

# A GHOST STORY

Laura Bergallo



Illustrations  
Leonardo Assis

Spiritist Alliance for Books



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**Translated by:**

**SAB**

**Spiritist Alliance for Books**

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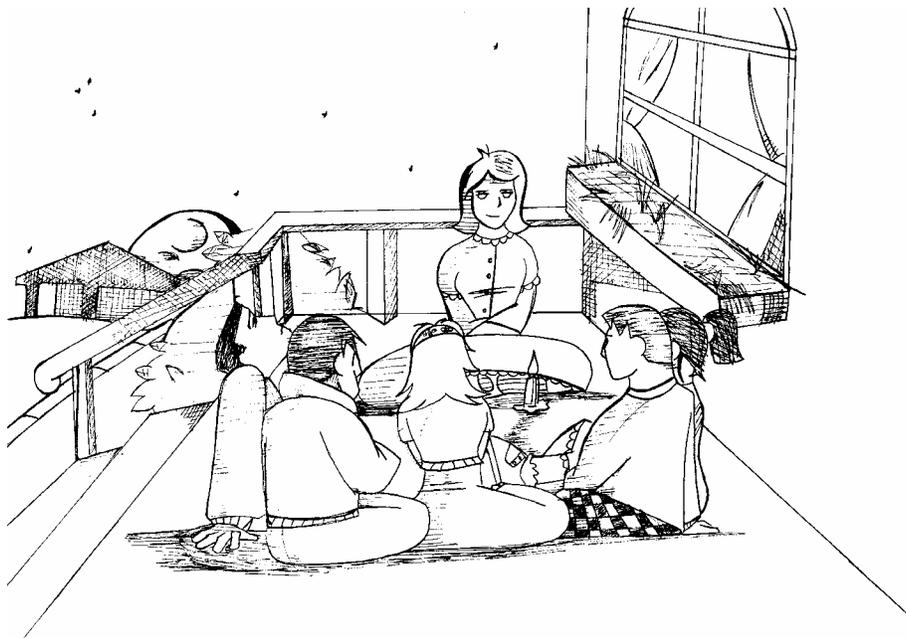
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## Chapter 1

“And then,” said Trisha, in such a deep voice that it gave me goose bumps – “they heard the sound of footsteps and chains dragging down....the candles in the living-room blew out all of a sudden leaving the whole place in absolute darkness.”

Our bulged eyes all turned to her waiting for the end of the story. Daryl, Melissa, Philip, and Danielle, our inseparable little group of friends, sitting at the porch of my house on a cold full moon night could barely move. We were so scared. But to be honest, the one really scared to death, was me.

Trisha was the eldest of us all...and she knew how to tell ghost stories like nobody else. She used to say she had a knack for the thing. And boy, she really did. She knew just how to leave everyone scared to death.

“C’mon tell us....what happened after that?” Philip said in an impatient tone.

Trisha added more suspense. She gave a long sigh, opened her eyes wide, stood up from the chair very slowly and came toward me. I felt the color running out of my face suddenly.

A horrible spectrum crossed the room...leaving a cold trail behind.....and laughing like a madman. The three boys, in total panic, ran out the door, they ran so fast and so far they were five blocks down the road from the haunted house before they knew it.

“But, tell us the truth, Trisha” – Danielle whispered, with such a tiny voice that we could barely hear her. “You made this whole story up, didn't you?”

“Of course not! Do you guys think I would make some stuff like this up? This happened in a little village in Minas Gerais. My cousins were there and told me everything.”

I felt my heart freeze. These ghost stories freaked me out and I don't even know why I was sitting there every night listening to them. Afterwards, lying in bed, I would stay hours staring at the ceiling, not being able to sleep...and when I finally managed to sleep, I would have nightmares all night long.

“Junior!” – My mother called me from inside the house. “It’s late, time to come in!”

Still feeling a little spacey and disoriented because of the frightening vibes of the story Trisha had told us, we said goodnight and scheduled a dodge ball game for the next day. After all, vacation time was almost ending and we had to enjoy it to the very last bit.

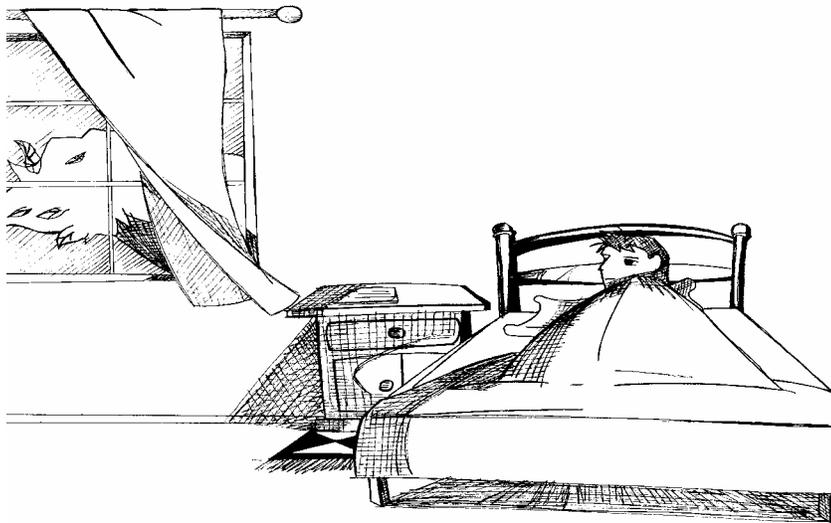
## Chapter 2

That night, like in so many other nights when we met to tell horror stories, I could barely sleep. When I closed my eyes all I could see were horrible scenes, like cemeteries and coffins, and any little noise would make me jump to my feet.

And to make matters worse, my big brother Raphael, who was fifteen, thought that it was funny to scare an eleven year-old, that was me.

“Did you hear that?” He would ask me, when the wind blew outside. “I don't know... what a weird noise... It seems like there's someone at the window.”

I would curl up under the covers, and try to think of things that would calm me down. Like the conversations with uncle Albert, my father's brother, who was a priest and always told me ghosts did not exist.



“Spirits, ghosts....that's all superstition. The dead cannot come back. They stay where they are, very quiet, in deep sleep, and they will only wake up on the day of the Final Judgment.”

“Final Judgment?” I would ask, curiously.

“Yes. That day, a long, long time from now, when God will judge all of us and finally decide who is going to heaven and who is going to hell.”

That would calm me down a bit, but would also make me a little nervous. Final Judgment? A kind of.....finals? But what would happen with those who flunked? Must be Hell for sure. Definitely, the idea wasn't pretty. Thank God death seemed like a very distant thing, because this idea of Final Judgment made me scared of dying.

Well, like I was saying, that night I didn't sleep a wink. Raphael bugged me as much as he could, and only left me alone after he fell asleep. I needed to sleep! The next day had the promise of many games and I had to be in good shape. We were going to have a dodge ball game, boys against girls, and I didn't even want to think of the shame if we lost to the girls again.

For the longest time I just tossed and turned in bed. At times, Raphael would snore more loudly and my heart would race. But I finally fell asleep, in the middle of the night, hoping I wouldn't dream of the frightening characters in Trisha's stories.

## Chapter 3

The next day was cloudy. But it didn't seem like it was going to rain, and even though I felt a little tired, I rushed to meet my friends so that we could start one more day of games and fun.

The game was still on. It was going to be like always, in the back yard of the abandoned house down the street. It was a large yard, unpaved, and we had all cleaned it up, cut the weeds and taken all the garbage away. The owner had never showed up, so it was as if the property was our own.

And that was where we played most of the time. We played soccer, dodge ball and volleyball. We would get together to fly kites, and ride our bikes. It was a free territory, where we could do anything we felt like.....or *almost* anything. There was one thing, however, which we never talked about. It was like a silent agreement among us, we never talked about exploring the old dilapidated house in the front of the property. Its windows faced our playground, which we reached by walking alongside the house.

It was a two-story house, so old that the paint on the outside walls had faded ...they could have once been blue, or maybe yellow, but the fact is that some of the bricks were exposed here and there.

The main entrance door was made of dark wood and shaped in an arc, which seemed to raise a sense of mystery that surrounded the old house. The huge windows had some broken glass framed by rotting wood.

The neighbors said that in that place, many years ago, a tragedy had taken place. A little young lady, who at the time was in love with the son of one of the house servants, had poisoned herself and died in her bedroom after her wealthy father prohibited her from dating the poor young man. The house had been closed all those years, and nobody had ever entered it since then.

“What a story!” Trisha would say cheerfully every time the subject was brought up. “I bet the ghost of the young lady is still wandering about the house, eternally searching her forbidden love!”

Perhaps it was just her imagination, but the truth is we all had a strange respect for the old house.

We would play in the back yard almost everyday, right below the closed windows, but we never tried to get into the house. And we were always careful enough to leave before dusk.

“Let’s have the game in the afternoon,” Daryl suggested that day, “Melissa is out shopping with her mom and she can't play in the morning. She says she'll only be back after four.”

“But it’s going to be too late then,” complained Philip, who was very upset.

“No, it won't,” said Daryl, “we will have to wait.”

I nodded, thinking it was better like that anyway; I could get some rest from my sleepless night.

I went home and stretched out on the hammock in the veranda, and asked mom to wake me up for lunch.



## Chapter 4

I was awakened up by Uncle Albert who always dropped by for lunch on Tuesdays.

“What a lazy boy!” He said smiling and shaking up the hammock, “that’s what I call a life!”

“Hi there, Uncle! Is today Tuesday?”

“With the blessing of the Lord!” He replied in a good mood. “That’s the only chance I have to eat like a priest! You know that Nadine’s food is not very good. Your mom’s cooking, however...”

Nadine was the rectory maid, and according to Uncle Albert, all she could cook was ground beef and mashed potatoes.

Uncle Albert grabbed a chair, straightened his cassock, running his hand along the length of the fold, and sat down next to me.

“Oh boy, what a morning I had!” he said, as his expression turned serious all of a sudden, “a poor woman showed up at the church early this morning asking for help for her little son, who was born blind... She can't afford the special care and schooling that he needs. It broke my heart to see this.”

“Yes, Junior,” he added, “we have to thank God everyday. God has been very kind to us. We were born strong and healthy, we can see, we can walk...”

A strange thought crossed my mind. Why had God been so good to me, and not to that little boy who had been born blind and poor?

I was hammered by the question for a while. I looked at my uncle, always so kind, so benevolent and so knowledgeable of God’s word, and I decided to ask,

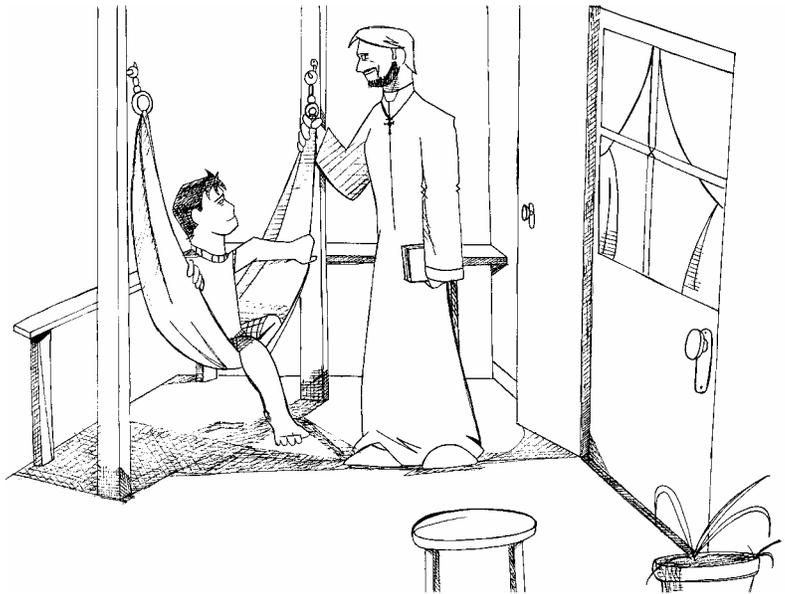
“But if God is so kind, why did he allow the boy to be born blind?”

Uncle Albert got a little disturbed. He straightened his cassock, and replied without looking at me,

“That’s a mystery, dear nephew. God is all-knowing, and it’s not up to us to understand certain things.”

Raphael came in then, and called us out for lunch.

Uncle Albert stood on his feet in the blink of an eye. I thought he must have been starving to death, because in a flash he was in the house.



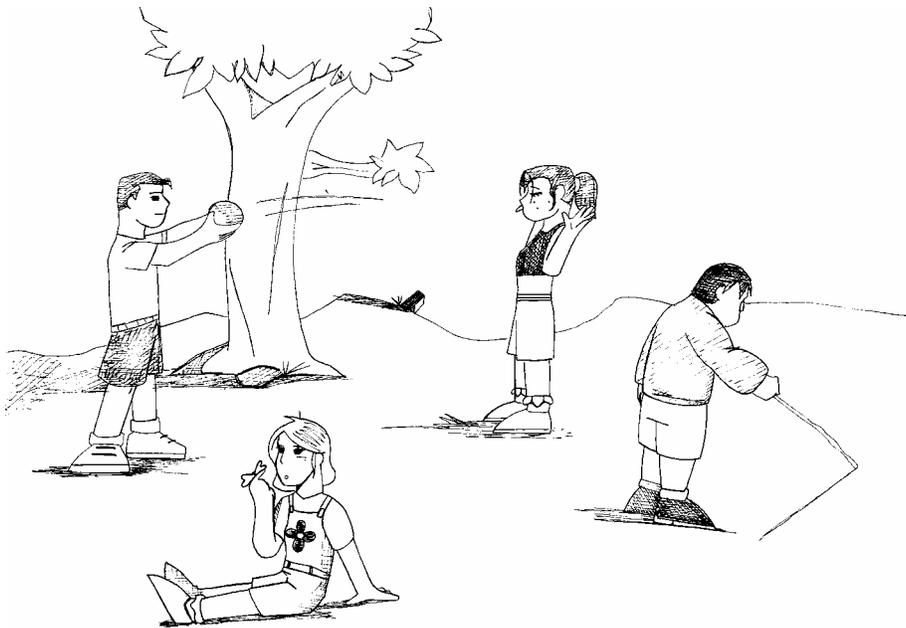
## Chapter 5

After lunch, I called up all of my friends and we arranged to meet at the playground at four-thirty.

On the way, however, the conversation I had with my uncle about the blind boy was still puzzling me. I didn't for a moment doubt the Almighty kindness, and I used to pray to God every night, but how is it that some were born full of health and riches while others had so many problems?

Why did some children have such good parents like my own while others were abandoned right after birth? Why did bad things happen to good people like Mrs. Gilda, our neighbor, who not only was kind but also never missed a mass, and who had fallen ill so suddenly, coming to die in horrible pain?

Trisha's boisterous laughter brought me back from those strange thoughts. I was feeling more rested now and ready to beat the girls in the dodge ball game that afternoon.



“Only Melissa is missing now,” said Philip, annoyed.

“Take it easy, she’s coming,” replied Daryl who had already started to mark the field.

Melissa arrived right after that, and she was all smiles.

“Are you guys ready for another defeat?” She asked arrogantly, with a sneer.

“What took you so long?” Philip complained as usual. “Now the game will go all the way into the evening!”

“I know guys, I’m sorry! But after we went shopping, mom wanted to drop by the church to enroll me in the Sunday school.”

“Sunday school?” Danielle seemed not to believe that. “Does that mean you... are going to go to school on Sundays?”

“No... I mean, yes, something like that. It’s because my family has converted. They’re all evangelical now, you know. And we go to school at the church on Sundays to learn the Gospel.”

That whole religion issue that had been on my mind lately started to seem interesting.

“Ah, so now you’re Protestants...” I said remembering some brief conversations I had with Uncle Albert about the subject.

“Yes, we have accepted Jesus...the pastor said today that only those people who accept Jesus will be saved.”

“But the Catholics also accept Jesus...” I retorted quickly.

“Ah, but it’s different,” Melissa continued, “to accept Jesus, for us, Evangelicals, is to join *our* church, to become a *brother and sister in Christ*. At least that’s what the pastor said.”

“But, what about the others? The Catholics, for instance?” I asked getting more and more interested. “What about the Buddhists, and the Hindus, and so many other people from distant places that may have never heard of Jesus? Won’t they be saved?”

Melissa seemed a little confused.

“Well, I think not.”

“But it’s not their fault,” I said so low, that I think I was the only one who heard it. And Trisha interrupted the conversation anyway, with her screechy voice:

“Let’s quit that nonsense, guys. Is this game on or not? Or could it be that the little boys are scared to death?”



## Chapter 6

Daryl brought the ball and we took our positions on the field, ready for the game. But talking to Melissa made me really confused. Where would *salvation* be, after all? If all religions as I knew said that only their own followers would be saved... but then, what exactly did *salvation* mean?

Philip's scream because of a pitch that almost hit me, brought me back to reality. Those concerns would have to wait. I couldn't lose concentration now, otherwise the girls would win one more game and I couldn't stand the thought of them making fun of us boys. I had to concentrate on the game.

And we started out all right. Daryl, who was an excellent player, hit Danielle with the ball right from start, sidelining her. But the game would soon get tougher. The boys had more endurance but the girls were faster, and in no time the game was tied.

Philip had missed a move and was also sidelined so, only Daryl and I remained in the game... Trisha and Melissa were jumping sideways so they avoided being hit by all the balls we pitched. I soon noticed we would have to be very smart if we really wanted to win. So we tried to wear them out.

Daryl would throw the ball to me, and I would quickly throw it to Philip on the other side, the highest I could. Philip would catch the ball and try to hit the girls. The ball would come back to us and we would go all the way again.

Our strategy seemed to be working fine. Danielle, who was behind us, couldn't catch the ball at all. Trisha and Melissa were all red in the face because of running so much. Their legs were spent.

And it was right then that the unthinkable happened. With one of those high balls I was throwing

around, trying to reach Philip above the heads of the girls, the ball hit the trunk of the mango tree next to the house...and went straight through one of the windows on the second floor, shattering the glass, which was already partly broken.

The six of us were all kind of downcast, looking up toward the ball.

“My new ball!” Daryl complained loudly, looking down to the pieces of glass spread out on the ground. “Now I want to see who is going up there to get it!”

Everyone looked straight at me.

“If you are the ‘shield’ in the game you got to go and get the ball,” said Trisha, with her bossy attitude, “isn’t that the rule of the game we all agreed upon?”

“All right, but I’ll do it tomorrow,” I said, trying to buy some time, and thinking I’d manage to escape from getting into the house (as a last resort, I’d ask Raphael, my big brother, to come in with me.)

“No way.” Said Daryl. “I want my ball *now!*”

“Yeah, and let’s do it fast, because it’s going to be dark soon,” warned Philip.

I looked up at the sky and realized that the cloudy day made things even worse. He was right. If we didn’t move fast, it would soon be dark. And the old house had no lights at all!

“Don’t tell me you’re scared!” Trisha teased me.

“M...Me? Of course not....”

“Well then, hurry up,” said Daryl anxiously.

“Don’t worry. We’ll be right here at the back door waiting for you,” smiled Danielle, trying to encourage me.

My hands were sweating and I just prayed for them not to notice my heart was almost in my throat. Where would I get the guts to go into the house? And, on top of that, go up to the second floor?

I remembered the ghost stories the neighbors always told about the old house. Where could the ball be? With my luck, I bet it had fallen right into the bedroom of the dead girl.

And I had no way out: if I didn’t get into the house to get that darn ball they wouldn’t leave me alone anymore. The girls especially, wouldn’t give me a break and would make fun of me forever.

“It looks like Junior is really scared.” Trisha started.

“Afraid of the ghost of the poisoned girl,” added Melissa, with a scornful giggle.

“Are you going or not?” Daryl insisted, very seriously.

And I had no other option but reply, pretending confidence:

“I’ll go.”

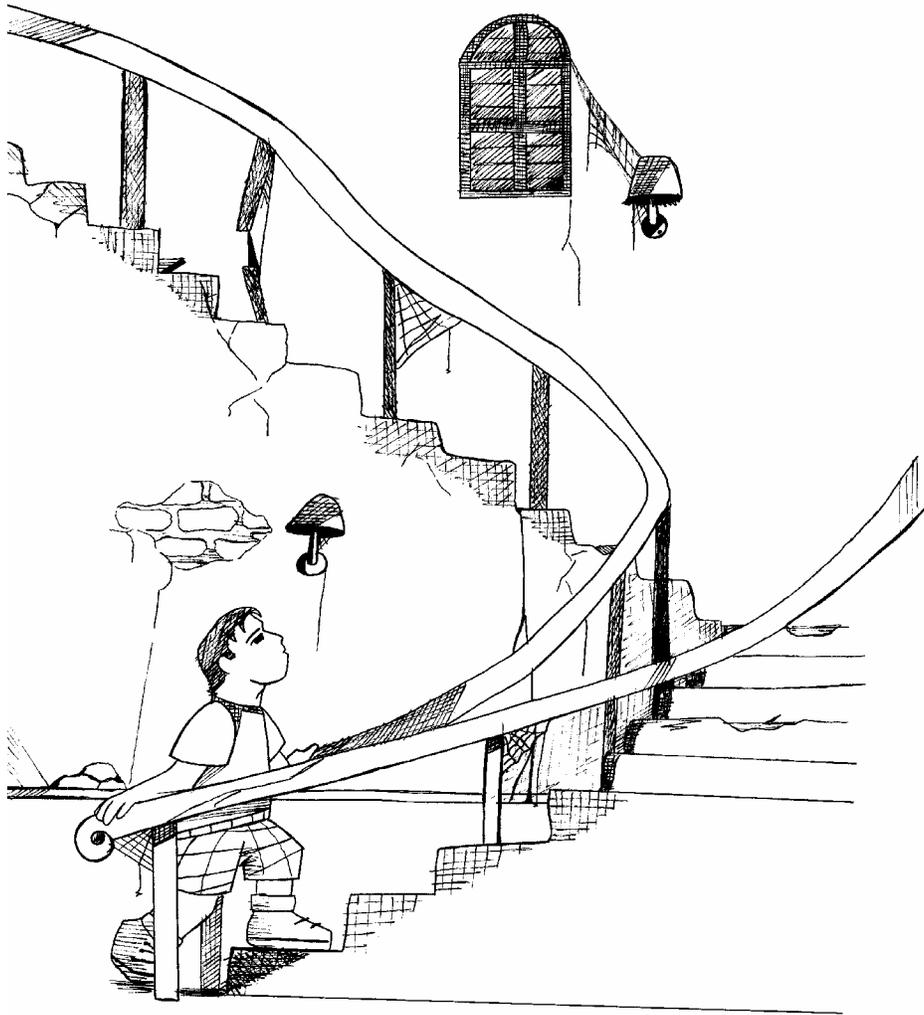
## Chapter 7

My voice became absolutely shaky; I was stuttering. My heart, accelerated, and my mouth totally dry, helped make things even more difficult for me. But I thought to myself,

“I have no choice. I’ll have to face it, so let’s do it quickly!”

Decision made, I touched the rusty knob of the back door to the house, praying that it would be locked. But it wasn’t. It was just a little stuck.

Daryl came to help me out. We pushed the door together, and all of a sudden it opened up, creaking loudly, which made me jump back.



“It’s just an old door,” said nosy Trisha, giggling. “Don’t tell me that scared you out.”

I didn’t even answer. I had been upset with her all along, because she was practically forcing me to get into that scary place. I took a deep breath to get the courage and, without looking back, I took the first step into the house.

Everything around was in darkness. The closed windows would let a soft light in through the glasses that allowed me to see something. And when my eyes got used to the dark, I started to notice the inside of the

house better.

I was in the kitchen, which was practically empty, except for an old stove falling to pieces and a dusty table. I moved forward slowly.

I crossed an open door, avoiding a huge spider web hanging from the ceiling, and I soon saw myself in a huge living room. Some old furniture piled up and covered with pieces of filthy bed sheets blocked the way.

I looked forward, and I saw an enormous wooden staircase, very high and a little curved, with the handrails broken in several different spots that would lead to the upper floor. And that was where I had to go, since the ball had fallen in the second floor of the house.

At this point, my heart was racing faster than ever. I couldn't believe what was happening. How come I, the most frightened of the whole group, who hated ghosts and haunted houses was there, alone in a place like that?

The truth is that I was. And I could waste no more time: I had to run upstairs and get the ball before night fell once and for all.

I moved the piled furniture away and looking around in absolute terror, I reached the staircase. When I stepped on the first step, a horrible sound gave me a fright. The wood was rotten, so I had to go up very carefully.

Step by step, I moved upward. I was halfway up there when one of the steps broke down right under my foot, and I had to hold on to the handrail not to fall through. That situation was not only scary, it was getting dangerous too. But there was just a little more distance to go and I moved on.

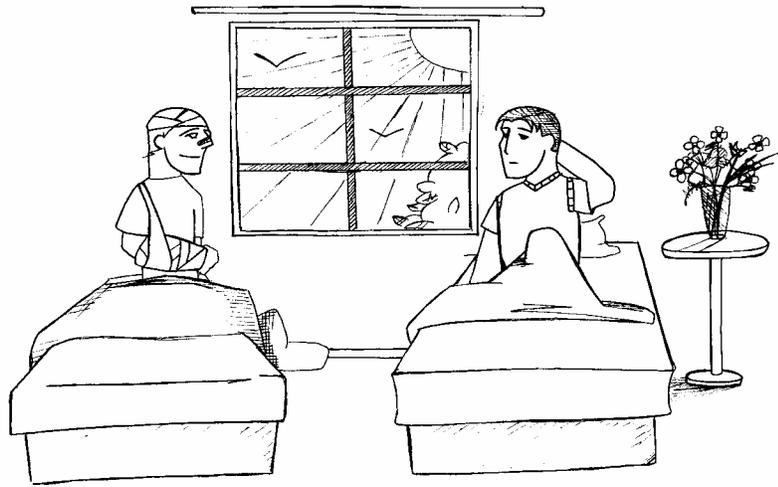
When I got to the upper floor, I suddenly saw four closed doors. They must be the bedrooms! And which one might have been the dead girl's? The mere thought of that gave me goose bumps.

By the position of the house and the playground, I tried to calculate in which of the bedrooms the ball must have been, and so I approached the door I figured was the one to that bedroom. Besides the wooden floor that squeaked under my feet while I walked, I could hear nothing else. Just a cold silence and the whisper of the wind that blew outside.

With my eyes wide open in such fear, I pushed the door open with a hard shove. And I barely saw the bedroom inside, because a sudden wind gust, caused by the opening of the door, made the windows fly open, and I saw myself running away scared, back towards the stairs.

I started to run down the stairs. But the steps were in worse condition than I had thought. I was so scared I didn't even notice. One of the steps, however, which was cracked right in the middle, broke down under my weight.

The last thing I remember is the fall, which seemed endless, and my scream fading as I fell down.



## Chapter 8

I woke up slowly. I opened up my eyes without quite understanding where I was or what I was doing there. The first thing I saw was the smiling face of a very pretty young lady, all dressed in white, who was looking at me with such friendliness.

“Hello Junior, how do you feel?”

I stopped to think. My body was still a bit sore, but my mind was coming back to normal little by little. I remembered I had fallen through the stairs in the old abandoned house.

“I’m ok...I think,” I replied, while I observed the scenery around: very white ceiling, slightly blue walls, a huge room, full of light and full of beds. I was in a hospital!

“Well, then it must have been serious.” I thought scared.

It seemed the young lady could read my mind.

“Don’t worry, it’s all right now,” she said softly, and her smile seemed to lighten up the room even more. “All you need is rest.”

In the bed beside mine, a chubby boy, with his head bandaged, was sound asleep. There were other boys in the other beds, with bandages in different parts of the body, and there were some other people dressed in white taking care of them.

“But where’s my mom?”

“You will see her later. Now try to get some more sleep. If you need anything I’ll always be around. My name is Lana. All you have to do is call me.”

Even though I was in a strange place, and didn't even know that young lady, a feeling of calmness came over me. I couldn't explain why, but I *really* believed everything was all right now. I turned to the other side and fell asleep.

When I woke up, I saw that the boy in the next bed had also woken up and he was looking at me in curiosity.

“Hi there,” he said, “I’m David. What’s your name?”

“Well, everyone knows me as Junior. But my name is Peter Paul, the same as my dad’s.”

“Were you also in an accident?”

“No...I fell through a staircase. But I’m better now. What about you?”

“Well, they say I was hit by a car. I can't remember a thing. And I don't even know how long I've been here. I've been up for just a few days.”

“And how are you feeling?”

“Much better...You know, for a hospital, this place is neat. The food is good, and the doctors take very good care of us. As soon as my headache starts, they give me a pill and the pain is gone.”

David was pensive for a moment and then he continued,

“But there are certain things I don't understand.”

Suddenly Lana came over and joined us.

“Do my little patients feel like going out for a walk?” She asked, with that smile emanating light.

“Walk?” I asked. “But can we already?”

“Of course you can, you have the authorization to. I'll help you stand up.”

The three of us walked down a long and cool hallway where we took the elevator to the ground floor. We crossed a huge lobby, and reached a sunny garden, full of trees and flowers. A three story fountain, where water poured making a soothing noise as it ran down, caught my attention.

Some people were walking along the garden, and others enjoying the sun rays sitting on the benches, always with a nurse beside them. We also sat down on one of the benches, in the shadow of a tree which was full of yellow flowers. That was when an old lady approached us.

“Hello, Aurora,” said Lana.

That name looked familiar. Aurora...I knew somebody called Aurora, didn't I? I forced my memory, but I just couldn't remember.

“I'm glad the boys are recovering,” Aurora replied kindly.

“Junior is great! If you feel like, you can come and visit him in the infirmary. Maybe the two of you can talk better.”

I found that weird. Why should *I* talk better with that lady? I didn't even know her... but Aurora agreed by nodding her head and said goodbye to us very cheerfully.

“Ok, then. I'll drop by later.”

I looked at Lana puzzled, but before I could ask anything, she stood up and asked,

“Come, come with me. There's a place I want you to see.”

## Chapter 9

We followed Lana through the garden. As we walked, I could notice the beauty and the peace of the place we were in. Flocks of noisy birds would fly across the sky all the time, flowers with different colors and scents decorated the plots which were well taken care of, and little red and gold fish swam in the stream of clear waters that reflected the sunlight.

“It's here,” said Lana, when we arrived in a house with verandas all around it.

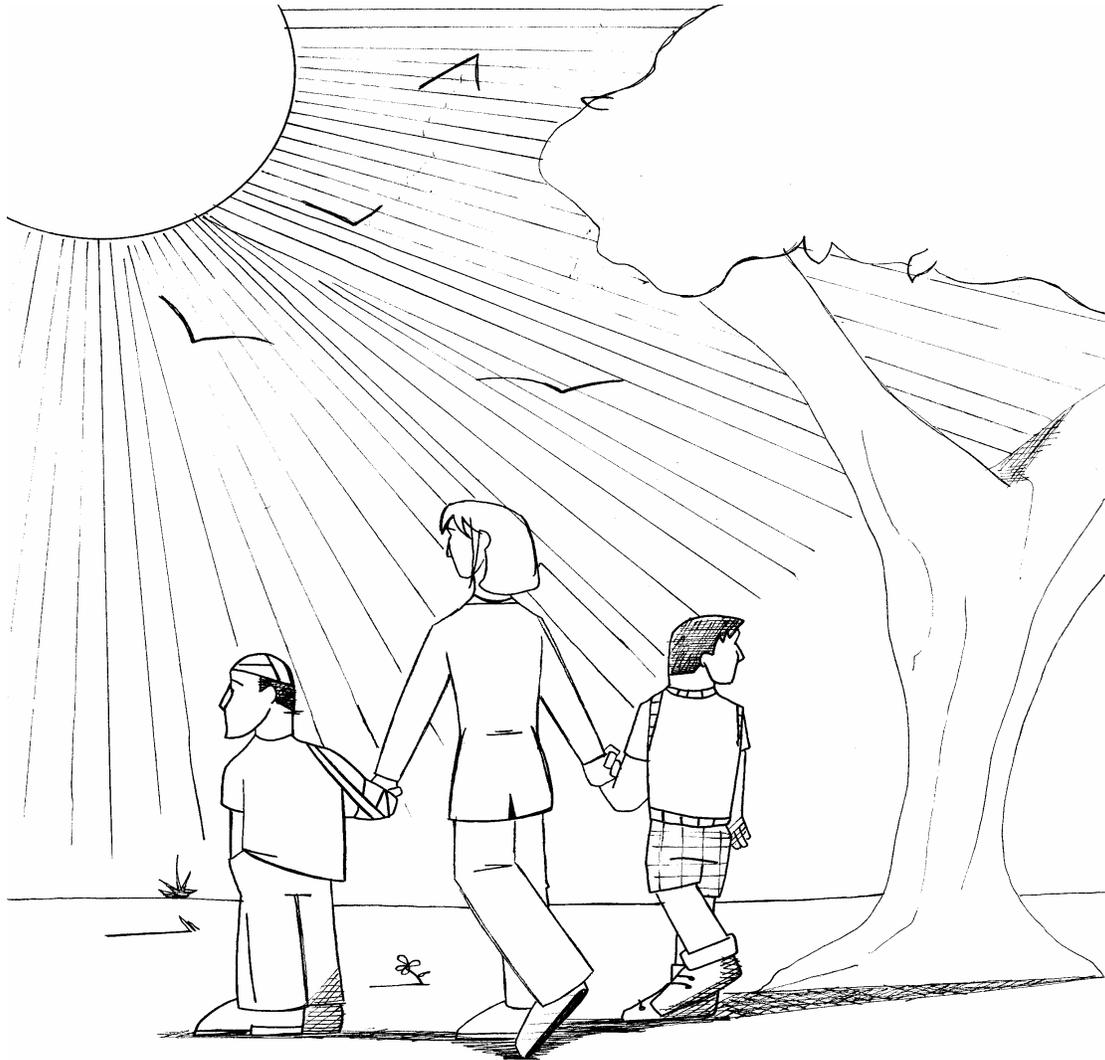
“Where are we?” asked David.

“This is the school. The school you are going to be going to as soon as you are fully recovered.”

“School?” I didn't understand anything.

“But I don't want to go to this school! I want to go back home, I want to go back to *my* school!”

David looked at Lana in suspicion.



“Listen here,” he said a bit angry, “I want to know what is going on. Why can't I see my parents?”

“Everything will be explained, be calm. That's why I brought you here. Let's go inside.”

Lana took us to an empty room, where there was just a large table and some school desks.

“If you wait for me here a minute, I'll be right back with someone who wants to talk to you guys,” she said, leaving the room and closing the door.

As soon as we were left alone, David pulled his chair closer to mine, and said in a very low voice,

“This is all very strange, isn't it?”

“Yes, it is,” I replied.

I was also getting worried.

“I don't know, but I've been thinking...” He continued. “Who knows, maybe we're in a dream.”

“In a dream?”

“Yes. We just need to find out if you're a character in *my* dream, or if I'm a character in *yours*.”

I was quite confused. But I couldn't believe that.

“No...I don't think so. It's all too real.”

“Then... there's only *one* explanation,” he said with a shaky voice.

I looked at him waiting for the explanation, and I noticed he looked so pale.

“We... are dead,” he whispered. “We *died*, you get it?”

I got scared. But I soon recovered.

“Of course not,” I said, finding it funny. “Do any of us look like a ghost?”

And then I remembered Lana. How can such a beautiful young lady like her be a ghost! That boy David must be nuts.

And that's where we were in the conversation when the door opened. Lana came in, smiling as always, and with her was a healthy and happy looking lady, who approached us and looked at me.

I was paralyzed. Of course she looked different from the last time I saw her, a long time ago. After all, I remembered her very skinny, very pale, almost bald and with a suffering look that she couldn't hide.

But that was her! Could David be right, could all that be a dream? It could only be, because *I couldn't be looking at who I thought I was looking at.*

## Chapter 10

“Yes, it's me, Junior,” she said. “Mrs. Gilda, your old neighbor. You are not dreaming.”

“But, how can that be? Haven't you died, Mrs. Gilda?”

“Death does not exist, my son,” she answered calmly.

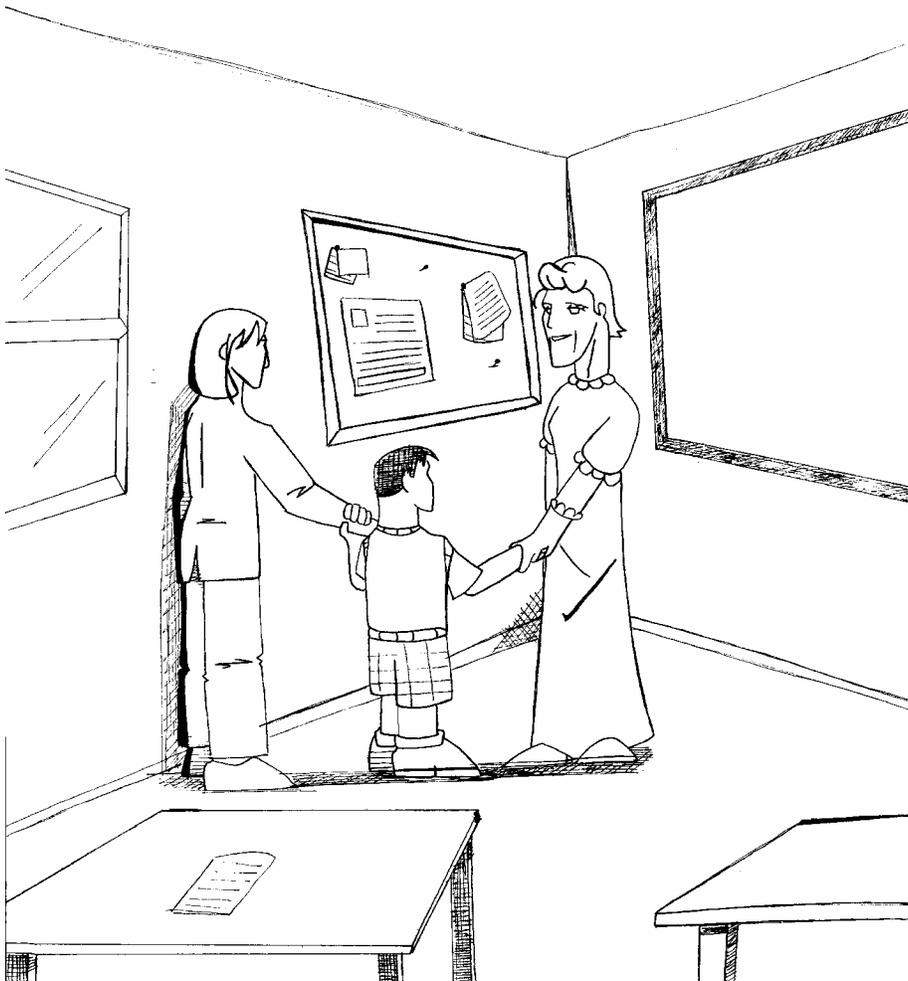
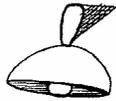
I looked at David, who was watching everything with his eyes wide open. I grabbed Lana's hand, scared. That was horrible... I was then face to face with a ghost?

“I was trusted with the responsibility of giving you boys the first lessons,” she added, “to welcome you. To make you feel happy here.”

“Didn't I tell you?” David interrupted, very nervously. “We are *dead!*”

I tried to swallow, but my mouth was dry. What do you mean, *dead*? What about the Final Judgment? Where was the little old man with the white beard that was going to judge us?

I turned to Lana hoping she would deny David. But she just embraced me and smiled.



“Tell me it's not true!” I begged, crying.

Mrs. Gilda stood right in front of me and started to move her hands above my head. A silver light came out of her fingers, and that slowly calmed my heart down. Lana did the same to David.

When I got calmer, I found the courage to ask:

“Then, is this heaven?”

“If that's how you want to call it,” Lana agreed. “But, in fact, it's a spiritual colony. It's called *New Hope*.”

“Is this where you go when you die?” asked David.

“Not everyone,” Mrs. Gilda explained. “This is just *one* of the places for those who leave the Earth. Only those who deserve it come here. But there are better and worse places.”

I remembered what I had learned about Heaven and Hell. It didn't quite fit what was happening. For a moment I thought that the Catholics must be right

about who deserves to go to heaven. After all, Mrs. Gilda had been a catholic....and I, even though I didn't go to the mass often; I had been raised in a catholic family. And it seemed like we really were in a kind of heaven.

Lana surprised me by reading my mind.

“We receive here people of all religions, Junior. What really matters is the way you conduct yourself... you know... your behavior. Mrs. Gilda, while on Earth, was a serious catholic. David, on the other hand is Jewish. We also have protestants, Buddhists, Muslims, and, of course, Spiritists. It all depends on each individual.”

“Spiritists?” I asked.

“Yes... people who had good fortune, while still on Earth, and knew more about this reality that you are just now being introduced to. And believe me, there is still a lot to learn. That’s why you are going to go to school.”

“But I want to see my mom!” David started crying.

“Me too,” I asked.

“At the right time you will see your parents and brothers and sisters,” Mrs. Gilda explained softly.

“But now it's time to go back to the infirmary. I know Junior is going to have a visitor.”

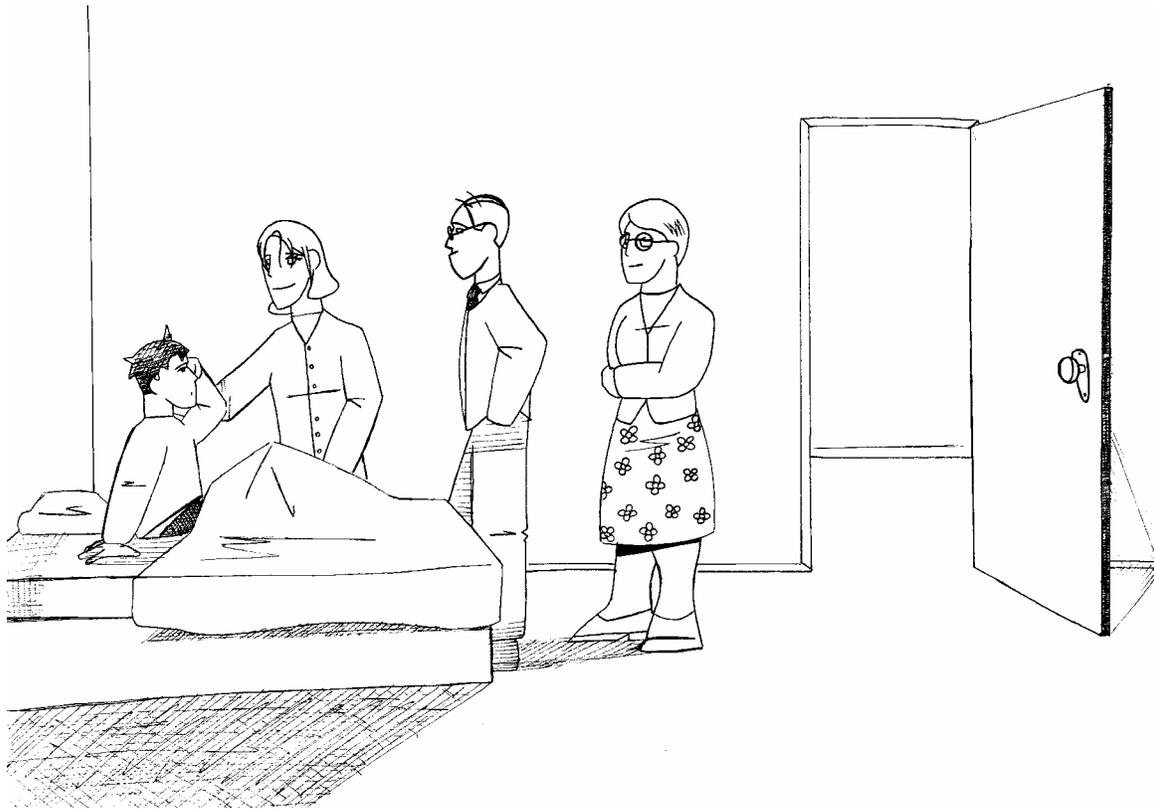
## Chapter 11

That was right. Mrs. Aurora had said she would visit me later on that day, even though I didn't know why.

But the experience and the emotions had been so strong, that both David and I were feeling very tired when we went back to the infirmary. Lana thought it would be better to call off the visit, and gave us some sweet remedy that made us sleep soundly until the next day.

When I woke up, I thought that everything that had happened had been just a dream. All that story about ghosts, Mrs. Gilda looking so happy and healthy, the idea that I was dead, the school and everything else...none of that seemed real. But I soon found out it was in fact real.

“Good morning, Junior,” said a kind and calm voice.



When I looked to my side, I saw Mrs. Aurora standing by my bed. There was a tall man with her. He had a gray beard, and smiled at me in a friendly way.

“It's so good to see you around here,” he said, sounding like he already knew me.

I kept quiet, trying to remember that face. But I couldn't. Thank God he introduced himself,

“My name is Abelardo. Doesn't that name ring a bell?”

“Well... this was the name of my mom's father... But he died before I was born.”

“That's right. And here I am.”

I was surprised. My grandpa! And then I remembered the name “Aurora.” That was my grandmother's name, his wife. She had passed away when I was still a little boy.

“We are here to welcome you,” said grandma. “As soon as you recover, you're coming home with us.”

You will see that everything is going to be all right.”

I couldn't help but ask, “but if grandpa died before I was born, how come he already knows me?”

“It's because we have already been together in many other lives.”

“Many ...lives? How so?”

Lana, who had just arrived, was the one to answer.

“At school you are going to learn that we incarnate... I mean... we live in a material body...many, many times. And we will go on doing just that until we reach perfection.”

“And there's more,” grandpa added, “many of us remain together throughout several lives. It's my case with your grandma, with your mom, and with you. It's your case with Lana.”

“With Lana?” I asked surprised.

“It's true,” she said, with her bright smile. “I have already been your mother in many lives. We have also been brother and sister...and even lovers.”

I must confess that I liked the idea of being so close to Lana so many times... especially the idea of being her lover. But all that they were telling me was so new to me, and it sort of scared me. I think they noticed that.

“In a short period of time, Junior,” said my grandma Aurora, “you will be fully recovered and strong. And then we will come to pick you up. Until then, you must rest as much as possible and use all this free time to reflect on all that you have learned.”

-“As soon as you come to live with us,” grandpa added, “you are going to go to school, and learn a lot of incredible things.”

“But when am I going to see my parents?”

“As soon as you are ready.”

Having said that, my grandma kissed me and the three of them left, leaving me alone with my thoughts.

## Chapter 12

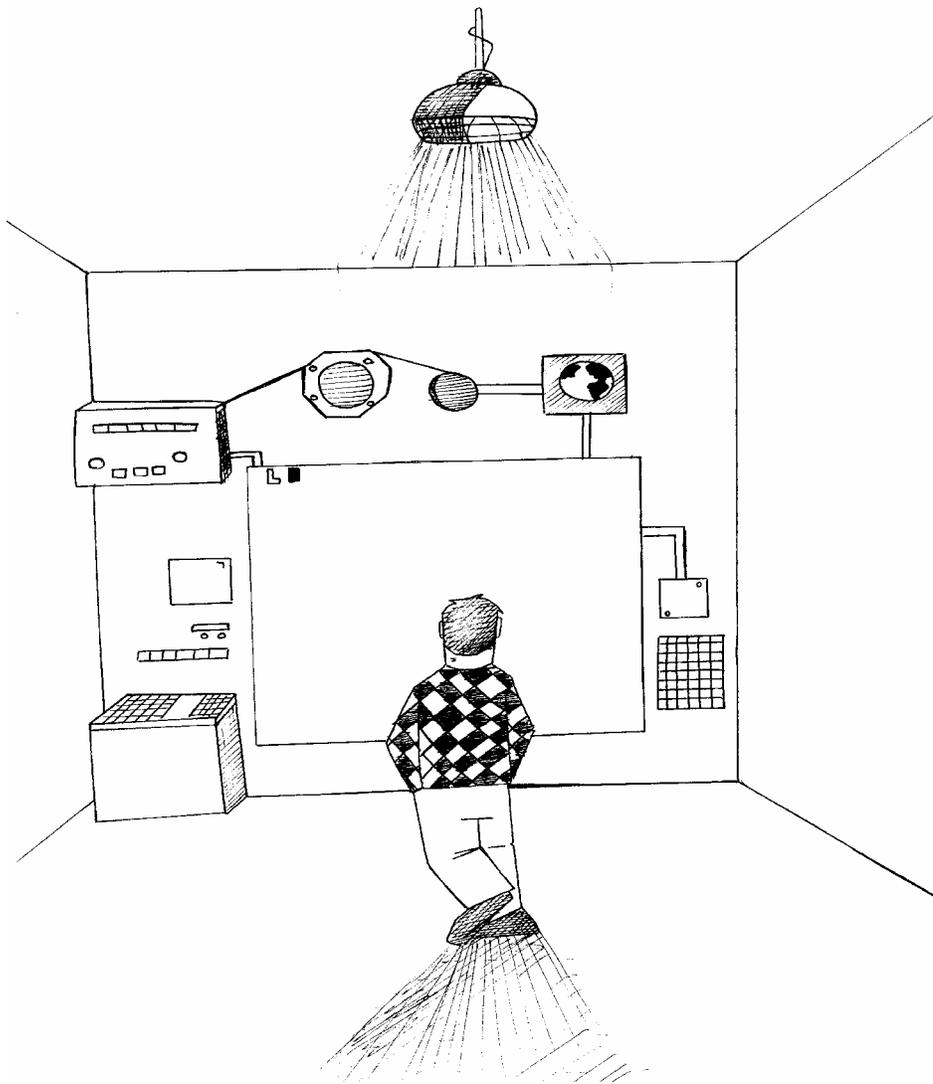
“You can't imagine just how cool it was,” said David, all excited. “I loved my new house.”

“And when are you moving?” I asked, already missing him.

“Tomorrow, I think. I'm going to live with a cousin of mine, who was a Rabbi on Earth, and with his mom, my grand-aunt. But Lana said that we're going to see each other frequently. Besides, we are going to go to the same school, right?”

That comforted me a little bit.

“And Junior is also leaving soon,” said Lana who had come with David to see me.



“Am I?”

“Your grandparents are soon coming to pick you up. You'd better start preparing yourself.”

The next day, David left, leaving the bed next to mine empty. But I had no time to feel lonely, because it was soon my turn to go.

I was sad to say goodbye to Lana, but she promised she would always be with me. She had to do her work at the hospital, where she helped so many “newly-dead” (or would it be newly-born?), but she wouldn’t forget about me or David.

The arrival at my grandparent’s home was a happy occasion. They welcomed me with the house full of flowers, a comfortable and sunny bedroom, and all the love they could give me.

That helped me ease the pain of the longing I had of my parents, Raphael, Uncle Albert and my friends. Besides, I met many nice people at school.

The teacher was Mrs. Gilda, who seemed to grow younger and healthier every day. Her lessons were very dynamic, and she taught us that everything was always right in nature, even what seemed to be wrong, like the death of someone at a young age, or the suffering of a good-natured person. After all, many of the things that happen to us are just a result of our own acts in the present or in past lives. Now I can understand the situation of that little boy who was born blind.... I wish Uncle Albert could understand it too!

Mrs. Gilda also taught us about Karma, or the law of return, which makes each and everyone of us responsible for all we choose to do. So, I found out that in one of the lives I lived, many centuries before being Junior, I had done something terrible; I had pushed an enemy down a cliff. Now I can understand why I had fallen off the stairs. And I was glad I could sort that old issue out.

“Well, then there is no Final Judgment,” I said once in a loud voice during class.

“No, Junior, nothing is ever “final.” Mrs. Gilda taught. “And the only judge that can sentence us is our own conscience. We can always improve ourselves; it’s only a matter of willpower. To evolve is the law, and that nobody can run away from. Heaven and Hell are within us.”

As time passed, I learned more and more things. And I was happy with the things I learned. Life in *New Hope* was all about study and work, and also fun and a lot of happiness. It’s just that the longing got in the way sometimes.

But one day I was called to take a peek at the folks that had stayed on Earth. In a room that had a big screen, I could see my mom and dad, who were still very sad for me. I also saw Uncle Albert, who didn’t stop praying for me, and I realized just how much his prayers had helped me out. I could hardly recognize my brother Raphael, who had grown up and was going steady with someone. And I could even take a look at my friends, who, besides being all young adults, were still quite close.

But what really struck me was when I saw Trisha. She looked unhappy, skinny and ugly. She didn’t look like the pretty and cheerful girl I knew before.

“What happened to her?” I asked Lana, who was standing by me.

“Even after all those years, Trisha can’t forgive herself, she feels guilty for your death. You know, because she was the one who insisted you entered the house.”

“But it wasn’t her fault!” I protested. “It all happened because it was meant to happen!”

“*We* know that, Junior. But she doesn’t.”

“Well, then I *must* tell her! Is it possible?”

“Well, we can always try and find a way.”

## Chapter 13

Lana promised to help me out. I wouldn't be able to live in peace until I could explain to Trisha that she didn't have to feel guilty. First of all, I hadn't *really* died, and also because *nothing* happens by chance. I had come into that house and fallen off the stairs because that was *exactly* what I was destined to do.

It took Lana a while to come up with the news. But when she finally showed up, she had good news.

"We got it! Today you are finally going to be able to get in touch with the Earth!"

"But how, Lana?" I asked.

"You are going to speak through a medium."

I hadn't learned much about that yet.

"A medium?"

"Yes, it's an incarnated person, someone who is living, like some prefer to say, who is particularly sensitive, who can hear you and transmit your thoughts."

Great! Then I wanted to speak to everyone. But Lana explained to me that time was going to be limited. I would say what was most important, because there was a very long line of 'dead' people waiting to communicate as well.

That was incredible! Like magic Lana took me to the place where a spiritist session was taking place. There were prayers, the medium concentrated, and when my turn came, I directed all the power of my thoughts and my will right toward his mind.

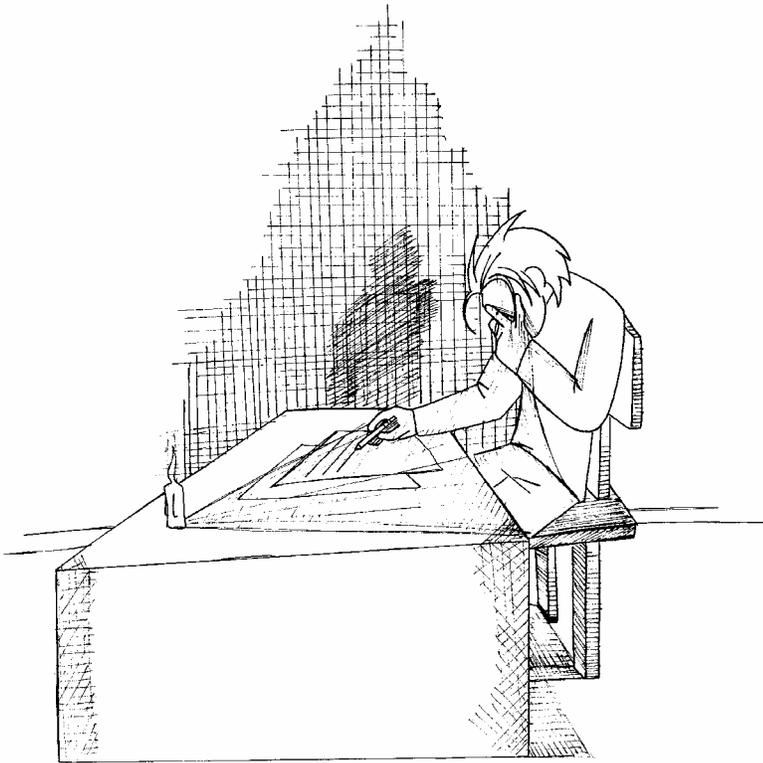
And it worked! We saw the medium's hand run through the white paper writing all the words I was broadcasting. I tried to be brief. But it was too emotional (not to mention the longing), and I think I even exceeded my time a bit.

But I said everything I needed to say.

To my parents, I said I was alive, happy and very healthy. I said I missed them, but I was living with my grandparents, who gave me all the love in the world.

To Raphael, I sent my congratulations for his coming wedding, and said that I was very happy for him. I thanked Uncle Albert for his prayers and confirmed that Heaven was really cool! Ah, and I said I had met an Angel (Lana had no wings, but was still an angel).

I sent millions of kisses to the rest of the family, sent my best to all my friends, and a special message to Trisha. I told her to go back to living in peace, because she wasn't guilty of anything. I was still her friend, and we would still meet many other times. I said I was more alive than ever and I could only be in peace after making sure she was fine too. And, finally, that ghosts *do* exist, but they are people just like us.



Well, we have reached chapter 13, and I have to end this ghost story. Nothing to do with the number 13, which is a number just like any other, contrary to what many believe. But my time to go back has come.

I have been called to *reincarnate*, that is *to be born again*. A great responsibility! A brand new chance to re-start, and to do everything a little bit better than the previous time.

And I could hardly believe when they told me who I am going to be in this new journey. Just imagine....I am going to be Raphael's son, my own brother. It seems that I am going to be my own nephew.....and my mom's grandson.

That only proves that besides being wonderful, life is really very funny!

**THE END**

*Junior is eleven years old and is scared to death of ghosts.*

*He gets goose bumps when he listens to the stories that Trisha, the oldest in a group of friends, tells, and she can tell very scary stories like no one else.*

*But school vacation is almost at an end, and they need to enjoy it to the very last. They don't waste any time: at night they meet to listen to stories, and by day, they all play in the back yard of an old abandoned house down the street.*

*One day, however, something unexpected happens, which makes Junior have a better understanding of everything that happens when we pass away.*

*The survival of the soul, karma, communication between worlds and reincarnation, which were enlightening answers to all the little boy's questions.*

*After the mystery is unveiled will he continue to be afraid of ghosts?*