

AND I FEEL FINE

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

ETHAN (M): Older than 20, a man who has lost everything in the mayhem of a world gone crazy. Weary, scared, and lonely.

ANGELINE (F): Roughly the same age as Ethan, a woman who is a little light on common sense, but full of enthusiasm and a zest for seeing the best in the world.

MO'ATHA (M): Older than Ethan, a man who takes himself very seriously because nobody else seems willing to do so. Adventurous but short on imagination.

GRACE (F): Any age, a woman whose impatience is matched only by the intensity with which she sees herself as far along the path to enlightenment.

## TIME

Anywhere from six months to two years after society has completely lost its collective mind and the rich have started using antibacterial hand sanitizer as a form of elite currency.

## PLACE

An abandoned and gutted store.

## NOTES

This play is absurd. It should be performed as such – hectic, irreverent, and silly.

"It is a curious fact that people are never so trivial as  
when they take themselves seriously."

–Oscar Wilde

*(Lights come up on an abandoned store. Most of the shelves are gone, and the few that remain are empty. On one side of the stage are three religious pilgrims dressed in robes, huddled over a notebook and whispering to each other as they flip pages, point at passages, etc.)*

*After a few moments of this, Ethan rushes in on the other side of the stage. He's dressed in rags and looks like he has neither eaten nor slept for days. He closes the door behind him quietly but quickly, and then looks back out it through a crack. He hasn't noticed the others.*

*The robed figures immediately see him, and in hushed tones confer for a moment. They decide that Angeline will be the one to speak. She softly makes her way to Ethan. When she is uncomfortably close...)*

ANGELINE

Hello?

*(Ethan yells out in surprise, spinning around and then jumping back against the door. He hits his head, and shouts again as he collapses to the floor. The others just watch, concerned. After a brief period of uncertainty...)*

What are you doing here?

ETHAN

What!?

ANGELINE

What are you doing here?

ETHAN

Trying to not get trampled. Don't you know what's going on out there? It's hysteria!

ANGELINE

Oh. Yeah. That.

*(Ethan has finally taken in the people he is seeing.)*

ETHAN

Who are you? *What* are you? Are you priests or something?

MO'ATHA

We're *seekers*.

ETHAN

Oh. Seekers. Right. Sure. I don't know what that means.

GRACE

We are the founding trinity of tomorrow's religion.

ETHAN

Uh huh.

ANGELINE

We're open to becoming the Quadinity of Seekers...

ETHAN

Oh, nooo... thank you no—

MO'ATHA

Tetrad.

*(They all look at him.)*

Tetrad of Seekers. Not 'quadinity'. That's not a word.

ETHAN

Still no. Thank you.

GRACE

So you were not called here?

ETHAN

Called? No. More like pushed. It was either come in here or get trampled.

ANGELINE, MO'ATHA, AND GRACE

Oh.

ETHAN

Were you... called here?

ANGELINE

In a manner of speaking. We came here following the clues encoded in our ancient holy scriptures.

ETHAN

No kidding.

ANGELINE

No. No kidding at all. Are you sure your head is okay? You banged it pretty hard.

ETHAN

Umm...

ANGELINE

Let me see. Oh. Oh dear. Oh my.

ETHAN

What?! What—

ANGELINE

Nothing! Nothing. It's fine. Just a scratch.

*(She motions to the others to join in.)*

GRACE

Yes, just a scratch. Hardly noticeable.

*(Ethan moves to Grace.)*

ETHAN

How would you know? You didn't even see it.

ANGELINE

She did. While I was looking.

*(Ethan turns back to face Angeline, and Grace gasps out loud. He turns and sees her face agasp, but immediately transformed into a sweet smile.)*

ETHAN

What?

GRACE

Nothing. I was... tired. *(Fakes a yawn.)* Hmmm hmmm. So sleepy.

*(Ethan touches the back of his head, and takes away a bloody hand.)*

ETHAN

Uh oh. Not good. *(He lowers himself to the floor.)* Suddenly feeling a little woozy.

MO'ATHA

Could be a loss of blood.

GRACE

He hasn't lost that much yet. So unless he's already... sick...

*(The three seekers scream, and immediately rush away from Ethan like he's going to explode.)*

ETHAN

I don't have the plague. I just haven't eaten for three days.

*(They think about this, and then in unison all come back to surround him. Just as they get to him, he sneezes, and they all scream and rush away again.)*

Allergies!

*(They stare at him, suspicious.)*

I promise. Hay fever and dust. No virus.

*(Finally they return.)*

I don't suppose any of you have a band aid or something.

ANGELINE

I do, but what you need is some disinfectant.

ETHAN

Right. I can't even buy food. Like I could afford *that*. I'm no Purellionaire.

*(At this last comment, the pilgrims all stiffen and exchange glances.)*

What? What did I say?

ANGELINE  
We should tell him.

MO'ATHA  
Absolutely not. He's an outsider.

ANGELINE  
But he might be able to help...

GRACE  
He's one of the unenlightened. The scriptures clearly say that the path to Purell will only be found by—

ETHAN  
Hold. Time out. Back up. What was that about scriptures?

GRACE  
The scriptures say that the last holy bottle of Purell can only be discovered by—

ETHAN  
These are the ancient writings you were talking about? Just how *ancient* are these?

*(They all look uncomfortable.)*

MO'ATHA  
We don't know exactly...

ETHAN  
Uh huh...

ANGELINE  
But they're very cryptic.

GRACE  
And they were written in cursive, so they must be pretty old.

ETHAN  
Uh huh.

ANGELINE  
We should just tell him. He might be able to help. *(Hearing no objection...)* I'm going to tell him.

MO'ATHA

I'll tell him. Okay, these ancient writings were left—

GRACE

We found them in a geocache!

MO'ATHA

Anyway, they talk about a hidden treasure that—

GRACE

The last remaining bottle of hand sanitizer—

MO'ATHA

Do you mind?

GRACE

And enough toilet paper to fill a bouncy castle!

MO'ATHA

I said I would tell him!

GRACE

You were taking too long.

ETHAN

A bouncy castle?

GRACE

It didn't say that literally. But the meaning was clear.

ANGELINE

We followed the clues to this abandoned store, but now we've hit a dead end.

ETHAN

Okay. Hold again. Let me try to wrap my wooly head around this. You came... where are you from?

GRACE  
Cleveland!

MO'ATHA  
Trenton!

ANGELINE  
Albuquerque!

ETHAN

You all converged on South Bend, Indiana from—

MO'ATHA

No. We told you. We were geocaching. We met in Great Falls, Montana.

ALL THREE  
*(Wistfully...)*

So beautiful!

ETHAN  
Right. And so you came here because you wanted a mountain of T.P.?

ANGELINE  
Oh, no. It's not for the toilet paper. We're Disinfectites.

ETHAN  
You're...?

MO'ATHA  
*(Rolling his eyes.)*  
Disinfectites. We have awoken to the truth of spiritual enlightenment.

ETHAN  
Which is...

MO'ATHA  
You see, when disinfectants were plentiful, their ability to bring enlightenment and higher being was diffused across the globe. But now, with all of it concentrated in the hands of only a few people, the mystical elixir has taken on its own form of consciousness! It has become aware, and—

GRACE  
The problem is that now only those rich Purellionaires have access to the wisdom. But they're too blinded by greed to open their minds to what—

ANGELINE  
But true seekers like us, if we can just find a bottle—

MO'ATHA  
Now that the Awakening has occurred—

GRACE  
And somewhere very close by is—

ETHAN  
Enough! Stop. I get it.

ANGELINE

You do? You mean, you understand the amazing opportunity that is so, so close?!

ETHAN

I mean, I understand that you all are...

*(Angeline gazes at him with adoring eyes.)*

Right. On the verge... of something really amazing.

ANGELINE

I *knew* he'd understand! I just *knew* it!

*(She hugs him, and he suddenly sees that helping them might have benefits.)*

ETHAN

So you came here, and...?

ANGELINE

The prophecies say... *(She grabs the notebook and reads...)* Once you've reached the holy temple... That's here...

ETHAN

Got it.

ANGELINE

A light in the darkness will guide you forward. The words of dreams will be your key.

ETHAN

Okay...

GRACE

And that's it.

ETHAN

Oh.

MO'ATHA

So of course we assumed that what we needed to do was to sleep here. Or perhaps some kind of vigil or spirit quest. But—

GRACE

So we stayed awake and meditated...

ANGELINE

We tried sleeping...

GRACE

Alone and in partners...

ANGELINE

Of course, there's three of us and— Oh! Oh! With him, perhaps we should try sleeping together again!

ETHAN

As nice as that sounds, did you try the obvious?

MO'ATHA

What do you mean? These were the obvious things!

ETHAN

I meant just turning off the lights. You know, make it dark. You tried that, right?

MO'ATHA

Well...

GRACE

We didn't...

ETHAN

Of course not.

*(Ethan makes his way to his feet, with a steadying hand from Angeline. Together they go to a light switch and turn it off. In the darkness they see a glowing patch on the wall between two shelves. It reads... "It's The End of The World", and under it is written "dartingeyes@geemail.com".)*

GRACE

Ohhh.

ANGELINE

Oh my.

MO'ATHA

Wow. We should have tried that a week ago.

ETHAN

You've been here for a week, and haven't... never mind. Doesn't matter.

GRACE

So what does it mean?

MO'ATHA

The scripture says that "the words of dreams will be your key". Does anyone remember any words from their dreams?

ETHAN

I really don't think that someone who leaves clues in geocaches would be able to arrange for you to dream a specific set of words, do you?

MO'ATHA

But the scripture says that the words of dreams—

ETHAN

Right, I heard that, but does that really sound like a plausible solution to you?

MO'ATHA

You just hit your head, and it's bleeding all your brains out. What would you know about plausible?

ANGELINE

I had a dream about snakes last night. And one of the snakes told me it was going to curl up into a doughnut.

GRACE

Maybe that's it. Try sending it to that email address!

*(Angeline does. They all gather around her phone in anticipation. A moment after she hits 'send', the phone dings.)*

ANGELINE

*(Reading...)*

Sorry. Try again.

MO'ATHA

Try again... Try sending it again and see what happens.

*(Ethan rolls his eyes, but Angelina does. There's another ding, and she read.)*

ANGELINE  
Sorry. Try again.

ETHAN  
I can't believe you people.

MO'ATHA  
Do you have a better idea?

ETHAN  
As a matter of fact, yes.

MO'ATHA  
Well?

ETHAN  
Send an email saying 'as we know it'.

*(Angeline does, and there's a ding.)*

ANGELINE  
It says, "It's the end of the world." Just what it says on the wall.

ETHAN  
Type it again. *(She looks confused.)* "As we know it."

*(She does, then another ding.)*

ANGELINE  
Nope. Same thing. Just says "it's the end of the world."

ETHAN  
One more time, 'as we know it', but this time add 'and I feel fine'.

MO'ATHA  
What does that—

ETHAN  
Just do it.

*(Angeline does, and they stare at the phone intently. After a moment, there's a sound of chimes, and a panel in the wall swings open. From the other side comes a wash of light in the darkness, and a roll of toilet paper tumbles out.)*

MO'ATHA

It's... It's...

GRACE

Glorious!

MO'ATHA

Everything I ever imagined!

*(The three pilgrims suddenly go to their knees. They take flowers out from their robes, lay them in supplication towards the panel, and then start to kowtow up and down while chanting 'om' sounds. Ethan stares at them, shaking his head, then looks into the room beyond the panel.)*

ETHAN

Look. Purell!

*(Ethan exits through the panel.)*

ETHAN (OFF)

Hey! Guys! There're jelly beans in here!

*(Lights out)*