

# THE GATES OF HEAVEN

*FADE IN:*

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PEARLY GATES

*There is a seemingly endless line of people standing on clouds leading to the pearly gates, which are barely visible in the distance. The two men at the end of the line – Bill and Tom – exchange looks of disgust and impatience.*

**TOM**

I never expected lines like this in heaven.

*The man in front of them – Bert – turns to face them.*

**BERT**

We're not in heaven yet.

**TOM**

What's taking so long?

**BILL**

I guess they've got to screen everybody. Can't let anybody in.

**BERT**

It's not that. Look. There are four gates and only one's open. It's just like the grocery stores back home.

**TOM**

That's stupid. Why don't they put out a few extra gatekeepers?

**BERT**

Who knows?

**TOM**

Well, I'm not waiting here all day.

**BERT**

Where you gonna go?

**TOM**

Hmm. You got a point.

**BERT**

You see, they got us by the short and curlies. We have to wait.

*Much later, near the gate, Bert approaches the gatekeeper while Tom and Bill stand back and wait. Bert and the gatekeeper talk for about five minutes, then Bert goes through the gate. The gatekeeper then motions Bill to come forward.*

**GATEKEEPER**

Hi. How are you?

**BILL**

Uhm. Okay, I guess.

**GATEKEEPER**

You should be. So, what's your favourite movie?

**BILL**

Huh?

**GATEKEEPER**

What's your favourite movie?

**BILL**

Oh, I don't know. "Shawshank Redemption", I guess.

**GATEKEEPER**

Oh, sure. Pick one about gross injustice on earth.

**BILL**

"The Ten Commandments" was good, too.

**GATEKEEPER**

Don't butter me up.

**BILL**

Sorry. How come you need to know my favourite movie?

**GATEKEEPER**

I don't. I was just curious. So, were you good on earth?

**BILL**

More or less.

**GATEKEEPER**

It's a yes or no question.

**BILL**

Okay, yes.

**GATEKEEPER**

Go ahead. You're in.

**BILL**

What?! That's it?

**GATEKEEPER**

Uh-huh.

**BILL**

What if I was lying about being good?

**GATEKEEPER**

I trust you.

**BILL**

I don't believe this! What about people like Hitler? What if he came by and said he'd been good?

**GATEKEEPER**

Oh, don't worry. Back then, we screened them a lot better. He didn't get in and neither did Ed Wood.

**BILL**

But do you even know who I am?

**GATEKEEPER**

No. But I know you're dead.

**BILL**

You didn't even ask my name. How do you know if I'm really supposed to be here? Maybe there's been a mistake.

**GATEKEEPER**

(LAUGHING) That only happens in the movies. God doesn't make mistakes.

**BILL**

I didn't mean to suggest He does, only –

**GATEKEEPER**

Listen. I got a lot of other people here to check in and, as you probably noticed, I'm on my own.

**BILL**

I was wondering about that. How come there isn't anyone at the other gates? We've been waiting for hours.

**GATEKEEPER**

It's hard to keep up. There are a lot more people dying these days. The line-ups just keep getting longer and longer. Plus the other three guys who were supposed to help today called in sick.

**BILL**

Called in sick?! You mean there's sickness in heaven?

**GATEKEEPER**

No, there isn't. Nobody ever gets sick. That's why I suspect they were lying and just wanted the day off.

**BILL**

This is incredible!

**GATEKEEPER**

I know. What are the odds all three of them would call in sick the same day? Good thing I was here, eh? Anyway, did you say you'd been good on earth?

**BILL**

Yes.

**GATEKEEPER**

Alright, then. NEXT!

*Bill steps away and waits for his friend to come forward and be questioned. He waits a few minutes as Tom is interrogated. Suddenly, Tom frantically waves him over.*

**TOM**

(TO BILL) He's not letting me in!

**BILL**

What's the trouble?

**GATEKEEPER**

I'm just following orders.

**BILL**

(TO TOM) Didn't you tell him you were good on earth?

**TOM**

I figured I had to be honest. I told him I'd been good and bad.

**GATEKEEPER**

That means purgatory, according to my books.

**BILL**

For God's sake! I mean Jesus Christ!

**GATEKEEPER**

Did you talk like that on earth?

**BILL**

Hell, no.

**GATEKEEPER**

You know, it's not too late to pull you back. I can still change my mind.

**BILL**

Sorry about the cursing. But listen. Tom here is my closest friend. He basically led a good life. I know because we did everything together. We even died together. He's at least as good as I am.

**GATEKEEPER**

(TO TOM) Is this true?

**TOM**

Yes, sir.

**GATEKEEPER**

I don't have time to argue with you. Go ahead.

**TOM**

Go ahead where? Where do we go from here?

*The gatekeeper looks around, mystified.*

**GATEKEEPER**

There are supposed to be angels here to take you to the next level. Well, I'm due for a break. I can take you. (HE CLOSSES THE GATE, AMID A ROAR OF ANGRY PROTESTS OUTSIDE.) Do you guys golf? We've got some great courses up here. Come have a round with me.

**BILL**

Sure, but don't you have to get back to the gate soon? I mean, a round of golf is going to take hours.

*The gatekeeper comes up to Tom and Bill and puts his arms around them.*

**GATEKEEPER**

You know the best thing about heaven? There is no time here.

*They walk off into the clouds as people angrily rattle the gates.*