

Confessions of a Germaphobe

10-min play

by
J. Jea

J. Jean
ljk@comcast.net
651-303-5049

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Emily	neurotic; phobic	20-65	Female
Father John	priest; kind; sensitive	20-65	Male

TIME: Present; mid-day

PLACE: interior of a Catholic Church

NOTES: The set can be as elaborate or as simple as you wish

"Hand sanitizer is the gateway drug for OCD" - unknown

AT RISE: THE INTERIOR OF A CATHOLIC
CHURCH, DIMLY LIT

EMILY (Neurotic, phobic) ENTERS.

EMILY

Hello?Is anyone here? Hello?

The LIGHTS brighten.

HELLLOOOO?

*FATHER JOHN (Kindly, mild-mannered, the guy you
want to have a beer with) ENTERS.*

FATHER JOHN

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know anyone was here. We've been having some trouble with the -

EMILY

Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned, it's -

FATHER JOHN

Well, you get right to it, don't you.

EMILY

I don't like to waste time. It's been, well, ... never since my last confession.

FATHER JOHN

We might be here a while.

EMILY

I'm not Catholic. I should get that out of the way right now.

FATHER JOHN

Okay. We welcome everyone.

EMILY

I'm not so much worried about past stuff. I try to be a good person, you know?

FATHER JOHN

Deeds are only part of what brings us closer to God.

EMILY

What I really want to know is if you can absolve me of a future crime. Maybe crime is a little dramatic ... Misdeed, perhaps. ... Or an error in judgement.

FATHER JOHN

So you are planning on doing something that you know is wrong?

EMILY

Again, "wrong" may be open to interpretation. And that's why I want your expertise.

FATHER JOHN

Okay, why don't you say more.

EMILY

I want to steal the -

FATHER JOHN

Steal? Oh boy, oh boy, you went right for one of the commandments. One of the big ten as we say in the business. I'm afraid that there's not much wiggle room there. Stealing definitely would be wrong.

EMILY

What if I had a very good reason for it?

FATHER JOHN

The ends don't necessarily justify the means.

EMILY

Not always, I agree. But maybe sometimes there's a grey area?

FATHER JOHN

Have you ever stolen before?

EMILY

Never.

FATHER JOHN

And what makes you want to steal now?

EMILY

I'm a legal secretary at Simon and Feinberg and I went to the supply closet to pick up some legal pads, because, well that's what we use in a law firm. It just happened to be while the custodian was stocking the Purell and Oh my GOOOODDD ... Oh, sorry ... it was an expression. I didn't mean ...

FATHER JOHN

It's alright. Please, continue.

EMILY

Well, I just saw all these shelves of Purell and then he didn't lock the cabinet. He just went to lunch, enjoyed a grilled ham and cheese, and left those magical bottles just sitting there. Just sitting there! I've followed him all week. He does it every day. Stocks the cabinet, leaves it unlocked, eats a grilled ham and cheese, and then finishes stocking after lunch.

FATHER JOHN

He stocks the cabinet every day?

EMILY

It's a large firm.

FATHER JOHN

I see. And you've basically been stalking him ever since you saw him leave the cabinet open?

EMILY

I'd prefer to use the term "monitoring", but yes, okay.

FATHER JOHN

Because you plan to steal hand sanitizer from your employer?

EMILY

Yes.

(beat)

FATHER JOHN

NO! Are you nuts?!

EMILY

Excuse me?

FATHER JOHN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. That wasn't very professional of me. We've been going through a lot here with trying to keep up with the bills and my brother showed up at my apartment yesterday, un-announced as usual, just expects to take over my bedroom and have me stalk the frig with his precious almond milk. What is that, anyway? You can't milk a nut!

EMILY

Alright.

FATHER JOHN

But okay, getting back to your thing ... WHY?

EMILY

Well, I guess you could call me a germaphobe.

FATHER JOHN

I see. So that justifies stealing?

EMILY

Father! The firm won't even miss it!

FATHER JOHN

I think you know that that's a copout.

EMILY

(admonished) I do.

FATHER JOHN

Is this a monetary issue? Do you not have the money to buy your own?

EMILY

Oh no. The firm pays me quite well. It's just that I can't ever find enough at the grocery stores or the drug stores. Don't get me started on Greenwals. Every time I buy their supply they never have a shipment in by the next day.

FATHER JOHN

You buy the store's entire supply?

EMILY

Every last bottle, every time I can.

FATHER JOHN

Again ... WHY?

EMILY

I bathe in it, naturally.

FATHER JOHN

Yes, naturally. You're serious?

EMILY

Am I laughing?

FATHER JOHN

No, no. I was ... just ... confirming. ... Listen, I think maybe I should refer you to Father Brian. He's studied psychology ... Let me just -

EMILY

Have you ever done it?

FATHER JOHN

Done what?

EMILY

Bathed in Purell?

FATHER JOHN

No, I can't say that I have.

EMILY

You have to try it! It's simply ORGASMIC!

FATHER JOHN

I wouldn't know about -

EMILY

Oh, I'm sorry. That was rude. Of course you wouldn't know about ... No, I'm sorry.

FATHER JOHN

It's quite alright. I know what you are trying to say.

EMILY

Father, every time I bathe, I barely even get my feet in the tub and it's like Oh wee

EMILY goes into an interpretive dance of epic proportions.

FATHER JOHN

Well, you make a compelling argument.

EMILY

Can you blame me Father? Can't you absolve me?

FATHER JOHN

It's still stealing. I just can't overlook that.

EMILY

Let me put it this way. There are more germs in your kitchen sink than in the toilet. There's more bacteria in your mouth than there are people in the world. And only 5 percent of people in the world wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds, which is how long it takes to -

FATHER JOHN

Okay, okay. Point made.

EMILY

I mean, take the simple act of touching a door handle and then touching your face. Congratulations! You just rubbed thirteen hundred and twenty three bacterial colonies into your eye.

FATHER JOHN

Okay!

EMILY

So absolve me, Father! Mama needs her Purell!!

FATHER JOHN

But it's a sin! I can't simply -

The stage goes DARK.

Ah! Heaven bless it!

How many times have I reminded Father Marcus to pay the electric bill?! “Pay the light bill”, I say. “Sure, I’ll do it this afternoon” he says. (calling off) Father Marcus!

FATHER JOHN sneezes.

EMILY

What was that?

FATHER JOHN

What?

EMILY

You sneezed.

FATHER JOHN

No. That was a -

EMILY removes the cell phone from her purse and shines the flashlight into FATHER JOHN’s face.

EMILY

Are you lying to me, Father? Isn’t that a sin?

FATHER JOHN

I sneezed.

EMILY

Oh god.

FATHER JOHN

Listen, I sneeze when I’m nervous. I hate the dark. I guess you could say I have a phobia, too. (calling off) Father Marcus!! (to EMILY) It’s my brother. He would always sneak up on me in the dark and scare me. I guess I never quite got over it. (calling off) FATHER MARCUS!

The LIGHTS come on.

Oh, good. I guess he did pay the bill. Sometimes it’s just the circuit breaker.

FATHER JOHN sneezes.

EMILY

Ah!

FATHER JOHN

I'm telling you, it's okay. There's nothing to be worried out. I'm not sick. It's just a nervous reaction.

EMILY takes a small bottle of Purell from her cleavage and spreads it around herself.

EMILY

Nervous reaction, my as(s) My foot! A sneeze is a hundred thousand germs being released into the environment at a hundred miles an hour! THAT'S what a sneeze is!

FATHER JOHN

Okay, let's take a step back here.

EMILY

Take a step back nothing! This is serious!

FATHER JOHN

Okay. I didn't say it wasn't. Let's just breathe together, shall we?

EMILY

Are you patronizing me? You're patronizing me now?

FATHER JOHN

Look, no one is patronizing anyone. I just think we should both calm down.

EMILY

Calm down! Calm down! Don't tell me to "calm down"! YOU calm down! I'm just glad I have my emergency bottle, otherwise I might really freak out.

The stage goes DARK.

FATHER JOHN

Oh Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

EMILY

Are you allowed to say that?

FATHER JOHN

Oh shut (sneeze) up (sneeze)!

EMILY

Ah! Stop! Stop releasing the germs!

FATHER JOHN

I can't help it (sneeze)!

EMILY

I should never have come. I might as well have gone to a preschool and let the little viral incubators lick me!

FATHER JOHN

(calling off) Father Marcus! Please!

EMILY

Om Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim
Pushti Vardhanam. Urvarukam Iva
Bandhanan Mrityor Mukshiyā Mamritat.
I implore you, the Source of the cycle of
birth, life and death, to free me from its
bondage, make me fearless, and lead me to
absolute bliss.

FATHER JOHN

No, Tommy. Don't put on the scary
mask.Where's Mommy? Where's the
flashlight? ... Please, Tommy. ... I'll do
your homework. I'll be good. ... Just
turn on the light! Please Tommy!

*The LIGHTS come on. FATHER JOHN is twitching and
rocking in a fetal position. EMILY is fervishly rubbing the
Purell on her arms. She stares at him.*

EMILY

Are you okay?

FATHER JOHN

Sure ... yeah ... I'm okay ... why wouldn't I be okay?

EMILY

You don't look okay.

FATHER JOHN

I'm totally fine. Everything's under control.

EMILY

Okay, we can't both panic at the same time.

FATHER JOHN

Who says I'm panicking? I'm not panicking.

EMILY

Look at you!

FATHER JOHN

Look at YOU!

EMILY

At least one of us has to stay sane.

FATHER JOHN

So you admit that you're -

EMILY

Look, we both have our issues.

FATHER JOHN

I guess that's true.

EMILY helps FATHER JOHN to stand.

EMILY

Okay, I'm going to go.

FATHER JOHN

But I haven't absolved you.

EMILY

You know what? I think it's okay.

FATHER JOHN

What are you going to do?

EMILY

I don't need absolution to do what I need to do.

FATHER JOHN

But ...

EMILY hands FATHER JOHN her bottle of Purell.

EMILY

Here. I think you need comfort more than I do.

FATHER JOHN

That's ... that's sweet.

EMILY

Take care and ... uh ... keep the lights on.

FATHER JOHN

Right.

EMILY EXITS.

FATHER JOHN sneezes. He looks at the Purell in his hand.

FATHER JOHN

A hundred thousand germs at a hundred miles an hour.

FATHER JOHN crosses to exit as he rubs Purell on himself.

The stage goes DARK.

Oh hell.

Blackout

End of Play