We had a blast. I took him to this jazz club, the Five Spot. Very cool place, very happening -- It's not around anymore.

Anyway, I knew some of the musicians, so I told them he was a motherfucker on the trumpet, and they let him sit in on one of their sets.

Jesus [Laughing] Oh shit.

Lucifer Right?

So he gets up on the stage, and he's just playing along, you know, at first. But it's pretty late by now, past midnight for sure, and we'd had a lot of rum and cokes. And you know Gabe, he's not going to be able to hold back.

He starts to get into it and the band is really cooking, and the place is poppin', you know, and he lets go. I mean, he just cuts loose! They had no idea what hit 'em.

You should have been there.

Jesus I can imagine.

Lucifer So he's tearing the roof off the place. But after he kinda blows off some steam, ya know, he lets it chill and he gets all soulful. He takes it all the way down. It was primeval.

By the time ol' Gabe's through, no one else is playing, no one is talking. Hell, they're barely breathing. The whole place is absolutely transfixed.

I think he did that on purpose, so we could get out of there without being mobbed.

Jesus I'd have liked to have been there.

Lucifer     What the hell's keeping you?

Jesus       I don't know. I really need to get away more.

Lucifer     Corpo-reality ain't so bad.

Jesus       Well, yeah. It's just that I left on such a bad note.

Lucifer     Yeah. Yeah.

              Really though. What's up? What brings you down to terra firma?

              I figure it's just a quick visit. I mean, I didn't see any clouds of locusts this morning. The East River hadn't turned to blood the last time I looked.

Jesus       Yeah, don't worry, it's not the Big Day. I'm just in and out. I think I've got a flight out of JFK tomorrow at some ungodly hour.

Lucifer     [Picking up his Blackberry] What's your flight number? I'll get you bumped up to first.

Jesus       I have an exit row. I'll be fine, thanks.

Lucifer     [Putting the Blackberry away] You're sure?

Jesus       Yeah. Listen, Dad wanted me to talk with you.

Lucifer     How is he?

Jesus       Good.

Lucifer     I should call.

Jesus       You should.

              He's very pleased, you know. Very impressed with the job you've been doing. "Lucy's really kicking ass down there," I think is how he put it.

Lucifer     Really?

Jesus        Yeah. You've impressed him. And I gotta admit, I feel the same. I mean, I knew you'd be great down here, but this is just fantastic. They can't even go shopping without guilt.

Lucifer      Thanks. Thanks, man. I feel pretty good about what I've managed to do.

Jesus        It can't be fun.

Lucifer      Well. You just have to take pride in your work. Otherwise, yes, it can really be a drag. It's hard work.

Jesus        We should talk sometime about what you do to protect yourself. I mean, this kind of work has got to really take a toll.

Lucifer      It does get me down sometimes. And not like you'd expect, you know? I introduced this kid at Berkeley to a recruiter from Archer Daniels and they made him a great job offer.

Jesus        Sure.

Lucifer      I knew he'd regret that later, but I get kinda cocky sometimes. It's the collateral damage that always gets you.

He had this daughter that he didn't know about. Dancer. Amazing dancer. You probably know her, Virginia Caldecott.

Jesus        Of course I know her.

Lucifer      Well, she found out from her mom that this guy was her dad, and she looked him up, and by then he was doing pretty damn well, so she found out how much money he had, and tapped into that, and that was the end of the dancing...

Jesus        Hey, you're just doing your job.

Lucifer      Sure, but I'm saying I wasn't ready for it. She started to party, got into coke and all that and just went straight downhill. It's sad. Really

sad. That wasn't what I was trying to do. I just felt terrible.

Jesus Well, I have some good news for you.

Lucifer Yeah?

Jesus Dad says you're done.

Lucifer Done?

Jesus You've done a bang-up job. You've paid your debt. The banishment is over, effective tomorrow morning.

Lucifer They're lettin' me back upstairs?

Jesus [Smiling, offering a handshake] Congratulations.

Lucifer [accepting the handshake, but unsure]

I don't know what to say.

Jesus You could say thanks.

Lucifer No, I mean...I just.

I don't know. I kinda like it here.

Jesus Come on.

Lucifer Hey, it's not the most glamorous location in the universe, but somebody's gotta work it, and I'm proud of what I do.

Jesus You should be.

Lucifer I don't know...It's like I just got it really going well, ya know? I mean look what they're doing IN YOUR NAME!

Jesus Speaking of which...

Lucifer What? Does that bug you? I thought you'd like that. You've always been into that dark humor and all.

Jesus No, that's fine. Nice touch, actually. No, it's the H.

Lucifer The H?

Jesus Yeah, what does the H stand for?

Lucifer Oh, like "Jesus H Christ?"

Jesus Yeah. When did I get a middle name?

Lucifer It's just the initial. When you want to be profane, sometimes you want that extra syllable, that's all. What do you think?

Jesus Why H?

Lucifer I don't know. It had a nice ring to it. I suggested K, but it sounded kinda hokey.

Jesus I guess I can live with it.

Lucifer Another Jack on the rocks?

Jesus [snorts] Sure.

Lucifer [gestures to the bartender]

Jesus So, I'll send down a couple million seraphim to help with the transition.

Lucifer Uhhhh. I don't know, Jake.

Jesus What?

Lucifer Tell the Sheriff to hold off for now.

Jesus You can't be serious.

Lucifer Don't pull the plug on me. I know I've only done a few K's. But I feel like I've made some real progress. I mean back in the middle ages they didn't have this kind of infrastructure, no media, hardly any money. It was pretty much just theft, murder and adultery. A little blasphemy. Small potatoes. Now look at this place!

We got a wealth disparity down here like I couldn't have dreamed of back in the early days.

We got drugs, rock and roll, TV, the Internet fer chrissake, have you seen the Internet!?

Jesus I don't have a computer.

Lucifer Jesus!

[pause]

My point is, I'm not sure how I feel about being yanked off the case just when things are going good.

No, I take that back, I AM sure how I feel about it. It sucks.

Jesus This isn't the last planet in the Universe.

Lucifer Listen. There's a lot more to it than you'd think. I got a whole infrastructure, and it's always expanding. I got a brand new QC division up and running just last year. You should stick around and watch what I do.

Jesus You know I can't do that.

Lucifer Just look around. Everything I do is in the background. It's like ambient evil. No one in this town even thinks I exist! I'm in Devil's Heaven!

Jesus [laughing] You're out of control.

Lucifer This thing could go way beyond Earth. Once we've worked out some of the kinks I know we can take this operation galactic.

Jesus So, uh...

Lucifer [now more calm, stern]  
Tell the Y man I want to stay. And if he still insists on bringing me back upstairs, tell him I'm not going back to fucking HR. I've paid my

dues. I want management, and I want to be part of Creative. No more Admin.

Jesus He doesn't make those decisions these days.

Lucifer Don't tell me Mike is head of HR.

Jesus All right I won't tell you.

Lucifer Christ!

Jesus Look, I want to hang out and all, but I really just came down to --

Lucifer I know. I know. I'm sorry. I'll let you take off. But listen. Talk to your dad for me? He'll understand.

I can make this happen. Hell, If you can throw me down just hundred troubled angels I get them in shape in fifty years. They'll ready to run the flip side of their own worlds like you never dreamed.

Jesus [finishes his drink]

Lucifer Jake.

Jesus [slightly irritated] I'll talk to him.

Lucifer Hey-suce.

[They hug.]

Lucifer You don't have to be such a stranger, you know.

Jesus I know.

Lucifer Come down for Mardi Gras. We'll pop over to Rio.

Jesus Oh god.

Lucifer Get you some hot Brazilian chicks...

Jesus I don't know.

Lucifer Make M&M look like Mother Teresa.

Jesus        I'll talk to Dad.    We'll see what he says.  
                 [exits]

**curtain**

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