

## The One True God

**The idea for this was given me by my brother, Geir Kvaran**

Joseph knew immediately upon waking, the essential facts of the situation: he was dead, and the semi-dark room in which he found himself was a purgatorial waiting-room where his eternal fate would be decided. As he rose from the hard bed on which he lay and his eyes accustomed themselves to the dim light, the first thing he saw was an olive-skinned woman still asleep on a bed next to his. He supposed her to be Polynesian. The second thing he saw elicited a scream of horror and nearly caused him to faint from fear. Seated in the corner was a massive monster, with a monkey-like body and the head of a particularly unattractive fish, making strange sounds at him. His noise had no discernable effect on the creature but it did apparently summon two guards from an adjacent room. They quickly and roughly attached themselves each to an arm and lead Joseph toward a door. He knew instinctively that this was not the door behind which one would care to spend eternity. He put up something of a struggle, but it was clearly pointless. Looking over his shoulder he saw the Polynesian woman rise from her sleep, look at the monster, and serenely fall to her knees, a beatific smile on her lips. To no one in particular, Joseph cried out, "Who is that thing? What's going on?"

To his surprise one of the guards answered him without, however, slowing the advance on the dreaded door. "But of course that is Taoptin, the one and only true God. See, *she* knows him."

"What!" screamed Joseph, "I've never heard of him. You can't condemn me for not believing in something I've never heard of."

Joseph's protest had an unexpected, immediate effect. One guard released his grasp -- the other retaining a firm hold -- and sprinted over to a large book by the door. He shuffled through it for a moment and then turned. "Our records are to the contrary. You did indeed hear of Taoptin. It was in Anthropology class, Bristol University in the Fall semester of 1974."

"What! No one was suggesting that I should believe that."

The guard reaction was a mixture of sympathy, skepticism, and ennui. "You'd be amazed how many people say that. In fact the people on the island of Motola do seem to be the only one who figured it out. All the rest of you insisted on worshipping false gods."

From the corner of his eye he watched the young woman, enraptured look still in place, walk through another door and disappear into a backlit glow.

"But I had no way of knowing!"

As he stepped through the door the guard's last words were, "The true heart will find the truth."