

# After the Death of Me



**James S. Reiley**

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By  
James S. Reiley



Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.

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To Vicky, my main affiliate and anchor in this life.



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## Preface

Embedded in this little novel is a sort of “how to” manual for getting ready to face the greatest adventure in this life: death and what comes after. From what I have been able to gather, it’s a lot easier to make the transition to the next form of existence and with a lot less confusion if one knows what to expect. I have tried to portray the physics and mechanics of the background environment after death, as well as the dying process, as accurately as I can, mostly from teachings in Theosophy, Siddha Yoga and other corroborating sources.

I also included a short bibliography of books that provided some of the data for this story in case someone would like to look closer at a few of the topics. At least they’re pretty good places to begin.

My thanks to my wonderful wife, Vicky, and her daughter, Sara, for their fine editing and prose refurbishment. And thanks to the members of the Theosophical Society who took the time to answer my questions about the astral plane and transitioning to that place.



# 1

## I Die

My name is Kyra. At least that was the name I used when I was alive on the physical plane. I never really cared for it all that much when I was there—, mostly because nobody seemed to know how to spell it. People were always saying things like “Dearie, was that with an ‘ee’ or an i?” So sometimes I would invent new spellings just for the occasion, like Keerae or Quirra. It was my own little form of occasional mischief, without some of which I probably would have been bored completely out of my mind.

Most of my life was like that once I got a handle on which end was up. It was hard to experience much that didn’t smack of “I’ve seen this movie before.” Not that there weren’t a whole gaggle of things to enjoy in this life, just that I had to work a little harder to feel like there was something new and different going on. It’s a lot like always knowing the punch line before anyone ever finishes a joke.

But when I got really still sometimes, I noticed a feeling or voice or something that would say things to me like, “You are really blessed to exist as a human being,” or “There is nothing more useful than what you are experiencing right now. And all of this is totally for your benefit.” Then I would probably go watch something goofy on TV or call someone on the phone.

As you might already have guessed, I tried very hard not to take anything too seriously.

Maybe that's because I always saw people obsessing over what I thought was pretty useless stuff. And it was like most of what was going on for them was the most important thing since the invention of pizza. Take Mr. Palmer across the street and his lawn, for example. He fertilizes, weeds, mulches and mows about every half hour from January through November. And, if you get anywhere close to stepping on his yard, he yells and sometimes actually growls at you. Perhaps his deck of cards is not entirely full, but it seems we're all a smidgen like that in this western, I'm-gonna-get-more-stuff-than-you-do kind of culture. I've long suspected we might be missing the big picture here. But I don't actually voice that thought very often unless I want to be declared out of my mind or some kind of total dweeb.

I'm sixteen (or was) and spent the biggest chunk of time growing up in Walnut Creek, California, not a bad place, American dream-wise. My dad is the director of a small medical center, and my mother teaches biology at a community college just up the road. I have a younger brother named Gustav. A pretty odd name for a kid, and what's even odder is that nobody seems to remember how it came to be, not even my parents. I suspect they used the random phone book selection method to name both of us, but they get kind of pissed off when I accuse them of that.

Gustav's okay, I guess, for a much younger brother. He's seven and intellectually way out there—currently the youngest kid ever to attend sixth grade in Contra Costa County. His favorite pastime is writing computer software that he can play games against. I hope he doesn't grow up to be a total geek now that I'm not around to steer him in other worthwhile directions.

Anyway, I died not too long ago—no, not metaphorically, the real deal. My actual permanent name for this personality is Reina. I don't know where that name came from either, but it feels right when I think of it in reference to me. So, I'll probably speak of myself with this moniker for the duration here.

And, since you're reading this book, you should know that it was channeled through my semi-psychic buddy Lawrence, who tunes in to me periodically to get the latest installment of what's happening here. He's a young man (32), and a web page designer who lives by himself out in the woods near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. One could even call him a hermit, but he would be okay with that. His wife died in a car accident a couple of years ago. Every few weeks, after some subtle urging from me, he turns on a recorder and goes into a kind of meditative trance. At that point, I take over to a limited degree, plugging in thoughts to dictate my story, which is mostly a collection of events taking place in this astral world. Later, he runs the recording through a computer dictation program and voila, instant chapter.

This channeling arrangement is purely consensual, by the way, and I think it's been beneficial for Lawrence. It seems to give him purpose, knowing that he prepares people for the dying process and helps them understand more about where they're headed. It also gets him out of feeling quite so sorry for himself. I don't know how many of these books we'll do together, but stay tuned.

Meanwhile, dying is sort of an interesting exercise. In my case, I was busy minding my own business, walking home from school with my best friend Allie, when deep inside my head, a small thin spot in an artery gave way. I later heard the hospital people talk about something called a berry aneurysm in the Circle of Willis, whatever that is. Anyway, it meant that this particular trip in twenty-first-century Earth was finished for me.

Unfortunately, it freaked Allie out pretty good. She's okay now though. I check in on her every so often.

And, believe it or not the dying part is just swell with me. Comparing life now with life then is no contest. I guess the sentiment most often expressed here on the astral plane is that when we hang out in physical form, it's like being buried in a tomb of flesh—yuck. Here, if you know what you're doing, you can go anywhere you want instantly and manifest whatever floats your boat. It's way cooler than you can imagine.

The dying process is more or less like what the books say—at least the books that tell it like it is. In my case, I hung around my body for a while, sort of hovering over it. There was no pain at all. I just noticed that this form that I thought used to be me was not moving at all and seemed completely uninhabitable. It was clear pretty quickly to me though that death had happened. Some folks apparently don't catch on to that right away. I don't exactly know why, but the astral workers who help in the transition process see it occur more often than you would suspect. My Master says that it's a problem with the peculiar religious beliefs that are prevalent today.

His name is Eli, by the way, and I always refer to him as Master Eli or simply Master. He has a very elevated consciousness, and I'm told he's on a fast track to becoming a Solar Spirit in the Hierarchy. This is a level way beyond my current pay grade. I'm on the Probationary Path and have been for a number of lifetimes. Basically, this means I'm just beginning to think about getting my spiritual act together.

Master Eli is my teacher, spiritual advisor and the head of the organization that gives me my assignments. These are astral worker missions to fix or prevent situations that would otherwise cause chaos and confusion in the astral plane and occasionally on the physical plane. The problems on the physical plane are those

that a person's astral guide(s) are unable to manage by themselves. Anyway, Master Eli seems to have his ear to the ground about these kinds of things, and I'm one of his agents (not very secret though).

But back to the dying part. I more or less fiddled around a while, looking down at my body as it tried to get ready for what was next. My mother and father came and went. Both of them tried to be brave, but there were a few crying jags, especially late at night. Surprisingly my mother was a little less emotional about the whole thing. I think this was because she had always been an avid reader of spiritual information of all kinds, especially Theosophical Society stuff and eastern metaphysical writings, and had a better picture of what actually happened when you die.

Mother didn't let many people know about the kind of books she read. She told me that for whatever reason, folks in this part of the world tended not to want to spend much of their time on spiritual information that required a lot of focused attention and intellectual effort. At most they generally got a Sunday morning sound bite that matched the prevailing Judeo-Christian cultural look at the world. Whenever she let it slip the kinds of things she was into, people looked at her like she was close to being a total whack job.

Ever since I proverbially kicked the bucket, Mother talked out loud to me when she thought my dad was asleep. He was raised as a fundamentalist Christian, and is a completely lovable human being, but he carries around with him the cultural mindset of that upbringing. Mother used to say things to me like, "Kyra, honey, don't be confused. This is just a phase. When the time comes, head for the light, and everything will be fine. We'll miss you terribly, but we won't hold you here."

I saw her corner Gustav a couple of days after I died. He was crying and taking it pretty hard. He and I had always been



close, but I guess there was a greater bond between us than I had suspected. Mother said, “Gustav, my wonderful son, you have to understand that Kyra is about to spend her time in a marvelous place—one that you and I can’t even imagine. The thing you should do is wish her a pleasant journey and blessings on finding her next home. Don’t be sad and wish she were back here, because that will create energy that won’t be useful for her. Be happy for her, and send her love.”

He said in between sobs, “I just miss her. She took time to make sense of this world to me. She was the best friend I ever had.”

“I know how you feel. She was special and a terrific person, and I’ll miss her too. When you get past this time and your feelings settle down some—and trust me, they will—maybe I can give you some books that will describe what I think has just happened to her. What do you say?”

“Okay.”

Actually, she and I had talked about this a fair amount, so I wasn’t at all afraid or confused. As mothers go, she was the best, and I think I’ll miss her most of all. If you’re ever looking for an Earth physical plane mother to be born to, I’d give her a five-star rating with no hesitation.

I hung around during the funeral, which happened four days after my death. It was a little strange watching the people who had been a part of my life grieve and look so solemn. If they’d had any idea, they would have been throwing me a hell of a bash. I think the way they do it in New Orleans with a jazz funeral and party attitude might be a better way to send somebody off.

There was a video of pictures of me at the gravesite and later at the house. They surprised me a little. I wasn’t so bad to look at in those days. I was (and still am) about five foot seven with curly reddish-brown hair. I weighed about a hundred and thirty-five

pounds. Every now and then I had thought it might be better to be a little more curvaceous, but I still seemed to turn heads more than occasionally. My mother used to tell me how pretty I was, but truth be known, it just never seemed all that important.

After the day of the funeral, things happened quickly. I remember the main stages, but some of the details in the transition process seem to have gotten a bit blurred. For instance, the changes in consciousness and perception from the physical plane to the astral plane are difficult to hold on to unless you've seen it so often that it's just a change in background scenery. And near the end of the incarnations that require a return trip to this physical plane, it gets exactly like that—or so I'm told.

In any event, I'd been through this process enough times that I didn't need my guide to assist me in making the transition. For a person completing the first of his/her lifetimes, their primary guide shows the way to the next phase of existence in the astral plane. And, by the way, everyone has at least one guide assisting them in their time on the physical plane.

As I moved toward the light, I heard a swooshing and buzzing as I traveled faster and faster through a tunnel of sorts. The walls weren't solid; mainly, they were a delineation between what was inside and what was outside the tunnel. At the end, I slowed down and came upon a beautiful being that looked entirely made of pure light. He emanated a love that was almost impossible to believe.

From what I had read and from what my mother told me, I took this being to be my soul, also known as my higher self. This is the entity that manifested me and manufactured this life for the sake of his and my spiritual evolution, though the actual distinction between him and me is a little fuzzy here. I felt loved, humbled, peaceful, and awestruck all at the same time. I don't

think I could have generated a cynical thought at that point if I wanted to—pretty weird altogether.

Through a non-verbal cue, we evaluated a replay of everything that occurred in the life I'd just lived. It wasn't at all threatening or judgmental, just an objective look at what was learned and where some of the hard spots were. When these hard spots showed up, he found them pretty amusing, like when I was five, and my father wouldn't let me go next door to play with my friend Lisa. I threw a horrendous tantrum and put clothes and some cookies in my backpack to leave home. I got two blocks before feeling like an idiot and going back.

Since I died at the age of sixteen, the replay didn't take very long—probably only a few minutes, I think. It was hard to tell exactly how long, since it was quite compressed, like a movie fast-forwarded. But even though it was compressed, we saw every moment of my life, just the two of us watching with no one else around. He explained that particular events were reviewed in greater detail by a committee who decided what aspects to build into my next life—but more on that later.

When the life replay was over, he expressed his sincere love and gratitude to me—again, without words—and faded from view. He left me with an innate sense that he was always with me and a part of me. I can see why newbie dead people think this is God, Jesus, Buddha or whatever deity they worship.

After the replay, I gradually lost awareness of any kind for some length of time. I suppose this was something resembling sleep, but without dreams or anything memorable. From what I found out later, most humans go through a phase like this of varying lengths to prepare for the next stage of their astral existence. It's kind of a supervised hibernation.

After an unknown amount of time, I woke up and found myself standing on the edge of a brightly lit city. At the entrance

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to the city, a small group of people waited for me. Their human shapes were surrounded by radiant swirling mists of many colors, and their bodies were encased in translucent egg-shaped structures. From what my mother had told me, I recognized these as the astral bodies of human beings.

I recognized my grandmother right away, only she looked like a younger version of herself and much happier and healthier than I remembered. She had died four years ago from cancer. As I found out later, when people die, they usually keep the body resemblance of what their mind defines as their self-image. So probably Grandma thought of herself in younger terms than when I saw her last.

I saw three others I also knew. The first was a young boy named Edwin who died of leukemia when I was in the eighth grade. He and I were very close for a while. Edwin also didn't resemble his earlier self that much and was now a taller, strapping lad with a rugged and handsome face. Another thing I learned was that children, when they find themselves on the astral plane, as weird as it sounds, tend to grow towards adulthood in appearance at about the same rate they would if they were still physically alive. I think it has a lot to do with the effective power of one's strongly held beliefs. But I digress.

The second person present was Mrs. Beale, the ancient librarian in grade school who had a particular affinity to me. When I was leaving elementary school, she stopped me near the end of the school year, hugged me, and said if she could have had a daughter, she would have wanted her to turn out just like me. I was a little embarrassed and quickly responded with something like, "You probably wouldn't say that if you knew how secretly rotten I am." I remember her laughing pretty hard at that. I think she was surprised to hear that because I was always so well behaved in school.

The remaining person that I knew from this last life was Mr. Crockett, my middle school soccer coach. (I had aspirations of beating the Chinese women in this sport when I got older.) The odd thing was that old Mr. Crockett now had the appearance of a twenty-five-year-old woman, except that it wasn't odd at all. It absolutely suited him/her. It turns out that on the astral plane, you can have any look you want. If it isn't one that your mind knows, you have to mentally reinforce the image for a while for it to show.

I don't know how I knew these people, given their changes in appearance—I just did. They were all smiling, and seemed genuinely pleased to see me.

When I speak of seeing these people, I'm misstating or at least tremendously understating what's going on. Perceiving visually on the astral plane is more like seeing something from all sides at once including the inside out. I guess it's not really seeing at all but being aware of all of the astral molecules in something or someone through the receptors inside your astral body. It's a lot like trying to describe the tints and hues of a wonderful sunset to a blind person—however accurate the description might be, understanding is impossible.

The same thing is true for astral hearing. It's more like having receivers for every kind of audible vibration being emitted. (And music here is more wonderful to experience than anything ever imagined on the physical plane.) But, for the sake of discussion, I'll use the familiar terms for seeing and hearing. Just be aware they're not even close to what you experience on Earth.

Communication between people here is straightforward but complicated at the same time. It isn't done using sound, but through directed thoughts. A message is formulated in words and then packaged up and aimed at someone. But since it has to be in words, the people talking have to have a language in

common. It's pretty close to instantaneous, though, and distance is not an issue.

Anyway, the other person in the Welcome Wagon group was not someone I remembered from my last life. He was a short man of about twenty whose appearance was Middle Eastern. He spoke first and said, "Welcome, Reina, to this astral world. I am Omar. We're here to greet you and help you make the transition to your new home."

The moment he spoke, I recognized Omar. He was my guide and astral worker assistant in some of my assignments during sleep times on earth. He was also a student/devotee of Master Eli and an operative in his organization.

After fumbling a bit with this new mode of speech, I said, "I'm so pleased to see you, Omar, my old friend, and all of you who came here to welcome me to this place. I remember you all well, and if I didn't know better, I'd think I've died and gone to heaven."

Omar smiled. "It's wonderful to see you too, especially now that you don't have to return when your sleep state is over."

I glanced around. "This place is all so bright and strange looking. But I like it." I looked at Omar again. "What happens now? I don't see any white rabbit, but do I get taken to see the Queen of Hearts, or what?"

"If you are feeling alright, we can proceed to your dwelling. It is of course temporary until you decide what kind of space to manifest for yourself. We find that most people crossing over need a short training course and adjustment period before being totally acclimated to this plane. You are no doubt an exception having spent so much of your young life already existing and operating here as an agent for Master Eli's organization while you slept. Do you still remember how to fly?"

"I think so, even though there's still gravity here. As I remember, it's mostly just deciding to propel yourself in a certain

direction—sort of willing it to be so.” I lifted off the ground, flew a few yards away circling the group, and returned to the starting spot. It felt altogether reasonable and natural.

When I landed, Mrs. Beale grinned and said, “By Jove, honey, I think you’ve got it.”

Omar added, “I think this may well be one of the shortest transition periods on record. Oh, and before I forget, Master Eli will be by to see you as soon as most of your astral faculties are back in place. He said he was busy with something or he would have been here to greet you.”

Grandma said, “Kyra, or should I say Reina, we’re all here to help you in whatever way we can to adjust to your new surroundings. I’m so happy to have been part of your last life. Once your memory of this place returns, call on us anytime, and we’ll be there right away if we are at all able. It’s so good to have you with us.”

The others except Omar nodded their approval then vanished just like on *Star Trek* but without all of the Hollywood fade in/fade out stuff.

Omar said, “Reina, would you like to travel to your new home? Or rather, will you come fly with me? I always like saying that.”

I replied, “Okay, I’ll fly with you, but Frank Sinatra you’re not.”

With that, we both took off and flew soundlessly in the direction of the center of the city. It was much more vibrant than an ordinary city. This was in part because of being able to perceive a greater portion of the visible spectrum, frequencies that are lower than the palest red on the physical plane and higher than the deepest violet. It’s also because every object on the astral plane emits light. Seeing all this fresh from physical plane Earth mode was spectacular.

The first thing that struck me about this town was the absence of roadways of any kind. It occurred to me that there was no need for vehicles or transportation devices because everyone could fly. The city was sprinkled with small houses and apartment buildings surrounded by parks with flowers and greenery. Everything was unique but beautifully consistent and compatible, as if everyone had hired the same expensive landscaping company.

I noticed a lack of anything resembling commerce—no billboards, neon signs or golden arches of any kind, and no telephone or power lines.

People were flying at various heights by themselves or in small groups. Some waved to us as we flew by. I could see people on the ground as well. They stood out since they were usually a lot brighter and more colorful than their surroundings.

We arrived at what appeared to be a block of condominiums and small houses next to a tree-lined park. Omar headed toward a dwelling at the end of the row beneath a brilliantly red maple tree that looked more imagined than grown. I asked Omar, “Is that tree for real?”

He replied, “Reina, as your memory of this place returns and with a little retraining, you’ll know which of the visible entities are evolving life forms, such as people, plants and animals, and which are artificial constructs. Ah, here we are.”

We landed gently near the front door, no lock visible or key required. I guessed thievery and break-ins were not part of the program here. I asked Omar about it. “Don’t people lock their doors around here?”

“When most anything can be manifested at will, there is no incentive to invade the dwelling of another. And from a purely practical standpoint, humans on this plane are able to pass through any substance at any time with no difficulty. Let me demonstrate.”



He proceeded directly through the door. I hesitated then followed him. I didn't notice a thing except that one instant I was outside and the next inside.

"Wow, that is very cool. Does this mean I can go through anything?"

"On this level of the astral plane, yes, that is true."

"And what level would that be?" I asked.

"The fourth level."

We moved into what looked like the living room. It had tall ceilings and great big windows with views of the surrounding hills and trees.

"Hey, this place is terrific," I said.

"We're so pleased you like it. We designed it based on what we remembered of your preferences. As you get used to life here, you can make whatever changes you like or seek a new place altogether. This is just a starting space for reorientation."

"Well, you all did great."

At that point, I noticed a small glowing marble-sized object sitting in the middle of a small table near one of the picture windows. "What's that shiny doo-dad?" I asked.

"That's a gift from Master Eli. He constructed it for your personal use. It's like a computer and advisor all rolled into one. All you have to do is connect to it, then ask it a question. Master thought it might make reloading the information about this place a little more convenient, and it will give you a bit of guidance whenever you need it. I have a similar one that I call Oracle, but I guess you can call yours anything you like. Here, let me show you."

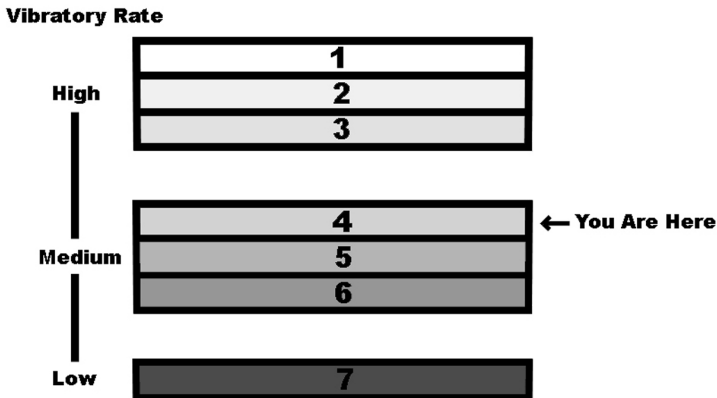
He made a gesture with one hand, and a small, bright shiny orb appeared in front of him. He said directly to the object, "Oracle, please tell us how many levels are on the astral plane, and why we are on this one."

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Messages starting coming from the glowing object. It sort of reminded me of the computer HAL in the movie *2001, A Space Odyssey*. It said, “There are seven levels or subplanes in the astral plane. This is by appearance only, since all subplanes occupy the same space as the physical plane. It is only your perception that there are seven levels as you travel throughout this plane. This is merely your consciousness responding to the vibrations of one sub-plane before tuning in to the vibrations of another.”

At that point, the Oracle presented a holographic image:

### Astral World Subplanes



“This is the fourth level,” said Oracle. “You are here because the majority of the molecules in the outer layer of your astral body are of the matter belonging to this level. There are three so-called higher levels than this one. They are referred to this way because the vibrations on those levels are at significantly higher frequencies than the ones you perceive on this level. As a group, levels one, two, and three form a separate class or subdivision from the others. This is because the matter on these subplanes

is categorically different from the other four. It is much less dense—analogueous to the difference between air and water on the physical plane.

“The sixth sub-plane, which is two levels lower than this one in terms of vibration, is perhaps most similar in appearance and operational characteristics to the physical world.

“The seventh and lowest level forms a subdivision of its own. It is generally inhabited by most unfortunate beings. These are the ones who in physical form repeatedly experienced predominantly vile and unpleasant emotions, such as hate, anger, jealousy, and excessive sexuality. As a result, their astral bodies were loaded with the dense matter corresponding to these emotions. The matter in that subplane is the densest in the astral world. It coexists in what would be the space below and just above ground on the physical plane, and is very dark at all times. It is completely devoid of all that is light and good.

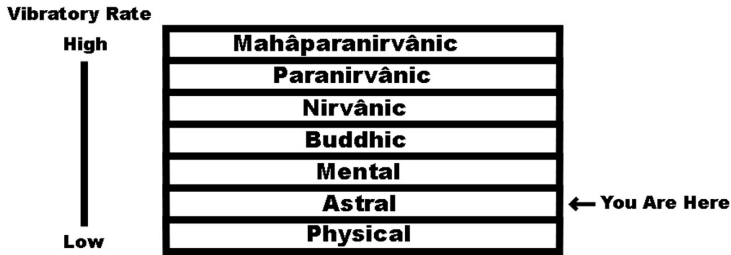
“As to why you are on the fourth subplane, you refused to allow your astral molecules to rearrange themselves at the time of your entrance to the astral world. Nearly all people, when confronted with the fear of death, automatically migrate their densest molecules to the outside of their astral body and then the next most dense and so on. This provides a layering of shells, which they suspect will protect them from what is happening. You resisted this fear-based emotional elemental, as most spiritually evolved people do, and left all of your molecules intermingled, just as they were on the physical plane. So what dominated your astral body’s exterior was matter belonging to this subplane.”

When it was obvious that he was done with this particular lecture, I asked, “Oracle, you spoke of the astral plane coexisting with the physical plane. Do any other planes also share this space?”

“Yes, there are five other planes.”

Oracle presented another holographic image:

## Planes of Existence



“The next plane vibrationally higher than the astral world is called the mental plane. This is the next form of existence for humans after they shed all of their astral matter and move on from this plane. It has been referred to as heaven or paradise by many writers of spiritual literature. People tend to live there for thousands of Earth years before reincarnating again.

“The next plane higher is called the Buddhic Plane. It is the source of souls and soul material. It is most often the case that the higher selves of human beings reside primarily on this plane. The Buddhic plane has been described as the origin of all matter that manifests on the planes below it.

“The three planes above that are called the Nirvânic, Paranirvânic, and Mahâparanirvânic. We know that they exist, but we are not able to liken them to anything in the astral plane.”

When Oracle finished, Omar said, “Thank you, Oracle.”

The voice replied, “It was my pleasure to be of service,” and then the orb vanished.

I said, “Wow, does the oracle answer all of your questions whenever you want?”

Omar said, "Pretty much, unless of course the information is beyond my capacity to comprehend. Master Eli is very careful about such things."

"Cool. I can hardly wait to get plugged in here."

"Okay, then with that introduction, I will leave you for a while to center yourself and become accustomed to your new living quarters. I'll come back in the morning to check in and get started on your refresher program. Again, welcome to the astral plane, Reina."

"Omar, thanks so much for meeting me and getting me situated. Oh, and lest I forget, thank you for being my loyal guide on the physical plane when I needed it. You dosed me with amazing counsel and good vibes whenever life was challenging. Good on you for that."

"I'm really looking forward to seeing you tomorrow," said Omar.

"Before you go," I added quickly, "is morning like it was in the physical world? Will I notice some sort of light change or something like a sunrise happening? Not that I saw many of those on the physical plane, because I was always a night owl, but you know what I mean."

"You probably won't notice any change. Even though the sun and planets exist on this plane, the light on the astral plane is more diffuse. Because of this, and the fact that everything generates its own light, there is no perceivable night. So in answer to your question, no, you won't notice any difference when the sun rises. But I'll be back in about six hours, to put it in Earth terms. See you then."

After a small wave of his hand, he vanished with a small popping sound.

I wandered through my house to have a look around. Off the living room was another room with about the same amount of

space containing musical instruments. There was a piano, a flute on a stand, several horns of various shapes and sizes, and fifteen or so different kinds of stringed instruments, including a harp. The harp was a bit of a cliché, I thought with a wry smile, but there was nobody around to share that thought with. I knew, without knowing how exactly, that music here was going to be a big part of my relaxation and self-expression, and this room gave me a really good vibe.

I checked out the rest of the place. There was a huge library with what looked like a gazillion books filling the bookshelves that spanned all four walls, with a big desk right in the center of the room. Adjacent to it was a smaller room with a sofa and three comfy-looking chairs.

There was no kitchen. I thought this was odd until I remembered that in this form, there was no need to cook or eat. There were also no bathrooms or bedrooms for the same reason that beings function differently here. And, amazing beyond belief, there were no washing machines, dryers, or any other devices associated with removing dirt. Let's hear it for the astral plane! I wanted to high-five somebody.

There were plants everywhere. They felt very friendly and were the most delightful shades of green. I made a mental note to ask Omar what they needed in the way of care. Then I remembered that I had my own oracle. Why not ask it?

I went back to the living room to the brightly glowing orb and spoke directly to it. "Oracle, could you tell me how to take care of the plants in this place? There isn't any running water in the house."

"Reina, the plants were created by thought-forms generated by Omar and your friends when they made this place for you. They don't require any maintenance, except maybe some occasional mental reinforcement if they start looking a little

fuzzy around the edges. The good news is, you probably can't kill them from neglect."

The voice was that of a somewhat sassy young woman with a slight Jamaican lilt.

I said, "Oracle is a pretty formal way to address someone. Are you called by any other name?"

"I'll answer to whatever name you'd like. And you're right, being called Oracle strikes me as a little lame."

I thought for a moment. "Okay, then, what about Julia. I've always liked the name Julia—I don't know why."

She said, "That's cool with me. Thanks for asking. I was designed just for you, but I haven't been completely clued in about every possible thing that would make you happy."

"Julia, what kind of being are you?"

"I'm an artificial elemental cranked out personally by Master Eli. He thinks you're amazing, by the way. He built that into me along with my other features."

"What do you do around here?"

"I'm here for whatever you need. If you want to get tuned in about something, I'm your own personal search engine. If you need a best friend, I'll do what I can, but fair warning, sometimes I can be a little sarcastic. Good luck with that. But if you're feeling down, I might let you beat me at checkers once in a while—maybe. So there you go."

"Sounds good," I said. "But how do I connect to you when I'm somewhere else?"

"All you have to do is think of me and want me to be with you. I'm made to transport myself to wherever you'd like me to be. So basically, need oracle, will travel."

"Julia, to borrow a quote, I have a feeling this is going to be the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

## Another Dimension

After exploring my surroundings, I got to thinking about this place and life in general. The space around me seemed pleasant enough, but existence here would be way different from anything I had ever experienced or even imagined in my earthly life. I mean, let's face it, no more eating, drinking, sleeping or most of the other things that made up a lot of my normal daily activities. And, being able to fly and walk through walls would change my style in a big way.

I thought about my family and missed them, even my weirdo little brother, Gustav. He was okay, that kid, despite being a genius and all. He and I used to have some good talks. He was always asking why things were the way they were. When he did, it forced me to figure out my own picture of how stuff really worked. So I suppose it was useful for us both.

In thinking about my family, I felt a bit sad, and that's when it hit me—I still had feelings and emotions here. At the exact moment I felt that, a wispy ghost-like thing came into existence then floated away from me. It wasn't very substantial, and after about thirty feet it dissipated completely. It struck me as odd, so I decided to consult my resident knower of all things.

“Hey, Julia, could you explain what just happened here? Did you see the thing that floated away from me? What was that?”