

FAITH IN THE SUPER BOWL

A short play
by
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MEMBER

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FAITH IN THE SUPER BOWL

CHARACTERS

FAITH mid to late 30s pregnant, religiously devout.

ANGELO late 30s-40, also devoted but to something else.

TIME

Sunday morning.

PLACE

Angelo and Faith's kitchen.

SYNOPSIS

A couple finds enlightenment in a bowl of breakfast cereal.

FAITH IN THE SUPER BOWL

FAITH is at the kitchen table in her Sunday best eating a bowl of cereal while reading the paper. The headline reads, "Virgin Mary Sandwich Sells for \$28,000." ANGELO, in PJ bottoms & Judas Priest T-shirt enters with plate of bacon and a large cereal bowl with "SUPER" written on it.

Morning.
ANGELO

Morning.
FAITH

She begins to wretch upstage.

You okay? Sweetheart? Faith?
ANGELO

Bacon?
FAITH

Yeah. Want some?
ANGELO

Angelo! Oh God! (She begins to heave again.)
FAITH

Sorry. It's the smell, isn't it? I'll get rid of it.
ANGELO

He voraciously chomps it down.

Oh my God! That's disgusting.
FAITH

I'm sorry. (beat) Did you get my cereal?
ANGELO

There--between the Life and the Cheerios.
FAITH

ANGELO

Thank God!

He pours "Alpha-Bits" into his bowl and adds milk.

FAITH

You coming to church with me?

ANGELO

Sports page. (She hands it to him.) Nu-uh.

FAITH

Honey, we talked about this. We said we wanted the baby to have a moral compass.

ANGELO

Hmm... Oakland Raiders are 14 point dogs versus the New Orleans Saints.

FAITH

Are you listening to me?

ANGELO

Yes, dear. We've talked about this a hundred times since you--"we" got pregnant.

FAITH

You don't want our child to have a moral compass?

ANGELO

The problem with compasses is they only point in one direction. Our child should be free to believe whatever he or she wants. Maybe the baby will be Jewish or Catholic--or even Muslim. (looks up) Sorry Allah, I love bacon!

FAITH

Very funny.

ANGELO

You put your faith in Jesus. And *I* put mine in...(closes his eyes, stirs his cereal bowl and looks down into it) the Oakland Raiders.

FAITH

There's no comparison between church and football.

ANGELO

I don't think so. I have more devotion to this game than Mother Theresa did to the Virgin Mary--well, maybe not quite that much, but still--

FAITH

And football brings you some kind of spiritual enlightenment?

ANGELO

Yes it does. (he looks at watch) You better hurry if you want to be there when the service starts.

FAITH

Don't know if I'm going; tummy aches.

ANGELO

Okay. Suit yourself. (beat)

FAITH

So how exactly does football bring you spiritual enlightenment?

ANGELO

It's a holy game: they play on Sunday, it symbolizes the eternal struggle between good and evil--Yin and Yang--both needing each other for balance--very Taoist, that, each team strives towards nirvana: the end zone, and, come to think of it, the coach plus the eleven men on the field, that's kind of like Jesus and his disciples.

FAITH

Jesus had twelve disciples.

ANGELO

Hello? Judas? (He points to his T-shirt.) I rest my case. You know you're going to miss Reverend Sinner's "enlightening" sermon.

FAITH

It's reverend Spinner--not Sinner.

ANGELO

Spinner--Sinner...whatever. (He checks his watch and then hesitantly gets up to use the telephone.) Excuse me.

FAITH

(under her breath)

There's no excuse...

As ANGELO talks on phone, FAITH eavesdrops while looking in his bowl.

ANGELO

Hey Jimmy. Yeah, Angelo. Yeah. She's good. I don't know why they call it morning sickness--she's sick all day. Yeah. Oh, um, how's about a dime on the Raiders. Hell yeah, I'm taking the points. Okay. Yep. Thanks, Jimmy. (He hangs up and returns to the table.)

FAITH

Who's Jimmy?

ANGELO

Huh? What Jimmy?

FAITH

On the phone Jimmy.

ANGELO

On the phone. Oh. That's just...Jimmy.

FAITH

And who is he?

ANGELO

The guy on the phone.

FAITH

JESUS!

ANGELO

No, Jimmy. And hey! Thought you weren't supposed to take the Lord's name in vain. (she glares at him) Your rules, not mine.

FAITH

CHRIST! WHO IS JIMMY?!?

ANGELO

(with a big sigh)

Jimmy the Fixer.

FAITH

Jimmy the Fixer? Sounds like some gangster. Is he a repair man or something?

ANGELO

He's a...maker of books.

FAITH

Like your publisher?

ANGELO

Uh...no.

FAITH

Your editor?

ANGELO

Not that either. (beat) He's my...bookmaker. My bookie. My sports book. The man with whom I bet money on football every Sunday.

FAITH

Oh my God! I can't believe you've been gambling every Sunday instead of going to church? (beat) How much did you bet?

ANGELO

A thousand bucks. And I wouldn't call it gambling. And, no, I didn't go to church *with you* because I've been re-affirming my faith from the comfort of my own home. I always pick the early game--that way it's nearly finished by the time you get home so we can spend some "quality time" together.

FAITH

This is exactly the kind of thing we were talking about last night. Times are tough. You don't have a "real" job. And how do you expect to provide for a baby?

ANGELO

Firstly, I do have a "real" job and--

FAITH

Reading comic books all day is not a "real" job!

ANGELO

I'm a comic book *historian*. And, aren't you always saying that if you have faith, the Lord will provide?

FAITH

And how exactly is he going to provide for you?

ANGELO

Mysterious ways. (beat) I have you, Faith, and don't you always say, "The Lord works in mysterious ways?" (silence)

FAITH

You know the doctor said you shouldn't be eating that sugary cereal.

ANGELO

I only have one bowlful on Sunday's.

FAITH

Why don't you have some Life or Cheerios instead?

She gets Cheerios and tries to pour in his bowl.
He covers it with his hand.

ANGELO

Too many vowels!

FAITH

What?

ANGELO

It messes with the message. (He closes his eyes and winces).

FAITH

Message? What message?

ANGELO

(reluctantly)

You have to swear never to talk about it.

FAITH

Okay, I swear.

ANGELO

(whispering)

The Alpha Bits tell me who's gonna win the football game.

FAITH

What? The cereal! That's ridiculous.

ANGELO

Hey, I don't make fun of your beliefs. (beat)

FAITH

So how does this work exactly?

ANGELO

The first time was just before Christmas way back in the day. We didn't have a lot of money and I wasn't looking forward to Christmas too much so I told my parents I had a tummy ache and didn't want to go to church. I was eating my Alpha Bits and there it was: "P-I-T-S-I-N-I-M-A-C-U-L-T".

FAITH

"Pit sin, I'm a cult?" Doesn't sound like a message from God to me.

ANGELO

Just listen. Dad says, "Who do you like, son? Pittsburgh or Oakland?" I say "Pittsburgh." He makes a phone call. We watch the game. (He stands and acts out as he recalls it.) There's twenty seconds left, the Steelers are trailing the Raiders 6 to 7. Ball on the forty yard line, fourth and ten, no time outs. One play.

FAITH

All of this means nothing to me.

ANGELO

Just wait. So, Bradshaw takes the snap, steps back in the pocket. He avoids two Raiders,--WOOSH! ZIP!--throws it toward John "Frenchy" Fuqua, but Jack Tatum hammers him---POW! The ball goes sailing backwards--WOOP! WOOP! WOOP!--and Franco Harris picks it up, inches before it hits the ground and runs 35 yards to the promised land! Pittsburgh wins 13-7! Dad is jumping up and down. I'm jumping up and down, and I realize that miracles really do happen. (He makes crowd noises.)

FAITH

What does that have to do with "Pit sin I'm a cult?"

ANGELO

Monday morning and Dad's reading the paper. He leans over and says, "Son, this is gonna be the best Christmas ever," and on the back of the paper, I see it: "Pittsburgh Win on "Immaculate" Reception." P-I-T-S, "Pittsburgh," I-N, "Win" I-M-A-C-U-L-T, "Immaculate."

FAITH

That's the silliest thing I've ever heard. Maybe it meant you were entering into a "pit of sin and that you were a one man cult!" That's almost as bad as this woman with the grilled cheese sandwich.

ANGELO

Lemme see that. (She gives him the newspaper, he scans the article.)

FAITH

I don't see the blessed Virgin on there. I mean I can see a woman's face, but--

ANGELO

Yeah, it looks more like Madonna than "*THE* Madonna".

FAITH

Some casino bought it.

ANGELO

Yeah. Says it will be part of an exhibit called "The Father, Son and the Holy Toast."

FAITH

So you've been betting on football ever since then?

ANGELO

No, I thought it was just a coincidence, but from that day forward, I watched football with Dad every Sunday. But once, when I was in college, the Friday after Thanksgiving in fact, Mom called to tell me he'd passed away. I didn't know what to do. With Dad gone, I wondered how I could afford to finish college. I don't know why, but I went to the cupboard and got myself a bowl of Alpha Bits. It was like an invisible hand guiding me. And, as my tears of grief mingled with the milk, I stirred it and there was another message: "H-A-L-E-F-R-U-T-E-E".

FAITH

Hale Frutee?

ANGELO

Exactly. I figured that this was the way. So I took every penny I had, went down to the bookie's and put it all on Boston College to win.

FAITH

And you got that from "Hale Frutee"?

ANGELO

It's a see-saw game, late in the fourth quarter, the BC Eagles are down 41-45. (He again acts out the play.) Twenty-eight seconds to go. All the receivers go deep--ZOOOSH!-- Miami figures there's no way this little guy can heave the pigskin 63 yards into the wind.
(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

He gets the snap, scrambles to his right--WEESH!--narrowly avoids a sack--BAWW!-- And then he launches it, with divine, super-human strength, up over everyone's heads, (he whistles an arching whistle, like the sound of a bomb dropping) right down into the open arms of a receiver who rejoices in the end zone, right there in the presence of God and all his devoted followers who believe! (He imitates crowd noise.)

FAITH

Okay, okay. But "Hale Fruty"?

ANGELO

It had taken me years of devotion to decipher that message. I knew Doug Flutie was the quarterback and that they stood no chance of beating Miami. They dubbed that play the most miraculous in college football history: the "Hail Flutie". (he chants) FLU-TIE! FLU-TIE! FLU-TIE!

FAITH

You are nuts, you know that? How do you know it wasn't just random letters? And who do you think is sending these messages?

ANGELO

I don't think anything's random, and I don't know--but I do believe. It could be God or Jesus or the Buddha for that matter, but I believe that somebody up there likes me.

FAITH

So what did it say this morning?

ANGELO

"S-L-V-R-B-T-R-S-G-L-D"

FAITH

"Silver betters gold?" Sounds like a commodities tip...

ANGELO

Well, you got the message right. The Raiders wear silver and New Orleans gold. Any time I get to bet on the prophet, it's a good sign.

FAITH

The prophet?

ANGELO

Al Davis? Owner of the Raiders? When he was commissioner he had the vision of the "Super Bowl"--the greatest sporting event ever conceived. If that isn't divine inspiration, I don't know what is.

FAITH

So how does this bowl work?

ANGELO

I ask it a question and it answers.

FAITH

Like one of those magic eight balls?

ANGELO

Kinda, but you can only ask them “yes” or “no” questions.

FAITH

If it were a message from God or Jesus or the Buddha, then why can't he spell?

ANGELO

I don't know. Maybe he's not good at English. Or maybe there weren't enough letters in the bowl. It doesn't matter. I know what it means.

FAITH

Can you ask it another question?

ANGELO

I'm kind of superstitious. I only ever ask it once a week.

FAITH

Please? For me? Please?

ANGELO

(sighs heavily)

What do you want me to ask?

FAITH

The baby. Ask about the baby. Will our baby be all right?

ANGELO

You sure that's all you want to know?

FAITH

Yes! Yes! Ask it.

ANGELO grimaces, shrugs, closes his eyes,
stirs the bowl and looks down.

ANGELO

Hmm...

FAITH

What does it say? What does it say?

ANGELO

Look for yourself.

FAITH

H-A-V-E-F-A-I-T-H. Have faith?

ANGELO

That's what it says.

FAITH

(startled)

Oh! I felt the baby kick.

They laugh together.

ANGELO

It's time for kickoff. Wanna watch the game? Just the three of us?

FAITH

You mean you, me and the Lord?

ANGELO

I meant you, me and the baby--I'll even make you lunch.

FAITH

Well, since you put it that way, okay. (beat) I have a sudden craving.

He helps her to her feet and they start to exit.

ANGELO

Oh God. What for?

FAITH

Alphabet soup!

They laugh. Lights fade.

END.