

Angels
The Ninth Order

By Mark Mc Quown
A full length play

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(c)

Angels
The Ninth Order
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Characters in Order of Appearance

John	An Angel of The Tenth Order, Seraphim, ageless male with full set of white, feathered wings.
Darnell. . . .	An African/American Angel in his twenties, no wings.
Sylvia	A white, female Angel who looks ten years old, no wings.
Chalice	An African/American Angel in her twenties, no wings.
Rayleen	A white, female Angel in her forties, no wings.
Wendell	A white, male Angel, ex mechanic in his sixties, no wings.
Groell	A white, American male Angel in his late thirties in an Army uniform, no wings.
Hanna	A white, female Angel in her late teens, no wings.

Setting:

The setting is the Way Station in Heaven, a pre stop for Angel training and the time is the present.

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A play in two acts

Act One

(A space that contains benches, tables, rugs, toys including a tricycle, all on a surface painted blue and white like clouds. The area beyond the surfaces is black. The background is large, red curtains with white sheers between them and beyond that is black. “Carmina Burana” is playing somewhere off in the darkness. An Angel with full white, feathered wings come from the darkness and walks across the surface carrying a chamber pot and disappears on the other side.)

(A male person screams from behind the curtains. The curtains blow on stage lightly as SOUNDS play of that person sliding down a huge chute and then rolling out onto the surface. DARNELL is an African/American male in his twenties.)

DARNELL

What in the – I mean – this is the only way in? You are kidding me, right?

VOICE (O.S.)

Get over it, Darnell.

(Darnell stands and brushes himself off.)

DARNELL

Get over it? I don't see you falling down the chute and rolling in here like a dog ball. It just seems so stupid that that is the way in to the Way Station.

(A beach ball rolls on followed by a ten-year-old looking girl/woman named Sylvia.)

SYLVIA

Hello, Darnell, and welcome back.

DARNELL

Sylvia.

(Darnell crosses to a bench and sits.)

SYLVIA

You weren't gone very long.

DARNELL

You're darn right, Sylvia, I was not gone very long – because a forty or fifty-year-old woman drove into the crowd at the parade I was at and killed me. I was two years old. I had only been on the planet for twenty-four months and a drunk killed me and three others, so I am not the only one back today.

(The same winged Angel enters with a tray of coffee, tea, and tea cakes. The angel places the tray on one of the tables and leaves.)

DARNELL

Thank you, John.

JOHN

Stuff it, Darnell.

(Sylvia pulls out a toy house and sits on the surface and plays in each room.)

SYLVIA

You and John seem to have some...

DARNELL

...don't go there. It's hard enough to be here waiting and waiting and waiting.

(He makes coffee for himself.)

DARNELL

That's what we did down there – is wait. Is the whole darn issue one of who can wait the longest? And why isn't there a bigger fight against the new evil? Do you think he knows, Sylvia?

SYLVIA

Yes. It's happening more and more now since all the killings in schools and restaurants and community buildings.

DARNELL

Do you think it's the signal?

SYLVIA

No. Not yet. There aren't enough. But, if this continues – then something is happening. It could be the beginning.

(A female screams as her body falls down through the chute and she finally hits bottom off stage and rolls on through the red curtains with white sheers. Chalice, an African/American female in her twenties rolls to a stop and immediately adjusts her hair.)

CHALICE

This is the most ridiculous thing. We are in the twenty first century and we are still dropping in from the chute. Help me out. Hello?

DARNELL

I thought you were white.

CHALICE

And what darn difference could it make if I was white. I still fell down here and rolled in. What are you doing back?

DARNELL

I died at the hands of a drunk female, I was two years old in a parade.

SYLVIA

I don't care for the undertone of male superiority, plebe, be careful what you say up here..

CHALICE

Make me some of that coffee, I need some punch.

DARNELL

Now listen here you two...

CHALICE

...careful.

DARNELL
...I know that Sylvia is...

SYLVIA
...NEXT IN LINE.

(Darnell makes a cup of coffee for Chalice)

DARNELL
I understand the deal about being next in line, okay? I have been next in line as every one around here knows and now I am making coffee in lesser Heaven for a black woman who used to be white. So - I said it. There it is. It's out, right?

(Chalice walks to the table and sits across from Darnell as Sylvia moves on from the toy box to dolls with a stop at the table for a tea cake – or two.)

CHALICE
How many colors have you been, Sylvia?

SYLVIA
All of them.

CHALICE
And does it make any difference?

SYLVIA
Only down there. What happened to you this time?

CHALICE
I was killed in a church in the southern United States - by a white man who entered our Holy shrine bringing death with him in the form of a rifle which he used to send us back toward the Master.

DARNELL
You mean lesser Heaven.

CHALICE
Stop Darnell will you. We all understand that you are an intellectual with an enormous capacity for past self-pity and over wrought emotional instability which is why...

DARNELL
...don't go there. I have certain rights, even here in the queue...

CHALICE

...you are still here, still in the queue even though anyone else would have already exploded into a mass of random electrons and protons – so, you still must be special since you're back here...figure it out Darnell before it's too late.

SYLVIA

...again.

(Darnell gives Sylvia a sharp look.)

(Sylvia stands and takes one of her dolls to the edge of the surface and looks out into the blackness.)

CHALICE

What do you see?

SYLVIA

My life. So much of my life wasted because I didn't know. And I wanted to know but, I didn't know how to ask so, I spent so much time doing everything the wrong way. I kept listening to people, anyone, but – there were never any answers because I hadn't found the secret that the answer is really inside you and you only.

DARNELL

Yeah, it's a big blow to most.

(John returns and takes the tray)

DARNELL

So John, I don't suppose you want to cough it up just why...

JOHN

...no. I do not.

(Calling after him)

DARNELL

Maybe someone should tell the establishment that the waiting rooms in prison are warmer than this.

John (O.S.)

Turn up the heat.

DARNELL

I don't understand this. He has no right to treat us this way. We are Angels for God sakes.

(A slight rumble like a volcano mixed with an earthquake but brief. No one moves for a moment.)

CHALICE

Pre-Angels. Pre. You know you're an Angel when there are feathered wings growing out of your backbones. Of course – you know that feeling, right, Darnell?

DARNELL

What ever happened to you again? I know you told me half dozen times but...

CHALICE

...I died on an operating table in Planned Parenthood during an abortion – which also killed my child. I was poor, white, eighteen and they offered me money.

DARNELL

How did you get up here?

CHALICE

You mean why didn't I go straight to hell – it was someone higher than my\ pay grade that made that decision Darnell. And that same one made the decision to remove your wings and plop you back in the queue so. . .

SYLVIA

Death isn't always our fault. Anyone who comes here knows that. That is why we are here. In the queue.

DARNELL

In lesser Heaven.

VOICE (O.S.)

Stop saying that.

(A female scream as her body hits the walls of the chute and finally lands backstage and rolls out on the surface from the red curtains with white sheers. Rayleen is a white female in her forties and is tattooed on both arms and other places. She is still trying to scream but her voice is too tired.)

RAYLEEN

What in the...

SYLVIA

Careful. You pay for what you say.

(Rayleen looks cautiously around and then at herself)

RAYLEEN

What the...

DARNELL

What happened to you?

RAYLEEN

Where am I?

DARNELL

What's the last thing you remember?

(pause)

RAYLEEN

What? Remember what? And who are you and – the last thing I remember – my boyfriend shot me through the bathroom door. Thought I was a burglar. Oh God - I'm dead, right? That measly little mother fu...

(John clears his throat as he enters with a tray of glasses and lemonade)

JOHN

Wrong. If you were dead, you would not be here. You would be...

DARNELL

...do we have to go there?

JOHN

No.

(John turns and his wings brush against Rayleen. She is frozen in terror)

RAYLEEN

That – is an Angel.

SYLVIA

(mimicking her)

That – is correct.

RAYLEEN

I'm dead - but I'm not dead. There are Angels here and then there are...

DARNELL

...lesser Angels in lesser Heaven.

VOICE (O.S.)
One more time, Darnell...

(Pause)

RAYLEEN
...who's that? Is that your dad? And where are we again and how did I get here?
I fell down some tube. A round thing with walls and I kept hitting it and hitting it
and...

CHALICE
...it's a Way Station. In the ethers.

RAYLEEN
The ethers? You mean, like in the air like...? What the...I'm crazy right. I'm crazy
dead. Really, really nut cake. Took too any bad things and now it's all coming back,
right? It's just a hallucination and I'll get over it, right? Someone? Never mind, it's my
problem, it has always been my problem. Where's my purse? My purse, it has my
wallet and all m I.D. and everything I own, hello. Oh man, this is so bad.

(She starts to pinch and bite herself back to reality.)

RAYLEEN
Ouch. Ouch. Ahhhh. Shit!

(An explosive SOUND off stage and the curtains blow onstage from the noise.
Everyone stops and looks off stage waiting.)

RAYLEEN
All right, give it to me. Give it to me straight and cut the crap, I'm a big girl who
has been around the block a couple of times so I can take whatever it is.

CHALICE
It isn't that simple and it's hardest on Catholics who believe they were promised
place in the kingdom on the right hand of God, on the right hand of Christ on the
right hand of the Holy Spirit, and if they had a waiter up there, they would also be
on the right hand of them.

RAYLEEN
So – that wasn't true in the Bible, none of it was true, is that what you're saying?

SYLVIA
It's all true – as long as you understand how time fits in the equation and how
long time is.

RAYLEEN

And, how long is time?

EVERYONE

Forever!!

RAYLEEN

So, where are all my friends, where is the light at the end of the tunnel, where is all the fantastic music and where am I now?

(A softer section of *Carmina Burana*.)

SYLVIA

You are in the Kingdom of Heaven – but Heaven is huge. It's bigger than all the malls on earth put together. It's larger than the Universe and there are rooms and Mansions and shelters and Palaces and you get to them with...

DARNELL

...wings. You have to have wings. They transport you between the bubbles of time and the concrete concourse of outer Heaven and the inner Universe. Wings come in one model and our friend John is wearing it. You get wings for service and once you have wings you can begin the advance toward the maker and master of time.

RAYLEEN

Do you know that for sure?

DARNELL

Yes.

RAYLEEN

How?

DARNELL

I can't tell you that.

RAYLEEN

How about directions to my mansion? My kingdom? My palace? Taco Bell? Mickey D's and the bathroom because I have to pee something terrible.

DARNELL

Nope.

RAYLEEN

This is ridiculous.

(She walks the perimeter of the surface and tries to step onto the black)

(As soon as her foot touches the black, a black out takes place after an intense flash of light, an intense sound effect and Rayleen is gone. The lights come back up instantly.)

(Darnell pushes a cube over toward the red curtains with white sheers and sits on it facing the curtain. He starts counting. Chalice sits at the low table and Sylvia joins her, all facing the red curtain with white sheers. A female screams followed by her body hitting the sides of the tube as she flies down the chute and hits the floor off stage and then rolls on through the curtain. She stands instantly and assumes a fighting position.)

RAYLEEN

Fuck this. Come on – give me your best shot, you angelic cock su...

VOICE (O.S.)

Careful.

DARNELL

I believe she broke a record. Where did you go?

RAYLEEN

Who cares where I went? Where did I go, just now? – I just died in my parent's car which drove off the road in a hug fuc...

VOICE (O.S.)

Uhhhh!

RAYLEEN

...ing storm and my whole family drowned. So, where are they? We were all together and the car went under water so, where are they? Where are my damn parents? Talk. Say something you bunch of. . .

(An enormous fart comes from the tube as a man's voice comes screaming down the chute, hits off stage and slides onto stage on his back on a Car Creeper with a wrench in one hand and a joint in the other. Wendell is a man in his middle to early sixties and of Hungarian descent.)

WENDELL

What the crapnation is going on here?!!!

(He stands trying to brush himself off, but holding the wrench defensively.)

WENDELL

I'm warning every butt sucking one of you assweeps that I am dangerous, I have a dangerous body which has been classified as – dangerous. What do you want? Who are you? Don't get too close to me because I am pissed and I am late with this guy's car so I am saying to you all, get the piss out of my way so I can

(John enters with a tray of glasses and Irish whisky. He places the tray on the table. He turns and picks up the Crawler, takes the wrench and joint out of Wendell's hands and leaves.)

WENDELL

Hey. Hey! You duck, that's mine. My stuff. That's very expensive weed and now that it's legal in California I get to suck that sucker down so give me back my shit.

VOICE (O.S.)

Careful

(Wendell looks around for the voice as John leaves with the things. Without taking his eyes off the place where John left, Wendell rushes over and drinks from the bottle and then drinks some more. He finally pours a shot and sits down in confusion.)

WENDELL

Damn Irish know how to make whiskey and that's a fact. That duck fella had wings, right? Those were wings? The guy who took my joint and wrench? And crawler? I say he had wings, correcto? Hello? This is Earth to Wendell – he had wings, correcto?

CHALICE

What happened?

(Turns to her.)

WENDELL

What? To me? What happened to me? Don't know exactly. Was working on a car and we had a little earth quake, just a stutter and the damn thing fell on me. This isn't the hospital. I know, I know it's that DAB crap – high concentrated THC in a wax like crumble – put it on top of the weed in your pipe and it blows the ethanol out of your system. I'll come back in a few seconds, right? To the car? Right? Somebody talk!!!

(He takes another drink. Sylvia walks over and pours herself a shot and downs it Western style.)

(Wendell holds the bottle at her like a trophy.)

WENDELL

Here's looking at you missy.

(Rayleen stomps across the surface and grabs the bottle out of his hands. She takes it and downs about three shots from the bottle and puts it back on the tray staring at Wendell.)

RAYLEEN

I'm the one who needs some help here, not the geezer. I just died – twice. How many of you in here have died twice, right in a row?

(Everyone except Wendell raises their hand.)

(Pause)

RAYLEEN

Okay, I am starting to get that the parade here is a little more complicated than what we were lead to believe - on earth. It's just, I mean that we're all here to ah...?

WENDELL

What in damnation, woman, are you talking about?

EVERYONE

Death.

(Wendell is stunned. He stands up and then sits back down again and takes another drink. He pulls a small, round, plastic cylinder out of one pocket, opens it and removes a rolling paper and then pours pot into the paper, pushes the top back down on the plastic bottle and places it back in his pockets. He rolls a joint while he talks.)

WENDELL

I can't be dead. I support two grandchildren and some homeless folks down on their luck and horses and some dogs and a cat and a skunk and a parrot. Who'll feed my animals – take care of my stuff? Who will do that? I have cars, stalked up down the road, waiting for me because people come to me because I'm the only honest mechanic in town except some Korean guy who also seems to be honest and – well, I mean . . .

(Pause)

WENDELL

We're dead? Is that what this is? Here?

SYLVIA

No. Yes.

WENDELL

Child, why aren't you in the arms of the Heavenly Savior on a chariot of fire with a good Corvette engine in it? I mean, how old are you? How could some God take a beautiful little girl like you, from the earth? Why aren't you in your mansion?

SYLVIA

I am.

WENDELL

(he laughs)

You'll have to excuse me; my eyes just aren't what they used to be. I just don't see the big guy around us and the fast-fiery chariot or leather couches, hardwood floors, new appliances, a house staff to clean the place and wipe your butt when your too old.

CHALICE

The big guy is not a guy. God is an entity neither male nor female.

DARNELL

And no sense of humor.

RAYLEEN

And that is no shit!!

VOICE (O.S.)

One more time, young lady...and you will be...

(Pause)

WENDELL

...you got somebody asleep back there?

CHALICE

The I Am.

WENDELL

The I am what?

RAYLEEN

(to O.S. Voice)

I will be what?

SYLVIA

Not here!! Which means some bigger queue somewhere else. Which means some line waiting to be a servant in someone else's Palace. Which means that you are not a full angel but you made house servant status for someone who is.

(Chalice, shaking her head back and forth, walks to the back edge of the stage and looks out.)

WENDELL

Excuse me, are you leaving?

CHALICE

We're all leaving, eventually and there is the rub – eventually – that span of time in space, generating no direction, but heart felt emotions running wild and circumspect - the point being - when is the time to leave and each one of us is the clock so only we know when the big hand touches the six and we make the jump to light speed...

WENDELL

...you might want to try this, Ma'am, the finest whisky ever made in my opinion. *Sine Metu*, see, right here - means – 'without fear', right there on the bottle's label since 1780. Jamieson, how many times have you saved me before?

(He finishes the last little bit in licking the joint so it won't fall apart. He reaches for a lighter in his pocket and almost lights the joint but John has entered the room and immediately walks to Wendell and removes the joint and the lighter and leaves with them.)

WENDELL

Hey, duck man, those things are mine and I am really tired of you taking my stuff on this greyhound to Heaven so I am just going to stand up here and take that stuff back, dig me?

(A bell sounds and everyone except Rayleen and Wendell walk to the edge of the surface and get down on their knees and pray with no words. In only seconds, they stop and return to where they were on stage.)

WENDELL

I am definitely dead.

RAYLEEN

I agree and it happened to me twice.

WENDELL

Wow, how did you get so lucky?

RAYLEEN

It had nothing to do with luck, slick. All right? So, someone here owes us an explanation cause - you all don't have anything else to do whereas me and ah...

WENDELL

...Wendell.

RAYLEEN

...Wendell - may still have some choices, hopefully.

SYLVIA

Listen you two and listen carefully. We are at a Way Station – drifting in between the layers of electrons and protons and smaller than anything else tons – we occupy another world inside the world that you came from on earth. We could spatially be in your back yard or on Pluto's erupted surface – we are here and that is fact one. Fact two is that you don't get to bring almost anything up here with you and if you do bring something, it is because that thing or those things have something to do with your future life and/or they have something to do with why you are here at this Way Station and you will learn those things if you stay here long enough to get wings.

(John enters and removes the bottle and glasses and adds small, finger sandwiches to the tray from the tray he carries on.)

WENDELL

I haven't quite finished with the bottle.

JOHN

I believe you have finished.

WENDELL

Listen, feather back, in my home town I am...

(John turns on Wendell in anger taking a step toward him. No one moves or breathes.)

JOHN

...you are not in your hometown, mechanic! You are in the ethers now and this is no longer your world! This is my world and I have instructions on how to care for it and they come from the I Am so don't call me those names ever again. I am John to you and if you can't accept that we will send you someplace a little more rural to get your wings.

(John leaves. His wings rustle together and the Angel disappears.)

WENDELL

What did he mean by that?

DARNELL

Your soul, Mr. Mechanic, is the last wire of life that you have and you are now in a world that lives or dies by that soul. Even though you show a body, that is only to facilitate your journey where you will eventually need no form. If you were to lose that wire of life, you would become mindless particles floating around old sewer holes trying to find your dark, smelly corner for eternity and the you that you recognize as yourself – would be gone for eternity.

RAYLEEN

This is not right. Whatever happened to live right, die well and live on in the image of your God?

SYLVIA

It's an old Bruce Willis line and he's on his way here pretty soon to eat those words.

CHALICE

That's not fair and they get to know the truth and the truth is that; that is the truth – on earth. This is not earth – this is in earth and the truth here is that we are all on a journey to return to the source we know as...

VOICE (O.S.)

...get a room.

CHALICE

(softer)

The smashing news is that you just don't die and go to heaven. You have to do an Interstitial or Winter Quarter in the service of the power of white light. You have to join in the fight against evil which is now growing like a cancerous barnacle on the democracies of the planet and its Judeo-Christian peoples. You have to go back and help down there before you move into our Mansion up here.

WENDELL

What the fuck is she talking about?

(More rumbling like a volcano going off, brief.)

CHALICE

In this service, you are expected to use language that is appropriate to the circle which includes the I Am. Breaking of rules like language, extends your interstitial to the point where you are just finally ejected from the journey and absorbed into the larger structure. Like shit!

(There is a crashing sound and a single, piercing light on Chalice for a moment and then return to the scene.)

CHALICE

(softer)

I just wanted you to see that there is normally, instant reaction to rule breakers. There are rules here but they are not the same rules as on earth. Many are the same but most rules here are made to keep you on track for your particular journey, which is different for everyone.

RAYLEEN

What are we?

DARNELL

You are Angels – to be. Pre-Angels. Just before Angels. Just before wings which are, your transportation out of this Way Station – unless. . .

RAYLEEN

What? Unless what?

DARNELL

Unless you are asked to be the caretaker of this Way Station and if that happened, you would be the one to move John, onto his real journey. You would launch an Angel into the fight and that Angel would be in your debt for eternity.

WENDELL

So, the, ah, wing thing, Mr. ah – is the present Caretaker?

DARNELL

And he takes his job deadly seriously.

SYLVIA

Wings are your graduation into the circle of Angels, The Ninth Order. Into the circle of energy more precious than life and less precious than life's giver but, not all winged entities are Angels. Remember, you need wings to transport through the ethers. There are no recent new Angels, but there are many who go on and get their wings and become transporters

(John enters and stands at the edge of the surface.)

JOHN

Go ahead. Ask. Ask about John. John is in the ancient circle of the most prized and he gives his service as a household butler by keeping the Way Station clean and its inhabitants well-fed and for that – John gets to ride eternity on a flaming surfboard made of fire and ice – to ride the wind waves of the hostile Universe of man, planets, stars and dark matter. Because I am one of the first – we are the legion of original Angels. Seraphim. The Tenth Order. We are God's original army, the fighters of peace under the divine banner of Whiter Light

DARNELL

You're the best.

JOHN

Dry up, Darnell.

(John leaves)

WENDELL

Well, he didn't leave the bottle. He took my weed and lighter and he left with a bunch of unanswered questions like where is my room and the bathroom and the general store and what about a tooth brush, where is the kitchen, what happens if you step out there in the black, who rings the bell and what happens if you don't pray at that time, where is the laundry, what about sex drugs and rock and roll and – what do we drive up here and lastly – how does it all work?

(Wendell sits back down and tries a few of the finger sandwiches.)

DARNELL

You work for your wings. You are in a queue for your wings. The next one of us for wings is Sylvia and not because she has been here the longest. After Sylvia is Chalice and after Chalice is...

WENDELL

...you.

DARNELL

(intense anger to tears)

...wrong!! Rayleen is before me.

RAYLEEN

But I just got here. Twice.

DARNELL

It makes no difference how long you have been here. It is what you bring here that is the most important and if what you bring here makes one of us go up faster, you are rewarded for that. And – if what you bring here makes one of us go slower, you are also rewarded for that in the other direction.

RAYLEEN

How?

DARNELL

I can't tell you that. Now about the rest of the questions. You don't need a room, a kitchen a bathroom, sex, drugs or alcohol even though all those things are here and available to you.

WENDELL

Well, now we're talking.

DARNELL

But I can't tell you how.

RAYLEEN

Seems a lot like earth was to me. So many questions and almost no answers.

(She crosses to a bench and lies down on her back.)

RAYLEEN

Don't know how you exist without any privacy. And how about the darkness? Do we sleep? Are there bedrooms in the Way Station, do we get a tour and where does John go when he goes out that way – which now seems, now that I look at it, to be the only way out?

CHALICE

It isn't the only way out. There is another way but you will earn more about that in time unless you came, already prepared to make the jump.

SYLVIA

Stay away from the edge. You belong in the center like we are now. The edge holds different journeys for different people and they are all different. People have come here and immediately stepped off the edge – and never returned here. We do have a lot of toys in the middle so you can play, but - you do have to work hard to get your wings. You have to literally die for them and...

CHALICE

...every day. And – you are the only one who knows when it's time.

(Chalice turns around and steps into the white sheers and jumps.)

WENDELL

Wait. Wait.

(He runs to the spot but Sylvia stops him before he gets there.)

SYLVIA

Are you sure this is what you want to do?

WENDELL

What do you mean? Where did she go? What do you mean is this what I want to do? I don't even want to be here so how would I know if this is what I wanted to do?

(He steps closer to the back red curtains and looks out and down.)

WENDELL

No one's here.

SYLVIA

She went back to serve. Is that where you're going?

WENDELL

No. No, I am going to the Board of Reconsideration.

DARNELL

Don't have one.

WENDELL

Complaint Department?

SYLVIA

Nope!

WENDELL

There must be some union here that bucks the upper crust.

DARNELL

There was. They left.

(More strains of "Carmina Burana".)

SYLVIA

Morning Star, God's favorite and the powerful head of a group of Angels defied the I Am and they were banished from Heaven. They were the tenth Order of Angels, the Seraphim, of which there is only one left, John, so now there are only Angels of The Ninth Order. Morning Star is now Lucifer and the ruler of Hades.

WENDELL

That can't be true. I thought all that was a legend and the true hell of disorder, political alliances, corruption and crappy made cars were all human characteristics and can't have no place up here or wherever the hell we are here. Ouch. Ouch!!
OUCH!!!

(Wendell is being pinched by an unseen entity.)

VOICE (O.S.)

Don't test me mechanic.

DARNELL

We are the origin and therefore the originator of all of those elements and we have passed that onto you. The earth is a seed ground for the continuation of Angels and since Angels have now fought each other, with many destroyed, more Angels must be born out of the fire of the human experience to combat those souls who fall to dark power, to dark matter, to that condition that is not of Heaven, but came from Heaven.

(Pause)

WENDELL

You're building an army, right?

SYLVIA

Humans are born with an instinctive desire to kill something for food. Humans are cursed with the instinctual desire to eat meat. To kill an animal and eat it. Heaven sent that to you to help you survive. You are born in the image of God and you contain Godlike features which Morning Star worked and strived for his entire existence, only to be thrown down in the end from his enormous ego that thought it was even greater than the I Am. You have to graduate from those features in order to move up to your higher self and your wings.

WENDELL

What does that have to do with a big, juicy steak sandwich, baked potato, sour cream, chives, Cabernet Sauvignon, cutey waitress and clean finger nails? Man, I'm hungry and after that I want to watch some Fox News and the I want to listen to Bill O'Rielly so I can get the real days news from a fair and balanced television station.

DARNELL

You're not even in the ball park, Mr. Mechanic.

(Darnell goes off where John always enters from.)

WENDELL

What's his problem?

SYLVIA

Can't say.

RAYLEEN

How about us, what is our problem?

SYLVIA

Ignorance - which is what most people's problem is. Ignorance of the fact that there is a hugely powerful entity that is at the head of a pyramid of power that descends all the way down to Dark Matter, dark power and a Hell ruled over by one of the greatest Angels in all time, Morning Star. And, that evil now invades earth through the dark, corruptive powers of fanatical Islam. Your problem is ignorance.

RAYLEEN

I always believed. I always prayed and I always tried to help people even if they were crapheads who didn't understand that I was helping them. I have always held God in my heart and no matter how bad I was being, I always knew I was being bad and there was probably another way to live but I just hadn't come upon it yet.

WENDELL

Me too. Ich auch!!

SYLVIA

And that is why you two are here.

RAYLEEN

I have to be me. I have to be who I am. This is who I am, hamburgers, French fries, tattoos and all and I don't see having to give that up in order to grow wings to fight some dark dude in a dirty alley without Batman.

WENDELL

I'll second that – include chili dogs and...

SYLVIA

...don't worry, it goes away after a while. Many things go away after a while and when they are gone, knowledge seeps in and takes their place and eventually you learn...

RAYLEEN

...it's never going to go away for me and this is not what I prayed for all my life so I really think that I really don't belong here so I'm just going to go back a couple of steps and try and figure out who...

(She turns and walks briskly upstage to where Chalice left and without turning around jumps into the darkness.)

RAYLEEN (cont'd)
...fucked up my life.

(Her voice trails off as she falls away into the darkness.)

SYLVIA (cont'd)
(goes back to the toys)
...and then you know and you begin to move forward.

(Pause)

(Wendell walks to where Rayleen jumped and looks out into the dark and then returns to Sylvia and sits down at a table.)

WENDELL
So, does she come back? Does she come back here?

SYLVIA
No one knows. She jumped earlier and we think she broke a return record for time. I don't know why she would jump again, so early, unless, unless she is the. . .

DARNELL
. . .she's not.

(Sylvia gives Darnell a sharp look as Darnell walks to the Red Curtains and looks out and looks down and then returns to the space.)

(The characters spend a few moments in silence with little movement as they ponder their next move.)

WENDELL
So, you're building an army – to fight one of your own...

(Darnell comes back in carrying a large, old book)

DARNELL
Not one of our own. One who was our own, but now is the entity of evil, the entity of death, the entity of dark matter.

WENDELL
What is this dark matter crap I've been hearing for years now?

(Darnell places the book on a table and begins to read when John enters and interrupts him by speaking the words aloud without the book.)

DARNELL

Noun, Astronomy...

JOHN

noun: **dark matter**; noun: **cold dark matter**; noun: **hot dark matter**,
in some cosmological theories, nonluminous material that is postulated to exist
in space and that could take any of several forms including weakly interacting
particles (cold *dark matter*) or high-energy randomly moving particles created soon
after the Big Bang (hot *dark matter*). But the matter is really this. The Universe
is made up of 68% dark energy, 27% dark matter leaving 5% for the earth, the sun,
the moon, the stars and everything else we see from the earth – all of it combined.
Dark matter is the battle field for the existence of light and we are its soldiers.
(John closes the book and carries it out.)

(Darnell drops his head in some personal shame.)

WENDELL

So – let me see if I have this whole design here - people are born – they are supposed
to learn some epic teaching about dark matter and energy and then they die and pop up
here – even though it was down a tube, and here we get further orders. We’ve been
drafted, right? This is the Divine draft and you don’t just take anyone – you have to
work up here in order to gain a rank? And work means you have to die and go back
to earth like Rayleen just now and do it all over again until you get it right. It’s
“Groundhog Day” only Bill Murry isn’t here yet – is he?

SYLVIA and DARNELL

No!!

(A screaming, male voice is heard falling down the shut, hitting the floor back stage
and rolling on in an American Army Infantry Uniform with blue jeans and Army
Boots - he is a noncommissioned officer smoking a joint. He’s a grunt in his late
thirties.)

GROELL

What the fuck.

(A loud thunder clap and Groell is slapped up by the side of his head and he falls
over and then instantly sits back up.)

GROELL

What in the fucking fuck...?

(The scene repeats itself again with Groell hitting the floor and then sitting up.)

GROELL

Okay!! Okay!! I got it. I get it. I’m all over it. Where the fuck are we?

(The scene repeats itself with Groell hitting the floor and then sitting up.)

(John enters carrying a tray with a bottle of Perrier, a glass of ice and tea sandwiches.
He removes the joint from Groell's hand and holds it like it's poo poo.)

JOHN

I suggest you shut up.

(He takes the joint from Groell and leaves the tray on a table and takes the old tray with him as he exits.)

(Groelle carefully stands up and takes off his gear and drops it on the floor. Sylvia collects it and takes it off stage and then returns.)

GROELL

The ah, guy with wings – took my joint – what up with that, is this a no smoking area?

(He crosses to the Perrier and pours it in the glass and drinks. He sits down.)

WENDELL

Took mine too but he left me some Irish Whisky, not this French bubble water. Took my wrench and crawler, crap!

GROELL

Wow. Wow. Really, this is just – wow, what the fu...?

EVERYONE

Shush!!!!

GROELL

I'm dead, right? We're all dead here?

SYLVIA

No. It is slightly more complicated.

(He looks around.)

GROELL

I don't see how anything could be more complicated than this. I'm dead and so is everyone else because - we are not on a battlefield in Afghanistan, right and a guy in white wings took my fu – ing pot?

(A woman screams as she hits the walls of the tube coming down and finally rolls onto stage under the red curtains with white sheers. She rolls across the stage and hits Groell's legs which brings her body up to his waist level and then drops her head into his lap with her hands wrapped around his legs, yelling into his crotch.)

GROELL

Man, adds a whole new meaning to a hummer.

(Rayleen pulls her head up and looks into Groell's face.)

RAYLEEN

Groell?

GROELL

Rayleen? Rayleen, I thought you was dead?

WENDELL

...she is...

SYLVIA

...not...

DARNELL

This is not the house of death – this is the house of light and life. Except.
You know each other?

GROELL

Yeah, but she's dead.

SYLVIA

Not.

GROELL

Why do you keep saying that? Who are you? Where are we?

DARNELL

What happened to you?

GROELL

What?

SYLVIA

What happened to you, just now?

GROELL

(he thinks)

I – I was in Afghanistan and – and I was in a jeep driving toward the compound when there was this unmerciful sound of explosions, torn screaming, flesh searing apart with eyes popping against a sun like yellow fire. And on the other side was some Afghani kid giving me the finger through the blaze and smoke – while his sister or girlfriend picked through my driver's body for anything she could carry away from the flames, which was nothing more than a shredded bag of pot we would have shared with our outfit. Rayleen.

RAYLEEN

Groell, I never thought I would see you again. When was the last time we...?

SYLVIA

...this – has never happened before.

WENDELL

How is that possible? Don't you all know we are only separated by six degrees of people so you must get people up here all the...

DARNELL

...we don't. It doesn't work that way. This is a Way Station, not a family reunion center. We are here to do a job. We all have a new employer he she is the most powerful entity in the Universe and we work for him and...

RAYLEEN

...what's it to you anyway, pal.

DARNELL

(angry)

I am not your pal and don't ever call me that again. I am a fellow traveler on a journey so much larger than life that it covers life in a massive veil of translucent material that separates us from the dark matter and energy that surrounds your home plane and your very lives. We are Angels of the Ninth Order and we are here to build an army of light to fight that which is dark and that which is evil and that which is guided by a powerful hand who has had the greatness of sitting next to the I Am in the seat of power in the throne room of Heaven's King and...

VOICE (O.S.)

Get to the end, Darnell.

(Darnell deflates and quickly sits down in a corner.)

GROELL

Who – is that?

(No answer.)

GROELL (cont'd)

Where are we again and – who's in the back room?

SYLVIA

This is the Way Station before the Gates of the unending Kingdom. We are here with the I Am.

GROELL

And what are you doing here?

EVERYONE

Waiting.

RAYLEEN

And while we all wait, after I have died three times, is there some sort of room where my friend Groell and I can go and be private by ourselves?

(John enters)

JOHN

No!!

GROELL

Holy Shit, what the fucking fuck is...?

(A lighting strike drops Groell and Rayleen, loud thunder and Groell is bounced a few times once he is on the floor.)

(No one moves, no one breathes.)

(Groell looks up and all around and then gets up on his knees.)

GROELL

Sorry, sir. Sorry. I'm getting it slowly. I got it, Sir!

VOICE (O.S.)

At ease.

(Groell helps Rayleen up and moves her toward one of the rugs and then sits with her.)

(Rayleen cries through her words.)

RAYLEEN

I'm so sorry. I'm sorry to everyone. I just never thought there was anything like this. There was nothing in Sunday School that said anything about some post mortem Way Station where we get drafted to fight in just another damn war between good and evil. If the God I prayed to isn't powerful enough to drop this Morning dick on his head then what was it all about down there? Hopelessness? Did you want to introduce us to sheer, unfathomable hopelessness? That's insane. I've seen hopelessness.

RAYLEEN (CONT'D)

I lived with parents that drove themselves to death trying to bring food and shelter to their children while the messed-up Universe let rich men and women party and frolic in the wealth of our emotionally broke and completely downtrodden families. That wasn't fair and this isn't fair and I had to stick out my life down there in a world you made comfortable for the rich and a death cloak for the poor and poorer. You are not the God I prayed to and I demand to see that God now. The Bible says I have the right, my church said I had the right – I HAVE THE FUCKING RIGHT AND I WANT TO SEE HIM NOW!!! NOW. This minute. Where is my God?

(No one moves. There is no sound.)

DARNELL

This is not right? What's going on here?!! Why doesn't he...

JOHN

...stay out of it.

DARNELL

Don't talk to me like I am a child – where is the retribution? Where is the lightning and thunder? Why isn't she writhing and smoking on the floor? Where is her payback, where is?

SYLVIA

. . . Darnell?

GROELL

Dude?!!!

DARNELL

Don't call me dude, you rodent. I am an Angel.

(He moves menacingly toward Groell.)

JOHN
Were!

SYLVIA
He still is.

JOHN
Not!!

SYLVIA
(screaming)
Don't lie.

RAYLEEN
(to Darnell)
That's what you did. What I did is what you did, right?

JOHN
No, what he did, he did as a full-fledged, winged Angel of The Ninth Order.

GROELL
God clipped his wings for yelling back?

SYLVIA
It is none of our business.

RAYLEEN
Listen, you little bitch, I don't know what kind of crap you had to go through to get on the good side of this God, but I went through...

SYLVIA
...you have no idea what I went through. You cannot count the concrete floors I slept on, the blood stained knees from praying, the cuts and lashes from an ignorant society that etched their disapproval across my back and face. You cannot know the life I gave up to gain a life forever. You don't know what I did in order to stand here now. None of you!!! I gave up life when I still lived in order that I could receive the Sacrament of Christ and be resurrected. I never lived nor did I give birth through my body to another human – so don't ever speak to me that way again – I am on the side of the I am.

(She stands and pulls her garment up in the back to show severe whipping at some past time.)

SYLVIA (cont'd)

Only God knows what I gave up to stand in this space waiting for my turn to stand on the field and face the master of darkness and defend the light of Christ against an on coming siege from the left and the right of the entire Universal community in space. I paid my dues while you newbies sit here in the house of the Holy and complain about missing your Snickers Bar and cold glass of Coors.

GROELL

Never tried that combo – is it good?

SYLVIA

Shut up.

GROELL

Wow, the whole scene up here has certainly changed for the worse. So John, how about dinner? Do you do dinner? Is Prime Rib out of the question or did that rib already come into play, lol.

(He laughs and guffaws and then stops when no one joins.)

(John turns, his wings ruffle and he leaves the arena.)

WENDELL

All my life I watched the Republican and Democratic parties cut down our liberties, chop away at our monies, kill our young on the battle field and worse – kill our young on the race field of our own backyards and all of that time, I wondered – why doesn't He step in, why doesn't God just bring down the hammer on these assholes who cut the heads off of people and fry them in cages because they don't bow down to the man with the knife and the God he assails as Allah? But he didn't, he doesn't and...

DARNELL

...he won't. He's busy.

SYLVIA

Very busy.

RAYLEEN

That is not what you learn on earth from the Bible. What you learn is that he is a constant God, full of love...

SYLVIA

...omnipotent...

(Rayleen walks to the red curtains and steps up on the lip and looks into the darkness.)

SYLVIA

Please come back. Please reconsider. Don't jump for God's sake.

(Rayleen turns to her.)

RAYLEEN

But that is exactly who I am jumping for, God's sake. If he doesn't want me to go then I will be stopped. Are you listening? Are you here?!!! I am standing on the abyss, again, for time number four. Am I going I Am? Am I? AM I? AM I?!!!

(John raises up the cross around his neck and points at Rayleen)

JOHN

Forgive her, she knows not what she says.

RAYLEEN

Do you hear me speaking? I am asking for your presence here. I want you to come in and change the game, tell the truth, act like my God.

(John lowers the cross to its original position.)

JOHN

For I am the...

RAYLEEN

(screams)

Where the fuck are you?!!!

(A huge flash of lighting and booming thunder. The space goes dark except for a spot on Rayleen standing on the edge of the abyss with fear and horror on her face.)

(Darnell crosses over to her and extends his hand. Rayleen reaches out for his hand and he pushes her off into the darkness. She screams and falls. Her voice trails off as she descends.)

RAYLEEN

Is this what you did, Darnell, you chicken shit...?

(Pause)

JOHN

Well spoken, like a trooper.

(He turns and leaves.)

(Sylvia crosses to the toys and finds a doll to play with. The doll is dressed like Rayleen. Groell lays down on a bench and goes to sleep. Wendell walks over to where Rayleen was pushed and looks out into the darkness back stage. Darnell goes out the same way John went. The lights begin to fade. A woman screams and is heard hitting the walls of the tube as she falls, hitting the floor back stage and finally Chalice rolls on naked through the red curtains with white sheers in between and the lights go to black.

End of Act One

Angels
The Ninth Order
By Mark Mc Quown
A play in two acts

Act Two

(When the lights come up, Chalice is in a black, shiny, silky robe with black socks, sitting at a table drinking tea. Wendell is still standing where Rayleen was pushed. John is just leaving with the tray he used to serve the tea. Sylvia is still sitting on the floor with a doll dressed like Rayleen. Darnell is not on and Groell is asleep on a bench, but he has been covered with a blanket and now has a small pillow under his head.)

CHALICE
Where is Darnell?

JOHN
Busy.

CHALICE
And you are?

WENDELL
Wendell, I'm a mechanic.

CHALICE
There are no vehicles up here.

WENDELL

I noticed.

CHALICE

And him?

SYLVIA

That is Groell.

CHALICE

(to Sylvia)

I thought you were moving on?

SYLVIA

It still isn't my time.

CHALICE

What's taking Him so long? It was never this long before.

JOHN (O.S.)

It is complicated.

CHALICE

This is starting to remind me of one of the democratic parties that make up our government in the old US of A. We've slowed down the process to a crawl. Our government is crawling across our wages and benefits like a plague out of control. Did something happen in here? Did I miss some big event?

(Darnell enters.)

CHALICE

Oh my God, a familiar face, who is also still here.

(Darnell walks to the table and sits. He takes one of the tea cups and puts a sugar in it.)

DARNELL

What happened? I mean, this time what happened?

CHALICE

I was shot. Watching a rock concert in Paris. Me and a hundred others were killed. Islamic fanatics, representing ISIS just slaughtered people - in a rock concert. It's spreading and its coming to a head. It is a dark and malevolent kind of evil.

SYLVIA

How did it happen, in Paris?

CHALICE

Terrorists exploded into the theater at night and just started shooting. They emptied their clips and reloaded and began shooting again, just like we were animals, pigs or cows or birds, cans or snakes. It made no difference to them that we were human. It made no difference to them that we were all ages, male and female and that we would never have children or see the sun again or feel the cool breeze on our faces as we walked along the shore of some huge ocean or lake or quiet county stream. It made no difference because they killed us in the name of their God. Some other God who asks the followers to just kill off anyone who doesn't believe in their religion? A God named Allah killed a hundred of us. It could have been a shooting game at a Carnival using humans as targets. Kill ten for a stuffed teddy bear with a burka. Kill twenty and get a golden gown and a one-way ticket to Paradise. How did these men become so stupid?

DARNELL

In other words, a group of assholes.

(Everyone stops and waits but there is no action from the darkness.)

(Chalice looks around waiting for the voice but no voice comes.)

CHALICE

Yes, Darnell, sub-human, stupid, acting on stupid orders from even more stupid people. Terrorists who go home at night and pray on their prayer rug that they killed in honor, that they killed for their supreme being. They are mindless, mind controlled robots of death in the name of one of the most ancient religions on earth, and their God has no remorse. We might as well have been old beer cans or Budweiser bottles. And they are cowards who hide behind humans as shields. They are cowards who think they will rule the world.

WENDELL

Those dicks probably couldn't tell the difference. They're chicken shit brown for one thing with a yellow chicken shit feather sticking out of their desert assholes. They walk around thinking they are doing the work of their God but they are working for a dumb group of Muslim shit heads who eat human existence for lunch.

(Groell wakes up and sits up.)

GROELL

Who. What happened – oh, never mind, I remember now. Oh babe, who are you?

CHALICE

Chalice.

GROELL

Groell.

CHALICE

I know. And how did you get here, Groell?

GROELL

Drove over a land mine in Afgan land. Tore me up. And you?

(John enters to take away the tea set.)

JOHN

It makes no difference how any of us arrive here. We are here on another mission that has nothing to do with what happened to you in your earthly experience.

(He collects the tea things and places them on the tray.)

GROELL

And what is that exactly?

JOHN

I cannot tell you.

(He turns with the tray and leaves.)

(Two women's voices are heard screaming as they fall down the chute, hitting the sidewalls and finally hitting the stage, back stage and sliding out through the red curtains with white sheers in between. Hanna is on a pair of roller blades in cut offs and a tank top. She is in her teens. Rayleen is wearing a pink shirt with the artist's name Pink, barefooted in a pair of cutoff jeans with a piece of material like a cowboy neck band, wrapped around her waist. She has a large number taped to her back)

HANNA

Oh my God, oh my God – oh – my – god. Who are you? Where are we? And... Don't touch me, don't. I don't like people touching me I don't know.

RAYLEEN

(takes a defensive position standing.)
Don't anyone ask!!!

(Rayleen immediately walks as far down stage as she can and sits on the floor in despair.)

DARNELL

Two of you? That's new, isn't it?...what happened to you?

HANNA

What? - What happened? What happened was - I was rollerblading – in Venice – Beach and, who are you again? And You?!! and, and ah – I was run over by a police car chasing a black man down the boardwalk. The fucking car was on the boardwalk!! Don't they know that someone could get hurt or even killed with a moving car on the boardwalk? Can you believe that? Hello?

SYLVIA

I never saw two, ever!!

WENDELL

Cops are stupid. Something like terrorists only with a badge...

(to Rayleen)

And you?

GROELL

...and a gun... Were you in a rodeo, babe?

RAYLEEN

...and some damn attitude. No Groell, I was not in a rodeo and I don't care to discuss it right now, for time number four.

CHALICE

...this just isn't right!!! First two people who know each other and then two people at the same time. At the same time!!

SYLVIA

You got a number on your back.

(While Hanna speaks, Rayleen tries to reach around and pull off the number but she can't. Finally, Groell walks across quickly and pulls off the number and returns to his place.)

HANNA

No!! No. No way. Is this, heaven? No, I can't be dead. I can't be dead, I can't be dead, I can't. I have too much to live for. Where is the person? Where is – the guy, the book, the light and all that stuff that people say they saw when they came back to life from dying. But this is not right. It's not my time, you dicks. Where is the, you know what I'm trying to say – where is. . .?

(John comes back in.)

DARNELL

We should ask – someone, what is...

JOHN

Calm down.

(Hanna turns and sees John and his wings and screams.)

HANNA

Ahhhhhhh. Ahhhhh, Ahhhhhh.

JOHN

Stop screaming, please. Now, what is the question?

HANNA

Who are you? What are you?

SYLVIA

We are all Angels.

CHALICE

And we all arrived alone!!

HANNA

He has wings.

DARNELL

Yes, John is a finished Angel. Everyone in here is moving toward being a finished Angel. Including you, now.

HANNA

And then what happens?

JOHN

I cannot tell you.

WENDELL

Do you know?

JOHN

I cannot tell you.

GROELL

What can you tell me?

JOHN

Stop asking all these questions. You may remove those things on your feet young lady and I will store them for you if you need them later.

DARNELL

John...?

JOHN

No!!

SYVLIA and CHALICE

But what about the...

JOHN

No. No. No!!

(Hanna sits down right where she is and removes the roller blades.)

(Her cell phone drops out of her pocket to the floor. Sylvia gasps, Darnell stands and Chalice backs away from the object.)

(Pause.)

JOHN

Where did you get that?

HANNA

(confused)

It's my phone dummy.

JOHN

You cannot have that here and I am not your dummy – don't call me that again. Do you understand?

(John steps towards her quickly and collects the phone from the floor. He looks at it suspiciously and then looks around suspiciously)

HANNA

So you'll put it with my blades, right?

JOHN

(walking out backwards)

You cannot have this device here.

HANNA
(she shouts)
What's the deliosis?

JOHN
(almost out and angry)
You will not have this device here.

(He is gone)

WENDELL
Why would he take the phone? I mean – does He think she's going to call home like ET?

CHALICE
(to Groell)
No, I think it's something else. Many things are unclear here at the beginning. Like, why did two come just now and one with a phone? And why is Groell here and what happened to him? Now there is change. These things have not happened here before so – there is some kind of change taking place.

GROELL
What happened to you, Rayleen, I mean you're dressed up like...?

RAYLEEN
Don't go there, babe, okay?

GROELL
Copy that girl!!

CHALICE
Groell has something about Afghanistan and a mine, Wendell has cars, Rayleen knows Groell and came back with another person and I – came back naked. How does this all fit together? And she brought a phone, unheard of before this. We have to make this make sense because I feel very strongly that this signals a change. The change. Groell, what happened to you again?

HANNA
Why could I have roller blades but no phone? That makes no sense. Didn't you all have a phone?

GROELL
Not too much to say about it, really. Mine, bam, red, bam and here, pretty much. Except I did have a joint and a lighter but now the joint is gone and so is the lighter but – I still have this.

(He reaches in his pocket and pulls out the remainder of his pot in the small, plastic pill bottle.)

HANNA

This just can't be right. Look at me. I didn't even make twenty. I mean, I never had a chance to...

CHALICE

...what?

HANNA

What happened to my life? Why didn't I get a chance to live, like all of you had a chance? What did I do? I won't ever be a mother and know the feeling of making a baby.

RAYLEEN

(to Groell)

It wasn't a damn rodeo, idiot, I was in a...

(The bell rings and immediately Chalice, Sylvia and Darnell move to the edge, get on their knees and pray.)

(Groell jumps into a defensive position.)

WENDELL

Don't worry dude, they're just praying. It only takes a few minutes. Not like on earth. So, at least that is an improvement on the 9old deal, maybe there is more up here and we just haven't found it yet.

RAYLEEN

Pdq prayer.

(Groell and Wendell star at her clueless.)

RAYLEEN

Pretty damn quick – prayer, pdq? It's a joke, right?

(John steps out when the praying is finished.)

JOHN

This is not a joke.

RAYLEEN

You're damn straight!! As we are all finding out. You know, no one down there thinks they're coming up here by falling down a damn tube, like a straight down water slide with no water at the end. Everyone down there thinks they walk through some long tube of light with friends at the far end, waving them forward through an incredible bliss of sound and light. If they thought they would fall down some cardboard tube, hitting the sides and finally bouncing onto the floor in front of a bunch of strangers – they would crap tacks.

HANNA

Listen, I just want to step in here and say this about that. And that is: I prayed all my short life down there or wherever I was and I asked for help and I asked for things and I offered to give up all kinds of shit...

(A small rumbling off stage.)

HANNA (cont'd)

...and I never got anything. Nothing, zip, zero, zilch, minus nothing, empty space except for me crying a lot at the end because, because I – for whatever. I never understood why no one answered my prayers. Isn't that what you do up here. Or can you say?

(Sylvia, Chalice and Darnell return from the edge.)

SYLVIA

All prayers are answered.

HANNA

Hog.

DARNELL

Every request in the name of God gets a response.

GROELL

Total bull.

CHALICE

There is not that happens on earth or in the Universe that the I Am does not know. The I Am is the Universe.

WENDELL

And Miracles? Are they just special little gifts to people who walked the right rope and said the right things and believed the correct notions about...

JOHN

...I cannot tell you that.

(John leaves.)

GROELL

Getting tired of that guy. Getting tired period, except – the last time I was like this I had this totally weird dream about going to Germany where I met this guy who had just bought this state of the art, Nikon Camera, for a Japanese friend of his back in the states and to make a long story short I told him I would take the camera and deliver it to his friend in San Francisco. Really weird dream, don't know why I went there even. Old stuff.

(Rayleen walks toward the red curtains. She picks up a block and carries it to the edge of the curtains and then sits on it facing Groell.)

CHALICE

And? Then what?

(Groell looks uncomfortable, looks at the floor, moves his feet aimlessly.)

GROELL

I don't know why the fu... I got into this. I never tell anyone that story so – what the fu...

(Chalice clears her throat obviously.)

GROELL (cont'd)

I got back to the states in New Jersey, picked up a bunch of cigarette butts just so the Army would know I was still a solid grunt in my infantry M-O-S and then they let us out and I flew to San Francisco with the camera on my glorious journey home but - I never delivered it – I just kept it for myself even though I never even used it. Didn't even know how it worked. I just wanted it, I got it and I hated it after that.

CHALICE

And you say that is a dream you have when you get highly stressed?

(Rayleen rocks back and forth on her cube.)

DARNELL

I would say, from years of experience, that was not a dream and you know it's not a dream but you tell us it is so you look a little better than the – I screwed my Army friend and his friend, so I could have something I wanted but didn't really want. You stole the camera. Right Groell?

RAYLEEN

Never told me that story, babe, that's for sure. So, talking about stories and thieves and lovers, this is what I figure about this one. After learning a little more from my last adventure, number four – down there – which was about as ugly as anything so far, there is only one way out of this hole and I'm taking it...

GROELL

That's exactly how I felt, babe – that there just wasn't...

(John rushes on.)

JOHN

No!!!

(Rayleen rocks backward off the cube and screams. Her screams fade away almost instantly as she falls and falls far off in distance from the Way Station. Finally, the sounds are gone.)

(Sylvia walks over and pulls the cube further toward the center. She looks off into the darkness as the others wait without speaking.)

SYLVIA

(to John)

Does she know?

JOHN

I do not know. I would not know how?

SYLVIA

I'm next!!

JOHN

Of course. Of course you are.

(John leaves. Sylvia walks to the toys and finds a ball she plays with.)

WENDELL

Sylvia. What is it – that she knows?

(Sylvia does not answer nor does she look away from her toys.)

WENDELL

This is what I'm getting. I'm getting that this whole scene up here is changing from what it was before we all arrived and now there is some confusion about going forward from this point where some of us step into the queue for wings.

CHALICE

Were all in the queue for wings, including Darnell for the second time. Sylvia is next in line.

GROELL

And – who supposedly is after Sylvia?

DARNELL & CHALICE

Chalice.

WENDELL

Soooo – who’s after Chalice in the greater queue?

JOHN (O.S.)

It does not make any difference.

DARNELL, CHALICE, SYLVIA

Rayleen!!!

(Pause)

WENDELL

What? Rayleen? But, but I thought she just got here.

SYLVIA

She did. And then she left, again.

(Pause)

HANNA

(to Groell)

And, what happened to the camera...?

SYLVIA

But she’ll be back. Everyone comes back – everyone. Somewhere. Sometime.

(A woman’s voice screams as she hits the sides of the tube, hits the floor backstage and is pushed on sitting in a wood, old style rolling chair with wood arms and a partly opened back, slides on dressed like a Missionary with yellow Nike sneakers.)

RAYLEEN

Easy, easy now, I have a queasy stomach and I lost my Rosary and now I’m about to lose... Oh shit no – not here again?!!! My fucking mind!!! NOT HERE AGAIN!!!

VOICE (O.S.)

Really? How many times!!

RAYLEEN

Sorry!! It's just that there were – so many of them. So many people and so much confusion that... And the car – I mean, with all that noise and confusion I – I – I...

WENDELL

...say it ...

RAYLEEN

...I forgot I was on a journey – from this Purgatory.

(John comes out with a tray of soup, crackers and tea. He places them on a table and leaves with the old tray.)

JOHN

You are welcome.

RAYLEEN

Back at you, big guy.

GROELL

Cool dog.

HANNA

Do you have any diet coke?

(She crosses to the table. Groell who is near the table reaches innocuously across towards the tray for a cracker.)

JOHN (O.S.)

Do not even think about it thief.

(Groell retracts instantly like a snake and recoils back in place.)

(Rayleen sits and eats.)

RAYLEEN

I tried to remember. I wanted to so bad so as soon as I was flying out the chute I kept saying, I can't forget, I can't forget, I can't forget – and then – I was in this chair with my legs spread apart – looking down at the faces of a bunch of men who were sex hungry, drunk and a pitiful example of our species. And I forgot. I totally forgot what I was doing. I was stripping in some Hollywood strip club and then I was here but I tried, I tried to keep it together in my head but life is too strong and it sucks your purpose right out of you and leaves you with that two-day-old meat-loaf life you'd been living with no hope for advancement because God and the Liberal Left of the United States don't give a shit about the poor.

(She stops and realizes that no one is talking but her. She eyes Hanna.

HANNA

Hi.

RAYLEEN

Hi.

HANNA

Hanna.

RAYLEEN

Rayleen.

HANNA

We were in the – I mean; we fell down here in the thing – together. You know – you look...?

RAYLEEN

...dead tired.

GROELL

I'm gonna kill myself.

HANNA

Was that a joke – dead tired.

SYLVIA

Someone already tried.

GROELL

Right. Righty o. Well, so as not to break up the momentum, I suppose as a sign of the times on Earth Ray, you were near some subway that blew up killing a ton of people and it flashed all over the news, instantly, right?

RAYLEEN

No. I wasn't Groell. I was stripping in one of your old haunts in Hollywood, when a car, being chased by cops, drove through the front door, all the way down an aisle of tables to the stage and pinned me between the strip pole and the dick's front bumper. I died of asphyxiation, right? I was the only injury! Do you get that?!! Do you comprehend what I am saying?!! No one else in the entire room was even hurt, not even the asshole driving the car. What do you think that means and who would you ask that question to and if the answer to that was God, who didn't bother to return an answer to you in any way, shape or form, where would that leave you exactly?

GROELL

Dressed like a missionary?

CHALICE

Lot of men like that. Want to pop a bride of God.

VOICE (O.S.)

(angry)

Chalice!! Once more and...

(Chalice is down on her knees with her face on the floor, prostrate.)

SYLVIA

(softly)

Perhaps another time for the strip-club story.

DARNELL

What makes you think so?

WENDELL

I know it's just me, but I'm beginning to detect a chink – in the armor here. Anyone?

HANNA

Yeah. I just got here and I got that right away when John the wing man went nut cake on my cell phone.

(John comes on quickly with a cook's apron wrapped around his waist.)

JOHN

Did not.

HANNA

Did so.

JOHN

(louder)

Not.

HANNA

So.

JOHN

(louder)

Not.

HANNA

So.

WENDELL

And their off, ladies and gentlemen, out of the gate with the number one Angel taking the lead followed by number two, three, four and all the way to eight as they make a wide first turn at the corner of Earth and the Way Station, yooooooooo babe, I'm flying on a chariot made of fire.!

(Rayleen peels off the black, cotton nun's uniform to reveal a pair of sweat pants, tank top and the ever-yellow Nike sneakers. John enters immediately and takes her clothes and gives her a numbered ticket and leaves.)

JOHN

In case I am not here if you return for your things.

RAYLEEN

Right. When I return for my things I use this number. That's easy. What wasn't so easy- was me figuring out why I was in some old dressing room, seedy, smelly, moldy, dirty dressing room where every nasty thing that ever probably happened on the filthy floor I was standing on, came up at me like a flash of light as I asked my poor-ass-self, why am I here? How would I get out of here if I had to, which I did – so I went into the one stall bathroom and sat down on the toilet and prayed and....

(Pause)

GROELL

...and? And what, babe?!!

RAYLEEN

It just came to me in a flash – that the prayer wouldn't be answered and it wouldn't be answered because He didn't have time, because some evil was growing faster than He had planned on so, He was dissuaded from me, from anyone, from everyone so He could concentrate on the bigger problem – the problem of a new Hell on Earth. See, I was raised Catholic. I was taught by nuns so I know that God came to many people in the old testament and he came to fewer and fewer people in the New Testament and now – he doesn't come at all. Because the evil has moved from down there to up here. It was so clear that for just a second, a fraction of a frigging second I remembered all of this. In a brilliant flash of a micro second I saw the whole picture, the army, the fight, the disaster and the aftermath which was the total desolation of darkness.

WENDELL

You think He's just tired of making appearances?

RAYLEEN

Yes.

GROELL

You think He's bored?

RAYLEEN

Yes.

CHALICE

You think He wonders why he made us in the first place?

RAYLEEN

Yes.

DARNELL

You think He needs us at all?

RAYLEEN

Yes. Very much.

HANNA

You think he knows about my cell phone?

(Everyone turns and looks at Hanna who immediately recedes to some other spot.)

SYLVIA

Should we be scared, Rayleen?

RAYLEEN

Yes, because the crap that we face below is the ugliest, black and stinking mass of stupid men and women that has ever lived on earth and – formed these groups to corrupt us, chop our heads off, burn us, drown us, slaughter our children and hypnotize a bunch of totally stupid desert dick brains into thinking that if they carried out these suicide bombings that they would be welcomed into the heaven of Allah and get a mansion and servants and luxuries for eternity. These crap head cowards called ISIS and ISIL are brainwashing a bunch of brain hungry souls who are dead poor without paper to wipe their dirty asses and they want to believe that wearing a suicide vest into an open market and killing innocent people is the act that will release their mental and soul tied poverty – and so they do it. So, they can share in the riches of a world where all the money is in the hands of less than one percent of the population.

WENDELL

Isn't that what God is offering us?

HANNA

Except we didn't do those terrible things to people and I, personally, am not poor in spirit or personal wealth. My phone is six hundred dollars and those blades are the best on the market. We are not a country of cold hearted killers with no toilet paper.

GROELL

What makes you think so? We gave blankets soaked with infection to the American Indians who were starving, poor, hungry and damn cold and it warmed them up and then killed them by the tens of thousands – yeah, we're really holy, babe.

SYLVIA

This from the man who stole a camera he didn't even know how to use.

GROELL

Copy that, sister girly.

DARNELL

That is what God is offering us – and I don't believe that Allah is offering his Islamic children mansions in the new kingdom, for killing Christians. I believe those men have completely misinterpreted the Koran to make it say the things they need it to say so they can kill with some kind of impunity.

CHALICE

There is only one small problem and that is – He is going too damn slow...

RAYLEEN

(she takes her cue and stands)

...and that is where we come in. See, I had a stupid dream sitting on that toilet and in that dream I was the hero and I did things that slowed down these jerks, stopped many of them and killed others. I was a female, bad ass hero and I was good at it and that was when I just started to remember that I had been here - and I had this feeling that I was coming back here - and bring everyone back down there and join me, the hero in my dream. But...

HANNA

...what is she talking about? I just got here. I don't even know which street is mine yet so maybe I should just stay here and...

RAYLEEN

...you can't. You can't because we need your phone and you. Why do you think John was so weird about the phone?

(John has entered during the conversation.)

JOHN

Because it connects you to the other world. It links you through the ethers and that is why it is not allowed here and should not have been allowed to come through. You no longer can be linked though a device to the earth proper which is not below us, we are in it so, it surrounds us. It has to do with an understanding of size and how minutia can reside within a particle or molecule of power.

SYLVIA

(to Rayleen)

What are you thinking you're going to do anyway?

RAYLEEN

I'm thinking now that we could go back – together, all at the same time.

JOHN

No! You cannot do that; it is not allowed.

SYLVIA

And that is not why you are here. No one asked you to take charge because there is an established order and I am next.

(They all look at Sylvia who is pouting.)

WENDELL

(to Rayleen)

And then what?

DARNELL

Then comes the hard part, the almost impossible part and I know this only too well, and that is – you must remember somehow that you were here or the journey will be for naught. Trust me on this. We would need something to help us all remember. Rayleen almost remembered by herself but that is very, very rare. We need a stronger hit down there or life will simply absorb you and you will return to the nonsense you were probably up to your neck in so you weren't concerned with God, Heaven and a new Evil.

SYLVIA

What are you saying Darnell, don't get involved. We have an established order and I am next.

RAYLEEN

Maybe not. Maybe there are other possibilities...

SYLVIA

How dare you even suggest that...

CHALICE

... which might expedite the queue and the cause and all else, et al?

GROELL

I don't get the phone connection – forgive the pun.

RAYLEEN

We leave a message on that phone. A detailed message of what happened up here so the person with the phone hears the message and we have at least left opened a doorway to the Way Station. The phone is the key to jar our brains into remembering. I know. I almost did it without a phone – on a toilet, doing number one in the dirtiest dressing room of all time so I know it can be done. This is why He stopped responding to us. We are special and we have a special kind of mission that no others have performed before us.

JOHN

If you had spent this much time praying for brains from your maker, you all would be winged Angels and you would not be stuck here in the Way Station. There is an order here that has been established before time. You cannot come here and suddenly think that you have the power to change this order, you do not. If you did have the power, I would be the first to know and I would tell you because I do not lie, steal or cheat. I am an Angel of the First Order of Heaven and I do not have the power to lie.

WENDELL

It'll never work. I'm a mechanic, trust me. I see how things go together and make other parts work and I see this as a real...

RAYLEEN

...there is one other factor that would help make this work and that factor is...

DARNELL

...John.

(Darnell and Rayleen share a look.)

JOHN

Save yourselves from further stupidity in this action because...

SYLVIA

...he understands the order of things and that I am next in the order of things.

(John turns and gives Sylvia a sour look.)

HANNA

I don't want anyone to forget that - my phone is not leaving here without me.

(Darnell walks off and quickly returns with the phone which he places on a table that no one is sitting at.)

JOHN

This is not amusing, Darnell and seems clearly to me to be another one of your...

DARNELL

...shut up, John.

(John explodes into the air a few feet up and then drops down in front of Darnell.)

JOHN

(one word at a time)

Do not speak to me in that tone with those words, you second rate...

CHALICE

...Angel!!

(The two back away from each other.)

DARNELL

(very emotional)

I was John once, before John had any idea he would fill into the position. I was here when John rolled down the chute and rolled under the red curtains and popped up like all of us did and wonder at where we were and who all the people were that surrounded us at that time. Sylvia was already here so she is really the oldest in time but still not ready for her wings. I was like Rayleen only I was the Captain of the Way Station and I knew certain truths and one of them was the oncoming darkness of ISIS and ISIL Islamic State Islamic Syria is ISIS. Islamic State Islamic Libya is ISIL. I did something that will never be spoken of by me but it was wrong, it was not timed correctly and I paid for the mistake by losing my wings.

(He pulls his shirt up revealing torn and broken bone where his wings had been shorn.

A few feathers remain, bloody but still attached to wing material.)

WENDELL

Round One, ladies and Angels, goes to – the ladies of company A. Now, Round Two is up at the bell and...

(The bell rings. Chalice, Sylvia and Darnell walk to the edge and get on their knees.

John watches in some slight horror.)

JOHN

Wait. WAIT!! This is wrong. It is too early. This is not the correct bell. We just prayed only moments ago so this bell...

WENDELL

...begins Round Two. Rayleen, what is the plan? I am so ready to listen to a woman tell me what to do, I can't explain it. I am also really ready to get the flock out of here and do something with whatever is left of me. I was a grease knuckle down there but I had those same kind of dreams – not on the white throne but – anyway, I had them. I was the hero. I am still the hero and I remember it up here – so, if I can do it up here then I can do it down there with the right kind of push. What is the plan?

RAYLEEN

We all have to jump at the same time so we empty the Way Station and then the process will see there's a problem and begin to correct the system by making it go faster and maybe He will realize we are working for our wings – just not in the way He intended or not.

GROELL

Next.

RAYLEEN

The person with the phone...

HANNA

...me!!!

RAYLEEN (cont'd)

...must get to the message and then they must understand the message and what they are supposed to do with it. This is crucial – this is the whole damn ball game.

JOHN

That is certainly asking a great deal.

RAYLEEN

Unless, they hear the message and then see - John the Angel, then we have a huge chance.

(They all look at John who backs up to the table where the phone is and he sits down.)

(John keeps looking around for a reaction from the I Am.)

GROELL

We would be the second coming.

SYLVIA

How ridiculous. Suddenly the second coming is not the I Am, but the focus group which includes, ironically: a camera thief, a stripper, two Negros of different sex, I think, a Valley Girl and a mechanic. Good Lord, you look more like a holocaust parade in retro. The chances of you, the F troop, of ever making a difference in this conflagration is...

JOHN

...you forgot someone, Sylvia.

SYLVIA

Oh, no, I didn't John. I'm not going to make the leap because I am next. I am the next friggen' Angel of The Ninth Order and there is nothing in the Universe that can change that.

JOHN

I am not talking about you.

(John picks up the phone and hands it to Rayleen.)

JOHN

Record your message, you do not have a lot of time. Be careful and be exact in what you say, we are all pitting our immortal souls against the grain of the present situation of inaction by our God.

(Rayleen takes the phone and walks away from the group, but is joined by Chalice. The two women speak back and forth into the phone and record a message.)

SYLVIA

I have the power to stop this and you know it.

(Sylvia stands up and pulls her hair out of the child like style and pushes it into an adult female style. She backs away from the group and stands, with her legs apart in a solid, defensive position.)

SYLVIA

This is the Way Station and it has been here since the beginning of time. We are not the inhabitants, we are only here for a brief stay where we learn the rules and issues of being a winged Angel. The process has gone on for thousands of years and then suddenly a stripper arrives along with a Valley Girl with a phone and a conspiracy is born – born out of fear because you don't have enough information yet. You are all stupid including the highest-ranking Angel in all Heaven.

(John exits and immediately returns with everyone's things in a rolling grocery cart and leaves them next to a table. Everyone quickly takes their own personal things.)

SYLVIA

Why would you do this? You are a full grown, adult Angel of The Tenth Order of Seraphim, the only one left besides Morning Star and you risk all. There is an order and a season for everything and it is not left up to you to make those decisions.

JOHN

My mistakes on earth were many Sylvia, but the greater of all was the mistake that the I Am was more interested in me praying than working and doing work that moved Spirits back toward the Maker and thus completing the cycle. You are a prayer, Sylvia, just like me but – your devotion shows more when you sacrifice the physical frame for the greater good of God.

SYLVIA

Are you waiting for that voice to slap you down like a pitiful slug?

JOHN

No. I believe the voice is waiting for you – to slap me down.

(Sylvia without thinking walks immediately to John and swings her hand to slap his face, but her hand is stopped just fractions of an inch in front of John's cheek. Her hand trembles in space until she finally drops it to her side and returns to her spot.)

JOHN

Do you think that was an answer Sylvia?

SYLVIA

No, I think it was a mistake

RAYLEEN

All right, its recorded.

JOHN

Give the phone to Hanna.

(Rayleen does that.)

WENDELL

Hey, shouldn't an adult carry that assignment?

JOHN

Yes. An adult does carry that assignment.

DARNELL

And what about the rest of us? What do we do?

(John reaches up into space, puts his hands together like a magician and pulls out an ink pen which he uses to write a number on his hand and then he hands to Groell. John shows Groell the phone number written on his hand.)

JOHN

Write this number on your hand. Write a note to tell yourself to call this number. Write whatever you think you will need to remember you were in the Way Station and you have a job.

(Groell writes it down and a few short words and then passes the pen.)

SYLVIA

This is beyond stupid and I am warning every single one of you that if you mess up my movement to full Angel, I will be merciless, after my wings come in. I will haunt you all.

(She runs off)

JOHN

She does have the power to stop this. She has the ear of the I Am. That is where she is going.

GROELL

And – what is this plan, one more time for the stupid.

RAYLEEN

I believe that our brother, John, has now set a plan in motion. You all have a phone number written on your hand that will ring Hanna's phone and she will answer – after that – we have to pray a little that some connection is made and we slowly find ourselves again and we remember that the earth is under attack – under attack by terrorists whose sole desire is to tear Christianity out of the heart of the living and replace it with some form of cancer. This is everyone's struggle.

HANNA

Not mine. Sorry. I'm just thinking how cool it is here and what I would look like with those beautiful wings and then I think about down there and all the blood and stuff and – the stupid cop that killed me and now – you know – I'm suddenly sort of digging all this. I mean – we're going to be Angels. How cool is that. We're going to be able to fly and see other Angels and live in some huge palace with help from lesser people or just the children of a lesser God. Here, you can have the phone.

(She places the phone on one of the tables.)

HANNA (cont'd)

It's not my fight and it's not me. I just got here and didn't even make twenty on earth. I'm just going to hang for a while, while you all go down and beat the crap out of those guys. Then you all can come back and tell the stories. Party time!!

GROELL

(moves to next to Hanna)

Yeah, I think I see her point. I mean, we could go tomorrow maybe after we checked it all out up here. I mean there must be sh... up here nobody knows about yet, right? I mean – did you all go out there where John disappears to and see what that scene is? No. We have listened to the wing man and the hundred-year-old girl along with the two grows from the hood and even the voice of the big Guy. Maybe we should just hang a bit and get the lay of the land before we bail back down to earthtown.

WENDELL

You're breaking up the team.

CHALICE

There was never a team.

RAYLEEN

So, just like that, it's over?

GROELL

We're talking a little way down the road babe, and then we jump em, right? Other wise – we get to share in the splendor of all this new sh. . . stuff.

WENDELL

Kind of like the camera, huh, just want what you want and fuck the rest of us. Sort of like the way the whole United States government really thinks about its people. You know. And what I think now is that they don't think about us at all but they do think about their money and their insurance policies and how they can make us pay for it so their lives don't change as long as they keep kicking it down the road – not theirs, only ours. You see it that way Groell?

(John looks around with his eyes and his eyes catch Darnell)

DARNELL

Don't look at me, I already tried once before and...

SYLVIA (O.S.)

...got chopped, clipped, kicked and redressed. You had your wings peeled off Darnell, is that what you are going for now? To just evaporate into ten million particles of Darnell with no consciousness of the whole person – for fucking ever!!!

VOICE (O.S.)
SYLVIA!!!

(Lightning and thunder cover the stage as everyone cowers. Sylvia, John, Darnell and Chalice all fall on their knees with their heads bowed down to the floor.)

(All is quiet.)

CHALICE
I guess he is still listening.

DARNELL
Still.

JOHN
Omniscient.

SYLVIA
Omnipresent.

RAYLEEN
Omniconscious.

(They all turn and look at Rayleen in a new light.)

WENDELL
What a bunch of pussies. You know, I started working on cars because I knew from the front what a shit bag machine was and what a high class act a BMW was. I could tell the difference between the good, the bad and the ugly. I had some control – you understand. I never opened a hood and was shocked at what I saw. But these creeps over there in Syria and Libya and Iran, they are no damn good to the core of their engine block and if they had their way they would destroy us all just so they could watch our TV's and screw our wives. We have a chance here even though it's as slim as a C. H., I don't see that we have a choice and if it takes all of us, then – it takes us all. See, I believe we have to look at it entirely differently now and start to see it the way that our government looks at us. We have to find our own heroes and then we have to jump on the boat with them or we will allow our world below to perish. Period. End of story!

RAYLEEN
What happened to you?

WENDELL
Don't know – finally came out of the closet there. Still dirty as a rat, though.

(He examines his hands and fingers and still sees the grease stains.)

RAYLEEN

I always liked real, gritty men.

(pause)

HANNA

You can't make us.

WENDELL

I can't – but he can.

(points to John)

GROELL

I think it's a little out of his style, right? Isn't that right John? You're more of a shouter and a pointer than a get on your neck and pull your eyeballs out, right?

CHALICE

Don't forget – we could be anything and anywhere so you might have to add a number one or 01 to the beginning of that number on your hand if you are in a foreign country, and – hope we can still speak some language we understand. Make the sign of the cross. The sign can be our signature. This is crazy, but someone has to wake the planet up to Hell's invasion. Even our own government does not understand the menace and the underlying disease that makes up ISIS and ISIL. They are a virus and need to be exterminated.

(They all look at her.)

CHALICE

Morning Star is loose and has changed its name to ISIS. Lucifer is loose and has changed its name to ISIL. This is not happening in Kansas and we only get one shot from the balloon. If we fail, we will be reduced to the lowest common denominator and that will not be fun. If we fail, a group of totally stupid, cowardess men will take over free will and Lucifer will attack Heaven with an army of human slaves.

SYLVIA (O.S.)

No one move, I have special orders. No one.

RAYLEEN

Everybody to the edge.

(Everyone except John, Hanna and Groell runs to the edge in the back by the red curtains with the white sheers in between.)

RAYLEEN

John.

JOHN

Do not wait for me, I will be there shortly.

SYLVIA (O.S.)

(closer)

No one move. I speak with authority.

(John and the group look at each other.)

JOHN

We must wake up the souls of the army of white light or the dark army will cut off the heads of our children and sleep in the beds of our dead – I see it as a future. I see it as real.

DARNELL

Why isn't He saying anything?

(Pause)

JOHN

It is all still a mystery.

CHALICE

Or – She is waiting.

DARNELL

Waiting – to see if we can act – outside of the paradigm?

HANNA

What's a paradigm?

JOHN

We don't have time for an English lesson. We have to go now or we have to atop Sylvia, which might be dicey in the face of the I Am.

WENDELL

Can you stop her?

JOHN

Yes – at the peril of my own soul.

(Sylvia runs on stage.)

SYLVIA

Stop.

WENDELL

What if it was someone with a little less to lose?

(John looks at Wendell and for the first time – smiles a broad, teeth showing smile.)

WENDELL

Right. I'm going to ride next to you, Sylvia.

(Wendell rushes toward Sylvia and picks her up with one arm and marches toward the back where, without looking back, he steps off into the darkness with Sylvia screaming.)

SYLVIA

Nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

WENDELL

Someone bring my wreeeeeeeeeeeeench.

(Their voices trail off in the distance.)

(John steps up to the table and takes the phone, grabs Hanna with one arm and swings her out into the darkness where he jumps immediately after.)

JOHN

(falling)

Bonsai - I always wanted to say thaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat.

HANNA

What in the fuck are you doing dude!!! Noooooooooooooo!

(their voices trail off in the distance.)

GROELL

Well, the place sure cleared out pretty fast. Butler and almost everyone. So, you all plan to come over here and grab me and force me back down there. Which you could probably do but – you won't because the Big Boy still has a say and I think that He says I still have free will.

RAYLEEN

Groell, honey, don't you remember the good times we had babe? Think of it now, with what we know – think about what we could do...

GROELL
...with each other.

CHALICE
You liked this creep?

GROELL
Hey. I'm not all bad.

RAYLEEN
No babe, you are in fact, pretty damn good but this is a new deal and its not like the camera honey, this is for real for life. You have to grow up Groell, even if it's for a few hours so you can help us, please babe.

DARNELL
We don't have time for this, leave him. Now.

(Darnell, Rayleen and Chalice all stand together on the back ledge of darkness.)

RAYLEEN
One last chance, Groell – to play with the big kids.

(A woman's voice is heard screaming as she falls down the chute bouncing off the walls and finally hitting the floor off stage and rolling on under the red curtains past the white sheers. Sylvia is in her bra and underwear. She stands, looks at herself and screams as she runs off stage.)

SYLVIA (O.S.)
(passes Groell)
How dare you stop me from my wings.

GROELL
I'm not stopping you, I'm helping you. I stayed to help you because Sylvia, I believe with all there is that you we're next in line and now it seems that I am next after you, right?

(She walks back in dressed in a robe.)

SYLVIA
You are insane Groell. I have spent lifetimes waiting in the queue to get that which was promised to me and you – you flop up here from earth just having stolen a camera...

GROELL
...I just didn't steal it; it was...

SYLVIA

...and you let your child-like mind suddenly see yourself as a full winged Angel of The Ninth Order. Are you a total idiot you idiot? You are insane and there is no place here for the insane so you might as well step over to the edge and give your next to useless life to your God and let Him see where mercy places you.

GROELL

You – have no idea you skinny little kid/bitch. I wasted my life down there because you are right, I was an idiot who just lived life, from bed to bed and from bar to bar and I did that because I learned that from my dad and no one in the group I hung out with had any idea any of this was happening up here or down here or where ever the fuck we really are but, now it's different because I have seen it with my own eyes, I have been in the halls of Heaven and I believe that there is something I could do on earth that would help the cause and

(Sylvia turns and runs but Groell stops her. “Carmina Burana” comes up from the darkness behind the red curtains. Groell suddenly let's go of her as a pair of wings floats in from the darkness and settles on an empty table.)

GROELL

Wow. Will you look at this? Maybe you're not next in line. Just maybe the Groell man has found his slot. Maybe, just maybe, the friggen Universe stepped aside for a second to let me slide in. What about that Sylvia?

(Groell reaches out for the wings but he is shocked by the feathers and is knocked down on the floor where he rolls around rubbing his wounds.)

SYLVIA

You are a moron. You are more stupid than John if you think you can just take a pair of wings off the shelf without ever putting any effort into gaining those wings and the power they bring. Your greatest moment Groell will have been camera theft, not the growing of full wings as an Angel. You will never possess those wings.

GROELL

Wow. What have I done?

(He looks suspiciously around himself, three hundred and sixty degrees waiting.)

(Sylvia picks up the wings reverently and starts toward the exit.)

SYLVIA

Please make yourself comfortable, camera thief, because when I come back out, I am going to rearrange the way the master put you together in the first place. You could try praying, but I fear you have crossed that line of communication and now I am going to finish what you started you creeping little slug.

(She rushes out with the wings in her arms.)

(He rushes to the red curtains and grabs a handful of the white sheers like a cloth pole and bunches them together.)

GROELL

Okay, God, I know you're tired of all this lying and cheating and violence and power crap so I'm dropping in without orders – I'm going down to do your business so I hope the damn Democrats and Republicans understand this mindless shit of our present situation. All right – I hope you forgive me for not understanding that I should have delivered the damn camera and I hope you get that I get what kind of a shit pool I am in because of...

(Groell jumps right at a large crescendo in the music.)

GROELL (O.S.)

SHIIIIIT!!!!

(The lights fade as Groell screams hitting the side of the tube and fading into the distance.)

(Sylvia comes in, fully winged and stops, looks around for Groell in all directions. “Carmina Burana” continues from the darkness.)

(She steps toward the back of the stage and looks into the darkness.)

(She crosses to the toy pile and begins to put the toys back in the pile in an order. There is a low rumbling and she stands up and looks all around her.)

VOICE (O.S.)

You are now the one responsible for the Way Station. Your wings will grow as you work and as you work you will push others through the station and make room for more. Do you understand?

SYLVIA

Yes, Father.

VOICE (O.S.)

There are instructions in the kitchen.

(Sylvia's wings clutch together as she meekly runs off. A pair of voices is heard falling down the chute. A man and a woman scream as they hit the sides of the chute and finally hit the floor backstage.)

(Black Out)

(Music Out)

End of Act Two

The End