



THE ETERNAL DISCOVERY

The Other Beyond the Stars · Book III

GERARD FELLER

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*“The greatest discovery of eternity is not a new world, a new star, or a new galaxy.
The greatest discovery is Christ Himself.”*

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Bible quotations are included in support of the story and its themes.

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CHAPTER 1

THE VOICE BEYOND THE HORIZON

The morning had no beginning, and that was one of the first things Elias had learned since his arrival in the Land Behind the Morning. There was light. There was change. There were colours that were deeper, shadows that moved and golden glow that drew over the mountains. But nowhere did a sun appear. Nowhere did the light come from. It seemed to come from all at once. From the sky. From the trees. From the water. From the people.

Even from the stones. Elias stood on a high hill above the First City and looked out over the landscape. Below him rivers shone like liquid crystal. Waterfalls fell from mountain walls that were higher than clouds. Forests moved in a gentle wind that not only cooled but also seemed to carry joy. In the distance sounded music. Or maybe it wasn't music. Maybe it was the sound of life itself.

He wasn't really getting used to it. He smiled. Actually, he didn't want to. Amazement wasn't temporary emotion here. Amazement was a way of existence. Behind him sounded footsteps. He didn't have to turn around. He already knew who it was. "You're awake early." His father came standing next to him. Younger than Elias had ever known him on earth. Stronger. Living. But still the same. Still daddy.

And Elias said to him, I am not sleeping as I had been before, and his father laughed, and said to all the people, As if the world were listening, as if the creation were listening, as if it were listening, when one thought, and the resting man was not. Elias looked aside.

And he said to them, I thought I was at home, and I am at home, and I said to him, Why is it that there is something missing? and his father looked upon the horizon, and there were mountains that were like blue shadows above the world, and more mountains came out behind them, and again, and there was nothing missing, and there might be nothing missing, and his father said, Maybe something is calling you. Elias was silent, and the words were going to be in his heart.

For he had known that feeling, a cry, not of discontent, not of loss, but of discovery, and had seen thousands of wonders since his arrival, and had found friends, and had met lost loved ones, and had visited the Library of Life, and had seen the King's Wounds, and had learned that love was truly the foundation of reality, and yet... yet the desire grew.

Elias nodded, "Yes," but to go on, his father put a hand on his shoulder, "do you feel that?" Elias nodded, "Yes." "That feeling never disappears." "Why not?" His father smiled, "Because God is infinite." The words lingered. God infinitely. On earth Elias had heard those words often. But now he understood that he had never really understood them. Infinitely meant not only that God had no end.

It meant that He could never be fully discovered. Always more. Always deeper. Always richer. Even after a thousand years. Even after a million years. Even after an eternity. Suddenly something happened. A gentle vibration went through the air. Not through the ground. Not

through the trees. By him. His heart began to beat faster. A light appeared on the horizon. Far away. But at the same time close. Like a star suddenly coming within reach.

The light became clearer, not dazzling, inviting, and Elias felt how joy flowed through him, a joy greater than himself, and his father smiled, and said, "I think someone is looking for you." Elias knew immediately who, before the shape became visible, knew it, before he saw a face, before words were spoken, his soul recognized Him, as a river recognizes the sea.

As a child recognizes his father's voice. As love recognizes himself. Jesus. The light came closer. And yet He seemed to walk. No throne. No lightning. No overwhelming power. Just a man. But at the same time more real than mountains. More real than stars. More real than the world itself. When He reached them He remained. His eyes rested on Elias. Those eyes. Eyes in which infinite wisdom lived.

But also infinite kindness. Elias felt the same emotion as they did during their first encounter. And yet it was different. At the time he had been a seeker. Now he was a son. "Good morning, Elias." The voice was warm. Known. Living. Elias smiled. "Does there actually exist morning?" Jesus laughed. His smile was perhaps even more beautiful than the music of the city. "Not really." "I say good morning because I don't know a better word."

And they went together, and they went down a path, and they went down through the fields of golden flowers, and all that was in Jesus' hand, and it seemed that life was brighter, and not because he changed it, but because all things rejoiced in His presence, and suddenly a bird landed upon His shoulder, and a little beast with blue-golden feathers, and it looked at Jesus. And Jesus looked back, and Elias knew without words that love was between them.

But the bird flew away again. Jesus continued to look. Then He turned His attention again on Elias. "You feel the call." It was not a question. Elias nodded. "Yes." "Tell." He thought. "I am happy." "I know." "I have received more than I had ever hoped." "I know that too." "But..." He sought words.

"It feels like something is still waiting." Jesus smiled. "That's right." They reached a viewpoint. Below them was the First City. Further on rivers. Forests. Mountains. And behind the horizon something Elias couldn't describe. As if reality was getting even bigger there. Even deeper. Even richer. Jesus pointed to the distance. "Do you see that?" "What do you think is there?" Elias looked. "More of the same world?" Jesus shook His head smiling.

"Much more." "How much more?" Jesus looked at the horizon. Then onward. As if even the horizon for Him was no more. "More than you will ever discover." Elias felt no disappointment. Only excitement. "I will never come." "No." "Isn't that frustrating?" Jesus laughed again. "Why should it?" Elias thought for a moment. Then he began to laugh. He understood it. For the first time. The joy was not in reaching the end.

The joy was in discovering. In growing. In moving on. In finding new wonders. Jesus looked at him. "You have come home." "Yes." "Now the work begins." Elias felt a shudder of expectation. Not of fear. Not of uncertainty. But of adventure. "What work?" Jesus smiled. A smile in which galaxies seemed hidden. "Come along." Far behind the horizon began a new light. And Elias knew:

This was no end. This was the beginning of a journey greater than all the journeys before it. Eternity was open to him. And Christ was at the forefront.

CHAPTER 2

THE MAPS OF THE SEA OF STARS

Elias did not know how long he had walked with Jesus. Time felt different here, not because she did not exist, but because no one was pushed by it. No one was getting older. No one lost anything. No one ran after the clock. Eternity was not an endless timeline. Eternity was present. Yet Elias felt that something important was about to happen. Jesus had said, "Now the work begins."

Since then they had moved further up the hills. The First City was now far behind them. Before them there was a landscape that Elias had never seen before. The sky shone in shades of blue, gold and silver. Far above them moved light streams that reminded of star nebulae. Not far away stood a building. At least... Building was not the right word. It seemed rather grown than built.

As if crystal, light, and living trees had formed a palace together. High arches reached up. Pillars seemed to have taken on light that had taken on solid form. Water flowed along the walls without ever falling down. Elias stood. "What is this?" Jesus smiled. "The Cards room." "Cardhouse?" "Yes." Jesus shook His head. "From My creation." They walked on. At the entrance stood men and women.

Some recognized Elias from his history books, but others did not. Yet no one felt strange. Everyone seemed like family. An older man came to them smiling. His eyes shone out intelligence. Next to him was a huge light. "Finally." He looked at Elias. "We wondered when you would come." Elias looked amazed. "Do you know me?" The man laughed. "Everyone knows here at last." Jesus put a hand on his shoulder.

Elias, this is John Kepler. Elias froze. The famous astronomer. The man who had described the movement of the planets centuries ago. Kepler smiled wide. "On earth I thought I understood something of God's universe." He pointed to the building. "When I came here." "And?" Kepler laughed again. "When I had just begun," they went in. Elias immediately stood.

Space was impossible to large. No walls. No ceiling. No end. Tickets were floating everywhere. Millions of maps. Some as big as a continent. Other small as a page. They hung in the air like living windows. Galaxies were slowly spinning around. Nebulae moved. Planets shone. Cosmic rivers of light flowed through space. "This..." Elias didn't find words. "...can't exist." "You said that before."

Jesus looked at him smiling. Elias laughed. "That's right." A young woman came along. She carried a map on which an entire galaxy was visible. "New discoveries?" Jesus asked. The woman nodded enthusiastically. "Three new living mist fields." "Nice." She continued. Elias looked at her. "New discoveries?" "Yes." "Here things are still discovered?" "Every day." "But..." He hesitated. "Didn't you make all?"

"Yes." "Why do they have to discover it?" Jesus looked kindly at him. "Because love love loves to discover." Those words lingered. Love enjoys discovering. Suddenly Elias understood

something. God had not given Adam a name himself. He had let Adam discover. He had always let him participate. That was God's way. Not to chew everything. But to invite people to join.

Invite him to become fellow explorers. Jesus brought him to a huge map. The image hovered over the floor dozens of meters. An ocean of stars. Galaxies. Lightfields. Unimaginable distances. "This is only a small part." Elias looked at him unbelieving. "A small part?" "Yes." "How great is your creation?" Jesus looked at the map. Then at Elias. "Nobody knows." "Nobody?" "Noone?" "Only My Father."

Elias felt a chill of awe, even here. Even now, God lived greater than all that was created. He looked again at the map. Suddenly he saw light points moving. "What are those?" "Travelers." "Travelers?" "Yes." "Where?" "Everywhere." Elias looked amazed. "Do you mean that people really go to all these worlds?" "Yes." "Why?" Jesus smiled. "Why did people climb mountains?" "For the challenge."

"Why did they explore oceans?" "Out of curiosity." "Why did they build telescopes?" "To see further." Jesus nodded. "That desire I have made." Elias began to understand. Curiosity had never been a mistake. Curiosity was a gift. Sin had distorted it. But not created. Now he saw it back in its purest form. A desire to discover God's reality ever more and more.

Kepler came back to them. He pointed to an area on the edge of the map. There the light seemed different. Deeper. Mysteriuser. "You go there." Elias looked up. "I?" Kepler nodded. "Your first mission." Jesus smiled. "I go with you." Elias looked again at the unknown area. His heart began to beat faster. Not with fear. Expected. He felt the same as he did when he first began a new investigation on earth.

But he said, "What is there?" Jesus looked at the distant fields of light, and his eyes reflected stars. "We are going to discover it." At that moment, the whole of the Stars seemed to smile, as if even the stars were pleased. A new adventure began. And somewhere far beyond the limits of all that Elias knew, a part of God's creation had waited, which had never been seen by him. The horizon had again grown.

And that made him happier than ever.

CHAPTER 3

THE BUILDERS OF LIGHT

The journey began the next day. Or what went on here for a day. Elias had learned that time in God's new creation was not measured by suns or bells. Yet there was rhythm. Meetings. Development. New experiences. And above all expectation. He stood together with Jesus on a vast plateau outside the Maps. Before them lay a vehicle. At least that was what Elias thought at first. Then he realized it was not a vehicle.

It was alive, like a combination of ship, bird and star. The hull consisted of lightening material that constantly changed color. Patterns moved along the sides as if the ship was breathing itself. "What is this?" asked Elias. Jesus smiled. "A lightcraft." Elias walked around it. "Living?" "Yes." Jesus looked at him. "My children." Those words surprised him. His children. Not angels. Not God Himself.

And the people had built this place, and a woman came forth, and her face was joyful, and she gave Elias a warm smile, and she was like, "I am Hannah." And there appeared a great wolf beside her, and his silver coat shone in the light, and Elias' wondered, and the beast said, "And I am Arion." Elias stood there, and the wolf laughed, and the wolf laughed, and the wolf laughed, and the wolf laughed, and the wolf said, "You are not the first to be amazed."

"That gets used to." "Not really." Jesus looked at the amused. "Arion has been helping these projects for a long time." The wolf nodded proudly. "We are good designers." Elias laughed. "We?" "The animals." "You design ships?" "Why would only man be creative?" Elias kept silent. He would never have asked such a question on earth. Here he discovered again and again how small his old world image had been. They went on board.

Inside the ship was much bigger than outside. Light flowed along the walls. No motors. No controls. No screens. Yet Elias felt that everything was working. Perfect. "How do you control this?" he asked. Hannah smiled. "With love." Elias looked at her. "That's not a technical answer." "Here she did." She put her hand on the wall. Immediately the ship began to move. Not shocking. Not abrupt.

It seemed more like reality itself invited them to travel further. Outside the hills disappeared. The Maps Hall was smaller. Then something happened that Elias had never expected. The sky opened. Not literally. But the space above them seemed to be deeper. Stars appeared. Billions of stars appeared. More than he had ever seen. Much more. The new creation appeared not smaller than the old universe. It appeared to be larger. Much larger.

The ship ascended. The First City became a light point. The mountains disappeared. Among them lay a world larger than continents. Greater than planets. A living world. Created by God. Restored by Christ. Full of joy. Full of meaning. Life. Elias looked speechless. Jesus stood beside him. "Nice, isn't it?" Elias laughed. "That word is far too small." They traveled further. Starfields slipped past them.

Cosmic nebulae radiated colors that Elias had never seen before, and sometimes they met other light-faring men, and each ship was different, and no two designs were equal, as no two people were equal, as no two stars were equal, and all over he saw creativity, and everywhere he saw joy, and over time a point of light appeared in the distance, and it grew fast, until Elias saw it was not a star, and it was a city.

A city between the stars, hanging in a giant mist of light, towers of crystal reaching for miles. Bridges of light-connected buildings. Water flowed through the air like floating rivers. Music filled the space. Not through speakers. The city itself seemed to sing. "Where are we?" asked Elias. Hannah smiled. "Builders of Light." They landed on a huge square. Immediately Elias saw hundreds of people working.

Some of them designed new gardens, others built buildings, others made light currents into works of art, and they worked everywhere, but no one was in a hurry. No one was tired. No one complained. Everyone was glad. A man came to them. He wore simple clothes. His face looked familiar to Elias. Very familiar. Then he recognized him. Johann Sebastian Bach. The composer. Bach smiled. "Welcome." Elias looked surprised.

"You work here?" Bach laughed. "Of course." He pointed to a group of people. "We are currently building a new musical river." "A river?" "Yes." "From music?" "Yes." "That can be?" Bach looked back surprised. "Why not?" Elias started laughing again. That happened more and more often. On earth he learned to think boundaries. Here there were no limits. Or rather, only love determined what was possible. They walked on.

Everywhere he discovered the same pattern. No one worked to make himself important. No one worked to become higher than others. No one worked to gain recognition. Everyone worked out of joy. Out of love. Out of gratitude. Suddenly Jesus stood. Before them lay a huge open terrain. Empty. At least, almost empty. In the middle a light core floated. A radiant sphere. Not larger than a house. But full of energy. Full of possibilities.

Jesus looked at Elias. "This is your first project." Elias looked amazed. "Mine?" Jesus smiled. "We do nothing alone." Elias looked again at the core of light. "What shall I build?" Jesus looked at the stars. Then at the people. Then at the animals that were running all over them. And finally at Elias. "What do you desire to make?" He surprised him. For on earth he had always asked, "What should I do?"

Here Jesus asked something else. What do you desire to make? Suddenly Elias understood something. Even his desire was a gift from God. Creativity was not competition with the Creator. Creativity was participation in the joy of the Creator. Slowly he looked at the light core. Images began to emerge in his thoughts. A place. A world. A garden. A meeting place. An area where people, animals and angels could meet.

A place of bondage, a place where no one ever had to feel alone. Jesus smiled. As if He had known that thought for a long time. "That seems to be a wonderful beginning." The stars began to shine brighter around them. And for the first time since his arrival in eternity Elias discovered that he was not only a resident of God's new creation. He was allowed to participate. He was allowed to participate. Not as owner.

Not as a hero, but as the King's beloved son, and that only made the joy greater.

CHAPTER 4

THE GARDENS OF LIFE

The next time Elias saw the light core, she had grown. Not much. Maybe only a few meters. But she felt different. More alive. As if the idea that was born in his heart was slowly taking shape. He stood together with Jesus on the great building site of the Builderers of Light. They worked around them, men, animals and angels, working side by side. Elias still thought that was wonderful.

On earth, cooperation often meant battle. Conflicting interests. Different visions. Hidden pride. Here, cooperation seemed more like music. Everyone contributed something. Nobody wanted to dominate. Nobody wanted to win. Everyone wanted it to be more beautiful. Arion appeared next to him. The great wolf looked at the light core. "She is growing well." Elias smiled. "As if you were talking about a tree." Arion looked at him amazed.

"That's about what she is." "A tree?" "A living world." Elias looked again. Maybe the wolf was right. For the longer he looked, the more movement he saw. Deep inside the light, patterns formed. Landscapes. Colors. Possibilities. An angel came to them. His name was Michael. Not the archangel Elias knew from the Bible. But another. A builder. An artist.

"Have you seen the first contours?" he asked. By gesture he made a part of the light core open. Immediately a world appeared. Not completely. Still incomplete. But visible. Elias held his breath. Forests. Lakes. Valleys. Mountains. Falls. Fields full of flowers. Stretched plains where animals could move freely. And everywhere space. Space for meeting. Space for community. Space for joy. "Beautiful."

The word again felt too small. Jesus smiled. "That's because beauty is always greater than words." They walked on. As they walked through the design, Elias discovered something strange. Each tree was different. Each river had its own character. Even the stones seemed unique. "Why do we make nothing identical?" he asked. Michael looked at him. "Why would love make copies?" Elias kept silent.

On earth efficiency had often seemed more important than beauty. Here was the opposite. God loved diversity. Of course he had always done that. No two snowflakes. No two leaves. No two people. No two stars. Why would that be different here? Suddenly he heard laughter. A group of children ran through the design. Together with them ran animals. Deer. Wolves. Birds. Even a young lion. They played.

[illegible]

For immediately Elias saw what she meant, the hill, the open plain, the animals, the river would fit exactly, not because an engineer calculated it, but because love saw it, slowly Elias began to understand something, the new creation was not built from rules, not from systems, not from efficiency, it was built from relationship, from love, from joy, from attention.

Then Jesus and Elias sat down on the edge of a lake that did not yet exist. The water shone. The horizon reflected colours that did not occur on earth. For a long time they sat silently next to each other. Then Elias said. "Why do you let us do this?" Jesus looked over the water. "What do you mean?" "You can make all this yourself." "That's right." "Much better than we." Jesus smiled. "That's right." "Why?"

And Jesus looked at him, and saw Elias in his eyes the same love he had seen before at the throne, the same love that the stars had made, the same love that the cross had borne, the same reason that a father taught his child to walk. Elias listened, and said, "The father walketh faster." "Surer." "But joy is not in himself." He pointed to the builders.

Suddenly he saw his whole life on earth again. How often did he think that God wanted results? How often did he think that success was more important than relationship? Now he saw that he had made a mistake. God had never wanted a task alone. God had always wanted community. Cooperation. Friendship. Love. A gentle wind drew over the lake. In the distance Elias heard music. Not from instruments.

It seemed to come from the world itself. From the trees. From the water. From the sky. Jesus listened smiling. "They begin." "Who?" "The birds." Suddenly Elias saw thousands of birds appear. Colorful. Majestic. Free. They circled over the new world. Their singing filled the sky. But this was more than singing. It seemed as if they were adding life. As if their joy became part of creation. Arion appeared again. The wolf looked up.

Elias said, "That is always my favorite moment." Elias said, "Why?" Arion smiled, "Because you see that everything is working together." He looked at the birds, at the angels, at Jesus. "That was always God's intention." Elias felt a deep emotion, for he understood that the new world they built was more than a place. She was a picture, a reflection, a testimony, of how God's kingdom really was.

A kingdom wherein no one was centered except Christ. And that is why everyone flourished. The sun did not exist here. Yet the evening seemed to fall. The light became warmer. Deeper. Richer. Jesus rose up. "Come." Jesus looked at the far horizon. Far beyond the new world. Far beyond the star sea. Far beyond all Elias had seen so far. "I want to show you something."

Elias immediately felt the same expectation as they had at their first encounter. The adventure continued. And somewhere beyond the limits of the known a miracle waited again. A wonder that would make everything he had learned even greater. For the creation was not only infinitely great. It also appeared infinitely deep. And every step brought him closer to the heart of her Maker.

CHAPTER 5

THE STAR OF THE FIRST SONG

They traveled farther than Elias had ever travelled, even further than he did during his journey through Veritas Omega. Then he had seen worlds. Realities. Possibilities. But always as a visitor. Now he traveled with Christ. And that made everything different. The lightcraft moved silently through the star sea. No engines. No acceleration. No technique like Elias who had known on earth.

The journey was rather like a conversation between the ship and creation, as if space itself were welcoming them. Jesus was at the front. His glance rested on a distant light source. Since their departure from the Gardens of Life, He had spoken little. Not because there was nothing to say. But because some trips had to be seen first. Elias stood beside Him. Billions of stars passed by.

Some larger than entire galaxies from the old universe, others small and bright as diamonds, yet he noticed something. More and more often he saw stars that were different, not hotter, not bigger, but more alive, as if they were more than celestial bodies, as if they were carrying a story. "What are those?" he asked eventually. Jesus looked at the light point that Elias pointed out. "These are the Singing Stars." "Singing Stars?" "Yes."

"Do you mean literally?" Jesus smiled. "You will hear it yourself." The light point grew. Ever faster. Elias realized that he was not looking at a star. He looked at a world. A world of light. A world that shone like a living diamond. As they came closer he heard it. At first hardly. A vibration. A soft tone. Then another. And another. Slowly a harmony arose. No music that came from outside.

The world itself sang. Elias remained speechless. Millions of tones flowed together. No chaos. No noise. A perfect harmony. Like every stone. Every tree. Every drop of water. Every star. A voice. And yet together he formed one song. "What is this?" he whispered. Jesus looked at the world. "This is the Star of the First Song." They landed. As soon as Elias touched the ground he felt something strange. The bottom lived. Not as an animal lives.

But as a melody lives, every step brought forth new tones, and looked down, and there were crystals under his feet, and not one colour, and there were thousands of colours, and every colour seemed to be connected to a tone, and a group of inhabitants came to meet them, and men, and not like the people Elias had met so far, and their garments seemed to be woven out of light, and their faces were full of joy, and a woman stepped forward, and said, "Welcome."

She bowed light to Jesus. Not out of fear. Not out of duty. Out of love. Jesus embraced her. "Good to see you again, Miriam." Elias smiled. He still found it touching how personally Jesus knew everyone. Not millions of people at once. But each person individually. As if each person was uniquely precious. Maybe so. Miriam led them through the city. Or what kind of city went through.

Buildings grew out of the ground as music that had become visible. Water flowed in rhythms. Trees moved on melodies that Elias could not understand but could feel. Everything lived. Everything was singing. Everything was adoring. They reached a large square. In the middle stood a tree. Larger than all the trees Elias had ever seen. The branches reached for miles. Light flowed through the trunk like liquid gold. And from the tree sounded a song.

A song so beautiful that Elias felt how tears came into his eyes. Suddenly he saw images. The creation. The first stars. The birth of worlds. Angels. Men. The history of the earth. The cross. The resurrection. The new creation. Everything seemed present in that one song. He looked at Jesus. "How can this?" Jesus put His hand against the tribe. Immediately the song became even richer. Even deeper. Even more beautiful.

"All the beauty comes from here in the end." "Here?" "Not out of the tree." Jesus smiled. "Out of love." Elias listened again. Now he heard something he had missed at first. Among all the melodies. Among all the harmonies. Cracked one heart. The heart of Christ. Not literally. But really. Everything was connected with Him. Everything received life from Him. Everything found meaning in Him.

And Elias remembered something of his earthly life, a text which he had read, that all things were created by Christ, and that all things were in him; and on earth he had understood these words, above all theologically; and here he heard them; and here he lived. And there he sat, and Jesus under the great tree: and for a long time they listened to the song.

And Jesus looked at the stars, and said to them, What thinkest thou? Elias thought, To discover more of thy creation? And he said, To know more of thee? Jesus nodded. And he remained silent. And Elias waited. And Jesus continued, and most of all, because I want thee to see as I see. And the words looked deep, and looked not only as the stars.

Not just animals, not just humans, but everything, with love, with joy, with attention, with wonder, and all of a sudden Elias understood that this was perhaps the greatest lesson of eternity, not knowledge, not power, not responsibility, love, love, and love, and the evening, when that word had meaning here, ...

And to his surprise Elias heard that they too sang. Not loud. Not intrusive. But really. The whole cosmos turned out to be a choir. An endless hymn. A symphony without end. And somewhere in the middle of that symphony Jesus sat beside him. Not only as King. Not only as Creator. But as a Friend. Elias looked up. For the first time he began to suspect that even the oldest inhabitants of eternity still were.

But a fraction of God's glory had discovered, and that made him incredibly happy, because it meant that the greatest wonders still lie before them. Then Jesus looked at a distant mist of light on the horizon. His smile was widening. "That will be our next destination." Elias followed His glance. What he saw seemed impossible. A nebula that lived.

The next adventure was waiting.

CHAPTER 6

THE LIVING NEBULA

The nebula was like a dream even to Elias, and that was something he had wanted to say since his arrival in the new creation, he had seen miracles that surpassed every earthly imagination, the First City, the Library of Life, the Croning Hall, the Singing Star, but what was before him was different, much different, the lightcraft was slowly floating closer, and before them was a huge nebula.

Not a cloud of gas like astronomers who had studied on earth. This nebula lived. That felt Elias immediately. She breathed. Moved. Thought. Billions of light wires flowed together as nerve orbits in a gigantic consciousness. Colors arose and disappeared. Patterns formed. Grown. "What is this?" asked Elias softly. Jesus looked at the nebula.

His eyes exuded the same love that Elias had learned to recognize. "A community." Elias looked again. "A community?" "Yes." "Who?" Jesus smiled. "We are going to discover it." The lightcraft flew on. As they came closer Elias started to notice something. The light wires were not energy. They were lives. Millions. Perhaps billions. Consciousness. Connected. Working together. Communicating.

Suddenly he saw forms coming into being. Animals. Humans. Angels. They appeared in the light and disappeared again. As if the whole nebula was constantly telling stories. "Live they in this?" asked Elias. "Yes." "All?" "Yes." "How?" Jesus looked at him. "As body cells live in one body." That comparison struck him. A body. Billions of cells. One life. One purpose. One harmony. Slowly he began to understand. This nebula was no place.

This nebula was a community. A living community. They reached an opening. A huge space appeared to them. No buildings. No streets. No squares. Only light. Living light. Thousands of people met them. Their faces luminous. Their eyes reflected joy. But what Elias most amazed was something else. He felt them. Not their thoughts. Not their secrets. Not their memories. Their joy. Their love.

Their gratitude, as if their hearts were joined, not lifted, not fused, but joined, free and one at a time. A woman came forward smiling. "Welcome." Jesus embraced her. "Elias, this is Seraphine." She smiled. "We heard a lot about you." Elias laughed. "I hear that more and more." "That's because your quest has touched many." They began to walk together through the mist. Or maybe they floated.

Elias wasn't sure, because gravity seemed to be a suggestion rather than a law. Everywhere they met groups of residents. Some were engaged in art. Others with music. Others with projects that Elias didn't understand. But everywhere he saw the same. Cooperation. No competition. No rivalry. No need to be better than others. Everyone seemed happy with the gifts of the other.

And it touched him more than all the wonders, because on earth he had seen how much pain jealousy could cause, how many relationships were damaged by comparison, and here that was no

longer. Seraphine seemed to understand his thoughts, and he said, "You don't miss it." "What?" "Compare." Elias smiled. "No." She looked at the people around them. "When love becomes complete, comparison disappears by itself." "Why?" She pointed to a group of artists.

Everyone was working on something else. Everyone was luminous. Everyone enjoyed the work of the other. "Because everyone's beauty is a gift to everyone." Those words lingered on. A gift to everyone. Suddenly Elias understood why joy was so great here. Every discovery. Every gift. Every victory. Was shared. Nobody lost. Everyone won. They reached a high platform. From there Elias looked out over the entire nebula.

And he saw the greatness of her life, and the galaxies would fit into it, and perhaps thousands of them, and the streams of light were moving like rivers, and billions of lives formed one harmony, and he felt tears coming up, and not of sorrow, and of beauty, and of awe, and of gratitude, and Jesus came up beside him, and said, "What do you see?" Elias thought for a long time, and said, "I see what you always meant." Jesus smiled.

Elias looked again at the community. "No loneliness." "No isolation." "No fear." "No masks." He looked at Christ. "Connectance." Jesus nodded. "Yes." Then his glance became more severe. "No sorrow." "And even this is but a beginning." Elias laughed. "That is what you say." "That is because it is true." Together they looked at the endless sea of light. Then Jesus pointed to a distant region of the nebula.

There the light seemed different. Deeper. Richer. Older. As if a great secret was hidden behind a veil of glory. "What is there?" said Elias. Jesus remained silent for a moment. Then he answered, "We keep the memories of the stars." Elias looked amazed. "Stars have memories?" Jesus smiled. "All that I have made carries a story." The words shuddered through him.

Because once again he discovered something. Reality was not only greater than he thought. She was more personal than he ever dreamed. Every star. Every world. Every tree. Every bird. Every angel. Everything was meaningful. Everything was carrying history. Everything was carrying love. Somewhere deep in that endless reality, another adventure awaits. An adventure that would bring him even closer to the Creator's heart.

Because the farther he traveled, the clearer it became, the greatest discovery of eternity was never a place, never a world, never a star, the greatest discovery was always Christ Himself, and that discovery would never end.

CHAPTER 7

THE MEMORIES OF THE STARS

The next journey began in silence, not because no one had anything to say, but because some destinations themselves call for silence. Jesus and Elias were once again on board the lightcraft. The Living Nebula was now far behind them. For them there was an area that Elias had not seen before. The light was softer here. Deeper. Older. As if space itself had memories. "Where are we going?" asked Elias.

Jesus looked at the stars. "To the Archive of Creation." Elias smiled. "Does there exist an archive here?" Jesus looked at him amused. "You still think like a scientist." "Probably." "That doesn't have to change." The ship slipped on. Slowly a gigantic structure began to become visible. Elias didn't know how to describe it. It looked like a galaxy. But also on a tree.

And at the same time on a cathedral. Billions of wires of light connected countless stars. All formed one whole. Everything lived. Everything breathed meaning. As they came closer, Elias saw that each star had its own color. Some gold. Other blue. Other silvery white. Other colors that had never existed on earth. "What are these?" he answered. Jesus answered: "Rememberings." Elias looked again. "Whom?" "Of all things that live."

The ship came to a standstill, and before them a huge bridge of light appeared, and Jesus came out. Elias followed. Immediately he felt something, not with his body, not with his mind, with his heart, a deep emotion, as if millions of stories were greeting him at the same time. An old man came to meet them, and his face was full of wisdom, but wonder, as if he were still amazed at God's greatness after thousands of years. "Welcome."

He bowed lightly to Jesus. "Master." Jesus embraced him. "Elias, this is Nathan." The man smiled. "I take care of a small part of the memories." Elias looked around. "A small part?" Nathan laughed. "That's what we all say here." They started walking. Left and right stars shone. But now Elias saw that they were more than stars. In every star lived images. Memories. Stories. Suddenly Nathan stood.

He laid his hand on a golden star. Immediately the space changed. Elias stood in the middle of a forest. An unknown world. Giant trees. Crystal rivers. Strange animals. Everything radiated beauty. A group of children played among the trees. Their laughter filled the landscape. Then the image faded. Elias was again in the archive. "What was that?" he asked. "A reminder." Nathan smiled. "From that world."

Elias looked amazed. "Did he have memories?" "Of course." "Why should only man have history?" "Did he find it?" "Did he see history on earth as something human? Here he found again how small his glance had been. God didn't only love people. God loved His whole creation. Nathan walked on. They reached a silver star. When he touched it, another scene appeared.

A herd of animals. A huge plain. Generations that followed each other. Life that flourished. Growing. Changed. Again and again. Elias watched breathless. "This is beautiful." Nathan

noded. "God forgets nothing." Those words came in as light. God forgets nothing. Not only people. Not only events. Not only prayers. Everything. No bird. No flower. No star. No world. Nothing had ever been lost. They walked on.

Then Jesus himself stood before them. A star shining different than all others. Greater. Deeper. Brighter. As if an ocean of memories was hidden in it. "This I will show you." Elias immediately felt awe. Jesus put His hand against the light. Reality changed. Suddenly Elias saw the earth. Not the earth as he knew it. But the earth as God saw it. He saw Adam. Eve. The first garden.

He saw generations come and go, civilizations come, rich rise and disappear, people laugh, people cry, people hope, people pray, everything flows by, not like a movie, but like a living story, and then he saw himself as a boy, lying in the grass next to his father, looking at the stars, and he heard his question again, "How do I know other people are real?" His father laughed, as he did then.

But now Elias saw something he had not seen before. Jesus stood by. Not visible. Not tangible. But present. Lovingly present. The scene changed. He saw the day his father died. His grief. His confusion. His loneliness. And again he saw Jesus. Not absent. Not far away. Closer. Closer than he ever realized. Then he saw Anna. May. Veritas Omega. His quest. His despair. His hope. His prayers.

The same presence, the same love, the same loyalty, the same loyalty, the image faded. Slowly he was back in the archive. Tears ran over his face. Jesus looked at him. Not with pity. With love. Deep love. "I was always there." Elias nodded. He could not speak. He had sought for years. For years he had thought he had to find God.

Now he understood again what he had already discovered in the Library of Life. God was always the one looking for him. Nathan looked at the stars around them. "That is the secret of all memories." "What?" asked Elias. Nathan smiled. "When you look deep enough..." He pointed to the endless sea of light. "You find Him everywhere." Elias stood still for a long time. Looking at the stars. Looking at the stories.

Looking at the love that carried everything, he looked up, and he saw new fields of light appear above the archive, even deeper, even deeper, and he smiled, because by now he knew the pattern, and when he thought he had reached the border, God opened a new horizon, and somewhere beyond that horizon, another discovery was waiting, not because God wanted to remain hidden, but because His beauty was truly infinite.

And eternity was still just beginning.

CHAPTER 8

THE HIDDEN ACTS OF HEROISM

The Archive of Creation was behind them by now. But the images of it remained in Elias' thoughts. Especially one discovery did not let go of him. God had always seen more than people saw. Much more. Not only the great events. Not only kings. Not only wars. Not only world history. God saw everything. Every choice. Every tear. Every act of love. And apparently Jesus wanted to show him more of that now.

They walked together through a valley that Elias did not know yet. The sky was clear. A gentle river flowed between fields full of flowers. Animals moved freely among people. No one seemed to have rushed. Yet Elias felt that this place was important. "Where are we?" he asked. Jesus smiled. "The Valley of the Hidden Victories." Elias looked amazed. "That sounds impressive." "That's it too." "Who has won here?"

And Jesus said to them, There was no man that was known on earth, but they were come to a great place, and there were thousands of them, and they were gathered together, and they laughed, and they spoke, and told stories, and there was a spirit of great joy, and Elias was not known to any man, neither were they famous, nor were they famous, nor were they famous, nor were they known to any man.

And he said to them, What is this? and Jesus looked upon the multitude, and said to them, Because they have done something that the world has hardly seen. And when an elderly woman came to them, she smiled kindly, and her face was calming. And Jesus embraced her. And Jesus embraced her, and said, Mary, and Elias looked upon her, and said, What hast thou done?

Jesus smiled. "Tell him." Mary thought for a moment. "I worked forty years in a nursing home." "That's all?" said Elias. "She laughed. "It was often like this." Suddenly, the space changed. Pictures appeared to them, a young woman who visited a lonely resident, a hand held. A smile. A prayer. A listening ear. Thousands of small moments. Nothing spectacular. Nothing world-shattering.

But then Elias saw the consequences. Life that changed. Children who later gave love. Families who recovered. People who found hope. Generations that were affected. A wave of light spread through history. Ever more. Ever more. Elias looked at it speechlessly. "This all came forth from this?" Jesus nodded. "Yes." Mary smiled shyly. "I didn't know it myself." She walked on.

Elias remained behind. Wonderful. Disgraceful. Shameful. How often had he measured success on earth with visible results? How often did he think greatness should be visible? Here he discovered again how different God's kingdom worked. A little later they met a man. He wore simple clothes. No special appearance. No impressive presence. "What did he do?" asked Elias. Jesus smiled. "Ask him."

And the man took his shoulders, and said, "I was a bus driver." Elias looked amazed, and said, "Bus driver?" And the man nodded, "Fourty years." And he looked at him, and said, "Tell the

whole story." And the man smiled, and there appeared images again, and there was a boy who was bullied, and the driver who greeted him every morning, and the woman who had lost her husband, and the driver who listened to her every day.

A man who was about to give up his life. The driver who noticed him spoke with him. Before him prayed. Elias saw waves again. Not great. Not spectacular. But really. Life changed. Hope arose. Love spread. As light spreads in a dark space. The driver looked at Elias. "I always thought I had done nothing special." Jesus smiled. "That's what almost everyone here thought."

Elias slowly began to see the pattern. Here, not the greatest achievements were celebrated. Here, love was celebrated. Not the quantity. But the authenticity. Not the visibility. But the faithful. They walked on. Then Jesus stood. His glance became softer. "Now I want to show you something." Immediately Elias felt awe. When Jesus said that something important always happened. Reality changed again.

Suddenly Elias was standing in a familiar room, his own office, on earth. Years ago. He saw himself sitting behind a desk. Moe. Overworked. Doubtful. He remembered that night. A normal evening. Nothing special. He had received an e-mail. From someone he hardly knew. A difficult question. A personal problem. He had almost not responded. He had been tired. Busy. Distracted.

But in the end he had answered. A simple message. Not long. Not particularly. Just friendly. The scene froze. Elias looked at Jesus. "Why do you show me this?" Jesus did not answer. Instead, the consequences appeared. The person had found hope. That hope had affected others. Relationships had been restored. Lives had been changed. Years later, the consequences still worked.

Elias looked bewildered. "I did not know this." "No one ever told me this." Jesus smiled. "No need." Slowly Elias began to understand. The greatest surprise of God's kingdom was perhaps this: Almost no one knew in his earthly life how God used him. Not even a little. God saw connections that no man could see. Influence that no man could measure.

Fruits that only became visible centuries later, they reached a hill, from there they could see the whole valley, thousands of people, maybe tens of thousands, millions, no famous names, no great monuments, no statues, only joy, only love, only gratitude, Jesus looked at them, and then Elias. "Now you understand why there is no competition in my kingdom." Elias nodded, for he saw it.

Every victory was ultimately God's victory. Every fruit came from God's love. Every heroic act eventually began with Christ. No one could boast. But everyone could rejoice. And it was precisely through this that the joy grew. Much greater. They remained on the hill for a long time. Looking at the valley. Looking at the hidden heroes. Looking at the beauty of a kingdom in which love proved more important than

And as always, that miracle would not be about stars, not about worlds, not about himself, but about the love of the King who carried everything, and that love was still deeper than eternity itself.

CHAPTER 9

THE LIBRARY OF PROVIDENCE

The new destination was farther away than all the previous ones, even the lightcraft seemed to travel slower, not because the distance was greater, but because the reality itself changed, the stars became scarcer, the light became deeper, the richer, older, Elias was at the front of the ship, still thinking of the Valley of the Hidden Heroes, to the bus driver, to Maria, to all those people who had never become famous.

And yet had an invaluable place in God's story. Slowly he began to understand why Jesus put so much emphasis on love. Love turned out to be the only force that lasted forever. Everything else eventually disappeared. Power. Wealth. Status. Fame. But love remained. Jesus stood beside him. "You think deeply." Elias smiled. "That seems to be a habit of mine." "I know that." They looked at the stars together.

Then something appeared on the horizon. At first Elias thought it was a galaxy, but as they approached it saw that it was something else. Much different. A library. At least... That was the closest word he knew. But no earthly library had looked like this. The structure seemed infinitely large. Billions of light rooms. Countless galleries. Columns that stretched beyond view.

And there were rivers of light everywhere, and books were floating like stars, and stories were moving like living beings, and they said, What is this? Jesus smiled, and said, The Library of Providence, and a shiver of expectation passed through him, and they landed upon a terrace of white gold, and a man came to meet them, and his face was full of wisdom, and wonder, and as if he were still enjoying every day.

Elias laughed at you. "I hear this more and more." "That's because your journey makes many curious." "Who are you?" "Lucas." Elias looked surprised. Elias looked at it. The evangelist. The writer of the Gospel of Luke. Luke smiled. "Yes, that Luke." They walked through the library. Everywhere Elias saw books. But no ordinary books. Some were larger than buildings.

And yet every book was alive. And Elias looked at him, and said, "What is the matter with these books?" And he looked at him, and said, "It sounds impressive." And they stood by a great book. And there was only one word on the cover. And Elias frowned. And he said, "Offward." And Luke smiled, and said, "Open it." And as soon as Elias touched it, the space changed.

On her way to work, she missed her train, something that really annoyed her, and then he saw another man, that same morning, that same city, that same train, and he met someone, and a conversation arose, and a marriage was coming, and children were born, and there were changes in their lives, and generations later were still visible, and the scene faded, and Elias was back in the library, and he looked at Lucas, and he was looking at Lucas, and he was laughing, and he was laughing, and he was like, "Exactly."

They walked on. Another book. STRAIGHT. Another book. AWARE. Another. VERLIES. Another. ON WAY. Each book showed the same. People saw chaos. God saw a story. People saw

loose events. God saw connections. People saw coincidences. God saw providence. They reached a huge room. In the middle stood a book that was bigger than all the other. It shone gold-colored light. Elias felt immediately awe.

"What is that?" he asked. Luke looked at Jesus. Jesus nodded. "Let him see it." Luke slowly opened the book. Immediately light filled the space. Elias saw the history of mankind. Not as isolated events. But as one story. Billions of lives. Billions of choices. Billions of encounters. All connected. Everything intertwined. All of it. Suddenly he saw something incredible. Jesus. Everywhere. Not visible to the people.

But present, with kings, with peasants, with scientists, with children, with sick, with dying, with believers, with doubters, with seekers, with lost people, with the same love everywhere, with the same faithfulness, with tears coming up everywhere, with the same crying, and with the same crying, and with the same smile, and with the same smile, and with the same smile, and with the same smile, and with the same smile, and with the same smile, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, and with the same voice, Elias looked again. Now he saw how events came together. Prayers were answered. Meetings arose. Lives crossed. Not mechanically. Not as a machine. But as a masterpiece. As a symphony. Freedom remained. Choices remained real. But God's wisdom was greater than everything. Much larger. Suddenly Elias saw something familiar. His own life. His father's death. The meeting with May.

The development of Veritas Omega. Even his doubts. Even his mistakes. Even his pain. Everything turned out to be intertwined in a bigger story. He looked at Jesus. "Even my mistakes?" Jesus smiled. "Especially those." "When love touches them." Elias kept silent. For again he discovered something. God had not only worked despite his mistakes. God had even used his mistakes. Not because the mistakes were right.

But because God's love was greater. Luke slowly closed the book. The room became silent. For a long time no one spoke. Then Elias said: "I used to think that providence meant that God controlled everything." Luke smiled. "And now?" Elias looked at Jesus. Then at the library. Then at the endless rows of stories. "Now I think providence means that love never gives up." Jesus smiled. A smile full of joy.

"That is a good beginning." They left the room. But as they walked on, one thought continued to grow in Elias. Maybe God's greatest wonder was not His power, not His knowledge, not His creation, perhaps His greatest wonder was His ability to continue to give love to billions of people, for billions of moments, without ever getting tired, without ever giving up. Before the exit Jesus stood again.

And he said, "Where are we going now?" Jesus looked at the distant horizon, and his eyes were shining with hope. Now you are going to see something that even many inhabitants of eternity have never seen." Elias felt his heart beating faster. For by now he knew:

When Jesus said something like that, there was another miracle waiting, and each time it turned out to be a miracle bigger than the last one.

CHAPTER 10

THE WORLDS YET TO COME

The blue glow on the horizon grew ever greater. Elias had learned that distances in God's new creation often worked differently than on earth. Sometimes it seemed a little close while it was incredibly far away. Sometimes something seemed unattainable while one step was sufficient. Yet he felt that this place was truly special. Even Jesus exuded a silent expectation. Elias noticed that.

He had now come to know Christ in thousands of ways, as a King, as a friend, as a Creator, as a teacher, but now he saw something he had rarely seen, and wondered, not because Jesus did not know something, but because he found joy in sharing discoveries, as a father enjoys when he shows his child something beautiful, and the lightcraft slipped on, and for them an area that seemed impossible opened up.

No stars, no planets, no nebulae, only blue light, living blue light, moving like an ocean, breathing like a living being, yet not feeling like a being, it felt like a possibility, as a future, as something that hadn't yet become complete. "What is this?" asked Elias softly. Jesus looked at the endless blue sea, "The Fields of Possibility." Elias frowned. "Possibility?" "Yes." "Do you mean future worlds?"

Jesus smiled. "Amongst other things." The lightcraft came to a standstill. A bridge of light appeared before them. As soon as they stepped on it Elias felt something strange. Images were all around him. No memories. Not events from the past. Possibilities. Future projects. Future discoveries. Future worlds. As if God's creation was still full of unopened doors. "I don't understand."

Jesus walked slowly on. "Tell." "I thought the new creation was complete." Jesus kindly looked at him. "She is." "But..." He pointed around. "What is this?" Jesus smiled. "Full does not mean standing." Those words didn't stop. Suddenly Elias began to understand something. On earth he had often thought perfection meant that nothing changed.

But love constantly changed, growing constantly, and constantly, and so why would perfect creation stop? They reached a high platform, and among them the blue fields stretched beyond the horizon, and millions of light seeds floated in space, and each seed contained a world, a project, an opportunity, an adventure, an discovery, a dream, a man met them.

His face was shining at the same time, youth and old age. He smiled wide. "Finally." Jesus embraced him. "Elias, this is Benaiah." "What is he doing here?" said Elias. "I am helping design new worlds." Elias looked at him amazed. "New worlds?" "Yes." "That does not yet exist?" "But will exist?" Benaiah nodded. "One day." Elias looked at Jesus. "You still make new things?" Jesus smiled.

"Why should I stop?" That question struck him deeply. Why should God stop creating? Because sin was over? Because salvation was finished? Because history had reached its goal? No. Those were earthly thoughts. God was living. God was love. God was creativity. God was

plenty. Why would an infinite God ever stop giving? Benaiah showed them one of the seeds of light. Immediately a world unfolded.

Giant mountains. Living oceans. Forests of crystal. Flying animals that Elias had never seen before. Rivers of light. Music that became visible. It was breathtaking. "Does this world already exist?" asked Elias. "Not yet." "But he feels real." "That's because he will be real." They walked on. Every light seed revealed new possibilities. New beauty. New adventures. New ways in which love could express itself.

And Elias stood there, and there was a certain seed of light, and he did not know why. It was so simple, and there were no wonders, and no spectacular landscapes, but a great open world, full of communities, full of communion, and Jesus looked at him, and said, "You like him." Elias nodded, and said, "Why?" And he said, "Why?" And he smiled, and said, "Because I know what I always sought."

Jesus waited. "I used to seek answers." "Yes." "When I sought you." "Yes." "But actually I sought bondage." Jesus smiled. "Exactly." Elias looked again at the world. Suddenly he understood something that touched him. Even the new worlds eventually did not turn around places. Not about landscapes. Not about wonders. But about relationships. For communion. Like everything in God's Kingdom. Benaiah looked at the endless fields.

"The most beautiful surprise of eternity is that there is always more to come." "Do you never get tired?" said Elias. "Are you tired of breathing?" "Are you tired of it?" "Are you not." "Are you tired of it?" said Elias. "Are you tired of it?" "Are you tired of it?" "Are you?" "Are you not." "Are you?" "Are you tired of it?" "Are you?" "Are you ever tired of it?"

Richer. Jesus looked at the distant horizon. His eyes were shining. "There we go." Elias followed His look. Far beyond the Fields of Possibility a light appeared that he had never seen before. Not gold. Not blue. Not white. A light that seemed to be pure joy. Immediately he felt a desire that went deeper than curiosity. "What is that?" he asked. Jesus smiled.

A smile that seemed to encompass all eternity. "That, Elias..." He looked again at the horizon. "...is the Joy of the Father." And for the first time since his arrival in the new creation Elias wondered if he was perhaps just at the beginning of what God really wanted to show, for the greater the discoveries became... the greater God himself turned out to be. And that made the future infinitely beautiful.

CHAPTER 11

THE FATHER'S JOY

The light was different. From the moment they left the Fields of Possibility Elias felt it. He had seen many forms of glory by now. The golden splendor of the First City. The music of the Singing Star. The deep harmony of the Living Nebula. The awesome beauty of the Library of Providence. But this light was different. Not greater. Not brighter. Not more impressive. Personal.

As if someone were welcoming him, as if the light itself were glad to come. The lightcraft flew on. The closer they approached, the stronger that feeling became. A warm joy filled his heart. Not by himself. As if he were absorbed in a joy that already existed. A joy that was older than stars. Older than time. Older than creation. He looked at Jesus. "Is everyone feeling this?" Jesus smiled. "Yes." "What is it?"

Jesus did not answer directly. He looked at the horizon. Then He softly said, "This is something of the heart of my Father." The words touched Elias deep. The heart of the Father. Suddenly he understood that he had actually longed for it his whole life. Not for knowledge. Not for answers. Not for certainty. To home. To a Father. Slowly a world appeared. No gigantic world. No cosmic miracle. On the contrary.

She seemed surprisingly simple. Green hills. Trees. Rivers. Flowering fields. Children who played. Families who walked. Animals who walked freely. A world full of joy. No spectacular beauty. But a beauty that directly touched the heart. They landed. As soon as Elias touched the ground he felt something he had never experienced before. Full safety. Not only physically. Not only emotionally.

Full security of existence. As if nothing could ever threaten him again. As if he were fully known. Fully loved. Fully accepted. He remained. Overwhelmed by a feeling for which he had hardly any words. Jesus looked at him smiling. "Now you understand something of what children feel when they trust their father." Elias looked at the people around him. Everyone shone. Not excited. Not exuberant. Deeper. Calmer.

A joy that depended on nothing. A little boy ran by. A huge lion followed him. The boy laughed. So did the lion. At least that seemed so. Elias had to smile. A little old woman sat under a tree. Around her sat dozens of children. She told stories. Everyone listened carefully. Even the birds. Even the animals. As if the whole creation enjoyed. They walked on. Everywhere Elias saw the same.

Relationships. Connectivity. Presence. No haste. No fear. No hidden sorrow. Only joy. Then they reached a large tree. Not as big as the tree of the Singing Star. But in another way impressive. The branches spread like arms. The light between the leaves was warm and inviting. Jesus sat down. Elias did the same. For a long time they sat still. Eventually Jesus spoke. "Tell me." "What?"

Elias smiled, and said, "Tell me, what did you think before?" Elias smiled, and said, "Tell me, I said, when I was young, that God wanted obedience." Jesus nodded. "I thought later that He

wanted faith." Jesus continued to listen. "I thought that He wanted truth." And later on, Elias looked at the tree, and looked at the children, and at the peace that was everywhere.

And Jesus smiled, and now Elias remained silent for a long time, and looked at Christ. And now I think that He will give love. Jesus smiled, and smiled, and said, "This is much nearer." And the words touched him. And suddenly he saw something that he had never understood before. God had never made men because He lacked anything, not because He was lonely, not because He needed worshippers, not because He needed help.

God had created because love wanted to share. As light spreads. As music wants to be heard. As joy wants to be shared. Suddenly memories flowed through him. His youth. His father. Anna. May. Veritas Omega. His quest. His doubts. His fear. His desire. And behind all those memories he saw one reality. God was always giving. Always. Even when he didn't see Him.

Even when he did not believe Him. Even when he reproached Him. The Father had never stopped giving. Tears appeared in his eyes. Not of grief. From emotion. From gratitude. Jesus looked at Him. "Now you understand why joy is so important." Elias nodded. "Joy is love that is shared." Jesus smiled. "Exactly." They remained under the tree for a long time. Life went on around them. Children played.

Animals were walking around. People met. Birds were singing. Everything was radiating the same reality. The Father rejoiced in His children. And His children rejoiced in Him. Eventually Jesus rose up. His vision was again directed on the horizon. There appeared a light even greater. Even deeper. Even richer. A light that not only radiated joy. But union. Community. Unity. "Where are we going now?"

And Elias said to him, And Jesus looked upon him, and said to him, Now thou shalt find out why none is ever alone in my kingdom. And Elias immediately felt hope: for he knew by now that every new discovery brought him nearer to the heart of God, and the heart of God was infinitely deeper than all the stars together.

And somewhere behind it lay a secret that would even surpass his deepest desire for connectedness.

CHAPTER 12

THE BOND

The journey to the next destination did not last long, or perhaps it lasted for a very long time. Elias knew that time in the new creation was no longer measured by clocks. Some moments seemed to contain eternity. Other centuries felt like a breath. Yet he felt that they were getting closer to something that had occupied him all his life. Connection. Not superficial bonding. Not companionship.

Not communication, but real community, the kind of community he'd always wanted, even when he hadn't had words for it, even when he was a boy looking at the stars and wondering, "Does anyone really exist outside me?" Now he felt that he was coming close to the answer. A world appeared to them. No city. No nebula. No library. A valley. A huge valley. Larger than continents.

And they came from different directions, and they all flowed together, and not into one river, but into a harmony of streams, and Jesus stood. And Elias nodded, and said, "Yes, that is a picture." And Jesus smiled, and said, "From my kingdom." And they went on. And the nearer they came to the valley, the more Elias began to feel something.

Not with his body. With his heart. He felt joy. Love. Amazement. Hope. Not only his own feelings. Also others. But without confusion. Without losing himself. He stood. Amazed. "What happens?" Jesus looked at him. "You are beginning to experience the connection." "I feel others." "Yes." "Read their thoughts?" "No." "What then?" Jesus pointed to the rivers.

"As those rivers are connected without losing their own source." Slowly Elias began to understand. He felt no information. He felt life. Real life. A mother who felt joy about her children. An artist who enjoyed beauty. A wolf who was happy during a journey through a forest. A group of friends who explored a world together. Everything flowed through Christ. Everything remained personal.

But nothing remained closed. Elias felt tears rising up. His whole earthly life he had struggled with isolation. Even when he was surrounded by men. Even when he was loved. Even when he loved. There was always a distance. Always a border. Always a wall. Now began to disappear. Not because he lost himself. But because Christ connected everyone. They reached a large square.

There were thousands of people there. Children. Older. Men. Women. People from all time of history. Animals walked free between them. Lions. Horses. Wolves. Deer. Birds. No one was afraid. No one felt threatened. Everyone radiated the same peace. Suddenly Elias heard someone laughing. He turned around. There stood Mei. His old colleague. His friend. The woman who had told him:

"You're not looking for proof. You're looking for a witness." Elias smiled wide. "Mei." They embraced each other. Immediately he felt something special. Not her thoughts. Not her memories. But her joy. Her love. Her gratitude. And to his surprise she felt the same. Mei smiled. "Now you understand." "Yes." "You're not alone." Those words brought him back to

Luna Station. To the artificial stars. To his prayer.

And he said to them, Let there be one. How small was this loneliness now? not because his desire was wrong; but because the answer was so much greater. Jesus came to them. And he said to them, What is it that thou hast felt? Elias looked about.

"And you are the source." Jesus nodded. Not proud. Not solemn. Just true. Suddenly something happened. The whole valley began to shine. Not bright. Warm. Living. Elias looked up. Above them appeared lightlines. Millions. Billions. They connected people. Animals with humans. Angels with humans. Worlds with worlds. All connected. All living. Everything flowing from Christ. He saw that every relationship had a unique color.

Every friendship, every family bond, every collaboration, every encounter, nothing was identical, God didn't like uniformity, God loved harmony, as a symphony contains thousands of different tones, yet one piece of music, filled Elias with a deep emotion, because suddenly he understood something, and on earth people had often thought that individuality and connection were opposite each other, as if you had to choose.

Or be yourself. Or be connected. But in God's Kingdom it turned out exactly the opposite. The more one became himself... the more he became connected. And the more connected... the more everyone's unique beauty became visible. May looked at the lines of light. "Beautiful, isn't it?" "More than beautiful." "I know." Jesus looked at the endless valley. Then He spoke words that Elias would never forget.

"This was always My intention." For a long time it remained silent. No one had to say anything. The truth of those words was everywhere. This was what creation was made for. This was what love existed for. This was what Christ had suffered for. Not only salvation. Not only forgiveness. But fellowship. Living fellowship. Eternal bondage. Then Jesus pointed to a new horizon. Far beyond the valley. Far beyond the mountains.

There was a light shining even greater. A light that seemed to be pure worship. Pure joy. Pure love. Elias immediately felt expectation. "What is there?" he asked. Jesus smiled. His eyes shone. "The Feast of the People." And again Elias knew that the next discovery would deepen everything he had seen so far. For in God's Kingdom, every horizon appeared to be just the beginning of a new one.

CHAPTER 13

THE FEAST OF THE NATIONS

The light on the horizon grew with every step. Elias had learned by now that every new destiny revealed something of God's heart. The Singing Star had taught him that creation worships. The Living Nebula had taught him that communion lives. The Library of Providence had taught him that love never gives up. The Valley of Covenant had taught him that no one really is meant alone.

But what was now before him felt different. Greater. Richer. Joyful. As if all earlier discoveries were coming together here. They reached a high mountain pass. Jesus remained standing. "There." Elias looked out over the valley on the other side. And his breath stalled. As far as he could see he saw people. Millions. Maybe billions. People from every century. Every culture. Every nation. Everywhere there were tents. Pleines. Gardens. Music pavilions.

Fountains. Lightfields. And above all, there was an atmosphere of joy that was almost tangible. "What is this?" he asked. Though he suspected the answer. Jesus smiled. "The Feast of the People." Among them waved a sea of colors. African robes. Asian silk. European costumes. Unknown clothing from forgotten civilizations. Clothing from times Elias couldn't even place. People from thousands of years of history. Together.

Not mixed, not equalized, but united, every culture seemed more beautiful than ever, free from pride, free from fear, free from division, everything that had remained good, everything that was beautiful, everything that God had ever meant, they were immediately greeted by music, not one music style, thousands of musical songs, songs, songs of the people, corn, rhythms, instruments Elias had never seen before, but nothing bumped.

Everything was one great piece of music, like the colors of a rainbow, like voices in a choir, like stars in the sky, a man came to them laughing, his skin was dark, his eyes were joyful, he embraced Jesus, "Welcome!" Not far from that, an old Chinese woman greeted Christ with the same love. A little further, people came from South America. Northern Europe. The Middle East.

Everyone knew Him. Everyone loved Him. And He knew everyone. Elias looked amazed. Jesus seemed to be in no hurry. He had a smile for every man. For every man a word. For every man the same love. They reached a large square. In the middle stood a table. A table so big that a city had fit. Yet she felt intimate. Personal.

As if there was a place for every person present. And perhaps so was. "Is this..." Elias was looking for words. "Yes." Jesus smiled. "A reminder of the great wedding meal." Elias looked at the table. Suddenly he understood something. On earth people had often thought that heaven was mainly about individual happiness. But God's Kingdom turned out to be something else. It was family. Community. Living together. Celebrating together. Discovering together.

A group of children ran by, and a flock of horses followed them. An eagle hovered over the square. Birds sang along with musicians, even the animals seemed to be part of the feast. And why not? Elias thought. They were also of God's creation, not as a set, not as possession, but as beloved

creatures. A woman came standing beside him, wearing clothes from an age Elias did not recognize.

"Good, isn't it?" He smiled. "More than beautiful." She nodded. "On earth many people thought that heaven would be boring." Elias laughed. "I don't understand that anymore." "I don't." She looked out over the feast. "I think people often underestimate how much joy God has." Those words lingered on. How much joy God has. That was it. Every place Elias had visited radiated the same reality.

God was not thriving with joy. Not careful. Not reluctant. He gave abundant. Like stars giving light. Like fountains watering. As love gives himself. Suddenly sounded a new music. Deeper. Richer. Mightier. The whole square became quiet. Millions of people turned around. The animals also seemed to listen. Jesus smiled. "It begins." "What begins?" asked Elias. But at that moment he saw it.

On the horizon light appeared, not just a light, a presence, a glory, a love, so deep, so rich, so beautiful, that Elias fell immediately to his knees, not out of fear, out of fear, others all around him did the same, a holy silence filled the valley, and then a voice spoke, not loud, but more powerful than all the stars, softer than a whisper, but deeper than the ocean, the voice of the Father, "Welcome, children."

There was no need for more words, for in those two words everything lay. Acceptance. Love. Joy. Home. Elias felt how the Father's love flowed through all creation. Through humans. By animals. By angels. By stars. Through worlds. Through everything. And suddenly he understood why Christ had brought him here. Not to learn anything new. But to experience something deeper. The Father really rejoiced in His children.

Not despite who they were. But because they were His. Tears ran over Elias' face. He thought of his old life. Luna Station. To the artificial stars. To his loneliness. To his question: "Does there really exist someone besides me?" Now he knew the answer. Not just someone. Billions. A family. A kingdom. A Father. And a love that appeared greater than all the stars together. For a long time he kneeled. Listening.

Worshipping. Enjoying. Until the music began again. And the feast continued. Greater. Rider. Joyful than ever. For in God's kingdom joy never ends. It grows. Always deeper. Always closer to the Father's heart. And yet Elias knew something for sure. No matter how great this feast was... there was still more waiting. For every discovery turned out to be only a new door to an even greater reality.

And Christ already smiled as He looked at another horizon.

CHAPTER 14

THE GREAT FAMILY

The Feast of the People continued. Or perhaps it had become part of reality itself. For Elias never saw a beginning. Nowhere was Elias an end. Only growing joy. Growing love. Growing community. And yet again he felt that familiar call. The invitation to go on. Deeper view. Discovering Jesus stood beside him at the edge of the vast festival grounds. Among them a sea of people waved.

Millions of voices, millions of stories, millions of lives, and yet they formed one family. Elias looked at Christ. "How many people are here?" Jesus smiled. "More than you can count." "Myths?" "Much more." Elias laughed. That answer began to be familiar. God's reality always turned out to be greater than his questions. Jesus pointed to a mountain range in the distance. "Come." They left the party. They slowly climbed up.

As they came up, the view became more impressive. Among them was the valley, beyond the mountains, behind the cities, behind the sea, and beyond the sea, and a thousand other worlds, all connected, all living, all carried by the same love. On top of the mountain was a building. Simple. Warm. Inviting. No palace. No throne room. Earlier a house. A home. Above the entrance were words written.

The house of the newcomers Elias stood. "Newcomers?" Jesus nodded. "Yes." "As I once was." "Exactly." They went in. Space was filled with light. But especially with people. Some were joyful. Others stood still. Amazing. Overwhelmed. Some cried. Not of sadness. From coming home. Suddenly Elias saw something. A man who found his wife. Children who met their grandparents.

Friends who embraced each other after decades of separation. Restoration everywhere. Reunion everywhere. Love everywhere. His eyes were damp. "This is happening all the time." He asked. Jesus nodded. "Every day." "Still?" "Yes." "After all this time?" Jesus smiled. "The family continues to grow." Those words touched him. The family continues to grow. He had often seen the new creation as an end.

But again he discovered that she was a beginning. New people came home constantly. New stories began. New relationships arose. A young woman came to them. She seemed surprised. As if she had just woken up from a long dream. "Where am I?" she asked softly. Jesus looked at her lovingly. "Home." The woman began to cry. Not because she was sad. Because her deepest desire was finally fulfilled.

Elias looked on. Suddenly he remembered his own arrival. His confusion. His wonder. His first meeting with his father. His first meeting with Christ. And for the first time he realized how much those meetings had meant to him. Jesus looked at him. "Do you remember?" Elias nodded. "Yes." Jesus smiled. "You understand why you are here." Elias frowned. "Here?" "Yes." "Why am I here?"

Jesus looked at the new arrivals, and they rejoiced, and wondered, and asked, and looked again at Elias. And he said, "Because you are going to help them." And Elias looked amazed. And Elias looked at them, and said, "Yes," but there are so many others. And he said, "Why do I?" Jesus smiled, and said, "Why not?" Elias laughed, and he could have expected that answer.

There were groups of people who accompanied new residents everywhere, and some of them explained how the new creation worked, and others listened to stories, and others helped families find each other, and everywhere he saw the same thing, and there was no obligation, and no task, and love, and an older man came to them, and Elias immediately recognized him, and his father, and he smiled wide, and said, "I wondered when he would ask you this."

And he looked upon the newcomers, and said, "Do you remember how you felt lost?" And he said, "And how much you wanted to speak to someone who understood what you were going through?" Elias nodded. His father put a hand on his shoulder, and said, "You may be for others." And the words touched him, because suddenly he saw the pattern, and his father had accompanied him on earth, and his father had accompanied him in the new creation.

Now he was allowed to accompany others himself, not because he was special, not because he was wise, but because love is always passed on, like light, like fire, like joy. Later that day Elias sat on a terrace above the House of Newcomers. Under him he saw people arriving. Over and over again. Over and over again. Each arrival a miracle. Each reunion a feast. Each new resident a beloved child of the Father.

And Jesus sat beside him, and said to him, For a long time, Elias said, I thought that the heavens were most about to be received. And many men think of it. And Jesus said, Behold, Elias looked down at the people, and looked down at the children, and rejoiced, and said, Love is always flowing. And Jesus nodded, and said, Exactly. And the sun was not here, but it felt as though the evening was drawing near.

A warm glow filled the sky. A sense of peace was hanging over everything. Then Jesus looked again at the horizon. Farther than Elias had ever looked. There was a light shining greater than worlds. Greater than stars. Greater than anything he had seen so far. Elias immediately felt awe. "What is that?" he asked. Jesus smiled. A smile full of expectation. "The King's Council." His heart began to beat faster.

Because he knew what that meant by a new horizon, a new discovery, a new invitation, and again it would appear that God's kingdom was much bigger than he could ever have dreamed, and the journey continued, and eternity still felt like the beginning.

CHAPTER 15

THE KING'S COUNCIL

The way to the King's Council was higher than all previous journeys, not higher in distance, higher in meaning, that felt Elias immediately. Since his arrival in the new creation, he had learned that every place revealed something of God's character, the First City had spoken of coming home, the Singing Star of worship, the Living Nevel of community, the Library of Providence about God's faithfulness.

The Feast of the Peoples about joy. The House of Newcomers about love that is passed on. But the King's Council felt different. Here he would discover something about responsibility. Not the responsibility of the old world. Not power. Not control. Not status. But something new. Together with Jesus he reached a plateau. There stood a building. No palace. No fortress. No throne room.

To his surprise it seemed more like an open garden. Trees grew between columns of light. Rivers flowed through the halls. Flowers bloomed among paths. All breathing peace. "This is the Council?" said Elias. Jesus smiled. "Why not?" Elias laughed. He had learned that God's kingdom continually reversed his expectations. They went in. To his surprise he saw no throne. No royal seats.

No hierarchy, people were gathered together in groups, some were talking, others were listening, everyone seemed really interested in the other, no discussion to win, no struggle to influence, only seeking what was good, what was good, what was life, what was brought to them, a man came to meet them. Elias immediately recognized him. Moses. Not as the impressive prophet from paintings, not as the leader of Israel.

But as a kind man with warm eyes, Moses embraced Jesus. Then he looked at Elias. "Welcome." "Thank you." Moses smiled. "You are curious." "That's right." "Good." He pointed to the people around them. "We are busy here." "What?" Moses looked at him amused. "With the same as always." "And that's how love serves." Those words surprised him. He expected something greater. Something more impressive.

Moses seemed to read his mind. "People on earth often think that leadership means others listen to you." He looked around. "Here is leadership that you learn to listen." Elias kept quiet. For deep down he knew Moses was right. How many problems had arisen on earth because people wanted to be heard but didn't want to listen? They walked on. He saw people working together everywhere.

Not to force decisions, but to discover possibilities, new projects, new worlds, new forms of beauty, new ways of serving others, suddenly Jesus stood before them, a great map appeared before them, not of stars, not of worlds, of people, billions of light points, connected, growing, "What is this?" asked Elias. Jesus looked at the map, "These are the relationships of My Kingdom."

Elias looked breathless on. Every connection shone light. Friendships. Families. Collaborations. Meetings. Everything formed a huge network of love. "This is bigger than galaxies." Jesus smiled. "Much larger." Then He pointed to a small point of light. Elias saw a new resident. Someone who had just arrived. Several connections appeared around him. People who helped him. Listened. Guided.

"Do you see?" Jesus asked. "Yes." "That is leadership." Elias looked surprised. "That?" "Yes." "Do not rule?" "No." "No." "No giving orders?" "No." "Not exercising power?" Jesus shook His head. "Leadership means helping grow." Those words touched him deeply. Suddenly he remembered something from his earthly life. How often had he successfully associated influence?

How many times did he think that being important meant that many people listened to you? Now he saw how different God's kingdom worked. The greatest leaders were those who helped others. As Christ Himself. They reached an open square. There were hundreds of people there. And animals. And angels. Together they worked on a new project. A young woman led the group. Or rather, she served the group. She listened. Asked questions.

Confused. Confused ideas with each other. Everyone grew under her guidance. No one got smaller. "See?" Jesus asked. "Elias nodded." "She makes others bigger." "Exactly." Jesus smiled. "That's always been My way." Suddenly Elias saw something. The cross. Not literally. But as a principle. The greatest became servant. The most powerful gave Himself. The King washed feet. That had never changed, not even in eternity.

And it was here that he saw it brighter than ever. Later he and Jesus sat by a river. The water was slowly passing by. In the distance people were working on new projects. New worlds. New places of encounter. New adventures. Everything carried by love. Elias looked at Christ. "Why do you show me this?" Jesus smiled. "Because you will soon be given more responsibility." Elias looked amazed. "I?" "Yes."

"What responsibility?" Jesus looked at the river. He looked at the water that gave life to all that touched it. Then He answered, "The same responsibility I always give." "What?" Jesus looked at him. His eyes were warm. Depth. Love. "Take life to others." Those words lingered. Not power. Not status. Not honor. Love. Joy. Hope. That was the command. That was always the command.

Slowly Elias looked at the horizon, and beyond the King's Council, a new light appeared, even greater, even deeper, and more mysterious, and again he felt that trusted expectation, because he knew something for sure by now, and no matter how much he had discovered, God always had more. Much more. And the most beautiful chapters of eternity might still have to be written.

CHAPTER 16

THE FIRST MISSION

Elias thought long about what Jesus had said, "Take life to others." The words continued to move through him, not as an order, not as a busy order, but as an invitation, as many things in God's kingdom. Since his arrival he had discovered that love never forced. Love was inviting. Love attracted. Love aroused desire. Yet he knew something new began. He felt it.

As he used to feel when an important investigation was about to start. Only now the expectation was deeper. Joyful. He was again in the House of Newcomers. People came in. People found family. People discovered their new reality. Some immediately luminous. Others needed time. Not because of grief. But because of wonder.

And a young man stood by the edge of a garden, and looked at the mountains, and looked at the sky, and looked at the world round about him, and saw Elias, and saw him, and he had carried him, and looked at him, and he looked at him, and said, "Yes, I know, I know, I know." And he said, "Too beautiful." And Elias smiled, and said, "That's what I thought." And the man looked again at the horizon, and said, "I don't understand."

Elias began to laugh. "And?" "And?" "I stopped." "Why?" Elias looked up. "At the endless sky. "At the stars that were visible even during the day. "Because I found that wonder is often more beautiful than understanding." The man smiled. "A little uncertain, but sincere."

For the first time Elias felt what his father had ever done for him. He did not have to answer. He was present alone. To be with someone. To listen. To be accompanied. Just as Christ did constantly. Later that day Jesus appeared. He stood under a tree while children and animals were playing around him. As always, everything seemed to be more alive in His presence. "How was it?" He asked. "Good."

"What have you learned?" Elias thought, "That people do not always need answers." Jesus smiled. "That is an important discovery." "I used to think that wisdom meant that you knew a lot." "And now?" Elias looked at the young man who was talking to others. "Now I think that wisdom often means that you stand next to someone." Jesus nodded satisfied.

That same evening ...

Jesus smiled. "A young world." "Young world?" "Yes." "Everyone there?" "And animals." "And angels." "And travelers." "Elias felt the same excitement he used to feel for a scientific expedition. But this journey was different. Now it wasn't about knowledge. Not about research. Not about proof. Now it was about people. To live. Not much later he was aboard a lightcraft.

Along with some other companions, there were people from different times, a woman from the first centuries of the church, a twenty-first century scientist, a boy who had lived on earth less than twenty years ago, and to his joy Arion was also present. The great silver wolf jumped aboard. "I'm going." Elias smiled. "I had hoped so." "New worlds are fun." "Why?"

CHAPTER 17

THE WORLD OF AURORA

The world slowly appeared out of light. At first Elias saw only colours. Deep blue. Bright green. Golden clouds. Then the shapes became clearer. Oceans. Continents. Mountain chains. Stretched forests. Rivers that flowed like silver ribbons through the landscape. Aurora. His first destination as a guide. His first assignment. He stood at the front of the lightcraft as the world grew ever larger.

And Arion sat next to him, and the silver wolf looked down, and said, "This smells good." Elias smiled, "You always say that." "No." Arion shook his head. "This smells really good." Even Jesus seemed amused. "Maybe we should take your judgment system more seriously." And not much later they landed on a great plain. Soft grass flowed into the wind. Flowers shone out colours that Elias had never seen.

Some known. Other totally new. Giant winged animals hovered over the mountains. Little luminous beings darted between the flowers. Everything lived. Everything was joyful. Yet Elias noticed something different. People. Many people. Newcomers. Not only arrived from the earth. But residents of this young community. They were still discovering their world. To find their place. To get to know their possibilities.

A woman came to meet them, with bright blue eyes and a kind look. "Welcome to Aurora." Jesus embraced her. "Good to see you again, Lydia." She smiled. "We are glad you have come." Elias looked curious. "Why do you need help?" Lydia laughed. "For the same reason that children need their parents." She pointed to the world around them. "We are learning." Those words surprised him. Learn even here.

Even in the new creation. But of course. Why would growth ever stop? They walked to a high viewpoint. From there they could see a large part of Aurora. Everywhere people were busy. New gardens were built. Communities grew. Artworks arose. Animals were cared for. New discoveries were made. Everything lived. But not everything was simple. Lydia pointed to an area on the horizon.

"There's a challenge." "A challenge?" asked Elias. She nodded. "No problem." "No conflict." "No evil." "But a challenge." That sounded different. That sounded very different than the old earth. She continued: "That region is huge." "Full of wonderful possibilities." "But many residents feel overwhelmed." Elias immediately understood. No fear. No danger. But the question: Where do I start? What is my place? What can I contribute?

He remembered his own first days, his own wonder, his own insecurity, and suddenly he realized why Jesus had sent him here, because he knew this, because he understood this, not from theory, but from experience, and later that day he spoke to a group of residents, and they were sitting under a tree whose leaves were light, and everyone told his story, a young artist, a researcher.

A woman who loved animals, a man who wanted to explore new worlds, all of them had the same question. What is my place? Elias listened. For a long time he said nothing. Then he told about himself. About Luna Station. About Veritas Omega. About his quest. About his doubts. About his meeting with Christ. No one interrupted him. Everyone listened. Then he said something that suddenly became clear to him himself.

"Maybe your place doesn't begin with what you do." The group looked at him. "Maybe your place begins with whom you love." There was a silence. Not uncomfortable. Deep. True. Lydia smiled. A boy looked up. A woman got tears in her eyes. Somewhere they knew it was true. On earth people had often sought identity by performance. By success. By meaning. Here they found again what had always been true.

Relationship preceded task. Love preceded destiny. Jesus was a little further between the children. He played with a group of young lions. At the same time He spoke with some residents. And He listened to an old man. As always He seemed fully present to everyone. Elias looked at Him. Suddenly he understood something new. Christ never gave orders. He first gave Himself. And from that relationship everything arose.

Later that night Elias looked out over Aurora. Lightfields shone between the mountains. Music sounded in the distance. Animals moved through the valleys. Communities grew. Life flourished. And for the first time he felt that he was really allowed to contribute. Not something great. Not something spectacular. But something of the love he himself had received. Jesus came standing beside him. "And?" He asked. Elias smiled. "I am beginning to understand."

Elias looked down at the world, and he looked down at Christ, and said, "That your kingdom grows by love." Jesus nodded, "Always." "Not by power." "No." "Not by compulsion." "No." "Not by impressive achievement." Jesus smiled. "Not by the stars." Then looked he far beyond Aurora. "From all that Elias knew. His eyes shone expectation. "We are not yet ready." Elias began to laugh. "Of course not."

"There is something waiting." "Greater," said Elias. Jesus smiled. "Much larger." And again, a new light opened up on the horizon, a new world, a new discovery, for even now, after all that he had seen, Elias began to suspect that he was only on the edge of God's infinite kingdom, and that prospect filled him with joy.

CHAPTER 18

THE OCEAN OF LIVING LIGHT

The journey from Aurora felt different. No faster. No further. But deeper. As if they were not traveling through space but by meaning. Even Arion was unusually quiet. The great silver wolf lay ahead in the lightcraft and looked continuously at the horizon. Elias noticed it. "You are quiet." Arion looked up. "Listen." "What?" The wolf turned his attention again. "You do not hear it yet." Elias listened.

At first he heard nothing, except the gentle movement of the lightcraft, only the silence of the star sea, but slowly... very slowly... he began to perceive something. A vibration. A rhythm. A melody. Far away. Unimaginably far away. And yet it came closer. Jesus stood next to him. A smile appeared on His face. "Now you hear it." Elias nodded. "What is that?" Jesus looked at the horizon. "The Ocean of Living Light."

The name alone did something to him, not because he understood what it meant, but because he felt it was important, very important, slowly the ocean appeared, not an ocean like on earth, not water, not waves, not a sea of liquid, before them was an ocean of light, endless, boundless, living, billions of colors moving through each other, golden waves, blue streams, silver rivers, violet shines.

Everything was flowing, everything was alive, everything was singing, and then Elias realized that the sound he heard came from the ocean itself, and the ocean sang, not with words, not with music as people made, but with meaning, with joy, with adoration, with love, and he felt how his heart began to beat faster, not with fear, of recognition, as if he had seen something he had longed for his whole life without knowing.

They landed on the edge of the ocean, and as soon as Elias got out, something special happened, a wave of light came to him, not threatening, not overwhelming, not Welcome hot, and when the wave hit him, he saw images, a mother hugging her child, a man who gave forgiveness, a girl who first discovered a new world, a group of friends who sang a song together, a lion who played with children.

An old woman who met Christ. Millions of moments. Millions of moments. All filled with joy. The images disappeared. Elias looked amazed at Jesus. "What was that?" "Rememberings." "Who?" Jesus looked at the ocean. "Everyone's." Elias remained silent. For suddenly he began to understand. The ocean consisted of more than light. More than energy. More than beauty. The ocean contained joy. Real joy.

The joy of all creation, everything that had ever been good, everything that had ever been loved, everything that had ever reflected God's glory, nothing lost, nothing, they walked along the shore, millions of light waves rolling softly towards them, every wave bringing new images, new memories, new stories, a child who first saw a star, an artist who completed a masterpiece.

An animal that discovered his freedom. A community that grew together. Everywhere the same pattern. Life. Love. Joy. Elias looked at the endless ocean. "Why does this exist?" Jesus smiled. "Why do people keep their most beautiful memories?" Elias thought for a moment. "Because they are precious." Jesus nodded. "Exactly." They reached a high cliff. From there they could see the entire ocean. As far as the eye could see. And even further.

For the ocean seemed to stretch beyond the horizon. Beyond stars. Beyond worlds. Beyond everything. Elias felt small. But not insignificant. Rather beloved. As a child feels small when it first sees the sea. And at the same time knows that his father is standing beside him. For a long time they stood silently side by side. Then Jesus spoke. "Elias." "Yes?" "What do you think is the greatest power of my kingdom?"

Elias thought. Love. Joy. Truth. Mercy. Everything seemed possible. Eventually he answered: "Love." Jesus smiled. "That's true." He pointed to the ocean. "But do you know what love does?" Elias looked at the waves. Then he shook his head. "She shares herself." The words touched him deeply. For immediately he saw it. The whole ocean consisted of shared joy. Shared love. Shared beauty. Nothing was held.

Everything flowed, like rivers, like light, like music, like grace, and suddenly a huge wave of light appeared, bigger than mountains, higher than cities, and it slowly rolled through the ocean, not devastating, majestic, and as it passed by, Elias saw something incredible, and in the wave, thousands of worlds reflected, millions of lives, countless stories, all connected, all carried, all loved, tears appeared in his eyes.

And Jesus looked at the ocean, and said, This is but a glimpse. And Elias began to laugh. And he said, This is because it is always true. And they looked at the endless sea of light. And Jesus pointed to a point on the furthest horizon, and there appeared a new thing, and there was no world, no star, no nebula, a light that seemed to encompass all the other lights, as if all the beauty there was there.

As if all joy was flowing from there. As if all love had begun there. Elias immediately felt awe. "What is that?" he asked softly. Jesus looked at the distant light. His eyes shone with a depth Elias had never seen before. "That, My friend..." He smiled. "...is the Source." And suddenly Elias knew that the greatest discovery of his journey was ahead of him. Not a world. Not a galaxy. Not a miracle.

But an even deeper revelation of the heart of God Himself.

CHAPTER 19

THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS

The light on the horizon grew slowly, not because they were getting closer, but because Elias started to look differently, and he realized that over time, since his first trip with Veritas Omega, his biggest problem had not been that he saw too little, his problem had been that he was looking wrong, looking for evidence, for explanations, for systems, for answers.

But again and again Christ had taught him that the deepest truth was a Person. Now he felt that that lesson reached its peak. The Source. Even the word sounded different. Deeper. Richer. As if all earlier discoveries were coming together in it. The lightcraft moved silently. Among them was still the Ocean of Living Light. Billions of joy. Billions of stories. Billions of memories.

But for them something bigger appeared now, much bigger, not a place, not a world, not a building, a presence, a reality, a glory, Elias felt his heart beat faster, not of fear, of desire, a desire that he knew, the same desire that had made him look at the stars as a boy, the same desire that had driven him to Veritas Omega, the same desire that had led him through all the worlds.

But now he finally understood what he was really looking for. Not knowledge. Not sure. Not even heaven. God. Jesus was standing beside him. His gaze rested on the light. And for the first time in a long time he didn't speak. Elias noticed. Normally Christ explained. Answered questions. Now he kept silent. As if words were no longer sufficient. Slowly they came closer. Then something happened. Not outside him. Within him.

All the memories of his life began to come together. His youth. His father. Anna. May. Luna Station. Veritas Omega. The Throne. The First City. The Singing Star. Aurora. Everything. As if his whole existence formed one story. One way. One journey. Always leading to this moment. Tears appeared in his eyes. Jesus looked at him. "You understand." It was no question. Elias nodded. "Yes." "What do you understand?" For a long time he found no words.

Then he softly said, "That you have always been the goal." Jesus smiled. Not proud. Not solemn. Just loving. "Yes." The light grew deeper. More rich. Until Elias realized that it was not from one source. It was the Source. All the beauty he had ever seen came from here. All the joy. All the music. All the truth. All the community. All the sudden he saw something. Not with his eyes. With his heart.

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Billions of voices, billions of lives, billions of worlds, everything focused on the same Source, not out of fear, not out of obligation, out of joy, out of recognition, then he heard a voice, not like before, not from outside, as if she spoke directly through the whole creation, through stars, through oceans, through people, through his own heart, the voice of the Father, "My beloved children," four words.

But in those words was more love than any language could ever comprehend. Elias felt how reality seemed to answer itself. Not with words. With joy. With worship. With gratitude. Then something unexpected happened. He saw Christ. Not as he had seen Him before. Not as the Friend. Not only as the King. Not only as the Savior. He saw Him as the center of everything.

Like stars moving around a sun, like rivers flowing to the sea, like music returning to its theme, everything found its center in Him. And all of a sudden Elias understood words he had ever read on earth, that all was created by Him, that all was created for Him, that all was in Him. Now he saw it. Truly. The whole creation was a love story. And Christ stood in the midst.

Not as a ruler who drew everything to him, but as a love who carried everything. Elias cried. Not of grief. Not of regret. Of beauty. Of awe. Of gratitude. For he finally understood why the journey would never end. God was infinite. Not only in power. Not only in knowledge. But in beauty. In love. In joy. That meant that there would always be more to discover. Always more to love.

Always more to admire. Always more to share. Jesus put a hand on his shoulder. "Are you disappointed?" Elias looked surprised. "Disappointed?" "That you still don't understand everything." Then Elias began to laugh. A deep, liberated smile. Perhaps the happiest smile of his existence. "No." "Why not?" Elias looked again at the Source. At the glory. At the love. At the infinite reality of God.

And he answered, Because I finally understood that the most beautiful thing is that there will always be more. Jesus smiled. His eyes shone. "Welcome to eternity." They continued to look together. To the Source. To love. To the Father's heart. And Elias knew: the greatest discovery of his life had not been an answer. Not a theory. Not a world. Not even heaven.

The biggest discovery was that he was loved forever and that love would never stop.

CHAPTER 20

THE ETERNAL DISCOVERY

For a long time they stayed at the Source. How long did Elias know exactly. Maybe days. Maybe centuries. Maybe just a few moments. Time had lost its power here. Not because it no longer existed. But because love had become more important than time. Eventually they rose up. Not because the moment was over. But because the journey continued. As always. As eternity was meant. Jesus walked next to him.

They left together the place where the Source had been visible, or perhaps it was still visible, because once Elias had seen her, he discovered her everywhere, in every star, in every tree, in every smile, in every encounter, in every world, everywhere he saw traces of the same love, the same glory, the same Father, reaching a high mountain, higher than all the mountains Elias had ever seen.

From the top he looked out over a reality that seemed to have no boundaries. Below him lay worlds. Thousands. Millions. Perhaps countless. Some he knew. The First City. Aurora. The Singing Star. The Living Nebula. Other he had never seen before. New star seas. New light fields. New worlds full of possibilities. New adventures. New communities. New wonders.

And even behind those worlds were even more horizons. Even more beauty. Even more discoveries. Elias looked silently. His heart was full. Not because he had seen everything. But precisely because he knew he would never do so. Before that thought would have troubled him. Now she made him happy. For it meant that God's goodness was truly infinite. Jesus stood beside him. As so often. As always.

They looked at the future together. Then Elias asked, "How many worlds are there?" Jesus smiled. "More than you can visit." "How many wonders are there?" "More than you can count." "How much beauty is there?" Jesus looked at the horizon. "More than you can ever comprehend." Elias laughed. Not surprised. Not surprised. For at last he understood that the answer would always remain the same. God was always greater.

Deeper. Richer. Nicer. Than every discovery. A gentle wind drew over the mountain top. Downstairs Elias saw lightmen leave. New expeditions. New projects. New travels. New encounters. Life grew everywhere. Joy grew everywhere. Love grew everywhere. And no one seemed afraid that it would ever stop. Because nobody had to be afraid. Suddenly a group of children appeared. They came running up the mountain laughing.

And there followed behind them a colourful collection of animals. Wolves. Deer. Birds. A young lion. And to Elias' surprise also Arion. The great silver wolf sat next to him. "You look back at the horizon." Elias smiled. "That's right." Arion looked along. "After that there must be something beautiful." "I think so." "Shall we go and look?" Elias started laughing. That was exactly what he thought. Jesus looked at them both. His eyes shone joy.

The children cheered, and the animals were excited, and suddenly Elias felt the same expectation that he had felt as a boy when he looked at the stars, but now without uncertainty, without fear, without loneliness, and knew that he had not been alone. Never would have been. Mei appeared. His father came along. Friends gathered together.

And there was a group of them who were ready to go, and not because they missed something, but because they wanted to discover it, and to continue to share it, and to grow it, and to look at the group that was gathered, and to speak words that Elias would never forget.

Like the Throne, as at the Source, and "And you?" Elias looked at the horizon, and looked at the endless worlds, and at the stars, and to the friends next to him, and to Christ, and then he answered, "Yes," not because he knew what was coming, not because he understood everything, not because he had no questions about anything, but because he knew who he would travel with. That was enough. More than enough.

Together they began to walk, to a new horizon, to a new discovery, to a new revelation of God's love, and as they disappeared into the light, Elias finally understood the deepest truth of eternity: Heaven had never been the destination, God was the destination, and because God is infinite, the journey would never end, not after a thousand years, not after a million years, not after an eternity.

More love. More fellowship. More of Christ. More of the Father. More of life. And therefore the end of his story was at the same time the beginning of a new chapter. A chapter that would never be written. Because it would never end. END OR BEGIN. With this conclusion The Eternal Discovery rounds off the trilogy:

1. The Other Beyond the Stars . 2. The Land Behind the Morning . 3. The Eternal Discovery ...