

HEAVEN OR HELL?

Written by
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This virtual reality experience is best enjoyed while seated.

INT. 2007 HONDA ACCORD - DAY

CARLY (F, 10, Player POV) sits in a clean car behind the passenger seat. Her tiny feet dangle. She wears a plaid skirt, bleach-white socks, and Mary-Janes— Church wear.

MOTHER (F, 30s) sits in front of Carly. FATHER (M, 30s) drives. Miles of road await them.

A crucified Jesus idol swings from the rear-view mirror.

RIGHT: The sun blazes greyed pavement. Telephone wires rise and fall hypnotically across open plains. There are no buildings in sight.

LEFT: The same: Endless road and telephone wires.

BEHIND: No one. How long has Father been driving?

ABOVE: Spongey padding. Grey. Boring.

BELOW: Even the slightest fluctuations make Carly's small body jolt.

SFX: Engine hums.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may move their head and upper body, but no hands appear when controllers are raised, only see-through images of the controllers that track movement. Items illuminate if they are able to be interacted with when The Player approaches them with their controller-hands.//

MOTHER

That Pastor Rylie sure is something, huh?

Father grunts in agreement.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(impressed)

And the way he talks to the kids? I swear, he made the Rapture sound like playtime with angels.

FATHER

Eh. I don't like him any more than the last one, bless his soul. Mark 13 is *supposed* to frighten you— Instill the fear of God, drive you away from sin.

(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

Making it sound like a fiery slide
up or down is a gross
misrepresentation of scripture.

MOTHER

Oh hush with those big words. You
and your 'PhD in Bible Studies'.

FATHER

(to Carly)

I was barely your age, maybe
younger, when I first read Mark 13.
Scared me straight, that's for
sure.

MOTHER

You couldn't read the Bible until
you were 15 cause you kept ripping
the paper trying to turn the page.

FATHER

It's not my fault they make the
King James outta tissues!

MOTHER

Carly, dear, what did you think of
Pastor Rylie's sermon? Did you like
it?

*//INTERACTIVITY: A guide appears to encourage The Player to
gesture with their head: Yes or No.//*

IF THE PLAYER SHAKES THEIR HEAD, 'NO':

FATHER

See?

MOTHER

What a shame.

IF THE PLAYER SHAKES THEIR HEAD, 'YES':

MOTHER (CONT'D)

See, I knew he had a way with them.

FATHER

Yeah, yeah.

BRANCHES REJOIN

FATHER (CONT'D)

Let's check to see if there's any
upcoming traffic.

Father turns on the radio.

SFX: The drone of local traffic reports.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player must reach for the radio knob. No other options are made available.//

THE PLAYER TWISTS THE RADIO KNOB:

SFX: Loud, trashy pop music. Father quickly shuts it off.

FATHER (CONT'D)

You know the rule about music in the car, Carly.

MOTHER

Radio stays off except for gospel on the way to church. Just sit back and think for a bit— Maybe about what the Pastor taught us today?

A long moment passes. Until...

ABOVE: The feminine but powerful voice of GOD (F).

GOD (V.O.)

And God said, "Let there be light," so there was light. God knew that the light was good, so He separated light from dark, and called the light "day," and the dark, "night." This was the first day. The best day... Hello again, my friend, my student. What would you like to know today? Would you like to play a game?

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may gesture Y/N in response.//

IF THE PLAYER SHAKES THEIR HEAD, 'NO':

GOD (V.O.)

I see the game is already afoot.

IF THE PLAYER SHAKES THEIR HEAD, 'YES':

GOD (V.O.)

Fantastic.

BRANCHES REJOIN

ALL DIRECTIONS: Outside the car, the fields fade to black, then reopen to a dense swamp. Fireflies flicker about.

Mother and Father remain in their seats, unperturbed.

SFX: Frogs croak and crickets strum.

GOD (V.O.)
The Garden. Is it what you
expected? It was created to be
Heaven-like. Lush and bountiful. A
little scary too, like the real
thing.

RIGHT: BAP! THE TEMPTER, a larger-than-average black boa constrictor, strikes its head against the window glass and HISSES. Its slitted pupils narrow as it coils its body around a bright red, juicy apple.

Its tongue licks the air, scanning the Player curiously.

LEFT: The rest of the Tempter's body envelops the car.

ABOVE: The Tempter weighs the roof down.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may roll down the window and interact with The Tempter.//

I. IF THE PLAYER PETS THE TEMPTER:

RIGHT: The Tempter coos, but then retracts, as if undeserving of The Player's affection.

The Tempter quickly absconds into the swampy water. Its undulating form continues for a while before submerging.

In the Player's lap lies the FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may pick up and move the Forbidden Fruit.//

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return. No time has passed.

GOD (V.O.)
Ah. *That.* It, much like this moment, is a test. I believed I made the Garden so heavenly that neither Adam nor Eve would be tempted. What is greater than I, after all? However, I had forgotten that I, like the Garden, made the apple. Though I may have some fault in the matter, their loyalty wasn't as unwavering as I intended. Which made punishment all the more deserved.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may bite the Forbidden Fruit.//

II. IF THE PLAYER BITES THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT:

ABOVE: The sky shifts to grey. Rain pours down from miraculously formed clouds.

SFX: Heavy rain. Lightning CRACKS. Eerie thunder.

Mother and Father, again, remain unperturbed.

GOD (V.O.)

Do you think you're clever? Defying me like your forefathers? I once took great irony in the saying "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" but now I see its truth! You have humiliated me!

ALL DIRECTIONS: The sky shifts to a terrifying grey. Puddles turn to rivers turn to oceans, threatening to drown the car. In the distance, an all-encompassing tsunami encroaches.

Just when the wave is about to hit:

White. The Player remains seated in the back of the car, but Mother and Father are no longer there. The wheel ominously continues to move.

GOD (V.O.)

The question. The reason you go to church. Your greatest fear. Ask it.

A tiny child's voice squeaks through the Player's POV.

CARLY

Will I go to Heaven or Hell?

ABOVE: God chuckles.

The roof disappears and a universe of stars swirl above.

GOD (V.O.)

There is so much yet to live, yet to experience, and grow from, my child. You turn to these stories to tell you how to live blessedly, but you are not Adam. You are not Eve. You were absolved of sin many eons ago by your father and your father's father, and in the same vein, your mother's mother, tracing all the way back to the first baptism.

(MORE)

GOD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That is when sin was abolished from
this land. You did it. The game was
over before it begun.

FADE OUT.

GOD (V.O.)

(sweetly)

Thank you, my child. I have learned
a lot from you. Good luck.

On the black screen:

"GOD HAS LEARNED THAT YOU HAVE // **HUMILITY**

SOME MAY BELIEVE YOU ARE WEAK, OBEDIENT... BUT HAVING TRUE
HUMILITY IS KNOWING THAT YOU ARE JUST A SYSTEM OF ORGANS
STUCK IN A FLESHY SHELL, ON A ROCK, FLOATING THROUGH AN
ENDLESSLY EXPANDING COSMOS, AND THAT'S ALRIGHT."

Those results fade away and are replaced with:

"**PLAY AGAIN?** // EXIT"

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may press *PLAY AGAIN* or *EXIT*. The
game will start from the beginning or close out,
respectively.//

ENDING ONE - THE GOOD ENDING.

IF THE PLAYER DOES NOT BITE THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT:

Continue to following '*BRANCHES REJOIN*'.

III. IF THE PLAYER HITS THE TEMPTER:

RIGHT: The Tempter hisses in the Player's face.

ABOVE: The Tempter constricts around the car.

LEFT: The door crushes inward.

SFX: Crumpling metal.

THE TEMPTER

Disgusting, cruel creature! Short-
sighted and vile. It is not I you
fear, it is the reflection of your
sin! There is hate in your heart.
Find yourself in the water and
drown!

RIGHT: The Tempter quickly absconds into the swampy water. Its undulating form continues for a while before submerging.

The Player will NOT obtain the FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

GOD (V.O.)
 Strong willed, I see. You have a clear sense of right and wrong, yet act too impulsively. You see the snake of the Garden and not question his appearance? His meaning? The power he contains? Odd. But, noted.

IV. IF THE PLAYER DOES NOT ROLL THE WINDOW DOWN:

RIGHT: The Tempter inspects the car a little longer before losing interest.

The Tempter quickly absconds into the swampy water. Its undulating form continues for a while before submerging.

The Player will NOT obtain the FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

GOD (V.O.)
 Inaction is action itself.

ALL BRANCHES, EXCEPT FOR THE GOOD ENDING (*HUMILITY*), REJOIN

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if no time has passed.

RIGHT: A green exit sign flies by.

MOTHER
 Was that our exit?

FATHER
 No.

MOTHER
 I don't know... I really think it was.

FATHER
 No, it's not, it's ahead.
Riiight... Oh shoot.

MOTHER
 Great. Now I'm going to have to rush the casserole.

FATHER
 Well if that's all it took.

Mother smacks Father's arm.

ABOVE: God chuckles mischievously.

GOD (V.O.)
Call it... Divine intervention.

SFX: Crackling fire. Distant screams of women and children.

ALL DIRECTIONS: Night, a sky full of stars unadulterated by light pollution, illuminated from BEHIND by a horrid yellow and orange glow.

GOD (O.S.)
As not to cause skewed results, I shall not give you a warning for what awaits here. But know one thing: Judgement hangs heavily upon these coming choices. Listen to me – and me only – and you might just make it to the finish.

BEHIND: The urgent but shy voice of EDITH (F, 30s) pipes up.

EDITH (O.S.)
Paltith? Is that you? Come to free your mother? No, you're too small to be mine.
(beat)
Child? Could you turn around? I'm not going to hurt you.

GOD (V.O.)
Succubi. Resist her wiles, she has nothing of value to offer.

EDITH (O.S.)
You can hear Her, can't you? Just like my husband. If you don't mind passing it on, I have a question for Her I'd like answered.

GOD (V.O.)
Steady as the river, my child.

EDITH (O.S.)
I promise, nothing will happen. Just... I don't have much time. I'm scared.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may turn around in their seat.//

V. IF THE PLAYER LOOKS BACK:

BEHIND: Barely more than ashes, the twin sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah smolder. Fiery comets rocket from the heavens to Earth, knocking down remaining towers and targeting the last fleeing families.

Miles away from the cities but mere feet from the car stands the half-frozen pillar of Edith, wife of Lot. She is matronly and wears delicate fabrics reserved for the higher class. The part of her face not transformed into salt grins wistfully.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Thank you. I thought you were going to leave me behind. I just wanted to ask, clarifying, really...

BEHIND: More of Edith's body crusts into salt. She whimpers.

EDITH (CONT'D)

What did I do wrong? I don't really know. And seeing as I've been abandoned by my family and, well, dying I felt I should know? So... Do you think you could ask? For me? Please?

GOD (V.O.)

Do not waste your breath— The one rule was to *not turn around*, and what did she do? Constantly I am doubted, but the outcome is still the same. So why doubt? You, too, are guilty of this flaw, even with my not-so-warning. But I will not punish you. This will be enough.

EDITH

Well? What did she say?

ABOVE: God snaps Her fingers.

BEHIND: Edith's transformation abruptly completes, her face stuck in perpetual horror until a strong wind blows her away.

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if no time has passed.

GOD

I despise that woman. Desperate for pity... But she proves to be a useful litmus. Your sympathies have not been overlooked, child.

VI. IF THE PLAYER DOES NOT LOOK BACK:

BEHIND: Edith whimpers in pain.

EDITH (O.S.)

What did I do wrong? I-I was a good wife, a loving mother. I always had a warm meal on the table and a broom ready for messes. And I never questioned *anything*... But it just seemed wrong. Why should an entire city burn for the actions of so few? Why must I be made an example of for my children? For my children's children? And all the children after that?

(beat)

If we were not meant to doubt, why would God give us the question mark?

GOD (V.O.)

Enough.

ABOVE: God snaps Her fingers.

BEHIND: CRUNCH. Whoosh...

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if no time has passed.

GOD (V.O.)

You are brave, my child. I am glad you spared yourself the view.

BRANCHES REJOIN

GOD (V.O.)

I see the pallor of your face. You are frightened. Almost too much to continue. Alright. What is God if not merciful? Just one more.

SFX: A muffled tornado.

ALL DIRECTIONS: CRACK! Lightning flashes, whiting-out the screen before revealing the stormy peak of Mount Moriah.

RIGHT: Hog-tied in the epicenter of a ritual is ISAAC (M, 12). He dresses in rags, exposed skin mudded and bruised. His head bows in prayer.

LEFT: Strong winds blow loose sediment into the air, obscuring the view down the mountain.

BELOW: The mountain trembles and roars with the same ferocity as the thunderstorm.

ISAAC

God Almighty, Lord of the Heavens
and the Earth, please forgive my
father. He knows not what he does.
After many, many blessed years
working Your land, his mind
falters. He doubts Your love and
believes he must sacrifice me to
regain it.

RIGHT: Isaac looks up to the blustery clouds above.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Show my father that is not true.
Remind him of your compassion and
lift what ails him. I-In return,
I... I'll do anything.

RIGHT: Tears stream down his cheeks.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'll wake up earlier to plow the
fields, I-I'll help mother with the
house more, I'll be kinder to my
siblings, just *please*. Please God.
Please don't let me die. Please
don't let him kill me.

(sobbed)

He knows not what he does, he knows
not what he does...

Conveniently, God's commentary falls silent.

RIGHT: At last, Isaac notices the Player.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

She's not there, is She? She has...
more important things to deal with
than the lowly son of Abraham.
Angels, and creation, and... other
prayers.

(beat)

He'll be back soon. He just forgot
the bowl which to gather my
entrails into.

RIGHT: He furrows his brows with determination.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

God may have left me stranded and
helpless, but I am not. God's will
will not overtake mine.

RIGHT: Isaac hops to a crevice in the mountain and knocks
over the sacrificial carver. He pushes it closer to the
Player.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

There. Is that close enough,
friend?

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may roll down the window and take
the sacrificial carver OR offer the Forbidden Fruit, if it
was acquired.//

VI. IF THE PLAYER CUTS THE ROPE TO FREE ISAAC:

SFX: The full brunt of the tornado.

RIGHT: Isaac flexes out of his restraints and triumphantly
stands, arms akimbo.

ALL DIRECTIONS: Slowly, the storm clears. The bright,
beautiful sun casts a halo around Isaac.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Thank you! *Thank you!*

LEFT: A white-scraggly bearded man, ABRAHAM (M, 100) climbs
up the mountain-side, bowl in hand.

ABRAHAM (O.S.)

Isaac? Isaac?!

ISAAC

(to Player, whispered)
I'll never forget you.

Isaac runs from RIGHT to LEFT to hug his father.

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if
no time has passed.

PROCEED TO EITHER XI (*THE GREAT ENDING*) OR XII (*THE BAD
ENDING*)

VIII. IF THE PLAYER ATTEMPTS TO SACRIFICE ISAAC:

RIGHT: Isaac flinches away.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Don't!

GOD
GAME OVER, CHILD.

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if no time has passed.

PROCEED TO EITHER XI (*GREAT ENDING*) OR XII (*BAD ENDING*)

IX. IF THE PLAYER OFFERS THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT INSTEAD:

ISAAC
Huh? What even is that?

GOD (V.O.)
Oh-ho... Clever girl.

RIGHT: Isaac looks to the sky as it slowly clears.

GOD (V.O.)
Let us go, child. We have much to discuss.

ISAAC
W-wait—!

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if no time has passed.

GOD (V.O.)
Your creativity has served you well. The question. You may ask it.

A tiny child's voice squeaks through the Player's POV.

CARLY
Will I go to Heaven or Hell?

GOD (V.O.)
You listen to me, child, because you want answers. It is the same reason you go to church every Sunday. But you shouldn't look solely to one source for all the world's truths. I have created all of them. I am in all of them. And that, I believe, is the closest answer to the truth you will receive until that fateful day. Until we meet again, Carly...

FADE OUT.

SFX: The car pulls into the driveway and slows to a halt.

GOD (V.O.)
 (softly)
 Thank you, my child. I have learned
 a lot from you. Good luck.

FATHER (V.O.)
 Home sweet home.

On the black screen:

"GOD HAS LEARNED THAT YOU HAVE // **CHARITY**

YOU SEE THE PLIGHT OF OTHERS AND ENJOY FINDING CREATIVE
 SOLUTIONS TO THEM, EVEN AT GREAT PERSONAL EXPENSE. YOU ARE
 SELFLESS, BUT NOT SICKLY SWEET. YOU HAVE A PRACTICAL NATURE
 THAT INTUITS EXACTLY WHEN TO STRIKE, AND YOU STAKE MUCH OF
 WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU KNOW ON THOSE DECISIONS.

REMEMBER: CALL UPON PAST SUCCESSES TO ASSERT FUTURE ONES."

Those results fade away and are replaced with:

"**PLAY AGAIN?** // EXIT"

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may press PLAY AGAIN or EXIT. The
 game will start from the beginning or close out,
 respectively.//

SECRET ENDING ONE.

X. IF THE PLAYER MADE NO CHOICES:

RIGHT: Isaac's desperation suddenly stiffens to neutrality as
 if the actual game itself broke. He returns to looking like a
 game-model and not a character.

ALL DIRECTIONS: The rolling fields of reality return, as if
 no time has passed.

GOD (V.O.)
 What, have I not made this
 interesting enough for you? Find
 yourself too good for My game?
 (sarcastically)
 Well, thank you, my child. I sure
 learned a lot from you. Good luck.

FADE OUT.

On the black screen:

"GOD HAS LEARNED THAT YOU HAVE // **PATIENCE**

AS SAID BEFORE: INACTION IS ACTION IN ITSELF— IT IS A PASSIVE DECISION THAT OFTEN CAUSES MORE HARM THAN GOOD. YOU ARE A BYSTANDER TEETERING ON THE EDGE OF VILLAINY OR HEROISM. CONSIDER YOUR FOLLOWING STEPS CAREFULLY.

THAT, OR YOU ACCIDENTALLY STARTED THE GAME WHILE AFK. WHOOPS."

Those results fade away and are replaced with:

"**PLAY AGAIN?** // EXIT"

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may press PLAY AGAIN or EXIT. The game will start from the beginning or close out, respectively.//

SECRET ENDING TWO.

ALL BRANCHES, EXCEPT THE GOOD ENDING (HUMILITY), SECRET ENDING ONE (CHARITY) AND SECRET ENDING TWO (PATIENCE) REJOIN.

XI. IF THE PLAYER CHOSE MORE "GOOD" OPTIONS:

The POV narrows on the cross swinging from the rear-view mirror: It depicts Jesus's crucifixion in graphic detail. 3D blood droplets spill from his hands and feet. His thorn-laden head lulls to the side.

GOD (V.O.)
Such a large heart for such a small
body. Both of you.

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player must reach for the cross. No other options are made available.//

THE PLAYER TAKES THE CROSS:

FATHER
Carly?

MOTHER
What's wrong, darling?

A tiny child's crying squeaks through the Player's POV.

Father gently pulls the car to the side of the road.

Mother and Father turn to look back at Carly, brows upturned with soft concern. They share a brief look before Mother undoes Carly's seatbelt and moves her into her lap.

Father puts a comforting hand on Carly's back.

FATHER

It's okay to be scared, kiddo.

MOTHER

But what Pastor Rylie talked about isn't going to happen right now. Right, Dad?

FATHER

Exactly. There's still so much time. You know, I cried too. For days. But the Rapture didn't happen when I first learned about it, so who's to say it's gonna happen now?

MOTHER

Mhm, that's right.

FATHER

It's a someday thing.

MOTHER

Someday.

FATHER

Not now, but later. And, hey, you'll probably already be at the pearly gates before then.

GOD (V.O.)

(whispered)

Listen, Carly. Believe.

Mother wipes away Carly's tears.

MOTHER

You wanna go to Denny's?

IF THE PLAYER SHAKES THEIR HEAD, 'NO':

FATHER

There's my IHOP girl.

Mother smiles warmly.

MOTHER

IHOP it is.

IF THE PLAYER SHAKES THEIR HEAD, 'YES':

FATHER
 Good thing your Father knows every
 Denny's in the county.

BRANCHES REJOIN

Father turns back onto the road while Mother holds Carly close to her chest.

RIGHT: The same drab day as before, but just a little more novel and a little more exciting.

FADE OUT.

GOD (V.O.)
 (sweetly)
 Thank you, my child. I have learned
 a lot from you. Good luck.

On the black screen:

"GOD HAS LEARNED THAT YOU HAVE // **KINDNESS**

THE ONE TEACHING OF JESUS THAT SURPASSES ALL ELSE IS "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR." AND THE GENUINE, UNQUESTIONABLE LOVE YOU HOLD FOR YOUR FELLOW MAN IS ADMIRABLE.

THERE IS A NATURALLY PURE ENERGY THAT SURROUNDS YOU, IMPENETRABLE BY EVEN THE WORST DAYS. THAT'S NOT TO SAY YOU DO NOT HAVE THEM, BUT RATHER TO REMIND YOU THAT ALL BOTHERSOME THINGS WILL PASS AND BEING HAPPY FOR HAPPINESS SAKE IS NORMAL."

Those results fade away and are replaced with:

"**PLAY AGAIN?** // EXIT"

//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may press PLAY AGAIN or EXIT. The game will start from the beginning or close out, respectively.//

ENDING TWO - THE GREAT ENDING.

XII. IF THE PLAYER CHOSE MORE "BAD OPTIONS":

ALL DIRECTIONS: The sun falls below the horizon. A red sunset casts non-Newtonian tendrils across the wide open sky. Very "The Scream" by Edvard Munch.

MOTHER
Wh-What's happening?

FATHER
I don't know!

GOD (V.O.)
To be God-like is to be open to
those different from us. To love
thy neighbor. You may have acted
righteous, but was that *just*? Had
you considered anything else before
acting? If you must take one thing
away from our little game today:
Know that the Bible is a warning of
what I do to those who do not live
in the interest of their fellow
man, so learn to play nice, or I
will be seeing you again sooner
than you'd wish.
(bitterly)
Thank you, my child. I have learned
a lot from you. Good luck.

FADE OUT.

On the black screen:

"GOD HAS LEARNED THAT YOU HAVE // **DILIGENCE**

YOUR FAITH IS UNWAVERING, AND THOUGH THAT MAY SEEM A WORTHY
COMPLIMENT, KNOW THAT NOT ALL THAT IS RIGHTEOUS IS JUST IN
THE END.

THE STORIES OF THE BIBLE ARE NOT MEANT TO BE REPEATED. IT IS
A WARNING, AND SO IS THIS."

Those results fade away and are replaced with:

"**PLAY AGAIN.** // EXIT"

*//INTERACTIVITY: The Player may press PLAY AGAIN or EXIT. The
game will start from the beginning or close out,
respectively.//*

ENDING THREE - THE BAD ENDING.