

God Is In My Bedroom

By

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'For God's sake, Gary, stop that and look after David,' Jeannie shouted from the bathroom.

'What?' Gary shouted in response.

'You heard me. He's in the kitchen.'

'But I'm just about to get to the third level.'

'I don't care. Go and look after your son. And I don't want to see another mess when I get home tonight.'

'It's Sunday. It's my day off. Why can't you stay home and look after him?' moaned Gary just as his character faced up to fight the swordsman Azroth.

'We've been through this a thousand times.' Her voice was getting closer. 'I look after him all week. I work on Sunday because we need the money.' Jeannie was at the door. 'You're only playing a stupid game, anyway.'

Gary reluctantly saved the game and wondered into the kitchen. David beamed up at his hero father from his lego. 'I'm making a super laser, Dad,' he said. 'Wanna help?'

'She gets all the time off when you're in school,' muttered Gary.

'What did you say?' said Jeannie.

Gary jumped. She was right behind him.

He decided to opt for confrontation rather than his usual sullen silence. 'You send him to school during the week. You can do what you want all week.'

'Except that's when I do the cleaning and the shopping and everything else I have to do,' she snapped back. 'Spend some time with your son. And don't make a mess that I have to clean up.'

She slammed the door behind her as she left.

'Just 'cause it's Sunday,' said Gary as he wandered back into the living room and his beloved games console. Despite himself he picked up the controller knowing it was wrong.

There was an almighty crash from the kitchen.

'Bloody hell,' shouted Gary when he saw what David had done. The fridge door was open, a bowl of beetroot was broken on the floor and David was covered in yoghurt. David burst into tears.

'Why can't you be at school? Just because it's Sunday.' Gary smiled in realisation. 'Kid, do you want to get some religion?' he asked.

The response was an innocent smile.

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'God's in my bedroom,' David said to his Dad.

'What?' muttered Gary as his magician defeated the demon Azroth.

'He talks to me,' said David.

Gary glanced at David's smiling face. 'You aren't becoming a nutter are you?' he asked.

'Nutter, nutter, nutter,' said David running around in a circle with his arms outstretched.

'I'm a nutter.'

Gary looked on in fear and guilt. 'It's because I sent you to Sunday School, isn't it?'

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'This is going to be just like Jonah, again,' whispered the first voice.

'No it's not,' said the second in an equally soft whisper.

The two voices were only audible to the keenest ears in the quietest corner.

'The kid's going to run away. Just like Jonah.'

'No he's not. He's going to be another Moses.'

'You got lucky with Moses, finding him again and again.'

'It was skill not luck. We've got to keep trying with this kid. After all these years, we're in a technological age. It might even be the right one. We don't know when we'll get another chance like this.'

'Okay, okay.'

'Moses, right?'

'Yeah.'

'Not Jonah or Samuel or even David. Moses.'

*

'Dad, did you know that tomorrow there's going to be a crash in the market?'

'What?' snapped Gary. He was annoyed at being distracted just as he was defeating the warlord Azroth.

'The market. Someone's going to crash into it. Tomorrow.'

'What?' repeated Gary, only his mouth was responding as his brain and hands were otherwise occupied with swords, wands and battle towers.

'God told me. What's a market?'

'God?' repeated Gary's mouth. His brain caught up. 'God told you?'

'Yes, Dad. In my bedroom. I'm a nutter.' David zoomed off into the kitchen.

Gary stared at where David had been standing until the inevitable crash came from the kitchen. The warlord Azroth neatly skewered each of Gary's characters in turn as Gary went to sort out the problem.

*

The radio was blaring over the barely controlled chaos of the morning preparations for work and school. 'The stock market has fallen by 10 points in one morning. This fall is significant to all of us, who have pensions or investments.'

Gary stared at David over the chaos of breakfast. 'Just a coincidence,' he muttered to himself.

'Here's your lunch,' shouted Jeannie, shoving a plastic box into Gary's hands. 'You need to go or you'll be late for work and I need your car out of the way so I can take David to school.'

'Just a coincidence,' repeated Gary.

'What's that?' asked Jeannie.

'Nothing,' he said.

Jeannie pushed him out of the door.

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'A plane's going to crash in the 'loo,' said David. As he pushed a lego man off a lego wall he made the sounds of guns and bullets.

'When?' asked Gary. He was partly distracted as the news was about to come on.

'Soon. Today. Tomorrow, I think.'

'What does God sound like?' said Gary.

'He's quiet. Real quiet. Like the softest whisper in the world.'

Gary stared in fear and trembling as the news bulletin showed a plane burning on the runway in Peru. What had he done? Sunday School should have been safe enough.

*

'Daddy, what's a call girl?'

Gary's body twitched to the side in unconscious response to the fireball aimed at his character. 'What now?'

'The minister's seen her.'

'What? They didn't say that in Sunday School did they?'

'No, God told me. A minister's seeing a girl who calls people.'

'Is it someone from another church? Is that what they at Sunday School? Do they talk about the ministers at the other churches?'

'I dunno. They tell me all about the baby Jesus and God.'

Gary couldn't focus on his fight against the wizard Azroth anymore, so he put down the controller. 'Tell me all about it.'

'There's a minister who sees a girl and she calls him and he goes home to his family and they all forgive him but the minister has to get a new job.'

'When's all this going to happen?'

'Tomorrow. And the things are going to get better in the market place, too. It's bouncy.'

Gary listened carefully to the news the next morning and, sure enough, the stock market had bounced back and a government minister was caught with a call girl.

'I'll take David to school,' he called to Jeannie after breakfast was finished.

'What? No you can't,' snapped Jeannie. 'That's my job.'

'It's okay, I'll take him. Your cars in front of mine anyway and I'd have to move it. We're ready, now. You can take my car, instead. Bye.'

Gary bundled David into the car and drove off as Jeannie came running out of the house in her dressing gown.

'What did God say will happen tomorrow?' asked Gary. 'He didn't say anything about football did He?'

'Nope.'

'Can you ask him?'

'Okay.'

Gary noticed a man smiling at them and waving as they pulled up outside the school. When the man realised that Gary was driving the car he looked away suddenly. 'David,' he said, 'who's that man there?'

'That's Rob's father. He talks to us all the time. He's really funny.'

'I'll bet he is,' muttered Gary.

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'What else can we tell him?' said the whisper.

'Just big stuff, right?' said the other whisper.

'Yeah. Easily noticed. So he'll know it's not just a coincidence but not anything that will make a difference.'

'How about the weather?'

'This is a technological era, remember. He can get moderately accurate reports from the media.'

'I've found a freak flood in India. That couldn't have been predicted.'

'Good. Is it soon?'

'A few days. What about the football?'

'Okay, but only once. We may want his attention but remember before when we told that clairvoyant in Germany her future and she passed it on that Austrian guy and it all went wrong.'

'Do you really think that the Second World War was our fault?'

'I don't know. The computer didn't find any unexplained coincidences but let's just be careful. Okay?'

'Okay.'

*

'Daddy.' David pulled at Gary's arm with one hand while holding a pterodactyl in the other.

'What now?' snapped Gary. Azroth the three headed hydra was just about dead.

'Did you know there's a flood tomorrow? Just like in the bible? There'll be animals and a rainbow and Noah and all. Just like they said in Sunday School.'

Gary ignored his controls. 'A flood where?'

'In the bible.'

'In this country?'

'No, in India.'

'What about the football?'

'God wouldn't tell me until now. He told me to tell you now that Wigan beat Hull three to nil.'

'What? Are you sure?'

'That's what God said.'

Gary turned on the telly to watch the football. Meanwhile the three headed hydra Azroth grew four more heads and ate all of Gary's characters.

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'David has a friend called Rob,' Gary said to Jeannie while they watched the telly.

Jeannie fidgeted. 'Ah, yes, I guess so.'

'What's his Dad like?'

Jeannie's face was expressionless. 'I dunno. I can't remember. I don't think I've met him.'

'Only he recognised the car, the other day.'

'There are lots of red fiestas around.'

'I think I'll take David to school more often,' said Gary.

'Okay,' said Jeannie. She was staring intently at the telly. 'Fine. We can swap cars.'

'Let's move his seat into my car. That'll be better.'

'Whatever.'

They continued to watch the telly. Wigan beat Hull, three nil in a surprise upset and Gary wondered how he would go about placing a bet on a football game.

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'Has God said anything new,' asked Gary as drove David to school.

'No Dad,' said David. 'He's waiting. He says there's something really important happening.'

'Can I talk to God?' he asked carefully.

David bounced up and down in excitement. 'I want a new games console.'

Gary glanced across at David. 'What new games console?' he asked looking back at the road.

'The Azroth. You must have heard of it Dad. We've got to have one.'

'The Azroth? I thought it wasn't coming out for weeks.' Gary was surprised that he hadn't noticed it. 'Anyway, you don't care about games.'

'That's 'cause I'm too little to play them. When will I be big enough?'

Gary frowned in guilt at the selfish lie that enabled him to have exclusive access to the games console.

Rob's dad was standing near the gate. He looked away when he saw David in Gary's car.

'See if God will tell you about the football again,' Gary said to David whilst he stared at Rob's dad.

'Okay, Dad.'

'Oh, and I think I should pick you up as well, tonight.'

'Really? That would be great, Dad.'

'Wait a second,' Gary said as David opened the door. 'You know this stuff about God? Have you said anything to mummy?'

'Yeah, but she wasn't listening. I can tell, 'cause she was on the phone and when she's on the phone she doesn't want to talk to me, so I play with my lego in my room.'

'We'll keep it as our little secret. Okay? Just you and me and no one else in the whole world. Okay?'

'Yeah, my friends didn't believe me anyway. Why doesn't anyone want to hear what God says, Dad?'

'I guess they feel that they've done something wrong and God will punish them.'

'But God is love. That's what they say in Sunday School.'

'Off you go. Time for school.'

David slammed the door shut behind him and ran into the playground.

Gary smiled to himself. When had David become so interesting?

*

'God doesn't want to talk about football, anymore,' said David. They were eating a take away supper in front of the telly. David on the floor, Gary and Jeannie on separate sofas.

'Why?' said Gary.

'What's that?' asked Jeannie.

'Nothing. Just a game we have between us,' said Gary. 'Just our little secret.'

David covered a huge grin with his hands and blinked at Gary. Gary winked back and David giggled.

'I tried to ring you the other day but your phone was busy,' suggested Gary, carefully. 'It's busy a lot these days.'

Jeannie fidgeted. 'Is it? I must've been out of range.'

'How come you don't cook as much anymore?'

'What? I'm too busy.'

'And the house is a mess.'

'What is this,' shouted Jeannie. 'A bloody inquisition?'

'Just wondering what's changed.'

'Nothing. Right? Nothing. I'm going to eat in the kitchen. I hate this programme.'

Jeannie left and Gary stared thoughtfully at David who looked back and grinned.

'Our secret,' said Gary.

'Yeah, Dad. Tomorrow everyone's losing interest by half a person.'

'Did God say that?'

'Yep.'

'What exactly did he say?'

'I don't know.'

'Why don't you show me where God talks to you?'

'Okay. Mummy's crying.'

'Is she? She's probably just sad about something. Let's go to your room.'

Gary noted that David's room was a mess. Jeannie usually cleaned it up each day, but it hadn't been tidied for a week or more.

'Where does God speak to you?' asked Gary.

'When I'm in bed. After I've said my prayers and the lights out but the other day he said I should talk to him in the middle of the day. That's when he said about the football.'

'Let's do that now.'

David giggled as they kneeled to pray.

'How do you pray?' asked Gary.

'Like this.' David stuck his little hands together, and screwed his face up in concentration. 'God, please look after mummy and daddy,' he said, 'and make them happy. Please let me be big enough to play on a games console. Please look after me.'

'Don't you think mummy and daddy are happy?'

David looked at him and shook his head as he eyes became misty. 'You just shout at each other and never talk. And I like it when you take me to school, Daddy. I hate it when Mummy's late and I have to wait for her. I get lonely waiting at school 'cause everyone else has gone home except Mr Dreiber.'

'Who's Mr Dreiber?'

'He's our head teacher.'

Gary turned out the lights and they lay down as he thought over everything that had happened lately.

'Yes, God,' said David.

'What's that?' said Gary.

'God asked if I was here. So I said yes.'

Gary listened with all his body and realised that there was a faint scratchy sound coming from the wall. He stared until he had convinced himself that he could see a faint glow.

'Is God talking, now?' he asked David.

'Yeah, but I can't hear properly 'cause you're talking, Dad.'

'Sorry.'

'God wants to talk to you Daddy. He's really excited. He's been wanting to talk to you for ages.'

'Why didn't he ask before?'

'I'm sorry daddy. I was naughty. I didn't want him to talk to you 'cause then you wouldn't want to talk to me anymore again.'

Now the tears were in Gary's eyes. 'Don't worry mate. I'll always talk to you. I won't even get the Azroth console so we can talk.'

'But Dad, we have to have the console.'

'Yeah but only to share, okay?'

'God's trying to talk to us, Dad.'

'Okay. What's he saying?'

'He says, that it's really important. That everything's about to go wrong. The world's going to get really hot and dry and there'll be wars and all sorts of things.'

'How does He know what's going to happen?'

'Da-ad, He's God.'

'Ask him, anyway.'

'He can hear you. He says that he has something for you to do and it will make you very rich.'

'Who are you really?' asked Gary.

David stared at the wall for a few seconds before answering. 'He says he's a person. And he has a computer that's like it was a God. It can tell they've changed time because of unexpected co-incidenc-es and you have to write something down and take it to someone.'

'What this about half a person losing interest?'

David paused. 'Per cent,' he said in the studied concentration of someone repeating something they don't understand. 'Half a percent. Off interest. Base rate?' He shrugged to his Dad.

'So how will I get so rich?'

'An a-ccum-u-lat-or?' suggested David.

'I'll bring a pen and paper with me tomorrow.'

*

Gary hardly bothered to check the news about the half per cent drop in the Bank of England base rates. He spent quite a bit of time looking into accumulators on the horses, though, so he was ready in the evening for his chat with God.

'How do I know that I can trust you?' Gary asked God.

'Dad,' said David, 'he's God. They taught us every day in Sunday School.' He sang, 'trust and obey for there's no other way.'

'Let's see what God says,' said Gary.

'God says it's you he has to trust... You won't understand anything until it's been decoded by someone so you'll have to do your job... and he says what have you got to lose?'

'Okay, tell me what I've got to do.'

The instructions were long and very complex with strings of numbers and letters that had to be checked again and again. It had taken them a month to sort it all out and get it exactly right. God was now ready to tell them who to contact.

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Gary met Jeannie in the kitchen when David was asleep. 'We need to talk, he said.'

Jeannie frowned and stopped in the middle of making a cup of tea. 'Not now, I'm tired.' She rubbed her eyes and for the first time Gary noticed how red they were.

'It's about us. I think we need to try to sort things out. Between us.'

She stared, puzzled. 'What? Why?'

'Come on,' said Gary. He sighed for a second determined to go on. 'I don't know whether you're actually having an affair or not, but we need to sort this out. For David's sake.'

'What do you care about David?'

Gary felt s intense stab of emotional pain at Jeannie’s implicit admittance of the affair. ‘I care a lot more these days. Surely you’ve noticed I’ve been putting him to bed.’

She nodded. ‘Yeah. When did you last play on your console?’

‘Weeks ago. Look, we can get this right. What are you going to do? Are you leaving us?’

‘It’s finished,’ she said, fighting back a sob in her throat.

Gary felt a tear in his own eye and let out a sigh of relief. Jeannie mattered more to him than he realised. ‘I want us to try again. To be a family. I’m hoping to come into some money soon. That’ll make it right.’

‘You idiot. Money won’t fix this.’

‘It will if it pays for some counselling or something. Will you give it a try?’

She stared at him without answering.

‘For David’s sake,’ he added.

She nodded her head. ‘For David’s sake.’

*

Gary knocked on the physicist’s door.

‘Come in,’ was shouted from within.

Gary opened the door into a typical academic’s room of shelves, books, a huge desk drowning in paper, computers and circuit boards. ‘Are you Doctor Barry?’ asked Gary.

‘Yes, how can I help you?’ Barry was a tall, young man in jeans and shirt

‘I’ve come about a project of yours called Tempus Fugitive.’

‘Are you a student?’

‘No, I’m a member of the public and I know this sounds weird but I have a message from God.’

Doctor Barry took a step back, eyes wide.

‘It’s okay. I don’t think it’s really God, just our name for it,’ gabbled Gary. He didn’t want Gray to call security or the police. ‘I don’t understand a lot of this but God or whoever said to say

that time is more like a thrashing hose than a path on a hyper-sphere. And your software is okay, but don't use probabilities to compare events use segregated dimensions, whatever that means.'

Doctor Barry blinked and dropped his arms. He was clearly confused for a second but then seems to realise something. He stared at the floor.

Gary waited patiently for what must have been many minutes.

'That might work,' said Gray. He ran to his desk and started scribbling equations on the back of a piece of paper.

'I've also got some letters and numbers. God or whoever says they're important but they look like rubbish to me.'

Barry ignored him.

'I think they'll help.' Gary waved the pages in Barry's face.

Barry stared at the handwritten pages. 'Encrypted. Or maybe just compressed,' he said.

'What's this all about?' asked Gary.

'Something to do with my research.' He looked at Gary. 'Ah, I guess you've never heard of me or it. Are you a physicist?'

Gary shook his head.

'I have a theory about time. Imagine that the universe is a big hyper globe in 4 dimensions.'

Gary stared.

'Sorry. Look, think of it like this, we're living on the surface of the world, but our paths are actually paths in time. All paths are possible but we only take some paths. And while we're on one path we can't see any others. But we can go backwards on the path – backwards in time and take another path.'

'What like in that movie "Back to the Future"?'

'A bit yes, except that we can't remember what happened because we go back in time together and that erases all our memories.' Doctor Barry had obviously said this little speech many

times before. 'My theory says that you can only detect time travel if the time travellers choose the best possible path and if there are more co-incidences than you would expect.'

'How does this work with God talking to me?'

'I don't know. There's a corresponding part of the research that says with enough energy you can create a wormhole across from one point on the path to another. In time and space. But it would be almost impossible to control and to anchor in the right place as the Earth turned and orbited. It would also take incomprehensible amounts of energy and virtually all of it would be lost in the process,' answered Barry.

'So it's people from the future? And they're so quiet because most of the energy has been lost.'

Barry smiled at him. 'I also have a theory that we seem to be inordinately lucky. There are so few possible paths that lead to a technological age.'

Gary ignored the comment. 'What do you think those numbers and letters mean?'

'I don't know, yet. There's a lot of them isn't there?'

'It took us days to write it all down.'

'Tell me all about it.'

It took Gary many hours to explain everything that had happened in the last few months.

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'Dad, the phone. It's for you,' shouted David.

'I know, I know,' answered Gary. He had been talking to Jeannie. It hurt so much to hear it but he made himself listen to her all the way through without interruptions, like he'd been told.

They were starting to connect again at last.

Gary put the phone to his ear. 'Yes?'

'It's Doctor Barry, here. I thought you'd like to know I've decoded those pages. Thankfully your handwriting was good enough for a scanner. It is from the future.'

'What, those letters and numbers?' asked Gary.

‘Yes. It was highly compressed information and I’ve got to pass on some stuff to you. Dates, and names. I don’t quite know what to make of it.’

‘I have some other information that will match it,’ answered Gary with a grin as he mentally prepared for the millionaire’s lifestyle.’

‘We’re in direct contact with them, now. Because the link is direct between components I’ve been able to boost the signal significantly. I think we’re only just in time, too. I have to convince the World’s Governments to do something urgently. I’ll be able to prove my predictions so they will have to listen to me. We can avoid losing the whole of humanity. We’ll still suffer but we’ll survive.’

‘Really?’ said Gary, hardly believing any of it. Everything seemed so ordinary.

‘There’s more to it, though,’ said Barry. He was getting very excited. ‘I think the coincidences are too big and we were lucky but even the biggest coincidence in the world couldn’t have saved us. We have to do exactly the right thing to survive. We could only do this if we’d been contacted by a successful future. One where we saved, and only if they contacted us here and now.’

Gary wasn’t really listening much anymore. He was planning to contact a stockbroker and a bookie. ‘Thanks Doctor Barry. Can you get those dates and stuff to me as soon as possible?’

‘Do you understand what I’m saying? Did you hear how unlikely it all is? These people getting through to your son? What I said about how difficult it’s going to be? Money won’t be meaningful anymore.’

‘Yeah, whatever. Can you get those dates and names to me really soon?’ he repeated.

‘Yeah. Okay. I’ll email you.’

Gary passed on his email address, dreaming of riches and the good life he was going to have blissfully unaware that he was the first person to have been told of the difficult but now possible future ahead.

THE END