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"I already believe that life doesn't end here, and *Noelle's Ark* wonderfully addresses that possibility."

--Curt Rouanzoin, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist,  
Approved Consultant in EMDR



*Noelle's Ark*

*A Novel*

*Dr. Audrey Levy*

**Pacific Style ~ Marina Del Rey, California**

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This story is dedicated to my nieces, Lauren and Samantha,  
and my nephew, Alex.  
As a family member, the best I can offer you are  
Roots and Wings.



Thank you, James Spencer  
Lee Cohen, Carol Duffy, and Dirty Jack  
Curt Rouanzoin and Eddie Eisele  
Silvi and Kelly Levy & their Vet Dr. William Carlsen  
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And, especially, my agent, Mary Yost  
I could go on and on, and so I say,  
Thank you to All my Angels  
Thank you for allowing me to access you  
on Heaven and Earth.  
Rest, my friends. Be at peace  
Thank you for helping me to rest.

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*“The Earth is the cradle of the mind,  
but we cannot forever live in a cradle.”*

*Konstantin E. Tsiolkovsky,  
Pioneer of Astronautics*



## Prologue

*...Once upon a time, a princess was born with the proverbial silver spoon in her mouth. Her family hoped and prayed, that one day she would marry a rich and handsome prince, and they would all live happily ever after.*

*...But, instead...*



## Chapter 1

In the murkiness of dirty water, a drowning man's subconscious mind flooded out its contents in a few seconds. He relived all the events of his life almost simultaneously, and then James Splendor, only 56 years old, just under six feet tall, with sandy hair and hazel eyes came to in the afterlife. He was confronted by a man's bloated body, face down in the dirty water.

A soft voice said to Jimmy, "You're dead, son."

Jimmy said, "I always knew I was living hard and would die young. It was me and Jimmy Dean, man. Me and Elvis. Me and Bogart. Bogey said the rest of the world was three drinks behind. I couldn't have agreed with him more."

A white light began to glow next to Jimmy. It became larger in its brilliance and took on the shape of a man – Jimmy's father. Jimmy recoiled. "You're dead!"

"Yes, son, and so are you."

"But I hate you! We can't be dead in the same place!"

"There's only one place to be dead, son. Welcome home!"

“No. I don’t believe you! This is a bad dream. A nightmare. I’m not really dead. I’ll just wake myself up.”

Jimmy stomped around, shook his head, waved his arms frantically, and yelled, “Wake up, Splendor, wake up!”

His father stared at him sympathetically. “It’s not a dream, son. You drank yourself to death, just like I did, and you left that pretty little princess all alone.”

“Noelle! She’ll wake me up. I just need to yell loud enough. Noelle, help me. Hear me. Hellllllpppppppppp meeeee! You have to wake me up!!”

“She can’t hear you, son.”

“I don’t believe you. I’ll make her hear me. I can’t be dead. There is no afterlife and there is no God!”

Jimmy took off running as fast as he could, because he thought his life depended on it, and he ran, and he ran, and he ran for seven long Earth years before he stopped to ask for help from an angel named Oleo.

\* \* \*

As Jimmy ran, he found himself in a forest as a handsome, unblemished young man. No longer part of the bloated, drowned body in the muddy water, he was surrounded by the unbelievable sight of giant pine trees located in a valley between purple majestic mountains.

Jimmy breathed deeply, taking in the powerful scent. He reached out to touch the incredibly detailed bark of one of the trees.

As Jimmy studied it, the bark moved ever so slightly. In awe, Jimmy whispered, “I can see the tree *breathing*.” His eyes opened wide in wonderment, as he took in his surroundings. Where the hell am I, he thought.

From the safety of the towering pine trees, Jimmy watched as a stunningly groomed bald eagle soared through a striking blue sky, the white head blending with puffy

white clouds. The eagle effortlessly scaled the mountains, and landed on one of the tall trees.

Jimmy realized the eagle had spied him, and was now staring at him. Jimmy stood perfectly still so as not to scare the bird away, and see what it would do. To Jimmy's surprise, the bird whooshed into the clearing, instantly transforming into an eight foot growling, swiping bear.

Scared out of his wits, Jimmy prepared to bound off in the opposite direction to make his break for freedom, when the bear lowered her front paws to the ground, studying Jimmy, and suddenly transformed into a beautiful young woman with long auburn hair, sparkling brown eyes, and a delicious mouth.

The woman wore a flowing white dress and was barefoot. She tilted her head to one side, thinking, and abruptly a pair of sandals appeared in her right hand. She laughed out loud as she slipped on her shoes.

"Hi there. I'm Oleo."

Jimmy was dumbfounded, and burst out laughing, "Well, I'd rather deal with a good looking woman than mess with that bear! How'd you do that... Oleo, is it?"

Oleo smiled. "Yup, I'm Oleo, as in oleomargarine, an angel who likes to slip in and out of all kinds of things."

Jimmy laughed. "Ah, an angel! Where are your wings, Oleo?"

Oleo glanced over her shoulder. "I found them a bit cumbersome, so I ditched them a few lifetimes ago."

Jimmy did a double take. "A few lifetimes ago!"

Oleo was nonplussed. "Everything is possible here, James."

"How do you know my name? What's going on?"

"James, listen to me. My name is Oleo. I really am an angel. You are what humans call 'dead,' and you're in the afterlife. In reality, you've simply left your human body just like a butterfly leaves its cocoon. We are spirits

having a human experience, not humans having a spiritual experience.”

Jimmy shook his head. “I don’t believe you.”

Oleo put her arms on his shoulders. “James, you’ve been running for seven years Earth time. It’s time for you to stop.”

Jimmy’s eyes indicated his fear. “Seven years? That can’t be! It didn’t feel anywhere near that long!”

Oleo laughed. “That’s God’s time for you. Some say one second for God is one thousand years for us, so if he says, ‘Be back in a minute,’ don’t hold your breath!”

Jimmy tried to clear his head by rubbing his forehead. “The last thing I remember is standing on the dock next to my sailboat and fishing. Suddenly, I felt like an elephant sat on my chest. I started pounding on my heart, when I lost my balance and fell into the water. I wondered if I was dying... Is this heaven or hell?”

Oleo put a gentle hand on Jimmy’s cheek. “You make your own heaven, dear. All your choices lie within your mind.”

Jimmy furrowed his brow, and cautiously backed away. “Ah, of course. . . why didn’t I think of that? Of course, I’d choose to have my father, the man I hate more than anyone on the planet, greet me at the pearly gates!”

Oleo laughed. “Hate is a strong word, James. You shouldn’t use it against your father, whatever he is, whatever he’s done. Come. He’s been waiting for you to slow down.”

Oleo headed off through the forest. With no place else to go, Jimmy followed her.

\* \* \*

## Chapter 2

They found Jimmy's father sitting on a rock next to a stream. Jimmy said grimly, "I have nothing to say to him."

Oleo smiled gently, "Then just listen." She motioned for Jimmy's father to meet them halfway, and she created a gazebo in which they could all sit.

"James, I want to introduce you to William Splendor." Jimmy's father extended his hand to shake. Jimmy just stared at him with fire in his eyes.

"I know who he is, and I'm not interested in shaking his hand.

"His friends call him Bill, and while on Earth he took offense very easily, here he has learned patience."

Bill lowered his hand and took a seat in the gazebo. Oleo followed suit.

Jimmy sat on one of the steps, not quite ready to join the party. "The guy walked out on us when I was two years old, and came back when I was sixteen, only to get drunk and burn the house down... and that was after beating up my mother! Then he died in jail at the age of 52, where they'd locked him up for forgery. Let me guess, you're going to tell me that in heaven all is forgiven."

Oleo said, “Yes, I am, James. I’m also going to tell you that in heaven all is understood, and perhaps right now, for you, that is even more important, because you are having a very difficult time understanding what’s happened to you and the ripple effect your life has had on others’ lives.”

“Well, you know what, Oleo, I don’t think I want to work that hard – hard enough to understand and forgive my father. I think I’m tired of working so fucking hard, and I just want a cold beer.”

A cold beer materialized in Jimmy’s hand. Shocked at the magic, he turned to Oleo and his father. “Now, you’re talking!”

Bill smiled. “Actually, son, it was you talking that created the beer. Is there anything else you want?”

“Yeah. I’d like a refrigerator full of beer that never runs out!”

A refrigerator materialized. Jimmy jumped up to pull it open. Indeed it was filled with beer, and when he reached in to take one out, another immediately replaced it.

“Dad, are you making this happen just to get on my good side?”

“No, son. Our imagination rules here.”

“But that can’t be me, or I wouldn’t have conjured you up. Oleo, it must be you doing these tricks.”

“They’re not tricks, James. Anything you want is yours in heaven. It is the ability to have everything that makes so much of what you thought was valuable have no real meaning, and that which you took for granted have the most meaning of all.”

“In other words, money is useless.”

“And unconditional love is everything. You might think the beer is useless, too, except for its taste, since you can’t get drunk here.”

As Jimmy finished taking a long pull on the bottle, he licked his lips. "Well, I always did love the taste of beer, and it was the getting drunk part that got me into trouble."

"And me, son." Jimmy's father leaned forward. "Getting drunk always seemed to be at the root of all my problems. Your grandfather, too, and his father before him. I'm sorry for all the pain I caused you, Jimmy. What can I do to make it up to you?"

Jimmy thought about it. "My first inclination is to tell you to die, mother fucker, but you're already dead, so I don't suppose telling you to go fuck yourself is going to do much good either. What I don't understand is that if my imagination rules, why are you still here when I'm trying to imagine you gone!"

Bill laughed. "That's because I want to be here, and I've been practicing my imagining skills a lot longer than you have."

"You see, James," Oleo threw in, "All of us are available to each other, just by thinking about wanting to see the other person. Your father has wanted to see you, your mother, and sister ever since he came here so that he could make amends to you. He greeted your mother as well, and will be here for your sister when it's her time to join us."

"My mother! Where's my mother?"

"I'm here, Jimmy." Marie Splendor stepped out of a cloud and rushed into Jimmy's arms. He lifted her off the ground and swung her around in a circle.

"You're okay, Mom, you're okay!"

"Of course, I am, honey. So are you. Now you've got to help Noelle."

"Noelle? What's wrong with Noelle?" Is she sick? Is she here? Did she die?"

Oleo took Jimmy's hand. "It's not her time to die, but she thinks about suicide way too much, because she's haunted by nightmares."

"What kind of nightmares? What can we do to help her?"

Jimmy's father came to stand next to Jimmy's mother and they linked arms. "I had to do the same thing for your mother after I died. It's the wreckage of our past, son. It haunts the living. It's too big of a job for you to do on your own."

"Mom, you've forgiven him?"

Marie nodded. "Yes, Jimmy."

Jimmy turned to his father. "I was angriest about what I thought you'd done to Mom, and if she forgives you, then so do I." Jimmy extended a hand to his father, who took it and pulled him in for a long, tight hug.

Finally, they released each other, and Bill said somberly, "Son, with Oleo's guidance, you'll be able to help heal Noelle, but you have to be willing to go down a dark tunnel of memories and look at yourself in a way that you never have before. I never realized how ugly I had become, and the extent of the awful truths until I took the journey myself. You must be very brave to look at the stark reality with no buffers."

Oleo took Jimmy's face in her hands. "You will see yourself as ugly. Noelle's nightmares stem from all the anger, fear, and sadness that she kept locked inside of herself when she saw you drunk and herself as helpless. Those 20 years that you were together had much love and affection, but more often than not there was turbulence and violence that infected the core of your relationship. That infection killed you, James, and it is eating away at Noelle's chance for happiness."

Jimmy's hazel eyes filled with tears, and he grasped Oleo's hands. "Will you help me? Tell me what to do."

“First, we’re going to visit her while she sleeps, and we’re going to bring her the family of little creatures that you had together.”

Oleo spun around in a circle with her hands to the sky, and suddenly Jimmy was being jumped on by a frantically happy German Shepherd named Silvi, and three frenetic ferrets, Johnny, Norma Jean, and Blue. With his wonderful laugh echoing his joy, Jimmy sank to the ground to be surrounded by licking tongues and wagging tails.

The ferrets climbed inside his clothes and Silvi climbed into his lap. Jimmy was afraid he’d crush them with the amount of love that poured out of his heart. “Guys, guys, I missed you so much! I can’t believe you’re all here. Noelle will be so happy to see you!”

Oleo put out a warning finger. “Remember, James, we are visiting Noelle while she sleeps, and if she opens her eyes, we must disappear instantly.”

“Oh, but why? Won’t she just think it’s a dream?”

“We’re going in the early morning hours, just before dawn. When Noelle finally awakens, she won’t be sure if it was a dream or a visit, but we are not there to make any ghost appearances. We don’t want to scare the bejeezus out of her. We are simply going to give Noelle the hope that there’s more to life than she thinks.”

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