

The Taming of the Elephant

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Book two of the series
The Story of a Thousand
Lifetimes

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Foreword

Some stories are not written because someone thought of them, but because they insist on being told. *The Story of a Thousand Lifetimes* is such a story. This second part describes my journey, and at the same time the journey of many who, in those same years, felt the call of something new moving through the world.

This book tells of the years before the New Energy began to spread on Earth and in the Cosmos. It is about searching, stumbling, remembering, losing, and rising again. About old pain that surfaced, and the unexpected openings that could emerge through it.

Although it describes my personal path, it is not meant as a memoir or a diary. It is more like a chronicle, a remembrance, a mirror. Perhaps you will recognize something of your own story within it, or perhaps it will open a window toward something new. What follows is a testimony, a weaving of experiences, passed on with the intent that every reader may feel: *I am not alone in this.*

May this book touch you where words fall short, and inspire you to continue your own journey with gentleness and courage.

With love,

Joy

Chapter 1

A string from the mailbox opens the door to ancient wisdom.

Just like the first time I stood at the door of Han Boering, a great connoisseur of the I Ching, a string is dangling from the mailbox. As I am about to pull it, Han already opens the door.

“Well, there you are again,” he says. “Come in.”

A little later I am sitting at the table with a cup of tea, trying to stay out of the smoke of Han’s cigarette.

“What is your question?” Han begins.

“I’d like to gain insight into how best to continue with my book. I notice that I’m starting to falter.”

“Oh yes,” Han says, “you wrote that in your email. Let’s see what the I Ching has to say about it. But first, can you tell me what you have in mind?”

“I’ve been left with questions about the use of oracles and mediums. The main character has been advised by all kinds of people working with oracles, acting as mediums, or practicing astrology. Her problem is that these pieces of advice don’t always align. In addition, she has developed her own insights and receives messages from spirit, and she must somehow reconcile all of this, which doesn’t always succeed. I want the main character to discover which advice she can safely follow and which she should distrust. Where are the boundaries of what such advisors can truly offer?”

“Interesting,” Han says, picking up his cards. “It’s good to realize right away that consulting oracles is as old as humanity

itself—it comes from the human urge to know more about what cannot be seen.”

Han looks silently at the cards and their positions for a while, nods, and begins to speak. “In the center lies Following, which means that you follow your ideal. Now it’s about what surrounds it—what will work for you, and what will not.”

“Do I see Small Restraint?” I say. “All that fussing and nitpicking over the tiniest details?”

“In this case it means you will have to work hard to truly tell the story well,” Han continues. “Let’s look further. You are making many discoveries that will lead you from the distant past to the here and now. That fits perfectly with what this book is about, and it aligns with your own nature. You will also discover how often people, through wishful thinking, distort their own reality. Because of that, the main character’s insights will become much clearer. She has been conditioned in a certain way and therefore dealt with the advice of oracles, mediums, and astrologers in that same way. She thought she understood what was meant, but she comes to different insights. A beautiful development.”

Han lights another cigarette, which immediately sends me into a coughing fit, and then goes on. “You have a strong ambition—as does the main character, of course. That is reflected in the hexagram The Caldron. But you are also confronted with life circumstances, represented by the Well. Both are part of this reading. It means that when your goal, your ideal, and the means diverge, you must make do with what is available.”

“Wait,” I say. “What do you mean by that?”

“Are you expecting a substantial sum of money?”

“Yes, my lawyer has filed a lawsuit in the personal injury case. I expect the other party won’t be able to avoid paying.

Once that is settled, the issue of the doctor's negligence still needs to be addressed. So if all goes well, I should receive two payments."

"Exactly," Han says. "I expect you'll receive both, but if they don't turn out as you expect, you'll have to manage with what you get. It leans toward a favorable outcome. Still, circumstances are decisive in how you will give shape to your ideal—that is what the cards in this reading show. Obstacles also lie on your path, which is why I connect the ideal with the circumstances. But this line also appears: 'He obtains golden arrows,' which means you can truly focus on something. Once the last issue with the insurers is behind you, burn the papers and move on. Make the most of the circumstances, but don't let them hold you back either. You will succeed, because you feel you must write this book—that is what the line 'at the king's command' signifies."

Han studies the cards again and reaches for his book. "I also see that the soul's mission of the main character—of you, in other words—gets stuck on a man," Han says. "It will take great effort, but she finds a way to deal with it and follow her own path. That is what the hexagram Innocence shows: when you act contrary to your nature, you only create difficulties. This is a beautiful development the main character undergoes—she is truly going to fulfill her soul's mission."

A little later I am outside again.

Just keep going, Joy, I decide.

Chapter 2

An ambulance full of questions, a guide with answers.

It is exactly five years since I met Max again and thought I knew he was the man I had been waiting for in this lifetime. I am still waiting, and I am sick of it. Every couple I encounter—happy or not—stirs up an intense longing in me. On top of that, it was hardly a pleasant experience to be invisibly dragged into an ambulance in which Max was being transported after a heart attack, only to be held responsible for the outcome. It has cost me many restless hours, and even now I half expect a phone call at any moment asking me to rush to a hospital—though it makes no sense, since Max keeps me at a distance whenever possible. I don't want to go on like this. That is why I am standing at the door of Ian Graham, ready to speak with White Bull about the strange bond between Max and me.

"Welcome," says White Bull once Ian and I have caught up.

"As always, I begin with the question: how are you?"

"Terrible," I reply. "As if life is conspiring against me."

"Tell me," says White Bull. "What is weighing on you? Then I will try to pour a little oil into the wheels so your life can move more smoothly again."

"As you know, five years ago I came across Max again. At that moment I was certain he was the man of my life. Even Maria, a psychic I sometimes visit, seemed to confirm this with her descriptions. But Max appears completely unaware and only grows more irritated by my presence in his life. I could

have accepted that—if he didn't keep showing up when I travel in spirit. Not only is he present, he seems blissfully happy in those moments we are together. Because he shows no interest in me in earthly reality, I have broken the bond I feel with him several times. I did so again right before the last week of the healing training.

During a healing I received to release the relationship cord with Max so I could move on more easily and freely, things became a wild jumble: I suddenly found myself in an ambulance where he was being resuscitated, and a voice told me I must center myself because I was his anchor on Earth. At that point I truly no longer knew what to think of the situation. Still, I let that go as well—until I was drawn into contact with him again for something not relevant here. A few emails went back and forth, but I continued to feel unwelcome. Because I could not reconcile the ambulance incident and his journeying with me, I could not let him go. At a certain point I was so tired of the uncertainty that I decided to directly offer him my friendship. I knew I was forcing things, but I could no longer bear the situation. His answer took a few days to arrive but left nothing unclear: he preferred to keep his distance. I don't understand it. If only I felt indifferent, but I don't. What is happening here? Why is there such an enormous gap between the world of spirit and earthly reality?"

"First of all, let me say this: you have pushed matters to the edge because you no longer wish to waste time. What you desire is a physical relationship. Look to earthly reality—that is where relationships take place on Earth. At that level, Max is not interested."

"Then why is he with me whenever I journey in spirit?"

"Max has his reasons for not choosing you within the physical reality of Earth. When you undertake a spirit journey

with ayahuasca, you are connected with the higher dimensions. In that moment, his soul seizes the opportunity to be with you; for his soul, it is the only possibility. You and he share an ancient bond, and on the level of spirit you are in harmony. He delights in your company there, and you in his. But on the earthly level he is not connected with you. His brain governs his three-dimensional reality and tells him you do not belong in it. I advise you: the next time you journey and he appears, resolutely deny him access. For you do not want only a spiritual relationship—you want a physical one as well. He blocks that. Max is not able at this time to choose the way of the soul and to break with his current choices. What is happening between you is a classic example of free will obstructing the program of the soul—affecting not only his life but also yours, and that of others. It is a frustrating situation, but everyone, including friends in spirit, must bow to free will. It cannot be otherwise.”

“I have had more than enough of being alone.”

“Exactly. What you long for is an earthly, physical relationship. But I also want to point out that you often have the tendency to remain in a state of hope rather than living in the here and now. And hope has a partner called hopelessness. When one is present, the other is never far away. A life without hope is not a hopeless life, but a life of infinite possibilities—because anything can happen. Give up hope. To hope is to refuse to accept what is. When you accept what is, you set him free—and perhaps he may make another choice. I am not encouraging you with these words to begin hoping again. Live with the physical reality, not with what a psychic or an old ghost like me tells you. Relationships take place in the physical world, not in the astral or the realms of light. It all happens in three dimensions.

This does not mean you should stop listening to your intuition. On the contrary—you have strong intuition that can guide you to the right place at the right moment. Your intuition speaks through feeling, through bodily sensation. And you know: your body is incapable of lying. It helps you distinguish between what you perceive and what your imagination wants you to believe. Intuition resonates in your body; fantasy does not.”

“How is it that Maria described Max so accurately as my future partner—years before I met him again?”

“Without doubt this woman is very gifted and has your best interests at heart. What happened is that she perceived the ancient bond between you and Max. But she also picked up your longing. Those two she merged together. Because she saw you both so clearly intertwined, she gave you details that made it almost a certainty in your mind that Max would be your partner in this earthly life. And it could have been so, had his free will not chosen otherwise.

What you now long for is the classic story: woman meets man, the step-by-step unfolding that leads to relationship. Allow yourself this. Let Max go. Live in the now. Turn him away if he comes again during a spirit journey, for it is a direct torment to you—and very tempting to fall back into. What you need—also considering the work that lies before you—is a very earthly relationship with all its pleasures. Someone who keeps you anchored in the here and now, even though you will at times visit other dimensions. After all, you did not come to Earth to be only a spirit.

Such a relationship is also good for keeping your heart open. That is the place where we, and thus also Tithua, place our messages and guidance. Do not think that Tithua is waiting impatiently for you to be ready to work with her. Where she is, there is no time. She waits quietly until you are prepared. And

when the moment comes, it can all unfold very quickly. Do you have any more questions?"

"That was clear, thank you. Just one small question about the court case that will take place in a few weeks."

"Ask."

"I notice I am very tense about the outcome and afraid that this alone may have a negative effect. What old belief in me could be disturbing the process?"

"Know that the situation no longer serves you, and that not only human law but also spiritual law has influence on the outcome. Beyond that, I say to you: whatever the outcome, do not make yourself dependent upon it. This issue simply no longer serves you. Over every drama the curtain must eventually fall. Over this one too."

"Thank you," I say.

"And I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you. Remember that you are part of the Universe, whose only desire is to give. You have no idea what blessings will come into your life when you live in harmony with that. I bless you and hold the image of the highest possible for you. Find the true freedom with which you become, on Earth, a reflection of truth. God be with you."

White Bull disappears, and slowly Ian returns.

Chapter 3

A code word, a farewell, a battle in heaven.

"And...?" Anton asks when I come to report on the weekend.

"It was all about Max, Max, and more Max. Just as White Bull said, he completely blocks my way. And that wasn't all—I received the code words he and I had agreed to use in this life during the ayahuasca ceremony. I had completely forgotten them."

"And what are those code words, if I may be so bold as to ask?" says Anton.

"I need you."

"I need you?"

I can hear he's struggling not to laugh. "Don't you dare."

"I wouldn't dream of it, but still—it's quite something that those were the very words you once agreed upon."

"Yes, yes, I know. The only words I never managed to say to Max, the words that stuck in my throat. And shall I tell you something? It's too late to use them now."

"You could at least give it a try."

"Do you think I could still achieve anything with them?"

"That's not the point, in my view. The point is to speak those words aloud—and preferably to mean them."

"But I don't need him anymore. In fact, I already let him go after what White Bull told me."

"Do you really believe that? I think it would do you good to speak those words anyway, even if only to let him know how hard they are for you to say."

"I'll think about it."

Once back home, I sit down at my laptop to send Max a farewell email. I spend hours searching for the right wording. When I'm finally satisfied, I still don't dare press the send button. I get up, walk to the kitchen, make a cup of tea, return, and read the text once more. Does it sound right? Am I writing something I'll regret?

Dear Max,

Rest assured, this is the last message I will send you, and it is meant as a farewell.

Before you and I entered this life, we made an agreement to support one another when the moment came, as I've told you before. The words we agreed to use if one of us needed the other were: *"I need you."* Unfortunately, I did not remember those words at times when I truly could have used your help. They never even occurred to me; in fact, they are words I can barely speak.

This past weekend I was shown that I could not move forward unless I addressed the situation between you and me. When I heard those words we had agreed upon, I was astonished that I had not remembered them.

White Bull (who he is, you can find on the website kindmanmankind) told me, among other things, when I asked what was going on: *"This is a classic example of free will crossing the program of the soul. Very frustrating, but everyone must bow to it, even when it affects other lives."*

I can do nothing but bow to your free will. And I can no longer wait. I needed you, but I never said it outright. Because I am tired of waiting and deeply long to have someone by my side, I am moving on.
I wish you love and light on your further path.
Joy

No, I see nothing in this message I don't mean, nothing that tries to manipulate. It is as I have written it. Then I press the send button. *So that's that*, I think. A day later there is a reply.

Dear Joy,

A beggar in India went to the temple, lit incense, and prayed to his favorite Buddha: "Lord, I am so poor and miserable, please let me win the lottery." Thus the devout beggar prayed daily in the temple, and years went by. One fine day the Buddha grew tired of these complaints. He raised his eyes and said: "Then why don't you buy a ticket...?"

Well, here or there, I wonder—am I being compared to that tiresome beggar?

With this answer I see that I must account to you for my actions, or inaction. For those who are not wise, like me, Joy, life is full of riddles—mysteries, if you will. What life has taught me so far is that appearance and paradox are its characteristic forms. So I am left to wonder whether there is a deep truth in the old adage that everything is an illusion, that our world is nothing but appearance. From that wonder I draw inspiration and feel vitality. A mystery must remain so, otherwise it ceases to be a mystery.

You might ask yourself whether the distance I keep from you does not in fact give you the space and freedom you need in this life. And whether my free will, in choosing not to admit you into my life, is not also guided or inspired by a wise plan. Messages that come from afar are not always easy to decipher, you must understand. This knowing you discover layer by layer by living your life. This is my message to you, and you must make do with it. You must trust that I am sincere.

Necessity is a feature of action—or inaction. There is no necessity *to be*. Life is eternal; otherwise it would not be itself. “*My manifestation is a play of nature, divine folly,*” said a wise man once.

Be a divine fool, Joy, and do only what is necessary. Farewell.

Max

I read and reread, trying to grasp the deeper layers of what Max has written so beautifully, while at the same time struggling to suppress my irritation at the words *make do with it*. Is he casting himself as an illusion I created—as the Buddha statue of the beggar? Surely he doesn’t mean me as the Buddha. What is he showing me? Why does he hide his feelings behind so many words and metaphors? Is he afraid of hurting me, and is this his way of delivering the message? Reading it this way, it seems as though Max has not sensed my intent, and that hurts.

And is it coincidence that he used the word *fool*? I think of the first time the fools invited me to come and play; I also think of the tarot card I once drew as my year card, the card of the Joker, warning me to take a closer look at something. I don’t know. Still, it feels good that Max is finally responding personally to one of my messages—and that he seems to be

listening to messages from afar, from higher dimensions, even if they don't match his near-constant presence during my spirit journeys.

I have never doubted his sincerity. Does he think I have? Why? I decide to be wise, not to argue, and certainly not to try to prove myself right. Perhaps by not sharing my feelings openly from the start, I am partly responsible for this situation. *If only I had... then...* But *if only* helps little when it was never done. What I do know is that I will never again let such a situation arise. Open communication is the shortest road to happiness. Still, I remain frustrated, because something nags at me: the sense that there are misunderstandings at play, that an image of me has arisen that is not true. There is nothing I can do about it now, and that makes me angry.

Thank you, Max, I appreciate what you've written.

By the way, I have never doubted your sincerity, and you are one of the people in my life who—though you call yourself unwise—at least makes the effort to act, or not act, as wisely as possible.

Well, see you in heaven!

Joy

See you in heaven. Yes, that's what it will come down to. I imagine the first thing I'll do upon arrival is storm at Max, grab him by his heavenly collar, drag him across the floor, and fight out my anger. Meanwhile, Peter looks on, shaking his head at this unholy scene.

The thought of it pleases me. Here I am on Earth, alone, while the agreement had been to do this together. As if I had been lured into a trap. I hadn't wanted to return to Earth

again—but because Max was coming, I agreed. And look at me now.

Still, the heavenly brawl with Max has done me good, because damn it, I won't let this defeat me. No Max in this life? Fine. Then I'll go on alone—or perhaps I'll meet another man. Slowly my rebellious, angry mood ebbs away, and a more mature, wiser part of me emerges. There is a woman inside me who refuses to be defined by others, who remembers she has her own work to do. Besides, I have no desire to behave like an angry teenager. What I want is to rise above old pain, to heal the remnants of old wounds, and to do my work.

In the days that follow, I discover how deeply I am bound to Max. Once again, the emotions sweep through: rage and deep sorrow blend with relief, only to give way again to a sense of abandonment—even betrayal. I curl up on the couch, so small and alone, clutching my wounded heart and wondering if this pain will ever give way to joy.

I think of the time White Bull came to take me into the world of light, of that feeling of total connectedness, and I wonder how on earth I can now feel so alone, so forsaken by everything and everyone. Why didn't I let go of Max at once, when it was clear he barely noticed me and was deaf to my messages from other dimensions? Why?

At last the fog of sorrow begins to lift. One day the phone rings, and within two minutes my mood has greatly improved. No trial—there is a settlement offer, and even a reasonable one. At long last, one of the personal injury cases is over—after six years! I can hardly believe it, and yet it feels as if, at last, a curtain has fallen over this drama.

That evening I sit with Anton at Ian's place, champagne in hand, deeply grateful for the friendship of these two dear men.

Chapter 4

Cups, swords, death—and a new choice.

Together with Inanya I walk through rugged, desolate terrain. I have no idea where we are going. Inanya appeared suddenly just as I was about to go to bed and beckoned me to follow her. Without another word she turned, clearly assuming I would come after her.

Her black shepherd dog leads the way, moving as if he knows exactly where we are headed. I struggle to keep up with the pace; I am not used to climbing rocks like a mountain goat. After much scrambling and climbing, we finally stand before a cave. The dog looks back, sees that Inanya is behind him, and slips through a narrow opening.

I am not fond of tight spaces and hesitate. But I don't want to be left behind. The dog and Inanya wait for me in the passage; as soon as they see me, they turn and start walking. I follow. It feels as though we are winding through the very heart of the mountain, and I completely lose my sense of direction. At last I glimpse the flicker of candlelight. Moments later I stand in a high, spacious chamber with a large wooden table in the center.

At the table sits an old man with a deck of cards before him. Inanya takes a seat and gestures for me to do the same. The dog lies down on the floor, eyes closing.

Once I am seated, the old man studies me intently, shuffles the cards, then spreads them across the table in a wide arc. With

his hand he invites me to choose one. I look at the cards and pick one. He flips it over and lays it on the table.

It is the *Two of Cups*—a card that looks romantic, with two lovers offering cups to one another beneath a great wing. Yet on closer inspection one is always giving away their full cup to the other. It is the card of a fated entanglement.

The old man gestures for me to draw again. I pick another card: the *Ten of Swords*—one of the most dreaded cards. A figure lies pierced to the ground by ten swords. The card of a great letting go, radical and merciless, as if brutal force has suddenly broken into your life.

Again he motions me to draw. This time I reveal *Death*. I need no further explanation. This is the card of bidding farewell to the old, of creating space for the new.

The man rises suddenly and beckons me to follow. Inanya looks at me intently; I cannot quite read her meaning, but I rise with anticipation to go after him.

We hurry through passage after passage—until, as if in smoke, the old man vanishes. Without seeing a side corridor or doorway, I suddenly stand before a wall. Startled, I look around. Fortunately my eyes have grown used to the dim light, and I don't panic. I remain standing there, uncertain.

Then Inanya appears. She signals me to follow her back. At the table sits the old man once more, as though he had never left. By now accustomed to strange occurrences, I am no longer surprised.

"Before you do anything, you must first feel. Have you forgotten that? Your feeling immediately told you not to follow the man, and yet you did. And when it turns out you have made the wrong decision or reached a dead end, you return to your starting point and make a new choice. If you return, for example, to the moment when it became clear that Max was not

choosing you, you can make a new choice. Do that, and you will free your way again. Feel deeply what has happened of late. Reflect on what has brought you into difficulty, take stock, and make a decision.

The cards have spoken, and you understood well what they told you. The time before you now is of great importance. But you may not, and cannot, begin until you have definitively released what blocks your path. And you cannot carry the task you have taken on if you keep your heart closed from the pains of life."

All I can do is nod. Then the veil breaks the contact with Inanya. I am back in my own home, staring at the flickering candle on the table.

Chapter 5

In the motherline, old wounds are revealed.

Now that I am truly leaving Max behind, the family secret must also come to light. Nothing from the old cycle may remain as an obstruction. I pick up the phone and call Mayet, a fellow student from the healing training and the one White Bull refers to whenever there are persistent issues. Mayet works with traumas that have arisen in the bloodline. I tell her about the secret, about what I have seen during the soul retrieval and the reincarnation session.

“Of course I can try to help you,” Mayet says a little later. “I’ll call you back after my appointments today. That will be late this afternoon. Expect that I will probably need two sessions.” At the end of the afternoon I settle into a chair with the phone, prepared to spend at least an hour and a half with Mayet.

“I’ll begin by attuning myself. Then I’ll look at what I can perceive in you right now, and after that I’ll review your life from conception through your twentieth year. In the second session I’ll go further back in the bloodline. All right, I’m tuning in now. You may interrupt me with questions at any time.”

Then it is quiet. I wait tensely for what Mayet will perceive.

“First of all, you have a great deal of difficulty feeling at home on Earth. You don’t feel that you belong, energetically—as if something doesn’t fit. You are haunted by homesickness