

SKETCH ON THE SUBJECT OF 'GRACE'

Performed at an evening service, 17th July 2009, Holy Trinity Church, Headington Quarry, Oxford

SOMETHING SPECIAL

CAST

PHIL – HEAD OF COMPANY
JAMES - Hard working employee looking for a raise
SARAH- Kind employee
JANE - Jaded employee

JAMES enters. There are a lot of cardboard boxes around. He starts to carefully put one on top of the other. The cardboard boxes have names like 'Overtime' 'Worked weekends' 'Community Work', 'Extra Courses', 'Success', 'Profits'

JAMES: I've come to ask you....no...it seems to me.....over the last year...that's it!

SARAH comes in

SARAH: What you doing?

JAMES: Could you just....I need some space?

SARAH: Alright. I'm just getting some coffee. Want some?

JAMES: No! I mean....thank you

SARAH: suit yourself.

JAMES: *[keeps building]* Over the last year I've been putting in a huge number of extra hours. I was more than happy to put in these hours in order to promote the company. The projects have gone very well – you will of course have noticed the increase in profits as a direct result. I went on several courses to improve my management skills – these proved extremely valuable. So, to get to the

JANE: Hi James – talking to yourself again?

JAMES: hajust preparing.

JANE: Always prepared – that's our James! Bet you went to Boy Scouts....

JAMES: I did actually...

JANE: There's no point – you know that don't you?

JAMES: No point in what?

JANE: Asking him for a raise. He's as tight as a...

JAMES: Jane! – I have a watertight case – I've got the figures – over the last year I've done everything that could be expected of me – I've come in early, left late, worked at weekends, gone on courses, improved my productivity, raised profits –when he sees this he won't be able to say no.

JANE: He'll find something James.

JAMES: There's nothing for him to find Jane.

JANE: you were off sick for 2 days.

JAMES: I'm allowed to be ill!

JANE: You took time off to go to your daughter's sports day.

JAMES: I forgot about that!

JANE: He won't.

JAMES: You watch Jane – I've done the work, I've put in the time – I'll reap the rewards. You should have done the same.

JANE: I'm a realist James. I gave up looking for miracles years ago. If you work hard and do well, they just give you more work! Here he comes.

Phil enters very excitedly carrying a large brief case with the words 'Something Special' on it. He uses it to knock down James' work by mistake

PHIL: Hello everyone! How's the team?

EVERYONE: Fine boss.

JAMES: We're firing on all cylinders.

PHIL: James! James! Relax! Everyone can you stop what you're doing – I need a word with you [*they gather round*]

JANE: Here we go.....

PHIL: I've just had the most incredible experience. I'd parked the car on Leaders street. You know how I like to give myself a decent walk first thing. Well, I was walking along thinking about work – lost in the planning of it when I suddenly felt someone grab me by my jacket – I thought I was getting mugged.

SARAH: It's not a nice area around here – you should park nearer.

PHIL: You're wrong Sarah. Because at the same time as I was grabbed, this car went past in front of me and I swear the wing mirror brushed my arm.

JANE: You didn't just walk out into the road did you?

PHIL: No. I was crossing on a green pedestrian light. But I hadn't looked to check the cars were stopping. Some idiot car driver jumped the lights. I'd started walking and the bloke behind me saw the car coming and grabbed me.

JANE: Whoa! That was close.

PHIL: The thing is I was stunned – the bloke took me to the side so that I could lean against a building for a minute or so to get myself together. I don't mind telling you, I was shaking. Still am! Look *[shows them shaking hands]* I was just looking up to say thank you and you saved my life, and he'd gone.

JANE: Just like that?

SARAH: That is so cool – the super hero thing – save the man and then disappear to do more good deeds! Did you get his name? And address?

JAMES: The boss nearly got killed and you're looking for a date! Boss, shouldn't you be at hospital now? You ought to get a check over.

PHIL: I'm fine, James....in fact I'm better than fine....A complete stranger just saved my life! I could have been under that car. I'm alive! Everyone – *[out of his suitcase he pulls a bit of paper which says "Day Off"]* you've got the day off! Enjoy!

SARAH AND JANE: Whoopee!

JAMES: But we've got all this work to...

SARAH and JANE: Shut up James!

PHIL: James, James! I've just been given my life – free – gratis – have you any idea what that feels like? I'm breathing – all my limbs work – I want to

climb Mount Kilimanjaro! I want to hug you all! I want to give all my money away! I want to..... That's what I want to do...

JAMES: What?

Phil is fiddling with something in his brief case

PHIL: You know that raise that you've all been angling for?

JANE AND SARAH: Yes

JAMES: I wouldn't put it quite like...

PHIL: You've got it – all of you. Plus an extra 5%.

Pulls a piece of paper out with RAISE + 5% on it. They all stand there looking stunned.

PHIL: It's worth it for the look on your faces alone!

JANE: Well, stone the blooming crows!

SARAH: Wow!

JAMES: You're just giving it to us?

JANE: No strings attached?

PHIL: Did I get my life back with strings attached? I still can't believe it! I'm alive! Thank God! What you all waiting for? Get out of here! I need to lock up! I'm going home to see my wife. I've got to get some flowers, book somewhere for lunch...get going!

JAMES: But...

PHIL: Someone saved my life! All I've done is give you the day off and some money! Get out of here! Enjoy.

JANE: You don't have to say that twice. Come on everyone!

They start walking down the aisle

JAMES: I did all that extra work.

SARAH: Yeah.

JAMES: And he's just given us the money – he's given it to you as well. You didn't do anything!

SARAH: Thanks a lot! I seem to have been in this office a lot for someone who's done nothing.

JAMES: Nothing to deserve the extra money.

JANE: You don't get it do you?

JAMES: Get what?

SARAH: You just got given a gift – free – gratis – that's something special.

JAMES: I don't want a free gift – I want to earn everything I get – fair and square.

JANE: Tell me James, what did you do to earn the right to be born?

JAMES: What?

JANE: You got given life – what did you do to earn it?

JAMES: I don't know what you're on about.

JANE: I give up – come on Sarah- let me treat you to a latte and cake

SARAH: So miracles do happen!

JANE: Yes Sarah, I think they do.

They leave. James is left behind.

JAMES: I just don't get it..... *[He wanders off]*