

A Heavenly Fable

► **By Michael Mountain**

Our work for the animals is a work of the soul.



“For some, their eyes lit up with delight; others just had a look of bewilderment and shock.”

It was Judgment Day, and the long line of people snaked out of the Great Throne Room, through hallways and anterooms, and into the great open beyond.

There were only humans in the line. Since the other creatures of Earth had never entered into the world of good and evil, guilt and fear, or sin and redemption, and were therefore not in the business of judging others, there was no reason for them to be judged themselves. They went into a kind of fast lane that by-passed the Throne Room altogether, and led directly to whatever lay beyond. But even from the very front of the line, you couldn't see what that was.

The line wasn't usually this long. But the world had ended the day before, so everyone was there – all shuffling slowly along as, one by one, they appeared before the throne itself.

Not that there was any actual requirement to go before the throne and be judged. It was all entirely up to you, which meant that you could opt out altogether. The downside of that, however, was that it left you with nowhere else to go. You were, after all, dead now. So, unless you just wanted to remain like that, it made more sense to take your chances and get in line along with everyone else.

The line shuffled on.

Along the way, the apprehension was palpable. Even those who had convinced themselves, in their former lives, that all would be well today were suddenly not quite sure. Certainly, they'd done or believed all the right things as prescribed by their religion, faith, or culture. But now that it was coming down to it, there was this worrying sense that everything was not

necessarily the way they'd been taught. And it was none the more encouraging that bits of rumor and gossip were filtering back through the line – nothing concrete, just intimations that things in the Throne Room were not quite what people were expecting.

Even when you were almost there, you still couldn't quite see what was happening in the room. The line entered from behind the throne, so you could just catch glimpses of the faces of the people as they turned to face it. You couldn't hear what they were saying, either, but you could occasionally hear gasps of delight and see their eyes light up as they ran forward to greet whoever was sitting there. In other cases, there was just a stony silence and a look of shock, even bewilderment, as though the person's entire belief system and way of life had suddenly been stood completely on its head.

And so, one by one (it was always one at a time), they entered and turned to face what awaited them.

As it turned out, no one was waiting to pass judgment on you, or to read out a list of your sins of commission or omission; nor to tell you whether you'd passed or failed, or even what was going to happen next.

Instead, on the throne, there was just a small white rabbit – the kind they use in medical experiments. And, by her side, other animals: a stray cat, an old circus bear, a slightly scrawny, but peaceful-looking, little homeless dog, and more.

And then a quiet voice in each person's head saying simply: “As you have done to the least of these little creatures, so have you done to Me.” 🐾