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**American Association of
Community Theatre AACT
NewPlayFest Winning Plays:
Volume 4 (2020)**

Goat Song Revel by
DAN BORENGASSER

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Goat Song Revel

By
DAN BORENGASSER

Goat Song Revel received its world premier production at the Manatee Performing Arts Center in Bradenton, Fla., on Feb. 6, 2020.

CAST:

CHORUS Catherine Burke
JOB Jason Lipton
DIONYSUS Daniel Pelissier
SATAN Joseph Smith
GOD Caroyn Zaput
MESSENGER Michael Herring

PRODUCTION:

Director Kathy Pingel
Production Manager..... Kristin Ribble
Stage Manager Sophia Coscia
Set DesignRalph Nurmela
Light Design.....Nick Jones
Sound DesignMark Toebben
Costume Design Susan Sajec
Mask DesignLarry Engler

In addition to the information on the Important Billing and Credit Requirements page (p. 3), all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*Goat Song Revel* was premiered in the American Association of Community Theatre’s AACT NewPlayFest by the Manatee Performing Arts Center in Bradenton, Fla.”

Goat Song Revel

CHARACTERS

JOB (m): The biblical Job.

GOD (a)

SATAN (m)

DIONYSUS (m): Greek god of the theatre.

MESSENGER (a): Stock character from Greek drama.

CHORUS (w): One person named Doris.

TIME: Biblical times.

SETTING: A single room in the house of Job with five doors.

CHARACTER NOTE

Both GOD and MESSENGER may be played by an actor of any gender. Please change pronoun references as needed.

Goat Song Revel

ACT I

Scene 1

(The house of JOB—a simple, rustic room. On one side, there is a table surrounded by four chairs. On the other side, there is a desk and chair. On the far side of the room is a cupboard with shelves holding candles, earthen dinnerware and chalices. On the other far side of the room is a doorless cabinet to hang up clothing.

There are five doors: one for GOD, one for SATAN, one for DIONYSUS, one for JOB, and one shared by the CHORUS and the MESSENGER.

JOB enters the darkened room with a lantern, sits at his desk and reviews his ledger. After a few moments, the stage lights come up full, blinding him. After he rubs his eyes, he sees the five doors, which strike him as odd.

Then, a one-person CHORUS unexpectedly enters, wearing an expressionless mask. She whirls and dances toward the audience.)

CHORUS *(to the audience)*. The gods of our antiquity,

Protect us from iniquity.

Especially Dionysus, yes!

The god of wine and drunkenness.

(She glances around.)

And, yet, 'tis not a classic setting,

A far more foreign place, I'm betting.

But very soon we'll see the light.

We trust the gods to make things right.

JOB. Who are you?

CHORUS *(to the audience)*. Generically, I am the chorus.

Specifically, the name is Doris.

JOB. One person? You're more like the soloist.

CHORUS (*to the audience*). What one is this who doth demand?
And boldly makes his entrance grand?

JOB. My name is Job. This is my house. (*He gazes out at the audience, trying to figure out who the CHORUS addresses.*)
Who are you talking to?

CHORUS (*to the audience*). I am the source of exposition.
And help to deal with all transition.

JOB. Ah ... you mind if we drop the rhymed couplets? And just talk.
(*Off her silent stare.*) Just for now. While it's only the two of us.

(*She's quiet, but then nods.*)

JOB (*cont'd*). What's going on here?

CHORUS. I think we're in a Greek drama.

JOB. A what?

CHORUS. Greek drama. A chorus is usually found in a Greek drama.

JOB. And you're the chorus?

CHORUS. Yes.

JOB. The entire chorus?

CHORUS. So it would seem.

JOB. Is that normal?

CHORUS. Not really. There are usually about a dozen of us.

JOB. Must be a pathetic drama.

CHORUS. It may be a budget thing.

JOB (*indicating the five doors*). What are all these doors?

CHORUS. They're not yours?

JOB. No. Just that one.

CHORUS (*pointing at her door*). Well, that's the door I came out of—you don't want to go in there. I don't know what the other three are for. (*Beat.*) You're positive they're not yours?

JOB. Yes, I'm positive. (*Beat.*) So what happens next?

CHORUS. Just go about your business. The play should unfold.

JOB. You're sure this is a play? Not a dream?

CHORUS. It's possible, I suppose. But I generally don't show up for dreams.

JOB. And what ... what will this play be like?

CHORUS. That depends.

JOB. On what?

CHORUS. Whether it's a comedy or a tragedy.

JOB. Which is it?

CHORUS. I'm not sure yet.

JOB. But how will I know?

CHORUS. Oh, you'll know.

(As the CHORUS heads toward her door, JOB makes a move toward one of the other doors.)

JOB. Maybe I can find out by opening these other doors.

(The CHORUS quickly steps over and lays a cautioning hand on his arm.)

CHORUS. No! I wouldn't do that!

JOB. I don't want to just sit around and wait.

CHORUS. You shouldn't take any chances. What if you fell down a flight of stairs? Or were asked a riddle by the Sphinx? Or killed your father and married your mother? Suddenly, the play is a tragedy. Bide your time. You'll find out soon enough.

JOB. All right. *(Beat.)* For now.

(The CHORUS once again prepares to exit.)

JOB *(cont'd)*. Ah ... one thing ... I've never been in a Greek drama before. There was that little Yiddish play on Sabbath a couple of years ago ... but a Greek drama? I'm a little apprehensive.

CHORUS. Don't worry. I'll be back. Probably. *(Beat.)* In the meantime, I'll see what I can find out.

(She exits through her door, and, after a moment, JOB exits through his door.)

SATAN, with a pointed tail and wearing all black with a cape, enters through his door, along with a huge puff of smoke that billows into the room.

He looks around expectantly, then grimaces knowingly and sits at the table. After a moment, he begins thrumming his fingers, obviously impatient.

After an almost uncomfortable period of time, GOD, in a long, flowing robe, hurries in from his door.)

GOD. Sorry, Old Scratch.

SATAN. You're late, eternal one. You're always late.

GOD. I said I'm sorry.

SATAN. It's a power thing, isn't it?

GOD. Is this the way it's going to be? Why are you always so hot under the collar?

SATAN. Comes with the territory.

GOD (*glancing around*). Why'd you pick this place? Where's our cribbage board?

SATAN. I'm tired of cribbage. I want to play a new game.

GOD. What's wrong with cribbage?

SATAN. No more games of chance. I don't like games of chance.

GOD. What are you saying? Are you suggesting—

SATAN. No, no. I know you don't cheat. At least not on purpose ...

GOD. Careful ...

SATAN. What are you going to do—condemn me to hell for eternity? Oh, wait—you already did that.

GOD. You've certainly got an attitude today.

SATAN. Yeah, well, sorry I can't be all whoop-dee-doo for you.

GOD. OK. Ease up, will you?

SATAN. Maybe I'm just tired of always playing the heavy. Ever think about that?

GOD. Don't blame me. You were the one who got a little too big for his britches.

SATAN. Anyway—since you chose the last game, I'd like to pick this one.

GOD. But I like cribbage.

SATAN. Well, I'm tired of it. (*Beat.*) It's a perfectly fair request. How about it?

(*Beat.*)

GOD. I suppose.

SATAN. Yes!

GOD. What's the new game?

SATAN. One I made up. It's called Job.

GOD (*eyeing the room*). This *is* Job's place, isn't it?

SATAN. You didn't know?

GOD. Please. I'm not in prescient mode around the clock. Sometimes

I enjoy the unexpected—a little surprise—just like anyone.

Especially when I visit Earth. How's the game work?

SATAN. We have Job here, who, as you know, is incredibly pious—

I'd say obnoxiously so, but that's just me. Anyway, it seems he's been enjoying great good fortune lately.

GOD. He's done all right.

SATAN. All right? I'd say a lot better than all right. The guy's got

seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke

of oxen and five hundred she-asses. Plus a wife, seven sons and

three daughters. We're talking huge tub of butter here.

GOD. OK, so he's prosperous. What's the game?

SATAN. We take turns putting him through terrible indignities till

he cracks and curses you. Whichever one of us breaks him, wins.

GOD. What if he doesn't break?

SATAN. What if he doesn't break? That's a good one.

GOD. I mean it—what if he doesn't?

SATAN. OK, OK. Then, you automatically win, and we go back to

cribbage. Happy? So, are we on?

GOD. This doesn't seem like something a benevolent deity would do.

SATAN. I have two words for you.

GOD. What?

SATAN. Mount Vesuvius.

GOD. That was different. It was a natural disaster—not quite so

personal.

SATAN. Hey—you giveth and you taketh away. Your ways shouldn't

be subject to the logic of mankind. I bet Job thinks he deserves

his prosperity because he's a (*Finger quotes*.) "righteous" man.

GOD. Not bad, Old Scratch. You always were persuasive.

SATAN. Then, we're on?

GOD. With one change ... *and* ... one condition.

SATAN. What's the change?

GOD. I don't participate. You get five chances to test him to see if

he'll curse me. You do it—you win. You don't—I win.

SATAN. And the condition?

GOD. Job is not to die. *(Beat.)* Agreed?

SATAN. Agreed. And, of course, no foreknowledge or divine intervention on your part.

GOD. Of course.

(GOD and SATAN head for their respective doors.

Before they exit, DIONYSUS, wearing a mask and robe and holding a bunch of grapes, enters from his door and heads upstage to speak to the audience, not noticing GOD and SATAN.

Spotting DIONYSUS, GOD glances at SATAN, who shrugs as if to say, "I have no idea." Then, the two quickly exit.

DIONYSUS hears the doors and turns, but they have already disappeared.)

DIONYSUS *(to the audience)*. Welcome, loyal devotees of me,
Dionysus—god of fertility.

Also wine, 'cause of your undoing,

And the theatre, like this you're viewing.

(He glances at his surroundings.)

Yet, I see no warriors or kings

In these humble offerings.

Tragedy demands a fall from power,

So mayhap a comedy comes this hour.

(The CHORUS enters and is both pleased and surprised to see him. She kneels before him.)

CHORUS. Oh, great god Dionysus, we honor you and dedicate this performance to you.

DIONYSUS. And you are ... ?

CHORUS. The chorus.

DIONYSUS. You may rise.

(The CHORUS rises.)

DIONYSUS. A one-person chorus? Sounding like a comedy.

CHORUS. You think so?

DIONYSUS. Look at this place. Could it be more rustic?

CHORUS. And that makes it a comedy?

DIONYSUS. A little more likely than a tragedy.

CHORUS. Job will be so happy to hear this.

DIONYSUS. Who's Job?

CHORUS. The protagonist. *(Beat.)* I think.

DIONYSUS. What's he like?

CHORUS. Nice enough.

DIONYSUS. Any nobility in him?

CHORUS. Doubtful.

DIONYSUS. Powerful? Prosperous?

CHORUS. Maybe. Hard to say.

DIONYSUS. Still might be a comedy.

CHORUS. A question, oh esteemed god of theatre.

DIONYSUS. Yes?

CHORUS. Why the five doors?

DIONYSUS. Are they his?

CHORUS. Just that one.

DIONYSUS *(pointing)*. Well, that's mine.

CHORUS *(pointing)*. And that one's mine.

DIONYSUS. The other two?

CHORUS. No idea.

DIONYSUS *(considering it)*. Five doors ... it could be a farce.

CHORUS. A farce?

DIONYSUS. A farce. Also a comedy, although in a farce, the action's more important than the characters. A bunch of doors can create a *lot* of action—with misdirection, confusion, characters bumping into and avoiding each other.

CHORUS. And then?

DIONYSUS. Hilarity ensues. *(Beat.)* Theoretically.

(At that moment, SATAN's door opens. He steps out with a cloud of smoke, takes one look at DIONYSUS and CHORUS, and immediately goes back in, cape swirling, slamming the door.)

CHORUS. Was ... was that hilarity?

DIONYSUS. Ah ... no. *(Beat.)* That was just weird.

CHORUS. Who in Hades was it?

DIONYSUS. No idea. (*Beat.*) But I intend to find out.

(*They are quiet for a moment.*)

CHORUS. If ... if this is a farce and the action is more important than the characters ... ah ... aren't we the characters?

DIONYSUS. That's right. It means we're stereotypes or caricatures.

CHORUS. I'm a stereotype? A caricature?

DIONYSUS. If this is a farce—yes.

CHORUS. And ... and you, too?

DIONYSUS. Yes.

CHORUS. But, oh great one, you are a god. You cannot be a stereotype or caricature.

DIONYSUS. You think I like it?

CHORUS. I ... I don't know what to expect. I've never been in a farce.

DIONYSUS. I know. The farce was after your time. All sorts of plays cropped up after *our* golden age of drama. Back then, there was just tragedy, comedy and satyr plays. (*Wistfully.*) Tragedy—now there was a genre for you. Nice ... clean ... powerful. You had your hubris, your *deus ex machina*, your catharsis ...

CHORUS. I love the catharsis.

DIONYSUS. But after that? Look out. Dramatic mayhem. Absurdist, neoclassic, naturalistic, historical, allegorical, pastoral. You name it—someone will write it.

CHORUS. What can we do?

DIONYSUS. First thing—find out what kind of play we're in.

CHORUS. And then ...

DIONYSUS. If it's a farce, change it.

CHORUS. You can do that?

DIONYSUS. I've never tried. But I'm a god. I ought to be able to. (*Beat.*) I must go. I have other plays to sanction. But I'll be back. And if you find out anything, knock on my door.

CHORUS. Yes, oh most worshipful god of frenzy and madness.

(*As DIONYSUS exits through his door; JOB enters before the CHORUS can exit.*)

JOB. You're back. *(Beat.)* Any news, chorus ... ah ... choral person?
Do you mind if I call you Doris?

CHORUS. No.

JOB. Any news, Doris? Are we ... are we in a comedy or tragedy?

CHORUS. Still hard to say. Let me ask you a few questions.

JOB. Certainly.

CHORUS. Are you a king or nobleman?

JOB. No.

CHORUS. That's good. Tragedies frequently happen to the nobility.
Are you rich and prosperous?

JOB. Yes.

CHORUS. That's bad. Tragedy involves a fall from power or position, and prosperity can count as position. Are you a great warrior or hero?

JOB. No.

CHORUS. That's good. Tragedies also strike down mighty warriors and heroes. Are you prideful?

JOB. I'm proud of being a righteous man. I'm proud to be a servant of God.

CHORUS. That's bad. Pride is often considered a tragic flaw.

JOB. So which is it?—Tragedy or comedy?

CHORUS. It's not altogether clear yet. I was told by the god—

JOB. God? You spoke to God?

CHORUS. Well, yes. In fact, one of the doors *(Pointing.)*—that one—is his.

JOB. In my house? Here in my home? I am blessed beyond belief.

CHORUS. I suppose.

JOB. Will he appear to me? Will I see him?

CHORUS. Possibly.

JOB. You know what this means?

CHORUS. What?

JOB. I'm not in a tragedy. Isn't that wonderful? It must be a comedy!

(He jumps up and hooks arms with her, dancing and whirling in a circle, until she slows him up.)

CHORUS. Sir! Please! We don't know that yet!

JOB. But look at me—I'm happy. I've always tried to be righteous and avoid evil. And, now, I've been rewarded with a sacred portal.

CHORUS. You don't know much about Greek drama, sir.

JOB. Please, call me Job.

CHORUS. Very well—Job. Often a tragedy will start on a positive note and then go downhill.

JOB. What? Is that possible?

CHORUS. I'm afraid so.

JOB. But why give me all my good fortune and this divine door, and then take it away?

CHORUS. To increase the potential for pity and terror.

JOB. It must be working because I'm feeling pity for myself. And I'm starting to be terrified of what could happen.

CHORUS. No. Not you. The audience. The audience is supposed to feel pity and terror.

JOB. What audience?

CHORUS. If we're in a play, there's probably an audience.

JOB. Where?

CHORUS (*pointing toward the audience*). Probably out there somewhere.

JOB (*glaring out toward the audience*). Accursed snoops!

CHORUS. Now, Job, don't get yourself all worked up. This could still be a comedy. But if you get too bitter and angry—too serious—it may tip into tragedy.

JOB. Maybe you're right.

(After a moment of mental adjustment, he puts his hands in his pockets and does a little two-step jig toward the door.)

JOB (*cont'd*). Gosh, I sure am feeling good today. (*Winking at CHORUS.*) I bet it's a beautiful day outside. Think I'll go for a little stroll. Care to join me, Doris?

CHORUS. Ah ... no, thanks, Job. I don't think I should use any door but my own.

JOB. As you like. Maybe I'll check on the livestock.

(JOB exits through his door.)

The CHORUS pauses a moment, glancing after JOB with a look of concern, and then leaves through her own door.

As she disappears, GOD steps out of his door, eyes the room carefully and then goes to the table and sits.

From time to time, he looks toward SATAN's door, with much the same impatience and table-thrumming that SATAN showed initially while waiting for him.

Finally, SATAN dashes in, smoke billowing and cape fluttering.)

GOD. Now who's late?

SATAN. Was anyone here when you came in?

GOD. No. *(Beat.)* How about, "Sorry, creator of the universe, I was running a little behind"?

SATAN. No one? You saw no one?

GOD. No. *(Beat.)* Every time I start thinking you might be getting better—

SATAN. There was a stranger wearing a mask. Know who that was?

GOD. Who?

SATAN. I don't know. I'm asking you.

GOD. We saw one person with a mask earlier.

SATAN. Different mask. Different person.

GOD. No idea.

SATAN. No idea?

GOD. You said no foreknowledge or prescience, remember?

SATAN. Something weird is going on.

GOD. It's the human race—what can I tell you?

SATAN. Who wears a mask? Someone with something to hide.

GOD. Must be one of your people.

(SATAN glances around.)

SATAN. Is it me or are there a lot of doors in here? *(Pointing.)*

That's mine. That's yours. That's where the first masked person came from. That leaves two unaccounted for.

GOD. One could be Job's.

SATAN. That's right. And the other may be for the other masked person I saw. Although you'd think that all the people wearing masks would have the decency to use the same door. *(Beat.)* That the way you figure it?