

PO' LIL ANGEL WAS CRACKED IN THE HEAD

BY JULIAN LEE RAYFORD

THE story I goin' to recitate right now, hit is about a certain angel he were cracked in the head. I mean he were crazy, he really were.

A man lived in Heaven, in the capital city of Zion-town, and he were a angel, he sho' was, but he were crazy, yes he were, he were cracked in the head. Not hardly nobody knowed it though, in fact not nobody atall, cause in spite of he didn' have but only enough brains to not go barefeets in a blackberry patch, he were just slick enough to get by so as people not catch on, yes suh, that fella he fool everbody good and proper.

Him comin' up to the Lawd God one day, and he say one day to the Lawd God, him say, Lawd, I done invent a angel! You what? I invent a angel! But I got all the angels I need. You is? Yes I is! And this crazy he say, But that ain't so, Lawd, cause here is the very first angel, and I done invent it myself. And then, I be dad burn if he didn't out with a corn cob, it was a corn cob all wropped up in newspapers and scraps of calico. So he say, There now! That's a real angelicsy angel! Lawd he say, Is that you' angel? Sho' is! Heaven needs a few angels like these here. And Lawd God unto heself he say, I never

before realize hit but this po' chile he crazy, he cracked in the head like a broken egg. So Lawd he say, he say Looka here, Butterfish, (cause I want you to know that were that po' chile's name, it were Butterfish) Lawd say, Looka here, Butterfish, you bresh up on that angel a yourn. Do he need hands? Now Butterfish, you just know he need hands, and do he need feets? You know he need feets, Butterfish. You show me that angel again tomorrow. And po' crazy Butterfish, he say, Alright, Lawd, I gon' do that. But will you lend me a nickel, Lawd, so's I can go ahead and take out the copyright?

And after that, ever time Lawd God see Butterfish, why, po' crazy he done got a new invention. But not nobody know hit though, because my Lawd he never gossip about nobody, but one day po' Butterfish he put he foot in the bucket. The Zion City Council hit were magnifyin' the great question: Who is to arise and go whither, when in come old crazy Butterfish, po' lil ol' angel chile he cracked in the head. He shout right out, he shout, Good morning, bright and early risers, how y'all is today? I done brang y'all a new invention!

Chairman in that committee, he

say, Wherefore you disrupt the vast dignity of we Zion City Council when us councilate? We is already done got in Zion ever single invention that ever will be needed from hither to yon, praise God! What is you lil old fompy invention, nincompoop?

He say, crazy chile he say, I have invent a knife, a fork, a spoon, a plate and a cup and saucer, so as you folks can eat like civilize people.

Ooh! that chairman he gitten so hot! He just bellow, boom, rave at that angel Butterfish, he say, My goodness, gracious a life times, boy! Us done had all them things for years and years before you was even born: and here you come break up our meetin' like you done invent the Lawd heself!

I did invent the Lawd, you just ast him!

So they ain't got airy sense a humorous like my Lawd God, they spout, You old bug-eyed-ape, you ain't got the sense God given a bed-bug, you loony headed lunatic!

AFTER that, well, after that, why, A po' crazy, he taken to settin' in dark corners mumblin' jibber-jibber to heself, ever once in awhile sayin', I has just invent a lion and a tiger and a elephant, and tomorrow I gon' invent a real doughnut, and then I gonna invent me a doughnut hole that I run right in through the middle of that doughnut. There, Mista Butterfish, ain't Butterfish somewhat smart, so to speak?

Well, you know, that po' Butter-

fish, that po' boy, he never knowed that he crazy before, but after that he done talk to that Zion-town City Council, why, then, he know he really crazy sho' 'nough. Yes, he do! He just set in dark corners and jibber-jibber to heself, and he was afraid o' people. Didn' run out to meet my Lawd no more.

Didn' offer my Lawd no more inventions. And it just broke my Lawd's heart.

And you cain' fool my Lawd, no suh! My Lawd, he knows what done happen, yes, he did.

And my Lawd, he went to that City Council meetin', and my Lawd he stood up before that meetin' and he said, You know, the' is some strange people in the world, and up here in Heaven, too! Now, because you politicians is been so smart, you done let a harmless crazy chile know he was crazy.

I knowed it, but I never said nothin' about it. And that po' Butterfish, he never would a knowed he crazy onless you told him so. Now, I gon' have to build a lunatic asylum and git ready to take care of crazy people. Wouldn't a been no trouble atall if you politicians hadn't a told Butterfish he crazy. And I'm tellin' you right now, and you can mark my words . . . the next time the City Council tell air one o' my chillun he crazy, why, I gon' put all you politicians in the bug-house, too, cause that where most of you belong in the first place!

And then, my Lawd, he went away, and he no sooner turn he back

than them City Councillors say, Well,
I tell you what, maybe the Lawd he
might know what he talkin' about,
cause when it come to puttin' that
Butterfish in the crazy house, I agree.

But puttin' respectable hard-workin'
politicians in the bughouse, why, I
think that goin' too fur . . . maybe we
better think about the Lawd, as well as
Butterfish!



TO A WOMAN APPROACHING MIDDLE AGE

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

You are more lovely
Than early autumn sky,
Warm, soft, and holy
As the summer wind's sigh.

You are joyous calm,
Full, sure, and unending,
Rich with the sweet balm
Of life's deepest meaning.

You bear the gladness
Of every age and time;
Earth's every sadness
You guard and make sublime.

You are gentle, strong,
Creation's majesty,
Glowing with the song
Of all eternity.