

Opening Doorways:  
Dolphins, Cars, Boats, and Chocolate



Madeleine Howenstine

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There are times in a life when the universe seems to be prodding one in a certain direction, calling one's attention to a path, to a doorway, through seemingly random coincidences that land on one with a deep sense of meaning, holding the message 'pay attention!' The following narratives illustrate significant synchronicities in the life of one woman, as she proceeds on her journey through the universe.

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## The Story of a very small car



In the early spring of her senior year of high school, she happened to take a trip to Hamilton, Ontario, visiting the friend of a friend who was a professor there. Though she had passed through Canada many times as a child, she had never spent more than one night there. This time she was spending a week. During her stay, she became fascinated with a tiny little car of a type that she had never noticed before. The cars were very small and boxy, looking more like toys than something that someone would actually drive. With their tiny wheels and contrasting color roofs they almost looked like something out of a cartoon. When she asked what they were, she was informed they were Austin Minis, a British car. Hamilton seemed rife with them--on every street,

in every driveway, in every parking lot. She loved their miniature profile and the tiny wheelbase that made them seem more like something to play with rather than everyday transportation.

On her return to her home in North Haven, Connecticut she found herself driving into New Haven weekly for various events. She would go in and out of New Haven on Prospect Street, preferring the road less traveled to the main thoroughfare. On her first drive into the city after her trip to Canada, she noticed that there was one of the delightful little cars parked on the hill on Prospect Street just as one left New Haven. Each time she passed the car in its parking space on the hill, she would give it a friendly nod of recognition, feeling delight as in seeing an old friend and thinking “there is that little car I love!”

Then, several months after her sojourn in Canada, she attended the community meeting of a local, New Haven based, teen crisis center. Having arrived a bit early, she sat watching others coming through the doorway for the meeting. Two men who she had not met before entered the room. The first man was tall, slender and quite good looking dressed in a very preppy Yale style. Then the second man stepped through the doorway. In contrast to the first man, this man was short and stocky, wearing brown jeans and deep forest green shirt. He had shoulder length auburn hair that glistened with red and a full beard and mustache. As she watched him enter the room, suddenly the thought 'there's a man I could love' permeated her mind. She was very startled by this distinct, seemingly random, thought as he did not meet her teenage fantasy of who she would marry--the usual tall, dark and handsome hero. Instead he had the build and aura of a leprechaun. (Later she came across a poem a former girlfriend of his had written. In it she had described him as “all shades of brown, especially golden.” This phrase perfectly captured

his presence.) He glanced around the room as he entered and then came directly over to where she was seated and took the seat next to her. They chatted briefly as the meeting started, sharing their appreciation of the local apple cider, which he had brought for the group. They shared their amusement that the inserts in the bottle top said “This is not our usual top. We are waiting for replacements”, since they both knew that the ‘usual top’ was a plain white one. After the meeting the man invited her out for coffee. In spite of it being a school night, and her still in high school, she accepted the invitation.

They decided to go back to his graduate student housing for coffee, leaving her car near the meeting venue and taking his car over to his room on the other side of town. When they arrived at his room she saw that on the door of his room he had pinned a variety of photos and papers from his childhood. One of them was his birth certificate. Astonishingly (at least to her) he had the same birth date as she did, albeit seven years prior to hers. As she also shared her birth date with her maternal grandmother, this felt significant to her. They proceeded to have coffee and chat for a couple of hours. When they finished they went back out to his car to return her to the other side of town where she had left her car parked. As they came out of his building she looked across the street to where his car was parked. She suddenly realized that his car was the mini cooper that she had been noticing for the last two months as she entered and left New Haven!

They were married a year later and revealed in a thirty year marriage that only ended with his death at the age of fifty-five.

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## Dolphins



As part of her coursework for the Bachelor's completion program at CIIS, she was obliged to set up a meeting with a research librarian in order to be coached in the effective use of the library resources. Her initial meeting was postponed due to snowstorms on the East Coast that made it impossible for her to get to California for the day of the appointment. The appointment was then rescheduled to coincide with her next weekend course. When the time arrived she went to the library only to find the changed date had not made it into the appointment book and the research librarian was double booked for that time. Overhearing this, the head librarian, who was no longer doing many of these sessions, volunteered to work with her. They sat down together at one of the library's computers to begin the session. The librarian then turned to the woman and asked 'What is the subject that you are thinking of exploring?' The woman replied that she had

already settled on investigating various methods of self-inquiry. She had begun to develop the idea of creating a workshop that consisted of several distinctive processes of self-exploration.

The next thing she knew, the librarian was turning to her and asking “What happened to you at Delphi?” She had never met the librarian before and the librarian would have no conceivable reason for knowing that this student had ever been to Greece, much less to Delphi! As she recovered from her astonishment she thought back to her trip to Delphi more than thirty years before. She and her husband had gone exploring down the road from the main site and had come upon a cleft in the mountain that contained a shrine. Entering the cleft she experienced a dramatic sense of the presence of the gods that was so strong that she could not remain in the space, fearing an earthquake. The sense of tangible presence of ‘divine other’ was intense. It was her first conscious experience of numinosity, of the feel of the presence of the Gods.



What had provoked the question about Delphi? The association in the librarian's mind was the words written over the lintel of the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, "Know Thyself." Yet the librarian could not have known that this woman had even been to Greece, much less Delphi. Or that this was where the particular incident took place where numinosity first clearly made itself felt in her life.

The librarian then proceeded to do some searches using Delphi as the search term. One of the items she came up with was that word *delfine*, in Greek, means dolphin. The woman, sitting there was fascinated—she had not made the connection of the terms. And she remembered the second time that she went to Greece, twenty years later, the boat that she had been sailing on had been accompanied by dolphins all the way down the Saronic Gulf, from Piraeus to the point at Sounion. They rode the bow wave, playing back and forth under the boat. The captain of the boat said that this was the first time that dolphins had been sighted in the Saronic Gulf in twenty years.

Approaching Sounion, the gods had made themselves felt yet again. As the boat passed by the point where there stands a temple to Poseidon, the captain of the sailing vessel was recounting the myths of Poseidon in his strong Greek accent. An American woman on the boat had the habit of repeating each sentence the captain uttered, to see if she had understood it correctly. When the captain said "Poseidon, the God of the Sea," she repeated it as "Poseidon, the goat of the sea!" At that point the boat cleared the point and was hit by the full force of the Meltemi—a gale force wind that occasionally blows down the straits between Sounion and the island of Kea, where they were headed. The boat gibed and spun in a full circle, with the boom swinging



wildly. Luckily no one was swept off the boat. And then for the next six hours they sailed into gale force winds with waves regularly washing over the bow and down the full length of the boat. Poseidon did not apparently appreciate being mistaken for a goat!



Once again, the woman, sitting there looking at the computer screen with the librarian, was bemused by these resonances from earlier occasions that she had not thought about in years, with no seeming connection to her current exploration of methods of self-inquiry.

Then, as if this were not enough to emphasize that the woman should take notice, there was one last synchronicity to the occasion. When the session was winding up, the librarian said that she would locate some more materials related to the research that she could not immediately put her hands on. She asked if she would find the woman in the café in an hour or so. It so happened that before the end of the hour the woman was called away from the cafe and then went directly to her next class. When she arrived at the classroom a fellow classmate came up to her saying

that she had a message from the librarian. The classmate carrying this message? Her name was Delphine....

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A 'chance' encounter upon a boat



Until her husband's unexpected illness and death, the trajectory of the woman's life had seemed fairly clear: starting with the marriage heralded by the appearance of the mini-cooper in her life, she became wife, mother, help-meet, expecting to grow old with her husband and to enjoy retirement, travel, and grandchildren as a couple. Throughout her marriage she had participated in an ongoing conversation with her husband about life, the universe, and everything. With his death that conversation came to an abrupt halt. Suddenly, the trajectory that had seemed so clear simply disappeared. For the next several years she was just involved in picking up the pieces of

her life, dealing with a variety of serious crises. She had no sense of what new form her journey through life would or could take. The future looked empty and bleak as she cast around for a way to support and nurture her mind. She felt lost. A friend described her as a person in a dark room searching for a doorway, feeling her way with her hands along the wall. The friend said that suddenly and unexpectedly she would find the opening and pop through the doorway into a new life.

A year or so later, she was visiting a friend in Sausalito, California, staying on his boat, an old fifties wooden motor launch. On the evening of the second night of her visit, the friend informed her that he had a long-standing commitment to having another friend up for the evening. He said he could cancel it if she would prefer. She said “no, that she would enjoy meeting his friend. When the friend arrived they sat on the back of a boat, looking out at the birds on Richardson bay, casually chatting.



Hearing that the woman was from Connecticut, the friend of a friend asked if she knew anything about connections between restaurants and the mafia in Connecticut. He then went on to describe a very strange and uncomfortable experience in what had appeared to be a small family restaurant in the town of Milford, Connecticut. He and a colleague had stopped in for dinner while on business in the town. When they entered, the entire restaurant became quiet and the other patrons turned and stared at the newcomers. Though they stayed for dinner, they felt very uncomfortable the entire time. He wondered if they had walked into a Mafia hangout. The woman explained that yes, it was highly likely that it had been a Mafia haunt, that the Mafia is alive and well and functioning in Connecticut.

She then asked what the man had been doing in Milford; being a somewhat unprepossessing town, it seemed like an unlikely place for someone from California to visit. He replied that he was academic director for a master's program in Conscious Evolution at the Graduate Institute that was based in the town. As soon as the woman heard this she felt a doorway open. A school in Connecticut that offered courses on consciousness! Here was a possibility for nurturing her mind and continuing the exploration of nature of reality that had always been the backdrop of her life with her husband. Suddenly and unexpectedly through this 'chance' encounter on a boat in Richardson Bay, a new path forward had been revealed. From there, even with various twists turns in the pathway, the woman had the experience of 'being on the right path' again. She no longer felt lost and trapped by life.

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## Emergence from the Implicate Order in Dialogue Groups or Unexpected Chocolate



When she convenes Bohm Dialogue groups she has found that it is a context in which synchronicities often emerge. A participant will come to the group with something on his or her mind, yet not have shared it with the group. Over the course of the session the conversation will gravitate to a particular focus, and she is not surprised when someone in the group who has not spoken, shares that this has been what they have been absorbed with prior to the session. She had experienced this herself at a dialogue group that she participated in occasionally. She had just attended a five-day silent retreat at the Insight Meditation Center in Massachusetts. She drove directly from the retreat to a Dialogue evening at Hampshire College. Having spent the last five days in silence, she was in no hurry to jump into the conversation. As she sat there listening, members of the group started talking about silence, about whether they were comfortable or uncomfortable with it, how it affected them. Silence became the primary theme of the evening.



Finally, in the last five minutes of the session, the woman spoke up to say that she had just come from a silent retreat. The convener of the group looked at her and exclaimed “oh that is why we were talking about silence! I was wondering!”

Then one particularly delightful evening several years later in a dialogue group that she was convening she shared the story to illustrate how synchronicities often occurred in dialogue groups. A few minutes later a participant mentioned suddenly having a craving for chocolate. Immediately others in the group said that they would also love to have chocolate. Everyone searched through their bags to see if they happened to have any but no one in the group had any with them. They all laughed about their cravings for chocolate and then went on with the conversation. About ten minutes later, the door opened and a young man walked in, sat down, and pulled out several bars of chocolate and passed them around, much to the astonishment of the participants. The young man sat and listened to the conversation for several minutes, then realized that he was not in the event he had come to attend—it was actually scheduled on a different evening. After much laughter, the group shared how remarkable it was that he arrived providing chocolate so soon after they had been bemoaning the lack of chocolate in the room. Near instant manifestation from the implicate order! In spite of it being a completely different sort of meeting than the one he had thought he was attending he elected to stay for the rest of the session.

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## Horses on the Mongolian Steppes



It was August and she was riding across the serene grasslands of the Mongolian Steppes. She had come to Mongolia to make this journey, driving a herd of 120 horses from their over-grazed summer pastures to less accessible, lush ones 150 miles to the east of Ulaan Baator, where the herd's current pasturage was located. A group of five Western women, all over the age of 50, were accompanying two nomadic herders as they drove the horses to their new winter grazing lands. Besides loving the outdoors and horseback riding, her interest in the group level of mind had drawn her to this unique opportunity. She wondered how herd mind would be evidenced in the behavior of the horses, as they are used to living enmeshed in group life, and how she would sense this.

This opportunity for this adventure arose unexpectedly in her life. For years she had felt that she should go to East Asia at some point in her life but had felt no particular draw to go to either China or Japan, though both held some interest for her. Then one day, during the socializing

after an evening of meditation, she overheard one member of the group speaking to another about a plan to go to Mongolia to spend seven days on horseback, driving a herd of Mongolian Steppe horses to its new winter pasture. As she stood there listening she thought, “Horses? Seven days of riding? Mongolia—East Asia? I could do that!” Again, there was a sudden feeling of a door opening, of the universe offering an opportunity that would nurture and support her mind and her soul. She immediately signed up for the adventure.



As she hadn't ridden for several years and had never ridden more than two hours at a time, she decided to find a local stable where she could renew and build up her skills as an equestrian. She located a stable that offered trail rides of various lengths through the Marin Headlands. One afternoon she decided to stop by to inquire about arranging a ride. There was a two-hour trail ride going out that day that she could join. She immediately signed up for it. While she was

waiting for the horses to be saddled she began to chat with the other woman who was going on the ride.



The other woman was a stewardess for Luthansa. She had used to be scheduled on the run from Frankfurt to San Francisco. Now-a-days, she was on the flights to Los Angeles but had filled in on this run for someone on the San Francisco flight. Rather than going shopping with the other stewardesses on their layover, she decided that she would do something that she had always planned to do while on the San Francisco run: come to this stables and take a trail ride. As they talked further the woman shared with the stewardess that she was preparing for an upcoming trip to Mongolia. The stewardess was astonished as her former husband had been an attaché for Germany in Beijing and she and her husband had spent sometime on horse back in Mongolia! The stewardess was able to share with the woman her own stories of riding on the steppes. They



both were amazed that they had spontaneously shown up at the same time at a small stable in California!



She began to ride regularly at the stables, building up her endurance to be prepared for the long hours in the saddle in Mongolia. The next time she went out to the stables she was handed a slip of paper with yet another woman's contact information. This was a woman from the East Bay area who had started coming to the stables to prepare for her upcoming trip to Mongolia, a part of which was to be on horseback. Mongolia seemed to be in the air.



The trip across Mongolia itself was fascinating. Though on the trip she was not aware of any particular synchronicities, the entire experience seemed a significant event in her life. Watching the dynamics of the horses, the herders and the way the herd flowed through their environment stimulated her thinking about the way that parts and wholes fit together. The herd consisted of 120 horses. There were twelve stallions in the group. Five of the stallions had their own sub-herds consisting of their mares and offspring. Seven of the stallions were young ones who had not acquired their own mares yet. These young stallions stayed together as a group of their own. The older stallions frequently chased them away from the other mares.



Rather than there being a single ‘herd mind,’ the herd consisted of six major sub-groups that mostly flowed together over the landscape but occasionally fought with each other. Over time, the young stallions kept trying to go off on their own. Cutting of their escape routes and heading them back into the main body of the herd became a daily challenge. She learned to read the contours of the land, to note when they were likely to flow off to the side and to head them off.

While her initial interest had been, at least in part, the opportunity to spend a week with a herd of horses to get a sense of what their group mind might feel like, she came to realize that it was much more complex than a ‘herd mind.’ Successfully driving the horses across the steppes involved heightened awareness of the entire herd, the sub-herds, the landscape and the actions of the other drovers. She learned to feel where she was in relationship to each of the aspects, to anticipate the flow or stoppage of the herd and how she could best help create the container that allowed the herd to flow in the desired direction.



The steppes were beautiful. Being in the presence of the herd and spending eight days on the back of the same horse, a short, sturdy, former racehorse who she named Rusty for his color (Mongolians do not name their horses), observing the intersection of a long history of nomadic life with the 21<sup>st</sup> century, provided her with a glimpse of worlds she had only read about. The Mongolian herders would ride on their steeds, in their traditional coats, smoking cigarettes and

talking on their cell phones. Gers (the traditional yurt of the nomads) were scattered across the landscape. Each ger had a motorbike and solar panels. The solar panels powered the televisions and cell phone chargers she saw in the interior of every ger she visited. The contrast between old and new was striking. All in all, it was quite an adventure.



Though the emergence of this trip and all that led up to it had been rooted in synchronicities, the trip itself, while wondrous, seemed devoid of them. She wonders if the import of this experience will unfold at a later time in her life.

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The phases of her life where the synchronicities were the most obvious, seeming to say “Pay attention!!!”, have always led her to new possibilities, new pathways. Even when seemingly mundane, as the appearance of the chocolate in the Dialogue group, there is a sense that here is something of which to take notice. She hopes to remain alert to these cues from the universe, whenever and wherever they appear. And to willingly step through the doorways that are offered.

