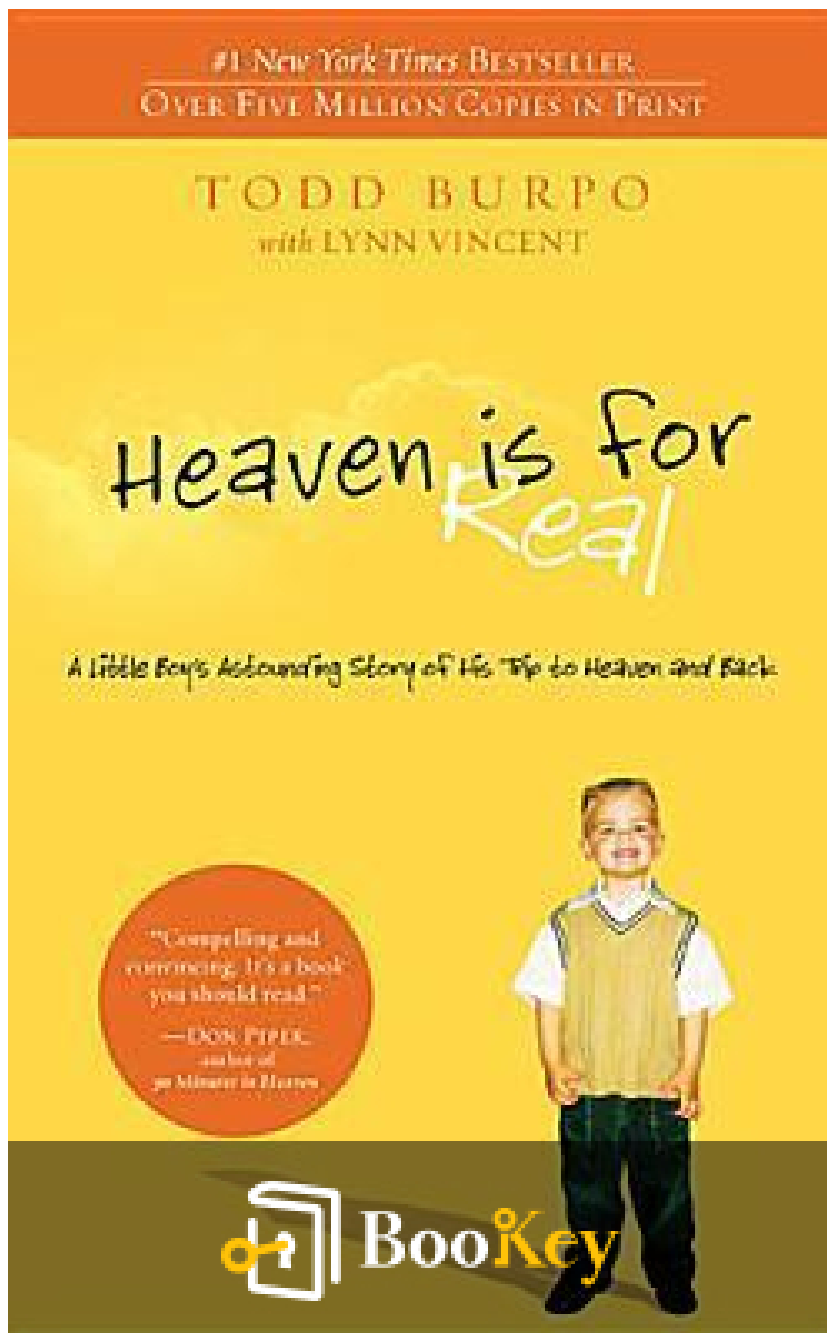


Heaven Is For Real PDF (Limited Copy)

Todd Burpo



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Heaven Is For Real Summary

Ein Junge spricht über seine außergewöhnlichen Erlebnisse im
Jenseits.

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About the book

In "Heaven is for Real," Todd Burpo recounts the extraordinary journey of his son, Colton, who, at the tender age of four, battled a severe illness that necessitated a near-fatal surgery. This harrowing experience marked a pivotal moment for the Burpo family, as Colton's survival was nothing short of a miracle. In the days that followed his surgery, Colton began to share vivid and profound accounts of a journey he claimed to have undertaken while unconscious—a journey to a realm beyond earthly existence.

As Todd and his wife, Sonja, listen to their son's remarkable tales, they find themselves bewildered by the depth of his knowledge about people and events he had never encountered. Colton describes meeting family members who had passed away before he was born, illustrating a connection to his ancestors that deeply resonates within the narrative. His experiences challenge the Burpos' understanding of life, death, and the spiritual realm, leading them to contemplate the existence of an afterlife.

Colton's innocent yet profound assertion, "Heaven is for real," serves as the heart of the story, ushering readers into a conversation about faith, spirituality, and the mysteries that lie beyond our earthly experience. The compelling nature of Colton's accounts not only offers comfort to those grappling with loss but also ignites a broader discourse on what it means to believe in the afterlife.

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Through Colton's story, the Burpo family emerges as a symbol of hope and faith, reminding us that the boundaries of our understanding of existence are often surpassed by the mysteries of the universe. In presenting Colton's experiences, Todd Burpo invites readers to explore the profound connection between life and the hereafter, raising thought-provoking questions about the nature of faith and the possibility of a heavenly realm beyond our earthly perceptions.

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About the author

In "Heaven is for Real," Todd Burpo recounts a life-altering experience centered around his son, Colton, who, at the age of four, underwent an emergency surgery that almost claimed his life. As a devoted pastor in a small Nebraska town, Burpo's life was grounded in faith, but nothing prepared him for the extraordinary events that followed Colton's recovery. Upon waking from surgery, Colton began sharing vivid and intricate accounts of his time in heaven, including encounters with Jesus, angels, and deceased family members he had never met.

Through Colton's innocent yet profound revelations, themes of hope, spirituality, and the unwavering bonds of family are explored. Burpo reflects on how Colton described heaven in a way that resonated deeply with the beliefs of many, sparking a national dialogue about the nature of the afterlife. The narrative highlights the stark contrast between the life of a small-town pastor and the extraordinary claims of his child, inviting readers to ponder their own views on faith and eternity.

As Burpo navigates his role as a father and spiritual leader, he emphasizes the importance of childlike faith—the kind of untainted belief that allows for profound spiritual insights. The book not only serves as a memoir but also as an inspirational guide, encouraging readers to embrace hope and the idea that heaven is not just a distant concept, but an accessible reality. The

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overwhelming success of "Heaven is for Real" has made it a cornerstone of contemporary Christian literature, establishing Burpo's voice as a beacon of encouragement in times of doubt. Throughout the chapters, the intersection of ordinary life and divine possibility shines, leading readers on a reflective journey about the afterlife and their own faith.

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Chapter 1 Summary: THE CRAWL-A-SEE-UM

Summary of Chapter 1: Heaven is for Real

In March 2003, the Burpo family, recovering from a challenging period of health crises and financial strain due to surgeries and a cancer scare, sets off on a much-anticipated trip to Greeley, Colorado. This journey is meant to bring joy and rekindle family connections after a tough seven months filled with adversity.

Their adventure begins with a visit to the Butterfly Pavilion, an educational establishment near Denver that captivates children with its vibrant display of insect life. Although the Pavilion's exterior is unassuming, inside it offers an array of fascinating experiences, particularly for Todd and Sonja's children, Colton and Cassie.

The excitement escalates in the “Crawl-A-See-Um,” a room brimming with various insects. Here, Colton and Cassie are drawn to the Tarantula Tower, a captivating feature housing several species of tarantulas, including a striking skeleton tarantula. This moment sparks joy and relief in Todd, the father, amidst the backdrop of their recent struggles.

As Cassie gathers her courage to hold a Goliath Birdeater spider, the family

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learns from a knowledgeable zookeeper that these South American tarantulas are generally safe to interact with. Colton, however, grapples with a mix of awe and hesitation. His yearning for a sticker—an emblem of bravery awarded to those who handle the spider—fuels a competitive spirit within him. Although Cassie emerges victorious, confidently earning her sticker, Colton ultimately succumbs to fear and decides against participating, opting instead to explore a different exhibit. His choice underscores the innocence of childhood, demonstrating that while desire for recognition is strong, the instinct for safety can prevail.

Together, this family day not only provides a respite from their challenges but also highlights the themes of bravery, the complexity of childhood emotions, and the small yet meaningful victories that accompany growing up.

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Chapter 2 Summary: PASTOR JOB

In Chapter 2 of "Heaven is for Real," titled "Exhibits and Memories," the chapter opens with a vibrant scene at an aquarium where Colton and his sister Cassie enjoy interacting with starfish and vibrant sea anemones. This playful moment captures the innocence of childhood, contrasting sharply with the challenges their family faces. Todd Burpo, their father, reflects on a significant summer spent playing softball with his wife Sonja, underscoring how a seemingly joyful time turned into a pivotal moment of illness and hardship for their family.

The narrative takes a dramatic turn as Todd recounts a severe leg injury sustained during a double-elimination softball tournament. Attempting to slide into third base, he suffered a spiral fracture of his tibia and a broken ankle. This incident not only inflicted physical pain but also destabilized the family's financial situation and hindered Todd's ability to fulfill his pastoral responsibilities, leaving him reliant on crutches and altering his usual active participation in church life.

As he adjusts to these limitations, Todd faces additional health complications. His discomfort from kidney stones, already a painful ordeal, is worsened by the stress of his previous injury. A visit to the doctor unveils a worrying lump in his chest, later identified through biopsy as hyperplasia, a condition that could signify the onset of breast cancer. This diagnosis

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deeply resonates with Todd, who draws a parallel to the biblical figure Job, known for his immense suffering and unwavering faith, mirroring Todd's own feelings of despair and determination to persevere.

Amidst these tribulations, Sonja remains a steadfast source of support, encouraging Todd to navigate his struggle with vulnerability. He grapples with feelings of pity even as he seeks help within his church community. After a poignant moment of self-reflection and a heartfelt encounter with God, where Todd acknowledges his selfishness, he gradually discovers comfort and reassurance in the prayers and support of his church family.

The chapter concludes on a note of hope and divine intervention. An unexpected phone call from Dr. O'Holleran brings the startling news that the tissue removed during Todd's mastectomy was entirely normal, dispelling the fears tied to his earlier diagnosis. This miraculous outcome catalyzes Todd's recognition of a higher power at work, leading him to see the event as a clear sign of encouragement from God.

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Chapter 3 Summary: COLTON TOUGHS IT OUT

Summary of Chapter 3: Heaven is for Real

In this chapter, the author recounts the healing journey following a series of health struggles, including cancer scares and painful kidney stones. After a period of recovery and relearning to walk, the author and their family decide to take a much-needed trip, recognizing the importance of stepping away from their recent hardships.

As they prepare for the trip, a new challenge arises when Colton, the young son, comes down with a stomach flu, sparking concerns that they may have to cancel their plans. Sonja, the mother, demonstrates resilience by seeking support from friends and ultimately taking Colton to the doctor. After a mixture of prayer and anxious anticipation, Colton's fever subsides, restoring hope and allowing the family to proceed with their trip.

During their visit to the Butterfly Pavilion, a pivotal moment occurs when Colton confronts his fear of holding a butterfly named Rosie. With family encouragement, he successfully overcomes this fear, marking not just a personal victory for him but also a joyful experience for the entire family.

As they leave the pavilion, the author reflects on the trials they have faced,

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likening life to a boxing match filled with unexpected challenges. This introspection leads to a sense of relaxation and gratitude for the joyful moments shared together, signaling a significant turning point in their collective journey toward healing and independence.

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Chapter 4: SMOKE SIGNALS

In Chapter 4 of "Heaven is for Real," the Burpo family enjoys an evening at Old Chicago Restaurant in Greeley, Colorado, sharing a meal and discussing church ministry with Pastor Steve Wilson and his wife, Rebecca. The atmosphere is initially light, with Todd, Sonja, and their children—Cassie and Colton—relaxing after a day of swimming. However, the mood quickly shifts when Colton begins to complain of a stomach ache, signaling the beginning of a distressing night.

As dinner continues, both children's discomfort escalates, leading to an early exit from the restaurant. Once back at their hotel room, Colton's condition worsens, and he starts vomiting, exhibiting signs of a stomach flu. Cassie soon follows suit, adding to the family's concerns. Todd and Sonja speculate on the cause of the children's sudden illness, pondering whether it might be food-related or due to the flu that Colton had previously displayed signs of.

Throughout the night, Colton suffers from frequent vomiting, while Cassie manages to recover more swiftly. Todd tries to catch some rest amidst the chaos, knowing Sonja is dedicated to caring for their ailing son. By morning, with Colton's condition still critical and the threat of dehydration looming, they make the decision to seek medical help, opting to return to their hometown of Imperial instead of stopping in Greeley.

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During the drive, Colton experiences multiple bouts of vomiting, intensifying Todd and Sonja's anxiety. Upon arriving at the hospital, they consult their family doctor, who orders thorough tests for Colton. While Todd feels a sense of relief at being in professional hands, his relief fades when the doctor brings unsettling news. The X-rays reveal unexpected findings that rule out appendicitis but suggest something much graver.

The chapter concludes on a note of despair as the doctor identifies dark masses on Colton's X-ray, signaling a potentially serious health issue. This shocking revelation plunges Todd and Sonja into a state of fear as they grapple with the uncertain fate of their beloved son, setting the stage for the family's harrowing journey ahead.

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Chapter 5 Summary: SHADOW OF DEATH

Summary of Chapter 5: Heaven is for Real

In this emotionally charged chapter, the narrative unfolds on March 3, when young Colton is hospitalized due to a serious and mysterious illness. He receives intravenous (IV) treatment, but despite his family's repeated efforts to communicate with him, he remains unresponsive, which signals a dire deterioration in his health. Colton's parents, Todd and Sonja, grapple with their fear and despair. Initially, they cling to hope and trust in the doctors, but as his condition worsens, their optimism wanes.

Sonja dedicates herself to staying by Colton's side in the hospital, while Todd faces the daunting task of managing their household and fulfilling parental responsibilities amidst this emotional crisis. His prayers for Colton grow more fervent as he confronts the alarming signs of mortality he has only witnessed before in elderly patients. This stark contrast heightens Todd's anguish, as he feels overwhelmed by helplessness and desperation for clarity regarding his son's health.

The tension escalates when Todd and Sonja experience a deepening frustration with the medical uncertainty surrounding Colton's treatment. Each visit from medical professionals, instead of offering reassurance or

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solutions, brings more questions and a heavy sense of dread. As the reality of their situation becomes increasingly apparent—the unsettling thought that their young son might be slipping away—they find their faith in the medical system tested amidst their heartache.

This chapter poignantly captures the turmoil of a parent facing the unimaginable, reflecting themes of love, faith, and the desperate search for hope amid despair.

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Chapter 6 Summary: NORTH PLATTE

Summary of Chapter 6 - "Heaven is for Real"

In this pivotal chapter, the Burpo family faces a series of challenges as they seek adequate medical care for their son, Colton. The family makes a crucial decision to transfer Colton from the Imperial hospital to the Great Plains Regional Medical Center in North Platte, aiming for improved support and resources. However, the discharge process takes longer than expected, introducing anxiety into an already distressing situation.

Once Colton is discharged, his frailty is palpable as Todd carefully lifts him from the hospital bed and secures him in the car seat. Sonja, Colton's mother, braces for a potentially difficult drive, fearing he might get sick again.

As they venture out on a cold yet sunny day, the family is suddenly confronted with a troubling incident when Colton begins to retch. Concerned, they pull over, and Sonja is left devastated upon reviewing Colton's X-rays. The frightening images reveal a serious condition, and both Todd and Sonja grapple with a wave of regret. They reflect on their faith in the doctor's decisions, wishing they had questioned the medical authority more rigorously.



Amidst their turmoil, Todd finds solace in a biblical story of King David, drawing parallels to their own challenges and the consequences of their actions. Even as guilt and despair loom over them, hope persists, with Todd focusing on the critical fact that Colton is still alive, spurring them to act quickly for his well-being.

They rush to their pediatrician's office, only to discover the doctor is on lunch break, which amplifies Todd's frustration. In a state of urgency, maintaining composure proves difficult as they await assistance.

After a tense wait, a brief examination leads to the decision to order a CT scan, prompting them to head back to the hospital. At this juncture, Todd recognizes the gravity of the situation, understanding that the forthcoming steps are vital in addressing Colton's urgent health crisis. The weight of parental love, hope, and desperation intertwine as they navigate this harrowing experience, building tension and leaving readers eager for what lies ahead.

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Chapter 7 Summary: "I THINK THIS IS IT"

Summary of Chapter 7: Struggle in the Clinic

Chapter 7 unfolds in the somber and intense atmosphere of a medical clinic, where Colton Burpo, a young boy grappling with severe health issues, faces the daunting task of drinking a necessary cherry-red solution for a CT scan. His frail condition, marked by constant vomiting and exhaustion, amplifies the struggle, revealing the pain both he and his parents, Todd and Sonja, are enduring.

The family's desperation for answers underlies Colton's resistance; without the CT scan, doctors are unable to diagnose the cause of his alarming symptoms. After a tense and emotionally charged battle where Colton adamantly refuses to drink the solution, a compassionate technician intervenes, deciding to proceed with the scan regardless of Colton's reluctance.

In the imaging room, the atmosphere thickens with anxiety as Colton is positioned inside the intimidating machine. Todd reassures his son, trying to instill courage, while Sonja battles tears, her heart heavy with fear. Once the scan is complete, the family is escorted down a secluded hallway, indicating the seriousness of their predicament, rather than the bustling main waiting



area.

In this quiet space, Sonja's sorrow becomes acutely evident. She reflects on the fragility of life, recalling her previous pregnancy loss and the immense joy Colton has brought them during his young life. The looming threat of losing him weighs heavily on her mind, igniting a crisis of faith as she grapples with the possibility of enduring another profound loss and questions where God's plans may lead them.

The chapter reaches a poignant conclusion as Colton's condition worsens, rendering him pale and motionless. In this heart-wrenching moment, Todd and Sonja confront the horrifying possibility of losing their beloved son. The deep emotional turmoil they experience resonates throughout the chapter, leaving readers with a profound sense of empathy and dread as they navigate the uncertainties that lie ahead.

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Chapter 8: RAGING AT GOD

Summary of Chapter 8: Crisis and Despair

The chapter opens with a devastating revelation for the Burpo family when a radiologist informs them that their son Colton has a ruptured appendix, necessitating immediate surgery. This diagnosis starkly contrasts with the earlier assessments they had received, plunging Todd and Sonja into a state of shock and fear.

As Colton is ushered into the surgical prep room, the atmosphere thickens with anxiety. The sight of their son, distraught and crying for help amid the flurry of medical preparations, intensifies Todd and Sonja's anguish, leaving them feeling powerless in the face of his suffering.

Dr. Timothy O'Holleran, a physician with previous ties to Todd, approaches them with the grim reality of Colton's condition. He emphasizes the urgency of the situation and the inherent risks of the surgery, compounding Todd's struggle to balance his hope for a positive outcome against the stark uncertainty and potential loss looming before him.

Caught in a storm of emotions, Todd is especially affected by Colton's desperate calls for comfort. As a pastor, he feels the weight of the

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expectation to remain steadfast and composed, but in this moment of crisis, he is unable to suppress his fear and sorrow. Seeking an escape from the chaos, he retreats to a quiet room where he confronts his swirling emotions, grappling with his anger and desperation over the possibility of losing his beloved son.

This moment of solitude spirals into a profound crisis of faith. Todd wrestles with his relationship with God, voicing his frustration and despair as he reflects on past struggles and the burden of this new challenge. This emotional turmoil exposes the depth of Todd's apprehension and the stakes for his family, revealing how deeply intertwined his faith is with the well-being of his son.

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Chapter 9 Summary: MINUTES LIKE GLACIERS

Summary of Chapter 9: "Heaven is for Real" by Todd Burpo

In the aftermath of a harrowing medical emergency, Todd Burpo grapples with profound emotional turmoil as he watches his family face a crisis. Just fifteen minutes after a tense ordeal, he emerges from the chaos with a sense of steely resolve, even as he witnesses his wife, Sonja, overwhelmed with tears. Determined to find solace and support, Todd reaches out to his church secretary to activate the prayer chain, hoping for divine intervention as his own faith begins to waver under the weight of uncertainty.

As the minutes stretch endlessly in the sterile waiting room, filled with anxious whispers and a palpable sense of dread, Todd clings to hope. Ninety long minutes later, a nurse finally appears with promising news: their son, Colton, is out of surgery but calling for his father. This moment reignites hope within Todd's heart.

The reunion with Colton is bittersweet; despite looking fragile and weak, the glimmer of recognition in his blue eyes provides some reassurance. Todd and Sonja shower Colton with affection, exchanging kisses that elicit a small, comforting smile from their son. Sitting by Colton's bedside, Todd treasures their time together but is soon confronted with a shattering reality

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when Colton reveals his awareness of having "almost died." This knowledge terrifies Todd, igniting fear about how deeply his son comprehends the gravity of the situation. In a bid to shield Colton from further anxiety, Todd quickly shifts the conversation, encouraging his son to focus on healing.

The Burpo family is soon surrounded by members of their church community, providing emotional support during this daunting time. Todd reflects on the significance of having a robust support network, emphasizing how crucial it is to lean on others during dire circumstances.

However, the challenges don't end with the surgery. Dr. O'Holleran explains the troubling condition of Colton's internal organs due to infection and outlines the painful treatments ahead, which include draining pus from Colton's incision. Each night, Todd faces the heart-wrenching task of performing this painful procedure on his son. Despite Sonja's previous caregiving experience, the gravity of their son's situation tests their resilience.

This chapter captures the depth of parental love amid crisis, the strength found in community, and the stark confrontation with mortality, setting the stage for Colton's extraordinary experience that will unfold in the following chapters.

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Chapter 10 Summary: PRAYERS OF A MOST UNUSUAL KIND

Summary of Chapter 10: Colton's Ongoing Health Struggles

Following Colton's emergency appendectomy, his health remained precarious as he grappled with persistent vomiting and indications of infection. His condition gradually improved, and after a week in the hospital, the family prepared to bring him home. However, a last-minute blood test revealed troubling new complications that delayed their hopes of discharge.

The medical team discovered additional pockets of infection, necessitating a second surgery. This news weighed heavily on the family, already exhausted from days of worry, but they found some solace in knowing Colton would receive round-the-clock care in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), allowing them a brief respite from anxiety.

Despite early signs of recovery, Colton encountered further complications, including bowel difficulties and intense pain, prompting his doctors to recommend transferring him to a specialized children's hospital. This transfer was compounded by the onset of a snowstorm, which complicated logistics and heightened the family's stress during an already challenging time.

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Amidst this turmoil, their church community rallied around them, offering prayers for Colton's healing. In a surprising turn of events, shortly after the prayer vigil commenced, Colton began to experience relief from his symptoms. He was able to use the bathroom, a significant milestone marking the start of his recovery. The healthcare team was left astonished by the speed of his turnaround, affirming that he was on the path to healing.

After an additional day and a half of observation in the hospital, Colton returned to his former cheerful self, leaving the medical staff impressed by his remarkable recovery. With renewed hope, the family began to envision their return to normalcy and daily life, grateful for the support that had seen them through such a turbulent chapter.

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Chapter 11 Summary: COLTON BURPO, COLLECTION AGENT

Emotional Toll and Financial Struggles

After Todd and Sonja Burpo returned home from the hospital, they were left feeling drained both mentally and physically, their ordeal weighing heavily on them. Faced with overwhelming financial burdens, Sonja carefully reviewed their bills, revealing a staggering total of approximately \$23,000 due, compounded by previous medical expenses. With Todd unable to work due to ongoing health issues and their son Colton recovering from a serious illness, the couple found themselves in a dire financial crisis. Despite their attempts to brainstorm solutions, they felt utterly helpless, lacking immediate means to settle their debts.

A Miraculous Turn of Events

In the midst of their despair, Colton, blissfully unaware of their financial struggles, surprised his parents by insisting they needed to pay Dr. O'Holleran, the surgeon who had helped him recover. This statement shocked Todd and Sonja, considering the negative feelings Colton had held towards the doctor during his treatment. Shortly thereafter, an incredible

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wave of support enveloped the Burpo family; checks and donations began flowing in from friends, family, and kind-hearted community members, nearly covering their debts in a miraculous turn of events.

Life Lessons from a Child's Perspective

Colton's innocent comments transcended mere financial matters, revealing a greater understanding of themes like forgiveness and compassion. After witnessing a minor disagreement over sharing, Colton remarked that Jesus had told him to be kind, leaving Todd deeply moved by his son's profound faith. Moreover, Colton displayed a genuine concern for others' spiritual well-being, especially when discussing funerals. He worried aloud about whether the deceased had a relationship with Jesus, showcasing his sincere grasp of faith and the importance of salvation.

Apprehensions at the Funeral Service

During a funeral service where Todd officiated, Colton's worries escalated as he interrupted the proceedings to ask if the deceased had accepted Jesus into their heart. The unexpected inquiry created a moment of disturbance, startling both parents and guests alike. His innocent but intense concern over a stranger's spiritual condition highlighted his remarkable understanding of

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life, death, and faith. This prompted Todd and Sonja to delicately navigate their son's fervent beliefs and the potential implications of discussing such topics in sensitive settings.

Ultimately, these experiences underscored the Burpo family's emotional tribulations and the unexpected blessings that faith brought into their lives during an incredibly challenging period, illustrating how a child's perspective can offer profound insights into the complexities of life and spirituality.

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Chapter 12: EYEWITNESS TO HEAVEN

In Chapter 12 of "Heaven is for Real," titled "**Extraordinary Discoveries**," the Burpo family finds themselves grappling with the implications of their son Colton's remarkable experience after his near-death surgery. Four months post-surgery, Todd and Sonja Burpo begin to piece together Colton's unusual comments and memories, recognizing that they hint at profound experiences during a time when he was clinically absent.

As the family drives through North Platte, Colton reveals a striking detail: he saw his parents praying in separate rooms during his hospital stay. This disclosure not only captivates Todd but also builds on the foundation of Colton's previous claims about meeting Jesus and angels, stirring Todd's curiosity and concern about the depths of what his son encountered.

Deepening their conversations, Colton shares imaginative insights, such as mentioning that Jesus has a cousin named John the Baptist who baptized him, and that in heaven, Jesus rides a vibrant rainbow horse. These whimsical yet vivid details offer a unique snapshot of his heavenly experiences, reflecting a childlike wonder interwoven with spiritual authenticity.

Colton's description of Jesus brings further depth to his narrative, as he describes Jesus wearing a purple sash and possessing red "markers" on His

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hands and feet—an innocent yet powerful reference to the wounds of the crucifixion. This revelation not only astounds Todd but signals an understanding that seems far beyond a child's grasp, pushing him to contemplate the profound nature of Colton's insights.

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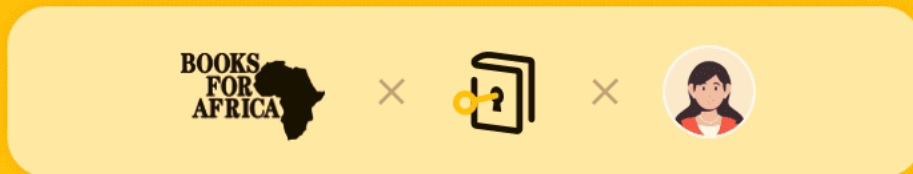




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Chapter 13 Summary: LIGHTS AND WINGS

Summary of Chapter 13 from "Heaven is for Real"

In Chapter 13, Todd Burpo delves deeper into his son Colton's astonishing experiences in heaven, which have been a source of both intrigue and wonder for the family. As educators, Todd and his wife Sonja adopt an open-minded approach to engage Colton, encouraging him to share more about his extraordinary journey.

The chapter begins with Todd's curiosity about Colton's initial remarks about doing "homework" in heaven. This casual mention piqued Todd's interest, prompting him to seek a deeper understanding of what Colton truly experienced during his brief time away from life on Earth.

When Todd inquires about his son's heavenly experiences, Colton reveals that Jesus was his teacher, fostering a sense of joy in the tasks assigned to him in heaven. This revelation is significant as Colton begins to recall other children he encountered there, painting a picture of a vibrant, communal environment.

Colton describes the inhabitants of heaven, stating that "everybody's got wings," and clarifying that while he too had wings, they were not very large.

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Interestingly, he observes that Jesus did not have wings, moving instead like an elevator, which adds a unique dimension to his portrayal of the divine figure.

As Colton elaborates on the appearance of the heavenly beings, he notes that everyone has a light above their heads, reminiscent of biblical descriptions of angels as radiant beings. Todd reflects on the inherent honesty and innocence that children possess, suggesting that such qualities might grant them the ability to perceive deeper spiritual truths.

The conversation continues as Colton graphically expresses how people in heaven wear distinct colors, gesturing to illustrate this point. The chapter reaches a poignant climax with Todd's inquiry about the duration of Colton's time in heaven. With certainty, Colton responds that he was gone for "three minutes," encapsulating the mystery and wonder of his experience.

In conclusion, this chapter beautifully blends Todd's quest for understanding with the pure, childlike revelations of Colton about heaven. Todd's reflections suggest a growing acceptance of his son's extraordinary experiences as valid encounters that invite a broader exploration of spirituality, leaving readers contemplating the nature of life beyond the physical realm.

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Chapter 14 Summary: ON HEAVEN TIME

Summary of Chapter 14: Understanding Colton's Experience

In this chapter, we delve into the extraordinary account of Colton Burpo, a young boy who underwent a near-death experience during surgery for appendicitis. Colton's assertion that he spent "three minutes" in heaven prompts his father to grapple with the profound implications of this statement. He contemplates the nature of time in the afterlife, realizing that no official record documented Colton as clinically dead during the operation, leading to confusion about the validity of his claims.

The father's reflections are further complicated when Colton later declares he "died for a little bit." This statement raises questions about how his son could have experienced heaven without actually experiencing death. To reconcile these conflicting ideas, the father recalls biblical references where figures like the Apostle Paul and John—in the Book of Revelation—encountered heaven without the traditional experience of dying. These reflections underscore the possibility that divine circumstances could allow such experiences outside the confines of death.

As the chapter progresses, a shift in perspective occurs. Colton's understanding of his experience is heavily influenced by his father's beliefs,

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particularly the notion that only the deceased can enter heaven. In his innocent way, Colton concludes that he must have died to have seen heaven, demonstrating a child's attempt to align his extraordinary experience with his father's faith.

Central to Colton's narrative is a moment of divine communication; he describes how Jesus came to bring him back from heaven, indicating he needed to return to fulfill his father's prayers. This revelation profoundly affects Colton's father, who had been grappling with feelings of anger and despair throughout his son's medical ordeal. The realization that his fervent prayers were answered evokes deep emotion and stirs contemplations about faith, divine mercy, and the boundless love of God.

The chapter encapsulates a critical moment of reflection for the father, who finds solace in the idea that despite the trials they have faced, there is hope and a powerful connection to the divine through prayer. This exploration of Colton's experience prompts broader thoughts on the relationships between faith, divine encounters, and the nature of reality beyond life and death.

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Chapter 15 Summary: CONFESSION

Summary of Chapter 15 from "Heaven is for Real" by Todd Burpo

The chapter opens in early July, illustrating the vibrant atmosphere of the plains of Imperial, where the warm weather and lively wildlife reflect a sense of renewal and hope. Amid this backdrop, Todd Burpo recalls attending a church district conference in Greeley, Colorado, a significant event that brings together numerous pastors and delegates to share their experiences and struggles in service to their congregations.

During the conference, Todd engages in deep reflection about his faith, particularly in light of his son Colton's serious health crisis. He grapples with conflicting emotions, feeling anger and frustration toward God while simultaneously confronting his role as a concerned father. This internal struggle highlights the complexities of faith when faced with adversity, revealing a raw and honest portrayal of his spiritual journey.

Seeking solace and clarity, Todd makes a poignant decision to share his personal struggles with the audience at the conference. He openly discusses his own health issues and the burden of fear he endured, likening his experiences to those of Job—a Biblical figure known for his profound trials and unwavering faith. This humor-infused analogy not only lightens the

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atmosphere but also helps to bridge the gap between his vulnerabilities and those of the audience, fostering a sense of shared experience.

Through this public confession, Todd discovers an essential truth about prayer: authenticity matters. He realizes that it is acceptable to express feelings of doubt, anger, and confusion in his conversations with God. This understanding transforms his relationship with faith, reinforcing the notion that all prayers, regardless of their emotional state, are acknowledged by God.

A particularly moving moment arises as Todd recalls the anguish of seeing Colton frightened and alone during his medical ordeal. Yet, in reflecting on this experience, Todd finds comfort in the belief that God's son, Jesus, was with Colton during those darkest moments. This revelation solidifies Todd's faith, instilling in him a profound sense of reassurance that he is heard by God. Ultimately, this chapter represents a significant turning point in Todd's spiritual journey, as he embraces a more open, honest, and trusting relationship with God through prayer.

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Chapter 16: POP

Summary of Chapter 16 from "Heaven is for Real" by Todd Burpo

On a warm August day, Todd Burpo embarks on a drive to Benkelman with his four-year-old son, Colton, as he bids on a job. Colton enjoys the view from their Chevy diesel truck, relishing the heightened perspective as they travel through familiar rural landscapes, dotted with farmland and lakes that paint a serene backdrop to their journey.

During the drive, Colton unexpectedly mentions his deceased grandfather, affectionately known as "Pop." When Todd confirms that Colton met Pop in heaven, he is taken aback, prompting a whirlwind of emotions and questions about his father's death and the afterlife. Todd's keen desire to validate Colton's experiences showcases a father's instinct to protect his son and seek the truth amid the profound revelations.

As the conversation unfolds, Colton vividly describes Pop, noting his large wings and distinctive attire, further captivating Todd's imagination. These moments evoke cherished memories Todd harbors from his own childhood, recalling the time spent on the farm with Pop, who had provided an escape from the tensions caused by his father's struggles with mental health. Colton's articulate recollections ignite Todd's curiosity about the depth and

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nature of spiritual connections within their family lineage.

Reflecting on Pop's life and death, Todd grapples with lingering concerns about his grandfather's eternal fate. The tension is eased years later when Todd learns that Pop had participated in a religious service shortly before

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Chapter 17 Summary: TWO SISTERS

Summary of Chapter 17: Heaven is for Real

As the seasons changed from summer to fall, Todd and Sonja Burpo found themselves frequently discussing the concept of heaven with their young son, Colton. Central to these conversations was Colton's vivid descriptions of Jesus, in which he dismissed common portrayals of the figure for inaccuracies in details such as hair and clothing. This insistence on the authenticity of Jesus' appearance set the stage for a deeper understanding of his extraordinary experiences.

One evening, while Todd was immersed in preparing a sermon, Colton made a surprising remark to Sonja, revealing that he had "two sisters." Confused yet intrigued, Sonja inquired further, leading Colton to explain that one of these sisters was a baby they had lost to miscarriage. This revelation shocked Sonja, as she learned that Colton believed the baby had communicated with him, stating she died in Sonja's tummy. Colton's claim that God had "adopted" this sister filled Sonja with both wonder and astonishment.

Colton went on to describe this unnamed sister as resembling his older sister Cassie, but smaller and with dark hair. This poignant description stirred a mix of emotions in Sonja, intertwining grief with a profound sense of joy as

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Colton's words provided insight into their loss. He noted that since the family never named the baby, she remained without a title, which offered Sonja a sense of comfort in her lingering sorrow.

Through Colton's innocent yet profound revelations, the Burpos found a pathway to healing. Sonja's guilt and grief began to shift as the realization dawned that their unborn child was secure in heaven. The couple had always held a belief in their baby's place in the afterlife, but Colton's experience brought an undeniable clarity to that belief.

With this newfound understanding, Todd and Sonja began to embrace the prospect of reuniting with their daughter in heaven. Lightening the gravity of their earlier reflections, they exchanged playful jokes about who might arrive in heaven first and began contemplating names for their daughter. This joyful anticipation ignited a sense of hope for their eventual reunion, illuminating their path as they navigated the emotional terrain of loss.

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Chapter 18 Summary: THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD

Summary of Chapter 18 from "Heaven is for Real"

In December 2003, Todd Burpo engages in a bedtime routine with his son, Colton, where he reads a Bible story about King Solomon. This story illustrates a profound moment of sacrifice and love, as Solomon proposes to divide a baby to uncover the true mother, who reveals her identity by refusing to let her child be harmed. This tale prompts Todd to reflect deeply on the nature of God's throne and the biblical descriptions attached to it.

During their bedtime prayers, Todd inquires about God's throne, eager to learn what Colton might know. Colton astonishes his father with his description of the throne as immense, emphasizing God's profound love for them. He shares that Jesus sits beside God, a revelation that surprises Todd and hints at a wisdom in his son that seems far beyond his age.

Colton continues to share insights about heaven, revealing that the angel Gabriel occupies a place on the opposite side of God's throne. This knowledge resonates with Todd, reminding him of Gabriel's significant role in the Bible as a messenger. Colton also mentions that he sits next to the Holy Spirit and prays for Todd from heaven, underscoring a deep spiritual connection between them that transcends earthly boundaries.

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A particularly touching moment arises when Colton recounts meeting his deceased grandfather in heaven. This encounter reinforces Todd's belief in the afterlife and the enduring relationships that exist between heaven and Earth. Through Colton's revelations, Todd begins to envision heaven not merely as a collection of treasures but as a nurturing realm filled with love, where family ties are revered.

To further explore Colton's memories, Todd asks whether it ever gets dark in heaven. Colton's firm response, asserting that it never does and explaining it's due to God's light, strengthens Todd's confidence in his son's extraordinary experiences and insights about heaven. This chapter concludes with Todd feeling reassured and enriched by the understanding that his child's visions of the afterlife are genuine and impactful, solidifying the family's connection to both spiritual and earthly realms.

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Chapter 19 Summary: JESUS REALLY LOVES THE CHILDREN

Summary of Chapter 19: Insights from Colton's Heaven Experience

This chapter delves into the experiences of Colton Burpo, a young boy whose fascination with death and heaven began around late 2003 and early 2004. After a near-death experience, Colton vividly depicted heaven, describing ethereal elements such as golden gates, a radiant city, vibrant flowers, and playful animals. Central to his visions was a powerful message: "Jesus loves the children."

Colton frequently conveyed this message to his parents, consistently asserting that Jesus has a special love for children. His enthusiasm permeated everyday life, influencing family dynamics and moving them to view children's ministry with renewed passion. Colton's mother, Sonja, became increasingly engaged in church activities for kids, while his father, Todd, encouraged church members to embrace the role of teaching Sunday school. Their family atmosphere transformed as they recognized the profound responsibility and joy in loving and serving children, mirroring the love of Jesus.

Another noteworthy aspect of this chapter is Colton's fascination with

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rainbows, which he associated with biblical references to heaven. In spring 2004, a remarkable rainbow appeared shortly after Colton nonchalantly claimed to have prayed for it the day before. This event not only highlighted Colton's innocent faith but also reminded his parents of the power of child-like belief and the importance of trusting in God.

Overall, Colton's experiences and insights challenge his parents to reassess their adult views on spirituality, encouraging them to adopt a simple yet profound faith akin to that of a child's. This chapter emphasizes the need for adults to embrace a more trusting and open-hearted approach to their beliefs, just as Colton did.

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Chapter 20: DYING AND LIVING

In Chapter 20 of "Heaven is for Real," titled "Good Friday Reflections,"

Todd Burpo reflects on the significance of Good Friday while driving with his children, Colton and Cassie, in their truck. This moment takes place in April 2004, a year after Colton's remarkable hospital experience during which he claims to have visited heaven. The Burpo family observes a cherished church tradition of coming together for Communion during Holy Week, a practice that allows them to connect more deeply with their faith and community.

As they drive, Todd engages Colton in a conversation about the meaning of Good Friday. He is surprised to discover that Colton has a profound understanding of Jesus's sacrifice—expressing that Christ died to allow people to see God. Colton's innocent explanation simplifies complex theological ideas into a message that resonates with a child's perspective, prompting Todd to admire the beauty and clarity of childlike faith. This moment revitalizes Todd's appreciation for the straightforward beliefs that children hold, contrasting with the often convoluted interpretations of adults.

Amid these reflections, Todd contemplates the realities of parenting, particularly the challenges of ensuring the safety of young children like Colton, who is often oblivious to potential dangers. Todd recalls moments of panic when Colton dashes ahead, unbothered by the risks around him.

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A notable incident at a local snack shop serves to highlight this theme. After scolding Colton for running into a parking lot, Todd tries to impart a lesson on awareness of danger using the unfortunate example of a dead bunny in the street. Colton, however, joyfully responds by expressing his excitement

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Chapter 21 Summary: THE FIRST PERSON YOU'LL SEE

Summary of Chapter 21: "Heaven is for Real"

The Burpo family experienced a tranquil summer, filled with moments of familial bonding and deeper reflections on faith, notably surrounding Colton's remarkable experiences. Their playful discussions often revolved around envisioning Jesus, leading them to reconsider their earlier questions about various depictions of Him, hinting at an evolving understanding of spirituality.

As August arrived, the Chase County Fair in Imperial drew near, a beloved tradition that captivated the local community with its lively atmosphere and diverse activities. The fair showcased livestock competitions and exciting spectacles, such as "Mutton Bustin"—a whimsical event where children ride sheep. Amidst the cheerful chaos, a lighthearted controversy emerged involving a lemonade vendor, whose promotional tactics sparked some ire among attendees.

During this bustling time, Todd and Sonja Burpo managed their family garage-door business while balancing the demands of the fair. Todd took Colton along to visit Harold Greer, a congregant in the nursing home who

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was nearing the end of his life. This visit held significant personal weight for Todd, as he sought to provide comfort in a difficult moment while Sonja remained at their booth with their daughter, Cassie.

At the nursing home, Todd was welcomed by Harold's family, who gathered around him for support. In a solemn and heartfelt atmosphere, Todd offered a prayer for Harold, asking for a peaceful transition to heaven. Colton sat quietly, yet his presence was anything but passive; he observed the scene with an air of calmness that contrasted with the heaviness of the situation.

In a touching display of faith, Colton reached out to Harold, grasping his hand and delivering a message that resonated with profound sincerity: he told Harold that the first person he would see in heaven would be Jesus. This innocent yet powerful reassurance not only provided comfort to Harold but also illuminated Colton's unique ability to offer hope in the face of mortality, reinforcing the belief in a loving afterlife that echoes throughout the family's journey.

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Chapter 22 Summary: NO ONE IS OLD IN HEAVEN

Summary of Chapter 22 from "Heaven is for Real"

In this chapter, titled "Inheritance and Memories," Todd reflects on the treasured items he inherited from his grandfather, whom he affectionately called "Pop." Among these items are a .22 rifle, a well-used bowling ball, and an old desk that Todd personally remodeled during his woodworking days. This desk becomes a powerful symbol of Pop's character and work ethic, serving as a reminder of the hardworking man Todd admired.

The narrative takes a poignant turn when Todd's son, Colton, shares his extraordinary experience of meeting Pop in heaven. Colton provides vivid details about Pop's clothing and wings, yet struggles to remember his grandfather's facial features. Intrigued by his son's description, Todd decides to show Colton a photograph of Pop, hoping to spark a stronger recognition of him.

Colton's reaction to the photograph is revealing; he exclaims that "nobody's old in heaven," which intrigues Todd and prompts him to delve deeper into his family's history. They search for younger images of Pop, and when Todd's mother sends a photocopy of his father in his youth, Colton instantly recognizes him. However, he fails to identify other family members,

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including his great-grandmother, despite their recent encounters. This raises questions about how Colton's mind processes age and recognition in the spiritual realm.

This experience leads Todd and his wife, Sonja, to reflect on a comforting aspect of Colton's insights: that in heaven, individuals may appear as their younger selves. This concept offers both hope and uncertainty, suggesting that while our essence and relationships continue, the physical changes brought by aging might not apply in the afterlife. This chapter beautifully weaves themes of memory, familial connections, and the eternal nature of identity in heaven, enriching the reader's understanding of the profound experiences that shape the family's faith journey.

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Chapter 23 Summary: POWER FROM ABOVE

Chapter Summary: Colby's Birth and Insights from Colton

Colby's Arrival

On October 4, 2004, the Burpo family welcomed Colby Lawrence Burpo, a baby who bore a striking resemblance to his older brother, Colton. Each child in the family brought a unique dynamic: Cassie was known for her sensitivity, Colton held a serious demeanor, while Colby infused the household with his humor and laughter. This blend of personalities contributed to the vibrant and loving atmosphere of the Burpo home.

Prayer and Spiritual Insight

One evening, as Sonja, the mother, read a Bible story to Colton, she prompted him to pray for Todd's preparation for an upcoming sermon. To her surprise, Colton remarked, "I've seen power shot down to Daddy," hinting at a deeper connection to spiritual experiences. This statement indicated to Sonja that Colton perceived divine assistance as something tangible and impactful.

Understanding the Holy Spirit's Role

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Colton elaborated on his experience, explaining that “Jesus shoots down power” through the Holy Spirit, which sparked a significant revelation for Todd, the father. This realization underscored the power of children's faith and the idea that their prayers might be guided by a direct channel to God. Todd recognized that his own prayers for help while preaching were not only answered but infused with the very strength that Colton described. This moment emphasized the innocence and sincerity of children’s beliefs in divine support, illustrating how their understanding of faith can provide profound insights for adults.

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Chapter 24: ALI'S MOMENT

Chapter Summary: Colton's Revelation

In this poignant chapter, Todd Burpo reflects on a deeply impactful experience involving his family and their babysitter, Ali Titus. Tasked with caring for the Burpo children while Todd and Sonja attend a softball game, Ali returns home to find Sonja distressed about an emotional topic that resurfaces: her previous miscarriage. This leads to an intimate conversation as Ali cleans the kitchen, revealing personal struggles and feelings surrounding loss.

During this time, young Colton Burpo exhibits a profound sense of grief for a sister he claims to have seen in heaven. Strikingly, Ali is unaware of any deceased sibling in the family until Colton shares his revelation. This unsettling insight unveils a hidden aspect of the Burpo family's past, illustrating Colton's emotional turmoil and deep yearning for the sister he has never known. Both Ali and Sonja are moved by Colton's heartfelt expression of sorrow, creating a bond rooted in shared vulnerability.

The experience profoundly impacts Ali's perspective on faith. Despite her earlier doubts about Christianity, Colton's vivid depictions of life in heaven and his longing for his sister provide her with a newfound sense of hope and

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belief. Ali reflects on how Colton's innocent yet transformative proclamation reinforces the idea of divine connection and the comforting possibility of an afterlife.

Overall, this chapter explores themes of family, loss, and the unexpected ways a child's perspective can influence the beliefs of those around him, showcasing how moments of revelation can lead to deeper understandings of love and faith.

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Chapter 25 Summary: SWORDS OF THE ANGELS

In Chapter 25 of "Heaven is for Real," the Burpo family shares a memorable outing in 2005 as they watch the cinematic adaptation of C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. This beloved book, which they had cherished in their own childhood, comes to life on screen, captivating Todd and Sonja, while sparking excitement in their children, especially six-year-old Colton, who is eager to witness the action-packed narrative.

The film tells the enchanting tale of the Pevensie siblings, who are evacuated during World War II and stumble upon a magical wardrobe that transports them to Narnia—an extraordinary land inhabited by talking animals and mythical beings. Here, they join the majestic lion Aslan in a struggle against the wicked White Witch, who has plunged the kingdom into eternal winter.

Colton is particularly mesmerized during a pivotal battle scene, energized by Aslan's resurrection and his victory over the Witch. However, the lighthearted atmosphere shifts when Sonja comments about the absence of swords in heaven. Colton firmly asserts that swords do exist there, given that angels wield them to keep Satan at bay. This surprising declaration generates thoughtful contemplation for Todd, who connects Colton's insights to biblical references about spiritual warfare and the fall of Satan, pondering how a child so young could articulate such profound concepts without any formal instruction in Sunday school.

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As the discussion continues, Colton expresses a wish for a sword but reveals that Jesus has deemed him too dangerous to possess one. His tone noticeably changes when Todd gently probes about his encounters with Satan. Colton suddenly becomes tense and withdraws, clearly disturbed by a troubling experience that he hesitates to share.

The chapter wraps up by highlighting the complexity of Colton's feelings regarding heaven, which encompasses not just the joy of vibrantly beautiful imagery like rainbows and golden streets but also the presence of darker, fearsome elements that contribute to his trepidation. This juxtaposition signals an early recognition of the duality of existence, blending both wonder and fear, as Colton navigates his understanding of the spiritual realm.

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Chapter 26 Summary: THE COMING WAR

Summary of Chapter 26

In Chapter 26, Todd Burpo takes a drive with his son, Colton, to McCook, Nebraska, for a business trip. During their journey back, a profound discussion unfolds about the afterlife and heaven.

As they travel, Colton's curious nature surfaces when he asks about the location of Todd's father's grave, whom he affectionately calls Pop. Todd explains where Pop is buried but reassures Colton that his father is now in heaven, enjoying what Todd describes as a new, glorified body. This reassurance strikes a chord with Colton, who shares a revelation he received from Jesus: those who ascend to heaven are given new bodies.

The conversation takes a more intense turn when Colton reveals he has witnessed a future war that will engulf the world—a cosmic battle between good, led by Jesus, angels, and the righteous, and evil, represented by Satan, monstrous beings, and malevolent humans. This revelation resonates with Todd, evoking imagery linked to biblical prophecies, particularly those found in the Book of Revelation.

Todd ponders the nature of time as described by Colton, realizing that in

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heaven, time may not function in the linear way it does on Earth. Colton appears to have access to knowledge of past, present, and future, hinting at a divine perspective that alters human understanding.

Colton's description of the upcoming battle includes terrifying monsters, leading Todd to question how they will fight these creatures. Colton enthusiastically responds that they will wield weapons like swords and bows and arrows. Todd feels a mixture of surprise and slight disappointment, as he had hoped for more powerful means of combat to confront these formidable foes.

Despite the daunting prospect of such a battle, Colton brings comfort to Todd by assuring him that Jesus will ultimately triumph over Satan. This declaration shifts Todd's initial trepidation into a sense of resolve. As their conversation winds down, Todd reflects on Colton's acceptance of the situation and his serious acknowledgment of the challenges that lay ahead. As they approach home, Todd contemplates the weight of their discussion, instilling in him a deeper understanding of faith and the battle that exists beyond their earthly realm.

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Chapter 27 Summary: SOMEDAY WE'LL SEE

In Chapter 27 of "Heaven is for Real," the Burpo family begins to share Colton's extraordinary experience of heaven with the public. This sharing takes place on January 28, 2007, at Mountain View Wesleyan Church, where Todd Burpo delivers a sermon comparing himself to "Doubting Thomas," highlighting his own struggles with faith and anger during Colton's life-threatening hospitalization. The church is filled with attendees eager to hear Colton's incredible story, particularly his encounters with deceased family members in heaven.

After this impactful public presentation, Todd discovers an email about Akiane Kramarik, a gifted young artist who has also claimed to have visions of heaven. Her artwork and descriptions resonate deeply with Colton's experiences, particularly in capturing the vibrant colors and the figure of Jesus. This connection excites Todd, as it suggests a shared glimpse into the celestial realm.

Colton's story begins to resonate with various individuals, leaving a meaningful impact on those he and his family encounter. Todd recalls a touching conversation with a grieving mother who lost a baby, where he provides solace about God's care for her child in heaven. He also shares moments with nurses who, having witnessed Colton's miraculous recovery, affirm their belief in a higher power.

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As Todd reflects on the blessings bestowed upon their family through Colton's experiences, he is mindful of the severe trials they faced—primarily the fear of losing their son. He acknowledges the complex relationship between joy and suffering, drawing parallels to Christ's own sacrifices, emphasizing the depth of their faith amidst hardship.

Both Todd and his wife, Sonja, experience a transformation in their views on heaven, contemplating it with newfound depth and hope. Todd's mother articulates a shift in her understanding of heaven, moving from an abstract idea to an inspirational expectation of eventual reunion.

The chapter ultimately conveys the intertwined nature of grief and joy within the Burpo family's journey. Colton's extraordinary experiences provoke profound reflections on love, heaven, and faith, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of life beyond the earthly realm.

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