ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND STEVE

A Play in One Act

by

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ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND STEVE

The summit of MOUNT MORIAH, your typical ancient mountaintop. Stark and rocky with a single gnarled bush. Walking into scene are ABRAHAM--oldish in a biblical sort of way, fancy robe--and ISAAC--younger, dressed for a day at the beach. Abraham is carrying a KNIFE and a ROPE.

ISAAC
So, where’s that fishing hole you were talking about, Dad?

ABRAHAM
Don’t worry, we’re almost there.

ISAAC
Really? Because this is a mountain. In the middle of a desert.

ABRAHAM
Isaac, do you really think that we would have hiked all the way out here for no reason?

ISAAC
No, but--

ABRAHAM
So just take my word for it. There’s an awesome fishing hole up ahead.

ISAAC
It’s just that--

ABRAHAM
What?

ISAAC
We don’t have any bait...or spare hooks...or even rods.

ABRAHAM
Right. Rods. I must have left them in the trunk of the caravan. Not to worry, this knife and rope that I brought should be enough.

ISAAC
For...fishing?
ABRAHAM
Sure. Knife fishing. You’ve heard of knife fishing, haven’t you?

ISAAC
Is that a thing?

ABRAHAM
Isaac, I’m your father. Have I ever led you astray? Have I ever given you reason to doubt me?

ISAAC
No.

ABRAHAM
So have a little faith. You’re my son. Just do what I say.

ISAAC
Okay. I guess.

ABRAHAM
Great, now if you’ll excuse me, I have to take a call.

ISAAC
A call?

ABRAHAM
A business call.

Isaac opens his mouth to respond, but before he can, a booming voice rings out from above.

GOD (OFF STAGE)
Abraham, it is I, God, your Lord and Savior! Are you ready to bestow upon me the ultimate gift?

ABRAHAM
(ignoring Isaac)
Oh Heavenly Father, I have brought a blade forged from the sharpest of metals blessed by You, Yourself, and a sturdy hemp rope anointed with sacred oils...

GOD (OFF STAGE)
And what about the boy?
ABRAHAM
Isaac is here with me. Are You certain I must sacrifice him?

ISAAC
Wait, what?

ABRAHAM
Let me do the talking, Isaac!

(then, to God)
There must be some other way!

GOD (OFF STAGE)
There is not! By killing your son--

ISAAC
Excuse me?!

GOD (OFF STAGE)
(talking over him)
--By killing you son, you will demonstrate your devotion to Me, your Lord.

ABRAHAM
But why must it be my son? Edith Fleischman has a boy--

ISAAC
You’re offering up Fat Frankie?

ABRAHAM
Shut up, Isaac. As I was saying, why not Edith Fleischman’s son? Sure he’s a little on the dull side, we’re not talking about a future doctor here, but still...

GOD (OFF STAGE)
It must be Isaac! You must prove you love Me more than anything else on Earth, and it is Isaac who you love most.

ABRAHAM
Wait! What about my wife?

ISAAC

(outraged)
Mom?!
ABRAHAM
I said, shut up, Isaac!

(to God)
Take my wife! After all, my love for her eclipses all else!

GOD (OFF STAGE)
These aren’t your wedding vows, Abraham! You cannot lie to me! I am the All-Knowing! I am God! The one you love most is your son. And that’s only because he looks like you. A little. Around the eyes.

ABRAHAM
Look, I totally get the whole ‘child sacrifice’ thing. My friends back in Babylon do it all the time. Big fans. But Isaac’s barely even a child anymore, he’s thirty--

ISAAC
What do you mean? I’m fifteen!

ABRAHAM
For God’s sake, shut up, Isaac!

(to God)
Are you really telling me that You, Creator of the Universe, couldn’t find a guy with an actual kid?

GOD (OFF STAGE)
You must have faith, Abraham.

ABRAHAM
Oh please. You think I’m gonna fall for that? I’m a father too, you know. I use that line all the time. Why should I believe you?

GOD
Because I will fill your life with meaning. By following me, you will learn about the Universe and how it was created; I will teach you the secrets of life, and your descendants will populate the Earth. But only this declaration of loyalty to Me, your Lord, is enough to convince Me that you are worthy.

A beat. Abraham seems to be considering.

ISAAC
Seriously? You’re not buying this are y--
ABRAHAM

(ignoring Isaac)
Oh God, Eternal Sovereign, if you do speak the truth, send me a sign!

A large neon sign swiftly descends from the sky with flashing words: “Do it! Do it!”

GOD (OFF STAGE)
So, Abraham, what do you say?

An uncomfortable pause.

ISAAC
You say “no”, Dad. Right?

ABRAHAM
Of course, Isaac. Of course I say no. We’re gonna walk down this mountain, and go fishing, just like I promised.

ISAAC
Oh, thank God! I mean--not God, but you get the idea.

ABRAHAM
That’s right. In fact, you can see the fishing hole from here.

ISAAC
Really?

ABRAHAM
It’s just down there.

(he points into the distance behind Isaac)
See? Right over there.

Isaac turns to look.

ISAAC
What are you talking about? There’s no--

Abraham quickly steps up behind him, and in one motion uses the knife to slash his throat. Isaac’s eyes go wide, then he crumples to the ground. Dead.

ABRAHAM
Okay, okay...there, I did it!
GOD (OFF STAGE)

Wait, what?

ABRAHAM

I did it. I have killed my son.

GOD (OFF STAGE)

You did WHAT? That’s it. I’m coming down there.

There’s a flash of lightning, and a cloud of thick smoke. When it clears, there stands GOD—short, glasses, an ill-fitting robe. He stands with arms outstretched, as if he’s just made a big impression.

A long beat, as Abraham regards him.

ABRAHAM

(crying up to the Heavens)

God! I think You may have sent down Your accountant!

GOD

(in a normal voice)

No, it’s Me, you buffoon!

ABRAHAM

Really? I thought you’d be taller. What are you, five-five? Five-six?

GOD

And a half.

(surveying the scene)

Oh man. Look at this mess. What the Hell have you done?

ABRAHAM

You said it was the only way I could show my faith and loyalty! So I did it! I killed Isaac.

GOD

I was totally just messing with you, man! Don’t tell me you actually did it!

ABRAHAM

You said it was the only way...

GOD

I was kidding! Have you never heard a joke before? Did I forget to invent those?
ABRAHAM
But, You said... Y-You promised... what about the knowledge and the power?

GOD
You actually bought that? Even with me doing that ridiculous booming “God” voice?

ABRAHAM
Well, yeah! Why wouldn’t I have? And why did you just put God in air quotes? What was the joke supposed to be here, anyway? “Ha-ha, looks like somebody just killed his son!”?

GOD
It was more like, “Ha-ha, what kind of idiot would let the voice inside his head convince him to murder his kid.” You kinda ruined the punchline, Abe.

ABRAHAM
So what am I supposed to do now? What am I supposed to tell my wife?

GOD
Who cares? Women aren’t scheduled to have rights for another five thousand years.

ABRAHAM
But... I trusted you! You’re my Father Who Art In Heaven. Fathers aren’t supposed to just screw their sons over on a whim! You’re supposed to lead me, to guide me! To love me!

GOD
Fathers disappoint. Sons suffer. That’s how it goes. That’s how it’s always been. Don’t believe me? Go ask Adam and Cain.

ABRAHAM
You know what? That’s it. I’m done with this whole monotheism thing. I’m outta here.

He begins to walk down the mountain.

GOD
Wait! Where do think you’re going?

ABRAHAM
I’m gonna catch the three o’clock mass at the Temple of Baal.

GOD
So, what? You’re just going to cheat on Me with another religion?

ABRAHAM
No, God, we’re breaking up. It’s not You, it’s me.

Abraham exits. A beat.
GOD
No, Abraham, wait! I can bring Isaac back!

Abraham re-enters.

ABRAHAM
Really?

GOD
Really. Now, he might have a slight appetite for brains, but...

ABRAHAM
God, I swear, if You turn my son into a zombie I’ll--

GOD
You’ll what? I’m genuinely curious. What will you do to the omnipotent, all-powerful Me?

ABRAHAM
I’ll...I’ll...You know what, just please don’t do it.

GOD
Fine, Operation Zombie Isaac is a no-go. Here’s plan B: I’ll get you a back-up kid. There’s one about five-hundred years in the future. Moses. Real nice kid. Sarah will never know the difference.

ABRAHAM
What do You mean “never know the difference”? Isaac is our son! He looks like me!

GOD
Was your son. And he only looks like you a little. Around the eyes.

ABRAHAM
I’ll be damned if some weird-eyed Moses kid is about to come into my home pretending to be the fruit of my loins!

GOD
No, you won’t be damned. That’s kinda the whole point of all this! Alright, I have one more idea. You seemed to have no problem believing in Me even though you couldn’t see Me, so...hooray, good news! Isaac is actually alive and well and chilling out in Heaven right now. Isn’t that right, Isaac?

(with his hand cupped over his mouth like a ventriloquist, he throws his voice so it seems to come from above.)
In a high-pitched Isaac accent)  
“Hi Dad, it’s me, Isaac, your son Isaac. I’m doing great up in Heaven. That God is a really great guy once you get to know Him.”

ABRAHAM

Goodbye, God.

He turns and exits once more.

GOD

Wait, come back! I’ll throw in Canaan and Philistia! I take back what I said about the whole circumcision thing! You like bacon? Eat a pig, I don’t care! What else do you want? I can tack another night onto Hanukah! Fine, two nights. Five! Why are you walking away?

He waits for Abraham to reappear. But this time Abraham does not re-enter. A beat.

GOD

Great. Now what am I supposed to do?

(Then, peering out into the audience)

Hey you. You!

(No answer. He puts on his booming “God” voice)

YOU, IN THE FIFTH ROW!

In the audience, a startled man, stands up from his seat.

STARTLED MAN

Who, me?

GOD

Yeah, you! What’s your name?

STARTLED MAN

Steve...?

GOD

Steve! My man! Wazzup!

STEVE

Not...much?
GOD
Get up here, let me take a look at you.

(Steve steps up onto the stage.)
Oh, yeah. Let me guess - distant father? Never played catch with you? Always made you feel like you weren’t quite good enough?

STEVE
How...how’d you know?

GOD
Steve, I’m omniscient, omnipotent, and do I have a deal for you! How would you feel about being the new founder of monotheism?

STEVE
Me? But I’m just a mid-level data technician, with an ex-wife and a bad back.

GOD
But you’ve got a son, right?

STEVE
Dylan.

God throws his arm around Steve, and they start to walk down the mountain together.

GOD
Follow me, and you will learn about the Universe and how it was created; I will teach you the secrets of life, and your descendants will populate the Earth....

Lights dim as they exit and

BLACKOUT