

Upon seeing God in Dearborn

*An empty stage onto which walks Percy, a large package wrapped in brown paper. Percy is filled with the sheer joy of being alive. A few moments later Raymond - a letter stamped with the words PAYMENT OVERDUE on the front - enters. Raymond wishes everyone in the world were dead. Raymond glares hatefully at Percy, who smiles with childlike innocence. Raymond paces angrily around Percy, poking at his sides. Percy giggles with each poke.*

PERCY

Hi.

*Raymond continues to circle Percy, eyeing him with disdain.*

PERCY

My name is Percy. Well, Percival, actually. But everyone calls me Percy because Percival sounds so, you know, serious. And who has time to be serious when you're going to a party. That's where I'm going. To a party. I'm a birthday present for a little girl in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Have you ever been to Grand Rapids? I've never been outside Dayton, myself. But I hear that they have a mail sorting facility in Dearborn that is to die for. Have you ever been to Dearborn? That's where Henry Ford built cars. I know that because a friend of mine was stamped with the words "Birthplace of the automobile." Well, that's how I know that -

RAYMOND

Shut up! Enough! I don't want to hear anymore about your stupid friends and their stupid messages and your stupid little girl and her stupid birthday. I just want you to shut up! Okay? Just... just... shut up.

PERCY

Well, all right then. But you see, I'm a -

RAYMOND

I know. I know. You're a stupid birthday present for some stupid little girl -

PERCY

I don't think there's any reason to call someone you've never met stupid –

RAYMOND

Can't you keep quiet for more than five seconds? Huh? Can't you?

PERCY

I -

RAYMOND

Quiet. Silence. Peace.

*There is silence. Twice Percy begins to speak, then is met with a glare from Raymond.*

RAYMOND

Look at you. All nicely taped around the edges. Your address written in pen, for Christ's sake! Little happy faces where the I's are dotted! A Goddamn return address label with freaken' flowers on it! (Pause. Fumes) Look at me. I said look at me, present boy! (Percy can barely look at Raymond) You can't can you? Because you know what you'll see. "CAR-T-SORT" on one side of my face. A "PAYMENT OVERDUE NOTICE" on the other side. (Sobs) The disfigurement of an automatic stamping machine.

PERCY

Gee, I... *(Reaches for Raymond's shoulder)*

RAYMOND

*(Pulling away, trying to hide his tears)* No. No, I don't want your... pity, present boy.

PERCY

Percival. My name is Percival. But you can call me Percy.

RAYMOND

Ever wonder what it's like, Percival? To be one of us. The unwanted. The scorned. The bill.

PERCY

Oh, you're not that bad...

RAYMOND

Not that bad? Not that bad? Tell that to the guy with no job and four kids when I gotta tell him he's being evicted. Tell that to the woman who needs her car to visit her sick mother, but I'm the one whose gotta tell her the bank can't wait another week for the next payment.

PERCY

But you're not the one taking away the car or the house, you're just delivering the news.

RAYMOND

You think that makes a difference, present boy?

PERCY

Percy.

RAYMOND

They don't care. I am the bank. I am the collection agency. You ever seen a letter after it's been tossed in a fire?

PERCY

*(Terrified)* No.

RAYMOND

Ever seen what happens to a letter after it's been through a... paper shredder?

PERCY

Stop it! You're scaring me!

RAYMOND

That's life, kid. It's scary.

PERCY

I guess I never thought...

RAYMOND

You never thought. You never thought. *(Starts poking Percy's chest/package)* That's your problem, you don't think. You just talk and talk and talk until you drive everyone around you crazy. *(Still poking away)* Well let me tell you something present boy, I don't need your sympathy, I don't need your polyanna attitude, and I sure as hell don't need - *(We hear the sound of paper ripping as Raymond's finger punctures Percy's packaging. Both look at the hole horrified)* Hey man, I'm sorry... I didn't mean to -

PERCY

*(Clutches the hole as if to stem the bleeding)* Oh my God. I'm... ripped wide open.

RAYMOND

Well, now, I wouldn't say wide open. It's just a little tear -

PERCY

I'm disfigured...

RAYMOND

I wouldn't say disfigured -

PERCY

*(Wailing)* I'm hideously deformed -

RAYMOND

Aww, now, kid...

PERCY

I heard about this sort of thing happening in post offices in the big cities, but I never thought it could happen here, in Dayton.

RAYMOND

Look, it's really not –

PERCY

Dayton, where children can still walk to school unafraid, where neighbors still help each other with the groceries, and the cop on the corner is your friend. Dayton, where -

RAYMOND

*(Bored by now)* Oh boy. Look, kid, trust me, it's just a tear, really. A small tear at that.

PERCY

No, stop, please, don't lie. It's bad, isn't it? I mean really bad.

RAYMOND

No, I mean it. Look, see, if I take just a little piece of tape from here (Percy winces as Raymond takes a piece of tape from another part of Percy's packaging and covers the hole) and move it over to here... there... just like that... and look at that. Good as new.

PERCY

No, it's not! I'm falling apart. I'm a leper.

RAYMOND

You're not a leper. You're a birthday present for a little girl, remember?

PERCY

I am?

RAYMOND

Come on now, kid, don't you feel just a little better?

PERCY

*(Holds back his tears)* Well... maybe.

RAYMOND

You see, it wasn't that bad.

PERCY

No, I guess not.

RAYMOND

Well, you were very brave, just then.

PERCY

Really?

RAYMOND

Why, sure you were. In fact, I'll bet that -

*A very bright light suddenly appears above.*

PERCY

Oh my God. I'm dying!

RAYMOND

What?

PERCY

I'm dying!

RAYMOND

Why do you think you're dying?

PERCY

Because I can see a bright light. And I heard that when you die, you see this bright light. And you're supposed to walk to the light, see? That's how you get to heaven. (*Looks up, steels himself*) Okay, God, I'm ready. I'm ready to join you. (*Gets up and looks at the light*) I'm ready to go to heaven with all the other ripped, torn, discarded packages.

Raymond has been squinting at the light, and makes a realization.

RAYMOND

Wait a minute. That's not God.

PERCY

Of course it is, and he wants me to walk to the light.

RAYMOND

Stupid, if you can only see the light when you're dead, how come I can see the light, too?

PERCY

Huh?

RAYMOND

I wasn't ripped, how come I can see this light?

PERCY

I... I don't know.

RAYMOND

And if you're dead, how come I can talk to you?

PERCY

Extra sensory powers?

RAYMOND

No, stupid, it's because that's not the light of God, that's the mailman taking us out of the mailbox.

PERCY

Then I'm not dead.

RAYMOND

Unfortunately, no.

PERCY

Oh.

RAYMOND

Now don't you feel just a bit silly?

PERCY

Yea.

RAYMOND

Come on, it's time to go.

PERCY

*(As they exit stage right)* You know that wasn't very nice what you said just now.

RAYMOND

When I said what?

PERCY

That you wished I was dead.

RAYMOND

I didn't mean it, Percival, I'm sorry.

PERCY

Percy. Call me Percy. My name is Percival but my friends call me Percy.

RAYMOND

Come on Percy. Let's go to Dearborn.

PERCY

Oh, that would be so nice. You know I'm a birthday present for a little girl there. She's going to be so happy to see me...

**Fade to black.**

**Curtain**