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Contact Robert Kerr at RKerr@robertkerr.net for more information.**

AND THE AIR DIDN'T ANSWER
[EXCERPT]

a play in one act
by

Robert Kerr

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www.robertkerr.net
rkerr@robertkerr.net

CHARACTERS

DAN

JENNIFER

RENEE

Dan's MOTHER

Other parts may be distributed among three actors as follows:

Actor 1: FATHER MCLAUGHLIN, TEACHER, GOD, Boy Scout INTERVIEWER

Actor 2: LITTLE BOY, CRUSADER, ABRAHAM, DRUNK, PRODUCER, DANTE

Actor 3: Dan's FRIEND, ISAAC, DRUNK, a Bible SALESMAN, VIRGIL

SETTING

Dan's church, school, and home; a park; an office; and Dan's imagination.

(The church where DAN rehearsed earlier. JENNIFER is waiting for DAN when he enters.)

JENNIFER

You're a half hour late. Where were you?

DAN

Detention.

JENNIFER

Detention? That's a first for you. How come?

DAN

It's a long story.

JENNIFER

Oh, well. There's this girl in first period study hall—maybe you saw her in detention—some hippie kook named Renee something-or-other. Anyway, she walks in right at the end of first period, and she said it was because she had to send something to one of those hippie organizations—Green Peas or something. So she got detention.

Are you set to practice your speech again?

DAN

I'm not going to give it.

JENNIFER

Why not?

DAN

I don't feel all that faithful.

JENNIFER

Did you talk to Father McLaughlin?

DAN

Yes, and as a result I'm tired and hungry and I don't have one bit of faith.

JENNIFER

Here, why don't you try reading something from the Bible? Maybe that will remind you how loving God is.

DAN

All right.

(DAN starts to read the Bible. Elsewhere on stage, ABRAHAM and ISAAC enter. From above, GOD'S VOICE is heard.)

GOD'S VOICE

Abraham!

(Pause)

Abraham!

(Pause)

Abraham!

(Finally, ABRAHAM notices the voice.)

On your knees!

ABRAHAM

(kneeling)

Yes, Heavenly Father.

GOD'S VOICE

Would you do anything for me?

ABRAHAM

Of course, Heavenly Father.

GOD'S VOICE

If I asked you to, would you climb to the top of Mount Sinai and scream at the top of your lungs, "I'm an effeminate moron!"

ABRAHAM

Yes, and I would even add, "I'm proud of it!"

GOD'S VOICE

Would you eat earthworms fried in the fat of a leprous ass?

ABRAHAM

Gladly, and I wouldn't even add ketchup.

(GOD enters.)

GOD

All right, then. What I want you to do is this: Go up into the mountains and make a sacrifice.

ABRAHAM

Is that all? I do that all the time.

GOD

This time you must sacrifice your son, Isaac.

(ISAAC squeals in terror and clutches ABRAHAM's leg.)

ABRAHAM

Isaac? If I kill him, who will clean up the camel's dung? Why Isaac?

GOD

I get tired of seeing all those cute little lambs dying all the time.

ABRAHAM

But he's my own son!

GOD

Are you turning chicken on me? Abraham's a chicken! Abraham's a chicken!

ABRAHAM

All right. I'll do it.

(ABRAHAM performs each action as GOD tells him to.)

GOD

Great! Now build an altar with those stones... Nice and high... Just like that. Next, make a fire. A big one... There's nothing I like better than a big fire, except a big flood, of course. Okay, tie down Isaac... There you go, good and tight, so he can't get away. Ooooh! Look at him squirm!

(GOD gives ABRAHAM a knife.)

Raise up this knife. Really high, now... When I count to three, drive it right into his chest... One... Two... Two and a half... Two and three quarters... Wow, you really did mean it! All right, let him go.

ABRAHAM

What?

GOD

Let him go. I changed my mind. There's a ram caught in that bush over there. Kill that instead. I'm hungry for lamb chops anyway.

ABRAHAM

But didn't you want me to sacrifice Isaac to prove my faith?

ISAAC

Shhhh!

GOD

Hey, I was just kidding. Come on, don't pout like that. You didn't take me seriously, did you? For heaven's sake, some people just can't take a joke.

(GOD, ABRAHAM, and ISAAC exit. DAN is closing the Bible.)

JENNIFER

Well, did it help?

[END OF EXCERPT]