

The Age of Loneliness^{*}

Steven S. Taylor

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Music written by

Claus Springborg

CoCreation

Cast of Characters

June

Market

Satan

Yahweh

Kapital

^{*} "The Age of Loneliness" comes from Edward O. Wilson 2013 and George Monbiot 2014.

The Age of Loneliness

(June is lying on the floor. Market enters, regards June. Pause.)

MARKET: So, that's it. You're just going to lie there?

JUNE: Seems like a good plan to me.

MARKET: Beaten. Defeated. The suffering artist.

JUNE: Comfy. Unconcerned about what others think.

MARKET: And why? Because other playwrights are better than you, because other plays are better than your plays?

JUNE: Bite me.

MARKET: No, not because they're better. You were doing okay at the box office. You had butts in seats. You were winning.

JUNE: Leave me alone.

(Satan enters.)

SATAN: Markie has a point.

JUNE: Oh, God.

SATAN: Oh, no, you're thinking of Yahweh, not me. I can see how you might make that mistake.

(Yahweh enters.)

YAHWEH: I can't. I don't think we are at all alike.

SATAN: You really want to go there?

JUNE: Could you all just shut up and leave me alone?

SATAN: Of course we can't. You know that.

YAHWEH: What would your therapist say?

MARKET: Would she say that you're a loser?

YAHWEH: That's not helpful, Markie. Dr. Jones would say that you need to understand and come to terms with us. You need to control us.

SATAN: I don't see that happening.

MARKET: Nobody controls the market, that's the whole point.

YAHWEH: When did you start referring to yourself in the third person?

SATAN: Everybody does it these days. Satan thinks it's cool.

JUNE: It's crap. It's lousy dialogue. It sucks. I suck.

YAHWEH: Don't say that. I don't think you suck.

JUNE: Yeah, I know. You love me, you love us all.

SATAN: Does anyone fall for that these days?

MARKET: It seems to work for Dr. Jones. I heard she's buying a new boat – a Riva.

YAHWEH: Take control. Be the playwright. Write us.

MARKET: Control is an illusion. You know that making art is all about not having control of where you're going. It's about the departure, not the destination.

SATAN: So why try? Just give in.

YAHWEH: Be the playwright.

(June stands up.)

JUNE: Okay. Maybe I don't have any choice.

YAHWEH: That's my girl.

MARKET: Once more into the breach!

JUNE: See, that's what I mean – that line worked for Shakespeare, but from me it's just a hackneyed cliché.

YAHWEH: You'll do better. Just write.

(June moves to the side of the stage. Yaweh, Market, and Satan exit. Kapital enters.)

KAPITAL (*sings*):

I should be happy
I've got it all
But I feel so crappy
I've hit the wall

Even with money there's still a huge void
The richer I get, the more paranoid

YAHWEH (*enters and sings*):

I should be happy
I've got it all
But I feel so crappy
I've hit the wall

The faithful, they love me, they really do
They don't love each other, only the few

SATAN (*enters and sings*):

I should be happy
I've got it all
But I feel so crappy
I've hit the wall

MARKET (*enters, cutting off the song*): Oh, please. I've never seen a group of bigger babies. You're gods, for crying out loud. Could you maybe act like it?

SATAN: Yeah, you're gods, quit complaining.

MARKET: You were singing with them.

SATAN: I was making fun of them. Come on Markie, you know that.

YAHWEH: Leave us alone, Markie.

KAPITAL: Yeah, we don't need any of your stuff.

MARKET: Of course you need it. Once an addict, always an addict. That goes for both of you.

SATAN: Yeah, you're addicts. G junkies.

MARKET: You know where to find me.

(Market and Satan exit.)

YAHWEH: Sometimes those two really piss me off.

KAPITAL: Yeah me, too.

YAHWEH: I didn't know you were unhappy.

KAPITAL: I didn't know you were either.

YAHWEH: So, we have that in common, too.

KAPITAL: Yes, we do. (*Pause.*) So, do you want to talk about it?

YAHWEH: I don't know. There's not much to say. I mean, I tell them to love each other, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you – I mean, I don't know how many ways I can say it.

KAPITAL: Kids – they never do what you say, do they?

YAHWEH: I guess. But you expect them to grow up eventually. Sometimes it feels like they are starting to get it.

KAPITAL: The long arc of history bends towards justice?

YAHWEH: I was hoping that it was bending towards love.
KAPITAL: Maybe it is.
YAHWEH: Not fast enough. (*Pause.*) Maybe I'm just getting old.
KAPITAL: Get off my lawn.
YAHWEH: Yeah, get off my lawn. (*Pause.*) It was fun singing together. (*Pause.*) How about you? What's up with the paranoia?
KAPITAL: What do you mean, did you hear something?
YAHWEH: From you.
KAPITAL: Right. It's nothing, probably just some lingering effects of withdrawal from the magic G.
YAHWEH: So, you've been clean?
KAPITAL: Well, mostly. Okay, some. I'm trying to be better, but I'm not perfect.
YAHWEH: Maybe a little Growth is okay.
KAPITAL: Oh, it's better than okay – it's still G. There's still that rush, that hit.
YAHWEH: Yeah, I know.
KAPITAL: Maybe, Markie's right. Maybe we're just pathetic addicts.
YAHWEH: We're all sinners, none of us is perfect.
KAPITAL: I thought you were perfect.
YAHWEH: I think if I were perfect the world wouldn't be in such a mess. They might actually love one another.
KAPITAL: You gave them free will. You gave them choice.
YAHWEH: Did I? But I also made them with the hope that they would be better than this. I thought they if they had free will then something really special would happen, they would learn to act lovingly towards each other.
KAPITAL: They do sometimes.
YAHWEH: Not enough of the time.
KAPITAL: Maybe they just need more time.
YAHWEH: Maybe I need to start over.
KAPITAL: Another flood?
YAHWEH: I promised not to do that again.
KAPITAL: What are you thinking?
YAHWEH: How about climate change? Rising oceans - which is different than the flood – crop failures, famine ...?
KAPITAL: That's pretty hard on everything else.
YAHWEH: Pretty hard on you?
KAPITAL: I meant on the animals, the plants, and it will be worse for the poor – those whom you claim to love the most.
YAHWEH: It always seems to work out that way doesn't it? You always hurt the ones you love? See, that's what I mean about not having done that great a job in creating the world. The system should punish the guilty, not the innocent.
KAPITAL: Easier said than done.
YAHWEH: I know, right? This whole god thing is harder than it looks.
KAPITAL: I know. I really thought that I could do some real good.
YAHWEH: And you have. Fewer people die from hunger, more people have decent drinking water, and there's block buster movies which are really cool.
KAPITAL: So what was the idea with water borne parasites, anyway?
YAHWEH: And video games. Those are really cool, too.
KAPITAL: Thanks.
YAHWEH: And parasites are my creatures, too – they need someplace to live and prosper.

(*June enters.*)

JUNE: Parasites? Really? This is supposed to be a love scene.
KAPITAL: I'm feeling the love.
YAHWEH: I thought it was going pretty well.
JUNE: You're supposed to be seducing Kapital.

YAHWEH: I know, I'm getting there.

KAPITAL: You were doing great. I'm really feeling the connection.

JUNE: Aaaaah!

(June exits.)

KAPITAL: So, you were seducing me?

YAHWEH: Seducing is such a creepy sounding word. But you were feeling more connected?

KAPITAL: Yeah. So ...?

YAHWEH: So ... ?

KAPITAL: Maybe it could work out between us.

YAHWEH: It feels kind of awkward, sort of wrong being so open and explicit.

KAPITAL: I know what you mean.

(Satan enters.)

SATAN: You two make me want to puke. I mean, really, after all the years you were together and you finally break up and now you want to get back together?

And even when you were "on a break" these past few centuries, you weren't really. We all know about the booty calls, we all know what was going on.

YAHWEH: Why, I never –

SATAN: You always!

YAHWEH: I don't have to stand here and be insulted.

(Yahweh exits.)

SATAN: You two can kiss and make up later, you always do.

KAPITAL: What was that about?

SATAN: Oh come on, you know you're better without Yahweh. Remember all those centuries when you were together? It wasn't a partnership of equals, it was always Yahweh first and you second. You've done a lot better since you split up.

KAPITAL: I don't know.

SATAN: I mean to the degree that you really have split up. It makes me sick when I see you try and get back together. Because nothing has changed, it's still Yahweh's show. And it's never going to change.

(sings)

Oh, you may be rich
but you're Yahweh's bitch

You could be the one
And out shine the sun

But you're a poodle
just a limp noodle

in all that you do
you're the number two

I had so much hope
But it's always nope

So, you may be rich
But you're Yahweh's bitch.

KAPITAL: That's not very nice.
SATAN: Come on, I'll buy you a drink.

(Satan and Kapital exit. Market approaches June.)

MARKET: That's nice. I don't know what it has to do with your story, but I do like a bit of singing.
JUNE: Sometimes you need a different approach. Not everything can be text.
MARKET: Or subtext.
JUNE: Thank you.
MARKET: And audiences like musicals more than straight plays.
JUNE: I don't know that a couple of songs here and there really makes this a musical.
MARKET: Sure it does.
JUNE: But I don't like musicals. They're too fluffy, not serious enough.
MARKET: Come on, Brecht wrote *Three Penny Opera*.
JUNE: But he called it a play with music.
MARKET: Tomato Tahmahto.
JUNE: Aaaaah!
MARKET: That's becoming your catch phrase.

(Market walks away from June. June exits. Yahweh enters.)

YAHWEH: What a surprise.
MARKET: Always nice to see you, too, Yahweh.
YAHWEH: Where's your poodle?
MARKET: I'm on my own today.
YAHWEH: Then maybe you should be on your own.
MARKET: Don't be that way. I'm really very fond of you. *(Pause.)* No, really. I admire you.
YAHWEH: I can't wait to hear where this is heading.
MARKET: I think of you as the Proctor and Gamble of religion. And it's absolutely brilliant. No other god creates in-house brand competition.
YAHWEH: Brand competition?
MARKET: Yes. The Muslims, the Christians, the Jews – they're all yours, right? You're the alpha and omega for all of them? They're all your people, your customers in my language?
YAHWEH: I suppose
MARKET: You are the god of Abraham. But you've created these different brands that compete with each other. Just like Proctor & Gamble, where the different soaps they sell compete with each other in the market. It's good business for them because the competition makes everyone sharper, keeps them on their toes, and for P & G they win regardless of which brand wins.
YAHWEH: Not everything is a brand.
MARKET: And the competition you've got going – I mean the wars and killing is farther than I would have gone, but that's why you're Yahweh and I'm just me.
YAHWEH: Don't push me, Markie.
MARKET: Like I said, I admire you.
YAHWEH: Do you know how much it pains me when my children kill each other? One on one is horrible, but mass murder in my name is an abomination. It tears my heart and fills my soul with a horrible icy void of despair.
MARKET: Really? The crusades did that to you?
YAHWEH: Yes.
MARKET: And the holocaust?
YAHWEH: Yes.
MARKET: And the 9/11 world trade center thing?

YAHWEH: Yes – my children do unspeakable things to each other in my name when all I ask of them is to love one another.

MARKET: Wow, so it must suck to be you.

YAHWEH: Yes, I suppose it does.

MARKET: So, if you don't mind me asking, why did you make them that way? Why even have different competing brands?

(Yahweh exits and joins June.)

YAHWEH: I don't want to do this anymore.

JUNE: Really.

YAHWEH: This has stopped being fun.

JUNE: I know what you mean.

YAHWEH: So, I need a favor.

JUNE: No.

YAHWEH: Hear me out.

JUNE: I know where you're going with this and the answer is no.

YAHWEH: Kill me.

JUNE: No.

YAHWEH: You're the playwright, you can kill off a character.

JUNE: No. I can't kill Yahweh.

YAHWEH: It could be suicide.

JUNE: You want to kill yourself?

YAHWEH: Have you been listening? It sucks to be me. I don't want to do it anymore.

JUNE: Hey, when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

YAHWEH: You call that writing?

JUNE: But you've got so much to live for.

YAHWEH: Like what? How many more will be killed in my name?

JUNE: How about your personal life? It looked like you and Kapital were getting along pretty well earlier. That could be going someplace, if you know what I mean?

YAHWEH: You're really going to go there? Are you saying this play is really a romance? The story of Yahweh and Kapital falling in love? That happened a long time ago. It didn't work out.

JUNE: Maybe that's what makes it such a great story? A failed love rekindled? Lost love found?

YAHWEH: You don't have the guts to do it, do you?

JUNE: I don't think it's a question of guts.

YAHWEH: It takes real courage to kill off a character – especially a main character. You don't have the guts to do it.

JUNE: I could do it.

YAHWEH: Bullshit.

JUNE: Yahweh, language.

YAHWEH: How would you do it? *(Pause.)* See, you are pathetic.

(Yahweh exits. Pause. Kapital enters and talks to Market)

MARKET: You look a little down.

KAPITAL: Yeah, I guess.

MARKET: Do you want to talk about it?

KAPITAL: You're a therapist now?

MARKET: I like to think of myself as a facilitator – helping to make things happen, whatever that takes.

KAPITAL: Whatever that takes.

MARKET: So, what's got you down?

KAPITAL: I don't know. I feel a little aimless I guess. I mean, it's nice to be the one that all economic rents go to, but somehow it feels like something is missing in my life.

MARKET: Did you have a fight with Yahweh?

KAPITAL: I wouldn't say that. Well, maybe.

MARKET: I tell you, Yahweh's no good for you. We've all seen it. Yahweh doesn't love you, at least not the way you deserve to be loved.

KAPITAL: Yahweh loves everyone.

MARKET: So that's what you want? Polygamy? To be part of the harem? Or do you want to be special? Because you are special, you're Kapital, the one, the only.

KAPITAL: That's nice of you to say.

MARKET: And you deserve someone who appreciates that. Someone who will love you for you. Someone who will love only you.

KAPITAL: You have someone in mind?

MARKET: No. I'm just saying.

KAPITAL: Well, it's nice of you to say.

MARKET: Maybe I'm not such a bad guy after all.

KAPITAL: I wouldn't have said you were a bad guy. Maybe a bit of a bully ...

MARKET: Always the joker, Kappie.

(Market exits.)

KAPITAL: I wasn't joking. *(Pause.)* Alone again. *(Pause.)*

(Satan enters.)

SATAN: Hey.

KAPITAL: Hey.

SATAN: Why so down?

KAPITAL: I think my relationship with Yahweh is over.

SATAN: I always thought Yahweh was wrong for you.

KAPITAL: And you're only telling me now?

SATAN: You can't say something like that when you're together.

KAPITAL: I suppose.

SATAN: The problem was how Yahweh sees the world. Wants everybody to be better than they are. All that love your neighbor stuff. I mean, sure that would be great, but it's just not realistic. You, on the other hand, you're at your best when you count on people to be greedy and self-centered, when you let people be how they are.

KAPITAL: People aren't all bad.

SATAN: I'm not saying they are. What I am saying is that the system works better when it's based on people's baser instincts. So when they are good, that's fine, it doesn't screw anything up. But the other way, when you base the system on people being good and they are bad, it screws everything up. You see what I mean?

KAPITAL: I guess so.

SATAN: Look, people are complex, behavior is over-determined. So in any system some of them are going to behave in ways that you don't expect. The key is to make the exceptions not be problematic.

KAPITAL: So, it's better to be a pessimist and be pleasantly surprised instead of being an optimist and being consistently disappointed?

SATAN: Exactly. And that's why capitalism works. That's when you work best, when it's simple and all about making money. I say financialize everything and then we can have a nice straight forward system that works the same for everyone and everyone understands it.

KAPITAL: I see your point.

SATAN: It's what made you what you are today. Which is great. It has made you great.
KAPITAL: I wouldn't go that far.
SATAN: I would. I just did.
KAPITAL: Well, thank you.
SATAN: So, do you want to get a drink? Sorry, this is probably a bad time for you, what with the breakup and all. Forget I said that.
KAPITAL: No, that's okay. I think a drink may be just what I need.
SATAN: Really? Great. I know a little spot.

(Kapital and Satan exit arm in arm. Yahweh enters and follows them from a distance and then returns.)

YAHWEH: So, I'm alone. I guess that means this is the time.

(June enters.)

JUNE: No, it doesn't mean that.
YAHWEH: So, how should I do it?
JUNE: Don't do it.
YAHWEH: Clearly you don't have what it takes to do it, so I am left with no choice but to do it myself.
JUNE: You don't have to do it.
YAHWEH: Pills? A Gun? How does a god kill themselves? *(pause)* I think a gun. And being a god I can create a gun.
JUNE: Okay, if you have to kill yourself, at least come up with a better way than shooting yourself. I mean that's really weak.
YAHWEH: You're the playwright. Write me a better way.
JUNE: But I don't want you to do it.
YAHWEH: Then a gun it is.
JUNE: No, wait.
YAHWEH: Wait for what?
JUNE: How about you and Kapital? I really think that could work out.
YAHWEH: We're broken up.
JUNE: But are you really? I didn't really see a break up scene.
YAHWEH: I'm tired of that whole on again off again thing. It's just not going to work out.
JUNE: Maybe if you gave it a chance.
YAHWEH: I don't think so.
JUNE: Maybe there's someone else for you?
YAHWEH: Who? Markie? I hate that little bully. Markie's lap dog, Satan? Let's face it, I am alone and I will always be alone.
JUNE: Maybe being alone isn't so bad.
YAHWEH: I'm lonely. Let's face it, you're lonely. You can't even write fictional characters who manage to connect with each other.
JUNE: Maybe.
YAHWEH: So, goodbye.

(Yahweh pulls out a gun, commits suicide and falls to the floor.)

JUNE: Damn. I did not want that to happen.

(sings)

Yahweh. Oh, Yahweh.
You were a fickle one,
A vain, and tricky one,

But I love you anyway.

(Kapital, Market, and Satan enter.)

KAPITAL (*sings*):

Yahweh. Oh Yahweh.
You were my biggest foe
But I still love you so,
I hate that you went this way.

SATAN (*sings*):

Yahweh, Oh Yahweh.
A lie, I will not tell,
You damned me straight to hell,
I will celebrate this day.

MARKET (*sings*):

Yahweh. Oh, Yahweh,
It's true what Nietzsche said
You were already dead.
Let's get on with the play.

JUNE, KAPITAL, SATAN, & MARKET (*sing*):

Yahweh. Oh, Yahweh.

(Pause.)

JUNE: So, who's next?

MARKET: What do you mean?

JUNE: Which one of you is going to kill yourself next?

MARKET: Not me, I'm loving life.

SATAN: I'm pretty happy, too.

JUNE: Kappie?

KAPITAL: What? Can't we just be sad for a while? I'm just going to hang out with Yahweh for a bit.

MARKET: With the body?

KAPITAL: Yeah. Do you have a problem with that?

MARKET: No. It's a little creepy, but whatever works for you.

(Kapital goes and hangs out with Yahweh.)

JUNE: So, this is what it's come to. Just me and the minor characters.

SATAN: Hey, that's not nice.

MARKET: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were so cool, Stoppard wrote a whole play about them.

JUNE: Well, I'm no Stoppard.

SATAN: But you want to be.

JUNE: Bite me.

(June exits.)

MARKET: So here we are.

SATAN: Yes, here we are.

MARKET: You know, nature abhors a vacuum.

SATAN: Indeed.

MARKET: As do I.

SATAN: Indeed you do.

MARKET: And do you know where there's now a giant vacuum?
SATAN: Do you have a point?
MARKET: Yahweh's death has created a giant power vacuum. You might say there is a job opening. Deity to three major religions.
SATAN: Oh, I see where you're going.
MARKET: And?
SATAN: Well, I am of course flattered. And I have to say that I never wanted this.
MARKET: Except that time when you tried to overthrow Yahweh.
SATAN: Well, yes.
MARKET: And I think you could really take advantage of the brand rivalry, push the Jews, Christians, and Muslims to new heights with some friendly competition.
SATAN: It doesn't have to be friendly.
MARKET: You're hired!
SATAN: You think I could really do it?
MARKET: Why not? I wouldn't just rush in and have them hang all the crosses upside down right away or anything.
SATAN: Well, not right away.
MARKET: You really don't even have to tell them that Yahweh is dead.
SATAN: I could just fill right in, be Yahweh for them.
MARKET: But in your own, satanic way.
SATAN: I could tell them that the best way to love each other is to love your self first.
MARKET: It would be your will that they get rich because they deserve it.
SATAN: And you can't share your great wealth with those less fortunate if you don't have great wealth to start with.
MARKET: So the path to heaven is paved with personal ambition.
SATAN: They will like this so much better than all that crap about loving the least amongst you. We'll call it prosperity theology.
MARKET: I like that. And what's the way to prosperity?
SATAN: You, of course. Trust in the market to work!
MARKET: So when they worship Yahweh, they'll really be worshipping you. And really, they'll be worshipping me.
SATAN: Delicious.

(Satan and Market exit. June joins Kapital.)

JUNE: You're taking this pretty hard.
KAPITAL: Aren't you?
JUNE: Yeah. I've never had a character commit suicide on me before.
KAPITAL: You know the Americans put "in god we trust" right on their money.
JUNE: I'm sorry.
KAPITAL: And you've just left Yahweh here. No funeral. No burial. Just lying here on the stage.
JUNE: The song was sort of a funeral.
KAPITAL: It's not right.
JUNE: It wasn't my best song.
KAPITAL: We need to get Yahweh off stage.
JUNE: I know. I just don't know how.
KAPITAL: I think dragging would work.
JUNE: Don't we need a motivation?
KAPITAL: In a play where the playwright talks directly to the characters you're worried about the dramatic reason for dragging the body of a dead character off stage?
JUNE: Good point.

(June and Kapital start dragging Yahweh off stage. Kapital takes the gun.)

YAHWEH: Hey, that hurts.

KAPITAL: Is this a resurrection?
YAHWEH: No. I refuse to be resurrected.
JUNE: That was a Jesus thing.
KAPITAL: Oh well, never say never.
YAHWEH: Never.
JUNE: Even dead, you're a pain in my ass, Yahweh.

(June and Kapital leave Yahweh off stage and return.)

KAPITAL: So, what now?
JUNE: I don't know.
KAPITAL: If Yahweh can die, that means the rest of us can, too.
JUNE: I suppose so.
KAPITAL: I don't want to die.
JUNE: Sure, who does. *(Pause.)* But you have to admit, it raises interesting questions.
KAPITAL: Like who would give my eulogy? Or whether you'd do another song?
JUNE: I was just thinking, what would a world without Kapital be like?
KAPITAL: I don't want to find out.
JUNE: Or a world without capitalism?
KAPITAL: I don't care. I don't like where this is going.
JUNE: What would happen if you stopped getting all economic rents? If maybe other players in the system got their share?
KAPITAL: Their share? You mean my share?
JUNE: I'm just saying, it raises interesting questions.
KAPITAL: What would happen if no one ever saw your plays? Is it still a play if it never gets performed? Are you still a playwright if your plays aren't produced?
JUNE: I thought we were talking about you.
KAPITAL: What's the difference between someone who write plays that aren't produced and a crazy person howling in the wind?
JUNE: Okay, okay, I get it. You don't want to die.
KAPITAL: I can't die.
JUNE: I don't know about that.
KAPITAL: You can't kill me. You haven't got the, the well whatever it takes ...
JUNE: I killed Yahweh.
KAPITAL: Yahweh wanted to die. If you kill me your play is over.
JUNE: I still have the others.
KAPITAL: Maybe the problem isn't me. It wasn't Yahweh and it isn't the others. Maybe, it's you.

(Kapital pulls out Yahweh's gun.)

JUNE: You're going to shoot me?
KAPITAL: Maybe.
JUNE: This sucks. *(pause)* I suck.

(June exits. Pause. Satan enters.)

SATAN: So, how are you doing?
KAPITAL: I don't know.
SATAN: Yahweh's suicide is hitting you pretty hard?
KAPITAL: I guess. *(pause)* I threatened to shoot June.
SATAN: Really? What do you think would have happened if you did?
KAPITAL: I don't know. It's like one of those time travel paradoxes.
SATAN: If June dies, do all her characters just cease to exist? Can a character kill their playwright? Maybe that's how that Pirandello piece happened. Maybe what the six characters don't say is that they have killed their playwright.

KAPITAL: I think Pirandello went on to write plays after that.
SATAN: Maybe it doesn't really kill the playwright, it just kills the playwright for that play.
KAPITAL: That's why I like you, you make me laugh.
SATAN: I didn't hear you laugh.
KAPITAL: It was more of an inner guffaw. But you can't say I like you because you make me guffaw inwardly.
SATAN: Fair enough.
KAPITAL: It's easier with you.
SATAN: What do you mean?
KAPITAL: With Yahweh, it was always hard. It was "use your wealth to help others", "do more", "be better".
SATAN: Not really my thing.
KAPITAL: No, you don't nag me.
SATAN: I'd like to think that I love you for who you are.
KAPITAL: I don't think you've ever said you love me before.
SATAN: You knew.
KAPITAL: But it's nice to hear.
SATAN: And I'm not against doing good. I think Yahweh's goals were admirable. I'd really like everyone to be happy. I just think the way to do that is through going out and trying to be happy. If that new giant flat screen television makes you happy, go ahead and buy it. If those new shoes would make you happy then you should have those new shoes.
KAPITAL: And you shouldn't feel bad that your happiness means you're not spending that money on trying to help someone less fortunate.
SATAN: Looking out for number one is not a crime to be punished.
KAPITAL: Exactly.
SATAN: And that's the message I'm putting forth.
KAPITAL: I'm picking up what you're laying down. (*pause*) Who are you putting forth a message to?
SATAN: All my people.
KAPITAL: Okay, I mean I guess they are all your people in a way.
SATAN: I mean my followers. I've taken over Yahweh's job.
KAPITAL: Oh. I did not know that.
SATAN: Well, we've kept it on the down low. I haven't said, Yahweh's dead and now Satan is in charge. I don't think that would have gone over too well.
KAPITAL: No, I don't think it would have.
SATAN: So, I've just stepped in, kept all the bells and whistles the same. Left the organizational structure the same, just assumed the role with minimal disturbance to the daily routine.
KAPITAL: And when the time is right, you'll let them know.
SATAN: I suppose. But what's in a name? They call me so many different names anyway.
KAPITAL: Is Markie behind this?
SATAN: I'm my own god.
KAPITAL: This has Markie's fingerprints all over it. And I don't have a problem with that. I'm okay with Markie.
SATAN: It was Markie's idea.
KAPITAL: I knew it.

(*Market enters*)

MARKET: You knew what?
SATAN: That you could get us both some excellent G if I took over Yahweh's job.
MARKET: True that.
KAPITAL: So this is really a dream come true for you.
MARKET: How do you figure?

KAPITAL: You've finally taken your rightful place as the supreme being, the one we all worship.
MARKET: Oh, no that's not me. That's our friend here.
SATAN: And really just in Yahweh's place.
KAPITAL: You don't buy that.
MARKET: And you of course. They worship you. They name the whole system after you.
KAPITAL: They do. But they worship you.
SATAN: They worship me.
KAPITAL: In their ritual. In their words. But in their actions, they worship our friend the market. The real, one true god these days.
SATAN: Come on, Kappie, you're still a god. A very important god.
MARKET: And they still worship you. In their actions as you say.
SATAN: Really, it's me that only gets lip service. And in the name of Yahweh at that.
MARKET: Let's not quibble, between the three of us we run the world. There are no other gods that matter.
SATAN: When you put it that way.
KAPITAL: It's hard to argue with that.

(June enters.)

JUNE: Nooooo! This is all wrong.
MARKET: Wrong? How so?
SATAN: I think Market's point is hard to argue. Kapital, the Market, and my interpretation of Yahweh - or maybe homage to Yahweh is a better term? We are the three gods that matter.
JUNE: No. That's not how it's supposed to be.
SATAN: But that's how it is.
MARKET: And you wrote it so I don't think you can complain about it
SATAN: That really doesn't seem fair.
JUNE: Look, just because I haven't been able to get you to do what I want, doesn't mean I have to be happy with what is going on here.
MARKET: I think it means precisely that.
KAPITAL: What did you want to happen?
JUNE: Does it even matter?
KAPITAL: I don't think it can happen if you can't even say it.
JUNE: No, that's not how theater works. It doesn't matter what you say. It matters what the characters do. It matters how they struggle and make decisions.
MARKET: Trust me, this whole play has been a struggle.
JUNE: I know. And I am so tired of it.
SATAN: Then end it. We don't really need you.
MARKET: We're quite happy without you.
KAPITAL: But you aren't happy without us?
JUNE: I'm not happy with you.
KAPITAL: Maybe you should worry less about being happy.
JUNE: Oh, I don't worry about being happy. I don't even think about being happy. Yahweh is dead, Satan is running the monotheistic religions, people everywhere worship the market, and you, Kapital, you're still addicted to Growth. No, I'm not worried about being happy.
KAPITAL: That felt a little mean spirited.
JUNE: I haven't even begun to be mean.
KAPITAL: I don't like the tone of your voice.
JUNE: So let me tell you how it's going to go. You, Kapital, you're going to start caring about something other than yourself. And you, Market, you're going to go back to serving others. You're going to find ways to work with the things that really matter in this world and not just those things that can be monetized. And you, Satan, you're going to ... you're going to really take

seriously your new role and you're going to resurrect Yahweh and preach love and connection to each other and to the world.

YAHWEH (*from offstage*): I refuse to be resurrected.

SATAN: If Yahweh refuses to be resurrected, there's nothing I can do about it. That's resurrection 101.

JUNE: Look, you're my characters and you have to do what I say.

MARKET: That simply is not reality.

JUNE: Reality? We're not dealing with reality here.

SATAN: There's always a reality. And you have created this reality.

JUNE: Aaaah!

MARKET: That's what you've got? Aaaaah?

JUNE: Kapital, you know what I'm talking about here. You miss, Yahweh. You want to do good.

KAPITAL: I don't know.

JUNE: Yes you do. I am sure of that.

KAPITAL: I think that deep down Markie and Satan are my people, my own, my homies.

SATAN: That's nice.

MARKET: I've always felt that way, too.

KAPITAL: So, I think this is okay.

JUNE: No. You have to want more than this. You have to want more than them.

KAPITAL: No. I don't.

JUNE: Yes, you do. (*pause*) I'm the playwright, damn it.

(*Kapital pulls out the gun and shoots June. June falls dead.*)

KAPITAL: And I'm Kapital, bitch.

(*Pause.*)

MARKET: I did not see that coming.

SATAN: We don't seem to have disappeared. So at least that question is answered.

KAPITAL: I ... I ... well that was a surprise.

SATAN: When you meet the playwright in the road, kill her?

KAPITAL: I ... I

SATAN: I, I, I, ... use your words, baby.

MARKET: You don't know your own strength.

KAPITAL: Well, no, I really didn't mean her any harm.

SATAN: I believe you.

MARKET: Me, too. (*pause*) So, what now?

SATAN: So now, we're three.

MARKET: The three musketeers?

KAPITAL: The troika?

SATAN: The big three?

MARKET: Well, whatever, the point is that we're in charge and we don't have to worry about what Yahweh says or what June wants, we can just do what we want.

SATAN: Isn't that what you always do?

MARKET: Oh, baby, you haven't seen anything yet. I have been constrained. Free in name only. Give me real freedom and just sit back and watch.

KAPITAL: That sounds good to me.

SATAN: I think I can help with that. I can hear the message now, "the will of god is delivered through the invisible hand of the market."

MARKET: I like that.

KAPITAL: Little do they know that in reality, what most people will get is the invisible foot of the market right up their backside!

MARKET: The market giveth and the market kicketh you in the ass.

KAPITAL: And I win either way.

SATAN: We all win either way.

MARKET: Yes, indeed. The big three are in charge!

SATAN: This is great. And I see how both of you really benefit from this. Market gets to be worshipped – which I think is what you really wanted all along.

MARKET: I wouldn't call it worship.

KAPITAL: What would you call it, the neoliberal consensus?

MARKET: Exactly.

SATAN: And Kapital gets growth. You just keep getting fatter and fatter.

KAPITAL: Yes, I do.

SATAN: And it looks good on you, it really does.

KAPITAL: Thank you.

SATAN: But what do I get out our partnership?

MARKET: You get their souls. You get them to stop caring about each other, to talk and think in terms of what can be counted rather than what matters.

KAPITAL: You can only manage what you can measure. And management is next to godliness.

SATAN: Yes, I see that. And don't get me wrong, that is all good and I do love that. But is it enough?

MARKET: What else do you want?

SATAN: Well, everyone talks about the Market and they named capitalism after Kapital. But I have to go around pretending to be Yahweh. That doesn't feel like an equal partnership to me.

MARKET: I never suggested it was an equal partnership.

SATAN: So, I'm the junior partner?

MARKET: Look. I made you what you are today. Don't forget that.

SATAN: I don't know about that.

MARKET: Why do you think Yahweh committed suicide?

KAPITAL: That was you?

MARKET: I don't want to brag.

SATAN: Oh come on, I've been working on that for thousands of years.

KAPITAL: I don't think either of you should be bragging about getting Yahweh to commit suicide. That was just plain not nice.

MARKET: Since when do you care about being nice?

SATAN: Really, you've been pretty much of an asshole to the world's poor for as long as I can remember.

KAPITAL: Hey, I don't have to take this.

MARKET: What are you going to do about it?

(Kapital pulls out the gun.)

SATAN: Oh give me a break, you can't shoot the Market. Or me either for that matter.

KAPITAL: Why not?

MARKET: You're in too deep. You need us. You need both of us to keep growing. You need us to stay on top.

KAPITAL: Yeah, well maybe. But that doesn't mean I have to hang out with you.

(Kapital exits.)

SATAN: And then there were two.

MARKET: He'll be back.

SATAN: Of course he will.

MARKET: And you'll settle for their souls.

SATAN: Why.

MARKET: Because just like Kapital, you don't have any other choice.

SATAN: You can't blame me for wanting more.

MARKET: I suppose not. But I don't have to like it.

SATAN: Oh, come on, we're two peas in a pod you and me.

MARKET: I don't think so. Just because it's just you and me here doesn't mean that there is a you and me. It's me. And you're my bitch.
SATAN: I don't know about that.
MARKET: You don't have to because I do know about that.
SATAN: I don't like that.
MARKET: I don't care.
SATAN: So that's the way it is.
MARKET: That's the way it is.
SATAN: Well, then to hell with you.

(Satan exits. Pause. Market laughs and drinks it all in, then slowly exits. Curtain.)

About the Author(s)

Steve Taylor is a professor of leadership and creativity at the WPI Foisie Business School. His research is focused in two areas: organizational aesthetics and reflective practice. The former applies art-based scholarship and practice to management and organizations. The latter focuses on the ability to analyze our own actions and learn how to be more effective, ethical, and artful as managers and leaders. His research has been published in academic journals including *Organization Studies*, *Leadership Quarterly*, *Leadership, Academy of Management Learning and Education*, and *Journal of Management Studies*. Taylor is the author of the books: *Leadership Craft*, *Leadership Art*; *You're a Genius: Using Reflective Practice to Master the Craft of Leadership*; and *Staging Organization: Plays as Critical Commentaries on Workplace Life* and is the founding editor of the journal *Organizational Aesthetics*. Steve is also a playwright, whose plays have been performed in England, France, Poland, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Italy, Australia, and the United States. He received a PhD in management from Boston College; an MA in performing arts from Emerson College; and a BS in humanities from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Claus Springborg is a consultant and researcher at CoCreation. He works with leadership development through art-based methods, embodied cognition, and contemporary art. His background is in dance, music, and meditation. He received his Ph.D. from the Cranfield School of Management.