

Eternity

by LariLee

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Chapter 1 of 1

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General Disclaimer: Any resemblance between the characters is intended purely as parody.

He awakened, or perhaps came to, standing in a long line. He knew who he was and all his appendages seemed intact, yet he could not remember how he arrived.

"What's going on?" he asked brusquely, but the people around him ignored him. That was irritating. No one ignored the Reverend Barry Selwell! With distaste, he noticed two young women holding hands. One of the women sported a crew cut and a thin, man's athletic shirt. In disgust, he noticed she was wearing men's pants and boots. Her 'girlfriend' was dressed more appropriately, in his opinion - except for her pink triangle earrings.

Great, he was in line with a couple of dykes. Well, Barry Selwell was not going to stand for this! He deliberately stepped out of line, disregarding the men in white who gently asked him to return. "I'm the Reverend Barry Selwell, the televangelist," he said several times as he pressed by them and walked on. Airport security, he decided. Making him wait as if he were just anybody!

After pushing past nearly a hundred people, some of whom, he noted, looked at him respectfully, recognizing him from his Sunday services on television, he finally reached the head of the line.

He stopped in front of a desk and found a little man in white seated behind it. Something struck him as wrong, but he could not define precisely what it was. Then it dawned on him there was no computer. The man was writing with a quill into what appeared to be a ledger.

"Return to your place in line, please," the man said without looking up. Again, security tried to reach for him, but a frown and a fierce look drove them back.

"Excuse me," he said with no hint of apology in his voice, "I am the Reverend Barry Selwell. Why is this line here?" He did not want to admit he did not know how he came to be standing in it and could not remember how or why he had arrived.

"Mr. Selwell," the man began, finally looking up at him.

"That's *Reverend* Selwell," he said proudly.

The man behind the desk looked amused. His icy blue eyes seemed to pierce into Selwell. "I know who you are," the little man said. "But my boss does not. Please step back in line for processing."

Never one to be intimidated, Selwell put his hands flat on the desk, leaning down to tower over the man. He learned that trick in Theology 302: The Presence of Power. "What's your name?" he asked quietly with a slight, ingratiating smile.

Amazingly, the man smiled back sadly. "You don't know me?" he asked, icy blue eyes sparkling. "I didn't think you would, but call me Mickey."

Selwell tried not to smile. "Well, Mickey, I'm a very busy man, doing God's work. I really need to get through this line and go ... go on to my destination." For a moment, he nearly slipped and said he was not sure where he was going or why he was in line, but he covered it well, he thought.

"Doing God's work?" Mickey asked with a small smile. "And what is that?"

It was only with great practice Selwell did not roll his eyes. He pegged him as an atheist or an agnostic. Both were repellent, wanting to argue and fuss. God ought to smite all of them.

"I have a Sunday radio show, plus a Wednesday night call-in program. Recently, I just broke ground on a new Temple in my Point of Light complex. Annually, I bring in about seven million dollars." *There*, he thought, *let him ignore me now*, and he smiled smugly.

"You've done all this by yourself?" Mickey tilted his head. "Amazing."

Selwell looked modest. It was a look he practiced a lot. "Well, you can do anything with God on your side, Mickey." It was the tag line to his radio show.

"No," the little man clarified, "I meant it's amazing you never paid attention to widows and orphans. That you never fed the hungry, housed the homeless, or helped the poor. That you've used God's name to persecute His children!" Mickey began to stand and Selwell wondered why he thought the man was small. Mickey seemed to be growing with his anger.

"You've made a mockery of God and His love, selling trinkets to increase your own fortune. In all your days, you have done nothing to help anyone but yourself. You've lied, stolen, fornicated, and smashed the Ten Commandments into dust with your vendettas and greed!" Mickey was standing fully erect, gleaming with intense luminosity and the appearance of wings made of folded light.

Selwell drew away from the desk. Looking around, he noticed the people in line, frozen as if in a bad sci-fi movie. He looked back to Mickey and had to tilt his head up to see him.

"Oh, my God," he said, numbly, as he realized where he must be. His numbness passed quickly. "I'm in heaven?" he asked.

"No, Barry," Mickey informed him, "you're being processed." The great angel sat down behind the desk and became a mild-mannered clerk, again. "Please step back in line."

"What?" Selwell asked incredulously. "I'm a reverend! Surely you don't mean you expect me to return to my place behind those two sinners!" He glanced back and noticed the people were no longer frozen. He could see the two women were now hugging each other with one arm, leaning into one another.

Mickey followed his gaze. "Ah, yes, they were on the same plane with you. But in coach." Now Selwell remembered some of the flight. The lobster bisque was terrible. "Anna Lewis and Jane 'Jay' Anniston. They will be missed terribly. Every week they volunteered at a women's shelter. In fact, they were going to meet with Congress while in DC to discuss the issue of domestic violence." Mickey sighed. "At least they came here together. Harder on the survivor when their partner dies."

Selwell lost his temper, at last. "You cannot begin to condone their behavior," he spat in quiet fury. "They're *lesbians*." The hated word dripped from his tongue, loaded with disgust and venom. "You aren't telling me there are *lesbians in heaven*?" he asked sarcastically.

Mickey looked up in surprise. "There are lesbians, gays, straights, bi-sexuals, and transgenders... people from every nameable group--except pedophiles. They usually go straight to Hell."

Closing his eyes against the shock, Selwell touched the desk for support. *You can't faint when you're dead*, he told himself. Opening his eyes, he stared at Mickey. "I'm not sure I belong in a Heaven that allows homosexuality."

Mickey grinned. "Don't worry, you don't. You're going to Hell."

Selwell spent a few moments opening and closing his mouth only to repeat the process. Sputtering, he managed to get out "Hell? Why?" Then he made a few other comments that were incoherent.

Mickey stopped smiling. "Because you never served God. Only your ego and your bank account benefited from your 'ministry'. God Himself said He did not know you. And I hate to tell you this, but there are some gays and lesbians in Hell also. They've been waiting for you."

Two white clad angels began pulling Selwell away. This time he could not resist them.

"The homosexuals in Hell said it wouldn't be Hell without you," Mickey said, and then returned to his book, and began to process more people.

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