

## Conspiracy Theories

“Alright, Winston, this is your office. The job is simple, get the souls to walk through the door.” I look around the plain white room to find nothing but a huge door all the way on the opposite wall.

“That’s all?” I ask.

“Yes. So even *you* can’t mess it up. Don’t make me have to re-assign you again.”

“You won’t have to, sir.”

“Good. Here is your first appointment.” He throws a file my way.

Before Gabriel leaves, I hear him say, “Don’t mess it up, intern.” Good to know my boss has so much faith in me. *Would it kill you to believe?*

I slowly flip through the file of the first soul I get to open the door to Heaven too. A part of me is excited. I wanted a hands-on job; I wanted to see the souls and do a part of God’s work not sit at some desk job calculating and predicting an untimely extinction. No one has been ready to use the big A word yet. They just keep throwing minor inconveniences at Earth like a highly contagious flu-like virus hoping humanity learns their lesson. I think they will, but Gabriel doesn’t. Big shocker there.

The file is rather thin and for the most part doesn’t contain anything all that interesting. Andy Kazoo is a 35-year-old customer support agent for a small regional brick distributor. *Wow that’s lame.* A brick distributor? What and Why?

Before I have a chance to dive further into whatever there is left to read, Andy Kazoo appears before me in a flash. I love a dramatic entrance. *Alright let’s do this.*

“Where am I? Who are you? What is this?” Andy spins around in circles taking in the brightness.

“Hi, Andy. I’m Winston and this is—”

“How do you know my name?”

“I am an ang—”

“What am I doing here?”

“Look!” I say having no idea where to even start. Maybe this is going to be harder than I thought. “Give me a chance to explain everything.”

Andy opens his mouth to speak but quickly shuts it. I smooth down my robe and try to pull myself together. “My name is Winston. I am an angel of the Lord, and I am here to guide you into the afterlife.”

I see Andy’s eyes roll into the back of his head as his soul tries to faint but it can’t since his physical body is gone.

“What? So, I’m dead? I’m dead!”

“Uh, yeah, sort of.”

His eyes almost bug out of his head. “What do you mean sort of?”

“Well, you haven’t crossed over yet which is why I’m here. I make sure your soul crosses over.” I smile hoping it helps with the delivery of all that information.

“So, you’re an angel?” Andy asks.

“Yes.”

“And I’m going to Heaven?”

“Yes.”

He smiles. “Good to know. Alright, Winnie, here’s the deal. I’m not dying today so send me back however I got here and I’ll see you in a few years.”

Uh oh. This isn’t good. “I’m sorry what did you say?”

“I’ll see you in a few years, so if you could just send me back to my body, I’d really appreciate that.” He turns around only to find no door. The only door in the room leads to Heaven which means crossing over.

“Andy, I can’t let you leave. Even if I wanted to, I can’t. I don’t know how to send you back. The only way out of this room is through that door.” I point behind me.

He sighs. “I hate to break it to you, but I’m not walking through *that* door.”

“Andy, please don’t make this harder than it has to be.”

“Oh, I’m going to. Let me out or I want to speak with the manager or whoever is in charge around here. I want to talk to God.”

It takes everything in me to keep a straight face. *You’ve got to be kidding me.* I must’ve misread the name of the file because apparently, I’m dealing with a Karen.

“Unfortunately, God is busy at the moment, so it’s going to be just you and me.”

Once again Andy heaves a very dramatic sigh and crosses his arms. “Look, I can’t die. I would be missing out on so much in life.”

“Like what?” I ask always fascinated by what interests humans.

“Well...there’s a new Star Wars series coming out on Disney+ that I can’t miss. I have to chew and fit a whole pack of gum in my mouth, preferably 5 gum. All the rest are garbage. I have to watch *all* of Titanic, and I have to be featured on a cooking show on Food Network like *Beat Bobby Flay* or *Worst Cooks in America*; I have to learn how to play the recorder since it’s been a while since I’ve last picked it up. I really should practice more. I should probably also re-learn how to read music. I’m going to tell myself to start training for a 5K; Maybe own and run a food truck, kind of depends on how the cooking show goes. I mean the list could go on.”

*Interesting such an interesting list.* “That’s a lot you still *have* to do.”

“Exactly which is why I can’t die!”

I nod. I mean he’s right in a way, I guess. “What if I told you, you could achieve most if not all of that in the afterlife?”

He stops picking at his fingers and looks directly at me. “I’m listening.”

“Andy, you can do all of these things in the afterlife. You can watch Star Wars and the Titanic, try chewing a whole pack of gum, run or not run a 5K, and so on.”

“I can do those things?” I can see the wheels turning in his head. Things just got interesting. “Well, would I be able to watch other things?”

“Other movies?”

“And other shows like the *Office* and *How I Met Your Mother*.”

“Yes, all movies and shows are on one streaming platform. Any show and movie you want to watch.”

“On one platform? You’re joking? No Peacock or HBO bullshi—”

“Yes, one platform. There is no need for others.” One of the many downfalls of human society: multiple streaming platforms. All these money grubbing corporations praying on the love people have for these shows. There are way too many now.

“What about food? Is there food in the afterlife?”

“Your soul will no longer need food for energy, but if you do eat it won’t hurt you. Most souls still eat three meals a day.” This topic can get complicated very fast, and the room is starting to get hot from all these questions. Gabriel never said what I was allowed to say or not say. Hopefully, I don’t get in trouble for this.

“So, Burger King chicken fries exist in the afterlife?”

“If you want them to, then they do.”

“What about Hershey’s Kissables, or Kudos Bars, or Danimals crush cups!”

“Yes, yes, and yes.”

“Hmmm, okay.”

“Just okay? Doesn’t that sound great? Doesn’t that sound better than being on Earth?”

Andy doesn’t respond. I can tell he’s still trying to make up his mind. I have to sweeten the deal more.

“I also heard that you like conspiracy theories.”

“Oh yes, I have a blog and everything. I am always reading about different theories.”

“Well, what if I told you that you can find out the answer to any conspiracy in the afterlife.”

His mouth drops.

“Want to know who killed JFK? I know who did it. Want to know who killed JonBenet Ramsey? I know who. Does Big Foot actually exist, Did OJ Simpson do it, did Carol Baskin feed her husband to a Tiger, what’s really going on in Area 51, what happened to the planes and ships that disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle? Walk through that door and you’ll be able to find out.” I’m sure bribing a soul into Heaven isn’t the best way to go about things, but it beats the standstill we would’ve been in.

“Everything I’ve ever wondered, read, and written about I would have the answers to?”

I nod and smile. “Yes, Andy.”

After moment of silence, Andy says, “Alright I’m ready to die.”

“Are you sure?” I ask.

“Yes.” Is all he says as we walk over to the only door in the room.

“See you on the other side.” Andy squints as he steps over the threshold and into the light. Just before I close the door, I hear him say, “That’s who killed JFK?”