



## **“Getting into Heaven” & “The Arcade of Dr Morbius Trip”**

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### **Getting into Heaven**

*Or Limbo - What Catholics believe in and Lutherans practise on others*

For a start why am I here in this bloody useless place? Just standing waiting outside with a mobile phone. I was born and then someone else decided for me what I should believe. I didn't even decide on being born, I never got to choose my parents. Okay, Okay, you can say, we're all in the same shit. And true I rejected all that mumbo jumbo of three Gods, one God, a hundred Gods, as soon as I could think, well I saw a lot of animals and strange figures on a hanging mobile over my head, and I knew there were cot bars either side, anyway after trying to eat the mobile figures, then I tried to understand them, gave up and thought life's ok still.

Seems you need faith though. Without that you don't get the keys, and you don't get in. In practice, you get turned away. That bloody bouncer on the door hung with silver jewellery, crucifixes and demons, scowls, he won't look me in the eyes [haven't I got an angel on my back?] and he says;

'Who do you know in there? I don't think you're right. You're not the right kind of person.'

'My girlfriend is inside' I say.

'Well she ain't with you mate, says it all'.

Someone whispers to me 'he trained as a priest before going out into the world.'

So why am I here? In Limbo, when I don't even believe in it. Maybe that's why I am here because I don't believe, so they can't let me in to Heaven or send me to Hell. As a quiet atheist who tries to be okay, ethically that is, where can they put me. Except Limbo's my

place. So I don't get in to see the dancing virgins, or Goth Lolitas, depending what you believe in, maybe I'll sit alone in Nirvana café at nine am tomorrow, not much use now when you're queuing in the rain. Write poetry about bad tea. Fuckin middle class twat.

'Maybe you just haven't got what it takes to experience that ecstatic communal feeling' he inquires sensitively .

' I don't swallow the religion pill.' I say.

He looks at me seriously, 'Look. I was a football fan, she supported Palace, her friends were mine, till I was demoted, now I just love to watch football. I still have a twinge when Palace play.' He was ambulating.

'Why don't you go away and become a fucking documentary maker?' the bouncer asks thoughtfully.

'Christ, as though that's an option.' I say, but I don't think he liked my tone of voice.

'You're just a trouble-maker, fuck off out of it' he says assertively.

I stand my ground as for once he looked me straight in the eyes.

'I will buy a ticket' I say. 'There are tickets, you're selling them to everyone else.'

'What are you dressed as?' he inquires.

'A ghost' I answer.

'Well this is strictly pirates and angels' he replies.

'From a ghost ship, you know drifting around on the sea'. I'm being clever.

'What flag?' he demands.

'A white flag of surrender, like a shroud. They all died'.

'Now if you were a skeleton, or a casket of treasure' he measures me up, 'that would be princely. We don't allow pictures in here I told you already – no photography'.

'What are you dressed as?' I ask.

'I'm dressed for business, just like they all are inside' he points over his shoulder.

'Ghosts are fuckin useless, Can a ghost drink? Has a ghost a tongue? Can a ghost fuck? I don't think so. You're dead mate.'

'OK, doc-maker? Take coke mate?' his interrogation continues.

'No I don't.'

‘Shut up’ he was annoyed now. ‘Listen, Take coke, how can you take it knowing all the small kids dying from making it in poison pools in Columbia or Peru?’ he’d taken me by surprise. He had a point. ‘You’re no good to them inside, and they’re no good for you.’

‘Why should you decide?’ I replied.

‘Look’ he said quietly ‘I’m a vegetarian but I have a job to do.’

‘I just want to dance that’s all. You don’t believe in that stuff. Neither do I. That’s what makes me discerning, and I discern you and you ain’t goin in.’

I wasn’t about to give up. ‘I don’t judge, I just observe.’

‘Yeah yeah yeah, and then what? They see themselves on telly made out to be addicts?’

‘I don’t make films’ I said.

‘But you see them in your head? Same thing, Holy Ghost.’

‘Look, I asked my girlfriend to get me a ticket and she said she would, then she forgot, then she said I maybe able to get one on the door.’

‘Sad’ he says almost wistfully. ‘I jus go down the pub with the missus, it’s kinda friendly there. Trust me it’s not for you, Heaven.’

‘Why can’t you let me decide?’

‘Then I ain’t got a job, you want that? I don’t come to your work and interfere? Do I? Be fair.’

‘You mean you’ve got to exclude so many people so you can have a job?’

‘Management’s decision, not mine. People like to know they’re special when they go in.’

‘Why can’t I be special?’

‘To put it bluntly mate, your girlfriend already decided on that. Fact of life.’

‘But she’s an atheist.’

‘Practicing?’

‘Well no, not exactly.’

‘She’s perfect then if she can pretend for them inside, a double life, fantasy, Heaven. Hmm.’ He hummed knowingly.

‘I see, it’s not about being who you are, it’s about who you appear to be.’

‘Got it in one mate. My ol gran on her death bed had a priest visit her in the home, he said you’re dying now you old biddy, sign up quick.’

‘And?’

‘She took one look at him and said fuck off, she was a right one.’

‘I can pretend. I know all the dogma. I was taught it, you know, the dancing angels on a pinhead.’

‘They’re all drugged up, don’t tell me what I know.’

‘I know the theological moves of debate, virgin pretence, faith as an answer to any science or reason. I can be in heaven too.’

‘Not the point bro, you’re an ethical thinker, it always shows through.’

‘The clubbers won’t know.’

‘True, but I do. I can’t break my contract with heaven now can I? Where does that put me? A flaming scab hypocrite. Worse than them inside who don’t care or don’t know. Put it this way, I’m savin as many good people that I can. I’m savin you bro. It’s my calling. I was a trainee priest you know.’

‘You certainly learnt sophistry.’

‘Thank you. Know why I left?’

‘No.’

‘Never saw what was wrong with those Pharisees.’

‘I see.’

‘Heaven’s full now, can’t let you in.’

‘Take Hell’ he said, ‘it’s a mirror image of Heaven, it’s the 666 club over near Old Street. Much more cool. If you can’t get in one place you go to the other, simple.’

‘And queuing is limbo?’

‘Not exactly, ordinary life’s waiting, it’s only limbo for you coz you can’t get in either place. So your waiting is fucking pointless.’

‘Like life itself?’

‘Not for those who get in, they’ve got a point to their lives. And for you bloody stupid waiting.’

‘But do you still believe?’

‘I told you already I go down the pub with the common people.’

‘So you don’t believe?’

‘I left the seminary didn’t I? Sometimes you don’t want to listen, and you call yourself a doc-maker. Fuckin deaf dumb and blind kid.’

‘Sorry.’

‘That’s okay, sometimes we gotta see things over and over before we get it.’

‘Right. So we are pointless then?’

‘No. No. No. They are pointless because they want to get in to what someone else has made up for them.’

‘Whereas?’

‘Life is pointless till we find the point of it mate.’

‘So I should leave the queue?’

‘Now you’re getting it, Christ said follow me. Mohammed said follow me. Your girlfriend said follow me, they just need to be in crowd, a palace of pleasure, following each other senseless. Let them. Don’t follow anyone bro.’

‘That’s why you’re on the door, outside.’

‘Told you I have a deeper side.’

There was a pause in our conversation whilst he considered. I thought finally he might be going to let me in. Then he ventured helpfully:

‘Why don’t you stop wasting your time and do something creative instead, I teach limbo dancing down the local Adult Institute on Fridays.’

‘I’m not a very good dancer.’

‘Told you it would be no good for you in there. Okay try creative writing instead, more your solipsistic thing.’

It was beginning to get light. What a bloody long wait for nothing. People were leaving. And I’m the last one still standing waiting to get in.

‘Look there must be space now?’ I ask.

‘No, them inside need their emotional space now, I mean what would it be like, a bunch of latecomers arriving when everyone’s chilling out. Disruptive. I bet you were a hippy once? Never heard of love and peace matey?’

‘Yeah, I heard of it.’ It hardly seemed relevant.

‘And let everyone do their own thing?’

‘What like drug dealers?’ I was getting frustrated and my argument was descending into controversy.

‘No like your girlfriend bro. You tried callin her?’

‘Yes. In all that noise she couldn’t hear properly.’

‘You can text can’t you?’

‘ She said her battery was going out.’

‘Her battery is well charged, don’t you worry. Cruel to be kind bro.’

And he takes a sign from the side of the door and hangs it up, HEAVEN IS CLOSED.

‘Look my friend. She’s not free to live love...If you still need to know the truth, how the world fits you up’, he says, ‘wait round by the side door on Douglas Adams Street where they all come out back to reality and mind out for all the holes full of puddles of water.’

I stood outside and watched the world go by, including you with your friends.

### **The Arcade of Dr. Morbius Trip.**

Welcome to the arcade, I bow to you, sincerely, happy in your presence, I am Morbius Trip, doctor of knowledge, grateful that you are here at my pier head arcade. Make your body my temple - for my mind is at your disposal. I am totally corruptible because nothing remains the same [in my mind??]. See what choices are available to you in this our seaside circus...

You little thoughtful one. Enjoy the most fantastic ghost train ride, swirl in a mirrored track, a figure of eight. A journey upside down and inside out. Relive all those false demons. See how the ghosts are quiet and then appear, those machines flipping around in their hatred at your appearance. A lifetime’s experience! And you are back to wherefrom you came? No, this ride will leave you walking backwards! Into your lover’s arms if they are there.

You, young student, you come here with not some little academic prowess, I think you might enjoy Madame Kali, our Fortune Teller, where all those things you thought, and had reconciled as abstract, within theory, to be behind you, come alive again. How does her ignorance work, except on your gullibility and need. And retrospection lends a new awful foresight! But no insight at all.

And you, young lover, engaged in your temporary wholeness, could visit our infinity chamber, you can split like a wave-particle duality. Understand there are many different

possible worlds outside you! All verbs! Ah but never forget the eternal recurrence of love. And the infinite pointlessness of it.

And you my pretty lady. Come into the tent and kiss the strongman, put your hidden inner talents in my market! A kiss is a mere £40. You ask how can a kiss be worth this? But it all begins with a kiss and ends with a kiss.

And you my pretty showgirl, for your delectation our brothers and sisters will perform the most terrifying acts, tiptoe balancing blindfold, pirouette on tightropes and summersault high above in thin air, before skipping to their tiny platforms. Cleverly I have used refugees, defying humanity, fearless of this death. Around the capitals of the world they have performed much worse unimaginable feats.

And notice our troupe of clowns, every one different in character and appearance, day by day they put on their make-up, yet their skill is that they are all interchangeable at any moment in their performance, take a bow now for the lady to your circus names, Billy Cash and Zoe, Prosopopoeia and Hope. Once they were in the audience just like you!

And if you care day tripper, venture into the hall of mirrors where you'll see more distortions than Janus ever saw, reflections on reflections.

Why you there bystander! You had better find someone to enter with. No-one laughs alone. How confident even then you all are in your laughter, that you will leave with the same body! But I see them all come back in time, when only their children enter and laugh. And the old and disabled sit and stare at the sea. And the suicides drop in the water at night.

And you most confident lady, why not visit the very top of the tower, where an empty darkened room projects all life in real time: a chance meeting, a missed rendezvous, an illicit affair, an accident in the street. Circling through its landscape, this camera obscura obscures nothing, alights on any solitary soul, in a network of streets, and events. If you dare not visit this room, then stay unentranced at the patterns of misfortune and good fortune alike, dare to be the least politic of all.

Now as the poorest of ringmasters, with only this wooden jetty for a stage, I ask you most charming lady, let me take your hand, I will kiss it delicately, once more, and offer this gift of a small lotus flower, before it disappears. Come step into this humble carriage, drawn by that strange animal which sits harnessed in front, and away...fear not for the animal's freedom or treatment, later its reins are untied, and its cage is always open at night, secretly the beast travels into the town or to a nearby village to eat. I am told it knows all the best restaurants to be served.

Leave now for the arcade outside...