

## Chapter 1

*Why do I have the feeling of weightlessness? What the bloody hell is going on? Have I lost control of me senses? I am squinting as I watch clouds race by, disappearing into the emptiness behind me. Me eyes are fixed upon the light ahead. I am suddenly spiraling upward at a very high rate of speed, surrounded by colors that appear to be morphing, one into the other. I seem to be heading toward an infinite, white light. Now I see other people stepping on a soft substance.*

*Who is this gigantic person with the golden tip wings standing behind that dark, wooden podium? As if by magic, I'm being jostled into line, while others arrive behind me. I seem to have no control over me actions. What is going on here? Now, I see a bright golden gate, and there's a tall man with white feathered wings and piercing blue eyes standing in front of it.*

*I watch intently as the towering man signals with his hand; some people are directed to the left, others to the right. Without warning, he beckons me to the right. Right or left, what does that mean?*

*Now, I am being unceremoniously directed to sit in a yellow, padded chair; several others are doing the same. I'm dressed in me blue jeans, a corduroy jacket, and gym shoes. Nervous as a cat in heat, I touch me sideburns, over and over, afraid of what's next; I just want to get this waiting over with.*

*Suddenly, I have to abandon me seat for another seat, as the line moves along slowly. Blimey! How much time has gone by? The line seems endless. I wonder what is beyond the gate. What's up ahead?*

“Come here, Tomas Alvers.” A man with wings gestured for me to get up and follow him to a room and take another seat. Of course, I have no choice but to obey.

Sitting down in front of a medium-sized screen floating ten feet in front of me, the only bright thing in this very dark room, I rested me hands on me legs. *Where the Hell was I?*

*It's so dark in here,"* I thought, feeling helpless. *I can't see the chair, or even me hands, and I can't tell if the person has left, or is still here.* Then, a movie began, but I saw a little baby. I was seeing me life story before me very eyes and, suddenly, I remembered all of the details of me life!

*What are those things that look like rosary beads on top of the screen?* I thought as I sat in that dark room and watched me movie. Each time I did something good in me movie,

I obtained a bead on the right side. Every time I did something wrong, I received a bead on the left side.

The beads were moving, as if by magic, from place to place, and I could only watch it happen. I saw more beads on the left side than the right. Finally, I knew what the left side meant. Now, there was a scale on the side of the screen. In awe, I watched the beads fall onto the scales as it tipped to the left. I was shaken to the core of me being, but I didn't know why. My eyes welled up with tears.

I screamed, "OK, get it over with! Send me to Hell, already!"

Then, a luminous figure appeared out of nowhere. I think that happened a lot around here.

"You were a good father, Tomas. You were kind to family, and friends, and you suffered from depression, something that's not always your fault, and you played a benefit concert. Charity is a big thing here." He hesitated, then looked deep into my eyes. "Tomas Alvers, he continued, "are you sorry for all the bad things you have done during your life?"

"Yes, I am!" I exclaimed as I wiped my tearful eyes with my right hand. I knew that this must have been my judgement. The scale then tipped to the right.

"Our time is over. Your guide will take you the rest of the way."

Standing up from my seat, the glowing figure pointed toward a bright light.

Out of curiosity, I followed that light out of the darkness.

Then, I heard a voice calling my name, "Tomas Alvers?"

"Who's there?"

My eyes started to adjust to the bright light, seeing a man sporting two white, glowing wings, which were almost as tall as me. Walking in front of the being, I noticed that he was wearing a white gown. A light surrounded his face; he had short brown hair framing his teardrop-shaped eyes. He also had a soft smile. Blimey!

"You are calling *me*, right?"

"Yes, I am here to help you get settled into your new surroundings."

"Where am I going?"

"To Level 5, for now. Until you're ready to advance, you will stay there. But, know this, souls don't just sit on their laurels; they are always moving."

"Really? What's Level 5?"

"It's part of Heaven. You ask a lot of questions, Tomas. But that is also part of the process."

Yes, I have so many questions about my afterlife, or is this just a dream?

“Hold my hand, and I will transport you to Level 5.”

Taking the angel’s hand, I became light on me feet, flying through strobes of color, seeing another soul traveling in the opposite direction. Where was that soul going?

We landed. That flight seemed shorter than me first trip.



“We will be there in a few seconds.”

The angel and I touched down in front of a street next to a big bungalow, with a two-story house across the street; it had a *FOR SALE* sign in front of it. The angel’s kind face reminded me of me own mum’s endearing mug.

When can I go down and see me family?”

“Tomas, you will be cremated very soon. When a person is cremated, the soul is more spiritual, more detached from Earth.”

“I didn't ask to be cremated. I guess me wife can’t afford to bury me.”

“No, Tomas, you didn't but, after one is cremated, they can’t visit Earth for twelve months.”

“That's a long time to wait to see me family, and I don’t see any cars on the street.”

“We have no cars here.”

“So, what do I do next, sprout wings and fly? How do I get around?”

“I will teach you. Now, it is time to go to your new place.”

“You mean the house across the street? I don't think I came here with any money in me pockets.”

“The person vacating the house is going to the next level. He is leaving it behind, so it’s for sale, figuratively.”

“Boy, things seem mixed up around here, especially for Heaven.”

“You will get the hang of things,” the angel said. He then pulled a big white bag out of his pocket.

“This will get you started. You’ve earned this for all the good things you did while you were alive.”

I fished through the sack. “Is this real money?” I asked, a little perplexed.

“It’s spiritual money, about one million dollars in gold coins.”

I was flabbergasted. This had to be a dream, money in Heaven? “You give me more money than I need to pay for this house, and I get the place for free, totally free?”

“All newcomers get free housing, thanks to their kind earthly deeds. You can use this money to buy whatever you would like here.”

“I don't see any stores, just rows of two-story houses.”

“Other souls sell, lend, or give away, things that they make on every different level, but it's time to see your new place now.”

Curious, I walked across the street, but the angel didn't follow me.

“Tomas, I will see you next week, after you get comfortable in your new place.”

“No tour of the pad?”

“When I see you, I will fill you in. Oh, there is one thing.”

I stopped in me tracks.

“The house has a half bath, but souls don't need to use the facilities.”

This dream was becoming sillier every second. I guessed that nobody stole things up here; the door wasn't even locked.

Walking into the modestly furnished house, I saw the bathroom, with a sink and a toilet. I kept thinking about me family and friends, and that stupid toilet. How could I miss using the loo in this dream?

Entering me backyard, I saw some shrubbery, and a flowerbed, where the flowers smelled overly potent, and I saw a vine with purple flowers on it. Purple and black being me favorite colors, I picked them.

I took them into me new house and walked into the toilet, decorating the fixtures with the vines and flowers to remind me that I am either spiritual, or having some crazy dream. After doing that, I walked out the door and went to look for me best mate, Paul Lamb.



## Chapter 2

*What is a bar doing here? This has got to be some really wiggled out dream!* I thought as I walked in yet another door. My eyes popped out of my head as I walked over then sat down on a barstool, like it was second nature for me.

“What can I get you, sir?”

“Me?”

“Yeah, you are the only one here.”

“A Guinness, please.”

“One beer, coming up.”

I fished through my money sack, taking out a gold coin.

“You must be a newcomer; the beer is free.”

“What, did you just say free beer?”

“All food is free in Heaven.”

“On second thought, I’d better not have that beer. I had a little too much while on Earth.”

“Oh, you mean you saw your life on the screen?”

“Yeah, and I’m looking for someone.”

“Everybody is looking for somebody here.”

“There are beds in my house, but I still can’t sleep. How much time has passed?”

“Well, there is no time in Heaven, but some have tried different methods of keeping track of things. How many times have you seen your spiritual guide?”

“Once, and I’ll have tea instead of that beer, I think.”

“Then a week hasn’t gone by yet. Angels always come for newcomers at the end of the week.”

“I’ll have my tea with milk, and one lump of sugar. When does this place close?”

“Never, we’re open all the time, and I’m the only bartender who serves newcomers. Here is your tea.”

“Wow, you just conjured this tea! Blimey! How did you do that?”

“I can tell that you really are a newcomer. Your angelic guide will help you master the skills that you need here.”

I finished my tea, which tasted superb, better than any I ever had on earth.

“I’ve never had a drink this good.”

“Everything tastes great in Heaven.”

“Well, thanks for the tea.”

“It’s Jake.”

“Nice to have met you, Jake.”

“Don't worry, things will make sense soon enough.”

“Yeah, I hope so. Bye.”

Gold coins, houses, bars in Heaven, I must be out of me mind.



“May I help you?”

A tall man with a goatee just asked me a question. I found meself in a guitar shop, not knowing how much time had gone by. This man was wearing a checkered shirt. I had one just like his.

“I’m actually looking for somebody but, never mind. I like your shirt, by the way. And, yeah, I’m a newcomer.”

I found meself saying the same words every time I walked into a new place. Standing there, still confused, I looked at the instruments. *Maybe I can turn this nightmare around*, I thought. I spotted a guitar on a shelf, one which I had when I was alive.

“How much is that Rickenbacker 401 Bass? I don’t see no price tag.”

“Well, it’s actually half-price, or we can lend it to you, for free, for thirty days. Here, it goes for around \$3,000, but it costs \$15,000 on Earth.”

“I’ll just buy it.”

“Sure thing, I’ll carry it up to the counter for you.”

I reached into me bag and gave the money to the man. “This should cover it.” I laid a gold coin down on the bright, yellow counter.

He opened the register to make change.

“Keep it, I have plenty in me sack.”

I picked up the guitar, “Blimey, it’s light as a feather. Amazing, I can balance the guitar on me finger!”

Walking out of the store, I thought that, maybe, this dream was getting more exciting, not believing what I’d already seen in Heaven.

Returning to me house, I walked through me front door, leaned me guitar against me black leather couch, and walked into the kitchen. The angel with the kind face was sitting in me chair, putting something in his pocket.

“Oh, doors are never locked, Tomas,” he said, as if he could read my thoughts.

I sat down and just looked at him. “So, you’re ah...”

“Gabriel.”

“The same Gabriel from the Bible?”

“There are many angels with the name Gabriel, and we all have the same mission.”

I rested my hands on the oak table. I guess I was giving up on all this being a dream.

“What did you just put in your pocket?”

“It’s the most advanced micro television. They haven’t been invented on Earth yet. There are many things that angels have, and that souls do not. We watch what goes on for enjoyment. We gain a sense of satisfaction by watching angels doing things for people on Earth, every day.”

“So, while I was waiting for you this whole week, you watched the mini telly?”

“Fine. Call it a mini.”

I still couldn’t believe this, everything I did here, so far, revolved around me looking for Paul.

“When I left you, I helped other angels sort the prayers that people bring to God.”

“By the way, where is God? I haven’t felt Him since I’ve been here.”

The angel leaned over and took my hand. “God is all around us. You see, right now, you are going through a transitional period. The lower levels feel God but, the higher you go, the more you understand Him, and you will. It just takes a little time.”

“OK, so tell me, when I was on my way here, I saw angels in gowns, and they were walking past me, going the other way. Are they fallen angels?”

“No, they are souls who want to be like angels. Tomas, we’ve got a lot of work to do today.”

“Yeah, I know, I got an empty icebox and cupboards. I ran around so much that I forgot to buy food. Oh, wait, that’s free, isn’t it?”

“Actually, I’m going to help you with that right now.”

“We’re going back to the store?”

“No, I’m going to show you the perks of being a soul on Level 5.”

“I’m ready anytime that you are, Gabriel.”

“Go to the refrigerator.”

“I already told you, there’s no food in the icebox, or in the cupboards.”

The angel nodded.

I walked over to the front of the refrigerator and opened the door, showing him the empty shelves.



“I want you to think about something that you really enjoy eating, or drinking, and focus on putting that in your refrigerator.”

I closed me eyes.

“It may take a little time, so don’t worry.”

“That's what I want.” I opened the refrigerator and grabbed a can of soda. “I can’t believe, what’s... Hah! Hah!”

“Is that what you wanted?”

“Yeah, exactly what I wanted.”

“See, you did it on the first try.”

“Well, I have a good teacher. Can I conjure up something else?”

“If you want to; go for it.”

This dream was going in a much better direction. I concentrated again and, within seconds, I opened up the refrigerator and pulled out a piping hot pizza, like the kind I used to get from my favorite pizza place.

“I hope I got the ingredients right. Blimey, this is good. I can taste the pepperoni, and the cheese.”

“Now you can make your own food.”

I then looked down at my clothes. “I've been running around, wearing the same things for a week.”

“Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Clothes never get dirty, but some souls like to wear different things.”

“Can I make food, even if I've never tasted it before?”

“You can only make food that you’ve already tried. If you want to be adventurous, you can go to the store and sample something and, then, you can think it into reality.”

“Yeah, food is free, after all.”

Suddenly, I felt sad, “It is hard to believe that I have to wait so long to see me family.”

“Yes, but there are other places I can take you, though you need to know how to get there. We can't walk there.”

This was getting weirder and weirder. I was reading a sign on a pole in front of me house, while standing with Gabriel on a well-paved street, and I saw me name there on the concrete. “All I see is an empty street. There are no cars but, maybe, we're waiting for a tram, Gabriel?”

Gabriel snapped his fingers. “Tomas, you really must pay attention if you want to learn how to fly.”

“Flying, I'm looking forward to that! It would make me search for Paul much easier than walking around everywhere.”

“All you have to do is stretch out your arms, close your eyes, and think about floating off the floor.”

“Like this, Gabriel?”

“Yes.”

“Nothing is happening. I'm frustrated. This just isn't working; I'm just jumping around.”

“Concentrate on the feeling of weightlessness. Here, let me show you.” Gabriel rose off the ground.

“No fair, you got wings. Let's see you do it without using your flappers.”

Suddenly, Gabriel stopped flapping his wings. He now hovered above the ground without moving.

“Bloody Hell! OK, if you can do it without wings, then so can I. All I have to do is concentrate on floating, right, Gabriel?”

“Yes, Tomas.”

“What if I think about an airplane?” I tried again. “Nope, thinking too big. Butterfly, again, nothing! Now I was thinking too small. How about Peter Pan?... Hey, I just floated off the ground!”

“Very good, now all you have to do is concentrate on my face, and you will go wherever I go.”

“OK.”

We flew to some unknown place, but I knew that, if I could concentrate on Gabriel's face, I could focus on Paul and find my friend.

We hovered for a moment. “It doesn't work on souls, only angels. Concentrate on me again.”

He knew what I was thinking.

We flew again, and I could feel the wind on me body. We landed in a place which seemed almost surrealistic.

“Oh, no, not this line thing again. When I was standing in line, some of us went to the left, and some of us went to the right. What was that all about?”

“Anyone in the left line was going to Hell right off the bat. They had no merits whatsoever. They deserved to go there right away.”

“I'm really glad I wasn't in that line.”

“You're a good person, Tomas.”

I smiled. Gabriel thought I was a good person so, maybe, this wasn't such a bad dream after all.

"Where are we? Everything seems to be like a canvas, with all these different hues and colors."

"We are on the Astral Plane, the closest place to Earth."

"Why are we here?"

"I couldn't take you to Earth, but all these real people do transcendental meditation."

"Oh, really, I have a mate, Georgie Taxman, who practices it. I don't see him here. Hey, what's with these stalls? Something doesn't look right!" I blinked my deep brown eyes and looked at the stall again.

"It's just one of the attractions in the Astral Plane circus, Tomas."

"Huh, bloody lips with arms and legs, *and* it's smoking a fag."

"I see that you are a little unsettled."

"No kidding, this is blooming ridiculous!"

"Do you want to see the next one?"

"Does it matter, since we are being pushed along, anyway? Since when do squares have feet?"

We moved to the next stall. "Gabriel, now we're in a sci-fi movie. That ant is as tall as I am! What's in the next one? I could sure use a pen that writes on paper, by itself."

"You seem to be getting into this."

"It's this line that bothers me. Why do people come here again?"

"You see, Tomas, these creatures have egotistic personalities. They want to show everyone how weird, or remarkable, they are, so they parade themselves in a public forum."

"That's just sick. So, what's in the next stall? Yep, a giant spider, that figures. A shimmering rock formation, that's the only normal thing I've seen yet. Blimey, it's making a sound like a horn! When does this stall thing end? This dog is coming up to me. He's licking my hand; hey there." I bent down to pet the dog in the last stall. "Blimey! It's a dog with a long snout, and no eyes! This is one twisted place. Why did you bring me here?"

"I wanted to show you the strange stuff, first, before you look for your friend."

"You know about that, too?"

“Yes, we are angels. There is one more place which I want to take you to on this plane.”

“Lead the way or let me follow the yellow brick road.”

I was afraid that I was going to hit the ground. Flying very fast, I kept me eyes open. I didn't want to miss a thing in this dream while I saw fields of flowers going past me. But, having a linear mind, I could catch up with Gabriel.

