

PASSIVE (A 40 min play)

(As the lights come on, GL, we can see three men walking about, a random stroll, like waiting for someone. They keep crossing each other and look at the other in the eye but don't say a word, no exchange, no clichéd hush hush convos, then one of them just stands dead center on the stage and looks at the audience with curious albeit dead pan expression.

He keeps staring at them till someone in the audience starts shifting and feeling uncomfortable.

And as soon as he has convinced himself of the reality of the audience by doing this, he speaks out)

Man1: I can't believe this; he has actually got an audience for himself this time!

Man2: Now now, you've been working too long with him, he is getting to you, what do you say?

Man3: what can I say? All of us are characters, all of us in this room are characters, you , me , this audience that he has conjured up, are but characters. You saw an audience I believe, Hmmm, let me see, so all of us are human beings acting as characters in the play of life, some watching the play, others within the play, where characters are acting like other characters, for the characters watching the play from a seat in their play of life, where they have many roles- one being a patient audience member. Wait, I don't want to confuse you. Get on with it, why is he not here yet?

Man1: Ah, it takes time; he must be waiting for his epiphany moment.

Man2: Of course, epiphany, personally I would prefer 7 epiphanies a day and a world not so apparently devoid of angels. I don't know why I keep coming back to him; I mean all he makes me do is some lovey dovey role. My last three roles have been a metrosexual schoolboy, a guy called love who wore a cupid on his shirt and Lorenzo! I thought the asylum would do him good but he is not treading that thin line anymore, there is a whole freaking gulf between his insanity and what was his supposed genius.

Man3: He looked awful the last time I met him; he has been working on this dream script of his, where he ll find answers to his life and why he is the way he is that again being subject to consideration that he is what we think he is for he maybe what he thinks he is but not what we think he is.....

Gets cut by the director, from one corner in the stage, preferably in the passing out position

Director: I have been working you see, and this time its going to blow their minds off, then they can call me crazzyyy, like hell they can call me crazy. Ladies and gentleman , what you are about to see is a play in the making ,where I , the director and not a nymphomaniac, a rare species indeed, will direct the greatest scene ever, right in front of your eyes. I will create an illusion, an illusion so grand that you will see your life's reflection in this mirror.

Man1: Oh god, so is it going to be "Waiting for Godot" again?

Man2: Oh I so wish it's "Glengary Glenross", It would be so cool to parade around the stage wearing cool suits and screaming Fuck you, Fuck this , Fuck that and when you forget the lines, you can just lower your aviator shades and say a suave Fuck off, gimme the leads.

Man3: oh, get on with it will you, just introduce a crisis, the play will begin, it ll get resolved, the play will get over and I get to go home.

Director: There is no beginning, middle or end. This is a scene, a battle between good versus evil, a man trying to search his identity. Everyone wants to define everything because really, there is no definition other than the illusion of definitions. We contrive air to postpone the reality of our death. Yes, that's a thought. We are on a rock, floating in a vacuum of endless space, and we have had to survive as scrounging for some kind of identity. Yet it is through identifying illusions we have so accepted as our only reality that we can find the essential meaning of our lives.

Wow, this is some psychedelic shit man, right now the blue and red lights should bathe us all.

they actually shift lights to blue and red

This is the essence of the grandest lie ever told to mankind, LIFE.

Man1: Ummm, why in God's name am I dressed like Marilyn Manson?

Director: You, my child, are an angel.

(Man2 and man3 snigger and laugh, looking at each other)

Man1: what the.. An angel doesn't smoke; she doesn't look like a weird goth kid who is not getting enough action for her age.

(Gets cut)

Director: Hey hey wait a second. She? What makes you think angels are a 'she'? oh well they rarely are although I knew, when I was at the top of my game, a couple of girls who would dress up like them, wings et al , \$200 an hour, top class, ummm(scent of a woman level appreciation) and what do you think Life is, a freaking fairytale. *The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?* (Jeremiah 17:9) That being said by your bible. So, all the seven deadly sins are but a man's true nature.

Man1: I am an angel, the messenger of God, the guardian of man.

Director: And guard you shall, and deliver messages you shall, for you are Gabriel. (Man 3 snickers)

Man 2: (to Man 3) What?

Man 3: (pointing at Man 1) GAY-Briel, hehe....
(Man 1 snobbishly ignores and turns to director)

Director: Archangel Gabriel, oh you are such an angel. You want hell on Earth, don't you?

Man1: I am supposed to protect, to make mankind worthier for this life that they have been blessed with.

Director: and how do you do it, Gabriel? How? You subject them to adversity, you subject them to hell for only then will they rise above the pettiness of their materialistic existence and become noble. Mankind isn't worthy for its divine gifts now

Man1: (beleagured and somewhat influenced) OK, I am an angel. That's not hard to play

Director: Satan, oh where are you little devil(and he runs around the stage in a circle)

Man3: I guess that ll be me (and gives an evil rg grin to man 2 as he passes him who ob maxx wanted to be satan)

(to write further dialogues I need costume inputs) So, I am the bad man (scarface).I get my due at last, I get to kill , I get to drink blood and abuse and hey, where are my horns? No cape either? A scimitar, a trident? No weapons? What kind of a devil am I ?

Director: Too much television. This sort of behavior is left to the psychotic, dogmatic, fundamentalist believers you see on T.V. everyday letting off bombs and killing people in the name of God. Beliefs are dangerous. Beliefs allow the mind to stop functioning. A non-functioning mind is clinically dead. Believe in everything and nothing. You are here to have your due. A contract that's long overdue. You are no different from the Other, whom they worship. Tell me why? Because he had better PR, The entire institution of the church, a marketing team led by the CEO, the Pope, and their marketing tool called the Bible. You? Some black metal bands, kids who can't spell your name because they are so high on crack OH it's a raw deal and you must have your due.
(Man3 is slii high and is nodding in a doped out way)

Director: What do you say John?

Man2: John?

Director: Yes , John

Man 2: That;s it? There is no sinister plan for me? Nothing?

Director: You are John, just an average John Doe.

Man 2: Oh, MAN!!

Director: What? You have a problem with that?

John: Yeah I have a problem with that? What do you want me to do?? Give me a past, a character, give me something to work with!!

Director: All in good time John.

John: This sucks.

Director: Now,..... The idea, of this scene, is to bring out Heaven and Hell's lust for Man. It must be a dramatic situation, one so powerful and profound, that it required intervention from both sides of the cosmos. John..... is going to die.

John: (Gives up) Phew...Great!! Didn't see that one coming.

Satan: Nice.... How?

Director: He's going to commit suicide.

John: Why me!!! WHY???

Director: Come on Johnny boy! You're suicidal, how could you NOT be into that? You wanted a past right? Well there you have it.

Gabe: Ahem,ah.... we might have a problem..

Satan: Namely?

Gabe: There are a....ahem... couple of.....kids in the audience...
(Director and John search the audience)

Satan: So? They're are gonna find out sooner or later!

Gabe: Shut up Satan.

Director: They'll be alright.... Like he said, they'll grow up...

Gabe: It's just...isn't right!

John: what part? The fact that I'm committing suicide? Or that you are dressed-up GAY? (Satan and John laugh)

Gabe: Laugh it up funny man!!!

Director: (to the audience) This is an R-rated production. Anyone too young, or sensitive, or down right whimpy may please leave the theatre. (to Gabriel) There, I've fulfilled my responsibility. I am NOT diluting a great idea for the sake of rule breakers. Does anyone else have any other problem before we start?

Gabe: A...

Satan & John: (Loud) NO..GET ON WITH IT.

Director: Right!!... we begin. Scenario!! It's a lousy apartment on a lousy building in a lousy part of town, and the night is hot as hell...Music!!!
(Bradybunch theme starts to play) AHM!!!!!!! (it stops)

[SOUNDTRACK 1 (vampire nightclub mix type) starts]

Director: John, having just written his suicide note, is preparing for his last sin.... red lighting!!! (lighting turns to red) (to Gabe and Satan) You, you, out of the set! (Gabe and Satan exit stage) John, stares at his tool table, trying to decide the best way to die (John stands back facing audience, at the table and runs his hands on it). With a smirk, he lifts the Berreta hand cannon, and takes his seat (john lifts a gun off the table, grabs the chair, places it front center stage, and sits on it)..... He stares at the barrel for a while... his nerves go stiff, but only for a moment.... He sees his entire life roll past his mind.....

John: (music stops) You didn't give me one!

Director: PRETEND!!!! (music starts again) Now,.... He puts off his last cigarette. Having remembered all of his life (John rolls his eyes), he reminds himself that there is nothing worth living for... slowly, but steadily, he brings the gun to his mouth, opens it, and places the barrel inside..... he closes his eyes, and begins to count. Five,....his breathing intensifies.....Four...his heart beats faster,.....three..... the finger moves over the trigger...two....the music becomes deafeningly loud.....and then.....and then....

John: (Music stops) OH THE SUSPENSE IS KILLING ME!!!!!!!

(Gabriel and Satan jump in from off stage and make a posture. Director and John look at them with surprise)

Gabe: Oops...ah...not yet??

(director and John nod, indicating no...but Satan and Gabe hunch off the stage)

John: By the way this tastes awful (points to gun).

Director: You are going to die, and the last thing on your mind is the taste of the GUN?!

John: Ah...yeah?

Director: FINE!!!! Pick another weapon (John goes to the table and brings back a small pocket knife) And don't interrupt a build up again..... Now....where were we? Ah yes... the countdown.... (music starts) four..... three...two.....and.....LIGHTING!!!!

(The light turns bright on the angel side, reinforced by the spot....music plays the angel entry and stops. John drops his knife, drops his jaw, drops to his knees and starts bowing. Gabriel enters)

Gabe: (Deep, preachy voice) Rise child. I come to yea... with a message from GOD ALMIGHTY!

John: Oh, Holy Spirit! I am forever your faithful servant. Deliver me to heaven!!!

(Satan jumps in the red part of the stage)

Satan: (Anger) Never!!!!

John: Aah (Jumps towards Gabriel after being startled by Satan)

Satan: This one belongs to ME!!!

Gabriel: Be gone foul beast..... You will NOT have this soul today!!!

Satan: NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.....

Director: CUUUUUUUUUUUUUUTTTT!!!!!!!!!! What in GOD's name do you think you are doing?!! "Holy Spirit"!!! "Foul Beast"?? "NOOOOO"?? Pathetic!!!

Gabriel: Look, how else should a messenger of God behave?

Director: That was too preachy, too ideal, too..... masculine...!!!

Satan: I agree...

Director: You're next...

Gabe: All references in the Jewish, Christian and other holy writings give angels a masculine aspect! What are you looking for?

Director: I want you to be.... androgynous.

(John and Satan smile, get together, fold their hands and stare at Gabriel in anticipation)

Gabriel: wahat?

Director: As an angelic being, even in human form, Gabriel transcends gender.

Gabe: You mean Gay? (Satan and John burst into laughter)

Director: Zip it you two!! (takes the seat) You, are to project Gabriel's innate ambiguity in many forms, including gender.

Gabe: ha...ho...how do I do that?

Director: I want you to be powerful....

(Gabriel broadens his chest)

Director: But I want elegance in the role....

(Gabriel places one hand on the hip and twists)

Director: be luminous.....

Satan: But remote....

John: A little snobbish....

Director: with a measure of sympathy,....

(Gabriel ends up with a weird expression and posture)

Director: Think you can handle that?

Gabriel: (doubtfully) ahuh....

Director: That's my girl (Gabriel gets startled by the remark, snaps, looks at the director, then gives up and turns to the corner, starts contemplating his character. Director turns to Satan) And you sir.... Show me a Devil....

(Satan readjusts his stance and growls loudly)

Director: There's your problem right there? The devil has been depicted so many times in literature and art that we all recognize him instantly with hooves and horns, dark and horned. Let's just use your face and let the audience use their own imagination. Look like the neighbor next door - a little odd, perhaps, but nothing overtly dangerous. Simply a bored, unemotional, kind of creepy guy along the lines of Fagin in *Oliver Twist* - in a word, insouciant. You don't need to get angry, don't need to make a scene or call attention to yourself – you ARE Satan, after all.

(throughout this, Satan makes several corrections to his bodily posture and manner just like Gabriel did)

Director: Got that?

Satan: I think so....

Director: Good. Now, Lets try this over again shall we? Places.... Lights!!!

John: Hey, mind if I switch to the Gun again?

Director: Whatever suits you (John pockets the knife, lights a cigarette, picks up the gun)..... Music (music starts)....Annnd.....GO!
(director jumps off stage to watch from a corner)

(John takes his seat, stares at the barrel, puts off his cigarette, slowly brings the barrel into his mouth, breaths deeply, closes his eyes, music gets louder.....He is about to pull the trigger when the angel entry plays and the lighting changes as mentioned before. Gabriel appears.)

Gabe: (Almost Whispers) John... (John opens his eyes)... JOOHAAANN...(John looks to that side, gun still in mouth. Lighting supresses. Gabriel squints his eyes, tilts head to a side and asks)
Are you finally giving up on me?

Satan: (Voice from off stage) John....!.... (John looks to the other side, gun still in mouth. Satan walks in stylishly and takes his place, laughs fiendishly)

Gabe: Lucifier!
(John looks toward Gabriel, gun still in mouth)

Satan: This world...is mine, in time..... You...best of all of us Gabriel!, should understand... Aammbitioonn...
(John looks toward Satan, gun still in mouth)

Gabe: Son of Perditiion (John looks toward Gabriel, gun still in mouth)..... Little Horn.... (Satan grins).... Most unclean!

Satan: I do miss, the old names....(John looks toward Satan, gun still in mouth)... time to go.... John....

Gabriel: I will smite thee.....IN-HIS-HONOUR!!!

Director: CUT!!!!!!..... (comes into center stage) This isn't working, is it?

Gabriel: Hey... you ASKED us to.....

Director: You two were just fine... It's him I'm worried about.....
(John finally removes the gun from his mouth)

John: I'm trying to work with limited content here!!! Why don't you flesh out my character like you did with them?

Director: ummhumm.... Take a break you two.... Angel, stay where i can see you, i might need you on this..... (Satan walks off stage, Gabriel stays at the corner, half-facing the audience)

Director: (to John) John... your role, is a bit complicated...

John: Try me.

Director: When I thought of you, I wanted to represent the strongest in humanity. Mankind is caught in the crossfire between heaven and hell.... And you, are worthy of representing it in an unfront dialogue with the forces. You're a priest John. Someone who literally knows how the world works, and doesn't like it.....

John: The strongest in Humanity.....a priest..... So.... why am i killing myself?

Director: We'll get to that later.... right now... I want you to play a man, haunted inside out. A foul-mouthed [cynic](#) who pursues a life of magic and danger. Your motivation is attributed to an [adrenaline](#) addiction that only the strange and mysterious can sate. A condemned man... but trying to fight it. Some sort of weird mix of irreverence, fatalism, irony, and bravado.
(John gives a clueless look.. crickets chirp in the background)

Director: Look, show me a silent man who has a lot on his mind...(John makes a pose) breath as if you're tired and pissed off it all.....feel, justified..... You are the one soul, the Devil would come up here personally to collect.....now, go demand Heaven off of Gabriel.

(John looks down.... makes up his mind, looks up at Gabriel still facing the Audience.... and walks up to him)

GABRIEL: (without looking back) I know what you want, son.

JOHN: Still keeping your all-seeing eye on me, have you? Flattered.

GABRIEL: Well, I could offer how a shepherd leads even the most wayward of his flock, but it might sound disingenuous.

(John looks at director)

Director: Keep going.....
(Gabriel walks to the chair)

JOHN: I've been meeting some unusual sinners lately. You might consider giving me an extension. I'll do your side some good these days.

GABRIEL: Are you still trying to buy your way into heaven?

JOHN: What about the people I've converted, the souls that I've saved -- that alone should guarantee my entrance...

GABRIEL: (cuts in) How many times have I told you.... that's not the way this works.

JOHN: Haven't I served you enough? What does he want from me?

GABRIEL: Only the usual... Self-sacrifice..belief...

JOHN: (disgusted) I believe for Christ's sake....

GABRIEL: (interrupting) no no....you KNOW..... and there's a difference. You've SEEN ...

JOHN: I never asked to see. I was born with this curse.

GABRIEL: A GIFT....John...One that you've squandered selfishly...

JOHN: I've been counselling serial killers in prison....who was that for?

GABRIEL: Everything you've ever done you've only ever done for yourself!
To earn your way back into his good graces.

JOHN: This is bullshit – bullshit!! impossible rules, endless regulations...who goes up? who goes down? ...

You don't even understand us! (Leans in and Whispers) You're the one who should go down HALF-BREED....

(backs up dejected and sits looking down)

Why me, Gabriel? It's personal,
isn't it? I didn't go to church
enough? I didn't pray enough? I

was five bucks short in the collection plate? Why?

[Gabriel moves right up to him, makes this very personal.]

GABRIEL: (kneels in front of him) You're going to die because you smoked 30 cigarettes a day since you were 15. And you're going to Hell because of the life you took. (pauses, leans in close to look into the face, hesitates...) You're fucked.

Director: Very nice..... Improvised histrionics, good use of set..... and the ending, oh man!! Gabriel, i'm proud of you....

John: This play is going nowhere!

Director: Nowhere? Look at all we've accomplished!!

John: It's been 20 minutes since we started and we know nothing about me? Look at the audience. They're clueless! I've read the script, I'm clueless.

Director: What do you want to know ?

John: There are too many loose ends man!

Satan: In the theater, drama is a living, breathing art form. Actors are placed on stage, so that they can breathe life into the characters that have been created by the playwrights. In theater, the two main things to consider are: a) drama is driven by conflict and b) that drama is action.

Director: Action can be loosely defined as anything a character does with an objective behind it, ...

John: What freaking objective?

Director: whereas conflict can be briefly summarized as a clash between the motives of one or more characters.

Satan: There's hardly been any conflict at all.

Director: This is my style..... It's called suspense..... look it up.....

Satan: Told you he was crazy (to John).

John: All I am asking for is, some proper scenes, that depict an actual event that happened to these characters that reveals their past, not these disjoint character building aids!

Director: What event are you talking about?

John: Why is John condemned to Hell? What life did he take?

Director: His own!!!

Gabe: But that scene hasn't happened yet right? This was a flashback?

Director: This was symbolism! It doesn't matter whether it happened or not, as long as Johnny boy learnt how to play the part!

John: I'd do a lot better if you answer my question!

Director: Alright!!!! You're a suicide!

John: We know that!

Director: No....You've died before!
(Long pause..... The actors break into laughter)

Gabriel: We're acting in a play with no plot!!

Director: Come on!! Trust me. There IS a Solid plot!!!

John: Oh yeah? Then what happened in hell?

Gabriel: John....

John: Nononono wait wait..lets see where he goes with it... well?

Director: Well..... (Turns to the audience) The scene you are about to witness is a never before attempted depiction of Hell itself. Lights!....(lights go blank) Spot!..... John.....a much younger version of him anyway... has just died.....

(Total darkness. Lone chair and a table with torture worktools on them (doesn't have to be visible). John cuffed to chair in spot. Absolute silence except arbit shrieks of women and babies in background (very faint). Only sound of his own

breathing. Sounds of laughter from darkness, with arbut black clothed entities occasionally running about on stage. Impression of wild shades running about and doing things in private (facing back to the audience) in backdrop and dark.)

(John starts coughing badly.)

(Suddenly, all the shades turn their heads in his direction, as if to have just become aware of his existence.)

** Their costumes should include a way to depict eyes in the dark. A couple of LEDs will do. **

(They slowly and animalistically (possibly on all fours) approach him. One of them comes into the spot, crawls up him, sniffs him, locks eyes with him and slowly smiles.)

Demon1: (ferral+whispering voice) J-O-H-N.....

Demon2: (also stepping into spot, glaring eyes) John! (starts laughing)

Demon3: Hello John. (joins mocking laughter along with rest of them)

Demon1: Don't worry... happens to everyone at first...it's the sulphur.

(All step in spot and surround him, mockingly feeling and scratching him. Behavior much like half-animal-half-human vampire hybrids, sniffing, grunting, menacingly speaking with disgust and sadism pouring out. John slowly realises that he is in hell, sighs and calms down.)

(Next few lines in rapid succession.)

D2: So, you finally cracked eh?

D1: Whats the matter? Couldn't take it any more?

D3: Life's too much for ya?

D2: Are you a quitter John?

D1: A quitter?

D3: A loser?

D2: Pathetic!

D3: A chicken?

D1: Chicken Ha..

D2: Scared shit John?

D3: Do you feel FEAR? John?

D2,1,4: (whisper) F-E-A-R..
(All laugh)

John: (silent submission) Go ahead.... Make my day.....

(Demons stop laughing and glare at him. The leaderly D1 starts laughing again....stops....leans in close.....)

D1: You know what place is? It's called Pandemonium John..

D2: (popping in from behind, into spot) The hall of the devils.

D3: (echos D2) the devils.

D1: Inferno....

D4: The abyss.

D2: seasoned with fire.

D3: FIRE

D1: Hatred.

D2: Shadows. (laughter)

** Having rapid lines such as these will help bring out an unconscious coordination between the demons. And easy effect to pull off (with practice of course) and doesn't need sound editing. They just need to keep hissing and whispering. **

D2: In your case, it's home.

D3: Welcome home John! (snicker)

D1: Coz' you're gonna be here for a looong tiiiime..... Johnny... You're soul will be ripped apart, over and over again, in screaming and brutal agony... for all eternity...

(John starts to smirk, stunning the demons.)

D2: (leans in) Johnny boy.....word is..that you're on your way down.... fresh meat.....fingerlicking.....(refer constantine track position 32:15, Balthazaar's expressions and gestures)

D3: So,..... where do we start with you? (walks up to the table, possibly pulls off a cloth covering it)

(Lift a blade) Shall I spill your guts out?

D2: (pick up pliers) No....(brings it to Johns toes) I say we pluck his toes first....and feed it to him (laughs)

D1: (picks up a saw) Or perhaps, we saw his hands off..... help finish what he did to himself.....

D4: (pickup scyth or needle) Or....

D2: Ooooo i LIKE that one.....

D4: We stick it in his eyes.....So he'll wander blind for an eternity.... searching....

D1: No.... Before we have our liberties with him.... (points blade to heart) we must cut open his beating hear.....

(Flash of bright light illuminates whole stage for a moment, stunning everyone. If possible, a sound of a single heartbeat. John looks frightened for the first time. The demons, although dazed, recover their expressions and begin to laugh before being again interrupted by a light flash and heartbeat. They start breathing heavily and looking at eachother.)

John: (Looking at his own chest) What is happening to me?

(Again a flash, with a brief static sound, with continuous flatline sound with a voice saying "We are losing him!!". Another flash, the demons flich.....another, they start retreating, drop their tools ...another..... they almost fall back but freeze. The wailing and faint screaming sounds stop now and there is complete silence. The Devil walks in between the frozen demons, grabs a chair.... sits in front of John)

Satan: John, you son of a bitch.

John: What's going on?

Satan: Can't you tell? (flash) (Sigh) O John...John...John...John....When you cut yer tendons ya gotta cut deep enough.

John: (pause)(flash) What?

Satan: (suddenly leans in) You're going back.
(Satan starts to walk away)

John: (dejected...looks down...) No....

Satan: (suddenly interested) What? I didn't catch that?!

John: Do something.... anything?

Satan: (runs to the chair) Why?

John: I can't go back (in low volume)

Satan: Wha..

John: Don't wanna

Satan: huh?

John: I don't like it..

Satan: come again..

John: its..

Satan: Louder...

John: life sucks...

Satan: Say it ag....

John: (Screaming) LIFE SUCKS LIFE SUCKS OKAY!!!! THERE ARE YA HAPPY..... (looks at director) What the FUCK are you trying to do with this scene.

(general lighting)

Dir: What?

Satan: I'm done..

Dir: Why'd you stop!! It was perfect...

John: It's not right!

Dir: Meaning.

John: It's all screwed up!!!

Dir: Why, what are you talking about?

John: Well for one..... the background score SUCKED!!!

Dir: Whats wrong with the background score? Talk to me!!

John: Hell, whether classical or Christian, has always been perceived as an exceptionally loud place. St. Matthew's allusions to an "outer darkness", where "there shall be weeping [or 'wailing'] and gnashing of teeth" are among the most useful. Similarly, Aeneas' first perception of Hell is an aural one: "From here are to be heard sighs, and savage blows resound: then the scrape of iron, and dragged chains. Aeneas stopped, terrified, and drank in the din."

Satan: He's right you know... The essence of Dante's hell is the endlessness of the sound: it contains human voices and human non-vocal sounds blended

together and made so continuous as to become almost an atmospheric condition. For Dante, as for Aeneas, the sheer level of sound is physically shocking.

Dir: What the...where did you get this medieval shit?

Gabriel: Nor was this exclusively a medieval phenomenon, since Renaissance discussions of Hell also stressed the acoustic aspects in the context of a belief that all senses would be perpetually tortured there. For instance, William Sharrock dwells on "the variety of noises that shall be found in the howlings and drummings of Tophet".

John: while Christopher Love states that "the ear shall be tormented with the yellings and hideous outcries of the damned".

Satan: And John Bunyan predicts that the devils themselves will be "howling and roaring, screeching and yelling in such a hideous manner, that thou wilt be even at thy wits' end".

Dir: What about Milton? The narration proper of *Paradise Lost* opens on a lake of fire, covered with the forms of fallen angels 'rolling in the fiery gulf' of "ever-burning sulphur" (1.55, 69). The first auditory indication of the poem: Satan "with bold words / Breaking the horrid silence thus began."

John: "Horrid silence" is an oxymoron, and a bold one, to judge from the derision suffered by John Dryden after his use in 1660 of the phrase "horrid stillness".

Dir: What?

Satan: the phrase is in some sense analogous to "darkness visible", but the true force of Milton's use of it here takes a long time to emerge through the poem.

Dir: Alright, alright..we'll fix that... what else?

John: And why in God's name was John saying that?

Satan: Yeah..what's up with that?

Dir: Dude, that's the kind of character you are!

John: But how can't he be afraid of Hell?

Dir: What answer will make Socrates Shut up ?

Gabriel: I'd think he should...

Dir: Shut up Angel.

Satan: And why doesn't he wanna go back?

Dir: It's the same reason he slashed his wrists, it's suicide. It's in the script
Damn it!

John: This sucks....

Dir: wah wha what? You can't play this character John? Is it too much to handle? (turns to the lighting area) Stop playing with the lights, it's distracting. (to John) huh? John? What's it gonna be?

John: (pause) I quite. (walk to front of stage and sit facing audience)

Dir: What?

Satan: Yeah, me too. (goes and joins John)

Dir: You can't do this to me? ! I created you!! I command you!!!! I am the greatest director in existence. I have directed more plays than all of you have heard of Period, and You WILL Obey me! When I say jump, you will respond with how high....(interrupted by John closing his ears and going "LALLALLALLALLA....") Oh, frell!!!

Gabriel: I think it's about time you told us the crux of your idea.

Dir: (Frustrated) Fine!!... Take your place....

(Gabriel also joins the others facing the audience. Director grabs the chair and sits behind them, also facing the audience and looking in the distance.)

Dir: Spot! (The Spot switches on, the rest of the lights og off) What if I told you.... That God and the Devil made a wager...a kind of, standing bet for the souls of all mankind?

John: I'd tell you to stay on your Meds.

Dir: (smirk) Humour me. No direct contact with humans, that would be the rule. Just influence. See who would win.

Satan: Ok, i'm humouring you. Why?

Dir: Who knows! Maybe just for the fun of it. No telling.

Gabriel: Oh! So it's fun?! It's fun when a man beats his wife to death, fun when a mother drowns her own Baby. And you think... "The Devil" is responsible?

Satan: People...are responsible Mr. Director. People...are evil.

Dir: You're right. We're all born capable of terrible things. But then sometimes, something else comes along. Something that's just the right notch.

John: Yes, well..this has been really educational but, I don't believe in the devil...

Dir: You should....He believes in you?

(all three turn to him. Director is a little startled)

Dir: What?

John: You Maniac!

Gabriel: This isn't a play!!! This is a Diary!!!

Dir: What do you mean?

Satan: It means you're not writing a script, you're playing through your own life!

Dir: What makes you say that?

John: Oh, cut the crap! "He believes in you"!!!! This isn't some imaginary representative of mankind I am playing!!! I'm playing YOU!!!

Gabriel: It's written all over it. Your troubled past, your twisted view of the cosmos,.. WHICH I might add is the chief region you are in here in the first place...

Satan: So that's it isn't it.... You're trying to find answers to your life by letting us play your puppets!

John: And I am tasked with playing YOU of all people... A complicated role indeed.....

Gabriel: Or maybe, he's cast you as someone he WANTS to be...not someone he IS....Otherwise there is no need for it!

Satan: Yeah!

John: Psycho!

(At this point all three have managed to corner him and surround him, they start imitating the Hell deamons around him)

Gabriel: Looney!

Satan: Pathetic.

John: Weakling.

Gabriel: A symbol for your kind.

Satan: Bizzarre.

John: A wash up...

Gabriel: Lost glory...

Satan: Loser..

John: Afraid!

Gabriel: Afriad to face....

Satan: Fear...

John: Do you fea..

Dir: SHUT UUUUUUUUUP..... How dare you! On my Own Stage.....
I am the greatest director, and playwrite that ever lived!!! Where I go, Art is created. When I write, worlds listen... When I say Jump, YOU will respond with HOW HIGH!!!! Do you Get mE!!!!

Gabriel: You will not impose your twisted sense of Heaven and Hell on us.....You simply will not..

Satan: Yeah... especially on the poor audience.....

Dir: You have no say in this!!!

John: Heaven the holiest possible place, accessible by people according to various standards of divinity, goodness, and piety,

Satan: Heaven is generally construed as a place of happiness, sometimes eternal happiness. A psychological reading of sacred religious texts across cultures and throughout history would describe it as a term signifying a state of "full aliveness" or wholeness.

Gabriel: Heaven represents hope, for all mortals! You're playing with fire....

Dir: Heaven is a lie!!!! I am the living testament to that fact!

Satan: Just because you've had a few bad experiences in life doesn't mean there is no such thing as salvation!

John: God has a plan for all of us.

Dir: God is a kid with an antfarm. He's not planning anything..... The Devil, however....

Gabe: I can't take him anymore...I'm outta here.....
(Gabriel walks away)

Dir: What tha...Hey come back here!!!!

John: You had everything....Everything!!! What was the matter with you!!!!
(John walks away)

Dir: but...But..

Satan: Seriously... how could you throw it all away! Enjoy this...shit hole....I don't want any part of it.....
(Satan walks off)

(Director left center stage staring at nothing!!)

Dir: Well,....that's new.....(sits) Oh God...where did I go wrong!!!!
(breaksdown)... Are you listening up there? Hello!!! Can you hear me???
Anybody home!!!! I won't ask for a sign....I just wanted to say FUCK YOU!!!!
Is that the best you can do!!!! Hah, you're running out of ammo aren't you.....
Forget the fact that I am going straight to hell after all this, forgive the deed that you took everything away from me, and for what? for only trying to tell the truth, the only way I know how Now, you steal my entire cast!!!! What is the point

of all this? What is the point of life!! You know everything don't you?? The past...the future.... if you want to judge, why not just judge and be done with it....Why the ritual....why all the trouble of life!!! What a sham!!!! Answer me.....ANSWER ME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(Lighting starts to flicker.. Angel entry music plays.....director is pushed against the ground and held there by an invisible force.....Gabriel walks up to him and places a foot on him)

GABRIEL: Your ego is astounding.

DIR: Gabriel! Figures...(struggles under weight) And the wicked shall inherit the Earth.

GABRIEL: You judging me now John?

DIR: Betrayal, murder, genocide?! Call me provincial.

GABRIEL: I am simply seeking to inspire humankind to be all that was intended.

DIR: By handing Earth over to the son of the Devil? Help me here...

(Gabriel's wings fold behind as he sits on John, folding legs on either side of John.)

GABRIEL: You're handed this precious gift, right? Each one of you, granted redemption from the creator. Murderers, Rapists and Molesters... All of you, you just have to repent, and God take you into his bosom! In all the worlds in all the universe, no other creature can make such a boast, save man. (whispers close) It's not fair. If sweet, sweet God, loves you so, then I will make you worthy of his love. I've been watching you for a long time. It's only in the face of horror, that you truly find your noble self. (whispers) And you can be so noble. So.... i'll bring you pain. I'll bring you horror, so that you may rise above it.

(Stands and lifts John by collar in one hand)

So that those of you who survive this rain of hell on Earth, will be worthy of God's love.

DIR: Gabriel..... You're Insane!...

GABRIEL: The road to salvation begins tonight....right now.

(Gabriel throws Director into the slant wall (refer stage setup), finality music plays)

(Dark stage. Gabriel has already knocked Diro into the wall and has disappeared into the darkness.)

Dir: (looking up)
... I know I'm not one of your
favorites... I'm not even allowed
in your house these days... but I
could use a little attention...

(Nothing happens.)

Voice: That ain't gonna work.

(Director, still on ground hears footsteps arriving from a distance.)

Dir: Who are you?

John (Voice from the blackness): You haven't figured that out?!

Dir: Are you real?

John: Maybe.

Dir: Maybe? What do you mean maybe?

John: Maybe as in, maybe I'm a fellow inmate from the neighbouring cell,... or maybe I'm God approaching to deliver judgement, better yet...maybe, I'm one of those,... science bozos conducting a psychological test, or maybe.... I'm just in your head.

[John walks into the light with a chair, stops a few feet in front of Diro, places the chair down, back facing the Diro, and sits on it facing the Diro.]

John: (Sits there for a while staring at him, then leans in slowly) I'm you....
John.....

Dir: (smirk) Are you?

John: (leans back) Stop lying to yourself John. You've done that all your life...

Dir: (screaming) YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT MY LIFE !!!! (jumps up at him)

John: (pushes him down) There's your problem John, right there. Too restless, too arrogant, too.... intolerant..... too...full of yourself (imitate the director from before while saying it).

Dir: I have every right to be.

John: Look at you...

Dir: I've seen things you can't even im....

John: (screaming) LOOK AT YOU!!!! YOU'RE FUCKING PATHETIC!!!! You're all washed-up John. You're paranoid, clueless, in the dark, LITERALLY I might add, all curled up in a cozy corner, choking on your own filth! You're in a STAY JACKET for crying out loud!! You're alone, broke,... and a failure John.... (sigh) How the mighty have fallen.....

Dir: I was great once....

John: We both know how THAT happened so spare me your history lesson. Just because you were braindead for 2 fucking minutes doesn't mean you can lecture the living on life !

Dir: Believe me.... 2 minutes is a lifetime in hell..... When I came back..I knew...all the things I could see were real... Heaven and Hell...behind every wall, every window... the World behind the World....And we're smack in the middle.....

John: Yes, but there's a difference between the then and now. Life's a lot harder to live when you already know exactly where you're going.... Why'd you do it John? Why'd you sell our souls ? Why him ?

Dir: (breaks down) What was a supposed to do? I didn't have much of a life..... No loved ones.... wasn't really good at anything.... had nothing to live for..... Everyday i'di'd go to sleep at night thinking that this was all a bad

dream... that it'll all be over tomorrow.... That when I Wake up..everything will be back to normal.....

(John, who was until now staring at him, smirks)

Dir: Do you enjoy mocking doomed men.

John: You doomed yourself John... when you signed the dotted line..

Dir: I SIGNED IT IN BLOOD...

John: Well you sure signed it in bold didn't you?!!

Dir: Don't fuck with me...Don't fuck with me alright.... I was getting a pass to come back, i don't know why.... I don't know..... maybe the doctor was too good, maybe my Dad when to church too much, maybe Mom prayed too much, or I was five bucks extra on the collection plate, I don't know. All I know is, that I was going to live. I was climbing out of hell. I was coming BACK ... And to WHAT???? THE SAME PLACE I TRIED TO LEAVE IN THE FIRST PLACE!!!!..... I didn't know which was worse..... I didn't know.....

John: Well now you know.... You can't escape your fate John... A fate you helped create..

Dir: Haven't I served him enough ?

John: You still trying to buy your way into heaven?

Dir: What about the charity? That, that school I built..... That alone should gaurantee my entrance....

John: That's not the way this works John...

Dir: The hospital... I sponsored research that saved lives...

John: Ummhum.....Not good enough...

Dir: All that money I spent.... All those socially relevant Pla...

John: You sold your SOUL.... TO the devil HimSELF.... That's what made you what you are! LOOK at me!!! All your money, all your fame, your....

your.....uber-rich partygoer friends... your reputation! ALL OF IT.... was part of the contract... One day.....LISTEN to me!! One day... you are going to DIE...

Dir: I DON'T WANNA DIE!!!.... (crying) I don't wanna die..... I don't wanna go back there.... I ...I can't I like it here..I LIKE it now!!!... please... don't wanna die...

John: (slaps him) Get a HOLD of yourself... Our father would be ashamed of you.....

Dir: I can't take it anymore..... Everytime I see a clock I break downit's like screaming out loud, "THIS YOUR LIFE! AND IT'S ENDING ONE MOMENT AT A TIME."

John: This is OUR LIFE....and it IS ending one minute at a time..... And it is all YOUR FAULT!!!!
(John gets off the chair and pins Director to the wall, choking him)

Dir: You don't know that..

John: Your weakness has doomed us both John. I am ashamed of you.....

Dir: There is nothing else I could have done...

John: OYE.....You invented ME! ...I didn't make up a miserable half-breed loser to make myself feel better...TAKE some responsibility!!.....

Dir: I admit it....I am responsible....but there is a way out.....

John: Don't fight it Johnny boy....enjoy it.....

Dir: But i need your strength.....

John: Shut up...

Dir: Need your courage to face him again...

John: Keep your mouth...Shut!!

Dir: I NEED YOUR HELP!!!!!! (Leans in struggling) consider it...a last request.....

(John lets go...Director falls to the ground..... John removes his pocket knife, uses it to cut his stray jacket...and then places it in front of him....hands him his lighter and cigarette packet)

John: You play a dangerous game.....

(John walks away..... Stud music plays..... Director examines the knife just like John did in the first scene.... closes his eyes....slits his wrist... places the knife beside him....)

Dir: Hurry...

(The music reaches a crescendo in volume and pacing just as the lights start to flicker..... The Hell Demons all crawl up to a particular distance from him....and sit silently radially all around him.... The music stops..)

SATAN: Hello John.
[John pries his eyes open...]

SATAN: Hello,John.

Dir: What took you so long?

SATAN: John, hello. (Picks up chair, and sits in front of John)
You're the one Soul, i would come up hear to collect myself.
Ummhumm.
(claps)

Dir: So I've heard.
Do you mind?

SATAN: Oh, go right ahead. I've got stock.

Dir: (Shows Cigarette) Coffin Nail. (puts it into mouth)

SATAN: Very fitting John.
(John tries the lighter but drops it) You know when you cut your deep you cut your tendons. Finger movement goes out the window. Here, let me help you. (lights the lighter for John) See? Sunny !?
I've got a whole, THEMEPARK full of red lights for you.

Dir: Aren't you a peach.

SATAN: I didn't think you'd make the same mistake twice. (John looks up at him.)

SATAN: You didn't, did you?

Dir: ... so how's your family?

SATAN: Family is doing just fine. Busy busy busy busy busy.... need a vacation.

Dir: Word is that, that kid of yours a a chip off the old block.

SATAN: Well, one does what one can.

Dir: I just got a message from God....

SATAN: Boys will be boys.

Dir: From Gabriel.

SATAN: Hmm, no accounting for taste really.

Dir: I think I've found a way out....

SATAN: (Mocking accent) "I Think I've found a way out". (laughs, then gets serious.) Or is it another one of your cons.

Dir: Heaven is the easiest place to go to..... all you need.... is belief.....
(Satan is still suspicious)

Satan: (laughing) You already believe, Don't you John.....

Dir: No...I've seen.....and there's a difference.....

Satan: wow.... you really are loco...my work here is Done....

Dir: You do know what it is to truly be forgiven.... To be welcomed into the kingdom of God....

Satan: You're not a preist....Spare me, you're remedial.... incantations....

(Director starts praying, Satan gets off his chair)

Satan: Time to go, John...

(Satan grabs his left hand with his left hand... and starts to drag him toward center stage as Director starts praying louder...)

Director: May God have mercy on me and grant me the pardon of all my sins. Whose soever sins I remit on Earth, they are remitted unto them in heaven.

(Satan starts whistling as he drags him toward center stage...the Hell demons follow on all fours)

Director: Grant your child entry into thy kingdom.....in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

(Lights go out....)

Director: AMEN!!!!!!... amen.....

(Two torch lights light up on the side.....two compounders run toward the lone door with torches..... they open it... and run up to the director to inject him with a sedative.....all the while he is screaming AMEN.... AMEN..... The shots calm him down)

Compounder 1: Easy...Easy.... there you go...

(compounder 2...the new guy just stands and watches....his torch acts like a light source illuminating the happenings...)

Compounder 1: Rest buddy...

Compounder 2: Who's this guy...

Compounder 1: Who him... Meet the great John Constantine....Legendary Playwrite and director....once.....

Compounder 2: What happened to him??

Compounder 1: He was doing just fine... until one day he started writing disturbing things The doctors decided he's lost it.....so they put him in

here..... (to director) Which one was it this time? Shakespear??.... (To compounder 2) It must have been shakespear.... Look at him.....

(Compounder 1 gets up and begins to leave)

Compounder 1: Well, come along now... We work with them for so long sometimes I fear we become one of them (both exit through the door and lock it).... Don't bother yourself with secrets of.....such scary people....

(Compounder 1 walks off....Compounder 2..in his curiosity shines the torch through the door hole once more...illuminating the director on the floor)

Director: (in a whispering tone) Didn't work..... Muscles ...tense..... Sedative works up to brain...nerves shot...offerring...respice from a...cold....world.....the lights fade..... very....very ...slowly..... (And the torch switches off)

(Music and end Credits)