

THE EDUCATION OF ANGELS

A COMEDY FANTASY IN TWO ACTS

By Matthew Carlin

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SYNOPSIS: Nick and Jenna are two angels-in-training who are about to be sent back to Earth for their final exam. The problem is, these two can't seem to get along, which leads to a pretty competitive situation. When they return to Earth, they find Dave, a guy who is even more mixed up than they are. He is at the church, long before he should be on his wedding day, trying to decide whether or not to go forward with the wedding. Throw in a domineering ex-wife and the fact that Dave is the only one that can see only one of the angels . . . and multiple comic situations ensue. There is a serious side to this play, though, as we see Nick struggling to understand why he's back on Earth and perhaps, indeed, why he is an angel in the first place.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 WOMEN, 6 MEN)

NICK (M).....An angel-in-training, in his thirties.
(171 lines)

JENNA (F).....An angel-in-training, about the same age
as Nick. *(241 lines)*

CABBIE (M).....The cab driver from Heaven to Earth.
(34 lines)

DAVE (M).....A man in his early forties who is about
to get married. *(300 lines)*

NATALIE (F).....DAVE's domineering ex-wife.
(116 lines)

CHUCK (M)DAVE's pastor. *(28 Lines)*

CLIFTON (M)A very spiritual and wise elderly man.
(48 lines)

JACK (M)DAVE's best friend, also his best-man.
(73 lines)

ALLY (F).....DAVE's five year-old soon-to-be step-
daughter. (24 lines)

DO NOT COPY

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

The scene opens on the streets of heaven. At least on one little corner of a street. All we see is a bench, albeit a very nice and ornate bench, and a street sign which reads "Moses Way." Seated upon this bench is NICHOLAS TODD, we'll call him NICK, head hanging low. He was a man in mid-thirties, not bad looking. He is dressed in pants and a t-shirt which bears on the front what appears to be a pair of angel's wings. He seems distant, despondent. We can tell he's really a nice guy but troubled. For a moment he sits undisturbed until a young woman, JENNA, rushes in from offstage left. She is dressed in the same manner. She is anything but despondent. Happy-go-lucky and not afraid to let anyone know it. She knows no strangers. At first she rushes past but then, noticing him, returns and speaks.

JENNA: Hey! (No response.) Hey! (Still nothing. She goes directly over and sits next to him.) I said. Heeyy! (He shifts away from her but still says nothing. Not giving up, she continues.) So. I see we have a difficult case here. Not to worry. The doctor is in. (She gives him a big smile which he ignores. Pause. Then she slides closer to him.) It's customary to speak when spoken to, you know. (He lifts his head and glances at her out of the corner of an eye but still is silent.) Hah! I saw that! (Pause.) I did. You know, right about now there's a tiny little something . . . way back there, in the deep dark recesses of your mind. (She taps him on the forehead as she speaks. He gives her a look out of the corner of his eye.) Don't be alarmed! It's a voice . . . a tiny little voice . . . But it's growing . . . growing inside your head. It's calling out to you. You hear it. I know you do. It's speaking to you. Only to you. It's saying, "Who is this . . . somewhat kooky . . . but wonderfully attractive female who has wandered across my path?" (He gives her another quick look and she immediately reacts.) I knew it! You do hear it. Intriguing isn't it? It's getting louder . . . (She leans in a little.) . . . And louder . . . (Leans in more and gets louder.) . . . And louder! (He doesn't look at her but finally speaks.)

NICK: Go away!

JENNA: (She jumps up and, in the good old Frankenstein tradition.)
It's alive!

NICK: Don't you have some place to be?

JENNA plops right back next to him again.

JENNA: (*Simply.*) No. (*Then.*) What's your name?

Finally he gives up, at least to the extent that he looks at her.

NICK: I mean it. Shouldn't you be in class?

JENNA: Shouldn't you be in class? (*No response.*) So what's your name?

NICK: If I tell you my name, will you leave me alone?

JENNA: (*She considers.*) Maybe.

NICK: (*He looks at her and sighs.*) That's not good enough.

JENNA: I'd take a shot if I were you. You might think it better than the alternative.

NICK: What's the alternative?

She slides in close to him, obviously invading his space, then looks up at him with big puppy dog eyes.

JENNA: What's your name? Tell me your name. Please? Please tell your name! Will ya, huh? Please, please, please! I want to know your name! Pretty please. With sugar on top. Shall I continue? Please, please, please . . .

He jumps up trying to get away from this crazy woman and at the same time shouts out his name.

NICK: Nick! My name is Nick! Now cut that out.

JENNA: (*Still seated.*) Nick! (*She repeats the name, letting it roll off her tongue with a big "click" at the end.*) Nick! Nick! I like it! Nick! Kind of like one of those one word title kind of things. Jaws! Casablanca! Fame! Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious! Nick!

NICK: I am so thrilled you approve. You've made my day. Now leave.

JENNA: I said, maybe.

NICK: (*More of a plea than a demand.*) Leave! (*Sitting back down.*)

JENNA: You don't have to be hostile.

NICK: Go. Please?

JENNA: (*Flopping down next to him.*) All right! All right! What did I do?

NICK: What did you do?

JENNA: What did I do?

NICK: You didn't do anything.

JENNA: No. No. Don't spare me. I have to know.

NICK: You have to know what?

JENNA: I have to know! (*NICK shakes his head and moves away. She follows.*) Okay. Wait. Look. See. I have this thing . . . and I'm working on it . . . I really am . . . but I have this thing. (*NICK gives her a look and moves further away. Again she follows.*) Will you stop walking away from me? It's very rude! (*He stops.*) Thank you. Now look. It's just that when people don't like me, I have a hard time dealing with it. Okay? Especially when I've just met them for the first time. I mean, it's like, do I have bad breath or B. O. or something? (*She lifts an arm and sniffs.*) Fresh as a morning breeze. You can't get that in heaven anyway, can you? (*She then blows into her hand and tries to smell her breath.*) You don't get those things here, do you? I wouldn't think you would get those things here. Not that I've ever had a problem with those things, you understand. Do you get those things here?

NICK: I don't think so.

JENNA: That's what I thought, too. I want to make it clear that I've never had a problem with those things. You believe me, don't you?

NICK: I believe you.

JENNA: Then why don't you . . . I mean, I . . . what did I . . . ?

NICK: (*Showing some frustration with her now.*) !! !! !! Aye yi yi! Why don't you go trade in the wings . . . (*Indicates the wings on her shirt.*) . . . and get one that says "It's all about I."

JENNA: All about me. (*He stares at her.*) I think the correct way to say it is, "It's all . . . about me."

NICK: Whatever! (*She gives him a hurt expression.*) Listen. Trust me. You didn't do anything. It's not that I don't like you. I'm sure you're a wonderful ex-human being. It's just that I came out here to be alone.

JENNA: Alone?

NICK: Alone. (*Patronizing.*) By myself.

JENNA: I know what alone means. Look. I may be going out on a limb here, but this is heaven. Isn't it kind of difficult to be alone here?

NICK: More and more.

JENNA: Ooh. Ouch. (*NICK just sighs.*) Well, you knew you weren't going to be alone today.

NICK: Why?

JENNA: Because of our test? (*NICK stares at her.*) Is that what this is about? I have heard of pre-test stress, but you're going a little overboard.

NICK: What are you talking about?

JENNA: Our test. Our final exam. You know . . . that bell thing . . . a bell rings, and an angel gets his wings, kind of test. Well, in my case, an angel gets her wings kind of test. That test. You know. We're meeting the guy here that's going to give us our final test.

NICK: (*Incredulous.*) You! You've got to be kidding me. You! You're taking your final exam? Today?

JENNA: Oh, now wait a minute! I know I am not sensing an attitude! If there is anyone around here having problems establishing an angelic outlook, it is certainly not me.

NICK: Angelic outlook?

JENNA: You heard me.

NICK: This is the first I've heard of any test. And if I was taking a test today it certainly wouldn't be with you.

JENNA: Are you sure you didn't take a wrong turn somewhere along the way? It seems to me you speak with a decidedly . . . (*Points down.*) . . . "Southern accent," if you know what I mean.

NICK: (*Crossing to her. Trying hard to control himself.*) All right! That's it! I've tried to be nice about this . . .

JENNA: Nice? This is not nice. I know nice, and this is not nice!

NICK: You have no idea what you're talking about.

JENNA: All I know is I was told to come here. One hundred Moses Way and find the angel sitting on the park bench. All I can say is if you're an angel, you've got a lot to learn.

CABBIE enters. He is dressed as an old New York cab driver and has the accent to boot. He carries a clipboard which he reads as he moves between them.

CABBIE: Excuse me.

NICK: (*Still talking to JENNA.*) I've got a lot to learn? You've got a lot of nerve trying to tell me . . .

CABBIE: I said, excuse me!

JENNA: (*They continue arguing.*) You started all of this. I was just trying to be sociable!

NICK: You were being a pain in the neck!

CABBIE: (*Yells.*) I said, excuse me!

NICK/JENNA: (*Turn together to face CABBIE.*) What!

CABBIE: Whoa! Whoa-ho! Don't give me grief. I ain't gotta put up with that.

NICK/JENNA: HUH! (*They move to opposite sides of the stage.*)

CABBIE: Yeah! Whatever. (*Looks at the clipboard.*) Says here I am supposed to pick up a trainee named Nick. Are you him?

NICK: My name is Nick but . . .

CABBIE: Good. And also a . . . uh . . . Jen . . . Jennie . . . Jenno . . .

JENNA: Jenna?

CABBIE: Jenna! That's it! Jenna! Can't read my own writin'. Can I assume then that she is you?

JENNA: Yes. I'm Jenna, but who are you? Are we in trouble? We weren't really fighting, you know. It was just a little friendly difference of opinion. Really.

CABBIE: Ain't no skin off my back, lady. I'm just here to "provide the ride." (*Laughs.*) You like that? "Provide the ride?" That was my motto back on Earth. "Provide the ride." What do you think? Catchy, huh?

NICK: Provide what ride? What are you talking about?

CABBIE: (*Referring to the clipboard.*) Says here I am to deliver you two back to Earth for a special assignment. Says you will be working together. Part of a final exam. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So forth and so on. So let's depart. (*Starts to leave.*)

NICK: Wait a minute! What do you mean back to Earth?

CABBIE: Hey, pallie. (*Points to the clipboard.*) That's what it says.

NICK: Why should I go anywhere with you? I don't know you from Adam.

CABBIE: Nice guy, that Adam. You should get to know him. And that Eve! Whoa!

NICK: (*Gives him a puzzled look and then continues.*) And me work with her? I don't think so.

JENNA: You should only be so lucky.

NICK: Yeah, right. When heaven freezes over, I'll work for you.

JENNA: Now that's original.

NICK: Well how about . . . a . . . well . . . um . . . OK, when I think of something good I'm really going to let you have it.

JENNA: Great. I got a few million years. I'll wait.

CABBIE: Are we done?

NICK/JENNA: No!

CABBIE: Hey! Hey! No reason to shoot the messenger. As you've been informed, I'm just here to "provide the ride."

NICK/JENNA: But why do we . . . / Why do I have to . . .

CABBIE: Stop! What do I look like to you two? The information booth at the public library? The big guy says you are going back to Earth. The big guy says you are working together. When the big guy says it, it is! Am I right or am I right? (*They have no rebuttal.*) I thought so. So, let us spread our wings as it were and make haste. (*He starts off. They hesitate.*) Now! (*Points off*) The meter is runnin'! (*They exit hastily.*) That's better. (*He starts off, then stops, amused with himself. He turns to the audience.*) The education of angels. What a trip. But that's why they need me, cuz I "provide the ride." (*Laughs and very pleased with himself.*) Boy, I always had a way with words. (*He exits.*)

BLACKOUT.

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ACT ONE, SCENE 2

The waiting room of a church. There are a couple of windows, one up center, the other stage right. There is a door stage left that leads to another part of the church and another stage right that leads to a bathroom. The room is nicely furnished with a sofa and coffee table down center. On the coffee table are some books, magazines, maybe a box of tissues all placed in a particularly orderly fashion. There are a couple of armchairs either side. There is a small buffet table up center that holds a coffee pot, cups, pitcher of water and glasses. There is a bookshelf stage right. As the lights come up we see DAVE CLARK, early forties, dressed in tux pants, shirt and tie. DAVE is another really nice guy but we can clearly tell he has a lot on his mind. Quite timid by nature, DAVE likes things to be orderly. He does not like confrontation. We see his coat draped very neatly across the back of the sofa and the tie and vest on the coffee table, also placed in a very orderly fashion. You might say he is a recovering obsessive compulsive. Any time something is out of place he methodically puts it back into place. As he paces center, he speaks into a cell phone. DAVE seems nervous and agitated.

DAVE: *(Pleading.)* Look, Natalie, I . . . No. No. You cannot come down here right now! I know the wedding is still seven hours away. It doesn't matter. Because it wouldn't do any good. We've discussed this over and over again. *(As he paces, he knocks the coat off the back of the sofa. He immediately picks it up and tries to neatly put it back in place while trying to balance the phone.)* What? What? I can't . . . Hold on! *(He puts the phone down on the table in just the right way, folds the coat and then returns to the phone.)* Now, what was it you . . . *(He has to hold the phone away from his ear for a moment.)* You don't have to yell. I'm right here. What? I had to put the phone down for a second. That's all. Look. I told you before. I got here early because I wanted to have some time to relax. That's it. Before everyone else arrives. Yes. That's the only reason. What other reason would there be? I do not have cold feet. My feet . . . *(Looks down at his feet and getting distracted; sits to fiddle with his shoes; he lets the phone move away from his ear.)* . . . hurt. These rental shoes are too tight. I hate having to wear shoes that don't belong to me. I don't know why you can't just wear normal shoes with a tuxedo. *(Noticing the phone again he puts it back to his ear and again has to back off for a second.)* Not so loud! What? You don't care about my lousy shoes, and you'll see me in a few minutes.

DAVE stands.

DAVE: No! You stay where you are and I'll see you at the wedding in a few hours! *(Almost pleading.)* No. You're not coming down here! Natalie! Natalie! Please! Don't hang up the . . . Don't hang up the phone! Nat!

She obviously has hung up. Frustrated he hangs up the phone, tosses it on the sofa. Then almost as if in a panic, he grabs the phone and places it neatly on the coffee table.

DAVE: Great! Just great! Just what I needed. *(Talking to himself, he grabs the coat and starts to put it on.)* You can't see her today. You can't. You cannot see her today. Not her. Not now. *(He stops to gather himself.)* Come on. Get a hold of yourself. *(Removing the coat he looks heavenward.)* How about a little help here, huh? I mean, come on! Why does this have to be so difficult? *(He begins pacing again.)* Can't you make it a little easier this time? Can't you just tell me what to do? *(Pause.)* You know what? You could go on the internet. That's it! You could get your own web site. Everybody else has a web site. Why can't you get a web site? We could just email our questions and you could email us back with the answers. What do you think? Time to go high tech? *(Shakes his head.)* Who am I kidding? I can't do this. I've got to get out of here.

DAVE starts for the door at left, then thinks better of it. He heads for the window at right. Getting his coat half on he unlocks it and begins to try and lift it. At that moment he freezes.

There is a quick blackout.

We see the door at left open. A very bright light shines through it and in tumbles, almost as if coming in for a landing, the CABBIE, JENNA and NICK. They enter and as they do, the lights return to normal. DAVE is still frozen in place. The CABBIE strides in. NICK and JENNA look shaken, as if trying to regain their balance.

CABBIE: All rightie then! Was that a smooth ride or what? Never let it be said that I failed to provide the ride. *(Laughing, he gives NICK a pat on the back.)* You all right there, buddy? *(He looks to each of them.)* Well! Destination reached! You guys are now on your own. *(He starts as if to leave.)*

NICK: Wait a minute! Aren't you going to tell us what we're doing here?

CABBIE: I think you're supposed to figure that one out on your own. My guess is that it might have something to do with . . . oh . . . him! (*Sarcastically he points at DAVE.*) That's just a wild guess.

JENNA: Why is he not moving? (*Crosses over to get a closer look.*)

CABBIE: Ah! You might say he's frozen in time. He'll be quite mobile again as soon as I leave, I'm sure.

JENNA: (*Checking DAVE out, she gives him a few little pokes and prods.*) Cool.

NICK: That's it! You're just going to leave me here with her without telling us anything?

CABBIE: You got it Nick. But I should at least lay down the ground rules. (*Making himself at home, he plops down on the sofa.*)

NICK: Ground rules?

CABBIE: Ground rules. Here they are. (*He looks at his clipboard, flips a few pages and reads.*) As you are angels, you will only be visible to those that are required to see you. You will only be heard by those that are required to hear you.

NICK: How are we supposed to know who that is?

CABBIE: You'll figure it out! Says here you will assist the lady in any way you can.

NICK: Assist the lady? What does that mean, assist?

CABBIE: Oh, I'm sorry. (*Starts searching his pockets.*) I don't have my Webster's Dictionary here with me. (*Gives him a look.*) Assist means assist? What am I, your English teacher?

JENNA: (*Smiling.*) I think it means you're my go for. You know. Go for this, go for that.

NICK: Oh. No. No. No. That can't be right. Let me see that? (*Reaches for the clipboard.*)

CABBIE: Hey! (*Pulling it away, he crosses down right.*) You don't have clearance for that. Besides, I don't write it, I just read it.

JENNA: It's the rules.

NICK: You . . .

CABBIE: (*Crossing in front of the sofa to down left.*) The only other thing you need to know is this. You will be here until your assignment is completed. When and if that occurs, you will once again see my smiling face, whereupon I will . . . (*Trying to make his grand exit, NICK interrupts.*)

NICK: "Provide the ride". We got it!

CABBIE: (*Goes to NICK and shakes a finger at him.*) You got problems, buddy! (*He turns to go, but turns back to JENNA.*) Its clear that someone needs further study. Good luck with this guy, huh? You're gonna need it. (*As he leaves.*) Sheesh! Angels with attitudes. What's next?

There is a quick BLACKOUT again and the door opens, the bright light returns and the CABBIE exits quickly. As he does, DAVE is suddenly animated again, trying to open the window.

DAVE: Come on. Open!

JENNA: Where you going there, big guy?

DAVE: (*Whirling around. He is shocked by her presence.*) Who's that? What! Who? Who are you? How did you get in here?

JENNA: (*To NICK.*) I guess he can see us. That must mean he's the guy.

DAVE: (*Looks at her puzzled.*) Who are you talking to?

JENNA: I was just talking to Nick here.

DAVE: (*Looking around the room.*) Nick . . . where? Who is Nick? Who are you? Where did you come from? How did you get in here?

NICK: (*Walking up to DAVE.*) What do you mean who is Nick? I'm Nick.

DAVE walks right past him, obviously not seeing him and continues to speak to JENNA.

DAVE: I don't know who you are or how you got in here, but you're in the wrong room.

JENNA: (*Smiling.*) Oh now, this is interesting. He can't see you.

NICK: No! Of course he can see me. If he can see you, I'm sure he can see me. (*Walks right up to DAVE and looks him square in the face.*) Right! You can see me right?

DAVE: (*Looks right past NICK.*) Well, miss? Are you going to say something?

NICK: (*Crossing away.*) Oh, this is not right!

JENNA: This is awesome!

NICK: This is ridiculous!

DAVE: Awesome? What's awesome? Look. I'm trying to get ready for a wedding here. Could you please just leave? I don't know who you are. You obviously came in the wrong door.

JENNA: A wedding? A wedding, huh? (*Looks at NICK.*) It must have something to do with the wedding.

DAVE: Why do you keep doing that?

JENNA: Doing what?

DAVE: Acting like you're talking to someone?

JENNA: I am talking to someone. (*She points.*) Nick.

DAVE: Nick? (*Beginning now to doubt her sanity.*) Oh, right! Nick. From before when you were speaking . . . to . . . Nick.

JENNA: Right. And I'm Jenna. Nice to meet you. (*She holds out a hand which he refuses.*)

DAVE: You're Jenna. (*She nods.*) And he's Nick. (*She nods again. He begins looking around the room.*) And Nick is here? Now? In the room with us?

JENNA: (*Points.*) Right there. (*A moment as he looks around the room again.*)

DAVE: Would you excuse me for a moment? I need to make a phone call. Real quick. It'll just take a minute. (*Reaches for his cell phone.*)

JENNA: (*Moving up behind him.*) I understand you can't see him. I think you're only supposed to be able to see me and not him. I don't know why. Probably because he's just an assistant.

NICK: This is so wrong.

JENNA: (*To NICK.*) Be nice. Assistant.

NICK: (*Mumbling to himself he mimics her.*) Be nice. Assistant!

DAVE: (*Picking up the phone. He starts to dial.*) I just need to make a quick call.

JENNA: You don't really need to do that. The phone doesn't work anyway.

DAVE: What do you mean the phone doesn't work? Of course it works. (*Places the phone to his ear but, of course, it doesn't work.*) Wait. It was working just a minute ago. I don't understand. It must be the battery.

JENNA: Must be.

DAVE: Well then, if you'll excuse me, I need to go . . . uh . . . go to the store for . . . uh . . . batteries. (*Heads for the door at right.*)

JENNA: I don't think you should do that either.

NICK: That's right. Run! Run as fast as you can!

DAVE grabs the doorknob but the door won't budge. He struggles with it for a moment.

DAVE: Must be stuck! (*He tries again, but to no avail.*)

JENNA: It's not stuck. You just can't leave right now.

DAVE: (*DAVE jumps back.*) What do you mean I can't leave right now? What is this? Whats going on here?

JENNA: Don't worry. It's nothing sinister. In fact, we were sent here to help.

DAVE: Help? Help who?

JENNA: You.

DAVE: Me? I don't need any help.

JENNA: Obviously you do.

DAVE: What?

JENNA: Maybe you'd better sit down.

DAVE: I don't want to sit down!

JENNA: I really think you should sit down.

DAVE: I don't want to sit down!

NICK: He doesn't want to sit down.

JENNA: All right. Have it your way.

DAVE: Just tell me what you want! And who you are.

NICK: Yes. Please. Explain it to him.

JENNA: *(To NICK.) Gladly. (DAVE gives her another, "Who is she talking to?" look.)* Sure you wouldn't like to sit down? *(He stares at her.)* Have it your way. So. There's no easy way to say this, so I'm just going to say it. I am an angel. *(He stares at her again.)* And believe it or not, so is he.

DAVE: An angel? You mean like . . . a Charlie's angel?

JENNA: Well. *(Coyly.)* I can see how you would think that.

NICK: Oh please.

JENNA: But no. An angel angel. A real one. You know. From up there. Heaven. See. *(Points to the angel wings on her shirt.)*

DAVE: Oh. Sure. I see. And I'm Jimmy Stewart. *(Tries to go the door again, but she grabs his arm and brings him back.)*

JENNA: I love him. Did you see him in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"? That was, like, my favorite.

DAVE: Really.

JENNA: You don't believe me, do you?

DAVE: No. No. Not at all. *(Escaping he goes to the door again.)* I'm sure that was your favorite.

JENNA: I mean the angel thing.

DAVE: *(Struggling with the door, he yells back over his shoulder.)* Oh, the angel thing? Of course I believe you. Why should I not believe you?

JENNA: It's the wings, isn't it? *(She pulls at the wings on her shirt.)* I know they're not real angel wings. We're still sort of in training.

DAVE: *(Still struggling with the door.)* Angels in training. Great. Good for you. *(Laughs nervously.)*

JENNA: Look. Dave . . .

DAVE: *(Suddenly stops with the door and turns to her.)* How did you know my name?

NICK: How did you know his name?

JENNA: Wow! I mean, wow! (*She seems amazed.*) It just came to me. Just like that! Dave . . . Clark. Right? I knew it! That is so cool!

DAVE: And you are so weirding me out. (*Turns to the door again.*)

JENNA: No. Dave. Don't you see? He wanted me to know your name, so I know your name. It just reaffirms that you're the guy we're looking for.

DAVE: Why won't this stupid door open!

JENNA: (*Laughing.*) Dave. He, like, parted the Red Sea. This. (*Points*) This is just a door. Like, no problemo. Know what I mean?

NICK: Maybe if you spoke English instead of Fonzieisms, he might catch on.

JENNA: (*To NICK.*) It's English! (*Turns back to DAVE. She notices the coffee pot. Again to NICK.*) Oh. Nick. Would you be a sweetie and get me a cup of coffee? Assistant of mine.

NICK: (*He almost does so, then stops and points at her.*) You're pushing it. Pushing it.

JENNA: (*Back to DAVE.*) I admit I kind of miss my coffee. I was a big coffee drinker. Oh! A caramel frappuccino. What I wouldn't give.

DAVE: (*Crossing away from her.*) You see that! You're trying to tell me you're some kind of angel with the . . . (*Traces on his chest.*) . . . the wings thing. You're nuts! And you keep talking to someone who's not here.

JENNA: (*Sits on the arm of the sofa and watches him.*) Oh, he's here all right. I don't know why. I could have handled this on my own.

DAVE: (*Giving up on the door, he heads for the window.*) Okay! You obviously locked the door from the outside somehow, but like it or not, I am getting out of here. (*He tries the window but it does not give.*)

JENNA: Dave, Dave, Dave, Dave, Dave. (*Shaking her head.*) You need to have a little faith. You believe in God. Right? You were praying for help. Right?

DAVE: What do you know about it?

JENNA: Well. Not enough yet, but why else would he send us here? Think about it. If you believe in him, doesn't it follow that you should believe in us?

DAVE: (*Crossing behind the sofa to her. NICK moves up to watch as well.*) I never said I didn't believe in angels. I just don't believe you're one. Look at you. You're blonde . . .

JENNA: (*She almost flies out of her seat.*) What . . . (*Moving behind the sofa. NICK is laughing, but one look from her and he stops and moves away.*) . . . is that supposed to mean???

DAVE: What?!

NICK: At least it's getting interesting now.

JENNA: That I am a blonde! What has that got to do with . . . anything?

DAVE: It's just that you're . . .

JENNA: (*Getting in his face.*) Because if you are trying to imply that . . . because . . . I am a blonde I may somehow lack the . . . intelligence . . . or the . . . wherewithal . . . or the . . . ability . . . to do my job, I would not take kindly to that assumption.

DAVE: (*Backing down.*) I don't think I meant that? (*Pause.*) No, I didn't mean that.

JENNA: (*Continuing.*) And if you are trying to put me in a category or stereotype me in any way because I am a blonde, I would . . . so . . . not appreciate that!

DAVE: I'm so sure I didn't mean that!

JENNA: (*Emphatically.*) Then what did you mean?

DAVE: I just meant . . . (*Crossing down left away from her.*) . . . you don't look like what I pictured an angel would look like. That's all!

JENNA: That's all? (*Grabs him by the collar.*) Is there something less than angelic about this face? Something that bothers you?

DAVE: Uh . . . No.

JENNA: (*Pulls him along as she moves down right.*) Because I think it's a nice face. A kind face. A sweet face. Don't you?

DAVE: Yes. Right. Yes. I do. I do.

JENNA: Then what?

DAVE: (*Exasperated, he pulls away.*) You're wearing jeans and a t-shirt for crying out loud. A t-shirt with wings. On the front, no less.

JENNA: I explained that!

DAVE: Yes. You did. You did. And it was a perfectly rational explanation. (*He collapses onto the sofa.*) Why today? Why today of all days?

NICK: (*Crossing up behind the sofa.*) You're doing great so far.

JENNA: You stay out of this!

NICK: Absolutely! Not a word. I'm just going to stand back and watch the master at work.

JENNA: (*She starts to reply, then thinks better of it. She sits next to DAVE.*) Look. Dave. Just because I didn't fly through the ceiling in a blaze of glory wearing a gown of white doesn't mean I can't be what I say I am. Do you think he really works that way? Wouldn't that be a little too obvious?

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DAVE: I don't know. Maybe.

JENNA: If we're going to get anywhere in helping you, it's really going to depend a great deal on you.

DAVE: Me?

JENNA: You have to believe. *(There is a knock on the door. DAVE nearly jumps out of his skin when he hears it. We hear the voice offstage of NATALIE COOKE, DAVE's ex-wife. She does not sound happy.)*

NATALIE: Dave? Are you in there?

DAVE: *(At first DAVE is even more despondent, then seeing this as an out he jumps up, seemingly elated.)* Hah! Now we'll see about all of this!

JENNA: Who's that?

DAVE: *(DAVE seems thrilled that his ex has arrived as he makes a beeline to the door. JENNA follows.)* My ex-wife!

JENNA: Your ex? Coming to see you on your wedding day? You guys must be on good terms.

DAVE: Not really! *(Laughing.)* She hates me! I told her not to come.

NATALIE: *(Knocking again.)* Dave? I hear you in there. *(The door knob rattles but will not open.)* Unlock this door! Now!

DAVE: She doesn't really listen to me. For once that's a good thing. *(He stops and looks back at JENNA.)* Well? Are you going to unlock the door? However you do it?

JENNA: It's not locked. Go ahead. Open it.

DAVE: What do you mean it's not locked? Of course it's locked.

DAVE goes quickly to the door and almost rips it off its hinges as it opens easily. Surprised, DAVE looks back at JENNA. As the door opens, we see NATALIE standing there. She is an attractive woman in her thirties. She stands in the doorway, hands on hips, staring sternly at DAVE. JENNA stays behind DAVE.

NATALIE: It's about time!

DAVE: Am I glad to see you.

NATALIE: Really? You could have fooled me by the phone conversation we had a while ago.

DAVE: Come in. Please!

NATALIE: Oh, I'm coming in all right! *(She storms in and crosses downstage past the sofa. At the same time, JENNA moves behind the armchair left.)*

DAVE: *(Closing the door.)* Thank you. *(He crosses upstage toward JENNA with a big smile on his face.)* Natalie, I want you to . . .

NATALIE: Keep my mouth shut and go away? I know. (*She tosses her purse down on the coffee table but does not look in his direction.*)

DAVE: No. No. I want you to . . . (*He tries to indicate JENNA but she just ignores him.*)

NATALIE: You are going to listen to me whether you like it or not. Not that you ever listened to me when we were married! (*She begins pacing downstage.*)

DAVE: Fine. That's fine but I . . .

NATALIE: I can't believe you're actually here. Here. At the church. Acting like you're really going through with this.

JENNA: So, that's it!

DAVE: (*To JENNA.*) No. No. It's . . . It's . . . (*Looks to NATALIE.*)
Nat! Will you please turn around and look at me!

NATALIE: I don't even know if I can!

DAVE: Nat! I need you to turn around and look at me. (*He grabs JENNA and puts his arm around her shoulder like they were buddies.*) Nat!

NATALIE: I've told you a million times not to call me that!

DAVE: It's an endearment!

NATALIE: It's a bug! An irritating little bug! Don't think I didn't know.

DAVE: (*He takes a breath and regains his composure then speaks deliberately.*) Natalie. Would you please turn around? There is something I wish to show you. (*He remains with his arm around JENNA, and as NATALIE finally does turn around, he squeezes JENNA to him and smiles broadly.*) See!

NATALIE stops dead in her tracks and stares at him. Then, after a pause.

NATALIE: What is this?

DAVE: This is what I've been trying to show you.

NATALIE: What? Show me what? (*She crosses up to his right.*)
What, are you Marcel Marceau now? You're taking up mime?
What is this? Your new career? (*She repeats the arms motions of DAVE.*)

DAVE: I just . . . Don't you see . . . ? (*Let's go of JENNA and gestures toward her.*)

NATALIE: What?

DAVE: Can't you see?

NATALIE: (*Crossing up right behind the sofa near NICK. She of course does not see him, even though NICK tries his best to get her to notice him.*) I'll tell you what I see. I see you've lost your mind. That's what I see. That would explain a lot of things.

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JENNA: Told you, Dave.

DAVE's jaw drops in shock.

NICK: She did tell you, Dave.

JENNA: He can't hear you. Remember?

NICK: Excuse me!

NATALIE: Are you just going to stand there?

DAVE starts to pant. If we didn't know better, you might think he was having a baby as he struggles toward the sofa.

DAVE: I think I need to sit. Yes, I do need to sit.

NATALIE: Then sit. Please!

DAVE: OK, I'm sitting.

DAVE plops down in the armchair at left, and during the following dialogue we see him continually look from NATALIE to JENNA and around the room as if looking for NICK. All of this does not go unnoticed by NATALIE.

JENNA: *(Comes right behind him to comfort him.)* That's right. You take it easy. I know it's a lot to swallow all at once. *(She places her hand on his shoulder.)*

DAVE: *(He jumps over to the sofa.)* Don't touch me!

NICK: *(Coming to JENNA's side.)* I'm sure I know how he feels.

JENNA: You wish.

NATALIE: I am not about to touch you!

NICK: Was he talking to her?

JENNA: I think he was talking to me. You were talking to me, right? *(She reaches down and touches DAVE's shoulder and he slaps her hand away.)* Yep! He was talking to me.

NATALIE: *(Moves to sofa next to DAVE.)* We are divorced, and, please understand, we are going to stay divorced. That is not why I came here today. Let's make that perfectly clear. Are we clear?

DAVE: We're clear.

NICK: We didn't come here to get them back together, did we?

JENNA: No. No. It couldn't be that. *(Leans down to DAVE.)* You're not trying to get back together with her, are you?

DAVE: Are you insane?

NATALIE: *(Turns on him.)* Are you trying to start something?

DAVE: I'm not. I swear I'm not.

NICK: You'd better stop talking to him. He's confused enough as it is.

NATALIE: (*Stands - sternly.*) Because I am only here for your well-being.

JENNA: You're right. Dave, I'm just going to be quiet for a while, so just pretend we're not here.

NATALIE: (*Crosses to armchair left.*) All right?

DAVE: (*To JENNA.*) All right.

JENNA: (*To NICK.*) All right.

NICK: All right.

JENNA: (*Indicates they should sit.*) Shall we? (*And they do sit. JENNA on the sofa next to DAVE and NICK at the armchair right. DAVE stares at her. She whispers to him.*) Don't look at me. She'll think you're crazy, and it sounds like you're not exactly on her good side already. (*Points to NATALIE.*)

NATALIE: Are we calm now?

DAVE: Yes. Yes. We're calm. I'm fine. (*He obviously is not.*) I'm just fine and dandy.

NATALIE: Good. Then perhaps we can talk rationally for a moment. You can do that. (*Smiling.*) Can't you?

JENNA: Ooh! Patronizing. (*DAVE looks at her and she shushes herself.*)

DAVE: Rationally. Absolutely.

NATALIE: Good. We're both adults. With a history. Yes. That doesn't mean we can't communicate civilly. So. (*Sighs a deep breath and then jumps up from the chair.*) Have you lost your ever loving mind???

DAVE: Nat!

NATALIE: Don't!

DAVE: . . . alie.

NATALIE: (*Moving down right.*) Don't even try to justify this to me, David. First, you try to sneak this entire affair by me without my knowledge . . .

DAVE: I didn't try to sneak anything by you. We're divorced. You live halfway across the country. You never want to talk to me. We've barely spoken to each other in the last two years.

NATALIE: (*Moves around to the back of the sofa directly behind DAVE.*) Don't try to cloud the issue. Am I impossible to get in touch with? I have a phone. I have an email address.

DAVE: I sent you an invitation!

NATALIE: (*Crosses down left.*) Well, thank you very much for that! That really put me into the decision-making process!

DAVE: The decision-making process? I wasn't a part of the decision-making process when you got married again!

NATALIE: You know that's completely different.

DAVE: How?

NATALIE: Because I didn't need your help in making my decision.

DAVE: And I don't need your help.

NATALIE: That is obviously not the case.

NICK: This is good. You really married this one, did you?

DAVE of course doesn't hear him, but JENNA responds.

JENNA: Will you be quiet?

DAVE: What?

JENNA: Not you. Him!

DAVE: (*Drops his head in his hands.*) This is too much!

NATALIE: That I agree with. This is too much.

DAVE: (*Rises.*) Look. I know how you feel about this wedding. You made that clear in our phone conversations.

NATALIE: Not clear enough. Obviously. You know you really don't want to go through with this.

NICK: Oh. Here we go.

DAVE: That is not true.

NATALIE: David. I know you. Better than you know yourself. I know the signs. I was married to the signs for years.

JENNA: Signs? What signs, Dave?

NATALIE: Here you are at the church on the day of your wedding several hours before you need to be. Why is that?

DAVE: I . . . I don't know. I was ready. I just didn't want to sit around at home. That's all.

NATALIE: Oh, sure. This from a man who on our first date showed up in the lobby of my dorm two hours early and sat there because he wasn't quite sure if our going out was a good idea, so he wanted to be a little closer to the source to get a feel for things.

DAVE: That was a long time ago.

NATALIE: From a man who would show up several hours early at an airport, so he can really decide if it's wise to get on a plane that day or not.

DAVE: That has nothing to do with today.

NATALIE: A man who, if he wants to try a new restaurant, will show up an hour before everyone else to check out the menu and breathe in the aromas to make sure it will be an acceptable place to dine.

JENNA: Dave. That is a little excessive.

NICK: Can you say paranoia?

DAVE: (*To JENNA.*) It's being cautious. That's all. And that was a long time ago. I've had counseling! (*To NATALIE with a satisfied look.*) Yes, counseling.

NATALIE: So you've said.

DAVE: (*Addressing both NATALIE and JENNA.*) It's true. I haven't had any problems in more than a year.

JENNA: I believe you.

NATALIE: (*Crossing to DAVE.*) Well, maybe it just took longer to show up this time. There were times you were fine with me too, David. Remember? One day you were a normal, boring husband, the next day, you were Howard Hughes. Everything had to be in perfect order. Everything had to be just right! (*Gestures quotation marks with fingers.*) Whatever "right" happened to be on that day.

DAVE: That's not fair! It was never that bad and you know it. It was more like an . . . eccentricity. The doctors told you that.

NATALIE: Maybe it wasn't so bad to them, but they didn't have to live with you. It made me crazy!

DAVE: I know! I know! And I'm sorry. I've told you that but it's a thing of the past. I don't do those things anymore.

NATALIE: Oh, really? Be honest, David. You're here early today, hours before you need to be, because you have doubts and because . . . you're still crazy. Just like you always were.

DAVE: No. No. No. (*Moves behind sofa to up right.*)

NATALIE: And you should have doubts, David. As I've told you many times, you should have doubts.

JENNA: I think we know now why we're here.

DAVE: No. I should not. And I don't. Look. I told you on the phone not to come here. I told you I was not changing my mind. No matter what you said.

NATALIE: David. (*She crosses behind the sofa to him.*) I know what's best for you. I've always known what's best for you. If you had listened to me, we might still be married today.

JENNA: Think about that one, Dave.

DAVE: Natalie. I don't want to get into this with you.

NATALIE: This woman has a child. Right? (*He doesn't respond at first.*) Right?

DAVE: Yes. Yes. A beautiful, sweet daughter.

NATALIE: (*Pacing back and forth as she talks to him.*) You know nothing about children. You're terrible with children.

DAVE: I . . .

NICK: (*To JENNA.*) I don't think Dave here likes confrontation.

NATALIE: You certainly know nothing about female children. You know very little about females at all. Another one of the reasons we're no longer married.

JENNA: Don't listen to her, Dave. She's just trying to work you.

DAVE: I . . .

NATALIE: (*In his face.*) You never wanted to have a child with me.

NICK: (*Sarcastically.*) Why, Dave?

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DAVE: You said you didn't want children.

NATALIE: Only because I knew you weren't ready.

DAVE: Oh, come on.

NATALIE: (*Pacing again.*) You know it's true. Any time we were around friends with children, you acted like you thought they came from another planet. That they were some weird new species.

JENNA: (*To NICK. She laughs.*) They are, aren't they? (*NICK just stares at her.*) I mean. Kids. You know.

DAVE: That was different.

NATALIE: How?

DAVE: (*Crosses down right.*) They were other people's children. Some people just aren't comfortable around other people's children.

JENNA: That's good. Good answer.

NATALIE: (*Follows him.*) And isn't she other people's children?

DAVE: No. I mean. Yes. But she's mine too, now. Or she will be.

NATALIE: And what do you think you know about being a father? To a little girl? What is she, five? Six years old?

DAVE: Five.

NATALIE: Five. (*Shaking her head she places her hand on his shoulder.*) You haven't learned to live in the adult world yet, David, much less the world of the little people.

JENNA: Don't let her talk to you like that.

DAVE: I . . .

NATALIE: And this woman. (*Moves away from him to down left.*) If you couldn't make it work with me, why should it be any different with her?

NICK: I could probably think of a few reasons.

JENNA: Will you be quiet? I'm trying to concentrate.

NICK: Don't hurt yourself.

NATALIE: You are not ready for this marriage, David. You know it and I know it.

All of this is really beginning to get to DAVE.

DAVE: I . . . I don't know. I . . .

JENNA: (*Stands.*) No. Dave! You have to stand up for yourself.

DAVE: But I . . .

JENNA: (*Crosses to him.*) Don't let her get the better of you, Dave. You know what you want better than she does.

DAVE: (*As it trying to convince himself.*) I know what I want.

NATALIE: Will you stop mumbling!

JENNA: If you listen to her now, Dave, she wins. She'll think she's got you again. You don't want her to win. You don't want her making your decisions for you. Do you? Do you?

DAVE: No. No. I don't.

NATALIE: What are you blabbering about?

DAVE: All right, Nat . . .

NATALIE: Natalie!

DAVE turns back away, but is met by JENNA, who turns him toward her again.

JENNA: Stand up to her, Dave. It's now or never!

DAVE: No. Nat! I'm sure you have good intentions. I'm sure you're not here just because you think you can still run my life!

JENNA: You go, Dave!

NATALIE: Somebody needs to run your life.

DAVE: I need to run my life. You tried to run it all the years of our marriage and, unfortunately, I let you much, much too often. But, no more. I make my own decisions.

NATALIE: No matter how incredibly stupid they may be?

DAVE: No matter how incredibly stupid they may be. So. Nat! If I want to get married today, I will get married today!

NATALIE: If? Do you hear yourself, David? You said if!

DAVE: (*Turns away and whispers to JENNA.*) I said if.

JENNA: That's okay. For now. Just, say it with conviction.

DAVE: (*Turns back to NATALIE.*) If! That's what I said. If! It's my choice.

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