

The Trial of Existence

By Brent Holland

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DEDICATION

To the wonderful people at Eldridge Plays & Musicals, (especially Meredith Edwards) who have been nothing but supportive to me and are always quick to answer my sometimes stupid questions and send me in the right direction!

STORY OF THE PLAY

Portrayed in a fantasy-based courtroom we see ominous “Judgement” begin the Trial of Existence. Every 100 years the “Forces of Chaos” can choose to test humanity and a single candidate is chosen to stand trial. Should this candidate fail, all mankind will cease to exist. While the Michael and the “Representatives of Order” see the best in all of us, they must quickly name a candidate and in finding Erin, they put their faith that she is the one to represent us all. The test is 24 hours using pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, and sloth. If at any point the candidate fails four of the tests, the trial ends immediately and humanity is doomed. Can Erin show the strength that Michael sees in her, or will she fall to temptation? About 30 minutes.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 2 f, 7 either)

ERIN: (F) A recent college graduate and newlywed. She is the chosen candidate.

MICHAEL: (E) A member of the Representatives of Order. Patient and kindhearted.

ATAXIA: (E) A member of the Forces of Chaos. An enemy of humanity.

JUDGEMENT: (E) The unbiased judge of humankind.

WRATH: (M) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as Erin's husband.

GREED: (F) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as a needy mother.

PRIDE: (E) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as one of Erin's co-workers.

SLOTH: (E) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as Erin's supervisor.

ENVY: (E) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as one of Erin's best friends.

GLUTTONY: (E) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as one of Erin's co-workers.

LUST: (M) One of the seven deadly sins, also acts as one of Erin's co-workers.

DURATION: 35-40 minutes

SETTING: A fantasy-based courtroom

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(AT RISE: JUDGEMENT is sitting at his desk with ATAXIA and MICHAEL both present. Judgment is on a platform with two smaller platforms, one to his left and one to his right, that each have four chairs. The chairs to his left are white, while the chairs to his right are black. Standing in front of Judgment are PRIDE, GREED, WRATH, ENVY, LUST, GLUTTONY, and SLOTH. Each of the "Seven Deadly Sins" can be dressed to a director's tastes but should at least somewhat resemble the quality they represent. For the most part, they remain inactive through this first scene.)

JUDGEMENT: *(In a commanding tone.)* Ninety-six hours have passed since the Forces of Chaos have called for a Trial of Existence. Do the Representatives of Order have a candidate?

MICHAEL: *(Angry.)* The Representatives of Order object to the timing of this trial.

JUDGEMENT: Your objection has been noted.

MICHAEL: We request a 96-hour forbearance.

ATAXIA: *(Exasperated.)* Judgment!

MICHAEL: The Forces of Chaos know exactly why I have asked for a forbearance...

ATAXIA: And the Representatives of Order know exactly why we refuse!

JUDGEMENT: For millennia, the rules and procedures for The Trial of Existence have remained the same. The Forces of Chaos may call for a trial only once per every one hundred years.

(MICHAEL starts to object.)

JUDGEMENT: *(Cont'd.)* But if sufficient time has passed and if evidence is given that humanity has reached the point to where it could reasonably be concluded that their continued existence is a valueless burden on this governing body, then a trial must commence.

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MICHAEL: I understand that, Judgement, but the Representatives of Order have been scrambling all over the planet trying to fix the damage that Ataxia—

ATAXIA: Objection, Judgement. Irrelevant.

JUDGEMENT: Objection sustained. Do the Representatives of Order have a candidate?

MICHAEL: We have been rushed to the point of—

JUDGEMENT: (*Interrupting with intention.*) Do the Representatives of Order have a candidate?

ATAXIA: If Michael doesn't have a candidate, then the Representatives of Order forfeit the Trial of Existence...

MICHAEL: I have a candidate.

ATAXIA: (*Somewhat surprised.*) You do?

MICHAEL: Despite your efforts to distract us, I managed to find a candidate to represent mankind.

ATAXIA: You couldn't have had very long to find one. This is going to be fun!

MICHAEL: She is a strong and capable candidate.

JUDGEMENT: The Representatives of Order will present their candidate—

ATAXIA: (*Interjecting.*) When did you have time to find a candidate??

JUDGEMENT: If the Forces of Chaos interrupts this governing body again, I will find you in contempt and an alternate will be forced to present your case.

ATAXIA: My apologies, Judgement.

JUDGEMENT: The Representatives of Order will present their candidate at this time. Is your candidate aware of their situation?

MICHAEL: No, Judgement. I haven't had time to explain the rules to my candidate.

(*ATAXIA laughs.*)

JUDGEMENT: The rules will be provided. Present your candidate.

(*MICHAEL exits momentarily and returns with ERIN. She is confused and scared.*)

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ERIN: *(Meekly.)* Don't hurt me...

MICHAEL: No one's going to hurt you.

(ATAXIA laughs again and MICHAEL shoots her a look.)

ATAXIA: What?

ERIN: What's going on? Where am I?

MICHAEL: *(Calmly.)* I'll be able to answer all of your questions soon. I promise. No one here is going to hurt you, especially not me.

JUDGEMENT: Are the Representatives of Order ready to proceed?

MICHAEL: We are, Judgement. I formally present Erin Madison Brewton as the candidate to represent humanity in the Trial of Existence.

ERIN: Trial? I'm on trial? What is this?

MICHAEL: *(Placating.)* Give me just a few more moments... remember, I promised.

JUDGEMENT: And the Forces of Chaos wish to proceed?

ATAXIA: We do, Judgement.

JUDGEMENT: At this time this governing body opens the Trial of Existence. It has been 122 years since the last trial which ended in a final tally of 4-1 in favor of the Representatives of Order and the continuing existence of humanity. Are there any objections to acceptance of Erin Madison Brewton as the candidate to represent her people?

ERIN: What does he mean by that?

MICHAEL: *(Quietly.)* Shhhh....

ATAXIA: No objections, Judgement.

MICHAEL: Judgement, I would request time to explain to the candidate the rules of this trial.

ATAXIA: Why? It's not like she'll remember the rules once the trial starts.

MICHAEL: Judgement, I made a promise to my candidate.

JUDGEMENT: The Representatives of Order have three minutes to convey the rules of the Trial of Existence to their candidate.

End of Freeview

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