



PROLOGUE

NANDIA AWAKENED one morning and declared that it was imperative that she depart that day for realms far beyond those we normally travelled. “It is, quite simply, time to go,” she announced firmly after she had patiently listened to my repeated protests. I finally conceded that it was, after all, her life, not mine. It’s just that she had taught me so much about healing my death urges and living as an immortal that I had assumed that we would always be together. Sadly, this was merely wistful thinking.

Nandia did allow how lovely it would be if I gave her one more healing energy treatment before she departed. We made love one last time through torrents of tears. Then, beneath the canopy of our banyan tree out back, I set up the Reiki table, positioning it so we both could enjoy a view of billowy white clouds as they paraded across the sapphire-blue sky.

With Nandia lying supine beneath a light blanket, I sat at the table’s head and gave Reiki energy to my

beloved. An insecure part of me hoped this would dissuade her from leaving. A deep fear within me clamored for Nandia's reassuring presence and so I struggled to accept her freedom of choice. Wistful thinking dies hard.

After a little over an hour of treatment, I noticed that my hands began to elevate slightly above her body. This had never happened before, but I continued, curious to see what would follow. I worried that Nandia's departure meant a permanent farewell from the physical world and steeled myself to stay present, if, in fact, her death was imminent.

Then the entire table, with Nandia upon it, slowly rose above the ground. Like an anxious child suddenly beset with fever, I whispered, "My love, what is happening?"

"Ssshhhh ... be patient my love," came her peaceful response.

After rising only a few inches, the table then stopped and remained suspended in mid-air. My hands hovered just above Nandia's body, which soon began to rise above the table's surface. My hands slid aside and came to rest upon the table.

Nandia's horizontal body slowly rotated to the vertical. She turned to face me and smiled. Brilliant white energy radiated from her eyes and the palms of her hands. Beset with wonder, I sat back in my chair.

"Attend to this energy, Bears," Nandia sweetly telepathed. "It will last forever."

My mind buzzed over the possibilities. So perhaps there was an energy of physical immortality that could be bestowed upon others!

“And, lest you forget how much I love you, Bears,” she added, “I’ll be back to remind you. Don’t think you are done with me yet.”

I watched her body ascending into the sky. It grew smaller and smaller as it drew nearer the clouds. Overcome with the intensity of her uniquely beautiful love as it poured into my heart, through tears I watched as, once again, Nandia disappeared.



LESSON ONE:

MISS CHINN

THAT WAS OVER THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO. I am sure I have devoted at least a lifetime's worth of emotional energy feeling sorry for myself as I grieved the loss of Nandia. While certainly not as intimate as living together, she does visit from time to time, in the alcheringa — the dreamtime as it is called by indigenous folk of one of my ancient homelands. Some call it the afterlife, or heaven or hell, but I prefer the beauty of the aboriginal term and will use it often throughout this guidebook.

After several decades of drooling over as many distractions from Nandia's loss as I could possibly indulge, my life was renewed. Luckily, it was Miss Chinn who found me over-medicated in an alley one night, wallowing in self-pity and other effluvia. The stories you will encounter here are those I remember from centuries of working with Miss Chinn as a death mentor.

She had heard of my time as a Grand Council

Delegate and knew of my deep love for Nandia. “Let’s get him back to the school and see if he’s worth cleaning up,” she said. This I vaguely heard through the muffling fog of my amph-induced haze as pairs of hands grabbed me and deposited me into some sort of vehicle. Thankfully, Miss Chinn decided that I was worth the effort.

She was wonderfully patient with me. It took a while for me to come back to the realization that my life is a gift, not a burden. I gradually recovered my zest to bring what I could to life, while expressing my own unique version of it. It took a while, but I finally recovered my innate sense of joy and wonder. I began to appreciate and dearly love Miss Chinn.

There finally came a day when my renewed self-respect would neither allow me the possibility of disappointing her, nor myself ever again.

The stories that you encounter here have been written as my time at Miss Chinn’s School comes to an end. I have served as a death mentor for more than three centuries. Six months ago she told me that I need to “get out of the office” for a time. “If for no other reason than to explore the newer suburbs of the universe,” she advised. She then made some offhand reference to a future cry for help coming from that direction. This sparked a vague sense of uneasiness deep within my chest.

I suppose Miss Chinn noted my reaction, for she then casually asked, “Bearn, while you are out there, keep an eye open for a satellite campus, would you?” Given how much I love and cherish this woman, how could I not eagerly be looking forward to that assignment?

For those of you who have not yet met her, Miss Chinn is a timeless, raven-haired beauty, tall and slender and completely unflappable. It bears repeating that she is beautiful, but even more compelling is the child-like radiance that emanates from her. Her upper right incisor slightly overlays its neighbor to the front, giving her smile a disarming innocence. Add to that the single dimple that graces her left cheek and you can easily understand how so many who meet her presume her to be merely a blindingly attractive youngster rather than the rare woman of the ages that she is.

All we mentors deeply love her. And, we are often embarrassed by the depth of her love for us. It is said that her school was built before humankind first began developing civilizations, whenever that was. It is constructed atop a dimensional doorway — what we mentors know as a powerful coordinate point. I am sure that is one reason Miss Chinn originally chose its location. You cannot be working at her school for long before you realize that from here you can visit any conceivable dimension of reality that you could ever desire.

Miss Chinn's residence is perched among the lofty heights of this ancient edifice. Rumors are that the interior of her refuge has never been seen by any other mortal. But, given how adept she is at interdimensional travel, I have little doubt this has restricted her social activities to any great extent.

I have not worked as an operative for the last fifty years, preferring instead to help the newly inducted mentors learn the ropes. Many clamor for more stories, and finally Miss Chinn convinced me to write

this student manual for our corps of novices. For ease of study, I have indexed the many subject headings throughout this manuscript, as well as provided a page-referenced glossary.

Many years ago Miss Chinn read the stories I had written about my adventures with Nandia during our time as Grand Council Delegates. One morning after breakfast she further encouraged me. “I’m not paying you to sit around here, Bearns. So get about documenting your most intriguing cases and we’ll ask the students to read them aloud to each other.”

I was about to tell her how much I liked the idea when she bustled out of the kitchen, off to whatever dimension from which her most recent summons had originated.

Our students find themselves fascinated with my long history as a Council Delegate and as a death mentor. Many mornings, during my drowsy trundle down to breakfast, I get pestered with demands for more tales of those times that took place over five hundred years ago — of Nandia and the Praesepian siege, Geasa’s Saragalla epidemic and of Dunstan and Elli and the Royal House of Aesir.

Some of my apprentices have made the mistake of trying to emulate me during their early cases. Rather than trusting the impulses that come from their Inner Selves, they attempt to replicate the choices I have made while working my cases. I tell them that they are the individual they are for a good reason. They must learn to bring their own talents, inclinations, likes and dislikes to the job. Seeking to emulate me is not a road down which their value fulfillment lies.

Rather than claim authority for their own lives,

it is amazing how many people so fervently hold onto the notion that some other authority will serve as a worthwhile substitute. Such people often fear failing. They fail to lay claim to the sovereign throne of creativity upon which their physical and eternal lives depend.

I have always had the great good fortune to find highly qualified and attractive teachers. It has made my learning fun and my mistakes much less strenuous.

One day, as a young lad, I was wandering the hills and valleys near my boyhood home as I often did whenever upset or curious. I happened upon an elderly gentleman resting against the trunk of an ancient weeping willow tree. He introduced himself as Agoragon and invited me to join him. He then fell silent.

Years later, Miss Chinn informed me that I had spent the afternoon with a death mentor of the greatest renown. In time, Agoragon would become among my most beloved of teachers. On that first day, we wiled away a lovely, lazy afternoon, intermittently dozing and occasionally talking. The massive tree stood upon a hillock that overlooked a beautiful healing lake. I deeply revere that spot and often return to it during healing dreams.

Agoragon's Gift of Breath:

With sweet reminiscence Agoragon spoke of his many lifetimes, and of his love of nature. He was a born teacher. One did well to listen. He said, "Like a far-off dream, my last life comes to mind, always prompting me to breathe deeply. As I once again inhale fully, I am reminded of my own nature, my unique grace, deftness

and love of life.” He fell silent then for a time, perhaps in meditation, perhaps he was dozing, I could not tell. I waited. Suddenly his eyes flew open as he snorted and then resumed speaking.

“That first breath connects me with my body-awareness which is having an intimate love affair with the consciousness of nature. I so enjoy the feelings of passion and caring which remind me that I am abundantly loved for the unique creature that I am. I like to spend some time every day taking delight in me, and in the gift of being that I have been given.”

I listened and began mirroring his deep, connected breaths. I watched his face’s radiance grow as he savored being alive. My enthusiasm for my own life overflowed like the chattering of nestlings clamoring for second helpings at sunrise.

Of course we breathe in every dimension we visit, if only to absorb and replace energy. I remember several near-death crises when I feared I would never breathe again. It is the breathing of energy that I so appreciate. Breathing is a reminder, a cleanser, a healer, creator and transformer. Slightly less than twenty-one-percent of our air is oxygen, a magical detoxifier for the body. Breathing is such a gift, and Agoragon taught me the beauty in choosing deep, connected breaths.

The better part of that magical afternoon long ago was spent nestled in the arms of the silence we created together. I felt deeply at peace and blessed to be in this man’s presence. I watched sunlight sparkling like diamonds glissading across the surface of the healing lake. I learned to listen to the inner dimensions of the silence between us and delighted in catching the

occasional telepathic message from Agoragon. It was a profound honor to be with him.

He spoke one last time just before we parted company. “Bernard, you will grow to become a beloved teacher in your own right. A man to whom you owe a long-overdue debt will one day appear in your life. Your job will be to guide him through his death. Do not worry, you will be well prepared by the time his path crosses yours.

“He will need help remembering to feel the full range of his feelings, especially his fear of not being loved. You will help him remember he can heal his fears. He will believe his failures have condemned him. You will be useful when sharing how you have learned to use your failures constructively. Remember to use specifics in your tales. That way you create doorways through which he can travel to thaw his frozen emotional energy.

“And do take care to attend to the matter of your own deaths. There is a key in several deaths in your past that you would do well to review. Remember not to lose sight of the fact that whenever your spiritual growth becomes stalled, the need will be to mature emotionally. Oh, how I envy you. “Twill be more fun than a handful of tadpoles or even a twilight of stars.”

Agoragon’s prophetic vision proved completely accurate. The tale of the man to whom I owed that debt is among these pages. I also took up my teacher’s challenge to examine my relationship with death. As a Council Delegate on assignment to Aesir, I suffered a fall that led to a near-death experience. Later, Nandia guided me through the alcheringa to the dying moments in several of my previous lives.

The Lessons of Killing:

In a number of previous lives I had lived as a warrior — a fearless soldier of some repute. I loved to fight. And yet, despite becoming quite skilled at delivering death, I came to fear it and danced with all manner of distraction rather than face those fears. While well aware that none of us wants to die in the throes of agony, I learned from Nandia that many of us have painful, even gruesome deaths to better learn two lessons: First, we are creating our deaths by the choices we make and second, there is absolutely no need for suffering at any time — even when dying.

During those lifetimes when afraid to face my own fears of dying, I self-righteously abhorred killing. I dismissed the lessons of soldiering as befitting only lower human life forms. I believed that the lifetimes when I was involved with killing were meaningless failures — that I had not succeeded in achieving my life's true purpose. My attitude became so hateful that I contemptuously withdrew from any man who had served in the military. Yet my practice of distancing myself from such men aroused a curiosity about myself. I realized that, in my own mind, I was killing off the killers. I finally decided to investigate this hypocrisy after recalling Agoragon's long-past encouragement to examine my past deaths.

I found that my love of a good fight contradicted my moral righteousness about killing. This inner conflict deserved a greater measure of self-honesty. I asked my subconscious awareness to open the doors necessary so that my conscious mind would accept clarification of this discrepancy.

In a moment of quiet meditation, it occurred to me that it was not that I love to fight but rather, that I love a challenge. My consciousness, like every consciousness, loves to learn, to grow and to create expanded expressions of itself. This passion I misinterpreted as a love to fight, not yet aware that stepping up to a challenge never requires damaging another person. I knew enough about myself to realize that when I see an opportunity to grow, I will strive mightily to immerse myself in it. I have wondered if misunderstanding this passion for growth is what lies beneath all of humankind's warlike urges.

I came to see that by judging my 'killer' lifetimes as failures, I had rendered myself unable to benefit from them. Viewing those lives as a waste of my creative power, I considered them to be lessons I should not have needed to learn. I remained stuck in self-condemnation for weeks until Agoragon came to me in the alcheringa and simply said, "Bernard, those lifetimes were gifts. Learn from them." His words guided me to realize that being an effective death mentor requires rigorous self-honesty.

With renewed determination, I soldiered on. It was at that point that I saw that I had persistently withheld love from the killer aspects of myself. With self-righteous determination I hated those parts of myself and was trying to kill them off!

That was an embarrassing revelation. With it, I recognized that it was not death that I feared, but rather the deeper feelings of having failed to create a meaningful lifetime. That distorted idea and its consequent pain were quite destructive to my self-respect. I felt deeply ashamed of myself — more expressions of self-hate.

I began to notice several days after these discoveries a growing feeling of being released from prison. It was a prison of my own making, most certainly, yet a prison nonetheless. Emerging from my self-imposed incarceration allowed me to revive my passion to grow. Perhaps that is why I now so love healing, for each healing event produces an expansion of consciousness.

Agoragon's advice to examine my past deaths ultimately helped me to accept that none of my lives have been wasted. My lifetimes as a killer helped me see that a more useful option to hating the odious parts of myself is to love those parts. By loving the killer within me I staunchly stanch the loss of a great measure of my life's invaluable energy. I became more compassionate towards others' wickedness. A short time later Nandia visited me in the dreamtime and congratulated me. "It's no great trick to love the lovely, Bears," she said. "The great trick is to love the unlovely."

I share this lesson to encourage student mentors to uncover all of their own supposed past-life failures.

Today I do not know where next my path will lead. Much growth will occur in my thinking by the time I have finally related these tales into this digi-percept device that sits on the desk in front of me. I know my path, like yours, spans eternity. There is one cherished gift that I now realize from my many years of living — that I dearly love again crossing paths with those people with whom I have travelled in other lifetimes.

These days I find myself growing more curious about those malleable and chaotic dimensions balanced on the edges of reality. It is said that is where a fertile crescent of nurturing and growth reside for all realities. I imagine it could get quite confusing and

disorienting out there in that apparent disorder. Yet, I do so love a challenge and would love to team up with Nandia again for that adventure.

But that is just one idea that has been bouncing around in my head for the last generation or so. For the time being, I have this student manual to complete. I trust that when I am ready for my next adventure, I will know upon which direction to embark.

In the meantime, to any readers troubled by uncertainties, I strongly encourage you to consider becoming a death mentor. The path is really a combination of healer, artist and teacher. There is no greater satisfaction than knowing that by virtue of one's own life, Life itself revels in the joy and wonder of its growing and endless expressions.

And do take good care of that universally loved being you call your Self.