

THE COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT

a short play by
Peter M. Floyd

© 2018 Peter M. Floyd

Characters:

*Metatron
Puriel
Temeluchus
Ophaniel*

Note: All characters in the play are ageless and genderless. That being said, the play would be most effective if Metatron were played by an older actor, and Ophaniel by a younger one. For the purposes of clarity, in the stage directions the characters Metatron and Temeluchus are given male pronouns and Puriel and Ophaniel are given female ones. These are not to be taken literally; each character may be played by any gender.

Scene: A small room. There are three desks, of the type found in college classrooms – that is, each with a small desk surface that can be slid up and over the lap. To one side is a wastebasket, filled with crumpled up pieces of paper. There are more such bunches of paper on the floor around the waste bin.

At rise, TEMELUCHUS and PURIEL are seen sitting on two of the chairs. They are dressed in simple robes. Each has a large stack of paper sheets sitting on the desktop in front of them. Each of them is reading one of these sheets. After a moment, PURIEL snickers, crumples up the paper and tosses it over at the waste basket, not much caring if she gets it in. She then picks up the next sheet of paper in her stack. TEMELUCHUS then begins to laugh.

TEMEULUCHUS

Oh, this one's great. You gotta hear this one.

PURIEL

Tell me.

TEMELUCHUS (*reading from the sheet*)

"Yesterday was my boyfriend's birthday, and I was going to surprise him with a home-cooked meal. I prepared chicken cacciatore with a side of yams. For dessert, I made a lemon meringue pie, from scratch. I also picked up a pretty expensive bottle of champagne. After working all day to

prepare the meal, I waited breathlessly for him to arrive, but he didn't show. I called him to see where he was, and he told me that he was dumping me. He said he didn't think the relationship was worth putting much work into."

PURIEL (*laughing*)

Ouch!

TEMELUCHUS (*still reading*)

"I broke down and cried for two solid hours. I've always been a good person. Why would God allow such a thing to happen to me?" (*He crumples up the paper.*) Lady, it's not God's fault you couldn't figure out your boyfriend was a total loser. (*He crumples up the page and tosses it at the trash.*) Some people need to get a little perspective.

PURIEL

Seriously! I mean, listen to this one: (*She reads from her own sheet.*) "This morning, I woke up to find that my dog Barker had chewed away at some old photo albums I inherited from my grandmother. Dozens of irreplaceable old pictures are now terribly ruined. How could you allow such a thing to happen?" I don't know, maybe it's a judgment because you named your dog "Barker."

TEMELUCHUS

You are so right! Barker? Who calls their dog that?

PURIEL

You get no sympathy from me, guy. (*She crumples up the page and tosses it at the trash.*)

TEMELUCHUS

Shh, Metatron's coming with the newbie.

METATRON enters, leading in OPHANIEL. Both are dressed in robes similar to those of PURIEL and TEMELUCHUS, but METATRON's might be grander or have more color.

METATRON

...And here we are. Are you ready?

OPHANIEL (*nervous and excited*)

Yes, I think so. No, I am! I really am! I am definitely ready to handle this.

METATRON

You know Temeluchus and Puriel, don't you?

OPHANIEL

Oh, yes! I mean... I've seen you around. We haven't really—you know, not really talked or anything.

METRATRON (*to the other two*)

This is Ophaniel.

PURIEL

Hey.

TEMELUCHUS

How's it goin'.

METATRON

Now, let me just go over how this works. As you know, just about every prayer people send in comes in one of three categories: (*he ticks off on his fingers*) asking for something, complaining about something, or giving thanks for something.

OPHANIEL

There aren't any other kinds of prayers?

METRATRON

Not really. Well, some people send in suggestions on how we might improve things, but we generally ignore those.

OPHANIEL

I see.

METATRON

In this room, we handle category two: complaints. When people have a beef about something that happened to them, we process that complaint here, and if it's valid, we recompense them in an appropriate way.

OPHANIEL

Ooh... How do I decide if it's valid?

FOR FULL SCRIPT, CONTACT PMFLOYD01@GMAIL.COM