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The Light Between Us

Written by Laura Lynne Jackson

Published by Century

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1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Century
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 2SA

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Penguin
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First published in the UK by Century in 2015

www.randomhouse.co.uk

A CIP catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

ISBN HB 9781780894096
TPB 9781780894102
Ebook 9781473518971

Printed and bound by Clays Ltd, St Ives Plc



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I N T R O D U C T I O N

I WAS ON JERICHO TURNPIKE, heading west, when the messages started coming in.

I squeezed the wheel of my Honda Pilot and swerved right, pulling into a Staples parking lot. I hit the brakes and came to a stop halfway into a spot.

I wasn't ready for them. Just a bit earlier I'd been taking deep breaths, trying to stay calm, because I was so nervous. Scared to death, really. Soon I would be in a room filled with suffering people. My role that evening was to try to ease their pain. My fear was that I would make it worse.

I was wearing a plain black shirt and black pants. I didn't want anyone to be distracted by patterns on my shirt or flowers on my dress. I'd skipped dinner, because I was too anxious to eat. My husband, Garrett, wasn't home from work yet, so I'd asked my mother to watch our two young children until he got back. I was running late and I tried to make up some time on the busy road, but traffic was slow.

Then, suddenly, they started to come to me.

The children.

All at once, as a group, they were there. It was astonishing. It

was like being alone in a room when suddenly the door opens and ten or fifteen people come in. You might not even see them or hear them, but still you know they're there—you can *feel* them. You know you're not alone anymore. That is what it felt like in my Honda Pilot—I knew I wasn't alone.

Then came the words and names and stories and pleas and descriptions and images and all the things they wanted to share, so many I had to slow them down.

"Wait a second, wait a second," I said aloud as I fumbled in my purse for my little red notepad and pen. I started writing as fast as I could, but I couldn't keep up with all the messages I was getting. It was all just pouring out.

Tell them I am still here, one said.

Tell them I am still part of their lives, said another.

Tell them, "I love you and I see everything that goes on."

Please don't cry for me. I'm okay.

I am not dead. I am still your child.

Don't think of me as gone. I am not gone.

Please tell them I'm not gone!

I sat in my crookedly parked car outside Staples and kept scribbling—a woman surrounded by children no one else could see.

Finally, after a few minutes, I tucked the notes in my purse, got back on the road, and drove as fast as I could to the Huntington Hilton on Broad Hollow Road. I raced through the hotel lobby and found the conference room where the event was being held. A sign outside gave only a hint of what would happen that night. It read, "How to Listen When Your Children Speak."

The conference room was ordinary—brown curtains, overhead lights, plush carpet, swivel chairs. In the middle of the room there was a large rectangular table with nineteen people seated stiffly around it. When I walked in they all turned toward me and

fell completely silent. Their faces were sad and haunted. It felt like a full minute before anyone so much as breathed.

These were the parents.

The evening's hosts, Phran and Bob Ginsberg—the directors of the Forever Family Foundation—came over and broke the tension. They hugged me hello and offered me a chair. I said no thanks—there was no way I could sit, I was way too nervous. Bob stood in front of the room and cleared his throat.

“This is Laura Lynne Jackson,” he said in a soft voice. “She’s a Certified Medium with the Forever Family Foundation, and she’s here tonight to help us learn how to talk to our children.”

Bob stepped aside and gave the floor to me. I took a deep breath and looked down at the scribbled notes in my hand. The parents stared at me, waiting. I didn’t know what to say or how to start. Another long moment passed, the thick, heavy silence returning.

No one knew what was coming next, least of all me.

Finally I just looked up and spoke.

“Your children are here,” I blurted out. “And there is something they want you to know.”



My name is Laura Lynne Jackson, and I am a wife, a mother, and a high school English teacher.

I am also a psychic medium.

I’m probably not what most people think of when they think of psychic mediums. I don’t read tea leaves or tarot cards, and I don’t work out of a storefront. I’m not a fortune-teller and I don’t own a crystal ball (well, okay, I do have a tiny decorative one, but only because I couldn’t resist buying it when I saw it in a store). I am simply someone who possesses a gift that is more focused in me than in others.

I am clairvoyant, which means I have the ability to gather information about people and events through means other than my five senses. I'm also clairaudient—I can perceive sounds through means other than my ears—and clairsentient, which allows me to feel things through nonhuman means.

I can, for instance, sit at a table in a restaurant and feel the distinct energy of the people who were there before me, as if they'd left dozens of bristling energy fingerprints. And if that energy strikes me in a negative way, I'll politely tell the hostess I'd rather sit somewhere else or, if it's the last open table, that I have to leave. Which doesn't always thrill my husband and kids. Or the hostess, for that matter.

Beyond my abilities as a psychic, I am also a medium, which means I am capable of communicating with people who have passed from this earth.

If your first question is how I got to be this way, my first answer is, I don't know. I've spent a lifetime trying to figure it out.

In my quest to find answers, I've undergone rigorous tests—first with the Forever Family Foundation, a nonprofit, science-based group that helps people in grief, and then with the Windbridge Institute for Applied Research in Human Potential in Arizona. At Windbridge, I passed an eight-step, quintuple-blind screening administered by scientists to become one of only a small group of Certified Research Mediums.

And yet, even as I was searching for answers—searching for my true purpose—I was also carefully hiding my abilities from the rest of the world. I didn't know where or how my abilities would fit into my life yet. I didn't know what I was supposed to do with them. For much of my life, I tried to carve a path for myself that did not involve being a psychic medium.

In my senior year of college I studied abroad at Oxford, and studied Shakespeare, determined to immerse myself in scholarship. After graduating I considered becoming a lawyer and was

accepted into two top law schools, but I decided to follow my passion to teach. For the longest time I thought of myself as a teacher, first and foremost. Aura readings and spirit communications didn't have a place in my academic life.

And so, for nearly twenty years, I led a secret double life.

By day I taught teenagers *Macbeth* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, but at night, while my husband watched the kids downstairs, I was upstairs in my bedroom having private phone conversations with celebrities and athletes and astronauts and politicians and CEOs and all kinds of people, giving them a glimpse of something beyond the accepted bounds of human experience.

But here is the remarkable thing I discovered in the course of leading that double life—I realized that I am not really that different. Though my abilities made me feel that I wasn't like other people, that I wasn't "normal," I came to see that being "gifted" in this way was not the gift itself.

The beautiful gift I've been given—the awareness that we are all connected by powerful cords of light and love, both here on earth and beyond—is a gift that belongs to us all.



Like my life, this book is a voyage from darkness to light. It tells the story of the journey I took toward understanding my true purpose and the ways we are connected to the world around us. What I hope most of all is that you find something in my journey that resonates in *your* life.

Because if you do, you might come to the same understanding that I did—that the powerful bonds that connect us to our loved ones here and in the afterlife can, if we open our hearts and minds to them, immeasurably enhance the way we live and love today.

But even after I came to that understanding, I never thought to share it with the world. I had no plans to write a book. Then, one day at the high school where I teach, while I was on hall duty,

I felt a sudden, immense download of information and insight from the universe. It felt like a lightning bolt that brought instant clarity. And the basic instruction was simple.

You are meant to share your story.

This had nothing to do with me; it had everything to do with the message. The life lessons that emerged from the readings I gave were not meant to be kept secret. They were meant to go out into the world.

I don't consider this book a memoir of my life, but I see my story as a means to share some of the most powerful and profound readings I have done over the years. Readings that connected people with their loved ones on the Other Side and, in the process, helped them heal old wounds, overcome their past, re-imagine their lives, and finally understand their true path and purpose in this world. These readings were immensely poignant and informative for me.

The readings, as well as my life story, are really all about the same thing—humanity's brave, relentless quest for answers. As a student of literature, I was encouraged to engage with the most profound questions of all: Why are we here? What does it mean to exist? What is our purpose in this life? I don't claim to have discovered all the answers to these questions. All I can do is tell my story. And I can share my belief that if we don't at least consider the possibility of an afterlife—if we don't look at the wealth of evidence that has surfaced in recent years about the endurance of consciousness—we are shutting ourselves off from a source of great beauty, comfort, healing, and love. But if we are open to having this conversation, we might become brighter, happier, more authentic people. Closer to our truth. Closer to our real selves. The very best version of who we are. The version that allows us to share our best selves with others, and in this way change the world.

That is all I want to do—have the conversation. I want to open

up the possibility that there is more than just our traditional way of looking at the world. I want to explore what I've seen time and again in my readings—that the universe operates on a principle of synchronicity, an unseen force that connects events and invests everything we do with meaning.

I want you to understand that this very book has found its way into your hands for a reason.

Most of all, I want to discuss an amazing truth that has become apparent to me through my work—that brilliant cords of light energy connect all of us here on earth and connect us further to our loved ones who have passed.

I can see these cords of light. I can see the light between us.

And because the light is there, binding us, intertwining our fates, because we all draw power from the same energy source, we know something else to be true.

Nobody lives a small life.

No one is forgotten by the universe.

All of us can greatly brighten the world.

It's just that some of us haven't yet recognized how powerful we are.



I don't expect my ideas to be accepted without resistance. I've been a teacher for nearly two decades and I'm not easily persuaded by half-baked theories or moon-eyed arguments. I have always taught my students to be critical thinkers—to probe and analyze and question—and that is how I've approached my gift. I've had my abilities tested by scientists and researchers. I've spoken with brave explorers and profound intellects. I've followed the scientific developments of the last quarter century that have given us astonishing new insights into human capacity.

I've come to understand how the many remarkable occurrences in my life are consistent with, and explainable by, what we

are just now learning about the power and endurance of human consciousness.

Even so, the most important lessons in this book do not come from scientists or researchers or explorers. And they certainly don't come from me. I am not a prophet or an oracle. All I am is a conduit.

The most important lessons come from teams of light beings reaching out to us from across the divide.

As a psychic medium, I have read for hundreds of people, some of them rich and famous, most of them not. In those readings I have connected them to their loved ones who are no longer on this earth. These loved ones who have passed offer us a miraculous view of existence and the universe.



The very first step of our journey is easy—it merely requires us to open our minds to the possibility that there is more to existence than what can easily be grasped by our five senses.

The vast majority of us do this already. Most of us believe in a higher power, whatever name we use to describe it. I refer to this higher power as the universe. Others call it God. I was raised to believe in God and I still do, but to me all religions are like a great big plate that's been broken into many pieces. All the pieces are different, but they're all still part of the same plate. The words we use to describe our beliefs aren't as important as the beliefs themselves.

And so we are already willing to believe in something bigger than ourselves—something we can't prove or explain or even fully comprehend. We are not afraid to take that leap. But if we take the *next* leap—the belief that our consciousness doesn't end with death but endures in a much greater journey—then something truly incredible happens.

Because if we can believe in an afterlife, we then must allow for the possibility that we can connect to it.

To be honest, if the astonishing things that happened in my life hadn't happened to me, I'm not sure I'd believe they were possible. But they did happen to me, so I know they're not just possible—I know they are real.

And I know that when we open our minds to the ways in which we're all entangled—a part of the same whole, encompassing past, present, and future—we begin to see connections and meaning and light where before all we saw was darkness.

PART ONE

Pop Pop

ON A SUNNY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON in August, when I was eleven years old, my sister, my brother, and I were splashing around in the three-foot-deep aboveground swimming pool in the backyard of our home on Long Island. There were only a handful of days left before the start of school, and we were trying to squeeze every last ounce of fun out of the summer. My mother came out to say she was going to see our grandparents in their home in Roslyn, about a fifty-minute drive away. For years I'd gone with her on trips to see my grandparents, and I'd always loved going. But as I got older other activities got in the way, so sometimes my mother would go by herself and leave us behind. On this beautiful summer day she knew she had no hope of getting any of us out of the pool.

"You kids have fun," she called out to us. "I'll be back in a few hours." And that should have been that.

But then, all of a sudden, I panicked.

I felt it deep in my bones. Sheer, inexplicable, ice-cold panic. I shot straight up in the pool and screamed out to my mother.

“Wait!” I yelled. “I have to come with you!”

My mother laughed. “It’s okay, stay,” she said. “Enjoy yourself, it’s a beautiful day.”

But I was already paddling furiously to the edge of the pool, my brother and sister watching and wondering what was wrong with me.

“No!” I hollered. “I want to come with you! Please, please wait for me.”

“Laura, it’s okay. . . .”

“No, Mom, I have to come with you!”

My mother stopped laughing. “All right, calm down,” she said. “Come inside, get changed, I’ll wait.”

I ran inside dripping wet, threw on some clothes, dashed back out, and got in the car still half drenched, still utterly panicked. One hour later we pulled into my grandparents’ driveway, and I saw my grandfather—whom I called Pop Pop—waving at us from the back porch. Only then, when I got to see him and hug him, did the panic subside. I spent the next few hours on the porch with Pop Pop, talking, laughing, singing, and telling jokes. When it was time to go I gave him a kiss and a hug and I told him, “I love you.”

I never saw him alive again.



I didn’t know Pop Pop had been feeling weak and tired. The grown-ups would never tell me something like that. When I was with him that day he was his usual self—warm, funny, playful. He must have summoned all his strength to appear healthy to me. Three days after my visit, Pop Pop went to see his doctor. The doctor gave him the devastating news that he had leukemia.

Three weeks later, Pop Pop was gone.

When my mother sat my sister, my brother, and me on the couch and gently told us Pop Pop had passed, I felt a blitz of emotions. Shock. Confusion. Disbelief. Anger. Profound sadness. A deep, dreadful feeling of already missing him.

Worst of all, I felt a terrible, shattering sense of guilt.

The instant I learned my grandfather was gone, I understood precisely why I'd been in such a panic to see him. I had known he was going to die.

Of course, I couldn't have really *known*. I didn't even know he was sick. And yet, somehow, I did know it. Why else would I have demanded to see him?

But if I did know it, why hadn't I articulated it—to Pop Pop, to my mother, or even to myself? I hadn't had a clear thought or even an inkling that anything was wrong with my grandfather, and I hadn't gone to visit him with any kind of understanding that it would be the last time I'd see him. All I had was a mysterious sense of knowing. I didn't understand it at all, but it made me feel horribly uncomfortable, as if I were somehow complicit in Pop Pop's passing. I felt like I had some connection to the cruel forces that had claimed his life, and that made me feel unimaginably guilty.

I started to think something must be seriously wrong with me. I'd never encountered anyone who could sense when someone was going to die, and now that it had happened to me, I couldn't even begin to understand it. All I understood was that it was a horrible thing to know. I became convinced I wasn't normal; I was cursed.



One week later, I had a dream.

In the dream I was all grown up and I was an actress. I was living in Australia. I was wearing a long, colorful, nineteenth-century dress, and I felt beautiful. All of a sudden I felt a stagger-

ing concern for my family—the same family I had in real life. In the dream I felt my chest seize and I collapsed to the floor. I was aware I was dying.

Yet I didn't wake up—the dream kept going. I felt myself leave my physical body and become a free-floating consciousness, capable of observing everything around me. I saw my family gathered together around my body in the room where I'd fallen, all of them weeping. I was so upset to see them in such pain that I tried to call out to them. "Don't worry, I am alive! Death doesn't exist!" I said. But it was no use, because I didn't have a voice anymore—they just couldn't hear me. All I could do was project my thoughts to them. And then I began to drift away from them, like a helium balloon that someone let go of, and I floated way, way above them, into a darkness—a dense, peaceful darkness with beautiful, twinkling lights all around. I felt a strong feeling of calm and contentment wash over me.

And precisely at that moment, I saw an incredible sight.

I saw Pop Pop.

He was there, in the space just ahead of me, though not in his physical body but rather in spirit—a spirit that was beautifully, undeniably, entirely his. My consciousness instantly recognized his consciousness. He was a point of light, like a bright star in the dark night sky, but the light was powerful and magnetic, drawing me toward it, filling me with love. It was as if I was seeing Pop Pop's true self—not his earthly body, but rather this greater, inner light that was truly him. I was seeing his soul energy. I understood that Pop Pop was safe, and that he was in a beautiful place filled with love. I understood he was home, and in that instant I also understood that this was the place that we all come from, the place we all belong. He had returned to the place he'd come from.

Realizing that this was Pop Pop and that he still existed in some way, I felt less sad. I felt great love, great comfort, and, in

that moment of recognition, great happiness. And just before I was drawn all the way home with Pop Pop, I felt something closing around me and pulling me back.

Then I woke up.

I sat up in bed. My face was wet. I was crying. But I wasn't sad. These were tears of joy. I was crying because I'd gotten to see Pop Pop!

I lay in bed and cried for a long time. I had been shown that dying doesn't mean losing the people we love. I knew that Pop Pop was still present in my life. I was so thankful for my dream.



It was only years later—many years—that I gathered enough experience to understand what Pop Pop's passing and the events surrounding it signified in my life.

What I had sensed in that swimming pool was the beginning of the voyage of Pop Pop's soul to some other place. Because I loved him so much—because I was connected to him in such a powerful way—my soul could sense that his soul was about to go on a journey. And sensing that wasn't a curse at all. It allowed me to spend that one, last magical afternoon with Pop Pop. If that wasn't a gift, what is?

And the dream?

The dream convinced me of one thing—that Pop Pop wasn't gone. He was just someplace else. But where? Where, exactly, was he?

I couldn't answer that when I was eleven. But over time, I came to realize Pop Pop was on the Other Side

What do I mean by the Other Side?

I have this simple analogy to explain it. Think of your body as a car—new at first, then older, then really old. What happens to cars when they get really old? They get discarded.

But we, the humans, are not discarded with the cars. We move on. We keep going. We are greater than the car, and we were never defined by the car. We are defined by what we take with us once we leave the car behind. We outlast the car.

Everything in my experience tells me that we outlast our bodies. We move on. We keep going. We are bigger than our bodies. What defines us is what we take with us once we leave our bodies behind—our joys, our dreams, our loves, our consciousness.

We are not bodies with souls.

We are souls with bodies.

Our souls endure. Our consciousness endures. The energy that powers us endures. The Other Side, then, is the place our souls go when our bodies give out.

That raises a lot of questions. Is the Other Side a place? Is it a sphere? A realm? Is it material or spiritual? Is it a way station or a final destination? What does it look like? How does it feel? Is it full of golden clouds and pearly gates? Are there angels? Is God there? Is the Other Side heaven?

I came by my understanding of the Other Side slowly, and even today I'm sure I know only a small part of what there is to know about it. But we don't need to fully envision or understand the Other Side in order to take great comfort from it. In fact, so many of us already believe our loved ones who've passed are still with us—in spirit, in our hearts, called back into our lives through memories. And that belief is endlessly nourishing.

The reality of what happens when our loved ones pass on, however, is infinitely more comforting than most people realize, because these departed souls are much closer than we think.

Here are the first two truths I learned through my gift:

1. Our souls endure and return to a place we call the Other Side, and
2. The Other Side is really very close.

How close? Try this—take an ordinary sheet of paper in your hand. Now hold it up in front of you, as if you’re reading from it. Notice how that sheet of paper becomes a border that neatly divides the space it inhabits. It may be sheer and flimsy, a few tiny pulp fibers strung together, but it’s still inarguably a border. In fact, as a border, it divides a great amount of molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles. When you hold it up in front of you, you and billions of things are on one side, and billions of other things—chairs and windows and cars and people and parks and mountains and oceans—are on the other.

And yet, from your side of the paper, you can see and hear and access the other side quite easily—in fact, some of your fingers are already there, holding the paper. The sides may be separate, but, practically speaking, they are one and the same. The other side of the paper is *right there*.

As you come across the term “Other Side” in this book keep that sheet of paper in mind. Ask yourself, *What if the border between our earthly life and an afterlife is as thin and permeable as a single piece of paper?*

What if the Other Side is right there?