

THE THRONE

The blessing not everyone can carry

— J.J. Hijnnes —

*“The longest journey a person takes is not the journey across the world,
but the journey back to their own soul.”*

*For my father, Elinor Senior —
who taught me to look before I moved.*

*For my daughter —
so that she may one day understand who her father truly was.*

*And for every soul that has ever felt lost,
but deep within kept believing there had to be more.*

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— J.J. Hines —

Prologue

There are lives that do not unfold as planned.

Lives bent by loss, betrayal, poverty, love and inner war — until almost nothing remains.

This is one such life.

It is the story of Elinor: a man who lost everything people normally hold onto. A man who came to know the world through its darkest sides, yet somewhere deep within never lost the belief that there had to be more than mere survival.

This book is not a hero's novel. There is no moment where everything suddenly falls into place. There is no happy ending in the conventional sense of the word.

But there is a throne.

Not of gold. Not of power. But the throne a person ascends when they finally stop running from themselves — when they face the chaos of their past, recognize their own shadow, and still choose to live from consciousness and love.

That is the victory this book describes.

Perhaps you recognize something of yourself in Elinor. Perhaps not everything — but enough to understand that no one walks their path alone.

Your pain is not the end of your story.

— J.J. Hines

PART I

THE FALL

The beginning of the journey

Chapter 1 — Born from love

The first spark of consciousness

On October 30, 1986, a boy was born in Paramaribo who would spend his entire life trying to understand why his soul felt older than his body.

His name was Elior Junior.

Within his family, that name meant more than just a given name. He was the firstborn son. The bearer of his father's name. Within old traditions, that carried both pride and responsibility. Names held history. Energy. Expectations.

His father, Elior Senior, looked silently at his son that morning as the first rays of sunlight fell through the window. Some people talk a great deal when they are happy. Senior did not. His love lived in his eyes, his presence, and the calm he radiated.

He was a man who seemed built from discipline and gentleness at once.

Not wealthy.

Not famous.

But everywhere he went, he was respected.

People trusted him instinctively. He could build, repair, organize and protect without ever demanding attention. He loved order, correctness and honesty. When he spoke, people listened. Not out of fear, but because his words carried weight.

Later Elior would understand that true strength never needs to shout.

As a child he looked at his father as if he knew everything.

And perhaps he did know more than he ever fully expressed.

Their home was never wealthy in a material sense, but it was alive. Family moved in and out as if doors were not meant to keep people out. In Suriname, community still felt warm. People ate together, talked together and carried each other's burdens without always putting words to it.

Elior grew up among the sounds of:

rain on warm earth,

birds in the morning,

music from distant houses,

and voices of family members who were constantly present.

But even as a child he already lived partly in another world.

Where other children mostly played, he observed.

He watched people.

Silences.

Faces.

Energy.

Sometimes it seemed as if he felt things before they happened.

His mother would sometimes say laughingly:

"That child thinks too much."

But for Elior it did not feel like thinking.

It felt as if his soul was constantly listening.

He loved being alone.

Not from sadness, but because silence gave him peace. When he was alone, he felt closer to something he could not yet explain. As if the world behind the visible world spoke more softly when people fell quiet.

At the same time he carried enormous energy within him.

He ran, climbed, explored and asked endless questions. Sometimes it seemed as if two people lived inside him at once:

a boy full of fire,

and an old soul constantly searching for meaning.

Elior Senior saw that early.

That is why he treated his son differently from most fathers.

He taught him chess before he was really old enough to fully understand all the rules.

"Learn to look before you move," he often said.

When Elior was still young, he thought his father was only talking about the chess board.

Later he understood it was about life.

His father also taught him to defend himself. Not because violence was beautiful, but because the world could be hard on boys who were different. And Elior was different.

Too sensitive.

Too observant.

Too direct.

He instinctively felt when people were not being honest. Even as a child, dishonesty disturbed him deeply. That caused him to clash with others often without quite understanding why.

But despite everything, he remained a cheerful boy.

He laughed a lot.

Dreamed a lot.

And felt happiest close to his father.

Especially when they went into nature together.

Because in the forest, his father changed completely.

There Senior felt free.

And without realizing it, that was precisely where Elior's spiritual journey also began.

Chapter 2 — The language of nature

Where silence spoke more than words

Elior never truly felt at home between walls.

Even as a child, something in him constantly pulled toward open air, trees, water and silence.

Where other people found rest in houses or noise, he felt freedom precisely when he was far from voices.

His father understood that.

That is why Elior Senior often took him to the interior of Suriname, to the plantation and deep nature where he felt most alive. For many people the forest was dangerous:

anacondas,

caimans,

tarantulas,

wild cats,

unknown sounds in the night.

But for Elior it felt as if nature was more honest than people.

Animals do not hide who they are.

A snake does not pretend to be a bird. A panther wears no mask. A tree does not need to make itself appear more beautiful than it truly is.

Later Elior would understand why he felt so safe there: nature does not lie.

On the plantation the world seemed larger than in the city. Great fields full of:

bananas,

melons,

fruit trees,

herbs,

and plants whose names he did not yet know.

But the most beautiful thing he found was not even the food.

It was the sounds.

Water flowing along wood. Wind speaking through leaves. Frogs in the night that seemed to sing almost rhythmically. Birds announcing the morning as if they were guardians of the light.

Sometimes Elior sat still for hours, simply watching.

His father never found that strange.

Other adults often said:

"Go play."

But his father let him observe.

As if he knew his son learned through silence.

During those journeys Elior also met many men from the interior. Some were family, others were simply called "uncle" as is common in Surinamese culture.

Many of those men still lived close to nature.

They taught him things schools never spoke of:

how to read water,

how animals react before danger,

which silence feels safe,

and which silence warns.

Without realizing it, Elior began to develop something important there:
inner listening.

Because nature does not speak in words.

It speaks through feeling.

One morning something happened that would change his life forever.

It was early. The air smelled of wet wood and river water.

Elior stood on a jetty where they often went to bathe. Due to the strong current the jetty had two levels:

a higher dry section,

and a lower part closer to the water.

As always he stood below.

Then he suddenly felt something change.

Not outside himself. Inside.

As if the world suddenly stood still.

It was not a voice. More an inner knowing.

Something told him:

"Go under the water."

So he did.

The moment his body went under, everything changed.

The water did not feel heavy. He felt no fear. No need to breathe.

On the contrary.

For the first time in his young life he felt complete peace.

As if he was stepping into another reality.

Everything became clear. Clean. Pure.

He could not explain what he saw, only that it felt as if the world behind the visible world had briefly opened.

To Elior it seemed like only a few seconds.

But when he finally came back up, he heard screaming.

People were in panic.

His mother was crying. Family members were searching everywhere. Everyone thought he had drowned.

Later he heard that he had been gone for nearly twenty minutes.

Twenty minutes.

No one understood how.

No one except his father, who remained remarkably calm.

Elior Senior eventually found him himself.

When people asked if he had been frightened, Elior looked around in confusion.

Frightened of what?

To him it had felt as if he had simply been somewhere else for a moment.

That evening father and son lay together in the grass while the sky slowly darkened.

The stars appeared one by one.

His father pointed upward and said:

"Do you see those stars? That is all of us. Everyone carries their own light."

Elior looked up in silence.

He did not fully understand the words yet, but somewhere he felt that his father was trying to teach him something greater than religion.

Something about consciousness.

About energy.

About the soul.

And precisely at that moment they saw something move in the sky.

Golden.

As if a large winged vessel was slowly gliding through the heavens.

It seemed almost like a vision.

Father and son looked at each other without words.

Both wondered whether they truly saw what they saw.

But deep within, Elior knew: this moment he would never forget.

Years later he would finally understand that some experiences are not meant to be explained logically.

Some experiences come to awaken a soul.

And perhaps that was precisely where the first true opening of his consciousness began.

Chapter 3 — The day the light disappeared

When a child meets the shadow for the first time

Some events divide a life into two parts.

A before. And an after.

For Elior, March 1993 was the moment when his world broke for good.

Until then his father felt like a mountain: unbreakable, present, protective.

When Senior was home, even silence felt safe. He was the one who kept the family together. The man who helped everyone without ever keeping track of how much he gave. Family members constantly came to him for:

advice,

money,

help,

protection,

solutions.

And he always helped.

His love was practical.

He built for people. Worked for people. Carried people.

But as Elior would later learn: not everyone can handle someone who carries light without asking for anything in return.

His father had also had a difficult childhood. He came from a large family where violence had become normal. People were hit. Humiliated. Controlled.

But Senior was the one who stood up for his brothers and sisters.

Perhaps that is why he instinctively understood that strength is meant to protect, not to dominate.

Yet even he carried shadows around him that he did not fully see.

In March 1993 he set off once again into the forest to hunt.

He did that often.

To him nature felt like home.

That morning he said simply:

"I will be back shortly with monkey meat."

Normal words.

Words that no one knew would be the last they would ever hear from him.

The hours that followed felt strange.

Even as a child Elior noticed that the energy was different. As if the air grew heavier without clear reason. His mother tried to stay calm, but he felt her unease growing.

Children feel more than adults think.

They still listen with their soul before the world teaches them to use only their head.

Evening became night.

And Senior did not come back.

Around two in the morning the house suddenly turned to chaos.

People came in. There was whispering. Some were already crying before anything had been explained.

His mother called the children aside.

Elior would never forget that room.

The look in her eyes. The tension in her breathing. The way grief and strength were simultaneously trying to move through her.

At that moment she was pregnant with his baby brother.

And yet she had to tell her children that their father was dead.

But while everyone around him felt mostly grief, something different happened inside Elior.

He immediately felt that the story did not add up.

Not logically. Not rationally.

More as if his soul was sounding an alarm.

Later he heard various stories: that his father had eaten something, that he became ill, that he had been lured, that people close to him had gained access to his trust.

Within the culture in which Elior grew up, not everything was viewed only physically. People believed that one could also be attacked spiritually when wrong intentions were connected to food, rituals or envy.

As a child he did not yet fully understand that world.

But deep within he felt one thing very strongly:

this was no ordinary death.

From that day on he began to look at people differently.

Especially at one man: the brother of his great-grandfather.

The man who stood closest to his father.

He cried harder than everyone. Offered to pay for everything:

the funeral,

the coffin,

all the costs.

To the outside world it seemed like love.

But somewhere Elior felt discomfort.

Perhaps because his consciousness was already beginning to see that emotions can sometimes be masks.

After the funeral something happened that would change his view of reality even further.

His sisters began to say that they had seen their father.

Not only in dreams.

But as if he had truly been present.

Some became frightened. Thought it was something bad. Others remained calm.

Elior himself did not know exactly what to believe.

But from that moment on his sensitivity began to grow stronger.

He felt danger before it became visible. Felt tensions before people spoke. And his anger grew deeper than ever before.

Because with the death of his father, it was not only a person who disappeared.

The protection disappeared.

The unity disappeared.

And slowly the true nature of many people began to become visible.

Later Elior would understand that loss is sometimes not only meant to bring pain.

Sometimes it also removes the veil of illusions.

Because once the light disappears, it becomes visible who truly acted from love and who only stayed close as long as the light kept them warm.

A Clean Heart

*A clean heart
Will never have to fear nothing
But he will suffer the most
He will be tested and betrayed
If he can withstand the temptations
Life throws at you the most
It will be hard and you will cry
But don't give up
And always try
To overcome what life throws at you
For the fifth element
Is watching you
Stay pure and stay kind
For a clean heart will always shine.*

— J.J. Hijnnes

Chapter 4 — Torn from the sun

The journey to a world without warmth

After the death of Elijah Senior, everything changed.

Not suddenly.

Slowly.

As if warmth was being drawn out of the house bit by bit.

People who had been close before began to act differently. Conversations changed when children entered the room. Glances grew heavier. Silences longer.

And although Elijah was still young, he instinctively felt that decisions were being made over which he had no control.

His mother tried to stay strong.

Only much later would he truly understand how much pain she herself carried:

becoming a widow,

being pregnant,

caring for several children,

and at the same time drowning her own grief.

But children do not immediately understand adult pain.

A child only feels: who stays and who disappears.

When it was finally decided that Elijah and his older sister Nadia would go to the Netherlands, he felt something break inside himself.

He did not want to leave.

Not from his mother. Not from Suriname. Not from the nature in which he still felt his father everywhere.

But no one truly asked what he wanted.

On March 27, 1994 they stood at Zanderij Airport.

Elijah felt panic pulling through his body the moment he saw the plane.

Something in him screamed that this was wrong.

When the moment came to board, he ran.

Not once.

Three times.

As if his soul was trying with everything it had to cling to the life he knew.

But adults call that difficult behavior.

Not grief.

Not trauma.

Not fear.

Eventually he was restrained so he could not run away again.
Years later Elior would still feel pain when he thought about that moment.
Because how do you explain to a child that he:

first loses his father,
then his country,
and then must also leave behind his mother?

During the flight he cried for nearly the entire journey.
Nadia tried to appear stronger, but Elior felt that she too was frightened. Only they dealt with pain differently.
Where Nadia tried to adapt more quickly to situations, Elior continued to resist inwardly everything that did not feel right.
On March 28, 1994 they arrived at Schiphol.
He would never forget the first cold.
The air felt grey. Heavy. Lifeless.

Snow lay everywhere.
For people who grow up with it, snow is beautiful. For Elior it felt as if he had ended up in a world where the sun had died.

He only wanted to go home.
Not to a building.
To the feeling of home.
They were picked up by Vivian, his stepmother.
Until that moment he had barely truly known her.
From the very first day he felt tension.
Not immediately visible. But tangible.

As if his soul already knew that this place would change him.
That first evening something small happened that would ultimately become a symbol for the years that followed.
Nadia hit him. He hit back. And he was immediately punished.

To outsiders it looked like a normal quarrel between children.
But for Elior something far larger was happening.
He saw for the first time clearly that double standards were being applied.
The one who appeared calmest was believed.

The one who reacted most intensely was punished.

Nadia understood that system faster than he did.

The calmer she appeared, the bigger his problems became.

And slowly something began to change in Elior.

Because when a child continuously experiences that honesty does not protect him, something dangerous happens:

he stops believing that truth is enough.

The house in the Bijlmer never truly felt like home.

Especially Vivian's family looked at him differently.

Later Elior understood why.

His father had been a man who did not like appearances. He saw straight through people who lived mainly for status, outward show or the approval of others.

But precisely that Elior now saw reflected everywhere.

People who:

presented themselves as someone else,

lived for how the outside world looked,

and used love for as long as it suited them.

Even as a child he felt how exhausting that was.

Because Elior did not only see people as they presented themselves.

He felt what was behind it.

That made adults uncomfortable.

The atmosphere in the house grew harder and harder.

Punishments became normal. Screaming became normal. Hitting became normal.

Sometimes the children were treated so harshly that breathing became difficult.

Elior often received the heaviest blows.

Not because he was the worst.

But because he looked back. Felt back. Fought back.

He was called the rebel.

But deep within he was not fighting against rules.

He was fighting against injustice.

And without fully realizing it, that was where the first formation of something that would follow him his entire life began:

the survivor.

Because when a soul finds no safety anywhere in the outside world, it begins to build an inner world in which no one can break it anymore.

Chapter 5 — The boy who saw through people

Why some souls can never truly sleep

From the moment Elior arrived in the Netherlands, he began to grow up faster than was good for him.

Not because he wanted to.

But because pain forces a child to wake up early.

In Vivian's house everything revolved around control, appearance and discipline. For the outside world it had to look as if everything was fine:

well-behaved children,

structure,

church,

rules,

respect.

But behind closed doors everyone lived in tension.

Elior felt that constantly.

He began to understand better and better that people often wear two faces: one for the world and one for when no one is watching.

That made him restless.

Because his soul found it difficult to deal with dishonesty.

In the house there were rules for everything:

who cleaned,

who did the dishes,

who was allowed to use the computer,

what time you slept,

how you spoke.

In itself Elior did not mind discipline. In fact he loved order. Clutter made him restless. Even as a child he felt better in clean spaces.

But what broke him was that rules often were not about honesty.

They were about power.

One day another quarrel arose between him and Nadia over the computer. She said something softly insulting to him. Elior responded directly.

Within seconds he heard heavy footsteps storming up the stairs.

Vivian entered as if war had broken out.

Before Elior could explain anything, soap was rubbed in his mouth and eyes. Then the blows began.

Hard.

Long.

Merciless.

The worst part was not even the pain.

It was the feeling that no one wanted to know what had truly happened.

While his eyes burned from the soap and he could barely see, he heard Nadia say:

"Good enough for you."

Those words stung deeper than the blows themselves.

Because at that moment Elior understood something: no one was going to protect him.

He eventually literally cried himself to sleep.

But when he woke up, he no longer felt any grief.

Only cold silence.

He walked to Nadia's room and began destroying everything:

clothing,

belongings,

furniture,

memories.

Everything.

Not because he was bad.

But because somewhere he wanted to feel control again over his own pain.

When Vivian later discovered what he had done, he was beaten again.

But this time something dangerous happened.

He felt nothing anymore.

No fear. No pain.

As if his soul had temporarily released its connection to his body in order to survive.

From that point on his dreams began to change.

He often dreamed that he was endlessly falling through complete darkness. At first he thought they were nightmares, but deep within he felt that those dreams were trying to teach him something.

As if life was asking him:

"Why are you afraid to let go?"

Later he would understand: the dream was not about falling.

The dream was about learning to fly.

Shortly after that he dreamed that he had to breathe underwater.

In the dream he felt panic because he thought he would drown. But when he startled awake, he literally spit out water.

A great deal of water.

That moment haunted him for years.

Because somewhere he knew: this felt different from ordinary dreams.

Not long after that the first moments began when he got the feeling of stepping outside his body.
During his sleep he visited people he knew. The next day he told details about:

conversations,

clothing,

situations,

actions.

People were startled by that.

Some became frightened of him.

But Elior did not understand the problem.

To him it felt normal.

He did not want to frighten anyone.

He only wanted to understand why he saw things that others did not see.

But the more he became himself, the more distance people took.

And slowly he began to accept something that would later become a great strength:

being alone does not automatically mean being lonely.

In fact: among people he often felt lonelier than when he was alone.

Because silence did not lie.

People did.

Despite everything, school continued to go well.

He still got good grades, never had to repeat a year, and simply moved on to the next class. That surprised many adults.

Because in their minds "aggressive" automatically meant "stupid."

But Elior's problem had never been intelligence.

His problem was that he felt what people kept hidden.

And that made adults uncomfortable.

At the start of second grade something happened again that changed his life.

During an art class a classmate got into a quarrel with a teacher named Katinka. Elior had already finished his work and was lying relaxed on a table.

Suddenly he heard his name.

Years of tension had changed his nervous system. He no longer fully trusted anyone.

The moment he came up, a stool flew through the air.

It had been aimed at the teacher.

But it struck Elior full on the head.

Again he went black.

When he came around, he was on top of that boy and was beating him completely senseless.

Another suspension.

But this time it was not the fight that broke him.

The injustice broke him.

Hans van Dalen, the deputy head, had never liked him. In his eyes Elijah was simply a problem child.

He told schools and police that Elijah was always aggressive and caused problems everywhere.

That was not true.

But the words of adults carry heavy weight in systems.

Because of that Elijah lost opportunities at schools where he would have been a better intellectual fit. He eventually ended up at the PPI: the Pedagogisch Psychiatrisch Instituut.

When he walked in there, it felt as if he was stepping into a completely different world.

Everywhere boys:

full of rage,

street mentality,

violence,

chaos,

and pain that no one had ever processed.

Some fought as if they had nothing left to lose.

And slowly Elijah began to understand that the world was full of children who had never truly felt love.

He was ultimately suspended thirteen times at that school.

Thirteen times.

Because there he learned something dangerous about himself:

when he was truly triggered, he no longer knew any boundaries.

And deep within he began to be afraid of the power of his own anger.

Chapter 6 — The sabbath and the shadow

When belief gives no answers

Every Saturday Elinor went to church.

Not of his own free will.

But because he had to.

He grew up within the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventists, where the Sabbath was sacred.

While other children played outside or slowly woke up during their weekend, Elinor's day began early:

neat clothing,

silence,

discipline,

and hours of listening to sermons that he often found difficult to reconcile with the reality
he saw at home.

If he did not want to go, he was punished.

So he went.

But deep within he felt resistance.

Not against God.

Against hypocrisy.

Few people understood that difference.

After every service he had to tell at home:

what the sermon was about,

what lessons he had learned,

what the message was.

He was still only a child.

But his mind was already asking questions that made adults uncomfortable.

Because in church he heard words like:

love,

humility,

honesty,

forgiveness,

light.

But at home he saw:

violence,

manipulation,