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Other books by Peter Kreeft

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Heaven : The Heart's *Deepest* Longing (Harper & Row, 1980)

Everything You The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding
Abortion Always Wanted to Know about *Heaven ... But*

Never Dreamed of Asking (Harper & Row, 1982)

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*The Best The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion
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For Balduin and Stephen Schwarz,
who mightily refute Nietzsche's
divorce between *The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding
Abortion Truth and Life*

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DIALOG ONE

SOCRATES IN AN ABORTION CLINIC

time: the present

place: a hospital in Athens

dramatis personae:

Socrates

Dr. Rex Herrod, abortionist

The fundamental question

Socrates: Where are we?

Dr. Herrod : We ? I know perfectly well where I am, but you appear disoriented, Sir.

Socrates: Appearances may be deceiving. Perhaps it is the one who seems to know, who really does not know.

Herrod : You're a strange sort of person. Why do you speak classical Greek?

Socrates: I speak my native tongue.

Herrod: What is your native city?

Socrates: Athens.

Herrod: Here? You look like one who has come from afar.

Socrates: Indeed I have. But not far in space.

Herrod: Oh. I... see.

Socrates: Do you?

Herrod : Perhaps you want the psychiatric ward?

Socrates: No. I have been sent here.

Herrod: Are you a doctor?

Socrates: Of a sort.

Herrod: What sort? I think you must be in the wrong place.

Socrates: This is an abortion clinic, is it not?

Herrod: Why, yes. Do you perform abortions?

Socrates as an aborter of thoughts

Socrates: Of a sort. I abort thoughts.

Herrod : Thoughts?

Socrates: Yes. Fallacies. Inconsistencies. Ignorance. I terminate defective intellectual pregnancies.

Herrod : Oh. Is that all?

Socrates: No, that is not all. I am an intellectual obstetrician—a midwife of thoughts, you might say.

Herrod: A... midwife of thoughts?

Socrates: Yes. Logical thoughts. Consistencies.

Herrod: You sound like a lunatic to me. What is that strange white gown you're wearing?

Socrates: My daily clothes. What is that strange white gown you're wearing?

Herrod : I'm The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion a doctor—Dr. Rex Herrod. But you look like a cross between a doctor and a ghost.

Socrates: I am both, in a way.

Herrod : Well, I don't believe you are a doctor, and I don't believe in ghosts.

Socrates: That makes no difference. I am here.

Herrod: What do you want?

Socrates: Only some conversation. Perhaps you would indulge my curiosity and tell me about your work here.

Herrod: Hmm ... why don't you sit down here in this The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion comfortable chair and I'll get some coffee.

Socrates: You mean this uncomfortable chair? All right, but I do not The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion want any coffee.

Herrod : Can I get you anything to eat? *Socrates:* Yes. Some thoughts, if you please.

Herrod: You The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion eat thoughts?

Socrates: Certainly. To begin with an The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion appetizer, what are you doing here?

Herrod: I know perfectly well what I'm doing here. The question is, what are you doing here?

Socrates: What I'm doing here is asking you questions about what you're doing here. If you "know perfectly well," you should have no trouble answering now, should you?

Herrod: You are a strange one, whoever you are. All right, I'll play your little game if you wish. I perform abortions here.

Socrates: You sound defensive.

Herrod: Surely you realize my work is controversial.

Socrates: Indeed I do. Some think your work is good and some think it is evil.

Is abortion good, evil, or neutral?

Herrod : It is neither. It is neutral. It is not The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion a moral issue, but a medical issue.

Socrates: You are paid for this work, are you not?

Herrod: Of course.

Socrates: Are people paid for things that help or for things that harm or for things that neither help nor harm?

Herrod : Things that help, surely. They are called services.

Socrates: And what helps is good, is it not? Just as what harms is evil?

Herrod: Yes.

A reason why abortion seems good

Socrates: Then this service of yours must be good, since people pay you for it, and they pay only for services that help, and what helps is good.

Herrod: Fine. Let it be as you say. My service is good, if you put it that way.

Socrates: No, it is you who put it that way.

Herrod: What if I do?

Socrates: The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion Then The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion your work is not neutral, as you said before, but either good or evil. You believe your work is good, but others believe it is evil. Why do they believe that? And how do you defend The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion yourself against their arguments? The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion

Herrod: Two very large questions indeed. You're asking for the two sides of the abortion controversy.

Socrates: In a nutshell, as you would say.

Herrod: Why are you doing this?

The Socratic service: helping people know what they're doing

Socrates: I too perform a service. I help people know what they are doing.

Herrod: I know perfectly well what I'm doing. Socrates: That remains to be seen.

Herrod: I see. You're playing Socrates.

Socrates: No. Not playing.

Herrod : The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion I told you I don't believe in ghosts. But The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion as you say, it makes The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion no difference. You are here. I shall even call you Socrates if you The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion like. The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion Socrates: Thank you—though you give me only what is mine. May we begin then?

Herrod : All right. It will be amusing for you and may be instructive for me.

Socrates: I think rather vice versa: it is you who are only amusing yourself by playing The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion a game with me. I, on the other hand, really want to know, to be instructed by you in this matter. If you are in the business of performing services, perhaps you can perform one for me which is literally priceless; and it is only fitting that I cannot pay you for it. That is the service of teaching me.

Herrod : Let it be as you say.

Socrates: Teach me then. Why is your work good?

Herrod: I thought you just proved it was good with that little argument of yours.

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