

EXTREME GRACE

Imagining Heaven

by Dick Duerksen

Lie back, stare into the clouds, and imagine ... the very best place you could ever hope to visit.

Now, imagine that it has been put together by the same person who designed kittens, thunderstorms, banana cream pie, and love. That's right, God the Creator has been busy creating a new heaven and a new earth, a place where He is the designer, architect, interior decorator, and cook.

Imagine—colors so brilliant your eyes can hardly sort them out, food so delicious it makes you wish you had three stomachs,

music so beautiful it makes your heart cry and sing at the same time. Imagine a place where everything is better than the finest picnic you could dream up.

Think of a day in paradise, where friends gather to laugh, play, and enjoy being together, where wolves and lions are best friends with sheep and gazelles.

A place where Great White Sharks give you swimming lessons, where gorillas take you swinging on grape vines, and eagles teach you to soar far above the prairies, forests, waterfalls, and mountains.

Imagine stroking the nose of a rhinoceros, cuddling with a tiger, and running with a cheetah.

And don't forget the flowers—every color of the rainbow has been painted across petals and planted near the pathway. Each perfumed far more lovely than Paris ever dared.

A place where every time the phone rings, it is someone you want to talk with.

A place where no one calls you home to practice piano, take out the trash, or complete an assignment for work.

Worry, sorrow, and pain have been replaced with peace, joy, and excitement. Jealousy, lust, and anger have been replaced with LOVE, real genuine unending "I love you" love.

There is a banquet table set and ready, delicacies arranged to excite each person's taste buds.

And there are chairs at the head of the table, chairs filled with our best friends from high school, from sixth grade, from the week we spent in Hong Kong, and from the years we lived in Kalamazoo. Everyone is there, laughing, embracing, and telling old stories in new ways.

The Creator sits in the center of the crowd. He stands when He sees us, reaches out His hand, and beckons for us to join Him. "Come," He gestures toward empty chairs by His side, "I've saved special places just for you."

Imagine, an eternity celebrating with best friends.

