

THE FORTY-YEAR QUEST

Written by  
Fausto Lucignani

Copyright (c) 2017

fauluc@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

A MAN in his 50s stands in front of the entrance door. He RINGS the doorbell.

After a few minutes...

A corpulent MAN in his 80s appears on the doorstep.

He's MONSIGNOR KEVIN O'LAND, a retired priest.

KEVIN  
May I help you?

MAN  
Good morning Monsignor, I'm Professor  
JULIUS PATTER, I called yesterday.

Kevin smiles cordially.

KEVIN  
Of course, please come in.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin and Julius sit on an elegant couch.

KEVIN  
You're the first person I see in a  
week...nobody wants to spend time  
with an old man, I guess.

JULIUS  
...Somebody at the University told me  
that you're an expert on ancient  
Christianity, I'm writing a book  
about this subject.

KEVIN  
Indeed, it's a fascinating period in  
the history of Christianity.

JULIUS  
I'm starting to realize that, can you  
elaborate on it?

KEVIN  
There is a lot to say...you should be  
prepared to spend a few days with me.

JULIUS

It will be my pleasure. By the way, you will be remunerated for your service.

KEVIN

It's not necessary...

JULIUS

I insist, please.

KEVIN

Okay, just make a donation to the charity of your choice.

JULIUS

I'm a devout of the Sisters of Compassion?

KEVIN

That would be perfect...this Order needs help.

JULIUS

When can we start?

KEVIN

Tomorrow, I have a doctor's appointment...my heart, you know...is it possible for you to come the day after tomorrow at 9?

JULIUS

Absolutely, I will be here at 9.

Kevin and Julius stand up.

Kevin extends his hand to Julius.

KEVIN

It was nice meeting you, Professor, I'll see you the day after tomorrow.

JULIUS

I'm looking forward to it.

They shake hands, smiling.

INT. HOUSE - STUDIO/OFFICE - DAY

Kevin sits on a comfortable armchair.

Julius sits at Kevin's desk. A laptop lies in front of him.

A small statue of Christ stands on a pedestal in a corner of the room.

KEVIN

Do you want I start before  
Constantine the Great or after?

JULIUS

I'm interested in the time before  
Constantine.

KEVIN

(enthusiastically)

Very well then...Christianity emerged  
in the Levant in the mid-1st century  
AD. Christianity spread initially  
from Jerusalem throughout the Near  
East, into places such as Aram,  
Ethiopia, Assyria, Mesopotamia,  
Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Jordan and  
Egypt. In the 4th century it was  
successively adopted as the state  
religion by Armenia in 301, Georgia  
in 319, the Aksumite Empire in 325,  
and the Roman Empire in 380. The  
Council of Chalcedon in 451 further  
divided Christianity into Oriental  
Orthodoxy and Chalcedonian  
Christianity...

Julius stares at him with a distressed expression.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Too much?...I'll repeat it slowly so  
you can type.

Suddenly, Julius' face reflects strong emotions.

A beat.

JULIUS

Shut up, pig!

Kevin looks at him. His eyes are wide open. He appears  
discombobulated.

KEVIN

But...

Julius pulls out a short knife from his jacket and steps  
towards him.

JULIUS

Do you remember me, bastard pig?

Kevin's hands start to shake. His lips tremble. His face turns whitish.

KEVIN

(feebly)

Who're you?

JULIUS

You don't recognize me, eh...I'm BILL VENTURA...Little Billy...remember when you put your slimy tongue inside my mouth? You told me I was your favorite boy...you son-of-a-bitch...remember when you penetrated me?...I was crying, imploring you to stop...but you kept on pushing...

Kevin's face turns red, his eyes are wet with tears.

His body loses its vitality. He appears as a flaccid mass of flesh.

KEVIN

(sobbing)

Please...stop...please, what you want from me?

JULIUS/BILL

I looked for you for forty years... where did you hide?

KEVIN

I was sent to Vatican City--

JULIUS/BILL

Did they know you were a pedophile?

A long silence. Kevin lowers his head.

JULIUS/BILL (CONT'D)

(screaming)

Answer me! Did your superiors know?

KEVIN

...Yes.

JULIUS/BILL

When you were in Rome with the other pedophiles, I became bipolar and sick with depression...forty years in a state of emotional isolation ...sent from one hospital to another...taking ten pills a day...unable to work and have normal relationships.

KEVIN

I'm sorry, I'm sorry...forgive me...  
I'm old and sick...

Julius places the knife close to Kevin's throat.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(terrorized)

Don't kill me...please.

JULIUS/BILL

I've waited forty years for this moment.

KEVIN

How much you want? I have some money...I can give you what I have.

JULIUS/BILL

I don't need anything...actually, I need to see you dead.

A long silence.

KEVIN

Do you still believe in God?

JULIUS/BILL

Yes, I do. The Almighty gave me the strength to survive.

KEVIN

In the name of God...

JULIUS/BILL

Shut up, you're not worthy of uttering His name.

KEVIN

(sobbing)

I repent of my sins...have pity on me.

JULIUS/BILL  
Why should I?

KEVIN  
God wants us to forgive the  
sinners...

JULIUS/BILL  
You're worse than a sinner.

KEVIN  
Sinner will go to Hell...to all the  
others, God will open the doors of  
Heaven...

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY - ONE HOUR LATER

A WOMAN (50) opens the front door with a key.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - VESTIBULE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

The woman stands in the vestibule.

WOMAN  
Monsignor, I'm here, cleaning time.

A deep silence answers her call.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Monsignor, where are you?

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - OFFICE/STUDIO - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She stands on the room's doorstep and sees...

Kevin kneels in front of the statue of Christ.

Copious tears slide down his face. His expression shows  
inner pain and sorrow.

WOMAN  
Monsignor, are you okay?

A long silence.

Kevin stares at the statue.

KEVIN  
(softly)  
You spared my life...now, punish my  
soul...

Kevin's knife lies on the floor.

**The End**