

# FATHER

by  
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## Act One, Scene One

## FINAL VERSION

*The lights come up and we see Father Daniel, dressed in black clerical suit and shirt. He is in his late forties. He is being lead through the door by his secretary, Mrs. Brubaker, a woman in her early sixties. He is carrying a box that contains some personal, desk-type items i.e. a pen and pencil set, some bookends and a desk lamp. He sets this on the corner of the very cluttered desk. Down Stage left is a large blackboard with chalk and felt eraser. It is blank.*

Mrs. Brubaker:           *(as she comes through the door)* ....and, of course, through here we have your office. I'm afraid the movers were not very organized Father, so I told them just to leave everything. I will get you settled later. I'll also remove the overflow from the Sunday School that has somehow managed to find its way here.

Father:                    Thank you very much, Mrs. Brubaker. I don't think....

Mrs. Brubaker:         Not at all, Father Daniel, not at all. I've been the church secretary here at St. Nicholas for thirty-seven years. I've seen my share of Pastors come and go. Leave everything to me.

Father:                    Well, thank you again. I best start unpacking some of these boxes.

Mrs. Brubaker:         Fine. If you need me Father, I'll be at my desk.

*(Mrs. B. leaves and Father Daniel takes off his black jacket, rolls up his sleeves, takes the white tab out of his clerical shirt and begins to unpack books from a shipping box. He is soon interrupted by the voice of Mrs. Brubaker coming over an intercom.)*

Mrs. Brubaker:         Excuse me, Father. Mrs. Brubaker here.

Father:                    Yes, Mrs. Brubaker. *(Looking around and not knowing where the voice is coming from and getting no reply, he repeats a little louder)* Yes, Mrs. Brubaker.

Mrs. Brubaker:         *(In exactly the same tone and style as the first time)* Excuse me, Father. Mrs. Brubaker here.

Father:                    *(Louder this time, but not angrily)* YES...MRS. BRUBAKER! WHAT IS IT?? *(Still no answer. Father looks around, puzzled, shrugs his shoulders and returns to his unpacking. He doesn't hear Mrs. Brubaker enter through the office door behind him.)*

Mrs. Brubaker:         *(Again, in the same tone and style)* Excuse me, Father...

- Father: *(He is startled and again shouts into space)* WHAT IS IT, MRS. BRUBAKER?!?
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(This time, she is startled, but quickly composes herself and replies)* Father Daniel...*(Father Daniel again jumps, then turns and finally sees Mrs. B.)*...if you wish to speak to me you have to push the button on your intercom. It is on your desk. Here, let me show you. *(She heads for the desk, pushes aside several piles of files and papers until she finds a small rectangular box.)* Here it is...now pay close attention, Father...*(presses button)*...press to talk, ...*(releases button)* ...release to listen. *(Repeats the process several times.)* Press to talk...release to listen...press to talk...release to...
- Father: I think I get the idea, Mrs. Brubaker. Thank you. Now, what . *(She leaves him standing in mid-sentence and returns to her office off stage.)* ...was.... it.... you ... *(He stands there in silence watching the door a bit bewildered.)*
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(The voice again coming over the intercom and Father in once again startled.)* Excuse me, Father. Mrs. Brubaker here.
- Father: *(To himself)* Oh, I don't believe this. *(Moving to the desk and trying to keep his voice calm he pushing the button down hard and replies)* Yes, Mrs. Brubaker, what is it?
- Mrs. Brubaker: The Bishop is here to see you, Father.
- Father: THE BISHOP?!? Jesus Christ! *(Flustered, Father suddenly notices he hasn't released the button. He does so and bolts up right.)*
- Mrs. Brubaker: No, Father, just the Bishop. Shall I let him is?
- Father: *(Looks skyward shaking his head in disbelief.)* Shall you let him in? *(Then back to the intercom he yells)* Yes....you should let him in! *(Realizing he hasn't pushed the button down he repeats it in a calmer voice.)* Yes. Please show His Excellency in, Mrs. Brubaker.
- Mrs. Brubaker: Certainly Father. Right away.
- (Father hastily unrolls his sleeves, inserts the white tab back into his shirt and begins to put on his jacket as the Bishop is ushered in. The latter quickly moves around Mrs. Brubaker who is holding the door open. It is evident by the look he gives her as he passes that he is not accustomed to being kept waiting in an outer office. His displeasure instantly turns to syrupy-sweet friendliness when he sees Father Daniel)*

- Bishop: Daniel, Daniel. There you are. Good morning. I hope I haven't dropped in at an inopportune moment? *(He holds out his hand and ceremoniously offers his ring to Father who kisses it obediently.)*
- Father: *(Looking around at the obvious disarray.)* No. No, of course not, Bishop. Welcome. How nice to see you. *(The bishop is looking at a chair. Father notices and immediately begins to move the pile of files off so he can sit down)*
- Bishop: *(He takes out his handkerchief and dusts the chair seat before sitting.)* I was in the area so I had my driver stop. Thought I'd drop in and make sure you were getting settled. *(Indicates to the chair across from him and motions Father to sit.)* Everything satisfactory?
- Father: *(Moving more things.)* It...
- Bishop: Good, good. Glad to hear it. I always like to make a special, personal effort to ensure that new clergy to the Diocese are comfortable and properly welcomed. *(Waits for Father's reply)*
- Father: I...
- Bishop: Good, good. *(Without really listening. He obviously has another agenda.)* If I remember correctly, Daniel, your ordination to the priesthood came after you had had several years as the manager at....*(Again waits for Father's reply.)*
- Father: Yes, Bishop. Before I entered the seminary I was the General Manager for a large public relations firm called....
- Bishop: *(Very pleased, he stands.)* Good, good! I know you will be an asset to me...er..I mean, an asset to St. Nicholas, of course. Oh yes, and...*(waves as it is almost an aside)* ... to the Church.
- Father: I'll do my....
- Bishop: Good, good. *(the bishop begins to pace around the office. He slowly asks the next question and carefully waits for Father's reaction.)* Are you aware that St. Nicholas has a Patronal Festival every year, Father?
- Father: Actually. I haven't had time to....

- Bishop: Good, good. Let me give you a little history about the St. Nicholas' Day Festival. It has been an annual event for the last 58 years. *(the Bishop's demeanor slowly changes. His eyes glaze over and his anger builds over the next few sentences as he brings to mind the results of past St. Nicholas' Days.)* Unfortunately, for the last several years, the event has been plagued with, how shall I put it, ....minor difficulties. Frankly, I'm tired of being the laughing stock of the House of Bishops! I'm tired of being passed over for promotions out of this backwater Diocese! St. Nicholas has become an intolerable embarrassment to me...er...I mean, the Diocese. *(He snaps out of his diatribe)* May I be frank, Father?
- Father: *(Beat)* Of course, Bish....
- Bishop: Good, good. One of the reasons I wanted you here at St. Nicholas was to turn things around. Can I count on you Daniel?
- Father: I'll do my....
- Bishop: Good, good. Now I don't want to say that your career is hanging in the balance, but frankly, I hear that Armpit Alaska is always looking for good men. Do I make myself clear, Father? *(Doesn't wait for an answer but heads for the door.)* Good, good. Nice to have you aboard, Daniel. Welcome to the team. *(He sees the black board, smiles and writes MATTHEW 22:14)* Yes, Yes, welcome to the team! Remember my door is always open. *(He leaves, slamming the door behind him.)*
- Father: Thank you Bishop....I think. *(The following monologue is given directly to the audience)* You know, I'm a pretty easygoing guy. I accept most things as having some kind of Divine purpose or reason. *(Beat)* Now, I'm no Rhodes Scholar but does the expression 'lamb to the slaughter' ring a bell? When I entered seminary the good Fathers were always quick to say that "...many are called, but few are chosen." That's Matthew 22, verse 14. I suppose I should feel honoured for my vocation and being chosen for this present posting – and I would be honoured – if the words of old Father Cramer, the seminary's resident retired fuddy-duddy didn't keep coming back to me. He had a much more modern translation for Matthew's verse 14; his went..."many are called, but few are stupid enough to accept." *(He returns to character and stares for a moment at the closed door then shakes his head as if he can't believe what has just happened and goes to the intercom.)* Mrs. Brubaker, will you please come in here?
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(As she enters)* Yes, Father?

- Father: Mrs. Brubaker, who was the Pastor of St. Nicholas before me?
- Mrs. Brubaker: Father James Callohan. A dear man but never really fit in I'm afraid. Didn't have all that much time to, really.... was only here for a little over a year. I got a postcard from him last week from somewhere in Alaska....
- Father: *(Wince!)* Thank you, Mrs. Brubaker. *(An 'I told ya so' gesture to the audience while Mrs. B remains motionless)* What can you tell me about the St. Nicholas Day Festival?
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(Indicating towards the door)* His Excellency didn't waste any time, did he?
- Father: Ah...no. He didn't.
- Mrs. Brubaker: Well, Father, we have a committee that looks after it every year and recently we've been having some....
- Father: ... minor difficulties? I think that's what the Bishop said.
- Mrs. Brubaker: Yes. *(Then to herself.)* His Excellency does have a way with words.
- Father: Who is on this committee?
- Mrs. Brubaker: Well, let me see...your pastoral assistant, young Father Timothy who, by the way, is waiting to see you; Samuel Bennett, the Parish Treasurer, Peter Jason, and Ralph Rain, the other members of the Finance Committee; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Waldon Nicholas....
- Father: *(Cutting her off)* Wait...Nicholas? *(Beat)* Oh my goodness... No.
- Mrs. Brubaker: Yes Father, Mr. Nicholas...
- Father: No...please, don't say it....
- Together:** Mr. Nicholas' family built St. Nicholas with their own hands.
- Father: You've got to be joking.
- Mrs. Brubaker: I never joke, Father.
- Father: *(To the audience)* Now that's the first thing I've heard this morning that I may be able to take at face value. *(Beat – he then covers*

*his eyes against the bright lights and looks into the audience and asks) Okay, how many people in the house today have ever taken on a new job not knowing exactly what that future may bring but trusting that whatever it is will be for the best? Come on now, how many....raise your hands. (Giving the impression that however many raise their hands it is not many) Just as I thought...I'm in deep do-do here, aren't I? (Turns back to Mrs. B)*

Mrs. Brubaker: Mr. Nicholas is Chair of the Committee and Mrs. Nicholas is President of the Altar Guild, the Ladies of the Catholic Women's League and the Sunday Flower Fellowship. They are scheduled to see you after your morning meeting with Young Father Timothy. You'll be having lunch with them and the rest of the finance committee. I'm having the Ladies CWL provide sandwiches and squares.

Father: *(Father stares at her in disbelief). ..but Mrs. Brubaker I have quite a bit to do this morning....(gesturing to his surroundings.)*

Mrs. Brubaker: *(She notices his look – a look she is no doubt used to seeing. While exiting, she says) No time like the present Father, no time like the present.*

Father: *(Father is speechless. After a long beat he looks around the office then out at the audience and says) Deeper do-do than I thought.*

*(Mrs. Brubaker ushers in Young Father Timothy. He is wearing faded and worn blue jeans that contain enough material for several pairs of pants – and, of course, his hips are barely holding them up. His bright plaid boxers can be seen above the waist of his jeans. He wears Doc Marten boots and a black Rabat with linen collar that he wears under a sleeveless denim vest with a huge crest-like insignia on the back that reads "Bikers for the Boss". Elsewhere it is completely covered with religious pins and symbols. His hair is the 'radical' style of the day.)*

Mrs. Brubaker: Father Daniel, I would like to introduce Young Father Timothy. Young Father Timothy, Father Daniel. *(She exits.)*

Father: *(After taking in the young man's appearance and before shaking hands – again to the audience) Waaayyy deeper than I thought. (Back) Good morning Timothy, pleased to meet you. How are you?*

Timothy: Freakin' 'A', Father, freakin' 'A'. Thanks. *(Taking the Father's hand and shaking it vigorously.)*

- Father: *(Indicating the chair recently vacated by the Bishop.)* Please sit, sit.
- Timothy: Thanks.
- Father: Well, that's an interesting vest, Timothy. You've obviously had it a while.
- Timothy: Oh yah, Father. Forever. I never take it off...
- Father: Really.
- Timothy: Really. The folks around here love it; especially my club insignia. *(He stands to fully reveal his back.)* I designed it myself.
- Father: Interesting. *(Then to the audience)* For lack of a better word. *(Back)* "Bikers For The Boss"?
- Timothy: Ya got it, Father. We ride for The Redeemer, Cruise for Christ!
- Father: Oh, so the Boss is....
- Timothy: ...Jesus, of course.
- Father: *(To the audience)* Now that's a relief. For a moment there I thought Bruce Springsteen had started a sect of his own. *(Back)* Jesus, of course. So was that your mountain bike I saw chained to the statue of the Blessed Mother as I came in this morning?
- Timothy: Mountain bike? You're such a kidder Father. Nah, I've got a Harley.
- Father: A Harley?
- Timothy: Yes siree. A Fat Boy. The members of the young group call it 'the holy hog'. I'll give ya a ride later. You'll love it. It's...
- Father: Let me guess...freakin' 'A'. *(To the audience.)* Ya right.
- Timothy: You got it. The mountain bike belongs to Mrs. Brubaker.
- Father: *(Beat)* ...so Timothy, what is your slant on the St. Nicholas Day Festival?
- Timothy: Glad you asked, Father. You're gonna love this. The youth group and I are planning a bungee jump platform.



- Father: *(Calmly)* A what??
- Timothy: A bungee jump platform. We had planned to take everyone up past the choir loft, through the bell tower and out the shutters to some scaffolding attached right under the cross and over the west parking lot but my uncle Teddy owns this crane, see, and said we could use it. So we're gonna set it up in the part of the cemetery that hasn't any graves in it yet. It'll lift a ten by ten cage to a height of two hundred feet. There our paying customers will attach the rubber cords to their ankles and jump off. We're gonna ask everyone to yell "***We're Freakin' Flyin' for the Faith!***" It'll really make their blood race; their nerve endings tingle; their adrenaline rush. And, we can get fifteen, twenty bucks a pop, easy.
- Father: *(Throughout the previous speech Father Daniel's eyes have been growing wider and his jaw has been dropping. A little less calmly going to his desk and pushing the intercom button.)* Mrs. Brubaker, does the parish have legal advisors?
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(Over the intercom)* Certainly, Father Daniel.
- Father: Could you please get them on the phone for me??
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(Over the intercom)* Right away, Father Daniel.
- Timothy: *(Truly excited)* We're gonna make a fortune, Father. The only real overhead'll be the paper for the releases people will have to sign. It'll be freakin' 'A', won't it??
- Father: *(To the audience)* I don't know if I'd use, freakin' 'A' as the appropriate adjective at this juncture, or would that be an adverb – no matter. I will say that I don't know if the new lunacies created by modern technology are ever going to end. Every day we see and hear of people who are seeking activities to make their blood race; their nerve endings tingle; their adrenaline rush – to quote my young colleague here. I sincerely worry about this segment of God's creation because they never want to admit that enjoying such flights of fancy can **MAKE THEM DEAD!**  
I mean, really. *(Looking at, and addressing Timothy, who remains in tableau)* Who in their right mind would want to jump head first off a raised platform with elastic bands tied around their feet?  
*(Back to the audience)* Do they ever stop to consider the consequences? You know, they're gambling their foreheads won't become part of the local landscape and their only ace in the hole is

made of the same material used to bundle up asparagus spears at the supermarket.

What possible enjoyment can be derived from these pursuits? If I want to make my blood race; make my nerve endings tingle or adrenaline rush, I'll take a cab ride across town or drive the youth group's bus to their next outing, thank you very much. Besides, I've always made it a practice never to do anything or to pay anyone who demands I first sign a release. *(Beat)* What ever happened to fishponds, pony rides or even a *dunk the associate Pastor tank*? *(Back to Timothy)* Have you thought about a less *(searching for the word)* ...intimidating endeavor Father?

Timothy: Well, yah. We talked about a fishpond and pony rides – and the youth group wanted me to ask you if you'd be up for a *dunk the Pastor tank* but they're really all so passé Father.

Father: *(Relieved)* Ah...yes, they are, aren't they?

Timothy: Of course, I'll be offering rides on the 'holy hog' for those who want it. Some of the kids are getting last year's ramp ready now.

Father: *(Wide-eyed)* Yes, of course...

Mrs. Brubaker: *(Knocking as she enters.)* Time's up I'm afraid, Fathers. Betty Nicholas has come a bit early to see you Father Daniel and the Parish's legal council is in court and will call as soon as she can. Oh, and Young Father, we are getting complaints from the neighbours again about the weekly basketball game in the outside court.

Timothy: *(Truly bewildered)* It's only basketball for Pete's sake.

Mrs. Brubaker: That may be true, Young Father, but in future might I suggest that if you are going to divide the teams up into shirts and skins it may be prudent to have the female members of the senior youth group wear the shirts from now on.

Father: *(Wanting to change the subject)* Ah, er... Mrs. Brubaker. How soon can we get the entire St. Nicholas Day Festival Committee together?

Timothy: SNARFU. *(Pronounced Snarf-U)*

Father: Bless you, Father.

Timothy: Thank you, but that's SNARFU.

- Father: I beg your pardon?
- Mrs. Brubaker: SNARFU Father.
- Father: Excuse me?
- Mrs. Brubaker: St. Nicholas Assembly to Revisit Festival Updates. SNARFU.
- Father: *(To the audience)* St. Nicholas Assembly to Revisit Festival Updates. Welcome to NASA. *(Back)* Oh...all right. How soon can we SNARFU, Mrs. Brubaker.
- Mrs. Brubaker: *(She refers to her ever-present steno pad and flips back a few pages.)* All set up for tomorrow evening at 7:30. Everyone's confirmed. Now, Young Father Timothy, you're due to call the numbers at the Golden Age Club Bingo in 10 minutes. And please Young Father, no flatulence jokes this time.
- Timothy: But...
- Mrs. Brubaker: A little too close to home for some. *(As she exits)* I'll show Mrs. Nicholas in when you're ready Father. Chop, chop young Father.
- Father: *(To Timothy as he's leaving)* Is she always so ...
- Timothy: ...freakin' matter-of-fact.
- Father: *(To audience)* Not my first choice but as good a phrase as any I suppose. *(Back)* Ah...yes.
- Timothy: They don't call her Mrs. Ball-breaker for nothing. *(Exits)*
- (Father turns to say something to the audience but is interrupted by Mrs. Brubaker coming back through the door. Mrs. Betty Nicholas, a woman in her mid-late sixties with a huge bust, follows her. She was a schoolteacher – from the old school – and makes sure everybody knows it.)*
- Mrs. Brubaker: Father Daniel, I'd like to introduce Mrs. Betty Nicholas. Mrs. Nicholas is President of the Altar Guild, Catholic Women's League and Chair of the Sunday Flower Fellowship. Mrs. Nicholas, Father Daniel.
- Betty: Good morning Father Daniel. How are you?
- Father: I'm fine, thank you Mrs. Nicholas.

- Betty: You're well, Father.
- Father: Yes. *(Beat)* That's what I said.
- Betty: No, actually. It was not.
- Father: I beg your pardon?
- Betty: That was not what you said. You said, "I am fine". The proper response is, "I am well, thank you, Mrs. Nicholas."
- Mrs. Brubaker: I'll be at my desk if you need me, Father. *(She smiles as she leaves.)*
- Father: Thank you Mrs. Ball...er.... Brubaker. Ah...I am well, thank you Mrs. Nicholas. *(To the Audience)* Glad I didn't say, "Freakin' A Mrs. N."
- Betty: One should never abuse the King's English, should one? That may happen in other places, but that's not how we do things around here, Father.
- Father: *(Looking at his watch and addressing the audience)* There! It took exactly two minutes for the expression "that's not how we do things around here" to first come out. Oh, WAAAAYYY deeper than I thought.
- Betty: I've taught English for 35 years Father. You may call me Betty. *(she sits)*
- Father: *(To the audience.)* Do you believe in serendipity? If I didn't, I do now. When I was packing up all these old books I found my old high school Year Book. As I flipped through its pages I reread many of the notes that my classmates had written. I was flooded with happy memories until I came across a message from my grade 10 English Teacher. It read, 'Remember Daniel, always keep your dictionary handy...HA...HA Good Luck, Mr. W.' This sarcastic little tidbit was a direct reference to the fact that I was, without question, the worst speller he had come across in his 45 years of teaching. Don't tell anyone, but I am still a horrendous speller and I used to feel troubled and a little embarrassed about that, but I have since come to the realization that my lack of spelling prowess has nothing to do with me, nor anyone else with a mind, logical or not.  
It's the "King's English" that should take the fall! Talk about inconsistent! I'm amazed that anyone can spell without the aid of a

word processor and I'm not even considering the differences between American and Canadian spelling like (*Goes to the blackboard and writes all the following as he talks*) 'night/nite', 'colour/color' or little words like 'to, too and two' or 'by, buy and bye'.

In a world filled with universal laws; where two plus two always equals four and where gravity always pulls things down, (*looks towards Mrs. Nicholas's huge bust line- shakes his head*) Yes, always pulls things down, I am constantly bewildered that people like Mr. W., and 'Betty' here, teachers of the English language, don't take creation as their example and formulate some laws of their own. (*Beat*) Oh they say they have, but they're just trying to hoodwink us. Examples, you ask? A pleasure.

They give us cute little sayings so we can remember certain things like....

Betty: 'i' before 'e', except after 'c'. (*Talking to herself.*)

Father: Well, thank you that's great...unless my name is (*Goes to the blackboard and writes*) 'Keith' or 'Neil'. Or how about...

Betty: "An 'e' at the end of a word makes the preceding vowel sound long".

Father: Let's thank them again for their generous insight, but what if I want to (*Goes to the blackboard and writes – just the words in quotes.*) 'move' or 'prove' something.

Betty: (*Said not as though she has been following Father's conversation with the audience, but just as a statement about her profession – of which she is very proud.*) Ah...yes, Father English is a wonderful pastime.

Father: I can see you've enjoyed your time as a teacher, Betty.

Betty: Oh yes Father. I am still enjoying it, very much so. It is a very fulfilling vocation.

Father: (*To the audience.*) Vocation? Conspiracy is more like it. I mean why is English, the most complicated and inconsistent language in the world, the official language of both international commerce and aviation? (*Beat*) Frankly, I don't need another reason to be afraid of flying. (*Sits with Betty.*)

Betty: Father, I can't stay long. I just wanted to meet you and assure you that the members of the Altar Guild, Women's League and Sunday

Flower Fellowship will do all in their power to make our association mutually beneficial. If we can be of any service we hope you will feel free to let me know.

Father: Well, actually there is something. Does the Guild, Women's League or Fellowship have any specific duties at, or suggestions for the St. Nicholas Day Festival?

Betty: We do indeed, Father. We will be decorating the church – and while I am thinking about it, you might ask Young Father Timothy to move the trapeze and safety nets from the sanctuary to the parking lot this year.

Father: Oh, not to worry, I understand he and the youth group have other plans this year, Betty.

Betty: Well, I hope they've given up on the human cannon ball idea.

Father: Human cannon ball!?!

Betty: Yes. We just don't have the space. Oh, and we also hope he will refrain from putting goldfish in the font and holy water reservoirs this year. *(Beat)* Are you getting this all Father?

Father: Yes, yes. Trapeze, nets, goldfish. *(To Audience)* Human cannon ball?

Betty: Excellent. We will also be taking orders for Poinsettias and tulip bulbs for fall planting and of course we will be operating the Tea-room in the lower Parish Hall.

Father: Sounds like you have your work cut out for you.

Betty: Many hands make light work, Father.

Father: Will you be at the meeting tomorrow night.

Betty: SNARFU.

Father: What!?! *(Then realizing)* Oh, yes, of course.

Betty: I shall be there indeed but, as Richard is planning on attending the meeting this lunch time, I must now return home to tend to our cats.

Father: *(To the audience)* awwhh cats. *(He shuts)* I hate cats.

Betty: *(Standing to leave)* 7:30 tomorrow night I believe, and until then, Father, I leave you this little conundrum; *(Pleased with herself)* what do you do when you remove the skin from two pieces of fruit? *(She exits)*

Father: *(To Audience)* What do you do when you remove the skin from two pieces of fruit? *(Long Beat while he thinks - then)* Oh, that's easy...*(Goes to the blackboard, erases all that might be on it and writes/says)* 'You pare a pair of pears.' Where does it end??

*Black Out*

**Act one, Scene two**

*The lights come up and once again we see Father Daniel tidying up his office. He is moving a box of books from the small boardroom table to the corner of his desk. When he gets there Mrs. Brubaker comes on the intercom.*

Mrs. Brubaker: Excuse me Father, Mrs. Brubaker here.

Father: *(Again rolling down his sleeves and pushing the button.)* Yes, Mrs. Brubaker?

Mrs. Brubaker: Have you seen John Paul, Father?

Father: *(A little confused.)* Well, many years ago when he visited Toronto, before he di.....

Mrs. Brubaker: Oh no, Father. John Paul the third.

Father: What? John Paul the third? When did.....

Mrs. Brubaker: No Father, just the parish's cat. He hasn't touched his food all day and I was wondering if he was in your office.

Father: *(Quickly scanning the room. To the audience)* Cats.... *(He shutters again. Following dialogue takes place while Father looks under boxes and books for the missing JP III.)* I must admit I grew up with dogs. Not the special breeds, no, just your average, everyday mutt. They were usually medium sized, overweight and slobbery. Nonetheless, they were the greatest fun a kid would ever know. They would chase things, fetch things, wrestle with you and play tug of war. And after a long day of wearing each other out, I would flop down on the couch while the dog would curl up on the

floor at my feet. What a pal! *(Beat)* What do cats do to have fun? DO cats have fun? CAN cats have fun?

Mrs. Brubaker: *(As she enters the office, startling Father.)* I leave his food and water out by the photocopy machine. Hasn't touched it.

Father: So, we have a parish cat, do we?

Mrs. Brubaker: Don't all parishes? He's really no trouble at all. Except for the occasional fur ball he leaves lying around. *(She begins to look around.)*

Father: *(To the audience)* Yeah, what's with that? Is that what cats do to have fun? How on earth do they make those things? I know for a fact they don't carry them around. Are they woven? Are they the product of some rolling process? There has to be some commercial application they can be put to.

Mrs. Brubaker: But I suppose that's just normal.

Father: *(To the audience)* Oh, no. Cats are not normal. Cats do not live by the same universal laws that the rest of us do. Perhaps they are another of those unexplained mysteries like the crystal scull or Stonehenge but we don't know it yet.

Mrs. Brubaker: *(Abandons the search.)* Well, I am certain he'll turn up. Probably bound back into the office and proudly deposit another dead rat under my desk. The members of the Finance Committee are here, Father. Shall I have them wait?

Father: No, no, please show them in.

Mrs. Brubaker: Right away, Father. *(Exits)*

*(Father finishes unrolling his sleeves and puts his black suit jacket on again as Mrs. Brubaker reenters with four men in business suits. They each walk around her, giving her a wide berth and never take their eyes off her as if they are not sure what she may do.)*

Mrs. Brubaker: Father Daniel, I'd like to introduce Mr. Richard Waldon Nicholas, Chairman of the Finance Committee and the members thereof, Mr. Samuel Bennett, our Parish Treasurer and Mr. Peter Jason and Mr. Ralph Rain. *(Exits, much to the relief of the committee members.)*

Father: Greetings, gentlemen. *(He shakes each one's hand)* Let's sit around the table, shall we? *(Leads them to the table where they all*



*sit.*) I believe Mrs. Brubaker has arranged lunch for us a little later. It is a pleasure to meet you all.

Nicholas: Let me say on all our behalf's how happy we are to have you here Father. I also sit on the Parochial Committee that met with the Bishop when we were searching for a new Pastor. You come highly recommended. The Bishop seemed very pleased when you became available to take on the spiritual leadership of St. Nicholas.

Father: *(To the audience)* His Excellency obviously left out the Armpit Alaska component of my tenure when conferring with the Parochial Committee. *(Back)* Thank you very much, Mr. Nicholas.

Nicholas: Please Father Daniel...Richard. We're all members of the same family here.

Father: Thank you, Richard. So, perhaps we could start out with each of you telling me what it is you do.

Ralph: Anyone we can Father! *(This brings peels of laughter from the three committee members.)* Sorry about that Father. Couldn't resist.

Nicholas: *(Slightly embarrassed and annoyed at his colleagues)* Yes, well perhaps I'll do the honours. Ralph here, has an insurance company...

Ralph: Yes, Father. Rain Insurance...that's the name not only the type. *(He laughs heartily – the others don't they've heard it too often)* I'm a broker and handle all types of insurance, home, auto, travel.... you need anything and we're as "right as Rain." *(Beat)* Get it Father? "Right..as..Rain?"

Father: *(Looks to the audience but says nothing.)*

Peter: Yes, Ralph. I'm sure Father gets it. I own Jason Electronics Father. We specialize in computer-operated terminals for the banking and restaurant industries.

Ralph: And don't forget your line of slot machines...

Peter: Well, yes. We also manufacture a line of slot machines for the Province's casinos.

Ralph: Hey, don't be shy, Peter. Tell, Father. They're your biggest sellers!