

## If You'd Only Told Me

GOD: Richard Heath.

RICHARD: (DISORIENTATED; LOOKS AROUND NERVOUSLY) Yes... where... what's... er, what's going on?

GOD: What's the last thing you remember?

RICHARD: Er... (REMEMBERING SLOWLY) yes, I was at work... a seminar on Sartre with my final year undergrads... oh! The fire...

GOD: Nasty.

RICHARD: So I'm...

GOD: Dead. Yes.

RICHARD: I'm dead? Oh my God!

GOD: Yes?

RICHARD: What? You're God? But you're...

GOD: A woman. That's right. Surprises a lot of people, that.

RICHARD: But all the religions... everyone believes-

GOD: I know what everyone believes.

RICHARD: Everyone?

GOD: Everyone. I'm God, I'm omniscient. There is literally nothing I don't know.

RICHARD: Nothing?

GOD: Nothing. (PUTS FINGER TO FOREHEAD) Arsenal have just scored.

RICHARD: Oh boy, I've been wrong about a lot of things, haven't I? But why do you let them carry on believing-

GOD: Oh, they'll find out eventually. The second coming... I'm sending my daughter next time. That son of mine... honestly, he's caused nothing but trouble. But we're here to talk about you, Richard Heath.

RICHARD: Ye-es... oh dear, I do feel a fool. What's going to happen to me?

GOD: We'll come to that. Firstly, we're going to examine how you lived your life.

RICHARD: May I just ask you a couple of questions?

GOD: Very well. Take your time. We have considerably more than all the time in the World.

RICHARD: When did I die?

GOD: Two months ago – what you call months on your planet.

RICHARD: (INCREDULOUSLY) You mean-

GOD: Of course! Too many to count... for you, at least.

RICHARD: I knew it!

GOD: You hoped, you didn't know. Please remember, I know everything.

RICHARD: Everybody's thoughts... *my* thoughts?

GOD: Tiresome, but yes.

RICHARD: My thoughts about Debbie Harry? Ahem. Er... where have I been for the last two months?

GOD: In storage. What the Catholics call "Purgatory". You should see the looks on their faces! Transubstantiation! If I'd wanted cannibalism, I'd have made human flesh much more tasty. Really, and that silly book of theirs. Anyway, questions?

RICHARD: Why... why are you spending your time with me?

GOD: Oh, don't flatter yourself. I am conducting this self-same interview with eleven thousand six hundred and eighty three other dead people as I sit here speaking to you. And that's just from your planet. Remember, I'm omnipresent.

RICHARD: So it's true!

GOD: You bet it's true, buster. I'm also perusing the woolly tights in Primark in Bexleyheath. We're in for a cold snap. Well, not you, obviously. Let's get on... I've just remembered I've got to do Angel Delight for fifty eight billion. Cook's day off. You can have one more question.

RICHARD: Oh... I'm torn between which is the one true religion, and why don't you prevent disasters. Yes, all these floods, famines, volcanoes... why don't you-

GOD: Intervene?

RICHARD: Yes, intervene. I take it you could.

GOD: Of course, I'm-

RICHARD: Don't tell me, omnipotent.

GOD: You're catching on.

RICHARD: So why don't you?

GOD: Oh, but I do. On other worlds.

RICHARD: Other worlds? Which ones?

GOD: The ones that follow the one true religion. You asked the wrong question. That's what comes of free will. Now tell me, how do you feel you led your life?

RICHARD: Judged by what criteria?

GOD: Oh, you philosophers, always the same. And the Materialists... do you know, Marx is still insisting that I don't exist, even when we play Bridge on Wednesdays. Usually when he's overbid his hand.

RICHARD: Sounds like a form of cognitive dissonance... not to mention an irresolvable dialectic. Poor Marx.

GOD: Yes, one has to feel for him... so right about so many other things... Oh! But the Buddhists, they're the funniest... reincarnation... how stupid can a person be? They mooch about the place annoyed they haven't been re-born as iguanas. And all that saffron... is that a colour that suits anybody?

RICHARD: But didn't you make us in your own image?

GOD: Good me, no. If anything, it's the other way round. That's that silly boy of mine talking nonsense. Too fond of the booze on your planet – why d'you think he went around turning all the water into wine? Nope, the Buddhists have only themselves to blame. There's a thought – I'm tremendously keen on that wireless programme of yours, *Desert Island Discs* – you know it?

RICHARD: Of course, but-

GOD: No buts. Too much to explain. Still, who'd've thought Katie Price would make such a good presenter?

RICHARD LOOKS ASTONISHED

GOD (Cont.): Much has happened in the last two months. Anyway, Christians get the Bible, Jews I suppose get the Torah... they can drive away in their Chosen People Carrier... but what do the Buddhists get? A nice little colouring book or something?

RICHARD: You're very scathing about people who may honestly believe-

GOD: I'll say I'm scathing. Then there's the Hindus... Johnny Six-Arms and the Elephant Man... honestly!

RICHARD: And the Muslims? What do you have to say about them?

GOD: Very little. Didn't do Salman much good, did it? Such a waste of a life. Supposed – pre-destined, one might say - to have a glittering career as a tax accountant –but he had to go and write those awful novels.

RICHARD: But you're-

GOD: Yes, but you don't think they stop when they get here, do you? Oh no. Some of them seem to be expecting a roomful of virgins! Virgins! Here!

RICHARD: Erm... where are we exactly?

GOD: Well, I'm everywhere, we've covered that. Where do you think you are? Hammersmith? We're everywhere and nowhere... like "Hi Ho Silver Lining"!

RICHARD: You're a Jeff Beck fan?

GOD: Stop dodging the question. It's not as though I don't know the answer. Despite everything, you're quite pleased with yourself, aren't you?

RICHARD: Well... I tried to do no harm. I tried to be considerate to the needs of my fellow man-

GOD: And woman.

RICHARD: And women, yes... actually particularly women. I always admired and respected women-

GOD: You're not seriously trying it on with God, are you?

RICHARD: Don't you know? You're a fine looking...er... God.

GOD: Good here, you are full of yourself, aren't you? No wonder your wife was playing around.

RICHARD: What? I had no idea.

GOD: Don't tell me what I already know. But, oh yes... a couple of your colleagues... the barman at the Feathers... the Venezuelan basketball team-

RICHARD: Oh... not the barman at the Feathers!

GOD: Good. That's taken the wind out of your sails. Now perhaps you'll answer the real question.

RICHARD: Haven't I? I tried to be decent, generous-

GOD: Yes, yes, that's all well and good but what did you do for the giraffes?

RICHARD: Did you just say "giraffes"?

GOD: Giraffes, yes of course. Well, what did you do for them? I know the answer but I want to hear it from your own lips.

RICHARD: Er... well, nothing, really. I didn't know. If you'd only told me.

GOD: (THUNDERING) If I'd only told you? How much more obvious did I have to make it? And If I had only told you, wouldn't that have rendered the whole idea of consciousness redundant? You're the philosopher – according to you.

RICHARD: I, er...

GOD: Indeed. If I'd told you, then my giraffes would have ended up in the golden palaces I wanted and I could've cut out the middleman – that is, you – completely. Really, what did you think was the point of these stupid animals with their ridiculous necks?

RICHARD: Something to do with evolution?

GOD: Yes, you still believe in that, don't you? Y'know I nearly felt sorry for Darwin when I broke it to him. He's been wandering around sheepishly for... ooh... one hundred and twenty five of your years.

RICHARD: Not evolution? Then... this is an awful lot to take in, you know. So the giraffes...

GOD: Were your test. Suppose I'd have to give some credit to the Hindus, making the cow sacred. Except they picked the wrong animal. No, it was always giraffes.

RICHARD: Let me see if I'm understanding this... This is Judgement Day.

GOD: Your Judgement Day. Doing everybody all at the same time was always a big ask. So I do a few at a time. And I'm thinking of getting into outsourcing.

RICHARD: To whom? Oh, your so-, your children, the Holy Spirit?

GOD: Bless my soul... there's something else that'll come as a surprise... no, no. The only holy spirit around here is gin. One of my better thoughts.

RICHARD: So...

GOD: The other fella, Nick. He's not so bad when you get to know him. Good judge, as it happens.

RICHARD: And I am not to be judged on whether or not I believed in you-

GOD: Of course not. Only a complete idiot could take any of those so-called religions seriously. And the science – pitiful as it was – made my existence seem impossible.

RICHARD: But I am to be judged on what I did to benefit the giraffes.

GOD: Exactly that. No excuses there. So, in the matter of giraffes, how do you plead?

RICHARD: Well, I suppose I was barely aware of their existence. Don't think I ever even saw one.

GOD: Unforgivable. Which means that the fire at the university was just the start for you. Hope you're fond of barbecue.

RICHARD: But what about all these others... Marx and Darwin... they didn't do any more for the giraffes than me, did they?

GOD: I suppose not, but actually I quite like them. You, on the other hand... If I'd only told you indeed.

LIGHTS DOWN. CURTAIN