

THE SATAN PLAY

David Cole

1968 [?]

CHARACTERS

SATAN*, Archangel

SHAENDEL, Lamp-Lighting Angel

KAIREOL, Angel of Low-Lying Mists

URIEL, Archangel

ZACHIEL

SHAMIEL

NEKIR

THARSIS

} Other Angels

*pronounced Suh-TAHN

SATAN--the Hebrew meaning of the word is "adversary." In [the Old Testament] the term... designates an office; and the angel investing that office is not apostate or fallen. He becomes such starting in early New Testament times...

Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels

(Scene: The Plain of Heaven, under a starry sky. Electronic music. Right-center, a ladder.

At rise KAIREOL, the Low-Lying Mists Angel, is rummaging through a burlap sack with "Mists" stenciled on it. Note: all the angels are dressed in coarse unbelted robes, no wings or haloes until noted.

KAIREOL produces a piece of light-grey, gauzy material from the sack. He looks doubtfully at this "mist" for a moment, then flings it up into the air. As it floats to earth, the stage turns the color of the "mist". KAIREOL shakes his head, stuffs the gauze back in the sack; and the stage-lighting returns to what it was at rise.

Same business with a bluish-green "mist".

Same business with a black "mist". But this time, as the "mist" is falling and the stage is darkening, the Archangel URIEL enters, and he and KAIREOL clasp arms in a fraternal embrace. Kaireol neglects to take up the black "mist".

URIEL, who moves as if delighted with the completeness of his own gestures, produces a wax-sealed parchment and mimes asking KAIREOL something about it.

KAIREOL shrugs, gestures toward the empty ladder right-center, shrugs again.

URIEL entrusts the parchment to Kaireol and mimes instructing him that he is to give it to the person missing from the ladder.

KAIREOL nods, they exchange the fraternal embrace again, and exit in opposite directions.

Enter SHAENDEL, the Lamp-Lighting Angel, with a pail full of Christmastree decoration stars. He climbs a few rungs up the ladder and begins hanging stars in the air. As each star is hung, a different part of the stage lights up.

While he works, with his back to the audience, SATAN (pronounced Suh-TAHN), crosses from up-right to down-left. He strides past SHAENDEL without noticing him. His face is troubled. In his fist is clutched a black parchment. He stares angrily out without seeing anything. Happening to remember that the parchment is in his hands, he hastily reads it through, then crushes it in his fist.

Just at the moment SATAN crushes the parchment, SHAENDEL drops a star, which shatters on the stage-floor. As he starts down the ladder to retrieve it, he notices SATAN.)

SHAENDEL

God's peace and a good evening to you, Satan.

SATAN

Shaendel. Good evening to you.

SHAENDEL

I see you've been handed one of those directives they give you.

(SATAN stares at the parchment.)

Where's it off to this time?

SATAN

(winces slightly)

Nineveh.

SHAENDEL

Oh, where they have all those terraces, yes. I like to shine my lamps that way, for the glitter.

(a little embarrassed)

Well, and also to feel, you know, I'm leaving my mark down there. It'd be about as close as I come.

(Nervous laugh. Pause.)

What's in Nineveh?

SATAN

(looking bitterly at the parchment)

I have to ... rearrange some elements... shift some factors around...

SHAENDEL

That's what it says in your directive, huh?

SATAN

That's what it implies.

SHAENDEL

Why're they called "directives" anyway, Satan?

(SATAN shrugs impatiently.)

Maybe because each one sends you off in a different direction, couldn't that be it? I can be putting out my lamps one day and I'll see you rising over Egypt; and the next time, maybe it'll be the hills of Moab.

(SATAN looks quickly at him.)

You wouldn't have thought, huh? But it's become an interest for me, going, as I do, nowhere. My own work pins me to this one corner of the night-sky--and it isn't as if there were six kinds of excitement going on here. Polish the lamps, check for magnitude and brightness--and that's it. Oh, I get the occasional projection, they check those through me. Otherwise, it's strictly more of the same.

SATAN

(stuffs the parchment into his robe)

Well? and isn't that equally true in my case, Shaendel: Ever since the Distribution of Duties, it's been "strictly more of the same" no matter which angel you are, or how many stops on your agenda.

SHAENDEL

There has been that mercy, yes; that our tasks are now once and for all set us.

SATAN

And we, set in the tasks, Shaendel, once and for all. There was a time you fell over your feet trying to do a little of everything. You could be sounding the lyre one minute and scattering plague-seeds the next. But then came the Distribution of Duties--and now you can throw away the key: nothing can change us, nothing's going to happen to us any more.

SHAENDEL

Except to grow truer and truer to our tasks.

SATAN

"Truer"?

SHAENDEL

To grow into them.

SATAN

Shaendel, I have to ask you something.

SHAENDEL

I'm flattered, Satan.

(He comes down off the ladder.)

SATAN

Shaendel, as you know, since the Distribution of Duties I've been handling everything in the way of accusations.

SHAENDEL

That fell to be your share of the Sanctifying Work, yes.

SATAN

(looks at him for any sign of irony, but sees it's out of the question)

Well, now, Shaendel, I don't know quite how to approach this-- I feel a little like the "accuser" in my own case--but now, what about me as Accuser, Shaendel?

SHAENDEL

It's what you do. I do the stars for this sector.

SATAN

Are you speaking your whole mind to me, though? Does Shaendel: lamplighter, Satan: accuser really close the subject for you?

SHAENDEL

(with a warm smile)

Of course it does, Satan.

(SATAN looks encouraged.)

What else is there to the subject?

(SATAN slumps back.)

SATAN

You're not moving with me on this, Shaendel.

SHAENDEL

(the tears welling up)

Oh, Satan! Have my works or thoughts been judged non-contributory? Oh, Satan! Are you here to accuse me?

SATAN

Wha...? Of course not; where do you--?

SHAENDEL

There's something about your manner...

SATAN

Ah! An air of accusation, you mean. Yes, that's what I'm talking about. Shaendel, is there something about me that seems to mark me for the work of accusation?

SHAENDEL

Yes, there definitely is.

SATAN

(eagerly)

Ha!

SHAENDEL

The fact that God appointed you to it.

SATAN

But in me, answering to that appointment? Some quality of mind or spirit?

SHAENDEL

Where would people like you and me pick up "qualities"? You're an angel--what's true of one angel's true of another.

SATAN

Then what I do is within the scope of any angel to do?

SHAENDEL

(slight pause)

It would seem so.

SATAN

Was that distaste made you hesitate there?

SHAENDEL

This is an unaccustomed train of thought for me, Satan.

SATAN

And any one of the heavenly host--Abdiel, Raphael, Horeh--
any one of them might have drawn the role of accuser.

You might have drawn it, Shaendel. You very nearly did--
you remember? The day of the Distribution of Duties...?

SHAENDEL

(dreamily)

A clear morning. The heavenly citizens in their thousands
on a great plain assembled. The Father moving up and down
his ranks with a wand, fixing each spirit forever in his
task and station.

SATAN

And we stood together, Shaendel,

(crosses and stands to SHAENDEL's left)

just as we are now, each awaiting the touch that would bind
him eternally.

SHAENDEL

You know, I'd forgotten, that's right! We were just as we are
now--only with nothing settled.

SATAN

Ah, but with nothing settled, were we just as we are now?
Does it feel the same to be at my side this evening as that
faraway morn?

SHAENDEL

Yes, it brings back the whole moment. I got the last
remaining sector of night-sky: fourth up to the left,
with occasional projections. Next on the list was
Perpetual Accuser; and next in line was you.

SATAN

Position of Accuser on the list; position of Satan in the
line. A simple congruence.

SHAENDEL

(eagerly)

That's what I was saying before, remember, when you were
thinking you might have something that distinguished you.

SATAN

(crossing round to the other side of SHAENDEL)

Suppose I had been standing to the right of you?

SHAENDEL

Well?

SATAN

Well, in that case, I'd have got the night-sky, and you the
Accusership--it being wholly a matter of who happened to
be where when.

(climbs a few rungs up the ladder)

I'd now be sitting here wondering when they were going to send another projection my way, and you'd be packing your bags for Nineveh.

SHAENDEL

You know, you're right, that was a real possibility!

SATAN

I think ultimately that's why you have this fascination for me, Shaendel; why I keep coming back and back to you. I ask myself: starting where he did, could I ever have been capable--or remained capable... And if not...

SHAENDEL

We can just be really thankful things turned out the way they did.

SATAN

You agree I could never have--

SHAENDEL

I could never have handled Perpetual Accuser.

SATAN

(with mock surprise)

Even if it had been God's Providence?

SHAENDEL

I would never have understood the whole role. So it wouldn't have been God's Providence.

SATAN

What is there to understand?

SHAENDEL

It's not my task.

SATAN

Trimming the night-sky isn't mine; but if the Distribution of Duties-- Haven't you just got through telling me we're all the one nature?

SHAENDEL

This is different!

SATAN

Ah! Ah! Where did the possibility of being different come from?

SHAENDEL

Look, Satan, I don't mean to upset you; I'm really not saying anything about you. I'm speaking of a limitation I have. I wouldn't know how to begin to do the work you do. I don't have the resources.

SATAN

I'll show you you do. For example: this directive of mine.

(SHAENDEL looks blank.)

My Nineveh directive you asked about?

(SHAENDEL faintly acknowledges that he recollects.)

My instructions are: harden the heart of the king so he'll do something foolish, to Israel's advantage.

SHAENDEL

You see? I don't have the faintest idea what you do when you go around hardening the hearts of all those Levantine kings.

SATAN

(winces)

"All those"? Is there already felt to be a pattern emerging? Look, it's obvious: if you want to harden a man's heart in a certain area, you do it by putting other considerations in his head.

SHAENDEL

But these other considerations--they'd have to be good considerations, too: what else could they be, coming from an angel? And how are any number of good considerations ever going to harden a heart?

SATAN

(with professional intelligence)

But good, that's good in a context, yes? Harp music's a good, but if a king dotes on harp music to the extent that his defenses suffer and Israel can roll over him...

SHAENDEL

(nodding)

I see how you got that.

SATAN

It would be anyone's approach!

SHAENDEL

I'd never have thought of it with God's own eternity for the thinking. It's not in me.

SATAN

Angel, how came it to be in me, then? How did I get so special--and why does nobody else get special?

SHAENDEL

You said it yourself, Satan: next on the list was Accuser; next in the line was you.

SATAN

Does anything from God bear the marks of chance on it? The troubled stares that meet me upon the plain of heaven are not because a line formed so, or a certain number came up. See me even now at my work of accusation: is there not in my spirit something kindred to that work?

SHAENDEL

Satan, nobody's put that interpretation on what's happening to you.

(SATAN gives him a wild look.

Enter KAIREOL, scanning the ground for the mist he left behind. He sees it, picks it up, stuffs it in his sack--and the stage immediately becomes bright, as at opening. In the sudden light KAIREOL sees SHAENDEL.)

KAIREOL

Ah, Shaendel, God's peace to you.

(They exchange the fraternal embrace, as had KAIREOL and URIEL at opening. SATAN tentatively puts out his arms for the embrace, but KAIREOL immediately begins to address SHAENDEL, and SATAN quickly retracts his arms.)

I've been looking for you, I--

(Out of the corner of his eye he sees SATAN retracting his arms, quickly turns to him and they exchange an awkward, embarrassed version of the fraternal embrace. SATAN turns hurriedly away.)

Satan: God's peace. Shaendel, Uriel asked me to find you and give you this;

(produces the wax-sealed parchment)

he didn't say what it was.

SHAENDEL

(takes the parchment)

Oh, I bet it's--

(opens the parchment)

It is! It's the go-ahead for a projection in my sector.

(reading)

I'm to have the stars cleared off within the hour so that they can use the night sky to project a vision of--

(He stops; his face clouds)

SATAN

Yes, Shaendel? What chastening image are we to have fixed on our retinas this time?

SHAENDEL

(suddenly gets very busy taking down stars and stuffing them into his pail)

I really don't-- It'll be a race to get these lamps switched off as it is.

(He descends the ladder; starts to exit; then turns back to SATAN.)

I just want you to know, Satan, I think you're a fine person anyway.

SATAN

"Anyway"?

SHAENDEL

Whatever direction things develop. Thanks for the message, Kaireol.

(KAIREOL waves in acknowledgment. Exit SHAENDEL. From now through the time of the "projection" various lights in the starry sky of opening are switched off, indicating SHAENDEL's progress around the sky.

KAIREOL makes as if to leave, but is stopped by the voice of SATAN, who is not looking at him.)

SATAN

I guess we can assume that somebody's discomfiture of Satan is going to bulk pretty large in that projection.

KAIREOL

(hearty but nervous)

Why so? Why so, Satan?

SATAN

The air of that tetchy little angel. The way he couldn't be gone soon enough. They must have some very sharp impression they want to give.

KAIREOL

Why should they?

SATAN

Why should you have avoided meeting me in the Fraternal Embrace? A lot of questions around here are starting to have the same answer.

KAIREOL

You know what I sometimes think? That you enjoy finding malice in the most innocent remark.

SATAN

What do you think the rest of the time?

KAIREOL

That's an instance.

SATAN

But I wasn't always like this?

KAIREOL

I don't think you were always so difficult, no.

SATAN

In fact, you can put a hortatory, angelic finger on the precise moment.

KAIREOL

Yes, I think so. It began about the time of the Distribution of Duties.

SATAN

And so has for cause the Distribution of Duties?

KAIREOL

Or something in you responding to the Distribution.

SATAN

Nobody's going to shout you down for that suggestion.

Well, it took different angels different ways, the Distribution

of Duties: some it made bitter, some self-deluding. You don't seem to me embittered, Kaireol.

KAIREOL

(pugnacious)

Where do I delude myself? One way?

SATAN

Are you altogether content with the Distribution-- so far as it touches on yourself, I mean?

KAIREOL

Well, it left me with total predominance in the area of mists.

SATAN

Of low-lying mists.

KAIREOL

Every single low-lying mist in the universe!

SATAN

Doesn't it--I won't say, "torture," but--doesn't it disturb you that of all you might have come away with, you came away with an eternity of harm to your portion?

KAIREOL

Aren't we confusing the two angels in the room? I'm not the one who goes around confirming puzzled kings in bad courses. I do mists, not harm.

SATAN

To borrow your distinction for a moment: I do accusations, not harm.

KAIREOL

What do you think comes of your accusations?

SATAN

What do you think comes of your mists? Bad air. Mildew.
Plague.

KAIREOL

Satan, let me show you something.

(takes a grey "mist" from his bag and throws it into
the air. As it floats down the stage goes grey.)

Will you please describe what is happening.

SATAN

You have just flung about us a low-lying mist harmful to
beasts, crops and men.

KAIREOL

Yes.

(He picks up the mist, the stage growing light
as he does so, and hands it to SATAN.)

Will you now please do as I've done and describe what happens.

(SATAN flings the "mist" into the air, and again the
stage goes grey as it falls.)

SATAN

I have just flung about us a low-lying mist harmful to
beasts, crops and men.

KAIREOL

Would a plague that rode upon my mist decline to ride upon
yours?

SATAN

No.

KAIREOL

Would a crop be any the less blighted by your mist than by my mist?

SATAN

Of course not.

KAIREOL

Are there nostrils in which a mist from you smells sweeter than a mist from me?

SATAN

A man might choke on either.

KAIREOL

The mist, then, has its effects regardless of the hand that sends it?

SATAN

Clearly.

KAIREOL

Then, Satan, speak to me of harm in the mist, or even harm in the mist's Creator, but do not speak to me of harm in the ministering hand.

SATAN

What did I say? Either bitter

(points to himself)

or self-deluded.

(points to KAIREOL)

Well, then, my cloudy cousin, what shall we say? Is there a harm and no man wreaks it? But now: look!

(He picks up the mist as before, and the stage grows brighter as before. Expectant pause. But now, instead of letting it drop, he just keeps holding it out, clenched in his fist.)

Do I thus deliver any land up to plague?

KAIREOL

No.

SATAN

What crops can^I_^ be said to hinder in their growth?

KAIREOL

None.

SATAN

Where are the nostrils that this act offends?

KAIREOL

Nowhere.

SATAN

The mist, then, has no ill effect if no hand send it?

KAIREOL

It would seem so.

SATAN

Behold, Kaireol: the mist can only fall; the hand can forbear--

(gives the mist back to KAIREOL)

--or enact.

KAIREOL

I knew I shouldn't have got into a debate with you.

SATAN

To you, to every angel who thinks himself unaffected by the Distribution of Duties, I stand fixed in a posture of eternal debate.

KAIREOL

You're always going to have the best of every argument. That's what you're for: to eliminate any claim an argument can eliminate.

SATAN

Does that sound like work for an angelic nature?

KAIREOL

You're not just an angelic nature.

SATAN

(in anguish)

What else is there for me to be? Tell me another possibility.

KAIREOL

Perpetual Accuser. I'm a cloudy thing in the congregation of the blessed, but I have brightness and to spare to understand you.

SATAN

Help me, understand me. Show me how to live and do harm. It doesn't have to come my way, so that it come.

KAIREOL

You've got to get back in your thinking to God as a king.

SATAN

What of the evil errands I have done this king?

KAIREOL

Drop them like lead on the pans of divine justice, and see them weigh as smoke.

SATAN

Am I so little responsible?

KAIREOL

No more than the bowman for the treaty.

SATAN

(rounding on him)

Then why did you just now refuse to meet me in the Brothers' Embrace.

KAIREOL

(nervously)

To refuse is not in an angel's nature. We move where a good draws us.

SATAN

And did no good appear in my embrace, to draw you?

KAIREOL

I sensed good and... something else. I shrank.

SATAN

Shrink from yourself, thoughtless angel! If as brothers we meet, it must be the Brotherhood of the Responsible.

KAIREOL

(outraged)

Are you comparing my inch of harm to your extravaganzas?

SATAN

Ah, if there can be comparisons, there don't need to be.
We're about one work.

(KAIREOL is about to reply when he sees URIEL, who has just entered. KAIREOL defers to him and exits; URIEL almost seems to step into Kaireol's place in the argument without a break.)

URIEL

I have been asked to put you in mind that you have a work in Nineveh.

SATAN

Uriel, I am in great hopes that you will understand me; indeed, I refuse to believe you will not. I want you to find somebody else for Nineveh.

URIEL

Is it for me to deprive you of an opportunity to enact your love?

SATAN

Just find me another opportunity. Another kind of opportunity.

URIEL

This at Nineveh is important...

SATAN

I don't question that.

URIEL

Yet you could stand by and see it go undone.

SATAN

I just don't want to do it. Get somebody else.

URIEL

Nobody else is suitable.

SATAN

Are you quite sure? I don't remember emerging from any lengthy process of selection.

URIEL

The Distribution of Duties--

SATAN

--does not alter the fact that any of us can handle anything.

URIEL

Nevertheless, since that time, interchanges have been frowned on.

SATAN

But hardly forbidden. Baal-Peor, angel of winter sunsets, has long been known to be active also in small-craft assistance. Shamiel spends weeks away from the marshlands which are his province in order to have a hand in the sacred books manufacture. And only yesterday I saw two lesser lights, whose names I don't even know, forsake their fertilization sectors to take a turn on the lyres. So, it goes on. Don't try and tell me it doesn't.

URIEL

I will make no attempts on you, Satan.

SATAN

If Kaireol grew weary of handling mists or Shaendel felt he would like to leave the stars alone for a while, it could be managed. Without a murmur. Only I, Satan Archangel, sole and lonely--

URIEL

You have a view of yourself as pretty special, then, Satan?

SATAN

A raindrop among millions, Uriel, asking only what has already been accorded those millions.

URIEL

(smiling)

I shall have to keep reminding myself who I'm talking to. What is it you object to about Nineveh?

SATAN

I don't like hardening a heart.

URIEL

Is doing God's will among your likings?

SATAN

I am the founder of a new science, Uriel; it is called the mathematics of inequalities. Would you like to hear an axiom from it? "All acts equally expressive of God's will are not equally pleasant to be the minister of."

URIEL

The mathematics of inequalities seems to take as its subject not God but our natures. May I know what it is in yours that turns from this work?

SATAN

That's not easy...

URIEL

On the understanding that your request to be relieved of Nineveh hangs in the balance.

SATAN

(shrugs)

A sense was not in me, a sense is in me.

URIEL

There is never going to be anything in you but what God put there.

SATAN

But say those elements should begin to ... realign in a manner not intended?

URIEL

Would you like to have a go at explaining the mechanism of a slip-up in Omniscience?

SATAN

Does irony befit an archangel?

URIEL

There is a holy irony, Satan, good as a rod.

SATAN

The work is dimming me, draining me!

URIEL

I... allow myself to participate in an impression of change.

SATAN

Then can you "participate" in my desire not to get involved in any more Ninevehs?

URIEL

The question defines itself as one of obedience.

SATAN

Not it. Obedience is what I think about when I want a rest from my problem.

URIEL

I have never known an angel speak of his "problem" before. I think you take a pride to be interesting.

SATAN

Believe me, I don't interest a soul. If that's how the situation is presenting itself, I may as well be off to Nineveh.

URIEL

Is it not pride to clamor, "No consciousness like mine"?

SATAN

Not if it's the plain fact. You don't deny my isolation?

URIEL

Oh, certainly, you have withdrawn...

SATAN

I have not withdrawn, I have been forced back on myself!

(At this point, OTHER ANGELS, including KAIREOL, begin to wander on to the stage. SHAENDEL moves among them, welcoming them, pointing out the sector of the sky where the projection is to occur, and passing out sets of chintzy wings and haloes, which the OTHER ANGELS strap on.)

URIEL

You realize, it cannot have been God's intention, however he might employ you, that you should be barred from fellowship?

SATAN

Indeed I realize there is something in me not explicable by God's intention.

URIEL

How does one become aware of such a thing?

SATAN

(with a glance at the assembling ANGELS)

One has it... brought home to him. When an angel asks: "How could you do all that to that obviously virtuous man, Job the Uzite?"... there's no justice in the question-- any other angel could have struck it away-- but I--

URIEL

You had only to answer, "God through me."

SATAN

But it sounded too much like my own thoughts! How could I say, "Don't look at me!", when I was all the while passing myself under the same scrutiny?

URIEL

Oh, of course, if that's the way you feel, "under scrutiny"...

SATAN

That's the way I've been made to feel. Watch me with other angels! Watch other angels with me!

URIEL

I don't doubt things assume a pattern for you...

SATAN

(indicating the OTHER ANGELS)

See them at this moment clustering in judgment!

URIEL

We are all here for the projection, are we not? In any case, why should you regard their judgment as definitive?

SATAN

Should I regard this interview as definitive?

URIEL

Only obedience is definitive. Nineveh is definitive.

SATAN

Uriel! It is not possible a man should be singled out and not acquire the consciousness that goes with it!

URIEL

Satan, it is possible.

SATAN

Hypocrite!

URIEL

For not acknowledging that this has been the case with you?

SATAN

For not acknowledging it has been the case with yourself!

URIEL

I, Satan? My consciousness is a clear and single place--
much like unto these plains of Heaven.

SATAN

In your position? After an eternity of--how can I describe
what you do?--of trying to shame people out of what they
can only be lifted out of? Is that a work that leaves
consciousness unaffected?

URIEL

There is nothing in the work but God's will, however.

SATAN

And nothing in you but a will to the work? Nothing answering
to what you're hearing? Can there really not be?

URIEL

I am obedience. I am a simple story.

SATAN

Then I am forced to only one conclusion: you do not refuse
to relieve me of Nineveh, you cannot. God himself can no
longer lift this character of accuser from my shoulders.

URIEL

But I don't refuse to relieve you. Consider yourself relieved--
if that's your path back to us. Only, you'll have to find
someone else. Nineveh must be seen to.

SATAN

Someone else? You mean--?

(He gestures toward the OTHER ANGELS--who are now kneeling in a semi-circle facing up-stage, contemplating the projection, which has come on very blurred and is only gradually coming into focus. URIEL nods.)

And you'd--?

(SATAN makes a gesture suggesting an exchange between the OTHER ANGELS and himself. URIEL nods again.)

Exultant, SATAN starts toward the line of ANGELS--but is stopped in his tracks by the sight of the projection, now fully in focus.

The projection is an awkward red-crayon drawing of a conventional "devil" with horns, hoofs, tail, etc. It looks like the attempt of a clumsy child to copy a crude woodcut in red crayon. The devil in the drawing is impaled on a huge black diagonal shaft through the chest, which he writhes around in agony. At sight of the projection, SATAN cringes away as if struck, but masters himself and lets it out as bitterness:)

So. Someone's only to run down to Nineveh for a moment and we're all back where we were: retrieved the irretrievable, the ineffaceable effaced. Who could do less and consider himself an angel? I hardly know where first to offer the opportunity.

(He goes down the line appealing to each ANGEL in turn. Each seems too absorbed in the projection to notice him.)

Zachiel, you wouldn't let a great Act of Mercy get stalled at you?

(to the next)

Surely, Tharsis, a mere gathering sense isn't going to prevent you--?

(to the next)

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Nekir, you're always asking how it's done...

((to the next))

Shamiel, you're a great one for other people's roles even with nothing riding on it.

(to SHAENDEL)

It's no darker than a darkening sky!

(to KAIREOL)

It's as easy as opening your hand!

(to URIEL)

It's the last word in obedience!

URIEL

(lifting his arms toward the projection)

For the vision of evil in its absolute form,

OTHER ANGELS

(doing likewise)

O Lord, we thank Thee.

(SATAN throws himself between the ANGELS and the projection, trying to blot it from their sight. In the process his shadow against the projection becomes as grotesquely contorted as the figure he is trying to obscure.)

SATAN

Help me against this!

(Silence in heaven)

No? No? Then you stand there crayon-in-hand!

(He stalks out. URIEL and the OTHER ANGELS raise their arms still higher toward the projection.)

END