

Janne
“Beyond Life”

Written by: Ilse & Kjeld Johnsen



Second edition

2005

Part One: Describes the sorrow we as parents experienced after the death of our daughter Janne, who was killed in a traffic accident.

Part Two: Is about the inexplicable experiences that have happened to us after Janne's death. We also tell about the messages we have received via mediums and we let readers tell about their own inexplicable experiences.

The first edition of this book was published in Denmark in 2001 by "Bugtens Bogforlag". In order to benefit as many people as possible, we (the authors) chose, in 2004, to buy the remaining copies so that the book could become available as a "Free Book" on the Internet.

www.freebook-sorrow.com

www.spiritbook.org

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Janne er ikke mere

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Preface for the Second Edition.

The main content of this book is the same as that of the published edition. Events occurring after the First Edition had been published, among these the meeting with the Danish/English medium Marion Dampier-Jeans, the Scottish medium Nita Saunders and the English medium Billy Cook, are included in this edition. Also included in this edition are extracts from letters sent to us by readers who tell of their own unexplainable experiences. These extracts have been included with the permission of the families involved, in a form which allows them to remain anonymous.

Moral, ethics, credibility and honesty are for us not just words but values, which we regard highly. Therefore nothing has been written in this book that has not really been experienced!

Important:

To be able to distinguish between the inserts written by respectively Ilse and Kjeld, Ilse's insertions have been written like this - in italics.

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Prologue

The purpose of this book is to tell about the feelings and the sorrow that occurs at the loss of a child, and about the process of grief one goes through. We also tell about the unexplainable experiences that have happened to me, Kjeld, in connection with the death of our daughter Janne.

I had never previously experienced things that I could not explain in a rational way. I only believed in what my physical senses told me, everything else was purely superstition. People who told about out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences, life-after-death were to me dreamers. If this really existed, the evidence would have been well established. This was my understanding, up until the spring of 1996. After this point, my scheme of things slowly but surely changed.

It is our hope, that others who have lost somebody highly loved will be able to find understanding for the process of grieving by reading this book. Should they experience unexplainable events, that cannot be accounted for rationally – then maybe it is not as uncommon as most people think.

We also believe that there is a need to tell others, who end up in a similar crisis that despite everything, there is light at the end of the tunnel. By finding new paths to wander, the crisis can be turned into a new existence – completely different to anything one had earlier imagined – but where quality of life again can be set in focus.

Part One

The Beginning of a Nightmare

When one loses a child, the most precious thing in life – when something that used to fill up one's space, the thing that made life worth living, is no longer here – the world breaks down.

Everyone who is a parent knows that EVERYTHING is about the children. Nothing is too good for them, and the days are arranged to meet their needs.

When that child is suddenly no more, there is an empty space. A vacuum which is impossible to fill.

On Friday the 22nd of March 1996 at 11.30 p.m., my life's most awful nightmare began.

That Friday had begun like any other Friday. I was at work until 3.30 in the afternoon and home again shortly afterwards, as was my wife Ilse.

Our daughter Janne – who had started an education as a medical secretary in the autumn of 1995 – came home a little later.

Janne had planned to dine at her friend Heidi's that evening, something that she looked forward to, as Heidi made good food. Janne was only at home for a short while and called out from the hallway:

- Bye, I'm off now. I'll be home between 11 and midnight, unless I stay the night at Heidi's.

- Bye bye Janne – enjoy yourself.

I went out to the hallway and stood, as I had so often done before, by the door to say goodbye to Janne. She was in a happy mood as she quickly ran down the stairs.

Like a mother hen, I watched Janne from the window and saw how she rode her brand new green bike over to the other side of the road, where she stopped to talk to one of her many friends.

I returned to my chores.

As usual, we had been looking forward to the weekend. The next day, Ilse and I, together with my sister and her husband, were to go to look at a couple of caravans. We had long ago decided that we each would hire a caravan and together would take a three week holiday in Italy. Janne didn't want to come. She and Heidi were busy planning their own summer holiday trip to Turkey.

While we were away camping, Janne would be staying at home looking after her cat "Jaymiz". Jaymiz, a grey male tabby, came into the family in 1993, as a five month old kitten. Janne and Jaymiz were very close to each other.

We went to bed at half past ten.

At 11.30 p.m., the door bell of nr.53 rang. Ilse leapt out of bed whilst almost yelling:

- I hope nothing has happened to Janne.

We live in a top floor flat with two entrances, there being a staircase at each end of the apartment; nr.53, which we used as our entrance, and nr. 55, which Janne used. Janne always used her own entrance and had her own name-plate on the door. Any friendly visits to Janne always took place using this staircase. She would not dream of using our entrance, unless it was for a special reason. There had earlier been occasions when some young pranksters had rung our door bell for fun, and then ran off. Only once, when Janne had had problems with her bicycle lock, had she rung on our door.

It's probably some young people, I thought to myself.

- It's the police, they're on their way up, shouted Ilse, something has happened to Janne. She sounded frightened.

I jumped out of bed and managed to get some clothes on, before two policemen stepped into our hallway.

- Has something happened to Janne? I asked.

The older of the two officers looked gravely at us.

- I think we should all sit down, he said.

I felt my heart begin to thump and started to breathe fast and heavily. I showed them over to the dining-table, which stands by the window, from where there is a view of the nearby crossroads. There I could now see a blue flashing light.

When the police officer saw me staring over at the crossroads, he gently pulled the curtains.

Ilse, the senior police officer and I sat ourselves down. The younger officer remained standing. I didn't dare to ask, but the thoughts came rushing through my head, how bad is it?

We waited for the senior officer to speak. There was a long silence, while he alternately looked at us and then away.

- It's not so good, he said.

- No, I answered.

Again, there was a long silence.

- How bad is it? I asked.

After some time, he answered quietly:

- Janne is no more.

Those words will forever be burnt into our consciousness. I remember that my breath quickened even more, Ilse began to cry, and I laid my arms around her.

The officer explained that the accident had been caused by a car with five young people on their way home from a Sting concert. The driver had lost control of the car, driving up onto the sidewalk just when Janne was passing by.

- Was it a drunk driver? I asked.

- No, it doesn't look like that there was alcohol involved. We caught up with the driver reasonably quickly.

- Are you saying that he had driven off? Ilse asked.

The officer shook his head:

- No, he was at the scene of the accident when we arrived.

I remarked that they must have been driving unreasonably fast.

- Yes, it seems that way. If it is of any comfort, it happened very quickly. Janne had no pulse when the ambulance arrived.

Everything became so unreal. Only just before, she had been sitting in her room!

Even though I was completely stricken, I can remember thinking about how on earth I could break the news to Mother.

Janne was the apple of my mother's eye. Living nearby, Mother looked after Janne when she was younger just like Janne often visited her.

We sat numbed and almost paralyzed. The officer continued:

- The accident had occurred around eleven o'clock. The reason why we came so quickly is that the girl who was killed had Janne's medical card in her purse.

For a short moment we were clutching at straws. Maybe it wasn't Janne that had been killed. Hadn't she just recently lost her medical card? Yes, but she had found it again. Maybe she had lent it to someone!

All hope was lost when the officer continued:

- The girl had a green mountain bike with her. There were no lights on the bike and we don't know whether she was cycling, or pushing the bike along the sidewalk, although we think she was pushing the bike.

Yes, I thought, she had most definitely not been riding the bike without lights on.

One night a couple of months prior to that evening, Janne had – on her way to the youth club – come down to the street without her bicycle lights. Cycling without lights, she had been stopped by the police and fined.

The following day Janne was embarrassed as she recounted the episode. We had often told Janne about how important it was to have lights on her bike. To emphasize this again I had said:

- Janne, you must of course pay the fine yourself, and if it happens again the fine will double next time.

- Dad, I promise you – there will not be a next time.

Those who really knew Janne, know how much a statement like that meant. I have only myself known few people who were as honest as Janne. Never, in the little over 18 years we were allowed to keep her, had we caught her in a lie. Even though she knew it might lead to unpleasant consequences, she would always rather tell the truth than she would tell a lie. She despised people she could not trust.

- We are sorry, but we are going to have to ask you to come to the hospital to identify the girl, the officer continued. After quickly getting dressed, we were taken to the hospital.

At the hospital it struck me, that this was the very same building where we, exactly 18 years and five months ago, had welcomed our daughter to the world.

Now we had to say goodbye.

Many thoughts rushed through our heads, as we walked towards the door. I thought about how difficult it must be for the two officers to be the bearers of news like this. I couldn't understand why I wasn't crying. It was as if I was numb.

A nurse, who told us that Janne was not yet ready, received us. It would be another 20 minutes before we could see her.

The officer asked if we would object to there being an autopsy. Ilse and I looked at each other. We found it hard to understand the purpose of an autopsy.

- Is it necessary, you know it is a road death?
- Yes but we have to ask you.
- We object, we replied.
- You don't have to come to a decision today, the officer said.

The nurse tried in vain to keep the conversation going and even offered us a cup of coffee.

Ilse looked at me and said:

- This is just a nightmare – we'll wake up in a minute.

I looked around the room. No, I thought, this is real – this is happening right now.

After some time the nurse left the room, but came back shortly after with Janne's case notes.

- Your daughter suffered a fractured skull; she also fractured her right upper arm and a rib.

I asked to read the file myself, which I was allowed to do, though I since haven't been able to recall what was written in it.

After some time we were shown into a larger room, where Janne was lying on an examination couch. There was a blanket covering her, pulled up to her shoulders. Our initial thought was "It's Janne, but at the same time it isn't." The spark was gone.

She was bruised and had scratches on her face, which was completely blue.

In the midst of this awful situation, irrational thoughts came to mind like: Thank God her teeth haven't been damaged, as she'd had to put up with a lot as a youngster, when she'd had to wear braces.

There was no doubt in my mind that Janne had suffered a fractured skull. The back of her head was soaked in blood, and blood was still dripping out of her ears.

Ilse wanted to lift Janne up to cuddle her for the last time, but the nurse shook her head and pulled the blanket the remaining few inches up to Janne's neck.

Why wasn't Ilse allowed to do this? I thought to myself.

I knew it was only in very rare cases, that paramedics could declare a person dead. For example, this is the case if the body is severed.

The police later informed us that it was not the paramedics who'd declared Janne dead but the doctor in the ambulance, which had been called to the scene of the accident.

It was unreal seeing Janne lying there. She was lifeless and bruised, with blood coming out of her ears.

I was in a state of shock and felt as if I was paralyzed. We were powerless and there was nothing we could do.

I had always cared deeply for Janne's well-being – had always had an “alarm” turned on at the back of my head, a natural concern as to whether she was all right. Now I could no longer help her, and the “alarm” had been turned off.

I wanted to take her into my arms. I don't understand why I wasn't allowed to, and I cannot understand how I let myself be dictated into not doing so.

The officers and the nurse left the room.

After a while we said our last goodbye to our dearest loved one and kissed Janne goodbye, a goodbye that for us was beyond understanding.

As we came out the officers were leaving. The nurse told us, that the hospital had a small rucksack belonging to Janne. It contained her purse, an earring, a broken Easter egg, a smashed CD and her mobile telephone. After signing a receipt, we were given these things. This was hard and weighed heavily on us.

- If you have relatives who wish to come and see Janne tonight then you are welcome to bring them. Janne will be transferred to the Pathological Institute tomorrow morning, but until then you may come.

- How do we get home? I asked.

Everything had happened so fast that we had forgotten to bring any money with us. The nurse called for a taxi and we were taken home at expense of the hospital.

And that was *all* the hospital could offer two parents who had just lost their daughter – a cup of coffee and a taxi home.

We arrived home at around two in the morning, sat down on the sofa and stared vacantly into space.

I looked in her little rucksack. The Easter egg, which she had probably received from Heidi, was broken and the cover from her CD had a crack.

I felt awful looking through her bag. It was covered in blood and I immediately decided to discard it. This hurt me deep inside.

We still have Janne's purse; it's now in one of her other bags, still with the same contents as on the day she died.

At some point I went out into the hallway to check if Janne's bike lights were in their usual place. They were not. I went back into the living room where Ilse was:

- She had her bike lights with her, but maybe she left them on the bike – maybe they got stolen. She definitely had them with her.

Ilse continued to stare into space.

- Yes, of course she had them with her.

She continued:

- We'll have to call Mother and tell her what has happened, and then fetch her. We will also have to call your mother; we should ask them if they want to come to the hospital tonight.

Ilse called her mother and passed on the news about the accident.

I tried ringing my mother but she didn't hear the telephone.

I felt a great need to talk about the terrible thing that had happened. I called my sister and brother-in-law. The time was about half two in the morning.

My brother-in-law answered the phone. I told him what had happened and then talked to my sister, who was so shocked that she kept repeating:

- You have to get some sleep.

As if we would be able to sleep!

Mother had a hard time grasping the awful reality of what had happened. At first, she was in such a state of shock that she couldn't understand what I was telling her.

We fetched Mother, who was staying at my brother's, looking after his house and his cat while he was away, and drove back to the hospital.

On the way I asked Mother:

- *Would you like to see Janne, or would you rather remember her the way she was?*

- *I would very much like to see Janne! Mother had no doubt in her mind.*

It was hard, but I believe it was the right thing to do. Mother came back to our house afterwards and we attempted to get a bit of sleep. It was impossible, it was all so incomprehensible, and I cried inconsolably and could not understand that this had happened.

The following day saw the arrival of our entire family, mothers, sisters, brothers, in-laws, cousins, nephews and nieces. They had all come to be with us and to show their support.

We made "oceans" of coffee and tea, but didn't even consider making any food; eating seemed unimportant and we had no appetite. On the second day one of our friends called upon us. He handed us a huge bag full of cakes and all sorts of bread.

- *I've been told that you serve lots of coffee, but have nothing to go with it! He said.*

By the third day the family insisted that we should eat something, and had brought lots of food with them. In no time at all a nice table of food had been laid. We tried to eat but had only room for very little.

That same evening Dea, one of Janne's closest friends through many years, arrived with her father. Together with our family, we had just started eating.

Dea, her father and I therefore went into the adjoining room. While tears were rolling down Dea's cheeks, laughter could suddenly be heard from the other room. It seemed all wrong because; "how could anyone laugh?" I tried to explain, and at the same time apologies to Dea, that the family had been sitting with us for three days and now needed – just for a moment – to think about something completely different.

We received so many bouquets of flowers that they took up a large part of the living room and Janne's room. Flowers had arrived from Janne's workplace, from my colleagues at work and from friends and family, along with many comforting and deeply sympathetic letters and cards.

A couple of Janne's closest friends came to visit. They found it difficult to comprehend what had happened and at the same time expressed feelings of guilt towards Janne, as in

“why didn’t I do this or that?” A feeling which we told them was irrelevant, leading only to destructiveness; for Janne’s death had absolutely nothing to do with anything they had done.

My own thoughts were of course:

“I wish she had spent the night at Heidi’s”

Whilst we tried to lessen feelings of guilt in others, we ourselves were full of intense self-reproach.

“Had we been good enough as parents?”

“Had we shown enough appreciation, given enough credit, to Janne for her sense of order or for many of her other wonderful qualities?”

I felt that I had been too ambitious on her account. All these and many other thoughts rushed through my head.

I contacted our doctor, who was also Janne’s doctor and told him what had happened. He immediately wrote out a prescription for tranquilizers, which we collected.

In the days that followed, the few times we went out to the shops were chaotic. I was completely unable to make any sensible purchases. I just did not care. We bought what was closest at hand. Whether I received the right amount of change or not was infinitely trivial.

It was impossible to string thoughts together. My thoughts were constantly about Janne and about the meaninglessness of her death. Now and again we broke down in our grief, everything was just so hopeless. When I tried to sleep my thoughts were: “She’ll be coming soon, in a minute I’ll hear her footsteps on the stairs and the sound of her key turning in the lock.”

The tranquilizers I’d got from the doctor were only used once. I did not feel that they did me any good. On the contrary, they disrupted my sleep.

The police rang and asked, whether or not we had decided on an autopsy. During the conversation they pressured us for consent. We replied that we did not want an autopsy. We could not bear the thought that Janne should go through this too.

It was hard having this demand put upon us on top of everything else.

- If you don’t consent, it may result in there being a trial, the police said.

We finally gave in and reluctantly gave our consent, but on the clear condition, that it would only happen if it was absolutely necessary.

The funeral director told us later that they’d had problems with the Pathological Institute. When they had informed the Institute, that the funeral service would take place on the forthcoming Saturday, the forensic experts had said that they hadn’t yet determined the cause of death and also that we, as parents, had been against an autopsy. It was therefore uncertain as to whether they would be able to hand Janne over for the funeral service the following Saturday.

The forensic pathologists did however change their minds, determining the cause of death as being the result of the traffic accident.

The accident happened less than 100 meters from our front door, which is situated close to a crossing, where the main thoroughfare after the crossing has a slight curve. The speed limit was 60 kilometers per hour. Because of high speed, probably double the speed limit, the car had spun into the curve.

We often ask ourselves this question: “Why was Janne there – right at that very instant”?

The day after the accident we took the few steps from our home to where the accident took place; it’s hard to describe what thoughts and feelings touched us inside at the sight of so many bouquets, single red roses, candles, teddy bears, letters and other items, which those who cared for Janne had laid at the site of the accident.

When we arrived, a few of her friends stood there crying. We knew that many of these youngsters had used the last of their pocket money to buy a flower for Janne. It was, for us all, an indescribable and meaningless thing to have happened, and the grief was clear on their faces.

In the course of the following days candles were lit at the accident site, and fresh bouquets were laid in Janne's honor.

Counseling

If somebody had asked me, before the accident had happened, how Ilse would react if Janne died, I would have answered: “She will never be able to handle it; she would end up in a psychiatric hospital.”

Ilse showed herself to be the psychologically strongest of us. She took care of all the practical details connected with Janne’s death. She rang the funeral director, the priest, our friends, Janne’s workplace, and her own workplace. I rang only my sister and my boss, and then I broke down completely.

I met great understanding and support from my colleagues. Several of them knew Janne personally, and everyone was deeply shaken by the tragedy that had hit us. Both Kjeld’s employers and mine said concurrently, that we should not think about work, but take all the time we needed.

A couple of days after the accident, the police rang and informed us that if we needed counseling, we could contact the hospital.

At first we declined, because we had a fantastic family to support us.

We decided though, some days later, to accept the offer, prompted by the family, who could see how we were suffering.

We went to the hospital, where we had expected to speak with a psychologist. Instead we spoke to an auxiliary nurse, who had probably been trained in giving initial counseling for those in crisis. She asked what we had been through, and we talked about our tragedy, crying now and then.

The nurse informed us that should we want further psychological help, we should contact our doctor and have him make out a referral.

Our sorrow was so great, our powerlessness so insurmountable, that we might have expected too much of the counseling.

We had hoped for a miracle, but that did not happen.

We left the hospital and went home deeply disappointed. We did not even consider the possibility of asking our doctor for a referral for further counseling. Because if that was counseling, then we couldn’t see that there was any help in it for us.

The Funeral Service

One of the hardest things we had to make a decision on was, whether Janne should be buried or cremated. Since this isn't a subject one normally talks about with one's child, we were initially at a loss as regards what course to take.

But then I remembered an evening, not so long before, where we had talked about death. Ilse had told Janne that I, when the time came, wished to be cremated, whilst Ilse preferred to be buried.

Janne had looked at Ilse:

- No Mum – You don't mean that, worms will crawl around inside you.

This solved our problem. We decided that Janne would have wished for a cremation.

We contacted the cemetery office, and decided on a gravesite that lies just across from Janne's grandfathers.

The funeral director, a lady in her mid-thirties, sat across from us in the living room to discuss the funeral service. She cautiously suggested that the coffin should be decorated with red and white carnations.

- No, we don't want that, I answered. We would like red roses.
- They are very expensive at this time of year, she said.
- That doesn't matter. It has to be red roses.

We also had to decide which coffin should be used, which clothes Janne should wear and what should be written in the death announcement.

It is very hard to write a death announcement about your child.

The funeral director carried out her work very professionally. Not once did we feel that it was only business. She helped us to do the things we thought were right to do. When the funeral director went to collect Janne, from the Pathological Institute, we went along too. I was slightly worried, how would Janne look after 8 days?

The funeral director reassured me, saying that Janne would not have changed from when we had seen her at the hospital. This turned out to be quite right.

Our priest, whom we had never met before, was also there to give us the strength to move on. She came by every day to talk with us, and gave us room to cry over the loss of our child. She heard about all the thoughts and feelings we struggled with, and about the accident itself. She also contacted Mother and one of Janne's girlfriends to get some details for the speech for our child.

The priest came with us on the day we went to pick up Janne from the Pathological Institute, and did everything she could in the way of giving us support. It was a tough day to get through, a day of strong feelings and emotions, but it was something we felt deeply about doing because we were doing it for our child. To meet Janne again, and to give her the last kiss on her cold head. We held her hands, and I laid, for the very last time, a silk sheet over my beloved child.

We now knew how she lay in the coffin, what clothes she had on, and that she lay in her favorite bed linen.

The letters and the teddies and all the other things that had been laid at the site of the accident had been collected, and these were now carefully put into the coffin.

We then finally said “Goodbye.”

On the top of the coffin we laid a bouquet of red roses.

We drove after the hearse to the church chapel, and on the way we drove slowly past our home – Janne’s home – for the very last time.

In reply to the priest’s question about how I thought I’d be able to cope with the funeral service, I answered that I had been given some medicine from the doctor to calm my nerves, which I would take on the day.

The priest’s opinion however was that sedatives were not the answer, that one should allow oneself to grieve and she asked me why I was afraid of crying. Her point being that if one cannot cry on such a day then when can one ever cry?

I could see that it was wrong trying to suppress my feelings and that it was important to let the sorrow out, so I went through the funeral service without medication – without numbing my senses.

The funeral service was on a Saturday. Our church is relatively small so we had told the priest that a large attendance could be expected, as we had decided that anyone who wanted to participate in Janne’s funeral service would be welcome. The priest had arranged for the sliding doors to an adjoining room to be opened, and extra chairs were made available.

Kjeld and I walked to the church, which lies a short distance from our home. It felt like heavy going.

On entering the church, the first thing I saw was the coffin. I had imagined that I would break down completely. I didn’t but I felt as if I was paralyzed. My eyes seemed unable to look at anything but the coffin. On the way up to where the coffin lay, I saw the many beautiful wreaths with ribbons. When I reached Janne, like a caress, I gently touched the coffin. Almost in a trance I then took a seat near the pulpit.

The attendance was enormous – maybe 250 – maybe more; our family, our friends, neighbours, colleagues from both Janne’s job and our own, all of her friends and former schoolmates and representatives from the music school’s teaching staff.

Many were the tears that fell.

We were later told by a couple of Janne’s former schoolmates from the music school, that they had planned that when the coffin was being carried out, they would stand up and sing the song with which they always ended their church concerts. But in the event, nobody was able to stand up and sing.

The priest held a warm and beautiful speech that revolved around First Corinthians, chapter 13, verses one and two, and verses four to eight, the subject being eternal love.

The speech, which touched upon much of Janne’s personality, moved us deeply.

In the speech the priest said, amongst other things:

“Janne’s death makes no sense. There are no human words that can explain. There is no answer to the tremendous “Why?” which we are all left behind with. This is why we have to hold on to what is life-affirming. It would be in keeping with Janne’s spirit.

We have to hold on to the life that Janne had, and all that Janne stood for. All the love she received in her short life, and that which was fine and irreplaceable, that she gave to

each and every one of you. This is where we must start. For it is here we find meaning, in the midst of what we do not understand. Here we will find a depth, which will become a resource for you all.

Janne is with God, and we are here without her. There is a light for Janne; she is in God's hand that carries her where we cannot reach her, and which also bears us through that, which is unbearable and that, which we do not understand.

And we have a right to believe, that love is stronger than death.”

Apart from the church psalms, which I had carefully selected as a tribute to Janne, we had also chosen “What a wonderful world” for the choir to sing, a song that reflects Janne's view on life.

Throughout her childhood, we had sung many songs together, something we enjoyed greatly.

Now it is God and the angels that must do the singing.

It was a memorable and beautiful ceremony.

Kjeld, together with the family and some of Janne's friends, carried the coffin out to the hearse.

The church clerk gave me two large envelopes containing the condolence cards which had come with all the bouquets and wreaths. Since then I have often sought comfort in the kind words these cards contained.

Outside the church we were met with hugs from people who had come from near and far – although I didn't really register much. I was unable to comprehend anything other than the hearse with Janne's coffin that stood in front of me.

Many people carefully laid single red roses on the coffin.

After a while the door to the hearse was shut and the car quietly drove away, whilst we followed it with our eyes, frozen in sorrow.

The local pizzeria was a place often visited by Janne. The owner had offered his facilities to our disposal, and made Danish pastry and coffee available to the procession from the ceremony. It was a very gracious gesture.

The youngsters from Janne's circle of friends wanted to have a get together at the place where they usually met, so we provide some money for them to be able to do this, in what ever way they found fitting.

I don't know how we got through those days or the following days and months.

Janne

Janne was a planned child and our only child.

She was born on the 22nd of October 1977, a beautiful little red-haired girl.

After the birth Ilse started working part time. We had decided that Ilse should spend as much time as possible with Janne, to avoid her growing up in a kindergarten.

When Janne was one year old, she said her first word; it was “Dad” of course!

Teddy bears would make her eyes sparkle and it was the big hit all through her childhood.

She was a very manageable child. Obviously we sometimes had to draw the line, but if I told her: “Janne, you mustn’t do that” the answer would be, “okay”, and the problem was solved. Naturally the picture changed around 10–12 years of age. The answer would no longer be; “okay” but instead: “Why not?”

Janne was, from an early age, very conscious about being able to do, and wanting to do, things by herself. And she developed a wonderful sense of humor.

I saw it as a privilege that I could split my work between home and away.

Shortly after maternity leave, my work at the office changed to being an eight-hour day, every other day.

My parents looked after Janne on the days when I went to the office. After the death of my father, my mother looked after her alone. I have always had a strong dislike of institutions and wished for Janne to be in safe homely surroundings. Even though she was an only child, she was not alone. She would often play with her cousins, just as other children came to our home.

My work arrangements allowed plenty of time for Janne and me to do lots of things together.

We enjoyed going to parent/child gymnastic classes, and to children’s theatre, and other arrangements like these. We had plenty of time, and our everyday life was calm and harmonious.

When Janne started at school, it was natural for me, during her first school years, to take part in school outings – if needed. Later on when Janne started attending music school, I loved being able to watch their concerts in churches and other places, even though they took place in the middle of the day. We were also eager library-goers. Janne was very fond of books. She would often borrow a pile of books that would all be read within the week.

Janne liked that I was involved in her everyday life and we both enjoyed each others company after school over a cup of tea or lemonade.

As Janne grew older, she developed other interests, and naturally the need for my being there became less. I altered my working hours accordingly; the rhythm of my working life followed the rhythm of Janne’s development.

Her immense love for animals grew too. Her first animal was a budgie. Then came hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, a “shared” horse, a cat, and finally her very own horse.

When the animals, one by one, passed away, we would hold a “service” in the garden of our summer house. It once made me exclaim:

- *Where on Earth are you going to bury the horse, Janne?*

When Janne was eight years old, she came home one day from visiting one of her friends with tears rolling down her cheeks.

- They say I'm spoiled, she sniffled.
- Oh well, I said with a little smile. I suppose you are really, so all you have to say is: "I know, and it's just lovely."

Janne thought about it for a moment, and then her face lit up in a big smile and she repeated:

- It's just lovely.

One evening she asked me:

- Why does the moon shine, Daddy?

I explained to her that it was due to the sun's reflection and threw myself into a long explanation about the construction of the universe and our planetary system. After a short while she interrupted and said:

- Oh no – I should *never* have asked.

As an only child, Janne was naturally spoiled with toys and with attention, but we tried to make sure that things were always balanced. She probably had more toys than most of her friends. She had her own television, video and a computer at an early age, and at around twelve years of age she had her own telephone, because in our opinion she was sensible enough to be able to manage it. This turned out to be right.

Her own horse had long been at the top of her wish list. When she was fifteen years old she bought "Mickey" with the money presents she'd received at her confirmation.

Mickey was a pony, a black and brown gelding with white "socks". Mickey was stabled at what was known as "The Children's Animal Field" near our home. Janne loved to go riding in the surrounding green areas.

When we moved to our summer house the horse naturally moved with us, it being set out to graze in a field belonging to a nearby farm.

The area surrounding the summer house was often used for riding too.

I was full of admiration with Janne's special skills with animals. One afternoon before the weather was warm enough for the horses to remain outside at night, we had a call from the farm telling us that they would be going out that evening. They asked Janne to put their two horses in, before it got dark. Janne asked me, if I would come with her and help.

The sun was low on the sky as we wandered along to the farm. I was in front with one horse and as I turned around to look for Janne, who followed a short distance behind with Mickey and the other horse, my eyes met a lovely smile, and I saw her copper red hair shine in the middle of the two horses.

When I attempted to pull the horse into the stables, it reared right in front of the stable door. A couple of hooves kicked towards me. I quickly let go of the reins and the horse disappeared. I ran after the horse as I heard Janne's reproachful voice in the background.

- Dad, can't you even hold on to a horse?

Each time I got closer to the horse, it disappeared even further into the field.

It only took Janne a short moment to place the other two horses in the stable, after which she came out, went directly up to my “runaway” horse, which remained standing calmly, and pulled it in.

Whenever Janne bought make-up, she would first find out whether the manufacturers of the product concerned, used laboratory testing on animals. If that was the case, the company’s products were discarded.

She could appear to be the quiet type at school, something we were often told at parents meetings, where the standard sentence was: “We would like Janne to participate more in the class discussions.”

Even though she didn’t take part a lot in class discussions, she would appear much more confident outside school. On three occasions when she applied for an afternoon job, she was given the job after the first interview. The same happened when she applied for an apprenticeship.

Our summer house lies close to the sea and has a lovely garden. Between the front and back of the house there is a lovely roofed yard, where the family can gather together, even if the weather is bad.

Janne loved this place. This was where she spent the summers of her childhood. This was the place, where she would go swimming, where we would play badminton on the lawn, and this was the place, where she went in and out of the neighbour’s doors, as if she was part of their family. This was where she learned and loved to ride.

Especially the back garden meant a lot to her. In her first years, it was the sandpit that took up her time. Then came “Janne’s little garden”, where she would crawl around eating her harvest of peas, carrots and radishes. Later on it was the swing and the seesaw that dominated the back garden. As she grew out of the swing and the seesaw, we decided to lay out a Japanese garden.

The new garden became her favorite place. At one end it has a terrace whilst at the other end it has a small waterfall, where the water falls over terraces into a small pond, where goldfish and Japanese carps have their fling. A bridge leads across the small pond, which is surrounded by flat rocks.

Janne enjoyed being here with her beloved cat Jaymiz, who would usually be lying on one of the flat rocks by the pond, trying, with it’s paw, to make one of the frogs, which hid under the rocks, jump into the water.

In the front garden was an old Japanese cherry tree. In this tree there hung a little rope ladder, which Janne used to play with as a child. Later she used to enjoy lying on a sun bed in the shadow of the tree, looking up at the foliage, just lounging or reading a good book.

The tree withered and died the same year that Janne died.

When we were laying out Janne’s grave, the cemetery gardener suggested planting a small tree with hanging branches at one corner of the grave. He mentioned a Latin name, and we just nodded. It turned out to be a Japanese cherry tree, exactly like the one in our garden.

Janne had a great interest in things spiritual. One of her confirmation wishes was a crystal ball!

She also loved a good “shiver.” Books by Stephen King, or television programmes with a supernatural theme like “The X files”, were just the thing.

Janne also experienced a curious instance of haunting.

At the stable near our home, where she – apart from during the summertime – had Mickey stabled, were two boxes. In the box next to Mickey, a horse named “Filly Foot” was stabled. One evening, Janne told the following story:

- Dad, the stable is haunted. This morning, when we went to lead Mickey to the fold, I noticed that Filly Foot had a halter on. It was very tight and I felt sorry for the horse, so I tried to loosen the halter but couldn't. So I went back to Mickey, whom I had just pulled out of the box. When I turned around and looked at Filly Foot again, the halter was gone. We went into Filly Foot's box to check if somebody had hidden in there and was making fun of us, but there was no one. The halter wasn't on the floor either...it was nowhere to be seen.

- Janne, ghosts doesn't exist. I looked at her with an expression of patronizing tolerance, whilst thinking that it was incredible what a couple of young girls could work themselves up into believing.

- Ask mum. Janne looked at me accusingly.

I looked questioningly at Ilse.

- It's true; I went with Janne to the stable. She couldn't even get her fingers under the halter. When we looked back again a few seconds later, it was gone.

I was surprised to hear that Ilse had gone with Janne, and that she affirmed Janne's story.

- I'll be damned, I said out loud.

Janne looked at me triumphantly, while she said accusingly:

- You believe it when Mum says it.

Despite Janne's interests in the spiritual world she had both feet solidly planted on the ground. She was upset when others were having a hard time, and she felt deeply for the weaker members of society. For example, she very much wanted us to sponsor a Third World child.

Janne believed in the best in every man and had unlimited trust in everyone. This would at times lead to disappointment for her, when she now and again met people who let her down.

We have had countless youngsters visiting our home. Janne believed that her mum would always be able to make sandwiches, just as she often invited guests to our home for a hot meal.

As mother and daughter we naturally had our disagreements, especially about her choice of clothes when she was 14 – 15 years of age. It could quite easily end in big “drama”, but the disputes usually didn't last long.

Janne was conscientious, but probably mainly where her interests were concerned. She found housework boring. Possibly she was renowned for this amongst her friends, because she received a washing-up brush from a girlfriend for her eighteenth birthday.

Janne's last birthday was her eighteenth. We made quite a day of it. Apart from the family, she had invited a wide circle of friends. The day ended with a visit to a discotheque. It was a wonderful day for her.

When Janne was fifteen years old she had a boyfriend named Flemming, whom she met at "The Children's Animal Field".

Of course a mother isn't happy about her daughter tying herself to another person too soon. But on the other hand it was a comfort to me, because I always knew where she was.

Janne liked visiting Flemming's home very much and she was treated like a daughter of the house.

The relationship lasted two years. They parted but remained good friends.

When Janne was killed, Flemming was among the first to receive the news of her death, and he broke down completely when he heard. Now, several years later, Flemming continues to visit her grave.

We often speak to Flemming and his mother about Janne. It is a nice feeling to be able to talk to others who also loved Janne deeply.

Subsequently Flemming has told us, while they were dating, that Janne had repeatedly told him that she felt she wouldn't survive her teens.

She never expressed those thoughts to us, maybe because she knew that we would have rejected them as "a load of nonsense."

Janne's Poetry

A few days after the accident Ilse brought out a small book that she had found in one of Janne's drawers. In this book she had neatly written some poems. They were not the kind of poems one would expect a happy eighteen-year-old girl to write. We knew that Janne wrote poetry, for example:

The Dandelion

You stand in a corner
you little dandelion,
you're the only left.
I can't help it.
They came and took your friend,
kicked him into the dust,
till he was torn apart,
and slowly withered and died.
You have to seed,
so more can enjoy the sight
of your yellow wings and green leaves.
You little weed.

Janne 1992

This poem was probably written when her guinea pig died.

Alone

Far away
a little spot
with it's own peculiarity
with it's own personality
it stands
- alone

Far away
a new life blossoms
again
with its own peculiarity
it's personality
- alone

Far away
a tree sheds its leaves
and this is the date *
for the one
who is
- alone

Far away
are two spots
one small, one large
an animal, a human
which only death
can tear apart
- alone

Far away
peace rests over the city
and only the mumiks **
can be heard, as they crawl
in the night
separately
- alone

Far away
the two spots walks
into the fog
“The white veil”
but they are not
- alone

Janne 1991

* Janne's birthday

** Janne's nickname for guinea pigs

The following two poems shocked us greatly, because they seem to describe Janne's own death.

Fear

You hear the beat of your heart,
behind a wall of fear.
You hold your handbag tight
it feels more safe.

You float through the night,
like nothing will ever happen.
But you know, that very soon
death will appear to you.

You know your fear can be smelt,
and the shadows are waiting for you.
You know you will die
in the middle of the cold road.

Janne 1995

Death

I open my eyes.
Look up towards the light.
The light that is coming towards me,
through a black Universe.
The light which will give me
peace and happiness,
forever.

Janne 1995

The Time after the Funeral Service

Janne's mobile telephone subscription had to be cancelled, and so did her subscription to various magazines and memberships of mail order companies. It turned out that not all companies complied with the cancellation, and continued undauntedly in sending us new advertisements. It was hard and unpleasant to receive mail addressed to Janne.

Shortly after the funeral service I called the police and asked for permission to read the police report or have a copy sent home. I wanted to find out if Janne had been conscious, or if she had said anything before she died.

I spoke to the officer on duty and mentioned that they could “block” out the name and address of the driver. The officer promised to look into this matter and call me back.

The following day I received a call from a friendly police officer, who unfortunately had to inform me that a copy of the report could not be issued. But they could send a copy to my solicitor and I could thereafter put my questions to him.

- If you have any specific questions right now, I will be only too happy to try and answer them for you, the officer said.
- I would like to know, who declared Janne's death?
- This was done by the doctor who arrived with the paramedics.
- Do you know if she was conscious at any time?
- No, she was not. It's our impression that she was killed instantly.

The officer further informed me, that the driver had been charged with involuntary manslaughter.

- Do you have any knowledge of the date for the trial, and will we be summoned? I asked.
- No, you will not be summoned, as you are not a party to the case, but you may attend the trial. I am not familiar with the date, but the city court may be able to help you.

I later phoned the city court and was informed that a date was fixed for the beginning of April – approximately one year after the accident.

Our priest frequently visited our home in the days after the funeral service. She asked us how we had felt about being told that Janne was dead.

- Feel free to talk about it, the priest said. Don't be afraid to cry, it brings relief and it is very important that you let your grief out. Crying is only possible for 10 to 15 minutes at a time, and then you run out of tears. If you don't cry, the grief will get bottled up inside, and the next time you are faced with grief, it will strike you with twice the strength. That is why it's so important to let the grief out through crying.

We talk about the terrible events again and we cried.

- How do you feel about the person, who killed Janne? Do you hate him? She asked.
- No, we don't hate him, because we know it was not a deliberate act, even though he was speeding way above the limit. No, the sorrow is so immense that there is no room for hating.

It was hard to walk past Janne's room everyday, to see her bed empty and see all of her things in the bookcase. So we decided to change rooms, and make Janne's room ours, and move her things into our old bedroom.

This may sound odd, but it was a nice feeling to sleep where Janne used to sleep, because – in a way – it made me feel closer to her.

Janne's kimono hung in the hallway for a long period after her death, because we couldn't make ourselves put it away. During this period we would often find Janne's cat sitting by the kimono, sniffing it and whimpering.

We decided to go back to work a few days after the funeral service. We thought that Janne would like us to get on with our lives. We could come up with numerous excuses to wait for another couple of days, but we managed to go to work.

It was difficult.

Two years earlier I had been appointed manager. I remember that Janne on this occasion had been very proud of her mother.

The thought of leaving my job as manager had crossed my mind. I now questioned my ability to meet the demands and expectations that face a person in my position.

When I went back to work, my boss and my colleagues met me with open arms. The first few days back I can only remember as "being there." I was unable to make any difficult decisions. Because of this, I picked an assignment I could handle. It was putting letters into envelopes!

That was as much as I could manage.

We were on the verge of a restructuring in the office, a consequence of which being that I would have greater responsibility together with an upgrading of my position.

Shortly afterwards I found myself in my usual habitat of planning, organizing and administrating. I found my self on a kind of "break", when I was at work. When I concentrated on the job, I was able to repress my sad thoughts.

My work still has a very high priority. Without it I would quickly slip into a deep depression.

My colleagues are still there, when I need someone to talk to. They see when I am feeling miserable and now and again they put a flower on my desk to cheer me up, just like they completely understand my absence on special red-letter-days.

At first it was difficult to concentrate on work. The thoughts kept slipping back to Janne. One day, when I was at the main office, the office manager asked me how I felt and said that if I needed a transfer to another area, I only had to mention it.

- How is your wife doing? He continued.
- She is doing okay. She has just been promoted, I answered.

I regretted my answer, but the question surprised me and I instinctively answered in a way that would create distance to my grief.

Some of my colleagues avoided commenting on the accident. I understand this. Prior to the accident I would have reacted in the same manner. But some colleagues said that if I needed to talk about it, I only had to ask. I spoke mostly to two colleagues, Maibrit and Anette, about Janne and about our grief, especially to Anette, because we worked

together on a daily basis. I was and still am, deeply grateful to them that they took the time to listen and to ask questions.

A week after the funeral service, we were contacted by the funeral director, who told us that Janne's urn was ready to be collected, and we made an appointment for this.

It was a terrible day.

We met the funeral director at the grave. A man from the graveyard was there with Janne's urn.

I thought that it could not be true that my lovely daughter was in such a small urn – pulverized.

It was such a struggle to say goodbye, in every way as hard as at the funeral service.

Kjeld wanted to lower the urn himself. The site was covered with earth again and we laid down a couple of beautiful little wreathes.

The funeral director had a lit grave candle, which was put on the grave. We felt that this was a beautiful thought. Since then, there is nearly always a lit candle on the grave.

When we had lowered the urn, we went home. We had chosen to be alone, because now we had to make an attempt at understanding that it now was definitively over.

When one loses a child, there are probably a number of different reactions. Some people don't want to talk about it at all, and bottle up the grief inside. Others feel a great need to talk about it.

We felt an extremely great need to talk about the accident and about Janne in particular.

One of the very first things we told our family was:

- Please don't think: "We must be careful not to mention Janne whenever Ilse or Kjeld is around." On the contrary, we would very much like to talk about Janne and it doesn't matter if it makes us cry.

In our culture it is not "popular" for a man to cry. It is a sign of weakness. It is seen as degrading to cry, and it is in one's upbringing that it is not the done thing. For many men it is probably also a question of pride.

I learned to reach beyond that. I did not care about being "popular" or about pride. The sorrow was too immense.

Sometimes people that meant well would try to console us by saying that we would get over it after a couple of years.

I suppose it's difficult for those who haven't gone through the experience of losing a child to understand, that deep inside you don't want to "get over it." Your child should not be forgotten. You don't just carry on your life as if you had not a care!

About a month after Janne's death a young man came to me and asked:

- Have you gotten over it yet?

I was shocked by the question, and answered:

- No, I haven't. Just as the person who loses a leg has to learn to live with a handicap, so do we have to try, and learn to live without Janne, but we will *never* get over it.

Our family went to a lot of effort to get us away from home. They arranged trips to Tivoli gardens, to the Zoo and other cultural arrangements, just like they often invited us over, or out to dinner.

We gratefully appreciated everything they did to get us away from our everyday surroundings and create distance to the sorrow.

Being a very tightly knit family, all the members of the family often get together. We have a tradition in our family that we – as well as at special parties in celebration of something big (weddings, confirmation etc.) – get together once a month. This goes for both the younger and the elder generations. Janne really enjoyed taking part in these gatherings.

Family gatherings were and are still occasionally difficult to get through. This is when I feel Janne's early death to be most meaningless and unreasonable.

Both Kjeld and I were very preoccupied with having larger copies of Janne's most recent photographs made. These photographs were taken in December 1995, where Janne was attending a Christmas party at work and had bought a new outfit for the occasion. She looked so beautiful that I exclaimed:

- I must have a photograph of you, you look so lovely.

She let herself be persuaded, these pictures being the last to be taken of Janne. Later on, her friends were kind enough to send us copies of the photographs they had.

We continued to feel very low in spirit.

Because of this the priest arranged for us to have counseling with a therapist specializing in the treatment of those suffering from grief. We went separately, and had one-hour sessions once a week for a couple of months.

It was hard, mainly because the therapist didn't ask that many questions, but rather expected me to tell about my feelings. During one of the first sessions she suggested that I wrote a letter to Janne, which I was to bring to the following session.

So I wrote a letter to Janne and told her how Mum and I were doing, that we missed her, and that we were going out for dinner with some of her friends. When the therapist asked me to read the letter out loud during the next session, I broke down and couldn't do it.

One of the things I told the therapist was that all of Janne's things are still in her cupboard, and that all of her toys from her childhood are still in the cellar. The therapist suggested that we gave the toys away to an orphanage in Romania, where it would bring a lot of happiness.

I liked the idea. The thought that poor children in another country could benefit from it appealed to me a lot. I presented the idea to Ilse.

- No, she said. It is too soon. I can't deal with giving it away yet, it is a part of Janne. She's always looked after her toys; they're almost as good as new.

Ilse had difficulty letting go of the toys, because it was like letting go of Janne.

I cried a lot, when I was at the therapist's. Kjeld and I never spoke about our experiences with her. We both saw it as something personal.

Usually the session passed with me telling about my situation, about what I felt and thought.

Whether grief counseling has been helpful is a hard question to answer. I often wonder if my situation today had been different, had I not received counseling. The first year after the accident was particularly difficult and very traumatic to get through. Thoughts like – it's been two weeks since the accident – it's been a month since and so on – kept making themselves felt. We spoke a lot about Janne and many were the evenings where we broke down in sorrow.

The Easter and Christmas following the accident turned out quite differently than the holiday seasons we had celebrated earlier.

A couple of weeks after the accident Kjeld's sister and brother-in-law had invited us to celebrate Easter in their summerhouse. I can only vaguely remember how the visit went. The grief and the longing were huge – Janne was on my mind constantly.

In late summer we went on the camping holiday to Italy which we had planned before Janne's death. It turned out to be good for us, even though we hadn't been looking as much forward to the holiday as we had done earlier.

We got away from it all – or at least – distanced ourselves from the grief. And we felt that Janne was with us the entire time.

When the campsite turned out to be "a dump", we were able to laugh it off and say: "This will only be for a night!"

We cried, but we also had good times, so the holiday was quite a success.

Janne's birthday was in October, one month after we returned from our holiday. Again one of those days that is hard to get through. Questions like: "What would Janne have wished for her birthday"? And the insistent thought of how we used to enjoy birthday mornings with a pile of presents.

We talked about how we'd like to spend the day. We would take a day off from work, visit Janne's grave, and put some flowers and some more candles on it.

We also decided that we would watch one of Janne's favorite videos in the evening.

Our mothers and our closest friends, and even our priest came to visit, because they knew that the day would be hard for us to get through.

During the day, many, many bouquets were laid on Janne's grave. The feeling of warmth it gave us was indescribable.

Time passed relentlessly and Christmas came closer. The holiday season, which Christmas is, brings the family together – and is, at the same time, one of the hardest times to get through.

We had made a family Christmas calendar with Janne last year. Each of us had bought eight presents, which were each hung from a date on a calendar in the living room, and we took turns to open a present every morning for the first twenty-four days of December.

We usually had a large Christmas tree in the living room and Christmas decorations everywhere. There would even be a Christmas tree with electric lights on the balcony.

Janne liked to have candles in her room. In December her windowsill would usually look like a sea of flames with all the burning candles.

In the later years we had celebrated Christmas at home with only the immediate family. Our Christmas Eve had previously been a traditional affair, with roast duck, roast pork, rice pudding with an almond in (the finder of the almond being rewarded with an extra present), dancing around the Christmas tree and piles of presents – especially for Janne. This Christmas would turn out to be quite different.

Getting through December was hideous. Everywhere we looked were happy people – families, parents with their children. We could not stand the thought of Christmas, particularly the thought of celebrating Christmas Eve. This is why we chose to spend Christmas with Kjeld's sister and brother-in-law, who put their own plans aside in order to celebrate Christmas on our terms. We had the traditional Danish Christmas dinner, but we didn't have any presents, nor a Christmas tree or decorations. The atmosphere was cozy and friendly, in a quiet and easy going way.

The following Christmases have been celebrated almost in the same way as we used to do, though my Christmas decorations stay in their boxes. Only a very few pixies find their way into the living room, and we haven't had a Christmas tree since, not even on our balcony. Christmas presents have also been limited to a minimum. I find it hard to believe that I will ever again find any pleasure in celebrating Christmas. Christmas has become a nightmare to get through, for the joy of Christmas has gone.

After Janne's death I was intent on selling our summer house. Ilse however did not share this point of view.

- No! We must keep it. Do you remember, how often Janne asked us not to sell it?

We moved to the summer house at the beginning of May. It was the very first time we had been there, since Janne's death.

Looking at the garden, Janne's room, all the surroundings, it was quite painful. I looked over the lawn, and thought that Janne and I would never play badminton there again.

As I went round to the back yard, my emotions overwhelmed me, and I cried. Deeply and painfully

Over the years, I had always looked after the garden, and taken pride in keeping it trimmed neatly, just as I had always catered for there being plenty of flower baskets hanging from the roofed yard.

This year was different. I didn't care about the garden, I didn't mow the lawn, and I didn't weed the flowerbeds. And there were no hanging flower baskets.

Again Ilse took over for me, and we supported each other, helping out when and wherever the other couldn't cope. Ilse knew nothing about gardening, but during that summer she learned how to look after a garden, whilst I started redecorating the kitchen in our apartment instead.

We had talked about redecorating the kitchen before Janne died. The plan was that during Easter, I should assemble the kitchen units we had bought, and then redecorate during the summer.

So during that summer, I drove directly from work to our apartment and worked on the kitchen for at couple of hours each day. This helped me remain functional, as I needed to stay occupied to keep my thoughts at a distance.

Ilse felt the same need and met this need by going directly from work to the summer house, where the gardening would be waiting for her.

It was no easy task, because gardening has never been my specialty. I had instead, enjoyed things like playing with Janne in the garden, lounging on the sun bed, filling up a paddling pool with water and watching the animals (hamster, guinea pig, rabbit and cat) romping on the lawn. It was so terribly hard not to hear Janne's footsteps, and her calling out: "Hey Mum, I have something to tell you" or "Do you fancy an ice-cream Mum?"

I did not have the strength to go over her room. Dried flowers, which she had meticulously chosen, hung from the ceiling. The room contained neatly arranged files with all kinds of good advice on everything from budgie care to breeding rabbits, while a part of her huge collection of teddy bears still took up much of the space. The harness and riding breeches, which also hung there, spoke of a person who cared for horses and was a rider herself.

It was too hard.

Flemming came to visit us with his mother during that first summer at the summer house, and for Flemming too, the return was a painful experience.

Someone once said:

"You don't know what you've got, until it's gone."

The Court Case

It was nine o'clock in the morning, a year after the accident and I was at the city court. For the first time, I saw the person who was responsible for the death of our daughter. There was still no hatred towards him, as it was not a conscious act but a tragic accident.

The defendant was a young man, whom I took to be in his late twenties. He was accompanied in court by his parents.

Apart from the young people who were in the ill-fated car, there were a couple of other witnesses. A police officer who had stopped at a red light at the crossing, just as the defendant passed the green light and the expert on vehicles that had measured up the scene of the accident and examined the ill-fated car.

The counsel for the prosecution read the indictment and informed the court that Janne had been cycling on the bicycle path, where there had been found skid marks of about 30 centimeters in length. The prosecution further informed that the remains of her bike lights had been found a short distance from the scene. The accident had occurred a few meters from the crossing.

The counsel for the defendant informed, among other things that the car had been traveling at no more than 80 kilometers (50 miles) pr. hour.

The police officer, who then took the witness stand, informed that the ill-fated car had gone through the crossing at a very high speed.

The defendant had told the police that he had stopped at a red traffic light some 500 meters earlier. Because of this statement the police officer had attempted to cover the distance between the two traffic lights. The speed would have had to be in excess of 120 kilometers (75 miles) p/h if the car was to reach the next traffic light while it was still green: The next traffic light was where the accident took place.

The expert on vehicles explained that, on the night of the accident, he had taken a trial run at 80 kilometers (50 miles) p/h. But a much higher speed was necessary if a rather new car, such as the ill-fated car, was to skid in the place in question.

He further explained that according to the examinations and tests he had performed on the car, it would have skidded first to the left and then to the right, where the curb of the bicycle path was hit with such a speed, that it tore a tyre off the car. Afterwards the car continued to skid over the bicycle path and sidewalk.

The young passengers in the defendant's car told collectively, that the speed had been high, but probably no more than 80 kilometers p/h.

Their testimonies were identical: "It all happened so quickly." When the car had started to skid, everyone had closed their eyes and had therefore seen nothing. They had heard the car hitting something metallic, but believed it to be a road sign. None of them had noticed Janne.

One of the young men elaborated:

- I thought a great deal about how the car skidded, because it was so unreal. The car skidded towards the left and quite against the laws of physics; we were being thrown to the right.

The defendant seemed sympathetic enough and was apparently deeply moved by the tragedy. He broke down several times during the trial.

It was emotionally very taxing to attend the trial. But I felt a sense of relief in the fact that the defendant was a person of some sensitivity, and not someone cold and indifferent.

The defendant was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and was sentenced, according to normal procedure in this country at the time, to pay 20 day fines of 100 crowner (70\$) and a two year suspension of his driving license.

Or was it three years? I don't remember.

The defendant immediately appealed the sentence to the High court after advice from his counsel.

I did not attend the trial at the High court.

When I attended the trial at the city court, it was only for the purpose of hearing what had happened that night, and how the accident had occurred. All the things which I could have read in the police rapport, had I been allowed to read it.

How the High court finally sentenced the young man – is of no interest to us – it won't bring Janne back.

The young man has to live with himself for the rest of his life, knowing that he killed Janne. That in itself is a severe punishment.

I didn't want to attend the trial. I didn't want to see the face of the person who had killed my beloved daughter.

I had taken the day off work on the day of the trial and had stayed at home, waiting for Kjeld to return. It was a long day, and I felt empty inside. Kjeld did not return until the afternoon, the trial had lasted for four hours. He told me how it had gone and about the sentence.

I did not understand how anyone could be let off so lightly.

A friend of mine asked me one day:

- How much did you receive in compensation?

I explained that Danish law of torts works in such a way that compensation can only be claimed if financial damage has been suffered. For example, if one owns a horse, and the horse is killed, then one can claim compensation proportional to the value of a similar horse.

If you, as a parent, loose a child, you have not suffered any financial damage and can therefore not claim compensation.

There will probably be a variety of opinions as to how reasonable this line of thought is. A financial compensation might for some people mean the possibility of being able to do things that makes life a little easier.

Our point of view regarding financial compensation is that things are how they ought to be.

Because no amount of money in the world can replace the loss we feel for our beloved Janne.

The Years after the Accident

On the first anniversary of Janne's death we had taken the day off work, and we knew that the family would come to visit us.

In the morning, a letter came through the letterbox. It was a letter from Janne's colleagues, Kirsten and Rikke, who wrote about how much they missed her. They had almost completed their apprenticeships, and they wanted to know where Janne was buried. They felt that it was her special day too and wanted to put some flowers on the grave.

Ilse replied the following day and told them that we very much wanted to see them, and that it was a long time since we had received a letter which had brought us so much happiness.

The girls came visiting shortly afterwards. It was an emotional day. They told us how they had received the information about Janne's death, and about how their reactions had been.

We talked about Janne for a couple of hours, about the accident and about the girls' work at the hospital. After that the three of us walked to Janne's grave. The girls had brought a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and it was placed with great care.

We invited them to join us for dinner at a restaurant. Rikke however, was unable to join us, as she had a baby at home and the babysitter had to leave at six o'clock, but Kirsten could come.

We had an unforgettable evening with the conversation revolving mostly around Janne, and we learnt about Janne's life at work. It was of great importance to us. We finished the evening at our place and around midnight, Kirsten said goodbye.

This evening became the beginning of a warm friendship between Kirsten and us.

In the past year, many of Janne's friends have visited us at the summer house as well as at home. It has been a great joy and comfort to us, just as we have found joy in all of the bouquets that have been placed on Janne's grave during the year.

Janne's death has changed our life. We are no longer the people we used to be. Subjects that used to be of great importance are now infinitely irrelevant, while some subjects that never interested us earlier, have now become interesting.

For example, I had never previously taken an interest in spiritual books. Today we own quite a nice collection.

In the past, a nice glass of red wine was something I really enjoyed. Approximately a year after Janne's death this changed. I no longer enjoy the taste of wine. When we have guests, and I drink a glass of wine just to be socialable. The first couple of sips will taste like they used to and then the taste changes to something like vinegar.

A year after the accident we went on holiday to the Canary Island of Tenerife with Kjeld's mother and his cousin Line.

Line is the kind of person who can bring up the subject of “grief” without feeling awkward about it. This is why we’ve had a lot of good talks with Line about Janne and about our grief, not only in Tenerife but on several other occasions too.

On the seafront of the city Puerto de la Cruz there are artists who paint portraits from photographs. We spent a few hours studying the work of these artists. Then Kjeld asked me if I thought it would be a good idea to have a painting made of Janne. I thought it was a good idea, and as I always carry photographs of Janne with me, it could be done. The photos I had were small, so as to fit into my purse, and the question was whether they were suitable for reproduction on canvas.

We contacted an artist whose work we liked. The artist thought that the photograph was excellent for reproduction, and so we commissioned the work. We followed the work being carried out from the balcony in our hotel room. It was quite an experience to see how he managed to create a beautiful portrait from such a small photograph. Slowly the portrait of Janne “grew” out of the canvas. The resulting painting was a very beautiful and lifelike portrait.

Later on we found another artist, this time a woman, and ordered another portrait painted from another photograph.

The day came when the picture had to be collected. The weather was windy and she was not too be seen in her usual place. We were curious to see, if we would get the picture. However, the artist phoned us as planned, and informed us that the portrait was finished, and we arranged to meet in the hotel lobby. At the sight of Janne’s portrait, which was extremely beautiful, I broke down.

Today both portraits grace the walls of our living room, and they bring joy to us everyday.

Shortly after we came back from Tenerife, I read a reader’s letter in a newspaper where a lady wrote about her sponsorship with a children’s fund. My thoughts went to Janne, and to what she used to say about us sponsoring a child abroad. We wrote to the children’s fund and arranged to sponsor a girl in Burkina Faso. The girl’s education and her family’s health care are paid through the sponsorship. We send small presents on birthdays and at Christmas, and she sends letters to us, telling us how her life is getting on.

In the two years that have passed the need to be constantly occupied and thereby keeping thoughts at a distance, has been great.

During weekdays I buried myself in work. In my spare time I read a lot of books, I meditated, and I kept myself busy on the computer too.

When having computer problems at work, I had gotten used to calling the support department, and having them send up an expert who would solve my problems.

At home on the other hand, I was the only one to solve my computer problems. In the beginning I didn’t know how to do it and I had to go through the process of “learning by doing.”

Three years after Janne’s death, Ilse discovered a lump in one of her breasts.

- *It is probably something hormonal.*
- *No, the doctor answered. You have to see a specialist and have a mammogram taken. Oh well! I thought it's probably nothing that cannot quickly be sorted out.*
- *You have to go to the hospital and it has to be straight away, the specialist told me. Now he's got me really worried.*

It was close to a planned holiday in Italy, where we would be spending time with a large part of our family. I was looking forward to this holiday, and I didn't feel like canceling it.

At the hospital the doctor felt that the operation could be postponed the few days the holiday lasted, but asked me if I felt up to going on holiday at all. I felt that I was up to it. Believe me, I couldn't receive any news that was worse than the news I received in 1996.

The day after returning from a lovely holiday, I was admitted to hospital. The holiday had done me good. I was unafraid of the operation and I'd had time to think about how I would have handled the situation, if Janne had been alive.

I am certain that I would have felt totally different, because Janne would have been afraid of losing her mother, and her worries would have meant a great deal to me. I would probably have thought, as I did now, but the fear of dying and leaving Janne behind would have been huge. Thoughts like; what would happen to her if I died, or the sorrow of not seeing her any more, would have marked me.

The lump was removed as were 17 lymph glands in my left armpit. It turned out that 15 of these glands were cancerous. I had to have follow up treatment. I went through 29 radiotherapy and 9 chemotherapies.

Once again "the network" was up and running. Family, friends and colleagues again expressed great concern and a high degree of sympathy.

It has been very tough on Kjeld, the thought that he could be left on his own, was all of a sudden very present.

To this day, I am not afraid of dying, but on the other hand I don't feel that my time is up yet.

I was with Ilse at the hospital, on the day she was diagnosed.

- *What can be the cause of a lump suddenly appearing in the breast, we asked.*
- *It is hard to tell, but many women are born with a gene for breast cancer. Most of them never realize that they have this gene because the body's immune system keeps it under control throughout life. Should it occur that a person with these genes experiences a long term critical disease, or a long term severe mental strain, like losing a close relative, the immune system can weaken and become unable to keep the gene under control, and the cancer cells may start to grow, the doctor explained.*

Spirits were low and we were depressed over the diagnoses, as we returned home very few words were spoken.

Let's not let the little things get us down, Kjeld. We have been through worse. Remember what you always say: "If you are at the foot of a hill and you see ten barrels, each containing a problem, come rolling towards you, nine barrels will roll off the side of the hill. Therefore they will never reach you!" Ilse exclaimed after some time.

This optimism has been characteristic of Ilse throughout her period of illness. She has kept the spirits up for both of us, and has also managed to take care of her job as manager of a department with 20 employees. The radiotherapy were scheduled so that she was only absent from work for a few hours at a time. But in connection with her chemotherapy sessions, she had to stay in bed for a few days after each treatment. It was a rough time.

- Where did Ilse find the strength during her illness to go to work and at the same time teach value based management? My co-worker Anette asked me one day.

I could only answer that I didn't know, but that her will to cope was unbreakable, and that it helped to keep my spirits up.

I heard about Anette's question and I can only say that it was not until the mammogram at the specialist, that I realized that the lump was not just "easily removed", this was serious.

I was unhappy and very low as I came home from the specialist.

His words about the lump being malign stuck in my head.

- *I don't want to be left alone! Was Kjeld's first remark.*

I believe that this has contributed to me wanting to fight for my life.

I don't think that work is the place to be when you are ill, but in my case going to work, and teaching too, was keeping me alive after losing Janne.

A planned three week holiday in Spain was cancelled. Instead we planned to go to Rome for a week when the radiotherapy was finished, and two weeks in Thailand when the chemotherapy was over.

We needed something to look forward to.

We had eight wonderful days in Rome, in the pleasant company of my sister and brother-in-law, and later, 14 amazing days in Thailand, in the spring of 2000.

I often drive to Janne's grave on my way home from work. It means a lot to us that it is kept nicely, that the flowers are always fresh and that a candle is burning.

It was recently the anniversary of Janne's death. Among the many bouquets was one of roses and baby's breath from Flemming. It was placed where he always puts it.

Janne's death has left its mark far and wide and has touched many people. Not that long ago, I had contact with Janne's teacher from her first and second grade. He told me that he was always very moved when he passed the scene of the accident. The teacher had some photographs of Janne, which were taken in connection with a school outing, and he offered to send them to us. This made us very happy.

We still have contact with some of Janne's friends. They call us, or mail us on the web, and send us postcards from their holidays. All of this is something that we greatly appreciate.

We try to repay this kindness by inviting them to our home, and on many occasions we have chosen to go out to dinner with them. It means a lot to us, and it gives us an opportunity to follow their progress in life. It is hard to grasp that they have passed their driving tests, bought cars, gotten married and had children. I can't get any further than the 18 year of Janne's life. Then all progress stops.

When Kjeld and I go on holiday, we always bring a picture of Janne, just as our home is graced with pictures of her everywhere.

It is lovely that Kjeld and I have been so much in agreement on how to work through our grief. I can scarcely imagine how terrible things would have been, had we disagreed on many issues.

As things have gone, there has been, and still is, room for growth. But we have mutual values which form the foundation for us to be able to continue living together after Janne's death.

When you are in the middle of grief, it is difficult to believe that you will ever be able to move on.

To be in the middle of your life's biggest crisis is such a struggle. You take tiny steps. In the beginning, you go round and round in a circle. What makes it hard to break out of the circle is that you feel like you are "betraying" the deceased. As if you do not feel sorrow any more. That it is totally wrong.

The heart is full of love, and the grief and the feeling of missing, is always almost unbearable.

But one day, it happens that you find a path out of the circle. It does not happen after a year or after two years. But suddenly you realize that the birds are singing and the trees are a little greener – spring is coming.

I have found a path that I want to travel, and I have reached an inner sense that Janne is guiding me now.

I use my senses a lot more, and I have learnt to use my intuition. Intuition has become a very important part of my life – just like inspiration.

Inspiration means: "In touch with the spirit."

Due to Janne's death I have gotten involved in assignments that I probably wouldn't have gotten involved with earlier. Assignments that have demanded considerable resources and which have moved some boundaries for me. As an example: I have not previously had the courage to stand up and speak in front of a large crowd. This is no longer a problem.

I have chosen to expand my knowledge on management, in particular "Value Based Management". I have found many answers in the books of Deepak Chopra, and I have had the great pleasure of attending a lecture by him.

Kjeld and I have attended several lectures by spiritual lecturers and we have enjoyed every single one. We have the same view on the spiritual world, and we both read books on the subject.

Quality has re-entered my life.

A fine balance between the things I find important to do, and the things I like to do.

I have learned to do things on my terms and to be a bit more careless about whether others find it acceptable or not. I can get up in the morning and again be joyful that a new day has come.

The first thing I did after Janne's death was to throw away the bathroom scales and my watch. I have struggled with my weight my entire life, and all of a sudden it seemed so pointless.

It is important to be aware of the progress you make when you are going through grief. Earlier it was hard to hear the music that Janne liked so much. It hurt me inside. Now I can listen to that same music, with the same pleasure as I know she would have felt at hearing it. I rejoice with her and remember.

I see her clearly before my eyes in certain situations, and I am happy at the sight.

Some time ago I realized that I was laughing. Laughter, that came straight from the heart. It was scary and nice at the same time. I hadn't had a proper laugh in four years.

It takes a long time to get through the hopelessness. The thought that it would all be easier if I followed Janne, could be quite insistent in the beginning.

There are no easy solutions to the loss and the grief. We must seek strength in ourselves to move on despite having lost what was most dear to us.

I am deeply grateful that I lived to be a mother. I can relate to the joys and the sorrows I see in other people, or that other parents have in their lives.

I am still a mother, and I will carry that feeling for the rest of my life.

I often feel a stab in the heart, when I see other mothers with their grown children. Then I remember and miss the wonderful times I had with Janne, and I think about all of the things we never got to do.

I have a wish, that one day I will have the strength to give a lecture on losing ones child, and in that way help others.

When we loose our loved ones, we are met with so many taboos. We make a long detour around the people who have lost someone, instead of walking directly up to them, and sharing our sympathies. We do not have to say anything, just a hand on ones arm or just being there and showing sympathy is good and very comforting.

"But – she will only be upset" is the standard remark for not speaking to the grief stricken. But believe me – you cannot possibly be sadder.

A lot of people have told me that they have no clue of what to do or say, even though they want to. They are afraid of stepping on toes and afraid to talk about Janne. I experience people getting tongue twisted when rephrasing a sentence to avoid mentioning Janne's name or to avoid talking about events where Janne attended.

It means a great deal to us that people are willing to talk about Janne, about all the crazy, funny, boring and festive experiences they have shared with her. Because in that way she is still alive to us.

The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once said:

“Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards.”

Part Two

The Unexplainable

A mind that has been stretched will never return to its original dimension.

- Albert Einstein -

I have never previously had experiences that I wasn't able to explain rationally. After Janne's death I encountered experiences which I had no sensible explanation for.

At a family gathering a few years ago I met an elderly lady whose husband had died five years earlier. I asked her if she, after the death of her husband, had experienced anything for which she could find no natural explanation.

Surprised, she looked at me and answered:

- Yes, but you don't talk about such things.
- Why not?
- Because people will think that you are crazy.

It is probably the general attitude that some experiences are best not mentioned. As for myself, I told just about anyone who could be bothered to listen about my unexplainable experiences, though mostly to friends and relatives. They all listened politely, but only a very few of them commented on them.

One evening Ilse asked me:

- How do you think you would have reacted, if anyone prior to Janne's death had told you about such experiences?
- Yes I know. I would have been polite, listened and then thought: "He has really lost it now."

But I didn't care what people thought. The most important thing was that these experiences really took place, often occurring at times when I emotionally felt really low, which happened quite frequently the first couple of years after Janne's death.

When Janne was alive, we often discussed if there was a life after death, a subject in which she took great interest. I have to admit that I was then the negative part in these discussions, my perception of whether there is a life after death has changed, because I asked Janne for a sign if she was there, and this caused a number of unexplainable events.

A month to the day after Janne's death, I had the following experience. The digital clock, which is built into our gas cooker, was blinking with the numbers 00.00. This can only happen as a result of a power cut. The electrical socket was placed behind the refrigerator, which made it impossible to switch off the power without pulling out the refrigerator, neither is it possible to set the clock at zero by using the clock's switches.

My initial thought was that there had been a power cut. I set the clock and went into the living room to set the other two electric clocks, which were both depending on power from the mains – but they showed the proper time.

This set me wondering. For the first time in my life I experienced something for which I could not find a logical explanation. We only have a 220 volts power supply in the apartment. This just could not happen.

A couple of days after this incident, I tore the old kitchen down and put the cupboards out on the landing, ready to be carried down. The sun was shining and there was plenty of light on the stairs. On my third trip down the stairs with the cupboards, the lights in the stairwell suddenly came on. Only on the top landing, where there is only a small window, would one notice that the lights had come on. I stopped and listened but there was no sound. As I had just returned from taking down the last lot of cupboards, I knew that there was nobody else on the stairs. I went right down to the basement door and checked that there was nobody there either. There was no one but me on the stairs.

I was puzzled and started making a record of these incidents.

One day, when I had driven to the main office, I noticed, when I got back in the car, that there was a strong scent of the perfume which Janne used to use.

My sense of smell is not very good, but this scent was so powerful that I could clearly smell it. After a few seconds it gradually eased off.

There was nobody else near the car.

Shortly after this episode I was sitting in my office. I had just finished talking on the phone to a solicitor and was writing a brief note about the call. As I wanted to date the note I looked at my watch to check the date. It showed the 26th. I noted the date but suddenly realized that it was wrong. It could not be right. A quick browse through my calendar showed that the date was the 22nd. The date on my watch had taken a four day leap ahead. The button that sets the date was in its normal position.

On one of the last times Janne had come with us to see her grandmother, she had persuaded us to stop at a McDonald's restaurant on the way home.

As we were driving home on the highway from a visit at my mothers, the first since Janne's death, I suddenly felt a heavy object against my right leg. My first thought was that it was Ilse's handbag, which had slipped down. Out of fear of it blocking the pedals I reached down to remove it, but surprisingly I reached into thin air. There was nothing.

A few seconds later the McDonald's sign showed up.

In the end of August, we were going on a camping holiday to Italy with my sister and brother-in-law. We had arranged that, we would spend the night at my mother's, and then drive on to the ferry the following morning.

We were up early the next morning. I had just taken a shower and was about to have my morning coffee. My watch was in my pocket. As I took it out, the backing had come off.

It normally requires special tools to take the backing off.

I had, especially in the first year after the accident, several experiences where the hands or the date on my watch would leap ahead in time.

I had started doing a bit of gardening again in the second summer after Janne's death. At some point I looked at my watch, the time was just after ten. Shortly after, Ilse called

out that she had made coffee. As I sat down to drink my coffee, the news on the radio started. It was ten o'clock. My watch had leaped seventeen minutes ahead.

We had given Janne a stereo rack as a present for her eighteenth birthday. After her death we put the stereo in our living room. We later experienced that the radio would turn on by itself.

It also happened that our TV turned itself off.

On the 22nd of November – eight months to the day of Janne's death – we had another curious experience.

When we left for work in the morning, we left the radio on at low volume for the cat, something we'd done many times before. Ilse turned it off when we returned home at around 4 p.m. Later on that evening I noticed that the clock on the radio was flashing with the numbers 14.46. There had been no power cut and the radio was playing as we arrived home.

Another occurrence happened on the last day that we had our 14 year old car – a car which had transported Janne to numerous places. We were on our way home from visiting some friends, when Ilse suddenly exclaimed:

- What's the matter with the dashboard clock now?

The clock, which had never failed before, had taken a four hour and thirty-seven minutes leap ahead.

I have a set of rituals every night before I go to bed. My wallet has its regular place with my car keys on top, and of course we turn off all the lights before we go to bed. One November morning – a year and a half after Janne's death – we came into the living room, and the light above Janne's picture was on. On top of my wallet were Ilse's keys, and my car keys were in her coat pocket. If we imagine that we might have forgotten to turn the lights off the night before, we would in any case have been able to see the gleam from our bedroom. That Ilse by mistake should have switched the keys is unthinkable, because Ilse doesn't drive and anyway, we had not been out that night.

At home in our apartment I went through a period where I repeatedly experienced that one of my legs suddenly became freezing cold. This icy sensation lasted normally for about a minute.

When I think back on these unexplainable experiences, which occurred frequently in the first year and a half after Janne's death, it comes to mind that Janne was helping us by indirectly saying: "I still exist, but in another world."

I wrote to friends and acquaintances and told them about the accident. One of them is an elderly lady living in Australia. She had come to visit us a couple of years earlier and knew Janne.

We received a very long and comforting letter from her where she confided in us that when she was young and expecting her second child, she'd had a near-death experience. She told in detail about her journey through a tunnel, and about a light-being, who had

told her that her time had not yet come and who had, amongst other things, let her be present at a conversation between a doctor and a nurse.

"I was under general anesthesia," she wrote, "and I could have been hallucinating, if it was not for the fact that when I woke up there was a doctor and a nurse in the room, and I knew exactly what they were going to say to each other, because I had just experienced it. The words came out precisely as I had heard them."

From my cousin living in Spain we received a letter, where he told us that he had visited a female acquaintance, who was a medium. He had told her about Janne's death, and she had, he explained, gone into a trance where she'd spoken in a man's voice. My cousin had written down what was said during the trance, and had sent the transcript to us.

Here is an extract from the letter:

"The guide, who followed Janne, was of a very advanced stage, and gave her poetry, which she connected to her own life. Janne knew that her life was a path to the enhancement of the soul, which is why she gave herself so easily to the other world.

Her physical death is a doctrine to those who loved her. Physically she is here no more, but her spirit will connect to those she loved, and to the life she left as teacher. She had never before been surrounded by so much creative energy as she was, when it was known that her learning on this Earth had come to an end.

With all the power of faith and love that she feels towards her parents she will now help them to take part in a new progress."

Ilse and I signed up for some lectures on "near-death experiences" and "out-of-body experiences."

One of the lectures was particularly interesting. We knew that the final subject was about astrology. Therefore, Ilse had brought a horoscope diagram of Janne's time of birth with the positioning of the planets. It had originally been made for Janne when she was fifteen, by an amateur astrologer who was an acquaintance of a relative.

At some point during the evening, the lecturer asked if anyone present had brought a horoscope. Ilse passed Janne's horoscope diagram to her without telling that Janne was dead.

Ilse and I were not seated next to each other but from where I was sat I was able to watch her, and I was not under the impression that she was affected by the situation.

The astrologer studied the diagram for a while.

- Has something happened here? She asked.
- Yes the horoscope belongs to our daughter; she is no longer alive, Ilse replied.
- I will proceed then. I asked because this horoscope is rather unusual.

She continued to account for the positions for the star signs at the moment of Janne's birth, how Janne had been as a person, she finished off by saying:

- This young girl did *not* die from disease; on the contrary she had a very sudden and violent death, probably a traffic accident.

The lecturer's characteristic of Janne was correct, and we were deeply moved by what she told us.

The writer Deepak Chopra told in his lecture about “the coincidence” of life, that there are no accidental meetings. These “coincidences” often occur, when people have a need for certain information that another person can supply consciously or subconsciously.

One of my “accidental” meetings occurred on a day when I was out driving and was pulled over by the police. It was the first time in over ten years that I had been stopped, just as it was the first time after Janne’s death that I spoke to a police officer again. The officer asked to see my driver’s license. I stared at him...there was no doubt in my mind. Even though it had been a couple of years, I instantly recognized him.

The officer noted that I was wearing my seat belt and handed me back my drivers license.

- Didn’t you come to our place on the night our daughter was killed? I asked.
- Yes, it was me. That was a very sad night.

There were other cars that had been pulled over and after a short conversation the officer had to get back to work.

I often wondered how curious it was that out of hundreds of police officers in Copenhagen he was the one to pull me over. Maybe he had a need – consciously or subconsciously – to know that we had moved on.

Four years after Janne’s death we had a powerful experience, when Dea – who was a friend of Janne's – came to visit. She brought us a tape-recording from her mother, Lis.

Dea’s mother had through a friend been told that a Scottish lady, who is a medium, was coming to town. Dea’s mother had booked a séance with the Scottish lady, to come into contact with her mother.

During the séance the conversation suddenly took an unexpected turn. The medium said amongst other things:

- Your daughter is her name Joanna or Janna?
- No her name is Dea.

Short pause.

- Who was Joanna, Janna, Janne?

She says; “I miss her.” It’s your daughter she’s talking about.

- My daughter had a friend who was called Janne. She died in a car accident.
- Lis, your mother has brought Janne because she needs a little help. Did she die two years ago?
- No I think it was four years ago.
- She says it was not long ago. Your mother has helped her to understand where she is. She says “I did not suffer.” This has been a great worry to her mother and her family. Was she killed in a car accident, where there was a car and a bicycle? I can see the wheels. And she says “A car and a bicycle.”
- Yes she was riding her bike when a car hit her.
- She says the transition was very quick: “I left my body just before it was hit; *only* my body was hit.”

It is of great importance to her that this message gets through to her parents, as they have grieved tremendously and had many worries about whether she suffered. I can feel where her body was hit. Do you know if she died straight away?

- Yes, she did.

- She says that some time before she died she started to give some of her things away, because she knew she would not need them.
- I get the word “nurse,” was she training to become a nurse?
- No.

This wonderful girl Janne says “Thank you for letting me through. Your mother brought me here. You have no idea how difficult it is to communicate. Your mother helped me.”

There is something about a young man. Do you know if Janne had a boyfriend?

- Yes, I think so.
- She has been trying to contact him.

She would very much like to contact her parents to tell them that she still exists, they just cannot see her. If you see her parents will you please give them this message from her?

- Yes.
- It was very important for her to get through, because she never got the chance to say goodbye.

Never before had we received a message, which moved us as deeply as this one did, because the Scottish medium had never heard about either Janne or the accident.

Dreams

"Now our whole life, from birth unto death, with all its dreams, is it not in its turn also a dream, which we take as the real life, the reality of which we do not doubt only because we do not know of the other more real life? Our life is but one of the dreams of that more real life, and so it is endlessly until the very last, the very real life - the life of God."

- Leo Tolstoy -

Amongst the experiences which have helped me through my grief, were dreams where I "met" Janne. I have probably had many dreams which Janne has taken part in, but I can only remember the dreams where I've woken up in connection with the dream. To wake up after a dream like that was wonderful. It was as if I'd really met her again.

The first dream came to me approximately one year after her death. I was in our apartment, when Janne came and gave me a hug. She looked like she did immediately before she died. I told her that we had moved her room to the other end of the apartment, where our bedroom used to be. She smiled and said she was looking forward to seeing it. I asked if she would be staying for a while. To that she answered:

- I don't know how long I can stay.

One of the most beautiful dreams was a dream where Janne visited us in our apartment – it did not look completely like ours but in the dream it was our apartment. In the dream I was aware that Janne was dead, but it was totally natural that she was there.

Ilse was there too, as well as two children who had come to visit us. A girl of ten and an eight year old boy.

Janne sat on the couch and next to her sat a man, about ten years older than her. She introduced him and told us that his name was Lars.

- How did you die Lars? I asked.

- A man hit me on the head, he answered.

- It was a drunk that got him, said Janne and grinned.

Janne told that they were supposed to visit one of Lars's friends who lived nearby. His name was John and he had a grocery store. The two children asked if they could come along.

Janne smiled and answered:

- Of course you can.

I got a little nervous at the thought of the children going too.

- Janne is this wise? I mean right now we can see you, but what happens to the children if you suddenly become invisible?

- Don't worry about it Dad, Janne answered and smiled.

I followed the four of them down on to the street – which by the way did not look like our street. The surroundings were almost park like.

They left me there, and I woke up.

In the dream I knew the children's names and I knew who they were. In the dream I asked Janne a lot of questions about her death and I got a lot of answers. But as I woke up I could not remember the children's names, and I did not know who they were. I could

remember the questions I put to Janne but not the answers apart from a single one. I had asked her if she had lived before, and she had answered: “Yes many times.”

On Christmas Eve I met Janne again in a dream, where amongst other things, she told me that she wouldn't have missed her life for anything, and she continued:

- It's not important how long you live. What's important is – that you have been living.

The next time I met Janne in a dream was when we were on holiday in Thailand in the spring of 2000. In this short dream I was aware that Janne was dead, just as I was aware that it was about one year ago since my last “meeting” with her.

Suddenly Janne was there

- Where have you been all this time you little rascal? I asked.

I never heard the answer because she came up to me and gave me a hug, and at that very moment I woke up.

The dreams, which Janne was a part of, have been very lifelike. In the late summer of 2000, I had a dream where I went back in time to when Janne was about four years old. She was sitting on a bench in a beautiful garden. I called for her to help me water the flowers with a watering can. At some point in the dream I get the idea that I am dreaming. I look at Janne and at the surroundings. No – I conclude. This is not a dream. This is real.

When thinking back on the dreams that have made the largest impressions on me, not just the dreams about Janne but other dreams too, where I have been present at other peoples conversations – or dreams where I have heard “wise words” or expressions that were sometimes even poetic – I find myself thinking, “These were not my words, because I wouldn't have expressed myself in those terms.”

In the seconds that follow when I wake up from a dream about Janne, I ask myself: How can she be so alive? How can it be that I can hear her voice so clearly?

When all this is so lifelike, how come the surroundings aren't accurate? Is it all in our heads? Is it all just imagination? Or is it, as some books claim that we all leave our physical body every night when we sleep, and visit another dimension, without being aware of it?

For me the question remains unanswered.

Just like Kjeld has told, it is unbelievably lovely to wake up after a dream about Janne.

I have had quite a few dreams about Janne though I haven't written them down right away, so they're not so accurate. All the same, these dreams have given me a lift.

Only one dream is still very clear, I dreamt it shortly after her death while we were visiting my mother-in-law.

Janne sat on the sofa, pale and still weak after the accident, but she smiled. Janne had had her hair cut short a month before the accident. But in the dream her hair was not short. Instead she wore her lovely, long, red, curly hair in a pony tail – which for her was very characteristic.

I was extremely happy to see her. She got up from the sofa and came over to me. I remember taking her into my arms and kissing her cheek.

- *Janne, there is something Dad and I would like to know. Is there a life after death? I asked.*

Janne smiled with a roguish twinkle in her eye and answered:

- *What do you think?*

Another World Opens Up

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom his emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.”

- Albert Einstein -

One evening shortly before Janne was killed, she said to me:

- Dad I have a couple of books, which I would very much like you to read. Will you please read them this summer?
- Maybe, which books are they Janne?
- One is called “The Clan of the Cave Bear,” the other is “Sophie’s World.”
- Ok, I promise, when we move to the summer house I’ll read “The Clan of the Cave Bear.”
- Shortly after Janne’s death I started reading “The Clan of the Cave Bear.” I was so fascinated by it that I rapidly read the other books in the series too. Then it was time for “Sophie’s World.” I would have liked to read this book while Janne was alive, because maybe then I would have understood what it was Janne was trying to tell me, and we could had had some really good talks about the ancient philosophers, amongst other things.

After Janne’s death I felt a need to read about what others in a similar situation did. How did they manage – how did they move on? Someone recommended me the Danish book “Julie er død” (Julie is Dead) by Karsten Holm. The book is about a little girl who was killed when she ran across the road and was hit by a car.

As I read it I realized that many thoughts and actions in the book were identical to my own. Among other things, the chapter about “grief costing” both personally and financially, because it is impossible to be sensible and responsible with ones finances, when at the same time one is heavily weighed down with grief.

Later on I read the novel “The Celestine Prophecy” written by James Redfield. It describes how to develop spiritual values and about the “coincidences” that often occur in life.

Shortly after Janne’s death Mother showed us a paper clipping, which she had for some reason kept for a couple of years. It was a review of the book “Embraced by the Light” by Betty J. Eadie. The book is about her own near-death experience. I was fascinated by the book's review and decided that I had to read it. Never the less the book was not easy to get hold of because it was sold out from the publisher and also out on loan at the library. At work I talked about it to a colleague. He offered to borrow it from his own local library. A week later I had the book in my hand.

It was interesting reading but there were chapters in the book which I had a hard time relating to. For instance when she talks about a “knowledge library” where all knowledge is accessible and you just suck it in, or “becoming one with a flower” – being the flower. In spite of this it was a great comfort to read about the experiences in “the other dimension.” The book had made me want to read other books in the same genre. I found a Danish book with the title “Lys bag Døden” (Light behind Death) by Kirsten Mørck-Nielsen. The interesting thing was that even though the explanations in the two books were a little different, several of the experiences were more or less identical, including those that I found it hard relating to in the first book.

The third book I read was “Life after Life and Reflections on Life after Life” by Raymond A. Moody, who had interviewed over 300 people, who all had a near-death experience. The description of these people’s experiences was fascinating reading. The book tells, among other things, that surveys have shown that more than one million Americans have had a near-death experience.

I continued my search and read George Ritchie’s book called: “Return from Tomorrow.” George Ritchie applied to join the army during the Second World War and was here offered a medical education. After the arriving at the military base he developed a fever and was admitted to the camp hospital. George Ritchie talks about how he first had an out-of-body experience and later a near-death experience. He also tells that later, whilst traveling to the medical faculty, he travels through a city he’d never visited before. He was able to recognize places in the city from his out-of-body experience.

As I read more and more of these books, I developed a deeper knowledge of the spiritual world, and a greater understanding for something, which I had previously had a hard time relating to.

Another interesting book was “Beyond Time and Space” by the Norwegian writer Erik Dammann. In this book he tells about the experiment conducted by the Aspect group that confirmed the quantum theory, and he explains about the structure of atoms in an understandable language.

Dammann tells that if you imagine a hydrogen atom enlarged 100 million times the nucleus of the atom will be the size of a football. The small electrons, which surround the nucleus, will circle at a distance of ten kilometers from the nucleus. The distance between the single hydrogen atoms will exceed more than twenty kilometers.

In between all of this, there is nothing.

What is mind baffling in all of this, is that everything is made of atoms and these atoms are mostly made of nothing. Equally mind baffling is that scientific experiments in 1981 and 1982 confirmed the quantum theory; the theory which, back in 1927, was the cause of numerous discussions between Niels Bohr, Albert Einstein and Werner Heisenberg. Einstein then claimed that according to his theory of relativity, a speed faster than light would in principal be impossible. None the less the experiment made by the Aspect group proved that separated parts of a system can remain connected to each other regardless of time and distance.

The experiment was based upon two photons (symmetrical twins) being shot out simultaneously but in opposite directions, each having to pass a filter. In a billionth of a

second after the firing, the direction of one filter was changed and the fluctuation frequency of the photon passing through this filter was frozen. The surprising thing was that the other photon automatically reacted accordingly, without having been subjected to any kind of influence and regardless of the distance between them. In other words, the two photons exist in a unified whole.

What happened during the experiments was a completely new side to reality, which might reveal a totally new dimension, because the experiments showed that something exists, which affects the physical course of events, although this something in itself cannot be placed in time and space. Another surprise was that the smallest parts of the atoms seemed to be influenced by thought.

Werner Heisenberg wrote in his book “Del og Helhed” (Part and Whole) that whoever faces quantum physics without being shaken to the core simply just doesn’t understand what it is all about.

Erik Dammann also mentions numerous examples of Darwinism’s shortcomings in his book. Amongst other things he quotes an example from the book “African Genesis” by Robert Ardrey:

Ardrey tells about a stay in Kenya where a friend one day shows him a beautiful flower looking like a hyacinth, made up by a number of elongated single flowers in shades of color from coral red to green. At the tip it had pure green buds, behind these, partially blooming flowers with coral edging, and at the centre completely blooming flowers in pure coral. While Ardrey looked in wonder at the flower, the friend tapped the flowering branch lightly with a stick. The flower disappeared! Every one of the single flowers took off from the branch and revealed themselves to be a swarm of fluttering multicolored insects. The swarm of insects flew around before landing again like a disorganized clump around the branch. For a while, the different colored insects crawled back and forth over each other, until they had once more found their place in the “flower,” and sat unmoving with their colored wings folded more or less, depending on whether they represented buds or blooming petals.

What is fantastic about this is that such a flower is unknown in nature. What these insects construct, and what their predators amongst the birds recognize, is the idea of a flower which does not exist in reality! It is unbelievable that eons ago, these small insects found that by grouping themselves into the shape of a colorful flower, they could ensure the survival of their species.

Where do you find, asks Dammann, the Darwinist idea of random change in the individual and the mutual competition for survival in this example? These insects’ developmental histories must, according to Dammann, have meant an entire group of insects going through a co-ordinate adaptation, and it must even have included the development of different placing instincts for every insect color in relation to the flower idea as a whole.

While Janne was alive we had our little discussions. Where Janne was more into the spiritual world I was more of a Darwinist myself. After having read Dammann’s book, along with many other books, my perception of things has changed.

I can almost hear Janne saying: “What did I tell you!”

One day when I yet again was at the library, I suddenly found myself in front of a book with the title “Far Journeys” by Robert A. Monroe, the founder of the Monroe Institute of Applied Sciences. In the book he explains about an experiment he had initiated, where the use of a special sound, called “Hemi Sync.,” causes a synchronizing of the two halves of the human brain. This sound can cause a state of altered consciousness, where norms of time and space are suspended, and where the subject can undergo an “out-of-body” experience. To this end the Institute has released, among other publications, a series of CDs called “The Gateway Experience.” I had previously read Monroe’s book “Journeys Out of the Body” in which he amongst other things talks about “The Inner Rings” and “The Outer Rings.” The Inner Rings are, explains Monroe, the place where you go when you have just died, and the place where you can visit the departed in dreams. The Outer Rings, on the other hand, are what we understand as Heaven. This is where the departed goes after their stay in The Inner Rings, a stay which in earthly terms can last several years.

One encounters a similar explanation in the book “Journey of Souls” by Michael Newton, only in his book the idea is described in other words. “The Inner Rings” are in this book described as “The Place of Healing.”

I borrowed the book “Far Journeys” which describes the out-of-body experiences of others and of Monroe himself. This is where something strange happened. I can best describe it as a feeling I got, every time I started to read the book. It felt like someone very gently putting a hand on my forehead, or it could also be described as, a feeling of a weak current going through my forehead. This sensation could occur in other situations too, for example on the way to and from Janne’s grave.

Through the Web I found the Monroe Institute and the address of an agent in this country, where I bought “The Gateway Experience,” which consists of 18 CD’s. The exercises on the CD’s are a kind of meditation, which, amongst other things, involves reaching a state of consciousness where the body sleeps and the brain is awake. During the first few weeks of daily training, where I was lying on the bed listening through headphones to the instructions and sounds, which are part of the program, nothing happened apart from me falling asleep. After a further several weeks of daily training, I succeeded in reaching a state of mind where the brain is awake and the body is asleep. There is no doubt about when it happens, because at the same time there is a change in the level of consciousness, where one becomes alert.

The same feeling of somebody – very softly putting a hand on my forehead – occurred every time I started these exercises. After almost a full year of daily training, I had many fascinating consciousness-related experiences, but no out-of-body experience. And this was just what the purpose was of all this; to find out if it was really possible to leave the physical body – or whether it was all just wishful thinking.

Amongst the experiences I had during meditation were:

- I felt my legs being massaged without anyone being physically present.
- I felt a very powerful pulse through my entire body extending to my finger and toe tips.
- I felt my heart beating very fast, even though I was relaxed. At the same time I could feel strong warmth in my chest and a feeling of slipping out of “sync,” meaning that my consciousness seemed to be a slight distance above my head but locked there.

- I could see different colors but mainly violet.
- I could see pictures (almost as a dreamlike film) even though I was fully conscious.
- I once heard a loud rumbling noise, which was frightening.

During the first few years after Janne's death I had often stated – when the conversation fell on death – that I wasn't afraid of dying; on the contrary it would almost be a relief.

On a summer night – a few years after her death – I felt, after having gone to bed and without using “Hemi Sync.,” that I was dying. I experienced that I was slipping away while I was awake. I fought it by sitting up in bed and taking some deep breaths. In spite of my previous statements, when I thought it was going to happen, I was afraid to die after all. I afterwards read that this feeling of slipping away whilst fully conscious is not uncommon when you are about to have an out-of-body experience.

I used the Internet again and found a large supply of books which not only described the out-of-body experiences of others, but also instructed in different techniques of how to achieve this state.

One of the strongest experiences I have ever had occurred in October 1998. I had gone to bed and was going through some of the exercises from the Monroe Institute CD's in my mind. After a short while I felt vibrations going through my body. These vibrations could not be described as “chills up and down your spine.” On the contrary, they can best be described as being very powerful, very fast pulsating vibrations. My estimation is a minimum of 30 pulsating beats per second. The vibrations can start at your head and go downwards, or start at your feet and go upwards. My vibrations started at my head after which they – like a ring – moved down over my body. I only remember that they reached as far as my stomach, and then I slipped out of the state and found myself in the basement of the house.

As I went up the stairs to the gardens, I carefully touched the wall and felt the concrete. I was fully aware that I was outside my physical body and I thought that this was “just wild.” I was also aware that I was only wearing underwear, but this didn't bother me. I noticed that it was night time and continued on to the street. A couple of cars drove by but I didn't pay any attention to them. I thought, and felt, that this was just as real as when I physically walked along the street. I had to go to work the next day and I felt it was time to get back into my body and have a proper night's sleep. I looked at my watch – the time was 01:50. How would I get back to my bed? Could I ring the front door bell? Would Ilse be frightened? A few meters from the front door, it dawned on me that I could get back into my physical body simply by concentrating on it. I therefore concentrated with my whole mind on doing this. In that instant I was back in my bed, wide awake.

I lay there for a few minutes, thinking through the chain of events. I had at no point been afraid and had neither felt cold nor warmth. There was no doubt about the experience being as real as when I physically was on the street. I had been able to see, hear and feel, and a few minutes ago I had seen that the time was 01:50. How I had been able to bring my watch I did not know. It was dark in the bedroom but I had to see what time it was now and turned on the lights.

My watch showed 01:55.

The following day I wrote down my experiences. It was all as clear in my memory, as if it had been a physical experience. I sent my account to a news group on the Internet which deals with out-of-body experiences, along with the question: “How could I bring my watch with me”?

I received answers from most parts of the world and the common explanation was that I must have had the watch on me as I slipped out of my body. Due to this, I had brought a copy of my physical watch with me to the other dimension.

If anyone had told me a couple of years earlier of such experiences, I would have shaken my head and thought: “He’s been dreaming.”

When you go through this yourself, you know it’s not a dream because the experience is so different, and because you are able to think logically. This is probably the closest I could come to an explanation. You have to experience it, to know what it is.

This experience changed my life yet again. Now it is no longer a question of believing. *I know* now that a non-physical world also exists.

From this day onwards I could start living a somewhat normal life again.

Later, I took part in a spiritual workshop arranged by the British medium Graham Bishop, who is also known from Scandinavian television.

For the first time, I met people with the same interest as myself. It was a relief to find out that amongst them were two people who had also had an out-of-body experience. Unlike my experience, which I found fantastic, they found it terrifying to find themselves outside of their physical bodies. As I understood it, they had no wish to repeat the experience.

One of the many exercises at the workshop was that you had to try and be a medium yourself. We were divided into different groups. My sister, who was in one of the other groups, received the following message from one of the other participants:

I see a young girl, she is 17, maybe 18 years old, she has red hair, she can see trains from her window (Janne could see the trains from her window), there is also something about a summer house and a beach. This young girl was killed in a car accident. She sends her love and says that she is very happy to be where she is now.

Why it was my sister that received the message and not me, can have something to do with light / frequencies.

Nita Saunders (the Scottish medium), whom we will hear about later on in this book, explained that the reason she’d had such good communication with Janne, was that she and Janne had the same light. When a medium and a deceased have the same light – radiate the same frequencies – the communication becomes very easy. Perhaps the young man, who was a medium for my sister, had the same light as Janne.

Messages from Janne

Birth is not a beginning; death is not an ending.

- Chuang Tzu -

Marion Dampier-Jeans

Amongst the messages we received from the Scottish medium, was also an encouragement to contact a medium ourselves. During a visit to London in the autumn of 2001, we had the first opportunity to do this.

We visited Marion Dampier-Jeans, who is Danish born but has been living in England for more than thirty years. Marion is a well known and also very well acknowledged spiritualist medium in England.

At this time we feel the need to stress:

That we had not previously met Marion

That we gave her no information prior to the séance

That we, during the séance, only confirmed or denied Marion's information

This is a short summary from our sitting.

Soft and tranquil music is playing in the background. We are sitting in Marion's comfortable living room.

Marion exclaims:

- Yes I hear you

Turned towards us, Marion says:

- There is a young girl who would like to get through. The back of my head hurts, and so does my right upper arm. There is something about a hospital; did somebody die in a hospital?

- *No, we answered.*

Marion continues:

- I feel a jolt on my right side; some thing has hit her. She says; "I did not suffer, I left my body quickly." She is very sorry that she never got to say goodbye. She says; "The accident was not my fault – nobody is to blame." Did you go to a hospital to identify her?

- *Yes we went to a hospital to identify her.*

- There is something about food, did she just eat, or was she unable to eat anything?

- *She had been visiting a friend and had eaten dinner there.*

- There were several people around her when she died. Not the ones in the car but some other people. Did you know this?

- *No we didn't know this but it is possible.*

- You were there when she was laid in the coffin. You put a lot of things into the coffin with her. They were put on both sides of her. She laughs and says; "They almost stuffed it down around me. It is still with me." You also put something very personal inside that she cared a lot about. Amongst the things put there were some letters. There was a pressed flower in one of these letters. Did you know this?

- *No we didn't know what was in the letters. They were put in with all the things that had been placed at the scene of the accident. Among other things there were quite a few teddy bears. The personal item could be one of her own teddies or her silk sheets which she liked a lot.*

- Who is named Åse?
- *That doesn't ring any bells.*

(Åse is not a common name anymore, but was used in the old days).

- But there is an Åse because I keep getting the name so she must be there. Remember to ask Janne's friends when you get home. Apparently it is important.
 - Who is Marianne?
 - *That does not ring any bells either.*
 - Was your daughter good at English? Some of the information is delivered to me in English.
 - *Yes she was.*
 - What was the name of your daughter?
 - *Her name was Janne.*
 - It is possible that I have picked up the name Marianne instead of Janne (my name is Janne = Marianne). You have a very large picture of her on the wall in your living room, almost like a painting. It feels like she is following you with her eyes when you walk around the room.
 - *Yes that it correct.*
 - She is singing a song now. It is the Danish song; "I Østen stiger solen op." Does that mean anything to you?
 - *Yes she practiced singing it a lot when she was training for her entrance examination at the music school.*
 - You have either a cat or a dog at home. It's sick; there is something wrong with its liver. You have to prepare yourself that it won't be around for much longer. Janne will receive it when it crosses over, because animals go to the other side too.
 - *Yes that's true our cat has a sick liver, it is on diet foods.*
 - She is talking about her grave now; you have a candle burning there.
 - *Yes.*
 - Some of her friends have placed different things on the grave, not that long ago something very beautiful was placed there along with a wreath or a heart. That brought great joy to her.
 - *Yes that's correct. A very beautiful poem was laid down along with a wreath and a teddy bear.*
 - There is something about her room. What have you done to her room?
 - *We have moved her belongings to another room.*
 - She laughs and says: "All my things are still there."
 - *Yes they are still there.*
 - She says it will be her birthday soon.
 - *Yes, in twelve days.*
 - Kjeld did Janne owe you money?
 - *No.*
 - What is it then, with the twenty-five Danish crowns?
- Ilse smiles and answers;*
- *On the last night as Janne was leaving, she came up to me and said; "Mum I didn't get to the bank today and I don't have any cash. Can you lend me some change?"*
 - *I had twenty-five crowns on me, which I gave her.*

After our visit at Marion's we asked several of Janne's acquaintances if the name Åse meant anything to them but without result. One evening Janne's friend Dea came visiting.

- *Does the name Åse mean anything to you? Ilse asked.*
- Yes, Dea answered. That was my grandmother. She was the one who helped Janne send you a greeting through the Scottish medium.

A couple of months after our visit to Marion we had to have Janne's cat "Jaymiz" put to sleep, due to its illness.

Sounds

Shortly after our trip to London we began to hear sounds coming from our kitchen. In the old kitchen the cupboard doors had magnetic locks and the sounds from the kitchen were a bit like the click sound that occurred when the old cupboard doors were closed.

In the beginning we only wondered what the sounds were, but after a short while a pattern formed. They occurred between 9 o'clock and 10 o'clock p.m. or shortly after we had gone to bed. Sometimes the sounds were very loud, and they were often repeated up to six or eight times with a few minutes between them. After a while I began answering by saying "Hi Janne" which normally resulted in the sounds stopping.

If we had visitors the sounds did not take place.

One evening after we had gone to bed there was a weak drum-like sound to my left side, a sound that was like someone drumming their fingers against the table top. I turned to Ilse and asked:

- Do you hear what I hear?
- *Yes I think so, there's a weak drum-like sound*, Ilse answered.

The weak drumming sound started to move and was right in front of us. Shortly after, it was to our right side. The drumming sounds lasted maybe less than a minute and we never heard them again.

During spring we moved to the summer house again, also there I experienced an unusual sound. I was sitting in the front room drinking a cup of coffee when there was a noise from the kitchen, like a glass toppling over on the kitchen table. I had become accustomed to strange sounds and I answered; "Hi Janne," the sound repeated itself within a few seconds. "Is there a natural explanation to this?" I thought and said out loud; "Can you repeat it?" after about a minute it sounded like a glass full of pearls was tipped on to the kitchen table.

When we returned to our apartment in autumn everything was quiet. The sounds have gone for now. At no point has it been frightening. On the contrary, it has been a comfort; in the sense that it has been part of letting us know that there is another world too.

At one point we took part in a clairvoyant demonstration, along with some family members. Each participant was given ten minutes with the clairvoyant. I received, amongst other messages, the following:

- You have experienced great sorrow within the last few years.

I confirmed this and informed her that my daughter had died.

The clairvoyant continued:

- You should be very attentive when at home, because when your daughter is present she will show it by sounds.

Nita Saunders

(Scottish medium)

In the early spring of 2003 we had our first opportunity to visit the Scottish medium (mentioned – page 47). Her name is Nita Saunders. Nita neither speaks nor understands Danish.

As was the case with Marion Dampier-Jeans, Nita Saunders didn't receive any information prior to the séance either. Just as we only confirmed or denied Nita's information during the séance.

Before we left home we talked about bringing something which had belonged to Janne with us. Ilse found her gold bracelet and a small gold crucifix but eventually decided only to bring two photographs of Janne, which she had in her purse.

The sitting, which lasted about an hour, was taped and this is a short excerpt;

Nita started by telling us that she had been concentrating on the upcoming sitting for about 15 minutes before we arrived. There had been 4 spirits present, of whom one was a young person, who had a wonderful radiation of the color pink. This person was in very high spirits and eager to get through.

- Yes, you have a child in the spiritual world. Have you lost a daughter?

- *Yes.*

- In her room lies – either on a chair or on her bed – a large teddy bear, not a real teddy bear but more like an animal. She says; “It's still there.”

- *Yes on her bed is a large walrus teddy.*

- She is talking about some new clothes she has just bought, which she was wearing when the accident happened. Had she just bought a new T-shirt?

- *Yes she was wearing it.*

- She was annoyed that it had been ruined by blood.

She says; “Mum spoke to Christine the other morning and I was with you.” Who is Christine?

- *It is her cousin and yes it's true, I meet and talked to Christine the other morning.*

- You have recently looked at some old pictures she painted as a child.

- *Yes we had them framed and hung them on the wall.*

- She says; “There are so many pictures of me in the apartment but I'm alone in all of them. There are none with the three of us together.” You have a picture, which was taken on a holiday – a snap shot with the three of you together. You have to put it in the small frame with gold edging. Where do you have a small frame with gold edging?

- *It is in our kitchen.*

- She asks me to thank you for all the candles that have been lit for her.

Shortly before your daughter died, she knew that something big was going to happen. Dad's grandmother received her. She recognized her from pictures she had seen previously. She also says; “And then I saw Michael.” Who is Michael?

- *It doesn't mean anything to us. **

- She knew Michael when she was younger but then he disappeared out of my life she says.

- *We don't know.*

* Michael could be a boy around Janne's age. They were playmates when they were about 6 – 8 years old. At some time, Michael and his family moved from the area. We have later been told that Michael died when he was about 16 years old.

- She says; "I didn't feel any pain and I wasn't afraid. I asked Dad's Grandmother where we were going to and she said that we were going home." Was she hit by a car?

- *Yes.*

- Do you know if she was killed instantly?

- *Yes she was.*

- She tells me that there was a memorial service at the school she used to attend. She was very pleased by this. There is something about a house that you considered selling. She is happy that you didn't do it. Did you have a dog or a cat?

- *Yes, we had a cat.*

- She says; "It's with me right now."

- *Yes we are sure about that.*

Nita stretches out her hand and shows Ilse a gold bracelet and says:

- Your daughter says that you have one just like it and that you have a gold crucifix too. She says that you have them but the real ones are with her. She also says; "I had a good life but my time with you was over. It was not an accident but my time had come to an end. I had no control over what happened. There is a time to be born – and a time to die and no one can change that."

You have a lot of her toys. Amongst other things you have a doll sitting somewhere and you have a piano in your living room on which she used to play.

- *Yes, that is all correct.*

- Shortly after her death you went on vacation to Venice and a couple of other places. "I was with you," she says.

- *Yes we went camping to Venice and some other places.*

- Who is Anne?

- *That doesn't mean anything to us.*

- What was your daughters' name?

- *Her name was Janne.*

- Oh I'm sorry. I heard it as Anne. It can be difficult to get hold of names sometimes because their communication is so unbelievably fast compared to ours.

She thanks you for her grave being so beautiful. There is a tree at one side of the grave; it blooms in spring with some very beautiful flowers.

- *Yes it's a Japanese Cherry tree.*

- She says; "I'm not there but it's my little garden."

- *We know that she is not there.*

- She says she likes what you have done with the bathroom. What have you done?

- *We had it modernized last year and we had the walls painted in a color that she liked.*

- And Mum has got a new bedspread, it's very pretty.

- *Ilse laughs and answers "Yes I changed the bedspread last year."*

- She also tells that you were met with a lot of sympathy from a lot of people when she died. Your home was filled with flowers on the days after her death. She says; "It looked like a florist's".

- *Yes, our living room was filled with flowers.*

- Janne loved flowers because they are pure spirit and it's easier for a spirit to visit places where there are living flowers.

Where Janne is now, she is working as a kind of nurse to help those who have recently died and who don't know that they are dead. And also those, who have come over very weak and who need recreation. She is in a kind of a hospital or convalescent home, which is made of rocks that can breath and it contains all the colors there exist. She says; "It's so wonderful to be able to explain to them that they are not dead but simply living in a different world."

Janne goes to concerts too, she loves music. It is known that many great musicians have passed over to the other side and they still like to play. And the tickets here are free, she says laughing. She also says "Thank you" for the words you have written in her memory. Where did you write her name?

- *We have written a book.*

- Yes, it is a book and with it you help others. Through your book you have contact with others who have also lost a child. Amongst them you have come in contact with a person whose son died from a drug overdose. It was not an accident. Somebody had to learn from his death so that they could meet at the same level later on. There are different levels on the other side. To be able to meet you have to be on the same level. You can compare it to that rich and poor on Earth do not socialize because they are not on the same level.

- *Yes amongst others we are in touch with a person whose son died from a drug overdose.*

- Everybody who dies young gives generously from themselves, so that others can learn, the death of all children is a lesson to others. Nothing is a coincidence. The young man, who drove the car, which killed Janne, had an agreement that he would help in the right time and the right place. You see everything is very complex but still very simple.

You are here now to help others and you receive a lot of help from the other side. Janne died so that you could learn, and so that the three of you can meet at the same level later on. She is a very old and a very beautiful soul.

Your daughter has a great sense of humor. She says that there were two police officers at your apartment shortly after the accident and that one of the officers was young. "He was good looking," she says.

"Dad has given up smoking," says Janne. She is pleased because she did not like the smell. But you still have an ashtray on the table.

- Yes I gave it up a couple of years ago. And yes we still keep the ashtray on the table for our visitors.

- She talks about receiving a card for her birthday.

- *Kjeld's brother and sister-in-law place flowers on her grave for her birthday and such days. There is a card for Janne with the flowers.*

- She says "Thank you, I receive it."

- You went to church at Christmas and you lit a candle for her. It made her very happy.

- *Yes we were in a church where we took part in a very beautiful memorial service shortly before Christmas, which had been arranged by the Parent Association "We have lost a child," and each couple lit a candle for their child.*

- How is your leg Dad, did you fall on the stairs?

- Yes I fell on some stone stairs a couple of weeks ago, but I am fine now – Thank you.

- And how is your hair Mum?

- *It is fine again*

- Does one of you have a brother or a sister that has had cancer?

- *No, it's me. I had Radio- and chemotherapy.*

- Now I understand why she asked about your hair.

She says that your cancer has cleared up now. It happened after the accident because then – in your sub consciousness – you absolutely did not care whether you lived or not. But it was important that you finished your life and Janne sent many doctors and healers to you.

- Did you ever hear the doorbell ring without anyone being there?
- *Yes, it has happened a couple of times.*
- You have also had sounds coming from your kitchen. Janne says; “Am I smart or am I just smart”?
- I do not believe what I hear – this is incredibly – Yes, we have had a lot of sounds from the kitchen. When Janne was at school she sometimes used the phrase; “Am I smart or am I just smart.”

Turned towards Ilse, Nita says the following;

- She tells me that you have two photographs in your purse that you would like to show me.

After I showed Nita the pictures she says;

- Janne is asking you to buy a bunch of tulips and a bunch of daffodils on the way home. Put the two bunches in the same vase. She says; “Dad will have to pay for the flowers but they are from me.”

Development

In the first four years after Janne's death, we thought sometimes; "will we receive a message from Janne, if we contact a medium"? We were a little bit skeptical, and we would probably have continued in being so if we hadn't been given "a shove."

When we received the first very precise message from Janne, about four years after her death, through Dea's mother and the Scottish medium Nita Saunders, Janne gave us the impression that it was difficult for her to communicate with the physical world. Nita heard the word "nurse" in a communication, and asked if Janne had been working as a nurse.

During our visit with Marion Dampier-Jeans, we sensed a development in Janne compared to the first message.

At our meeting with Nita Saunders – seven years after Janne's death – we clearly sensed that a further development had taken place. The communication flowed quickly and with an incredible amount of details, for instance about what had just happened at our place. And we were told that Janne was now occupied as a "kind of nurse," the word, which in the first message had made no sense at all.

Nita Saunders finished off by saying that it was always a pleasure communicating with young people because they were always surrounded by so much energy.

To us these messages have a priceless value. They have been of tremendous help – getting us through our grief.

Astrology

” Being born twice is no more strange than being born once”

- Voltaire -

In 2001, at the request of the publishers, The House of Astrology in Copenhagen made out a horoscope based on Janne’s time of birth. Janne was born at Hvidovre hospital (Copenhagen) on the 22nd of October 1977 at 7:15 AM. At the same time, a horoscope was made for the moment of Janne’s death. Janne died in south-west Copenhagen on the 22nd March 1996 at 11:12 PM.

According to The House of Astrology, the birth horoscope showed that Janne was trusting, loving, and self-sacrificing; “a friend’s friend.”

Here is a greatly abbreviated excerpt from what astrologer Karl Aage Jensen had to say:

“She had a very great caring attitude towards other people, and she had huge spiritual abilities. It looks like Janne was a very highly developed soul who now works in the spiritual world, and you will probably notice that she is contacting you. This is why strange things can occur where you live.

The death horoscope contains almost only harmonic aspects. This horoscope doesn’t look like a death or accident horoscope, it is quite exceptional. I read into this that Janne had reached a new phase in her life and that she, in a way, was sent for by the spiritual world to carry out assignments there.

When you look at a horoscope like this, it almost brings tears to your eyes, so there’s something much deeper to it. Something here has reached into a higher level. Things end and new things can begin. It is easier to read it in your horoscopes – that you experience loss. There is this difference between the physical and the spiritual world, the spiritual world is completely without suffering. It is a place of well being and you become only upset, if those you left behind are upset. The most important thing is that you accept your loss and send light to Janne. She sacrifices herself to help other people – people who find themselves in shock situations like, for example, natural disasters and wars, events which kill a lot of people at once. This is where spirits like Janne come in. I sense very clearly that she is a radiant spirit, which makes her able to give even more from the spiritual world than she could while she was still living, because there are always physical limitations.

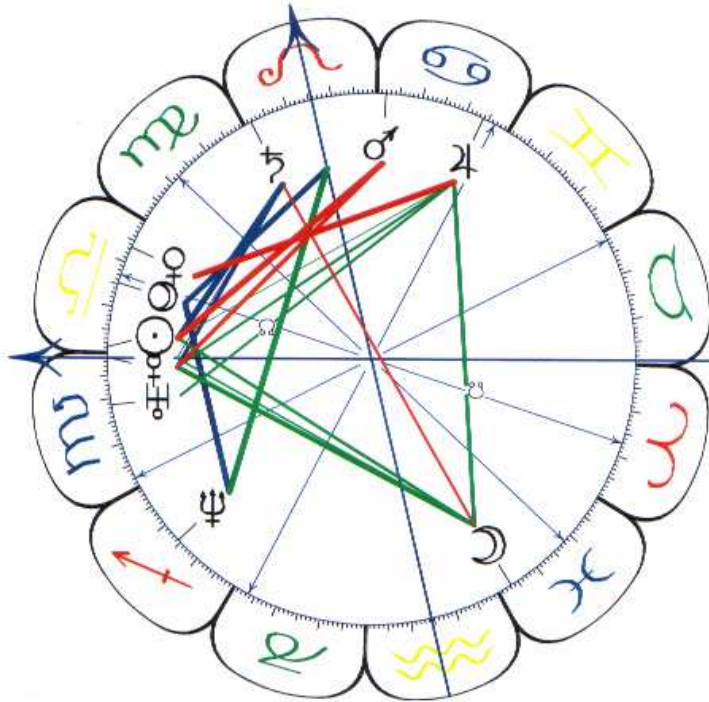
When she died the ascendant 20 was in Scorpio, which is the sign for death or transformation. The ruling ascendant Pluto was in the 1ST house and was also extremely well placed. The planet for destiny, Saturn, was in Pisces, which is the most self-sacrificing sign of all along with Mercury, Mars, and the Sun. It is completely extreme – I don’t think I have ever seen a horoscope like this before. She had a ”master-trine”, which means that she comes with a good, almost egoless karma, where things are not about herself but about the world and her fellow human beings.”

Quotation ended.

Janne’s horoscope was published in the Danish magazine “Horoscope” (number 4/2001) and is in the following reproduced in abbreviated form, with the permission of The House of Astrology in Copenhagen.

Birth Horoscope

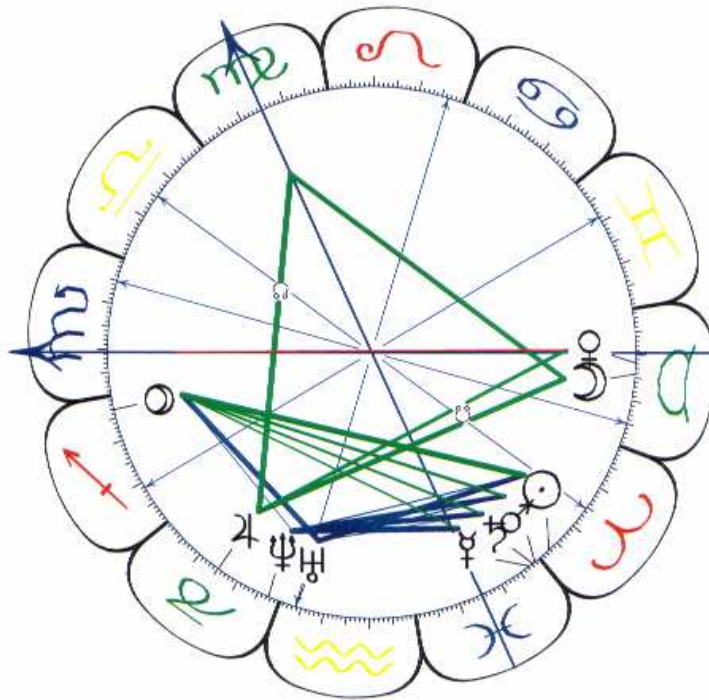
Date: 22 - 10 - 1977
Time: 7.15.00 AM
Zone: 1.00 E DK
Latitude: 55 39 N
Longitude: 12 28 E
City: Copenhagen



Radix: Janne 22- 10 - 1977 Saturday 7.15.00 AM

Death Horoscope

Date: 22 - 03 - 1996
Time: 11.12.00 PM
Zone: 1.00 E DK
Latitude: 55 39 N
Longitude: 12 32 E
City: Copenhagen



Radix: Janne 22 - 03 - 1996 Friday 11.12.00 PM

Janne´s Horoscope

By: Jo Hermann

Human beings are social. We live in groups, relationships, families and society just as the houses of the horoscope show. A person with many planets in the 1st or 2nd house will have a tendency to think “me first”, while a person with an emphasis on the 11th or 12th house has a well developed sense for what is best for everyone, and will instinctively set aside his or her own needs, if for the good of the community.

This theme is very apparent when you look at a horoscope like Janne´s. For her, the feeling of being connected to other people was a basic condition. She felt connected to all humanity. She had the friendliness of Pisces and the ability of creating harmony (the Sun in Libra), a Scorpio´s intuitive sense of what goes on in other people (Scorpio in the ascendant) and the understanding of Pisces that we are part of a larger picture (the moon in Pisces supported by the Sun in the 12th house).

Inner life

Mercury, Jupiter and Uranus are in water signs, which mean that it´s especially on an inner level, that her exploration of the world has taken place – through dreams, feelings and intuitive recognition. That Janne also had an interest in the spiritual dimension can be seen clearly by the planets in the 9th and the 12th house. She could have become a good priest or some other kind of guide to other people. With the ruler of MC (the Sun) in the 12th house, she could also have had abilities in working within areas such as art, advertising or the health department. The creative and humanitarian aspects were very well developed.

Openness and self-protection

It can be difficult living with such a great openness, as this horoscope portrays. She was both honest and loving even when it meant disappointment to herself. In this case, her Scorpio ascendant would not compromise. Janne would completely suck in influences from others, and she had probably found herself in situations, where she was so wrapped up in others and their needs, that she forgot her own needs. The poker face which Scorpio notoriously portrays is a reaction to this conflict – a way of keeping others out. But with Mercury attached to the Scorpio ascendant, Janne wasn´t very good at switching off. Her self-protection lies somewhere else, namely in a high level of personal integrity. The Sun in Libra has an inborn sense of justice, which is strengthened by the trine of Jupiter in the 9th house. And with Uranus in the 1st house she had the strength to stand by her convictions.

Mercury is also learning and education, and in spite of her strong intellect, she would not always fit in with a tailor-made school system. Uranus is in trine to Jupiter in the 9th house and is also part of a master-trine. This gives shrewdness, a desire for travel and intellect.

The need for respect

Another aspect of the matter is that she had a great need for respect and recognition from others, which is shown by Saturn in Leo of the 10th house. This need is hard to have fulfilled as a child – adults have a tendency of not recognizing children as an authority. With Saturn in opposition to the Moon, Janne knew this problem only too well. In addition, this aspect could cause her to be struck with discouragement from time to time; when she was not able to live up to her own high ideals, or when she met resistance from other people.

Seen as a whole, this horoscope shows a person with a remarkably large sensitivity and understanding for others, and with a strong sense of spiritual coherency. But at the same time a person with the need for solitude and time to process the impressions she got. Janne was a wise and shrewd person but probably hard to understand for others, because so much of her life took place on the inside.

The situation comes to a head

Neptune made a quadrant to the Sun in 12th and an opposition to Mars in the 9th house. At the same time Jupiter made a quadrant to her lunar node. The aspect of Neptune and Jupiter tells us about a poignant longing for a better life – or for a better world to live in. During the same month, Saturn speed through the last degrees of Pisces, forming, precisely on the 22nd, an exact trine to her Mars – and an exact conjunction to Mars over the sky in Copenhagen. These two aspects of Mars became the trigger factor to the traffic accident. Usually Saturn will put a damper on Mars – put a foot on the brakes – but in this case it is another side to the ring planet that comes through and the consequences of the actions of Mars become visible and tangible. An “innocent” push on the accelerator had very serious consequences. When you look at the horoscope for the time of death, the amount of harmonic aspects is remarkable. With a traffic accident, you could have expected quadrants and oppositions – hard aspect in Mars, Saturn, Uranus and Pluto. The dynamics in this horoscope were different. The Sun, Saturn, Mars, and Mercury are in a conjunction in the 4th house (which has to do with life’s ending because Uranus went into a semi-sextile to her Moon), all in trine to the death planet Pluto. At the same time the ascendant lies in the transformation sign, Scorpio.

Other influences.

Neptune is heavily in the picture too, with a sextile to the planets of the 4th house. But you get the best keys to the horoscope by looking at the Sun in the death horoscope, it being in aspect to Pluto, Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, Mars and Mercury. You could say that the Sun is overloaded and breaks down under this influence. As in all horoscopes, this is merely a drawing on the sky at a certain time.

There were other people present who were not killed – one drove the car; others were passengers, some became witnesses and others again did not even notice what was happening. As to why Janne had to die, we can only guess, but her horoscope tells us that she was particularly vulnerable on the 22nd of March 1996. And at the moment she died, all the planets in the sky were in aspect to one of her planets or axes, with an orbis of less than one degree (the only planet that did not connect in her horoscope was Venus). It is therefore not such a mystery that it became a crucial moment for her. There was a love story waiting for her. That she would not live to experience it was not told in the

horoscope. We are in front of something much larger than the diagrams of the sky. Whether one calls it coincidence, fate, subconscious choice or God's will is up to each individual to decide.

Epilogue

“The grace of God may step in when you don't lose your head
in a clearly desperate situation.”

- Carl G. Jung -

I have heard people say things like: “In your situation you are very vulnerable, therefore you're grasping for hope.”

Yes, that's right, I was grasping for hope because there was nothing else to grasp for. I asked Janne and a totally different world for help – and I got it.

I chose to spend my spare time studying the spiritual world, something I would never have thought possible a few years back. It gave me comfort and as well as many exciting experiences which I previously would have refused to believe could happen.

The out-of-body experience became the turning point for me. Up until that happened I had been down “in a deep hole”. That experience lifted me up. Now I *know* that another world exists and I also believe that if you can exist once, you are able to exist again.

Even though I still have a great interest in the spiritual world, I have, due to lack of time, given up meditation. Because I no longer use the “Hemi-sync” on a daily basis, I believe this is the reason that I'm again able to enjoy a nice glass of red wine. It's possible that very close contact to the spiritual side of life makes the body reject certain things.

In the first few years after Janne's death, I often sensed her presence, and we had many unexplainable experiences, amongst others the sounds from our kitchen. I no longer sense Janne's presence and there are no sounds anymore. Occasionally we get the odd night where we again hear – the previously well known – sounds, or notice that a clock has reset itself, but there can go up to six months or more between these events.

The process of grieving is slow; it took me seven years before I felt that our life had just about gotten back to normal. I can laugh again and tell jokes. I think that only very few people notice that deep inside me there is a sorrow, which particularly comes out when I am alone and allow my mind to wander.

It has been important to us to work through our grief, and to live through the nightmare again and again. To cry and to talk about Janne and the grief, to talk about the thoughts which rush through our heads. When grief is handled in this manner only time will heal.

We have slowly begun clearing out the cupboards which contain Janne's things, but it hurts.

The toys from her childhood are still in the basement and will probably remain there for many years ahead.

When I look back, I see that Ilse and I have chosen each our own way of dealing with our grief. Ilse has, to a large extent, buried herself in her work, particularly in management development. It has kept her mind busy. She was physically exhausted when she returned from work, especially during, and in the year after, her cancer.

The grief, the loss and the emptiness is still there. It's a lifelong process and that is the way it has to be. We have come as far as we felt up to.

We have our ups and our downs. The downs are mainly around birthdays, Christmas, and the anniversary of Janne's death. We have learned to live with our grief, learned to take the downs as part of the process, to let ourselves be really miserable and to take time off for it.

The guilt we felt earlier about possibly not doing the best for Janne has now been worked through.

We live for better and for worse and we understand that our personal emotional infrastructure cannot easily be changed.

We do things which we later on may regret but they are all part of our development.

Today it is mainly the positive experiences that I think about, and luckily they are the majority.

I have just recently been to a check-up at the hospital, and everything seems to be okay.

After jogging for a while, I have now started working out in a fitness centre. It is nice to move your body in this manner, while your mind goes wandering.

We travel quite a bit – though not wholeheartedly – because we do nothing wholeheartedly anymore. We travel to get new impressions and to get away from our everyday life.

Our life has a whole other content now than we had imagined it could eight years ago. We are both completely at ease with death. We know what will happen to our “shells” when we leave the earthly part of life. We have chosen our gravesites. It brings inner peace.

We believe in life after death and that we shall meet again.

*”Outside – beyond thoughts of right or wrong is a world.
That is where we shall meet you.”*



Postscript

On Christmas Eve 2003, my mother died after several years of illness. For the previous two years she had been bedridden, but was able to go to the bathroom. There have always been close ties between my mother and myself, so it was natural for me to visit her daily and to prepare and serve her meals during those years.

In the days before Christmas, it was clear that her life was coming to an end. She gave up eating and drank almost nothing.

The last couple of weeks she was so weak that her legs would not carry her, and she was completely dependant on home help.

I never doubted that when the time came, Janne would be there to welcome her grandmother.

At home I went to Janne's photo and said out loud, "Janne, give me a sign when you come for grandmother".

On the 23rd of December Kjeld and I had spent all day with my mother. In the evening at 11.45 pm, a nurse took over the watch for the night.

We lived close to my mother's, and we were back home before long. A little later, I was standing by the window looking out. A police car had stopped at the crossing where Janne had been killed. Not only was the blue light flashing, but also everything else on the car, that could be lit, was flashing. It was the first time since Janne's death that we had seen police lights flashing there again.

"Probably someone who drove too fast", said Kjeld.

The phone rang. It was the nurse saying, "It's over. Your mother died a couple of minutes ago".

Whether or not the blue flashes at that moment were a coincidence I shall leave up to the readers.

Billy Cook

(English medium)

In the spring of 2004 I read in a magazine called; “Horoscope” that the English medium Billy Cook was in Copenhagen. I called his contact to make an appointment. The contact told me that there were two free appointments on the following day and that we would see him separately.

As before, the sitting was taped and of course Billy Cook received no prior information either.

We presented two very short résumés, with Kjeld being the first to meet Billy Cook.

- There is an elderly lady here; she is not that tall but a bit plump. I am being told that she is your grandmother. Was she like a mother to you?
- Yes I grew up with my grandparents and the description of her fits.
- You have an interest in the spiritual world. Did you write a book?
- Yes.
- There is a new book on the way!
- Yes and no. I am in the process of editing the second edition of the book.
- Who lost a child?
- We did.
- There is a young girl coming through now. Your grandmother knew her. You have a photograph of your grandmother holding her in her arms.
- Yes that is correct. It was taken at her christening – a month before my grandmother died.
- Who is Anne?
- My daughter’s name was Janne.
- Ok. It is hard to tell the difference. She was a smart girl and very liked. A girl with a love of order, and a girl who now and again needed to withdraw herself to be alone.
- Yes that’s correct.
- Who is Kirsten?
- It could be a colleague.
- That makes sense. She sends greetings to Kirsten.
- Did a car hit Janne?
- Yes.
- It was particularly her head that was badly injured.
- Yes.
- You have been to Italy camping after her death. She tells me she was with you.
- Yes we have been told that before.
- She was very fond of animals. Did you have a cat because I get a picture of her holding a cat?
- Yes.
- Could Janne on occasion be a bit impatient?
- Yes.
- She says; “So can you.”
- Yes I have to admit that.
- Was Janne good at working with computers?
- Yes.
- Are you good at it too?

- Yes I think I am reasonably good.
 - She says she was better than you are.
- Kjeld laughs and answers; “Yes she definitely was.”
- The book that you are writing on is about your daughter. It has the purpose of helping other people who are grieving. She says: Thank you.

Shortly after I have left the sitting, Ilse arrived.

- Janne is still here but she is with your mother. Your mother thanks you for dinner and asks you to remember her like she was. “Please don’t remember me like the old fragile lady. My legs were hurting and I could not eat. That wasn’t me.”
- She also thanks you for taking good care of her.
Janne was an elegant girl who had spiritual ideas.
- *Yes that is true.*
 - There is an object in your living room which used to belong to Janne – something about “a funny toy” or something about “funny hair.”
 - *Yes, we have Janne’s old cabbage patch doll sitting in our living room.*
 - Who in your family wants to visit Australia?
 - *My husband would like to visit Australia because he lived there when he was young.*
 - Was Janne on a diet before she died?
 - *Yes she was.*
 - There is a lot of humor in Janne, she says: “You have given up.”
- Ilse laughs.
- Who had the prettiest funeral service?
 - *Janne did.*
 - Who had the white funeral service then?
 - *My mother did.*
 - Your mother and Janne are having a bit of a laugh about it. Janne had red roses and your mother had white roses.
 - *Yes that is correct.*
 - Who is Súsanna?
 - *It could be a girl in the spirit world but we don’t know her. We correspond with her parents.*
 - Please tell her parents that she came through and said: “Thank you.” Because they wouldn’t visit a medium themselves.
 - *No, possibly they wouldn’t, but I am sure the greeting will bring joy to them.*
 - She had a tragic death. Some kind of accident, I can feel the blow.
 - *Yes.*
 - Súsanna says: “Please tell Mum and Dad that I’m okay.”
 - *We will do that.*
 - She was youngster – a teenager?
 - *Yes.*
 - Did a car hit her because I can feel the blow?
 - *Yes.*
 - Was Súsanna driving a car herself?

- *No, I believe it was something about an ex-boyfriend who was jealous and ran her over. **
- I feel that he was intoxicated or on drugs or something like that. It makes sense out of something I told your husband earlier, that she knew the man who ran her over. Please let her parents know that she came through and that she sends them her love.
- *We will do that.*

* Susanna was driving her own car when she was hit by her ex-boyfriend.

- Who is Mikkel?
- *It might be a young man from the spiritual world. His parents are coming to visit us tomorrow.*
- Mikkel ask that you bring a greeting to his parents.
- We will do that.

Readers' Stories

In the printed version of the book, we urged readers to send us an e-mail if they had had inexplicable experiences in connection with death.

We are grateful for the contributions that we have received and quote some excerpts from them here:

Mikkel

In the spring of 2000, we lost our 21 year-old son Mikkel in a traffic accident.

I had the first "odd" experience about two weeks before Mikkel's death. I had an extremely vivid dream about our eldest son dying, and I woke up with a start and felt terrible – so terrible that I was unable to tell my husband about the dream in detail.

All that my husband could get out of me was that it had something to do with the children. I don't normally suffer from nightmares and have never previously had such dreams. I put the dream out of mind and didn't give it another thought until my husband reminded me of it after Mikkel's death.

Some days before the accident, the battery in my alarm clock slowly began to go flat, and the same thing happened to the battery in the bathroom scales; batteries which normally last for years. The day after Mikkel's death, the car battery was flat – before that there had been no signs of there being anything wrong with it.

After about 10 days, we started going to work again part-time. A couple of my husband's colleagues told him about some signs that they had received from deceased family members, which one night made him ask Mikkel for a sign of he still being around. At midnight – after we had gone to bed – the phone rang. There was no one at the other end. This happened a total of 10 times over a period of about 1½ hours, until we said out loud what we both were thinking; that it was Mikkel who was making the phone ring in order to tell us that he was nearby.

When we told our priest about these incidents he was not at all surprised – he'd heard it before!

For some time after that we both heard the usual noises coming from the bathroom indicating that Mikkel had come home, and was getting ready for bed. We didn't tell each other about this for some time though – one doesn't want to appear to be too "overwrought", and perhaps it might just be a case of wishful thinking, etc.

Three months after Mikkel's death, we went on holiday to Scotland. Not because we really felt like it, but because we thought that getting away for a while and thinking of other things would do us good. But as you yourselves have probably found out, one

cannot think of anything else. We spent a lot of time together, and what is there to talk about if not the most important thing of all – Mikkel's life and death.

One night I had a dream in which Mikkel lay lifeless on a bed. Everyone said that he was dead, but I was convinced that it was only a question of calling out long and loudly enough for him to wake up. I called and called, and in the end I succeeded! He was somewhat dazed for a while and difficult to get in contact with. However, little by little he became so well that I took him out for a walk along a road. I told him that he had been dead for three months, and I asked him urgently to promise me that he would not die again. He didn't give me a direct reply but said: "But Mum, I will always be with you". Shortly after, we came to a wall with windows in. Suddenly he jumped up onto a windowsill and down onto the other side, where he hit his head hard on some stones. It bled profusely, but he came up to me again quickly and said: "Look Mum, nothing happens!"

My husband has also had several dreams, among others this one: He was on his way to a remotely situated house, which was difficult to reach. His bicycle had a puncture, and he was going up to a flat, where there was light and Mikkel was waiting for him.

It was very hard for him to get there as it was difficult to enter the house, because the inhabitants of the house were preventing him. They were very nice people who constantly wanted to show him what they had done to the house. My husband couldn't get past them and up to Mikkel, who was waiting for him in the flat. In the dream he knew very well that Mikkel was dead.

My husband's interpretation of the dream was that Mikkel is waiting for him, but that he must pass a lot of obstacles before they can meet.

Another dream is about my husband and I riding each our own motorbike, with a child in the back seat. To begin with the child was sitting behind me and later behind my husband. We took the highway. We didn't drive fast, and it went well. Sometimes we passed by some other road users. Suddenly, the highway ended and we came to a very narrow single-track road with many road users going the other way, so that it was almost impossible for us to continue. We so wanted to get back to the highway, but it was impossible. We had almost come to a complete standstill, and we couldn't go back. After we'd left the highway, my husband could no longer sense the child in the backseat, so it is only he and I that meet the obstacles.

Furthermore, my husband has had a very lovely, almost psychedelic, dream in which he felt that his head exploded in lots of colors. He was together with Mikkel and talked to him and felt that he himself was also dead.

We have realized that there are very different kinds of dreams. You aren't in doubt when a dream really wants to tell you something!

Shortly after Mikkel's death, some close friends of ours sat in their sitting room with the doors open to the hall and the garden. Suddenly a great tit came flying in through the hall and directly into the sitting room, where it settled down on the coffee table and sat looking at them. The bird knew its way – although it is somewhat difficult to get into the sitting room – it did not flutter about and was not at all afraid. The man took the bird in

his hand and carried it out to a slope in the garden where he fed it water from a saucer. They sat down beside the bird, which stayed for a while and looked from one to the other, before it flew off again.

I think this is quite a remarkable story, for a great tit is certainly no tame bird. I think that Mikkel's soul, for a while, inhabited the bird and visited some friends who were close to him.

Mikkel's friends have been (and are) fantastic. They come and tell us about their experiences and dreams.

One of his friends has for many years had out-of-body experiences. Previously she felt bad about these experiences, as she was afraid that she would not return. Some time after Mikkel's death, she felt an "attack" coming on. She lay down on her bed and checked her watch, so that she later on, would be able to see how long she had been gone. She floated up into a fantastic light, where she met Mikkel, and he looked at her with a soft smile. She didn't doubt that he was having a wonderful time. When she returned to her body, she looked at her watch again and saw that she had been gone for 16 minutes. For the first time, she hadn't been afraid during one of her out-of-body experiences but had had an incredibly peaceful experience.

Another friend, L, who stayed with her boyfriend on the night of the accident, woke up at 2 am, because she heard the phone ringing and asked her boyfriend to answer it. But he couldn't hear it ringing! An hour later, the phone rang again, and it was L's mother phoning to tell them that they had just had a call from the hospital about the accident, in which also L's brother was involved. L. was not at all surprised – she already "knew" that the accident had happened at exactly 2 a.m., when she had heard the phone ringing the first time.

L. has told of several dreams, in which she has "talked" to Mikkel. For example, she met him in a dream where Mikkel and some other friends were seeing her home. When she got home, Mikkel insisted on following her in, which she didn't like because she knew that he was going to talk to her about her life. She started making fun and asked feverishly, if he remembered the time when Mikkel answered yes, he remembered, and they had had a lot of fun, but now it was time for her to take her life more seriously and think about her future.

Since then she has worked very determinedly with her law studies (which she might have done anyway).

A third friend had the following dream a few months ago, which she sent us per e-mail:

"This summer, when I was in France, I had a dream. There were a lot of smiling faces/shadows, and Mikkel was there as the main character. I was filled with love, with an extreme strength, and everyone was so happy. Mikkel said that he loved me and smiled; another shadow or more said a name "Sehera/Seneca" or the like. It was difficult to hear, but I woke up and quickly wrote it down. Since then the dream has been at the back of my head, and I have not given it much thought, but have enjoyed the feeling it gave me.

A couple of weeks ago I felt that I *had* to find out, what that name was. I looked it up in all my dictionaries, but something was still missing. I started looking through my general books, and "Sophie's World" leapt to the eye, and would you believe that there was a philosopher named Seneca, who lived from 4 BC to 65 AD.

I quote: The stoic Seneca said, "Man is holy to man". Furthermore, the stoic stressed that all natural processes, such as illness and death, follow the inviolable laws of nature. Thus man has to reconcile himself to his fate. Nothing happens by chance, they think. Everything happens out of necessity, and so it does not help to complain, when fate knocks on the door. Just as man must meet life's happy circumstance with peace of mind.

I had not previously heard about Seneca, but one of my first reactions after Mikkel's death was that there had to be a reason why it happened.

Since my youth, I have been interested in and read books about death, among others Raymond A. Moody. I have always been convinced that the "supernatural" was just part of the natural.

My husband on the other hand – just like Kjeld – has always been extremely skeptical towards everything that could not be measured and weighed. It simply did not interest him. However, luckily all this changed in one stroke after the nightly phone calls a couple of weeks after Mikkel's death. Luckily, because if we hadn't had the same ideas about something so fundamental, then I think that each of us would have been very lonely in our grief.

It struck both my husband and I that there are many similarities between your situation and ours. Like Janne, Mikkel was an exceptionally lovely person; he never spoke badly about anyone, was almost always happy and had a great sense of humor. Our experience with the "help" that is provided at the hospital corresponds somewhat to your own.

Fortunately, we have also been so lucky that our (and Mikkel's) friends and family have been fantastically considerate towards us. We have also discovered that we don't at all care about what people think, when we say that we are convinced that there is life after death, and that we will meet Mikkel again, though in reality more people than expected are quite open and ready to talk about it.

For the past week, my husband has complained that his wristwatch was 10 minutes slow every day, and suddenly one day it was 1½ hours behind. One day when we were going into town, we took out the watch to bring it to the watchmaker. And suddenly the time was absolutely right, although he hadn't set it for the past couple of days – also the date was correct, so it had not just lost 12 or 24 hours. We had no doubt then, that is was a greeting from Mikkel.

Nikolaj

Y.J. lost her son, Nikolaj, on 3rd November 2001, just one week after having celebrated his 25th birthday.

At that point in his life, Nikolaj had started drug-abusing with hash and pills. When he asked for help, his mother got him enrolled in a Minnesota programme. During the treatment, he was given methadone, because he was deeply depressed after having been abandoned by his girlfriend. Three days after the methadone treatment had been initiated, Nikolaj was found dead. The Institute of Forensic Medicine stated the cause of death to be an overdose of methadone.

How it happened has never been discovered.

His mother's story:

Three to four days after Nikolaj's death, I was sitting in the dining room when I heard a loud crash from my study. I went in to see what had happened. It turned out that the front panel on Nikolaj's piano (under the keyboard) had fallen off. That in itself was strange as the piano had been sitting there for at least 15 years, and this had never happened before.

Next to the piano, there were three manuscript holders with various sheets of music, and on top of them there was a basket with a bunch of papers, among them words of songs with chords that he had downloaded from the internet. All of it had fallen from the panel and had been dispersed around the piano. I picked it all up, but later discovered that two sheets had fallen all the way to the other end of the room, which was about four to five meters away. These turned out to be two songs by Neil Young: "Old Man" and "Through My Sails".

(In order to clarify the message from Nikolaj, the Neil Young songs are shown on pages 84).

We both loved Neil Young's music. Whenever Nikolaj came home, we listened to the music together, and each time Nikolaj would play some of his songs on the guitar or the piano. He especially loved playing "Love is a Rose", and then he knew, and expected, that I would come over and give him a hug. By and large, we had the same taste in music, but Neil Young was our favorite.

I had another experience one morning, when I woke up very suddenly. I had been lying on my side, but turned onto my back and looked up. I saw a strange "cloud". It was a strange, flickering cloud, which reminded me of the flickering one might see above the asphalt on a hot summer's day. Suddenly, Nikolaj's head appeared inside the cloud, very clearly.

He looked at me, smiled his lovely smile, and then he was gone again. It was as if he wanted to say that he was all right. It was not something I had dreamt.

Last summer I scanned a really good photo of Nikolaj onto the computer. Some time ago, Nikolaj's grandmother came to visit. She had just started taking a computer course. She does not own a computer herself and had never been near one, before she started the course, so she wanted to practice on mine.

We agreed that she should begin by playing patience in order to practice using the mouse. I explained to her how she was to press “start”, then “programs” and then “tools”. When she pressed "tools", the photo of Nikolaj appeared. It covered the whole screen, and he just sat there smiling. She did not get any practice that day, and we could not bring ourselves to remove the photo. If I had wanted to find the photo, I would have had to enter some quite different programs and find the file name. We were both very touched by the episode.

Some time ago, the bulb in the lamp above my coffee table sprung. I was sitting watching TV, and therefore wanted to wait till later before changing the bulb. When I had finished watching TV, the bulb came on again. I thought that it had probably not been put in properly, but that was not the case. I didn't give it another thought until a couple of days later, when the bulb above my dining table started flashing. I checked if this bulb was loose, but also this one had been screwed in tightly. This repeated itself several times over the next days.

The Neil Young songs:

OLD MAN

Old man look at my life, I'm a lot like you.
Old man look at my life - twenty-four and there's so much more.
Live alone in a paradise that makes me think of two.
Love lost, such a cost.
Give me things that don't get lost.
Like a coin that won't get tossed,
Rolling home to you.

Old man take a look at my life, I'm a lot like you.
I need someone to love me the whole day through.
Ah, one look in my eyes, and you can tell it's true.

Lullaby's, look in your eyes,
Run around the same old town.
Doesn't mean that much to me to mean that much to you.
I've been first and last,
Look at how the times go past.
But I'm all alone at last,
Rolling home to you.

THROUGH MY SAILS

Still glaring from the city lights
Into paradise I soared
Unable to come down
For reasons I'd ignored

Total confusion, disillusion
New things I'm knowing

I'm standing on the shoreline
It's so fine out there
Leaving with the wind blowing
But love takes care

Know me, know me
Show me, show me
New things I'm knowing

Wind blowing through my sails
It feels like I'm gone
Leaving with the wind blowing
Through my sails.

Jesper

Jesper was 22 years old when he was killed in a traffic accident in 2000.

His mother's story:

When he graduated, Jesper got a small gold-peaked student's cap. I had stuck the peak down into the frame of his photo.

Jesper liked the group "U2" very much. One Sunday, when his sister sat in the living room listening to U2, she suddenly cried: "Mum, Mum, hurry". It turned out that the cap had fallen from the photo under the coffee table, which is about two to three meters away. This happened twice when a certain track was played. I think that it was Jesper who was saying: "How good it is to hear my music again".

One evening, my husband, our daughter and I had driven down to the harbor to buy ice cream. We drove very slowly alongside the water enjoying our ice creams. The car radio was off, and the three of us nearly dropped our ice creams, when it suddenly started playing one of the songs that Jesper liked very much.

One Saturday morning when my husband had just switched on the coffee machine and was busy making a cheese sandwich, he heard a thud. When he turned around, he saw that the coffee machine had been unplugged and that the flex was lying on the table.

Often I have a feeling that someone is stroking my hair.

Shortly after Jesper's death, I had the same dream three times. Jesper was standing right in front of me smiling. He said, "Mum, I am fine. I have come home now."

During Easter, I went to see an English medium. One of the first things she said was, "Your son says that he is fine and that he has come home". I was puzzled as it was exactly the same thing he had told me in my dreams.

In late summer, I had bought a new car, but had not yet found out how to set the clock on the dashboard. Therefore the clock hadn't been set after the change from Summer Time to Winter Time.

Every two weeks, I go to a meditation session together with a friend. When I picked her up, I told her about the problem with the clock that had not yet been set back an hour. When we returned home in the evening, I looked at the car clock, which read 10.15 pm and said, "It finished early today, didn't it?" "No", answered my friend, "it's 10.15."

"That's impossible", I answered; "I told you that I hadn't set the clock back. It is an hour ahead". She looked at her own watch, which read 10.15 pm.

"That's strange", I thought. The clock showed the right time until the following Saturday when I went to the cemetery. When I left the cemetery, the clock was again one hour ahead. This lasted till Monday evening, when I once again went to the cemetery. When I drove home, the clock again showed the right time, and it has ever since.

Little Mikkel

In 1986, I lost my little boy, Mikkel, who was killed by a drunken driver – so I must say that your description of the sorrow, and how you dealt with it, is exactly as I experienced it.

I can tell you that that part of our hearts, which was torn away, will never come back – the grief stays. On the day of anniversary, at Christmas and at birthdays the grief will always come back. I do not mean this in a negative sense as one learns to live with it – it is part of one's life, which is meant to be there.

Like you, I have become absorbed with the spiritual – which is probably natural, when one is looking for answers – I have also had several strange experiences after Mikkel's death. The first one was in connection with Christmas, about two months after I lost my boy. My husband, my daughter, who is our eldest child, and I, went, as usual, to church on Christmas Eve. Soon after we had sat down in church, about 25 meters from the door, I grew cold as ice – I turned around to see if anyone had opened the door, but there was no-one – my lap stayed cold as ice for the rest of the sermon – my own interpretation of this incident is that my little boy Mikkel was with me.

Later in 1987, I was pregnant again – one night when I had gone to bed, the bedroom was suddenly lit by a pleasant, soft red light, and a little girl sat and looked at me. I did not understand what she was saying, but her presence calmed me completely, and suddenly she was gone again. I have often wondered who she was, and a couple of years ago in connection with a visit to a clairvoyant, I asked about it. I was told that it was an angel – this angel was present in connection with my unborn child receiving his/her soul, and she was to monitor that this happened the way it should.

Periodically, there is some activity going on in my home – in the kitchen we have three interconnected lamps and one of these is sometimes "played with"; it has been examined in detail to ensure that there is nothing wrong with the lamp.

Some evenings, we talk – in the family – quite a lot about spiritual matters and about the experiences that I/we have had over the years – this usually results in the lamp going crazy. A clairvoyant, who has been to my house, told me that it is Mikkel (my son) who plays with the light.

Several times our TV has suddenly been switched off. At the beginning we thought that it was because it was an old TV – but after we got a new one, it also happens. I often say, "Hi Mikkel".

Actually, I had my very first experience when I was five or six years old. It happened one night after I had been put to bed. At the time, we lived in a flat on the second floor. Suddenly I saw a white figure walking past my window. It frightened me a lot at the time. Something very strange in this respect is that my, now grown-up, daughter had a similar experience two days before Mikkel was killed!!!

At that time, she had just turned seven. She was at the neighbor's playing. It was dark when she walked the few steps back home. She came rushing through the door very pale from fright and told me that she had seen a white figure out in front of Mikkel's window – it looked like a ghost.

We have often discussed what it really was she saw, and one might guess at many different things.

Experiencing strange things is not new to me. My mother and one of my brothers have often had various experiences. In the case of my mother, I can say that she always knew if one of us children met with an accident before she was officially told, just as she knew that Mikkel had been brought to hospital on 17th October 1986. My brother also knew that something was wrong – only he did not know what it was or who was involved.

When I was about to give birth to my youngest child, Pelle – now a teenager, things went wrong. My womb burst, and both Pelle and I nearly died. The only thing that I remember quite clearly, when I was taken to the operating theatre, was that I did not want to live if my child did not survive. I simply could not cope with losing another child.

It is very rare that both mother and child survive an incident like this one. Therefore Pelle and I were almost put on show (not meant in a negative sense) for all the doctors at the hospital to see. We were really spoiled with a single room, etc. for almost a month, before we were sent home.

After the ordeal that Pelle had gone through (he was in fact dead when he was born), they wanted to scan his brain to see if anything had been destroyed due to the lack of oxygen. It goes without saying that many thoughts run through one's head while one is waiting for the result.

The day before the scanning, I experienced in the afternoon (during the noon nap) that a woman came in and took Pelle in her arms. She spoke to him and touched his head softly. I was unable to get in touch with her, and I had not previously seen this woman at the hospital. I did not see her again later either. Who she was, what she came for, I do not know. I was just so terribly afraid that she would take my child away from me. This episode has also often given rise to many thoughts and much guesswork.

Christina

Our daughter Christina died of cancer at the age of 32. She was an only child and like Janne a beautiful girl.

Christina was born in 1970.

The same year that Christina was born, we got a small black dog, which we named "Vaks". He was a magnificent, healthy and happy little guy, a mixture of a poodle and a cocker.

Vaks was especially fond of digging his teeth into Christina's Lego, chewing the uppers of our shoes and lots of other mischief.

We had Vaks for almost 16 years. He was a very affectionate dog, and therefore it was a great loss when he died, not least for Christina.

Some months after his death, I woke up one night feeling a light touch by Vaks's nose to the back of my left hand. I sat up, and there I saw Vaks standing in the middle of the floor looking at me. I reached out to touch him, but his figure faded away.

Whether or not this was just a vivid dream, I do not know, but it is still completely clear in my mind. It was a lovely experience.

One day long ago, when Christina was about 5 or 6 years old, the three of us were going to the local library; it was a very windy day, and Christina was sitting in the back seat of our car, a small Fiat 127.

When I tried to open the right front door, it stuck, and no matter how much I pushed to get out, it did not open. In the end I gave up and crawled out through the left door together with Christina.

We had just got out when a large, heavy branch of a tree fell down on the right front door making a large dent.

Neither before nor after, has the door been difficult to open.

Loosing our beloved daughter was the worst thing that has ever happened to us. At Christmas in 2001, I woke up one night after a terrible dream, which about eight months later became harsh reality.

I dreamt that our lovely girl passed away. Why I had that nightmare, I do not know. I only told a colleague whom I really trust. At that time, Christina had not been diagnosed with any disease.

Later I learned that she had been in for a health check before Christmas and would only be given the result after Christmas. She wanted to spare us any worries, but my subconscious must, in some way, have picked up that something was wrong. After New Year, our daughter was diagnosed with cancer. She had been very tired for a long time; a fatigue that we ascribed to the tough job it is to be a mother of two small, active boys. Thomas, the younger, was nine months at the time, and Anders just over three years.

Christina had two operations, but neither radio- nor chemotherapy had any effect; it was a very aggressive kind of cancer. It has been a terrible year with an indescribably great loss, but also a year in which we have spent a lot of time together with our grandchildren.

I sat with her the day she died and among other things I read aloud to her from a book. A few hours before she passed away she called her grandfather in her sleep, very faintly, with the question: "Why don't we fly now?"

It gave me comfort in this, our life's nightmare that my father in some way was with her. During Christina's illness I had sometimes asked him in my head if he could help her. My sister had done the same. The book I had been reading from was a book that I had borrowed "by chance" from friends, and the title was remarkably enough "Flight into freedom".

Súsanna

Súsanna was killed in a traffic accident on the Faeroe Islands at the age of 19. Here Súsanna's mother tells about dreams, etc. that she had after Súsanna's death:

I was in my childhood home in another village. I was standing by the sitting room window looking down the road. Suddenly I saw some young people with student's caps on their heads; all the girls wore long white dresses. They formed a long chain and held each other's hands while walking down the road singing. Suddenly one of them lifts her arm and waves at me. Then I see that it is Súsanna. I knock on the windowpane and wave at her to get her to come closer. She came and I went outside to meet her. We gave each other a big hug and stood like that for a long time. Then I stepped back and looked at her. I asked: "Is that your confirmation dress that you are wearing?"

"No, Mum, it isn't", she replied.

I asked her how the exams had gone and she replied that everything had gone as well as it could in every way. She was so unspeakably happy.

It must have been her intention that I should see her at her graduation day. That is not how it went in reality. Another explanation might be that she wanted to remind us of the great white hosts of Heaven. It was a fantastic sight.

At the same time I saw – not far from the place where we stood – some of our old neighbors standing talking. They had all been dead for years.

I see it as a lovely greeting from the other side.

When I woke up, I was very touched, but also very happy to have been given the opportunity to see Súsanna close by. I had wished for that many times.

In another dream, Súsanna was out on the town. I was terrified because she had not yet come home. Suddenly I heard the front door slam and I ran into the hall; there she was. I said to her, "Where have you been; I was so terribly worried about you". She replied, "But Mum, there is no need to worry because I will always come back."

And one might say that Súsanna has kept her promise.

It often happens that we see small grains of gold both inside and outside our home. One can only see them when the light shines on them from a certain direction, and then they twinkle like small stars. The largest ones are almost as large as the nail of a little finger and the smallest the size of a pinhead. We have noticed that shortly after we have been really sad – when we have felt hurt or lonely – we have suddenly seen these small grains of gold, and we take them as warm greetings.

One might then ask where these stars come from?

We think that they are greetings and comfort sent from above.

We have been told that others have also experienced this phenomenon with the grains of gold.

Appendix

"A Guided Experience" is rendered with the permission of Graham Bishop.

Even though "A Guided Experience" is normally without any risk, we draw your attention to the fact that the use of this exercise is without any responsibility to the authors.

A Guided Experience

(Copyright Graham Bishop)

Requirement: 2 persons (One Subject, one Guide)
Subject sits relaxed in a chair and the guide speaks the following words in a calm and monotone voice.

I ask you to allow yourself the full freedom of this experience, to trust and follow my direction, and come with me on a journey to love.

Pause 2 seconds

Begin by closing your eyes and relaxing; take two or three very deep breaths.

Pause for breaths

As you listen to my voice all other sounds will only make you concentrate more and more on my words, all other noises or sounds will take you deeper and deeper into the experience and journey.

Pause 2 seconds

Now, within your own thoughts, create a picture of us both standing together on an open, raised terrace, looking out over a very beautiful garden.

Pause 5 seconds

Just in front of us there are five wide steps, which lead down to the beautiful soft, green lawn

Pause 5 seconds

In a moment we are going to go down these steps into the garden, and I will count each step as we go...

As we go down each step you take one very deep breath, and as you breathe out... you become more and more deeply relaxed, more and more deeply focused into the garden

Pause 5 seconds

Now, picture us standing at the top of the five steps... as soon as you have this thought in your mind gently lift your right hand and put it back down.

Wait for hand lift...(if hand does not lift after 15-20 seconds, repeat last instruction once more - if still no reactions continue reading).

FIVE stepping down the top step now. d-e-e-p .. d-e-e-p .. breath .. d-e-e-p-l-y
r-e-l-a-x-e-d .. F-e-e-l-i-n-g happy, f-e-e-l-i-n-g calm

Pause 5 seconds

FOUR stepping down the next step now.. d-e-e-p .. d-e-e-p .. breath .. v-e-r-y
d-e-e-p-l-y r-e-l-a-x-e-d, f-e-e-l-i-n-g safe, f-e-e-l-i-n-g secure.. going
d-e-e-p-e-r and d-e-e-p-e-r now

Pause 5 seconds

THREE stepping down another step now.. d-e-e-p .. d-e-e-p .. breath .. m-o-r-e
and m-o-r-e d-e-e-p-l-y r-e-l-a-x-e-d .. Letting go m-o-r-e and m-o-r-e
now

Pause 5 seconds

TWO moving deeper now as your take another step.. d-e-e-p .. d-e-e-p .. breath ..
Feeling so very, very light.. As light as a feather now

Pause 5 seconds

ONE finally taking the last step now.. You let your breath find its own rhythm
now.. And you step out onto the soft green grass, feeling light and feeling
free

Pause 20 seconds

You stand there looking around the garden, and just a little way in front of you, you see a wooden bench.

You slowly walk across the grass towards that bench feeling peaceful and calm.

Pause 5 seconds

You feel lighter and lighter as you move closer and closer to the bench
Pause 5 seconds

You arrive at the bench now and sit down
Pause 10 seconds

As you sit there you become aware that someone is sitting next to you...
Pause 2 seconds

You turn and come face to face with someone that you know, who has passed into the realms beyond, the spirit world. Welcome them, share with them, feel the closeness of their presence. Speak with them, hug them, and take this opportunity to be free.
Pause 2 seconds

Now, just sit alone with them for a while and enjoy the experience, I will return for you later
Pause for 3-5 minutes

It is time to continue now; it is time for you to say good-bye to the person who joined you. Thank them for sharing, smile and tell them that, one day, you will return with openness and love to share with them again. Now you slowly stand up, look around and we begin walking back across the grass toward the steps that we came down earlier.
Pause 5 seconds

We are moving closer and closer to the steps and you feel full of life and very, very happy.
Pause 5 seconds

Picture us standing at the bottom of the steps now, and when you have that picture within your mind, lift your left hand.

Wait for hand lift...(if hand does not lift after 20-30 seconds, repeat last instruction).

I will count as we climb the steps now...
Pause 2 seconds

ONE you take your first step.... feeling happy and full of energy
Pause 2 seconds

TWO as you take the second step.... becoming aware of your breathing now,
feeling good, feeling well

Pause 2 seconds

THREE as you take the third step.... becoming aware of your body now... feeling slightly heavy and still very, very happy

Pause 2 seconds

FOUR you take the fourth step now... soon back now... feeling alive, feeling great

Pause 2 seconds

FIVE the fifth and last step now... slowly and gently you open your eyes and return now

Pause 10 seconds

Slowly and gently, open your eyes and return now (repeat until they are back)

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This book is dedicated to the memory of:

Janne,

Mikkøl,

Nikolaj,

Jesper,

Little Mikkøl,

Christina,

and

Súsanna

Thanks all for the care and support you have given us.

A special thank you to our families and friends, Janne's friends, our priest and our colleagues.

Thanks to Graham Bishop for the permission to render "A Guided Experience".

Thanks to Dea's mother, Lis for the permission to bring excerpts from a tape-recording.

Thanks to Astrologihuset (The House of Astrology) in Copenhagen for the permission to render Janne's horoscope.

Thanks to everyone who wrote to us after the publishing of the printed version of the book, and for your permission to render your own experiences in this edition.

Books of Interest

Near death experiences:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Closer to the Light | - Melvin Morse |
| Embraced by the Light | - Betty J. Eadie |
| Life after Life and Reflections on Life after Life | - Raymond A. Moody |
| Return from Tomorrow | - George G. Ritchie |
| The Near Death Experience | - Lee Bailey & J. Yates |
| You Cannot Die | - Ian Currie |

Out of body experiences:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Adventures beyond the Body | - William Buhlman |
| Far Journeys | - Robert Monroe |
| Journeys out of the Body | - Robert Monroe |
| Soul Traveler | - Albert Taylor |

Other books:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| Bag tid og rum - Norwegian edition (Beyond Time and Space) | - Erik Dammann |
| Journey of Souls | - Michel Newton |
| Many Lives, many Masters | - Dr Brian Weiss |
| Mutant Message Down Under | - Marlo Morgan |
| Out on a Limb | - Shirley MacLaine |
| Sophie's World | - Jostein Gaarder |
| Talking to Heaven | - James Van Praagh |
| The Celestine Prophecy | - James Redfield |
| The Clan of the Cave Bear | - Jean M. Auel |

A Thought:

- Do you believe in God?
- Yes, I believe in God.
- What do you think God is?
- I think that God is love. God is the light. God is the one that created the DNA-molecule, the beautiful scented flowers, the birds that sing, the fish in the oceans, the leaves on our trees.
God is the true artist – the great intelligence.
God is what we cannot explain and do not understand.
God is the creator of all things – that is what I believe.
- What do you believe?