

**Children's Letters to Satan  
(and Other Horrible Scribblings)**

By

John Busser

## CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

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*For Barb, who never pressed charges.  
And for Sophie, the best dog who ever owned me.*

*My thanks to Gene Kato  
and Next Stage Press  
for bringing you this volume of my work...*

*...just so you know who to blame.*

CHILDREN’S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

A Collection of 7 Short Plays and Monologues by John Busser

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\*Indicates instances where gender switching may take place where indicated.

CHILDREN’S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

Children’s Letters to Satan (and Other Horrible Scribblings.) was originally produced at Blank Canvas Theatre in Cleveland, OH in 2017, featuring the following cast:

- Steve Berg .....(Jeff, Alan, Dave, Austin.)  
John Busser.....(Jerry, Capt. Ramirez.)  
Vince DelCalzo .....(Grandpa, Federman, Satan, Prof. Ogilvy.)  
Matt Dodds .....(Man, Patterson, Damien.)  
Eric Grow .....(George, Glenn, Brandon, Vega.)  
Lysa Kenney .....(Nun, Barbara, Arionna.)  
Greg Mandryk .....(Steve, Al, Harvey, Dash.)  
Nicole McLaughlin Lublin.....(Brenda, Gretchen, Greco.)  
Grace Mitri .....(Vanessa, Barbara Sue, Tess.)  
Elise Pakiela .....(Cassie, Molly.)

# THE ADMISSION

By John Busser

(Approximate running time: 10-12 minutes.)

## CHARACTERS

NUN Female, 40's – 60's, a younger Mother Teresa

MAN Male, 30's\*

## SETTING

Inside a sparse room.

## TIME

Early evening.

\*The character is written to be a native of India. If the producing company is unable to cast this way, I leave it up to the producer's discretion.

• • •

*A woman is staring out into the distance. She is dressed in a nun's habit and leaning on a desk. A name plaque on the desk reads "Sr. Teresa." She is looking out of a window. Her eyes move back and forth for a bit as she watches multiple people. She shakes her head and sighs...*

**NUN.** Dumb bastards... (*Notices and addresses the audience.*)  
Oh, don't judge me. You don't know. You don't know what I've been through. Walk a mile in *my* shoes. Then, you can talk...

Oohhhh, I need a smoke. You know how long it's been since I've had a cigarette? I mean a *really* good cigarette? Centuries. But not one of the local brands. Those taste like yak hair and armpit. Can't get one decent brand around here. What, are we in a third world country?! (*She thinks about her last statement, sighs.*) Sorry. Forgot where I was...

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*(Fanning herself.)* Whew! It's hot in here. Oh, who am I kidding? It's hot everywhere. It is, hot as Hell here... which I suppose is appropriate. I guess I shouldn't complain. At least we *have* seasons here. Hot. Hot and humid. Hot and dry. Hot with a chance of monsoon. And here I am in this stifling, fashion disaster of a uniform, sweating, you should pardon the expression, my metaphorical balls off. 90 in the shade and I'm wearing a wooly prom dress straight out of the 14th Century. What I wouldn't give for a decent pair of culottes and a tank top. I could work in those. I could get some shit done. I'd drop this outfit like a bad habit. *(She laughs at the joke.)* And you wouldn't know it to look at me, but I got some nice legs under this Catholic camouflage. I turned heads back in the day...

Christ, I could use a drink. That's right! *(Pulls out a flask.)* I'm through denying myself the simpler pleasures. *(Takes a sip, notices the stares.)* Oh, give me a break. Father MacNally has a Communion wine monkey on *his* back, and nobody says bupkis. I'm doing the Lord's work too, aren't I? So why can't I have a belt every now and then? Lotta drinking going on in the Bible. I don't recall any passages where Christ was turning wine back into water. You'd think that'd be a bigger miracle out Nazareth way considering the lack of potable water back then. And am I the *only* one around here who finds it a strange that priests are allowed to drink on the job? Who wrote *that* little rule into the Good Book? Probably a Mick. Oh, excuse me. "Irish Catholic". Wouldn't want to get all politically incorrect. It offends our American friends.

*At that moment, an Indian man rushes in out of breath.*

**MAN.** Mother, come quickly. One of the men is being eaten by a python.

**NUN.** So? Who do I look like, Saint Patrick? What do I know

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from snakes?

**MAN.** Please, will you help? It has swallowed him almost up to his head!

**NUN.** Oh for crying out loud. Who is it?

**MAN.** It is Jugdish.

**NUN.** Pffff. More like De-lish, am I right? Huh? Nothing? *(Looks at man. He is frowning.)* Sorry. I always get like this on a heavy flow day. All right, listen, why don't you get one of those Peace Corp hippies to help out? I'm sure they're down by the river trying to score some weed. Just follow the sounds of the Cat Stevens tapes, or whatever he's calling himself these days...

**MAN.** Please Mother, perhaps if you prayed for him--

**NUN.** Oh God, just get him out of there, would you?

**MAN.** Thank you Mother. *(He exits.)*

**NUN.** *(Yelling out the window.)* And stop calling me "Mother." I have a name you know. *(Now addresses the audience.)* I should start wearing a nametag. You know, one of those "Hi, my name is..." things? And I'm thinking of going with "Terry." Sounds less formal. Makes people feel comfortable. Lord knows these folks could use some comfort. They put up with a lot. Famine, disease, pestilence, monsoons, earthquakes, rats, bugs, warlords, blah, blah, blah. Now we got snakes eating people. *(She exhales wearily.)* You know, someone sent me one of those "Hang in there baby, it's almost the weekend!" posters. The one with the cat on the branch? Well, it's only Tuesday here and I would gladly strangle the jackass who hung *that* up in my office.

Well, not really. Don't get to be a saint that way, do you? Not that that's why I do this, mind you. I genuinely feel for these poor folks. It's all about the work... but... people, you know, they say things. "Oh Mother, the work you do is soooo important. You are truly a blessing from God." Or "Surely the Vatican knows of your deeds. You will be made a saint." And I



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tell them to stop with the foolish talk. But once the idea is out there, it's a little hard to NOT think it. I mean, you tell someone *don't* think of a pink elephant and... well, you know how it is.

Frankly, it's a little embarrassing. They make such a fuss. I'm just an ordinary person like everyone else. Just doing my job. Still... it *is* nice to be recognized. Have someone ask for an autograph or a blessing. All the nice things people say, the accolades and whatnot. And really, I'm still trying to get my head around winning that Nobel in '79. That was something, considering it was my first time being nominated. Mohandas Gandhi? Nominated *five* times. Never took the prize. That's a fact. Such a nice man too. Like Susan Lucci, but knew how to stick to a diet. I'm just saying...

You know, I gave most of the prize money away. Donated it to charity. Made for a great tax write-off that year. Honestly, I *wanted* to give it to the poor. They needed it worse than I did. Figures that... witch, Sr. Agnes at the Little Sisters of the Poor managed to get her claws into the money to finance her parish bingo racket 2 villages over. Can you believe it? The people around here need three squares a day. Of food, not bingo grids.

I'll let you in on a secret. (*Stage whispers to audience.*) I kept some of the prize money. I shouldn't have, I know, but come on, aren't I entitled to one little luxury? Haven't I earned the right to treat myself? I could have used it to buy antibiotics, but let's face it, (*She reaches into the desk drawer and pulls out a package.*) who *doesn't* love Double Stuf Oreos? They put a smile on everyone's face. Not so good against cholera, but hey, that's what med students are for, right? And, they go great when you dunk 'em in goat's milk.

Now, I admit, all this sainthood talk had got me thinking. Why *not* me? So, I did a little research to find out the criteria for

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sainthood. Here's what they look for. (*She counts off.*) 1.) exemplary model 2.) extraordinary teacher 3.) selfless behavior 4.) miracle worker. I've got most of those under my belt already. Haven't performed a miracle yet, unless I can somehow make Sister Bernadette's lamb stew edible. There ought to be a Commandment, "Thou Shalt Not use Cumin by the Bucket". But I digress... Now, I think I'm doing pretty well moving up the ladder toward Canonization. Then, I get the bombshell. The source I used had a misspelling. I *thought* it read that the last step before becoming a saint is "Beautification". I figure, great. I get myself a makeover, I'm in like Flynn. After all, not too many homely saints on church windows, right? I figured, maybe they fly you in to Vatican City, spruce up the habit, dye some of the gray out, get your nails done while his Holiness chews the fat with you. I'm starting to get excited. Maybe all this hard work and is finally going to pay off. I couldn't contain myself anymore, so I talked with a few of the other nuns after Vespers one evening. What an idiot I was. They told me that not only was the word "Be-AT-ification", not "Be-YOU-tification", but that you have to be dead to receive it. It means that the Church recognizes that the deceased has gone to Heaven. And that you're now referred to as "Blessed." Quite an honor, yes, and sure to look good on a resume, but I'm really not ready to kick off just yet. Besides, I don't have that miracle yet. And how often do *they* happen?

*At that moment, the man from before comes rushing in, a smile on his face.*

**MAN.** Mother! Mother! It is a miracle! The python has coughed out Jugdish. He is disgusting to look at and smells worse than usual, but he is alive! And it is all due to you Mother! God heard your prayers and has answered them!

**NUN.** Wait, what prayers? I didn't pray for him.

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**MAN.** But Mother, I heard you. You *did* pray to God. You said, "Oh God, get him out of there, would you? " Not very formal but it did the trick.

**NUN.** I'm pretty sure Jugdish just didn't taste very good to the poor snake. He ate a lot of the lamb stew yesterday, didn't he?

**MAN.** You joke all you like Mother, but I know that you are truly a miracle worker. The village will celebrate this miracle. We will prepare a large feast and then play bingo at the Little Sisters till dawn. Thank you, Mother! Thank you!! (*The man leaves.*)

**NUN.** (*Looks at audience.*) So now indigestion is a miracle? I didn't do anything that a bottle of ipecac couldn't have done. Maybe Sister Bernadette is the real miracle worker. That lamb stew of hers is a really rough ride. Of course, if they want to believe it was my "intercession" that saved that poor man, who am I to dispel such notions? Don't want to shake their faith now, do I? Let them think that God stuck a spiritual finger down that python's throat and caused it to give forth. The way of the Lord... Besides, why give her the credit for doing nothing more than misreading a cookbook. In fact, Bernadette could stand a little lesson in humility. Calling her specialty, "Heavenly Hash". She's just asking to be taken down a peg. (*The man runs in.*)

**MAN.** Mother! Jugdish says he lost his favorite ring down the snake's throat and is trying to reach in to get it. What should we do?

**NUN.** Put all your money on the snake, I'm closing up shop for the night.

**MAN.** Oh Mother, how you joke. Who has money here? (*He leaves.*)

**NUN.** (*She sighs one last time.*) What did I tell you? Dumb bastards...

***Lights Out The End***

# LAW AND MAIL ORDER

By John Busser

(Approximate running time: 10-12 minutes.)

## CHARACTERS

JEFF Male, 20's – 30's, any ethnicity, terrible driver

BRENDA Female, 20's - 30's, any ethnicity, thinks Jeff needs a lesson

## SETTING

A suburban home kitchen.

## TIME

Monday afternoon.

...

*At lights up, Brenda is sitting at the kitchen table. She is in front of her computer. A door slam is heard from offstage.*

**BRENDA.** *(Without looking up.)* Honey? That you?

**JEFF.** *(From offstage.)* Yeah.

**BRENDA.** Did you get the mail?

**JEFF.** *(Tersely.)* I didn't see anything in the mailbox.

**BRENDA.** Something wrong? You sound like you're mad.

**JEFF.** *(Entering.)* Oh, I'm super. I just got a ticket.

**BRENDA.** *(Finally looking up.)* Oh, honey. You didn't.

**JEFF.** Yeah, I did.

**BRENDA.** Another one?

**JEFF.** Don't say it like you just found bodies in the cellar. It's just a stupid traffic ticket.

**BRENDA.** Were you speeding again?

**JEFF.** *(Annoyed.)* No. I went through a stop sign.

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**BRENDA.** You went through a stop sign? How did you not see a stop sign?

**JEFF.** I did see it. I just didn't come to a complete stop. The cop was right there.

**BRENDA.** Okay, let me see it.

**JEFF.** (*Handing it over.*) I just paid off the other one. This is not gonna look good on my record.

**BRENDA.** When do you have to pay it by? I don't see anything on this with a date.

**JEFF.** You have to look it up online. It'll give you the amount and due date.

**BRENDA.** (*Turning to the computer.*) This is going to cost you a fortune, I bet.

**JEFF.** For a lousy stop sign?

**BRENDA.** Compounded with your other recent infractions, this one will probably put you into some kind of bad driver profiling system. The police watch for these kinds of patterns, you know. Where you've been caught speeding, running red lights, now a stop sign. They can send a car to watch the most likely areas you're going to be, and bam, you're caught.

**JEFF.** You make me sound like the Hannibal Lector of moving violations.

**BRENDA.** If the lead foot fits... (*Seeing something on the screen.*) What's this?

**JEFF.** Isn't that the municipal court site?

**BRENDA.** Yeah, it is, but something looks weird here. I punched in your ticket number but all it brought up was this countdown clock.

**JEFF.** (*Looking at the screen.*) A countdown clock? Counting down to what?

**BRENDA.** I don't know. The home screen had a message on it about the new online justice system they have, and then I navigated here. But now I don't know what to do.

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**JEFF.** The clock is almost down to zero. Maybe it's calculating the amount or something. We probably just have to wait, till it's done, that's all.

**BRENDA.** Honey, computers nowadays can do millions of calculations a second, if not more. If it needs this long to calculate your fine, you're in big trouble.

**JEFF.** I'm sure their system is just bogged down. Probably a lot of people paying tickets online today. (*A ding sound is heard from the computer.*) There you go. It hit zero. Now we should see..... nothing. Huh, I wonder what that means.

**BRENDA.** (*Hearing something from offstage.*) Oh, that sounds like the mailman. I'll go get it. You try to figure this out. (*Brenda exits.*)

**JEFF.** Okay. (*Turning back to the computer.*) So, let's see... maybe if I tried--

**BRENDA.** JEFF! JEFF! (*She reenters quickly with a pile of mail. She keeps the top letter and puts the rest on the table.*) Take a look at this. It's from the municipal court.

**JEFF.** It just came now?

**BRENDA.** Yes. Just this minute.

**JEFF.** (*He opens and begins to read the letter.*) "The City Municipal Court has issued this WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST as a result of your failure to appear in court on this date. Failure to comply with this warrant may result in an INCREASE IN JAIL TIME. This is an attempt to resolve this matter in a timely fashion and without the city police being tasked with taking you into custody."

**BRENDA.** This date? You just got the ticket. Or is this for something else?

**JEFF.** No, there's my ticket number at the top of the page. That was quick.

**BRENDA.** What else does it say?

**JEFF.** (*Reading more.*) "I have the right to remain silent. Anything I say can and will be used against me in a court of

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law. I have the right to an attorney. If I cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for me. Do I understand the rights I have just read to myself?

**BRENDA.** (*Confused.*) You just read yourself your Miranda Rights. Why would they have you do that? (*Suddenly realizing.*) Oh my God! Let me see that. (*She takes the letter and rereads it.*) Jeff, I think you're supposed to turn yourself in.

**JEFF.** Turn myself in? Hah! Yeah, right.

**BRENDA.** I'm not kidding! Look, here. "...issued *this* warrant for your arrest." This letter *is* an arrest warrant. They want you to take yourself into custody.

**JEFF.** It was a stop sign. I'm not going to jail over a stop sign.

**BRENDA.** You just Mirandized yourself.

**JEFF.** So?

**BRENDA.** So I think you better get yourself an attorney.

**JEFF.** Where am I supposed to get an attorney?

*The computer chimes in with new mail. They both look.*

**BRENDA.** "Need an attorney fast? Click here." (*Brenda and Jeff look at each other for a beat.*)

**JEFF.** How would they know?

**BRENDA.** How *could* they know?

**JEFF.** It's got to be junk mail. Trash it. I need to think.

**BRENDA.** What are you going to do?

**JEFF.** I don't know.

**BRENDA.** Call the attorney.

**JEFF.** I am *not* going to call for an attorney. (*A new chime is heard.*) Hold on, somebody just texted me. (*Jeff pulls out his phone.*)

**BRENDA.** Who is it?

**JEFF.** (*Reading the message.*) "How... do you... plead?" How do I plead?

**BRENDA.** Who sent you that?

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**JEFF.** I have no idea. *(He begins typing in.)* “Who... is... this?” *(He sends the message. A beat later, the phone chimes again.)* DA... My father?

**BRENDA.** What? Let me see that. *(She takes the phone.)* Uh, honey. This doesn't mean your dad. “DA” means District Attorney. *(Another message comes in.)*

**JEFF.** *(Taking the phone and reading.)* “Press 1 for Guilty. Press 2 for Not Guilty.”

**BRENDA.** Press 1.

**JEFF.** Whose side are you on?

**BRENDA.** I'm on your side, but you *did* break the law, honey.

**JEFF.** It was just a stop sign, for God's sake!

**BRENDA.** You're still guilty.

**JEFF.** I want to speak to an attorney.

**BRENDA.** Sorry, you told me to trash that email. *(She pulls out her phone and begins texting.)*

**JEFF.** Well, how was I to know?

**BRENDA.** Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

**JEFF.** *(Annoyed.)* Oh, are you a lawyer now? And who are you texting?

**BRENDA.** Don't get angry with me. You're the lawbreaker here. *(She puts away the phone.)*

**JEFF.** You know, who's to say I even rolled through that stop sign?

**BRENDA.** That's how you want to play it? You want to challenge his account of it.

**JEFF.** It's my word against the cop's. Why not? I figure I got a 50-50 chance of beating it.

**BRENDA.** You might want to read this before you roll those dice. *(She hands him an envelope.)*

**JEFF.** What's this?

**BRENDA.** It looks like a Notice of Violation from the city's Traffic Camera Division.



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**JEFF.** What?! (*Looking at the letter.*) I didn't see a camera there.

**BRENDA.** I figured that. You are definitely *not* smiling in that picture.

**JEFF.** This is so unfair. (*He sits, dejected.*)

**BRENDA.** Oh look. Another piece of mail for you. From the Criminal Courts Division, this time.

**JEFF.** You open it.

**BRENDA.** (*She does and reads.*) Apparently, justice is swift. It looks like they reached a verdict.

**JEFF.** What does it say?

**BRENDA.** Will the defendant please rise?

**JEFF.** JUST READ IT!

**BRENDA.** That kind of outburst won't be tolerated in this court of law.

**JEFF.** Please, Brenda. I'm asking you nicely. Please read me the verdict.

**BRENDA.** Well, since you asked so nicely... "We, the Municipal Justice System, find the Defendant, Jeff Pendleton, guilty of failing to bring his vehicle to a complete stop."

**JEFF.** So I'm guilty. Big deal! What are they gonna do? Throw me in jail over a stop sign?

**BRENDA.** Let me finish.

**JEFF.** Fine...

**BRENDA.** "Due to the repeated nature of this and similar violations over the past 12 months, the Defendant is hereby sentenced to 3 years -- "

**JEFF.** IT WAS A FUCKING STOP SIGN!!

**BRENDA.** You, sir, are in contempt.

**JEFF.** I'm not going to jail for 3 years.

**BRENDA.** There's more.

**JEFF.** They gonna hang me?

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**BRENDA.** "Taking into account the testimony of a character witness vouching for the Defendant, sentence is hereby commuted to 6 months House Arrest."

**JEFF.** Character witness? Who the hell was a character witness?

**BRENDA.** That would be me.

**JEFF.** What?

**BRENDA.** That's who I was texting before. Sorry I couldn't tell you, honey. I was under a Court Order.

**JEFF.** You did that for me?

**BRENDA.** Now aren't you sorry you yelled at me?

**JEFF.** *(He embraces her.)* I'm sorry, baby. I'll never do it again. You really are the best.

**BRENDA.** Damn right I am.

**JEFF.** Let me make it up to you. We'll go out. Dinner and dancing. What do you say?

**BRENDA.** Aren't you forgetting something?

**JEFF.** Like what?

**BRENDA.** *(Clearing her throat, she reads.)* "Sentence to begin immediately."

**JEFF.** You're kidding, right?

*The doorbell rings.*

**BRENDA.** I'll get it. *(She exits.)*

**JEFF.** *(Calling after her.)* You are kidding, right? RIGHT?

**BRENDA.** *(Reenters with a box from Amazon.com.)* Now honey, we have to uphold the law, don't we?

**JEFF.** What is that? Did you order something?

**BRENDA.** Um no, this isn't for me. *(She starts to open the box.)*

**JEFF.** *(Grabbing the packing list.)* Well, it must be yours. It's a piece of jewelry. I don't wear bracelets. Who is El Mon Bracelet? Sounds swanky.

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**BRENDA.** It stands for Electronic Monitoring Bracelet. And it's for your ankle. (*She takes out a small device with a plastic strap for attaching to the ankle.*)

**JEFF.** Okay, I'm out of here! You've had your fun, but I'm gonna go out for a nice, long drive. Maybe I'll go on an illegal lane-changing spree.

**BRENDA.** FREEZE!

**JEFF.** Yeah, right. (*He attempts to walk past her.*)

**BRENDA.** I SAID FREEZE! (*She pulls a Taser gun from the box.*)

**JEFF.** Are you serious?

**BRENDA.** Don't make me tase you, Jeffrey. (*She points it at him.*)

**JEFF.** You *are* serious...

**BRENDA.** Down on the ground!

**JEFF.** What?

**BRENDA.** DOWN ON THE GROUND! (*Brenda takes Jeff by the arm and pushes him face first to the floor.*) Palms pressed flat against the floor. Spread your legs apart.

**JEFF.** Honey, what are you doing?

**BRENDA.** I SAID SPREAD 'EM! NOW!! (*She kicks at his legs.*)

**JEFF.** (*He complies.*) Yes sir! I mean, yes ma'am. I mean--

**BRENDA.** QUIET! Lift your right leg. (*Jeff hesitates.*) NOW! (*He lifts his leg.*)

**JEFF.** This is crazy!

**BRENDA.** This is fun!! (*She clamps on the ankle bracelet.*)

Alright sir, you may get up off the ground. Thank you for your cooperation.

**JEFF.** (*Brushing himself off.*) Since when did you become a police officer?

**BRENDA.** (*Grabbing the last piece of mail, she opens it and pulls out papers and a badge, which she promptly pins to her shirt.*) Since this morning. I took an online course last week and

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got the confirmation email while you were on your little joy ride. Here's my diploma. (*She hands it to him.*)

**JEFF.** You could have told me.

**BRENDA.** I was working deep undercover, honey. I couldn't jeopardize an ongoing investigation by discussing this with civilians.

**JEFF.** I'm your husband, not a civilian.

**BRENDA.** (*She taps the badge.*) When I'm wearing this, you're just another scumbag trying to circumvent the law. And if you cross me, I will TAKE... YOU... DOWN. By any means necessary. (*She comes nose to nose with him, menacingly.*) You got me, punk?

**JEFF.** (*Backing down.*) Y-yes, ma'am...

**BRENDA.** (*Suddenly switching to all smiles.*) Good! Now come with me, Jeffrey.

**JEFF.** Where? I can't leave the vicinity, remember? (*He lifts his leg.*)

**BRENDA.** You'll see.

**JEFF.** I'm not going anywhere for at least 6 months.

**BRENDA.** Stop your pouting. I just thought that, you might want to partake of the conjugal visit room.

**JEFF.** Conjugal... visit... room? Conjugal Visit Room!! (*He smiles.*)

**BRENDA.** For only the most hardened of criminals.

**JEFF.** I'm very hardened right now.

**BRENDA.** Good. Then you better get in there before lockdown.

**JEFF.** Aren't you afraid I'll make a break for it?

**BRENDA.** Why do you think I wanted these? (*She pulls out a pair of handcuffs.*)

**JEFF.** (*Smiling.*) Oh, yeah.

**BRENDA.** Move it, convict!

**JEFF.** Yes, Warden. (*Jeff exits.*)

CHILDREN’S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

*As Brenda starts to exit, her email chimes. She opens the email and reads.*

**BRENDA.** “A Proclamation from the Office of the Governor. Whereas of this date, Jeffrey Pendleton has served as a model prisoner during his time of House Arrest, it has been decided by the office of the Governor, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this state, to grant him a full and unconditional pardon. Jeffrey Pendleton is hereby restored to full citizenship.

**JEFF.** *(From offstage.)* Honey, who is that? Somebody send us a message?

**BRENDA.** No, sweetie. Just more spam email.

**JEFF.** *(Sticking his head in.)* Don’t even bother reading that junk. Just trash it.

**BRENDA.** Good idea. *(She deletes the message.)*

**JEFF.** Now get in here. I’m ready for my strip search. *(He leaves.)*

**BRENDA.** *(Grabbing the taser.)* So am I, honey. So am I... *(she exits.)*

**Lights Out**

**The End**

# OLD WIVES' TAIL

By John Busser

(Approximate running time: 25 minutes.)

## CHARACTERS

GRAMPA Male, Mid 60's, loves to tell stories

CASSIE\*.. Female, 8, his granddaughter

Barbara Female, Mid to late 30's, Cassie's mom

## SETTING

A hospital waiting room.

## TIME

Early evening.

\*Cassie may be played by someone older than 8. But she is playing an 8-year old child.

...

*At lights up, GRAMPA is seen sitting in the waiting room of a hospital. There are multiple chairs and a small table with magazines on it. Grampa leans on his cane. There is a small cooler at his feet. BARBARA enters with her daughter CASSIE, in tow.*

**BARBARA.** Dad, I'm so sorry. I got here as fast as I could. I had to pick up Cassie at school. *(She goes to her father. He stands. They hug.)*

**GRAMPA.** It's alright, Barbara. Your mother's resting right now. The doctors asked me to wait out here.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

*They sit. Cassie sits one chair apart from Grampa. During the following conversation, Cassie, by turns nervous, bored and anxious, does what all 8-year-olds do during family matters. She looks around, watches the overhead TV, picks up and thumbs through various magazines, looks at her shoes. In short, she pays attention to everything BUT the matter that brought her and her mother here.*

**BARBARA.** How long have you been here, Dad?

**GRAMPA.** Oh, about an hour. Maybe an hour and a half. Don't remember what time we came in here this morning.

**BARBARA.** Have you eaten? Can I get something for you?

**GRAMPA.** No, no. I brought something. But I'm not very hungry at the moment.

**BARBARA.** Anybody else here yet?

**GRAMPA.** No. Kinda thought your sister Gretchen would be here by now, what with her being so close.

**BARBARA.** She might be out on a sales call. She could be on the other side of town for all we know. I'm sure she'll be here soon.

**GRAMPA.** I s'pose you're right.

**BARBARA.** I'll give Gretchen a call. Maybe she'll pick up.  
*(She pulls out her phone.)*

**GRAMPA.** Have her bring your mom's sweater. Swing by the house and pick up the red one she likes.

**BARBARA.** *(Looking at her phone.)* I can't get good reception here. Can you sit with Cassie? I'm going to try over at the other end of the hall.

**GRAMPA.** *(To Cassie.)* You're not gonna bother me, are you?

**CASSIE.** *(Looking up surprised.)* Huh? Uh... No, Grampa.

**GRAMPA.** *(To Barbara.)* We'll be fine. You go.

**BARBARA.** I'll be right back. *(Barbara exits.)*

*Grampa and Cassie sit in silence. Grampa sits staring straight ahead. Cassie is looking down but slowly lifts her gaze to watch*

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

*Grampa. After a few moments, Grampa slowly turns to look at Cassie. She meets his gaze but then sheepishly looks back down. Grampa turns back to staring straight ahead, now with a slight mischievous smile on his face. He slowly turns to her. She is still looking down...*

**GRAMPA.** *(A bit louder than normal.)* You say something?

**CASSIE.** *(Startled.)* WHAT?! No! No, I didn't.

**GRAMPA.** Thought you said something to me.

**CASSIE.** I didn't say anything.

**GRAMPA.** Cuz that would bother me.

**CASSIE.** I didn't.

**GRAMPA.** I'm tryin' to think. Can't have you gabbin' in my ear.

**CASSIE.** Well, I didn't say anything.

**GRAMPA.** And you said you wouldn't bother me.

**CASSIE.** I'm not, Grampa. I'm not bothering anybody.

**GRAMPA.** Good... cuz ya know, if you do..... I get to hit you with my cane.

**CASSIE.** ... what?

**GRAMPA.** Yeah. I get to hit you with this. *(He playfully waggles it in his hand.)*

**CASSIE.** Nuh-uh.

**GRAMPA.** Yeah-ah. Fraid so. Hospital rules.

**CASSIE.** What rule is that?

**GRAMPA.** The "Bothersome Child Rule."

**CASSIE.** I never heard of that. That's not a real rule.

**GRAMPA.** You're an authority on hospital rules, are you?

**CASSIE.** *(Thinking about it.)* ... No. But...

**GRAMPA.** Well, I am. Been coming here all my life. And after a while, you learn all the extra rules the hospital puts in place to keep it running smoothly. And one of those rules is the "Bothersome Child Rule." *(He pulls a card out of his wallet and [pretends] to read it.)* Says "Any child under the age of 12 creating a bother to adults in designated waiting areas, are



CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

permitted under hospital law to receive up to three strikes with a wooden implement by said adults. Implements include wooden spoons, rulers, dowel rods, two-by-fours..." (*He gives her a gleefully malicious look.*) "...and canes." Designed to keep things quiet in the waiting room.

**CASSIE.** That's not real. That's just your driver's license! (*She grabs for it.*)

**GRAMPA.** (*He pulls it back.*) Yes, it is. I had to take a test for it and everything. I have to be licensed to use this cane as a deadly weapon. Especially on little girls who question their elders.

**CASSIE.** I don't think so.

**GRAMPA.** You know what else it says?

**CASSIE.** No.

**GRAMPA.** Take a look. Right here, on the back. What does that say? (*He holds it out for her to read.*)

**CASSIE.** It says... "...organ... donor."

**GRAMPA.** That's right. I'm an organ donor. But this is a special license. I'm a "multiple" organ donor. You know what that is?

**CASSIE.** Isn't that where you give more than one?

**GRAMPA.** That's right. And I've given plenty in my life.

**CASSIE.** Grandpa, you never gave anyone your organs! I'd have heard about it from my mom.

**GRAMPA.** I never said I gave anyone *my* organs, now did I?

**CASSIE.** But...

**GRAMPA.** I'm a multiple organ donor. Means I can donate organs from a bunch of people. And I have...

**CASSIE.** You're crazy, Grampa! No one does that.

**GRAMPA.** Are you sure about that? You been around all my life telling me whose organs I can donate and whose I can't?

**CASSIE.** No, but no one would let you!

**GRAMPA.** Let me tell you something young lady. When you've been around as long as I have, people look to you to

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

make decisions. Important decisions. And sometimes those decisions revolve around me telling some snotty teenager, "Hey, you gonna use both those eyes? Cuz this schoolteacher over here needs one, and you're elected, Charlie." Now, could *you* make that kind of decision?

**CASSIE.** Well, no...

**GRAMPA.** Well, I can. And if I thought for one minute, one of your kidneys wouldn't work better in some truck driver from Duluth, I might have had them wheel you in there for a little slice and dice. I could get top dollar for one of your kidneys. Practically brand new.

**CASSIE.** *(A little scared.)* You can't just take someone's kidney!

**GRAMPA.** Don't put it past me. I'm a whacko, remember! You said it yourself. Come here, I'll prove it.

**CASSIE.** *(Moving to a chair farther away.)* NO WAY!

**GRAMPA.** So, you believe me now, do you?

**CASSIE.** I just... I don't know.

**GRAMPA.** Suit yourself. *(He gets up and moves one chair closer to her.)*

**CASSIE.** Okay, I believe you!

**GRAMPA.** *(Laughing, he looks at her.)* You don't have to worry. I'd never sell one of your organs... *(He goes back to his original chair.)* I might donate it, though... cuz I'm a donor, not a seller. *(He winks at her.)* You remember that...

*They sit in silence for a few moments*

**GRAMPA.** *(A few beats, then Grampa looks over at Cassie.)* Come here. Sit next to me. *(She gives him a dubious look.)* You know I'm only playing around, right? C'mon, you're safe.

*She gets up and slowly moves over to the chair next to him. Right before she sits...*

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**GRAMPA.** For now...

*She sits down one chair away from him. He laughs.*

**GRAMPA.** So, how old are you these days?

**CASSIE.** I'm eight.

**GRAMPA.** Oh, so you're almost of driving age.

**CASSIE.** Yeah, right. I'm too young to get a driver's license.

**GRAMPA.** Baloney, I was driving at your age.

**CASSIE.** No way, Grampa. You have to be sixteen.

**GRAMPA.** I grew up on a farm, little girl. You know what it's like to grow up on a farm?

**CASSIE.** No.

**GRAMPA.** Everybody pitches in. No free rides. Your Great-Granddad didn't take to slackers. I had to help out like everybody else. I learned how to drive every damned piece of equipment he owned by the time I was ten. The tractor, the combine, the bear-catcher, the pickup truck--

**CASSIE.** Wait! What?

**GRAMPA.** Yeah, Great-Granddad owned a pickup truck.

**CASSIE.** No, you said a bear catcher? What's that?

**GRAMPA.** What's it sound like?

**CASSIE.** ...I don't know. It... catches... bears?

**GRAMPA.** Good guess, Einstein. It catches bears. Lotta bears on the property. We had to chase 'em with the bear catcher. Chase 'em, scoop 'em, throw 'em in a crate, 1,2,3. No more bears.

**CASSIE.** What did you do with them?

**GRAMPA.** Well, some we sent to the zoo. Some, to the Russian circus. Most of 'em we sent to Canada.

**CASSIE.** Why?

**GRAMPA.** The Canadian government likes having a large number of bears in their country at all times. Keeps the lumberjack population under control. *(He winks.)*

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**CASSIE.** Oh... (*Confused.*) I never heard of that. A bear catcher, I mean.

**GRAMPA.** Where d'you think I got this scar? (*He shows her a faded scar on his arm.*)

**CASSIE.** Mom says you almost lost your arm when you were in the navy.

**GRAMPA.** (*Lowering his voice.*) That's just what we told her. She couldn't handle the truth.

**CASSIE.** What truth?

**GRAMPA.** Well, let's see, I was about your age, I think. Don't remember the year. But it was as cold a summer as I'd ever seen. Temperatures that would freeze your nuts off... (*He looks at her.*) If you... had any...

**CASSIE.** It's okay Grampa. I know what nuts are. Wendell Herschmann at school told me. Gross.

**GRAMPA.** (*Slightly embarrassed.*) Gross, huh... I see. Uh, where was I...?

**CASSIE.** You were freezing your nuts o---

**GRAMPA.** Yes, we were. And your Great-Granddad and I had to go out and de-bear the North 40.

**CASSIE.** Was it dangerous?

**GRAMPA.** Only for the bears.

**CASSIE.** Mom never told me any of this.

**GRAMPA.** Well, she never knew any of this. I never told her about it. I do believe that you are the only person I've ever told this to. No one else would believe it. But you do, don't you? (*She nods.*)

**CASSIE.** So, what happened? Did a bear attack you that day?

**GRAMPA.** I'm getting to that. Now, we used to get our share of brown bears and black bears and the occasional grizzly. We figured it was business as usual that day. We packed up our lunches and set off for a day of bear catching. We fired up Ol' Bessie...

**CASSIE.** Old Bessie?

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**GRAMPA.** That's just what we called our catcher, and I set off with Great-Granddad riding shotgun. He was going to let me catch my first bear of the season, although he was ready to take over at a moment's notice, if I couldn't scoop him up. But I wanted to catch one of these big sonsabitches on my own. And I would've done it, too, if the blizzard hadn't hit just then.

**CASSIE.** A blizzard?

**GRAMPA.** Came outta nowhere, probably caused by Global Colding. We had that back then.

**CASSIE.** You did?

**GRAMPA.** Oh yeah. Blizzards and ice storms all the time. Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Didn't matter. Walked twenty miles to school every day in the summer in a snowsuit.

**CASSIE.** Were you in summer school?

**GRAMPA.** What's that?

**CASSIE.** Did you have to go to summer school cuz you flunked your classes?

**GRAMPA.** What? No! I never flun—

**CASSIE.** Did they call it winter school, cuz it was snowing like in winter even though it was summer?

**GRAMPA.** No, no, they just—

**CASSIE.** And why didn't you just drive to school? You knew how, right?

**GRAMPA.** Yes I did, but--

**CASSIE.** Why didn't you drive a snowplow? Did they have them back then?

**GRAMPA.** Yes, they had... Who's telling this story?

**CASSIE.** Sorry Grampa. So, what happened next?

**GRAMPA.** There we were, in whiteout conditions, can't see your hand in front of your face, let alone any bears, when suddenly, Bessie runs into something big. Stopped us right in our tracks.

**CASSIE.** (*Fascinated.*) What did you hit?

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**GRAMPA.** (*Leaning in.*) Biggest damn bunch of Polar bears you ever saw.

**CASSIE.** Polar bears?! How could they be Polar bears? Don't they live on icebergs or something?

**GRAMPA.** Very good, you know your bears. They live up North in the cold. But their iceberg had probably melted, with all the Global Warming going on.

**CASSIE.** I thought you said it was Global Colding?

**GRAMPA.** (*Grampa looks at her slightly irritated.*) It was cold where I was because of Global Colding. Well, all that cold had to come from somewhere, right? (*Cassie is confused.*) It came from up North where all the cold is usually kept. Cold came down our way, so, to fill the temperature void, Global Warming moved in up where the bears are, driving this whole family of Polars right down onto our farm.

**CASSIE.** They were a family? Awwwwwww...

**GRAMPA.** Looked like a Mama and Papa and three babies. Or it could have been two Papas. That's how big they were, and I don't like to judge lifestyles.

**CASSIE.** Could you scoop 'em up?

**GRAMPA.** Too big and too many all at once. They started pounding the cab and clawing the windshield. Great-Granddad and I are rolling and tumbling back and forth.

**CASSIE.** Weren't you scared?

**GRAMPA.** It happened so fast. The cab door came open and WHOOSH, Great-Granddad was gone. Pulled out by one of the babies. I could barely see them as they tossed him around from one to the other. They were playing with their food, see?

**CASSIE.** Oh my God!

**GRAMPA.** Then it was my turn. One of the big ones reached in and pulled me out kicking and screaming. It looked like both of us were goners. One grabbed my arm, right there (*indicating his scar.*) and the other held onto my legs. They were about to split me like a wishbone...



CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**BARBARA.** Well, I got hold of Gretchen. She'll be here shortly. I told her to pick up mom's sweater.

**CASSIE.** Mom! Mom! Guess What?!

**BARBARA.** What, honey?

**CASSIE.** Grampa fought bears when he was a kid.

**BARBARA.** Really?

**CASSIE.** Yeah, he drove a bear catcher when he was my age cuz Great-Granddad doesn't take kindly to slackers, but then polar bears came down from their melted icebergs and there was chili they ate and it made them run away, so he got a scar instead of being eaten. And he was driving at my age because they had Global Colding so he walked twenty miles to winter school in a blizzard. And I think the bears were gay, but we don't judge--

**BARBARA.** That's fascinating sweetheart, but I think you've been bothering Grampa enough.

**CASSIE.** Oh no, mom. Hospital rules say as long as I don't bother him, he's not allowed to hit me with any wooden implements.

**BARBARA.** (*Giving Grampa a look.*) Oh really?

**CASSIE.** It's the law.

**BARBARA.** I think Grampa's been pulling your leg, honey.

**CASSIE.** He'd donate my leg before he'd ever pull it, Mom. Don't you know anything?

**BARBARA.** What?

**GRAMPA.** Lovely child, isn't she?

**BARBARA.** Sweetie, go get yourself something from the vending machine over there, will you? Here's a couple of dollars. (*She hands Cassie a few dollars. Cassie runs off. Barbara sighs.*) Dad, do you mind?

**GRAMPA.** Mind what?

**BARBARA.** Stop filling her head with made up stories, okay?

**GRAMPA.** What made up stories?

**BARBARA.** Walked twenty miles in a blizzard?



CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**GRAMPA.** I was in better shape then...

**BARBARA.** Global Colding?

**GRAMPA.** I'm pretty sure that was a thing...

**BARBARA.** Gay Polar Bears?

**GRAMPA.** One was slightly pinkish in hue...

**BARBARA.** Dad, that's not funny.

**GRAMPA.** Oh, Barbara, I'm just telling her some family stories. It helps to pass the time.

**BARBARA.** It helps to misinform my daughter about things. I'd rather she didn't grow up thinking the hospital had a rule letting people whack kids with a piece of wood.

**GRAMPA.** Ah, the good old days...

**BARBARA.** Dad, no more of these "family stories," okay? She's too impressionable.

**GRAMPA.** She's just a kid. Let her be one.

**BARBARA.** (*Sternly.*) No more lies Dad. End of discussion.

**GRAMPA.** You're no fun.

**BARBARA.** We're not here to have fun, Dad. Remember who's down the hall? She's not having any fun. (*Barbara sees that this has affected her father.*) I'm sorry. We're all just worried about Mom. I'm going to check at the nurse's station. See if I can find out when we can see her. I'll be right back.

*Barbara exits as Cassie returns with a can of soda*

**CASSIE.** (*She sits next to Grampa.*) So, what'd I miss? Any news?

**GRAMPA.** (*Somewhat subdued.*) No.

**CASSIE.** Any bears show up?

**GRAMPA.** What?

**CASSIE.** Bears! Any bears show up in the hospital?

**GRAMPA.** No, no bears.

**CASSIE.** Probably too close to the zoo for them. Can't risk capture now, can they?

**GRAMPA.** I guess not.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**CASSIE.** If one showed up here, maybe they have a “Bothersome Bear” rule so you can whack him with your cane. That’d be great!

**GRAMPA.** Yes, maybe...

**CASSIE.** (*Noticing Grampa is less talkative.*) ...Grampa?

**GRAMPA.** What, Cassie?

**CASSIE.** I’m sorry Gramma’s in here.

**GRAMPA.** (*He looks at her.*) Yeah, me too, kiddo.

**CASSIE.** Is she gonna be alright?

**GRAMPA.** Oh, I know she will. Your Gramma is a strong woman.

**CASSIE.** Mom says Gramma’s the strongest woman she knows.

**GRAMPA.** That she is...

**CASSIE.** Grampa?

**GRAMPA.** Yes?

**CASSIE.** If Gramma needs any organs donated, could you use your license to get some?

**GRAMPA.** Oh... I suppose so. But I wouldn’t want to abuse my license.

**CASSIE.** Why not? If Gramma needs a trammsplat...

**GRAMPA.** Transplant.

**CASSIE.** Yeah, that’s what I meant. If Gramma needs a trans-transplant, isn’t that what the card is for? To help people get new organs?

**GRAMPA.** Well, yes. It is. But you know, I can only use it so many times in a year. They don’t want you to overuse it, you see. It’s not fair to others.

**CASSIE.** Is it fair that Gramma needs a heart transplant?!

**GRAMPA.** What?

**CASSIE.** It’s not fair that Gramma needs a new heart either! I don’t know why she can’t get a new one!

**GRAMPA.** Who said she needs a new heart?

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**CASSIE.** Mom told me Gramma had a heart attack. That's why she's in here. She needs a new heart.

**GRAMPA.** No, she doesn't need a new heart.

**CASSIE.** I thought when you have a heart attack you have to get a new one.

**GRAMPA.** No, not all the time.

**CASSIE.** But sometimes?

**GRAMPA.** Well, yes, sometimes.

**CASSIE.** So maybe she needs one this time!

**GRAMPA.** No, Cassie, she...

**CASSIE.** Is she gonna die?

**GRAMPA.** No!

**CASSIE.** But heart attacks can kill you, can't they?

**GRAMPA.** Yes, they can, but only sometimes...

**CASSIE.** If I could donate my heart, I would.

**GRAMPA.** Cassie! Don't say that!

**CASSIE.** I would Grampa!

**GRAMPA.** Cassie! I'm serious.

**CASSIE.** But if she needs one—

**GRAMPA.** Cassie, listen to me--

**CASSIE.** And you can't use your card--

**GRAMPA.** Just listen--

**CASSIE.** But Grampa--

**GRAMPA.** Cassie! *(He bangs his cane on the ground. Cassie stops talking.)* Now listen to me. Your Gramma did *not* have a heart attack. She doesn't need a new heart. She doesn't need *any* donor organs, okay?

**CASSIE.** So why is she here then?

**GRAMPA.** *(Looking off to where Barbara exited, then facing Cassie again.)* Cassie, your Gramma is in here because... because... she's having her tail removed.

**CASSIE.** She's... what?

**GRAMPA.** Your Gramma has a tail. And now the doctors have to remove it.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**CASSIE.** What?

**GRAMPA.** I know, hard to believe. She's had that tail most of her life.

**CASSIE.** A tail?... Can she... wag it?

**GRAMPA.** No, she can't wag it! She's not a dog!

**CASSIE.** I'm sorry.

**GRAMPA.** It's alright. It's not a tail like that. More like a monkey tail. It's prehensile.

**CASSIE.** What's that mean?

**GRAMPA.** It means she can pick stuff up with it.

**CASSIE.** She can?!

**GRAMPA.** Yes, but only small things. Spoons, pepper shakers, a pair of glasses, that kind of stuff.

**CASSIE.** That's... awesome.

**GRAMPA.** It was a big help in the kitchen. Like having three hands to cook with.

**CASSIE.** I never saw it! Where did she keep it?

**GRAMPA.** Where do you think she kept it, in the fridge?

**CASSIE.** I don't know!

**GRAMPA.** Under her dress! Why do you think she never wore jeans?

**CASSIE.** Cuz it wouldn't fit?

**GRAMPA.** Cuz she'd look like she didn't make it to the bathroom on time, that's why. Easier to keep it curled under a dress.

**CASSIE.** How come she never told anyone about it? I think that's so cool!

**GRAMPA.** The neighbors would not agree with you.

**CASSIE.** Does Mom know?

**GRAMPA.** She does.

**CASSIE.** Wait... does Mom have a tail?

**GRAMPA.** No. And neither do I. This is something only folks from her side of the family would get. An inherited trait, like brown hair, or fair skin. In this case, a monkey tail.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**CASSIE.** So how come Mom doesn't have one? (*As she says this, she tries to glance at her own backside, checking for any indication.*)

**GRAMPA.** Well, it tends to skip a few generations. Just happened to show up in Gramma. May show up in you, maybe your kids or grandkids. We don't know.

**CASSIE.** So why does Gramma need it removed?

**GRAMPA.** Well, she's getting old, it's getting harder to hold things with it. And it droops a lot, so it keeps tripping her up. We felt it was only a matter of time before she broke a hip falling ass over monkey tail. It was time.

**CASSIE.** This is sooooo neat. I can't wait to tell Wendell Herschmann at school.

**GRAMPA.** Hold your horses there, young lady. You can't go blathering about this to anyone else. Especially your friend with the nuts.

**CASSIE.** But Grampa—

**GRAMPA.** No butts! No telling tales about Gramma's tail, you got me?

**CASSIE.** Awwwww man.

**GRAMPA.** I mean it. Don't give me a reason to use this. (*He holds up the cane again.*)

**CASSIE.** So why did Mom say it was her heart?

**GRAMPA.** Well, I guess she was worried about how you'd react to this. It's not exactly normal.

**CASSIE.** A heart attack is WAY worse!

**GRAMPA.** I know. But a heart attack is also something you would understand. It's bad, yes, but survivable. When Gramma comes home, you'd be so happy just to see her alive you wouldn't question it. You would never have had to know the real reason she was there.

**CASSIE.** Mom lied to me.

**GRAMPA.** For your own good, Cassie.

**CASSIE.** She always says to tell the truth.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**GRAMPA.** I know, but it's complicated--

**CASSIE.** Have you ever lied to me, Grampa?

**GRAMPA.** What? Me? Lie to you?

**CASSIE.** Yes.

**GRAMPA.** ... No! Of course not.

**CASSIE.** So why did Mom?

**GRAMPA.** You really want to know?

**CASSIE.** Yes!

**GRAMPA.** Okay. I'll tell you the truth... Your mom told you what she did because... She wants the tail for herself.

**CASSIE.** What?

**GRAMPA.** It's good luck, you see. Whosoever holds the monkey tail shall be the possessor of great fortune. It's a family legend, passed down. In the olden days, the youngest family member received the tail before starting a family. Now, it goes to any family member who makes first claim after the removal. But it must be done in front of at least two witnesses. Once they bring the tail out, your mom probably plans to make first claim in front of me and Gretchen when she gets here.

**CASSIE.** Don't you want it?

**GRAMPA.** (*Smiling.*) I got all the great fortune I need resting in a hospital bed down the hall. Your Gramma doesn't need that tail, and neither do I.

**CASSIE.** I don't think Mom needs it either.

**GRAMPA.** Don't think too poorly of your mom, kiddo. She probably wants the lucky tail to help ensure a better future for you.

**CASSIE.** Really?

**GRAMPA.** Yes, your mom loves you very much.

**CASSIE.** Thanks, Grampa. It's nice to know. (*She hugs him.*)

**GRAMPA.** Hey, are you hungry?

**CASSIE.** Sure!

**GRAMPA.** (*Grabbing the cooler at his feet.*) Me too!

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**CASSIE.** What are we having for lunch?

**GRAMPA.** That depends... (*Unzipping the cooler.*)

**CASSIE.** On what?

**GRAMPA.** On what they have in the vending machines.

**CASSIE.** Why can't we have any of your lunch?

**GRAMPA.** Cuz I don't like the taste of monkey tail. Do you?  
(*He pulls a freezer bag with "something" in it out of the cooler.*)

**CASSIE.** Is that...?

**GRAMPA.** Sure is. They brought it out just before you arrived. I put it in here for safe keeping.

**CASSIE.** But why? I thought Mom wanted it.

**GRAMPA.** Oh, she does. Gretchen too, I'll bet. But I want you to have it.

**CASSIE.** Don't I have to claim it?

**GRAMPA.** Marriage laws in this state say that my wife and I share joint custody of everything under our roof. So, I figure the monkey tail is half mine. And with me being a multi-organ donor, I hereby exercise my right to multi-organ donate this good luck monkey tail to my favorite granddaughter, Cassie.  
(*He hands her the bag.*)

**CASSIE.** Thank you, Grampa, but why me?

**GRAMPA.** Because you always believed in me, kid. That means a lot.

**CASSIE.** Of course, I believe in you, Grampa. You always tell me the truth...

**GRAMPA.** I do, don't I?

**CASSIE.** ... No matter how full of it you are. (*She smiles and winks at Grampa.*)

**GRAMPA.** (*He laughs.*) I am, aren't I?

**CASSIE.** So, should we go see what's in the machines?

**GRAMPA.** Let's take our chances, shall we? (*He gets up.*)

**CASSIE.** I'll bet some of the food's older than you are, Grampa.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO SATAN (and Other Horrible Scribblings)

**GRAMPA.** Don't press your luck, smarty-pants. (*They begin walking off.*)

**CASSIE.** Why not, I got this, don't I? (*She holds up the bag.*)

**GRAMPA.** That's right, and now you have two of them.

**CASSIE.** What? I do? Where? (*As she walks off with Grampa, she frantically twists around trying to see if she has any trace of an actual tail.*) Tell me...!! (*They exit.*)

*Lights Out*

*The End*

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS  
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