

So You Want To Create A Universe?

By Sam Heyman

Scene One:

The play begins with GOD and THE ONE WHO CAME BEFORE on stage. GOD is seated in a chair, and THE ONE is standing a few feet behind him. A spotlight should hang over where GOD is sitting, and THE ONE should be mostly concealed by darkness. As he delivers his introductory monologue, THE ONE should pace the floor, a la a military briefing.

The One Who Came Before:

So, you want to create a universe? You think you're cut out to be the one your people pray to in times of great need, the being your people curse and plead with when things aren't going so hot, the Almighty, Eternal, All-Seeing, All-Knowing God?

THE ONE pauses for dramatic effect. GOD tries to jump in.

God: Y-Yes?

The One: That was rhetorical. I ask only out of formality, you don't have a choice in the matter. You have been brought here today, to the Green Room Beyond Time, because you are the best of the best. The cream of the crop, the top of your class—or at least you would have been if you had had any classmates. Seriously, a class of *one*? Were no other deities born in your eon?

God: Actually, they all dropped out. A lot ended up going into community theatre.

The One: Figures. Softies. It doesn't matter, we don't need em'. This next Universe needs a God with real grit, none of that namby-pamby planets made of frozen gas crap. If you're serious about being a Creator, you're going to have to get creative.

God: I'm ready!

The One: I'm talking planets orbiting supernovas, (Yeah!) planets full of sex-crazed cat creatures, (Sure!) planets whose moons occasionally threaten to crash into them!

God: That doesn't sound safe, but okay!

The One: You've got a lot to learn, kid. Fortunately, you've got me to teach you.

God: And who are You, if I may ask?

Lights go up more fully, and THE ONE steps forward to where GOD can see him.

The One: I... am The One Who Came Before. In addition to teaching you how to do your job, my purpose is to remind you that you are not special, that just because you're capital-G God now doesn't mean there wasn't a capital-G God just like you that's done everything you're about to do. Also, I'm here to keep you company, at least until you get settled into this whole, forced monotheism thing you've gotten yourself into.

God: What, is it bad?

The One: Oh, no. I mean, you're a virgin, right?

God: *(embarrassed)* I mean... yeah.

The One: Then don't worry about it. You won't know what you're missing.

THE ONE takes a flask from a pocket on his person and unscrews it, taking a swig. His mood markedly improves.

God: What's that you're drinking?

The One: Oh this? Just holy water. It's kind of like a cocktail of Muscle Milk and absinthe, for ethereal beings. Puts hair on your chest, if you so deign to have one.

God: Sounds disgusting.

The One: Yeah, well, it serves an important function. A variety of functions, actually. Want a sip?

God: Oh, I don't drink.

The One: C'mon, it's only holy water.

God: You just said it's like a cocktail of Muscle whatever and Absmith.

The One: And you clearly don't know what either of those things are, so don't worry about it.

After a moment of hesitation, GOD takes the flask, and takes a sip. Almost immediately, s/he spits it out and crumples to the floor. Gripping his head in agonizing pain, GOD shouts:

God: Eternity wrapped in fuck-rope! I'm blind!

The One: Correction! You have now traded your common sight for something a bit more befitting of your new job. You are now All-Seeing.

God: Then why can't I see anything?!

The One: Simple: there is currently nothing for you to see.

The pain subsides. GOD regains his composure.

God: Oh. So now what?

The One: Now, you create.

Fade to black.

Lights up on THE ONE, sitting on the ground, reading from a book (a Bible, if you can get one), clearly amused. The stage around him has garbage and things strewn about. After THE ONE lets out a burst of laughter, GOD enters the scene, looking haggard and exhausted from some eons of universe maintenance. While THE ONE speaks, GOD busies himself cleaning up the garbage.

The One: Come over here, you have to read this. This is incredible.

God: *(with a sigh)* Define incredible.

The One: I swear, no matter how subtle you are at taking an active role in creating a species, some navel-gazing kook always manages to catch on. Remember that ball of clay you sneezed on a few millennia ago?

God: Sure.

The One: Yeah, that wasn't a ball of clay. I figured you had to get off regulating entropy some time, so I gave you a little nudge. Surprise! It's a humanity!

GOD would be fuming if he weren't so exhausted.

God: Alright, okay. Yeah, okay that's fine.

The One: So they wrote like a town's worth of libraries of books about you—*Really* cute stuff, though a lot of ritual sacrifice in the earlier ones—and I get to this one, and it's like, "Wow, Champ, you should be really proud of yourself. You've got kids that think you're the greatest."

GOD flips through the pages of the book, not really appreciating it, while THE ONE takes his flask out of his pocket. After he takes a swig, he continues.

The One: I mean, when I was you, I was lucky to get a civilization up and running at all, let alone get them to recognize my role in doing it.

God: Yeah, well, you seem like you can appreciate it a lot more than I can. How about we trade roles?

The One: Wait, whoa, hold on there—What's gotten into you?

Confrontation time! Experiment with physical movement and grappling.

God: What's gotten into me? The entire ever-expanding bloody stupid universe!

The One: That was your idea, need I remind you, not mine. And it's not that bad, is it? I mean, you can pause the expansion of eternity any time you want.

God: But I'm working all the time just trying to keep everything from falling to pieces! The structural integrity of the outer three dimensions is full of holes, there are stars dying all over the place —

The One: That's what nebulae are for—Come on. You're freaking out about nothing, guy.

God: No, I'm freaking out about *everything!* (beat) Oh.

God plunks down on the floor, defeated, while The One paces about behind him. His tone is calm, solemn. Slightly bitter.

The One: Contrary to popular belief, you can make a perfect soufflé. You cannot, however, make a perfect universe. So stop beating yourself up and running yourself ragged over something that's going to end soon anyway. Enjoy what you have done while you can.

The One takes another swig from his flask. God senses the change in mood and turns to face him.

God: What happened to your universe?

The One: It ended, just like yours will. I'm over it.

God: You don't drink like someone who's 'over it.'

The One: The wording of that statement is ambiguous and I refuse to acknowledge it.

God: Come on, admit it! You're still upset about what happened to your universe and you wish you could do it over again.

The One: Keep going! I love to be psychoanalyzed.

God: You don't have to be ashamed of it. It hurt you and you wish you could forget it, so you drink,

The One: That's where you're wrong, kid. Out of all of the species in all of the universes I've known, only humans drink to forget things. That's not to say it's the stupidest or most shameful reason I've ever seen. The one who came before me had a species in his universe that drank because they were taught, by Him, I must add, to be afraid of their livers. Needless to say, they didn't live very long.

God: Wow. What a jerk.

The One: Yeah, Gary was a horrible guy. Partly because he was an amorphous blob God. No spine, no sense of decency.

God: So why do you drink?

The One: *(wistful)* Because I don't want to fade away.

God: Well that came out of left field.

The One: Gods like us, we don't die. We just ease out of existence after a while. After that, nothing and no one can find us

again. And since our universes can't outlive us, we're lost without a trace.

God: Wow, that's... that's like a mondo bummer.

The One: It's driven greater men to drink, that's for sure.

God: But... I'll still be around to remember you.

The One: For a while, sure, but give it another few eternities. You'll be gone, too.

GOD tries to get the flask out of The ONE's grasp, but THE ONE easily keeps him at bay (this will be easier if GOD is shorter than THE ONE, but it could be funny regardless of their heights).

God: Not if I drink holy water. If I do that, I can keep us alive, and then,

The One: Kid? First of all, to clarify, holy water's a euphemism. You wouldn't know how to make it, and I'm not going to tell you. Second of all, face it. You can't handle your shit. And you're better off for it.

God: *(at a loss)* So what am I supposed to do? Come to terms with the futility of my existence? Wait around until the universe stretches as far as it can go and then coast into existential retirement?

The One: No. You're supposed to enjoy it. Gary may have been a horrible person, but he did what made him happy. Every time one of his worlds exploded into shards of screaming earth, I could see his mucus membrane practically trembling with glee. I'm not saying that's the sort of God you should be, but if you're going to create a universe, make it yours.

THE ONE picks up some of the garbage from the floor and hands it to GOD.

The One: Make something extraordinary. Don't hold back.

God: Even if it seems unsafe?

The One: The more perilous, the better. We've come a long way from putting little blue planets just light-seconds away from death by solar radiation.

God: I guess you're right.

GOD shapes the garbage into something spherical. The sound of a cacophony of cats meowing fades into the scene (a couple hisses in there wouldn't hurt). THE ONE smiles, flattered.

The One: You actually took me seriously?

God: If Gods wrote Bibles, this world would get its own book.

Fade to black.

End.