

Be An Angel, Will ya’...

An original comedy
By
Frank V. Priore

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION

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ACT I

Scene 1

Please Note: This scene may be played on a four foot by eight foot platform level with the stage and centered in front of it, or if the stage has an apron of approximately three foot forward of the act curtain (such as most school auditorium stages have), it may be played on this apron.

Before Curtain Rise: PEGGY, an angel, pokes her head out through the curtain opening, looks around, and then calls back behind her. She is dressed in an angelic robe, but has no wings or halo. The platform in front of the stage (or the stage apron – see note above) is bare except for a tiny [index card sized] sign on a low stand at the extreme DR edge of the platform. The sign is facing the stage; the audience cannot read what is written on it.

PEGGY: Are you sure this is the place we’re supposed to report to?

(A booming voice is heard offstage)

(VOICE): I’M SURE!

PEGGY: Alright, alright. *(aside)* Why do archangels always have to shout? Sheesh! Give someone a little authority and right away, they pull rank on you.

(VOICE): I HEARD THAT.

(PEGGY gives a “raspberry” in the direction of the curtain)

(VOICE): I HEARD THAT, TOO!

PEGGY: Great. Now, I’m in even more trouble. I really should keep my mouth shut at times like this. (Laughs) But razzing archangels is so much fun! *(She gives another “raspberry” and laughs again.) (Pushes curtain back, calls out)* Barb, Clara. C’mon girls. We’re here.

(She holds back the curtain, and BARB and CLARA, two more angels, attired similarly to PEGGY[without wings or halos] ENTER)

BARB: *(Sarcastic)* Wonderful, Peggy. Where’s “here?”

CLARA: *This* is where The Boss wants us to wait?

BARB: It’s just an empty room. I didn’t know Heaven had empty rooms.

CLARA: I didn’t know Heaven had *rooms*. We angels have always existed in wide open spaces – green fields, lush gardens, mountain streams, waterfalls...

PEGGY: Wait...Clara, Barb. There’s something else...listen.

BARB: I don’t hear anything.

CLARA: Neither do I. Not a sound.

PEGGY: Exactly. There’s no Heavenly choir singing in the background. Do you ever remember a time when you couldn’t hear the choir?

BARB: You’re right. We must be in some remote part of Heaven.

CLARA: Oh! Uh, oh.

PEGGY: What’s the matter, Clara?

CLARA: I just had a scary thought. Suppose we’re not in Heaven at all?

BARB: That’s silly. Where else would angels be, if not in Heaven?

PEGGY: I don’t even want to think about the answer to that, Barb.

CLARA: *Could* we be in...you know...

BARB: *It is* a little warm in here, now that you mention it.

CLARA: And we can’t even fan ourselves with our wings. They made us check them at the door, along with our halos. I feel naked without my halo.

PEGGY: Girls, I think we’re in more than a little trouble.

BARB: (*Spotting the small sign*) Hey, look – a sign. (*She moves to it, reads it.*)

CLARA: What does it say?

BARB: (*Reads sign to herself, then*) Well, the good news is that we’re still in Heaven, but just barely. (*Reads out loud from sign*) “Warning: Heaven city limits. Do not go beyond this point. It’s a long way down, and it’s quite hot!”

(*PEGGY and CLARA move to the edge also. They all look down.*)

CLARA: (*After a beat or two*) Could it be? Yes! Yes, it is! Look, I can see Lucifer! Wow! Hey, Lucifer! (*Mockingly, holds both fists in a “thumbs up” position*) Nice pitchfork! (*Calls down*) How are things going down there? Hot enough for you? (*The three laugh*)

(*JUDY ENTERS from behind the curtain. She is also an angel, but is in brighter robes and has her wings and a halo attached. She also has the letters “AA” attached to the top left corner of the front of her robe. She carries a large book.*)

JUDY: Get away from that edge, you idiots! You’re going to fall over it, if you don’t. And believe me, you definitely do not want to do that!

(They turn, move back, spot JUDY)

BARB: Judy, what are you doing here?

JUDY: I was sent to judge the three of you.

CLARA: Oh, really, now! Says who?

(In answer, JUDY just points upwards)

CLARA: Oh. *(After a beat)* But, why you? We were expecting one of those snooty archangels.

JUDY: I *am* an archangel. I’ve just been promoted. See... *(She points to the “AA” on her robe.)*

PEGGY: Well, then I have a message for you.

JUDY: Yes? *(PEGGY gives another “raspberry.”)* That’s your problem, Peggy. You have no respect for your betters. That’s why you’re in trouble so often. And in case you haven’t figured it out yet, that’s also why you have never been promoted, not once! You’ve been stuck at “angel” for what, now... 200 billion years? Or is it three hundred? Don’t you want to make it to Cherubim or Seraphim some day? *(She sticks her finger up in the air in a scholarly manner, as she recites a quotation)* “And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things!” -Sir Philip Sidney.

PEGGY: *(Annoyed)* “I yam what I yam, and that’s all that I yam!” – Popeye the Sailor.

JUDY: *(Sighing)* You never change, do you? After all this time, still a wisenheimer.

BARB: At least she’s not a hypocrite. You’ve always been just an angel, yourself. All of a sudden you get a promotion, and right away you become “Judge Judy?”

JUDY: *(Annoyed)* I accept any assignment The Boss gives me. But since I have the title *(snippy)* and you don’t, let’s get down to business, shall we? *(She opens the book, flips through a few pages, then tsk, tsk as she looks down at the book)* My, my... you girls have really got yourselves into some deep doo-doo, I see. But, I must say, I’m not surprised.

CLARA: *(To PEGGY and BARB, sotto voce)* She’d be surprised, all right, if I pulled that halo down around her ears!

JUDY: So...What do you three have to say for yourselves?

PEGGY: What can I say... we were bored, right girls?

- CLARA: Precisely.
- BARB: To the max.
- JUDY: Bored. I see. And that justifies ... (*Looks at book again moves a finger along something written in it*)....attempting to steal Gabriel’s trumpet?
- PEGGY: We wanted to start a Rock n’ Roll band. And the only other instruments up here are those stupid harps.
- CLARA: Did you ever try playing “Rama Lama Ding Dong” on a harp. It’s just not the same!
- JUDY: (*Questioning*) Rama Lama, *what...?*
- CLARA: Ding Dong. It’s a Rock n’ Roll classic.
- JUDY: Ding dong is right. The three of you are a *bunch* of ding dongs! Gabriel has put in a formal complaint with The Boss. It goes without saying, he does not look kindly upon attempts to steal his trumpet.
- PEGGY: We didn’t intend to actually *steal* it. We just wanted to sort of *borrow* it. We were going to give it back.
- BARB: Yeah, we just wanted to lay down a few hot tracks from The Coasters. You know, *Yakety Yak, Charlie Brown, Smokey Joe’s Café...*
- JUDY: No, I don’t know, and I don’t think I want to. Can you imagine what would have happened if The Boss decided to call for the last day, and Gabriel had to go running around looking for his trumpet? The Boss would not have been amused, to say the least. I don’t he would have accepted “Yakety Yak” as an excuse.
- CLARA: So, what’s the big deal. I mean, we weren’t even able to lift the darn thing. It must weigh a ton.
- JUDY: Beside the point. You three have got to learn your place here in Heaven. Gabriel is *not* one of your peers. He’s...He’s...He’s Gabriel, for goodness sakes. And just for your information, he has The Boss’s ear. I find you guilty of conduct unbecoming an angel. You have been sent here in anticipation of just such a verdict.
- PEGGY: Yeah, we’ve been trying to figure out what this place is. Do you know?
- JUDY: Yes. It is a portal. I am banishing you from Heaven for the length of your sentence.
- BARB: And how long is that ?
- JUDY: Not too long; only a few centuries. Until you learn a little respect for your betters, and learn not to do foolish things like making a grab for Gabriel’s trumpet.

- CLARA: Where are we being banished to? *(After a beat)* Oh, don’t tell me we’re being sent to ... you know... *(She points down over the edge of the platform).*
- JUDY: Hades? No, but, you’re close. Earth.
- BARB: Do you mean we’re going to live with humans?
- JUDY: Actually, you’re going to live *as* humans.
- PEGGY: Well, of all the rotten ...
- JUDY: Don’t blame me. This is *your* doing. You wanted to play *(with a sneer)* rock n’ roll music. Angels don’t do that; humans do. *And ...there’s, ahem...several other things humans have to do that angels do not. (Enjoying this)* Eat, sleep, bathe, and, er.... *(giggles)*...we-e-ll, I just leave you to find that out on your own.
- CLARA: What a bummer! If I was able to barf, I would.
- JUDY: Oh, don’t worry; you will. Now, if *that* doesn’t make you long for the good life you have in Heaven, nothing will!
- PEGGY: *(To CLARA & BARB)* Look on the bright side. Maybe we can meet Justin Bieber! **(NOTE:** Individual productions may substitute the name of any current teenage heart-throb or current popular teenage band.)
- CLARA & BARB: Who?
- PEGGY: *(Sighs)* You girls are so last millenium!
- BARB: So, when are we...?
- JUDY: Right now. *(Reaches behind the curtain, hands the book to a waiting offstage stagehand, and pulls out three filled backpacks one at a time (handed to her by the offstage stagehand), giving one to each of them.)* Here.
- PEGGY: What are these?
- JUDY: Survival packs. They contain things you’re going to need on Earth, like clothes, and money, and ...oh, yes: suntan lotion. *(Giggles again)*. Oh, and there’s one more thing. You are absolutely forbidden to get involved in any human affairs or use your angelic powers while on Earth.
- CLARA: Well, that’s no fun.
- JUDY: You’re not supposed to have fun. This is punishment. And don’t try to sneak in a little angelic hocus pocus on the side. You are being watched.

BARB: Suppose we accidentally use our power? You know, like if someone sneezes, and I say: “God bless you.” Whenever angels confer a blessing, something nice happens to the person being blessed.

JUDY: Practice saying: “Gesundheit” instead.

CLARA: But, suppose we do slip?

JUDY: I’d be careful not to if I were you. As I said, you are being watched. Remember, you are trying to earn back your wings. Getting demerits is definitely not the way to do that. Okay, time to get down to business. *(She pushes up the sleeves of her robe and rubs her hands together, as if she was preparing to do some physical work.)* Now let’s see.... It’s been a long time since I transported angels to Earth. Let me think *(Rubs her chin as she tries to recall)*... There’s a little verse that does the trick, as I recall. Let me see if I can remember it... Oh, yes *(She recites)*

“ Heavenly Hosts, Listen well,
Take these angels straight to...Earth.”

That should do it.

BARB: It doesn’t rhyme.

JUDY: I could make it rhyme. *(enjoying this)* Now, let’s see... Where can I send you that rhymes with “well.”

BARB: *(Quickly)* Forget it... please.

JUDY: *(Suddenly appears to be a bit puzzled.)* Hmmm.

PEGGY: What’s the matter, Judy? Trying to remember something you forgot to gloat about?

JUDY: Oh, go stick it in your halo, Peggy. *(With a smirk)* That is, of course, if you every get it back... It’s none of your business, but for your information, I was merely trying to remember something about that little verse. I seems to recall there being another line to it, but I just can’t remember what it was. No matter. I’m sure it worked just fine as is. *(She holds the curtain back for them to pass through)* Now, come along. This way. Earth awaits you.

BARB: *(As they EXIT)* I wonder what pizza is going to taste like.

JUDY: I’m told it’s best with extra cheese. Have fun, girls. *(She closes the curtain, remaining on the platform. She folds her arms and laughs. Suddenly from behind the curtain, a loud “raspberry is heard.” She is startled by this, and she puts her hands on her hips and shakes her head in annoyance)*

(BLACKOUT)

ACT I
Scene 2

SETTING: *The lobby of a country Inn. It also serves as the family room for the family that runs the inn, Grandma CONSTANCE, Grandpa EDWARD and their granddaughter SAMANTHA. There is the front desk of the Inn centered along the backstage wall. There is a stool behind it. On the wall behind the desk, there are several pigeon holes, a set of hooks with room keys on them, and on a small shelf, a radio. On the wall is a large sign that says: “The Friendly Inn” and in small print below that: “Hospitality – No extra charge!” On the desk, there is an open registration book and a pen, as well as a small bell – the type one might use to summon a bellboy at a hotel to come to the front desk. There is an entrance Up Left. It is a hallway, which leads to the front door [offstage]. There are stairs along the Right wall which lead to the family’s bedrooms, as well as the Inn’s rooms [all offstage], and another entrance Up Right against the back wall which leads to the family’s dining room and kitchen [offstage]. A cuckoo clock is on one wall. There is a couch, a few feet away from the Left wall, with a coffee table in front of it. There is an easy chair with a small table beside it on the upstage side of the chair located Down Right . The table has a small lamp on it. There is a large potted plant behind the table. Flats used to create the Left wall are overlapped [see set diagram] so as to provide a “hidden” entrance. It will only be used at the end of Act Three, Scene 1, and it should be wide enough for an actor to enter through easily. See set diagram.)*

AT RISE: *A door is heard slamming shut, and SAMANTHA and BILLY ENTER from the hall. They are teens, and both are carrying backpacks with their schoolbooks inside. SAMANTHA moves to the couch, sits on the right side of it and plops down her backpack alongside her on the floor. She indicates that BILLY should do likewise.*

BILLY: *(As he sits on the left side of couch and drops his backpack alongside him on the floor)* Are you sure this is ok with your folks, Samantha?

SAMANTHA: *(The following dialog takes place while each takes out a few books, a notebook and a pencil or pen out of their backpacks. They spread them out on the coffee table and start doing their homework.)* Sure, Billy. I have friends come over to do homework with me all the time. And my folks” are actually my grandparents.

BILLY: Oh?

SAMANTHA: It’s a long story. That’s what they always tell me, anyway, whenever I ask. I’ve never actually seen my parents. My grandma and grandpa are the only parents I’ve ever known.

BILLY: Oh. Bummer. *(Looking around the room)* You do live in an interesting house. It’s huge.

SAMANTHA: It’s more than just our *house*, Billy. We run an Inn here.

BILLY: Oh. You mean like some kind of B & B?

SAMANTHA: No. It’s just a plain B. We don’t feed them. Oh, and there’s something else you should know about my grandmother... she’s a genius; she knows everything.

BILLY: About what?

SAMANTHA: About anything. She’s a walking encyclopedia.

BILLY: A walking what?

SAMANTHA: Encyclopedia. They’re those book-type thingees people used to use to find out stuff BI. That’s Before the Internet.

BILLY: Oh. I see. In prehistoric times.

(A door is heard slamming shut again, and CONSTANCE ENTERS. She walks, speaks and acts every bit as if she were an aristocrat. She carries a small package.)

SAMANTHA: *(To BILLY)* Here she is now. *(To CONSTANCE)* Hi, Grandma. This is my friend Billy.

CONSTANCE: *(Turns her head slowly and deliberately toward BILLY)* How do you do, William.

BILLY: *(To CONSTANCE)* Wow! You knew that my real name is William. You really do know everything.

CONSTANCE: Hardly. “Billy” is the common nickname for “William.”*(After a beat)* So, my granddaughter told you I know everything, did she? *(To SAMANTHA, who has grimaced and is shrinking down on the couch at this.)* You really have to stop doing that, Samantha. It’s embarrassing...even if it is true.

SAMANTHA: Sorry.

BILLY: That’s really cool. Say, how much is *(He takes a quick glance at his homework paper.)* 13 times 224?

CONSTANCE: *(Without missing a beat)* 4, 268.

BILLY: Great! *(He writes this down on his homework paper.)* And how about...*(Another quick glance at his paper.)* 27 times 16?

CONSTANCE: 632

BILLY: *(He writes this down on his homework paper.)* And the square root of 400?

CONSTANCE: Seven.

BILLY: *(He starts to write this down, but stops and frowns)* I don’t think that’s right.

CONSTANCE: It isn’t. Neither are the other answers I gave you. Do your own homework, young man. *(Turning to SAMANTHA, who is now shrunk down so far on the couch, she is practically on the floor.)* I will speak with you later, Samantha.

SAMANTHA: *(As CONSTANCE moves towards stairs.) (Sotto voce)* I’m sure you will.

CONSTANCE: *(Turns back toward the couch)* Oh, and Samantha...*(Not seeing her because she has shrunk down so much on the couch)* .Sam-an-tha? *(She reaches the back of the couch and peers over)* Are you down there, Samantha?

SAMANTHA:: *(Sitting up straight)* Yes, Grandma.

CONSTANCE: Ah, there you are. *(Handing package to her)* This arrived for your grandfather. I found it in the mailbox. Would you give it to him, dear?

SAMANTHA: Sure.

CONSTANCE: *(Suddenly pulling package back.)* Never mind. I’ll give it to him myself. He’s coming now.

BILLY: *(Amazed again)* Wow! How did you know that?

CONSTANCE: No trick to that. Take a deep breath, young William.
(He does, then quickly lets it out gasping)

BILLY: Ugh! What’s that smell?

CONSTANCE: Essence of stercus tauri vulgare.

BILLY: Huh?

SAMANTHA: That’s Latin for “bull dung.” My grandfather has a pet bull. It’s his sort of hobby.

BILLY: Get out...a bull? You mean a real live bull?

CONSTANCE: Oh yes. He even has a name for it. Maximilian, he calls ...*(distastefully)* the thing. I attribute this aberration to a deprived childhood. His mother never let him have a pet goldfish.

BILLY: But a bull? Isn’t that a bit of overkill?

CONSTANCE: My husband is like that. He always wants the biggest and the best of everything. Fortunately for him, this carried over to his taste in women. *(Smiles)* He got the best – me.

(EDWARD ENTERS from front hall. He is about the same age as CONSTANCE. He is wearing an old gray suit jacket that has seen better days, and has an open button-down shirt, which is missing the top button, and the slacks he is wearing have definitely seen better days. He is also wearing work boots that appear to have mud caked on them. He seems to be in a fog, which is his natural state.)

EDWARD: *(To CONSTANCE)* I left the door open, Connie. We need to air out the place.

SAMANTHA: *(Sotto voce)* I’ll say.

CONSTANCE: *(Sternly)* Edward, how many times have I told you to remove those boots when you come from that pig-pen you keep out there.

EDWARD: It’s not a pig-pen. It’s a bull-pen!

CONSTANCE: What-ever. You are to leave your muddy boots in the room that is so aptly named the *mud* room! Do you understand me, Edward?

EDWARD: *(He opens his mouth to speak, and for a second, he looks like he is going to respond harshly to her, then he thinks better of it.)* Yes, yes. Certainly, Connie. I go take them off now. *(He heads for the hallway, then stops and turns to CONSTANCE as she speaks.)*

CONSTANCE: And change out of that smelly old jacket. I need you to watch the front desk for a while. I have had a busy day down at the bank trying to convince that stodgy old bank manager that being two months late on the mortgage for this place is not the end of the world. I need to lie down and rest.

EDWARD: It’s your own fault, you know, Constance.

CONSTANCE: Ex-cuse me?

EDWARD: Certainly! You never should have started making payments to that bank. You give them some money once, and then they expect something every month!

CONSTANCE: *(Sighing)* That’s how mortgages work, Edward.

EDWARD: Ridiculous! These bank managers are all dotty, if you ask me!

(HE EXITS through front hall.)

- CONSTANCE: *(To SAMANTHA)* It seems like you’re going to have to give your grandfather the package after all. *(Hands it to her and starts to EXIT toward stairs, then turns back.)* And do make sure he’s changed into something decent. He exchanges one ratty old jacket for another and thinks I won’t notice. *(She turns and EXITS up the stairs. After a few beats, EDWARD sticks his head into the room from the front hall.)*
- EDWARD: Is she gone?
- SAMANTHA: Yes, Grandpa.
- EDWARD: Well, thank Heaven for that. *(HE ENTERS, but stops short. He has not changed any part of his outfit.)* Now, why I the world was I coming back here?
- SAMANTHA: To watch the desk like Grandma said.
- EDWARD: *(As he moves behind front desk)* Oh, yes, yes. Absolutely. The front desk... Wonderful thing, these front desks. Lots of little compartments underneath them. *(He pulls out a fairly large book from behind the desk.)* Ah, here we go. I knew I left my Waltrudus somewhere or other. *(He sits on the stool behind the desk and opens the book as he takes his reading glasses out from a front pocket of the jacket and puts them on. Finding his place, he settles down and intently starts reading it.)*
- BILLY: *(To SAMANTHA)* His what?
- SAMANTHA: Waltrudus. Wally Waltrudus. He’s the author of that book: “The Bullkeeper’s Bible.” It’s supposed to be definitive book on the subject. Grandpa studies it every spare moment he has. *(She takes a quick look at EDWARD.)* And nowadays, most of his moments are spare. Unless Grandma catches up with him, that is. She’s always got some chore or other for him to do. *(She realizes that she has the package in her hand.)**(To EDWARD)* Oh, Grandpa...
- EDWARD: *(Startled, he looks up from the book.)* Huh? What? Who’s there?
- SAMANTHA: *(As she RISES and moves around the couch to the front desk.)* It’s me, Samantha.
- EDWARD: Oh, yes, yes. Samantha. How *are* you my dear? Nice to see you.
- SAMANTHA: *(Used to this from him)* I’m fine, Grandpa. *(As she hands him the package.)* This package came for you in the mail.
- EDWARD: Really. *(As he puts the book down on the desk and takes the package)* Now, who in the world would be sending me a package? *(He opens the package.)* *There is a whistle inside of it.)**(Recalling)* Oh, my goodness yes. My bull whistle. It finally arrived.

- SAMANTHA: A bull whistle, Grandpa?
- EDWARD: Yes. For calling your bull. Gets their attention every time. Of course it’s a high frequency that only bulls can hear. *(He blows on the whistle. No audible sound is heard, but shortly after, a loud “Mooo” can be heard offstage. After a few beats the sounds of girls speaking can be heard coming from the front hall entrance.)* Now, who the devil can that be? *(Putting the whistle down into one of the compartments under the desk, he glances at his wrist watch)* Company at this late hour?
- SAMANTHA: It’s only about four o’clock. And if I had to guess, I would say that that is some arriving guests. *(As she points to the sign above the front desk)* This is an Inn, you know.
- EDWARD: *(Turns his head and looks at the sign.)* Well, bless my soul. So it is.

(CLARA, BARB and PEGGY ENTER. They no longer are wearing their angelic robes. PEGGY and CLARA are wearing tee shirts with well-known rock-band decals on their front, jeans and sneakers, and are carrying the backpacks they were given. BARB is dressed in a bright yellow dress, and is wearing several plastic bracelets, sunglasses and a large straw hat. She also carries her backpack.)
- CLARA: Well, girls. It looks like we have arrived.
- BARB: It’s about time. We must have been walking around this stupid town for an hour.
- PEGGY: *(To BARB)* We would have gotten here a lot sooner if you hadn’t stopped in every shop we passed by.
- BARB: I wanted to get some souvenirs.
- PEGGY: Barb, you get souvenirs from places you want to remember visiting. We’re not here on some kind of vacation, you know. I don’t know about you, but the sooner *I* get home, the better.
- CLARA: And why did you buy that flashy dress? We’re supposed to blend in inconspicuously.
- BARB: *(Sarcastic, pointing to their tee shirts)* And those shirts are supposed to be “inconspicuous?”
- CLARA: I think they’re appropriate. We *are* trying to start a rock n’ roll band, remember?
- PEGGY: And they’re a lot better than the logos on the tee shirts *Judy* supplied for us.

CLARA: You can say that again! Who are Lawrence Welk and Guy Lombardo anyway?

PEGGY: Search me. *(To BARB)* But I still think you went overboard with that dress, Barb.

BARB: Well, ex-cuse me! I’m just trying to make the best of a lousy situation. It’s bad enough we were put down in this little hick town; do we have to look the part, too?

PEGGY: It’s not a hick town; it’s a “rural community.” Remember that. And, yes, we have to look the part. That’s the whole idea.

BARB: Well, I don’t like it.

PEGGY: You think I do?

(SAMANTHA moves to them.)

SAMANTHA: Excuse me, ladies. Can I help you?

PEGGY: Yes. We’d like to rent a room.

BARB: Just one? You mean, we don’t even get our own rooms?

CLARA: Be quiet, Barb. Judy gave us a very limited amount of money. It has to last until we can find some kind of jobs.

BARB: Jobs? You mean, like *work*? I’m liking this place less and less. Who’s stupid idea was it to steal Gabriel’s trumpet, anyway?

PEGGY & CLARA: *(Together, to BARB)* Yours.

BARB: Oh.

SAMANTHA: We have a room on the third floor that should do nicely. It’s extra large.

BARB: Oh, great. We have to climb stairs, too.

PEGGY: *(To BARB)* Put a lid on it, will you? *(To SAMANTHA)* That’ll be fine.

SAMANTHA: Come on over here. *(She moves to the front desk and indicates that the girls follow her. They do.) (To EDWARD)* Grandpa, these three ladies would like to register.

EDWARD: *(Looking up from his book)* Register? Is it time to vote already?

SAMANTHA: They’re registering for a *room*, Grandpa. Could you take care of that, please? They are going to be in 3A.

EDWARD: *(Annoyed at the interruption to his reading)* Oh, very well, I suppose.
(Using his finger as a bookmark, he closes the book, but still holds on to it with one hand, as he rises and steps forward to the desk.)

SAMANTHA: *(To the girls, as she heads for the stairs)* Two flights up. It’ll be the first room on your right. I’ll just go up and make sure it’s ready. *(To BILLY, still on the couch.)* I’ll be down, shortly, Billy.

BILLY: No prob.

(SAMANTHA EXITS up the stairs.)

PEGGY: *(Picks up pen on the desk.)* *(To EDWARD)* Is it all right if I sign for all three of us?

EDWARD: *(Who is sneaking a peek at his book. He looks up)* *(To PEGGY, absent-mindedly).* There’s three of you? *(Seeing BARB and CLARA, as if for the first time.)* Oh, so there is. *(To PEGGY)* Just sign once. It’s all right. Saves ink, you know.

(As PEGGY signs the book, BILLY, who has been “checking out” the girls since they entered, rises, quickly takes a comb out of his pocket and runs it through his hair, straightens his clothes and swaggers over to them as they are filling out the registration book, and stands next to them with his thumbs tucked into his belt on the sides.)

BILLY: *(Obviously deepening his voice)* Hello, ladies. My name is Billy.

PEGGY: *(Turning to him. Putting him in his place.)* Yeah?...And?

BILLY: *(Deflated and embarrassed)* And, er...and I think I’ll just go back and finish my homework.

PEGGY: Good idea...*kid.*

(BILLY hastens back to the couch, puts his nose into one of his homework books)

BARB *(To PEGGY)* Why’d you do that? He was kind of cute...I mean, in a human way.

PEGGY: No getting involved in human affairs, remember?

BARB: *(Flustered)* I didn’t want to have an *affair* with him. I just...

PEGGY & CLARA: *(Quickly, together, to CLARA)* Put a lid on it!

EDWARD: *(As PEGGY goes back to signing the register.)* How are you girls on bulls?

- PEGGY: *(Looking up)* Excuse me?
- EDWARD: Bulls. You know, bulls.
- PEGGY: Just a minute. *(CLARA has already pulled a book, entitled : “The Angel’s Field Guide To Earth” from her backpack and is leafing through it quickly.) (To CLARA)* Quickly. What does “bull.” mean?
- CLARA: *(Looking in book)* Uh... *(Finding it in the book)* Bull means.... *(Looks startled)* No. That can’t be right. Oh, wait. There’s another definition...*(Reading from book)* “Bull: a male bovine; especially an adult uncastrated male bovine”
- BARB: Oo! That sounds interesting.
- PEGGY: Got it. *(Turns back to EDWARD)* Male bovines, eh?
- BARB: *Uncastrated* male bovines.
- PEGGY: *(Quickly turns her head and looks daggers at BARB, then looks back to EDWARD)* I, er, think bulls are very nice.
- EDWARD: Excellent. Excellent.
- PEGGY: We’ll be going up to our room, now. *(She turns to the others, indicates that they should move to and up the stairs. Before they start moving, she mouths: “Weird” to the others. EDWARD goes back to the stool and his book. Before long, he nods off with the book on his lap. CLARA and BARB EXIT up the stairs. Just as PEGGY is about to follow them offstage, a crack of thunder is heard and the lights briefly flicker. PEGGY stops in her tracks and turns, looking for the source of the thunder and flashing. . After a beat, JASMINE ENTERS from the hall. She is a young woman, and is “dressed to kill” in a flashy outfit. She takes a few steps into the room and then strikes a pose ala Marilyn Monroe.)* What the...? *(Spotting JASMINE)* oh, crap! *(She quickly lifts her head to heaven, lifts her arms, waves them in a “no” gesture and says:)* sorry...sorry. *(To JASMINE)* Jasmine! What are you doing here?
- BILLY: *(Who had looked up at the sound of thunder and flashing of the lights, spots JASMINE. Immediately, he goes once again into his “Joe Cool” act, standing up, straightening his hair and facing JASMINE.)* Well, hi there.
- JASMINE: *(Slowly turns her head to him and stares at him. Finally she smiles and takes a sexy step or two towards him.)* Are you speaking to me, young man?
- BILLY: *(A little uncertain)* Well, yes. *(With more confidence)* I, er... certainly am, miss.

(JASMINE continues slowly walking toward him at the couch, smiling like the cat about to eat the canary..)

PEGGY: *(Who has moved a step or two closer to JASMINE.)* Jasmine, no! Leave him alone. He’s just a kid.

JASMINE: *(Turns her head to PEGGY, smiles, then turns back to BILLY)* Interested in making my acquaintance, are you? *(She extends her upstage hand and beckons him with her finger.)* Come here. *(He steps toward her, zombie-like. PEGGY quickly moves below the couch and gets between BILLY and JASMINE.)*

PEGGY: *(To JASMINE)* Knock it off, Jasmine. *(She quickly turns to BILLY.)* Listen to me, kid. Your homework is finished. Grab your books and get out of here right now!

BILLY: But, I...

PEGGY: *(Practically screaming)* I said now!

BILLY: *(Quickly grabs the book he had open on the coffee table, jams it into his backpack [in his haste, he forgets to take his homework paper], hotfoots it around the right side [the side opposite from where JASMINE is] of the couch and heads for the hall exit. Just before he turns, looks at JASMINE and sighs)* Oooh, man!

PEGGY: Now! *(BILLY quickly turns and EXITS)* *(To JASMINE)* What the hell are you doing here, Jasmine?

JASMINE: *(With a smirk)* What the hell, indeed. Your friend Judy summoned me from Hades. I almost didn’t come, you know. I do have a nice little split-level den down there – with a view! Overlooks the River Styx. Lovely place. You must come and visit sometime.

PEGGY: Fat chance. Now, I ask you again: What are you doing here?

JASMINE: I told you. Judy conjured me up. She didn’t intend to, of course.

PEGGY: Explain.

JASMINE: *(Enjoying this.)* That little spell thingee she did to send the three of you here. Remember she said she thought she left something out? Well, she did. There’s another verse that needs to be said It’s a sort of a “No demons allowed” verse. She has to include it or else the portal she opens up also allows everyone’s favorite demon, *(striking a pose)* *moi*, through.

- PEGGY: *(She looks up to Heaven)* Oh! Judy! You nincompoop! *(With her hands on her hips, To JASMINE)* And you—you think you’re everyone’s favorite demon?
- JASMINE: Well, not everyone on Earth, silly. I mean I’m a favorite with all my fellow demons,. Whenever I’m on Earth, I manage to give the nasty little things a thrill.
- PEGGY: How does you being here make *them* happy?
- JASMINE: I create the most delicious mischief whenever I’m let loose up here. *(She laughs)* It’s so much fun making life miserable for these puny little humans What’s-His-Name seems to be so fond of.
- PEGGY: Yes. I’ve heard that you’ve managed to create a lot of problems for humanity before we could get a team of angels up here to drag your sorry butt back to Hell.
- JASMINE: Oh, much more than mere problems, I assure you. I have a knack for fashioning misery that lingers long after I’ve been, er...sent on my way by those busybody friends of yours from Heaven.
- PEGGY: How can you do that? God protects humans from demonic magic.
- JASMINE: Yes. But He allows us to tempt them, as I’m sure you know. And believe me, I know just how to put the most diabolical thoughts into the heads of just the right people at just the right times to cause almost universal distress, anguish and grief on Earth.
- PEGGY: You’ve got me curious now. What have you managed to do over the years?
- JASMINE: Oh, lots and lots of pure depravity. For instance, I’m responsible for the creation of Income Taxes, toll booths *and* parking meters. Oh, yes. And I’m sure you’ve heard of Wall Street.
- PEGGY: *(Amazed)* That was you?
- JASMINE: Positively. And just recently, and I’m very proud of this, mind you, – the T.S.A.! *(Laughs again.)* Oh, dear me, that was a good one! *(With an index finger on her lip, as if she is thinking)* Let’s see now...what else?
- PEGGY: There’s more?
- JASMINE: Tons more. I remember that time in 1973 when I managed to let loose a double whammy on humans. First off, I managed to tick off most baseball fans. I gave the owners the idea for the “designated hitter” rule. And then I got into the minds of the medical establishment and *voila!* HMO’s! But my crowning achievement came several years later -- Reality TV!

PEGGY: And now, you’re back.

JASMINE: *(With a flourish of her arms.)* In –person!

PEGGY: So, what mischief are you planning this time?

JASMINE: You know, I’m not really sure. *(giggles)* These humans have managed to screw up the planet so much on their own, I don’t know what’s left for me to do. But don’t you worry – *(With another flourish of her arms.)* I’ll think of something!

PEGGY: That’s what I’m afraid of. *(After a beat)* You do know you’ll be stopped, don’t you?

JASMINE: Who’s going to stop me -- you?

PEGGY: Yeah, me. Clara and Barb are here, too. That’s three against one.

JASMINE: *(Laughs)* But you *can’t* stop me, Peggy. That’s the beauty of it. Remember what Judy told you? *(Wagging her finger back and forth)* No using your angelic powers here on Earth.

PEGGY: *(Aside)* Crap! *(As before, raises her head and arms up)* Sorry! Sorry! *(To JASMINE, with false bravado)* We’ll think of something, you can bet on that!

JASMINE: *(Patting her on her head patronizingly)* Su-u-u-ure you will. Although it will be hard to do that with your underpants on fire. *(She point to PEGGY’s backside..)*

PEGGY: What? *(Suddenly starts jumping around and patting her backside, as if putting out a fire.)* Ow! Ow! Cut that out, Jasmine!

JASMINE: Certainly, dear. *(She twirls her pointed finger and puts her hand down to her side.)* Always glad to oblige. Well, *(waves)* Ta! It’s been fun. If you’ll excuse me, I have to go register for a room. *(She heads for the front desk, PEGGY follows her).*

PEGGY: You’re taking a room - *here?* Where *we’re* staying?

JASMINE: Of course, darling. Don’t worry; I won’t play my radio too loud. *(Laughs gain, as she rings the bell. This startles EDWARD, still asleep on the stool.)*

EDWARD: *(Startled, looks up.)* Who? What?...

(CONSTANCE ENTERS from the stairway. She stops on the top step and looks down at the front desk.)

JASMINE: I’d like to take a room.

EDWARD: You can't take a room. We need them all!

CONSTANCE: *(As she comes down the stairs and moves to the front desk.)* She wants to rent a room, Edward. Please register her, if you can keep your head out of that stupid book for two minutes.

EDWARD: It's not a stupid book! It's my Waltrudus – *The Bull-Keepers Bible*, for heaven's sake! Why would you ever think it was a stupid book?

CONSTANCE: There's a thousand answers to that question, Edward. *(raising her voice a bit)* Now, put that thing down and register this young lady.

EDWARD: *(In a fog, as always)* Young lady? What young lady? *(CONSTANCE points to JASMINE)* Oh. Oh, yes. *(To JASMINE)* Sign here, miss. *(He turns and takes a key from the rack.)* You're in 4A. Check out is at 12.

PEGGY: 4A? That's right above us!

JASMINE: Don't worry, Peggy dear. Heat rises. *(Laughs again as she take the key from EDWARD and EXITS up the stairs. PEGGY scowls.)*

CONSTANCE: *(To PEGGY)* Is there a problem?

PEGGY: No. No. We're, er...old friends.

CONSTANCE: *(Sternly)* Good. See that things stay that way - *(She points to the sign) friendly.* I take it you are also a guest at our Inn?

PEGGY: Yes, My, er...*sisters* and I are in room 3A.

CONSTANCE: *(With a forced smile)* How nice. Do enjoy your stay.

PEGGY: *(As she quickly moves to stairs and EXITS up them.)* Yes. Yes. I certainly will.

CONSTANCE: *(To EDWARD after PEGGY has exited.)* You are still wearing that jacket.

EDWARD: *(Looks down at jacket)* Of course I'm wearing it, Connie. I can't image what else I would do with it.

CONSTANCE: You could put it in with the dirty laundry. Or better still, on the compost heap. *(Sniffs contemptuously)* It smells like it's halfway to compost already. We will be having dinner shortly. Do not show up in the dining room wearing that jacket. Do I make myself clear?

EDWARD: *(Sheepishly)* Yes, dear.

CONSTANCE: Good. Because if you do, I will personally deposit both it and *you* onto the compost heap. Where is Samantha, by the way?

EDWARD: Samantha?

CONSTANCE: *(Sighs)* Your granddaughter. I left her here doing her homework with a boy. *(Glancing at the coffee table)* Their homework is still here, but they are not. When did she leave, where did she go, and did she go there with or without that boy? *(EDWARD looks totally confused)* Look who I’m asking! *(sighs again)* Tell me, Edward, was there ever a time when you had the slightest idea what was going on around you?

EDWARD: Huh?

CONSTANCE: I thought at much. I might as well be asking the wall, but that young lady who was just here said that she had sisters with her. Is there any possibility that you took note of how many girls registered and how many rooms they are in?

EDWARD: *(A rare moment of clarity)* It should be right here in the book. *(He looks at the open register on the desk)* Hmm. Oh yes. Here we are. Three altogether. I remember them now. Nice girls. Very sound on bulls.

CONSTANCE: Is that so?

EDWARD: *(He looks around to see if anyone else is in the room. Then, suddenly sounding quite rational)* Connie, there may be a problem.

CONSTANCE: *(After a beat)* Yes, I suspected as much.

(SAMANTHA appears on the top of the staircase. CONSTANCE sees her.)
(To EDWARD, sotto voce through clenched smiling teeth.) Later. Keep in character, dear.

There you are, Samantha. And where is the boy?

SAMANTHA: The boy? You mean Billy? *(Quickly looks toward couch)* Gee, I don’t know. I left him here doing his homework. Maybe he finished it and went home.

CONSTANCE: Isn’t that his homework on the table?

SAMANTHA: *(Moves to back of couch, looks over at coffee table.)* So, it is. That’s strange.

CONSTANCE: Very. Samantha, why were you upstairs while he was he down here doing homework?

SAMANTHA: I wanted to make sure the room was ready for our new guests.

- CONSTANCE: I see. Very good. I wish some other people around here (*Indicating EDWARD*) were as conscientious. We do depend on our guests to survive. Although, if you ask me, we’re fighting a losing battle. I was just at the bank today. We are two months behind on the mortgage.
- SAMANTHA: What does that mean, Grandma?
- CONSTANCE: It means we’re in danger of losing this place. But don’t worry, dear. I’m not going down without a fight. That two-bit desk jockey at the bank does not know who he’s up against!
- SAMANTHA: My money’s on you, Grandma.
- CONSTANCE: Good bet.
- SAMANTHA: The lady who knows everything.
- CONSTANCE: Oh, posh!
- SAMANTHA: Which reminds me. There’s one question on my Science homework that I just can’t figure out. Could you help me with it? (*She moves around couch, picks up her homework paper and reads:*) “December 21 is the day with the least sunshine; however, February, not December is the coldest month. Likewise on June 21 we have the most sunshine, but August is the hottest month. Why?”
- CONSTANCE: (*Without missing a beat*) The oceans. Our planet is mostly water. Water holds the heat and cold. It takes two months for the ocean waters to cool down or heat up.
- SAMANTHA: Wow! I never thought of that. (*She sits on the couch and puts her homework paper on the table. She takes a pencil [or pen] and writes down the answer.*) Thanks, Grandma.
- CONSTANCE: That will cost you, however. Now that I’ve helped you to complete your homework assignment, you are free to help me. The folks in 2B checked out this morning. The room needs to be cleaned and the sheets and towels changed. See to it.
- SAMANTHA: Sure thing. (*She quickly puts her homework paper and book in her backpack, and with the backpack she moves to the stairs to exit.*)
- CONSTANCE: (*As SAMANTHA is exiting.*) Work quickly. Dinner will be ready soon.
- SAMANTHA: Gotcha. (*EXITS*)
- EDWARD: (*Looks up suddenly at the word “dinner.”*) Dinner? Oh, my stars and planets! I forgot to put out some hay for Maximilian! (*Rises, puts book down and heads for the hall.*) Connie, you’ll have to watch the desk.

CONSTANCE: It’s fairly late in the day. I doubt we’ll have any more people looking for rooms today. But I’ll stay a while until dinner.

(EDWARD EXITS. CONSTANCE moves around to the back of the desk, spots the whistle, picks it up and examines it. Finally she blows into it. No sound is heard, but suddenly, a loud “Mooo” is heard offstage. She quickly puts the whistle down. BILLY ENTERS from the hall. He takes a step into the room and looks around.)

BILLY: *(Calls out)* Sam? Are you here?

CONSTANCE: You are looking for my granddaughter, young man?

BILLY: *(Realizing she is there.)* Oh, yes. Ma’am. Is she here?

CONSTANCE: She’s busy. She was looking for *you* a while ago. Apparently, you left without telling her you were going.

BILLY: Oh, that. Yeah. There was a pretty scary lady here. She sort-of chased me away.

CONSTANCE: Oh? Really. And why did she do that?

BILLY: *(Mr. Innocence)* I have no idea. I was doing my homework, minding my own business, and wham! She goes and chases me out of here.

CONSTANCE: And now you’re back.

BILLY: I left the homework here. *(Spots it on the table.)* Oh, there it is. *(Moves to the table, retrieves the homework notebook and puts it in his backpack.)*

CONSTANCE: Tell me more about this “scary lady.” Was she one of my guests?

BILLY: I think so. She was registering.

CONSTANCE: And out of the blue, she chased you away?

BILLY: *(Getting nervous)* Er, right. Out of the blue.

CONSTANCE: *(Stares directly at BILLY for several beats, during which he becomes more and more nervous.) (Finally)* You were trying to flirt with her, weren’t you?

BILLY: Not her! The other...*(Uses his hands as if to push the words back into his mouth.)*

CONSTANCE: I knew I was right! I always am. But you already know that. Does Samantha know you were doing that?

BILLY: Er,... no.

CONSTANCE: I thought not. *(A beat)* Did you find what you left behind?

BILLY: Yes.

CONSTANCE: Good. Then, I’d like you to do a little magic trick for me.

BILLY: A *magic* trick?

CONSTANCE: Yes. Disappear!

BILLY: Er,...right. Tell Samantha I’ll see her tomorrow in school. *(EXITS through hall.)*

CONSTANCE: *(Laughs)* I can be a pretty scary lady, too, when I want to. *(She turns the radio behind her on. A soft 40’s type instrumental tune plays on the radio. She closes her eyes, enjoying the music.)* Nice. Very nice.

(CLARA and BARB ENTER from stairs. They hear the music.)

CLARA: *(Listening to the music for a beat or two.)* Interesting. *(To CONSTANCE, who has opened her eyes as she heard them enter.)* What song is that?

CONSTANCE: *(She mentions the name of whatever song has been selected by individual productions)* It’s a tune from the forties, I believe. Do you like it?

BARA: It’s okay, but it’s not Rock n’ Roll.

CONSTANCE: Thank God!

CLARA: We’re into music that has a much more lively beat.

CONSTANCE: Oh? *(Takes a beat where she narrows her gaze. She is beginning to probe for information about them.)* Are you musicians?

CLARA: You bet! We’re starting our own band.

CONSTANCE: Really. What instruments do you play?

BARB: Harps...Ooof! *(CLARA has jabbed her in the side with her elbow.)*

CLARA: She means guitars.

CONSTANCE: I could have swore she said: “harps.”

CLARA: *(A forced laugh)* Harps? Why would we play harps in a Rock n’ Roll band. Heavens!

CONSTANCE: Heavens, indeed.

BARB: Well, we have to be on our way. *(They move towards the hall exit.)*

CONSTANCE: By yourselves? Your sister isn’t going with you?

CLARA: Sister?

CONSTANCE: Yes. I was speaking to her a little while ago. I’m certain she said you were her sisters.

CLARA: She did? Well, er...I suppose we *must* be her sisters then. *(Anxious to get away from CONSTANCE’s questions)* We do have to be going. C’mon, Barb.

BARB: Yes. Ta ta! *(SAMANTHA ENTERS from the stairs as they exit.) (CONSTANCE stares intensely after them.)*

SAMANTHA: The room’s all done, Grandma.

CONSTANCE: Very good. Samantha, child, I need your help with something else.

SAMANTHA: Don’t tell me another room needs cleaning.

CONSTANCE: Okay, I won’t. What I actually want is for you to do a little detective work for me.

SAMANTHA: *(Excited at the prospect)* Wow! What do you want me to do?

CONSTANCE: Did you happen to see those two ladies who just left?

SAMANTHA: Sure. They’re in 3A. They just arrived today with one more lady.

CONSTANCE: I know. What I *don’t* know is why one would say that they are all sisters, while another one seemed to be unaware of that. They’re up to something, Samantha. I want you to snoop around and find out what. Oh, and the other young lady in 4A - there’s a connection between the four of them. Find out what it is, if you can.

SAMANTHA: Sure, Grandma, if you want me to. But I’m a little confused. I always thought you already knew everything about everything.

CONSTANCE: *(With a smile)* How do you think I get all my information? By judicious use of spies like you.

SAMANTHA: Wow! I’m an official spy for my grandmother!

CONSTANCE: One thing, though. Under no circumstances are you to get involved with anything our guests are doing; just try to find out what they’re up to, is that clear?

SAMANTHA: Gotcha, Grandma. Okay, then. I’m on the job. *(She head for the hall exit.)*

CONSTANCE: Samantha.

SAMANTHA: *(Stops, turns to CONSTANCE)* Yes.

CONSTANCE: Be a spy for me *after* dinner. *(Moves to SAMANTHA, puts her arm around her, leads her offstage to the EXIT Up Right.)*

(As they EXIT, FADE TO BLACK)

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION

ACT II
Scene 1

SETTING: *Same as Act I, Scene 2.*

AT RISE: *A few days later. PEGGY is asleep in the chair Down Right. There is an open book on her lap. After several beats, SAMANTHA, who has been crouched out of sight behind the front desk, rises. She is outfitted as “Sherlock Holmes,” with a deerstalker cap, magnifying glass in her left hand and a calabash pipe in her mouth. She spots PEGGY asleep and sneaks up on her. She looks her over through the magnifying glass.*

PEGGY: *(With her eyes still shut, slowly and deliberately)* What - do you think - you are doing?

SAMANTHA: *(Caught in the act, she quickly takes the pipe out of her mouth and puts it into the base of the potted plant and quickly moves the magnifying glass to the plant and pretends to look through it at the plant.)* Aphids! I’m checking the plant for aphids. Can’t be too careful, you know..

PEGGY: *(Opens her eyes, slowly turns her head to look at SAMANTHA.)* Aphids. I see. *(After a beat)* How’s the deer-stalking going?

SAMANTHA: Huh? *(Realizing she is talking about the hat, whips it off, tosses it next to the pipe in the base of the plant.)* Oh... this? It’s, er...the latest fashion with the kids. The British look.

PEGGY: *(With a nod of her head toward the plant base)* Does your grandmother know you’re smoking?

SAMANTHA: Oh, I don’t smoke. That pipe, er...that pipe, er... that pipe’s for blowing bubbles.

PEGGY: *(Reaches over to the base of the plant, picks up the pipe, examines it.)* Odd looking bubble blowing pipe.

(As SAMANTHA stumbles for an answer, EDWARD ENTERS from the front hall. He is dressed exactly as he was in the First Act. He immediately spots the pipe in PEGGY’s hand. He moves to her.)

EDWARD: Ah! So that’s where my pipe went. *(Taking the pipe from her)* I’ve been looking for it all morning. *(After a beat)* What were you doing with it?

PEGGY: Just admiring it. It’s a lovely pipe.

EDWARD: Yes. Yes it is. Handed down to me from my father. *(A beat)* Where did you find it?

PEGGY: It was lying at the base of this plant.

- EDWARD: Funny place for it to be. I wonder how it got there?
- PEGGY: *(With a significant glance at SAMANTHA)* I haven't the foggiest idea. *(SAMANTHA mouths "Thank you" to her.)*
- EDWARD: *(Looking at the pipe closely.)* Is that a nick on the bowl? *(Spots the magnifying glass in SAMANTHA's hand, takes it from her as if it were the most natural thing in the world for her to be holding it, examines the bowl of the pipe with it.)* No. No. Must have been the poor light in this room. *(Looks up at the ceiling to light fixtures that are not seen on stage.)* I should change those lightbulbs. They're getting weak. *(Turns to SAMANTHA, gives her back the magnifying glass.)* Thank you, dear. Very thoughtful of you. *(To PEGGY)* Say, would you like to see my bull? It's a great morning for bull watching.
- PEGGY: I'll, er...have to take a rain check on that. *(Lifting the book from her lap.)* I'm engrossed in my book. I want to find out how the story ends.
- EDWARD: Is it about bulls?
- PEGGY: No. It's a murder mystery.
- EDWARD: Oh. Too bad. I have many excellent books about bulls. I could lend one to you, if you'd like.
- PEGGY: Another time, maybe.
- EDWARD: Well, your loss, my dear. *(To SAMANTHA)* Er,...Samantha, you haven't seen your grandmother around, have you? *(He looks about furtively.)*
- SAMANTHA: No. *(EDWARD breathes an audible sigh of relief.)* But I still think you should change your jacket and your shoes, Grandpa. If you don't, they're going to walk off you by themselves. Your jacket is full of dirt.
- EDWARD: It's somewhat dirty, I suppose. *(Uses his hands to brush off the jacket. Dust could be seen coming from it when he does.)* But what do you expect. I've been out in the pasture with my bull, Maximilian.
- SAMANTHA: That would explain the mud on your shoes, too. *(a beat)* Of course, if you were out by Maximilian, it might not exactly be mud.
- CONSTANCE: *(Offstage, calls out loudly)* Ed – ward! Where are you? There's work to be done up here.
- EDWARD: *(Calling back)* Coming, my dear. *(He quickly takes off his jacket and hands it to SAMANTHA)* Here. Hide this. *(Starts for the stairs, but turns back a second to SAMANTHA)* You know, your grandmother can be very unreasonable.

SAMANTHA: She is who she is, Grandpa: one of a kind. They threw away the mold.

EDWARD: Your grandmother was not molded, Samantha. That woman was cut out of sheer granite!

SAMANTHA: *(Smiles)* I’m sure she really does need your help, though. Running an inn takes a lot of time and effort.

EDWARD: Caring for a bull take time and effort, too, blast it!. There’s a lot of work I could be doing out in the pasture.

SAMANTHA: Absolutely, Grandpa. Out in the pasture, I’m sure the work is just...*piling up*.

EDWARD: *(Completely oblivious to her meaning)* Exactly. Exactly. *(Turns back to the stairs and EXITS.)*

PEGGY: That wasn’t very nice, Samantha.

SAMANTHA: Sorry. *(She purses her lips and stares intently intently at Peggy)*

PEGGY: *(Seeing that she is staring at her)* What?

SAMANTHA: I was just wondering - how did you see me sneaking up on you? Your eyes were closed, and I didn’t make a sound.

PEGGY: *(Smiles)* It’s a talent. I have a lot of talents.

SAMANTHA: I’ll bet. *(A beat)* Why do I get the feeling that there’s more to you than meets the eye?

PEGGY: *(Looks directly at SAMANTHA for a few beats, then...)* Because I suspect that you are a very perspicacious young lady.

SAMANTHA: Perspi..who?

PEGGY: *(Smiles again)* It means having keen insight.

SAMANTHA: Thanks...I guess. So, what’s the deal?

PEGGY: *(Rises from chair)* Nothing you need to be concerned about. You can just tell your grandmother that I pose no danger to anyone here, okay?
(SAMANTHA looks surprised at this) She *does* have you checking up on me, doesn’t she?

SAMANTHA: How did you...?

PEGGY: Lots of talents. Remember?

SAMANTHA: Mmm. No danger to anyone, eh?

PEGGY: You’ve got it.

SAMANTHA: What about to that lady in 4-A -- Miss Jasmine?

PEGGY: *(A beat)* Very good. I told you you had keen insight. Don’t worry, though. It’s just something personal between the two of us. It doesn’t involve anyone else.

SAMANTHA: What about your sisters ... if they really are your sisters?

PEGGY: *(Smiling once more)* Samantha, do you know what they say about a little knowledge – that it’s a dangerous thing?

SAMANTHA: Yeah.

PEGGY: Well, a *lot* of knowledge is even more dangerous – *much* more dangerous.

SAMANTHA: You can trust me. I won’t tell anybody.

PEGGY: It’s not that I don’t trust you, I do. Really. It’s just that I don’t want to put you in danger.

SAMANTHA: *(She looks at PEGGY strangely)* What danger? Are you...you guys...are you some sort of sorcerers or wizards or something, like in the movies?

PEGGY: *(Quickly)* No! Absolutely not! That’s just made up stories. There aren’t any real sorcerers or wizards.

SAMANTHA: Well, what, then?

PEGGY: *(Stares at her intensely for a beat or two, then)* Samantha, do you go to Sunday School?

SAMANTHA: Sure. Grandma takes me every week.

PEGGY: In your lessons, is there anything about...*angels*?

SAMANTHA: Well, yeah, but...

PEGGY: *(Patting SAMANTHA on her shoulder)* Come with me then, child. Let’s go take a walk. We have a lot to talk about. Why don’t we pay a visit to the pasture. I’m dying to see you grandfather’s bull.

SAMANTHA: *(As she and PEGGY: move toward the front hall exit.)* You are?

PEGGY: Absolutely. Into each life, a little bull must fall. *(They have exited.)*

FADE TO BLACK

**Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION**

ACT II
Scene 2

SETTING: *Same as, Scene 1.*

AT RISE: *Later that day. CLARA is in the chair Down Right. She is reading a paperback book. BARB is in the chair Down Left. She has an open book of crosswords, and is working on one of them. A chime door bell is heard.*

CLARA: What’s that?

BARB: *(Raises and waves her hand like a child in a classroom)* Oh, I know the answer to that one! It’s what happens when you press the little button outside the front door. I tried it the other day. I was curious.

CLARA: But why would anybody press a button outside a door?

BARB: Haven’t the foggiest. *(Looking at her puzzle)* Say, what’s a five-letter word for “mystery?”

CLARA: Peggy.

BARB: Thanks. *(Starts to enter it in the puzzle, then erases it.)* No. That’s not right. The letters don’t cross...*(Realizing)* Wait a minute! What do you mean “Peggy?” Her name isn’t a definition for “mystery.”

CLARA: Lately, it is. Have you noticed how she’s hardly ever here? And even when she is here, she never pays any attention to what you are saying to her. There’s something going on, but she hasn’t told either of us what it is. I wonder what she’s up to.

BARB: Maybe she’s trying to figure out how we could start our rock n’ roll band. That’s why we’re here, right?

CLARA: It most definitely is not. How are we going to start a rock n’ roll band? Can you play a guitar?

BARB: No.

CLARA: Neither can I. And I’m sure Peggy can’t either. In fact, we don’t even *have* any guitars.

BARB: Well, yeah, but...

CLARA: No “buts” about it. This idea of a band was idiotic from the start. And look at all the trouble it got us into.

BARB: I guess you’re right, but if Peggy isn’t trying to get a band going, what is she doing out all the time?

CLARA: *That’s the mystery! (The doorbell chimes again.) There it goes again! (Puts book down on small table, rises.) I’m going to go see who’s doing that, and why! (She starts to cross to the front door, but before she can even take one step, two things happen simultaneously: CONSTANCE appears on the top step of the stairway and a TELEGRAM BOY ENTERS from the front hall and stops a step or two into the room. He is holding a telegram in his hand.)*

TELEGRAM BOY: Telegram! Telegram!

CONSTANCE: *(Quickly coming down the stairs and moving to him.) I’ll take that, young man. (She does, and looks at the name on it.) It’s for our guest in 4-A. (She moves around the desk and puts the telegram into a pigeon hole on the back wall behind the desk. She starts back out from behind the desk, and she spots the TELEGRAM BOY still standing there.) (To him:) Is there something else?*

TELEGRAM BOY: Er,.. no Ma’am... It’s just, you know...*(He holds his hand out, palm up looking for a tip.)*

CONSTANCE: Is there something wrong with the palm of your hand? Do you have a splinter in it or something?

TELEGRAM BOY: No, Ma’am. It’s just that it’s customary to give a tip...

CONSTANCE: A tip, is it? Well, here’s a tip for you. Don’t ever enter someone’s home again, unless you are properly admitted to it!

TELEGRAM BOY: But I rang the doorbell...twice. Nobody answered it.

CLARA: Doorbell! So, that’s what it is!

BARB: And you ring it to gain admittance. Hey, what a cool idea! *(CONSTANCE has turned and is staring directly at her.)* Or not.

CONSTANCE: *(Turns to TELEGRAM BOY)* And you...Do you have more telegrams to deliver?

TELEGRAM BOY: Oh, yes. Ma’am. A whole lot of them. They’re out in my truck.

CONSTANCE: Then why in the world are you standing here?

TELEGRAM BOY: Er...right. *(He turns and quickly EXITS through front hall.)*

CONSTANCE: *(Starts toward the exit Up Left, then stops and turns to BARB.)* Vexer.

BARB: Huh?

CONSTANCE: The word you are looking for in your puzzle is “vexer.” There are many synonyms for mystery that are six or more letters, but the only five-letter synonym is “vexer.”

BARB: *(Looks at her puzzle and enters the word one letter at a time, as CONSTANCE moves to the exit Up Right and EXITS.) (After CONSTANCE has exited.)* You’re right. That’s got it! *(She looks up and sees that CONSTANCE is gone.)* Where did she go?

CLARA: *(Points to Up Right.)* Thataway. *(She stares toward Up Right for a few beats, then...)* Hmmmm.

BARB: What?

CLARA: She wasn’t here when you asked me about the word “mystery.” I’m sure she wasn’t.

BARB: She must have been here. How else would she know what I said?

CLARA: I don’t know, but there are a lot of strange things going on in this place, and I know we’re not the cause of them. We can’t be. We’re not allowed to use our angelic powers.

BARB: What kind of strange things?
(Suddenly, a fiendish laugh [mah-ha-ha-ha] is heard offstage, then the cuckoo clock starts cuckooing. Finally a loud “Moo” is heard offstage.)

CLARA: *Those* kind of strange things! *(JASMINE ENTERS from the front hall. As usual, she is dressed to kill. Part of her current outfit consists of a bright red, full-length cape. CLARA spots her.)* And speaking of strange things, Barb, look who just walked in.

BARB: *(Turns in her chair and spots JASMINE)* Jasmine! What are you doing here?

JASMINE: Well, well. If it isn’t the Bobbsey Twins.

CLARA: Cram it, Jasmine.

BARB: Does Peggy know you’re here?

JASMINE: *(With a quick laugh)* Of course. She’s been trying to put a monkey wrench in my plans all week. She can’t, though, poor girl. Dear Judy has prohibited the three of you from using your angelic powers. But my demonic powes are working just fine, thank you. *(As a demonstration, she points her left hand at the cuckoo clock without looking at it. It immediately begins cuckooing, but much faster than previously.)*

- CLARA: Still a show-off, eh, Jasmine? But why am I surprised? You were a jackass even before you signed on with Lucifer and his gang. Tell me -- are you still smarting from that whack on the behind I gave you with my sword on your way down to Hell?
- JASMINE: *(This has wiped the smile from her face. She stares daggers at CLARA.)*
Don't push your luck, Clara. I'll turn you into a toadstool,. I can do that, you know, and you won't be able to do a thing to stop me.
- CLARA: Remind me, Jasmine: Did I already say: "cram it?" *(They stare each other down.)*
- BARB: *(Trying to break the tension.)* What is it that Peggy's trying to stop you from doing?
- JASMINE: *(Slowly turns to BARB. Her smile is back.)* My latest – and greatest, by the way – little plan to bedevil – pun absolutely intended – these silly humans.
- BARB: Which is...?
- JASMINE: I'll tell you what – why don't you just listen? *(She points to the radio. It immediately turns on. At first there is a screeching as if it is trying to find the station, then...)*
- (RADIO): *(An Announcer's voice)* And now, our previous recorded "Jasmine Show."
- (JASMINE'S VOICE): Well, hello out there, all you losers! This is Jasmine urging you to forget whatever it is you are doing. And why? Because no matter what it is, it's a *useless endeavor!* Everything you can possibly think of doing is useless! If you think it's not, you're just deceiving yourselves. Let's go to our phone lines. Our first call is from New Jersey. Go ahead, New Jersey. You're on the air with Jasmine.
- (A MAN'S VOICE): I don't think what I do is useless. I'm a doctor. I save people's lives.
- (JASMINE'S VOICE): Wrong! Of course it's useless. People only think they want to live long lives. Why bother? The longer you live, the longer you have to pay taxes! And wait in line for gasoline. And scramble to make your mortgage payment. And watch reality TV! *High definition* reality TV. Now if that isn't depressing enough, might I bring up politics? You vote one party in, and they steal money from your right pocket. Next time, you elect the opposition, and they take the money out of your *left* pocket!
- (MAN'S VOICE): Gee, I guess you're right.
- JASMINE'S VOICE): Of course, I'm right!

(CLARA has moved to behind the front desk over the radio voices. She reaches up and clicks off the radio.)

JASMINE: Hey! What’s the big idea? The next call was even better. I convinced a bus driver to give up her job.

BARB: *(Rising)* How did you do that?

JASMINE: Simple. I reminded her that all she did was drive people to a job they probably hated, and then back home to ungrateful children who don’t care how hard their parents worked all day. All they’re concerned about is putting their hand out for money to buy pizza and play video games.

BARB: That does sound pretty depressing.

CLARA: Wait a minute. With a show that outrageous, you’ll never stay on the air.

JASMINE: Dearie, you don’t know much about talk radio, do you? The more outrageous your show is, the higher your ratings are. *(Laughs)* And my new philosophy – I call it “Asininityism,” by the way -- is spreading like wildfire. It has just one tenet: Anything you do or can possibly think of to do is asinine! What a depressing thought! Before long, I’ll have everybody in the state *completely* depressed. From there, it’s a short hop to the entire country, and then the world! *(Rubs her hands together in glee)* This is the best idea I’ve ever come up with! *(Laughs again)* I’m such a fiend! Sometimes, I even scare myself.

CLARA: Only when you look in a mirror.

JASMINE: Watch it, girl!

(PEGGY suddenly ENTERS from front hall. She is holding a folded piece of paper. She moves to JASMINE.)

PEGGY: There you are, Jasmine. I’ve been looking for you.

JASMINE: Really, now. And why would that be?

PEGGY: *(Smugly)* Oh, I don’t know. Maybe it was to let you know that I’ve figured out how to stop your current scheme dead in its tracks. And it doesn’t involve a one little bit of angel magic.

JASMINE: *(Not the least bit concerned, she moves to the couch, sits and folds one leg over the other.)* And how do you plan to accomplish that, pray tell?

PEGGY: *(Moves to JASMINE, hands her the folded paper she is carrying)* Read it and weep, demon girl. *(JASMINE looks over the paper)* I’ve just signed this contract. Now, I have a radio talk show on right after yours. My show will be all about how wonderful everybody’s endeavors are, and how God

blesses them all. It will be a complete repudiation of your message. Your plot is finished, Jasmine!

JASMINE: Actually, it’s you who are finished. *(She raises a hand behind her and snaps her fingers. The TELEGRAM BOY ENTERS and moves toward PEGGY).*

TELEGRAM BOY: Telegram for a Miss Peggy!

PEGGY: That would be me.

TELEGRAM BOY: *(Hands PEGGY a folded official-looking document.)* You’ve been served!

PEGGY: Served? How could I be served? It isn’t even dinner time.

JASMINE: *(Laughs)* No. You’re not being served dinner, you foolish girl. You’re being served with a restraining order. It seems that my producers feel your show would be slanderous to my message and, of course, to me personally. So, you’re not on the air at all; you’re decidedly off the air. *(JASMINE smiles at PEGGY.)*

PEGGY: *(Crumbles the “service notice” into a ball, throws it up into the air and bats it towards JASMINE with her hand, as if it were a tennis ball.)* Serve this, Jasmine!

JASMINE: Spoil sport.

CLARA: *(To TELEGRAM BOY)* I thought you said this was a telegram!

TELEGRAM BOY: Good trick, eh? You fell for it. Besides delivering telegrams, I’m also a process server. *(Shrugs his shoulders)* What can I say - I don’t get enough tips delivering telegrams. *(Turn and EXITS through front hall)*

BARB: *(To PEGGY)* So, that’s what you’ve been up to lately, Peggy – trying to foil Jasmine’s schemes.

CLARA: Why didn’t you tell us?

JASMINE: Probably so you wouldn’t get in her way.

PEGGY, CLARA and BARB: *(Together)* Cram it, Jasmine!

PEGGY: It’s okay, girls. I can handle her on my own.

JASMINE: I doubt it.

CLARA: We’ll be upstairs if you need us, Peggy.

BARB: *(As they start for the stairs to exit.)* Oh, and Jasmine...

JASMINE: Yes? (*BARB blows a raspberry at her and then EXITS up the stairs*) (*sarcastically*) Good come-back, Barb.. SAMANTHA ENTERS from the entrance Up Right, moves to behind the front desk. From a pigeonhole, she takes a telegram, and looks at the address.)

SAMANTHA: (*To JASMINE*) Say, aren’t you in 4A?

JASMINE: Yes.

SAMANTHA: This telegram arrived for you.

JASMINE: For me? (*As she rises and moves to front desk*) Probably from a member of my fan club.

SAMANTHA: You have a fan club? (*Tilts her head, looks at JASMINE, as JASMINE takes telegram from her, opens it and looks it over.*) Are you famous or something?

JASMINE: Not quite yet. But I am going to be. This telegram is from *Celebrities Magazine*. They want a photo spread of me for the headline story in their next issue!

SAMANTHA: That’s cool! You know, I’m a pretty good photographer. (*She reaches under the front desk and comes up with a camera.*) Would you like me to take your pictures.

JASMINE: I think I’d rather have a professional photographer. Are there any in this town?

SAMANTHA: This is a pretty small town. I don’t think there are even any other *cameras* in town.

JASMINE: Very well, then. Where do you think we should take the pictures?

SAMANTHA: There’s a lovely field just outside.

PEGGY: (*To SAMANTHA, surprised*) Maximilian’s pasture?

JASMINE: (*Turns to PEGGY, which puts her back to SAMANTHA*) Who’s Maximilian?

SAMANTHA: (*Makes “shhh!” motion to PEGGY*) Maximilian, er...owns the pasture, you might say. He spends a lot of time out there.

JASMINE: And he won’t mind us using it to take pictures.?

SAMANTHA: I doubt it. In fact, I’m sure he’ll come right out to, er... *greet* you as soon as he spots you in the pasture. Why don’t you go on out there and practice posing. I’ll be with you in a minute. (*JASMINE begins to move toward the*

front hall exit.) Be sure to twirl that nice bright red cape around. That’ll look great in the pictures.

JASMINE: *(Stops, turns back to SAMANTHA.)* Yes, it will, won’t it. *(To PEGGY)* You see, Peggy? When you’re popular, everybody is eager to help you out. Do you get my point?

PEGGY: Well, somebody’s sure to get the point.

JASMINE: *(To SAMANTHA)* I’ll wait for you out there. *(EXITS through the front hall. SAMANTHA and PEGGY burst out laughing.)*

SAMANTHA: *(To PEGGY)* How’s that?

PEGGY: Wonderful. I couldn’t have done it any better. You’re very lucky, though, that that telegram arrived.

SAMANTHA: Not so lucky. *I* sent it!

PEGGY: Samantha, you are my kind of girl! Judy would just hate you! *(Snickers)*

SAMANTHA: I’ll be right back. *(Holds up the camera)* I have to make a video of this. This is going to be too good not to be captured for posterity. *(She quickly EXITS through the front hall exit.)*

(After a few beats, from offstage the sounds of a bull snorting are heard)

JASMINE: *(Offstage)* What the...?

(The sound of thundering hoofs is heard, followed by JASMINE yelling “OUCH!”. PEGGY puts her hands on her hips and laughs hysterically as the scene fades to black)

CURTAIN

ACT II
Scene 3

SETTING: *Same as Act I, Scene 2.*

AT RISE: *Two days later. Nobody is onstage. After a few beats, JASMINE ENTERS from the stairs. She is carrying two large pillows, and is making various sounds of discomfort as she slowly descends the stairs and moves to the couch. She places the pillows on the right side of the couch and then gingerly sits down on them.*

JASMINE: Ahh! That’s better.

(After a beat or two, SAMANTHA ENTERS from the front hall. She sees JASMINE on the couch and stops in her tracks, then with large, exaggerated steps, tries to sneak past her behind the couch headed toward the stairs.)

JASMINE: *(Without looking at SAMANTHA)* I hear you, you little twit.

SAMANTHA: *(Stops)* Who, me?

JASMINE: Yes, you. I didn’t know you were in league with Peggy, but I do now. That was a neat little trick, getting me to twirl my red cape in a pasture with a bull in it.

SAMANTHA: Thank you... I think.

JASMINE: Sort of fiendish. You would have made a good demon.

SAMANTHA: Really?

JASMINE: Yes, but you better hope you *don’t* end up in my realm. I can promise you that if you do, I will personally make eternity an extremely painful experience for you. Do you have any idea how many stitches it took to close up the hole that bull’s horn made in my backside?

SAMANTHA: Uh...666? *(Pronounce this “six hundred-sixty-six”)*

JASMINE: Cute. But you have a lot to learn about demons. Here’s one thing: a demon never, *ever* forgets an insult or an injury. This is both, by the way. So, you, my dear child, have made yourself a very bad enemy for life and way beyond that. *(Unseen by her, PEGGY ENTERS from the stairs and moves to just right of the front desk..)*

SAMANTHA: *(Sarcastically)* O-o-o-o. I so scared, I’m shivering.

JASMINE: Oh? You want to shiver, I can arrange that. *(Rises. As she does so, she winces and says: “Oh!” She turns and makes a motion with her arms and hands as if she is about to cast a spell.)*

PEGGY: Knock it off, Jasmine.

JASMINE: *(Finally seeing PEGGY)* Oh, please, Peggy. You know you can’t use angel magic to stop me. I can do whatever I want without worrying about intervention by you.

PEGGY: I wasn’t speaking about knocking off your *spell*, Jasmine. I was talking about your head. *(Reaches behind the front desk and pulls out a baseball bat.)* And what would occur if it should happen to collide with the business end of this baseball bat. *(JASMINE grunts, turns back away from them and folds her arms in anger.)* *(To SAMANTHA)* Just out of curiosity, Samantha. What is a baseball bat doing behind the desk?

SAMANTHA: My grandmother keeps it there to discourage travelling salesmen, and couples who arrive in the middle of the day without luggage. *(This raises PEGGY’s eyebrows)* She runs a tight ship here.

PEGGY: I would say. *(They laugh. Unseen by all, CONSTANCE ENTERS from the stairs. She stops on the small landing at the top stair.)*

JASMINE: I hope you two are enjoying yourselves. You do realize there will be payback for this, don’t you?

CONSTANCE: *(As she slowly comes down the stairs.)* Exactly who will be paying back whom, and for what?

PEGGY: *(Surprises)* Er, Jasmine owes me for a ...a... *(with a quick wink and nod at SAMANTHA, who giggles)* a pillow I picked up for her in the village.

CONSTANCE: *(Slowly and deliberately)* So....the two of you know each other.

PEGGY: Jasmine and I go way back.

JASMINE: *(Sotto voce)* Several millenia.

CONSTANCE: *(To JASMINE)* Pardon?

JASMINE: *(Not caring if CONSTANCE heard her or not)* Just clearing my throat.

CONSTANCE: *(Staring at the back of her head. [After a beat])* Um hum. *(Turning slowly to SAMANTHA)* And you are involved with these two *how*?

SAMANTHA: Er...I was just making polite conversation with the guests.

CONSTANCE: *(After a beat)* Are you finished conversing?

SAMANTHA: Oh...absolutely.

CONSTANCE: Good. I assume there are chores and homework that require doing?

SAMANTHA: On it, Grandma! *(She quickly EXITS up the stairs.)*

CONSTANCE: *(Turning to PEGGY and staring at her.)* Are there any further financial arrangements you need to conclude with this young lady?

PEGGY: Not at the moment. *(CONSTANCE continues to stare unmoving until PEGGY gets the message.)* I’ll er, . . . just head on up to my room. *(She hastily moves to stairs and EXITS. CONSTANCE turns and silently watches her go, then after she has exited, she turns back slowly and stares at the back of Jasmine’s head. She moves around the left side of the couch, sits on the left side of the couch and turns to JASMINE.)*

CONSTANCE: She purchased a pillow for you.

JASMINE: Yes.

CONSTANCE: And I understand you have requested several extra pillows for your room.

JASMINE: Right again.

CONSTANCE: I assume this has to do with your unfortunate encounter with my husband’s bull.

JASMINE: More like an encounter with your granddaughter’s bull.

CONSTANCE: *(A beat)* Explain.

JASMINE: She tricked me into entering that pasture behind the house and twirling my red cape around. That *animal* . . .

CONSTANCE: My husband’s bull.

JASMINE: Precisely. Your husband’s bull took that as a challenge and charged at me. Actually, I’m a pretty good sprinter. I almost made it out of the pasture in time. I was half way over the fence, when the bull, er . . . shall we say . . . *(She unconsciously rubs her hip) . . . helped me over it.*

CONSTANCE: And you say Samantha tricked you into entering the pasture with a red cape when she knew the bull was there. Why would she do that?

JASMINE: I don’t know. Ask Peggy. Those two are out to get me.

CONSTANCE: Peggy is the young lady who was just here? One of the three sisters in 3A?

JASMINE: Yes, but they’re not sisters. They’re ang . . . er, . . . just three *friends*.

CONSTANCE: You started to say something else: “ang . . .” I believe it was. *(She looks up over JASMINE’s head, as she thinks.)* Let’s see . . . “ang . . .,” “ang . . .” ang . . .”

(Looks back at JASMINE) The only word that that seems to be the beginning of is: “angel.” (They stare at each other silently for a few beats, then...)

JASMINE: Really.

CONSTANCE: Really. Unless, of course, you were in the act of mispronouncing “engineer” or “English teacher.”

JASMINE: Or “engraver.” *(PEGGY sticks her head out from behind the downstage wall at the head of the stairs, attempting to eavesdrop. Without looking at PEGGY, CONSTANCE lifts her head and addresses her.)*

CONSTANCE: Ah. 3A. You’ve returned, I see. *(Throughout the following dialog, she does not turn to look at PEGGY.)*

PEGGY: You do? How? You weren’t looking this way. What do you have – mirrors or something?

CONSTANCE: Or something. And you’ve reappeared why?

PEGGY: I, er...I left my glasses down here somewhere.

CONSTANCE: Unless I am mistaken, you don’t wear glasses.

PEGGY: Ri--ight! So I guess I didn’t leave them here after all. *(She turns to exit, CONSTANCE with a sharp voice stops her.)*

CONSTANCE: *(An order) Stop! (PEGGY does) Please come down here. (She rises, steps to the left of the couch. When PEGGY arrives at the couch) Sit. (Another order)(CONSTANCE indicates that she should sit next to JASMINE. She does. CONSTANCE paces two steps to her left, her hand on her chin as if she were thinking. She then pivots sharply toward the others.)* Something is going on here. It involves the two of you and those “sisters” of yours *(Indicating PEGGY)(CONSTANCE slowly moves back until she is essentially standing over them over the following dialog.)* Up to now, this has not been any of my business, so I have chosen to ignore it. However, you have somehow involved my granddaughter, so it has now become very much my business, and I cannot ignore it. If all of you intend to remain at my inn, you will immediately *disinvolve* Samantha from whatever it is you are up to. Is that quite clear, ladies?

JASMINE: Yes.

PEGGY: *(Making a little cross over her heart [“cross my heart and hope to die] and holding her hand up, palm up, as if she was taking an oath.)* Absolutely.

CONSTANCE: Excellent. *(With a steel-edged smile) I’m so glad we had this little chat. (She begins to cross to the stairs, but when she is slightly past Center, the TELEGRAM BOY suddenly ENTERS.)*

TELEGRAM BOY: *(Holding up two telegrams.)* Telegrams! *(CONSTANCE quickly moves to him, takes the telegrams, looks at the addresses as TELEGRAM BOY stands there with his hand out, again waiting for a tip. CONSTANCE stops looking at the telegrams and stares directly at him for several beat, fire in her eyes. Finally, withering under her stare, he withdraws his hand and sheepishly EXITS out the front hall exit.)*

CONSTANCE: *(To JASMINE)* One of these is for you, 4A. *(JASMINE holds her hand out behind her to receive the telegram. CONSTANCE walks over to the back of the couch and ignoring JASMINE’s outstretched hand, drops it in her lap. She then turns and EXITS out the Up Right Exit still holding the other telegram in her hand.)*

(JASMINE picks up the telegram, casually rises and moves a few steps Down Left as she opens it, scans it, and suddenly loses her air of confidence.)

JASMINE: Damn!

PEGGY: *(Rises)(Sarcastic)* What’s the matter, Jasmine? *(Moves to her, tries to look over her shoulder at the telegram)* Doctor’s bill?

JASMINE: *(Quickly closes the telegram before PEGGY can read it, and she tucks it into her bodice.)* Very funny... Just a fan letter.

PEGGY: Mustn’t be too much of a fan. You said: “damn.”

JASMINE: Don’t you have a harp to play or something?

PEGGY: Actually, I’m going to go outside to Maximilian’s pasture and have a look at that magnificent animal. He’s a prize winning bull, you know. Of course, I’ll be sensible enough to stay on the *outside* of the fence. *(Laughs, as she moves to front hall and EXITS.)*

JASMINE: *(After PEGGY has exited, she takes out the telegram, opens it and scans it again. SAMANTHA appears at the top of the stairs, unseen by JASMINE. She pauses and listens to JASMINE.)*

Damn and double damn! *(Reads telegram out loud)* “Your mission has failed. Stop. The radio show is no longer relevant. Stop. Cease all operations immediately. Stop. *Stop!* Stop. Damien

SAMANTHA: Who’s Damien?

JASMINE: What? *(Turns suddenly toward SAMANTHA.)* Oh, it’s you again. Why don’t you go peddle your papers or something?

SAMANTHA: Huh?

- JASMINE: Oh? Is that reference too archaic for you? *(SAMANTHA shrugs her shoulders as she descends the stairs.) (Angrily)* Do you know why I know what that means and you do not? *(SAMANTHA again shrugs her shoulders, but stops in her tracks, sensing JASMINE’s anger and suddenly becoming very afraid of her.)* Because I am old enough to be familiar with every idiom every expression, every proverb, adage, maxim, truism or aphorism ever uttered by your useless race of beings! From when Adam said: “Hmm, I guess an apple a day doesn’t keep the doctor away after all” to when all those baseball players said: “Oh, you mean *those* steroids.” And *you* are merely a little punk teenager who wouldn’t know an idiom if it jumped up and bit you on the back of your hip-hugger jeans! What I meant to say is scam! Get out of here! Get lost, you little brat!
- SAMANTHA: *(Getting a bit of her courage back)* You get lost! I live here. You’re just a guest.
- JASMINE: But a very dangerous guest, don’t you ever forget that.
- SAMANTHA: Okay, I’ll give you that. But you still haven’t told me who Damien is.
- JASMINE: *(Furious, she slowly advances toward SAMANTHA, who takes a few steps backward)* Oh, you want to know who Damien is, do you?
- (DAMIEN suddenly ENTERS from the front hall. He appears to be a middle-aged businessman; however, his suit and shirt are completely black, and his tie is bright red. He wears glasses and carries a small attaché case, also black.)*
- DAMIEN: Yes, she does. *(Seeing him, JASMINE stops in her tracks and quickly retreats to extreme Down Left, where she stares out at the audience.) (To SAMANTHA)* I am Damien, my dear. *(Points to JASMINE with a smile)* She works for me.
- SAMANTHA: Oh, my... You said your name was Damien? *(He nods)* And she works for you?
- DAMIEN: Right again.
- SAMANTHA: *(Without leaving the spot she is standing, she leans a bit toward him, looking him over.)* But wouldn’t that make you...?
- DAMIEN: *(Smiles again)* Him? No. I’m just middle management. And she and I have a little business to discuss. Dull stuff, really. Trust me, it wouldn’t interest you at all. So if you would be so kind as to ... *(Still smiling, he waves his hand as to indicate she should leave. She just stands there staring at him. Finally, after a few beats of this, his smile disappears, and his expression becomes menacing.) (Sternly, with a breathy, devilish voice ala “The Exorcist”)* Leave us! *(Smiles again, in a normal voice)* Please. *(She starts*

for the front hall exit, crossing above him. When she has almost exited, he speaks again.) Incidentally, I understand that you’re quite the little photographer.

SAMANTHA: I am?

DAMIEN: Oh, yes. That video you made of Jasmine’s encounter with the bull is priceless. Good stuff. Top notch. Really.

SAMANTHA: Er, yeah. Th-thanks. *(She quickly EXITS through the front door exit.)*

JASMINE: *(Turning to DAMIEN)* She made a video?

DAMIEN: *(As he moves to the coffee table in front of the couch, places his attaché case on it and opens the case.)* Yes. Just as you ...how did you put it?... *almost* made it over the fence. *(He pulls an 8 x 10 photo out of the case and hands it to her. NOTE: he must hand the photo to her and she must view it without ever turning the picture side to the audience.)* Here’s a still from it, taken at the, shall we say “critical” moment.

JASMINE: *(Looks at picture)* That little...! I’ll turn her into a...

DAMIEN: Tut, tut. Water under the bridge. Unfortunately for you and your little crusade, she posted that video on the internet. *(JASMINE looks shocked)* It’s gone viral, I’m afraid. Over 300 million views to date. My dear, you have effectively lost any credibility you had with the people up here. And, as your face and another, umm...*prominent* feature of your anatomy have been circulated worldwide, your usefulness to us has diminished greatly, to say the least.

JASMINE: What does that mean?

DAMIEN: I’m afraid I’ve had to demote you to... *(He takes a folded sheet of paper from his case, opens it, looks it over)*...second class fire stoker. *(He holds it out to her. She reluctantly reaches for it. He suddenly pulls it away from her at the last moment.)* However....

JASMINE: There’s a however?

DAMIEN: There’s always a however. You should know that. Some of our very best soul-snatching schemes with these humans have depended on a “however” in the fine print.

JASMINE: So...?

(DAMIEN smiles at her, calmly closes the case, and sits on the left side of the couch. After a beat, he looks around the room.)

DAMIEN: Lovely décor, don’t you think?

JASMINE: Whatever.

DAMIEN: You know, I concluded the bargain for my first soul in America in an Inn just like this. *(Stares ahead with a smile as he recalls)* A General, I believe, during their Revolutionary War...Arnold something.

JASMINE: *(Matter-of-factly)* Benedict Arnold.

DAMIEN: Oh? You know him?

JASMINE: I was in charge of red-hot pokers and pincers in dungeon 93B at the time. Oh, yes, General Arnold and I know each other quite well. *(She smiles, almost a laugh.)* He was one of yours, was he?

DAMIEN: Yes indeed. Even signed the contract in blood. Not his own, of course. Generals never shed their *own* blood. *(Smiles, looks up musing on the past.)*

JASMINE: *(After a beat or two)* So, you were saying: “However...”

DAMIEN: *(As he speaks, he takes an eyeglass cleaning cloth from a jacket pocket, takes off his glasses, wipes them and puts them back on.)* Jasmine, you have always been one of my favorite underlings. Your work has a particular nastiness about it that’s quite lovely, actually. You’re mean spirited, vicious, and absolutely ruthless I like that in a demon. Consequently, I’ve decided to give you a chance to *redeem* yourself, if you’ll pardon the expression. If you can bring me a nice fresh soul; and by that, I mean a young one. No senior citizens, mind you. They’re much too easy. You can get them to sell their souls to you for a ten dollar winning scratch-off ticket and a can of Metamucil. If you can get me that nice young soul, I will restore to you active status as a demon, first class. *(A beat)* Well, *(He rises)* so nice to see you again, Jasmine. *(Closes, latches and picks up his attaché case.)* Good hunting! *(He EXITS through front hall exit.)*

(JASMINE moves to Down Center, looks at the audience and breathes a deep sigh of relief. She then proceeds to the chair Down Right, starts to sit in, and then remembers. She moves to the couch. Before she arrives, a loud “Moo!” is heard She turns toward the audience and scowls, then continues moving to the couch, picks up one of the pillows, brings it to the chair and places it on it. She then plops herself into the chair. She leans her head back, closes her eyes.)

JASMINE: *(Contented)* Ahhh!

(The front door is heard closing, and shortly after, BILLY ENTERS. He is carrying his backpack in his left hand. He takes a few steps toward CENTER, and spots JASMINE in the chair.)

BILLY: *(Trying to get attention.)* Er,... excuse me.

JASMINE: *(Annoyed, answers without opening her eyes.)* What...is it?

BILLY: I was looking for Samantha. Have you seen her?

JASMINE: *(Reluctantly opens her eyes)* No, I haven't. I suspect she'll be avoiding my company for a while, young man. *(Realizing)* Young...man! *(Smiles.)* Young man! *(Rises, quickly uses the back of her fingers to wipe invisible dust from her skirt, and moves seductively toward BILLY.)* Hel-lo there. And how are you today,...sir?

BILLY: Sir? Oh boy! *(He drops the backpack, tries to surreptitiously kick it behind him, puffs out his chest.)* How do you do, lovely lady!

JASMINE: *(Turns her head toward the audience.) (Aside to audience.)* This is going to be a snap! *(She grabs the back of his shirt near his neck, lifts her handful of his shirt and walks him out, (EXITING).)*

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN

Perusal
Only FOR
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION