

JOHANNA LAMMI

Still With Me



A JOURNEY THROUGH
LOSS INTO LIFE

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Johanna Lammi is a Finnish writer, former HR professional, and certified yoga and mindfulness teacher whose life changed profoundly after the loss of her soulmate, Jannis.

Her journey through grief, healing, and spiritual awakening led her to rebuild her life on the Greek island of Rhodes, where she now writes about love, loss, and the quiet ways life continues to guide us forward.

Johanna holds a Master of Science in Economics and has a background in human resources, nutrition counseling, and mindfulness practice. Shaped by her own experiences with trauma, burnout, and recovery, she brings both lived experience and decades of personal and professional learning to her work.

She is the founder of *Soul Speaks Now*, an online space for those navigating loss, change, and the search for meaning. Johanna is most at home by the sea, walking in nature, practicing yoga, and writing from the heart – often accompanied by stray cats who seem to find her wherever she goes.



Table of Contents

Before You Begin	9
1. A Life That Began to Crack Open	13
– Before the Love Story Began	
2. Love Found: When I Met Jannis.....	31
– How Love Found Me on a Greek Island	
3. The Journey of Healing Begins	45
– From Holy Places to the Fire of Transformation	
4. Our Alchemy	55
– We Were Each Other’s Medicine	
5. When Love Transformed into Light	57
– The Final Days and the Final Gaze	
6. The Invisible Hand of Love	67
– Love Letters Arrive	
7. The First Invitations Back into Life	81
– A Trip to Kallithea and a Parade	
8. The Number 23.....	93
– How One Number Became My GPS	
9. My Promise to Him.....	98
– To Share Our Love with the World	

10. Love Still Speaks	106
– The Signs That Silenced My Doubt	
11. The 40-Day Memorial Ceremony.....	114
– Fear of Losing Him... Again	
12. A Rainbow and His Promise	123
– Heaven on Earth	
13. A Home That Healed Me	130
– Place Marked with Hearts	
14. Between the Collapse and the Rising	141
– The Moment Before the Light Returns	
15. When Life Sent a Massage Therapist.....	155
– The Moment I Said Yes to Joy Again	
16. A Cup of Love & a Dash of Magic	169
– A Message at the Bottom of the Cup	
17. A Glass of Wine & a Golden Heart.....	176
– His Dates with Me	
18. In Love... Again	191
– When Life Itself Became the Love Story	
19. Eleftheria	203
– The Path Was the Purpose	
20. For the Grieving and Aching Hearts.....	210
– Practical Guidance for Grief, Presence, and Ongoing Connection	

21. On Soulmates	232
– How Our Loved Ones in Spirit Can Ease the Grieving Process	
Bonus Section.....	240
– Real Love Letters – Captured in Photographs	
22. How This Story Came to Be.....	267
– On Writing This Book and the Presence I Felt	
23. Closing Words	272
– Closing Note & a Shared Letter for the Reader	

From My Soul to the World

This book was never just mine.
It was seeded by love.
Watered by loss.
And guided by the unseen hand of something greater.

It came to awaken remembrance.
To whisper to those who long for eternal, unconditional love.
To gently hold those who are grieving –
and quietly teach them
how to keep living, loving, and listening.

I did not plan to write this book.
The book asked to be written.

And so I said yes.

May it travel far and wide.
May it cross borders and languages, touching hearts and lives.
May it offer peace where there is pain,
and hope where there is doubt.

This is not just a book.
It is a soul contract fulfilled.
A bridge between worlds.
A real-life *P.S. I Love You*.

If it found you, it was always meant to.

Before You Begin

**We never truly said goodbye.
We just learned to speak without a voice –
and love in a different way.**

– Johanna

I don't believe in coincidences. If you're holding this book, something meaningful brought you here.

Maybe it was grief. Maybe it was your interest in deep, slightly mysterious love stories, or curiosity about what might remain when the body is gone. Or maybe it was a quiet ache underneath a life that looks whole on the surface, but still feels as if something essential is missing.

Whatever the reason, you're very welcome here.

This book is a lived story – a memoir – but also a guide through grief, including illustrations of the most important scenes and signs I experienced along the way.

It's a story that begins with loss and slowly opens into something I never expected to experience:

**A love that didn't disappear.
A presence that didn't end.
And a way forward that revealed itself one step at a time.**

This is also a book about listening to and following the gentle nudges that life sometimes gives you. It's about the small, quiet but deeply meaningful moments we begin to notice when we slow down enough for it. About signs that don't shout, but simply wait to be seen. And about learning to trust the heart when the mind has no map.

Living through all of this changed how I understand love and loss, and what it means to keep going when life breaks open. The pain of loss is part of the human experience, and that's why it unites us. Not necessarily because the experience is exactly the same or because our journeys will look the same, but because it's something we recognize in each other. On these pages, I share what happened to me when I allowed myself to stay present with grief instead of turning away from it – and how, slowly, a new life began to take shape – just when I thought everything was over.

You don't need to believe in anything to read these pages. You don't need to agree with my interpretations, or share my language for what I experienced. I know that some might call this story strange. Some might call it coincidence. Some might call it imagination. Take it as you wish, as long as it serves you.

This story is not rooted in any religion or belief system, but rather in what I noticed, felt, and lived through as my life unfolded. Most of the story happened in Rhodes, Greece, where religion is tightly intertwined with everyday life, so I have simply done my best to describe how I felt living in this culture, and how I experienced the Greek Orthodox religion and its mourning traditions as a Finnish woman.

If you're not grieving – or if you don't believe in signs, messages, or anything beyond the veil – that's okay. You can simply read this as a soul-deep love story – one that didn't end after we said goodbye. All I ask is that you bring your curiosity and your humanity.

My words may reach you in your own life – in your pain, in your longing, in your feelings of emptiness, or in your questions about who you really are, deep down.

If these pages offer you companionship, comfort, or even a moment of recognition, then they've done what they were meant to do. And maybe they will help you remember what a part of you already knows:

Love never leaves us in the way we fear – it simply learns new ways to stay near.

Welcome to the journey.

With love, <3

Johanna



1. A Life That Began to Crack Open

– Before the Love Story Began

“I want to die.”

It was fall 2021, 6:30 a.m. My alarm clock rang, as it always did, and I woke up exhausted. The familiar thought of wanting to leave this world looped in my mind again – not necessarily because I planned to act on it, but because I didn’t want to get up and go to work. The weight of the world had begun to feel unbearable.

This wasn’t ordinary fatigue. It wasn’t the kind of tiredness that sleep could fix. I felt exhausted by life itself, by the constant struggle of endlessly trying to figure things out, by waking up day after day into a quiet emptiness inside me.

At the time, I was working in senior HR and leadership roles in Helsinki, Finland. I had grown up in a culture that valued hard work, external success, and the famous Finnish *sisu* – extraordinary determination, guts, the ability to push through, endure, and perform even when it feels impossible.

I had all of that.

After graduating from the Helsinki School of Economics as one of the top one percent of students of my year, I built a career that looked excellent on paper. I was competent, trusted, well paid, and often praised for my performance. I lived in a beautiful apartment in one of Helsinki’s wealthier areas, in a relationship that was safe and

kind. I exercised regularly, dined at good restaurants, and functioned well in the world.

On the outside, my life looked stable. Even successful.

But on the inside, I was slowly dying.

If I had to describe my life at the time with one word, it would be simply *suffering*. And decades of it – mental, physical, and emotional.

I came from a broken home that left a deep imprint on my nervous system. My childhood was shaped by unpredictability and fear. My parents did their best, and I love them with all my heart, but their own personal struggles created an environment that never felt safe. I grew up doubting my self-worth, carrying layers of trauma and shame that followed me into adulthood.

Trauma flashbacks were the hardest. They could hit anywhere, sometimes even in the middle of a business meeting, leaving me internally collapsing while trying to appear composed on the outside. Somehow, I learned to hold myself together. No one saw the cracks.

For nearly two decades, I also struggled with bulimia and mild depression, before finally recovering in my early thirties. My eating disorder was never about food or weight. It was all about emotional regulation – numbing anxiety, releasing feelings I didn't know how to process, and surviving the relentless stress of studies and work.

Despite years of therapy, inner work, and exploring various healing modalities, I still found myself questioning the purpose of life itself. I felt empty and restless.

If life brought along this much suffering, what was the point of it all?

Was life really nothing more than constant work, self-doubt, physical pain, injuries, heartbreak, trauma flashbacks – and the persistent feeling of being lost?

It often felt like I was living in a movie I didn't belong to.

Deep down, I sensed I was meant to do something else – something more purposeful, something that made me feel truly alive – but I couldn't quite grasp what it was. Over the years, I had trained to become a group exercise instructor, yoga teacher, and nutrition counselor, yet each attempt to pivot faded, and I found myself reverting back to HR: more bureaucracy, more processes, more conflict resolution, and aligning people practices with business goals.

Years of waking up at five in the morning to study, doing high-intensity exercise, and later working long hours in fast-growing organizations took their toll. By my late thirties, I had already experienced several burnouts. Each time I promised myself I would slow down, listen to my body, and choose differently.

And each time I returned to the same recurring pattern: performance, over-responsibility, achievement.

I was very good at performing.
And very bad at resting.

My unresolved traumas burned like flames inside me, whipping me to do more, be more, and simply smile through the pain. Looking back on it now, I can see that one thing I certainly did not do was love myself. I didn't like who I was, and in many ways, I was trying

to outrun that feeling through work, achievement, and being useful to others.

Performing well became a way to survive and be valued when I couldn't value myself.

Somewhere beneath all of it lived a quieter part of me – a sensitive, intuitive part that had always been there. I had been interested in meditation, mindfulness, well-being, nature, alternative healing, and spiritual and self-development literature for as long as I could remember. My bookshelf overflowed with worn, dog-eared books I had read again and again, searching for answers to questions that never left me:

Why am I here? Who am I, really?

I wasn't seeking spiritual enlightenment as an achievement. I was simply trying to understand life – and to find relief from suffering. By spiritual awakening, I didn't mean converting to a religion, but rather seeking answers to life's deepest questions, finding truth, and seeing through the illusions my mind had created.

However, this softer side of me stayed mostly hidden.

Angel cards were not the kind of thing you could bring up in a life of management team meetings, business suits, and performance reviews.

Mindfulness and yoga became my lifelines. My suffering had always been generated in my mind – by relentless thinking, self-criticism, and doubt. As Eckhart Tolle writes, *the mind is a wonderful servant but a terrible master*.

When Johanna's life collapses, she follows an unexpected inner call to the Greek island of Rhodes. There she receives mysterious heart-shaped pancakes and feels more alive than she has in years. On that same island she meets Jannis — a man whose presence awakens a love deeper than anything she has ever known.

Then he dies. What follows is not only a story of grief, but also of what remains. Heart-shaped signs start to appear in unexpected places, and the number 23 keeps returning. Gentle nudges lead Johanna back toward sunlight, sea air, and, eventually, toward the freedom to live again.

Set on the island of Rhodes, *Still With Me* is a deeply personal memoir about love, loss, spiritual awakening, and the courage to rebuild a life when everything that once felt certain has fallen away. For anyone who has lost someone — or themselves — this story offers companionship, hope, and the quiet possibility that love may not end where we think it does. Readers who were moved by *P.S. I Love You* may find something strangely familiar here: a journey through grief guided by love that still refuses to disappear.

“An incredibly moving love story and a powerful journey of self-discovery. I was in tears on almost every page. The way Johanna brings emotion into words is deeply comforting — and full of hope.”

— Piia, Early Reader

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