

## Chapter 2

*The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.—Revelation 5:8*

Many others watched Gremma pray. In Heaven, a great cloud of witnesses had packed-out Theater One, and their excited chatter spilled out into the lobby where self-serve popcorn machines blessed theatergoers with Heavenly Pop, lightly salted and beautifully coated in freshly melted butter. Generous buckets sat warmly in the laps of contented recipients. No lines of waiting, no cost, and no issues of calories or cholesterol. The beauty of transformation touched everything in Heaven—even the popcorn—and theatergoers greeted each other with the fullness of joy.

Today in Theater One, Jesus was hosting a live showing of Gremma's prayer entitled, "Jaro in the Balance." Everyone in the theater knew that the Jaro people of East Africa were on the Unengaged List because they did not have two important things connected to them: a person and a plan. No person had yet arrived with a plan to share the good news of Jesus and to plant a church that would burst into a thriving church movement. Thousands of Jaro people remained trapped in a worldview of fear, superstition, and charms where witch doctors demanded a family's wealth in exchange for empty promises at the price of a few shillings, a chicken, or a bag of dried corn. When a child grew sick, witch doctors became wealthy as parents reached for hope and lost resources.

God, and every one of his children, already knew the end of the story. People from all nations would join them at his throne joyfully sharing his presence and the incredible treasures of Heaven. However, the details of the stories were still in process; God loves the art of creating a story that shows his glory. Since sin continues to plague the Earth until Jesus returns, tragedy and triumph still share the big screen.

Those seated in the various theaters of the Mall of Heavenly Stories braced themselves for the experience of watching their Father at work. It never got old.

Gremma's hunched-over frame filled the screen in Theater One. Her chair slowly rocked back and forth as she talked with God in the name of Jesus. Those watching understood that a supreme action movie was underway. No one was fooled just because the show's hero was a 92-year-old Swedish grandma sipping a cup of Lipton leftovers.

Gremma's powerful prayer crackled with life and energy. As Gremma's prayer rose from her heart and left her lips, it entered into Heaven and was transformed into incense, a fine powder shimmering with colors, energy, and purpose.

As Gremma's prayer transformed from faith to power, Jesus spoke to all those in Theater One, "Please welcome some newcomers to Heaven: Roger, Ellen, and these three beautiful little ones, Anna, Esther, and John."

Shouts of welcome and warm applause echoed in the theater as they stood. On Earth, they were a family of five who ended their time there when Jesus brought them home after a traffic accident.

Jesus continued, "Roger, please come forward and receive this golden bowl, your first task as an elder of Heaven."

Roger walked forward from the front row seats and received a golden bowl from the hands of his Savior.

Jesus's eyes sparkled with love and life. "Well done, good and faithful servant. On this day, you will stand next to me and collect the prayers of the saints."

Roger reverently cradled the golden bowl under his arm, and looked out at the glowing faces of those standing before him, now giving him a standing ovation. He had never received one of those. His beaming smile mirrored the faces of Ellen and the three youngsters standing next to her. Little John waved to him, and Roger returned the gesture.

"Today, the pleasing aroma of Christina's prayer has reached my throne," Jesus said. On cue, the shimmering powder of prayer drifted down from the starry sky above and into the golden bowl in Roger's hands. Suddenly the theater filled with the aroma of a flower's perfume.

"Wow ... Beautiful!" spoke Harland, a man seated in Row 28 who knew Gremma well. For 62 years, Harland had been her husband. "I had hay fever on Earth, so I could not smell Christina's garden. What flowers are we smelling today?" he asked the woman next to him.

"Blooming lilac. Wonderful!" enthused Jean, a master gardener during her years on Earth. "Look at the smile on Jesus' face as he enjoys the fragrance and watches our pleasure at this moment."

Jesus' happiness was contagious. "My children," he continued, "Gremma's prayers are so pleasing to me! Roger will now take the bowl of her prayers and add them to the golden censer before my throne. When the time is right, an angel will add fire to those stored prayers and throw them down to the earth as part of my final victory."

The big screen returned to one of the heroes in that fight for victory, smiling, rocking, and praying in her Iowa living room.

But our Grandma-Prayer-Warrior was about to be knocked down.