

IN THE CONSTANT PRESENCE OF ANGELIQUE

by

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Cast:

John Felton..... Male, early- to mid-20s. A former graphic designer.

Charles Davenport Male, mid- to late-30s. A priest.

Angelique Female, 20-60. The Angel of Death.

Time:

The present.

Place:

A Catholic church in northern California.

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(Lights up on a church sanctuary. Davenport runs in from left, drunk.)

DAVENPORT

I'm free! Freeeeee!

(Notices crucifix, downstage)

Don't look at me like that! It's all your fault! You were never there! Feh!

(Beat. To crucifix.)

I'm should check my email!

(Runs out, right)

JOHN

(Enters from left with backpack, followed by Anglieque)

Go away.

ANGELIQUE

Oh, *petit garçon*, you're tired.

JOHN

Just leave me alone!

ANGELIQUE

You're grumpy because you've been driving all day.

JOHN

No, I'm grumpy because you never stop hounding me!

ANGELIQUE

You know, you've become far less interesting over the past year.

JOHN

And whose fault is that?!

ANGELIQUE

I don't know what happened. The first few months were so much fun!

JOHN

It wasn't worth it. Look at me! I had a good job. Friends. Now...I haven't worked in six months. My friends are afraid of me. And I'm so far behind on the rent I'm about to kicked out onto the street.

ANGELIQUE

We can still make this relationship work.

JOHN

I don't want it to work. And if you push me too far...

ANGELIQUE

We don't have any other options, *mon petit chou*.

DAVENPORT

(Enters from right. Davenport cannot see or hear Angelique)

Silly. My office is this way.

(Notices John)

Oh. Hello.

JOHN

(Rises)

Father Davenport? It's so good to see you!

DAVENPORT

Hi. Do I know...John Felton?!

ANGELIQUE

What's this?

JOHN

You recognized me!

DAVENPORT

Well, uh...you did send a lot of pictures. What are you doing here?!

JOHN

I had to come see you. In person. There's been a development!

ANGELIQUE

Have you been going behind my back?

DAVENPORT

Oh. Okay. But...uh, I thought you lived in...L.A.?

JOHN

Orange County. I've been driving all day. Can we go into your office?

DAVENPORT

No! Uh...now's not a good time.

JOHN

Please, Father. I really need to talk to you.

DAVENPORT

Well...okay. But just five minutes. And let's here out...let's stay out here.

ANGELIQUE

That's for the best, Jean! You never know with priests.

JOHN

(Halfway to Angelique...)

That's!...

DAVENPORT

That's what?

ANGELIQUE

(Takes large book from purse and starts reading it)

Actually, let me find out for you.

JOHN

(Pointing downstage)

Uh...that's a very inspiring crucifix.

DAVENPORT

That ugly old thing?

JOHN

Sure. Um...uh...I'm not Catholic, by the way.

DAVENPORT

That's fine. Believe me, that's just fine. Now, John, I thought I said—

JOHN

I know, I know! But—

ANGELIQUE

He's a Jesuit, Jean! Watch out!

JOHN

(To Angelique)

Yes, I know.

ANGELIQUE

That means he's smarter than he looks!

DAVENPORT

John. Johnny John John. Now, did you go to that therapist I told you about?

JOHN

He wasn't any better than the others. No no, it's the meds!

ANGELIQUE

(Still reading)

Mon Dieu! He's actually kept his vows. For fifteen years!

JOHN

(Grabs backpack and starts taking bottles out)

I tried all of them! This didn't work. This didn't work. This made me gain weight. This made me dizzy. This one blocked me up like you wouldn't believe. And this one—

DAVENPORT

I can't help you with drugs. If they're not working, then—

JOHN

(Holds up bottle)

But this one! This one worked!

DAVENPORT

Really?

JOHN

But there's a problem.

DAVENPORT

Of course.

ANGELIQUE

Did you know he's not a virgin?

JOHN

A big problem.

ANGELIQUE

He lost his virginity with his high school's head cheerleader...on his parents' bed!

(Keeps reading)

DAVENPORT

Well...?

JOHN

I'm sorry. I...I'm a little distracted.

DAVENPORT

It's okay. You took the meds. They worked. And...?

ANGELIQUE

And a month later, he did it in the same place with the quarterback!

(To Davenport, who can't hear her)

Good for you, *mon père*! Good for you!

JOHN

(To Angelique)

Will you shut the hell up all ready!

ANGELIQUE

What a fascinating priest. Which is something I don't say often.

DAVENPORT

Is she here?

JOHN

(To Davenport)

Yes!

DAVENPORT

And you still think she's a demon?

JOHN

What? No! I haven't thought that in a long time.

DAVENPORT

Good.

JOHN

She's the Angel of Death!

ANGELIQUE

It's true, *mon père*.

(Goes back to reading book)

JOHN

She says that she has to have one human friend at all times. It helps keep her connected to humanity. If she didn't have a human friend, she'd go crazy and everyone would start to die. And I'm it!

DAVENPORT

(Beat)

Your five minutes are up.

ANGELIQUE

I prefer “demented”, *mon petit chou*.

JOHN

And that’s what happened! I took one of these pills. I couldn’t hear her, or see her. And then, two hours later, that horrible earthquake in Australia! 20,000 people dead! And it’s all my fault.

DAVENPORT

You made a mistake coming here. I can’t do anything for you.

JOHN

But you’re the chief exorcist for the entire West Coast!

DAVENPORT

Was.

ANGELIQUE & JOHN

Was?

DAVENPORT

John...can I call you John? John, John, John. There is no such thing as demons. Or the Angel of Death. That earthquake wasn’t your fault. You need a better shrink. Don’t worry, there are shrinks of lots...lots of shrinks around here. This is California!

ANGELIQUE

He’s drunk!

JOHN

You’re drunk!

DAVENPORT

Yes I am! Damn it, I—

(Covers mouth with hand)

ANGELIQUE

He’s lost his faith, poor thing.

DAVENPORT

Oh what the hell. Damn it! I am! Considering the email I just sent to the Archbishop, I ought to be! Anti-intellectual, superstitious, flatulent old gasbag.

ANGELIQUE

And he’s about to become a renegade priest! Which means he’s about to become an insurance salesman.

JOHN

But you're an expert! You wrote a book on exorcisms!

DAVENPORT

All a bunch of crap. There is no such thing as supernatural...things.

JOHN

But I see her all the time! She's real.

DAVENPORT

Then you're lucky.

JOHN

Lucky!?!

DAVENPORT

Yesh! I want to believe. I've tried to believe. But I need to see it. That's why I went into exorcisms. I figured, if I could see the Devil, or demons, or whatever, that would be enough. But after ten years...nothing! Nothing at all! You're followed around by the Angel of Death? I'd do anything to have proof like that.

JOHN

(To Angelique)

Well?

ANGELIQUE

Well what?

(John indicates Davenport)

No, no. *C'est impossible*. Completely against the rules. I've told you.

JOHN

Bend the rules!

ANGELIQUE

Absolutely not!

JOHN

Fine.

DAVENPORT

John, maybe we should go into my office after all. Before someone comes in and sees you...arguing.

JOHN

That's okay, Father. I know what to do now. My final alternative.

DAVENPORT & ANGELA

Final alternative?!

JOHN

I've got almost sixty of these pills left. I'm going to take one. Right now.

ANGELIQUE

Cooyon, don't be silly.

JOHN

(Opens bottle and shakes out pill)

But don't blame me for the tsunami. Or meteor. Or instant outbreak of avian influenza.

ANGELIQUE

You aren't really going to—

(John pops pill in mouth.)

No! Spit it out! Now!

(John takes water bottle from backpack and drinks)

Merde.

JOHN

And if that doesn't convince you, I'll keep on taking them.

ANGELIQUE

No no no! I could end up harvesting millions before their time.

JOHN

(To Davenport)

It takes about five minutes. I'm just going to sit here. Quietly.

ANGELIQUE

But John! All those people!

JOHN

(To Angelique)

You forced me to do this.

ANGELIQUE

But...but...

(Beat)

I'm not going to change your mind, am I?

(Beat)

All right. You win.

What?!

JOHN

You win!

ANGELIQUE

You mean it?!

JOHN

Yes. I'll leave you alone.

ANGELIQUE

But what about...

JOHN

I said I'll leave you alone! What more do you want?!

ANGELIQUE

Really? Forever?

JOHN

Forever. Well, for sixty-two years, three months and five days. *Au revoir!*
(Angelique becomes invisible to John)

JOHN
(Startled)

Ah!

JOHN
(Beat)

She's gone.

DAVENPORT

She's gone?

JOHN

She's gone! She's really gone!

DAVENPORT

Oh. Well...ah...are you sure? Maybe it's just the pill?

JOHN

No, no. It's not that. She's gone for good!
(Hugs Davenport)

Thank you, Father!

ANGELIQUE

Unless of course circumstances change and then you never know.

DAVENPORT

Okay. But I didn't do anything.

JOHN

(Starts to exit left. Then stops, turns)

Sixty-two years...Father, do you have a calculator?

(Beat)

No, never mind. It can wait. Goodbye!

(Exits left)

ANGELIQUE

For example, you could be in Idaho. I really hate Idaho. All those damn farmers with their damn potatoes. Someone should really...oh, no. I'm already talking to myself.

DAVENPORT

Lucky bastard.

ANGELIQUE

I could...I could...but he can't be an insurance salesman. He has to stay a priest.

How...how...Oh I know! I know!

(Becomes visible, and audible, to Davenport)

Bonjour, mon père.

DAVENPORT

(Turns, startled)

Who are you?!

ANGELIQUE

Oh, that's so much better.

(To Davenport)

Bonjour, bonjour. I have news! The Archbishop has passed away. He just had a massive heart attack.

DAVENPORT

What?! But he just...but I just...Oh my God. When???

ANGELIQUE

Just before he was to check his email, *mon petit chou.*

(Lights down)

THE END