

The Amazing Angel-Man

By Julian Felice

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DEDICATION

To Sean and his inspirational family

STORY OF THE PLAY

James, a young boy, suffers from Angelman Syndrome. This neurodevelopmental disorder causes problems with speech and mobility causing him to spend his life in a wheelchair. The story shifts from James' imagination where he dreams of being a superhero called "The Amazing Angel-Man" to the real world, where the realities of his condition have a serious impact on his family, particularly his father. As the play progresses, these two separate worlds start to overlap, leading to an uplifting resolution that upholds the values of hope and imagination.

The play was inspired by the real-life story of a young boy who suffers from Angelman Syndrome. This syndrome affects males, females, and all racial/ethnic groups equally.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The play was first performed at the Ince's Hall (Gibraltar) on March 20, 2017 with the following cast and crew:

JAMES: Kai Nemes; JOHN: Conor McGibney; TINA: Rachel Almeida; LYNETTE: Ria McCarthy; MICHAEL (As Claire): Laura Abensur; NEIL: Nayan Adamberry; DR VINCENT: Talia Hart; DR DE'ATH: Ytzack Elkerbout-Bonich; LOUIS (As Louise): Maria James; PETTAK: Julian Reyes; DOCTOR: Jake Ciruela; ENSEMBLE: Mohammed Acharki, Carmen Anderson, Jenaika Ballester, Natalie Bonavia, Marta Miranda Porras, Rachel Nahon, Emily Pott, Johnny Ramagge, Natasha Richardson, Ella Vatvani, Wessel Westdorp.

Director: Julian Felice; Assistant Director: Dulcie Edwards; Lighting: Louis Emmitt-Stern; Sound: Liam Ballester.

AWARDS

Best Original Play, 2017 Gibraltar Drama Festival

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast of 12 plus ensemble. Most roles are gender flexible except for those noted. Doubling possible.)

JAMES: (M) The Amazing Angel-Man.

JOHN: (M) His father.

TINA: (F) His mother.

LYNETTE: (F) His sister.

MICHAEL: His caretaker.

NEIL: His imaginary friend.

DR. VINCENT: Pediatrician.

DR. DE'ATH: Specialist.

LOUIS: John's colleague.

PETTAK: Grand King of the Trintons.

DOCTOR: Surgeon in hospital.

WOMAN: (F) In danger, saved by the Amazing Angel-Man.

ENSEMBLE: Actors play various background characters.

For gender-neutral roles, adjust names and dialogue accordingly.

SCENES and SETTINGS

There are no specific scene breaks; rather the action flows smoothly from one time or location to another. Lighting can focus the action on basic areas including a busy street scene; the family home; the offices of the pediatrician and specialist; John's law office; a fantasy game show stage, and a hospital. One or two furniture pieces such as desks, exam table, podiums, and hospital bed may help define each of these areas.

PROPS

Puppet on a fishing rod

Wheelchair

Football

Baby stroller

Kit-Kat candy bar

Bottle of whiskey and glass

Small doll on a wire

Blanket-wrapped baby doll

Paper file

Foam or soft plastic ball

Light saber

SOUND EFFECTS

Superhero type music; an upbeat 1990s dance song; canned applause; gameshow buzzer; house door opening and slam; beep of car door, car ignition, and car driving off; loud car horn; car skidding; and ambulance siren.

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(AT RISE: The play opens with a superhero type MUSIC. Two members of the ENSEMBLE run down from the back of the theatre, shouting, calling for help and generally creating a sense of panic. LIGHTS full revealing a busy street scene with other members of the ENSEMBLE reacting to the shouts. The original members run onto the stage.)

ENSEMBLE 1: Help! Help!

ENSEMBLE 2: Somebody help!

ENSEMBLE: What's wrong?

ENSEMBLE 1: Up there! Can you see it?

ENSEMBLE: What?

ENSEMBLE 2: There! At the top of the tallest building in the world!

ENSEMBLE: Where? *(Pointing.)* There?

ENSEMBLE 1: No! *(Points higher.)* There!

ENSEMBLE: What is it?

ENSEMBLE 2: Can you not see it? A woman!

ENSEMBLE 1: She's dangling over the edge!

(There is a sudden consternation as those in the crowd see the problem.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* Somebody help her! Quick! Call the police! She's going to fall! Help!

(There is a buildup of panicked noise. JAMES bursts through the CROWD.)

JAMES: I will help her!

(The CROWD stares at HIM.)

ENSEMBLE: Who are you?

JAMES: I am the Amazing Angel-Man! And I am going to save her!

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ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* No offense, but aren't you just a kid? Yeah, what are you going to do? Save her on your tricycle? Put together a jigsaw? Read a book?

JAMES: No! I will fly up there!

(The CROWD bursts into laughter.)

ENSEMBLE 1: Get away, pipsqueak! That woman is in trouble!

JAMES: Then watch and see!

(HE takes a few steps back and then runs forwards. The CROWD lifts him to a flying position and carry him around the stage. Other members of the ENSEMBLE point in amazement.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* Wow! Look! The kid's doing it! He's flying! He's going to save her!

(The CROWD carries JAMES off stage. A member of the ENSEMBLE enters, holding a puppet representation of JAMES on a fishing rod. Other members of the ENSEMBLE continue commenting on the action.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* Go on! Quick! Oh no! She's let go!

(A DOLL on a wire representing the woman starts to drop from the top of the stage. The puppet representing JAMES starts to move towards it.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* She's falling! Save her! He's nearly there! Come on!

(The puppet representing James catches the doll.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously)* He's caught her! She's safe! He's bringing her back down!

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(The puppet and the doll exit and JAMES enters with the WOMAN.)

JAMES: There you are! All safe and sound!

WOMAN: Thanks! You saved my life! But...who are you?

JAMES: I am the Amazing Angel-Man!

(The CROWD starts cheering his name while he stands proudly. After a few seconds, TINA enters, calling James' name in time with the crowd's chants while she looks for him. As she enters, the crowd immediately disperses and JAMES sits in his wheelchair.)

TINA: Ah! There you are! I'm just going to get you ready for dinner. *(Moves his wheelchair forwards.)* Won't be a minute! *(SHE exits.)*

(JAMES pauses for a beat before addressing the audience.)

JAMES: OK. You're probably wondering what is going on, right? Well, all this that just happened, that was all in my imagination. Because I can't fly, obviously. In fact, I can't even walk, hence *(Gestures to his wheelchair.)*. As it happens, I can't talk either, which probably comes as a bit of a surprise to you because I'm talking to you right now. But this is just a narrative device so that I can clear a few things up for you. And I'm going to be doing this every now and then, so the sooner you get your heads around it, the better it is for all of us.

My name is James. I am confined to this wheelchair, and my imagination is pretty much the only thing I've got. Luckily, though, it's a pretty powerful one. Like all kids, I dream of being a superhero, one who can fly and run fast and use his superpowers to do good things...like save people from falling from tall buildings.

I call myself Angel-Man, but, of course, that's all in my head. I'm not actually Angel-Man. In fact, Angelman is not something that you can be but something that you...you know what? It's a bit early to give everything away just yet.

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(TINA and JOHN enter.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd. Gesturing.)* This is my mom and this is my dad, and this story is just as much about them as it is about me. It all starts off with them, and for that, we have to go all the way back to the 1990s.

(SFX: An upbeat 1990s dance song like "Everybody Dance Now" starts playing. TINA and JOHN re-enact the story in a highly-stylized manner.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* So, Dad is a brave and noble knight who fights for King Ethelred of Puritania...

JOHN: *(Sheepishly to the audience.)* Actually, I have just completed my bar exam and am about to start working for a law firm.

JAMES: ...and Mom is a beautiful princess.

TINA: *(Likewise.)* Er...I have a Media Studies degree from *(Insert the name of a rival university.)* so, in all honesty, I am just grateful for any job.

JAMES: They first meet at a jousting tournament.

JOHN: More like the local nightclub.

JAMES: Dad made his way to Mom and knelt on one knee...

TINA: He saw me across the crowded dance floor and staggered up to me.

JAMES: And recited a romantic sonnet.

JOHN: *(To TINA, drunkenly.)* Did it hurt when you fell from heaven? Because you've been running through my mind all day long...no, that's not right!

JAMES: Mom was enraptured by his beautiful poetry...

(TINA giggles girlishly.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* And they began courting. Not long after, Dad wished to marry her, but first he had to vanquish a fierce dragon in order to win her hand.

(TINA and JOHN are miming doing the dishes.)

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JOHN: *(Wiping a plate, casually.)* Want to get married?

TINA: *(Drying.)* Sure.

JAMES: A year later, they get married. Big summer wedding, all the traditional stuff and Mom looks radiantly beautiful in her white gown. Later, just in time for Christmas, my sister Lynette is born.

(A YOUNG LYNETTE enters.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* This is her and she'll play a small part in our story. But for now, I'll just say that she plays the piano, likes watching Disney movies, and is always making herself look pretty. Typical girl, really – or, at least, as typical a girl with a brother in a wheelchair can be.

(TINA, JOHN and LYNETTE exit. NEIL bursts in. He is wearing a superhero costume.)

NEIL: Here I am, Angel-Man! Never fear, your trusty sidekick is here!

JAMES: *(To the audience.)* Oh, yeah. Hang on. *(To NEIL.)* What are you doing?

NEIL: I've come to help save the woman.

JAMES: What woman?

NEIL: The woman dangling from the top of the tallest building in the world!

JAMES: Erm...awkward...

NEIL: What? What's awkward?

JAMES: You're too late. I've already saved her.

NEIL: Why didn't you wait for me? You always do this! *(HE starts sulking.)*

JAMES: This is Neil. Now, you will notice as our story progresses that no one else seems to see or hear Neil. Well, almost no one. You see, Neil only exists in my imagination – I told you, that's one of the few things I've got. And, yes, the other kids in my school year, they're all nice to me and stuff, and they all feel sorry for me, and they help me and everything, and invite me to parties and all...but they're not *really* friends as such.

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JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* At least with Neil I can interact, and he's Angel-Man's sidekick too. Problem is, he's always changing his superhero name and I can never keep up. I don't even know what his current name is.

NEIL: *(Sullenly.)* Star Boy. *(JAMES rolls his eyes at the audience.)* Who are you talking to anyway?

JAMES: Considering that he's a figment of my own imagination, he's really, really annoying. I don't think he's ever forgiven me for giving him the name Neil.

(NEIL stomps out grumpily.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* Anyway, we'd best get on with the story because I am about to make my first appearance.

(LIGHTS shift. LYNETTE enters and plays with a doll while JOHN enters, carrying a football. JAMES exits.)

JOHN: Hey, Lynette, want to play football with me?

LYNETTE: No thanks, Dad.

JOHN: *(After a pause.)* What about throw and catch?

LYNETTE: No thanks.

JOHN: *(After another pause.)* We could go out on your bike...

LYNETTE: I'm playing with my dolls, Dad.

JOHN: *(Dejected and disappointed.)* OK.

(TINA enters.)

TINA: John...

JOHN: Yes?

TINA: Do you remember a few weeks ago your parents looked after Lynette and we went out to dinner and had a few too many glasses of wine, and when we came back I told you to be careful and you said, "Well, what happens, happens"?

JOHN: Yes....?

TINA: Well...it happened.

JOHN: *(Lost.)* What?

TINA: *(Showing him a pregnancy test.)* I'm pregnant!

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JOHN: *(Stunned.)* What? How?

TINA: The traditional way. You know...

JOHN: Darling, that's fantastic! When?

TINA: June. Congratulations, Daddy!

(THEY hug and celebrate.)

JOHN: Did you hear that, Lynette? You're going to have a baby brother!

TINA: Or a sister...

JOHN: No! Please not this time! Let it be a boy!

TINA: It's not up to me!

JOHN: But...I want someone to play football with me! Who am I going to pass my skills on to?

TINA: John, I've seen you play -- you're a terrible, terrible football player! And girls can play football too, you know? And ride bikes...

JOHN: Not this one! I love her with all my heart, but I am not sure I could handle any more dolls' tea parties. Also, isn't it every man's duty to have a son? To continue the family name and so on?

TINA: We're not the royal family, John! And, anyway, it shouldn't matter whether it's a boy or a girl; what matters is that the baby is healthy.

JOHN: That's what everyone says, but no one really means it! They all secretly want either a boy or a girl. At least I'm honest about it.

TINA: *(Tenderly.)* Come on, John. We've been blessed with a second child. You're an amazing Dad, and you will be again, whether it's a boy or a girl. Once the baby is born, I'm sure it won't matter to you.

JOHN: *(Grumpily.)* OK. I promise I won't care about the baby's gender.

(LIGHTS shift as LYNETTE exits and DOCTOR VINCENT enters carrying some files.)

DR. VINCENT: Everything looks very encouraging in your 20-week scan, Mrs. Cooper. The baby is growing as expected and all your readings are normal. I expect this to be a healthy pregnancy. How have you been feeling?

TINA: Some sickness. Some spotting. But nothing too bad.

DR. VINCENT: Good. Would you like to know the sex of the baby?

JOHN: *(Quickly.)* Yes.

TINA: *(Smiling.)* Yes.

DR. VINCENT: You're going to have a boy. Congratulations!

JOHN: *(After a stunned pause.)* It's a boy!!!

(HE starts an exaggerated celebration that lasts a few seconds before realizing that the OTHERS are staring at him, bemused.)

JOHN: *(Cont'd. Stopping.)* See? Still not caring about the baby's gender...

JAMES: A few months later, I'm born and Dad gets the boy he's always wanted. He is so proud that he chooses the name himself.

JOHN: *(Proudly holding the baby.)* James.

JAMES: The family is complete, and everybody's happy.

JOHN: Look at this boy! He's always smiling!

JAMES: But not for long.

(The scene changes to Doctor Vincent's office. JOHN and TINA look worried.)

DR. VINCENT: And there's still no crawling?

TINA: Nothing. When Lynette started crawling she was all over the place, we wished she would just stop. But now we'd give anything for James to do the same.

DR. VINCENT: Speech?

TINA: Occasional sounds. Very occasional. Not even any babbling or anything.

JOHN: Is that unusual?

DR. VINCENT: At fourteen months, yes. It indicates some kind of developmental delay. Mind you, it's not unheard of for it to just kick-start all of a sudden and, before you know it, he could be running you ragged.

JOHN: That's what I said.

DR. VINCENT: But we should keep an eye on it though. Just in case.

JOHN: Of course. But I'm sure we're worrying about nothing. Look at him: I've never seen a happier baby. He's always smiling!

DR. VINCENT: *(Concerned.)* Yes. He's always smiling.

JAMES: By age two, there had been little improvement. I still wasn't walking, or talking. I started having seizures and doing these random, jerky movements with my limbs. As you can imagine, Dad wasn't taking it too well.

(LIGHTS shift as VINCENT exits. JOHN walks into the house with TINA following. He is visibly upset.)

TINA: John...

JOHN: He's doing the hand thing again, Tina. Flapping them around like a dolphin. I thought you said it was just a phase.

TINA: That's what I read...

JOHN: It's not a phase, Tina! He can't walk, he can't talk, he barely sleeps! His head is not growing like the doctor said it was, and now the flapping! *(HE demonstrates.)*

TINA: But he's happy, John. Look at him! He's always smiling!

JOHN: *(Unconvinced.)* Yes. He's always smiling.

JAMES: Eventually, I was referred to a specialist who decided to run some genetic tests.

(LIGHTS shift as JOHN and TINA wheel a stroller into the office of Dr. De'Ath. DE'ATH speaks to the stroller.)

DR. DE'ATH: Hello, James. My name is Doctor De'Ath.

(JAMES leaps up from his wheelchair.)

JAMES: Doctor Death! I knew you were behind this!

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DR. DE'ATH: Angel-Man!

JAMES: We're here to stop you!

DR. DE'ATH: We?

(JAMES looks about, panicked. NEIL rushes in.)

NEIL: I'm here, Angel-Man! Sorry I'm late. Wardrobe malfunction...

DR. DE'ATH: Who's this?

JAMES: This is my loyal sidekick Star Boy! And we're --

NEIL: Er...Angel-Man?

JAMES: *(Impatiently.)* What?

NEIL: I'm not Star Boy anymore. Kind of got tired of it.

JAMES: So, what are you now?

NEIL: Thunder.

JAMES: Thunder Boy?

NEIL: No. Just Thunder.

JAMES: Thunder?

NEIL: Yes.

JAMES: Fine. This is my loyal sidekick The Thunder! And we're --

NEIL: No, not *The* Thunder. Just Thunder.

JAMES: Just Thunder?

NEIL: Yes.

JAMES: That's a stupid name.

NEIL: Hey, it's not my imagination we're in!

JAMES: OK. Enough. This is my loyal sidekick Thunder. *(HE shoots a critical glance at NEIL.)* And we're here to stop you!

DR. DE'ATH: Oh really? How about you get a taste of my awesome power?

(HE fires a laser from his finger towards NEIL. It hits him and he falls to the floor.)

JAMES: *(Urgently rushing over to NEIL.)* Thunder!

DR. DE'ATH: And now, Angel-Man, it's your turn!

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(HE fires a laser at JAMES who this time deflects it back, flooring Doctor De'Ath. James then helps NEIL.)

JAMES: Thunder, are you all right?

NEIL: Yes, Angel-Man. Thanks.

(THEY turn to face DOCTOR DE'ATH, but he has escaped.)

NEIL: *(Cont'd.)* Oh no! He's escaped!

JAMES: We'll see you again soon, Doctor Death!

(As the fantasy ends, DE'ATH returns as the real doctor.)

TINA: We'll see you again soon, Doctor De'Ath.

JAMES: *(To the audience.)* The results took some time. It was a tense wait.

(LIGHTS shift as EVERYONE except JOHN exits. JOHN is sitting at his desk in his office. He looks distant. LOUIS, his colleague, enters.)

LOUIS: John, do you have the notes for the Brennan case tomorrow? *(There is a pause. JOHN is lost in his thoughts.)*
John?

JOHN: *(Reacting.)* Huh?

LOUIS: The notes for the Brennan case?

JOHN: Oh, yeah. Er...

LOUIS: Do you have them?

JOHN: Yes. But, er, they're not finished.

LOUIS: Not finished? I thought we'd agreed they'd be ready for today.

JOHN: Yes, I know. I'm sorry. I just...my head's somewhere else. Sorry.

LOUIS: The little one?

JOHN: Yeah.

LOUIS: Any better?

JOHN: No. The doctor has run some tests and we're just waiting for the results. I suppose I'm just a bit preoccupied. I'm sorry.

LOUIS: Don't worry about it. I understand. Do you want me to take the notes off you?

JOHN: No. Thanks. I'll get on them straightaway. It'll help to take my mind off things.

LOUIS: Well, if you change your mind just give me a call. *(Starts to exit.)* Oh, some of us are going for drinks after work. You're free to join us. I'm sure a few beers will help you take your mind off things too.

JOHN: Er...thanks, Louis, but...you know...

LOUIS: I know.

JOHN: ...I've got to be with my family right now.

LOUIS: Of course. No worries.

JOHN: Thanks, Louis.

(LOUIS exits. DOCTOR DE'ATH and TINA walk in to change the scene.)

DR. DE'ATH: The results of the tests have come in, Mr. and Mrs. Cooper. *(There is a tense pause.)* I'm afraid they show that James has Angelman Syndrome.

(There is a stunned silence.)

JOHN: *(Stammering.)* Wha...what's Angelman Syndrome?

(The scene suddenly changes to a game show. DOCTOR DE'ATH plays the role of the presenter while three members of the ENSEMBLE become contestants. JOHN and TINA continue lost in their thoughts.)

DR. DE'ATH: Welcome to Convenient Plot Exposition, the game show where we clarify important factual information to the audience in a jazzy style. It's not insensitive – it's playful and lighthearted, and intended to change the pace and tone at a tense moment of the story, while also avoiding a sense of didacticism. Now, let's meet our contestants!

ENSEMBLE 1: Hi! I'm Chelsea. I'm a boutique assistant and I'm from Dallas!

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(SFX: Canned applause is heard.)

ENSEMBLE 2: My name is Stevie, I'm a mechanic and I'm from Memphis!

(SFX: More canned applause.)

ENSEMBLE 3: I'm Natasha and I'm a hairdresser from Pittsburgh!

(SFX: More canned applause.)

DR. DE'ATH: These are our contestants. Let's play round one: Angelman Syndrome. Hands on buzzers please. *(The CONTESTANTS prepare themselves.)* Question 1: What causes Angelman Syndrome?

(SFX: A buzzer is heard.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Chelsea from Dallas?

ENSEMBLE 1: It is a neurodevelopmental disorder caused by either deletion or inactivation of genes in the maternally inherited chromosome 15.

DR. DE'ATH: Correct! You have educated ___ audience members!

(SFX: Canned applause.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Question 2: What are the symptoms of Angelman Syndrome?

(SFX: A buzzer is heard.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Stevie from Memphis?

ENSEMBLE 2: Severe developmental delay, including speech impairment, movement or balance disorder, and hyper motoric behavior.

DR. DE'ATH: Correct! You too have educated ___ audience members!

(SFX: Canned applause.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Question 3: How common is Angelman Syndrome?

(SFX: A buzzer is heard.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Natasha from Pittsburgh?

ENSEMBLE 3: Latest studies suggest that Angelman Syndrome affects about 1 in every 24,000 children. There is no known cure but people with AS live a normal lifespan.

DR. DE'ATH: Correct! You have educated ____ *(one less than before)* audience members!

(NATASHA protests.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Sorry, but a man in Row G has switched off. However, you still have a chance to win if you answer our bonus question. Hands on buzzers. Why is Angelman Syndrome known by this name?

(SFX: A buzzer is heard.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Chelsea from Dallas for the win!

ENSEMBLE 1: It is named after Harry Angelman, the British pediatrician who first described the condition in 1965. The term "angel" is often used to describe people with AS because of their youthful, happy appearance.

DR. DE'ATH: Correct!

(SFX: Canned applause.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* Congratulations, Chelsea from Dallas! You are tonight's winner!

(Canned applause.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* And your prize is...the gratitude and appreciation of tonight's audience!

(CHELSEA celebrates.)

DR. DE'ATH: *(Cont'd.)* How are you feeling, Chelsea from Dallas?

ENSEMBLE 1: I am over the moon! Thank you very much!

DR. DE'ATH: *(To audience.)* And thank you for joining us on tonight's show. Don't forget to join us the next time you need something clarified on stage, and remember, you learn something new every day! Now, we head back to my clinic.

(ENSEMBLE exit as the scene returns to the clinic.)

JOHN: Well, that was weird.

TINA: What does this mean, Doctor?

DR. DE'ATH: It means that James will have difficulty with walking, talking and many other basic functions. There are a number of treatment options, and with therapy and medication we can manage some of the symptoms, but things are going to be difficult for him...and for you. There will come a point when he will need almost constant care. On the bright side, there are some encouraging treatments being developed that James might be able to take advantage of in the future, and we will obviously keep a close eye on all developments.

(DR. DE'ATH, TINA, and JOHN exit.)

JAMES: *(To the audience.)* But Dad had stopped listening a long time ago. All he could think about was that his son – his only son – was suffering from a condition that would prevent him doing all the things a boy was supposed to be able to do. And as frustrating as this realization was for all of us, it was him who took it worse.

(JOHN enters with a foam ball.)

JOHN: Come on, James. Your therapist wants you to do some ball exercises. So, I'm going to gently throw you the ball and I want you to try to catch it, OK?

(HE gently throws him the ball. JAMES makes no attempt to catch it and it bounces off him.)

JOHN: *(Cont'd.)* No, James! You've got to try to catch it, yes? Like this! *(Demonstrates.)* OK? Right, now your turn. *(He tries again, with the same result.)* You've got to try, James! You have to try! The therapist says it will help develop your muscles and your reflexes. Go on, try to catch it. *(The same process is repeated.)* OK...how about just holding the ball, yes? We can try catching later. For now, just try to hold the ball.

(HE places the ball on James' lap and holds his hands to it. As soon as he lets go, JAMES lets the ball drop to the floor.)

JOHN: *(Cont'd. More frustrated.)* No, James! Use your hands to hold the ball! *(He places the ball on James' lap again.)* Come on, James! Hold it! HOLD IT!

(JAMES lets the ball drop.)

JOHN: *(Cont'd. Angrily.)* Forget it!

(JOHN exits in fury. After a few seconds, JAMES leaps out of the wheelchair and grabs the ball.)

JAMES: I've got it!

(NEIL enters.)

NEIL: What?

JAMES: The Energy Ball!

NEIL: Great job, Angel-Man! You found it!

JAMES: Now we need to take it back to the Trintons.

(PETTAK enters.)

PETTAK: Angel-Man! You have recovered our Energy Ball!
You have saved our civilization!

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NEIL: Who's that?

JAMES: That's Pettak, the Grand King of the Trintons.

PETTAK: You have proved yourself a true hero, Angel-Man.
You and your assistant –

JAMES: Thunder.

NEIL: Erm....Angel-Man?

JAMES: What?

NEIL: Er....

JAMES: You've changed your name again, haven't you?

NEIL: No. Yes. Well, kind of.

JAMES: What do you mean?

NEIL: You were right. Thunder on its own was lame. So I've
decided to go for The Thunder.

JAMES: The Thunder?

NEIL: Yes.

JAMES: You're sure?

NEIL: Yes.

JAMES: No more changes?

NEIL: No.

JAMES: Grand King, my sidekick's name is The Thunder.

PETTAK: We are eternally grateful to you, Angel-Man and
The Thunder. I must now return to my planet and place this
Energy Ball in its core so it can continue to power us for
generations. Thank you both! *(HE exits.)*

NEIL: You did great there, Angel-Man.

JAMES: But you helped too. That battle with the Human
Crocodile?

NEIL: Did you see how I punched him in the face? And when
I grabbed its tail and – *(HE glances offstage nervously.*
Panicking.) Got to go!

(HE exits. JAMES looks confused. TINA enters with
MICHAEL. James immediately returns to his wheelchair.)

TINA: *(Over-motherly.)* James. This is Michael. He has come
to work for us. Well, for you. He is going to care for you. He
has a lot of experience working with young children. He will
help you with your exercises, give you some massages...I
think you're going to like him. *(There is an awkward pause.)*

TINA: *(Cont.)* I'll just leave you to get to know each other, OK?
(SHE exits.)

(MICHAEL is very matter-of-fact with James, very much unlike how the others have been treating him.)

MICHAEL: Hello? *(There is no reply.)* I'm Michael and, yeah, like your mom said, I'm going to be your caregiver. So, we're going to have to become friends. And, yes, I'll look after you. I'll push you around, I'll feed you, I'll take you to places...but there will be times that I will be challenging you and stretching you and you're going to hate me. But do you know what? I won't care. Because I'm not the one sitting on a wheelchair.

(There is a tense pause. JAMES is responding more to him than to any other character. MICHAEL takes out a Kit-Kat, opens it, breaks it in half and offers some to James.)

MICHAEL: *(Cont'd.)* Hungry? Kit-Kat?

(JAMES' eyes light up. He takes the chocolate and eats it.)

MICHAEL: *(Cont'd.)* I thought you'd like it. Your mom said you like chocolate. *(There is a pause as JAMES eats.)* So, what things are you interested in?

JAMES: *(Suddenly.)* Is this because I can't walk?

MICHAEL: Is what because you can't walk?

JAMES: That I have a caregiver.

MICHAEL: Yep.

JAMES: And because I can't control my arms and my legs?

MICHAEL: That's right.

JAMES: And because I can't talk?

MICHAEL: Well, you're talking to me now.

JAMES: Yeah, I don't know how that's happening. Because, you know, I can't actually talk. And yet we're...

MICHAEL: *(A beat.)* Maybe we're communicating at a different level.

JAMES: Maybe. Like telepathy or something. Whatever it is, though, we —

MICHAEL: -- understand each other.

JAMES: Yes. I guess it's because you're different than everyone else.

MICHAEL: How so?

JAMES: You talk to me, not at me, even though you know that I can't actually respond. Everyone else speaks to me with that sympathetic, almost condescending tone of voice, as if they're scared of upsetting me, as if I can't understand them. But you...you're different.

MICHAEL: And I gave you chocolate.

JAMES: That too. But, somehow, you get me. *(Pause.)* Bit corny, isn't it?

MICHAEL: Yes. But that doesn't mean it isn't true. *(Pause.)* I asked you a question. *(JAMES looks at him blankly.)* What things are you interested in?

JAMES: *(Immediately.)* Superheroes.

MICHAEL: *(Interested.)* Oh, really?

JAMES: Yes. I like them all, but Superman's my favorite.

MICHAEL: I see. *(Another pause.)*

JAMES: I'm a superhero, you know? In my mind. And that's all that matters. Have you ever heard the phrase *cogito ergo sum*? *(MICHAEL smiles.)* It means "I think, therefore I am." And I think I'm a superhero, therefore —

MICHAEL: --you are. Wow. Descartes and a Kit-Kat. Quite a first day! And what superpowers do you have?

JAMES: I can fly, of course. And run faster than any other superhero, even the Flash. And I have superhuman strength. And I can shoot lasers out of my eyes. And super-hearing. I can even turn invisible if I want to. I fight crime and save lives. I give back to the world what it has given to me.

MICHAEL: That's very noble of you. And do you have a superhero name?

JAMES: Yes. I'm the Amazing Angel-Man.

(NEIL enters. He's watching, interested.)

MICHAEL: And who's this?

JAMES: Who?

MICHAEL: Him.

JAMES: (*Shocked.*) You can see him?

MICHAEL: Of course. He's standing right there.

JAMES: But...no one else can see him!

MICHAEL: I can...

JAMES: (*Uncertain.*) Yeah. I don't really know how you're doing that.

MICHAEL: As you said, clearly I get you. Now, are you going to carry on being rude or are you going to introduce me to your imaginary friend?

JAMES: Erm...he's Neil.

MICHAEL: Neil? Seriously?

JAMES: He's my sidekick. He's known as The Thunder.

(*NEIL coughs.*)

JAMES: (*Cont'd.*) No, Neil, not again! What have you changed it to this time?

NEIL: (*Sheepishly.*) Dragon-Boy.

JAMES: Dragon-Boy?

MICHAEL: I think that's a great name! (*JAMES and NEIL glare at each other.*) So, Angel-Man and Dragon-Boy. Looks like the three of us are going to have loads of fun!

(*LIGHTS transition to JOHN in his office. He looks distracted. LOUIS approaches him.*)

LOUIS: The Simpson contract has come through, John.

JOHN: (*Emerging from his stupor.*) Oh. Good.

LOUIS: Didn't think we'd make it there. Nice work!

JOHN: Thanks.

LOUIS: No problem at all. (*HE starts to exit, then stops and turns to him.*) We're all going to go to have a few drinks and celebrate. You're more than welcome to join us. Although...I imagine...

JOHN: Yep...

LOUIS: ...it's not a problem.

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JOHN: ...you know. Family and stuff. Kids. James.
LOUIS: Of course. I understand.

(HE starts to leave. JOHN ponders for a moment.)

JOHN: Actually, you know what? I think I will join you.

(LIGHTS transition to JAMES, NEIL, and MICHAEL engaged in a superhero fantasy. Michael is playing the role of the Dark Overlord.)

JAMES: I will never join you, Dark Overlord!
MICHAEL: Don't be stupid, Angel-Man! Join me and we will rule the universe together!
JAMES: Never!
MICHAEL: Then...you will die!

(NEIL has sneaked his way behind MICHAEL.)

JAMES: Now, Dragon-Boy!
NEIL: *(Prompting him.)* Dragon-Knight!
JAMES: Oh, for god's sake! Now, Dragon-Knight!

(NEIL attacks MICHAEL with a light-saber. Michael drops to the floor, defeated.)

MICHAEL: *(Crawling on the floor.)* Angel-Man! You and your sidekick have beaten me! My powers were no match for your cunning!
JAMES: *(Sitting in his wheelchair.)* You have been vanquished, Dark Overlord! I will now temporarily assume the throne of Quartzeria until the rightful king returns!
NEIL: I will fetch him, Angel-Man!

(NEIL exits. JAMES remains sitting in his wheelchair and MICHAEL is still lying on the floor.)

MICHAEL: I was a fool to have challenged you, Angel-Man! The legends about your awesome power are clearly true!

MICHAEL: *(Cont'd.)* Here I lie, a defeated villain, powerless and unable to continue. I pray that you forgive me.

(JOHN enters, slightly drunk. He surveys the scene with disdain.)

MICHAEL: *(Cont'd.)* I hereby renounce all my powers and all my claims to the throne of Quartzeria, and vow to send myself in exile to a remote island where I can no longer do harm to the people you have sworn to protect, Angel-Man.

JOHN: *(Sharply.)* What are you doing?

MICHAEL: *(Surprised to see him.)* Sorry. We were just...playing.

JOHN: Is that what I pay you for?

MICHAEL: Well...

JOHN: No. I pay you to care for him. To massage him, to do his therapy, to push his wheelchair and to give him his medicines. Not to crawl about on the floor pretending to be Darth Vader.

MICHAEL: The Dark Overlord.

JOHN: I don't care. Just do your job. Or I'll find someone else who will. *(Starts to exit.)*

MICHAEL: I was trying to stimulate his imagination.

(JOHN stops and turns to HIM.)

MICHAEL: *(Cont'd.)* Studies show that active role-play is good for all children, even those with Angelman. After all, their imagination is the biggest strength they have. I was trying to engage with his fantasies in order to encourage a response. All children love superheroes. Even those in wheelchairs.

JOHN: Spare me your psycho-babble bull crap. What he needs isn't role-play. What he needs is a miracle. *(HE starts to exit but stops again.)* Oh, by the way: Angel-Man isn't a superhero. It's a disease. Believe me, there is nothing super nor heroic about it.

(LIGHTS shift to TINA talking with DOCTOR DE'ATH.)

DR. DE'ATH: Research from a lab in California looks promising. A new pioneering gene therapy that aims to get cells to produce the genetic proteins missing in patients with Angelman. They are even talking of clinical trials within the next few years. It will take time, but the medical community is very excited. We could maybe even consider James for the pilot program.

TINA: That's great news. We knew there were tests going on, but we weren't expecting results so quickly.

DR. DE'ATH: Well, always best to remain cautious with these things. But it's good to know that within the next decade or so this might be a thing of the past. In the meantime, all of James's results are normal. His carer says he has made some progress with his muscles. Shows that the therapy is working. Tiny steps, of course, but generally positive. He's doing well, all things considered. *(Beat.)* And, Mr. Cooper? I haven't seen him for a while.

(There is a tense pause.)

TINA: He's...he's at work.

DR. DE'ATH: It's good for him to be present at these discussions.

TINA: I know. It's just that he's been busy.

(DR DE'ATH approaches her. The mood becomes more serious.)

DR. DE'ATH: Mrs. Cooper...these things often affect the parents worse than the patient. James...he's naturally not as aware of his limitations or of his condition as you are. It can be very distressing...particularly for fathers. *(A pause.)* Is your husband struggling to cope, Mrs. Cooper?

TINA: He's...more withdrawn. Working late nights and generally avoiding spending much time at home. It's hit him hard, obviously. Well, it's hit both of us hard, but he's always taken it worse, and, as the years have gone by, so has his frustration. I don't think he's ever really accepted James's condition and he feels helpless.

TINA: *(Cont'd.)* I suppose that's the worst thing about these situations -- you can't really take the blame out on anyone. It makes it frustrating. *(Pause.)* I can understand it, though. John always wanted a son, and James...he's just not what he expected. A son who can't walk, who can't talk, who can't do very much. It's not what he imagined. And I have to be the strong one because every morning I wake up and realize that this is what our lives are going to be like. It's hard. But if it were easy, then any one could do it.

DR. DE'ATH: That's right. I've dealt with many families over the years, Mrs. Cooper. What your husband needs to do is to stop focusing less on what James can't do and more on what he can. Then he'll realize, and it will open his eyes.

TINA: I hope you're right.

(LIGHTS quickly transition to the Coopers' home.)

TINA: *(Cont'd. Stressed.)* I hope you've finished, James, because it's bath time and then to bed.

(SHE moves to JAMES and finds that he has dirtied his clothes with food.)

TINA: *(Cont'd.)* Oh, James! What have you done? Look at you, you're a mess! Come, let me take that off you and put it in the wash straight away. *(SHE removes his shirt and begins to stomp off.)* Honestly, you kids really know how to pick the right time for everything!

(JOHN enters. He has been drinking.)

TINA: *(Cont'd. Angrily.)* Where have you been?

JOHN: Out.

TINA: That pipe is dripping again. I thought you said you fixed it. And Lynette needs some help with her math homework and I can't do it because James needs a bath. Also, you need to spend more time with the kids because you've been out all day and James has missed you.

JOHN: Really? Did he ask for me?

TINA: (*Looks closely at JOHN.*) Have you been drinking? (*There is a tense pause.*) John? (*Beat.*) Is that where you've been? Down the pub again, while I've been here dealing with dripping pipes and dirty clothes? (*Another pause.*) John! Listen to me!

JOHN: Leave me alone!

TINA: No, I will not leave you alone! You cannot do this to us! Turning up late, stinking drunk, and then telling us to leave you alone! (*A pause, then softer.*) What's wrong, John? What's going on?

JOHN: I'm sorry. I can't cope with this anymore.

TINA: This? What do you mean this? You mean *him!* (*Pause.*) That's what you can't cope with. Him! (*Pause. JOHN avoids eye contact.*) He's your son, John! He's your son!

JOHN: My son? Look at him! There's my son! In his wheelchair. Smiling. Stains on his face and not a hope in hell. That's my son!

TINA: John, you can't do this. I...I know you're angry. (*JOHN scoffs.*) No, I do! I understand, John. I might not be a man and believe in all this father-to-son football, family name nonsense, but I understand why you're so angry. But you mustn't take it out on James, or on us. And you mustn't blame yourself either. No one's to blame.

(*JOHN looks accusingly at TINA.*)

TINA: (*Cont'd.*) You're blaming me? You think all of this is *my* fault?

JOHN: The doctor said, didn't he? That it's the maternal gene. All this – you gave it to him!

TINA: You think I did this on purpose? You think I somehow willed this to happen? To condemn my son to spend his life on a wheelchair? That I deliberately damaged my genes just to spite you? (*Beat.*) Of course, I didn't! These things – they simply happen. It's not my fault, it's not your fault, it's no one's fault! These things happen!

JOHN: Yes. They happened to me.

TINA: They happened to *us*, John.

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(JOHN and TINA hold each other's gaze as he rises and leaves. Tina starts to cry and exits.)

JAMES: *(To the audience.)* Mom spent the rest of the evening with me, pretending nothing had happened. I didn't really understand what was going on, but every child can tell when his mother has been crying. Especially when she's been crying because of you.

(NEIL enters.)

NEIL: Listen!

JAMES: What?

NEIL: I think I can hear the princess!

JAMES: Accessing super-hearing... *(Listens carefully.)*
You're right! It is the princess! And she's crying!

NEIL: We have to follow the sound, Angel-Man.

JAMES: *(Gesturing to another part of the stage.)* It's coming from in there!

NEIL: But that's the Dungeon of Doom!

JAMES: If we are to save her, we must brave the dangers of the dungeon. Follow me, Dragon-Boy.

NEIL: Er, Angel-Man...

JAMES: What?

NEIL: Would this be a bad time to tell you...

JAMES: That you've changed your name again?

NEIL: Yes.

JAMES: Yes! Quick, creep inside!

(THEY mime creeping into the Dungeon of Death. They look around, cautiously.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* The princess must be around here somewhere.

NEIL: We must find her quickly, Angel-Man, before the Fire Ogre gets back!

(SFX: A door is opened.)

NEIL: *(Cont'd.)* Too late!

(HE exits. JAMES sits in his wheelchair CS. JOHN enters. He has been drinking. As soon as John enters, he looks at James and smiles.)

JOHN: *(Drunkenly.)* What are you smiling at? *(Beat.)* Eh? *(Beat.)* What do you have to smile about? You can't walk. You can't talk. You just...sit there. And eat. Sit and eat. *(HE sits down, takes out a bottle of whisky and fills a glass. He drinks it straight in one go. After a pause.)* Stop it! Stop looking at me! Stop smiling at me! I have nothing to smile about, do I? Look at you! My only son! And he can't do anything for himself! Anything! We have to feed you, we have to clothe you, we have to bathe you, we have to do everything for you! And all you can do is smile! *(HE walks away and tries to calm down, but he fails. Erupting angrily.)* I SAID STOP IT! I don't want you to look at me! I don't want you to smile at me! I don't want you anywhere near me! You're just a burden! Do you hear that? Nothing but a smiling, useless burden!

(TINA enters. She has heard part of his final tirade.)

TINA: John!

(HE glares at HER. They maintain eye contact for a few seconds before he moves away from the scene. The ENSEMBLE forms upstage. The following routine involves some physical theatre and choral work to communicate the story.)

ENSEMBLE: An angry man barges out of his house.

(SFX: A door slam.)

ENSEMBLE: He goes to his car.

(SFX: The beep of a car door unlocking.)

ENSEMBLE: He sits in the driver's seat and turns the key.

(SFX: A car ignition.)

ENSEMBLE: He sets off down the driveway, leaving his home behind.

(SFX: A car driving off.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* He drives out of town and towards the mountains. He has no destination in mind. He is angry, and he is drunk. He reaches a curve in the road. In his distraction, he drifts towards the wrong side of the road. Suddenly, a truck appears, heading in the opposite direction.

(SFX: A loud car horn is heard.)

ENSEMBLE: The man slams on the brakes and turns the steering wheel furiously.

(SFX: A loud skid.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Variously.)* He skids across the road and towards the edge of a cliff. The man bursts through the windshield and heads towards the empty blackness beneath. Luckily, his foot gets caught in a barrier and he hangs dangerously over the abyss. The man struggles, not realizing that his movements are loosening him. The barrier starts to peel off the man's shoe as he continues to jerk. Suddenly, the shoe comes off and then –

JOHN: I saw it out of the corner of my eye. A small light. Not the kind of bright light I expected when people talk about their near-death experiences, but like a distant firefly heading towards me. As it approaches, I cannot quite make out what it is: a large insect, or a small bird, maybe. Perhaps something manmade? It comes closer, at high speed, moving directly towards me. I can see it's bigger than I thought – about the size of a small child.

JOHN: *(Cont'd.)* It stretches out towards me, and suddenly, I can see it clearly. But...it can't be...

JAMES: Dad – give me your hand.

JOHN: James? But...but...you're...you're flying?

JAMES: Dad, give me your hand! We don't have much time!

JOHN: But how are you –

JAMES: Dad, you have to trust me! Give me your hand!

JOHN: James!

JAMES: *(Urgently.)* Dad!

(The ENSEMBLE show JAMES rescuing JOHN and placing him on the roadside. SFX: An ambulance siren is heard and two PARAMEDICS enter and begin working on John. James stands in a corner, watching, while John continues to call out his name deliriously. The LIGHTS fade on John being attended to by the paramedics. LIGHTS up to reveal a hospital waiting room. TINA looks anxious. A DOCTOR enters.)

DOCTOR: Mrs. Cooper?

TINA: Doctor?

DOCTOR: We've completed the surgery, and I am pleased to say all things have gone well. Your husband is stable.

TINA: How badly is he hurt?

DOCTOR: It could have been a lot worse. His heart responded fine and most of the injuries are superficial. He has a nasty gash on his right ankle that will make him limp for a while but, other than that, he just needs a few days of rest and observation before we discharge him. *(There is a short pause as he reflects.)* We can't really explain what happened. It's a miracle he's alive, if I'm honest.

TINA: Can I see him?

DOCTOR: For a few minutes, sure. Then it would be best to give him a chance to rest. He's had a bad shock.

(HE exits. TINA enters the hospital room with trepidation. JOHN is lying on a bed. He looks dazed. He barely registers a reply. Throughout her speech, he shows some awareness of her presence but does not respond.)

TINA: John? How are you? *(Pause.)* The doctor says you'll be OK in a few days. You gave us a nasty scare. *(Pause.)* Look, John...I know things have been difficult for you. For all of us. And this business with James...I know it's hit you hard. And I know you feel helpless. You blame God, you blame the doctors...you even blame me! And I understand all that. You wanted a son, and you're upset about how things have turned out. And you turn to drink because it makes you feel better, and you lash out because you're angry. And tonight you almost died because of it. You almost left your children without a father. *(Pause.)* You *have* a son, John. He's 8 years old and his name is James. And he's a great little boy. You'd be so proud of him. Yes, he's very ill. He can't walk, and he can't talk. He won't do many of the things that other boys will do. But *we* can move him and *we* can be his voice. He's amazing, John, he really is. He can do incredible things. He's a fighter. And he's happy. He's always smiling. And he loves you. He loves you very, very much. Much more than you deserve.

(The DOCTOR enters.)

DOCTOR: Mrs. Cooper?

TINA: Come back, John. Your son needs you.

(SHE exits with the DOCTOR. JOHN is in tears. LIGHTS transition. MICHAEL and JAMES enter, with Michael pushing the wheelchair.)

MICHAEL: ...if it's a nice day, I could take you up there again. We could look at the birds and everything. But you have to do your exercises first, OK?

(JOHN enters.)

JOHN: Hey.

MICHAEL: Mr. Cooper. How are you?

JOHN: I'm much better, thanks.

MICHAEL: It's good to have you back.

JOHN: Thanks. *(An awkward pause.)* Erm...could I...could I speak to my son? Would you mind?

MICHAEL: *(Surprised.)* Er...yeah, sure.

(HE exits. JAMES is looking and smiling at JOHN, who seems very uncomfortable with the situation. He paces around and fidgets. There is a long pause before he starts to speak.)

JOHN: How did you do it? *(JAMES does not react to the question. A beat.)* Because I know it was you. I don't know how you did it but you did. That was you, James. I saw you. I heard you. You were right in front of me. *(Pause.)* You saved me. You took me into your arms and flew me to safety. Yes – you were flying, James. And you were talking. You knew I was in trouble and you came to me. One moment I was falling and then...you caught me! You caught me and carried me to the roadside for the ambulance. You...you saved my life.

(HE approaches JAMES tearfully. James still seems impervious to everything.)

JOHN: *(Cont'd.)* I'm sorry, son. I am so, so sorry. I promise I'll never drink again. I've sought help, and I'm going to meetings, and I'm doing really well so far. But I know I will never drink again...because I have no reason to. I used to drink because I was angry, angry that you were ill and that you couldn't do all these things. But I've realized you can do some amazing things that I never thought possible. I've realized that you are a special little boy, that you have given me a second chance and that I need to do everything in my power to deserve it. You have given me a chance to be a father again, James. You saved my life. And not just on the cliff. *(A pause as he gazes lovingly at JAMES.)* I love you, son. *(HE starts to walk away.)*

JAMES: I love you too, Dad.

(Shocked, JOHN turns around to look at JAMES, who still smiles blankly.)

JOHN: *(After a few seconds.)* Amazing.

(HE exits. MICHAEL enters.)

MICHAEL: You ready?

JAMES: Yeah.

(MICHAEL starts to gather some belongings.)

JAMES: *(Cont'd.)* You know something? I've decided to stop being a superhero.

MICHAEL: *(Casually.)* Really? Why's that?

JAMES: I've figured out the reason for my existence, and I've realized I don't really need superpowers. I don't need to fly, or run fast, or shoot lasers. In fact, I don't even need to walk, or talk, or do all those other things that kids do. I have my mom. I have my dad. I have my sister. As long as I have my family and my imagination, I can do anything I want.

MICHAEL: Bit corny, isn't it?

JAMES: Yes. But that doesn't mean it isn't true.

MICHAEL: Touché. There's just one more thing though.

JAMES: What's that?

MICHAEL: Isn't there someone you're forgetting?

JAMES: Who?

(NEIL enters.)

NEIL: Me. *(Pause.)* You can't stop being a superhero. What will happen to me?

JAMES: *(After thinking for a moment.)* I am going to free you from my imagination, Neil. It's time for you to become your own person.

NEIL: I can't do that! I'm a sidekick! Without you, I'm nothing!

JAMES: I don't think you need to be a sidekick anymore. I think you're ready to become a leader.

NEIL: Really? Do you mean it? *(HE thinks for a moment.)* But I can't! You know how bad I am with names!

JAMES: Maybe you can call yourself The Amazing Angel-Man.

NEIL: But that's your superhero name!

JAMES: You take it. I don't need it anymore.

NEIL: Gee...thanks. I promise I won't let you down.

JAMES: I know. Then, to the elements be free, and fare thou well.

(THEY shake hands.)

NEIL: *(Adopting a pose.)* Here comes the Amazing Angel-Man! *(He runs off.)*

MICHAEL: *(A pause.)* That was a very nice thing you did there. You really made his day.

JAMES: Yeah. And I could do with a break from him. He could really get on my nerves sometimes. *(MICHAEL laughs.)* So, let me get this right: I saved my father's life. I helped him to become a better person. I brought my family together. And I made my imaginary friend's dreams come true.

MICHAEL: Yep.

JAMES: And I did all this all by myself.

MICHAEL: That's right.

JAMES: *(After a moment's reflection.)* I guess my dad is right: I am pretty amazing.

MICHAEL: *(Chuckling.)* That you are, James. That you are.

(SFX: The superhero theme plays as the LIGHTS fade.)

THE END