

The Book

by Jann Burner

(The true story of how it was and how it went)

The following is a true story, or rather it is a true experience from the story of my life. Some say that just because something happens doesn't really make it "true".

When I was a younger man in San Francisco I lived with young woman I'll call Mary. One Christmas I bought Mary a new book that had just come out that was getting a lot of attention in our circles. I signed the inside cover and Mary signed her name and her phone number and address under my name. Now Mary and I were very sociable and we often had guests stay over. At the time of this story we had a female guest from England, I'll call her Beth. Now Beth was a gypsy. She really was. She would travel to a place (she'd often just stick a pin in a globe), and then find a way to make enough money to get to another place. She was truly a World Traveler. Well, after her extended visit she decided that she next wanted to go to Peru. So the day came we were to take her to the airport for the initial stage of her new adventure and as a parting gift she gave Mary a beautiful tribal dress from Afghanistan and Mary, feeling like she should give Beth something in return, handed her *The Book*. Beth was pleased to have something interesting to read on the plane.

A couple of months went by and we had another house guest. I'll call her Susan. Susan was a childhood friend of Mary's from the same small town in the Mid-West. Well, one day Mary received the most amazing letter from an old high school boyfriend, who still lived in her home town. Susan knew this young man as well. It seems that this young man, who never left the hometown, read a book one day and this book inspired him to think about travel. After all he was a young man and he'd never been anywhere. So for his initial trip he decided to go to Manchu Pichu in Peru. Apparently he

arrived just fine and was walking around the historical site when he came upon an obvious Holy Man sitting in a meditative posture alongside a trail. Being a "*Spiritual*" sort of young man, I'll call him Steve, Steve sits down in front of the seeker. The Holy man opens his eyes and smiles. Steve smiles and Steve is so moved that he pulls a book out of his pack and offers it as a gift to this Holy man. The man opens the book, smiles and reaching into *his pack* he pulls out a book and hands it to Steve. Steve is rather shocked to see that it is the same book. Not a word has been said. He opens the book and there on the inside cover is the name and address of his high school sweetheart in San Francisco! To say that this blows his mind would be an understatement. He was so blown away that he immediately went back home to the Mid-West and composed this letter to Mary.

Mary and Susan are blown away. I am blown away. What are the odds? Beth must have somehow met this Holy man and given him her copy of the book that Mary had given her. Susan went to bed shaking her head. She also was a traveler and for her next adventure she had been planning on going to Southern Mexico and buying a horse and living in the jungle on her own by the beach. Sounds strange, but in those days people did things like that. Well Susan departed and a couple of months went by and then Mary received a package in the mail. It was from Susan in Mexico! She opened the package and inside was a long letter and a copy of the original book "***Be Her Now***" by Ram Dass that I had given to Mary the previous Christmas!

Here is Susan's story. She made it to her ideal spot and found her perfect horse and had a glorious time living in the jungle on the beach by herself. No problems. But gradually she came to long for some companionship. So, one day she is riding her horse down the beach and she comes upon this very nice house. So she rides up to the house and intends to make some new "friends". She walks up to the house. No one seems to be around but the front door is open. She calls out. No answer. Thinking that perhaps someone is in trouble she walks in but no one is home. On her way out she passes

through a small library. Being a serious reader she stops to look at the books and is struck that the books are all in English. She glances along the shelf and her eyes fall on a book by the same name as the one Steve mentioned as being his motivation to travel to Peru. She picks the book off the shelf and opens it. On the inside cover is my name and beneath my name is Mary's name and address and phone number in San Francisco. To say Susan was blown away would be an understatement. She had never "stolen" anything in her life but she just couldn't believe this. She took the book and mailed it, along with the letter we were reading and then promptly returned to her home in the Mid-West. I know this seems strange, but back then people did things like this and sometimes things happened in very mysterious ways.

Now I'll bet that although many years have passed, that sometime this year I will serendipitously get an email from one of the four people mentioned in this story or I will actually run across this specific volume of this book with Mary's and my name signed in it. What are the odds?

