

Soul Survivors

By Sasha Gabriel

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“It’s ridiculous, that’s why!” Jason snorted.

“But *why* is it ridiculous?” she countered, clearly upset.

“Look, no one’s ever proven that a soul exists!” He was frustrated. “It’s junk that religion feeds you so they can control you... ‘Believe in us or your soul will burn in Hell’,” he said in a sing-song voice.

Stephanie loved him but here was something else they would never agree on. She decided to drop it.

“You hungry?” her voice more cheerful than she felt.

He nodded, feeling guilty about hurting her feelings.

Watching her carefully choose a piece of lettuce to eat from her salad, he started.

“Steph... I know this belief stuff is important to you, but it’s not to me. I’m sorry I hurt you but I can’t lie to you. I love you. Can we get past this?”

Stephanie grabbed his hand. “Course we can. I don’t mean to come across all strict or something but I do believe we all have souls. It’s just that...” she shrugged.

“What?” he smiled.

“Well... it’s just that when we have kids... I’d like them to believe, too.”

Jason realized what this meant to her. “I understand... I do, Steph. Look, when we have kids you can take them to church. But I won’t come. I’ll make up some excuse... like the dust in the pews is so holy I’ll start sneezing and interrupt all the singing and...”

Stephanie burst out laughing. They walked home, holding hands tight, and it was forgotten.

Jason kept his word and so did Stephanie.

Ten years have passed and Stephanie and Jason have twin boys, Edward and Ethan. As an inside family joke, Jason would call them E squared, written as in Einstein’s famous formula.

One day, the twins came home excited they were chosen to attend a seminar in Paris with their debate team the following week.

Non-stop chatter, packing and re-packing finally gave way to the day when the boys waved goodbye to their proud parents at the airport.

Jason and Stephanie watched the plane slowly make its way down the runway, taxiing for takeoff.

Tired, they decided to go home just as someone yelled. They saw a runaway baggage tram crash into the still-lowered wheels of the plane, turning the tram into a giant fireball.

Screams filled the air as the fireball engulfed the plane, and in a jolt that shook the building, exploded, burning debris falling everywhere.

The entire school and most of the community attended the funeral.

Since the accident, Jason was bereft, lost without his boys. Stephanie comforted him as best she could but the pain was overwhelming.

That night, Jason was in the bathroom, crying quietly. Finally, he turned on the hot water, hoping the shower would wash his despair away.

The room filled with steam. Turning, he gasped.

There on the mirror were two words, written as clear as ink on paper.

“Hi Dad”

Jason turned... did Steph... but, no, the door was still locked.

In disbelief, he looked back. The words were gone. Just some bizarre illusion created by the steam, he decided.

Finding himself oddly disappointed, he turned back to the shower.

Just to make sure... he looked again.

“We’re okay. It’s awesome here. Don’t cry. Love E2”

Jason almost ripped the hinges from the door, yanking it open and yelling Stephanie’s name.

He babbled that she *had* to see this!

He pointed to the mirror, the words crisp for them to see.

He looked at her, his eyes begging the question, *could this really be true?*

Through tear-filled eyes, she nodded, both believing.

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