

THE P-TEAM

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

MOSES	A solid fellow doing his best to free his people and give them a little break from the desert heat while he's at it.
GOD	The Almighty, the Big Cheese, trying to lend a hand to his good friend and servant Moses.
ERIC IDLE	A lanky Brit with amazing hair and a flair for the absurd.
LEONARDO DA VINCI	Architect, inventor, and painter, a renaissance man if ever there was one, but in his own time really just appreciated for his muffins.
IVAN THE TERRIBLE	A fierce and determined sadist, convinced that the secret to world domination lies in distracting the enemy with large numbers of massive Cervidae.

SETTING

A heavenly conference room high above ancient Egypt

SCENE

(God, Ivan (the Terrible) Vasilyevich, Eric Idle, and Leonardo Da Vinci are sitting around a table as Moses walks in.)

MOSES

Lord, I'm so sorry. There was this huge backup by the river...

GOD

I know.

MOSES

Four huge cargo boats crashed into one another...

GOD

I know.

MOSES

There were goats floating everywh— What was that?

GOD

I said "I know".

MOSES

Of course you do. I mean, you are God, after all. How silly of *(suddenly noticing everyone else and shifting without missing a beat...)* who are all these people?

GOD

Look, Moses, I've been thinking about your memo...

MOSES

About turning down the heat a bit? Honestly, it's really sweltering down—

GOD

No, the other one, actually. About how to handle the whole Pharaoh situation.

MOSES

Oh, excellent. So you're going to send them a plague? Honestly, I think a good bout of coughing and vomiting and sweating will really get the point acr—

GOD

Actually, I feel that if we're going to do this right, we need to be more... creative.

MOSES

I see.

GOD

Which is why I have brought in a team of consultants to help brainstorm some really good ideas here. Why don't we just go around and do some quick introductions. You all know me, of course, the good old Almighty.

ERIC

'ello. I'm Eric. Eric Idle, comedy writer. Still waitin' a few centuries before I actually hit the scene, I am, but God here tells me I'm going to be a real riot when I do.

LEONARDO

I am Leonardo Da Vinci. Inventor, painter, architect.

GOD

Now don't be shy. (*Pause...*) Go on.

LEONARDO

And I am a fair pastry chef as well.

GOD

He's so humble. His muffins are heavenly. And I should know. And Ivan?

IVAN

I am Ivan Vasilyevich, known throughout mother Russia as Ivan the Terrible.

MOSES

Ivan... the Terrible?

GOD

Oh yes, but he's frightfully clever. Now, as you know, my good fellow Moses has proposed sending a plague against the Egyptians, and has done a bang-up job convincing me that this is a good idea. I say, if you're going to do something, do it well, and so we're looking for some really top-notch plague ideas here. So let's get started, shall we?

(Leonardo raises a hand.)

Go ahead, Leo.

LEONARDO

How about, we flood everyone... with pamphlets. Constantly. Endless pamphlets. So many that they won't be able to find their actual mail for all the interfering... what? Why are you all staring at me?

GOD

Right. How about some other ideas?

MOSES

You know what might send a good message? Insects. Tons and tons of insects everywhere. Getting into your turban, crawling right up your—

ERIC

Oooh, I like that. Huge, crawly insects, or maybe even buzzing annoying ones.

GOD

(Jotting notes...)

Swarms... of insects. Got it. Not bad, not bad. But I think we can do better.

LEONARDO

Oh. I think I can do one better. Instead of pamphlets, suppose we create a great network of information, where everyone is "plugged in" all the time. Each person would have a little book for communicating across this vast network. And then, when everyone is completely dependent on it, we start flooding it with total... nonsense!

IVAN

A painter, you say?

LEONARDO

Trust me. This will really get their— Oh! Oh, even better. Sometimes the books will just stop working for no apparent reason. People will have to close the books, and then open them again... No?

GOD

His muffins really are heavenly.

ERIC

Here's an idea. What if... we took all the water in the Nile, and replaced it with chicken soup.

MOSES

How is that a plague? It sounds like you're just feeding the Egyptians.

ERIC
Chicken soup... with matzoh balls!

MOSES
Still...

ERIC
I think it makes a statement, don't you?

IVAN
A stupid statement.

MOSES
I'm with Mr. Terrible on this.

ERIC
(Turning to Leonardo...)
You like it, don't you?

LEONARDO
Suppose we replaced all theater and all education with entertainment that is so utterly mindless that anyone who watches it loses the ability to think for themselves?

MOSES
Oh, shut up.

GOD
Actually...

LEONARDO
(Hopeful...)
You like that?

GOD
What? Oh, no. That was bad even for you. No, I was thinking, what if, instead of soup, we turned the whole Nile into blood.

ERIC
Oooh. Good one, sir.

MOSES
Very dark. Very ominous.

LEONARDO

All the fish would die.

GOD

That's alright. Honestly, I'm not a big fan of fish. I'd take the loss.

MOSES

Definitely jot that one down, Lord.

GOD

So do we have one then?

(God turns to Moses, who nods encouragingly, then to Eric who also nods. Then to Leonardo, who shrugs, and finally to Ivan. Ivan, shakes his head from side to side.)

No? You don't like that one? Well, you've been very quiet over there. What are you thinking?

IVAN

Moose.

ERIC

Sorry?

IVAN

Moose.

(They all stare at Ivan, who then puts thumbs to his temples, hands out like antlers, and makes a moose call.)

MOSES

Moose?

IVAN

You no seen moose? Big, brown... with antlers?

ERIC

I know what a moose is...

IVAN

Send forth huge flocks of moose. Trample flower gardens, knock over garbage cans. Leave big piles of moose crap all over street. Trust me. Pharaoh will get message.

MOSES

Mr. Terrible, I don't mean any disrespect, but...

IVAN

(Angry, threatening...)

Yes?

MOSES

(Suddenly very nervous)

D...d...d... do moose travel in flocks?

ERIC

No, I think he means 'herds'.

LEONARDO

Definitely 'herds'. But what if instead of just sending in herds of moose, we first rubbed them down with cotton fibers so that they carried an immense electrical charge, and then—

MOSES, ERIC, IVAN, GOD

Shut up!

LEONARDO

(Muttering...)

Would have been really cool...

MOSES

If I can be frank, Mr. Terrible, nobody in Egypt would have the faintest idea what a moose is.

LEONARDO

...with halos like the northern lights...

MOSES

Now, if we sent in crocodiles...

ERIC

I like that. And if we got kosher ones...

IVAN

This is lizard, yes? This could work. How big is crocodile?

ERIC

A big one, that could be up around fourteen or fifteen feet.

IVAN

I like this.

LEONARDO

Actually, a swarm of poisonous dart frogs would be more—

MOSES, ERIC, IVAN

Shut up!

MOSES

So is it settled?

GOD

Sorry to throw a wrench in things, but I just checked, and as luck would have it, I'm currently facing a real crocodile shortage just now.

ERIC

Oh no.

GOD

Damn things are going to go extinct if I don't stop sending everybody handbags for the holidays.

LEONARDO

I bet there are lots of frogs on—

MOSES, ERIC, IVAN

Shut up!

GOD

He's right about the frogs, actually. I've got buckets of them just sitting around.

IVAN

I have it. I have it.

(They all turn to stare at him.)

Just kill them.

MOSES
What?

IVAN
Kill everybody.

MOSES
That seems a little severe.

IVAN
He's God, not girl scout.

GOD
They can't learn a lesson if they're all dead, Ivan.

IVAN
Okay. Okay, just kill the children. The adults will get message. Trust me.

MOSES
That still kind of kills them all eventually. Without children...

IVAN
Okay. I have answer. Just kill firstborn. And... anyone caught chewing gum.

MOSES
It would put the fear of You in them for sure.

GOD
It certainly would, but it does seem pretty gruesome. Perhaps we can call that Plan B.

ERIC
I'm thinking, I'm thinking... what if... he turned everyone to salt?

MOSES
He already did that.

ERIC
Maybe a good flood?

MOSES
Did that too.

ERIC
Ahh, but did he do it with a huge downpour of penguins...

MOSES

Do you really think that sends the proper message?

ERIC

Keep 'em off balance, that's for sure.

MOSES

We need 'fierce wrath of God' stuff here, Mr. Idle, not wacky television programming.

ERIC

Fierce wrath of— I got it. I got it. A huge torrent of hail. I mean a real gullywasher. And...

GOD

Yes?

ERIC

Set it on fire.

MOSES

Burning hail.

ERIC

Nothing says Wrath-of-God like burning frozen water.

IVAN

This is pretty good, actually.

MOSES

I like it. Burning ice.

GOD

I think we've got it, and a few good backups to spare. Leo, how about...

LEONARDO

Ahh, everyone is just going to tell me to shut up again.

GOD

Actually, I was going to say, how about if you shuffle off and make some muffins to celebrate.

(Leonardo gets up and exits while mumbling...)

LEONARDO

Just you watch. Spam mail is going to be the worst plague mankind ever...

(After he's gone.)

GOD

He's really an amazing baker.

MOSES

I'd hope so. As an inventor, he's a complete washout.

IVAN

What does he paint with? Watercolors?

(Over the next few lines, the voices get softer as the lights fade out.)

GOD

I like the burning hail, although the river of blood still sounds pretty good to me.

ERIC

What if we turned all the livestock into balloon animals?

IVAN

What about covering everyone with leeches— no, wait, with lice!

MOSES

I already suggested insects!

IVAN

Lice is not insect. Is lice!

MOSES

Lice are definitely insects!

ERIC

Suppose we just make it really, really dark, so everyone keeps bumping into their furniture and stubbing their toes?

(Lights out)