



Little Angels

Freda
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by
Freda Lonnen-Norton

Acknowledgement

Thank you Carol, Tricia, David, Andrew and especially our artist, my 8 year old great-granddaughter Lena, for hours of help and support and everyone, both on earth and in Spirit, who have helped me write my little book and given me memories to put in it.

Freda

Thank you

I've known my Mum Freda for over 60 years on this Earth Plane, and who knows for how long and on how many others, but not till she asked me to proof read her long-awaited book did I really feel I got to know her properly.

As long as I can remember Mum has been promising to write this book, but somehow other things always got in the way. Other things like helping other people, always being there when she was needed. Only now that she is over 90 has Father Time taken over and said she must sit quietly and at last allow others to help her. After a lifetime of listening to her Little Angels and helping them to do their work here on this Earth Plane, she has been allowed to sit and write.

But even her writing is so much help to so many people. Guiding, inspiring and leading – but oh so modestly. Mum's Angels are truly only Little. She doesn't aspire to help from those Heavenly Beings with beautiful white wings playing their harps. Her help comes from those who, just a breath away, were our own dearly loved family and friends – grannies and siblings and tiny babes who never saw the light of day.

If this wonderful little book gives comfort and confidence to just one person, then Mum has achieved her object. If it enables everyone who reads it to realise that love and forgiveness are the cornerstones on which we should build our short stay on this Earth Plane, then she has surely achieved her greatest ambition.

On behalf of everyone who reads this, or has it read to them, thank you Freda.

Tricia, Germany.

Chapter 1

Flowers for Tony

I can't really remember how old I was when I first became aware of those my mother called Little Angels, who became close companions all my life. She told me that when I was two years old I described a few of them of whom she caught a glimpse, but I cannot remember that now. After all, it was just on ninety years ago! But I can vividly remember when I was three years, one month and thirteen days old, a very important day in my life.

We lived in Eastbourne then, my very strict Victorian Father, my mother twenty years younger, and his five children by his late first wife. My soft-hearted mother was so sorry for this motherless little family, and dismayed how many times he employed a new housekeeper (they always left after only a few weeks), that she applied for the job herself to the consternation of her parents. Many years afterwards one of my half sisters told me that the day she went there to live she gave them so much love and caring that she became like a real mother to them.

I think the little prayer she taught me, with which I always end my closing prayer when I take a service, sums up her attitude on life:

“Lord, help us we pray
To help others each day,
And light for a little
The paths on their way!”

The father of the little family pestered her to marry him but Mum said, more than once, that really she ‘married’ his children, one boy and four little girls. She herself then had three children, I the eldest and two sons.

Another member of the family, who had been around for years, was Nanny Wick, an unrelated nurse. I remember her clearly, tall, thin, grey hair in a severe bun, and boss of all she surveyed. We kids all treated her with respect!

On that special day I really disobeyed all orders. I do remember going surreptitiously into the back garden and picking wallflowers. It was absolutely forbidden for anyone except my parents and George, the one-armed gardener, to pick ANYTHING in the garden, but I was desperate – I wanted some flowers.

Clutching a bunch in my hand I heard Nanny Wicks' voice calling me, there she was, like a non-fire-snorting dragon, on the top of the steps outside the French window demanding what on earth I was doing. Trying to be fearless, but probably trembling like an aspen, I informed her that I had picked them for my brother who was being 'borned upstairs'. I don't remember her reply, but I do remember being grabbed by the hand and taken indoors, then creeping upstairs to my parents' bedroom.

My father and a strange man, probably the doctor, looked surprised to see me, but there was my Mum, lying in that huge four poster bed, and she and a kind-looking nurse lady – not a bit like Nanny Wick – smiled at me. In my mother's arms was a little red-faced baby with gingery-gold hair, who opened his eyes and looked at me. I don't know what happened after that. Looking back, and remembering it so clearly after so long, it is as if I am watching a television, which is suddenly switched off, but my mother told me when I was older that I was not chastised at all, and my father was astonished when I thrust the flowers into baby Tony's arms, kissed him and said "I picked these for you – I've been waiting all

my life for you to come back again.” Strange thing for a child of three to say, I suppose. I wonder what the doctor and midwife thought?

My younger brother, Patrick William, was born in Eastbourne. Father called him his ‘Little Benjamin’, and probably hoped he would be the last of his ‘tribe’! We all called him Paddy. He was born in 1920, but I honestly cannot remember anything about that event.

Chapter 2

Of Indians, Mushrooms and Rabbits

My mother was a medium, but after she married my father, a true Anglican, he would never let her mention such a terrible thing. That dreadful word Spiritualism was absolutely taboo in his house. He was comfortably off, although not a rich man, and when his first wife was alive he had a carriage and pair. On Sunday mornings my sister Eddie, his youngest then, told me their mother and Nanny Wick would line up the five children: Jack, Liza, Vera, Trixie (Beatrice) and Eddie (Edna) – for Father's inspection to go to church, and just before he came into the room they hurried along the line pinching the children's cheeks in case he thought they looked pale. Then they all piled into the horse-drawn carriage which the gardener-cum-coachman-cum-anything drove, and Father rode on horseback to the square, where he tied up his horse outside the church.

Luckily this drill died out after his first wife died. He sold the carriage and acquired a car with yellow wheels – I DO remember

that! We called it custard wheels, and my Father never drove it, but hired a man to drive, which was not very often. I expect he got it as a status symbol, just as he sent every one of his children to boarding schools, which I for one absolutely hated! I missed my Mum so much.

Although Spiritualism was taboo it was difficult to suppress those Little Angels popping in from time to time, especially as not only was my mother a medium but her mother too and she told me that my great grandfather was a Cheyenne Indian, who married a French Canadian girl and changed his name to her surname - Neely.

Mum's family lived in Leigh-on-Sea and often as a child we seemed to spend time there with my grandparents, being chased round the garden by a crowd of cousins.

Gran was, of course, very psychic, and sometimes when we were there, probably in school holidays, she, my Mum and our Aunt Alice would have what they called Little Sittings, and I was sometimes allowed to join in. It was there that I myself became more aware of the Little Angels, otherwise Spirit, who made themselves known to us. My mother quite often was taken over in trance,

and she had one special guide, a Red Indian, who used her voice to talk to us. I found it very interesting, but it was impressed on me not to tell Father – he would not understand! Also my brothers were not invited, they were too young – not much younger than I was! But maybe they did not have a little friend when they were two years old – like I did! I have always been grateful to those three lovely people - Gran, Mum, and Aunt Alice – who taught me so much, and helped me to become more aware of those Little Angels – not big shining Angels with halos and feathery wings as they are portrayed in so many books, stories and paintings, but just people like us, released from physical bodies into another more beautiful vibration of life, and able from time to time, if they so wished, to bring their love and interest close to us. How thankful I am to know they are there, and how grateful for their upliftment when this life sometimes gets us down a bit.

When I was very small Father bought a cinema (about which he knew nothing) in Eastbourne, and at five years old I was sent to a little day school there, where I made lots of friends because they could come on Saturdays to the cinema for nothing! We all

crowded on the seats at the very back of the cinema. I adored Douglas Fairbanks, and would have stayed all day to watch him. I even managed to write to him and – wonder of wonders – received a signed photograph in return. It got so crumpled under my pillow every night!

Father had an excellent manager to run his New Gallery Cinema (now demolished), but he suddenly collapsed and died, and for a long time I thought I had murdered him! I can remember the agony I went through, because the day before the poor man died, his wife, his two children, my Mum and I went picking wild mushrooms, and I thought I must have picked a toadstool by mistake and poisoned him! I dared not confess my fears in case I was sent to prison and hanged, and it never occurred to me that someone else might have picked one! After he was buried they did tell me that the cause of death was from a heart attack, poor man.

Father then sold the cinema and we moved back to Bournemouth, Father's real home town. Two of his brothers and three sisters lived there, and he bought a large impressive Grocery and Provisions Emporium (HIS own description!) and a

house in Grove Road, with a small stable at the end of the garden and a little fat dapple-grey pony, whose name I cannot recall. But we only had her for a short while – suddenly pony and trap had vanished and I was so broken hearted. He bought me a rabbit on condition I fed it and cleaned its hutch. Everyone I am sure, who gives a rabbit or similar pet to a small child, knows that the novelty soon wears off! I did not mind poking dandelions and other delicacies through the bars, but apparently other duties were carried out by the odd job gardener who came only twice a week. I vaguely remember the rabbit, but I remember very vividly that one day we all sat down to dinner (dinner at 1pm in those days) and a delicious stew was dished out. I noticed that my mother did not eat any, she was not hungry, and two of my sisters only wanted vegetables, then I heard Vera whisper, “Is it rabbit?” Even to this day I recall throwing down my knife and fork and rushing out screaming into the garden. No sign of the rabbit – even his hutch had gone! The old odd job man put his arms round me as I wept into his smelly coat, and dinner was over I expect that day! My Father WAS strict at all times, although at others he really

spoilt me, but I think that was a harsh lesson for a little girl of six!

When, many years later, either of my two little girls 'forgot' to clean out their rabbit or guinea pigs I could NEVER have served the little creatures up in a stew – I loved them too much, both the rodents and the children! No wonder Father did not believe in Little Angels.

Chapter 3

Boarding School

When I was seven the family moved again from Bournemouth and I was left there in a small boarding school, nearly heartbroken at leaving my lovely mother. By that time, four years after the end of 'The Great War to end all Wars', all our half-siblings had left home, Liza to Italy, as governess, and the three other girls set up by Father in a rather small but 'posh' dress shop in Putney, with a little flat over. Vera, always elegant, like her own mother, ran the shop, Trixie had a secretarial job in the city, and Eddie, the baby of the first family, kept house for them. Poor old Jack, the eldest, had unwisely answered the appeal of Kitchener's huge posters all over England, with his pointing finger and staring eyes and the message 'England needs YOU!', and like many youngsters at the time he volunteered in 1917 for the army. As he was too young he said he was eighteen years old and no one queried it – the army was desperate for cannon fodder. He came home badly shell-shocked, which affected

him all his life, but he was fortunate later to find a wonderful woman who helped him have a useful working life and loved and cared for him until he reached his three score years and ten.

Father sold the shop and then we went on the roam again, with my mother and two very little boys, to Leigh-on-Sea, quite near to my grandparents, which delighted Mum.

My grandfather had a large flagpole in his front garden, and when I went home for holidays from school he would don his frock coat and top hat, run a flag up the pole, and be there to meet me. I was always put on the train in Bournemouth in the charge of the guard and met by Father in London, and how excited I must have been to rush down the road, leaving Father behind, into the arms of that big bewhiskered old granddad who was so pleased to meet his 'little girlie'. Mum, Gran and the little brothers were always there as well, to make me really happy. But, alas, how fast the holiday time went, and how sad I was to go back to school. Although they were very kind to me they were not Mum and it was at school that I got into so much trouble over those Little Angels.

To be quite honest I had never actually seen a really solid, fully materialised Spirit then, although I was very aware of them. I am told I sometimes heard messages, rather in my mind, for other people, often grownups who were surprised at their accuracy, but I had to be very careful about this for fear of being called over-imaginative or even telling lies. So I kept quiet and only my three 'specials' Mum, Gran and Auntie shared my secret and, of course, they kept pretty dark about it.

At school we had to go to Church in the morning and Sunday school in the afternoon. There were only six boarders, so we all shared the same dormitory, and the rest were 'day girls'.

Just for two terms only, and I honestly cannot remember the reason, my brother Tony, (aged only five) came as a special concession. I was overjoyed, but he too was terribly homesick. I suppose, although he was so young, he felt it undignified to be the only 'man' in a place full of women, large and small! He slept in a tiny room next to the bathroom. How joyfully we went home after his first term, but on the first night when we went back to school we were both rather unhappy though glad to be together.

Sometime after I went to bed, when the other girls were asleep, I crept along the landing and into Tony's room, and he woke up and together we cried ourselves to sleep. In the morning we were found, pillow still wet with tears, fast asleep, curled up together. Oh! How sinful! Our spinster Head Teacher tried to explain to me how dreadful it was, how sinful in the eyes of God, for a brother and sister to sleep together! I had no idea what I had done to make God so cross! We had often before been put in the bath together, so would that have made God cross too? I tried to explain that we were homesick, missed our Mum. Poor innocent child! Corrupting her little brother, and not having a clue what she had done wrong, and I am glad they only blamed me – I loved him too much for him to be hurt. Of course, I never went into his pokey little room again, and if we wept, then we wept alone.

Perhaps that is why he only had two terms there, and I wonder if that toughened him up a bit for the big boy's school in Ryde to which he was sent later.

Chapter 4

The High Rocks

When we went home for the next holidays we found Father had moved again, this time to Kent, where he had acquired a hotel a few miles from Tunbridge Wells. It was called High Rocks Hotel, and attached to it were the famous old High Rocks which now, I believe, belong to one of the Trusts responsible for such historic treasures. We were very excited about this! There was a turnstile opposite the hotel and I was at times allowed to sit there and charge visitors threepence to go over the rocks, (this when Father must have realised that he did not have to pay me). I sometimes got overworked and fed up at not being free to play outside with my brothers! When I was free I spent hours exploring the magnificent thirty to sixty feet high rocks while Tony and Paddy had a business of their own to run, and very lucrative it was until Father was told what they were up to!

In one of the barns was stored our big rocking horse, which we loved, and Tony would entice unsuspecting visitors into the

barn and try to persuade them to have a penny ride on the rocking horse, which I gather many did, probably in admiration of the little boys' business acumen. At the same time his brother stood outside the gents' toilets next door and charged a penny a time. Fortunately the 'ladies' was more discreetly placed in the hotel, so I suppose desperate females were probably expected to have a little refreshment after using the free facilities!

My mother did not have a very happy life there. She seemed always to be working and did all the cooking, with help of one maid and Bert, who was barman, chauffeur, and general factotum. We had a car, which only Bert could drive. With an ample bar on the premises Father enjoyed plenty of sampling, and sometimes a little too much, which was rather sad for his wife. I think we kids got on his nerves a bit, though we tried to keep out of his way during the school holidays.

We had a lovely old Airedale dog called Peter, who had lived there all his life. A railway line ran behind the hotel, for just round the corner was a little platform called High Rocks Halt, where trains from Tunbridge Wells stopped, just right for

visitors in the days of fewer cars and no buses in our way. Old Peter loved to lie in the sun on the railway line and apparently the engine drivers always sounded the whistle when the steam trains left the halt, giving Peter time to rouse himself and get out of danger. Alas, one day, he had no warning. We never knew how it happened – was it a new driver, or did he forget to pull the chain in the engine? Or was Peter too fast asleep? It fell to Bert to collect and respectfully bury what remained of dear old Peter, and we kids gave him a lovely funeral.

The last Christmas holiday we spent at High Rocks, when I was twelve years old; all the family were there except Liza. My three sisters from Putney, Jack from goodness knows where, I cannot remember, and my brothers and me. My Mum, with Eddie and Trixie, must have worked like Trojans, but on Christmas Day the Hotel was closed, no maid, no Bert, only Father's big family (but for Liza, still in Italy), sat round the dining table while he carved a huge turkey and grumbled that it was tough! It was so big that Tony said it must have been very old! Well, the day passed in the usual way. Tony ate too many sweets and was sick. Paddy had

tummy ache, then fell asleep and was carried upstairs and put to bed in his clothes – whacked out!

I remember being woken up in bed with a terrible noise coming from my parent's bedroom. I crept out and peeped through the door, then ran quickly back to my bed and hid under the bedclothes. I had seen my Father and Trixie shouting and hitting out at one another, and Eddie standing by the bed, cradling my mother in her arms. A little while after I heard more noise and commotion then a door slammed, and a few minutes later another door slammed, then the place was quiet and I fell asleep, and the boys had slept through it all.

I woke up late the next morning, woke the boys, and we all went downstairs. Mum was in the kitchen, Father nowhere to be seen, and not a sign of the girls. Mum had a bad bruise on her face and told us she had fallen down. I know I felt a bit bewildered, but we sat round the kitchen table eating cereals until our half sisters appeared and we three kids went off for a walk. We came back to see Bert, probably called by telephone, driving off in the car with our sisters and all their luggage, leaving only Jack behind.

A few days later there was a telephone call from Putney telling us Trixie was ill in hospital with appendicitis, which was much more serious in those days. Our parents rushed up next day to see her and two days after that, on 2nd January, she died of peritonitis. Alas the imminent wonderful discovery of penicillin would probably have saved her, but at that time there was no cure for peritonitis.

My mother told me, quite a long time later, what really happened that Christmas. Father, furious over the tough turkey, over indulged at his 'free drink' bar, and blamed my mother for buying it, and knocked her about so much that Trixie heard her shouting at him and crying and she and Eddie rushed in to stop him. Dressed only in a thin nightie they noticed some of the many bruises on her arms and body. In the morning they persuaded Vera, who had not intervened the night before, to go home with them and the last thing Trixie told him, before they drove away, was that she never wanted to see him again and they had always been afraid of him.

When Father and Mum went to the hospital, Trixie was so upset when he went near that the doctor ordered him out and he

was kept away. She died with her 'Other Mother', who she loved so dearly, holding her hand. Mum had always loved her, probably as much as her real mother had, who was seen by my Mother, waiting for her in Spirit.

Father and his remaining family left High Rocks as soon as possible and returned to rent a house in Leigh-on-Sea again, until he made their last move, buying another business in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight.

Chapter 5

Trixie in the Bedroom

When I returned to school after Trixie's death everyone made a fuss of me and I felt very important, although I was terribly sad about Trixie. She and Eddie were my favourites and I loved both of them very much. As I grew older Eddie and I kept in close touch and it was she, when I visited her in Bexhill when we were both middle-aged, who took me one afternoon to a service in a friendly little Spiritualist Church there. The medium, who had never seen us before, brought our Father to us, with the most convincing evidence and full of apologies for doubting our beliefs, but all I could see of him was his hand, swinging his gold hunter watch and chain to and fro, as he used to, and made me keep trying to blow the top open! He would work the chain up into his hand, and then surreptitiously click it open! The medium even said "Why does he keep telling you to blow it open?" Well, we were glad he realised Mum had been right – I hoped he had apologised to her as well!

My mother had warned me to keep our beliefs to myself at school or I would probably be teased and laughed at. Let them find the Little Angels themselves. When I went to bed the first night after returning from the Christmas holidays I forgot her warning when, lying awake after my companions in the dormitory were all sound asleep, I suddenly noticed a lovely silvery light in the dark room and there, standing at the end of the bed smiling at me, was my sister Trixie. She looked really alive, but prettier than I had ever seen her before. Her hair was like a golden cloud round her head and shoulders. Even now, so many years afterwards, I can picture her radiant happiness as she stood smiling, then slowly disappeared leaving me gasping and speechless. How I wished my Mum and Eddie could have seen her. Entirely forgetting every warning I cried out “Oh! My sister came to see me!” And all the girls woke up, just as the last of the silver light disappeared.

Of course, I was reported – five times reported! I was put back to bed, and given a pill to quieten me down! I was nearly expelled for my wicked lie – my sister was DEAD. I must have been dreaming! But

when I know I am right I can be as stubborn as a mule, even one with a carrot before its nose! I knew she had come, and in a way Trixie had opened a door, pulled away a veil, blown away the smoke, done something to me or for me for suddenly, at thirteen years of age, I was not just aware of them but quite often saw them when they wished to show themselves. They are just Spirits I know as I am inside this physical body. I believe we have a long way to go, and maybe centuries of service, learning and evolvment before there is any hope of becoming a real Angel, but still I call them Little Angels and, if we look around, we can sometimes find one still inside its physical prison, trying to enlighten us with a bit of Love and Service.

I was not expelled or certified, but given another chance, so I vowed to keep my mouth shut and my eyes and ears wide open!

A little while after this unfortunate – NO! this miraculous episode – we were all sitting in class, with our uncomfy wooden chairs and lift top desks, when a man walked into the room behind me and went over to Margaret sitting in front of me. He bent over, kissed her on the head, then

smiled sadly at me and walked away. I turned my head and watched him go out through the closed door. Nobody took any notice, even the teacher did not appear to see him, and I recognised him – he was Margaret's daddy. I had seen him when he and her mother called with a present on her eighth birthday only a few days before. Then the Head Mistress came in, looking very sad, and politely asked if Margaret could be excused and took her away. When she came back a few days later, a very sad little girl who had loved her Daddy so much, I felt so guilty that I could not tell her how he had come to tell her he was all right and give his little girl a kiss. I wonder if she felt him there?

Chapter 6

The Golden Indian

As a child I was always interested in Spiritual Healing and imagined a beautiful silver Angel, or even Jesus Himself on special occasions, overshadowing some important person on earth, or even someone quite unimportant like me, and pumping healing into someone very, very poorly. My patient mother would try to point out that she did not think it was always like that, but I was on the right path. However, if it was the time for the patient to go to Heaven then they might not get really well, but in the meantime the healing would help them – at least that is how I think she explained it. Rather like the maxim:

“Do thy duty, that is best;
Leave unto the Lord the rest”.

We always expect miracles, and indeed are often surprised by them, but cannot order them.

When my brother Tony was 11 years old he was very ill with nephritis and everyone was terribly anxious, especially our mother. When Father was away, trying to find a new business to buy, she asked a

healer from the local Spiritualist Church to come. I, of course, was eager to see what he was like, what he did, and did he really have an Angel to help him, so I crept into Tony's bedroom and there was our Mum with a very ordinary looking man, bending over the sick boy in bed.

The man looked at me and smiled and told me to put my hands quietly on Tony's head while he and Mum worked on his body. All I remember is how worried I was that my hands got so hot, I was afraid they might hurt him. But I think I was disappointed at the lack of an Angel nearby – only the three of us and a poorly little boy who, to the surprise of the doctor and delight of his family, got slowly stronger and better and lived to learn quite a number of very hard lessons which life later threw at him. That was my introduction to Spiritual Healing and I have indeed found it wonderful all my life. My father would have been furious had he heard about a healer visiting his house!

Some years later I had a really wonderful experience. I was visiting my sister Vera and a friend of hers, Margaret (crippled with arthritis and hardly able to walk), was there. How the subject of healing arose I cannot imagine, as Vera absolutely

scorned my beliefs, but a desperate Margaret asked me about it, and Vera more or less dared ME to try it on her. I pointed out that I was not a registered healer and had never been used as my husband, Douglas, was so against my beliefs. But between them they really forced me to try, so I prayed for her, and could see the amusement in Vera's face, as I stood behind Margaret's chair and placed my hands (alas unwashed) gently on her shoulders.

This was over sixty years ago, but as I write I recall how I seemed to be pulled up to over six feet tall – a dumpy five feet of insignificant woman – and power seemed to radiate through ME as great hands guided mine over Margaret's head, limbs and body. My eyes were closed but all around was gold. Into my mind dropped the words "I am RUNNING WATER, you are Aquarius the Water Carrier", and then it was over – never to happen again. I came down to earth and opened my eyes.

Vera was staring, but never said a word. Margaret seemed to be weeping softly. I said "I must go" and just left and went to catch a train home. Nobody stopped me and Vera, on the rare occasions I saw her, never teased me again. Margaret? She

must have benefited somehow, because in a few days she was driving a car again.

I honestly do not know why I met her at Vera's house – I had never met her before or since, but maybe one of her Little Angels manoeuvred something to help her and, if so, another pretty BIG one to use me as well. It is sometimes quite miraculous what determined Little Angels can do!

The incident with Margaret was printed in 'Prediction' years ago and called 'The Golden Indian', because Margaret had actually looked up and seen him right behind me.

Always at night, before I go to sleep, I endeavour to link with Spirit in Absent Healing, often experiencing an awareness of the one on whom my thoughts and prayers are concentrating, and have felt very close to them, and on some occasions I have been told they 'felt me near'. That makes complete sense to me, for so often are we told that we can travel in our sleep state to those wonderful 'Realms of Greater Experience', as that lovely medium John Lines expressed it, and sometimes we can remember ourselves. Oh! How grateful I should be who have experienced so many 'close encounters' with the Little Angels I

love so much, but how far more grateful am I that many more, who have not yet seen the little I have, have found the truth deep within their Spirit minds and started to dig deeper.

When I trained to become a Spiritual Healer in Cornwall, at every healing session I attended there was always a soothing musical background to create a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere around the healers and patients, and I believe this draws those Little Angels closer to help us.

Often when a medium links with Spirit they bring a memory of someone singing or playing a melody we can associate with them and helps to identify them. My long gone father-in-law, Frank, on the rare occasions he 'drops' in to say hello, announces his presence with the sound of the drum he played in the Town Band!

I have a lovely musical memory which was given to four friends and myself some years ago. Two medium friends and myself had been invited to tea with two elderly ladies in North Country, Redruth. Evening was creeping in, nearly time for lights on, tea things tidied away, a warm REAL fire alive with pictures, and comfortable chairs helping us enjoy each others company, quietly chatting, when suddenly around us came

gentle sounds of a familiar Mozart melody. For fleeting seconds every one of us saw quite plainly a quartet of bewigged gentlemen, clad in what looked like soft coloured silk and satin clothes, sitting on gilt chairs with thin curved legs, which hardly looked strong enough to support the portly gentlemen. They were playing an out of the world melody.

How long did it last? What is time? Maybe only seconds, but we ALL saw and heard them, and seemed lifted up and away into another environment of peace and light and beauty. I often recall that wonderful vision we experienced – each one of us. I seem to see again the violins they so tenderly caressed to create the beautiful music which seemed to linger in that little room long after they had vanished from our sight and we came down to earth again. Yes, music is indeed the food of the Gods!

Chapter 7

The Lost Purse

In 1930 I was one of the four pupils from our school entered to sit the L.C.C. (London Chamber of Commerce) Exam. The minimum age had been sixteen for many years, but was then reduced to fifteen, so I was one of the youngest to sit. When I was away at school my Father sent ten shillings (fifty pence) pocket money once a month to buy 'essentials', i.e., toothpaste, shampoo, postage stamps and any other 'essentials' required by a female teenager.

Alas, when we set off by coach to Bath it was the last week in June, and I only had about a shilling left, and no pocket money due until 1st July. The other three had been well provided, two or three pounds each, one girl even had five pounds! A fortune! I was much too shy to explain my predicament to the Head teacher, and hoped until the last minute that Father's letter might come a few days earlier, with perhaps a little extra, but I guess even the most determined Little Angels could never impress him to do anything, and a very

despondent child set off for the mighty city of Bath. I even did not want to buy a penny ice cream when the coach stopped for toilets and refreshments on the way. Fortunately we all four got into the toilets for only one penny, as there was no attendant, and we let one another in, ignoring the disapproving glances of some elderly ladies.

Bath was a grand, interesting place, and we all did quite well in the exam room. Even I passed every subject except mathematics and got honours in two, but I always was and still am hopeless at maths! Unfortunately one seemed to have to pay everywhere – 2d to go into the park, 3d the museum. I never ever dared to spend a penny or twopence on an ice cream, just said they make me feel sick. We had a few hours off every day and one day the other three went to the pictures, but I had an imaginary headache and could not go – just went to bed and cried in self-pity. All the others had received letters from home – I received none! They bought souvenirs and little gifts to take home. I couldn't – they must have thought I was mean. Then I had a wonderful idea – I lost my purse! When we got to the park on the fourth day there I put my hand in my blazer pocket – calamity! No

purse! All my money gone! We retraced our steps, not a sign of it! Heaven help me – we even went to the police station! Poor child had lost her purse – (chopped it up, into a bag, and into a litter bin!). My affluent comrades each lent me a shilling, the richest one made it half a crown! Oh rapture! It even cured my allergy to ice cream. I think that was the most wicked thing I have ever done in my life.

When we got back to school I found the letter from my Father, precious pocket money and a note: “Sorry this is a bit late, see letter from your mother,” and in Mum’s letter she said she had asked Daddy to send some extra money early for me to take to Bath, and that Gran had been taken ill and died on 30th June, and she was sorry she had not written, but they had not wanted to upset me. So that explained it.

I repaid my debts, leaving me once again very short of funds, and no one ever knew my agony in Bath.

Many years later I spent a night in Bath, in a heavy snowstorm, but that is another memory when those Little Angels really rallied to help me. I think they had long forgiven me for ‘losing my purse’. A pity there was not enough energy to put some

cash into my pocket, but that might have meant robbing someone else! At least they impressed my colleagues to help me out, as I believe they often do. Maybe it was another lesson I had to learn.

I was delighted and proud to receive my certificate, but I have not a clue what became of it later, and I doubt if it was of any benefit, because I never became a teacher after all, well not a real teacher. Another path lay ahead of me.

Chapter 8

The Fortune Teller

When I was fifteen years old Aunt Alice came to stay and she, Mum and I went to a Church fete. It was a lovely day and crowds were there. In a tent was an old lady called Madame something who told fortunes. I can't remember her name, but my mother told Aunt Alice that she was not really a fortune-teller, but a well-known medium down on holiday. She had wanted to help the Parish Church where she had been married, and for a wonder her services were gratefully accepted. Perhaps the broadminded vicar, desperate for restoration funds, realised she would take more money than any of the stalls, which she probably did. She charged five shillings (25p) and soon had a queue waiting. Aunt Alice was first of our trio, then Mum and then I went. Even seventy-five years later I can remember that remarkable woman (although I can't remember what I had for lunch two days ago!).

After bringing my sister, my grandparents, all four of them, described

accurately (from my memories of the maternal ones and pictures of Father's parents), the grey pony and a host of others, she said I would marry a man with a crippled arm (No fear! I thought – but I did!) She said I would have two children, though I would like to have six children, but must wait patiently for the other four. Her prediction of another four children was correct! When I was forty-nine I married one of the loveliest men in the world – a widower with four children, who became just like my own. She also said I would love to have a son, but I must wait some years for that and would not see him for a long time! She said a lot more, but these stuck in my mind, as did her forecast that I would live to a good old age, at least eighty-seven. So she was right there, but I guess I am living on borrowed time now! I must try to make the best of it.

When we compared our readings over our shilling cream teas Aunt Alice said she was told to 'look after her youngest sister' among other things, but with my Mum she gave only the Little Angels around her and no predictions. None to give, I suppose, because she died unexpectedly at the end of that year.

Of course, I do hope that in my links with Spirit I have not been looked on as a 'fortune teller', even on the rare occasions when I used to do sand readings for charities and sometimes a simple prediction slipped in, such as I had often received myself.

I liked to do sand readings and still have the slightly ancient floral tray given to me by my dear late medium friend, Leslie, and original still-golden sand Jimmie and I collected on a sunny day by the sea in Cornwall long ago.

Many years ago I sat with Nan Whittle when she gave a class on sand reading in London and was asked why I did not try! So I always did them, when asked, for a long time after that, just as Nan Whittle and Mum had done, and even raised money in the old City Hall in Truro in meetings arranged by my old pal Betty from Newquay for charity. Happy memories!

Even more happy memories of services of Flower Clairsentience, which I enjoyed so much and made many friends.

I love flowers and am always pleased to be invited to take a service and feel the different subtle vibrations of the flowers in the tray. All those that are not taken away

after the service by the donors, I can usually take home and put again in water in the special vase on the Healing Table in my bedroom, to enjoy again.

There are of course, many varied ways of working with flowers, but I used the lessons my Mum taught me, and have seen other mediums use, and it always seems to please those helpful Little Angels in linking with loved ones still here. But the greatest help they can give us, I believe, is the confirmation that they are often close to us, trying to help us in whatever way is right for our own progression in the lessons we have to learn in our physical lives.

Chapter 9

Family Moving On

Altogether I spent eight years at boarding school and decided I would like to be a teacher, so put my back into studying, which pleased everyone. In the meantime my sister Eddie married and had a daughter, Sheila, and my Brother Jack, after trying to work for Father and wandering from job to job, met his wonderful Ethel, who took him under her determined wing and into her tiny home. She really worked wonders and from nothing they ended up with their own little shop in Bournemouth, after the start of a tiny 'tea and sandwich' stall on a building site, she often climbing up ladders with cups of tea and fodder for the workmen. If ever a Little Angel in a very ordinary looking 'shell' lived on earth it was Ethel. They even retired to their own humble chalet, with a gorgeous garden, near the river at Purley and I think every stray or misunderstood cat around moved in with them!

Vera, the elegant one, moved away from the tiny gown shop in Putney and very soon had her own business, employing two

underlings in Beckenham. She met and married a gentleman who not only had his own Estate Agency, with well-known businesses in Staines, Egham and Feltham, but also a magnificent house in Staines. His father had been a diamond merchant in Hatton Garden and Dudley also inherited that business. He adored Vera, and she certainly felt the same about him, and elegantly graced his home and his table with plenty of servants to serve them. Poor old Liza worked hard in her beloved Italy and was apparently a respected Governess to the children of the English Ambassador. Her one claim to fame was when, after an earthquake, she was the last to rush from the residence as it collapsed behind them, but was not badly hurt, although very shaken! The servants had felt the first slight shakes, Sir and Madam were roused, the Butler and Nanny had grabbed the children. Luckily Liza awakened to the shouting and scrambled out in her nightclothes, last one away! No one seemed to have thought of her, or were perhaps too busy saving their own skins, so maybe the English Governess was not as respected as she believed! I wonder if a Little Angel woke her up? Even so, she would never have believed it!

I enjoyed the school holidays in Ventnor, and Father seemed better and very involved in his quite grand double-fronted Grocery and Provisions shop which he named 'The Island Stores'. We lived in a large flat above. During those years I had become far more aware of those Little Angels. Although at school I never dared mention them, at home with my Mum we often saw and recognised them clearly and Trixie often popped in, luckily never when Father was around, but I suppose he would not have seen her if she had. There was a Spiritualist Church there but we never dared to visit, someone would have seen and reported us, and it was best to keep the peace, because we both hated the storms, which were very seldom for once!

My two young brothers both went to the local school, in fact the only school in Ventnor, instead of bundling them off to the Boys' School at Ryde. My Father sank his stupid pride when he learned that even the Doctor's two children went to the school in Ventnor! Alas, I was still sent back to Bournemouth. How wonderful if I could have gone to school nearby, and come home to my Mum and brothers.

Chapter 10

Sausages for Christmas

Our last Christmas with Mum was a very eventful and memorable time. Tony and Paddy still attended the local school in Ventnor and all three of us looked forward to Christmas with our mother. Father, of course, was very busy with all the preparations for the festive season and kept all his assistants well on their toes. Directly I arrived home for the school holiday I was also put to work, serving and weighing up sugar, tea, cake, fruit – dozens of commodities which now appear in hygienic wrapped packages, often very difficult to open, especially the biscuits. Then they were all kept in big tins, and weighed and wrapped as required, which kept the shop assistants busy, while the customers sat on chairs by the counter, ticking off the items on their lists.

Unfortunately my mother had not been well for some time. Not really ill, but somewhat poorly, so I had to do a lot of odd jobs in the flat, especially cooking. I was unpopular when I tried to dragoon the boys

into making their own beds and tidying their bedrooms and do shopping for me (as Father grumbled that as long as I was away from the shop I was shirking my duties!).

As at school I had not been taught even to boil an egg, cooking was difficult to satisfy my gourmet father and to produce a few delicacies to tempt my mother, who still tried to help but got so weak that she had to stay in bed and seemed to be fading away under our very eyes. About three days before Christmas we called in the doctor who insisted she must be admitted to a Nursing Home in Shanklin, for proper nursing care. I went into the sitting room, where we had put her bed so it was nearer for me to keep popping up to see her. She took my hands and kissed them and told me not to worry, she would not leave me yet because 'Nessie' (my father's first wife Agnes) "Had promised to come for me". That was the last time I saw her, with her beautiful smile, enveloping me in Love. She went to the nursing home that afternoon.

Father went twice to see her in the Nursing Home and took Tony the first time in the evening and Paddy the day before Christmas Eve. We were so busy in the shop on Christmas Eve, delivering last

minute orders to some of his special 'posh' customers and I went in the delivery van to help. It was much too late to hire a taxi and go to Shanklin that evening so Father arranged for all of us to go to see her on Christmas Day. I do remember climbing the stairs to our flat on Christmas Eve, hungry and exhausted, scrambling up some food for three starving 'men' and myself, and looking at a tremendous turkey and string of sausages, which had just been delivered – ten o'clock at night! I got a tablecloth, covered it all over, and went up to bed, to have a good sleep and tackle it in the morning!

Mum had begged me to look after the boys and I had managed to fill two socks with little bits and pieces she had hidden in the wardrobe. Even at their ages they were still her 'little boys'. But I was so tired I forgot all about them, so Santa Claus did not visit our home that night!

I think I was the first to wake on Christmas Day. I switched on the light, shook myself, and realised what had happened. What thoughts flashed through my mind? Father had booked a car so we could all go to the Nursing Home, which meant I must somehow deal with that giant

turkey before we went, and leave it slowly cooking in the oven. I crept down to the kitchen and then realised I had not a clue how to make the stuffing. No packets of stuffing then to help us out! And which end of the turkey did I have to put it? I am sure I must have prayed for help. I always seemed to be doing that nowadays. I got down Mum's Mrs. Beeton's Everyday Cookery Book and had found 'Stuffing', all sorts of stuffing, when the door opened and in crept the boys. The only ingredient for stuffing we had appeared to be the bread. I couldn't find any herbs anywhere, so Father would have to be content with just sausages and bread sauce. We tried to guess the weight of the turkey and how long to cook it, and we all worked out different times. Tony suggested we at least lit and warmed up the oven. Where were the matches – all used?

Living over a shop it was easy to pop down for forgotten items, but shop was shut and Father in bed. Paddy remembered a box on the table next to the tobacco tin and sneaked off to get it – well done Patrick! I pushed a few sausages inside the bird and my hand encountered paper and I pulled out a greaseproof bag full of bloody, disgusting looking articles, which Tony recognised as

giblets. What on earth does one do with giblets? We were getting more and more dismayed. Again I prayed to anyone around, and the telephone rang in the hall. There was a deadly silence. I think we all felt the same – who was ringing on Christmas Day? We heard our father come downstairs and pick up the phone, but we could not hear what he said. Then slowly he trudged up the few stairs, opened the kitchen door, and just said, “Your mother’s dead”, and went away. Three voices said three different things, almost in a tone of relief, “He won’t expect us to cook that turkey now.” “We could just cook the sausages for him today.” And I said, “Yes, I could cook the sausages, thank goodness.” None of us realised what had hit us or how that poor old man must have felt. It had happened again. Nessie had died a week before Christmas leaving five children, now he was left once more with three kids to look after.

He came down to the telephone again and rang the police in Leigh-on-Sea to tell Aunt Alice, who had no telephone, and she rang back to let him know she would come down on Boxing Day, which she did, and stayed until after the funeral. Thinking back, it must have been Mum’s time to go, and our

prayers were answered in the best way they could manage at that time.

Yes, we cooked the sausages. We pricked them, sizzled them slowly in dripping which splattered all over the stove. Served up Oxo gravy and tinned peas in a beautiful gravy boat and Doulton vegetable dish, and laid the big oak table in the dining room and got out the best linen napkins and silver condiment set. Father sat in one of the oak carver chairs at the head of the table and we kids sat on three of the other six and had Christmas dinner in style, and miraculously not one of us choked.

Before dinner Father told us to take away the Christmas tree. It was not a huge one but we had decorated it, as Mum had instructed, with ornaments kept many years. He told us to take it to a widow who lived just round the corner up Tulse Hill. He went down to the shop and brought up three bags of sweets for her children, some biscuits and cheese and a big bag of fruit. Tony carried the fruit and sweets etc., I managed the tree and Paddy walked behind picking up anything we dropped. Our Father had a soft spot sometimes. He knew the lady well for though she was not really a customer, she sometimes, perhaps in desperation, would

send a child with a note for something like bread to pay for later, and he always tried to help her. Goodness knows what she lived on. She did washing, anything – no benefits then. I hoped she would not be offended, but both she and the three children (two little girls and their big brother of thirteen who helped her wonderfully) were delighted.

Many years later after the Second War, I returned to Ventnor to attend the unveiling of the War Memorial in the Park, on which my brother Tony's name is engraved. She stood next to me and on the stone was the name of her son, and we hugged one another in remembrance of that Christmas Day when the two boys met briefly and now their names are engraved next to one another.

Chapter 11

The Deep End

After Mum died I was really thrown into the 'Deep End', as the saying goes. My Father took me away from boarding school, after winning an argument about paying a term's notice, and I became cook, housekeeper, shop assistant and clerk to keep all his accounts. As most of his customers had monthly accounts and in the days of no washing machines and all goods having to be weighed up, life was hectic and a bit miserable, although I expect it was far worse for him. Tony was packed off to the boarding school at Ryde, to my dismay, and Paddy still attended the local school until Tony left Ryde School in 1933 and had to help in the shop and Paddy was sent in his place. Poor little fellow, he was only ten when Mum died and must have been shattered.

On the day of our Mum's funeral Father would not allow any of us children to go, only the grownups, and sent the boys out for a walk to get them out of the way. Aunt Alice told me that, as the cortege

wound up the long hill to the cemetery, he saw two little boys, who stopped, took off their caps, as even very young lads did then, and he suddenly recognised Tony and Paddy and he waved to them. I often wonder what thoughts went through the heads of her 'little boys' when they realised whose funeral they watched passing by.

We liked living in Ventnor. Tony came home for weekends and the boys spent a lot of time on the beach, and on Sundays, when household chores were over and Father asleep full of Sunday lunch and whiskey, Tony and I paddled canoes out around the pier, but Paddy was a bit frightened to come with us. Neither of us could swim at all, but the deaf mute young man who hired out the canoes very cheaply to us, often let us out when the sea was too choppy for visitors to go! How we were never capsized and drowned I don't know! Little Angels around again, I suppose. Not our time to go.

Unfortunately my Father became very dependent on the hidden bottles of whiskey in his little office up the stairs at the end of the shop. He was lucky to have two good assistants, Clifford and Ralph, who appeared to be conscientious and honest, and did not seem to be disturbed at having

to help Father up when he sometimes tottered on the lower stairs – very embarrassing. I remember one occasion after the shop had closed and Paddy and I were upstairs with Father’s meal all ready wondering where he had got to. I found him in an apparently unconscious heap at the bottom of the stairs and frantically telephoned our doctor thinking he was dead. Doctor came at once, took one look at Father, told me to fetch a blanket, which he put over him, and then told us to leave him there until he ‘slept it off’, and went off home! I can’t remember how long the ‘sleeping off’ lasted, or whether we had anything to eat that night, but I fear the business must have suffered without his firm hand on the reins.

Old Scottie, who drove the van, helped me out bringing in coal and taking out rubbish and even old Sarah Jane, who was now employed in the cash office and in charge of banking and wages, seemed very fond and supportive of my brothers and me. But Sarah was taken ill, very ill, and died after a tough fight against cancer, of which we knew nothing until after she went.

Father, I learned later, got a loan from the bank, but realised he must sell up while

there was still something to sell. It was bought by a little man called John Maycock, who had lived for years in China and been waited on hand and foot, and must have been as green-as-grass to buy quite a large business, about which he knew nothing, and a huge flat in which he lived alone. He sold off the business again to the International Stores.

The final blow to my Father was when he was diagnosed with cancer and, by the time the bank loan was paid off and most of the rest of his money in the pre NHS days was spent on a colostomy operation and weeks of care in the familiar Nursing Home in Shanklin, there was little money left. I wonder sometimes if our doctor had shares in that home.

When I was sixteen I met my first husband, Douglas, who apparently took a real shine to me. Whenever I managed to go out on my own, usually in the evenings after Father had fallen asleep in the armchair after a hard day's work, Douglas would suddenly appear. He was a kind little chap, and after sheer hard work and study at school had got himself a job in the Accounts Dept of the County Council in Shire Hall in Newport and travelled there every day.

Despite the persistent wooing of Douglas, I fell deeply in love with a lovely little postman called John, and then a gorgeous fair-haired blue-eyed Adonis called Cuthbert, but alas neither of them guessed or appreciated my affections. After they married rather older maidens, I brokenheartedly turned to the patient and understanding Douglas as my only hope of getting away from my father, who incidentally was furious about our friendship. This was largely because Douglas's mother who was always hard up and his father, an excellent house painter who got very little work, never came into HIS shop, but frequented his business arch enemy and only other grocery shop in Ventnor at that time – the Cooperative Stores! But love conquers all, even third hand love, and eventually we got engaged!

Douglas had a great friend called Leslie and as they were both really outstanding tenors, they formed a group with some other vocally gifted lads and called themselves the Harmony Eight. I tagged on and joined in many concerts with them and Douglas, Leslie and I joined the local Operatic Society, which produced some of the best productions of Gilbert and Sullivan

operettas I have ever heard on the amateur stage

Leslie was a Spiritualist and often tried to persuade Douglas and me to go with him to the little church in Ventnor, but Douglas, who was in the choir of the Parish Church, would have nothing to do with such a thing, and I dared not go in case someone saw me and told my Father – I was really terrified of what might happen!

Leslie's parents were Baptists and soon after his Father died someone reported to his mother that Leslie had been seen coming out of the Spiritualist Church. She was absolutely horrified, but as he was a fully-grown man she could not stop him, and he was becoming very clairvoyant. Then his mother, who had never got over her husband's death, became very ill. Leslie told me that one day she asked him if he really, truly believed she would ever see his Father again. Delighted to share his beliefs with her, he said that he was certain when she passed away her Spirit would leave her body and she would find Father waiting for her just outside the bedroom door. This seemed to comfort her and a few days later she passed peacefully away in her own bed, the son she loved holding her hand believing

her beloved husband was just the other side of the bedroom door.

A few weeks later a visiting medium gave Leslie a message in the Church from his mother – his Dad was NOT outside the door, he was standing by the bedside!

After that most evidential little message Leslie went from strength to strength and eventually became a sincere, kind and helpful medium, his own guides and helpers giving him evidence to help many others. To me he was like a brother, and I kept in close touch with him and his wife Eva all their lives.

Many years later, when I was working as a Home Teacher of the Blind in Cornwall, his wife, Eva, telephoned me just before Christmas and said Leslie had been rushed into hospital and was very ill. It was not possible to visit him, it was so far away, but I said I would come directly after Christmas. I had so many commitments with my blind folk and little spare cash to travel.

As I was living on my own then, two medium friends invited me to tea on Christmas Day and we had a little séance with another couple there. One of my friends gave us wonderful evidence and suddenly told us a couple wanted me to know that

they had just met their son, Leslie, and would I ring Eva and tell her he is so relieved to be out of pain and would be near her and help her all he could. They talked for a while and thanked me for keeping in touch with their boy.

A little hesitantly – Oh thou of little faith! – I rang Eva. She said at once I must have heard the news. How did I know? And I gave her the messages and she said a neighbour, a dear friend of Eva's, had come just before the hospital rang, and was staying the night with her and would drive her to the hospital the next day and take care of her. Eva was a very resilient and capable woman and fully realised the help she would receive, not only from friends around her, but from those Little Angels in whom she and Leslie so firmly believed and who would not let her down. From what I heard from time to time over the next few years before she joined Leslie, I think they kept that promise.

Chapter 12

World War Two

When one has floundered in life in the 'Deep End' for a while, there is only one way to go and that is UP! So UP I went, and in January 1938 I married Douglas. As he was a chorister and we both attended the Parish Church, we had a full choir at the wedding. Flowers decorated the Church (whoever put THEM there?) and bells were rung. Vera's husband generously gave us five pounds and Father managed ten, so I was able to buy a really beautiful wedding gown at a 'Guinea Gown Shop', plus wedding veil (two shillings and sixpence), and a bouquet of daffodils made by my friend and enough pale-green satin for a frock which my dear friend Mavis, my bridesmaid, made.

I guess looking back it was a real economy wedding, but the Church was full and the sun shone, and we went by train to Leigh-on-Sea for a three day honeymoon! The only thing I cannot remember after 68 years is a reception!

We moved into a bungalow in Newport, Isle of Wight rented at one pound

a week, really far too exorbitant for us. We collected some floor coverings and bits of second-hand furniture which Father gave us, before all the remainder from that huge flat, including the carved oak dining table, two carvers and six carved black chairs, all fetched twenty-two pounds the lot in auction! A 'friend' of Father's arranged this! Our income was Douglas's wages, but a year later, in the times when rises in wages were awarded only on merit, his wages were exactly doubled to five pounds a week! We had a big garden and free allotment on which we slaved every minute we could. No TV, no radio, no washing machine, no electricity, Tilley oil lamps and no gas cooker – happy as Larry with our kitchen range stove, copper to boil the washing, two hens for eggs and piles of vegetables outside.

Poor old Father for the first time was nearly broke. He had lost thousands of pounds in the tremendous HATRY share collapse years before and his rather neglected business suffered a lot as well. None of his family would offer him a home, so he came to live with us, had the better bedroom as a bed-sitter and was waited on hand and foot. I always managed good meals for him, did his washing, and he

generously paid one pound a week for the lot out of his meagre savings and pittance of the recent Old Age Pension. When he died he left me the residue of his estate which, after the funeral expenses, was three pounds sixteen shillings.

Our first daughter Frances Anne was born in November 1939, as the War Clouds grew darker around us. My husband, who had a paralysed arm, as prophesised in 1931, tried hard to join the forces, but had to be content as a Fire Watcher. He spent many nights supported only by a stirrup pump and the protection of his tin hat. He was also an ardent Churchman and Choir man, so once more I could never speak of my Little Angels, who were constant companions all through the War.

In 1938 my brother Tony, who had joined the RAF in 1937, came down for a week's holiday. He longed to be a pilot but was, he said, just one of the 'erps' who pulled out the chocks from under the wheels, but I told him that if no one pulled away the chocks the planes could not fly and to me he was the most important bloke in the RAF.

Before he arrived on his Red Indian motorbike a telegram was delivered recalling

him to duty, but it was too late to catch the last boat at Ryde to the mainland, so he left first thing in the morning. I was terribly upset and said I did not think I would ever see him again. My husband got really cross with me and said if there is a War it will be over by Christmas – he will be all right, he's only ground staff! Some time later came a postcard of the ship on which he was sailing to Singapore. I was so glad – I knew he would be safe there, away from the War zone! Another big mistake in my life.

Next door to us we had lovely neighbours, Frank and Stella and their five sons all military age. After they were all called up and even their eighteen-year-old 'baby' had joined his five brothers, she came to me in tears, naturally afraid for them. I told her with real confidence that they would all be all right, but I felt doubtful about young 'Bunnie', next door the other side. Those six brothers served all around Europe and came home unscathed but Bunnie, an only son of lovely parents, was shot down over the Channel after a sortie in Germany, maybe by friendly fire? No trace of him was ever found.

Portsmouth and Southsea were terribly hammered by bombing in the War

and, far away as we were, in the nights we could see the fires burning and every time there was a raid the planes dropped the 'spares' on the Island on their way home. Occasionally a town was targeted, with damage and loss of life, but the only damage we sustained were broken windows and a ceiling down. Every time the sirens sounded we crawled into the remarkable Morrison table shelter, which covered half our kitchen-cum-dining room.

In the sneak raids of spare bombs, we lost three dear friends on different nights. One was a darling old organist at the Parish Church who was coming to supper after choir practice. He lived alone and that evening I had made a tasty macaroni cheese, which he loved. I called out to him as he passed our gate on his way home, at the end of our road, and he said he was just popping home for a 'clean-up'. Back in five minutes. The unheralded stray bomb demolished his home and him just as he got there. It only gave us a bit of a shaking – not even time to reach old 'Morrison'!

Another friend, Sheila, had a little girl of six years old called Barbara. I took my three year old Frankie to tea one day and Frankie settled herself down in a tiny child's

blue armchair. Sheila insisted we took it home because it was outgrown. Barbara was pleased to see it go, it was babyish for a big schoolgirl of six and Frankie was delighted. That evening Sheila's husband had just left for nightwork, when their house took a direct hit and he, in the next street, rushed back to join others tearing at the rubble. His wife was dead, but she had shielded the child with her body and little Barbara was rushed to hospital.

She had so many visitors, even toys and severely-rationed sweets, but the nurses said she was always looking through the window – she just could not believe her Mummy would not come. The only thing left from her home was the little blue chair, which we offered later to her Daddy and he gave it to the hospital for the Children's Ward. He was a lovely Father to her and as she grew up she became so thankful that he had left for work that night.

Our third friend was actually killed going to work, but although his house was ruined his wife and only daughter were saved by diving into the cupboard under the stairs. Years after the War I met the grown-up daughter in Bournemouth, where we both worked as Home Teachers of the Blind.

Fortunately my little Frankie was never afraid – I made sure of that! As soon as she could walk and a siren woke her in the middle of the night, she would be out of bed and trundling along the passage to the shelter with Teddy in her arms – he was priority to save to her. Whatever happened in the world outside, our Morrison table shelter was SAFE! I think she thought it was protected by a ring of my Little Angels and I did nothing to disillusion her!

A few weeks after Sheila was killed and we had visited little Barbara in hospital a few times, a friend of mine, Joan and her little daughter Gill aged five, came from Andover for the day. Soon after they arrived the air-siren sounded. Joan screamed with terror and the child was terribly frightened, which quite surprised three year old Frankie, who calmly pulled little Gill into her old friend 'Morrison' and, although all was quiet outside (just a false alarm) I eventually persuaded Joan to crawl in with me, for the sake of the children.

Oh! How I wish I had a recording of that three year old sage of wisdom explaining to Gill that IF the naughty men DID throw a bomb on to our roof, the shelter was made of iron and would protect us, but

if we were a weeny bit hurt, children were taken to hospital, with a big rocking horse and visitors gave them sweets, and they soon got better and had a lovely holiday.

I think my friend Joan thought the child was crazy and I fear that would not have been exactly poor little Barbara's description. But the end of her lecture, very 'SOTTO VOCE', with a quick glance at their two Mums at the other end of the shelter, was a bit dramatic. She quietly assured Gill that IF their mothers, by some oversight, were killed, then everyone made a huge fuss of the children, but even then there was nothing really to worry about "Cos they just turn them into Little Angels and our Daddies look after us!" Maybe the fact that both Frankie and Gill had very loving fathers was added as a compensation!

That wee girl of three, now an over middle-aged woman, has had a similar philosophy all through her life and often throws it at her ancient mother in rare times of strife!

In May 1944 my second daughter Patricia was born, and what a time that was! The Luftwaffe suddenly seemed to throw a last fling at us. Little Frankie was sent to friends in the country at Whitwell to stay

while I was away. We were ignorant of the battery of guns near the village, but Jerry was not, and the night after Frankie left there was apparently a ding-dong of bombs and guns and my fire-watching husband learned on the grapevine where it was and told me! I was frantic – no car, no telephone, no buses! I thanked my Little Angels for pushing my little girl and her two old ‘aunties’ into a cupboard under stairs, as Frankie insisted they all sheltered, and it was the next best place to a Morrison. No wonder I had to be rushed by taxi to the nursing home to deliver my two weeks late baby!

My husband with his tin hat, shovel and stirrup pump spent two nights and one and a half days outside the nursing home, (with short breaks for light sustenance and toilet relief), because bombs kept popping down. It was so noisy and dangerous that the patients (four others) and my doctor and Matron were sheltering nearly all the time in the reinforced cellar and one stalwart nurse and one expectant mother were in the delivery room at the top of the house, trying to encourage a reluctant and stubborn child into a hard world! Outside hundreds – no

thousands – of brave men were fighting desperately for victory at last.

To this day Patricia is proud that she was born during an air raid! But I did begrudge having to pay the doctor's fee! He was in the cellar making out his accounts while the baby was born!

Chapter 13

Tony at the Gate

After Brother Tony joined the RAF in 1937 he heard rumours he was being sent to Singapore and tried to persuade Paddy to join him in the hope he could 'claim' his brother to go with him. I guess that it took a determined Little Angel to lead Paddy to decide not to go to that 'warm and beautiful' place with his older brother, especially with the War Clouds starting to gather over our country.

Paddy was called up in 1940, and joined the Royal Artillery and sailed overseas in 1942. He seems to have an almost unscathed life in the Middle East and saw a lot of the historical treasures of the East. He came home early in 1945 and saw a poster asking volunteers to train for clerical duties. Although, he says, the rule in the forces is 'never volunteer', he suddenly found himself doing just that and was accepted – rather to his surprise I gather! His Light AA Battery men were sent to Palermo, all on the quiet, and as the gunners left their landing boats and waded

ashore the waiting enemy opened fire and mowed every one down. The clerk was still aboard the ship and was one of the few of the unit who was not killed. He lost a lot of friends that day and now, an octogenarian, he still sometimes wonders why he was spared. Sadly he does not really believe in Little Angels, but perhaps one day he will.

He came home in 1946 and today is still going strong and is a happily married octogenarian and a good old pal of mine!

My brother Tony, it seems, had another path ahead of him. He was very happy in Singapore, far away from the European War zone, and often wrote interesting letters about life in the RAF there. His only concern was the terrible bombing thrown on his home country and anxiety for his family. Letters passed between us until suddenly in December 1941 came the terrible attacks on Pearl Harbour and Singapore, when communication ceased. Just a few managed to get back to England and all news was bad news – what on earth was happening out there?

We did not know if Tony was dead or alive, until early in 1943 my sister Liza, who was living in Scotland, happened to meet an RAF pilot officer who had been stationed in

Singapore when it was attacked He got talking to her and he had actually been at Seletar Airfield and flown dozens of personnel away to Java, until it was not possible to evacuate any more; too many planes were shot down in the operation and those remaining were ordered to get away from Singapore.

He remembered my brother – Ginger he was named, with his auburn hair. My sister learned that Tony had been landed on the island of Java, hoping for further rescue by sea or air but, of course, the enemy themselves overran it very soon afterwards and those who survived were taken prisoner. But to hear he had got away was wonderful news – he was alive! Of course, I imagined him and his pals struggling though jungle living on bananas and goodness knows what and going goodness knows where, but he had survived. What a miracle! Little did I realise then what was in store for him.

We never heard another word until after the War, when one glorious morning I received two cards from him, from his POW camp, and the following day two more. He said he was well, not badly treated and looking forward to coming home. They were

undated and probably found, with hundreds of others, by the troops who liberated the camp. The prisoners must have been told what to write to show how well they were being treated. I was so excited, imagining him coming home any time, so I hung flags round the front door to welcome him home and then left the door unlocked, bundled the two little ones into the pram and nearly ran the mile to town to try to get some little treat for him to eat! Coming home still on the trot, I suddenly noticed in the distance someone standing at our gate. A man, tall, slim – was he in uniform? Yes! Could it possibly be? My trot became a gallop – roaring along the road I recognised him and waved frantically! He turned, waved, and I was near enough to see him smile then, suddenly, he disappeared. I could not believe it! I reached the gate, sick at heart, and realised what had happened. He wasn't coming home, not, at least, as I had hoped, but he had come to let me know he was 'OK'. I could almost hear him saying it!

The little lad who called about an hour later with the telegram confirmed what I already knew, but the worst part of it was that he had died only three days before the end of the War – VJ Day.

Chapter 14

Forgiveness

This is the most difficult chapter to write. After my amateurish but utterly sincere attempt to write a little book to give thanks to those Little Angels who have helped me so often in my life, they seem to be impressing me to affirm that I believe that after LOVE, FORGIVENESS is the greatest blessing in our lives. I must try to obey them and hope they may guide my pen.

Without Love, given or received, life is empty. Without FORGIVENESS, life is bitter. I know because I have experienced its bitterness when, for the first time in my life, real hate tried to take over my usually loving heart.

When my brother Tony died and I received the usual official telegram of regret, I was more upset than I imagined it possible for anyone with the proven knowledge that he was still alive in far better conditions than in this world and that he had also come to really show himself to me.

As many did at that time, I as his next of kin advertised in a number of papers and received many letters from his colleagues and pals for which I was very grateful, and showed them to our younger brother. But it seemed strange that he 'lasted' until just before the camp was liberated and no one told me HOW he had died. I was told how popular 'Ginger' was and how he cheered them up and how, in their starved states, they invented the smell of fish and chips or sausage and mash suppers. His special pal young Derek, who came to see us, said he talked so much about his sister 'Bunnie', as he always called me, and the rest of his family that Derek felt he himself knew us personally.

Then the messages and dreams started. He was fine! Happily working with animals (his 'appointed job' in Spirit). Just little short snips of information until, one day, nearly a year after his death, I went to a séance with a genuinely respected medium and Tony came through to the seven sitters. He took over the male medium and spoke to me. I shall never forget it! He said he was suffering from Beri Beri, TB and Nephritis (again). He was suddenly dragged from his 'hospital bed' of leaves and taken outside,

and at that moment in our darkened room came a horrible clatter of metal and a brief silence. Tony said “I passed so quickly and suddenly here I was, looking at all my mates, who did not seem to see me, and at once I saw this stranger, who smiled at me but never spoke, just led me away up, up, into a beautiful light, and there was our Mum waiting for me”.

At that I just burst into tears and he was gone and our medium sort of shook himself back and gasped “Oh! Take those swords away!”, and his dear wife gave him some water and all was peaceful in the little room, except for one stupid woman sniffing in her chair, hating even more the whole Japanese nation who seemed to condone such barbarity. We have all heard of many acts of extreme cruelty in those dreadful camps and Derek would often slip something out, usually what the Malays, especially women, suffered; young girls raped and mutilated, old women tied up for bayonet practice etc., but he always avoided telling me of punishment to the prisoners, which we know was terrible. I felt sure that my prisoner had been beheaded as so many were, and transferred my hating to the man who carried out this deed, entirely ignoring

the fact that he, as a paid soldier, had to obey orders or would probably be executed himself and possibly his family punished. Forgive? NEVER! Even my Little Angels seemed so far away, until they organised a way to redeem this stubborn woman.

I went one night to a big Spiritualist Church in Bournemouth and a fantastic medium gave a wonderful message to the largest congregation I have ever been in (except at the Annual Reunion Service in the Royal Albert Hall in London). She suddenly said "I have a young Airman here, his name is Tony – he is very excited". Two or three voices called out, one had an Uncle Tony ("NO" said Tony). The next one knew a neighbour's son ("NO!") Then someone else called out and I sat there, my heart pounding but not wanting to 'steal' someone else's message, when she swung round and pointed to me, who she had never seen before, and almost shouted "You are his sister!" I nodded (which mediums hate – I should have said "Yes") she said again he was so excited, so glad to get through. With the bitterness I had felt at his death, he had found it hard to break the barrier. Then she hesitated and said "I can't believe it – he keeps pulling off his head, throwing it into

the air, then putting it back on again and laughing all the time! What on earth is he doing?” and I mumbled “He was decapitated”, the actual words I spoke, - and they were heard through the church.

He was happy! Something funny happened inside me. I sort of stopped hating the whole nation, which of course helped Tony a lot in one way, but somehow could not forgive one little man who obeyed orders,. But a whole six months later, thank God, I DID forgive.

One evening, in my old friend Millie’s little living room, my medium friend Leslie, his wife Eva, Jimmie, Millie and I gathered round her real fire. Warm and cosy in the firelight, I was nearly dozing in an old armchair a bit away from the others, when I ‘felt’ someone come and stand behind me. I clenched the wooden arms of my chair and my heart was really banging and for the first time in my life I think felt afraid – not of all the doodlebugs, or fierce storms, or even spiders, but the tremendous man, all in black, and standing behind me, his hands on my shoulders, seeming to completely paralyse me – I could not speak or even move my hands. For what seemed a long time I tried to call out to Leslie, but it was

impossible. The entity was trying to communicate I knew, but my mind was too numb to understand. Then suddenly I realised who or what it was when I heard a quiet “Sorry” (sounded more like “Solly”, but I knew who it was). I had always pictured him a tiny little man, but this man was gigantic! Of course, he would have been to have wielded a heavy weapon of immediate execution.

Then all at once Leslie must have realised something was wrong and he jumped up and shouted “Go away! Let her alone!” and I was free. I then realised what I should have realised long ago and felt actually gratitude that he had found me, probably just one of those with whom he wanted to make peace, and I said, meaning it sincerely, “God bless you – I forgive you” and he just quietly vanished somehow. The others seemed to stir themselves and we all felt a wonderful feeling of peace and love in that precious little room where I had spent so many happy hours and which I will never forget, especially the night I forgave and a hateful lump of stone melted in my heart.

Mentioning briefly that Spiritualist Service arranged by the S.A.G.B. (The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain), on

Remembrance Sunday, 13th November 1966, has brought back to me more memories. This service was introduced by Eric Stuart, with demonstrations of Clairvoyance by Nora Blackwood and Stanley Poulton. Sandy Macpherson was at the Great Organ and dear Harold Pook at the Grand Piano. I seem even now to experience the poignancy of standing in that packed Royal Albert Hall as thousands of poppy petals glided silently down on our bowed heads, each an emblem of one of the many dear souls we were remembering. An unforgettable evening, and I still have the one tiny red petal I picked up for MY special boy.

When I lived in Reading, I drove one Remembrance Day to my sister Eddie in Staines and wanted on the way to visit the Runnymede Air Force Memorial. As I parked there it was nearly 11 o'clock, so I hurried in and was surprised by just how many youngish women were already there. They seemed to be looking for someone and a bit disappointed when it was me who walked in. I heard one of them say "Oh! she is late this year!" then just as the maroon (which they used then to mark the two minute silence) was about to go off, a young woman came

racing up the steps and almost fell down in front of one of the many plaques of names around the walls - she had arrived! Then miraculously I saw 'him', obviously waiting, maybe trying to show himself and stem her tears. Despite their own grief her friends gathered around her and the young airman smiled sadly at me, and then the maroon sounded again and he disappeared. I cannot possibly describe my thoughts as they all left together. They were such a sad group who obviously had come time and time again and their sorrow must have wrapped some unhappiness around many lives, mostly young, in the Spirit World so close to them.

I saw clearly only the one young man, and indeed he was young, and I shall be ashamed to the end of my life for not telling her he was there. Since that day I have become prepared for ridicule at times, because I am sure it cannot be easy for those comparatively new to their own real vibrations to try to impress a stranger to comfort a loved one with the knowledge that they are close by.

I have more courage and trust now.

Chapter 15

The Black Market 'Bone'

After the War a special young pal of Tony's, Derek, came to see me, and because of him I unknowingly became one of the maligned and wicked 'Black Marketeers'. He and Tony had made a pact that if either of them survived the terrible conditions, the hard work on the railway, the sickness and starvation, they would go home and find the other's next of kin, and Derek found me, bless him.

He was so tall and so thin, but still with a smile for me, and came and stayed with us for a week. Food was still tight with rationing so strict – all I wanted to do was feed him up and take care of him. He was only eighteen when he went to Singapore, so still very young. I had saved four meat rations for Tony, so we both went into town, pushing the pram, to see what my jolly fat butcher, who had never even given me one sausage over the ration, could sell me.

As usual the shop, which he ran himself, had a queue and when I got to the

counter with this skeletal young man beside me, we worked out that the best value that day was half a pound of minced meat (two rations) and a few sausages (two rations). He asked if Derek was my brother. I told him my brother was not coming home but this was his friend, who had been in the same Japanese prison camp in Sumatra.

He took the payment for my purchase, looked at Derek and said, “Have you got a dog – would you like a bone for him?” I hadn’t got a dog then but I unashamedly nodded my head – a bone would make soup and I had my own vegetables in the garden! Lovely! He lumbered away into the back and came out with a well-wrapped parcel. “No charge for bones,” he said as I offered to pay.

When I got home and undid the ‘bone’, it was about two pounds of rump steak, and I made all sorts of meals for that boy while he stayed with us. I gave my husband a wee taste, first for years, but he had got used to minced meat and even a sausage was a real treat, but thanks to that dear old butcher, whose two sons had both come safely home a few months before, they both enjoyed ‘THE BONE’.

That was the only extra I ever received on the evil Black Market and I certainly did not even taste it – I could not have eaten it if you paid me! I hope Saint Peter will forgive one day.

Derek kept in touch for a while, and even brought his lovely little Scottish bride to us on their honeymoon. That was a long time ago and we lost touch, but I shall never forget them.

Chapter 16

Psychometry

In 1948 we moved to Reading and there it seemed another door was opened for me, now in my early thirties, with two of the brightest kids in the world – at least we thought so, and I still do. My Father had died in 1944, but all my siblings and I kept in quite close touch, although the only one who shared my experiences of Little Angels was my youngest sister, Eddie, who lived on her own in Staines.

As the girls grew up their father became interested in many activities involving meetings and occasional visits to London, leaving me free to become member of a really active Spiritualist Church in Reading with easy access by bus (no car of course at that time!) It was there I was introduced to the marvels of wonderful materialisation and direct voice séances of famous mediums, and met many others. The Officers of the Church became dear friends, and I shall never forget the wonderful medium John Lines who helped me so much in the problematic days ahead.

My Aunt died and left me one hundred pounds and, believe it or not, I spent this on MYSELF! I bought a red Austin 7 car for sixty pounds and spent the rest on driving lessons and passed the driving test first time.

I remember going one evening to the home of a dear old medium, we called her Betty. About ten of us gathered in her rather cramped front room for a 'little sitting'. She was a trance medium, not very big, not very famous obviously or I would remember her name. To our amazement she suddenly seemed to grow in size and stature and a deep voice boomed out and addressed me. Rather surprised I asked his name and he replied, "Dunstan."

"Not Saint Dunstan?" I replied, and he laughed and said he was really not a saint, but I could call him Brother Dunstan if I wished, and he would help me in the work ahead of me. He had lost his sight on earth many years ago and I had a natural and understandable sympathy with those now in the physical body with the same condition and he would help me to help them. I would be led away to another part of the country and I must put my trust in Spirit to guide me in my new path. It would not always be easy,

for I had not chosen an easy path – that was the gist of his message to me. He hinted that there had been a time in earthly life when I could not see physically, which would be an advantage, and I could accept that. It had always been somewhere in my memory.

Very occasionally I am asked to take a service of psychometry, which is quite interesting, though I prefer clairvoyance, but I am reminded of a really remarkable psychometrist I met in London many years ago. I had gone up to the Ideal Home Exhibition and making my way back to the station in the evening I noticed a board outside a hall informing me that a Mr. Gerald de Beaupaire would hold a service of PSYCHOMETRY, at (I believe) 7 p.m. start. Fee half a crown (twelve and a half pence). So I went. The hall was quite crowded and the only thing I could put in the box was my bunch of car and house keys. Nobody else ever used them, because I always handed another car key to the garage, if necessary. Half a crown now! I was actually the second person he came to – what an extraordinary man! I only hope I have remembered and spelt his name correctly. Again I was told I would leave my home and go right down to the West, Devon or Cornwall. I would pick

up a newspaper in a friend's house and read about a convent where a little silver lamp burned on the altar, and it belonged to my family. I would work for Spirit. I would marry again and have a son. But I would not see him for a long time! Just as the other medium had said when I was fifteen years old. He brought so many to me, even my apologetic Father. I was absolutely overwhelmed, although I could not really imagine going to the West Country - I was married, with two grown up daughters and living in Reading! I rescued my keys and caught the 9.15 train home.

The next weekend I went on my monthly weekend trip to dear friends at Ruthern Bridge in Cornwall and as I went into the kitchen there was the local paper, open on the table, with the picture of the little silver lamp, burning on the altar of the Lanherne Convent Chapel! I drove there next day and learned that in 1231 Lady Alice Lanherne married Sir Romprey Arundell, and it became their Manor House. Many years later, Carmelite Nuns fleeing from the terrors of the French Revolution were offered the sanctuary of Lanherne Manor by Lord and Lady Arundell of Wardour Castle, Tisbury. I knew that my great, great

grandmother had been a Lady Catherine Arundell of Wardour Castle, who had eloped with the bailiff on her Father's estate, because my Aunt Kate, born in 1850, eldest of my Father's twelve siblings (he was number seven) had known her great grandmother who had died in her late nineties. Aunt Kate had actually seen her funeral cortege with lots of flowers and black horses and men in big black hats! Unfortunately her Father had disinherited her and her beloved husband (John Lonnen) had died in his forties, so how she had coped and lived I cannot imagine! Perhaps her mother had been more sympathetic!

Recalling Mr. de Beaupaire's excellent evidential and perfectly correct demonstration of psychometry recalls to mind a demonstration I went to much later. I can recall that it was a very large, well attended hall, and conducted by two 'International Mediums' at great expense, but just cannot remember WHERE it was held.

After the wife's demonstration of clairvoyance, they turned to psychometry. I was rather surprised when someone was sent round the hall with a very large round tray, upon which their 'Audience' were

allowed to place articles to be psychometred. When I saw the large number of wedding rings, all jumbled up with jewellery, knick-knacks, keys etc., chasing each other round the tray, I declined to join them.

Nothing was numbered at all, all quite wonderful. Had I not seen it myself I would never have believed it! The pandemonium and arguments afterwards! Poor women especially, trying to retrieve their wedding rings – surely even the Little Angels could not sort out such a ridiculous situation. I wonder anyone risked putting in their precious wedding ring – even the medium had difficulty over a number of claimants for anything she dared to pick up! It was so sad.

Mr Gerald's other prophecy also came true – as I said before, I DID and do live in Cornwall, and married my dear Jimmie and we nearly had a child of our own, but he passed back to Spirit before he was born. On the night I lost him I awoke to see my mother, who I had not seen for over thirty years, standing by our bed and in her arms a beautiful, golden-haired baby, and she said, "I will look after him until you come and join us!" That, to me, was a miracle. Oh! How many miracles are given to us in life,

and how can I ever doubt the existence of those precious Little Angels who so often pop in without our even being aware of them.

My daughter Frankie had thrown away all thoughts of University, and had married and I decided to get a job, and was really 'propelled' into applying for one as Assistant Secretary of the Berkshire Blind Society – and was accepted! Alas, soon after that our marriage ended in divorce, but Douglas soon found an excellent wife, whom we had known in Ventnor, and they had a long and happy marriage, and we were all good friends until the end of his life, well into his eighties.

Chapter 17

Stephen and the 'Bumpbeds

My younger daughter Tricia seemed to be, as it is said, 'tarred with the same brush as her Mum and Grandmother'. I first realised this when, at the age of six, her precious cat, which she had named 'Kit' as a baby, died one Christmas (something or someone always seems to die at Christmas in our family!) and a few days afterwards, when I popped into her bedroom to say goodnight, she told me Kit was asleep on her bed. I could not see him, but I did feel the warm spot when I put my hand right on the place I was told he slept every night. Always she was very aware, not only of animals, but especially Little Angel Children who popped in to visit her very often.

I remember once I came across her dancing quietly in the garden, a radiant little seven year old girl who, when she realised I was watching her, seemed to 'come back to earth' and she solemnly informed me she had been dancing in the Black Forest with a blue-eyed, golden-haired young German man, "And one day, Mummy, I will go to

Germany and find him!” Thank goodness it was I who saw her and not her Father! I shudder to think what would have happened had my Father caught me ‘imagining’ such an experience! I don’t know if she has ever found him, but she does live in Germany, with a very loved Cornish husband, and her own three married children and two grandchildren, and loves the Black Forest. Her first husband was a very sceptical Police Inspector, who would never believe in the existence of ‘Little Angels’.

Tricia’s younger son Andrew, at about the age of three years old, had a ‘Little Angel’ friend called Stephen. Stephen was often around and described as one of the old fashioned little boys, dressed in a sailor suit. Andrew slept in a tiny bedroom of his own, but when he was four it was decided to put him to share a room with his brother, David, and move little sister Susan into a room on her own, as she was now a grown-up young lady of nine, and delighted to have her own bedroom. So a set of bunkbeds was purchased. On the day it arrived I was there, but luckily Police Inspector Daddy was out. Tricia and I, with the doubtful aid of the children, installed the new bunkbeds and made them up, then went downstairs to

prepare lunch, leaving the boys to argue about the occupation of higher and lower beds. Suddenly Andrew hurtled down the stairs shouting frantically “Mummy, Stephen’s jumping up and down on our bumpbed and he’ll break it! He won’t stop it!” With a chuckle we raced upstairs, and ordered a quite invisible Stephen to behave himself, as obviously he did, because all was silent.

After that we heard nothing more of visits from Stephen, and David and Andrew settled amicably into their shared room, and Susan was delighted with her new sanctuary, albeit on the small size.

It was many months later that I, visiting my nonagenarian Aunt Frances, the real matriarch of my paternal family, was shown an old family photograph album - some of the sepia images many years old and an interesting record of my family. Among the photos I found one of a lovely little boy, dressed in a sailor suit, and written on the back, ‘**Stephen John, aged five years old, died April 1872**’. He looked just like Andrew! After many years of our time, he was still able to return as the child he had been, bless him and I hope he enjoyed

playing with a little boy who, though now a grown man, still remembers him.

Chapter 18

Sweetie Boy

When Tricia was seventeen she had a really remarkable experience. Paul, her then devoted boyfriend (who later got a free car from me!) asked if he could take her home to his parents for Christmas. We were not overjoyed at the suggestion, but they were so keen, and his parents sounded pleasant and friendly on the telephone and promised to take great care of her, so off they went. When they returned after Christmas Tricia said what a wonderful time she had and, after her Father was out of the way, she explained that on Boxing Day they had all had what they called 'a little sitting'. To Tricia's amazement, although it was explained to her that they had hoped it would happen, one by one a fully materialised Spirit appeared and spoke to the four others there, as the medium sat quietly in a chair. Then appeared a young woman, "Like an angel without wings" Tricia told me, who stood in front of Tricia and smiled. The poor child was speechless and hadn't a clue who it was, for not a word was

spoken and the others begged her to talk to her or she would go. Suddenly Tricia remembered I had told her about my sister Trixie and gasped out, "Are you Auntie Trixie?" The angel lady nodded her head, and still not a word. I can just imagine how bewildering it must have been for Tricia to speak to someone she had never met, who had been dead for years, and did not say a word! Suddenly Trixie opened her hands and there was a little yellow canary, sitting comfortably looking up at her, and Trixie said quietly, "Tell Mummy I still have Sweetie Boy" and the little creature flew up onto her shoulder and with another lovely smile they both left. Tricia said it was the most wonderful thing she had ever seen, but "Who was Sweetie Boy, Mum?" So I explained how the little canary had belonged to Trixie when the three girls lived at Putney and had obviously missed Trixie so much that she had quickly followed her to the place we call Heaven, when Trixie passed so suddenly just after Christmas.

My most memorable materialisation séance was in 1961 in Reading with Jack Gardner. The sitters were carefully chosen but one of the tickets went astray! An elderly member of the church was taken ill on the

day of the meeting and offered her ticket to a young man who was sceptical about anything to do with Spiritualism or continuation of life. I am not sure how he slipped into the room unnoticed by our Church Secretary, but I do remember the really beautiful Being who materialised before him and insisted that the rather bewildered man took his hand and walked round the room with him, but he refused and hurried away afterwards!

The whole séance was wonderful, with many building solidly and recognised and greeted by the sitters, from a little girl child to a huge dark brown man, with big horns through his nose and clad only in shining white trousers. One young sitter there had a wonderful 'Visitor'; a tiny, thin very old woman suddenly appeared before her, spoke in a foreign language and addressed the young woman as 'Maria'. Poor Maria was quite speechless so gradually the old woman just slowly shrunk down, down, until a little figure like a tiny doll seemed to disappear before us. After the meeting Maria (Mary to all of us in the Church) tearfully explained that the dear soul who came to her spoke in Polish, which Mary understood, and had been chosen to come to speak to

her from her parents, grandparents, two brothers and a little sister who had all died in Belsen. The mother had arranged with an Aryan friend to leave baby Maria in a cupboard if or when the troops came for them and this she had done, and after the war she brought her to England. Mary knew about this and had always wondered what had really happened to the family. She could not even remember, and she told us that her grandmother had tried to put her mind at rest by saying they did not realise at first how they were to be treated, and their ends came quickly and all their love was around her.

I shall never forget that tiny figure, and we thanked Spirit for the energy which enabled her to try to put her granddaughter's mind a little to rest. That was really an unforgettable experience on a wonderful evening and I think it helped our friend Mary who, despite having loving Polish adopted parents, had always appeared rather a sad little soul before, and seemed to 'come to life' and enjoyed being an active worker in the Church, happy in the knowledge that many of her 'Family Angels' were not far away.

Actually it was at this wonderful demonstration of materialisation that I first 'saw' Michael. It was he who came and spoke to the sceptical 'intruder' in the circle. After the young man had refused to touch the hand of that wonderful visitor, the Spirit stood silently and looked around the room at the sitters, all looking in awe, and he said quietly "You may call me Michael". Then wonder of wonders, he came and stood in front of me, his eyes seeming to pierce into my brain, and said "You will see me again", then smiled and slowly disappeared.

I have only seen him once since! When sitting peacefully in the firelight in my old friend's home in North Country, Redruth. He suddenly appeared, still radiant and beautiful and just smiled at us and left, leaving such peace and upliftment around us. I wonder if, or when, I might see him again?

Chapter 19

The Piskies Call

CORNWALL

Oh, how belovèd is this precious place,
Where blows the purple heather 'cross the
moor

In regal beauty, laid to interlace
With gold of gorse. Where wheeling seagulls
soar

O'er rugged cliffs and softly swoop to rest
Upon a harbour wall, beside a sea
Of azure blue, who's gently swelling breast
Bears little vessels to the cobbled quay –
Where Cornish piskies dance and magic weave
Our worries and our troubles to erase,
And make us wish that we need never leave
This most belovèd, this most precious place.

In 1961, in a friend's house, I picked up and glanced through a Cornish paper – there was an advert for a Home Teacher of the Blind. Just what I would love! I was meant to go, so nothing whatsoever stopped me! My elder daughter Frankie was married and Tricia had gone to Germany and found herself a job there, and so I was free to go. I

was even shown nice accommodation in someone else's Cornish paper of two rooms to let in Redruth. So I telephoned, paid a month's rent, gave my notice, reluctantly received, and in January 1962 off I went in my rather ancient but quite reliable Austin 'Kittybelle' KBL. The Blind Society in Cornwall provided a car, so Tricia's current boyfriend Paul offered to drive down with me and buy my car for forty pounds. As he drove away I wondered if I would ever get the forty pounds. I was quite right – I never did! He moved away and apparently broke up with Tricia! I had paid a month's rent on my comfortable rooms, which was fortunate, as I had to last until I was paid at the end of January, and I shall always be grateful to those Little Angels for all the help they managed to give me over those three weeks!

I had a 'shilling in the slot' electric meter and a little Daisy stove (I don't expect my landlady realised this!) which I used for heating and kettle and cooking, and paraffin oil was half a crown a gallon. My wages, when I got them, were eight pounds a week. I was at first an uncertificated Home Teacher so also had to take the H.T. exam in September, which meant a correspondence

course at home. I knew about administration, eye diseases, etc. from my former job, but still studied these, plus Braille, Moon, Deaf/Blind Alphabet and many handicrafts, so got up early in the morning and stayed up late at night studying.

On the first Sunday there I found the bus station and saw a bus marked Falmouth – FAL, my first initials, Freda Aileen Lonnen. I got aboard – I was on the look out for a Spiritualist Church. I tentatively risked asking an old lady (who had bought a return ticket to Falmouth) if there was a Spiritualist Church there. She was going to take the service! So again I was taken along, introduced to a crowd of people, and also learnt there was a Spiritualist Church in Redruth five minutes from where I lived.

When I was interviewed for the job I had been asked about my religion. I unwisely but honestly told them I was a Christian Spiritualist. Deathly silence! I was warned that I must never tell anyone I was a Spiritualist, and perhaps they were so desperate to get someone that they risked taking on a Spiritualist. I kept my word, but no one ever knew how much my belief and knowledge of my beloved Little Angels

helped not only me, but nearly all of the literally hundreds of blind and visually impaired people (VIPs) I visited until I retired, and still do.

I had over two hundred names on my list to visit then and my predecessor had retired due to ill health nearly two years before. If anyone wanted materials for handicrafts, such as dishcloth cotton, cane or rush for stools, tray bases etc., I drew these from the office, the clients paid me, and I paid money in at the end of the month.

During my first month in Cornwall my cash had dwindled to one shilling by the end of the third week. Petrol for the car I used went on an account paid by the Society. But even in those pre-decimalisation days one could not get much for one shilling! It would pay for a loaf of bread, two pounds of potatoes, and four eggs – my larder was empty! Only one thing to do, so this I did. I seldom ask for anything for myself, I don't need to, but I got down on my knees and asked if God or anyone could possibly help me.

Off I drove next morning, tummy rumbling a bit, and the first house I visited was Barbara – I had tried twice before but she had been out, and I was anxious to

meet her, the only one I had not yet visited. She was totally blind, delighted to meet me, because she owed the Society seven shillings and sixpence for dishcloth cotton they posted to her before Christmas! Just imagine 7/6d and I didn't have to pay it in until the end of the week! Thank you, thank you Little Angels.

Barbara was a wonderful young woman, very active, and I never once heard her complain unless someone visited her in the evening, switched on a light and Barbara missed turning it off when she checked all the lights before she went to bed.

Oh! That 7/6 (thirty-five and a half pence now). It paid for bread, potatoes, six eggs, margarine, a gallon of paraffin – I can't remember the rest! I think there were even some sausages! Tea or coffee didn't worry me – water was FREE! A few days later – another really 'material miracle'.

I suppose some Angels realise that the physical body is the temple of the Spirit, so has to be sustained! I went into the wilds of rural West Cornwall, searching for a young blind man who lived with his parents on a farm buried in the heart of the country and found myself, after struggling down one of the ruttiest, muddiest lanes I have ever

tackled, in a farmyard amid geese, chickens and three dogs, who all made such a noise that out rushed the farmer and his spouse.

Of course, it was the wrong farm! But oh, what a wonderful mistake! I was taken in the kitchen for a “Cup tay, m’dear”, and sat down with two of the loveliest people I’ve ever met and given hot pastie “Cos we wuz just having ours”. They then directed me to the right farm – their relations about a quarter of a mile away. When I left they insisted on giving me the biggest pastie I have ever seen, because “We always put in a couple of extras just in case some one drops in unexpected like” and about ten fresh cauliflowers “Over from them sent to market this morning” for me and to give some away to the blind folk I was visiting, which I did. I have not a clue where that place is now – I cannot remember! But that monumental pastie gave me about three dinners and got me through to my payday. I guess I am one of the luckiest people in the world. I tell you something – cauliflower on its own needs some boosting if there is no cheese around, but is delicious with a drop of mint sauce, and there’s usually a bit of mint in someone’s garden.

Chapter 20

The Chinaman

In September I went to Devon to sit for the exam to get my Home Teaching Certificate, with a crowd of other hopefuls. We had ten subjects and had to pass all of them – fail in one and you took the whole lot again next year. Twice I nearly slipped up. When we were waiting to be tested on the Deaf/Blind (Manual) Alphabet, a young woman came out looking very distressed and warned us that they also wanted the Deaf/Dumb (Visual) Alphabet, and some of us had not realised that! I had a very vague memory of it, because I had concentrated on the Deaf/Blind Alphabet. We all practised on one another, and so being forewarned is forearmed. I got through both alphabets to their satisfaction! But I felt sorry for the first candidates who might not have been as lucky.

My second near slip-up was rush seating. We were all given what appeared to be a square wooden stool frame and huge tubs of soaked rushes and had to complete the stool in a set time. As I drew the first

length of rush through my fingers to press out the moisture, I suddenly 'saw' a very large Chinaman standing before me. He really startled me but apparently nobody noticed him. Without making a sound he told me to "Measure." Measure? What must I measure? Then the penny dropped. If a stool frame was only one inch longer one way than a perfect square then two extra twists of rush were needed at the ends, so they all finished evenly in the middle of the completed stool. By the time I had pulled out my tape measure from my bag of tools and discovered that the frame was NOT quite square, he had disappeared! I sent him grateful thanks. I got busy on the stool, finished it in good time, and was pleased with the result – rush and cane seating were two of my favourite handicrafts.

Again I silently thanked him for his warning, and later thanked him twice again. First a few months later, when I received the news that I had passed the exam in all subjects and was now a certificated Home Teacher of the Blind, and later at a weekend Refresher Course in Devon. Here I met again one of the girls who had sat the exam with me and who told me she had failed and had to try again the following year.

Fortunately this time she passed – she measured the stool frame! I felt quite guilty when she congratulated me and again sent a grateful thank you to that Little Angel – well, not really little, but must have been an Angel who for some reason helped me when I really needed it. I believe that he was one of the guides of my dear friend John Lines, whom I ‘met’ many times in John’s meetings and ‘circle’ in Reading.

Working first in Cornwall, with wonderful people and in such lovely surroundings, there were such happy years. I was never a nine to five worker. I got involved whenever I was needed and gradually became more psychically aware of my Little Angels, as I always call them, who I am sure really tried to help me a lot. With over two hundred on my initial visiting list, new names and problems continually cropping up and weekly handicrafts class to run for my VIPS, I was kept on my toes.

I made many friends at the three churches I managed to attend under my maiden name and one dear old lady, the Secretary of the Redruth Church, welcomed me to her tiny home whenever I had a few hours in the evening or on Sundays. What happy gatherings we had there. On many

occasions medium friends of hers and my medium friend Leslie and his wife from Ventnor would visit me and would join us. How sorry I was that I could not share my beliefs with anyone else for fear of losing my job.

Incidentally, the first blind person I ever visited in Cornwall was a young man called Roy, who lived with his lovely wife, Joyce, and their very special cat. Sadly Roy died quite soon after I got to know them and at his funeral the Church was so packed that I only just managed to find a seat right at the back of the balcony. To my surprise he appeared at the side of his coffin, and looked up and waved to me. I did not tell his wife!

Nearly 20 years later however I was able to tell her, when I took a service at a Spiritualist Church a few miles away. She was there, wondering if the medium could possibly be the Home Teacher who had visited them. Oh! How pleased we were to meet again, she also a working medium now, and how often he pops in at HER Church, and often with that precious cat. Thank you, Roy.

Chapter 21

Minnie and the Thunder

So many times I was almost ordered by Little Angels to visit someone and I always responded, day or night, as quickly as I could. On one occasion I found an old lady who had fallen in an outside toilet in the garden, lying with a broken leg. Of course her front door was unlocked – most doors were – so I could walk in and eventually found her, but she had been lying there for three or four hours, feebly calling. Another time poor old Dickie, whom I had actually visited two days beforehand, had fallen downstairs and broken his hip. I nearly did not respond to that urgent ‘call’, as I had seen him so recently, but I was thankful that I did. He was old, blind and lived alone, but refused help except two days a week, and would probably have lain there that day and the night before anyone came. As it was, his front door was locked, but there was a jug of milk on the doorstep. A neighbour and I managed to break in through the back scullery of his tiny cottage. He was treated wonderfully in hospital, where he spent

Christmas, and I invited myself to go and have tea with him there. But early in the New Year he slipped peacefully away, and an unheard of nephew organised the sale of the little cottage Dickie had been born in.

One night, well after midnight, I was awakened by a loud voice calling "Freda." As I was alone in the house, my two rooms, I thought I had been dreaming. I was tired, so snuggled down again to sleep. As again I heard "Freda" there was a flash of lightning, and loud crash of thunder, and I remembered Minnie. I leapt out of bed, threw on some clothes and rushed out in pouring rain to the car. Minnie lived alone about five miles away in one of those little prefab chalets erected as 'temporary accommodation' after the Second War and she was absolutely terrified of thunderstorms because once, years ago, her roof had been damaged by lightning! I broke all records racing to her and saw at once a light in her little home, and as the front door had been unlocked I called out to her. She was in the tiny toilet, the door was ajar but difficult to open as she was behind it kneeling on the floor. I pulled her up into my arms and half carried her to her bedroom. I threw off my wet coat and shoes and crawled into the bed

by her side and she said, “I knew you would come – I asked God to call you!” I cannot really think that was correct, but somebody certainly called me that night!

It was so noisy she was afraid the roof would blow off so, to make her laugh, I found her an umbrella and made her sit up in bed under it, while I made a cup of tea, and I stayed with her there all night. Gradually the storm rolled away and very soon another little miracle occurred. She had been on the housing list for a long time as, alas, had so many others, but within a month she was moved into a little ground floor flat in sheltered accommodation, where there was another flat above hers, so her roof could not be damaged or fall on her! She lived there happily for many years and was one of the friendliest souls I have ever known, and some of her dearest friends were the officers of the local ‘Sally Army’ (Salvation Army) and her Home Teacher pal, Freda.

Chapter 22

Jim, but not James

In 1964 I moved from Redruth and rented a very pleasant little bungalow in Camborne, about five miles away, and my friend Millie, from the Redruth Church, moved about the same time to a house not far from me. She had meetings there in a lovely big lounge and on one or two occasions I assisted her, but was only ever called 'Freda'.

I had also got involved surreptitiously with the church in Falmouth and was especially interested in the healing. One day I went to tea with one of the healers, a good friend of mine called Harry Sharratt. As I arrived a friend of his, with whom he worked, was leaving. I, of course, had the car belonging to the Blind Society, which I was allowed to use myself in my own time, provided I paid for petrol for the mileage I did myself, a wonderful concession as, unlike the other five Home Teachers I did not own my own car. It was pouring with rain so I offered this strange man a lift home, which he hesitantly accepted. It was not far,

and as I dropped him off at his house he said if ever I was in Falmouth I would be welcome to come in for a cup of tea. I thanked him and returned to tea with Harry and that was that, not another thought. Just someone I had helped a little – not someone who would change my whole life. But apparently I had made more of an impression on him!

The following day my old pal Harry, a serving Spiritualist Medium and a dedicated healer, rang me to tell me that his friend Jim had plied him with questions about me, because I was so like his wife, who had died suddenly a few years before, and left him with four children, the youngest seven years old and the eldest sixteen. Was I well off? Was I married? Being told “No” to these two important questions he asked Harry for my telephone number and that evening a rather hesitant voice introduced himself and invited me to go to the pictures with him! Rather taken aback, I said I had to go to Falmouth on Sunday, and could I just pop in for a cup of tea about four o’clock. I didn’t really want to go to the pictures with a strange man!

To cut a long story very short, I did go to tea, but we never went to the pictures, I did not even go to Church that night – we

sat and talked and talked until eventually I dragged myself home after eleven o'clock. Three months later we were married and I found myself with the extra four children I was promised when I was only fifteen years old. I have often been told it is not easy to be a stepmother, but I found it as easy as my own mother had, and I was luckier than she had been. I had found a kind and caring husband who accepted all my beliefs, and when we both retired we were able to work together in healing. After we married I moved into his home and sorted out my few possessions and bits of furniture into his house. I was soon aware of his first wife, Marion, who had obviously stayed close to the husband whom she had known since childhood and their children. We became quite good friends, and she seemed to quickly realise that I loved all of them and would try to look after them.

I had been told in the church in Reading, a few years before, that I would meet a man whose name was Jim but NOT James and he would alter my whole life. Well he certainly did, but I had forgotten the James bit until we went into Redruth Registry Office to arrange a wedding on 17th July and he gave his name as Harold

Norton. I wasn't keen on the Harold, and told him so. I thought his name was James. I nearly shivered when he said, "I am called Jim but not James." So then I realised even this was pre-arranged! Apparently there was already a Harold where he worked, so he was nicknamed Jim to save confusion, and only addressed as Harold by his sister, who said Jim sounded common! She was a rather difficult lady who I did not meet until after the wedding, when she came down on holiday, and was horrified that he had married again without telling her! Perhaps he had been afraid to! Not to worry, she lived miles away in Yorkshire, but always came to Cornwall with her little niece for the school holidays, and took over the running of the house to everyone's dismay!

When her sister-in-law died so suddenly in 1959 she had travelled down at once to help them and insisted the youngest child should return home with her, as she was only seven years old and needed Motherly care, but they came and spent the school holidays with her father and siblings. When Marion died so suddenly and unexpectedly, her grief-stricken husband was advised to put the younger children into a home, but this he refused to do, and only

agreed to let his sister take and care for the youngest to be sure she had a more sheltered life and upbringing. But unfortunately he did not realise that the child only wanted to stay with her Father and siblings and the aunt, though bringing her up carefully, was rather strict and possessive. What difficult decisions are often made in times of grief and anxiety, which at times lead to hard lessons we have to learn?

Sister-in-law Doris did not approve of me at all – not only was I a divorcee but, even worse, a Spiritualist and worse than anything I had married her baby brother, when he should have taken his brood of four and set up home with her in Leeds. I tried hard to bow to her authority and to all her wishes, did all I could for Jimmie and the children, and never argued with her. ‘If you can’t beat ’em, join ’em’ is my policy.

Despite starting my married life trying hard to keep the peace at home and working at the best job in the world, I realised I had a very special husband and nice stepchildren, and the six weeks’ holiday soon passed and we were able to sort ourselves out and really start living. We had spent two days honeymoon in London, introducing him to my two married daughters and a little

grandson and granddaughter, and everyone was happy. I could hardly believe how wonderfully my life was working out.

Chapter 23

Trivial Evidence

Jimmie became very interested in what he called my 'Angel Friends' but, like many newcomers, seemed desperately eager to have some indisputable evidence that his first wife, Marion, was really conscious of us. So many times I knew she was pleased he was being taken care of and that I loved all of them, but his very eagerness seemed to make it difficult for her to contact him, as so often happens between those who have shared a true bond of love. Both, I think, get so emotional that a sort of barrier builds up. She never intruded on us, but so often I could feel and fleetingly see her, and one day she actually was following me upstairs, I could even hear her footsteps, when her daughter, Judith, came out of the kitchen and asked me who she had heard going upstairs behind me – so I told her! She seemed to accept it, although she never mentioned it again, but I felt somehow that the possibility gave her some comfort. I think she had had a hard time looking after her Father and two brothers

after the tragic death of her lovely mother. She was only thirteen years old, Christopher eleven, Bruce sixteen. Bruce joined the RAF and married quite young and Chris left school at fifteen and found a job as a boy porter in the GWR/BR, with his Father.

Marion had been in Spirit for seven years before I stumbled across Jimmie, her lonely husband, and we decided to spend the rest of our lives on earth together. She was obviously very close to 'our' man, whom she had loved from childhood, and seemed determined to keep a watchful eye on him and their family, probably to assure herself that I would make a reasonably good stepmother and wife. She made her presence known to me the second time I met him, when he invited himself to supper and she suddenly appeared, sitting on the settee, beaming at me. When I risked telling him he found it difficult to accept, having until then no knowledge of the 'Discerning of Spirits'. Although cognisant of many of the teachings of the Bible he had not registered those important verses in the books of Corinthians, but grudgingly accepted that she might be there, because I was able to describe her and he said he had often 'felt her around'.

In those three months before our marriage, when I was a frequent visitor to his home, she seemed to haunt it and we got quite friendly. I often relayed little messages from her, but he still had that little fear of our philosophy, born of the indoctrination of a religion very adverse to Spiritualism, and said he wished she would tell me something that was known only to the two of them and could not possibly be attributed to mind reading. He certainly wanted to 'test the Spirits', which was understandable, although I knew he longed for real proof from his first love and my dear friend whom we both always called 'Number One Squaw'.

Marion was discreet, did not seem at all jealous – she is far too nice for that - and after we had been married a short time she seemed to be assured that I was genuinely fond of the poor guy and doing my poor best to look after him, so she decided to leave us in peace and only popped in from time to time on special occasions or times of crisis. But before she really decided to move on in her wonderful new life she gave him a silly, trivial bit of evidence which finally convinced him. One evening I wandered into our bedroom and was surprised to see Marion, who had not been around for some time,

sitting on OUR bed, laughing cheekily at me. She faded from vision as 'our' husband came in, which was disappointing, for I would have given anything for him to have seen her clearly as I did, almost to a point of real materialisation. However, I told him of her visit and said she was dressed in a rather shabby navy dressing gown which seemed a bit out of place on her, and she was cuddled into it and seemed amused about something.

Rather indignantly he assured me that she had NEVER worn a thing like that. He had given her a beautiful floral kimono with big roses on it which she always wore. Was I sure it was Marion? Even to pacify him I couldn't turn that old dressing gown into a rose adorned kimono, I am not in the habit of doing such a thing. After a long argument over that wretched dressing gown we retired in silence, he was certain I was mistaken, and I jolly well sure I was not! But an Aquarian cannot argue with a Leo, so I shut up and got grumpily into bed.

It was about two o'clock in the morning when our mutual husband suddenly sat up in bed, gave me a shove and shouted, "I remember! You were right!" As I shook myself awake he explained that when he

had come home from work on that fatal day, seven years before, expecting to find Marion preparing a meal, there had been an ambulance outside and he ran indoors to see her unconscious on the settee, the doctor carefully draping round her a disreputable old navy dressing gown, grabbed in emergency, before being wrapped in a red blanket and carried away to hospital, where she passed to Spirit a few hours afterwards.

He told me that even amid all the trauma he felt so ashamed that they had found it, for Marion had wanted to throw it out, but he had insisted on keeping it hanging on the bathroom door, loved but never used, a gift from his long gone mother!

But Marion had remembered, and now we understood her saucy look as she cuddled it around her, trying to convince him that this was something I could not possibly have known about, and even he had forgotten. So often such silly **trivial** bits of evidence are most convincing.

Chapter 24

Rescue in the Snow

I think my years working in Cornwall as a Home Teacher of the Blind were really the happiest time of my life, both before and after I married Jimmie and when, in 1965, he was suddenly made redundant and together we both immediately found new positions in Hertfordshire, I wept at leaving Cornwall, although grateful I had so easily found a new post working with my VIPs. Judith married her school sweetheart on 8th January 1966, and the following day Jimmie and Christopher set off by train to Hemel Hempstead to take up their jobs on the railway there. The next day our furniture followed and I set off in the Blind Society's car (loaned to me for the journey) with a colleague, Liz, another Home Teacher, who would drive it back to Cornwall! Plus two extra passengers, Zanna, an elderly peke who had belonged to Marion, and my little chihuahua, Paddy, and the rest of all our belongings!

Somewhere it started to snow and another somewhere Liz took the wrong

turning, and just as dusk was turning it really snowed and we found ourselves in a little hamlet, outside a village pub, and in front of us a very steep hill upon which were stranded (near the bottom) two or three cars, a lorry and a bus! SNOW everywhere! On enquiring in the inn we learned we were seven miles from Bath and roads almost impassable! The landlord was lovely, had a big roaring fire and room packed with travellers hoping to doss down in armchairs or on the floor until conditions improved! Old Zanna was screaming in the car, and we couldn't take two dogs into the pub and just couldn't get a grip on the hill, so we decided to try to bed down in the car (we had two rugs and two dogs for hot water bottles and a flask of coffee) but soon felt absolutely freezing! "Oh! Please can somebody help us!" But how? If strong men, including a lorry driver, could not drive, how could we hope to? We fed half our sandwiches to the dogs and sat and pitied ourselves, and hoped we wouldn't freeze to death!

Now, this is absolutely true! I haven't a clue where we were, but I do know that just as we were getting really worried, and still it snowed, a 'ghost' looked in on us and made us jump! It wasn't a ghost – a young man

knocked on the window and asked if we were going to Bath? I rolled down the window and he quickly explained he had to abandon his motorcycle and could he have a lift. Yes, certainly, if he could drive us there.

When he pushed us over, got into the car, started the engine and gently crawled forward and zigzagged up the hill, a lot of the folk in the inn, hearing the sounds, came out and burst into cheers. We dodged the bus and the many stranded cars and jogged our way to the mighty city of Bath, where he put us up for the night in the warm kitchen of his student's flat! Conditions were not quite so bad there.

In the morning he went to report for work and found the factory closed, so he drove Liz to the railway station to catch a train back to Cornwall, as we were all concerned about her travelling in such conditions especially by herself, then he drove me and the dogs to Hemel Hempstead, and said he would drive the car back to Cornwall!

I had phoned Jimmie earlier, and as he and Chris had to go to work they said they would leave the key under the doormat at our temporary rented house at Tring, near

Hemel Hempstead. After a cuppa and a snack, I gave what cash I had to Nick for petrol and handed over the Blind Society's Car to a complete stranger, and off he went in the snow, on four wheels, a flask of coffee and a prayer! He rang me in the evening. "All's well! Delivered safely! Less snow in Cornwall!"

After a warm welcome, he left and thumbed a lift. He was picked up outside by a car going to Bath! I cannot imagine how 'They' arranged that!

I never saw Nick again, I did not even know his address, only that his name was NICK EVANS. Nick, my friend, I can never thank you enough, and I will bless forever you and those 'Little Angels' who helped you to help us on that unforgettable journey.

We soon moved from Tring into Hemel Hempstead where we only stayed for about two years, then went to work in Bournemouth, my family's 'home town', leaving Chris happily working in Hemel, in his own little flat and on the threshold of marriage.

During the time we lived and worked in Hemel Hempstead we often travelled up to London to visit the Greater World Spiritualist Association, then in Lansdowne Road, and

also the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain at 33 Belgrave Square, and I was once invited to do Sand Readings at a Greater World Garden Party and enjoyed a lovely Summer day, meeting and making many new friends.

Chapter 25

Red Hawk

The older one gets the faster the earth years seem to fly away! But how thankful I am to have so many memories, not only of those wonderful Little Angels who have helped me so much from Spirit, but also to so many still on earth, all over our world, like little candles shining in the darkest spots, and many right on our own doorsteps, often unrecognised, but helping in so many ways to spread a bit of love around us, and I thank God now for their love and help.

As my dear friend and guide Red Hawk has so often said, "Have Patience, have Tolerance, Uplift and LOVE -- and NO WORRY!"

On applying and being accepted as a Home Teacher of the Blind and later a Social Worker in Bournemouth, I was again warned by my employers never to let anyone know I was a Spiritualist, not on pain of death, but of losing my job which I loved so much. Fortunately we were able to attend the three Spiritualist Churches in the area and made many friends there, and we even

held a Healing Circle with three friends weekly in our home, which was a great joy to both of us.

It was at one of these little weekly meetings that I first met one of the most special Little Angels. Well, not really little, probably a bit further up the ladder but not, he told us many times, a really important big Angel, but so very dear to me. I think I had been aware of him all my life, and now I call him my Guardian Angel.

We met every Tuesday evening from 8 to 9 pm. Opposite our house was a church clock and always we opened at 8 pm and closed as the clock struck nine. On our first meeting he came through me just as the others were ending the Lord's Prayer after my opening prayer, and told them he had been trying to control me, but I was too stubborn to let him through. Apparently he talked until he himself ended in prayer and the clock struck nine as he finished and I came back. The three others were so surprised and pleased, all gave slightly different versions of what he said, but all agreed I had been a stubborn woman! So we arranged a tape recorder for following meetings and I kept a written record of these. We did not know his name, so I

asked Jimmie to find out, which he did at our next meeting. I had hoped for something beautiful and peaceful, like Silver Cloud, or Golden Star or similar, but he said always you ask names, some of us have had many names and they are not important, but we could call him Red Hawk. Then he laughed and said, "This woman (always he called me 'this woman') does not like hawks and is not keen on the colour red, but tell her I am now called Red Hawk. I ask permission to be her guide and watch over your circle, and among those who also come and help her is her own brother, and he and I help one another and are always near if she needs help." How glad I was to hear his words, even if I had wished another title for that dear soul. Always he calls my brother 'The Boy', and I often feel him around.

Red Hawk always opened every evening in prayer but to me this particular one is very special, so I would like to share it with you:

A PRAYER OF RED HAWK

Hear the sound of prayer ascending
Upward to the highest Heaven

'Bove the mountains, bare and rocky,
O'er the tall trees of the forest,
Blending voice of earthly brothers
Turbulent as tossing ocean,
Gentle as a folding flower.
Prayer of Black man, naked, standing;
Yellow man in humble bending;
White man in his temple kneeling;
Red man proud in supplication.
Prayer of cowering beast of jungle,
Tortured whale and falling eagle,
Weary mule and starving vixen,
Rising in imploring cadence
From the fog of noisy city,
Lonely wilderness of the prairie,
Burning sands of arid desert,
Frozen snow of icy northlands,
Carried by the winds towards Thee,
Mighty Spirit, Power Eternal -
Listen from celestial Heaven
To our prayers of supplication.
Praises from this world of brothers,
Listen, and in mercy help us,
Wrap Thy cloak of love around us,
Comfort, pardon, soothe and heal us.

* * * * *

He brought many needing healing and advice, and many other guides and helpers also came for Esther, Sylvia and Jimmie (he had a very special young Indian named Lone Star). One evening, I learned from the recording, the sitters became aware of a bright silvery light in a corner of the room behind me and Red Hawk turned me round and told them to stand and we all had to bow to his Master, Running Water, who had honoured us with his presence.

If we asked permission, sometimes other special friends were invited to sit with us from time to time, as this was not an actual developing circle, but a friendly and weekly meeting with Spirit for communication and healing.

On one occasion my younger daughter Tricia, with her sceptical husband, John, and three children were staying with us and she wanted to come to the meeting, but her husband had no idea what we were doing, otherwise he would have stormed out, family and all, back to Wokingham! Jimmie asked Red Hawk to try to talk quietly (an impossibility!) and by the time the girls arrived John and Tricia were settling three little children down to bed, and they persuaded Daddy to read a story for them.

Well, Red Hawk tried his best for a few minutes then said, "Open door for young woman!" Of course, no one obeyed him – it was forbidden to admit anyone once we had started! So again he gave the order and Jimmie quietly opened the door and Tricia crept in and sat down on the spare chair, and they heard a real deep guffaw when she whispered, "John's fallen asleep!" and our dear old friend said, "I MAKE man sleep so young woman come talk to me – long time I wish speak with her again!" Yes, they all slept until John woke up at ten o'clock and Red Hawk and Tricia enjoyed nearly all the time talking to one another as if they were old friends, which he assured us they were. He was also interested in her older son, David, and as he has grown up has occasionally come through to talk to him, and I feel he has somehow taken David under his wing as well, which has been accepted. I hope one day he may use David to communicate, as he had used my mother when I was a child, and I had actually heard him.

Chapter 26

Maisie

Now, as it is so long ago, I make an admission. During the time we lived in Bournemouth I surreptitiously invented a 'twin sister', who had my maiden name (Freda Lonnen), who actually took TWO services in a friendly little church there. My 'sister' was very like me except that she dressed more flamboyantly, loved lipstick and eye-shadow, and whereas I was then a mousey blonde she had lovely brunette hair. (Wonderful the transformation a wig can make. I must try it again sometime!) Fortunately none of the congregation had met Freda Norton, and the elderly lady in charge never gave me away – she seemed glad of my help!

But I honestly never told anyone else of my beliefs, although those Little Angels helped me so much in my work with the VIPs. But there was one other incident – NOT my fault! To save any embarrassment I have avoided giving real names of any of my clients, but Maisie is an exception. I must not say she was the dearest to me of all the

hundreds of men, women, children and guide dogs I met in my twenty years of professional work and over thirty-five voluntary, but there was never one dearer than my friend Maisie.

I was given the name of a newly registered elderly blind lady, and instructed to ring the front door bell, go in and enter the door on the right indoors, which I did. I called out to her as I opened the living room door and there she was, sitting on a rather hard chair at a table, with a few empty cups and two or three half empty meals-on-wheels containers, etc. On her lap a beautiful Siamese cat, who turned on me his inscrutable blue eyes as his mistress said, "Come in dear! I knew you'd come today – your Indian guide said you were coming to help me! I am so glad to meet you!" I was so pleased – no, grateful – that somehow someone had set the ball rolling to make her life easier. She was over eighty, almost totally blind, and the only help came from a couple who lived rent free in the rest of her home, and very little help that was. I arranged some help for her and visited as often as I could, but I was worried about her meals – she ate so little, although she made sure that Chang (the cat) was well fed, and

was glad her hour-a-day home help was fond of cats and made sure there was ample food for him. But after a few weeks Maisie got so frail that the doctor had her admitted to a geriatric hospital for a while to build up her health, and her lodgers said they would look after her cat, Chang, who she adored. We thought he would be happier in his own home. Alas, when I went before she was discharged from hospital to make sure there was sufficient food, milk being delivered and bed aired, there was no cat! The lodgers had visited her once in hospital and told me they thought it unlikely that she would ever go home again, so they had had Chang put to sleep.

I thought the shock would really finish her, she was broken-hearted. It was then that I really realised how unhappy and lonely she was. I knew she had been an only child, and early in the Great War her sweetheart had been killed and she had thrown herself into nursing, both on the continent and then in the military hospital which had taken over the municipal buildings in Bournemouth, where her parents lived. Despite her present condition, I never once heard her complain. She was grateful for any help from anyone, even the milkman who carried her daily

bottle into her little bedsitter, the regular two postmen who brought in her post and read it to her, and the MOW (Meals On Wheels) ladies who lent her their eyes to write necessary letters after they had finished their deliveries, and even the young rent-free couple who picked up her pension and did shopping. After her sickening bout of weeping over Chang she forgave them and confided in me that she knew Chang would be sent back to her, because the first Siamese cat called Chang was given to her on her tenth birthday by her Father, and every time one Chang got old and died another one arrived just the same, and always she called it Chang. That seemed to comfort her, but it made me wonder where on earth I could find another Siamese chocolate point kitten to be called Chang. Thank goodness I should be able to have a few weeks grace for it to be born and return to earth in reincarnation – although, until I eventually did find Chang, I was a bit doubtful whether it applied to cats!

Chapter 27

Chang

After my retirement, when we returned to Cornwall I was able to work as a medium again. I was accepted as a Greater World Registered Medium, and have always worked respecting the belief and principles of this World Wide Christian Spiritualist Association.

I had grown so attached to Maisie that I felt the best thing for her was to be taken into care, for she seemed so frail and ageing so quickly I did not feel I could go back to Cornwall and leave her in her present home. Jimmie knew I was worried about her, and it was he who suggested we take her to live with us. When I told her that I was leaving, and suggested her going into a small rest home run by a very caring friend of mine in Bournemouth she seemed relieved, but said it would be wonderful if she could come and live with us. She loved Jimmie. We had both visited her in hospital and he had also done a few free jobs of work for her in the house, and the outcome was that she went into the rest home for three months care and love

with my dear friend Jean. We moved back to Cornwall, settled in there, and then drove back a week later and brought Maisie to her new home. I had given Jimmie a gorgeous Siamese kitten we named Juno who took to Maisie at once but, as she pointed out, Juno was not Chang although she was very nice, and unfortunately the lady from whom I bought her did not have a male kitten left! But somewhere I guess Maisie must have had a Little Angel to help her, for one day someone told me of a Siamese cat breeder in Stithians, so two weeks later, on Maisie's birthday, I took her for a little drive in that direction!

I left her in the car outside the house, said I would pop in to see a friend, and soon found myself in a big room with a big lady and what seemed to me dozens of Siamese cats of all ages! She told me to have a good look at them and pick a kitten, and she would see if it was a male. But I thought of an easier way. I just called out "Chang" and to my amazement a tiny chocolate point creature ran out of the melee and tried to climb up my legs! I told her I would have that one if it was a boy, but she insisted on taking him and a few similar kittens into the kitchen to examine them before I finally

chose. Is there really such a word as coincidence? I dutifully followed her, clutching three squirmy little bodies myself, and they were all dumped on the floor and raced around the kitchen until again I called “Chang”, and one raced over to me. I picked him up and she exclaimed, “It’s the same one!” How she could tell the difference I don’t know, but I did know it was Chang, and after I paid for him I carried him out and put him into Maisie’s arms, where he settled passively and licked her hand. She knew it was Chang too, and I knew he HAD come back – for the last time.

He and Juno were great friends and he lived nearly two years with us, most of the time playing with Juno and both popping in to visit Maisie, but every night he curled up on Maisie’s bed, while Juno slept on ours. Maisie could not walk, but Jimmie carried her into our lovely big garden, and it was surprising how many people in the village seemed to come and visit her. So many times she said how happy she was and we were so glad she came with us. But towards the end of her life her sight went completely and then she became very, very ill and for a few weeks the two cats kept vigil separately on her bed. Always one laid at

her side, where she could gently stroke it and feel its company and love, then in would come the other one, but we never saw them change over. On the last day, while Jimmie and I sat in the bedroom with her, both Chang and Juno laid patiently at the end of the bed. Gradually the gentle breathing stopped as she slipped away, her hand in mine. Chang leapt up, licked her cheek, and both cats jumped off the bed, raced downstairs and out of the kitchen window, and then we saw them, dancing crazily around like a pair of dervishes on the lawn. They never came into her bedroom again.

I told Jimmie that I wondered how long she would let us keep Chang, and it was the day after Maisie's funeral that a neighbour knocked on the door and said there was a Siamese cat lying on the village green just up the road. Chang had never left the garden to our knowledge, though Juno had visited nearly every house in the village, but it was Chang who Jimmie carried home, dead and not a mark on him, and Juno who helped us bury him in the garden.

Chapter 28

The Light-House on the Hill

Soon after Maisie died we moved back to Falmouth and got involved in the Spiritualist Church there, and I was asked if I would organise (voluntarily) one of the Clubs for the Blind for about six weeks until a new Social Worker took it over. Of course I was delighted and Jimmie helped a lot with all the handicrafts, as well as transport if needed. The six weeks stretched to twenty-seven and three-quarter years, when I retired for younger and possibly more active helpers! But I still keep in touch with many of my VIPs.

With Jimmie at my side I seemed to link closer to those Little Angels who had so wonderfully helped and guided me for so many years, and my 'twin sister' obviously disapproved and disappeared altogether, even her wig!— I did not need her help anymore! I enjoyed serving the precious church where for a time I was honoured to be Vice President and am now a Trustee, I hope to the end of my life. There are a number of Spiritualist Churches in Cornwall,

and I have been privileged to serve nearly all of them, but Falmouth Central Spiritualist Church is my 'home' church (**THE LIGHTHOUSE ON THE HILL**). Here I have found many friends, healing and a special sanctuary of peace. Jimmie and I became registered Spiritual healers, as required, and I believe we were used by those in realms of Greater Experience to help many of our fellow creatures, both human and animal, to improve physical and mental conditions.

Owing to subsidence the Church had to be demolished and services held in small hired halls while another church was erected. Its faithful officers and congregation dug deep into their pockets and surprising donations were given, and a new church – another 'Lighthouse on the Hill' – was raised and dedicated in 1999. Always there are those who forever compare the old and the new. I remember our 'old' church with love and affection, but myself I admit there are some improvements in our new building, for instance a lift, which was very expensive, but compulsory in the building regulations, and sometimes a help to this old girl when her gammy leg plays up a bit! Quite honestly, there are improvements, and it is the human love and energy which seem to

impregnate a building and show again those Little Angels and all their glorious company to uplift it in worship, and it is up to us to keep in unity and harmony to help any strangers who enter it and turn them into friends.

Speaking of Spiritualist healing reminds me of an amusing incident some years ago, which has really nothing to do with Spiritualist healing, unless a Little Angel inspired me to suggest it. In my blind class in Bournemouth was an old lady called Maudie, who always wore cotton gloves because of a rash on her hands, which her doctor could NOT clear up. She had used many kinds of creams and lotions, and they could not find why only her hands were affected. It caused her great distress, poor old darling. One day, as she was telling me how even the latest, very expensive cream “Weren’t bit of good duckey”, I suddenly had an inspiration and wondered if I dared mention it. You may ridicule, but I am a believer in the healing properties of one’s own saliva. Did not Jesus heal a blind man with his own saliva? I have often soothed a rash or itching on my own body with mine, especially first thing in the morning, before the cup of tea which may contaminate it for

a while, so I suggested that Maudie try it for a few days. I begged her NOT to lick her hands, but collect some saliva in each hand, and gently spread it over them and leave it to dry. Then I forgot all about it! A few weeks later I noticed Maudie had no gloves on – her hands were lovely! “I done what you told me,” she said gleefully, “And I went to my doctor last week and showed him, and he was that astonished he could hardly believe it, especially when I said a woman had told me to spit on ‘em!” I wonder if the doctor ever dared to tell any other patient likewise afflicted to “Spit on them!”

Believe it or not, that is perfectly true! I think today I would not dare to suggest such a remedy, especially with the wonderful relief from my Aloe Vera plant, which has helped many friends.

Chapter 29

Christmas 1986

Unfortunately Jimmie suffered a slight stroke and had some difficulty managing the rather narrow stairs in our little house, so we sold the house, paid off the rest of the mortgage on it, and had enough left to buy a very pleasant mobile home in the village of Foxhole, a charming, friendly little community. Rather strangely, although our house had, of course, been professionally surveyed by the buyer, two weeks after the buyers moved in most of the ceiling in one bedroom fell down exactly on top of where we had slept in bed! Fortunately it missed the young couple there, they slept the other side of the room, but it must have been a shock, poor souls.

In Foxhole we were still able to keep in close touch with Falmouth by car, but suddenly we found ourselves almost uprooted and picked up and deposited in a comfortable ground floor flat in St. Agnes, where we lived until Jimmie died on Boxing Day in 1986.

We had Christmas day on our own at home, as was usual. We went to Falmouth on Boxing Day to take our presents and have a buffet tea with Judith and her husband Allan and their two children, Karen and Tracey. Judith's sister Alison, and her two little children, Carley aged four and Tegan aged two were also visiting for the day. Jimmie loved his grandchildren and they made such a fuss of him and we all had such a happy day there. But about half past six I noticed Jimmie looked terribly tired so we decided to go home.

As I drove him home he said he did not feel very well and dozed a little by my side, but we got home all right and he sat back comfortably in his special armchair. Then I realised he was far from well – looked as if he had had another stroke, but when the doctor arrived he was dead. I rang my daughter, Frankie, who arrived about ten minutes later, just after the police, who insisted I have a glass of sherry because of the shock, and then requested me to move the car outside, so the undertaker could park there I presumed. But they were rather taken aback when I gave one of them the car keys and asked him to move it himself, in case his companion breathalysed me

afterwards! The things one does in a state of shock.

Frankie had the unpleasant job of telephoning Judith and Allan, who offered to ring Jimmie's two sons and daughter Alison.

Juno, Jimmie's precious Siamese cat, went nearly crazy when she went to investigate what had happened to him, and I have never known a cat mourn as she did. She would not eat anything for over a week, until she went in to our neighbour Joe one teatime and pinched sardines off his tea table. He was so pleased that she actually ate them, and then she decided to move in with lonely Joe, who was her willing slave for the rest of her life.

I remember many friends and family who have passed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, and have often said if they don't take me over at Christmas I shall probably be fit for another year. My Jimmie was the first for Boxing Day and, as he had requested, I conducted his funeral service in a crowded crematorium, and even at the service I saw something rather unusual. In the front row now sat six mediums, supporting me I know, but with my inane sense of humour the thought crossed my mind – I wonder which one would reach

the rostrum first to take the service if I collapsed? I even felt Jimmie would have been amused to see them. I felt him very close, and many remarked later at the wonderful feeling of love there that day. Although I would grieve and miss him terribly, and still do, I remember feeling a little glow of happiness for him at meeting our 'Number One Squaw', his childhood sweetheart and beloved wife and mother of his children – Marion.

Jimmie's little granddaughters Carly and Tegan seemed worried somehow about his dying, although we assured them he was happy and hoped that would pacify them, but they kept asking if he was comfortable! He had his own armchair, so whenever he had visited them they had always padded an armchair with cushions and fussed over him like a pair of old hens! However, a few weeks after his death I gave away his special chair to another needy old chap, and a few days afterwards the little girls and their Mum visited me. The children, as always, raced into the sitting room, almost forgetting what had happened. I heard Tegan cry out "Oh! Grandpa's not here!" and Carly said quietly "His chair's gone". Momentary silence, then a little voice, sounding

somehow relieved, said “Oh good! At least he’ll be comfortable!” Then back into the kitchen for lemonade and biscuits. No more worries about their much-loved old Grandpa – he was probably sitting up in Heaven in his comfortable chair!

A few years later I landed back in Falmouth, my really dearest part of Cornwall. There is a saying that if you have just a drop of Cornish blood in your veins the Cornish piskies will call you home. I think my drop of blood goes back many years to ancestors of whom I had no knowledge when always in my early life I longed to live in Cornwall and often, after I had my first car, I would drive down late on Friday night to my friends at Ruthern Bridge, near Bodmin. I have stopped about midnight at Stonehenge, feeling alone in all the world, when it seemed a wild and deserted place and all the stones alive with history and spectral figures dancing round – very different from today. Then on and over Bodmin Moor, then only one narrow road, fraught with the dangers of roaming animals. Back early Monday mornings, reluctant to leave my precious country, for Cornwall is really a country, and wishing I could stay there forever.

Chapter 30

The Lesser Kingdom?

I refuse to call them 'The Lesser Kingdom', those wonderful creatures Great and Small whom so often we, who should know better, abuse and hurt and experiment on, as if they have no feelings or right to live at all. If they must die, let death be instantaneous, and no suffering or fear or pain before it is carried out. There – I have got that off my chest!

I have had so many experiences and evidence about animals in Spirit that I could write a whole book on that subject, but doubt if anyone would read it. I must admit that I have often grieved more for a little domesticated animal than I have for a friend, because I never worry about a family or friends – I am quite convinced that they are all right, and to me a funeral is a thanksgiving for a life and a birthday into a better one.

When I was much younger I would wonder what happened to animals, but I don't worry now, and never forget to talk to those who pop in to visit me! I can honestly

say I am convinced of the survival of living creatures, probably on paths of progression. I remember vividly when I had to have my much loved little cocker spaniel Bunty, in terrible pain, put gently to sleep by a trusted vet friend. I buried her in the garden, gently patted down the earth and then went to put away the spade but, as I walked away, she came running across the lawn towards me and jumped up into my arms, bless her.

I felt very worried about my old friend Leslie, who loved her and she adored him. He lived some way from us – I could not just ring him, I must drive out and tell him. Just then the telephone rang, it was Leslie. She must have gone straight to him. He said he had heard a scratching at the front door – a scratching? He opened the door and she jumped straight up into his arms and then disappeared.

My brother Tony told me that he is permitted to work with the animals in what we call the Spirit World and often, when I take a Service, will bring back creatures who shared human love on the earth plane.

Some years ago, rather to my consternation, I was aware of a young elephant. I felt rather reluctant to mention it until he gently rubbed his trunk against the

neck of an elderly lady in the congregation, and my brother breathed 'Amah!' Years before, a mother elephant had been brutally butchered for her ivory tusks and her baby had been reared by a little girl and her parents. The old lady remembered how sad they had been to have to leave behind a half-grown little elephant in good, kind hands when they had to leave India, and how delighted that grown-up 'Little Girl' was that Amah had not forgotten how much she had been loved!! Oh! What wonderful reunions there have so often been when Tony helps some of them to happily meet again!

My last little dog, Bobbie, jumps on my bed every night, and when one night, a few months after he died suddenly of a heart attack, I put another little rescued one on his dog blanket, I felt him jump up next to her. She gave a little growl, so I knew it was really true, he was there, and now they are good friends, and will probably progress together one day and share their little blanket at the end of the bed.

But I must tell you about the Parson who dived into my carriage just as the train left for Paddington and a big black Spirit retriever jumped after him and stretched out on the empty seats next to him. We were the

only two in the carriage and got talking. I asked him when he had lost his dog and risked telling him his dog was on the seat by his side. Heated moments! I am sure he tried to exorcise me! Next stop he got off quickly and disappeared, dog and all, up towards the front of the train. Funny thing, I saw him in front of me at Paddington, dog still on his heels, held up at the barrier, and I wished he knew his old pal was there.

It is always sad when a loved and loyal Guide dog has to be retired, and a younger dog takes over looking after its master or mistress. Sometimes the 'old dog' is kept in the family, but often this is not possible so a loving and caring home has to be found.

My good friend Richard, a big, tough, totally blind (but soft-hearted) guy found a wonderful home for his beloved companion Yulin, and decided not to visit after he settled down, for fear of upsetting either of them! About two years later Richard was awakened in the middle of the night by a big 'something' plonking onto his bed and being licked all over his face, and he knew his old pal had come to say goodbye. Next morning he heard he had been found peacefully in his last sleep in his basket at his new home.

'Lesser Kingdom?' I wonder!

Chapter 31

Chinese Junks

In this age of Aquarius there seems to be a new awareness and acceptance of the reality of Angels and Nature Spirits, at which a lot of people scoff, but it is difficult not to believe in something or someone you have actually seen perfectly clearly, which brings to mind a conversation I had many years ago when having tea with my dear, late friend, Mavis, and my cousin Beryl. Both knew I was a bit unusual, like my mother had been, but out of respect to my mother, of whom they had both been very fond when they were children, they didn't like to call me 'queer'.

I well remember that day, the three of us sitting in a café in Bournemouth, and Beryl suddenly asking me if I believed in ghosts.

"Of course she doesn't!" exclaimed Mavis, "Why? Have you seen one or something?"

"Of course not", exclaimed Beryl, indignantly, "I don't believe in them – I just wondered if you did."

There was a rather embarrassed silence and inevitably they both turned to me and said together, "Do you?"

"Do you believe in Chinese junks?" I asked quietly.

"In what?" they cried, simultaneously.

"In Chinese junks," I repeated. "Do you believe there is such a thing as a Chinese junk? You know, one of those flat-bottomed boats with sails."

"Well of course," said Beryl, looking at me pityingly, having spent some years as a missionary in China, and so did Mavis, who said she certainly believed in them, but admitted she had never actually seen one, except in pictures.

"But have you ever seen one?" I persisted.

Beryl had, but asked me "What on earth have Chinese junks to do with ghosts."

"It's strange," I murmured, more to myself than to them, "People can believe in Chinese junks and Tibetan temples and angel fish which they have never seen, yet they cannot believe in ghosts which they have probably seen dozens of times in some form or another – it doesn't make sense to me."

A heated argument ensued, gradually evolving into an interesting discussion on a number of remarkable experiences of Spirit intervention, hitherto denied, of the two friends concerned.

It made me wonder, as it often does, why so many people shy away from what they call supernatural occurrences which are, to me, as natural as the air I breathe. After all, am I not really a 'ghost' myself? Or, to give myself a better title, an embodied spirit trapped in a temple of flesh. But nevertheless, for all practical purposes, a ghost, more solid than those disembodied, whose presence I was sometimes too blind to see and too deaf to hear, although at times fully conscious of their presence and in tune with their thought vibration, rather as a radio set tuned in to the various wavelengths around us.

I wonder if *they* call *me* a ghost? If those who may be inexperienced and unaccustomed to their new life out of the physical body are frustrated - if they try to contact me, or us, and find us as elusive as many find the ghosts who appear so fleetingly, trying to impinge themselves on our consciousness? To a mere novice like myself it is all very perplexing at times, and

difficult to explain to solid, material beings who positively reject any possibility of a being they call a 'ghost' being able to think or contact them. Yet I find it so natural and easy to believe.

I suppose I am fortunate. I have seen solidly materialised beings of various ages, sizes and nationalities and watched them embrace and greet those on my side of life.

But I believed these things long before I ever witnessed a transfiguration or materialisation or heard Spirit speaking in a strange voice through a familiar medium. It is something I feel I must have known long ago, a memory perhaps brought with me. To me those dear ones so many just label 'ghosts' are as real as the embodied creatures, human and animal, around me. In fact, I find it easier to believe in ghosts than in Chinese junks, because I've never actually *seen* a Chinese junk!

What is a ghost? Dictionary: The disembodied spirit of a dead person, supposed to haunt the living as a pale or shadowy vision.

But I am afraid the topic of ghosts has for a page or two withdrawn me from the far more wonderful experiences of Angels, who for centuries have been seen, written about

and painted, in varying degrees of evolution and who, I am sure, are still interested in every living soul in Heaven and on earth, and all creation.

Chapter 32

The Soft Hill

I remember, in the early sixties, driving with three friends to the beautiful Chalice Gardens in Glastonbury to meet one of the Souls involved in spreading the knowledge of the Winds of Truth, and visiting what the Lord Mikaal (Archangel Michael) calls 'The Soft Hill', where some believe Joseph of Arimathea buried the Chalice.

The old black dog belonging to Christine trundled after us as we walked the short way to the Soft Hill. It was a warm summer early evening, and as we entered the meadow and stopped and looked at that tiny molehill of a mountain, I stepped forward to climb it a little, then looked up and there he was - who was? He was very tall, very beautiful, shining in a silver light and as I dropped onto my knees he smiled at us, then just vanished. In a daze I felt a hand gently touch my shoulder and Christine said, "You saw him?!" And as I got to my feet the old dog, crouched down beside me, stood up and shook himself. Had the dog seen him too? I have my own idea who He was, but I

keep that in my heart, with a memory I shall never forget.

Many years afterwards I drove again to Glastonbury, on my own, and walked through the Chalice Gardens towards the place of the Soft Hill at the end. But alas now there was barbed wire fencing it off, so I went and sat amid the flowers by the Chalice Well and filled my two plastic bottles to carry home some of the healing water from that sacred well, to which we are told Joseph of Arimathea brought his nephew, years ago, to bathe. I always brought home water from this well for use in Baptisms at our Church.

I have another special memory of being permitted to see what I felt was a sort of Angel, so extraordinary that I really could hardly believe my eyes.

I was driving down what we call the 'old' bypass round Redruth, over the roundabout and straight down the long hill towards Carn Brea. There was no other traffic around, and I will understand if you say this vision was not possible. The sky before me was blue with a few scudding clouds over the tall hill of Carn Brea, and suddenly a big hand seemed to draw apart the blue sky and to my astonishment a huge

head appeared, as if between parted curtains, and looked down. I completely forgot I was in a car, although I automatically slowed down without stopping. Behind the sky and the vision was a brilliant light, and for probably only seconds I gazed up, transfixed by the unbelievable light, then slowly the bewhiskered head withdrew and the hand closed the curtains and I found, just in time, that I was approaching the roundabout at the bottom of the bypass, on the main road between Redruth and Camborne and I stopped just before I reached it.

No other cars passed me, but the traffic on the main road kept on rolling by. No one was standing gaping up at the sky – no one to my knowledge mentioned it at all! Not even in a letter to the paper. So what did I see? And was I the only car on that old bypass that day? Did you see it that afternoon in July 1962? I shall never forget it! If indeed these two Beings were Angels I must admit I did not see their wings, which were so prominent with the two who ‘came’ for little Tommy.

Chapter 33

Tommy and the Angels

Tommy was a retired Cornish tin miner, who lived with his lovely wife in a tiny cottage in a nameless village in Cornwall. When I met them he was nearly ninety years old, totally blind, and very ill. I visited them quite often, and did as much as possible to ease their lives, but they both had their own inner peace and faith, and a wonderful daughter nearby, and lifelong love from schooldays for one another. Their tiny cottage radiated friendliness and love. The staircase was too dangerous for Tommy to go up, so as he became bedridden he was moved downstairs and Annie slept in their armchair by his side.

One early evening the daughter telephoned and asked if I could possibly come, Dad was asking for me. So off I rushed and arrived just as their friendly doctor was leaving, and he whispered, "Take care of them – not long now."

Tommy heard me, reached out to take my hand, and Annie said, "He wants us to say a prayer for him, but we don't want to

worry parson, cos I haven't been able to go to Chapel long time." So I took off my coat and joining his daughter and Annie, we all knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer together. I felt he was so nearly gone that quietly I said the words of the 23rd Psalm, and as I came towards the end I heard his last little sigh, and as I finished, "I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever," I opened my eyes and there they were. Two bright shining Angels, folded wings and all, one each side of the little truckle bed, and they seemed to hover there as I gently closed his blind eyes and made the sign of a cross on the forehead of one of the loveliest souls I have met on this earth. As I took Annie into my arms, I heard her whisper "I hope God sent an Angel to meet him" and I said quietly "I am sure he did" and wondered if I dare tell her what I had seen.

I was glad Annie had some family to help her, but she quickly followed her beloved Tommy a few weeks afterwards. I was thankful for that, and felt a wonderful upliftment at her funeral service to believe they were together again.

Chapter 34

'Romeo and Juliet'

Minnie and Albert were really a sort of modern, very elderly, Romeo and Juliet. Minnie was tremendous, totally blind and had no legs, was very hard of hearing, had a huge old fashioned ear trumpet, spent all day on a couch with wheels and loved singing hymns. Albert was partially sighted, thin as a rail and flourished a walrus moustache. He adored Minnie, who he met when he was admitted to the Home for the Blind, where she had spent most of her life. He waited on her hand and foot and saved the carers in the home a lot of work with his constant, loving attention. When I met them they were both in their early eighties, without a relative in the world.

When Minnie died poor old Albert was absolutely inconsolable, it was pathetic to see him, poor old darling. At that time so many years ago, if any blind person in a Home died without any relatives, I always travelled with the undertaker to the funeral, to sort of oversee it and tell the parson a bit about them. Many of them were what were

called in those days pauper's funerals, as was Minnie's. I collected in the home for a wreath and asked the florist to put as many different flowers as possible in it, and then made a note of all of them – for obvious reasons.

Albert did NOT attend – I thought he would have jumped into her grave, but after the service I went to the Home to report on it. Albert asked if there were lots of flowers, and I read out the list of different ones sent for her. I think he pictured a lot of wreaths, and I did not disillusion him! I told him the service was lovely, congregation sang her favourite hymns – I jolly well MADE the pallbearers join in with me! The minister really was kind and I thanked him profusely. Old Albert was really consoled, and that was important, and I hope I have been forgiven my 'white lies' on his behalf. He did not live long without her, and although two other old dears tried to adopt him, he remained faithful to his 'Juliet', and was eventually laid to rest near her corner of the graveyard.

I travelled to so many funerals sitting between the undertaker and the driver of the hearse that I got quite friendly with them, and said I would expect a free ride in the

back by myself one day, instead of being squashed between them!

The love and devotion of my dear old 'Romeo' Albert and 'Juliet' Minnie calls to mind the Spirit man who came through one night at one of Red Hawk's meetings. He told us his name was Robert and he would like to give us a poem he composed for his beloved wife Elizabeth after she passed to Spirit.

On our tape recording he sounded very old fashioned, but so gentle and sincere I feel prompted to include it here. He said he never wrote it down, just kept it in his heart for her, and I feel someone might be comforted by his loving words:

WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?

Where have you gone, my dearest one, my
own?

Death took you by the hand and closed a
door

Against me, but I shall not be alone,
For you are close beside me evermore.
I see your eyes shine thro' the stars at night;
I hear you sigh upon a summer breeze;
Your fragrance lingers in a rosebud bright;
Your heart is beating in the pounding seas;

Your laughter echoes in a blackbird's song;
A settling butterfly brings your caress.
To everything in Nature you belong,
Your Spirit living in her loveliness.

'Robert'

Chapter 35

Arthur's Boots

I think it is important that anyone working as a medium and endeavouring to pick up communications from Spirit, never ever lets their own mind alter what they are given. Unless, of course, it is something that could really upset and hurt the person receiving the message, in which case it might have been dropped in by someone jealous or annoyed, and still close to the earthly conditions. So often people think Spirit friends can organise our lives for us, tell our fortunes. But usually all they want is to put at rest our minds that they are near, not always at our side, for they have their own progression to make, as we all have, but to comfort us with their love and interest, and I do believe that the best way they can help us in our lives is to impress others to do what they would do if still in the physical body. I have strong doubts about the word 'coincidence'. I think a good, helpful coincidence has been manipulated by one of those in the realms of greater experience who I call Little Angels. I have experienced

hundreds of coincidences in my life, especially if I have really needed something for someone else and asked for help. Like Arthur's boots, for instance. Such a trivial request, but so important to old, poor, blind Arthur. Did his Mother in Spirit intercept my tentative request on behalf of her son? I don't think it quite reached the Angel Gabriel, but somebody answered it, I am sure.

I try to make my prayers thankful and not ask for this and that, because I believe that GOD knows what is best for us in our earthly lives, with many lessons to learn, but when I visited blind Arthur and his eighty year old sighted brother who looked after him, they were both very sad. Their mother who had cosseted them all their lives had died ten years before, just on her century, and when I first found them back in the sixties, their life had been very Spartan. Luckily they and Mother had been helped by that wonderful organisation, the Salvation Army, which carries many 'earthly' Angels in its rank, and Mother and the 'boys' always attended their services on Sunday. Here, on this Friday, was their problem. Arthur's boots were 'broke', top nearly off the bottom, too bad to wear at all, let alone to a Service!

Having pestered the then National Assistance Board for so many necessities for them, I had no hope of getting boots in time. There might be a jumble sale somewhere next day, Saturday, but unlikely to have boots size nine for sale, and they had no money left at the end of the week (except collection coppers). I could not possibly afford to buy boots, and Arthur had rickets as a baby and Mother always made him wear "Boots not shoes, Missus, cos his ankles is weak", and Mother's word was law.

I promised to TRY, but the only way I could try was to have faith that maybe Spirit could help, as I was asking for someone who could not help himself, so that is what I did, humbly and apologetically, before I got into bed. Next morning I tried two jumble sales, but no luck, and going dejectedly home (Oh Thou of Little Faith!) I dropped in to see my old friend Minnie, in her prefab, and when I went in a neighbour was leaving. I apologised but Minnie said, "Don't mind she me dear. She's only the blind visitor." The neighbour said, "Do you visit blind men as well as women?" I assured her I would visit anyone who had sight problems, and the long and short of it was she told me her husband John had died two years ago and

she thought she had sent all his clothes to the Sally Army, but she turned out the cupboard under the stairs yesterday and found a pair of boots she didn't even know he had – would I like them for anyone? She did not know the size, but I did. Of course, they were size nine, brand new, and I shall never forget Arthur's face when they fitted him perfectly, and all three of us nearly cried for joy. They never asked me how I got them, but I know that somehow old Mother still loved and was caring for her 'boys'. I took a present to Minnie's neighbour, who was delighted at the thought, and then, crazy as I am at times, thanked John for hiding them until they were really needed – if they had been really his?

Chapter 36

Mother's Sunday Hat

Maisie, Millie, Myrtle, Milly, Mavis and Minnie were some of my dearest friends – all those letter Ms! Of course, there are hundreds more in Spirit I can never forget, but each of them made an impression on my life – like my Mum, another 'M' I guess.

Myrtle was absolutely stone deaf and had very little sight, but for years she had absolutely refused to learn the non-visual Deaf-Blind Alphabet, as she could still read very big black letters. I did find a solution to this problem. I asked her if she could help me. I said that I had nobody to practice what she called 'the finger alphabet' on, so please would she allow me to show it to her? Not TEACH it you notice – just demonstrate it! It would help me so much. Bless her, she threw her arms round me and said of course she would if it helped me!

It is so simple to learn and she picked it up very quickly. I taught her sister and Myrtle herself taught her friends, and after that instead of sitting in complete silence her companions were 'talking' to Myrtle on her

fingers and she laughing and joining in the 'conversation'. Consequently she had far more visitors and 'helping me' helped herself even more. She was a dear, and I loved her and her sister Milly very much.

Alas, Myrtle became very, very ill and I spent a lot of time with her and her younger sister Milly, staying at night towards the end of her life.

One Saturday night Myrtle suddenly seemed to improve and even sat up in bed for a few minutes, so the next day I went to church in the evening. After the address I became aware of a young-looking Spirit woman, dressed in black with an ugly old-fashioned black hat, standing next to the medium on the platform, staring at me! The congregation were singing a hymn and she smiled at me and said, "Go home to Myrtle!" Obviously no one else had heard her, but she came towards me and just disappeared!

You know, it is most embarrassing leaving a church in the middle of a service, and I hadn't a clue who she was, but I had to obey and apologetically sneak out. Milly was surprised I went home so early and Myrtle was peacefully drowsing, so I explained I had a headache and Milly went to make a cup of tea while I settled down by the bed

we had brought down into the 'parlour' for Myrtle.

As Milly put the tea tray on the table blind Myrtle sat up in bed and shouted, "Oh look! There's mother!" And, with a wonderful smile on her tired old face, fell back on her pillow with one last gasping breath, and there was Mother in that ugly old-fashioned hat, standing fleetingly at the end of the bed, hands outstretched to her 'little girl'. Milly was distressingly shocked, and I was thankful of her mother's warning. She could never accept what had happened, although she had heard Myrtle cry out she must have thought she had been dreaming!

She told me that when Myrtle was ten years old their mother had dressed and got them ready to go to Chapel, and lifted five-year-old Milly on the table to button up her little boots, and then dropped dead in front of them as their Father came into the room. Such a sad story.

A long time afterwards Milly found a picture in the attic of her own mother, dressed in black in mourning her own mother, and wearing her best Sunday hat, which Father said she always wore to Chapel.

Chapter 37

Electron

My husband Jimmie and I were registered healers and worked together in a group of healers at our Church. After he passed to Spirit I still attended the sessions, but concentrated only on Absent Healing on my own. But one night, after my usual link-up with Spirit, I was suddenly aware of a very tall figure, silver from head to foot, who rather startled me. He looked so strange, yet I knew he meant no harm. I remember his eyes staring into mine, and he told me his name was Electron and that he worked on the condition we called Cancer, and would like to help me, but I must work exactly as he told me. Of course I was delighted, but wondered why he had chosen me when there were so many healers in our Church.

However, the following Monday I attended as usual, and hoped I might have an opportunity to be used for healing, instead of just sitting at the side trying to give out help! Then I was again aware of him, close to me, and ordering me to go to a woman already seated on one of the stools, and a healer working on her!!

To any sceptical reader who has got as far as this it must seem impossible that a very ordinary, somewhat elderly woman, could quietly communicate with a Spirit guide who was giving her an order, and she actually arguing with him, her or it as the case may be, because she was afraid to butt in on another healer. But that I had to do – I just couldn't go up to one of our important healers and place my hands on the patient's shoulders as I was ordered. For a while Electron persisted and still I refused, then suddenly he left – I never saw or felt him again.

I quietly left the room, and went home and wept. Surely he must have understood? Looking back it still bewilders me!! But then came a strange ending.

Some weeks later I visited Cheshire to serve a Church there, and stayed with a medium friend, a dear pal of mine. On the Saturday two friends of his, who I had met before, came to tea and of course there is only one special subject of conversation when we get together. They told me that they were so pleased that a new Guide had recently joined their healing circle. YES – his name was ELECTRON and he worked on Cancer. I was overjoyed, and I realised he

could help tremendously in their very well attended healing works. I hope he has forgiven me for disobeying him.

The lady being treated in my circle that he had tried to get me to help was suffering from Cancer I heard later, and although the healing she had received eased the pain, she passed to Spirit some months later, very peacefully. Her time to go I expect, and I am sure Electron would have helped her, however annoyed he was with me. Oh! Life is difficult sometimes however hard we try.

Chapter 38

The Circus

I think it is wonderful how many people who were born blind can adapt and live in a sighted world, and live really extraordinary lives and give so much to the world in their work and knowledge.

Have you tried to explain a flower to a child who has never seen one? Its colour, its shape.

In my early days I met a little girl named Christine, who lost her sight completely at the age of eight but, thank God, could remember colours, animals, people. She never once grumbled that these things were now only remembered when she could feel them or be near them.

Three colleagues and I were instructed to take six visually-impaired children to a circus, and I argued against taking Christine – I said it would be cruel! That wonderful Secretary in charge of our Blind Society (now over fifty years ago) insisted, and off we went! We had seats in the front row. The other five little girls could see a bit, like bright lights and colours – Christine saw only

blackness. Luckily she had good hearing as I whispered what was happening and tried not to miss anything. We arrived home late afterwards and I was dragged in for a cup of tea while Christine regaled her lovely parents with all she had 'seen' at the circus – her eyes had remembered everything that my eyes had fed to them! The colours, the costumes, the clown who nearly fell off the horse, the ringmaster with the fat tummy, the beautiful fairies – so much that I had forgotten I had told her! She was excited that she could tell her friends at the Blind School all the wonderful things she had 'seen' at the circus. I was sure her own Little Angels would keep those pictures in her mind to share with her friends.

Christine did very well at school and college and eventually went to work and live in Yorkshire, and again I had another 'coincidence'. In a paper I read of a young blind woman who was exercising her guide dog in a free run in a field and suddenly she died of a heart attack. Helpers, police and ambulance men were unable to get near her until they called a vet to sedate her faithful dog who tried to protect her. Her name was Christine – MY Christine. Even as I shed a tear for her, so I shed two more for the

bewildered dog who loved and devoted her life to her blind mistress who was taken away from her.

My Grandmother told me a rather interesting story about the son of a friend of hers named Bob, who was born blind, as so many were up to and during the early twentieth century. He was nurtured and taught by his devoted parents and probably very over-cosseted. He was a very happy boy who grew into a friendly man. When Bob was about thirty years old he fell down the stairs, banged his head hard on the post at the bottom and could suddenly SEE. I cannot imagine the shock this must have been to him, who had never had sight, and existed in a totally black world.

His mother rushed from the kitchen after hearing the loud bang, and found him dazedly looking around and she asked him if he was hurt. She told my Gran that Bob blinked at her and said “What are you?”

“I am your mother dear” she said, trying to put her arms round him.

“Oh! Aren’t you ugly!” he exclaimed and cringed away from her! How had he visualized her? How could he visualize anything? In the next four days he tried to explain that in his mind he knew the

difference between beautiful and ugly, from the way people used the explanations. He could obviously see colours, but in his blindness he had lived in a world of such beauty that even the trees, the sea, the loveliest flowers and most wonderful sunsets he now saw dimmed in the memories he had either seen or remembered from somewhere. Somewhere?

Gran told my mother it took him a long time to come to terms with what everyone else called *the miracle of gaining sight*. He was a remarkable man, devoted to his parents, always ready to help anyone or everyone, but always around him was the mystery. What did he remember and visualise in his years of darkness? Where had he been? Where had he lived? Where had he existed? What had he seen and never forgotten?

Both my mother and grandmother had their own ideas about that, but I think many who heard them thought they were a bit far fetched. I'll keep mine to myself!

Chapter 39

Valentine Cakes

I have often said “It is no good being so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good,” for I believe in all sincerity we are put on earth in physical bodies to learn lessons to help our Spiritual progression onward, upwards towards the Godhead from which we emerged. I am fundamentally a simple trusting soul I suppose, but I am so grateful for the knowledge, backed by evidence, which has been tucked into my mind on this sojourn on earth, and I am sure carried back when my Spirit leaves behind its physical overcoat and returns to store it in my soul, in those of Greater Experience. So many lessons I have learnt in this life of mine, so many regrets for opportunities lost to help others, so many stupid mistakes of judgement, I sometimes wonder if there will be anything left worthy of storing? But I can only pray that the little help and love I have endeavoured to give to others may earn me some forgiveness. But I digress, as usual. A real, wandering-minded Aquarian!

But what has this to do with Valentine cakes you ask?

Well, nothing at all – it was Mary who tried to get me to make the Valentine cakes, another string of coincidences. When I first came to Cornwall as an unqualified Home Teacher of the Blind on a pittance of a wage, I often used to drop into the many real jumble sales which were usually held then on Saturdays, and offering amazing bargains in all sorts of treasures, a bit like today's boot sales, but so cheap!

Wandering around one I spotted four little heart shaped cake tins, one penny each, so gathered them up with a tuppenny fish slice. I got home delighted with the slice – just what I wanted, I only had four kitchen implements, but what on earth had made me waste fourpence on four small cake tins? Well, it was St. Valentine's Day next day, so just for fun I would make the four cakes, and I could also bake the rest of mixture in a biscuit tin I had brought with me and not used for ages. Luckily I had a bit of flour and a couple of eggs and the other wherewithal for such culinary activities.

As I was beating it together I felt someone watching me, and became aware of a very small old lady, all ready in her big

white apron, and she spoke gently into my mind, “Please make some Valentine Cakes for him”. I asked her name, and was told it was Mary, but then she was out of sight and sound, but not mind.

O.K, I would make them – but who on earth was he? Why does he want them? Just like some of those Little Angels, they struggle to get through, give you half a message, then disappear. Lack of power, I know, but annoying to someone who wants to help them. The four little heart shaped cakes turned out perfectly, a wonder for me, and the other little cake was possible, and I enjoyed it for tea next day. I even managed, by a lot of banging and bashing, to produce some nearly icing sugar from granulated sugar to decorate the four smaller ones – but who were they for? I nearly ate them all myself!

The next day, Sunday, I went as usual to my Spiritualist Church, and at the last moment took the four cakes with me. Not very easy, trying to hide the bag of cakes and avoid squashing them. I hid them under my seat and hoped the folk behind would not notice.

It was a pleasant service – but was Mary’s HE there? Then, as we stood up to

leave, I saw him – the only man, and an old one at that, sitting alone at the back of the church, a rather sad, old man. I caught him outside and risked it. I gave him the bag of cakes and said, “Mary sent them.” I shall never forget him stopping, opening the bag and two tears running down his cheeks on to those little Valentine cakes her love had helped me to make.

As we walked away together he told me they had met on a Valentine Day, married on a Valentine Day and after fifty years this was his first without her. But, of course, he was not without her.

I kept in touch with him and by the next February he had followed his Mary to Spirit, so I guess they were together again. I wonder if they make Valentine cakes in Heaven?

Chapter 40

Anemones

Mary was not the only one who managed to make me 'work' for them. In fact, it has happened dozens of times in my life and I have been grateful for such opportunities to be manoeuvred in really quite simple ways, which seemed to help often lonely old folk, and sometimes grieving younger ones mourning someone very precious, and sometimes having no belief in a continuation of life. I remember when I first lived in Cornwall and was very hard up, I went into a shop to buy two pounds of potatoes. While I waited to be served I was conscious of an elderly Spirit man begging me to buy a bunch of anemones. They were lovely anemones, but rather expensive – threepence a bunch! I had only a shilling left, twelve whole pence, to last a few more days, and my spuds would have cost tuppence, so I closed my eyes and hardened my heart. Cruel woman! As the assistant came to me I realised I was asking for "A bunch of anemones and a pound of potatoes please." Outside the shop I

wondered who on earth the flowers were for! Then someone came into my mind. I had sat next to her in church the day before and as we left she said she had hoped to have a message from her husband. I had actually gone to Church in the car, and as it was a cold, wet night, I had offered her a lift home to cheer her up, poor old girl.

Clutching the anemones I wondered if they were for her? Didn't know her name, but knew where she lived, so off I went and knocked on her front door and hoped for the best. When she opened it I pushed the flowers into her hand and was again conscious of the old Spirit man and knew it WAS a special day. "Happy Birthday," I said, "I was asked to bring these for you."

To my consternation she pulled me indoors, burst into tears and kept saying, "He remembered, just as he said he would", and the poor anemones were nearly squashed to bits before being lovingly arranged in a little vase and set beside the precious photograph on the sideboard. Over a cuppa I learned he had died nearly a year before and always on her birthday had bought her anemones, her favourite flowers, so I was glad I lashed out three pence, and I know it made him happy, too. Of course, I

had to make a note of the date to remember it each year with a bunch of anemones, although after two or three years she had joined him, so he could pick them himself to give to her.

Chapter 41

A Bunch of Freesias

I must add just one more flowery story to my little book and just one poem from the many I have enjoyed writing.

All my life I have admired visually impaired folk, young and old, especially those who were sightless so here is the tale of Annie, who was totally blind, and a sixpenny bunch of freesias which changed the end of her life.

When I started working in Cornwall as a Home Teacher of the Blind back in the early sixties, after I had visited nearly all the folk named in my little Robin book of blind folk living in their own homes or with families, who I felt were priority, I started on those who were in hospitals or welfare homes, who at least were fed and watered and not struggling at times on their own.

In Cornwall, as elsewhere, a number of the old workhouses and orphanages, dreaded not so very many years ago by the poor and deserted, were now refurbished and named Geriatric Hospitals and Children's Homes, and to one of these

hospitals I set off to visit four elderly blind ladies. As always on a first visit I took with me four small gifts to make a friendly introduction, as I was well aware that often they had few visitors and an unexpected gift, even a small one, was a little cheering. Off I went with a box of talcum powder, a tablet of lavender soap and a wee bottle of scent, all prettily wrapped. But most important to someone lying hour after hour in semi-darkness must be someone to talk to, and I am used to talking!

I was one gift short, so on the way I popped into a shop and expended the huge sum of sixpence on a bunch of beautiful freesias, full of buds, gorgeous colours and sweetly scented – surely one of them would be able to see them? My first three patients had very little sight, and the first two already had flowers on their tables, but were pleased with the soap and talc. I was able to read two letters and a few cards to one of them, and write a letter and take it to the post for the other. The third said flowers made her sneeze and she already had an elaborate arrangement of artificial flowers “What my son gave me” of which she was very proud. But she was still pleased with the bottle of scent.

My fourth patient was in another ward, and when I bent over the dear old lady in the cot-bed I realised that she was in complete darkness – totally blind. She smelt the flowers and very gently touched them, then asked what colours they were. A pleasant nurse came with a vase of water and told her she would stand them on the big over-bed table at the far end of her bed, so that she could not knock them over. I could have wept! If only I had something for her to hold and smell and use, as I had given the others. Her name was Annie. I stayed with her rather a long time. She told me she had worked for years as a midwife, starting just before the Great War and in the troubled times afterwards, in and out homes, in all sorts of conditions, bringing new lives into the world. Now she was over eighty years old, confined to bed, no family, forgotten by friends, but her mind was still full of memories, never complaining at anything.

As she was telling me about the wonderful young soldier, her one promise of happiness, lost in the mud and slaughter of Gallipoli so long ago, we both heard someone say “What beautiful freesias”.

I saw that a visitor leaving the ward had stopped to smell them, and came over

to my new blind friend and said “They cheer up the ward, they are so lovely”, and the old blind lady said “I wish I could see them”. Well that was just the start, the reason I had been impressed to spend sixpence on flowers and keep them for her.

I went to visit her as often as I could, even at weekends or after work, and at first I took flowers, but strangely I often found someone else visiting her and little gifts on her table and sometimes fresh flowers in her vase. Her second visitor had obviously spread the word and others would stop and talk to her and those Little Angels, who must have organised all of it, had found a way to find friends for a very special old soul. What a difference visitors made to her life. Miraculously before I had to leave Cornwall for a few years, one of her ‘grown-up’ babies also heard about her, and adopted her as an extra sort of Grandma for her own grandchildren, and all because the sixpenny bunch of freesias had been kept for her.

It is said “God moves in a mysterious way”, and obviously He had some helpers who listen! Even with so many people all over the world in trouble, some Little Angels were able to help me to help Annie.

I am quite sure that this is just one more example of how we, still in a physical body, are able to do things on their behalf for those they love on earth, and what a small cost for us in trying to help those Little Angels who seem to help us every day of our lives.

NIGHT is dedicated to:

Agnes, Annie, Arthur, Beryl, Billie, Clive, Dot, Elsie, Hilda, Kathleen, Maureen, Myrtle, Patrick, Peter, Philip, Richard, Rose, Roy and many others whose names I cannot recall, who live and lived in the total darkness of NIGHT, and whose courage and the light they shed I shall never forget.

* * * * *

Through many years I wished and longed to live the rest of my life in my beloved Cornwall. Now, perhaps, my prayers will be answered and my wish come true, serving in a small way my Special Church, and wishing I had done so much more for everyone in the long life I have been given to spend on earth.



Freda knows she has lived her whole life accompanied and supported by 'Little Angels', those who on the Earth Plane were our dear family and friends, and others from Spirit who still try to help us with their love and guidance. This autobiography describes her long and sometimes difficult journey, working for Spirit and for us.