

Greetings From Karma City!

by Paul Steven Stone

A friend of mine died and went to heaven. At least I thought he went to heaven. I mean Freddie wasn't such a bad guy and if he had any faults they were mild peculiarities. Like his girl watching. He was a champion girl watcher. Even in this age of The Emancipated Man Freddie held doggedly to his badly scripted macho mannerisms. And he didn't do it quietly.

Being an unapologetic "breast man" Freddie couldn't walk down a busy street without offering a steady stream of lascivious commentary. "You see the rack on that one?" was almost an anthem with Freddie. "Take a look at those lungs!" and "Catch those hooters!" were also frequent enthusiasms.

Imagine standing in the middle of a crowded theater lobby between acts and your companion feels the need to loudly advise you to, "Check out her boobs!" You want to disappear off the face of the earth. Immediately, if not sooner.

I don't like to speak ill of the dead, but Freddie was one of those guys who kept his head in his penis and let everybody know it.

So one day I get a letter from Freddie and it's postmarked Karma City. At first I thought he must have sent it before he died, but I couldn't figure why he'd be writing from Karma City, which I thought I remembered was near Kansas or Missouri.

Turns out Freddie was already dead when he wrote the letter and he wasn't anywhere near Kansas or Missouri, at least not geographically.

"Dear Paul Steven," the letter began. "How are they hanging, kid? Seriously, I wanted to let you know not to worry about me. I'm doing real well and having a ball in this place they call Karma City.

“Being dead is an okay thing. You pretty much do what you want. And I never saw so many beautiful, busty babes in one place during my whole life! For a breast man like myself it starts to resemble paradise.

“Except for this thing they call karmic retribution.

“It's something all of us new arrivals get to experience. I'll give you an example...

“There's a guy in my group called The Colonel who must have been a very angry fellow when he was alive because now he has to put up with people yelling at him all the time. That's his payoff for the sins of his last life. Out of the blue, at any time of the day, a total stranger will suddenly start shouting and ranting at him. Sometimes it's a whole pack of angry strangers. The attack lasts maybe 30 or 40 seconds, a minute at the most. Fifteen minutes later, or two hours later, another total stranger, or group of strangers, will suddenly start shouting at him for no good reason.

“Then there's this lady, Ethel, who must have been an extraordinary gossip during her lifetime because you can't go anywhere in Karma City without hearing a new rumor about her. There's no pattern to the rumors; they cover every conceivable aspect of her life. Her sexuality, her relationships, her past history, her political and religious proclivities. Rumors about Ethel swirl continuously, creating a myth so huge it's dwarfed only by the height of her constant embarrassment.

“All that aside, I'm anxiously waiting to learn the focus of my own karmic retribution. I've been told they can also assign you good karmic retribution; it doesn't always have to be bad. Like if you mostly helped people in your last life—maybe you worked for Mother Teresa or the Red Cross—you would live out your days in Karma City being cared for and adored by the masses. Maybe that's what I'll get though personally I don't care very much for the masses.

“Anyway, I gotta run, Paul Steven. I'll write once I get better situated and learn my way around. Stay alive old buddy!”

He signed off, “Your Former Friend Freddie.”

I didn't know what to make of that. Getting a letter from a dead friend who tells me he didn't die and go to heaven. He went instead to Karma City!

Freddie's second letter arrived three days later.

"Dear Paul Steven," it began again. "This isn't heaven, it's hell! No matter what name they give it.

"I can't believe what they gave me for karmic retribution. And they think they're so clever. Rigging me up so that a small bell goes off every time my eyes travel across some lady's superstructure. Like it was a crime! It sounds like one of those bells in department store elevators that signal the floors. And don't think because it makes a puny sound it lessens my embarrassment every time the 'ping' signals I'm gawking at some woman's breasts.

"And you'd think I could stop myself once I hear the bell go off, wouldn't you? But no, there's some sort of automatic response mechanism that keeps the eyes going back for more looks—and the bell pinging over and over—in spite of all my attempts at self control.

"And the women of Karma City know exactly what the bell sound means. It's a conspiracy. A conspiracy to dampen my love for the opposite sex. Just the way gossip about Ethel was part of a conspiracy to dampen her interest in spreading gossip.

"But tell me, what did I do that was so wrong? I love woman. I honor them and cherish their exquisite forms. Not just their breasts but their buttocks too.

"Speaking of buttocks...that's another thing: when my eyes stray across some strange lady's delightfully fetching rear end this kazoo sort-of sound goes off. A kazoo! It sounds like a mating call for depressed clowns.

"I told you Karma City has the most beautiful women going, didn't I? So who can blame me if I can't keep my eyes off them or prevent the tintinnabulation of tiny bells and kazoos sounding off everywhere I go?"

Freddie ended his letter asking me to pray for him and for his sanity. I doubted I would ever hear from him again.

That was the last letter I received from Freddie though a post card came about three weeks later. On one side there was a photograph showing a chorus line of busty ladies in bathing suits under the words, "Greetings From Karma City!"

On the other side was this short message from Freddie:

"Dear Paul Steven. Please disregard my last letter. I'm in heaven after all and love karmic retribution. Have assembled an all-girl band and we play songs using my bells and kazoos. We've already learned to play the Star Spangled Banner and I love it.

"Besides, you wouldn't believe the lungs on these girls!"

