

# **The Houses of Heaven**

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[https://www.reddit.com/r/WritingPrompts/comments/48fxir/wp\\_after\\_dying\\_god\\_informs\\_you\\_that\\_hell\\_is\\_a/](https://www.reddit.com/r/WritingPrompts/comments/48fxir/wp_after_dying_god_informs_you_that_hell_is_a/)

We arrived first at the House of Lust. "House" is a misleading term. It was more of a camp, spread over acres and acres of lush forest. There was a white sandy beach (nude, of course) full of copulating couples. There were little cabins sprinkled all along the path, from which orgasmic moans regularly came belting out. Men with six pack abs and women with perky breasts strolled by without even noticing me and God. They only had eyes for each other, tickling and pinching each other with flirtatious giggles.

"What do you think?" God asked as we passed a nineteen-way taking place in a pool of champagne. Little cherubs flitted overhead armed with mops and cleaning supplies, thankfully. "Lust is our most popular sin." I eyed the supermodel-like figures of a couple passing nearby, and could easily see why. "You can look however you want. Hell, you can be whatever gender you want. No fetish is too taboo, and no desire can be denied here."

It was quite tempting, but I wasn't ready to make a permanent decision here. "Let's see the others," I told God.

We carried on to Greed. We passed rows and rows of mansions, each more opulent than the next. Some of them were so large that they would have had enough bed rooms to fit my entire hometown. And so many different styles: one second, we were in a beautiful French vineyard in front of a gorgeous chateau with the Alps in the background. The next second, a warm tropical beach with a modern mansion atop breathtaking cliffs. After that, a ski chalet in Colorado with a roaring fire in a hearth large enough to fit an ox. Each one had various Italian sports cars and Rolls Royces parked in front, with the occasional smattering of boats, helicopters, etc.

"Any material desire you ever wanted," God explained. "Your own world, where you can have everything. You want the Hope Diamond? You can fly to Washington DC in your own solid gold helicopter and buy it from the Smithsonian. Hell, you can just buy the Smithsonian."

Also tempting, but I decided to keep looking.

Gluttony was next up. Tables and tables of the very finest foods: beautiful steaks cooked medium rare; butter-poached lobster tail; fresh oysters on a half shell; exotic wines in dusty bottles that had been hiding in the cellars of the world's finest restaurants. Everyone had a glass of champagne in hand and simply lounged on couches and chairs near the tables, eating endlessly. As soon as the inhabitants took a bite, the food just instantly came back. My mouth watered even watching them.

"In every other House, the food is practically sawdust compared to Gluttony," God explained. "You haven't truly experienced heaven until you've been to Gluttony."

I shook my head, and we kept moving.

Sloth was as you'd expect. An endless sea of the softest mattresses, stacked with cushions and pillows that made the story of the princess and the pea seem minimalist. Little angels visited each resident, giving them massages that made them all melt into their blankets.

Wrath was... well, a lot like what I'd expect Hell to be like. Fire, brimstone, whips, torture.. you know, the works. Except here, you weren't the one being tortured. Every enemy you'd ever made in your real life was now under your thumb. "Lots of people choose their fathers," God explained. "Lots of grudges against parents in general, you know. But you're not limited to that. Someone beat you out for a big promotion back on Earth? Take your pound of flesh here."

Then we arrived at Envy. It looked... well, a lot like home.

"Go on in," God said, gesturing toward the door. I turned the knob and walked in... and found Emily waiting inside. She ran forward, wrapped her arms around my neck, and planted a kiss right on my lips. "Welcome home, honey."

I looked back toward God. "Oh, don't be coy," he said. "You have no secrets from me. We all know that you were in love with your best friend's wife." She didn't seem to hear him at all; she went back into the hall. "We all know that you just settled for your own wife while secretly pining after her. Well, this is your chance to live happily ever after."

I peered into the kitchen. Emily was baking something, wearing nothing but an apron. Her curly black hair fell softly over her shoulder as she whisked ingredients. She turned back, noticed I was observing her, and an enthusiastic smile spread across her face.

"It's what you've always wanted, isn't it?" God whispered in my ear.

I wanted to take it. God damn did I want to take it. But I shook my head.

God seemed puzzled. "You need to make a decision," he told me.

"I haven't seen Pride yet."

He scoffed. "No one ever wants Pride, trust me."

"Well, I want to see it."

Pride was boring. Just a row of workbenches in a bare white room.

"I don't get it," I told God.

"Yeah, no one does," he answered. "That's why no one ever chooses it. Doesn't cavorting in Lust sound better than sitting here building little trinkets for the rest of eternity? Wouldn't you rather gorge yourself in Gluttony? Or spend time with Emily in Envy?"

I considered the options again. "I pick Pride," I finally told him.

He narrowed his eyes. "What? Look at it!" He gestured around the room again. There wasn't much to look at. "Why would you choose this for the rest of time?"

"Because you don't want me to pick it," I told him. If he was really God, he'd know what a contrarian I can be. And I knew he was hiding something, trying to pretend like Pride didn't exist. There was something special about it.

God scowled back. "Fine." He led me over to one of the workbenches. In the center, there was a black space. A blank, empty void that went on forever. "Here's your universe," he said. "You've got seven days to get started." He took his seat at the bench next to me and went back to tinkering in his own world. After a long pause, he finally spoke again: "You know, it might be nice for me to actually have some company for once."