

PROLOGUE

I can't believe I'm writing this. My hands are shaking so much I can barely type. I keep hitting the wrong keys. I argued with myself at length about whether to share the events of the last few weeks with *anyone*, and I'm not sure if it was the angel on my left shoulder or the devil on my right who won the debate. Well, probably not a devil, if all this actually happened. But, as much as it scares me, I'm

writing this because I'm pretty sure that's what I'm *supposed* to do. That's why I think I was given a seat at the table.

When people read this, some are going to say I'm absolutely bonkers and dismiss me as "just another nutcase." Others are going to call me a heretic and want to drive a wooden stake through my heart. Then, there are the wacky types who are going to want to touch me and follow me around burning incense and hoping to share my every experience. I would probably fall into the first group, because I have to admit, my story sounds like someone who has had a psychotic break. Still, I'm not sure I could find fault with any of those reactions.

I swear that everything I write here is true to the best of my knowledge and that these things took place exactly as I have captured them. I didn't make notes at first, but the deeper I got into all of this, the more I knew I

needed to make a daily accounting in order to try to not miss anything important. So, I'm sharing what is essentially my diary of what happened.

When I reviewed my notes and imagined myself in the role of a third party reading them, I occasionally found that I needed to add commentary for clarity. Where I have done that, I have tried to make it obvious. But, I did not go back and change the original content.

As background, I think it is also important to note that I don't take drugs. Never have. I drink alcohol, but for the last fifteen years, I've been doing a cleanse between New Year's and Valentine's Day. I did so again this year. Since the events I am sharing took place during this time, I was not under the influence of alcohol. Nevertheless, I readily admit that while all this was taking place, I thought seriously about having a drink . . . no, drinks.

Let's call me Tom. That's not my name, but I need to try to protect me and my family from the consequences of writing about what happened. In a way, I suppose that by hiding behind a pseudonym, I'm as guilty as those who have denied things like this in the past, but I'm doing the best I can. I want you to know everything so you can decide for yourself if I'm certifiable, or if something beyond our normal sense of reality actually occurred.

In the end, it doesn't matter what you think of me. It's the story itself that I'm convinced is important, because it may very well matter what *you* decide to do with what I have to tell you.