

Wicked Ruler

Winner of the 1997 CITA Dramatic Sketch Writing Contest

by John Cospers

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CHARACTERS

THEME: Satan

Power, Evil, and Seduction- Three Sides of the Devil
Jesus

(A ladder is at stage right. Power is on the ladder, two steps up. Evil is at stage left, holding an apple with a bite out of it. Seduction lies on the ground, facing the audience, with head pointed towards stage right. All three wear black. Jesus enters, slowly, wearing jeans and a white shirt. He is hungry. He sits on the front edge of the stage.)

POWER- Welcome. You have been expected.

EVIL- No one comes by without my knowledge, and no one gets by without seeing me.

SEDUCTION- I've been waiting for you for a long time.

POWER- Surprised to see me? Or surprised by what you see? Am I not what you expected?

SEDUCTION- I'm not what anyone expects.

EVIL- To some, I'm a nightmare.

SEDUCTION- To others, a dream.

POWER- And still others, a fantasy.

EVIL- But you know better than anyone who I am.

POWER- The crown prince!

EVIL- A musician by trade.

SEDUCTION- An angel. The archangel.

POWER- This is my kingdom. I am God here.

EVIL- I set the rules. I hold the power!

SEDUCTION- I can make you, or I can destroy you!

EVIL- I'll make you rich, or reduce you to a pauper.

SEDUCTION- I can give you beauty or transform you into something hideous.

POWER- I'll give you power and glory.

EVIL- Or I'll crush you!

SEDUCTION- Break you!

POWER- Bury you!

EVIL- I control your fate. Resist me, and you only destroy yourself.

POWER- All those hopes and dreams will be smashed beneath my feet. You came here with nothing, and you'll leave with nothing!

SEDUCTION- *(sliding next to Jesus)* But it doesn't have to be that way. I'll give you life, love, peace, happiness. All you have to do is...listen to me.

EVIL- Let me feed you. Let me clothe you.

SEDUCTION- *(putting a hand on Jesus' shoulder)* Let me put rings on your fingers, sandals on your feet. Let me take care of you.

(Jesus pulls away and stands up. Evil approaches him, angry.)

EVIL- You think you can resist? *(holds out the apple)* No one can! No one! You may see yourself as different, but you're not! You're flesh just like the rest of them!

POWER- You're in my domain now! All you see is mine! The ground beneath you. The air around you. The sky, the water, it's all mine now! Mine!

SEDUCTION- And the more you resist, the more you become mine!

JESUS- I don't need you.

POWER- You are hungry. Perhaps you would like to eat? *(gesturing to the ladder)* Do you see this stone? If you truly don't need me, if you are who you say, then turn this rock into bread so you may eat.

JESUS- It is written: "Man does not live by bread alone."

(Power slides off the ladder. Evil grabs Jesus by the arm and forces him up the ladder.)

EVIL- This is the highest peak in my kingdom! If you do not need me, if you are who you

claim, then throw yourself down! It is written, "He will command his angels to watch over you!"

JESUS- It is also written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test!"

SEDUCTION- Look out from there! Look to the north, south, the east and west!

Everything you see I will give you if you will only bow down and worship me!

JESUS- You shall have no other Gods before me! At the holy name of Jesus, every knee shall bow!

(Power, Evil, and Seduction drop immediately and fall face first before Jesus.)

JESUS- Away from me!

(Jesus exits.)

POWER- *(looking up)* My fate is sealed.

EVIL- *(looking up)* My end will come.

SEDUCTION- One day, I too must bow.

POWER- Then perish in the fire.

SEDUCTION- But I will not go alone.

EVIL- You will die with me.

POWER- *(standing)* Some because I gave you power. *(turns to exit)*

SEDUCTION- *(standing)* Some because I gave you glory. *(turns to exit)*

EVIL- But most because I made you believe...

(Blackout.)

EVIL- That I don't exist.