

All Popes Go to Heaven

Bells rang over Italy. The burial procession was completed and the new pope would be announced in the days to come.

The now-deceased pontiff viewed the procedures through veiled eyes until the image faded and a new one took its place. Breathless in awe, he walked towards the entrance of a gold-and-pearl portal. Tears in his eyes welled and spilled down his cheeks. He reached out to touch the everlasting gate, eternity at his fingertips.

“Who goes there?” a voice asked from behind him. The pope turned around to see a figure walking towards him. The body belonging to the voice was now between the former Bishop of Rome and the gate.

“Those are some long robes. That won’t work for you in there.” The man in front of the pope was barely wearing any clothes at all. He had a deep skin tone and a small, but ornate, headdress.

“OK, let’s go down the checklist here,” said the man. “I see you have your jewelry. That is quite an impressive ring! Do you have any food with you?”

“Uh, n-no...,” the pope answered.

“Hmm, OK. I see you don’t have anyone with you. Will they be here soon?”

“Will who be here soon?”

“Uh-huh. So you’re by yourself. What’s going on down there! Moving along. Do you have your Canopic Jars? There should be four,” the guard asked.

“What? No. What is going on? What is the meaning of this?” The pope’s frustration rose.

“Look, you seem like a really important guy, so I’m very surprised you don’t have any of this stuff with you. Were you at least mummified?” The pope stared, dumbstruck. “I’ll take that as a no. OK, without the proper gear, the best we can do is place you as a teacher or something for one of the Pharaohs. I’ll hook you up with a non-murdery one. Your afterlife will be just fine.”

The guard gave the pope a linen garment. He was eternally grateful it was more clothing than what the guard had on. “You can go on over there and change. I’ll get someone to take you to your new home.”

The pope walked away, confused.

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“Michael! I’m gone for five Earth minutes and you’re dressed like an Egyptian guard giving wrong information? And to the Pope, no less?” The angry man stormed toward Michael, snapped his fingers, and his visage went back to normal. Wings unfolded wide, like a long stretch first thing in the morning.

“C’mon Peter. It is so much fun messing with the Catholics.” Michael smiled and Peter ran after the Pope.

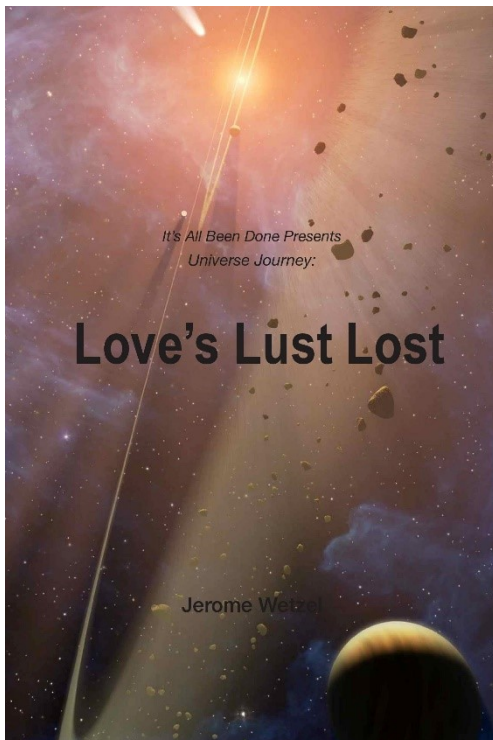
“Mister Pope, sir! You don’t have to change into that!”



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