



Jesus

Someone They Can Touch

"IT'S A SMALL THING, REALLY, TO GIVE UP MY GLORY FOR A LITTLE WHILE,
SO THAT SO MANY OTHERS MIGHT HAVE IT FOR ETERNITY."

HARRY, ANGEL 4-R (4TH RUNG), moved closer to the odd structure standing curiously weighted amidst the diaphanous splendor of heaven. It seemed to have grown up, like an ugly block-shaped mushroom, out of the vaporous terra of the heavenlies. The cube appeared as a gross uncleanness within the pristine dimensions of God's domain, with textures and unpleasant colors foreign to its inhabitants.

It's so ugly it hurts the eyes, Harry thought. They must have told me wrong. How could The Son possibly be in that thing. He moved closer, his curiosity overpowering the revulsion that filled him at the ugly sight.

Harry peered around one of the cube's corners. The second side looked exactly like the first. He crept ahead, carefully staying clear of the cube's surface, fearful that contact with the coarse material might inflict damage to his person. Reaching the end, he craned his neck around the next corner. This side was much the same, except that it

contained a rectangular irregularity in its middle. A seam ran straight up to a point just above Harry's head, angled sharply right, where it met up with another seam running straight up from the cube's base. Near one of the vertical seams a loop of hemp rope protruded from the cube.

How does one enter such a beastly thing? Harry wondered.

Knock on the door, Harry, came the reply into his head.

"What?"

Make a fist and rap your knuckles against the door, just above the rope.

Harry clenched his fingers into a tight ball and struck his knuckles against the rough wood. Knock. "Ow." Knock. "Ow." Knock. "Ow!"

"Come in!"

Harry stood staring at the wall. He stared at the seams that formed a rectangle. He stared at the hank of rope. *How? He screamed into the space between his ears.*

Pull the rope.

Harry yanked down on the loop of rope. The rectangle shifted, but failed to open.

Pull the rope toward you, Harry.

He grasped the rope firmly in his hand and yanked it straight out toward him.

Suddenly the door flew open, sending Harry careening backwards, leaving him sprawled in a tangled heap.

"Well, hello Harry! Good to see you." The Son reached down and set Harry back onto his feet.

"Y—you know me, God?" Harry stammered, nervously putting himself back in order.

The Son smiled warmly. "Of course I do. Now, what can I do for you?"

"What is this thing?" Harry asked, studying the curious structure. "Is it a new kind of throne?"

"No, no. It's a house—a mud brick house that people live in down on earth. And this is how one comes and goes from inside," He said, swinging the wooden door on its hinges. "Come on inside, Harry. It's rather cozy."

Harry followed The Son into the structure. "More like *confined*," he suggested. Inside it was dark, smelled of clay and damp straw, and the four walls and low ceiling seemed to move in on the angel, leaving him feeling uneasy, and more than a little claustrophobic. He sucked in his breath, as if air were in short supply.

The Son laughed and moved about the

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room testing its dimensions. "I think one could get used to it. Now, Harry, what's on your mind?"

The angel had never before been so close to God. Only one among countless millions, he had always been lost in the crowd of those offering praise and worship to the throne. He knew that the upper echelon—the splendid archangels—was almost constantly in the presence of God, but those of his stripe were seldom so close to the throne and the magnificent Presence.

Now here he was, granted a private audience with The Son, and without warning his tongue became a leaden obstacle to expressing his thoughts. But he pushed back the powerful feelings of inferiority—feelings that even he realized were created solely in his own mind—and pressed ahead with the purpose of his visit.

"W—well, God," Harry began, "I—I've heard a rumor—a rumor about *you*—and I thought I'd check it out for myself." Harry exhaled, relieved to have finally gotten it out.

"A rumor, huh?" The Son said. "This can't be good. What have I done now?"

"Oh, no!" Harry cried, horrified that The Son would think such a thing. "No—nothing like that, God. You see—"

"Listen, Harry," The Son interrupted calmly, reassuring the angel with a warm hand on his shoulder, "pretty soon I'm going to be taking a new name—a *human* name. Why don't you help me get accustomed to it by using it now."

"Uh, sure. I could do that."

"Good. The name's 'Jesus.'"

Into Flesh

Harry rolled the unfamiliar word around in his mind, sampling the flavor of it, mentally affixing the name to The Son. "Je-sus. Well, that shouldn't be so hard. Jesus." He grinned up at The Son, feeling his earlier nervousness slip away more with every moment spent in the Presence. "Well, God," he began. "Sorry; Jesus, I've heard others talking about you going down to earth for awhile, and—"

Suddenly a light went off in Harry's brain. Of course! The new name, the curious structure in which they now stood—these were in preparation for The Son's visit! Harry was slow, he knew; he wasn't still on the 4th Rung after all his centuries for noth-

ing. But sooner or later he was able to put the pieces together.

"Then, of course," Harry blurted out, "it *must* be true! Why else would you need a human name?"

Jesus grinned at the angel. He winked and said, "Harry, don't ever let them sell you short. You're right on the ball."

"Then it's true?"

Jesus nodded. "That's why I made this house: so I could get used to living as humans do—to experience the sights and smells and sounds of their existence."

"But Jesus," Harry shook his head, perplexed, "You've never done anything like this before."

"Sure I have. A few times, anyway. Don't you remember when I visited Abraham and Sarah at the oaks of Mamre?"

Harry did remember, and recalled how fascinated he had been watching The Son personally give the two old believers the news that Sarah would indeed give birth to a son. Yes, and he now recalled even more instances in which God had visited earth to deal more directly with His people.

"So then," Harry said, "this is no big deal."

The Son turned quickly serious, moving about the small room as if measuring its circumference. "Actually it is," He said, stopping before the wall opposite the door. Instantly a small square opening appeared in the mud brick, and white heavenly light pierced into the dark interior of the structure. "This time, Harry, will be *quite* different. This time I'll be there in the flesh."

Horrified at the prospect, Harry felt his stomach twist in revulsion. "*Flesh?*"

"Oh, it isn't all *that* bad," Jesus chided. "There are millions of people living that way right now."

"Yeah, but they're *used* to it! You're used to so much better."

"But it's the only way it can get done."

"What?" Harry screwed up his face. "What would be so important that you'd have to do all that?"

They Need a Savior

The Son looked into Harry's eyes in a penetrating way that the angel had never before experienced, and said, "Their redemption. It's time for me to go down to earth and fulfill the law We established long ago."

Becoming transfixed by the Presence, and The Son's willingness to sacrifice His own comfort, Harry said in a hushed tone, "But, in person? Couldn't you do it from up here?"

The Son moved toward a corner and a small, crude stool appeared. He sat down, rested his chin in his hand, and said, "There was a time, long ago, when We considered that. But you know, Harry, these people need a Savior. They really do. They need someone they can see with their own eyes, whose voice and words they can hear for themselves—and they need someone they can touch, and feel is really there with them."

Having never been assigned to earth, Harry's experience with humans was strictly secondhand, but he was beginning to understand how, because of the type of beings they were, they might appreciate God meeting them on their own level. He turned to The Son and said, "They need a 'Jesus'."

"It's the best way to show them God's love," Jesus said. "Put Him into flesh."

Harry stared out the newly formed window, gazing into the more familiar brilliance that enveloped the tiny hovel. "Okay, I think I can see this," he said. "But one thing—and please, Jesus, I don't mean any disrespect—are these the right people? Is this the right time? As I understand it, the world's a pretty small place right now, and these people have a lot to learn. Things are fairly primitive down there."

"It was worked out long ago, Harry. Now's the time."

"But is it necessary to give all this up—the throne, the grandeur, the *glory*—to go where people live like this?"

The Son answered with a sigh. "It's a small thing, really, to give up my glory for a little while, so that so many others might have it for eternity."

"But Jesus," Harry said seriously, "you'll be losing who you *are*—your identity."

"No, I'm not losing it. Just setting it aside for awhile. I'll still be God, only now—for a little while—I'll also be man."

"Sounds complicated," Harry said, screwing up his face.

"Yes, I suppose it is," Jesus said, rising from the stool. "But nobody ever said it would be easy to save all of mankind."

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(to be continued...)