

## Characters

- NORA (F)** - A housewife
- GOD (M)** - The Supreme Being
- WARREN (M)** - Nora's husband
- DARREN (M)** - Warren's best friend
- KYLIE (F)** - Darren's partner
- JADE (F)** - Single friend of both Nora and Kylie

## Scene 1 – Garden

(SFX. “The Sun has got his hat on” plays as an introduction. The lights come up to show Nora, a middle-aged housewife, sitting in her garden. She is tired-looking. The stage is set with a number of striped deck chairs and a rather battered free-standing barbecue sits somewhat redundantly downstage. A garden umbrella, tilted stands towards the back of the stage. A small trellis with some flowers shows that they are in a “normal” garden in a “normal” street. All characters are dressed for a fine summer day, with the exception of The Supreme Being. Nora sits in a deck chair and talks to herself but using the pretence of talking to a rather tarnished, but brightly coloured garden gnome.)

**Nora:** Well, I don’t know what Warren was so upset about, I mean, a lot of people *like* boiled fish! The problem is, that some people just want too much these days, I suppose. (**Sighs**) It must have been nice in olden times. No windows to wash, servants to cook and clean and all a person had to worry about was the revolting peasants. (**Considering deeply**) But what if I was a revolting peasant though? Maybe it is true, maybe it’s just like they say, a person should be careful of exactly what they wish for. (**Deciding**) No, I definitely wouldn’t like to be a revolting peasant. Dirty fingernails, dirty hair, dirty everything....yuck! No Nora, you should be happy with your lot. I mean, Warren doesn’t need *too* much looking after. Ok, so he doesn’t like my cooking, but apart from that, I suppose I have it quite easy.

(She leans back, sighs loudly and shuts her eyes. SFX. Heavenly music. God, dressed in white robes and sporting a beard, enters from the left and stands beside the dozing woman. After a few moments, smiling, he coughs gently)

**God:** Ahem!

(Nora wakens with a start)

**Nora:** Jesus!

**God:** (**Smiling indulgently**) Well, not exactly, but close enough I suppose. Normally it takes a lot more explaining, but you’ve got it straight away, well done. I suppose it was the robes wasn’t it?

**Nora:** (**At a loss**) What?

**God:** The robes, was it the robes? Or was it maybe the beard?

**Nora:** Who the devil are you?

**God:** (**Frowning**) Ah, this might be a little more difficult than I first thought. Nora, you must open your mind and trust me, for I am about to ask you something that will change your life forever.

**Nora:** Oh God, that sounds a little ominous. (**To herself**) Hold on a second, maybe I’m dreaming. Maybe the boiled fish wasn’t boiled for long enough....or maybe....maybe I’ve poisoned myself, like those Japanese chaps who eat...what’s it called... puffer fish, just for kicks. (**Horried**) Crikey, maybe I bought puffer fish by mistake. (**Angry**) What sort of fishmonger sells puffer fish in Ireland, for goodness sake?

**God:** Nora, pull yourself together and try to listen. I have identified you as someone who will do my bidding and I have need of a woman like you. I have searched diligently, and you are the chosen one. **(Proudly)** What, my dear, do you think of that?

**Nora:** **(Perplexed)** You chose me? Why in heaven's name would you choose someone like me? What about Mrs. O'Brien down the road, she goes to church every day.....**(Bitterly)** and she's a much better cook than me.....or so my Warren says.

**God:** **(Nodding)** Yes, she is a better cook, but I must stress that *you* are the chosen one **(Quickly)** and besides, Mrs. O'Brien is away on holidays at the moment. **(Wistfully)** Two weeks in The Costa del Sol, I believe....most inconvenient, but there you are, planning you see.....the problems of being the Supreme Being, in a nutshell. **(Sighing loudly)** Two weeks in The Costa del Sol, hmmm

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**Nora:** Excuse me, your Worship, but what exactly am I being chosen for? I very much appreciate being selected and all that, but a girl needs to know why. Things like this never happen to me.....**(Musing)**, although I did win a juggling competition once, in the Brownies, when I was eight.

**God:** **(Laughing)** Ah yes, the juggling competition, I remember as though it was yesterday....or was that tomorrow? Omnipresence you see, always been tricky! Two oranges and an egg, wasn't it, though I seem to recall that the egg didn't last very long.

**Nora:** **(Frowning at God)** Well I *was* singing at the same time! The judges said they had never heard singing like it before. **(Dreamily)** I won a Bathing Suit Barbie, the only thing I ever won in my whole life. **(Coming back to reality)** Anyway, why would you choose me, a person who apparently can't cook, juggle or sing?

**God:** Nora, I have a special task for you. Now, you must open your mind, because this task may, at first glance, seem a little...er...odd.

**Nora:** Listen, I'm really quite busy at the moment, so could you please get on with it, the dishes are not going to wash themselves you know.

**God:** **(Brightly)** Ah, wait a second, I can help with that. **(He closes his eyes and puts his finger in the air and twirls it round)** That should sort it. **(He looks at Nora, slightly puzzled)** Boiled fish shouldn't stick to the plates like that, you know. Next time, try a tiny bit of olive oil in the water.

**(SFX. the sound of smashing plates)**

**God:** Blast! Modern crockery is so infernally fragile. Don't worry, when all this is over, I'll get you some new plates ok?

**Nora:** **(Cunningly)** What about a dishwasher? Mrs. O'Brien got a new dishwasher, the other day and she says it's brilliant. Plates come out as if they're new.....and it only takes a few minutes. I mean, if I *am* the chosen one, there must be a few little perks in it, **(Hopefully)** mustn't there?

- God:** (**Giving in**) Oh all right, look, I think Harvey Norman has a sale on at the moment. I'll tell you what, as a gesture of goodwill, here's a gift voucher for €399. That should sort it. ....and, it's all completely tax free! Mind you, you must use the voucher before (**Peering myopically at the voucher**) July the seventh, or it'll be too late.
- Nora:** (**Snatching the voucher and staring at it**) Brilliant. Mrs. O'Brien, eat your heart out! (**She stuffs the voucher down the front of her dress**) Now, that'll keep you safe.
- God:** (**Relieved**) Ok, so that's taken care of, now to business.....
- Nora:** (**Interrupting**) If you don't mind me saying so, you're not exactly the way I imagined God. I mean you *look* like God, but you don't seem to act the way I thought you'd act. (**Peers at him suspiciously**) How can I be sure that I'm not dreaming? Maybe I have just eaten puffer fish after all.
- God:** Oh me, give me patience! (**Crossly**) It was not the fish, so please don't ask any more questions, I simply need a small favour from you. Quid pro quo and all that, now will you do it?
- Nora:** Well, I'm not in the habit of doing favours for just anyone, (**Patting her bosom and the nestling voucher with a smile**) but seeing as it's beginning to look like you may be....er....who you say you are, I think I'll have to say yes. Mind you, I'm still not 100% convinced about the fish!
- God:** (**Testily**) How many times do I have to tell you woman, you have not eaten puffer fish! As to who I am, hold on a second and I'll show you something that should finally convince you.
- (**He stands rock still, concentrating furiously, with his hands balled into fists. SFX. Mysterious music**)
- Warren:** (**Entering with a shout of delight and with red wine down the front of his shirt**) Will you look at this, just look at this? It's a miracle I tell you, a flaming miracle. I was just taking some paracetamol....you know I had a terrible hangover from last night....and when I went to take a swallow, my glass of water had turned into wine (**taking a swig**) and very nice wine too.
- God:** Yes, it was quite a good year, 356 BC as far as I can recall. It came from the wedding of.....let me see.... (**Thinks hard**) oh yes, that's it, Zebadiah and Mary, a lovely couple and very progressive for Pharisees. (**Extending his hand**) Hello, you must be Warren, I'm God.
- Warren:** Wow! My hangover must be a lot worse than I thought. I imagined, just for a second, that you said God.
- Nora:** He did, and what's more, I've just about come to the conclusion that he is who he says. I mean, look at the robes and his beard, he's just like he appears in all the pictures.
- Warren:** (**Eyeing God up and down**) Fair enough, I see what you mean. Do you fancy coming inside God, you can watch the end of the match, if you like? It's live and it's rather good. United have just.....

**God:** **(Interrupting)** No thank you, I already know the result and I don't like penalty shoot outs, but don't take my word for it, go back in and enjoy the wine, there's plenty more in the cistern

**Warren:** Cheers! **(Raising the glass in salute)** Sorry babe, I'll see you later. **(He bolts back inside)**

**God:** Now Nora, does that prove who I am?

**Nora:** Yes, I suppose. Good trick with the wine by the way, that'll save us a fortune in Aldi. Now, what do you want me to do?

**God:** Ok, please don't get too excited, but I want you to build a boat.

**Nora:** A boat, what sort of boat and why can't you build it yourself?

**God:** Well, when I say boat, I mean quite a big boat.....a ship actually. An ark to carry the chosen ones and all the animals when the flood comes, and no, I can't, I'm too busy.

**Nora:** Flood, what flood?

**God:** **(Proudly)** Oh, it will be an inundation the likes of which has only been seen once before in all of history. The waters will come and only the chosen will be saved. I have selected you, Nora, to lead your people to safety in my name. What do you think of that?

**Nora:** Very nice I should think. But, please tell me, how on earth am I going to build a ship?

**God:** Here are the plans. Follow them exactly and all the tools and materials shall be provided. Now look, when we did this before, I was able to allow a great deal more time, but Windows 10 crashed the other day and so now I'm a little pressed, so.....er.... you'll have to have it built by next Thursday.

**Nora:** Next Thursday? How can I possibly do that? You'll have to find someone else I'm afraid.

**God:** That my dear, is out of the question. Now, if you don't mind, I'm off. It took me ages to book the flights, the terms and conditions were most exacting and I have to get to the airport by four o'clock this afternoon, so if I'm going to pack, I'll have to get a move on. **(Puzzled)** Maybe I'm getting old, and the web page was a nightmare to browse, but I still don't know why, as The Supreme Being, I've now got travel insurance. Ryanair.....huh! But finally, two weeks in the Costa, here I come....Yahooooooo!

**(God leaves at a run, giggling like a giddy schoolboy. Nora is left nonplussed)**

**Nora:** Warren.... **(She shouts)** Warren, get out here....Now!

**(Warren arrives, a little flustered)**

**Warren:** **(Impatiently)** What do you want? United have just scored again and the match is going into extra time. I need to get back. **(Looking around)** Where's what's his face?

**Nora:** We need to build a boat.

**Warren:** **(Taken aback)** A whaa..... a boat! What do want a boat for?

**Nora:** The Lord has just asked me **(She thinks for a second)**....no, he has just instructed me, to build a boat for him.

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**Warren:** Go on, you're having a laugh. Hold on a second. That wasn't puffer fish we ate, was it?

**Nora:** No, I'm reliably informed that it wasn't. We have to build a boat and that's all there is to it. Look, here are the plans.

**Warren:** **(Looking at the plans and scratching his head)** What the heck is a cubit when it's at home? It says we have to make the thing 30 cubits high, 50 cubits wide and.....blimey, 300 cubits long! I don't know, I've seen a few boats, but nothing like this before. These plans are ancient, but maybe I can download some proper instructions from the internet. Are you sure that fellow was God?

**Nora:** Yeah, pretty sure. I mean, you saw the beard and robes yourself, and he did do the washing up from out here.

**Warren:** Yes, I was wondering about that. Ah well, I never liked Willow pattern anyway. Right, if you're sure, I'll get the computer fired up and I'll see if I can't get some proper plans downloaded. I'll do it after the match ok?

**Nora:** All right, we have till next Thursday. I'll make some tea. Oh, by the way, we'll have to drop into Harvey Normans tomorrow, **(Proudly)** we're getting a dishwasher!

**(Lights fade to indicate the passing of time and "Who's been Polishing the Sun" plays for a few seconds. There are now additional people in the garden. Darren, Kylie and Jade (Nora's friends) are present, along with Warren. They are all dressed for the sun and staring at something off stage.)**

**Warren:** Well, I never thought we'd get it finished, but it's done and I must say, I think it looks rather good.

**Darren:** Yeah, it's a grand job. Any chance of a beer?

**Kylie:** **(Taking beers from a cooler)** I'll have one too petal. I still don't understand though. What is the silly thing for?

**Nora:** I think we're supposed to get in it and bring as many animals as we can find along with us. There's going to be a flood or something.

**Jade:** The forecast is for a heatwave though. Anyway, I don't think we'll get too many animals in with us, it doesn't look that big.

**Darren:** Yeah, I was thinking that myself. **(Winking and nudging Warren mischievously).** Did you follow the instructions carefully Warren?

**Warren:** **(Nervous)** Ah hold on there, are you telling me that I can't follow instructions? Anyway, the plans were basic, with lots of little pictures. It went together like a dream. Look at the lining I put on the inside.

**Kylie:** Will it float though? It doesn't look too seaworthy. I'm not sure I want to sit in it.

**Warren:** If Nora is right and the flood comes, you'll sit in it ok. What do you reckon love, when did he say the rain will start?

**Nora:** I thought he said Thursday, but I can't quite remember. Jade, will you have a look at the paper and see what the weather is doing.

**Jade:** **(A touch peeved)** I don't need to, it's late Thursday morning, it's sunny and warm and it certainly doesn't feel like rain!

**Warren:** Ah here, let's have something to eat so. Nora, what about a spot of brunch?

**Nora:** I was thinking of some fish.

**Darren:** I read in the papers about some Japanese lads, who are so bored, they risk their lives by eating poisonous fish, just for kicks. You're not going to give us any of that stuff are you?

**Nora:** I asked the manager in Tesco and he categorically stated that it was company policy, never to supply puffer fish to any stores in Ireland.....  
.....but seeing as Warren and I are watching our figures, boiled fish it is. Besides, I think we'll all need to be pretty slim if we want to fit into that. **(Pointing at the ark off stage)**

**Kylie:** I'm still not sure it's going to be big enough. Where did you build it?

**Warren:** In the garage, beside the bikes.

**Jade:** Hadn't we better move it off the lawn and onto the drive? I mean, if it's going to start raining soon, we'll get a good run out onto the road. I don't want to get tangled up in the roses.

**Darren:** All right so, come on Warren, we'll drag it over. Have you stocked up yet?

**Warren:** Yeah, two cases of Budweiser, a twelve pack of Tayto cheese and onion, pickled onions and a whole crate of Guinness.....

**(The two go out, talking about the provisions)**

**Nora:** I wish you two had met God. He seemed like such a nice chap. Beautiful eyes and such a smile. If he wasn't God, he'd have suited you quite well Jade.

**Jade:** Ah here.....you know I don't like a man in a dress.

**Nora:** It was a robe, not a dress and besides, beggars can't be choosers.

**Jade:** It's amazing isn't it? I mean, God himself, here in the garden. Were you scared at all? I mean, if it was me, I think I'd have fainted.....ah you must have been a bit nervous.

**Nora:** Not really. I was a bit worried that I was imagining it all, but he was so persuasive. Once he'd explained everything, it sort of made sense.....sort of.

**Kylie:** **(Looking off stage, a little puzzled)** Are you sure the plans were right. I mean, if we all get in, there's not going to be too much room for any animals.

**Jade:** I didn't want to say anything in front of the boys, but I'm not getting into any boat with sheep in it, right! Or insects for that matter. In fact, I'm not sure I want to get in it with any animals, you know I get terrible hay fever.

**Nora:** Well, we're definitely taking little Winston. After all, he's only a Jack Russell and so he won't take up too much space.

**Kylie:** And we have to take Mogg. I know he's a cat, but I can put him in his cage and he gets on well with Winston. How much food should we bring?

**Nora:** God didn't actually say, but I'd imagine enough for breakfast, lunch and tea the next day, so some bacon, a dozen eggs, three tins of beans and a sliced pan should be enough.

**Jade:** **(Panicking)** What about Coronation Street? There's supposed to be a big fight in The Rovers tomorrow

**Nora:** It's all right, Warren stored some batteries up the front end and we have the little telly from the caravan, so we shouldn't miss anything. I'm partial to the X-Factor as well and it comes on right after Corrie. I love that Simon with his trousers all snuggled up under his armpits. I wish Warren would wear his like that.

**(Warren and Darren arrive back, rubbing their hands and panting)**

**Darren:** Well, that's her all ready. Have a look.

**Nora:** You know, I'm beginning to think it may be a little small after all. Warren, you did follow God's plan carefully, didn't you?

**Warren:** **(Guiltily)** Well, not exactly. You see, I was thinking that God probably has very little to do with boat construction anymore.....and the match went into extra time and penalties, so I didn't have time to download any proper plans, so I.....I suppose you could say that I....er....outsourced the construction.

**Nora:** **(Suspiciously)** Outsourced! What do you mean by outsourced, exactly?

**Warren:** I....um....well....I dropped in to Darren and asked him for help. I mean, he used to sail a Mirror dinghy when he was a kid. He said that we should go and have a look at what was on sale.... in a more ready-made sort of way.

**Jade:** Ready-made? Oh my God, what have you two done?

**Darren:** Nothing. Listen, we had a few scoops, just to get us in the boat building mood, then we popped across town and had a look at what we could find.



**Kylie:** And what exactly did you find?

**Warren:** **(Proudly)** We found *her*. **(Flourishing a hand at the ark offstage. Everyone turns to look)**

**(There is a moment of silence as they all look at the ark critically)**

**Nora:** **(Threateningly)** Did you buy it like that?

**Warren:** What do you take us for? Oh no, I said it to Darren, I said, if God wants us to build a boat, then a boat we should indeed build. We put it together from all the bits and pieces that we bought.

**Nora:** And where did you get all the bits and pieces?

**Darren:** **(Exchanges nervous glances with Warren)** Where does anyone buy bits and pieces? Ikea!

**(The three women speak at the same time in astonishment)**

**Nora:** **(Together)** *Ikea?*

**Kylie:** **(Together)** *Ikea?*

**Jade:** **(Together)** *Ikea?*

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**Warren:** **(Proudly)** Yeah, she was a bargain too. End of a line, so we picked her up for a song. We used her as the basic hull shape and kind of super-glued all the bits on. She's inflatable see, none of this hammering business. We even managed to sell all the wood and nails that arrived, courtesy of God, so we actually made a profit. **(Pleading)** I mean, be fair, plastic and rubber *must* be far more sea-worthy than gopher wood

**Darren:** And, seeing as it's apparently easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.....we decided that we had to spend all the money we made. We bought some lovely replica gear for us all. Hunter wellies, Barbour jackets and best of all, matching Ralph Lauren polo shirts with "I survived the Flood" on the front.

**Nora:** **(Shocked)** Was that not terribly expensive?

**Darren:** Not at all! We got them down at the market.

**Warren:** **(Proudly)** All knock offs!

**Kylie:** **(Admiringly)** Ah Babe, that's great.

**Nora:** **(Looking worried)** But is it the same size as the one on the plans?

**Warren:** **(Shrugs)** I Dunno! I never found out what a cubit was, so I took an educated guess. I converted cubits into centimetres and added a bit for good measure, I mean, they both begin with "C", so I figured what the heck! It looks great though, don't you think?

**Nora:** Hmmmmm. I do like the little cabin, but I'm not sure where we'll put the animals. Maybe we should just take Albert and Mogg, I mean, God was a little vague on the exact details.

**Jade:** Hold on, I'll pop next door and grab the hamsters. I think they could be male and female and if I remember my bible correctly, the creatures must go on in pairs.

**Darren:** Great idea! Hamsters won't take up too much room and let's face it, if we get stuck floating round for too long and the beans run out, we can probably eat them instead.

**Jade:** No way! You are *not* going to eat Boris and Carrie! Besides, they are so small, we wouldn't get more than a mouthful each.

**Warren:** **(Laughing)** Jade, you do know how hamsters pass the time? They don't just trot round that little wheel day after day. They indulge in...well, other pastimes. Don't you worry, give them a few weeks and there will be plenty for all of us.

**Jade:** **(Puzzled)** What other pastimes?

**Darren:** Bonking, you idiot!

**Jade:** Be quiet! You always have to be so rude. My hamsters don't do that sort of thing, they're still only babies.

**Darren:** Then why did we have to give away all those little hamsters last year then?

**Jade:** **(Looking puzzled)** I thought they were just wild hamsters who'd climbed into the cage to say hello.

**Warren:** Are you for real?

**Nora:** Oh leave her alone you two. **(Glaring at Warren)** Never mind Jade, I'm sure they *were* just visiting.

**Jade:** Well, I'm glad someone believes me. **(She laughs, relieved)** Bonking...indeed, the very thought!

**Kylie:** Gosh, look at the time. If the rain is going to start this afternoon, maybe we should load up now. Jade, we'll get the animals and make a start ok? The two lads can get the heavy stuff.

**Warren:** Come on Darren, you get the beer and I'll get the telly. I left it all in the garage, ready to go. I wonder if the little fridge will work off the battery, because I can't stand warm beer.

**(All four exit, leaving Nora alone. She peers up at the sky)**

**Nora:** It doesn't look like rain, but maybe I should just have more faith. **(Looking towards the ark)** Oh no! **(Urgently)** Will you two watch where you put your feet, you'll burst it!

**Warren:** **(Popping his head back onto the stage)** It's ok love, I bought a puncture repair kit and a bicycle pump, just in case.

**Nora:** Who's a clever husband then? (**Warren leaves again.**)

**(Nora picks up a copy of The Daily Mirror and reads the headlines out loud)**

**Nora:** "Phew what a scorcher". I don't know, the papers haven't said anything about rain, let alone floods. Oh Janey, maybe it *was* puffer fish.

**(God enters, wearing sunglasses and sipping a ridiculous cocktail)**

**God:** Greetings Nora. (**Then speaking very slowly and with great care, pronouncing every word**) *How's she cuttin'?* (**Smiles broadly**) Sorry, but I met some charming lads from Mayo at a party in the nightclub and I've learned some wonderful new phrases. (**Brightly**) Did you build the boat?

**Nora:** I was just beginning to wonder if you were coming back. (**Proudly, gesturing offstage at the boat**) Sure, have a look.

**God:** It doesn't look at all like it did in the plans, but hey, I'm no boat builder. Well, the rain should start any minute, so it's a bit late to do anything about it now. Maybe you'd better take some umbrellas, you could get wet and catch a chill and that would never do, would it?

**Nora:** I think there's a couple in the garage, I'll get them on the way out. Are you coming with us?

**God:** Gracious no! I only popped back to make sure that all was going according to plan. I met a charming theology student from Belfast at the night club and I think she quite likes me, so I have to get back. I discovered that being sort of omnipresent, I can teleport. Just as well, because I couldn't stand those tiny aeroplane seats with that bright yellow plastic.....and I never liked Paninis much.

**Nora:** Do you mind if I ask a question God?

**God:** Fire ahead.

**Nora:** Why does there have to be a flood? I mean, you did it before and what did you achieve?

**God:** Do you know, I'm not one hundred percent sure, but I think it has something to do with free will. But (**Shrugging**), it matters not a jot, the rain is coming, so I think it's time you all popped off. Thank you so much for building the boat, I really didn't think you would, you know, but you have reaffirmed my faith in human nature. Bless you my child.

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**Nora:** Cheerio then. Oh, you wouldn't mind pulling the front door closed after you, I wouldn't want to get burgled, not just before the flood.

**(She takes one last look around, then leaves. God wanders around for a few moment, idly picking up the garden gnome and examining the base.)**

**God:**

Created in the People's Republic of China...HmMMM! **(Putting the gnome down, he looks at the sky, then at his watch, frowns and takes out a mobile phone and taps a number furiously.)** Hi Gabe, you couldn't do me a favour could you? Try and find out why the rain hasn't started. It's getting a little embarrassing here, they're already in the boat, but the sun is still splitting the stones and I think people are going to start asking questions. Yeah, I'll hold for a bit...**(Listening to the phone)** Green sleeves...must change this music...Yeah Gabe, what's the story?  
**(Surprised)** What?**(Shocked)** *What?* But they can't have! Yeah, I'm sure...well, fairly sure anyway. **(Thinking hard)** I mean, how could they? I've only been gone for 2000 years! **(Pause)** What?...Ah look, I would have put it in the grand plan of creation if that was the case and I've never heard of it! *What?* **(Angry)** I don't believe it!**(Shouting)** *The gougers!* Look, I'm telling you that I never even thought of it, not even as a remote possibility...Drought? Are you absolutely sure?...Oh, the dirty eejits! **(He throws down the phone in disgust and looks out at the audience, shaking his head)** *Bloody Global warming?*

**CURTAIN**