



The Invitation

Music: None

Content and Purpose: Two men are waiting to get into Heaven, and they find out that they were meant to reply to the 'invitation'. After lots of discussion about when this invitation might have come, they realise at the end that the invitation was to believe in Jesus.

Cast: 2 men, Bill and John

Props: None

Starting positions: John on stage, Bill walks on from audiences left.

Notes: Needs to be played for laughs, but remember to give the serious moments time for people to get the message.

B: Is this your first time?

J: Yes. Good news, isn't it?

B: You mean about the party?

J: That's right. You know I always thought all this stuff about heaven was all about a great church in the sky, you know – rusty vicar, dusty pews, and here we are, and it's all a big party!

B: I must admit, I always thought my chances of getting in here were pretty slim. But imagine my surprise when I get up here and find I'm on my way in, no questions asked.

J: You could have knocked me down with a feather.

B: I don't know about you, but I'm feeling a bit peckish, so why don't we head on over and start the party?

J: Why not? Oh, there is one thing, there's a guy on the door. His name's Pete, some kind of bouncer I think, but he shouldn't be too much trouble. Leave him to me. *(They walk over to the side of the stage, and Bill knocks on an imaginary door)* Nice place, eh?

B: Yes, I could spend a lot of time here. *(They react to an imaginary door opening, and St Peter appears).*

J: Pete, hi!

B: We haven't met before *(Shakes imaginary hand)*.

J: Has the party started yet? Yes, look, there's Frank.

B: Hi Frank! We'll be with you in a minute. Mine's a pint. *(To John)* Hey, how did he get in there?

J: No idea. So Pete, can we, err, come in? *(Listens to Peter's reply)*. WE can't come in unless we've replied to the invitation? Oh come on Pete, you know us, Bill and John *(Pause for Peter's reply, then whispered to Bill)*. We still can't come in unless we've replied to the invitation? Right, yes. Look Pete, there's been a bit of an administrative hiccup, so we need to sort it out. We won't be long, so don't go away.

(Bill and John cross to the other side of the stage, and talk conspiratorially)

B: What did he mean by 'invitation'?

J: Dunno. I think it may have something to do with the fact that we need to have done something good to get in there: it's just a formality, but it helps keep the riff-raff out.

B: I see, you mean...show him our better side as it were. Dredge up from the past a few things he might like, eh?

J: Yes, that's it. Look, I've got a notebook here, so why don't we jot a few things down...Did you believe in *Him*?

B: What, *Him*? Oh yes, I never seriously doubted *His* existence for a minute.

J: Good, good.

B: How about you? Did you...go to church?



- J: Well, yes. I was there on all the big occasions – Christmas, Easter, New Year, Bonfire Night...you know...and you?
- B: Oh yes! I've been...but I must say I found it pretty boring.
- J: Shhh! Look, you can't be too careful what you say round here. They might here you.
- B: Oh sorry. I forgot where I was.
- J: Look, did you do anything brave or...heroic?
- B: Mmm, let me see. *(Suddenly remembers)* Ah, yes! I've got it *(builds up story into epic proportions as he goes along)* I was on a safari, driving through the bush, women and children in the party, when suddenly we were attacked by a huge, savage, ferocious lion. I *(with fake modesty)* got out of the Landrover and fought it...bare handed *(by now, he is staring into the distance, lost in his memories)*
- J: That's terrific! When was this?
- B: About five minutes ago.
- J: Oh, I see. Look, I think I've got something! I was once Pontius Pilate in the school nativity play!
- B: *(Puzzled)* Well...that should be enough. Why don't we try again?
- J: OK, you talk to him this time. *(They walk over and knock on the door)*
- B: Oh' hi! Look Pete, there are a few things we'd like to say before we come in. Now we're not perfect, we admit, but I think when you weigh our lives in the balance, like you do in there, you'll find that we are as good, if not better than most.
- J: And a lot better than Frank.
- B: That's right. Now, Pete, you've probably got all this on file in there, but you know...Pontius Pilate...safari, eh? And er...we've read your book, and we like it, don't we John?
- J: Oh...er, yes, yes. "To be or not to be"
- B: "It's easier for the eye of a rich man to go through a camel's..."
- J: No, that's not it. "It's easier for a rich man to go through the eye of a camel..."
- B: Well, you know what we mean, eh? And we've been to church, and we like it. Great system. *(Listens as Peter speaks)* You mean we still can't come in, unless we've replied to the invitation? Yeah, you said that before, but we thought...*(Listens)* Nothing to do with that?
- J: *(Getting a bit desperate)* But we...didn't get an invitation *(Listens, open-mouthed)* I did? When? Frank? That wasn't an invitation, look if you must know, Frank was a bit of a pain in the neck. He was always going on about Jesus or something, but he was...boring, I didn't want to be like him.
- B: *(Confidently)* Well, I didn't get one...what? *(Now worried)* But I only went into the church to get out of the rain. I know there was some bloke at the front prattling away...but he was talking to the other, not to me *(listens)* You mean I still can't come in unless...*(an idea strikes him)* Ah, but you didn't give us much evidence did you? How were we to know it was all about an invitation? I mean if someone had come down from up here, even the boss himself, to make to whole thing a bit clearer, we'd have done something about it wouldn't we?
- J: What did you say?
- B: I said they didn't give us much evidence.
- J: No, after that.
- B: I just said that if the boss had come down to make it clear about the invitation, we'd have...we'd have *(light suddenly dawns, and they turn to each other in dismay)*
- Both: Jesus?