

The Saga of Odin

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This saga was narrated by Odin, Who incarnated Himself on the Earth in ancient times and Who takes care of the Scandinavian lands (and other lands as well).

The particles of the Eternal Knowledge about the purpose of human life on Earth, about the multidimensionality of the worlds beyond the material world, about what is truly ethical, about earthly love, and about the Divine Love are interwoven into the plot of this saga.

May these stories and images manage to transmit the Tenderness and Power of the Divine *Depths* to the readers who will try to experience the Light and the Love of the Creator of the entire universe behind the words and images of events!

This book is intended for a wide array of readers.

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Chapter One:

The Girl and the Lord of the Lake

We are sitting together, Divine Odin and I, hugging each other and uniting ourselves as souls, even though He doesn't have a material body right now, while I have one, this does not hinder our communication in any way!

Many legends are related to the name of this Divine Teacher Who has looked after the Scandinavian lands throughout the centuries! Many generations of people have honored His Wisdom and Power!

So we are both together, Odin and I. I am listening to His Words, I answer Him, I ask Him questions, and I listen to His responses and explanations.

His Divine Body, the Body of the Spirit, consists of Light! He can condense this Light and His appearance becomes more defined in this way, so that one can see His locks of hair, His eyelashes, His bright eyes that radiate Love and Calm, His soft and tender Smile, and His strong arms.

In a blink of an eye, He can make Himself younger or show His Appearance saturated with the great Divine Power, with beard and hair as white as snow, and wavy hair that covers His shoulders.

His Great Power is connected with the Ocean of Power of the One Primordial Consciousness.

His agile Body of Light is much bigger than the material body of a person. This Body of Light can become giant and extend Itself for kilometers or It can dissolve Itself in the Transparency of the Calm of the One Ocean. He can recreate this Body anywhere in the world, and even in many places simultaneously.

Odin shows me, within a tender Light that is similar to a golden mist, the vivid images of the stories that He wants to tell us with my help, my dear readers.

I understand that today Odin did not come to just visit me for a moment, which means that it is now time for Him to tell His stories, those which He has meaning to tell me for a long time. The three-dimensional images of the northern beauty of cliffs and rocks covered in moss and lichen, of crystalline lakes amidst thick forests, of fields and a small farmhouse close to a lake, open before me. I see people dressed in ancient Finnish clothing.

It seems as if this image is getting closer and the words of Odin begin to sound.

* * *

A small Finnish farmhouse was located near a forest lake. Here there lived a family, a husband, a wife, and their small daughter.

And *above* this lake and *beneath* this lake, and around this lake and afar, there lived the Divine Lord of the lake. He was big, like a mountain, and consisted of the Light of Love, Care, and Tenderness. This Light easily permeated both the land and the air and was very subtle, so that not everyone was able to see it.

The Divine Lord of the lake was the Lord of not just this small lake and the forest around it, but also, like all other Divine Souls, He was Lord of all the Earth and could appear and disappear in His Body of Light anywhere. However, He still had His favorite places where He always stayed. In this way, He lived close to this small lake together with people, trees, grass, small fish, birds, and other wild and domestic animals, filling all the space with His Light of Love.

The adults could not perceive the Lord of the lake at all, but a girl, while she was very small and still could not speak, was able to see Him.

Some young children very often can see that which exists on the non-material plane. This happens because they themselves have recently lived in these worlds, in the same way as do the souls who do not have material bodies right now.

However, after these children grow up, they forget their ability to see with the soul. They lose it because they stop using it.

This happens since none of the adults explain to the children that it is possible to do this. On the contrary, parents teach their children to live among material objects, and if children tell them something extraordinary, adults say that all of this is just a fantasy.

Without a doubt, it is very important to teach a small person to use his or her body in the material world, that is, to walk, to talk, to look using the eyes of the body, and many other things.

Losing the ability to see with the soul is a good thing if this soul is weak, because, otherwise, the non-material worlds will only frighten this person!

Nor will this vision be favorable for the souls who came to incarnate having coarse qualities that were formed in the past, because such souls will only be able to perceive infernal beings, which can in no way benefit these incarnate souls.

However, the ability to see can help a subtle and strong soul to learn more quickly.

Adults don't know this, because they themselves forgot about this possibility long ago. Well, maybe not all adults, but the large majority of them unlearned the ability to perceive the surrounding world with the soul without using their bodily organs!

And our Aina, which was the name of the girl, growing up, also began to lose her ability to see in the world of the Divine Light, since no one could explain to her that this world is a reality. She began to gradually forget that the soul has eyes that can see much more than the eyes of the body. She did not have time to understand that a soul which is developing correctly can also listen and speak without pronouncing words. The soul can speak the language of the spiritual heart.

The parents of Ainu did not tell her anything about such possibilities, since they themselves did not know how to see or listen in this way.

In spite of this, Ainu did not lose the ability to feel everything around her with the spiritual heart and the ability to love everything. That's why she always felt joy and tenderness when she went to the lake, even though it was the Lord of the lake Who was helping her to experience these states.

The Lord of the lake loved the little Ainu very much!

The girl frequently played on the sandy shore. There, magical tales and marvelous stories always came to her mind. Ainu did not know that it was the Lord of the lake Who was telling her them using the language of the souls.

When she retold these stories to her parents, they called her a daydreamer and an inventor.

Also, one time, it happened that the Lord of the lake saved the girl by teaching her how to swim! This happened as follows:

Ainu went to get water from the lake. The bucket was very big, and Ainu could only lift and carry half of it. She bent down on the pier to collect the water, but accidentally picked up more than she could lift. The weight of the bucket pulled her, and she fell into the water.

She was very scared, because the adults always told her that, when swimming, she should not go very deep so that she doesn't drown! And in this place close to the pier, it was very deep for her size.

Ainu began to sink out of fear, even though the shore was very close.

In this same moment, the Lord of the lake was able to calm her. He made a small female duck with her ducklings swim near her. The girl, after seeing such nice ducklings, forgot about her fear. The mother duck decided to leave, and the ducklings followed her moving their legs so fast that they almost ran on the water. Ainu saw how the little ones were kicking quickly and that they did not sink for this

reason. So, she also began to move her arms and legs quickly and soon reached a shallower place, where she could stand on the sandy bottom.

* * *

One time Ainu fell asleep on the shore and saw the Lord of the lake. It even seemed to her that she recognized Him. After all, He lulled her to sleep when she was very young, and she always felt very good in His arms that consisted of Light!

And so it happened that, upon awakening, she did not stop seeing Him. Her eyes of the soul had opened!

Even though it seemed impossible, the Lord of the lake began to talk tenderly with Her:

“Hello, Ainu! Do not be afraid of Me! I am the Divine Lord of this lake. I have known you for a long time and I love you very much!

“Do you remember the stories that came to your mind when you played on the shore? It was I Who played with you in those times!

“And later, when you were about to drown, it was I Who taught you how to swim!”

From then on, Ainu was able to see the Lord of the lake and converse with Him.

She asked Him questions and He always answered her.

In addition, He taught Ainu to live in a happy, sunny, and golden world where everything responds to love with love.

She would wake up in the morning and greet everyone and everything with her joy! Then she would walk along a trail towards the lake and on the path she would say: “I greet you, forest! Good morning, giant pines! I thank you for your songs, dear little birds! Flowers and grass with dew, you are so beautiful! I greet You, my friend, Lord of the lake!”

The entire world around her responded to her with joy and love, and the Lord of the lake hugged her with His tender and transparent arms, and smiled to her with a radiant smile.

Some time passed, and AINU grew and became a very beautiful girl.

* * *

One day, the parents of AINU decided, as they always did each month, to go to the city to sell milk, cheese, and butter and to buy what they lacked on their farm.

The Lord of the lake told AINU:

“Try to convince them to not go to the city this month! If not, this can end badly!”

AINU pleaded with all her strength for her parents to cancel their trip, but they ignored her, saying:

“How can you not understand, AINU?! The milk will become sour and we will not get any money!”

AINU had long ago stopped trying to tell them about the Lord of the lake, because they only laughed at her words, saying that she had already grown up but was still fantasizing!

When the parents returned, both became seriously ill.

AINU tried to cure them, but each time they only got worse, so she became very frightened and went to see a medicine woman.

The medicine woman came, but did not even enter the house or look at the sick. She said that in the city an epidemic of a very dangerous disease had begun and that many people were dying with great suffering.

Then the medicine woman burned some herbs, ordered AINU to repeat certain incantations, and said that the disease was very contagious and mortally dangerous, so AINU should not even go near her sick parents.

However, AINU continued taking care of them.

Despite all her efforts, her parents died several days later spending all this time in pain and agony.

AINU grieved and was so frightened by the disease of her parents that she stopped seeing the Lord of the Lake and listening to His words. She forgot about Him, and it did not even occur to her to ask for His advice and His help.

She stopped seeing Him because the worlds of the Divine Light are not visible from the worlds where despair, sadness, fear, anger, or other similar states reign. AINU only felt the Lord of the lake again when she buried the bodies of her parents and came to rest on the shore of the lake.

The Lord of the Lake tenderly embraced her with His Calm and Care and said to her:

“One should never cry for those who have abandoned their bodies! For they did not die at all! Look, here are your parents! They see Me and they see you!”

The parents of AINU were close to them in their non-material bodies and appeared to be younger and more beautiful than they were in their final years of life.

They addressed the Lord of lake:

“Oh Great One! Will you take care of our AINU? She is completely alone!”

“I will try!” the Lord of the lake answered them and smiled in response.

The parents told their beloved daughter some comforting words about how good they feel there in this new world, then they hugged her, and started walking away on a path covered in resplendent grass.

“Look where they will live!” said the Lord of the lake.

And so, AINU saw in the distance a house on a hill and a meadow in which cows and horses grazed. Over there, the birds were singing everywhere! All of this was not material; but nevertheless, it was filled with homely comfort and tranquility.

The Lord of the lake continued:

“You should not try to hold onto them, AINU! They will rest much better in the clear and pure worlds than being close to you all the time!

“However, if you remember them with joy, they will feel this and will visit you.

“They were good people in general. They lived in calm and care for each other and for you and they learned cordial love, even though this love was not perfect in all aspects.

Their life will be peaceful and cheerful until each of them will be born again in a new body.”

Ainu stayed seated for a long time on the shore of the lake. Her Great Friend did not say anything to her, but each wave of His Light washed away traces of her sadness.

Ainu asked:

“Why have I not seen You all these days? Where were You?”

“I was here, nearby, but you were so scared and afflicted that you did not notice Me. It took Me a lot of effort to protect you from the disease.

“It was not possible to help your parents. Their time for parting had arrived.”

“Are you saying that a person cannot change his or her destiny?”

“Sometimes one can. The destiny depends on the past lives of the soul and on those decisions that one takes in the present.

“Do you remember when you, being very, very small, told you parents that one should not kill and eat chicken, geese, and lambs and that it is not necessary to eat meat to be healthy? Although they loved their domestic animals and took care of them, they continued killing and eating them. They did not heed your words at that time.

“You yourself always followed this advice of Mine, while they refused to do so. For this reason, they underwent so much suffering before they died.

“The pain caused to others always returns to the one who caused it. The pain returns to one’s destiny, to the destiny in this earthly life or in the life of one’s next incarnation in the material world.”

“Tell me, is it only possible to see with the soul into the worlds of Light?”

“No, but I do not want to teach you, without necessity, to see the worlds of gray sadness and tears, nor to speak about the worlds of the cruel darkness! I do not wish for anyone to live in these worlds!

“It is for this reason that the absence of the ability to see the non-material beings that inhabit these wretched worlds is a good thing for those souls who are not subtle yet.

“One must become a strong and wise soul to be able to see in these dark worlds without becoming afraid and without dirtying oneself from the contact with the beings who live there; which can happen, for example, when one is helping those who are sick.”

“So then, can you teach me to heal diseases? In this case, I could help many people understand what I understand right now! I will not be afraid, because I know the Love and the Power of Your Light!”

“Alright, Ainu!”

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From that moment on, the Lord of the lake began to teach Ainu the art of healing, and she began to help people by healing their diseases and explaining their causes. She also explained how to eliminate these causes in oneself. In addition, she discovered the healing properties of plants and different methods of healing that can be done with the help of infusions made from these plants, as well as with the help of the Subtlest Light, Which the Lord of the lake taught her to feel and to direct in order to heal someone.

In this way, the young healer became very famous in that area.

Soon the times grew restless and war came to these lands. One day, a large detachment of soldiers passed near the house of Ainu.

They stayed to rest in the farmhouse and took all the reserves of cheese, flour, and nuts.

The head of these soldiers was young, strong, and very handsome. He liked Ainu and he ordered his soldiers:

“This woman will be mine! Don’t you dare touch her, or even kiss her or hug her.

“When we return victorious, I will marry her! And when we visit this place next time, I will give her many beautiful jewels of gold and silver!

“She will share with me, as my wife, all my new lands!”

Ainu asked in astonishment:

“Maybe, first you would like to know if I want to be your wife!”

“It is enough that I want this!” replied the chief with arrogance.

The soldiers marched out the next day leaving the farmhouse completely sacked.

They returned three months later or, better said, only some wounded and mutilated ones returned carrying the almost dead body of their chief on a stretcher. They said:

“We will leave him with you. He wanted to be your husband. If he survives, you will be able to marry him or have him work for you. We cannot carry him any longer.”

Ainu asked the Lord of the lake to help her heal this warrior. His name was Richard. She liked him, even from their first meeting. His strength at that time attracted her, but she did not like his arrogance.

But now, when he was nearby, weakened by his wounds, the heart of Ainu shuddered from compassion and ignited with true love.

She recalled how unattractive Richard was during their first encounter.

However, love changes people! Richard fell in love with Ainu during his first visit and he still loved her now, recovering from serious wounds thanks to her care, and learning to love.

He began to understand that love does not mean “to possess a woman”, but that it is the ability to live together in harmony, giving joy and happiness to one another.

Ainu cured Richard by healing his body and soul. The Lord of the lake helped her to do this.

* * *

Richard and AINU became husband and wife.

One day the Lord of the lake asked AINU:

“Would you like to give me a new body? You and Richard could become the parents of a child in whom I would incarnate a Part of Me.

“There are so many afflictions and calamities on the Earth! I would like to help people, but for this I need to obtain a material body. Through you two, I could become the Person Who would bring the Divine Knowledge to the Earth and reestablish the Divine Laws for a righteous existence!”

So, after some time, AINU and Richard had a son.

They named him Olaf.

However, not everything in this Incarnation turned out to be as easy as one might imagine. He had to pass through many trials on the Earth before he came to know about his Divine Predestination and was able to fulfill it.

Chapter Two: **Life among the Vikings**

Odin continued:

“Today I would like to talk about what happens when a Divine Soul is born on the Earth with the Mission of Service.

“There are Those Who remember about Their Divinity after incarnating.

“But there also Those Who fulfill what was determined in the Divine Plan without realizing Their Unity with the Primordial Ocean of the Divine Consciousness.

“In addition, there exist Those Who can recall and strengthen this Unity during Their life on the Earth and later, while remaining in Complete Mergence with the United We of all the Perfect Ones, fulfill everything that was determined for this incarnation of Theirs!

“As a child, Olaf did not know who he really was.”

“How could this happen? For his mother Ainu should have told him this! Everything could have been so much simpler.”

“It is very difficult for Me right now to explain to you all the nuances of the law that governs the formation of people’s destinies. I am only going to tell you the most important principle, namely, everything is done for the best, taking into account the interests of many souls.

“Ainu was taken from the material plane before she had time to teach Olaf everything she knew and could do. She only managed to tell him very little, and he had to learn all the most important things by himself.

“The problem was that Ainu and Richard were very different according to the level of their subtlety and according to their ability to understand the Divine. So, in order to preserve the Divine subtlety of Ainu, she was taken from the material world much sooner.

“The task of Olaf then was to repeat once again the entire Path all the way from a human to God in order to memorize well all the stages of this Path and the methods of ascension. Thanks to this, He would later be able to show this Trail to many other people.

“I want to repeat this again to avoid misunderstandings.

“According to the higher plans, sometimes Those of Us¹ Who come to the Earth have to carry out the life of an ordinary person for some time and to look at the world with the eyes of a mortal just like everyone else. This is done so that later He or She can return to the Immortality of God and can explain this Path to other people thanks to the received experience.

“It happens that it is first necessary to know weakness to later obtain the Power of the Omnipotent One; it happens that at times it is necessary to suffer from the lack of understanding to later be able to obtain the Highest Understanding; it happens that at times it is first necessary to know, through one’s own experience, the importance of

¹ Of the Divine Teachers (translator’s note).

the love that unites one person with another in order to be able to unite oneself in Love with the Divine Primordial Power.

“Keep listening! What I am going to tell can help you and many others to strengthen the Unity with the Divine World! It will also help you to live with the understanding of that Divine World and of the Knowledge about which we will speak later on!”

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After the unexpected death of Ainu, Richard was not able to recover from the grief for a long time. He did not want to live in a place where everything reminded him about his lost beloved; he could not live anymore without her in the harmony that she had created. So, he took his beloved son, Olaf, who was five years old at the time, and began to travel.

They wandered for a long time, which was fairly difficult for both of them due to the age of the boy, and later they arrived at the sea.

Its vastness captivated them with its beauty and power, and so Richard decided to live near the sea!

Soon he met a jarl, a leader of the Vikings, who accepted him into his community together with his son.

In this way, Richard returned to the life of a warrior, who went on sea voyages during almost all of the spring, summer, and fall.

It was a difficult time for Olaf, for during the maritime campaigns, Richard was gone for long durations with other men, and Olaf stayed on the shore with the women and children of other warriors.

For the community, Richard and Olaf continued being strangers for a long time.

As a result, Olaf had to endure the teasing and aggression of the older children. In addition, the woman in whose house he lived during the absence of his father was angry with him all the time, because Olaf followed the rule of not eating meat and fish, which was instilled in him during

his childhood. Due to this, Olaf very often left the table hungry without having eaten anything.

If it were not for the reserves of wild nuts and other edible plants that he had learned to recognize during his childhood, he would not have survived.

He was especially bullied by the teasing of the adolescent named Boli, the oldest son of that woman.

Boli had grown up without his father, under constant reproaches of his despotic mother. He was sickly, clumsy, and weaker than his peers. Even adults quite often made fun of him, and he kept accumulating resentment and malicious desires to humiliate others in the same way as he had been humiliated. Boli found pleasure in venting his sensation of inferiority on others who were weaker than he.

Olaf, who was three years younger, became for Boli the principal object of such attacks.

Boli enjoyed making sarcastic remarks to Olaf, ordering him to do meaningless things, and lecturing him in a burlesque manner.

Olaf was very surprised by this attitude and could not understand it. He was accustomed to the fact that mutual love and care are natural in the relations between those who are older and those who are younger.

However, thanks to this behavior of Boli, Olaf learned to maintain inner calm and not get angry in response to offenses. He maintained an imperturbable calm even when other children joined Boli.

And if fights occurred, with each one Olaf became better and better at being able to defend himself and other weaker children, for Richard taught him many techniques necessary for battle. In these harsh lands people respected strength, and Olaf, fighting at his level of a child, defended his right to not be like everyone else. In this way, gradually, he gained the respect of his contemporaries thanks to his ability to be just, generous, and strong and thanks to the fact that he never employed his strength unjustifiably.

Even many adults began to say that he would become a true jarl when he grew up! For the strength of the soul is perceived by people even when they do not understand why the acts and words of such a strong person have a notable effect on others.

The jarl, the head of that community, also possessed strength, but it was coarse and it kept all the members under cruel submission.

The name of the jarl was Biyorn. He was of great stature and looked like a giant bear because of his constitution and strength. His decisions were the law for everyone, his judgment was not questioned; no objections were accepted. Those who were in disagreement with the jarl had to either be quiet or leave the community. Anyone who tried to doubt the judgment of his decisions caused an explosion of anger in him and could be killed by the jarl right there or be subjected to another severe punishment.

* * *

One day Biyorn spoke to his people about his campaign plans to distant lands that were located in the far south. He said that there were rich settlements and even cities there, as well as ships that did not have warriors on them. He also said that an abundant booty was expected from this campaign in the lands where no Viking had ever been before.

After the exclamations of joy for this future campaign had calmed down, Olaf suddenly dared to object the jarl himself! He stepped forward and asked him:

“Biyorn, do you think that you are governing wisely and do you believe that it will be fair to attack peaceful settlements and take their wheat by force, the wheat that we have not cultivated and the wealth that we do not have the right to claim? Would you like it if our houses and women were also subjected to an attack and looting, while our men were on the campaign?”

Richard did not have time to stop his son and now stood with a pale face and with his hand on the hilt of his sword. He was waiting for the inevitable retaliation for the audacity of Olaf.

However, to the surprise of everyone, Biyorn did not get angry, instead he laughed and said:

“You are still a stranger among us and a brat, Olaf! You have not yet understood how the true Vikings live! We fight with the strong and we do not harm children or women! That which we win in a good battle is rightfully ours!

“The cowards among the people who are afraid of battles will be kept alive and will simply pay a ransom for their lives.

“Brave warriors fight for glory and riches!

“And death in a battle is a great lot, because it opens the doors to the world beyond the grave where heroes live!

“I will take you with me, Olaf, so that you learn to be proud to belong to our traditions!”

So, Biyorn decided to turn Olaf into a warrior of the sea.

And that was how Olaf climbed aboard a drekkar² for the first time so that he could learn to be a “true Viking”, which meant that he should accustom himself to the “law of strength” and forget his ideas about justice, the ideas that he was not afraid to explain even to the jarl himself.

Olaf was happy that he was going to the sea with his father. Only his thoughts about the criminal intentions of the jarl watered down his happiness. But he hoped that there would not be any battles or lootings.

Olaf did not foresee how this campaign would end.

Meanwhile, the severe warriors taught him to control the sail and to row for long periods of time.

He became close friends with the helmsman Vagni, who told him and showed him, among other things, how to operate the rudder and how to determine the course from the stars.

² A typical ship used by Vikings (translator’s note).

They sailed farther south than they had ever done before.

The jarl had decided to amaze everyone with a great booty.

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Olaf remembered this battle for the rest of his life.

Since he was still an adolescent and wasn't prepared for true combat, he was assigned, together with the helmsman Vagni (whose death would be too great of a loss for any campaign), to protect the drekkar, which would not be attacked according to the calculations of Biyorn. And the other warriors left to fight on land.

However, Olaf was not able to avoid the battle, for three of the local warriors climbed onto the ship. Vagni fought with two of them, and the third attacked Olaf.

He was much bigger and stronger, but Olaf was able to block his attacks with success. Later he even wounded the third warrior on his right forearm, but in that same moment a sharp pain shot through his arm as well, even though Olaf was not wounded. The pain that *he* caused instantly reflected *onto his own body*. He became dizzy and blind for some time and almost dropped his sword. Vagni, who had already wounded and disarmed his two attackers, arrived just in time to save him from an inevitable death.

Soon Olaf saw how Richard was killed. It all happened as if in a dream. Olaf watched everything from far away and, therefore, could not do anything.

The body of the one whom Olaf loved very much, now lied on the ground. The body resembled a hollow shell covered in blood, and around it there were more bodies.

There were not many who perished in this battle. The defenders of that town surrendered soon and then started loading the drekkar with the ransom that the jarl determined that they had to pay for their lives, the lives of their families, and the integrity of their houses.

Olaf watched all of this and his thoughts were full of pain. It further strengthened his understanding that the predatory raids of the Vikings were not heroic acts of strong people, as everyone around him thought, but crimes instead!

He had discussed this with his father many times before, but Richard saw no other way to survive. The lands where they lived were infertile and, besides, Richard had neither the desire nor the skills to live the life of a farmer.

So the atonement had arrived.

“What would have happened if I had refused to participate in this campaign? Perhaps, the loss of the only person dear to me is the severe punishment of the Gods³ so that I understand once and for all that one should not act against one’s own principles hoping that nothing happens? Isn’t it possible to live the life of a sailor without causing destruction and death to others?”

He felt as if he was now alone in this world.

“Where is that person who was my father? What will be his future?”

Vagni tried to comfort Olaf telling him how glorious it is to die in battle, for the brave warriors who die in this way go immediately to Valhalla⁴, where they meet Odin.

However, Olaf was not sure that this was true, since the purpose of this battle was the looting of other people and their death, and this, then, was a deliberate injustice!

The father of Olaf had told him before that his mother AINU knew how to see the Gods and converse with Them. She also said that souls do not die and that people invented many lies about the Gods and about the rules of life for mortals. These rules, used by people to justify their depraved life, are so different from the real Divine Laws.

She taught him to live in a completely different way than the way of other people. But Richard was not able to live this way without her, and he did not tell much to Olaf about what

³ The Holy Spirits.

⁴ The paradise for valiant warriors who have fallen in a battle.

Ainu was like and about what she taught. For he believed that this would only bring problems and additional difficulties to the life of the boy, because these ethical principles were too pure and completely dissimilar to the reality that was around them!

Olaf could barely remember his mother, for he was only five years old when she left. The biggest thing that he could remember when he thought about her was the state of his own infinite happiness coming from the tenderness of her love!

Later, on occasions, Olaf saw her face consisting of Light. Her lips moved as if she wanted to say something, but he did not hear these words. He only felt her tenderness and care that embraced him from all sides!

And now he was left completely alone. “How will I continue to live on? And why do I need to keep living?” he thought.

Olaf directed his mental questions to the world of the Gods and asked for Their help and understanding.

Meanwhile, all the Vikings rejoiced over the conquest of great riches! The death of some of their warriors was something typical. Fortune smiled upon them and they were returning with the drekkar full of wealth. They were triumphant!

Only the helmsman Vagni came to the jarl Biyorn and spoke to him gloomily and confidently:

“Stop the lading, Biyorn! The drekkar is overloaded! Greed will destroy all of us!”

“Shut up, Vagni! I want to take everything that now belongs to us! We have laded even more than this!”

“Yes, jarl, we indeed have laded more, but we navigated along shores in good weather and we stopped in bays for the night. But now the open ocean is waiting for us!”

“Stop the panic, helmsman! You are whining like a woman!”

Vagni became gloomy, turned aside, stopped arguing, and went to check if the load was properly secured.

* * *

Very soon the ship, which was overloaded by the booty, came across a storm. This storm was so strong that the drekkar could not resist it and began to sink. Vagni once again saved the life of Olaf by tying him to a piece of the mast. Olaf then fainted and did not know what happened to everyone else.

Having regained his senses, he saw how a person with a brown face leaned over his body. The man said something to him in his own language, which Olaf did not understand, and gave him something to drink.

In this way the destiny of Olaf, controlled by the Divine Will, changed drastically and unexpectedly.

For what reason? To give him the possibility to search for the answers to the questions about the meaning of human life and to study them in new conditions, more appropriate for this.

Chapter Three: **In the Southern Lands**

A few months passed before Odin continued His narration about Olaf, and when this happened, I found myself at an unexpected turn. Before me, images of a Mauritanian styled palace, which reminded me, by its beauty, of the Alhambra, began to unfold.

There, among other things, there was a patio with an arched marble colonnade around its entire perimeter that provided shade during the stifling middle of the day. Refreshing streams flowed from one pool to another gleaming in the sun and murmuring. Each pool had a beautiful mosaic on its bottom. There was also a garden with orange trees and peach trees, and a large room decorated in oak wood served as a library.

“Where is all of this, Odin?”

“This is the south of Spain during the greatest flourishing of the Arab caliphate. In those times, almost all the countries of the Mediterranean constituted an integral part of this great world of the Arab Empire and of its religious and cultural influence.”

*** * ***

A brown-skinned Arab, who was not very young and who was the owner of that luxurious palace, walked through the market being accompanied by his armed bodyguards. The market was located near the port. Everything was sold here, from gold-plated jewels and fabrics to aromatic spices and mature fruits, from fish and clams to slaves. An adolescent was the subject of a negotiation between a buyer and seller. It was possible to hear their conversation:

“No, you are wanting too much! He may not even live until tomorrow, and then I will lose my money!” said a buyer who was indignant and who wanted to pay less for the slave.

But the seller did not yield, saying:

“He only looks weak! He is very robust and will be a good worker! It was not more than yesterday that we fished him up from the sea! If he managed to survive there, he will not die here!”

“But this almost dead little fish is not worth this money!” said the buyer and continued on his way.

The eminent Arab attentively looked at the young boy, who was Olaf, and paid the seller what he was asking for. Then he motioned for Olaf to follow him. The latter did not even try to escape, since he barely had enough strength to walk.

*** * ***

The name of this eminent Arab was Amin Abduljadi. He not only rescued Olaf from slavery, but also treated him as his own son given to him by Allah in place of his only other son who recently passed away.

Amin began to educate and teach Olaf as his heir. He was very rich and possessed many merchant ships that carried both travelers and cargo across the Mediterranean Sea.

Subsequently, he and Olaf travelled very often together on these ships. Thus, Olaf learned to sail and to carry out trade negotiations, for Amin dreamed of handing over all of his affairs soon.

Olaf learned Arabic very quickly, since Amin Abduljadi hired many professors for him. He studied Islam in all the beauty of its Sufi wisdom, the philosophy of the Greeks and Romans of ancient times, the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, mathematics, and astronomy.

Amin was not a religious fanatic. He called himself a philosopher and did not force Olaf to adopt Islam.

At times they discussed the differences that exist in the beliefs of people. This topic always interested Olaf, because he wanted to find the truth hidden in the many religious doctrines of different nations, which he could now observe and study.

* * *

One time they rested on the sea in a small sailboat that Olaf had already learned to steer perfectly. It was a clear morning and a gentle breeze filled the sail.

They talked about the differences that exist among religious beliefs.

Amin explained to Olaf his own worldview with the following words:

“I love the wisdom and beauty in everything!

“I enjoy the beauty of this day and of the blue waters of this calm sea!

“I love these seagulls that fill the expanse above the sea with their voices!

“I receive Truth from everywhere, no matter where it comes from. For me there is no difference if wise words come from the mouth of a Muslim or from a Christian who

adores the Sacred Scriptures and worships Jesus or any other manifestation of the Power of God, no matter what name they call Him.

“I believe that there is only one God beneath all the disagreements of human beliefs!

“Here, in this country, we can see how many people live in complete harmony, even though their beliefs are different. If the Arabs began to annihilate those who follow different beliefs, we would be surrounded by ruins instead of the flourishing of culture, of art, and of commerce. But now, many people adopt Islam voluntarily.”

“Yes, but this occurs because the slaves get their freedom in this way. And other people do this so that they do not have to pay taxes for the right to follow their own faith. There are also those who do this to obtain a preferred position in society.”

“You are right Olaf. Many people want to gain earthly profit from everything, including from their religious life. They believe that this will bring them happiness and success.

“However, happiness has a different nature and is discovered through love for God, the Almighty and Merciful Lord of all!”

“But if God is One, as you say, why then do such different beliefs exist? Do the gods adored by people really exist or is this simply an inherited tradition?

“My father told me that my mother could talk with God. Can you also do this? Can you listen to God, ask Him questions, and receive His answers? Can you teach me to do this?”

“I myself cannot, but I find the answers to my questions in the sacred books.

“If you would like, I can invite a sage, a Sufi, who says that he can listen to and understand the words of Allah. It would be interesting for you to speak with him!”

* * *

The name of this Sufi was Ali Djamal.

“Tell me, oh venerable one, can you listen to Allah?” asked Olaf.

“Yes, I can!”

“And why can’t I do this? Why can’t other people do this either?”

Ali Djamal was silent for a while looking at Olaf attentively and later answered him thus:

“God speaks with a person *in the language of the heart*.

“Those who learn this language will be able to understand God.

“The ability to perceive God with the spiritual heart that can see and hear is a simple and accessible ability for each person! And this ability is easily developed by the one who knows how to love! You already know how to do this! And you only have to learn a little bit more in order to understand the Highest!”

“But I do not hear His words even though I want to! I have so many questions for God!”

“Do not be in a hurry. You will be able to listen when it is time!

“Meanwhile, you can feel His Will in the same way as you feel the favorable wind that fills the sail and gives the ship the power to move. Or, on the contrary, you can feel it like the warning in the sea when the black clouds cover the sky and the blasts of wind burst.

“With time, everything around you will become an open book wherein you will see His Divine indications and learn to understand them.

“You will realize that the Divine Power always abides inside you, in the depths of the spiritual heart!

“Yet, some other events in your life must first occur before you can feel the Power of Allah in all His magnitude.”

So, Olaf gradually began to learn all this, in the same way as every person can learn it. For this, he transferred the center of his perception of the world to his chest, in which

not only breathing is performed and the heart beats, but also love is born.

And with this love, the soul can embrace everything that it sees around itself! And then the spiritual heart can grow and become gigantic!

Olaf could do this especially well on the open sea during good weather. It seemed to him that he could embrace with his love all the sea and all the lands and that his love could even reach those places where he had previously lived! It also seemed to him that he could embrace his mother and his father, even though they had left this world, and many other people whom he loved and respected, as well as others whom he had never seen!

In this love of his, there was the tenderness of the morning sun. There, the power similar to the power of the ocean also grew! God, Who created all of this and Who loves everything and everyone, was present in this love!

It seemed that just a little more was left before it would be possible to listen to the answers to all his questions and understand all the setbacks of human destinies. But this did not happen, and the sensation of the happiness of the Mergence with the All-Powerful Sovereign of the world disappeared for a time. In this case, the habitual perception of the ordinary material world and of people returned to Olaf.

* * *

One time, Amin Abduljadi asked Ali Djamal:

“Tell me, what destiny do you see for Olaf? Will he abandon me? He longs to return to the land where he was born and raised, and I feel that if I let him do this, I will never see him again. Do I have the right to keep him here?”

“This young man, given to you by Allah for his education, is special. Even I, who have been walking toward the light my entire life, cannot understand his entire destiny. It is this way because he came from the Source of this Light!

“Soon he himself will come to know what is necessary about himself, but not now. One more important event must

happen to him before this, and then he will remember his Divine Nature and bring the Light of Truth to this world!

“I do not have the right to intervene in his destiny. I can only help him a little and teach him certain things.

“Still, I can console you and tell you that you will abandon this life and pass to other worlds in his arms.”

* * *

Many years passed. Olaf sailed with commercial missions all over the Mediterranean Sea. He had business with some European countries and carried out increasingly distant sea voyages.

He gathered in his ship a group of brave and faithful sailors, and each one of them became a loyal friend.

Olaf knew that we would have to travel north! He knew this in the same way that he knew the Will of God, and he only waited for the right time to come.

Thanks to the lessons of Ali Djamaal, Olaf not only learned to *feel* the Will of God, but he could *listen* to His advice and indications as he addressed Him with his questions. He felt His Love, His Power, and His constant presence more and more vividly.

When Amin Abduljadi, who had replaced his father, left this world, Olaf understood that God filled the new course of his destiny with a favorable wind.

Chapter Four: **Journey to the North**

It is silent. Mist floats on a small lake that is lodged among pine-covered hills. Here at a certain time Odin began to tell me this saga.

Now He once again fills the silence, which embraces me from all sides, with His words:

“Can you hear me well in this silence? Are you ready to write down the next chapter of the saga?”

The presence of Odin begins to increase like a rising wave of the sea and envelops me completely.

He continues His narration.

*** * ***

Olaf stopped his ship at a small seaport. It was a necessary to replenish the supply of provisions before the final voyage.

Before this, the members of his crew had refilled all the containers with fresh water from a very clean little river.

Now in the city, they bought everything else that they needed.

However, for some reason, Olaf kept having the sensation that he should do something more important in this city.

Olaf’s companions were astonished and wondered why they had been at this “stinky place” for three days already. Still, they were accustomed to trusting Olaf, and for this reason only, they waited.

Olaf also waited for at least some sign from God to continue the journey or a clear explanation on what he should do. For the moment, he heard only the following direction: “You must stay here to pay off your last debts. Then your path will be clean and clear!”

But Olaf never borrowed anything. He was raised by his adoptive father with the understanding that being a debtor in big or small things is a heavy burden that prevents one from living correctly, because it does not allow one to feel oneself as being free. In addition, unpaid debts aggravate the destiny of a person.

Olaf did not understand what he should do now.

“When will we finally leave?!” this question was on the tip of the tongue of every one of his companions, but they stayed silent.

“We will leave soon. Get ready to sail. I only have to go through the city one more time,” Olaf told them.

He decided to be in solitude for some time in order to try to understand what he should see, hear, or give back here.

*** * ***

Narrow dirty streets, stinky smells, noise, chaos, and rude shouts were all around him, and there was not a single sign from God!

Olaf started walking resolutely towards the sea. The cool breeze cleaned the dirtiness of this suffocating and crowded city. Olaf thought: “Enough with this waiting! If something must be done, God will show me this clearly!”

Near one of the ships at the berth, he heard the following conversation:

“Are you in need of a marine pilot⁵? I can steer your ship wherever you need me to.”

“Get lost, you poor old man! You cannot even see what is under your feet! Perhaps you were once a marine pilot, but now it is time for you to open the path to the other world! This place is only for the young, leave it!” the man responded and burst out laughing.

The old man turned his back in silence and headed for the next ship.

Olaf decided to give this old man some gold coins and accelerated his pace.

Suddenly, he recognized that this person was Vagni, the helmsman!

The joy of this understanding overflowed Olaf! He called out to him in a loud voice:

“I need you, helmsman Vagni! We are sailing north and our path is long and dangerous! Would you like to come with us?” Olaf spoke in the native language of Vagni, whose sounds he had not heard in a long time.

⁵ A marine pilot is a sailor that steers the ships in dangerous waters or in intense traffic, like ports, narrow canals, or rivers (translator’s note).

Vagni turned around. In his burnt-out gaze and hunched body, a formerly powerful and calm sailor awoke! Hope arose! It seemed that this hope was rising slowly from the depths of the sea, the hope of liberation from this miserable and humiliating life in a foreign country. It was also the hope of returning home. Vagni did not recognize Olaf, for more than twenty years had passed.

“Do you remember Olaf, the boy whose life you saved twice, helmsman?”

“You survived in those times? Are you going back and can you take me with you?”

“Yes!”

Olaf hugged Vagni, who still did not fully believe his luck.

A boy who looked to be about ten or twelve years old and who carried small merchandise on a tray fastened with a strap that passed over his shoulder, heard the conversation between Olaf and Vagni.

He understood the words of his native tongue that was foreign here and addressed Olaf, saying:

“Take me with you, sir! My name is Roon, and I will be a skald⁶ in your battles and feasts! I ‘drank the honey of Odin’ and I know how to compose heroic songs! Do not worry that I am so skinny! It is only an appearance! I will not be a burden for you! I will glorify your deeds and your kindness! I am also from the north! Take me with you! If you leave right now, my owner will not be able to catch me and he will never find me!”

A boy who was both weak and, in appearance, sickly was something unexpected for Olaf.

But then he remembered how he himself looked in the slave market and thought that he must have looked the same or worse.

Well, at least now he understood which debts God had told him about!

Olaf ransomed this boy from his master.

⁶ A Viking war poet (translator’s note).

The crew of Olaf gained two new members, and they finally continued on their journey.

* * *

They were on the open sea. The aft wind filled their sail, and the ship glided smoothly over the small waves. Olaf held the steering oar firmly, and Vagni was at his side. After spending a few days with Olaf, it seemed that he had rejuvenated.

He told how he had survived after the sinking of the drekkar, how he was able to return, how he participated in new Viking campaigns to the lands of the Franks, how he almost died there after a grave injury, and how he led a hard and lonely life abroad.

Olaf also told a little about his life.

Vagni was surprised by what he saw on the ship. He could not believe that people of different nationalities and beliefs could work side by side with such harmony.

He asked Olaf:

“In your crew there are Christians. Are you not afraid that they will betray you?”

“It took me a long time to choose my companions among the brave sailors for this expedition. I rescued many of them from slavery and many of them have traveled with me more than once when I performed the merchant duties of my adoptive father. I trust each one of them, and each one of them is faithful to me.

“And what about you, Vagni, did you begin to hate the people among whom you had to live? Hatred destroys one’s health and ruins the life path of the one who hates, condemns, and despises others!”

“You are talking as if you approve of the Christian ideals?”

“I consider some of these ideals to be wise and just! I follow many of the commandments of Jesus in my life, and this makes me happy!”

“Did you change your faith? Did you become a Muslim or a Christian?”

“No, Vagni! I changed my faith for the Knowledge!” Olaf smiled. “And the commandments about love announced by Jesus also come from the One Divine and Eternal Source of the Truth!”

“So, you still haven’t abandoned your childish ideals of ‘justice’ then?”

“Not at all, Vagni! Not only did I not abandon them, but I also understood their Deep Foundation that lies in the Laws of the All-Powerful Creator of this entire world!

“The majority of people are accustomed to dividing everything into what is ‘theirs’ and what is ‘foreign’.

“In doing so, they love, protect, and respect what is ‘theirs’, *their* children, *their* beloved women, *their* country, or *their* faith. Each person can have different degrees of understanding and feeling of this small world of ‘theirs’.

“On the other hand, that which is outside of what is ‘theirs’ is considered ‘foreign’. And so, it is okay to hate and despise ‘foreigners’ because they are different and live in a different way. It is okay to take their lands and riches by force.

“It is called ‘heroism’ and ‘feats’, to take from ‘foreigners’ and give it to ‘our people’. This engenders hatred between people, between countries, between towns and brings wars and other calamities to the destinies of people.

“It is important to understand That Which exists above all of this. It is the One and All-Powerful God Who created this Earth — one for all beings — and these seas and oceans — one for all as well — and the trees, and the grass, and the fish, and the birds, and the other animals who live in the forests, and the same people, and the sun that rises above us all and give us its light without any discrimination.

“The understanding of this allows us to stop dividing the world into parts and understand that everything comes for the Creator and exists for the Creator!”

“But is it possible to love ‘foreigners’, as you say?”

“At one point you, Vagni, began to love a “foreign” boy and taught him to steer the drekkar, did you not? Now look how strong my arms are and how easy it is for me to set the course by using the stars! All of this is the fruit of your love!

“Well, they are not just fruits of your love, but of many other people as well.

“And my second father adopted me, a “foreign” boy, and educated me as his own beloved son! I hope I never gave him a reason to regret this!”

“It is difficult for me to understand you, Olaf, for you think in a completely different way than all those whom I have known up until now! Apparently, I am too old to change, but I will try!” said Vagni.

“It’s never too late to understand the Truth, Vagni!”

“And are you sure that this is the Truth?”

“I am verifying this with my life! And God speaks with me through every event that He sends to my life, and to your life as well, Vagni! After all, I was able to find you in that little city thanks to His directions! And now before us the entire expanse is open for new discoveries and feats!”

Chapter Five: **Olaf and Anika**

We are sitting near a fire in the woods. Its calm flame gives us warmth and comfort.

It is a chilly spring morning. The sun recently began to rise above the horizon. The new day is awake, and the birds greet the dawn with their songs that decorate the silence of the forest!

Odin began to speak:

“Love between a soul and God usually has a story that lasts more than one earthly life. I took care of you, as well as of many other people, for many lives.

“I watched over your development in this life from the very beginning! I bathed you in My lakes! I taught you to admire the beauty and to love everything around you! I sat with you near many fires without you noticing Me or recognizing Me.

“And then many of your years of studying Me have united us even more firmly.

“Now I am telling you stories about earthly love and about Heavenly Love. With the Waves of My Tenderness, I again and again embrace you and every one who reads these lines!

“By using the emotions of the heroes of this saga, I want to embrace everyone with My Light and submerge everyone in My Depths! Now let the words sound in which one can hear the voices of seagulls and feel the splashes of the waves against the sides of the boat!

“May the fragrance of the flowers and the salty taste of the drops of the sea reach every soul!

“May the expanse of My northern lands be so palpable that, by only reading, one can expand oneself over this vastness, loving every pebble and every pine, which found the strength to take root in a crag and not fall from the strong bursts of the winter wind!”

Odin easily opens the image of His northern lands before my inner vision. There, granite rocks rise on both sides of the fjord⁷; the streams of the waterfalls fall in some places of the cliffs; the pines manage to keep their trunks with their strong roots in the steep slopes; the crystalline surface of the water reflects the sky with the delicate tracery of the white clouds.

It seems like we are flying, as consciousnesses, above the surface of this mirror of water! I begin to hear the sounds of oars touching the water!

⁷ A large narrow inlet of the sea on the coast located between steeply sloped mountains, typical of some Nordic countries (translator's note).

* * *

The ship glided smoothly over the waters entering into the fjord. The movements of the rowers were harmonious and rhythmic. It seemed that the cliffs, covered with trees in some places, floated to the right and to the left.

Ahead, an entrance to a small bay opened up. The small and long houses of the Vikings were lodged here, protected from the winds by the large cliffs.

Not many merchants dared to enter these fjords, because those who lived here were accustomed to taking what the merchant ships carried with the aid of arms. The one who dared to offer his or her merchandise in this place, especially that expensive merchandise which Olaf brought, had to have great courage and strength.

Olaf's lightweight and agile ship flew in like a seagull in the bay. The boardwalks touched the small pebbles. Olaf disembarked and walked towards the armed people who left their houses.

He said:

“We have come in peace! From my travels to faraway lands, I have brought you my merchandise: golden wheat, white rice, fabrics, and jewels. If the owner of these lands allows me, I offer to your warriors and to your mothers and wives all that they desire!”

The jarl Ingvar, who was the head of the clan, the governor of that community, and the owner of those lands and of some drekkars, personally went out to meet Olaf:

“Well, merchant! Bring your goods and we will look at them!”

The companions of Olaf began to empty the trunks and sacks and put the merchandise inside the main house of that community.

Meanwhile, the jarl asked Olaf:

“Why are you not afraid that I will take away everything that you brought and your life for good measure?”

“Those who live in fear hide themselves in their houses instead of sailing the oceans! You are a warrior and you know that fear leads to defeat in a battle!

“Fear is destructive not only in the battlefield, but it also brings undertakings into ruin.

“Brave people, however, ‘go after the horizon’ and God is behind their back, as a Protector, and shows them the way!

“If we reach an agreement, I will come back to your hospitable bay after one year and after two years and I will bring the new exotic goods that destiny will send to me.”

“You are brave and speak in a beautiful way! We respect the brave! You are right! We will gladly listen to you in the future!”

Meanwhile, they began to hear the excited voices of the women who were inspecting the fabrics and jewels displayed on the tables.

*** * ***

Anika was the only daughter of the jarl Ingvar.

She was as beautiful as a tender and delicate spring flower, slender with long blonde hair up to her waist, tied back by a thin ribbon around her head. Her blue eyes were the same color as the clear sky. She wore a white dress with the fine embroidery of blue flowers around her neck, and a belt made with threads surrounded her precious waist.

Fragile and tender compared to the people around her, she was different and special.

She saw Olaf, and from this moment on, she did not look at the brocade or the precious stones, or the fine drawings on the buckles, or the different necklaces, or the earrings, or the little filigree chains. Now she only looked at him until their eyes met.

And when this happened, what people call “love at first sight” occurred. A radiance ignited in the souls, that radiance which attracts one soul to the other!

“Who is she?” Olaf asked the jarl Ingvar after a time that seemed to be an eternity.

“She is my daughter Anika. But do not look at her like that! She is not for you, merchant! I am going to marry her to the owner of some nearby lands. This kinship will bring me great luck! I will be the supreme sovereign of all the local jarls!”

Olaf did not answer, because first he had to make sure that she wanted to unite her life with his. And if this were the case, there would be no obstacles!

*** * ***

The jarl Ingvar invited Olaf and his crew to stay several days to rest from their long sea voyage. In addition, he decided to hold a feast with a competition between the friends of Olaf and his warriors. He wanted to show his superiority over these foreigners.

Olaf did not have anything against this, because his friends also agreed to rest there, to participate in the competition, and to show their mastery in the handling of swords and bows.

On the day of the competition, while everyone was preparing for the tournament, Olaf and Anika moved away from the others and headed for the shore where they could talk alone having hidden themselves from curious eyes.

The most important thing had already been said between them with their words, with their looks, with their touches, and with the tenderness of the love that was burning stronger and stronger!

Anika looked at Olaf in such a way that he no longer had any doubts that fate had given him a mutually experienced love!

It was as if they had begun living in another world that illuminated everything around them with a state of growing happiness rising from mutual understanding and unity of souls in the shining Light!

“Tell me about yourself, Olaf! I want to know everything about you! Where were you born? Where did you live? And what is important to you?”

“But you yourself have not told me anything about you.”

“Why should I if you can see me like the palm of your hand? Besides, my life is so simple that I do not have anything to tell! My years passed by each one like the next! I rejoiced with the arrival of spring, with the flocks of swans that fly above my house, with the flowers that open themselves up. Then summer arrived, and the tender sun warmed both me and all of nature, which also rejoiced in the short northern heat. Then autumn and winter arrived, and I spent many sunsets near the flame of the fire doing sewing chores. So, I have nothing to tell. You, on the other hand, have seen and known much!”

“I was born in the lands of the north, much further east than here. I became an orphan very early, and destiny brought me to the southern lands. There a person, who later became my adoptive father, educated and taught me.”

“What God do you worship? How should I pray for your wellbeing and protection?”

“In my travels, I was able to study the many beliefs that exist in different countries and among different people.

“Through these studies, I recognized the sovereignty of one God Who governs the entire universe. It does not matter if one calls Him Odin, Allah, or Elohim! I believe that to each people He sends His Messengers, which is why there are many Who are called Gods. Those who know the Primordial as the Truth, the Wisdom, the Love, the Perfection, and the Omnipotence also know that just as all rivers, seas, and oceans consist of water, all beliefs are similar to the sounds of the different languages used to designate the One Divine Power.

“No doubt, there exists what the people themselves added to the legends about God and His Messengers, and this is why many misinterpretations of the Truth arose in the beliefs of people.

"It is similar to a reflection in the water. Without wind, this reflection is perfect, but when there is wind, the movement on the surface of the water creates alterations, and if the waves are very strong, you cannot see anything anymore. In spite of this, that which is reflected does not cease to exist, it does not matter if we can see the reflection or not."

"You speak so well, Olaf! Tell me, how did you decide to come here with such expensive merchandise?"

"I dreamed about returning here for many years. So, I assembled a team of brave sailors and faithful friends. I will introduce you to each one of them! We have stayed in many places, and no one has created an obstacle for the peace and friendship that I have proposed."

"And in all these places the beautiful women could not keep their eyes off of you?" Anika jokingly asked.

"Possibly. But I found you!

"Love is the most beautiful state of the human soul! And you gave me the happiness of being able to love you!"

"Why do you not seek to participate in this competition that my father organized? Your friends also want this entertainment. Are you not afraid that they will think you are weak? Do you really want to be here with me and not there?"

"Yes, I want to be with you and not be separated from you even for a moment!

"I control the sword and the bow fairly well, but I believe that one should not use arms without extreme necessity. I am not afraid to appear weak because I know my strength. But I saw several times how my loved ones perished.

"It is difficult for me to explain it now with words, but I learned the law of the Creator that calls on us to not cause unjustified harm to anyone.

"Therefore, one should not even tear out a small flower without extreme necessity!

"Right now, looking at these forget-me-nots near the water, I see in each one of them a small manifestation of the

marvelous beauty of the entire Earth, this beautiful Creation of God!

“And the plants not only manifest the beauty of the Creation that delights us, but they also feed our flesh with their fruits, and, through this, their strength adds to the strength of each one of us.

“The suffering and the pain of assassinated animals or the suffering of people due to enmity among themselves is, in my opinion, what violates the Laws that please the Lord Who created all of this.”

“Do you really believe that there can be Perfection on Earth?” asked Anika.

“How can you doubt this, experiencing the delight of the love that has brought us together?”

They embraced each other and united their lips.

Later, when they continued their conversation, Olaf said:

“It is important to understand that what people consider to be an ideal for themselves does not always really bring them closer to the authentic Perfection.

“Many consider kindness and mercy as weakness, while force, cruelty, and certainty in the right to avenge oneself are considered to be bravery. It is not easy to change these convictions.

“The victories in this tournament will entertain the pride of many. For some, these victories will serve as lessons in the art of combat, while for others they will be a motive for envy.”

“But I believe that this tournament will not cause harm to anyone! If you triumph, it will be more likely that my father will agree to marry me with you!”

“I am not sure of this, Anika, but we can try it. Alright, let this competition be for me too! Let’s go!”

They held hands and walked happily towards the crowd of spectators and participants. When they arrived, the jarl looked at his daughter disapprovingly, but she gave him a brave and firm look back. The happiness and love made her fearless. Then the jarl understood that now it would be

difficult for him to get the obedience of his daughter and he regretted having started this feast. However, it was too late.

* * *

The entire community, from children to adults, gathered to see the duels. Even the women with children who were breastfeeding came to see how the foreigners fought.

Among the friends of Olaf, there were some Africans and their dark skin was the subject of wonder. Everyone was also interested in the armament of the friends of Olaf, who had lightweight swords and sabers, as well as thin armor that shined like scales.

Every person wondered if this armor would resist the strong blows and also how these foreigners would fight.

In the beginning, each fighter competed in shooting bows.

Later, the duels with swords began. Whoever lost left the competition, and whoever won continued to compete.

Olaf beat everyone. No one could compare with him in the speeds of his attacks and his defenses. It seemed that he predicted every movement of his adversary before that person could even move. The attacks of Olaf were so precise that he did not even injure his opponent. Instead he simply put his sword in such a position that the next movement would be fatal for his rival.

Initially, Ingvar wanted to fight with this merchant to give him a lesson, but, seeing how his best warriors were defeated one after another, he decided not to participate in the tournament.

Together with all the others, he greeted the victor saying:

“Ask for any prize, merchant! You are, truly, a powerful warrior!”

“I ask you for the most beautiful treasure in the whole world! Let me marry your daughter, jarl Ingvar!”

“You are bold, stranger! But these matters are not resolved so quickly!”

“You will give me a great ransom for my daughter! You will bring your boat filled with gold and jewels to this bay once again! And only then will we celebrate the marriage. Of course, you will leave me what my people did not buy now as an advance payment. You promised to come here again. So, I will wait for you for one year. Are you rich enough to gather such a ransom?”

“I have enough gold and jewels to fulfill this. But let your daughter marry me now. My word is as firm as the blows of my sword. And later you will receive what you want!”

“No, merchant! First bring me the gold! There is no other way! And hurry! For if you do not return after one year, I have another candidate, the union with which will give me the same influence as your gold!

“Now let’s feast! Prepare the tables with the food!”

Everyone ate, and the young skald Roon sang his beautiful songs about brave warriors and about the heroes of the legends of different people. He sang about the love of the bride waiting for her fiancé.

He not only sang the ancient songs, but he composed new lines listening to them in the world known only by poets. Everyone applauded him, for in these lands the art of the skalds was appreciated in almost the same way as the valor of the warriors.

Chapter Six: **Leaving to Return**

Odin stopped his narration for some time.

I waited for the continuation of the story for several months.

On that day we meditated amidst beautiful expanses of meadows that extended for many kilometers to the left and to the right. In our wooded lands, such places are rare.

On the gently sloped hills, angelica plants flowered whose tender fragrance saturated the air heated by the

sunlight. Soon fireweed will also bloom and then there will be even more beauty around us!

Odin came!

He had never come in this way before.

The Light began to rise from the Depths, and suddenly all the fireweed flowers opened simultaneously on the non-material plane! This happened not only near my body, but also at a great distance. Everywhere, the blossoming sea of meadows became covered in resplendent pink foam! It is impossible to transmit this beauty with words!

At the same time, Odin filled all this expanse above the surface of the Earth with the Tenderness that arises and pours out from the Divine Depths, similar to a universal ocean!

I even got a little confused by this Beauty manifested so Divinely and grandiosely! Tears of happiness welled up in my eyes!

Odin maintained this beautiful painting, so intensely filled with His Love, for a long time!

Then He continued His narration.

* * *

Olaf and Anika walked, holding hands, amidst the pink sea of fireweed in bloom.

“Travel with me right now, Anika! I love you and you love me! It is too long to wait for the consent of your father, and during this year, in which he waits to receive the ransom, much can change!”

Olaf knew in this moment that a great obstacle lied ahead. He felt the danger, but he did know whom this danger was threatening, him or Anika. He did not have any idea how it could be prevented, but he hoped that the difficulties would only come to his path. He did not want to frighten his loved one.

Meanwhile, Anika said:

“My love for you will remain unchanged, Olaf! I don’t want to risk your life! Your ship is fast, but the drekkars of

my father have more rowers. And if you take me against his will, they will begin to pursue us. And if they reach us, a cruel death awaits you, and I await an even more terrible fate, which is the life without you! I ask that you fulfill what my father wants and bring the heavy ransom that he asked you for, and then I will be with you always! I will wait for you, no matter what happens! Only death can stop this!”

“Alright, let it be as you wish! I will return for you and bring as much gold and jewels as your father asked me for. Only death can stop me!”

“My love, I cannot travel with you right now, but I can become your wife without waiting an entire year for this! I love you! May all the Gods be witnesses of our love!

“For if something happens with you or with me in this year, we would not forgive ourselves for not using this time when we were together!”

*** * ***

That which happens in the bridal chamber between a man and a woman, called husband and wife, is sacred, and this sacred union should be hidden from the eyes of others.

And that which opens up to those who truly love each other during the union of souls and bodies is impossible to transmit with the help of words.

Olaf and Anika understood the great happiness of this union. All the earth was their conjugal bed and the sky covered them with itself as if with a blanket!

The Gods rejoiced for these people in love, for this love was preparation for the Great Love that unites a soul with the Creator of the entire universe!

*** * ***

The week before Olaf’s departure passed by like a happy dream.

And when the ship departed, having hoisted the white sail, Olaf stood at the stern holding the steering wheel. He

did not look back. The meeting with his beloved was waiting for him! After a year, we would return here and Anika would be his forever!

She, on the other hand, stood on the edge of the cliff and whispered: “Great Gods of all the lands and seas, protect my loved one no matter where he goes on his journey! May he return! I will wait for you, my dear!”

[The translation will be continued.]