

SON of GOD -- a one-act

CHARACTERS: (2)

SON of GOD, male, in his thirties, dressed in a white robe like Jesus, wearing a hunter's cap with flaps.

GUS, male any age, easy-going

SETTING: Two airplane seats with a space between them, facing the audience (or two chairs)

LIGHTS UP.

(Son of God is already seated in the aisle seat.)

(Gus comes down the aisle, looking for his seat.)

GUS: (points to the window seat) I guess that's me there. Although I thought I had an aisle seat.

SON of GOD: No man is an aisle seat.

GUS: (thinks about it) I suppose not. May I?

(He manages to get past Son of God.)

SON of GOD: At last you've made it, I see.

GUS: I've been running late all day.

SON of GOD: (profoundly) A man who runs late is a man who runs late.

GUS: (thinks) Very true. Hi! I'm Gus. I'm on a business trip. Hardware. And you?

SON of GOD: I'm the Son of God.

GUS: Really? . . . Excuse me. (Attempts to get out of his seat.)

SON of GOD: You just got here!

GUS: I know, but I've got to –

SON of GOD: Stay!

GUS: I've really got to – (Can't get out.)

SON of GOD: I said stay!

(Gus stays.)

SON of GOD: Have you heard the Word?

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GUS: I'm pretty sure I have.

SON of GOD: I mean the real Word.

GUS: How can I not have?

SON of GOD: Have we lifted off yet?

GUS: I don't think so. There was some sort of delay upfront . . .

SON of GOD: He who has heard the Word is never delayed.

GUS: I think you and I are *both* delayed.

SON of GOD: Are you argumentative?

GUS: Not especially.

SON of GOD: You were born in sin.

GUS: No, I think my parents were married.

SON of GOD: Original Sin. That hideous black blot on your soul.

GUS: My folks always told me I could be anything I wanted to be.

SON of GOD: Well, they were wrong! Not with that mortal, horrible, sickening stain of Original Sin that I can still smell on you.

GUS: (sniffing himself) I didn't think it was that bad.

SON of GOD: Believe me, it's bad!

GUS: Perhaps I should try to get another seat. (Stands up.)

SON of GOD: We're full.

GUS: How do you know that?

SON of GOD: Because I checked. But not to worry about your Original Sin. I have the cure.

GUS: I doubt that any of my sins are very original.

SON of GOD: Are you trying to make light of this?!

GUS: I'd like to.

SON of GOD: (lifting a small bottle of water) Do you know what I have here?

GUS: I'm guessing a bottle of water?

SON of GOD: Not just any bottle of water. This is the one that's going to wash your filthy soul free of its impurities! (Shakes the bottle of water.)

GUS: Somehow I don't think so.

SON of GOD: Do you want to burn in Hell for all eternity?! That's what's in store for you.

GUS: I don't think that bottle of water is going to make a difference.

SON of GOD: So you've already been baptized?

GUS: No, my parents were atheists.

SON of GOD: (freaked out) Atheists! Oh, my god, no! Your parents didn't love you enough to have you baptized?!

GUS: They made me wash behind my ears.

SON of GOD: It's not too late! What if you died in a plane crash, with your immortal soul the way it is?! Here! Let me help save you! (Starts to unscrew the bottle of water.)

GUS: Sir! Sir! I do not want your water!

SON of GOD: I'm saving you from the flames of Hell! And you are not stopping me!

GUS: Hey, you're not!

(They struggle for the bottle of water.)

SON of GOD: Wait! Wait!

GUS: What?!

SON of GOD: I have another idea.

GUS: I don't think I want to hear it.

SON of GOD: Instead of dousing you with baptismal water what if I die on a cross for you?

GUS: Are you kidding?! What is this whole get-up? (Gestures at his robe.)

SON of GOD: When we get off, if we ever get going, what if you nail me to a cross and I expire in three hours and then your sins – and everybody else's – will be expiated?

GUS: I don't want to be expiated!

SON of GOD: Of course you do. I was sent by my Heavenly Father to rescue you. I have some nails and a hammer in my luggage. (Stands as if to get the luggage.)

GUS: Stop that! Stop it! You're creeping me out. What in the world makes you think I'd agree to any such thing?

SON of GOD: If somebody offered to get rid of my sins, I believe I would take him up on the offer, especially since it would please my Heavenly Father.

GUS: What kind of father, heavenly or not, wants to see his son crucified?

SON of GOD: He who loves humankind.

GUS: No, he doesn't! That's sick!

SON of GOD: My father is not sick! You are sick!

GUS: If God wants people free of sin, why doesn't He just forgive them, all of them all at once? Or not have them born in sin in the first place?

SON of GOD: It's a mystery. By the way, I'm the co-equal of my father. So I am sacrificing myself to myself. For you!

GUS: For god's sake, shut up.

SON of GOD: O ye of little faith.

GUS: You're making me lose the little bit of faith I have.

SON of GOD: Because of me you can be free of a ton of sins – and for free.

GUS: I don't have a ton of sins!

SON of GOD: I can tell a masturbator a mile off.

GUS: Not true! . . . Only when I'm lonely.

SON of GOD: See!

GUS: I do not consider pleasuring myself a sin.

SON of GOD: (gasping) What am I hearing?! Do you not hear those sinful words -- (savoring them) "pleasuring myself."

GUS; God knows, there's enough loneliness and sadness in the world without having to feel guilty about "pleasuring myself."

SON of GOD: Stop saying that! You're --

GUS: You brought it up.

SON of GOD: He who pleasures himself displeases the Lord.

GUS: He who speaks in homilies should make sense, at least once in a blue moon.

SON of GOD: I sniff other sins about your person.

GUS: You leave my person out of this.

SON of GOD: I can see that we should have gotten you when you were a child. It wouldn't be so difficult now.

GUS: You shouldn't be allowed anywhere near a child.

SON of GOD: I can see your sins laid out before me! All cardinal! Besides lust, I see pride, greed, envy, gluttony, wrath . . . and . . . and . . . What am I forgetting?

GUS: Sloth. (pronounces it *slowth*)

SON of GOD: Yes, sloth! (pronounces it to rhyme with *cloth*)

GUS: It's *sloth*. (pronounces it *slowth*)

SON of GOD: It's *sloth*. (pronounces it like *cloth*) However it's pronounced, you're guilty of it.

GUS: You don't know me. You don't know what I'm guilty of not. Maybe mispronunciation ought to be a sin! A cardinal one!

SON of GOD: I think I detect some sins in you that don't even have a label.

GUS: You sure care a lot about my sins. Look to thyself!

SON of GOD: I have no sins. That is why I am the perfect sacrifice.

GUS: The Hell you are!

SON of GOD: If you won't nail me to a cross when we land, I bet I can find a whole bunch who will.

GUS: Am I going crazy? This is all some sort of elaborate practical joke, right?

SON of GOD: There are none so blind as those who will not see.

GUS: What am I missing? Tell me.

SON of GOD; Here is God practically sitting on your lap and providing you the path to salvation, and what are you doing? Resisting.

GUS: You're not God and I'm not letting you sit on my lap.

SON of GOD: Let me tell you a parable then.

GUS: No way!

SON of GOD: A man one day went out to spread weeds and nettles in his neighbor's orchard. He had come to hate his neighbor and wanted to do him ill will.

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GUS: I'm not listening.

SON of GOD: The man went at night and in disguise so that no one would know it was he spreading the bad things in the orchard.

GUS: Was he wearing a cap with ear flaps?

SON of GOD: No. Why?

GUS: Never mind. Don't go on.

SON of GOD: So the neighbor comes out of his house in the morning and sees all the weeds and nettles in his orchard.

GUS: And he goes to his neighbor's house and kills him?

SON of GOD: No.

GUS: He makes the neighbor dig up all the weeds and nettles and never speaks to him again?

SON of GOD: No. He harvests all the weeds and nettles that have been planted in his orchard and makes a wonderful vegetable stew that he serves to all his large family, which had been starving, and not only do they not starve, they flourish. And do you know why?

GUS: I don't want to know why.

SON of GOD: Because the weeds and nettles, far from being bad, turned out to be full of miraculous properties that made them healthy, wealthy, and wise -- and immortal.

GUS: What a bunch of self-serving crap.

SON of GOD: And even the neighbor who had planted the weeds and nettles, thinking them harmful, ate some himself and became immortal. And taller.

GUS: But was he *happy*?

SON of GOD: You have an attitude.

GUS: Let me tell *you* a parable.

SON of GOD: You? What do you know about parables?

GUS: Once there was a man on an airplane who had the misfortune to sit next to a crazed individual who wouldn't take no for an answer.

SON of GOD: How fascinating!

GUS: The crazed person kept insisting that he was right about everything and had all these truly weird notions about sinfulness and salvation and said things that made little or no sense

whatsoever. Apparently no one had ever told the crazed man that he was crazy and that to follow even one item on his agenda was to court madness and waste one's life on total gibberish. The end!

SON of GOD: I like that parable.

GUS: Then it's missed its point!

SON of GOD: But I don't see what it has to do with anything we've been talking about.

GUS: Of course you don't, because you're crazy!

SON of GOD: (hurt) That's not very nice.

(Pause.)

GUS: Oh, great! Now I have to apologize to *you*?! Well, I'm not doing it.

SON of GOD: You must learn to forgive others.

GUS: No, others need to learn not to piss me off.

SON of GOD: I used to be like you.

GUS: You did not!

SON of GOD; Unhappy, suspicious, cynical.

GUS: And then you found the Word?

SON of GOD: I did. And now I'm happy.

GUS; I'd rather be unhappy, suspicious, and cynical.

SON of GOD: No, you wouldn't.

GUS: Yes, I *would*.

SON of GOD: You know what you need?

GUS: (Doesn't answer)

SON of GOD: (Holds up the bottle of water) This.

GUS: I'm not thirsty.

SON of GOD: Sure you are. (Unscrews the bottle cap and sprinkles a little on Gus.) There! Now you're baptized!

GUS: How dare you! What in the world do you think you're doing?! Unbaptize me!

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SON of GOD: Too late! Now you're one of us.

GUS: I am not one of you!

SON of GOD: Another soul saved!

GUS: If I want my soul saved, I'll save it myself.

SON of GOD: We can't take that chance.

GUS: This is utter nonsense. Are you looking for a punch in the face? (Makes a fist.)

SON of GOD: If I have to take a punch in the face to do God's work, it is nothing compared to the suffering of the early martyrs.

GUS: I think you've ruined my clothes.

SON of GOD: It's just water.

GUS: No, it's Holy Water and it burns!

SON of GOD: No, trust me, it's just plain old water.

GUS: Just who are you? You're not the Son of God, I'm pretty sure of that. But who?

SON of GOD: Do you really want to know?

GUS: Yes!

SON of GOD: You're positive?

GUS: I'm going to strangle you.

SON of GOD: I'm just a guy.

GUS: Like hell!

SON of GOD: I'm just a guy who likes to fly on airplanes, corner somebody, and then sprinkle water of them. I do it all the time. I can't stop.

GUS: You're a serial water sprinkler?

SON of GOD: Sort of like an arsonist, only in reverse. All that about bringing the Word is just baloney. The real reason is that I like to throw water on people.

GUS: I've heard of some pretty disgusting things in my day, but that is the worst!

SON of GOD: I'm sorry. Let me make it up to you.

GUESS: You can't.



SON of GOD: No, this is good. Watch.

GUS: It had better be.

SON of GOD: You see this water? (Holds up the bottle.)

GUS: (standing up) If you so much as –

SON of GOD: No, no! I promise. You're already sprinkled. Now for the really good stuff. GUS

GUS: You see these hands? They're going around your neck in about two seconds.

SON of GOD; (not intimidated at all) And you see these? (Holds up a bag of peanuts.)

GUS: What are they?

SON of GOD: Peanuts.

GUS: (moving back) I'm allergic to peanuts!

SON of GOD: (putting the peanuts away, holding up a different small bag) How about these?

GUS: What are they?

SON of GOD: Pretzels.

GUS: I don't like pretzels.

SON of GOD; You're going to like these. (Holds up the bag.) This is my body. Take ye and eat.

GUS: Oh, for Christ's sake, will you not stop?!

SON of GOD: (holding up a small bottle of airplane wine) And this is my blood! Take ye and drink.

GUS: I don't want your goddamned blood either!

SON of GOD: Do this in commemoration of me.

GUS: Put those things down.

SON of GOD: Now?

GUS: Now !

(SON of GOD puts the wine and pretzels down.)

SON of GOD: I am ready for my martyrdom. (Crosses arms over chest.)

GUS: Take these hands and put them around your own neck. (He arranges Son of God's hands around his own neck.)

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SON of GOD: What are we doing? This isn't how it goes?

GUS: Yes, it is, from now on. Whenever you have this urge to convert somebody in any way, shape or form, your hands will go up to your neck and you will begin to squeeze and squeeze.

SON of GOD: That won't kill me. I'll just pass out.

GUS: Good enough. Now do it!

(SON of GOD begins choking himself.)

GUS: Are you feeling the transformation yet?

SON of GOD: (Gags yes.)

GUS: Great! It's a start. Again! Harder! And do this in commemoration of me!

(SON of GOD again chokes himself until his eyes bulge.)

SON of GOD: (choking, strangling, coughing)

GUS: Amen!

BLACKOUT