

SALVATION

by Chris Van Strander

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CHARACTERS

THE REVEREND Preaching.

SETTING

Here. Now.

Center stage, *THE REVEREND's TRUMPET STAND*, and a *MUSIC STAND* to serve as a podium.

OTHER ACTORS, if possible, ring three sides of the stage. They act as *THE REVEREND's choir/congregation*, punctuating her sermon by responding to her calls: affirming, shouting, even jangling some instruments (tambourines, maracas) we'll be giving them.

THE REVEREND announces herself by *BLOWING HER TRUMPET*, then moves to the music stand.

THE REVEREND

We're gonna have church here tonight. *(waits for an affirmation)* Said we're gonna have church here tonight! Someone say "Hell Yeah." *(waits for a response)* Someone say "Hell Yeah!"

(produces her "sermon"—this script) Tonight's sermon comes from the Book of... David. *(looks at audience)* Brothers—sisters—Do you love me? *(waits for their response)* And I love you.

For Love is the greatest treasure on Earth. 'Fact, Love's the centripetal force **KEEPS** this muckball spinnin' **IN THE FIRST PLACE!**

Love for family. Love for friends. Love for **MAKIN' LOVE**—can I get a witness?

But watch out now!: 'cause all too often, what do we do with that Love?

We **KILL IT!** Debase it! Destroy it!

WHO AMONG US hasn't suffocated our Love?, buried it?, 'cause we were too scared?, too shy?, too spiteful?

WHO AMONG US hasn't warped our Love?, twisted n' twisted it 'til it's got more work done on it than a porn star startin' her fifth decade?

And where's that land your ass?, treatin' Love like that? **PURGATORY!**

Messed-up joint, Purgatory. They tell me: when you get there?, there's this big ol' Yaphet Kotto-lookin' angel, talkin' 'bout "Sit your dumb ol' Love-killin' ass down a few thousand years, 'til someone prays you outta this shit."

(beat) Now—what date's today? *(waits for a response)* October 2nd.

THE REVEREND holds up **FOUR FOLDED PIECES OF PAPER..**

THE REVEREND

I have four souls.

Four of our brothers and sisters, who departed this life on October 2nd— **CUT OFF**, even in the blossoms of their sin, no reckoning made, but sent to their account with all their imperfections on their heads— **Who AS WE SPEAK**, now languish, chained and bound, in Purgatory.

Tonight, on this, the anniversary of their passing, we intercede for them.

'Cause I **BELIEVE** there's hope! I **BELIEVE** we can get Heaven to—kick open! I **BELIEVE** that-if-every-single-person-here-tonight-will-shout-with-me-in-one-voice "OPEN THAT GATE!" it **WILL FLING WIDE!**, that these souls may finally enter that place where All Is Love! Can I get an Amen? **CAN I GET AN AMEN?!**

(beat) Our response will be, on the 1—2—3: “Open That Gate!” Let’s try: 1—2—3!:

EVERYONE (hopefully)
Open That Gate!

THE REVEREND OPENS and READS ALOUD one of the papers, at random. Then:

THE REVEREND
1—2—3!:

EVERYONE
Open That Gate!

THE REVEREND BLOWS HER HORN like the Archangel Gabriel. This paper’s done.

Ad lib, THE REVEREND now invites some of the OTHER ACTORS (those game to volunteer) to come “testify” and read the remaining three papers aloud. After each is read:

THE REVEREND
1—2—3!:

EVERYONE
Open That Gate!

THE REVEREND BLOWS HER HORN like the Archangel Gabriel.

These FOUR PAPERS—each adorned with a photo of the person—read as follows:

August Wilson.

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright.

In 2005, Brother Wilson found out he was ill. But did Brother Wilson go quietly into that good night? "Screw this!", he said. "I wrote the motherfucking PIANO LESSON!"

On October 2nd, 2005, Brother Wilson grabbed his wife. Popped a bottle of Viagra. And LIKE A TOTAL FUCKING MACK, made love to that woman for 12 hours straight! When he finally succumbed, he was smilin’ so wide? You'd've thought it was opening night of FENCES!

Marcel Duchamp.

Artist. Dada-ist.

Brother Duchamp could've had any woman on earth. But his brilliantly warped mind couldn't resist transcending the bounds of human love! Which is why he started fucking alpacas.

Soon, he'd moved to Peru to pursue his llama lust. On October 2nd, 1968, he bit the dust when an angry herd attacked him, post-gangbang, ran him off a cliff.

Pope Urban the Fourth.

Devoutly Catholic, Brother Urban harbored a secret: His true object of worship was not our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was his OWN MOTHER! His lust for her was so great, he joined the priesthood just to get her out of his sight!

But his desire caught up: On October 2nd, 1264, he had Mom over for dinner at the Vatican. Though he had to pee five minutes into the meal, he held it and sat there, devouring her with his eyes, for three—four—FIVE hours, 'til his bladder exploded!

Harriet Nelson.

As in OZZIE AND HARRIET's Harriet.

Sister Nelson may've SEEMED like America's perfect housewife... But for 40 years, she carried on a torrid affair... with her MAID, ESMERELDA!

Knowing nobody would accept "everyone's favorite mom" was really, in her heart of hearts, a stone butch diesel dyke, Sister Nelson took pills to prolong her life. That way, she figured, once everyone was dead, she could finally come out. Unfortunately, the pills contained mercury, and on October 2nd, 1994, she shuffled off this mortal coil.

After the last paper is read:

THE REVEREND

(gazing Heavenward, rallying the others) Look, y'all! Do you see?! It's openin'—it's openin'—IT'S OPEN!

To read the rest of this play, please contact me at:

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