



**Elena Lindström
Marjo Ojalamm**

Translated from Finnish
by Päivi Berg

SOUL CATCHER

**Sexual, Financial, Emotional
and Social Misconduct
Committed by Spiritual
Authorities and Survival
from It**

BONA ANIMA

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Committed by Spiritual Authorities and the Survival
from It**



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For Those Who Have Been Hurt

”But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”

(The Bible: Amos 5:24)

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To the Reader

This book originates from end of the year 2018 when my friend Elena told me part of her story and expressed her willingness to print the story as a whole in a complete form. Her deep wish in all its tragedy was that the story could be an encouragement and assistance to those people who have been abused by a spiritual auervaara¹. The relatives and friends of a victim who has experienced abuse also need information of this difficult topic. In addition, Elena wants to make many activists in our society and spiritual communities aware of this phenomenon which is quite unknown in Finnish context.

Although Elena's story is partly situated in a country other than Finland, I strongly presume that this same phenomenon also exists here. Additionally, private people and spiritual communities are increasingly connected to each other in this global world.

¹ Auervaara is a well-established term in Finland, meaning a love scammer whose purpose is to exploit his victim, usually financially and sexually, but also in other ways. (Publisher's note)

I was puzzled about what I was told. Even though I had known Elena for a long time I couldn't have realized in the kind of abusive hell she had lived for several years.

However, I had recognized changes in this young woman's and wife's outer appearance: Elena had switched her jeans into a long dress and tied her polka hair into a bun on her head. She had also covered her head with a chiffon scarf. I didn't wonder the change all that much because Elena visited Evangelical churches in Russian language where this sort of dress is commonplace. My friend had started to comment on spiritual issues in quite a law-abiding way, but I considered that as a passing phase and belonging to steps of spiritual development towards a more gracious way in dealing with herself and others.

When I grew out of my bewilderment, I also realized that this story should be made public. This case and phenomenon are taboo, and it is hushed silent. When the target of manipulation and abuse is an adult the victim may be blamed and made guilty and responsible for the action. It is thought that an adult should be able to recognize a person who is deceitful and not

surrender to become seduced, but this matter is not all that simple.

We don't want to label Christian churches in a negative way, not Evangelical churches nor old institutions. Christianity may bring a lot of positive into a person's life but there can also be a possibility for evil that is hidden from sight. We must bear in mind that spiritual institutions consist of people and all the facts that apply to any organization – add also religious, spiritual dimension that brings its own potential for abuse as a tool of control.

I do not believe that Elena is the only adult Christian abused by a spiritual authority. Elena felt guilt for "committing adultery" for a long time until she realized that she as well as her loved ones had been outrageously abused in the shadow of religion.

Elena's story, the knowledge and awareness of it had to be written down because skewed authorities and communities often repeat the same mistakes and ways of conduct. We need to learn from this so that more potential victims won't become prey to this, and the action of abusers is prevented. Also,

psychotherapists as well as social workers that `bump into this` need factual knowledge of this hushed topic.

But let's have Elena tell her own story. After that I shall deal with abuse performed by a spiritual authority from different perspectives; first I analyze Elena's story to some extent and thereafter process spiritual misconduct from a broader point of view. Because there is so little research on this my study is incomplete. Many essential views remain missing.

Elena's story is told in the way that she has written it; I have only edited it a little. In order to protect her family Elena uses a pseudonym. The names of other people have also been changed so that privacy remains.

At my summer house in Kurikka in Jurva on a March day in spring while birds are chattering in 2020.

Marjo Ojalammi

Elena's story

Birthday Party at the Infertility Clinic

It was 13th of November 1996 and I was celebrating my 30th birthday at the infertility clinic of the Finnish Family Federation. I didn't choose so, it was just a coincidence. Doctor appointments were not so easy to get and me and my husband took the time which was available.

As I was sitting in the waiting room, I thought “huh, that’s one way to celebrate round years, isn’t it”. We had got married a couple of years earlier and after a year expecting and hoping we had turned to infertility treatments. That was a tedious process. Starting with a bunch of medical examinations: blood test, measuring hormone levels, sperm tests, blowing through fallopian tubes and finally examination of the abdominal cavity. All this before any actual treatments.

Finally the doctors didn't find anything wrong with me, but the quality of my husband's sperm turned out to be weak and inadequate for natural fertilization. Fertility treatments should

help – I was told, I could get pregnant through insemination or in vitro fertilization.

On the wall of the infertility clinics waiting room there were cute pictures of "bunny stories" – bunnies are known to be fertile. On the sofa table there was a guestbook. "We are all in the same boat here. You can share your feelings openly; we understand", stood on the front page of it. I thought to myself: "Surely I don't want to share my feelings with people I don't know. Besides I am a Christian, Our Lord Jesus does miracles and I really don't intend to spend a long time here!"

I had known (I wish I knew?) how long our infertility battles would turn out to be! – probably it was better I didn't.

At that time, on the day of my 30th birthday, we had proceeded a while on the clinical path of fertility treatments. All the examinations were done and inseminations by Clomiphene ovulation simulations were to follow. My husband was sent to a medical procedure for improving sperm quality. The doctor was to clog a blood vessel, which was located too close to the testicles and increased the temperature of the scrotum above

the recommended value.

The nurse gave us information on the infertility treatments to come and we went home. On the way home we dropped by the neighbors who had three little children. The wife was from Eastern Europe and the husband was a Finn. This couple Alina and Pekka eventually played quite a big role in my life. That I will tell more about later on.

That day the whole family happened to be sick with stomach flu - diarrhea and vomiting. “As a good Christian I need to help”, I thought. We spent the rest of the day helping. I got to clean baby vomit and change diarrhea diapers, as the mom was in quite bad shape as well. I thought that at least my Lord could be proud of me as I had denied myself and served others. When we finally arrived home in the evening, we discussed that there could probably be a better and more cheerful way to celebrate an anniversary. We decided to book a trip to the USA to honor the day. One of my relatives lived in Florida and we had previously discussed the we might possibility visit him.

As there wasn't any rush to take the trip, we could fly at a

suitable moment.

My Parents Meet and I am on the Way

At this point I should probably tell who I am on the first place. My name is Elena. I was born in 1966 in the capital of a small East European country as a first child in the family. At the time my mom was 21 years old and my dad was 27. I was born in the capital where my father Timotei was a resident. At that time our country was a satellite country of the Soviet Union and the place of birth was rather important throughout ones life. The most important records like the birth certificate and criminal record were to be applied for at the registry office of the place of birth.

In those times people also had a residence permit within the country, which defined the area where they could live. If I had been born in the capital, I would have been entitled to a residence permit there. That was extremely hard to acquire if you weren't local. Some people could even get married to one particular person in order to get a residence permit in the capital.

Soul Catcher consists of Elena's story and its analysis. A non-fiction book on psychic and spiritual misconduct that is very concealed and on which there is little information so far. The book deals with spiritual violence performed by religious leaders towards an adult person. Their authoritarian position can enable versatile abuse, also sexual.

There is no exact term for this phenomenon in Finnish. We use the term kietominen in Finnish edition. Religious and spiritual dimension empowers the abuser to have such control and power, which is not possible in other mental and sexual abuse forms.

Although the victim is an adult, it is very hard for her to recognize the fact that the relationship, she has been driven to, is not one of love and companionship between two equals. Kietominen (or seduction) works mainly in the same way as grooming: a manipulative process performed by adult as a preparation for the sexual abuse of a child. An adult person is carefully and skillfully manipulated in spiritual context.

