

*A Tale*  
OF *Spirit*

*Yours, Mine and Lessons from the Universe*



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DORIS MAE  
HONER



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A loving thank you to my sister, Margaret, who believes in me and has always encouraged me to continue to write and to follow my own star.

Sir Isaac Newton wrote, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

One of my giants, Michael Williams, has helped me realize my dream in writing. In the descriptive words of Dan Rather(*The Speakers Sourcebook*)..."The dream begins with a teacher who

believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth." Michael Williams is that teacher.

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## Introduction:

When I worked in a facility giving care to those chronically ill, I noticed that the elders loved to reminisce. Their stories were told over and over, and it is sad that their legends and history died with them.

Throughout my life I have met people who shared their thoughts and experiences with me once they found me trustworthy. All of them at one time or another express much relief that their experiences are respected and acknowledged, where, and I quote them, "Most people would say I am crazy!" Their experiences are real. So are mine. Spiritual experiences have been acknowledged since time began, are mentioned often in the bible, and are known without question by our indigenous people. I often wonder what made our present population so sure that the wonders and experiences of Spirit should be called "crazy." It was with surprise and joy that I discovered an author, Fern Michaels, in her book "Lethal Justice," writing about one of her heroines, the lawyer Nikki, whose daughter Barbara came to talk to her in spirit form. She explains that a person has to be open, in order to receive communication from the other side.

Everyone has the ability within themselves to feel and have Spiritual experiences, but some people are more developed in this way, than others. Children are wonderful at hearing and seeing the Spirit. I'm writing A Tale of Spirit with all the truths of Spirit, and hope the many others out there will gather courage to share their experiences too. God lives and Spirit is His/Her gift to us.

## ✧ A TALE OF SPIRIT

This is a collection of life stories which come from oral family history passed down to me, as well as anecdotes from other people's lives. Included within are my own personal experiences also. There is no particular order in terms of time, so you can hop from one story to another whenever you like. The quotes are thoughts from my favorite authors as well as thoughts I've written in my journal through the years.

The thread of Spirit runs through all our lives in many different ways, keeping us attached to the real reasons we chose to come here. In my earlier life, I took up painting, both in oil and acrylics, and I see emotions and Spirit in color. In all the stories gathered, you may notice that emotions and Spirit are sometimes woven through different situations in strong red, blue, green, gold and purple colors, the many shades of love, wisdom, beauty, trials and peace. The stories also bounce with a little history of how life was lived in the "old days" as my Grandson Jared would put it. In my book I talk quite a bit about "the old days", how things were in the time and place where I grew up.

I might have called this book by a different name, but I believe there is Spirit in all things, nature, culture, choices, people, situations, because in the biggest scheme of things, I find we are never alone, and Spirit is with us, a part of us, since the time of creation. We simply must keep ourselves open to Spirit.

I've learned from any tragedy or chaos, the order of the Universe will always emerge. The tragedies become vehicles of growth for us.

My personal history includes being a registered nurse for thirty-five years, my specialties were Neurology, Psychiatry and Obstetrics. After that career I went back to school obtained diplomas in Recreation for special populations, another diploma in Gerontology. I opened my own business, taught Gerontology in Northern College, in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, Canada, and expanded further by continuing my education to obtain a degree, with a major in recreational arts. I also opened my own business, brought music, art, puppetry and writing into different facilities, some for the aged, others for the mentally handicapped or physically disabled. In Kirkland Lake I

wrote a column in a local newspaper, the Northern Daily News. My column was about the local folks there, giving them credit for their work, as well as for themselves. My first marriage was to a nice Peruvian man who spoke little English when he came to Canada. I coached him in English and he taught me Spanish. As he learned more English his courses became more clear and he achieved his Bachelors in Commerce. We both worked, saved, bought our home and raised our family, three amazing children. We grew apart and divorced after the children left home to start their own careers. My new beginning gave me freedom to explore on a deeper level my own life and my Spirit. My second marriage was to a wonderful man named Bryan who struggled with chronic illnesses, became ill and died too early. His spiritual experiences are included in my book. Later I married Ray, my present husband in 2000, and we enjoy great, gentle happiness together. Writing has been one of my passions since a very young child, especially poetry and short stories.

Bright dreams are different from usual dreams in my life. I have received bright dreams ( called visions) since early childhood and they never fail to fill me with a sense of wonder. These are mentioned periodically in my book, since they have answered so many of my questions, and given me positive direction.

I like to think of life as climbing mountains, crossing the plains, descending into valleys and learning all the enriching lessons of the journey. Certainly, like everyone, I have made mistakes, fallen off mountains, and done my share of weeping, but through it all, one fact shines brilliantly, like the star of Bethlehem. We are never alone.



## The Valiant Spirit of Northern Women

*We learn that love is imperative and that fear is to be transposed into positive action - DorisMae Honer*

Laura Honer was frantic. Her five-month-old baby, Patricia, was gasping for breath and had been going into paroxysms of coughing. Laura was beside herself with worry and fatigue, having been up with her baby day and night since the baby became ill.

It was in the small mining community of Kirkland Lake in northern Ontario and the year was 1930. A cold November wind was howling, wildly whipping the snow outside, reducing visibility to almost zero. More and more snow was falling. Taxi drivers were refusing to drive up the hill where Laura lived for fear of getting stuck.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Laura threw another blanket over the quivering, struggling baby in her arms, and went to answer. When she opened the door, she gasped in amazement and thankfulness.

Catherine Lamb, her mother, stood in the doorway.

"I just knew I had to come," Catherine said as she entered the home, slamming the door against the wind. She shook her coat and stamped her boots, sending snow everywhere.

"But, but, how did you know?" Laura gasped.

"I just knew," Catherine said again, her intense blue eyes quickly examining Patricia's trembling body as the baby heaved in almost a

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convulsion before still another exhausting cough.

"Its whooping cough," Catherine muttered after hearing the sound of the baby's cough. "We have a lot of work to do, so let's get busy."

Catherine explained that she had "prayed the train" from New Liskeard to Swastika, an even smaller town about 10 miles from Kirkland Lake. From there, she had "implored God" to at least get the taxi to the bottom of the hill. From there, bag in hand - she had trudged the long distance up to Laura's door.

"Walking up that hill through the deep snow took some doing," she said, "but I'm here!"

*(Catherine Burnett was born in Hurdville, McKellar County, outside of Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada, on December 4, 1880, and had been the third child in a family of seven children. In fact, she was taken out of school in Grade 3 to help raise her brothers.*

*Later, when she had her own family, she insisted that each of her daughters receive a good education, something she had been denied.*

*When Catherine was in her teens, she apprenticed with the local seamstress. She married Albert Absolom Lamb in Parry Sound and the newlyweds traveled by train and boat to New Liskeard, a little more than 50 miles southeast of Swastika.*

*For the trip, Catherine had made her own stylish suit, the traveling clothes she would put on after the wedding. Her skirt was fashionably long. When she stepped off the horse-drawn carriage in front of the home Albert had constructed for them, she stepped into a foot of mud. It had been raining for weeks and the gravel roads had turned to liquid earth.*

*Catherine had long black hair tied up in a bun and her cornflower blue eyes never missed a detail. She had a quiet, purposeful way about her which endeared her to all who knew her. She was a woman who could be counted on.*

*There was only one doctor in New Liskeard and it seemed inevitable that Catherine would come to his attention. She had*

*stitched up a horrible gash in her husband, Albert's, leg, where a long saw had cut him. He was working as a lumberman at the time.*

*She had kept the wound free of infection with herbs and poultices, and when the doctor saw her beautiful stitching of that long wound, he was amazed. He asked Catherine to assist him. As a teen, Catherine had learned to deliver babies and how to use the various herbs and remedies taught her by her pioneer grandmother, who had been taught folkloric medicine from the native peoples.*

*Sometimes she would work with the town doctor long into the night operating on some emergency case. It was a pioneer time and people just did what they could with the resources available.*

*Catherine became known and trusted in her community. But she was also known for something extraordinary.*

*For example, she would often interrupt preparations for supper, or bathing the children, and start preparing for an emergency situation. She would put a basin of water and the old flat iron on the black iron stove to heat them, and then she would start ironing the sheets she kept stored for "medical use" so as to sterilize them.*

*From a special drawer would come her case, holding a particular curved needle, and she would thread it and drop it into boiling water. There was no phone line at that time. Shortly after she was ready, there would be a knock at the door.*

*Outside there might be one man or several carrying a pain-ravaged fellow worker.*

*"Just put him on the couch there," Catherine would calmly say, "and wait while I wash my hands."*

*She then would work on the wounded man until she had cleansed, disinfected and stitched the wound. Sometimes the men had to hold their mate down while she worked, but they trusted her, and she was able to start the healing process.*

*How did she know people were coming for her help? Catherine Burnett Lamb was psychic.*

*(Catherine Burnett Lamb was also my grandmother. Laura Honer was my mother and baby Patricia, one of my sisters.)*

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Quickly, Laura and Catherine prepared the room for baby Patricia with steaming kettles, set on the tiny electric stove which dad had brought from the Lake Shore mine's electric shop. Dad was the chief electrical superintendent for the company.

Steam soon permeated the tiny room where Patricia lay in her crib and the baby finally began to relax. Catherine then began applying poultices of oatmeal and mustard and wet moldy bread.

Later, she cleansed Patricia with a solution of Epsom salts and water. Thanks to my grandmother, Patricia Maureen Honer survived the whooping cough, surprising even the local doctor.

Patricia grew up to be a kindergarten specialist and married Gordon Littlejohn, a mining engineer who later became a lawyer. They had three children.

Her son, Mark, was mentally challenged and died at age 11. Patricia started a tiny school for mentally challenged children and the school blossomed into a very large learning facility and a teaching centre for caregivers. Her daughter, Maureen, received her Master's diploma in journalism, and is a freelance writer for several different magazines. Her son, Bruce, followed in his father's footsteps and became a lawyer.

Patricia Honer Littlejohn and her husband, Gordon, were responsible for giving many valuable gifts to mankind. Patricia died at 72. During her precious lifetime she accomplished many good works.

I still remember the first time I went on a train ride with my grandmother, Catherine. She was taking me down to New Liskeard to meet my grand-dad. I was just over three years of age at the time and the year was 1937. My granny had come north by train to visit our family and to retrieve me, and we headed back south.

We had been enjoying the trip back together, when the conductor came walking down the aisle of the train asking loudly: "Is there a doctor on board?"

The second time he came into our train car, my grandma stopped him, and asked what the problem was. After quietly conferring with

the conductor a few moments, she turned to me and said: "This man is the conductor. I've asked him to take care of you because they need me in another car. Someone needs my help." She hurried away into the next train car.

The conductor scooped me up and hoisted me onto his shoulders. He also gave me his conductor's cap to wear and took me around the train. I met many nice people on the train, including the coal-blackened men who were shoveling coal into the furnace at the front of the train.

I wanted to blow the train's whistle and they let me. I was allowed to grab that lever and, with all the strength of a three year old - and maybe a little help from the train's engineer - I heard the power of that whistle. What a wonderful time I had while waiting for my granny.

When we got to grand-dad's in New Liskeard I overheard my grandmother telling him that she had helped a lady who was in labor and had helped deliver a baby boy in the train's ladies' room.

At granny and grand-dad's place, there was a big, black iron stove in the kitchen and one electric light bulb hanging from the ceiling. A fly catcher also hung from the ceiling and curled down like taffy, with several flies attached to it.

There was one tap connected by hoses to a nearby spring and it gave the coldest, sweetest-tasting water. In the living room, there was a pot-bellied stove which heated the main floor of the house. A pipe went through the ceiling and heated the upstairs to a lesser degree.

Granny used to put a stack of hot newspapers or department-store catalogues - which she had heated at the back of the wood stove - into our beds to warm them for us before we slept. There were linoleum floor coverings throughout the house. In the entrance, ascending to the upper floor was a wonderful cherry colored set of stairs with a banister which provided good sliding for us grandchildren.

I spent many summers at my grandparents' house when I was

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young. I'd like to tell you a bit about my grand-dad, because he was unique.

My grand-dad Lamb was born in St. Mary's, Southern Ontario and was brought north, on the shoulders of his Dad to Huntsville, Ontario when they literally opened up the North on foot. They were pioneers. Grand-dad Lamb worked in Magnetewan, Ontario, as a forestry helper, and guide for hunters. He had learned the native Canadian dialects and helped teach the local tribes to read, write and do simple arithmetic. Later he worked as a lumber jack, and was also good with his hands, a carpenter and a man of all trades. The native Canadian peoples respected and accepted him in all the many tribes along Lake Superior, and other regions where he travelled. He was blonde, slim, and had a mustache, under high cheekbones. His eyebrows were a bit bushy over very twinkling blue eyes. He had lost some of his teeth. Apparently they had become infected and he pulled them out with a pair of pliers. Grand-dad gave respect to all people, and expected the same in return at all times.

His hands were large and gnarled, strong from working all trades where he used his hands and body. No job was too tough or too menial for him. He believed in working hard, and believed people should take care of themselves. He refused what he called "the government's hand- outs" which were the unemployment and old age pensions. He said, "hand- outs make people soft and dependent."

When my grand-dad became ill I helped granny care for him. Unfortunately she died of a heart attack while caring for him. (Grand-dad came to live with our family after her death.)

When I heard the news of her death, I was devastated. I still remember that horrible, intense pain which choked and engulfed me. I ran to my room and threw myself on the bed.

My mind was blank in pain, shock and disbelief. Time seemed to have stopped. Then, the strangest occurrence happened. I began to be filled with the familiar rosy, reddish, warm feeling of warmth

and love. It was like my Granny's arms were around me, and I could smell the wonderful odor of her body.

She told me she was very happy, that the next life is peaceful and loving, and that I was to be happy that she was happy. Although I could not see her, I knew she was there, embracing me. I'll never forget how she infused my body and my Spirit with peace, light, love and joy.

A naysayer might say that this was just my imagination. I say this was the Spirit of my Granny, and I *know* she was there.