

*Janice Stork candidly shares memorable true stories about extraordinary people, pets, and places. Through heartfelt losses, including two sons, she shares firsthand signs of life after death. The presence of Swami Kriyananda and Paramhansa Yogananda further confirmed the soul never dies.*

**Memories in a Box**  
**Signs of Life After Death**

by Janice A. Stork

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Memories in a Box

# Signs of Life After Death



Janice A. Stork

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ISBN: 978-1-64438-374-2

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Printed on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.  
2018

Cover design by Todd Engel

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Stork, Janice A.

Memories in a Box by Janice A. Stork

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT / Afterlife & Reincarnation|

PHILOSOPHY / Religious

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018913976

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## Chapter 2

### Mother's Silence Teaches Me

“Max,” I called out. “Food.”

Max came running down the hall with Kiera, my black streetwise female cat, and Mango, my orange and white male fat cat.

“So, are you all hungry?” I asked, looking down at all my four-legged pets.

“Meow, meow, meow,” answered Kiera and Mango in unison.

I fed my four-legged babies and headed to the back door calling out, “Alexa, play *After the Storm* Native American music.”

Music coming through a speaker in the garage sounded like dual flutes serenading each other in the wind. I sat down on the gray rug next to the wood box left there from the day before. I opened the box’s lid and saw countless pictures. Right away, I could see that tossing the contents of this box wasn’t going to be as easy as it was when I cleaned out the storage containers the day before

I flipped over a picture facing down to see my mother smiling back at me. Her eyes were emerald green and her auburn hair hung down past her shoulders. She was wearing a flower printed blouse under blue overalls. She looked like she was in her late twenties.

As a young girl, I followed my mother everywhere she went. I would watch her can food from the crops we grew on our farm, or grade eggs (clean them up) after the chickens laid them. One of those memories was when I watched my mother painting the outside of our grading house. It was built so she had a place to buff the eggs. The windows of the building didn't have any glass. Instead, the openings were covered with chicken wire. While my mother painted, I suddenly noticed something moving in and out of the loops of wire and it had wet white paint on it which seemed to annoy it.

“Snake! Snake! Snake!” I screeched loudly, as I ran down into our canyon.

I have memories of my mother sewing clothes for my dolls. One Christmas, she stole one of my dolls and let me be think I had lost her, which devastated me because I didn't have any friends near our fourteen-acre ranch. My doll was my best friend. However, when Christmas came, I opened a large present that had my doll in it with brand new clothes my mother made for her. My mother was instantly forgiven for taking my baby, and suddenly, Mom became my hero.

If I gazed at the picture of my mother through my eyes as a young woman, I would be seeing something different. Back then, she would have divorced my father and remarried several times. During those years, I saw

my mother as someone damaged from the poverty she experienced during the Great Depression. She was so scarred from having to wear her brother's boots to her graduation and having to wear hand-me-down clothes, that as an adult, she would have to own at least ten pairs of shoes, countless fine clothes, and have cases of food stored on shelves in the garage in the years that followed.

For her to feel accepted by other women, my mother had to belong to the PTA, Women's Club, Eastern Star, and numerous other social clubs. And most of the time, she had to be president of the club, even if she didn't know what she was doing; it was the title that mattered.

The aftermath of my mother's poverty affected me directly. At age fourteen I was told to wear high heels, learn to put on makeup, and I couldn't leave the house until my hair was perfectly coifed. I also had to take music lessons and play in an accordion band with my siblings before all my mother's social clubs.

Still gazing down in a half trance from the sound of flutes playing in the background, I was aware I knew many secrets about my mother my brother didn't even know. My aunt told me my mother had been raped by her father before he fled their ranch, leaving my grandmother alone to take care of her four girls during the Depression. I reasoned this was probably what caused my mom to play games with the men she dated or eventually married. Some of the games were dangerous.

My mother assumed an air of innocence when she dated a man. She portrayed herself as the perfect



Christian woman, and she had a picture of Jesus on the wall of her home to prove it. I didn't see her that way. Instead, I saw a woman going through singles ads between husbands, looking for the right man to snag that would take care of her. The more she told her prey how wonderful they were and how she had never eaten a hamburger (when they bought her one for the first time), the more they loved the beautiful naive woman they were dating. Then, after her husbands married her, she changed, and so did their marriages. Suddenly, nothing ever satisfied her. And just as suddenly, she wasn't getting enough attention and wanted a divorce. My mother's behavior caused me to stay single for most of my life.

However, the mother I saw in the picture now through the eyes of the crone I had become, I could finally make peace with her. She sacrificed a lot making clothes for me to wear to school. She made sure I had music lessons and taught me how to dress and fit in when I found myself in social circles. This was an important asset when I later went to work for the California Legislature.

Fresh memories flashed through my mind of the years before she died. My mother had Alzheimer's. It became noticeable when she would watch the same movie over and over. She would call me to say she needed to go to the grocery store to buy shampoo. When I took her home after we went shopping, I would notice she had four bottles of shampoo in the bathroom. I thought it was odd for her to call me saying she needed something she didn't. Then, one day I decided to go

over to her mobile home and clean it while she was visiting some friends in the mobile home park. It was worse than I ever expected. There were three or four duplicates of everything in the pantry. Eggs in a carton in the refrigerator had grown black hair on them from being so old, and all the milk was spoiled.

I decided to take my mother to the University of Davis Hospital, in Davis, California, for a diagnosis and I was told she had Alzheimer's. The saddest thing of all was that I never got to say goodbye to my mother while she was alive. By the time she was diagnosed she barely recognized me. And it seemed too much of a coincidence that I was the one who transcribed the hearing the Assembly Health Committee had done on Alzheimer's.

The title of the report was, "Locked in the Corridors of their Mind." Transcribing hearings never made me feel as sad as it did when I listened to people talk about their loved ones. One woman said she caught her father walk out of the house, fully dressed and wearing a heavy coat, into 105-degree temperatures. Another man said he was at the Navy Hospital in San Diego, California. He left his wife sitting on a bus bench while he went to get his car a half block away. Looking back to check on her, he watched his wife get into a car with a man and drive away down the road.

It was when my mom could no longer speak that my lessons in communicating with another soul began. One day I was feeding my mother her lunch in the care facility where she lived. When she was finished, and her dinner removed, she propped up her head with her two

hands, arms bent, resting on the table. My heart felt it was telling me to pay attention. I looked into her dull eyes and somehow knew she was trying to tell me she was ready for the car to come from another dimension and take her life.

My visits to the care facility were finetuning my mind to sense my surroundings. I remember sitting in a chair in a hallway while I waited for a nurse to finish changing my mother's urine-soaked diaper. I saw something I will never forget. A man walked by and reached down to help push a woman in a wheelchair. There was an old woman with a cane walking down the hall and she bypassed a man headed in her direction. Soul was sensing soul because these people all had Alzheimer's. The nurse later told me they must watch out for any male patient trying to help a woman because they could hurt them without realizing it by pushing them too hard or by offering a hand for support but not realizing they were no longer strong enough to hold them up.

One night, when my mom was rushed to the hospital and diagnosed with blood poisoning, an ambulance driver took me aside.

"You know, you really don't have to do this," he said softly.

"Do what?" I asked, with a puzzled look.

"Heroics," he replied.

"I don't understand?" I said.

"When your mother was admitted into the care facility you filled out papers saying to take your mom to the hospital and try to save her if she got sick," he said.

“Aren’t you supposed to help a patient when they are sick?” I asked, with a puzzled look on my face.

“She’s not there. You are trying to save what is no longer there,” he said softly, as he walked away.

The following day, I called my mother’s doctor and tearfully talked to his nurse for thirty minutes. She explained the documents I signed related to my mother and what they meant when it comes to treatment for her in the care facility.

Over and over she tried to calm me down. My mother was alive, and I didn’t understand why she should not be treated. The word “heroics” was confusing. They all acted like she wasn’t alive.

“Wait a moment, please,” the nurse said, putting the phone on hold until she came back.

“I spoke to the doctor and he said your mother has been in a vegetative state for some time,” the nurse explained.

Biting my lip so hard tears came to my eyes, I thanked the nurse for her time. I immediately drove to the care facility and changed the admission documents they had on file.

My mother lay peacefully waiting for the car to come take her to the other side, with no antibiotics, just a tiny breathing tube in her nose slowly giving her oxygen. I remember how I became desensitized to what was going on around her.

One by one, nurses’ assistants came into my mom’s room to check on her; even staff just walking by came in. They were drawn to the energy of archangels or higher beings that come to help a person close to

crossing over. The energy was pure love and people walking by could feel it. During my studies of the afterlife, I learned that the angels and/or higher beings will be with a person before they pass.

Quite by coincidence, I remember meeting a woman, Vanaya, who had lived in an ashram in India, for seventeen years and was an officer of Siddha Yoga, which was led by Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. Vanaya's job was to help people crossover. She dabbed my mother's upper lip with special herbs and anointed her scents that she had brought. Vanaya shared with me that a person dies according to how they lived and their karma<sup>1</sup>. My mother must have been really blessed to be getting the treatment she was from a woman that appeared out of nowhere from India to help her crossover.

Vanaya invited me to come over to her home, where she wanted me to have a reading with someone on the phone who communicated with angels. She scheduled the reading for herself, but she wanted me to have it because my mother was dying. The reader told me many angels were keeping watch over my mother and her time of passing was drawing near.

Driving home from Vanaya's home, I noticed a little boy racing his tricycle to the edge of a curb with his dad chasing after him. The sun was setting, and my heart felt a tug. The feeling wasn't for fear of the child, but it felt significant. I looked up into the sky and saw an

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<sup>1</sup> Karma: Lessons or rewards a person experiences in this lifetime brought here from their actions in a previous lifetime

awesome site. Hundreds of tiny waves of dark colored purple, crimson, and orange clouds were rippling across the sky. The sight was so peaceful, beautiful, and loving.

When I got home later that night, I noticed the red light on my phone was flashing. My mother's care facility had called and said my mother had passed. The time given of her death was the exact same time I saw the surreal sky, which made me think she was waving goodbye to me.

After my mother's death many things started happening I had thought were coincidences. I found myself walking through a shopping mall and stepping into a See's candy store to buy a few pieces of chocolate candy. Later, I ordered a Butterfinger ice cream cone from Bask-n-Robbins. The next day, I was able to buy a small electric piano in a thrift store for only ten dollars, which was nearly impossible. Soon, I realized, the See's candy, ice cream, and even the musical instrument in the thrift store, were all my mother's favorite things. She seemed to be using me to do all the things she missed in the care facility because I had the body and she didn't.

About the same time my mother passed, I was trying to buy a modular home. It was in the Diamond K Estates located in Roseville, California, where Governor Ronald Reagan once boarded his horse. A huge white mansion sat on a hill overlooking a pond. The day I went to the real estate office on the property and signed escrow papers on my new home, I decided to check out the pool next to the mansion. Tall towering oak trees hung over the pool. Nearby, I spotted a one-room dollhouse that had been built for children and trimmed to match the

gingerbread work of the mansion. My first clue my mother was helping me get my home, was that she loved dolls and once had a doll hospital in her home. The little house was painted yellow, which was her favorite color and the one color I disliked.

I remember my son Jon coming over to see my home. We talked about his grandmother's passing. When I mentioned how the sky looked the night she left her body, he said he was also looking up at the same time, marveling at the sky's beauty. My mother had said goodbye to both of us.

The coincidences didn't stop there. Jon and his wife Kristin, living in Fair Oaks, and my son William who came up from San Diego, and I all went to Bodega Bay, on the coast of California, to set my mother's ashes free. I had gone to the 99 Cent store and bought four yellow sand pails. I filled the bottom of the pails with my mother's ashes. Popped popcorn was placed on top before covering them with plastic wrap.

We drove along the road with steep cliffs overlooking the ocean until we came to a sign that pulled at my heart. The sign said, "Schoolhouse Beach." My mother loved kids, so I knew it was the right place. After parking the car, we grabbed our sand pails and carefully walked down wooden steps taking us down from the cliff to the sandy shore.

Each of us threw popcorn up into the air while trying to dodge waves coming towards our bare feet. Suddenly, a white cloud of seagulls swooped down to catch the popcorn and carry it off to eat. My heart felt content knowing that my mother was watching and how much

she loved seagulls. All was good until some of her ashes I threw into the air came back and slapped me in the face. Everyone laughed but me. I sputtered and spit out the ones that got into my mouth.

Communicating with my mother from one dimension to another, or soul-to-soul, was only the beginning for me. I set my mother's picture on the pile of pictures to be saved and closed the wooden box. I stood up and walked toward the back door and opened it.

"Alexa, stop playing the music," I called out, hearing the flutes come to an abrupt halt.

"Max, have you been here all this time?" I said, feeling a little guilty for leaving him for so long.

"Let's go see if there are any cats at the fountain," I teased.

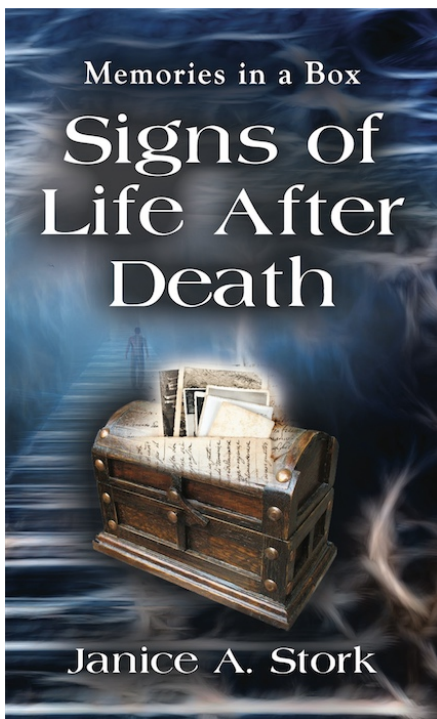
"Ruff-ruff," barked Max, as he darted down the hall into the living room and jumped onto my leather loveseat



## Author's Note

One thing I learned in writing *Memories in a Box, Signs of Life After Death*, is that there was a common denominator in most of the stories where I heard a voice from either the spirit of a loved one or saw a sign trying to connect with me.

Most of the time I was in a relaxed state of mind. My thoughts were on how the loved one who had passed, or even a picture, triggered the connection. Life, for me, wasn't cluttered with busy thoughts or demands on my time that could be distracting. And, my heart was open and receptive to signs of life after death. However, I do believe there is free will. No one has power over us. My heart was open, which allowed me to see the signs I now cherish.



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