

# They Didn't Know

that this is what they would find in heaven

By and Based on the Books of Robert J. Cormier ([www.thefaithkit.org](http://www.thefaithkit.org))  
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The following are twenty-six stories of what people learned immediately on arrival in heaven. In most cases, what they learned was something they didn't know they didn't know.

Abraham didn't know that he had even done it. All he did was hold the door, and smile at some guy whom he let pass. Abraham almost always did this. What he didn't know was that this guy was in despair, feeling worthless and ignored for quite some time. It was getting worse and worse. Anger was building up in him, mostly anger at himself, of course. Happiness was not on the horizon. Somehow, this tiny act of kindness, and the smile that went with it, made this angry guy feel that he, indeed, was somebody, not nobody. As he reflected more and more on this issue, he came to realize that he *was* somebody and to be "somebody" means a lot. He learned to see himself as God sees him and went on to make a quiet, private ministry of helping people to see that they, too, are somebody. He directly affected hundreds of people in his lifetime, and the effects of these contacts reverberated in many directions for the rest of time.

Barbara didn't know that that conversation did, in fact, make a difference. It was a conversation at an airport with a stranger that she would never see again (on earth). Nonetheless, they were sitting next to each other at Gate 22, their flight was delayed, one thing led to another—that other person really needed to talk—and Barbara shared what she understood as the point of view of faith. The other person listened, acknowledged that the point was "interesting," and that was it. Barbara never knew that this person kept thinking about it, got it, was now looking at life in a new way; and this led to many other breakthroughs. Neither person knew all the awful things that were lined up to happen—even involving the injury of many other people—but didn't happen because of these breakthroughs. Neither person knew that, in heaven, we recognize other people for the good they inspired in us, and this becomes part of the unique love that unites us with them.

Charles didn't know how much every little thing matters. He didn't realize that every prayer, every minute of meditation, every act of patience and compassion, and every little sacrifice, made his spirit *somewhat* deeper,

and once he was transformed by the direct sight of God, this *somewhat* was magnified enormously—enormously for every single bit of growth. It was like getting a billion for investing a penny.

Diane didn't know that her life of sacrifice would have the effect of an historical movement or discovery. She didn't even want to make the sacrifices that life called for from her. She just didn't feel she had a choice. It was do the right thing or suffer your conscience. She didn't know that such decisions are massive moves within a spirit; and the countless things you then have to do to live out these decisions develop your spirit even more. Since self-sacrifice is the greatest thing a person can do, they have the greatest effect on what the human family will start with when history is finished. And everyone will see it.

Edward didn't know what he would gain from his unrecognized discovery. In life what he got was mostly frustration, and sometimes worse; but he never gave up until it was clear he would not live to see his discovery recognized. This made him very sad. But, in heaven, he gained a happiness that was worth much, much more than what he paid in sadness. His life of striving had produced much more holiness than he would have gotten from the success he was hoping for. What was more, the insights about creation that only he had gained on earth went with him to heaven, and they gave him an utterly valuable perception of God that became a human treasure. (Of course, everyone with expertise, or any sort of special knowledge, had a special contribution to make to humanity's first moment of seeing God face to face.)

Frieda didn't know what her mistake was meant for. On earth, she only knew that she felt embarrassed and even a little sick for the thought that what she had done had cost other people so much. She didn't know that, though her mistake did cost other people in the short term, it led from one thing to another, and to remarkable results long before history was over. Heaven was much richer for what she did. And now she also knew that the great things that came from what she did could not have happened any other way. Her priceless contribution to all this was to bear embarrassment.

George didn't know that his father really loved him. Certainly his father never said so. For this reason George never felt that he was much loved or admired. But now that his father was transformed, and gained the power to express himself, George found out that his father was tremendously

proud of him always. He also found out that his father's handicap had had the purpose of making George learn to believe in himself, with all the glorious effects that followed from that.

Helen didn't know that her grandfather loved her deeply from heaven. He didn't really love her all that much on earth. Her grandfather was not capable of much love, and, of course, there was a divine purpose in it. But now, himself transformed and cured of all his anger and fear, now he was capable of great love and had a special love for the granddaughter whom his struggle to love took part in making him the person that God transformed. This was the first thing he said to her in heaven.

Isaac didn't know that his unrequited love was not for nothing. All he knew was that he felt stupid. Loving a star, someone unattainable, someone who did not know that he even existed... and she would never have been interested in him even if she did know him. He did not know that all admiration stretches your spirit, calls you to grow, and gives God more to work with when you die. He did not know that the result of his transformation would be someone utterly captivating to everyone, and in a special way to anyone who had participated in making him who he became.

Jane didn't know how she could ever be forgiven. Certainly she never forgave herself. But now she understood how ignorant and self-centered all of us are bound to begin. Now she understood the limits of what she was given and the reasons for these limits. Best of all, it was clear to her—people made it clear to her—that those she hurt understood this also. Of course they understood! They, too, had struggled with much, much more than Jane ever knew. They, too, had received no more or less than what God gave them; and if for God's purposes some had been given more, they were much more grateful than judgmental. Actually they weren't judgmental at all. They saw the truth of the past. They saw the beauty of present. They were happy to love. They loved Jane.

Kevin didn't know how natural forgiveness would come to him. He had feared he could never forgive. He didn't know the power of knowing—knowing about human nature, and knowing about God's reasons for what He gave to a person in terms of growth, and what He did not give. Nor did Kevin know about the power of happiness, of being the person that he was meant to be, with the place in our family that he was meant to have. This absolved him from any need to see himself better than anyone, or continue

with anger at anyone who might, on earth, have threatened his idea of himself. Kevin also found that seeing things as God sees them made it just as natural to embrace someone who was notorious in history. He found that no one is notorious in heaven, but rather everyone is a child of God who had a part to play in making us the family that we were meant to be. He also found out that what people had to offer NOW was much more important and interesting than anything that pertained to humanity's necessary past.

Laura didn't know how really sorry she would be. It's not that she felt guilty; she understood things better than that. But now she was aware of the pain she caused in others and she wanted to address their pain. She knew that this would help build a bond of love between herself and these others; and, once she had revealed her heart, this is what happened.

Matthew didn't know how unashamed he would feel asking forgiveness. He was sorry, for sure; but now he understood his role in the scheme of things; and he knew that he was called to love himself enough NOT to worry about how he once looked, and to love God enough to trust Him for the role He needed him to play. Of course, he also knew that no one would try to make him feel ashamed, but rather appreciate his plea for pardon, and love him almost madly for who he had become.

Nancy didn't know where she lost that key. When she got to heaven... well, it wasn't a priority, but you do get infinitely detailed knowledge of your own history. It comes from two sources simultaneously. For one, you know your own spirit down to the last detail. This means you know the meaning of every effect you bear. This allows you to see things you didn't even notice, consciously, the first time around. Besides this, being united to God, you see what He sees, which is everything. Now you know where you lost that key, and why you couldn't find it. Now you know countless other things about your life, and some are amazing, and some correct your professed memories, and many are just great memories to have and relive. And the bad ones you see for their purpose and in the light of their wonderful ultimate results.

Oscar didn't know why that accident had happened. Oh, he *did* know why in terms of how such accidents *can* happen. But why did this particular accident happen to him. It wasn't a natural consequence of some sin he was committing, or the result of risk he was intentionally running. It didn't lead to something great five years down the line, something that could never have

come about any other way. He wasn't conscious of learning anything from it. It did not inspire any great kindness from anyone else. Of course, everything that happens has countless effects; and these have effects; and these have effects. Who would have known that he had a role in sparing our human family from a Third World War?!

Patty didn't know why the struggle of human history had to be *such* a struggle, with so many massacres and other cruelties, epidemics, and ugly ages that saw a loss of professed faith. The best she could imagine was that a certain randomness was for some reason necessary, and if certain terrible things *can* happen, a certain number of them *need to* happen. This is what she thought. She wondered why things couldn't have gone more smoothly with less suffering and steadier progress in all areas. She didn't know that if history had to conform to *our* plan, and our ideas of what is tolerable, and if progress took place as we would want it, it would not be the battle with evil that gains us so much. She didn't know that the farther we had come, the more we had gained, especially it was not obvious at all times that we were going to win. This is what she found out. She also found out that, from God's point of view, the human family was never going backward but rather always taking the steps that were necessary to get us to glory. She even found out, in terms of numbers and maturity, humanity *had* progressed uniformly, almost minute for minute.

Quincy didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, how it would be possible to know every fact from every angle that we might imagine wanting to know. He didn't realize that life with God means that we can get to any information we might want (but you don't have to think about everything at once) and speed is not an issue.

Ramona didn't know the size of creation, or the number of stars and planets; and she had no idea of the diversity possible in self-conscious creatures who were capable of the vision which is faith and the love which is divine. Finding out was not scary and it did not take time getting used to.

Sam didn't know why human nature had to be made as it was, with a propensity to anger and other ugly manifestations of selfishness, bodily desires arising long before the mental maturity to handle them, and a lifetime at risk for all sorts of craziness. He didn't understand that human nature was built for the long haul; and once he could look back at eons of human progress, he realized that primitive-type feelings were needed so that we

would survive primitive times, and yet these same mechanisms contained the seeds of a glorious inner-life once we grew up.

Teresa didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, what life was like "above" time, i.e., life from a point of view where one could see past and future in one panoramic glance—the point of view of Him who invented time. Once she got above time, however, it all made sense, much as the lay of land makes more sense when you see it from the air.

Ulysses didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, how "time-value" works. Time-value is the idea that even though experiences here are what they are because of time—experiences being rich because something is rare, or seasonal or otherwise cyclical, or otherwise affected by time—these experiences still give us a glimpse of heaven where life takes place "above" time. Ulysses found out that the keyword was, indeed, "glimpse." He found out that rich experiences speak of something which transcends time, and all great experiences show us an element of what we experience constantly in the world above time.

Victoria didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, how it was possible to intimately love *everyone* among the almost countless members that make up our family. She came to see that it was a mistake to try to imagine loving more people than you could give time and energy to here on earth, but when you get to the world where time and energy are unlimited, and so are our spirits... In short, it's not so hard to love a vast number of wonderful people when you have forever to do it.

Wilbur didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, how he could feel good about intimate love for someone knowing that this same person had intimate love for many others. He didn't think of how it is when the person who loves the person I love also loves me, and each relationship is different and absolutely special.

Xenia didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, how she could know everything but still expect to explore forever God forever. She didn't count on the fact that God is infinite, and this means that at any moment we can have everything that is available and still forever get more.

Yves didn't know, and couldn't begin to imagine, how, exploring God, he could have real adventure without real danger. He didn't realize that

the glory of adventure is not the possibility of getting hurt but rather the need to give one's all in order to go forward.

Zelda didn't know and never discovered, nor did anyone else, to their complete satisfaction, the answer to the question, How is it possible that God always was?