MY HEAVENLY DIARIES/ (THE ROUND TRIP) (work titles)

By:

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INTRODUCTION

ARE YOU PARANORMAL - LIKE ME?

Have you thought: What the hell am I doing here? I detest this place. Why this town? Why do my parent’s pick on me - they give me faults and guilt; strangers make fun of me… Other people are not shy - why am I shy? Others do not hang-back - they just breeze along? If I had a choice in all this!

However, if you knew all the facts and did have a choice, would you have taken this life? If you knew what your destiny holds - could you stick with the challenges, the rocks and hard places? Would knowing ahead (precognition) do any good? Perhaps. At some time we have had faced these thoughts and misgivings. Our parents and grandparents and about everyone on Earth has had them especially when tough spots surface. The answer is twofold: Knowing ahead (precognition) goes both ways and ordinarily we assume that precognition is simply coincidence.

Here it comes - shake your hands in the air: The bible verse - it may be the only bible reference in this whole book so relax! ***God knew us before we were formed in our mother’s womb…*** did you ever wonder about that? Just where were we when He knew us? How long were we *there* and did we know God also? Did we get along with God or did we have a falling out? Curious thoughts! Perhaps life is not as random as we thought! If it is not random, then this life must have been planned! And planned before we were born! OK; let’s give this a try - but why don’t we remember it?

***We do remember things from this pre-existence but in little snatches.*** Often they come during our childhood but persist just enough to make us think: “I remember having this conversation before - like we spoke it just now! “Or: “I know this town, there is a jewelry store just around that corner oh yes, and a bridal shop upstairs to the left - and pleasantly there they are! At times ***you know*** you are meeting a positive person and you accept them into your life or it is a negative person you would rather avoid. These spontaneous memories may lessen as we age; parents and teachers and peers crowd out our pre-worldly thoughts. We become mundane robots like everyone else. If we have a precognitive thought we carefully hide it for fear of being “different.” If people thought you were “different” during my young years - you could become a candidate for life in a horror-filled mental facility commonly known then as “The Boobie Hatch”. Above all else, one avoided the Boobie Hatch.

MY HEAVENLY DIARIES

CHAPTER I

LET US START AT THE BEGINNING

Over time, nearly all of us have mastered a few talents - we might not use them every moment but they are with us -on call! One Rule of God’s is: “Once you master a thing –you know it forever!” This means it is possible to give thought to solving a problem, recall the talent needed and use it! (How many pre-school children today say, “Oh, I know how to do that, let me show you.”) Some things we just start out knowing. Some people are sympathizers. I am not! My most prominent gift seems to be counseling I think of several possible solutions for your problems. With me there is no time for pity. I am there with words that help. My mind works immediately choosing solutions.that help others.

The other gift is a Far Memory. As I relaxed my thoughts recede until it had reached as far back as my very creation! Finally, it became evident that I should start this book there! Yes, you will get a blow by blow account that spans several million years including the beginning the start of my paranormality. Some readers may not agree with my simple explanations but that’s all right - it was one surprising shock after another to me too. Just continue reading without judgment

THE GODHEAD

There’s one good place to start! I was told: The three had simply appeared after a tremendous burst in the atmosphere and found they existed; were intelligent and realized that a powerful force produced them and it needed to be controlled. Once this was accomplished, Power (The Holy Ghost, to many of us) was assigned to this duty. The second became the Creator (The Father God to us) He had the ideas. (The 3rd Being was not revealed to me at this time so I believed as my religion taught! For that relieion it was Jesus Christ; he was the savior.) To continue: All was good. The three beings realized they were alone. This was no fun they needed activity and others. This was The Creator’s job. He used themselves as prototypes. These newly created beings we call “Angels”. There was song and happiness around the Godhead at first.

But just like kids -it does not take long until one thinks it is better and more able than the others. And you know the story: One Angel decided it was even better than its Creator! That didn’t go so well. The angels took sides some for the Godhead and others for the naughty Angel, called Lucifer. This was Heaven’s first discord. God then banished Lucifer’s gang to a planet that was void of everything. They went from having it all to having nothing but worse, a body was required to tolerate the atmosphere of that void planet. The angry wicked angels decided on ferocious looking coverings and shortly fought among themselves.

But now, The Godhead had a only a partial entourage. They decided - no repeats and formed lots of good, happy, knowledgeable spirits, but of a smaller stature and less powerful This constitutes our entrance. We are in this batch; a bit smaller and weaker but we began intelligent and joyful.) We were pure spirits and were created after the great fight of the angels … But like the angels who fell by following Lucifer; errant thoughts the same kind of thoughts grew to be our undoing. One by one each of us lost our bright pure shine and when our clear thinking could not be restored on the God Level - we had to leave Heaven. It was only then we too realized: Being with God was a whole lot better. In this fall we also lost our wholeness. We would never recapture being a complete spirit because: Once sent to Earth spirits become male or female. Even when you regain Heaven the angelic-type of wholeness cannot be restored. You are forever a guy or a gal (My good angels who told me these things did not extend into Transgenderism’ etc.).

As per Geneses God turned over the void place and refashioned it into a neat habitation in six days! [I do not wish to enter into a discussion about Adam and Eve. There had to be first people in need of rehab to begin.] But the evil angels were in a sort of negative glory here already and sought to convert these weaker males and females to their purpose. And those dang things still plague every one of us as often as they can. We have a real fight on our hands with them. They are strong and although wicked they are immortal. And why not? After all…they were here first! Like I said - we have a fight on our hands so keep your guardian angels handy and busy!

MY FIRST EARTH LIFE

Let us face it I was not a perfect little cookie when I fell out of Heaven! That first very long ago Earth life was meant to correct my thinking: I had gotten a dose of that: “I want superiority” plague and when all else failed to change my mindset I was sent to an island on that once void planet! One thing I discovered about being on Earth was that nothing retains its freshness; it disintegrates. The ideas and dispositions on this island too had disintegrated into negativity. It was not designed that way by the Godhead but when I arrived the island had two classes of residents: The haves and have nots. Wrong thinking had not been eradicated in those that had to leave Heaven and it was easily prodded by Lucifer’s followers. So you can see, my first sojourn was not headed for success. I was born to a poor couple. We lived in sight of a beautiful palace. Perfumes wafted their fragrances, music and laughter filled my hungry ears. I saw gorgeous fruits and foods carried past us and through the palace gates. The differences tempted me away from a contritely simple lifestyle. Here follows my experiences living on the First Island Paradise.

My parents called me “Little One.” I was their only child. (If a girl was born first, no other children were allowed!) My tall sinewy father had a better position than most; he was in charge of several men. They followed him off to some laborious work every morning. He never spoke about it. It became my secret game to watch them trod off. I kept hidden in the hut but I peeked through a door flap to watch. None of the workers were smiling. No one in the village smiled; everyone was serious.

Mother was willowy; her skin was sallow with a reddish glow. Our bodies were always clothed; the men wore a simple garment to the knees, fastened with a bit of twine at the waist. The ladies and children’s garments were a bit longer; all the cloth resembled that of the doorway flap but finer. Regardless all cloth was the color of dead grass. Mother was responsible planting and preparing the food and for all things inside and out the hut. If the reed roof was disturbed by winds, she mended it. There was always dust to sweep but everyone was constantly “on watch” for bubblings in the dry earth. This signaled the disturbance of underground volcanoes. I helped mother with her work. The village women each had a special chore; some women gathered plants to be prepared for another lady who loomed cloth; one baked. Children did not mingle or play outside. They stayed indoors for safety. Mother said I was growing up and it was dangerous to go outside.

In the distance was the Palace compound. It was surrounded by a tall white-washed wall. Oh, how I wanted to peek inside. The Palace sounds were so wonderful! When I looked about me at this working class I understood - we actually had nothing. We were all living in twig and reed huts. It was always tropically hot. A canopy of tropical foliage shaded overhead. Our family hut was a bit roomier than most because of my father’s position but all the huts were round. They were made with thin branches; fastened upright, side by side for the outside wall. The roofs were of dry grasses fastened to place with other grasses. The roofs overhung the sides about eight inches. As one did not express their thoughts, I kept mine private but I thought this life was low class.

The soldiers marched through the village often; they were huge men. They wore leather and metal garments. I dare not ask but wondered: Why are the village people relegated to having so little? They worked very hard grew their own food yet only those with connections to royalty had plenty- like those soldiers.

The villagers kept as inconspicuous as possible. Their largest concern was the uncompromising soldiers of the reigning Royalty. These muscular men were military brutes. They saw all, heard all and reported what they chose and were never judged! They ravaged girls and there was no recourse, no stopping this, no righteousness for victims. Any civil retaliation brought terrible consequences: People seemed to disappear and later stumble back without minds. Many of us cowered with fear not understanding why this had happened to villagers. The populous did not know right from wrong. The rule of survival was: Don’t cross authority. Bodily strength was the ultimate goal. There were learned scientists and doctors but being special they lived within the Royal Compound.

I was not even outside when a soldier grabbed me and pulled me out of my home! I screamed in terror. My father dashed to save me but neither of us went unscathed. Father was restrained and made to watch several soldiers ravage me. They tossed me aside weeping in pain. Worse they dragged my well-meaning father away scorning and spitting upon him! Upon his return he was mindless; he lost his work position and my mother blamed me - for ruining her life!

I blamed those soldiers for my suffering and for my dad’s. He tried to save me but was hauled off and returned in horrible condition. I wanted revenge but how? I was a shamed girl and mother blamed it all on me. I was somewhat pretty and petite so to escape mother’s dour displeasure I went onto the pathways. Playing the soldiers was easy. They paid: a few coins, a scarf or a nice spangled piece of clothing. I worked my way reaching the soldiers guarding the Palace Gates. They let me look inside the gate and see the revelry. I giggled and imitated the dance movements of the girls inside. Soldiers inside the gates invited me to dance for them. Over time, my goals shifted - I wanted to dance for the Royals! Oh, I was cautious not to alert the soldiers of my new goal.

My garments were not as enticing as the real dancers but I was noticed and called closer to dance. The dancing life was better until I discovered the girls had to service the higher officers; most were slobbering and inebriated; repulsive but I knew I must appear delightful or be cast aside. The girls brought me to their matron and I was given lovelier garments and bangles to wear. At the banquets I shared the foods and wines served on golden tableware. My acceptance at the last table brought me strings of shiny gold tokens placed about my brow. I discovered the girls were housed in a large pyramid. This was most different from any dark twig hut. There were many tiny lamps. It was a complete lifestyle change which took place within the palace compound.

There were a few things I did not like about the housing. We were assigned a bunk. Mine was almost half way up near a corner. While I wondered how one climbs at such a backward angle, the matron placed us in a hypnotic trance and by some trick she knew, we were transported up to our bunks!

Once accepted inside the palace compound we were not free to leave. Never again would I see my dear father. It was a weight on my mind but when I considered my mother’s attitude; not leaving the compound was better.

Everything was at hand to make us beautiful. During free times, the girls giggled and exchanged beauty secrets. I promptly learned to laugh - without crinkling the sides of the eyes; to avoid lifting the eyebrows strongly to avoid wrinkles across the forehead and never to squint! If things were no longer seen clearly - forget it - pretend; squinting pressed wrinkles above the nose between the eyes! The girls told each other about moves they discovered to be most seductive both in dance and service. They discussed moves which actually brought about a wondrous feeling! None of them thought about pregnancy. There was the infirmary to take care of that. The matron told them that on no account were the girls to be hit or struck by anyone! The girls held their “jobs” until their beauty faded and men sought younger girls. I thought they were turned outside the palace gates and went to their old homes. There were no older dancing girls.

We did sleep peacefully during the night. In the morning the matron clapped her hands together sharply and the girls awoke. We were transported from our bunks to the floor of the pyramid in the way we had gotten to our bunks. A table was always set for us and the foods were more than I dreamed ever existed! Always we ate enough but not too much. Loose flesh was not attractive.

Shortly, I discovered that a pyramid is a very strange structure; at certain heights inside, vibrations were very stimulated and one could even hear them. These vibrations kept most of the girls lulled in sleep. There were many pyramids throughout the land. Each pyramid used the vibrations differently. For instance; one stimulated (electric) power; another moved water. Those two were not hollow inside, and then there was the crematorium; it conducted heat viciously. Our pyramid was simply a dormitory but it had vibrations especially by my bunk.

Although the girls mingled, attended and serviced the Royalty there was no hope of marrying. Rules were most strict: A Royal married another Royal. Such marriages lacked the excitement the young girls brought. Royal women had no need of a fine personality or looks. They had prestige: and after producing a son, the royal couple might never cross paths again!

I was summonsed one evening to sit at the head banquet table. The foods there were especially elegant. However without warning this esteemed solicitor lashed me across the back with a narrow strap of leather. It stung; I screamed and jumped up to flee but the warrior lashed me about the ankles to draw me back. I landed in the young “Magulla’s” lap! I cried out in pain and embarrassment. “Oh, oh, your majesty, I am so clumsy, forgive me. It hurts; oh I hurt, dear sir.” The Magulla (King) unwound the leather strap to see both my ankles were rasped; and called a servant and a guard. “We need unction! Remove the guest; such behavior is disallowed!” The Magulla applied the unction with a light touch. He lifted my veiling and short thin jacket to see a wicked bruise across my back. The oil did not sting and would break-up any tendency of the skin to discolor. “What is your name?” He smiled when I told him. “Little One, it fits you perfectly. Please remain by my side this evening.” When the revelry ended, he asked if I could walk. I thought so, but my ankles buckled. He had a servant carry me to my quarters.

The matron was shocked when she opened the door.

“There was a mishap. The Magulla wishes she receive the best attention. Behind them another servant entered. In his arms was a huge vase filled with beautiful fresh flowers. “The Magulla sends these to bring happy thoughts.” The men kept their eyes shadowed, bowed and backed out.

I was still very new at this lifestyle and wondered what the flowers meant, if anything. The ladies had never had flowers in the quarters before. They loved them and the fragrances were delightful. I had expected to be thrown to wild animals after landing in the king’s lap! He was a powerful Magulla; young yet and rather cute. Perhaps this was something nice; the girls thought so.

By the next evening there was neither swelling nor discoloring, but my lower legs were stiff! I could not dance! Dancing was my career! The girls primped and set their flashy jewelry about themselves and skipped out the door. Outside a servant bowed to the matron; entered and swept me off my feet. “The Magulla wishes your presence.” He set me beside the Magulla. I smiled easily - wrinkle precautions be hanged. He asked about my well-being; had I discomfort sleeping. This sounded promising; I figured, if we did not do well together, he could toss me back into the dancing pool. Against protocol, I glanced up at him and spoke.

“And, how has your day been, Your Majesty? Win any new medals or lands?” He laughed; hum, nice enough teeth. I heaved an exaggerated sigh, “I’ve spent a dreadful morning trying to look especially beautiful for tonight. What work and I am still me! Do you suppose the makeup is worth it?”

“I won’t know until I can wash it all off you.” I laughed easily. An attendant poured wine for us in one large goblet.

“Oh, I don’t even get my own goblet! This place is more hard up than I thought.”

He howled in laughter holding his sides. An attendant approached; was he ill?

“No, I think I finally came alive.” He said wiping a tear. The attendant seemed puzzled but bowed and left. We ignored the dancers and jabbered silliness back and forth. We giggled and laughed. The festivities and music was moving into a torrid momentum but suddenly the Magulla stood and scooped me into his arms. We slipped away with little notice. In his room, he sat me on his bed; removed my head veiling, set it aside and finally spoke. “I have a chore, Little One.” With that he oiled a fine cloth and began to dab off all my facial makeup. “As I suspected; you wasted your morning. You are more beautiful without all that.” I felt oily but he was pleased. I watched him slip off my shiny cloth slippers and to my surprise, he kissed my toes. When he looked up I placed my hands about his face and smiled. His arms slipped around me happily. Then a ribbon of sorts had been knotted behind my waist and would not budge. It seemed to get tighter at every try; finally we both broke into peals of laughter.

“Your Majesty,” I was breathless with excitement, “let us just lift my garment a bit, oh - please!” He liked how my body moved with each breath. Without realizing it, I attained the apex in advancement - The Magulla’s favorite concubine!

The new position did not change my housing. I remained in the pyramid with the other girls; same routine: We were put to rest in a trance state. The matron had a way of moving her hands and we sleeping beauties were lifted and laid to place. After a while I noticed a vibration from the corner where my bunk was. It caused a buzzing that never stopped. My entrancement was broken. The vibration encouraged a gift out of the ordinary. At first I thought it was a dream but I was awake! I wondered how my parents were and felt like I was actually hovering over them. I jerked and felt like I hit the stone bunk quite hard. This was indeed a great curiosity. Then I saw a small frame form and little black and white people appeared in the frame; they began moving and pointing at something on a table. I could not hear their words but saw their mouths moving. I watched the little display with interest before falling asleep. Carefully the next day, I eavesdropped during the feasting and reveling. How quaint! The revelers were performing the very scene I had watched in that little frame! Nightly I watched the little scenes and found them repeated at the banquets. It was a secret cleverness to me. One night there was a different scene. It was a northern Magulla plotting an invasion of our territory! Even if it were incorrect I needed to tell my Magulla; having great preference with him I was allowed an audience. We discussed the visions and even if an invasion was unlikely… He checked immediately. His spies found it true! The invasion was quelled. We two celebrated privately and lovingly. He was quite young for a Magulla; his skin was fair with tiny brown spots. It was not the golden-red glow of the others. His nose was straight but shorter and his eyes were grey - not brown but grey! His garments were always white as snow and softly textured. Only during public revelry did he wear a colorful mantle or have vestitures of regality at hand. He was decisive in giving orders but he considered every possibility before expressing that order.

My brand of silliness was special. With me he was free to have fun; be soft spok and kind. My new gift gave me security. The underlying terror of my childhood was gone. There was something a bit unusual about him. Even in our intense moments, his head covering never came off! So I never saw that his hair although long was very curly and auburn rather than black. After that special wonderful night I was pregnant. My small body revealed it quickly. Naturally I was not allowed to have the Royal’s child; the Royal Bloodline could not be compromised. I was sent to the infirmary to be “Reconditioned”.

The doctor was a renowned scientist of their kingdom. He had discovered “Anesthesia.” In the mildest form this was people-useful but without precautions or misused it could be lethal. His discovery was confiscated by less scrupulous scientists and misused dreadfully in experiments on foreigners, prisoners and disruptive citizens!

I was coming out of the anesthetic and heard the doctor’s words: “Three! It was a Miracle! Just think, if she could have had them!” He was lashed for his humane reaction but he was too scientifically valuable to be numbed by his own invention!

My Magulla only took another girl while I was recovering but even today, man’s expression has never changed: “A man must keep fresh.” But I was his love and it never faded.

Whenever I had news regarding the Kingdom’s safety I was always hustled into an audience. Many skirmishes were nipped before they began because of this strange little gift. As time progressed I learned to read the maps and could point the routes of an enemy’s advance. My Magulla was amazed at this ability and instead of my having a short time as a pretty dancing girl; I retained a position as Beloved Advisor to the Magulla for over forty years.

At fifty-eight My Magulla offered me to a renouned royal visitor as I was his most precious possession. He bowed and left the area. But the visitor just saw an older woman, shook his head and decided to do the Magulla a favor; he ordered me sent away and demanded a pretty young girl.

I had no idea how far the royal visitor had sent me! I was put into a light sleep-trance and set onto a stone shelf without soft padding! When I awoke in the morning; I was only a spirit form; there was no body! It had been incinerated! My word, that naughty old Royal sent me away all right. I glanced about - I was in the crematorium!

I found the spirit form very easy to move; popping off the shelf and to the floor without sound or feeling a hurt! I noticed that I was wearing the garments I had last worn but my spirit form did not have my proper coloring; it had a brownish tinge. As soon as there was a crack of light at the door, I fled through it and tried to get the attention of several soldiers but to no avail. Even the Magulla’s guards did not detect me. I flew past them but I could not get My Magulla’s attention. Aside from this body-less problem; I had seen a most destructive vision! It was so very important! What a horrible fix to be in; but then I observed My Magulla! He had fallen into depression at the news of my fate. He kept shaking his head and mumbling; “She was mine - my greatest love - my only happiness. Oh, she saved our land, yes but to have had her as wife to have kept our children; she’s gone! All this - this kingdom falls as nothing to me.”

Thus he had no knowledge of the plans of those kingdoms to the north of ours. One kingdom had partial tropical climate and the other was temperate. The three kingdoms were separated by rivers which formed natural barriers. I hovered watching them. The two kingdoms intended to attack together. There was a bitter fight, but My Magulla’s army and navy launched counter-attacks. Now there was a movement and I watched strange crafts emerge that had been hidden. Some elevated from the ground which opened for them; others seemed to slip out from under the land and travel underwater - like those nasty dolphins I remember hearing their noises when I was a child. Word then was they reported the arrival of strangers. Uglier grey-black crafts were now empowered. I fully expected them to slither along the ground or slide into the water, but the heavy noisy things lifted into the air! There were so many fronts of action and loss of life everywhere. Was it a win, a loss or a stalemate? And then I noticed a few in the spirit-form like me - continuing to fight! They too were brown tinged spirits and like me required no firmament on which to stand.

It was evident to me now, that My Magulla knew of these things and worse -I was a part of it. He used me. My kind loving Magulla held an invisible whip of authority which oversaw all these nefarious pursuits. This island was ugly; it would never find peace.

I moved about checking: The palace was a mess but the village was in shambles. The pyramids stood firm as did the tall standards which held assemblages of quartz crystals. The crystals attracted sun energies and were strictly off limits because these energies were killing-strong and a direct opposite of energies generated by the pyramids. It was a positive/negative and a standing warning that the two energies should never make contact!

Things were settling back to their regular routine of abnormality. The ugly crafts were returned underground. Soldiers recruited everyone left to join them in the massive clean-up and rebuilding process. Many of those numbed had survived the war likely because of their complete lack of alertness.

Unfortunately, our southern portion rebuilt to its former self. The Royals emerged from their safe place and much was reinstated. The old laws, rules and assumed power of the soldiers returned. It was evident to me that the devastation had taught the authorities nothing. I realized the route I chose for a better lifestyle had horrible flaws.

I watched people-in-spirit going about their routines: the soldiers fought; the commoners and the dancing girls bewailed their plights. They seemed stationary whereas, I was too inquisitive to remain in one place. Finally I observed a different Magulla on the throne! My Magulla had been replaced because of his continued depression. He reclined in an area by himself. It was not a prison; it had thin billowing curtains at an opening; there were no doors or shackles. It was kingly; there was a fancy side table with fruits and wines. Yet, I could not catch his attention. There seemed nothing I could do. So I squatted beside his day bed and determined this was my future. One day his attendants rushed about in a dither. Next I knew, he was being dressed in his best garments to be removed to the crematorium. My Magulla had died.

CHAPTER II

LIVES WITHOUT BODIES

“Hello, my love,” I called to him! He sat up and seemed alive again. He hopped off the canvas transport and fled into my arms. In silent happiness we clung together. We returned to the palace together in-spirit and reigned side by side unseen by the world. Funny, without bodies, time did not matter. We saw an infamous war many fell on all sides but all was rebuilt. He did not agree with many decisions. And that he would outlaw and prevent the human-to-animal experiments. We saw the outcomes when we were alive but knew not where they came from. Now - in the spirit form we viewed the inhumane brutality under which these experimental objects were assembled.

During these years, a string of harsher Magullas claimed the throne; the land became more treacherous and lecherous. Human-animal affairs were common. Together My Magulla and I wished there was a higher authority to stop these outrageous evils.

Was it from a distance yet it seemed right under us we heard a horrible and astounding sound. Was it thunder? My Magulla had heard of thunder. Whatever the sound, it rolled resoundingly drum-like very near us. We could not determine but clasped hands and noticed the earth beneath us was bubbling! The villaagers had always watched for this! There was a trickle of smoke that suddenly became rocks and dirt flying into the air. Neither of us had ever witnessed such an unearthly exhibition. We moved away. The rumbling disturbed mountains, broke some which churned the waters into an enraged torrent of waves. The waves did not stay to place but gushed outward - indeed in all directions! Before our amazement turned to awe the sun was blocked by the flying dirt. We looked down so see the waters had flushed away from us.

The waters gushed through the huge boulders of a nearby land east of us. At first we did not see this receding water, but it had changed direction and forced itself through those boulders heading for us. It hit with such force that our kingdom was heaved against its river and we heard cracking! My Magulla uttered a fearful epithet. He explained that there were thick columns of coral which kept our land afloat. These were buckling and snapping like twigs. Worse, the complete navy was stationed down there… The dungeons with prisoners were there and in this spirit-form we could do nothing to warn them!

On the land it was complete mayhem. The waters reversed to that land east of us backlashing. We saw soldiers and the poor climbing anything tall; hanging onto the tops of stripped trees and climbing pyramids. Everywhere was complete mayhem and devastation! Everything we knew buckled before our eyes! The trees let go the soil and crashed into the crystal standards. These snapped and toppled into the power pyramid. There was a crackling of positive and negative forces making contact. This was followed by a tremendous ballooning explosion - and then the waters swallowed everything - everything!

Yet in this terrible climax we noticed a few Royal Ships and strange things moving in the waters. Escapees! The High Priests and Doctors fled with their ungodly worthless paraphernalia, their statues of Gods and journals of their experiments. Some of their monsters swam to other lands. These knowledgeable would begin again; subjugating natives into submission; building pyramids and temples! Thankfully the monsters did not reproduce but carvings of them can be seen in many places; some were named as Gods! The land had another name and I can’t remember it but centuries later another land pushed and rose from the waters and was resettled. The historian-storywriter, Homer became obsessed with this long gone “second paradise.” He presented it as a peaceful Utopia and called his dream land: “Atlantis.” But was it my Magulla’s Island Kingdom? His was not a paradise. Perhaps Homer was dreaming?

OTHER SURVIVORS

My Magulla and I saw a bit of dusty earth with a few pointed boulders. Spirits brownish like us - were swimming towards it. They climbed onto this land falling exhausted, wet, and now dust drifted onto them. We tried for some companionship but their backs were turned to us. This place promised nothing; we were completely demoralized. In a while we saw a speck of light that finally revealed three spirits dressed in white approaching. They stopped to talk at each group. When they came to us they spoke of a better place saying we could ***work*** our way back to a God that was good. He had a land called Heaven that was wonderful. This sounded like a fool’s dream; no wonder so many spirits turned away. The Magulla was skeptical. I did not understand “God” or “Heaven” but it seemed to me that ANYWHERE was better than this dust-covered nothing-place.

The Magulla was not interested in ***work*** but my life had been work and I asked: “What makes your place so wonderful?” When they said: “God” I really had questions about this GOD:” Among them: Is He cruel, old? Is He good looking? What’s He like when things get tough? Would I get blamed for stuff I didn’t do? Would I have to sleep with Him to stay there? How much did this place cost per day? Were the meals good; the beds comfortable?

Now of course, I realize those three white spirits had great self-control to keep from rolling in laughter but I didn’t know and I was in earnest. They said, “One must spend time repenting-being sorry for all one’s sins.”

“How can I do that when I don’t know what sins are?” - They said good spirits would tell me everything I wanted to know. But I must go through some period of thinking and repenting before entering the Gates of Heaven. At this, the three spirits almost lost me. GATES: Another compound! I was very wary: “Are there pyramids in this Heaven-place?” The spirit said, NO! Most emphatically, NO! “What do they do with their dead bodies?”

“My dear, we do not deal in bodies. We deal in spirits. At my confusion, he asked: “Do you now have a body?”

“No, sir.”

“Correct! However, I shall show you and forgive me. (I rolled my eyes expecting to be flashed.) But do notice that your spiritual arm is rather brown? Mine is nearly clear - see-through. What your repentance time does is get rid of that brown stain. Now I will admit it is deeply imbedded and will take time but it can be done. The waiting is boring but it is worthwhile. You can pray for others; like your friend here.”

“What is ‘your pray’? Is it like a soldier ready to pounce on a young girl?”

“No, no, oh my no. To pray one can ask God for something like, like help for a friend who is also working back. Also to pray: one can tell God you love Him.” - I was shocked!

“Those words are precious, Sir! Never have I just said those words without meaning and I certainly could not say them to someone I have never met!” The three white spirits were bewildered.

“Perhaps you would like some time to think about our invitation. We can interview the others and return for your decision.”

My Magulla said nothing but awaited my decision. I floated back and forth in thought. Finally I had my answer: “We have been here since our land crashed into the sea. And this place has been without change. If there are chances for change to one day have some light like those three have, I accept.” My Magulla was stunned. His spirit was darker. But then, he too accepted.

Out of the three Island Kingdoms only five spirits accepted. I was appalled and turned to them: “This is your chance to get out of here! Come! Come with us!” But many fanned a hand down and shook their heads, no. One of the luminously white spirits turned me away from them. “Actually, my dear, we did well.”

STARTING BACK

And that quickly our small party was in another place. Our names were taken for formal record and one by one each of us faced a judge. This Being was more covered with gold, jewels and light than I had ever seen.

His voice was kind and soft: “Your spirit has fallen into nearly total ruin, Little One. How did this happen?” I told him that it began when I was ravaged by the soldiers and my mother blamed me. I tried for a better livelihood but I made a terrible choice.

“Are you sorry for these sins?” This confounded me -there was that word “sin” again. “The things you did that made you know you made a bad choice.”

“Oh, yes, often, but I could not leave the palace grounds once I was accepted. I thought we just danced but …” The glorious being smiled with kindness. I was genuinely naïve.

“Do you wish to correct all of this?”

“You’re Majesty so much of what you say is beyond my mind. I still have so many questions. Like what is all that bright light over there? Is it from the explosion? That’s what happened before our island sank.” The glorious being held steady; he dared not laugh at her: She was in ernest.

“The Light is from God. He shines brightly all by Himself. There are no explosions here. I must tell you the tarnish on your spirit will take time to erase. After that, you will be allowed within the Gates of Heaven.” I squirmed uncomfortably. “What is the matter, my child?”

“I don’t like gates. They keep you in - like a prison.”

“In this case, the Gates of Heaven keep the unworthy outside. There are several lines of spirits all working their way toward those Gates for admission. Now, the spirits are placed where they should be placed and walk the expanse to the front. You must know, you have a long way to walk, my child but Heaven is a wonderful goal and ever enjoyable - never any bad!” My head cocked on his last word.

“What is “bad” Your Majesty?”

“You have never heard of good and bad?” I shook my head. He was silent a moment. “Do you read?” I shook my head, no again. “I will draw you from the lines now and then and instruct you so you may learn what you need. Oh, I will not be wearing these fanciful items but you will know me. Now, Little One, go to the doorway and the spirit will take you to the lines. Do not be afraid, God’s love is with you.”

Once I was out of earshot; he dropped his face in his hand and laughed with trepidation. He had just volunteered for the most difficult challenge he ever faced as a counsellor. He took a deep breath and reoriented himself. As Judge, he was ready to interview the next spirit.

I did not see My Magulla for many eons but the following was his story: The young Magulla entered and was stunned at the extravagant gold and jewel display. Why had he not thought of something so beautiful? He bowed. The judge asked the spirit to explain his ordinary routine of life. “It seems that your spirit is in a deep condition of ruin. How did this happen?”

“I became Magulla at age seven when my father died. Without guidance or advice and lacking understanding; signing documents was like child’s play. Much damage and death came in my kingdom because of my ignorance. I did wonder about our military; where such massive men were found in the kingdom. No word was ever spoken about enhancing the men for strength. Certainly I had never known about the monsters created from innocent foreigners. I did view the ships and submarines under the island.

“I was married at age ten. I forgot it until I was taken to sire a child! I was fourteen - I was a child; this was crazy. Mostly life became festivities and dancing girls; some pretty, all trying too hard to gain acceptance. When the kingdom was threatened I’d give the word to defend it. Then I met Little One and she - have you met her?” At the counsellor’s nod the Magulla continued: “She brought me to life! I never knew how to laugh or tell a silly thing or indeed be happy. She developed some unusual sight-gift and began to tell even point out where invasions were being plotted. It was indeed always correct. We were together forty-three years. You will excuse me; I love her; to have married her!” He stopped catching his hand over his mouth. “After Little One died; I mourned until my own death. When I died, she was there waiting beside me. We saw the invasion; she had desperately tried to warn me but she had died. The new Magullas did terrible things; I could not stop them! Later we heard rumbling and a mountain spewed debris and the waters came. We saw some escape and also horrible monsters.” He shook his head. Inadvertently; he had sanctioned so much evil. “Sir, when you live on an island you do not consider water an enemy. Finally, here we are.”

The counsellor nodded. “The learned ones; their new sites shall have the same fate.” He checked his book. “Have the lines been explained to you? Good. I want you to pray - ask God to forgive Little One as she does you. You each have a long way to travel. I am glad you decided to come.” With a nod the interview was finished.

THE LINES

The garments of The Lines were drab cloaks with deep hoods. These garments obscured faces and discouraged friendships. I never found my Magulla nor did he find me. This “working back” was not a strenuous thing just bewilderingly time consuming. We moved slowly eight across in lines that began far ahead of me and continued back of me and turned out of sight. The slow plodding was less enjoyable because we could hear laughter and joy of merrymaking on the other side of a tall white stucco wall to our left. It was too smooth to climb and there was a beautiful, pink pearl-colored fence on top of it. Perhaps silence would have been easier during our long trod; we could hear the joys but not partake.

The counsellor did arrive! He drew me from the lines now and then. I was an illiterate common person. He told me as much as I could absorb each time. We always parted with kind words. Finally, I asked him if he was one of the three referred to as God. He said, no but at times people thought so. His name was from a time in another land that had sunk just like “Atlantis”. I decided he should have a name: “You have all the good things we talk about the Godhead having; they are three so I am calling you, Number Four!” I wanted to be good like Number Four.

He came to visit: “Hello, Number Four, had any fun in that throne room of yours?” He smiled a bit but never laughed! “It seems these lines move most slowly. At times it feels like we sway in place.” He assured me that I had moved much by showing me a tiny light back where I had begun. “Hum and where are those Gates?” - He gestured ahead but I did not see anything. “Number Four, how long are these lines? There were spirits behind me when I started?” He turned my head and tilted my chin up slowly. I had never looked into the distance before. There were eight spirits across and these lines went back, dipped as the substance beneath them and rose like a hillock. It turned a bit and then came back in view. “So many- oh, so many!” I said.

“Oh, it continues around the corner, but we can’t see that far. Those most far are the ones many consider doomed. God loses few. He is most merciful. Some spirits are lost, but it is by their choice; that we need not discuss. Come, have you understood the lessons so far?” I nodded. “Keep praying for the others - any others and soon you will join in the joy.”

“Number Four, how do you get back inside if the Gates are closed?” Now he laughed:

“Spirits have special gifts.” He said.

We passed along to a nearby area and began my lesson about the things and actions the Godhead considered sin? He tried to be delicate so as not to cause defensiveness. By counselling me he was unfolding many obnoxious traits in that land which should not have existed. “Atlantis” was meant for minor repairs to the spirit so they could return with clear light to Heaven! Instead most of the returning spirits like the Magulla and I were very tarnished. I tried to meet my lessons with an open mind; for this consideration he seemed at ease.

“Can you tell me, Number Four - it is so drab in the lines, is the weather a bit brighter inside those gates?” He smiled and with relief answered, yes. He led me back to my place and when I faced front - he had disappeared. I rethought everything and then prayed earnestly for the spirits near me and behind me and for those who earth people thought were in Sheol. I knew what it was like to be thought of badly. My prayers for others moved my spirit forward; the Light seemed a bit better. This was heartening. Finally one day I found myself in front of those Gates.

STEPPING INSIDE

With a majestic aire, the Gates of Heaven swung open and the Light spilled down the few steps. I was so overcome; I just stood staring. I could not believe it…they did exist! A very nice spirit in a rather plain robe and sandals helped me up the few pearly steps. Did I really belong now?

He said, “Welcome to the first level of Heaven. Come. Come. Step inside. This is called Gold. What would you like?”

“Sir, I’d like a bath and different garment. Is that possible?” He smiled at my simplicity and nodded, yes. We took a few steps to an open space. Suddenly, I felt clean and my garment was different. It was not sparkling white like Number Four’s but a lot better than that drab hooded thing I wore for - how long? Should I ask? I never got a straight answer about time. Number Four kept saying there is no time here. Everything on earth went by time.

“Here is your area. Before you start your orientation, you must have a mansion and landscape it. You may desire whatever sort of mansion and it shall be. Everything in Heaven is accomplished mentally: Any questions?”

I nodded. “Who do I pay and how?” The spirit laughed. His white teeth indicated he was not old.

“You have become pure enough to enter Heaven and purity is the price - so everything has been paid.

“Why is this part called Gold?”

“Because gold is what is important to man.”

“Number Four, well, a counsellor, said I must learn God’s ways.” He nodded. “This mansion- is it just for me?” He nodded. “Then I won’t need much. Who checks to see if I keep it nice enough? Or perhaps there is help?” He laughed; she was a new experience.

“Things stay clean. Here whatever you wish for is stimulated by mental vibrations and becomes manifest.” I stood bug-eyed. He said that again! What did he mean? He ignored me a moment and continued: “For instance, you may wish for a pool; maybe pretty curtains around it; flowers maybe a little fountain near the mansion and pool. You can think about the rooms you need. There is an area where you may see all these sort of things to stimulate ideas. I am your Helpful Spirit and when you have any questions - just think of me and I shall come. First we shall get you settled with the mansion and then talk about the classes you suggested.”

I felt parched and his big words left gaps in my understanding. He placed a kind arm around my shoulder and laughed softly. Next I knew I was resting on a ribbed velvet lounge with a cool drink. Near me was a little white and gold wall table that held a white and gold vase with large pink and white blossoms. Their edges were ruffled and tinged with gold. As I looked about; he was right so many things were gold. I asked him when I could see God. I had been told about a very kind God.

“Sir, where do I learn the meaning of all these big words that you speak?” He lifted his head, nodded and jotted a note on his parchment sheet.

“Indeed, my child, we shall include that too.”

I thought about this mansion: no stick hut, pyramid, or palace and those were the dwellings I knew. He mentioned a little pool, and maybe pretty circle of curtains to surround it. yes. I would start with a pretty lacy circle to suspend thin billowy curtains. Yes, like at My Magulla’s palace! Well, that was certainly gone. I could do that. He said the area was gold; ok the lacy circle can be gold! Well that was backwards. How to get the pool in there? I turned to the Helpful Spirit and told him my dilemma.

“Just wish for the pool you want.” He said. I thought about the color of the Gates that pink-pearly-cream which showed many pastel colors. Oh, that was so pretty! Yes! Maybe - just a tiny place with a window to see the pool:

“Oh! Sir, does it rain here or have violent weather?”

“No, it is always pleasant. I shall make a suggestion, if I may? If you make a large doorway instead of a window, you can have access to the pool.” He did it again! Another word she did not know. Well, his pool idea was nice and the large doorway. I was surprised the window disappeared and the doorway was now in its place. I must watch my thoughts - Thoughts changed things quickly here.

“Sir, what rooms do people have in mansions?”

“You might like a place to rest so you can watch the little fountain; and a dressing room with places to keep your garments: A little table for lady’s things and a chair.

“And I just wish for it?” He nodded and enjoyed my contemplation.

“And remember you can always add or subtract things; ugh like with the window and door, my dear. I nodded.

“Sir, is there a banquet or maybe a commissary? You know, for food!” The Helpful Spirit laughed.

“Let’s set a few green plants around the pool and the doorway and we can visit places for the other things which interest you. You now have a nice little mansion! Are you hungry, my child?”

“No sir. I thought it would be a good thing to know. I was told by the three white spirits that we would work our way to be with God. Am I there yet?” He shook his head, no and straightened a bit. With a wave of his hand he indicated a garden bench and that I sit.

“We do not have time here as you have it on Earth. We have no night; it is always daylight. Once you find an endeavor you particularly like, you will not notice this.” (‘Oh dear, she spaced-out; I’ve done it again!’) ”That is: Time will always feel like - ‘Now’ When you are doing something you like. You have attained the first level. Tell me, are you happier here than in your previous land?”

“Maybe; I don’t know yet. Sir; is there any way to do this faster? I really want to see God.”

The Helpful Spirit said, - We must start you on the most basic things to know about God’s Heaven; check your abilities and go from there.” My hand went to my mouth;

“Sir, my abilities got me into this mess. I danced my way into the palace and became the Magulla’s concubine. The Magulla and the Counsellor are the only persons I know.” I looked about and wondered. “Sir, is there anyone else on this - you said, Gold Level?”

It did look bare. “Yes! And you will see the counsellor again. The Magulla is not available yet. Most of the residents here engage in pastimes. Women indulge in garments and jewels; men in fancy mansions and gadgets. There are many dances - where men and women dance together or listen to music. You do need a reading and writing class and God’s Way Class.” He patted my shoulder and checked his charts. - Ah, there is a class just starting: “God’s Way”, come!” - And so the first of the rudimentary classes began. To my delight Number Four was the teacher!

“Sir, I think you’d better tell me what to call you.”

“A very good way to begin the class, thank you, Little One. Everyone, I will be your teacher. That is what you may call me. Many of you have met with me at least once. This is the most important class we have and you cannot leave until you understand and agree with everything. Now, I must ask, have any of you found anything in Heaven not to your liking? That is, something you would change?” - There were no hands or bids. “Class, do know that The Godhead is in charge of everything! They are exceedingly good and kind. They work together keeping all to a fine balance. I say ‘They’ because there are three exalted beings that constitute - make the Godhead. Together they have created everything; control the Force which drives everything in the Universes and oversee planetary movement, weather, and dispense justice - make right rulings in all matters. At times they seem slow to action but things turn out properly. They established several guidelines which mankind is wise to follow. We shall study each of these. For now, let us worship God: “God Eternal, to you be the honor and glory forever. Amen.”

Little One had a finger to her lip. - He nodded - “What is Amen?” - It means so be it; let this be. - She lifted her head and nodded. Another in the class asked where the Godhead came from.

“Ah, this is how it was told to me: Long ago there was a collision of tremendous energy forces that were uncontrolled. It caused a tremendous explosion…”

“Oh, like I saw!” Little One pipped.

“Exactly, Little One except it was very much bigger and more intense. When things settled the Three Spirit Beings discovered that they just were! They decided this force had to be controlled. Each chose the area they could best work and Heaven was formed. Alright class, now you have many more things to contemplate - think about until next time. Class dismissed. In a way, the teacher dreaded tomorrow’s questions but he sighed, that was his love. He thought about his subject for the next class.

He hoped to explain the Guidelines of God. They were followed easily, thus moving spirits toward that elevation Little One desired. The hardest Guideline perhaps was: Accept God’s Word; it is always true. Enlarging that would be - and no excuses. This sounds authoritarian but when followed, an individual’s freedom had a natural ease. Another was Equality: spirits are spirits; although each spirit has unique abilities they should meet as equals with a friendly exchange of ideas. The Teacher felt his brow: Too many big words! He would have to adjust his expressions or Little One would be lost. It will work. He began pulling his hair back and fastening it as he moved along; another chore was ahead for him.

The reading and clay tablet writing was ok, but I felt this was wrong for ladies. I thought of The Helpful Spirit and there he was. I told him my reservations: Women were not given educations. They were just meant for a man’s amusement! He sat down beside me; “We try to prepare a spirit for its future and we hope it will be in Heaven. Some will wish to remain here others may be inclined to take another Earth life; both areas call for skills and education. Little One, once you learn anything you will always know it.” He noted paranormal clairvoyance and jotted in his records. He mentioned I could further study that. “You see a spirit is a forever thing; all you learn can lay quiet at the back of your mind, but it is always there. This helps with insight; should a person tell a thing wrongly; you can realize this and not be foiled. To speak up or not depends on a subject’s importance. You can master many skills and will find that reading and writing are the foundation for all knowledge. Yes, we want all spirits to be educated, even children.” I nodded in understanding and thanked him.

I went to my mansion and sat beside the little fountain. I tried to remember all of these new things and realized if I could write then I would have it all at hand! The teacher mentioned a building which had all this stuff already written and one could read it. Perhaps if I wish - and that quickly there was a building. I floated around its stone and column perimeter. Spirits floated inside by thought rather than mounting steps and opening doors. Inside a massive room I saw a barrier desk with Helpful Guides. One took me about the place. It was thrilling! I spent a lot of my free time in this building.

Diligence and perseverance helped me master words. I began taking specialized classes. One teacher said if I helped others, my spirit would advance more quickly closer to God. All I knew was court dancing! The Helpful Spirit approved saying later there would be a need for dancing girls who followed armies. I did not want to be a party to something evil. Assured this was not the case, I taught court dance. Meanwhile animals caught my fancy especially when several understood my thoughts and responded. By thought and gesture I began fooling about with equine jumpers and then canines. Later, I was asked to instruct a ringmaster with big cats. I found them most cooperative; the bear did not respond. I had no luck with that bear.

My student was in the cage when I arrived. He held an upended chair and a whip. There were several lionesses moving about growling at him. He motioned for a leopard to be let in. Snapping his whip and poking his chair’s legs at the animal. This shocked me. I called “NO!” and without equipment entered the cage. ‘Hello, you beautiful black animal!’ - It answered impudently, ‘Panther!’ I bowed to it and thought, ‘Thank you, it seems this silly man wants you to do something.’ I turned to the cat-master and asked what he would have the animal do? I listened and then thanked him. I conveyed these thoughts to the panther; to mount a large half barrel; another and then jump to the top of a ladder-like elevation. “Could you do that?”

“Easy!” The routine was done in a flash. With a few thoughts each animal was performing which aggravated the cat-master:

“People expect to see them snarling and wild! They will be disappointed in the show.”

I felt like snarling at the cat-master. Looking about at the big cats, I thought, ‘This guy wants to hear you snarl and growl a bit.’ They looked at him and made a vicious cacophony of sounds. I smiled, ‘How about a few paws? Very nice!’ But the cat-master did not appreciate my approach and called for a lion. It trotted in snarling and stopped at the sight of me in my long white gown. ‘Oh, what a great wonderful lion YOU are! Come over to me. Oh you are so gorgeous!’ It moved magnificently and circled me. I asked the cat-master where he wanted the lion and he said atop the ladder where a leopard was. I put these thoughts to the two animals and they agreed to move easily. By now the cat-master was fuming. He called for the Imam! The Imam it turned out was a full grown Bengal Tiger. It swooped through the hatch into the ring.

I was taken back a moment by the sheer size of it, but it was truly beautiful. ‘Well, hello, Imam. You are one gorgeous tiger; your fur is so shiny and your pretty markings match right down to your feet! What is it you do in the show?’ I listened and gestured according to its words: Around the ring, around the back of me and then mount a few risers to the top on another high placement. I smiled and said perhaps Imam ought to growl a bit to make the cat-master happy. Kindly I thanked all the animals and then asked the cat-master. “Do you have any Cheetahs?” - He said no; they were too fast. I would like to see one but it was not to be today. “So, you see, sir, you think of them as good people! Just catch their eye; think kindly and then instruct them. Even to the growls. You have a beautiful lot here, thank you.” I floated out of the cage.

The Big Cat Master was not a happy man; he snapped his whip a few times and then reluctantly tried my method. It frightened him that it worked! If he could remain calm enough - he seemed to be getting it; the reports were good. But far into the season, he lost patience and eye contact, picked up the chair, shouted and snapped the whip too close. The lion nudged him and he tripped over the panther. A leopard looked at the cowering fellow and nudged his waist so that he rolled. As this was fun for them, the other cats joined rolling him about the ring like a wiener. There was only one claw scratch. The audience applauded! I wondered if the cats could learn to bow! The cat- master flunked.

The library held scrolls of every imaginable subject from: the stars in the skies to the worms in the dirt! I tried to learn numbers but did better with medical herbs. To me people needed good health. There were unused areas mankind would develop on Earth later. Heaven was the place where development began. There was a practice area for inventors and for many in the arts. I never gave thought to how much time I spent in these areas because time was inessential but seeing these discoveries was fabulous!

SELECTING A NEW EARTH LIFE

One time my Helpful Spirit shuffled his ever-present charts and mentioned that I would gain Light Years toward my “See God Goal” if I actually lived on Earth a while. I never thought of leaving Heaven!

He said to undo the big mistakes of the Atlantean life; I could experience the opposite. For instance: Although it was not my decree, I had aborted many children; so in the new life I could want a child desperately. He seemed to have a plan in the works; especially when he said: “The parents die but I would have a dependable brother; and a loving marriage … but there must be challenges! Challenges well-handled gain much. This new Earth life would not take place immediately …There is much time to prepare and refine details.”

“Why wait?” I asked.

“Because you lived before the end of an eon; this means everything around you was quite advanced but the people had degenerated from God’s Values. Every eon gets no better; this situation repeats. People become quite knowledgeable and puff themselves until God has lost all status with them - ugh, they think they are God accomplishing every success by themselves. When it is evident that reparation for these people is impossible, God chooses a form of destruction. Any survivors must eek a living without their accustomed conveniences. It is a most difficult transition but when you consider that there are few survivors it is a blessing. You, my child would not do well during earth’s rustic period. There are survival skills you do not have for that time frame. You are perfect for your own time. We shall talk about it later.” He patted my shoulder, smiled and was gone.

These were certainly new thoughts for me. The complete agenda to see God was never fully explained. What a come-down; complications at every turn. I was thankful for my kind “Teacher.”

“What is it, Little One?” - There he was! Just seeing him smile gave me confidence. He assured me that seeing God was quite a long road but doable. By remaining in Heaven the road would take longer because Heaven is perfect - it has the challenges of learning new things or solving problems. But earth challenges present true choices. Making right choices moved the spirit toward God faster. Do you remember questioning yourself before making a choice?

“Teacher, I learned the details afterward. First I hoped a soldier might take me to wife and later My Magulla - I figured if he really loved me; he would waive the rules and marry me.” I lifted my shoulders and let them drop.

The teacher said I put my trust in man. And worse, every bad choice reduces a bit of God’s Light. Wholesale terrible choices were the norm in “Atlantis”. What seemed the way to betterment and the right course; was all wrong to God’s Way of Thinking. God’s Light diminished until “Atlantis” was completely dark.

“Teacher you help so much. Tell me, did you ever fall in love?” He threw his head back and laughed.

“Little One, there were growing lives for me. Once I married; a Priest has prestige but makes little money. This brings insurmountable challenges for both wife and husband.” He patted her hand which signaled end of that subject. “I gather you are considering an Earth Life later. The more obstacles you overcome favorably; the closer your spirit will travel toward God. Most spirits tackle one problem area per life. But Little One, you have eternity so do not let my words dampen your determination.”

I was stricken; I wanted to see God NOW! I asked him to stay a bit; I was lonely. “But do you not meet others at the classes?” I explained that many spirits are repulsed to make friends with concubines. “You train animals. How did you approach a new one?” I considered this and then told him it was a kind look of admiration. To this the Teacher nodded; “It is the same making friends. And - stop thinking of yourself as a concubine! That life is finished! I must leave now, but call when you need.”

It set me thinking: if an earth Life with lots of challenges could provide enough Light for me to see God…I spoke with several spirits adept in such planning. Surprising the many things that are taken into consideration - like hair texture and color, teeth, eye color and size, skin tone, height and weight! Every mistake was countered by a similar situation to help surmount the obstacle successfully. Now and then I would be called to try a situation with new spirits. Then when there was head- nodding all around, we would be dismissed..

Whenever life-threatening situations in these little practices came up, I asked: “If I die here, will I get to see God?” After a quick check the Life Planning Spirit usually answered,“No”. I would retaliate: “Ok I’ll live through that! Next?” The planners were often stupefied by my steadfastness to rack up points to see God. Normally, spirits choose one fault to right; and here I was choosing enough for several lifetimes. When at last I was faced with an ending I could not (and he said, “Seeing God was possible!”) I asked: “Will it hurt?” The planners assured me it would not but the sequence would be a shocking surprise. There were so many things planned! I am sloughing over these now or I will be telling them twice.

When the time drew near, I assumed the features I would have, to become accustomed to them: A short body, red hair and green eyes. I would be a minor royal: But having lived among Royalty in “Atlantis” I knew protocol so these classes were simply updates. Beside protocol royal shenanigans were not obvious. My brother and I would be first cousins of Alexander the Great Conqueror from Macedonia. Our sweet mother was the sister to Alexander’s mother. Both the planners and the teacher watched me depart with hopes and skepticism. The red hair - well - nobody fools with a redhead! I nearly demanded that the spirit-guide assigned to me, keep nudging me in the right planned direction! When all was “Set in Time” and my new Earth Life was to begin: My mind was cleared of all memories!

CHAPTER III

THE GREEK LIFE

I arrived into the Royal Macedonian family. Grandpa was powerful King Phillip. His son, my cousin was Alexander the Great. After those two the bunch were just knock-offs. The world at that time spoke Greek. Besides Alexander, King Phillip and his wife Octavia had daughters; Eurydice who married Ptolemy of Egypt and Cleopatra, my mother who married Pyrrhus, a proficient red headed warrior in King Phillip’s Army.

Our mother’s dowry included Epirus - making Pyrrhus the king of a mountainous land west of Macedonia but north of Greece. Pyrrhus conquered lands of more use so he could indulge his wife, Cleopatra fondly dubbed: “Patty” with nice things! The had two children, Achillidies and Deidiamia (me). We were named after mother’s ancestors. Our line traced back, (scholars said) “to the gods!” Part of our education was learning and reciting the whole family line - Boring! We were little kids!

My first memory was that Epirus was cold! Outside the window I saw big jagged rocks poking through snow. A nice nanny, Mayadike keeps us clothed in woolens- they were warm but itched. I am two and Achillidies is six. We are holding hands. Oh, here comes mother. She is so pretty but she is crying…

Mother says our father - King Pyrrhus has been killed in the war-- I wondered what this meant. Something about his having enemies and that our family was vulnerable. We moved east to Grandpa Phillip’s in Macedonia.. Grandfather Philip and Grandmother Octavia want to see Achillidies! I am just a girl; somehow boys are preferred but I’ll show them! Whatever my brother can do - I will do. They will like me too!

Macedonia was less rugged but just as cold. Grandmother Octavia had been given a boa to keep her warm when Grandfather Phillip was off fighting wars. She gave mother one. Our introduction to the snake was positive and we both played with it. Grandmother Octavia said the only drawback was that the boa grew terribly large and overly heavy. Then it was time for a new hatchling. Grandmother Octavia loved her snake, so much that she commissioned her statue done with the serpent entwined about her. (Note: Octavia’s statue is now at the first Getty Museum in Los Angeles, CA.)

# HERE

Truthfully, our mother, Cleopatra preferred a warmer climate. Shortly our little family and the warriors of father’s army journeyed along the Aegean east and south until Mother and the warriors decided on Sardis. This inland city lies nearly straight east of Athens and is north of Ephesus in Turkey. This route exposed us to the lands where our ancestors fought battles and now our ancestry lessons came alive! As a travel cover for safety, mother told us our ages were older that we were. Everyone knew when King Pyrrhus was killed and in later years my brother was seriously confused by this. He swore we were children of a dalliance, but he had the red hair and capabilities even better than our father. Was he his father’s child? Of course he was. I was girl, it didn’t matter - we were us.

Cleopatra’s estate was not royally exquisite but large and walled. The wall let my brother and I play safely and later allowed us horseback. Indoors we played at war strategies being partners plotting war board games. At stalemates we questioned and decided which one of us had the best approach to “the enemy”. Our nanny, Mayadike was most bewildered at my enthusiasm for boy-endeavors especially “horse”. I rode astride as well as Achillidies - so ungainly she admonished! Princesses rode in little goat carts. We heard stories about Epirus and fantasized it as completely as Homer had his “Atlantis”. How we longed for our real palace! Achillidies hated book study, but he would study with me. This meant I got an equal education. While he studied future king things: sword-play and warfare, I could learn nothing useful like sketching and tapestry. I did nothing for myself; an attendant even combed my hair. I felt even in these young years that I must be self-sufficient but it did not happen. I was just dubbed naughty.

When Achillidies was actually 17 and I was nearly 13 the Generals of Alexander’s army got the insecurity-itchies and decided to conduct a genocide. They must rid the world of Alexander’s relatives and thusly assure their own places in history! (Note: They received almost one sentence in the Holy Bible!) If there were no relatives, no one could lay claim to Alexander’s vast territories! Antigonus swooped from Antigonea, Turkey; Selucas of Syria went into India and Lysimachus covered the peninsula, etc. Ptolemy of Egypt refrained because of his family ties to King Phillip and Alexander.

Our nanny, Mayadike saw the mansion invaded and her Queen Cleopatra killed. She rushed to get me from my art class. I was being made to feel the arm muscles of Ares, the Discus Thrower. He was posing for his second statue. The Scopas School of Art carried on the great sculptor’s style and demanded muscle strength! My drawings lacked that strength! Suddenly Mayadike burst in; bowed to the art master and hustled me to the pre-chosen emergency meeting place.

Achillidies was at war practice maneuvers in the wild and instantly we were both thrust into reality! His army regrouped along the Meander River. Achillidies wore full armor and was draped with a purple mantle. The army declared him King Pyrrhus II. At seventeen this red-haired kid led an army! His democratic army condoned safe travel to Alexandria, Egypt for me and my nanny. We followed the Silk Road with several plain-garbed warriors on ordinary horse (War horses were huge and wore armor). We ladies rode donkeys to avoid suspicion. Being an excellent horsewoman I resented this to no effect. We were fleeing for our lives and must be incognito - no one was to say my name or title! Jewels and monies were deeply stored in Mayadike’s things. It was frightening to see a caravan or strangers approaching our way. We breathed easily once they were past.

Along the Silk Road, the Orientals with their camel trains were no threat. They knew the oasis! It meant fresh water; plump dates and bracelets of figs to munch! Mayadike checked the oriental goods; one time finding flat colorful gems and nail lacquers! Another time she chose white silks and embroidered fabrics. These she would save for the time when I would marry. At one oasis we encountered a woman wise in medical herbs. She intended to set up shop in Alexandria. Mayadike decided that she should accompany our party. Herbs, she thought should keep me from grouching. The herbs were messy when winds blew but fun. And the wise woman provided some deflection for us.

Although I was approaching marriageable age; there was no one of my station. I had been betrothed posthumously to Alexander, my cousin, but that was an honor thing. In Egypt there might be a possibility. After so many gut twisting fears of discovery the site of our destination was a relief. Powerful Ptolemy was Achillidies’ father-in-law. (Royal families intermarried. Polygamy was accepted as long as men had the money to provide separate residences at great distances assuring that their wives never met!)

With pure pleasure I dismounted the boney-backed donkey. The herbalist was happy to arrive; she gifted me with bunches of each medical herb and happily sought - the marketplace. Ptolemy’s daughters were friendly. They showed me the fun advancements in Alexandria including the women’s quarters cooled by wonderful sea breezes and the public baths! Yes, Baths! Our party was dust-covered from hair to toenails from travel. Surprisingly, a huge open area had rows of seated toilets on three sides. This was a gathering place. Ladies and their maids chatted and men discussed politics. There was the lighthouse, but that was a man’s thing. It did provide a good point of orientation when one was shopping in the marketplace.

Achillidies’ wife had two Pharaoh Hounds but the lady did not reprimand them effectively. I was unable to pet either so visited when the nippy, skinny things were kenneled. We cousins skipped laughingly along the garden paths. I was enraptured by a tiny brown snake that slipped onto the path. It was so cute! Just the size to slip around my wrist, but my cousins screamed and pulled me back. A gardener heard the girls and scooted the viper with his trowel but the thing flipped, twisted and bit him. He curled dead on the spot. We girls clung together shrieking and were hurried away. My cousins spent much of their day with hair, wigs and makeup. I needed to accomplish! Mayadike tried the market place first but the Great Library enraptured me. There were walls of diamond-shaped wood racks all filled with precious scrolls! The math teacher explained algebra. I loved it; later we began geometry - a total bust. Algebra reminded me of moving the little tokens about on the war games board. Geometry: as soon as you learned a rule- it was obsolete! What manly nonsense! Euclid could keep his Geometry! Upstairs in the Library and to the right Astrologers studied the stars. Their brass equipment seemed to collect dust efficiently - how I’d like to give that strange arrowed globe a twirl! I learned the basics of Astrology but realized I would be as old as the teachers before gaining astrological abilities. Life in Egypt was pleasant until one afternoon.

The family, attendants and soldiers gather for the evening feast! There was never an intimate supper. It was always everybody and all chatting at once. Men gathered together and were a bit rowdy with their meals and beers. The ladies sat together, their wines watered appropriately. There were all varieties of meats, foods and fruits. After this particular feast, Ptolemy announced that an armada of ships bearing the cranberry red sails of King Demetrius the Poliorcetes (the City-taker) was headed toward Alexandria. This would be no skirmish but a dreadful naval battle! For safety all the women and children would be sent by King Ptolemy’s private ship to a safe place down the Nile. They would return when all was safe. Achillidies and I searched for each other in the melee that ensued! Finally I found my brother. He had been looking for my red hair. I was wearing a black braided wig. We hugged and kissed; everyone trying to be orderly; servants packing garments and necessities; cooks outfitting the ship’s pantry; men one way; women and children another! Without thought, I grabbed my parcel of medical herbs with my personal baggage. The general aire was wild!

THE PLACE OF SAFETY

Once settled I noticed how beautiful the ship was! Even the outside to the waterline was carved fancifully with flowers, gods and goddesses and gilded with gold. There were good accommodations, large gathering areas and pleasant foods. In the morning the ladies chatted like it was a holiday cruise. In two days the ship stopped and a gangplank was lowered. This was our safe place. The shoreline was filled with short curious natives.

Again the ship’s pilot assured the ladies that it was safe - but no one moved: The natives were covered minimally and those bits were accented by ruffs of dried grass about ankles, wrists and waists. They were shorter than the Egyptian black people; many had scars, unusual nose adornments, piercings and black hair that seem to have exploded behind fancy headbands. The native men held rustic spears on end. The ship’s pilot appealed a bit adamantly but again the women did not move. I tolerated two days of women’s prattle and that was enough! I walked to the gangplank. The women pleaded that I not go, those were barbarians with spears down there! But I had been avoiding death for so long, the inutility if it would one day be proved. I said: “Oh it doesn’t matter; one day somebody’s going to kill me anyway.”

The ship’s pilot had one warning: “Ah, my Princess! One thing! They tolerate no black!” ‘Ridiculous, they are all black!’ His demeanor was serious explaining that the natives considered black to be evil. So I checked from my sandals up - oh the wig! That was black! Without a thought I jerked it off and plopped it onto his tally sheets and then started down the gangplank. Below us the natives were agog - what manner of person tears off their hair? They fell to their knees but I nodded and had them rise. They escorted me to a special hut where the tribal chief lived. He was not there but his wife and a daughter were. The girl was about my age.

I nodded and said hello in Greek. To my surprise they understood! Greek was the language Alexander had left in all of the lands he conquered. The daughter and I happily sought out the chief. What a curious sight we found!

The chief wore Egyptian garb - white with a cloth covering his hair. He had one knee propped against a huge boulder. With his arms upstretched he cried out to God for protection from the people on the golden ship! At this I laughed; then quickly bowed and apologized explaining that the people on the ship were praying for protection from THEM!

We discussed foolish assumptions cordially. The chief had received his answer. He turned to his prayer rock and thanked his God. His way of praying was not like any “Greek” ritual I ever attended! The three of us compared traditions. The Greeks honored each god and goddess with a temple. On its feast day, they offered a bowl of whatever was appropriate: rice; wheat; corn; gold or silver that the goddess or god might intercede to Zeus for them. What did he offer to his God?

He explained that he offered the love in his heart. He had but one God and prayed directly to Him! I liked this - no intermediaries - no worries about the size of offerings, no arduous travel or worry of missing the appropriate hour. One God! What a relief! They returned to the hut where a simple spicy meal was ready with flat bread and no flatware- they used the bread to gather parcels of food! As the hut was small, I returned to the ship for the night. I had a new God and a great adventure but the ladies tisk-tisked and nay-nay’d and refused to explore the area and these wonderful little people.

I was invited to observe their medicine man. He spread a circle of powder around the patient who was convinced that he was plagued with a death curse. All the symptoms were there: Weakness, fear and hysteria; his legs would no longer support him. The medicine man circled and prayed a sort of song aloud and shook a feather that he dipped into a small gourd bowl of liquid. In his other hand was a rattling gourd painted with strange colorful inscriptions. After a long ritual the patient relaxed, felt better and the “medicine man” pronounced him cured. The patient left over-joyed. The medicine man admitted he had no magic whatsoever. Everything he did was to change the patient’s thinking! He asked me about my magic and I admitted I had none either but I had a pretty agate he could have for letting me observe. The stone frightened him - it looked like an eyeball. I explained quickly that some rocks had colorful layers and when found were polished in this fashion. He laughed then and clutched his new treasure.

The chief’s daughter was not out and about for a few days so I stopped at their hut. The girl was very ill from cuts covering her torso. Some were scabbed others showing signs of infection. What happened? Where was the doctor? The medicine man only attended men! Women had no status! In shock, I dashed to the ship, found the cook and asked him to prepare a bit of hot water. In my room I scoured through the herbs and then made a tea. When it cooled, I took it to the hut and began applying it. The girl was being prepared for marriage. “This is our custom. He will think it beautiful.” I thought: ‘If you live that long!’ The girl sipped some of the tea. The rest was dabbed on the wounds again. I had the cook make an energy restoring soup and continued treatments. When recovery was eminent our worried hearts were at ease.

But morning found the village in an uproar. Naturally, I thought my friend died and I was doomed. But, no! A large spotted cat entered the village during the night; it wounded three and killed one person before being speared. It was a female hunting for food so there must be a little one. The men set off to find it. The women helped me with the wounded and then we gathered as in a class learning as many plants as I could identify nearby…and they shared their secret plants with me!

The men returned with a tiny female cub. She was in a crate they made with twigs and grasses. She was the cutest thing I ever laid eyes on; fuzz and spots; huge blue eyes and soft floppy paws. The chief would determine its future! The natives showed me the mother. They said the females could be tamed if worked with from infancy - to hunt, and drag things usefully but they were very speedy. I cuddled the cub and the chief decided this was their gift. I would call her Cymbal. She made a little tinkling sound when the cage moved. As I took her to the ship several natives scrambled up behind me shouting there was another cub! Would I take her too? ‘Oh, La-La!’ I thought and called her that! A pair of little wildcats would certainly be the talk of Alexandria. I nodded!

The ladies and children doted on them, fed and cuddled them; wiping their little pusses and fluffing their cheek fuzz. The little children could not pronounce “Cymbal” so her name deteriorated to “Simba.” After months, word came that the war had ended with a victory for Ptolemy and Pyrrhus. The ladies and children could return. Before the gangplank was pulled up, a few natives rushed to the ship; they had another little girl cub. ‘To the gods - three! How does one use three?’ Well I wasn’t going to let them kill it so held out my hands, laughed and thanked them - thinking: ‘Let’s ship out before they find any more.’ There was a clang; I laughter and looked at the new addition: “You made it by the bell! Very well, I’ll call you Belle.” They traveled well and were completely socialized by the time we arrived at Alexandria: Simba, LaLa and Belle. Only by their spots did I know them.

FROM CHEETAHS TO SIWA

The men were happy to have their families reunited. Pyrrhus laughed his heart out over the three cuddly cubs but checked the library - they were Cheetahs. He was amazed to see them respond to my voice and hand commands. The natives had instructed me correctly. Also true, they were not so cute when they lost the baby fuzz and began stretching into adult sleekness. But I kept a routine: there was play, face nuzzling, damp wipe-downs, lessons and petting at rest. Two strict but gentle grooms fed and kenneled them. Leather workers fashioned slip-on harnesses to begin pulling a weight. One cat in front and two side by side behind. Pyrrhus watched as I controlled the fastest animals on four paws. When a small iron wheeled cart arrived, the wheels stuck out too far. I thought it most ungainly. The metal workers said this assured that it would not tip over. The Egyptians perfected this style and it was proven in wars and races for decades! Pyrrhus hoped the heavy iron wheels would slow the three wildcats. Pyrrhus watched me mount the cart. Gingerly I called a word and the trial run began with a jerk. They left a trail of dust before anyone caught their breath. When the cart was at the end of the harbor Icalled a command and they slowed to a stop. I dismounted and spoke lovingly, wiping the dust from their eyes and faces and nuzzled each one. Deidiamia walked them back to see astonished onlookers. The only problem was the cats needed daily runs over a clear distance; they were useless in tight places and crowds - like at the marketplace. Vendors began offering coffee to those watching the cats’ daily run along the harbor. Pyrrhus was not completely at ease. Going like this he feared his sister would not live long enough to be married - if he actually found a suitable bridegroom.

Upon hearing that I had success with herbs in Africa, Pyrrhus decided I must do the Siwa Temple. The experience was called “Death into Life” It might bestow healing powers. He gained a “healing thumb” from it. The Siwa Temple lay west into the desert a few days near an oasis. More desert travel I could do without but I loved my brother. He gathered several soldiers for safety. It was quickly apparent we must travel after sundown. The winds were constant; blowing hot sand viciously. We were protected a bit by being wrapped completely only our eyes showed. After several days we saw palm trees - the oasis! But we halted short of it at a small temple partly hidden by sand.

SIWA

There: the priests welcomed us minimally. I asked if I could bathe. The old priest looked at me strangely. They had no water for bathing, but there was oil, crockery and cloths to have an oil bath. He explained the oasis was up the hill. This was deflating news my skin was itching from the sand; I thought words a royal does not use.

As soon as I emerged from my “bath” I was seated at a stone table and the priests took turns reading aloud from two different parchments. Mercifully they began the readings from the present time which was 303 B.C. The voices fell into monotones. The priest explained the parchments were copied from carvings on each side of the temple walls. As a privileged one (Big Name Ancestor) I was entitled to learn the predictions from both walls… Most initiates were allowed to read one side of the wall. With two one got the whole picture of the predictions. I was still itchy, oily, tired and stiff from horse travel and now sitting on a plank bench in a chiton. The temple was freezing cold as night fell and the priest’s monotone was not conducive to alertness. The readings continued for days. Finally they got to a part telling of a terrible devastation which would basically finish the world. I asked that they repeat when this was to happen and was told the equivalent of about 2023, A.D. I was so exhausted that I stretched and said: “Oh, to the Gods, we need not worry about that - we’ll all be dead!”

Shocked, insulted and bewildered - the High Priests slapped the parchments shut. They removed themselves from the table area and said: “The Life to Death into Life Experience” would begin. I followed the priest. He pointed out the carvings along the walls. Decades ago younger priests spent their lives by the light of tiny oil lamps copying the predictions and most of them went blind doing the work. Hearing this, I felt grateful I was just bored.

The stone ramp ended at a wooden door which opened to a room with one louvered window set high. The priest explained while a variety of foods were set on a stone table, he said that the light only entered the window a short time and then the room was thrust into darkness. The Foods were for my dinner and later for breakfast. A closed sarcophagus dominated the room. When the light fades, I must lay most still on it; keeping my garments tightly about me. In that monotone he mentioned that tiny asps came in at night and would creep about until they decided I was living … Asps! That poor gardener in Alexandria! Oh to the Gods I questioned my brother’s sanity. What loving brother puts his sister through such a frightening ordeal? I got onto the cold stone and tucked my long chiton close about wishing it was Dorian style - those lucky women had long sleeves! I lay rigidly. What if I moved? And without warning the light passed and the room was pitch black. I wanted to cry but dared not move and I was so exhausted from the travel, the readings and now this! I lay so still that if I fell asleep I did not realize it. But - Oh, to the Gods there was a movement on my arm and it slid to the crease to my upper body. I became rigor-still with stress and remembered no more.

The door creaked; it was morning. The priests actually shook me to consciousness; remarking with surprise, that I had eaten nothing! Their words sounded like a school-teacher sweetly cooing, “Good morning students.” I was as cold as that stone and too stiff to move on my own.

I hurt between my legs. The old priest discovered my clothing was bloody. There were several young priests at the temple. The old one kept his voice muted, called for fresh garments and cleansed me gently without fanfare. He served me wine and fruit while controlling his building anger. He swore the older priests to silence lest King Pyrrhus should hear of this! This Temple would be at an end and them with it! Search! They would find the rapist.

The priests seemed unnaturally jovial that I had survived the experience as we began the trek down to the reading room. As to the possibility of my receiving any paranormal gifts, the priests were non-committal but said often things manifest shortly. I asked what kind of priests they were! To my terrible surprise he said - “Embalmers! We do kings and their families. We embalmed Alexander! He is right here; buried under the floor of our lower level! This is secret, my dear, and private - as he wanted. We shall now join your brother.” They spoke without feeling. I tried to blank out these words and happenings but I was incensed at my brother. Paranormal - healing gifts! I was incensed with him and then realized I was given a token of honor.

It was a special talisman designating that I read both sides of the Temple walls gained this special knowledge and lived through the Siwa experience. It cheered me until I saw it and nearly dropped the thing. The talisman was an armlet of two asps their tails knotted - and their heads facing outward oppositely. A large deep red cabochon garnet was centered in the knot. Each snake represented the reading of one side of the wall carvings. My brother quickly suggested that I notice the beautiful garnet. After I calmed enough I realized it was a very high honor and wore the armlet daily for the rest of my life!

(A note: During an archaeological dig in the latter half of the twentieth century, this armlet, my golden hairnet and picks, a small sized harness (for one cheetah) The finders were mystified as to its purpose. There were horse breast plates of gold and bits of precious jewelry were displayed in Pforzheim, West Germany in 4/1970. This “great stash” was excavated in Thessaloniki north of the Polyponese and attributed wrongly to King Philip of Macedonia. Well, they were close most of the things belonged to his Granddaughter.)

We started back to Alexandria. The return was not as arduous as the going. What a delight to see that huge Lighthouse in the distance. We reached Alexandria and civility. As I had survived those asps and death and even escaped those embalmers - every breath was a joy to me . Even the squeaky strings at music festivals became a pleasantry. I was alive! I could hug, tend and enjoy my three wildcats again. Events continued at a normal pace. At events I sat near an exit with the three cats by me: Never in the Royal box. That involved banners of cloth waving and too many people pressing close. When the event finished I left the auditorium first; guards blocked the exit until my cart was safely underway. One time Pyrrhus and Ptolemy borrowed the cats to hunt. They sought a sort of antelope for a feast. I clutched: To the gods, there goes all my training! I feared they would go wild but they returned to me as sweet natured as ever.

BETROTHED

Pyrrhus was antsy. He knew I should marry. He and Demetrius the Poliorcetes became friends after the naval battle. I had not seen the man but he was the big topic of sonversation during the Nile excursion to that safe place in Africa. The women had abhorred his lifestyle - bastard children all over his kingdoms. Demetrius also had a son and daughter nearly my age! His first wife was thirty years older than he and lived in his father’s palace at Antigonea! How women do talk! It was actually abhorrent to my brother too but Demetrius had conquered many lands! This last entitled him to marry me!

After much deliberation, Pyrrhus suggested the match. They sealed the troth with a handshake and a wine. King Demetrius was not of royal blood. His father, Antigonus was one of Alexander’s generals. But our bloodline was tremendous! Pyrrhus would keep to custom. We had been raised to follow custom. “Deidiamia will attend the political comics, tomorrow at the festival. They tease and nearly insult us, Demetrius so be prepared to laugh outwardly. You can catch a glimpse of my sister there.”

“A glimpse! Will she not join us in the Royal Box?” He did not understand Pyrrhus’s quiet negative response. The bridegroom-to-be somewhat stewed inwardly about this but kept his demeanor pleasant.

The Royals entered a bedecked box to great fanfare until they were seated. Demetrius kept watch for a redhead but just as he was getting antsy Pyrrhus nudged him and said, “There she is at the far entrance.” Before the bridegroom could voice his displeasure he caught sight of this tiny lady with red hair leading three wildcats bigger than she was into the theater! He gasped! Stunned and intrigued he watched her command those wild beasts with a hand movement. The attendants had cordoned off an area for the group.

As was custom, I bowed to the Royal box and sat. As suddenly, Demetrius became most interested in “the woman!” To the gods this was the greatest surprise. I could feel I was being watched but it was important to pamper my pets. He watched me pet one spotted head and without realizing it he found himself massaging his bare knee, thinking; ’I am a wildcat!’ I laughed slightly, when another beast slipped its head under my chiton to shade its eyes from the sun. Demetrius had no idea what the entertainment was about. The comedian made a joke; the crowd laughed breaking his reverie a moment. It finished; there was the stir and crack of applause in the audience.

“What happened? Where did she go? She is gone!” Pyrrhus told him that his sister leaves first so the cats cause no problem with the populous. In a moment he nudged his friend: “Turn around. There she goes, see that stream of dust! ” Demetrius stood a moment in awe. Finally he said, “She finds the chariot games a bore, yes?”

Pyrrhus mentioned the betrothal to me. He was pleased the way plans were coming to place. His friend, Aprexatelles invited him to hold the wedding in Argos, a Greek city across the Mediterranean. The esteemed Water Master of Graecia, Aprexatelles had a glorious retreat and used all his skills in making it a spot of true beauty. I leveled my eyes menacingly:

“ To the gods, you say, this king is almost thirty years older than me: Likely slobbering in his beer, grey haired and fat! Certainly, I was not thrilled. My dear pets - must I forsake them? My brother assured me, kennels and grooms would accommodate my valuable animals and always, they would travel with me. Shortly, we set sail for Argos.

As the ship docked, the people of Argos lined both sides for the parade. Those Royal Parades! Just exhibitions but the people expect and want to see us. I will have a float manned by a few horses and the three Cheetahs will lounge near me on the float. They look so sleuthy. At times I wish their eyes were rounder so they looked more - well, friendly. The day followed schedule. The cheetahs rode with me languidly disregarding the shocked Argoneans who promptly decided we were barbarians!

Beyond an auditorium was a narrow road that rounded the mountain side. A path veered right and lead to The Water Master’s estate at the top. After the parade, the two men that kenneled the cats, hitched the cart. The cheetahs were ready to run after the sea journey and happily took off at my command leaving a trail of billowing dust which arose marking my progress. The mountain was no challenge for the Cheetahs, but the rest of the party hiked. The path was too steep for the horses. When I reached the wall, Aprexatelles met me. We bowed to each other.

While I unfastened the tack, the Water Master asked about the animals and I told their story. He began telling me the story about his mountain home. Inside the low wall we trod on low green plants. Outside the wall Argos was natural: dust, clay, rocks and a few agaves. The house was smoothed clay but sported three half fountains shaped like seashells which spilled water from the top one to those below it. There was a pool to envy and a row of Italian Cyprus as a backdrop. I confessed it was the most beautiful place I had ever seen. The owner enjoyed talking about his estate and I questioned while he gloried in explaining it all: his siphon systems which brought water up the mountain to the estate, fountains and pool. There was a hermetically sealed tank inside the house which heated the tiled floors and the luxury of water was provided in the house. Finally he asked what I wished to do. The cats were used to being wiped down and so he bowed and left me to it. He must check that everything was perfect for his guests.

According to custom, I would meet my bridegroom formally the evening before the wedding this presentation would be in the garden. I was not in happy bridal mood. My thoughts were on a slobbery old man touching me for the rest of my life. I was repulsed but shivered privately hoping to keep this hidden.

I was by the pool and lovingly wiping the dust from the three spotted faces when they detected a movement by the wall opening. The wildcats arose. It was a group of sweaty warriors who drew their swords. ‘Here goes my private moment!’ I moved slowly and obviously set my right hand on the mossy ground. At this, the three Cheetahs dropped to the ground but watched the men. I kept my voice fairly tinkly and happy. “All is well gentlemen, sheath your swords. Approach slowly and normally.”

The men were hot, tired and thirsty. Demetrius put a hand on his hip. Never had a female ordered him about - he was amused, but not foolish. The swords were sheathed. He called out:

“Pyrrhus said we had use of the pool.” I lifted my chin in answer and gestured with my free left hand to someone that was nearly obscured. The groom came nodding and bowing. How I wished they would not do that! Then by lifting my right hand and moving it towards the groom the Cheetahs arose and followed him to their kennels. The taller man sent the soldiers toward the house but he approached. He was dressed well under a thick coat of dust and sweat. As we were not formally introduced speech was limited but regardless, I was not giving up the pool! His dark brown beard lay flat but the hair on his head was wavy. His skin was deeply tanned. He began a stupid chat.

“Had the lady attended the event? It was required! Did she know?” He chastised lightly already knowing the answers and laughed easily. I was not cutesy pretty; and red from the sun. He enjoyed my teasing comebacks and yet it seemed to baffle him. I knew he wanted to use the pool, so did I - why wasn’t someone interrupting us? Very strange! “I will use the pool. A lady must fix my hair; it is long and needs braided.”

“Oh I can braid hair,” the huge man said, “done it for years.” So I set the little gold net carefully poolside I dare not lose any of those long pins or the net would not stay to place. I shook my fine curly red hair free and turned my back to him. He separated it into plaits and confidently began criss-crossing them; tucked the ends under deftly, “There!”

I felt the braid and asked how he learned, expecting perhaps he had a little sister.

“Oh I always braid my horse’s tail.”

Insult! And without thought, I slapped him. He dared not laugh and apologized immediately. We turned our backs and undressed. He slipped into the water. I laid my fibula, and filets on my chiton but kept my under-cloth. When he surfaced he called me on it.

‘No fair! You have that and I have nothing!” I laughed at him and in a moment he laughed also.

He was quite handsome. His eyes were blue! Nobody had blue eyes! We teased each other mildly. He questioned how Aprexatelle had brought water up the mountain for the pool. As I had asked the Water Master I could tell the function. Also there were wall fountains, water for the house and a hermetically sealed tank which heated the floor inside rooms during inclimate weather. Aprexatelle had planned the water system of Athens; genius, sheer genius. As we finished our swim, Mayadike, my nanny since childhood, wordlessly scurried forth with towels, bowed and scurried away. I wondered why she hadn’t “rescued me.”

The tall man laughed easily; his teeth were beautiful, he was elegant. We neither asked names, we couldn’t; we were not introduced. I found him enticing.

At the family banquet with Aprexatelles family the ladies sat and talked together. The men across the hall at another table spoke together. Pyrrhus and King Demetrius were difficult to see. The tiny oil lamps cast so many shadows - ‘Oh, where was this old King?’ It was stressful my misgivings grew after such a fun time with the gigantic soldier. I slept fitfully that night. Mayadike’s soothing words did not comfort me. The next day was devoted to preparation; I was bathed, perfumed - all sorts of things meant to take my mind off the terrible meeting ahead.

Our cultures varied in presentation garb. Pyrrhus would wear a fine chiton, a gold sash, gold touched sandals and his crown. King Demetrius would be different, I supposed.

I told Mayadike about the gentleman I’d chatted with in the garden - she saw him - indeed more of him then she’d expected. I had misgivings about marrying some old king. My heart had been captured but I just wanted to talk, I knew I had no choice in the matter. All the while, Mayadike dressed me, pinning the fibulas at the shoulders; setting pleats attractively in the white chiton and crisscrossing a gold fillet to hold the front and back together. The crown was set to place. I detested that crown; it was an unforgiving tube that clamped over the head with a small golden pear shape pinching each temple. My sandals were gilded. The two of us walked into the garden stoically. We saw Pyrrhus first the other was in the shadows but when I noticed the difference in their height - this golden armored king was nearly two cubits taller than Pyrrhus! The armor, scabbard, sword and a full face helmet topped with cranberry red plumes all of it was a sickening golden nightmare!

I bowed feeling a bit faint. “Brother, my sincere apologies but no.” I turned to walk away. My brother stalked forward protesting my action. “You must meet King Demetrius.” The two men advanced toward us. I wanted to heave but stood looking composed and tried banter: I faced them and bowed:

“Am I so formidable that my betrothed must approach me in full battle armor? I am sorry, brother but I must refuse the match; this giant king would be the death of me.” I bowed, turned and walked toward the house.

“No, no. It is me!” Demetrius yelled. He tried to dash after me but the armor clattered, squeaked and pinched. He grunted… “Pyrrhus, get me out of this… thing! Oh these crazy rituals… Deidiamia, stop it is me who braided your hair! To the Gods, I can’t move in this thing.” He flung the scabbard and helmet aside. The golden King’s hair was damp from its confinement and Pyrrhus was unshackling the upper armor as fast as he could. When the arms and some of the body plates were off Demetrius lunged awkwardly towards me and hugged me unabashedly - to my brother’s complete shock. ”Oh, to the gods, I love you woman - you little wildcat of a - woman!”

It was amusing but I must remain composed: “YOU can braid my hair anytime.”

Demetrius laughed; the lower armor nipped him. He wailed and then I laughed. This was definitely far from the customary meeting! Not custom at all! Pyrrhus’ hand covered his mouth and then Demetrius’ words re-spun and he stopped in dead shock! - ‘Demetrius braided her hair! They should not have seen each other! He touched my sister’s hair! How uncouth. How barbaric; not custom! Not custom!’ Custom was in complete shambles! Pyrrhus; the honorable one stood baffled!

In a moment my words of rejection re-played in his mind. Demetrius was huge. The union could tear her. He contemplated a helpful solution: Ares, the Discus Thrower, his family was invited. As a married man Ares would have control… Pyrrhus solicited him to ease her first time.

When rules were understood poor little Mayadike set the pool area beautifully and then led me there. I thought perhaps it was an impromptu party but Mayadike’s voice was shaking; “Sit; you must do this. It is your brother’s command.”

I sat on mats near the display of fruits and oils, but still had no inkling. Ares arrived and sat beside me. Mayadike bowed and scurried away. Ares related his command to her and that his orders were that he not complete the act; chosen because as married he had control.

Shocked, I stood and jumped into the pool. I sat curled on the bottom; Ares dove in and gathered me out. “The man is of monster size and this is so your small frame can contain him. Do you think I am not shocked at this command?” He was wiping the excess water from my face and wrapping me in more cloths to absorb the water.

Ares insulted me! “Oh, and that means I am repulsive!” I huffed. He was shaking his head.

“You have become a most attractive lady. I realized how sheltered your life was at the art school. You blushed violently when the Art Master made you touch my arm. I am relieved that you escaped the genocide.” He saw me smirk ironically.

“Escaped! Sent into hiding in the desert; facing asps, Siwa enbalmers; never being myself openly; now this!” Ares expression was of a man lost to these words. Deep inside I knew I must honor my brother’s decision. “I guess we must get on with it.” I reached for a deep red plum, took a bite and gave it to Ares and lay down, “So, do it!” Ares threw his head back laughing.

“Not that simple, my lady; first we use perfumes and then oils. It is a gradual building of - .” He stopped and touched his nose to her cheek, then to her chin and stopped short! To the gods, he wasn’t supposed to feel emotions! Confusion flicked at him. To the gods, could he control himself? My eyes flicked.

“What is it Ares?” He shook his head, no. I was uncomprehending but knew any routine must have follow through! At last he gathered me into his arms and kissed me tenderly and lovingly, laid me back softly and began. “My lady, forgive me, I myself feel a wicked desire for you!” He panted afterward; covered me and then kissed me again. In a bit he slung his mantle about himself and carried me into the house; laid me on my bed. Ares smoothed my hair with shaking hands and then he left almost clumsily -without a word. Seeing him like this was so different! At the games he was so cool in concentration showing only strength and force; this disheveled Ares was bewildering.

Unbeknownst to me Ares was building a terrible determination over this encounter. Perhaps I was overly innocent but the act was not hurtful; in fact it was so different that I secretly did not want it to end. Ares? To the gods, Ares! Was a mind capable of trickery?

I married Demetrius in that Argos Garden the next day. Weddings were simple. Two ornate tents representing the families were set upon the grounds. The bride simply walked from her tent into the groom’s. When the tent entrance fell closed the guests began feasting outside. The feasting would continue for weeks. Demetrius offered me jeweled gifts which glowed in the light of small oil lamps set about. His tent had a softly padded silk tapestry on the floor. We were having a light wine and laughing softly when a slight hitch came - no wedding goes smoothly. The tent cover lifted unexpectedly but it was not a person.

Lala, my second Cheetah wandered between us and lay down. We were stunned; none of my pets had ever done such a thing! Demetrius chuckled and then rolled back laughing.

“To think I must conquer a wildcat to gain my beloved!” But I did not think it funny. I jumped up and lifted the opening. None of the other Cheetahs were about. The guests were busy at the tables with loud feasting. The tent was unobserved. I had no protocol on this situation except knowing that I could not leave the tent! Calm - calm.

“Lala, go to the little man!” The cat stared Demetrius face to face, chortled, but got to its feet slowly and sauntered out. Was that laughter coming from the wedding tent? Yes.

Several days into the feasting, Ares caught Demetrius by surprise, flashing a small dagger under his chin. “Listen, my Lord; you have had your dalliances but this is our Princess and you dally no more! To the gods, you will be faithful or you will be no longer.” Demetrius understood the young man’s actions were not all work oriented.

“You are most solicitous of our dear Queen; be it then; I hire you as her personal bodyguard. Where she goes - you go.” He clasped Are’s shoulder and they agreed. In a few days Pyrrhus realized that Ares was constantly near Deidiamia. He asked his new brother-in-law who said, “I hired him as her bodyguard. This way I know where that confounded dagger is.” Pyrrhus did not understand, but the conversation had finished.

ATHENS

Demetrius followed tradition, showing all of his lands to me, his bride and in so doing

displaying me to all of his people via parades. Demetrius was loved by commoners; he

abolished slavery. Over time the upper class realized freedom actually sweetened the atmosphere and a few coins for work well repaid itself. Unfortunately, there were small districts that resented releasing their slaves. Demetrius had been a king on the move. He owned no palace. His dwelling was a mammoth ship called “The Seventeener.” For our stay in Athens, he chose the Parthenon as our residence. He had done this before and held wild parties there as I had heard with the women’s gossip, but now he developed a new lifestyle. It was now realized we needed a palace on land! He chose to build in an area called Sikking (not in the Orient).

Athenian politicos invited my new husband to join them at the baths. And then it happened so fast! A young man made sexual overtures to Demetrius. This was so ridiculous that my husband rebuffed the youngster. The young man felt publicly humiliated and jumped into a vat of boiling water! Everyone began screaming. Retrieval was slow with rustic wooden paddles. News spread across the Acropolis in double time. Immediately, Ares and I rushed toward the sounds. The young man was burned terribly. Ares tried to shield me by pulling me away. In that shock and anguish I lifted my hands and prayed: ‘Dear God of the African chief, please make this man feel better. Thank you.’ I extended my hands over him from head to toe. The skin sloughed and became as pretty as a baby’s. I heaved a breath of relief and walked away, but the young man squealed that he could not live with the humiliation of his actions and jumped into the boiling vat again! I stopped; it was of no use God will not heal if the recipient refuses or doubts the healing. I threw my hands out helplessly and we walked back to the Parthenon.

# HERE

Word went through the Acropolis. The High Priests and Doctors were not pleased to have afree healing ability about. Definitely their prestige and incomes would be undermined. This upstart - Queen Deidiamia must be stopped. The Arraporah (holy women) felt differently, and enthroned me upon their (stone cold) altar to receive the petitions of the women who came to worship Athene. Behind me was the ivory statue of Athene. It was so tall that I never saw past the folds of her garment. I felt silly but queens do not publicly exhibit emotions. I blessed the women and handed them a small colored stone to carry. When they felt better they could return the stone in a small receptacle by the entrance.

The High Priestess of the Arraporah could read the ripples in a small pool of water nearby. Rather like the Sybils at Delphi and Dodona but without the accouterments. It was interesting so she taught me. I asked if there was anything that I could give her. She said that numbers intrigued her - so we began simple math and algebra! But the signs I saw in the small pool were not encouraging. This was a new art to me - maybe I was wrong.

Unbeknownst to me, the High Priests and Doctors were plotting against me while across the Aegean Sea several kings were plotting against old Antigonus, who was Demetrius’s father. My husband had to help; Pyrrhus too would help. It was set that the decisive battle would be on the Plain of Ipsus. I was installed with the Arraporah (holy women) at the Parthenon for the time being.

Demetrius journeyed to Delphi to consult the oracle about the war’s outcome but the interpretations were indefinite. I felt the difficult journey there had been a waste of time. After the armies sailed, I discovered I was with child. My small stature did not conceal this long.

Pyrrhus heard about the incident at the baths confirming his belief that I received a healing gift at Siwa! Now he hoped for something beyond belief: That I heal the war wounded and that they could fight again! With this in mind the two Kings sent the war wounded to Athens - a hospital was set up in the Erechtheion (Temple of Maidens). With the first shipload I discovered my healing gift restored fresh wounds well enough but once infection set in the wounds did not respond. I prayed but God’s ears were closed. There would be no rechargeable army. The second shipload was worse. The garrison soldiers were reluctant to help unload them. The third shipload had been practically slaughtered and stomped in the field. The garrison soldiers viewed the wounded soldiers as losers! I ordered them. They unloaded them begrudgingly; dumping the poor men like rubbish on the unfinished side of the Erechtheion leaving them exposed to the weather. The Athenians recoiled; their prissiness preferred beauty and scholarliness! These dying bloody beings were ugly; besides it set their thoughts and convinced themselves that it was their king’s war, not theirs!

Ares and I went from early morning to late at nightworking in this makeshift hospital. There were no medicines or bandages. For a few my healing gift worked. The land had little growing that could help. Ares gathered agave for its balm and I tore my chiton for washcloths and bandages until I was nearly indecent. I listened to these young men; so many wanted only to see their mothers; I cried with them. Ares dragged me away nightly but I had to run the Cheetahs before rest. He accompanied me but always returned as pale as a ghost. Speed was not his thing.

MEGARA

One morning the High Priests arrived. I breathed in relief: They would at least bless the wounded, but no. They grabbed me and Ares saying the Senate voted non-support of the war; therefore we were exiled! They thrust a cask of gold coins at me and shoved us toward the dock. Mayadike, the cats and Ares family stood with our belongings. Where was the cart! I needed the cart and harnesses! I was ignored - I had become invisible. We were sent to a City-State called Megara a bit northwest of Piraeus.

Megara was unfriendly to Demetrius. Megara’s governor was light in the head but his wife, the governess ruled ruthlessly. She had men’s limbs cut off for the slightest misdemeanor. She detested Demetrius for freeing her slaves although she did realize she could not harm his queen (Demetrius was away but he may return) - regardless the governess was determined to provide our little party with a miserable exile. The Cheetahs were confiscated then starved. I was sent into the ring for the amusement of the Megarians. But the mauling by hungry beasts they expected did not occur. The three chortled, came gathered around me and we cried and clung together. Vexed, the governess ordered them removed. We had to watch other cruel judgements. SHE kept the cats; housed them in a barn gave the carnivores hay.

“Queen” Deidiamia must earn her keep! She can grind corn and make our bread daily!” She laughed and sneered. Soldiers, fearful of the governess made sure I was collected to work each morning! Our small party was assigned a workman’s one room rubble house with no door and no window. It had ledges inside to sit or lay on. Ares was conscripted to the mines; his pregnant wife, Iolia, son and Mayadike were considered useless. But the villagers welcomed Mayadike. She cooked food and tended the outdoor fire. She kept with news - and discovered a pilgrimage to Dodona might pass their way. Ares developed a cough from the damp mine. His son played with other children. Iolia’s time of delivery came. Mayadike ordered Deidiamia and Ares’ son to remain at the outdoor cooking area. Finally, Mayadike emerged with the infant! “They have a new son. Iolia is resting.”

Garbled news reached the governess. Deidiamia was still outside when several armored soldiers on horse raced past them and entered their small house. Iolia and her newborn were horse-stomped to death. The old women rushed in afterword but there was terrible news when Ares came home. His cough was now compounded with remorse. He realized Deidiamia was their target! The sequence would repeat when the royal was born! It was required that all deaths in Greece be registered. He considered the unthinkable.

In the morning Ares demanded I cover my hair and wear Iola’s garments. He trod to the registrar’s and reported the death of Queen Deidiamia and her newborn Prince Alexander. He returned to his area and related to everyone what he had done and why. These poor people agreed to be silent or the killing would repeat. The only downfall was that the Governess was without a baker. In a flash I was conscripted (as Iolia) to grind the corn and make the bread.

When my time of delivery came I did not fare well. Fact was I was unconscious for days and never saw my baby. Mayadike (I was told later) safely took some coins and bought a goat. The little prince was a large babe but doing well. The pilgrimage to Dodona arrived in Megara and bedded down for the night. It was then that Mayadike decided to take the baby, Ares’ son, the goat plus supplies, and work herself into the pilgrimage. She left funds for my keep but now just Ares and I were left in Megara. As soon as I was a bit better, I was snatched again to do the grinding and baking. I was depleted but the neighbors always had kind words and stews.

Pyrrhus and Demetrius lost the battle of Ipsus. The Arabian king (Selucas) held India and used war elephants. They frightened the horse soldiers sending them chaotically into our own troops Another King (Lysimachus) from the south had sword blades attached to chariot wheels. Foot soldiers were slaughtered. Old Antigonus died in battle. When this news reached us, Ares and I felt resigned: We would die in Megara.

Losing the war meant Demetrius forfeited most his lands and fortunes. No one wanted his navy! No one wanted Pyrrhus’ cold mountainous Epirus either! The two ragtag kings: Pyrrhus and Demetrius and, Tiggy ( Demetrias’ son, Antigonus II) made their way by horse from the battlefield to the navy on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Although Demetrius retained his navy he had almost no funds to maintain it! This was a floating city with workshops and families plus the actual fighting navy.

When luck runs sour, how it continues! The navy headed to Athens to collect the Queen. There they smelled the stench of biers burning so many wounded that passed. Once landing the kings were dunned to discover: The Athenian Senate voted neutrality and exiled Deidiamia, her nanny, Ares’ family and the Cheetahs. They had been exiled to Megara. Riled at this, Demetrius loaded supplies and cut aid to Athens. He and Pyrrhus turned sail to Megara.

There the Governess impudently stated, “Deidiamia died; too bad too, she was the best bread baker I ever had! Ares? Oh that blond - he’s in the mines.” The Kings changed attitude. Deidiamia had no practical skills. And was made to grind grain and bake bread! In their building anger, Pyrrhus noticed two cheetah pelts mounted over the Megarian throne chairs. When asked, her dim husband giggled and the governess remarked off-handedly “Oh, they died. The other makes a noise all the time. It is in a barn but won’t eat anything!” They found putrid hay in a trough for the carnivore! The kings seethed. Pyrrhus got milk and ground meat and when it seemed a bit like itself Pyrrhus sent it to seek and find.

I saw Simba my first Cheetah at my side and broke-down weeping. I was discovered by my own pet. Death was imminent! I felt my head covering thrown back; dust flew revealing my filthy matted red hair. I heard harsh words: “Do away with them in their own worst way!” Hearing these damning words; and being half delirious with stress and hunger I fell info dep faint. When I awoke my restoration had begun. Everything was swaying. Two women were oiling my body, two others were un-matting my hair. There was a window but nothing was still, everything kept coming into sight and leaving. I was aboard the Seventeener. Ares was succored in the men’s quarters. His dreadful cough was treated with pine essence and sunlight.

When Ares was somewhat better he explained the false recordings of deaths; that it was his own wife, Iolia had given birth and the event was misconstrued that it was the queen. Megarian soldiers were sent to their hut. Iolia and his newborn were stomped to death by the horses. Ares realized if the mistake was discovered, the Queen would face the same fate. So he entered the deaths as Queen Deidiamia and her son, Prince Alexander. Ares explained how Mayadike had taken the children and joined a pilgrimage to Dodona. She left monies with trusted women for Deidiamia’s care. “She had an extremely difficult delivery, my King. The old lady bought a goat. We have never heard word of her.” The kings also had received no word from Egypt and were equally unenformed.

As bad news loves company: Very shortly Phila, Demetrius' first wife (who was 30 years older than he was) arrived at the Seventeener. When enemy soldiers came to sack the palace at Antigonea Phila and her daughter, Stratonike (Nikki) fled for their lives - with nine shiploads of “hastily gathered belongings and heirlooms.” “Tiggy was off fighting with the kings, I have no word.” she said.

“Tiggy is here and in good health.” He did not mention that Tiggy was thrilled to learn about naval life. Phila haughtily approved of the ship when she came aboard - until she heard that Demetrius’ young wife was in the ladies quarters! Phila let it be loudly known that she would not stay aboard ship with Deidiamia ***there***-“Evict her! As first wife, you defer to ME!” Phila had always lived comfortably with his father; she never corresponded. Fleeing the palace at Antigonea was the only strenuous upsetting event Phila ever experienced.

Demetrius held his civility although his shoulder hurt. He had taken a spear and lived, but the healing restricted much in his right shoulder. On the road from the battlefield, horse salve did some good on the wound. He was silent about his pain; after all, he was the King. But he was building a terrible disgust for Phila. He dare not speak until he was absolutely calm. Pyrrhus was proving to be a bad sailor. He decided to sail to Alexandria and be reunited with his Egyptian family. ‘Ah, now I have the solution!’ Demetrius intoned.

“Phila, I heartily suggest that as Pyrrhus will reunite with his family in Alexandria that you accompany him. You too have relatives there, your sister. Rest at Ptolemy’s and be restored to your own graciousness.”

“Ah, yes,” agreed Phila, “Nikki and I can rest and heal from this excruciating war experience.”

But Nikki surprised her mother. She decided to stay aboard ship. Ship life was a new adventure and she had had so few! Tiggy would not come with Phila either. How long would it take Phila before she realized her children made their decisions and her overseeing their lives was at end?

Although he never showed the pain publicly, at night I heard my husband groan from the next cabin. I knew my healing thing would not work on old wounds but maybe I could ask my special wonderful God to remove the pain. My husband was asleep. I hovered my hands over the area; thanked God and then turned and performed that rolling walk of sailors when returning to my room. It was morning when he shouted:

“Deidia where is my scar? It is gone, GONE! I was proud of that scar! What happened?”

I was surprised too. “Oh, does it hurt so terribly, Iorcetes?” We had each cut our names in half for pet nicknames. He stopped and lifted both shoulders carefully and then rotated the arm carefully, “Not at all! Oh, to the gods, I am ruined! Ruined! No one will believe I was wounded! They will call me a liar.”

I had not expected a healing and now I was amiss. “Do you want the pain back, Iorcetes?” He gave this thought; rotated his shoulders again and said, no. He threw his arms around me freely and then laughed at himself.

When I was well, meeting his children became an instant mother-daughter-son-giggly, wonderful thing! They were most endearing and fun. They were my “Children” but their ages cast them closer to being sister and brother. Tiggy spent most of his time learning naval things but was particularly cheerful and discussed his serious preferences and thoughts calling me: “His little mother!” Nikki and I investigated all the workshops on their city of ships. One dyed the cranberry red sails for the fleet. There were huge vats of dye. By necessity, many activities were curtailed and materials rationed. Cloth was mended invisibly!

Being income-poor, the food supply for the ships residents was mostly looted from enemies’ land holdings. Hunger prevailed often. The cook cried. He had the privilege to cook for royalty and he had used the last potatoes! All he had were the skins which he usually fed to the pigs, but there were no pigs! With disgust he threw a handful of potato skins into the kettle of hot grease. The two ladies fished them out with wooden paddles and declared them very delicious! The distraught cook wept louder. The ladies cried out: “Fish? How about fish?” But he said, no. Fish were time wasted.

“Fish are small and we must feed hundreds! Fighting men cannot subsist on a few morsels of fish.

When all seemed completely hopeless, King Selucas of the war elephants sent an envoy with a proposal of marriage for Stratonike - not to his son, but for him! The age difference was over sixty years! Demetrius was devastated and appalled. But to his surprise Nikki agreed. She had always loved her grandfather and felt at ease with an older man. Demetrius was disgusted. He wanted her to know a love like we had. In the end the hunger pangs won out. He sent an answer. His correspondence stated boldly that his daughter agreed, but should he mistreat her - basically Selucas should not count on a long future - continuing:

“Beings I have been well stripped of my holdings, the wedding and feastings shall be as your treat. Our guests shall be all of my families, my complete navy and their families.”

Envoys were sent to Alexandria, Argos and places of family importance. Shortly, an Egyptian ship with Ptolemy’s and Pyrrhus’ families joined the fleet. Pyrrhus must speak with Demetrius and boarded the Seventeener. He was appalled at the starvation around him.

“To the gods, I would have brought food!” He took a breath. “Mayadike made it to Alexandria with your son Alexander by my sister, Deidiamia and her bodyguard’s son. I deliberated on bringing them, and as I see about me, I made the right call. The children are well, happy, have pastimes and the library to salve their curiosity. Do you want to tell my sister?” Demetrius stopped in shock: No one expected them to be alive. Time! To the gods, he needed time to think about this.

The wedding parties assembled and greeted but there could be no dinner feast! In all this excitement I cannot say if Phila attended; truthfully, I didn’t care! ***Nikki was*** ***my daughter and Tiggy was my son now!***

The fleet could be seen across the horizon each flying the deep cranberry red sails. It was impressive. Selucas was glad this was in friendship as there were over three hundred naval ships. Demetrius had a no nonsense warning in place! No matter how hungry his people were, they were to wear the best cloths they had; must approach slowly and eat politely at the wedding feast. These would be the first wonderful meals any of them had for many months! They thanked the gods that the feasting continued for many weeks!

The unloading was methodical; the guards; the royals, half the navy; their families and more navy. It seemed slow. Pyrrhus brought my one Cheetah; he had taken it with him to Alexandria because I was so ill upon rescue. Simba walked beside me placidly; Ares and other attendants were a step back. Several ladies kept the bride veiled and several soldiers carried her on a curtained dais.

Demetrius eyed his young, sprightly wife. She was bouncing back now. There was no need to relive any of Megara. Motherhood changed women even in the best of times - he observed that on the family ships. He motioned to Pyrrhus: “Children need a fine childhood.” The two nodded. Pyrrhus retained both boys as his sons.

The only repulsive thing for me was their special spice, Star Anise. It was gathered from a grove of very attractive trees but it seasoned everything! My sweet Nikki asked her groom about the food for her little mother - me. The only thing that did not have it was yogurt: Sweet young creamy yogurt. I ate it for every meal and snack! I had our cook get the recipe. Although there was nothing on our vessels to make it with he spoke positively but said he could not guarantee its success because the process needed a still time and the ship swayed continually.

Selucas chuckled; he enjoyed being taken advantage of and Demetrius certainly knew how to present himself with kingly protocol. Nikki was tall and big boned. She was fair with blue eyes like her father and had dimples when she smiled. Her curly hair was a lively brown; she was so lovely to see. Selucas was more pleased than he expected and gifted her immediately with a cask of precious jewels from his India. Perhaps it was a streak of guilt that parlayed such sapphire and diamond giving or maybe it was just that he had had his fun with them and wanted someone young to enjoy them. He said she must have a talisman: The thing or creature which represented his kingdom. Nikki toured the lands and decided definitely it was the elephant! Promptly jewelers were called to fashion bracelets, necklaces, earrings and even fibulas with the face and ears of these creatures. Tiny Deidiamia too should have a talisman: And before a word, Demetrius said “The cheetah!” His mind always reverted to the first time he saw her. And Demetrius too received: Casks of gold, Oriental pearls and feathers for ornamenting his new turbans. He was given several large fertile lands!

One fly flew into the ointment: Selucas’ son Antiochus fell madly in love at seeing Nikki! He nearly died of longing. After many months Selucas’ only son did not recover so the loving father passed Nikki to his son, Antiochus. She retaliated only by her written signature: “Stratonike, Queen of King Selucas.” Antiochus worshipped her and even constructed a garden of hanging plants hoping to see her smile.

LATER YEARS

In time Demetrius regained stature; conquering three crowns and was called Emperor of Greece. I was now The Empress Deidiamia and through all of this I remained true to myself. When monies improved Demetrius could continue the palace for us at Sikking, but Phila got wind of it and claimed the palace -playing her first wife card! Once again, this left us without a residence but we had each other. Phila had her palace without her family. Demetrius decided not to try for another palace. After Megara he did not want to leave me anywhere! So I remained at his side on sea or land. There were small skirmishes but Demetrius hoped to back-off waging massive wars. However we were called to an area north to help a distressed smaller king, Antipater. We went.

Once there a spy informed Demetrius that the man had bigger hopes. I saw the verbal exchange but had no idea that King Antipater had his own mother killed to gain that small kingship; he wanted us to help him do away with his brother and then he planned to turn the tables on Demetrius to gain several crowns at once! Demetrius detested being duped and lied to. We were gathered for the assembly dinner in a field tent. The feast ended shockingly.

The cook was beside himself, the forks had not been packed! I suggested he make as many things that could be eaten with the fingers, like fried chicken pieces and those fried potato skins with salt! I thought he was going to weep more so patted his shoulder and took my place on an “X” folding chair. There were dozens of couches for the men to relax. The guest of honor brought armed troops to the feast! They marched in and stood side by side surrounding us. This was a terrible breach of protocol! But Demetrius had anticipated such a move by this mother-killer-King.

Twice as many of our troops joined us standing behind and between the others. This was outrageous but as a woman I could not speak! The guest of honor became more and more upset. I tried to get his mind on the food but could not and so much was wonderful specialty foods! I had no idea of the intrigues but King Antepater realized these were collapsing behind us. The other guests were relaxed on couches and enjoying themselves. Without warning King Antipater lunged at my husband with a dagger and one of our guards speared him. Our guards crossed their spears across the opposition and all calmed until Antipater’s army yelled ovations to Demetrius; defected and joined our ranks!

I will mention one particular mercenary, a Gaul from Chaldea. This soldier passed by my tent and grabbed me mistakenly. He thought I was one of the dancing girls. We had many dancing girls who followed the army and traveled with their mothers. Ares saw him in my tent and with his dagger pulled - set the Gaul straight. He was new and foreign so at my word, Ares led the Gaul away.

“That little thing is the Empress?” The Gaul asked!

“She is very big to us. Come; this other tent has the dancing girls.” Ares said.

Later my brother, Pyrrhus was warring along the Adriatic coast and rested with a friendly-king in Korkira. Pyrrhus was overcome with the Korkiran Princess Lanessa. Greeks were ordinarily fair, blond and brown eyed (only we of the House of Pyrrhus had red hair). Lanessa was a brunette with deep olive toned skin and brown eyes. Pyrrhus blushed and soon there would be a wedding feast. As much of Graecia was cold in winter, and Korkira mild the kings and queens came for the wedding and stayed all winter. The queens loved comparing their jewelry. None was as finely finished with tiny shots of gold as Queen Lanessa’s. Her work was done by Etruscans (more north) and featured a Ram. Ah, talismans! Stratonike and I had them and only Ptolemy’s wife had none. She chose Wheat, their mainstay.

Our following 13 years of marriage were happy. At times his populous took advantage of his kindness. Some wanted him to rule on problems that a lawyer could solve. Once he gathered all these bogus petitions while we were strolling across a bridge; he stopped, shuffled them and threw the lot over the bridge into the water. He turned to the shocked penitents and said: “There, it is all solved. Go home.”

But our army was mercenaries and they were not happy at peace. There was a skirmish in Thessaloniki quite northeast into the Polyponese near the Aegean Sea. Demetrius and Pyrrhus were both beseeched to help. They tried to figure a plan to march both armies so they would reach the destination at the same time. The two studied the map but there seemed no way because of a chain of mountains Finally Pyrrhus threw down his stylus and said, “Oh, let Deidiamia take a look at it!” Demetrius looked stunned. “Oh, yes, we used to play games like this as kids. She is good.”

My brother told me the problem so I bent over the map. That was a wicked problem. The valley by the coast was at a lower sea level than any other area and easier hiking. The valley opposite the mountains swung a path too far west making it longer by at least a day. But partially up the mountain a path which would nearly obscure the armies from each other was noted. This would be difficult but better than the inland one and certainly better than trying to conquer the tops of the rugged mountains. The men agreed with me.

Now the fly in this maneuver was a traitor! That very Gaul that wandered into my tent! He convinced soldiers of each army that they were being taking to a desolate place to war each other! They would be grateful to him for this insight and proclaim him king! Discord grew as the trek continued. When we reached Thessaloniki the discord was bubbling hot. No amount of salving words soothed it. Demetrius thought if he spoke to them at the theatre it would quell the discord. But the vibrations around us were tumultuously disturbing and I feared for my husband. I sent Ares to guard him. I was in the seating area near several ladies. I did not have Simba with me; she was in her kennel. There was a plat and Demetrius mounted that and held his arms up for quiet. However the traitor dashed towards me and turned me to face him. That very Gaul from Chaldea who had accosted me in my tent! He held a pike pointed at me and said, “Now you die!” I whimpered- what was this? Men fight men not women! But he threw the pike. It seemed a thud against my chest but heavy. A terrible commotion started. I saw the wildness about me but could not catch my breath. I thought, ‘If I take a step back maybe I can at least balance this heavy thing.’ But when I stepped back - it was my spirit that stepped back and my body crumbled to the ground before my eyes. I was surprised and then shocked to realize - I was dead!

Demetrius and Ares saw the attack. Ares dashed to me but Demetrius had a spasm and stood dumbfounded. He could not talk or move. I saw some locals hustle him stumbling to safety. To my surprise the Gaul fell weeping upon my body; Ares arrived, yanked him off and used his dagger. I shouted “No”, my spirit-voice would not be heard. Ares too was killed in this exchange.

And there we were the three of us in a spirit-form. The Gaul began proclaiming himself King but nobody paid him any attention in the melee around us. Ares gaped at the man in surprise. The civil war continued. Others made a bier and began piling bodies on it. I instinctively knew we were to go someplace, but where or how we got “there” I could not remember. I took Ares and the Gaul each by a hand and we started walking away in silence. Behind us our bodies were being carried to the bier. It was strange, each of us felt fine. We had seen our ruined bodies and knew we were dead but we felt fine. We walked from this scene so long a time that I felt our travel was useless. Out of desperation I wished to My God that we would get “there!”

CHAPTER IV

THE SPECTACULAR BEYOND

I felt dusty; the men were despondent. We were bloody. And as sudden as my thought, a bright white light drew us to it. It was a warm and embracing kind of light. And then in a moment I saw a beautiful pink light higher but the men did not see it. As I catched this pink light it began to pull me to it! The men tried to hang onto me but the light was stronger and I slipped from their grasps.

I wandered a few steps in this new pink lighted area and seemed to be alone. I looked about for Ares and the Gaul but they had not come with me. Theree was a spirit carrying parchments. He wore a smooth robe with a sash and he guessed immediately who I was. We walked together through a dry warm pink mist. He said this was a reflection of the Pink Light. ‘Mist separates areas: It is a privacy thing.’ Thus began my orientation into Heaven. But my mind was buzzing about the earthly turmoil and I had left my husband. Was he all right?’ My well-meaning husband! How I loved him and wanted to return to him. The spirit said this was impossible.

He asked me to sit and began showing me pictures that moved. He said it was me, from my very beginning. I saw no resemblance and was still upset by this separation. I wanted to go back! I felt fine; that dying must have not happened at all. But I had to watch these miniature people in his little box. He would not let me interrupt him.

There were a few snatches: Some weird land - the doctor looked a bit like the Gaul. Finally the little pictures began showing the Greek life! The spirit really worked to impress upon me that I could not return: He pointed out that my body had a big hole in it and was useless. The pictures ended with the bodies of Ares, the Gaul and me upon a wood bier with many others. But there was good news for me: All my intricate planning for the Greek life had paid off! I mastered almost all of the challenges. There was one thing not handled well enough, but I would be able to see God in a very short time. This guide spirit became mosr animated - I need never leave Heaven again. I had by-passed many levels of the climb to the God Area by making the right choices. My mind rejected a parting from the husband I loved. Again the nice spirit said pointedly that I need not return to Earth! But Demetrius was in danger: My tall, huge man that I could befuddle and tease. It couldn’t be over. It couldn’t! How I yearned.

"Oh, he escaped, my dear. They got him away. He is safe and will retire to his daughter’s in Syria. You may check on him from here, when it pleases you." I nodded but this situation was not at all satisfactory. It did not please me at all.

The Helpful Spirit told me: "The men: Ares wants to go back. He wants his magnificent body. That is unfortunate. Actually, your killer has fared better! He showed true remorse over what he did. He knew you in that earlier life; a doctor in fact. “ Oh, this perked my thought: ‘Ah then, it was more than a resemblance.’

“What would you like to do, young lady?"

Do?I could not go back. I wanted to go somewhere and cry. The spirit would not accept that option. OK: “I want to know which of these Gods is real!’ "I want to see the Greek Gods!" There was an aiare of bafflement on the spirit's face. "You know” I prodded: “ Zeus on Olympia and Apollo who chases the Sun…"

"There are no such Gods, my dear. Those were stories to help people get here." I feigned being baffled - no Greek Gods! So another choice would be the God of tehe African tribesman. Without y voicing this he nodded.

"You learned about the true God, I see - ugh…in the jungle?” He was confused and flipped a page or so of his parchment charts. “Oh! Another one of those death trials! You may note; those little people become cannibals an eon hence! Well, at the time of your encounter, they prayed to the real God, my dear. For now, I suggest you wish yourself to your area and perhaps you would like to adjust some of the things in your mansion - it is here on this level now. Alas I suggest you see friends, take some classes, give some classes and enjoy your heavenly blessings." He said like a smart-talking preacher and then closed the parchments.

"But I don't have friends and do not know how to make friends. Royals are not allowed open friendships. Mine was a life of silence and incognito. I never dared to talk freely…and from your little box it seems I was very naughty before this Greek life. Who would want me for a friend?"

"Ugh, here is a list of classes that might interest you. I'd suggest you try. Get to know some people in the classes…" I was not departing.

I saw no one else and the place was not familiar to me. I followed him closely. Finally he said, "The spirits on this level are all doing what they love to do; some are working, others giving or taking classes. That is why you do not see anyone. Look down the list, please.” I realized he wanted me to leave him.

I took the list. Some classes (cooking, baking and music) I rejected immediately. Others I checked and attended. Time passed, I kept busy but checked on both my brother and my husband often. The classes kept my attention much longer than I could guess I had taken nearly all of the classes; I even learned to make useful garments and could fashion my hair and apply my own makeup. I gave many animal training classes. There seemed to be no end to the day but I was never tired or hungry. I became adept at considering the task at hand before starting to solve it. There were psychic and paranormal classes. I knew how to grind corn and wheat grains and make bread outdoors but never I wanted to see any of that again and rejected teaching those arduous tasks often.

"Deidiamia - ah, Deidia! You had a nickname! You have never chosen music."

“Oh my husband and I had pet names: first half of mine and last half of his: Deidia and Iorcetes” I ignored his question about music.

“You have never taken music!” He repeaated

“ No music, no water and no sports games, please! I had to attend **all** of the plays, games and music festivals in Graecia. Those squeaky shrill instruments still make me shiver and I can feel the stinging dust at the games and races. The sun reddening my flesh was torture. So are my reasons.”

The spirit squashed his mouth together, "But you have mastered the races!" He said. "You lived with black people, you dealt with Chinese traders; you befriended the Gaul once; you even married a foreigner. Indeed, you have mastered the races! That is the most difficult task in the world." We were both talking about different things! - How could he confuse wrestling, discus, javelin throwing and chariot racing with kinds of people? I did not ask because it meant one of us was wrong.

## THE WORLD OF MUSIC

I became extremely happy in the Unseen Realm. I learned all sorts of things and taught a few classes. The Helpful Spirit determined that from my past history - I was good at inspiring ambitious men. There were many of these in the World of Professional Music. The helpful spirits tried their darndest to get me there. I was very music-negative. After time the Helpful Spirits conned me! They said; I must walk to my new class.But in doing this I had to pass the entrance to the World of Professional Music. I still wore a simple Greek Chiton; it was my version of a Helpful Spirit’s robe. That’s what had happened to me by giving classes and guiding other spirits…I became a Helpful Spirit!I was good at counseling because I did it kindly. I saw the backs of men at study. Most of them had wigs and the hair shined with cleanliness. I saw ruffled dickeys, shirts with balloon sleeves, satin waistcoats and knickers tied with ribbons. Some had jackets of embroidered silks and covered buttons … These were men? What sissies. But the harpsicord was perfected and the piano, nearly so. I was about to continue my walk when I heard the most beautiful sound.

Franz Schubert began his final concert. He would then leave to begin his Earth Life. They hoped the lovely sounds would entice me; and they did, oh they did! Those sounds mesmerized me. A cute sissy-dressed man came away from a sort of magical-crooked-box. I entreated him to make those sounds again. He could not but in appeasement he wished a garden of pastel orchids for me. There were few flowers in Graecia, Egypt or Syria. And these had such a glistening quality; they seemed shot with dew and Oh! Their fragrance was beyond delightful. The Master of Music put an arm around me, saying that although Schubert had to leave, there were others who made lovely sounds on the magic box! Perhaps I had time to come inside and hear them! He brought me gently into his world. The Master of Music was working on an Earth life and introduced himself saying he helped the others write music - his name would be Franz Liszt.

"But, I cannot pronounce that. In Graecia it is most impertinent to use the 'ST' sound as it makes spittle from the mouth and that is unforgivable. Is ‘Leez’ all right?" He drew a breath - it jarred him a bit but at last this lady was in his area and interested in Music! How many years had they tried?

"Leez will be fine, my dear." He smiled.

It was a strict rule: As a spirit that need not leave the Realm: ***I could work with those working on Earth Lives but could not become a part of their life***. In the ensuing years, only Puccini and Chopin caught my heart, but I closed my eyes to the feeling by thinking of Demetrius; no one had been as wonderful to me as him. I noted that there were always women in composers' lives.

Although Liszt taught me everything he knew about music, when it was time for his departure, I felt abandoned. The composers pleaded and cried to him about their pieces. He wrote much of it to get them off his back. I was not adept at scribbling musical notes; I would get nothing else done! So, I refused to do it: Saying they were a bunch of crybabies and could well apply themselves to music that was stirring and inspirational rather than stuff that ought to be placed in the waste basket!

***It did not set well.*** The composers began playing harsh sarcastic notes as I passed their areas. Yet, it was ***their*** music and ***stirring***! Some of it became a whirl of rambunctious sounds, like Carmen; Peer Gantt, Night on Bald Mountain, The Fire Dance, The Saber Dance. The Russians actually found these sounds exhilarating and did them without anger. Even gentle Tchaikovsky was caught up with the new sound and although nearly finished with the 1812 Overture, put a real cannon in, explaining he was too old to learn how to make the miraculous noises like the others!

There was Rimsky Korsakov, a dreamer - so opposite. He needed reality in his life to get substance in his music. “The Captain does not think of his beloved in the midst of war - he thinks of winning the battle!” Rimsky was amiss that his music was not right in my eyes; he disappeared. I was very upset. I would answer for ruining his gift! Then, in time he came back. "You are right, Deidia; I joined the navy. It is like you said. Oh, I go all over the world and now can write about much more, thank you!" Later, an Englishman Albert Ktelby followed an almost identical musical pattern painting exotic scenes in music.

'If only the others …' Finally, Franz Liszt returned. He was so overcome by the exuberant music he could not find his voice.

"Ugh, Deidia, what happened?"

"They became upset because I refused to write their music." I felt quite sheepish.

"Why did I not do that? Great work lady!" He said. I was absolved.

We two worked together again like old times. There was always a new musician to hear. It was so fulfilling having Liszt back.

In a while, the musicians began to change. Instead of composing works, they appeared in concert performing works already long written. In a bit this began to change also. Short pieces “ditties” became vogue. Two and a half-three minutes and it was finished! No more four part movements that put one to sleep and then jarred them awake in the third movement. Classical music moved aside. It was relegated to Universities, music teachers and social pretenders. There was folk music but it was performed for show skits or at festivals. Music became common-people friendly and enjoyable.

There were many things about the Unseen World that I did not understand. There were several composers like nice Scott Joplin who said he was going to be a Negro (black person). Their spirits were just as white as mine. Many spirits assumed the features they had chosen to become second nature to them. Others worked on their music let the features wait until they had nearly completed their work.

There were many romantic movies that needed music and several “Big Bands” wrote and performed in those and then record albums were cut and sold. I worked with some of them and made a few mistakes with them. Although Jimmy Dorsey played a mellow saxophone and I sanctioned this new instrument to ***orchestra*** - other groups did not play the thing so mellow. So also with Tommy, his brother with a slide trombone. Others made fun with these. I had to answer to Liszt about everything! When Dixieland Jazz, used those instruments and trumpets, my mistakes haunted me. I fully expected to be evicted from my job! I beleaguered Guy Lombardo for losing his piano to lead an orchestra and I never could tell his brothers apart! I could not fathom nice little Hoagy Carmichael as long and lean and ugly as he said he would be. And, how I pleaded with Frankie Carle to keep composing; his life was long and he could not rest on his laurels - he would not listen. And dear little (Earl)Spike Jones, so despondent that his Record Company would not allow him to do a serious album to show people that he was a classically trained pianist.

HEAVENLY SIGHTS

There were other times when things seemed so screwed-up with the composers making wrong decisions that I sought an audience with The Father. No other spirit was as close to me as Liszt but he had his own woes. I consulted with this very accommodating Spirit called The Father. There were times I needed a father.

***I did not realize that by helping others, I was refining my own spirit.*** I thought I was still on that level where the Light at the Entrance was pink, and without realizing it had advanced through the Purple Light and then into the God Area. One of the Helpful Spirits told me this was called ***the non-colors***. The Light was immense and emanated from the Godhead. My mansion was still the tiny clay house with a fountain-pool I had envisioned at the first. I never thought about going there; I was so engrossed with the work There were so many composers! My little mansion moved in elevation as I did but I never actually realized it. I would approach the immense gilded and carved wood mansion of the Father and ask the two tall angels at the equally tall doors if I might have an audience. Only once did they stop my advance. I thought I was at fault that the angels crossed their spears before me. My fear of pikes returned, but one angel spoke: "He is in audience. Wait!"

Wait … may as well look around. The way to His mansion was lined with pretty white light standards; metal with lanterns bedecked with flowers and ribbons floating gently. To my left was an oriental palace touched with gold - maybe it was a place of worship. Beyond that was a large group of men wearing little, sitting cross-legged and pleasantly watching all the proceedings. I turned and in back of me were heavily bejeweled Arabian tents and Bedouins moving about. The road under foot was of see-through bricks filled with flecks of gold; it shimmered. In the distance I could make out an empty area and then a white wooden fence and more empty area that was curious. Turning more to the left there was a smaller mansion but a replica of the Father's being of rococo carved wooden swirls touched with a bronzed gold finish. It had a similar tower too but this mansion looked abandoned. That seemed strange because everything else was filled with light. The Angels' announced that I could approach. As I started along the golden glass brick path the nicest looking young man was leaving with a folder of papers tucked under his arm. He wore a white robe; his hair was white and softly curled. He was beautiful.

"Oh, pardon me, madam. I was so engrossed in my joy - I did not see you." He said his name was Joseph and he was studying the records of the Messiah. It was a great privilege! I recalled that when we escaped Sardis we visited with some Jewish Rabbis in Ephesus who believed a Messiah was coming. When I visited, I often saw Joseph in passing. He told me that he was copying all the accounts of the Messiah’s Earth Life and hoped to continue His work.

The Father always met me in a small room where His Light was very bright and cast a shadow in front of his knees. I tried to watch my step but every time, I fell over something. He would always laugh at my clumsiness; half arise, reach out and set me steady. Often just being there comforted me; it made little difference what we said. But, at times he would elevate us from that room, several levels to look across at the stars. One time He pulled a curtain back and all below us was dark. "That is Earth below us, dark and unhappy. It makes me - so very sad that mankind chooses wrongly so often." It was then that the aggravations with my protégé composers became insignificant. I pitied The Father; this was big. This was the Earth! We stood silently awhile and then He gave me a hug and I left feeling loved to have Him share this.

RULES AND TRIALS

I loved helping the composers and arrangers - their music would fill my soul. But there were strict rules: A Helpful Spirit could not become entangled personally with their charge. I did well enough; during my stay there. There were still but two tempters: Puccini and Chopin. Puccini wanted me to leave percussion for violin (which could sound like squeaky Greek music) so we parted. I checked Chopin’s records and he had a Countess. So, it was not too perplexing when a Life Planning Spirit approached me with some new thoughts. He said this was about the welfare of several of my loved ones from the Greek Life: My brother, Pyrrhus; my bodyguard, Ares and Demetrius, the husband I loved more than life. I told the Spirit:

"I ask about them now and then, but am told they are off somewhere even in other lives. Do you think if I ***pray*** more for them?"

"It will take more than that, I fear. It would benefit them if—***you***—took an Earth Life." I was astounded: Leave Heaven! Leave The Father! Leave Music!

He said. "Oh, you'd have time here yet. The planning takes a bit to coordinate. We are thinking you might go about 1930. There are many Greek soldiers who would love to do a kindness for you. We thought to slate you as sort of a farmer's wife in Springfield, Illinois."

I never entertained a thought of leaving Heaven … I really went through many horrible trials to gain Heaven! I always hoped these loved ones would join me someday! My thoughts were shaken by the year 1930 A.D. and I blurted: "To the Wondrous God - How long have I been here?"

"From your death in Thessaloniki, it is almost 2300 years. Not quite a month in God's way of thinking." He tossed this off-handedly while he glanced at his sheaf of parchments. "You would think this bunch would have made it by now." he mumbled.

I was abashed 2300 years and wandered back to Music in a daze. "Leez! They told me I am here 2300 years. What do I look like?" I felt my face.

"The same as the first day I saw you. The spirit never ages."

"But you look old, my dear friend."

He laughed, "I am about 30 or so. I affect this look because that is the way people always think of Liszt. That life was OK musically. You notice, my movements are not dowdy nor my flesh wrinkled. Come let us walk through the instruments. “Whenever a musician returns he can claim his instrument." He began naming the pianos and came to a Harpsichord. "This is Landowska's; she was a master." He sat down and set his long boney fingers to the keys and played.

"Oh. That's very nice, Leez. With a little practice you could…"

"Aha! No you don't. Not on me." He closed the lid laughing.

"They asked me to take an Earth Life, Leez, to try to help a few people make it inside."

"It is good to help others but it can be hard to do though. I am taking another Earth Life myself in a bit." This startled me and he patted my hand. "I - had trouble with the personal part. I want to play music for God! I am well able; except for the purity part." He gathered me in a turn. "Let us check the podium and see if anything has transpired. I know piano has been slowing and that organ is not really your thing." Those words made me think of Craig who insisted on playing the piano and organ simultaneously, woe! Liszt shuffled the parchments. "Oh, we have a pianist; classically trained. He is having a hard time composing for his presentation concert. Perhaps you can check on him. Oh! Wait. It says here that he only speaks Deutsch. That could be a problem; our interpretative system for German was not in use during two world wars. It is being updated for us but it is not complete. You may hear in our Heavenly language but it will revert to Deutsch at times. He's in the classical composition area." Liszt handed me a slip with his name.

I looked at the paper--‘maybe Polish or Lithuanian, not like any German name I ever saw. I will have him pronounce his name. 'Ah, that must be him scribbling as fast as can be and his waste basket is overflowing with paper crumples.' His hair would be as frizzy curly as mine is if it were not clipped short. ***'Cute features. Those will gain him no Light.'*** I stopped at the piano, a black Blauthner—'Don't often see one of those'.

He poked a few keys, jotted it on paper, poked again, crumpled the paper and tossed it into a tall overflowing mesh waste basket. His white shirt sleeves were turned back a couple times, cuff links placed carefully on the wood at the end of the higher octaves. As Liszt and I approached, to my dismay, Liszt disappeared! Now the young man was rummaging in his basket, found a wad and smoothed it out upon the rack. He erased a few notes, and copied in a few new ones. His hair shined blond at the ends. The notes rippled. She never saw such dedication.

"Ahem," she said - no reaction. "Ahem" - again no reaction. 'How impolite! He knows I am standing here.' "What are you doing?" I hedged.

"Ich schriebe Konzert, Gnadiges Fraulien, Komnen Sie wenn Conzert."

‘Oh dear, it is German!’ I blinked and said: "Oh how nice. How's it coming?"

Now, he forgot his thought, grabbed the paper wadded it and shot it to the waste basket, smacked his pencil on the rack. He began a discourse in Deutsch explaining his time-limits and that he needed absolute quiet. He bowed, turned and reseated himself. Just as he stretched his hands toward the instrument, he heard me in his native Deutsch.

"And what, pray tell, does all that mean?" He shook his head in woe and wished to have me removed; but saw no one to help him. In aggravation, he turned again toward his keys, ignoring me while I stood quietly, crossing and re-crossing my thumbs.

"Please, why don't you play me what you have written," I said.

"Ist kein Konzert. Sie muss wenn es Konzert kommen." He took a snort of a breath.

"Concert! You probably can't play at all!" ‘That should irritate him.’

"Was! WAS! Ich bin am jungsten Konzert Klavierspieler aus Berlin Universitat. Ich bin eirste, die hochachten im Mitbewerbung Chopin!" As he spat these words of self-praise, he stood absolutely straight, his simple white shirt and brown wool slacks changed into formal tails, white tie and a ribbon banner diagonally across his chest with a badge.

Her part of the interpretative language system had kicked-off. 'Oh, boy, whatever that was! No wonder the Germans had so many wars,’ I thought.

"Well, this is indeed nice. That means you can play Chopsticks' for me." His face turned into a red scowl...finally the interpretations kicked in for her and she heard scathing words.

"Hear you this, young lady! I am a concert pianist; I do not play Chopsticks. I am seriously working on a concert and wish to be left alone."

"And, you are having troubles with it." I gestured to his waste basket.

He tossed his hand in a circle. "Ja, ja. This is why I wish to be left alone."

Ishook my head, no. He collapsed on the bench and hit the wood violently with his arm. He turned savagely towards her. "Ich hass es sagen, aber heinaus, bitte!"

This did not interpret... maybe it was not so nice. I had to hear him play. Next come tears ..."I - I do not wish to hear you play. It was Leez, he want me hear you." She sniffed her eyes watery. "Leez say you play --pretty--good."

"Liszt! Franz Liszt!" He asked in disbelief. His cloths were back to the shirt and slacks.

"Yes, nice old man, who--takes care of the place."I purposely understated.

The young German sat down again, his mind was floating. "I did not even know - he knew - I was alive!" His hand was to his chest. "I play. I play you anything, you want! Ugh, you said 'Chopsticks'?"

"Eh, maybe Grieg; play the wild violent parts from Grieg."

"One can pick-out parts?" He said in amazement and lifted his hands.

They were the most beautifully shaped hands I had seen in years! They flew across the keys like the fluttering wings of a hummingbird. My breath caught in anticipation. There was much right hand work in the piece, but I must hear the other hand. If it were less good, it would restrict his writing.

"Bass! Good rotary bass from Chopin...the Polonaise."

"Chopin is my idol! I separate the others, but not Chopin!" His hand went to his chest dramatically.

'Oh boy, put my foot in that.’ "Takes so long, just good bass..."

"Fraulein, I could no more separate Chopin than I could tear the heart from my chest!" He dramatized.

I held a straight face. "Ugh—Fire Dance...Sabre Dance, yes, Sabre Dance: Short and exciting!"

"Fraulein, I play you Polonaise, whole thing."

"Then please, do not pound or hold the notes." Iturbi set a precedent with his pounding claw-like hands approach.

The German held up a finger, arched his eyebrows and smiled: "My degree! I play Chopin like Chopin himself." Strangely, his clothing changed again to formal white tie and tails. I wanted to shake my head and drop…how many bad Polinaises had I heard since dear sweet Frederick wrote it?

It seemed a bit stiff at the start and then his hands touched gracefully and lightly over the keys. I was thinking about his possibilities as he finished. He turned and with a nasty smirk said, "There, how was that?" I was abashed at the smirk and was glad the war was over; he would have made a tough commandant. I recoiled at his pettiness like it was

spoiled fruit.

"Good--pretty good."

"Ach, Ach! All my Professors say Wonderful!' and you say, good!" He stood and brought himself to his full stature, but our height was equal. Dismissing this he spoke impressively. "I am Horst Jankowski, Berlin Conservatory--you heard of that? Eh? Who are you to insult ME?"

With a hand to my chest I considered this. 'Who am I?' I tried several responses in my mind first. 'I help Leez...not so impressive. He needs to be impressed …well, I was the Empress of Greece. I do not know if they have Empresses now ... Ah, there are yet Princesses' - My hands pressed together and I bowed with elegance and charm. Although my chiton and filets remained the same , I added golden sandals and a crown like my sister-in law Lanessa from Korkira wore; with pretty gold-shot work. My own gold tube with a pear-drop over each ear was both too plain and uncomfortable. "I am the Princess Deidiamia of the House of Mollosia in Graecia." I made up ‘Mollosia” because I forgot the name of own House.

His eyes opened widely at the royal title. He immediately clicked his heels and bowed eloquently, mangling my difficult old name. My heart fell at this - Earth titles, and proper dress was nothing in the Spiritual World. I was ashamed of my ploy. He began speaking from the bowed position. "It is my supreme pleasure to play for you, your majesty, Princessin Da--da--yamy—yam-ii! Um gott es willen, Ich kann es nicht sagen!" The auto-interpretation was off again.

At last, I could not contain myself and broke into laughter. The title was good for softening-up tough Germans. "Oh, that's all right. I don't think I can say your name either, John-kow-seee."

"Ah, shorter 'a', no DJ sound: 'Ya - Yan-KOFF'-skee."

"Forgive that I do not say a short 'a' or an 'st' But I am taking an English speaking Life shortly, and those letters are included. Mine is 'Deidiamia but call me Deidia."

He touched his lips with his beautiful hand, trying it under his breath. "Tell you what! I call you, Princessin; you call me**,** John-kow-seee." He nodded once brightly. “You wanted' Chopsticks', yes? I play it better for you!"

He sat down, played it and then double timed it; made it sound Oriental and then classical. I could visualize him in popular piano. Both hands had equal versatility. When he finished, he asked if I had a favorite song. ‘Hum, it had to be popular.’

"Not really, but in my new life, they say, I shall be--like-a-farmer's wife so, play, 'Hitch Old Dobbin to the Shay.'"

"That is so old. Take something newer." But I shook my head and he proceeded with the simple melody. He actually smiled when he finished.

"But there are so many notes you did not play, Jankowski" (mispronouncing it forever after)..."A1l these," I pointed to the keys, "up and down here!" I said childishly.

"They aren't in the song, Princessin."

"But, let us put them in! Let's see, it's an old horse, can we make his feet clop? Road is bad, buggy hits a hole, can we do that? Yes! That sets the fringe to swinging on the buggy. Now the guy is catching his hat and she is holding onto hers!" This was fun and I giggled while he played appropriate sounds into the old tune. "Now the horse is prancing and the girl is laughing." Soon he had filled the song with innovations and was laughing. “Ah, thank you for the buggy ride.” I said.

"I have never had such fun with the music, Princessin."

"See you have thousands of notes in your hands, Jankowski (mispronounced) and you must play them all. It is more fun when you do, yes?"

He nodded eagerly. His upturned nose bobbing, the eyes full of smiles.

"Ah, I see you two are getting along fine," Said Liszt.

"It IS Liszt!" The young man said, getting to his feet. "It is wonderful, this lady knows all about the music. I was about to ask her to play. You will, won't you?"

Deidia placed her hand to her chest... "I most certainly will NOT, when your hands are here to touch those keys."

They saw the young man's face light-up. "But you will come back?"

"She'll be back." Liszt said. "I ... liked that stuff, I heard."

"But - I am a concert pianist." Horst called after them.

"Oh, don't let that hold you back, we need cheerful stuff." Liszt answered.

"Ach, but what if I can write nothing?"

Liszt pursed his great thin lips. "Then, just play --a simple melody." Out of earshot, Liszt asked me about the Princess-thing.

"Well, Leez, he has this terrible temper and he - just - needed a Princess." And we each turned to other chores.

“Deidia, what are you doing?" Liszt asked.

"My dear friend, I am learning Astral Traveling.

"Bah! That's all we ever do here! Come, you must get to Jankowski. His waste basket is full." Liszt said.

As we arrived we heard a tremendous chord boom. I walked up to him, cocked my head silently, lifted his hands and turned them over, looking childishly at each one. He broke into laughter.

"Ah, my new friend, do you have time to play the little fun thing?"

"With pleasure; I have been thinking of you."

"Dooming me to hell?" I alluded to the chord.

His face shot scarlet and he laughed. His teeth were short, straight and clean. Horst spun off all the little embellishments. I picked up a wad of music and flattened it on his rack. He would play it. I nodded if it had possibility. If it was really bad I made a bad-smelly face and purported it to the wastebasket - he would laugh. If it was good, I made a variety of pleased sounds and set it in a special pile. Once a spontaneous little sequence spilled forth and I was so happy I grabbed his hands and kissed them. "That's Jankowski." Oh, that horrible name - I never said it correctly.

"Ach, let me write it down, it just came out!" Then he held up a finger. "I have something around here that will go with that!"

There were only four bars on a sheet, but a whole song hinged on the two elementals. Without thought I sat down on the bass end of the bench beside him, but he absently reached out for a lower chord and pushed me ... Apologies flew quickly! I made room, let him continue his musical thought and write it down and then I slid off the bench.

"We have learned a lesson. My place is in the curve of your instrument, and your place is on the bench."

"But--I want you on the bench!" He said a bit shocked at himself.

"If anyone sits beside you, you can't play all the notes." I smiled and patted the curve of the piano.

"I am worried, Princessin. My first concert is coming up, and...I don't know anybody but you." He pouted slightly. "I will do the Polonaise and some others…one of mine, but ich bin aIle gemischen ab. You see, I thought I would do classical things, now I don't know."

"So, you will play both and see how it goes."

"Ja, whichever goes best... but nobody will come." He shook his head dejectedly.

"You have done a lot of work and it will be heard according to your promise. Your promise is very beautiful, Jankowski." I pressed his hand with mine.

That instant Liszt caught sight of the gesture. "Pressing work, I see!" I explained that the concert was ready. Jankowski handed Liszt his program. Deidiamia saw boredom in the old face.

"If it goes too heavy have that new thing handy, Horst. It sounded pretty good." Liszt said.

"Was ist 'handy’?"

"At hand, within reach--ugh, bring it with you, just in case." He saw the pianist nodding. Liszt grabbed Deidia's arm. "I have used the language tranlations so long that I have forgotten my conventional German!" He said angrily.

"He is afraid no one will come to his presentation." I said.

A snigger: "He's one hard critter; always full of grudges; revenges - nasty digs over all his lives. That's why nobody will work with him or indeed likes him."

"He is quite pleasant with me."

"The first reaction you saw—is the true him! It takes more than agility, remember young Rubenstein?"

"Nobody likes him until he becomes quite old."

"And then, only because his wife has sense enough to listen to your advice to him! Well, Jankowski doesn't get that chance." He handed her the chart.

"Why is the life so short?" She asked.

"He does this repeatedly! Comes! Writes! Goes to Earth! Presents the music! And every time he returns with more negativity on his spirit...he does nothing to improve his spirit."

I gasped; "And he is going to a Godless country …I see he was in France before he came here. A powerful leader banned God; and - took God’s place! This leaves so little hope … For now let us think about the concert. Maybe you can ask a few and I will also. That way he will not be discouraged.

I sought classmates, students and spirits who would be friends later. I managed to gather about forty. Liszt's guests numbered twice that plus a few of the old masters. Not many spirits were enthusiastic. There was a low mumbling. To her surprise, the new composer arrived in white tie and tails but not his badge of honor - thank goodness. Already he looked hot and uncomfortable, but bowed and quickly took his seat.

The "Chopin" drew mild applause…and a shuffling of feet! Entities were leaving! Bright, single clear notes cut the air. The retreat halted. Horst was suddenly wearing his turned-back sleeved shirt and brown slacks.

He smiled. "Bitte, helfin mich." He requested snapping his fingers.

I asked; "Jankowski, do you want us to snap the fingers, like this?" I snapped mine.

He nodded and grinned, "Ja, bitte, bitte!"

He sat down and began to play. Inez her friend, was disgusted at the single notes. "I can play single notes!" She said.

“Yeah,” said Rose another friend.

"A moment please; it may burst into something," I said.

Suddenly sweet and clear like sky rockets on the Fourth of July more notes came from one piano than many entities had heard in years! Someone commented that there was a good arrangement of "Play a Simple Melody" about twenty years ago.” Liszt shushed him then looked at me thinking: 'I told him if he could think of nothing-- to play a simple melody … what a sense of humor!' I guffawed silently thinking - ‘or absolutely none.'

Horst stood to applause! He held up a finger and spoke. Again everyone heard him in Deutsch! I listened carefu1ly...Kindergeschietemadchen... "Is that a little girl in a child's story?" I asked.

"Ja, ja!" his head bobbed, yes; "Heide."

There seemed to be a joyous sense of fun in the crowd. "Heide, Heide", the word circulated. I smiled to him, thinking: 'Great! I did not read the book because it was too thick! Ah, well, listen!' Now several gentlemen volunteered to interpret the music into possible lyrics. This was a good sign!

I glanced about, the auditorium was filled, and the masters were at the back in their collegiate gowns and mortarboards. I breathed a little easier now. There were more than the invited guests; and all were enjoying themselves. At end, people rushed to him and gave him congratulations, which he clearly did not understand until they shook his hand prolifically. Then he realized--it was well received--a success!

After the crowd dispersed, I came up to him. He was sitting, his hands white at the knuckles from clutching the bench.

Without an exchange of words, I realized his classical hopes had gone awry. Everyone was wild overhis popular pieces. "It is my entire fault." I said.

"No." His eyes watered. "Like you say, the tinkles make me so-o-o happy." He turned toward the instrument, lay his head down and wept.

"One can never lose the classics. They are ingrained in the mind, the hands. You have already mastered them. The piano does not play you. It is your mastery of technique that' bring forth the true musicality; even before a full orchestra, yes?"

"Ja," he murmured.

"The conservatory makes one too serious, but gives one a good foundation. The impressive concert you were writingmade you angry with the music, but the happy little notes bring you joy. You will see these people will come back again and again, because, they think you know something about being happy that they do not know! Let us go back to your studio. Maybe you will play me those little things...if you are not too full of your success…Maybe a glissando."

"Oh, Princessin, I never play a glissando. At the conservatory it is considered a very cheap movement, bad piano manners." As he spoke he punctuated his words with up and down conductor's movements.

To answer him, I imitated his movements pointing my finger into the air.

"But sometimes a little zip is just what a piece needs!"

He grabbed my hands and laughed. "Princessin, that was so funny. I do that, don't I?" He laughed again.

In a bit Liszt wandered into his area. Horst bowed and admitted he was in a quandary. "Herr Liszt, a moment. Why does the Princess never use my first name?"

"She is old Greek. They do not say certain letters. You should hear what she calls ME!"

By his third concert, I breathed easier. I felt he had accepted his success in the popular field. But, in the midst of the joyful pieces, he played the melodic Claire De Lune. He had arranged it beautifully and it was accepted widely, but I knew what it meant. After the well-wishers dwindled away, he spoke in light confident easy tones. His face was deceitfully full of smiles.

"Dear Jankowski." I took his hand.

In that instant the farce melted. "Ja-a-a" He wailed. "I am becoming a great success and... I am so disappointed."

"You can't keep this up if it breaks your heart."

"No, I must stick with it. You see, now I play my classics and I find myself, putting in a tinkle or a double time or an arpeggio...I can't play them straight anymore. So, I must keep with the popular music... because." He took a huge breath to hold back a sob. "It makes me so-o hap-p-eee!" He wailed burying his face in my hands. He was the most sensitive man - how could Liszt have said those harsh things? I had to get his mind to another subject. Tell me about *you*...past times." I sat down beside him.

"Ach - Once I had a wife but it was hard times in the music and she turned into a shrew. My music became deathly heavy and dark. This happened a few times. Each time the music had death themes. But then once I did not take a wife and the music picked up. People liked my stuff. They still play my operas and pieces. So from then, I decided no wives ...oh, I had lady friends!"

"Yes, I notice you are quite surrounded with young ladies, Jankowski."

"No. I doubt if they hear my music. I think they just look at me; this face! I wish I had not taken these features. Ach, each sounded good, it is just that when they were assembled..." He huffed, "To be alone is not best and too many excesses creep in. Excesses come too easily. Maybe I would like to be married to the right girl. Maybe, like you, who knows how it is with a musical life but - just a nice girl, no. They cannot comprehend." He changed the subject: "Once you said you were taking an Earth Life."

"Oh, that …They say it is in the center of the United States; flat land called prairie."

"I would like to go to the United States to visit, maybe play music. But my heart is in Deutschland. The forests and mountains are so beautiful, the colorful houses... that is in the South of Deutschland . You know, when I got to the University in Berlin - I was born in Berlin - but I laater loved in the - Black Forest so when I returned to Berlin they did not understand my dialect; my very own countrymen!" He shook his head. "Of course, I must work in a large city -they say Stuttgart in Baden-Wurttemberg and my mother will be yet in the Schwarzwald. I love her; she worked so hard she is my heart to me."

"What are you taking so that you can stay on the Unseen Levels one day?" He knew nothing about this. I explained about negativities and mistakes and how one must work them away. One could foster benefits either choosing good in situations with others, or with features of the body. He fidgeted, saying it was too bothersome; how could he concentrate on the music? I explained *eye* spectacles. He liked that idea; it would detract from the pretty face ... and freckles were alright to him. He would seek out his Life Planner and quiz him about simple things! But once there he quizzed on other things.

While with his Life Planners, he asked about his mentor - her Earth Life, the music she likes especially upon the Earth*,* ***before*** his time to leave. She would marry; also help over four dozen musicians over rough spots in their careers. The new Earth Life plans were in flux yet. Astrology was used in the Unseen Realm for planning the lives-- (Astrology was an intensive study that Earth People accept as foolishness. … but Deidia went only a short ways with it because she was very paranormal. She could just look ahead and choose the path. Horst needed charts and mastering Astrology was child’s play for hm.

He found an astrology manual now and then until he had a collection that rivaled his stack of music! Practical things were beyond his understanding, he could not choose a shirt and tie for the day or make appointments or banter to catch a girl easily, because he thought in music. He studied the appropriate "marriage signs" and sought changes in his own birthchart hoping he and his mentor might marry! At this, the Life Planners was hesitant. Saturn needed to be in the tenth house, to assure regimented and diligent practice on his difficult instrument! To make such changes, could involve years; postponing his birth date; maybe shortening an already short life! Besides there was an age difference; he does not visit her town and she does not visit Deutschland! She has no overseas travel after University in Amsterdam, Holland. The Life Planner saw no way for the two to make contact! Horst persisted. Finally, he heard their famous words:

"I will work on it!"

So too, Horst would work with the information he had gathered. 'At his concerts, he presented an older American pops tune to his European fans along with this normal agenda. Liszt was pleased that the German was gaining a following. Jankowski concerts filled the auditorium, and often monopolized the "tune-in music" of the Realm! Liszt asked me if I had checked the program. There were some Love Songs on it and he rattled his program in aggravation.

"Oh, has he become serious about one of his fans. Which one is it?" I was curious.

"I don't think so. See this: Caroline Denise? I asked his manager and discovered that this is just a more popular name to help sell the record. The original title was an obsolete Greek name: *Deidiamia.*" The old man pursed his great lips. "And "My Roman Love Song"; that too had a name change from Grecian… 'Everybody goes to Rome, nobody goes to Greece!'." Liszt heaved a great breath. "Perhaps you have a problem, my dear. You are not to be in their Earth Life!” He advised.

Together they listened to the bouncy little tunes, innovated with hundreds of embellishing notes. How catchy! They were much too good for popular music.

Liszt read the translated words to her. "...but these fancy words of love just won't come out of me. I'm a Simple Gimple ... man."

It silenced me; I had only been doing my job. I saw Horst turn to her and point his finger, "I am going to haunt you with this one." The audience twittered.

Her mind began swirling: The joyous audience, the words of caution and the magical notes. Perhaps he meant a haunting melody? Liszt stopped smiling altogether. Jankowski had taken the Jack Fina arrangement of "No Arms Can Ever Hold You" matched it closely, but it expressed more passion than one little woman could ignore. I tried to smile but was numb. Horst followed it with "The Donkey Serenade" a tune from "The Firefly"; in my Senior Class operetta (1948); and then he followed this with the once popular "Third Man Theme." At end there was a crash of instruments into the piano! – His thought transferred to her: “It doesn’t have an ending, so I gave it one.” At last she laughed.

One song was a coincidence...three were purposeful. Liszt was angry! None of these songs had any place in Jankowski's time. They were important in Deidiamia's time. The papers trembled with anger in Liszt’s great hands.

The pianist was building a bond between them by using his newly gained knowledge of mental suggestion. She would not hear the song by the pianist of the time; she would be hearing what could be mistaken for Jankowski. He was mind-playing!

If these upset Liszt, there was more. A little ditty, in which he thanked everyone for liking his music, did not bother Liszt, but an afterlife song sent his long arms into the air in silent rage.

'People on Earth don't understand 'The Other Side' as alive and useful! They look upon it as dead, finished, lost or aimless.'

All this while, Horst was tinkling lightly: "I won't mind (if) we say good bye, as long as you come back as mine. Oh, darling, I'll love you till the end of time, so this little while won't matter--as long as you promise to come as mine."

Liszt turned his back and held the papers taunt, as if in study. He was furious! After the adulations and the auditorium was clear, Liszt told the young man not to play these mind games anymore. It was not allowed!

"Very well, Maestro but did you know, the young lady is taking an Earth Life? With a few astrological changes - these things may be possible!" Having accomplished what he wanted, the young German went on to another subject. "I must ask about something else. I need more notes, perhaps a few strings. Would that be all right?"

I had been distracted by others but overheard this and whispered to him:

"So you do not lose your piano; So many pianists get swallowed by an orchestra."

"I promise, Princessin, I will not lose my piano." Liszt acquiesced - a few strings would be fine.

We were leaving. Liszt said beings I shall be an American in the new life, I should hear an American classical composer. Very few entities assembled for his concert. The man turned on his bench and began to explain his piece.

“He is a teacher from the mid-west, but I'd like you to talk with him. He needs direction. He has finger-technique but, well ...listen."

There was a Chopin ...done quite well on the extra-long grand, a difficult thing to do. Then a new composition; no introduction: The thing actually stung your senses and bounced into innovation after disconnected innovation. There was no melody, no theme - in any of his twenty-six non-memorized pages. My stomach was clutching tight and I twirled away dizzily. Liszt turned me around again.

"He has some very good things in there. Actually it is a lot like Jankowski does but this man doesn't **know** what to do with it."

That comparison was like calling a sardine a whale! "You ARE sick. Does this represent American music? Let us leave!" I said.

"That would be a direct insult! We must congratulate him. I WANT YOU to say a few encouraging words to him."

"All I could think was: Why do you hate the piano?"

"He is from your very own State of Illinois and he's taking that mess to Earth. Won't you please try to change his outlook? It is so easy here! If you don't do it here, you will have to do it there!" I refused by shaking my head. “It will follow you.” Liszt said. I thought, ‘Oh, dear; now I will be aunted by one composer and followed by another; great, just great!’

Back to little Horst: He was presenting a new piece. "We do something different, so not judge too harshly. We practice long on this." Jankowski turned to begin but his strings were not ready; cello tuning, chairs scraping. He was so short he peeked through the open piano lid and motioned to no avail. In a sweat, he climbed upon the bench and shouted! When he had their attention, his hand went to his chest and he took a deserved calming breath. His voice dropped to a softer pitch. He popped-off the bench and seated himself.

He announced the title in German, but not even I could decipher it. I managed Black Forest, because he had mentioned Schwarzwald, was where his mother lives, but "Fahrt" in English did not sound very nice. Soon bass strings were plucking, notes tinkling and bouncing along! It seemed to top everything he had previously presented. When the song ended, the auditorium was absolutely still. He swallowed, his hands resting lightly on the keys. He slowly turned to peek - had his audience left! But at his movement, applause broke like thunder! He was asked to play it again! He was overwhelmed and croaked softly:

"I only thought you might kind of like that."

His decision about the strings had been right. I could have ruined his promise! I wandered past Liszt in a daze. He caught my arm.

"Tell Jankowski, it is simply beautiful... that I could not get to him. Leez is there someone else I can work with, who needs me?" I could sense Liszt's shock. "He does not need me to make mistakes for him. I must rest awhile."

I retreated to my seldom visited little mansion. Liszt followed me.

"There is an American you can listen to Deidia. His name is going to be Peter Nero. His style is different but he will be in direct competition with Jankowski." Liszt was gambling. Peter should frustrate Deidia quickly. His artistry was nothing like the Continentals. Introduced, I bowed.

Peter nodded casually, finished his tune and then turned to Liszt without a smile. I noticed he wore a white dinner jacket, had dark brown wavy hair and deep brown irises, set in large eyes*.* His features were smooth, his hands were not wide, but he had immensely long fingers almost like Liszt's. I stared at the attractive man. He reminded me of someone; who?

Liszt vanished! I laughed uncomfortably at this. Peter sat quietly and stared at me. "I heard there was a lady in music, but I've never seen you." There was a soft hint of a smile.

"Yes, I usually work on the continent. Leez wanted me to hear you play. He says you have quite a following." To my surprise, Peter nodded but did not activate. He simply kept looking at me. After two minutes I was quite flustered.

"Are you playing today?"

"Oh, yes." he said easily, but sat idle.

"Now?"

He heaved a large breath, "Aw, all right," and swung his wide shoulders around. His piano was a white upright! His tune was "Margie," from the twenties! It was going well, then...a new strain, a haunting bit of? Too long for an innovation."

"Oh, what are you playing now?" I asked brightly.

"Same song."

In another moment the original melody crept in, lingered a moment and was gone again. I tried not to fidget. "And what are you playing now?" I tried to sound composed.

"All same piece." He finished it off. He glanced up, somewhat enjoying my concealed exasperation.

"But--but--it is everywhere, all mixed-up. How is it that --ugh (that was Greek - Oh, the word is) **WHY** do you play so?"

He intentionally held his laugh. "I always play like this haven't you heard me?" He saw me shake my head. "Here, I'll play this for you*."*

I enjoyed how his great hands moved. All the time he kept his eyes on me, peering into my being. There was a penetrating vibration about him. I felt about to faint. 'Ah, yes,' Uranian vibrations.' I remembered visiting that planet; its energy began to drain you if you stayed over-long. His music began wandering again and my mind left the music and slipped to his appearance. There was a nagging feeling that I had seen him or somebody who looked like him …was it that Gaul?

"You are doing it again, losing your piece." I said.

"You aren't following the dream of the thing. Don't you hear the dream of it? Perhaps you just don't like the song." He reached for my hand, but althoughIe seemed mesmerized, I moved my hand quickly to my chest.

'How sweetly old fashioned.' He thought.

"Perhaps when you become more familiar with music …” I did not finish.

Out of Julliard, he held back a laugh, “But, I cannot BE more familiar with music."

"This is so different! Leez, you know little old man who brought me. He sort of takes care of the place. He said youplay very well, but I don't understand your technique."

Suddenly Peter threw his head back and let go of the great laugh that was building-inside of him ... ‘Liszt - a maintenance man!’ How I t hit his funny bone! Unfortunately, I was abashed, bowed and dashed away. Peter was non-plused. He had never had anyone bow to him. He could hear the lady calling Leez, Leez.

As she rushed into Liszt, he caught and stopped her. A plaintiff melody wept across the "tune-in" music.

"Who is that? We have no one that plays like that!" She said.

"Oh, 'Lost Love'...that's Jankowski. He left after the new recording presentation to do something about his face. When he returned ... you were not about and he thinks you can't stand the sight of him: Car accident; face scarred-up. He's growing a beard. It should cover most of it well-enough so he can perform."

"Why?" As fast I leveled my hands that he need not explain. I knew; Jankowski was obsessively dissatisfied with his face. "Where are you taking me?" In that moment, I saw and tried to dash but Liszt planted me decisively.

"Deidia thinks, you think less of her because the strings were a success."

I tried to wiggle free. "You humiliate me, Leez.”

"Because you **will** be leaving shortly and...Damned if I'm going to listen to eight years of 'Lost Love!" He took her gruffly and shoved her into Horst's arms! The young man caught her pleasurably.

"I did this piece, because 'they' say they want another 'Black Forest', but now they do not. I don't understand."

"They mean a 'hit' like the 'Black Forest'...what does 'fahrt' mean?"

"It's not as they put it--not a walk (spassieren) but a sprint! - A couple skipping along or a little auto bouncing along happily. Here is one: 'Let's Live a Little' that's what we each are going to do." He laughed. "Oh, Liszt, before you leave. I believe I need more notes: a Sangerchor. Would that be acceptable?"

Liszt checked me but answered as he needed: "A choir. Yes, that would be all right."

I thought of Fred Waring- he went to a choir! Horst laughed at my expression. "Oh, it will be all right, Princessin, they aren't going to sing anything." Then he stopped and laughed at his words. "Well, I have ***sounds*** in mind...You don't mind, the face?" He gestured to his beard.

To her own surprise, she hugged him for reassurance. "What is bothering me is the Life Planning Spirits are after me to start my earth practices. When, exactly, I don't know. But I want you to keep writing; I will hear it and BUY your work ... and hope - there is always hope!"

"I want you to marry me." He blurted. "I can't continue without you. You are my music."

He kissed every knuckle on my hand, then awkwardly set his face aside mine and touched his mouth so gently to my temple; that perhaps it hadn't happened.

But it was happening before Liszt’s very eyes! Liszt had to realize and accept it: The two would be on Earth at the same time. She would not be a Helpful Spirit in the World of Music any more. She would be living upon the Earth as another man’s wife! Liszt would fend the musical area alone and … he determined, this time he would make them write their own music!

Word was out that Jankowski was adding a choir. The area was over-run with entities wanting the jobs, even foreigners he could not understand! His only hope was to call his Helpful Spirit and ask that only people who understood him apply. He knew some Italian and French from the music conservatory, but that was just musical terms. He chose unique voices and a huge Bavarian with a good solid bass. This man spoke several languages including Russian. The experience made Horst realize his need for English. His Life Planning Spirit tried but the possibility was mute. His tours and the travel interfered and after the unsuccessful outcome of World War II - Germany -as well as the world - would not be mastering only German!

I came to Jankowski announcing: "I have taken my features and body to get used to them. What do you think? The hair must be tinted red. It is a no-good color."

"JA, keep it red, it is so beautiful. My news, Princessin is part dreadful: I play in the States, but not where you are! The word was, your husband will have an accident. Several of your children are agreeable to being with me: They all have travel in their charts, and another marriage for you is set! And …one is for me. Now I am six years younger, instead of eight. All they have to do is find the contact so we can meet." He laughed. "Come, we shall play your little things. Down the straight-away comes Old Dobbin! One of these days I will put all these little things together for you." Midway into Dobbin he saw a Lyricist and called him over. "Rabe, I want you to hear this. I have been fooling with it forever!"

Bernd Rabe placed the music sheet on the desk and the two heads began work. It was time for me to tiptoe away.

I was at a class. Liszt needed me. "Come out of there! You have to get back to Music!" admonished Liszt.

"Oh, what must the class think? You hustle me out like I was being arrested! I was tuning-up on oh, those little picture-things - clairvoyance."

"Jankowski is in concert." Her mentor said: "Listen to the tune-in." This was strange - there had been no announcement of a concert. We hurried through space, she heard Gershwin double-timed on the tune-in. "Delightful but I preferred his short songs. Who is doing it?"

"Peter Nero."

"Oh! He kept to the same piece! What a surprise. "

"He is growing out of the other style. Keep listening."

I wished to compliment Peter but Liszt said there was no time.

Peter joined them so I had my chance. The auditorium filled with the old masters and everyone I knew: All my friends so many. ‘What a great turn-out for Jankowski!’ I did not realize this spontaneous gathering was for me! My ***time*** had come to leave Music and start my Earth Practices! Everyone knew it but me!

The whole concert was unusual; Horst placed his music on the rack; he always had it memorized. His white shirt looked like he had used it for a pillow. The choir and strings zipped into place. Horst turned and spoke to me as if we werealone. He called the piece: "Flowers for a Princess." And admitted he could not fit all of them in, but got most of my fun innovations in the piece.

"Ha, you haven't had flowers since Schubert," shot Liszt. She half-laughed at that.

At its finish he waved his hand--no applause and went into "Exactly You!" He pointed to me. Again - no applause. "We made it, Princessin! I did not write this but it is our 'Grande Amour'."

I was jarred. 'They must have set it!” I accidently hit Liszt with my arm.

Inez chastised me for giving no respect to Liszt. Auby, my classmate was a big girl. She kept glancing around; Rose was holding back tears so were my other friends.

Liszt petitioned only one thing: "When you get there; please, learn to say my name." Horst then began "All My Happiness." It was about as happy as his "Clair de Lune" and bared a tender spot. I was absorbed in the music. I felt a touch on my shoulder and brushed it off.

"It's time," A Life Planning Spirit said: "Now!" He tugged at my chiton.

I resisted, "Oh, stop bothering me; it is concert!" But I saw the serious faces of my friends. Then Auby and the Life Planning Spirit tugged me to a grey mist. Peter smiled as usual with his lips not parted. His eyes twinkled. "See you there."

Auby was a big girl. She and the Life Planning Spirit shoved me into this cloud shrouded mist. I would never forgive Auby. I did not hear the rest of the concert!

CHAPTER VI

PRACTICES AND INTERRUPTIONS

That grey misty tunnel was like a vacuum! It sucked me away and right in the middle of - in the middle of …! My head, what happened? My head felt numb. I could not finish my thought and looked around. Some adults stood idly chatting quietly. I could remember nothing; not even from a few minutes ago! Not only that - my clothing had changed. I wore a dress and it - barely covered my knees! My legs were bound in some thin covering and my shoes had blocks that raised the back of my feet. I was told later those were heels. There was something on my head. It was not a crown! My hands were covered but each finger had an individual covering. I should have looked at styles! I loved my chiton; it was a serviceable garment. I was at ease in it. Now, it was gone!

A Life Planner stepped to me. "Ah, **Mary**, Welcome. In this area we go over all episodes and situations you will face in your new life...” I looked around me for this Mary…then recalled - that “Mary” was to be my name during this new life. He was still talking. “Nothing is left to chance-- although upon the Earth it will seem so: Because the mind is cleared again before one leaves here for their actual birthing. All spirits who are involved in a practice episode will take part. If any disagree the episode shall be reworked and tried again; at times immediately (at times repeatedly). I know this will be new to you because before your Greek Life we simply read you the situation and you made a decision. But overall this new method lets everyone involved participate.

Ordinarily, we do not follow a straight through life sequence. We do scenes rather jumbled. This approach keeps the various spirits from developing judgements. Do you have any questions?"

"I feel so dizzy and numb?"

"***Mary, the tunnel descent* *dims the mind*. *This is so that* *you remember only what happens here*; *nothing else. When the practices are finished a second erasure will take place. This is so that the life upon Earth starts fresh…as if it were not planned.******However, Free Will is always available on the Earth to change things... We plan each episode so that each entity gains as many benefits as possible from it. We call these benefits: 'Years toward the Light' - (Light of God of course.)”***

“Your name actually is Mary Louise. Later you will meet the spirit that was your brother Pyrrhus; his name will be Louis so by Louis and Louise - you will know him. You are named after your grandmothers. Later, you shorten the Louise to Lou and finally drop it altogether and go by Mary. Although you are all adults at the practices; some of the practices will involve childhood encounters.” He consulted his charts, "You are an only child. There is a stillborn brother when you are eleven, so in actuality, you are always an only child."

"Will my parents live?" Mary asked.

"Yes, both have long lives. Springfield, Illinois is a State Capitol City. The town is situated safely. There are winter snows; one ice storm but nothing overly harmful. The parents are people who wish to clear their karma. Your mother comes from a large city and consumingly resents the lack of activities. Your father is a simple hard working man. He does not hear well and so believes his wife’s every word which is unfortunate; she lies. Your parents could but have no relatives or friends visit. This lack in the social area makes you shy. Later, at about fourteen you will quietly begin to be yourself. You have a very strong mind; recognize and sort truth from fiction ***but you must reject questionable things in mental privately. Do not incur this mother’s wrath; never speak back she was once ruthless!***

I listen to the following: When I am five years old and unaware of my proper name. I never heard fairy tales or children’s songs. The Catholic School is overly strict being the last school taking disruptive children before they are sent to reform school! There is no kindergarten; it begins with first grade. There is a woman teacher dressed in black called a Sister. My mother leaves me at this school all day. There is a room filled with noisy children - I am terrified. Alter, homework is never completed because my mother has an addiction for motion pictures. I must go with her whenever she says. This mother hoards money for her addiction so there is little food. The father figure Joseph Wangard works the afternoon to night shift at a bakery. He sees me after work a few moments. We never eat. On Saturdays we eat bakery pastries but I never see the leftovers. He is unaware of Helen’s addiction! This mother begins to associate herself into a dream-world lifestyle. Until she no longer accepts her life or indeed any person who knew or met her before she married! She constructs lies about them so they can be banned from her preferred life..Father’s side of the family cannot understand why they no longer see Joseph and Helen.Mother’s siblings live in St. Louis, a hundred miles away so are untargeted.

At this school, the teacher and children mention fairy tales and nursery rhymes; I do not know them. I know movie stars and cartoon characters! I dare to talk with the girl sharing my desk, Loretta. She has a married brother but for daily purposes she too is an only child. Loretta and I latch into a friendship. At recess we chat and watch the rougher games. Loretta and I would not dare fall in the cinder playground and ruin our stockings.

The school Sisters specified that the children must bring a specified lunch to eat in the lunch-room. My mother appears to accept this. Her father, Joe accepts the new menu gladly. This food cuts into mother’s movie money She is unhappy. There is no food except Saturdays when my father has a free day. She cooked so badly that bakery pastries filled the weekend.

“Who are these parents?" When I looked, I recognized the governor and governess of Megara. Some things can never be blotted out! Awaiting another episode, I saw the Gaul! I felt like heaving! “No, oh God, NO! - I quit! That bunch can work back on their own!"

"My child, they have waited long to right their wrongs.”

“And I have forgiven them, but things are not easily forgotten. I do not want those mental monsters in my life.”

“Do not be hasty; they have come a long way to earn the right to an earth life. They are strict and I see your grammar school is strict also. The bodily elements you chose will help keep your balance and purity intact but you must control your responses. You are the only God Level Spirit in this whole bunch and we do not want to lose you … Oh, I take that back! You have a son later who is one of us! I see he has chosen a tough road." The Life Planning Spirit heaved a sigh. Two God Level Spirits - we must not lose them in the process.

"The friendly entities you love will enter your life when you are fourteen years of age. Oh, this is interesting: Your father’s older brother, John was your father Pyrrhus - in the Greek Life. He’s good! Yes, he’s good all the way through.”

"Oh, I hope he plays a significant role… Indeed, you are jumping all about: I guess it will level but it is most confusing at the moment, dear Spirit."

He stared at me a moment; no one called him an endearing term. "You will have guardian spirits and later several angels to help you. I note these parents are overly controlling. The mother quizzes you about every minute out of her sight” … He flipped the pages and guffawed, "When we get there, my dear, when we get there."

Episode: Another involving my childhood - This rental house adjoins a coal company where big trucks move. The owner has two guard dogs. I am three years old and sneak across the drive, pet and think-talk with the dogs. Caught by landlady: The two ladies ask the Life Planner why am I not terrified of the dogs - the coalmen andindeed, they were! The Life Planners flipped back pages. He raised his eyebrows and quickly adjusted the wording: “She has an ease with animals. He avoided referring to specific animals. These child scenes felt stupid; we were all adults! If the scene was amenable to all involved - it was ***"set-in-time."*** It soon became evident that the mother figure, named Helen was irritable at her “Lack of position.” This was unchangeable. Joe the father figure was considered a blue collar worker.

To assuage her dissatisfaction with her marriage and position, Helen dwelt on her old St. Louis :ifestyle. She ascribed to movie aristocrats. Her husband, Joe was unaware of his wife’s invented lifestyle. Mary became the audience for her mother’s pompous stories. There was never useful mother- daughter instruction or chat, no hugs no kisses.For pompouseffect, Helen makes me late for school and Sacrament Events; I am mortified. On the opposite note: Helen never misses a moment of a movie!

Joe was mild. The bakery was large. He operated a machine with swirling blades. Joe was the only baker who never had an accident on that frightening machine.

Helen’s dream- stories required that I listen attentively. She imagined and invented my being bad. I had no idea what brought such accusations; had I made a noise coming into the house, who knew? When I was about eight, Helen began expressing death wishes saying her life was so miserable that: “If I lived in St. Louis I would walk into the river and never come out!" As a small child I feared that one day mother would actually kill herself! As I grew older, I realized this was a control- ploy.

Episode: I am 10. I listen but do not understand a conversation between a man, Ed and my mother. During several interchanges I heard Ed say, “Think of the little baby.” I thought he meant me but I was ten years old! This Ed drank heavily. Unfortunately, one time Ed was sober and presented himself well to my Aunt Birdie and Grandmother Mary. They came by Interurban train for the day. Aunt Birdie slipped him her address. The Life Planners explained to me that my grandparents depended on my Aunt Birdie to read, write correspondence and so on. Birdie hopes to marry Ed and live happily ever after. He shook his head.

Episode: Finally justification! I was 18. Helen pulled her suicide skit, but to her surprise, I thought at 18 I should be able to say something. So quietly and levelly I said: "Mother, you don’t have to go that far;” I saw the pleasure in Helen’s movement. “We have Lake Springfield. I am sure if you go there it will do the job." I stared seriously at her. The shock cured her.

Episode: As time passed I came to understand that my parents had no intention of my ever leaving their house! When I decided to marry my parents played many tricks to stop it. Mother hated the idea of relinquishing control. After this her health declined.

The husband figure Charles, was the Gaul… it was always in my mind- he killed me once! I’ve got to be careful! With these two the practices soon became embittered and terrifying. Yet the Life Planners said Charles had advanced the most! He began as a compatible person but after marriage he became a verbally maniac but this was they way his siblings were like their father. My preferences were shoved aside, my words unheard by his shouting. My feelings ignored, planned events cancelled. He was master!

Helen, and Charles the governess and the killer: Neither had squelched their vices. These two mental cases tore me between them with demands: Neither listened to logic. Mother’s approach was the fist in a velvet glove; Charles used cutting verbal abuse yet in all his violent movements and bangings on things he never touched me. There was no way out of the marriage as long as I was not hit! I resented that law and religion.

I asked the Life Planners to write me out of this Earth Life. They said it was impossible too many spirit entities were involved. As I could not quit, keeping silent was my only recourse. I deplored getting myself into this mess for the sake of helping Demetrius, Ares and Pyrrhus make Heaven. And where were they anyway?

Small Episode: Grade School Episode: Loretta and I sat out Snap the Whip at recess. Neither of us wanted to explain scraped elbows or knees and torn stockings to our mothers. Loretta's father died early. Her mother sewed. Loretta's grandmother lived with them. The father had dlied Although frugal, this family was save. It made me cry inside.

Episode - a trip to visit Helen’s parents in St. Louis. I expected a wonderful time tap dancing with my young Aunt Birdie or sharing secrets about special grocery shopping with my Grampa. But this visit was no fun. Mother and Grandmother argued in the kitchen. Joe went into the parlor and closed the pocket doors! Finally, Grampa took me away from the kitchen and into the dining room. “Grampa, is any of this my fault?” He hugged me and said no. “Aunt Birdie wants to live in Springfield and marry a man she met when she and your grandmother visited last summer.

“ED! He works where my mother did. He is violent and drinks. We find bottles hidden everywhere! He keeps bothering mother. He comes Sundays when my dad is working. We can’t get rid of him. It is awful, Grampa.” The two women were very loud. I knew Grandmother owned a pistol and was a great shot. “Gramma won’t shoot us all will she?” Grandfather embraced me and swayed back and forth saying, no, no. The two women did not come to an agreement. Nothing was settled. The scene was rewritten time and again. The episode went unresolved. Mother cut them from our lives too.

Behind us, there was a commotion at the entrance. The whole group of us turned to see what it was. Franz Liszt the Master of Music intoned loudly that he had permission and needed a spirit back at the World of Music. He bulldozed into the area with total righteousness, turned to me and said, "Come my dear, I need your help immediately."

I looked at this terribly old boney gentleman –***and did not remember him*!** He began talking while moving me quickly to his destination. I comprehended nothing he was saying but I was grateful to leave this terrible practice.

The old man said, "Deidia ugh, ***Mary***, Jankowski stopped working when he heard you had left. He did not even finish his concert; he laid his head down on the keyboard and wept. We can't get him to do anything! You, know, for a man whose life is music that is not good."

Cautiously I nodded agreeing with the last words but my mind was not in this man’s present. I was afraid that he had the wrong person and would soon find this out. I would be returned! The old gentleman went into a technical discourse beyond my present mental state. It was time for honesty. I touched his arm gently.

"I am sorry, sir but I think you have the wrong person. I have no idea what you are talking about. Are you sure, you want ME?"

Liszt turned to me in dismay. "Oh. Oh, it will all come back to you, my dear. So, you changed your look and name at the very last!" He said cautiously. "I am talking about your protégé, Jankowski. He should be working on the music part of his Earth Life. You were the only one working with him and indeed he is most fond of you… But, the time arrived when you needed to practice for your own Earth Life and he - is lost.

I looked at Liszt quizzically. Someone was affected by my non-presence! No one in the practices gave a hoot about ME; not parents, not husband, some friends a little, but not, it seemed my children-to-be! All any of them cared about was how “The outcome affected THEM!”

'A man was giving a concert … hum. What did I know about music?’ I thought: There was an episode where I took Hawaiian guitar all the neighbor girls were taking it. Every piece of non-Catholic music Helen snatched and tore to shreds! At times even pieces that set my father to whistling, (like: "When I was single (my pockets did jingle.”) were shredded.

We entered an ethereal portion which resembled Stuttgart, West Germany. Above them the tune-in music wailed a heartbreaking tune.

Liszt lifted his head back and traced a circle with his great boney nose. "If he plays; it is this weepy stuff."

'Oh, he plays the piano! What do I know about the piano?' They approached a really cute young man with eyeglasses. He wore a trimmed beard.

When he saw me, he jumped from his bench and came running with complete delight. I was even more surprised when the young man (I was two inches taller now) slipped his arms around me and with the lightest wisp of a touch kissed me perhaps a dozen times. Wow, was this what I did in music? At the practices I had a grouchy husband. Why bother with him - this guy was cute; he loved and missed me and … I remembered nothing about him!

"Ah," said Liszt, "that is settled!"

'Settled? Well, something is settled for you guys,' I thought and now realized that the older man had disappeared. I would start from a logical point:

"Have I been here before?"

"Ach, this is my Stadt, Stuttgart! Let us go to the Schillerplatz, Princessin. It is pleasant there."

'Oh, boy, I am hearing some German. Why did I not press more at school with that sweet library nun?' "What is Schillerplatz?"

"Park in Stadt, na Studio. Kommen Sie." He said.

'A park in the city. And come see studio! OK.'

He explained that when he was in this city, he walked around this square. He was usually awake and keyed after a performance long after everyone else was fast asleep. The night gave a peaceful and different aspect to the park. Most times his car followed him. His music was providing him with a nice income; so he had a car and driver. "The driver does more than that, Princessin. He sings in the choir and keeps track of my time; does things I never learned to do. Werner is a nice person."

The thought passed my mind: in America, everyone belonged to a Union. Chores were not piled on one person. I looked about. There seemed to be many government buildings, but he said, no. Those were small shops, except for one that was the Post Office. He suggested they go to the studio and he would finish the concert for me. He admitted it was most unprofessional to stop so - but the music was for me! He didn't care about anyone else. “When you left…” his face clouded with emotion. In none of the earth practices had I seen an endearing emotional person! Well, maybe Grampa Jul. The little cute man took my hand and suddenly we were in his studio.

"Princessin, you are the only one who understands me –oh they like my music but some of their demands, I do not understand. At times they want music that is raucous! To keep the recording contract, I must do things that I would rather not."

I gave a silent laugh. "That makes two of us! People find so many faults with me. Oh, one man wanted to marry me -‘sometime.’ I wish I had his parents! They are so nice. The practices are not smooth everyone has a problem.

"Please but tell me you have sweet parents!"

"They … have their own worlds."

"My mother is very sweet, Princessin. She did terrible jobs so that I could study piano. She always hoped to have a little farm in the Schwarzwald - so when I could ... with the war it was better that we moved into the rural area and she loves it there.”

'Princessin’, I thought. ‘What a cute nickname.'

He sat down and began to play: "The More I See You". I was not amused at first; the song was chosen by a failed romantic. Suddenly, I began studying the arrangement, noting the differences from the 40's hit. Extra tinkles lightened it. I smiled and enjoyed it. Then he played "Cast My Fate to the Winds" saying, "that is what I have done May-ree and you are the cause of it all."

"The tinkly sounds cheer the music so much!" I said, but my mind was mostly out; I felt like a dud.

"Now, Princessin, I play you something with a bad title: Schnee-Boo-B-Bop"

"Not B-Bop! It's dead!"

He shook his head no, laughing.

"It seems to have no words," she said.

"Oh they all have words to be published. You have to guess them yourself." Then he thought the words as he played and they filled my mind easily. At times his Lyrics were off syllable to English words …the lyrics were in German! "Before I met you, I always seemed to be walking in the shade; now I play "A Place in the Sun". They have set us a marriage later in your life. Have you gotten to that part in the practice?"

I shook my head, no. 'My god, I am marrying a full-blooded German! Ah! I remember! He told me he could not learn English because of the war and I … Oh shoot! The thought is gone! Why can't I learn his language?’

“I am doing another album, all arrangements, harsh. I not play that for you."

"But you will not stop composing?" He smiled and shook his head, no.

'Perhaps he can be persuaded to take more things to better his spirit.' "Oh, what is with the beard? It seems I did not remember a beard."

"Car accident; got scarred-up; beard covers… I write the way I feel and when you left - there were some ‘Lost Loves’ like Liszt said."

I lifted my head. Liszt was coming; I had to leave. I liked this area.

"Liszt, even if he is insincere, do you know what a delight this has been? The practices involve arguments and the men are disappointing." Liszt had a questioning look. “Liszt, I agreed to take this life because my brother needed help and I wanted Demetrius for my husband again. Turned out, he is long taken. They say his wife dies, but by then I am married and he marries another. Ares, my bodyguard was the next choice, but he is indifferent. A bank-teller." I heaved a breath, "Also out. Guess who is the husband? The Gaul who killed me in the Greek life! He has the temperament of an erupting volcano!" I heaved holding-in ironic laughter: "And, they say he is the best …it is most depleting. Therefore my friend; three men leave me unhappy; I may as well include one who is delightful."

He put his arm around me and rested his cheek atop my head. The entrance to the Earth Practices lay before them. "I have permission to bring you back freely. I feel that this will be sooner than we expect. How I miss you, my dear. Now, I understand your concerns when I left the Realm."

The Helpful Spirit stepped up, Liszt quickly pointed out that Mary had gone through the dimming process already and that he had permission to take her back as was needed. It sounded like prison parole. The Life Planners were chagrinned. Another dimming would destroy the mind. But leaving it open meant she would remember all the events of the practices. And all that had been. I ventured to ask them about my art work and writing a book about the Unseen. He checked. The book was near the end. There was even the Godhead's permission to expose many things about the Unseen.

The practices: More episodes …Transatlantic travel to University; some earlier scenes; with Ares at the Theater. One with Auby and her families’ dog! This idea of remembering things was kicking in but it was confusing!

Episode: Mother’s movie obsession continues I am a teenaager. I began leaving “for bathroom or water” but talked with the ushers. I felt plain so the talk was impersonal, problem solving or about their futures.***I recognized* s**ome of these as wounded soldiers returned from the battle of Ipsus ...memories began hitting me. I was setting future events while comparing it to the past! What a challenge this Far Memory was.

Episode: Delivery job for a dental laboratory. My second day a policeman questioned me about walking the streets! I explained my job. The policemen decided to keep me safe! I was forbidden to cross 6th Street East - too many ruffians! I smiled remembering the police as our soldiers! My mind kept opening like this. It became my special secret during the practices but I was very cautious around Helen and Charles.

Long Episode: Liszt entered, he wore academic garments now and they billowed with his movements like sails. His mouth indicated he was unstoppable! "Come! Jankowski's work is drawing a different breed of animal - rough bunch. Some of his original fans are abandoning him." My mind was intact now! I went!

In a moment I heard clashing and banging. The joyful lightness and tinkles were gone. My body seemed to collapse, tears streamed down my face. The music was hate-filled. At concert's end he slammed the lid shut, swung around and scowled. The new fans pressed upon him with many congratulations. I could not break through that rough bunch. Liszt held a finger in the air. "Listen to this, his managers are talking."

"Now we do a Christmas Album, Horst and clean-up!"

Jankowski opened the lid and hit a note savagely. A glissando followed. That was his ultimate Berlin Conservatory insult! "I do no Christmas Album. I - am - a Jazz Man," Another glissando; the lid slammed again.

"He must know I attended and could not get through. I must tell him - that - I did not like the music. My God Liszt, he makes the joy in my life … and now he is filled with hate. He is as unhappy as I am."

"You can stay no longer; I must return you, Mary. What will you do?" I shook my head. What could I do? I would be living on the other side of the world - 3500+ miles away. If I phoned, we had no common language. I would hear him in Deutsch! He would hear me in English. In the Practices as on Earth there would be no interpretative equipment available!

I fanned my hand at the Life Planners and their silly charts. “I need help! Two things! Jot this for **later.** Christmas; I know nothing about Christmas. ***Immediately*:** I must write a letter in German, a language I do not know. I cannot write English because the recipient could not read it. This is imperative! A career is at stake!"

"Notes,” the Life Planners said, “We must make notes. To whom must you write?" They scribbled it down. "Oh! OH! That's it! The contact we need to get you both together! How good! Our dilemma is solved! Ugh no, it is not! Her husband hates further education he would not approve funds for lessons. The charts are not compatible” They both turned to me: “There is no way you can take a German class - but you can teach yourself! There are language records and books at the library. You can buy a personal one later. Ah, you will need a German/English Dictionary!” A page flipped, “Here, here is a good one at the Good Will Thrift Store it is way in the back and is $.25…oh - it is in script!"

The book at school was script. "I can manage script. This is going to take me forever!" I wailed, “I don’t have forever!”

There was interference - a freebie brush-up business class. My husband wanted me to get a job! In his construction field, money was always tight during winter months. Some government agency was footing the bill. I tested and passed. He drove me to Illinois Business College. The classmates tried to establish friendships. There were a few hours after classes, before the family arrived home and before time to cook supper. I tried the local library’s German records.

"Oh, so foolish!” I spoke to myself. “Go to the blackboard; take up the chalk! Phooey! My pen is out of ink. - And the book is no better: Aesop’s fox; Pressing juice from grapes; Clothing too tight.” I could cry I was so in immediate need and distraught. I need musical terminology!" Those business classes cut the time I needed to learn German. A month of false starts! And then a book on musical terminology - in German! Finally I took up the dictionary. I looked up the words in my thoughts singularly. There was no other way! Of all two pages, I had one sentence properly constructed. There was one word I had not cross-indexed. It turned in my favor providing comic relief. What horrible language to write on such lovely gold edged stationary; and it was going to a University Graduate! My stomach churned. To assuage my discomfort, I wrote the whole letter in English also and sent them both. Just by chance, maybe someone in his group might read English. The album covers gave overview hints but no address just his city. I knew using the recording studio address in New York was useless so I prayed and wrote:

Herrn Horst Jankowski, the Great Pianist

Stuttgart, West Germany.

At the Post Office I jotted the zip code, affixed the correct postage, said another prayer and dropped it in the out of town slot. ***I closed my eyes. 'Dear God may I see him getting the letter. Please do not let him toss it aside.'*** In a small picture my clairvoyance formed; in it was a group of men all dressed in black suits. I did not realize that this was their dress code.

One came and handed Jankowski a letter from America. He used a letter opener. I saw the glint of the gold edged stationary, 'Ah, he got it! But, how does he receive it?' I watched him and was confused. Horst had laughed fully. His entourage had not seen him really laugh for a long time. He quickly folded the letter, wiped a few tears and placed the letter in his breast pocket before anyone saw the words. Later, she saw other clairvoyant scenes Now he had a sheaf of papers and told his managers to throw out everything he had worked on for a new album and smiled indulgently.

The concert was ready! Again Liszt exploded into the practices snatching me back to Music. "Come, we find a good place." The rough element was drifting into the auditorium. They applauded before Horst was seated and spied Liszt and me. His chest swelled; he smiled and bowed. Seated, he faced me: "I do this for you and me: Ein Hoch der Liebe (One Height of Love). There were the tinkles, the fast step, beauty again!

As the concert proceeded, the audience went crazy with joy. The old Masters were now joining quietly and nodding. Then Horst turned to the audience and took a piece of paper from his breast pocket. "A lady wrote me a note about my music, but she did not sign her name…If I did not know who she is, I would wonder…I play for you: "Ich Wunder."

"Aha! You wrote a letter! Of course, you conveniently forgot what you wrote?" I nodded. He grumbled, "Women, bah!"

'Oh, I thought I signed my name - I will have to remember to do that.' After the concert, Horst wrenched himself from the crowds and held onto me swinging me back and forth like the sun pierced his being. "The music brings a nice income, I have a house. Wait until you see your bedroom! Eh, she has a few moments, yes, Liszt?" The master nodded.

Once away from the music, I heard him mostly in German and he heard me mostly in English. We improvised with hand motions and smiles. He had bought the historic house of a composer of church hymns. So, the exterior and a few fixtures had to remain the same. It was two story dark red brick with fireplace chimneys at each end. The front door was centered between two windows and three above. Inside, the woodwork was painted white.

One entered a large darkened foyer. He turned the switch. The light was minimal. I saw an antique desk with telephone and a vase of flowers; a hat-stand was near the door. Another door lead to a library. From a darkened corner something arose and began to advance.

"Oh, this is Zabadac, like in the music. There are two (Afghan Hounds). The other - what is it?”

"I thought it was a ghost! It is so dark in here. See! White triangle like a skull with three dark holes."

He laughed, "Rolfa, has a dark face. The light one is Zabadac."

“Oh like in the picture on the album!

“Ja est alle - there!

They proceeded through the house. The living room furniture was Italian Country in yellow raw silk. This set upon the parquet floors; a pastel Karastan rug not touching the furniture. These were things like I could only dream of having! How did he know? Did they have the same tastes? Beyond this was a dark topped dining table with white sides, legs and chairs. Behind the dining set was a full wall cabinet with crystal and dinnerware. I was surprised he chose this China: Wedgwood. It was so special: I owned two salad plates and two cups and saucers of it for breakfast. I was so full of happiness I could burst. The kitchen was modest, counters new, (stove a relic of creamy white enamel and nickel) also a new stove and refrigerator nearby. We proceeded upstairs.

First was “my bedroom,” there was a large twin bed, with a partial lace edged canopy and matching bedding. Near the ceiling was wide crown molding with a Greek Frieze of Wedgwood blue and white plasterwork. It was breathtaking. Beside a vanity and bench stood a tilting floor mirror in butternut wood and a pale blue rug with pink roses.

He passed a little room quickly and continued to other bedrooms for her children. He fully expected them to move with their mother. He had checked with the Life Planner; her husband had already set a time for his earthly departure.

Horst’s own bedroom monopolized the back side. The headboard resembled a loose flat five strand braid of carved wood. There was a silent butler near the door. The colors in the room were sapphire blue and white. A night stand with a lamp held a doily, a crystal dish and box of tissues. At the far side was a large near black chest of drawers. There was a desk and chair piled with music blanks. An original bath adjoined.

Back in the hall I asked what was along the other way. He said his man and wife lived there. "I am lost without them. I can do nothing for myself. Come, I show you my new car - well, old car, but she is just like she come from the factory."

There was a two bay garage. In one was a black Daimler-Benz and the other was a classic 1934 Rolls Royce. Werner pulled it onto the street but the visit was cut short. Liszt came to snatch me back. But now I had precious memories!

Episode: Early January 1949: I started as a delivery girl for a Dental Laboratory. It was on the fifth floor of a red stone, six storied building. The building housed: realtors, small businesses, a few C.P.A.'s, financial managers, two dentists, 2 dental laboratories, law firms, two elevator operators and opposite my work place on the fifth floor - to my surprise - was an attorney of some prominence. After 2300 years, with all the awful things I had assumed this man recognized me. I had never seen Demetrius clean-shaven. He said: “This is my name now,” pointing at his name in gold lettering on black on his office door. He was very happy. We chatted and then I started my first day on the delivert job.

Mr. Yardley was not satisfied with this scenario. We retried it several times even to arguing in Greek! It carried through the open transoms! Mr. Yardley constantly saw me as his wife! He forgot he was married. Later that day I met his son, who had been-Tiggy. As soon as the boy saw me I was his little mother again! Both of them sought me to solve their problems unabashedly ever after.

There were other Episodes: Mr. Yardley always shot into the hall to talk and be teased. He was as of old, my husband Demetrius the Poliorcetes - and I could always expect the unexpected. On one occasion he had re-won an election as State Representative; the press were interviewing him. He saw me passing along the hall and motioned that I come and introduced me as his wife! I tried to stop him by shaking wiggle fingers but he continued, complaining that I wanted him to continue upward in his political career but he was happy where he was. I lifted my brows sarcastically: Of course he was! This was the man who tried to reassemble Alexander's Kingdom. Fun as it could have been I knew I must withdraw; before the pressmen began taking pictures! The Lab guys caught it - there is something with Mary and Yardley! They thought like earthlings.

Episode: In the World of Music, the new album and its main song took a name change. Ein Hoch der Liebe was changed to: "And We Got Love." Horst did not know this. The cover pictured a lady stepping out of the '34 Rolls Royce with Rolfa and Zabadac. Werner played chauffeur. Horst was making sure I would not forget our future. My letters continued privately. I hoped my slaughtered Deutsch was getting better.

Episode: His next concert program listed a song called "Congratulations" There was a stir of controversy about the album cover and a little clairvoyant scene formed. “The girl goes on the cover.” Horst pouted, "But you say I never take a picture. Now, here is a picture. I want this on the cover." The managers were astir - "We promised the girl the cover!"

Horst thought a moment; "Then put her on the back." The Life Planners did not think it funny.

Among the songs was "Black Eyes". I looked for a black-eyed seductress to appear at piano-side and then realized it was the Russian song: 'Ochie Chonia' from my Russian Class in ’52.. I explained: The class tried to cut records without giggling. Liszt wryly said, "My, what a coincidence!"

Liszt and I listened to a piece, I translated, "I write my - something - in the sand." It was a bit soulful, maybe feelings." Some jazzed tunes then again - "And We Got Love." It was sexier. I liked the older arrangement. Finally, Horst rushed up to me joyously. "I call this album "Piano Affairs, because that is what we are having! You write me ***about*** the music. I tried to write a letter, but it is so hard, I would get no music done, so I thought, I'll write in the music."

I smiled but thought this career-unwise. I should have told him that. “My dear, I have qualms. Will this healthy husband of mine follow the plan?"

Horst answered: "When it is set, ***it is set!*** They say ***we cannot fight the stars***…You will bring the children and we shall have a good life."

Episode: I had to find out about Christmas. Ines and her family had bought an older house. When I came to visit her new neighbors were there. I was surprised that my best friend Inez and her neighbors, Jeri, Dottie and Nan were there visiting. They were all into Christmas with special cookies and foods, sequin covered fancy stockings they made by hand to hang by their fireplaces for their children. I asked why a child would only get one stocking. They thought I was a riot! These craft-minded women brought evergreen branches and made wreaths or swags to place about with red candles. Some candles they cast themselves! The Christmas- thing was over-done but exciting. In a bit I discovered the real reason for this gathering; Ines told them I could read palms! Idid not appreciate being used. I had shown Ines some of this but, she lacked finesse upon tender subjects. Most of the ladies had new friends which threatened future breaks. As these were well marked Ines about lost her neighbors by saying bluntly, “Hey, hey! What have you been up to?”

After smoothing things fairly, I asked if there were other holidays that they observed in special ways. Easter! Halloween! For all of these the differences between earth celebrations and Heavenly celebrations popped to mind, but noting Ines’s perchance for gossip, I kept these thoughts private. I simply listened. Halloween, Christmas and Easter were underplayed on earth but voicing these things would not be conducive to friendships with good Catholic and Christian women. Silence was in order.

Episode: Religion classes gave me quandaries. In Heaven, several large religions had areas for their congregations. One of the Helpful Spirits told me that the Grecian religion was hollo, now useless; in deed obsolete. For this life, I would attend Catholic schools and learn all the bible stories: Fine with the Grecian part. Christian, I could not get in my heart. I knew The Father was the right God. This quandary lingered through 12 years of parochial education. I found Jesus wonderful but as I was in the Practices I could not check his status. For years, he remained a paper hero to me; like George Washington or Moses. I accepted the teachings; it was Catholic school!

Episode: Grade School. Contrite children kept their eyes down reverently in church. I never gawked about in church. My chum Loretta was surprised that I never saw the statues. We came from the candy store and stopped in church. “Look!” She said. Before my eyes were a pair of bloody feet with a spike holding them together, my eyes traveled up a life sized cross with an agonizing Christ figure. I became woozy and said - no more statues! Loretta assured me that the others were nice; Mary Magdalene, Gabriel, other saints each holding a lily. SS. Peter and Paul holding Keys and - something; I was still not over that bloody statue and did not want in a religion that did this to people. I wanted out! As this was impossible, I learned the tenants but rejected the actuality.

Episode: I am 18: I meet my grandmother Mary! This was followed by a reunion of Helen and her mother; by way of a con job by my Uncle Mike’s wife Mary Regina.

Episode: After marriage, I try to get a stir a friendship between Helen and my Aunt Bertha and Helen. Helen refused! Despite this failure, my aunt and I shares some wonderful times - we connected famously. We shopped and took the children to County Fairs. Aunt Bertha was game for anything even new wild rides. She was such fun!

Episodes: Letters to Germany. When there was little musically to write about I wrote about avoiding a black demonstration near the Capitol Building; about how flat our prairie land was; about Springfield being the hometown of Abraham Lincoln and who he was; and his regular walking routines. At wits end with this, I began inserting Peanuts comic strips that had to do with Schroeder, a little blond boy at his toy piano. I saw by my clairvoyance, Horst shared these cartoons with the choir and combo. The choir girls taped the comics to the back side of the piano where they stood to sing during practice and recordings. Whenever a letter came, everyone surrounded him - for the comics! I knew he reveled in trying new sounds so when I heard an electric flute or just innovations like a change of key mid-song - once a strange sounding electric guitar. Later I felt he was ready to be introduced to the pedal pointe' and perhaps after that - syncopation.

Liszt visited! He was not rescuing me from the Practices. "I have been checking into the future, my dear. You are too trusting. Like with this Gaul-husband! Because you save and cut corners you think he does too. He lets you struggle while - perhaps you should check his daily spending! As one of us, you do not question. You think everyone is well meaning!" And later, after Jankowski dies - it is a prolonged illness. You will be in a foreign country and he was the money maker! Then what! You will have two families of children and no funds. Oh, yes, write the great book - in Germany? Who will read English there? You must check these things! It is only a few years that you share with Jankowski. I hate to see things befalling you. I mean this more kindly than it sounds. You and I have worked together so long we seem attached. Please do not leave yourself so open. Liszt proceeded to march her to the Life Planners. "Listen and heed! This lady's well-being must be covered at all costs! She has never worked to support a family. Her sustenance is an issue. She is artistic, musical and her practicality is - hard come by!"

"I am learning to be practical, Liszt! I never maintained a house, washed and cooked - or had children! Oh, I had a child in the Greek life, but I never saw it! I knew nothing about self-maintenance. Physical labor I learned in Megara. Such is why I do my own hair and cloths, make old things into nice; to be somewhat acceptable on little - and be at ease - with myself.”

"Ah, we can work it in so you find out about the child. Mayadike - your onetime nanny will tell you," the Life Planners whispered as he jotted a memo. “Yes, she is included.”

I turned to the Life Planners. "My kind sir, I cannot resign myself to the demise of that healthy husband - Charles. It seems impossible."

The Life Planners flipped his sheaf of papers. "I will show you the death scene. This is what it will look like. His work base is from your home; it is night. Charles hears noises, goes out and is clubbed near a white panel truck. You go into the area and find him on the ground. It is over. I remembered – ***white panel truck!***

Episode: This and the aftermath were practiced. I practiced settling affairs in a daze. Her youngest child mentions that maybe I should write the pianist. ‘Oh, yes the pianist!’ In the entire hullabaloo, I did not think of my future.

I investigated Liszt's qualms and conferred with my children. The boys and oldest daughter decided not to relocate to Germany; they had already made career choices. I would keep the Springfield house as base and wrote Horst!

The man was delighted; he would have a family. Because they all played piano, he cheerfully made arrangements for lessons. Episodes for the move and adjustments were included. For the children and me it was a change from daily misery to open joy and free laughter.

Episode: A Reprieve is granted. The Life Planner walked in rattling his papers. We have news that changes much of this!" He looked at me. "Your first husband, Charles wants a reprieve."

"My God! That can’t be, he's dead almost three years!" I screamed.

"That does not matter. He has looked into future happenings. There is something with his father’s estate a few years beyond. He wishes to straighten it out. It is a legal necessity and will be allowed. We will drop the second marriage for a while. You will go back to your first husband."

"You cannot do this! We are married. It is ***set in time*!** We have a family. My children are the happiest they have ever been. Horst and I are due this happiness.” My objections had no effect. "How long will this reprieve take?"

"Ugh, this would be twelve years before beginning the estate settlement."

"Twelve years before –" I was dunned and turned to Horst, "My dearest, if they do this, we are lost."

The Life Planner was stringent: "I am sorry, but the reprieve is granted. Come with me."

Behind me I heard another Life Planner speaking with Horst: "We must make some adjustments …perhaps we can find another birth date that will give you more time... If you wish to marry, or I see that back several years, a showgirl makes a play for you. You were not interested; you can be interested now."

"Too fast …all is happening too fast. I am married to the love of my life, happy at last and have a family. Now you say I have nothing! And, my wife can't come back. My heart is torn asunder! Go away, go away! I must find my thoughts.”

"No! His children are being cheated; this estate is no small thing! The farm looked like nothing, the old father was a grasping miser but the estate is easily accessible being near Springfield and so is worth much. Charles wants to right this. Now later, Mary can come to help with several hectic problems - the music suffers changes and your contract is not renewed … there will be other albums but not on an American label."

"Can we marry when she comes?”

"Mary will yet be married." The Life Planners prodded. "Give the new girl a try; for your happiness."

My eyebrows shot up. The Life Planners whisked me out of earshot.

Episode: The little girls were now in Springfield; as if no interruption had taken place. All went well until Regina showed adeptness for the piano. The Midden’s bought a new Storey and Clark Upright of light wood. It was tuned "brilliant" and had a great sound but once Regina laid eyes on it, she backed off. "I am supposed to have a grand! This will not work at all: Not at all!" With a bit of drama an arm went to her brow. She would not even sit on the bench! Luckily the other children thought the piano was great and promptly asked their mother where certain notes were; gathered their little savings and bought music that pleased them. They played like they had years of lessons! Ah, there was music! Marshall brought computer enthusiasts like himself in from Urbana. Most of them played - there was Chopin, Mussorgsky and newer classics. Music brought me alive.

Episodes: The routines of our home-life. My letters to Jankowski continued. I became good at vocabulary but horrible at proper construction. Most all the children learned German; Marshall added Russian. Charles’ boss retired. After several work tries Charles started his own construction business and hired most of the crew he worked with. He mastered his inferiority complex with customers. His crew met daily at the cottage. It was their work base. But, in the home he was still the volcanic Lord and Master! Unfortunately, he began treating the workers like family! The standard crew brushed it off but summer help disliked it; there were anonymous retaliations. A gas can was stolen from a truck, material was damaged, the house was egged and then it got worse: New appliances were stolen from a new house site.

At break he always bought the crew coffee and great donuts! Home life: for me had not changed: I was allotted $20.00 weekly to cover all food for eight, clothes and washing - we used a laundromat. I cooked and baked from scratch; sewed for me and the girls. Our family never tasted a fancy donut! Much later, my clothes were hand-me-downs from one of Charles' wealthy clients. They were boutique beautiful. The children thought their dad purchased them saying, “Mother always looked beautiful!” But I did need s few garments that I could wash and work in around the house. The Salvation Army and Good Will solved that problem. I went there when the children were at school - so they never knew. Tv was the children’s entertainment. Now and then I saw it. When we were at grocery, I saved the change-back to buy a record album. Freebies ruled my life: The local library, free art shows, receptions and free concerts kept me and at times the children mentally alive.

I remembered “my two other children by Horst” asked the Life Planners what happened to them?

"They will be in your life, but not as your children. Heinrich changes sex and comes to your brother-in-law and his wife, Sharon. The second son will come to your daughter. We cannot do away with spirits! They are chosen for the parents as well as for their betterment. You are a pseudo-parent to the little girl; the little boy will be at your house a while.”

"Why do they not go to Horst?"   
 "Sorry, that's all I have on it, my dear." Oh, the chagrin!

Episodes: The mugging scene was practiced. Minor changes were made in the accident so that he was not killed. I did not tune into the changes but followed the practice episode. We got a list of the stolen items to the insurance and Charles seemed to act normally, no faultfinding. Christmas: There was a minor drainage operation; Valentine’s Day he had brain surgery. My son Marshall drove in to be with me. I was glad for his stabilizing personality. We talk little. Neither of us were motional. We had edperienced enough and secretly hoped for the negative. (The Magdalene, my oldest child babysat; the others; children were not allowed at hospital.) Finally, Marshall asked:

"Do you think he'll make it?"

I sat quietly, I hoped not but not knowing my son's real feelings I shrugged; "I don't know."

After seven hours, the doctor; an old neighbor in the country announced happily that Charles made it. As neither my son nor I were happy or relieved, the Doctor decided we were in shock and detailed the operation. My son and I realized we were both unhappy at the news but but managed to look grateful. We were taken to see a groggy Charles. He shook hands with Marshall and croaked something off the cuff - which I could not hear. Marshall laughed then said he was glad it was over, clasped his father’s hand again. Charles dozed.

"Well it's late. I should be starting back to Urbana." Marshall noticed my stunned deflation. He placed his arms around me.

"It means a lot to have you here, Marshall." - He was my only calming touch with sanity.

"I drove down in the Olds. I didn't trust the motorcycle in this weather (there was snow on the ground). The weather is to get worse.”

“You could stay here awhile if you want and leave later … I have no idea where I parked the car. It's in the hospital’s east lot." He helped her find it.

The Planner marked his papers. It was set. “He should recover, not completely; there will be pinched nerves, headaches. He should be up and around and back to his old self in no time." He was taken back when she said, "Shit!" Undaunted the Life Planners described another scene. He was more surprised when she said:

"Try it with the others. I don't care what you do," and started away.

"But - you have to know what's…" The Planners implored.

"I KNOW… between that man and my mother - more rotten hell and terrified children.

Twelve years of nastiness, plus a drawn out estate settlement no, thank you.” I surprised them. I effused to continue the Springfield involved practices. Those people ultimately do as they please anyway. I take the brunt of it.. “If there is a real emergency, then call me."

"My dear, you can't be serious." But I was and departed to rest; to talk with God; maybe even cry. I developed such vigorous self-control: that I had not shown emotion or cried for 21 years. I would ask for a clairvoyant picture of Horst receiving each letter before I mailed it. If there seemed to be a problem I re-wrote it for a better reception. In one I hoped he could visit her country. Maybe he could bring a few friends, perhaps the choir and orchestra! How she saw him laughing.

Conference! With my lack of participation, the Planners realized the hell these people made and approached me. I would not agree.

"Difficult! Listen! I agreed to this life to help my brother and Demetrius get to Heaven. Could not have Demetrius - pre-existing crap …” She shivered: “Ares and the Magulla - good beginning. My nerves break. Does anyone care how I am faring? Yes, Demetrius! When I awaken from a coma, I discover my parents have tried to cash out all my savings, but thankfully were denied. I have no idea where three and a half days of my life went! I marry what I think is a compatible man but get a sharp-tongued, illogical, spendthrift; a back-stabbing ass like his father plus I have the old governess for my mother! -Two control freaks! When that man walks in the door -How often, I wish I’d kept my iron skillet … I had a wonderful protégé in music, best one I ever had; tried everything I suggested; we were married now that is out… Because of that Gaul! ***That damned Gaul!*** He killed me in the Greek Life and he is killing me again and again every time he opens his screaming maniac mouth. And you tell me nonchalantly that I have twelve years until this dump estate ***begins*** to be settled! That farm brought death and drudgery to every family who ever lived on it! All our savings were sacrificed. Why? Because his wages covered only the utilities, nothing else! And I was boon-doggled into this because HE wanted to be a farmer …even when his father reneged on a managerial agreement - he stayed -until we were completely destitute. And for this faithfulness - his father - evicts us! Are my parents empathetic? Mother says, “Oh Charles is hard to get along with!” We survived because of the township people! They moved us to a house they found him a job, and a car to use. We owed them our lives and some of them I did not even know their names."

"We are observing how the undimmed mind can be a hindrance. We knew there would be some retention of memory because Liszt dragged you back into music.”

“Oh, yes, blame Liszt! He will take an Earth life when I am about sixteen in this life. This will leave no Master in the World of Music." I heaved a sigh. “Oh God help us!”

***"Oh, no, my dear; let us explain: You have no doubt observed the quiet Lemu ri’ans, the gathering of spirits to your far left of God's Throne. They sit quietly and observe all the happenings, but do not speak or take part in anything. Well, they were…a terrible learning experience for us, terrible! Essentially, the spirits are there but the minds are ruined because they were dimmed a second time during their practices. They are childlike, but God ordered us to bring them into His Level to stay. We let them be. They are enjoying and absorbing the wonders of Heaven and as He said -They deserve Heaven and HE HAS THEM!***

“Your time in Music is successful. You worry about this but you bring out their talents. It is their Free Will that causes imperfect choices. You are not responsible."

"But I feel responsible; especially when they surprise me with a composition; I hear it and know it could be more effective with an adjustment. Am I wrong?"

"Perhaps you should join a little music group in this earth experience. You can then realize the difference between “the wanna-be” and the true performer. Yes, that will work in fine. Liszt gave us a list of pianists that he wishes you to guide. It is not an expansive endeavor like in the World of Music. Some just need confidence. You do that. Aha! Here is one just the opposite - over-confident. You can deflate that one in an easy way. Some of these are just to enjoy and give them a nod. One or two need a few innovative ideas. Two youngsters are in direct competition! These musical things you can readily solve…oh, there is one young man; you must find a piano for him." He chuckled and flipped the parchment.

"Here, you will do series of paintings when the urge is there. I see you keep diaries. These will change in tone…***write down your dreams and designate it as a dream, so that you are aware of any prophetic dreams. Later, you will be jotting more Ethereal moments***…getting away from earthbound happenings. These will be fulfilling. The everyday is mundane. Tell me are you interested in helping spirits who have passed on but have not returned? You have the planetary set-up for communication with them. They are from various time frames but are in an area near your workplace much later; actually in the business district. These may be useful to the history of your community. They will not wish to be merely discovered. They will want directed to their reward. You can do this. You may write their stories, but jot them immediately, so that no detail is lost. Is there anything else?"

"How do I handle Charles?"

"From the charts, very little makes him happy. Has he forsaken God?"

"No, but he has forsaken Catholicity; since the ‘70’s - Vatican II when they let Luther out of hell and did not reveal the Third Secret of Fatima. It seems to me, he feels solely responsible for his business success and rewards himself accordingly.”

All the Life Planners stopped in surprise and then laughed in unison. They made notes: The man’s thinking, bogged with self-superiority. Change needed. They looked up and spoke:

***“The Godhead swings the Universe. Luther was a man before his time, but then we doubt that any time would have been appropriate to attack Catholicity. Luther's thought was rational, much of it correct but it was a time when thinkers dare not express their thoughts. Many stories in Catholicity tax the mind. Being pain-of-sin-bound to believe is not God’s way. There were many great thinkers over the centuries. You might like to read their theories; we shall include them for you. Some favor science, (shakes head) too bad; others favor a supreme being, better. Few pierce the Shield of Goodness that surrounds our wonderful Godhead. This is, I dare say what you hope to reveal; our ways and routines, His laws and knowledge in this book you wish included in your life. You will begin it several times, before you can express things easily. It is not an easy subject. Mankind rejects much of the Unseen. Oh it's funny because mankind could live so easily if it was not determined to do things themselves. God and his angels are so readily available for everything, even the intense stuff.***

Episode: I mentioned God to German Nazi-atheists! The situation: I was on a ladder cleaning inside high cabinets. The telephone rang. My neighbor, asked, "Mrs. Midden is your chandelier tinkling?"

"No, Mrs. Day but my Christmas Cactus fronds are bouncing up and down."

"Oh, thank goodness! I'm not in this alone!" Click.

What a quizzical call, well the lady was in her late eighties. I mounted the ladder again and heard my two good cups tinkling, moving in small circles**. 'My lands, it's an earthquake!’** When the phenomenon stopped and all was well I remembered Earthquakes are World News! I sat down and wrote the episode to Horst immediately. My letter ended with: "God is bigger than mankind." I tested the letter via clairvoyance.

Horst got the letter just before they were to appear in the Fernsteturm - a TV tower that dominated the south ridge of Stuttgart. It made him wonder: God was not in their lives. It had been thoroughly erased; Hitler had been their God; now they had nothing! Only the older generation remembered God and Angels and knew how to pray. His mother did. He folded the letter and set in in his breast pocket. The group arrived and set up in the tower’s TV level. The audience was gathered when the power went out and the earth trembled! The elevators went out and there were no stairs at the time to get out of the tower. Being very strict in their wardrobes, the men began sweltering in their black wool suits. None of them would even unbutton a jacket. They were in a situation that could turn riotous and fatal. Horst recalled my letter: “God is bigger than mankind.”

"Mary's right!" He said out of the blue. "Why do we let men dictate? God is bigger than mankind. We could be stuck up here for hours!" With that he unbuttoned his jacket and removed it. His group was agog. He proceeded to lose his tie, remove his cuff links and roll back the shirt sleeves. "Ah better!"

Words of agreement and head nodding followed. Everybody does what the boss does! All the men removed their jackets and loosed their ties. The audience did too.

Now Horst looked at the audience and turned to his combo and singers. "Let us play for them. We know the music we don’t need lights!"

"But it will not be broadcast on TV!" This was Claus, the sound man.

"So! They came to for a show; we do the show."

"But… But! What if the power comes on?" asked Claus.

"Then we start again. They get twice as much." There was happy applause. And the calamity happening outdoors was forgotten. (Stairs were added after this earthquake.)

Episode: A little clairvoyant picture formed. Horst was asleep atop the bedding fully clothed. I asked the Life Planners if he was on drugs. Drugs had become prominent in the music world. The Life Planning Spirit said no, he is just exhausted. The man could work almost two days on end without tiring, but when finished, he crashed. He looked uncomfortable in his black suit. I thought, "I wish I could at least loose his shoes and remove his glasses." Suddenly, I felt my spirit move … I was a in a man’s bedroom! Many things in the Unseen Realm have surprised me. I loosed the tie, removed the shoes with great effort; the eyeglasses were in my hand and I set them down at a little table beside his bed. Then, I was caught by a mischievous thought. He ought to know that I came! So I placed the shoes and tie in an unnatural position and took the eyeglasses to his bathroom - Ah the medicine cabinet. With a bar of soap I scribbled in my Deutsch: "Your spectacles are in here, Mary." I heard a movement and I dashed back to the bedroom. He moved. The soap flew into the air and I was catapulted ... safely and giggly back into the practice area - that was fun. I should check the aftermath with clairvoyance.

Werner, his valet entered and was shocked to see things in disarray. Quickly he began chattering to himself and picking up. Horst sat up and laughed at Werner's somewhat graceful dipping movements. Everything was fuzzy so he reached for his glasses but they were not on the side table! He lost his cool. “Glasses!” The Life Planners told her to relax, see how it plays out. Werner asked Horst if he had scattered the things. - No. - Werner decided it was a ghost. Werner’s wife would not live where there was a ghost. He was jabbering while walking with the soap, taking it to the bathroom and saw the mirror. "Horst, come! Oh, let me help you. Look, it says, your glasses are here, MARY!" The two stared together.

"Open it." In a moment the eyeglasses were on his face. "Oh! Oh!" He said reading the message. It was truly her writing! Horst said he must think. New music was already spinning about in his head.

At the door Werner turned. "I should clean off the mirror, if my wife sees it she will go into hysterics. Horst went into the bathroom and looked at the mirror. Werner was correct. The message had to go. It if were his choice, he would keep it!

When Werner's footfalls fell silent, Horst cried out: "May-ree, I see that you can come, but why don't you come when I am awake? How did you do that? I study all these books and I can't do that."

I asked my Life Planners if it would be all right to visit him in-spirit. This was new territory. I knocked on his bedroom door. He opened it and I smiled. I did not know my spirit was light-filled. I wore my Greek chiton like in the World of Music. He tried to touch me but his hands went through me. I assured him it had not hurt. We discussed how I accomplished this. He wondered if anyone else could see me or if it was just him. I had no idea. At first, I could not substantiate the bi-location long and without warning I was gone, but I returned and apologized. It was disconcerting but I could visit! He listened closely to how I had transported myself in-spirit. He had to learn this wondrous paranormal thing.

They decided it would be pleasant to meet at the Schillerplatz and walk together. Werner knew that she could come; he followed them in the car. What Horst did not reckon was that Werner was frightened. The first time, Werner was so stiff I thought he would have a stroke. Horst had not noticed. Many appearances did not accustom Werner. He always looked sick and faint.

Episode: It was a pleasure giving up the Springfield episodes. Now I knew delight. Horst was on tour in Vienna. He wanted to meet me at the great wheel. The ticket master saw the lady! Horst bought a ticket for himself, but the man blocked his entry insisting that a ticket was needed for the lady.

"But she is not real, Mein Herr; she is a phantom." He sliced his arm through my body.

"Perhaps as you say, Mein Herr, but you need a ticket for the lady."

Horst was frugal about nothing-things (a remnant from his sparse and meager childhood). He tried prestige. "Do you know who I am?"

"I don't care if you are Houdini; you don't get on unless the lady has a ticket."

How I wanted to laugh. The ticket was purchased grudgingly and we got on the wheel.

"Well, my dear, I guess that answers your question, doesn't it? I am visible to others.

"I am very upset." He said. We sat in the carriage going up-up in silence until he said, "I have a song about your hometown. It is a bit too quaint, but I wanted to use this special instrument and key change."

"Oh neat."

"What does that mean?" He asked. I explained the colloquialism. He laughed.

He did not tell her about any of the other music he had done. It would be a surprise. Her energy was failing. She had to leave, gave him a wisp of a kiss on the cheek and dematerialized. He got off the wheel alone.

"Where is the lady?" The ticket master asked.

"Oh, she had to go." Malevolently he did not explain. Awe-struck the man rushed to see if there was a body.

With each bi-location I could remain longer. Horst felt at ease and would call mentally and tell me about his problematic music. One time, a French horn had nothing to play: Solved it. There were many such visits.

Was I leading a double life? Yes, I think so. Finally Charles noticed the German manual and asked… Before I could answer, The Magdalene volunteered that I had been writing to the pianist. Charles said nothing but became nastier adding more controlling demands to my schedule.

Episode: After four months, Horst mastered bi-location! I felt a movement on the edge of the bed, opened my eyes to find Horst. Now I knew why he was so enthralled at seeing me in-spirit! Every hair on his head and face the beard and mustache glittered with a golden Light. It was about his shoulders, down his arms. Every bit of his black wool suit and tie was shot with specks of gold. His eyes twinkled with joy. He bent down and kissed me softly and then in a flash was gone. Indeed, what an experience!

Since he had his first musical hit; life had opened many wondrous doors to him. But, this was ever more wonderful than his first plane ride or seeing new parts of the world. Bi-location was beyond his wildest expectations. He did it! His body was back in his bedroom but he had been visible to Mary in Springfield! He dashed from bed to the desk and began composing, scribbling ever so fast. The notes kept pouring onto the paper he was writing more music than ever. Indeed, this was a "Dream Flight". He sat back and sighed delectably. The sun was rising but he was too supercharged to be tired: “This is the morning after such a night!” Another sheet of paper, more notes! Not knowing how to express it any differently, that was what he called the song!

Episode: I was summoned to the earth practices. Our middle daughter became ill a cold. Her tummy hurt. Hospitals still had little technology. Assured it was not serious; Charles left.

To take my mind off the child I wrote Jankowski and explained a movement called a pedal pointe’ mentioning the adjustments the piano would need on a polished floor. I added that Claude Debussy had managed two in sequence but breaking strings was at times inevitable.

I relaxed and asked to see how the letter was received. The clairvoyant picture opened and I saw him holding the letter; shortly workmen were at the piano. His entourage’ wandered in: "Horst what are you doing? The piano is heavy enough without brakes!" He fanned them off quietly: "I need this."

Episode: At the hospital Regina’s condition changed to pneumonia. The tummy ache was appendicitis and the operation was impossible. In a swirl of anxiety I stopped at the music store and there was the new album completely self-composed. She hoped the works had not been hurried to meet a time schedule. She read the titles:” I Feel Like a Child”: I did not need a man feeling like a child right now! In her swelled anxiety she did the unthinkable - she wrote about Regina’s deathly illness but she forgot to check its reception. The news was doubly devastating: ***He did not remember that she had a child***!

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I listened to the Album but it took three days: one band eluded her: "Any Problems Now?" It had guitars reverberating; some noise and then a sweet piano interlude that said: "If you have any problems now, I will sit right down and play I’ll them for you." Was it anger? If so why the sweet interludes? In her grief I could not click-in that he was using the pedal pointe’.

I asked for a little picture. What I saw and heard was very upsetting and I turned on the Life Planners:

"What is this? I do not understand!" So, they told her. "WHAT! You did not make me understand that he would not remember my children! You have let me ruin his career!” I fumed! “I have absorbed some raunchy words from this “husband” and his phony, critical, ultra- religious family - do not push! I wish to refrain from uttering them but you are the worst botchers ever! FIX THIS! I do believe this is the reason so many spirits do not make it back to Heaven. You do not consider personalities and sensitivities. Your stars! God preserve us from your stargazing!" I stalked away. The Life Planners looked at each other. Actually, this gaff provided the only way to make the couple break-up. This way Horst might show interested in another woman.

I was triply exasperated knowing twelve years of abuse were ahead with Charles. I checked my clairvoyance and worried; Jankowski was not playing any of his compositions and his face had darkened! He sulked after performance. His entourage’ cavorted and encouraged him to play with a blonde. Pretty little Eve flung her arms around his seated figure and talked sexy words. The now and then scenes faded completely after this lady visited his home. My clairvoyance and clairaudience with him closed down!

Episode: Regina mends after (for then) a radical procedure and comes home. I played the new album: Jankowski Plays Jankowski. There was a lot of talk music in it. I wrote but saw him toss it aside. One of the entourage’ retrieved it. Shortly, a letter on his stationary arrived. It was Lincoln’s Birthday; which is a Holiday in Illinois but not Federal. The family was home. Everyone wanted to hear what it said! Eve wrote it and enclosed a clipping. They were engaged. I told them about the engagement and said, “Well he is in his thirties about time,” and smiled. Interiorly I was furious and thanked God again for drama club in High School.

Episode: On President's Day everyone was home I cooked the individual breakfasts that Charles forced me to do! It was - eggs and bacon in the variety each one preferred. In moments Charles began grumbling into his plate that it had taken too long! I arose from the table, stood a moment and left the room. It spurred me into travel action.

Episode: The children dawdled at leaving for school; I had intended to just leave a note. My taxi was due so I told the children. Marshall asked quietly: Why? I could not bring myself to say home was unbearable so I said: It was the only way to talk this out and see how things really stand. I assured my son that I would come home again. Although the travel was easy, there were complications and delays upon my arrival.

Only one practice was scheduled for this episode. The Life Planners had accomplished ***their goal***: returning Jankowski to his life’s gift. Some music came of our reunion, but his last two albums did not sell. His success-bubble was deflating; another comeback was sketchy. The Life Planners noticed something! The pretty blonde had aroused Horst's carnal instinct. “We cannot let this happen! Oh dear God, we will lose both of them and she is one of us! We must work against this after the fact (without a practice)! The Life Planners took me aside and began the vague ramblings of intellectual phrasings only Philosophy adepts can understand. Compound complex sentences flowed but secretly the Life Planners were devious:

"Being one of us you will experience and notice much duplicity in mankind; a mankind which insufferably rejects much of the Unseen. Oh, it's funny take education! The theories are often wrought from abandoned wells, expounded upon by minds dried to God; of Earth-wisdom examined by the earths' greatest thinkers and yet! It is not funny at all. They lead astray the many by their super knowledgeable, stupid, wrong conclusions.” The Life Planning Spirits leaned back in their beautiful clear Lucite chairs contemplating. Had they covered the subject they wanted? As if on cue, they all began to check their notes:

"Mary, you do know that this book will not have a long life? You did a meaningful book in Ephesus during the Greek Life." The speaker tapped the chart: "This one will last until the

eon begins. Nothing of it will be found. Everything is destroyed! The survivors (there are always survivors) will not be drawn to the paranormal or the intellectual. Books are not an important matter in early circumstances. Their pressing matter is eking survival.”

"As long as it helps as many people as possible; I realize I exhibited terrible vibes against St. Paul when he burned the books in Ephesus. I should apologize.

"Unnecessary!"

"I cannot solve the day to day with Charles. At times he treats me like an enemy. In the practices, the problems were so poignant that I would have been willing to help the climax. Why are you laughing? I felt that way when his father reneged a promise and we lost 2/3rds of our income! Those men stimulate hate."

“My dear, in Astrology, the 7th house includes both marriage and enemies … On the Senior Henry Midden you can help him into the hereafter - differently, aha, most differently. See, here is the aspect." I looked at the symbols - meaningless to me. "The aspect which caused his vengeful instincts - will culminate again. Oh, dear, dear, dear, it will affect your husband and his brothers also. We must set a safeguard! Indeed, we must protect you and the children from that!"

"Maybe I need to control my emotions better."

One Life Planners released a huge breath. "You are not in need of control. From what I see, others cause the friction." He flipped the pages. "You do not seem to realize this, but your hearing is on the wane. You will get a small hearing aid. Now, now, don't be upset! I am sure Beethoven would delight in one of these had they been available. It will help you with the music - except - for something called a ten tone scale. What is that?"

"Weber! It seems to rumble without interest." She said.

“Why is your family so surprised with your approach to musicians who need help?"

"First, my parents forbid me to mention any of those years. Then I wrote Charles about the Russian class I was taking; his answer from Korea was very negative, but I thought he would see clearly when we were face to face but he was vehement against higher education! I was not using my music. My parents never touched the subject so I never mentioned it."

"How long was it before you told him?"

I answered, after I returned from Germany it came out in a news article. There was the sound of air escaping balloons. "Ah, now all is evident. Your children realize higher education **is** important. They choose more lucrative fields. They understand but you have made a hornet's nest with Charles. This will not be easy but you must remain tolerant.” Lordy, I thought, at times I want to wack his hard head with a cast iron skillet. The thought of prison was the only thing restraining me.

It was time to begin the Earth Life. There were a few moments to meet the people Liszt wanted me to help; they came for introductions. Peter was nearby! I could feel his over-powering Uranian Vibrations but not fathom why Peter was included. He was great! A few organists and Craig, who insisted on playing both organ and piano simultaneously, were still in the unseen. Lastly, Horst came. He held himself together well. He said he had reset the lifespan again and chosen things to help his spirit progress. There would be something with his hands. I protested this - they were his livelihood! He fanned a hand down. The hands would not be the death of him; he said a mid-point got him! A Mid-point! How amazing that could he understand Astrology? He vowed we would fight the stars and be together! I smiled wanly. Demetrius had tried; we were forever-friends. Demetrius! The reason this farce life began. I touched Horst's hands a last time, draining my composure, bowed to the assembly and then turned into the shaft's vacuum force to be propelled to my destiny. Is this why babies cry?

CHAPTER VI

AMERICAN EARTHLIFE

SECRETS - MANY SECRETS

I left Heaven as an adult spirit; everyone does. I had taken as many bodily deformities as I could so I could gain enough Light towards God's Level. I was hoping to donate these benefits to Demetrius, my brother, Pyrrhus and Horst. The Life Planners would not let me consider the black skin. Its bonus is 750 years. Also they tempered my other rambunctious desires saying I must be recognizable as Deidiamia of Graecia! (Earth year, Circa 315- 288 B.C.)

They did give me “dishwater blonde" straight, thin hair which I would later perm and tint red; green eyes, freckles on anemic skin, crowded teeth, a knobby, taller, thin body - taller by 4 inches of my old Grecian body.. Although I wanted a widow's peak, and beautiful cheeks neither of these carried much Light so I settled for cowlicks and high forehead. Also I chose acne and wanted legs different lengths and a weak back. Again the Planners tempered these but they were confused; they knew I did not need these things however, I would still gain benefits if they were tempered: So they gave me about 15% of each deformity I chose; saying that as an artist I could balance the eyes and brows later with makeup! My chin receded and nose still had a slight hook; these too minimized with makeup or by tilting the head up a bit. The Life Planners realized that with each 7 years the body renews its skin. This meant that my teenage acne scars would be smoothed a bit by 21 and nearly completely gone by age 28. This was a necessity they said; I would mingle with people who looked at the package first! The time gained by taking these bodily disfigurements was assured and totaled: 658 “Years Toward God’s Light.” All the slights and torments I endured successfully could bring the total to almost 1000.

However, the transition from spirit-adult to earthling-babe was a shock! No one taking an earth life comprehends life from a tiny helpless beginning. In this early form we expect safety. When my eyes could focus; I saw my parents - My Far Memory exposed them for what they had been and all hopes of safety vanished! I screamed endlessly. My new and inexperienced parents were baffled. They tried everything to calm their baby. It was blamed on colic, various maladies even to sour or poisoned milk! My mother, Helen thought I was poisoned by my father Joseph’s jealous relatives! She never guessed that I was terrified of them. Over time, I grew less apprehensive but the lack of socialization was introverting.

My first true Far Memory Experience happened when I was at our neighbor’s listening to the radio! I was three. Mrs. Wilder asked us to listen to WLS Barn Dance that Sunday night. Her son was going to sing on the radio! My mother, Helen tried to tune in but the static on our Philco was terrible! The ladies threw up their windows and consulted each other. Mother and I went to Mrs. Wilder’s house. Joseph, my dad worked Sunday baking bread for Monday when stores opened. He missed most events. The Wilder’s radio was perfect. Her son sang with a few friends and guitars. I said, "Oh, I know that sound those are: "The Sons of the Pioneers". They are big!" We three listened and after the song Mrs. Wilder's son telephoned home. He asked if she could hear the music and admitted they still had not decided on a group name. Mrs. Wilder turned to me and asked, "What did you call them?" I repeated it and Mrs. Wilder told her son. He said that was one of the names they'd been fooling with and so as leader he pronounced them: "The Sons of the Pioneers". I was so thrilled to hear them and extolled to Mrs. Wilder, "Oh, they will be real big, records, movies - everything! Their big song is "Cool Clear Water." I skipped home but mother jerked my arm and admonished: "You shouldn't get her hopes up like that." I was too happy, I knew I was correct.

Helen the matriarch was all “show and control.” She needed her movie fix to: “help her forget her horrible life.” Mother admired and wanted to be the snobbish ladies who controlled their husbands’ big estates. Her personality fluctuated; kind to my father; harsh and cold with me and dad’s siblings whose lives were hard during the depression. She was simpering and fawning to people better set (like landlords). She would give a beggar a good sandwich, but never me or dad. We had lard on bread with salt and pepper- and this was what he had in his lunch bucket with a thermos full of hot coffee daily.

Joe, my father was nearly deaf. He seemed oblivious of what his wife did. She was wonderful because she married him. During the depression it was safer for anyone employed to work a later shift. (Joe was stoned by some unemployed men one morning because he carried a lunchbox!) But this later shift pushed his sleeping to a different time. I remember coming into the bedroom to see Daddy asleep.

Joe loved working at a large bakery operating a dangerous double bladed machine called a rounder. He was deft, careful and thankfully never had an accident. His hours began at noon and went until 8 p.m. or later. Other times he read the newspaper or put on old cloths and cut grass with a push mower. He loved the yard neat even if it was rental.

Later, mother fanaticized telling me that my father was like a doctor (bakers wore white) Personally, I thought that was silly; he had flour in his work-clothes, not blood but I dare not speak. Joe too knuckled under pleasing Helen demand for prestige. He could wear only suits, ties and white shirts. He never owned a colored or printed shirt. While mother ironed, she wove stories about her single days during which I must sit attentively listening. She recited these often. In her stories she worked many “Jobs”. Later I realized there were not that many hours in a day! And such abilities! She sewed only the sample baseballs at a factory; played saxophone in the Powell Symphony Orchestra on Grand Avenue, and was in their combo that played on a showboat! She worked at St. John’s Hospital in St. Louis, West with a doctor that “knew her father!” Exciting things - and from her demeanor things I must implicitly believe! None of these stories were told in Joe’s presence. He thought Helen taught me the things children should know.

Helen’s house had new appliances and good furniture. Some never used. I had large outdoor toys but they were kept orderly by me in the dining room. My socializing was restricted to movies where you kept quiet, looked and listened: We went as often as the movies changed. On Saturday mornings my father drove us to the bank where I must be alert, pleasant and silent. Helen was no cook; she tossed this aside as due to her St. Louis lifestyle as a working girl. (Her excuse never varied but when I was 16, my Aunt Bertha put a hand on her little hip and said: “How long you gonna go with that, Helen!” Helen was galled and she cut Bertha out of our lives! Helen thought food was a waste of money and time. Once it was eaten - there was nothing for “show”. Joe brought bread home; milk was delivered for Joe, the money-maker. She bought coffee, lard for sandwiches with salt and pepper. On Saturdays my dad was home; once she fried eggs into black Frisbees; another time, oatmeal to stiff glue. Bologna and eggs made guest appearances in the kitchen but were unused unless Joe asked for them. I had coffee with cream and sugar for morning. (Mother said I was allergic to milk.) Her staple dinner was a pot of water, salt and pepper; into this went beans from dad’s garden or worse, dried lima beans. No meat or veggies were added. She bought the cheapest meat; pork sausage - once liver all fried too fast and like her eggs a crispy black. There was (umm, she cooed) hearts and kidneys water-cooked with salt and pepper! The house smelled like boiling urine. Joe never complained.

Large watch dogs figured into my young life. They belonged to our landlord. I thought to them and they responded. I pet them by sticking my hands through the chain link fence, seeing them "smile" was joy. Mother and father never smiled or hugged me or kissed me so the big watch dogs were a delight for me. But I was caught and chastised by the landlady. Rip, the English Sheep dog once tore a guy’s arm, but Max the German shepherd was ok. The two were wonderful dogs and Rip especially was sad at this revelation. I asked him - mentally: ‘You wouldn’t do that to me?’ and he brightened. So I told the lady, “He said I’d be safe with him.” This befuddled the landlady. Max was let free at times and he would visit at our wired red picket fence. I chatted and pet him carefully to avoid splinters from the fence. Helen insisted we needed a watchdog and they bought a Wire hair Terrier. I silently interviewed the pups at the kennel but despite my pleas, Helen and Joe chose “Tarzan” who proved incapable of learning or pleasing. Helen was constantly smacking him with a roll of paper. He would ride happily in my doll buggy but one Saturday Joe saw, objected and tried to pull Tarzan out. Joe was nipped. Tarzan had to be chained to the old icebox, the only thing substantial enough to restrain him. They thought he would overturn the new refrigerator.

I had to play quietly in the parlor. Tarzan wanted to be with me and began quietly chomping his way through the kitchen wall to the parlor. Helen noticed the dog’s mess, swept it up and pulled the table a bit so the tablecloth hid it! Tarzan accomplished a peek-hole when the landlords visited unannounced. Joe complained that the table was too far towards the dog and pulled it back revealing the hole! Three of four adults were shocked. Joe volunteered to repair it, but the landlord said, “No, you’ll move.”

At the next house Tarzan was outdoors. Joe made a doghouse from a barrel; set it in the garage, and made a flip door for entry and exit and padding to curl up on. There was a guy wire on a overhead wire so the dog had the full run of the back yard. Tarzan was listening when Helen warned me that green (Concord) grapes would make me sick. When the neighbor’s child came and began to pick them, Tarzan dashed over and knocked them out of her hands. The child was terrified and Tarzan’s good deed was punished. As soon as he could Tarzan escaped. I was frightened that his behavior would bode him no good, but my father had been bitten so often - he was relieved that it had fled. We had no more dogs during my childhood..

The new rental place was too far from Joe’s work; he needed the car, I was nearly five. At Easter there was a bunny. I taught it to play ball. Father loved watching it, but Helen scowled; nobody could be happy unless she decreed it. The bunny disappeared. Joe’s brothers and sisters visited. I was overjoyed: People, real people! Relatives! Shortly, Helen found fault with each one who had met her in St. Louis; before she married Joe. She convinced her trusting Joe to distance them with: “I heard them talk bad about you, Joe”. Thusly, Helen protected dream-life of aristocratic heritage. This way, no one could call her on it. Whenever the movie changed we walked 13 blocks to the Pantheon Theater and another 13 back in the dark. We were safe it was a different world. But Joe never dreamed so much of his wages was frittered away on movies! He still subsisted on one lard sandwich and a thermos of coffee for lunch daily.

One mid-night, I heard giggling and peeked from the covers. I slept on the sofa. (I outgrew my crib, no bed replaced it.) The giggling was from three girls taller than me. Their garments seemed old fashioned with dropped waists but were of tissue silk, each different and beautiful. Their hair: one marcelled (some kind of a wave-process); one a Buster Brown bob like mine and one had banana curls with a flat ribbon medallion in her hair. Was I sleeping through company? The house was dark; I heard snoring in the bedroom. The three girls took turns swinging by their hands on an unused drapery rod between the parlor and the dining room. One girl went completely over the top! I stopped smiling: Even at five, I knew this was impossible! Wood, wall and ceiling were above the rod! The girls continued until I giggled. They stopped; looked at me and disappeared! “Don’t go!” I called again and again only succeeding in waking a crabby Helen.

In the morning mother actually listened to me! She quizzed the landlord and was told: A girl in a wheelchair was hit by a rock thrown through the window and died. There was a blood stain of her handprint that returns no matter how often that wallpaper is washed. This was right by the sofa where I slept! Did we pack-up and flee? No, the ghosts made the rent cheaper. Thinking movie money - Helen told me a ghost would upset daddy - so it was our secret! I was never to talk about the ghosts to anyone! She then frightened me with tales of mental institutions for people that saw things that were not there! I hoped the children would return but they never did.

The year was filled with firsts. In the summer I got to see some of my first baseball game. I was honored to go anywhere with both my patents because my father was always working.

# HERE

I started first grade in September 1945. My seatmate and I were neither five yet but she was more intelligent than I was - she knew her name. I only had a nickname and the teacher never called it during the roll call. The teacher called a girl’s name, but that girl never answered. Six weeks into classes, my father asked how school was. I mentioned the girl and her name. My dad said derogatorily: “You darn stupid fool, that’s you.”

“Then why do you always call me “Snookie”? I was never told this other name!”

Mother struck her impudent stance: “That is what the nurse called you when she first brought you to me and we use it.” - I did not know my own name! Mother had made me look like an idiot! Monday; when the name was called, I answered. Young Mother Veronica nodded. There was something about the young nun. The other nuns were older, dour and briskly informal. Mother Veronica floated about the class room like a fairy and gave individual suggestions. We were into an art project; folding sheets of doll house furniture. My seatmate Loretta said I got the piano. All right, but where was the rest of it? I went to Mother Veronica’s desk. One of the kids said it was all there; just that it was an upright. Sister was so pretty I stayed in line anyway. That was when I noticed how her fingers bent upward at about a 35 degree angle as she showed how to crease the pieces! This was completely abnormal and although I did not know the words for this, I realized Mother Veronica was going to have a nervous break-down! I returned to my seat having lost all my color and mentioned it to my seatmate that I hoped we were safe. In a few days we were let out for Christmas vacation. We found old Mother Anastasia at the desk; saying Mother Veronica had developed a nervous condition would not return.

That Christmas I remember, my old doll got a new dress with lace edges. “There, isn’t she pretty?” I got nothing! I hated that doll!. I hated that doll; I wanted the new dress with lace so I would be pretty. The next morning Santa brought me an erector set, a wind-up train with tracks and a punctured spool and stick set to build things. My father loved “showing me how everything worked.” At school I listened to the boys behind me and realized I’d been given a boy’s toys.Later my aunt Bertha spilled the beans; my parents had wanted a boy. Well, I was beaten to a pulp by my birth, but I wasn’t ugly enough for a boy anyway. Too bad folks.

In second grade a few boys got into bit-trouble but the principal and two tall eighth grade boys came into the room. Buxom Mother Joseph tapped a thick ruler on her other hand and spoke about disciplining the boys. I listened and hated it! These were little kids! ***I covered my eyes and prayed silently to God and then cast my thought to each of the two eighth grade boys:*** ***"I will not do it! I will not do it!"*** When the first fellow dawdled with the ruler, the principal said sternly, "Well, get on with it!"

The boy took a large breath and handed the ruler to the other eighth grader. "I will not do it!" The second fellow heaved a breath and said, "I will not do it either." He handed the ruler to the principal and said, "Here, do it yourself!" Mother Joseph was so flabbergasted her mouth fell open. Both eighth grade boys turned sharply and marched out of the room. I smiled and sat back. Wow, “thinking to” worked with people too! I was very happy.

We marched to the basement for lunch. But the children were to bring their lunch. It was not furnished. I sat with nothing. The monitor nun moved about the room and noticed several children had no food. By Friday we all had notice. I came home with the news. My father was home. He brought up school. It was OK.

“Oh the teacher said we were to bring a lunch to eat at school.” Helen thought a lard sandwich. But I continued: “She said it had to be a meat sandwich, a piece of fruit and something to drink.”

“Is that for Monday?” Mother asked and I explained. She said in dismay: “Every DAY!” I nodded, yes. She exaggerated a shaking expression and surprisingly my father said.

“That is good and I’ll take two of those sandwiches!”

Mother was devastated. She had to make lunches every day and it would cut into her movie money. She could say nothing without revealing her folly. I was not alone; several of us never knew “Breakfast” but now we had one meal a day. Unfortunately this fell to nothing during summer. No summer lunches, no food.

Third grade I retorted a comment of Mother Mary Catherine: “It is not only Catholics that are good people. There are kinds of people that we do not have in this school and they are also God’s people.” One boy fell to his knee and shouted: “I salute you, Sister of the Hawk!” and a second boy stood, put his hand to his heart and said, “And I as well!” It frightened me, somehow - I expected to be killed. Years later I met the man who was my brother in the Greek life. He trained a few pet hawks for war messages; he became known as The Hawk.

Fourth grade was stranger. Three very intelligent boys had regressions similar to mine. Mother Isabel was dismayed. Things happened in History, Religion and Geography. I was asked about the capitals on columns on old Greek buildings. I seldom opened a book to study at home (Mother's movies came first!) I said they were all the same: Simple Doric style out of doors. When Mother Isabel corrected that there were other types, I answered, "The Ionic and the badly designed one with little leaves-Corinthian - fared better indoors, they would not hold up in the weather." The three boys agreed. When I was asked who was Cleopatra? I said, "She was Alexander's sister and was killed in Sardis. One of the boys said she was Antipater's mother killed by the Antipater. The second boy mentioned Cleopatra, wife of Alexander the Great, and a fourth mentioned Cleopatra, Ptolemy's relative.

The Sister became bug-eye and said, "Yes there were many Cleopatras but the one I am looking for is-?"

Ruth A. stood up and spoke crisply, "She was the queen of Egypt and killed herself with an asp." The three boys and I all turned to look at Ruth. I said, "If she was Egyptian did she not know this little brown snake was poisonous?" Mother Isabel answered yes, but she wanted to die.

I responded, "Oh that is too bad. She has a long way to go then." The three boys verbally agreed. Suicide is quite serious in the Heavenly Realm. The three boys bowed to Mary and she smiled and nodded her head to them. Mother Isabel was baffled by this respect among children. Then she recalled Mother Mary Catherine mentioning a strange display in her third grade last year. It involved a pledge of allegiance to this girl. Mother Isabel was confused, I was an only child, I had no brother! She asked one of the brilliant fellows. He answered: “That was proper, Mother Isabel.”

Although everyone knew the Christmas story, Mother Isabel read it anyway, but I put my hand up. "Mother, I cannot place this Harrod. The lands you are talking about all had kings, but none were named Harrod." Robert stood and said, "Yes, Mother Isabel, that has always bothered me too. What is his blood line? You see, Lysimachus held the Southwest parts." Raymond stood and said, "Yes, Mother and Selucas held Syria and India, Ptolemy held Egypt, Antigonus was in Turkey - so what is this Harrod's bloodline?" The teacher was flabbergasted. Then Theodore stood and screamed. "Yes. And that Antiochus held Babylon - his fantastic hanging gardens! Fantastic my eye! Do you know who had to water all those …pots? ME!"

Mother Isabel paled. Something had happened which was not normal. God! This was Reincarnation! The Catholic Church had discontinued teaching it. All she knew was the way it was in one Bible story: “Children, I do not know the answer but I will check it out and report back after Christmas Holidays.” Mother Isabel was true to her word. She checked history, checked her wall maps, asked the principal and then consulted the pastor. They pooh-poohed her cases for Reincarnation! Mother Isabel was overly wrought by the New Year. To her class, she explained all the things she had discovered about the kings of that time and so it was that Harrod had been appointed as an overseer or satrap as they were called for the land that included Bethlehem. She went into a discourse on Reincarnation saying that there was such in the bible, but it was not a popular teaching these days. She resented being put off by those authority-figures who had not witnessed her class.

During that year (1937) my parents decided to build a house. They had just paid free a lot near the bakery where my father worked. The house would have many wondrous features; a built-in bathtub, a hot water heater, built-in kitchen cabinets. Mother demanded several things: a built-in breakfast nook and a small light on each side of the front door. The architect, builders and mother argued and screamed at each other over these costly details. As an only child I was dragged along everywhere. This was on a Sunday - mother was proud of that; later she would say, “We even had them open on Sunday!” But even being seven years old, I’d heard enough shouting - and was hungry. I spoke normally: “Sirs, I was told that in business: The customer is always right!”

“Ugh, eh, yes. Ugh. We will look in to this and settle it by the first of the week. We will make it right.” Everyone packed up and left. Everything was built by hand there were no power tools. In less than five months the house was ready. We moved in. Mother bought a davenport (back folded down to make a double bed) a straight chair and floor lamp. At the Gas Company she chose an apartment sized stove, and when the builder asked what goes in this room? She realized that furniture was needed for my room. I had a room! It had a door, a closet, mother’s vanity and cedar chest. She bought a brown metal bed and promptly painted the bed and vanity white enamel. All the walls had a sandy finish - you dare not brush against them - it was like sand-paper. I would like light pink or blue walls so naturally Mother chose institution light green. There were some neighbor boys who decided my mother would be a good target to torment. When World War II began - our German name provided a second reason for taunting. Mother never had a neighbor she liked …I could not play with any of their children although if Mother was in the basement we would all sit on the grass and talk good kid stuff. Once she instructed me to tell the kids Bing Crosby was my uncle … I could see her in the front doorway - so I said it. After she left one of the boys asked was Bob Crosby my uncle too … but I had not heard of Bob Crosby; looked back at the doorway - she was gone - so I told the truth. “No they aren’t my uncles at all. Mother told me to say that. I don’t know why - just puttin’ on I guess.” The kids all laughed and I was relieved.

When new neighbors bought the bungalow next door -I went out and made friends immediately! They had an adopted boy three years old. Tommy became my pal. He learned Gene Autry’s songs and serenaded my gramma at the Interurban to St. Louis. There were

soldiers on the train so he sang “God Bless America” to them - People threw coins, he thought he was being pelted at first but kept on singing. I helped him pick up the coins!

That Spring Mother Isabel prepared her 4th grade class for Confirmation. The class spent a lot of time in church, learning the life stories of the saints depicted in the statues. There were certain questions that the Bishop of the Diocese would ask and the children dutifully learned the answers. None of the children knew exactly what to expect of this sacrament. The boys were hoping for super-powers! The girls wanted beauty and a good husband one day.

As we knelt before the altar in Confirmation cloths each boy and girl prayed for their hopes. Perhaps the blessing would manifest on the way to our seats! But none of us felt any different. Monday the boys grumbled, the girls were disappointed. Loretta, my friend, was philosophical, simply heaving a breath and saying; "Another disappointment, oh well!" Some of the boys became adamant! One going so far as to question the bible stories! Another said his uncle - not a Catholic said the Blessed Mother was a whore! Neither Loretta nor I knew that word but from the intonation, it was not good. The boy promptly supplied the explanation. Each of us girls put a forefinger to our lip and turned away.

The Sacrament produced the wrong effect. It should have been explained as a help to strengthen our Faith. We few students remained in disbelief silently - we must remain in school. I was skeptical too. I paid a visit to church and questioned the Holy Ones relentlessly. They were silent. I heard nothing! Was I abandoned by asking such things? I left school that summer deflated by the Confirmation; the lack of response by the Holy People in Heaven. Maybe none of the religion was true. These thoughts brought ugliness and near-death.

Children who are alone find or invent invisible playmates. I was happy with my two until Confirmation made me doubt God. After that my pleasant invisible playmates withdrew. Two others came. The games they suggested were different. I always played quietly to let mother crochet. The two new spirits invited me to play “rope”. I had one on my stick horse - cowgirls had ropes. I would wrap it about my waist making my body bulge to look fatter. A few nights before this, mother and I saw a costume movie with Simone' Simone'. There was an escape scene where the heroine pretended to hang herself. The two spirits enticed me to reenact the scene in the basement. It sounded good. I took the rope downstairs and fastened it in the rafters. I placed four 2 x 4 blocks of wood from my father’s work bench under it to stand on. The rope was supposed to slip freely and not harm me. But not knowing knots, it did not work. I felt the rope tightening around my throat, and worse the blocks of wood began to wobble apart! I tried to keep the rope off my throat and at the same time work those blocks back together. I was terrified and ashamed that my mother would find me dead. The rope tightened until I could not yell out. ***Suddenly I mentally screamed: "GOD, HELP ME!" My eyes closed, stars began popping and pinging in my head. Then as suddenly I felt two strong arms lift me slightly, loose the rope and straighten the wooden blocks. I felt relief and thought by chance my father came home and saved me but, no. Then I heard an angry voice in my left ear, "Take that thing off your neck! Quick, throw it up in the rafters out of sight - no time to take it down. Place the wood where it goes! You are all right! Your neck is rasped and red. Ugh, your mother is coming! Tell her you are finished playing and were just coming upstairs!"*** I looked around. I was alone but I followed these orders deftly. This had to be God's quick help. I was overjoyed! God preserved me and was covering my indiscretion. He knew how fragile my freedom was. Even hearing mother’s gravely singing did not knock my joy. Helen never looked at me; just said she decided to do some ironing. I had to get away quickly - she always told those two hour stories when she was ironing! I said that I finished my play and was going upstairs. Very carefully I mounted the stairs; my legs were shaking. Now I had a wonderful secret that I protected from everybody.

The two Angels, God sent instructed me to use a lovely scarf that an older Polish woman had given me. ***"Wrap it loosely around the redness; it will take two days before it looks natural."*** I sat down by the vanity exhausted, covered my eyes and took a huge breath.

***"Dear God, I will never doubt you or anything about you or the Blessed Mother or any of the holy saints again! I called and you came! You did not have to come, I doubted you. I will never do that again. I am yours forever."***

To my surprise, about a week later, I heard the voices of those two nasty fiends! I screamed at them to leave, go, get out! I never wanted to see or hear them again! As I watched their shadowy clouds move out the window, mother came rushing in to my room.

"What is it? Are you all right? I heard you screaming at the top of your voice!"

"Oh … I am sorry to upset you, mother. It was a play scene.” (And now I had two secrets!) “ Dear God, please forgive me for being so foolish." I pleaded silently.

About a month later my father mentioned he needed to dust off the furnace pipes! I remembered that rope; it was next to the furnace. While he was outside finishing a different chore, I quickly went to the basement, pulled the wash stool over and unfastened the rope. I moved a few small lumps and grits of coal in the coal room and threw the rope under them; pushed at it with my foot to make the rope hopelessly dirty. I would NEVER play with a rope again! I closed the coal room door and latched it; shoved the stool back to place, came upstairs and thanked God for the needed time. God knew my parents were nothing to reckon with…even God helped me be secretive when necessary.

I was not scathed alone. Mother Isabel’s clerical rebuff about the Reincarnated children upset her so much that when the children were dismissed for the summer - Mother Isabel asked for dispensation of her vows and left the Ursuline Sisters. The next spring she visited her old class as we marched to Mass. She was happy and at peace. She loved the children. She said met someone and was going to be married! All the children wished her well and told her they missed her too. Most of all we were surprised: She had a neck, hair, body and legs! That long black habit hid everything.

Things seemed to normalize, but alas not for long. The Wangard's were paying off a loan for my hospital bill. I’d caught Scarlet Fever and as Joseph handled food, it was either: he remains home a month or they put me in the hospital. After quick calculations, I was taken to St. John's. Helen took a job as maid at a funeral home to help pay that bill. Insurance had not been invented. Her job went awry. Ed, one of the undertakers raped her. When he discovered she was pregnant he pestered her no end to leave Joe and marry him. She refused. Ed drank heavily and came to the house when Joe was working. One Sunday he arrived sober! My Grandmother and Aunt Birdie had come by Interurban to visit. Ed presented himself well! Aunt Birdie slipped him her address and they wrote.

As pregnancy was a taboo subject, I had no idea why this guy would not just go away when mother told him to. Helen and Truth were complete strangers but her twisting of facts was Oscar worthy. She told Joe that he would be a father again! Her fears, lies, and bad food habits (she had discovered canned chili) landed her in hospital for the last two months. The house was robbed while my father and I visited the hospital (No children could enter; I had to wait in the foyer). In mid-November the child was stillborn. Ed did not relent … he threatened to marry her younger sister and give her a “hell of a life” but Helen would not be a shamed woman; she held strong caring about no one but herself and her foolish made-up aristocratic life. Ed presented himself well to Aunt Birdie and she moved to Springfield. She knew he drank but had no experience in what this meant. They eloped. Birdie asked Helen to get the rest of her things from my grandparent’s house in St. Louis. (The meeting to fetch Aunt Birdie’s things was the often tried but an unsolved episode.) Mother never mentioned her lost child to her parents or siblings. Everybody’s unhappiness was blamed on Birdie. Grandmother and Helen shouted terribly. My grandfather consoled me and assured me I was safe. But it did not level; the maternal family broke contact. I missed my grandparents but could say nothing. I grieved alone. Joe was saddled with another hospital bill plus the funeral bill. Helen never talked about any of it just kept her nose in the air. Joe cast a block of concrete and chiseled “his son’s” name on it. It was so pitiful a memorial he cried. I had never seen my dad cry before.

It was April of 1942 when Joe brought home the news: The bakery cut everyone’s wages in half. Union be-hanged, they must accept it or the bakery was closing its doors. Joe realized paying those loans plus the house mortgage was impossible on half salary. To balance things, Joseph took a morning class in riveting and although it was ear-splitting with his hearing aid he qualified at the top of his class and was given a war job in St. Louis. My parents rented our new house to a couple. We began packing our garments. There were no foodstuffs. I sold my bike.

I was riding my bike one last time. Mort, the neighbor boy bumped it from behind and suddenly I stopped and at last the tears came. “Mort, I don’t have to take it anymore! We are moving. We can’t make it.” I spilled the news about the bakery cut tearfully to the oldest tormenter. We were moving to St. Louis. Mort was shocked. He really liked me he said but just didn’t know anything about liking a girl. We became friends then but Mort realized he knew nothing about his own parent’s money situation. He only knew that his father drank and it upset his mother. She was an OK mom. I was too stressed to ride my bike so we walked them the block to our houses and said goodbye.

ST. LOUIS GIRL!

My parents put our furniture in storage. My father moved to St. Louis; we followed in a week. He worked at Curtiss-Wright Aircraft until the war contracts finished. The apartments were ancient but when Helen found a sewing job on Fourteenth Street near town - I liked everything about this Euclid Street apartment! My father would be sleeping and mother was not there to find fault over imagined things. There were families with children. For me, St. Louis became freedom and discovery! The apartment house children had a black Newfoundland dog! There was the iceman and dairyman both with old horse-drawn wagons because of gas rationing. We begged ice chips; watered and spoiled the horses! This area was called Aubert. It was between Page and Easton and from Euclid west to Kingshighway. It had a Western Auto, Sears, Post Office, Pevely Dairy barn with horses, A & P grocery, a corner tavern, an ice cream store and specialty shops: one vulcanized tires; another made composition store manikins. Several antique shops were across Easton. A streetcar line went east to old downtown and west to Easton village. We children ran errands for the tenants in the building; sold molasses confections or papaya juice at a stand. People bought anything that could be eaten from kids. There was summer at Sherman Park and splashing in pools. The art department and library were open. All kinds of game areas were there for older boys. Two played a Mexican game: jai-a-li. We kids played at posing like the statues in art books; hand-stitched gowns and had tea parties. We sent notes by a pulley between the first and second floor. I learned the streetcar lines and loved my freedom. I decided to write to my grandmother about leaving Springfield but that I would be in big trouble if they answered my letter; mother was still angry. I was returning from the post office when the streetcar stopped at Euclid for the stoplight. A girl yelled out the open window - it was my pen pal! Jamie Cartwright lived in St. Louis. We made a date for the next Saturday. I would go with her to her piano lesson. I liked singing and soon signed up for that. One day Jamie was near tears. She could not play her assigned piece to suit the teacher. Without thought, I took the music and had her try it a certain way. The teacher loved it! But this was Jamie’s weak spot. She could not read the little musical indications. I showed her and told her what they meant but she became dependent. But her music had emotion and verve. Her parents were happy and Jamie advanced nicely.

During one of our formal tea parties held on the front porch, a taxi arrived bearing my Aunt Elizabeth. The landlady walked me to the taxi to check that I knew the person before I got in the taxi. My aunt and I chatted. I admitted mother was still adamant. The St. Louis branch was ever hopeful. A few weeks later a knock came to our door. I opened it to two well-dressed men wearing black suits, topcoats and fedoras. One said he was Helen’s cousin John Kowalski. I knew the name from several of my mother’s truth and fiction stories. Wow, he was real! I invited them inside The other man he said, was his secretary. My father was asleep and mother had to work a half day. I awoke my father; he dressed and we chatted. Helen arrived and nearly fainted at the sight of John who now lived in San Francisco! I was sent into the bedroom on the guise of removing my black “Chen Yu” nail polish in ten minutes for all the change in Cousin John’s pockets! (It was over Ten Dollars.) But after nearly two hours he could not convince Helen to come back into the fold. We walked John and his secretary to their car; Cousin John hugged me whispering in my ear - “We gave it a good shot kiddo, too bad.” Joe admired the car. Cousin John said it was a Buick special-1939. We said our goodbyes. The men got in back - he had a driver. Once Helen heard the car door close she stiffened. “What kind of union official is he? I know that sound! That car is bullet-proof.” Dad and I sighed - another two hour story. Dad cut her short. He liked that car and wished he had one like it! That summer I was happy; I meet a cousin and had a secret visit with my aunt - about which my parents were never the wiser. Gosh, I wrote grandmother expressing joy at seeing them but regret for the failure. We moved to a place on Maple St. Mother did not want to chance anyone finding her in a place thatheld beer parties on the weekends! My parents were invited but mother was too good for them! When it got rowdy, their Mastiff, Duke made its way upstairs and slept under my army cot. The landlady called Duke and he shivered - shaking the cot. I quickly draped an Indian blanket to the floor so the dog was hidden. There was no door to the kitchen where my cot was. .

When summer hit, I was free of both school aand music. Maple Street was too far from Sherman Paark, but a straight shhot to the streetcars downtowm! I’d go early, check out all the big department stores and ride home with no one the wiser. At times, I would back-track to 14th St. where the sewing factories were housed. When mother finished for the day, we would walk to Seventh Street to Child’s cafeteria. Mother lived for their Chop Suey. Along the way I saw poor bums sitting on wide basement window sills. I felt so sorry for them and mentally wished them well. I mentioned them to Helen- hoping she’d say something kind but when she turned to look those wide window sills were empty. Helen let it pass; stupid kid-trying to fool her! On various Saturdays Movie Stars appeared in parades to stimulate interest in buying War Bonds. One time a Japanese one-man-sub was displayed - for the same reason.

The war efforts were winding down. War contracts were not renewed. As the aircraft contract finished and their last Friday was at hand: Joe told one guy he only riveted the body; another said he only did the tail - so on. The fellows decided beings it was their last day and this was the last plane - they would assemble it and see what it looked like! None of them considered that they were on the 4th floor of a closed brick building. When the supervisor saw the plane he nearly had a stroke. The guys thought it was a cute little thing; a Navy fighter. They said their goodbyes, took up their belongings quickly, and left.

The plane could not be dismantled - it would be ruined. Permits, police, a crane, a pear-shaped wrecking ball and a double-length flatbed semi were lined up. The newspapers had a ball! The crane knocked the security fencing down and then made a huge hole in the building. The plane was padded, chain-strapped, pulled out by crane and lowered onto the semi. Police sirens wailed as traffic was halted and cleared along Natural Bridge Boulevard. The little Navy Fighter was escorted to Lambert field. People line the boulevard and waved flags for miles. Joe read it in the paper; “That’s right when Americans make something it can’t be taken apart!” He finished the article and smiled happily swirled and said: “Ain’t it great, we did that!” (Note: The building at Union and Natural Bridge remained with its hole on its eastside fourth floor for over forty years. After two generations the building became a curiosity. Finally a trucking firm established there.)

The air in downtown St. Louis was thick with bad diesel exhaust. It affected my lungs so badly that that I heaved whenever more than two buses idled. Joseph made a job for himself at Mavrokos Bakery doing specialty pastries. He loved decorating the long breakfast rolls with cherries! That bakery had outlets all over St. Louis. Helen’s workplace was closing. This and my cough made the money hungry woman doubly aggravated. A doctor prescribed nine different pills and there was no improvement. When I began to heave; it ruined her aristocratic stance. She decided it was time we returned to Springfield.

My freedom died; no streetcars, shopping or fun at Sherman Park. It meant dour Ursuline nuns and a couple smart-alek boys that teased me before. I hoped they died or moved out of the parish but no such luck. A bright spot appeared: If the Wangard’s would let their daughter come to St. Louis Saturday’s for music; the Cartwrights would pay the expenses! I was happy. (This arrangement lasted through our High School years.)

I did not wear heavy makeup like some of these eighth grade girls at Saints Peter's and Paul's School, but otherwise I had outgrown them. I knew how to get off the school grounds to lunch at a Jack Robinson's Hamburger place. (It was that or foodless; there still was no school cafeteria.) I was thinner than everyone else but could put garments together elegantly. I had nice clothes by way of my St. Louis-good times allowance; art and fashion books from Sherman Park Library and in all the movies I had seen the stars dressed superbly.

Helen’s cooking never improved and Joe never complained but one Saturday I closed my eyes during the prayer and sighed sadly when I opened them. Joe asked, “What is it?” I admitted I was praying that it would be something else. Joe laughed heartily and nodded. That soup had its day; Mother switched to bakery pastries, pie and cake: Beautiful, unhealthy but it sure beat those awful soups.

St. Louis changed me from a shy-hang-back-scared-of-everybody-kid. There were three months until 8th grade graduation. I knew the Ursuline Sisters at SS Peter’s and Paul’s needn’t be so harsh. Maybe long ago a few kids were extra rowdy but we were normal kids, frightened senselessly - all of us with stress - bitten fingernails. (So different from St. Mark’s which had young Dominican Sisters.) When the Principal who was the Eighth Grade Teacher -Mother Joseph voiced a biased opinion, I now set it straight; my paranormal gifts were surfacing. When Mother Joseph sought sympathy for missionaries; “There have been so many of our missionaries killed in Africa, none ever survive.” Up went my hand. I remembered that stay with natives south of Alexandria in Egypt and I asked: “What did they wear?” The buxom principal drew back,

“Why habits, like this!” (Black).

I nodded. “There’s the problem; those people tolerate no black. They consider it evil and do away with it as quickly as possible. I could explain how…” I was denied that story.

Another time: “We have never had any vocations to the Sisterhood here in many years and only one to the Priesthood, Fr. Shea. I don’t know why this is.” My hand shot up.

“Well Mother, I was always taught to put my best face forward in public. Now if this is your best face, what kind of hell-hole is that convent over there?” Mother Joseph was shocked into defending herself and then stopped: “If I had you all year, you would not speak to me this way!” Three of the most brilliant fellows cat-called: “Thank God you didn’t. It’s the truth! Oh, yes it IS the truth!” and the boys clapped… Everyone graduated.

VARIETY SHOW

After grade school graduation there was nothing to do in Springfield. Jamie’s family traveled in summer. I talked the neighborhood children into putting on a variety show. The basement at our house was big, clean and new. We practiced there and accepted cast off draperies to partition a dressing room. I always bought "Hit Parade Magazines" and knew most of the songs from movies so I helped the kids learn the words and melodies. Among the kids were two talented five year olds Tommy, my friend and Ebie, Mort’s baby sister. Together they performed "Pistol Packing Mama" and "Paper Doll". Mort and his brother, Jackie worked with little Ebie’s trigger finger so she could shoot the cap gun. Some kids danced, others sang. Charlene, my croquet friend played Hawaiian guitar, wore a grass skirt, a lei and proper colorful top. When the show was whipped together , I hand printed tickets and was absolutely surprised when the kids returned having sold all the tickets! Now I had to tell Helen that the show was actually going to take place because the kids sold all the tickets!

Helen had no idea what was required of HER, so she moved all the dining chairs to the basement, borrowed the neighbor’s chairs and made lemonade. The kids conquered stage fright and did a great job: Too good. They were implored to give the play again the next day. The complimentary lemonade stand closed. Helen was out of lemons and served ice water. The kids divided the money afterward. When it finished it was an anti-climax for me. Back to croquet with Charlene.

I was too old to be playing kick the can, but we could play late under the street lamp. Joe Klasing was fourteen and dragged along with his parents to visit Charlene’s parents. Kick the can or adult talk? Joe found a great hiding place, and when I was scrambling about he motioned for me to join him. We were under the porch, obscured by wooden lattice work. We remained to place twice watching the kids search for us. We chatted quietly. He would go to Lamphier High School but his true dream sounded feminine and he shied from saying. We wrote letters then High School started. I enrolled in Sacred Heart Academy.

REGRESSIONS

After this fun summer I began freshman year where none of the girls seemed to have any adventures. There were two sistes from St. Louis, they boarded but had never taken a streetcar ride or seen a movie star parade! This school had Dominican Sisters who were as endearing as those at St. Mark's in St. Louis. I chose my subjects: I by-passed Latin because at Saints Peter's and Paul's the 4th through 8th grades sang Mass in Latin daily! I asked for German, but the Sister became rigid and said they taught only Spanish and French. Disappointed, I decided quickly on Spanish; there were more popular songs in Spanish than in French! Art and Sewing I needed (store bought cloths hung loosely on me). Later, I could sew the cloths I’d design. General Science, English, Algebra and Modern History filled the schedule. I had never heard the word Glee so passed on Glee Club. Uniforms were suspended as well as Yearly Class Books because materials were not released for public consumption. War effort restrictions were still in place.

Home room seats were alphabetized. The W's and Z's tried for friendships hoping to discover similar interests. Margaret W. and the Zink twins had no thoughts about careers. What was there anyway: Married; nurse or secretary. Gladys W. wanted to be a fashion designer. I thought that sounded good: Art and get paid for it! The really cute girls clicked together locking the rest of us out. Worse, most of these came from wealthy families and could do no wrong! They had been writing to and seeing boys all summer. Gladys and I spoke with the banished girls who were: too tall, short, over weight, skinny, wore glasses as well as those from modest parishes! Together we found our own clicks and cheerfully survived. We shortened our names. Gladys chose Gaye and I took Mary Lou. But feeling neutral about boys we found ourselves considered losers. This was not a nice way to start a new school! I decided to ask my wonderful God about this situation. His answer came by way of my two invisible playmates who seemed older and wiser than me. Their words were very concise: “First, you may now call us ***Your Guides***. Second, you will meet someone Saturday evening. It will be an easy and lax thing but will do through these years." Saturday was my fourteenth birthday. I nodded thinking a boyfriend for my birthday!

Saturday evening, would I be out with friends? No. Mother and dad decided to go to the Orpheum. What a downer! But I had not been in the Orpheum. It was Springfield's million dollar theater. Being stuck with mother and dad; I better observe this place:

Inside the polished brass doors was more gold and marble than one could imagine! Even posters had tremendous pink marble frames adorned with mythical gargoyles. The plainest thing was the ticket-sellers art deco box. The floors in lobby on and lobby two were patterned terrazzo. An expanse of eight beveled plate glass doors separated Lobbies One and Two. Twin marble staircases lead to the balcony. Gold framed beveled mirrors adorned the walls along these staircases. Over this central lobby glowed a huge beaded crystal chandelier shaped like a pear. A polished brass rail stretched along the center lobby. Burgundy velvet roping could close the entrance to the carpeted inner lobby. There were tasteful antiques set about which actually belonged to the manager, Mort Berman. This was my first time to view such richness and yet - it felt like home; not any home I’d ever seen on earth but somewhere … it felt like home.

I saw the entrance to Aisle Three. Outlined by the doorframe were two tall slim ushers; one brunette and one blonde. They wore medium blue cut-away jackets with covered buttons, lighter grey-blue trousers with a medium blue side stripe, stiff formal front shirts and black ties. I walked in, looked up at the ushers: The blond was Ares! I threw up my hands, smiled and walked up to him:

"Oh, Ares, how good to see you! You're the only person in this whole darn life that I’ve recognized!"

He said, "Yes! Me too!" and we hugged. "Oh, God you don't know how good this is to see you. Are you here alone?"

"No, I'm with my parents," I turned to find them still at the base of the inner lobby fiddling in Helen's purse. When Ares saw them, he caught me close, moved me behind him; felt his chest and exclaimed:

“Oh, I don’t have it!” (Ares in the Greek life always wore a small chamois pouch with a dagger, under his chiton.

"Oh, they are pretty good now, Ares."

"Jeez, how'd you get THEM?" He mumbled.

"They're working it out." I answered quietly.

They were upon us and as suddenly he remembered he was not my bodyguard. He was an usher. He smiled pleasantly and asked where they would like to sit.

I spoke up, "Oh, a little past the middle, but so we don't get popcorn pelted.”

The silent brunette threw his head back to laugh and quickly turned into the darkened auditorium to hide it. Everything was kept regal at the Orpheum. Ares smiled and said, "We don't let them do that here." But once inside where it was dark, he laughed too. He manipulated his flashlight holding that hand steady, showing us the way, and said, quietly, "We call this, 'a little past the balcony’.” He heard me, um. He deftly let my parents enter the row of seats first and placed me in the aisle seat and then watched me all evening. And, now for what it was worth I had a boyfriend! One who worked evenings and weekends; a young man whose new name I did not know, and yet a man I knew very well! It gave a contorted but pleasurable feeling.

Monday morning our class was sent to the art room for religious class. Sister Maureen would conduct it because their regular Sister was not well. Sister Maureen was a tiny Dominican Sister with her two central teeth crossed. She wore unattractive rimmed glasses. Her stiff-edged veil always looked as if it had been crushed off kilter by an elevator door. The class gathered about her. She had no idea of how to conduct a religion class; she taught art and sat in Study Hall. Sister Maureen opened the book and heaved a huge breath. I found this religion as confusing as keeping the old Greek gods straight! The clergy never knew what God was doing presently! Everyone of them adhered to the the Catechism or the Bible. Every time the name "Jesus" was said, I shivered remembering that life size statue of Christ's crucifixion at SS. Peters and Pauls. Over time it became replicated like my mother’s stories. Didn’t any of the clergy realize Jesus would get tired of sitting at the right hand of God doing nothing? She pictured the Father sitting upon His throne frozen with his right arm raised. In reality, I never saw Jesus - he was always off counseling people and The Father was never still, but swinging with happiness and thankfully He was always jolly at seeing me. He was not someone to be in fear of; He was My Father in Heaven! How I missed Him. I never voiced this. Sister Maureen was doing Noah. She impressed upon us that Noah's family was GOOD. This jarred me into the present:

"Sister, I have a question? If this family was good and we are descended from that family; why are there bad people in the world?"

"That sounds logical. There should be only good people. I don't know but I'll ask Father Haug." The class proceeded. When class time finished, Sister breathed a sigh of relief.

Tuesday, Sister Maureen gathered her new flock around her. "I asked Father Haug about the bad in people. I did not like his answer." She sniffed, "He said it was recessive genes from Adam and Eve."

Some of the girls nodded. Jane asked, "Sister where did all that water come from?"

I quashed my lips together; here comes the old excuse: God was angry at the bad people! Mary spoke quietly, "Sister, don't you remember all those books at the Great Library?" (I knew her and yet I did not.)

“Great Library?" She asked.

"Yes, my dear one, the Library in Alexandria. About the strange island beyond Iberia ugh Spain and Nubia ugh Africa?" I turned to my classmates, "The names change over awhile." I turned back to the Sister, "Yes, one goes up the main staircase and turned right to where the old men have all those astrological apparatus' and they will tell you about the great island and other things."

"But the Library at Alexandria was burned by the Romans!" Sister Maureen said.

Now I was the baffled one! "St. Paul didn't burn that too, did he? Oh, that St. Paul! Ah, you see Sister," I softened my voice, "In his *zealousness*, he burned all the books in Ephesus; some were medical books. Oh, rustic sure, but it was all those people had! It left them in a terrible state."

"How do you know this, Mary Lou?" Sister Maureen asked.

"Remember, my dear one, we came through there and rested at the Jewish Holy Sites and discovered everyone was sick. We knew about healing with God and used the colorful stones - because the people had to SEE something - like the holy water and oils in your religion now, Sister. So these little ways were written and used "they say" for well over two hundred years until St. Paul! So you see I assumed it was he behind the burning of the Alexandrian Library. Oh, they had such great stuff. Well, let me tell you about the flood. Does anyone have a map of the area? No? Well, there was an eruption somewhere in the Mediterranean and this rumbling caused a lot of movement of the water.. It bottlenecked at the Pillars of Hercules They call those rocks something else now. But when it flushed into the Atlantic it hit the understructures of a huge coral island there. The island broke in three parts each part sinking and pushing the waters back to its beginning. This regurgitated several times until the whole island was sunk. Many other lands around the Mediterranean were flooded.

Then I continued saying that the people on this island were wicked more so than the Nazis in all their horrible acts. (News of the Holocaust atrocities was newly revealed.)

"At least the Nazis killed their prisoners. Those from the island did medical procedures on any stranger landing upon their shores. Their strong anesthetics ruined the mind. Any citizen questioning authority was taken and returned without a mind - if they were lucky. The doctors performed operations man to beast - that was how the mythical creatures came about. Most had strength but varied from childlikeness to volatility in mindset. When the island sank some of the privileged natives and these animal-creatures survived making it into Africa and South America. This is why one sees pyramids in South America, Mexico and Egypt. This island was full of pyramids. The survivors brought their beliefs with them. But thankfully, the creatures never reproduced." I saw the Sister bristle at the "R" word. "Horrible people; God had a right to destroy them!" In God's mercy, the bell rang leaving Sister Maureen breathless with pounding heart. She had not experienced perspiration since she joined the convent! Sister Maureen was grateful that the regular religion teacher was returning tomorrow, but such a fantastic report on the great flood! Was this account History or Literature? And this girl spoke like they had gone together to Holy Sites and to the Great Library? It gave her pause. She was both joyed and reticent to find this Mary Lou in her art class.

A few weeks passed easily in art class. Sister Maureen did not have much planned. She went to a closet and brought out several large books. One was Audubon prints. Two others were Roman and Greek prints of classical statuary. The girls shared the books. Needless to say, the Audubon book was set aside quickly. All was peaceful until Jane said too loudly, "Oh, look! Here's one who dropped his fig leaf!" Suddenly the little Sister realized the girls were getting their eyes full. The girls all twittered except me. Sister noticed this and asked directly what I thought of the Roman art.

I laughed. "Oh those Romans! Much of it is not good classical design. They overdid everything. And why do they say under this print, 'Sculptor unknown'? Anyone with any sense knows this is a Greek Scopas!"

"How do you know a Scopas?" The Sister's thyroid blue eyes grew curious.

"See, Lysippus made his men graceful almost like girls; Scopas' men were massively muscled. Praxiteles is a bit more difficult to detect from Lysippus." The girl flipped the pages: "See: Scopas, Scopas, Lysippus and another Scopas; who wrote this book anyway? Now see here," I pointed to a picture. "Praxiteles - more muscle, but natural sized for an athlete. Not overly heavy as Scopas. Scopas made Atlases!"

The Sister turned a few pages in the other art book and said How about this one, Mary Lou?"

I glanced at it and said, "That's a Phidias. He did the big statue at the Parthenon, oh well, both of them; the ivory one inside too. He did wonderful bronzes."

Sister Maureen tried several Roman statues, but I did not know them. I shook my head and said: "We had no sculptors in Greece who put cupids and flowers in statuary.

Jane said that they were Roman and I circled my head around in exasperation.

"The Romans! What they could not steal they copied." Anna, a girl of Italian extraction took offence but I gestured simply and said, "War booty, my dear. I'll show you what I mean. Where is that picture of Ares? It was back a few pages. "Ah! Here it is. This man was from Argos - the southern Argos. This was done for his second Olympic win; by the Scopas School in Sardis. They decided on this different pose because there already were several good statues of discus throwers at Mt. Olympus in the conventional pose. So, he seated Ares and enlarged the discus so that it resembled a shield. This statue was white marble and twenty-eight feet tall. Now, during a much later war, the Romans raided Mt. Olympus and carted it off with teams of men and horses to Aitalia. Isn't that a riot?!"

Suddenly, Sister Maureen was flipping pages as fast as possible and folded the book to reveal the remnants of Athene. I asked what it was and Sister explained it was the Phidias Athene - what survived of it."

"Survived? This is all that's left, you are saying?" The Sister bobbed her head. Although I reeled interiorly I continued: "O.K. She should have a brush on top of a helmet. Well, it is not *brush* it is metal prongs that make up the brush and was painted red. The statue was very large; ships could see it from Piraeus. She is dressed like your Joan’d Arc in armor and holds a spear. Now those eyes were so large that pigeons would walk across her lower eyelids and it looked like her eyes were moving." I stopped. "Sister, bronze is not supposed to deteriorate. Are you sure that is all that is left of her?"

Sister Maureen laughed softly and said, "It lasted a good long time." Then she handed the book around the class. I felt drained and sat quietly in thought. Then I asked to see the first book.

"Maybe there is a picture of Ares’ other statue in it; it is also a Scopas. It is standing throwing the discus."

"I've found it," called one of my classmates. I looked.

"No, that's the Myron. Scopas had the head looking backward and the body more bent." The girls turned a few pages, "Ah, yes, this is Ares. He is here ***again***," I said happily, "but not an as athlete; still tall and blond, but slim with light blue eyes. He is working at the Orpheum. It was so good to see him. Oh, it could be some of the others are here also, but I ***know*** him! He worked as…ugh for my family." I smiled easily. It was most natural to me but not for the others.

The bell rang. Sister Maureen was chagrinned at that bell. She wanted this to continue! She would check some of these facts, but the part about the same man being here ***again*** shook her completely. Maybe the girl dreamed or just liked ancient history. She would talk with Sister Eulalia who taught ancient history but Sister Eulalia did not know Mary Lou Wangard! She was however, intrigued enough to become Sister Maureen's cohort in research! The girl had been amazed that the Great Library of Alexandria had burned so this became their cut-off date and she was definitely knowledgeable about Greek artifacts. The two Sisters agreed: A prominent name would establish a time period. Something else bothered Sister Maureen. When Mary spoke about the Greek period, her voice lilted and assumed an accent that was fetching, but when the reverie was broken, she reverted to her normal tone and almost mincey speech pattern. Also, when comparing, the girl would say 'Your religion' and she spoke verbatim often including Sister Maureen. Alexandria, Ephesus, Argos and especially Sardis made the Sister most uncomfortable, and a Scopas school! That would be worth checking. She had to check that; she was an art teacher!

Before English Class, some of the wealthier girls chatting about places nearby to visit: Starved Rock State Park to the north, Mathessian State Park nearby, Turkey Run in Indiana and Dickson Mounds. I filed these places mentally for summer family jaunts. But Helen always questioned me about what went on at school that was not studies. She became enthusiastic and decided Dickson Mounds would be a nice drive for Memorial Day weekend. None of us knew what this place was.

In 1945 Dickson Mounds was rustic. The parking lot was negligible and dotted with grass, but there was a sidewalk and a few large stone urns outdoors. We three took snapshots with a Kodak box camera. The building was plain. One entered onto a mezzanine with a railing along one side. People were looking down; children pointed, look at this one; look at that one. Helen and Joe were first to look down over the railing.

Helen and Joe were appalled and pulled back. I saw ***people****,* as alive as we were but they did not move much and seemed distressed. Some were dressed for summer others for winter. (The detail of their clothing and belongings are for the sake of history. There is little known about this tribe of Indians. Even their name is but supposed.) The lighting was amber colored and soon my eyes became accustomed to it. The whites seemed creamy and everything and every person down there was laden with dust. Now and then, they took turns looking over their shoulders or walking slowly, but the group as a whole seemed stranded. I leaned over the railing, perhaps there were railroad tracks and they were waiting for a train! But there were no tracks. There was nothing but cement floor and wall.

The men, women and children of winter, wore tightly woven blankets in a simple wide-stripe pattern of paper bag brown and charcoal black over their winter dressed shoulders. The men wore tall wool hats with a brim that extended about four inches straight out and were adorned with one or two feathers. Very little of their faces showed and their coarse thick hair even to grayed older men, had a twist-do like a coiled twist of tobacco. One man had beaded ornaments on the ends of his twist-do. The garments often had beading. The background beads were white, a tiny inverted triangle of bright blue in the center. Some huddled together as if in conversation. Some squatted on the dry clay ground. But all the winter men wore suede tops and leggings with fringes, beaded ankle or calf-high moccasins also with fringes over the leggings, as well as their dusty blankets.

The summer men were bare chested, wore a beaded headband of several colors, but some had the inverted triangle in blue on white. Many had one or two feathers on very dust laden hair in disheveled braids or twists. They wore several layers of breechcloth fastened with large bead trimmed fringes. None of the men wore war paint.

The older women seemed forlorn protecting their few personal and household belongings and children. Their arms encircled woven reed containers with fold over covers and twig fasteners. These early 'suitcases' were near sledges with thin tree limbs for poles. A color flashed on most cases, likely dyed with bloodroot and pokeberry.

The women wore long sleeved garments, fringed across the shoulders both front and back and at the "Vs" of raw necklines. Their skirts were calf length with about 8" fringes, but their tall vamp beaded moccasins covered their legs. Their hair was also coiled into a twist. The children's clothing mimicked the male and female attire in miniature.

There was one most attractive woman. Her skin was lighter; her hair shined black and wavy. It was puffed slightly at each side. She wore a cloth that seemed to have slipped back from her head. She reminded me of a Goya Madonna. This lady partially knelt by a lacey woven urn shaped basket. Her expression was so appealing that I hurt for her. I mentally thought to the young woman, 'You are so beautiful! I hope you all get to where you want to go. You seem so tired of waiting.'

Before there might be an answer, my mother moved angrily across the room, she grabbed my arm. "WE want to leave NOW!" No talk of it permitted. Helen huffed that she would never return! I thought this very strange behavior. They had driven quite a distance to see these poor people and I really felt badly not helping them out of that confined area.

Back in English Class, I remarked to Susan Carrico that my parents and I visited Dickson Mounds. Susan's pal Joan asked almost with salivating, how I liked seeing all the skeletons.

"Skeletons! Skeletons! Ugh, no. I saw some very dusty people waiting to go somewhere."

"No, no," Susan said, "I have a brochure in my handbag! They were in that room below the balcony. Didn't you go in there?" Susan rummaged in her bag.

"There was a beautiful young lady by a rather tall lacy basket." Just then Susan handed me the brochure and my eyes fell to that basket, I gasped at the picture. "Oh, my word is this - what you saw? No wonder my mother pulled me away; she must have seen as you say… I saw such pitiful people that did not move much.”

"Aw, you didn't even go! You would have seen the skeletons." Donna said. There was no explaining this; they thought I was lying; it wasn’t worth it they were in the perfect beauties click and would never be friends. I let it pass.

Jane wanted to go to a matinee at the Orpheum. Actually; I could rear Jane; she wanted to check out the guy in the art book! We would take the bus to Jane's house afterward. The girls went to the candy machines and checked both. A variety of candy was still hard to find in stores. The tall brunette leaned over to Jane and me, "Avoid the marshmallow."

Jane a middle child resented being bossed, "I’ll choose what I want!"

"Your funeral!"

"Bad?" I asked.

"Couldn't get our teeth out of it! Your -ugh, he's on four; I’ll tell 'em you’re here. I'll seat you both." I smiled, "Darn, why didn't he say his name?"

Jane wanted to sit further back and not near the aisle; she did not like getting up because of her girth. They became engrossed in the movie when HE strolled quietly down the aisle. I caught the movement in my peripheral vision and touched Jane's arm. Unfortunately, Jane jumped, and said:

"Oh! My God! I thought it was a bug," and began giggling. We both giggled and dabbed tears quickly before he turned around at the base by a fancy old organ, a holdover from silent movie days. Jane seemed to be looking ahead. I flashed my eyes at him. He passed coolly.

In a bit some background music began; I recognized the piece, and … it upset me but I did not know why. The music continued and I was so bereft I told Jane “I can't stand that music. I'll be back when it is over." By the time I reached the lobby I was actually shuddering my arms were stiff. "Ares" rushed to me.

"It's that music! Is there a soundproof room where I can go until it is over?"

"No." He took my shoulders, "Sometimes music gets to me too and I don't know what it is. Hey! It's stopped. Better? Here, let's get you some water." He led me to one of the pink marble fountains, turned the faucet and smoothed my hair.

But I couldn't sip water, I was still shaking. He led me to the dark cover inside the

Aisle Two doors. The movie ended, but the music began in reprisal with the credits and I quivered. I thought to my Holy Guides, ***what is causing this?*** While I waited for an answer, the brunette began checking the credits. He said, it was Freddy Martin's Orchestra and Jack Fina was playing piano.

"That's it! That's it! Martin plays piano, but would not keep with it. To appease me he got this guy. Later on I helped a different man in piano who said he would haunt me with some pieces from my youth, which is now. It all falls into place. Gee, that was awful!" I took a deep breath. “Oh, Ares, it’s Horst! He did several arrangements almost note for note…ugh, he is from West Germany, after the war is over. It will actually be over one day, Ares."

The two young men were listening, not really comprehending. But "Ares" said, "I'm glad to hear that. I have a brother in the war. Tell me about this guy."

"He will be six years younger than me, so you see, how could an eight year old German be playing music in an American movie?" I wish I could remember the other three songs. I would be prepared for his haunting."

"How did this happen?" Ares asked.

"Oh, after our being separated, way back, I took some classes and ended up helping music composers. I worked there a long time, before –ugh, I came here."

He nodded with more understanding than the brunette! "I can't do anything yet, but I love you." He kissed my forehead and held me closely.

"Me too," I looked up but he did not kiss me again.

"People are leaving. We better get you back."

"Yes. I'm with my friend Jane. Her name does not fit her; it should be Auby. Isn't that silly?"

"Not silly at all. I'll lead you down…Len put you inside! I always want you at an aisle seat."

"Oh! Why?"

He grinned a bit shyly, "To watch you …and you have beautiful legs." I smiled.

I scooted in by Jane. "Sorry to be gone so long. Did the boy get the girl?"

"Naturally!”

“Do you want to stay over? Sometimes they have shorts or newsreels. Let's see, Jane.

"I didn't know that! We usually run out right after the movie."

"We always wait until the movie starts again.'"

"Still coming to my house?" I nodded happily.

Jane came from a large family of eight children. She was in the middle and knew all about sinful things like abortion, fornication, homosexuals and other stuff. Jane decided I was overly indifferent and should be more judicious. Actually, Jane was giving me too much credit. I had never heard of these words. They were not in movies.

Someone opened a door and a huge Dalmatian swooped inside and wriggled all about the family. The children pet the dog. Jane's mother explained that it was deaf and it was very trying when the dog dashed into the street. They called her Polka Dot.

I held my hands and mentally spoke to the dog. It came over and sat quietly at my feet. I pet "Polka Dot" while explaining to the dog that my father was deaf. 'He has to be very careful as he works around dangerous machinery. So too Polka Dot has to be careful because she does not hear dangerous things. And she could not hear her people warn her. She has to look both ways before running out. No more dashing out, Polka Dot; you could get hurt really bad.'

The dog put her ears down dejectedly. I turned to the family, "You have to think to her and she will hear you! She is a very smart dog. Jane's mother pulled back askance but Jane did not understand and repeated that the dog was deaf. I asked the mother to call the dog in thought. Mrs. Gralie would try anything! It worked. Polka Dot came right to her. She pet the dog and told her how much they all loved her. She got reactions of joy that were most surprising.

By now Jane was bursting to blurt out the details of their visit to the Orpheum. She started with: "Hey I've never seen so many good looking men in all my life! She fanned herself with a hand, "We went to the Orpheum." Her sisters wanted to know who was in the movie. Jane drew back in mock-surprise: "They're working there! Whatever your heart desires," Then she lifted an imaginary glass in toast, "Except the blond, that one is Mary Lou's."

I hoped Jane would go no further! After all, I didn't know his name. I called him something and then in a flash that name was gone.

"Don't think I didn't see you two; music my eye! I may look unobservant, but I don't miss much. When you're as big a girl as I am, you remain still, but move your eyes plenty." I sighed in a sort of laughter. Dearest Jane always coming to a wrong conclusion! My friend Jane may have been physically still but not verbally. At Sacred Heart Academy, was Jane quiet or sedate? About as unassuming as Superman with background music! The Orpheum suddenly did a lot of business with the SHA girls. Several tried for the blond. He was a gorgeous Greek God! He paid no attention!

Sophomore home room was in the basement. It meant climbing to the fourth floor for the morning class and again in the afternoon for another. It kept the girls agile. This was the year we hopeful fashion designers decided Drama Club would be fun. Although we practiced and memorized our readings, Sister Mary Isobel the drama coach, decided two recitations made the program too long and gave us a Robert Frost poem to memorize and recite together. It was dated and boring. We practiced it jokingly walking to Gaye's house after school and at the performance we wished we had recited it that way! It was bombing. When we paused for a breath, applause began. I shook my left hand, no, alongside the hip - so the Sister could not see and the clapping stopped. When the tortuous recitation finished, neither girl stopped to hear anything from that Sister! Gaye dropped the club, but I saw it through, much to Sister Isobel’s chagrin. Each member had to appear in two plays.

At an all-girls school, the guy's parts were also played by girls. I drew a gardener’s part in the first play and borrowed my father's garden cloths leaving them purposely dirty and sweaty. Some parents and my mother attended this play. One of those contrived –we can't get caught themes - where the gardener sensed foul goings on and had to be included in the girls' food fest for their boyfriends. It was completely unmemorable until the food scene. No one had the foresight to bring any food! Sister Mary Isobel came to the rescue! She had some dried fruit given her at Christmas time. It was now April. I loved dried apricots and as my next line was a distance off; I bit into the fruit and my teeth stuck in it! I was side front stage and dare not draw attention to myself by using a finger. I worked my tongue and tried to swallow. The audience began chuckling at my discomfiture. The girl's surely were lousy cooks! My line was fast approaching and when it arrived I was still struggling, so put my hand in the air and circled it a time then patted my chest and the audience howled. At last, I swallowed and spoke my line. The audience applauded roundly, but this play won no prize just an angry drama coach.

The second play had a new cast; a similar plot but without eating. I was cast as a black maid. During the war Sister Mary Isobel could not get any black makeup (no grease available for the populous yet). Sister told me to adjust the dialect. I tried but doing so ruined the flavor of the part. The maid became a deep southerner. During the performance I tripped over a cable snaked across one entrance; slipped at my second entrance and grabbed the doorframe; lastly I caught my wig and maid's bandeau on some hook or other on my third entrance. The audience began awaiting the maid! Sister Mary Isobel shook with distaste saying, "No matter what play it is, you turn it into a farce." We won second prize!

Sister Mary Isobel was reeling! The winning plays had to be repeated exactly at a huge all school banquet. The one exception was that the black makeup arrived and Sister Isobel malevolently demanded that I use it! I did not want to appear like a minstrel, but as a black person. Two black students registered that year and I caught one of them making it clear that I was not making fun of her, but that I really needed help with this makeup for the play. Griszella agreed. We met early and she did a nice job, then said, "Why anyone would want to even look like a "colored" person is beyond me." (In the forties these people still referred to themselves as colored.) I was completely delighted. I took the outside entrance to the anti-room off stage. This way my mother and especially Sister Mary Isobel would not see me and make changes and mother would not have a chicken fit! I memorized my gaffs, assuring the same audience enjoyment and to Sister Mary Isobel’s reeling shock, I was presented a special prize for my performance. Helen began "her shivering bit" as the cast joined their parents in the audience; and that black girl was approaching her table! Her eyes boggled when she discovered that the colored maid was me, her daughter.

"Go wash that off this instant!"

"No, mother, no one will know the maid without her makeup and she won a prize!" I was triply pleased. So pleased that I wore the makeup home while Helen drove, silently burning all the way. Ah, Helen’s silent treatment - how wonderful it was!

Thaat summer, Cousin Chuck returned to high school on the GI Bill and we were invited to attend his graduation. We drove Aunt Bertha to Feitshan’s High School. The auditorium was nearly full. We found seats. The rest of our row was empty. There was some loud talk at the entrance and I turned around to see a family of four looking about for seats. The man turned around and I gestured that our row was available. The woman went stiff as a board and shook her head, no. She wanted to be in the back. The gentleman thanked me and said he would gladly sit with us but they asked him to speak tonight. ***The thought crossed my mind that this man always wanted to be a speaker***; so I told him this was wonderful. I would listen to every word and smiled. He was very tall, tanned and had blue eyes. As soon as I turned to the front, mother snapped: “Who is that man?” I did not know. She began to sputter about speaking to strangers but Aunt Bertha said, “Oh, that’s Bill Yardley. Everybody knows Bill.” I caught Bill, but someone behind me crinkled their program and I dare not ask my aunt to repeat the name because mother looked about to explode. And she did: “Which man was it?” Several men were taking seats on stage.

To underplay the whole thing, I looked at the group and said: “The one with the big feet.” He watched me so intently that he missed his introduction - twice. Finally one of the men tapped his shoulder and he jumped a bit and said: “Oh, is it me, already?” I listened; the speech was not memorable.

Fashion design careers fell to the wayside in our junior year. Gaye discovered one began by working at dress pattern companies at pitiful pay and worse, you were not given name credit for your designs. I turned my sites to becoming a writer. Most of my writing was in diaries in which I glorified the Orpheum, Ares and the ushers that worked with him. Unknown to me my mother read these entries avidly and replaced the diary exactly as she had found it. I recorded my feelings and thoughts using a Thesaurus for a variety of words, but living so sheltered at fifteen I knew nothing about sex or lovemaking. To be held lovingly and kissed like in the movies was the extent of my knowledge. Those innocent yearnings were misinterpreted! Mother actually wrote under the entry: "You should never write things like this down."

When I opened my diary to the rebuff, I felt violated, sick at my stomach and foolish for committing my secret hopes to paper in such eloquent words. I loved playing with words; the first book I ever bought was that Thesaurus! There were so many precious words! I closed my diary. 'I guess if I understood real feelings, Helen would forbid me to leave her sight.'Be it known, she had never played “Mother”- she was always “Helen” or “The Woman!” to me.

***Now I heard these word : "Let's write something else, my dear."*** I followed my Guide’s advice and kept recording in the diary but the tone changed. I mentioned shopping, the stores I visited, the fabrics and cloths I liked even the dress patterns that appealed to me. The movies I saw with parents; who stood at which aisle in the Orpheum. The other theaters had only a central aisle' the side aisles smacked the walls. Her Guides were correct. A bit of tissue under the journal was moved. It meant if I did not keep with the diary Helen would ransack my room looking for other writings. At first, the tissue was out of place often. When these mundane entries failed to excite her, Helen quit.

Junior year I drew three study halls in succession. At first I was at wits end sitting, having finished my homework usually within the first study hall or perhaps ten minutes into the second! Twice weekly I began going to the library and after a search found some non-fiction stashed in the back. I learned how cosmetics were made in the 1920’s and actually made lip balm and makeup remover plus I learned that new vocabulary. Working along I found a few foreign language books - German! I knew I would need German! That script! After conquering script - those articles: Die, Der and Das - so bewildering. The diphthongs - Oh Heaven! Finally I asked the Sister at the desk if she might know how to pronounce them. She did and quietly helped me.

The rest of the study halls I began fiction writing: About all the alleged happenings at the theater. If I hit a block, I thought about another usher and fabricated a life story for him. This was easy, because all these young men were bound together by their workplace. But fiction was false - made up - untrue. I loved reality! But I kept with my story. I even sketched the interior of the Orpheum for the jacket of “My Book”. All of this was safe in a loose-leaf binder. I took it to all my classes and home afternoons. Helen never bothered touching school books!

From school, my walking-to-town-friends were: Gaye, Jane and Kathleen a short redhead who owned a horse, but secretly liked the western style riders on them better! At Gaye's house, Jackie, her older sister rushed across the street with great news. She had been accepted for College German! She needed it for Chemistry! I looked at her strangely. ***My Far Memory was kicking in again:***

"But you will only use it one year, Jackie. Your sister here should be taking it; she will live in Germany quite a few years." Then I swirled to Gaye, "But not in the part where I will be working and that's much later also, so we won't see each other over there." The bus pulled to a stop and I hopped onto it leaving the sisters in wonder. (Update: At a class luncheon in 2000 Gaye told me that Jackie went to college met a guy who was from a small town nearby and married him. Gaye went to college and met a career army man. They were stationed in the north part of Germany for six years. She never learned German, saying, “We did not have to associate with them!” What a missed opportunity!)

Gaye and I did things together but she was as tardy as Helen. Mother drove me to the meeting place. “Oh, there she is!” Mother said. I told mother keep driving. “She always keeps me waiting. Go up a few blocks and circle around.” When I got out of the car, I did like Gaye always did: “Hi, I’m here!” For two blocks walking to the Orpheum, Gaye was furious! I turned the tables on her, and said: “Now you know how I feel when I have to wait for you.” She stiffened then relaxed. We remained friends. Actually, I sensed that Gaye wanted to see the blond. She wore her best aqua suit and blouse hoping to turn his head. I never felt pretty more like a scrawny pullet: So many uneven features that I worked to normalize. We were young; Ares was gorgeous. People talk about puppy love; maybe it was. I knew one day he would open his eyes and see how plain I was. After we girls bought our tickets, Gaye became a smiling happy animated idiot that I did not recognize! We stopped at the candy machines, but there was no advice from either usher. I rolled my green eyes in question; Len said, “It's all fresh.” At this moment a note fell from my purse. Ares popped forward and retrieved it. It was to Gaye from Mary Lou. The guys read it together.

Len spoke out loud, "Gaye?" She turned and said, hum? Len explained, "She dropped this note so I thought she was Gaye."

"Oh, I wrote a note!” I admitted “but we did not connect and I forgot about it,"

"Yes," said Gladys, "I'm Gaye and she's Mary Lou."

Both boys Beaned and both showed the girls to seats. Len picked a couple several in and Ares knocked him. "These down here are better." Ares let Gaye enter first and set me on the aisle. He almost kissed me he was so close.

Len buffed Ares upper arm, "Ooh, you're smooth." Len went back, but Ares patrolled the aisle. He slowed but did not stop on his return. I thought, ‘Well, after two and a half years, we are ¼ of the way there. He knows ½ my name and I know none of his. What an affair?' Gaye got nowhere in her beautiful suit and blouse. Under the uniforms these handsome guys were from hard working families.

THE HOUSE IS SOLD

My daddy, Joseph mentioned it casually to me. "We are selling the house. I am tired of paying the mortgage. We are getting a smaller place. It does not have a basement or garage and needs both, but we'll own it outright.” I did not see the house until the walk through. It was a sagging three room shotgun without a driveway. The afterthought bath was hideous and filthy. That had to be redone. I figured it would be no bargain once improvements were made. Also, I knew what the St. Patrick's girls suffered at SHA from staff and students. Just being on the East side brought chides. I tried to speak, but he said; the deal already was closed. Their 5 room cape cod was sold to a serviceman's family which equaled possession in thirty days. Being non-service people, we had to wait six months for possession of the little shack.

Springfield did not have apartments at the ready on every block like in St. Louis. Joseph talked with his sister, Bertha. She said if they could find nothing, they were welcome there. Helen and Joseph did not even look! But they planned to pay room and board to Bertha and her husband Lee! Lee was a very sweet man who had suffered mustard gas poisoning in the First World War. His wife, Bertha was always right. When he'd absorbed all he could, he would visit a corner tavern and sleep there until morning.

Actually, this meant there would be two staunchly correct women in the house: One frivolous and one practical. Aunt Bertha had a garden and canned much of her bounty. She called these jars of vegetables, “Her Jewels”. She was also an excellent cook which shook Helen's composure. Quietly, I asked my Aunt how she made this or that; everything from dumplings to cobbler. Joseph loved coming home to Bertha’s FOOD! I did too. Helen tried intimidation by making up a phony word. Feisty Bertha would place her hand on her little hip and say,” I can look that up, Helen.”

One day, a letter came from Bertha's son Chuck. He was on his way home from the Navy for good! Helen realized it was Chuck’s room we were renting and Joe was becoming too happy with his sister’s cooking! A good excuse to leave: Chuck needed his room back!

Aunt Bertha’s kitchen sink stopped up. (There was no Drano on the market yet.) It was late the stores were closed. Joe and Lee dismantled the plumbing and would get parts the next day. Aunt Bertha placed a big dishpan in the sink to catch any drips. Late into the night, there was a knock on the door. The house sprung alive: Chuck returned! Once he was a skinny kid who gave me bike rides and now he towered six foot four; a man with straight-dark blond hair and twinkling blue eyes. He gathered his five foot two mother in his arms and swept her in a circle of happiness, kissing her bumping his head on a chain hung chandelier and laughing with joy. After great talk, Chuck took the sofa. In the morning it was share the bath, but Chuck said, that was ok, he would just use the kitchen sink and filled the dishpan.

His mother was watching to catch him, but he moved so fast dumping the dishpan into the sink.

"Yahoo! Hey, what's this?" He laughed as the water sloshed through the open drain and soaked his new slacks. Everyone dashed to dry him which made him laugh louder.

His mother was mortified. She tugged knots in her apron and was not far from tears. "I wanted everything to be so nice then the p-plum-bing stopped up and the stores were closed."

Chuck took her into his arms: “Hey, it’s all right I just didn't know you had pretend- plumbing. Believe me being home is more than nice; it's heaven."

Between the three men, the plumbing was righted. Only Lee knew what he was doing, but had no strength; Chuck had too much, so Joe tightened things without stripping the findings.

THE PAST UNFOLDS

At SHA, Little Sister Maureen saved her gift money diligently and told her class about several music albums she might consider. Meanwhile she turned her radio to a Philadelphia station that played the classics. This afternoon would be a Beethoven. The girls sketched while one student posed in her uniform. Mellow music played. I asked when they would play the Beethoven, but Sister replied that it was playing.

"But Sister, that's Handel." I answered. Sister was adamant reproving me. But I told her the phrasing in Handel was very mild and that there was only one fancy phrase in the whole thing, "Ah! There it is! Now the rest is dead."

Sister restrained herself but rushed to the radio when the piece finished; astonished to hear the announcer say he had inadvertently put on Handel and would now play the Beethoven. Sister reeled a bit but apologized to me. I was embarrassed that an authority figure should do this and asked her forgiveness for embarrassing her. Sister asked if it was just this one piece I was familiar with, but I said, no and went on sketching.

Sister then wondered, "But you are not in Glee Club nor do you take music here!"

"Oh, I have a friend we take lessons together, but really - before here." A classmate thought I mean t before I started SHA: “No, when I came to begin the life here. You remember, Jane you attended the concerts with me." But Jane did not remember and then I was confused. How could only I remember?

The bell rang. It was the last class before Christmas vacation but Sister Maureen had a new quest. To get as much out of me about these unknown things as she could!

Back from Holidays, Sister Maureen had the class flip through some books she bought while on vacation in Athens! She encouraged comments! One girl asked if that was the Parthenon and the Sister said, yes. This caught my interest. I glanced at the picture and saw shambles! "It is WHAT! Oh, that must be when they were building it; see the builder's huts in the lower … I had no idea there was photography then."

"No, that's the way it looks now, Mary Lou." answered Sister Maureen, "It is ruins."

My head went numb. I saw no one not even the Sister. The color drained from me like I had seen a corpse. "Who let it run down like this? It was faced with white marble, absolutely beautiful!" Suddenly I lifted a finger into the air, "Ah! Eighth grade - they said it was bombed during the war because ammunitions were stored in it. That would account for some of this devastation." Rosemarie asked, "Where was the Arena?"

I shook my head. "There was no arena in Athens. Money was appropriated for one, but the money was used for a religious ship. The king was not amused; He thought his people needed exercise; they were languid from being overly scholarly."

"There was an Arena; where they killed the Christians," insisted Rosemarie.

"We had no Christians in Athens. There was a stadium for the races. I never stayed for them. The horses made it too dusty, all over your cloths." I brushed my shoulder distastefully.

"You talk like it was just the other day!" Rosemarie said.

Before her chance passed, Sister Maureen asked, "Who was the King then, Mary Lou?"

"Name not heard much these days; like that of the good thief beside your Jesus; Demetrius, the Poliorcetes was King. Good to his people.

Upset by the answer, Sister Maureen mumbled that she never heard of a King Demetrius, but quickly curbed her reaction and asked Mary Lou, “What do you remember about the Parthenon?” and was quite amiss when I said the king and I stayed there because it was the nicest place. Athens had no palace. The next question was: “Did you say you passed the Phidias on the way to the Parthenon.”

"No, Sister - ***from -***it each morning. I lived there. It was too dark at night to see it when returning."

"Lived there! Oh, like Arraporah?” (Holy Women)

I smiled at her innocence. "Eeh, something like Arraporah."

Sister Maureen quickly sought her cohort, Sister Eulalia and felt ultra-foolish asking about a king who lived at the Parthenon. To her surprise, Sister Eulalia said, yes. It stood Sister Maureen's hair on end under her veil. The two read the accounts together. On his second visit he brought his wife Deidiamia (sister of Pyrrhus, the Hawk - of the healing thumb) who herself was quite able to heal and was most prayerful. They dare not utter the words written about Demetrius' first stay aloud: Orgies with concubines in the holy place! They read the account together: “Deidiamia went out from dawn to dusk tending to the wounded returned from the war. She and her party were exiled to Megara when the Athenian Senate declared neutrality. She was given a small chest of golden coins with Demetrius' image on them.” Sister Maureen felt ill. Somehow she could feel herself holding that chest of coins! “The gold coins were derided as useless in Megara!” For a moment Sister Maureen remembered and then it was gone. She must remember! One of the younger Sisters was taking something called the Sylvan Method which had to do with controlling one's own mind. She dare not seem anxious, but she must borrow that book!

As soon as Sister Maureen was armed with a bit of knowledge, the subject was changed. One student asked if she had decided which album she was going to buy with her Christmas money. Sister said she had almost decided on the Polivitsian Dances.

"Borodin came back and rewrote those! Don't waste your money on them. The musical is much better." I noticed Sister's shock so explained: "When composers think they have not received enough adulation for their work, they often come back and rewrite it. Let me think; he worked with another man on it. They are now Bob Wright and George Forrest."

Although Sister was reeling she asked calmly, "What is the name of the Musical, Mary Lou?"

"Oh, Sister, it is a thing which goes against the tenants of your religion. It is called: … “Kismet.” It will play Broadway a few years and then be made into a movie with Jane Powell and Howard Keel – he is not so well known now. Victor - ugh, Vic - oh, what is his name? Nice looking Italian boy plays the other lead." One girl ventured Victor Mature, but I said no, it was a singer. I turned to the Sister and asked, "What is Nineveh?"

Sister Maureen said it was a city northeast of Babylon.

"It is in the music: “Not since Nineveh; not since Zion." The plot involves some fliers downed to discover a lovely civilization …Oh, yes! Nineveh; godforsaken camel stop! Nobody ever went that way. Why did they choose that!" I was sequestered to sing some of the Kismet songs; so I did including the rather sensuous "Baubles, Bangles and Beads" Suddenly I said Vic Damone! He plays the other flier.

Several girls sought the Album Kismet, but it was not available. It had not been recorded. In fact, the musical did not hit Broadway for another six years. I was accused of lying! They talked about other music and about the changes in the styles of music. Sister Maureen said she could not tolerate "Jitterbug". I assured her the Lindy was less violent.

"But wait until you hear Hard Rock, Soul and Rap! You will think you are dying; it is little more than screaming - so different! There is something mild, not far from now called; Oh sister, what's the name of that French Cuisine in New Orleans?”

A classmate shot, "Gumbo!" I shook my head, no.

Another cried, "Creole." I nodded my head.

"I will sing you something, but do not tell my cousin, she has the same name. It is a very lazy rhythm from the Caribbean with bongo drums: “All day, all night, Mary Ann ... Down by the seaside sifting sand." Some of the girls recalled it and sang along. I sang "Yellow Bird" but they were lost. "We have Rock a very long time; just like Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, all your life! (Sinatra was unknown; he was still singing with Big Bands!) Between we have Trumpet and Marimba bands. The finest is Herb Alpert cute pieces! There is another trumpeter with a name nearly the same: Al Hirt. He is from New Orleans but Satchmo is the best - that’s Louis Armstrong. There is a very nasal Country Western music and the themes are at times things that your religion absolutely teaches against dear Sister: broken marriages, loving one while married to another, not great for advancing the soul. Let's see - lots of harmonizing groups, they come and go fast. Then comes a young fellow who is popular forever: Elvis Presley. They call him Elvis the Pelvis because of the way he swings his hips, ugh. I apologize, Sister but so it is. He has cute songs: I Want to be Your Teddy Bear; Blue Suede Shoes; so."

The bell rang. The girls kept asking questions. I was gathering my books and answering them. "Each of these types lasts a goodly time, then music frays into Hard Rock. When good music returns, I won't be here!"

"None of us will; we will all be graduated!" said Anna.

"No … I meant I'll be going back." I caught sight of the Sister whose color drained. She was as white as her habit. "Sister, are you all right?" I saw Sister Maureen bob her head, yes.

Word spread quickly that Mary Lou knew music! To me - these things were already written, practiced and Set in Time! Why did people remember nothing not even their own lives! Far Memory was at times ignomatic.

Eleanor, one of the girls who took piano at SHA assembled several interesting parts of the classics and was practicing it for an assembly. When she saw me walking through, she stopped.

"Oh, please do continue, it is lovely!"

"I have plagiarized a minimum of thirteen composers in it,” Eleanor spat.

Others crossed the auditorium and asked Eleanor to play it. Reluctantly, Eleanor played it and then swung nastily to me but tried for lightness because of the other girls: "What did I tell you, thirteen at least!"

"But no, it is delightful. Six; one twice, but some is really yours and very good! They don’t mind. They are happy to be remembered.” I bowed, and walked to my class.

Helen and I parked across the street from the Orpheum to watch the ushers change the marquee lettering for a new movie. We had not seen Ares for a few weeks but this happened with each of the ushers at times. Helen pretended not to notice but walking under the marquee was Ares with a well-built and breath-taking girl. I knew I was plain but was philosophical about it thinking: ‘The guy was bound to wake-up sometime.’ I smiled to myself; at least the girl had good taste. He's as best looking as they come. She dismissed the scene easily. But Helen still rummaged my diary and pretended she did not know I kept one! I could feel mother’s uneasy vibrations. When the boys finished the marquee, Helen suggested a drive to the A and W Root Beer on South Fifth St. I wanted to laugh, but why refuse Helen’s magnanimous gesture.

At SHA, Sister Maureen continued lightly leading me into regressions. Sister had read and re-read the historical entries about Demetrius and Deidiamia. I relaxed during art classes all my stressful clutch feelings disappeared in art classes. Out of the clear blue sky, Sister Maureen asked, if I was in Athens after that war broke out.

"Oh! Yes, the wounded were brought back. The second and third shiploads actually reeked. The garrison soldiers had to be ***commanded*** to unload them and once the Propylaea was filled they DUMPED the others on the unfinished side exposing them to the elements. I had only Ares to help me. Supplies were non-existent. The Hierophants, eh -High Priests never came to bless the poor men. I was so disappointed. It was a dreadful time; the kings were counting on me."

"Why did you leave Athens?" I bolted and stifle a heave. I took a few breaths and said; “The Hierophants arrived and ordered Ares and I leave. The Senate had voted neutrality for Athens. They gave me a cask of coins and told us the rest of our party was at the docks and we all had to leave; Ares' family, my sweet little nanny, and my cats. They would not fetch the cart! My - animals needed exercised. It was so distressful. We were sent to Megara; a bit northwest."

"But that was still in Greece, right?" asked Rosemary.

I nodded. "You see, every city-state was like a foreign country! The Greeks were only civil during the games."

"What happened after your baby was born Mary Lou?"

The girls were all bug eyed: "She had a baby!" several cried.

"What was it like?"

"Like I had my legs pulled off. I never saw the baby! - so sick." I added. "When I was better; only Ares was there. His wife and their newborn had been killed by horses. My nanny took Ares' older son and my baby. Ares told me she worked into a pilgrimage to Dodona. That was a holy place."

"Why would anyone get in the way of horses and with a baby?" cried Jane.

"But no, soldiers rode their horses into our house! It was like those rubble huts in that book of Sister's. They were stomped to death. It was done by order of the governess of Megara."

"Did you get out of Megara?" the Sister asked almost inaudibly.

"After the war my brother and husband found us."

"Then you lived on after Megara. History says you died in childbirth there."

"HISTORY! ... I don't understand?" Her words absolutely shocked me.

"Well, I want you to know," The Sister took a deep breath, "You went through so much that, this is why I am what I am now." She lifted her scapular a few inches. "I wouldn't go through that for any man!" She lowered her head, the veil gyrating as she shook her head no. The Sylvan lessons were working' she remembered! "And … those two babies survived. I got them both to Egypt with Pyrrhus' family there.” She drew herself up with pride: “I was their nanny!" I was overcome to tears. The Sister was Mayadike! Darling wonderful Mayadike! My lungs were strained'. I wanted to throw my arms around the little Sister and hug her, cry and never let go. The whole room stood mesmerized staring at Sister Maureen. Only the clanging bell-ending the class broke the spell.

One would think Sister Maureen had enough, but next time she pressed on having me tell the class about a time when Athens was left destitute.

“It was after a previous war: The people began cannibalism. Demetrius had grains and food brought and the scholars declared him a god. He took this with a grain of salt - a god!” She laughed, “Any one doing a great deed was declared a God.”

“Once we traveled to Kor’kira for my brother’s marriage to Lanessa. It was warm there; the bride was beautiful; her jewelry was exquisite but she cooked the hottest food we ever tasted. All the families stayed until spring!”

"There was a skirmish with the Maced'yons (I pronounced it this way when in reverie). Both Pyrrhus and Demetrius were asked to help. Upsetting vibrations erupted and a rumor began that the armies would fight each other! Demetrius hoped a speech would quell that nonsense but things went haywire and I was killed."

Sister’s questions kept coming: "Tell us about that. How old were you then, Mary Lou?"

I wished Sister would stop this yet I respected authority. "It was in Thessaloniki north of the Polyponese at a theatre; there was much movement and I feared for my husband's safety. I did not expect anyone to target me! I was about twenty-eight.” I stopped abruptly. “How can that be, Sister? That I was older then than I am now? Shouldn't I be older now?"

"I'm sure it is as it should be." She nodded her head to continue.

One of the class said, "Tell us how you were killed."

"I had sent Ares down to protect my husband (Ares was my bodyguard) when a Gaul; he was one of our mercenary soldiers, touched my shoulder a bit roughly. Demetrius, you see, had me travel with him everywhere. After Megara he would never leave me anywhere. The Gaul turned me toward him and said, "Now you die!" Then I saw he held a pike in striking position. Me? Men fought men! Ares and Demetrius saw the attack but were too distant. I saw Ares bolting to me …It did not hurt but rather that I could not catch my breath. The thing felt so heavy that I thought to step back to steady myself, but instead, my body collapsed before me. I was staring at this when the Gaul fell upon my body weeping! Ares arrived. They fought. I screamed that they stop, but they did not hear me and slayed each other. I saw their spirits stir and told them to get up. The Gaul thought he escaped death and began proclaiming himself king! No one paid attention, everyone was scurrying and fighting. I knew we were to go someplace but it was illusive. We began to walk. The dust rose terribly. I was tired and thought, 'Oh, to the Gods, I wish we were there.' And with that everything changed.”

I related our quick ascension and that I was pulled away from Ares and the Gaul to another area where I had my life reviewed. I had gained by making mostly good choices. A good spirit there said I could remain in Heaven and rest a while. “Rest! I was so worried about my husband. He said it was not my husband's time and that he escaped. The old spirit gave me a list of things I might like to try, classes available or classes I might teach! Casually, he told me to see and make friends.” I threw my head back and laughed at this.

"Is that when you went into Music, Mary Lou?" The Sister asked.

"I took a lot of classes on that list before music." I said.

"Were there any good looking guys there?"

"Yes, but I still felt married and hoped to see my husband. I'd ask about him but was always given an excuse; mostly that he was not available. The composers were all younger."

"Were any of us there?" one of the classmates asked.

"Jane was, but I don't think that was your name. Even now, I want to call you Auby."

Jane was shocked. "That's what my mother calls me! My name is Audrey Jane. I like Audrey but if they murder it into Auby, I'll just go by Jane!"

"Did you like any of the musicians?" Asked Anna, she was a boarder.

"Chopin. He was so gentlemanly that was way back, but he already had a lady."

"George Sand," Sister Maureen said.

"Yes, she was a Duchess or something." I saw the Sister nod. "Puccini, but he left piano and went to violin."

"He didn't play a piano, Mary Lou" said Sister.

"No, but that was our general section. He actually played a Virginal, a rather light weight piano type without legs. It would be placed upon a table. There was the man I left up there. He will play in the sixties, writes cheerful stuff, well mostly.

"What's his name?" asked Rosemary.

"Horsss Jankowski."

"Do you mean Horace?" asked Jane.

"No, we don’t have the name; the little German, Jane, remember? It may have a "t" on the end. Yes, Horst.”

"Does he have a big hit?" asked Anna.

"Ah, ja! Ein Schwarzwald …eh, English! A Walk in the… Oh, Sister, a big forest where Snow White and the Seven Dwarves lived."

Sister screwed up her face thinking. "Black Forest," she quizzed.

"Ja, Ja! Das es ist! A Walk in the Black Forest; it is a kind of hop-skip along, very sweet.

"Do you marry him?" asked Rosemary.

This made me extremely sad, "I think not."I said. "I will help him finish his music; nice person, most kind.

Sister Maureen thought this odd. "What do you mean, Mary Lou?"

"He had not written all his music when it was my time to leave there, so I will finish him here. It is nothing new, Liszt did it in that life; it worked pretty well. He is coming much later. He will work on the East coast."

"Will he be Franz Liszt again?" asked Rosemary.

"Same spirit, but," I pointed my finger at Griszella and nodded. "He will be a Negro but plays his stuff, name: Andre Watts.

Sister Maureen held her hands under her scapular, her breath forced and panting. What was the bible adage: 'Ask and ye shall receive'; she received way more than she expected.

"Well, will you marry" - Rosemary again.

At this I became silent in thought. It was not Ares, or Demetrius. She loved Louis, but that had been her brother. The Gaul came to mind. She took a breath.

"Well I come for four men.

"Four! I'd be happy with one." cried Rosemary.

I threw my head back: "My brother, of course; my old husband, Ares and the Gaul. Yet these are disappointing men. Now little Jankowski tries everything I suggest in the music. To come back for him is right. He is the best; but has a short life."

"Mary Lou, what do you mean ‘come back for?’" asked Sister Maureen.

"Show the way back, like you … try to lead them to Heaven, I hope perhaps forty or fifty. They say I will lose one or two, but I hope not." I took a breath and with sparkly eyes said, "Let's face it, Sister, we want to bring everybody back!"

"Oh, then you are going to be a nun!"

"I … do not wish to offend you, Sister, but I think not."

Blessedly, the dismissal bell rang. I gathered my things and wished the little Sister did not have that clergy-power.

Meanwhile at home, Helen and Joe sold the furniture that would be called downsizing today. The dining room set, my bedroom furniture and other things. What they kept was still stored. So after living with my aunt and uncle they found an apartment in a private home quite east of their cape cod and then nine blocks north of the bus stop. Helen promptly declared she would fetch me to school! RED FLAG! Constant mother; NO! I prayed for a solution and the words I spoke were not from my mind. They were my Guide’s; I spoke calmly:

"Oh that is way too much money for gas, mother - just to the bus stop. Perhaps after school we could meet half-way… in town maybe… some place where I could wait inside. How about Myers Brothers? It has a weather shelter?" I was surprised that Helen agreed.

Inside, the new living quarters we shared the bathroom with the lady of the house. In the bathroom were white terry towels with bright colored crocheted baskets attached to their fronts. Each basket held a washcloth with matching crocheted edges! I could see each other bedroom had a high bed with a crocheted bedspread. Under it was a handmade pastel sheet to display the pattern. I was mind boggled at all this hand work. I implored the lady to remove the lovely spread from my parent’s bed. They would have to use it for sitting as there was no chair. Helen was stunned that her daughter dared to speak! Mrs. Pasquale nodded and promptly insisted they come to the family gatherings on Saturday evenings. Helen seemed pleasant about this until she got in the car.

As the car door closed Helen, the teetotaler proved to be a bigot also. She hoped these Italians were not a beer swilling bunch like at that last St. Louis apartment! I smiled:

“Their dog, Duke sneaked upstairs and hid under my army cot on Saturday nights.” Helen was surprised at that.

Thanksgiving was bleak; no meal planned. Helen ate no fowl. She made a big deal of her distaste of fowl. My friend, Margie asked me to dinner, and I was surprised that Helen said ok. Margie and her new sister-in-law were fixing oyster stuffing but the novice cooks found oysters so slimy and disgusting that maybe three got in the stuffing; the rest went in the trash.

It was a delight to hear happy free talk. The men and sister-in-law wanted to watch a game and so Margie and I took a bus to the movies. The Orpheum was crowded and we sat way down front. Margie’s string of beads broke. They were popping everywhere. Margie screamed -“They are my mother’s pearls. It’s all I have left of her! The cute Italian ticket-taker, Lawrence was working Aisle Two and came striding to us with a flashlight. We three searched until we found all the pearls. The movie was so predictable that we hadn’t missed much. It finished about eleven p.m.

Margie and I should have remained together, but Margie last bus was at one end of the block and mine at the other and without warning, it pulled away. I tried calling the Pasquale residence repeatedly but the line remained busy. The drugstore owner finally asked me to leave so he could close. I explained but it wasn’t his problem. I began walking to the taxi stand, but was stopped by a guy who said he knew my girlfriend. I believed him. His car was a '35 Ford sedan. The passenger door was wired shut; I had to scoot across the driver's seat. As soon as I did this, I felt I made a mistake. He began in the correct direction, but the car was so badly kept I felt yucky. I heard my Guides: 'Well, you're in a fix now!' He was driving the correct way; I breathed easier until he passed my street. I bolted for the door but was trapped. My words were ignored.

He drove along the by-pass and took a frontage road - corn fields! Not a light in sight. Panic! Old enough to be a veteran; they could kill without a qualm! ‘Oh, God what do I do? Take care of me; don't leave me now.' The car pulled to a stop.

"Why don't you sit behind the wheel?" Figuring to get near the door I complied, but in that second he pushed me down.

"What the; you'll wrinkle my dress! Let me up."

But he kept pushing my cloths aside and I kept replacing everything. Both engrossed - both silent. I could have kicked myself for wearing low heels; I had strong fingernails, but maybe he would hit. If only I knew what he was trying to do! My thoughts kept popping. 'What if he kills me and they find me in this cornfield? Oh, mother would be devastated. GOD, I AM DEVASTATED - HELP!’ If I get out of this and mother finds out, I will never be let out again! If I get out of this, I'll never be so foolish again! Darn, this sucker's strong. Perhaps I can fake a heart attack.’

Gasped, wheezed, moved any way I could, told him about my weak heart; he was not the least bit concerned. I kept fighting, pushing, gasping but it was going downhill. He tore my panties and lunged at me then stopped short and screamed:

"The rag; it's the RAG! Why didn't you tell me you were wearing the damned rag? For God's sake, damned it!" He pulled away like I had something contagious and got his cloths together.

I was still on the seat, 'Better keep quiet. Maybe he will kill me now.'

He pulled my arm, shoved me into the passenger seat and got behind the wheel. My cramps hit suddenly. Should I pull my garments under me? If there were clots, my coat and clothing would be ruined. Better his old seat! I sat very still and forward.

He did not backtrack, but continued along the lane - this frightened me more. There was a railroad track, a right turn and LIGHTS! That was 31st Street! (Dirksen Parkway now.) We drove silently to Clear Lake Avenue. Roughly, he shoved me back against the seat.

"Will you sit back? I'm not going to kill you or anything." He turned onto Daniels Street.

Very quietly, I asked, "What were you trying to do?"

He lifted his back slightly. The old car was so out of time it limped as if the kitty-corner tires were flat. "You didn't even know?” he said. "What I really like about you was that you fought like a little wildcat, all the while. You never stopped. I really admired that." I could not return the compliment so remained quiet. He told me his name, branch of service, how long he was back - and *would I like to go on a date sometime?* I was so shocked I had no words: My mouth was dry.

"Too fresh, I guess; I unnerstan, I unnerstan." He stopped where I pointed and he helped me out like a real gentleman! Then he shook his finger in my face. "Only one thing: NEVER go with anybody that you don't know again; ***never*** again!" He got back in his car, "And baby, keep fightin! Goodnight!" He slammed the car door and drove off leaving me standing in the street stunned.

I took a few breaths; the house was dark. No cars, company was gone. 'Better happy- up: Happy- Mary Lou; darned fool Mary Lou. Happy. Happy! I let myself inside. My parents were snoring! "It's me! I'm home." No response (nobody cared; in movies, parents were up, they cared). I hung my coat, grabbed my pajamas and looked in the mirror over the sink; ‘So that’s haggard!’ Mama Pasquale's door was shut, so I removed my makeup at the sink, brushed my hair and wanted to whimper like Mama Pasquale's kitten, but instead shuddered in the dark until it passed. I went to the old army cot; told no one - ever but that memory resurfaced throughout my life.

A few weeks and exams then Christmas vacation. Junior Prom was in May. Most of the girl's parents found them dates and some girls exchanged brothers. Even Gaye’s mother got her a date! The Wangard's never had friends or company, a prom date seemed hopeless. The ushers all worked evenings.

Joan O. a girl I wrote to when she was ill was pleasant she asked if she could read my book about the Orpheum. I let her borrow it. Shortly Joan said she knew a fellow who lived near her. “He works at the Orpheum, but he’s nothing like the John David in your book. He’s conceited and always has some girl walking him home.”

"You mean he walks them home."

"Oh, no I don't! All these different girls walk him home and they stop and kiss every few steps." She fanned her hand down, "Nothing like your John David."( I had created an ideal!)

"This is interesting tell me about this guy, what's his name?"

"George. He has a lot of sisters and brothers. They live a block over from me. His older brother is in service, a nice guy and cute! God, he's cute. But that George..." Joan O. mentioned a last name. I had her spell it.

Later I checked the information in a city directory at the public library; first finding Joan's address and then calculating the other residence. Helen liked voyeur drives. She was prime to see how people furnished their houses. I suggested we check out where "a school friend" lived. It was a sweet little white house with a clipped boxwood hedge, no car in the drive; a blue serviceman's Star flag in the window - relieved the star was not gold and pretended to check other houses. Joan O.'s words might stem from jealousy but if not, Ares had retained the conceit of his Greek Olympic celebrity. My mind flashed to the very pretty girl walking ***George***-ugh, what a name!

Weeks were passing and nothing was coming my way. After much thought, I asked mother to drive to that 14th Street house. There was a boy I might ask. Helen agreed too readily, knowing that boys did not like girls chasing after them. She fully expected me to be rejected.

I mustered courage to get out of the car and walk to the door. It took more courage to knock. I was ready to dash away but the door opened and a handsome man that looked exactly like Ares, but much shorter opened the door. It was his father. I explained about the school dance at an all girl’s school and that I only knew his son from seeing him at the show. His parents both seemed charmed and - overly relieved. Louis and Violet Water happily invited me inside. They said ***George*** had joined the army, but they would give me his address - we could write. They told me about all their children, names and ages, even the illnesses they each survived! His mother brought out a picture of their oldest son still in the navy, and like Joan O. said, he was too adorable to be real: blond, bright blue eyes, round smiling face and dimples. I told them I was an only child, likely spoiled; people always say they are! ***George’s*** parents fell in love with me and implored me to visit! Yes, I missed the prom, but gained a pseudo-family - the kind of parents I had expected my mother and father to be - plus sisters and a little brother.. Ares and I exchanged short letters. However, he had the ability to use ***telepathy***. He sent his thoughts to me. He had done this at the theater. At first I thought it was my hopeful imagination, but one time said he had five sisters and now at the residence, I found this to be exactly true! When I got telepathic word that he would be home for furlough, I dared visit. He said simply, "I told you I'd be home," but he did not smile. He never smiled anymore but all the rest of his family did. In the kitchen, he used telepathy to talk with me and I answered verbally. Then it reversed, I thought to him and he answered verbally. Mr. Water noticed this half/half exchange and called us on it.

I giggled and looked at ***George*.** 'It is so much easier this way, Ares; otherwise I'd be tongue-tied.'

"Yes," he said, "me too," and he finally laughed.

"You two are doing it again!" His father said.

"It is just that I feel so at ease like this with Ares. There were always so few people we could talk with."

***George*** nodded in agreement. Several times, I called him Ares and his father mentioned this. ***George*** told his father he preferred it. When it was time for the afternoon bus, he walked her to the door silently. He wanted me to be there for him, wait. No problem, I was still in school. There was no kiss, no embrace just a hand upon my arm. I hoped for at least a cheek kiss in those few steps.

Jamie Cartwright, my long standing music pal wanted to visit the shotgun shack on the right side of the wrong tracks. To me the house was demeaning. I had no bedroom; actually no bed but a studio couch opened for Jamie’s overnight. In private Jamie confided: "The other house was so sweet. Your parents are crazy! But we’re OK!” Jamie was always ready for new adventure and heard a steam whistle and realized she had no idea what a coal mine was. Springfield was ringed with coal mines. We walked a few blocks to look at all the conveyor things and coal cars being filled. There was a little steam engine used to pull the cars to place for filling and then away afterward. The engineers called the cute engine “Half-Pint” Jamie became obsessed with the idea of riding on Half Pint with them. The guys “AW-GEE’d we’d like to but it is against company policy.” We walked a few blocks, giggling all the way to a gas station for cold sodas. Jamie flirted with the gas station attendants! On weekends, there were few riding the old bus to town, however the experience lasted a lifetime. The bus was in poor shape; a few colored people rode to church on it. Jamie had never seen a colored person in their own surroundings. Her mom had a maid but Jamie faced it; her circle was boringly restrictive!

My cousin Chuck finished high school under the GI bill. The graduation was at Feitshan's. Joe was working and missed it but Helen and I picked up Aunt Bertha. We were seating ourselves when a huge man rather blundered by stumbling down the aisle looking for seats. Our row was empty so I motioned to those seats and told him they were free. We looked at each other a moment; he straightened and beaned!

"I'd love to join you, but they are letting me speak tonight!" He motioned that the rest of his party take the seats, but the woman shook her head, no and motioned to seats in back. He smiled again. He had dark wavy hair and light blue eyes. I felt like this man always hoped to be a speaker so I said:

"How wonderful, I shall listen very carefully," and I bowed my head to him.

He walked a bit straighter, was seated on the stage and peered into the audience. Helen demanded imperiously: “Who was that man?” but I did not know. Mother began sputtering about strangers … Aunt Bertha said, "Oh that's Bill Yardley! Everyone knows, Bill.” But a program crinkled behind me and I missed the last name. With Helen in her prissy-fit I dared not ask Aunt Bertha to repeat the name. I thought, ‘A second great looking man with no name!’ He was introduced but did not rouse; a second introduction; still nothing. Finally, someone patted his shoulder and he jumped, "Oh-me! All ready?" The handsome brunette came to the microphone and gave a thoroughly forgettable speech. Afterword, he greeted each graduate. I kept my program, but the speakers’ names were not listed. I wondered but soon forgot the incident.

During the summertime when mother was about to corner me two hours to hear one of her stories, I’d say “Oh, I haven’t seen my friend Ginny for a while (or Peggy, Joan, Judy, Betty all Ares’ sisters) and would hop a bus. I loved their unpretentiousness and apologized for dropping in, but we had no phone. They always brushed that aside and included me in their activities. Together we pinned cloths on the drying lines then folded them when dry. I did the socks, rolling them into little balls and pulling one cuff over it to hold. On my next visit, Mrs. Water updated me on the socks. Mostly the men loved them. Butch the youngest wondered what the soft pretty balls were and Louis did not know how to get it apart but shot several across the room to Butch trying! Her oldest son was home a week now. Two of the girls and I were chatting about making slaw. Each girl had their preferences. I agreed, thinking, my mother never made slaw in her life! The back screen door opened.

"Hey, mom, I'm home." He saw me as he wiped a sweaty hand across his brow and blushed. I noticed the voice. As he came away from the door, I saw the wide burly shoulders and was certain!

"Well, it's been one dandy long time since I've seen you! And they say that you were in the Navy?” I was smiling broadly. "I don't believe it!" I kept up the farce. "How did you do?" I cooed, pressing my fingertips together.

He began shaking his head and smiling as brightly as the sun. "Very well and you look wonderful!"

"Well, I'm all put back together, no holes…but I thought," - my voice was cool and teasing again, "least of all YOU would choose the Navy." - silent laughter, "Because of the seasickness." My eyes were watering with happiness.

Mr. W. came through the door to find his oldest son blushing and buckling in laughter, "Oh, I did this time too, but I got over it real quick! I can't get over how fantastically good you look." Louis said.

"Me too, you look so wonderful."

Mr. W. expressed surprised that we two knew each other, but when he spoke the paranormal reverie short-circuited. We were suddenly in the present.

"No," I said, "I have never met your son. This is Louis then?"

"And you must be Mary Lou that visits," he said blushing again.

"But how can you blush so? It is most appealing." At which he blushed again. “Your mother and father here, say you do not have a girl. I see not why. Come, she patted a chair next to hers. "I am most gladly noticing everything about you; little hook nose like mine."

"Your nose is not hooked!" The war hero exclaimed.

"But not nice; ah, runs in the family!" She said cheerfully.

"Who's family? Not mine!" His mother exclaimed.

"No, of course not, mother, ours!" Louis indicated me and him. "Our father, grandfather had it on back to…"

"Back to the gods!" I laughed and he joined in laughing. I turned to his parents. "People believed that; isn't it wild?" As quickly I turned to Louis "Oh! My dear Rus (my nickname for Pyrrhus) was it not a shock to find there were no Greek gods, like we were taught?"

"I'm glad there weren't; those were formidable suckers." To which we howled in laughter.

"You know, I'll bet a lot of today's religions are like that; just stories to get you to Heaven." But I did not want to be serious. I was overjoyed to see my brother from Grecian times and wanted to taunt him. "And now, Rus that you are assailed the conquering hero and returned, what shall you do in your spare time? Of course, you will (I held back a laugh) take up horseback riding."

He burst into such laughter that he held his sides, "Whatever possessed you?"

"Don't you know, people of these times think it pleasurable to ride horses in their leisure time?"

"Only if YOU will ride a donkey."

"No-o-o-o, SIR!" We kept laughing. "I thought that the brown with the white stockings was by far your favorite, my dear Rus." His younger sister, Peggy said -“Stockings on a horse?” I explained what that meant and listened to Louis.

"I sat on that damned horse so long; I thought I'd grown four shod feet! I need never so much as look at a horse again." Louis said.

"Confidentially, I'd like the cats again, but they'd likely put me in jail. How about the bird? Would you like to go hawking again?"

"Now THAT I'd like again," Louis accidentally noticed his parents and siblings staring at us blankly. He turned to include them in the conversation; "It was unbelievable that a little thing could be taught to hunt so well."

"We really don't know what you two are talking about. It sounds like another time."

"But why are you so quiet dad? You are in this. We stayed at your place in Argos."

"Yes," I agree, "the wondrous magical gardens atop the sparse dry mountain. I've been wondering about that since I met you. When you have this magnificent ability with water control, why in Heaven's name do you work at a newspaper?" I could not place Mrs. W. The women wore veiling; perhaps she was a part, but was obscured. She certainly loved me like family! I filled the Louis Water family in on our stories.

Finally I said, "I met Iorcetes, well, Demetrius in that garden. We were married there," And then I turned to Louis, "I know you were never at ease having chosen him for me, but he was nice, and oh, how frightfully easily I could tease him."

"Like you are doing me?"

"Exactly! So good for the heart." I said with delight.

"And, is he here?" asked Mrs. Water.

"Ah, yes. I have not met him but I saw him in the city. My uncle Johannes had just come from a dentist whose office is next to his. Now, you will meet my little uncle, Rus. He is the father we lost; little man that clips the hedges at Sangamo Electric. Your mother said you will be working there. He is daffy fun. Such a small town is it not?" She swung around to include everyone in her gesture. Their audience was stupefied.

Mr. W. pursed his mouth ineffectively, "This other man - will you meet him?"

"Well I'd better. He's the reason they got me into this life. We shall be but friends, my dears. They said, he will be divorced several times and I cannot have that in my life."

"Because you are Catholic?" asked Mrs. W.

"I don't know. It could be. They didn't tell me why just that I could not marry a long married then divorced man. They said that after two years, a marriage becomes an unbreakable bond; is that Catholic?"

"No-o-o, never heard that," said Mr. W.

I felt my head: "Ah, you are right; Catholics say no divorce at all. What's the matter with me; I have eleven years of intensive Catholic training." I said. “Oh, yes, Rus, Tiggy is here, about my age. Demetrius’ son again, but I do not know if he has the knock-knees because the men all wear trousers these days. Why are you laughing?”

“It’s the way you say things! Oh my God! How about your parents, Mary Lou?" asked Louis.

"They are to take care of me, but at times they do it too closely. Ares was about to slay them on the spot when first he laid eyes on them."

"And, how does my brother fit into all this?" Asked Louis.

"My dear brother, I do not know the word here, maybe he was … a protector."

"Oh, damned shit!" Louis smacked his hand against the counter top. "Just like today!"

She put her fingertips together questioning his anger and decided it was her word. "Brother, remember! Demetrius hired him to protect my body so I don't get killed."

Louis took a breath and relaxed, "A bodyguard."

"Oh, then it is the same today. I did not know. After I married, Ares was always ready to trap Iorcetes (that was a nickname we used) at being unfaithful, so Iorcetes hired him to watch me. He said he was safer knowing what Ares was doing." She looked at the family, "Well you see, Ares always carried this sharp little dagger in a Pilcher, eh a little chamois bag around his neck and under his garment. He did not look armed, but was."

"What has ***George*** to do in your life now?" asked Louis.

I gave a sarcastic laugh, "If he would do something! I promised him in Megara; it was rough there, and he asked me then, when there are no stations to come back as his. At first it was fine and he asked me to wait for him. Today that rings most bleak as the going word is not pleasant to the ears. So it seems he does not want me and at times … I don't like him very much." Suddenly I looked up and covered my mouth my eyes were wild. "Please forgive me that I should say such a thing in his parents' presence.” I was mortified to the quick.

Mr. W. nodded and Mrs. W. said, "That's all right. There are times I don't like him much either," then she laughed in embarrassment: Truth serum time. They wanted more from Louis.

"Our child’s play was always earnest activity: even the horse things and games."

"You said games, what kind of games, checkers, marbles?"

"We had marbles but not to play as today; they were mythical. We had a landscaped board and moved them as little people around."

"What did they call that board game?" asked Mr. W.

Louis drew up his burly shoulders, "War maneuvers, dad; we had troups and ships. War is still the same; mass killing."

His father drew back into silence.

"Let's see; you married twice. Rus. It was different then, accepted. Antig-o-nee and Lanessa. She was that beauty from?"

"Off the coastline," Louis had the thought and then it faded.

"Kork--, Oh, I almost had it!” I said.

"County Kork in Ireland." Volunteered Mr. Water.

The two laughed and told him, no. "We are south in the Mediterranean."

"But then north, Adriat; is there Adriatic?" Before the chat went further, I noticed the time. "Oh it is nearly four. The buses stop running at four on Sunday."

"No buses anymore! I have a car. Didn't you hear it - driving in?" I shook my head, no. "I thought the whole neighborhood could hear that car." He joyfully drove me home. We each felt like a light came into our lives.

‘My God! I found my brother, thank you.’

The few times Ares was home on furlough were disheartening, little or no conversation between us. I realized I knew his family better than I did him. I didn’t know how to keep the Water family and be free of Ares.

Senior year my paranormal episodes continued; a couple during rehearsal for Rudolph Friml's Operetta, “The Firefly.” The hired combo staggered in over two hours late. I detected that they did not know the music as soon as their notes began. I was furious we had been waiting like fools. I stepped to the fore of the stage and in my strict but elegant instructor’s voice asked them if they were professional? They nodded yes blearily,

“The place to practice the music is… at home. You waste our time!” I bowed and turned away. The nuns were delighted; they did not have the nerve to say anything themselves! One Sister came onto the stage and thanked me!

At a later practice, the pianist came. His "Donkey Serenade" and his appearance were so close to Horst's - it baffled me. I mumbled it under my breath. A speaking actor heard, looked and mistook him too. Although the music was excellent, I noticed several innovations were missing. The actor was devastated that it was not Horst! For me it was the second of his three ***haunting melodies***!

At the Water’s I was surprised that ***George***joined the family in the kitchen. He sat sullenly. His mother asked him if he had a headache. He said, yes. I suggested an aspirin, but accidentally thought 'He probably wouldn't take it from me anyway'. "Oh, I would but they don't help," he answered verbally. His mother explained that he had headaches since he fell out of a tree as a little boy.

I asked where it hurt and said Louis could help. When they looked stunned, I explained that before he had a healing ability in his thumb. Ares looked so miserable I placed my fingers on his forehead gently, 'Dear God, I wish he would feel better I wish a lot more.' "You know, Ares, I don't do it anymore. I would if I …"

But to everyone's surprise, he opened his eyes and said, "It's gone! Just like that when she touched me."

I was surprised myself. 'Well, thank God! It still works. They said, once you do a thing, you can always do it; hum.'

"You ought to be a nurse," ***George*** said. The others agreed.

"I lost a friend over this very thing. She does not want to go into nursing alone. I refused because it was so devastating last time, Ares. Even you did not appreciate the morning rounds."

"Those morning rounds lasted until night!” He got up from the chair now and began to chat! "We are both thin. Did your parents ever put you on anything to build you up?"

"S.S.S. Tonic: The Worst - 83% alcohol. Bottle after bottle - and before you stands the testimony to all the NO-GOOD it has accomplished."

"I had something else, and yeast, he said.

"Beer! I thought it was going to be Root Beer … Beer and yeast, terrible; that is still the Egyptian man's drink and they are welcome to it." She said.

But the conversation disintegrated. Louis was not home; she said goodbyes and took the bus.

Graduation preparations changed class routines. I came home at two with the invitations. Helen, my mother was working at a tent company; she would be in about 5 pm. I wrote a short note to my grandparents and addressed an invitation to them and then one to the Cartwright's - Jamie’s parents in St. Louis, also to Aunt Bertha, Cousin Chuck and Uncle Johannes. I dashed across the street to the small olive mail box and was back in the house before mother arrived.

Helen shot to the negative immediately: “Why are you home? Did you skip school!”

Within days I was home early again when the mail brought a letter from my grandmother! It was filled with delight and sweet words. There was a little money, not much but the letter was precious. I had to place it in a secure spot. Helen still went through everything and threw out whatever she pleased. I had lost so many mementoes by her hand. I removed the top drawer of my chest of drawers and taped the envelope underneath; facing it so I could slip the letter out easily and re-read it. With the money I bought extra material for a more open dress I’d designed. Although the dress looked very nice, I realized I was not ready for strapless in Springfield. It would be worn to Jamie’s graduation party in St. Louis. Jamie was still a flirt and so willful! Mrs. Cartwright had once confided that Jamie left them with battle scars! Things always went so easily when I was there.

The three city Catholic High Schools graduated together at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on a Sunday evening - naturally dad was working. It was embarrassing and demeaning to trot up the church aisle in special garments for Communion; Confirmation and grade School Graduation … so conspicuously tardy… all because mother insisted on making late entrances. This time, I told her I had to be there a half hour earlier than it was. True to Helen’s tardiness, she got me there right on time! It was the only procession that I marched with my class.

My parents’ reluctant gift was a portable typewriter. I wanted to type my novel. To do this I remained home, assumed the household chores and did laundry. Helen was very pleased.

However as summer progressed I noticed a horrible mistake in my story. It involved scrapping several months' work! My hands hurt from the unbalanced stiff keys. I realized that I had no business keeping house for my parents! I had an education. I dumped the book project dressed and hopped a bus to town. I applied for work. The best jobs had been snatched. My only taker was Kresge's Dollar Store. It was a strange feeling to be out among people after being cloistered at home for three months. I wrote grandmother about the change, so her letters would not fall into mother’s hands.

One Saturday a strange car pulled into our drive. It was my Uncle Mike and his family. Helen swallowed her voice for a few moments. It was uncomfortable but finally Helen relaxed. Aunt Mary Regina smiled mischievously; took me and her two little children outside. While the children reveled at seeing grass and plants, my Aunt confided that she wanted to reunite this family! The visit seemed to go well. They visited about once a month until Helen was comfortable with them. Then she asked Helen and Joe to come to St. Louis and visit them! Helen deferred saying they did not know the way! So Uncle Mike volunteered to meet us at Chain of Rocks Bridge and lead us to their house. We went! Mother relaxed and pointed out an amusement park she loved. She said, it took several streetcar changes to reach it.

After lunch Aunt Mary Regina suggested they visit Great Aunt Nonie. Helen always liked Aunt Nonie.

“I’ll call and see if she’s home. She lives with your cousin Annie now. Helen and Joe would be a secret; a surprise. But I heard Aunt Mary Regina’s telephone call. She said, "Hi, this is Mary Regina. We're comin' up, ya hear! Yeah, we're leavin' now."

Mike hustled Helen and Joe into their car. Aunt Mary Regina pulled me back and whispered, "Your Gramma’s there."

"My God how do I look? Do I look all right?"

"Don’t worry, it doesn't matter to grammas."

The visit went ok with Aunt Nonie, Annie and her husband Wilbert. My Aunt pulled me aside and said, "Your Grammas in the living room." Mary went into the darkened room and could see a shadowy figure in an arm chair. The reunion was old fashioned. Her gramma said:

"Who's this?" Aunt Mary Regina explained it was Mary Louise, all grown up and seventeen. "But she was a little girl! Seventeen! Come here, Baby!" We held each other. "I missed you something awful. Oh, there are Mike's two little ones, but you were the first!"

From the kitchen came a shriek: "WHERE’S SNOOKY?" …That Woman never used my name …out of high school and I’m still Snooky. She knows I hate it!

"Gramma, assume all the blame if you have to, even if it wasn't so. Hug and kiss a lot! We've GOT to stay together." Her gramma nodded and held her granddaughter’s hand.

Nonie told Helen her mother was in there and wanted to make up. Nonie gave Helen a stiff push into the room. Gramma advanced quickly throwing her arms open wide.

"I love you Helen, forgive me! It was my entire fault. I was wrong, so wrong." She embraced Helen and sobbed into her chest. "It's too long to be mad."

"It is too long to be mad. I'm sorry too, Mother but it wasn't your fault. It was Birdie's; for marrying that no good drunk!"

I saw my gramma's neck stiffen at this blame shift; her eyes shot wide open. How did Helen come to that idiot conclusion?’ She clung to Helen and thought, 'Oh, why not, we got this far', so agreed with her. They both sniveled. The others sniveled too. Nonie said, "Well now it is time for a good cheesecake!"

Some things never changed. When I was little; these women doted on a cheesecake from Famous Barr. My taste buds had matured. It wasn't as bad as when I was little. Suddenly I was being hugged by my Gramma.

"You were right, kiddo, we did it," she whispered.

I thought, 'Aunt Mary Regina did it.' Uncle Mike said, "We are a family again!" - "And a good family," Cousin Annie said holding her coffee cup high.

To which her Wilbert raised his cup and added, "Yes, and even more coffee to that!”

CHAPTER VIII

WORKING GIRL

Actually, clerking at Kresge's was fun but everyone was up-tight: It was just a Kresge’s Dollar Store; it wasn’t Saks Fifth Avenue! The floor people and some head counter clerks held a laughable prestige. Soon my work-joy was tarnished by Helen who began coming into the store with Mae Morgan, our neighbor. The two twittered behind their gloved fingers. I was embarrassed but mother impudently informed me they could shop wherever they pleased! I was bereft, ‘Every Day!’

Once I was asked to work in the stock room a few days. Ah, reprieve. When I came onto the floor Friday evening, several strange men stopped and questioned me about work, the merchandise and prices. I was always the honest soul. I told them I loved accessories, but that the feathers sold better at cheaper prices. (Behind them the hat lady was making, no-no signs. It made me wonder.) When the men asked about hosiery I admitted that the hosiery prices fluctuated - and were often too expensive. I apologized saying I shopped Penney's for stockings! They thanked me and I went to my counter to finish the last few moments of the day.

Monday morning the vibrations on the “floor” felt unusual. I asked my counter partner what was the matter. Miss Eddington said, "Those men Friday were from the main office and were investigating overcharges on merchandise. They fired Mrs. Dolly and the basement floor walker. In the office all are out except Mrs. Hollis, she was innocent."

"How terrible; what did they think these people were doing?"

"Putting higher prices on things and collecting the over-drafts for themselves."

"Oh, that wasn't right, was it, Miss Eddington?"

"It certainly wasn't, Miss Wangard."

"I wonder how they discovered this?" I asked in all innocence.

The job lasted until after New Year’s; lots of pink slips went out and I got one. Helen was delighted; now she could have me home and be relieved of all the housework. But a little spending money had already contaminated me. When I got the pink slip Friday, I grabbed the want ad section of the newspaper along with my coat. In the car amidst mother’s gabbing, I saw and ad and said, “STOP right here!” I hopped out to answer the ad: Delivery girl for Dental Service Laboratory. The elevator operator said it was on the fifth floor. I passed an open door along the way. I went to the end of the hall and after a short interview could start work Monday. Upon leaving I heard a loud commotion coming from another office. I was entering the elevator when someone yelled after me, but the elevator door shut quickly. I had gotten the job effortlessly. Helen hated it -fifth floor! She couldn’t pester me out of a job. The Elevator girl Era asked if that was my mother in that car and I said, yes, that she and our neighbor came every day giggled and teased me at my last job. Era said, Uh HUH!

Monday morning, the elevator girl related who was on each floor as we rode up. Era was a large black woman and the building’s grapevine. Passing the open door I heard voices again and kept going. Inside I was introduced to the technicians and given a key to the postal box. My job was to check it five times a day, make pick-ups at dentists’ offices and type the statements daily. I left the Lab to start my first round; a tall man popped into the hall and blocked me.

"Here you are! My God, I've been out of my mind since Friday! My girl didn't know who you were and you got away! Do you know I've been trying to find you over for two years! We talked somewhere, God knows where and I went through the whole school records - Feitshan’s a graduation! And they had no idea of who you could be."

I snatched a quick look behind me but there was no one else he could be talking to. I was a bit in wonder; The Water’s children went to Feitshan’s?

"Oh my cousin graduated there. Yes, you were the speaker. I am working at the laboratory starting today."

"Oh, in that case, you should know everyone on our floor." He took my arm gently. "This is my secretary, Irma."

"Pleased. My name is Mary Wangard."

"You got that? Good." He said. "This is Dr. Sandy's office. He isn't in right now. Here are Hugo and Harvey. They are just starting out so you'll see them in my office using the phone." Now he walked me to his office. "When the rest of my firm is in, I will introduce you to them." He put his arms on his waist and grinned at her. The lay of his teeth, the twinkle in the blue eyes were Maced'yon features. He pointed to his name on the door. "That's me now, William Yardley."

That fast I answered like my old Greek self:

"How did you get a name like Will-yam? It sounds like gummy marshmallows."

He threw his head back and laughed. "This time I have my father's name, my dear. He's a minister and when I had a son, I called him …” his voice trailed to nothing, "Oh my God, Deidia, I thought she was you; tall and slim. I waited until I was well out of college." His voice was in anguish.

"Is it Phila?" He looked flustered. "A NEW one!" My voice escalated and I stomped off to the elevator and pressed the button.

"No, no, my dearest, honestly, I thought she was you.” Our voices rose.

My hand struck my head and I reflected a moment: We were to be friends; I remembered! I turned to him: "Let us calm ourselves, my dear. I think the Guides knew better than we did. We have outsmarted no one. Tell me something about the lady. Is she nice?"

He nodded with the most contorted face saying, “But, but but…” and controlling himself that he not weep.

"You love your son-others?"

"Daughter, but Deidia, it is ***our home***! It is nearly an island, evergreens, water, on the lake, it’s beautiful. I bought it for you and me like we always dreamed. You must come and see it, my dearest. Oh, you must come."

I hit his chest. "Not on your life! I come out there, and you remember old life like today, Iorcetes and you will have no happy home … FRIENDS! We keep it straight and none of this to your wife, NONE AT ALL!"

"What are you talking about? YOU are my wife." He drained to a halt as the elevator jerked to a stop. "You rang the bell! Don't you dare get on that!"

"I am supposed to be working and I haven't even gotten out of the building: Fired before I start!" The door was opening. I placed the back of my fingers to my lips signaling silence and then I pushed the hand toward him in parting. I got on the elevator and Era let the door close.

"Oh, I see you met Mr. Bill. A real gentleman; heard you two talkin'."

"He took me to meet the others on the floor, ending with Hugo and the Judge."

"Who's the judge?" Era asked.

"The big man in Hugo’s office, Harvey Bean."

"He's no judge - but he isn't married."

"Oh, he will be; lady with large expressive brown eyes; big girl, beautiful. It lasts forever and he becomes a judge; handles probate… on my husband's family… ugh, in time to come."

"So you're married, Chile?"

"Not now, this is maybe in thirty years or so."

"Uh HUH!" Era became rigid and her eyes grew larger than anyone thought possible. Finally she relaxed and opened the gate and door. When I came back to the Lab. Lloyd, the head tech looked up from his grinding bench:

“Hey, you missed a real go-around. Some foreigners were having an argument in the hall about a house at the lake and it was hers and she said sort of something about kids and two wives: Seemed kinda mixed up - like maybe a divorce. He really sounded miserable.”

Others nodded, “Yea, miserable!”

“Foreigners?” I asked.

“Oh yeah, you should have heard their names. I couldn’t begin to pronounce them.”

I listened to all the things Lloyd and the guys had heard over the transoms and thought: ‘Foreigners? That was us! Iorcetes and me.’ I said nothing!

Third day at Lab: I was heading for the Post Office when a voice called to me:

"Hey young lady!" It was a police officer. "I saw you all day yesterday and Monday on the streets. What are you doing?" I explained my job and my schedule, pointing to the fifth floor of the Bank Building. To my surprise, he said he would alert the other patrol officers to insure my safety. He said, I was allowed to go two blocks any way from the square except East. “East, not past Sixth Street.”

I said that there was one dentist office they sent me to that was south to Edwards on Sixth. This was ok'd.

"If you ever need help, just hold a hand in the air and one of us will be there." He touched the tip of his visor and went on his way.

I began my trek and sniffed a bit. 'Some free country! I wanted to check out Fishman’s pawn shop window but now it is out of bounds. Reminds me of dear Iorcetes; his army at arm’s reach for protection. Did someone do this to me? - Not my parents; they know no cops. I laughed. I trade a mother for the police force some exchange; I couldn’t be naughty if I tried.’

A man I’d seen in Yardley's office happened to escort me from the Federal building to the Bank building. We were stopped by a policeman! I explained who this man was. His was not an isolated case, others went through this interrogation but the ordeal helped their visibility. If Will-yam saw me he would yell out my old name and dash to catch up with me. He took my arm and walked proudly with me. Mr. Yardley was never stopped by a policeman.

Era was laughing. “Child, I met your mother! She had some story that I take her to where you work. I was so glad we talked Child! I just told her, ‘I’m sorry ma’m, but that business is closed to the public, it is strictly for Dentists.’ Child, you got a doozy with that one.” I was very thankful.

At the close of one workday, Mr. Yardley and I got on the elevator together. He took my arm down the few steps chatting about nothing happily. His '42 Buick was parked at the curb and mother pulled up in the '38 Ford coupe. I asked if he'd meet my mother and he jolly well agreed. When he saw the woman's face, his big hands grasped my knobby shoulders and prevented me from getting into the car. His gaze steeled as well as his grasp.

"She is fine, Will-yam. She treats me well, in fact over-protective."

I felt his grasp loosen slowly. He removed his grey homburg (hat) and offered greetings. Then he stood straight a moment: "Are you sure?" I nodded. "Who is your father?" He whispered.

I smiled ironically, "Guess!" His head tilted back in exasperation. Two thousand plus years and his hate still lingered. He grasped the door handle but before he opened the door, "You come to me anytime, you understand. You are sure; you are safe with her?" At my acquiescence he gritted and spoke almost inaudibly through his teeth, "Oh, I hate this." He handed me into the car, closed the door and stood arms akimbo until he could no longer see the little Ford. Helen extolled about how gracious that nice man from the building was - for about twelve minutes. I agreed realizing their thoughts Beaned to opposite poles.

I had a delivery in the Ridgley Building, 8th floor. There was a tall doctor in the office too. I checked the names on the door… Kenneth Otten … There was someone with that last name, I ought to know …Ah! ... “Pardon me, Doctor Otten, do you know a Greg Otten?”

He said, “Yes that’s my son. Such a kid! We don’t know that to do with him; nothing interests him.”

“Oh,” I said, “he is a pianist and a very good one; wins all kinds of scholarships. Piano is his whole life.”

“Really, oh, that’s good to hear. My god, he is just a bane to his mother. No games or anything. Thank you; this is such a relief.” I nodded and went on my way.

In April, Mr. Yardley re-won his seat in the State House of Representatives. I was not politically minded and thought it was his first win. I would congratulate him. But his office was jammed with pressmen. I was out of my element and began backing out but Mr. Yardley caught site of me and the fun began.

"How wonderful," I said. "Your win makes me so happy. Of course you will continue as last time: first Senator, Congress and up? You have the feel of the people, my …"

His eyes twinkled with my words, but the press should not think him coldly ambitious. He shook his finger at me: "No you don't Deidia. I'm not doing that; I-I am contented with this."

"But of course, I understand; as you say."

"Deidia stop placating me!” He turned to them, “Gentlemen, my wife!" He extended his palm towards me.

I placed my hand to my mouth to stop him, but the words spilled out. As the reporters swirled towards the door looking for his wife Polly. I dashed to the Lab - inside and closed the door, leaning against it to catch my breath. The techs asked if I was OK and I just made funny hand motions and nonsense sounds gesturing to the other office. I checked the evening's newspaper. All was well.

Era related that the Yardley children sometimes cane in after school and went home with their dad. Slyly, she mentioned Harvey Bean was interested in me. I smiled and said, no. His lady is coming. When exiting the elevator I saw a blond boy in Irma's chair, Tiggy! It was Tiggy. He was always full of smiles. The young girl was lovely but wary. It was Nikke; but not like the Nikki of old. Another time the elevator door opened for me but a lady exited. Era said: "That's Mr. Yardley's wife. Her name is Polly Yardley."

"But no!” I laughed. “The ***Poliorcetes*** is a man, Era. It could never be a woman."

Era felt trapped in something she did not understand, and really didn’t want to. The door was closing, Polly thought someone called her. Era was shaking her head vigorously no, as she let the door shut.

Carl, my boss was working at his special machine bending a gold rod and making the clasps for a partial denture. The machine did the unthinkable - it stopped working and he tried to screw a tiny brass screw back into place but it was ruined. “Mary take this screw and go to a hardware store and get one like it. Don’t come back until you find one!” I was thankful it was a pleasant day but this should be no problem, just a new adventure- going to a hardware store. The first store did not have it neither did numbers 2, 3, 4, or 5. I was out of hardware stores. I put my hand to my head. I had no thoughts and prayed: “Dear God what can I do to find this tiny screw for Carl’s machine?”

Something turned me north and I was walking on 6th Street. I was near the Madison

Railroad Station. There were several buildings I had never noticed. A curious one seemed dark inside but through its windows I saw all sorts of machinery; a few sparks flying and I went in. A man looked up and asked, “May I help you?” Without knowing double intender I said:

“I hope so I need a screw…Oh, I have it right here in my purse. It is just a tiny little thing and goes in my boss’s machine. None of the hardware stores had it.” There were several smiling guys peeking out from around their industrial machines. The noise and clamor wafted to shut down. How would their boss handle this?

The screw looked lost in this gentleman’s greasy hands. He turned it over rolling it between his thumb and forefinger. He took so long I expected him to say, no. “You know, I think we will give this a try. Yes, maybe we can make one.” As he turned toward his machine all the guys disappeared but one who he called for a piece of brass by size number. He adjusted his equipment and set the brass to place, Blip-blip, out comes the brass and he resets the machine. Blip and he nods. To another machine! Sets it, inserts the project cuts off the length. Back to the first machine; reset and insert flip on the machine: Flee-burger-flee-burger. Zit. Nods head. Hands it to a polish man who’s eyes grow to golf ball size. The screw was barely a half inch long. Finally he checks his against mine and feels satisfied; hands me the two screws and says: “There ya go!”

I was really surprised but tried to remain professional. I asked how much it cost and hoping I would not faint! He said, “Oh, fifty cents.” I shelled out a half dollar and thanked him. It niggled my mind so I asked the gentleman what kind of work did they do here. He said, “Oh we make dies,” and nodded. I thanked him but had no idea what “dies” meant. As I closed the door cat-call voices in unison pealed in laughter from inside. Things like, “A screw and she paid! Wow! Fifty cents to get screwed; must be hard up...OK Guys back to work.”

Carl was upset: “FIFTY CENTS! Ought to be gold! Aww it’s not fitting!”

So I told him it had to, the guy made it for him! Lloyd picked up on this and asked what kind of place was this. I related that I asked and still did not know… “He said they made dies.”

To this Carl’s eyes opened wide and he promptly tried the screw again. It went in perfectly. Lloyd asked where this place was. The group was surprised that there was such a business in Springfield.

UNEXPECTED COUNSELING

I was always pressured by Ares’ sisters to visit. ***George*** was home on furlough. I knew but would rather not see him. My crush on him was into massive wane. He was not affectionate; actually he was cold. We nodded to each other. He did not stand to greet me but remained in an easy chair with the newspaper. The girls threw their hands in the air and said, "Oh, forget him come out here!" From the kitchen window, I noticed a '39 Dodge in the driveway and asked if they had visitors, but Louis blushed saying he got a different car. At her quizzical look, he said, "Had to: turned the Merc over in the lake - third time it didn't survive."

"Third time!" a hand went to my hip. "How is it you turn a car over, Louis?"

"Well, they don't turn like a boat." He said.

His father advanced a few words; "Louis drove a PT boat during the war, Mary Lou."

"With a boat, you just flip the wheel and she turns on the spot! That crazy car just squealed a lot and kept going straight; right into the water; can't figure it out."

"You hadn't driven a car? Never took lessons?"

"No! I was a veteran, they gave me the license." He blushed realizing how stupid that had been.

This tugged at my heart; something was the matter. I circled a toe on the linoleum and said almost inaudibly, "What's bothering you, Louis?"

"I'm supposed to be dead. Now listen, we speed in, make a hit and zero out pronto. We did ok I don't know how many missions. I was supposed to take care of my men!"

His parents quieted. Louis never spoke about the war. He was hospitalized and then came home, but had confided nothing.

"Damned thing hit the boat before I could turn it; wood splinters, bodies everywhere; and I knew them all. I loved those guys and because of me they are dead! Why the hell, not me? Why was I left? I have no right to be left. I killed them; I should be dead with them." He cried out in anguish.

We wanted to rush to his comfort, but dare not. I steadied myself and spoke:

"And so, you think you should give God another chance to right His mistake. Well my dear, you've tried three times and He just doesn't want you yet, does He? Maybe He wanted us to meet. I would have missed it. Heavens knows, you cheer my heart so. Relax my dear. God has something in mind for you." Finally, she gave him a one arm hug. Louis changed the subject.

"Oh, yes! I heard you read most of their palms last time. Will you do mine? Maybe I’ll find out something." The Navy veteran said.

"I warn you it will be about yourself. I cannot do like the gypsies. Ok?" He agreed. "Let's see first; right here, big square of protection around a nasty star of destruction in the Mount of Mars. That is why you are here! At the Propylaea, lots of soldiers had the star but without the protection. Hum, long life line, pushed into the center of the palm by a very well-padded mount of Venus." She leaned to his ear, "Whew, sexy devil here." He guffawed and blushed. "Look at those yellow fingers and fat little bases of them. Excesses: Perhaps the vice of smoking heavily." This was so evident that she laughed. "You can correct these; Hum, tremendous will power in that thumb, but you're easy to get along with; don't hurt others feelings, ahem, like me. I don't hurt your feelings, do I?"

"Naw. How about a girl?" He asked.

"Under the little finger, here. There's your girl. O-o-o the line is red and sinuous; she loves you so much, at times it is painful. There are two children; same sex. One might be adopted, it is older than the affection line but you love them both: Just one lady." She patted his hand and noticed his eyes were the brightest cornflower blue she had ever seen.

"Last time I saw you, you were starting a new job. How is it?"

"There are so many caring people downtown. The police watch out for me because I am a regular. The elevator girl knows everyone and keeps us like a family. Iorcetes has an office on our floor and his two children come after school to ride home. They are the same two: Tiggy and Nikke. But, the men both go by Will-yam. I do not know Nikke's new name yet, or if the younger has the knock-knees because of the long pants. Why are you all laughing?"

"Oh, God, the way you say things," said Louis.

"How old is this Iorcetes?" asked Mother Violet.

"Perhaps forty-two: He introduced me to everyone on our floor - one is a tiny old dentist and there’s a ding-a-ling dentist a few floors down.

"Ding-a-ling dentist!" Louis repeated this and burst into laughter again.

I related his effeminate escapades about taking dental impressions. “He is in practice seven years but is most unsure of himself!” Louis wanted that name - to avoid him!

A re-run of the Wizard of Oz was at the Senate Theater. Mary asked if she could take the little ones. The youngest boy said Louis promised to take him fishing, but Judy 5, was happy to go. ***George***is still holding the darn newspaper. His sisters mentioned the plans; he said dully that he'd seen it ignoring me. "So have I, I said.” Louis drove us and picked us up afterwards. Little Judy held her fun time story until she got home and exploded with joy to her mother, dad and siblings. This was fun to see her so happy.

## Young Will-yam Yardley was graduating Springfield High School. He saw me coming from the Post Office. He hailed and caught up to me and we walked back to the bank building together. I asked what he intended to do now. He admitted he was in a quandary. His dad wanted him to be an attorney and come into the firm but he had his heart set on a naval career.

"Have you talked with him?"

"EVERYBODY has talked with him and he will have it no other way. It is all I've ever wanted! If he doesn't sign the papers it's out."

"That isn't fair. I'll talk with him. Is he in now?" The young man nervously acquiesced, "Then when we get there." I said.

They rode the elevator silently. Mr. Yardley was at Irma’s desk sorting papers.

"Um," I said then realized that I forgot his awful new name! In a few seconds it came to me. "Ah, Will-yam," I drew my hands together and bowed. "Pardon that we interrupt you, but your son has important things to discuss with you… NOW, ***you know*** (Oh, oh, what is Tiggy’s new name?) ***he*** has been a very good son. He did everything ***YOU ever wanted, all these years. Now, it is his turn.*** I pray you listen and heed." I bowed formally again as one did to a king and backed away. The young man was stunned (I had said nothing about his wanting to go into the Navy). I made a hurry motion with my right hand. It was time to leave them in audience. I backed out, head down and walked to the lab. Iorcetes could be so stubborn!

I set the last mail of the day on the counter, put the key down, the statements of the day were typed my day was finishing. I gathered my handbag and said goodnight. Passing the Yardley office, she saw only young Bills' back, but Mr. Yardley's exasperation was evident. I pressed the button. Young Bill dashed out nearly jumping me in the hall.

"I got it! He listened and said, yes! He said, yes! I can't believe it." The young man's head lifted as if to spin with joy. "Thank you so much."

"I’m glad. You are serious?"

"Most."

"He will be very proud of you." I smiled nodding. The noisy elevator screeched and we heard the yank of the safety gate.

In the morning Mr. Yardley caught me coming in for work. "Deidia, that was the hardest thing I've ever had to do … but I did it."

"And he is due, my dear, yes? Of course, and you will be so proud of him you will think it is all your idea, you'll see."

But he turned away and wailed in agony. "I wanted him in my fi-rm…"

This was another time I restrained from comforting a strong man in a vulnerable moment.

At the Lab, the boss's wife was preparing monies for the coming year’s insurance premiums. She was an excellent bookkeeper, called me and handed me a canvas bag.

"Just go to a teller; all the information is in the bag. It will tell him what I want done."

I felt vulnerable carrying money that was not mine but once in the bank I had a mischievous thought: Why go to an old teller? I looked and went to an auburn haired young man. We exchanged greetings and I shoved the canvas bag under the iron bars. They stood silently a moment. In the forties banks were somber places - with stiff overly proper old men venerating their positions and those precious dollars.

"What do I do?" the young teller asked.

"Oh, I don't know; the bag will tell you."

He stood quietly a moment looking at the bag. "It isn't saying anything."

I caught my chest to keep straight. It was difficult to retain the somber decorum. I explained what little I knew and started to giggle, hiding it by burying my face in my chest.

He sorted little packets. Quite seriously he asked, "Do you bank here?" Affirmative. "Perhaps you should write your name down. Then if anything happens to the bag before you return, I can vouch that everything is here and taken care of, Miss Wang…"

"Oh, Wangard, like one-guard."

"She is using Christmas Savings! Don't use them, they pay no interest! I don't use them. Here, don't let the bag talk too much." They exchanged smiles. He had many happy lines around his mouth. His lips were smoothly shaped and slightly pink. His eyes were clear grey! I glanced at the name: Charles H. Brittin. The name shook me. It was almost identical to … who? The "H" made me curious but I kept a happy face.

Saturday mother and I arrived to bank. Helen went to Clifford a senior teller and I went to Charles H.

"Hello, Mary Wangard!" he said brightly.

"Hello Charles H. Brittin; what's the "H" stand for?"

"Howard."

"Nice. I was looking for an unusual "H" name."

"What does he do?"

"Plays piano."

"Does your man have to play piano?"

"Why, what do you play, Charles?"

"Baseball," He said brightly and saw her face grin in amusement. "I see you walking out there."

"Deliver dental things, pick-up mail. Not great, but ok."

She had not looked into the bank before but now began to steal a glance towards his cage. Often after the bank closed he was working on his books. Some mornings they passed each other going to work. He'd tip his hat and they would say "Good morning." They cut up quietly a few minutes on Saturdays when she made a deposit. During the following months his began to be the only lamp burning in the whole bank. His cage partner, Clifford told him he had better settle something concrete with the girl or "the brass" will think him incapable of his workload.

At the Water’s, her pseudo-mother Violet greeted her; "Oh, Mary Lou, Louis is taking flying lessons!" I was stunned at Mrs. Water's information and at hearing my old name: There I would always be Mary Lou.

“At the new airport?” She nodded. What stunned me was that I considered flight lessons a while previous. My books cautioned about flying in canvas covered planes. There must be no holes in the canvas; wind could rip the covering and ruin inside pressure dangerously. Mother had driven me, griping all the way, but she would not wait for me. I spoke with the fliers and we checked the student plane together. From the inside I saw one - two - more and more holes - some over an inch in diameter. No matter what the instructor said, I backed out. Saw no little black Ford on the drive so took a taxi home. Now, Louis was into flying lessons! I knew those planes were not safe. As these thoughts spun in my head, the ’39 Dodge rolled into the driveway, looking worse than before. It too had been hauled out of the lake, now Louis was taking flight lessons! It was fun, he said, like nothing imaginable.

"The square indicates an isolated incident. You are taxing it to mean invincibility. Do you use a parachute?"

"No, but they are up there."

I took him by the lapels and placed my forehead against his. "You will promise me Louis," I whispered, "that you will wear a parachute each time you go up and use it if you have occassion. You have tried God four times, and as you see, it is not your time. He wants you here, like he wants me here for something!" I loosed his lapels. "God knows what that is, I surely don't."

"You could marry ***George,***" Mrs. Water said quietly.

"Oh, but I don’t get to marry Ares. There are other ladies for him."

"Then who will you marry?” Mrs. W. wished she would take Louis.

I swirled to the novice pilot. "Remember these things for me, sometimes I forget afterward." When he nodded I continued. “It is a man named Charles J. Midden," she jerked distastefully at the similarity to the bank teller's name. "He is a farmer at first, but then goes into something with wires. I have never met him in my life. I can see a little picture. It is not far, there is a tall thin elevator, a crisscrossing railroad tracks, oh a sign says: Bral-for-ton. I can't read the population."

"Bradforton," said Mr. Water. "There is a grain elevator there with a large bin to burn corn cobs."

I was shocked and deflated. Shoot, it was real.

"You don't have to marry him," Mrs. W. said in earnest.

"You could marry me!" Louis said dimpling beautifully.

"My dearest Louis, you are like my soul, we are too close. Besides you are going to marry Lanessa again, the pretty Italian you loved so much."

Louis seemed placated, but I reached for a kitchen chair and sat down. His parents asked what the matter?

"He killed me last time, but they say he has advanced most."

"What else?"

"Later, I work with a little German pianist to help him finish his music. This will not be easy for any man to handle. His music was not finished when I had to leave. But this is most confusing: I am 19 he is now 13. OK, then it is much later. Forgive me for hashing this out."

"Is this an American-German; someone living here?"

"Oh, no Mr. Water he is based in Stuttgart, West Germany, his music studio is along the Konigstrasse—main street in their downtown."

"And how are you going to get to Germany?" asked Louis half-teasing.

"Plane, big thing holds 300 people. Leaves from an island off Miami Beach, Now-sow?"

"Nassau," Said Louis.

"Ah, correct."

When Louis drove her home that evening, he didn't care if she was darned cracked looney, he wanted to marry her and without voicing her thought - she thought maybe she should. She loved him; if only he hadn't been her brother; it felt like it would be incest. "Oh, if it wasn't already planned! You will have Lanessa soon. Let me look at you. Take care of yourself, Louis. No more doing away attempts, ok?"

"OK. Hey! See you again!" He shifted the sad old Dodge and backed out the Wangard drive. She held her tears until he rounded the corner.

'Thank you God for letting me meet him.' Behind her Helen opened the front door. Now she had to hold the tears longer or hear an hour's worth of Helen.

When my parents threw open suggestions about which way to take their short ride before Joseph Wangard went to work, I suggested that we had not been out west Jefferson Street in a long time. The '38 Ford was headed promptly that way. I kept inconspicuously alert. I searched for a farm with lots of buildings, mostly painted red. Maybe? They went too fast to absorb the details. There were the railroad tracks, the sign. It was just as I had seen it in the little clairvoyant picture. The loop was worn off the “*d”* which made it read *Bralforton*. To the south a large grain elevator and the bin to burn corn cobs. I felt ill: It was not a flight of fancy; not imagination! All the things in my picture were real. My dad drove a bit until the roadsides were fields then he turned the car around. Coming back, I noticed a huge barn without paint almost leaning upon the road, the Midden name on a beat-up mailbox and a farm so dismal it seemed abandoned. It was spooky like an old movie; I shivered.

The nonsense with the bank teller continued. I slipped a cartoon of the '38 Ford under the bars one week and he asked her to do his '42 Ford. The next week I slipped one under. He took it turned his back from the dour executives at their roll topped desks; and his shoulders heaved with silent laughter. We enjoyed little confidences but he never asked me out! What was it with the men I met: None of them asked me for a date. I chalked it up to everything off-kelter about my face. I was good for being a friend.

One Saturday, Joseph decided to do the banking. Charles H. asked Clifford to let him take this one! I stood beside my dad, wondering about this change of venue. Charles H. smiled and introduced himself to my father. He told Joe what a wonderful daughter he had and also how wonderfully distracting she is! This gave him a serious problem to solve. He had to solve this problem to keep his job:

"Joe." He confided, "You know how important it is to do a good job." He saw that Joe definitely acknowledged this fact.

I was listening expecting Charles H. to say: "Keep her away!" But to my dumbfounded surprise, he asked Joe for my hand in marriage! And - Joe agreed! This was beyond belief! I felt my stomach drop. I wanted to whimper like a wounded puppy. I still hoped Ares would … but here was this! I managed to smile to Charles H. I doubted if our hands had ever touched. When the two men finished talking and agreeing, Charles H. entered my father's transaction and smiled to me completely relieved. I forgot about my transaction and numbly followed my father out to the car. Once the car door shut I swung forward to look at my father:

"Daddy, do you know what you did?"

"Don't you speak to your father with that tone!"

"Mother, you don't even know what this is about!" I spoke with the driest mouth I ever had. "How could you daddy?"

"Nice boy, I like him. Be fine." He said.

Her back hit the seat. "I don't believe this. He got me engaged to a man he just first saw today!"

Helen's voice was soft like addressing a naughty child: "Did you do that, Joe?"

My dad nodded sheepishly and grinned from ear to ear. Neither parent said another word!

I was completely amiss and mentally prayed: ‘Dear God, what's going on? I didn’t know this fellow was even in my mix! This sort of thing doesn't happen. I haven't met his folks; haven't dated, and it isn't Louis! Of the bunch you could have let me have Louis.'

The answer was quick and simple. 'Over as fast as it’s happened: He will need your help.'

'HE will! I NEED HELP.’

Things changed in that they talked about a distant future- at the bank cage on Saturdays: No wedding plans, no dates, no ring; another ***George*-**like episode - there but not tangible. To forget about the problem I took the bus out to visit the Water family. They welcomed me as usual. To my surprise, Mr. W. said I looked concerned would I like to talk about it. Were my thoughts so noticeable? I admitted there was a concern but all the pieces are up in the air. I shook my head, no.

Behind me came a voice, "Sometimes it does one good to air it all out," said ***George*** who had come from the front room and stood abnormally close.

I stifled a laugh. “At times dear little daddies make surprising decisions for their daughters.” ***George*** had not hung so close for years. I asked him if he had some place to go but he was chatting lightly and finally said, that I had read all their hands; would I do his? What a relief those words were. I actually heaved a hearty breath and said sure and reached for his hand.

"Let's see, now, please don't be upset if I express things without great finesse; I am not a professional." He nodded . "Long smooth thoughtful fingers, uninterrupted in thinking you do not self-question your decisions. Thumb balanced, good decision ability and tact. Good flow in your timing; rather work indoors. A few excesses in the base of the fingers, but as with Louis' smoking. What tiny fingernails! Like they started too late or you got cheated; symbolizes a cold astuteness, somewhat critical in overstating your case, sort of a lack of caution." (‘Oh. God,’ I thought, 'a darn crummy nagger.')

"Well, let us turn the hand over and see what is underside. What you accomplish means a lot to you; extremely good at speaking, in fact you make your living talking and have a handsome income from it. Just don't believe yourself too much." (She thought, 'Hot Dog, a con artist!')

"Talking? What about singing?" He asked.

"That too is using the voice well, but from the other lines, I'd say speaking, Ares. You don't play an instrument, do you?" - Negative head shake. - "Usually a singer accompanies the self. You are self-sentimental, but do not express it or reach out to others. The headline is very deep but short."

His dad broke in, "Short headline! I told you - you were dumb."

I was shocked they were listening: "But no such thing! A long headline does not insure that a person is more educated. In fact, long is worse because it can be muddling or indecisive.” She held out her own hand for all to see. “You see all lines of influence that cross it! His headline is very deep and clear; it means he will know his subject well.” To ***George****,* “See, Ares mine is long and dips to the moon, too many subjects.” Back to Mr. W. “Don't sell Ares short. -You have some worry lines, mostly from the family; nothing unusual, most people let family tangle up their lives. What is unique is the way your life line hugs the base of the thumb. Venus is most flat. There is very little you get excited about; almost …no emotions?" She waited for him to dispute this.

Instead: "Yes that is correct. I try situations that should stir the emotions, but nothing happens."

('Oh whoopee,' I thought, 'I wish I'd have known **that** several years ago!') She looked up pleasantly, "At times I feel vividly, but not often. Let us continue; there are no affection lines! That goes with lack of emotions. "But there are several children that you love. Now, often teachers have no affection lines but they have many children around them, and these are the lines for children."

"BASTARDS!" screamed mother Violet lifting her face to heaven.

I ignored this outburst to preserve tranquility. "Then too Ares, at times an affection line does not show until after the fact; don't let it worry you." She patted his hand I felt nearly as dumbfounded as I was with Charles H.’s proposal! ‘Whew -ee, can I pick 'em: heartless, unemotional, conceited, easily angered and critical; a lady’s man and so good looking! Will my lot ever be normal? Oh, there's conversation! They are talking. What’s it about?’

***George*** stepped from the room a few moments, and I understood; I would have if it were me. I wondered where the girls were and found two of them devouring "Confession Magazines."

"Hi, I caused a row in the kitchen, so I thought I'd retreat. What are you both doing?"

"We've decided to quit school and get laundry jobs," Said Joan; Ginny nodded, yes!

"That's terribly hot work; my aunt Bertha did it for years."

"But its winter now, we'll keep warm."

"What about summer?"

“Maybe we'll be married by then," said Ginny.

"Too young; too young!" I said tossing my hands in the air.

"Not by these magazines! These are true life! Sit here," said Joan. She tugged me down beside her.

I could not explain to them the enhanced misery these magazines portrayed. They believed love conquered everything. Only the heroine's viewpoint changed, not her circumstances. “Don’t you see, they go from miserable to less miserable?”

“OK. They aren't having any fun, but that's real life." said Joan.

"So why sign up so soon?"

"But Mary Lou, you're my age, I thought you were all ready to be married!" said Joan.

I wanted to laugh at my situation. "Not right now, maybe two or three years." I was going to add after I get my own thoughts “put to bed” but my two pseudo-sisters jumped up and fled into the kitchen both crying out and supplementing each other’s words:

"Momma, Momma, Mary Lou doesn't want to get married for two or three years!"

I followed them. "Things I'd like. I've saved a little, not enough." I was uncomfortable when they pressed me about how much I had saved - Jamie's parents never talked money! I liked it that way. On the spot, the two girls decided to remain in school and work evenings at the Sweet Shop about a mile away from their home.

The little ones came inside; they had been sledding and unbundled by rote hanging their things very orderly. I had gold wrapped chocolate coins for them and they were delighted.

Shortly, Louis arrived and said: "Well, shoot, if I'd have known you were here, I wouldn't have bothered with what I was doing."

Did she dare ask him? Yes.

"Shootin' the breeze with some guys at the tavern," He blushed violently. She loved “this brother.” In a bit he drove her home.

Surprisingly, Mrs. Wangard popped out the front door to say hello. She liked Louis and spent a bit of time on his attributes after he pulled away. I smiled as we went inside. Helen the strict teetotaler! Gosh, how I wanted to laugh.

Monday morning, Era, the elevator girl did not think I had a boyfriend. A tall redhead that delivered fresh towels weekly promptly tried his hand, both hands! He followed me into the lab with his rolls of clean towels. The work crew thought it was cute. I wanted to laugh. Why didn’t I laugh? I tried to halt the scene. It was comical that another man could want to be tossed into my salad of four men. (William Yardley’s offices were across the hall.) Subtlety was not working on the redhead; finally I pulled him out of the lab and closed the door. I told him flat out that I was interested in someone already and made certain Era at her waiting elevator heard it!

In the Lab I said: "Guys you don’t know how confusing my personal life is right now. I don't need this Jake in the mix, ok!" I looked into the small mirror near the office and saw nothing fetching in the reflection; perhaps I was everyone’s fool. "Oh, Lord, I'll go to the Post Office."

"You just came from the Post Office!" her boss said.

"Do you want to dictate the statements for the day?" I was antsy.

Her boss said it was too early. I sat down at a workbench and toyed with a coil of green wax. Helen had a little cactus dish garden. The coil turned into a cute little snake, just what a cactus garden needed! It would be a surprise. At home, I set the little snake in the cactus garden. Mother didn’t see it for a few days but when she did she screamed bloody murder. I came finding her ready to whack it with a fly swatter … “No, no it is just wax! Your garden needed an animal but there aren’t many kinds in the desert. It was a surprise. The little green snake stayed.

None of the Lab men detected that I was upset. Who could she talk with? Her parents were aloof; their child was kept safe from problems! The priest was old. The Sisters at Sacred Heart would never, never fathom my predicament. The only other people I could talk with were the Cartwrights (too far) and my pseudo-family, the Waters. She took the bus out hopefully. This day too did not go as expected.

Within moments of my arrival, ***George*** began a non-committal conversation that turned into money talk! I was stunned. Money! His army stint was up and evidently he saved nothing! Maybe he wants to borrow my little savings… Suddenly, his talk honed in on his subject saying, “A couple could make a good start on $200.00.” (Oh, he did not want to borrow money - what?) And then he added -“A couple like us!” ‘What an insulting proposal! What a bugger! I wait nearly six years and get a proposal based on money. Not one romantic word at all!’ My answer concerned the money: "It wouldn't make a dent, Ares."

"Better than starting with nothing; I could do a lot with $200.00," he said.

I held my composure, but entertained several explosive, condescending thoughts that skated across my mind; refusals, missing proms, being ignored for a dang newspaper, all of this - so demeaning and without fun. Over it all, one memory bounced to the front: Seeing his complete name carved on a windowsill in the Post Office by a lovelorn girl expressing undying love. He’d asked me to wait until he was financially able (or was it while he dallied.) I was deflated; what a disappointing “first love". I hoped these sour thoughts were not registering on my face. At least Charles Howard was sweetly old fashioned and my thoughts now went to him. We had a song! True this all transpired in ten minutes on Saturday mornings, but now I could balance things: I had given Ares too many benefits of doubts: He was out!

"We never see each other, write or even talk." I leveled.

"Oh, well we'd see each other more." He saw her incredulous face.

Unfortunately my words became vocal: "Until the money was spent. That is no foundation for a marriage."

"Think about it, don't be hasty." He said. I went out the back door for air.

His middle sister Peggy followed me saying - After all the movies he’s seen to blurt a stupid thing like that! Mother wants you to stay for supper.” I doubted that now! Sadly, I glanced about the yard but in April, there were no flowers.

"My God, that ***George***!" said Peggy. "He really likes you, you know."

"I don't know how much of that kind of 'like' I could take, dear. I love your family and I think they like me. I was very lucky for that much."

I had brought a tiny camera and pictures were taken, but by suppertime, ***George***was sulking and criticized his mother's cooking. I expected him to 'put on a good face' trying to change my mind. I prayed silently: ‘Dear God, he hurt his mother's feelings. What shall I do?’

To my surprise, my Guides said***: 'You may leave now. You have done all you can. You need stay no longer. GO!'*** Somehow I was relieved. 'Oh, I love these people. Louis, oh, God I won't see Louis. I love Louis so much! Then, let me do this well, no bawling.'

There was inconsequential chit chat. When it was nearly time for the last bus and Louis was not home yet, I kissed and hugged them all; told ***George*** to come. I took his hand to the front door. He was surprised when I picked up my hat, coat and purse. “Let's face it; you and I aren't going to work out. I like you very much, but something just isn't there. You have been very nice about my visiting over the years - and I've been ashamed of coming really, but I really do love your family. I am sorry Ge-George." It was probably the first time I ever said his given name. "Now," I patted his hand, "I must go, my composure is at end; you do understand?"

"Stay! At least until Louis comes home. He'll crucify me."

"Can't its cracking; All good to you." I stepped through the door … He let me leave!

A SLIGHT EMANCIPATION

On the bus, I relaxed and saw my reflection in the window: Pathetic! ... Almost six years wasted, “Well, Dear Ones, enough self-pity! Let’s start with my clothes. I need more adult cloths?’ Instead my Guides said:

***‘My dear, stop giving people the benefit of the doubt. He is grown-up. He knew he slighted you. Your old Greek Loyalty must end! You were told during the planning stage that promises made in one life do not carry over into another. Be lighter! Do that with the 2nd one too. You need not suffer over his mistakes.'***

The Guides last two sentences confused me. I thought perhaps they were just words. 'I guess I'll change my way of living!’ I laughed these words were from the twenties at least but they fit my situation today! By the time the bus reached town, my new changes were decided.

Mother was not home. That was luck for me. I went to my cardboard closet and piled all the cutes and pastels on my parent’s bed and then gathered them to the ally garbage can shoving old newspapers on top to cover them. At my small chest of drawers, I toyed with facial expressions out with the serious. Dour and coy was not my thing- just nice. Hum, mascara and eye shadow; how I wished there were better colors. I bought these when Susan from the Hotel and I were best pals. I lightly defined my eyebrows into the double arch that showed in a class-book snapshot. Malevolently, I parted my hair in the middle. I had a natural cowlick but mother never tolerated a center part saying nice girls didn’t… I rather liked my new self and then Helen came home. "What are you doing to your face? Your hair! Nice girls don't…

This was not my angry day not a day to trifle or tolerate prattle. "It’s all right mother. Everyone knows I'm a nice girl. Oh, I'm so-o-o nice!” My teeth were clenched and Helen stepped back. It made me change course: “We took snapshots this afternoon. Everyone laughed at the tiny camera. I'll drop them off tomorrow." Surprisingly, there was no lecture. …"

Monday, my co-workers at the lab liked my new makeup but came right out and asked why she was so extra cheerful. I tossed it off as along over-do tiff with a friend. In a few days there was a letter for me in the early mail that her boss picked-up. I had once thought that ***George's*** letters were being destroyed by Helen. I asked that he use the Lab’s P.O. Box. But Helen was not at fault; there had been no letters. I read it, slipped it back in the envelope and stuffed it in a pidgeon hole on my desk. The telephone rang: there was a pick-up at Dr. Wilson's. As soon as I was out the door and they heard the noisy elevator. Lloyd reached over and snatched the letter!

"Oh, shit! A dear Mabel damned. Some little tiff with a friend."

"Let's see it. Hum, George W. I better never meet him." Carl, the boss said.

When I returned five sets of pitying eyes confronted me. Harry from the polishing area crept over. "You knew him for years; can't you try to make up; get it going again?"

"It was bad news for a long time, Harry. Anyway, this sounds like I’m a will-o-the-wisp, but I met another guy, works downstairs at the bank. Blessedly, it was time for my first trip to the Post Office. As there was only one young man working as a teller there so it was not hard to put 2 x 2 together. Things were easing back to a new normal. He picked a song for us and we talked about having a family one day - all in those ten minutes, Saturday mornings… those were a great ten minutes.

Coming to work mornings - Charles H. began avoiding my eyes. I guessed it was second thoughts about the spontaneous proposal. But that Saturday, when my mother and I came into the bank, Charles H. left the cage completely! Clifford his cage partner apologized saying Charles H. had a real problem and he would take their deposits this time..

Sunday morning I opened the newspaper’s society section. An announcement hit me like a bullet between the eyes! My very own fiancé Charles H. Brittin was engaged to a girl from a prominent family who lived in “a blink-and-you've-passed-it town.” I related it to my mother, saying maybe I should have listed my engagement to him first. Helen assumed her silent imperiousness and drove us to church. ‘Well dear Guides, you were right - over before it began.’

At church the sermon related to undying love. This was a hit below the belt and made the tears well, cascade down my cheeks and around my chin. Perhaps this was my just desserts as the old timers used to say. No, Ares was not a good thing for me. I sat perfectly still until the tears dried. The priest made another remark about faithful love and this time although I braced, it did not work. Brittin mild as the affair had been was my hold on sanity at this moment and this small hold was being flushed down the drain. I felt hot, my head spun.

'God, I don't know how to handle this. I feel like my brain died.'

'Cry, elegantly don't daub, but let go; save yourself!'

Helen stirred and upon seeing the tears, scanned her daughter like scum sat beside her. I could not fathom mother's coldness. A moment after the priest turned back to the altar, I picked up my purse and walked out. It was pleasant outside. I wondered: how many girls lost two men in one week; three counting Louis… the towel man did not count. That thought alone set me to laughing. It hurt. If it didn't hurt, it would be comical. I would write to Jamie Cartwright. Maybe Jamie had some useful input heaven knows she bounced in and out of relationships quickly. Helen arrived and said I had disgraced her publicly! “How dare you! Over a man that was not good enough.” Finally, I was wise enough to block her out.

I had to go to the bank. Charles H. did not flee this time. "Well, congratulations, I guess."

Charles H. turned on his heel and left the cage without a word. Clifford stepped into his place.

"This isn't what he wanted at all. He is very, very upset."

"As am I," I answered pleasantly.

"This girl came here one day; didn't even talk with him; told all the big wigs that he made her in a family way and wanted him to do the right thing. She convinced his parents too! Everyone's against him and he hadn't seen her over a year - since he took her to his Senior prom. He hardly knows her and he didn't do it. But," he nodded to the brass, "they said he had to solve his problem in gentlemanly fashion or lose his job."

This was April: He was at the bank over a year now! It was appalling that so many adults with more sexual knowledge; should fall for this girl's story! She turned her back to Clifford and leaned against the marble counter. 'Dear God, I have before me a group of men playing God and ruining a young man's life, and mine. I'm not crazy-mad about this young man like I was about Ares but check out this girl and level the whole thing. Thank you.'

She turned back to Clifford. "He is a likable person." Clifford nodded and finished her deposit.

Once in the car, she heard her Guides***: 'It is unnecessary to involve the self emotionally in this matter, but with Cancer rising in your chart, you will likely be emotional. Actually, this is the woman he should marry; you must convince him of that. He needs one friend. Later, he will not continue to be innocent. Keep the self-unencumbered.'***

I heard the Guides words; knew they were correct, but they were not the words I wanted to hear: I must convince my fiancé to marry another girl. At that moment I was in the coupe, but could not see out the window; a little picture was forming in the mist. There were several braziers burning. The people had great suntans. There were elegant foods around. A harem girl and a man wearing little shared a goblet of wine. Guides spoke: 'This land is extinct, but this is where the attraction began. Notice the face! Again: let not past loyalties carry into the present.’ I concentrated but recognized nothing. This was my first clairvoyant picture. I did not realize this was uncommon. The window cleared. My father was driving to the grocery store. The clerks there always made me laugh but the respite did not last. I was not calm; I was becoming more upset by the hour.

Monday, I felt that Charles H. watched my every move as I crossed Washington Street and angled around the Court House (now the restored First State Capitol). When I returned my boss shoved a twenty dollar bill in my hand and told me to go downstairs and get change. He did not want gum or anything from the drugstore, just go to the bank! As soon as I came into the bank, Charles H. dashed to the cage she approached. He apologized for his behavior Saturday. I tried to shorten this episode but I heard my Guides: 'Help him now!' So I stretched my fingers out to hold his.

"Clifford said you knew her at high school…"

He finished her sentence. “Hadn't seen her since - over a year!

"We have to level this mess out now, as best we can, Charles. Let's do this." She took a huge breath. "**Otherwise**, is she an ok person?" He shrugged. "Is she somewhat fun, can you talk with her easily - aside from this mess?" I tried to give him another perspective. "How are her parents? Do they like you? Are they easy to be around, not too uptight?" As he acknowledged this and that: I admitted that, “Friendly communicating without holding back is possibly the best thing two people can share. Gosh Charles, this might not be as disastrous a thing as we first thought. I know it truly ruins it for us but we are friends and that part will always be good.”

"I really wanted us to be more than friends." Charles H. said and I nodded.

"But- we can't have that, so I want **you** to be as happy as possible in this mess." I

said quietly. He broke into a heartbreaking laugh and thanked me. They both teared but held steady. He closed his eyes and shook his head, and slowly let go of her hands. She clutched the twenty dollars in small bills and change. Unsteadily she went through the revolving door.

'Ok Guides! How's that for helping?'

"Very good but you are not through.' They said.

'I need a vacation.'

'Sorry, you won't get it - so you aren't surprised.'

Carl, her boss was polishing a gold clasp. "All fixed up?" He asked.

"Hardly," I asked about a vacation, but he said they closed shop and took vacation in June. I fingered the key and went to the post office. Upon return I was so drained, I did not remember going to the post office or if there was any mail. I laid the key on its little counter. "No mail. I'm sorry, I like it here a lot, but I'm emotionally shot. I can't make it until June. Don't worry about paying me, I do love ya all." I picked up my purse, walked out and closed the door. In a few seconds the tension eased. I started along the hall. William Yardley was sorting papers at Erma’s desk. He saw I had my purse and called me in. I managed a half-smile and told him briefly that I quit my job; that my life was in shambles; said a few words about the boy at the bank downstairs, not in the building. "We are leaving too, moving." William stood and started towards me. "They are tearing down this building. I found another place on Adams by the printing company. It will have air condition; I'm buying it."

As I nodded in agreement but as fast the thought hit me! 'I'm leaving Iorcetes. I don't believe this—four in one week.' These people were my joy. That was one blow too much. I began falling and that fast William caught me before I hit the hard tile floor.

"Deidia!" He cried out. He patted my cheek, "Come dearest," I was out. "HARVEY! MY WIFE’S FAINTED! I can't revive her." The loud voice brought me a moment of consciousness, I heard Harvey's words:

"This isn't your wife; this is the girl from the Laboratory. I'll get some water." He went into Dr. Sandy's office. I saw Dr. Sandy and fell unconscious again. His tiny glass of water wasn't helping; they loosed my scarf, unbuttoned my coat. Mr. Yardley told the two about our conversation before this happened. Dr. Sandy decided my nerves collapsed and I should be taken home. William threw the office keys at Hugo, the C.P.A: “Lock up!” Then William carried me to his brand new ‘46 Buick. Dr. Sandy came along and Harvey got behind the wheel.

Harvey drove wildly To Jefferson Street and suddenly said: “Do we know where we’re going?"

"Yes!" Said William.

Harvey asked: “How do you know?

William said, “I know where everyone in the building lives except the business school students; their transient.” And then gave directions right to the Wangard driveway! Harvey jumped out and banged on the door. A small sounding dog barked – oh great! Mrs. Wangard opened the door surprised by the well-dressed big man, and lush automobile and then more surprised to see Mr. Yardley carrying her completely unconscious daughter. They brought me inside. Dr. Sandy solemnly told Helen his diagnosis and that they just lay her down and let her rest. “She should be recovered in a few days.” Helen listened astutely as the small man was introduced as Doctor Sandy*.* Helen obeyed religiously - not knowing little Dr. Sandy was a dentist.

I opened my eyes. I was in my parents' bed room - on my father’s side of the bed. I pulled the covers back and found that I was completely street-dressed! My hair was not mussed and the house was empty. Nellie, a Manchester-Pincer mix pranced in; I heard her little bell hitting her ID tags. Together we went into the back yard. The Tulips were blooming and things smelled so fresh. We walked the perimeter looking at the beds where leaf buds were swelling on the blue hydrangeas from Grampa Jul. The witch hazel tree looked strange; it was covered with crunched yellow shaggy blossoms; it had never bloomed before. I pet Nellie and we went back inside.

Two letters were propped against a holy statue on the desk. One was from Mrs. Cartwright and the other held the prints of the last day with ***George*.** I set the pictures in the cedar chest atop his few letters. Then I noticed that my savings bonds were not in their place, or in proper order! Curious! I checked the shoe bag inside the closet door where I kept my bank book. It was in a different pocket. I felt too wonderful and free to interpret these things. I opened Mrs. Cartwright's letter.

Jamie was falling behind on her music and wanted to drop college. Would I visit a weekend? Why not? These were enjoyable people. I dashed off an acceptance note and dashed to catch the postman’s pick-up at the olive box. I could always catch the interurban if necessary. I packed my small fabric covered cardboard suitcase for an overnight, dislodged the precious letter from my Grandmother, and with my bank book and savings bonds stuck inside a sweater sleeve, I locked the suitcase just in time! The '38 Ford coupe drove in. Mother was unusually quiet when she saw me up.

"Mother, I am a bit confused. What day is it?"

"Thursday. That nice man said you quit your job. You don't have to go to work!" She said cheerfully. "Would you like a sandwich or some ravioli? I'll open that. Oh, you had mail."

The pictures came that I took at theWater’s house. I put them in the cedar chest. Some things were moved around…”

“There was a letter.”

"Yes, I saw it. Why were my things disturbed?”

“Well we didn’t know how long you’d be like that and so we took them to cash out, but they refused! Oh all the nerve - our own daughter…”

“The Cartwright's want me to visit the weekend. That sounds like fun."

"After the fright you put us through! You're staying right here where I …"

"I already answered and I'm all packed."

"Give me the letter! You're going nowhere!"

"It's already mailed."

Helen shot about the room, trying the suitcase, checking the cedar chest then the shoe hanger bags. "You won't get out of this house! …You … are in too delicate a condition …."

"Why didn't SOMEONE HERE worry about MY delicate condition before it happened?"

When it was time for Joe to be finished work, I rode with mother to the bakery. Joe was so happy to see me up that he asked what I wanted to do now. Before Helen could open her mouth, I said I’d like to visit Jamie for the weekend. Joe agreed; they would drive her there.

That morning, Helen proceeded with her plot to kabosh the visit; “Let’s have lunch at Pope's cafeteria and then we can visit the Jewel Box. When these were nipped she called several wrong turns and confused Joe. He lost his cool mumbling that she could find her childhood neighborhood like the back of her hand after twenty years. Helen grabbed the wheel! She indignantly refused to let Joe turn in the Cartwright drive!

I opened the car door on the street, took the suitcase off the shelf behind the front seat and walked along the herringbone patterned brickwork drive. Before I reached the first step, the front door flung open and Jamie threw her arms around me!

"Where are your folks?"

"Mother has her nose out of joint; my fault; my fault, my most grievous fault!" I said like an altar boy. Jamie giggled and we hurried inside.

"So you broke it off with everybody! But you look good, new hairdo, and makeup; really neat. It sounded so settled and great with Ares - and after nearly six years - you turn him down! What a hoot! Too much time to waste on one guy. No Mr. Right for me yet! Oh, there are some cute guys at the seminary up the way, but hey, they're going to be preachers and just want wives who play piano. Webster Grove is yuck - don't tell - I've been skipping classes. The Prof gave me a piece for a recital in two weeks. I can't get it. It just sounds ba-rump, ba-rump, ba-romp when I play it! They are going to stamp FLUNK on my forehead." Jamie lifted her shoulder blades making her neck disappear.

"You can't lose the whole year! What's the piece? Do you have a dress yet?"

Jamie shook her head. "It’s been going so poorly, I doubt if I can walk onto the stage."

"Wow, two young women who lack self-confidence. Men do that!" I told her about my ‘bus transformation.’ I changed everything even my walk. “Did you see Rita Hayworth in ‘Gilda?”

"No, was it naughty?" She picked up her music and handed it to me.

"Sensuous… Her Gilda walk would fit: The Maleguena - Spanish Music! Let's see if there is a theater showing Gilda. We can study her walk and practice."

"You think I got a chance at the piece?"

"For you, lady! It’s a piece of cake." (With TV this great walk has been cut for the sake of time allotment.)

CHAPTER VIII

CHANGES

PREPING JAMIE

We girls sat through the Gilda twice. In Jamie's room we set her hair to fall in loose waves and turn under. The walk was not working. Rita Hayworth had not sashayed both hips. They tried swinging an outdoor sofa pillow - too heavy; bed pillow - just right! Enough weight to pull one hip to the side. Next was makeup. Jamie was delighted - this new look made her feel grown-up. Jamie sat down at the piano, watched my gestures for the rhythm, count and the tricky crescendo explosions that would push her performance rating.

Jamie fell in love with the piece. She had no idea music could be so overwhelmingly sexy. "How do you know this stuff? If I had you back music would be a cinch. Say, why don't we go to college together? The other subjects are, eh, ok. You haven't missed much; if veterans can go back to college; why not you!"

Jamie came from money. Three-room-shack people are not that entitled. Cornelia and Jamison listened to their daughter's words and squeezed hands; they nodded conspiratorially.

I had to quell Jamie’s idea. "Gee, I saved a little money, Jamie. I was going to buy a Cheetah cub."

Jamie circled clutching her middle, laughing. "I love it! You're as nuts as I am."

I was persuaded to stay another week. I could wear Jamie’s things! Meanwhile Mr. Cartwright furthered arrangements for me to take an entrance test. If I passed I would be one and a half years behind Jamie. He took me aside and mentioned his plan. He would burden the costs as long as Jamie remained with piano. My part would be transportation. This seemed too good to be true, but I would not deceive Jamie. Jamie agreed readily and threw her arms around her father. We girls went upstairs. Jamie threw open her closet. "Hey, I'm not all innocent in this; now I can get new stuff!" They laughed.

In town the girls and Mrs. Cartwright shopped for a recital gown. It was sienna brown bias-cut velvet. Young girls did not wear black! Its front and back décolleté were filled in with sienna brown voile. The gown moved well.

The girls secretly adapted the gown turning under one shoulder. I was so thankful that I had taken sewing my Freshman year in High School! We set colorful deep ruffles to bedeck that shoulder and neckline. More ruffles around the hem and up the split back seam. The dress was folded in the box to hide our modifications. We rolled some ruffle into two roses for her hair. Jamie was ready. She had the walk, the dress and the music!

It was a capacity crowd. The contestants were introduced from the judges' desk. The young musicians each marched onto the stage in much the same fashion; nervously jerking to place on the bench, squeaking it to place and performing. Nearly all of them jerked to their feet, bowed crisply and stalked out grateful it was over. Jamie the lag behind student was last on the list.

She moved onto the stage like she owned it. Her chin was slightly uplifted, her makeup perfect, her dark hair glistening from much brushing and pulled back like a fandango dancer. Jamie walked in true Rita Hayworth fashion and the audience fell silent. (She had mastered that lower ruffle) stopped at the piano, turned to the audience with a controlled smile (another Rita Hayworth trademark) and nodded to her astonished parents. She swept gracefully onto the bench, squared her shoulders, inhaled in delight and began to play, resoundingly, vibrantly and with unexpected pungency. When the piece finished, she waited until the last notes faded into the back of the auditorium; arose gracefully and stood to thunderous applause. She bowed slightly and then "Rita-walked" off the stage slowly.

Her parents were bursting with pride and as astonished as hell but she won the scholarship. I thought Jamie won it before she played a note.

In the summer the Cartwright's went abroad as usual. I came back to Springfield, took sixty cent an hour jobs and saved for transportation. Helen and Joe had other ideas. They treated me like a stranger and demanded all of my wages for staying at THEIR house! I said quietly, “It will be as before, 1/3 before deductions. They tried another approach to confiscate my savings. Several times they bought an expensive item; said; “You have the money, pay for it!” At first I did but then they planned for siding to be put on the house and gave me estimated bill. “My name is not on the ownership papers: It is YOUR house - YOUR responsibility. I handed the bill back but later donated one hundred dollars. I detested riding to the bank with them but the buses were no longer dependable; more people were buying automobiles.

I was facing Charles H. Brittin. How quaint; that episode seemed now and so out of mind. But there he was with his beautiful grey eyes, auburn hair and happy smile. Where had I been? No, he had not married yet and hated the prospect.

"Charles, I left the Lab so you'd do better not seeing me. I changed jobs, Right now I'm at a Sundry - it is a family - and me!”

He grimaced and nodded. "I joined the National Guard, two weeks yearly; get paid; use my vacation. It'll work out ok.”

I felt this move was not great; the Koreans were in turmoil would this involve our country? Also, I toyed with the idea of our marrying and adopting this woman’s child. I had a note to this effect to give him after my bank transaction. My Guides said, ***‘No! Fold it up in your hand.’***

Suddenly Charles H. spoke harshly: "All I can say is: if she wasn't before; she is now!"

I stood in shock and disappointment. Now I understood why my Guides had me hold off on the note. God! What a thing to say to the woman he “loved?” He noticed the note:

"Oh is that for me?" He asked sweetly.

"No, no - it was … a bit of figuring. 'Dear ones, shall I drop this in the waste here?"

***‘No, he would retrieve it. Tear it later. You are now finished with him. You are FREE, absolutely FREE!***' I walked numbly through the revolving doors, breathed the fresh air of freedom - whoopee - It was not exhilarating.

In the Fall Mr. Cartwright transferred us to the State University to strengthen our standing for admission to a more prestigious university later! We spent evenings entertaining at businessmen's gatherings, and fraternal societies. Jamie played and I sang; my voice spanned three and a half octaves. We did not need to charm young men - the businessmen had sons. Jamie and I gleaned this mad-money. I socked mine away. By Christmas break the University plans were confirmed… The new University was in Amsterdam, Holland and had accepted both of us. It made me woozy - wait until my parents hear this! If they haven’t plucked all their feathers out in anger over St. Louis (“Nice girls don’t leave home until they marry!”) - this will singe the rest of them. I attended to all the chores needed for staying at University overseas.

Helen was furious! "This is outrageous! St. Louis was bad enough for US! Nice girls don't leave home…. Leaving the country! I absolutely forbid it! Helen performed more royally than the Queen Mother. Helen finished with: “We a***re THREE: We stand together:*** ***mother, father and daughter - FOREVER!*** - You know it and you will do it!” It was like an absurd replay of Grandmother and Helen’s grand break-up. I didn’t take the bait. Who would choose unpaid housework over a Free Education in Holland? The Cartwright's had everything set. I just needed to meet them at the train.

I rationalized, it was near Christmas and regardless of the atmosphere with my parents - it was a time for present giving. There was just the right nip in the air and a few snowflakes fell. The crowds propelled me into a Walgreen's on Jefferson. Once inside I could think of nothing that brought me this way! I turned to leave, and heard a familiar voice. I was crowd-propelled into Charles H. Brittin. I held steady: Korea! Darned, he joined the National Guard! His was the first unit leaving. His arms were laden with gifts.

"Charles! (He liked to be called Charles) When are you leaving?" The inquiry was carried by my resonant voice.

"Before Christmas; we hope to celebrate early." His eyes remained steady on me. Behind them there was a cough for recognition, then a tug on his arm. Charles H. ignored it as shoppers knocked into us and we each juggled packages and laughed as the crowds moved us deeper into the store.

I had not seen the palm side of his hand, but said quietly, "You'll come back fine. Take CARE! But, you will be fine," My voice fell to a whisper, "Goodbye now."

A very pregnant woman called “Chuck! Who is this?” (He steeled hating to be called Chuck!)

I turned to go before I broke into tears. I thought it was finished; that my Guides meant I would never see him again. Behind me the woman’s voice became insistent.

"Chuck, who is that WOMAN? TELL ME NOW!" I saw their reflections in mirrors behind the soda fountain. The hugely pregnant woman dragged on his arm but he straightened with dignity, took a breath and spoke savagely; and so clearly the whole store heard: “SHE's the WOMAN who made it POSSIBLE for ME to MARRY - YOU!" He saw me stiffen my shoulders. I halted a moment then quickly continued outside.

'Oh dear God, how hurtful!' The Guides answered, 'Truth is often hurtful even cruel.’

Helen especially was brutal. She disowned me; how comically incorrigible. Finally I took a taxi and hoped they would not follow. The Cartwright's were delighted to see me and filled me in on the plans: New Year's Eve on ship. At University, some of the professors would chaperone us. We girls would board with one prof's sister as there were no girl's' dorms. The University of Amsterdam was male oriented; there were a few women in the other colleges. Our curriculums were heavy in music. Mine had art; but language, history and water maintenance was drafted for both of us. Neither of us knew a word of Dutch.

To have family, I wrote to my gramma. Although I wrote to my parents, there were few answers. Maybe they meant the "disinherited" nonsense? News came by way of Gramma and Aunt Mary Regina’s grapevine: When the St. Louis family visited, Helen said “Snooky” was with her boyfriend, an accountant. Joe said he was a baker. Gramma said sweetly, "You could be proud of her, Helen." I rather hoped my parents had not thrown out my cloths in the cardboard closet. My Aunt had no way to check.

Everything was not as cozy as we girls hoped. Although we were settled and had phrase books, Dutch customs clashed with American freedom. The girls quickly discovered that one excellent museum was verboden as it was in the Red Light District. Some of our classes were not in the old guild building along the canal, and zeer ver (too far) to walk. Most people got around on rijwiel (bicycles). The worst ordeals involved finding de plaats to buy those monthly supplies, and het postkantoor to buy stamps and mail letters. Also each letter must be weighed for the proper amount of postage! It was impossible to buy stamps ahead of time. Mr. Cartwright indoctrinated the girls into international banking, transferring money by cable, and calculating rates of exchange. Department stores did not exist. Every item seemed to have a tiny shop. The citizenry did not bother with street names they simply counted the gracts (canals). The girls pressed themselves so hard to learn Dutch; that their efforts seemed to disappear the next day.

CONSCRIPTED - TWICE!

The Profs were very old and mumbled softly beyond the scope of the phrase books. For tests, I asked that we be allowed to write our answers in English. One Prof could read some English, but was too rusty to speak it. One hurdle crossed! He was so impressed at my command of English that he asked me to tutor a class! There would be some bit of income from this! My experience was due to all those unfinished manuscripts and a Thesaurus from high school days. These things had paid off with a great vocabulary!

Several Veteran Students did not approve of woman pedagogy and chaffed a lot, but several professors joined the class realizing that English was moving to the fore. The students grudgingly set aside their prejudice. The earnings helped my travel money problems.

Career-wise this college move was ddreadfl for me. I loved Ballet but became too tall. My singing was geared to opera, but opera was unfunded! Only the Concertgebou (Orchestra) was funded.O necessity, I turned to theory, conducting, orchestration and composition. There were so many instruments to learn; and all compositions depended upon the breathing, phrasing and sound range of each instrument. Jamie had none of these problems - for her it was just performing on the piano. But I had my hand in this constantly because her reading the fine points in a composition constantly eluded her. Once she had the idea all was well..

With my slates of music derailed I took portraiture classes. Botanical classes sounded interesting but were too far on foot. One day I was rushing to the piano conservatory and heard voices! Oh No! One voice was Jamie's. She was in a terrible broken Dutch argument with her professor. "Do you think it is you who give me insights into the interpretations of this g--d music; or maybe I absorb it by osmosis? Ah! Here is the teacher! Without her, I am nothing!"

I reddened in astonishment. The professor was wounded and stepped into the hall. I looked at the music. Jamie sat down; her trying a new piece sent shivers up the spine. Outside the frosted glass door the profs collected and listened. I recognized the opus and hummed a bit. Jamie would play a bit. Together we adjusted the timing, added niggles of a bounce. At the motion of my hand Jamie built a crescendo and once when Jamie's fingers simply would not comply; we stopped the opus and set another piece of music on the rack; staccato phrasings. When the crispness was established, we replaced the opus and the notes were flicked off easily.

The door opened on us: I was marched to the dean. Once the professors explained what they had observed (not that they were eavesdropping) I was given an internship to add polish to a stable of concert pianists and producing an individual technique for each! Again the male student body revolted at a woman in pedagogy - especially one younger ; they were all veterans.

I quelled the resentment: "You are already the best in the University, I understand your resentment. It is that they gave me this job, and I must accomplish! Please let me do my job." To settle their recalcitrance I often asked a Prof to listen to the part in question. When the Prof agreed (and they would) I accepted the very formal apologies lightly and quickly suggested trying another problematic work.

Now and then a student would play notes. I finally had one admit he just took piano to fill that hour! His major was in water engineering. I resented knocking myself out for a dilettante. What would help? The hands! Without a word I began observing their hands. Indications could have fit any knowledgeable money making person. I went to the library and requested some books on Chierology (hand reading).

"We do not approve of the occult." The old librarian said.

"Nor do you approve of Psychology! How does one learn about dealing with people?" I waited.

The books were encrusted with dust, had illustrations but all were written in Dutch***. There was only one way and that was to pray, and touch each book. I touched each book, thinking: 'Which book will tell me about serious musicians?' I chose the one that seemed correct. 'Dear ones let me find this easily.' I ran my fingers over the page edges to the end and then back to the front. Finally I opened the large book: Singer, Musical Arch, Art of Speaking, Finger Agility, Breath Agility, Finger shapes which indicate various instruments. I closed the book. 'Dear Guides, where do I find: Engineer for Water Maintenance?'***

***Again my fingers felt across the edges of the pages again and then I flipped them, as the first time. 'Tricky; try businessman-swimmer.' I opened the book: Water journey across; Swimmer/sailor. 'Ah, it is in Mars, by the thumb, like my once brother-Louis; A broad expanse of the Plain of Mars.' The entry next to it was intriguing: Aviation inflated Luna, usually with inflated Mount of Venus.' I did not need that entry but I always read the before and after entries in dictionaries also. The music information would help; my eyes sparkled; I slid the book back to the Librarian and thanked him.***

"But you will want to take it with you?"

"How good of you, but I have found exactly what I need, Professor." I bowed and left. Ah, no more time wasted on dilettantes. Surprisingly, I made the Dean’s List of exceptional Students and discovered that my rather special gift set my travel money worries to rest!

We girls were exhausted and looking forward to Spring Break. Then the Profs snorted there was no such thing! To Jamie's complaints her parents wrote that a National Holiday was nearing. We shall all go to Schevenigen. I was ecstatic; Juliana, the Dutch Queen took her holidays there! The Cartwright's did things first class and they were normal people! Jamie did not share my enthusiasm - parents cramped her style. The area was beautiful, I had a great time. I still do not swim.

Jamie determined to stay in Europe uninhibited by parents for that summer; she could not stay alone and recruited me. Together we sold our used books for a few Guilders. I saw a list of books needed for the following year and took a copy. Our idea was to get jobs in the bulb fields to the north having no idea that we first needed job permits from our native country! We promptly got jobs and for two weeks we snapped heads off tulips, braided stems and leaves. We got in line for our money and were sniffed off with:

"Oh we don't pay foreigners. You may work, but we won't pay you."

This flattened our spirits; we had counted on the wages to flaunt our independence. We may starve! Faced with the reality of being destitute, Jamie cried out: "I'm calling daddy!" We dug out our return tickets and sailed to Boston. Jamie knew a few places in Boston where she could charge the hotel and food. I saw a college book store and found books in English comparable to those on my list and shipped them home to my mom and dad’s. Was I still disinherited? If so, Jamie’s home will have a summer guest! My idea was to find work, study and hopefully take a few tests and comp out of them. It would cut down the year and a half that I lagged behind Jamie. (Also it proved very stressful at my parents’ house.) It made summer tough going but worth it. I advanced a half year. The second year in Amsterdam was a vast improvement. A new professor knew some English - What a joyous relief! Christmas and New Year’s the populous pre-planned for these free times. Tiny businesses throughout Amsterdam were closed. One visited neighbors, friends, relatives and church (Wesley country). The attractions were mostly open but for residents, the best part was that the pile drivers were still! Rebuilding anything on this spongy land required a base of wooden piles. The pile drivers ordinarily worked with steady thuds from dawn to dusk. Silence was blessed. For Christmas break, Jamie wanted to go to Paris and stay with friends. We needed a break from our mad pace and from each other! I stayed with our landlords.

It was mostly pleasant. The couple had no tree or lights. Instead the lady swept the house immaculate and together we three went to the Christmas Market. Here the lady of the house bought three very large thick cookies with very little icing. At the house for Christmas Eve, there was a pot of soup, a large mackerel, marinated then baked with pork rind, vegetables, lemon slices, vinegar, dill pickle, juniper berries, other spices, onions and beer! Mackerel is just not to American taste. Tiny stemmed glasses of Guinevere (Gin) were served; this helped settle that fish. Christmas morning we had the giant cookies and hot chocolate. It was then I learned that so much ginger cookie was not pleasant. It was a special gesture, so I ate it in several sittings.

The Dutch lady painted new floor tiles while sitting cross-legged on my bed. The floors ordinarily were of pounded and shined dirt. Having floor tiles meant these were elegant people! When the new tiles were returned from the kiln, the lady set them to place. She had two and a half rows to make yet.

Mornings the Dutch woman arose early, saw her husband off to work and began her gathering of foods mostly leeks and potatoes for the soup. She seldom warned me but pulled her large copper kettle out from under my bed! It clanged like a church bell. The landlord and I took trolley rides, to the local sites. At last I was able to visit the Rijksmuseum as well as see this "Red Light District". Our outing led us to their bicycle shop to fetch the mister for dinner. He greeted each of us with a triple kiss: one on each cheek and one on the neck and they pressed hands. I was introduced as their American visitor to clients. The nods were forced. The war was finished but the resentment was not. With every pound of the pile drivers the locals hated the foreigners who desecrated their land: This meant the Americans, English, French and Germans!

When all the customers were taken care of, the mister closed the shop and hung a metal key ring covered with black leather around his neck and put a peaked leather cap on his head. We would do a Rijsttafel; an Indonesian buffet with spice aromas to conjure thoughts of Scheherazade. It was the most wonderful meal I ever had! We walked back to the shop together and to my amazement, the triple kiss ritual was repeated. It remained long after the war when separations could be forever.

While on this holiday, the weather held nicely. The couple got a tandem and a single bicycle. We rode to see their friends on Marken Island. We bundled against the brisk wind, a mean feat in the days before slacks were accepted. I borrowed a voluminous skirt which was wrapped around the legs and slipped a garter at the ankles to hold it. In a bit the city fell behind and tiny yards with white fences gave way to grassy pastures with guard geese! Bike paths were alongside canals. The farms were small but fertile. Many of the windmills here were completely wooden. I mentioned that some looked shabby with cross-slats or uprights missing. Here I got an education: Each slat or upright removed represented a person! A central upright meant the founder or husband of this family mill had died. The side upright represented a wife and the cross pieces meant children according to their family- placement. The pieces of wood were removed so that the mill remained efficient. No longer were the mills unkempt now they proclaimed family history.

Arriving we dismounted onto an absolutely clean sidewalk to the house. An ornamental post corralled the bikes. At the door was a contraption I mistook for a doorknocker - a very ornamental pipe knocker. It meant no smoking in this house.

Everything about the house was small and clean. Each window had ruffled curtains and a flowerbox with artificial plants. The furniture was very small. A narrow staircase broke the back wall to an upstairs. Every wall was whitewashed to discourage vermin. The guests were promptly served either tea or hot chocolate and charmingly decorated pastries accompanied by a bowl of thick cream and a big ladle.

We would stay overnight in a tiny portion of the house, yet there was much more house making it an "L". I asked what this might be. The couple chuckled lightly and began a tour. The ruffled curtains at each window and the door were nicer than in the house! As we approached a Jersey cow curiously looked out a window; then another Jersey face appeared in the next window. Inside, the floor was lye bleached and wax shined. Fresh sawdust was sprinkled on the inclined floor under each cow. They were tethered with hand-woven straps in a flowered pattern; no facial harness here but woven collars to which a bell could be attached. Both cows had their tails tied up out of the way with more beautiful strapping; for cleanliness. It was so incredibly cute I smiled through the tour.

Across the room was a large stand with implements for dairy work. There were places for three more cows, but these were empty. Dainty black iron mangers by those windows were empty also. The two cows had a bit of hay in theirs. Their horns were polished and their coats brushed.

"The cows are special; they bring in the money and deserve to have it nice. They are plain at the moment; our girls usually have wreaths of flowers for their foreheads, but alas winter." The Mrs. explained.

The farmer gestured, "In the back room are the cheeses in process."

There was no sour smell. Above from the rafters hung bunches of parsley, basil, lavender and other pungent herbs that kept everything fresh. Somehow I recognized the herbs although I had never seen or smelled them before. I knew they were good for … and as fast my thought was gone!

Their repast was paling steaks in casserole topped with breadcrumbs. I knew it was fish, but was surprised that it was eel. The word for eel was aal but in this area it was paling.

In the morning we pedaled to the millers. The wooden windmill was painted green with white trim. Outside was a dock with little boats for moving products. The miller adorned his dockside with topiary clipped like a braces of poodles in various positions. Inside the windmill the mechanical wooden parts groaned. The guard geese were in an enclosure for the day. Burlap bags of grains, flours and feed were stacked to orders. Each bag had two knots at the top like little ears holding it firmly closed.

Quaint Marken Island held incredibly caring, hardworking people of serenity and gentleness. Already plans were being formed to drain the lake surrounding Marken Island to increase tillable acreage. To disturb this quaintness was sacrilege. Today Marken Island is long forgotten.

Jamie returned in time for classes; she was not exactly elated. She met a French business student and beings it was cold, time was spent indoors. Before we left to classes, our landlords tried to tell us something but neither of us understood the words. Our minds were on Jamie's problem! We reoriented to classes, with our minds elsewhere, but by the end of the school day Jamie was back to herself. What a terrifying way to learn a lesson! Happily we arrived at our pension to find it utterly abandoned; no plants, no pots, no furniture and no floor tiles. We quizzed several neighbors before finding their landlord's whereabouts. Jamie said that she never heard of anyone taking the floor! I assured her, the landlady had made the tiles; they were hers.

At the new place, the girls had to share a bed over the cupboard. This was a new experience for Jamie. The cupboard was on the same order as before: hollowed in front for cooking utensils, and on one side for firewood. The opposite side had food shelves closed with doors. Again, the mattress was atop this cupboard. Four posts went to the ceiling with draw-curtains. In the open was Jamie's steamer trunk like an eyesore with no place to hide it. Neither of us overslept when the kettle clanged. Opening the door they heard and felt the pile drivers vibrating everything. Holiday was over!

We concluded the Dutch never built - they just drove piles, side by side, each as tall as telephone poles into the polder soil; which to us might be swamp. The polders formed a seal which kept the wood from rotting. The piles were original under the oldest of buildings! Once the pile drivers stopped late in the day, one could hear the church bells and maybe a barrel organ. One tipped the organ grinder and petted his big dog. One guy wound the organ; another steadied it. It sounded like circus music. The big dog was of the Mastiff and St. Bernard mix.

Smitten Jamie wrote her Frenchman. Her graduation was coming. He was encouraging her to set him as her concert manager! I was skeptical; perhaps he needed a job and she was a cushy pushover. I still had a year to go.

On the home front the letters from Jamie's mother hinted at union troubles and Mr. Cartwright's illness. He blamed it all on the unions. In Amsterdam, the landlords were moving again. The new place was farther yet. In the melee a cable arrived: "Father had heart attack STOP Business closing. Request your immediate return, Mother."

We girls collected our academic records and books; set sailing plans and hurried with packing. A black bordered cable arrived. Mr. Cartwright died. We were instructed to take a plane. We trod back to the VVV (traveler's help) to exchange tickets but shipped the heavy stuff. Airlines were in their two prop infancy. We girls felt numb and dazed; managed to successfully board a train in Boston for Chicago but at Springfield, Jamie would not let go of me. Her world had collapsed. "Come home with me, I think I'm going to die."

I knew that feeling a few years ago with my love affair!. So I continued on to St. Louis. I telephoned my parent’s neighbor. The Wangard's still had no phone. Helen was not at home so I left the message with the neighbor adding that I would be home after the funeral.

Once at the wake, I was quite surprised to see the spirit of Mr. Cartwright standing by the head of his casket. He looked as real as my Uncle Lee had when I was sixteen. I directed my thoughts to him:

'Mr. Cartwright are you all right? Do you want to come back to be with us?'

'I'm fine, but I can't come back the body is ready for burial. I wish Cornelia would be more staunch and purposeful. She is such a sweet lady! She does have business acumen. Tell Jamie to marry the Frenchman and have a good life. That would give mother someplace to travel.'

'You are still maneuvering everybody’s lives.' I said.

He nodded. 'And you - hard worker - get back to Amsterdam and finish those pianists! That is no way to do, young lady.' Your education is assured and if you wish to continue then that also. In his sternness, he became more visible and then as fast faded from sight.

I sat down and felt my head. When I was steady, I told Jamie and her mother what had happened. They agreed: That was just like daddy! (Note: Later, Mrs. Cartwright became an Executive Secretary. She did not retain that wonderful house but bought an apartment near La Due. There were no takers for the steel mill; it lay fallow dozens of years.)

After all was leveled I finished University. The Bachelor Graduation costs were more than I could handle; I had the diploma mailed. Jamie married the Frenchman, had fairly successful concert tours for several years. But we lost touch after I married.

THIS IS WHERE A CRISTMAS STORY GOES!

AFTER AMSTERDAM

My parents never quit endeavoring to "clutch the child!" Mother wanted me home! She was as annoying as sticky glue. I told her I would not be into that housekeeper thing and she spiffed about. In a pile of mail was a card from Allis Chalmers offering a job! How quaint! I had applied there after I left the Lab! The offer would expire in eight days. I snickered because I wanted to be in music. I tried the local Junior College Music Department. I sat for an interview with the Sister when several discordant notes attacked the area. The Sister, clasped her hands together and said, “That is our star student.” I clutched my purse and stood. “Sister, I am so sorry, we have nothing to discuss.” I bowed and left.

I went to Allis Chalmers with the stipulation that I would need a leave of absence later to finish my degree. That was agreeable! The money was the best I’d had seen in Springfield but after three days I was tortured by inactivity. I saw Rita Kirby a bus riding friend from Sacred Heart Academy. “What you do in this town?” I asked. An over high school age Catholic group met once a month on Thursday and it was tomorrow!

"Taking a bus there is ok,” Rita continued, “There will be rides home. They never let anyone take a bus home." I got the address - same bus route I used to the Water’s house. OK, I’ll try Chi Rho Club. I wore my fitted black coat. It was Kelly Green when I worked at the Lab. I had it died after a few years. It was still with me. As well as a velour skull cap with two feathers down one side.

There were no greeters at Chi Rho. Amsterdam had greeters everywhere. I unfastened my coat slowly and laid it on the third chair from the door. I walked one side of the room. Most of the guys wore suits and were clean cut but their stance or sitting positions indicated insecurity. Two sisters I recognized from Sacred Heart Academy were draped over an upright. If the pianist was not playing for fun; his future was bleak. Several groups of guys were chatting but as a whole - this bunch was lifeless. Without being noticed I walked toward my coat. Behind me a girl called my high school name. I turned out of politeness and saw Catherine Stallone; acknowledged her and set the coat back down. Catherine's hovering mother got on famously with Helen. Her sister, Christine was so overly insecure as to be inhibited childishly. I said nothing about University; this was not college fodder!

A priest arrived and chairs were quickly pulled into rows for a meeting. The place needed freshening: The Bishop - owner wanted a complete rehab of the place for free! There was a stage but it was beyond use at present. The meeting closed in neutrality. The chairs were pulled to the side and the piano guy began tinkling. I approached my coat again. A tall lean fellow stopped me and asked to dance. He introduced himself as Norm Brunner. The last name alerted me but why was eluding me. I asked if he had a short brother, Bill….No, I was not interested in Bill; his last name made me feel like I might know … something. "Isn't that silly?"

"No, it's like going somewhere and you feel like you've been there before."

"Precisely! The pianist looks familiar and so does that group of old men."

Norm threw his head back and laughed. "Don't let them hear that; they think they’re 'cool dudes'." We laughed together. "You dance well, why don't you and I …"

"But, you aren't for me but thank you. Thoughts keep popping into my head about the people here!" I did not want to start *anything*! "You're going to marry Norma Palmer; pretty ashen blonde; she went to Sacred Heart Academy. Have you met her yet?"

"No." Norm answered in astonishment.

"Your brother, Bill marries first. A girl named Margie, cute bouncy little thing. She too isn't here now. You both have families; one has a set of twins; one moves away. God! Don't you remember that?"

"You're wrong. We operate a farm; none of us would ever leave it."

"It's a farm in Missouri; it's Bill that moves." I said.

Bob Fleish cut in. Norm told him their conversation but asked me his girl's name again.

Bob became most interested; did she see someone for him?

"Yes, a short blonde, very blonde; with pretty cheeks and happy glasses. She has a bible name; ah - Ruth. Odd: You so tall and she so tiny."

He asked if it were either of the girls at the piano? Here was a guy that didn’t listen: "No, a blonde! Those two are sisters. The sitting one does not marry at all. Don't remember about the other." We chatted a bit and Norm returned.

I was confused that he said he farmed. I said, maybe you farm now, but later there is something else but it is near the farm." Bob and I turned into a foxtrot. When I swung around I said, "The tall thin-thin guy over there - that's the farmer - all his life!"

"Oh, that bunch, Ed, Al and one Robert. They are all farmers. There are two Roberts there. The tall one works at A-C. "

"Not always. One with glasses shoves wood into trucks - Oh building houses! That's what **you** do Norm and very well too. The man without hair; not for anyone! Everything he touches - ugh well - he has a dark side; marries when he is 38."

"Robert does electrical work, but lives on a farm. He volunteered to rewire the stage. Tell me about the other Bob - he's the guy without a cap.

"Not now, but he's a postman! Very nice guy has all boys. He marries a tall, skinny, pretty girl with a long first name." I could not see the face under the visor of the ball cap. "What's the name in the ball cap?"

"Charlie Dold; he’s an accountant."

"It is his sister the postman marries. Charlie never marries. He is sweet and very shy. The older thin farmer marries long after everyone else; disastrously, but that’s love."

"How about you?"

"He isn't here; some guy named Charles Midden."

"Oh, that's his brother, the bald one, Robert."

"I need some air. Ugh, Robert is too much."

At the front doors more members were arriving. I saw Ruth and called to Bob Flesh: "Your blonde is coming up the steps."

"But, I was going to dance with Margie." He complained.

I grabbed Margie's arm and brought her to Norm. "This is Margie. Is your brother Bill here? Call him and tell him to come NOW!"

"But what about me?" asked Bob Flesh. I gestured to the door at Ruth, smiling, vivacious, with happy glasses. "Yes! I'm gonna dance with her." They never separated.

Norm and the girl named Margie were dancing when Bill arrived saying, "What's so darned important?"

Norm introduced him to Margie. Bill was dumbstruck when she smiled. They were the first of the group to marry

Rita, Mary's friend from High School brought Norma Palmer to the April Fool's Dance. When I saw the girls coming, I touched Norm's shoulder. He came skeptically with me. When he saw the long ashen blonde hair, pretty upturned nose and pretty smile his questions stopped. He simply held out his hand to her.

"Whoa, I have to get my coat off first," Norma laughed, "If I’d known you were here, I'd have come when Rita first asked me."

'There,' I thought, ' these guys are all so old; no use letting them dead-end date.’ All the couples I mentioned married and soon the club had a smaller membership.

I had put the Water's family as much out of my mind as possible but now there was a small entry in the newspaper: Joan had been in an accident. Her taxi had been hit. She was at St. John's. Unfortunately, besides "taxi" it had mentioned the time: 1:30 a.m. I wanted to visit Joan. Helen Wangard postured about girl's riding in taxis at such an hour! However, Helen received word that her only friend Florence was at St. John's. Helen HAD to visit Florence, so I visited Joan W. We were alone but minutes when George and his mother walked into the room. I wanted to disappear! We said hellos civilly and Mrs. W. chatted in her easy way. ***George*** was seeing one of the young nurses (good Ares was moving on!) Violet asked. - what about me?

"Oh, I saw someone a while ago,” she thought of Charles Howard, “but, it didn't work out!" I said.

George’s voice turned harsh, "You could make it work if you wanted."

I covered my mouth at the incredulous sentence. "No, that **was** impossible." With that I turned to Joan and asked if any bones were broken. Joan assured me that everything was internal, but the doctor had given no diagnosis yet, and she hurt a lot. Without further thought, I held my hand over the girl and said, "Is it here?" and saw Joan nod. I thought, 'Dear God she will want to have children one day; make her feel better. Thank you.'

Joan took a big breath and said "Oh!"

Her mother was apprehensive, "Does it hurt terribly?"

"No, that's just it! It feels fine; I want go home." Joan said.

"You ought to be a nurse," ***George*** said.

I shook my head, no. "By the time I got down the hall, I would be sick and need a bed.” My humor did not register.

In a while we visitors walked out together, but along the way and outside I did not see my mother or the '38 Ford in the lot. My ire rose. "I cannot believe this! All the times I've waited for that woman and she has done this! The car was parked right over there."

The bus line was a block in the dark in an unsafe neighborhood. Mrs. W. volunteered that they take her home. ***George*** growlingly complained that he had a date and would be late. He made a thing of not knowing where my house was. Mrs. W. was surprised at this! I apologized for delaying him, and thanked them both for their kindness. Helen cut them short with a wordless despotic glance. The next morning, Joan's doctor found nothing wrong and released her.

I was curious: Those 5 older guys come to Chi Rhon but never mingle. I meandered over by them and asked what they were discussing. It was the condensation in a watch! They explained this was an unsolvable phenomenon. Some of the men at A-C had this problem. A watchmaker inserted a few salt tablets. I mentioned salt tablets; they ignored this preferring their mystery. I said if there was no solution; they were wasting their time and turned away. They followed me and began turns taking me home. I asked a couple girls to come. It helped even this group. There were public dances, Novenas at the Cathedral! Lillian was too chunky for Ed; Dottie got too serious about one Bob - he went through three girls! A few guys belonged to clubs which held dinners. I made a fashionable statement alongside a guy, and enjoyed many dinners. The best part for the guy was - if it was a ham dinner: the escort got mine. Ham and I were not friends!

Al was taking me to a dinner, but he was not on time and did not call (Finally, they had a telephone installed.) My parents were leaving for the movies and I thought: ‘Why be home alone?’ I was getting into the family car when Al drove in. “Hey, where ya goin’?” I explained. Word got around the group - Don’t be late for Mary or she’ll be gone!

By June, the Chi Rho building had been renovated. The young people decided to celebrate with a potluck at Lake Springfield. The tables were spread with foods. Folding chairs filled spaces where the picnic benches were not long enough. By now I knew most of the members. Catherine and I came with Bob-the future postman.

I looked at the parade of guys piling food on their plates and my eyes fell on a soldier; I paled and felt faint. 'God forbid, it was true: Charles J. Midden is real.' My seatmate said I looked like I saw a ghost. To me it was worse; a ghost I could handle. Maybe if I walked a little; Sit in Bob-the postman's car if it was not locked. It opened and I slipped into the driver's seat, This one Far Memory was making me sick!.

The soldier's vibration was cold and wary. I don’t want him. ‘Please, dear Guides let's be rational: There is a composer out there somewhere that I’m supposed to marry. If that is so, how does this awful Gaul fit in? I pushed the Gaul out of mind. Let's see the German musician is 6 years younger than me, hum 15! Well that doesn’t come about yet. I am afraid of that Gaul. Yes, they said he was the best of the bunch but he killed me!' I began sobbing uncontrollably.

My Guides answered: 'He worked out a lot of things. He is ambitious, but not musical. Introverted, but the most faithful man you'll know.

Catherine opened the car door and got in. She asked the matter quietly. I said it was seeing the soldier. Catherine unknowingly said, “You don't have to marry him or anything; especially if it does not make you happy.” It did not make me happy, but it would likely happen anyway. I was grateful that Catherine came. We chatted a while.

"Well, I feel better now, thanks Catherine. Is there any food left?"

We laughed about little nothings but did not touch the car episode. Later Robert the farmer/electrician said another club he belonged to was having a square dance. He thought if the girls come, they would have a square of eight. Catherine was excited to go, so we two agreed. Catherine's house was easiest to find on Walnut Street.

Neither Catherine nor I knew what girls wore to square dances. We were familiar with Roy Rogers’s movies, so I chose a double dotted Swiss organdy with lace medallion covered waist, white sash in back, white collar and cuffs. Catherine had a black print dress with covered buttons. We wore ballet slippers, the only casual shoes either of us owned. The Monsch Farm with its new barn was at a distance and the dance would be in the loft. We gathered our skirts close to climb the ladder. In the loft, all the girls wore blue jeans and men’s white shirts with rolled back sleeves. I turned back to Catherine:

"Nobody has dresses! What the heck; we don't know them; let's have fun!"

We sashayed and swirled and do-se-doe'd happily. Then a guy from another square swooped me into their square and another swooped Catherine into it. The music started and the original square was amiss. Finally Robert grabbed me by the arm and then Catherine. When our abductor was questioned, Bob said: "Well let's put it this way; we brought 'em."

Catherine felt subjugated, but I laughed and whispered in her ear: "Hey, how often do we get fought over.

On the way home, Private Charles J. Midden asked me for a date. He said it so shyly that I thought; 'How many men have ever asked me for a DATE? They just propose!' I accepted.

The drive-in movie featured Robert Stack as a matador quite unbelievable. The soldier sat stiff as a board. We drove to the "Wishing Well" a local night spot. The leader of the combo saw me and the music struck up: "When the Saints Come Marching In." I stopped and laughed. Somebody in the combo knew me. In the World of Music the musicians rankled me by playing this when I came into the auditorium. Now it was a total surprise and I lifted a hand and waved. Charles asked if I knew them, I admitted, no but one of them must know me. He was quiet. We had seven-sevens (too strong and unpleasant.) Nobody danced. He drove to my home and asked for my name and address; said he'd write; walked me to the door and kissed me lightly goodnight. No sparks.

He was off by train that morning at 1:30 to Seattle. He wrote one letter, sent several post cards along the way and had flowers sent; Roses -half red and half bright yellow. Later she discovered that he asked Robert to send all red roses, two dozen, but Robert thought his brother was acting too quickly for all red so ordered half of them yellow. Charles telephoned her work place before shipping out. Everyone thought this was sweet. But unfortunately after that it was bleak … the older guys stopped dancing with me. The silliness of this was I was never interested in ANY of them - I knew their future mates were on the way.

I was gaining vacation time at Allis Chalmers… time to get my Masters. Catherine had dropped from sight. Mrs. Stallone told Helen, Catherine was working away from home in a tone of voice that meant she was "a dirty girl". My, my, that made two of us - dirty girls!

The requirement for my Masters was to compose a complete work for full orchestra. If I wrote a thesis it would mean a doctorate. How had Mozart dashed off all those darned notes? Writing notes was an abominable chore; the thesis was easy. I did them both and then arranged a cheap oil freighter passage to Amsterdam, took a leave of absence and my vacation time.

The freighter was no bargain; it smelled grungy. Without a good leveler the ship rocked with the waves. An experience not to repeat; I must find another way to get home. At University all that was needed was for the Concertgebouw to play my composition. There were mistakes in entrances but the Prof said he could see what I had in mind: It passed… My thesis was accepted. They wanted me to graduate in June with the complete assembly of colleges and I should have done this. Often over the years, I’ve regretted my frugality but at the time I could not handle the costs or time needed. I did inspect the grey-blue gowns with orange arm bands; the stiff vibrant red cape with patterns and shiny yellow gold fringes and other glorious finery. Grey-blue killed my face. The Orange for the House of Orange, I understood but the stiff satin cape, the flourishes clashed like a circus marquee. The soft tams were cute! The class ring was masculine. I passed asking that my diploma be sent home.

I was a January grad so it was dead winter; for a mid-westerner Amsterdam was mild. Flying home was costly and dangerous It was a dream to fly again. I got wind of something called a military hardship policy: One could fly home free on a military aircraft due to necessity and hardship! My story was accepted! They would get me to Lambert Field in St. Louis, Mo. I felt so blessed. The craft was a two engine cargo carrier. I boarded to discover it had no passenger seats, and my window had a full-blown cataract in all but one top corner. Only the pilots had seats and a small heater between them. The two piled mail bags and soft baggage for me by the window. When the engines revved - it shook violently - would it explode? The noise and the vibrations increased until that blessed moment when it was airborne. It was cold. I wore a spring coat. One pilot or the other shuffled things to get me settled but once I relaxed, I discovered we were flying east! The pilots explained they flew over Europe for several mail drops; but just over Russia and then landed in Japan! Refuel and check; and then they would be off to Alaska and home! Alaska in winter! The pilots assured me I would get to Lambert Field but not with them; in a bit better plane from Seattle! Her eyes shot open! ‘Seattle! Oh dear God, You are punishing me for that hard-luck story! I don’t want to become my mother always telling lies! I promise, I’ll never tell an untruth again!’ Ugh, mother? Well, that’s for survival - but not to others.’

Below them many famous cities still had piles of war rubble. International news led one to believe reconstruction was simply a paint job. When a cloud cover or falling snow obscured things, I was gyrated to sleep. A pilot would shout a city’s name over the noise, "That's Minsk, Russia!" and I would crane my neck from my nearly warm curl to see lights and snow. After several such views, ignoring was easy. Maybe if I thought of something better…Doggoned Doctorate was not keeping me warm! Ok-Ok cut that thought…How about…That class excursion to the North Sea Project? The wind was unrelenting, my headscarf smacked like a flag against my chapping face. We saw to learn - dike construction, filtering materials and sea barriers that rivaled the Siegfried Line! I dozed …in the peat bogs. The smell in her dream was so real I awoke and sniffed about. To stay awake I recalled all the steps they used to reclaim the land (before fertilizers). All tolled it spanned 30 years. (Now, fertilizers sped the process by decades.) I went through the process of the windmills carrying away the water into a network of canals. The acidic new land planted to buckwheat for seven years; left fallow for twenty. Then wheat, potatoes and peas were grown… I was awakened:

"Hey, we will be landing in Japan in an hour: Going over the war zone and China."

"Which way is Korea?"

"Gotta guy there?"

"Yea, Pusan, G-4 good deal." I saw their thumbs go up. How I wanted to stay awake, prayed to stay awake … until they woke me up.

"Hey, you slept through Japan, but we brought you something to eat." I was hungry and thanked them. My nose was red, my fingers were stiff. The round wooden box was cute. The co-pilot opened a Swiss army knife with spoon and fork. The food was hot, fragrant things over rice and uh-things. It was wonderful and certainly not Pope's Cafeteria Chop Suey! There was even a crisp little roll which I unrolled and a filling fell out. I held the warm box such a good feeling. Those droning engines…

"You got to see this volcano! We go over the top of it." I was expecting Hawaii’s red-orange molten lava - I’d seen pictures! But this was still, ugly, black and white. I asked what volcano it was. "Aniak-chak Caldera. It is beautiful to us. It means we will be in Ft. Eielson soon."

"That's great," I said being somewhat bleary and then wondered where that was!

We landed on ice. The temps registered 60 degrees below zero. We deplaned into arms holding heavy quilts to wrap us. We moved slowly some 40 yards to a Quanso-hut. Once inside we warmed near a pot belly stove. Now it was official: I positively knew I was loony - but if so then so was a ski patrol team that arrived from Ft. Richardson. They wore their heavily padded bombardier jackets indoors. These bore all their insignias: 536th Trans Co—Ft Richardson, Alaska with embroidery both inside and out - with dog sleds down each sleeve, raging polar bears with lightning bolts and a red and black winged shield. I wanted to buy one but no; these were precious.

Liquids were kept hot on top of the stove: broths, cocoa, and coffee. Everyone changed socks after entering - without explanation. This rather turned my nose; geez feet. There were board games, at times radio and books. They talked a lot; about hometowns, their girls, moms especially, showed photos; happy for this bit of variation and what the hell was Holland like? The two pilots came inside in need of wire. One engine was threatening to fall out! There was no wire about until one pilot spied a piece that was holding the stove pipes together! They gingerly unfastened it with extreme care and turned to the group: “NOBODY TOUCH THAT STOVE PIPE!” Out they went. I discovered it was not the plane to Seattle and was relieved. It was the plane I arrived on! Talk about a tummy twirl, whew! My plane would arrive in a day and a half. This was a fun group in high spirits and I was perfectly safe!

In unison it was agreed that I must meet the villagers. I could not leave Alaska without a dog-sled ride. I was finally getting thawed - sledding at 60 below zero!' Regardless, out I went bundled in a parka, fur gloves, fur-leather boots called mukluks, and a padded bear skin blanket. First we saw the dogs. I loved dogs but these were sinewy skinny dog- wolves that seemed to eye me as lunch. They resembled no Alaskan malamute or Siberian husky in dog books. Quickly I was strapped to the sled and with a word and the snap of a whip the sled was swaying forward at great speed propelled into visibility zero! The sudden lurch left my stomach behind and the fragrance of fishmeal and dog breath filled my nostrils. I could smell in this cold! We zipped past more dogs on a run rod. There were buildings on either side but even with glasses and scarves my eyeballs were nearly frozen. The blowing snow came fast and stung like bees.

At the other end of town was the village and these hearty souls came out to chat! One man had a litter of puppies from his famous snow dog. They had bell tipped ears yet and brown masked puppy faces. The artist in me memorized the pups; the creases in older faces and the patterns of the bead work. There was a certain way the snow banked against buildings and fence posts; how tiny evergreens persisted upright in this bitter cold. There were “fish strips” drying; a drum ponging in a building; a juxtaposition of the primitive and civilized but I never asked: "Why don't you leave this frozen wasteland?" This was Utopia to these happy people! Our short exchanges were most enjoyable. The sled master tapped my shoulder. I stiffened: 'Oh God, we have to ride back!' The return trip seemed shorter. The dogs on the run seemed more dog-like; the wolf-like dogs less vicious. I agreed with the servicemen; this was one ride I would never forget! The men talked on and on about my adventure. I felt it had been talked to death, but wisely smiled and agreed. It would feed their stories - hopefully not prefaced with: “And then there was this idiot woman who…”

"A low wood supply; with all those trees out there!" I said. The barracks set up a howl of laughter.

"Most of them are pines - full of resin; burn like firecrackers; whoop-pop and out!"

I was apprehensive when my plane arrived. But, it had seats and a heater! It also had food rations, skis and poles, high rubber boots and parachutes. There were landings and take-offs before Seattle; a plane change, more take-offs and landings before Lambert Field in St. Louis. But I did not know the stops so I telephoned from Seattle to my parents’ neighbor and hoped my parents would drive down. It had been a cold adventure but at last the sun was in the sky and shining. It turned a light snow covering into mush.

The compound was restricted and encircled with high fencing. I saw my parents so bid the fliers goodbye and walked out to meet them. My father’s greeting was: "There you are, Snooky." I laughed; what else could I do. "I hope you're satisfied! Your mother got snow in her shoes,” father scolded gruffly pointing to Helen’s open toe shoes! I pressed my lips together to keep from laughing.

Behind us a voice called out, "Hey, lady, you the one in from Alaska?" I turned and nodded.

Mother grabbed my arm, "Don't speak to strangers!" That really made me laugh.

"How many miles? How cold? Snow?"

"12, 850 miles," I called," Sixty below," at “Snow?” I threw my head back, laughed and fanned a hand down.

"We got it on the radio, great flying girl!" He gave a thumbs-up. I tilted my head and nodded.

Helen still tried for control, "You shouldn't talk to strangers like that." I ignored her. "You should be ashamed; the stories we had to make up-where you were. Off like a hussy!"

"Oh, get with it. That was so old.” I stopped. Derisiveness would drive my Guides away. They kept me buoyed and bouncing back. This had been the stupendously stupid thing I had ever done. It was fun! Oh, mother and dad…had their little shell and tried to force me back into it. Could my life ever be normal? I hoped not… The Practical Guide said:

, “No, you will meet women with controlling mothers and realize: God has blessed you with a strong and right mind! Others you will note are less fortunate.’ Fortunate? Fortunate! I wanted the mother- control idiocy to stop: I was nearly twenty three!

The ride was blessedly, silent. Once home I was surprised to see my cardboard closet and garments! I ignored mother’s nonsense yapping and settled in. There were some letters from Charles Midden delivered after my mail service’s cut-off date. He was stateside but in quarantine in Colorado Springs. I wish he’d stay there. The Christmas tree had been kept, but there were no presents - I had missed the holiday!

It was time to return to A-C. Same people, same cigar smoke filled room! Only thing amiss was while I was gone; my friend Dottie became pals with K-T. who was pretty but a bit cold; we never turned back on. Virgil O. came to my desk. “Ugh, while you were gone, well, I needed a pen and opened your desk drawer. Do you know, you have a bank book in there?” Evidently everyone else knew it; they began to gather around me. I laughed.

“Believe me; it is safer there than it is at home.” They questioned me. “OK several years ago I was incapacitated. My parents tried to cash out my bonds and account. Thank God they were denied.” The group was appalled. One lady asked if they worked/hade an income. I nodded and then - did I pay room and board? I told them, a third. Virgil said, “God, you’d be better off in an apartment. Everyone agreed. The urge to do it lingered with me.

I caught mother looking for my bank book. Doggone it! Every few months they were ready to fleece me. I was sick of it. That Friday evening I decided to shop in town. Mother insisted on coming with me. I went into Bell’s Furriers and asked about a coat like the one in the window. I saw mother jump in her panties. The mink was overly expensive but they had muskrat coats in a honey color. One was “let out” construction, but the pelts were female and narrow. (I needed nothing skinny). The other was matched, fur on fur and wider. I liked it better. It was a very simple design almost a uniform - forever in style. It needed a bit of alteration at the hem line but the color was exactly like mink. I said, yes. Mother was too choked to say anything. Saturday I withdrew the money and brought my coat home. Neither parent said a word. (Note: I had it for twenty years and loved it every minute. By its end I was working with fur and reconstructed it into a double Afghan.)

Charles had proposed in a letter. I was surprised that he was serious about me. I did expect him to be the “Gentleman Farmer” not doing the labor. This correspondence continued because “You don’t dump a guy that’s overseas!” His letters related the weather in Korea little about anything. Once he wrote that he wanted to be a farmer and have a good dairy herd; that his mother, brother and sister all died within one year. That was his idea of personal. I almost knew the military compound, the bus ride to his office workplace in Pusan and the weather by heart! He had no hobbies, He liked music, but later I discovered it was WLS Barn Dance only! He did not ballroom dance, he would learn he wrote. He did take roller skating lessons - Oh, whoopee! New Foods bombed with “Never eat anything off the food stands! In Pusan, they fertilize with their own excrement.” There was never a subject discussion. His word cut things short. He finished High School but lauded the fact that he left school before the last period, a study hall and hitch-hiked home. It was more important to get home to work. (RED FLAG!)

Once the car radio began a song I knew and I sang along with it. He said he never heard it performed with word before. I said I was singing it…He said: “Shut up, I want to hear the music!” I was so shocked yet took it. (Another RED FLAG!) After that, I felt my education was down the drain with this one. I had not written to him about University, Holland or Alaska but I was foolish enough to want to be married; all but 2 classmates were married. It was still a black mark to be single past eighteen! One of the last things I wrote was that my parents fleeced me every three or four months and that this last time I was so bereft that I bought a fur coat. Not that I wanted it but to spend my money on myself. I added: “Unfortunately, this was money I hoped to use for the wedding … He wrote that he understood and not to worry.

For several years, I had written to a friend of my Aunt and Uncle on the west coast. (You will consider that I always thought of myself as very plain because I knew what was under the makeup! With this mindset, I always considered myself - the neutral advisor; not a prospect.) I shall call this gentleman S. He was 32, tall and attractive. He played some parts in movies; lived with his mother had a brother living on the Islands. He did a stint in the Air Force. They were independently wealthy. His mother mentioned his problem was he did not want a Hollywood marriage. He wanted lasting love and stability. Their area was not amenable to this. The ladies he met were … career minded. Studios chose him to escort starlets to clubs and events - It was all Publicity and vapor. In letters we discussed his hobbies: Trap Shooting and fixing his MG. I did not know what Trap Shooting was and wrote back, “For myself, I really couldn’t kill anything.” We tried foods: Tamale pie. Mexican food had not reached the Midwest. So : “I never heard of this dish. My parents and I sometimes bought tamales from a little man with a cart outside a theater,” There were pictures of his mother by their pool; palm trees surrounded it. I was thinking: What would make that pool look anything like Christmas? For the silliness of it, I suggested wrapping lights up the trunks of the palm trees. He thought it was great and did it. Movie magazines extolled his originality. We discussed women: Being where you live (I avoided his age) I think any young lady you bring to visit, must absolutely love your mother - like you do. She is a big part of your life. One you can take to your father’s lodge and both of you can enjoy these trap shooting events and one that was not afraid of grease and tools! (I did not mention pretty or having a sense of humor, being well educated or what she did for a living or hoped to do.) Once I took a chance and kidded him about his fortune … “I figured it out, S. If I saved 90% of my salary I could reach that point in 87 years. But the good part is: If I do without lunch, I could do it quicker! S. thought it was hilarious.

But alas Charles that I really did not know was in my picture and it was time to stop writing to S. I really enjoyed our writing and laughter. I hoped the best for him because his California area seemed to be a completely phony world. (Note: To my foolishness: A wealthy, good looking, fairly great guy and I let him get away. Either I was truly God’s Child or nuts.) S. married about a year after I did, nice girl, there was very little family publicity ever. He did both movies and TV.

Later in life I had a jarring vibration about him. I saw turmoil in my little clairvoyant picture. His younger daughter had rebelled and found a ne’r-do-well with more bad habits than good. Any logic brought mayhem from his daughter. It was still California but faster than ever. When S. was really at his wits end with her he stopped and walked away a few steps. “Come with me.” She protested all the way upstairs. Silently he dipped into a small drawer. He handed her a packet of letters. “I’d like you to read these; I’ve followed them and lived by them. They were from a wonderful friend. And then I’d like them back.” His daughter returned in a bit with another outlook. She hugged her father and nodded her head:

“Now I understand, dad. Thank you so much.” This was such a surprise to me: He had kept my letters! They were helping the next generation … Now, if I had followed my own advice.

# HERE

THE REFUGEE GROUP

A refugee lady started A-C. Nobody wanted to talk with her so, I dived in. She was a Serbian learning English. She knew German, some French and Russian. We hit it off nicely. In a few months she gave a Russian class at the Junior College. We had a Naval Captain in the student body. He had contracted an uncommon illness and was wasting away but with this he found and made fun in everything! There was a great poet: Stenka Ras’neeyea. Captain Tisko would say, “Why don’t we hear another poem by Stinky.” We would sing “Black Eyes” in Russian. One student was a Dominican Sister. She suggested we cut records of us singing it so we could remember the class. When Tisko giggled he sounded like the Pillsbury Dough Boy. Captain Tisko would then say: “We have to cut another, I can’t take that home, Delila would ask questions.” One guy was on Visa from Syria. He had a difficult name. But his first name was Ferdinand. The Captain: “Hum, too long! What do you do?” He said he was learning American Politics. The Captain fanned that off - “Oh, bah - well, what does your father do?” The guy took a breath and said, “He owns a sand ranch.” The Captain touched his fingers together understanding and said, “OK we’ll call you, Prince Fertie”. Then we cut more records - he made me laugh and then said: “Ah-a-a you laughed; I can’t take that one home either. We cut enough records for the whole class. Captain Tisko kept with the Russian language the rest of his life! Among the students was a Lithuanian refugee. He was a cook at the Leland Hotel and volunteered to bake our Christmas party cake. He began saving ingredients! When the cake arrived, it was 14 inches across and had a light yellow frosting with nuts. When he cut it there were had seven layers with custard filling some layers included poppy seeds. Our teacher asked what was in it? He said: six dozen eggs, four pounds of butter… lots of milk, vanilla, some flour and things. Being Muslim, Prince Fertie missed the party.

Often after class we gathered at the teacher’s house with her family. We called it our Refugee Group. My new parish priest was from Serbia and sought like-language people. He proved to be a delight. He, like our teacher’s family ran from the Germans, then from the Communists. He went to Africa and then ran from the Muslims. One night he returned to the rectory to find it in dark and locked! He forgot his key. Ended, he climbed through the second story bathroom window. We heard a great story next gathering. Fertie taught us how to eat tiny hot peppers. Captain Tisko asked our teacher’s mother if he could borrow some pillowcases and men’s ties. She wondered but the Captain promptly flattened a pillowcase on each guy’s head and handed them a tie. “Now, Prince Fertie is more comfortable.” The group was delightful. One marriage came out of the class. Our teacher’s younger brother came to give his sister a ride home and fell in love as soon as student Eileen asked a question in class! An American girl with brains, yay! Our teacher was bereft: Eileen was older than she by several years! Love won out.

There were so many fun crazy things inside me that I wanted to share and absolutely no one to talk with. It was difficult to write to Charles at times. So I thought why not and mentioned I was taking a Russian class ... My God, thaat set off an atomic bomb! He wanted me to quit the class. He did not want to marry anybody that had more education than he did … Well, ha, ha, ha there and now I had a problem. Helen, my mother long ago decided his letters were not interesting and she stopped reading them. I thought face to face Charles would see that education was important. There I was, just like with Ares, giving an adult the benefit of a doubt. Some people are closed, greedy and stubborn. I knew it; I just always hoped they would see the light.

Charles came home There had been a tidal wave in the Pacific and they had spent most of the journey indoors and ill. Later I mentioned education, but he was extremely adamant …Why did I not quit? … Likely because my parents were so money hungry! I desired a logical compatible helpmate. I did not love him like I had Ares never like Iorcetes not even like Charles H. but companionship would due.

Mother knew I wanted Charles to see the Christmas tree so she took it down that day while I was at work. I chose the invitations. I already had silver and hollowware. During my Lab and Ares years I bought odd pieces of silver that I liked and lots of silver-cloth; there were many small jewelers throughout the city then. On my deliveries it was easy to pop in and see what each had. I studied flatware patterns a very long time before choosing National Silver’s Concerto. My distant touch with music! It has a bit of a shell pattern at the top. I paid weekly on it and then brought it home. Mother roared at the waste of “our” money! “There is no place to put it,” she wailed.” It set nicely on top of my little oak chest of drawers. I checked it at times to see that none was missing!

With Charles -We dated seeing movies of Tex Ritter; nothing spectacular. Charles promised to learn to dance, but now said - he had two left feet ...RED FLAG! This was very disappointing; I sat on the sidelines by far enough these two years. I wanted fun with “my man.”

Shortly Charles was pushing for a date right after Easter. I really wanted to wait - a long time; maybe a year or so … We went to town for dinner but instead he steered me to an off-beat jeweler to buy me a ring. He said about a little over a hundred dollars. The guy showed a dinky thing worth thirty bucks. I said NO! For that money it should be a fourth carat! I had learned my gemstones from Bill Holland and Bill Tobin both jewelers. This place had junk!

I did not want white gold all my things were yellow gold. Charles said it had to be white! RED FLAG! I wanted one solitaire. Charles insisted it have tiny stones astride it. RED FLAG! I hated it and worse it infected my finger. Most times I could not wear it. The same thing happened with the bedroom set. I was for one Fruitwood bed stead; he insisted on a white mahogany 5 pc. “Fifties Style” set. I still detest it but it does not show the dust! With each purchase he said: “Oh, you’ll like it.” I never liked any of it. Later, I met his older brother’s wife: Her ring was a yellow gold solitaire. Charles did not care about pleasing me; he had no respect for my desires … just that it was different than his brother had chosen.

A wedding dress; my abilities dictated that I design and make mine. I bought a manikin to hold it and threw a sheet over it during the day. Ordinarily I had to spend no more six hours on a garment but somehow this was taking much longer. The project dragged. I really felt that I’d completed more. I continued hemming the train; it was taffeta and would be under a long veil …I discovered needle holes where stitches had been removed! Mother was there watching me. I was suddenly boiling inside but kept steady: “Mother, you are not to do this!” She made no retort but thereafter the dress was completed with two weeks to spare.

Charles and I had ordered the cake and did last minute things. My money was tied up in the wedding. I returned home to hear my father announce that he wanted to trade cars. I realized the '38 Ford was exhausted. So much of it had been replaced and restored all through the war years. A '46 Ford Bell Telephone sedan was the contender and they needed $500.00. I laughed- how incredible could they be? I talked with Charles. He said to make it a loan. I did this making them promise to repay it. Solemn promise! My dad took the money and nodded but ***giggled***…

We visited the farm to check the room we would use. The wall paper was a “settle for” because the father would pay but not for one wall painted plain. I dislike being surrounded by patterns! It had two clashing papers and looked hideous (RED FLAG!) That day, I saw Charles in his work clothes - and did not recognize him. Robert said that was my intended (RED FLAG!) Much too different I never envisioned blue jeans, crummy jacket and leather ball cap! I decided to return the ring but Robert was not going to town and I was stuck there. This was disgusting. Charles said he played the piano: His Confirmation name was Peter: Why was he wasting his time on this ugly falling down farm when he had this great ability to play the piano? I genuinely mistook Charles for Peter from The World of Music! Their features were nearly identical and Peter was a nice person. I find unhappiness from so many sides …but the sun will surely shine I continue.

I accidentally encountered William Yardley one evening while changing buses. We walked to his new office on Adams Street. He had begun an intense search into the Midden family on his own and did not like what he discovered. He pleaded to dissuade me without going into details. I wish he had!

"But, Iorcetes, you have a family and it is only natural that I should wish to be married. What would change between us if I did not marry? We are always friends; that is all we can ever be, my dear."

"Oh, you are correct of course, but one never marries the man; one marries the family. And, this family carries dreadful things. Do you know these things? Well, my dear, I suggest you question him closely and be satisfied with the answers. More so, I wish you would not marry at all. It breaks my heart, Deidia."

"My dear sweet man, we did part so violently in Thessaloniki. How I wanted to return and longed for your safety and welfare time and again. But you were always away, so they said. And, he is interested in me."

"He'd better well be and he'd better not mistreat you or - or you come to me!" William said. I nodded. We parted trying to smile to each other. What a love to remember but I was keeping him straight; I would get him into Heaven! That was what I came here to do. I did put several questions to Charles as Mr. Yardley suggested. And true there were happenings. I realized that lives had been ruined and lost because of this grasping old father. But surely … not knowing all the sons had been taught horrible things aimed at subjugating a woman.

The day before my wedding, my father came to me saying: “There’s something I want you to see!” He drove us to a bakery on West Laurel St. “It is for sale and the guy is going to show us the routine. We three observed how this baker put all his goodies together. I could see that my father was very interested. When the price was mentioned and my parents were saying that was a fair price - I asked to see his books. The seller changed the subject. In a few moments and then every few moments I asked for the books and he mentioned something else like: he had bought this house on 4th and Cook with the money he made from the bakery. (How could we know if this was true?) Now I was ignored for a little detail to entice my father. Finally I said: “I am sorry no books, no deal.” And I walked out, thinking the nerve the God-danged nerve! The day before my wedding trying to get-get-get! I had wedding bills - how dare they even try this! Oh, they fussed about it and I leveled: “That is not the way one does business. He is likely losing money… and I saw not one customer.” Joe was implacable: “I don’t care about books. I don’t know about books - I wanted that bakery.” He bawled like a little child.

By evening things seemed calm. We went to the church for the practice. All was fine. We had no dinner afterwards, Either Charles did not know about it or ignored it! ( that was on his list.) The wedding party was expecting one! I suggested we go for a drink or something, but Charles barked, No - he was tired! RED FLAG!

Neither family wanted their child to marry. The Midden family judged: “She dresses too well; came from the wrong side of town; that means she’s a spendthrift; a gold-digger! Did you see that fur coat? She’s got her eye on the farm! Nobody would choose Charles. He can’t talk properly.” His family considered him inferior minded. One by one Charles' family revealed their self - grandeur insinuating that Charles, being imperfect was not to their level, neither, of course were the Wangard's being from that East side shack. Realistically, I knew Charles had a problem pronouncing his "L's" but he sounded no worse than many foreigners with broken English. At University, they came from Austria, Switzerland, Holland, France and the Danish peninsula. The Solitaire Ring lady was very judgmental; I expected more culture from her because her father handled large State responsibilities. Much later I realized as also did Robert’s wife that we were religiously married into a family of loud insecure demonic oafs.

WEDDING DAY PREPARATIONS

Meanwhile Helen and Joseph set about serious sabotage while seeming to acquiesce.

Early on, Joseph refused to wear a tuxedo. So Charles and Robert both bought dark blue suits.

I had trouble getting ladies: Dottie was Catholic but not friendly because Robert dumped her.

My Serbian friend was Russian Orthodox; AThe pastor said it wasn’t “Catholic” enough! She

became estranged. Jamie was touring in Austria, Catherine Stallone was working in D. C. and

Margie, my friend from Aunt Ida became a fallen woman and would not partake with a “Goodie

two-shoes”.

I asked my distanat cousin Mary Ann. Who said yes! Oh, Thank God, I had a Matron of

Honor! Mary Ann asked if we needed chairs for the reception: Yes! I hadn’t thought about

chairs. This family of never visited cousins helped shape everything. Mary Ann’s husband and

brother would usher! More than that, Mary Ann’s mother and Aunts Felice and Lucy would man

the reception tables, make the punch and transport foods! Al from Chi Rho ushered. The priest

was Fr. Kristos Jelenich, from the Refugee Group. This was one moment of happiness.

The wedding was scheduled at 9:00 a.m. A second wedding was scheduled for 10:00 a.m.

At 7:30 a.m. Joseph left togas up the ’46 olive Ford Sedan. He returned about 8:15. Helen announced she would drive to the north end and pick up Great Aunt Ida. As Helen lacked any sense of time I shouted, NO! Father then said he would drive mother and keep her to schedule, he ***giggled***.

8:45 –already behind fifteen minutes! Wait, Joe only ***giggled*** when he was planning a trick! **Call a taxi!** Can't! Helen forbid money in the house during the reception. My going away things were next door. Those neighbors had already left for the church! Can't get on a bus in a long wedding gown … call the rectory tell the pastor the problem. The old pastor was alone and did not comprehend my emergency. 9:45 – I am in complete hysteria. But what's this - a strange car coming into the driveway; my St. Louis relatives! I rushed out.

"We forgot the way to the church so we were going to wait here. We are late. What are YOU doing here?"

I explained, dashed up the steps, locked the house then packed myself on Aunt Mary Regina’s lap. We were at the corner when Joe pulled around that corner. "What are you doing in there? Get in this car now!" He growled.

"Forget it!" I said through the open window, "**You** follow us!"

Inside the church, I was wrinkled but relieved. I checked to see if the groom was still there. Charles and his brother Robert were sunburned nearly maroon from haying the day before; ‘Must be terribly uncomfortable in those starched white shirt collars’ I thought. Helen was at the back of the church posturing about this plight, saw me and said with disgust, "You're here!" She swirled and said, "I don't have my hat. You have to wait until I get my hat."

At her response, my trusting nature evaporated, "Forget the hat; get seated!" I summonsed my cousin. "Please seat the woman." That cousin was of small stature but he had been an MP during the war. He took Helen’s arm, she resisted. He had great control and was smiling; Helen assumed an aristocratic pose and up the aisle they marched.

My father said, "I have to get your mother's hat."

"No. **YOU** have to walk me down the aisle, just like last night."

He growled, "No! That was practice; this is real; I'd rather be dead."

I was stunned; realizing they planned this horrible charade. I turned to my Uncle Mike, and asked him. He said he was thrilled. It would be an honor.

The word "honor" caught Joe’s ears. My father shoved his brother-in-law out of the way. "It's my duty; I get the honor." Uncle Mike concurred and guffawed silently.

The wedding march began and Father Jelenich motioned for the men to assemble, then he stood smiling broadly and tapping time with his fingers on his tiny black prayer book. The groom had a perfect right to appear stunned. Fr. Jelenich leaned to the couple and in his cute Serbian accent said: "Oh, May-ree, I am so glad you're here. I thought you weren't coming. As they spoke the next wedding party was assembling. The little priest said, "Ah, forget them, I don't have that wedding. THIS is my first American wedding, and it is yours that I know since I come … and you made it! I wish you both much joy." He turned saying, “Come, we sign the papers!” stopped short; "Oh, yes, the ceremony; now we begin." It was a very short Mass and shorter vows.

Charles would not honor the receiving line, but hustled me directly to the car! He did not question me except to ask the way to the photographer's studio. Robert drove. Mary Ann and Robert were in the Group Wedding Picture. After this, we drove to visit Charles' bed-ridden cousins. And then to his older brother's home which was luxurious and the front yard made a good back drop. Charles had his own camera in the car. He had taken wonderful pictures overseas, so posed me, laying out my train and full length veil attractively. It was the first time he said I looked beautiful!

The family breakfast was somewhat ruined by up-man-ship of my Solitaire wearing sister-in-law saying that we had not invited her children or her parents or her sister and … and I had not even been seated yet! This “happiest day” was constantly bombarded. I said levelly:

"Look lady, I am doing well enough to do this much. If you don't like it, give your own party - now!" The older brother patted his wife’s arm and said let it go.

I turned and my eyes alighted on Fr. Jelenich. Thankfully, he was turned to his far seatmate and chatting. My words rather sobered Helen and Joseph who spoke not a word. Joseph ***giggled***. Father Jelenich stood after the meal and said, "I hear that the newlyweds are going to live with the in-laws." He looked at grim Mr. Midden and said, "It has been my experience to note that this is often not a workable thing but perhaps all will be well here. I salute the lovely couple." He held up his coffee cup and everyone followed suit. Robert thought they should have pictures with the priest so we four went outside. Robert was off to fetch the camera; the priest said: “I have never seen such a humorless bunch in all my life! Get out of that house as soon as you can!” When Robert returned the priest stood smiling took an arm of each of us. He laughed and said, "It is such a beautiful day; let us all be happy! I wish you both great luck and God's blessings." He shook hands around and left.

The reception went fairly well. Robert sneaked vodka into the punch; Joseph saw and kept having his glass refilled! We cut the cake; I do not remember eating any at all. Helen ordered ice cream, when specifically told it was not a child’s party! The weather became quite hot. Joseph and Robert set floor fans about. The guests were delighted with the ice cream - Oh well, so much for convention! The Solomon’s opened their door and I changed into my going away outfit. I removed the purple orchid from my bouquet and Mrs. Solomon pinned it on my coat. Louise, Charles’ sister caught the bouquet. And true enough she was the next one to marry!

THE HONEYMOON GHOSTS

We drove to Colorado Springs. Charles loved the West. It was beautiful. We drove a mountain trail to Echo Lake and saw a guy sunbathing in the snow! The thin air sucked my anemic energy but I pretended to be in good spirits. A sign announced two mining ghost towns ahead. This sounded like fun.

Of the two abandoned mining towns: Blackhawk was boarded over; but Central City was preparing for tourists; the saloon was open. A fellow recited “The Face on the Barroom Floor” boringly. My attention wandered. There was a tattered stage and an upright in horrible condition. ***I wondered what this all looked like in active days.***

At that thought, everything looked clean - the stage curtains opened and a line of dancing girls skipped joyously on stage. Their red and black polished cotton dresses were over the knee and had many rows of under-ruffles. The bodices were fairly tight, the necklines cut low and outlined with ruffles. Each had perhaps two dozen buttons closing the backs of their dresses. Their hair was in pompadours and backed with bonnets. As they danced the humidity made little temple hairs stray. They lifted their skirts and bent their knees circling their lower legs about. The dusty miners hooted appreciatively. In the scene; the piano tinkled a long forgotten honky-tonk tune. As the ladies skipped off, I heard one say: "Oh, God, I hate doing this." The one ahead of her turned over her shoulder and said: "Look at it this way; this is the last time tonight!" They both laughed. The last girl kicked her leg back flirtingly.

Charles touched my arm, laughing at the curator's story and my time warp disappeared. I thought it was a re-enactment. “When will the girls perform again? It was darling!” The curator stared at me. He said over the years, a few people claimed to see dancing girls and miners but he didn’t believe them. Then he turned away ignoring me. Charles laughed: “It is supposed to be a ghost town.” But he shuffled me out and never touched the subject again. What? Was this a partnership?

Once home Charles told his father he was glad ***that*** was over; it was good to be ***home***. Did this mean I was stuck in this awful house? Things were so worn and exhausted they could not be cleaned. I expected we would go out and do something fun. Shortly, he asked if I wanted to visit my parents. “No!” I never wanted to see them again! They ruined my Wedding Day and stole all the happiness I should have had and turned it into a horible memory. He said, “Aw, you ought to see them.” Just the mention brought thoughts of a double slaughter. We went. It was uncomfortable - just like every homecoming from College I was treated like a transient stranger.

Charles was able to have a G.I. education privilege, but spoke just as vehemently against more education as he had written. Again,news of my Doctorate was shelved. Charles was irritated that most of my friends were professionals. He began refusing to visit them saying, “No, they will judge me.” I insisted we visit my Russian teacher but she and Charles did not hit it off; in fact she was uppity-nasty. He took me roller skating but that ended after two times. He was tired… No movies; no plays or musicals: Music? WLS Barn Dance on the radio. The Midden’s never had friends over saying the neighbors were Protestant and did not like Catholics! If both sets of parents represented Catholicity - I would change on the spot. The Wangard’s never had visitors - no one was good enough for Helen. That meant: Neither of us knew much about entertaining.

The farm house was an unhappy place. “Dad” Midden seldom smiled never joked or took anything lightly. Often he stared dourly at me when I spoke to him and never answered; quite intimidating; perhaps he was deaf - I asked Charles. No, he heard perfectly. I expected a happy family (like the Water’s.) Charles said his brothers and sisters all hated each other! It began with nasty jibes, and grew into full-fledged conflicts. Now he tells me! Henry Jr. threw snide remarks at Charles when his family visited the farm. I thought him an un-cultured clod. Why had their mother and father let them get away with this uncouth behavior? It could make anyone sour.

One Saturday I ironed three white shirts for church the next morning. The laundry was not picked up. “OK I said, “I’ll do it this once but I didn’t marry all three of you.” A hired hand sat on a Victorian settee in a window bay; someone was to take him home. He intended to ask for a day off. Charles was upstairs with his father speaking about the possibility of building a small house at the east end of the property. Robert stepped into the discussion. It escalated to volcanic volume. It vibrated throughout the Victorian house. RED FLAG!

"Do they do this?" the hired man asked.

"Don’t know. I've never heard anything like that in my life!" I confessed. (Helen ruled in quiet, long, boring tones.)

The shouting continued. The hired hand leaned forward, "I was thinking about asking for a raise," he snickered and nudged his head towards the stairs. "Well, I'll tell you … you married this and may have to live with it, but I don't!" He pushed to his feet, "and you shouldn't either, young lady! Tell them, I quit. I'm walking home." I was both surprised and bereft at this.

The tirade continued until Charles’ hope was beaten flat. The three came downstairs civilly. Their conversational tones were normal. Finally one of them, asked about the hired hand. I handed the ironed shirts around:

"Oh, he quit." I folded the rickety ironing board.

"You mean he got a ride; someone came after him." Robert said.

"I mean he quit. He did not like the tones of your discussion, said he did not have to take that. He is walking home."

They swirled like dervishes. "But, we don't talk that way to people!"

"Obviously you shouldn't talk like that with each other; you are people too. It gives a terrible impression.” I was disappointed in the outcome of the meeting. There would be no house. His dad and Robert glanced at each other -who was she to admonish us?

At morning I asked, "Are you going to church?" After that blow-out I figured they would be too contrite to show their faces in God’s House.

"Yes," Robert said. "We'll take dad's car; mine is full of junk." He opened the back door, "Shoo, get. There's a damned dog out here." Robert pulled the car near the brick house.

I removed my gloves when I saw the lap eared dog; mostly Setter. I smiled ignoring the men.

"Oh, let's see! Aren't you a nice one! What nice markings and what a sweet loving face." The dog gurgled; its face nestled in my hand while I pet its very long nose. It was a bit full coated across the chest and tail. I looked up to Charles. "We need a good dog and this is him!" I turned back to the dog. "Let's see, Iorcetes calls me 'Butchie' because I worked like a little doggie. Can I give it to you? Do you like ‘Butchie”? Well, ok." I turned to my father-in-law. "Can he stay in the century house? You have Whitie but he is really old, Dad. We do need a dog to alert us when strangers are about." To my surprise, old Mr. Midden ***spoke!***

"You are right. Robert, show him to the garage and leave the door open a crack." Robert did this. The four drove stoically to church.

After Mass, Robert went to the garage hoping the dog had escaped, but it was sleeping peacefully exactly where Robert should park the car. He whistled to it, but the dog did not move. Robert turned: "What did you call the dog?"

"Butchie." Before he could turn back inside, the pup ambled past him to me. Robert volunteered to get it water. Mr. Midden said he had a bone from a roast and fetched it. (I never saw any roast? Crap another hide the good food bunch!) The pup took it gently.

"He has a soft mouth hunting stock, I'd say: About four or five months old." The old man's eyes actually glittered with joy. The dog glanced about holding the bone.

"He wants to know where he can take his bone." I said.

Mr. Midden called the dog and they walked to a place he thought was proper. The pup settled happily.

Later, I stood silently by the dog. I was thinking to it; telling it about shaking hands. I showed it how to transfer its weight to one side and lift the other paw. 'OK, people will say hello, or shake hands. Let's try.' I put out my hand and said, "Hello." But there was no response. "OK, shake hands!" It placed its paw in my hand. "Ah, so you think it should be 'shake hands, OK Butchie."

"Oh, look the dog shakes hands! How did you do that?" Mr. Midden exclaimed. "We always wanted Whitie to shake hands, but he just did not get it."

The new dog brought life to the farm however it was not a barking dog. It scanned strangers; any not passing his approval got nipped. This spontaneity was followed by quarantine routinely. He never seemed to mind; the nip was worth it. He followed me unless it was food. His sheepish glance revealed he was frightened of the cows but his back step showed he was terrified of the turkeys, especially when they fanned their tails.

The Midden’s had built a new barn for the dairy herd, they said. I entered with high “Marken Island” hopes. There was straw and hay chaff caught in spider-webs everywhere. They never cleaned except the granary and where the cows stood. These animals were never washed or brushed. Their horns were twisted stubs from dehorning. It was so sad.

Charles admired my ability to call in the cows. He had to chase them over a 40 acre

timber. Butchie would sit on the opposite side of the cattle guard safely and watch me open the

barn-door and corral gates. I would simply think: 'Time to come in ladies.' My result was

overstock! Charles’ bull watched me from his pen. If I went into the barn, he came inside too.

He was from Curtiss Candy Farms so I called him Kurt. I wanted to pet his forehead. I mentally

told him; he could not shake his head: His horns were bigger around than my upper arm and

could hurt me. Dutifully, the 1872 pounder remained still munching a bit of alfalfa and watching

my hand. I told him good things about himself and petted his white central star. His hair was

very stiff. I looked up and all his ladies were watching me.

Charles would bring a hay wagon with milk cans and the milking machines and then with

bewilderment turn out the steers and young stock.

"You are only back here five minutes and you have all these in the barn; how do you do it?" I told him. “You’re kidding, right?” One evening I made him try. It scared him when he saw the first few arrivals; he was so frightened he could not keep calm enough to repeat it. Well, that was his problem.

I kept working at Allis-Chalmers until Mr. Midden said he'd like Charles to take over managing the farm. I could handle the books and the dairy customers. Once I quit work, Mr. Midden reneged! My wages were over twice that of Charles. Now I had no job because A-C was downsizing. Mr. Midden felt he had a right to me as a free housekeeper! These bombs fell as I was drying a sturdy French knife. If there was ever an urge to face a prison sentence; I pulled my arm back … quickly my Guides spoke evenly:

***'Give the knife to Charles. Go outside! There is something else. It is meant for you but you won't get it.'***

Within a few days, Aunt Lucy called and asked if I knew an Etta Edwards. It had been so long... The cousin shot: "Either you do or you don't. I think you don't!" and hung up. I wondered what that was about. A few days passed and an attorney I did not know called and asked. I recalled the cute little lady (actually she was delighted that I saved a special accessory for her.) She mentioned a will and asked me to say I lived with her. I said yes, that it had been a long time ago but Lucy had already lied and claimed my inheritance of $1200.00. I thought, "***I hope God rights this. We certainly could have used it.’***

Shortly, as the Serbian priest predicted Mr. Midden became an ogre. I refused to put up with his bullying nastiness and we moved to an apartment off South Grand Avenue.

I was up the on requirements for a hired hand because once I thought of investing in a little land in Saratoga but overall the actuality was too costly for me but I knew the hired help was entitled to a place to live rent free; enough food produced on the farm and transportation to and from the job. I made Charles inform his father of these things. Surprisingly, after speaking with Robert and Henry Jr. checked with his “on call” battery of lawyers - the old man agreed. Charles used the car, got the apartment paid and both produce and meat provided. It didn't take long for Mr. Midden to realize his cleverness had cost him! He had some rental houses astride his old grocery store building in town. When one house became vacant (conveniently) my husband and I were asked to move into it. It was near the State Capitol and walking distance to downtown.

Although the people in Mr. Midden's second house nearby knew the setup, the people across the street never saw Charles go to work (he parked in back and left at 3:30 am) or come home after 8:30 pm. They decided I was a shady lady, gossiping about me and those Middens! Word carried to the family in the second house who then told me. Although it was comical, Charles set them straight without saying a word. He drove the farm dump truck home, parked it in front reeved it a bit before shutting it off …doing likewise at the early hour before leaving. The gossip stopped.

I was at odds with Charles vocabulary. One night he came home and said “We need some chairs in here. When I come home I want to hit a chair.” I was shocked and said that would be a waste of money if all he wanted to do was break them up. He had to explain what he meant. I recognized a pretty girl from the Myers Building and a classmate also. Both lived nearby, we visited not often but it was nice. I had to learn cooking with what little came from the farm. At times I’d cry just reading simple recipes for lack of ingredients. The friends could whip up fried ham, potatoes and baked beans. Those were impossible for me. How to stretch a pound of hamburger into two or three meals for two - those were the recipes I needed.

Charles was companionable until I missed a period! The next morning he began a new routine. Charles started to the car came back inside and without provocation banged the table and began shouting and screaming: “You go no place - you stay in this house - you talk to no one - know your place – cook my meals - Do as I say! I am your Master!” In shock, I asked what brought this on but he hit the table and screamed awful things, was instantly outside slamming the door behind him.. It left me shaking and in tears. Day after day he frightened me with such horrible put-downs exiting before I could even catch my breath. It repeated every morning and it left me in tears. I had done nothing to call up such wrath.

He had a face-off with my Gynecologist in my seventh month! He took me to the GP with a few sort words and left me for a consultation. I told the GP that I had pre-natal care but Charles had a verbal conflict and quit my gynecologist. The GP rolled his eyes heavenward.)

Charles lost money right and left by ill-thought plans like raising Pekingese puppies; getting paid to mow the orchard (He thought he would cut out his older brother’s getting that money.) I said it won’t work - You are already on your father’s payroll - you won’t get anything extra but he bought an electric mower; it wouldn’t work on the rough terrain. That was just one doubly failed project.

I had radio and cooked what I could. I had my oil paints; used leftover school paper for canvas. “They need more life!” Charles would yap briskly, and be out of the room! I was painting wintery Alaska! He never asked, never discussed anything or spoke conversationally. . He had no interests, no hobbies or friends. All these things had been safely hidden from me before the marriage. Finally he rejected all my friends as judgmental. I was bursting in my silence There was no one to openly talk with. Opposites do not stay attracted! I worried about this child I was carrying. All this would have some effect. Would it be born frightened and nervous like me. I loathed this Catholic marriage and for not knowing about birth control! Catholics were not privy to literature on Birth Control. Is that the church’s way of increasing membership? Charles was unapproachable and my feelings disintegrated from righteous anger, to distain and finally unmitigated hate. Where was my God during this siege of my emotions? Where He always is when we are too engrossed in our misery to calm a bit and seek Him.

I was too ashamed to tell Mr. Yardley about this mess, I had not heeded his words about the Midden Family yet telling him right off the bat is what I should have done! I could not tell my parents I had made a mistake (Mother loved making everything “Bad” and dangling this over me would be sheer delight!) In the fifties; Divorce equaled: A failed woman in shameful ruins, excommunication from the church! I was starving again in more ways then just food. Mentally, emotionally and bodily because of this new monster whose face grew red and slobbery and his eyes bulged looking like “The Picture of Dorian Gray”. My Far Memory was no balm in this; he killed me in the Greek Life! I knew he could kill me again. Are there any people who are not threatened, badgered and put down at every turn? I was strong at holding my tongue, I honored authority but felt like a spineless fool.

I began pulling my eyelashes out between tears and nerves. ‘O.K. dear Guides: What is my recourse? I have no place to go; no money or bank account; No cloths to get a job - who hires a pregnant woman? I am no longer me - I have been confiscated! If I must stay then toughen me up.' I heard these words:

***'Unfortunately your job with him is overly difficult, but leaving will gain neither of you. Your mother and aunt give Oscar performances of “Pity-me!” They faced their struggles badly, chose wrongly and each made their lives worse! To survive this Midden bunch you must be staunch - not with voice or expression but inside your being: Keep your knowing! Keep your refinement! No Tears! Tears are useless here.’***

What a different tactic! They were correct I was a lady. “Alright! Guides, no more tears!”

This man was inconsistent. He brought home tiny baby animals that the tractor nest upset. Then decided I needed something to do and bought me a Pekingese puppy. He had a mishap with a hitchhiker stealing his anti-depression pills so this man who is fiercely afraid of big dogs bought a German shepherd to ride with him in the early and late hours. The new dog, Mac was friendly with Butchie and mild natured. A milk customer drove in and did not see him (Mac’s coloring blended with the cinder driveway). Mac was hit and Charles brought him home from the Vet with a steel rod in his back leg. He explained minimally and laid him in the kitchen. The older Peke, Teddy stated his territory immediately. Mac was quiet. By now another of Charles stupid investments came in to play: We got a female Peke, sight unseen. She was s miniature Teddy was 14 pounds. Charles would net return or sell her. They never mated.

The tinier Peke noticed Mac could not move so cheered him with play. She lay down at Mac’s nose and pulled her tiny legs close to her body and looked at him. He pushed her gently with his nose and she rolled across the floor, popped up and came back for more. This was great fun. Teddy barked in Mac’s face. I rather wondered what would transpire but Pekes do tackle anything. Finally Mac pulled a front paw back to his chest, raised it and flattened Teddy to the floor. The big dog looked at me: ‘Take this thing away!’ I reached for an angry squirming Teddy and set him in his bed. Charles came home. Teddy resumed his fight with Charles who barked words back. Again, Teddy went to his bed.

When my Matron of Honor, Mary Ann visited she told me that Aunt Lucy had claimed my inheritance and used it as a down payment on a new house. "But, Lucy has built two new houses already.” Mary Ann shook her head in sympathy and related Lucy's words: "***I couldn't see*** it any other way!" Then Mary Ann added, "Did you know both Lucy and her husband are losing their eyesight?" We young ladies were shocked with this terrible news. Later, I asked my Guides about the greedy cousins. They answered: ***'As one sees mentally, one also reaps physically. It is that for which they asked: Very simple concept.'*** I was struck by the surreal logic. 'Was this because of me?'

'No, ***God grants desires.'***  This was a revelation! One must speak carefully!

My father began visiting often; he played with the Pekes. Amrhein’s Bakery moved to Decatur. Surely he knew this ahead - maybe before my wedding but they said nothing. Now he finally burst into the open! “It was your entire fault that I don’t have a job! I have a right to your money and I wanted that little bakery. We even took you to see the operation you said no - because the owner would not show his books: As if books made a difference!” The Pekes curled in their beds and listened. When Mac arrived to recuperate Joe became apprehensive and stopped his crabby visits. Later, Joe fell for a donut machine (which required licenses health permits and so because he wanted to make it a business in a town that did not allow food related home businesses.) I saved him from that investment. But without a word to me he fell for a gumball machine swindle; borrowing money to do it. He managed to place them. Being dim at business, he bought his candy and gumballs at dime stores! Do-Good groups began placing machines. Store owners rather help Do-Good groups and his were out! In a fit of temper Joe collected his machines and took an ax to them in the alley. There was an old saying: “You marry your father.”

Charles’ terrorizing dropped after baby Magdalene arrived. His sister-in-law intoned: “The Midden’s ALWAYS breast-fed their babies.” She was a healthy round specimen. The Hospitals were gung-ho on it. Nobody considered that I was anemic - I had to breast-feed. There was nothing and the baby screamed day and night. I bought strained bananas and pears - she gulped them - I finally was able to see the doctor who looked at both of us: Give her a bottle. He concocted a formula using our whole milk from the farm. Peace on one front. But: Now, the sex wasn’t what it was! Does he say this to me? No, he tells Henry, Jr. in front of me and his wife! The brilliant older brother answered in front of his wife: “It never is.” This didn’t stop the sperm. Baby #2 arrived. He was so opposite of The Magdalene that I checked often to see if little was breathing.

The Pekingese loved all children. The neighbor children visited the baby but they played with the little dogs, Teddy needed a chair on school days so he could stand with his little paws on the window sill and bark his playmates off to school; and welcome them home after school. I used a borrowed stroller and when Marshall was old enough I propped a pillow against the wide handle. The dogs were hitched to the sturdy frame. Teddy was a puller. Little Bebe thought the platform under The Magdalene’s full petticoats was for her. Bebe viewed everything - hidden from the world! We walked to town. Sometimes we would see Mr. Yardley. If he had a concern personal or political he would feel free to tell me about it. I counseled or gave him a light-hearted view (Almost like working with music composers.) Walking my strange menagerie was breathe easy time. I knew Charles was working 3 ½ miles out of town!

After our son Marshall was born, I realized my waist would never return to 22”. I called the neighbor girls and let them pick and choose. What upset me most was that now I had no gown. I always had a gown! True, concert attendance seemed remote but somehow I felt I would soon. With a few gift dollars I bought a pattern, dark green shantung and a bit of metallic cloth for edging. It was a fishtail style gown. I finished it and quietly set it in the closet.

FOR A MOMENT - REALIZATION

Charles wasted three years and most of his savings trying to be a farmer. Finally he realized managing the Farm would never happen and his income was not paying expenses! My nearby classmate Joan K. said her husband was taking a test for new policemen and that Charles could try. Knowing nothing about city rules or procedures -he came in 13th of 15 chosen. We breathed easier. Charles was thrilled. He would need a car and without further thought or discussion - bought a new 1955 Ford Custom on the spot! I tried to say there may be shared rides. He nay’d this. When the list appeared in the newspaper: The Midden’s erupted. They were losing their flunky. The brothers Henry Jr. and Robert were employed electricians - too good for dirty farm work! Both sisters were married and out of State. The clan decided a house on the farm would entice Charles to stay if it did not, their old father could have a better place to live. The new house brought no wage increase! Charles only saw: “ Farmer!” and the Farmer Insanity won.

The house was not set off privately but stuck between three chicken houses, behind the triple garage, the red brick house and a disintegrating historical house. There was no private drive or steps to the front or back door! There were the same responsibilities, plus new car payments and for me massive clean-up after amature builders finished varnishing the woodwork sloppily.

On our last day in town, I answered a radio show and was awarded two tickets to the Lake Club to see Frankie Carle, the pianist. Charles was aggravated that he had to drive me to the radio station to pick up tickets! The date was next week so he relaxed. Helping build and moving into the (1956) house left Charles ready for a break! He asked his dad to baby-sit and got into his dark blue suit. I dug out the fishtail gown. My hair was longer now and so I fashioned an up-do. I fully expected “Dad” Midden to renege at the last moment, but he came! When I entered the living room, Mr. Midden was overwhelmed. "You look grand; just grand!" He said. I smiled thinking, 'You two-bit bunch don't know me at all.' I thanked him.

Charles was convinced that the tickets would not be honored, but I knew Frankie Carle. It was his way of finding me. We could not afford dinner but we each had two drinks and chips. In the World of Music, Frankie Carle had refused to compose more; this was later in his career. He was accompanied by two lady accordionists. His hits were on the program. My musical smile came through. As we “danced” near him he turned to me, nodded and spoke:

"I know, I know - it is just like you said but" He shrugged, “but the ladies are a help."

"Carle," I said kindly keeping sweet; he realized he had been wrong to stop composing. I was feeling my own mistakes. I held steady and nodded, "It is wonderful to see you again, and you look as good as ever! Carle, this is my husband; the like-a-farmer. You’ve given us a lovely evening, thank you. You are a dear."

Charles withdrew in shock at my lilting voice. Did I actually know - a star? Finally Carle looked at Charles and nodded. My husband blurted; "Yes. Wonderful, ugh, enjoyed it very much."

All Charles’ mental practicality turned off completely. The irrational farmer acquired a new mantra: “I want it!” He sent for expensive things he always wanted! In a few years this want became - more children. We were paying for a model train set, camera equipment, the car the second child plus house utilities on one hundred dollars a month. One evening I thought he was finally taking me out for an entertainment - He parked outside the church and dragged me in front of an assistant priest, saying he wanted more children and I was ruining the marriage! The priest sided with Charles disregarding all practicality. I came home and fell unconscious ten hours!

THE LAND USE PLAN

In 1957 the County approved "The Land Use Plan"; it set several restrictions on all the land in Sangamon County. Charles felt that such restrictions were subjugation. Mary and Charles understood subjugation! Their County Supervisor stood alone against the plan. Several monied farmers wanted the plan defeated; they provided money but wanted to remain incognito. Mary had the art and writing skills, Robert had a mimeograph. They printed illustrated fliers and distributed them at grain elevators. I spoke with each Township Supervisor telling them the story and asking if a meeting could be held. I wrote letters to the Editor. Mr. Midden's housekeeper made sugar donuts and coffee for the meetings. Old Mr. Midden became caught-up in assembling the materials.

There were pressures from "opposing factors". One pressured Mr. Midden to fire Charles; the owners of Schaffer’s Hatchery-Feed Supply had their hay barn torched one weekend! Mr. Tolan a tour guide at the State House was fired as controversial. Tolan’s two brothers farmed in Gardner and Salisbury Townships. When the plan was brought before the County board again, it was solidly defeated. But, old Mr. Midden was so activated; he wanted to keep on fighting! Life in the norm no longer appealed to him. He could not believe it was over. He decided it was my fault that his excitement stopped!. He threatened to throw up chicken wire in front of our house and let his pullets run outside!. The surroundings were hideous enough. I opened the drapery and explained the situation to The Infant Child of Prague. Our statue of him faced out the front window.

Tuesday morning and thereafter: no fence was erected. Thursday morning Mr. Midden left to deliver his milk and eggs. Immediately, Charles began to empty the historical house of its hoard of broken furniture, boxes; it was fire hazard junk. Robert up late helped Charles! They made a pile of rubble in the cinder drive; connected water hoses for safety and Robert struck a match. The excelsior in a dry cracked leather rocker whooshed in a mini-explosion and was gone! Robert was so shocked that he quickly went into the old house and tossed stuff out the windows. The half-dead old mulberry tree and woodshed were next. Out went the old dog house Butchie never used it: Onto the fire - wooden pullet batteries. They stopped at the red brick smoke house. It was unbelievable; the brothers worked together amiably.

I asked how they would explain the ashes in the drive. Robert immediately watered them down, loaded the dump truck and drove off. Charles parked a hay frame over the burn spot. When Mr. Midden returned, he noticed no changes: The 70 year old tree, the wood shed, the chicken batteries he passed daily. I glanced at our Infant of Prague Statue, visible from the window. Wow, what a kid!

Mr. Midden missed the wood shed in November. Robert explained its departure. You say the tree is gone? Humph! I did wonder about the chicken batteries, but kept forgetting to ask. I haven't looked at any of those things for thirty years!"

Helen and Joe both found work. Joe went to a family owned bakery and stayed there until retirement. Helen sewed custom drapery until that store closed. She set up a sewing room in a small building near their house. It halted Helen’s daily telephone calls and Joseph’s demoralizing visits.

When my parents would visit at the ’56 house, they brought presents for the first child, The Magdalene, but trinkets for Marshall; on his birthday! I burned, “The birthday child gets the presents." Helen fumed that The Magdalene would be hurt but I won.

Through the years, my musical friends surprised me with tickets. Charles enjoyed attending these things but never asked how they came about or why. Charles was with me when I saw Earl Jones coming out of the Orpheum movies! I stopped him and said, “Earl, so good to see you. Did you ever get to do your serious piece?” He shook his head no. “They want the other the cheerful. Oh, this is my husband the -like a farmer” I thought quickly while they shook hands. “Perhaps when your wife sings.” He brightened and smiled, “Yes!” He thanked me and after pleasantries was on his way out. Some guy behind us asken who that was. I indicaded in a moment and then said, Spike Jones. There were many big breaths of surprise and delight. The next time we saw him was at a concert in Jacksonville- a school auditorium. Naturally magic tickets appeared for us. Charles did not ask and I did not say. Everyone ws on bleachers.“Spike” saw us in the audience and smiled, circled his finger in the air wiggled his shoulders joyously, sat down at the piano and performed a classical aria for his wife. This was an audience-eye-opening surprise; people did not realize he could play anything but cowbells! The ovation was exciting Spike was so happy. His recording contracts never let him vary from the nonsense instruments!

Jeff Craig, a supper club performer insisted on playing both organ and piano together. It amused Charles that also we spoke together like old friends yet he never aske any questions. This persisted into the 1970’s when Guy Lombardo left tickets for them at the Lake Club. Upon seeing us on the dancefloor, he left the bandstand and threw his arms around me. Striking up a conversation saying, "My God, how good to see you! How is it that you look so wonderful and I look … like this?" Suddenly he realizing I was dancing with someone he opened an arm wider. "How do you do, Charles!" then to me, "I've solved the problem of competing with that darned pianist of yours! It is a surprise; don't leave. Don't leave now, promise?" I nodded smiling broadly. Later a second piano was moved on stage. Lombardo called them his twin pianos. (Together they did the job of one Horst Jankowski whose star had entered the European and American scene.) I laughed with delight. Charles thought they were magnificent. Although Charles wondered about the name star’s getting tickets to us, he would never broach the subject. He thought, ‘whatever, it was free.’ So with all these personal exposures to name performers even hearing my light guidance at times - Charles kept himself in the dark by not asking. The Doctorate was still on the shelf.

On the farm, every year a new baby arrived. My anemia, my hearing worsened. I couldn’t hear the children at night… (I could place a smiley emoticon here.) He had to get up to check them. I was weaker each time and without help. Some little baby was getting short changed. There were also the two Pekingese and Mac that Charles did not give an eye to. Each year the little ones looked more pitiful when I returned from the hospital.

Helen demanded we visit each Sunday! Charles only free day! There the children and he must sit in the parlor while Helen talked with me… No, while she pumped me for anything she could twist into a negative. Then she began fables about my grade school classmate and how successful a nurse, she was. Or about that nice man (Louis) who always brought me home. I was obliged to listen attentively until I asked smoothly, which nice man was that?

“Oh, Louis, drank quite often, did you know? William? Oh ha-ha, my dear he has two children my age and a darling so talented wife; did you know?” When she said she saw Ares, I told her I doubted that; his dear mother keeps me up on the family and he is living in a town called Carnac with his 2nd or 3rd wife! It was all true, but not shocking enough to silence Helen.

The children begged to bring riding toys for outside, but their grandmother cold shouldered this. Helen expected five active children to sit in place. Out of it all, Easter was best; Helen bought them Easter clothes (saying, I did not know the styles living on that farm!). Every year each got a stuffed toy rabbit. Once Helen colored eggs and hid them. The children took turns hiding them again until they were cracked, covered with mud and grass clippings. Helen about died of shock! She was going to serve them for lunch! But now the children discovered the back yard! They could play outside. Joe enjoyed their antics.

The best visits were when the St. Louis bunch descended unannounced, often two cars full. Aunt Mary Regina would fry chicken while the older ladies talked and Helen fumed in silence because grease was getting all over her seldom-used little stove. Aunt Mary Regina never noticed Helen's withering looks. Joe sneaked in the garage to enjoy a beer with the men. On one visit Uncle Mike asked Helen to take them to visit Mary and Charles’ house. Helen and Joe led the way to the farm taking an involved route. (Upon every visit Joe lead them a different way. In time the telephone call came: "Mary, this is your Aunt Mary Regina. Helen said she is going out and we can't visit! Can we come to your place? We have no idea how to get there?"

I asked their location and gave them simple instructions: Jefferson Street due west before you pass the elevator. There is a big barn hanging almost on the road. (Note: that barn finally collapsed.) When they arrived, Aunt Mary Regina was fuming. "It was so easy. Helen and Joe never took us that way!" (One of Helen’s control ploys.) The visit was lovely. Charles showed them the dairy barn, hog lots and explained the timber beyond. They met Mr. Midden who wore his sweet customer-face. It was during a quiet time that I quizzed grandmother and grandfather about family history.

Gramma said: “Helen applied for work when she was fourteen and changed her surname to SHEA. She’d been harassed in school. She was ashamed of doing this, but I thought it was brilliant. I gathered all my children and announced that we would be known as Shea. It was easy to spell and pronounce. Ours was the Russian-Polish name your Uncle Mike found when the Army wanted his birth certificate. It had been so many years! My husband Joe was dubbed Shea because he marched in the policeman’s marching band and all those cops were Irish.

Now in their mid-seventies; Gramma Studenski rolled her shoulder to her left and looked up to her husband, Jul. "As we are spilling beans, you may as well know, Jul. After Joseph "Shea" died, I remarried - ugh - several times, but they all died - they were smokestack workers. Each time I was left fending for myself and the children. I never mentioned them, Jul because - well … they didn't last long and … I prefer to remember the two that did: My Joseph and my dear Jul." He gave her a hug of affection. "It's ok, dear."

The St. Louis family stopped trying to visit the Wangard’s. Helen returned Gramma Studenski’s gifts … was she at fault? I explained, “Ostracizing family was Helen's way of control; she did this with my father’s family. The only time I saw my Grandfather Wangard was in his coffin. I was ten; that was when I met my Aunts and Uncles! Gramma and Auntie, I must explain something. Although the house is nice, it is not ours; actually we do with little. What I'm saying is you may not get a big feast each time, but I'll do what I can. I want you to come."

After this Aunt Mary Regina realized I wore the same dress, patched in places; the children's everyday clothes were homemade; Charles wore patched jeans. There was never soda, beer or fresh produce in the refrigerator: mostly milk and dinky eggs. “Mr. Midden sells all the good produce in the city.”

OUR INFANT OF PRAGUE!

The statue had come into our life when we bought a Christmas Crèche'. It was unnoticeably damaged. Its right hand was cracked around its plaster ruffle and the cross of his crown was chipped, but it had the sweetest childlike face. The perfect ones lacked personality. The proprietors practically gave it! It sat on the TV facing the picture window. I dabbed red oil paint to match here and there to make it better but we did not know his story: He was just a cute little kid. The Magdalene and Marshall liked the idea of a child saint.

The older two children were off to school the little ones still asleep. The weather was cooler. Robert decided to butcher. This was done in the triple garage. I opened the drapery. Four hogs' heads faced me from a cement ledge. I nearly heaved. I heard these words: "Close the drapery; little children need not see this." The words were from my Guides or the Little Infant! Automatically, I pulled the cord and leaned against the front door. City people never see this kind of stuff! I felt ill and cried out: ***"Oh, God, get us out of this!"*** As I asked: God began! I did not realize my words of anguish were a plea.

God seems to tear things down to the barest nothing and when all of your assets are gone, He begins reconstruction.

One Thursday, Mr. Midden made an invalid turn and wreaked his old 1951 green Ford. He was making his milk and egg deliveries in town. The car sat with spilled milk and broken eggs while the insurance companies fought over a settlement. By then the car was so rank no one would repair it. This incident began a domino effect and at the time; even more losses for Charles and me.

Charles decided to sell our car to his father. With the money he would buy a large freezer. Freezing food would help ease our food crunch and get us a better selection of meats rather than the dole outs.( I believeth him not! And truly like all l his big plans, it did not work.) The car was more expensive but Charles never admitted to a bungling loss.

The Pekingese mated once, stillborn ... Mac began chasing piglets. Teddy sniffed out mushrooms; it gave his new lifestyle meaning but he would not budge until I picked every edible one, even bird's nest mushrooms seldom larger than a fourth inch square. In nice weather the dogs had outdoor shelters with fencing.

One night a ruckus awoke Charles. The hens clucked like crazy! Dainty Bebe was accosted and so frightened she bashed against something in the dark and was blinded. She went into shock and died. Teddy was covered with saliva but fended off his intruder. He was moved inside. Within a week Charles saw a movement near the hen house: A red fox. Charles dashed in, uncased his rifle and shot. It stared at Charles and came at him. He shot again. It stopped a moment then crept stealthily to the historical house, collapsed with its mouth foaming.

Butchie became entangled in a barbed wire fence Mac heard and rescue was on! Butchie lost a hind leg, but not his sweet disposition. Teddy mourned Bebe, developed Leukemia and died; Mac‘s piglet chasing was his undoing. Charles took him to a farm without piglets. We lost all our pets.

Our second son arrived in Dec. of 1960. My anemic body refused to snap back but I was determined to get out of the hospital. Maternity required a 5 day stay! We simply did not have the money. If I had help I could come home. Charles asked Helen. After fawning and preening she accepted. I came home the next morning; the children looked like ragged orphans and my heart melted. Helen was useless calling out, “Where are the pans? Formula, I don’t see any? Where are the hot pads? “I think the baby needs changed; you’ll have to do it. I know nothing about little boys! Come show me where …”

“Mother look in the cabinets and drawers. BE NOSY, leave me alone!” Helen did not believe anyone should sleep during the day! She would not take the laundry downstairs or do it.

After two days, I asked Charles, "Can we for-go mother? She prattles me crazy."

"But the doctor said you have to have help."

"Who has to tell him? Honey, she won’t iron, or make beds. Says she can't cook (the period belongs here) on electric and doesn't know about frozen food. She calls me to change the baby and rinse the diapers. She won’t take the laundry downstairs or do it. Please tell her she does not have to come. I’ve gotten no rest! And I would be grateful if you finished the laundry, I can’t lift the jeans to the wringer."

Charles shot alert. This meant his wife was not only cooking and going to the basement for the freezer but damned near everything! He was appalled at his mother-in-law’s uselessness. He thought it out while separating the cream and milk. No use tackling it tonight. He'd call her in the morning before she got ready and say, Mary was back to her old self. He'd thank her and say how wonderful it was that she helped them, but that he would not be in to pick her up because Mary was feeling so much better. I was heartbroken at these turns. The children were a blessing - such a happy lot; The Magdalene gave up quarreling and defying every word. But the bills were staggering.

I had Charles check the want ads in the newspaper. Charles was underpaid by $150.00 a month. He asked for fifty dollars and got a big dose of Midden static. Instead of cooperation Mr. Midden decided Charles should sign a contract. He would have his attorney draw one up! Contracts were unnecessary for hired hands. I told him: Sign nothing! Robert and Henry Jr. thought it an excellent idea. Charles contacted his sister Julie about job possibilities in her area but received no word at all. Instead they made a trip in from Texas to tell us how good we had it!

Unfortunately, Charles caught stomach flu. There was an ice coating on everything and he wanted me to take pictures before it melted. He was not better so I put on his jacket and got the stock in the barn. He did the minimum and crept back to his sickbed.

When the contract arrived among the items were:

1 hour off per month to get a haircut.

Sundays: car used for 6 am Mass only, Required: to take Mr. Midden.

Milking: seven days a week, twice a day at 4:30 am and 8:30 pm

Hogs slopped daily after milk is separated.

Bovines and stock fed and watered daily.

Field chores: planting, harvesting, etc., as normal.

All chores must be completed daily regardless of weather conditions,

sickness or any other emergencies. All else comes after the chores.

Sick leaves and vacations: none.

Wages: $100.00 per month.

Raises: non-negotiable.

Clout and esteem were quite evident. This contract would reduce their lives to slavery. What future lay ahead for us and our five delightful children: Dread, distain, disgust and poverty?

On Thursdays, after Mr. Midden went to town and Robert had left for the day, Charles gathered several head of his livestock; loaded them in the dump truck with the cattle racks in place. In this way he disposed of his cattle until all that remained was Kurt, the Curtiss Candy Bull. Robert kept buying grey stock which was destroying the Guernsey line but he never set foot back at the barn. Charles asked Robert then his father if they wanted to buy Kurt - but this alerted them that Charles stock was missing! They said they wanted new blood. But Kurt was given a reprieve at the stockyard. A farmer recognized quality and paid top for him. Charles came home. His youthful dream of a great Guernsey herd was dead. He cried. I oved Kurt but even then tears never formed..

We met with my friend Tisko and showed him the contract. He thought it despicable and instructed us not to sign anything! He related the possible directions Mr. Midden’s attorney could take but they all ended that same: We would have to move. Charles was not being considered as a son but as a hired hand! As a hired hand, he had no rights! We would have to appear in court - if we didn't; we would be held in contempt and have to move anyway. Tisko shook his head, "I had no idea you were in such a terrible situation. I wish I had better news for you." We all hugged and felt that at least someone knew our plight.

On our tenth wedding anniversary, the mailman drove off the road and up to the “56 house”. I came outside. He had a registered letter from some attorney but he held tightly to the letter.

"Are you having any problems here? Like with your father?" He asked.

"Oh, it's his father. He wants us to sign a contract - horrible: no time off; milking and chores even if sick; one hour a month to get a haircut."

"Do you make reasonable?"

"One hundred a month."

"Christs! What a rotten deal; rotten deal. I thought something was up when I saw this letter. They don't do things like this unless it's bad news. Tell you what. Take the letter and this pen and write on it, 'Refused".

"Can you do that? I thought you had to accept all your mail."

The mailman assured me he was correct and that it could gain us some time. "You will find out what it contains without opening it; believe me!" He patted my hand and backed out of their drive.

In eight days the mailman returned and tooted his horn. I asked if it was another letter, but he snickered - he was just being nosy.

"There’s been an eviction notice delivered, beings we didn't sign the contract. It says, he is entitled to rent his property and has a tenant lined-up."

"Dirty skunk! Little guy, ain't he? How you gonna do?"

"Don't know. We have no car and he clamped down on the car keys, couldn't even take the children to school, but the Discos and Griffiths around the lane volunteered so that part is solved.

"Is your husband adopted?"

"No, we just let ourselves wide open." I said.

"It will work out; I get around." He patted my hand again, but could not smile for the sour taste in his mouth. He backed out. Mr. Midden came out of his house to approach the vehicle, but the mailman was so filled with hate that he turned his car violently and covered the old man with cinder dust.

On Sunday, May 13 a beautiful off-white and grey 1954 Cadillac meandered easily up our drive. I came outside, what could get worse, I thought.'

"Hi, I'm Ed Griffith: Theresa and Bill - that take the kids - that's my son and his wife. Tell you what: I thought you might like to use this car to go to church and stuff. I remake wreaks now and then and have an Oldsmobile that I just fixed - the wife likes it better. So, I'd be obliged if you use the car. Later, if you want to buy it, we'll see."

Dumbfounded, I said. "Yes, thank you, Mr. Griffith. Charles will surely drive you home; he is still doing the milking." I saw the man's taken-back reaction.

"No need to get him, I'll drive back."

Indeed, Charles drove the gentleman home and parked the beauty in our part of the dirt drive. "Honey, get everyone ready for church. Do you know what Mr. Griffith said? Beings we are evicted, I am as much as fired. He told me to let the milking go to hell! And, damned it, I am!" He removed his ball cap. "There's more, but I'll tell you later."

My precision Church routine began: Dress the middle children; fix The Magdalene's long hair; Check the older two, perfect their look. Dress self and fix my long hair: Back to baby Derek, the December child - changed and dressed. The Magdalene and Marshall get everyone's coats; do themselves then the middle sisters: Hats on girls and mother; Mother dons coat, buttoning every other button to keep it shut; gathers baby and diaper bag with enough bottles, and soda crackers; Out the door. This time there were no crabby nasty words in the car to church. All was serene. Church too meant reverence. There were prayer books. As the children squirmed; they were rotated nearer mother; if fussy rotation nearer father, if loud, carried out! Cry rooms were unheard of!

After Mass, Charles began relating the facts of our future as told to him by Mr. Griffith. A truck was lined-up and the moving crew would be provided by the local contractor.

"But, where will they move us - the highway?"

"Oh, to the old Mc Murray house, the first lane west off Bradforton Lane. They are school teachers and trying to sell it; thought it would look better with tenants."

It's not a farm? How do we pay the rent?"

"That's the good part; The Township held a meeting. They said there had never been a hardship case in the history of Gardner Township and all agreed that I could clear some brush at the roadways. They will pay me fifty dollars a week plus the rent for the house. They said it was the least they could do." He grinned. He saw my astonishment. They were appreciative because we fought the Land Use Plan. Those down Moore's Lane added that I never took a cent in all the years I'd plowed out the lane for the school bus in winter. Didn't want anything; waiting for school buses in winter, - no damned fun."

"But this is wonderful. I can't believe anyone knew we were alive! Can we take Butchie? Gosh, I hate to leave him here."

"My father would probably say we were stealing his property." He touched my arm kindly. The emergency had changed his demeanor; “Honey!” A moment of kindness!

We would need a babysitter for court day; I called my mother; forgetting that Helen saw this as an opportunity to downgrade her son-in-law. Helen let go with both barrels but I steeled. My demeanor was staunch:

"I need a babysitter for an hour or so on the 16th - just that! I don't want to live with you. Can we leave the children in the morning around nine?"

Her efforts thwarted Helen clammed a moment then grunted. I thanked her and hung up.

That day; the children brought their stuffed Easter rabbits and a few loved toys to Gramma’s. Court was cut and dried; a formality like Tisko said. What killed Charles was hearing his two brothers beside their father say that their sister Julie stood in agreement. Louise, the schizophrenic sister was not mentioned. Julie was closest to Charles heart. On the way to their car-to-use I patted Charles arm, "Well, we've lost a bad family and mine are not peaches! Let's say, we adopt the township!"

Charles broke into laughter until he was away from the court and the others; then his laughter turned to tears. “It was seeing them all against me.” He drove carefully around several blocks until his tears and face recovered. We went to the Wangard’s to fetch the children; took a few snapshots with Joseph and Helen and the children. Joseph mumbled: "Boy that sure is a dirty way to do a man and his family: Son of a gun!" My father seldom expressed anything.

We began packing immediately. Charles dismantled a walnut flower stand he had made for me. I had begun to dry off the Gloxinia bulbs earlier. I took the Infant of Prague from the TV and began wrapping it in newspaper. "I'm afraid to ask anything of you again, little one.” I heard: ' I had to look at that place!’ Mary thought, ‘Poor baby: We got this far, in amazing shape! Get us through the rest. You know what's ahead.’

CHAPTER X

THE BIG HOUSE

The big house was 92 years old. It provided an adventure from the onset. It was shaped like a Capitol "I" with side porches along both long sides; was two story with an attic. We never ventured to the attic. There was a cellar door on the west porch. One sunny day, I discovered it was a cool room with rickety and warped wooden shelves, cobwebs and empty canning jars. The east porch provided easy access into the house by light weight wooden screens. To access the house, anyone could bang on the screen door and the hook flipped open. The windows had no ropes, leverage or locks but were 12 panes over 12 and heavy. Without ropes, who would bother! There were ten rooms and bath all in sublime dilapidation!

I had a small portable dishwasher. The owners assured me it would hook to the sink faucet without worry, but the pump in the basement had to be spun by hand to start the water. It was a house and I could use the dishwasher! The bathroom was off the kitchen. It looked ok. None of four fireplaces worked. The east parlor one had no chimney. The west parlor’s had a chimney but was sealed shut behind the grate; making those above them also kaput. The dark curving staircase was glorious! A large foyer was at the second level. The owner said, "There are four bedrooms. One is awfully large, like the dining room below it and the back one has a staircase to the kitchen. Isn't that silly?"

Silly? I smiled. A school teacher that didn’t know any architecture! -It had been a mansion with a ballroom and maid's quarters! The ceilings were 12.5 feet high! Everything needed cleaned. The mop handle was a foot short even when I was standing on tip-toes.

While I packed at the '56 house, the moving crew stomped up the east porch steps with furniture. Their stomping disturbed a nest of copperheads under the porch. The moving stopped until the vipers were eradicated. Children would be using these steps! The guys stopped for water. This was when the moving truck guy said he delivered water to this house. It was stored in the cistern! The wells nearby were yellow with forsythia roots! A good well was at the bottom of the southwest hill. Charles inherited a chore: hauling a couple buckets of water up daily.

The house set on a hill, had a front door but no evidence of steps. The garage was new. Beside it was a wash house with no panes in the windows and a shiny mound of dirt floor on which to set a cauldron for boiling wash water. It would make a nice play house. The foundation of the house was stacked lime stones now without mortar. From the basement one saw daylight like stars in the sky.

The furnace had a single stack of bricks about four feet tall upon which balanced a disconnected furnace pipe. Corncobs and bits of coal lay around the dirt floor. It was May and warm.

For its forlorn appearance the house seemed quite sturdy. But the plumbing was not. The pipes gyrated and made horrible noises when I spun the wheel of the pump after connecting the dishwasher: Simply air in the pipes? There was a time I went down the steps to spin the wheel and two eyes glittered at me. I hoped it wasn't a fox. Back turn upstairs; maybe there is a carrot in the fridge. Ah, yes! Knife: slice it into coins; open the outside cellar doors; placed the carrot coins up the steps and out to the wash house. I perched by the window to watch but did not recognize this big animal that lumped up the steps chewing the carrot coins. It was four times bigger than a squirrel. Quickly down the stairs close everything and spin the pump wheel. Half way up the steps the pressure built and blew a hole in the pipe. I got a face full of water. When the dishes were finished and the plumbing was quiet, I dressed all the children, put them in the beautiful Cadillac and drove to the natural history museum. While the children enjoyed the displays I checked a case of small animals. What we have in the wash house was the size of their beaver but without the flipper. Maybe it was a groundhog, but their specimen was so little! I came home and chatted with Charles when he arrived. He wanted to do away with it. I said it was all right as long as it stayed outside; I would give it a carrot daily.

Charles fared well at his new job. The contractor kept an eye on him from afar and noticed that Charles cleared three days brush and scrub trees in one day. Charles didn't know it, but he was in line for a better job. Shortly, he started with Henry Sommer as a go-fur. Customers liked him. He had an endearing business face - like his father!

Derek was 6 months old when the St. Louis family spent an overnight at the big house. There weren't that many beds. Aunt Mary Regina and Uncle Mike brought Great Aunt Nonie, Grandmother and Jul Studenski. In the second car was Cousin Cathy, her husband John and their children. I told my Grandmother that I must cut Derek’s hair. Grandmother said one must wait a year before … She stepped into the dining room, took one look at Derek and said; “Cut his hair!” It was a day of fun and laughter. Grandmother said this was a happy house. She was correct.

At bedtime, the company decided on the east bedroom and all the children were into the west bedroom. Aunt Nonie took the upper foyer sofa without pillows; the pillows plus those from a gift sofa in the toy room (east parlor) covered the slats on the brass bed for John and Cathy. The others stacked blankets and contented themselves with the floor.

Charles had gone to an auction earlier. There was a fold away leather sofa like a Murphy bed. It took three men to move the Victorian Empire oak piece up the stairs. One pressed a button on the left arm and wham- bang a double bed appeared! Another press of the button and the thing folded just as fast. The three girls slept in it with strict instructions to never press the button or they may never be seen again! This monstrosity was purchased for twenty-five cents. Charles thought someone would bid after him. Visitors laughed their hearts out seeing the old mechanical piece.

All quieted down for the night, until 1:30 am. Cathy turned over and the pillows swayed. Out of bed she went hitting a cast iron heat register that was on the wall. There followed a tremendous rumbling. It was too close and too loud for thunder. Cathy sat on the floor in tears laughing. The register had fallen into the furnace pipe and clattered through the walls two floors to the basement. Everyone shot awake! When it was determined Cathy was not hurt, laughter replaced sleep. Grandmother repeated her edict, "Oh this is a happy house."

His boss, Henry Sommer exclusively worked in the rural areas. Charles did a lot of the roof repairs. He had a knack for determining where a leak began. This work usually took him into attics where cast off furniture was stacked. The owners would be right there chatting. One time Charles noticed an old wooden clock so the owner gave it to him; glad for one less bit of clutter. After a while, people got wind of Charles' fondness for clocks and he would gladly bring their castoffs home. In all the hubbub of moving and children the Gloxinias were not restarted and the bulbs died. Without the fluorescent lights in place, the shelves were far enough apart for the tall clocks. This was fine with me. He re-assembled the walnut flower stand. Evenings (without milking to do anymore) he cleaned, polished, balanced and wound the clocks and then set them on the shelf. Many had hourly and half hourly chimes. Unfortunately, the prettiest one had the worst gong, like someone banging a metal dishpan.

There was one clock that he was told did not work, so he set it under a chair in the west parlor. In a bit, we heard ticking. It was going. Charles was pleased and prepared the clock as he had the others. Once balanced on the shelf, it would not work. He kept fooling with it to frustration. Finally, I said, "Why don't you put it back under the chair and if it goes, then simulate the level of the floor."

Skeptically Charles set the clock under the chair. In a few moments, it began ticking. He took his level and marked the readings; got some chips of wooden shingles and began shimming it out. When the clock was to place he was stunned; only one corner was on the shelf! The other three had a variety of shims but it was ticking!

The huge dining room was great. An old pedestal table I refinished on the farm was nearly centered. The children rode their gift tricycle and tractor around it. Charles worked in the corner sanding his great grandfather's old wardrobe that nobody wanted. He had begun it before the move. I cut clothing patterns on the table. Any child in need of quiet or play board games (their favorite was chess) in the west parlor. The Statue of the Little Infant of Prague sat on the mantle happily surrounded with children.

One Friday evening, Charles carried a shoe box under his arm. In it was his first lesson in electricity. Henry Sommer wanted him to wire a barn the next Monday! Over the weekend he must learn how to make a doorbell ring. After two and a half hours he mastered the thing. Monday he found the barn a breeze and electricity was child's play to him. He became resident electrician; actually he displaced both Robert and Henry, Jr. both who were called for the electrical phase of house construction.

The bathroom plumbing in the big house continued to rumble when the dishwasher was used. One day I noticed that the bathtub had walked on its little bowed legs two feet into the corner! The inflow was intact but the tub had disconnected itself from the drain. From now on it was sponge baths!

October brought an early snow that second Saturday. When our family returned from the Christmas parade we saw snow filtering in through a window onto The Magdalene's pillow! Charles ordered: "No one goes in the basement! He checked the furnace with its single stack of bricks propping up one pipe. He fixed the banding - the other pipes were OK. Charles gathered the corncobs and what bits of coal there were. I was sent to town for something but upon return the Cadillac slid into a neighbor's drive on Bradforton Road. The men there pushed the car back on the road. The older man asked what we intended to do for winter? He had been the coal man for the big house. All he did was shovel coal into the furnace all winter! This was a shock; such coal bills were beyond us. I immediately told Charles.

How I wished at least one fireplace worked. I lifted my eyes to the Little Infant of Prague; sitting on the beautiful mantle in the west parlor.

"Well little one, I've need to bother you. Find us another house." I heard the little voice. It seemed to surround her. 'You'll not be here the winter, It's arranged. There is something else.'

But the news was interrupted! The two older children dashed in asking me if they could play chess. "Yes, yes, of course." They settled at the coffee table that was placed near the Infant of Prague. Their games were fast! After about six they were off to other things. But I did not receive the rest of the message from the Little Infant of Prague.

The following Monday, It had iced and Charles took the car to work. At a bridge, the car slid into an empty school bus. Before I found out, Mr. Griffiths had towed the car to his garage and was fixing it. Within days Charles said the house they were building for Paul Sommer (Henry’s son) was finished. "We can rent the house they will be vacating. It's good; Henry lived in it before he built his new one. It has some built-ins, one of Henry’s carpenters did them, so don't say anything negative, ok."

RIDDLE HILL

Five rooms after ten; one room had no heat! This stored our excess. Our dining table went into the basement. Five children slept in one small room. Boys couch by the window 3 girls in the brass bed. The Great Grandfather’s Wardrobe was finished and used to divide in the large living room into a play area and the other side for our bedroom. The small dining room became the living room; it was bright and cheerful. The Little Infant of Prague and the clocks occupied this area. The ticks and gongs were more apparent now. The kitchen was large. The huge chest freezer settled in easily.

During the night one gong awoke me. Instead of getting up and settling my mind, I guessed it was one a.m. Then in a bit there was another gong …single gongs continued from 12:30 a.m. until 1:30 a.m. from 13 clocks.

The Magdalene and Marshall started Farmingdale School. The school district was elated that we left the big house. They had no idea how the school bus could manage the hill to it! The Magdalene made a few lifelong friends, but Marshall was devastated in a class of 13 farm kids. It was not his element. There were no challenges to interest him.

Thanksgiving each of Henry Sommer’s guys got a frozen turkey and it this proved scrumptious. But Christmas the turkey looked funny and after baking it, the whole house smelled horrible. Out it went. The rest of the great dinner and desserts had to be supplemented with fried bologna sandwiches. I was blamed for the ruined meal. Others reported their foul was foul also, but I received no apology.

Charles used plastic to buy Christmas then discovered contracting work fell off in winter! Applying for unemployment killed his self-confidence it set the family on edge. I was expecting in March. But my body had not recouped from bearing the last two children. I barely had strength to get Charles off to work and the two older children ready for the school bus. I dragged so badly I could not remember caring or feeding any but the new baby, Selena.

Helen’s snapshots made me realize how pitiful the little ones looked. But as usual, Helen offered no help but she bragged about “seeing” the different guys I knew from Chi Rho to say how well they were doing. She still telephoned daily for an hour. She became more snobbish. Every few months they arrived with a different car. Helen said Joe was dissatisfied with the last one! She flaunted her new diamond earrings, necklace and finger rings. But they had an accident when their car was rear-ended. Helen went to the hospital. That last car was a Nova and was fixed. Helen and Joe stopped changing cars. When Helen called to tout made-up stories, I said:

“I don’t care about that! I want to know how you and dad are.” There was a three word answer and she clicked off. Her arthritis had been stimulated and she renounced activity.

The children made friends with the Wilson sisters across the road. They tended two donkeys for a Democratic politician and taught the donkeys to pull a cart. All the Riddle Hill children enjoyed rides up and down “Old Salem Road.” In summer, everyone’s children gathered black raspberries from bushes that outlined three sides of Old Salem Cemetery. There were never many berries brought home! We hoped the quiet occupants enjoyed the laughter of children gathering berries. There was a small church at the front it. Small denominations would use it. If there were any midnight gatherings; neighbors summonsed the sheriff.

Two warm afternoons, I donned a bathing suit to take the sun. The first time a funeral cortege drove past me and turned into the cemetery. I dashed inside. My second session was disturbed by the putt-putt of a lawn mower. A cemetery maintenance man was mowing! At the fence line he gawked with surprise. Every time he saw me thereafter, he made reference by saying he hardly recognized me with my clothes on!

This was the Kennedy era: Surplus food was given to the needy. Charles’ boss signed us up for this. I gathered the children and drove to a small town called Salisbury for our allotment. The men unloading food were chagrinned at the beautiful Cadillac but after the first time, they all looked for the big car with the happy kids. There was a button in the glove compartment that opened the trunk. The kids took turns on who got to press the button.

The monthly allotment per person was: 1 gallon tin of peanut butter-the kind that oily sets on top per person (8); 1 gallon can of (very salty) meat (8); 1- -5 # package of cornmeal (8) but only 1--- 3 pound brick of American processed cheese. There was cooking oil, flour, oatmeal and dry milk - 8 large portions of each. Charles used the meat for sandwiches for work lunches. I made pizzas, mayonnaise for their homegrown garden vegetables; grilled cheese sandwiches (with purchased salad olives and onions) peanut butter and (store-bought) jelly sandwiches. I made yeast cornbread, oatmeal and plain breads, many oatmeal cookies. It was challenging but with store bought eggs, yeast, raisins and cocoa there was a good variety; maybe not healthy but thank God, filling!

Into this lack of affection from Charles I decided the children needed something to love; went to the dog pound and saw a cute female wire-haired Terrier. “Cupid” had a sweet attitude. Unknown at the time was preventatives or shots for maladies. The mild disposition was actually the beginning of distemper. Little “Cupid” was loved and carted about in a doll buggy. The yard at Riddle Hill was fenced, so there was never a worry about strangers or of the dog dashing out. Cupid lasted long enough to become completely loved, then began resting more until she could no longer move. I took her to the vet, but it was “curtains”. A tiny kitten that The Magdalene found was brushed by a back tire when it escaped and succumbed. Someone passed along two rabbits because there was an empty cage outside the children’s bedroom. These lasted until a couple stray dogs got them. No more pets: Too devastating! Charles made our lives - something out of the old confession magazines.

An invitation arrived in the mail. Robert at 38 years old, was getting married! Charles threw it in the waste basket. When he wasn't looking, I retrieved it. I did not know the girl or indeed the city on the postmark. When I could, I wrote a letter asking her to look into the families' background as there had been much sibling estrangement, strange occurrences, deaths and one institutionalized sister who was now married and in Sioux City. I mentioned Robert's extreme strength (he had once lost his temper with the new ‘54 tractor that overturned in the woods. He lifted the thing upright!) "It was not that I did not wish "Sharon" wedding happiness; it is the long haul afterwards that needs super strength." –I gave much thought before sending the letter then walked out to the mail box, set it inside and pulled up the little red flag. We did not attend the wedding in Dalton City. When I discovered it was a small town east of Decatur, IL. it jogged an old memory! It seemed forever ago - yes, at Chi Rho Club when I was telling guys about who was marrying whom: Robert would be much older and marry a young girl from Dalton City. Sharon was 18 years younger than Robert …

Without seeming provocation, one morning on the short drive to work, the engine fell out of the Cadillac ruining the car. A neighbor donated an old Ford, black turning purple-blue with a pronounced shimmy but it was transportation. I washed the old car and it would not start! I called the Bean Boys who fixed cars. Jim Bean came over, laughed at the poor old car, and said the alternator got wet, when it dries out it should work. It did. But shortly, the car became worse and we borrowed money for a used blue station wagon. The only one interested in the old Ford was a junk yard. It brought $28.00.

Charles needed bagworm killer from the Farm Supply Store. I fetched it. A red-headed woman stepped alongside and announced to the clerk: "I'm Mrs. Robert Midden and I am here to pick up an order." I turned in surprise to see the girl smiling at me. This is how Robert’s wife, Sharon and I met. We chatted as long as we could about everything. Sharon had pulled it out of Robert about his sister; he admitted to her that he had no intention of mentioning Louise until AFTER the wedding if ever! Sharon had been a secretary at the State House but it was too fast a life for her she was not about to hop from man to man to "get somewhere". These were the years of "Free Love" and she did not want her name in any black books. She had worked long enough to buy a car, but Robert said she did not need it on the farm as his truck was newer. She sold it to help pay the wedding expenses.

‘Oh God the trap is sprung! No car - no way to leave! No honeymoon! At least Charles and I had a week in Colorado Springs!' But he saved his Army pay. I said none of this. We parted new friends, but I came away with a lower opinion of Robert. Like me, Sharon would become a woman without money or hope of escape.

About now, I had the strangest dream. It was about Nefertiti and her spouse. They faced angry people and turned regally away leaving their young son ogling the crowd which set upon and killed him. The parents seemed without a care. I awoke with a start and checked baby Selena OK and then the others who were nicely asleep. The dream replayed in my mind; what parents could leave their child to be slaughtered? It was so disturbing. I borrowed a book about Jeannie Dixon from the library wherein this woman told of having this same dream but it had continued with serpents coiling around her legs. I was glad my dream ended before the snakes. But it seemed to open a facet of my mind that had been dormant. Flashes of precognition came, but the time frames were outlandishly confusing.

Charles continued his morning tirades of “Putting everyone in their place” and left slamming the door so hard that my cooking pots bounced away from their hanging place and one finally fell off. The handle came off! I had saved green stamps a long time for it. I needed that pot - I only had two and a small aluminum pan. I was devastated. I cooked for eight with one frying skillet and one 3 quart pot! I asked around but none of the new neighbors knew of a tinker. I put the pot and handle in the trunk of the car. I would be on the lookout for someone that might help my pot.

One day I noticed an iron works business sign on West Jefferson Street. I circled the block and parked outside. ( IL. IRS building is there now.) I took my pot and handle and went inside. A gentleman asked if he could help me and I said I hoped so. At a feminine voice several work fellows peeked out of the warehouse area. I explained that my pot fell off the wall and the handle broke. He said, “Lady I hope you hit him hard enough!” I was dismayed. He said he thought they could help and he disappeared into the warehouse area where loud laughter and clapping ensued…

Finally he emerged and the pot had it’s handle welded on. I was thrilled and asked how much it was. He said fifty cents. I shelled out and then asked what kind of iron things did they do? He said, “Oh come through the warehouse you can see out the back door!” So I pass through this grungy greasy mechanic’s garage; he turns to the East and points into the air. “See all that red scaffolding way over there?”

“Oh yes! That’s where they hung the big American Flag to honor the troops.”

He looked down at me and said, “That is ours. We are building that building.”

I covered my mouth and gasped. “Oh, I have insulted you! I am so sorry.” He crunched my shoulder a bit and said,

“No, no we were at a fussy lull and having you has been a delight, put us back on earth. We should thank you!” I left a happy work crew with my newly mended pot.

The strange precognitive memories kept coming. One regarded ***a white panel truck.*** Henry Sommer let Charles drive one home and I went into hysterics! I asked Hank to take back the truck! (I remembered finding Charles dead beside a white panel truck. But this could not be correct; our children were too young.) In my Far Memory reprisal they had chosen life directions - and there was another man. I hadn't met another man. What was this foolishness? Who would want a woman with six little rag-a-muffins from a place called Riddle Hill? My thoughts were "far out". I should be happy he was entrusted with the truck. But my outburst set badly with Charles-the faultfinder. He zoomed into tirades that could not be quelled by logic, silence, or kindness.

My body was vitally emaciated. The doctor prescribed iron tablets but too little a dose. I felt useless. Charles continued his tirades - nothing made him happy. One midnight it upset me so much that I could not sleep. I dressed; got the car keys and was opening the door when Charles heard the click and asked where I was going.

"To the concrete underpass; I'm sorry to ruin the car, Charles but you’re not happy and I am doing no good here. You will get along fine. Goodbye."

It took him a moment to comprehend my words and then he grabbed me gently and turned me to him with sweet comforting words; away from my intention. He mentioned the possibility of our having our own home. It was the one on Adelia Street that we looked at. This place had a small upstairs. “Not another move! An upstairs; more work, bedclothes and cleaning. “I can't do this; I can’t tackle more."

His tantrums actually subsided. Perhaps he talked with his co-workers, but Charles actually began to think of me. He looked into a baby sitter and took me out to dinner when he could. He had no idea I had become so fragile. We made plans for a dinner out. My mother still called daily touting people whose wonderful lives I did not care about. This time she decided it was only right that I should spend my birthday with her and my dad! She had never pulled that stunt before and she was not going to do me out of a pleasant evening and dinner. She fussed when I told her, no. and began a tirade but I’d heard so many from Charles that I could compare them and know my mother was an amateur. I was able to hang up the phone, block out the mother-nastiness and have a very nice evening with my husband.

The house deal was accepted, but an attorney was needed. The realtor used Mr. William Yardley. I called his office to ask about the abstract or whatever was needed to buy this old house. William took the receiver with delight:

'Ah, Deidia!' Into the receiver he said, "Hello, my dear, can we chat a bit? I do hope so; it has been awhile." Next he went into his memories of last seeing me. "I particularly remember you're coming to the opening of the Stratton Building. You were so proper with little gloves and hat and a Japanese print halter, devastatingly beautiful! I remember making way to you and promptly took you in my arms. Then I noticed Charles and …ha ha …quickly put one arm around him also. I wanted to say to him, 'Now young man you take care of her, but it did not come out that way."

I laughed. "No, it didn't.

"Oh, you remember my gaff."

"Every word; you said, 'Now, young man I want you to take care of my wife; she is everything to me."

"I did, didn't I? You tried to save me, but I goofed that too. You noticed Polly off a ways and mentioned my wife was…?"

"Standing alone at the end of the hall."

"And, I could not conceive of anyone else being my wife at that moment." He chuckled into the phone. "I do believe Charles was astonished, but my dear, whenever I see you, Deidia you are my wife! Let me say it, I am and forever will be most inordinately … fond of you."

"--And I also," I said. "My dear, I wonder if there might be some news about that house?"

"Oh, that. Yes, everything is nicely in order. I hope you will be happy there. It will be good to have you back in town. Maybe you will get in town more often." There were pleasantries and we hung up.

I had let circumstances invade my health and thinking. I no longer felt like the personable confident girl that Mr. Yardley thought he was talking to on the phone. I was bewildered and exhausted. The silly old song I had sung on the bus a lifetime ago. How did it go? ***I'm gonna change my way of living and if that ain't enough, I'll even change the way I strut my stuff. My walk will be different, my talk and my name. Nothing about me's gonna be the same.*** Then I laughed. 'Well it worked once. The little Infant of Prague! He's always been a help.' He was poised in the living room now. I heard him:

‘L**ittle lady, what did you do at Christmas?'**

‘I made a cowboy shirt for Marshall and red nightgowns for the girls.'

**'And for you?'** the voice asked.

'Ugh?'

***'Precisely! What you must do first is try some hair color. You were a redhead in the Grecian life and used makeshift stuff before you married. Then next are garments. How are you fixed for garments?'***

"Ugh?'

***‘Look over the pile of garments you were given. So nothing fits! See if something can be transposed into a garment. You will need something, shortly.’***

This confused me but I started with the hair. Hair color kits were in their infancy. I chose a color called Tiger Lily. My hair turned out fine not too bright. I checked the clothes: Impossible - just like before. No one: husband, children mom or dad - neighbors noticed the new hair color! Well, at least I felt better.

After the holidays and some discussion, Charles and T asked Robert and Sharon for dinner. Robert was uncomfortable at first, but then relaxed. Sharon delighted in learning which child went with each name and that they were so grown-up with their pseudo-grasshopper drinks and their table manners were perfect. (Learned at the big house: My motto was: Even if we have nothing; we can have manners!)

After the dinner, the good vibes lasted about three days then Charles expression began explosions I could not quell. My studies of abnormal behavior in Amsterdam regarded children with hydrocephalus. Holland had so many. Charles outbursts were beyond my capability. People without funds equaled institutionalization. I looked at the Little Infant's Statue but heard nothing. Darn; I must forget this and search those useless garments again, and continue saving myself.

The only possibility was a pair of silky pastel blue pajamas. I dismantled them; turned the pieces until I actually had a fairly sleek dress. It was no sooner finished it when Marshall's Saturday Class at Blessed Sacrament set a date for First Holy Communion. The timing made my mind spin. I needed a hat! There was some sheared black castor (beaver) from the late Grandmother Sommer-Midden who had worked as a furrier. Long ago, Grampa Midden was pleased that I take it as no one else wanted it. In my scrap cloth box was a piece of cambric and red and gold upholstery from my mother. This turned into a black open toque and a boa. True, it looked fairly hokey but I was clothed. Charles seemed proud of my appearance. Photos were taken and there were gifts for Marshall from my mother and father.

CHAPTER XI

THE COTTAGE IN TOWN

Moving day! How I disliked leaving my wonderful Riddle Hill neighbors. The tax collector put his arm around me; “You mean it; you will miss these people?” I nodded. “Then, don’t worry, little lady. Your new place will have good neighbors too.” I hoped he was right.

The weather set a record low of 17 minus 0 degrees but Henry Sommer's crew effectively moved us. Some useless things were cumbersome gifts from a dear neighbor and had to be taken along. They were set on the front porch. I called the Good Will; these went happily to be used in client rehabilitation. Now all the gift curtains could be used in the parlor and dining room. There were no shades or window coverings. Unfortunately there were no drapery. I had a bag of plastic violets and many little square green planting pots. I made tiny “violet plants” and set them along the window sashes.

The children’s room had eight windows, four doors (two on closets). It was a meld of a small bedroom and a back sunporch. Actually we discovered it was one huge ice box. The children huddled under lots of blankets and stuffed all their soft toys - mostly big Easter rabbit toys from their grandmother’s yearly gift around them.

House-wise: The residence was vacant over a year. The plumbing was fixed before moving day; winters had been unkind to it. Our awful plastic drapery cut the cold a little in the children’s room. (The hazards of plastic were yet unknown.) Again several girls slept on a brass bed. The double bunk was assembled for the boys. I hoped all would be fine: After we moved into 334 South Adelia, renovation began - but it was to the upstairs. It was raw. It's only attributing features were 3 large closets against the walls. There were no walls all plumbing, wires and toilet even the stairway to the main floor were exposed. One mounted two steps to access an outside door. Opening the door led onto a rickety few boards and stairways down to the back yard. The crew of Henry Sommer was happy to have work in this dead of winter and the upstairs was made livable but not for children’s bedrooms and play areas like we all anticipated. Charles was planning it as an apartment to rent out!. It was a good plan but a devastating disappointment. The apartment would provide a little income during the slack cold months. The children had no choice but to live six in the one huge room and share the bathroom. They were mild mannered, polite children most of the time and they were careful to use the closet doors as room dividers when dressing. Years later I discovered they were as terrified of their father’s nightly and at times morning outbursts as I was. They were not gathered there to play when he came home - they were hiding from him!.

To furnish the apartment Charles reluctantly followed the advice of his co-workers and entered the Salvation Army Thrift Store finding a nice Refrigerator and Stove. All the kitchen cabinets and sinks were from a local salvage company. Meanwhile we tolerated aqua walls and tarnished, ugly gas-electric light fixtures. There were a few roller shades that fit nowhere! Our own living room drapery from the farm house had been given to Charles’ newlywed cousins. Our kitchen was tight a run-around-the-table nightmare with an appliance on each wall! Its attribute was a pantry on the East side. Everyone loved the pantry! The kids found it was great for hide-and-seek and finding any foods to nibble.

Having a tenant overhead, helped curb Charles’ tantrums. I put my foot down on loud noises. It afforded a reprieve until Charles learned the tenant's hours and let loose when the tenant was gone. That meant the tantrums were purposely done for condescending mastery! It was obvious Charles had no mental defect that built and blew - he did it on purpose just to feel masterful. But it frightened the children (Just as he and his siblings had been terrified of their father and hid with any special treat under the dining room table and hidden by the long tablecloth! Likewise our children began avoiding their father. They played in their room. It became their rite of survival. When the truck drove in the back they flew into their bedroom and set-up overly outlived toys. I faced his stupid but terrifying wrath alone.

On the other hand, the children became accustomed to life in town easily. They were surprised at the small frontal distance across the house, but the old driveway was concrete and they could ride their outdoor toys wonderfully. Unfortunately the youngest other child on our double block was twelve and assumed many household chores to help her mother. It was an old street; the neighbors were between 75 and 92. But my children treated them as great aunts and uncles; Marshall helped his father with moonlighting jobs. The Magdalene listened to the older ladies’ stories;she would sit on their porch swings for hours. The little ones visited less because of play.

Parochial School became a problem. There were three streets with heavy traffic between Adelia and the Catholic school. Charles took the car to work so the children would have to walk. Dubois School blessedly was two and a half blocks away and a school guard was stationed at the Monroe Street crossing. (Bussing began after the last Midden child finished High School.) As each dear neighbor left for Heaven, younger families moved onto Adelia Street.. They all mastered growing lush lawns and tried to shame me about the lack of lawn esthetics. I gestured magnanimously and said, “I have all your children here playing freely in the safe middle of the block.”

One lovely afternoon I was able to use the car! The children and I were in Kresge’s Dime Store and about to leave when I heard a spirit guide speak unhappily! It said: ***'A record is in by that guy. It’s under the J's.'*** It was like they had to tell me but did not enjoy it. I checked the "J" section thumbing it twice. The only possible album was by a Horst Jankowski. I laughed remembering how in High School I had taken a pen and thought: ‘OK write my married name.’ The letters that spelled were as unpronounceable as this. With a J, a few K’s and a W; I had thought the angels were spelling my grandfather’s original surname! Wait! This was an “H” name - unusual here in America. How long had I looked for a man with an unusual “H” name? I’ll try it.’ At home, not time for records, supper had to be started.

"Hi Daddy! We went to town and had a nice time. I got socks and mama got a record!" Regina was our eloquently truthful child..

"Oh, what's the record about?"

"We don't know; we began supper." Regina said.

"Well, stop everything, let's hear the record." Charles said. I was mind boggled at this, but he opened the cellophane and turned on the record player. The first song did not turn them on but after that they all became interested. When the featured song began, I put my hand to my mouth in awe.

"My God, it's beautiful!" I said..

"Yes, that's really all right. You picked a good one!" Charles said. We let the record spin while we ate the evening meal.

I played the record the next day. The bouncy tunes lifted me into a happier world. His next album was added. The helpful spirit began to tell me when a new one was at The Music Shop. Never were any more of his records albums in the Dime Store. His music brought a joy into my everyday life that I never had.

SWEET INES

My first visiting neighbor was Ines McDaid. She was new to Springfield from Lansing, Michigan. We met when I backed the station wagon out. Ines was burning leaves and her four children were roasting hot dogs over the fire! I rolled down my window and said, "Well, that's the best use, I've ever seen made of that." We laughed. Next day Ines came over asking to borrow a loaf of bread! The following day it was a bowl of sugar! There was something familiar about Ines, but I couldn’t keep giving out groceries so I asked Ines for tea and apologized about having my records playing "I usually play them when the children are in school. I… I only have Jankowski. He's German, I think." Ines visited twice a week. We listened to music and became acquainted. She said:

"It feels like I know this music but haven't heard it for a while. I can't believe it's been around for a few years and I never heard it! I found out my twin sister has his records. She's kind of hoity-toity but says if she plays his music her parties stay pleasant, but if she tries another pianist, things go ribald! It feels like I know you, especially with this music; do you know him?"

"Well, Ines, I have an angel that tells me that I do. I am writing a piece about a long ago time.”

"I'm like that about remembering things. Do you get anything about me?"

"You giggle like someone.” I began remembering: “She came to Jankowski's first concert I felt like nobody knew him and … an old man and I asked all our friends to make an audience. Wait, I'll play you a piece. You listen. You had never heard him. Tell me what you said." I placed the needle on: "A Simple Melody." Ines relaxed.

"I said, 'Humph, I can play single notes' then you said, 'wait it may turn into something' and it did! Listen, see it DOES! Oh my God what are you writing about? - Atlantis! May I read it?" She took the script…

"This guy, the anesthesiologist is your husband, Charles. You don't say so; maybe I read this before! Do you suppose?"

"My arms are cold, Ines."

"I'm too pleasingly plump to get cold. You're going to see the pianist, I know it!"

"Sure," I answered sarcastically.

"Hey, Mary can you come over tomorrow and help me make Mrs. Johnson's fudge recipe for the school fair?"

"Sure, I'm making plum muffins; nothing to them."

"I hate you Mary Midden, I had a wonderful time; see you about 1:30?"

The Texas Fudge Recipe made five pounds and was truly delicious. I got the recipe.

Ines was skeptical of the plum muffins; they sounded strange and looked moldy. But once The Magdalene let a classmate take a bite of a muffin; children flocked to the booth returning for more and eating them on the spot. Ines' fudge was not moving fast. She needed that muffin recipe.

Ines and I haunted antique shops and second hand stores; until Mr. McDaid wanted to upgrade to a classier neighborhood. She invited me for tea with her new neighbors and coerced me to use my palmistry skills. Ines learned a bit, but lacked finesse when citing a lover or a coming break-up.

Once she came to my house frightened. I know why our house was so cheap! Mary Kay awakens to see an old man standing over her trying to hand her a pretty gift. When she refuses he turns away sadly and disappears. Missy never sees anything, but Mary Kay is frightened."

As if I had done this before I told Ines how to bless the house - use "holy water" and tell the spirit this place is hallowed. That he should go to the Keeper of Records and get on with his life in the spirit. I said I would come and do it if Ines had no luck. In a few days Ines asked me to come. She closed the door behind us:

"He's GONE!" she said with relief. "I asked the neighbors if anyone else had problems with the house; Mary, get this! The old guy kept showing up, that's why the house was affordable. It seems he was never on good terms with his daughter. One way or another; she died in the house and he died later. I guess he was trying to make up with her; and chooses little girls. I did the Holy Water thing and so far - so good."

"I am experiencing spirits coming for prayers. The first one was like a little cloud with a tail and I laughed at it, because of that Ghost-Buster Movie! But the children came home and some saw it. The Magdalene, Regina and Selena saw it but Cosima saw nothing. The other kids were at scouts. I was grateful for that! Gee, how upset they were! Finally, I wrote out a prayer to recite to these spirits; like - to remember their childhood and past sins and chips on the shoulder they caused or felt from others and so on. One guy puzzled me he was college age and carrying a few books. He wore a pale yellow vest sweater. He came through the house and kept going. I called after him, but he said: He saw my "Light" and thought this was where he was to go. That puzzled me. He wouldn't come back."

"Hey, I almost forgot! Isn't today your birthday? I made you a cake; well a one-person cake. I'm on a diet." Inez placed a white cupcake with a blue candle on it, and I giggled. Then Ines giggled and her giggles were infectious. The more I giggled the less I could blow out the single little candle. The harder I tried the more we laughed at my failure. About to singe the icing, I reached to pluck out the flame, but Ines grabbed my hand. "I don't care if the whole thing burns up; you have to blow out the candle!" Finally, after a huge breath, the flame was out and both ladies felt their chests raw from laughter. I was thirty- seven.

"Hi, Mary! What's wrong?" Ines came in.

"Something's wrong with the music. There was a bit of this and a couple weepy things in the previous album, but this is awful! It sounds so angry and unhappy. See what you think." I set it to play.

"He sounds like a nasty little snot. All those are good songs. Listen to that nasty plink."

"A glissando!” I said, “He would never do a glissando. He said the Berlin Conservatory considered it a bad movement and only for those who were too lazy to play arpeggios. Something's happened; I can’t bear it if he is as unhappy as I am. Oh, Ines you did not hear that."

"Still blowing up? I nodded yes. "I think Ken has a girl on the side."

"Oh… God!"

"Yes, he hasn't touched me since we lost that last baby; (it was best. It wasn't right at all but…"

"I'm sorry, Ines."

"You're getting things about the pianist.”

"Remembering."

"Tell me something. How did we dress for those concerts?"

"I always wore a long chiton, I had been Greek earlier. You were so happy with a certain dress; it was overdone. I hope you don't mind. It was thin like Georgette; the bodice sheered and had a sweetheart neckline. The sleeves were short, split and overlapped. The skirt had a handkerchief hemline. It was not a style for you."

"What color was it?"

"Everything there had a cream color to it, so I don't know."

"It was baby blue and you've just described my prom dress exactly! I loved that dress so much, I designed it myself and it was absolutely frumpy, but I was so happy with it!' Ines laughed, "This is scary as hell! You're going to write him, aren't you?"

"I doubt he knows English, Ines."

"You will learn German and write." She broke into conspiratorial giggles.

After Ines left, my Guides sounded disheartened. 'I guess you'll want to write. You'll need a German/English Dictionary' there was a pause. 'There's one at the Good Will for $.25 but it is in script.'

‘I can handle script. Do I have time to drive there now?’

‘Go tomorrow. Start dinner now. Charles had a hard day.’ My eyes rolled heavenward.

'In the morning, go to the library and choose a manual; Then to the thrift store for the dictionary. This project will take longer than you think …there's interference,' the helpful spirit said.

I delved into the new language. It had a childlike broken-English quality. Word placements more closely resembled Russian. I hoped it would be close to Dutch, and go faster, but no; this was a page by page thing. I barely managed a proper sentence but the library manual was more adult than the language records. When I could I typed on the Atlantis experience.

I was finishing experiences when Charles saw a notice in the paper about women taking a 3 month brush-up business course and being paid for it. As winter brought the usual lean period, Charles stoutly encouraged me to apply for it.

I passed the preliminary testing easily. Class started in two weeks at Illinois Business College. I found the better German textbook at a book shop and returned the library’s copy. A Mrs. Barnett was taking the brush-up class also. She had to deliver her daughter to Springfield High School daily and suggested I ride with her for companionship. The classes went well except for typing. I never copied - I composed verbatim. Speed was evasive. I tried to learn a few German phrases between classes, but the other ladies engaged me in friendly chat. I noticed a familiarity about the accounting teacher. A tall gaunt woman with her hair dressed close to her head. It was the way she swirled her hand; as if over a pool to read water. Miss Kilpatrick fascinated me when she said after the delight of Algebra she went into accounting; not for her that Geometric tangle of intangible rules. I laughed. Neither had I mastered Geometry in either this or the Greek life! And this lady was a ringer for the high Priestess at the Parthenon who taught me to divine shimmering water. I was happy the lady achieved her dream of mastering mathematics, but kept silent - why sound nuts.

I finished with A's and A+'s in all but typing. It was crazy - with all the articles and poems I had published how I lagged in speed and accuracy. As nothing came of the job end of it, Charles' once handsome face returned into a crimson scowl. Oh, how I would rather have secured a job and been free of him for a few hours.

LETTERS AND MUSIC

The German lessons were slow going. There were no musical or inspiring words in the manuals or on language records. I prayed: ‘What caused this change in his music? Dear Guides, let me see what caused his unhappiness, please.' I sat down and watched a little picture weave upon a plain wall in our bedroom. I saw a mountain road, a convertible with the top down; he was sprawled asleep in the back. Someone else drove the car. Something was in the road and the driver swerved into the mountain and the car flipped repeatedly. A flash scene: The car was a tangle; next scene he is in a hospital. A lady visits, sees the body in braces and bandages; massive zigzag stitching and staples across the right side of his face and she withdraws.

"She abandoned him!"

'Yo!' their word for 'yes'. 'We want you to hear this.'

"Ah Horst, It is so good to see you back. Now we make a Christmas Album and clean-up!"

"I do not do Christmas Albums. I - I am a Jazz Man!" With that he slammed the piano lid after one sharp glissando. Actually, he was a Jew but did not know the religion. He only knew this was his mother was very secretly.

'He has insulted them. Oh, I have to write that letter NOW, somehow, before he puts out any more of that awful stuff; but would he take heart?

**'THIS is who you are, my dear!'**  These words stopped me! The space cleared, then I heard the notes of Schubert and faces of many pianists sped past. Liszt played Landowska's Harpsichord; Puccini (infuriated me), Chopin with George Sand, Gershwin defending his negroes, Porter’s difficult lyrics, Fiedler doing Western music, Lombardo, Carle, Griffin, Ward, Craig and finally this cute Jankowski: The German who hated being cute but tried all my musical suggestions without question.

I took the albums and laid them according to their writing. 'This song is supposed to be called "Deidiamia" and that "My Grecian Love Song." My sensitive hands sorted them. The awful one is last. How? Oh dear Guides, how can I learn that language?’

**'My dear you can fairly well construct a sentence. Say you do not know his language but hope to learn it. Take both books and just write.'** After two and a half days in spare time, I had two pages that seemed too idiotic to believe. 'I'll write this in English also in hopes that someone there can translate; then he will know I am not simply an inept fool.'

The post office was in the Federal Building yet. I had the letter weighted for airmail and stamps affixed. My qualm came with the postal clerk. I knew him from a Catholic that studied the religion, Would he mention this foreign letter to my husband? I dropped the letter in the slot.No backlash there! Now I wondered if the letter would be delivered and if he could make some sense of it. Once Home I asked for a pre-view. This was my clairvoyant vision:

Horst was given the letter and thought it was from his record affiliate in the United States. His sound man hunched over his shoulder to read with him. The others gathered around too.

"It is a private letter, like they say a fan letter!" Klaus laughed some others guffawed.

But Horst did not laugh. He tried to decipher the sadly slaughtered Deutsch. Some things did not make sense, but he got the idea where the message was heading. Klaus on the other hand jibbed at his boss's shoulder when he found something hilarious.

"Oh Gott, Horst! Es sagen "remember all your years in the greenhouse! You are growing flowers!" Klaus laughed until tears filled his eyes.

"Get me the English/German dictionary. I am sure she has the wrong word. Here! Ah, Greenhouse is Conservatory. She means the Music Conservatory! You laugh too soon." When he finished at her signature, he noticed the second letter in English. He folded them both and slipped them in the envelope and looked at his address. "But, this is wonderful, Klaus. Look! It has no address, just the city."

"Why does that excite you?"

"Stuttgart has six million people and it comes from America. It means that I have gained a sort of reputation for my music. Indeed, this is wonderful." He put the letter in his breast pocket and dropping all chores called a man and they left. The little clairvoyant picture closed. Another little picture opened: He hands the letter to a man in a library. From the conversation, this man tried to teach the pianist English. He reads the English version transposing it into Deutsch for Horst. The pianist is most pleased. He says: “Professor that is the kind of English I wish to speak!” The Professor dropped his pince-nez. This writer was no a run of the mill fan.

Shortly Horst began a new project. He agreed with May-ree (his pronunciation of Mary) the new music was not the music of his heart but there were some charming innovations. What caught him completely was her describing: "Flowers for a Princess" from another album; citing the innovations that could not fit into the song, but he would have. 'She was correct. Rabe and I tried to fit in the Boogie Woogie bass. She must think a lot of me and she may write again! She says she hopes to learn my language better. Maybe I have found someone at last! I must get an atlas and find out where Illinois is. She writes her town is between Chicago and St. Louis: Wherever, what an incredible distance!'

He composed long after the others went home. In the late morning his staff filtered in finding him in wrinkled shirt, cuffs turned back and both tie and cuff links at the right side of the piano keys. They heard caressing sweet notes and breathed a sigh; their Jankowski was back! In a few days his new music was complete!

"Ah, Horst! So good to have you back!” His directors were pleased, “A few more cuts (songs) and the new album is complete. What do you think of that?"

Quietly in a danger-zone-voice, the composer said: "Throw it out."

"Ach, do I hear you correctly"

"All of it. We call in the choir and do this; it is better music."

"But - but we don't want better music; we want this!" They met with Horst's sweet smile. Their hands went into their hair with exasperation: "Artists - BAH!"

Taking no notice of the commotion he caused, Horst quietly explained his ideas to the choir. Their sounds were beautiful and he smiled with pleasure. It had been so long since they saw him smile.

I wondered, but did not expect an answer. After three months my Guides instructed me to go to The Music Shop. Would it be trash or treasure? The cover was very different; it set off long forgotten memories. A beautiful girl was exiting a baby blue ’34 Rolls Royce. On leach she led two Afghan Hounds one light faced and one dark. The chauffeur looked familiar; but not his uniform. I removed the album at home: 'Those dogs were in a basket; the room was very dark - a library; they scared hell out of me! I almost rode in that car but… and the thought faded. Oh my God, he really got the letter!' I read the contents on the back. 'Maybe the slump is over.' She smiled pleasantly, set the album in the cabinet.

It was too late to play it; supper needed to be started; the children wandered in from school. On a self-dare she said, "Jankowski's got a new album." They begged her to play it. "Do you think it will be all right daddy's about to come home?" They insisted, so I opened it and set it to play. When Charles entered the house, Mary felt a clutch in her stomach, but the children were enthusiastic telling him about a new record; the littlest ones jumping up and down. They loved the happy music.

End of work day: He just stashed the tool containers in their place in the kitchen. Many of the songs were tunes already popular in America but they were performed with more embellishments and wonder. I could not listen too well being in the kitchen but the children were dancing and looking at the cover ooh'ing and ah'ing over the old car, the chauffeur and the pretty lady. They were not keen on dogs. Charles wanted no dogs so they did not experience this joy.

The music caught Charles attention: "Boy, he's got it bad for somebody."

My throat caught but I said evenly, "Oh, you think so?" But behind the stove, I reeled a bit: ‘Oh God, what have I done?’ I calmed; ‘Couldn’t be! No, it couldn’t be!’ The children were laughing and dancing. I would play it when the house was quiet. - Perhaps it was nothing. That proved wrong. Every note was aimed, well intentioned and lovely. I choked but sobered enough to think; I must dissect the music and played the album all day befuddled. I tried transposing the possible German words. The wonder in that man's hands was so powerful, light and loving. 'Oh God, how will I write about this? Dear Guides, I really need your help.' On the record player, one note pinged. I checked the listing: Zabadak. -‘Oh, one of the dogs was Zabadak’. I feared my husband might put two and two together. He could have noticed the German books and thought they belonged to the older children. Still - this was not a time to mention my Doctorate in Music. What an emotional whirlpool!

About a week into having the album, I relaxed enough to detect the unsung lyrics. One song was about her letter**. I *remembered that practice episode:***When Horst presented the music, he took a letter from his pocket and said; "…If I did not know who sent this letter, I would wonder. I play for you, 'I Wonder'." "The Last Waltz"; in 1948 I had encouraged my junior class to choose it for their final prom number. I had even sung it for the class, but the girls reported that nobody could find the music so had to choose "Goodnight Ladies". "Black Eyes" was one song on this album. It was a song I learned in Russian class in 1952. I ***remembered*** his assuring me he was not learning to play both piano and organ together, but it was just for the entrance of "Casino Royale." I need not ask about it in her next letter. "And We Got Love" was the happiest thing he did since the "Black Forest". That needed congratulations! I was very happy with this album and shortly his great amour became a secret delight. No one had ever invested so much thought and work for my sake in all of my life. I held these thoughts close without a word to anyone, but it meant I had to continue or the music would crash again!

My Deutsch was no better but this letter was congratulatory. There were so many good things to write about the music, innovations and tinkles and what certain songs meant to me. The songs had English titles. She referred to each song in English. At one point she wrote. "Oh Jankowski, you live up to your potential so beautifully. You have more music in your littlest finger than most pianists have in all ten." She thought a bit then wrote: "There is perhaps one thing; I have never seen your photograph on an album cover; just sketches or small snapshots on the back. I am looking for one of me, but alas I am hard to find."

About a month passed. The telephone rang. I was on a ladder cleaning my very old glass-faced cabinets in the kitchen. It was my sprightly 84 year old neighbor.

"Mrs. Midden, it is Frances Day. Is your chandelier tingling?"

I looked up at it. "No, Mrs. Day but my Christmas cactus' fronds are bouncing up and down."

"Oh, good, I'm glad I'm not in this alone." The telephone clicked off.

I wondered what "this" was, but climbed back up the ladder to continue my cleaning. In a moment my china cups clinked together and began to circle on their saucers.

'My Lord, It's an earthquake! In the center of Illinois! Well shoot, if things can get all swallowed into the ground, I may as well stop scrubbing these cabinets.' She put away her cleaning supplies and ladder. It subsided. ‘My that makes one feel insignificant! Oh! Oh! Earthquakes make International News. I'd better write Jankowski and assure him I'm all right. I can mention God; I don't think Germans believe in God.' I asked my helpful spirits that the letter get to its destination quickly; then posted it.

The letter arrived just before the group left for a show at the Fernsteturm (TV Tower.) He read it immediately (in her little clairvoyant picture, she saw a quizzical expression a moment). He put it in his breast pocket and hurried on to the show.

The group entered the tower which set at the South ridge of the Stuttgart basin. (The basin was grassed completely; it covered a huge hole left after World War II bombings.) The city rebuilt modern. The tower had speed elevators but no stairs! All performers were assembled and set-up when the power failed. Everyone: audience and group, those on other levels and workers were stranded. With the air off it became hot quickly. The windows did not open! The musicians wore black wool suits, knit ties and white shirts with cufflinks. Panic was about to burst in the audience and Horst remembered May-ree's words.

‘Something like this phenomenon straightens out one's thinking-- who has more power man or God!’

"Ok everybody! Make yourselves comfortable, and sit down,” he shouted and then removed his wool jacket, tie and cuff links and then turned back his shirt sleeves.

"Mein Gott, Horst what are you doing?" The sound man was appalled.

"May-ree is right. We are slaves to man's conventions. We should be slaves to God!"

"Ja, Ja, Horst is right." Soon everyone had their woolen jackets off.

"Ok, we know the music; we don't need light. These people came for a concert. We play!"

"But it will not be on TV." The sound man, Klaus complained.

"If the power comes on, we will do it again for TV. Everybody ready now." The maestro felt the keys and the concert began. They had played two songs and were into a third when the lights flickered and the air pushed alive through the vents. The audience shouted and Horst threw his hands in the air, "Ah wonderful! Now sit down everyone, we do the show for TV." He grinned. Performing in shirt sleeves and sweaty brow he was adopted as Stuttgart's own son! He laughed heartily but never revealed that as a little kid of eight he escaped the Jewish killings because he played the piano!

Back in their studio, Klaus asked what I had sent, but Horst did not want to reveal everything. It happened that there was a cartoon tucked inside with the letter and so he pulled this out and said, "It is a cartoon of a little boy playing the piano. She has translated it into Deutsch. Pass it around, but I want it back."

When it was returned, he taped it to the back of his roll top desk which set in the open. There was also a snapshot of a redhead in a closed red velvet gown (the wealthy lady’s hand-me-down). Alone he read the portion of the letter that poked fun at her appearance. 'But why,' he thought, 'she is beautiful; ah, that is it. She does not want to appear proud of her appearance.' He heaved a sigh, 'I always knew that my girl would be from far away.'

The next time, a few more Peanuts cartoons came; again Schroederer was playing his toy piano. In the letter he read, "I am not free, but experience quite a time surviving for I too, am most tender hearted. To survive my ordeal, I took my innermost feelings and mentally placed them in the tiniest box. I tied the mental box with a ribbon and tucked it into the deepest crevice of my heart. I never dared to look at it again. Now, Jankowski, you are tempting me to unwrap the little box. It feels like a tiny flickering flame of a little candle. I am afraid. I almost think I love you."

When the next album arrived at the Music Shop, My husband and I went together. He noticed it first. He laughed once. I leaned in to see what brought laughter. "I guess he can get music even out of that!"

My head bolted into the dumbfounded-ness of shock. Not only was it a photograph of the pianist, smiling, but he held a tiny piano in one hand and with the other hand tilted, set his littlest finger on one of the keys. I was shaking rather than joining Charles in fun. "Do you want to get it?" My insides ached from the strain of remaining composed.

Charles said, "Sure, we have all the others." While I turned it over, Charles went to the Country Western section. A pretty lady was on the back but no "inanities". I noticed that the songs were listed in both English and German. “And We Got Love" was there again, but the German was “Ein Hoch der Liebe" or One Height of Love. Another was "Our Beach Affair" or "Ich Scriebe Mein Sehnsucht aud dem Strande." ‘I write my ***Something*** in the Sand" Maybe 'Love Letters'. I must check; the word meant yearnings! It was not the lightest melody and had several tremendous crescendos, but he was beginning to use the music to speak to her. A terrible career move, but there was "Slick, Delila, Cinderella Rockefella, Pata Pata and Congratulations" and these were all bouncy Jankowski.

At home, Charles played his Country Western record first and then they played mine. He remarked on the pianist's dexterity. The children put up with their father's Country taste. Marshall liked the piano and mastered things easily. All the children played. I never had much chance - having mother chores.

Monday all were gone for the day: I set the record to play while housecleaning, scrubbing the kitchen tile in time to the music; scrutinizing movements and listening for sounds he had not used. I ***remembered*** that he was always looking for new sounds. I asked my angels for input. ‘How am I to congratulate him on this work when one of his songs has that title?'

***'He acknowledges your congratulations. Have you noticed the title on the album?'***

I had not! Because of the photo! I blushed when I read: "Piano Affairs". My thoughts were not clear on his accident and I wondered how to approach the subject of the beard. I did remember his saying once that; girls just came to look at him; he doubted if they heard his music!

Cautiously, I stated in my letter: "A long time ago, Jankowski, before this life, I had a wonderful brother, Pyrrhus. When our parents were both dead, he was barely seventeen and was crowned king. He looked very young and wanted to appear older and more majestic, so he grew a beard. And, in about fifteen years, he did."

I heard an electric flute while listening to the radio, and mentioned the sustaining value of this sound. Did he change from sharps to flats? Had he heard Bell's work with an electric guitar? There were the strangest bubbling sounds like it was under water on his "Romeo and Juliet". She thought perhaps that work did not get to Europe, so made him a tape of the album to study. Then there was a pedal pointe’. There's a sound and a half! She explained about this movement and that the piano would move across the floor if it did not have brakes on the wheels; that Debussy managed two before he broke strings (very violent stress on the instrument). There were times when there was nothing to write about so I used my locale. "The Springfield area is called Prairie, it is very flat. It is also the home of our 16th president Abraham Lincoln. He freed the slaves, but come to think about it, at the moment; he is pretty flat too." It was irreverent, but I hoped to build a little sense of humor in them. I ***remembered*** how serious some of my German ancestors could be - just the opposite of the Wangards who were joyfully looking for a comical twist to things.

Another time; "Our town tries to be a large city, but it does not succeed too well; so I was surprised as I drove on Monroe Street. The State Police were quite heavy, directing traffic which of course was tied-up because Springfield is not use to this sort of confusion. A large number of Negroes (the Germans used this term) were having a protest march and were noisy. They waved signs and shouted. Some of the women wore see-thru blouses. All seemed hot and there were so many. As soon as I could, I turned the car and drove another route. Maybe my town is growing."

"Your new records are played a lot on radio. It would be kind of nice if you could come to the States; bring a few friends, like the choir and orchestra. The States vary in reception. Boston: the people are somewhat cold; the central area is better; but actually people become friendlier as one goes west into Texas especially. This is the way I have found it."

CHAPTER XII

THE GREATEST PARANORMAL GIFT

It was bedtime; Charles had benefitted us with another useless explosion because the school books were not set evenly in their area (a corner of one jutted out). Thankfully, now he was asleep; the children were tucked into their beds. I was the last to prepare for bed. I was in nightgown and had taken my hair down. It was quite long and it was good to run my fingers through it. I checked the house a last time and then an errant thought: The next album seemed very slow to arrive. Was Jankowski taken ill?

'Dear ones,' I called to my Guides. 'You let me check if my letters are received and how they are accepted. I wonder if you could show me what is going on, please.' I waited standing at the foot of our double bed and I looked at the wall’s plain area. My pastel of a white peacock in a hanging basket was above on this space. The mist moved about and settled into a rectangle and focused on the composer lying kitty-corner across a very wide bed, fully clothed; eyeglasses still in place. I had many questions.

'Is he on drugs, drunk or something?'

'Dead tired; worked the night-the next day and the following night. It is about 4 a.m. in Stuttgart.' Their voices had an unhappy dullness about them and I realized why: the piano affair had become personal. But this secret life had awakened my musical knowledge. It stabilized my sanity and I was at peace knowing myself. Oh, to be rid of those badgers at least in mind! Then I could secretly reclaim my position. The letters were for his music as well as for me. So he fell in love with me! He loved me in the World of Music. There, as a counselor I had to set it aside! But upon earth I was very much in need of that love.

I looked at the clairvoyant picture: Tired little man; it tugged at my heart: 'I wish I could go there and at least loosen his tie; take off his glasses so he doesn't break them. Doesn't he have somebody to do this?'

'They are long retired for the night,' My Guide said.

'That's too bad, I would loosen the tie! My eyes opened more widely because: ***I noticed myself standing in the little picture!***“Oh My God!” I blurted and my wandering Spirit snapped back into my body with such force that it knocked me onto the bed between Charles' feet. He stirred groggily and asked what that was. I thought quickly and replied that I lost my balance. He was asleep before I finished. I hung my robe and looked to the place where the little picture had been. This was new it was something to think about!

'Did I really go to Stuttgart; into his bedroom?’ The Guides answered, 'yo' (yes). 'Well, it didn't hurt or anything. Can I try that again? Let's see: I felt sorry for the pianist…’ and there I was again! Standing quite firmly this time, I watched my ethereal-self untie the first shoe. What a struggle to get it off - and then the second shoe. I advanced to his shoulders and slipped his tie, opened the collar button. These movements took tremendous effort in the spirit I discovered! He took a deep breath as I reached for the eyeglasses and I halted mid-movement until he was still.

When I was holding the eyeglasses the mischievousness silliness in my genes aroused. I decided he should know I came! I placed the shoes heel to heel, strung the tie across the floor, and removed his jacket from the silent butler and placed it over the desk chair. These were easy moves after the others. ‘Now for the eyeglasses?’ I explored a doorway. It lead to a white tiled bathroom. (Not wearing glasses myself, I had no idea how berserk one could become at not finding them in a regular place.) Ah, here was a place - the medicine cabinet; I opened it and set the eyeglasses inside. There was a bar of soap, just the thing: I wrote with the corner of the soap on the mirror: "Horst, ihr Augenglases sind herein, Mary" As I was leaving the bathroom, he stirred on his bed. In my fright of being caught in a man's room - the soap slipped out of my hand and slid across the rug. I dashed for the door and hoped to be home. Within a moment the spirit snapped into the firmly braced body but it was still a strong return and dislodged my footing a few steps. I went to bed giggling.

After the family was off for the day, I wondered what affect my night wandering might have. Again the mist churned into a small rectangle space and I saw the following:

A short man in a black suit opened the door and peered in at his boss. As he was still asleep, the man entered quietly then suddenly let out a yell as his foot slipped on the soap. Horst was awake! He reached to a side table for his glasses feeling blindly. The butler got to his feet – soap?

"Oh my, what's this doing here? He bent to pick up the soap only to step into a shoe and lose his balance. He dipped and picked up the shoe only to straighten and find another. By now he saw the tie and then the jacket on the chair, dipping and calling out his surprise. He carried the jacket to the silent butler and smoothed it lovingly in place.

Horst said, "I can't really see you, but it looks like a ballet. Where are my glasses, Werner?"

"Sit still, Horst, I'll find them. He skittered about the room to all points of likelihood without success. He took the soap back to the bathroom. There he noticed the mirror: "Horst! You have to see this! Come, Come. Oh wait; I'll come get you." Together they went into the bathroom. "Look it is written in soap! - Horst, your eyeglasses are in here, Mary.' I did not know she was visiting?"

"Ach no, but open it and get them for me so I can see it," He set his glasses to place and tilted his head to focus: "Amazing! I will be in the library. I must check something, then I will come to breakfast."

In the library he checked his psychic books and sat back contemplating. 'May-ree', he thought, 'I see that you can come, but would you come when I am awake and can see you? We shall be entirely discreet.'

I questioned my Guides about doing this. It was OK. They set my free time here at around ten p.m. At first I could not sustain this new skill and kept disappearing before the musician’s eyes. It was disturbing for both of us but I would return in a moment and we’d talked quietly. He tried to touch my fingers but his hand went through the apparition. These experiences enlightened both of us. At last he asked how I did it. He had read many accounts in his books, but in practice, it did not happen for him.

I explained that it had been a fluke, completely unanticipated and then told him the routine I followed. He would practice. "If I come, will you let me love you?"

This terrified me. This was too deep, way too deep. All sorts of thoughts besought me before I could answer him. This could be the death of my spirit! A triangle affair! But a voice of my Guide whispered, 'It is all right. Say, yes.' I did - feeling that Jankowski was too Mercurial to master the feat.

"Ah, good now remember, you promised. You see yourself in the little picture, right? I will work on it." Horst said as I was fading from sight.

I returned to my body with a tremendous thud. It shook the bed like a tractor tire had been thrown on it. Charles shot awake!

"What the hell was that?"

"It was me." Then I giggled. 'Oh, dear Guides, I wish this wonder was with Charles. He treats me like an enemy. Worse - this whole thing sounds dirty.'

The guides spoke***: 'Spirit to spirit or spirit to body is condoned: Because there are no sexual relations. Love expression is a different concept. You will have no trouble with this; unless it becomes body to body. If such occurs, each of you will cast aside all benefits incurred in these lives.'***

'This spiritual or part-spiritual thing - will it bring about a permanent relationship?'

***'No. Mankind has dominion over all things of the earth, and all its animals. Man has dominion over himself via his free will. God has dominion over all. You know by the Saturn sojourn of learning that God's ways are not like men. When entities (in spirit) are unsuited they are free to turn in another direction without remorse. There is no unhappiness in the Spiritual Realm. Review, my charge, you are coping with an intolerable marriage to a humorless man. I am sure that if divorce was not forbidden in your earth life (not everyone's) that you might welcome such? You have said that you will accept Horst-in-spirit and I think you should. Think: what love do you remember?'***

'Throughout my few other lives, love has been imperfect,' I acknowledged. The Guides' faces seemed quizzical. 'Yes, even Demetrius that I loved with all my heart; was a lady's man until we met and if Ares had not threatened him if he strayed; the possibility was there.’

The work week was finished. Charles came home at four forty-five. Tonight he looked at the stove. "You shouldn't use that slot of the spoon rest; you should use this one."

I could not believe his idiotic words. "They are both clean. It makes no difference." He took heavy steps into the dining room, his face growing red. 'Well, something ticked him. I hope he leaves the children alone.'

In a moment the frightening voice bellowed and a little voice was howling in terror. 'Whatever I pray for, he sniffs. I thought he would be glad to return to work after the winter lull.’ The Guides were still.

Saturday morning brought continuance of the glowering looks and spiteful talk. I remained silent. He would just shout louder; in his family - loudest won! The contagion spread. Several children demanded eggs a different way as well as the bacon. Charles agreed with them! It was only right that I please each of them. Marshall and Cosima said it did not matter; whatever mother fixed they would be happy.

"Today we eat these, maybe next time." I said quietly. There might have been something ominous in my voice, things quelled.

Couples were to support each other. At times, I wondered if the piano affair was discovered. I stored copies of my letters and my few jewels in a private lock box at a bank - plus my change back and soda bottle deposit money. The older children decided returning soda bottles was demeaning. I did it; so I kept the coins.

Finally, I heard my Guides. ‘Nothing will make him happy. You have given up your writing because he did not like the clack of the typewriter; you gave up a neat income from portraiture because he accused you of falling in love with clients - all women! T'he children are learning his ways. They will become unhappy individuals. Realize, my dear, he is all about control. When have you seen a movie? "Salome." Where are your friends? - Kept at distances because ‘they would judge him!’ - A dance? We could go on! You have lost yourself. What more can he tear from you? Who will you be, Mary Midden? You have your paranormal gifts and are reclaiming music. These bring satisfaction. These are yours.'

Bi-location was wonderful. It was easier than driving the car. Horst was still trying. The seven hour time difference helped. By the hour I went to bed, Horst was finishing a gig. In Stuttgart we met and walked around the Schiller Platz. Werner followed by car but was never comfortable with the ghost-lady. If Horst was on tour we met at fun sites. The thought niggled him - did anyone else see me? In Vienna he decided to test it. His childhood frugality kicked in. He purchased one ticket for the Giant Wheel. Despite his objections that she was a phantom. (Horst even sliced his hand through me) the ticket-taker pronounced it a magician’s trick and demanded a ticket. His curiosity had backfired. The wheel was fun, but underneath Horst was unhappy. Suddenly, I felt the pull that indicated the spirit must return to the body. I mentioned it and lightly kissed his cheek. I wished for an easy return!

When he got off alone, the ticket taker asked where the lady was.

Horst said mischievously, "Ach, she had to go," and explained nothing. The ticket seller searched the area for a body.

Another time, he thought it would be a good idea to give a party at the house. There would be several record magnates. May-ree was guest of honor. The evening drew on and Horst was getting tired. Continental gentlemen do not leave a party before the guest of honor leaves.

"Horst, just tell them I am staying here."

"That is improper! … I know! Werner, take May-ree home."

Werner paled. "Herr Jankowski, I do not know where the lady goes."

'Oh, the address is over here!" They walked into the hall. "Just drive twice around the Schiller Platz and come back. They should all be gone by then."

Werner’s face paled more. I followed him to the car and then turned and bowed to the guests. They returned bows and smiles. Werner looked deathly pale. He let me in the back seat and I felt so sorry for him so told him to just drive a few blocks and I will leave.

"No, no Gnediges Frau, Herrn Jankowski says twice around the Schiller Platz and you get twice around the Schiller Platz. Stiff necked he carried out his orders. Now and then, because I was quiet, he'd take a quick glance in the rearview mirror, only to feel his stomach drop again.

Weeks went by then one night I closed my eyes and felt the left side of the bed dip. (Charles was on the right.) I opened my eyes and there sat Horst. He mastered bi-location. His spirit was shot full of a golden Light. It bristled and vibrated through his clothing, the tips of each hair both on his head and face glistened. His eyes twinkled with delight. I could not decide which was most spectacular, his being there or the Light emanating from his spirit! I beamed a surprised smile and quickly he patted my hand gently.

He threw a glance at her sleeping husband and frowned.

"Come, let us go home." He whispered.

'How will we keep together?"

“Hold my hand and you wish to go where I go." As they arrived at the Ditzingen House, he halted in the front hall. "Now May-ree upstairs, you will see me sleeping; you do not want to see me sleeping. Let us go to your room. It is finished; I think you will like it. We can look out the window at the sleepy city."

He opened the door and to my surprise there was plasterwork around the top 1/3 meter deep at the top of the walls. The background was Wedgwood blue and the figures were Grecian with a Greek Key edging. The German-double bed (a wide twin) had bedding that was deep with laces. There was a dressing table, a tilt mirror and a massive beech armoire. It was so beautiful.

"I thought the workmen would never finish," he said with a wave of his hand. "I wanted to be here and the time for a tour was drawing near, but they finished the day before I was to depart. The smell is all gone. You told me about your brother of another life. I checked many histories before I found the accounts. I thought May-ree will like this, my Princessin, aha! You were more than that!"

"But no more, I am just Mary Midden now."

"It is strange that I do not remember who I was," he said.

"Either Mahler or Offenbach from their pensive music, but you mentioned that last time you had a hooked nose and that is why you chose a smaller one.

"Yes Offenbach seems right I could play his music without ever looking at it." He brushed his lips across her cheek. "Did they tell you, it is not the same?" She shook her head and found his arms were lightly around her.

"My dearest, your ways are so sensitive. I wish my heart could live with yours," I said.

"But Liebste, that is it exactly. Step closer, close your eyes; wish your heart to be with mine; that is what I will do." He felt her tremble then she felt a warm glow like the sun warming her from inside throughout the whole spirit, torso, arms, legs and especially the heart area. She kissed him lightly and wished to return this wondrous response to him. When at last they parted, the elation remained, beautifully and serenely. They wished themselves downstairs and strolled hand in hand through the house. It was so perfect, the kind of furniture, carpets and colors - even her favorite china. Beautiful things I had dreamed about and I realized how strongly I felt about Jankowski. I was a Helpful Spirit! No I wasn’t; I was an earthling. What confusion! Change the subject: "Where is the piano that sat here?"

"Oh, the piano is work. It is back at the studio, Liebste. You must meet Zabadak and Rolfa." The Afghan hounds looked so innocent now.

Back in Springfield her body squirmed, cramping to pull the spirit back. This was overly long for his first effort too. We held hands and wished to return without effort and to land easily. Both spirits slowed and he handed her into her body.

"Ach, I must go, Liebste, my man is calling me to awaken for work. G'nacht, Liebste."

The bi-location proved remarkable for both of us. There were times he would relax and think: 'May-ree, can you come? I have a problem.' This time he was arranging for full orchestra and choir. He was fully dressed, perched cross legged in bed on his pillows. The music was spread before him as the orchestra set. He was biting his pen.

"Ah, you are here! I notice all through the piece, this man sits with nothing to do!"

"How does it sound?" I asked.

'That is the problem. It sounds fine!"

"Well, let it be Jankowski." She leveled.

"But you do not understand, May-ree. I am paying him!" Cheap, cheap! Mary held back her laugh.

"Do you need him for other pieces?" He nodded. "Then let him sit idle." He looked at her with shock. "It is better to not muddle the work, my dearest. What is this album?" He laughed!

"Ach, a riddle: I am doing half-baked bread."

"What?" I was dreadful at riddles.

When she shook her head he said: "Offenbach; I'm doing Offenbach."

I laughed pleasantly at his light-hearted riddle.

"Before you go, Liebste, I want you to know, I mastered the pedal pointe. It will not be recorded however. The sound equipment makes a bang-bang mess of it. But! I do it at appearances." He smiled.

"What fun! How many can you do?"

"Nine. The piece is on the new album, but played with other instruments."

"Did it go smoothly?" I asked cautiously.

He swung his head shyly, "I broke three strings but no more," he held up a finger.

I smiled and kissed his forehead and dissipated.

RUINING THINGS

The new album arrived at the worst time (September 1969). My middle daughter, Regina’s tummy ache became appendicitis and her nothing cough turned into pneumonia at the hospital. Charles brought the children's record player. An asthmatic child sharing the room was delighted with the children's records. Daily our nine year old grew worse. Five more days her veins would collapse; I-V's would be impossible. When your child is slowly dying, the world around you becomes Doldrum City. The Guides advised me to take Fifth Street.

'Park! It is there.’ Those Guides! In the busy town, they always had a parking place waiting. ***Never doubting them***, I proceeded into the shop. The awaited Album was not the Offenbach. The cover was a mirror image of Horst and was called: "Jankowski Plays Jankowski" 'What's this?' I turned it over. He had composed the complete album! I shook my head, 'That's what happens in translation! I meant for him to do five or six of his.' I brought it home. The music was listed in English and German. I gave it a fast spin before leaving for the hospital in the morning. It would be something to talk about with Regina.

Unfortunately, a few of the children drifted in as I was placing the album in the cabinet. It was late I dhad to start supper! We must play it! They implored, The Magdalene became her father! Four caught that trend. I was rattled. None of them asked about their sister! I was crying inside but to shut them up I opened the cellophane and hoped my nervousness would not affect setting the needle to play.

When the music started, the instrumental made no sense with the title; neither did the next band or that following. There were many innovations, some talk music unfortunately but none fit the titles! I could not handle the sensitive melodies. I needed cuddled; someone to say Regina would be all right. When the truck drove in, I ejected the album but noticed I had Side B playing. I had been checking the listings for Side A. I quickly shoved the record out of sight.

Surprisingly, the children were quiet. Supper went easily and I gave the report on Regina's condition adding that she asked about each of them - to induce their interest.

To Charles I inferred there was no improvement. An oxygen tent was placed over her. They could not expel the phlegm because of the appendicitis nor could they operate because of the pneumonia. Charles refused to go to the hospital! He had found three of his family dead during his sophomore school year in High School… A great comfort he was!

The hospital requested that all visitors not come before nine thirty. I had an hour after Charles and the children were off for the day. Maybe the new album would make me happy.

I was hit with the tartness in the first piece --jazz into rock-- which mellowed into a sweet phrasing that suggested*:* ***"And if you have any problems now; I will sit right down and I'll play them for you."***

My mind skipped all over; concentration was impossible. There was "Little Old Town" that was Springfield; I knew! He'd used a little instrument like a piano but with bell-like higher octaves. The song was sweetly nostalgic. The next two were just beyond me. One was: "A Ruby in The Sunset." I managed the notes into words until "sunset" then it was off by several syllables. I stopped the record and got the dictionary: "Sunset" was Sonnen-unter-gang". She restarted that band; now both notes and words fit perfectly. His lyrics were Deutsch! "Blow-up the Piano" Was this comedic? (The only way that he could get away was to blow-up the piano.) Laughing relieved my stress! Stress really hurts.

Time to flip the record: Dream-flight. She listened: ***"Not by a plane -"*** 'Oh, this was his first bi-location!' I wished I had all the words; ‘Maybe they'll come to me'. "I Feel Like a Child" **w*hen I read your little story. You know I'd do anything you ask me, but this is something that I simply cannot do, for you.'*** My story of course was about Pyrrhus' beard. I took up the Piano Affairs album with his portrait. A scar! Very faintly she traced it from his eyelid down the right side of his face. There had been a lot of air brushing and reconstruction: 'Oh Good God! Why did I not remember the accident before I wrote that? How I can undo this?' Then a ditty began that made me check the title: "The Butler's Ballet" I remembered the little clairvoyant box showing little Werner slipping on the soap and bending to pick up things and laughed into relief again. Then the Song with a funny title: "This Is the Morning" But in Deutsch it read also, ***after such a night*!** This was another song I would like to have all the lyrics! What in Heaven’s name did he write about their ethereal meeting? Again, she caught her breath! By then the last band was spinning. It was noisy, crashing jazz and made no sense at all. Maybe it just filled an empty spot. I forgot about the pedal pointes - maybe this song was his nine pedal pointes. (Later, I realized they were in “Any Problems Now?” also)

The Time! Hurriedly, I put the new album away and drive to the hospital. There was something to talk about. In my purse I brought a vial of ***Castor Oil*** to rub on my child's very black and blue little arms. Three days of applications dissolved the blood pooled under her skin from the constant needle insertion. The child's arms were now fading from yellow-green back to normal. I took care that the staff not see me with an Edgar Cayce remedy and tucked it back into my purse. ***The Castor Oil*** ***also cut infection. Our family quelled outbreaks of sties with the barest dab.*** Sties appeared less often and then stopped altogether!

I wrote mentioning several pieces of the music of which I could determine the words, but had not been able to play them often enough. My family life encroached and I could not endure my anguish alone. The Guides shouted at me sternly: 'NO! NO! Don't write it!' But I did not realize that this man only lived music! There was no other experience in his life. As a counselor I would have realized this but as an anguished mother I did not. I wrote of the child's illness to Jankowski. Without the fore-thought of checking my clairvoyant pictures, I mailed the letter. By Far Memory, I remembered the original practices -he loved the children. I sincerely thought he remembered them but when our lives were cancelled for the sake of Charles reprieve -Horst’s mind had been wiped clean! That afternoon I ran into two things: 1.) Regina's black and blue arms were nearly normal. A nurse complained belligerently that she wouldn't know which arm to use next. I boiled: "She has only two arms!"

2.) The nurse straightened up but later questioned Regina …what did your mother rubbed on. Regina said breathlessly, "Oh in the drawer." There was a tube of A and D ointment; the nurse threw it back in the drawer mumbling: "THAT WOULDN'T DO IT!"

"Mama prays a lot."

I brought the new record but it was too large for the children's machine. The arm would not clear and set down normally; Regina moaned disappointment. I tried to sing the songs but the child turned away. Regina drew pictures. At first they were fun things, but as the child failed, she drew a funeral cortege with an arrow pointing to a horse drawn hearse mounting a hill with crosses ahead. At the end of the arrow was printed: "ME!"

"Oh, Honey you're going to be all right!" I assured her.

Regina: "I knew I wouldn't be here long, but I thought I'd do more good than this" It was the first time she referred to an early death. I showed the picture to Charles, "You better get down there!" He came, brought get well letters her class had written tried his hand at cheer and bolted from the room. Even the nurses panicked; they offered to buy her anything that she wanted to eat. One suggested ice cream and at first the child said no, and then she thought of the watered down Jell-O and nodded. They spooned it to her by the half teaspoon - barely a tablespoon in total, the nurses were elated.

Dr. Holman’s calm demeanor masked his upset. He brought in a little rubber "V" connector and had a nurse cut the I - V tube; insert it; add a vial of medicine onto the other end. This was a ground- procedure then. The head Sister examined the procedure. Dr. Holman hoped to dilute adult medicine to help the child. It did. Improvement began. Soon the oxygen tent was removed. By some flux maybe prayers, Regina did not require an operation! The miracle medicine both attacked the pneumonia and cleared the appendix.

Regina came home, friends visited; all seemed to be leveling. In Germany chaos began!

I had been so torn in anguish that I did not check my clairvoyant "picture" to see the reception of that letter! By the time I thought to do this, the damage was complete. Horst was devastated. He wished the child well; but he had not anticipated news of their being a child..

Now I ruined Jankowski’s career! I noted Klaus pointing out that I’d signed my name Mrs. Mary Midden but Horst could not listen. Concerts and tours continued but he stopped composing and refused to play the compositions that were for me.

A U.S. tour was scheduled: Horst demanded they cancel Chicago and St. Louis. He loved May- but she had not been truthful. The musicians landed in Milwaukee. The clubs in the northern cities were indifferent to adapter needs for their equipment. It seemed they hit no man’s land. Out of the blue Horst said: "Remember, in one of her letters, May-ree said in the United States, the people become friendlier as one goes west. I suggest we go west; make arrangements to play more in Texas." This was the first time he spoke her name. They cancelled Chicago but a huge concert at the Arena in St. Louis simply could not be cancelled. Name stars would be singing his work! Ella Fitzgerald would do “One Height of Love!” As Horst relied on his entourage’ to have him where he needed to be; the group manipulated it so that he would play St. Louis unaware! They wound through a variety of states west, and then blissfully settled in Texas. They loved Texas and remained as long as they could, but it was time for St. Louis. Horst thought he was playing Las Vegas.

In November I felt a pull to St. Louis. I checked both a Chicago and a St. Louis newspaper at the library but found nothing! I felt something was to happen! My church was sponsoring a day trip to Belleville, Illinois to visit “The Lady of the Snows Christmas Light Show.” There was shopping time during the daylight hours at a nearby St. Louis Mall. Naturally no one ellse wanted to go with me. Once in St. Louis, I telephoned all likely auditoriums but at last Springfield news was that the Arena was razed. There was no news that it had been rebuilt! So I did not call there. With self- disgust I telephoned my Aunt Mary and Uncle Mike asking if I could spend the night saying I had missed my bus tour bus. They were delighted for company and fetched me immediately. It was a pleasant visit, but no Jankowski meeting.

Returning to Milwaukee from “Vegas”, Horst could not be enticed to land in Springfield! He considered himself an honorable man; he would not be involved with a married woman. It broke his heart completely. His entourage wanted to see him happy. Back in Stuttgart they began a quest for feminine companionship for their boss. Horst resisted. One evening a pretty blonde showgirl caught his attention. It was her background: She had worked in New York, spoke English and knew show tunes. His curiosity made him vulnerable but brought no inspiration. The girl was just sexy.

He wrote music about the new girl but it was suggestive. They differed in thoughts and lifestyle but his co-workers were overjoyed and pushed. She updated his garments, hair style and encouraged him to stand playing piano like the upcoming Rock and Rollers did. The new look was accepted by all but him. He hated it. Standing to play made his fingers hurt. Specialists could not abate his pain.

In Springfield, I tried to visit in-spirit repeatedly to speak with him but he blocked my paranormal attempts. I wrote the news that Regina was doing well, but I saw him brush the letters away and let one of the others read and tell him! This was the result of writing my personal anguish. Human logic was never God's wisdom! One night a dream continued after she awoke. A strange girl refused a small gold locket saying it was dull and cheap. He turned toward me and said, "I offer her gold but she wants junk."

I half sat up in bed. He penetrated his own block. I saw little pictures! They entered his historical house. The lady said something about getting brighter lights and dropped her gloves and purse carelessly on an antique table. He jumped a bit. She did not like the hat rack. He jumped a bit again. On the main floor, she did not like his Italian Country furniture! The kitchen was old fashioned but she did not wait for explanations. He took a huge breath and expelled it silently. He took her upstairs and upon seeing the Greek plasterwork announced that it was simply awful and so old fashioned it had to go, saying: "We shall tear it out, Liebste," She flailed an authorative hand.

Horst pouted his mouth and still said nothing. He had recently paid the equivalent of $5,000.00 for it. It was beautiful; he bristled. So far she disliked everything; there was no use showing her the antique car. He had not anticipated rejections. May-ree and he loved all these things but “Eva” was modern and proving to have an impenetrable authorative stupidity.

Mary Midden listened to the discourse and then Horst mumbled something that the young lady found agreeable and they left the house. He locked the door. They walked away. The scene closed.

'He's brought another woman into the house. How dare he! I know I shouldn't feel anything; I should be professional. All we've shared and he gives me up so easily.' I shivered with rage.

Although I was congenial with family; had baked the fruitcakes, cookies and candies; there was this secret aggravating loss of my joy. I pulled him out of a slump; I went in-spirit to help him whenever he called. A new lady! ‘How could he?’ I wanted to scream but in her house she dare not even mumble ; The Magdalene would tattle to Charles.

But I stewed inwardly and once I lay down to bed, I wished myself to Horst's house; dallied outside on the front walk a moment but it was dark so I went inside. Everything was quiet. I floated upstairs, observed the little 'trunk room' sadly; looked inside my beautiful bedroom it was still intact. I entered Horst's bedroom. It was empty. I stood there feeling a deep sadness. Sadness gave the spirit-form no power anger or love did…How could I become angry? I looked at his bed; remembering the music spread out across the blue comforter. He was mercenary about paying a musician who had nothing to play.

'Well, I’ve done so much and - he never paid me a cent.’ I had to push myself out of the heartbreak I felt: ‘Damned! Dump me - he owes me more than anyone!' ***Anger was empowering!*** I jerked open the shrenk (wardrobe) and yanked a handmade black wool suit out. I let the jacket fall off the hanger. With the trousers in hand I climbed onto the bed, and walked on my knees to the headboard. From the center I wove one pant leg in and out of the braided wood and gave it a vicious pull. Then I did the other leg on the opposite side likewise. I heard a split. The jacket was next; into the bathtub. It took all my angery strength to turn the hot water faucet. ‘Let it shrink!’ Back to the wardrobe; tied all his shoestrings together in tight knots; tossed garments out of the shrenk and the dresser; tossed every bit of music on the desk into the air. In my frenzy I wedged the silent butler under the door handle. At last I returned to the bathroom and turned off the hot water, surveyed my mischief and wished myself home with an easy landing. I slept wonderfully. I would ask to see a clairvoyant aftermath later.

Morning: Here was my clairvoyant scene: Horst and his butler, Werner stood outside his bedroom door.

"Horst, I can't get the door open. It is stuck." Werner said excitedly. The pianist tried the easily operated handle. It did not budge. Together they pushed until there was a crack wide enough for Werner's arm to shove the silent butler free. He opened the door and peek inside:

"Mein Gott! I think you've been robbed."

They walked in slowly alert that perhaps the perpetrator was still there. Horst picked a few desk items from the rug and set them to place. He was upset that his music had been scattered about the room. Werner went through the room shaking his head. In the bathroom he stopped short.

"Oh mein Gott your good suit jacket is - is! Maybe, maybe the cleaners can save it." He saw Horst purse his mouth, "No, just throw it away."

"But who would do this? Shall we call the politzei?

Horst looked at the knotted shoestrings: "No, just clean it up. I will go downstairs." He checked the other rooms - just his was disturbed. He sat at the dining table, his back to the wall of china. ‘May-ree first revealed that she could come by disturbing my things.’ He was certain she had done this. ‘No police! Any hint of psychic phenomenon would become scandalous. Meta-physical studies were still done secretly.’ He must tell May-ree about Eva. He teared; maybe Klaus would write - not Eva. Eva knew nothing about May-ree.

CHAPTER XIII

MY LIST

FOUND: FUTURES?

Marshall was in his sophomore year at Springfield High and became intrigued with a large boxed contraption by Magnavox called a Computer. Four other boys were equally intrigued. They stayed with it several months and were invited to visit the University of Illinois in Urbana. The new Computer department housed a massive unit. The boys stayed the weekend with a genius named Sherwin Gooch who was happy to mentor them.. It became an every weekend event. Over time three boys dropped out having lost the fire, but for Marshall and Mark Rustad - Computer was their thing!

# HERE

The Magdalene was a High School Junior and walked home after school. One afternoon she heard a guitar strumming in a building and looked inside. She was intrigued by what was dubbed “The Jesus Bag!” As a child her "nun vocation" had been ruined (behold by the church pastor!) but she still deeply loved God and thought these youngsters had something. She did not stay that first afternoon, but asked permission for the next day; to check it out.

Marshall tried to discourage her, noting that some of the youngsters sat on the cement outside and propped themselves against the dusty building. Later he thought some kids were “stoned out of their gourds!” He did not want his sister into that. Charles and I questioned The Magdalene who admitted that there were some recovering addicts. If anywhere this was the place for them to normalize, she touted. I asked The Magdalene if parents ever visited, and she encouraged me to come. There was a gathering where the kids sat on the floor and some guy talked bible in youthful language. Then they began to sing to a few guitars.

Shortly my daughter came home saying that the group had a pianist but needed a piano. I leveled my eyes at her; they were not getting the family piano!

A few days hence I talked with a neighbor whose marriage was collapsing. She had refinished an antique piano but simply could not take it with her. I mentioned this to The Magdalene, warning her that a piano needed tuned whenever it was moved!

One telephone call and The Magdalene dashed to the neighbor’s to see the gift horse. From there she promptly telephoned the Coffee House. Seven boys arrived with a small pickup truck to load the old fashioned upright. It was beautiful with two fluted columns supporting the keyboard. The truck sagged upon receiving the gift horse but it was FREE! They made it to the Coffee House. A piano tuner was waiting! The Magdalene formally invited me to visit because I’d found the piano! The evening was about the same except for a few testimonies to God's helping them through rough spots. Shortly, a thin blonde youngster sat down and played a few church tunes. His hands looked good and without thinking I was behind him watching the hands. He was playing pieces with four and five sharps or flats. This kid had training. Shortly, I whispered an easier finger movement for his arpeggio. He was delighted! Then I suggested he try jumping sequence into the lower octaves with just the left hand and then later, when it sounds right, to try jumping the sequence with the right hand. "Everybody plays middle range!" The boy found it quite disturbing at first, then found it fun.

At home, I asked my daughter what the boy's name was: Larry Houston. "Oh for God's sake!" I said: "There is a Houston on my list and to hear him, I had to find him a piano! Incredible!"

I “What are you saying, Mother?" The Magdalene shot angrily. So, I took The Magdalene into my bedroom and showed her the list.

"Oh, Jankowski wasn't alone; the old master, Liszt gave me a list of around forty pianists that I am supposed to review and help." I explained no further for the list was drawn up before this life had begun. The young girl left with a bit more understanding than I expected. About three weeks later, The Magdalene strode in and said, "Well mom, thanks a lot. You've ruined our pianist. He is playing all over the place and we can't sing with him." Then she calmed and admitted that he wouldn't be with them long anyway. He was about to be drafted and so joined the Air Force to be a jet pilot. I was sorry to hear that he would change venue but the choice was admirable.

Quite a bit later Houston wrote to the group. The youth leader read his letter. The Magdalene brought the news home. Larry said they had an evening free and went to the service club. He sat down at the piano and fooled around. One of the officers tapped him on the shoulder. "Where you headed, son?” Listened to the cadet and answered, “No, you belong in the orchestra!" He went on to say he never saw the inside of a jet or much of regular Air Force life after that. He'd been featured in the Air Force Orchestra; sent on tour around the country and will be going overseas. Actually, this was a pretty good alternative at a time when Viet Nam was a bloody hot spot. I nearly purred: ‘He has such good hands. One on the list - helped!’(After his stint, he'd had enough of travel and professional music to last a lifetime. He went into anesthesiology!)

I read about a classical pianist from St. Louis who would be giving a concert at St. Ursula's Hall in Springfield. I curled my nose for an unknown reason, but felt drawn to go to the concert. In my foolishness, I wore a shiny burnt orange shantung dress, long white gloves and a small black hat - and sat in the middle of the sixth row; I was difficult to miss. The name made me squirm was he good? I read the program. He had composed his work some six or more years previous. I was at attention when he came on stage but concerned when he unfolded his music! Maybe he had another piece! I checked the program, no. What kind of composer doesn't know his own music after six years?

The answer became apparent. He had twenty-six pages of innovations and difficult tricks each - never repeated! There was no melody or rhythm. I could not slip away the row was full. I crossed my arms. If I had not been wearing gloves my arms would have been bruised my fingernails. The music became scratching on a blackboard! Why hadn't I sat in an aisle seat - in the back! Stuck! I might as well begin an analysis.

'Well he does play each innovation well; it is just not strung together properly. It carries the listener nowhere; dissonants and very difficult passages. He has mastered the instrument but not composition.' Now I remembered: This was the American I refused to speak with. 'Well it still sounds like he has something against the piano! What the hell can I say to him without negativity?' People were leaving. I stopped my exit and stepped into an empty row. ‘This over-supply of innovations sounded like… Ah! I have it.

When he walked down the side aisle, no one was nearby. She stepped in front of him and bowed. We held hands. I addressed him by his last name, smiled cordially and introduced myself as Mrs. Midden. My title frightened artists badly.

"Actually “Z” your work reminds me of early Rimsky-Korsakov. He put all his little things in one piece and then later he learned," I took a breath, "to take but a few and repeat them until a lovely strain of melody comes through; something that a listener can catch onto and hum afterwards, yes? That way you can write other works each with another few good innovations. You have exceptional versatility." I cocked my head slightly and smiled that he understood. "I want to thank you for giving the concert; it was," I almost choked on my words, "most rewarding."

"Rimsky–Korsakov! **Wonderful** yes!" he shook my hand vigorously and they smiled at each other. ('Oh, shit he only heard what he wanted to hear.') We bowed to each other and I preceded him along the aisle. When we were at the door, I turned nodded and hopefully disappeared among the people milling outside. I was so angry with myself for attending this concert, but heard my Guide: 'It had to be done. You have succeeded.' But the Charles Dickens' phrase echoed in my mind: "Bah Humbug." I was shaking completely as I drove home. Old Liszt was correct; it is easier giving tips in the Spiritual Realm. ‘It has been one long, time since I did this. Oh, my and there were 38 more on the list!' I marked a tiny note by name in my diary.

'No, my dear, the total is now 53. Some were added. Do not be amiss, the others are to enjoy mostly; you will understand.' My Guide said.

As 1969 continued, there were more names she recognized in newspaper notices of coming concerts. All of the concerts were free, given in churches, the Junior College, school halls or the public library. The most delightful performance was Russian Music by Coleman Blumfield. She was familiar with Pictures at an Exhibition especially since its main 13 note theme had been chosen as the theme song for the computer: Plato, at the University of Illinois. Coleman played so magnificently that I wondered why he was on this list! By some flux I was the first to reach backstage to offer congratulations. I found the young man shaking, riddled with nerves. He was watching the bigwigs of this music department begin their approach. But I silently took both trembling hands and held them until they were perfectly calm and the young man's breath was even. Finally I said my name and smiled up at him.

"None of them can perform like you do. I doubt that they know what it is! Your Mussorgsky is brilliant, Coleman. I gave the hands a small bounce before I let go; "No need for that, ever…again, wonderful." As I left, the crowd approached. He inhaled deeply, smiled and reached his hand out confidently. 'Ah, worth it! Worth it!'

The St. Louis composer, “Z” returned from New York. He would play at the First Presbyterian Church; the one that Mrs. Abraham Lincoln attended in her time. Charles as usual refused to go, so again I had no escort! I hoped “Z” improved. I wore a black peau sheath with crisscross detail and aurora buttons (a la Salvation Army Thrift Store) a half hat framing her bouffant curled hairdo and long white gloves. I recognized none of the audience but was intent on the work.

The pianist recognized me, bowed to the audience and nodded to me. I inclined a brief nod and smiled. Unfortunately, he played his original piece but had written another about living in St. Louis. I sat very quietly, wrists gently one on the other, palms upright, with a pleasant partial smile. 'By golly, he's getting the idea!--too many innovations yet, but a good theme. One would recognize St. Louis from hearing the piece. When he finished there was good applause and I too applauded lightly but dipped my head three short nods when he looked. He Beaned.

I was about to leave, but was stopped by a woman who noticed my exchange with “Z” and her questions began! Muriel Andersen was an “I” person - once a performer and did music therapy and now taught piano. “There were two music clubs. Did I belong?”

"But no; I am here for the concert." I replied.

"You seem to know the pianist. Mrs. Brand takes from him and is learning his piece."

My stomach cringed. "Do you have any musical background?"

I went stiff; this was a subject I never divulged. I tried to smile, bow and split but the new lady kept hold. 'Oh God, what do I do?'

'Well, dear, you are in it now.' My Guide said.

"Some." Inwardly I collapsed. Mrs. Andersen was delighted and led me about like the AKC Westminster’s Best in Show on a leach. One lady was Mildred Williams. I felt an ease with Mrs. Williams but she did ask my background.

Outwardly, I kept my stature and said quietly, "I am out of the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.” My stomach was clutching and I hoped this was the extent of it. I would not be paraded about! They asked me to stay for a reception but I declined and left.

Muriel checked the phone book and made her husband buzz Adelia Street. The poor fellow just followed Muriel's dictates. Life for him was easier that way. 'Ah, it is a modest house.' Muriel felt she could call me for tea." I found myself with a new “best friend”. Usually I attended concerts alone but now and then I asked Muriel to accompany me. Charles and the children at home were not interested in classical music. Although Marshall was, he was aat the age where guys were not seen with their mothers! Meanwhile, Muriel honed her vocabulary with "in" words to prove her musical worth and I was virtually kicking myself for being trapped with local music teachers.

My next artist was Ward Johnson. He was performing the Mass of St. John on a church organ. This same piece was recently given by a German organist, Hoffman, whose performance loosened the window panes at Central Baptist. (My written note to Hoffmann was not the kindest. Once in Germany Hoffman managed to seek Horst and bitterly complain about this Mary Midden even to shoving my note at him. The note was the catalyst. By it I viewed a clairvoyant picture: Horst was trying to keep from giggling by pursing his mouth. Hoffmann was verbose and wasting valuable time. Horst handed the note back and said, "But the lady knows everything about music; perhaps she is correct," (and held his joy until his ribs hurt and the organist had stomped away.)

Now in true artistic fashion, Johnson had calculated the size of the church and the congregation before he pulled his stops. The music was a delight. Afterward Muriel sauntered up, took the organist's hand and affectedly told him how she enjoyed the infinite variety of nuances in the work. Then she cast a sweet smile to me. I had no intention of topping my friend: "Ah, Ward, you are the one who plays Griffin like Griffin himself. How is it, aha, ***why***have you taken to this?

"Oh I've always wanted to try a full pipe organ."

"Well you have succeeded beautifully. So glad you didn't pull all the stops out completely. When I was in school, my master brought me to hear this piece without telling me the title. Then, asked, what does this sound like? And I said: Burglars in the basement."

Ward threw his head back and laughed heartily. "Oh, it does; like they are sneaking around with flashlights." He laughed again.

"I was quite admonished. Good to see you; that your dreams keep coming true." We shook hands both smiling.

Muriel's shock was evident. I took her arm and nodded that we leave. However, once at her house, Muriel made no move to leave my car. She began to speak of certain musical movements, pretending to forget their proper names. I thought, 'oh dear, quiz hour.' I answered softly and patiently.

Next Muriel invited me to tea with Virginia Bennett, a composer of church music. Virginia was quite tubby, more magnanimous and delightful, but another "I" person, My ears were weary after listening to the two but I kept them as friends. It was Mrs. Williams for whom I joined Morning Etude, a group of private music teachers. I impressed upon them that I did not play. I heard the winter recitals of their pupils; some of the advanced ones were on my list. A few kind words were mostly all that was needed. I pleasantly marked these names off my list.

Meanwhile back in Germany Horst’s life was about to explode. There was a letter from Mrs. Midden. Again Horst let Klaus read it and tell him the contents. He was fighting his thoughts because he had proposed to Eva already. May-ree was not available. He must break her off. Klaus would write it. He was mid-sentence with Klaus when Klaus saw the Fraulein coming. Without knowing the subject of the correspondence Horst wanted, said, "Oh here is Eva, she can do it." Horst was stunned, but she was there and had heard Klaus. (This spelled a coming hissy-fit of which German girls are most capable.) He let her spout and blow and then continued in that dangerously soft tone he used to impress his desire. Almost inaudibly he explained his need.

“You must be careful what you write, she is very intelligent! Keep it short and thank her for writing." But Horst did not know the ways of a New York Showgirl, he innocently mentioned the letters and comics. Eva demanded, confiscated and destroyed them all! The choir was upset, they always re-read the comics! This was unfair and they formed a clouded view of Eva!

Thinking to be helpful one of the entourage’ mentioned some little gifts. Eva promptly did away with these also! All that survived were a few recipes that Horst particularly relished. His cook had recopied them into Deutsch for her own convenience. If asked she would hand the originals over. No showgirl was ruining her kitchen skills. Werner’s wife had worked hard transcribing Horst's favorites! Mrs. Werner’s dander was up!

Horst was lost without the letters. Every time he re-read them he found something newly interesting. May-ree wrote that way! Now Horst’s letters were gone! Eva’s manager-ship began by changing Horst’s look and musical approach. He stood to play at the piano and in two months his hands were now hurting. To save his hands he tried other instruments; he was adept at trumpet, but although these works were fairly successful in Germany, the magic was in his compositions and piano. He tried to remember the words and subjects in each letter. It was a horrible time for his career. Worse he seemed to have lost his control of his entourage’! They were pandering to Eve like he did not exist!

Alone one evening in his room, he chanced to pass his now swollen hands over the front edge of his chest of drawers. There was something! It survived; a silver medallion less than an inch either way. It was Rococo and engraved with a "J". May-ree wrote that it had been in an auction box. At the time she had no one with that initial but it was so beautiful she kept it. He had centered it on the dresser. He fingered it, and the tears came. As he touched the little medallion. His touch alerted me in Springfield, Illinois and in a moment the scene formed and I saw his unhappiness. In a few days I received Eva’s letter and a clipping of the both of them announcing their engagement. His face seemed smudged. Whaaat an awful picture for the newspaper.

A voice wailed: May-ree, May-ree, if you're ever going to come, come now!" Immediately I saw, that it was a man who worked with Horst. I would travel in a minute, but had no passport up to date, and it was Christmas (1969). I could not leave my children during Christmas Holidays. By earthly standards, I should let go of Jankowski but on the God-Level he was my charge. I had to keep his career on track. Chagrinned a bit, I asked my Guides what the urgency might be.

"They need you to speak with audiences. You can go in-the-spirit. People will see you."

Going in-Spirit I found the man who called in anguish. Klaus was in Naples. They would be entering Athens, Greece the next day and none of them could speak Greek.

"Klaus I have not spoken Greek for ooh - many years. I think I can but it will… not be modern."

He felt a relief and then pushed his luck by calling after me, “It will be at nine pm. Do you have a place to stay? I nodded. As I was walking away Klaus called again: “May-ree, we have nothing else on the program; he will carry the whole thing! Can you do a little something before you introduce him? And perhaps a little costume?”

One day’s notice to do a show in a language I did not speak for nearly 2300 years and … find a costume! I nodded to Klaus and expanded my thoughts. I could be myself; yes, give these Germans a whiff of old Grecian Royalty. Let him see what he’s dropped so quickly! Promptly I conferred with my Guides to check a possibility. Would another spirit acquiesce? Yes, it would love to see me. I smiled mischievously. ‘So, they want a little show… ok!’

I decided to wear my classical chiton with gold fillets and sandals. Around my up-do, ’d borrow my Kokieran sister-in-law Lanessa’s tiara. It was lovelier and comfortable. I asked for (The spirit essences of several jewels) my Nike earrings that Demetrius had fashioned for me with little chariot wheels that spun and my armlet from Siwa with two serpents entwined at the tails and facing one up and one down; a large cabochon garnet set at the center: That was akin to my "Diploma" of that lifetime.

The next night in-spirit I checked with Klaus for any last changes’ then added that there would be something with me. It would arrive in time. I brightened at the sight of her, Klaus nearly fainted. I nuzzled Simba’s pretty spotted face, and touched the black marks down her cheeks. She was not on a chain or leach, but as I touched the side of my thigh, the Cheetah lifted her head and elegantly walked beside me. It was as normal to me that night as it had been so many centuries previous. We walked onstage. There was a hush in the audience. When I stopped center front, I lifted my hand at the wrist and the Cheetah sat beside me and then I held my right hand to my thigh and smiled to the audience. Placing my left hand at my chest, I began my talk with: “Kali Maera” or Good Day to everyone. I told them I was a lady from their past a long-ago-past and gestured saying; “When I was here. I lived on the hill up there. The place was quite beautiful. I stayed with the Holy Women while my husband was at war. But, a-ah - I notice that unfortunately, the place has seen better days.” There were a few laughs. I gestured with my left hand to the animal. “I had three of these given to me for a kindness in Africa. They were little kittens. Well, they come as rather large kittens. I gestured with my left hand but not moving the right to indicate fifteen inches. The audience twittered now and again; someone asked a question:

“Was something the matter with your hand; you never move it?

“Oh. It is to control the cat!” I lifted my hand a bit and the Cheetah looked to me immediately. I patted its head and it assumed its watchful scanning again as my hand went back to my thigh. I smiled to Simba. A person called out: “What was your name?” I told them, Deidiamia; and then bowed sedately. When I thought that this was enough; it was time to turn the attention to Jankowski. I swung to my left a bit magnanimously and introduced him. “But that was in the very long past. Tonight I bring you into the present. I present to you a man who I think is the most agile pianist in over two hundred years. I welcome Horst Jankowski. I swung my left hand toward him. He seemed dazed if not frightened so I smiled and waved my hand. I bowed to him and then to the public, touched Simba’s head and we calmly exited the stage.

Klaus was shaking, He said he feared Horst was having a spasm. But Horst began playing modern adaptions of the most popular classics. I told Klaus there was “no worry” the cat would return where it belongs. He saw it meandering away walking slowly, until it popped out of sight. This possibly shook Klaus the more but Simba was gone. Quickly, Klaus said that Horst had an album due and then changed course asking that I come to Toledo tomorrow? No one spoke Spanish. They will want to know about American fashions. Quickly, I said, it was no problem. I would see him in Toledo but no cat!”

Horst had not known about my coming to MC. “Why did you not tell me, Klaus? Oh it is better that I did not know. What did she say to the people?” Klaus had no idea. The pianist could see she was in-spirit and although his show was a smash, May-ree and that Cheetah were the show-stopper! He admitted he was terrified it would attack him (after her mischief in his room) which he did not impart to anyone - his valet was mum.

Horst was in thought as they traveled to Toledo. May-ree’s spirit absolutely glittered; she was so at ease with that jungle cat and it glittered too. Ah, then yes: The big cat was a spirit! ***That meant animals too had spirits and remember! There was so much in the Paranormal World that was not in books!*** He mentally damned his present foolish mess. The new style had set off this plague with his hands; they were swollen and hurt miserably and he had to play. Why had he been so stiffly conventional? ‘May-ree loves me or she would not have come; she always helped me. May-ree was amazing! Indeed tonight everyone saw and talked with her! Gott im Himmel: **THAT** was true royalty! I am sick of myself.’

Klaus was elated. It had gone shockingly well. Klaus had no idea that May-ree was in-spirit and wondered what she used to make herself glitter.

At the appointed time, Mary appeared to MC wearing a flamenco gown actually fashioned after the one Jamie wore at her scholarship concert but black with red and yellow ruffles. She introduced Horst and the Maleguena. After the number's applause, I began speaking off stage to the audience about U.S. fashion. I had removed some pins from my hair and it fell across my back. I fastened a pink bow across the crown and came on stage in pale rose velvet hot pants a knot-tied white silk shirt, pale rose pantyhose and tall white boots. I moved confidently to the center of the stage and then held out my hands like a model. Behind me Horst had the most shocked look on his face, compete with mouth open and shaking his head, no! The audience began giggling as he arose and walked in front of me; his arms akimbo chatting in Deutsch. And without touching me; told me to sit on the bench!

Those who understood German, giggled as his voice was picked up in my microphone: "Mein Gott, May-ree you should be spanked! A Mother with a child, to expose yourself so! Sit yourself here!" He knew he could not touch that glittering figure. "Ach, I spank you with the music. It is Wack-Wack!"

I was audacious enough to interpret his words: the audience both howled and clapped as his first volatile chords resounded. The Spanish enjoyed this spontaneity, but Horst deplored what he termed “exhibitionism".

Klaus breathed fully and said happily, "That was fun, May-ree. Now we go to Paris!"

"Sorry, I do not speak French."

"Oh, Horst and some of the girls speak French. We do not go with any fashions in Paris. Paris is ahead of everyone. We just do elegance." His expression clouded.

"Ah, then, glad I could be of help. What is wrong?"

“The music does not come to him. He scribbles and wads. Another album is due!"

"Maybe he can do the pieces from the tour. They are very beautiful. He has blocked me but as you see: **I will help him.**"

Klaus did not understand my words but did not ask.

I hoped I made a partial inroad to unblocking my spiritual contact. 'Dear Guides, can I see if he is composing?'

The picture formed. I was relieved to have this much! In the tiny picture I saw the composer walking from the soundproof room and Klaus approaching him. He spoke levelly with Horst as always, but was surprised at the retaliation.

"Ah, Horst, you made a mistake" (in the Maleguena).

"I know it! It was one note; leave it!" he said angrily, "Oh, my hands." He mumbled in agony.

A second scene formed. Klaus asked Horst if there was anything particular he wanted on this album. Horst stopped short and said: "Yes, reverse the sides; make the second side the "A" and the first side the "B" side." He nodded to himself. The album would be love messages to May-ree.

Klaus then asked him about the sequence of the bands. To his surprise, Horst said to leave them. He walked out of this studio for the last time. It was his last album under this Mercury contract. (After the self-composed one flopped his audience was wary again. This last album had a shaky beginning but its beauty and passion won out; “A Walk in the Evergreens” finally went gold.)

Within days a letter arrived at the Midden household on Jankowski's personal stationary. The whole family was home and at table for dinner. It was Lincoln's Birthday, February 12. In Illinois that is a holiday, but mail was delivered as the post is Federal. I was surprised; I hoped for good but knew it was not good news. Mary caught her breath, opened the letter, and leaned against the doorframe.

"What is it?" Charles demanded. The children were perked and listening.

"Oh, Horst actually dropped a note. He will be married! Her name is Eva Hume. There is a clipping. Oh, she's pretty.” (But Horst’ image was fuzzy. Maybe he moved). The clipping is in German; “Let's see, it says she was once a New York Showgirl and will be his personal manager." Although Mary's voice was perky and her face smiling for the children and especially Charles, she thought, 'Jesus God, a showgirl! I am replaced by a--showgirl!'

Charles said, "Oh, that's nice…well, he has to get married sometime." She looked at him and noticed that several children were nodding automatically like bauble heads.

"Yes, I guess so. He's in his thirties." I said.

"Sit down and eat," Charles growled. End of conversation! Charles had a job lined up and promptly left the house after eating. The children cleared the table. Mary moved in a daze; her life’s joy had just been sucked out of her. The telephone rang in the bedroom. It was Ines McDaid calling long distance from Michigan. She had gone to visit her twin sister, Eunice.

"Mary, what's the matter?”

“Oh nothing.”

"It's Ines! What' up. I got this terrible feeling and knew it was about you: Tell!"

"Horst is engaged to a showgirl. He had her write."

"Oh God! That won't last. That's a tough life and he's so… you love him! Mary Midden, you LOVE him," but she was not giggling.

"Charles is thrilled," I was drained.

"I'll bet he damned well is. What are you going to do?" Ines asked.

"What can I do?" my voice held anguish. "What angers me is that he pushed it onto someone else to write. Damned, it makes me furious!"

"That's what I felt; fury! You'll do something. Take care now, Mary Midden. I love you silly." Ines rang off. Long distance was dreadfully expensive.

Mourning privately would have been normal for me but the next three days spurred Charles’ faultfinding, the demands and explosions came non-stop. There was no forgiveness for my “great wickedness.” He did not understand I was helping this guy and unfortunately he was talented and so darned sweet.

Saturday morning started - bright, peaceful. Maybe the negativity was subsiding. The breakfast turned out perfectly to everyone's order! They were around the table. Then the faultfinding began: “The eggs…” He’d cut too deeply already whatever his complaint this time - I’d had enough! Quietly I slipped from my seat, stood and lifted his plate of soft fried eggs, turned it over on his head and rubbed it in. "You've had it, Buddy," I scowled inaudibly and walked from the room. Charles was too astounded to respond. The chilfren were silent..

That cleared my mind of any indecision. I must see what could be salvaged in Stuttgart. This meant a new passport. Wow it was no longer $10.00. No airline tours included Stuttgart. It must be a single destination flight. The passport photographer was out for a few weeks! I made an appointment. ‘Would a telephone call suffice?’ I called person to person and hoped Eva would not answer. The housekeeper answered.

The Long Distance Operator panicked when she heard German on the end of her line. I suggested that I try if that was acceptable. Agreed! I spoke as the operator might. The housekeeper said: Ach, bitte, Er nicht im haus; aber gehen zu club und verschlich, wurden nicht heim bis neun." Mary thanked her and there was a click. The operator panicked again but I explained that he was out until 9 p.m. but that was too late for me - here. I canceled the call and thanked the operator. Unfortunately The Magdalene, our tattletale overheard and told Charles first. He went into over-kill. I just walked away.

For weeks, Charles found use for the station wagon. If I asked for the car, he wanted an account of my time. While housebound I made dinners for the coming month and froze them - with instructions fastened to their tops. There were vegetables, lasagnas, beef and gravies, chicken and gravies etc. If The Magdalene craved to be lady of the house, she was going to have her chance.

I did what my Guides instructed. One Tuesday I dressed nicely took my comb and makeup for my picture appointment. Along the way I noticed Charles’ obvious red-orange pick-up truck with the white racing stripes several cars behind. As suddenly, I was not driving the large station wagon anymore. It seemed to have developed super-powers! It turned on South Grand, jerked up speed at Third Street and crossed the train tracks before the bells dinged and the barricade lowered. The car jerked turned right into a bank lot and sped to the back. My station wagon exited on Fourth Street; accelerated again and flipped left on a tiny street and then onto Fifth Street. It slowed in front of the photographers.

Now I heard my Guides voices: 'Ah, made it. Park here!'

The parking was by rote. I was never so befuddled by my vehicle. I had clung to the wheel for dear life; the gas pedal worked on its own and the brakes had not responded. Before I unlocked the car door I searched the street: No red-orange truck but I was shaking. The pictures were wonderful. I affixed two to the application, cursed the wasted time and mailed it. At my bank lock box I sorted information - My jewelry and money I took; other things were left. Had I even anticipated Charles’ intentions, I would have put all the copies of my letters in the lock box. Instead I put them on a shelf in the basement with some children’s school papers.

My plane tickets should have arrived! I checked the travel agency. They bollixed my order because they were promoting another airline with a tour. I called the airline directly and explained my problem. It was settled immediately! All the necessary paperwork came in the mail when blessedly - I was alone.

The accounting of my time, who I saw, and what I did, continued. Charles' acerbity “lost him points”. When it was time, not only did I want to leave but I did not want to return! What had begun as Salvage Jankowski became Preserve-Mary and hopefully save my children. Once settled I would send for them. I hated leaving the littlest girls and my quiet mannered boys. Looking at the situation now, I was blindly forging ahead hoping to make things better - like everyone in the world who is not paranormal.

There was one small item needed at the dollar store. The only parking space on Adams Street was near Representative Yardley's office. As I bustled around the corner, we collided. He caught and steadied me and laughed pleasantly. “I do hope you are coming to visit me! What is the rush?”

"Oh, my dearest, I apologize. You are looking wonderful, new eyeglasses?”

“Yes, I know you like the others but they stopped making the style but well at least I can see better. You are so beautiful; my beautiful wife! Do you have time to visit?”

“Well not really, my dear. Uh, there is something you should know. Things are in turmoil in my life.” I laughed. “It seems like I am playing an old record for you. After I left the Bank Building I studied music and then helped composers write theirs.”

“That is commendable! You never said.”

“And that is my problem. I gave it up - after - Charles and now one of my best charges has come into problems and needs help.”

“And Charles is upset.” I nodded in agreement.

“But that is not new he is always … You see, there are complications; the musician and I have no common language; a telephone call is impossible … so I am going to Germany … now my dear, calm yourself. The direct flight plans to his city are out of range so I am taking Icelandic to Luxembourg and someone will fetch me there … I must be there a month for the best price. I have not told Charles, I am just leaving. Actually the way it is … I don’t want to return.” My composure collapsed, I was a shaking mess. William held me steady.

"Oh - my - Lord! Are things that bad? Must you go so far? Well, I see plans are set." I nodded and told him my departure date. "This breaks my heart, Deidia. I am quite angry with … You will take care and see me right away when you return?" I nodded and he held her arms until we were both steady.

Two mornings before departure, I loaded my excess necessities packed in the largest suitcase and two cartons; had them banded properly and sent them air freight to the Flughaven in Stuttgart - to be held until picked up.

On that day the children lingered on leaving for school until I simply had to dress for travel. "My dears, I'm going away for a while," I said quietly, "Don't worry, you are very capable of doing everything equally as well as I do. You can handle it!” (My eyes were on The Magdalene.) “There are dinners in the freezer, all marked how to thaw and heat them in the microwave. Just pray everything turns out better for all of us."

Selena, eight asked, "Where are you going, mommy?"

"To Germany," I answered softly.

"Oh goodie, you are going to see Horst! Wait I made a flower. I want you to give it to him from me." She dashed into the bedroom and brought back a huge many colored carnation of tissue paper. "Here! Now I want him to have this."

How I wanted to cry, gather her up and take her.

Marshall the quiet one said, "My God I hope this turns out all right. Why?"

"To talk with him see what I can get straightened out. I hope I am not too late; that we can all have a sane life." I hugged each child.

The Magdalene asked if she had an address; she would not tell! (This from a tattletale!) I gave her a copy. “I hope you continue like every day but be kind to each other and happy. IF it works out, I'll send for you; if not, we’ll see how it goes!" I waved at them standing at the window as they walked to school, like I did every school day.

CHAPTER 13

DEUTSCHLAND

The taxi came and my experience began. I wrote my schedule but could see no little picture. I hoped someone would meet me, my funds were minimal: After tickets, taxi and such, I had almost one hundred and forty dollars. (4 Marks equaled a dollar then.)

From Springfield, Illinois a plane took me to St. Louis; another to Miami Beach. It flew over a smoldering swamp in the Seminole Reservation and when the clouds closed together everything looked like an unending field of cauliflower. Miami Beach was the largest airport I had ever seen. There was a shuttle plane to Nassau. It was filled to standing room with locals and German tourists returning home. This was my first time to actually hear Deutsch. Many black people packed the non-air-conditioned plane. One German called to his friend in back: "How goes it back there?" I turned to see a man wipe his brow and say: "Sie riecks zu Himmel!" I threw back my head laughing! The first gentleman looked down at me. "You understand?" I nodded yes, touched her chest then her lips with an understanding smile.

The Nassau Guards were spiffy in white English Bobbie Style uniforms. Check through was easy. Her flight, a long narrow Icelandic Plane sat on the runway. On board the stewardesses spoke five languages efficiently. They passed out the day’s newspapers in English, Belgian, Spanish, French and German. I got a leftover, it was Belgian. This was more pleasant than I expected: I saw English, German, Belgian French and Spanish words all mingled in the articles. This was easy reading for me; I was tops in Spanish in High School. The French and Belgian I sloughed over. Night fell and college age people settled into sleep easily. I was unsettled: ‘Am I nuts or crazydoing this?' After several hours, breakfast was served. When the French coast was announced (semi-brut) Champagne was served. Within an hour the plane cruised into Luxembourg. My three suitcases arrived without mishap. Some passengers giggled and pointed at my old ivory Samsonites each with a large white belt around it. But several modern soft sides arrived torn with the innards ballooning out; a handle askew or a wheel assembly broken! An attendant helped me and thanked me for the belts, saying they were a help in lifting.

I looked about the waiting area, no one! A German dowager mentioned she was taking the Autobus to Frankfort and that if my ride did not arrive promptly; I should do the same; stay in the hotel where the Autobus stopped and take the zug (train) the next morning. After forty five minutes, I followed the dowager's advice.

The Autobus carried a jolly group of Germans. As soon as the bus was underway a stewardess offered juice, beer or wine in little bottles from a cooler at her feet. The men became jollier and included me in their repartee. Customs check; here the policemen passed my passport from one to the other in the same amazement just as the customs in Nassau and on the plane. Finally it came back. The lady next to me asked to see my passport; she wondered why it had been passed about when everyone else’s were glanced at and flipped back quickly. I wondered too. She looked at the picture and then passed me hers; she was slouching in the picture it added years!

Our Autobus crossed the Mosel River onto twisting two lane roads. Several young men explained the Roman ruins we were passing, saying the blossoming trees were cherry. In a little town, the streets were one vehicle wide, but two-way. When a vehicle came from the opposite direction, each hopped the curb and caressed the store fronts. God help sidewalk pedestrians! The accident happened on a main street.

The bus driver moved to far to the right and a terrible screech pierced ears as the side mirror was peeled off a Daimler-Benz which in turn peeled chrome from the side of the bus.

An amiable Deutscher stood in his seat, adjusted his small rimmed wool hat, "Ach, we will be here awhile; time to get a wurst." He arose and about twenty-five others promptly made a dash for the street vendor.

"Won't the police take statements from us?" I asked.

"Aber, nein. Sure you won't have something?" I shook my head pleasantly and he replaced his hat and left. Everyone returned with juicy bratwursts loaded with condiments.

The police arrived in a small, bright blue Triumph convertible with blaring singsong sirens. Most of the bus windows went down to hear the olive uniformed police. They inspected the damage and decided it was the car's fault! A roar of disagreement went up. “This was a double amputee veteran! He did no wrong. Everyone on the bus agreed it was the bus driver's fault! But the decision stood. All the way to Frankfurt, the Deutsch passengers jeered the driver. On a narrow street another bus turned in from the opposite end. We all watched both large buses climb the sidewalks. “O-o-oh" the Deutchers catcalled, checking porch roofs that cleared by millimeters. He again declared himself a good driver and threatened to stop the bus. It was a hollow threat and the Germans promptly asked the stewardess for beer. She said she was out of everything and was accused of siding with the bus driver. The passengers reminded me of school children rather than adults. I tried to not laugh but my eyes were sparkling. As the hours passed, the passengers dozed lightly, half-awakening at each turn. At one turn large windows gleamed shiny vessels - a champagne winery: We were in Wiesbaden! The driver and Stewardess were glad when everyone finally dismounted at the Hotel Monopole-Metropole in Frankfurt. I rented a room for the night. It was snug, dark but clean with white thick woodwork. The locks had a triple mechanism. Along the hall pairs of men’s shoes set by each door. I slept fitfully. In this jumble of happenings, I forgot about eating.

The morning had free breakfast of hot hard rolls, butter and coffee with condiments all served with hotel silver on a crisp white tablecloth with a large cotton napkin. I lingered pleasantly, and then asked about trains. The train station was only two blocks away. Being used to grocery shopping, I stopped at a stand outside a small grocery. There were mammoth white roots I did not recognize and long cucumbers. Inside can goods all had a uniform brand with the tiniest picture of the item in a gold oval. Quaint grocery stores no supermarkets. The bananas were speckled, but the prices were governmentally frozen too bad.

The train schedule was automated. A couple explained in German what was happening on the display board that resembled Wall Street stock entries. They showed me how to calculate my destination; press two buttons for a printout. Ahead was the ticket counter. A young man took two suitcases and helped me onto the train to Heidelberg. We sat with three people who had brought hampers, flatware and food. At Heidelberg there were but moments to change trains to Stuttgart.

The conductor went along the side aisle calling: “This is an express train. It stops for NOTHING!” The train gained maximum speed and continued for about ten minutes; and then it began slowing finally stopped completely. The windows flew up; heads were sticking out the windows. Nothing but a second set of tracks! To the hall windows! Nothing but slanting concrete - walls two trains high. The conductor patrolled the hall relating: “A cow was on the tracks. She is being led (sauntering at her easy gate) to safety.” The next warning was “Kophs en! Zug compt!” The second train zipped past ours. What conversation stuff. Their “express” sped to make up lost time.

In the Stuttgart train station the young man helped me find lockers, but said they automatically opened after 24 hours. I thanked him but his parting words set me in a precarious position. He said, "I hope you find your friends all right."

A ne'r do well, unshaven chap picked-up the words and followed me. There was a travel agency, I turned in there and milled between people. I watched the man dally and then continued on. I asked the clerk for directions to a money exchange and a hotel and then visibly checked the outside area before leaving my sanctuary. It was about 1:00 pm.

The Hotel Graf-Zeppelin was across the street. The lobby was newly decorated with an oversupply of brilliant balloon size bulbs in rows up the floating staircase. I brought one bag. A Serbian bellhop took it and carried it to my room. Once inside he fell at my feet, kissed my shoes and cried-out about mad-love for me. He was my slave. I stepped back quickly in surprise, gave him four marks and told him to leave. He ascended to one knee, grabbed the money and ran. I

stepped from the room, double locked it and checked the restroom (toilette). I returned to

discover a maid and a different bellhop embraced in a passionate fit of kissing in my room.

The maid turned to me and said I disturbed THEM. They had not been TOLD the room was

taken. What nerve I had! What was that naughty phrase Horst had used in the Invisible

Realm! Ah, yes!

"Ist mein zimmer, heinaus, bitte." The couple fled each going a different way. My overnight case was undisturbed. I tried a chair under the doorknob but it was too short. I opened my suitcase finding it filled with music and manuscripts. Its twin had the change of clothes, my night cloths, diary and makeup. 'If it wasn't for the makeup, I would sleep in my slip,' I checked the phone book. Found the studio number; gave it a ring: No answer; back to the train station and exchanged the suitcases. I was doubly angry with myself; should anyone have approached it would have been a suitcase to the crotch! I set it in my room, tried the studio number again and then went out to explore the city. The stores were closed for the noon hiatus. Several men carried small orange net bags each with two little bottles of beer in them, curious. There were show windows, and kiosks advertising a Royal Stuttgart Ballet, Public telephones and tram tickets for sale. The Hindenburgbau restaurant looked OK. I ordered an early dinner.

At the next table a gentleman took up a tablespoon and fork. He adroitly folded a piece of wilted lettuce into fourths; and maneuvered it into his mouth with the spoon! He then took up his knife and sliced into his hard roll, buttered one half and downed it in three bites. My salad was arranged artistically and followed by something that resembled a butterfly pork chop, but wasn't and coffee. I ate everything and tucked the extra roll into my small black clutch purse.

Amazingly my room was locked and empty! In the telephone book was Berndt Rabe's number. He did write lyrics with Horst but I did not ***know*** him. Horst was listed on Panoramastrasse and not in Ditzingen on Shoenblickstrasse; this was confusing less than two months ago, his letter had been on stationary from Ditzingen! What was going on? I copied all the numbers. It was still early. A brochure listed a special exhibit at a college one block away. It turned out to be African Art and nearly identical to an exhibit that recently toured Springfield. Back to the Graph-Zeppelin and the telephone: nothing.

Time to compose a letter to Horst: “I am in Stuttgart. The town was quite nice. I will be at the Graf-Zeppelin a few days but do not have the money for longer and will take a pension. I hoped to see you because I have given up everything in the United States. From the looks of it, there is nothing in Germany for me either. This was my foolishness. I will call the studio daily, as long as I can.” There! That ought to get a rise. He was not alone at the heartstring game.

I checked the travel services and got a city map. Pensions were one night things: I would be moving daily, but paying 1/3 as much. A tram ticket for several rides would be a good investment. ***My Guides appealed that I remains at the Graf-Zeppelin another night*** ***- but my logic being swayed by the cost!*** ***Why was I not listening to the Guides? Logic and reasoning won over the advice of God's Guides. Humans! All of us can be “ Very Stupid Humans!”***

The tram lines were well marked on a folder with my ticket. Many sites were within walking distance. I called the studio each day at the train station and then moved my Samsonites to other available lockers. The third day the pension was easterly. I needed the large suitcase for outer garments. The room was several stories up on the backside of the Pension; out the window I saw a sheer drop of several hundred feet to terraced rows of grape vines. Heights dizzied me.

I went out to buy a roll and banana. There workmen jogged into a grocery, grabbed a roll, some meat and fruit. Condiments were at the checkout counter. Purchases were set in a little paper funnel twirled from a piece of thin paper and the top corner folded down to cover. The men rushed like there was a fire. I tried to see the irony of a rushing man carrying a silly paper cone but after another failed phone call, my hopes failed. The unanticipated expenses dwindled my funds to a few coins and then I would have nowhere to go. Maybe I ought to go to the Fernsteturm, the observation deck and just fall off.

With this in mind, I took down my red hair, coiled it snugly around my head and put on a brown wig to look less obvious. I took a tram then bus to go to the TV Tower. Quite suddenly the bus driver said something that I did not understand but everyone else popped to their feet and exited. I sat. Where could I go; I was dead broke? The driver turned to me and spoke German slowly. The bus needed service; he was going to the round. I wanted to go to the TV Tower. A dialog followed as to where I was from. He would like to write to an American lady! (Oh no! My heart was strained.) He scribbled his name and address; made me promise to write; then he ***emptied the till*** ***and thrust all the coins into my hands, saying this was for postage.*** He was going to have a soda; would I like one? No. He was so happy and kind that I was about to heave. I wanted to cry or laugh but could do neither. I watched him lean against the wall and chat with other bus drivers. I thought; “Dear God, I don’t want to do this but I am doing badly, please forgive me.’

"Ah, hey--das war gut!" The driver climbed into the bus - There was no service done to it! Again he asked my destination. I said the TV Tower. He disagreed and then began speaking in ***English*** - “No you don’t. I’ll take you home!” I had not expected to see the pension again, could not pay for another night and I had no idea where the pension was from here. He put the bus in gear noisily and drove . This should prove interesting. The bus lurched forward, turned often perhaps from north to east. In a bit I recognized a street and places I had seen before.

*.* "Here you are, Miss," He said in ***English,*** "You promise to write to me?" I nodded in a whimper realizing that I was no better off than before but walked to the door of the pension. He waved happily. ***When I peeked outside to watch the bus depart it was already gone! How did it leave so quickly? There were no sounds of engine, gears, squeals or acceleration. This pension lay a block from a stoplight. The other way was a steep hill. Yet that bus was out of sight.*** I went inside baffled.

I retired for the night, the pillow case felt like canvas, but I had brought a little cheek pillow which eased it. By morning I was hungry. I dressed and checked the pension rules and charges. This one charged for breakfast (forego breakfast) but telephone calls were free! She called the studio and behold, someone answered! A cleaning lady said they were coming in today; call at eleven o’clock. With joy and relief I redressed in my best hand-me-down dress and placed my one extravagance a pale grey mink boa and makeup in a white zip bag. I had two hours; time enough for a short but happy walking tour.

It was such a relief to make contact and I breathed easily. Now I actually saw and enjoyed the little front yards. No lawns; instead this street had tiny wood fences at the sidewalk often a Beware of Dog sign - little Dachsies no doubt. Behind the fences two rows of Butter Bibb lettuce, a row of strawberries and a row of primulas not yet in bloom; quaint. I turned around to view the pension. This one was called Haus Berg Hotel. It had two towers with shapely German domes.

What lie up the hill? Previously I noticed a set of stairs ascending to another street. She checked her map discreetly; “Eugenie Platz” a memorial with an ornate yellow marble fountain and flowers. This was but a block from the address the bus driver had given me. I must stop there and thank Hans Brunner for saving my life!

***I found the door and twisted the clinger. A lady opened the door; I spoke in simple Deutsch about her son Hans and held out his note. The lady took a deep shocked breath, and shouted at me; saying I was playing a cruel joke: Her son had been killed almost two years ago and slammed the door!*** I stood reeling, tried the clinger again, but no answer. One phrase was not familiar, but I understood most of it. “Cruel joke”I had to look up. Even as I looked up those words the reality did not hit me then or indeed not for months afterward: ***I rode a*** ***phantom bus with a phantom bus driver!*** - I held the paper with his address and the very real coins and heard my Guides: “We must start to the Zug and call the studio. I stepped carefully down the hill; passed the new Bibliotech. I was thankful it was a brighter day. Germany had been chilly, sunless and rainy. I crossed construction blockades at the Schloss Garden. In front of the blockade was a garden expanse with blue flowers that resembled magnified forget-me-nots and colorful hybrid pansies. A few more steps to the train station; again: phone booth, drop coins in the slot. It rang once and was picked up. I introduced myself in Deutsch.

"May-ree! May-ree we tried the Graf-Zeppelin but you had checked-out!" The voice told me Horst would be playing for a style show, but he messed up on the word style and used "Mode' this infraction made me ralize that he was speaking English! I mentioned this.

His voice answered sweetly, almost childishly to the affirmative.

"Oh, I feel so foolish, trying to write in Deutsch when …"

"But no, it is because of you that we speak English. May-ree we all love you very much. Now, Horst will be at a department store at noon. It has a big sign outside: Herties; and is on the Konigstrasse.

"Oh! I am not far from Konigstrasse, about a half block."

"That is good. Where are you? The **train** station! Oh, mein Gott; get out of there right now. **NO! NO! Don't hang up.** I mean get out after we talk. You see, that is a very dangerous place. So many women have been raped and murdered there; they don't even put it in the papers any more. So, get out of there and never go back. Herties." his voice slowed several paces, "is maybe three blocks south, OK? OK, we see you at the store at noon..."

After we both rang off, I leaned against the inside of the booth; tepid about leaving it. 'Good heavens, I phoned from here daily because of those lockers.’ But I had to change lockers again. I opened a suitcase for a pair of earrings and was closing it when three men stopped and hung on the locker door smiling menacingly.

"Oh, hello," I said in Deutsch and laughed, "I know this looks funny, but I really do know what I am doing," I snapped and locked the case; flipped it on its end, shoved it inside, slammed the door shut and took the key. "Guten Tag Alle!” I said firmly and strutted past them with determination.

'Jesus! God! Angels! Guides! Thank you, thank you for Klaus’ warning.' I scurried into the underground to cross the street. Walking across the wide street was not allowed because of the plethora of taxis and autos which started from the stop lights at 30 mph. Trams rounded the corner from three directions, they missed each other by millimeters. The track network was so vast that the street cobbles were chinked to fill voids. That first day I tried crossing the street thinking the under-ground would not be safe. A police car yodeled its singsong siren and a policeman yelled: "Tram!" I looked up to see the first tram from the west rounding the turn. It was so close I saw that it was solid cast iron! My God, it wasn’t stopping! I heard my Guides, ‘Step here!’ and point. I did and it cleared me. Before I took a breath a second tram just as menacing tolled bells and came crossing around me from the east. The Guide said step there and pointed. Again it cleared but by now I was rooted to the spot from fear and a third tram was from the south along my right side! I was bolted to the spot and thought: ***'Oh God, get me out of this!'*** My Guide said:

***O-ooh!' and the good Guide bumped me into a third safe spot.*** I stood frozen in place so very glad I was not carrying a suitcase!

When the trams were gone the two policemen were covering their eyes. Peeking through their white gloved fingers one shouted at her: "Untergrund! Untergrund! Nie darieber!" I had no idea what "darieber" meant, but that experience was etched in mind: Use the underground!

I followed the signs and came out on the east side of the Konigstrasse and proceeded a few blocks. There was a dollar store. I went in and bought a pair of pantyhose, just in case. The sales clerk wanted to show that the tiny pantyhose would really stretch and took them by toes and band and stretched them over her head saying, "Sehen Sie, sie haben eng!" singing the last word. I laughed and bought them. I proceeded to the department store and noticed a modest sign announcing that Horst would be playing in the restaurant. Again his face seemed blurred, maybe the ink smeared.

I found the ladies rest room and checked my hose for runs; wiped the street dust from my shoes with a paper towel; checked my ornate hair-do and makeup; not too bright, eyes perfect. I fastened the simple dime store pearl earrings firmly.

A couple girls giggled at my concentrated movements, but this was the most important meeting of my life! I had preplanned this costume. The dress was black silk shantung with a bit of hip interest on one side and ¾ length sleeves. Finally I reached into the tote for the new mink boa and wrapped it around my neck; fastening one end to the split jewel neckline, twisting it a time around itself then fastening the other end higher. It was beautiful. I folded my fuchsia hound's-tooth coat over my arm, replaced my gloves and admired myself in my hand-me-down outfit. I took the stairs to the upper floor.

Here I calmed, ready! There was a man in black: topcoat, homburg, and suit. He was unrolling a coil of wire and attaching it to amplifiers. Another dressed identically, was adjusting sound pickups at the back of the dining room. When the first man backed to where I stood, I tapped his shoulder. He simply glanced back and kept with his coil.

"Bitte, ich kom Herrn Jankowski sehen. Ein studio mann sagt mir hier kommen?"

"Er ist nicht jetzt hier," The man then straightened. He looked familiar, but now the color left his face and he became rigid. It was Werner, the driver on the album cover.

I extended my hand to introduce myself, but he jumped back from me! To calm himself he took several deep breaths. "Meeses Meed-den, oh, yes. We finally got your word. I opened your letters myself as Horst was on tour. I return routinely for mail. It was indeed an upset that we did not receive it sooner. Someone would have met you. His hand went to his chest and his breathing accelerated again.

I smiled gently and said that I could sit out of the way.

He drew a breath and nodded: "Yes, there are benches by the elevator. You can see everything." He closed his eyes and shivered.

My coat brushed against him when I turned away. He gave a start and followed me to the bench reached out his hand and said: "Forgive me, madam," grabbed my arm and moved his grasp from my elbow to my wrist. He took a large breath and tried to laugh. "Oh-oh, it is- I am so - glad you are REALLY here! YES! YES!" He took a few steps away; turned, nodded; took a few more steps and glanced at me again.

'Oh - bless the dear man.' I thought. ‘I was correct, he was very frightened of me in my spirit-form.

In a matter of ten minutes the restaurant was almost filled. The chauffeur brought another man and tried to formally introduce us but his tongue twisted and it came out: "Ah, ba-ba-ba."

"Yes, thank you," I said with a nod and a small smile.

The other man acknowledged me with an “Ah,” and a lift of the head. He continued that, he built the sound. He was Klaus Reiser and that his name was listed on the "Ein Hoch Der Lieb" album and he was proud of that. He too was speaking English. It was this voice that beckoned me to M-C in Athens and Toledo last December. He spoke easily, "Horst has changed everything! He is not the same, not the music, nothing! This worries me much. I have been with him from the start! It is that he was so… fond of you; how is the child?"

"She is getting well and is safe…He was doing so well… I could not get here sooner; passport and interference ...With the changes; is it successful?"

"Well, that is funny, May-ree he is always somewhat successful. It is going pretty well." He glanced around. Store associates were sticking roses, greenery and other flowers in a trellis at the end of a raised catwalk for the style show. The restaurant was nearly full. Someone bumped Klaus into me. "It is hectic! We must find you a seat. Here by the piano, so you can see him. Werner went to get him (Horst). They will arrive shortly. We are using the combo today." He seated her.

"Does he know I am here?"

"Ah, yes, May-ree." His tone and choice of words seemed to pre-empt an explosion. I sat easily, while again thanking God for my few years in Drama Club!

The musicians were drifting in. A younger lady dressed in black with short bright red hair asked if she could sit at my table. I nodded and said, "Aber, ja, bitte."

At the rear of the room, Werner and Horst were coming; at least it might be Horst. 'Different! Oh, yes.’ I had figured the mileage; ‘My God, I come over 4700 miles to see a man in a too large bush jacket, long wiry hair and unkempt facial hair. I must be out of my skull.' Yet, I sat straight. Long ago, I learned to keep thoughts and emotions separate from facial expressions. Today I needed that, like they say: “Big Time!” I managed to smile pleasantly to the young lady next to me, but read his lips as Werner motioned where I sat: "Which one?"

“Mit Rottkoph" (With red hair).

"Welcher? (which?)

"Im shwarz (in black)"

"Welcher?"

Werner focused, "Mit dem pelz (fur)!"

"Ach, Ich dachte.” (Ah, I thought so.)

We watched each other while appearing to be looking straight ahead. 'I don't know if I can take this, dear Holy Guides.'

'You can! Be soft and gentle' ***don’t*** say what pops to mind and ***don't*** quarrel at all!'

Another man also dressed in black came to my side with a rose, saying it was from Horst. "He wants to meet you. Please come with me."

I gathered my small tote and followed. Horst tried not to look into my eyes. He glanced down, up or to either side. I noticed that he shook hands very lightly. His hair was below the collar and his glasses were an extremely new "fast biker" style. Horst introduced this new man as Hermann Schaaf, the finance manager. Now a younger man in black joined the group. His hair was in a pageboy style and it swung happily from side to side. Verbatim he began talking excitedly in front of … Horst. This was the shy voice that had answered the telephone earlier!

"Oh, Meeses Mee-den we are so glad you are here! I know you from your pictures! We all love you. We were on tour when he got your letter and you know what Horst says? He says, 'Oh, May-ree is here. Pack up we are going home.' We say: 'what!' But he says again, 'Yes, pack everything, we are going home!' and the woman says: 'Why do you give her such concern? You have your tour, your music.' And you know what he says? He says, 'You do not understand, without her there is no music’." I caught my breath at this. (Those were the exact words of Old Liszt from the Spiritual Realm! “Believe me he wants you for the music!”)

Horst nudged him with an elbow and told him to go set-up. Happily after “spilling these beans,” he went to the band area. “That was little Wolfie,” but Horst was not smiling.

Werner dashed up with a floral card enclosure and gave it to Horst who glanced at it.

"It is for you May-ree," Horst handed her the card. "They should not have left them, they were all dead."

I read the card, it said "We miss you terribly," in German. I set the card down without a change of expression.

Horst picked up the card read and held onto it: "They miss you!" surprised at my non-challance.

"Because I am here," I said quietly and watched his curious face.

Hermann dashed up and said, "Horst your change of clothes is here."

Horst slipped his arm lightly under mine. We proceeded to a table where Hermann had laid a new leather overnight case.

"Oh, you got a new suitcase!" I blurted. "Well, you had the other a long time," remembering a satchel of pebble leather with two straps. He considered it perfect.

Hermann stopped short and flashed a startled look.

"Oh yes, the other," Horst sighed while Hermann opened the new one and said. "It was …" Hermann sropped for lack of the word.

"Shot? Ugh, Caput?" I asked.

"Not to me!" Horst answered spitefully. This indicated that some changes he did not approve.

"It was a keepsake, from the conservatory days but I see, new appearance, new eyeglasses. Oh! I did not break your eyeglasses?" Her hand went to her chest and she saw him shake his head I decided to say something about a paranormal happening: "I - I'm sorry about your suit."

"Understood," he pursed his mouth. "The hosen were fixable, but the Jacket," he shook his head and laughed into his chest.

"Horst, you have never seen this lady! Not until now! You are talking crazy." Hermann spat the words.

Horst almost burst. He put his hands elbow high and pushed an elbow to distance Hermann from himself. "I told you she was special - HEAR ME! Now go away." The pianist turned back to me.

"Jankowski, what I do not understand is that you all speak English so well. If I'd known, I would not have…" (Made such a fool of myself, I was going to say) but he waved his hand, no.

"You were right. I did not speak English. I tried classes over the years, but always a tour or a performance and all I had was broken English. Then your letters;" He chuckled to himself, "were so … but I knew what you were telling me. I sat down and translated your letters into English. They were beautiful letters AND the kind of English I wanted to learn. So I studied them. English was becoming more important to us not only for the United States but every-where. So I made everyone who wanted to stay with me, do the same as I did." He awaited the barrage of words that did not come.

"AH,” she caught her breath, "some of them were quite personal," she said softly.

"Do not worry. They had the same effect on everyone; you are delightful. They all love you, May-ree." He had promised himself he would not weaken. He stiffened his shoulders to catch his composure and then tried small talk. "Why is it that the whole world refers to us as Deutsch except in America? They say German."

"I think it is the Germanic, Teutonic, Anglo-Saxon sort of reference."

"Yes, we all loved your letters and jokes and then she came; and she went through things and destroyed them; everything. I have nothing!" He wailed. "But she did not know about some little things,” he smiled mischievously. Catching himself pouring out his distain, he quickly changed the subject again. "Tell me, where are you staying?"

"At the Haus Berg Hotel! There is a big spa around the corner but not with it. I managed two nights. Mostly pensions are but for one night and then they make you leave."

"Oh Gott, don't leave! We had a terrible time trying to find you. The Zeppelin said you left no address and the police said you did not check in with them. You are supposed to check in with the police, May-ree."

"I had no address. And I never saw a police station."

"Well, you are with us now. We will take care of you. Something tells me you must not go back immediately. Are you with a tour?" He saw her shake her head shyly. "How long is your ticket for?" She told him a month. A finger went to his mouth. "We will do something. What is terrible is that I have started this tour. We start in a small circle from home, and then gradually work further away. We will get to Russia. Last night, I think we were in Heidelberg. I was returning to do this show." (Behind him Werner shook his head and motioned upward likely Hamburg) "The owner is a longtime friend, so I do it for him, but Werner brought your letter, then the previous ones were here when we returned. Mein Gott, I was out of my mind."

"Horst you must change. It is time!" said Hermann as he noticed another person and said," Oh, hello; Horst, you remember Da-lia Lama?"

I turned expecting to see a Holy Man in orange sheets, but instead it was a willowy, spectacular brunette. She was a name model there: Introductions made by Hermann to me. The model flashed a perfect smile while putting her arms around Horst's shoulders and whispering something in his ear; he stiffened moving his shoulders with a shrug. I smiled. In Springfield women fawned over political celebrities. Horst was unresponsive to the model, and flashed bothered eyes to me. Hermann pushed him to change cloths!

Horst said suddenly: "I don't like that jacket. I'll wear this; is it foolish enough!" Hermann was taken back, but snapped the case closed quickly. He looked up and whispered something to Horst, who grimaced and gestured to a table on the other side of the catwalk. From the corner of my eye, I saw a nearly platinum blonde and a few others. Hermann rushed to escort the party to the table indicated. To Werner the maestro said, "We are ready, take May-ree to her seat." With two steps clear between us, he followed to make an entrance, but no one acknowledged him. (This indicated his popularity was on slide.)

The other redhead had taken Mary's seat. Three other seats were left. Mary took the one which poised her back to the style show. Two dowagers in dark neutral fedoras and well filled wool suits stopped. They sported worn pull-through fur scarves at their necks, dark brown gloves and sturdy leather handbags. It was almost a uniform among middle-age Stuttgart women. They asked if they could sit there, in German. Forgetting myself, I answered, yes and then gracefully rolled my right hand at the wrist and added:"Aber naturlich," and smiled. The ladies were seated and remarked that I had to turn around to see the show. I answered, "Dieser ist sehr gut fur mich, aber danke." (This is very good for me, but thanks.)

At this, they began to question my heritage. Horst was seating himself, and wanted to say something, but heard me say, "Ich bin Americanerin." Now he musr listen with interest. The older generation did not kindly receive Americans. Stuttgart had been overly bombed; it was nothing.

"Ach Gott, nein. NEIN! Sie kann nicht. Wer denken Englanderin oder vieleicht (perhaps) Franzosin. Sie sagen 'yes' aber Sie Kleide Franzosish." (They were appalled that she was American and from my cloths they thought me English or French.)

I was amiss perhaps the ladies hated Americans; and why not! Stuttgart was still in long recovery since World War II! "Hopefully I am one of the good Americans." I said in Deutsch. And catching sight of Horst who was enjoying my discomposure and laughing until his face turned red. He left the piano and came to the table.

"Gnediges Frauen und Fraulein," (Good ladies and miss) he said spreading his arms around them. "This is my friend from America. She has come all this way just to visit me," he said in Deutsch. Then turning to me he entreated me to have something to eat. The ladies hands went to their chests and immediately wanted to shake his hand, sensing their intentions, he touched each of their hands on the back lightly, smiled and dashed back to the piano. They were elated.

He looked over the rack and caught the eye of the first model, nodded and began standards; there were none of his compositions! I was disappointed and decided that whatever else could go wrong likely has. Then he began the song from West Side Story, Maria. "There once was a girl named Maria," I caught my breath and dipped my head that I understood the past tense of the song. Immediately he was upset and circled his uplifted hand; forming NO with his mouth, then he lifted both and made a stay motion. There was more emotion in his face than distress. I circled my hands: Where can I go; then patted the table cloth.

'Why did I include that song?' He thought, but finished it and then he flipped several pages of music and then a few more. He saw that I picked at my food. My fork would not cut through the tough gelatin and there were no knives or a waiter to supply one! Of the two choices, I wished I would have ordered the half sandwich ungainly as that would have been to eat. He started "Easter Parade" not too appropriate for free time wear. Near the end he was standing and playing "The Fire Dance" and not too well … 'Missing notes is not Jankowski, I was concerned; he was perspiring with duress. At one point he opened his mouth and was not playing at all. The combo noticed this and began playing around his spasm. In a few moments he was lucid and began playing. 'Something is desperately wrong! He isn't on drugs?' My Guidesanswered, no.

The style show finished at 12:45 p.m. The attendees left quickly; there was hardly applause! The busboys and waiters were stripping tables and setting chairs into two long rows. Horst came and slipped his arm through mine and led us to a line of chairs. Along these few steps, several people asked him for autographs. He obligingly slipped a card from his right breast pocket each time and opened his pen to sign his name. He showed me the third card before passing it along. The picture was of the group, he was barely identifiable. His signature was so full of scrolls it looked like Arabic plus circles! Perhaps this was why he did not write himself. I nodded, “Understood!” Finally we talked … about nothings at first like the lovely evergreens on the “Baby, But Grand” album cover. Turned out it had been a huge stage mural in New York! His arms were extended at this time, one around my chair and the other over the empty one next to him. We were finally into something important when three more people interrupted him for autographs! He stood and said the other man had cards his were all gone. They rushed that way. He asked me to stay and left to speak with someone from the store. As he returned I arose. He dabbed his face with a kerchief. It was then that I noticed his hands were abnormally swollen.

‘What was this?’ His beautiful hands! They were stiff and huge like a lineman’s rubber gloves. It caught me off guard. Several typical thoughts crossed my mind like: ‘What the hell happened? What have you done to your hands?’ othere biting and spontaneous ghings. ‘Oh Good God, what shall I do?' And then I realized I was staring at his hands with wide eyes, my breath caught and mouth open. Finally I gasped a few breaths and looked to his face. The Guide’s words hit me. I gushed simply: "Your hands! They … they look so …hurt!"

"Oh they do; they hurt me so much.” He strode to me like a hurt little boy. “Here let us take a table over here while they find a place for us to talk." To my surprise his entourage’ encircled the half meter table (Werner, Hermann, Klaus and Wolfgang with the page boy). Horst jibed they were like his brothers; he had no family in Stuttgart. "And they all love you, May-ree. You wrote so many things but never with a bad word or about sex. Don't you like sex?" I dipped my head snickering in embarrassment:

"O-ooh, one does not write that!" I whispered.

Then in a breath he explained that he had seen many doctors about his hands, had innumerable tests and medicines; one time they thought a hot wax treatment would help, but it was seven times worse! And the cause was not found. I looked at his hands; scarcely touching them and motioned that he lift them a bit. It had been a while since read hands! The Guides’ voices: 'Once you do it; you can always do it!' The nails denoting extreme energy, were unmarked and lovely yet but almost lost with swelling. Finally, I motioned that he turn one over and then the other to study the lines and the mounds on the palms. There was no line tangle on Luna - no drug abuse. This had taken a few minutes but I could not detect the problem. The fingernails were normal, not turning into the skin.

"It is not the heart!" I said at last. He agreed readily and explained tests substantiated this. His hands were so swollen that few lines remained in evidence. I shook my head and touched the hands ever so gently. With exasperation I thought: 'Guides, where have I seen this fingernail configuration before? The Jewel Tea Man! He was quitting his route because of bad circulation.' Thus I diagnosed, "It must be the circulation."

"But it is! My god it is," he glanced to those around them and lifted a hand in helpless exasperation. "She looks at my hands and tells me correctly! Oh mein Gott, I've gone through such pain," he held back a sob. "Ugh, yes! They said the only way to heal them is to stop playing the piano," he hung his head at that futility. "That is my life. They say, I have broken the nerve endings in the tips of my fingers. They call it; oh, what is it they call it? Ach-- nerviosa. Oh, I did not introduce you to the others," he said trying to regain his composure again. "This is Werner Randecker you met and Klaus Reiser does the sound. This is Hermann," his nostrils flared angrily when he said this name repeating that he was the finance manager and little Wolfgang Schmid (long “I”) was from the combo."

I suggested I write the names down and they all babbled about my being left handed! Horst suddenly began telling me about his mother. He thought it was too much for her to take care of her little farm in a five syllable, tongue-twisting town in the Schwarzwald. He persuaded her to move if he ever found a place. He had found a place, "It is in Wallhausen by the Boden Sea; they also call it Lake Constance in the extreme south-east but still Germany, May-ree. The area is so beautiful. I knew she would love it, but she fought us when it was time to actually go. (Above him all the heads were nodding agreement.) We had to remove her bodily! She cried and wailed all the way in the car and when she saw it; she loved it!"

"Is this the place with purple windows - ugh - purpura fensters?" I asked indicating a two story "A" Frame. I noticed 3 of the 4 men were baffled.

"Yes! That is my room that has those windows." He said happily. "Now she loves it."

Hermann shook his head, extended his hand about to say something, but Werner stilled him by leveling Hermann’s hand; his head shivered, no. Then his stomach clutched and he excused himself. The other three continued listening with interest.

I asked if his mother kept her goats; the little grey ones with lop ears. He nodded happily, but Herman could not contain himself:

"How can she say these things?" He blurted.

Horst turned to him: "Why don't you take care of ***the* *woman*.** You do it otherwise." Hermann pulled back at this nasty retort and left. Horst continued, "Ach, there is so much; let us have a wine, it is good here." He ordered and then said, "You must know I married. We have taken an apartment. I told her that I wanted you to stay with us, but she-" His hands went into the air and he shook his head completely baffled.

I kept a pleasant face, but thought, 'He actually is so naïve: Wanting to bring another lady into the same apartment with his bride.' Trying to be helpful, I suggested that perhaps I could stay at the house. I saw him sigh and cast his eyes downward.

"The house is all closed. We will find you a hotel." I nodded. All the pieces of my little clairvoyant scene were falling into place; he got an apartment so she did not ruin the house. We sipped the wine. It was smooth. A few cake crumbs, the coffee and the wine were all I ate that day.

"Can you find a piano with a softer touch?" I asked.

He sniffled and nodded. "I have an electric piano but the sound is… yech but it has a fun wing-wang switch. Ach, I will have a smoke." One man fetched his kit. "Do you smoke, May-ree?"

"No-- I never had to."

"Ach well, none of us had to, but now; oh they want me to quit; so I have taken up the pipe." He excused himself and blew his nose. Hermann was back and whispered something to him, while another took his pipe, filled, tamped, handed it to Horst and lit it for him! The men decided if he smoked they could also and began pulling out cigarettes and lighters. "Put those out, please!" he said, "I can't smell May-ree's perfume if you smoke. It is delightful. I have a pipe a few times during the day."

She mentioned that the tobacco smelled fragrant. He pouted then said:

"My bride wants to talk with you, but no matter what she says, we will take care of you! Do you drive? Yes, of course, I remember! We can give you a car to use." I did not know all their traffic signs. "Then we will get you a driver, no problem; and whatever you do: **Don't leave here!** I am finally getting some sanity in my life." He pushed his chair back, looked at the two approaching and left.

Hermann introduced the bride. Eva was petite, pretty, blonde, and nervous. She wore a pale tan raincoat with large lapels of the day, but the thing I noticed was her translucent lavender eyelashes; definitely a youthful experiment. Eva sat down rigidly, her arms pulled back and hands clinched schoolgirl style. I thought: 'She has my world, why is she so damned nervous?'

I felt sorry for her. "I did not know you already married. That changes everything; and it will be all right. Please, please relax." The four men surrounded them.

Eva talked crisply and fast, but not insultingly. She was terribly upset with Horst. It was not what she had expected (this life to be). She went into detail about his habits and finished: "He does not go out and mingle," she said. (Mary knew he was deathly afraid of being shoved and mauled.) "And, and--he will not even play with us!" She said indicating Hermann and another man. They shook their heads, no, agreeing with her.

My stomach clutched! Eva wanted him to join in sex games with her and members of the group! This was absolute irony, knowing how straight Horst was. I thought, 'Lady if he was not so straight; YOU would never have come into the picture!' But, I slowly gestured, lifting my left hand to myself, and turned that hand slowly to the men and drawled quietly, "Oh, no. He won't do that." Hermann seemed surprised at my response. The others caught my meaning and promptly agreed out loud. Hermann was more baffled. He was expecting one of these women to explode. When was the double-hissy fit coming?

There was a pause. "He is very sensitive and holds things inside a long time. He does not forgive easily. Oh he is crisp and stern at times but right now those hands are killing him." I noticed that the men took this literally! "No, no, I mean the hands hurt him very, very much. He can barely touch anything. It will take much patience and understanding to get you both through this!"

Eva had heard nothing. She was too upset and must express things. "And he wanted you to stay with us. We have a tiny apartment and it is yet, alle unbestanding (unsettled). There is barely room for us to pass each other."

"That was very sweet, but I would not dream of coming to your apartment. Everything will be fine; all is settled; please calm, calm." I hoped Eva would relax. "Tell me, do you love him?"

"I - I did - I thought I did but all this is so upsetting. Maybe - I don’t know."

"He is all music. He drops everything if he hears new notes! It is going to take a lot of love and patience to get used to this and I know ***you can*** do all the right things.” I said and patted Eva's hand.

Hermann stood in confusion, still awaiting the hissy-fit explosion. He noticed Horst who made a gruff motion moving his head in such a way to indicate, get ***the woman*** out of here. I caught it and wondered 'Will he do the same to me? He cut me out once. Why am I being so nice to the opposition?'

***'Because, you counsel and she is frightened and young,’ My Guide said. The big money she expected is not there. He dropped everything to find you and he is ill. If he keeps smoking he will … be more ill.' the Guide said.***

Hermann must take Eva away! He touched Eva's shoulder, “We must leave if you want to change for tonight.” Immediately, she forgot me and popped to her feet. Without a word they sped to the elevator, chatting vigorously. Horst kept out of their sight. When the elevator doors closed upon them, he touched his chest, came and sat down.

"Ach, now we can talk." But neither of us said anything. Instead we stared at each other. "You are so beautiful." He leaned across the small table as did I, thinking he would whisper. Our lips barely touched, or had they? We were drawn to kiss again, lightly like the flit of a butterfly. It was not planned, but we were both suffering so many hurts. They could not stop the butterfly kisses. "Ach, we must talk” but just as their lips almost met again, a stranger approached and asked for an autograph! Where was peace! Although the restaurant was nearly empty, the sound system was being dismantled noisily by Werner, Klaus and Wolfgang. Finally, at 2:00 p.m. the store manager said, there was a room now that was private on the upper floor. Horst gathered me carefully by the arm. Up the wide metal steps we trod noisily.

The exhausting day splintered all my hopes. It did not matter what Horst said; I was unable to save anything: The music, the man, the ability, my hopes; I felt completely beaten. There was no salving, no inspiration for music: All lay in ruins and all of it was my fault. He was my charge and I failed by bringing my own life’s problem into the music correspondence. As we reached the landing, sunshine reflected through the wired-glass. My mouth felt dry. "Look! The sun is shining. This is the first time it has shined since I came to Germany. It was my try at buoyancy.

"Really! Ach, ahead, that must be the office."

He looked around in awe. It was more storeroom than office. There was a window wall, an artist’s desk with a back- lighted slant top for graphics. Two sketches were there, ready for newspaper ads. Two orange plastic chairs faced the light board. Every other space in the room even tables held stacks with light plastic chairs and single chairs thrown upon them. There was barely standing room. It was so terrible it was funny. Before I could laugh, he turned me toward him. "Look! What do you think of all this?" He motioned to himself.

I sank into one of the little chairs. "We are a wreck, Jankowski." I used his last name because he did not like “Horst”. "I had no idea my letter would touch off so much! My God, I've made a horrible mess of everything and I've failed you." I stretched a hand towards him, "I am so sorry. Can you ever forgive me?" Quickly he pulled a little chair and sat down beside me.

"But no, it is not your fault. I let it happen all by myself! I was very foolish."

"That is kind, but I should have told you. The record albums take so long; and things are not easy for me. And I did, Jankowski I fell in love with you completely. Nor did I realize that you did not remember about the child but things have not worked out on my end either." I took a deep breath of recovery. Now we must attempt problem solving. “What can we salvage?” At his quizzical expression, of the word - I supplied “-to bring best about."

He stood up: "What about the cloths?"

I stood up too and faced him, "Not really **so** bad, a bit too big but I think the cloth is too thick. Maybe something a bit firmer, Colors are fine. The glasses are a bit overwhelming; can't see the face so good." She stopped, “Ah ha, the face, I forgot …. I see the young men are growing long hair here, not much in the states - just the rebelling young men. I am too conventional." I touched his back hair lightly. "Oh, it is soft! The beard-ugh barten is soft too.” I laughed into his shoulder. “I wish you could have told me it was soft, Honey. It looks wiry-steif. The beard is fine, just maybe to shape it a little."

"Ja-- Ja, you are right, but there is one thing I do not understand. What is it that you say, 'Honey'?"

I laughed because it was not more serious. "Honey--honig ist susse."

"Strange- we say goldfinch." When I looked surprised, he laughed and then I did too.

Again we sat down but the stress of being calm and sweet finally consumed me. I began to break, saying with anguish that I could not heal his hands or fix so many things … the thought of going back home - facing the volcanic Charles … I fell unconscious.

Horst was helpless to assist. He was a little man about five foot five inches and his hands were useless. There was so much racket on the floor below no one heard him. He paced hours before someone banged on the metal steps! The noise shook me from unconsciousness. It seemed but moments had passed. He was standing near the doorway and took a breath of relief when I moved. The room seemed less bright.

My thought was that we did not solve very much and I came to him wondering. He said I was in very fragile condition; must rest and recover. Why he was saying that? I felt fine. Klaus yelled something. Horst was shaken and kept a protective arm around me. In surprise, we looked at the darkened widows behind us and started down the steps. “I will come by after the show.” He accidently noticed his watch. "Oh Gott, I have fifteen minutes before the show at 21 o'clock." (9 p.m.) Klaus and Werner met us. Horst said something in Deutsch. Both men glanced at me with shock. Werner came to my side immediately. Horst and I stopped turned and looked at each other. Shyly, Horst waved stiffly. I returned it and blew a kiss.

'Look as long as you can; he will try but this may be the only time you see him.' The Guide told me. ‘No! I could not accept this! 'He will come', I thought defiantly! Shortly the underlings hustled us in opposite directions. While driving, Werner filled me in on their plans for moving me in the morning. The Haus Berg Hotel was on a hill above them and a one-way street coming down, not going up! Werner said he'd likely get lost in the dark to go around the block so turned the little Renault around and backed up the steep hill. The car sprogged; we said goodnight and Werner in the car jerked away.

Hours passed, Jankowski did not come and there was no word I felt that I had been dumped. Finally, I dressed for bed and lay down on the canvas-stiff pillowcase. The day had been excruciatingly taxing. Once I relaxed, I was out!

I pushed myself to pack the little overnight Samsonite; knowing that Klaus wanted me in a hotel they knew in Botnang a suburb west of the city. I decided to donate the dress and matching coat I had traveled in to Die Hellaluja Brudders (Salvation Army) but the maid fell in love with it and I gave it to her. I enjoyed the way the maids opened the windows in the morning and also the gorgeous lace curtains I noted as I passed many private homes. I guess the one thing that tickled my funny bone was the sign outside a mechanic’s shop, “WE SERVICE FOREIGN CARS” but then I saw a mother embracing her daughter as a streetcar pulled to a stop for her. Would she return safely the war-fears remained.

A huge Bavarian that I had not seen before introduced himself as Herrn Durchmesser. Ah, his voice! He was the bass singer on: "When the Girls Come Marching In." Happily, he fetched my suitcase from the 3rd floor room. A little yellow Citroen was outside the hotel. It had its hood replaced but not painted - no time! I asked what happened to the Renault? He mopped his forehead.

"Oh, ist caput; was ok last night!" He paid my bill and chastised me for mot eating anything. There was no bill for food! We began a twisted journey to find the train station for my other suitcases. Soon he admitted he was lost. I glanced around and noticed a landmark.

"Ah there is Eugenie Platz! I know where we are." The discourse was in Deutsch.

"Where is it? I live here and I've never seen Eugenie Platz".

"Back there now. It is a terrible walk from below; turn here we go down Adenouerstrasse; pass the new Bibliotech; go about two blocks north and turn left on Schillerstrasse to der Zug! (Train station)"

"Mein Gott! Ist alle unter die Construction!" He said.

"No worry, Schillerstrasse ist offen; jetzt geht garade durch! (Schiller Street is open, just go straight through!).

We arrived easily at the station but he insisted I remain in the locked car! It was a pretty ride to Hotel Hirsch in Botnang. It had a modern white exterior. Inside was formal but ancient with dark paneled walls. Behind them the street parted into a "Y" and along one branch was a row of single item shops: Eggs, wurst, fowl and beef. There was a bread bakery and a sweet bakery. Behind them was a mechanics shop for "foreign" cars. Ahead on Esslingerstrasse were two churches. The reservations were set. Her room was small with a wide twin and a ¾ length featherbed. The window had exotic lace curtains.

Durchmesser said I was to eat at the hotel and they would pay for everything at the end of my stay. He brought my three suitcases upstairs. He came down mopping his head again and we entered the little yellow car and drove seemingly in circles and down hilly streets to Feuerbach. I noticed the tram numbers to orient myself. The studio had moved from the Konigstrasse: Another sign of cutting costs.

Horst was not at the studio; he had become violently ill, collapsed and was hospitalized overnight but was recuperated by morning. The late show had produced several spasms like the one at the style show. Klaus said he would be in tomorrow before they resumed the tour.

No time was mentioned, so Sunday disregarding my Helpful Guides’ screaming, “No! No! I went to church, understood nothing, walked back and missed my ride! I caught a tram and made it easily, but most of the group were on the road to resume the tour. Klaus was doing a last commercial and Little Wolf was clearing old TV commercial film. Both were upstairs. I passed many Albums that were mounted along the staircase. Some covers I had never seen. Klaus was recording a commercial with 6 very old hunting horns. This resulted in seventeen takes before I burst out laughing. Then I noticed little Wolf un-reeling a large spool of film. He saw her look and began an acrobatic performance while pulling out the film and laughing behind soundproof glass. I tried to be silent but threw my head back holding in the giggles. Between bad horns, Wolf and me, Klaus efforts were thwarted. He called a break. Several important executives arrived for a meeting. Durchmesser fetched food.

I expected a nice repast I really needed it but Durchmesser brought several bottles of wine, stemmed glasses woven through his fat fingers and a huge sausage from the downstairs refrigerator. There was no bread, no condiments! The gentlemen took seats. Each crossed one ankle over their knee; drew out a fancy gold pocket knife some were jeweled and aside from heavy gold watches and rings, they could have been anybody! The ritual began: The huge sausage was passed along; each man cutting a chip and eating it! (I declined politely and held my giggle nicely.) Durchmesser opened and poured the wine. The commercial was not finished that day.

They finished it Monday. Klaus said Horst called and wanted me out of the city because it was too big and dangerous. He did not want me wandering about Stuttgart! (Durchmesser or little Wolf must have related my Zug Escapade. Klaus and Wolf would not be in Stuttgart because they must join him. ***I saw a small clairvoyant picture***- Eva tried to form Horst to her ideas again but he had regained his authority! He'd nod then do as he pleased. Eva liked a new tune; until she read the lyrics! I saw him purse his mouth: 'What may happen when she reads the other new songs?' He smiled mischievously.

Klaus thought the American Embassy would have ideas or could make adjustments. We drove there in his VW.. The woman in charge assumed wrongly about me and fussed as if I was a stupid teenager running after a celebrity. She all but dislodged her very dry wig. The more upset and loud she was the calmer and more sedate I became. For me it was just like home: Crabby apples do abound everywhere. My calmness infuriated her and demanded to know about the Midden's bank accounts in the States. I remained dignified saying easily that I thought my husband might have two hundred dollars. Did I have any accounts? - “Oh yes.”-- How much is in it? The woman slashingly demanded. I decided to say the amount like it was absolutely wondrous: “Four-teen dollars!” Now Klaus caught on to me and guffawed covering it with a cough. He asked about my plane tickets, if they could be changed for a quicker return. I had my dainty black clutch, opened it and handed him the tickets.

Klaus examined them and was amazed at their negligible cost! "How is it that your round trip ticket is less than any of us pay for one way?" I relaxed, ignored the woman behind the desk and explained the limited boarding sites. Icelandic had two routes east: one from Milwaukee - to Iceland and then to Luxembourg or the second which was from Nassau in the Bahamas to Luxembourg. The return is about the same for each, but with a maintenance stop in Dublin, Ireland. Klaus acknowledged they could do no better if any changes were made, stood; thanked the woman. I bowed a bit and thanked her quietly. Klaus held my arm as we left the Embassy.

"Oh, May-ree I did not expect that! I never would have taken you there if I had known."

I held my composure with complete dignity, but when we were outside I shook violently. I took a few deep breaths, but control did not come. My voice wavered and caught with these words:

"Oh, she was … just … having a bad day."

"A **BAD DAY**! She's had a **BAD LIFE!"** He drove fast but cautiously in his VW Beetle. We passed over a bridge. Below were many train tracks from the Zug. “I am so upset with that lady!" Claus said but did not show any temperament (Charles would crack the steering wheel with pounding.) "This was an extremely difficult time for you. Please cheer yourself. Your driver showed us the bill from your last hotel; and you have never eaten breakfast or lunch! This is not right! You cannot eat cold all the time. You must eat warm, May-ree." We shall go to the hotel and you rest and have food! A driver will pick you up in the morning. Horst wants you to stay with people like he grew up with, so you can know his kind better. Also do not worry, we will send a car and take you to Luxembourg in good time for your flight." I was taken back; I did not want to go home. As hectic as these days had been, it was so much better than at home. I supposed I resented most of all that my most important hopes had backfired. Home: where I had been treated as rejected livestock - now I would be garbage.

'So this is how they dump me!' I thought. Her Guides’' voices were positive: 'It will be wonderful not like the Midden Farm. Agree with him.’

"Well, surely he knows best," I said referring to a man who needed more help than I did!

"You are artistic also," Klaus said, "I had the feeling that you were and when I met you it was most evident!" I mentioned I did oils and pastels. "You must look into oil pastels. I saw an artist on the street doing them; he ran a rag over them and it all blended like an oil painting!" This sounded interesting and I decided he was trying to stimulate the use of my free time. I would check out an art store that I noticed. Being judicious I saw that the oil pastels and paper was too expensive. I got colored pencils figuring I could surely find paper somewhere. I sent letters to my Aunt Bertha in Springfield and my Uncle Mike in St. Louis. I had sent a Mother's Day Card to my mom; this took a bit of effort as the German holiday was different. I picked up a few postcards and air mail stationary but kept most of the cards.

Mr. Durchmesser arrived with the car serviced, a few funds for me, checked and paid her tab. He held a list of instructions from Klaus. I asked Klaus earlier if he could have my mail forwarded; should I get any. It would be at the equivalent of General Delivery at the post office in downtown Stuttgart. He agreed and Durchmesser and I were on our way with Godspeed.

The huge Bavarian retrieved my luggage and piled it haphazardly into the rear seat of the Citroen; a funny car with a non-grill resembling the mouth of a fish. We made a "U" turn and headed south. Driving several hours; he passed several towns that he dubbed tourist traps, and continued along narrow winding roads. I enjoyed the countryside, It was so different from the country roads in Illinois. He stopped the car suddenly, said he would check this place and then turned back to Mrs. Midden. "Do not open the door!"

We seemed to be in the mountains; looking out the passenger window I saw a sheer drop and let my back hit the seat and closed my eyes. Within moments, Durchmesser returned perturbed:

"They are closed and the dining room is not serving!" The heavy man made himself comfortable in the Citroen and started it. "Would you check the car pockets and see if there is a map? I have directions to a nice place, but I like to see the road on a map." The car had pockets everywhere! I found a Russian map; finally one surfaced in Deutsch. "Ah," he said and shifted into first. These roads were one car wide any oncoming would swerve. The road continued up one side of the mountain by hairpin turns back and forth. In a small town called Simmersfeld he stopped at an impressive building called "Die Sonne". It loomed larger than any other building. Across the street a building's piedmont stone read 1621. 'That was built when the Pilgrims landed in America.' My thoughts were interrupted:

"Ah, Mee-ess Meed-den, this is a nice place! It is alle neue, showers in every room and large fensters (windows). You can see the Franzosish Alps past the Schwarzwald. It is out of skiing season and so you could have any room. I chose the largest! And it has a dining room where you may have your meals. Come let us go in."

The place was truly new; there were built in closets with mirrored sliding doors, two large beds each with the Deutsch 3 piece mattress that resembled the back seats in cars of the thirties. While the proprietress demonstrated the casement windows which could be opened two ways, Mr. Durchmesser fetched the luggage. He suggested luncheon and then ordered Wiener Schnitzel, Pommes Frites (French Fries) and Bier for both. Mary designated a wine instead of beer.

The orders were mountainous and the Bavarian ate like he had not seen food in a week. As was custom we talked about an hour: He and his wife’s experiences in moving after the war even into Russia and the United States. In those plaaces, if you had nothing nobody cared! They were destitute when they returned to Germany. It was a lifesaver for them when he fell in with Jankowski. His delight with him knew no bounds.

"I tell you Mrs. Meed-den they helped us when nobody else would. I owe our lives to them but I have to quit. The travel is so hard on the system and der Blutdruck ist zu hoch!" (Blood Pressure is too high).

I nodded, after the foods we just downed; I guessed his blood pressure was at skyrocket stage! At last he left orders with the proprietress (Mrs. Wurster) that Mrs. Meed-den was to have 2 eggs for breakfast, butter, honey and pancakes! My eyes grew wide at this and I adjusted it sensibly after he left: Saying I would look like him after all that food!

Frau Wurster laughed. She was short, stocky and apple cheeked (windburn). She explained that their place was not finished, but had been built where their old inn burned completely. Her husband constructed most of the inn himself. The steps were thick solid planks, quite golden in color and were from the local supply. He would lay a terrace shortly. I wondered how much energy that thin little man had! But, by the end of the week the terrace was laid. It consisted of three leaf clover shaped pierced blocks set on sand. Their littlest boy had a grand time with one tiny toy truck in that sand. When it was time to come inside his mother pretended to be upset that the sand covered his little legs and Lederhosen (leather shorts). She patted the shorts and the kid was obscured in a cloud of dust. We ladies both laughed.

Several German Veterans habitually occupied a couple tables near the bar in camaraderie. One had a dreadfully reconstructed left cheek evidently patched with pigskin; but their laughter was good to hear. Two uniformed German Army officers visited routinely. The Lieutenant was hooking a throw rug with a pattern of two evergreens; like his shoulder patch. He seemed to be good friends with the innkeepers; he would fetch any needs. He spoke English with an Oxford accent and explained that the army was not what he expected. His troops consisted of older villagers who planted new seedling evergreens. He was expecting to be commissioned Captain and bought a new English Ford Caprice. One afternoon he took the innkeepers and me for a ride in it. The frau was breathless with laughter at the speed!

The other officer a Captain of slight build hung to himself. He was usually bombed after two beer and schnapps. Twice he assumed I was French and chatted in that. I assumed he missed his family because he cried a lot.

I walked through the small town, had a cobbler fix a heel on my shoe; bought a white cardigan and visited the other little shops. Outside the church a monument listed their war dead. I noticed the surname of the young bartender and his brother. The town boasted a main street (the highway) and 102 people about 2/3 of whom I met during my stay … I was a novelty!

The church was red rock. Someone explained their angel was the oldest thing in town! I happily accepted the information but wondered where the angel was! I hadn’t passed one. I sat down in the darkened bare church. There was a 20’ tall pole fastened on the sanctuary wall. It was varnished. Near the top the pole had an indentation. Behind this were two rustically carved pieces of wood - wings and - a baseball bat? No, a slender cone! The angel was holding a trumpet! How charming a giant clothespin angel!

Along the main road was a walled place. Perhaps it is the wealthy estate of Simmersfeld but when I dared to peeked inside the corner opening - it was the graveyard! Many plots were double; most were outlined with cement curbing. Nearly all were in-planted with a knot garden of alpine flowers and miniature Alberta Spruce. A friendly lady arrived with a watering can and gardening tools. It was her job to maintain the plots and catch other work as she could. Her son was brilliant and worked away from Simmersfeld. She added that everyone buried there was from Simmersfeld except one; a French flier downed there during the war. No one took care of his grave. I walked to the weedy little patch; the stone read: Unknown Frenchman, World War II. I thought, 'I was saved from this kind of burial by a ghostly bus driver!' I said a prayer for the Frenchman.

The lady pointed out a tree that had been brought by a biologist from a great distance. It was the only tree like it in all of Deutschland. I tried to read the plaque, but regardless; it was a California Redwood. The trunk was immense, but the land was not conducive to its gaining height but it had the proper needles and tiny cones were strewn about. The plots were charming in Spring with so many Alpine flowers in bloom. I mentioned the tree and lady caretaker to Frau Wurster, but Frau Wurster was shocked! The woman was the town whore! "She has no man! We have nothing to do with her. Different ones let her clean rooms during skiing season. Otherwise she takes care of the cemetery." So Simmersfeld had a scarlet woman with a brilliant son who worked away from Simmersfeld … Indeed; very smart kid!

The bartender's older brother decided to show me the woods. He assured me there was nothing bad in it like bees or snakes. Frau Wurster gave her ok to this, so I went. There were small blueberry plants but the greenery was completely unknown to me. There were never mushrooms, her escort said. The stream was pretty, but one did not drink the water. One must have tea, coffee, juice or spirits. The tractor paths seemed childlike -then I remembered seeing a Cub Tractor on a hillside removing stumps when Durchmesser brought me. The root balls were nearly the size of a pilate ball. They rolled out easily! I gathered samples of a few plants and pressed them in my Dictionary. One afternoon we walked past a field of Soccer players and watched them awhile. The game seemed to encourage sloshing brain matter.

The escort saw a friend across several fields. The men stared at each other, but as an American, I lifted my hand and waved! My escort promptly grabbed my arm down and said: "We are not allowed to lift our arms so; it is in the treaty agreement." I was confused and then it hit me: “The Hitler salute!” Twenty-five years had passed and one could not wave to a friend!

Several customers stripped and polished a huge log. They heaved it to place and said it would soon be fashioned into a sofa for outdoors! The Captain-to-be explained that there were several log chairs and sofas outside residences in Simmersfeld pointing in the correct directions.

An older couple lived near The Sonne. Herrn Jliesdt drove a truck and his wife raised Fuchsias. The plants were wintered in a slat house. Fredericka Jliesdt and I chatted in English! Their daughter’s family lived in Florida and their granddaughter Dagmar was visiting. We three walked to the grocery to buy an ice cream but the proprietor had none. I braced myself for the wailing and tears, but Dagmar quietly looked sad. Nothing else was said, no compromises. This kid had control!

Fredericka and her husband drove to Wildbad twice weekly to "take the cure" for rheumatism which was a prominent ailment there. They invited me to go as there was a pool. They preferred Eberhardsbad but there were several others catering to other ailments. The Bad had a red rock exterior and was quite old. It had a Moorish theme; Babylonian columns backed the pool. The resting or lobby area was filled with wicker furniture, palms, a fountain and Greek marble statuary. Above was a tremendous circular stained glass dome. None of this looked rebuilt.

I brought my one piece bathing suit and pink cap. Caps were a must! The older couple went to their special area and I to the pool. Not being a swimmer, I hugged the side and watched others do the butterfly stroke. I decided to cut short the resting period and wander the little town. Wildbad was unique in that there was a roadway on each side of a stream. An Arcade had automatic merchandise dispensers from panties to facial tissues, but no cigarettes! Most of the houses were several stories with pushed out roofs. A new cure bad called The Panorama set atop a small mountain and was accessed by a funicular. But the mineral waters called for rest afterward. Having no idea of this I was exhausted after my little walking tour. Thereafter I rested; that water was potent. Upon our return there was fire in the pine filled Black Forest. The smoke arose. Frau Wurster said it was all right; there was a cloud in the sky and that meant rain! Fire was set to all the leftover chaff from pine logging. Both Wursters reassured that all was safe but I packed my bags anyway. When all was safe I wrote Jankowski’s group about all my experiences.

A manila envelope of mail arrived from Stuttgart; family letters. The Magdalene said everything was ok except dad had the fridge wall to wall with beer (not like him). He wrote a weather- letter finally mentioning that Selena had to get glasses, but looks cute in them and that he had cancelled all the credit cards; so mine were useless. (I smirked - he never gave me a credit card.) I answered the children’s letters describing the clouds when flying; the evergreens and mountains; the old cure-bad and the vending machines. Now those pressed flowers and weeds came in handy; I told where they came from and marked those envelopes “biology lesson”. Charles answered in about a week saying they all missed her and awaited her return. (This meant, the house was wrecked, the cloths were dirty maybe all the food was eaten) He would wire funds if she needed (Sourly magnanimous act after the credit card fiasco.) Ines wrote saying, "Please, don't burn all your bridges behind you." The Magdalene wrote that “Dad saw a lawyer about a divorce.” Her parents sent a little "helping money". She wrote a thank you letter to them and a note to Dr. Floyd Barringer asking him about this condition called: “Nerviosa.” His answer indicated that the United States was no farther along in a successful treatment. The Barringer family had been the best neighbors at Riddle Hill. He was a Neurosurgeon. I kept all my letters up-beat.

I mentioned helpful things to the music group like the care-free fabric called Damask boucle’ double knit for the girls in the choir and how to measure fabric in English; about my pencil sketches of the village; about the big tree; the church angel and a wedding I inadvertently attended. I wished everyone well in each letter.

THE RETURN RIDE

Klaus telephoned two days before I was to travel to Luxembourg: My mind kept crying: ‘No, no no: Tell me I can stay. Oh, God, please, I don’t want to return!’ Klaus said "May-ree we have never had such a tour! All of our cars broke down; one after the other! Not to worry, little Wolf will come for you in his own car. It is old but ok. He is playing in Trier that evening, so that is why we chose him. Horst is in London setting plans for an album with BASF." I responded happily but wished he had mentioned more personal news. 'Had any good come of my escapade?’ I was devastated about going home and it was impossible hid it.

I informed the Wursters that I would be leaving "Die Sonne" in a day or two and then went upstairs to pack. I scanned the Black Forest from my windows; yes she had covered all of it in my pencil drawings as well as a couple of the town from the café window.

Little Wolf bounced into the inn, promptly greeted me then flew to the proprietress with cash. While he was shuffling Deutschmarks, he asked: "Oh, ja wo bist die am grossten Baum? Ich nicht es sehen! (Where is the huge tree? I did not see it.)" I laughed as Mrs. Wurster seemed startled at his question; then seeing he was serious, gestured her whole arm to the west and told him; in the cemetery. Mr. Wurster was already stashing my three suitcases to the back seat of Wolf’s tan Beetle. Wolf started the engine. Heintzie Brudder the young bartender reached through the open window, and thrust a bouquet of fresh lilacs into my hands.

They were beautiful and fragrant, but there was no florist in the small town. I asked where he got them. The youngster blushed and admitted: " Sie gestollen aus alterin's." He blew his laughter into the little Volkswagen. "Hey, Gross--Nie vor hat Ich eine gestollen Blumen!" Wolf laughed and asked what I was saying? Then fanned his hands and Heintzie giggled with him. My word for bouquet actually meant the bloom on wine grapes!I laughed with them.

"Oh, Meeses Meed-den, you are so much fun!" He started the engine, zigzagged a few roads and shortly they were on the Autobahn. We chatted going faster and faster until the speedometer passed its highest marking and continued back around passing the zero and getting up to twenty-five. I thought Volkswagens only did 65. He joyously pooh-poohed that. His pristine brown page-boy swung gaily. “Oh there is one thing, Meeses Meed-den, I cannot shut the heater off! It is broken - on.” It was warm underfoot and kept getting hotter until I rode with my feet elevated. It was just another crazy new thing. We turned off the Autobahn onto a two lane without slowing. It was then that the bicyclist came down a hill and crossed the road in front of us without looking.

"Uh-ah," we both sang. Wolf pulled the emergency brake and used the foot brake; nothing slowed the little car! The bicyclist passed blithely about forty feet in front of us and continued up a little hill. We both expelled huge held breaths too soon because the cyclist circled around and came down the hill and crossed in front of us again clearing us by ten feet! Seems rather than making a "U" turn at the fork on his side of the road, it was more fun to glide down the hill; cross the street; circle and re-cross. We watched his stiff straw hat jostle around his head and his large tummy jiggle under his undershirt.

We could not speak! The car sped past the junction. He released the brake and our crazy pace resumed up and down the hills. I noticed the gas gauge was at empty and said, "Do you think… we need petrol?”

"Oh no, it is … oh!" He glanced at it.

I pointed ahead: "Ah, Petrol at the bottom of this hill," I said.

As the little car descended, it began to cough and sputter, then began to slow. We glided into the petrol station and it died by the pump. What good fortune we laughed like idiots until our terror was expended.

Shortly we arrived at customs and handed over our passports. Wolf's things were scrupulously inspected; his music page by page, his guitar and case examined, even the picks were investigated. I figured an hour to inspect my three suitcases. The officer looked up and asked if the bags in back were mine. I said, yes.

"Pass." He said without looking at us and motioned for the next car.

"My goodness, I could have the Queen's jewels!"

Wolf laughed so hard the gears spragged and the little car hiccupped before it took off.

Luxembourg was less pristine than Germany. The curb dust swirled with each passing vehicle; even the flowers in flower boxes were dusty. We drove past a farmer’s market in the plaza, turned a corner and stopped. This was the Continental Hotel. My heart sank. A doorman took my bags and handed them to a bellboy. Wolf said he was not staying, so the doorman watched his car. Wolf came upstairs and checked the room and then made me promise to have dinner at the hotel. We chatted a little; I showed him my sketches and snapped his picture.

The market had folded, the stores were closed! I studied display windows of furniture, kitchen cabinetry and garments. One store had tops and bottoms suspended by black thread - no hangers or models! The jewelry shop windows were bare but for the velvet mounts. At the hotel I asked where the Icelandic store was to confirm my flight ticket. It opened at 8:00 am and it was a ten minute walk across the bridge south. I changed for dinner.

The Continental had an elegant dining room with one glassed-in wall of silver service. The waiter decided I was French and spoke this to me. The menu was tri lingual, but not English. I asked about the special and was surprised that the fillet was not beef but fish. He boned it deftly at the table for me and removed the inedible parts. He brought a beautifully arranged salad and small carafe of sauce. Poured a wine and bowed like I was royalty.

An American family with three children arrived. They were seated across the aisle. They were the typical American family but the Continental considered them rowdy and loud. The parents seemed afraid to control them. The little girl about 8 years old placed her fork in the empty stemmed glass and twirled it about. Somehow the whirligig got away from the her and there was the clink of broken glass. The waiter deftly swept it away. The boy wanted a hamburger he began wailing when it was not be served on a bun. The waiter brought a large beautiful salad; held the crystal bowl a moment, smirked in distain; set the bowl on a side table; dug both large fork and spoon into the beautiful salad and tossed it together with complete disgust. The couple did not recognize the insult and thanked him! He proceeded to serve each one but the mother stopped him saying she would serve the family herself. His eyebrows hit his hairline. He stepped back to my table a hand to his chest. He bent and refilled my wine glass from the carafe on the table:

"American brats!" he whispered under his breath. At that moment, I was happy to be mistaken as French! The Americans were not pleased with their dinner and did not stay long. The mother apologized for breaking the glass. The waiter in true French style bowed elegantly and said, "Think nothing of it; it is on your bill!"

In the morning, Mary rolled up a strange contraption that resembled a bamboo blind, but shut over the window on the outside. Across the street a lady was setting out pots of large blue flowers like the magnified forget-me-nots at the Schloss Garden. I went to breakfast and then across the street to the florist. The flowers were "Brollies". This did little good for identification. In England "Brollie" was an umbrella! I walked to the Icelandic office and confirmed my flight. Afterward I walked the north side of the palace. Luxembourg was not flat there were high areas and very low ones most places were connected by bridges. On a steep hillside several tiers of men were using rustic scythes to cut the grass, interesting. I wondered where people ate lunch - there was a half circle of store fronts all reading “Brasserie” but not knowing French I thought these people were bra nuts! It was time to get to Loftleider Airport.

The driver decided to take a scenic route, and as soon as I noticed this a few sharp phrases in Deutsch quickly routed him toward the airport. Things went well at the airport, but in Nassau there was a hot sticky two hour layover to Miami Beach. I had no return ticket to St. Louis, Missouri, but realized I could not afford an overnight stay in either Nassau or Miami Beach. A fellow traveler managed to take things in hand and get me a flight with a stop-over in Atlanta, and then on to St. Louis. I telephoned Charles about the changes. He would meet me. Not wanting to return showed on my face. Charles hugged me like a contaminated substance. It was a silent drive. The house was dark. Everyone had retired. I asked him to wait in the dining room while I changed for bed. I had been alone so long, he was a stranger. He found this curious.

CHAPTER XIV

RECONSTRUCTION - GHOSTS

The changes in the house were not apparent in the dark. But morning the dining room revealed my eight English dining room chairs, the floor to ceiling Victorian mirror, two wall shelves I finished ebony and gold leaf, the stereo player and speakers were gone! My murals were stripped from bedroom and foyer. My Austrian draperies were gone; my dresser was bare! I loved these things; I had lovingly nade and restored them. My bow front dresser with gold leaf trim went to The Magdalene who now had an apartment. In its place was a youth desk too low to sit at. My sofa with baby blue slipcovers and fitted pillows that I copied from pictures of Betty Woolworth’s summer home was replaced with a one piece eight foot ivory brocade sofa with wooden slat sides. Nice, but the color died in the baby blue room. New chairs were on order.

There was a monstrous Audio system in the living room. He refused to show me either the manual or how it worked. "Why did you do these things?"  
 "Well, I missed you so much I could not look at the things you made and your mother said the mirror and chairs were too morbid and maybe that was why you left."

"AND, you listened to HER! She HATES you and has no taste whatsoever! Two huge red swivel chairs on pink carpet with dark yellow drapery and dark green walls with a brown sofa. I want my things back! THIS is not my home! You’ve ruined it." He had no taste either! “Look at that mirror in the foyer! I hung it so the flaw did not show. You got it so everyone looks like clowns! And you bolted it! Where are my mural and mother of pearl shelf ?” I felt like walking out!

"The mirror is at the farm in the garage, and I am not bringing it back!" He said that the drapery and murals were in the basement (I found them mangles and torn.) but the shelves and chairs are lost. Then in a breath he ordered me not to speak about Germany, of anyone there; no pictures, snapshots or mementoes - He wanted none of it. He thought little of her friends for not warning him and she could have no contact with any of them! If I had any money Catholicity be-hanged I’d have left right then. This was the only time I ever spoke out about my feelings but it all blew over his head.

"Well. I brought a few souvenirs and did some pencil sketches in Simmersfeld and if you think I am throwing them out; forget it!" He promptly agreed these were ok.

The children were reserved but welcomed me back. They were cautious a few days and then relaxed; their temperaments were better! Her neighbor, Mrs. Day mentioned “divorce” so I quizzed Charles. He had seen a lawyer in Petersburg but now that I was home that was all off. But the word was out in this two horse town. To salvage my proper reputation I sent a note to the society section of the local newspaper to the effect that I was working in music and solved some problems stating with whom and where. I was so angry with Charles and his outrageous demands that I signed my name: Dr. Mary L. W. Midden. As Charles knew nothing about my music degree, this opened a barrel can of worms. He was angry that ***I had lied*** about this education. The children were delighted! Their mother was special! Finally I asked him if he would have married me had he known. Charles never answered: He wanted total control - never wrong; never apologize! Once only he asked how I had managed the food on $20.00 and increased the weekly allowance. All of my frozen meals had not been touched! Well I did not have to cook for a while. I hated his changes and that my life was now more restricted.

I guessed that Horst still had Eva - God, what a mess - a playgirl! And again for me there was nobody I trusted to confide in. Ines came once but we dwelled on her problems; she was getting a divorce and had a job teaching disabled people at Good Will. My Guides were silent. I remembered that I had cartons at the Flughaven. Gosh, I need to write to Horst. I must thank him he was wonderful taking care of me and that we reconnected. I must mention that I cannot write freely. God, I can’t do anything freely!

More insecure than ever, Charles popped in like lightening every few hours - checking on me. I found - the BASF album, but had to stash it; no time to even see the cover! Try when the truck leaves: The first band - seemed to indicate that Eva was angry or had left - but damned! That red-orange truck swung back into the drive and I had to shut down that monster sound system. As it was, an evaluation of the work was impossible. Another album was available by a Beverly Hills Co. I noticed it had five songs relating to our one afternoon together! How could he compose five songs about a few hours!

Charles understood about the cartons but insisted I read my letter in English before it went anywhere. Doing this, I found I could skip over a few words and managed a few pertinent phrases discreetly. I was blessed that none of the children were home - all of them had or were taking German long before this can of beans was spilled.

It was from quiet Marshall: “Mother, I overheard Regina (10) talking to dad. She said: ‘Daddy, you never take mommy out or say nice things or buy her any presents. It is always hard and mean and your way or nothing! I don't ever want to marry anyone who would treat me like that.’ And then she just walked into our bedroom.” Regina was always the truthful one. No one could even fault or disagree with Regina.

This gave Charles thought: “Maybe a weekend away would salve wounds. He did not consider that I had been traveling. He never asked about what happened- just guessed the worst. I did not need a car ride to a nowhere town. I was exhausted; I needed peace. The town he chose had nothing; the motel was partly under a river bridge. Many businesses, hotels and restaurants were closed and boarded over. No entertainment. He did not understand my lack of enthusiasm. This was a fine outing to him. We were mismatched. He needed a grade school dropout to commandeer, bully and accuse.

The music club people knew I returned and became suspicious. Charles wanted all to appear normal; so the friends “were in” but if visiting - subject to his spot checks. Nothing about Germany or Music! The growing children became aware that their parents were completely dysfunctional and home was abnormal. They were always hiding in fear of their father’s explosions - now mother was being treated like a sub-standard slave. Like his father, Charles’ business face was so compliantly different. His clients loved that wonderful man! As each youngster became completely able they moved out! They seldom visited and I wished I could go too.

We did begin to have dinner out now and then. Usually small supper clubs had music but as Charles was not a dancer - it was sit and listen or leave before the music started because HE WAS TIRED. On one occasion, I witnessed a "stoned" drummer. I could never work with that; music was becoming nothing. The eating out did not last long, the “I’m tired”; became I changed my mind”. His old routines resurfaced. My thoughts became skeptical, disdainful and yes, hateful. I was certainly paying for my “great indiscretion!” But I am silent! Against that shrieking terrifying man voice was wasted.

The local music teachers were changing to a country style. Muriel was one! Mrs. Williams continued advanced piano. Within a year, I noted many contemporary pianists "retiring"; some succumbing to "heart attacks" - dying rather than accept change. So many careers were being ruined. Muriel invited me to tea with Mrs. Williams. I had to be reserved; it is not professional to speak freely about your protégés. I mentioned the fashion show without detail and relied on my in-spirit M C events as in-body happenings to appease Muriel’s curiosity. (I did not want to tell them contemporary music was hearing death tolls. Hard Metal was invading the scene with a vengeance!) I said what I could without revealing the unfortunate situation. Shortly, Mrs. Williams had to leave early for a pupil.

MURIEL’S GHOST

As soon as she closed the door after Mrs. Williams, Muriel took this time to tell me about her small windfall which enabled her and Ernie to buy the house they had rented all these years. But her joy was not lasting and it was not the fault of the house. No sooner had the ink dried on the papers when Muriel detected drafts of cold air and noises where none had been before.

The cap came when Muriel noticed a phantom lady in brown following her husband, Ernie upstairs! She blithely called to him, "Hey, Ernie, who's the dame?" Mr. Andersen turned but not hearing too well, answered to the effect, that yes, he was going up to read just the same way; in his room. Muriel went on to describe the woman, who stopped mid-step, turned back and shot-out the closed front door! She had never detected anything in the house before this.

I listened lightly. Muriel was such a drama queen. She explained with superlatives and was flighty. Not knowing if this was vivid imagination or reality I consoled my friend, left and forgot about the lady in brown.

September began the new season for Pen Women; for a long time they wanted me to join! The club would meet at Muriel’s. She asked if I would carry coats upstairs, as most of the members were beyond climbing stairs.

The evening began easily but disintegrated when the president: Jessica appointed herself etiquette princess. She told me as co-hostess I must remove my hat! I had gone to teas at the Governor’s mansion and never saw any ladies do that … besides I did not have my hair fixed to remove the hat so smiled and rejected lightly. Jessica began fussing about it. I stared her down and flatly refused! Thinking, 'Wow, and they want me to join this club!' I took several wraps upstairs. And decided I had better notice Muriel’s new quilt or be dubbed non-observant as well as stubborn.

While in the room, I heard papers shuffle. In checking, there were no papers on the desk or in the waste basket and Ernie had not turned a page of the newspaper. Nothing was amiss in the bathroom either. A waft of cold air chilled me. The windows were closed! Now I heard creaking. I held back laughter; what a trite little mystery! Then I recalled Muriel's ghost story. Although I had never faced a ghost before, I directed my thoughts to it:

'How long have you been dead?'

'Ugh! Na' forty years,' the voice held surprise.

'Why do you stay?'

'It’s my house! MY House! All those strange people are down there…in MY HOUSE!'

The cold air squeezed past me and headed down the staircase. Without thought I reached out to grab her and missed two steps. Luckily, my hand was on the door frame and I caught myself. The angrier the ghost became the more visible she became. On the bottom landing the lady in brown manifested. She was plump and wore brown chiffon, tan three button gloves and a bobbing wire-rimmed hat of chiffon. The comical looking ghost floated across the shag carpet and turned defiantly, hands on hips and glared at all the women. Her spirit protruded from the center of the piano bench!

Muriel screamed from the adjoining dining room but deftly covered her scream by saying she caught her heel on the shag carpet. Within moments, several ladies, began complaining about the cold and asked Muriel to turn off the air conditioning. Muriel assured them it was off and turned the heat up. The ladies finally settled, enjoyed their unremarkable program had small sandwiches, cake and coffee or tea; collected their wraps from me and toddled to their cars.

Muriel's neighbor and I stayed to clean and pack dishes. While working, I broached the subject and we discussed the ghost. One mentioned that perhaps the lady was a mother and her people have been waiting for her many years. Muriel enforced this thought with: "Mother's always go to Heaven." Their talk was for the benefit of the lady in brown. At last the neighbor and I headed home. Muriel guided Mary’s car out of the driveway and onto narrow English Street. I did not like this club; each member felt better than the others. I relaxed driving but as I approached the garage a cheerful voice spoke:

"Oh, is this your house? You must love it!"

I turned, saw the ghost beside me and suddenly the garage door was approaching quickly; I jammed on the brakes! "Ugh, yes! A moment, please," I felt about to heave my goodies. I went out to open the manual garage door but stood shaking. 'What am I doing, dear Guides?' 'You’re opening the garage door. Pull it up.'

Shakily I thought. 'Oh Dear God, Help me get rid of Muriel's ghost.'

I put the car in the garage still slightly stupefied and closed the overhead door. The ghost was outside waiting for me, slipped her hand in the crook of my arm and chatted all the way to the back porch; then she passed inside before I had my key in the lock. It was dark. I slipped the dimmer upward a bit in the dining room.

The ghost said, 'Oh, this is lovely!' (There was the dining table with no chairs!)

'Thank you.' I was breathing heavily, nodded and walked into the bedroom.

Charles stirred, "Is that you?"

"Yes!" I shot hysterically! "I'll be awhile, I have to unwind." He murmured, ok.

My Guides spoke: 'Tell her all the things you say in your prayers for spirits. We will help you.'

I felt faint, but smilingly joined Muriel's ghost. I chatted mentally about all the things in my prayer for the sick and dying. The ghost joshed, calling it foolishness! ‘To think anyone could wish themselves up to Heaven and just check-in!'

'Why not; you've been wishing yourself through walls and closed doors for nearly forty years. It isn't any different just a little longer journey. You keep thinking that you want to go up to Heaven! I dare you to try it!'

'Humph! I'll give it a try,' the ghost said moving her hand in coquettish affectation. With that she rose partially through the ceiling, silk stockings drooping under pudgy calves, dainty black Mary Jane's on her feet. 'Oh, I'm going!'

I nodded encouragingly, 'Yes, *want* to go to Heaven; to the Keeper of Records.'

The ghost made twittering sounds and the feet rose out of sight. I felt like collapsing. My heart was pounding but I gave instant thanks to God and my Guides. I thanked them again in my regular night prayers. At 2 a.m. I awoke with a start:

'Where is the ghost?' I sat up in bed, 'It isn't here, is it?'

The Guides cleared a little scene of mist. 'Here she is. She is happy.' Mary saw Muriel's ghost stepping elegantly at a lawn dance. 'Lie back and sleep.'

In the morning before Charles and the children were off for the day, the telephone rang. It was Muriel, without a word Charles gave me the receiver and left the house.

"Mary, this is the first good night's sleep I've had since we bought the house."

Before an animated description started, I broke in: "Do you want to know why?" I couldn't help being sarcastic. After the story, I added, "I think my hair might be white, but Muriel watch for disturbing signs for a week, to be sure she is gone. You might check your abstract; see if any lady owned the house forty years earlier."

Within a week to the day, Muriel brought her abstract to the Midden house. Over tea we read the abstract. Charles made a spot check and thought them both silly. But Muriel shoved the abstract at him and made him check it himself. There was only one lady who owned the house. It was forty years previous and her name was Mayme C. Moore. Charles then agreed. Muriel had looked up descendants of the woman and one of them dug out a portrait of Mayme Moore. Muriel paled; that was indeed the woman. Muriel wrote to Dr. Louise Rhine at Duke University about their escapade. Dr. Rhine had some correspondence with me after Muriel Andersen's letter, but I realized it was acquiescent dribble--a pat on the back and let it drop.

RELATIVES; THE NEW AGENDAS

The restrictions and spot checks continued. My Aunt Mary Regina had a birthday so Charles drove Mary to St. Louis to visit. Charles was so rude to his wife, that the visit turned cold. My aunt and uncle realized their niece was being verbally abused and in kindness did not ask the questions they so longed to! It was no better when that aunt and uncle visited Springfield! Charles put Mary down whenever she spoke. They could see the strain and hurt wondering if a break was eminent. For any other mortal it was, but for me: NO DIVORCE IN MY LIFE. It was not a Catholic trap; it was a God order because I was “One of them” and I knew it well. But what good was I doing in this household? .

I managed to play the Beverly Hills Record; Horst had mentioned. It was "Jankowski Jerusalem" and came out nine months after my “homecoming”. I listened to it in three sessions but could not study it. Aunt and Uncle visited again, blessedly, Charles was on a job! I played the album for them. It was nothing like Horst’s happy bouncy earlier works, but it was not a bouncy happy time. These relatives were the only people I told about the changing music, his hurtful hands and that he sent her to rest where he grew-up while he continued his tour. He was a clean decent person.

PARENTS

Only her mother was home when Charles took me to visit them! I hoped to tell my parents some fun stories about the village people but Helen cut me dead!

"That is over! We will not talk about it ever." ( An exact response replay of my early accomplishments.) I stood to leave. Charles said sternly, “Sit!” which meant “Sit and take it!” I forgot mother always aimed for the negative, the dirt. No bus service on Sunday; three miles to home; me wearing high heels. Mother was not honorable she was hateful, and impudent. After listening I said, “Mother you will never get to Heaven that way.”

“I’m not going to Heaven; I’m going to HELL! All my friends are there. I don’t know anybody in Heaven.”

“Well, don’t expect me to follow you.” I walked out the door. If that jake of a husband came or not; I didn’t care.

I wrote a short letter to Horst saying I got the Jerusalem Album and that he could write five songs about our afternoon, A Bright Day's Hideaway; (Oh! That awful little room but the sun came out!) The fifth posed a question; I was not the butterfly and amidst the song's fluttering sweetness was an absolute clash of bitterness! Had Eva exploded and maybe left? She could be the butterfly. I wondered but did not write this. I loved Little Princess Doll and The Shadow of Lotus. Long ago I bought an old anthology which had that very poem! This was the melody I had been trying to explain in an earlier letter; with the sweep of wind - like a carousel's swishing. I was nostalgic and wished things more positive for us; hopeful his hands were mending and then lightly mentioned in my things were his albums at the Flughaven. I dared not leave them when I came. It is very difficult for me here and ending my letter with: "My darling, we tried."

I dare not be caught writing! But took care and by some flux the letter made it. Within a week, there was a note from the International Airport in Peoria, Illinois: My things had arrived. There were no charges. They just needed my Identification. Charles was caught short by this. Surely there were some monetary charges! When she presented her passport as identification Charles and the baggage handler had never seen a passport. Together the two men studied it. Charles wanted to leave immediately but I knew I had packed some glass and two porcelain vases (in the hope of not returning). As one box seemed limp I opened it and reported damages. The second was ok; I not bother with the large suitcase. It had the albums wrapped in a faux leopard throw along with some small pink liqueur glasses. These were the few things I loved. The rest was winter garments. Charles was surprised at my adeptness in asking for a damage claim form. He admitted he would have no idea how to go about any of this or even in getting a passport! I thought he had one during Korea! He said, no, they were just shipped over..

When we arrived home, I asked Charles to stay out of the room while I unpacked the large suitcase. I did not wish him to have negative feelings about any of my clothing. I retrieved the albums and slipped the bundle under my bed; the same with my pink liqueur glasses. The other things he knew about from the airport so I left them packed. Later, I discovered the vases were mendable, but not my pair of decanters: One rim was hopelessly crushed and the other’s stopper was ruined. I could switch parts and still have one decanter but the stopper was not a perfect fit. Thank God, I took Insurance on everything. After a few weeks, I slipped the albums back into the record cabinet easily and the cute little glasses in the glass faced cabinet.

But Charles still popped in at odd times. Playing my music was hopeless. The manual would have helped - if there was one it was well hidden!

My music friends wanted me back. Going to Morning Etude with Muriel and Virginia was granted. My thoughts became more flexible about the homemaker-teacher. Now and then a performance was given with a Band-Aid on a finger. Once, a pupil could not get all the grease of shop class from under his fingernails. Many were promising young adults. Often it was the teachers who over-reached their abilities. I was becoming less stiff - joining the music clubs did help me. I did not judge; at times a teacher’s performance bore no resemblance to the work. I did meet one problem. Muriel's best student won the Federation of Music Competition (a week at Music Camp). The girl happily played her piece for Morning Etude. I checked the program and waited for the girl to play it, but the girl bounced from the bench and bowed. Muriel sighed, “Isn’t she wonderful?” I turned to Muriel:

"Is this what she played for the competition?"

"Yes. I am so proud of her."

I could not believe this; Muriel taught the piece incorrectly - and the young lady won the (Central Illinois) Federation of Music’s top prize. That meant … How I lost faith in the local music scene! Aside I spoke quietly to the girl mentioning the Music Camp might find differences in her performance and that she should consider advancing to perhaps Mrs. Williams. We both loved Muriel but …

The Guides asked if I wanted to visit Jankowski in-spirit. I was torn he had married I knew nothing else about his life now. If I interfered, I could be causing him problems with the wife. (What I did not know was that the ill-suited couple divorced. The marriage lasted 2 ½ months.)

I continued bi-location but alone to beautiful places I had never seen. It was not like being with a friend. It was not joyous anymore. I went to the Tetons. My friends spoke glowingly about those mountains. I talked to people there while in-spirit. But bi-locating alone was not fun like being with Horst. Actually, it was flat. I missed my chance at happiness so God changed the agenda.

Dreams were not a big part of my sleep habits but now oddly, I dreamed of a few celebrities and people I knew. The day after each dream their obituaries would appear in the newspaper! This was shaking. Quickly, I prayed that they follow the Light they see and “check in.” As soon as I became attuned to this dream thing, God changed the agenda.

I began to pray before sleep for any sick or dying that I might know who needed prayers: I began to see a procession of skulls! Their bodies were covered. They varied in size; some writhed in pain, others were still. Disconcerting as these were, they needed prayers. Nightly, I tried finding variances hoping to identify them but soon admitted: A skull is a skull. Perhaps a Grapevine! I called my sister-in-law, Sharon, Robert Midden's wife. We discussed the creepy visions. Sharon began to check with her relatives and friends discreetly to see how they were. Found or not, we two prayed. After a while, my call would be: "Hi Sharon, I've got a couple."

Just when I was becoming accustomed to the skulls, God changed the agenda again!

In late fall, I received a telephone call from Martha Caudill. I listened as Martha explained how she had gotten my name and number from a piano pupil of Muriel Andersen! This child swore she saw a ghost while house sitting. Martha believed the child completely because at times, she saw something herself. The core of her call: Martha did not need wrong gossip! She knew it was a man and felt it wanted to control her. I listened but could trounce blabbering Muriel. It seemed Martha had quite an imagination:

"At first it tickled the dog's tummy. The dog enjoys it. But, the overall feeling is foreboding." I kept her on the phone while asking my Guides what to do. They gave the go-ahead. Now I heard Martha asking for help. I told Charles what the call was about.

He said, "Go if you want to. I think you're both nuts."

I told Martha I would come and placed a small birthday candle and a book of matches in my purse and drove the '70 Mercury wagon to the address. Martha ran out to greet me. She was a pretty woman with a nice head of black hair and was well suntanned. I soon discovered such victims were jittery and chatted about everything BUT the case at hand. Martha was a bookkeeper but played piano at a night club evenings; she had written a ditty and played it.

Finally I outright asked about the phenomenon. To her surprise, Martha said the face shows up in her painting (A dull cardboard print of an English Cottage with flowers, and pond.) I saw nothing odd in the picture. Not to be dismayed, Martha suggested she make us some Sangria as hers was very good. She spoke from the kitchen as she sliced fruit; recounting phenomena - one was a time warp adventure of pioneers that I understood. While Martha chattered I turned to the picture and thought: 'Hello, would you show me yourself?'

As I watched a tiny mist swirled about before the cottage area and formed itself into a gentleman with a soft burgundy beret with a metal ornament in a cockade. He wore a huge stiff pleated collar at the neck of a burgundy velvet jacket with gold trim. His hair was carrot red and unkempt like his wiry whiskers. His eyes seemed clear grey and glittered with mischief.

'Ah, tell me why you are here, sir?'

'I’ve been wandering a long time. You see, I knew this lady in England. I never knew where to go or what to do after I died so I wandered the whole earth sometimes on ships. Then I noticed her and thought she is a good person; maybe I can stay with her. She does not seem to mind that I am here and I earn my keep! I see that she and her house are safe. At times, I give her advice, but I don't think she hears me. Where is her dog? I miss the little fella.'

'I will ask her, but tell me, are there any more of you?'

Soundlessly, a thin layer of mist moved about the painting. Face after face appeared. They were of different sizes until there were eight. I was overwhelmed and called to Martha about the dog.

"He's at the vet's, but I'll bring him home tomorrow. It's ready! Isn't it pretty? Martha poured two glasses with Sangria and took her easy chair. "Tell me did you find him?'

I smiled broadly. "Take a look, Martha."

Martha was astounded; she found seven but she missed one face as large as the Englishman's. I traced it with my finger.

"My God years ago; I had a Doberman Pincer. That kid said she fell over something that seemed to be a big dog." Martha took a few breaths. "You see, my present dog is a little Manchester.' The ladies sipped the Sangria. I related the Englishman’s story. Martha explained that she wrote poetry and was told it was reminiscent of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. She had never traveled to England, but felt an affinity for it. We chatted about Muriel, the piano teacher's ghost and that I had directed it back. Then Martha took our glasses to refill. But the Englishman caught my last words!

"We heard that you could get us where we supposed to go! We will go now."

"Martha, hold up on the drinks; they want to go now! So I think its best I leave with them."

We ladies shook hands and said we would check in a few days. The Englishman planted his hulk in the front seat of the station wagon. A lady in a pioneer bonnet rested her arms between them from the second seat. The rest were densely crushed together. The mist or ectoplasm was so dense I could not see to back out the drive; Martha actually had to guide me.

‘Ok, dear Guides, I don't want to bring them home with me, can you take them up, please?’

‘No, you are well able to do it yourself!’ I was driving west on Cook Street. ‘Pull aside the State House. We will guide you.’ (Spring Street has since been closed. 9/11 but earlier a wierdo entered the State House and shot the security guards about mid-seventies.)

My instruction was that first all the spirits hold hands. I was to go out-of-body with them; first to the crow's nest atop the State House Dome; then check that they were all together, dog too. Next they should all wish to go with me to the Keeper of Records to check-in. Shortly, I heard the words:

'Oops! Oh, you brought them all here - to where YOU would enter. The dog isn't supposed to see this much Light! Dogs have another area. Oops! Oh, there it goes (Sniffing at everything). We will get it; we will get it where it goes. Ah, we will get all of them where they go. Ugh, thank you.'

Suddenly I felt smacked back in my station wagon laughing until my tummy hurt. I thought leading people to Heaven was going to be somber! As I drove home the episode replayed in my mind and I laughed again. The wagon's engine choked; maybe it was laughing too.

Once home, I opened the door and said, "I am alone. Everything is fine. I took them all *home.*"

Charles leaned against a doorframe laughing. Although he was curious, he never asked.

Unfortunately, on the third day, Martha telephoned. She was lonely and wanted the Englishman back. I wanted to howl with laughter; nobody wants a ghost back, do they? This was incredible, but I held my laughter until I determined if Martha was serious. She was!

I had heard TV ministers use a phrase, so I drew upon this and said:

"Let me pray about this a moment." Immediately I mentally called my Guides and voiced my concerns. Likely the spirits were oriented and too happy to want to return.

'You are correct. Tell her we will get her a more appropriate spirit to protect her house and guide her. It won't be like us but suitable - according to her advancement. She will like it.'

I repeated most of this. Martha seemed appeased. In three days the telephone rang. Martha was absolutely happy with her new spirit and as she spoke, I saw the guide - quite flamboyant with a swashbuckling red satin lined cape over its suit. 'It's what she needs,' the Guides explained. I nodded.

Martha called in three weeks! Mrs. Midden was a bit apprehensive. Martha’s neighbor was experiencing strange lights in her house. It was not children with colored flashlights. Martha asked me to come. After the preliminary walk through and chat; I blessed the house. I asked for a little glass, filled it with water from the tap, lit my little pink birthday candle (having four girls, I had more pink candles) and proceeded from the living room where Martha and Mrs. Fortune, the lady of this house were sitting. The family dog, a grown Irish setter got off the couch, lifted my skirt hem and sniffed at the back of my leg - a cold wet shock! I continued my house blessing ritual: hall and each room as I came to it. In an overhead built-in cabinet, I heard a nasty voice, ‘We hear you. We hear you!’ The dog stopped, whimpered and bolted back into the living room and crawled onto the couch. The house became cold! Unperturbed, I asked the spirits/things to gather around the candle. I dipped my fingers into the water and sprinkled it upon each place saying, ***this place is*** ***hallowed***. After I completed this blessing throughout the house, closets and cabinets I opened the back door and bid them to be buried at the furthermost point of the land deeply. They could not surface until God called them and they would do His bidding. Then I blew out the candle in the direction they should go.

I returned to the living room to find the ladies and the dog wild eyed and shivering. I sat down; the dog put its head in my lap and shivered. The ladies had turned the heat to 82 degrees. Within moments the warmth returned. I stayed until the dog was back to its goofy self and then bid the ladies good bye.

In the wagon, I pulled away serenely enough but after I drove a few blocks I realized, I saw nothing! There was just the nasty voice. The Irish setter saw more than I did! Martha called; the house was serene. This set me to wondering, why I had not seen anything. My Guide said I was protected from such evils (also these activities kept my mind off the pianist.)

The Magdalene had a friend from the coffee house. Steve played a 12 string guitar and instructed her. Steve was a diabetic. He kept to his health regimen. His family took a weekend vacation, but Steve remained home to work on his music. He cut tapes of his songs and arrangements. Without thought, he had a soda and felt all right so had a few more until nearly a case was emptied! Sunday evening, he died alone.

Mrs. Midden accompanied her shaken daughter to the wake. The new tapes were played; a real talent, snuffed too soon. The Magdalene said he actually hated being restricted by the diabetes, but she did not think the tragedy was planned; after all they were Jesus Children! It was a dreadful accident. I did not see Steve’s spirit. The Magdalene looked questioningly at me for solace but I had no idea where Steve’s spirit was.

A woman from Cantral, Illinois called. She wanted her house cleansed of evil spirits. She was certain it was the ghost of her husband's first wife! This woman's shrill whine gave me chills but it was someone in need! Over the phone the lady implied it was a great house on a hill. I followed directions, turned off the highway; expecting something like the “Big House” .It was a small "L" of grey tar shingles! I pulled in the drive: Home is castle! The front picket fence needed paint. A light weight screen door opened. A black Lab puppy joyously preceded an unattractive woman with wild dyed black hair.

It was slightly dark inside. The lady indicated a chair and immediately asked if I knew a man with one hand; she had "feelings". I said no. I did not know Jean Kern fancied herself as a “psychic reader”. "You feel like it is too late for something; it involves this man with one hand." My demeanor stiffened: Wait a minute; I came to help ***this*** lady.

"You called me for something?" I said kindly. At this Mrs. Kern began an exhibition saying her hair was being pulled (not evident). She was pinched (not evident) all the while the woman is relating mischievous acts - one that the refrigerator was catapulted to the floor (it looked new - not a scratch).

During this, the pup faced the open door but sat between my legs and wagged its tail languidly. It got up and turned to my left. Beside me was a pair of legs in cotton stockings and black oxford shoes. A farm woman, wearing a charcoal grey dress and floral print apron stood to my left. Her hair was coiled in a cinnamon bun atop her head. She did not look like a prankster. My back was to Jean Kern:

'Did you do those things?' I mentally asked the apparition.

The lady answered with a question 'Are you her friend?' My answer was no. 'Hum well!

The problem isn't me. It's that!' She motioned towards the south wall. 'She was doing some candle ceremony and got that! After it came, all manner of stuff began.'

I could not pivot any further left so could not check the south wall immediately. 'Thank you; and why are you here?' I asked. She was the first Mrs. Kern; loved her husband, boys and house. She would do nothing to destroy her possessions!

During this time, wife #2 felt I was not paying enough attention to her and began more ribald behavior! I turned back to Jean who mentioned that by “Her powers” her husband regained his "nature" and repeated it. I wanted to ask what “nature” was but at that moment - I caught sight of "that"! “That” was crouched and black, had a sharp profile with jutting pointed face - and scales that shined black.. The eyes were slits. There was a pouf of hair at the top of its head and I assumed it had a cape…until it moved. It seemed smaller until it stretched proving that there were two creatures with boney webbed wings! Immediately, I interrupted Jean's stupid diatribe:

"Yes, you have things here." I arose and asked Jean if there might be a picture of the first wife… on a side table in the next room. But the photo was of a girl about sixteen. Disappointed, I said, "Yes the first Mrs. Kern is here but …”

The screen door opened, the dog wriggled greeting a young girl, home from school. Mrs. Kern introduced me and added that ***she always knew what Darlene was doing***and that way she would be good. I thought, “Fearful intimidation, you nasty woman!” Within moments Mr. Kern arrived. He was far from the virile stud and carried a package of bologna from the nearby deli. This tickled my funny bone (a farmer’s wife having lunch meat for dinner)! But I dared not laugh. They asked me to share dinner with them, but I realized I should be getting supper for my family!

***'Ok, Guides, get me out of here! What do we do?'***

***'Let us get ready to leave. Tell the first Mrs. Kern that she can fix a mansion to her liking in Heaven even just like this one because her husband will be along shortly.' I turned to the ghost-lady repeating this. 'Now, tell these people that you are about to leave with the “ghosts.”’ I did this. A new guardian spirit was ready to be installed, but I did not see it immediately. 'Now, order those two things to leave the house.' The angels spoke no more. It was up to me to dictate their choices to do God's bidding or …***

Immediately, there was a terrific whistling noise in the kitchen, as the black things shot through the back door and outside. The pup caught the movements and lunged, biting savagely at nothing visible. It pushed the light screen door open and gave chase at full gallop into the side of my station wagon. It whimpered, fell back and began barking at the roof of my vehicle. Upon it were perched the two horrendous creatures. They viewed the dog as a strange curiosity.

"I'll leave now," I said, shaking hands with my hosts and smiling like this was an everyday occurrence. "I'm taking them all." I turned to wife number one and asked mentally, 'You'll give it a try? Won't you? '

'I love him so much, and I love this house.' I felt at a loss.

Now my Guides spoke: 'We'll take her up and take them away. Put a shield of protection around your vehicle! We'll be back shortly.' That meant all my protecting Guides were needed for this mission.

The pup was still growling and barking at the roof of the wagon. Mr. Kern tried to pull the pup away and shush it, but could not. "My Lord," he said, "he's dented your car door!"

I looked, "No worry, I'll pull it out with a plunger." (This was possible on the huge "Gas Guzzlers".) As a seer I watched the round-up. Wife #1 was whisked into the ether while the inhuman creatures resisted the Guides with fighting and lashing. Their scrawny wings filled like Para-sails in the wind but finally they were subdued. The pup turned and ran to Darlene who bent down and petted him. I got into the station wagon, watched the Guides and demons depart, said a prayer for a mantle and a shield of protection for my vehicle; all the while waving and smiling goodbye to the Kerns.

I was relieved to approach the hard road at the bottom of the hill but this proved no time to relax. The wagon was buffeted off two wheels knocking it across the center line, but with a real effort I righted it; compatriot-demons kept rocking the twenty-four foot wagon, pushing it from one side of the two-lane to the other. I breathed relief that it was not rush hour. The torment lasted a mile but my faith never wavered. I knew all my wonderful protection would return. It took a moment to realize when it all had normalized. I hoped those awful things had not banged up the body of the wagon but it was all Ethereal. There was just the pup’s dent.

As soon as I arrived home, I dashed to the bathroom, grabbed the rubber plunger and went back outside to restore the car before anyone was the wiser. I heard that suction and yes, the dent popped out. Good as new, not even a rubber ring mark! I expelled a breath and thanked God for everything! I prayed there would be nothing worse come my way.

By word of mouth, I was kept busy with ghost and worse removal. A client sometimes gave me a donation. Sometimes they were too astounded to think about one. Either way, I seemed to be doing a service. Getting people to Heaven was what I hoped to do but the opportunities came in such strange ways. Most often, the Guides let me escort the spirits to Heaven. It made me ask; why had they taken the first Mrs. Kern?

***'Your ethereal cord leaves a light path. The lady did not want to go, but had intentions of returning. She would have followed your light path. As we have no bodies, we have no path. We lined-up a house guardian, and have it in place. We dare say, the second Mrs. Kern shall be frustrated in her evil endeavors.'***

They let her see a small misty picture of the spirit. It seemed similar to the one they placed with Martha, but without a cape. Instead it wore a business suit with a nine button vest! The Guides explained it this way: ***'We cannot place an extolled good spirit with one on earth who is less spiritually developed. It would prove detrimental to the guide and accomplish nothing for the earthbound. Both earthbound and spirit must understand each other, yet the spirit is always the more advanced.'***

I hoped I had seen the last of those two households but alas, no.

WORK UPHEAVAL

Winter, 1971: Hank Sommer decided to quit his Contracting Business: His diabetes turned nasty. At first Charles Midden looked for another job, but winter is the worst season for those in construction work. He telephoned his brother-in-law Norman who lived in Evanston, Wyoming. Norm was a deputy sheriff; he covered a lot of territory. He said there were electrician positions available there.

Spontaneously, Charles drove to Evanston in snow. I-80 was closed; he had to take an old route through Cheyenne. The villagers there said he’d needed a heater for the engine and surely all the cars had little electric plugs hanging out the grills. After checking the work possibilities, he telephoned home. True there were jobs available but they paid the same wages as in Springfield. So it would be foolish to uproot the family for no increase. My eyes about popped out, Charles made a sane decision! I silently thanked God. Charles asked me to fly to Salt Lake City and meet him. We would see the town, visit with Norm and Julie and drive home together. I told the children there would be no move and no upheaval! They rejoiced and rushed into the foyer where “all the religious stuff was”. The children each said a thank you there and left to see TV.

Marshall drove me to St. Louis. He was always calm; had his license and blessedly, he was not in Champagne that weekend. (The Magdalene drove but she was scatter-brained behind the wheel.) Marshall said he’d felt Wyoming would fall through and that something else would come about. “After all, mom the Little Infant of Prague got us off the farm: I’d have never found my destiny in Computer if we stayed!” That Little Infant! “Yes, mom, He’s a good little kid.”

My travels were always an adventure. The flight had skiers going to Snowbird. It was interesting watching the skis paraphernalia loaded. A quiet sedate ride changed when the stewardess took drink orders. I ordered a Schnapps and Soda. A traveling salesman promptly asked if he could sit and talk with me. He said most of the passengers were Mormons and were having water! They did not even take tea or coffee! He said he felt outcast as he wanted a Gin and Tonic. He said he was with some organization that I promptly forgot. Then the man launched into a dissertation about the potato problem. I hadn't known there could be a potato problem.

“Oh yes by some flux the potatoes began rotting before their time! I discovered they were washing them before storing them! You never wash potatoes until they will be used! My mother taught me this!” (This was before he'd had the gin and tonic so I listened.)

When the plane landed, we did not seem any more ostracized than anyone else, said goodbye on the plane and never asked names. Charles met me. We took a motel room and toured various Mormon places. I did not relish visiting Mormon sites. There were places in Illinois, Nauvoo and Carthage. Each time, my hands ended up bleeding from a scratch when there was nothing nearby to prick them. I hoped this time would be fine! We entered the Visitor's Center. It was a brisk February and we were mid-crowd climbing stairs when my hand hurt. Charles asked the matter.

"My hand!" We looked at the banister for a splinter and then at my glove; there was nothing. I removed my glove and there were three deep scratches from my wrist to the index, middle and ring fingers; the blood beaded. Two ladies behind me had to be steadied at seeing it and word spread along the staircase. I wanted to get out of there but it was very crowded. We had to go up. The problem was likely my doubting portions of the religion and Joseph’s self-glory in taking multiple wives. I tried to ignore the prickling scratches but could not replace my glove. The Visitors' Center was beautiful; the story about constructing the Tabernacle was interesting but not seeing inside the Temple was disappointing. Other churches encourage visitors in the hopes of gaining converts. The museum across the street was best of all.

We visited a large department store near these shrines. Charles encouraged me to choose a set of fine stainless flatware for eight. It would be for daily use as the light weight things we used were mismatched and my silver too precious for daily use. I noticed Charles actually saw, reasoned and talked like a rational adult.

None of the dining rooms served liquor but called themselves private clubs. One could bring their own booze (From one of the nearby drive-up liquor stores) a quaint curiosity. Cold Duck was the “In” thing of the day. Charles ordered that.

We saw the Great Salt Lake and Snowbird Mountain where the skiers on the plane were heading. We drove to Evanston to see his sister, Julie and Norm. As we turned the fork to Devil's Pass a radio announcer said the Pass would be closed in ten minutes. Charles sped up to clear the Pass. Snow began falling at the designated tenth minute!

"One thing… they know how to predict weather here," he said.

There was no snow in Evanston, but as we pulled into the drive aside their trailer, the temperature registered -28 degrees. Charles told me to walk slowly to the door and remove my pantyhose immediately when we got inside. He said the moisture in footwear would freeze and become a real health hazard. My wonder-light-bulb flashed: Back at the Ft. Eielson Quonset hut in Alaska! So that was ***why***the guys removed their boots and socks when they came inside. It only took twenty odd years to learn the reason!

Shortly, Norm arrived, parking his deputy cruiser behind the Mercury wagon. Very shortly Julie arrived. We gathered around the dining room table. Soon talk fell to a light fixture that Julie wanted; a wagon wheel. It had to be scaled down to fit the trailer. Snow began to fall. It covered the mountain in back of the trailer. In ten minutes it stopped. Charles was ready to pop to an electrical supply house for the light fixture. Norm said:

"No, Charles we will have to wait for the snowplow to clear a path. It snows deeply here."

Patience was not Charles strong point; he looked out the bay window and was surprised that the snow was several feet deep! Following advice also was new. Once the plow went through, he and Norm were off and back quickly. Charles switched fixtures. Julie was delighted. The men plugged their car heaters in for overnight.

Although it was bitterly cold, we started back to Illinois; swinging off I-80 and into Cheyenne following the rectangle of old roads and missing the natural windrow that blew viciously across the new I-80. The ride was uneventful, but we were in good spirits. Charles decided to start his own business; he would buy the tools and materials he needed from Hank Sommer who was retiring. I wondered about the money for this but did not want to break the good spell.

God was with Charles in this endeavor. Although Hank had consigned everything to an auction, Charles got everything he needed and gathered enough small jobs to get the family through the winter! The Adelia Street House became the work base. The children and I learned to take messages professionally, getting names, numbers and an idea of the work needed. In Spring most of Hank's old crew signed on with Charles. But responsibility began to erase his easygoing Wyoming persona.

My music friends were delighted that we were remaining in Springfield. I called Ines. To my shock, Ines was into divorce proceedings. I begged her to reconsider, Ines had four children! But she made a good case and had a job with Good Will: The angels implied that Ines’ ideas would not turn out as well as mine! ‘What! My hopes had been shot to pieces and Charles was reverting to his old ways! I was doomed to be a zombie-woman again - dead inside.

AUNTIE RUTH AND OTHER SPIRITS

The telephone rang. It was Uncle Johannes. His wife Ruthie died. They were a childless couple who visited often at Riddle Hill and enjoyed the children's shenanigans with the donkeys. It had inspired them to purchase a small acreage. They outfitted it with a swing set, a pony, a friendly dog as well as Ruthie's trained Bandy Fowl that played softball; were house broken and provided fun tricks. Ruthie also had ducks; not for Ruthie dinky chicken eggs! Their neighbors' children were invited to come anytime. Many of these families were poor. The children learned animal care. Ruthie had been burned in a fire as a child and taught safety religiously! If any of the families had a hard time, Ruthie and Johannes dug in their pockets and helped. Ruthie enjoyed the children ten years and then one night quietly passed.

Ruthie was never glamorous. In life she was in constant movement, her hair always sported an un-do that lent a berserk quality to her short rotundness. In her casket lay a glamorous woman her sandy blonde hair lifted and waved, her lips tinged with rose and make-up perfect. Only if one had never seen Ruthie would they think she looked "fine - very natural". Uncle Johannes was being cheered by a North-ender who was sharing childhood memories. Before the Monsignor arrived for prayers, I spied Ruthie's spirit sulking in the corner by the head of the casket. Unlike the beautified corpse, she wore her mismatched sweater and skirt, her berserk hairdo and twisted baggy stockings. I called mentally, 'Hi'. Ruthie looked up. 'Oh Mary, this is the dumbest thing! Everybody that's here, I don't give a damn about! Those I really care about haven't come.' She wailed. I suggested they might come later and we chatted easily. Then my cousin Louise stepped in front of the spirit and began a conversation. Ruthie faded. As quickly Louise's attention turned elsewhere and she left. I found Ruthie calling to Johannes but he did not hear her. She wailed into my chest. We two sat away from the crowd while the monsignor began the usual prayers.

Ruthie listened a few moments and threw her hands into the air: 'I don't see any cool waters or rolling grass. I'm right here getting nowhere!' I told her those prayers were to comfort the survivors and took Ruthie's hand. “Go where I go.” We went in-spirit to the Keeper of Records and then I asked if Ruthie wanted to see her mother and father, and stayed a few moments. Ruthie said, 'I don't want to leave Johannes down there.'

The Helpful Spirit checked her charts and said it would not be long and Johannes would come up. She would have enough time to become reacquainted and plan her mansion. Ruthie wanted to know about her Bandy hen and rooster. They were quite old.

'Johannes will care for them and then they will go to a place and be happy. They do not have the restrictions like the earthly bodies but they do exist and have a good time. It works out fine.' The Helpful Spirit turned to me and shook a finger at me: 'This is why we were so upset when you brought the dog!'

Ruthie asked what this was about.

'Oh she comes and goes with spirits. One time she brought a group of people and a big dog was with them.'

'I didn't want to lose any of them,' Mary wailed.

'Oh it was all straightened out.' The spirit said.

I frowned a bit: 'I think spirits ought to be told what use they can make of themselves when they arrive here; like self-betterment courses and to learn about God's ways and His laws. Some have talents they can teach others. Aunt Ruthie here, oh! You should see those little Bandies she taught! What I want to say is some entities float around earth or in the nearby atmosphere for great periods before arriving where they should be. What do you guys do?'

'If they are agitated we send them to relax.'

'Precisely! Earth people are too accelerated, my friend. Do you know how long a person on earth can relax? Even after they ***retire***? I'll tell you; three days is bliss, after that they are frantic.'

'I don't understand all my niece's words, Sir, but she is correct! The first few days of retirement were great, then we had too much of a good thing. That's when we set up the little farm. We had to be useful!'

'You think we should call an update meeting?'

'Definitely; even The Father looks upon the earth and checks things.’

In the room of the funeral home there was a great crack as people stood after the prayers. My repose was gone; I was among the living. For the next few years I drove to Uncle Johannes whenever he called. At times he had dreams, at other times he was just lonely. Once I managed to get Helen and Joe to visit him. We all watched the Ten Commandments on TV. But if his siblings came; he said they always badgered him about his money! He aged quickly now but stubbornly would not make a will. He gave me several explicit instructions and the papers for insurances. Unfortunately without a will, an attorney hired maintenance men for the little farm; his siblings and children of siblings he had never seen collected small inheritances! The little farm was sold.

Johannes had accomplished a great purity of spirit. When I asked where he had gone, I was shown a tiny two room mansion fashioned like a gingerbread house and decorated with icing and candies. He said there was only one drawback; there weren't any children and he wanted to play Santa Claus! A Helpful Spirit overheard this complaint and promptly asked if he would like to go to the area where people were practicing for their earth lives. There would be children and some might be in hospital a time and others choosing disabilities! Uncle Johannes was delighted - Children!

Aunt Ruthie decided against rejoining Johannes and remained in another area of the same level. When her mind was opened to remember all the things she knew; she had several other endeavors to pursue. ***Spirits are not bound to others after death. Each is a free entity that need not depend on others. They realize that God knows and fills all their needs.***

LIFE CONTINUES

Virginia Bennett held a recital of her students. One fellow was to be the highlight of the evening. And I continued seeing the various hopefuls and composers on the List that old Liszt jotted for me … Although the young man did not hit a wrong note, his hands quivered over each key before striking it. I caught him privately; his was the same problem as Coleman, the Russian Mussorgsky proponent. I reassured him. But he said it was just too difficult, he had other talents. Next time he was in a recital, Virginia played and the young man sang. The voice was not forceful but had great exuberance and personality. He told me he was much happier. I continued hearing performers.

The Ghosting also continued. Charles assumed the façade of indulgent master. Although he feared the paranormal he was too stubborn to ask. He banned candles in the house. (I never used any except on a call.) The Little Infant of Prague lost his never lit votive candle. He did not mind, saying now he feels part of the family. In spring of 1972 Martha Caudill called; her voice nudged the edge of hysteria. She was returning from a sick call (she had read some poems and said a few “prayers” for her landlord who was ill.) Then she noticed two strange things approaching her. She hurried inside, opened her Grimore and recited chants that they would go away.

The word **"Grimore"** opened my eyes: The Hand Book of Witches! I had no idea that Martha was into witchcraft. 'Oh, oh, she's talking; what on earth is that woman saying?'

Two of the most horrendous blister-covered animal-like things floated towards her; they weren't real! She could see right through them! As she spoke a clairvoyant picture formed just as she described them: One pale green and the other pale red. Martha declared YES! They had lizard's tails, cow nostrils and were about four feet tall. Water balloons looked more substantial as they swished awkwardly toward Martha from the back field. Mary peered past the two critters and saw that the field was lumpy.

“Has it been plowed?” Martha acquiesced. "Martha, does that field go across the back of Jean Fortune’s house?" The yes answer gave me a twinge. Likely, those were the two I buried back there last autumn!

Martha continued, "I read them a banishing spell from my book, but they just looked at each other and continued to approach! Mary, surely you have the Book of Secrets!" I said, no. Martha then read completely unintelligible syllables to me.

"No Martha! I don't know that at all."

Martha's reserve broke: "Mary they are at my door! What'll I do?" She wailed in anguish, "You get over here right now!"

I already had my Guide’s instructions. "Martha, first, I want you to put your book aside and pray to God! Ask Him to send you all the angels He has available to help you. Second, I want you to take a little candle and water like I did at Jean's". I told her the ritual and Martha repeated it. But this time, I told her to bury them deep-deep in the ground. And then to call me back immediately, "I'll come if you need."

Martha called in seven minutes. She witnessed a miracle! She spoke of GOD and how HE worked and her witch's chants and secrets had lost ground and failed! She asked about a church where this God could be found. I was so glad we were not face to face because Martha's words sounded almost childish. I suggested St. Patrick's on South Grand, East and 18th (now MLK Drive). There was a gentle calmness at that church. Martha kept unwinding over the telephone:

"I have already thrown out all the witchcraft books and stuff; they didn't work; your God worked and He didn't even know me! I only took that stuff up because I wanted to know things that others didn't; to appear superior and mysterious. Oh-ho, I thought I was so smart, but when I really needed help it was a big hoax."

"Great! Martha, on another subject altogether; there is a Community Concert in Lincoln, IL. Some of my friends have given me passes to see Peter Nero. Would you like to go with me?"

Martha was delighted we set plans.

THE TETON INCIDENT

I walked into the bank lobby and noticed a poster about some God-Group. I felt uncommonly drawn to attend. The lecture was near my home so I went. Charles did not mind as long as it was not Jankowski’s music!

The conference room had many tables of materials and pictures of oriental gods in red and gold foils. My urge was to back-face and leave but a call pierced the room for everyone to be seated. A woman spoke telling their story: That the Archangel Michael appeared to her telling her to preach. Then a personable young man stepped forward and during his speech casually mentioned that he had met each of those attending while their spirits were wandering away from their bodies during sleep! Their religious group was situated in the Grand Tetons. I perked. I remembered visiting the Tetons in-spirit. That was the only time I encountered and talked with anyone! He continued; he had impressed upon our minds the urgency of attending this meeting! The attendees seemed beguiled. I was incensed; he had taken advantage of my mind - all these minds! I wanted to flee! My Guides told me to stay until the assemblage moved about. I was most upset: ***'It is God that has dominion over mankind!'*** My Guides agreed. I remained pleasant and once again thanked God for High School Drama Club.

The lady prophet spoke again saying they were established in a safe area of the United States and were assured by the Archangel Michael that this place would be untouched during the extreme desolation that preceded the coming of Jesus: They would survive in this haven; it was **“secluded and self-contained”** in the mountains. Those two words indicated "controlling cult”. I awaited the moment when I could flee! The speeches finished and all were invited to choose free materials and to sign up for monthly literature before they left.

I was careful to touch nothing, passed before the sign-up podium stood a few seconds and slipped out the door. I was completely angry with myself for attending such hokum. But the group proved unrelenting. They had established a sort of mental control and after a day, headaches began. I am not a headache person! If someone thinks of me I will feel a zing and then try to think of the likely person whose thoughts were intense: My Aunt Mary Regina, my older son Marshall, Ines and Sharon were my normal group. The zings intensified. Could be that cult! Immediately I asked God for a shield and mantle of protection. The headaches ceased immediately:

'Dear Guides, How can I make this person realize what these headaches feel like?'

‘***Oh, that's easy; just ask that the vibrations be returned to the originator,'***they answered. I did this and felt free! About a month later one of the attendees stopped me:

"I did not see you at the lecture! They held another one. But the cute guy, the one next to the prophetess was not there. He has been incapacitated with migraines. It was a nice meeting though." I told her I was not interested in the group. (How interesting: Now the handsome young man was making his own headache unaware!) The Grand Teton incident changed my bi-location travel. I wanted no more such incidents! What could I do in-spirit and yet keep my spirit safe?

***'Dear Father, I am afraid that my spirit is in jeopardy by free traveling. I want it to be safe at night. I wonder if YOU would mind my coming to my area in Heaven during my sleep. Maybe I could work on my mansion or do something useful for You?*** To my surprise, the Father granted this. It began a completely new lifestyle for me.

CHAPTER XV

LIVING ON TWO LEVELS

I relaxed happily and wished to go to my future mansion site. This began a new paranormal phase of my life - existing on two levels- the Seen and the Unseen. I began researching books with beautiful architectural elements. I memorized various fancy staircases, window styles indeed there were so many lovely buildings to study. After a while my collection became a conglomeration of elements which did not fit together. In the morning after the family was off for the day, I jotted these things in the back pages of my journal. There were more entries than I expected. I began cutting and pasting extra blank pages in the back of the journal.

The evening of the Nero concert, I bought a half dozen mixed Mello-Crème donuts, covered the box with gold paper and curly ribbon. Martha Caudill was ready. The drive to Lincoln, Il. takes barely twenty minutes. Our seats were in the first row in the balcony but they were free. I could not determine if Peter was having any problems, but he was on my list. I admitted to Martha, that it had been years since I saw him and did not know if he would remember me at all. (Actually, it had been in the World of Music; that indeed was “many years ago!”) During a break I went back stage feeling a bit shaky wearing a lavender damask gown holding a very obvious box. A stage hand dashed back for him.

"Oh, Hello!" said Peter with delight. Evidently I looked the same. He was smiling and telling me the auditorium was nice. We laughed; a small auditorium - I’ll just bet it was! I told him I was from Springfield now; but had been out of Amsterdam; where they have the Ann Frank stuff. I mentioned a note I had dropped him a while ago about the music. He had not received it! If he had he would have answered! But as he came closer his Uranian vibrations seemed to suck the life out of me. He was talking cheerfully during my duress (blithely covered with a smile). He was holding my hand; ('Darn, that's right he is long unmarried, oh dear.')

'I can't stand the vibrations, angels! What shall I do?'

'Hold out, not long.'

I forgot how tall he was and what long exquisite fingers he had, but I did remember his flair for sarcasm! Often it showed in his music aith a few brash notes.I was on guard.

"The little man said you were holed up back there but although these have holes; I'm afraid you're playing for donuts tonight. They are kind of a specialty in my area."

He took the box and was thoroughly surprised, thanked me and blushed. He added that if I wrote to him, and he got it; he would answer; and I thought ' Oh, God, like I'm going to start that with another composer!’ but I smiled engagingly and nodded. Peter saw a stagehand and beckoned him to take the box to his room. I still wondered how he needed help. But his vibrations were saturating me and when he turned away, unprofessional as it was, I fled shaking. I was not recovered when I reached my seat, but chatted with phony enthusiasm to Martha..

'The contact was made.' The Guides said, but then they were drowned out by Martha. The program was Gershwin. He admired Gershwin completely! The double time and new arrangements were fetching. After the concert we ladies returned to Springfield and stopped at an all-night restaurant for coffee. Martha's demeanor had improved with the event of her house spirit and church attendance. She felt that as a divorcee she might not be welcomed so she sat in the back quietly and simply absorbed God! Martha hoped that someone special would come into her life. It was a wonderful evening.

On the Springfield scene, my friend, William Yardley was now State Senator but his life became a shambles when his wife Polly died of cancer. I too was distraught. We ladies saw each other at garden club events. Polly had so many talents: flower arrangement; orchid culture; organist. She encouraged her family in music. She managed a house and William's political gatherings. I admired her from afar but never - never did I accept William’s invitations to come to the house. (He always went into reverie when he saw me and more scenes with the Press were unneeded.)

There was no sign of Polly's spirit at either wake. (She was also shown in State.) It was disconcerting when the spirit was not present! I was certain that over the years Bill's gaffs at calling me his wife got back to Polly; that would cause unbearable heartache. I visited the cemetery afterward with the protection of many good spirits, parked near their impressive monument and entreated the elegant lady to speak with me.

'Polly, I want to speak with you a few moments, please.' Polly was aware of life after death at least by now she was so my chat went that way.

'At times, I wander back to the house,’ she said, ‘but I'm dead; and you're alive and I hate you.' Polly slashed.

'Let me tell you about that, Polly,' I recounted the Greek link with William as Demetrius; that I had been his second or third wife according to how Eurydice was counted. (I heard a chuckle; that was good!) And that I was killed at the start a civil war. I explained that Demetrius saw it but could not prevent it. That both of us knew when I came that he would already be married and we could only be friends … and I staunchly kept it that way!’

"Then you are innocent but I am still dead,' Polly shot.

'Eh, please don't leave me yet! Polly you do know that in-the-spirit you move about by making a definite wish? Gosh, I love you. You went through so much! I want you to have a happier life than sticking around here; ah, one moment!' I alerted God’s Angels.

'Could you take Polly and maybe a few other spirits to check-in?’ - ‘Polly, you can teach or learn things. Oh, it is most important to take a class to understand how God thinks! Ask for that! You see once you know that, you can move up to the very God Level easily, and become a guide yourself, if you wish! It is wonderfully fulfilling.'

'Is that what you are?' She asked. I remarked at times my life was too crazy to know what I am. I came to help several people get into Heaven and help others with music. Often, I feel like I am failing the whole thing.'

I saw an ectoplasmic throng of spirits, all of them gathered around the Yardley monument. Polly caught hold of an Angel's hand. The other spirits held hands with Angels interspersed. A large group of warrior angels surrounded all of us.

'Dear spirits, wish to go with the Angels,' I thought. In a moment they lifted like a chain of snap-the-whip; and were out of sight. I contemplated: The men I had come to help: Was I doing them any good? I felt they hated me: Ares/George; The Gaul/Charles; Pyrrhus/Louis and Horst. The steady one was Demetrius/William. I started the engine of the station wagon and stopped at the bottom of the hill until I could drive home.

The Magdalene was “on her own” settled in a good job with the telephone company, had a great used Dodge "muscle Car" but still attended the Coffee House. Her deep religious convictions surfaced and she told her family that she wanted to join a group called: The King's Children. She painted it gloriously, but after she joined the group was told they must only have part time jobs so that they could properly attend bible study! The rules were stringent; she could not come or go freely and there were curfews. Parents had to have permission to visit their child and even this time was limited! This did not set well with Charles, me or her siblings but The Magdalene was overcome with piety! She would be with God’s people. It went well at first; then she discovered part time wages were not enough to provide maintenance for her car. The leaders and the members of a combo used it freely but provided no funds, upkeep or gas!

I brought a delicacy for all the children and was met at the door by a young man who accepted my offering, but kept gazing at me.

"I'm Paul, forgive me, but it's like I know you; I mean aside from your being Mrs. Midden."

I nodded, "Yes, there is something; I don't know why I say this, but don't do ANY traveling for about two months; I mean on any State Routes."

The boy laughed. There were no travel plans that included him. Over the weekend all Midden's were gathering for the Fourth of July. Marshall was home. The Magdalene called. She needed a ride, her car had broken down but worse there had been an accident. "The whole school is upset. Two of the kids are badly hurt. It was out on the highway. It's a shame too, Paul wasn't scheduled to go, but there was room; he hadn't been out for a long time." Mary inconspicuously reeled!

I fetched The Magdalene and heard a message from Paul. There was confusion as I arrived at the King's Children's House. Finally, I noted the time and wrote the message down. The Magdalene didn't have to tell me; Paul was killed. Here is his message that I forwarded to his parents:

July 3, l973, 7:29 pm: Me: "Hi is there something you want me to say or do for you?"

"Yes, I want you to tell my mom, I really, really love her; I never had the opportunity."

"How about your dad?"

"Oh. I love dad, but mother always tried to smooth it; she stuck-up; say, she always smoothed it."

July 3, 1973, 10:30 pm: Paul: "I want to say something to my dad. Dad always tried to impress me with his way as the right way, but you know we kids got to find out which way is the right way; dad's way was right."

July 4th the obituaries ran the high school picture of Paul, beardless and with short hair; hard to compare the photo with the boy I talked with. I wrote a sympathy card to his parents quoting his words but did not attend the out of town funeral.

I said nothing about talking with Paul; my family would twist every word to mean that I caused the accident! But, Paul sought me out. One afternoon he appeared at the Adelia Street cottage. He looked the same as in life. We chatted about the things in my prayer about forgiving others as well as the self and about the Keeper of Records. Finally, I extended my ethereal hand to him and asked him to wish to go with me.

While Paul talked with a Helpful Spirit, I hung back respectfully. The Helpful Spirit mentioned traveling to the World of Music to visit The Magdalene's friend, Steve the guitarist who left the earth for this Realm a few months earlier. To all Steve might have been judged a suicide, but if that was so, he would be waiting outside the Gates. It was an accident - planned before this life began.

I was surprised to see that Steve had an orchestra of sixteen pieces or more. He wore a dark muted striped business suit used a poking motion with his baton to conduct. He implemented the orchestra with a synthesizer. Paul and I were told that these sounds were originated by Uranus-Pluto - Vibrations and this combination was totally new. Paul was not interested in professional music. I realized the episode was two-fold informing me of the new music and simultaneously a word for The Magdalene: Steve was very accomplished and all right.

"Paul, I think this is a message for my daughter; she was very fond of Steve." With that I returned to my own body to see this daughter gaping at her mother’s quiet form. I related the messages.

Shortly, the large old house with double verandas that the King’s Children rented was not up to such heavy youthful traffic. The group rented a smaller house; and moved about 1/3 of the kids into it. Shortly, the leaders and the music group went to a city north of Pontiac, IL to perform. When the kids walked down to the big house for breakfast; the leaders, the cook and the combo had abandoned them! They were left without food, rent, real jobs and some of them without families to which to return. The Magdalene could come home; she got a job in fashion, but many of the others had been ostracized by their parents and had no home!

HERE

TWO LITTLE DEMONS

The summer dry spell was now in full swing. At the other end of the Midden Telephone a whiny voice identified itself as Mrs. Kern. I winced. The lady explained that it wasn't for herself but for a Dr. and his second wife. They felt something was in their house. Mrs. Kern wanted me to stop by and she would guide me to the remote area east of 31st (now Dirksen Parkway). I packed my little kit and prayed for much protection before accepting anything involving that Kern woman.

The way there was a tricky round-about that reminded me of my parents guiding the St. Louis relatives to the farm. The doctor lived in a trailer! Evidently, the divorce had cleaned him.

Jean Kern and the couple told me that they were certain a hex had been put on them; because his ex-wife had been to Jamaica recently. Since then they had accidents and overly unusual things happen to him, to the car even inside the trailer. I did my best not to laugh: Hexes - Voodoo! Woo-hoo! I asked the three to remain in the kitchen. I conducted my blessing along the west side of the trailer finding nothing. When I started back; I heard disgruntled voices. I turned to see if it came from the victims, no. So I blessed the cabinets; two spirits manifested as clear yellow and clear red-orange lights and emerged mumbling obscenities.

'OK, are there any more of you?' I asked mentally.

'We are all here,' the two answered crankily and became tyrannical as I continued my blessing. 'We said - we are all there are, woman! Don't you believe us?'

I turned and leveled my gaze at them, 'Of course I do'. I said sarcastically.

'Yee-eeh!' they screamed and knocked the trailer from side to side. The three adults were bounced into each other unexpectedly.

I kept on, 'You must gather around this light!' At the kitchen door I asked pardon of the three stunned adults and took the light and glass of water outside without a word. I closed the door because Mrs. Kern tried to follow.

'You have a choice: you can go to God, admit your wrong-doing and ask to start over on a path to Light…or I will bury you in the ground and you cannot come out until the end of time.' I spoke in a voice of a mother chastising naughty children. The two drew back in horror at the last choice. 'Ah then you both wish to try the path to Light and God?'

The two nodded and mumbled, ' yuh, yuh, yuh.'

I raised my hands summonsing the Band of Angels who awaited my word. 'We have two who wish to work their way back to God! Will you start them on their path?'

When some of the wondrous angels were disappearing from my sight I blew out the candle and stepped back into the trailer. "You had two amateur evil spirits but they are gone to a place of reparation. It looks like that is all," I smiled to the trio. I was ready to leave. Jean Kern said she would talk with the couple later. I never saw the couple again. Jean was silent back to the Kern house. I got in my station wagon and stopped at the Music Shop.

THE PIANIST

At the Music Shop, there was nothing under the "J's". I saw a Columbia album of Peter Nero’s. Somehow I was unhampered by any interruptions while playing it at home! Consistently, there was a brash note of irony? Then the music was beautiful; Picasso Summer, You Are the Sunshine of My Life, and several others. As I handled the cover I felt turmoil.

'It isn't him, it's the record company.' My angels said.

To investigate this, I went to the library and checked several Billboard magazines. Nothing directly, but it mentioned an influential executive who, a few magazines later, began a new record company! I placed my fingers on the type and the story fell to place. This executive authorized equipment but later claimed it as his own and moved it to his new record company! He was sued but the damage went even deeper. Several recording stars discovered too late that the fine print of their renewal contracts actually signed them to this executive instead of to their original studio!

Peter was included. I relaxed and saw him in a little clairvoyant picture. He was trying to practice at home on a white grand, in a high collared costume likened to Elvis and Elton. He was trying to master the pedals wearing elevator boots. 'Ah, this is why he is on my list.' He was at home so I bi-located and walked through his dining room where several large brown boxes resembling refrigerators were standing … The Moog! That's right, he mastered the Moog.’ This genius has been caught in one rotten deal; but at least he wasnot standing to play and ruining his hands!! I approached and removed Peter's hands from the keys and turned him away from the instrument:

"Take some time. Think about this. It is not you." We discussed a few ideas and then I left.

Weeks and then months passed. I wrote to the manipulative executive asking if Peter would be having a new work soon. To my surprise I received a personal answer. What was typed on his stationary and what its vibrations said as I held the letter in my hands were two completely different things! The printed words said: Peter has not cut a new album, but we have an upcoming artist (his name) that you might enjoy …etc.

What the *vibrations* said was: ‘Peter's disappeared off the face of the earth. We can't find him anywhere! Oh, we've got this younger fellow, but Peter's been missing for four months!

I asked my Guides if Peter was safe; should I try to find him?

The Guides answered, 'He is resting, soaking up a new country, travel and history are involved; only good is coming from this. He is expanding … a new avenue for his talents.'

When he resurfaced there were no costumes! He had gone to Amsterdam, rented a flat near the Ann Franke House and wrote inspiring music about the youngster’s trials and life. It was successfully produced in New York. Later he was chosen conductor of the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra a position he held over 37 years. Peter was blessed! Conventional acoustical music crashed; careers vaporized; artists scrambled to reinvent careers (like Horst had done earlier). Some became guest conductors, did music for movies or TV. There were several deaths - those attributed to “Heart Attacks.”

Lea Annette, Muriel’s pupil returned from music camp and again played for Morning Etude. There were several pieces including the one with which she won the scholarship. Gently, she admitted a few things needed adjustment and played it with the tones, timing and quality it deserved. Lea had also learned "Monkey on My Back" and followed this with a ditty she wrote which sounded like a brook rippling cheerfully over rocks. It had dozens of notes and was absolutely charming. Lea worked her way through the gathering to me privately: "I didn't understand what you were suggesting last May, but now I do! You said, Mrs. Williams?" I nodded and smiled to her just as secretively. Muriel had reached the extent of her abilities but she would always be loved.

There was an Honor Scholars Dinner. As Marshall earned this honor, Charles and I went. Greg Otten had won several scholarships and played Debussy for the audience. It was weak in parts. The next morning I wrote Greg a note and told him that it was not his fault really; Debussy didn't know his own intentions most of the time. I also mentioned Debussy's double pedal pointe citing the procedure and the cautions just as I had given them to Jankowski.

Marshall came home, threw his books on the table, "Thanks a lot, mother! Greg got your note."

"Oh, it didn't ruin your friendship?"

"No, it's that he took it to the English teacher who brought me up and said, 'How can your mother write such beautiful English and you do so badly?'"

"It wasn't supposed to go that way at all! Greg looked so irresolute."

"Oh, I know it; the funny part was that the teacher didn't know the movements you referred to but beings everything else had been constructed perfectly, he figured that was too." Marshall laughed. "I was teasing."

Later, unfortunately, Lea Annette and Greg both tried for the University at Indiana Music College. Although both played magnificently, Lea’s composition turned the vote. Greg was devastated.

This was not a good position for me in fact it was completely unenviable: Congratulating one youngster and buoying another. That is exactly what I did; give credit. I was happy for Lea Annette; her composition had definitely been a winner.

Marshall reported that Greg was exploring other talents, like accounting and was accepted at the University of Chicago. Time to write to him! “I realize such a blow would make you negate the very thing you love the most. Perhaps another endeavor, Mathematics was in order until you feel better - keep handy access to a piano … for you **will** feel better. Life is genuine; it certainly isn't little babbling brooks.”

Nine months into a mathematical year, Greg changed his major to music. After graduation, he toured several years internationally and then settled at his Alma Mater teaching and composing.

GHOSTLY EXPERIENCES

Ed Curtin, the farmer friend since 1951 from Chi Rho Club lost his father. At the wake I saw the spirit standing near the indirect light at the head of the casket and acknowledged him. Ed's father seemed disgusted and crabby. I greeted him mentally and he poured out his woes, gesturing, saying the body was scrunched in the box and even the ear was bent: The flag on the casket was all wrinkled and a bouquet of flowers on the wall (Stands which hold tiers of bouquets.) arrived dead! Charles and I took seats until the line greeting Ed had thinned. I looked around and Charles asked if the spirit was present. I said yes, and Charles wanted details! Mr. Curtin was complaining but so far on everything he was correct.

The spirit spoke again; 'Once these things are taken care of, I'm off!' I asked-to heaven? He answered, 'Ha, been there; going to a dam-site and do a damned good job.’ He laughed at his pun and added - South America; got a friend already working there.'

Immediately my skeptical nature was alerted! Was this a hoax? Nearly four years earlier I had heard these same 'new life plans' from Louis Water! His was authentic; I had known him as a Greek Master of Water. Immediately I prayed that all false spirits be banished, but Ed’s father was still by the indirect light at the head of his casket. I asked him about his near-blind wife.

He said gently, 'Oh, we can't leave her here long.'

The crowd thinned and the Middens went to Ed. The happening got the best of me. I tapped Ed's arm. "Tell me, Ed, is your father a crabby person by nature?"

Ed was surprised at these words, "Gosh no; just the opposite."

I bobbed my head. "Well, you see he's done nothing but complain since we arrived." I told Ed about the flag, the ear and the flowers. Ed checked and agreed and held up a finger to the undertaker.

"What else did he say?"

"That he was leaving to build a dam in South America." Ed clasped his elbows and howled with laughter swinging his body left and right.

"That's my dad! He said more than once, whenever I leave farming I'm going to build a dam."

I was dumbfounded; Charles was stunned but now completely acknowledged my paranormal abilities.

NASTY SPIRITS IN THE CAR

There can be hard learned lessons about returning spirits "home". Charles took the family on a Sunday outing. Driving homeward he turned off to drive alongside Lincoln Park. Opposite however, are two cemeteries. In the Station wagon the children had a tall container with ice water. Most sat cross-legged on a double mattress and quilt there. I got the spontaneous idea to direct all the spirits that lingered in the cemetery to Heaven. ***I forgot to consult with my Guides!*** In that instant, there was a loud rush of wind and the long wagon was shaken up and down and from corner to corner. The youngsters were knocked into each other and screamed. Charles' driving and the road were not at fault. He tried to stop.

"Don't stop! Keep going. Get out of here. It is my fault! Dear God in Heaven I need help!"

The children noticed that I was being knocked and beaten. I was shielding my face. The onslaught continued for a few blocks until we came to a turn in the road. And then a second rush of wind which sounded like a tornado. With this wind came a great stillness. Calm enveloped the wagon. I checked the children. They agreed none of them had been attacked or hurt only shaken and frightened. I groaned feeling the back of my head. I was turning black and blue everywhere.

As soon as all was normal, Charles turned to me sternly and said, "Whatever you did, don't do it again!" His voice dropped, "We could have been hurt." There was no sympathy.

Marshall noticed my tousled appearance and agreed; the others agreed. I could certainly agree; I would not do it ***that way!*** Mentally I asked the Guides what happened. They said:

***'Only one of us is a warrior! We are not prepared to battle such evil forces. Henceforth please consider us! You can call legions of warrior angels and good spirits trained to such endeavors; just as we are trained to ours. You have heard that the Earth is the domain of Satan and his like…a cemetery is the greatest gathering place of evil. It is their special domain. Those spirits who follow their bodies to the burial site are most vulnerable to satanic control! These are easy prey, my dear. The dark ones convince their prey that it is ordained that they remain there until the end of time!***

***'Now you know well that death occurs when the ethereal cord is broken, this frees the spirit. It can move; it can go anywhere. God hopes like you say; that it wishes itself to check-in, receive its reward and get on with a new life. Every spirit gains some reward. You know God is merciful! This "Rest in peace" business has been taken out of context by the evil ones and they constrain their prey with it. The more spirits they dupe, the larger their domain! Understanding this, my dear, do you think they will not fight if someone threatens that domain? So then, there are certain rules: nothing spontaneous; pray for God's help first!'***

After this experience, I remembered these words forever!

A SURPRISE FOR THE RUSSIANS

Marshall spent the whole summer at the U of I. By September the computer group dwindled to three and the boys got an apartment together. Marshall was so peaceable that he appeared much older. Beings he worked for two years in computer most new students thought he was a professor. It took some doing to convince them he could not imbibe at their parties as he was not twenty-one. He put most of the professors' tests on computer; took and passed all but medical because he did not have access. He was taking German classes but passing Russian on computer! He was most disappointed when he could not attend the International Computer Convention in Moscow; it was lack of seniority. He had entered most of the classical music which at that time- required each voice being typed in! After that, he entered Christmas Carols and Disney songs because he liked them. How I missed Marshall. He was my stabilizer.

Cold War Russia was closed to religion in every form. The U.S.A. Computer Team Leader began presenting their experiments, when instead of the classics the senior hit the wrong entry and across the massive auditorium Marshall's Christmas Carols rang out! There was stunned silence. Quickly the team leader explained that Plato did classical music much better. To his shock his hand was stopped from changing it.

"We can hear the classics anytime, but are not allowed Christmas Carols. However, as it is part of the United States presentation, let us enjoy the carols." The finest computer minds in the world spent the week enjoying Marshall's Christmas Carols. God works in mysterious ways. (Every 13 years the convention is held in Russia and Marshall had gained the seniority by then and was most happy to attend the next Conference with his wife, Susan.)

Meanwhile, I wondered about Polly Yardley, drove to the plot and asked if we could talk. There was a rush and a thump as Polly's spirit returned this first time.

'Oh, I am working with disabled children! It is wonderful work and so fulfilling. They return at times carrying those earth conditions back. I convince them that they are no longer challenged but are even more complete and normal than before. I just love it, and I owe it all to you for getting me out of this awful cemetery! O-o-oh! I'll have to go, a new batch is arriving, Bye!'

AND TRANSPIRING IN DEUTCHLAND -

By changing record companies the lapse between albums from Jankowski was longer than before. This album too was a journal! The cover caught my attention: The Loftleider Airport in Luxemburg. Klaus must have told them about Icelandic! The back of the cover showed the group photo at the Royal fountains. He was nearly himself again; his hair groomed, more logical eye glasses and a light colored jacket made of a more bodied cloth that fit! His hands were still swollen twice their size. This album was called: "Night People Only”. The choir actually sang words in English. The first two bands were overtly sexy: “The Lady Eve” and "Light My Fire" - These dug into me. The rest of the album seemed to turn oppositely: "With Two Eyes" (a man can still be blind); "Bridge over Troubled Waters"; "Didn't We" (almost make it); "Let's Make a Day" (that will always be ours). I smirked sarcastically at this, ‘Yes, what hopes I had - none - all hope is gone.’ But Horst’s music seemed hopeful for us. With my funds confiscated and hard restrictions and orders my life had died. Two albums and I am too stressed and shaken to evaluate them. This album had a trumpet in a few pieces; Horst did Trumpet albums for the German audiences. I counted my change-back bottle pennies, drove to the telephone company to make a person to person call. Klaus answered, said Horst was at his mother's resting and gave me the number. The operator redirected the call. Horst was alone and getting better. He hardly remembered what was on the record (time lapsed) but promised to send some newer European albums. He sounded ill; it seemed like his spark was gone. Records never came; He did not have my address. Someone else rerouted my excess things to Peoria, but I did not realize this. As his star was not as bright: Would the Stuttgart Post Office even remember: their Great Pianist? Ours was the classic lack of communication.

The four younger children began to play at friends’ homes after doing their homework. Most often Derek left when the trucks drove in. He’d shoot hoops in the school yard. Pen Women was not inspiring but I went that evening to appease Muriel, my friend. Of the lot my going nightly to Heaven a few hours nightly was the very best.

One midnight I awoke to a vision of Horst. "I make a joke." (German jokes were seldom funny.) "I do half-baked bread … You have to *kuch* it more." I shook my head but wrote it in my journals exactly. When I finally saw the title in the Music Shop, I laughed: "Jankowski Plays Offenbach." Back to the oven: Orchestral, beautiful but impersonal.

I visited St. Agnes old Church and sat in the second pew on the right. I heard a voice: ***'I am the Father and I am well pleased with you; I bless you and give you a peaceful heart, certain graces and gifts. Your movements will be from my guidance. All will be as I wish. Go now.'* My** Guides said it meant that I was a true Child of God. (A child constantly drained by stress. Did God really want this?) My chest heaved dry tears. I hadn’t cried twenty one years!

CHAPTER XVI

1974 ONE PACKED YEAR

April 1, 1974: Charles and his crew were replacing the metal roof on his father's brick house. (It was good money.) Metal roofs last forever, but this one was helped to its demise.

Robert was awakened one night by his father's telephone call: There were footsteps in the attic! His father had complained before, but somehow, this time the complaint set Robert off and he grabbed his rifle, got a long ladder and made his way to his father's second floor; removed the ceiling covering; flashed a high Bean light around and was greeted by several pairs of glowing eyes. Not knowing what they might be; he shot several times blowing irreparable holes in the roof.

Afterward, he discovered five burly raccoons. One weighed in at 28 pounds; two at 22, one at 19 and the lightest 18. Butchie, the farm dog routinely chased them up the same tree, but they always disappeared. He watched for them to comeout of hiding but they never did. After a few days, Old Mr. Midden missed the raccoons! Although he did now know what was up there, he had them pegged by their footfalls. But alas, it was too late; he was alone again in the brick house.

Thus Charles and the crew were replacing the roof. Robert was back at the dairy barn. His wife had a new baby girl. Her mother was helping Sharon. Little Ann Maria was nine months old. Sharon was groggy. She had developed diabetes during this pregnancy, but refused insulin! How she wanted this baby girl! But she was determined to control the disease with diet Her exact words to me were- “And if I can’t this is a horrible life anyway!” They had two older boys in school . Bob refused th discipline them and they acquired the worst of the Midden Demonic Tempers. Sharon was feisty I am sure she was on the losing end of any “discussion.” The younger boy suffered from a pampered older brother. To justify himself, he - kicked and punched. There were holes in the plasterboard and every door in the ’56 house.

Sharon's mother screamed for help! Her daughter had faltered and fainted. The crew made their way to help. Sharon was unresponsive; they called an ambulance. Someone went back to the barn for Robert. Old Mr. Midden watched the baby. Charles drove Robert and Sharon's mother and then called me to come to the hospital.

But when the gurney passed me, my Guide’s words were that the condition was lasting. I joined Robert beside his wife's bed; looked for the spirit: It was not there .I dare not speak the words that my guides imparted.

The Magdalene brought her church friends to the hospital for a pray-in and were convinced that God was working! I agreed God was working. The Magdalene sensed my trend of thought and violently disagreed: **Their prayers worked!** **He was restoring Sharon!** She would recover fully. I wished my daughter was correct, but knew the Guides were.

Robert's friends brought food. My family worked cleaning a couple days and found it needed more. Every room and the basement were in unbelievable disarray and needed sprayed and disinfected for roaches. As I worked the baby watched quietly from her carrier.

Into the second week, I scrubbed and straightened and stacked groceries by alphabet. The stress was heavy; I liked Sharon. A part arrived for Charles Fleetwood Sedan. The turn signal arm had a flaw and fell off! Charles sent me to Jacksonville; some forty miles west so it could be installed. I had to steel my thoughts from the Sharon turmoil somehow! I brought a few large sheets of paper, a T-square, pencil, pen and ink. There was a large table in the Cadillac show room. I set up thee and I sketched from a book plate The Cathedral of Amiens, France. By the time the car was ready, I was completing the pen and ink. The owner of the agency was completely aghast. He had never seen a person start with a plain sheet of paper and produce something of this quality! I thanked him. It did the job - it took my mind off Sharon. Later this painting won several prizes and was on display one week in a national competition.

Back at Robert and Sharon’s house, I was on a ladder cleaning an upper cabinet when a little misty clairvoyant scene formed. In the scene Sharon wore a sleeveless white gown, with a simple scoop gathered neckline; the waist was defined with a golden sash. She sat on a stone bench of lovely design. Beside her a Life Planner explained her options from his charts. I wished I could go to Sharon and as quickly, saw myself in that garden. I was circling my sister-in-law futilely. The bench seemed to be surrounded by an invisible barrier. I banged on the enclosure. The Life Planner left Sharon. He said she could not be disturbed: She must decide.

When Sharon left the small place, it was with a sigh. She approached the Life Planner and said, 'You are right; there isn't any use. I would be **like that** forever. And I don't want to be around later. Oh!' She noticed me and turned her words to me. 'There's no other way. You will be around to take care of Ann Maria. It will be ok.'

The episode shocked me back into my body! The ladder I was using wobbled and I instantly caught the upper cabinet to steady myself. I looked down at the baby. What a sorrowful prognosis. I asked my Guides for direction and followed it. I set things in drawers so that the boys could make a few easy snacks for themselves. I did not realize they would not rinse off implements afterward! I found nine bottles of ketchup, multiples of cereals and pound jars of honey scattered throughout cabinets. After consolidating these I made a list so they would buy no more. All of the breakable glassware and a set of silver goblets that only a young mother would love were wrapped and the oldest boy took them to the attic happily. He was always afraid of breaking or denting things. I showed them the instant puddings and where the egg beater was to mix them. Pot holders were in a drawer beside the stove. Plastic storage bowls and lids did not stack and took a whole cabinet! Cake mixes would not be used for a while; they went in cabinets over the refrigerator. I wanted to cry but as usual there were no tears just a heavy heart. There was too little time. I dare not mention the precognition to my own family; The Magdalene would set the blame on me and Charles would reinforce that blame by agreeing with her. I never had a husband’s back-up.!

Sharon died April 11. The telephone call came right after the two boys came home from school. I listened; asked my Guides how to proceed; kept calm and let Sharon's mother "loose it" over the phone. I knew I sounded cold hearted, but the boys need not know right away. They needed supper first and after they had no important homework and were settling at TV, I told them I had some not good news. They hated the messenger! When their dad arrived home with Sharon's mother the boys promptly ran to him in the hopes that I lied! Their bond was most important.

The funeral was set at ten so Robert could be finished with his milking chores. Sharon's mother took exception to that; saying she could not understand people who placed farm work before family! And - she was a farm woman! I held the baby Ann Maria while in the receiving line. The Jewel Tea man arrived on crutches, one of his legs had been amputated: lack of circulation had led to this! I reeled, paled and felt faint, 'Will this happen to Horst; Dear God, no!' All I could do was barely nod to the gentleman and shake his hand. After that I got first names wrong and the right name would not surface, so I smiled helplessly.

ANN MARIA’S CARE

Robert's friends discovered that each one taking Ann Maria a day was not working. The baby was held on a hip and she cried all day. The climax came when Ann Maria caught Impetigo, a childhood contagion. All the ladies backed off. Charles volunteered my services although we had younger children home! Bob’s Doctor decreed that the child soak in a solution 20 minutes several times a day! This baby was too active to sit in a pan of solution - period! I came up with a plan; soak a disposable diaper in the solution; place it inside plastic panties. It was not conventional but the baby was happy and laughed at her soggy panties. Once she was healthy, Robert took her for weekends - at first. When we were all outdoors, a nurse-neighbor said there was a simple shot for Impetigo …(The urge to strangle Robert’s rustic doctor)…

Things had not normalized yet. Mr. Midden's housekeeper, Mrs. Brown had trouble breathing and was taken to the hospital. Liquid was drained from her edema filled body and although she chuckled that she could see her ankles, she did not make it home. Mrs. Brown’s wish was that all her old friends would come to lead her home.

Ann Maria was one year old in late July. At the wake, Mary noticed that a double room was set with a wide expanse of chairs separated by a center aisle. The left side was full but absolutely nobody sat on the right side. Robert with little Ann Maria was leaning against a ledge at the back of the room. I gestured to the empty seats, but he said, "Ann Maria said there were people in those seats," and shrugged his shoulders.

I relaxed and checked: She was correct - the unused side; every seat had a spirit person mostly ladies; Mrs. Brown, the housekeeper stood in-spirit chatting happily with a few new arrival-spirits.

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I covered my mouth and said, "She's right; they are all filled. We will just stand here." Without thought, I prayed for all the spirits that were stuck in the funeral home and wanted to "check-in." Immediately, my head was beaten by unseen negative spirits and I asked Charles to take me out explaining what was happening.

"I didn't think to ask for help! Who would think any evil was THERE?" Once we were on the public sidewalk going to our car, I regained my balance.

Robert's oldest brother, Henry and his wife Rita said impudently that they would care for the child, but Robert must let them adopt her! This was unacceptable. She babysat our children once and The Magdalene said they were treated like 2nd class citizens! They had to eat outside while her children ate indoors and jerked toys from their hands and gave them to her children and the same with the swings. At this dictate, Ann Maria came exclusively to Charles and me. As it turned out, Ann Maria was a child anxious to learn. She could be balanced at the piano and play the loveliest mild strains; reminiscent of the Zephyrs for Harp (when she was nine months old). She walked early and liked garage sales and if there was an item for her even better. She attended Music Club meetings with me and public high school concerts at the Rotunda in the State Capitol. There was always a performance that the child liked very much. For insured quiet, I prepared a "goody bag" with little cereals, oyster crackers and a few tiny candies.

I thought Ann Maria would like the children's records, but she covered her ears and hid from the silly sounds. At the public library Ann Maria chose Peter and the Wolf and memorized each sound quickly. Next was Mussorgsky's Dance of the Eggs. This became her favorite delight. She told her dad who thought she was a bit off. They played it for Robert. "Can you see all those little eggs with stick feet and hands dancing," Robert nodded even if he didn't. The child had so much in common with me that I asked my Guides about it. Their answer was surprising:

***'During the practices you and Horst had two children; well one child and a conception. Once a spirit IS we must find a recipient home for it. Sharon was the recipient for Heinrich; who of necessity came as a little girl. Raimond will be near you later also.'***

'Why wasn't Horst chosen?'

'He is no longer--in that position.' I was quizzical but there was no more input.

THE MUGGING

November of 1974, the Monday before Thanksgiving, Charles heard something in the back yard where the work trucks were parked. He looked out the window. He returned to our bedroom, nudged me and said: “Call the police.” He then went outside.

“Hello, I have no idea why I am calling, but my husband said to and then he went outside, He hasn’t come back in …” After taking my name and address; they’d send a cruiser. I put on a robe and went outside. Nothing was stirring. The garage doors were closed. Although the neighbors surrounding us had five big dogs, none of them barked. I checked the alley; it was empty. Although it was chilly, negative vibrations shook me. A patrol car entered the alley. I flagged them down; we heard a groan and followed the sound. Charles lay in a path between ***a panel white truck and the orange pickup.*** The officers helped him into the house. His lip was split. He mumbled that there were more than one and that his tools were taken. I drove him to the hospital; all seemed well. He stayed home Tuesday and had me jot lists of tools and materials and their prices for the insurance company. Wednesday he made paychecks for his laborers and then sent them to their jobs and laid down to rest.

By Thanksgiving Thursday, he had pain and stayed in bed. Helen and Joe Wangard were invited for the Thanksgiving dinner. Helen was insulted that Charles did not greet them or get up for dinner! Regardless of explanations, Helen took it personally, gathered their coats and disregarded their grand-children's' pleas left before dinner. Helen said they would never step into the house again. Although Joe sneaked back as he could; Helen never came again. But she decided she must watch the children. She made Joe drive past our house and their schools slowly and park so she could see them. Naturally the children noticed their little Nova and were embarrassed. They did it every day! The children began leaving by the back door of the school and either taking the alley or a half block farther and coming home on Governor Street. Their friends asked about this. The Magdalene provided this answer, “Oh, that’s my grandmother; she’s nuts but I love her.” We had no idea she was hallucinating about happenings at a funeral home where she once worked also.

A letter arrived from Charles' sister Louise expressing sorrow at his accident and that his tools were taken. She enclosed a check to help him replace some of his tools and asked that he not mention this as it might get back to her husband. Then she added: "I am taking good care of him. This is for you!" It was a curious statement. Louise was schizophrenic and had unhappy bouts during her life yet, she was the only sibling helpful and loving.

The night after the letter arrived, Robert telephoned: Louise had been killed crossing a hillside street near midnight. His dad wanted to go to the funeral. Charles drove him to Sioux City, Iowa. There, Louise’s husband told them Louise felt she was failing mentally again. Later on Vince discovered she had taken out a double indemnity policy if she died accidentally. Vince had no idea how this accident happened. The driver said he came down a hill and did not see her. Her coat was black and there was no street light.

At Christmastime Charles suffered excruciating head pressure. At the ER a hole was drilled and liquid drained. It was exactly one month since the mugging. He bounced back for a couple months. Valentines' Day it became an “all out” effort to save his life. Marshall drove from Champaign-Urbana; he and I sat hours, read everything in sight quietly. Finally Marshall asked how I supposed this would turn out. He had insights to an extent:

"When I first remembered there would be an accident, we lived at Riddle Hill; at that time - he did not make it. This was to happen a few years ago, but it didn’t. I remember he was granted a reprieve. It would be several years before ***something*** needed settled but that squashed all our hoped for futures. All was reset for this reprieve. Nothing huge or unusual has come up that needs settled so far." I shrugged.

If Marshall understood or not, he said only, "Do you think he'll make it?"

Not really knowing my son’s feelings, I said I didn't know. Footfalls; the doctor, their Riddle Hill neighbor Dr. Barringer had performed the surgery and said Charles had made it. Only the doctor was cheerful and surprised that we were stoic. He explained the extent of the operation and of the closing procedure. We thanked him sullenly. It meant Marshall would visit less and that my terrible marriage continued. They went to the room and waited for Charles to stir. When he did, I smiled and Marshall shook his father's hand and they exchanged a few words. Charles was groggy nearly immediately. It was an excuse to leave.

"Look's OK. Guess I'll be driving back now." He saw my stricken face and tried to soften the blow. "There's so much to do there and the weather is to turn worse." He walked me to my car. The battery was dead. I had forgotten to turn off the head lights. He drove to a nearby station to send someone, and then continued on his way.

During his hospital stay his older brother Henry visited. They shook hands and talked “stiff upper lip”. The Irish priest Clancy came one afternoon and took exception to my hat, a Silver Fox I had recycled.

"A little animal died for that hat," he chastised.

"Oh, Father, this animal was dead before you and I were born." I promptly gestured to Charles meaning; you came to see him, you oaf!

Once out of the hospital Charles was supposed to be as good as new. With head in bandages he had me (with little Ann Maria) drive him to the job site. Several storage units had to be completed before chemicals and various fertilizers arrived by freight to Brandt’s site then in Curran, IL. While he was swashbuckling about, I taught new words to the one year old in English and German. This child was so much like me and spoke easily with adults in complete sentences. But children did not understand her easily. As time passed I added Spanish to Ann Maria's little vocabulary.

OLDER MR. MIDDEN

“Dad” Midden was 88; his hands shook from palsy. Losing his writing skill devastated him. I was called in to keep books, do his taxes and write letters, graaaaaaatis naturally. If Mr. Midden needed something and Robert was not available, he telephoned me. Robert was now on Public Aid with housekeepers coming to help. The boys dubbed them the house wreakers which others thought applied to the boys. The house showed their tempers. Every door had a fist hole as did some walls! Mr. Midden wanted to make a new will but Robert put him off. Mr. Midden's hardnosed attorney had died and so Charles suggested a neighbor’ son. Old Mr. Midden agreed. I drove him to his appointments but did not go in with him..

Soon the attorney was on the phone, "Mary, I'm having a devil of a time trying to please your father-in-law. What can I do?"

"Oh, just fix it so he can take it all with him and he'll be happy."

"YOU… HAVE hit the spot! I've suggested each of the children; this way or that; he thinks everyone is an idiot but himself!"

"How delightful to be in his thoughts; I don't envy you."

"I'm beginning to not envy the Middens. Thank you Mary, I'll get this!"

A few months after the Will was completed, the nasty little man became more ill than he'd ever been in his life! There was hospitalization. Everyone rotated visiting; by my turn he was semi-conscious but holding on longer than his doctor expected.

'Dad,' I thought to the unresponsive man. 'It’s Mary. How are you doing?'

'Bad, awful bad.' He thought.

'Have you thought about leaving, going to the Keeper of’’

'I CAN'T! AFRAID!' His form wriggled a smidgen in terror.

'Oh, God loves everybody that’s in our religion anyway.'

'But you don't understand; I've ruined lives.' His body twisted in agony.

I could certainly agree with him there. ‘You think about it, dad.' I left the room.

Two days later it was Charles' turn. He walked in as his dad took a death gasp. Quickly, he called the nurse but the old man flat-lined.

"Why is it that I always find them - my mother, sister, brother, a cousin and now my father?"

"God knows you keep your head." I said.

'No consolation; never easy."

After arrangements were made, the family gathered at the motel where Julie and Norm were staying. Robert let it be known that he was Executor and would not settle the estate quickly; his dad agreed to let him have five years on the farm. This was disturbing because neither Charles nor Henry, Jr. were in top health.

At the grave site, I heard a nasty voice. I could not tell if it was old Mr. Midden or just an evil spirit protecting its domain: 'I hate you; go away!' It said. The veterans salute was fired and a day that had been warm suddenly turned cold. My sister-in-law, Rita said this was her wedding anniversary also Old Mr. Midden’s birthday; he was 89. The families disbursed. There was no gathering afterward. Charles asked Julie and Norm to our house. I was baking chicken. Norm and Charles drove to the motel to assemble and pack their luggage carrier onto their Ford Ranchero. The couple now lived in Vernon, Texas. Norm said he felt tired; Charles told him to lie down but Norm faltered. Long suffering with a bad heart he was rushed to the nearest hospital. I took the telephone call. When we arrived, Norm had already started on his eternal journey.

Next day: Same room, same Funeral Home; Norm was a Mason; the Evergreen service was beautiful. Just then, behind the casket I saw Norm's spirit in a white robe with cheap gold gimp at the neckline and twine rope at the waist. The spirit was his earthly size; curly hair cropped so short he seemed bald; he wore a bent halo of gold painted wire and held an evergreen sprig. At his back were two homemade-paper with pasted-on feather-wings. Norm was still the jokester. He placed one hand on his chest, raised the other and assumed a most saintly pose. I bowed my head and laughed into my hands. When I looked up, his mental words were:

'We'll take care of little Julie, don't worry.' And then he disappeared.

I drove with Julie to Vernon, Texas. Julie stopped at the veterinaries to pick up their two dogs, but the vet brought Caesar, Norm's Dachshund. Unfortunately, her old Blackie had an irreversible illness and Norm had the dog put to sleep with the intention of telling Julie before they returned home. Julie’s brave front burst; three deaths in one week! No words sufficed.

Vernon, Texas was a small western town without paved streets. All it lacked were hitching posts along the street. Julie wanted a break so we went through a second hand shop. There was a worn Ski Patrol jacket and I grabbed it! It had the ferocious bear on the back and dog sled teams down the arms; was reversible inside were more dog teams on the sleeves, insignia and bear. I hugged it like a lost relative. Julie found salt shakers for her collection. Neither of us understood the other's ecstasy.

After about a week, I returned by plane from the Wichita airport to St. Louis. Charles, Derek 16 (now six feet tall) and Selena 14, met me while Regina 17, baby sat little Ann Maria. I related an incident at Wichita Airport. Julie gave me a homemade gift in a glass jar. We wrapped it in a soft kitchen towel and I put in my cosmetic case. The odd object brought out deep security. My explanation was ignored: Authorities decided it was a bomb. Five special police slowly picked up the article with long handled grips. Once unwrapped, they were dunned to find a jar of chili sauce. To cover their embarrassment the head officer joked about a guy who came through with thawed frozen fish. His humor fell flat on the que of waiting passengers.

At home Regina delighted in all phases of caring for Ann Maria almost still two.. Indeed, after work they went shopping so often, clerks assumed it was her daughter. Derek and Cosima in free time visited the Mall-- Derek carrying the child piggyback, sometimes. A jeweler at Jacquards who knew Charles remarked, "Although your son has a daughter, he certainly does not lack for beautiful dates!" This was derailed as Charles laughed; looks are deceiving.

DR. LIEB

A dentist I knew when I worked at Dental Service Lab died. He had one nephew only. I asked Ann Maria if she minded going to a funeral home. The child said she was used to going with her daddy.

The room was compact but bright. Dr. Lieb was shown in his Masonic attire. Missing was his cane; he'd sustained an injury in World War I and always used one; mostly as a prop for his many stories. (Maybe Jonathan Winters met him early in his comedic career.) We two said a little prayer and sat down. The spirit positioned itself between the palms and floor lamp behind the casket. A mourner arrived, knelt and buried his face in the spray of red roses on the casket.

The spirit stepped forward, pursed his wide flat mouth and shook a shillelagh at the fellow. He looked at us two females with a twinkle in his eye.

'I always wanted a shillelagh!' Ann Marie straightened appreciatively. He turned to the mourner, 'Look at those sad eyes! Why now?' In all those years you never visited me in that blankity blank nursing home. I could well clobber you with my new shillelagh.' The Doctor raised his Irish cane and set his thin expressive lips in a pseudo-grimace. Ann Maria giggled in delight. I loved the old man and then realized, "I did not even know you were alive!'

The old man cocked a head at this; his tall red fez with its shiny emblems accentuated his movements. He swung his head towards the mourner and the tassel on the fez swung freely, 'But HE DID! That makes a difference.'

I asked if he knew about getting to Heaven; he nodded, yes but that he stuck around:

'To see who else would have the unmitigated gall to show up!' He looked at the mourner rubbing his face in the flowers yet. 'Why do you both hear me and he doesn't even look up?'

I explained that most people do not see or hear the spirit. At this he pursed the great thin lips:

'I think I'll stick around anyway and give them all a hard time; it'll make me feel better and if by chance one of them sees me: THAT would be worth it!'

I said I loved him and wished him well on his new adventure. Ann Maria and I arose and left. When we reached the foyer Ann Maria's eyes twinkled. With laughter in her voice she said, "Oh Aunt Mary, he was so funny with the little thingy swinging on his red hat. You know the best dead people; when I go with daddy, they aren't so funny."

I pushed the door open, we passed through it and then I laughed out loud. "Yes, he was funny. He a-ha ha, was always funny."

WILLS = FAMILY DESTRUCTION

Robert was chosen as executor of his father’s substantial estate. He ignored his siblings’ questions. Henry, Jr. discovered the will stated; Robert must produce good crops and earn enough money to buy the others’ shares. He was granted five years to accomplish this. Old Mr. Midden had several income properties. Ignoring protocol Robert seized all rental monies and used them personally; escrow bedamned! He planted little, cleared no fence, and left the care of his livestock to his two boys who had never handled heavy responsibility. Robert sold some of his dad’s antiques, threw parties for friends and discovered farm auctions. He had lived the paltry life under his father’s thumb; now he began living the party life!

Henry Jr. was always attorney heavy… He did not work on the farm but as first son he ruled his father’s decisions. He brought mishandling charges but the Will gave Robert free reign. Whatever hate Robert suppressed all his life was savagely expressed now. Wanting money faster, he sold the three rental buildings to the State of Illinois. The next scheme involved the Estate’s Attorney. They declared the IRS was clamping down for inheritance taxes (there were none at the time). As inheritors they all had to pitch in to pay it! Also there was a paper they were required to sign. Trusting the Estate Attorney, each sibling listened and signed.

Charles felt this tax thing was illegitimate. We visited an attorney in the building where I worked for a dentistat the time. The dear gentleman read the will and said old Mr. Midden Robert a loaded pistol to play with. So Charles visited small town attorney, who agreed. Also by signing that document the inheritors gave Robert the right to remain on the farm not five but fifteen years! Charles legally withdrew his name; spoke to the others and they did likewise.

Foiled - Robert lost his fabulous temper and confiscated Ann Maria from our home. I was not home to witness this but all the children and Charles were home. Robert took only Ann Maria, not her clothing, toys, jewelry or childhood mementoes. She was back at the farm full time. Robert’s excuse was: His daughter was now in Kindergarten; could dress herself and go to the bathroom; he could manage her now! I was devastated; the child had such promise to have the advantages snatched away!

Charles withdrew from Catholicity. Our children were delighted - church was a bore and now there were several changes introduced by “Vatican Two”. Marshall, our older son, said he could not accept an institution that didn’t know what it was doing! I attended Mass alone. I had my Guides, my visions and God's permission to escape nights to Heaven. I sang in the choir and later did the readings at the tumbling down-St. Agnes. As church’s sound equipment squealed and failed my clear loud\* voice was called into service repeatedly. (\*Loud from childhood, “Speak up so daddy can hear you.”)

The last four Midden children were each approximately a year apart. Regina and Derek both worked for the State. Cosima fell in love at college but this marriage was ill fated. She returned home with a little son. Cosima would continue college in Springfield! Before Charles could entrap me another six years without consultation; I volunteered at the Zone Center Library and suddenly Charles now medically retired since 1981 became acquainted with his grandson! It went famously.They became two pals tottering along together.

One volunteer slipped on ice at The Zone Center, but was refused medical coverage! I had no insurance - RED FLAG! I left for a dental receptionist job.

DENTAL RECEPTIONIST

We found ourselves in need of a dentist for adults. Charles’ doctor recommended his dentist. Charles visited and said this dentist is very common, no fancy stuff. When I visited, I found him less professional than any other doctor ever. He was short with the face of an Irish Lleprechaun. His clothing was new but from a by-gone era; that day it was lime green and white plaid shirt and pants and he smoked while he worked without asking permission. There were instruments on the tray. He pushed them around and picked-up what he needed. Were they clean? They were there when I sat in the chair. I was uncomfortable. He did not have a receptionist. I needed work and so asked about being a receptionist. I began in a few days, Saturday was my free day and he did not work Thursdays.

First off, I notice there is no sterilizer. “Just put them in the bucket and do a handful at a time in…” He used a blue liquid that he said was just as good. He wanted coffee and told me how to make the instant Maxwell House for him and then sit and look pretty! There were spaces in the appointment book. When the telephone rang, he preferred I ask him about seeing the patient first before setting an appointment. I had to dash from front to wherever he was and ask each time. The phone constantly rang so I was really on my feet and running a lot. Then I discovered I was to cancel several patients. He would have another person coming. There were no statements to be made; he did not send bills! The files were neat and tidy but not pulled for the day’s patients. It was a strange way to do business and then I noticed that, nobody stopped to pay. He said they had paid him when they got out of the chair and not to worry about marking their files - he remembered everything! Finally he mentioned he did a lot of Public Aid work but mostly made dentures. He did his own set-ups and only sent things to the lab for finishing! To my surprise his set-ups were excellent!

Within weeks the Dentist burst into the office saying his friend had lost his home! The economy was in a downward spiral. Without my knowing the Doctor's situation or home life, the thought somehow crossed my mind: Doctor if you're not careful, you will lose more than that.' I was shocked at this thought and did not dare to voice it. Bit by bit he mentioned his family but their joys were fairly big extravagances. At first he spoke in that autocratic voice that declares I am better than you and any of these patients. But, as the months went by his tune related that there were several purchases that were more than he wanted to bare.

The patients covered a wide variety and often I thanked the time I had spent in High School Drama Club. Few seemed to be work people; either they were wealthy or poor as could be. One day he prepared me for one patient:

“I do some work for the Department of Corrections, so Babe, they’re bringing in a prisoner in shackles. They always send them with two guards, no problem.” A few “Ladies of the night” had work done. A pretty and tall woman with a deep baritone voice told me about her boyfriend in prison who could lift her in the air with one arm. One dainty lady rummaged in her purse for a taxi pass and had an unguarded steak knife in her handbag! I mentioned it and she said, “No worry, I know where it is.” Just when I thought I’d seen the limit, the telephone rang. It was a nervous black accent so I called Doctor that it was a frightened woman named Mrs. Morton calling about her husband. His eyes got big and round: “Tell her to bring him in now! Then, cancel whoever’s next!” I did these things and hen I quizzed him about this Mr. Morton.

“You heard of Cornbread Morton? Drug Dealer? That’s him, nothing to fool with! Stay out of the way; he will have a man with him.” I took this in stride and did not explain - my mother’s cousin, John was into more than the Union Game in San Francisco. You treat them as normal good people.

I nodded to the two well-dressed men; they followed the doctor into the operatory. Those were actually Jewish silk suits - they were the best dressed patients that ever walked through these doors. Both wore black silk suits (did not buy those in Springfield) white French cuff shirts. When they turned each wore no tie but instead wore a lot of heavy gold jewelry. Cornbread handed his black dress hat to his man. His man wore a two caret stud in his left ear. They had smooth Italian shoes but no socks! Maybe they’d been to South Beach, Florida then again maybe they did not do socks. Mr. Morton’s lower front tooth was loose and just needed a pluck out, but pain might be involved so Doctor said he’d give him a little shot it be on the safe side (who’s safe side?).

The bodyguard backed out of the operatory when he saw the needle. He looked faint and oozy. I helped him into the X-ray room and sat him down and brought a damp towel for his forehead; turned on the fan. I tried to interest him in some cartoons we had for the patient’s amusement but it failed. By the time I got him feeling better, Cornbread was finished and OK! They walked out arm in arm. You couldn’t tell who was holding who-up. Doctor dropped into a chair in relief, “Bring me a cup of coffee, Babe.” When I returned the operatory was filled with smoke. He had forgotten to not smoke during this visit.

We did have enjoyable patients many times. And Doctor’s dentures were wonderful and so natural you would never guess. We did have one immensely overweight gentleman who came because doctor’s was the only operatory chair he could fit in. Unfortunately after his visit I had to check the waiting room chair that he used and glue it back together with Duco Cement.

The few death threats only bothered the Doctor - he fled each time and had me “Hold down the fort!” The Public Aid recipients were always demanding something; why he just did not tell them he did not perform many of the things they needed- Today that policy is mentioned up front. They will say you have three cavities but we cannot do that work. It is a shock but better said once.

The money problems began affecting me! I told Charles, if I have to work, I am keeping my money! About a year went by and then Charles “needed money” for the insurance on his crew. Actually, I discovered he thought I was saving money to return overseas but I was not! Being a trusting soul I wrote him a check. It was honored by my bank but they also blessed me with a loan for that amount! This was how I discovered - I was being paid in rubber for several months. Doctor did make good, but I began visiting his bank to check in future. Often the clerk just looked at the check and - laughed!

By my second year with him it was apparent he was sitting on a powder keg while chain-smoking. We both came from blue collar families and both had the advantage of University. We differed; he married up. Thusly his wife felt safe in her normal lifestyle. She married a doctor and spent accordingly! He was in dentistry twenty years but he still had to pay for his first office set-up. They had a nominal ranch house but after four children they needed a bigger house mostly to impress her Jaa-Cee members.. The wife shopped La Due west of St. Louis - mainly Saks and Neiman Marcus. In Chicago at Lord & Taylor. She used twenty-eight charge cards but he could not pay a nickel on any one of them. The children needed their private schools, parties, recitals and ski trip togs for all these events. She drove an old station wagon until it stopped and then she rented a car! She knew nothing of their financial crisis just thought he was cheap.. She married a doctor and could have anything she wanted. She was “wanting” herself right out of her lifestyle.

He admitted he was doing OK until the bigger house then everything began to tumble. He would dash out of the office saying he’d be back. Patients had to wait! Monday mornings were worst. The first time, I thought we were robbed! One Monday, Jack Conner the insurance man came to collect his premium and I told him the problem, naturally it was unbelievable until doctor appeared and put him off with “The check is in the mail” routine. Every room of the suite would be a mess: the lab, wash room both offices, operatories, used instruments stuffed the galvanized bucket; broken Medicaid set-ups now re-using them for a paying patient! He searched for Medicare vouchers to send for reimbursement. His wife knew nothing of his near-daffy plight but it had all piled up. Even a C.O.D. charge on a veteran’s dental work done outside town! And then, Doctor was asked to move the suite from the eigth to the twelfth . The K of C Eye Clinic wanted to expand into our area. He was asked to move from the eighth to the twelfth floor of the Ridgley building! But only the eighth floor had reinforcements for the heavy dental equipment and that would cost tremendously. This tumult gave all the appearances of starting but in the end Doctor sweet-talked his friend the grocer into renting him the empty building next to the grocery store. Meanwhile his plump oldest daughter crabbed for a better car for college. Just saying NO would have solved much but he could never admit he was drowning in debt… He was pshyed into the prestige doctor thought like Charles had been obsessed with being a farmer. Worse we got involved! He talked Charles into remodeling that empty building into his new suite! I said he did not have the money but he assured Charles that he had secured a loan. But at fess up time, there were great put-offs and then our little Jesus Daughter came with her father. To shut her up- and from God knows where Doctor got the money!

But it was secured by a 30 day loan. And thinking he discovered help with his money problems he began making thirty day loans - first to pay his house mortgage and then another to pay that loan; it lasted a good four months but collapsed and then he borrowed from friends. I tried to find other work but the economy always seemed to be failing. I kept with the dentist to… not be at home! Doctor had no collateral to complete any move but talked a black family into moving all his stuff to the ally room of his “new suite” for ten dollars!. Guess who had to set all those steel shelves and patient records orderly. Thank God for a couple inch pipes and leverage, but the back oh, dear. The move and his wife’s decorating skills in the waiting room up’d his practicea bit. Again, Doctor had his nose in the air. Whhere the money came from was likely between the devil and him. Such was a behind the scenes look into the town’s “Upper Echelon”.

MY GUIDES ARE REPLACED

I was attending Mass. I sat quietly and prayed: ‘This Midden family is beyond me! Dear God, you have given me wonderful spirit guides and many special gifts to help others. It is this Estate thing. The older brother, Henry is having heart attacks. Robert fights settling. They both want the whole thing! Their sister is a widow. Charles’ reprieve to solve it went fallow - neither heir listens to him. He’s the kid that doesn’t talk right!- The funny thing, God is that none of that family knows how to enjoy anything. Is help coming, dear God?'

***At this moment a lovely Light Beam penetrated the center of the old church roof; its light so dazzling that the sanctuary and pulpit were obscured. There was a slight movement along this light Beam and then the sanctuary was filled with glorious beings in a variety of sizes. Their garments were wispy, floating in many panels of Light that at first I could not determine if these creatures had wings. Their hair was white, but each was individual. Their clothing color was determined by the golden Light Beans; some were warm cream, beige and palest rose. Their joyous faces were as pale as their clothing and also individual; some dainty, others muscular! I glanced over the congregation; no one was seeing this! Not the Light or activity***!

***The Beams of Light now shifted to pierce the right side of the sanctuary. Along this beam descended three more angels. The first and second matched the coloring of the large group, one being about seven feet tall; it had feminine features framed with soft curls that bounced when it settled to place. The second appeared masculine and over eight feet tall. It wore plainer garb, had long straight white hair with sharp flat bangs; it carried a book. The last angel made me pull back in alarm. It was easily twice or more the height of the others and wore steel-blue armor. Its extended wings filled the sanctuary and as it settled they folded and were held militarily erect. This made it appear massive. This angel removed its plain helmet and shook free bouncy white curls. Its face was pale like the others and when it smiled it had dimples and a beautiful continence.***

***The first group of angels drifted back and upwards filling the sanctuary. From the source of the great Bean of Light the tremendously full and resonant voice of God the Father spoke:***

***'Behold, I give you three angels for your use. One is social, the second is practical and the last is a warrior. You are my Chozeh."***

***The tremendous Beam of Light faded to a glimmer. I studied each angel baffled that God should give me three. The warrior was something I had never seen depicted in art. Its armor seemed fashioned of movable metal pieces even over the wings. It was assembled only at the shoulders and arms. It had no accouterments or fastenings; rather it seemed to be a long skirt of metal pieces fashioned like round-tipped shingles ending well below the feet.***

'Dear God, I already have guides; I thought they might be angels.'

***'We replace them. God determines you need us.' The social angel said.***

'Gee, I don't go out battling with evil like in "The Exorcist." I think it would be a shame to use your time with me. You will have little useful activity.'

***'God determines what you need,' said the practical angel, ‘We stay’.***

Now music wafted to her ears as the Beam of Light became most brilliant again. Although the Mass continued effortlessly, I was so caught in these angelic proceedings I lost track of it. Moving down the Beam of Light was a male figure, quite beautifully dressed in a robe that sparkled in places like it might have tiny beads about. I did not recognize the spirit, but knew it must have importance. A garment lay draped across his outstretched arms. It glittered more than lame' or golden beads; sparkles leaped several inches and I watched closely.

The Communion Prayer was drowned by the tremendous voice of God, the Father: ***'This garment fends off all evil. Wear it pulled close and the hood deeply over the head.'*** The male spirit and the social angel held the garment and brought it to me. They placed it about my shoulders, pulling a neck lacing snug. Without a smile the male figure reached behind me and lifted the hood to place. He turned quite solemnly and took a medallion about three inches across and ¾ inch at the edges. It was attached to a square link chain. He set it about my neck. It had one Hebrew Character centered in it. I noticed that this spirit wore one also.

Again the voice of The Father: ***'This shows all (that) you are my Chozeh (a chosen one). Use it to ask anything of earth.'*** God said and He was not finished!

***The angels had a cumbersome white cambric collar; reminiscent of old nun's habits. They fastened it around my neck.***

***'This reminds you that you are responsible for all the good you can do.'***

I did not understand this last pronouncement. The Angels were moving about. Finally, the male spirit smiled slightly and said I looked fine. He ascended facing me then turned and disappeared. Just my three new Angels remained. They came to each side and back of me. I felt their warmth but now, I could no longer see them.

I was a bit apprehensive about these gifts. Last time the Father granted me a Peaceful Heart and it was followed by Sharon’s crisis and death. What was ahead this time?

All of my life I felt had prayed to God, the Father. Often, I felt different from others and at times I felt older than Catholicity. Always I wanted and called out to God, the Father. Jesus seemed like a very nice new-comer to me. The Magdalene had a great faith in Jesus and at times I wished I could experience that kind of belief. I heard my angels chatting and typed their conversation. They reminded me that Jesus always referred to himself as the Son of Man, but said that all the phenomena, law and powers were from His Heavenly Father. My mind queried about the Christian teaching which asserts: "One must believe and accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior to be saved; that without this - one is lost into the everlasting fires of Hell."

**'T*his concept is needed to reform many as it is their last sojourn. If they don't shape up this time, they are out! That is why spirits like you are here trying to help loved ones. Do you remember why you came: For others, of course. There are others like you upon the earth. They need not worry about themselves because they have no intention of straying. Most do not remember like you do, but it is ingrained in their sub-conscious; the need and urge to help others!'***

'I would have strayed,' I said thinking back.

'And you are feeling the dire repercussions of that innocent episode yet, dear lady.'

'Indeed, twelve years, I guess Horst is gone back?' I listened to their silence.

EARTHLY REALITY

Cosima had a chance for an internship at Horace Mann Insurance but needed to get there an hour before my work. Charles decided that I could stand outside the locked office because only one trip would be made to town! The breeze was brisk; a drugstore was across the street. It had a coffee counter! With coffee in hand I looked about for a seat, yet hoped to see a familiar face. Across the way was one from the Russian Class, Tisko the attorney. He motioned me over, introduced me to his seatmates: One an older man who escaped home for a few hours peace each morning; a dentist from the old bank building, Dr. W. and his friend. These last two were in a small musical group of retirees.

These coffee meetings were most enjoyable. A few days into this, Harvey Beam and his still beautiful wife stopped to chat. Charles Tisko introduced me to them. I smiled and said perhaps Judge Beam would not want to meet me; he was presiding over the Midden Probate Case. His curiosity peaked and soon the whole table became engrossed in this fallacy case. Which brother was my husband? Judge Beam admired Charles because he was the most logical of the three! This surprised me. And then the judge mentioned that once he had a speech defect of Stuttering. The conversation turned - I looked familiar to him. I agreed; he once had an office on the fifth floor of the old bank building. I worked for the Dental Lab at the opposite end of the hall.

Judge Beam recalled there was something unusual between me and William Yardley but he was wise enough to refrain from saying this. Instead he mentioned not seeing William forever so long; the building had indeed been a family away from home. Attorney Tisko and Mrs. Beam found themselves circumvallated from the conversation, but I gestured and spoke including them both. Thereafter, Judge Bean frequented the coffee klatch to catch up on the doings of the three brothers.

During this time St. Agnes built a new school. Mass was held in the Gymnasium. I had freely counseled the pastor for several years; Father Patrick and I were friends. He asked me about the farm and family. I told him that Charles had cooled to religion since Vatican II; also he had not recovered after the mugging. He is holding-on until a last job is finished but will sell his work things as business has fallen into a depression. Charles did find good new jobs for all his crew. The farm: I laughed. The father-in-law’s will grants Robert a free hand and it looked like the inheritors will die penniless before it is settled. Father agreed saying that is the way most estates go. “Father, Robert took Ann Maria. It is a disaster for the child. She is so brilliant.” Father P. concurred, “I can’t help watching her, even at six Ann spoke and acted like a thirty year old. Her brothers were very opposite. (Later, when she graduated eighth grade she was awarded a full high school scholarship to Ursuline Academy.)

Meanwhile, the estate remained an entangled flux. Henry Jr. successfully displaced Robert as executor, but once in power he too disregarded his siblings - wanting the farm for his own children. Charles was disgusted and consulted a small town lawyer. I went with him. His office was cluttered with cases on every visible seat. The attorney apologized and I smiled and said, “No, you know where everything is. I will be fine.” This intrigued the attorney and in a moment he asked Charles if I was the same lady - ugh - earlier! Charles nodded and the attorney seemed baffled. Charles told him the situation and some problems. The attorney shuffled a few papers while seeming to half listen. He nodded to us that it would all get sorted and strangely to me all seemed finished and we left.

Shortly, at the pre-work coffee Judge Bean asked me about the goings on, I admitted that Charles hired an attorney and immediately apologized to Tisko. To my surprise Tisko said: The thing he liked least was going to court! Both the Judge and Tisko wanted to know who Charles had retained.

" A Senator Knupple from Petersburg."

Harvey and Tisckos as if on cue leaned back in their chairs and hooted. Harvey wiped away a tear and said, "It'll get settled now! You've made my day."

I did not know Senator Knupple’s reputation: "Is he as formidable as old Mr. Hodges was?"

The two men laughed again and agreed; "Alongside Knupple, Hodges was a pussycat."

(Hodges was old Mr. Midden’s attorney during our evection). I heard my angels: 'God sends what we need; let it at that.'

Charles saw a good return at the auction of his trucks, tools and supplies. To celebrate, he decided we should antique shop that Saturday, in Indianapolis. Seven blocks from our cottage our maroon Cadillac was broadsided by a pick-up truck. The celebration stopped cold. ((I was glad, Charles should not even think of spending money on antiques!) We both felt all right. That night it felt like my back was cut in two. I could not see a Doctor; Charles had dropped the insurance! (HE was covered by Veterans; I was not.)

*I* ***prayed that my Angels find a few doctors in-the-spirit who knew about back bones. The Angels agreed; told me to relax mentally-just a little! I was to envision a movie screen with my own skeleton body upon it and thus view the damage. The bones at my center spine were splayed to the right, but attached. Then, I saw three doctor spirits. They asked me to remain still while they made an adjustment. I watched the screen and saw only the little bones being pressed to place. When it was complete, all the pain was gone!***

The follow-up instructions: I was to remain in bed Sunday and Monday only getting up for bathroom. After that it would be all right. I called the dentist that I could not come in to work because I had hurt my back. I would likely be in Tuesday morning.

Tuesday morning! The dentist asked details; I told him what happened, but did not want to tell him about my spirit- healers because he … he was “of little faith.” I said my doctors were from a distance but they set everything to rights. He looked askance, but said nothing.

At morning coffee, the older man, the home escapee discovered my last name and knew old Mr. Midden from World War One: That was his war buddy! He remembered visiting the farm when my family lived in the little house. Old Mr. Midden had no visitors - just milk customers. I vaguely remembered the old fellow. He was impressed by little Marshall's proper manners. Judge Beam leaned to me and whispered bitterly:

"Why don't you tell him how rotten that old man was?"

I whispered: "Because his is 92 and that was his only friend back from the war. We let him have happy memories." Harvey stared at me.

Evidently the Midden men had reached their out-shout stage in his Court Room

“How did you get in that cut-throat family?” He asked.

“Total lack of luck.” I admitted.

HEALINGS - GHOSTS - SETTLEMENT

The Unseen Realm became more interesting. I asked my Angels if God would help my friend Muriel. Her bouts of congestion turned life-threatening. The Doctor's already stopped treatment and gave her husband bad news: Muriel had hours! I was at her bedside and thought my simple God-healing words, patted Muriel's chest, kissed her and left to mourn in private. In the morning Muriel had no trace of congestion and at 10 am was discharged. I was surprised to hear Muriel's voice on the phone that afternoon and visited after work.

“The doctors were baffled. They had no idea where the congestion went!”

I was surprised in many ways but kept quiet to her.

Shortly our alley neighbor, Ed was hospitalized needing a heart op. His wife, Eileen said Ed did not pop out of it like predicted. I was not at the hospital but asked for Doctors in-the-spirit to check on Ed. I watched by clairvoyance. The spirit- doctors begin routinely then expressed horror! 'Look at this! And this is wrong! My God we have to get in there!' I watched the four doctors at Ed's bedside and saw their movements. Ed's breathing changed; he relaxed and spoke to Eileen: "I feel fine now." He healed two weeks sooner than expected and came home. He told everyone about his watching the first operation and what was said and done. - “It was just like on ER! (an old TV show.)

As neighbors Charles and I visited but I never mentioned the spirit team. I continued thanking God. Then Charles had a kidney stone. The doctors plopped him in the hospital, did nothing for his pain and left saying: “Tomorrow we will take x-rays.” I was fairly angered with them and asked my unseen team if there was an herbal remedy I could slip into the hospital on the chance Charles might take it. The in-spirit doctors suggested linseed oil, one ounce drunk down and to rest an hour on the right side. Charles had so much pain he was game for anything. In the morning, he had no pain. There was no sign of a stone or gravel passed! The doctors were baffled and discharged him. As soon as I was confident in the healings - God changed the agenda!

A NEW PARNORMAL GIFT

February 1982, I was still stuck working for the dentist. A new law made it impossible for me to quit! Then I began to notice that the dentist had exhausted all his friends. They discovered he was a deadbeat. One took him to small claims court! Now the Doctor became crude and demanding with me! He purposely blew his cigarette smoke in my face. Daily I found the operatory tray laden with both used instruments and cigarette ash more so than usual. On Monday the X-ray room had a galvanized bucket of used instruments still no real sterilizer and was out of his “good enough” blue liquid. He demanded the laboratory be straightened, the instruments sterilized x-rays without names processed and mounted… and the carpet swept! Duties never assigned a receptionist. I did what I could and escaped to lunch at the building he had to vacate! After my “sack lunch” I walked to clear my system of frustration, and cigarette smoke. A new gift presented itself!

While walking along 6th Street, I remembered a Pen Woman had a painting still on display since "First Night" A New Year's Eve celebration of the arts. I walked through the gallery which led to the Lincoln-Herndon Historical Law Building. I took a gander at the piece of art, lilacs in a vase. However, there was a sign dangling overhead that read: “ First Springfield Post Office 1841.” I smiled and wondered what it might have looked like back then and as quickly I heard a twangy old voice say:

‘Well, I’ll tell ya little lady.’ I turned about but I was alone … A “Time Warp” began unfolding. As the old voice spoke; furniture began to appear. I saw a small western garbed man sitting in a captain's chair facing me. His leather vest and hat were dry and stiff. A tobacco tab swung from one vest pocket. With gestures he explained the wall of cubbyholes was on the south and west of the room. His desk and chair sat at an angle as he faced the people. ‘Not like now; I don't sell stamps anymore. I just watch the people. "They" set things like they thought, but more to sell tickets for upstairs ... It's all wrong! Lincoln did not have a front office; he was not that high up the ladder; he shared an office in the back room.' The postmaster packed his pipe and continued. 'This was the best job I ever had.'

I asked if he ever thought of checking in to see how he's done. He surprised me. 'Tried that; didn't like it; came back.' I thanked him and said I had to get back to work. He arose and walked with me to the doorway, then stepped down and helped me down the step, swung his arm in mine and walked me to Sixth and Monroe Street chatting all the way. He touched his hat in farewell, turned and vanished. I was fascinated! Quickly I stopped at a stationary and bought a small spiral notebook to jot the episode word for word and about the changes. When Charles fetched me that evening, I asked him to drive me to the new Post Office for some literature. Charles crabbed all the way but my phantom had not said his name! I was wise enough to not mention this reason. The small brochure they provided listed the first three Postmasters. Once we were home, I sketched the postmaster and his surroundings while Charles finished his Afghanistan type cooking experiment. He was most intrigued with this type food after our visit and dinner with our son Marshall and Susan, his wife at an Afghanistan restaurant in St. Paul, MN. We loved these flavors!

Back to work I wondered if there were any other ghost-people or Time Warps nearby.

I put out a mental thought. Would there be any answers? How delightful! ***My phantom experience was followed by others. I would think: Is there anyone from (and choose a decade) who would like to tell me their story****.* I wondered about these phenomena. The Angels reminded me of the stories of travelers witnessing reenactments of the French Revolution. After I helped several spirits back, I felt badly that the postman remained intentionally. All the others were happy to be rid of their self-imposed confinement where nobody talked with them. I went back to the 1841 Post Office. The postman had noticed other spirits leaving after talking with me and now he was ready also. The ghosting period lasted three months. There were nearly 53 stories of these people in the downtown area. I verified them at the Sangamon Valley Room of the Local Lincoln Library. The spirits seldom remembered their birth date but always remembered their date of death! They remembered how it happened and what they did (usually to escape going to the cemetery!) Most told their position in life: blacksmith, rug weaver, seamstress, leather worker, lady accountant, shop owners, banker, a gentleman farmer, his paramour and her orphan helpmate, a prostitute! The last of the spirits comprised several generations of a black family and their neighbors! I wrote and sketched most of them discounting any who would not give any date or name - they could not be checked. There were a few from nearby towns which could not be checked as I had no home support from Charles to pursue this research. All of the shadow people were nice folks who were tired of “hanging around.” I am in first draft of these stories and admit, I came to love all these ghosts.

THE FATHER’S NEW PROJECT

I was summonsed: There was a Heavenly happening! For me, living on two levels was easy and very pleasurable. While I was working nights-in-the-spirit on my mansion-to-be and getting nowhere with my collection of beautiful elements; I was summoned to come before God, the Father. I thought, “Oh dear, He’s realized I am getting nowhere but God had a different idea altogether. The Father gestured to a darkened building across the way that was constantly in His line of vision. “This belongs to a good spirit but he is away working all the time and seldom comes. The area is as much as abandoned. I’d like you to work on it, fix it up.”

“But Father, It belongs to someone else! I would not like a stranger changing my place without my knowledge. I should consult with this spirit …would you agree?”

The Father tossed His head upward and said, “I shall send for Him.” And so it was agreed that I would make suggestions to the owner. He was a counselor now but the Father said the man previously had sizeable ministries. The Godhead thought his accomplishments went well. Privately, this spirit was at odds with this judgement. Feeling he failed , he did not come for the largest Heavenly Celebrations, and avoided crowds. At his mansion we met and chatted about the gardens first. and chose fragrant plants like Lilacs, Gardenias and Mock Orange. These aromas would please the Father and Holy Ghost whose mansions were close-by! We decided on a pale blue enameled brick path from the darkened mansion. The path would encircle a three tiered fountain. From here this path then lead to a gazebo of shimmering pastel cut glass. Nearby were extra benches of stone. We envisioned large oak trees near the north edge of his area and placed cherry trees in blossom in the eastern area. This much was a success. I did not know his name but at moments he seemed like someone from my past - maybe a lost friend? It was morning on Earth and I must return to my regular routine.

This spirit became interested in the mansion project when I imagined an open auditorium for his people to worship the Godhead. He would come now to share a new idea. He devised a closed garden for his quiet contemplation. When I saw it, the garden was completely white; trees, shrubs, flowers, rocks and bench. There was a tiny stream making a pretty sound. I touched the rocks with mica so that they glittered. He liked that.

This spirit tarried longer now and this pleased The Godhead. Once, the spirit admitted that he hid in his counseling work because his religious ideas failed his expectations and he felt any plaudits unworthy. But he was joyful showing me the cherry orchard. The trees bloomed pink perpetually and now he had paved their trunks with a swirling pattern of diamonds. This lavishness shook me. All of my married life was remaking cast-offs! He explained: ***Heaven was whatever a spirit wanted; it was all free. We paid for it by returning to God. There was no limit. He laughed and gave me a light hug. 'You think earth … It catches the Light of God beautifully doesn't it?'***

**SETTLING THE DOCTOR**

By May, 1982 the “jig was up!” The Dentist continued his professional delusion but he was beyond hope of repaying his loans. He was unable to make the smallest effort toward his wife's 28 Big Name charge accounts. Doctor still had his first office-set-up debts (20 years old) plus interest. He never made a payment figuring his title “Doctor” gave him the prestige of immunity! But the Post Office did not honor his “Immunity”. There was a bridge for his patient being held for POD or payment on demand. All he knew was that his pockets were empty and he was unable to collect his patient’s bridgework! After adding the office move, the handcrafted Amish furniture the wife wanted for their house, the fees for the rehab in the reception room, his lack of proper bookkeeping plus family wants and bills: It left him in the dark about how huge his debts were.

Worse, his wife had no idea! She caught wind of something amiss at the May Women’s Club meeting! After confirming the news she was completely unhinged and sought psychiatric and financial counseling at Catholic Charities. His spoiled children comprehended nothing but decided “Daddy doesn’t love us anymore.” and bonded with their mother.

After my rubber paycheck ordeal the thread of my patience was thin. The thread broke when I walked in the door Monday morning and he demanded a patient’s X-Rays that he had taken Saturday (I did not work Saturday or Sunday).The laboratory was in a cyclonic state with two full sets of unmarked- undeveloped X-rays piled on that filthy counter. When I did not have them in hand he termed it as my incompetence to his (millionaire by way of owning a computer company) patient! It is a fact that people under duress transfer their failings to others but I was shocked at this arrogant lie! I stepped back and thought:

'Angels, what shall I do? He is ruining my reputation.'

'Go to the back room, gather your things. You may leave.'

‘Now? I have no other job lined-up.' But the angels ***insisted* *that* I** ***leave.*** I followed their instructions and left quietly but a half block along, I met two Medicaid patients walking to the office. When they saw my lunch kit, they questioned and I admitted: “I think I quit!”

The Doctor flaunted his doctoral prestige and blocked my unemployment saying there was work! I hired an attorney and got the rubber checks righted and rights to unemployment but no vacation money and the attorney took all the funds that the court restored. (Via another Medicare patient I heard that his wife tried to work in the office and lasted a few days.) There were Medicaid cases he had begun and not finished. One patient spoke to an authority and I found myself questioned by a Federal Agency about a case that was not completed. I asked which one? That opened a can of worms! I only acknowledged the ones I definitely knew. Within eight months a front page newspaper article displayed photos that shocked the city! The doctor was practicing without a license in squalid surroundings. Soon his lovely house was for sale; the wife and children divorced him and moved to another town. He went to work at a floral shop where he arranged flowers; a skill he learned for high school pin money! Everyone involved with this maneuvering man regained nothing.

SETTLING THE ESTATE

Summer of ’82 was bleak for us. The economy was down and work was nil. The 2nd executor of The Midden Estate hired my husband to mow about the estate but then reneged on payment! The money from Charles business auction dwindled. Three nephews and Charles planted small gardens in the old garden area. I found books at the library about foraging. Charles and I snacked on daylily buds for lunch until the acid bloated us. We were delighted when the New Zealand Spinach became ready. The nephews had grown more zucchini than they expected. The spinach, zucchini and some onion made great stir-fries. The library herb books, especially those mentioning medical qualities claimed my attention.

In the asparagus bed an interesting plant popped up rhythmically. Henry Jr.’s sons did not recognize it. An angel whispered to me: 'where have you seen that leaf before?’ - My God! On Belt Buckles at flea markets! I took a few specimens to the Department of Narcotics. They advised that we pull it out! - a perennial! When I returned with the news, the nephews and us walked the grounds and found marijuana growing on four hillocks and between 500 feet of asparagus plants. Accidentally one of the nephews opened an abandoned refrigerator in the triple garage. It was stuffed with dried marijuana. It was reported. The Narcotics Division took no action. It seemed Robert had followed his dictum: Make friends in lucrative places and use them!

Photos of starved and dead livestock were presented at Probate and Robert was given notice to move! Henry Jr. still angled for the farm but Charles’ attorney, Senator Knupple restrained those ambitions; settlement was at hand. The Farm would be auctioned (as Charles proposed - five years earlier).

As Robert was to move, his brothers alternated a watch after he was caught removing the upper kitchen cabinets! One evening it was our turn and we parked along a drive near the pasture. A ruckus from the ‘56 house (that had been built for our family) escalated to blows knocking one of the young helpers out the back door. We heard a rush of wind alongside the car, from the south. I saw many grey Indian Spirits pouring from a central dip in the ground. The spirits knocked our car while angrily heading for the ’56 house. Charles was too stunned to speak. ***Quickly, I prayed for a circle of protection around us and our car.***

The place had a pioneer history of Indians dwelling in the timber. These were believed to be “locos" outcast from a peaceful tribe in the area of what was Douglas Park in Springfield. The farm timber was about three and a half miles west of this; a goodly distance without transportation.

***I prayed to God to send as many warrior angels as He had available to subdue these errant spirits.***  Charles felt the wild air currents as did I but we could not see much because of the dense ectoplasm. Then as suddenly as it had begun all became suspiciously quiet - too quiet. Again I prayed: ‘***Dear God can we see what happened!”*** There was no immediate answer. The helpers and Robert began moving paper ephemera quickly and silently stuffing empty oil drums - that had no lids. It began to rain lightly. We knew in our hearts all these mementoes faced ruin. We took comfort in that Bob in a better moment had let us borrow them to study a week but we returned them to see their unfortunate demise.

The next day was a court day; Robert relented meekly and the probate settlement was signed. What had happened to change their minds so quickly? Did angels come? How I wanted to know!

ANOTHER NEW TURN

It was a relief to go out-of-body to Heaven at bedtime. I gained several honors for bringing new delights in music and fountains for all the spirits to enjoy. One honor made me completely uncomfortable. The Father gave me to the spirit whose mansion I was helping finish. The Father said we were now Affinity Spirits. I was to forsake my own unfinished mansion and share this one. The Father explained that very seldom two spirits are this attuned. It upset me very much. I was still married on earth and one day I hoped to see Horst! He was so dear to me more than all the other men that had been so special. Now, God the Father dropped an Affinity Spirit in the act! The Father chuckled: “No problem: it was not a triangle or sept-tangle affair.” I had to believe The Father. He was always right but oh how it secretly upset me.

My Affinity Spirit sensed my inner turmoil and said: I must admit, I have known you a very long time. We met when you were called “Little One” We chatted together about many things, I was your teacher. You called me Number Four.

Indeed that was the counselor who interviewed me at the very first! He heard my terrible story about the Life in “Atlantis”. I did not even know right from wrong. He came often to instruct me. I had grown to love him and then the chance for an earth-life surfaced and I no longer saw him. Now he was my Affinity Spirit.

I was Catholic. During this gathering of the religions I kept looking for Jay to approach Jesus I never ever saw Jesus. but throughout the evening it did not happen. Jay turned to my quizzical face and smiled. “Actually, Mary Deidia we met many eons ago. You called me “Number 4”: That always made me laugh. And you were so determined to see and meet the Godhead, that I kept my eyes on your progress. Well, many spirits watch your progress. At times there is hissing and booing from the galleries against the evil ones. It is always a relief when you overcome another bout of nastiness. You are well loved, my dearest. ..and it seems that so am I!

“No more hiding in your work!” I reasoned. Jay nodded.

We two were compatible yet there were no crazy love sparks. After a bit, he brought me to meet his mother, a tiny woman not five feet tall. This went moderately. I could tell - nobody would be good enough for her son but as this was The Father’s doing; she accepted.

. He met me each evening at Heaven's end of God's Shaft. At times it seemed like out of the blue, he presented me with a set of jewels or a new crown. In turn I suggested modern man's dress for him. He pulled his hair back to the nape of the neck for Glorifications; and changed from robe and mantle to a white or a black tuxedo. When I arrived in the evenings; he might suggest colors to wear to Glorifications which are almost nightly. Sometime we stood in a receiving line. I had not a great admiration for Jesus so this associaaaaation never crossed my mind. Everything was there! Lands, I was stupid. There were festivities, music and dancing. That winter I placed a small ice rink in the commons edged with colorful crocus peeping through "snow" edging. It proved so popular that happy spirits asked if they could have the ice rink year round. The Father granted a section beyond the Christian sector for this. Although it was fun to watch, The Father did not want it in front of His throne area constantly.

One of our endeavors was edging the commons with an easy scalloped rose brick wall. It had closed urns atop each plat. This next winter however, The Father knowing the future asked us to remove the wall. He preferred no separation between the commons and the throne area. It was a blow; the wall was beautiful but we rationalized… everything was God’s. The wall disappeared. This actually prepared the way for a happening at a December’s Festival called: "The Wonder of God". My Affinity Spirit encouraged his mother to attend, but like many she felt unworthy and held back. She peeked from the doorway of her tiny stucco mansion. The Father caught sight of her and drew her before Him. She was so shy she could not lift her face. Ever kind He tilted the little mother’s face upward with a finger saying, 'See it is fine. We need to enjoy your goodness. Please visit us.'

This December marked a momentous festival. When the worshipping of the Godhead, the music and dancing ceased; an unusual quiet ensued. My Affinity Spirit approached the Godhead and bowed: ‘I have two announcements: First it is proper for spirit’s to choose a name they wish to use in this Realm. I wish to be known as “Jay”. The second announcement encompasses all of us in the Realm.” Jay turned to the head Jewish Rabbi and said: “We are all happy, pure children of God. We are all in Heaven. I drop the barriers between us (our religions); let us be one!” Jay extended his hand to the Rabbi. After the initial shock, the Rabbi extended his hand and said, ‘I drop the barriers.’ Jay thanked him and proclaimed them one.

With this event all the Heavenly spirits fell into rapt attention. The Father and the Holy Ghost watched with interest. Jay proceeded to each Denomination: The various smaller Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and etcetera and had success. One religious leader was dressed in much gold; part was armor, part multi-layered skirts and tightly fitted legwear. This leader wore a tall ornate golden headpiece. He folded his arms, took a step back and declined with a single shake of the head.

Jay passed along to others including several Arabian garbed men with fluffy mustaches. One of them dawdled a bit, then flashed a smile and extended his hand. Now all had accepted the invitation but the gold covered Siamese. Jay returned to him.

"I try once more. You stand alone, dear friend. We have One Godhead. The others have agreed. Shall we drop the barriers?" The spirit dawdled and all eyes were on him; especially those of the Godhead. At last very slowly the hand extended and met Jay's. There was a shout of sheer joy! All of Heaven was one. The barriers between religions cease to exist! The Father was most magnanimous retorting that indeed Reincarnation could be at an end also! Those working their way to God's Level of Heaven were assured. But once returned - no more reincarnations!

***Now in Heaven there are no religions per se, just The Godhead! It is beautiful.*** At times a group on Earth makes a try at consolidating two religions, but it becomes; **you join us**! And then, the thing collapses.

REPLAY: THE INDIAN SCENE!

I lectored four-thirty Mass the Saturday after the Indian event on the farm. As I sat on the velvet pillow to the left of the sanctuary a brilliant Light shown from the east and filled the area. Two Angels floated down the shaft of Light. They carried a scepter about twelve inches long and of bronze-toned gold. The top ball was shaped with melon indents topped with a loop through which was fastened a deep red cord. It twined loosely around the staff to the bottom and was fastened there with a tassel. Next, the full voice of God the Father filled the area: ***'My child, this will banish evil. The Angels will show you how to use it***.' I saw my spirit-body arise and walk towards the angels, passing through the marble altar; (I forgot the congregation, the Mass and even my part in it.) One Angel moved behind me, took my arm and demonstrated the motion I must use while the other Angel spoke the words. They reminded me that at times when I should call for God's help, He may have His Warrior Angels deployed: ‘Call! But use this. We will now replay the events of that night at the farm; look on the back wall of the church.'

The viewpoint was from across Highway 97 at the entrance to the farm. I saw our maroon car parked on the back drive to the barn but none of the existing buildings were in evidence: I saw no '56 house; no triple garage, neither machine building, fencing nor fuel tank. As suddenly the area was filled with huge warrior angels in battle array swinging hefty swords fighting savagely with the spirits of many armed grey Indian braves. Our car was buffeted from side to side. As the grey spirits fell they disintegrated. But new waves arose from where the pasture dipped. The fighting began again. My hand was at my mouth and the horror registered on my face. The priest with the little afro-haircut was curious, saw nothing; asked nothing.

THE AFTERMATH

When the estate was finally settled there was no joy. Robert's estate attorney excused himself from the case weeks before he could be held responsible for misattributing funds. At the finish, Robert was saddled with a debt of only 1/3 of his squandering; none of which was repaid. Destitute, he found work at a friend's furniture store and rented a house. Henry's family had a battery of attorneys' fees and outrageously wanted Charles to pitch in! Their sister Julie did pay him until she had no inheritance! Judge Beam tired with the satisfaction of seeing that horrible case through. Senator Knupple was pleased at the outcome; his fee was mostly friendship! Robert's estate attorney built a red brick mansion near Washington Park! The three heirs got leftovers and detested each other. For me, twelve years plus 5 years to actual settlement absolutely cancelled all hope of finding a sweet loving marriage with Horst (he never remarried). The reprieve Charles was granted revealed only the negatives of the Midden selfishness, greed, hate and lack of forgiveness.

I was happy that my children valued higher education enough to do it themselves. Also, that they had observed their parents differences in temperament, thoughts and values and dropped hurtful things from their lives. Now that time has replaced most of that generation , some of the nieces and nephews have drifted nearer to me. If anyone can learn from reading these accounts please notice that secrets are always revealed; personal judgements can be wrong and that absolutely - forgiveness heals the heart.

WONDERS BE TOLD

The Ethereal World had wonders to tell me! I found it amazing that there could be anything new yet the wonders came and this one was startling.

The messenger Angel told me there was a member of the Godhead I did not know. Immediately, as a Catholic I forever had believed in: ‘The Father, Son and Holy Ghost!’

‘***NO! Heed the messenger! It is time for you to know Justice. We hear His work in the travails of winds across the plains, in the weather displays of the sky; He expresses His displeasure with mankind in the risings of the seas and torments of heat and cold. Not to insinuate that the torrid or arctic zones have displeased His Almighty Grace! No! These places are storehouses. He fends Angels to inaugurate procedures or move the clouds blithely along. It is Justice who manipulates parts of your Earth life. It enables you to command some weather and at times righteousness and it will commence’.***

I was surprised that Justice deemed me important. All my life, I was made to feel inadequate and unacceptable! I had so many bodily flaws and even imagined one that my parents and husband invented. How much better it is to have gifts from the Unseen Holy Ones! I asked the messenger: 'What do you call a person like me? I remember a past that is lost to history; a life in Greece and to a point knew this life ahead. I am still baffled by mankind; often I feel like I stepped into an land of aliens.’

***'You are God's Child, His Chozeh, You think like we do but if you wish a definition use: Seer!'***The special Angel continued*:* ***' An update: you and your husband will receive monies from various compensations; bits enough to keep going.'*** With this, the Angel turned a bit and left.

As I look back, this proved true: Just as the auction funds were at end; Charles's Uncle Norman died and endowed each of his nephews with a neat little inheritance. We were thrilled with the windfall. It almost lasted until the estate funds came through ... Monies when it was needed!

My Angels alerted me, that there had been things I wished to know and now, they had permission to tell me. I readied my pen and paper.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHEAD

***'First, God came into being not like embodied people, animals, etc. No parents; There were cosmic explosions which happened eons ago; caused by pressures of an energy form. This energy is everything we call magnificent! The energy is not an earth-entity. The threefold Godhead was formed by scattered, latent elements which fused rightly at a time of said combustion.***

***'I know this all sounds … ugh but let us continue: Two of Triune Godhead you have been privileged to meet. The three together master all cosmic powers. Other entities: earthbound or non-earth were formed by the God of Creation; you call Him - Father. This is done in conjunction with the God of Power; you call Him the Holy Ghost. Creation cannot be activated without energy which Power controls. The third is Justice and as the word implies Justice commands many facets from the entire universe down to private life happenings. All happenings are for the return of mankind to God’s righteousness and hopefully Heaven. Each (of the Godhead) is equally knowledgeable and controls their chosen area.***

***‘Women and men as such did not appear until much later in the creation process. The Angels were created whole and perfect spirits equal to the magnificence of their Creator. Some of these have never touched Earth but have always attended at the God Level. The Lucifer account is correct. After that God made more Angels whole, but varied their sizes. This time God devised a plan to rehabilitate the Angels if they showed indications of darkening.’***

(I thought it amazing that there was a time when the Godhead was new at their jobs!)

***'Sometimes the qualities of the Angels fell into fault. First they were sent to various planets of which each have particular vibrations often capable of righting the stray. If this failed, then their wholeness was separated into what we know as male and female. This also was done to stimulate their return to Light. Often it worked, but for those who failed there were other ploys. If these too came to naught an Earth life* *seemed a likely fix. As a covering was necessary to survive this earth phase, the Godhead thought the dirge of caring for this covering would induce a spirit’s desire to return.***

***‘Earth was a lovely planet before the outcast Angels inhabited it. The coverings they chose unfortunately stimulated pride. Soon the Earth was ravaged by them and the Godhead decided to simply rotate the Earth thus eradicating the devastation. The fallen Angels were sent - elsewhere. Once free of the menaces, God reformed the earth according to His original plan. As we all attest, it did not remain pure and lovely*.**

These revelations were beyond me; surely as much as “St. John's Revelations” must have been beyond him. Rereading these things did not make them more understandable. I had used the gift of adjusting the weather for decades unaware of the original source and taught my children various neat angelic helps. Seldom did any of us look for parking spaces; we thought to our Angels of our destination upon starting the car. When we traveled the weather was always great!

After hearing these Angel words many things that seemed just “off the wall” fell into place.mGod again changed the Agenda to Dreams. I did not dream often, but there was one dream of two people. One I did not recognize and the other was Charles' old boss, Henry Sommer. As I opened the newspaper that morning, my Aunt Bertha's obituary found my eyes. The lady in the dream was snatching tablecloths and pillowcases; my Aunt Bertha was a professional laundress until she was 62. I immediately told Charles to telephone Hank Sommer’s house. He was hospitalized but seemed to be mending.

Charles and I went to Aunt Bertha wake but her spirit was not around. I alerted the Angels to check: My Aunt had not gotten to Heaven nor had she gone the opposite way. She was holding a thick lighted candle with both hands, searching all directions! Shortly the Angels gathered the lady. She wore an outfit of grey and a bonnet both trimmed with lace. (At the wake the corpse was wearing a long pink funeral gown.) Quickly Bertha noticed a Light which drew her to a Helpful Spirit waiting there. I said: ‘Tell her enjoyable things.’

I was checking local records (to compete my ghost interviews) at the local library and wondered about the actualities of everyday life in the late 1880's. I asked the Angels if it was possible to ask one of the spirits that I met during the 1982 Ghost Period. The bookkeeper named Emeline Whitcomb came gladly, saying she was delighted to help. She related her new adventures first. Her friend who worked in the same building but for another newspaper shared her enthusiasm for books. He met her and they proceeded to devour volumes in a very short time. She was most happy. I asked about the town during the 1880’s. Emeline related that as a foundling she had to work. There was a grocer she frequented near her work place. She preferred it because it was clean. There were wide walk boards across the front and one did not have to worry about getting the hems of the garment in the mud. She described various businesses along the way including a bakery where she left her "bag" a morning to be filled with her order and picked up after work. She walked home and this was completely safe. ‘The working ladies were recognizable from the wealthy by their bags!’ She did not venture west of Fifth Street and never to Fourth because she had to walk. All she needed was available within a short area. I thanked her. Emeline had been insightful.

This note came into view: (From August of 1982) ***The Angels took me-in-spirit to a place where negative spirits disguised themselves with sheet coverings. They let new arrivals enter peacefully enough, and then begin to taunt and prick them with darts! The Angels explained: The evil ones often work this way with those on Earth, influencing them to make wrong choices then punishing them afterward.***

I had started several dozen shaggy yellow mum plants and asked the parish priest if I could place them around the flagpole. He agreed, but the plants were doomed. The ground was clay with builder's rubble from the new school. Father W. and I picked up rubble and chatted. He wanted to try his new grass seeder. The heat of summer encrusted the clay. Although I brought peat moss and Pearlite it was a tough and fruitless job. Father W. was happy to have someone interested and began planting several fancy shrubs at the west edge of his drive. Both little gardens were killed after a torrential rain! An old waterway snaked through the area flushing both gardens. We each replanted only to see the second plants flushed away after another rain. The priest discovered the land had been an orchard with a creek meandering through it. Only during rain was the creek activated.

I thought: 'What can I do to salvage this?' I heard the words: ***'Build a dam. You can do it!'*** Ah, yes, I had the know-how! I constructed one to save our back yard where the play area kept flooding. I studied the path of the water. If I set a tiny dam below ground; extend it perhaps six feet north… This would change the flow enough to miss our plantings and the rectory driveway also. The water should flow north of the driveway right to the street! I drove home and got the big fork, spade, a roll of heavy Aluminum foil and enough ½ bricks for the length of my dam. I checked the calendar; the moon was in its wane. That was good the clay earth would pack solidly.

When Father W. saw me placing the bricks he was completely befuddled. "I am picking up brickbats and you are putting them down!" I told him my plan. He was skeptical. When the next heavy rain came, both gardens held. The water went where I destined. Father W. was amazed; dashed into the rectory, got his abstract to have a clause added: "Nobody ever removes that line of bricks." The assistant priest was shown the new plan to foil the water. He said, "I didn't believe it would work! The water had always gushed over the drive and this time the water went alongside and bothered nothing!”

Still the plants needed more attention than I could muster. I added a spreading sedum, geraniums and several white ghost plants (Artemisia, vulgare). Father W. enjoyed clipping the white leaved plants. They made a unique white hedge for him. The gardens lasted until ground was broken to build the new St. Agnes Church. Fences blocked all access but the little buried line of bricks was untouched!

THE BLACK FAMILY

I was typing an article when my mind veered completely. I thought of the black family; of the Ghost Period. I knew little about them. Alfred Smithsome answered the call. He was silent when I had discovered them but now spoke easily.

‘I wandered in the 1930's and finally settled in Yorkshire, New Hampshire. I got year around work on a fishing vessel but I was hard pressed to explain this to the home folk. It was not a work accident at all. I was hit with a stick while out bauley-balling; a game. It did some strange damage and I succumbed: April 9, 1975.'

'Was the stick like a pike or an arrow?' I asked.

'Indeed, I don't know; because I was so different the moment I died that I didn’t care. This difference surprised me. By this I mean, my spirit was like a white person. I felt like an albino in my own “skin” but others dead like me spoke like this being a wispy white was normal. One time I thought about my old home in Springfield; and there I was but all was leveled of houses. Can't remember the date, but in the seventies. I thought it would have been nice to see my old home place again; and there it was! There too was some of my family from both sides. Off and on they were white like me too. We all thought about this and decided it was a special grace we got fer wearing the black skin. Whatever spirits we saw were like white people too. Then, you saw us and spoke to us and you weren't a spirit. Sherrie Lee said she'd speak 'cause you probably couldn't hear us no-how but you did.' He stopped a moment. 'May I ask you a question?' When I nodded, he continued: 'How did you know all spirits were white? That's what you told Sherrie Lee before we went up.'

'And she said, no qualms, we know.' I said.

'But we didn't, we jest suspected.' He said. I’ll tell you about us: my uncle Jonesie Boy his name is Raymond; he's got a beautiful mansion with all manner of pretty things; mine not so big but the Light is good and warm; now the Scears women they not with us; but down two colorful levels. Lucy Anne, she in between and Lambra not anywhere! Bennie and Sherrie, they brother and sister, they above me! Now strange thing; I can't go up to see them; they gotta come down to see me. Oh they tell tales of gorgeous things they got.

'Now we were right! The black skin (same with Chinese and so) it was for grace. We never know'd that black would wash us white. I am proud to come back and tell my story and thank you fer takin' us up.'

'What do you do up there?'

'Well, I don't play bauley-ball. No, I have talents in the migration of fowl and I supervise and conduct classes in the Wildlife Sector; of course I know fish.'

'Is this where the animals go?'

'Yes it is. They are all free of Earth-body restrictions but will conform during the classes. It is jarring to see a rabbit swim like a man, but interesting.'

'If you had a choice would you keep the black look?'

'Oh, upon orientation we were told that the color of skin does not exist in Heaven; that's where we are! All spirits are pure or they don't get in!' He stopped a moment. 'We asked about you. You worked with some black entertainers and they were white then. We saw the, well, like a TV show.'

I was surprised at this. 'I didn't know there were records kept during our life in the Spiritual Realm!'

'Indeed, indeed. They said we could see because we had contact with you. I’ll tell you, I got six rooms and a garden, a lake and a boat. That boat is golden and it goes wherever I wish it to go. I can go anywhere in my boat.'

'Did you ever try to go without the boat?'

'No, ma’m. See, there is this rush of sea-breeze across my face that I always liked before.'

''Did you come in your boat?'

'Yes, ma'm. Don't you see it out there?'

I hadn’t looked but did at his gesture. In my drive was a huge golden ship out of water; intricate down to the rounded bolt heads and radio antenna. I enjoyed talking with him. He bowed and asked me to visit him sometime; he would show me his mansion. He would see me, I promised. He tipped his captain's hat and withdrew to the boat. It glided out of the drive and all of it dissolved in the ether. After this encounter, I called on his animal expertise often. Alfred and I are friends ever since.

Before sleep, the Angels wished me to accompany them. They did not travel to the City of God's Light but dipped and avoided "space junk". Not that these spirits could not pass through it, but it seemed logical to dodge it. They took me to the perimeter of Heaven. It was outlined with white statues easily as tall as my Warrior Angel but reminiscent of the tiny sulphide statues in antique marbles. These statues were markers. During their fast travel other spirits were unnoticeable, but now that we stopped; outside the perimeter writhed a multitude of blackened evil spirits with long tails. They squirmed and made threatening motions.

'They have become a concentrated congregation. This makes it difficult for spirits who do not know their way to Heaven. Instinctively, I lifted my hand with the scepter then checked with the Angels; if I had back-up and could use it. Given the nod, I said the words:

***'In the name of God, I kill thee evil; In the name of God I obliterate thee evil.'***

There was a thinning, so I repeated the ritual until the last few slithered away. The Angels proceeded to two other areas along the perimeter where I repeated my ritual. ***It was successful because our arrival was unanticipated.***

Mid-October the book: "Atlantis Rising" encouraged me to ask the Angels about the Bermuda Triangle. I had crossed the Atlantic both to and from Luxembourg without mishap.

An Angel left for information and returned shortly to say: ***‘The area holds a combination of whirlpools and energy from sun rays that hits long sunken crystals from the “Atlantis time”. This combination accounts for the disappearances of ships and planes. (Murders in that area were attributed to evil influences on man. In fact, the angels attribute UFO Phenomena to the evil ones.)’***

I cocked my head at this: I never believed in UFO’s.

On a different note, Jesus had not attended the festivals for several months if one uses Earth-time. The Helpful Spirits informed me easily that at intervals he leaves to prepare for portions of "the Second Coming." They continued that there actually was such an event in the future when the Angels and spirits will fight lowly spirits.

***'You will be on a heavenly sphere then, but behind Jesus with others from our level. We have other information: You will be doing exorcisms and must take these precautions for success:***

***To prepare:***

***1.) Always pray for the self and for helpful Angels.***

***2.) Call your contact Angel (go-between angel) for the Holy Ghost.***

***3.) Pre-arrange for a Godly guardian spirit for the afflicted one.***

***4.) Throw a mantle of protection over all those present.***

***5.) Then remove the evil demons; use water for appearance and both the scepter and sphere.***

***6.) Thank the Holy Ghost and the contact Angel.***

Actually, this is nearly exactly the ritual I have been using during the Ghost and Worse Cases.

**ANIMAL SPIRITS**

This evening I looked about and wondered about the spirit of Charles' mounted bass. He bought it at the taxidermy near Marshall and Susan’s house. Charles said he once caught a bass that size. The spirit of the bass was still with the mounted one. I tried to convince this little hold-over to check in at the Wildlife sector, at least for the night. It refused saying it liked being here, its home! One of my Angels led it to check-in anyway. Its hang-up was: it enjoyed seeing things out of water! All spirits have a fear of The Unknown. I asked if animals always remained the same species and was directed to speak with a Helpful Spirit in that area.

The Helpful Spirit informed me that it depended upon the animal’s temperament. Ferocious beasts must lose their wild heartedness to innocence, before any other action could be taken with them. To achieve this, beasts might become victims; then they usually progress to small wild innocents and then to farm stock. After this they could become a family pet. However little things like your husband's fish often like to play with joy and abandon only.

While he was available, I asked this Helpful Spirit about trees and mountains. Indian lore professes these possess spirits. He did not have that information as this was not his area. He referred me to a Nederland Section of the area.

An Angel took me to such a place where I discovered that often mountains and trees of long life do have spirits but not as mankind thinks! It seemed that even the devils do not want certain spirits any sooner than they must accept them! As it is impossible for such headstrong and uncontrollable spirits to become eligible for an earth life, they are relegated to inhabiting long term life forms. Often I note a newsphoto of an accident site especially near a mountain and see in the dust or the rocky mountain a very vicious looking wild spirit.

I asked about shrubs and trees cut down early. He said they have lists of all such and they mostly inhabit the Wildlife Sector happily.

NEW VENTURE

Back in the earthly sphere, I still had no work. To do something I volunteered to distribute literature for a new politician. Not knowing why, I prayed over the brochures. The fellow was successful in the districts I trod which were 80 to 97% opposition party! The new State Representative suggested me for a part-time job with the Clerk of the House at the State House. Turned out, the clerk had been both a patient and as an insurance man, a victim of “The Dentist!” Our rough times of being conned by him consolidated a friendship. During the interview we chatted like pals laughing over our in-common horror stories.

The job GAVE THE PRESTIGE OF ACTUALLY ADVISING THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WHEN NECESSARY. The clerks dressed as professionals, yet it was a four month a year; five dollar an hour; dead end job. It required flexible hours; sometimes my committees met in the afternoon; at times one was the last one that day. There were evenings when I finished paperwork (all done by hand) after midnight. Charles was always available to fetch me. We Committee Clerks reported for work at 8 a.m. on regular days and finished at 4:30. When there were no assigned committees I went to the Illinois State Library. As a State worker I had access to this library. I studied many herb and unusual plant books and once those were exhausted I delved into books on antiques; religions and lastly odd facts. In my second year as Committee Clerk at the State House, I asked Charles to take pictures of several rooms. At this time the House of Representatives was resplendent with Wedgwood Blue, and gold leaf trimmed white columns (At present it is restored with original dark Victorian colors). We stopped for a soda at the third floor soda machine as two men walked away grumbling in disgust. It was a machine which only worked for kind words. I thought to the machine: 'Would you kindly let us have sodas? I heard it say, 'Oh sure,’ so put the coins in and out popped the can then the second for Charles. I mentally thanked the machine. Meanwhile the men were waiting at the elevator and remarked that the machine was working! I smiled when the men asked how I did it. I said treat it nicely. Charles said, "She does this sort of thing all the time." He had become a believer. As we were leaving, I warned Charles: "This small elevator always stops on the second floor."

He pressed the basement. He wanted to take pictures of the huge foundation stones. It slowed and stopped at two. We peeked out; no people!

I said, "It's the good looking fellow in that portrait. I asked each portrait and he was the only one who answered. Let's just press for the basement again." Charles took a “pretend this is normal” breath but in a moment was impressed: The blocks of stones in the basement of the Illinois State Capitol are tremendous. At that exit the security guard was my pseudo-brother, Louis. I loved using this exit and seeing him a few minutes.

During a Pen Women meeting one evening, Eileen Mears, a journalist mentioned I might do a book about the herbs in the bible. Out of this came "In Praise of Herbs." A small soft cover book that was somewhat successful, but the silly bible stories attributed to the Blessed Mother's association with different flowers made me decide that the monk scribes were overly imaginative. There was one little bulb especially: The Star of Bethlehem said to be the tears of the Blessed Mother. Of course she cried over those darn little things! Planted too deeply or too shallowly they will not bloom. If leaves cover them over winter and not remove in the spring they will react as if planted deeply and not bloom! They are a gardener’s tiny plague!

The New Year, 1983 still had produced no inheritance money but at least my small salary kept us in food for a while. I was lectoring at Mass on the 18th of January. To my surprise I heard God the Father in angry voice. He had begun as usual, saying I pleased Him and that He loved me. Then He continued: ‘This world is wicked! I want to cut this back! Do not be afraid, it will not harm you or your loved ones. But I must deal harshly and destroy evil. They have no right on other planets!’ I wrote down the communique as soon as I got home!

Ten days later, January 28, 1983 the world was stunned when the space shuttle exploded killing everyone on it! I dropped beside Charles on the sofa dunned. In a moment I thought and said:

“My God, I think I have something on that; wait a minute.” I fetched my notebook and turned pages backward then read the entry to Charles. Even with this revelation, we mourned the terrible loss of life. The event curbed the Space Program for several years.

There was a special Mass at St. Agnes Gym; at the makeshift chapel. Bishop Mc Nicholas presided. The congregation did not cater to this Bishop, he was overly greedy at collecting parish moneys. The Bishop was blessing the altar with oils. The priests who served him were visibly jittery that they might make a mistake! Father W., our Pastor was stunned at the thick coating of oil being smeared on his lovely marble altar! At the part of Mass where the congregation shakes hands with those nearby to wish each other "Peace" the Bishop left the altar and headed directly for my area! I was seated by several Dominican Sisters and thought at last kindness from him. I was dumbfounded that he should take my hand in both of his and say that he really needed to speak with me. Me? This man must have his wires crossed, I was not a moneyed person. He was known to confiscate ten percent of the proceeds off sales endeavors even on what the children made selling cheese and sausage door to door! I could recall no contact with the Bishop except a group luncheon for those who wrote articles in the Catholic Newspaper (My articles were about using Guardian Angels). But, there had never been a personal contact with the Bishop. I tarried after Mass as there was a tea set in the adjoining children’s lunch room.

Bishop Mc Nicholas was surrounded by people as I passed nearby. He moved his arms in a parting of the sea motion and called out to me to wait so we could talk. Naturally all those surrounding him were curious and listened. He mentioned that he had a heart condition and did not know how much longer he had! I mentioned that Doctors do amazing things these days but he wanted to know about Godly things and Heaven and what to expect! Boy! Was I surprised that he would speak this way openly – after all he was the Bishop! They supposed to know these things. But, I took him at his word and said I would write to him and try to help. He did not want to let me leave, but I assured him again that I would write some of these things for him then he would have them. I was somewhat shaken because his vibrations were intense. I had held the hands of persons who did not know their time was ending; their spirit seemed to suck my energy leaving me faint. I thought the Bishop was over-reacting but I kept my word.

He answered and in a bit I wrote again. This time there was no answer. I figured he thought me a kook. But no, Charles said the morning radio reported that Bishop Mc Nicholas died at 2 a.m. that morning. I reeled wishing I had more time! I implored my Angels to see how he was. Saying: 'Tell me please, I must lector 8 a.m. Mass.' I prayed for composure to do my best for all the people. As I stood at the podium I heard the full volume voice of The Father:

***'You have done all you could and it was enough. He is all right.'***

Later I lifted my eyes to the back wall of the church and saw a little picture form. There was Bishop Joseph Mc Nicholas in white and gold garments wearing his Bishop’s hat. He was gesturing salutations left and right and smiling broadly. I relaxed and smiled appeased.

Charles suggested that we tour the Dana Thomas House which the State of Illinois bought and restored. It was good to think of something else, but the huge house did not afford this luxury. The tour guide rather suggested that Mrs. Dana had not been in her right mind to squander so much money on the house. I blew that off but the spirit of Mrs. Dana did not. In the bedroom as I looked at her rustic hair dryer and curling apparatus I heard a voice terse and clear: 'They are still making fun of my house.' I looked about but could not see the spirit. 'Oh, no', I thought, ‘She referred to it as your legacy! It is beautiful and far ahead of its time, even now. If it wasn't revered, the State would never have bought and saved it!' But in the bowling alley, Mrs. Dana spoke again with negativity defending her home. I retorted: "Mrs. Dana, with all you went through, and then your income stopping; if you were only distraught, the more power to you!'

A couple behind the Midden's said something derogatory and Charles countered: "Everyone has skeletons in their closet. Take the house for what it is; a magnificent piece of work!" The group was going out of doors and Mrs. Dana followed us. I thought to her 'Perhaps you would like to go somewhere where life is fun and happy like you always wanted with your parties. You could imagine a mansion or even this one.'

Mrs. Dana said yes, but then added that she would like to visit her loved ones. She explained that their grave plot was just off the main entrance in Oak Ridge on the path to the right but not far. I did not want to let the lady wander and shortly suggested to Charles that we go to Oak Ridge to see where Mrs. Dana’s family was laid. This way I kept tabs on the spirit and was assured that the lady would check-in where she should. In the car, Charles asked if I knew where the plots were. "Yes, she told me." I armed myself with a battery of God's angels just in case others wanted to come. After a short visit, Mrs. Dana turned to me; 'We are ready!' And so a group in Victorian finery: A girl in lace from head to toe and parasol; the men in cut away grey tuxedoes, and top hats carried gold headed canes. I leaned against a tall monument. This was my first glimpse of Mrs. Dana. She wore the palest pink taffeta gown with a self-overskirt of rushing, huge balloon sleeves and matching pink gloves. She carried a wand with eyeglasses at the end. On her head she wore a huge white velour hat with pink ostrich plumes. All in all they were a flamboyant group. A Helpful Spirit met them. His manners were exquisite. As he welcomed them; the ladies each extended a gloved hand. The spirit of Mrs. Dana had shed weight and age; she was a beauty.

There were smaller endeavors that day removing a few errant spirit-intruders from Lincoln's Home and a couple leftover neighbors from north of it. A small house placed just north of the Lincoln home was referred to by that neighboring couple as a shack! This little house has since been removed. After a few convincing words this couple imagined their home as their mansion in heaven and after much endeavor I had them on their way.

Finally - Finally! Some money from the estate came through in June of 1983! Charles immediately wanted to see our daughter in California. We had not been able to attend her wedding in 1978 or even provide a decent gift. As money never stayed long with Charles he set big plans. These did not mesh with Cosima’s family. They had built no seniority to take free time! We only saw them Saturday and Sunday. Their house had the barest necessities of furniture. A Bed and Breakfast in L.A. sounded good to Charles. After our flight, we rented a car - it was not what we had been promised. It was a grey compact that we promptly lost at a 7 - 11. We bought towels that matched the upholstery to cover any purchases. When we were about to leave we saw five little grey cars! We went back in the store and watched as each little grey car was claimed - figuring the last one would be ours! Without realizing it, the clerk was suffering in panic mode by our loitering! With a waver in his voice he asked if he could help us and we explained about the car. The clerk relaxed and with a choked-laugh he pointed out our car. We needed something to ID the little thing and promptly bought a bumper sticker: "The Grateful Dead” … Never lost the car again.

Along Highland Boulevard we found the B and B, a cream stucco box. No one was home until five p.m.. We glanced along the block: a Corvette convertible graced one drive; a Porsche Sports Coupe another and setting at the front of a circle drive a black '38 Rolls Royce! All the houses were more impressive than the stucco box. We circled few blocks. Western Avenue had the houses used in TV sit-coms. Gardenias wafted fragrance. There was a small Greek café with walls full of photos inscribed to the owner. Around us milled young couples in expensive garments. The girls’ were into posing and their hair shined like wigs. Some photos indicated that the owner was kind 'WHEN". Ah, prospective stars and starlets! By the time we finished our Greek salads it was after five and the lady of the house should be returned. The little rental car looked out of place on that block.

The lady, Irene Tresun had us pull the car into her drive and off busy Highland Avenue. She was a tiny Jewish-Russian immigrant that loved the USA passionately. She had three dogs; a very old standard poodle, Pierre and two little Schnauzers, Bitsy and Trouble (mother and daughter). Pierre was happy to sit and smile. The two Schnauzers galloped up the curved staircase; and loved me immediately. They completely ignored Charles - he was glad - they terrified him. There was a closet with a wrought iron balcony that overlooked the hallway downstairs; a colorful Spanish mantilla was draped over it. Here and there were wall piercings covered with fancy wrought iron inserts. Irene explained she and her mother were only allowed to buy the house if they promised to keep an awful old chair that used to set where she pointed. She put it in the garage. Our room was filled with maps and memorabilia - this lady traveled. She asked us to open the two front windows in the morning before we leave and close them in the afternoon when the sun became hot. Breakfast was at 8 am. We did not realize that the electrical system was from the 1920’s and plugged in a travel iron to touch up garments. There was a pop. Charles unplugged the iron, it had blown a breaker. As there was no sound downstairs we figured Miss Tresun had likely thrown the breaker on again.

In the morning Irene discovered that her microwave would not work. She brewed coffee so there was no indication of other outages. Irene finally admitted something was amiss as she could not open the can of dog food earlier for the furry ones. Charles asked if she checked her breaker box and she said she did not have one but she had a fuse box. The electrician, Charles asked to see it. In short order he'd replaced the fuse and breakfast for everyone was begun. Irene joined them at the table and distances evaporated. We stayed a week and then another. She was so endearing - like the mother I never had. At times she decided we would never find a place and drove us in her classic red convertible Oldsmobile. She earned a bit when it was hired for movies. Irene was docent for Hollyhock House by Frank Lloyd Wright and led tours for the Conservancy. At times we followed her to several great Art Deco buildings, a Spanish District full of wedding shops and a Farmers Market. Around the corner a few blocks was the L.A.’s million dollar theater; reduced to Spanish movies. Irene was wonderful without her we would never have so many great memories. Charles wanted to visit Hearst Castle. Irene knew the couple who ran the B and B in Cambria and made reservations for us. She advised us on places to see. Charles asked if we could return for the last week before we returned to Springfield. She said there were B & B rules they followed but we could come as guests; heaven knows she needed the money; the stained glass ceiling in her bedroom was bowing and had to be re-leaded and strengthened. She explained that there was another stained glass ceiling in the den; (we had not looked up) it was back lighted artificially, but the one upstairs is against a glass roof and more exposed to deterioration. She brought us upstairs to see her bedroom. If our room was large hers was huge. The king bed set upon a raised floor. The chest of drawers had a niche of its own with an arched stained glass window above it. In the left corner was a mannequin wearing a beautiful tiny wedding dress! Later on, Irene explained that she had been engaged and he was killed in the war. Later she became engaged again and this man too was killed in the jungles - same war! So she just kept the dress. Some of her cruise-travels listed unheard of places. She visited where her fiancés were killed! I discovered dwelling in sadness was a very Jewish thing. Unfortunately, these personal losses left her thinking foul thoughts of God! I could understand, but hoped one day she would come around. We hated to leave Irene. We had become the children she never had. Irene was the kind of mother - I never knew.

Cambria was different yet California. This B & B lady was Mexican her husband was not. Guests used the main bedroom of the small ranch and the couple stayed in a trailer nearby. This lady was a dietitian and served fruits in variety with her breakfasts. Her fledgling herb garden furnished deer with delightful munchies. She did not know this until they stayed in the trailer and heard the deer! On our drive we saw the otters at play in Morrow Bay and chose restaurants along the way.

One evening a pianist was playing a bit better than supper club style and when the waitress asked if there was a song I’d like to hear; I said, the Maleguena. The waitress returned saying he’d play around with it, it had been a long time. After one try that lapsed into a more popular song, he got it! It was so spectacular he got bravo calls and more tips than in most of his week! As we were leaving, I stopped and admitted that I had pulled the Maleguena on him. He laughed and shook his finger at me: "I knew it had to be somebody! I had to give it a few tries but I got it." It was beautiful and I thanked him.

Charles asked how I knew he could play that. I said the man's touch indicated he had many years of practice. After the third tour, Hearst Castle became stale to me but Charles was in his glory taking slide snapshots His hands were very steady. I loved the outdoor pool but never voiced my far memory thought: It was so like Aprexatelles’ pool atop the mountain in Argos, Greece where I met my darling Iorcetes. That pool was not this large but the shape was the same with his house nearby much like the Greek temple-front at San Simeon. How things triggered sweet Far Memories! So often I am living now but recalling or comparing other times. There were several days before returning to Irene's. Wine country called, and Solvang. Irene had mentioned Solvang. She intimated that the real craftsmen were stabled in the far interior. That's where the jewelers, etc., were. I found window laces to envy those in Stuttgart but did not voice this! We purchased matching finger rings. (Charles had cut his wedding ring off in anger after a near accident on the farm!) These were not wedding rings at all but unconventional Victorian ladies.

Our last week near the Fourth of July was family time. Cosima and Charlie knew places like Beverly Center, restaurants, shops and the best family beach. Cosima and I covered up. Charlie, Jonathan, and Charles splashed in the ocean. Charles lay out to dry, getting a terrible sunburn. He bought many kinds of remedies none that gave no relief. Finally, he gave in and tried my suggestion - vinegar. Our son-in-law Charlie Van Buskirk was not impressed with the outside of Irene’s house, but overwhelmed at the interior. He estimated the house (in 1983) at a quarter of a million (Today into millions).

Charles and I shopped the stores at Beverly Center again later. We bought a few wonderful bits of clothing and enjoyed them the rest of our lives. We drove to places we missed like the tar pits at La Brea and impressive Westin Hotel, Irene mentioned the Los Angeles Library. Charles and I proceeded to walk into the Library with an assumed confidence of one who has been appointed to take pictures. Charles covered the place well. At the exit, a guard was in place and said pictures were not allowed! A few years hence, the Library burned completely. It was rebuilt. The Los Angeles Times reported as there were no records or photos of the interior they just had to fabricate the interior. Oh, had they put out a plea! Charles’ slides are excellent.

HELEN WANGARD

Meanwhile, Helen changed tactics. There were reasons not apparent to us at the time; one being they stopped doing Christmas altogether but mostly my mother wanted to get some benefit from their health insurance premiums! She got in the habit of going into the hospital at Christmastime. The first year we were all concerned, but after several years of this -the pity-party was stale! She did have a terrible case of Rheumatoid Arthritis. The winter of 1984 again she followed this routine! Helen changed doctors like the breeze. (When a doctor did not coddle her enough, she kept his prescriptions, but found another doctor.) One did not correct Helen Wangard; she was omnipotent! This Christmas time she did herself in. Her legs were a mess by lack of circulation and had advanced gangrenous sores. I did not recognize the sores but as soon as I got a whiff of them, I remembered. That is a smell you never forget- even after 2400 years! I remembered all those mercenarysoldiers in Athens. I about swooned. A doctor sent her home to think about amputations. She decided her daughter (me) could carry her about the house! And she presented me with his edict. I had hurt my back year’s earlier digging out a cracked cement “fish pond” in our backyard. I informed mother that I was forbidden to lift over twenty pounds. Joe could not do it his back was touchy also. Once he tried to help Helen and landed in the hospital! Helen having no fall-guy at her beck and call decided to tough-it-out and leave this world intact! She had home nurses; Charles bought a whirlpool for her legs but it was too little too late.

February was downhill and hospice. Helen was nasty to everyone. She pretended to be asleep when I visited but was awake when there was an audience to hear her complaints and moans. The staff filled the doorway and assured Charles and I that Helen was medicated for pain. My father, Joe nodded understanding. Finally, she yelled out: “Jesus! Oh Jesus, come and help me.” I took an exhausted breath and thought, ‘Oh yes, JESUS! Call Jesus!’ and shook my head with sarcasm. Just then there was a rush of air and even the staff perked. Helen stared in silence towards the foot of her bed. At last she yowled and turned towards my father: “Joe! Joe! Jesus said I had to be good or I would go to HELL! I don’t want to go to HEL-L!” she wailed. The staff covered their mouths and one by one turned out of the room to snicker. Helen quieted thereafter and let the staff perform their duties with her.

I came the next day. Helen said that Joe had an accident with the car on the ice. Also that she was afraid to go (die) because nobody would take care of Joe. I assured her that we would. Helen relaxed. We checked on Joe; found he had been patched up for a few broken ribs and his Nova was at a junk yard. We persuaded his insurance to fix the car. Within a week, Helen passed away.

My parents assured me years earlier that arrangements and a will had been made but there was nothing! Helen’s clothes closet held one vest that she had sewn. She had given away all her garments and all those I gave her! I supplied all the burial garments even breaking a suit I loved because it complemented Helen’s one cranberry red vest. As mother had no friends even among the neighbors and had turned off all the relatives that were still alive the wake was but a few hours before the funeral. At the very last two cousins came. She had sewn drapery for my cousin Cathy in St. Louis. She and Cathy ‘s personalities meshed. The other was my dad’s nephew who was befriended as a kid (but who she later cut dead) both came. Cathy kept looking around but those were the only attendees besides Charles and I. She asked why I didn’t cry! I had not cried since July of 1953 but somehow my mind filled with the happy song of the Munchkins’ in the Wizard of Oz: “The Witch is dead, the Witch is dead; the Wicked Witch is dead!” Silently, I patted Cousin Cathy’s hand and managed a wan smile.

LONDON

In the autumn of 1985 my friend, Jan D. a Pen Woman was going to London; a tour to see plays. I mentioned it to Charles who did not understand plays, movies or entertainment. I expected him to snort and snicker. After our months in California and St. Paul, Minnesota to see our children, I hoped he realized what a chunk of change had been used of his inheritance. He urged me to go! The group was Jewish women. OK- those were God’s chosen people!

From the plane I saw an ocean liner and it looked so tiny down there! In a flash it was out of view. My ear began aching and did not stop even with medicine from the hotel doctor. A bus met our group. This was new to me but I appreciated it.

In London, the stores were skimpily decorated for Christmas both outside and inside. Beside seeing plays there were visits to Windsor, The Tower, St. Paul’s Cathedral and one special evening dinner. We enjoyed Windsor but were hustled back to the bus and we wanted to shop! Jan D. and I bought train tickets and returned to Windsor. Our families got Irish and Scottish woolen sweaters that Christmas 1985.

Jan and I shared a meal with the Jewish ladies one afternoon, but they shocked me. The ladies played "I can one-up you." Jan and I sat stunned! One even said she had TWO maids. On the way to our room, I spilled my thoughts: Weren’t the Jewish God's people? Word must have gotten to them. Thereafter all their talk was pleasant. For me, the plays were fun They filled a corner of my being that lay empty my many married years. There was a revival of "My Girl" (ancient); “The Starlight Express” (modern) and three others. I delighted in the slap-stick, over-acting and banter usually being the first to laugh. Finally, one lady said: "We get a kick out of your laughter; you have so much fun!" It was then I realized how stoic these companions were!

During free time we visited Harrods Department Store I got a pair of bright green pantyhose (wore them for years at Christmas time with other green fun things.) We parted for an hour. She loved perfumes and I was intrigued by the furs. One coat especially: A pieced mink in black, charcoal, light grey and white was as lovely as a stained glass window. We saw two sections of the Victorian and Albert Museum and were serenaded by a young woman in a gown plauing a harp. Across the street was a Baccarat Crystal Shop and a Wedgwood Shop next to it. We examined the real stuff!

The tour bus buzzed Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square and some park with people on soapboxes and artists set-up along the fence. I found the second Greek cook from my previous life at our special evening meal. The Matre’d seemed familiar. How could I know him? But he bowed when he saw me and I returned a bow. He seated me and asked my food preference. I asked what he recommended. His chest expanded to this with delight. I followed his suggestion and asked for a coffee. He caught his chest in ecstasy. The other ladies were chatting and he let a waiter attend them. There were tiny bowls of light brown crumbles set by each plate. None of the ladies knew what this was. I glanced along the table easily - there was no sugar. It must be castor sugar. The Matre’d watched the table. When I took a few little grains and dropped them in my coffee, the Matre’d lifted to full height and smiled holding his chest. Ah, someone was Continental! When the group was leaving, I stopped by the Matre’d and thanked him. We embraced like lost friends. He bowed again vocalizing his supreme pleasure. (Ah, now I had it! My Far Memory kicked in. He was our Greek cook that traveled with the army. How upset he had been when the forks had been forgotten! We had changed the menu to finger food! How dear he was.) Several ladies asked if I knew him: “We are friends a long time,” I said. The Jewish ladies did not believe in precious previous lives only in the afterlife.

Returning home was eventful. I was doped full of medication that did not help my earache but it certainly conflicted with my Chaves Regale Highball and I was loaded off the plane in a wheelchair in Chicago! On the puddle - jumper to Springfield, the plane stopped in Decatur a few moments. The plane shook as the crew unloaded luggage but none of us deplaned. I was placed in a wheelchair at Springfield. Charles was shocked. I did not explain. However the other travelers were in for a bigger shock. The entire collection of luggage had been unloaded and left on the tarmac in rainy Decatur, IL. My large gown case was the only luggage on the plane! It was so bulky that the attendants must have checked the destination tag and left that sucker!

After eight years at the State House, I switched jobs to a Retirement Association for Teachers. The Association had been endowed with an art collection. I oversaw the cataloging, framing, and traveling exhibits plus printing literature for the members and its many involvements. Much art was actually sold; I was overworked and pay again was a mediocre $5.00 an hour.

Meanwhile, Charles completely retired but he hated lethargy. To throw himself into something he began cooking dinner nightly. However, his cooking required the best chef’s books and cookware! As the inheritance was basically confetti, the children pampered him with these “necessities”. What the children and I did not know was that Charles discovered TV and Radio Shopping. Being home, he got the mail first. We discovered the purchases after his demise. He had squirreled away his purchases spending on TV promotions but far more far more on a radio personality’s merchandise; there were books, mugs and tankards; sweats, tees and silk ties. But there were no debts; no receipts and nothing listed in the household checkbook! None of the merchandise was anything any of our family wanted or used. We were devastated and deflated.

Being home all week on the weekends - he wanted out of the house! He could no longer buy great art objects in Antique Stores so in his demanding terrifying way week after week I went as he continued his buying obsession in Thrift Shops. No fancy eating out; wolf down a burger between St. Louis, Peoria or Mattoon stores! Before this started, I had six little stuffed toys but after he started, I had a room stuffed with 2000; a basement with 14 containers of fast food give-aways and enough Christmas for several households.

CHAPTER XIX

A HORRID WEEK

It was just a common work day and then suddenly I was called to Doctor’s Hospital.

Something happened to Regina. My boss Victor drove me. Selena drove from her job. Charles was in the lot when we arrived. Victor said he hoped she was all right, but Charles looked dreadful; he was holding back tears and only jerked his head, no. This was crazy Regina was in perfect health! She was pushing herself recently, determined to do everything she wanted to accomplish. She was almost in hysterics when she caught the flu and missed a certain Class at University. She said, “You don’t understand there is no time to take the class next year!” She held classes for the sight impaired at the Board of Education where she worked. She taught her husband of two years how to fix his special meals ahead and freeze them - even how to do his

laundry if necessary! She was liaison at the University between students and staff. Yet she handled everything with ease and aplomb.

She was a normal child - a naughty little rebel at 13. Marshall once said: You think The Magdalene is bad: God preserve us from Regina! One day she attacked me with her words; I was floored. Nastiness begets nastiness! ***I heard my angels: ‘NO - she will sass back and turn into her father!’*** Instead my words were un-related completely. I said quietly, ***“Regina, there is so much good in you and … I’d really like… to see it again.”*** She stopped in surprise and quietly walked away. She must have given this thought because she changed. She began solving problems. She saw kids-in-need and quietly turned things around for them - she became the unexpected dreamed-of-helper.

Regina’s passing happened so unexpectedly I felt the shaky vibrations of those around me. Gary, her husband, his family and I were to view the body. I was first. None of us could speak we were so choked-up. I felt a touch on my arm where no one was standing. It was my serious angel. And then I saw my daughter’s spirit looking at her body on the gurney. I asked her mentally, ‘Would you want to get back in the body, but she answered, no. I reeled at this. My angel said, "We thought you'd need us." I replied mentally, "I think she needs you more." (Regina always poo-poo’d my paranormal gifts.) Instantly, the angel transferred its position to standing before Regina. It touched her hand with the tip of its wing and Regina looked up, and more up until she saw the head of the angel high above the ceiling: 'Mother! Is this what you have with you?' I nodded and watched her listen to the angel's words. In a moment it turned Regina around so that she faced east; the angel held her waist and both of them (without moving) soared upward. I watched until the two became a pin dot that popped into tiny sparkles and then disappeared. I reeled a bit; she was gone. My daughter was really gone! I turned soberly to the others, “We may … go now. She… is all right.”

Together with Gary, we made arrangements. Charles received two plot when the estate was settled. Gary accepted one and a monument and then told us that at times, she absolutely floored him:

“We just got back from our honeymoon and she sat down and said, “Now Gary, this is important! I won’t be around til I’m old and grey so listen: “When I die I want to be cremated. That‘s because I do not want people looking at me and saying -how good I look! Hell, I’ll be dead! I like flowers but not Gladiolus - I hate gladiolus - those are funeral flowers! Also I detest the 23 Psalm - that’s for other people not me; I’ll be doing something useful and enjoying things like skiing that I can’t do now because of this darned back of mine. I want to be a donor - let them use everything they can. Well, I think that’s it.” He shook his head - “I wondered about her; I mean what a thing to tell your bridegroom! We are married two weeks and she’s got her funeral planned.”

Since Gary mentioned these activities I relaxed and wondered what Regina would be doing! The mist formed and then my daughter’s spirit was playing - tennis! Regina once loved the game. A full black tarp covered the other half of the court - I understood this. It meant I had never had contact with this partner so seeing him was impossible. We were grieving and she was to playing tennis. I asked if I could check Regina’s orientation.

At this, the little misty scene opened. Regina then, still wore her hospital gown and had the plastic tube in her mouth. There were several newly arrived around her. The men wore business suits. A Helpful Spirit was speaking, but the group’s attention wandered. I went in-spirit to the place and asked Regina what she learned. She shrugged. The language was either too obsolete or too eloquent. I asked my daughter to change her garments by wishing it; the same with her hair-do, and features; anything:

***‘Heaven is a mental state; everything is accomplished by thought and telepathy.’***

**‘**That’s wishing! That must be what he was saying "- the mental stimulation of vibrations”. Oh, thank heavens you came! They said I have an area over there but I have to make a mansion! I don't care to see neighbors.’

‘Aha, you just wish for privacy and a pleasant mist obscures them. What do you want to do?’

‘Update this stupid language so others understand the directions! I want so much to see what there is here for me to do! How do I go about “making” a mansion? The area is over here.’ She led the way.

‘Why don't you just wish for your home? You can change it later, anytime. This is Heaven; you can have anything you want. There is no charge.’ We two laughed. ‘You won't need a bathroom, but a dressing room would be nice; maybe a Jacuzzi. Lots of spirits have Jacuzzis. You won't need a working kitchen, just think of whatever food you'd like. You'll have to wish the landscaping. Until that is in place nothing else can proceed.’

‘Oh, I like my house the way it is except for that evergreen tree. I wish it was bigger.’It began emanating from the misty "earth". Her eyes were large at this. A Helpful Spirit stood beside her and said:

‘Is this tall enough?’ He'd watched her shake her head, no. Then it would elevate a bit more and more until it reached the increment she wanted. ‘I think I’ll keep my car. Oh, I know I don’t need it, but I only had it a few months. I can just park it there and look at it for a while.’ Then she turned to the spirit: ‘OK, that's done. What kind of work can I do around here?’

This was so like Regina! I laughed and found myself back in my body.

THE MEMORIAL

Being paranormal has its share of skeptics. Although my husband believed, my children rejected any mention of my ethereal experiences. I typed the account and placed it in a folder with my writings. Maybe one day… We followed her wishes. There was only one bouquet with gladioli from Gary’s Jacksonville relatives who did not know. The Midden and Farley families did not expect a large gathering; it was State Fair and the Saturday Show had a big name star. Seats at the funeral home were mostly filled when we arrived! The lines waiting extended into the next block! My cousin Cathy represented the St. Louis branch and sat across the aisle. Gary’s minister disregarded Gary’s words and began the 23rd Psalm. Suddenly Cathy screamed across the aisle: "Mary, do you see that woman up there?" I nodded with a smile and said, “It is Regina.” She came to check, noted the gladioli but lifted her head away. She floated towards the preacher. She was carrying a slim Irish style bucket, noted the huge crowd and with a wide smile - posed - like a star! Reaching the preacher, she lifted the bucket and ethereal confetti piled onto his head and shoulders. He was unaware of course, but others, my cousin and I saw it and laughed. Regina wore her waltz-length wedding gown - the most beautiful garment she ever owned and loved. After this bit of mischief our daughter smiled, swirled a bit and floated out of sight.

JOSEPH WANGARD

Joe Wangard refused to come to the memorial! He was contrary and fussy after Helen died. We brought him to our home daily until after supper and then drove him home. Joe began finding fault and harassing me. I re-arranged my work hours to avoid him until the weekends. Charles drove Joe home. One lovely afternoon Joe took a walk along his street. His neighbors liked him and so set up a round robin watch over him, reporting his whereabouts to the next one in line. One evening he kept walking out of sight. The neighbors called the police. Before they arrived, he walked to Bergen Park nearly 16 blocks from his house. He sat down to rest, chatted with a golfer who drove him home. Charles and I were called to explain. Joe told the police he seldom saw his either of us and said we never visited! His clever lie caused his undoing. The Dr. who interviewed Joe determined that he became disoriented but it was not demented in any way; he was just contrary. However we did not need any more meeting with the police; we had to find a supervised shelter for him. At first we tried a nursing home. He approached all the women as a sultan and insulted obese attendants. When we finally thought he was settled; we drove to visit our two children in Minnesota.

Selena called our motel room saying Grampa was taken to psychiatric! They said he threw a phone at his roommate for not paying him rent! Selena urged us to finish our weekend trip; she had everything under control.

In Minneapolis, Marshall’s intended had us meet her parents. Her dad simply could not understand the weather. By his calculations it should be -24 and - it was shirt-sleeve weather! He was overly bewildered by this. Finally, I told him, “Sir, if you really want that weather, you may have it back after we go home. Marshall’ eyebrows shot upward and he joyously changed the subject. On the way back we noticed black ice on the opposite two lanes and slowed. We heard lots of horns honking and angry semi-s passing at faster speeds. In a bit we passed them all…

When we arrived in Springfield, Joe was calm and happy in the hospital. He enjoyed the private room! As he made himself persona non-grata at the nursing home, other quarters had to be found. Later it was discovered that his private funds were depleted and the nursing home wanted him out! (Note: This facility was closed later for such tricks plus patient abuse, lack of food and clean bedding!

The news at this time which cheered the family was the announcement that Kim and Derek, my younger son were expecting their first child. Shortly the second surprise; it was a boy; next surprise: There were twin boys!

Although Joe was informed, it flew over his head - he was too busy planning his next mischief. Finally a sheltered home in a nearby town (but too far to walk to Springfield) accepted Joe. Here, he went to ball games, took bus trips with the others; there were shopping centers nearby and fast food plces! He could check them out by just telling the pretty lay and she gave him money! We updated him on the twins but his mind was on events at the shelter. He lived there happily until one evening he laid down and just passed away petting the big house dog!

RETIREMENT

My working days ended in on my birthday in 1995 because of a work accident. I went into the Hospital. I was deemed unable to return to work. I found myself retired. This ended a covert lifestyle my husband had! I did not know he was buying things over TV. Charles had secreted funds. As I was out of the house working a low-paying job, he spent many times what I made, was home to receive the deliveries and hide them. With my abrupt retirement he could not continue his obsessive shopping and became perpetually angry with me. Nagging that I get another job! This was impossible I lacked eseveral new business skills and was unable to us the telephone normally. I was assured by my boss that the workplace would cover my hospital and doctor bills from the accident but, The attorneys at my workplace found loopholes. They paid nothing! Before computers were used, we got these hospital bills nine months later!

1998 -2HEINRICH AND EARL

The summer of 1998 one of my Angels informed me that Jankowski was now in the Unseen Realm. Back in Stuttgart my angel had been correct: I never saw him again. I checked on his spirit; thankfully he was inside the gates. I asked his whereabouts and was told he was entering a bright yellow area (seventh level) but was amiss at what to do. I relaxed and promptly visited in-spirit. He had made a house but in Germany lots had very little yard space! So much area upset him. Like most work-alcoholics he was fidgety. I remembered that Earl (Spike) Jones was on that level. We visited Earl. Each was classically trained but Earl could never record in that genre. They began playing their pianos together. By indulging in their music, they were entertaining others and advancing together. Later, they reached the God Level, but were told that the two needed to learn to “be their own people.” They were sent to opposite areas of the same level.

Horst had chosen to be called Heinrich, his favorite name. He went by Heinrich for all the time with Jones. He felt out of his element alone and admitted to his Helpful Spirit that he could not understand a God. He took the classes, but on seeing GOD, he was lost. Jay, my Affinity Spirit helped him understand the Godhead and the Holy of Holies. Horst explained to Jay that all his life, he had never known God. His mother did but boys his age had to accept Hitler as their god! “Heinrich” and Jay became good friends. Jay asked him to play his compositions. It was happy music and Heaven thrives on happiness.

Shyly he sat at his piano and a few people gathered. He admitted he had not done these songs for many years. As soon as he was into it, he was surrounded - just the thing he feared most; a crowd!

When I visited on my nightly sojourns, Jay took me to visit Heinrich. I asked how it went.

“Oh, the music is - OK but,” he heaved a breath, “I’m afraid the “Heinrich” thing is finished. As soon as I played my stuff, everyone knew it was me.” He said most dejectedly.

We took him to our mansion and served a light wine and pecan pie, his favorite. After lots of talk he seemed to be all right.

20002 THE PAINTING

The beginning of 2002 I began an acrylic painting of the Blessed Virgin. My first was donated to or a church raffle years earlier. But now I had seen the woman in-spirit. It was to be just a bust. I was into the underpainting which makes the finish colors pop! I was surprised by a joyful spirit-appearance of the Blessed Mother. She was happy I was doing her painting until she saw it! ‘No, no, no I don’t want a blue gown! I want the sparkly garment and look at my eyes! I have large eyes. Oh, you have some pictures of ladies. Let’s find my eyes!’

Nothing in my files pleased her. At last I got my high school yearbooks. Promptly the holy lady pointed to the features most like hers! She had large light blue eyes with deeply hooded lids. She wanted a bit of a smile. ‘Everyone paints me sad, older and grieving’. Much of it was a happy life. I enjoyed my children!’ The painting had been blocked in already when she said, ‘And I want to be surrounded by angels - many angels.’ The angels had to be tiny to fit in the painting, but the garment she wanted would never be white or sparkly enough with conventional paints!

I was dizzy with her demands! I brought out a practice canvas and tried several techniques for the gown. Finally I resorted to iridescent paints. The little lady was satisfied! I was not- not at all. The whole composition was terrible. My relaxing endeavor had turned into an unpaid commission. I did only two paintings for demanding clients. And I hated both finished products. One was a fictitious landscape with everything tossed at me afterward - from a gazebo to a wildlife section and kids placidly fishing by a little stream. The other was a portrait to be done in a modern style - in purples, with a full smile and wearing pearls! An artist should not be commanded. To me it was a horse-face with a gauche smile but lovely string of pearls. I hated it; her husband did not like it. I could not stand the failure it was so volunteered a second in natural colors, a gentle pose, partial smile and pearls. She did not like it, but her husband did!

The Blessed Mother painting hangs over my computer table. Everyone that sees it stops a moment and then says: “Why she is smiling! How nice; everyone does her grieving. This is the way a young mother should be” (Slightly indulgent of her children.)

2003 found us joyfully meeting the school bus for the twins or checking on Bruno. Often he had gotten off his lead in the big yard. Charles began slowing down. At times he could not avoid Bruno’s happy dashes around the yard and I caught Charles. Derek started him at Obedience Class. Bruno loved seeing all the dogs and was ready to make friends. On the “Leave it” command, he was last in line, and thought, ‘Yes! They did, they all left it all for me,’ and gobbled all the cheese blocks before he could be stopped. The short teacher took Bruno first in the next exercise. He stood quietly behind her. She held a cheese square during her explanation but she began gesturing about. The Coonhound’s gaze never left the cheese. When her hands rose above him, he stood on his hind legs and followed behind her. He was taller than she and when she turned - the huge happy face was right in hers! Derek was asked to not bring Bruno anymore.

A vision during the night: A still Dominican Sister. The morning’s paper listed Sr. Mary Mathias’ obit. She was a classmate. Sunday was the wake; it turned into a huge event; Bishop George Lucas, 8 Monsignors, all the Dominican Sisters and retired clergy were there. (Sr. Mathias was Diocese Historian.) Sr. Caroline, another classmate played piano and organ. There was a luncheon at which another classmate Sister Diana enwisened us to take dessert early so we would get our choice! (Five girls from my High School Class had become Dominican Sisters; another became a Poor Clare Nun.) Listening to events about Sister Mathias spurred me to contact Regina who worked in record-keeping on the God Level now.

Mathias had not checked into her level yet because as a rule members of clergy need to undergo a detoxification process. This is necessary so that they may once again think and make decisions for themselves instead of following the rules of their Order by rote.

Two days later as I was brushing my teeth when Regina visited in-spirit saying that Sr. Mathias was pleased that her talents could be used and now prefers to be called “Joan”. This was her given name. Regina was preparing to take Joan to visit a garment area for a new look. My daughter looked staunchly at me: ‘Also I am choosing a garment for my glorification.’ This meant: “Mom, you BE there!”

Sister Maureen, my High School art teacher who had regressed me into the Greek Life often, also prefers to drop “Sister”. She has uncovered her red hair and has it softly waved and curled at the edges. She was leading a musical group! Sister was most fond of music. For Regina’s Glorification, I invited them to tea at Jay’s mansion. We had pecan pie. When Horst/Heinrich heard he quickly joined us. It was an easy gathering. After Brother Dom brought Champagne, St. Patrick arrived and made it a very happy gathering. (As they can, the Godhead joins. Heaven has its easy-going side.)

Friday night Jay and I planned flowers for the Commons which lies in front of both the Father’s throne and the mountain of the Holy Ghost. We lined the blue brick paths with short Marigolds and blue Brollies scattering pots of white lilies also setting them around the pastel gazebo which Jay decorated with braids of lilies! (This became a favorite thing of his.) Huge ribbon bows with long streamers were placed on the fancy light poles lining the “Street of Gold”. Each bow was centered with a nosegay of marigolds. The Siamese “priest” dashed out to Jay asking if he could use the same décor at his place! Jay was pleased; we also decorated our mansion’s tower with lilies and huge ribbon bows with long streamers. The time I spend here is lively fun and so fulfilling. How I wished everyone realized all these “Unseen Things” exist!

A few nights I accompanied Padre Pio to healings like the Father instructed earlier. It is difficult to keep at reporting because of the variety of chores I do during my few hours there. We visited two ill classmates of mine then on to Bourbonnais to visit a friend’s ill husband then to Minnesota to bless my son and his wife. The reception at my son’s was not good; Susan did not recognize either of us and screamed. They are working their way back to religion after an overly convincing humanities class. The padre’s celestial garments are intimidating; and make him appear huge.

Back to the earth: ***I have seen paintings with a white overlay to resemble ethereal animals. I wondered if this technique would be feasible for angels. Although they were around me they stay visible but seconds! They sensed my quandary. The social angel extended an arm for me to study. The arm was almost invisible. It seemed best described as a thick, clear liquid body. The fingers, arms, wrist and fingernails were perfectly formed as on a person of gentility, but see-through!*** Although I ironed this information in mind, earth people had to understand. So I painted them with white hair and wings and flesh-colored faces and hands. I simply must perfect this!

Mid-March a sleet storm felled a third of a Silver Maple at the back of our neighbor’s house. Blessedly it fell clear of power lines, houses and fences! ***My prayer during inclimate weather to Justice is for the safety of my home; the nearby properties that might have bearing upon it and to keep the utilities working.*** During the daytime if such weather is already in progress, I state when and where I need to travel and ask that Justice “hold-up” the rain until I am safely indoors or under cover both in coming and going! (Selena caught on to using this request immediately when she moved home from sunny California!)

Charles and I continued checking Bruno when his family was out of town. He was rambunctious and by Thanksgiving his trick was to stretch his long neck and then reach down and squeeze the latch free on his lead and then roam the yard freely! Derek was surprised at seeing this. He thought a neighbor always let the dog loose. Often Bruno tripped the boys. The straw broke when Skylar got tangled in the lead ande was HhhThe little boy was Hh

kkkkkk was dragged to the end of the yard. The little guy was a mess of welts and bruises; Derek and Kim realized this could be life threatening. Tearfully the family returned Bruno to the breeder along with the kennel, doghouse and other accouterments. But Derek and the boys loved that dog and parting was terrible so they kept tabs on him. He won prizes and as a prize-winning - Blue Tick Coonhound he was a valuable specimen. Family dog was not Bruno’s calling. Chatting mentally with Bruno was a bit comical. He said. “Oh life’s pretty good, but I am alone a lot. Then they will bring a pretty girl dog to visit but just when we are making friends - they take her away…”

CHAPTER XX

FIFTY YEARS

2003 Derek warned us ahead: The children planned a celebration for our fiftieth anniversary. May 2, 2003. They all married, most with families. It would be a time of perfecting nostalgia for them! The world would see happiness personified! All negative actualities ceased to exist! The California girls and Derek made lists, had invitations printed and sent; made special wrappers to slip over Hershey Almond bars with both our wedding picture and one of us presently. Gold and white flower streamers decorated table bouquets. Kim a graphic artist has a gift! She decorated the Washington Park Pavilion with fig trees laden with lights and vision boards with photos of each parent’s heritage, the children, and some accomplishments. They ordered me to set out my University Doctorate (I kept it in the basement for all the grief it ever brought me).

The attendance surprised us. Both Monsignor Wright from St. Agnes and Rabbi Marks (with whom I studied Hebrew) came. The Rabbi’s presence furnished a bit of astonishment to the frosty Midden branch. It hadn’t been planned - but it added a little tweak. The day was wonderful and joyous. Many of my classmates from High School attended and I was happy to visit with them. My best friend Gaye had already passed away, Jane was very arthritic and lived in New Mexico. Many of my composers were gone! Only Peter was left. Of my University Class at the Music College only one survived - had he ever forsaken his hate of Americans? It did not matter. My family and friends were my happiness!

Besides all this wonder, the children, sent us for a week to Kansas City, outfitted us with a digital camera and money!

We saw Hallmark and several stores. One morning we awoke to see the pool area in complete disarray. I thought, “Boy, what a party that was!” With an inside room we were unaware there had been a tornado! All was fine. Independence. MO. was nearby. It was a comfortable town. At the Presidential Library I noticed that the Truman’s had chosen the same pattern of crystal that I had! It was in stock ninety-two years before I chose it. Charles used his Black Light to check some statuary in an antique shop and gave instructions on it to the intrigued shop owner.

It seemed that this year would present another adventure for Charles and I. We had barely caught our breath! Within months, Jonathan, our first grandson was marrying a lovely Guatemalan lady. Carrie was finishing her degree in Sociology. Being down on our luck again Charles and I were about to decline. Michael, Selena’s husband sniffed the truth and suggested we stay two weeks with them and they would pay the airfare! How deliriously wonderful! Cosima took vacation time! Unfortunately when we arrived all the food handlers in super-markets went on strike. Food was hard to come by. Cosima was an eat-out specialist. She also planned visits to every museum site in Los Angeles (involving many hours of driving from Ventura) by Selena, Cosima. At times, Michael drove us to every site that touched Michael and Selena’s lives and his childhood including the spot where Michael was born - on a railroad tracks!

It was near Halloween and Michael and Selena had a surprise. They drove us to Long Beach to the Queen Mary for a Ghost Tour. Was the story made-up? What’s to lose! We followed the guide through several levels of the ship and saw the quarters where troops stayed and the Red Cross station; I saw no phenomena. There was a replay for the bomb hit the Queen Mary took and water rushed in. Selena and I wondered where our men were…back 20 feet. An empty gap lay between us. As we ladies saw nothing in that gap we motioned for the men to walk up, but they both shook heads indicating that there was something between! The story of the water gushing inside continued a while enhanced by red lights flashing, and sirens yelping. I was saddened with the thought: ‘If there were any spirits here - they were subjected to this horrible frightening re-play nightly - all month: Poor dear souls.’ Shortly the tour ended and we exited at the opposite end of the ship. We needed to orient ourselves to find the SUV? Suddenly, Selena glanced to the left of us.

“Who are all those people? The ladies are dressed differently; the guys have suits and celluloid collars! Some ladies have Jackie Kennedy pillbox hats.”

I relaxed and saw a loose assembly of about fifty people. There had been a few well-dressed people behind us and then that space!

***“What shall we do?” Selena whispered.”***

***“Say a prayer that they check in to a better life.” I whispered. We did this and the ghost people disintegrated.***

We found the SUV and relaxed gratefully. We were on their way to Cabazon to meet Michael’s parents. I mentioned if it was not too far out of the way could we see the Crystal Cathedral! Michael checked the map and with a slight jog we were right there! We pulled into the parking lot passing several tall evergreens and parked. There were identical evergreens in front of us …where was the cathedral… it was reflective glass and right in front of us! Charles and I watched the program on Sunday mornings but never understood the lay of the building. Once inside we saw that it was set on the width rather than on the length like other Cathedrals. We took pictures; saw the Visitor’s Center - a swirled aluminum structure and then the gift shop. The shop was decorated for Christmas with all sizes of white Christmas trees and shiny silver and clear ornaments. It was so much like Jay’s Contemplation Garden that I could have remained indefinitely.

Cabazon was a little town which had one restaurant, a small motel and a closed gift shop within two concrete dinosaurs. There were modern windmills on the hillside and building activity across from the restaurant. This would be a 13 story casino! The McLaureys were congenial. He was a retired railroad man and she had been a rodeo queen. She rode horses quickly around barrels and back. She was beautiful! Her memorabilia showed us she was even more beautiful then. Her husband brought several photo albums. She pointed out the family members. It was only on the way home that Michael mentioned that his mother was legally blind. There was no hint of her impairment; she had memorized the albums.

After we settled at Selena and Michael’s; the bed was great but I had little peace. Wave after wave of spirits began flooding into the room wanting to get to Heaven! Selena did not experience them. Charles was sacked out. He seemed perpetually tired. Was it a put-on … a replay of his many refusals to kill our joy? We did not give him much real thought.

Cosima fetched me to do last minute foods for the rehearsal dinner. Unfortunately the supermarkets were still on strike! Everyone in the area scrounged wholesale markets and health food stores. All leveled beautifully. The practice was the evening before the wedding followed by dinner at Carrie’s mother’s house south of Los Angeles. Dinner was a wonderful blend of American and Mexican foods.

Two weeks of strenuous travel - Charles seemed to be losing energy; he dropped off to sleep easily. We knew little about Parkinson’s disease and quietly it was actually taking a toll. On the wedding day he dressed determined to attend the event!

It was smoky outside. Several fires were raging on the East side of the mountains. It jumped the highway traveling quickly towards the Reagan Presidential Museum. The church was at the base of the hill. We all prayed. The wind shifted at the last moment and all was saved. The church was fresh until the doors were opened after the ceremony. The reception music was very loud, intensified for Charles by his excellent hearing. Near collapse he demanded to leave. We missed most of the reception. The wedding couple got off on their honeymoon driving along the coast. Jonathan veered off to Lake Tahoe. They had avoided the smoke, barricades and fires without knowing it. It had been a huge vacation with our three car caravan covering hundreds of miles of multi lane highways. Now we checked the temporary fire stations and saw the routines used in California to fight the wildfires; Their tents for rest, the commissary, the hospital station. Several planes with huge bags for water were filled at the ocean and dumped on the fires. So much effort and it seemed beyond hope. Helicopters checked firefighters on the hillsides trying to save houses.

We returned to Selena and Michael’s and packed our cloths, gifts and camera excess. Selena and Cosima shipped our belongings home by UPS so there was little to carry onto the plane. Charles could barely stand through security but he kept pleasant and smiled to the kids. Our daughters did not suspect his exhaustion nor did I. An airline attendant on break chatted and joked with us. He must have noticed and excused himself going to the boarding station and chatted a moment: We received precedent boarding and seating! It was an easy flight all the way. Below us were the fires ravaging whole mountainsides until we reached the north rim of the Grand Canyon. It had been an exhausting delight seeing everything and everybody - but we had the rest of our lives to recuperate.

Charles needed more care from this point. It kept me indoors. The yard fell to ruin. The topiary tree shot three feet above my head. Charles stopped driving; this fell to me: It became four specialty Veterans’ Clinics monthly. There was no respite in site and I needed to be available. I began writing my memoirs. I realized that my children never knew me as an educated person. I was certain I seemed to be a frightened mouse. It was almost a joke: I was so adept with self-control; I counseled and inspired so many but could not conquer my own life. The children must know about my ethereal gifts! I had beloved and lifelong friends; and there were all the Gardner Township folks who helped us during our eviction from the farm. So often I tried to write about my “gifts” but the time was not right and the efforts came to naught. This time I began at the very beginning - Heaven. A call from Danville Veterans’ Hospital: Charles had biopsies; the tests were positive. Before depression hit Charles I mentioned that he’d had a long life already; and thus avoided the clutches of negativity. We told the children and E- mailed his veteran friends discovering that most of them had survived this cancer and gave good advice. He saw the deterioration in local friends and set his mind: No Chemo and no Radiation! An herbal pill lowered the PSA so much his oncologist wondered. I made various restorative teas and tinctures. He had a radiation pellet inserted four times a year. His oncologist admitted Charles outlasted his other patients by eight years... Eight years! I needed a break! There was a Newspaper article about Therapy Dogs. I had an affinity for dogs. Charles said I could check it out. It was just one hour a week. I called the author Rose Hutches; Rose and I attended the first lector class at St. Agnes! (Lectors read two scriptures before the Gospel at the Catholic Mass).

In the Unseen all dogs were taught in German! I spoke German to my mother’s Nellie when we walked. These Therapy dogs in the here and now only understood English! By the time I conquered the command the poignant moment passed and I felt like a nincompoop. The group met Tuesday mornings at a designated Nursing Home. Residents pet and talk to the dogs. At first Rose brought her own one and a half year old Rough Collie, Dundee for me. HE was sable and white like Lassie in the old movies, big and sprightly. Most times, the ladies borrowed dogs from APL and returned them at the end of the hour. Returning a dog afterward was dreadful. A few ladies had their own dogs trained in Therapy. These rather showed the APL dogs how things should go at a nursing home. It was a good mix. Usually the ladies ate for lunch and chatted after returning the dogs.

I would stop by my house after the nursing home to check, and if all was well, I could join the ladies for lunch. The lunches were too big; I brought ½ of it home for Charles. This pleased him. The illnesses somewhat mellowed his viperish personality.

I ordered an Aramaic bible translated into English. I wondered about II Sam. 22. And asked my angels if God the Father still gets so enkindled with anger at mankind? ***The angel replied after a pause: ‘No, because Jesus came to save the world. Mankind is to follow His teachings and be lead to Heaven. But there are those who do not follow or have misinterpreted and woe; to them is the justice of God’s wrath.***’

Mary thought, ***’Dear God, I wish to know your ways in the world today. What is your desire? I would like to speak with and advise people of your desires.***

***The angels said, ‘Follow the dictates of the Lord-God; His commandments. Do not hide Him in a channel of darkness. Revel in His Light and He will give thee power over your enemies; which are His enemies! That is all.’*** I did not know I had enemies?

One October weekday, Derek took off work and drove his visiting sister, Cosima and us to the Galleria in St. Louis. At a Halloween store they found mask lights; each got a set. At a crystal store, I saw a pretty daisy and said, wouldn’t this make a lovely tiara; a whole ring of them. Cosima laughed at my frivolity. I asked my angel to fetch a jeweler in-spirit who could fashion such a thing. The jeweler was small and soft spoken, listened to my idea, nodded and departed.

Meanwhile we four drove to the (Italian) Hill, Soulard Farmers Market and then the Missouri Bakery for pastries, which we dug into immediately! Once on home turf, the rest of We ate at a Chinese American Buffet. There was a Halloween Store nearby; spooky fun until bedtime! Well, once home The pastries were shared with the rest of the family.

Bedded down for the night, I promptly went in spirit to Heaven where the jeweler was waiting with the tiara! He handed the handful of daisies to me - like stars it glittered so much! I thought of Jay’s mother: How she loved daisies! Jay and I visited but before any words were spoken she saw the tiara - instant love! The jeweler was honored; she was elated and I felt better than I could imagine!

The morning: Cosima wanted to visit a Hobby Lobby as there were none in Ventura. She found many items related to Chess. Her husband Charlie had made Chess Master, and this was her chance to present him with appropriate things. Later we three dressed nicely for Charles Birthday and had luncheon at The Gateway to India: Wondrous chicken, deep Turkish coffee, a buffet and Mango Ice Cream - such earthly delights!

Saturday brought Derek’s family to celebrate Charles birthday. When the adults fell into chat the ten year old twins slipped into the kitchen to play Cookie Monster Throw Ball. Soon their giggles were silent; Kim slipped a peek. They were bent over the washer-dryer counter tackling a round Kinkade puzzle. They had the difficult sky nearly complete!

Sunday was departure day. The Abraham Lincoln Capitol Airport, like larger airports presented security-hassles. One fellow lost his cool and began threatening the staff at the ticket counter. Security honed in and all travelers were hustled into a safe area. The family could but wave to Cosima and had to tread to the opposite end of the building to see the plane taxi and take off.

HALLOWEEN IN HEAVEN

The week before Halloween, in Heaven I asked Justice to consider some mild decorations like pumpkins, gourds and fall flowers. In all these years, Heaven never decorated for this holiday. I designed some happy-face Jack O Lanterns outlining the faces with silver and fall color fiber optics. This was given an OK. Jay and I covered the light standards along the “Street of Gold”. No goblins or gore! Heaven is a happy place! We asked that everyone decorate. Fiber optics caught on in Heaven - they were everywhere; on roofs around columns. The open auditorium had bales of straw, cornstalks and fall fruits; little pumpkin strings along the pasture fencing. When all was done, a fire was needed. There are no fires in Heaven, so it was fabricated with a caldron atop flames of colored cloth flames blowing about happily. A huge dray wagon would be used with tiers of straw as seats. It would tour around the level. We chose Belgian horses to pull it.

The finishing touch was our tower. It became a giant cornstalk with lights, oversized fruits, vegetables and more fiber optics wove throughout. We laughed at all of it and rested in our Jacuzzi. The two Borzoi/Huskies jumped into the tub. I said, on earth, wet dogs smell like polecats. Jay smiled. ‘No bad smells in Heaven.’ Soon there was whistling, the dogs perked and scrambled out – completely dry - to play with the Holy Ghost. Shortly, I made the rounds of my regular chores - unfortunately when my body at home fell asleep this stopped any further remembrance.

This morning a reading from a Dr. Schuller book which mentioned: “-making a distinct contribution to those around you,” and thought: ‘All I do seems to be on the Spiritual Level.’ The angels said, ‘Not last night! The Father sent you to see French and German officials in an effort to straighten their thinking. We think you were persuasive!’ It was not the first time my mind slept through endeavors. There were times with Saddam Husain and other foreign officials, but I had fallen into deep sleeps and was told later.

When I visited Heaven, there was a huge celebration. Jay was dressed in a bright rosy pink tuxedo and top hat. Although shocking, I covered my facial expression and remembered a dress I once made in the ‘50’s from drapery scraps. (My mother, Helen, dropped off 9” to 12” lengths from her workplace. I saved them - The dress was a De-lustered white satin with a front panel of hot pink with red glow (called Schiaparelli pink and used by that Paris designer in glorious gowns). I envisioned her garment but added some tulle as it was sleeveless.

Halloween lasts nearly an earth week in Heaven: This time the newly arrived of the past year were honored. The Heavens were opened for all levels to view, inter-mingle, and share joy.

November 1: In Springfield - All the Halloween trinkets were packed away. Charles brought out Christmas boxes. Nothing like Cancer and Parkinson’s disease to encourage extending the Holidays!

There was an encounter when Marshall came–in-spirit. He mentioned being sorry for the extreme lack of communication and then telling me he was overwhelmed at times. I asked my son to speak with Jay. This set him back, but I assured Marshall that Jay previously experienced many problems.

My High School classmates - in the area gathered for a luncheon twice yearly. Over time it dwindled from twenty-two to eight. This year’s place had a bar and the girls had cocktails. Susan Block explained a Tuitami as something like a milkshake with happy additions. I ordered one. The young bartender opened a recipe book and poured this and that, mixed a bit then brought it to me. Soon he hung over the counter watching my reaction. Then he blushed and admitted it was the first one he ever made. The ladies tuned in and enjoyed these antics.

Mid-month the headlines on a “Supermarket Scandal Sheet” blurted that Robert Stack (movies, and TV) had the same malady as Charles. Long ago I knew Mr. S. and hoped I could do a healing for him. The Holy Ghost’s word was that the condition was a pre-set choice. I was disappointed but understood.

Here is a phenomenon: Jay visited unexpectedly. He was interested in a TV show called: America’s Castles. (This indicated that the spirit world keeps an eye on human-doings.) A garage door repairman arrived with an estimate outside. I mentally told Jay I had to turn off the TV. Jay said, ‘That is ok. I’ll watch it anyway!’ Later I quizzed Jay. His answer was that he wanted to refresh the museum. We designed the museum to hold all the lovely things we retired when downsizing his original mansion. We both had “earth thoughts” when it was first constructed. We supplied various suites for guests. After time, we realized The honored spirits had their own mansions - why would they stay with us? Our entertaining was mostly outdoors . We served special snacks and wine during the dancing and entertainment for glorifications. Perhaps three times do I remember our entertaining in the ball room but it is so pretty we keep it.

Back on earth it was time to work on the yearly Christmas letter and update address labels. I always had this complete before Thanksgiving. My angels remarked that my letter was good and said it is time to awaken the clergy! With this in mind, I included two more priests and two Bishops on the list. In a few days they were printed, stuffed, labeled and stamped. I E-mailed a picture of the new St. Agnes Church to Father Paul Dufner, founder of the Rosary Center in Oregon. He wrote earlier that he had gone to the old St. Agnes as a child.

Thanksgiving was great at Kim and Derek’s home. We were determined to watch the Macy’s parade but the twins had a Christmas Song Trivia and Santa’s arrival was forgotten! What songs they did not know - their Grandmother Midden did!

In Heaven this night I saw a piercing bright light. Jay’s mother was being honored. She wore the snug glittery gown with hood; she had placed her new crystal daisy crown on top of this. Her tiny feet had sparkling slippers with dainty bows on them. Many saintly spirits were gathered beneath the pedestal she stood upon. They called praises. It was a packed house! I changed immediately from my usual “travel duds” to join the others. The little mother noticed and smiled pleasantly. Heaven has so many eye-catching things and such joy.

I am surprised that the Aramaic Bible is very easy to read. Many Proverbs hit home today. I marked the bottom of those pages with star stickers. (As reading progressed, the star-pages began to bulk up the bottom edge of the book.

On Dec. 6 to 8, I had strange unpleasant dreams. A classmate and I were wrapping a corpse! Another involved a wolf-faced person; and three skulls. In a few days Selena’s Michael almost severed a finger at work; a classmate was having a serious operation and other classmates were ill. Several prayer chains began for all these people. Michael’s finger mended in record time. But the dream-people eluded me.

Jubilee Mass night was too late for me at St. Agnes, but sent congratulations that our pastor, Father W. was at last recognized and given the title of Monsignor. His sister Nancy was in my High School class. Springfield is very small town at times.

Tuesday The Therapy Dog Group visited Cerebral Palsy. The dogs do not mind, but some of their owners are not at ease and pass. This side of town gave me a reason to drop off several pairs of new shoes at Helping Hands. Charles (had over-bought) decided he would never use them; his walks were shorter.

Charles and I drove to Chatham to see the twins in their first band concert. The boys were taking drum lessons for a year. Kim’s family came for the fun. Unfortunately the twins did not get to play full sets of drums, but were relegated; Ty to bells and Sky to a snare drum. Skylar hit his one note appropriately. Shortly this wasn’t enough and he began moving his sticks both right and left and the little head bounced to an unheard rhythm. I nudged Patsy, Kim’s mom. “Look at Skylar!” –“What’s he doing?” - “Air Drumming” - he would hit his real note on cue. Both Grandmothers laughed heartily. (Ah, I have four grandchildren and a son-in-law that love music!) I feel blessed.

December 12 was Derek’s Birthday. Our gift was a tiny scene for his snow village. There were two ice fishermen, a light-up fire with kettle over it; plus a few items from his Desired List.

The twins were in the Christmas pageant. One was a shepherd, the other a King. They each spoke clearly into the microphone. An angel choir of 2 and 3 year olds each wore sparkly halos and sang, “Away in a Manger.” White Oaks Walker Ben and Dorothy Dorkins came. Ben is a gemologist and a delightful story teller. When my walking -strength ends - I sit with Ben. Mr. Reese from the carousel often joins us for a fun story chat.

At home this evening a priest on EWTN said that the angels have no free will! I heard a gasp from the foyer where my angels congregate. They said: **‘*He is both right and wrong! We have free will. It is just that we want to do the will of God.’***

I was ready for bed. Jay came to my bedside. Charles had turned in three hours earlier. I thought to Jay: ‘My dear, I thought we might work on the Christmas decorations.’ Jay said there was no need, it was completed! Then he added that many spirits were so happy in decorating that they asked to do the Commons, and the Street of Gold. But this was my thing! I closed my eyes a moment, I had to adjust my perspective. I must be happy to let others do happy things. So I smiled, and accompanied Jay to see the decorations. Fiber optics were used again. There were star-arrangements of lights seen through faux snow. Even on the tower of their mansion. There was a huge Christmas tree on the Belvedere. I looked down and saw that the Holy Ones had their thrones decorated! Everything was coordinated. The spirits were overjoyed and I was completely happy.

On Earth, Kim and Derek were on their way to her aunt’s funeral in Paxton. This was cancelling Christmas. Adding to this, the weather changed to snow and ice. Over 100 area accidents were reported in the shortest time. The Radio reported one accident involved a family on Route 72. Derek and Kim’s family was on that road! Derek called: The family crash was North of their turn off. They were safe! They were returning to Springfield in a slow caravan at 35 mph with Kim’s family in two more cars! Weather be-hanged: The Middens and Elliotts were doing Christmas!

At free times, Charles and I read library ephemera. Magazines and a Ruth Montgomery book explained the eradication of germs - radiating a healing power by reading the “Akashic Records”. My angel’s phoo-phoo’d this as quite rustic. I was happy at that because I knew nothing about “Akashic Records!” The angels said: ‘***You ask God for permission and if granted, ask that the person feel better. A second way was after permission was granted, ask for spirits versed in the need and let them do the healing!’*** I thought this is not fair it will teach me nothing, but the angels countered: ***‘Yes it will; to cooperate with others!’***

My last chore to learn was reading auras; the light a person has about them. The angels said my normal vibrations are too high to do this. I must lower them one or two degrees and then I can see auras. Once I did manage this: Blue around my pastor, Monsignor W. and gold around the two altar boys. It happened during that same Mass but I could never master it again.

I recalled a time; I was working for the dentist … he was out of the office. I experimented lowering my vibrations but lowered them too far! I saw tough looking spirit-people and drew back. They told me: ‘Deal with it, Babe: We‘re your connection between here and THERE.’ Then the woman gestured to an ancient elevator that only went down. I was so shocked I abandoned the experiment. The angels agreed; I went too low. ***’Just try one degree; stop and check. You are just so different from usual paranormals.’***

The last days of the year found us in Danville. Charles was to have his implant only to find a mix-up in paperwork; no medicine was kept at the facility it was shipped from Chicago to the Midden home. All was reset but we traveled for nothing; once you’ve e

Seen Danville Facility, you have expended it.

The New Year 2005 began with my having the worst pain in the left temple. I thought of all the people who concentrated too hard to impart something but it was still there, subsided and returned! The morning’s paper revealed that one of Charles’ cousins was lost in the Sangamon River. This river does not have water year around; when it does it moves in violent whirlpools. A friend was with Cousin Jim Midden when the boat capsized; Jim was last seen hanging onto the boat. It was a heartrending experience. I wondered why the boy contacted me; we had never met. The angels said, ***‘Oh, they always travel to the Light.’*** I had not heard those words for year

The young man’s body was discovered about four months later. But he had long before this reached his reward. Our surprize was that the friend in the boat was my nephew, Bobby Midden!

The California highlight of August for Charles and I was the arrival of great-granddaughter, Katie to Jonathan and Carrie Van Buskirk in California. Darius is ok with a new sister. He began guitar with Michael, Selena’s husband. Selena began taking art classes in soft pastel. She observed street fairs and at last took the plunge. The Ventura area is quite open to the art world. She began selling small pictures and was invited to enter a juried show. Selena’s arthritis had been underground since her move to California. Her landscapes are so realistic one could mistake them for Photographs.

CHAPTER XXI

OUR LOSS, HEAVEN GAIN

ANGELS, ALWAYS HELPING

I had bouts of *back pain*, finally the angels answered saying ***it was a calcium buildup around the bones, to immediately cut the calcium intake from two to one tablet daily and to take a couple tablespoons of a ½ and ½ mixture of olive oil and peanut oil to lubricate the systems.*** They chiseled off some calcium while I slept. Morning brought substantial relief except I had no relief in the fingers. They **said *fingers are too tricky. Rub them with castor oil to cut any inflammation.*** I was very happy with their work; finallythe angels asked me to stop thanking them! That night they tackled the tailbone/hip project telling me that this was not a customary procedure. This was the way warrior angels were healed of their wounds. Wow, I was receiving special treatment.

# HELP

# HERE

My friend Ben was given a new drug - his legs hurt. His wife telephoned. Ben suffered a heart attack. After procedures the hospital had him up and sent him home. Dorothy said he just looked puny. I sent several doctors-in–the-spirit to check Ben hoping to correct any botches. Meantime I wished my spirit into my travel duds and while actively walking with Charles at the Mall I bi-located with my angels to Ben and Dorothy. I blessed the house and them first. Dorothy saw nothing, but Ben did! He sat transfixed and described my long white gown with a few jewels down the front. The jeweler noticed them and the scepter and globe. He told his wife how the angels looked: “No, not like a knight! The armor goes down like a skirt covering the feet.” During our many chats at the Mall, he came across as skeptical about Heaven and God, but said that he would rather believe and be wrong than to not believe and be wrong!

After our walk at the Mall, Charles and I drove to Ben and Dorothy’s house. Dorothy was correct; Ben looked puny. Their son, Glen was in from Carbondale, their other son Paul was arriving soon from Raleigh. The breakfast table was full of prescription pill bottles. Ben joked lightly. It was a nice visit. The doctors had assured Ben all would be well, but like Dorothy, Mary saw that Ben was too fragile to be home.

To think of something else I sat down to type on “The Memoirs” until bedtime… When I went up with my go-between angel, Heaven had no Light! I asked the go-between angel to check my Angels’ Lights; All were fine. Traveling upward - there was still no Light; I dissolved into panic and summonsed Jay. He assured me all was well. “Come we shall go to the resting area. There is nothing we can do.” Jay explained that God does this every once in a while so spirits realize what total darkness the Earth does have! We are more dependent upon street lights, auto and truck lights those in our homes and buildings than we can imagine. Several weeks to us, passed before the Light began returning. During this time, Jay told me about his routines. This night when I arrived Jay said my two Borzois/Huskies love the Holy Ghost and also dashing up his mountain, so they were an instant gift to Him. I still had feelings about Bruno so decided I might like a Tree-Walker Coonhound. When Jay saw it - he loved that dog and assumed it was for him! I thought; ‘He is here, all the time - I am not, OK.’ Jay called her Pee Gee which is “Sprightly One” in Aramaic. He began taking Pee Gee to work. She eases situations by perking her ears, going down on her elbows, wagging her tail and at times… The sound begins with a straight bark which dissolves into a yodel of horrible dissonants. It shocks any stubborn client-spirit into helpless laughter.

At home, I never felt well after eating pork egg rolls; two and I would be asleep. I decided there must be a fish ingredient in them and checked the label: Anchovy paste and MSG plus fish juice in both filling and wrappers. That was a double whammy for my seafood allergy. ***The angels proposed a precautionary measure: I was to fetch my herbal tinctures and take a dose of my Poison Antidote before eating eggrolls.*** It worked!

Ben crossed my mind. In the morning Dorothy called, Ben passed away last night. The services were set. They had been a sweet couple. I checked on Ben’s spirit and was surprised that he chose instant purification! He would be free in the afternoon and enter the God Level! I alerted my daughter, Regina to meet him as he was a friend. I went up in-spirit and asked for Ben. There was a flash of Light to my right: There was Ben a bit befuddled. I hoped to find out some details about “Instant Purification”. He said, “Oh, when they told me I had a choice for Instant Purification, I asked, ‘Is it worse than the Battle of the Bulge?’ They said no, so I said, ok! …Your daughter came by and talked with me; a very nice young woman.” That afternoon I wrote all of this to Dorothy.

Tonight angels called me to attention saying, “The Father has words for you.”

“My dear, I must destroy another spacecraft. It is not with fault of men; the crew does its work. It is just - Space Interference irritates me.” I thanked the Father. The proposed mission was called off because of technical failures - no loss of life.

Mary Ann Spearie, the cousin who was my Matron of Honor lost her husband Bob after his dozen years plus with Alzheimer’s disease. All our classmates in the area came. I noticed Bob’s spirit standing beside Mary Ann. He was steadying her. How sweet! When all were seated, Bob’s spirit appeared beside the foot of the casket in a corner. He wore a light blue cardigan, sport’s shirt and slacks. The corpse wore a suit! When he saw me he moved towards me – and stood piercing several seated mourners and told this story:

***‘The problem with this disease is not with the mind, but with the brain. It becomes paralyzed. I felt like an absolute prisoner in my body.’ He continued: ‘If I knew that I’d go to Heaven, I would have left that body in a minute. You visited that time and had angels accompany me to a Place to Contemplate. I asked the spirit who had my charts: How am I doing? Will I get to see God? He said no, but I was close. I asked how long I would have to stay in that body before I got to see God and live with Him? He said six months; so I said O.K.’***

I found this most interesting. In my letter of condolence to my cousin, I explained all these things. Alzheimer’s disease is so hard on everyone.

Early June, a Tuesday: I shared a Brown Coonhound with volunteer Lindsay. It seemed that this day, there were few dogs and fewer residents that were interested in seeing and petting them. We left early; returned the dog to APL and after checking Charles, I drove to the chosen restaurant to arrange for tables. Partially there, I began to have qualms and drove more cautiously. At the restaurant I attended to things but by the time everyone arrived my stomach was tied in knots and I did not know why. I ordered and pretended to eat. By the end of the gathering, the feelings began subsiding. The clock in our old Toyota finally reflected the time. It was only 12:30. We usually finish about 1:20.

The moment I arrived home, the telephone rang. It was the Crystal Cathedral. (Charles felt he learned a lot from listening to this program. He thought a lot of old Dr. Robert Schuller.) A staff member related that Dr. Schuller’s good friend had died and he was so upset, he was cancelling the dinner in St. Louis. We were sorry at the news. The Dr. hoped to reset in the fall. We cancelled our hotel reservation and sent Dr. Schuler an E-mail condolence: Getting older, all one seems to do is loose friends and family. Unfortunately, Charles was not well enough by the time the dinner was reset and it was impossible to attend..

Last of June: There was an earthquake in Troy, Illinois. The angels say ***‘In a bit, the area will have a another problem.’*** This frustrated me; that timing! ‘In a bit! Oh, you guys!’ - ***‘Oh, you don’t like our timing?’ -*** ‘It is too indefinite; wishy-washy. Could be now or ten years from now.’ ***-- ‘Hum, at 24 hours a day; ugh between four days or four weeks. How’s that? We have a time calculating between our time and yours.’***

TERRORISTS!

My paranormal activities were never honed into governmental or war like problems. There had been no precognition about 9-11-2001. I was as shocked as everyone else but assumed if God wanted me in on it, I would have known. Presently, I seemed to be into no parnormal activities. It was simply on a lark I asked my angels if there were any terrorist activities in the nearby area; asking for city, state, date and that I see the proposed area: Foiling a terrorist attack! Me? Could I do it if I had to? Shortly a little clairvoyant picture formed. In it were two masked men with guns hijacking two planes. The view switched to the Hancock Building. A sign across the bottom of the vision reads: Chicago, IL August 4, 2005. I E-mailed this to my cousin who could relay this sort of thing. (Note: Almost ten years later, a TV documentary related this incident … saying was foiled by covert information to our government!) - Success!

The very next day there was another vision. This one was related: St. Louis, MO. The date across the bottom of this also read: August 4, 2005. Two men in fatigues and soft caps with visors and boots drive army vehicles onto the I-55/70 turn off ramps. One is a jeep on the: To Illinois right side; the other is an all metal long truck and parks at the incoming ramp to St. Louis. They are about 200 feet from the butterfly turns. The truck driver gets out. He is tall and slim not black but dark skinned with a skimpy beard. The Jeep driver is regular built about 5’ 7”. His beard is skimpier but longer about 3” to 3 ½” and greying. They both held detonators. I sent this message to my cousin also - the men were caught and the plot foiled! Success again!

I asked the angels if there were any other things impending, for instance Los Angeles and Minneapolis. Then angels answered that Minneapolis was not considered major; L.A. is safe and well observed: It is a gateway; if it is disturbed all action will go underground!

MY ALMOST DOG

I continued going to APL Tuesday mornings. There was an unusual dog there with a nasty disposition. Cheyenne was of medium size with dull brown loosely curled hair. Only her head legs and tail had hair. She had become so matted that her poor overbred body was clipped. Her face was large and round as a soccer ball, Eyelids and nose that awful pink brown, and poodle ears that looked pinned on to her head. The staff would have nothing to do with sassy, snappish, lunging Cheyenne. I usually gave a few treats through the fencing, but Cheyenne was unapproachable. I passed by and then turned around and thought to the dog: ‘You are really very cute, but everyone’s afraid of you. These people are trying to help you. You will have to change your attitude or you’ll never get out of here.’ The dog perked at ‘cute’ and listened. The next week, Cheyenne sat and smiled when I came so treats went into her kennel. The next Tuesday, Cheyenne was in the yard staked. (She had heartworm treatment and needed quiet, but I was unaware) I unshackled her and we went for a walk around the grounds. Work men building an operatory thought she was most unusual. We proceeded slowly toward the front of the building. There was an igloo on the porch and Cheyenne peeked in it, then went inside a few moments and backed out. It became a Tuesday routine for us. The weeks followed with improvement; the staff fell in love with Cheyenne! She was given an outdoor kennel and fresh air. I had Charles convinced to adopt Cheyenne. But the dog took a downturn over that weekend and the doctor thought the poor thing had gone through so much already and now a full-blown cancer - he put her down.

Sue an attendant was being walked by a big strong dog but quickly made her way to me with the awful news. We fell into sobs in each other’s arms. Sweet Cheyenne had grown on everyone! This shock had actually made my eyes misty! Everybody wondered what kind of dog she had been. Everyone checked dog books none of them resembled Cheyenne! The answer was in my art-room high on a shelf, among my Muppet Puppets - a curly brown dog with a soccer ball face, big smile and pink nose - Rolf, the piano playing puppet! Charles called: “Why were you laughing?” - “I found Cheyenne!”

New staff and new attorneys began changing rules that year. Now, only APL dogs could be taken to Nursing Homes. This did not set well with several ladies. Not only had their dogs been rescued from APL but were now Obedience trained Therapy Dogs. Mixing the schooled and unschooled dogs helped settle the rough stock by example. The attorneys stood firm. There was no compromise. This decision split the twenty-two Tuesday volunteers. The half with Therapy Dogs moved to Illinois Humane. Rose H. had rescued two young Rough Collies. She kept the large sable and her friend Joan R. took the white ex-show dog. Neither dog “meet the standards” of the AKC. The white was shown until discovered blind! The sable had an extra long body and long legs. Both new Collies were passed the Therapy Dog International test. .

Rose was a journalist but also evaluated dogs, took their pictures for the APL website and donated a whole outdoor covered building for the dogs in the name of her other rescues. e. Now APL squeezed her out of these volunteer jobs the attorneys cited that the paid staff could handle these jobs. As Rose left and I used he dog at the nursing homes, I went with Rose. The large group split The cat ladies and those using APL dogs stayed. All Therapy Dog people turned to Illinois Humane. Both groups survived. Rose had other dogs so let me use the Collie, Dundee. The dog was naughty at first seeing what he could get by with but once I called his bluff he was amazing - we understood each other.

Our Therapy Dog Group grew to include several couples. This proved great with residents because the few men now had guys to chat with! Rose qualified to bring Therapy Dog International to Springfield, Illinois. Before this the closest place for this training was in Vermont.

FINDING CHEYENNE

As much as I liked handling Dundee, there was still a spot in my heart that tugged for Cheyenne. I could bother Alfred Smithsome in The Wild Life Sector and ask about her.

Alfred was talking with Louis Water. (Both his parents and all the siblings had serious heart problems. Steadily they arrived in Heaven by middle age.) Louis became involved with the raptors especially the hawks. Louis wore thick garments and gloves; on his shoulders and arms were several hawks. Alfred recognized my description of Cheyenne and at mention she came scampering to us. Louis exclaimed that she was the cutest thing. “Cute” was her turn-on word. She liked Louis Water immediately. Alfred mentioned the alterations that Cheyenne wished; mainly to be sleeked up underneath and have her coat completely brown. (It had been mottled, she explained). Alfred said she was an excellent hunting dog and Louis adopted her on the spot! He turned to me and said, “I hope you don’t mind, sister, but you never liked me to hunt with your cats (3 Cheetahs) and actually, they always rather set me on edge. I teach the hawks hunting manners.” I laughed; I felt the same way about the hawks; the beaks and talons, the flutter and sharp eyes set me on edge. In July Louis was glorified and received his golden crown from the Father. Now, he was a bonafide Heavenly King! A sweeter, good-hearted man I never knew and the plus was, he still blushed!

KATRINA

August was a busy month: The Father mentioned that he was very unhappy with the southern states. He even expressed a thought of simply doing away with them because of their unholy lifestyles. Very shortly, Katrina went through the Southern States: Mississippi, Florida and Louisiana especially. Amid the destruction, loss of life and population displacement God relented. It seemed reminiscent of His leniency with His people Israel in the Old Testament. He is forever hopeful. Unfortunately, the first thing the area did was put the decadent Mardi Gras together with the excuse that it brought in monies to help them rebuild! ( Update Note: In 2006 a #5 hurricane came; the Lake Pontchartrain levee broke spreading the water more devastatingly. There were reports of corpses floating in contaminated water and vipers infesting those waters. Yet, Mardi Gras survived again. What exactly does this repetition convey? An old movie title fits: “Dumb and Dumber.”)

Through these times, many good spirits in Heaven were enlisted to help check-in all the new arrivals. Even Jay and P.G. worked at checking them in. I went in-spirit to help and asked if Louis might bring Cheyenne. Jay thought this a good idea. The dogs took the grim edge off the check-in proceedings. Cheyenne was so blocky and comical scampering back and forth with scrolls that it was hard to be dismal and she had a great time!

About this time, I began having intense thoughts about my granddaughter Amy who is still considered “Missing.” She was abducted when she was 13. I found her spirit isolated from others, curled on a cot in a shack and covered with what might be called burlap. The child,had attained her Heavenly adulthood but mentally thought this was all she deserved! Usually a spirit will seek solitude while dealing with the effects of a horrible death But Amy’s solitude lasted far too long. As Grandparents, we expected her to be found but when I was paranormally able, the angels told me she had been tortured and killed about two weeks after her abduction.. We had never thought negatively but our oldest daughter, The Magdalene felt differently, saying she heard Amy’s voice calling for two weeks and then it stopped. She tried to contact Marshall but he had blocked calls from her..

When Amy sat up, the cover fell aside. She wore the same garment in which she lost her life. There was an Afghan hound curled beside her. We talked quietly so Amy would beel comfortable moving back into activity. We changed her garment, she liked my white gown but added puffy sleeves and gasped a slight giggle when she found herself dressed in this. I wished her hair groomed. It fell medium blonde to the middle of her back and was loosely waved. I asked what Amy’s favorite color was; pink. “Let’s do away with this shack.” We decided on a pink shimmery glass-like house. Once Amy discovered it was one-way glass, she wanted the glass panels larger and a fireplace. She had lived in Minnesota and everyone had fireplaces there! The roof tiles were also glass. Heaven was not cold like Minnesota. She thought a few trees with pretty blossoms and then she asked where people were; she did not see any. I told her at moment many of them were helping to check-in some new arrivals from a flood. We visited this area. Amy’s pet dog trotted beside her, “Sweetie” Amy’s hound noticed other dogs trotting back and forth and stepped right into place. Amy laughed; the dog got her a job! She became engrossed in this and now can always be found at check-in with her dog.

That name was strange. I send an “E” mail to my son Marshall and asked what the Afghan’s name had been. He “E’d back: We had her 13 years, she was a rescue. Her name was “Cedes” like Mer’cedes without the Mer .... I smiled reading this. I had forgotten that Amy slightly lisped. “Sweetie” was close enough. I wanted to nudge Marshall’s thinking toward this but they speak of Amy in the present and have devoted their lives to finding her - always hoping she will walk through the door! Only this would halt these “Cold Case” police and FBI searches which seem to resurrect every five years wreaking their home and reputation, belongings and books, landscaping and concrete drives, walks and pole building floor by using bull dozers for the sake of “maybe finding a clue”. Many things can never be replaced. Much ruined by a spray for blood but the heartache and shock of these impromptu disruptions put Marshall in the hospital with a heart attack and open heart surgery … Amy would be nearly 40 now, if alive. But she is a happy wonderful young lady and working with Cedes where neither age.

We lost Mary Janette Holmes, a classmate to cancer. We worked for nine years in The State House. She was widely known by managing the journal room. So it was a very crowded wake. The lines moved snail-like and my back hates standing for any period. I heard some of the prayers over the intercom. The priest said: The spirit remains at the grave site – until the rising on the last day! But no-no-no, The moment the spirit and soul leaves the body is its last day! Ever since my daughter Regina died, I am able to see where the spirit goes! I left a letter for the family: Mary Holmes was on the red level, one more and she entered the Godhead’s level. I visited her in-spirit earlier and chatted. Mrs. Holmes decided that she wanted a smaller version of Cinderella’s castle something shiny and pink. (As you note, there are many variations of the Disneyworld Castle mostly chosen by ladies.)

At bedtime, I stopped by the Godhead. The news was that another hurricane was approaching the East coast. Was the populace alert enough to leave? This land was already saturated. Weathermen and meteorologists fully expected the land to subside. I mentioned this to the Father.

He said, ‘People! Stuff! Never their inner being! So Foolish! What do you think?’

‘I am too hard, Father.’ I waved my hand away. ‘But some may change.’

‘Good!’ He said, ‘At last someone who thinks as I do.’ Yet, in a moment He said, ‘So often I think it should be all done away with. It has so much darkness.’

I thought, ‘Wow, those people are on a tight rope.’

September 27, the angels called me hurry to the Heavenly Level. It was for my Glorification. I never know when the cleansing and blessings are needed but I am grateful for them. Jay was at the ready with my closed sparkly gown, crown and shoes. We approached the Holy of Holies. Jay went inside and stood to the right. A lovely angel escorted me into this strangely magnificent elongated octagon structure. First one knelt then went prostrate. I tried to remember the simple endearing words. There was a zapping twice of the Eternal Force that the Holy Ghost directs. The Force passes through a large faceted diamond which filters the force effectively. The mortal body gathers negativities that we do not suspect.

During the festivities that followed, many of my friends, the composers I had helped and relatives gathered and chatted, congratulating me. I was very surprised to see my earth husband, Charles “visiting this level where his mother now dwells.”

HELEN’S AFTERLIFE

I felt magnificent in the morning, but the angels beckoned me. I went with them in-spirit. They considered this sad news. My mother Helen had gone through the routine of the Interim Community twice without improvement! Worse, she was influencing those in that Community to revolt to God’s rule! Some were refusing to attend the Community Prayer Groups that help others. (By so doing spirits move forward shortening their time in the Interim Community.) The Helpful Spirits felt Helen should be assigned to the Static Community, but deliberated on doing this because of me. I had donated time (so Helen could pass through the Gates into Heaven.) But once inside the Heavenly Gates Helen provoked rebellion and had to be evicted to the lines of the Interim Community. Even here she proved that there was no rehabilitating her: The woman is an avowed control-freak!

I told them, that as parents, Helen and Joe were ok at first but gradually increased control of me. The angels flipped pages checking the records and were shocked that this ruthless woman had been approved for any earth life. My donating time for Helen had been a complete waste. A person cannot be forced to love being in a perfect Heaven. They seek their own level. I heaved a sigh and said: ‘Do what is best for everyone.’ Helen was taken to the Static Community. Looking in on her from afar, I noticed Helen stood imperiously. No one there moved or spoke to each other. There was Helen’s friend not three steps away. Both were too into themselves to see each other.

Joe avoided Helen’s control with outdoor work around house. Once he retired to attend her however, he was appalled. Joe passed away two year after she did. He was a simple man, loved her for accepting his deafness but now Joe never asked to see Helen. He found his brother Johannas and my friend Ben telling stories and laughing: This was his thing, light banter. At heart he was stil a baker and taught others the trade but harmlessly, he thought he owned the bakery! The Helpful Spirits sniggered and let that slide.

THE APARTMENT DWELLERS

Nearing the end of October, Charles decided to raise the tenant’s rent. It was not increased in twelve years; utilities were more expensive and after retirement, Charles did not have the staff to repair things. It must be hired. The tenant flatly said, no! It had to remain the same! I rather smirked at his belligerence. His kids finished college and married. He and his wife visited them in Florida routinely. My angels said do not judge…Within a week the tenant said something rudely and out-of-line to a co-worker and was fired! This put a different spin on things; now he did not need the apartment he was returning to his home city; apologized and we kept friends. Later men from the FBI interviewed us about him. He was seeking a new security-type job. We cooperated - it went well.

A church group was sponsoring a refugee from Katrina and the apartment rented too easily. Charles and I as well as the church sponsors soon discovered some things in New Orleans do not encourage a God-fearing lifestyle. Within a week the new tenant decided the Midden phone was for his use; had several girls up; brought street people in because they had no place to “crash” but he worked at a tavern nights playing “pee-yanna”. (The pronunciation should have alerted me.) Before the month was out, he burned the oven black; decided he wanted a barbeque on the small wooden apartment porch and finally decided the landlords and the church group were too uptight and - moved! - Blindsiding all of us. The church sponsor an older man scrubbed the stove and floor. We all agreed, this had been a terrible lesson. We were frustrated and had lost but thankful he was out of our lives. Charles and I realized that some lifestyles were Godless so we stopped renting it.

The cottage needed a roof. A HUD petition flopped - HUD was only attending to the eastside of town. Charles’ began falling asleep many hours. With me home he could not secretly indulge in ordering radio and TV promotions; he could not get the mail first - he never explained so his folly ended with me none the wiser.

HEAVENLY HOLIDAYS

The holidays were near. In Heaven, Jay and I wanted to decorate his mother’s little mansion for her special day. No red flowers! She is tired of red. Daisies: Yes and no. She loves them but they will not show up against her white stucco little mansion. I thought about Franz Schubert who gave me beautiful orchids. He had called them Darwin’s. Amidst placing the pots, Jay’s mother stepped into the doorway. These were absolutely new to her. I explained that on earth they were from the Hawaiian Islands. We asked if there was anything she particularly might like.

‘I’ve been seeing quite a few dogs around lately. They are so tame and friendly but they are large. I would not want a hunting dog like Jay’s. Is there something a bit smaller?’

‘My brother from the Grecian life adopted Cheyenne. She is not so large. Jay summonsed a Life Planning Spirit to fetch Louis. Tepidly he came with Cheyenne, hoping she would not want her. Louis said he would check the conservatory and see if there are any like her. Shortly, he returned. He seemed to be empty handed, but under his mantle he withdrew a nearly platinum puppy. It was curly from nose to tail. ‘Her name is Curly Top.”

Jay’s Mother laughed holding the puppy aloft. ‘Indeed, she is curly all over. I love her! At this Cheyenne patted her feet happily and said, ‘Oh, she is my very own puppy!’

His mother asked me about my daughter, Regina. So it was that Jay’s shy Mother met Regina who loved working in Records. Regina invited the lady to see the area. Curley Top never left the lady’s arms. But she wanted to try this strange apparatus. One of the helpers, Bernadette joyfully cuddled the puppy. Jay’ mother’s interest intensified. She could now be found in Records with other ladies. One worker chastised Bernadette but the pretty ex-nun said cheerfully, ‘Somebody has to take care of the puppy!’

2007 opened on earth well enough. Charles and I listened to “The Hour of Power”. The tower shines incredibly. I made our special Sunday breakfast and then we walked. The Veterans’ provided a walker for him. It clacked and jerked over the grouted tiles that White Oaks then had. We got permission to walk at Lowes. Charles saw the Home Show TV innovations come to life! The ex-contractor enjoyed Lowes.

This evening I arrived in Heaven to find our tower gone! It was our front entrance. Above were our private rooms. Now, there was space! Even the roses bowering the doors were gone! Jay was not around; perhaps he could not face the situation. Men on earth do that. I asked the Father about the change. He said that He moved it because His own Light was blinding Him by reflection. Plus He admitted the bell concerts ceased to be a pleasure. He moved it to the area beyond our museum. It was comical yet I felt violated. When Jay arrived we steadied each other - All belongs to God! All belongs to God! All belongs to God! And then it was funny: God’s own Light caused it! Planning a new entrance was useless. Nothing held a candle to that glass tower. Now, guests came directly into the banquet room. The Father investigated a new product and installed it. This rather resembled a shorter version of our glass tower, but absorbed His Light, expelling it out the opposite side of the tower. It did not glisten but glowed a grey-blue. The Father said He was being selfish; by making it shorter he could see the horses performing their jumps over the boxwood barriers in the pasture! Both Jay and I laughed The Father’s reasons made it easy to accept.

Mid-February there was a pretty fountain pictured in a Senior Citizen Magazine. It featured a pineapple. Jay and I inspected the fountain in-spirit but it was not as expected. Jay said he never had pineapple. We went to an earthly produce store where he could handle and sniff the fruit. It was fun until a clerk asked to help us. We were visible and wearing evening cloths!

A few nights later Jay took me to the ballroom. He had installed a fountain. It was a golden pineapple. Every bud center held a ruby; the upright leaves were each outlined with tiny gold shot. Water dribbled off each into a shell-shaped bowl. Wow! Now that’s a fountain!

There was a section on new exotic cars in the newspaper. One was a Bugatti model Veyron. I remembered Alfred’s boat and that Regina had kept her new car. I had given nothing to Jay for a while. I fashioned it like the picture, a silvery navy to dark green. I parked it north of the new tower so we could see it from the Belvedere. Oh, dang it, I fell asleep before I saw his reaction.

Noise and emissions crossed my mind but the Helpful Spirit said it would just “GO!” No problem. It is so easy to think in earth terms. Jay met me in the car the next evening saying it rides as smooth as cream. It made me happy. Another evening Charles came with me. He went to his mother’s but not before noticing the car. Charles weakness was having a new car! Jay ever glad to make someone happy, asked what color? - Bright yellow! - ‘It shall be at your mother’s.’

Ms. Louisa was waiting outside her mansion, a replica of the Sommer home place a step-edged brick painted white. Ms. Louisa was versed in compounding drugs for her father’s drugstore. Once she discovered she could teach this to others her ascension to the God-level began.

I heard from Catherine Moloney a school mate. She visits Florida and California during our inclimate weather and has daughters there. Catherine changes topic mid-sentence. This time suddenly she was talking about ghosts that wandered through her old home east of Lake Springfield. Legend had it Mr. Lincoln visited friends at the next farm. Catherine said she was not perturbed to have him walk in from one side of her house and pass through the fireplace. She would just say hello and he would tip his tall hat. The farm resident related that her rocking chair moved violently during a storm. If she turned quickly there was the apparition of a woman in the rocker. I realized that I had no ghostly encounters for twenty years! They were rather enjoyable. And, what you want comes to you.

Nine days into April, The Holy Ghost beckoned me: Several groups were interested in beatification for the late Pope John Paul II. I mentioned that since he had Parkinson’s disease perhaps he could help heal others. I was then introduced to the late Pope, who was very surprised. He said he has not become used to Heaven and had no thoughts of doing anything yet. Also he remembered me; that I came to him with pleas with both Jesus and the Blessed Mother. He had not acted on those desires and now he felt badly about it. I waved his qualms away and remarked that he was a friend of Padre Pio; I hoped that if they met, the Padre might encourage such healing endeavors. (Update: nothing.)

DECISONS

Derek and Charles chatted about the condition of our house. The roof was in tender shape. They discussed looking into a Senior Living Center. But we had just invested in four new kitchen appliances! But immediately, Charles was gung-ho about escaping the overhead of keeping a house. We looked. The first place had no empty apartments to see; the second was suitable for one person with little who could put up with an overseer with a hair-trigger personality. The appliances were new and clean but of cheapest quality. Besides monthly rent and down payment this church group demanded 2% interest on any CD’s and monies from selling our residence! I said interest rates are 1% now. The overseer said that she didn’t care; they got 2%. Charles illness did not let him comprehend. I controlled my rising peeve.

We drove to Meijer’s to walk. (Charles found parts of Lowes had open doors and he was cold!) In quiet areas there I mentioned the interest charges. Now, Charles understood. I mentioned our new stove, two freezers (Our monster from the farm days finally gave out.) and refrigerator. “Our stove is glass top; theirs were gas burners and remember when I checked the stove drawer for depth! It came off the track.” There was no storage room for food, dishes and the dry herbs! Charles was now back mentally. There was no move!

I was transcribing my notes to computer when I heard The Father’s voice. He was planning devastation. He assured me it was it was not in the States. A week later, there was a huge hurricane in Indonesia followed by tsunamis. The check-in area was busy; we helped.

Jay visited to listen to President Bush’s speech. He remained for a program on the Da Vince Code, which is a big topic at the moment. Inaudibly, and to my surprise - Jay said he never had a wife or child in the Jesus life; but he did as High Priest in Lemu`ria and also as Zanathrusta. He shook his head NO, when the pagan deities Isis and Osiris of Egypt were mentioned in connection with the Jesus life. About Joseph of Arimathea going to Scotland with the Holy Grail/chalice; he thought perhaps there was a curative spring there. He was not familiar with the Holy Grail legend. He was not happy with the outcome of that life. He had not brought everyone back as he wanted. Thusly, he long avoided references to that life and avoided the Christmas and Easter celebrations… “When you came to work on the mansion, my mindset changed. I was certain you were the girl from the island devastation (like Atlantis).”

The next program was entitled: The Science of the Bible. Jay stretched and stood. ‘Oh, my dear, all that is so very old and mostly misinterpreted.’

Since Jay and Charles began driving their fancy cars more cars were appearing in Heaven. Jay said perhaps I should have one. I laughed and considered a Rolls Royce Corniche or an old ’69 Jaguar and then decided – ‘No! A carriage: A cute peach-color bubble of a thing for four of our dainty white horses to pull.’

CHAPTER XXII

DOGS

# I was relaxing to sleep; my prayers were that I might help any spirits and please, no skulls. I opened my eyes and was drawn back! Dundee was in-spirit! His face was near mine. He said, hello and explained that he and Lance chatted over this idea of having a spirit-form! Lance was Joan R.’s blind white Collie. Lance discovered by curling- up and closing his eyes; he could lift his spirit- head, look around and SEE! He memorized where furniture was and saw that his mistress, Joan was pretty! Then he found he could wander about in this spirit form while he seemed to be sleeping! Dundee thought this was neat and tried it. That’s how he got to my bedside - walked all the way to my Light! He said he needed to get away at times; Rose his mistress had five other dogs and life was busy. ‘We are constantly learning advanced obedience stuff, traveling to win silver dishes and ribbons.’ With peace in mind Dundee wandered to my house, ‘Hey! Pretty neat,’ he told me and no, he was not ill! ‘But Rose has Roxie who wants to let go but she loves Rose and does not want to go - if there is nothing afterward.’

‘There is a conservatory for all animals,’ I told Dundee, ‘People-in-spirit love and care for them.’ I mentioned my one-time brother adopted a dog from there. It is a good place.’

Dundee acknowledged, ‘But how can you know?’

I said, ‘When people and puppies are young, they remember some Heavenly things, but as we grow up day to day things make us forget.’

‘Hum, I must tell Roxie.’ I watched him trot off. I watched him via clairvoyance. Roxie was intent. ‘Is that the lady who rubbed my bones and made my pain go away for a long while?’ The English Shepherd continued: ‘I must tell…’

Tuesday at luncheon, Rose was heartbroken; she told everyone that her Punkin died. My back hit the chair so hard everyone looked at me. Rose explained that Punkin was a stray from APL. He had so uch wrong with him that although he was but two years old, the doctors said he would do well to last a few months. So Rose brought him home thinking he would know some happy last months. Punkin rallied and lived to 18 years old. He considered himself “people”. After hearing “Punkin’s” story I was convinced dogs do communicate. This news expanded the Unseen for me.

Rose’s son, John was having his fortieth birthday. He suffered an aneurism when he was 18. His body was handicapped completely. Roxie was his dog. When Rose could no longer give John the care he needed , Rose had Roxie trained as a Therapy Dog so it could visit her son in the nursing facility. This year Rose arranged a Renaissance Party with catered lunch and a performing medieval group. The group explained their garb and weapons which were real – no duct tape swords here! They demonstrated various sword-play used in movies and TV and then a man and lady actually fought! Everyone was glued to the performance. Rose brought Dundee. Roxie’s old arthritic body hurt to be touched. Dundee visited throughout the group but spent most of the time with his head in John’s lap while watching the demonstrations. John loved that day. From the dog’s expression - he thought the troupe was nuts.

Charles demanded I be at hand now. The gardens went unattended; my topiary pine shot skyward. Charles demanded to know about legal papers often. If he was not instantly placated on the spot that temper flared. Remembering that in the Greek Life he murdered me did not help the cause; he still terrified me. I had no idea his mind was changing. The effects of Parkinson’s was still unknown. The stress affected my blood pressure. One evening a voice I had not heard for years spoke: The little Infant of Prague! ***‘This is the way it has to be now.’*** The words were relaxing; someone in Heaven was watching! Tuesdays I renewed my sanity by “Going to the dogs” with the Therapy Dog Group.

COUSIN CATHY

I was happy that my Cousin Cathy and her dear quiet husband, Ben planned a visit. I did implore them to wait a week; Cosima would be in Springfield then. But they arrived when they pleased anyway in their thirty-three foot motor home; mangled directions and ending in Rochester, IL. She botched my telephone directions but we finally met hem at the East Walmart to park the motor home. It was lovely but Cathy was fuming over the miscalculations. The morning went downhill. Ben was quiet. At a Steak n Shake for breakfast Cathy faulted the waitress … she had forgotten the butter and Cathy was not leaving a tip! Ben escaped to the rest room but when he returned, she repeated her tirade for him! By now, I had no appetite but as our meals were satisfactory I tipped the waitress. Seeing this, Cathy turned her venom on me repeating her diatribe a third time. Without a word, I arose, nodded to Ben and Charles, paid our bill and went to the car. It cut their visit short. I had brought two paintings for them, but she set them in the motor home and continued ranting Somehow I mentioned olive oil in cooking or maybe it was as Popeye’s girl hoping to break the tidal wave, but this turned into a lesson to me aboul only using Extra Virgin Olive Oil and only extra virgin olive oil. Again I tried to stem the vitrol by lightening the conversation with a joke:

“Did you ever wonder what kind of mischief those other little olives got into?” Ben laughed immediately but both Charles and Cathy looked askance - like I was nuts. Cathy hustled herself back into the motor home.

They drove away after she made another wrong turn finding the interstate but finally they were headed to St. Louis. Cathy said she -“had to get home to cut the grass.” What a putdown.

GONE TO THE DOGS

Rose and Joan of the doggie group vacationed taking all their dogs to “Camp Gone to the Dogs” in Vermont. At camp, the ladies discovered Collies do not know how to swim so Dundee and Lance learned. Roxie took to Sheep-herding forgetting all her Arthritis. It was on this trip that Rose learned Roxie was a purebred English Shepherd. There was a couple with several dogs just like her! Dundee was taken to the sheep herding field but one sniff and he walked away. Rose’s Harold, her Maltese was exposed to the camp dog psychic. Rose was curious about this naughty escape artist. Where had he been during his 16 months on the run? The psychic acknowledged that little Harold became a wily street dog; finally settling into a community of feral cats! A man came by with food now and then. Beings Harold was so small the cats ignored him. He let the cats eat first and then had leftovers. Things changed when a Rottweiler convinced him to hit the road. They were promptly apprehended by Animal Control. Harold was unrecognizable as a dog; his cotton-fine hair was a dirty muddy mat of knots. Harold was chipped and theytraced him to Illinois Humane. Rose had him clipped and washed and decided no more running squirt! She adopted him. Nothing ever escaped from her yard! But he was the only little dog. He short-cutted under the big ones and always wore a feisty expression.

Rose’s old English Shepherd, Roxie survived cancer surgery, but she became cranky and lethargic. I asked my social angel to contact Alfred at the Animal Conservatory in Heaven. Once he knew the problem, Alfred had Punkin visit Roxie one night.

I was awakened by an exclamation, “Oh!” I checked Charles; asleep. Then her clairvoyance formed a picture of Rose’s huge room for the dogs. The front wall of the house did not appear because the bow of Alfred’s golden boat was there! Punkin hopped off and said to all his pals, ‘See! I’m ok and everything is great. This is Alfred. He has this boat; neat huh! Come see!’ Every animal inspected the ship inside and out. Never had Dundee’s eyes opened so widely. His cool demeanor was abandoned; the group was excited. Roxie felt placated.

THE MARTYRS

Early November the newspaper carried photos of five firefighters who died in the California Fires. I went numb; one photo was the firefighter who posed holding Skylar’s paper “Traveling Abe Lincoln.” I took the picture and remember telling him to take care even in practices.

***The angel said: ‘Yes, they are all saints because they died helping others. They are all martyrs’***

‘Then those of 9/11?’

***‘Yes! All are on God’s Level and are useful people.’*** That indeed, is high regard.

Although the angels asked me to come up early I wanted to see a Travel Show on Athens, Greece. The Parthenon is being restored. I doubt if they can do it for a mere twelve million dollars: The price to build the original.

I came immediately afterward and discovered it was a glorification for Jay! I held his crown wondering who designed THAT: A Swarovski crystal Crown of Thorns! His comment: ‘Hopefully no one smash’s it on!’ I checked; it had padding. After greeting those on the God Level we took the bubble coach and four to visit the other levels of Heaven and then returned to join the festivities. When I slept, it was restful and refreshing.

Charles and I were watching TV, when Dundee in-spirit sashayed into the foyer. He looked at Mary sadly and said, “She decided to go back.” I extended a hand to him and said mentally, ‘Come, let’s say a prayer for her.’ He came and sat before me. ‘Paw; thank you.’ He laid his long nose in my lap. ‘Dear God, we wish the best for Roxie; that she may have a wonderful someone there to love her. She is a good sheep herder. Maybe she can teach some to herd sheep. Dundee’s eyes looked up soulfully. God, she is a large dark colored dog and had a lot of pain from arthritis. Please let that be shed so that she has a wonderful life now. Amen.’

After breakfast and a walk, I E-mailed Rose to check and it was so. Roxie went into paralysis and true; Dundee seemed to be the only one of her dogs that missed her.

Tuesday, Rose brought Dundee for me and a Tri-color Collie (a Foster) for herself. My friend Verna came and I let Verna take Dundee’s leach. Verna was frightened of the extra-large Collie but I assured her that he was most gentle. They wandered off. Time was passing and I decided to look for Verna. Along the way, I asked attendants: “Have you seen a little lady with a big dog?” Up two floors, they affirmed and I found her! Back in the recreation room, Rose was entertaining with the Tri-color Collie doing a few dance steps, even passing between her legs as she walked. When Dundee returned he stopped and scrutinized the Tri-color’s movements. Rose had taken Dundee for dance lessons in Chicago! It was quite evident the Tri-color was his pupil. Rose giggled and whispered. “Yes, it is and you should see them in the back yard.”

This night I endeavored to stay awake! My granddaughter Amy (who took the name Deidia) was being glorified. Amy looked so tiny in her gossamer gown. Regina attended her. Uncle Johannes and Joe Wangard came. I was elated. Jay held Amy’s golden crown inside the Holy of Holies. Nearby was Cedes, the young lady’s Afghan hound sitting piously but wide-eyed. When the ceremony finished, The Holy Ghost glanced down and asked, ‘What is that?’ I told Him it was Amy/Deidia’s dog and helps her at check-in.

The Holy Ghost drew himself up and said: ‘I have never blessed the animals.’ and then summonsed all the dogs in the area: P.G., Natasha, Tsimbi, Curley Top, Cheyenne, both Roxie and Punkin and the seven white horses and others. Would He want the birds? -- ‘No, they do nothing.’ All were given a blessing and then the festivities began. It was emotionally filling to have my granddaughter Amy/Deidia honored. If only her parents could witness this! These many years they have devoted themselves to finding her. Death they would not accept.

In a few weeks, an angel told me that someone wanted to speak with me. My Aunt Bertha had questions. She knew some of her relatives were in Heaven, but she could not see them and did not understand this! Or that her brothers Joe and Johannes would have to visit her! I tried explaining but my aunt was too flustered. There was a tap on my shoulder. Jay rescued me. He smiled. ‘There are others to solve this… Come Bertha there is someone who can help you with that.’ He said.

On the following Sunday I went to Joan R’s Christmas concert at St. Paul’s Cathedral. Joan met me saying; Lexie, her Samoyed was in the car ill. The dog went down in her hind quarters but wanted to be with Joan. Lexie was nearly dead weight but Joan had carried her to the car. Lexie rolled her eyes to me and said: ‘So tired, so tired.’ Her ears were splayed. I told Joan and prayed for the beloved Samoyed. After the concert, the dog was still lethargic. I heard an angel say, ‘this is the last time you’ll see her (Lexie)’. My back hit the side of the car in shock but I only told Joan the dog kept saying ‘So tired.’ Joan went to the vets; Lexie had had a heart attack; not good. I had a little misty picture of Lexie, and called to her. ‘Did you know Rose’s dog, Roxie?’ Lexie thought a moment then answered, ‘dark sturdy dog; likes shee-eep.’ I nodded. I quickly contacted Alfred to take Roxie to the vet’s. Next I saw the two old friends nose to nose in an exchange. The first thing out of Lexie was: ‘Do I have to do sheep? I like cold and snow.’ Roxie said - ‘Tell them that.’

The Illinois Humane Owned Animals (Doggie Group) had already planned their Christmas Party at Joan’s on Tuesday. Even with Lexie gone, Joan felt better doing something. Her home is mostly white as were her dogs. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie, meal, gift exchange and Lance when he was awake! Every now and then he could be caught “napping” - so he could see in-spirit and enjoy everything. Aside, I asked Joan if he had been napping often and if so to smartly clap her hands to jerk him out of his reverie.

This night I prayed earnestly to visit Heaven to see the Christmas décor. My angels said that palm trees had been fabricated out of rock candy! When I arrived, the trees were also laden with colorful fiber optic lights the glow was magnificent. I thought about wearing white, but Jay suggested candlelight as that was the color of his tuxedo. Should I mention that on earth men have long returned to black tuxedos or all white. I put the thought aside. After all Joan Rivers was not around to bad mouth and if **she** had worn drab monotones for two thousand years, she would cut loose too! He mentioned my shoes; the diamond covered sling-backs that I loved, saying he heard some women have fifty pair of shoes. I retorted ‘Possibly the shoes are not comfortable or match only one outfit.’

Jay wanted me to wear all my diamonds! This was impossible as I have two crowns that he gave me and we laughed about it. Tonight the throngs of spirits gathered to watch the dainty horses perform their jumps and maneuvers. Colorful lights glinted off their silken white fur. An angel fetched me from this to visit in-spirit to chat with “Mattie”. Turned out, Mattie was a very old cow in Michigan! She was tired of living, being milked, and being bred to have babies given away. I did not mince around but told Mattie about the conservatory, and Alfred. I also mentioned about going to be sold and what happened. Gruesome as it was, Mattie said at least now there were no surprises and she had the Conservatory and Alfred to look forward to.

As the year ended, I asked the angels if they had any good words for me. They nodded and said that more time will be given to Charles. ***‘You worry, why? Give it to God! You are not to worry.’***

Attending my husband was driving me crazy. Online, I checked some FBI reports and tried to get impressions of the missing children and a woman listed. One of the children was returned safely home. Regardless, my contributions went unrecognized although I provided descriptions of the perpetrators and their vehicles, license numbers and etc. I chalked it up to skeptics.

I could look forward to Rose and the Therapy Dogs. On that front: Joan had Rose scout for a new dog. Rose found a younger mix Collie. Joan called her Gwennie (Guinevere) as she had Lance-(Lancelot). There were times Gwennie was not queenly; she brought gifts: First a tuckered out squirrel, then a rabbit. Gwennie bolted through a half-closed car window to chase a second rabbit. Joan kept patient with her. Gwennie was about three but she had never been a puppy. She was bred and caged. Now she was so happy, she remained a spritely “puppy” for years.

Joan’s blind Lance was opposite, quiet and laid back but taught both Joan and me that he could count steps; knew left, right, straight ahead; narrow place; tight place; stuck - back out. If he was too far for a resident to pet him, the command was “A few steps forward.” He even surprised us when a space was tight - he measured it by touching the tips of his full double coat of fur to detect space on each side and then by extending his nose to the front to touch an object. If there was just a bit of leeway he pivoted on hind legs and walked out! He was the first dog that learned to “Say a prayer” for a resident. Later, Dundee learned. Each expected a treat afterward. There was one frightening incident: A resident got a new electric cart and got his button controls mixed up. He hit Lance’s leg and pinned the blind dog down. Lance yelped in pain! I said: “Oh, God!” ***The angel said: ‘Lift and push.’*** Without a thought about the man’s weight plus that of the cart, I lifted it and shoved it freeing the dog. Lance yelped limping away; I followed him and massaged his leg until it was better completely.

I handled Dundee most. He checked card players. If their hand was good he lifted his chin but if it was not a good hand he made pitiful eyes. He turned the trick of playing dead into a vaudeville act and always had an audience. Dundee was a very long legged and long bodied Collie that moved elegantly. His eyes were small but he could move his brows for expressions. That long Collie nose directed his gaze. He would sit slowly, settling the back end like a fat lady. Command: “Paw” and he would give his paw; with the word “Stay” he would level his eyes and nose and I would say, “Yes, I’m going to make you do it.” The audience began giggling. “Down.” He would slowly slide down and then his aggravated looks began. I’d say, “Bang, bang!” and he would heave a breath and slowly slip to the elbow (another Bang!) finally his body was prone- all but the head. He would look up and I’d say, “Well, that doesn’t look very dead to me!” With that the head would drop making all his Therapy and license tags clink. The residents and staff howled with joy. He was a Star, got his treat plus hugs and petting by everyone.

CHANGES FOR ME

During an elevator ride to the main floor in April, I experienced something strange. The white fur on Gwennie and Lance glittered like holographic excelsior. Every hair seemed shot with brilliant glowing Light. None of the other ladies saw it. It proved afterwards to be a blessing for the others. It was a pre-curser to an eye condition. At my cataract surgeon I mentioned that I saw a hot pink jelly belly shape in the other eye. Dr. Susan checked and rushed me across the hall to Dr. Robert. After tests involving a non-iodide dye and photos, I received laser shots that did not hurt or vibrate. The jelly belly shape subsided, but left a slight fog that mostly subsided. Dr. Robert called it: Macular Degeneration and this began a series of scary treatments that are holding my sight.

Charles began falling. The first time was in our small bedroom. I lifted him but it began happening when least expected; in our narrow walk-in closet - and then by the shredder and computer and other furniture … I called the fire department. I told the operator. “It is not an emergency, my husband fell and I can’t lift him. I’ll turn on the outside lights! (We leave the clear rope lights up year ’round because one 40 watt bulb is lost on this long porch.) They picked him up so easily!

May Day I was saying my night prayers - actually chatting with The Father and uttered a pun on another word which made The Father chuckle. He drew me up to Him where we continued a jovial exchange. Shortly Jay sought me; The Father related some of our happy nonsense.

My Practical Angel announced that I knew most of the secrets of God’s Unseen Universe. I was set back at this, hoping the wonderful experiences would not stop. I wrote everything faithfully. I realized that I had not entered my experience at the Temple of Siwa! They suggested I do this now. I asked my angels if they could help me with the knowledge I still needed so I could help others.

***“Ah,’ they answered, ‘the request! Yo (their word for “Yes”)’*** These words made me wonder. What lie ahead?

I seldom cared to doze-off or relax mid-day; because once I had a vision of an accident. Our family was traveling in the South. I awoke with a start and described it: The cars, the banisters on the bridge and - an egg cracking factory. Charles was driving and laughed at me. But in a moment we saw the bridge, a car being towed and soon the second vehicle very smashed. My husband said, “OK where is this crazy factory? What did you call it?” I glanced to my right and said, “Oh look, it is right there - see - Egg Cracking Factory!” The children were all quite surprised. I never wanted to doze in the car again.

This time I dosed watching TV and “saw” a white haired lady smiling peacefully with her eyes closed. Mary thought it was Betty C., a kitty lady from APL but Betty E-mailed everyone saying that her longtime roommate was transferred to a nursing home and died!

Mid-month I asked for a baker-in-spirit. I wanted to use molded pans a first time and wanted the little cakes to turn out beautifully for the doggie group’s bake sale. By afternoon I had eight perfect teddy bear carrot cakes. The next day I asked for a confectioner-in-spirit to help me decorate them. It went perfectly from mixing the icing glaze to placing candies and raisins for nose, eyes and paws. Michele their bake-sale guru said the tiny cakes sold for five dollars each and were the first item sold out. ***There are many in-spirit professionals*** ***we can ask when we need specialized help.***

Derek, our younger son telephoned. He was given three chores to do, and forgot one of them. We went over the list. It was a CD of Marshall and Susan’s vacation trip to China. Their pictures numbering almost 450 were jamming my computer.

Rose called. Would I do Lector duty for her Saturday evening at St. Agnes? Rose did not get along well with the new Sister in charge and did not want a confrontation. When I talked with Sister, I realized both women have exuberant “A” personalities: One spark- clash! Many times in my life, I have been grateful for that high school drama club. In the church I asked for a group of warrior angels to scan the area because the vibrations felt disturbing. I mentally used the scepter and sphere to bless and cleanse inside the church. In a few moments the angels asked me to cleanse it again. Finally, the church felt calm. Lectoring went fine.

Sunday there was a documentary about ancient calendars: The Mayan, the I-Ching from China, the Sybil of Delphi (?), the Wizard Merlin, and Mother Shipton were mentioned as all predicting the end of recorded time as December 24, 2012. I remembered the wall carvings at the Temple at Siwa which mentioned a terrible upheaval about 2023. The Siwa Temple has not been found or researched at the time of this writing but their records were identical to those carved on the walls of a very large Egyptian Pyramid. The carvings were not mentioned in the pyramids already investigated. Is there a large pyramid hiding in the sand? I laughed; people think pyramids are mostly tombs but they were power generators. (Most Egyptian Kings were buried in the Valley of the Kings!) Puramids were powerfully potent. In my first sojourn, one was used as a crematorium. How my Far Memory thoughts mingle with the present!

Following is the account of my visit to Siwa with my Greek brother, Pyrrhus:

MEMORIES OF THE TEMPLE AT SIWA

A television documentary related an excavation at Sehwah in Egypt was begun in 1993. I remembered Siwa - I could never forget it! Today, the Anthropologists were wondering if it contained the remains of Alexander the Great. Tersely, I remarked, of course it does. That was the big thing! It set Siwa apart! It is under the main flooring in the room off to the East.

My account began in Alexandria at a banquet celebrating the victory of Ptolemy Navy over Demetrius, the Poliorcetes (City-taker) Navy. The ladies and children were returned from their place of safety during the war, in the jungle to the south along the Nile.

The whole Siwa thing began in Alexandria at a banquet celebrating the successful end of a war with the Navy of Demetrius the Poliorcetes. The men were all at table, served and chatting before the ladies entered. Pyrrhus searched for me but could not find me. Finally I approached him and he still did not recognize me - like all the ladies I wore a black wig. He had been looking for my hair. Both of us had fiery red hair! He showed me a ring - his spoils of war. (It was set crossway across the finger and had a large amethyst set to one side.)When he filled my thoughts with his success; he asked about my adventures in the interior. I had learned so very much but also knew men had short attention spans! I learned medical herbs from a gypsy before we reached Alexandria; treated the tribal chief’s daughter - and learned tricks of the mind from their witch doctor! I dare not mention my new way of praying directly to God, the Father! The Greeks worshiped so many minor “immortals” that any change was anathema. The Chief presented me with an adorable Cheetah cub. Then a twin was discovered. They were a delighted amusement for the ladies. The third kitten was presented as we were leaving the shore. I was told how to train them: Few verbal, mostly with hand signals.

My brother was impressed with his little sister’s newfound abilities and decided that I was a good candidate for paranormal gifts that could be gained from attending the Temple at Siwa. Siwa was an oasis in the desert west. It was a goodly trek by horseback from Alexandria. My brother sent a courier ahead; the high priests at Siwa expected us. Pyrrhus and I were first cousins of Alexander the Great. Our mothers were sisters. The high priests were privileged to honor Royals (even lesser royals like us.) The high priests had several younger adepts; all affected the same overly reserved composure.

Pyrrhus was most impressed with the strange vibrations and abilities the place offered. He had gone through part of the learnings but had less time than needed to complete reading all the historical and prophetic parchments copied from the wall carvings. He did pass through “The Life into Death into Life Experience” and emerged from it with a healing power confined to his left thumb. (Most Greeks were left-handed.) Now he would attend the readings and absorb what he had not learned before. The names of the priests at Siwa were unpronounceable and forgotten immediately. For the record their names from highest ranking to least were: Aquaten, Moshetem, Aufrah, Mentzina, Raufmah, and Meninwa.

It took several nights travel on horseback, thusly avoiding the heat of the day. Pyrrhus did not tell me it was through a desert. Sand bit me everywhere! When at last we saw the oasis what relief - I needed a good bath! But this was not Alexandria. My hopes were dashed when we halted at a drab mud colored little temple. The greeting was simply: “Ah, you have arrived; come inside.” Instructions began immediately! Pyrrhus called for a wine and this helped our parched mouths. The High Priests seemed to exist Spartanly without anticipating the needs of travelers. They recited in Greek monotones continuously reading from large parchment books in an older obsolete picture-language they called Hieroglyphics.

In the year of Siwa’s establishment, the articles of knowledge for mankind were carved upon each side of the temple walls and handed down to each generation since their first High Priest, Nimorth, the Great. Strangely a bit of information is carved on the left side which fulfills the prophecy regarding it on the right side. Most initiates read only one side which led to much inaccuracy but reading both sides rendered the prophecies intelligible. Ra-ten, an adept completed the actual carvings. The carvings at the great pyramid are identical to these at Siwa. This duplicate insured safekeeping. (This pyramid has yet to be discovered.)

Snippets of their history included: An original handful of priests were saved from the sinking of the great island in the ocean and from the hazards of great sea serpents. The winds and waters were in flood stage and desolated all surrounding lands. The priests felt Siwa was chosen both foolishly and wisely. Only the sturdiest of date palm grew by water holes. These were blessed by Zeus, who provided travelers bearing goods and precious metals. The priests were embalmer’s burying the wealthy and kings and felt their isolation and the surroundings ideal for such preservation: A most chilling thought for a girl nearly fourteen.

I sat for days absorbing their words and was grateful it was inscribed on parchment. Word was that several adepts had lost their eyesight transcribing the carvings to parchment. The priests took turns reading aloud from huge books.) After completion of the readings I asked if I could take a bath. The old men were surprised but finally one fumbled saying they had no water for a proper bath but there were oils, shards and towels. He pointed to a small room with high set hole for a window. I wanted to cry, not even a lady to help me and I was so uncomfortable the sand felt like bugs all over me. Yet, I dare not embarrass my brother.

A Life into Death into Life Experience followed the oil bath. For this I was lead up a ramp along the dark walls that had the carvings. We reached an upper chamber. In this I would spend a night into morning alone on an esophagus. I was told to lie still because during the night small serpents would wander in and over my body; they were asps. As my cousins and I and witnessed an asp nip and kill a gardener - Once left alone and the small light passed the window into darkness I was terrified into rigidity. I felt the little things move. Under this strain I fell unconscious. I heard nothing until the High Priests opened the noisy wooden door. I did not move when they entered and called to me. The priests were amazed that I was stiff, tired and hungry but astounded when their small oil lamps showed that during the interlude, I had been ravaged! I ached but thought it was from the cold stone. I heard bits of the discourse - the older ones completely blamed a younger adept! They cleaned everything gently and were ordered: “Speak of this to no one lest we all be doomed by the King!

The older High Priest escorted me to the lesson room where her brother was waiting anxiously. Along the way, I mentioned the rumour that the Great Alexander visited here and liked the temple very much. This was when the priest ventured, “Yes, he visited often and wished to be buried here when he died. He is here, buried under the floor in the adjoining room!” Before my shock subsided we reached my brother and - hopefully sanity. The priests felt I had received a healing power and awarded me an armlet of gold. I nearly dropped it when I saw the emblems: Two snakes knotted together in the middle one facing up and the other down. The knot was centered with a large garnet cabochon. I detested any reminder of those creepy little horrors but later - much later I realized its uniqueness. (NOTE: 1970 - A poster in a grocer’s window in Wildbad, West Germany caught my eye; it was my old armlet but I lacked funds to take a bus to see it! Recently 2015 it was pictured along with my small gold net and pins for containing my long frizzy red hair. Also found were the tack for my last surviving cheetah, Simba. Its small size stumped the archeologists. A gold breastplate, accouterments and tack were for King Demetrius’ horse. These were attributed to King Philip! They come to conclusions as best they can!

I did gain a healing touch at Siwa. It was not apparent immediately but revealed itself among the locals in Athens. This gave heart to my brother and husband that during the coming war they could send the wounded to Athens and I could, as if by magic heal them. The mercenaries could return to battle! They would have an indestructible army. The One on One God I had met in the jungle did not approve: My healing touch was limited to fresh wounds. The Battle of Ipsus was a complete failure.

How memories of a paranormal mingle. On Memorial Day Weekend: The Hour of Power at the Crystal Cathedral was stirringly patriotic. A military flag ceremony fells me. So far that is the only thing that will stimulate a tear in my eyes. How useless war has always been.

ONE NEAT PRIEST

Father Chiola who both Rose and I knew, was celebrating his 30th Anniversary as a Catholic priest. There was some commotion at Rose’s handicapped van. I dashed to help with her son, John’s huge rigid wheelchair. Then when we were inside, settling nicely there was an announcement that a car CM 334 had left its engine running and it is locked! Rose whacked me. “That’s your car!” I felt for my keys - not in my pocket! “Rose hand me my handbag.”

“HAND-BAG? Call a locksmith!”

“No, I have a second set of keys in my handbag.”

These words threw Rose completely, “A second set of keys? You are - I - don’t know…”

When I returned I told her there had been a time I kept locking my keys in the car, so now I always carry a second set in my bag. Rose looked at my tiny evening bag and shook her head: It was all of 5” by 6” and hard sided. And loudly in church Rose blurts: “What the HELL can you carry in THAT?” and she wasn’t the least bit contrite. Within moments she asked me to get a table with the end open so she could put John’s wheel chair there. When I arrived, a place had been reserved for him! John is a happy person, speaks with a soundboard and can only take liquid food. He garners a tremendous share of hugs, attention and happy words.

The angels say a new pace is starting but that I can handle these things. Before I

took a breath Charles began prodding me to investigate Reverse Mortgages on the Web. The house needed a new roof and HUD refused. They were not working on that side of town! Derek had patched as much as he could safely. I jotted the application routine. First: An appointment with a counselor; that meeting went well. Next we studied the variety of possibilities in this procedure and set an appointment with a bank in town. According to the information online this bank was figuring for self-gain by saying a loan was needed to fix up the house before going ahead with the Reverse Mortgage: This was not “cricket.” Back online we found a bank in Tremont. After telephone conversations, we completed a Reverse Mortgage to Charles’ determined satisfaction. He was ill but as difficult as ever. We were no longer renting the apartment so the house became a single family residence with a small kitchen upstairs.

To my surprise, there was to be a celebration for Jay and me that evening. I thought a gift was in order, so procured a dress watch for him (Not useful in Heaven where there is no time). The wide band tapered and was paved in extremely tiny diamonds. The thin rectangular watch and band were platinum. “Oh, I like this!” He said and twisted his hand back and forth looking at it. The Father announced: ***‘This year we shall have a new festival in early July. It is Freedom; the freedom that comes from overcoming Free Will and its temptations.’*** As ever, my notes end when sleep overtakes me.

I decided to read a book on the rosary. Reaching the nineteenth rose I wished I could pray so fervently and then I heard laughter. A tiny Holy Lady appeared in the foyer. ‘I have enough roses, dear.’ - So I thought, ‘How about forget-me-nots? They don’t take up much room.’ - The lady laughed again. ‘No wonder The Father finds you so delightful.’- and she was gone.

Dundee wandered in in-spirit while we were watching A Mother Angelica Live Classic. He apologized for not obeying me at the nursing home. He asked if he could stay awhile because it was hectic at home. He slipped onto the sofa, laid his head in my lap and listened attentively. His Collie ears and head perked up when Mother Angelica said, “People have spirits, but animals have no spirits.”

Dundee’s eyes narrowed: ‘She knows she is wrong, she hemmed and hawed.’ His head returned to Mary’s lap, but wriggled a bit. ‘Well, get on with it, lady!’ His eyes were menacing. I wanted to laugh, but Charles was attentive to the program. The dog stayed until the rain stopped outside, although I told him he will not get wet while in-spirit.

In a few days Dundee was back in-spirit and watched a Christian program. I remarked mentally, that it wasn’t too good. The dog agreed and began a one-way conversation. ‘I visited the Place where the Animals go and it is very nice. When we are both in-spirit can I be your dog? That was indeed very endearing and I agreed. This time when I said goodnight I told him to just wish to be home. He did not have to walk! He was surprised at that.

While we were driving to Meijer’s to walk; Dundee appeared in the back seat, and began chatting about being my dog.

I spoke mentally to Dundee. ‘Your body is home is a deep sleep when you come in-spirit. Rose will think you are sick. That might not be good.’ The dog pulled up its head in comprehension, ‘Oh, to the vet’s for nothing - that would be NOT GOOD indeed!’ He got to his feet and disappeared.

Tuesday was a nice nursing home visit. Rose said she had farmed out her dogs for a few days so she could visit relatives. When she returned the keeper sniffed at Rose. “You said that dog (Dundee) does everything. I threw a ball and he would not get it.”- “Oh, he doesn’t do fetch. Cocoa does fetch. If I could only get Cocoa to do the long sit, I could have him certified as a Therapy Dog.”

That weekend The Magdalene and her fiancé Harold visited. They spent time with Derek’s family, visited the Lincoln shrines and the new Presidential Library and Museum. It was a nice visit. It is a joy that they have found each other; each of them lost a spouse several years previously. The Magdalene asked if it was all right for her to take some of the things on her list. Fine. There was a goodly supply of boxes and bubble wrap and we continued until those were exhausted. It was amazing how much a car could hold! Cosima and Derek had already taken some things from their lists; Selena had taken maybe four things for her tiny house.

I greeted my angels silently; ‘Hello, dear ones: anything to tell me?’

‘***You’re funny.’***

‘No, I’m sad. Charles is less well daily.’

***‘He’ll last a while. You however must change perspective or this will age God’s Child.’***

‘How do I do this?’ - They said - have no more todays. But if you feel like writing - go ahead.’

‘Is there something else? I feel like crying but I never cry.’

***‘My Child, My Child, tears denote self-pity.’***

‘This is like being worked to death and yet being alone.’

***‘Your new friends are alone, but they fill their time. They survive pleasantly.’***

‘Ah, I must engage in endeavors, I love.’ They nodded. ‘Is there anything with the herbal that I can do for him?’

‘You are not allowed so you will not find any remedies. My dear, you cannot change the stars.’ Mary smirked; that was right: I found gangrene remedies only after my mother passed away. Later, I saw remedies also in material I had which related to Charles maladies: Strange.

Last Sunday of July: I had finished my lector readings; the Gospel was finished and all were quiet and seated. There was a movement. Across the red carpet Lance in-spirit ambled easily. He said puckishly, ‘You say I never visit you.’ True, but I had not expected him in church and patted the pew space beside me. When his head was in my lap he said he was tired. How I hated those words from a pet! Lance was nearly ten years old. I asked if he wanted to visit Lexie. Surprisingly he said he didn’t like Lexie. I thought, there was Roxie, did he know Roxie? The answer was, yes. I summonsed my go-between angel and told him the story. Eptua, my go-between angel brought Roxie with Alfred in the boat. Lance was always smiling and this moment was no exception. He chatted with Roxie on the boat and then accompanied them for a short visit. Alfred returned before I caught up with the homily. Alfred said he took Lance to Joan’s house. What a relief!

I wanted to see a Therapy Dog (Roxie doing what it loved. Polly Yardley worked with disabled children. I asked my go-between angel to suggest the dog’s abilities to Polly. There might be an affirmative answer.

The angel returned and said that Polly was now on the God Level, but she had never checked-in or visited anyone. **This indicated that Polly was so engrossed in her activities; that she does not realize she has gained several levels!** I did the same thing back when I was in the World of Music! A Helpful Spirit suggested I talk with Polly. She and a work friend visited the dog at the Conservatory for Animals and found Roxie scampering about herding sheep and Lexie chasing snowflakes and watching sled dogs. They giggled with glee. At the mention of Roxie’s name the English Shepherd came to Polly. It was instant love. I showed them Lexie’s little tricks and the co-worker took the beautiful Samoyed. After hospital visit the ladies could return the dogs to the Conservatory. But the dogs proved to be such delights, Polly kept hers, and Lexie went with Polly’s friend. It was not long before Alfred was plagued with people; all wanting Therapy Dogs!

Polly and I became closer friends. On one occasion, I asked did she visit William. Polly shook her head no. She did wonder if he was like ***that*** in the Greek life***.*** I said, ‘As my husband, Demetrius did not have the chance: My bodyguard vowed to kill him if he strayed. Some emissary did betroth him to an Egyptian woman and we had arguments when he honored that betrothal.’ As Polly and I walked, I remembered that Polly played organ. She nodded and said she loved Beethoven. At the mention of his name, the composer came into view and bowed. Polly said she played some of his pieces, but why did he still dress in this early style? I agreed and suggested a tuxedo. He retorted, ‘Why change?’

I said there was a cereal company logo; he could be mistaken for the “Quaker Oats Man.” -- ‘What did “Quaker” mean?’ he asked but Polly smiled and deftly took his arm. ‘Tell me about your music.’ Next thing he was showing Polly his magnificent white and gold organ.

In a few days I wanted to check on Polly and the dog, but Alfred rushed to her with his eyes bulging and said I really started something with those dogs. People were asking and he had to check all these records to see which had been trained as Therapy dogs. They were being checked-out to hospitals! This was a good thing but should I apologize for causing this extra work? The angels advised me to let the women run with it, that I had enough to do in the Ethereal Realm.

August: The Magdalene and Harold her fiancé visited again. Derek came and told childhood stories; first on his dad and then on me. He began: “Well, mother can talk to animals. One evening the old neighbor from the farm, Mrs. McConnell telephoned and said Uncle Robert’s bull was out and running up the highway! Dad was on a job, but mom said she would drive out and see if she could help and - she drove off in the new Cadillac! Ok, mom, you take it from there.”

“Oh, yes. While I was driving, I thought, ‘What am I doing? I don’t know Robert’s bull. It wasn’t dear Kurt. I decided to drive along until I saw an animal out of place. I saw it in neighbor McConnell’s yard by the circular driveway. It was pitifully smaller than Kurt, but still muscle and horns. It lowered its head as I pulled into the open gate and stopped. It scraped the dirt once. This made me question my sanity but called to my angels for help.

“I stood beside the car and hoped. Keeping my arms and hands still I spoke mentally: ‘Well, hello! Would you like me to take you home?’ … It said, NO! … ‘Well, the lady here can’t take care of you and has no food for you. She is very afraid of you… Robert is missing you. Come on, I’ll walk you back.’ – I started along the shoulder of the highway; sneaked a peek now and then with my head down; the bull was trotting past the side of the car following. I’d remembered that Robert put in some cattle guards but was one at the front gate? Well, if the bull got out, it can get back in. I turned into the drive and it followed. Robert had returned. He stood transfixed with a bit of harness in hand. “Oh Robert, I have your bull.”- When he could talk, he said, “How-d you do that?” – Really, I didn’t know but I asked, “Can you take care of him?” When Robert stammered, yes, the young bull trotted to him and stood pleasantly to be harnessed. I said my goodbyes, and walked back toward the car. He looked ahead of me and saw the Cadillac in McConnell’s driveway. He shook his head in bewilderment. Mrs. McConnell had watched and spread the story through the township. It didn’t take long; some neighbors still had party lines.”

The visit was delightful with Harold who told a few stories. The Magdalene was the happiest we had seen her for many years. Harold was good for her.

I dreamed in the early morning about my late father-in-law. He padded about sitting on Charles’ walker seat… Often, Charles now had his father’s walk and Parkinson’s stature. The disease changed one’s voice and movements. Thankfully, I awoke. Before I returned to sleep, Lance-in-spirit wandered into the bedroom and inspected me. I was about to wish my spirit to Heaven so decided to take him with me. There, I checked Polly’s progress. Lance stood beside me seeing everything with delight. I asked if he would like to do a bit of Therapy work and he acquiesced with enthusiasm. Lexie was there and surprised to see her old – home buddy. Lance told him immediately that he was ‘just visiting, like Mary does.’

Jay arrived to fetch me so I introduced Polly who said the hearsay was that his area was larger having horses and people constantly visiting! He smiled indicating the other side of the Holy Ghost’s Mountain. He nodded pleasantly but said we must keep our appointment with The Father.

We updated The Father about the animals at “work”. Lance came wandering across from the distance. The Father was surprised at the nearly all white Collie. It is most gorgeous with perfectly balanced pastel facial markings. I told Lance this was The Father. Immediately he felt this Spirit was sad. Lance went up sat before Him, placed his paw on The Father’s knee and said a prayer for Him to feel well and happy and have a wonderful day.” The Father was taken-back by this spontaneous gesture and touched the dog’s head kindly. He said “Of all the creatures I have created, even mankind, none of them have ever said a prayer for me! Is he here?” Lance immediately said he was visiting like Mary. My heart dropped. Joan was still bereaved at loosing Lexi and I knew the Father did not have a dog.

A Helpful Spirit came saying a friend wanted to speak with me. It was William Yardley who quizzed me about this “Jay”. I would always hold affection for William but that God directed me to Jay. William accepted the news without incident! Amy/Deidia chose this moment to wander to us. I introduced her to William. The two talked easily and began strolling off together. I sent a silent thought to William: ‘Be careful with her, she had a horrible death!’ William straightened his shoulders.

It was the little mother’s feast day. We take part and so immediately went to don appropriate garments. Joseph, Jay’s father did the honors for her. It was very sweet.

It tried to drizzle for our Doggie Day, Tuesday. At the luncheon the ladies put their heads together to solve the problem of mending Rose’s cloth and wire spring tunnel. Her six dogs decided in play tunnel one afternoon. J.C. a three legged dog that is built like a boulder, jerked open the storage shed door, dragged out the collapsed tunnel. The dogs tore the tunnel in places before it sprung open. Although they had a great time Rose found the mess and was beside herself. Joan had the cloth and a sewing machine so several of the ladies gathered at her house. Joan opened the tunnel on her Duncan Phyfe table and her dog, Gwennie followed the ladies like she knew exactly what was taking place. Lance curled in nap position off and on, checking what was happening. Joan became used to his maneuver. I suggested a solution for the mesh part. Joan said she could cut and baste the patches but her machine could not get inside to sew it. Michele said she had a serger and would give it a try. Out of this I came home with a toy octopus to mend. It was quite colorless, but the squeaker was intact and Gwennie loved it. With a few invisible stiches the head was reattached. The poor thing needed a face so I embroidered orange eyes and delivered the toy Friday. Joan sent an E that her dogs were delighted with it.

This Heavenly Weekend Jay and I were free of commitments so decided to attend a ball. It was in South Beach, Florida. Jay wore a black tuxedo. I chose a shiny red slim gown with straps (Thank God for perfect shapes in Heaven) the ruby ensemble and a small tiara. The dancing was pleasant until several women encroached questioning my jewels and wanting to know where we were from. (Noxiously, I mentioned the Holy-land area.) At one point several warrior angels dressed in tuxedoes surrounded Jay and I and moved us to another part of the dance floor.

When we returned to Heaven, The Father summonsed. ‘We have to do something about the women in the Blessed Mother’s house. They constantly pray and they need to think for themselves …and to look around! Their mansions and gardens are shabby with abandonment.’ (The women pray for her causes.) The Helpful Spirits listened and while I thought how to soften the blow; these knowledgeable spirits went to the Blessed Lady’s house and said commandingly: “Ladies, God wants you to go home! Your mansions are dusty and your gardens overgrown and fading. So it is with your thinking. Go home. Think of fresh things. Come up to date!’

One simpered, ‘But the Blessed Mother--’

‘Look about you, woman! She has found new endeavors; she has not been here for some time and so it must be with you also.’

With suddenness they gathered their few belongings and dispersed. My thinking of emotions and reactions would have had no effect. The blunt approach was correct! Jay suggested we visit the double Ferris-Wheel. I glanced back to my earthly bedroom - Charles very asleep but that Dundee -in spirit had wandered in and was at my bedside. I asked Jay if we could bring him up. Jay laughed and said of course. Dundee was skeptical of the Double Ferris Wheel but we held him between us. He calmed on the lower circle and also the upper one, but when it began a complete rotation he showed apprehension. I told him to look out over everything and see how sparkly it was. He relaxed and his constantly sober face softened a bit.

The push these days on earth is “Global Warming.” To my surprise, The Father said the causes are not gasses or ice melting. It is mostly because the temperate zones are becoming weightier. It is caused less by falling leaves but by burials in vaults, paved roadways and by tall buildings; in other words by the heavy use of asphalt and concrete. The Father gave assurances that we relax; all is as He wishes. Thoughts of ancient calendars all ending at the same time made Him laugh. He said every so often the earth needs renewed by a rotation; this happens in segments now… not to worry.

Football season was upon us. The twin grandsons were in the marching band at Glenwood High. Both sets of grandparents plus Kim’s sisters came. This is quite a drive for them as Paxton is over 150 miles away and they travel back after the game! On our way there I detected breathing in the back, Lance likes traveling in-spirit but soon discovered stadium excitement too crowded and left.

Four evenings later was my glorification. There is a closed gown the ladies wear for this plus a new crystal crown. Jay set a crown inside this. It is such a glorious emotional feeling that l my earthly body gave out and I fell asleep. In the morning I asked The Father if I might see a replay of it. The Replay seemed to be from Jay’s mansion atop the tower belvedere.

Here is what I saw: The gown I wore shimmered and the crowns sparkled with tremendous Light. I did not remember wearing a bright red-pink mantle but there it was! It amazed me that The Father commented profusely about short prayers I say for people listed in the newspaper obituaries (most I do not know) and for the animals. Then he added: ‘Many people want to thank you.’ (All are spirits but are considered “People”.) To be remembered was unexpected but fulfilling. What a joy to know such little efforts are appreciated.

Friday proved active for Charles and me. We had good travel weather to Tremont. There we signed the papers for the Reverse Mortgage. To me, there seemed great amounts of money involved; the unknown process exhausted both of us. Returning, the restaurants did not appeal to us; we ate at home. Charles was asleep as he hit the pillow; I checked and closed the house, dropped into bed.

Dundee wandered in. He really liked visiting Heaven and began coming nightly. Jay met us with the car and three dogs in back. Dundee was taken back at seeing other dogs! Jay introduced them: His Coonhound Pee Gee, and the two Borzoi/Huskies that love the Holy Ghost. They sniffed each other. It was a reprieve for me. At our area, the two Borzois scampered off and Dundee hoped to go on the Ferris-Wheel.

Pee Gee was terrified just looking at it. Dundee convinced Pee Gee to try one circle. He was smitten with Pee Gee; to him she was gorgeous! They made an unusual and later faithful couple. Once Pee Gee enjoyed riding the Ferris wheel, a basket of leather was fashioned for the two to use. Safety was not an issue in Heaven, but the basket made them feel special. He gloated watching her ears flap in the wind and she had eyes that sparkled when he came. Jay thought Dundee ought to have a dog house or enlarge hers. Pee Gee said, ‘No Dundee must have his own.’ She wanted privacy at times. A doghouse was new to him. He was an indoor dog but hey! He was near Pee Gee.

One evening Dundee noted a strange movement! His head and ears went up: ‘There’s a man bothering the horses!’ Jay chuckled. It was seldom Dundee perked his Collie ears. Jay explained the Spaniard spirit once trained the dancing Lipizzaner’s. Dundee went to Pee Gee’s house and alerted her; they watched. Dundee knew some of those steps. (Rose his owner had taken him to dance class.) ‘Want me show you?’ Pee Gee was awkward she tripped over her big paws but Dundee had the patience of Job. The two were cavorting when my once brother, Louis wandered along with Cheyenne, his dog. He stopped and asked if his dog could learn some of that. Neither Jay nor I knew what to say. We called Dundee and he thought one more was fine but this expanded. Dundee began giving dancing classes when he visited. Quickly, three became twenty dogs and then more!

Springfield: As soon as the reverse mortgage money was available – Charles began spending it! He ordered the very best new roof. In short order he directed her to drive to a monument company to look at tombstones! (That can suck your joy!) We looked alone as there was no salesperson until I made a suggestion to Charles and we were laughing: I liked the engraving around the frame of a small granite and remarked it was a shame to ruin it with names. “We could just leave it blank and let ‘em guess”. The sales lady was quizzical but once told she did not find it funny. The new roof was nearly complete; Charles ordered replacement windows and two steel doors! I did not expect the windows or doors. There went half the money!

When the banks began having problems, Charles ordered me remove most of the available Reverse Mortgage money, convert it to cash and store it elsewhere! I tried to impress that we must pay interest on whatever we requested – but he was adamant to have his way! (By 2020 - the statements show more owed in interest than the equity was on the house!)

One evening Charles and I were watching the movie, “Drumline” when Dundee wandered in in-spirit. The band began marching and parting all over the field. The dog took a large breath. ‘Ha! Now I got it,’ and he was gone. What a curiosity.

When I left in-spirit that evening, Dundee was already there. His class was learning to move along in a line, turn the line and return. When they had this down, he repeated a second turn at the starting point. He had taught them to bow. Then the dogs were free for the night and scampered happily to their masters. Then a spirit who played a large bass drum volunteered to pound rhythm to the dogs pace. The dogs’ owners lined the fence to the pasture watching their pets but The Father and the Holy Ghost could no longer see into the pasture because of all the spirits. The dogs were beckoned into the Commons to perform their little march. The troop had grown to twenty-four dogs. Only one was a small terrier and it did tricks between the others. Dundee was always in charge and never nasty. Lexie, Joan’s Samoyed tried but simply could not concentrate. She practiced faithfully.

My driving to Veterans’ Clinic visits increased. Charles kept with the herbal tinctures that I made but he loved subs for lunch. He began needing bathroom attention day and night. With these added cleaning burden I began needing the Tuesday morning visits with the dogs. Veteran’s said they could send a person to help four hours a week. The first man was nice, over weight and used a cane. He seemed to need as much care for his pain as Charles! He watched games on his smart phone. The second person was a young man with a son in school. He reasoned wiping the kitchen counter was enough and fabricated excuses to leave early: His car; son ill at school; he too checked games on his smart phone! But, he was prompt with his monthly time-sheet! The helpers were frustrating: Write chores, showing them storage, cleaning supplies - neither remembered anything by the next week. They were added hassle.

My birthday in early October was actually ok. Derek and I set up a new phone system. The girls telephoned, sent cards and some spending money. The children treated us to a Thai restaurant and everyone enjoyed it. Charles enjoyed eating out tremendously. He was using a patio - cook’s apron to save his garments and loved this. Finally the Dr. had a sample analyzed. It was a parasite. Another month to right this and then the news revealed: Lettuce at the Sub shop was infested with e- coli.

My many years of praying for Marshall to return to the family materialized. It had been twenty-two years since I saw him and his wife, Susan. By then none of us wanted to remember any details of the break! My heart rose and I hugged them both. Marshall wanted to chat with his father, but this was fruitless. Charles was non-communicative and each said little. Susan and I had a great time in the kitchen. We discussed things both relevant and not. The conversations wandered everywhere. Marshall was positive although their home and farm were uprooted by authorities looking for a “lead” as to what happened to their abducted daughter - Amy was missing 19 years! The authorities focused on the parents again! This second time, the deck was knocked down, the yard and all concrete was bulldozed - Marshall had a heart attack! This was followed by open heart surgery. He was recuperating well enough. Marshall and Susan have worked endlessly to find Amy. They used Private I’s; TV shows; DNA on her baby teeth! Nineteen years of tension and heartbreak -multiplied by authorities’ repeated suspicion, harassment and property destruction that legally they need never repay or repair. - My Far Memory honed in to a time during The Practices: A Life Planner said “Your son Marshall has chosen a tough road. I could do little but love them and thank God for having our son’s family back in the fold.

I knew Monsignor W. was ill; that was the reason he had to give up the refuge of his little farm and later retired to a smaller parish. He spoke few but poignant words; we shared gardening, church safety and sheer foolishness often in a few moments before Mass. November 25 the newspaper had his obit. I now understood a strange dream I had (a part of me was amputated) it meant the removal of a person from my life. How often Fr. W. and I buoyed each other! The angels said he is on green. For a priest that is wonderful! I went in-spirit to visit him and found a baffled man. Never had he thought of himself; his clothing was threadbare, his car was ancient. Like me, everything was seconf hand, his trctor and farm implements. Now he faced configuring a mansion! I made the suggestions as with others. I asked what name he would use and he said, ‘Patrick.’ I mentioned doing things he liked freely for others and suggested his art of growing strawberries; then I remembered a conversation we had about fish and suggested relaxing with that and maybe later giving lessons in trout fishing. This last caught his attention so we wrapped up the mansion and simple landscaping and were off to the Animal Conservatory. I left him with Alfred talking about rainbow trout.

The queue at the funeral home for Monsignor W. was tremendous. I dropped into every vacant seat along the que chatting with my friend, Ed Curtin. Ed proved a Godsend as Charles was at home and already asleep. Ed caught wind of my family quirk (taking a word in the ongoing conversation and shooting off onto a fun tangent). It was a pleasant three hours to get to the family. Once there, I introduced myself as the unidentified lady in the newspaper photo at Monsignor’s retirement party. Patrick’s younger sister Nancy, a classmate did not recognize my married name but my maiden name rang bells. We spoke fondly. I was amiss to see a full view of the body tilted with the head up in all brand new “Monsignor Garments!” Patrick had a partial smile on his face; that is always a good sign. His spirit was not present. I felt pulled by the breast bone to attend the Funeral Mass: His spirit was not there either. I asked the angels about this. They said, “He’d rather not come.” All the priests of the diocese attended and wore identical vestments. Bishop Lucas said an ornate High Mass. Darn it, where was Patrick! Curiously, I followed the procession to the grave site …none of those priests or the Bishop came to the grave site..

The new Deacon, Mr. Hartley and Fr. Chiola said the last rites. The W. family sat under a blue tent with slight extension and among them was a man moving about. As I focused I realized it was a young slim Patrick wearing tan slacks and cardigan, a white shirt with medium blue stripes and a softly rolled collar - a popular European style! At his back were brown paper wings of teardrop shape, pasted upside down! I wanted to laugh convulsively, but made it resemble being distraught. He knew I had caught sight of him and began a pantomime to embellish the Deacon’s words: “Praise” and “Paradise.” It was so completely opposite from his restrained priestly demeanor. Then he pointed to himself and then to me and said, “Now I can do it too.” (Move about in-the-spirit). I could not hold back my laughter and so quickly turned my back to everyone and went to my car. Patrick lingered while they lowered the casket and then his arms shot into the air and he shouted - at least to my ears - ‘Now I’m Free! I’m FREE of it ALL!’ The words shocked me. I knew the little farm was an escape. He never retorted to the old brow-beaters but bore the responsibilities of a large new parish and buildings debt quietly. Perhaps that was the base of our friendship - two people silently trapped in their vocations.

I sat in the car and shook. Perhaps I should mention about his mansion. Non-chalantly he said, “OK, what I need is a place about as big as this tent; in fact, I’d rather have a tent.”

“So, have a tent! Put some jewels on it if you want. Whatever makes it Heaven for you, Patrick.”

“How do I do that?”

“Wish; it’s Heaven; have what you want!”

He nodded and said he’d work on it, turned, walked through the crowd and evaporated.

I thought for a moment - ‘Wow - who’d a thought? You think you know someone and they have more facets than you can imagine.’

December 4; I was watching TV when I began to hear Christmas Music. I muted the TV and listened to the Ethereal Music. There were so many variations on a theme and innovative phrasings to old carols! Some choirs sang beautifully. All of it induced me to turn off the TV and meander through the house, get ready for bed and join Jay. The music was indeed from the Heavenly Spheres and continued for hours - so lovely. Jay and I checked on Patrick. His mansion was gone! In its place was a tent in a wooded area; a stream was nearby where he stood fly-fishing. It was not our idea of Heaven, but Patrick was happy and content. We brought him for dessert at our mansion where he met our ever-ready dessert-friends: St. Patrick, Brother Dom. Horst and my once-brother, Louis.

CHAPTER XXIII

2010 - YEAR OF CHANGES

The New Year 2010 began. Charles began Parkinson’s induced hallucinations. He would sit becoming angry at times growled that he didn’t know why he kept me! At the time, I did not know these reactions were disease oriented. It hurt but I guessed he was angry about being ill.

I was thankful for my bedtime adventures. The Heavenly Festivals and reveling; the various Glorifications and admittance of new spirits; who could ever expect so many wonders in the Unseen Realm … I never spoke to anyone about all these paranormal happenings but I wrote wrote them in my notebook. At times of earthly turmoil and devastation Jay and I joined others working at check-in. Deidia/Amy and her dog Cedes still enjoy this work. Dundee visited nightly but would not take part in any carry or fetch. Other dogs love it. The scrolls simply represent what people expect to see in Heaven. Once returned their contents move to the recording computers. Everything is designed to comfort the newly arrived.

This year, Charles was less steady; at times slid slowly to the floor. At times I could lift him but admit - now the firemen fairly well knew the house. Otherwise Spring and Summer followed like the many years past.

October 6th my children and friends celebrated my 80th birthday. Those at a distance sent gifts and telephoned. The doggie group outdid themselves with cards and gifts at the luncheon. Derek’s family brought dinner and cake, plus party accouterments to the house rather than having their dad endure travel. It was a wonderful birthday! I stood behind him for a picture. Later, I did not recognize him in the picture. I saw him so constantly that his frailty shocked me.

Four days later, Charles was using his walker and simply keeled over in slow motion. He hit a maple chair. This was the only time he ever expressed pain. Quickly, I called the firemen. They had just the right equipment to get him to bed (his request). In the morning he could not move. I called the Veteran’s Clinic in Springfield who advised me - **to bring him in!**

Derek came but he was unable to move Charles. (Our bedroom is very small.) The firemen arrived and moved him easily with a pole and canvas stretcher; down the steps and into our car. Derek drove. The Springfield Veterans’ Clinic told us to - **take him to** ***Illiana in*** **Danville**- a 2.5 hour drive! There the doctors felt Carle Hospital in Urbana was better able to perform a needed procedure. (Back 35 miles (ambulance for Charles). But Carle Emergency was professional and deft. Charles ribs had bent in the fall this masked that fluid was collecting in his lungs. He stopped verbal communication after the procedure. He was given a two party room. Derek and I were very stressed at the complete lethargy and silence of this once vibrant and frightening man. Neither of us was sitting when he suddenly rolled his head completely left as if someone had called his name! He looked at the upper portion of a room divider; listened, then said:

“Oh yes, I know Roy Buckles, Hank Sommer and Joe Wangard!” He paused and listened, “Oh, tomorrow! Yes, I’ll be ready!” With that he rolled his head to the right; closed his eyes and fell back into lethargy. Derek and I decided an angel visited and that something would happen tomorrow.

In a few minutes a Doctor entered the room and asked about extra-ordinary procedures but after hearing the earth half of Charles conversation, I said, “No; it would not improve his quality of life.” The doctor agreed. Derek and I tried to sleep but it was impossible. Overnight the room was changed. It was for the dying but we were not told of this. Derek’s in-laws Patsy and Roy arrived after lunch hour and brought us food. In these distracted moments, at 1 p.m. Charles left us earthlings to join his work friends and my dad, Joe. We left the instructions according to Charles wishes. We were happy that Kim’s parents had come it soften things. Shortly we started homeward silently.

Derek chose a quiet roadway to travel home. Near a lumber company; I smelled the fragrance of many flowers. I asked if a flower house was nearby. Derek said, no. Then I remembered, many people send me the fragrance of flowers after they check into Heaven! That meant: Charles made it inside the Gates! How, seemed beyond my understanding.

I had taken this life to help four men who were having a difficult time gaining Heaven: Bill, Ares, Louis and Charles. I remember adding Horst (#5). They all made it! That work was finished. Charles wanted his body donated to science so there was a simple memorial, Derek assembled the presentation. The music was unconventional; Charles liked western music… The place was filled: the Gardner Township friends and customers, a surviving carpenter, classmates of ours, working day friends. The children and their spouses greeted everyone. Marshall and Susan from Osseo, MN were exhausted after the ten hour drive, but in good spirits. His comments were light-hearted, genuine and comical remembrances of his visit after his dad’s brain surgery in 1975. The other children did not understand Marshall’s stories but at that time children could not visit in the hospital. Most people there had never seen Marshall grown up but thereafter he was referred to as: “Oh, the fun one!” A Veteran’s ceremony was beautiful. Most of the flowers were red, white and blue. Charles’ friend Frank Farley for whom our crew built two houses was most ill but said this was one Veterans’ service he had to take part in. I chose the new Deacon to speak because he comprehended life and also I could hear him clearly.

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I had paid the utilities for several years but now with income changes it was scary- Paying Taxes and Premiums on half the Social Security staggered me. Charles had no life insurance. What little was borrowed on. We had the simplest memorial service. I was grateful we had no huge debts. The leftover Reverse Mortgage money was a costly cushion - there in case I needed but those interest sheets escalated fantastically. The enjoyments touted in commercials had never happened. Although we had a pre-plan for a funeral it almost covered half because of an investments lost by the funeral directors association.

Two months passed but I continued to steel myself at the computer waiting for Charles to break my concentration with his needs or demands.

***Finally, the Angels brought me to my senses: ‘Hey you’re free; no one’s going to interrupt you!’*** I actually sat back astounded! My nerves were shot; simple foods upset me I repressed so much that I was a shaking wreak. OK, now I must learn to be me! After fifty-seven years is there anything of me left?

Wasn’t there a Thanksgiving Day?’ I usually had the Christmas Letter ready and the tree up before Thanksgiving! In 2010 the letter was short. That big tree would be impossible to tackle alone. I found a two foot tree, spray-painted it white and stuck it in a frosted glass ice bucket. The ornaments were tiny; a few spanned three generations. I spread the French Table with strings of clear lights and covered these with a roll of artificial snow. I knew how to arrange the power strips so one switch-flip and it all went on! The children were shocked: It was not the Big Nostalgic Home Christmas! But I could handle this.

The Senior Center had an art class. I needed something so attended. It went well; I completed: The face of a panda, a tea party in the forest; and a ship at sea near land. The lunch cook meandered through the class and became most excited at my ship! As I went to wash out my brushes he tagged along talking about my Spanish Galleon and my wonderful fresh water pool! My ship needed a long pole in front he explained, that was a rudder on old ships. He went on explaining my perfect quay with a water fall into a fresh water pool. The sea water swirled which brought a small boat inward for the sailors to collect fresh water! How surprised I was and delighted with the information! When I returned to my area to pack up, the lady next to me bristled: “Don’t bother with him - he’s only the cook!” She stupefied me! My God, the man was brilliant!

My sight clouded. Upon testing my right eye needed treatment due to High Blood Pressure! A low blood count was discovered. It was explained to Derek and me like this:

“If either your son or I had a blood count this low (#2) we would have been long dead before we reached it!” The young Doctor added, “It is evident that beings you have been anemic since early childhood your system has tolerated this.” Massive doses of Iron Pills were started. Within a few months my blood count became normal but falls quickly without them.

Until the eyes stabilized I could not drive my car. The art class stopped! Rose Hutches fetched me Tuesdays and if needed Joan R. was ready so I could handle a dog at a nursing home. Derek carted me to the Doctors that treated my Cataract and Macular Degeneration Conditions. He took me grocery shopping and fixed or did whatever was needed. The two California daughters were concerned: Our Mother cannot brood over these happenings! As soon as my eyes stabilized, they would have me visit California.

Happily this came about. For two wonderful weeks I stayed with Michael and Selena. During the day the two girls took me shopping in all the little towns between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. They knew every boutique in each town! Their mother ended up completely exhausted with a new wardrobe including shoes!

Nearly every evening Michael McLaury and I talked music. I felt alive again! His compositions were so mellow and sweet I thought maybe movies or TV, but he had been in a Rock Group: “Harum Scarum” it was alright until some of the guys tried drugs. This scene was too heavy for him. He mastered several other skills. Selena traveled back to Springfield with me. I tried to find a few boutiques but alas the Springfield area had only two.

I managed to get a stick of Jankowski’s music copied for Michael. Being quite intuitive, Michael noticed the personal connections in the music and at last I admitted he was most special. I never relished coming home but this time joy abounded - the Doggie People were delighted to have me back.

I truly missed driving but rationalized if I was too be stuck at home I could tackle the garden in front. A patch of grass had gotten into my sedum. The grass patch was bigger than it looked. I bought a trench shovel and worked one and a half hours removing two buckets of deeply rooted grass daily. My compost stash plus peat and perlite replaced the low spots and the sedum was reset. Derek arrived unexpectedly and my project was discovered! He and the twins roto-tilled the rest, treated the ground and all was flourishing. My eyes were mending. Then the weather changed and a drought set in. Water was restricted. Slowly that live-forever sedum passed into sainthood.

Through these months I continued entries in my regular and Heavenly diary but I was not writing in a straight line; words pitched skyward or downhill and overwritten - many entries were useless. Keeping books and writing checks suffered too but I kept this as my secret so the children would not realize my Spartan lifestyle. But Derek kept an eye pealed and the children surprised me with replacements as old things died. One unhappiness was: My new eyeglasses were useless before they were delivered - my eyes changed twice after cataract surgery! No more waste and tussle with optometrists! I found an enlarging glass with a light for reading. Over time, my hand-writing improved and I was indeed thankful to God, my children and my doggie friends.

There was an H-2 channel showing: The Arc of the Covenant - one of those curious things in religiosity: After much time containing the God Spirit - the Arc “was lost!” I invited my angels to watch. Their response: ***‘Once God withdrew from the arc it became a lovely object.’*** Another week: “The Holy Grail” referring to the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper. The angels imparted, ***‘The room was rented for gatherings (like restaurants and clubs do today) the furniture and accouterments belonged to the proprietors. Likely after the group departed, the dishes were gathered, washed and put on shelves just like in restaurants today.’***

At home, my neighbor’s dad, Darrell was fixing a massive water related collapse on her second floor. Shock! We used the same roofers. I secretly used the indoor staircase, went upstairs and checked. All mine was fine. That night I relaxed after this scare and found a long collie nose resting on my arm. Dundee-in-spirit arrived promptly at 10:20 p.m. My go-between angel escorted us through the shaft to God’s level. That dog is spoiled now. He does not miss a chance to visit Heaven and especially Pee Gee. He is most diligent working with his dog groups. They practice the evening’s routines before their “Appearance.” It has grown to four groups of twenty to twenty-four dogs. Dundee delegated dog-leaders for these groups. They learn the new routines and instruct their groups. Dundee performs with his original group to live music in the Commons before the Godhead and spirits there. Once a new spirit arrival asked about the dogs’ master; who teaches them? He never saw a master! Both Jay and I pointed to the big Rough Collie and said: ‘Him!’ This Heavenly enjoyment is the offshoot of his one weekend “Dance Class” in Chicago! All hail his earthly owner, Rose Hutches!

Summer brought the best news: “Mrs. Midden you can drive!” To celebrate, I gave myself a home permanent, but into the neutralizing step, my arms grew weary and I could not finish it. Knowing it would not stay, I called a shop that Veralee, a Doggie Lady uses. Turned out that proprietor, knew my four younger children! He had taken Regina to the Prom! When I told the girls they promptly checked their Class books and E-mailed pictures of Jeff and Regina. They said he was the nicest guy in the classes they shared! The perm by him turned out fine but removed my red coloring! Suddenly I was blonde. I was a redhead since I was 17: “People do not mess with redheads. What do blondes do?” - Jeff said, “They ask questions.” Over time the blonde faded to g-r-e-y! It was time to give this coloring business thought. Could I handle grey? Ugh. Grey! But realistically, who ever saw a lady of eighty with naturally red hair?

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At Oak Terrace Nursing Home the Doggie People were leaving when Vivien’s grandson caught his fingers between the two glass doors. He was into the convulsive crying hurt little boys can do when I said gently, “Let me see it.” I held the little hand, prayed mentally that the fingers feel ok. When Vivien came a-hovering, the child said, “Oh, they don’t hurt at all.” He wiped his tears and skipped out.

I relaxed at home and smelled the aroma of maple tobacco; that was Horst! He chatted easily and then approached the reason for his visit: Dundee! “Dundee speaks so fluently. My two Afghans do not do that.” I explained the dog watches documentaries on TV. His vocabulary is bewildering. Horst agreed. ‘That dog is nearly human at times. He comes to me and says, Horst, this is what I have in mind. I look up then around thinking it is one of my entourage’ then down - there is the dog! Dundee explains his new idea routine and then asks what sort of music would work with it. It is just like I am talking with another person.’ The maestro shook his head and shortly was gone.

The 75 year old Silver Maple Tree of no one’s delight was removed from Lori’s back yard next door. Now the hot sun burned and dried two of my blackberry bushes. Their lush output shriveled as the drought continued but it made pests of Peppermint, Bronze Fennel, Lemon Balm and encouraged a strange weed in the white rocks of the old truck parking area.

Theresa Vann a classmate, passed away. The wake was at Blessed Sacrament Church. Theresa’s son had become the Catholic Bishop of Orange County CA. As a boy he was a slight, freckled redhead. It was years since those days. This day proved a confusing interlude, I was asked to move three times; the last - something about using the main doors for exit. I refused! I was unable to walk that far; besides I parked in a handicapped space near my first seat! The undertaker took my arm and we walked to my original seat. Along the way, I noticed a girl’s pretty up-do with bandana and (Oh, my!) her hair was in dusty dreadlocks! I shivered and murmured, “Shades of Medusa.” The young man caught a guffaw by coughing; hurried me past the casket to my seat, shoved a bald rotund priest out of the way and sped to the back of the church. There he burst into howling laughter. The shoved priest was Bishop Vann in a plain black suit!

There was instant payback for my dreadlock jibe: In the morning my old microwave caught fire. Derek and I got a daintier one. He took the other to the alley with my noted problem; by afternoon it was taken!

My oldest daughter , The Magdalene began having intestinal problems. Her normal medications conflicted with all antibiotics but her fortitude fought on through many operations to remove infection! One evening she telephoned; she was happy to return to part-time working. She and her work friend attended a movie and we talked as her friend drove them home. The Magdalene did not seem to want to end the call. We finally may have said we loved each other - we usually do. She relaxed falling asleep while her friend and nurse prepared dinner. She left us peacefully.

June, but nine months have not softened the loss. Harold Kingsbury brought The Magdalene’s children to visit from St. Paul. Michelle and Christopher brought blow-up mattresses and used both back room and the old apartment upstairs. They had nearly out- grown Sci-Fi fetishes and were fun to talk with. Harold too felt free to talk about his life happenings. There was little talk about The Magdalene. Losing her was too sacred; no one touched it. Derek came to visit and chat. He told stories about his childhood and mother who talked to animals. They heard it before but they laughed again.

Harold was not surprised, but once he met The Magdalene the paranormal was normal. When she was a child, The Magdalene saw into Heaven to as far as she was advanced. She saw all in the deep to light blues, all the greens and into the yellows and remembered everything explicitly and told her story often.

Mid-June Rose held the testing for new Therapy Dogs. Dundee was “Greeter Dog” and so bored he fell asleep. Many Doggie People help. Each dog is tested individually except for the long sit. Half do it at a time. There were over a dozen dogs that tested and only three failed; most of them because of the long sit of five minutes with a stranger at their leach. The dogs must be felt; fur brushed by a stranger; perform the novice obedience commands; sit a short distance from their master; and then sit at three times that distance. They must go through crowds and children with squeaky toys; not flinch or bark at sudden noises or upset hospital equipment; greet strangers and the greeter dog; be petted; held if small; leave tempting food alone and the long sit. It is grueling but the dogs often surprise us for a good laugh. The Carster children helped (actually - until they were in High School.) This once they decided Dundee needed attention. They took the leather sandals off their teddy bear and put them on Dundee’s front feet. Then they found a rain hat and placed it on his head with the wide brim turned back. He’s OK with dress-up. I took snapshots of him.

That night I needed sleep but was too accelerated; it was Jay’s Glorification and festival; I finally fell asleep. The Angels arranged a replay for me. It surprised me that again it seemed to be shown from our belvedere. We served food and wines in the mansion ballroom. The description of the area follows:

The Commons, mansion entrance and the pasture were outlined with fragrant Roses. The cherry trees in the pasture always remain in bloom, their trunks are wound with strands of diamonds and all walking areas are sprinkled with a glittery dust. It seems more vibrant than usual. The pasture was visible the horses and performing dogs lined along the little pasture fence. Each is wearing their Gift of a small gold medallion on a chain; Dundee wears his special pink diamond drop. They are not performing this evening. Jay’s private “Paper Garden” and our resting areas are obscured from others by mist.

Jay wore a lame’ tunic, red mantle and his dress watch. He wore the Fleur d Leis crown from God the Father, and had his hair pulled back smoothly.

The “saints” filled the Commons. A quiet joy predominated. The Ceremony of Glorification is followed by the receiving line and then dancing. Music is synchronized with fireworks and the dancing waters. God’s Light fills every “nook and cranny”. With thousands attending it sounds like organized chaos but there is always room to move freely.

One August morning I turned on the faucet and there was no water! I figured the lake finally went dry. When my neighbors were readying for work I asked if they had water. All reported things in good condition! I telephoned my son. Derek asked if I’d checked the basement… No! I went down stairs and at first nothing was apparent. But the herb room floor was damp. Water seemed to be coming from the crawl space under the living room. I went into the south basement room and was overwhelmed by a waterfall gushing over the edge of the crawl space. I thought of all the plastic containers of collectibles and holiday things in that area.. I called Derek again and then my nephew, John Patrick, an excellent plumber. He immediately had the city shut off the water supply before he arrived. Derek’s family came and the plastic storage containers were removed and stacked where it was dry. All mementoes were saved.

The break was a few inches underground in the crawl space. Ages earlier we had placed large sheets of cardboard and carpet on that “floor” so we could move about easily. All of this was saturated. John Parickt said the only good thing about the break was it on the city side of the meter; this meant I did not have to pay for the water. What a hollow plus! John Patrick replaced the burst iron pipe of 1905 with copper. He said it was not corroded - it just gave. All exposed pipes had been replaced when we purchased the house in 1963.

There was no other damage and everyone breathed a free sigh. Now drying out the hole began. However, before things dried enough to handle, mold set in. I dragged and rolled the stinking card board and carpet out of the “hole” by myself. A Shirley Mc Laine song crossed my mind and I had to laugh remembering some passe’ uppity club women. I sang Shirley’s song: “If my friends could see me nee-ow!” It cheered me completely even though Shirley was decked in diamonds, feathers and finery while I was rolling a moldy mess toward the cellar doors and to the alley. It was good to laugh!

The next challenge was over-supply! My late husband never bought one or two. There were 4 gallons of cooking oil (we never French Fried) cases of canned foods, 8 gallons of liquid soap, ammonia and bleach. I loaded the car and paid several visits to the food pantry. The ground in the crawl space was dry. Big dips and rises were found hidden under those old coverings. All made by Charles tossing bricks and bits of wood in there saying: “That’ll do; it’s out of the way!” Derek arrived unexpectedly and carted these bushels of bits out! Actually I found leveling the ground in the crawl space the easiest part! New carpet and cardboard was set flat in place and Derek replaced the storage containers of collectibles and mementos!

I had now conquered about six “Charlie things:” Like opening the cellar door - to free a sparrow that came down the chimney. That turned into a three hour and a half struggle because it took three different tools to remove four screws that held a bar across the door. The door would not open and in the semi dark I find a second bar across the bottom of the door. But I had all the tools! When I opened the door I faced a wall of Styrofoam! That was when I lost my cool and bammed hell out of the Styrofoam, but unfortunately - the bird died of a heart attack!

There was 2 ½ hours spent removing a simple extension cord - discovered it had been stapled with construction staples every inch - four feet of that under the bookcase headboard of my bed! I hoped there would be no more “Charlie things”... but there were.

I was in bed, chatting with God the Father easily that night; poking fun at my crazy predicaments when there was a rush of air; yet the air was still! To my right stood two dark grey spirits one older with charts and the other was Charles! He seemed in his thirties with that kind of hyped energy which often repels people. I was still in “Charlie Thing Shock”, and in that moment well, if he wasn’t already dead - I would have killed him!

Charles began talking softly. (The Father was listening to all of this.) The plea was that he wanted to continue with me as his wife. I about choked; especially after the day to day hells; money lacks; in-house ordeals. How stupendously outrageous of him! Never would I take another Earth Life! I earned Heaven and had Jay! But Charles was no one with whom to speak harshly. Softly I said; “The marriage has finished; in Heaven there are no marriages or…” Before I finished, his voice increased in volume and soon his words became dictatorial with his-gesturing to the house and accouterments; saying: “We have all this!” … (And just what was all this? Harder work than I ever experienced before he died; a garden lost - twice; a house threatening to self-destruct; finding hidden purchases that cost more than I earned! … Quietly, I shook my head, no. His face turned red and his eyes began to bulge - amplifying his voice to win not listening! Amidst this, I turned my head to the Father and shrugged helplessly. The Father breathed upon them and the two dissipated. In a moment the Father spoke: “He needs help. We have those who can help.” He saw that His daughter was shaking after this episode. “And, this was the essence of your relationship?” He shook His head. I told the Father, “If anyone can’t make it to Heaven - it is their tough luck! No more Earth Lives for me: Been there, done that!” The Father chuckled, gathered up my spirit and took me up for the night.

Rose took her dogs to doggie camp for two weeks. Joan did not go this year so carted me to the nursing home meets. Joan is a lovely person but not easy to know. She and I talk music and gardening. Joan plays piano well, and gives popular concerts at nursing homes for the holidays. Both Rose and Joan like me were only children introverted by controlling, hovering mothers. Joan never married. Rose and I shared more in life than we’d hoped.

Dogs communicate on earth! Lance spilled the news to Dundee that he saw the inside of a grocery store! That night, Dundee wanted to go in-spirit! One doesn’t disappoint such a brilliant expectant creature. I imagined myself in a tee and Capri pants because I am visible. We wished ourselves in-spirit to Meijer’s. Dundee was oogle-eyed seeing the stacks of canned foods - fruits and veggies - and also real ones - beautiful! Like Lance he was thrilled seeing an expanse of pickles in glass jars! He did not understand cuts of fresh meats and fish, but was amused at lobsters (their claws taped) swimming slowly in a tank. He lingered and asked me where they came from - the Eastern States; they pinch so their claws are taped. Dundee drew back. He learned to swim in Vermont - that was an Eastern State! “I had no idea there were things in the water!” (Collies do not know how to swim and must be taught) The corner of his eyes caught the decorated cakes and he forgot the lobsters immediately.

We went directly to Heaven where he immediately told Pee Gee about the store. His Coonhound pal did not seem to understand but she had no intention of leaving Heaven to see anything!

My St. Louis cousins Cathy and Ben toured Poland for a few weeks. It was sponsored by their parish priest, who wore blue jeans and tee! Fr. Marek explained that there was so much publicity over St. Stanislaus - breaking with the Catholic Church. (a money thing; the Archbishop wanted to close the parish; confiscate its funds and pay off the diocese pedophile law suits.) A respite was delightful for Father Marek, but was lots of walking for older Ben and Cathy. They visited Krakow where Pope John Paul II had been Bishop. Cousin Cathy is convinced our grandmothers family was from Krakow. I do wonder; our grandmother had told me they came from Bulgaria near Macedonia.

In September the doggie group lost a doggie-member. The Culbertson’s English Mastiff; Hoss just keeled over and died! That dog was an exquisite 262 pounds. I taught him about treats; one little cheese-kibble tossed into his almost closed mouth: How he rolled it all about his mouth! It highlighted that morning for everyone. Hoss was a Therapy Dog; Dundee would find a place for him in the group and this happened quickly. Justice had no pet. He wanted nothing frisky that would break his concentration. Hoss fit that need perfectly. He partakes in most activities by sitting and watching.

A Historical Walk of six sites was held in the autumn. Derek and Kim’s twins are re-enactors and volunteered at Iles House (one of the first houses in Springfield.) They guided visitors to the entrance and later gave a recitation about union soldier brothers returned after the war to Camp Butler (northeast edge of Springfield). Its uses were as: A training camp; a prisoner of war camp for confederate soldiers; a hospital, lastly as a mustering out camp. Now it is a National Cemetery.) The performance was wonderful. The twins repeated their recitation eight times during the evening, to full capacity crowds. They both have deep resonant voices, most pleasurable. Ty said it was the only time he was “the older brother!”

Christmas holidays provided ups and downs: Derek’s family was to visit so I set out the goodies and they brought the food. Cosima and Derek’s families replaced my old TV; a terrific surprise.

The following Tuesday, the garage door refused to open. Doggie Lady, Michele fetched me. This was a Christmas Breakfast Party at Rose’s house. Rose is a southern cook. The food was glorious. We sat and exchanged gifts and pet two black puppies from the shelter. Veralee carried her puppy to the temporary area and in that moment, Rose’s Blue Merle, Logan shot a glance to see where Dundee was (The dog ruler was curled in a sunny spot, good). Logan popped up beside me, lifted my elbow and slipped his head through this crack. I had a puppy so only had the fingers of my right hand free so I began to massage Logan’s throat. He was in ecstasy. Veralee returned to find her seat occupied. She was stunned and verbal. Eyes turned to Logan and me. Rose grabbed her camera! Everyone laughed at the audacious Collie. He stayed!

An electrician did a temporary repair for the garage door opener and left for the holidays. When he returned it was a job finding a fuse box. He had never seen fuses! Among Charles’ old supplies was a box with various amps: problem solved. That evening a vapor light (Dripping with icicles) lit! I thought it had burned out! Two on a fuse! - I was charged at Holiday rates!

My Christmas Eve on earth was spent at Derek’ and Kim’s. The twins and I were so engrossed in their comparing foreign languages, that Derek ordered us to join the others **now**, to open gifts. We three had difficulty winding down our happy chatter. The Elliotts really throw themselves into gift giving. This year was special for Karah, Kim’s sister. She was marrying a nice happy guy named Tony.

In Heaven the focus is on Light, Joy, Music and Camaraderie. Every mansion is decorated and nibbles are served. Jay and I added an eighth horse making four for each of our bubble carriages. . The drays and draft horses were equally in service. The decorations and glitter are over-the-top. This year the Commons area was covered with tiny lights under soft imitation snow (Spirits can’t smash anything).

2011 began Heavenly Diary #XXXI. Minnesota usually has nearly a year of winter and only a few weeks of summer. This winter Marshall was digging his car out only to find he was digging a heap of snow and standing on his car! They began thinking about a larger house rather than cut down their book collections. After discovering the costs of extending utilities, they remained to place.

While it was cold outside, the twins scoured my travel stuff. Tylar had been considering Germany and was surprised that I’d lived in the city of his choice, Stuttgart. Perhaps the only city at the time that voted to rebuild-modern. This commercial city does not cater to tourists.

I had a strange ***dream*** near the last of January about my mother: Helen wore a hospital gown and was walking the halls. I asked her why she was there and Helen replied dourly. ‘I had my teeth pulled.” Mother had beautiful teeth so I asked how many. The answer was: “All of them; feel fine.” But Helen wore a scowl. I awoke wondering about the dream’s meaning and decided maybe she was in rehab; her words always bit. She simply can’t be a normal lovable person. She once swung absolute power (previous life) and she has been determined to run God off the Throne and take over!

Just oppositely one of the Doggie Ladies died; Edie Lynn had been fighting cancer for twelve years and yet she was always sweet and enchanting. The Pearly Gates swung open wide for her.

I asked about certain biblical quotes. ***Jay explained “at that end-time” the lower portions of Heaven would disappear. These included the Static Community and the Interim Community as well as a few levels inside the gates. This was because many years have passed and some of those spirits have not progressed or freely helped others.***

The next revelations did not involve Jay, but my angels. A History-2 presentation stirred some wonderings. ***My angels said I could not visit Roswell, New Mexico in spirit because my ethereal cord would set off the radar! As they were unencumbered by this, they would ask permission to go. Their report was simple. One building held chemicals; another was a clean environment where documents were stored. There were workshops for building new innovative aircrafts and hangars to store them. There was a huge testing area for the craft. The E.T. phenomena resulted from suppressed information and wild imaginations. They found the E.T.’s were crash dummies. There were many types of drones.*** Then the angels admitted that these findings will be rejected because the mystery would be burst. But their findings answered all my wonderings. The angels admitted the excursion had been good for them too.

ST. PATRICK’S DAY

The St. Patrick’s Day Parade fell flat for me. Only members of The Kennel Club could participate in the Unit. But on the other hand -Heaven was into the happiest of festivals. St. Patrick loves a festival; anybody’s festival! Jay’s ballroom was used again. There were shiny wreaths of shamrocks on the tables. Pee Gee and Dundee were sniffing around the table when Saint Patrick decided more room was needed for food and placed a shiny table decoration on each of them. Pee Gee tried to shake hers off, but Dundee said quietly, “No, they think it is pretty.” Saint Patrick gave each of them a surprise hug and then a cup of Chartreuse Champaign Cocktail. As Dundee takes anything, Pee Gee followed suit; no drug problems in Heaven.

As the weather warmed here, I saw that the drought had killed everything and considered red chip mulch for the whole thing. Derek said it needed flowers and red chips would fade. He and his sons arrived and roto-tilled, sprayed the area and returned in a day to spread Preen and Green. Derek and I chose several Sedum and perennial geraniums and natural mulch He was surprised at the fine tilth of my soil; the plants went in quickly. He has extensive gardens, I thought him very adept.

April 2012 had a rough spot. Dundee at 12 ½ years old became difficult to load even with Rose’s van ramp lowered. On a walk with Hope-e, his old dog pal he lay down and would not move. Rose (a short pudgy lady) had to carry the long bodied 56# dog home. At the vet’s the word was a tumor entwined among heart valves. She let him go, but she could not tell me immediately. After a few days, Rose E-mailed me first. I handled him eleven years! It took both of us days to recover. When word was out sympathy cards, flowers and donations came from Vermont, D.C., New York, Kansas, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Georgia. The Dog World: Collies International, Therapy Dogs International, Obedience trials, Rally, Sheep Herding and Agility. So many had been amazed by the beautiful, graceful big Major Dundee.

I did not like facing Dundee that night in Heaven. In a somewhat dour sober way, he said, ‘Well, I know I come and go; but I didn’t know I was going to have to STAY!’ I admitted that I did not expect it either and hugged him, but he pulled away; he was a professional on this level! There were other dogs beginning to gather for their performance and he WAS their leader! Jay and Horst said they would take turns caring for him. He came to visit me and said, ‘Rose is sick about all this. Let’s go buy her a nice plant.’ We went to the market and in-spirit he decided she needed a little lavender basket with some succulents that wouldn’t die if she forgot to water them!

Dundee followed the concert circuit with Horst a few days until his head was splitting from piano music – and he loved good piano! He went to work with Jay and Pee Gee several sessions and then showed up in-spirit at my home.

‘I do not have Jay’s patience with those bummers. Why does he bother with anyone stupid enough to reject Heaven?’ The big dog was exasperated.

I patted the sofa; maybe there was a good TV show on Animal Planet. I had to look up that channel and hoped reptiles were not on. They had “Turtle Man”; a fellow was called to get unwanted critters out of basements, sheds and crawl spaces. Dundee settled into this program; finding new creatures he had never seen before. He watched several hours demanding that I watch with him! Worse, he came back three afternoons in a row! I spoke with my angels. He must have a Helpful Spirit or one that sets the performances for all those dog groups. Can he look up some activities that Dundee enjoys? I related his abilities, his visits to libraries and various hospital units, and sheep herding!

On the fourth afternoon he did not come! I was told he is trying visits with the Father’s white Collie, Lance and their friend, Roxie, the English Shepherd. Polly, her friend installed sheep for Roxie’s free time! It did not take long for Dundee to realize other sheep herding dogs knew nothing about American Sheep Competitions! He began lining up little red cones and giving lessons. The sheep were guided through the rows of cones – much like cars at construction sites. In the evening his groups gathered for their performance in The Commons. He was busy now and happy!

This Tuesday Rose brought Logan for me and although sweet and compatible doing his “sit and shake hands” he does not play dead or say a prayer. He learned something that Dundee did not do; to drink water from a plastic snack bag and never spill a drop. (After treats and tricks, the big dogs are dry and need water.) Residents love watching Logan’s pink tongue through the little bag. (Dundee had used a Dixie cup and likewise - never spilled a drop.)

Joan R. was scheduled to give a piano concert at Regency Home and invited me. They were all good standby songs. It was most enjoyable. I did not recognize one – Turkey in the Straw! But that was one I never recognized even when Arthur Fiedler’s Pops played it for me! I laughed but did not explain my sprint into Far Memory.

The Jesus spirit was judging the newly arrived when I came that night. His throne area was huge and of white marble. A red carpet runner led to the chair. I supposed it was carved and gilded but my eyes were drawn to the area behind his head a magnificent medallion of pierced-lacy gold that glowed unbelievably. He wore an English style crown, tall and glittery; a white robe with a red mantle that laid richly about his sandaled feet. His continence was stoic.

I understood this grandeur silently represented the glory lost by any spirit turned away! Those without a sense of right and wrong were ushered here for judgement. To come into such a presence and be refused admittance! Those accepted were relieved and their orientations began after this decision. It was so long ago, I stood in front of this same judge telling my pitiful story and being intrigued by the magnificent Light that radiated from the Godhead nearby. How I desired to see a God that had all that Light! (A Far Memory flash). And now I am allowed here and the wonder has never diminished. God is the ultimate of wonderful.

Jay was finishing the last three when I arrived. At the end of the session when the area was clear, he arose, set the crown on the throne chair; approached me and then took a huge breath. He shook his long hair free along with the stoic demeanor. He smiled. Quickly he gathered his hair to the nape of his neck and shook his shoulders loose. ‘The part of the job I hate is when I must say, no.’ He caught my arm and at last became the Jay that I knew, smiling and happy.

I visited a newly arrived spirit, Frank Farley, a friend and once customer of Charles. I followed a routine that seemed to cover the immediate orientation needs of the new arrival; the mental uses of thought; those he might ask for guidance. The only rub was that he could not see his wife right then, but he did imagine his mansion and the landscaping. There was a deep drum sound!

‘Oh the dogs! Come Frank, watch the dogs.’ I saw Jay and introduced him. Frank recognized the pianist. His wife collected all his albums and played them repeatedly. - ‘My Word, that man plays for dogs?’ Frank’s biggest thrill was the English Mastiff, Hoss who moves less but covers just as much territory, never makes a mistake and yet has never lost his aire of curious stupidity.

At home in Springfield, Saturday evening found me watching a travel show. This episode covered Greece and Korcula (Korkira then). In the Greek Life, Demetrius and I spent a winter there expressly to meet my brother’s prospective bride, the Princess Lanessa. The best part was warmth! It was now that I was jarred alert by a spirit who burst into the parlor. It was a very excited Greek man who self - questioned and then agreed with himself: ‘Yes, it was you! I asked about you after I well, died. Some friends and I went to a concert in Athens. Oh, you took our breaths away; you were everything we ever hoped a royal would be! And, you had all that hair and you shined and glowed and sparkled from head to toe and that wildcat too – trained better than any animal we’d ever seen! Everyone, we all saw you. Ah, we were so taken and breathless and then came the music! Oh the music was so full of feeling and so wonderful! Nobody ever forgot that night.’ I thanked him. And thought; that was December of ’69 - Horst was hurt and angry with me and blocked my paranormal ability to correspond with him. Klaus had no idea about the paranormal link and simply yelled pleadingly: They had “Language barrier frustrations”: None of them spoke Greek or Spanish.

Klaus did not question my being there but immediately made demands for the next night’s concert. There was not one personal word, everything was for Horst! Horst! Of all the nerve! That man dumped and had a stranger do it! This was incredible. …But Horst was my charge! I knew it was my duty to help him; I must forget these ungodly emotions.

‘Hum - think, think about Athens! - Athens was OK until I was exiled … Maybe the audience might like to see some ancient protocol!’ I thought mischievously and returned that night as Deidiamia - one of the Cheetahs was available. For years, I thought maybe I fantasized that performance. Out-of-body adventures never seem real to me but because of this little Greek man I validated that the adventure had really happened.

Would the coming hot days of August 2013 kill myfront garden again. The new Sedum! Was it settling in; growing or dying? The perennial Geraniums were fresh leaved. The blackberries on the south side bore spasmodically. Every time I picked them I wished they were black raspberries but all those varieties have thorns. How I’d love to abandon this house and the negative memories… that Reverse Mortgage! It has locked me in the cottage until I die.

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Marshall and Susan visited a few days bringing coolers of the foods their diets demanded. They tackled my portable tape player and that sound system. Years earlier, Marshall expressed wanting the Jankowski albums. Derek had placed that music on my computer so I gave the albums to Marshall. I knew my son and his wife were not into “God” (ill effect of college humanities classes) but I saw the two so seldom I burned a DVR of the memoirs I had written at that time. I no sooner saw them off when Rose drove in fetching me to help with the Therapy Dog Testing. There were 12 dogs that had trained for this; only two failed. The testers celebrated afterward with coffee and sweet pie.

I asked my angels for a replay of the night before. I was so tired after the TDI testing that I missed whatever happened in Heaven. It proved to be a bit of nonsense involving Dundee. He was in the pasture cavorting with one of the white horses. Pee Gee was resting in her pretty doghouse. The dog and horse were exchanging dance steps and cavorting joyously. When it came to the horse’s rearing, and the maneuver of kicking out its rear legs Dundee was at a loss but laughed anyway. Jay came beside me and I wondered, ‘Do you think they will work together?’ Jay said, no.

At a Sunday Potluck with Verna, a friend from State House Days, I found a childhood neighbor, Dottie Hart. We spoke with an 87 year old preacher. He insisted Jesus was “The Word” and made the world! Dottie and I thought differently but with him it was not a discussion; he became adamant. Fearing he might stress himself, we excused ourselves. So many misinterpretations! The world manifested as God spoke. - Oh well in politics men are screwing with the Constitution and Bill of Rights during this Obama administration.

This September Heaven’s occupants were happily chatting. Jay had a book in hand. ‘Look, look, your book is published!’ I wondered how this could be; I was still writing it. But, there it was complete with a book jacket! I was stunned but memorized book jacket. Both Jay and the Father agreed that everything in it was just like it is in Heaven. I finally mentioned my qualm. The Father said, ‘Everything takes place in the spirit first. So it is with this.’ I caught my chest in surprise. So, it finally gets finished and published!

At home I E-mailed this news to Marshall and described the jacket I had seen. Within hours, he sent an E-mail with attachment. He did the best he could. His programs are geared to inventive and repairing things like botches in new Intel Programs. But he did add three album covers of Horst’s at the bottom edge. He was unable to get the cloud and streaming light effect and said a graphics artist would be needed. I then sent it with a fast painting of the cloud and light effect to Selena, but this failed. I thought of Derek’s wife, Kim but I had never spoken about my “gifts” to her and put the idea on hold..

Etoile’ a friend from the Chicago Branch of Pen Women telephoned. Over the years we discovered we shared more than art, writing, foreign travel and Catholic educations but also Gardening; using herbs and farm living. Our husband’s had similar dispositions and, illnesses. Now we were both coping alone with children on call to help. She has a delightful outlook and I have my quirky way of stating things. We write and keep each other laughing.

Derek thought it important that I have a Power of Attorney and update my last wishes. I had the late Senator Yardley’s son-in-law Richard do these. Trouble here was he is retiring; his partner passed away three weeks after we completed - leaving me attorney-less.

September 20th the sky held one planet in the east. It was a very bright white. As I watched, it advanced toward me and enlarged. I had never believed in aliens but the thing frightened me and I turned away. When I dared peek the large globe slowly withdrew and in its place was a very low-setting full moon. I could see the “face”. Weather stations reported nothing. I jotted it in my Heavenly Diary. It pre-empted a happening the following week:

The Father bid me come to Heaven! He wanted to celebrate my glorification. The throngs overwhelmed me. Why? I was nobody special? Every spirit who had ever touched me - from the Atlantean life to the present was there. The wounded from Ipsus (301B.C.); every musician I mentored; families and friends up to recent; and all were happy. Horst played his compositions, arrangements and the “Evergreens” album which included “Whack-Whack” which made me laugh. (Few knew about my hot pants appearance in Toledo!) Jay held Open House! The celebration continued for hours. All past and present pets stationed themselves along the pasture fence, watched with sparkly eyes and lapped champagne. No problems with this in Heaven! I never figured out what was so special?

Springfield reality: The toaster died. Microwaves make bagels gummy. I bought a toaster-oven. After a few tries, I pronounce it a great gadget for one person.

Verna my friend fetched me to a potluck. Verna has a beau but that night she had an engagement ring. Her intended looked familiar. Yes, we had both gone through the Katrina victim ordeal in the apartment! I could laugh; he didn’t. Evidently his church had suffered many losses for their good intentions.

Derek and Kim treated me to a micro-brewery outing for my birthday weekend. The first place failed; we were outdoors and it began to rain. The waitress refused to let us move under an umbrella so we left! A second micro-brewery served food! We sampled 13 flavors of beers - fun! On top of this I received gift cards!

On Adelia Street, Halloween fell through the cracks. Not one Trick or Treater all evening. In Heaven Halloween festivities are a huge deal for “all people in the spirit.” I found the Heavens alight and completely decorated in happy themes. Throughout the period different groups of spirits are again welcomed. Jay and I take part in many functions and at times relax on the Tower’s belvedere and watch all the revelers.

I mixed an ice cream soda for myself. It was tasty so when I went on my nightly visit to Heaven, I made one for Jay. It had Vanilla ice cream, a bit of Crème de Menthe and Crème de Cocoa and was filled with ginger ale. Jay found this new taste pleasant so we prepared three for the Godhead. (An aside here: Justice and Hoss the Mastiff have proved a good match.) Justice was engrossed when Jay brought the soda. Without glancing back Justice asked Jay to set it on his little shelf - (in front of Hoss). Hoss leaned to sniff it, getting foam all over his big muzzle. He licked his face and after a slow-moment’s thought dipped his nose into it again! Justice turned to see why Jay and I were laughing and then He laughed too. We brought Justice a fresh one. Jay decided this would be another “Specialty of our House”.

Mid-November, Harold Kingsbury brought The Magdalene’s two youngsters from St. Paul, MN. It was a fun visit. Mary enjoyed learning Christopher’s new plans and hobbies. Both resigned their Sci-Fi fetishes to an aside entertainment. Chris was promoted at work.. Michelle is the quiet one. She has taken up mini-cross-stitch and was ¾ way across a hand towel with a multi-colored chevron pattern. We hit three great places to eat: Steak n Shake, Parkway Café and Mell-o-Crème Donuts: Before leaving, the trio took two dozen donuts with them to St. Paul, Minnesota!

Thanksgiving this year was superb. Derek’s family brought me to Paxton and I was thankfully the wedding dieting was finished! Patsy was back to her great cooking. The twin boys chatted knowingly with their grandfather, Roy about a variety of football teams and the careers of many players! I listened but I am not sports minded. There are many reasons. I remember being duty-bound to attend the Greek Games. We were dust-laden and sun-baked. But worse was the winner’s conceit and vanity and the Loser’s devastation and bitterness! How these things darkened a spirit’s condition. My mind flips into such comparisons but without change.

2013’s Years end brought a negative experience. A spirit arrived at my bedside. It looked and acted like Jay! It was most attentive and suggested we “Go up.” But along the way this spirit turned to the left! My Angel and I turn to the right to enter the shaft (tunnel) that leads to Heaven. Next I saw a fancy doorway; one I had never seen before! When this door was opened flames filled the other side! I immediately balked and wished myself to God! I was shaking in the arms of The Father… Duped! I had been duped! Even with four angels surrounding me something wicked crept through. Now I remember to remain alert and always call God immediately.

Heaven brought a nice surprise. I wanted to visit the Water Family. Mother Vi is ecstatic with a pretty house trimmed with pink “Gingerbread” trim. There many of the Water family gathered. Not there were Louis Jr. and Sr. and a few grandchildren. Ares was outdoors grilling ham and eggs; his mother Vi welcoming me as another daughter. Vi was so happy to have a larger house stocked with many foods and treats for several generations of this large Klan. There were overhead cabinets and on the base counters were bins with slanted silver lids holding lovely dried fruits. Drawers of flatware-which seemed enough for an army but forty is nothing for the Water House. Vi loved this new exuberance. This is my more than family - wonderful pseudo-family that were kind enough to “adopt” this only child as one of theirs. I never mentioned my parents quirks; I only delighted being with the Water family.

The last entry in the Heavenly Diary for2013 was a panic telephone call from a St. Louis cousin’s wife, Kathleen. Her friend was staying a few days to help her with Michael‘s medication problems. The guy’s current love interest misconstrued it and retaliated with ***witchcraft!*** Shortly Kathleen’s Waterford crystal begun flying, cracking and shattering! I was the only one she knew who might help. I was dismayed. I’d have to give this thought. ***Witchcraft! All that came to mind was the only curse my angels had ever taught me. I went into the alley, found a bit of unknown substance and gathered it onto a bit of dry paper; placed it on a metal lid and set it afire. As it burned I said:***

***“Burn witch burn, as you would have this lady with your plaque vibrations. Be they turned upon you; never to be undone. As you wish for others may it be for you.”***

I cleared away the debris and went into the house. There I watched clairvoyantly for the outcome. The witch was a woman of staunch determination. I saw the vibrations actually turn in that room and zoom back to her! “What?” the woman cried and tried to repeat her spell but it rebounded onto her each time. I relaxed. At 8:30 pm my angels reported: ‘All is well at your cousin’s house.’ The next day, Kathleen called; the house had returned to a beautiful calm. I answered vaguely saying that I reversed the vibrations. Ah, a little success to end the year.

2014 opened with my favorite TV Series, Ancient Aliens. The thought provoking episodes unfortunately disintegrated into silliness for this paranormal woman. Extra-terrestrials (which I felt were spirits would not require obnoxious spacecraft! Then possible theories became “purported beliefs” and the series turned into foolishness.

However a pyramid program awakened memories of my “Atlantis” -like sojourn. I was sleeping entranced. My body was moved without my knowledge and disposed of in a pyramid crematorium. I awoke in-spirit-form and found this most exasperating - no body! I did move unencumbered past the soldiers, but soon discovered I could contact no one and worse - I was invisible! I observed the kings of the other two “Atlantic” kingdoms plotting war but contacting my king was impossible. I tried to shake away these memories but they are so embedded in my sub-conscious that perhaps this can help my readers determine: Is Far Memory good or bad? Indeed, the memories must be categorized and remain in the background - summonsed only when needed.

CALIFORNIA

Cosima wanted me to visit them in California in February 2014. She was retiring after 27 years with the Ventura County. Derek let me know his family was going and they would take me! It sounded glorious! But air travel had changed violently. Planes were bigger and cramped; food was not served; free drinks ran out. Security regulations were overly stringent for Senior Citizens. We were rushed and pushed. I was not walking well and my Blood Pressure rose with the activities. I did not want Derek to know this … Vanity - I do have some vanity! To him mother is perfect! The dream vacation - surely he had gotten senior seating! But no, he hadn’t. The plane was super long (seats were in the middle of economy class) people pressed together; those in narrow aisle seats were shaken by incoming people. I requested a wheel chair at landing; another person claimed it! At the baggage claim, Selena happened to feel she ought to bring an assisted wheel chair. I was so grateful. Derek by his actions, did not accept my weakness “Mother is invincible” was readable on his face.

In Los Angeles, the California daughters guided the Illinoisans to Ventura. But the following ten days were not the relax-on-the-beach that Derek hoped. His sisters planned a site agenda which Charles and I experienced a few years earlier. Miles and miles of driving daily was normal for Californians but not for mid-westerners. Tickets were already arranged for events! Selena’s wonderful pastel art was being shown at galleries in three towns! After ten non-stop days the mid-westerners were exhausted! We needed more sit and chat. Michael, Selena’s husband never joined us; he lay incapacitated by a heart problem, work burn-out and depression over losing both his parents within a year. I was disappointed; talking music with Michael was my highlight! Derek was not having the vacation of his dreams but he did not want to dim his sisters’ endeavors at showing us all the sites from Santa Barbara to Tarzana. Derek finally asserted himself at Venice Beach. Phooey with hippie junk venders! He wanted to SEE that ocean and a beach: Looking at it from a park bench did not suffice but was as good as he got. Jonathan, Cosima’s son secured tickets for Universal Studios where we saw the animal shows especially. Derek noticed an actor from: “Parks and Recreation” and asked him to take a picture with our family. Somehow the man recognized me and by his talk he felt very honored. Afterward, I had no idea for certain the why of this encounter so put it off that people often mistook me for Agnes Moorhead (who played the mother on “Bewitched”). This did not hold water for my children - well the actor was too young to know me from music, wasn’t he?

Cosima’s retirement party our real reason for this journey arrived and was over the top wonderful! The foods were very special and her going away gifts were magnanimous. She was respected and loved. My arms went cold it was so wonderful: To be loved so much, I wanted to cry. It was so beautiful. Oh, drop the self-pity, Mary

GRANSONS

Skylar, one of Derek’s twins actually finished spending two months in Morocco. His language courses are Arabic. His brother, Tylar is specializing in crop genetics for the summer is working in Indiana. The college graduates met their dad and me for lunch and shared their news.

Skylar explained the host family was in crisis when he arrived: The death of a grandfather had occurred. As there are no lawyers or wills in Morocco, and several generations lived on the estate their futures were “iffy”. This emergency was not helped because a wedding was to take place and eveerything was set! The length of the celebration had to be curtailed. (Our traditions pale to these.) The bride is carried in by bearers. She changed wedding gowns nine times, being paraded about by bearers each time during the wedding week! The guests were bereft that the feasting was curtailed to a mere five days!

Skylar and his friend spent a lot of time in train travel to classes … all these provided good observational and growing experiences. Being light skinned alongside the natives, he tried growing a beard. It was thin and silky! But this time was fun and he remembered to bring everyone mementos; a head scarf, a key chain with a camel rider and a fun post card of the old Bing Crosby-Bob Hope movie: “The Road to Morocco”. Evidently nothing of celebrity interest has happened in Morocco since the forties. I enjoy the boys, their ambitions and steady personalities. Tylar admitted his Agricultural work adventures paled to Sky’s.

Shortly afterward I had an accident with the car - by law my fault. In a month I must take the Seniors’ Driving Test this year. Would the accident be held against me? To take my mind off this, I lopped back two Lilacs which refused to bloom properly. The Senior Test was stiff but I passed. There was no mention of the accident! But my eyes began playing focusing tricks and at 85 I felt it safer to stop driving. This decision carried unpleasant changes.

I could not pop to a store or attend Therapy Dog visits to nursing homes and lunches. As I had known rejection from both Pen Women and the local Music Club in the past (when you can’t DO-FOR THEM you cease to exist! I had to take any jobat the time) I had no hopeful expectations. However, I was completely delighted when several doggie-people pitched in; Bringing me a dog to handle and taking me to the doggie meets; to grocery; to Doctor’s appointments and even girly-shopping! - And they were always in great spirits about it! My son Derek is wonderfully there in the pinch and I have two friends from State House days but it hit me:

“My God, after two restrictive lifetimes (“Atlantis” and Greece) - I learned to make friends! Good friends: Wonderful friends! My life is doing fine.”

The ladies kept true and I am always ready. Rose was grateful that I could handle and loved each of her dogs. At odd times when others let their dogs wander - there was no worry; they by me; I am loved ... Nice! I was not joyful this time again when Rose told me that Logan, the big grey and my dog for three years went down and “crossed the rainbow bridge.”

I alerted Dundee on the God-Level and he retrieved Logan from the Conservatory for Animals and showed him the ropes of the dog routines. Logan was not a showman but he wanted a few changes in his appearance and name! He wanted some Blue Merle-type black spots removed and both eyes blue instead of one. The rest of him (all grey body) was OK but his name was not Logan; it was “Wolf!” He put up with “Logan” but now and here he wanted to be called “Wolf”. He accepted the routines the dogs did and one night remarked to me: “This place is really OK. But I’ll say this, that old fellow on the hill (Holy Ghost) really knows how to grow flowers!” (The mountain is covered with carnations). Wolf was not anxious to let just any spirit claim him. He is an attractive Rough Collie. Finally he noticed Eddie Curtin a fellow from Pleasant Plains, Illinois. Eddie: A farmer, an inventor of farm gizmos and an easy going gentleman: Wolf chose him! Expect it or not, Eddie had a dog!

In a little bit the angels directed me to a little meditation for perfect sleep:

***“Dear God, thank you for the day and for my angels. Dear God, I want my body and soul to sleep well so I can do all you have on my list for tomorrow. I want my spirit to come to you and be safe and to see Jesus and all my friends.”*** Then I add the words: ***Dear God, give me the sweet sleep of your children.***

This prayer has given me good sleep. My bodily schedule was off for years with caring for Charles.

In May I tried a gizmo that distance-sprays water on the garden. I wondered if it would help my windows and house. It did a beautiful job, but that setting was worn out afterward and only OK for milder watering in the garden. Next year, buy a new one!

Derek and Kim are married 30 years. To celebrate they took a three city tour of London, Paris and Rome. They had a wonderful tour and Kim made a beautiful Memory Book of their trip. It expanded their knowledge and love of Europe. I am so glad because I seemed to be alone in loving Europe.

Selena telephoned. Her Doctor recommended her for complete disability saying her body was so riddled with Rheumatoid Arthritis -that it was comparable to an 80 year old! (Being 85+ this did not make my day!) Michael was not improving. I knew she had been downsized at work and was unable to find new work - an economy downturn. The longer this situation persisted the tighter their finances became. Worries made Selena’s arthritis worse. She threw herself into her painting (the art-climate in Ventura is strong; she won prizes and was selling). But even with Cosima helping at art fairs the tent set-up became painful and in time she had to abandon it.

Being in the dark about these health things, I went out-of-body to my son-in-law, Michael! I had not projected myself to anyone on earth since I ransacked Jankowski’s bedroom and angrily ruined his wool suit. Going to Heaven nightly took a slow count of five but travel in-spirit across the USA was immediate! Michael showed no improvement. In-spirit I am visible. We talked about his talent, about his everyday work and Selena but mostly about his music ability and new directions as well We examined the guilt-trips parents imbued upon their children’s psyche. It had an outcome better than I expected. At Mother’s Day a beautiful card from Michael arrived. In it his note referred to our secret talks and that he wanted to regard me as his mother! I was delighted to become a pseudo-mom! But the out-of-body visit was too late; more needed salvaged than I knew.

Selena was in worse straights than Michael! Divorce was eminent, because of government programs and red tape. I suggested she consider coming home. She began to plan for this. She had tried staying with friends, and her sister, but no one really understood her disease. She looked too young, everyone thought, it will blow over. She tried to hide her constant pain. It took many months for her to sell or store her things and coordinate with an artist friend about travel. Selena could not hold a steering wheel!

The double children’s room ( 12’ x 18’) was the most likely place for Selena. The Reverse Mortgage set changes; the upstairs now lacked efficient heating and cooling. There was a large window air but installing it each summer entailed crawling onto the steep porch roof to remove the frame on the storm window. Charles refused to replace that window during the window renovation - another “Charlie Thing”.

A street-portraiture artist drove Selena to Springfield. Later this friend flew home. Selena arrived just before her late March birthday. She was delighted with the room, to have a bed and food. She was starved to 92 pounds; her hair had turned white and thinned. She breathed a sigh - at last she could at last let go this stress and worry!

Rheumatoid Arthritis was not new to me; my mother, Helen had it. A doctor once said I had it. I decided my husband’s negativity was affecting me bodily. I ignored the doctor’s edicts! For me, the disease seemed to halt. Selena settled in and finally we had a good chat. It was then I expressed my thoughts about my mother’s arthritis. Helen had a sizzling hate that I married anybody! After this her wicked malady unfolded. Helen spoke in unwelcome tones since we returned from our honeymoon and treated us like strangers thereafter. After a time she mentioned that her doctor said she had Arthritis but added: “If I have a pain take a pill.” Helen thought this pleasant and popped Cortisone pills indiscriminately. But this excess built inflammation and stopped working on the pain.

Selena was absorbing the meaning of my words better than I hoped. Although many

treatments have been developed, I site my mother’s case to show how hate, stress and anger can fester and ruin a good body. Selena recognized her handling of her problems needed adjustment. Thoughts are powerful and her changes brought immediate improvements! The new Selena reconnected with old classmates and work friends. Her attitude adjustments have released much of her rigidity and pain.

As she gained a bit of weight some strength returned. She doubled the folic acid and her hair thickened again. She tinted it a kind blonde: The Selena we knew was returning! Sheila Mack the cosmetologist (once my late-daughter Regina’s best friend) became her best friend and-pseudo-sister with much delight. Sheila swooped Selena into her family’s gatherings; the two share many personality traits including several holy and paranormal gifts! Selena’s hands loosed bit by bit to where she could pick up a coffee mug with both hands and later a stick of pastel for a few moments. Slowly she tackled some simple sunsets of 8” x 10” size. With the help of all our angels, this new life for both of us settled easily. We each have our private time and some shared time.

Meanwhile, my Ethereal Night Life continued. God’s Festival: “The Day God Made the Earth” was underway. During this we realize how wonderful it is to be granted an Earth Life to iron out the things not handled well at an earlier time. In a short span there would be another Festival! As we on earth were preparing for the Fourth of July and Independence of the U.S.A. - Heaven is joyously celebrating having conquered “Free Will” by finding out: Living God’s Way makes life so much easier.

A few times The Father beckoned me to do a special job in the spirit. One regarded the war in Afghanistan. Our troops did not have the equipment they needed! This made things suicidal for our troops. The Father decided I must assume the garb of the Blessed Mother as the opposition imagined her! Actually, it resembled a thin belly-dancing costume with veiling all in greens and yellows adorned with many golden bangles! I was to float down into midst of the guards and capture their attention. Words would flow as if I spoke this foreign tongue. Meanwhile a few score of Warrior Angels would infiltrate the storage compound and go about some work. When they finished, I would see a sign from the departing angels; I was to go into a twirl and disappear!

This was a scary bit of fun for me but I wondered what it accomplished. The day after the overwhelming battle that was to wipe out the Americans; the news media reported that there had been mass malfunctioning of nearly all the opponents’ equipment! The under armed Americans claimed the victory!

A bit later, my angels showed me a vision. A religious leader was being escorted to see his supreme prophet bobbing and crying out helplessly from a smoldering pit of lava. The angels said, ‘That is the Prophet Mohammed.’ His face had rivulets of larvae and lava running down. The poor soul called out - “Tell my people I was wrong I lied! Do you see any virgins surrounding me? NO! I led many astray and I beg you to make my people change; change the course for all my people.” The angels returned the current leader… but overall, as I watch the news, it must have been taken as a nightmare because Americans are being beheaded on TV and overall, conditions are dreadful! How very sad for all.

My Quarterly Alumnae news sheet arrived. Under the Memorials my cousin, Mary Ann Spearie was listed! My eyesight! I could no longer read the newspaper and dropped it! I projected myself to her Light. Mary Ann was on the orange level; kicking around at building materials. She did not know how to get ahold of the spirit who brought her and knew nothing about building or landscaping! I apologized for tardiness. I began the chat about “building in the spirit world. When Mary Ann finished her place and realized she could change anything by wishing - she was ready to see her parents and siblings! With guidance she summonsed her Helpful Spirit.

I went to my own level. Horst stopped me. Music I suggested was refused by Dundee - the dogs were not able to perform to that beat - but in true Horst-never-be-discouraged- fashion; the bright smile and the index finger: ‘But all the people loved it!’ I had heard a jingle on TV advertising the St. Louis Zoo; mentioned it to him and he checked for the complete song. It is called: “Going to the Zoo.” He arranged it in his style meaning about a hundred notes filling a few bars.

Michael, my son-in law was finishing rehab and seeking work. It was now all done by computer there was nothing person to person until a final interview! He landed a good position and headed to San Francisco. He has a sister living there and stays with her family. California is one expensive State so the future evolves slowly. He and Selena speak often thinking - in three years…

Within days of Michael’s leaving Ventura, forest fire swept through Ojai, on the hill above consuming several nearby small towns. It continued down the mountain leveling Ventura including hospitals, nursing homes, schools and houses down to the ocean: Their old rental house was gone. (Although Cosima and her husband live in Ventura three minutes away - they were spared but the smoke was heavy.)

Selena keeps in touch with her California friends. She shows several paranormal gifts which bring us closer. As a lark her best friend Sheila was hypnotized on a radio show very easily. When the Clinical Hypnotist gave a Christmas program, Sheila and Selena both took part. It resulted in both girls taking classes and becoming Certified Clinical Hypnotists. Selena had several pleasant successful results with clients breaking fears and addictions. Also as her hands healed she could once again hold a brush or a pastel for a ;monger period. She paints smaller works that seem well adapted to today’s smaller offices. A few larger ones sold as gifts. I am overjoyed at her success.

2015: As the year rolled over one of our Doggie Ladies met with an oversupply of burdens when her father fell on the ice and later had to be placed in a rest home. The home was not meeting its duties. Our doggie lady gained the responsibility and the ire of mouthy non helping siblings. Her happy personality evaporated. Subtlety did not work and this needed to be confronted; one gentleman refused to come to lunch! I hated to do it but I confronted her as kindly as possible in an E-Mail to the whole group. She decided to spend a few weeks in her hometown with family and returned her enjoyable self. Counseling tender hearted-musicians is so very different from helping normal people.

My friend Rose Ann was recuperating from hip surgery. She gave me her tickets to a Gershwin performance at our University Auditorium. The complete score of “Rhapsody In Blue” with piano and full orchestra was so moving that I felt something blossom inside me! I did not realize how starved I was to hear vibrant music!

In November, Harold Kingsbury brought Christopher from St. Paul, MN for the Sommer Family Reunion. My late husband’s mother was a Sommer. There were several hundred relatives attending. Although I was not a direct family member, Charles once borrowed some ephemera his mother had saved. As we read through, I remembered most of it and now, I seem to be the person asked about details. I wish I knew that much about my own ancestors. To that purpose I have included a few stories of my mom’s and dad’s families in the Lighter Stories at the end.

I decided to ask for something I really wanted for my birthday: A Leaf Blower. My house sets most vulnerably where wind blows fallen leaves. The old neighborhood has huge trees. I was delighted to receive this and really make good use of it! Unfortunately also for my birthday, the furnace went out and the garage door gave problems! But the day was saved: Derek and Kim drove Selena and I to Bellville to a large German Restaurant called The Haufbrau House for a wonderful lunch and then east to a Pumpkin Farm. It clouded over and everyone scattered to avoid the rain. ***Both Selena and I looked up and prayed: Angels blow those dark clouds to the south, please. Thank you. The impending rains ceased and the sun came out. The rest of the day was pleasant.*** We were on our way to St. Louis for a nostalgia tour. There, we saw the areas but all had changed or deteriorated where my uncle’s family had lived; St. Mark’s School and Church; the apartments we rented and my grandparents’ house all sadly leveled. Forest Park has more green space and I did not see the Jewel Box. A changed exit took us to Lindell where the mansions have been restored. A newer larger mansion is now where the Cartwright home was. I forgot a few years ago there was news of a fire on Lindell. It was the home of my friends. The wall of pleeched greenery was on the west but in its place sat the most gorgeous mansion with partial French Mansard roof in light green wavy tile. The house was painted in several shades of pastel green. We stopped and gaped - silently awestruck. Driving east to Union and then north to Natural Bridge sat the building complex where the Navy fighter planes, ducks and alligators were built during the war. After seven decades, my father’s infamous hole in the wall has been repaired. A trucking firm is there. I related the story; Kim had not heard it.

Arriving home the news was a shock: Our enjoyable Doggie member, Robert Williamson, a retired policeman who traveled widely with his Agility Border Collies felt not himself. The Dr. found advanced cancer and he died within a week! He collected everything “Superman” and he was ours! We loved him.

Early December Heaven was celebrating all the Dogs and Horses that perform all year. The dogs greeted The Father by placing a paw on His knee. Dundee declined to wear a second pink diamond drop. He said they would clink together and “Get Hurt” So the Father said, “You do so many things! I will place it over the doorway of your dog house!” Dundee thought a moment then said, “Yes, Father, as you say, I have my paws in many things.”

My Grandmother Mary Studenski has attained the God Level saying she discovered ladies wanted to know how to shoot a revolver. She was very adept with her old .38 and gave lessons. I said, “Wow, a .38 just like in the old west!” But she fell serious: “No, it is a snub nose.”

Selena and I made Christmas dinner for Derek’s family here. We cheated and bought the fried chicken, but plenty. But we had brie in pastry; Four Roses Eggnog (bit too strong), broccoli casserole, buns and butter and tea. We went into the living room to open gifts and then returned for dessert, but found we ate so heartily there was no room for cake. We divided it for take homes. Mostly it was a great evening. After thoughts: lots less booze in that eggnog next time.

2018: In Heaven, Jay thought we ought to attend a New Year’s dance in South Beach. I do not know why we go there - maybe he has a secret desire to rankle a few nosey ladies. We never stay long; possibly three dances. We arrive with an entourage’ of angels dressed in black tuxedos. At one point an angel moved in and swept a curious lady into a dance. To her surprise she said, “Ah, you dance so well I feel like I am floating on air.” The angel said, “You are!” I looked down and they were about five inches above the floor. She began asking the angel about my jewels and the angel said, “Our Majesties do not wear costume.” Another lady was seeking a donation. That angel said, “Our Majesties do not carry money.” Sooner or later the curiosity builds and we are encroached upon. That is when the entourage’ surround us completely and in a moment we are there no more. I think Jay likes this part best for he is always laughing afterward.

Selena attended a New Year’s Ball at the Top of the (Hilton) Tower with her girlfriends. She said, never could this happen for her in California - things were so costly it restricted the attendees. Here, pretty girls might chance walking in but Sheila Mack, her best friend, had tickets and it included dinner by a renouned chef!

I listened to the New Year’s beginning in New York and thought: ‘Dear God, I never thought I’d live so long’ The Angels said, “You are to finish the book!” So I am interspersing this with doing manual things like taking Christmas down and then resting by sitting and working on the book.

A plague swept through our area. Selena had gone with friends to hear a band and dance when she suddenly felt dizzy and collapsed. They gathered her to Emergency to find it filled with people suffering the same symptoms! Selena’s face was treated where she hurt it in her fall, but thankfully her eyeglasses were intact. It was an air-borne bacteria and spread here widely and quickly. The next day she was black and blue in many places but had a fairly quick recovery. After this excitement our world fell back to normality; Selena endeavoring to paint and me tackling the book.

May 20 in Heaven, Justice had researched my story about the disappointments and false judgements suffered by my older son and his family. Their oldest daughter may remember was abducted from their van when she was 13. Naturally, the parents are blamed. During the second and third searches, my son suffered heart attacks. With the high water table in the area, their home, landscaping and at a distance a tiny farm, barn and contents, even concrete were ruined! What is so unfair is: Success or none - There is no rehabilitation compensation…

Justice found an intensely dark area miles to the northwest of their small farm in Minnesota. Justice peeled layer after layer of darkness away and I saw that under a mild-looking farm acreage lay the bodies of dozens of youngsters, both boys and girls; murdered, buried - the earth leveled and planted to seem noxiously normal!

It will come about; plans are being set. When the Godhead plans an exposure it will be a massive.

On a light note, I was chatting with The Father and used a slang phrase: “Goof Balls.” Then I had to explain what that meant and in doing so said. “flakey” which also needed an explanation. By now He was chuckling heartily and said, “I like: Goof Balls, It reminds me of ping pong balls with google-eye faces.” We both laughed.

A few nights later there was a noisy Thunder and Lightning filled storm. The utilities were safe but a large branch of a neighbor’s tree fell into the street missing all the parked cars…this street is blessed. The neighbor reported it to the City Works Department; waited several days; nothing happened so he took an electric saw to it and bagged the whole monstrous thing himself!

Memorial Day was great. Derek drove Kim, Selena and I to visit their Aunt Julie in Branson, MO. She has moved to a first floor entrance apartment and it is lovely. Julie is doing well but her mind is seriously set on negative memories. We all have them but try our darndest to squash them. We added Julie to out excursion and saw another area of Branson and drove into Eureka Springs, Arkansas. There we saw a little village of gingerbread trimmed houses all packed closely with many turns in the little roads. Nearby was the wooden and glass Chapel in the Wildwoods designed in the Frank Lloyd Wright style. It was tiny and charming. Derek charts out his scenic interests and shortly we entered a parking area for a German-Swiss Restaurant. It had dozens of window boxes filled with brilliant flowers. The meal was most pleasant although it was my first time to be served whole duck in a German eatery.

Pleasantry is always followed by a downer: Had to have laser surgery on right eye - not as wicked as the apprehension: In a few days there was a procedure for the left eye for macular degeneration. Back to routine: Tuesdays are doggie-day! Derek drove Selena and I to visit his friend Ralph’s daylily gardens. Ralph is a Hybridizer and has several he named. He is cutting back on Hibiscus because of space and turning to Asian Lilies. They may be super tall but oh, the blooms and fragrance are terrific.

Pawnee a town just south had an auto show and tractor pull. This sounded like fun so Selena and I went. There were carnival rides and food stands. The tractor pulls were fun to watch. Drove west through Auburn and Chatham and stopped in at the new Good Will Store there and then home. Also Lori, my niece invited us to see her daylily garden and these too were spectacular one resembles a red orchid!

July Fourth: Jerome a village adjoining Springfield on the south has a very patriotic spirited parade. Likely every type war vehicle was in it and soldier of every war plus the Civil War Group that Sky and Ty are in. Sky played an authentic drum to mark time for many of the troops. The other twin Ty is working two states west and missing it all!

Selena and I have been attending Adult Color Book sessions and it is fun. I have posted many on Facebook … but it was a just a flash so to speak. My St. Louis cousin’s husband took the Alzheimer’s turn and it progressed very quickly. Selena drove us to the wake at their little Polish Church. The church was very different with large paintings of saints painted directly on the upper walls. It was good to see all the cousins and their kids and grandchildren but Ben was so endearing! We will miss him. In a few days I smelled Hyacinths - Ah! Ben made it!

I am looking forward to Harold, Christopher and maybe Michelle’s visit in early August. Christopher likes to celebrate his birthday at the Sommer Family Reunion: His only time to see relatives. His father’s side is completely deceased. We drove past the old Sommer-Midden farm. The new owners are into metal constructions - at moment it is huge metal farm roosters and cows. They also salvage fancy metalwork. It is no longer a working farm. We went on to Clayville Stagecoach Stop and were given a free tour of all the buildings and the main house. Our visitors liked seeing these things. Saturday was the reunion. Harold and Selena made a tray of cheese blocks and grapes. It had a slim turnout only 104 people came but I was very happy to meet Dolly Sommer’s son and grandson. Dolly never went by her married name; she was a known muralist in the Chicago area.

Next week is The 10 Day Illinois State Fair. I do not plan on going, but my family and some of the “Doggie People” are into it. I used to show paintings and my Russian Stamp Collection; the children showed in Junior Baking; it brought free passes and at times prizes.

The visits to Nursing Homes with Therapy Dogs resumed normally after the fair.

Because the Adult Color Book Club had been fun we tried a Rock Painting Class. This we discovered was for children - complete with flying paints, brushes and screaming tots with tiny rough rocks. It was also the autumn we thought a Chipmunk came in the house; they are very friendly here. Friends loaned us traps but the culprit was a tiny mouse!

October had Wiener-dog Races at Octoberfest in Jacksonville - those long critters are such fun to watch.

Blah! Congestion caught up with me, so I asked God for a few Drs. in spirit who determined my loss of height has crunched everything together and they inflated the discs between the bones! I feel a little taller, maybe it shows… no.

My friend Rose found a Collie. He has a Lord- somebody on each side of his pedigree so she is calling him “Lordy-Lordy!” He is large and stately but full of youthful spiff and pull. (How well that name fits him!) He is all white except for facial markings and one sable spot on his flank. Rose made a deal that the breeder - that he can show him 6 months. The six months is now expanding because the dog keeps winning at shows and - judges ordinarily do not like white Collies! And it continues! My blood pressure began toe-dancing all over the BP machine and as this shocks me, it will not settle down until I do! I got leggings and a top for my birthday! They fit nicely but I forgot Cosima is a shopaholic and at a distance so when something fits well she is so happy that she supplies more. After twenty pair of leggings I had to ask her to stop - I have no room to store them!

Good Grief! We just got word that my sister-in-law, Julie fell breaking her pelvis, some ribs and has internal bleeding. Selena and I got a prayer circle going for a good and quick mend. Derek and Kim drove to Branson several times to help her (some things just take manly strength) plus a lady’s touch. Why do ladies buy high beds that need a set of three stairs? They had to go and get her more down to earth! She mended fairly. But over and above - a good prayer chain helps.

2019:

Little did we know that this would be the last year we would enjoy the ease that many regard as normal. The whole world went about life ordinarily and as usual waiting for good things to improve. One doggie person was hit with father problems and legalities when her father slipped on the ice at his assisted nursing facility. She completely lost her sweet demeanor when her siblings responded negatively. I became her target! Finally she called me a thief in an Oriental Restaurant because I slipped the chopsticks in my purse! Time for a remark via Facebook - Mary’s Kind but Tough Correcting Style which covers: We love you, know you are having a horrible go of it but! And then the reason ( I stand unrightfully needled, my dog jerked and accused for over six months. Please, we want our sweet happy lady back.

I was on pins and needles - she disappeared for several weeks. She returned in completely happy form. A few weeks with her grandchildren and their activities changed her outlook back to wonderful!

News from Minneapolis was that Marshall needed stints. He related that it went very easily and was almost an out- patient thing.

Near the end of September Selena said I was not breathing normally - way too fast. The Emergency at Memorial Hospital was most efficient. I never saw so darn many packets of whatever ripped open and wrappings tossed in all my days! Looking back - it began the most frustrating week of the worse two years of my life: The shots, pokes and probes were endless. I never got much sleep in the first week, but finally several cardiologists found a perfect balance for pills and I was home for one week.

The world had begun to collapse with the Covid-19 Virus closing life as Americans knew it! The greatest populous lost their livelihood, income, homes and autos…this is an “On Credit” country. Businesses and restaurants closed and later some are existing by having drive-through for food. This is about to collapse as the food is becoming shoddy, stale or grease-soaked - and it is all in bag s with lots of paper - undetectable until one gets home!

So there was no likelihood of my birthday being normal this year. Derek and his wife Kim went about an open celebration - calling it a “Drive-by”. They contacted people and had it on FACEBOOK. The week and been damp and cold but my day was warm and lovely. (Even the Angels were helping!) Kim and Derek decorated the front yard with 90 paper candles, banners and signs. There was a table with basket for cards and baskets of flowers. I still have some garments I beaded way back in the day - and figured if need be I intended to rip the sides to make one fit! The kids set me on the porch and I hoped. A bit ahead of time cars began flowing down this little block and horns were honking, Friends and cousins yelling good wishes as they passed slowly waving! Many of the neighbors brought cards and flowers! Rose, my dear friend brought Smokey Blue the Therapy Dog I had been using before the nursing home visits were closed to everyone! He came on the porch and was happy to see all these people and get petted. Neighbor Chris and her husband have his retired K-9 Police Dog. I called his name and he perked and brought her across the street. Now Smokey is big, but wow, R-r-ralph is humongous but just as sweet.

HERE

CHILDREN - BRIEFLY

I have written lightly about my six children because it is about my life But this was my first time to be a real mother from my very creation. It was a new and at times bewildering experience but would have been great with a loving husband’s backing. The children were all different in good ways. They could have tempers by genetic-heritage but they may have decided my way was better. They never let go like their father. Years later, I was informed by Selena that the six had made this their solemn pact.

The Magdalene was the 1st child.

She was adored by her grandmother, Helen. The Magdalene had a religious vocation. She adored the Sisterhood - this was her goal. Her Confirmation classes were mid-stream when we were evicted from the farm. The move changed our parish boundaries. The Sister permitted/encouraged The Magdalene to continue Saturday classes as before. The Magdalene wanted to know about Heaven! As the Sister could only repeat biblical things; the child asked me. I told her to: Relax and ask God if she could see into Heaven as far as she could. The child was so excited and related: “First everything was gold and shiny; then in a bit everything was silver and pretty. There was a place where everything was a warm white. I told her this was an ivory level (not Ivory soap). Then The Magdalene saw blues which became more and more vivid and shiny like Christmas garlands which moved like there were miles of them - and then greens the same… “Then Mama, it stopped, but I’ll always remember it ‘cause - oh it was so beautiful!” By Spring my family lived across the street that divided the parishes. The Sister knew The Magdalene had a real vocation to become a Sister and continued to encourage her to make her Confirmation with her class. All went well until the child took her Confirmation gifts to the old Monsignor’s rectory to be blessed. He opened the door, looked down at the happy child and said: “You don’t belong to this parish!” and slammed the door! The Magdalene had a bullish streak and rang the bell again. When it opened she said quickly: “I want you to bless my stuff!” So he did and then she came to our car, opened the door and climbed in. Quiet was not this child! I asked how it went: and she blurted the story and added; “If that is how they really are in their hearts, I want nothing to do with them - ever - never again!” She was too angry to cry. She’d lost her Catholic Vocation! But she kept looking for Godin a church..

Helen had a mild deviousness. She preferred The Magdalene; always giving her much more than the others. Helen was buying the child - she was replacing me! When The Magdalene was on her own Helen would call her needing this or that. The Magdalene gladly helped her grandmother anytime. The secret plot was exposed when The Magdalene was asked to help Marshall’s ill wife in Minneapolis! Our daughter was between jobs so immediately, decided to move to Minnesota to help at Marshall and Susan’s. Helen was bereft:

“After all I’ve given her! I thought surely my needs were first! I’ll never forgive her!” I told Helen that The Magdalene must make her own choices.

“Well, it won’t work out; she’ll be sorry.”

Later Craig Huntley, a strict Christian Scientist came into The Magdalene’s life. They married. He had expense problems from the start. Craig was a journalist but put more time into reading history. Their children at 9 and 10 and had never yet seen a doctor or had any immunations. Craig had people “Pray over them” for any malady - even a broken tooth! The Magdalene was livid but Craig was the head of the house! He was downsized and did not find a job that equaled him. News was bleak from The Magdalene; not knowing we were actually being conned we sent money time and again for house, repairs, auto. Finally Craig took a sales job for Fingerhut but it was too little too late. She never told us until later that the children were borderline autistic. When The Magdalene found all her work with them children had been undone (he locked them in their room and read the encyclopedia!) She began divorce proceedings. In his apartment Craig cut his toe and refused a doctor or even a shot of penicillin. The toe turned gangrenous and in two weeks Craig died. The Magdalene went into depression and had quit her bookkeeping job. She fought it but they fell into dreadful straights. Charles and I helped them until we simply couldn’t. Suddenly Medicaid Doctors had her on head medicines. Years later, she was able to work and joined H & R Block. She proved so good at doing taxes that she built a twelve year clientele there. She met Harold K. Both were widowed. Harold was an attorney and businessman. With Harold she returned to being happy fun The Magdalene! They became engaged traveled in the off season. She loved Harold more than she knew was possible! They discovered that they could not marry because of her children’ government programs. They remained together informally a family. It was cut-short suddenly; The Magdalene developed colon problems surgery revealed that her many head- meds prevented the use of antibiotics. Any infections had to be surgically removed. Healing time seemed far into the future but she was always joyous. Her work friend, Sue N. was also a nurse and drove them often to work and back. One evening they saw a movie after work and The Magdalene telephoned me while Sue N. drove. She sounded like her bouncy self but I noticed she seemed to want to talk forever! At Sue N.’s home she rested in a lounge chair, intending to go home after dinner but slept through into the night. Mr. N. wandered through the house and awoke his wife: “The Magdalene doesn’t look right; her color is off.” She was 58. Harold guided her children until he too left us. He was a wonder.

Marshall, was the 2nd child; the quiet one. He has intense paranormal gifts having been drawn to places where stolen government documents were hidden when he first arrived in Minnesota. He prefers no exploitation to it.. He liked Boy Scouts; on a campout, the boys liked to be with Marshall because snakes always found him - and he hated snakes! He could not advance to Eagle because he was unable to swim. As a child he mastered and abandoned educational toys and was not into sports.I was bereft. He mastered things and dropped them. Finally he found a club and announced happily that he found a game he enjoyed: CHESS! I worried about his solitary future needlessly. Two huge Magnavox Computers arrived at Springfield High School when he was a sophomore … he was hooked! A guru (Sherwin Gooch) at the University of Illinois invited those interested (5 boys) to spend weekends at the computer facility in Urbana and room with him! Leaving the upsetting home-place and learning computer provided a double blessing for my son. The five enthusiasts dwindled to three. The guru designed a small box to extend usefulness and needed 60! Marshall took a specialized class at the nearby vocational college and learned the fine soldering and wiring that was needed. He and the professor toyed with the idea of putting piano roll music on the computer and receibed a grant to work on this..

They noticed that mistakes produced different alert- sounds: They managed to produce the 13 note Plato Theme taken from Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition by making these mistakes! Although the piano roll work was unsuccessful they did progress to typing each voice of music. Marshall did classical works and then Christmas Carols and Disney tunes in this laborious manner. He noticed that many programmers were leaving Plato and shortly after the Russian Conference that excluded him because of seniority but accepted all this music work, Marshall left also.

He transferred to The U of Minnesota and installed their Cray. He was called to several Universities to set-up their computer systems. But music taunted him! At a computer convention in Florida he saw the Fairlight Computer which played music! He took a leave to work and learn at the company in Sydney, Australia. It was a successful journey. Our computers now have music! Now he was invited with another programmer to White Flats, by the Government to adjust and observe several practice atomic bomb releases (before the radiation hazards were known)This was followed by troubleshooting and setting up computers in two Asian countries. Being fast to learn different languages he became enthralled with the foods and culture. He is fluent in these Tjai and Chinese plus Russian, German and computer languages. Marshall and his wife Susan bought some land and for years had an organic vegetable farm. He was 6 when we were evicted from the Farm but the feeling of tractors and hands in the dirt calls.

Personable he attracted young ladies without trying until he found Susan Pagnac a lady as vibrantly interested in learning as he. She had a five year old daughter Amy. The three were a love match. Shortly another daughter arrived. Susan named her after herself - reasoning that men do it all the time! One fateful day in August of ‘89, Amy 13, was abducted from their vehicle and was never found. This black cloud has shadowed their lives. They volunteer for “Missing & Exploited Children of Minnesota.” Since then, their younger daughter Susan Carol graduated Cornel. She plays all percussion instruments and mastered in Sociology. She is a beautiful light.

Cosima (Ko-SIMA) the third child was pretty, smiling and brought joy into our house. The older two forgot squabbling to play with their pretty sister. She needed love and hands on affection. As her father demanded orderliness grumpily and I kow-towed in fear, Cosima secretly sought this love and affection among friends. She enjoyed Girl Scouts completely and was a very adept student. She always told a new teacher - “OK, I am not Marshall!” She pushed aside any discussions of the paranormal. If she had any such gifts they lay fallow. An early college marriage was a bust with the exception of her son Jonathan. She returned to Springfield and finished at the U of I in Springfield graduating with two degrees; Business and Computer Programing. Cosima interned with Charlie Van Buskirk an actuary at a large insurance company and then stayed there. He too was a reserved person but felt cheated after finding a huge savings for the company with but a penny reward. He decided to move to California. At his going away party the thought of their separating hit them both. By some quirk of events the club was full and the honoree cound not get in! He suggested they have dinner elsewhere and they finally chatted on their own about missing each other. Charlie and Cosima dated the two weeks before his move; he loved her son, Jonathan at first sight and realized this was a nice trio. They married and have lived in California since 1978. Both Cosima and her husband have retired. If called, Charlie will teach either Actuary Classes or Chess. He made Chess Master long ago. These quiet men and Chess! How Grandmother Lula Sommer-Midden would disapprove.

Regina was the 4th child. She was factual and truthful and expected nothing less of others! This was discovered when classmates spilled the “There Is No Santa” thing. Regina felt we parents lied and what could the children believe then? She became a girl scout but detected which cookies sold best for fund raisers: Her mother’s first prize Brownies! Regina was paranormal but did not believe in any of it! She set a schedule for her life saying her life would be short! Regina enjoyed fully: her friends and nice garments once she was working. Being the third of four daughters she had grown-up in hand me downs. She was blonde like her sisters but noticed she was not being taking seriously at work; so like Cosima, she tinted her hair brown. Meanwhile she began full time classes at University while working; she became liaison between students and professors and joined the Sorority. Because the Board of Education was changing to all computers, she began classes for the workers. There were people with limited vision, she acquisitioned large screens with large type so they could keep their jobs.

She accompanied her brother, Derek to the motor vehicle station for a motorcycle license. Found it fun; took lessons, dated and later married the instructor, Gary Farley. Regina expanded Gary’s desire for more education and even taught him some cooking and household skills saying; “You will need to know these things but I do have one request; never look in my checkbook!” She had many chores at her workplace teaching those with limited vision, finding enlarged screens and products for them to use at computers. . . She was well compensated. Regina helped her best friend establish a Beauty Shop and was liaison at the local college. One day she felt faint at work. Derek called his father and they took her to Urgent Care. Her doctor was out and the one on duty called a wrong diagnosis (flu). Following those instructions, Regina died within an hour and a half! It was a frontal heart attack! Her doctor was absolutely livid and made every young woman who seemed to have flu - be tested for a heart attack. Now it has become widely known that young, healthy women too are prone to heart attacks. She was a donor, but because her cause of death was unknown at the time, only her eyes and skin could be used.

We were called to the hospital. I saw her in-spirit and sent my angel to her side. It touched her with a wing; she was aghast … my paranormal stuff was real! She had always poo-poo’d it. The angel spoke quietly to her; turned her to the east and they left together upward until they were the size of a pin head and then popped out of sight. I felt ill; my daughter was really gone- just like that! She was 30. The horrible loss later provided me with a new paranormal gift. Seeing where the spirit goes afterward.

Her professors and fellow students established a scholarship in her name; her diploma was awarded posthumously. Regina finished everything she had set to accomplish.

Derek is the 5th child: Happy, sports-minded, helpful and magnanimous: A real people person. His chidshood mantra was: “If it’s fun, I’ll do it.” He lost interest in Boy Scouts because: They had to WORK for badges! He first visited Urbana and Computer with his dad and I and his siblings. Marshall working there, showed them many innovations and games. Derek enjoyed the computer games. Naturally then, he ventured into computer at high school and was recommended to the State Board of Education in his senior year. He was there on speck; when he was asked what he could do he promptly keyed in all the fun games from Plato and was hired immediately! Derek remained there. He shunted the paranormal but was quick to tell people: “My mother speaks to animals.” He followed the marital route finding Kim Elliott, a graphics artist at Ski Club. . They have twin sons seriously delightful every minute, now both are University grads.aamd into history. In this “Lincoln Country” they joined the re-enactors of the Civil War as privates. Alike but on different paths: One at the Dept. of Agriculture; the other perfecting his Arabic to read foreign documents for the Illinois Dept. of Revenue. My son, Derek retired at 52. Over 250 work friends attended his retirement party - even those retired came. After three weeks Derek accomplished everything he wanted to do in retirement and missed working. He completed a couple contracts with the State Treasury and took a job that sounded good, but the top manager spouted about problems that did not concern his division. He left after two weeks. On the way to carpool two men in his division decided Derek was right - they put up with that woman long enough and quit! Before he opened the car door his phone rang. His scout said there was a position where he used to work … Without a breath Derek said, “I’ll take it.” At their home with Kim’s eye for graphic balance they have landscaped their yard with daylilies, Asian lilies, Iris, Tulips and other bulbs. Another case: Need to get in that dirt!

Selena is the 6th child and youngest. She is sweet mannered and was always ready to go along with the other children. She had several jobs turn sour; fell ill with an undetectable malady but her job was cancelled when she could only return part time! With a down job market Selena began college at the University of Illinois in Springfield. She earned a degree in Business Retailing. The severe winters promptly made arthritis apparent and prompted her to move west. Cosima quickly implored her to come to California. Both loved having family. Her father, Charles drove Selena’s very packed Toyota Corolla. I thought it would be a tight fit for too long - so I stayed home. They stopped at: Cowboy Hall of Fame, Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam and Las Vegas before arriving at Cosima and Charlie’s house. Charles bought! He came laden with videos, photos and an overload of tee shirts for himself and me!

Cosima telephoned pleading that I fly out. The flight was smooth until we neared Santa Barbara. The pilot announced turbulence and added that Santa Barbara’s landing strip was in bad condition so: We were in for a bumpy landing! ***This called for angel interference! So I asked them to steady the plane against the turbulence and to keep our landing smooth. They did all this wonderfully***. I complimented the pilot! His surprised face was fun.

Cosima and I walked about Santa Barbara and Ventura 1 ½ days before Selena and her father arrived by car! Midden gatherings are chaotic. Cosima’s plan was a surprise birthday celebration for me and her dad (our birthdays are two weeks apart) plus a welcome to California for Selena! What excitement!

Selena settled quickly into both a job and an apartment and shortly found dating more interesting. One fellow was addicted to hot sauce; he was an inventor. Several were musicians. She was used to her dad’s being handy at fixing things and noted that businessmen, inventors and musicians usually had no practical skills. She met Michael McLaury. He was working at air conditioning. He drove through the small towns, circled residences where he done work. They chatted easily and took walks along the beach. Soon they chose a favorite restaurant. They were old enough to try and be certain each was about as perfect as possible. She was 40 with her dad’s young features and my unaging skin - she looked 24. With Charles grand management, our fortunes were bleak again; we could not attend the wedding.

When this refusal happened again (our oldest grandson’s Jonathan’s wedding) Michael told Selena, “They are short on money. We shall invite them to stay with us and pay their way!” And they did!

Selena and Michael were happily married a total of twelve years and then Selena’s work folded. Michael suffered overwork burn-out plus depression after losing both his parents within one year. With these sour turns, Selena’s Rheumatoid Arthritis resurfaced. They became too ill to care for each other! Selena was now a selling pastel artist and accepted by the Pastel Society. But with this at home stress: she could not even hold a piece of pastel. Soon they were homeless! It was necessary to sell and separate to get the Government help each needed. In time, Selena’s situation somewhat stabilized with a good Rheumatologist. With friends helping, she was able to move back to Springfield. Michael recuperated and discovered the job market had computerized - a new ballgame. He found a good job in San Francisco. At this time Selena could not move much of her body, weighed 98 pounds and her hair had turned white!

This has been a smooth transition. I am not a hover-mother. She reconnected with friends. She was able to adjust her thinking realizing that hard thoughts caused many of her physical problems. Selena began trying her pastels doing tiny very simple landscapes. She is selling a bit of her art again. We agree: ***“Following God’s way makes life easier.”***

Warren was number seven, our third son that did not touch upon the earth at all, but he deserved a name. I met him in-spirit. He said I provided just the bit he needed to make Heaven. As a man about thirty, he has dark slightly curled hair and features like his brother Derek. Warren did not share much else. I suppose that we made contact was the necessary touch.

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ADDENDUM

ANGEL QUERIES

Often I asked the same questions of the angels; About “Years towards the Light”; the Interim Community and Hell. The angels answered patiently: ***‘Hell is for those who reject and cast the Holy Ghost or God the Father out of their lives. Remorse and repentance can fill gaps like putty for all grave sins. Those who cast aside the responsibilities of marriage heedlessly; adulterers who harm their wives and families; those without remorse after a killing; these are grievous offenses.***

***‘To be commended is honoring parents. Honoring age is commendable.’*** I asked about thieves, con artists and liars. ***‘The lie leads to other infractions, like your past boss, the Doctor; First the lie, then the sleight of hand followed by dishonesty in dealings; advantage-taking for self or loved ones. For loved ones it is a less infraction.’***

***‘It is that people question; how can I get to Heaven? Yes, we must love others, but used for such purpose as above – it is wrong. Mankind constantly covets. It is the stupidest offence; all they have to do is wish and one day something of like will be had for the self. One does not covet another’s spouse, children, one’s own children or one of the same sex. These last are in the Interim Community longest. David of the bible asked pardon but he was blessed and God could not subject David. However, God made no further covenants with man!”***

A BOSS DABBLES IN WITCHCRAFT

I worked at a retired teachers’ organization 1989 to 95. My boss was interested in getting ahead-having a little power to culminate his successes. He had consulted with a witch who was “a really nice person” he said. I flat out told him this was a bad idea saying, “There is no little bit with the occult; it is complete submission. Do not do it! Your success is commendable.”

I was hurt on the job. The Doctor advised that I not to return to the same kind of work. As there was no other work there, I left - without compensation and had to pay my own Hospital and therapy bills! I told the angels I felt this was not right. In a few months I visited to find everything changed! There was a new manager who now had a private closed in glassed space and all the workers and volunteers I knew had left! She was no interested in furthering the art collection although the donor was still painting and donating! I did not visit again.

A few years later by chance I chatted with a retiree who had served 2 years as President of the Board. Orville updated me: The art collection and print shop (both my domain) were obsoleted (the good paintings were already sold and the artist finally died.) By now the help had been boondoggled by inefficiency and retired or left. My boss that was always pleasant except for the witchcraft episode (I thought he’s dropped that thought.) came to another end. He spent much of the association’s capital personally before being caught. He was encouraged to repay and leave his position. There was no prosecution; he was too “big to fail”. Hearing this made me wonder many things. They do say evil punishes its own and laughs.

A WELL MEANING SPIRIT, ARES

In 1993, a spirit visited me: Ares was my first crush. He died just the week before coming for this visist. In-spirit he appeared in front of me as the well-built Greek athlete, blond softly curled hair and wearing an above the knee chiton. He decided to be my bodyguard; the job he held in our Greek life. This was a dear gesture, but I could not let him do this. I explained the forces my angels dealt with were different. He would not be refused! Ares accompanied me to work. He studied the evil forces my angels confronted and he understood his proposed task was impossible. The angels were confronting immortal demons. Ares also noted that - mostly I was unaware of their constant battles.

My boss at the Illinois Retired Teacher’s Association - against my warning became more involved with the occult. Quite suddenly a twenty-five foot tall warrior angel drew a huge sword and attacked an equally large black spirit. These mammoth beings fought strenuously. It convinced Ares, this task was definitely beyond his capabilities. Later, one of my angels said that Ares had gathered ex-bodyguards like himself and together they lectured others about these unseen forces that existed. I smiled. “He is helping others without knowing it; how wonderful!”

THE WANGARD LINEAGE

All the German cousins had had it with the Kaiser’s talk of another war. Some of their sons would shortly be of military age. Already each family had suffered military losses which left mothers penniless without husbands, sons or both: Enough brutalizing of families and loosing wars. The cousins decided to flee Germany. The absconding cousins totaled 25. They planned well.

A 22’boat belonged to a seafaring Wangard cousin. It was packed with food, water and supplies. It had covered sleeping areas and an oven. The group assembled at Hamburg and absconded in the night on their two week journey to America. My Great Grandfather John, a cobbler, his wife Anna and their two sons John and Peter Wangard were joined by the families of cousins: Chris Amrhein, the bakers; Shucks, the woodworkers. Wangard farmers - heard Wisconsin calling. The seafaring Wangards intended to remain where they landed on the east coast near Boston.

It was a rough journey. Great Grandfather John became ill and died. He was held a few days until large fish began following the boat. Reluctantly John was buried at sea. Shortly two others followed John Wangard into the deep.

They landed near Boston, meandered into a German speaking area and shortly the Shucks, Amrheins and Wangards journeyed to Springfield, IL. They settled in the Northend. There were Germans, Lithuanians and Portuguese; all speaking English peppered with ethnic dialects. The men followed their crafts but the late John’s sons did not want to be cobblers. John and Peter sought work at “The Rolling Mill” This place covered a massive area to the north of their area. It made iron products: Manhole covers even the cast iron frames for school desks. But most of all their mainstay was steel railroad rails for the expanding country! It was very hot and dangerous work. The boys cared for their mother, Anna. (They are listed in the first published directories of 1840 as Wangart. The final “D” in Deutsch is pronounced as “hard T”.

Peter married and worked as a switchman on the railroad many years. He was killed by a second train passing. (Only a son, Peter II is known. He married Anna Kunz. They had 4 children: Brother W. George, S. J.; Charles, Robert and Mary Ann.)

My Grandfather John II was blond, blue eyed and cute as a button. At 17 he married Louisa Grimmeisen from St. Louis, Mo. She was a bit older. Her family had emigrated from the Alsace area between France and Germany. Her sister Ida and half- brother, Henry Kierske later moved to Springfield; neither Ida nor Henry ever married. My grandfather, John II left the Rolling Mill and then worked in the coal mines after discovering he could not buy one. The couple had 13 children. Six children died in their early years. One named Henry was killed when his highchair toppled over! Grandmother Louisa Grimmeisen -Wangard succumbed during a flu epidemic in 1913. (Her gravestone was a gift to John II by a cronie. It is wrong one year. Grandfather John II refused to take money.) Surviving to adulthood was: John III (shortened form of Johannas) Joseph, William, Bertha, Margaret, Amelia and Katherine. Losing his wife changed Grampa John’s life violently. He ordinarily worked dawn to dusk in the mine as did his oldest son John. The girls were in school but there were three little ones with no one to care for them.

Grampa John II farmed out these three: Joe and Billie to the Alton Orphanage (for 2 years). Katherine was adopted permanently by Louisa Wangard’s sister Amelia Broadrick and husband in St. Louis. When the two boys were retrieved from the Orphanage they could go to school with their sisters. Later Joseph worked in the mines. The men were careful but Grampa John II was hurt in a mine accident and, had to retire. He promptly made his sons John III and teenaged Joe leave mining. Insurance had not been invinted.

John III went to cousin Shuck’s Lumber Yard and worked there until it burned. His last chore came because he was the smallest employee. He shimmied down through the burnt remains of the office into the basement and opened the safe. John III brought up the contents in bags and all the workers were paid. But the lumber yard did not rebuild. John III was drafted into the Army for W.W.I. (see a soldier returns).

Joseph worked a while at the Shoe factory on Eleventh Street. His machine cut leather soles but the smell of leather made him ill. His routine after work was to walk several blocks to the cousin Amrhein’s bakery for bread before catching the streetcar home. One day he noticed a lady in a driveway between her house and the bakery. Mrs. Amrhein was cleaning loaf pans. It looked too hard for a lady to do so Joe approached and said, “Ma’m, you wouldn’t have to do that if you had me to do it.” -- She looked up at the kid of sixteen and said, “You’re right.” He started the next day and stayed with the company 52 years.

Billy, the youngest son, joined the Navy at sixteen and worked through the medical ranks to become Captain William Wangard, M.D.

The girls married Veterans of WW I. Bertha married Charles Nesbitt, but he was a ladies’ man. Later she married A. Lee Clutter who raised her two children, Charles and Louise. Margaret married Tommy Alyward from Cantral, IL they had no children… Amelia married George La Benne from Detroit. They had one daughter, Dorothy. In 1941 this family moved to La Joya, CA. … Katherine was a spinster until her adopted mother died. In 1950 she married a resident at a retirement home.

MY GRANDMOTHER MARY’S LINEAGE

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Mary Zatorski-Jarzewiak-Studenski (and I know you thought Horst Jankowski was a mouthful!) Gramma was married several times. She had the unfortunate knack of marrying gentlemen that were boiler-workers and smoke stack builders. She preferred to remember those who lasted the longest: Joe “Shea” Jarzewiak and Jul Studenski.

Grandmother’s story: The Zatorski family came from Bulgaria. My Gramma never mentioned a father so he was not a war survivor. The mother and her children: Michael, Rose, Mary, Nora and Charles immigrated to New York. Their brother, Michael left with a traveling circus. For decades communication with him was scarce. He wrote to them because the circus traveled. My grandmother, Mary met a railroad man. Joseph Jarzewiak (Phoentic: Ya- chivie-yak) He was Russio-Polish: So Grandmother Mary learned Polish! His route was between New York and St. Louis, Missouri. When they married, he brought her to a house on Mother Jarzewiak’s farm in Kentucky.

Their little house was nice; it was surrounded by pretty grass when they arrived. Joseph taught Mary how to shoot a revolver in case a stray wild animal crept close. Unfortunately “the grass” was timothy and grew tall. Mary was bereft that the farm hands would not trim her nice grass. Also there was a room of machinery which whirred each morning and each evening. Joseph tried to explain the room has a cream separator - which made no sense to a city girl. Mary loved her mother-in-law from whom she learned a different cooking. Mother Jarzewiak’s prize on the farm was a golden apple tree. She tended and sold the special apples. The main operation of the farm was breaking wild horses to saddle. These were shipped by train to the farm; were broken and then sold mostly to the U.S. Cavalry. Joseph did this at first but developed a heart condition. He stopped this jarring work and turned to trains working up to engineer.

Mary’s sisters visited at the farm where Mary was already missing the verve of city life. Joseph decided St. Louis was better than large New York. He could get free railroad passes for the ladies so they all moved to St. Louis. Both Rose and Nora found husbands with excellent incomes for dangerous work. Rose married John Kowalski and bore John, Jr. Nora married Jim Hall and had Annie. The three families lived in nearby apartments and were very close. Joseph and Mary had Elizabeth, Helen, Michael and Birdie that survived.

Joseph played a Bass Saxophone. When he was home he met with other musicians who inducted him into the Police Band. They were all Irish. Joseph was Russian-Polish. So they dubbed him “Shea” for the band. This was how the “Shea” name began in the family. At times off duty policemen visited. Nora and Jim had a player piano so most everyone gathered there.

When Joseph’s heart stopped forever, Mary did cleaning jobs at nights to support her children. She cleaned Boatman’s Bank Building near the levee. She had to bring Helen to the Bank because nobody would watch this one. Helen was willful and naughty and full of crazy ideas. Helen had to sit on a bench and be quiet while her mother worked.

My Grandmother Mary was busy in the near dark when she heard a noise. Helen had fallen asleep - it wasn’t her. Another sound - she saw a dark figure crawling over the open-top revolving door! A thief! Mary took the revolver out of her pocket and shot him dead. This not only awakened little Helen but set off alarms and the police responded. When they saw it was their late friend’s wife she was completely exonerated. Unfortunately little Helen concluded that her mother really worked for the police - like maybe the secret service. Helen’s imagination went wild! She completely believed that her mother worked for the Secret Service…and worse she never changed that belief.

Mary met and married several times after Joseph died; each time hoping to have a nice settled home but each time none of the men lived long in their line of work. Mary gave up and bought a parrot for company. It called her Ms. Schmidt and alerting her to the door - even when she preferred not to be home. Gramma could not dissuade the bird so set it in the bricked yard for some sun. It clouded and rained. The parrot yelled: “Oh, Ms. Scnmidt, Polly’s all wet! Polly’s all wet.” Gramma Mary snickered but pretended to be concerned: “Oh, poor Polly; let me take you inside.” Who on earth was Ms. Schmidt?

Helen, the problem child was fourteen when her mother Mary married Jul Studenski. He was the most plain, tallest man at six foot six but he was pleasant and loving. My Grandmother Mary was everything in his eyes even though she was only five foot one. Helen at 14 years of age disliked him instantly! She remembered her own father! Helen went out and applied for a job at Grady’s Baseball Factory. Her application was completely falsified. She wrote that she was 16. Her nationality was - IRISH! Her last name - SHEA! She rationalized that her own father had played in the Irish policeman’s marching band and they dubbed him with an Irish name “Joe Shea”. She doubly -justified her falsification by feeling she had been harassed enough with Polish jokes through her school years. Nobody fooled with the Irish - they were fighters! She was hired but by the time she reached home Helen felt guilty and told her mother.

Her mother listened and called all her children about the table. “From now on your last name is SHEA. It is only four letters and easy to spell.” She huffed - “Why didn’t I think of that? Very well, go play; talk to the parrot!”

Jul Studenski had his friends in for cards every Friday night. One brought his parrot but it did not speak. Jul owned one and brought his into the room but it did not speak either. So on Friday nights both silent parrots perched behind the card players. Penetrating the concentrated silence rang his parrot’s first words: “Pretty Papa!” After the laughter died down, Jul said, “Well we know it never belonged to a sailor.”

THE ORIGIN OF “VINEGAR HILL”

In my early married days, I asked my Father-in-law, Mr. Henry E. Midden Sr. (named after his father) about the term “Vinegar Hill”. He said: When he was a boy, his father’s grocery store was built on the southern rim of Vinegar Hill on the corner of Spring Street and Cook Streets. The lay of the land was much different between today’s Jefferson St. and Cook Street; Walnut St. and Fifth Street.

It was a big dish affair - a steep dip culminating in the center of today’s New State Capitol. The streets were unpaved and in inclimate weather - which seemed constant - they were slippery mud. As a result any delivery wagon (dray) and horses faced a miserable trip both down and up the hill. In winter Walnut was the least rugged. Native Indians in this area were friendly. Their encampment was enclosed by today’s Walnut St. at Jefferson, into Douglas Park - and East along Mason St.) That and south (business and residential) area still has hills and dips.

Naturally, wanting everything dry - merchants built on the South Rim of the hill - along both Edwards and West Cook Street. But delivering goods to them took extreme effort. One needed both energy and tenacity which the delivery people termed: “Vinegar”. It took lots of vinegar to conquer that hill.

When a site was needed for the New State Capitol the State Big-Wigs decided to make use of Vinegar Hill. The nasty hole was so deep - not much excavation was needed for the basement! By squaring the lower level to plans the excess dirt was used to level much of the New Capitol grounds. As the Capitol was birthed, Vinegar Hill fell to History. First St. was cut off at the South side of the Capitol and picked up again on Monroe St. Market Street was renamed Capitol Avenue and continues from the East side of town to the Capitol. West of the Capitol became residential. Later many of these homes were bought by the State for buildings or parking.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF OUR LIVES

OR

SPILLING THE BEANS ON FAMILY AND FRIENDS

JOE BLURTS THE TRUTH

Joe Wangard retired from the bakery job he loved to care for his extremely arthritic wife, Helen. He had always kept busy in his free time; touch-up painting, fixing things, yard work. But now he would change pace: Indoors with Helen! Illness had not changed her autocratic ways. No one interrupted her when she spoke and this Joe came to learn unhappily.

Helen mentioned by telephone that they had some plumbing problems and she had no idea who to call. She never considered Charles. To her he did not exist. “Mother, Charles (my husband) has a business! We have a plumber. I told you they build houses and remodel homes.” Helen never listened to anyone, her mind was too busy construing negativities or concocting stories.

Charles and I drove to the little Jackson Street house. Charles went into the bathroom immediately to check the plumbing problem. Mary sat at the breakfast table and Joe seated himself comfortably, and placed a slight smile upon his face. Helen began an oft repeated story, one that took about an hour and a half. Joe’s smile was cemented in place; he stared blankly ahead.

Without warning Charles shouted from the bathroom: “Where’s the shut-off?” Helen stopped abruptly but poor Joe said forlornly, “There isn’t any!” -Thinking of Helen’s re-wind.

Charles peeked out of the bathroom and said, “There has to be a valve to shut off the water to the house!”

Joe came out of his hypnotic state and without thinking blurted: “Oh THAT! Yes, we have one of those.” His eyes widened in realization of his words. Quickly he got off his chair and said; “Come this way, Charles; I’ll show ya!” The two men left to the basement before Helen regained lucidity. Heaven was with Joe; she did not continue her story - nor did she tell them anymore - that I know.

RIVETING TIMES - GROWING UP!

By March of 1943 Joe Wangard’s financial needs were great after several hospital bills but this last blow threatened to bury their livelihood. All bakers at Amrhein’s Bakery had their pay cut in half! Union be-hanged! It was either that or the bakery was closing its doors.

Joe saw an ad offering a class in welding and riveting. It was held locally and held the promise of immediate job placements. Despite the horrible racket doubled by his (body-instrument with battery pack) hearing aid he made the top three in his class and was hired at Mc Donald-Douglas Aircraft in St. Louis. His youngest sister and her adoptive mother lived there, he did not even need a change of streetcars to get to work. As his wont he chose the night shift and slept days. This had been his routine since he married.

Helen rented the house, packed necessities and mother and I set off for a new adventure in the 1938 Ford Coupe’. The next day we found a furnished apartment on Euclid Avenue and I registered in 7th grade at St. Mark’s School. I was a shy, puny kid with nothing pretty going for me and was equivocally ignored! The Dominican sisters were most endearing even with unruly children. A great looking boy, Anthony was going to become a priest. Felix was tubby and funny. Ed was an out-of-towner and like me, just here for the duration. Helen actually secured a job. That whole building was devoted to sewing. There were four floors and basement with different factories on each. Over their stay, as war Contracts finished Helen worked in all but the handbag factory. She even sewed her finger in a parachute; the needle broke in her finger! It slowed her at home authority a bit realizing she was vulnerable! Helen enjoyed working and I enjoyed her working too I was not smothered and watched every minute. During school term I crossed paths with a pen pal and we decided to take music lessons together on Saturday mornings during school term. My parents gave me an allowance and some of this went for music lessons and streetcar fare.

The summer was wonderful there were the apartment house kids to play with. There was a pulley we fabricated to send notes up and down, until one note fell in some poison Ivy. I retrieved it; I was not allergic. We made–caramel corn, tea, even papaya juice and sold these at a little stand. St. Louis people bought anything from children! Sherman school a few blocks west was turned into a children’s delight with three small pools, basket weaving, acrobatics and ballet There were boys’ games – one called Hai-Hali a Mexican game. The library was not restricted. We kids studied all the art, cartoon and garment books. We staged shows for ourselves in an area behind the garage; played with Toby a black Nuffie; watered the milkman’s horse and begged ice chips from him. (The iceman only had blocks.) The kids learned when The A and P set day-old bread and packaged bakery goods aside to be given away: This held true for some produce. The kids decided to take orders from other residents of the house and add a bonus to the order. This was fine until one mother accused us of SHOP LIFTING! It was quite an accusation for children to explain.

The Wangards rented on Euclid until fall. Then moved to Minerva, where Joe and the owner came to odds which involved another move to Maple Avenue. The Maple place was on the third floor, had a view of the street in front and a roof in the back with pigeons. I almost snared one for dinner, but just before pulling the snare, I realized I knew nothing about such things and abandoned the project. At these last two places I learned to buy simple groceries, rolls and pastries at the corner bakeries and exchanged recipes for dinner with Edward, the war-child, who lived west on Maple Street. I learned to fib a bit to the streetcar conductors about meeting my mother in town after work. In part this was true, just that I did not go straight to the factory; I went to Famous-Barr (escalators) and learned what merchandise was on each floor, especially the toys on the eighth. When I knew all the merchandise and when it ceased to be fun and I would catch the street car home. If I really met my mother - about four o’clock I would walk west to 14th Street to the factory. These streetcar/store exploits were my secrets. The streets were always safe.

The contract for Navy Planes was completed and was not being renewed; neither were the contracts for ducks and alligators. The whole factory was shutting down. Joe and his fellow riveters had never seen one of their planes complete. The workers each saw the portion they worked on. Conspiratorially they had a riveting good time assembling that last little Navy Fighter. They did it out of curiosity but when their supervisor came and made such a stink over it - mum was the word. Nobody knew anything! They took up their lunch buckets that last Friday and said goodbye.

The aftermath of this jolly adventure was carried in: The St. Louis Post Dispatch complete with story and pictures: So many agencies were assembled on short notice. They had begun to remove the plane Sunday morning. It was on the fourth floor. The solid brick building was windowless There were only skylights! The factory was at Union and Natural Bridge Blvd. There was no mention about how this plane had become assembled. My father read us the newspaper article which stated they could not dismantle the Navy Fighter without destroying it. At this, Joe heaved a sigh of pleasure: “See! When Americans make a thing it doesn’t fall apart!”

Pictures showed the huge iron pear that tore into the brick; the crane, chains and padding to remove and lower the plane onto an elongated flatbed semi. Police escorted the little plane with many lights flashing. Crowds along Natural Bridge Boulevard came to see the little Navy fighter going smartly to Lambert Field. Mother and I were unaware of the escapade until Joe said: “Look at that! Ain’t it cute! **We did that!”**

Helen was still working so Joe turned to his old love, the bakery. He noticed a sweet roll in a bakery window; the family was on their way to a freak-show in one of the buildings close to the River. After the show Joe noticed the sweet roll had still not been purchased. He ordered the family to wait outside. When he came out he wore a happy smile and said he started work Monday. When questioned, he said: “I asked for the manager and said I knew how to increase the sale of his sweet roll cakes.” Helen looked at him in surprise, about to say, he knew nothing about marketing! But, Joe continued: ”He was interested, so I said hire me and I will show you how!” Helen asked how he would do this. “See, they have a half cherry on that long sweet roll! Shush, it is a secret.” There was nothing like Joe happy! The next time sweet roll cakes were in the window - not for long because they each had five whole cherries along the top.

During that one year, I gained confidence, independence, travel, fashion and money knowledge. Helen discovered she could actually sew for money and Joe - Joe could be surprisingly mischievous.

COOKING WITH GAS!

At Maple Street I picked a child’s magazine from a newsstand. While the stories were comical, one page opened a new world: Cooking. It explained a routine: How to light the gas stove safely. Start potatoes first, they needed longest cooking. How to open a can of green beans; what it meant to bread and season a minute steak; even how to cook a vanilla pudding and place it in the ice box. There was one drawback; Joe appreciated having a real meal so much; he wanted me to cook every evening after school. This would certainly cut into my secret fun excursions by streetcar. But, when the grocer had no minute steaks, I was free! I knew nothing else. One afternoon, Edward was in the grocer buying another type of meat. We exchanged cooking techniques and tried each other’s recipes. The next morning they saw each other at the stoplight and chatted about their new experiences. Felix the roundish patrol boy overheard snatches and decided we were sweet on each other. He began chiding us. Edward finally spoke. “Hey, what we’re doing is for survival, Bonehead.” This was probably the thinnest term ever applied to Felix.

IT WAS TEENAGERS!

World War II had ended! Emperor Hirohito had signed the peace treaty! It was an unbelievable event! My generation grew up with war. Off and on I was harassed because of my German surname, but in St. Louis there was no harassment. On the Streets of Springfield People bustled along the sidewalks with their heads down, thinking mundane everyday thoughts. The War was over! The city planned nothing! Along Fifth Street the busiest and most traveled street downtown there was not a single American Flag; not a poster in a store window! But coming the other way was Henry from my old grade school class. We greeted each other and I expressed my concern. Henry agreed, this was a day for celebration! He would think about it. We each went our own way.

That evening my mother Helen and I were leaving the Senate Theater and walking to the ’38 Ford Coupe. Crossing the street at Fifth and Monroe we heard fire sirens, saw police lights flashing and then a huge ball of flames rise in the air! Naturally with little to do in Springfield, a huge crowd came “out of the woodwork.” Henry was in the midst of it and caught my arm. “We did it after the football game; we dragged the wooden goal posts here and set them on fire. Ain’t it great! This is for us winning the war!” And Henry was lost that quickly in the pushing crowds. The stadium was two miles north - those crazy teenagers: The only ones with any patriotism in their hearts.

NAUGHTY CATSKILL ADVENTURE

This was on the evening of the moon landing in 1969. We gathered our family and visited at Bob and Sharon Midden’s place for the event on TV. I was curious and then suspicious of the event. It seemed to be staged in the desert of New Mexico. I was getting fidgety but heard a familiar voice and as suddenly saw a little ethereal picture of Horst, my friend in piano! I immediately went in-spirit to inquire, but at the site, no one had seen Horst. He did go outside for some air one of his entourage’ said. I saw footprints in the snow and then the tracks of a snowmobile! On a hunch, I followed the tracks. Perhaps he went on a joyride with someone; Horst did not drive.

Soon the tracks turned to the right and the land was no longer level. There was a steep dip and sharp rise. It was then I noticed a figure in the dark; it was Horst in his black suit and topcoat and small brimmed hat. He was brushing himself of snow. I called to him and soon we were walking back to the hotel. He was alright. “Do you want to tell me about it?” I asked. (In true German fashion, he was not at fault.)

“I came outside for some fresh air and there sat this snowmobile with the engine running, but abandoned; there was nobody around! So I thought to take a little ride on it. It was going pretty good and then it was going down into a valley and then up a hill. When out of nowhere, this big tree came at me. No matter what I did the tree kept coming and when it was evident, I jumped off into the snow. I am all right. But the tree would not give back the snowmobile and now here we are!”

“Does anyone know about it?”

“No. If it had not been abandoned; I would not be walking all this distance!”

“Will you tell anyone?”

“No, it was not mine. Ah, here is Claus!” And he left non-chalantly to his performance.

REGINA’S WEDDING PLAN

Gary Farley and Regina were happy to announce that they decided to marry. The families were pleased that the two decided on a church wedding. There was one rub; Regina’s best friend had married at the new St. Agnes but as there was no church yet, the ceremonies and services were held in the Gymnasium. Regina wanted a real church! Her intended said they might consider his cute little country church. It was a few miles west of Springfield, but close to New Berlin where they thought about having the reception. She agreed; they would set arrangements.

When both were free from work they met the minister to see the church. They entered the back for a complete tour. It was so cute! The minister asked how many people they expected. The two added the totals of both family lists: Gary had 150 and Regina about 300. That was when the minister paled and said, the church only holds 75 people!

Regina said, “Well the late ones can look in the windows and watch!” The minister opened the front doors from the inside. They all heard a loud buzzing. Regina asked if the power lines were close to the church, but a bee flew down to investigate them. When they looked up the eves held the grandest hive either had ever seen. They scurried down the steps and along the path catching their breath.

The only beekeeper was in another township and unavailable. Regina did want the church. The minister suggested a garden wedding. The grounds were laden with lush evergreens and it was enough distant that surely the bees would be no problem. The grounds were lovely. It was a comedown; but she agreed.

“The only concern I have is how can we hide all those tombstones by the side of the church?”

“Oh! We could face the trees and set the chairs so the backs are to that part,” The minister said.

“Yes, and anyone back there can peek over their monuments and watch!” The day was lovely; one errant bee wandered in, but the others provided background music.

THE KOREAN HOUSEKEEPER

I visited my Supervisor from the State house in the summertime. Bette had never been a Supervisor but always a private secretary. Outside that, she had four daughters - she knew mothering, therefore assumed her position – acting much like the “House Mother” on the TV Series, “The Facts of Life.” I loved her. She was short, rotund, jolly and we two knew each other from my first job at the Kresge Dollar Store. Bette hired a housekeeper because of her arthritis and some instability.

This time she showed me their new Boston Terrier. They called him Jake because he was unruly. The dog was black and white but the size of a bull dog with many of those features. Bette said the only person Jake obeys is the Korean Housekeeper. Bette overheard that lady who held a mop menacingly: “You do what I say! In my country – we eat you!” Bette said it sobered both her and the dog.

THE PUPPY

Several other ladies and I carpooled at APL when we took dogs to a nursing home. This day there were five ladies and four dogs. Michele drove the nearly three miles. The cat was in a carrier, the larger dogs all behind the last seat gawking out the windows and one Spaniel-Beagle puppy was being held by a tiny lady named Joyce. It began yapping and snapping her as soon as the SUV moved. Most dreadful thing when wearing hearing aids is hearing the shrill squeals of a puppy. After two miles all the ladies were tired of consoling the puppy. Bette’s Korean Housekeeper crossed my thoughts. That puppy was driving us nuts!

I caught the dog’s eye, pointed my finger at it and said sternly, “Be quiet or – we will eat you for lunch!” It was all I could do to keep a straight face but knotted my stomach and turned away before smiling. Michele hit both hands against the steering wheel, “Eat the puppy for lunch!” And she laughed heartily. The poor pup was terrified mute. Not another peep! It was a perfect little visitor being handed about for an hour and quiet during the return ride to APL.

FIRST BASEBALL GAME

Although my grandparents lived but blocks from old Sportsman’s Park in St. Louis, we had never attended a baseball game. I knew how ballplayers dressed from News Reels at the movies. My dad, Joe was “Gung-ho” to see these two teams play at Iles Park in Springfield. It was my first outdoor event. I had never experienced the evening breezes in a park and found bleachers a strange hard thing.

The game began and the crowds cheered as the players came on the field. It was a Local team verses the visitors: The House of David. This team did not dress like baseball players! They seemed to wear billowy white silk summer pajamas with a large bright blue star on the chest. Their pants were cut-off well below the knee. Also, their faces seemed strange. Joe explained this team wore beards and had longer hair. Men were traditionally clean shaven with short hair. I was quiet fascinated; their garments seemed to swing and move in different directions as they ran. Suddenly there was a loud crack and the crowd around me went into an uproar. Joe explained that the team made a home run. “Everyone shouts and cheers when there is a home run.” I saw a lot of movement around the field. Another crack and one of the House of David men took off around the square. He made it into home base so I shouted, “Hurray for funny pants.”

People stopped in dead silence and stared at me. Joe said, “Why did you do that?” I explained about the home run, what I did not know was that you cheered only your team. As the people became riled nearby, Joe and Helen pulled their coats around them and hustled their insulting stupid child from the park and home silently. No more baseball games for me.

MY BAD EYES SEE THE FORD F-150

For two years a personable man advertised the Ford F150 pickup truck. I was in need of cataract surgery but thought if I squint I could actually focus close-up details and see what an F-150 really looked like. While driving, I noticed an F250 another and even a F350 but people must not have been turned on to the F150. Now and then I would spot a FISO - These had “FORD” on the tailgate. In fact there were plenty of FISO’s everywhere! One day my son Derek was bringing me home from a lunch treat and I mentioned these FISOs. Derek said nothing yet. There was a stoplight and we stopped behind a truck. I said: “Oh, there’s one now; see - FISO.”

Derek never made fun of anyone and knew I was in earnest. He sat behind the wheel in thought and finally spoke, “Mother, that isn’t an “S”; it is a “5”. That’s the F150.”

I peered intently until I actually detected the little hook in the top flange of the five. I sat back and laughed. “Oh, oh, oh; Good one on me!” and I laughed again. “I wondered why any company would call their product “FISO”. Well, there certainly are plenty of them.” And I still laugh when I see a F150. However, Derek may have told my story and it mushroomed all the way to the Ford Company because the next year the F150 logo was changed to F-150.

BATTERIES AND BATTLING!

It became chilly in the house. By the time I became aware it was cold - the Thermostat registered 57. I brought the number up and all was well… for a few hours when the Thermostat blinked “Low Battery”. Oh, to the new battery box - for two new AAA’s.

I poured water into the coffeemaker and a tea-like product emerged. This was the fifth Bunn -O- Matic in three years to have a defective heat element! (It is a local product and you will get a discount if you return it for a new one) But this time it lasted one week! The one before lasted 3 months! That finished my “Return-and-pay-a discount” sweet demeanor. I wanted coffee! -Poured the puny brew into a saucepan; dumped the grounds into it; tossed the filter and pretended it was a blue enamel, white speckled pot over a campfire! Right there - my kitchen was my pretend chuck wagon.

I got out the strainers. Twice strained - the coffee was very acceptable. I emptied the reservoir; marked the top “Element Out” and took it to the alley. I boiled coffee like this three weeks before I was caught being rustic by my son, Derek. Nothing happened with my new home brews until my birthday- They got me an Eurig!

So many chores to do: drop off surplus food to the Food Pantry; too tight tops to the Thrift Store; buy particular groceries at two stores. I packed the trunk of my trusty steed - a ’93 Toyota Camry; noticed the back door had more space than usual; the little light for the driver’s door did not light. I tried to start the car – dead battery. After a jumpstart start service call for $30.00 I was on my way - to my Auto Body man to check door alignments. They were ok, fortified with a squirt of WD-40. I called the little mechanic’s shop for another battery, but he was not available; so I called a place my doggie day girlfriend uses. They had what I needed for my 22 year old Camry. Once there I remembered I had a credit card! I never used it before! What fun! But once road ready it was past the hours of the Food Pantry so that must wait. The garment drop was just up the block and that went fine; a little further and i could stop at the bank branch near the Shopping Center. To my surprise it was closed and snowed in completely - not even a footprint to the door! Ye Gods has my bank went bust?

It was then I realized I’d had but a coffee and was hungry. The Denny’s was at the next corner; although I hated their complicated menu I saw they had meatballs and spaghetti! It was perfectly wonderful! Maybe the day was turning around! I drove to Pointe West but neither grocery store had my needs. I came home exhausted and deflated. But, the week turned around and finished well. That Bank Branch had closed.

Sunday before St. Patrick’s Day I discovered no one was offering a traditional dinner. This was one thing I did well. I had most of the vegetables. So I announced by E-mail to the Therapy Dog Group that after the nursing home visit, I would serve the dinner. There were immediate responses and I drove to the nearby grocery for the corned beef. The young clerk did not know what corned beef was! But once found, the selection was lovely.

I set my schedule for cooking and timing and instead of soda bread made blueberry muffins. I E-mailed my son about my plans and he arrived shortly to vacuum the house (A chore I never did with the “Lady Killer” vac.) The decorations were up; the table was set. Derek tasted the muffins and said they were too dry! But I was saved by one of the group. Michele E-mailed that she was making the soda bread.

By Monday evening the meal was prepared, cooled and refrigerated. Tuesday I placed the meal on the stove, filled nut dishes, had plenty of ice and could attend the visit to the nursing home. Rose was bringing a dog for me to handle. Everything was set; I went to the car – another dead battery – the new one - unbelievable! My St. Pat’s Day teddy bear in the back car window had rolled over again. I straightened it but had not shut the back door well. I tried to call several of the ladies who live nearby, but they were all gone and their cells were off, so they were in transit. When upset my hearing aids simply become blocked. I hear squeaks or nothing. my cell phone was OK. Why was I having such problems? I finally reached the jump-start lady. Rose, her friend called. She noticed a call was left by me but it was garbled. I was grateful and told Rose the story, missed the nursing home visit but the dinner was ready.

The jumpstart lady came and I had to leave the car run for thirty minutes. The guests began arriving and everyone settled down to chat. I remembered to turn off the car at the appropriate time and gave the little Teddy Bear a very stern look: He had cost me $60.00 by rolling over. That was very naughty - he had a Velcro bottom!

Ken Lynn carved the corned beef. Michele dipped the vegetables onto platter and bowl; I set out the custard pies I’d made and every scrap of food was eaten - the dinner went beautifully. I had the best time of all - people turn me on! That ole show business is engrained in me: “Make ‘em happy!”

After the party when all was back to normal, the house got cold - 57 degrees again. I changed the batteries. Then the remote for a string of rope lights went out. I did have that battery but not the proper screwdriver to open the container. There is a second set of rope lights seldom used! I was down on hands and knees unfastening the remote on that set and using it on the one we use to brighten the dining room. The gremlin had not finished! Now whatever took batteries needed them. It was good that I always kept a fresh supply of AA’s and AAA’s.

When not another thing could go down I sat down to take my blood pressure – you guessed it: Error; Error and a reading of 657 over 294! Does it take AA’s or AAA’s - finally all was back to normal.

Were things settled; Back to normal? The computer caught a virus and needed a complete cleaning. But, the company was a scammer that broke in! After 2 evenings “righting it” the “ scam-company” reported they did all they could and my computer was in need of more power and to contact my server! I called my younger son who worked on it several hours and then took it home. It seemed ok, and then my replies to messages could not be sent. Now it was a navigational problem. But by this I learned to ignore unknown icons’; to keep the car doors very shut, car lights and heater off. Dear Angels in Heaven, do battery plagues end? – Never completely.

DOG FINDS FAMILY

At one dog expo, my first Collie, Dundee had demonstrated his dancing skills. After him a City policeman demonstrated how well trained his dog was. Dundee watched this pretty German shepherd and decided we should follow the policeman and his dog as they left. Surely I had noticed that she was a neat dish.

Turned out the policeman’s name tag had my maiden name! He was an older cousins’ son from Riverton. We had never met. During our talk, Dundee tried to get his dog’s attention but she just hopped in the K-9 cruiser and stared out the front window... He turned his head indicating he wanted to leave, so I dropped his leach - advising the upset policeman it was fine, Dundee would never go far, no worry. Dundee sashayed up a berm and posed like Lassie directly in front of the K-9 cruiser. Finally she saw him (He was beautiful!) and she barked happily. Did he come running down the berm to her? No! He turned his long nose away - “Too bad, lady; you blew it.” And looking unconcerned he walked to sniff a few fallen leaves. He had played the game.

WILD PARTY PEOPLE

Neither Charles Midden nor I were from party giving families. Birthday parties on the isolated farm meant picking some flowers for the table; a cake studded with candles; and homemade ice cream. The birthday child got a gift and there were balloons about for decoration. We asked the grandparents. But when we moved into town school chums and playmates were added to the birthday gatherings: More decorations were needed: Crepe paper ribbon was draped across each dining room doorway and window (4 doorways and 3 windows) plus hand blown balloons (New vacuum did not like blowing balloons). The dining room table was a white 52” pedestal oak with three nine inch leaves. If kids outnumbered the chairs, a wide board or two were set between and there were always adventurous ones to try them. After the party and photos, (even on regular school days) the table was stripped and set with a ping pong net for wild fun!

One year piñatas were discovered and the children made one for Marshall’s late August birthday. Nobody knew how many layers of newspaper it would take to hold it together, so plenty was used. It may have started as a horse, but finished as a llama. It was hung in a tree and curtains moved in windows as our all our over 80 neighbors had a free show. Every kid took turns whacking the llama. It swung happily but the kids didn’t even nick it. Marshall put the stick aside and took a baseball bat to the llama.

More curtains moved in neighbor’s windows. When the piñata gave the candy and kids flew everywhere shouting joyously. Our great neighbor, Mrs. Day came out with tears in her eyes laughing. “I was going to the bedroom but saw movement from my closet window (only on Adelia Street would there be a window in a closet) so I stopped to watch a moment. I had so much fun! Oh, that was such fun! My lands, how they kept with it! I had such a good time. What did it have in it that exploded? Well, of course - candy.” And she laughed again and went back indoors.

SUMMERTIME

Every parent knew where their children were in summertime – at the Midden’s. It was a safe spot…in the middle of the block. At times there were three sets of children; the girls on the porch with Barbie dolls. The little boys down the steps with wooden trains and tracks; other boys with construction trucks and fire engines along the walk; across the front walk the bigger boys pretended to fly airplanes – walking them and making appropriate noises.

On very hot days a 6’ x 8’ wading pool brought the kids in swim suits. Overnight the pool did what plastic does and had to be scrubbed. But the kids came too early one morning and liquid soap was still in the pool. They got in joyously and kicked up the suds and thought it was great. Unfortunately, word got back to a mother who quickly concluded: Mrs. Midden thought their kids were dirty! It took a few days to unwind that one.

There were times the children gathered at a house up the block. It was not my style to yell for my children at dusk. So the rule was: when the porch light went on- it was time to say goodnight. The porch light idea caught on quickly and there was no yelling on Adelia Street.

But one new mother remarked a bit snootily, that we had no lawn! We had what crabgrass could grow and for that scrawny bit, I was happy. It was the one time the unpaid babysitter (me) spoke back: “No we don’t have much of a lawn but we do have everyone’s happy children. Welcome to Adelia Street!”

THE “EARTH DAY” PINE

I had the youngest two children in a stroller with our few purchases tucked deftly about them. We went to the basement of Myers Brothers – ( now defunct department store) suddenly a young enthusiastic person shoved a tiny seedling tree into my face! “It is a memento of the First Earth Day – a Pine!” I swallowed my shock, said thanks and tucked it into one of the bags.

At home, what to do with a pine tree! Perhaps it was a Mungo Pine that would fit in nicely beside the front steps. I planted it there and within days the mailman crushed it with a heavy boot. I moved the little pine to the back where there were a few February bulbs were coloring. The little pine held on until my sons were old enough to play basketball in an area beyond the little bulbs. A basketball went astray and clobbered the little pine; it shook dazed by the unexpected blow.

Still thinking it was a Mungo, I moved it to the north planting area about two feet from the house. It stayed there until the year, I noticed my Mungo had developed a trunk and was shooting upward! This sent me to the public library where I scrounged books on evergreen trees. Then I had to study the needles on my little tree. Wherever the family drove, I gawked at evergreen trees and when I found a match I nearly fainted! A line of such trees formed a barrier taller than the two story apartment they shielded from traffic noise! My Earth Day Pine had to be moved from the side of the house!

I had made charts that showed where the water and gas lines came in from the street and chose a place between them. Now I had to learn the art of topiary! I could not have a whoppingly tall spreading tree at the curb. So home came topiary books from the library and the shaping began. This made apparent that the little tree was hiding a very crooked trunk – and why not? It had a hard-knock life. I kept it at four then later five feet for nearly fifty years. But then my husband became ill and the garden was mostly unattended. The pine promptly shot skyward. My six foot two son Derek was the same age as the Earth Day Tree. He would trim it but it fought him and went above his reach. It was beyond the salvage point. We trimmed the lower branches so we could see to back out the drive, but it looked terrible. My son and I gave it a farewell blessing and sent it to Heaven’s Conservatory.

PRESS RUINED

A widow lady named Mae lived next to my parents . One day as we spoke over the back fence she told my mother and I how she bemoaned missing her active life in Chicago:

“My husband traveled and I had a lot of time on my hands. There wasn’t much money but I discovered if I went to a funeral service there was a free buffet afterward! The best ones were held by families of the Mafia. So I went to all those! Hey Helen, don’t knock it! I was doing a good thing: Attending Mass; and I got to see all the huge flower arrangements, great limousines and the ladies in beautiful garments, veiling and diamonds! I was praying and well, who needed more prayers than those guys? It was going really well for me until I got caught. Some guy was snapping his camera and none of us paid any attention. Well, my husband bought the Chicago Tribune and there I was on the on the front page patting this mother’s hand while leaving the church. It was a very good picture of me but my husband was upset and forbade any further good will activities; so that ended my free buffets.”

THE ESCAPE!

There was a very dissatisfied young Beagle at the local No-Kill Shelter north of the Fairgrounds. The crafty dickens managed to slip away one afternoon and headed west like a racehorse. It passed the tall fencing of a Storage Facility and at the open gate dashed inside. It barely took a sigh of relief at its successful escape when the owner’s dog trotted out to meet the intruder.

One look up at the Great Dane shocked the little Beagle and it scooted back into the arms of the ladies at the shelter. It stayed peacefully until adopted into its “forever Home”.

SHIRL’S PIANO SCHOOL

At an evening meeting of a Music Club I met a lovely woman, Shirl who operated a children’s piano school. Many of the attendees shunned this lady because they considered her a paid babysitter - and - she was divorced! And worse in their eyes, Shirl was marrying a man who recently divorced. Shirl delightfully ignored them and told everyone that she was moving her school from downtown. Shirl told me happily that she met a man who was a piano teacher. As luck would have it they decided to marry and meld their Studios. Shirl and Gee-o bought a huge older home on the near-south side of town being assured that it was sturdy enough to safely support all their needs. And then, casually she added that his was only one fancy antique and it would be set in the dining room but she would have her twenty-two pianos upstairs!

At this I burst into joyous laughter and blurted: “Oh, I love it: Take me - take my twenty-two pianos!” We two hugged and laughed together shocking the forbidding old biddies completely.

The newlyweds settled down for their first night. Shortly they heard a creak then another and then several. Geo thought of his exquisitely carved antique being crushed and she of her complete school crashing to smithereens! They immediately called movers and moved everything out much faster than it had gone in.

Steel “I” Beans were inserted throughout the house and their schools took a hiatus until all was safe. After this recitation the club women adjusted their thinking. Shirl was real and such fun!

HOUSE HUNTING

Our newlyweds of the time decided to forsake their apartment for a bonafide home! Without telling Charles and I at first, they researched several areas and had rejected at least a dozen houses. Finally the two spoke with Charles and as construction brilliant he accompanied them quietly pointing out bowing basement walls; water marks, poor and short-cut construction that would be costly later.

They resumed their search armed with all this new information. Looked like everything they were drawn to had some major problem! Dejectedly, Regina said, “I don’t think daddy wants us to have a house!” And then this nice ranch in Chatham came on the market! It looked just right, so they had Charles and I come to see their find. It had a crawl space, covered with plastic. Charles thought that ought to be checked. Gary said he’d go down there with a flashlight. As his second foot touched the plastic he realized it was slick and began sliding farther away from us. Soon the flashlight shined everywhere as he slipped down on all fours. Gary yelled, “The floor is not flat - it slants!” And we saw the light receding until he was as far from us as possible! Regina yelled out: “Oh my God! I’m losing my husband!” Gary tried to crawl toward us but the damp plastic slid him back into that corner.

I asked if there was a laundry rope around. I saw a couple laundry posts in back. Charles found the rope free, wadded it and keeping one end - threw the rope to Gary. “I got it! I got it!” he shouted and hand over hand pulled himself back to us. Amazingly, he was not dirty just damp. Regina was so flustered she would not buy that house if it was ten dollars!

They kept looking. Finally in an older area called Southern View the perfect house was at auction. Regina warned Gary: “None of that cheapskate dawdling - I WANT THAT HOUSE!” And so they gave up their apartment with pool access for a lovely home two blocks from a large motel with a pool. Being a younger attractive couple they were welcomed to swim anytime. They became an unpaid draw.

THE BADLY COVERED BOOK

The dentist happened to look out the office window. “Oh, Look at that!” he said with a scowl. Below us was a grungy unkempt man walking along. - I glanced down: “That’s the doctor; he’ll go right in that building; works there.”

“DOCTOR!”

“Yes, medical Doctor; never worked at it a day in his life…said it was too messy. His office is in that building with the stationary story and luggage shop; says he keeps the family books.”

“You know him?”

“Oh, yes, Dr. H. is a well-educated gentleman. We had coffee together once and catch up now and then.

“ONCE!” The doctor laughed.

“Well true, he is a bit ripe but very interesting.” The dentist stepped back from the window. “They let him use a room for his work…”

At this I smiled a little. “No, he ***did not work*** in the stationary store - he ***owns*** the building.”

The dentist shook a little at this so I did not continue; the dentist already thought I was telling silly tales. The unkempt man’s family owned much of the land in town. They leased it never sold it. The doctor lived with his 2 sisters near Illini Country Club and we often took the same bus. His brother took care of the family’s rural properties. The doctor kept books for all of it.

“Oh, my brother doesn’t live with us,” The doctor explained one time, “He lives on South McArthur.” The doctor kept up with news and stopped to tell me with some regret in his voice, that he must go to D.C. for a bit. The election had gone all right and he was invited to several ceremonies. I asked if he would fly or go by train. He answered, no he would drive. “I buy a car each year to get a haircut. I have a barber in New York and we get along well. “This,” he took a huge breath, “Well, they expect you to look - you know… be a bit spiffy. It’ll be all right.” This seemed curious so I asked why not use the car he got last year. -“Oh, once I’m home; I don’t need it - they are a bother; I like taking the bus and seeing people.”

He continued his dialog saying last year he took the bus to the Lincoln dealer on South Grand at the time but no one would approach him for a sale. He chose a sedan but after a bit it was evident no one would wait on him. “I went to the front door and called to them: “You watch what I do!” He proceeded across to the Cadillac dealer and after choosing his sedan; turned in a fashion so that the Lincoln people could see him - counting out the cash. “I wasn’t truly satisfied so I drove over and peeked in the door and said, “See this sale could have been yours.”

Whenever the dentist spoke pompously exposing his hollow stature, I laughed silently and glanced across the street at the Stationary Store. Never judge a book by its dreadful cover.

JOE’S HEART PROBLEM

My father decided to make a pot of tea. His technique was unique. He had a little enamel pot of water; turned the gas flame to high; plopped in the tea bag and when the tag went up in flames- the tea was ready.

He was chilly and thought he’d save fuel by flipping on all the gas burners to warm the kitchen. He never listened to advice. The oxygen was depleted and gas fumes felled him. Joe went to the hospital. He did not understand what had happened to cause this so the doctors began tests and finally decided to monitor him overnight. As he fell asleep they removed his body type hearing aid and set the heart monitor in its place.

At two thirty a.m. Joe awoke quite disoriented; tried to turn up his hearing aid but he couldn’t hear anything! He yelled out but there was no immediate response so he decided the darn hearing aid wasn’t working and tore it off! Now he got all kinds of response - they thought he was flat-lining! They called my home and I dashed to the hospital. Nurses were replacing the monitor while explaining to a deaf man who was in turn trying to tell them that their hearing aid wasn’t working.

I tore into the room. As soon as I saw the monitor I knew what was happening but Joe wanted nothing to do with their hearing aid- it did not work! Once he was back to his own hearing aid the nurses had to explain everything again!

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

At St. Agnes a Crèche was set at the front of the church. The parents always guided their children there to see it. The six Midden children were excited to visit the Crèche. Naturally, there was a little glass dish for offerings.

Before we left home, each child was given a coin to offer the baby Jesus. I said this would be a sweet little offering. Our family arrived early as we needed a complete pew. The children pleaded to sit near the front close to the stable and figurines. We proceeded up the aisle to view the little scene.

At the Crèche I heard the coins drop: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 …? When I looked down to the dish among the 5 coins was a chocolate chip cookie. One child determined a sweet offering ought to be sweet! None of the six little Midden’s admitted to doing this.

It was endearing to see so many parents holding back laughter as they turned from viewing the Crèche.

A SOLDIER RETURNS

My Uncle Johannas often visited. He always enjoyed visiting and telling his stories. At times his life was serendipitous! He began the story:

He was an Army Doughboy during World War I. He did his boot training in New Orleans. On free time he met a French girl that spun his heart in humongous circles. Unfortunately, he did not get to keep their last date as he was shipped overseas without warning.

The crossing was arduous; this ocean and the unknowns frightened him but he covered it with silly stories and jokes to the other Doughboys. The ship landed on French shore. The sight of the war-torn villages and wounded ready to be boarded left his knees weak and his head woozy. He was heading into this! They were all heading into this! The ship was unloaded and Johannas followed the others into formations and stood at attention along the dock. Not only he felt heaving was near.

Whistles blew and horns blared - Armistice was declared! The War was over; Germany surrendered. The young soldiers held at attention not knowing what all this commotion was about. Then they heard the command: “Right Face, Harch… (Oh God, this was it!) Right Face, Harch” What? They marched back onto the ship. I questioned him: “But Uncle Johnny then you aren’t really a Veteran.”

“Oh yes, I am! I was as scared as the rest of ‘em.”

He continued: “Well, the first thing I did in New Orleans was go to see my girl. She was riding a bicycle with a basket of groceries and I hailed her happily. She stopped and hit me over the head with one of those long hard loaves of bread and said we were through! I hadn’t showed up for our date. I tried to explain but she would not listen… This hurt so I went out and hit all the taverns. I saw this big statue outside the Cathedral there and thought it was a good place to sit down and rest - facing the church like that…I fell asleep and when I woke up my doughboy hat had tumbled off to between my knees. People were passing saying - poor soldier boy and dropping money into my hat! I tried to stop them, but people just shook my hand - said good things and went on. So there I was and there was no way to give any of this money back - I didn’t know where it had come from and my girl had abandoned me; so I gathered my stuff , got on a train and came home.”

GRAMPA WANGARD’S RETIREMENT PLAN

John Wangard II had retired from the coal mines after an injury. His sons did quit the mines and seek other work as he wanted and all was going well but John II had an empty pit in his heart - he missed seeing all his cronies and telling stories. His children had heard them all. He needed a new audience! From his home he could see the miners begin their weekends by going into a tavern. He knew many of them over-imbibed and had little left for their families. Kids shouldn’t suffer. This sight and his thoughts changed his retirement weekends.

He had a large house and larger front yard with a pleasant shade tree. There was a player piano and both his sons, Joe and Billy played. He had three spritely daughters who cooked well. This plan needed one adjustment: Making the whole thing cost-free to him. How could he sustain and maintain? … Ah, brilliant! He installed a coin slot on the piano.

His house was thrown open to the miners’ families, friends and neighbors. Joe played the piano on his free day. Billy too until he joined the Navy: That was free music but Friday and Sunday the coins rolled into the player piano. There was dancing and singing in both house and yard, lemonade, tea and usually a roast, potatoes, vegetables from the big back garden and gravy - but the beers were limited. Son Johannas caught the knack of story-telling like his father. The pretty sisters became charming hostesses, cooked and passed the hat for donations. Now, John II enjoyed his retirement: The liveliness and happiness of people was complete fulfillment.

THE RADIO PROGRAM

Auntie Birdie discovered a radio program about “Finding Missing Loved Ones” over KMOX. She and wrote to the program about her mother’s missing brother Michael Zatorski who had joined the circus. By moving from New York to St. Louis his family had lost track of him completely In time a return letter arrived from the radio station. What was discovered would be broadcast and they gave the date. Auntie Birdie and her mother, Mary were thrilled for any word. They wrote to Helen. I was about eight years old and remember traveling at 35 mph in our new ’38 Ford Coupe Custom to St. Louis. KNOX did not reach Springfield, IL. It still does not.

The program began and we all gathered near the old arch-top radio. Another person was found and another. Finally the announcer said they had found Michael Zatorski who had left New York and ran away to the circus. He had actually joined the circus and became both a high wire artist and a high flying acrobat! He changed his name to Michael Bailey: That had been a big name person of the circus that he greatly admired. He loved his circus family and performed regularly. He did perform without a net; fell twice recovered to perform several more years. He fell a third time and did not survive. He never could find his own family; mother and siblings so left all his worldly possessions to his circus family. The announcer apologized that the story ended in this manner. But my Gramma was elated! Her brother had made a good living and was loved by his comrades. Auntie Birdie was unhappy with the ending. I sat back stunned. Of all the goofy, kock-a- mammy stories her mother Helen ever told and retold and retold - she actually told one unbelievable story that was true. Joe giggled and wanted to start home... Gramma Mary said: “Not until we celebrate with a Cheesecake from Famous Barr and coffee!” Before long Helen had reconstructed the radio story saying that HER uncle was The Bailey - part owner of Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus. She would swell with prestige in relating her “perfected story.” Lordy, she was a liar all her life!

JOE - THE INNOCENT

Joe Wangard was never up on news outside of Springfield; he hated to travel and not be in his own bed at nightfall. There was some occasion in Chicago having to do with his wife, Helen’s only friend, Florence Johnson. Joe was henpecked into driving Helen there. Joseph never drove over 35mph. They entered the lower east side of Chicago not knowing that black teenagers were into a game challenging drivers to hit them by laying down in the street! I do not know what their intended mischief was thereafter if any. But they saw the little old ‘46 Ford car approaching and one fellow promptly laid down in the car’s path.

Joe thought there had been an accident and pulled his car to the curb; shut off the engine. (My father was a slight man about 5’ 5”)He got out of the car and walked over to the guy lying on the street:

“My God, are you hurt? Let me help you up. Did you get hit or …”

“No, no, I’m ok.”

“Here let me help you to the curb. Now you just sit down and rest here where it is safe.”

“It’s really OK. We were playing a game…”The teenager was a bit baffled by Joe’s concern.

“That looks like a very dangerous game. You see a car might come along real fast and not see you in time to stop. That would not be good…You’re sure you are OK? I can take you to a hospital …”

“No, no need. I am not hurt at all.”

“Well then, you promise to not play that game anymore, OK?” The kid nodded and agreed. Joe said, “OK then I’ll be going; gotta take my wife to see her friend. You just rest there a bit.” Joe got in his car and the black boys waved to them as they drove away. Helen tried for details. Joe shrugged, “Just kids being kids.”

MEETING MR. LINCOLN

It was August, hot and humid. The St. Louis family visited. What to do to escape the heat of the little house! (I was eighteen and was working in the old bank building at the time with many wonderful people. I suggested we drive to New Salem, IL. This is a reconstructed village set in the time when Abraham Lincoln was postmaster and owned a store there. They parked the cars but Aunt Mary Regina was a large woman and did not want to walk the village. The group saw a picnic table and brought their basket, enjoyed the nice breeze and chatted. I completely forgot that my friend, Representative William Yardley performed as Mr. Lincoln at the open air theater there. Making this handsome man look like Lincoln was a fete in itself. Mr. Yardley was in makeup and costume and came out for a breath of fresh air. He noticed me and called out waving and joined us. Aunt Mary Regina wonereed who Deidia was and surprised he was calling to me! My family was introduced and everyone chatted happily. He spoke with my little cousins; Cathy and Michael. William shook little Michael’s hand very formally and kissed Cathy on the forehead. In a bit someone called him to the theater. We did not see the play because it ran until dark and the visitors wanted to drive back to St. Louis. Our day finished in our St. Louis family tradition: Coffee and cheesecake!

School started in September for little Michael in the first grade and Cathy in the second. The good Sister mentioned Abraham Lincoln and Michael’s hand shot into the air - he knew Mr. Lincoln! “He shook my hand.” -and Michael would not be dissuaded! It was Abraham Lincoln! The Sister excused herself and went to the second grade class room calling for his sister Cathy.

Cathy agreed with her brother; they had met Mr. Lincoln - “He kissed my forehead!” And she too would not be dissuaded. The Catholic Sister took the children to the principal, but the two held to their story.

Their mother was summoned to the school: Her children were lying! Aunt Mary Regina listened to the accusations, laughed heartily and wiped away a tear. (When Aunt Mary Regina laughed, being large, her whole body laughed.) She explained the “Big Lies.” There was no need for the children to go to Confession! The children were correct - in their way and then related the story. Aunt Mary Regina laughed all the way home.

SELENA AND MICHAEL’S HONEYMOON

In 2001, Selena met and married Michael McLaury, a peaceful brunette with a kindness she had never known. They did simple things like walks along the beach, go to nice restaurants and learn about each other. He was knowledgeable in many fields: computer, the building skills and liked music.

Tthe bridal couple drove to Springfield for their honeymoon! Michael had never been outside of California. I stayed home to meet the bridal couple while Charles was helping at Derek’s house. Selena and Michael were happy to arrive and ready to crash and not move another muscle. I took a deep smiling breath and said: “Not yet, my dears. Dad is at Derek’s. He needs some of his tools.” Michael asked what it was.

“Derek called this morning, saying his toilet was falling into the crawl space.” I expected them to laugh, but Michael was already stimulated! Charles kept what tools he could still handle safely after his mugging in ’74. Michel locked their Corolla and packed our Camry. “To Chatham - the Cavalry is coming!”

Kim was at work and the twin boys were at elementary school. They would come home by school bus but someone had to meet them or the driver would not let them off the bus! Derek would fetch the boys. The three men shook hands and began cutting out wet, wood and laying the new. Charles liked the way Michael handled a Saws-All. Derek had a new stool ready. The stool was nearly set. Selena and I ordered pizza. Things were humming. Kim arrived and was abashed that her spic and span house was now fairly disheveled. Just when all seemed under control, I asked if this was the day they were supposed to pick up their new puppy!

“OH GOD-- PUPPY!” Derek sobbed with exhaustion. “And - It’s in the next town!” The little boys were thrilled: This was the day! Oh boy, puppy coming! Skylar and Tylar hopped in the SUV with Derek and happily waved. The ladies set the table while Charles and Michael assembled the wooden dog house. Everyone got their first glimpse of a Blue Tick Coonhound. Puppy. It was introduced to everyone and everything: his house and water bowl and then brought inside the screen porch because of drizzle. Derek placed a large wire kennel by the patio doors. Puppy was interested. It could see the twins who decided he was: “Bruno.” What none of the family realized was that this breed was not domesticated; none had ever been a house pet! That night Bruno was nearly white but for a black spot here and there, a dipstick tail but had gorgeous velvety long ears.

The newlyweds brought a DVD of their wedding. Everyone watched it twice; so did the puppy until it finally dozed in the boys arms. All visitors are treated to the Lincoln sites. The couple would stop in Arizona on their return trip. Michael had some historic rather notorious ancestors there. His family was endeavoring to clear the names of these fellows, but alas old stories linger: The McLaury Boys that were shot at the OK Corral were his great uncles...

On the weekend Selena’s friend Sheila Mack gave a luncheon at her beauty spa, invited all the people who could not travel across country and had Selena modeled her wedding dress! Fantastic! – And Michael too was fantastic! How many guys can say they set a toilet on their honeymoon!

Shortly after their return to Ventura, Michael said there was something he had to tell Selena. Actually, it was not a bad thing. He opened the door to a back room revealing a complete music studio. Explaining he had a music degree from the Santa Barbara College of Music, did classical compositions and could play some guitar, piano and other stuff. He assured her there was no money in it. There was one large poster of a Rock Group which he ignored at that time. His reason for the secrecy was that he loved her so much he did not want to lose her. She said once that she was so glad he was not a musician or inventor! Selena was taken back, but found it charming. He had bottled this so long, she could but laugh. It is a great studio. She owned a keyboard herself! Each had waited a long time for that right person. A company that controlled computerized thermostats for businesses had an opening; one of their older employees retired and Michael was recommended. Many facets of his talents were recognized and they were happy for this great opportunity at the time.

TULIPS AND SCULPTURE

Mary and Charles thought Helen would like the newest variety of red tulip and bought a bag of six for a corner by their back porch. What they did not know was that Helen had never seen Tulip bulbs:

“This is horrible! What kind of gift is this - all dirty and brown.” Helen was on a roll befitting Queen Elizabeth I.

Charles turned to Joe. They took the bag and went into the back yard. While Helen raged at Mary behind closed doors, Joe got out a spade and the two men planted the bulbs right outside the back door and leveled the soil to look undisturbed.

Springtime: Helen came out on the porch and something red caught her eye: “Look at that! Joe, come look at this - magic flowers. Oh they are so pretty!” Each Spring the magic flowers came up to Helen’s delight. Joe agreed - they were magic flowers. After many years the flowers did not come up! Helen blamed thieves. Joe listened to the emotional rambling and patted her hand.

“Helen, they lasted longer than most flowers. I will find something more permanent to put there.” Joe escaped to find something- he didn’t know what! He checked the flower houses but nothing would last forever. He had to find something. He took a shortcut across the parking lot of a bowling alley. Something was coming at his car and Joe stopped. It was a big beautiful black ball. It stopped right at his car door. “God heard me! This is for me. It came right to ME! It’s a miracle!” Joe got out, picked up the heavy ball and put it in his car. The thing had three holes in it - having never been in a bowling alley, he guessed someone ruined it and threw it out. Joe brought it home and placed it (holes down) in the space. He called Helen and she called Charles and me to see the new sculpture. Joe bought for her! Both Mary and Charles knew instantly what it was. “Dad, tell us how you found this.”

“Oh, I didn’t find it. It found me. It came right to my car and stopped at the door.”

“Was anybody around?”

“No, that’s why I knew it was meant to me. It’s our miracle sculpture!”

Helen sighed with pleasure “Isn’t daddy wonderful? I’ve never had a real sculpture.”

THE WEDDING GREMLIN

The Wangard’s received a wedding invitation. His Supervisor, Mr. Johnson had one daughter and she was being married. Johnson was a common name. I asked if they were related to mother’s friends in Chicago - the Ben Johnsons but my father said, no.

We pulled up to a beautiful house south of Washington Park. I finally got to read the invitation: The daughter’s name was Doris… Doris Johnson …was a classmate - not pals or friends - I had never spoken five words to her - and I am going to her wedding reception!I volunteered to wait in the car, but mother was in an aristocratic mood and would not hear of it! I was made to attend. All was actually going well and then …

Doris’s little brother had been weaving in and out of the people and stopped at my father. “Hey, Mister! Would you like to see my pet mouse?” My father always enjoyed children and said yes! The kid dashes upstairs to get it and tells my father not to go away now! Shortly he returns with a tiny pink footed mouse. My father chuckles with the little boy and hands his punch cup to me while he takes the mouse. It is an agile little critter and promptly scurries under the cuff of my father’s shirt sleeve. It starts up his arm and tickles. Both he and the child are laughing, howling and gyrating to stop this mouse. Next my father is removing his suit jacket; I am devastated! I check the bride and she is ready to take the cake knife to her brother screaming. “I told you not to bring that thing down here!”

My father is unbuttoning his shirt! The guests are in complete enjoyment. All sense of wedding protocol has evaporated. My God! My Father is removing - oh no! And where is my concerned mother? She is stoically uninvolved; removed as far from the scene as she can, nose in the air - talking to a non-existent guest with her back closing her view of the riot. The mouse was caught. My father was still laughing but seriously making sure the little boy had a good hold of it. The kid ran upstairs and did not come down immediately. Father re-buttoned everything and sought mother. She remained unapproachable so he turned to the wedding table and chose a nice piece of cake, asked me for his punch cup and shook his head wishing the bride and groom a bit more peaceful lifestyle!

I approached my father, “Dad, mother is in a snit. She will give us the silent treatment for a week!”

“Oh - that will be pleasant!” He said.

HOW DO YOU TELL WHEN CHRISTMAS IS COMING?

First Grade Parochial children had a variety of answers for that question but none that the Catholic Sister was not expecting to hear. One said, “When the stores start decorating.“ Another declared, “When they move the Santa House to the town Square.” Another, “When we go to the Christmas Parade.” And, “When they start setting the train up at the Mall.” The Sister looked befuddled and one child shouted: “I know! When we go to visit Santa and tell him what we want!”

The Sister heaved a sigh none had mentioned anything about the Christ Child, but she had one little girl that had a vision about Heaven once. She told the class of beautiful sparkling things beyond belief. This girl had said nothing. So the Sister called upon her. “The Magdalene, how do you tell when Christmas is coming?”

The child looked up and said: “Well Sister, the way I tell is: First it is my birthday; then it is Marshall’s birthday; then Mommy and Daddy both have birthdays. In a bit Regina has a birthday; then Cosima has a birthday. And then - Mommy has a baby and its - Christmas!”

Thankfully, the bell rang for recess.

LIPSTICK

The one item of makeup I abhor is Lipstick. It is the most temporary of the lot! But over the years I found that a lipstick can suffice as an unexpected weapon. Like all ladies I carried a tube but seldom did the tube leave my handbag. Once I dress and leave the dressing area, I could not tell you what I was wearing because thoughts of me stop there. There were two times I used lipstick in abnormal situations.

Our old downtown area had limited parking and I was thrilled to find two empty spaces (Wow, I had a choice!) across from Senator Yardley’s office. I pulled forward so I could park and another car - a sports job dived in behind me and - used both parking places! I was pissed at the fast disappearing sport car enthusiast. No one was nearby (I thought) so I set the car in park and got out my lipstick. Across the beautiful windshield I wrote: “YOU BITCH -YOU TOOK 2 PARKING PLACES - YOU ARE BAD -BOO!” I reached my car and heard an office door open across the street but got in my car and drove away. When I came home the telephone rang. It was Senator Yardley and he was laughing:

“Deidia, you made my week! My girl saw the whole thing and called me so I took a little walk up the street and turned around to see - just what you had done and this - this fellow comes to his car and go into hysterics! I did get to see the message - then he tried to wipe it off with his handkerchief. What a greasy mess! It was wonderful, my dear, but the word you used was of the incorrect gender.” Bill laughed again and then we caught up with ordinary talk.

The only other time I used lipstick inappropriately was at the Unemployment office. It was the period after I left the dentist. It was a hassle trying to apply for jobs that were not there but it was just something of the time. As I entered the place that day a very paralyzed man in a suit and hat had a briefcase on his lap His wheelchair was motorized. He smacked a hand on his briefcase angrily and said, “Damned Adjudicator said I wasn’t handicapped!” I retorted - “That’s awful!” Now I was steaming; the adjudicators seemed to make a living hurting people’s feelings

more than helping them.

I thought I’d better use the little girl’s room before my own appointment. I passed two women who were exchanging negative experiences too. I refreshed myself and noticed this great plain wall facing opposite the entry door. With my trusty lipstick I printed: “ADJUDICATORS ARE THE DEVIL’S OWN” I closed the lipstick, dropped it in my handbag and walked out to my own horrible appointment. The following week, the message was gone the wall repainted! There seemed to be a new attitude in the building. The adjudicators were actually pleasant! They were actually understanding and even helpful! It was the last time I had to go there but it seemed that my message hit the right people.

A GARDEN OF REJECTS

I knew nothing about gardening before I married. I did plant some peanuts once; they grew and dried off. I mentioned this to the guys where I worked. They had a great chuckle; finally they told me the peanuts were underground and to dig them up. True, there were dirty peanuts - nothing like in the stores! I threw them away. But they had been planted by a Witch Hazel Tree (one of those bonuses that came with my dad’s plant order). It was on its second summer and this time it was covered with crunched perhaps half-dead pale yellow spider mums! Could not be; it was not Autumn! But these unhealthy mop-like things were attached to the branches! We alerted the neighbors who immediately trotted over to see the blossoms on this unusual tree. It became a yearly event complete with excuses which drew the curious: “No, I can’t go; we gotta see the Witch! Hazel’s blooming!”

After that, plants and I did not cross paths until 1956 when Charles and I moved into the small house on the farm. It had neither a drive, steps nor porch but it had plenty of builder’s rubble. Charles constructed a small porch and three steps but lands alive, it was muddy reaching it! I saw a pile of large solid bricks by the triple garage and asked my father-in-law if I could use them. Somehow - all by myself, I laid a four foot wide walk under the bay window along the house and outlined a small garden plot alongside. This was bare for a bit.

A milk customer volunteered a handful of Gladiolus bulbs and another some little plants but I rejected tomato plants because my father-in-law had dozens in his vegetable garden. I would not compete. I recognized a little green barberry bush in the timber: These bushes were used along the walk at the Lake Pavilion! A freebie! I insisted Charles dig it out and set it in my garden. (These men only crabbed about doing work that did not bring in money - which - explains my gathering and setting bricks and indeed why the whole farmstead was in shambles.) Although deviousness is not my trait: The little barberry had thorns which declared all must walk around the edge of the garden and not cut through it with heavy boots!

I began sending for free seed catalogs. What was a time zone? Needs sun or shade? This was a completely new endeavor. One freebie catalog was about Gloxinias; an indoor plant. They sent a packet! The seeds were like dust… I had one plant. I nurtured it, transplanted it and - found out it was a horseweed. Charles said the dirt was likely not right and set me on another path of discovery - dirt mixtures - with a new packet of seeds. This time I got better looking plants. They made little bulbs and big petunia-like flowers and velvet leaves; there were too many to set along the windowsills. But, the Gloxinian Handbook said they could be planted on the North side in dense shade BUT the buds must not get wet. If rain was impending they had to be covered! I adhered to this and even the milk customers had to trot across the yard to see what was blooming. My father-in-law admired them, but thought it silly that the buds could not get wet.

The weather was if-fy and we were going into town for a few hours. It rained and the Gloxinias were not covered. The buds shriveled and died. My father-in-law was more upset than I had ever seen him before or since! He apologized time and again. He really thought I was precocious. They lived to bloom well after a recovery cycle...

Later we left the farm and temporarily set many of the outside plants at my parents’ house. But the plants did not like it - nothing ever lasted there. My dad kept replacing -maybe it was the coal mine nearby. Only the barberry made it. We rented at two different places before we even dreamed of buying the cottage on Adelia Street in Springfield. The first house had the ground hog and I did not know if it would eat the flowers or not so did not plant. At the last place I just sprinkled out annual seeds of marigolds and celosia. On Adelia Street, the house had a Bridal Wreath Spirea in front, common daylilies in back; several paths that went partway; a filled in goldfish pond we assumed. There was a wild Cherry Tree, a Black Walnut; a Sweet Gum and a Silver Maple. Over time all of these trees were removed from the 30’ x 40’ back yard. The Spirea I trimmed so that it bowered beautifully. It stayed until the porch and posts needed renewed. That year my dad brought over a scrawny plant in a gallon pot. He said it was growing with a Rhododendron he bought. He was not interested in the little one. As our porch was in process, I sunk it - pot and all on the Northside where it stayed a year. The Spring of 1973 - there was nothing because the Spirea was gone. I set the little plant there. The little reject grew nicely. But there was more emptiness. The Rhubarb and Horseradish did not like the cement of the new porch. There was a nursery across from the farm so I went there and on the mark-down racks were a Tangerine Southernwood and a Blue Columbine. I had read enough by this time to realize these were special. The Tangerine Southernwood is yet but the Columbine truly reverted to species after about eight years of saving the seeds.

The tiny plant from my father was truly a Rhododendron with large pink clusters of flowers Mid-May. For many years every event was marked with pictures of it as a backdrop. It became the area showstopper. People we did not know gathered and took graduation and wedding pictures in front of it! In 2006 it was at its largest: twelve feet across, nine feet tall and seven feet deep. Charles had a special place in his heart for that bush. He lovingly raked fertilizer lightly under it and we both plucked the faded blooms religiously. But this was the strange thing: When Charles became ill with Cancer and Parkinson’s disease he never ceased caring for that plant! On its own, the bush began to decline. We kept with its care, but winter snows weakened and split the first of its three main branches. We duck taped it to place! When Charles had to stop his daily walks a few years later, the second of the branches split and dropped. Charles died in October of 2010 - the following Springtime the Rhododendron did not survive either. How curious - this plant really loved him.

Once again there was nothing in that spot. Derek, our youngest son has a friend who hybridized Daylilies and then became interested in Hibiscus. He gave Derek plants every time he ordered things and soon I was getting Derek’s leftovers. After hitting my great dirt - my three reject Hibiscus grew three times bigger than Derek’s and there was room for no more! By now his friend had begun Asian Lilies and the sequence is repeating and last year I became the recipient of several. One lily bloom immediately a deep maroon red, the wildlife ate it…

SPEED IN THE FAMILY!

There is a unique delight of speed that is common to people with advanced paranormal gifts. They have no fear of earthly limitations! It is the distaste of earthly traveling that irritates them. Once astral travel or out-of-body travel is experienced - speed limit signs are simply irritating! It is not that I would intentionally put others in hazard situations. But I notice it is not only me, but my older son especially plus a few of the other children share this urge.

I drove the children in the station wagon of the time often to deliver some oil paintings or retrieve them after an out of town art show. In places there were straight-aways that begged the pedal. I would tell the children, “Watch every side lane and let me know if any vehicle nears the road!” Then I would get the speed up to 85 or better. It was so exhilarating! Well, it wasn’t a week and their dad decided to take us for a family ride using the very same road.

He was doing the speed limit and said, “Isn’t this fun!” Marshall said, “Well, it’s more fun when mom’s driving.” This comment was followed by the sound of silence.

Marshall followed my suit when he began working in Urbana at the Computer Center. Someone slid into his little Mazda Turbo Engine and totaled the body - but the car worked. We spoke on the phone: The insurance would replace it with his choice of vehicle as that Mazda was no longer available. He said, “Now mom, listen, I am getting a Kawasaki Cycle.” It was eye-catching, green and stolen within a few weeks! “Well, mom, I really liked getting around on the Kawasaki so - as the insurance is replacing it, I found a BMW. It isn’t brand new; actually it is a rich man’s play toy. He is tired of it, OK?” Marshall said he was driving it to Springfield…

It seemed less than a half hour he was parking the BMW cycle in the driveway. “It’s great, mom; it has this adjustment that holds it straight - no work steering at all. Eh, I did have a happening. There was a road block. When I stopped - it was for me! The policeman related that something passed a first cop but he did not know what it was. He called the next officer ahead and they clocked me at 152 mph! It didn’t seem fast at all. I really love this cycle!”

When I stabilized my continence I simply asked that he not tell me when he is driving down anymore - just come.

The Magdalene: “Dad, the Instructor for the Driving Class won’t pass me until I learn to move into traffic and it scares me.” Charles bounced to the occasion, One of his carpenter’s had a friend with this problem. The cop was behind this Helena coming onto the I-70. Helena was not merging. He came to her car door and pushed her into this solution: ‘You are backing up traffic -count to three and merge! If you don’t I’m giving you a ticket!’ It worked. OK, The Magdalene, it is near Christmastime and we all drive to St. Louis. You can learn there to merge into traffic.

It was a perfect and sunny day. The Magdalene made four merges starting in Belleville and Granite City. By St. Louis she mastered it. Shopping, seeing Santa and riding an elevated rail for children topped the fun, happy day. By Driver’s Ed day, it snowed, sleeted and the earth was a glaze of ice. Driver’s Ed is not called off; The Magdalene is behind the wheel. The instructor nods. She counts 1, 2, 3 and deftly moves into traffic. There is a lot of squealing nearby but The Magdalene straightens out the car and says: “OK which way do you want to go? Hey, are you all right, Sir?” He could not answer but just nodded his head and pointed the direction. Finally, he asked where she learned to drive like that. Happily she told him.

The Magdalene loved her friends and often chatted with them until the wee hours. She drove the 23’ green Oldsmobile - (over the years most of the children did.) The weather had just finished a shower and she was driving across an overpass junction. A car was coming down the ramp hit some wet leaves and zoomed unexpectedly towards the Oldsmobile. The Magdalene could not get any speed on the wet pavement and uttered a crazed prayer. Both cars swiveled, slipping in a dance circle and stopped. Neither car was damaged nor driver’s hurt. The Magdalene popped out threw her hands in the air and shouted: “I’m alive! Thank God, I’m alive! We asked how about the other driver. “Oh, he was just sitting in his car in a stuper. As there was no accident, I came home.”

We were returning from a Thanksgiving weekend with friends in New Orleans, We went in two cars. Derek was ahead of us and then passed a few cars so was out of sight. Then we saw sparkles like on the Fourth of July up ahead of us. When we could we asked those in Derek’s car about the sparkles, but they had no comment. We were home about a week and Derek asked if one of us would drive him to pick up his Pontiac. He was having it painted. I thought he changed the color, but it was still silver. “Well, mom - remember those sparkles you asked about? It was me. I passed on the right -I know this is not a thing to do - but we came to a guard rail and the other cars would not let me back on the road, so I had to drive against the guard rail and well, it did a number on the car. It sure was pretty though.

The Magdalene was working at “Golden Bear Restaurant” when a customer came in and said: “There’s been an accident in the parking lot!” A dark car rolled right into a big green Oldsmobile. She clutched her heart, “That’s my car! Is the other driver still there?” The guy shook his head. She called her Insurance and all went well until it came to particulars.

Who was driving the runaway car? Nobody.

Who was driving the second car? Nobody.

Nobody was driving either car - one of them was parked. This called for a full-scale investigation, police and two sets of insurance people. Discovered: brake slipped off of dark car and it rolled out of its parking place with enough momentum to let it roll down the hill where it stopped by contacting the Oldsmobile.

Then there was Jonathan in Ventura, CA. Working and happy to get a neat little red car. He was with his boss, they went for lunch. The boss asked to drive it back to work. Jonathan agreed. Somehow one tire scraped the meridian and the car flipped several times. When it stopped it had crossed five lanes of California traffic. The police checked every car and person except the two in the car. The thing was such a shambles they figured no one survived. Then someone saw a movement in it. Jonathan had a few scrapes and a broken arm while the driver had minimal damage! Reporter: “How did you survive?”

“I don’t know about him,” Jonathan quipped, “but I got a Mom and Grandmother that pray a lot.” The newspaper reported it as: “Just good luck.”

THE FIRST DRUG BUST IN SPRINGFIELD

Charles and I were settled to sleep. The telephone rang. It was Mrs. Lemon on West Cook Street and she was frantic!

“Charles I can’t get ahold of your father and something is going on next door in his rental house!” She continued, “Now Charles I know I’m bombed - I’ve been drinking - but I see colored lights and a lady dancing in the basement with a snake. Can you come over and see if I’m wrong.”

We dressed immediately and drove there. I went to visit Mrs. Lemon but Charles was surprised to be met at his dad’s rental house by several squar cars of the city police! He explained who he was and the police said they were holding off on entering because it was their first drug bust and they thought several people might escape their net because they realized both front and back of the house had parking areas for a business next door and open to the alley. Charles explained the area and said he could stop the cars from leaving the front: “No problem.” Went to the visitors cars and removed the air valve caps. A few officers went around back and Charles turned the front door key. The other officers followed Charles inside.

During the tenants three days of residence the walls had been painted deep purple and black; there were douche bags hanging about one room and dirty baby diapers flung onto the ceiling. Illicit action was everywhere: hard drugs; orgies in the upstairs bedrooms; young boys sniffing glue and paint in the kitchen, and indeed there was a suggestive dance performance in the basement with a snake under strings of Christmas lights. Booze was the least of it! They were all arrested. The renters/offenders complained loudly about - the snake! They took special care of that snake pleading that it needed so many hours of sunlight and such. They all went to jail - snake too.

At the jail the Capitan took one look in the nesting box and with wide eyes said, “No! The snake cannot stay in jail - ugh - it hasn’t done anything!” Finally a bright thought surfaced: A pet store! There was a big pet store in Capitol City Shopping Mall! By dawn the store owners set up their front area - a house-like glass area with a tree of many branches and necessities to make a visiting snake comfortable. The snake was delivered, enthroned and received adulations and comments from “Oh My God”; “It’s so colorful” to “Holy Jesus, how long is that thing?”

Later that morning, I told my neighbor pal, Ines about my session with Mrs. Lemon. The drug bust was huge news for Springfield! There was nothing mentioned about the snake! Ines and I drove out to that Mall to see it! We stood with our mouths open. There it was and it made us shiver but we lingered until we could view it objectively. It was really - beautifully colored, looped and coiled throughout the tree branches - a complete eighteen foot boa constrictor! We were so dry mouthed in shock we decided to say nothing to our children. This adventure was for us.

Wow! Little old Springfield where nothing really happens - had grown up! We had our first drug bust - in Grandpa Henry Midden’s house. He was very surprised, saying the young lady he rented it to seemed very respectable. She had the most beautiful long blonde hair… It was found on a wig stand… The family deliberated on telling him, he was in his late eighties!

THE PIE ADVENTURE

For many years I have made a cherry pie with a lower layer of apples to cut the tartness. I used good old Pillsbury pie crust in my 10” glass pan. I pre-bake shell 5 minutes (so it does not get soggy). Open a can of cherry pie filling and one of apple pie filling. Dump in the apples, dump in the cherries, top crust on and bake… Very easy almost effortless.

Today we have the new and improved version: 8” aluminum pans with the shell in already. Open the cans of filling. OMG! Look at the goop! Colander to strain off over a cup of goop from each can. Not enough filling now…

New cans are smaller! Open: Half goop - half cherries woe! Apples, the same: Half goop half apples. By the time the fruits are ready, I have lost my routine to bewildering shock. Instead of one large pie, I fill both dinky shells. Then realize I have no top crust! No more in freezer either! My daughter comes through and we decide to scoop filling out of one shell and into a freezer carton. Turn messy empty crust shell onto the shell with the fruit. OK! “This looks OK, Mom. I’m going in to take a shower.” - She disappears. I open oven door. My angel says; “Stick the empty pan under it.” Do I listen?… No, because I am moving too fast.

Lift aluminum pie shell and it buckles! There is pie crust and fruit on the oven door, it’s window and between door and crack of the oven proper. No, not proper; this is absolutely not proper at all!

OMG! What a mess. Oh, I have a wide pancake paddle! Ah, scoop all broken crust and fruits into the aluminum pan I should have used to strengthen the bottom of the first pan. How the dickens am I going to get it into the oven? I don’t want this second pan to buckle! Ah, there’s something sturdy - the big old meat cleaver. Slide it under the pie pan with care and lift it to the oven. Ah, success. Turn oven back on. This is going to bake the residue that I could not clean-up. OH, HECK WITH IT!

My daughter comes from the shower and I tell her we are now having pudding instead of pie. And then I launch into my adventure. She says, “Didn’t you use a cookie sheet under it?”

Cookie Sheet! With a sigh, I acknowledge to not knowing this! And avow: I resign and assign all easy modern baking to the younger generation.

A MYTH-LADY CHEERS

Selena and I were gathering last minute Christmas table accessories. The check-out line was long and the man ahead of us was driving a handicapped scooter. He had one item in his lap but his expression seemed despondent. Nobody should look that dejected at Christmastime! I looked at his item and said, “Ooh, Lady Godiva Chocolates!” He looked up at me - perhaps this was a good gift after all. Then I continued innocently: “Tell me, when you take the cover off … does a naked lady jump out?”

Surprise; shock and then the loudest clear laughter I even heard. Suddenly he sobered a moment; turned his scooter out of line and laughed waving the box of chocolates all the way to the men’s room …

Selena rolled her eyes to the sky but she smiled.

THE COOKIE FIASCO

About a year later I tackled a cookie recipe. I did have parchment paper but this time it did not cooperate with me. I made the dough and stored it in the refrigerator until the next day. It spooned out perfectly on my sheet of parchment setting on the cookie sheet. I saw only a bright future ahead for these cookies…a gremlin had other thoughts.

When I lifted the sheet, the parchment did not adhere but went catapulting off the sheet and into the open oven! OMG WHAT A MESS - I DID IT AGAIN! At least there wasn’t any liquid like with that pie!

‘Turn off the oven’, I hear the angel say, so I do. ‘Now scoop up what cannot be saved and pitch it. And clean up.’ Sounds good; I do that. ‘Now, spread the parchment paper flat on the sheet and put some more cookie drops on it. Well, shut the oven door, lady and let it reheat! You are back to square one. Hold your thumb on that parchment paper! Ta-Da!’

THE MOST DIFFERENT YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES

2020.

We have our routines! Many of us hate them but we depend on the repetition as a way of survival. Suddenly the whole country is hit with the news of a killer virus from Japan. We had seen news reports for years about the bad air in several Asian countries, but did not expect such stuff to infiltrate the U.S.A. But it arrived and suddenly much of our country is closed and unemployed, loosing their homes and livelihoods. The stores and restaurants are closed. We can’t visit each other; can’t entertain the older people in nursing homes or hospitals. We find ourselves living in a very unnatural environment for people of the United States and as we survey things - the whole world has been affected. We don’t even know who to blame - maybe it is rich people who can fly anywhere at the drop of a hat! Maybe it was those cutting costs in coach? Maybe it is the people trying to help us…The daily reports of those affected with this virus have reached such staggering numbers that we no longer know if any of it is real, terrible or finally over.

Unfortunately this is also an Election Year and the blame has flown like Pidgeon-shit. We hear so many conflicting results that we have no idea who won the election - legally.

A REAL NIGHTMARE

This friendship started before I married. I would take mother to the grocery store instead of giving them my room and board money each payday! That way we had some food in the house. We shopped at the A & P on North 5th Street. I knew many of the clerks by name. Mother of course was too good to be friendly with clerks! I spoke with Pete and his partner at meat counter. There, I got spiced ham for my lunches. Quintin at produce taught me how to pick ripe fruit but one day said, “Be careful, never cross Pete.” I thought that odd; Pete was a light friendly sort. He walked to and from work; lived with his mother, easygoing it seemed.

On one trip I laughed with a bag boy at check out and Pete came over and said, “OK, I warned you once.” The young man laughed and said to me,

‘Oh it will be all right, I am leaving here for a coal miners job in Farminton soon.”

When I did not see the bagger anymore, I figured he left for the miner’s job. In a bit another nice man was not there. I thought that one odd, because Harold was intending to stay! Time went on, my lifestyle changed, I married but Pete was still at the meat counter and as fun as usual. Now and then he came back after hours to work all alone in the store. But one night another worker saw the light and wandered in to discover Pete grinding meat. But when he looked closer it was body parts. The interloper crept away and alerted the authorities. Pete was caught grinding body parts into animal meal and sending it out. In custody and accused of murder Pete confessed.‘ It was not just the one,” he said, “ I killed thirty-eight of them. They weren’t any good; they were two-faced, back-biters.”

When this and a photo of him appeared in the newspaper I was devastated. I knew a mass murderer - we were all so deceived.

# THREE STORIES

1937 SPELLING CLASS

I was into Second Grade Classes well enough. Our teacher was called: “Mother Anastasia” She was not just older, Mother Anastasia was an institution. She was climbing the front steps gingerly that Sunday and my cousin opened the door for her. She thanked him without another word and went on. This oldest cousin had her 18 years earlier when she was in her seventies and she still looked just the same. Maybe she was a mummy! My cousin had laughed and said, he did not think so. He thought one day she would just fall over dead.

We children were all seated after recess period when Mother Anastasia called: “Spelling Time.” We all turned to the page and I glanced down the new words quickly because she usually had a writing test and as it was not a written homework I could not tackle it because mother had a movie we must see. That day the teacher decided to call a name and have the child read the next word out loud, spell it and then use it in a sentence. My word was BURGLAR. I said the word but being of musical mind, my sentence was: “You must lock your doors and windows so the BUGLERS don’t get in.”

The old nun dropped her head, hiding her laughter and red blushing face beneath her broad stiff headpiece. It frightened me. I shook in fear. I was ready to shout, “Oh, God she died! I killed the nun!” But her shoulders moved and I stopped. When she lifted her head, she took a huge breath to compose herself and said. “ I have never had this happen before; you are both right and wrong.” And then she laughed and said, “Let us close the books and gather around the piano and sing!” I wondered why she wiped her eyes.

1949 FEBRUARY

I was about to ring the elevator button to start a trek to the Post Office when Dr. Sandy stopped me.

“Maybe you can help us; we are trying to remember the title of a song. We have parts but are missing some of it. Mr. Yardley popped out of Harvey’s office saying, “Yes Deidia, you know a lot of music; you probably heard this song. It is English. OK! What have we got? It is the longest title in the world! -“ ta- ta- ta - New Ashmonian, ---ta ta ta, student’s ‘ ta - ta band.” I shook my head, I had never heard it. Harvey said, “Ah, “we are-“ Yes, Harvey WE ARE trying to piece this fool thing together.” - Harvey fanned a hand: “No, I mean the beginning: “We are the new Ashmonian, ta ta ta-ta ta- ta- something about a young people’s band.” I suggested Teenagers? Student’s? - Harvey agreed: Yes! Student’s Band. It is really off the wall! - ”The English use the word ‘Conservatory’ for schools.” I said. - “Yes, Mr. Yardley said, “It’s Student’s Conservatory Band.” -Hugo finally called out, “You’re all being silly. I am trying to figure out this account!” He was ignored. I think we almost have it! Let’s see:

“We are the New Ashmonian, ta ta - ta, ta, ta. ta

Student’s Conservatory Band.”

“OK , what kind of Band is it? Does it parade?” I asked. - “It marches and plays spiffy music,” said Dr. Sandy. - “Hum, how about “Society Marching?” No said Harvey - it does not fit the rhythm but reverse it: ‘Marching Society’. Hey, we got it!

We are the New Ashmonian

Marching Society

Student’s Conservatory Band!

( yah, yah, yah-ah ah!)

We all laughed. “It needed my trombone!” Said Mr. Yardley. We all turned to see Hugo’s set frown. He had no sense of humor. “OK, What good did all this do you?”

Dr. Sandy pulled himself up elegantly to his complete short stature and said: “Young man, we collaborated to solve a problem and had a cheerful time doing it. Learn!”

When I returned to the Lab, Lloyd was ready to tell me about their transom eavesdropping. I had missed a fun thing - “Where else could you hear attornies, a doctor and a lady - that Greek Lady - cutting up to remember a song title!” I asked what the song was. Lloyd answered: “Hell, I don’t know, but they sure had a good time.”

1963 NOVEMBER

We had moved into the Cottage on Adelia but were as poor as church mice. All but the oldest two wore hand-me-downs. The children were clean and bundled with winter garments, bulky scarves and mittens on yarn braids. I wore the coat I brought before I married a bright blue fleece (curled weave cloth). Charles wore his everyday work garments. We bundled the children into the old blue Ford wagon that we bought on borrowed money. We were driving to town to see Santa. The city had moved the Santa House onto the square and he was there.

Without my husband knowing I told the children this visit was just for fun and dreaming. The children knew they could tell Santa all the wonderous toys they would like, but that it was all just dreaming, like make-believe.

There was no room for parents in the Santa House so we hovered outside listening. The four girls wanted dress-up fashion dolls but the young friend, not Barbie. Maybe some garments to dress them. Santa asked: “Why not Barbie?” and the littlest girl said, “She is too grown up to want to play.” and another girl said, “Her cloths are too fancy.” And another “Yes, Santa she can’t play in high heels!”

Marshall smiled a bit shyly and said, “Oh there is something I want, Santa, but I can’t put my finger on it yet. Let’s try something about the planets.” We all looked at him in surprise; how his interests varied. He mastered every game and instructive toy but never pursued any of them further. And then our burly bundled little boy Derek, blew his nose and looked more pitiful in his old cloths and stocking cap. “All I want Santa, is a Hot Potato.” And Santa clutched - thinking this little child is hungry. “Wouldn’t you rather have an airplane or a truck?” -- “No-no Santa, I want a Hot Potato.” Santa’ hands went to his face in exasperation. Our oldest daughter stepped up and explained: “Santa it is a game potato. You wind it up and quickly pass it to another and they pass it until it dings a bell and that one is caught with it and everyone laughs”. Little Derek nods his head and sniffs back a sneeze saying, “Yes, Santa, that’s it. And then, that one winds it up again and you do it all again.” Santa took a big breath and then said, “Ho-ho-ho! That does sound like a good game. I will look that one up and you shall get a Hot Potato. Ho, Ho, Ho. Each of you take a few candy canes, there, ho - oh, thank God. And Merry Christmas.”