

LESSON IN LIVING

AFTERLIFE

Elma Allen Milano

DONETTA: The first experience which confirmed my belief in an afterlife was when my three-year-old sister, Donetta, passed away from a heart leakage in 1925, when I was five years old. Mom and Dad were standing by her little crib when she breathed her last. Mother fainted, and Dad saw Donna's spirit leave her tiny body and float up to the corner of the little lean-to that housed her crib. He said her spirit hesitated in the corner and then went on up through the roof.

DAD: The next experience was in 1969 when Dad was in the hospital in Farmington, NM due to a heart attack. Mom had been with him. On the day he died, he told her that Larry (his deceased brother) and Pappy (his deceased father) had visited him during the night. And then he asked, "I'm not going to die, am I Mommy?" She comforted him by telling him she felt it was not his time to go. Later in the day, she felt tired, went home for a nap, and while she was gone, Dad passed away.

MOM: The next experience was in 1984, when Mother was living in Mesa and I was on a mission in Missouri. My brother, Les, and his wife, Marilyn, had been visiting Mom. Friday, before they left, Mother expressed her desire to go and be with Daddy. Les suggested she tell that to the Lord. The next morning (Saturday) when her friend, Margaret Goff, came to help with her house, Mom met her all dressed up and wearing a ruffled apron. She would not let her in. Margaret asked, "Won't you at least let me tidy?" Mom answered, "No, the folks are coming today." Later, Mom walked to the local Safeway, bought green grapes and green onions (which Dad loved), walked back home, set the produce down by the back door, walked back to her clothesline and collapsed. (I surmised she must have told the Lord she wanted to join Daddy.)

ELMINA: Mother's youngest sister was named, Elmina. She lived in Sunland Village while Mom was still alive. They grew close and phoned each other daily. Elmina was the "free spirit" of the Lillywhite females. She did not believe in afterlife. She and Mom had many an argument as Mom tried to convince her that it was real. Finally, in exasperation, Mom said, "I'll tell you what...I am older than you and I will die first. I will come and visit you and then you will know." Elmina agreed, and they put that subject to rest. Mother passed away on a Saturday. The following day, Elmina was sitting in her home about dusk when she felt unusually tired and headed to bed early. As she walked down the hall toward her room, Mom came walking toward her. Elmina leaned over to let her pass, and she disappeared. Elmina said she was wearing a sparkling white dress and was smiling. She looked beautiful like she did when she was in her prime and living out on the ranch. Elmina added in awe, "She didn't limp!" (Mom had one leg a little shorter than the other.) I asked Elmina, "Now do you believe in afterlife?" She responded in her husky voice, "I shuure do!"