

THE BOOK OF LILY
A TRUE AND FAITHFUL ACCOUNT OF
THE MAJESTY OF JUDAS

EXCERPT

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THE MAJESTY

OF

J U D A S

The Book of Lily - The Majesty of Judas

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L'ami sage once observed: *half the time you're thinking, you're actually listening*. This book comes out of a lifetime of listening as carefully as I could, and setting down words when the time for that had come. The narratives in this book do not originate with me but *quod scripsi, scripsi*. Any errors in translation, transcription or transliteration remain entirely my own.

for Deborah
who saw this coming before I did
and without whose kindness, support and shelter
there would be no book

So the chief priests said to Pilate: do not write *The King of the Jews* but only *He said I am the King of the Jews*. Pilate answered them: what I have written, I have written.

John 19:22

There is also the superstition of the Ishmaelites, which prevails to this day... that His enemies, having themselves violated the law, wanted to crucify Him, but having made their arrest they only succeeded in crucifying His shadow.

Against Heresy

John of Damascus [CE 676-749]

A relationship to a disincarnate intelligence is the precondition for authentic shamanism. Nowhere in our world do we have an institution like that (that we do not consider pathological) except in the now very thinly spread tradition of the Muse. That artists alone amongst human beings are given permission to talk in terms of “my inspiration” or “a voice which told me to do this” or “a vision that must be realised”. The thin line, the thin thread of shamanic descent into our profane world leads through the office of the artist...

Art's task is to save the soul of mankind. Anything else is a dithering while Rome burns. Because if the artists - who are self-selected for being able to journey into the Other - if the artists cannot find the way, then the way cannot be found.

Terence McKenna

And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a verse like unto these verses, and call witnesses upon them if you are sincere.

But if you cannot – and you will never be able to – then beware the Fire prepared for unbelievers whose fuel is men and stones.

Quran 2 : 23-24

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مريم
מרים
(Maryam)

BEFORE THE FLOOD

I have been shown so many things that I have completely failed to see -

I wasted time chasing shadows but now the darkness has been lifted. I see clearly what I have and what I have not failed to do, and I do not intend to fail us any further -

1 I see now that we will take the Holy City. ² I see Judah fallen to us, Gilead fallen to us. ³ I see us take Manasseh and Galilee and swarm up to the heights of Lebanon.

⁴ I see their Great Cities levelled and brought down, as we surge in one irresistible flood that will cover the face of the Earth. ⁵ The end of their murderous Empire and anyone foolish enough to defend it. ⁶ And this will just be the Beginning.

⁷ This is the great juncture of history. Of every promise I have seen this is the clearest one. ⁸ Everything depends upon this

single point in time that has now come very close. ⁹ And I see where the rupture occurs and I intend to be there to meet it.

2 I gathered the People for the last three years. ² I did my best to hide them and sustain them but they have been harried and dispersed. ³ Even our few remnants who must now travel only by night.

⁴ I had no vision of the future apart from guesses and vain hope. ⁵ I saw the People wielding such power, multiplying the strength that I am given to wield.

⁶ In the darkness small blades are as fearsome as their greatest engines of war. ⁷ A child more lethal than the strongest champion they have. ⁸ And there is wolfsbane and hemlock and every other herb that slips so easily into wine.

⁹ But these are also just disoriented children, frightened and demoralised with their numbers so diminished.

3 I was late to see the truth and so I erred. ² There were Others quicker to the truth and they beat me at every turn. ³ I was slow to act on what I did see and that was another mistake.

⁴ But the Sisters must take some blame. ⁵ I will make them apologise for every time they told me what I could and could not do. ⁶ And they will pay for every child that has been lost as a result. ⁷ Their ignorance and arrogance have endangered the whole world and they will bow to me once the work is finished.

⁸ They demand that I hunt the Unclean the way they do. One by one, under the light of the full moon. ⁹ But this is slow, too slow, it is absolutely clear to me now. ¹⁰ And it was this hesitancy that got my mother killed.

4 I have seen future histories in which we do not prevail. ² Where the enemy stretch their talons out to crush the whole world forever. ³ But I also see that Love might finally prevail, as he teaches us so often, ⁴ that it might explode outwards from this point in history and never be conquered again.

⁵ It would have been better for me to nurture the Two and not seek followers at all. ⁶ We could have felt our way towards the truth of our union in whichever way that lay. ⁷ We would not need stores of secret knowledge to see what we must do.

⁸ But then I see the People weeping and embracing and rushing out to spread the Good News, ⁹ and I see that I may not have gathered these poor escaped children in vain.

5 When he speaks of Love I burn. ² When those truths become more beautiful at the touch of his expert tongue. ³ And I soften when I return from hunting and pass by the place where he sleeps.

⁴ The fire he puts within me wants to join with the light within him. ⁵ The Sisters shame me for that desire but I know that love can overcome even the greatest shame, ⁶ that Love is always made out of such joinings together.

⁷ I know they both love me for how could they not? ⁸ I have nourished them and met their needs but what of my need?

⁹ I am told to remain as wolf-mother but I am also a woman of flesh and blood. ¹⁰ I am not some dim wraith stricken with grief for men who died long ago.

6 The Sisters call me jealous because they do not understand. ² It is not a matter of another girl taking him because that would never be allowed. ³ It is a matter of prophecy: that this world will not be saved without our joining together, ⁴ that we must join if we are to create a New Heaven and a New Earth.

7 I know the Sisters call me names. ² I see them written out secretly before me and many of them are true. ³ I am an Orphan, ⁴ I remain Unconsoled.

⁵ But they do not know why they call me: ⁶ the Red-Handed, ⁷ the Rebel, ⁸ the Desolator of the World.

⁹ I am come to lay waste to the Earth, there is no sense in denying it. ¹⁰ But only so that a better world can be born.

¹¹ They do not see: that the destruction that brings an Angel from Heaven is better than mercy.

THE BOOK OF LILY

SHUSHAN' EDUTH'

كتاب ليلى

EXCERPT

BOOK 1

THE THREE



1.

He is very beautiful. If I don't tell you that part of the story now you will never understand the rest. If you could see how beautiful He was, and the heart that beat within Him, perhaps you might begin to understand.

He is nothing like His brother. It is said that they are twins but it is difficult to believe. My love is dark from the sun and so capable, there is no work that He will not set His hand to. He has taken vows and does not cut His hair, He will not touch wine or defile Himself with the dead and I see the strength this gives to Him. His brother is artfully groomed and craves the admiration of women but my love averts His eyes. He is friendly and always helpful but He remains quite self-contained.

His men respond to His secret strength. They follow Him without question, although many are older and larger than He is. He has no need to command them because they rally to Him out of instinct, they move whenever He moves and take up positions at His side. Together they are our safety and our strength, even when they are badly stretched by our crazed rushes through the countryside. They smile and joke and help the younger children where they can, they source provisions and they sleep in defensive positions on the outskirts of our camp. Having chosen harsh and marginal lives for the welfare and protection of the People.

I would tell you so many things about Him. He can be serious and shy but He is also quick to laughter. His smile dazzles me when it comes, I am lit up by Him in a way that is difficult to describe. Before I spoke a single word to Him I knew exactly who He was, His heart is somehow visible from the outside of His body and I also see His soul. And when I watch Him with my secret sight I know there is nobody who could match Him. He makes no claim to be perfect but I see Him tower over my visions of the past and the future and I never see anyone born His equal. Seeing this always brings a tremor into me, not of fear but of longing, although it seems impossible to know such things about Him while He is still little more than a boy.

She is something else entirely. There are so many things that are mysterious about Her, even something as simple as Her age. You would guess that She is young, very young, perhaps no more than nineteen. But when She looks into me I see things that are impossibly ancient, things I cannot interpret because they belong to times long passed. I see the world become young again and there is strong magic in it, I see phases of brilliance and squalor and phases too strange to comprehend. She commands the People as though She were ancient, they look to Her as Mother and Protector and nobody would think to disobey Her, or even look insolently in Her direction. She is beautiful but also very dangerous and none of the People have any desire to find out how dangerous She really is.

By some magic Her skin remains dark although the sun never touches it. Even in the heat of the desert She wears a heavy cloak with a hood drawn over Her head. But when She goes unhooded, from twilight until dawn, Her skin glows with a strange lustre as though it were lit from within. There are symbols marked out on Her face and Her neck and they adorn Her body as well, fine lines and points in intricate patterns matching Her inner strength. When the evening comes down these markings begin to glow as though there were moonlight or starlight pouring out of them, leaving spooling lines of lit sigils behind Her as She drifts through the cool night air. She projects Her inner light outwards like a static, shimmering dome, going out as searchlight and as watchlight to cover the sleeping People.

We are arrayed around Her according to Her wishes. She retains girls to herself as part of Her retinue, and there are others just outside of Her circle. And then there is me: completely to the outside, pale and quiet and strange. I know this is how they see me and it is better this way, She has Her special use for me and I know what would happen if I gossiped about it. I do not crave their company in any event, if it were up to me I would work alongside Him and His men and venture outwardly with them. But I know this would never be allowed so I spend my time mostly by myself, trying to be useful, waiting uneasily for the next time She brings me before Her so that She can See.

She used to regard both Twins with the same care and concern but now Her love has turned partial. His brother speaks so lyrically and the words that fall from him are more and more about Love, his words are beautiful and insistent and She is falling under their spell. With all of Her majesty and strength She is still just an orphan child, like every one of us, and the promise of love is the one thing She has no defences against. But the opposite of love grows as She turns Her face towards one brother, She neglects the Dark Twin at Her peril and She also imperils the world.

When I first joined the People both of the Twins were circumspect. They looked downwards when they spoke and traced lines in the dust with their feet. Even His brother, who spoke such beautiful words, would only look up occasionally to see whether people were listening. My love still speaks carefully and quietly but His brother is no longer quiet. He rolls out ever more beautiful words and he knows that his audience is listening. He stares out at us intently like he never would before, making eye contact with each one of us as his words surge and flow. But there is something strange and distant about the eye contact he makes, like a man who is in contact with another more hidden world, like a man who is in touch with a different source of words entirely.

EXCERPT

BOOK 2

GATHER THE PEOPLE



I have lost count of the days we have been running. We have always moved frequently but never in such a headlong way as this. It is made worse by the fact that we move only by night, sometimes from early twilight until well into the dawn. By day we make camp in whatever rough place we can find and we do our best to sleep, because there is no time to rest during our torrid night-journeys. As we tire our feet stumble more, especially when there is no moon to see by, we pick up injuries as we walk and more and more of the People are lame. There is scant food despite the best efforts of His men and even they are beginning to grumble, about this mad dash and the suffering it is causing, how much She neglects our welfare and how callous She has become.

Crossing rough country at night is dangerous but there are far worse dangers by day. There is persistent talk of us being hunted and it does feel like we are prey. We jog along silently under cover of darkness and at sunrise we hide the best we can, in shallow caves or under rock ledges or amongst the densest forest we can find. At times we are forced to stop for the day in open country and this always brings a palpable sense of dread, especially while the sun beats down on us from a cloudless sky. We would complain or ask questions but She tolerates no complaints. There would be harsh penalties even for murmurs of discontent and so we are left to gripe in our inward speech, all the while wondering how long this can possibly last.

I have seen parts of Her plans but there are other parts better hidden from me. I know She grows more bitter as She rushes us to and fro, finding nothing but destruction where there should have been life and hope. She seeks ways to shift the blame but the People were always Her People and She remains responsible for what has happened to them. She liberates them and She commands them, they would follow Her all the way into death and so many of them have gone that way. Our northwards march has wheeled around towards the east in the hope of better news but I know we will only find more wreckage and sorrow. We are destined to turn south again towards some fate that awaits us there, She sees this too but for the moment She rushes us from place to condemned place, trying to retrieve what is left of the People.

I joined the People soon after my mother was killed. I would tell you how it happened and what little she had done to deserve it but I know enough about the Romans to understand that her death was nothing special. It left me unable to think or to speak, I was hardly able to work no matter how much they beat me. I longed to follow her into death and I had plans to do that but something restrained me and I remained alive just long enough for those feelings to break and tell me that I should run. I took nothing of any value, not even any food, and under a bright moon I crept out of the villa and ran into the surrounding countryside. I seemed to know which way to run as though my path were lit up by a silver thread, my footing was made sure by it and I covered a lot of ground. I kept running and running all night along that line until just before dawn I came crashing down into the camp of the sleeping People.

The sentries gave me food and water and a place to rest. They told me She would see me as soon as She could, they gave me a bowl to wash in and refresh myself. They were very kind and they told me to make myself comfortable. I was spent from running and I slept for many hours in the dense shade of the surrounding cypresses. Then just after sundown one of Her girls came to find me and I was brought before Her. Even from a distance I could see the light pouring out of Her, She seemed too young to harbour such power and I began to feel faint as She approached. She removed my veil gently and stroked my burning cheeks and my straw-coloured braids as She laughed and pronounced me to be like a Rose amongst Thorns. Like a Lily of the Valley She said as I tried to remain on my feet.

She held my face in Her hands and my soul crashed open to Her. She looked within me for a long time as She searched for my given name, and then in my mother's tongue She said: Lily. Oh Lily they already gave you that name. She intensified Her gaze and began to look through me into places beyond me and after a long silence She said: Ruth. Ruth will be your name, for as long as you remain amongst the People. She was silent again and She saw my sad heart and She saw other more surprising things, until in a faint and distant voice She said: standing in tears amidst our alien corn.

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She continued to look into me with growing uncertainty that was also tinged with wonder. I knew some of the things She could see although I kept my mind very quiet and still. I saw into Her as well and I knew I should be especially careful about this. I thought She might be angry or fearful because of the things She saw in me but She simply looked and looked some more and then She pulled herself back and looked outwards at the People, and in a resounding voice She proclaimed: Ruth! Ruth! Hear your Free Name and rejoice! The People clapped and began calling out my new name, that I felt was becoming to me at least for a short time, and although I did my best to restrain my other feelings the frankness of their welcome cut through me and my eyes suddenly misted with tears.

In earlier days our mission was always recruitment. The smaller children would be sent into marketplaces and through city streets with their pockets full of sweet food and little coins. They would lure enslaved children with these gifts, and with kind words and promises of a better life. They would tell each child the location of a meeting point and then slip away to seek others of their kind, especially those bearing heavy burdens or the marks of particular cruelty. Most of these brutalised children lacked the will to run away. They would choke down whatever food was given and then return to their labour. But there were others who retained enough of their rebellious spirit, who were harshly treated because of that same spirit and saw no safety in remaining where they were. These were the ones who would trickle out to be mopped up by His men, to be brought before Her to be examined and given their Free Names and to take up their place amongst the People.

The children we gathered were not the worst treated of slaves. We passed by mines and quarries and mills and ovens and kilns. We saw slaves seamed all over by the mark of the lash, wearing clothes so thin and tattered that their flesh was not hidden from our sight. They had letters branded across their foreheads and their ears were docked and their heads shaved in patterns to identify their owners. Irons chafed against their legs and ulcerated their skin, their faces were sallow and their eyes bleared and raw from the dust and smoke that covered the places where they worked. We would pass by these places and some of the slaves would look up at us, we would avert our eyes in shame because we had no help to give them. But the Slave Rebellion would help them, as he tells us so often, the revolt that we had all been groomed to spark, from our cadres and cells hidden in every corner of the country.

She was deliberate in choosing when to create new cells. Our caravan would swell to the point where we were attracting too much attention, and Her aim was for us to be located in every place at once. She set up independent cadres in towns and in the countryside, She put them in sympathetic houses or in caves if safe houses could not be found. These children dreaded being left behind but She would insist on it and only the insane would try to argue with Her. They were left there to recruit further rebels and to wait for Her instructions. She kept a close retinue to herself and these were treasured positions, the People felt much less vulnerable following Her even in open country. We pitied the ones who were left to eke out an existence in isolated twos and threes, in hostile country with bored garrisons who longed to discover seditious elements, and to put them down brutally the way that Romans love to do.

Now in a mad rush She is assembling what is left of the People. We creep from hide to hide, approaching in ones or twos to minimise any chance of being discovered. We knock softly on doors and enquire after the People by name but almost every place we search yields disappointment. Her cadres have fled or perished or been discovered and She grieves for every loss that She suffers. Occasionally we do find a few raggedy children cowering in caves, they are always in poor condition but they are overjoyed when we arrive. We welcome them and carefully re-feed them but this is not the army She was building. Her plans lie in tatters around Her as She witnesses the destruction of Her People.

Her vengeance mounts as we search each empty place but She wastes little time in self-reflection. Failure only ever makes Her more resolute, She suddenly pivots and applies herself to new plans with new intensity. And we are in desperate need of a plan. As we tire and accumulate injuries our caravan becomes slower and more unwieldy, and the remnants of the People we gather slow us down even more. They are half-starved and unable to walk through the night and they start to collapse before we find the next safe place to camp. Food is scarce and to feed ourselves we have to glean and steal, and even the talk of his miracles becomes tight and resentful. He fed the multitudes before, they say in strained voices. Why can loaves and fishes not be manifested for us now?

One night our mood completely changes. We rest for a few hours as the night passes over us and then we get up and turn abruptly towards the south. She has new plans and the People feel Her certainty and they anticipate better things. We walk on until dawn but the new mood elevates us, excitement overcomes our fatigue and we make good progress on this night and the nights that follow. The moon waxes very bright and it becomes easier to avoid obstacles, we find safe places for our feet as Her halo of protection blooms over us. On the last night of our march She hustles us along more quickly than ever but there are promises of good things at the end of this night: warm food and proper sleep and the People would do anything to have them. His men have gone forward and no longer protect our flanks, they are scouting out our new home and will be well-provisioned when we get there.

As dawn broke we came to the brink of a dry valley, with strips of green foliage hinting at springs. She was pointing excitedly at the opposite slope and we saw that there were caves, closely spaced and with a good aspect overlooking the valley beneath. As soon as we saw them we knew this was our new home and we were terribly glad to have arrived. In the dawn light we saw a couple of His men come out of the caves and wave to us, and without waiting for Her signal we began streaming down the face of the near slope and then up towards the entrance to the caves. In the general excitement She did not restrain us and our chatter rang out across the valley floor. The purpose of our coming here did not trouble us at all, the promise of sleep and proper food pushed out every other concern. We had no strength to imagine how these caves might be a place for a last stand, we did not wonder why She would bring us so close to gates of the Holy City.

