

My Journey Back to Heaven
Gabriel's Story
A Spiritual Fantasy by C.L. Rugg



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"I want something Good to die for . . . to make it Beautiful to live"
-Stacy T. Hunt, The Adventure Begins

Prologue

As the ambassador of Heaven to the Earth, I had become humanity's myth of Archangel Gabriel, the male youth with the wavy blonde hair and resplendent wings, resembling my fantasy depictions in literature and art, celebrated for giving good news, and comforting advice. My many excursions to the planet were usually as an invisible outsider. Historically, I was referenced in sacred texts such as the Quran, the Bible, the Kabala and other writings that no longer exist today. That was part of my cherished history, but like other Heavenly beings, I have multiple dimensions.

But while in Heaven, I reside in a medieval sandstone tower, above all other structures, more often than not, piercing through veils of clouds. From its open doorway, I look down at the eclectic areas of Heaven below, the balmy winds circulating through my sandy curls and furrowed wings.

My journey back to Earth originated with a decision I made a very long time ago while still in Heaven...

Our Mother Goddess and Creator on Earth, was worshipped before the origin of separate religions. She called herself Yahweh and was first recognized for her singular consciousness of wisdom; her natural state of being exists in visible and invisible spectrums of light. Following our creation, Yahweh grew curious about humanity and was intrigued by our devotion to her and each other. She decided her gender when she realized that humanity needed to identify the strange Deity with a face. After witnessing what humans valued, she created a soul that shared her own qualities, in order to bridge the gap between Deity and humanity—her son Jesus.

Yahweh has the highest regard for shared exchanges of understanding, compassion, and cooperation, in contrast to the underworlds of evil, extant in distant planes of the universe where tyranny rules. Only in these dark lands are her positive forces rejected, and despite her omnipresence and power within her own realm, forces

in opposition to free will, disrupt her essence and expression, undermining her own authority. Through the millennia, as maverick human emotions infiltrate Yahweh's wisdom, I believe that the combination of consciousness will allow us all to expand beyond the other barriers of darkness in the distant future.

Yahweh believes in the freedom of all souls to find their uniqueness through their own belief systems, made from the choices they make in their lifetimes. Once individuals find their zenith of maturity and have demonstrated the highest degree of nobility, we expect Jesus will one day follow a path parallel to our mother; he will become a Higher Power; a Supreme Being; Benevolent. Yet I never realized there would be so much more...

The inhabitants of Heaven share a phenomenal afterlife, a magical existence, currently without fear, where the only currency is the giving and receiving of love through acts of kindness. To those within her realm, Yahweh gives us the valuable senses of touch, taste, smell, sound, voice, vision; the perceptions of a beating heart, natural breathing; all that is wanted to make up for what we lost in our former incarnations, along with the ability to correct defects in our biology. Yet the truth is, within this state of afterlife there is no measurable mass or weight among us. We live between the spaces of subatomic particles, outside of humanity's ken—each soul is an unexplored version of life. Defying science and logic, our existence is best described by William Shakespeare's words. "We are the substance of what dreams are made." Our lives are manifested through thought and experience. What we believe to be true is our reality.

It is difficult to understand how the imagined ecosystems appear to be real and solid when thoughts and experiences are the basic raw materials. All of it is only possible through Yahweh's ability to mediate our perceptions so perfectly, so completely, that we believe our experience to be convincingly real. Yet this also means that threatening situations can irrevocably obliterate our identities—Heaven's own version of death exists!

Without day-to-day physical needs, we have no desire to take advantage of others, thusly, have no oppressive egos. Competition is no longer needed in Heaven, occurring on Earth for discipline and to build a sense of self-worth. Here activities and performances are done for sharing and pleasure, not just for self-promotion. Yahweh teaches us

that pride can either blind or lead us to truths about ourselves. Here, everyone desires to become their own hero, competing with themselves, and thus furthering their own growth and uniqueness.

In direct communication, Yahweh's mind would be too incomprehensible; too painful to be perceived, even by way of telepathy. Therefore, with few exceptions, the souls of Heaven communicate with Yahweh through her sun-like globe, called, The Quantum. It is her consciousness exchange of influence and protection. Within her Quantum, Yahweh has the power to organize energies; abolish chaos, allowing for limitless individual recognition; a place for safe and secure entry for her greatest understanding and fulfillment of desires. Here complete memories can be found, actual historic records become available.

Only a few such as I have the knowledge of Yahweh's frequencies for safe direct communication. When The Quantum is used, its overall dynamics will increase. Unused, its power is diminished. It is easy to witness the changes in color, brightness, and size which reveal the ebb and flow of its strength. Despite any distance from Yahweh herself, her Quantum—her will—remains reactive, as if it were contained in the palm of her hand. Her responsiveness is analogous to lovers who continue to love and hope, beyond the dimension of death...

Once aware of human evolution, Yahweh chose to use souls outside the easy influence of her Quantum, those living on Earth, to become the teachers of future generations. While living on the physical plane of existence, humans were to be found just as they were naturally expressed; becoming survivors of the planet's harsh challenges. Yet, especially for me, it was difficult to see how suffering, acts of cruelty, ignorance, war and depravity, could be her intention.

Yahweh's answer was that each action would be an intended catalyst to strengthen goodness and maturity toward her wisdom that would one day unite all species. Furthermore, what she believed has, in fact, shown to be true. The humans who survived the greatest difficulties on Earth, after the severe lessons had been learned, and after Heaven's final relief was bestowed; the returned souls had found that what remained was the awareness and fulfillment of their accomplishments—that the pain of their former lives was worth the struggle!

This gathering of every memory by The Quantum becomes Yahweh's instrument of universal understanding when welcoming

other forms of life, however they would be found. Simultaneously, this very long process was required for her secondary goal to occur; her hope that humanity would someday become ambassadors of her influence throughout the distant universe.

In Heaven, individual ecosystems have their unique needs and preferences for general well-being. Each territory has its own group of citizens who represent that particular ecosystem. Indirectly or directly all citizens of the community will communicate their happiness, or displeasure, by way of The Quantum, and thus to Yahweh, herself. Through this process, our Goddess learns to understand more about her beings, giving them what they need and desire by way of their own feedback. We call this form of government, the Continuum.

The human ecosystem of the City of Elysium is where I live. Its Continuum is composed of individual souls that act seamlessly to provide general maintenance to sustain or embellish our shared illusion of order. Like all workers in Heaven members of the Continuum are motivated by improved self-worth and the enjoyment of the fruits of their labors. Appearing as human professionals, the Continuum personnel inconspicuously sift through and tabulate The Quantum's data on our behalf. Decisions they make are matched with the perpetual collective desires for civic improvements, innovation, and with the added benefits of the most elaborate celebrations!

In the beginning, Yahweh gave us the essential necessities: our Earthly sensations, gravity, compatible air pressures, and the relief from complete darkness. But it was the Continuum that went further to make our environment more pleasurable, adding temperature variations, a glowing blue sky behind whimsical clouds, resulting from spontaneous weather patterns; the appearance of time moving forward with perpetual dates and calendars; the comforting progression of suns and other celestial bodies, and the separation of day and night. We also have the addition of natural cycles and rhythms of migrations, hibernations, change of season, and the like. Currently, the Continuum has established a complex reality that we have grown to enjoy and happily share. But despite the perfections of afterlife, the truth of it was...the citizens of Heaven were becoming too self-indulgent; indeed, we almost lost our way...

The first epoch of Heaven occurred while we lived in fear and darkness, before Jesus opened communications with Yahweh for the

first time. Currently, it is the second epoch of our time in Heaven. Yahweh is primarily focused on the relationship of Heaven with the inhabitants of Earth. Throughout this epoch, Yahweh chooses to embrace the turbulent cycles of creativity and destruction, no matter the tragic effects on growing civilizations; she watches things unfold naturally. Her approach is existential, allowing us to be on our own. She trusts she will meet each soul again; currently answering the prayers from Earth, reinforcing faith and the belief that there is purpose in their suffering. Her angels spread her word when deemed appropriate, and will one day defend Heaven against evil; a circumstance not anticipated in this age.

These days, angels also keep the peace beyond the walls between realms, calming the species that are incompatible with each other's mental development or temperament. When on Earth, in order to serve Heaven, angels keep hope alive, and promote concord so the masses will find joy and fulfillment in the progress of their actions. In exchange for their oaths to defend Yahweh, angels are given special powers. In the hierarchy of angels, it is the foot soldiers who have powers to pass on Yahweh's goodwill and emotional comfort. This requires the ability to fly, the encouragement of hope through prayer, all masked under the cloak of invisibility. Archangels such as I, may go even further; earning trust, teaching ethics, giving wisdom, and directing the paths of humanity's leaders. Eighty percent of Heaven's population are returned souls who are not angels at all, without significant powers or wings. By using The Quantum, unlike the rest of us, they can only teleport or use telepathy as long as there is both a sender and receiver of the call.

Since the beginning of my afterlife in Heaven, over five thousand years, I have blessed the new souls on the tree of life. Christmas tree-like branches hold each soul of light that perpetually appears after creation by Yahweh, before vanishing once its choices for the future have been made. It is here where the new souls must decide whether or not to go to Earth; if so, what form to become — to be human, a plant or animal, or whether to remain as a creature of Heaven, in such cases, to become a sprite. Sprites may take the form of animals, or items with utilitarian forms; all may grow further into fantastical beings with unique qualities. Reaching maturity under Yahweh's influence, they will find fulfillment and power with their own magic. Other sprites devoutly serve, offering their skills in a personal need to gain penance, or share

belonging.

During my years in Heaven, romantic desires had been merely intriguing adventures, keeping me away from more important matters: my attention to Yahweh, my concerns with Planet Earth, my great friends, and other personal activities. In my free time, I have enjoyed exploring the distant universe and have had close encounters with other beings, which were too abstract to be comprehended, but always worthy of intrigue. I still have maps in my head of many solar systems, star clusters, cosmic storms, asteroid fields, and wormholes. I've found breaks in time that suggest that time travel is very likely, but only for an archangel. Exploring the universe was a dangerous thrill that satisfied, despite the dismay of Yahweh, who feared for my safety. I later supposed that my busy activities had insulated me from the desire to become human. But recently I had an Earth experience that stressed this new urgency . . .

In the first part of my afterlife, my circumstances in Heaven were different than most. I had no comparison with the corporal world, since my soul returned to Heaven while still in my mother's womb. Once I had become an angel with my original genetics, the image that I am now appears fixed. I have remained a Heavenly being without any experience of my original incarnation or the reincarnations that other souls have had. Perhaps for lack of fulfillment, I chose to appear as a youth the age of twenty. My friends said it suited my curious personality and Heavenly distinction. For myself, I just knew it was the age I felt most comfortable.

Despite my youthful appearance, there is little question regarding my judgment or experience on most matters, for I was one of the oldest souls in Heaven. Looking back, perhaps my apparent youth was still seeking the parents I hadn't had the chance to know. From that part in my life, I never imagined that my lack of corporal world experience had any real consequence to my happiness. But I was wrong!

My personal space within Yahweh's realm of Elysium is well known as Gabriel's Tower. No matter how aloof the structure appears on the outside, my tower is pure contrivance from my first impression of a fairytale book, where the fair-haired maiden drops her braided tresses down for her true love to climb up and claim her! I could imagine the

lovers' feelings after the embrace, but any bonds they shared beyond the preliminary intimacies, would escape me. I was close to love before, but the situation left me with unforgettable heartbreak. Now I have the nagging desire to complete my life and find something more...

My story begins within my tower, my home and place for reflection and study, which is always open to my inner circle of friends and associates who have the freedom to gather and explore my vast magical library, eccentrically contained within its small spaces. As captain of the Department of Earthly Affairs, my associates and I are happily obsessed with human events. Today, I try to assuage my excitement, anticipating a chance to live as a human on planet Earth for the first time. I prepare to peer through my spirited telescope; the sprite goes by the name of Alias. Without a human mouth, Alias, like most sprites, has no option for words, only telepathy. In his masculine tone, I hear him open his mind to me.

"Good Morning Gabriel. It is March 5th of 1983 . . . is this your final day in Heaven?"

As I gaze at the colorful, swirling atmosphere of the planet just beyond, I answer with my own telepathy, *"I wish I could get out of my head. You know how heavily I weigh important decisions. But you are right, Alias, I plan to leave today!"* In words I continued, "It's hard to imagine that I will be down there with all the rest of humanity!"

"Honestly, maybe fewer worries are in order, sometimes you just have to take a leap of faith," Alias continued.

I smiled, responding, "Touché!" realizing that he had said what I was known to say in such situations. However, today it was all about my life, and my mind still couldn't find peace. I was becoming anxious.

Then Archangel Aseem came into my tower. He appeared to be a thirty-five-year-old man of ancient Persia; with dark and ample hair, his bearded-goatee was tightly manicured.

"Good morning my friend and captain . . . I don't have to imagine where your mind is today." Acknowledging me, he makes himself at home. One of my closest associates, Aseem oversaw the other guardian angels who serve the inhabitants of Earth; it is no coincidence that his name actually means guardian.

I tried to finalize business, but without success; "Aseem, if you give me a summary of our last council meeting, perhaps I could close down

any loose ends.”

He looked over his reports and began to discuss; “There is a serious concern that many of those who have wealth, have lost their compassion for the have-nots, which continues to be a problem for Earth.” Finding that my mind was elsewhere, he wisely shut down his handheld computer screen, without regard to the face of his researcher vying for his attention; the face was comically torn away into blackness.

Refocusing on my big decision, I said, “I can’t think, Aseem. I feel like I’m forgetting something very important.”

My friend realized that business was off the table. Speaking patiently, he said, “It’s only natural, there is no way to completely anticipate any journey.”

I stood up and began to pace, my feet turning cold. “Am I crazy for planning a return in these modern times, when too many people need more than resources allow; society ravaged by civil unrest, war, famine, compassion lost, and catastrophic natural events, never seen before?”

“It would be a challenge for anyone at any point in history,” he answered. “My ancient country was always at war, and when we did attain peace, there was drought, famine, and disease making it difficult to survive,” Aseem knew how to address my concerns, but neither of us knew the full details of the complex world, only its generalities.

“Aseem, tell me again what it is like to be human,” I urged.

After a few minutes, Aseem replied thoughtfully, “I suppose you feel alone most of the time, because, without telepathy and with the need for self-defense, it’s hard to know what others are truly feeling or thinking. It’s hard to know whom to trust; even within your own family, it can be dicey, unless you know something about the world around you. The truth is, you can only trust yourself, and you will have to be patient with those who don’t trust you at first. Regularly, you will have a mix of feelings that collide with opinion in every circumstance imaginable—you’ll argue a lot. Your choices can become complicated and risky, which may hurt in the short term, but can become important lessons later.”

It began to look as if I was making a horrible mistake.

Then he tried to be more reassuring. “But people are basically good. Things will be better for you because of your sharp mind, good character, and white skin that will keep you out of the worst of trouble. Your conscience will guide you faithfully. When choosing life, it should

never be a mindful decision; it is a courageous act filled with unknown risks. So, I can understand that you're scared, you have great expectations, but you also need to have faith that you will find all that you need, and want . . .

Gabriel, I've often wondered why your genetic parents didn't go back at the appropriate age to become your parents again. Did you ever get the chance to heal your breach?"

Solemnly, I shook my head and replied, "No, it was never meant to be. My parents will never leave Paradise. Every time I've tried, their doors and minds remained closed. There is nothing that they want from me."

I could see pity grow and then quickly vanish from my friend's face as he remarked, "Then you have no choice but to go alone. I suppose Yahweh will regress your original biology to the point of conception."

"She says it will work," I said. "But even Yahweh doesn't know the full consequences, since there are too many variables and no precedence with angels. You understand how I need to be born into humanity. I can't just appear without a past. I need to be as authentic as possible, otherwise the trip would be meaningless. What really concerns me are the unknowns. Remind me again about the possible side effects?"

"We'll have to assume you will have no memory of Heaven, at least at the start," he began. "We can only hope that you live as a natural Earthling, without otherworldly forces interrupting. It's possible you could have sporadic recall of Heaven and retain part or all of your angelic powers."

If that wasn't enough, there was something even more frightening on my mind. "What about Lucifer, my archenemy?"

"With all of Heaven looking out for you . . . you'll be as safe there as you are here."

Aseem attempted to quell my fears again, but my mind continued to spin. Did I hope, or did I not hope, to keep my memories? I expressed my need to panic. "If I don't remember anything, how can I contend with magical powers with a target on my back? Or if I do remember, then I will be forced to juggle the contrary toils of humanity, knowing that Paradise is inches away. Either way, I won't survive on my own without going mad!"

Then Aseem looked me straight in the eyes, saying what I needed to hear: "You can handle it. And I'll have your back no matter what

happens, I promise. And our friends have all given their support for your endeavor, and will jump at any opportunity to help.”

Aseem was as good as his word. Our eyes met holding firm, I said seriously, “I’ll take you up on that promise.”

After our heartfelt pledge, remembering the plans for the day, Aseem urged, “I think it’s time for your meeting with Yahweh. And don’t forget, your council will meet in the Grand Hall—you remember, we planned your party for your final send off. You have about an hour.”

“The party, yes, of course. I suppose there’s nothing like a self-imposed deadline to force a life-altering decision,” I said with the revelation, half sarcastically.

Aseem responded with a playful shrug, saying, “You know you made up your mind a long time ago, ever since Cambodia. You’ll always regret it if you never go. The last few years, you’ve been spinning your wheels, one of your least endearing qualities, I might add,” he pretended to accuse, waiting for my response, eventually giving me a nodding smile as the expression of relief appeared on my face.

“Aseem, you’re right on all counts! I suppose that I just needed to be reminded why I felt the need to go in the first place. And thank you for all your patience and candor.

“I suppose, it’s time to tell Yahweh, so I must hurry—I’ll catch you later.” I gave him my most grateful smile, that quickly disappeared with the appearance of wispy vapors that signaled my exit.

Seconds later I appeared in Yahweh’s throne room, remaining quiet, ready to be called. As usual, she was in deep communion with other souls . . .

The Deity’s personality had changed over the millennia. Currently, she was the Mother Goddess of Wisdom with advice about my personal affairs. In earlier times she was like an oracle who communicated with unintentional vagueness, and our relationship had been more distant. Our meetings could still be inscrutable on occasion, but we had each other’s full trust and a wish for mutual understanding. Yahweh continues to gain knowledge about humanity through Jesus, as well as through my reports on the conditions of Earth.

Along with Alias, I have the grand perspective to explore and implement her will to the best of my abilities. In the past, I had been overwhelmed with such power, but gained confidence with my high

priority role, learning to trust in Yahweh's decision to trust me. She was wise enough to know that disasters exist in the natural order of things, and that enlightened perspectives could transform even the worst situations into monumental successes, showing me how Heaven's best judgments could ultimately, positively impact the universe.

As an empath, during her intercessions, Yahweh's appearance resembled the image of each soul as they appeared in her mind. In front of me now, she had assumed the image of a young male human, a veteran in a wheelchair, in tears, staring down at the absence of both his legs. At Yahweh's side was her sprite, Damon, who could take on any animal form. In response to this particular supplicant's needs; the sprite changed into a golden retriever, under Yahweh's telepathic instruction. Once the retriever comforted Yahweh with dog kisses, the young man would be reminded of his own dog's love for him, opening his heart to hope, ease and courage. Despite Yahweh's comforts and personal encouragement, the exchange between them would be difficult; the boy's desires to avoid facing the world would be denied; he would have to grow stronger . . .

Today, Yahweh knew why I had come. At the next available moment, she focused on me as I kneeled into a full genuflection, my usual acknowledgement of respect for her. Seconds later, she changed into her default appearance, that of a comforting Mother Goddess, the age about thirty. A radiant, flawless beauty, her light brown hair was pulled into a long braid that first encircled the top of her head before falling down one side of her shoulder. Everything, including her pale green gown and her skin, shimmered with beads of light.

Her communications were always telepathic. *"Arise, Gabriel,"* she summoned. Together, we watched Damon change into her favorite Siberian Husky, with the brightest blue eyes imaginable.

"Gabriel are you ready to go to Earth?"

"Yes. I'm more determined to go than I have ever been," I replied.

Always reading my thoughts, she said, *"Be truthful now, I can see your fears and doubts."*

"Yahweh, I can't help but believe I will be vulnerable to capture. You recall, Lucifer wants vengeance against me — against us all," I corrected.

"Time and experience will guide you; until then, Heaven will protect you. Gabriel, you have many reasons to go, for yourself and

others.”

“I understand, Yahweh. But I must also ask. The other archangels and I want to know, when will the planet end?”

Our Goddess could only see so far, and had never given me a straight answer on the topic. Often quoting worldly texts, today she looked to Hindu philosophy: *“There cannot be an ending, without the anticipation for something new to replace it. Shiva’s fiery, destructive, cosmic dance will yield the materials for new beginnings.”*

“Do you mean the end is approaching? Is that why you want me to go now?”

“I have vowed never to interfere with the natural progress of the cosmos, unless there is a danger to Heaven. You have plenty of time,” she said.

Aseem couldn’t help me with my next question. “What about the conditions of mankind? Is it possible to reverse the loss of hope and resources that have terrorized those without power for so long, and then to do so as one of them?” I asked, wondering how I could impact humanity if I didn’t even remember who I really was.

“Gabriel, please understand that you are not returning to the planet to save those so defeated. Your company of angels will have that task. As for your other worries about the conditions of the world, the utopia that you wish for, will never occur on Earth, but one day it will happen in Heaven. As a human you will make your own mistakes, but with your intuition and knowledge, you will never be far from your true path.”

“What exactly will be my path?” She had a plan for me, I believed.

“Just be yourself, grow from taking risks, discover your valor. Respect equally those around you. Remember that all souls have the potential for sin and redemption. Return to Earth, because it is your time. You are obliged to go for yourself only. Enjoy all that the world has to offer. Meet your Fairchild. Love her, marry, and have offspring. I give you my blessing for good fortune in finding the bonds that you seek. Gabriel, I will always find a way to connect with you every step of your journey, even in your darkest hours, so don’t be afraid.”

“I will do as you suggest, for myself and for the sake of others,” I replied honestly, declaring my intention to move forward. With my formal bow, I could feel Yahweh’s sincere encouragement for my new life.

"I will be with you again when you are ready, after your final meeting." Yahweh reassured me, smiling as she bid me farewell.

I returned to my tower, which was now empty. Any expected company was likely preparing for the party. I saw my oldest friend and sprite — my bold herald, my horn — hovering next to me, ready to help.

When I was new to Heaven, my first sprite was just a large conch—a seashell. In the beginning, when I blew through its mouth, the strange friend and adviser would summon playmates for me. I named my friend, Denomi—Nomi for short. Later, Nomi helped me organize my best friends into group discussions where we would concern ourselves with the roles of angels in Heaven. With Yahweh's personal ear, and Nomi's help, I was launched into the position as their leader. Through the years, Nomi had evolved in appearance, currently a brass horn with tubing wrapped into a single coiled trumpet. Under my will, through the centuries, he and I have gained the power to call any soul. We have the ability to unlock souls in any physical or emotional imprisonment. Only together does the magic happen; we may wake even the most reluctant dead.

These days, Nomi calls the members of my staff as needed. Instrumental in providing news from my friends and all necessary gossip, he makes my announcements, and at my request, he is exemplary in organizing all of my gatherings. Today's party would be an informal affair, without the presence of Yahweh, so angel wings would not be worn.

Nomi hovers above me, vibrating for attention. He intends to consult with me about dressing for the occasion, telepathically suggesting; *"Your friends are going all out, flamboyant seventeenth- or eighteenth-century dress."*

Following his advice, I close my eyes to form a mental picture of how I wanted to look. When I opened my eyes, I was looking at my image in a full-length mirror. No longer was I wearing my plainly-woven cottons. Instead, I was dressed in a tunic brocade of red wine with patterns of yellow-gold, laurel leaves running from my neckline and continuing through my skirted waist that fell to my knees. My sleeves were now vertically-striped satin puffs of cream, gold and wine. My leggings had changed to a wine and gold weave, while gold colored

slippers appeared on my feet. I began to walk, testing the portability of my new attire.

“That’s right – over the top! What about a hat?” Nomi suggested.

“Yes! I’ll need it for balance.” Then I concentrated again, causing a burgundy velvet hat to appear on my head. The sunburst gold brooch pinned to one side, held ostrich feathers that sprung out from all angles, nesting within the brim. Smiling at my new look, I pondered what my friends would imagine for themselves. They knew that I preferred their ethnic dress on such occasions.

As Nomi announced the gathering, my company entered the large, mirrored hall, all in outlandish flair. Only Aseem was absent.

Long ago, I had chosen my exotic mix of friends from the corners of the globe. They always surpassed my highest expectations, honoring me with their dedication. They had all become advocates of their distant regions just as I had hoped, with genuine concerns for their adopted nations throughout every progression of history.

Archangel Michael asked, “Gabriel, are you at last comfortable with your decision?”

“Honestly, I thought I’d never get here, but yes, I must follow this particular journey to find a deeper meaning to my current existence.” I remained steady.

“You’re no fool—this is a courageous step,” he looked at me admiringly before announcing; “Everyone, give Gabriel your love and respect. He will be the first of us to be reborn!”

The others gathered with their applause, greeting me with handshakes and hugs of congratulations and wishes for the best of luck. With their open telepathy, I could hear them thinking about the challenges I had already considered, *“Such a modern age, such desperate and complicated times,”* —the general consensus. Michael thought, *“This choice would be absurd for anyone else but you,”* as the others agreed. Then they all shared the same concerns that I had been agonizing over. *“Is the apocalypse on the horizon? Is that why you’re going now, before it all ends?”*

Compelled to speak, I answered, “No. Yahweh does not yet see the end of Earth, although it must come eventually.”

On my behalf, Nomi interrupted their expressions of concern with a flurry of chords, calling my friends to form a line for my informal inspection. As I saw them, I wondered how I could cope without seeing

them during my time away . . .

Archangel Michael was my second-in-command, the bravest soldier, always the defender at any peril, regardless of risk to himself. He had originally begun life on Earth in the Caucasus Mountains, where he had ventured through the Russian steppe to the Caspian Sea. The sea took his life, along with his eleven-year-old son Christian, after they sailed into a devastating storm. He had never made it home to see his wife, who died soon after of a broken heart. But in Heaven they have been happily reunited for over twelve hundred years.

With curly dark brown hair and blue eyes, Michael always looked around the age of thirty-five. Today he sported a long, full beard which he menacingly fondled. I laughed at his costume. He was dressed like an Emperor of Russia in robes of ermine, and velvet in colors of lapis, red, and green, wearing a gem-filled gold necklace. On his head was a soft velvet, cobalt blue cap with gold piping which was topped with a golden crown containing even more jewels.

He smiled wholeheartedly as I displayed my own attire.

I moved in close to say, “Michael, you will be in charge and free to seek Yahweh’s advice whenever you need. While I’m gone, you will have my full confidence.”

His warm expression and full embrace, “I will miss all of your great ideas,” he said, reassuring me of the love between us. Then I moved away, preparing to address the archangel next to him.

Archangel Thanuel grew up in a Mayan village in South America. Thane, as he was known, had told us stories about social unrest, drought caused by deforestation, and territorial wars within the former Peruvian jungles. He had come to us after becoming one of the thousands of human sacrifices made to appease the gods, over two thousand years ago. Thane was known for having enough hope for those who had given up on life; he was full of energy, tireless in his good deeds.

Today, Thane was quite the scene, very theatrical. He wore a golden helmet that nearly swallowed his face. The symbols on it were embossed with the face of a viper in front, with dragon wings and serpent scales; he was Quetzakoati, the Aztec god of Mesoamerica. At his waist he wore spotted jaguar pelts. His chest was bare underneath his woven-hemp ceremonial poncho, which sprouted countless vibrant feathers on top, representing the birds of the Amazon Jungle. He soared like a bird to enhance the effect of wings as he performed a native dance,

finishing with a final bow. Everyone joined in the applause.

I told him, “You’re wonderful, the performance opened you up like I’ve never seen. It will be hard for me to forget you in this spontaneous moment. I will miss our good work together.”

We clutched each other’s arms, sharing a smile, then we hugged, strongly. I could feel his love for me. Still smiling, he pinched my bare chin, teasingly, “I’ll miss that face of yours, too,” he said.

Archangel Raphael was the protector against the diseases of humanity. During his days on Earth, he had crossed the perilous North Sea from Scotland, only to die later from the plague while in Normandy. Dressed as a Highlander in his Celtic green tartan, he was unrecognizable, costumed with a full face of burly, ginger-red hair under a helmet of Gaelic pewter that had the horns of a bull. I laughed as he growled at me, before dancing between swords that were inlaid with beautiful, regional stones.

Raphael then showed me his large gray wolf pelt that he wore draped over his shoulder. I realized that he had fished through his boyhood memories of the day. Through the aid of The Quantum, he found the precise memory and told me where and how he and his father hunted down the beast.

I thanked him for the story, pulling his shoulder close. After our embrace, telepathically I said to him, “*I plan to avoid the most challenging areas of the world, but may fail.*”

He smiled back to say to me, “I’ll do all that I can for you, wherever trouble may find you.”

“I know you will,” I replied ardently.

Archangel Leyla was the most intuitive and maternal of my team, officially the protector of conception and childbirth. Her mind probes could orient those who were mentally lost; she was the best guide in the science of psychic regression and retrieval, finding identities obscured by time and space. Four hundred years older than me, she appeared to be in her late twenties. Still I had always thought of her as my mother, ever since she rescued my mind from oblivion, as she continues to do with Heaven’s other stillborn.

There she was, in her usual paleness from her nightly excursions. Her Hebrew name meant Dusk, the darkest stage of twilight. On Earth, she lived and died as a slave, ages before the Exodus in Egypt. Today, she was dressed like a Jewish Princess. Her dress emphasized her soft,

feminine form with an azure silk bodice. Her midriff was bare; her skirt was in patterns of pink and orange mixed with threads of gold. Chains of gold coins crowned her head as her waves of deep chestnut brown hair cascaded down. More layers of gold coins accentuated her waistline; she jangled as she slowly gyrated into an ancient dance. Tiny loops of gold pierced her ears and nostrils. Her veil fell across half of her face, leaving her mesmerizing dark eyes open for display.

After the applause from her performance, Leyla spoke only to me, without leaving me a moment to respond. “Gabriel, I will be with you after our meeting, as your guide in the regression.” she smiled and nodded as we clutched and released our hands.

Archangel Khantu, had lived on Earth in Carthage, now Africa’s Tunisia, where his army had been defeated by the Romans. He had died in their arenas after a long career as a gladiator. He had been my general in many Heavenly campaigns, always the heart behind the plan to save human lives and minimize casualties.

Today, his head and face were clean-shaven, and he posed as a tall and noble member of the Maasai Tribe of East Africa. I could barely recognize him from his usual natural, dark hair, often with a full beard. His nose and ears were accentuated with gold piercings, his muscular body adorned with golden armbands. Khan wore a red silk toga tied with a leather belt, with a lion pelt flung over his shoulder. He carried a bejeweled ivory staff, filled with many colors of uncut diamonds. He maintained his expression of a strong thirty-year-old warrior until I touched and admired his lion’s mane. In that moment his true nature broke free as he smiled, giving me a massive hug that enveloped my much smaller frame.

Next was Archangel Tiande, who went by Tian. I shortened it further to just, Ti. On Earth, she had grown up in Cathay in ancient northern China as a member of a wealthy and noble family. But when it was discovered that she had the ability to foresee the future, out of fear and vengeance, she was tortured to death, to extricate the so-called evil spirits. Ti was known as the keeper of secrets, the angel of mysteries and with her powers of prophecy, mind control, and abilities to connect with unknown entities, she acted as my personal adviser when we faced new species for the first time.

She was wearing layers of kimonos; the outer layer was deep purple with cream colored images of barley grain, below that was a flash of

pale, periwinkle blue; underneath the rest, a crisp white color sprouted at her throat. The ensemble was held together with a pale pink obi; her shoes were three-inch platform blocks of lacquered wood. She had a headdress with a single parallel, lacquered chopstick, twisted in place by her long straight hair. On each side of her face dangled silver mobile Chinese characters. As I approached, I read the meanings, "Good Luck," on the left, and to the right was my name, "Gabriel."

After I acknowledged her beauty and taste, she noticed my serious expression; I appeared reluctant in my attempt to ask . . .

"Don't be afraid to go, it will be fine in the end," she said, recovering from her torn message. "Many will find happiness through your efforts," she smiled.

It wasn't the uncomplicated ease to the question I was seeking . . . even so, I nodded quietly, saying thank you, before kissing her hand.

As I moved away from her, Ti pulled one of her mind-control tricks on me. Her entire figure sparkled into multiple images, like a kaleidoscope snowflake pattern, with her smiling face enlarged in the center. With a nod, she blew me a kiss goodbye. The illusion was perfect. In that moment, I fell into a carefree smile.

I heard a clatter in the hall. It was Aseem, who had just that minute popped in. He bowed to me in a comical pantomime of an ancient Persian Sultan. I returned his grand gesture, removing my feathered hat to my heart with a graceful bow. Afterward, I looked at him admiringly.

On Earth, Aseem had died as a soldier in a Sumerian army, pressed into service without consent. Today, he had on a brass helmet that came to a point with phoenix feathers jutting out. The rim was of chinchilla fur. His turquoise, brown, purple and orange robes were accentuated by golden Arabic characters. He smiled and engaged me through the folds of his soft keffiyeh scarf, which nearly buried his face; only his tender eyes beamed through.

"You're the best Sultan that I've ever seen!" I said halfway choking up with spontaneous tears. I grabbed him hard.

"You'll be fine under our watch," Aseem whispered, feeling the moment.

I turned to face all the angels who had circled around me and said gratefully, "This was a memorable party. Brothers and sisters, my lifetime without you will be an eternity. May Yahweh be with us all."

My friends touched my hands for the last time, disappearing after

their final wishes.

When the room fell silent, only Leyla remained; the moment had become indelible. Seconds later in the seriousness of the moment, with a wish, I had turned back into my customary cotton attire, as Leyla found her more modest blue dress.

“Where do you plan to go, Gabriel?” Leyla asked.

“Yahweh and I believe that I will find the greatest experiences in the Capitol of the United States of North America. Honestly, I have no idea what to expect. As an Earthling, I can expect a wide variety of consequences that could be either hard knocks or just narrow escapes,” I confessed, rather nervously.

“You’re so tense with those foolish worries, may I?” With my approval she began massaging my shoulders.

Then I could feel the spirit of Yahweh surrounding me. *“Gabriel, it is your Goddess, I am here with Leyla to guide you through your transition,”* Yahweh informed me. Then I fell deeper into relaxation when I felt her warm energies filling me inside.

Leyla’s soothing voice and hands began to work their simultaneous magic. Soon she was ready to give me her suggestion . . . *“Now close your eyes, Gabriel, focus on my instructions.”* Leyla began, *“You will be calm and always bring hope to yourself and others. You have bright prospects, and will follow your intuition for the love of humanity . . . Now I want you to imagine the bright light of your conception . . . when you find it, hold onto that image . . .”* Leyla continued. *“Yes, that’s right, very good! Now, how do you feel?”*

I had no idea at that time that Yahweh had regressed me down to a single point of light, bodiless, but still unique with my original DNA. I could no longer speak, but communicated telepathically. *“I’m alright, let’s continue.”*

“Yahweh and I have a special place for you, Gabriel,” Leyla said. *“Let’s find a barren womb and grant a wish!”* Then I felt the gentle movements of Leyla’s cosmic waves surrounding and guiding me where to go.