



# Kirki

## Unlocking the Code



Kristel Belinets

# KiRKi

*Unlocking the Code*

**Kristel Belinets**

*Translated from Estonian*

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*“There are pages in life that shape us  
into someone else, for they awaken a  
deep wisdom of the soul and remain  
forever dear to the heart.”*



PART I

# FEAR



## IN THE FOREST

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"Kirki, do you even understand what you're doing? Just alone in the middle of a forest, naked, without any kind of plan. It's getting dark, by the way."

One part of me wants to bring some order to this strange situation I've put myself in. Every survival instinct in my body is screaming, but I don't want to listen. I'm just waiting for everything to be fine already so I can live my life the way others do. But no! That I cannot do, and that's exactly why I need to torment myself here. It's foolish even to ask why, because no one has the answers.

All my life I've lived with the belief that I'm capable of making every decision rationally and with careful deliberation. I genuinely thought I was living in my ideal world, where everything was comfortable

and easy, but it nearly had to kill me before I remembered to breathe. Then Sebastian came along, and secretly my hopes kept growing that now everything would fall into place before I could even blink. That's how these stories are supposed to go.

If it's possible to imagine yourself into a dangerous situation, I've done a magnificent job of making it real, essentially no one knows exactly where I am or when to expect me back. They don't know either that perhaps I won't make it back at all, if my body gives out for good. On top of that, the forest here is completely empty of people, so there's no way for me to catch the next train and simply ride home. I've never tolerated driving a car since the accident in childhood, so there are no more choices left than to simply adapt to what's here. Luckily it's summer, and I dearly hope the warm weather holds, then perhaps the reckoning won't be quite so terrifying, and the whole situation is merely comparable to a summer holiday at grandmother's in the countryside, which I never actually had.

Still, coming to this edge of the world was nothing simple. Yes, physically I was brought quite close, but inwardly I had to gather all my courage and surpass myself. I convinced myself to believe that right here I would find the recipe to heal my body. But my entire rational mind still cannot grasp why I'm actually doing this. What and to whom am I even trying to prove with such an act? All of this is madness that I alone have created. Perhaps it would have been wiser to simply hand my body over to the care of doctors and tell the others the truth? Maybe I'm just repeating Liisa's path with my stubbornness.

I harbour no illusions that clarity is coming anytime soon. It's possible that perhaps someday at the end of life, maybe then I'll truly understand why all of this was necessary, but right now there's emptiness in that place. For now I'm simply here, and it is what it is: all of this has to happen to me in precisely this strange way. The only consolation in all the unknowing is that somewhere inside me there's a very, very small part that trusts. Even without a map or a plan or grand visions, maybe in the end everything still moves in the

right direction. But the greater part of me fears that all this effort has been in vain.

Doubts about survival gnaw again. I'd like to think I'm not summoning that end any faster, but some place inside me, something vibrates in an entirely different way, and that is, mildly put, terrifying. A new sensation doesn't have to mean something bad right away, but I hardly dare hope for good either. I'm trying to find my centre and I long with all my soul for miracles to be possible somewhere. Perhaps at least the belief in them will sustain me now, and that's all I have, so I'm grateful for it.

At times fear still swallows me whole, as if I've been hurled into a black hole, and all bodily sensation is completely paralysed. What am I doing here? My legs can't rise, my voice is stuck in my throat, and even if it were possible for someone to hear my cries for help, my throat can no longer produce them. Most likely some bear or wolf will come along and simply claw me apart for supper.

Fear. A curious sensation in the body, the heart flutters, a cold feeling makes me shiver. What purpose

does it serve? Could fear be here to bring me fully into this moment? Not impossible, but what to do with this presence? What do I even expect of myself? I am both metaphorically and literally a lantern in the middle of a dark forest. At times I convince myself this is necessary, but everything else in me shrieks that I'd be better off sitting in an asylum between four white walls than in a dark forest at night.

"Do I even still want to choose life in this body?" The question isn't unexpected, I've been playing along that edge covertly even before the illness expressed itself in my body. I destroyed my own insides with negativity every day; the body simply had to give in eventually. It's a horrible feeling, that I myself am actually to blame!

It's possible I was hoping to find an easier escape by going into Frank's world and giving up this body for good. Our encounters were wild in the beginning, but something still kept me tethered to being human, something that even the finest technology cannot create there. Unpredictability and the sensing of energy are what make people fascinating and exciting.

In the virtual, however, all the spaces were extremely safe and utterly empty of energy, and just as predictable as Hollywood films. Besides, the body had a hangover-like feeling afterward, because although I wandered there on a mental plane, the actual physical body had been passive for far too long.

Unfortunately time slips away while roaming there, once I stayed for several days, and that was clearly too much. So I tried to avoid disappearing too deeply into the virtual from then on, and understood that limits had to be set, because in the physical world the body needs care too. I probably still didn't do it enough, I often sat there for hours anyway and froze bodily like a monument. The worse my physical condition became, the more I was forced to look into the darkness within. The effect of that on my relationship with Frank should not be underestimated. Who on earth came up with the idea that a person could become more whole when a perfect companion stands beside them? Perhaps the disruptions were exactly what was needed to shatter that illusion completely.

Unfortunately, as a human being, it's not possible to use simple back doors to avoid living. There aren't many choices left anymore, because the last ones I made are precisely what brought me here, to this place in the forest and in myself. Part of me kept believing that if I finally chose love with a physical person, then I'd be in the right place, and building a relationship would be motivation enough to heal and move on peacefully with life, because that way is the natural condition for life to continue. I hoped everything would resolve itself easily then, and that another person could help me find the connection with myself again and give my life meaning once more. Today, though, I must admit that was a very beautiful illusion. The more I began to rely on Sebastian, the faster I lost even more of my own strength.

The thoughts fall silent for a moment and I try to calm my body, which has bravely managed to sit motionless for hours. It seems that this path in life I'm walking now is like fresh snow. No one else has pressed their footprints into it before, and so there's no way to see how deep one might land when the steps begin. At

least this much I've come to understand by now, my journey is my own creation alone, and no one else can walk it for me. In this, the possibility of triumph and of ruin are both coming true at once. There's no point placing bets, because in the end there'll be no one left who could bear witness or jot down pearls of wisdom.

I try to breathe deeply, but it's immediately clear that inhaling is impossibly hard. I try once more, more consciously and with fierce focus on the in-breath. Still, the air seems to come through only the tiniest of gaps, and nothing reaches the lungs.

"Yes, I know, I can't receive either good or bad, nor myself," I say to myself, and my entire body sighs, for I realise I've let myself down completely.

I couldn't actually receive the love I'd hoped would save my life... nor let life in so I could heal. That's why Sebastian couldn't truly help me, I had to come searching for my soul alone. To feel fear and abandonment for real, to find my own roots and legs that would finally begin to carry me again. I want to take responsibility for my life into my own hands, but where do you find the instructions for how to do that?

Silence falls. Somewhere in the distance I hear the forest sounds growing louder. Fear creeps around me, but since I'm no longer certain whether it's necessary to go on living, I press my eyes shut and sink for a moment into a meditative state. If anyone should wish to devour me, at least I'd rather not see it.

The tea ceremony helps me stay calm and swiftly carries me away, somewhere into another world. Before my eyes I see an image, suddenly I'm in a deep crevice between cliffs, but ahead there is brilliant light. I have the courage, and I step into it. The most radiant glow I have ever seen, yet my eyes feel no discomfort. In its presence I begin to shine from within, and a warm feeling fills my heart, even the faint shadow of a smile flickers at the corner of my eye. I understand. This is the genuine light of life. Gratitude floods into me from the very root and crashes together above my head. A completely indescribable blend of opposing emotions. Gratitude, sorrow, love, longing, anger, clarity, confusion, to experience them all at once is too much even for one woman.

I feel physically how this wild state of being sends the body too into a spinning and vibrating in a strange way, as though I myself am no longer present in it, but someone else is moving and shaking it. At the same time, on the level of the soul, I experience the deepest connection with the energy of the entire universe. Dissolving into this moment and simultaneously grasping the enormity of the universe, everything at once, all at the same time, yet only for a fraction of a second. It is unexpected but immense, an experience from which it is difficult to return. I linger in its afterglow for several moments more. Before I can even begin to open my eyes, an old memory surfaces from some corner of my mind.

*It was evening. The last rays of light shone through dark blue clouds that had covered the entire sky. The setting sun was hidden behind them, and one could only sense how much beauty was concealed behind those cloudbanks. We were walking along the seashore with Ruudi. We were seven years old and had only been in school for a few months. I stopped, grasped his hand and drilled my gaze into his eyes.*

*"Ruudi, I feel that the others are afraid of me!"*

*I felt shame and guilt about my confession, but at the same time I understood that I was in trouble and he was the only one I dared tell anything to.*

*"Truly, I sense their fear toward me, and yet I don't wish anyone harm. Why are they afraid of me? Why don't they dare be friends with me? I don't want to go to school anymore!"*

*My unyielding gaze gave him no chance to pass lightly over the subject. Ruudi was surprised but gathered himself quickly, that very ability in him was what made our friendship work so well. He always had the skill to adapt to a new situation with lightning speed, and I was the energy that kept shaking those situations by the sleeve.*

*"Kirki, you know perfectly well that it isn't about the others, it's about you. You yourself are afraid of your own inner power. You can't accept yourself as the marvellous being that you are, and instead you constantly compare yourself to others. Don't do that!"*

*His calm nature and sensible words had pulled me out of a tangled mess more than once before. At that very moment, sunbeams broke through the clouds directly onto us. The magical drawing of sunrays between the dark blue clouds cast a golden glow into all the surrounding autumn darkness, and it was like a ray of hope.*

*"Kirki, you are like the Sun. You hide yourself behind the clouds and try to show that you don't burn. When really, you don't dare to shine in your true being, and that energy simply confuses the other children. Yes, you do burn, because you are the Sun, but if you yourself understood that and were willing to live your life as the Sun, then others would be able to accept it too. Only that way can you find your place at school and live in harmony with yourself."*

*Ruudi finished and simply held me.  
"It all begins with you," he whispered  
in my ear.*

The memory fades and pure water begins to flow from my eyes. So much pain tore open again in the

soul in an instant. I understand that Ruudi's words were right then and still are now, but there is great anguish in the soul, because I want to be simply like the others, not the Sun that burns. Defiantly my lips twist and I press my eyes shut even more tightly, like a small sulking girl. My heart wants to explode from the discomfort of removing the walls with which I've sealed myself off from the world. What have I done wrong for everything to slip away like this?

I finally open my eyes, all around it's still pitch dark, at least for my city-dweller eyes. Now I need to find my way back to the meditation hut; I don't actually want to stay in the forest for the night. I step in what I think is the direction I came from during the day, but the darkness offers no confirmation that this way leads back. Damn the sun! Defiance rears its head, because there is absolutely nothing to see.

"See, here's the proof! I am not the Sun, because otherwise I wouldn't be stumbling around in this dark forest."

I simply walk on by gut feeling. I'm sure I didn't go very far from the meditation hut, but since there is

genuinely nothing to see, I may just as well be lost. In a way, I begin to wish for it, some dreadful ending, after all, just so I wouldn't have to keep trying and failing.

"I've made my share of blind stumblings already, but still not a single result that moves anything forward. Why should wandering alone in the forest be any different or solve anything? Kirki, you've simply lost your mind!"

Walking in the dark is tiresome and uncomfortable enough. To keep from fixating on the fears, I let my thoughts drift back to the memory with Ruudi, so there's a glimmer to hold on to. I stop. As if a puzzle piece has suddenly clicked into place.

"How was it that Ruudi, who always adapted so quickly to new situations, couldn't do it anymore when he moved to the big city, and fell ill? What actually happened? We were children, but I tend to think something was being kept secret from us."

"Wait, woman, what are you doing right now? You just opened new rooms inside yourself that matter, and now you're trying to divert your attention elsewhere.

Why are you doing that?" one part of me asks aloud, with reproach.

I fall silent for a moment. I try to make excuses.

"Focusing on someone else is somehow easier, and it's lighter to notice complicated things from a distance. Understanding yourself is much harder."

"But that's not why you came here!" The voice turns harsher still.

"Yes, you're right, it isn't!"

"Sabotage has to go, if you still dream of going on living!"

## FACING DEATH

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Did I really have to come into the forest on the very first day and stay until dark? Shivers of fear run across my body. I hear the sounds of animals who have begun to move about more with the arrival of night.

"Do you still feel you came here to die?" I ask myself. Once again all my attention is on that same subject, you can't get well this way, with nothing but doubts sitting on your neck. It makes me want to cry. It seemed like by now this should be settled and I could simply move on. But one part of me is still appallingly clumsy and feeds endlessly on drama, which is why I can't just sit and wait for a fairy-tale resolution, instead I feel constant pressure to actually take responsibility and do something. I partly admit I'm harsh with myself, but at the same time I justify it,

because it helps keep my attention in place. I'm afraid that otherwise... otherwise surely nothing would change. So, in a way, I'm even grateful that this harsher part of me keeps surfacing, though the feeling is uncomfortable all the same.

I finally stop and listen. Some dreadful screaming has broken out, as if something is being eaten. But the meditation hut is nowhere to be seen, I should have brought the headlamp along. I sit down and lean against a tree, like a small girl being taken into her mother's lap. A great strong pine seems to wrap its invisible arms around me, and I breathe myself into the present moment. I plead with all my soul for guidance on how to get out of here, I truly no longer know the way myself.

The truth is, I'm simply afraid of death, usually more of other people's than my own, but right now it's probably my own. I don't want to think about the illness in my body, but the fact that it's there doesn't change. The contradiction inside me scratches ever more sharply: rationally I'd agree to undergo conventional treatment, but my body cannot consent to it,

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*Continue Kirki's journey  
in the full novel.*



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*Kristel Belinets*

tanaaoyunkam.eu