

# CHAPTER TWO

I woke up in a bed of feathers, and for a fraction of a second felt completely at ease. Quickly, however, I remembered what had happened and shot up. “EMSLEY?” I shouted out. I froze when I saw nothing but whiteness: white floors and white skies as far as the eye could see. All of my pain from the car crash was gone. The blood and cuts I had on me, the holes in my clothes, all of it was gone. I got off of the feather bed and found that my feet sank into the white ground, almost as if I was stepping into snow.

I stumbled forward and realized there was nothing off in the distance to see. It was just me, the bed, and complete emptiness. “EMSLEY?” I shouted once more. I returned to the bed and leaned on it to find that several feathers appeared to disintegrate on touch. I jumped back, but my curiosity overpowered my fear and I picked up a feather to find that it faded away in my hands. Whatever the material was, it was clearly not from this world. I stopped and thought about it: the white skies, no sun or moon, the soft ground and disappearing feathers. I realized that it was me who was in the wrong world.

I began to start panicking. I’ve read articles about how some people have very vivid memories of experiences which

never happened, and they claim they somehow are now living in an alternative dimension. Is that what happened to me? Am I in a different dimension? Am I in the void?

Out of nowhere, a large bright light appeared in front of me, startling me and sending me flying backwards. The light drew a rectangle in the air, big enough for me to walk into. I dove behind the bed and shielded myself. Suddenly, a man walked out of the rectangle. The man had short brown hair, was dressed in light blue pants and a light blue shirt. The clothes matched his abnormally bright blue eyes. As I was observing him, wings as big as the man himself spread out behind him. “Whoa!” I thought to myself. “This thing isn’t a human at all!” It appeared to be an angel, but I wasn’t convinced enough that it was peaceful to reveal myself just yet.

Despite this, the figure began walking straight towards me. “Hello, Owen.” It said, staring straight into my eyes. “It’s okay. You don’t need to be afraid.” I didn’t respond or get out from behind the bed, despite the figure seeming to know exactly where I was.

“I know this must be overwhelming for you.” The figure continued. “Every once in a while someone reacts this way. September 26, 12:17pm...you panicked at the news of being a

father and flipped your car. You can get out from behind that fill bed, by the way. I can see you.”

Completely perplexed, I slowly began to reveal myself and managed to murmur, “Am I in a hospital? Are you the doctor?”

“Yes, Owen.” The figure responded. “I am the doctor and you have endured a major head injury.” I could hear the sarcasm in his voice. “No, you idiot.” He continued. “I just walked out of a portal and have these wings and you think I’m, what, some sort of guy here to prescribe you some medicine for a headache?”

The figure observed me and said, “Look, I know how well you react to big news, so I will try and put this lightly; You died and are now in Heaven.”

Aside from the insults and the rude tone of voice, this was actually about what I was expecting to hear. I died. I had been in denial, but everything was leading up to this. The unearthly ground and bed, and the pain from the car crash being completely gone, and then this figure. “Is Emsley okay?” I asked. “Everything will be fine.” The angel said, not really granting me the answer I was hoping for.

“Are you supposed to be an angel?” I asked. “Yes, Owen. You are really perceptive, huh? My name is Eddie. My friends call me Eddie, but you can just call me Eddie.”

I wasn’t particularly in the mood for this man’s jokes. “Where is Ems-” I began to try again before I was cut off. “You can ask all the questions you want here in a moment.” Eddie said. “Follow me.”

Suddenly the bright light came back and drew another rectangle in the air. Eddie walked through it and motioned for me to follow. I slowly approached it and put one foot in. Everything seemed to be okay so far. I began to cautiously put my arm in until Eddie pulled me all the way in from the other side.

“Come on, we haven’t got all day.” He exclaimed.

I wasn’t able to be mad at him, because as soon as I got a look at everything around me I was absolutely blown away. We were in the longest and most beautiful hallway I had ever seen. The hallway seemed to go on for an eternity in both directions, and the floors and walls looked to be made of marble with chandeliers hung throughout.

Angels were everywhere, walking into doors or more magical rectangles. “So uh, what is this place?” I asked.

“This is city hall.” Eddie replied. “Would you like me to show you around?”

“Can you take me to Emsley?” I asked.

“There’s another stop we need to make first.” Eddie told me, and a new magical rectangle formed.

“Where is our next stop?” I asked.

“We have all of eternity to chat.” Eddie said, starting to form another rectangular portal. “Let’s start some other time.”

“You’re not exactly what I imagine when I think of an angel.” I said. “Aren’t you supposed to be nice?”

“Some of us are.” Eddie informed me. “I take my role seriously and don’t like to waste time when I’m working. If you want to talk with me, see me after my shift.”

“When does your shift end?” I asked.

“Fifty-eight years.” He responded.

“Holy frick!” I exclaimed. Without warning, I felt a strong shock pulsate through my body and I fell to the floor, almost as if I’d been tased.

“WHOA! What was that?” I yelled.

“You can’t talk like that here, you idiot.” Eddie told me. “You’re in Heaven. You can’t use terms like ‘holy’ or ‘God’ in common everyday expressions. You need to have more respect.”

I slowly stood up, still feeling the shock run through my veins. “I guess that makes sense, but what I said wasn’t even that bad!”

“I didn’t make the rules, buddy.” Eddie said. “If I did, that shock would have been much more painful.”

“Shouldn’t there be a penalty for insulting me? That’s like the third time you’ve called me an idiot in the last five minutes.”

“You aren’t allowed to be mean.” Eddie said. “But when I call you an idiot, I’m just making public service announcements. Nothing wrong with that.”

I decided to return the subject to Eddie's work. "You know, a common shift on Earth is eight hours."

"You guys are pathetic." Eddie said. "Shifts here are eight decades."

"HOL-" I stopped myself before I could finish.

"See!" Eddie said. "You're learning! You ready to go in the portal?"

"Sure." I said. I stepped through the portal hesitantly, but quick enough to be satisfactory to Eddie. On the other side of the portal, we appeared to be at the end of the same hallway. There were two doors. One was tall and gold, and the other was black and shut closed tightly. Something seemed off about the black door. It was very out of place and gave off a very unsettling energy.

Luckily, Eddie took me through the beautiful golden door which led into a very large room. "Welcome to God's office. We will be with you in a moment." Eddie told me, shutting the door behind him.

"God's office?" I thought to myself. "This is bizarre!" I felt extremely overwhelmed, but this room was very comforting and

familiar to me. There were televisions, couches, a window and even a snack table. I approached the window and got my first glimpse of the outdoors. The window overlooked a beautiful golden city. Buildings and streets were rich with the golden color, but I could see other incredible colors in the back, colors I had never seen on Earth before.

The most incredible sunset I could have ever imagined was happening just behind snow covered mountains off in the distance, and I could see what appeared to be rock above and below me, as if the room I was in was built into the side of the mountain.

“It’s beautiful, isn’t it?” I heard a very deep voice ask.

I quickly turned around and saw an elderly man dressed in long white robes. The man had long, curly white hair which matched his long and curly white beard. “Hello, Owen.” He said with a warm and welcoming smile. “Welcome home.”

“You’re...God.” I said, completely perplexed.

The man chuckled and corrected me. “Actually, that man over there is God.” He said, pointing behind me. I turned around and saw a middle aged man, with blond hair and a short goatee.



“Wow.” I said. “I didn’t even notice you were here... um... hello. You’re not what the movies make you look like.” I turned back to the man in white robes to find that he had vanished.

I looked back to the new man who smiled and said, “Actually, God is exactly what the movies makes him look like. I’m not God either. God is over there.” The man pointed to my left. I looked to where he was pointing and saw Morgan Freeman.

“What the...?” I said. I looked back and saw that the blond man had disappeared.

“I look how you want me to look.” I heard a female voice say behind me.

I turned around and saw a very slender girl with jet black hair. “I’m not human. I can take on any appearance I want.” She said.

I heard a dog bark behind me. “Oh you’ve got to be kidding me!” I said. I looked at the dog and said, “So you can be a dog too?”

“Actually, that’s just Baxter. He’s a good boy.” The girl said, reaching down to pick the dog up.

“So animals do go to Heaven!” I was very happy with this news.

“Of course they do.” She said and laughed. “Without Baxter here, this place wouldn’t be Heaven! When you lose a pet, they aren’t gone forever. They come here and play around with all the other animals and wait for you! If they don’t like the other animals, we have toys and food. Dogs can eat as much chocolate as they want here! Although, funnily enough, many actually don’t like it!”

The whole situation was very confusing, but I was glad to be talking to someone who appeared to be friendly. “So you’re God?” I asked.

“Yes.” She said. “I am God, Creator of the universe, Allah, The Light, HaShem, Elohim. Adonai, Ancient of Days, there are many different names for me. There are many different roles that I play in people’s lives. People call me what they want, view me how they want. Some people don’t even believe I exist, but I’m sure you already knew that.”

“Did you say Allah?” I asked. “Does that mean the Islamic faith was right?”

“I am Allah, Father of Jesus, King of the Greek Gods. The Islamic faith is the “right” faith, yes, but so is the Christian faith. The Jewish faith is “right” too. The Buddhist faith is “right” as well. There is no such thing as a faith that is wrong. I answer to all names, all languages, and all people.”

“You’re the father of Jesus and a girl?” I asked.

God laughed and said, “I have no gender.”

“So I died?” I asked. “And this is Heaven?”

“Yes, Owen.” God said. “That is true. You did die, and this is Heaven. You may ask me as many questions as you’d like.”

“Where is Emsley?” I asked. “Is she safe?”

“Emsley Nikki Hall...” God said and smiled. “An astounding girl. You two really have something special. When she got here she asked the exact same thing about you.”

The doors to the room we were opened and I saw Emsley for the first time since the accident, standing there in the door frame. “Owen!” She yelled. “Emsley!” I yelled back. She ran towards me and I ran towards her. I wrapped my arms around

her and squeezed her tighter than I ever have before and she did the same.

“I killed you.” I said, as I started crying. “It’s no one’s fault.” I heard God say. I looked back at God, who had now returned to a he. “These things happen, many times a day. But that is nothing to be upset about, because you never have to experience anything like that again. There is no pain in Heaven, unless you break one of our rules. I believe you already know what happens when you do that, Owen.” God smiled at me and continued.

“There is nothing to worry or be sorry about. You have all of eternity to make up for your mistakes, and I get to live with you. You are all my children, and I can now talk with you on day to day basis. On Earth, you fear and cry over death. Here in Heaven, we dance and rejoice over death, because death is the beginning of your brand new, everlasting and perfect life! There is no stress. There is no pain. Everything is wonderful here!”

Still holding Emsley tight, I asked “What about our friends and family?”

“Your friends and family are sad. You two were very popular on Earth it seems. But I happen to know that both of Owen’s parents and Emsley’s father and step-mother will all be

praying tonight. I will provide them with comfort, and they will all be okay. You will be reconnected with them someday, don't worry."

I felt sad that my family missed me. I wanted them to know that everything was okay.

"Am I still...pregnant?" Emsley asked.

"That's a good question, but it has a simple answer." God said. "The children in Heaven don't work the same as they do on Earth. You can have kids all the same, but you can decide exactly what point of the kids life they start with. If you want to have a baby without ever having to change a diaper, you can decide to have your child at age four years old. If you don't like kids at all, you can have your child at age eighteen. If you want to do everything the same as on Earth, you can go through the pregnancy all the same. Of course, childbirth is much more pleasant here. The baby Emsley was going to have was still nine months away from being born, but you can wait if you want. You can make your pregnancy last as long or as short as you want. That is completely up to you two, and I will let you discuss that when you are alone and settled in to your new home."

"We get our own home?" Emsley asked.

God chuckled and said, “Well of course! Everyone get’s their very own house, as big or as small as you’d like: no bills or expenses either! The first thing we’re going to do after this is take you to our local real estate agent.”

“Do we have jobs here?” I asked.

“If you want to work, you are welcome to work.” God said. “Over one hundred billion people live in Heaven, and we have enough volunteers that it is entirely optional. If no one wanted to work, I could just create a new person that does want to work. It is really that simple. If neither of you have any more questions, would you like to have a tour? If not, we can get you settled into a house.”

“If you don’t mind...” I said. “Could we get the tour?”

“Absolutely!” God said. “I’ll just get in touch with your designated angel, Eddie, and he will take you around Heaven and provide some insight on-”

“As a matter of fact,” I said. “we’ll just take the house.” “No, I wanted to see the tour.” Emsley stepped in. “No, no you don’t.” I corrected her. “Are you sure?” God asked. “You can always come back and take a tour later but we’ve got some

really cool stuff here that I think you two would enjoy seeing.”

“We are definitely sure!” I told him.

God made a magical portal and finally let us in on what was happening. “This is how most of us get around up here. It’s kind of like a mix between being Spider-Man and teleportation. If you think of where you want to go and you stick up your pointer and middle finger like you’re making a peace sign, a portal to that location will appear.”

“Can we go to places on Earth?” I asked.

“You can go to Earth, but you can’t interact with anything or anyone. We have designated angels which make trips regularly to Earth that interact with people, but there are more rules for that and they go there with a mission. This portal which I just created for you goes to our real estate office where you will have your selection of any house that ever has or ever will exist, and more!”

Emsley and I went through the portal and were suddenly in a store. We looked out the big glass windows at the front of the room and saw that we were now in the middle of the golden city. We turned around and saw a booth with one male angel and one female angel sitting at them.

“Hello, there!” The female angel said. “My name is Chelsea! What kind of a house are you looking for today?”

“It’s really that simple?” I asked.

“Yessir!” The male angel said back. “We’ll take you through several selections and if you don’t see any you like, we’ll find more options. You can take all of eternity deciding on which house you’d like!” He joked.

“And we don’t have to do anything in return?” I asked.

“No sir!” The angel said.

Emsley leaned in and whispered, “It’s free real estate.”

I laughed and said, “Well, you can’t go wrong with a mansion, can you?”

The angels working at the booth both smiled, and Chelsea said, “Of course not!” Three portals opened up behind us. Emsley and I stepped forward and Chelsea stepped out behind the booth, walking up to the portals. “Each of these will take you to several of our nicest mansions.” She said. “There is an old



fashioned mansion, a modern mansion, and a mansion that is somewhat in the middle of the two.”

Emsley and I walked through the leftmost portal and Chelsea followed us. “This is our old fashioned mansion.” She said. The house was absolutely beautiful, and Chelsea walked us around the place, but it wasn’t quite for us. I didn’t even know how to operate the toilets, and there was no television.

We returned to the real estate office and into the rightmost portal. “This is our modern mansion!” Chelsea informed us. Just as the last house was, this house was incredibly beautiful. The house was almost too big, and I could tell I would get lost. Plus there were windows everywhere, and I felt like my privacy was being invaded.

Returning to the real estate office, we entered the final portal. “This mansion is a good midpoint between the two you’ve already seen. It has some contemporary features but also has some historical characteristics built in.” The house was made of bricks and had a huge yard. “If you two have any pets up here or are planning on having kids, they would absolutely love that yard!” The angel pointed out. We followed her into the house. The front door led into a hallway with a giant staircase in it. She took us into the living room. There was a magnificent fireplace with a flat screen TV mounted above it, surrounded by

beautiful white couches. “This is really nice!” Emsley said. The angel then led us into the kitchen, which was in itself just as big as our old house back on Earth.

“This place would be great for you to experiment and make some dishes for your restaurant! We can totally do that now!” I told Emsley. She smiled and asked where the master bedroom was. The angel took us up to the staircase by the front door and down another hallway. “By the way, this door coming up on your right is the home gym, not that you would need it. You can choose how your physique looks just by snapping your fingers. The house also has its own movie theater, an arcade, a guest bedroom, and of course, here at the end of the hall is your master bedroom.”

We walked in and saw another bed made of feather like materials. “What is this?” I asked. “This is like what I woke up in when I first got here.” “These are called fill beds!” The angel told me. “They are super comfy! They’re made of this material kind of like a feather, but it’s called a fill. They are so soft they literally disintegrate if you rub them too hard. You’ll love it!”

Across from the fill bed was another fireplace, next to several windows which overlooked a mountain range. “Where is this house located?” I asked.

The angel laughed and said, “Well, in Heaven you can choose where in the world you want your home. If you want it right in downtown, you can put it right in downtown.” Suddenly the view out the window changed to the golden city. “Whoa!” I shouted. “That’s insane!”

“If you want it in the middle of the forest, put it right in the middle of the forest!” The angel said. The view from the window changed to a bunch of beautiful dark oak trees.

“I think we’ll take it!” Emsley said.

“Well, wait.” I said.

“No worries!” The angel said. “You’re not stuck with this house. You can change up your house anytime you like. You can even move into a completely new house whenever you want. All of it is of course free.”

“Well...” I said. “This is definitely an upgrade from where we were living. Everything seems super nice!”

“Absolutely!” The angel said. “You can add on a third floor if you’d like too, just as easily as you can say one, two, three!”

“I don’t think there’s much choice then!” I said. “We’ll take the house!”

“Fantastic!” The angel said. “Come back to the office if you need anything, but I think you’ll love it here!” The angel walked through a portal and left Emsley and I alone.

“I love you so much!” Emsley said. “This is so fantastic! I can spend all eternity with you and we have complete control over everything! Speaking of that, I hope you’re okay with it, I think I want to wait on the baby. I want to spend time with you and only you for a little bit. That means I don’t want to start my restaurant yet either. Would you mind that...?” Emsley asked.

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. “Are...are you sure? You’d give all of that up because you want to be with me more?” I asked, completely shocked. It seemed to be coming out of nowhere.

“Yes, Owen. I love you so much and want to spend all my time with you doing everything we want to do, not having to worry about anything else.”

Emsley was saying exactly what I wanted to hear, and a tear started rolling down my cheek.

“What’s wrong?” She asked.

“You’re just so incredible.” I smiled and said.

Suddenly a portal opened up. “Come on in, Owen!” I heard a voice say.

“God?” I asked.

“Yep! I’ve got a few more things to tell you and I’ll leave you two alone!”

“Will you be okay here Emsley?” I asked.

“Of course I will! I want to explore this house, and I wanna go try out the pool in the backyard!” She said.

I stepped through the portal and was back in the hallway in front of God’s office. The black door was still shut tightly, but the tall golden doors were opened. I walked in and saw God looking out the window. “Hey, Owen!” God said. ”That house you picked out is a real beauty. I just wanted to check in with you. I like to check in with everyone regularly and make sure everything is going as smoothly and wonderfully as possible! After all, this is Heaven.”

I smiled and could barely form a sentence. “Everything is wonderful! Heaven is spectacular!”

God chuckled and said, “Well that is the idea.”

“I just want my parents to be okay. I don’t want them to miss me. Can you somehow let them know that I’m okay?”

God smiled. “I’ll see what I can do. Your compassion for others is touching. Is everything else okay?”

“Thank you, God. I really appreciate that, and the new house, the beautiful city, all these new abilities. For once, everything is absolutely perfect.”