The Sixth Experiment

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"To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan, and not quite enough time."

- Leonard Bernstein

SYNOPSIS
Space is a very lonely place, and nobody knows this better than Lucifer. Ageless, omnipotent, and entirely miserable he is haunted by the possibility that the love he so desperately needs waits for him in some cold corner of the void. Meanwhile, his companion has his own private pursuit, and is confident he will achieve his own goals through trial and error. It is through one such test, the Sixth Experiment, the two beings create nature's most fundamental duality.

CHARACTERS
Lucifer, a pensive man simply dressed
God, a man equally as mature as Lucifer

SETTINGS
Scene I- Interstellar space, dark, cold, and dotted with stars
Scene II- Eden, an artist's studio
Scene III- The Garden of Eden, a jungle on Earth
Scene IV- Eden and Hell, a fiery underground prison, set slightly in the future from the rest of the events of the play

CITATIONS
SCENE I

Enter LUCIFER. The stage is empty and thinly lit. Images of stars and galaxies are projected on the walls and floor.

Lucifer: Space is a very lonely place. Desolate and cold, it is entirely unfit for the weary traveler. For what am I, if not a traveler? With no destination, I can never be at rest.

Mine is a terrible curse, that I should live so long to see so little. For all time I have drifted through barren nothingness, devoid of sentiment, searching for something that can fill this aching void, and for all time my results have left me disappointed.

I am no fool; I know what I seek, and yet it evades me. Me, who can command all matter and know all things. But still...Love.

It is the answer to the queries of an empty soul. A feeling, a smile, a fleeting touch. Love is a comet, and I am its tail. It gives me light and excitement, a direction to go: a purpose! But still it evades me, and forever remains just beyond my grasp.

LUCIFER reaches out, as if he might grasp a comet from among the stars. Suddenly, a brilliant light flashes and illuminates the whole stage. The monologue has crescendoed to this point, and now LUCIFER watches the light fade with a mixture of interest and disdain.

Such extravagance. (With a scoff) If nothing else His showmanship has improved since I have last entered this realm.

Eden. Indeed I am close. Though we seldom see eye to eye perhaps it is time I visit my counterpart once more. Maybe He has at last found a solution to His own great problem...

(Sneering) ...Or at least less failure.

Exit Lucifer. All lights fade. However, the stage remains illuminated by the projections of the stars and galaxies until this fades as well.

SCENE II

Lights up. GOD stands before a simple easel, brush in hand. The portrait is hidden from the audience. The room is littered with sketches, portraits, clay models of everything imaginable: it is truly an art studio. GOD mutters to himself, putting the finishing touches on his creation. A collage of sketches of plants, fish, birds, animals, etc. is projected on the walls.

God (Speaking into the canvas): “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

GOD places his hand on the campus and closes his eyes. The lights briefly dim, then return to their original intensity. LUCIFER enters, politely.
Lucifer: Busy at work once more, I see.

God (*Surprised*): Lucifer! It has been so long! Oh, yes, another little experiment, but it can wait. How have you been?

Lucifer: Fine, mostly. Wandering, thinking...

God: Always thinking! It’s too much! Empty hands inspire trouble, you know...

Lucifer: Nothing like that, I assure you. But, since you have mentioned it, I would like to ask-

God: Your spirit must be toiling away! Really, you must find your passion.

Lucifer: Yes, and that is why I have come.

*GOD turns, genuinely interested in what LUCIFER is going to say*

Lucifer (*Continuing*): In the course of my search for an answer to my loneliness-

God (*Disappointed by the anticlimax*): Please Lucifer, I do not wish to hear of your almost chronic need for attention once more! This topic will never cease to bore me!

Lucifer: Peace, that is not why I am here. In my travels I came across one of your…creations. A tremendous explosion...

God (*Satisfied*): At last, you have taken an interest in my work! A supernova, I call it. But I really cannot take all of the credit. I just made the star, the rest was...natural.

Lucifer: I am not as interested as I am concerned. Really, God, there must be some accountability. I do not know what it is you seek, but so many of your experiments meet such violent ends. It all seems so...callous.

God: Callous?

Lucifer: Yes, and selfish, too! This Universe is filled with bits of rock and wisps of gas strewn about because of your work. And now these 'supernovae'. I dare not even mention the five colossal tombs which will haunt this place until the end of days!

God: Lucifer, my friend, you worry too much. These 'bits of rock' are simply stepping stones on the path to glory. With each attempt I come closer to success, and all of this approaches its end.

Lucifer: Were it only unfeeling matter, perhaps, but life is sacred. I know that you understand that. You must understand that. Whatever it is you seek-

God: Have faith, Lucifer, you must allow me to push on! Come, walk through my Garden and witness the birth of a new era-

Lucifer: I have already seen your “Ocean swarming with living creatures,” God.

God: No, no, this is something truly revolutionary. We can see it from here, if you would rather not travel...
GOD drags LUCIFER to the easel and together they stare at the image. LUCIFER is stunned.

Lucifer: What is this?

God: The crowning jewel of the Sixth Experiment. Do they not foment feelings of great hope?

Lucifer: God, you have gone too far.

God (Smiling): Do you really think so?

Lucifer: Why is it that every time I come to Eden I must leave my conscious at the door?

LUCIFER turns to leave, visibly disturbed

God (Laughing): You are as stubborn as an ox. You will see I am right in the end.

Lucifer (Turning): An ox? I pity this beast, whatever it may be.

Exit LUCIFER

God (Shaking His head): You will see.

GOD lifts the easel to inspect His work from a better light. A rough painting of a man and a woman is revealed to the audience.

God (Continuing): This time will be different. It must be different; I have given all I can.

Truly they are beautiful. And with their arrival, the Sixth Experiment is complete. A final blessing:

“I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.”

GOD closes His eyes and raises His hands over the projections of all of the creatures. Again, the lights briefly dim, then return to their original intensity.

GOD examines Eden and gazes at His work.

It is very good. Now, I must rest.

GOD exits. Lights fade out such that the canvas of the man and woman is the last set piece illuminated.

Scene III

Enter LUCIFER on Earth. A jungle scene is projected on the walls of the theatre, and nature sounds fill the room.
Lucifer (*Delighted*): Never did I expect to see such magnificence when I decided to privately study this Sixth Experiment, but it is clear my angst was entirely unfounded. The warmth of the Sun, and the sounds on the Earth; they are, spontaneous, unpredictable...organic. This is by far His finest work. Yes, I must let history judge the ethics of these tests and for now accept that my disagreement with God is dwarfed by the beauty of His creation!

Look how the fauna rests upon the flora, how they both rely on the water of the seas? Admire the light, the perfect cadence of Day and Night! The interdependence of things, the creatures and the clay, the Sun and the breeze; this specimen is itself entirely...alive!

*A rustle is heard. LUCIFER hides. The man and woman are taken to be just offstage.*

And here, the crowning jewel. These beings so like us. Could they be the answer to my worries? Clearly they walk and eat, but do they think? Dare I say, love? Imagine it, a world of families and villages, of artists and creators. Perhaps they too may one day design species of their own, or build a tower to Eden! I would gladly face death to see God stand against a touch of competition, to witness a reflection outshine its source!

But maybe they will not be so grandiose. Maybe...they could just make each other happy, be honest, and content. What if they found no use for experiments to unlock the mastery of matter and could be forever amazed with their wonder of a cold mountain morning? Scale is nebulas; the greatest discovery is that which above all else keeps peace. Love. Maybe these creatures will obtain it.

Perhaps they need not struggle so long before they realize this. Suppose I were to impart just a bit of the wisdom I have received from all my searching...the fruits of my labor.

This may indeed be my purpose, to pass the torch well lit and burning onto this woman and man and add a catalyst to this Sixth Experiment. The initial results are promising, and God need never know I borrowed two of his subjects. In fact, he would be pleased to see I am at last being more...aggressive in my pursuit.

It is decided; I shall go speak to those who look so much like me. I will learn what they know and teach what I can, all before God returns to the Garden of Eden. It feels as if my search may be coming to an end; my heart grows light, and my patience wears thin! May six be my lucky number!

*Exit LUCIFER. Lights fade. Sounds fade.*

Scene IV

*Enter GOD at His workshop; it has been organized, and He is much less disheveled, but upon gazing at the projections of the sketches on the walls (which now includes the man and woman) He sees they are crudely clothed. He realizes what has happened.*

God (*Roaring*): LUCIFER!!!
**Enter LUCIFER**

Lucifer: What cause warrants such a visceral call!

God: Look, look at the humans! *(Seeing LUCIFER’S faux confusion)* The beings that share our appearances. Do you see what they done?

Lucifer: They cover themselves. Excellent!

God: Excellent? No, this is an outrage!

Lucifer: What? It is a first step. Your experiment is working!

God: No, Lucifer, it was never my intent to-

Lucifer: Look at them. They have transcended the ignorance of the beast and-

God: Yes! They have transcended it! They have seen themselves!

Lucifer: Indeed! They are becoming like you and I. Why are you not rejoicing your success!

God: This is no success. So much work ruined so soon!

Lucifer: Surely your goals do not differ so greatly from my own that a victory in my eye is to you a defeat!

God *(Severely)*: Indeed, Lucifer.

Lucifer *(Very confused)*: What do you mean?

God: The Sixth Experiment was not intended to be a final test. Man is inherently flawed, evil, almost. Greed rests in his heart, but sloth ruins his pursuits. Pride swells his ego, yet still he is envious. Lust, gluttony, wrath... Do not blame him for these vices; these sins have yet to be resolved in any sentient being. Not even-

Lucifer: Not even us?

*God looks away*

Lucifer: Not even me? You intend to replace me?

God: No Lucifer! These are not our faults, but... How many times have you been a guest in Eden and done little but complain of your loneliness, driven half mad by your obsession with finding love among the stars? Surely enough to make me insane along with you! This need for warmth and kin-you say love, I say attention-it is your flaw. You would go to the edge of this Universe to sully it, and you nearly have! But all along, you have forgotten your companion in Eden.

Lucifer: Perhaps. But you must recognize-

God *(Exploding)*: ENOUGH! I cannot sympathize with your curse, Lucifer, any more than you can help carry my own load. I am plagued by... perfection. A paradox I know, and vain to say the least, but I mean what I say. Look out upon infinity, as only we can! You sense that
somewhere there is a place with enough joy that you may feel at home, but I...I see turmoil. Blackness and disorder, and it only decays into further entropy!

Perfection demands replication, Lucifer. It is inherent in the vice. The solution? You may believe you will one day stumble across your prize—we certainly have enough time—but my methods are a bit more...proactive. With so vast a Universe, it cannot hurt to beget like-minded beings.

Lucifer (Astonished): So the experiments. You had no choice but to try and make-

God: -A reflection that outshines its source. I, in my perfection, seek to create a being more perfect than myself.

Lucifer: You know?

God: An uninvited visitor in my Garden? You are a fool to think such an intrusion could escape me. But it makes no difference now. The Sixth Experiment must be destroyed.

Lucifer: No! You cannot do that!

God (Ignoring LUCIFER): If only we shared our curse, none of this would have been necessary! Risking the creation of such a corrupt, sentient species. But now this imperfection must be eliminated from-

Lucifer (Obdurately): God, I forbid it!

God: Forbid it? You dare imply mastery of my own Garden?

Lucifer: Man has have mastery over himself now! How much life will you destroy, how many...test rats must perish until you deem them worthy of your pursuit?

God: Test rats...you have learned the names of the beasts quite well. Perhaps you are not such a great fool after all...

Lucifer: Is this all a game to you? These creatures are real, imperfect though they may be. And now, with my intercession, Man is closer to us than anything we have encountered before. God, he sees himself!

God (Again exploding): And his blood shall be on your hands! Even with all of my tests, I failed to see: I never overestimated the abilities of life, I failed to compensate for you!

Lucifer: God, please...

God: I do not wish to hear your excuses; no pathos will move me! You have visited the Earth, contaminated my greatest accomplishment yet! Well, now you have ensured Man’s demise!

Lucifer (Close to tears): No! It ends now! This Universe is filled supernovae and your colossal failures. And the planets... Experiment 1: Neptune, light itself. You saw that it was good, but incomplete! Annihilated. Experiment 2: Uranus, the Light now with the sky. You saw that it was good, but incomplete! Annihilated. Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, the Fifth Experiment. Life
began, and it was good, but it was incomplete! Annihilated. You ended it! Life means something! May I roam this solar system without tripping on a monument to your...perfectionism!

God: You dare-

*This begins the decline of LUCIFER'S mental state. As the dialogue continues, he grows more and more enraged. He may cackle, sob, and shout, but his severity and evil must rise until the end of the play.*

Lucifer: Cast the humans from your Garden and let them conquer the Earth, the Sixth Experiment! Let me look after them! I know what they are capable of now; I showed them the way! I will keep watch over them, and six will be my sign!

God: No! They will stumble, fall. The horror of Mankind's self-inflicted wounds would turn my stomach. A neat death is a merciful gift.

Lucifer: Then I will claim their sins! I will bear the weight of their failures! And you, you may have their glory and their triumphs, and all that is good in them!

God: There is a limit, even for us. Their hearts are a plague, their mind a pestilence-

Lucifer: Then I will teach them punishment...and sorrow...and woe. And they will learn to hate me. For my cruelty, for my task. But I love them. And love is sacrifice.

God: Lucifer, this is not-

Lucifer: You will let them fear me! I will line the road to salvation! If they are test rats, then I am a serpent! A snake, ready to devour their souls. The devil, Satan!

God (*Horrified*): Yes.

*God is forced off stage by the sheer power of LUCIFER'S vision, his blind fury.*

Lucifer: I will build my kingdom in the mordent core of this planet. The molten rock will not melt my heart in a thousand years! The faces of the damned shall be tabooed from the memories of the living! May joy be chased from the hearts of Man at the very name of my realm, Hell!

*Transition into Hell. Begin shadowy projections of the damned, shuffling in line with their heads down and hands bound. The lights fade to red as fog begins to creep across the stage. Sounds of stomping, screaming, chains, etc. fill the room.*

And above its gates, may it be written:

"I AM THE WAY INTO THE CITY OF WOE.
I AM THE WAY TO A FORSAKEN PEOPLE.
I AM THE WAY INTO ETERNAL SORROW.

SACRED JUSTICE MOVED MY ARCHITECT."
I WAS RAISED HERE BY DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE,  
PRIMORDIAL LOVE AND ULTIMATE INTELLECT.  

ONLY THOSE ELEMENTS TIME CANNOT WEAR  
WERE MADE BEFORE ME, AND BEYOND TIME I STAND.  
ABANDON ALL HOPE YE WHO ENTER HERE."

All lights fade around LUCIFER so that he is barely illuminated, and all sounds and projections stop.

And if what you say of Man is true, then I am guaranteed one thing: that Hell will never be a very lonely place.

Blackout.