

An Intellectual Discussion with the Madonna

A Play

by

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Two men, thirties, sit at a table on a tense, dark, sad stage. Thick-chested and barefoot Fitz is bowing his head in his hands. Sneering lawyer Van, blond, wears a bow tie. On his navy blazer is a name tag.

SCENE 1

VAN

Maybe we can fix these lights. I can't believe Dad left us this piece of theatrical shit in his will. I mean, who leaves a theater to someone? That's like saying, "Hey, I wanted to give you some debt. Have some debt after I die." Yeesh.

FITZ

(lifts head from praying)

Exactly! What's the use? I'm sick of people who drag themselves to Sunday matinees and fall asleep because the air conditioner's better here.

VAN

At least they come.

FITZ

Because they are elitist prigs, and the theater is something they feel they should attend. They are just a congregation from a church moved in front of a stage.

VAN

So invite some other people.

FITZ

Bah, no one can afford the theater. It's a poor-man's sitcom.

VAN

Now that's being a little hard on the theater.

FITZ

I wish I had a stun gun. First I would tase the old audience who is dead anyway. I'd put them on a train and when they woke up, they'd find themselves in the desert watching a play about how they were supposed to be watching a play.

VAN

That sounds a bit elitist in itself. We have the money, Fitz.

FITZ

YOU have the money.

VAN

You wouldn't be here without me.

FITZ

When I played Sammy in *It Must Be Dead Skin* your phone rang three times before you answered it! And your wife always leaves ten minutes before curtain to beat traffic. Traffic is always there. A play is not.

VAN

The audience, tepid as it may be, is integral to the performance.

God appears. He does a handstand. God is a Yugoslavian midget with an English accent.

FITZ

Hey, whoa, it's God.

VAN

We're closed for auditions.

FITZ

Wait, do you have a monologue?

GOD

Do I have a monologue? Yes, from Bill Supsurry's *Dogs Peeing on People*.

FITZ

Go for it.

GOD

Ahem. "I walk the earth and haze cats; I have hump sex all day; I never cry; dog food ain't half bad . . ."

FITZ

Okay, please stop.

VAN

Even God can't act.

GOD

I'm a better director.

FITZ

How about a political play of one of the Euro countries dissolving. You're Yugoslavian?

GOD

Well, Croatian now.

VAN

How about a play about hunger?

FITZ

Been done. Remember *Africa: Don't Eat the Camels?*

VAN

Oh yeah.

GOD

That's actually a musical now.

VAN

(absurd monologue)

When I was in law school I met this young female whose voluptuousness was only surpassed by her magnanimity in cerebral nymphomania, and we had a great many mind screws, but we never immersed ourselves in the physical since we saw it as a superseding of the soul. So, my point: why not stage a drama about this woman's talking labia? She represents the fear of tangible intimacy, the death of true feeling in a world of emotional dis-ease. We have retreated into our silly brains and, as a result, there is a dearth of love. Thank you. [He bows.]

GOD

Is there a private place around here where I can masturbate?

VAN

God!

FITZ

Do you have a monologue or not? Our father just died and left us this theater no one attends. God might be a huuuuge draw.

GOD

I have an idea.

VAN

Are you Equity?

GOD

Call it: *An Intellectual Discussion with the Madonna.*

FITZ

Good title there.

God whistles loudly. Virgin Mary appears with a plastic African-American baby. She is in a mini-skirt and halter top.

GOD

This is Madonna. Say, where's your real baby—the savior?

VIRGIN MARY

Real baby? This is my real baby.

GOD

But it's . . .

VAN

Holy shit, I know her. Do you remember me?

VIRGIN MARY

Sure, you played brain games with me. I wanted to be in your pants but you spake and spake and spake.

VAN

I thought you represented a cerebral existence which precluded enjoyment of the libido.

VIRGIN MARY

More like I had a dumpy ass and small tits and you weren't attracted to me.

FITZ

I like this, could work.

GOD

She really is a virgin.

FITZ

It's about religion.

GOD

Kind of a metaphor for the theater.

FITZ

Wait, is that a Cabbage Patch kid? It's missing a leg.

GOD

Just a prop man.

VIRGIN MARY

I even had a boob job because of you. Had my ass tightened. You should hear men's reactions when I tell them I'm Christ's mother. Christ.

FITZ

So, have you acted?

GOD

She looks great naked.

VAN

God!

GOD

This play will resurrect hope.

FITZ

Yes! We'll add catharsis and epiphany.

GOD

It has to be new. It cannot be superannuated.

VAN

I'll just play the lawyer, myself.

FITZ

No, you be God.

GOD

But I'm God.

FITZ

It's acting, God.

VIRGIN MARY

I'll play the lawyer in a feat of gender-blind casting.

FITZ

Play yourselves, probably better.

SCENE 2, One Week Later

GOD

I don't have my lines down. I can't remember this crap.

FITZ

Places! Two weeks till showtime.

VAN

Make-up. Where's the goddamn make-up?

GOD

Hey, watch it.

VIRGIN MARY

Yeah, no blaspheming His Omiscience.

GOD

The word is legs. Spread the word. [They all laugh.]

FITZ

Virgin, God, off. Places, Van. Don't worry about blocking, feel your place, walk around. Pace. Let's see it.

Lights dim and go up. Phone rings.

VAN

(answering)

Yes, Fitz, some day I want to be a senator. Right now I'm studying Tactics of Machiavellian Tax Monitors. One day I hope to be able to fund that theater that Dad owns which never makes money.

VIRGIN MARY

(enters)

You have a brother?

VAN

Yes, he works for my dad at the theater, post-structural, avant-garde without the linear narrative. Very spatial. *Very* spatial.

VIRGIN MARY

Are we having cerebral non-touch sex again?

VAN

What is that?

VIRGIN MARY

Stimulated only through the genesis of original thought. We substitute libidinal urges with perpetual brainwash. It's like philosophical Twister.

VAN

Okay, you begin.

VIRGIN MARY

God lives in my ovary where he has an igloo with a broken pinball machine. I have periods (great thing about being a virgin). My ovary has caused thunderstorms in France, polar bear headaches in Canada and rattlesnake erections in Egypt.

GOD

(enters)

I'm your new roommate! I'm from Connecticut, which I can't spell, and my parents are hyper-wealthy which means I'm prone to addiction.

VAN

What's your name?

GOD

God.

VIRGIN MARY

The God of my ovary?

GOD

Van, you are actually Joseph. Mary, well, you are Mary. I've always wanted to go to law school; I never got to finish my degree when I was creating the world.

FITZ

CUT! Good lord. This is the worst acting I've ever seen.

GOD

Sorry, I have a mouth ulcer.

FITZ

Christ Almighty!

Christ (or Dennis Hopper) appears. He is walking a stuffed dog.

CHRIST

Peace maaaaaan.

FITZ

I didn't mean that literally!

CHRIST

Just passing through.

VAN

Christ really should sue God.

CHRIST

What are your hourly rates?

FITZ

Get the hell outta here!

CHRIST

Come on Boopsie.

Christ exits, picking up his stuffed dog and running.

VAN

I've never had an intellectual discussion with the Madonna.

FITZ

I'd be afraid to really.

VIRGIN MARY

Hey!

FITZ

We have all the elements of a good story, so why doesn't this come together?

VAN

Maybe you should act, Fitz?

FITZ

How about a law case! Put God on the stand. Christ is suing him. Mary is a witness.

VAN

Can I bill for these hours?

GOD

Who's defending the defendant?

FITZ

God can afford his own lawyer.

GOD

I'll represent myself.

FITZ

The state of some state in the United States calls to court the case of God versus the Son Chris.

CHRIST

(reenters suddenly)

Christ.

VAN

(to God)

Did you or did you NOT rape the Virgin Mary?

CHRIST

That's hearsay your Honor.

FITZ

(as Judge)

Sustained. Wait why is Christ talking? Who's representing whom here?

VAN

Just answer the question.

FITZ

Continue.

VAN

Did you or did you not rape this innocent earthling, this pure girl who had not even had her first period
JUST SO YOU COULD HAVE A PATRIARCHICAL RELIGION NAMED AFTER YOU?

GOD

I just wanted people to read the Bible and not Agatha Christie.

VAN

You make me sick. Get this fetid pile of mildewed trash off the stand!

FITZ

Counselor you are way out of order.

VIRGIN MARY

Technically he didn't "rape" me.

CHRIST

Objeeeeeectionnn!!

VAN

And you! Now we have millions of old people who watch capitalistic evangelists!

VIRGIN MARY

I wish to take the stand.

Silence ensues. God is crying, consoled by Christ. Van consults the bench, is offered a line of cocaine from Fitz, refuses, is offered again, relents, snorts.

FITZ

Proceed, the Virgin!

VAN

Is it TRUE that God spoke to you one morning when you were picking sugar beets in a field somewhere?

VIRGIN MARY

Well, no, I was alone at my house playing chess on my computer and I had just reached a higher level when—

VAN

That's when you heard that man over there, "God," mmmmmm?

VIRGIN MARY

Yes.

VAN

Can you point to him please?!

She points. At God.

VIRGIN MARY

He's sitting. THERE!

FITZ
Order!

VAN
(to Christ)

I have an objection to your false identity—you weren't nailed to the cross . . . it was your long lost brother, wasn't it!! Wasn't it?

CHRIST
I-I . . .

VAN
Isn't that true?

CHRIST
It seemed so harmless.

VAN
(to Virgin Mary)
And what did this charlatan say to you?

VIRGIN MARY
Wait, God or the fake Christ?

VAN
God.

VIRGIN MARY
He said that I would be impregnated by a river.

VAN
Didn't he IN FACT say, "I am going to pierce you with an omnipotent sperm from my monolithic salami with such velocity—?"

GOD
I never said that! Wait, she can't sue me. I'm God. You can't sue God.

VAN
Silence! So you sought revenge after this whole river or salami whatever thing, correct?

CHRIST
Objection!

VAN
Shaddap!

FITZ
Continue.

CHRIST
That's favoritism because he's your brother.

FITZ
Look pal, you imitated Christ and created a lot of erroneous expectations. I'd can it if I were you, big guy.

VIRGIN MARY
(spotlight as lights dim around her)
When I had the child he visited me in the form of thunder and cracked my left ear drum. Then I had a second child. Then a third. Then twenty. All C-sections. It came to a point that I could have a child every three days which caused God to slice open my stomach and yank it away when it was born. He ate some of the children, some became bad presidents, some starved as martyrs. But I gave birth to the world, bitches, and now I only get credit for Christ and that guy over there is not even Christ anyway!

GOD
I am not an animal.

FITZ
Hang on. Back to director here. This isn't *Elephant Man*, douchebag. Come on, don't be derivative.

GOD
My bad.

Lights dim.

FITZ
Dad would have been proud, your locution, your objectivity.

VAN
Father was a good man, sometimes. I mean, he did leave us theater and you can't get any better talent than God.

GOD
Welllll, I'm not—

FITZ

Actually, you CAN get better. These stars all the same, a big disappointment when you see them up close.

GOD

Hey, wait—
(exits fast)

VAN

Our family is dead.

FITZ

In Greece everyone greets you and offers you food because you may be a god. Everyone may be a god.

VIRGIN MARY

Anybody have any acid?

VAN

Acid?

VIRGIN MARY

Yeah, acid. Trippppin’.

God enters with a pistol and shoots Fitz in the head and kills Van, turning the gun on himself and firing into his chest. Christ (who is not really Christ) enters and weeps over their bodies. Virgin Mary raises her plastic baby over her head.

VIRGIN MARY

Any post-thought will always nullify the raw emotive burst of deadly sin.

CHRIST

God wasn’t a very good actor. One can justify death of another individual based on a predominantly arbitrary human-made codification of anger.

VIRGIN MARY

Sigh. So true. And I don’t even know what that means.

FITZ

(jumps up)
Ha, I wasn’t really dead.

CHRIST

Now. I die! Wait, how come you’re not dead but God and your brother are? Wait, I’m not dying yet.

FITZ

I have difficulty assigning my attraction to the appropriate person. Typically, I love a woman as an image and become enamored of her faults but never meet her face-to-face.

VIRGIN MARY

How come you're not injured?

FITZ

Good question.

VIRGIN MARY

Do you believe that because of rampant disease that true intimacy has eroded?

FITZ

Yes.

VIRGIN MARY

Do you think we now lack introspection?

FITZ

Because of intimacy's death?

VIRGIN MARY

That we will soon live in our sanitized minds where it is safe and clean?

FITZ

But you've forgotten one thing.

VIRGIN MARY

What?

FITZ

Hope.

VIRGIN MARY

I knew it! Who is she? Some lover you haven't told me about. You liar. I thought you loved me. You said you loved me, that's what you said, over and over. Oh, I am weak.

FITZ

Nooo, like hope hope. Like, hope.

VIRGIN MARY

It's over.

FITZ

Did it ever start?

VIRGIN MARY

(runs off)

I can't stay here.

FITZ

Oh God.

GOD

(sitting up)

Yeah?

FITZ

Never mind.

VAN

(sitting up)

That blank gun really hurt my ears.

GOD

Man, theater is hard!

Lights.