



Password to Heaven

Deceased: St.Peter?

St.P: Tis I. Welcome to the Gates of Heaven.

Deceased: I am so grateful to be here. I have led the best life I could.

St.P: And now you will be rewarded with an eternity amongst the angels. All I need from you is your password, please.

Deceased: Sorry?

St.P: Your password. It's standard practice now.

Deceased: Nobody gave me a password, St. Peter. I was in hospital surrounded by doctors, and now I am here.

St.P: You need a password. Everyone does. Didn't Gabriel give you one?

Deceased: Who?

St.P: Gabriel. He's in charge of the technical stuff now.

Deceased: I never saw him. I came straight here from the hospital bed.

St.P: That's not good, sir. Here you are, here is a piece of cloud. Etch a password in it, please. Twelve characters, any language, one symbol, one number, mixed case.

Deceased: Is this a joke, St. Peter?

St.P: No jokes in heaven, sir. Just a second...

(Another deceased approaches, shows a password and the gates open)

That's the way to do it, sir.

Deceased: Someone must have given it to him and missed me.

St.P: Gabriel doesn't miss anyone, sir. He would be upset to hear that. Are you sure you belong here? You haven't wandered from...?

Deceased: No! I led a decent life.

St.P: Well, etch a password and we'll see.

(The deceased scrawls something in the woolly cloud held in his palm)

Excellent. I won't look. Top secret. Now, a form of ID, please.

Deceased: But you know me! You called me! Someone called me, at least. I followed the angelic trumpets from my hospital bed!

St.P: And beautiful they are, too, I know. But I need ID. Passport? Driving license? Council tax bill? Birth certificate?

Deceased: I didn't bring those things with me! Why would I? I'm glad to see the back of them – forever.

St.P: The last ones are valid for three billion years, you should have been told that.

Deceased: Well, I wasn't.

St.P: Hmm. How about your PIN?

Deceased: I don't have a PIN, nor a password, nor ID. I was seriously hoping to leave all that nonsense behind for eternity.

St.P: It's security, sir, that's all. There have been mistakes in the past and we don't want to repeat them.

Deceased: I'm not a mistake. I led an exemplary life. I just wasn't hot on technology.

St.P: You need to keep up, sir. We did. How do I know you are who you claim to be?

Deceased: You're St. Peter, the right hand of God almighty. You know everything.

St.P: I don't know your password or PIN. Like I say, they're secret.

Deceased: What about my fingerprint?

St.P: What about it?

Deceased: Can't you use it? It's common practise now.

St.P: Not here, sir. I mean, we're traditionalists.

Deceased: This isn't tradition, it's harassment.

St.P: No need to get edgy, sir, this can be sorted. All you need to do is head back, find Gabriel, tell him what's happened and apply for a password and ID card.

Deceased: How long does that take?

St.P: To find him? How long is a piece of divine thread, sir? Depends whether you hurry or stay here arguing the toss. I'd love to let you in, it's my raison d'être, but rules are rules.

Deceased: You couldn't have had these rules since the start of time, could you?

St.P: If we start debating time and whether or not it has a start and end, we will be here, well, quite a while. We adapt and change, as does the universe.

Deceased: The universe is a constant, eternal, like God almighty.

St.P: Not quite. Look I could put you through to our Subsidiary Angels Department. You could have a word with Uriel. He's hot on problems like this. Just a sec... oh dear, no answer. Come to think of it, there's been a bit of a time and motion issues there. He's on strike.

Deceased: Please let me in, St. Peter! You can't let red tape close the Gates of Heaven.

St.P: Why not? It might be red tape to you but it's peace and stability to us. Let me think... I'll talk to someone while I put you on hold. Would you like some music?

Deceased: No, I just want to get in. No one will know. Please!

St.P: Just a moment, another idea. We've opened a help centre on Alpha Centauri. I can send you there, if you like.

Deceased: That's light years away.

St.P: Four point three seven, to be almost exact. I think it's the only way, sir. They can sort you out in no time at all.

Deceased: How long is no time at all?

St.P: Very droll, sir. I'll still be here. I'll remember you. I promise.

Deceased: I should complain. This is unfair – grossly unfair.

St.P: There is a complaints department...

Deceased: No! Leave it. I'm going to try you-know-who.

St.P: For a password to heaven? Are you sure?

Deceased: No. Not for a password, not for ID, not for a PIN, not for anything like that.

St.P: Well, why, may I ask? It's just a little bureaucracy we ask for the sake of eternal peace.

Deceased: Forget it. I'm done with bureaucracy. And this is the opposite of peace.

St.P: So what will you want with... him.

Deceased: One thing alone. Yes. To let me in.