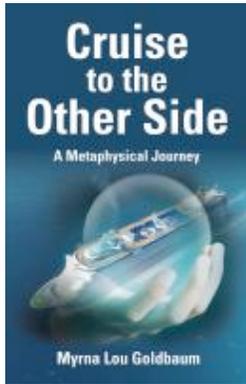


Cruise to the Other Side

A Metaphysical Journey



Myrna Lou Goldbaum



Reggie goes to a palm reader on St. Thomas who tells her to make up with her mother. The mother falls on the ship and dies. Reggie has visions, is befriended by a psychic, is contacted by her Guardian Angel, calls a radio show, purchases a crystal ball, is almost duped by an imposter, is nearly mugged, and is rejoined by her estranged husband. They search for the money her mother hid to secure their future.

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CHAPTER 1

THE VACATION

The Southwestern Airlines jet lifted off the Denver airport runway Florida-bound with a full complement of passengers and crew.

“Oh, Reggie, dear, we’re finally flying off on our dream vacation, our special adventure for an entire ten days. This is exciting, don’t you agree?” her mother, Shirley sighed.

“I’m so looking forward to our wonderful ten day cruise. This will be superior to any vacation we’ve ever taken,” Reggie replied.

About a half hour into the flight, the Captain’s voice boomed over the PA. “Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats immediately and fasten your seat belts. There’s a cluster of storms and heavy weather in front of us from the reports coming into the cockpit. The control tower predicts we could experience possible whirlwinds and tornado activity. Flight attendants take your assigned seats. Under no circumstances should anyone be up and about in the cabin until the all clear light is turned on.”

The plane suddenly dipped to the right violently, leveled, then dipped left again.

“What’s happening to us?” Reggie asked nervously.

The Captain came back on the loud speaker. “Folks, we are in for a rock and roll time up here and I expect we will be in for some major bumps. I’m trying to out-maneuver the violent storms. We’ll be experiencing turbulence that may be a bit rough for a few minutes but it will be nothing to be concerned about.”

“We should be OK then,” Reggie said with relief.

As the plane ascended to the new altitude, gale force winds pushed the jet airliner sideways and the aerodynamics propelled it downward. The plane plunged downward with a shudder. Passengers screamed while others cried out in panic throughout the plane. Some

people sat stone-faced, their bodies frozen with fear. A deafening rumble echoed within the cabin.

The loud speakers crackled again. “This is the Captain. We made it through the storms but it will be impossible to make up the lost time fighting against the winds due to mechanical difficulties. This is information for those passengers making connecting flights out of Ft Lauderdale. We are unable to land at our assigned gate on schedule. I’m confident the crew is handling everything with expertise in the cockpit and in the cabin.”

Suddenly the plane spiraled downward again, then leveled, then slipped sideways.

The lights flickered then it was dark in the cabin. The menacing storm outside the plane roared and thundered continually. Numerous lightning strikes crashed around them.

“Mother . . . I’m getting scared with all this gyration.”

Shirley squeezed her daughter’s clenched hands tightly in her own. “Don’t worry dear, the Captain knows what he’s doing up there in the cockpit,” she said reassuringly. “I’m certain the crew will get us out of this mess, and everything will be normal shortly.”

Just then the airplane plunged erratically downward.

“Help us, God!” a woman across the aisle yelled hysterically. “I don’t want to die! Please, don’t let us die, please, God, don’t let the plane crash.”

Everyone cried, prayed or sat gripping their armrests white-knuckled in paralyzed fear. The combination of noise from the whining engines, the wind and the commotion in the plane from most of the passengers was almost unbearable.

Shirley yelled above the deafening racket into Reggie’s ear, “If our plane goes down and you make it through this and I don’t survive, I promise you I will contact you from the other side because you’d have to know I was okay.”

Reggie heard her mother’s mouthed words in her ear, but she didn’t comprehend what she was saying to her. She was deep in thought about her own young child and husband. She didn’t want to leave them. All her marital problems dissolved at that moment. All she could think about was her little family sitting at home waiting for her to return. She took a deep breath and prayed. Finally, the turmoil

CRUISE TO THE OTHER SIDE

was over, and the airplane ride leveled out as smooth as a sheet of ice. A loud cheer went up from the passengers. The noise level in the plane dropped to a barely audible whisper compared to the lion's roar of a few minutes earlier.

"That was too spooky. I've absolutely had more than enough excitement for one day," Reggie commented with a weak smile.

Shirley nodded. "That was more than enough for me too. The butterflies in my stomach have horseshoes on them right now."

A few minutes later the plane ride resumed its normal flight pattern.

Reggie questioned her mother. "Why didn't you answer your cell phone at DIA? I dialed up your number like ten times."

Shirley patted her hair-sprayed blonde hair. "Honey, I never got your calls. I was trying to call you before we met up on the concourse. Someone left an unmarked, suspicious looking package outside the airport doors. Every TSA security line was held up. I'm so terribly sorry you were worried about me. I know you realize that things happen beyond our control sometimes."

"If you were calling me why didn't I hear my phone ring? Maybe you were doing something wrong with your brand new phone. You've had that old one forever."

Shirley's voice took on a hard edge. "Please don't start nagging me. I know perfectly well how to use my new cell phone. Would you like to check me out to see if I can use it the right way?"

She yanked her over-sized purse open quickly and reached inside for her phone.

Reggie drew a deep breath and put her hand on her mother's arm. "No, of course not. It was probably the bad reception in the terminal building with all the steel beams."

Shirley's sharp response hurt Reggie's feelings. Her comeback was way out of proportion, and the tone of her voice was a red flag, one Reggie recognized from her unhappy late teen years. *I better watch myself this week or we'll get into it like we always do.*

Reggie looked out the window and remembered her life during the year following her Father's passing. Shirley's personality used to be easy going, warm, fun-loving and she went with the flow when her father was alive. Since then she went into Super Mom mode and

was constantly watching Reggie. Her criticism was never taken lightly. She was mean-spirited and harsh sometimes too. When Reggie was out of high school, she had embarrassing situations to endure with her. One night Shirley accused Helene, her girlfriend, and Reggie of being “almost slutty hookers”. They were walking on the main avenue of their neighborhood on a hot, muggy August evening. Both girls were dressed in shorts, halter tops and flip flops. She called them out on flirting and hunting for boys. She insisted they were boy crazy and made them get into her car immediately that night. She drove them home, lecturing the entire time they were in the car. She said she remembered being young once and knew what they were up to on the avenue delighting in the wolf calls and whistles they were attracting. Reggie recalled another incident on a Friday night when Shirley plowed down the aisle at their neighborhood movie theater and demanded to know why she was sitting in a row with only the boys. It hurt her to be put down in front of her peers, but she never let on when her mother became demanding and overly protective.

I sure hope we aren't going to have any of her fits of over-mothering me again on this trip. I certainly don't need that!

Shirley turned in her seat and gave her daughter a long, appraising look. “That’s a beautiful shirt, honey; I like it a lot. It has a good neckline for you. I have a question though, why don’t you ever wear any jewelry?”

“I wear jewelry when I get dressed up but not for sitting in an airplane all day.”

“I was just thinking how fantastic your scoop-necked blouse would look if you wore it with that gold bird pendant your Dad and I gave you for your thirteenth birthday. Wasn’t it a gold bird pendant on a gold chain? Was it, a dove? Oh, I remember, it was a seagull.”

“Yes, it was a white bird, a seagull,” Reggie answered.

“You really loved that necklace. I assume you brought it along on this trip. I can’t wait to see you wear it again.”

Reggie opened the book on her lap once they were settled. Three and a half hours of flight time stretched out in front of her like a life sentence. *Is this a mistake, going on a long trip with a critical, inquisitive, demanding mother?*

CRUISE TO THE OTHER SIDE

A few minutes later she felt a little calmer inside. “Mom thanks for inviting me on the celebration for your birthday and Mother’s Day on this cruise.”

“Reggie, dear, I was hoping we would be able to work on our getting closer, that’s why I invited you. I’ve seen so little of since you and Earl married. My moving to Arizona has kept us apart too. It will be fun for us to go sightseeing and shopping.”

Reggie sighed and faked an interest in looking out the window. Hearing her husband’s name brought her back to reality. She remembered all the nasty arguments they had in the not-so-long ago past. She could hear his voice in her head, complaining and acting like they were mouse-poor citizens. She knew they were a hard-working couple who lived within their means. He was dissatisfied and wanted more out of life immediately, not in the future. They lived together for several years before they married, and life was good.

After they married and the baby came things blew up and out of control. Money was tight because of the additional expenses they had. Earl always wanted more of everything. He constantly complained to Reggie as if it were her fault they didn’t have a larger home or more cash on hand.

CHAPTER 2

REGGIE

As a high school girl Reggie was beautiful, popular with both the girls and boys and a top honor student. She was an only child who was happy for companionship. As a young child she shared her toys easily; as a teenager she was one of the gang and fit in with any group she happened to be with at the time. She volunteered at a nearby hospital throughout her high school years.

Shirley said, “Dear, I know you are giving up a lot of your free time to work at the hospital. I would prefer you look into anything but nursing.”

“And why shouldn’t I look at nursing as a career?”

“Because nursing is too hard for you and I would rather see you in any other profession. You can study anything else with my blessing.”

“Oh, well, tell me what I should study.”

“A degree in Business is something you can always fall back on in the future. Or why not consider looking at Teaching?”

“I’ll have to think about this mother. I volunteer because I like the people I work with and the atmosphere at the hospital.”

Reggie had good grades in high school and applied to several colleges. She heard from all of them but chose Kent State, to be near home but not on top of it. She dated several men in college but not a single guy who stuck. After her graduation she was invited to a girlfriend’s home for a party. She met Earl that evening and confided to her friend in the bathroom, he was THE ONE for her.

At first they were just friends then they began emailing and calling one another several times a week. It escalated to daily and finally, Earl asked Reggie out on a date. From that day they were smitten with each other. Their relationship was as smooth as a dish of ice cream. They had similar interests and were compatible on many levels. They dated non-stop for six months, then Reggie

moved in with Earl. He proposed one night at a drive-in movie. Reggie was so excited she called her mother. "Mom, , are you up?"

"Reggie, it's 2 o'clock in the morning. Are you alright? Why are you calling?"

"Guess what? Earl and I are getting married! He proposed to me on the hood of his truck. Isn't this the most wonderful thing? I had to call you and share our news right away."

"I'm happy for both of you. I'll talk to you tomorrow when I'm fully awake. Enjoy the moment my darling girl."

Shirley threw herself into their wedding plans the next day. She was meticulous on the details and had lists and ideas all over the house. Reggie took her shopping for her wedding gown and for the mother-of-the-bride dress too. They had a wonderful full four months discussing the plans daily for the young couples' marriage.

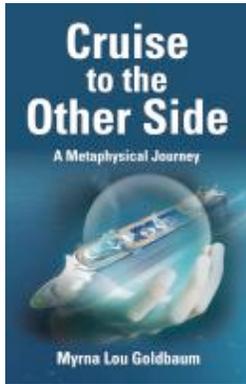
Reggie and Earl were married in their family Church on Main Street in Dayton Ohio. She graduated college the first week of June and their marriage ceremony was held the following week-end. They honeymooned at Niagara Falls and it was a magical week for both of them. Reggie got pregnant on their honeymoon, unbeknownst to them at the time. Six weeks later she confirmed it with a home pregnancy test. They were both surprised, but happy.

"I was hoping to have a year to veg out with just us," Earl said.

"I know me too," she answered.

"Well, if this was meant to be we should enjoy it and go with the program."

Reggie smiled and said she was going to work and help the financial picture one way or another through her pregnancy and after the baby was born too.



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