The Amazing Angel-Man

By Julian Felice

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DEDICATION

To Sean and his inspirational family

STORY OF THE PLAY

James, a young boy, suffers from Angelman Syndrome. This neurodevelopmental disorder causes problems with speech and mobility causing him to be spend his life in a wheelchair. The story shifts from James' imagination where he dreams of being a superhero called "The Amazing Angel-Man" to the real world, where the realities of his condition have a serious impact on his family, particularly his father. As the play progresses, these two separate worlds start to overlap, leading to an uplifting resolution that upholds the values of hope and imagination.

The play was inspired by the real-life story of a young boy who suffers from Angelman Syndrome. This syndrome affects males, females, and all racial/ethnic groups equally.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The play was first performed at the Ince's Hall (Gibraltar) on March 20, 2017 with the following cast and crew:

JAMES: Kai Nemes; JOHN: Conor McGibney; TINA: Rachel Almeida; LYNETTE: Ria McCarthy; MICHAEL (As Claire): Laura Abensur; NEIL: Nayan Adamberry; DR VINCENT: Talia Hart; DR DE'ATH: Ytzack Elkerbout-Bonich; LOUIS (As Louise): Maria James; PETTAK: Julian Reyes; DOCTOR: Jake Ciruela; ENSEMBLE: Mohammed Acharki', Carmen Anderson, Jenaika Ballester, Natalie Bonavia, Marta Miranda Porras, Rachel Nahon, Emily Pott, Johnny Ramagge, Natasha Richardson, Ella Vatvani, Wessel Westdorp.

Director: Julian Felice; Assistant Director: Dulcie Edwards; Lighting: Louis Emmitt-Stern; Sound: Liam Ballester.

AWARDS

Best Original Play, 2017 Gibraltar Drama Festival

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast of 12 plus ensemble. Most roles are gender flexible except for those noted. Doubling possible.)

JAMES: (M) The Amazing Angel-Man.
JOHN: (M) His father.
TINA: (F) His mother.
LYNETTE: (F) His sister.
MICHAEL: His caretaker.
NEIL: His imaginary friend.
DR. VINCENT: Pediatrician.
DR. DE'ATH: Specialist.
LOUIS: John's colleague.
PETTAK: Grand King of the Trintons.
DOCTOR: Surgeon in hospital.
WOMAN: (F) In danger, saved by the Amazing Angel-Man.
ENSEMBLE: Actors play various background characters.

For gender-neutral roles, adjust names and dialogue accordingly.

SCENES and SETTINGS

There are no specific scene breaks; rather the action flows smoothly from one time or location to another. Lighting can focus the action on basic areas including a busy street scene; the family home; the offices of the pediatrician and specialist; John's law office; a fantasy game show stage, and a hospital. One or two furniture pieces such as desks, exam table, podiums, and hospital bed may help define each of these areas.

PROPS

Puppet on a fishing rod
Wheelchair
Football
Baby stroller
Kit-Kat candy bar
Bottle of whiskey and glass
Small doll on a wire
Blanket-wrapped baby doll
Paper file
Foam or soft plastic ball
Light saber

SOUND EFFECTS

Superhero type music; an upbeat 1990s dance song; canned applause; gameshow buzzer; house door opening and slam; beep of car door, car ignition, and car driving off; loud car horn; car skidding; and ambulance siren.

The Amazing Angel-Man

(AT RISE: The play opens with a superhero type MUSIC. Two members of the ENSEMBLE run down from the back of the theatre, shouting, calling for help and generally creating a sense of panic. LIGHTS full revealing a busy street scene with other members of the ENSEMBLE reacting to the shouts. The original members run onto the stage.)

ENSEMBLE 1: Help! Help!
ENSEMBLE 2: Somebody help!
ENSEMBLE: What's wrong?
ENSEMBLE 1: Up there! Can you see it?
ENSEMBLE: What?
ENSEMBLE 2: There! At the top of the tallest building in the world!
ENSEMBLE: Where? *(Pointing.)* There?
ENSEMBLE 1: No! *(Points higher.)* There!
ENSEMBLE: What is it?
ENSEMBLE 2: Can you not see it? A woman!
ENSEMBLE 1: She's dangling over the edge!

(There is a sudden consternation as those in the crowd see the problem.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* Somebody help her! Quick! Call the police! She's going to fall! Help!

(There is a buildup of panicked noise. JAMES bursts through the CROWD.)

JAMES: I will help her!

(The CROWD stares at HIM.)

ENSEMBLE: Who are you?
JAMES: I am the Amazing Angel-Man! And I am going to save her!

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* No offense, but aren't you just a kid? Yeah, what are you going to do? Save her on your tricycle? Put together a jigsaw? Read a book?
JAMES: No! I will fly up there!

(The CROWD bursts into laughter.)

ENSEMBLE 1: Get away, pipsqueak! That woman is in trouble!
JAMES: Then watch and see!

(HE takes a few steps back and then runs forwards. The CROWD lifts him to a flying position and carry him around the stage. Other members of the ENSEMBLE point in amazement.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* Wow! Look! The kid's doing it! He's flying! He's going to save her!

(The CROWD carries JAMES off stage. A member of the ENSEMBLE enters, holding a puppet representation of JAMES on a fishing rod. Other members of the ENSEMBLE continue commenting on the action.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* Go on! Quick! Oh no! She's let go!

(A DOLL on a wire representing the woman starts to drop from the top of the stage. The puppet representing JAMES starts to move towards it.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* She's falling! Save her! He's nearly there! Come on!

(The puppet representing James catches the doll.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously)* He's caught her! She's safe! He's bringing her back down!

(The puppet and the doll exit and JAMES enters with the WOMAN.)

JAMES: There you are! All safe and sound!
WOMAN: Thanks! You saved my life! But…who are you?
JAMES: I am the Amazing Angel-Man!

(The CROWD starts cheering his name while he stands proudly. After a few seconds, TINA enters, calling James' name in time with the crowd's chants while she looks for him. As she enters, the crowd immediately disperses and JAMES sits in his wheelchair.)

TINA: Ah! There you are! I'm just going to get you ready for dinner. *(Moves his wheelchair forwards.)* Won't be a minute! *(SHE exits.)*

(JAMES pauses for a beat before addressing the audience.)

JAMES: OK. You're probably wondering what is going on, right? Well, all this that just happened, that was all in my imagination. Because I can't fly, obviously. In fact, I can't even walk, hence *(Gestures to his wheelchair.)*. As it happens, I can't talk either, which probably comes as a bit of a surprise to you because I'm talking to you right now. But this is just a narrative device so that I can clear a few things up for you. And I'm going to be doing this every now and then, so the sooner you get your heads around it, the better it is for all of us.

My name is James. I am confined to this wheelchair, and my imagination is pretty much the only thing I've got. Luckily, though, it's a pretty powerful one. Like all kids, I dream of being a superhero, one who can fly and run fast and use his superpowers to do good things…like save people from falling from tall buildings.

I call myself Angel-Man, but, of course, that's all in my head. I'm not actually Angel-Man. In fact, Angelman is not something that you can be but something that you…you know what? It's a bit early to give everything away just yet.

End of Freeview

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