

They Walked Among Us

Louie Harris

INTRODUCTION

IN life's journey there are times when a great experience comes as a shining light to brighten the way, something to bring new hope, comfort and enlightenment to our lives.

Such was the experience of Peter, James and John when one day Jesus led them up the slopes of Mount Hermon to pray.

Suddenly, the Bible tells us, there was a bright light. From this materialised two figures, Moses and Elijah, who had passed many hundreds of years before.

At first the disciples were afraid. When they heard the kindly, loving voices of these two great prophets gently informing them that they had come from the spirit realms with a message for Jesus their fear turned to wonder and joy.

The communication for Jesus was to inform him that soon he would join them in the spirit world. The message for the disciples was that here was the complete evidence for Jesus' fundamental teaching that what we call death is simply the change to a new environment.

Many years later, Peter wrote his Epistle. He recalls this great experience as the highlight of his life and the

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ultimate evidence that being on earth is but a short journey leading to eternal existence. It prepared Peter and the other disciples for the return of their beloved master in materialised form following his passing at Calvary.

Many may say that these events happened 2,000 years ago. Can they happen today? The short answer is "Yes". History proves that in the intervening centuries there have always been faithful servants of God blessed with the priceless gift of mediumship.

Such a servant of God was Alec Harris. With the loving and faithful help of his charming and gifted wife, Louie, he brought hope, comfort and enlightenment to countless people who mourned a loved one.

Over 30 years ago I met Alec and Louie in Cardiff when they kindly invited me to a circle in their home. That wonderful night was for me the highlight of my life.

When I entered the room where the materialisation seance was to be held I felt I was on sacred ground.

One by one, long-lost friends, now in what is beautifully described as the Summerland by them, fully materialised. They came forth to speak to their loved ones. One such reunion deeply touched us all. A father and mother who had "lost" their only son in the second world war and were in deep sorrow suddenly saw their beloved boy come forth to greet them. Yes, there were tears - but tears of joy!

It is a great joy to me that the record of the wonderful work for humanity freely given by my dear friend Alec Harris is now published. It is not only a tribute to his

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sterling qualities as a medium, but to an upright and kindly soul who gave the essence of his life as a servant of the Holy Spirit to comfort all who mourn.

Rev George May DD, PhD

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Chapter One

MY DYING FATHER MAKES A PACT

EARLY one morning in 1909 I woke with a strange feeling of excitement-it was almost exhilaration-as I recalled my visit, with my father the previous night, to the Palace Theatre in Porth, S Wales. Strangely, it was not so much the stage performance which enchanted me, but the accompanying orchestra which filled my childish heart with such delight. The thrill of it still lingered when I woke the following morning. I could picture Tommy Morris, the conductor, expertly leading his musicians as he swayed, caressing his violin with his chin while his sensitive fingers coaxed one lovely melody after another from his precious instrument. Something stirred deep down inside me. I knew when I grew up I wanted to be a violinist. I, too, would make the strings sing sweet music; I, too, might lead a similar orchestra. The decision was surprising. I was only nine years old and had never played any instrument. Nevertheless I knew that was what I would one day be.

At that time I could not possibly know what destiny held in store for me, how Fate had already decreed that my path should cross that of Alexander Frederick Harris, of Cardiff, S Wales. Though then totally unaware of his

extraordinary psychic powers, he was destined, it seemed, to become one of the most outstanding materialisation mediums of our time.

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This is our story, that of our meeting, marriage and eventual mutual involvement in developing his quite phenomenal spirit gifts. Alec's dedication and his selfless service to the sick and the bereaved are well known. Countless Spiritualists, and non-Spiritualists, flocked to our home to witness and marvel because when Alec sat in the seance cabinet, the two worlds, apparently so far apart and inaccessible to one another, could and did meet. The spirit world manifestations were as solid and real as physical ones.

On that morning after my theatre visit, I had a mind only for music, indeed, only for the violin. Eventually, when aged fifteen-and-a-half, I became a qualified violinist. My dream came true.

It was then 1916. Britain was in the throes of war. Quite unexpectedly Father's health gave the family cause for grave concern. He contracted an incurable ailment and became seriously ill. Very soon he had to give up his job. Father ultimately succumbed to the malignant disease and passed on. It was a bitter blow to all of us. He had always made home such a happy place, filling it with musicians and singers. But it was his passing, and a message he sent to me through Mother, that set me thinking about life after death. The subsequent fulfilment of a prophecy proved beyond doubt that he lived on. It was the first link in a chain of psychic events which indicated that this world and the Beyond interpenetrate. Each is as real as the other.

None of us in the family had had any psychic experiences, except Father, who often spoke of hearing voices. Not being conversant with such matters, we were inclined to treat these

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disembodied voices with a measure of jocularly, as a figment of imagination perhaps. But Father's awareness of the Hereafter was greater than we realised.

On the morning of his passing, as he lay on his death-bed weak and unable to move, he whispered to my mother.

"I have to leave you now," he said. "Sorry I can't see my boy, Ted, before I go, and my little Lou." His voice was so quiet Mother had to lean close to his mouth to hear him. Ted was still serving in France. Then came the message for me, barely audible.

"Tell ... tell little Lou that ... that I'll be the first to greet her from the Other Side." Mother nodded, too overcome to speak.

Father was quiet for some time. His eyes were closed. Then, quite unexpectedly, he sat up unaided, his eyes open, his face radiant. He stretched out his arms and joyfully exclaimed: "George! Austin!" These were the names of his "dead" brothers. A beautiful smile transformed his thin face. With a deep sigh of satisfaction he lay back on his pillows and passed peacefully to the spirit world. Father kept his word and made himself known to me at a sitting some years later. Even before that I often heard his voice calling my name.

After Father's death, Mother left her home in the Rhondda Valley and came to live with me in Waterloo, a suburb of Liverpool. My experience of orchestras began to grow as I applied for, and got, a variety of violinist engagements. But, in 1919, Mother began to yearn for the Rhondda Valley with all its old associations, and said she wanted to return. I decided to give up my job and go with her.

Once back in our home territory I sought, and obtained,

the job of violin lead at the Hippodrome, Tonypandy. Once more we we're financially secure. The Hippodrome engagement had far-reaching consequences for me, and might be considered the turning point in my life. It was there I became friendly with the pianist Peggy Gunter, later to become Mrs Phillips and, as such, the aunt of Alec Harris, the man I was destined to marry.

Peggy and I were very close friends. Unfortunately, we had to leave the Empire, where we later worked, when a dispute erupted. The union called us out on strike; Peggy and I found ourselves without employment. After we kicked our heels in frustration for a time, Peggy suddenly came up with a suggestion.

"How about attending an audition for that summer job that's going at Ilfracombe? If we don't get it, it would be nice to go there just for the day." The idea appealed to me.

So, the following Saturday, two excited young ladies caught the early boat from Cardiff bound for Devon. We attended the audition, which was successful, but declined the job because of the poor remuneration offered. Feeling that nothing was lost as we had had a lovely day, we boarded the boat to return to Cardiff. And this is where Fate took a hand in shaping my future.

A thick, black cloud descended on our boat. This worsened until it became a generalised fog making visibility practically nil. As a result, our arrival in Cardiff was delayed three hours. To our dismay, we missed our train connection and could not get home. I suggested to Peggy that we spend the night with a friend of mine, Lily Bristow. I knew she would gladly help us out of our dilemma. So, within an hour, two weary, dejected girls were knocking at her door pouring

out their tale of woe. Lily was understanding and gladly offered us shelter for the night.

The next day was Sunday. It is one I shall always regard as my special day for that was when I saw Alec Harris for the first time.

Peggy woke me early. I was surprised, as it was only 6.30 am, to see she was already dressed.

"Lou, I've just thought," she said, "I can't go home without first seeing my husband's sister and brother-in-law and their children."

"Oh," I said, still half asleep, "where are they?"

"They live in Malefant Street. You've heard me speak of Fred and Edith Harris, surely? She's my husband's sister. Would you like to come along with me? I'd like you to meet them."

"But Malefant Street is a long way from here," I said. "Remember it is Sunday. There's no transport."

"Never mind!" said Peggy. "We can walk there." She was insistent.

"When do you want to go?" I asked. "Right now," said Peggy.

"Now?" I gasped. "But it's only 6.30. You can't visit people at this time of the morning!"

"The Harrises aren't just people, they're family," exclaimed Peggy. "Anyway, if we've got to walk, and you have still to dress, we won't get there much before eight."

I dressed hurriedly and we set off in the direction of Malefant Street. After what seemed like ages, with my violin case feeling more cumbersome every step, we arrived.

We stood in front of a long terrace of houses. There seemed to be nothing to distinguish No. 123 from any of the others. We went through the gate, up the path, and knocked on the door. There was no answer.

"Like I thought," said Peggy. "They're still asleep."

She tried the door, and found it latched. Peggy knocked. I held back nervously as we waited.

Presently footsteps could be heard. The door was opened by a beautiful girl, no more than 16. She was still in her night attire. Her light, brown hair curled softly around a face that could not conceal its surprise at being confronted by visitors so early on a Sunday morning. Her eyes lit up with pleasure as she recognised Peggy.

"It's you, Aunt Peggy!" she smiled. "I'm afraid we are all still in bed. Come in and I'll go and call everyone." Peggy kissed her and then turned to me. "This is Connie Harris, one of the seven children I told you about," she said. Connie excused herself and started up the stairs. Peggy closed the door behind me. I followed her into the Harrises' sitting-room. Suddenly an idea struck her. She said, her eyes narrowed and twinkling with mischief, "Let's wake 'em all up, give 'em a surprise."

"How?" I whispered, fearful that they might hear.

"I'll show you," said Peggy. She walked over to the corner of the room, opened the piano, sat down, and started to play a rousing march, thumping the keys with all her might. Catching Peggy's mood, I grabbed my violin and gleefully added my talents to the cacophany.

It had the desired effect. Soon, there was a thumping overhead as people fell out of bed. Voices were raised, calling to one another: "What's going on? Who's that

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downstairs? Who's making that racket at this hour of the morning?"

Then came the resonant baritone voice of Alec's father, Fred. "Has everyone gone mad in this house?" he asked. "It's only eight o'clock! And it's Sunday!"

Within minutes the Harrises were streaming downstairs into the living-room. The last to come in, still pulling on a pair of trousers over his striped pajamas, was a sturdy, well built young man of 24, about 5ft 8ins tall. He stopped dead in his tracks as he caught sight of me.

I ceased playing in the middle of a bar, bow in hand, violin still tucked under my chin, mouth gaping like a goldfish. I couldn't move. I felt that a hand had grabbed my heart, and the fingers were squeezing so tight that I couldn't breathe. For what seemed a very long moment we stood still and stared at one another. Peggy broke the spell when she asked Fred and Alec's mother, Edith, to forgive our practical joke.

Peggy presented me to each member of the family, finally saying: "This charming young lad who seems transfixed in the doorway is Alexander Harris. We all call him Alec."

We smiled at each other awkwardly, he suddenly aware of his state of undress, realising it was too late to do anything about it! I was conscious, for the second time in my life, of a stirring deep inside me. It was a feeling I could not comprehend, yet somehow I knew it was concerned with my meeting Alec. This encounter was later to weld our lives together in a life-long partnership of love and service to those in two worlds.

Chapter Two

WE GET MARRIED

ALEC HARRIS' path and mine did not cross again for two years. In 1923, Mother and I moved from the Rhondda Valley to Cardiff. Alec later explained that though we did not meet he frequently stood on the opposite corner of the street outside the theatre where I worked and watched me being escorted home by the same man every evening. Naturally he assumed we were going steady and made no approaches. The escort in question happened to be a fellow musician who, because he was going my way, offered to see me home safely each night at that late hour. It was an act of courtesy, nothing more, and I regret that it kept me apart from Alec. Finally we met again one cold December night as we were both taking our respective mothers home after a show. The four of us were on the same tram, but unaware of each other.

Mother nudged me, and whispered in my ear: "Look at that boy sitting over there. He looks just like Theophilus, Peggy's husband."

Peggy had married Theophilus Phillips, Alec's mother's brother. It was no wonder there was a family resemblance. "That's the Harris boy I was telling you about," I whispered, excited at seeing him again.

When the tram stopped, I saw that Alec and his mother

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had also alighted. My heart gave a little somersault as I realised he was coming over to speak to us.

"Good evening, Miss Bradley," came the soft, rich baritone voice. "Nice to meet you again." The Welsh lilt made music of his speech.

"Oh, hello," I said, shyly. "Good evening, Mrs Harris."

"We haven't seen you in years," she replied.

"Two," I said, and hastily bit my lip. It sounded as if I had been counting them, which, of course, I had.

"This is my mother," I said, quickly, to cover up.

Our mothers went on ahead, chatting amiably, while Alec and I walked behind, shyly making small talk. We were awkward, very conscious of one another.

When we parted company Mrs Harris remarked: "We're having a party on Christmas Day. Why don't you and your daughter come along? We'd love to have you."

"That's a good idea," said Alec. "We always have a lot of fun. You'll meet a lot of nice people."

Before Mother could reply, I interrupted, saying: "I'm afraid I can't. Thank you very much though, it's nice of you to ask us." I glanced quickly at Alec to see his reaction. I was gratified that he looked crestfallen.

"I'm going to a theatre party on Christmas Day," I explained.

"Well then," replied Mrs Harris undaunted, "what about Christmas Eve?" Alec looked anxiously at me. "Yes, I'm free on Christmas Eve," I said.

"Very well. We will have our party on Christmas Eve."

Mother and I offered profuse thanks, bade them goodnight and went our way.

"What nice people!" said Mother. I didn't answer. I was already counting the days to Christmas Eve!

That first party at the Harrises' home is one I shall always remember. The music, the singing, the games, the dancing ... there was so much laughter and fun. Most of all I recall it was during that evening something deep, warm, and lasting was born between Alec and me. He had unwound sufficiently to talk about himself a little.

He told me he was born in Treherbert, in the Rhondda Valley, in 1897. I mentally made a note that he was three years older than I. "Just right," I thought. Alec spoke of how, at the age of three, his family moved to Cardiff. He left school at 14 to take up a job. By way of explanation he said: "I wanted to help contribute to the family's upkeep. For a while I worked in the office of a paint firm down at the docks." Alec smiled in reminiscence. "It made me feel very important, being a working man. Then I was offered the job as projectionist at the Gaiety Cinema."

"That must have been fun," I enthused.

"Yes, I could see all the films for nothing," he laughed. "I liked the work there. Being good with my hands, I could keep everything in order."

I nodded, but kept silent for fear of interrupting his story.

"Then, when I was a lot more experienced, I got what you might call promotion." Alec emphasised the word, and smiled.

"I obtained another job as projectionist and later became manager of a small cinema. Good for my ego, it was."

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I laughed with him. "And the war?" I asked. "Were you called up?"

"Yes," he said. "I joined the Royal Engineers, and quick as a wink was over in France. I had my eighteenth birthday over there. Four long years I was there, terrible years.

"Tell me about them," I said.

Alec shook his head. "Best to forget about them," he added. "I was one of the lucky ones." His eyes clouded. "I was in those terrible battles of the Somme and Passchendaele. A lot of the fellows, my friends and comrades, didn't make it, I did."

He sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "I had some narrow escapes, but I'm here to tell the tale. Just lucky, that's all." Alec smiled suddenly and changed the subject. "I don't want to bore you any longer," he said. "This is a party. You're looking sad."

"Oh, I'm not bored," I said hastily, and added shyly, "Alec ... I'm ... I'm glad you made it." Our eyes locked for a moment. Without speaking, he took my arm and led me back to join the dancing inside.

We met frequently after that. One Sunday afternoon Alec took me to Roath Park, Cardiff, where there was a pretty lake. One could hire rowing boats and spend a lazy afternoon on the water. We decided to do that.

After rowing about for a while, Alec pulled in to the bank and rested on his oars. He looked at me, seriously. I had that breathless feeling again, but tried my level best to look calm and collected. A voice inside me said, "This is it!" Slowly he leaned forward.

"I love you, Lou," said Alec simply. "I've known for a

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long time, I want to marry you." He paused, assessing my reaction. "Well, what do you say? Will you?"

Panic seized me. "I can't," I said, "I promised my Father I would look after Mother. I can't marry anyone, not for years.

He looked bewildered, and very disappointed. "But why ever not?"

"Because ... well, it's my music. It's my career! I can't give it up to marry."

"But you won't have to, Louie! You can be married and still have your music. You won't have to stop."

I felt I was being squeezed into a corner. I had to get out before I weakened.

"Well ... you see it's ... er. ..." I began lamely. Alec's face clouded. "Oh," he said, crestfallen. "I understand. You don't love me?"

"Oh, but I do, Alec, I do. I ..." I bit my lip. The words had slipped out before I could stop them. I saw Alec's shoulders relax.

"What's your answer then?" he asked softly. "Is it `Yes'?"

"No." I had to fight hard not to weaken. "I can't . . . "

He laughed, and his blue eyes twinkled with mischief. "Oh, it's still `No', is it? Well then . . ." and he shifted his weight suddenly, tilting the boat violently. "It's into the lake you go, my girl!" He gave me a playful shove.

I screamed, struggling, and fell against him. Alec's strong arms were about me. Then, slowly, he bent his head and kissed me gently. "Say yes, Lou," he whispered. "Please."

I was silent, thinking hard. My musical career meant much to me. I had worked hard to achieve it. "Give me a year to think about it, Alec," I pleaded.

"A year?" He gave me a twisted smile. "That's a long time when you're in love," he said wistfully.

"If you are in love, you won't mind waiting," I teased, "will you?"

He squeezed my hand. "No, I'll wait until you're good and ready, no matter how long." He looked very serious. "That's how much I love you, Lou."

Alec sighed in resignation, picked up his oars, and said: "It's getting late. We'd best be making tracks for home." And, in silence, he began to row.

Four years passed after that afternoon on the lake before we finally decided to name the date of our wedding. It was to be a quiet family affair. So, when we emerged as man and wife, one fine day in June, 1928, we were greatly surprised to see Lionel Faulkman, the well-known conductor and radio personality, and 16 members of his orchestra, grouped together at the church door, forming an archway with their instruments. I was the seventeenth member of that orchestra, the only woman! I was now 28 years old, Alec was 31. A wonderful new life of love, work and service together lay ahead.

We soon managed to buy a house in Manor Way, Whitchurch, and settled down to marital contentment.

On November 1st, 1932, our home was blessed by a happy event. A baby son was born to us. Inspired by my maiden name, we called him Bradley. We felt that our cup of happiness was filled to overflowing.

We spent 25 exciting, eventful, happy years in Manor Way. Many wondrous things were shown, and explained to us, by spirit friends.

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Chapter Three

OUR QUEST BEGINS

IN 1934 a dreadful thing happened. My sister, May, told us that our brother, Ted, had not only become a Spiritualist, but was also a medium. We were all greatly shocked. There were gasps of dismay all round.

"That's nonsense, May!" exclaimed Mother, looking worried. "Ted doesn't know anything about Spiritualism!"

"He does," said May, her voice hushed as if she feared someone might hear. "He's preaching in the Spiritualist church and describing 'dead' people."

"Don't be silly!" I laughed. "Ted? Preaching? He doesn't know his Bible well enough."

"But it's not Ted that's doing the preaching," added May. "Someone speaks through him, someone," her voice dropped to a shocked whisper, "who's dead!"

"Dead?" We all gasped, and fell silent as we contemplated the terrible fate which had overtaken Ted.

I was the first to recover. "There's only one thing to do," I said. "I'll go down, see Ted, and put a stop to all this nonsense."

Soon I was confronting Ted in his small Rhondda Valley home. Pulling my petite frame up to its full height, I shook an admonitory finger at him.

"Look here, Ted," I scolded, "what's all this about you being a Spiritualist medium? We are all good Baptists. Shame on you!"

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My brother smiled tolerantly at the ferocious little figure in front of him.

"Thank goodness," I breathed, "you still look all right. But why, Ted, why?" I asked. "You've always been such a sensible person."

"I still am," he laughed. "And so are you."

"Me? What's that got to do with it?" I snapped.

"Just that you, too, will be in the Movement very soon." "Me?" I was flabbergasted. "No! Alec would never agree to it."

"He's coming into it, too, but he doesn't know it yet!" Ted was positively beaming. "Shall I tell you something else? You will both do far greater work together than I could ever hope to do. It's something special."

"Nonsense!" I retorted. "That's ridiculous, Ted! How can you say a thing like that?"

"It's not me. I'm not saying it. It's Michael."

"Michael?" I enquired, looking around me, seeing no one. "Who's Michael?"

"He's a spirit guide," said Ted. "He has never been wrong yet."

I felt bewildered, distrustful of Ted's words. Nevertheless I experienced a vague stirring of interest. It prompted me to put many questions to him about Spiritualism, often arguing volubly. Ted answered tolerantly, patiently. I asked how he became interested in the subject. He chuckled, as if at some private joke. I pressed him further for an answer.

Still smiling at the memory of it, Ted told how he noticed that his wife, Annie, and a friend, always went out

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on a Monday evening. They never said where they were going and seemed rather secretive about this regular outing. He decided that, on the next Monday's excursion, he would follow them.

Keeping well out of sight, Ted saw them enter a house which was unknown to him. The door was open. Several others walked in without any preliminary knock or invitation. Ted followed them, and found himself in a large room. It had a row of seats and a platform at one end.

"It's a meeting," thought Ted. He seated himself at the back of the room, well concealed from his wife's vision and that of her friend, who were sitting at the front.

A man stepped on to the platform. He started to address several of those present, giving them messages from departed friends or loved ones. Understanding dawned on Ted. This had something to do with what was called Spiritualism, a subject one usually spoke of in hushed tones.

Not wishing to have any part of this, Ted slid down as far as possible in his seat to make himself less conspicuous. Alas, his movement attracted the attention of the man on the platform who promptly, to Ted's dismay, stepped down, and walked straight towards him. All eyes turned in his direction.

"You, sir!" began the man, pointing a finger at Ted, who squirmed uneasily. "There is a young Frenchman here, a soldier, named Pierre. He says you served together in the war, working with horses, lorries, transport. Do you know this man?"

Ted disliked the attention he was attracting, fearing that Annie would discover his presence. He kept his voice low.

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"I met many people called Pierre in France. How am I to know which one this is?" Ted was being difficult, trying to trip the medium who, nevertheless, continued undaunted.

"This Pierre is now showing me a scene," he said. "You are both standing under some trees alongside your lorries. It is a battlefield, there is a bridge. Pierre is saying, 'You stay here, I will go over first.' He leaves you to cross the bridge. As he does so, there is a great explosion. The bridge is blown up. Pierre is killed."

Ted was astounded. He recalled the incident very well, and remembered his friend. He was further taken aback when the medium remarked that Ted, too, could contact the "dead" and bring messages of hope to the living. "I suggest you join a circle and develop this gift," the medium urged.

This conversation was overheard by Annie. Needless to say, she was delighted.

"Annie persuaded me to form our own circle," smiled Ted. "After only three sittings I was controlled by my spirit guide, Michael. That's how it happened. There was nothing I could do about it. But now I'm glad, Lou, very glad. It has changed my life." I asked him if he had seen Dad. He replied: "No. I haven't seen him, but he has been described to me." Ted paused, as if listening; and continued: "Michael is saying you will see Dad before I do. Lovely thought, isn't it?" Somewhat shamefaced, I took my leave, begging him not to mention the subject to Alec and Mother when he came to see us. "Alec is sure to object," I said. "It will only cause trouble."

Ted did not take umbrage at my rudeness. He merely put an arm about my shoulders, and smiled. "Don't worry,"

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he promised. "I will hold my tongue. But mark my words; Michael is never wrong!"

I did not discuss this conversation with anyone, least of all Alec. So he was quite unprepared for what happened two months later. Alec had to make a

business call on a Mr Hewitt, whose house was across the road from us. Finding he was not yet back from work, Alec fell into conversation with his wife, Mary. A chance remark she made, apropos of nothing they were discussing, caused Alec to beat a hasty retreat.

According to Alec, Mary seemed to look through him, rather than at him, as she remarked: "You have a lot of lights around you, Mr Harris. Do you know you are a very powerful medium?"

Alec stammered. "What kind of a medium do you mean?" Mary replied, "Why, a Spiritualist medium, of course.

This caused Alec to take his leave with undue abruptness, much to Mrs Hewitt's amusement. As he burst through our door he gasped the story out breathlessly to me, ending with the observation, "Fancy a nice, sensible woman like Mrs Hewitt being a Spiritualist!"

However, it was this chance meeting with Mary Hewitt, herself a medium, which set our feet on Spiritualism's path. They became firmly planted, never deviating for the rest of our lives.

Two weeks after this meeting, the couple invited us to spend a few days with them in their caravan. Needless to say, the conversation was mostly about Spiritualism. I was fascinated by Mary Hewitt's many psychic experiences.

Seeing my interest, she invited me to go with her the

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following Sunday to a Spiritualist church. To my surprise I found myself accepting. Alec would have no part of it.

As soon as I arrived at the little church a sense of peace and contentment descended on me. Mrs Hewitt whispered to me, "You belong here." Somehow, I felt that I did.

The simple service appealed to me. I was most impressed with the impromptu address given by one of the congregation members. It seemed to answer most of the nagging questions that had been troubling me.

One facet of spirit communication which intrigued me was table-moving. At our next meeting, I asked Mary if she had experienced this phenomenon. She had and suggested if I was interested, we should try it out that afternoon. I was delighted, and a little nervous, wondering what Alec would say if he found out.

Mary said that the table moved with more facility if it was a light one. As hers were of the heavy variety, she asked if I could bring along one from my home.

After lunch, I was creeping softly downstairs, my little table clutched under my arm, when to my dismay the door was flung open and Alec came into the hall. He stopped in his tracks, puzzled by my antics. His eyes alighted on the piece of furniture I had under my arm. "Where are you going with that?" he asked suspiciously.

Overcome with confusion I blurted out: "To Mary Hewitt. We are going to try a table-moving seance."

Alec's mouth fell open. When it snapped shut he looked angry. I thought he would explode. "That you are NOT!" he said. Then he called: "Mother! Your daughter's going to a seance. Come and tell her she's not to go. I don't want her mixed up in that sort of nonsense."

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Mother came hurrying into the hall and saw us. Alec's face was dark with anger. I stood on the stairs, looking very determined, holding the small table.

"Look, Alec," said Mother reasonably, "she's a wife and a mother. She should know what she's doing." Alec turned on his heel and left the house.

I felt upset that I was going against Alec's wishes, but experienced a great urge to continue the seance. I left the house, still clutching my small table, and went to the Hewitts' home. Mr Hewitt opened the door. He smiled in amusement when he saw the table, but made no comment. He was a tolerant man and, though not interested in Spiritualism, did not interfere with his wife's participation. I was taken to Mary's bedroom, where the seance was to be held.

"We will sit for only an hour," said Mary. "If nothing happens, we'll try another time." We waited. Nothing happened. I experienced a feeling of acute disappointment. Eventually Mary decided to close the seance.

At this juncture there was a knock on the bedroom door. Mr Hewitt entered, ushering in a strange man who, it appeared, had just called at the house to see him on business. On hearing the singing from upstairs, he asked about it, and was informed that a seance was in progress. The visitor was most interested, saying he, too, was a Spiritualist. Would Mr Hewitt, he wondered, permit him to assist us? With a smile Mary's husband agreed, and led him upstairs to where our unsuccessful seance was about to close.

Introducing him Mr Hewitt explained: "This gentleman is a Spiritualist. He has been directed to help you. May he join you?"

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"Yes," said Mary. "Come in. Sit down and place your hands with ours on the table." He did so. To my astonishment, in a very short while the table moved! It rose slowly and lifted itself into my lap. As we recited the alphabet it would rock, coming to an abrupt halt when the required letter was called. This way it spelled out the name TOM. Mrs Hewitt asked, "To whom do you wish to speak?" The table replied LOU.

"That's my name!" I cried excitedly. "My father's name is Tom."

"That's interesting," commented Mary. "Ask him any questions you wish to confirm his identity." This I did. All were answered correctly by my father.

There now seemed to be a lot of power available. The table had no difficulty in moving. Our hands were barely touching its surface. The strange gentleman withdrew his entirely and sat back with his hands on his knees. Yet still the table continued to move. I asked my father what his second name was. The answer came, JOHN. I was disappointed as I thought this was incorrect; it should have been Richard. However, I consoled myself with the fact that all the other information had been accurate. We then closed at Mary's suggestion. The stranger took his departure downstairs. I told Mary I felt quite sure that I had found my beloved Dad. As I said this, there came three loud knocks on the wardrobe, which was some distance from us. Mary said, "That is your Dad saying `Yes'." She added: "I feel strong physical mediumship emanating from you. There is great work ahead for you to do."

When I recounted my experience to Mother, commenting on the only error being Dad's second name, she said:

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"That was no mistake. Your father's other name was John. Richard is your brother's second name." I was greatly relieved.

Alec was furious when I told of the knocks. "You'll end up in an asylum!" he snorted. "You are just fooling yourself with your own thoughts! I'm coming over next Sunday to prove to you it is all a lot of nonsense." I was filled with misgiving. Fortunately he did not carry out his threat.

Later, I accused him of not having the courage of his convictions because he had not turned up to justify his words of condemnation. I flounced off to bed without telling him what had transpired at our second sitting, again a very successful one. The table was active, without the stranger's assistance.

Alec remained downstairs, obviously deep in thought. Round midnight, he came upstairs and woke me.

"I will not let you go to sleep until you sit with me," he said. "We'll soon see that this whole thing is ridiculous nonsense." I was afraid to sit without Mrs Hewitt for fear that nothing would happen. I would never live it down. I protested: "Not now, Alec, it's midnight! Tomorrow perhaps?"

"You are afraid," he taunted. "You know I can prove that it doesn't really happen. It's all in the mind." Alec pointed at my forehead.

Incensed, I retorted, "You are the one who should be afraid, ridiculing something like this when it's true."

We found a suitable small table in the bedroom and commenced. Fortunately no light came into the room from outside. It was a new area with a few houses. The street

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lighting had not yet been completed. Only a faint glow came from the gas fire. I told Alec Mrs Hewitt was emphatic that no circle should begin without a prayer, and explained we would sit for only one hour.

Time passed. Nothing happened. There were no manifestations; no movement of the table occurred. It appeared resolutely glued to the floor. Alec became restless, and at the same time was a trifle smug that he had made his point. My disappointment became an unbearable longing. I silently prayed: "Oh, God! Please let something happen to convince Alec."

Immediately, I had a feeling of being lifted up. The whole room was illuminated by an unearthly blue light. It swelled gradually in luminosity, as though someone had turned up a gas mantle. Then, just as gradually, it

diminished in brilliance. I was afraid; so was Alec. He said: "Heavens! What's that?"

"I don't know," I whispered. With that the table began to rock violently. "You are moving it," accused Alec. I removed one hand from the table, still holding the other lightly over it. When it continued to move Alec insisted I was manipulating it with my legs. I was indignant and moved away, sitting right back from the table. Still it continued to rock. I asked nervously, "Is that you, Dad?" The entity acquiesced, and gave a message. Alec was not impressed. He maintained he was already aware of the information proffered, having been told the same thing by me some time before.

"Well, ask it something yourself," I suggested. Hesitantly Alec asked if there was anybody there who wished to speak to him. Instantly, the table's movements ceased to be so

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violent and gently spelled out "CON", the name of Alec's beloved sister. Tragically, she had contracted tuberculosis, passing on November 27, 1923. Connie returned that evening, obviously aware that if anything could convince her brother of life after death it would be her spirit communication. But Alec did not accept it. Her message was too similar to one I had often spoken of before. Alec attributed the communication to the manifestation of my thought, not hers. The question of how the table moved seemed to escape him. I reminded Alec there must have been hundreds of incidents which had taken place between himself and Connie about which I knew nothing. I suggested that if he were to ask her about any one of these, and receive a satisfactory answer, perhaps then he would accept that his sister was, indeed, present.

Tentatively he asked, "Con, do you remember, the week before you died, I read a book to you, and you expressed a wish that I should finish it and tell you how it ended?"

"Yes," came the gentle reply. "Can you give me the name of that book?" Alec probed. Immediately the answer came back, "Girl of The Limberlost."

Alec was shaken. "But that's amazing!" he said. "Only I could possibly know that."

"There!" I said. "You must believe now that your sister is here." I quickly asked her a question, hoping for further proof of her spirit presence.

"Can you see us?" I queried. She replied she could. "And the baby?" I added. She affirmed this, too.

"Where has he got his hands?" Without any hesitation she spelled out, "On his head". I had my back to the cot so Alec asked me to have a look. I got up and peeped at the baby.

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Sure enough, as he lay peacefully asleep, his hands were on his head. What could be more convincing?

Alec was silent, unable to speak, so great was his amazement. Up to that point he had firmly believed that all spirit communication was a well-handled hoax. Contact with his "dead" sister moved him greatly. Her loss had been a bitter blow from which he had not yet recovered. Naturally, we sat every night after that and received some truly remarkable messages. At times these were marred by nonsensical trivialities. Later we learned these were possibly the result of interference by mischievous entities who used the table as it was the easiest form of communication.

We found table-moving an extremely slow way of communication, so decided to improve on it. We cut out the letters of the alphabet and arranged them in a circle. Placing a glass or tumbler in the centre with our hands lightly over it, we found it would move quickly from letter to letter and spell out spirit

messages. This was a much more satisfactory method. We abandoned the table.

Things were going well when, quite suddenly, all messages ceased, and only one kept repeating itself, "Join hands!"

Being novices, we could not understand its meaning. I asked Mary Hewitt what she thought it meant.

"They want you to sit in a circle and join hands to build up the power," said Mary. "Obviously one of you is a trance medium. I think it is Alec." I told Alec, but we did not do anything about it at that stage.

Some time later, when I went to church with Mary one Sunday, I saw she was ill. After the service she walked on ahead slowly. I stayed to get a book from the church library.

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When I joined her she remarked: "Marie Therese (her spirit guide) has been here. She says Alec can give me healing. I will come over this afternoon, if I may, and we will try it." She urged me not to mention the ailment's location as it would provide further proof of Alec's mediumship if he found it himself.

At 3 pm sharp Mary arrived. The three of us, she, Alec and I, went into the lounge and sat with our hands linked. After a short while, Mary said quietly, "Now, Alec, give me some healing, please."

Alec was embarrassed and stammered, "But I don't know how, or what to do."

"Just pass your hands lightly over my body," Mary said. "You will be spirit-impressed what to do."

Alec looked self-conscious as he tried to follow Mary's advice. Quite suddenly, I sensed a spirit presence-and then had my first clairvoyant vision. I saw a

small Chinese boy overshadowing Alec. His hands moved very quickly, as they passed over the exact spot on Mary's body where the pain was located. Afterwards, Alec confessed to feeling very strange during the healing session. He felt he could not control his arms. It was as if some other force was manipulating them. Mary attributed this to the little Chinese boy who she, too, saw with Alec. We were all very excited, feeling that we were making fast progress.

The following Sunday, Mary asked if she could bring her sister, Artie, for healing. She had been ill with a nasty dose of 'flu. It left her with a persistent catarrhal and sinus condition. The pair arrived at our house, but Alec was not keen on treating outsiders. He refused to heal Artie. Mary tried to give her sister healing. No sooner had she

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commenced than Alec was controlled and went into trance. He administered to Artie, who immediately felt a marked benefit. The session completed, Alec sat down and started to sing a little Chinese song. I knew then that the controlling entity was the little Chinese boy I had seen at the previous circle. He told us his name was Toi-Toi, and subsequently, attached himself to our circle.

I was still employed as a violinist at the theatre and did not get home until 10.30 pm. This meant we could have a proper circle only on Sunday evenings. As we were anxious to know more about this wonderful revelation, we sat most nights in meditation to help prepare the way for spirit friends to manifest.

During one of our meditation sessions I looked up and, to my great astonishment, saw an elderly Chinese standing beside Alec. He appeared to be a physical being, certainly not merely a vision. He wore a beautifully embroidered Chinese robe. A small, round, black hat was perched on his

head. His pale yellow skin was drawn tightly across high cheek bones, eyes aslant. The form stood scrutinising me, his gaze penetrating, searching. So real did he seem that I was frightened. The figure must have realised his sudden appearance made me afraid for he disappeared as suddenly as he came. I could not get the strange visitor out of my mind, nor he us, apparently.

A few weeks later, as I sat quietly beside Alec while he slept on the divan, I glanced at his face and noticed with bewilderment that his features were changing. As I watched, he slowly acquired a Mongolian appearance, with the unmistakable high cheek bones. Alec's eyes narrowed, becoming up-turned at the outer corners. His mouth was drawn

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slightly downwards. "Alec's being overshadowed by a Chinese," I gasped. I was dismayed, not knowing quite what to do. Then from Alec came a voice. It was Oriental in inflection, high-pitched and nasal. "Little Lady!" it said. "Chang come to help, not to harm you."

The calm words reassured me. I moved across to the divan and had a closer look at the face. At once I recognised the elderly Chinese I saw previously. Alec's lips parted slowly. The voice intoned again: "You must make a time when I can come to speak with you. It is very important, and concerns the development of the medium. There is great work to be done. Chang will look after medium always. I am his principal guide. I will always be on hand to help him."

With these comforting words Chang quietly withdrew from Alec. His features returned to normal as he slept. I felt a great flood of relief that matters were now under the control of a trustworthy guide. Many had controlled Alec, but, somehow they did not belong; Chang did. We acquired a valuable, life-long friend in Alec's chief guide.

We sat most nights in meditation, sending out healing, giving the guides an opportunity to develop Alec's mediumship. Little Toi-Toi was a frequent visitor, bringing a lot of power to our circle.

One evening a young man communicated. He had been one of the first to use the glass and alphabet. The spirit visitor said his name was Jolkim, a young Russian of about 25. He had died on horseback while trying to escape from the enemy in the first world war. Each time he came Jolkim re-enacted the circumstances which caused his death. This was traumatic, to say the least. Alec had to suffer

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boisterous and even rough treatment from him. Jolkim was generally difficult and appeared to resent having been sent to work with us. Often he was quite disagreeable. Complaining that our rooms were always too hot, he brought freezing cold winds which caused us to shiver in discomfort. I was far from happy about this state of affairs. I feared for Alec who, when controlled by Jolkim, was completely at his mercy. We were greatly relieved when this young Russian was removed from our circle for six months. When he returned he was made to treat Alec's body with much more care.

Despite this rough patch in their association, both Alec and Jolkim were told, first through famed medium Helen Hughes, later through others, that they would become "closer than brothers, and would walk arm in arm". How true this proved to be. Jolkim eventually became one of our band of trusted guides. What a wonderful friend that lad has been to me and to hundreds over the years.

Shortly after Jolkim returned to our circle, Alec and I sat in the lounge chatting, when my husband suddenly announced he could hear a foreign language and had an urge to speak it.

"Speak then," I said. "Just do what you are impressed to do."

Alec emitted a flow of quite incomprehensible words, which obviously had the pattern and grouping of intelligent speech. After a moment, the spirit entity present seemed to realise I was completely at a loss to understand what he was saying. He promptly changed to English, projecting a beautiful, deep, rich and resonant voice.

"My name is Ewonga," he said. "I come to tell you I am

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the medium's bodyguard. From henceforth, no one will control him without my sanction."

I felt very relieved, realising that at last our circle was being properly managed and controlled from the Other Side. I expressed my gratitude to this gentle yet authoritative spirit. What a source of strength he proved to be over the years. I came to love this Red Indian dearly; we both trusted him implicitly. Ewonga was always present at our séances, guarding Alec while entranced. We had long, interesting talks with him about spiritual matters. During one of these he told me that a spirit entity who was greatly loved and respected, even revered, was being sent to take charge of our circle.

"Louie-One," he said (this was the name he always called me), "this advanced spirit being belongs to you. Many sit at his feet and listen. He speaks words of wisdom. Already they are preparing the path by which he will come to you. Be prepared to receive him."

Though Ewonga did not give us the name of this spirit entity who had attached himself to me, we were impatient to make his acquaintance. But patience was something we had to learn to cultivate while Alec was developing his mediumship. Things do not usually happen quickly in this field.

After Ewonga's manifestation our circle was much better organised. We always followed any advice he gave. He told us to form a circle of regular

sitters, and always to hold our seance on a Sunday night. The guide stressed the importance of these two factors if we wished to make progress.

At one of these Sunday night sittings a deep baritone

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voice announced himself as "Adoula" then struck his breast, and repeated, "Adoula come."

He was an African, and had a poor command of English. This improved greatly over the long years of his association with us, but Adoula never became fluent in the language.

Adoula was a wonderful soul and became very closely associated with Alec as his healing guide. And what a remarkable healer he was, with numerous cures to his credit. No ! I correct that. Adoula never took credit for any of the miraculous healings which occurred while Alec was controlled by him. When many blessed his name and thanked him he would spurn such thanks, saying with deep humility: "No thank Adoula. God give Adoula . . . and Adoula just give you." It was his way of saying that all healing came from God, that he was just a channel directing healing to wherever it was needed.

At the healing sessions, Adoula always worked with an ordinary pocket handkerchief. Using it like an X-ray, he would hold up the unfolded handkerchief and view the patient's body through it, moving it about until he found where the organs, bones or ligaments were out of balance. There was never any need to describe ailments to him or even indicate their situations. With uncanny infallibility, Adoula located the complaint. Never, at any time, did he presume to diagnose. He knew what was wrong-and where. Without comment or discussion with the patient, he would proceed to administer spirit healing.

Placing the handkerchief over the affected part Adoula blew on to it a stream of healing breath. Sometimes he emitted a deep-throated humming sound, low-key and vibrant, which generated power. In turn, this produced

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heat. More often than riot, the patient felt relief almost immediately. Some spectacular cures took place instantaneously: others required a series of treatments, possibly over a long period.

On Ewonga's advice, we formed a healing circle. Adoula was always present to administer to the sick through Alec. He was happiest working in this field of mediumship.

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Chapter Four

HER "DEAD" DAUGHTER RETURNS

THOUGH I was very pleased with the way Alec's trance mediumship developed, and was happy to meet the guides who, one by one, attached themselves to our circle, I often thought of my brother's prophecy that I would see my "dead" father before he did. I wondered when and how this could possibly happen. Needless to say it came about, and in rather unusual circumstances. Though I did not know it, I was about to be introduced to a most astounding type of mediumship, materialisation. One not only heard, saw, touched and embraced lost loved ones, but they appeared as solid and real as any physical being. In appearance, they were no different from when they were on earth.

My mother had a niece named Maggie; but because she was so much older than I, I always called her Aunt Maggie. She was a very religious woman, attending every Pentecostal church service or prayer meeting whenever

possible. The rest of the time she devoted to her large family. The four girls and three boys lived happily together, though a trifle cramped, in a small house in Porth. Of necessity, the three younger girls Ethel, Doris and Janette, slept together in one bedroom.

Quite suddenly, Ethel, an extremely beautiful girl, with long, golden hair reaching to below her waist, fell ill with

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tuberculosis. She quickly succumbed and passed. Because of their cramped sleeping conditions, her sisters contracted the deadly disease and died within 18 months of Ethel.

Poor Aunt Maggie was desolate with grief, overcome by this appalling tragedy which struck her close-knit family. Only her unswerving faith in God kept her sane. Despite her triple bereavement she had no desire to communicate with her beloved daughters, thinking Spiritualism was the "work of the Devil". Aunt Maggie firmly believed they would lie peacefully asleep in their graves awaiting the call of the "last trumpet" !

My brother, Ted, used to visit her weekly in an effort to bring a measure of comfort. Naturally, he tentatively put out feelers to see what her attitude was regarding life after death. Ted suggested that he might help her to communicate with Ethel, Doris and Janette. Aunt Maggie was aghast. She chided him for being a Spiritualist, spitting the word out with distaste, accusing him of working with the Devil. Somewhat deflated, Ted tried to lend weight to his arguments by telling Aunt Maggie that Alec and I were in the Movement. On hearing this, her eyes rolled in horror. She threw up her arms and prayed aloud for our salvation. Ted deemed it wise to beat a hasty retreat!

Not long after this unfortunate encounter, my mother and I held a seance. Alec was entranced. To our surprise, we heard Janette's voice. She addressed my mother, saying: "Auntie Polly, please go and see my mother.

She is very ill. Tell her we are with her, helping. Say that we love her very much."

Mother promised to do this. Next morning, though she rarely went out, she rose early, dressed, and caught the bus

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for Aunt Maggie's house. As Mother alighted at her destination she was surprised to see Ted getting off the bus in the opposite direction. Ted was flabbergasted at seeing Mother so far from home at that early hour and asked the reason. Mother explained she was on her way to see Maggie and related Janette's urgent request at the previous night's seance.

Ted exclaimed in surprise: "But that's an extraordinary coincidence! Ethel came to our circle last night and said the same thing. That is why I am here. I have not seen Aunt Maggie for a couple of weeks so wasn't aware of her illness."

"That is very strange," Mother replied. "Both girls bringing the same message at the same time but in different places." She pondered a moment, then said: "I fear there must be something very wrong with Maggie. Let's go quickly and see for ourselves."

Sure enough they found Maggie gravely ill. Both Ted and Mother passed on her daughters' spirit messages. Maggie found them difficult to understand, believing that they had gone from her for ever. She smiled, then murmured, "Oh, if only I could accept that." Hope flickered momentarily in her eyes. "How happy I should be." Then her face clouded as she remembered her firmly-entrenched beliefs. "But that is not possible. They are in their graves."

"Listen, Maggie, my girl," Mother said gently, but earnestly, "I am telling you the truth. You must believe me. They *did* come to us last night, through Alec and Ted. They want you to know they're not asleep in their graves awaiting a

trumpet call of Christ's second coming. They are alive and with you now. How else did they know you were ill? And how could they come to tell us if

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this were not so? We knew nothing of your sickness." Aunt Maggie seemed a little happier at that, though not entirely satisfied, as she sank back among her pillows. But a ray of hope had been given to her. Within the month she passed on during her sleep. One can imagine the joy she experienced at being reunited with her three lovely girls.

I have told this story because it had a sequel which gave irrefutable evidence that Maggie, Connie and my father were still alive, albeit in another dimension. To prove it they materialised with such clarity and physical detail that we had no difficulty in recognising them.

This manifestation occurred when famous materialisation medium Helen Duncan demonstrated at our Spiritualist church. Mary, Alec and I were fortunate in obtaining three of the greatly-coveted seats. Alec bought a bunch of violets, "to give to Connie".

On arrival he placed these flowers inside the seance cabinet.

The Helen Duncan demonstration began with the usual procedures. Prayers were recited, followed by a few hymns. Very soon phenomena began to happen.

A cultured male voice, with a strong Cambridge accent, (the medium was a Scot) announced itself as Albert Stewart, Mrs Duncan's guide. Albert welcomed us to the circle, giving explicit instructions on how we should approach the materialised forms. He also issued advice about conducting ourselves during the seance. This done, the curtains were parted, revealing that the medium was in deep trance. A tall male figure in a flowing white robe

stood beside her, his hand on her shoulder. I was utterly fascinated. It was my first materialisation experience. Alec and Mary were

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equally enthralled. After Albert materialised many others came to show themselves and bring messages. Though it was a marvelous experience, we were somewhat detached from those communicators who were not known to us. We waited anxiously for a loved one of ours to bring the evidence we needed.

We were not disappointed. After a while, a beautiful young girl stepped out of the cabinet. It was Connie. Every feature was as it had been when we last saw her. To Alec's joy she held his flowers in her hands!

"Thanks, darlings, for the violets," she said softly, but quite distinctly. Then she handed the posy to Alec. The extraordinary thing was that after they had been handled by Connie, the violets lasted for weeks without withering.

As we left the church I was conscious of a certain disappointment that Father had not shown himself. I consoled myself by acknowledging that what I had seen was very rewarding.

I wanted Ted to witness these marvelous manifestations. He did such good work round the valleys, giving so much, taking church services, always rendering very convincing clairvoyance. Ted was a popular medium. When he demonstrated the churches were filled to capacity. I felt that a sitting with Helen Duncan would help and encourage him further. I also thought that Father would most certainly materialise for Ted. Ted was excited at the idea, and a sitting was arranged.

Afterwards, I anxiously asked if he had seen Father. He replied that he had not. "But guess who did come? Maggie!"

Knowing her antipathy to Spiritualism, I was most surprised. "Maggie!" I exclaimed.

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"Yes," Ted affirmed, "Maggie! She came out of the cabinet looking just as she had on earth. She put her hands on my shoulders and said, 'Teddie!' She was the only one in the family who ever called me that." Ted's voice was full of excitement as he underlined this piece of evidence. Then he continued. "'Teddie,' she said, 'I've come to tell you that you are right about Spiritualism. I was wrong. You must carry on this good work!'" Ted laughed delightedly.

"But what about Father?" I asked. "Did he come?"

"I asked Aunt Maggie if he would. She said: 'He's here, Teddie. He helped me to come. He thought it would be more convincing for you if he did it that way!'"

We had to wait several months before Helen Duncan returned to our church. Again, Mother, Alec and I sat in the front row beside the cabinet, anxiously waiting Father's materialisation. This time we felt certain he would come. The previous night he returned at our circle and said that the guides were busy preparing him. They would help him to materialise at the Duncan seance. Father promised we would be able to recognise him. It was with bated breath we waited for Albert to conclude his usual preliminaries. This done, he paused, looking around. His eyes rested on our little group. I could scarcely breathe!

"There is a gentleman here," he began, "who wishes to come to the lady in the front row." I could barely contain my excitement.

"For me?" I gasped. "Has he come for me?"

"He has come for the lady next to you," came the reply, "but for you also."

With that the curtains parted-and my beloved father stepped from the cabinet. He came forward, his arms out-

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stretched to Mother. "Poll," he said, gently, "I am with you.

Mother went to him. There followed a quiet conversation between them, too personal to relate. There was no doubt in our minds it was Dad. Before Father appeared Albert instructed us to remove the handkerchief shading the red light used at materialisation séances. Father, he explained, would be able to tolerate the increased luminosity. "He is anxious to show himself clearly to his loved ones," the guide added.

We looked closely at Dad, hardly believing he was before us. Every feature was clear. His eyes, the texture of his skin, every line and detail of his face, were there for all to witness. Apart from the visual proof, he appeared as solid as I when I took his hand. He bent and kissed me lightly on the cheek.

A week or so later I was browsing at the library and found a book, "*Towards the Stars*", by Dennis Bradley. The title intrigued me. I took the volume home. It was a very comprehensive report of the investigations undertaken by the author into the direct voice mediumship of George Valiantine, a well-known American medium. Every time I picked up the book a voice said, "You can get that." Puzzled, I dismissed the suggestion from my mind as imagination. However, the voice was so persistent I decided to discuss it with Mary Hewitt. She took the matter seriously. She did not think it was imagination, but someone was trying to impress me that we should sit for direct voice.

At our next circle, I asked Ewonga if we should try to obtain direct voice. Without hesitation he said, "Get a

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cone, Louie - One, and wait." He was, of course, referring to a megaphone-shaped seance trumpet.

Every time we attended the Spiritualist church the demonstrating medium would single out Alec or me and tell us about "the great work we had to do" or that there were plans for our future in Spiritualism. It was all very well, but up to that point nothing had been made clear as to what these were to be. Our circle seemed to follow the same pattern with no change. It is understandable why the controlling guides sent a gentle spirit visitor to encourage me, through the entranced Alec. Softly spoken, supplying her name as Patience, she came to bring me patience, of which I was sorely in need. She told us to persevere. Ultimately we would attain what we were striving for. We were greatly heartened by her words and after that better able to endure the delays encountered.

Time passed. We tried to wait patiently for those on the Other Side to move when they were ready. Then, quite unexpectedly, a new, important guide made himself known to us. Through Alec came a deep resonant voice, announcing, "I am White Wing." Alec, controlled, rose to his feet, seeming to gain in stature as he came towards me. "I belong to you, Faithful," he said, taking my hands in his. "There is much work for you to do."

"Here we go again," I thought, and smiled wanly.

"I repeat," came the rich voice, "there is much work for you to do. Your world needs the help we will bring. We look to you to aid us to carry it through. I will speak simply. Your man is like the engine. You are the power which makes it go.

"White Wing not promise riches, but you will have sufficient for your needs.

Now, the path is narrow and difficult, but White Wing say, one day it will be a long, wide road. Hundreds will travel along it with you."

I was quite overcome by his words. I felt so close to this wonderful soul that I was prepared to do all I could to help him in his work. I even offered to give up my music if it was necessary.

"White Wing," he answered seriously, "may even ask that of you, Faithful."

I was touched by the beautiful name he gave me, and wondered why he had called me that. As if picking up my thoughts he said: "My name for you is Faithful because White Wing know you will always be faithful even through difficult times. One day," he prophesied, "when you come over to White Wing, there will be a reward for your faithfulness. May the Great White Spirit bless you." The guide withdrew, promising to come again. We were to become very close over the years.

He tutored me in all subjects relating to spirit matters. I discovered how little I really knew. I was virtually an ignoramus, as far as this topic was concerned, until White Wing took me in hand. I became his eager and diligent pupil, trusting him completely. Never once did I find him to be wrong.

We bore in mind White Wing's injunction, given at a subsequent circle, "to sift and question all that purports to come from the Other Side. Never accept anything if your better judgment indicates that it is unacceptable." He told us that so many people accepted whole-heartedly and unquestioningly every single utterance from a medium. They did not realise that, in the developing stages particularly, things could go wrong,

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permitting interference and distortion to take place. This warning made us cautious of any manifestation we encountered.

At this time, we started to experience quite a lot of physical phenomena in our home, even in comparatively bright light. Objects moved for no apparent reason; teaspoons were lifted by unseen hands and tapped against saucers, and so on. Alec disliked being in trance. He was unable to witness any of the manifestations that took place. To conciliate him, so that his interest would not flag, I agreed to sit sometimes for automatic writing so that he would be able consciously to participate in the spirit communication. One evening, Alec said he had an urge to put the pencil in his left hand. It was only a small stub, and difficult to hold. I was very surprised to see him insert it between the first and second fingers of the left hand. Being righthanded, this would make writing a difficult undertaking. No sooner had Alec grasped the pencil between his fingers than it began to write quickly on the blank piece of paper before him.

Though it commenced at the left hand margin of the paper the script started with the last word at the end of the sentence. It finished on the right of the paper with the word beginning that sentence. In other words, the communication was back to front. And to make things even more complicated the script was upside down! The finished message, written in this manner, was legible to me, sitting directly opposite Alec, but not to him. The letters were written at great speed.

Three times the pencil wrote the same message, and always back to front and upside down. It was, "Tell Mary - keep away from London."

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"Which Mary?" I asked. "Hewitt-your friend," wrote the pencil. "Who is it who is writing this?" I probed. "Bert," came the reply.

At this juncture, we noticed a strange acrid smell.

I sniffed, and turned to Alec, saying: "Can yon smell something? It's like sulphur burning."

Alec's nostrils twitched. "It's like the smell left after a shell has exploded. I remember it only too well."

No immediate explanation was forthcoming, either about Bert or the strange odour. A few weeks later we learned that Alec Hewitt's brother, Bert, had been killed by a shell-burst in the first world war. It was Bert's first contact with us, but he subsequently communicated frequently after that for many years.

After receiving Bert's warning, it was too late to deliver it to Mary. Early next morning I made a point of doing so, knowing that sometimes Mary drove to London at weekends.

As she read the message, Mary's face showed her amazement. She was visibly upset. She told me it seemed inevitable she would have to go to London. Her husband had mentioned, only the night before, that he intended to operate his business from the capital and wanted to reside in London.

"But we shall have to have second thoughts before moving, won't we?" she said gravely.

I read that it was absolutely essential to sit in complete darkness to achieve direct voice with only the seance trumpet edged with a band of luminous paint round its

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wider end to make it visible to sitters. I was disconcerted, having no desire to sit in the dark. Alec and I continued to meditate in red light. The guides apparently decided to take me in hand and condition me to sitting in darkness. No sooner had we commenced our meditation than the light went out. Afterwards we would discover that the globe filament had been destroyed. Time and again this happened. I felt a growing annoyance as the pile of broken globes increased.

As usual when in difficulties, I consulted Mary Hewitt. I told her about this new problem, explaining that the guides were being fractious, if not a little destructive, in their efforts to persuade us to sit in darkness. She smiled, amused at the battle of wills between two worlds, and offered to attend that night and observe what took place.

Sure enough, the same phenomenon happened. As soon as our sitting commenced, out went the light. Mary chuckled, shaking her head wisely.

"I'm afraid you will have to learn to comply with the guides' wishes," she said. "They are in charge and will brook no interference with their arrangements. Try sitting in darkness, otherwise I don't think you'll get what you are looking for."

I sighed, grudgingly agreeing. To our surprise, thereafter the guides put the light on and off at will without manipulating the switch. I made no move to interfere.

Mary and her husband eventually left our district to live in London, despite Bert's warning. I felt her loss keenly. Where would I go now, I wondered, when I encountered the inevitable problems?

The spirit people, always aware of our thoughts, were

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quick to console me and allay my fears. I received a message through a visiting medium at the Spiritualist church. It was: "You must not be upset. One friend has left you, but two more will come later to help in the work you are undertaking."

Alec and I continued our evening meditation sittings in the dark. Before we sat I placed the luminous trumpet on the mantelpiece. Here it would remain, resolutely immobile, apparently disinterested in the proceedings.

One night, quite unexpectedly, just as we were about to close, to our amazement the trumpet moved! It rose, and glided silently across the mantelpiece, coming to rest on the opposite side. The trumpet avoided two vases which stood in its pathway.

Simultaneously, a loud rattling sound was heard, as if pebbles were being thrown against the door. The sudden noise startled us, but we were very excited and waited expectantly for further manifestations to occur. The trumpet made no more excursions. We closed the sitting. To say we were pleased with what had occurred would be a gross understatement; we were both thrilled.

The exciting possibility of future phenomena so unsettled us that when we finally went to bed sleep eluded us. We lay awake into the small hours, contemplating the wondrous manifestations which might lie ahead for our circle. Uppermost in my mind was a deep sense of gratitude to those dedicated guides who were working so tirelessly to help us achieve our objective.

The following Sunday, I invited a friend, Betty, to join us in the seance room. She was the young daughter of an acquaintance of my mother. Betty's mother had passed

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not long before. A week earlier, I received a message from her through the church medium to relay to Betty. I thought it would be nice for her to speak to her mother, hence the invitation.

Just before we commenced sitting, Betty's cousin, Murdo, arrived asking for her. He had locked himself out of the house- Murdo was staying with Betty and her family-and came to borrow her key. Murdo was such a personable young man I felt drawn to him, and asked him to join us. Alternatively, I said, he could wait in the lounge until the circle ended. Alec approached Murdo and

tried to persuade him to join the sitters, saying: "You are a canny Scot. I would be grateful for your unbiased observations on what takes place at our circles. I'd like to know what really goes on. I can't believe half of what they tell me. I'm 'unconscious' all the time." Seeing the puzzled expression on Murders face, Alec explained about his trance mediumship.

Murdo nodded his understanding, agreeing to accompany Betty into the seance room. It was their first experience of spirit communication so I gave them a short explanation of what to expect. Alec went into trance.

Ewonga was the first to communicate with this advice: "The time is right for you to sit for voice, but Ewonga say who shall sit. Ewonga know best."

Each sitter was expectant, hoping to be chosen for the voice circle. Ewonga's deep voice resumed: "First, Alec and Louie," and, addressing Betty and Murdo: "Perhaps this lady and gentleman would be kind enough to help us by giving their time each week. If, of course, they are interested."

The pair indicated that they were, and willing to join

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the circle. Then, with characteristic courtesy, Ewonga begged the remaining sitters not to be disappointed because they had not been selected.

"These four I have chosen," he explained, "have what is necessary in their bodily emanations to obtain direct voice. If they sit alone, quite apart from your present group, voice will come quickly." Noticing some of the sitters seemed a trifle downcast, he added a word of comfort: "Afterwards, you will all benefit from their efforts. Once they have been successful, voice will then come to your Sunday circle." This relieved their despondency. Ewonga continued. "White Wing will give you your instructions next Sunday. I suggest you start sitting for voice the following Tuesday. I wish you success, Louie-One. May

God bless your efforts." He withdrew, leaving us greatly encouraged, anxious to start the new Tuesday circle.

As Betty lived very near the theatre where I worked, we decided to hold the voice sittings at her house. I could go there between shows. We would be able to sit for one and a quarter hours weekly.

At the Sunday circle, when White Wing gave us our instructions he stressed the importance of regularity. "Never miss one sitting," he urged. "It is essential that the link is not broken." We all complied with his instructions to the smallest detail. Even Murdo, a traveler, made sure he never left Cardiff on Tuesdays.

After sitting for nine Tuesdays we had a setback. On the tenth Alec inexplicably failed to appear for the circle! Feeling hurt and disappointed that he had let us and the spirit people down, we realised he was probably tired of sitting week after week, with nothing to show for his pains but

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negative results. But did we not all feel the same? Only White Wing's injunctions regarding the importance of "regularity" and "keeping the link unbroken" bolstered our flagging interest. Rather than cancel the sitting, we held the circle with the three of us, Murdo, Betty and me.

White Wing had instructed us to sit around a table with our hands resting on it. The little fingers of each hand were to be in contact with those of the sitters on either side of us; thumbs had to be kept apart. He also advised us to let water flow through the trumpet before laying it on the table. The instructions carried out, we commenced. Very soon we were amazed to see the trumpet roll around the table. Slowly it crept on to my hands, remained there for a moment, then returned to the table's centre where it became stationary again.

We were more than pleased with our progress. As we closed the circle, each of us experienced a feeling of achievement. At last, something positive had happened. We were getting somewhere, we felt, if the trumpet moved at all. Our weeks of patient sitting had not been a waste of time.

I got home to find Alec waiting for me, looking somewhat sheepish. "How did the voice circle go this evening?" he asked. "Anything spectacular happen?"

Still feeling hurt by his deliberate boycott, I retorted angrily: "How dare you ask that? You should be ashamed of yourself, letting the guides down like that. Have you forgotten what White Wing said about 'not breaking the link'? You needn't bother to come again if you don't want to.

"What are you talking about?" said Alec. I could see he was curious.

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"The trumpet moved without you, that's all."

"It moved?" He looked incredulous. "I don't believe it!"

"It did," I said simply. I told Alec that White Wing had insisted he was not to become entranced at the voice circles. It was intended I should be the medium for these. I asked Alec if he was willing to help me develop in that field. To my relief he readily agreed, only too happy to be able to witness the proceedings himself for a change.

The following Sunday, White Wing said the room we were using was not satisfactory since it was too large. He asked us to sit in a smaller one. Betty had a sewing room which seemed ideal for our purpose. Having blacked it out satisfactorily, we used this the next Tuesday.

We commenced the circle with the new format, Alec remaining conscious throughout. The prayers and preliminaries completed, we were greatly surprised to see the trumpet rise from the table and move swiftly about the

room. It was obviously directed by unseen hands. Later we learned that to perform this feat, psychic rods were used, fashioned from ectoplasm drawn from the sitters and the medium.

While we were all congratulating ourselves and spirit friends on the degree of success attained, the trumpet suddenly fell to the floor with a clatter. It brought gasps of dismay from all of us.

Thinking that the power had diminished, we sang a hymn, "Bringing In The Sheaves," at the top of our voices. This was to raise the vibrations. It had the desired effect. The trumpet began slowly to creep along the floor. It edged itself along until reaching my feet. Then the trumpet crept up my leg, moving up the side of my body

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to my shoulder. I sat motionless, scarcely able to breathe, lest I impeded it in any way. It then descended, returning to the table where it came to rest. As I closed the circle the trumpet moved again and came to me, laying itself on my clasped hands, pressing down heavily, as if to indicate that our spirit friends were joining with us in prayer. It was a reassuring gesture.

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Chapter Five

PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITIES OCCUR

THOSE in charge of my husband's mediumship now planned to take his development a step further. Chang, speaking through him, announced, "Alec must go in cabinet."

"But, Chang," I protested, "Alec says he will never sit in a cabinet. He doesn't like being confined."

"Little Lady," the oriental voice intoned firmly, "when Chang say medium go in cabinet, in cabinet he must go!" Disconcerted, knowing Alec's aversion to cabinets, I asked White Wing for an explanation. If I was the voice medium, surely it was not necessary for Alec to sit in the cabinet.

"Faithful," came the calm, rich tones, "you are the voice medium, but Alec is a very powerful physical one. We have decided that instead of developing you separately, we will endeavour to blend the power. Alec will go into trance. You must be the conscious half. It is essential that a physical medium has a conscious counterpart to take care of him. Alec will have voice manifestations only if you are present."

I was quite happy with this new arrangement and felt greatly thrilled. Alec was far from pleased.

"Why do I have to go into trance?" he complained. "And why in a cabinet, for Heaven's sake?"

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I did my best to explain what White Wing had said. Alec grudgingly consented to do as Chang asked.

Now that his physical mediumship had been launched, a new guide joined us. Christopher became an important member of our band of spirit helpers. He was an intermediary between circle members and beings on a higher plane who gave information and instructions regarding the handling of the circle in general and the medium in particular.

Christopher received these instruction and relayed them to us. The advice was wise, helpful and invaluable at all times. We accepted what he said without question, always believing that "Christopher knew best".

He never materialised, but usually spoke in independent voice. His lisping, gentle, light baritone voice, with its slow presentation, would be heard either above the cabinet or from high up in any part of the room. Occasionally, Christopher used the trumpet. Sometimes he could be heard conversing with Alec in the cabinet. The guide always came with advice, never indulging in trivial remarks. Christopher was a very important cog in the materialisation machinery of the Alec Harris circle. There were many such cogs, some big, some small, but all of them important, having their own specialised work to do.

One by one, these cogs, in the shape of friendly guides, began to operate smoothly in our circle. As each appeared, he politely introduced himself, explaining the reason for his presence and methodically applying himself to developing Alec's mediumship. Each step was guided into its proper channel at the appropriate time. Never was anything hurried. Naturally, with the advent of each new

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and trusted guide, confidence in our band of helpers grew.

When, one evening, a calm, gentle voice announced, "I am Rohan," we were very happy to welcome yet another spirit friend. I asked him what he had been during earthly life.

"What I was," came the gentle reply, "is of no account. It is what I am and the work I come to do that matters. This is my greatest concern. I come to assist you to give the world the truth about life after death. My work is to help mankind to a better understanding of what is known as death. I shall always be close to the medium, to help and protect him, and to guide his efforts, and yours, along the path ordained."

Rohan promised to be present at every circle. It was always he who came first to greet and advise sitters.

In deference to Alec's aversion to sitting in a cabinet, he was allowed to sit to one side of it, a little away from the rest of us. Christopher told us to place the trumpet outside the cabinet. We did exactly as told, firmly believing that voices would occur. We were to be disappointed. For several weeks, the cone declined even to move, let alone produce the faintest whisper.

While we debated what to do, suddenly a change of instructions was received. We were told to place the trumpet inside the cabinet at the next Tuesday circle. Unfortunately, I forgot and set it outside as before. No sooner had we commenced when the trumpet rose in the air and entered the cabinet of its own accord! Later I received this reprimand from White Wing: "Faithful. You ask for voice. You must carry out all our instructions if you want success."

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It was clear the guides never forgot what had occurred between us at previous sittings. They liked to be obeyed. I was meticulous over procedures pertaining to the circle. I became a veritable sergeant-major.

About this time a voice medium visited Cardiff. I was anxious to revive Alec's waning interest in this type of mediumship and believed I could achieve it by letting him have first-hand experience. I took a night off from the theatre. Murdo, Betty, Alec and I attended one of the voice sittings that were arranged.

The procedure seemed no different from ours, except that as well as the trumpet, there were various toys, bugles and tambourines, marked with luminous paint. Obviously, these were to be moved, jangled, or blown by spirit entities during the circle.

Not having witnessed such a seance before, we were all intensely interested. However, it was not as spectacular as we hoped. Hardly any direct voices spoke, only those through the medium's lips. Quite a lot of minor physical phenomena were in evidence. The medium could not have been responsible

for these. He was securely tied up by Murdo and several others before the seance.

The medium's guide said he wanted to speak to the lady by the window. Since I was the only female so positioned, it was amusing that many women acknowledged his call.

"No," said the guide, "I repeat I want the lady by the window." I responded. He intimated I was the person he required.

"Lady," he said, "you have in your home someone with far greater power than the medium I am using today." I thought: "He must mean Alec. But can I trust him?" As

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if in answer to my doubting question, the guide continued: "With me is a great chief, a North American Indian. He gives you this message, he is looking to you to see that the work begun is carried out. He asks, 'Will you promise, Faithful, to do this? "

Amazed that White Wing should be present at this circle, I gave my ready assurance. We were impressed at the manner in which he identified himself. By using the name he had given me, "Faithful," there could be no doubt in our minds it was he. Also returning through a medium other than Alec it was further proof, if we needed any, of the reality of his existence. This medium was unknown to us, and we to him.

There followed a demonstration of physical phenomena. Bells rang, tambourines rattled, objects floated in the air and we were touched by unseen hands. For me it was a wonderful experience. I hoped the same for Alec, but he was quite unimpressed by "all this nonsense". He insisted nothing happened that could not quite easily occur without spirit intervention.

"Alec!" I gasped, shocked at his disbelief. "How can you say that? What about the message from White Wing? How could the medium know he always calls me 'Faithful'? What have you to say about that?" Alec could not explain this part, but insisted the phenomena could be duplicated by physical means. Betty and Murdo entered the fray, protesting at Alec's attitude. The argument became quite heated, but Alec would not relent.

"All right!" he snapped. "You tie me up and I'll show you I can do all that. It won't be spirit communicators moving things about either!"

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Without any warning, Alec was spontaneously entranced. Our oriental guide, Chang, addressed me.

"Little Lady," he said. "Do as the medium says. At your next circle, tie him up. He will have big surprise. You all have big surprise, big shock." Chang seemed amused, then continued seriously: "Do not be angry with Alec. He pick up other people's thoughts and speak them as his own. Not his fault. This is not what he thinks." He paused, as if considering something, then added: "Tie him up. See what happens."

As if by the snap of a switch, Alec came out of trance. Conscious, he continued heatedly with the argument which had raged prior to Chang's announcement. He was totally unaware there had been a break in the conversation, knowing nothing of Chang's remarks.

"I'll show you," he said. "Just give me a chance." He looked defiantly at the three of us.

"All right," I said smugly, "next Sunday, instead of our usual circle, we will tie you up good and proper. You can show us how it's done."

He stopped short at that, looking, I thought, a trifle alarmed. Alec endeavoured to laugh it off with a shrug. I think he hoped we would all forget about it. But we had no intention of doing so.

Early on Sunday, we prepared the seance room for Alec's demonstration. We placed a curtain across a corner of the room to serve as a cabinet. As it was Christmas, we decorated the walls and ceiling with streamers, tinsel, balloons and the like. We found some toys, drums, bugles, tambourines etc. and placed these, together with my baby son's reins, which were heavily hung with bells, on a table inside the impromptu cabinet.

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We used anything that could be moved or make a noise. The chair for Alec was placed outside the cabinet.

When evening came we went into the seance room, followed by a somewhat downcast Alec. Much of his bravado had evaporated since his heated assertion that given the chance he could produce "spirit phenomena" by physical means. Here was his chance; we intended to hold him to his word. After all, hadn't Chang said we should?

Glumly Alec took his place in the chair set aside for him. Murdo tied him securely with yards of stout rope. Perhaps he was a little too enthusiastic about this. Alec called out in alarm: "Murdo! Not so tight, man. The rope's biting into me.

"It's the way I tied the other medium," said Murdo. "The `faking' one."

We all laughed at Alec's discomfort, feeling absolutely certain he would not be able to move his hands, let alone anything inside the cabinet.

Sitting in red light, we opened the circle with a prayer and prepared ourselves for a long wait. This proved unnecessary. Almost immediately, and to our utter

astonishment, the bells were shaken vigorously in the cabinet. Their tinkling was loud and clear. Quickly, we glanced at Alec to see if he had achieved the impossible and freed himself from Murders ropes. But no. He sat, still securely bound hand and foot, looking decidedly scared. Alec realised this was no physical manifestation engineered by one of us. We were all linked hand to hand. Murdo looked at me. I nodded. He got up and extinguished the light-and things really began to happen.

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Something, a strange object, was dropped into Murders lap. The piping Chinese voice of the little spirit boy ToiToi could be heard angrily denouncing the medium: "Alec, him plenty bad man! Give him back that `thing' he bring with him. We not need it." Being dark, we were unable to see what it was that had so angered the little fellow. We had to wait until the circle's end before we could inspect it.

What a wonderful seance that proved to be. The balloons were supernormally removed from the ceiling and burst with loud bangs. This delighted the spirit children, who had great fun. In their enthusiasm they pulled down all the decorations. Tambourines were played with gusto. Little hands excitedly wound up toy cars, popped guns, played mouth organs and beat drums. It was all so unexpected. We could hardly credit that all this physical phenomena had occurred in our circle.

There were 12 sitters, and dear, doubting Alec. We then recalled Chang's words about letting Alec try for physical mediumship. He said we would all have a big surprise. Surprise? What an understatement! We were astounded.

During the circle, Ewonga spoke to us in his gentle baritone voice, expressing gratitude to Alec for making it possible for them to manifest in this way. What an achievement it had been for those on both sides of the cabinet. Ewonga

added that this was the first of many such circles. In the future even greater happenings could be expected.

Before leaving, he urged us not to be angry with Alec. Angry? How could any of us feel anger towards him? We were thrilled with what had occurred. It was now obvious that Alec had very special mediumistic qualities.

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At last I began to understand the earlier repetitive prophecies regarding the "great work" that lay ahead for both of us. I regretted the irritation I had always felt when told about this.

As soon as the light went on, we hastened to inspect the object Toi-Toi had so disdainfully cast into Murders lap. At first, we were puzzled to discover it was an expanding rule, the type generally used by artisans. Then, understanding dawned. Alec had apparently slipped the rule into his pocket with the intention of retrieving it during the seance. By extending it, he hoped to simulate spirit activities by touching us or moving objects, however inexpertly. This, felt Alec, would prove undoubtedly his point about fake manifestations and gullible sitters. The guides had other intentions. By taking a strong hand they showed that Alec was a very powerful physical medium, not that this in any way pleased him. He would rather have left the whole business in abeyance, or preferably given it up altogether. But Alec realised that having got this far in his development, he was committed to continue with the work spirit assigned to him.

Thereafter frequently on Sundays we held special circles. Amazing things happened. For instance, a sitter would be tied to Alec by a strong cord which was secured by a variety of complicated knots (police knots, naval knots and those improvised by various circle members) which would be difficult to untie at the best of times let alone in the dark.

Sometimes we were told to tie cotton between Alec's thumbs, making hand movements impossible without severing the thread. This, we were advised, would convince us that the medium had played no part in the following

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phenomena. Having been securely tethered, Alec would go into trance.

Within a moment Alec's pullover, worn under his jacket, would be spirit-removed, leaving intact knots in the cord, and the thread between his thumbs. This was a physical impossibility.

Strangely, whenever it was my turn to be tied to Alec, I experienced a sudden drop in bodily temperature at the precise moment the pullover was taken from his body. An odd coldness enveloped me as the garment was dematerialised. This indicated to me that a large amount of power was necessary for this.

Another demonstration was designed to give us an insight into spirit perception. All circle members would place a personal article on a table inside the cabinet. This was done prior to the sitting, before Alec came into the room. Then, at the end of the seance, each article was found to have been returned to its rightful owner. Never once was there a mistake. It was a means of proving to us there was a supernatural intelligence at work.

Of course, there will always be doubting Thomases. On one occasion, a Mr K. in Cardiff remarked: "The medium always sits in his own house. He uses a special chair." What type of chair this was he did not enlarge upon. One of our sitters heard this remark. Feeling that it denigrated Alec's mediumship, relegating it to fraud, he hotly retorted that wherever Alec sat, whatever chair he sat in, made no difference. Remarkable phenomena always took place.

"But could he do these in my home?" challenged the sceptic. "I will only believe if the same manifestations happen at my place."

Alec was obliged to give a seance at the doubter's home. On the appointed day, Mr K. invited a group of his friends to form a circle. To ensure that we had nothing to do with preparing the seance room, we asked if he would do all the preliminary arrangements. The sceptic readily agreed. Earlier in the day we left with him a small suitcase containing the black curtains for the cabinet, rope for tying up Alec, and various toys painted with phosphorescent paint. At the agreed time we arrived to find everything in order, everybody ready to start. We each put a personal article on the table in the cabinet before Alec came into the room. Before entering trance, he was securely tied up by Mr K. and his friends; we had nothing to do with this. Of course, the same phenomenon happened as before. Each member received his, or her, own article before the circle's end.

A piano stood to one side of the room. Mr. K. seated himself in front of this. Still endeavouring to test the extent of spirit capabilities, he asked "Will someone knock on the piano?" Immediately, there came a loud thumping sound on the wooden instrument. Not content with this, Mr K. pressed for further proof that spirit beings were present. "I meant play the piano," he demanded. Immediately unseen fingers ran up and down the keys.

"That's quite amazing!" he exclaimed excitedly. "The piano is locked!"

The spirit people were in a musical frame of mind. They switched their attention to tuning forks. We heard one being struck. It gave off a humming tone in the key of "A". Then another was struck. It produced a lower tone. The second fork belonged to a cellist, one of the sitters.

Both had been placed in the cabinet before the circle began. Quite extraordinary was that later in the seance, each fork was returned to its correct owner, though they were identical to the eye.

Mr K. left the seance firmly convinced of the authenticity of the phenomena he witnessed. I felt our work was not to provide entertainment for casual sitters, nor to be at pains to convince disbelievers who were so blind they would not see. However, the guides were tolerant of difficult and incredulous ones. I realised they were building up the power, testing and experimenting, trying to assess the degree of development achieved.

We now had an addition to our group of workers, two delightful spirit children, Sonny and Kitty. They became close associates of our small son, Bradley. He came to regard them as part of the family. If he was in difficulty at any time, or lost something, he would ask their assistance. They never failed to come to his aid.

Cardiff's Park Grove Spiritualist Church was fortunate at this time to receive a visit from famous, much-loved medium Helen Hughes.

I immediately arranged a sitting with her. Helen's Red Indian guide said he knew we were sitting for spirit voices. "You will," he added, "also have full-form materialisation before very long." This seemed hard to believe.

When Helen came out of trance she heard clairaudiently about Alec's mediumship producing materialised forms. She smiled and added: "If my guide has said this, it will come to pass. Materialisation is to be Alec's forte. There is great work for you both. One of these days, I shall be asking you and your husband for a sitting." Ten years later her

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prophecy was confirmed. Helen sat in one of our materialisation circles.

At about this time, my niece, Phyllis, came to live with us. She asked to join our Tuesday development circle. We were delighted to have her. It was fortunate Phyllis came to us when she did since, quite unexpectedly, we suffered a setback in our circle. Betty and Murdo had to leave Cardiff. Had it not been for Phyllis joining the circle we would not have been able to proceed with the voice sittings. Phyllis and I decided to continue with just the two of us giving what power we could to the entranced Alec. We held the circles in our own home now. That anything would come seemed a forlorn hope. But one night, as we sang, the trumpet left the cabinet. To our amazement, my father spoke. He called my name through the trumpet. It was only a whisper, but it was my father's voice; of that I was absolutely certain. I remembered his promise to be the first to greet me from the Other Side, but I had hardly dared hope to hear his voice again.

On another night, I sang "The Indian Love Call". When I reached the closing words of the verse "You belong to me", a deep, baritone voice from the cabinet completed the song, singing beautifully, "I belong to you." Later I learned my beloved White Wing was responsible. There was no doubt now that the spirit communicators could speak and sing quite independently of Alec. Though it was many months before they conversed with us at any length, when they did so their voices were strong, recognisable and quite distinguishable from Alec's. It took two years' dedicated, diligent sitting to achieve this.

During the winter months it was bitterly cold. As we

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held our circles in the bedroom, Phyllis and I sat up in bed with the eiderdown over us. Poor Alec languished entranced in a corner of the room behind a curtain hung to form a cabinet. He always insisted on being tied up. Alec feared he might be accused of manipulating the trumpet. This was ridiculous. Often as many as three trumpets operated at the same time. There were also

a luminous plaque and a cross which we always placed on the floor before starting the circle. These floated round the room, gently touching the sitter the communicators wished to address.

One night, feeling sorry for Alec, we decided not to bind him in the usual manner. We left him sitting relaxed and comfortable in his chair behind the curtain. No sooner had we started than the two spirit children, Sonny and Toi-Toi, said they wanted to tie Alec up. They took the case containing the ropes, etc, from under the wardrobe, and set about the job with determination. We heard the rope going back and forth as the binding up took place.

We had a real "party" that night! We were sprayed with perfume. Pictures were removed from the walls and placed on the bed. All my clothes were taken out of the wardrobe and gleefully laid on the bed by the children. They were simply full of pranks. Then there was silence. I strained my ears to hear what was going on and sensed, rather than heard, a heavy object being moved. Absorbed by my concentration, I was startled when a loud knocking occurred near my bed. It was made by a drawer handle in a tall chest which stood far across the room. This was a heavy piece of furniture impossible for one person to lift-yet here it was standing next to my bed, quite ten feet from its original position. What was even more extraordinary was this: I had left a

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full glass of water balancing precariously on the edge of the chest. The glass was in the same position when we put on the lights. Not one drop of the liquid had been spilled. We drew aside the curtain to inspect Alec. Poor man! He sat there trussed like a turkey. The spirit children had put all the knots at his back where he could not possibly reach them. Sonny and Toi said afterwards they did this to show "how he should really be tied up". It took 20 minutes to release Alec.

White Wing now advised us that the time had come for him to keep his promise of sharing the voices with our other sitters. We should, he said, sit for these on Sundays and make another day for healing. So, on Thursdays we had the healing circle, and Sundays the physical one. This arrangement was satisfactory. Both the healing and the voices developed rapidly. We witnessed some remarkable spirit manifestations.

Despite being told of the wonderful things that happened through his mediumship, Alec remained difficult. He was not at all anxious to continue séances. We talked it over and decided to discontinue the physical sittings, and concentrate on his healing. This was something he really enjoyed doing.

Life put a strain on Alec at this time. He had great responsibilities at work, being in charge of a large number of men, and put in a 12-hour day. The only time we had together was on a Sunday. Much of that was taken up by the circle.

White Wing, aware of Alec's feelings and anxious to restore his interest, asked me to place a pad and pencil near my bed. When an opportunity arose he would control

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Alec. I was to write down what he said and show it to him. Some nights later there were three loud knocks on the bed's headboard. I knew it was White Wing. He tapped out that Connie, Alec's sister, wanted to speak. Immediately afterwards, tapping came from underneath the spring mattress.

Connie said by taps that we must not give up the circle. So much depended on keeping Alec to his mediumship. I replied that nothing I said seemed to do any good. Then I suddenly remembered the pad and pencil on a chair at the foot of the bed.

"If only you could write on that pad, Con," I said. "I'm sure that would convince Alec." She said she would try.

Alec slipped from sleep into the trance state. He had one arm under my body. I took hold of his other hand to link up with him for power.

Presently the pencil was picked up and tapped on the chair. Then it could be heard scraping on the paper as it wrote. There came the sound of the sheet being torn from the pad. I sensed a presence floating, it seemed, towards the bed. I felt breathless with excitement.

At this point Alec awoke. I joyfully exclaimed: "Alec! Con has been here!" I put on the light.

To my surprise, the piece of paper was lying on Alec's chest. I grabbed it, and read, "Be good, Al ... Con." I was overjoyed, but my pleasure was soon dampened as Alec demanded, "How do I know that you didn't write it?" A loud rapping came from the bedside lamp. I said: "It's your sister. She's here. Now do you believe? Speak to her. Ask her yourself."

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I quickly put out the light, knowing it would be easier for Connie to rap in the dark. Sure enough, the knocks were louder. I saw the dim outline of Connie's figure standing by the bed.

"Look," I whispered. "Alec, she's there. Can you see her?"

Obviously moved by renewed contact with his "dead", dearly loved sister, Alec gazed intently at the faint form. Then he said hoarsely, "If it is you, Con, touch me."

Another intolerable silence followed while I waited. Then Alec let out a joyful gasp: "It is Con! She has her hands on my head." I could have cried out in relief. My gratitude to Connie knew no bounds. After that wonderful

experience, which convinced him that his dear sister was alive and near him, Alec was only too happy to sit again. The work went on.

One weekend, Mary Hewitt, my medium friend who had gone to live in London, came on a visit with her husband. She was still anxious to convince him about Spiritualism and managed to persuade him to attend one of our physical circles.

Alec came home, the sitters soon arrived, the last being Alec Hewitt. He hung his big overcoat on the hall stand and entered the room. We locked the door and placed a table against it to reassure Alec Hewitt that nobody could enter. As soon as the light was extinguished something was dropped into Mr Hewitt's lap. While the seance was in progress he received a strong punch on the head with one of Bradley's boxing gloves. Earlier Mary had joked: "I hope my husband gets a good biff on the nose. He is so stubborn."

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When the lights were put on, Mr Hewitt found his keys in his lap. He was puzzled because he had left them in his overcoat pocket in the hall. Yet, there they were, transported through the locked and barricaded door.

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Chapter Six A SPIRIT FACE APPEARS

ON Christmas night 1939 Phyllis and I suggested to Alec we should have a circle, thinking it would be nice to exchange greetings with our many spirit world friends. To our surprise Alec readily agreed. He usually had to be coaxed to give any extra circles. Being an unwilling convert to Spiritualism, he was never very keen on spending long periods entranced. Before he could change his mind, we hastily hung a curtain across the corner of the room to

form a cabinet. Alec was placed inside. At his request, we tied his hands and feet.

In our haste, we did not darken the windows completely. Being a moonlit night the soft beams filtered into the room. We were able to see much better than usual.

No sooner had Alec lapsed into trance than Ewonga said: "We are going to try an experiment tonight. Please tie string around each of the knots in the cord binding the medium. Make them extra secure. We ask you to do this so that the medium, when he wakes, will have no doubts that what has taken place was the work of spirit friends and no one else. It will be a feat that no human could perform." Then, with a note of amusement in his voice, he added: "Also, have your long coat ready, Louie-One. Please secure the knots."

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Puzzled, we set to work on the cord, making a very good job of it. This done, Phyllis and I took our places and began to sing carols. After a moment, Jolkim joined in with his beautiful deep, musical tones. The spirit children present added their voices in beautiful harmony: then two voices sang together.

The moon later became very bright. By its light the trumpets were clearly visible in their entirety, not just by the luminous areas painted round their edges. The curtains forming the cabinet did not quite reach the ground. I saw beneath them a white, semi-transparent substance billowing along the floor. My stomach constricted with excitement as I realised that a materialisation was probably forming.

After a while, two spirit arms projected from the cabinet holding a shoe in each hand. One shoe was placed on my lap, the other on Phyllis'. Next, Alec's belt and jumper were laid alongside the shoes.

A deep, droning hum came from the cabinet. Adoula announced himself. Suddenly, we heard Alec, whom we had bound with cords, rise from his chair. The curtains parted and he stepped out of the cabinet, to be greeted by our shocked exclamations. He was minus his trousers. I promptly jumped up and protectively draped my winter coat around him as it was cold in the room now that the fire was only embers. Alec came out of trance. Glancing down at his state of undress-no trousers, belt, shoes or jersey-he wrinkled his brow in puzzlement, exclaiming: "What's going on around here? What's happened?"

We switched on the light and drew aside the cabinet curtains. Phyllis, Alec, and I stood in shocked silence, unable to believe our eyes. There, sitting in the chair just as if

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Alec's body was still inside them, with the ropes still securely binding them, were his trousers.

"Impossible!" said Alec. He looked down at his lower torso to confirm that he really was without his trousers. "It's amazing!" he added. "I can't understand it."

This example of dematerialisation and subsequent rematerialisation served to prepare us for many such extraordinary happenings which followed later as Alec's physical mediumship developed.

As a year, 1940 was a milestone on the path of Alec's mediumship. It took a great leap forward and never looked back, going from strength to strength.

White Wing had kept saying he would one day "walk, talk and mingle" with us. So far, nothing had come of this promise. I was surprised because everything he prophesied had always occurred. I assumed we would have to find a materialisation medium and have a sitting to make this possible.

I heard that famous physical medium Helen Duncan was visiting Barry, a small town only 12 miles from Cardiff. It would be a simple matter for us to go there. At our circle, I put the question to the other sitters and asked if they would be agreeable. Before they could answer, Rohan said: "There is no need to ask this lady. You have the power in your own circle. But you must sit for materialisation on another night other than your usual Sunday circle. Be patient!"

We were delighted at this news, but a problem presented itself. Since I was working at the theatre every evening, the materialisation circle would have to be held very late after I got home. Bearing this in mind we chose sitters who lived

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near us who were prepared to sacrifice their sleep. We decided on Tuesday. I explained it would probably be a lengthy business. It had taken two years to obtain voice phenomena, I pointed out, and would probably take seven for this. But they were undeterred.

The following Tuesday we assembled at 11pm. There were six of us, all rather doubtful that anything would happen. The circle commenced in total darkness. To our amazement a luminous ball began forming in the centre of the cabinet curtain. A face could be seen within this mass, not very clearly but still a face. While we pondered who this was, the head began to turn. The feathered headdress of a Red Indian could be discerned. I knew then who it was. "White Wing!" I cried out in joy. At the sound of my voice the head seemed to come alive. Slowly he turned to face me. His eyes gave a long, searching look.

"White Wing, it is you, isn't it?" I said, quite overcome. Slowly he nodded, then faded from sight. I was overwhelmed. Too full for words, I felt tears stinging my eyes. I had seen my beloved White Wing at last.

A second ball of luminous ectoplasm formed at the top of the cabinet curtains, and another face appeared. I knew from the oriental features it could only be Chang. Then there was another face at my feet. This time it was "Raf", a "dead" squadron leader who had attached himself to our circle. His plane was shot down over France. We saw his laughing eyes and strong white teeth.

"Raf!" I exclaimed. "How lovely to see you!" Smiling, he too faded away. It was all so breath-taking. I was up in the clouds for days.

I realised it only remained for us to continue developing

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until we had full forms. White Wing told us to put a small red globe in the socket, which we did. The dull light enabled us to see more clearly what transpired.

It was interesting to watch the formation of these wonderful spirit phenomena. At first, only heads appeared, but we recognised many faces easily. Then, after some time, came full forms. What an achievement that was. In producing this, the faces became less clear, rather like those on an out of focus film. The curtains would part-and fully materialised spirit forms stand before us.

One night only Red Indians appeared. Many different types came, but each was quite distinguishable from the others as regards features, heights and individual characteristics. Yet, with all this, I noticed that the forms did not speak.

As the weeks went by the figures grew stronger and stronger. One night, a beautiful girl stepped from the cabinet, her figure clearly visible through her gossamer robes of ectoplasm. She leaned over to us and whispered, "Con." It was one word, but she had spoken! I could hardly believe it, and was so excited I could scarcely wait to tell Alec about his sister's return.

Afterwards many came who managed to speak a few words as the power grew stronger. Mostly these were guides. They, it seemed, were better able to handle this power than loved ones, who often suffered from an excess of emotion. This detracted from their concentration. It was exhilarating to meet the guides face to face and to feel the touch of their hands.

There came an evening of exquisite pleasure, the night when Rohan, at last, chose to show himself to us after years of communicating only through his beautiful voice. He

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stepped from the cabinet fully formed, draped in a flowing white robe of ectoplasm. Rohan was of Arabic origin. His costume and headgear were draped to resemble his national dress.

Of medium height and slender, his thin face displayed remarkably refined features. A close-cropped black, curly beard covered his chin. This tapered to meet his hair on either side of the face at the temples. Rohan's upper lip was covered by a black moustache, which, being short, in no way concealed his lips.

There were two characteristics which made an indelible impression on my mind, and, through the years, were always remarked upon by sitters and psychic investigators. First, there were his eyes. These were of the darkest brown, almost black. Disconcertingly they stared into one's own as if looking deep into one's soul, but always with love and gentle understanding. Secondly, his hands were always noticed. They were extraordinarily beautiful, narrow and delicately shaped, with long, slender, tapering fingers. I discovered this as he took my hands in his as a welcome.

These two bodily characteristics were totally different from those of the medium. Alec's eyes were deep blue. His hands were broad and capable, with

square spatulate fingers. There was absolutely no physical resemblance between my husband and Rohan.

Rohan was now in charge of the circle proceedings. As a result of this we coined a name for him, affectionately referring to this guide as "The Master of Ceremonies". He was a lovely person, always so calm and gentle. When he came he radiated peace. One could feel the love and harmony he brought at all times.

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Having obtained materialisation, we knew it had come to stay. Now I began to understand about the "great work" it was said we had to perform. I envisaged the enormous possibilities this type of mediumship would provide for helping the bereaved. Seeing, for some, is believing. What manifested now from the spirit world would be far more convincing than anything we had previously been able to offer the lost and lonely.

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Chapter Seven

GANDHI COMMUNICATES

ONE night during our Friday voice circle at the local Spiritualist church, I felt the presence of a young soldier who was trying very hard to communicate, but having no success. I sensed his bitter disappointment at this failure.

When the circle ended I was drawn to a woman who looked very strained. I felt she was on the verge of a breakdown. I approached her, asking if she would like to attend our Sunday circle. On the night the woman presented herself. Because of her obvious need, I placed her in the front row. We always sat in two rows, close to the cabinet.

Shortly after we began, a young lad stepped from the cabinet. He held out his arms to the woman, saying, "Mum, it's Derry." She gave an anguished cry, jumped from her seat and went to the boy. He put his arms around her. The mother broke down and wept unrestrainedly in her "dead" sons arms.

He gently comforted his mother, saying he was always with her. Then he changed the subject quite unexpectedly by remarking: "I want you to be quite sure this is really me. Look, I've still got it." The solid form took her hand and placed it on his chest. "Can you feel it, Mum?" he asked.

Later we learned the boy had had a deformed breast

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bone which his family laughingly called his "chicken bone". To give his mother positive proof of his identity, he materialised the deformity to convince her. This he certainly did. There was not a dry eye among us as we witnessed this beautiful and touching reunion of a lonely, grieving mother and her "dead" son.

Afterwards she told me that the boy had volunteered for service with the paratroopers. He did not last very long, his plane being shot down over Africa. When she heard the news the shock was so great the mother could not sleep or eat. She had no desire to continue living. Her doctor was very concerned, but could do nothing to help. After the circle, she was a changed woman, taking part in all the church activities.

Later, we had a most unusual spirit visit. During one of our physical circles a tall, extremely thin man materialised. He left the cabinet, walked to the end of the room where there was an extra chair and seated himself on it. The figure spoke to us, quickly and urgently, in a tongue of which we had no knowledge. I dearly wished I could understand the words and phrases that fell from his lips.

Unexpectedly, a young Belgian man sitting on a chair near the materialised form suddenly said he was a linguist. Conversation flowed freely and easily between the living and the "dead". They switched into several different languages, and still spoke to one another with ease. Alec was certainly no linguist. English was the only language he knew. This spirit return was a very evidential point in favour of his mediumship's authenticity. No medium could get away with a situation such as this, unless, of course, he was a fluent linguist.

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It appeared from the conversation that took place that the tall thin materialisation was an Austrian Jew who had been a university language teacher. He was rounded up by the Germans, along with others of his race, and interned in the much dreaded Belsen concentration camp. Here he was submitted to the most ghastly torture. The last diabolical session of Nazi sadism went far beyond his endurance. Mercifully, he died while undergoing the ordeal.

Leaving his broken, emaciated body and tormented mind behind, he said, was an overwhelming relief. The teacher confessed he still suffered bouts of mental torment when memories of the horrifying atrocities committed on defenseless men, women and children flooded his mind.

After talking for some time the man seemed relieved of some of his tension. He rose from the chair, quietly returned to the cabinet and vanished from sight.

Rohan emerged and explained that the guides had purposefully brought the teacher in an attempt to erase the suffering that still lingered in his mind. We sent him on his way with our blessings and promised to keep him in our thoughts. It was an episode, I felt, that would provide irrefutable evidence that we do survive so-called death.

At the same circle was a sitter I did not much care for. As he came with a group, I didn't question his being there. I knew the group held themselves responsible for all newcomers they introduced. As a precaution, I placed him at the back of the circle.

A Hindu materialised for this man. Pointing at him he said, "I belong to you." "How can you belong to me?" this sitter asked sarcastically, but the form was not disconcerted.

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"I became attached to you when you lived in my country," came the calm reply. The figure then spoke to him in Hindi. This seemed to make a profound impression on the rather unpleasant sitter. He suddenly became quiet and thoughtful.

Afterwards, when the circle was over and we met in the lounge for tea, he came up to me and said: "Mrs Harris, I am a police officer. We know about your activities. I thought I would come along and see what it is all about. Frankly, I am amazed at what I have witnessed. First, that Austrian communicator spoke five different languages!"

"You counted them?" I inquired, surprised.

"I counted them. There were five. Then this Hindu chap coming for me ... I mean, no one knows I spent many years in India. This fellow spoke the dialect of the place where I lived. Fantastic! Quite unbelievable! I just can't understand it." He shook his head, still puzzled.

"I'm glad you were impressed," I smiled. "Rather, I should say, I'm happy you found it to be true and not a fake."

"A fake," he exploded. "How could it be? What about all those spirit forms who were recognised by people in the circle? No, this is the genuine thing all right."

I was relieved we had convinced the police. That was quite something. I felt sure our beloved spirit friends had known of the officer's intentions and specially arranged manifestations to enlighten and convince him. Had this not been so, he could, perhaps, have proved to be difficult.

Another time a spirit guide danced and spoke. She did so for Graham Watkins, who simultaneously was introduced to our circle by his wife Marjorie, a brilliant pianist.

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Because of her professional commitments, she was only able to join us on rare occasions. Graham became one of our regular and trusted sitters.

His guide was a Spanish dancer, Conchita. We affectionately shortened this to Chita. She was all woman. There was no hint of the medium's masculinity about her as Graham testified after she sat on his knee. He held his arm around her. Conchita's proportions were dainty and extremely feminine. She always materialised wearing flowing, filmy robes. The guide would carry a fine gossamer veil made of thin, white ectoplasm. She seemed to have perfect control of the available psychic power. Not only did she hold her solid form for a considerable time, but she simultaneously danced and spoke while being some distance from the cabinet.

As Chita danced, moving her limbs gracefully and expertly, her garments would billow out so prettily. Sometimes she threw the veil round Graham's neck and laughingly drew him towards the cabinet, talking to him all the while. Then, planting a gentle kiss on his cheek before leaving, Chita would say she was always looking after him.

By way of confirmation, I quote from an article written by the then editor of "Two Worlds", Ernest Thompson. He wrote:

At the first seance I had with Alec Harris 15 spirits materialised that evening. They were tall and short, fat and thin, male and female. Some were visitors from other lands, one being an American Red Indian who stood quite seven feet tall. As evidence of the genuineness of these

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manifestations Rohan, the spirit in charge of the proceedings, materialised, and drawing the cabinet curtains to one side revealed the entranced medium sitting in his corner upon a chair so that we could see them together. On two further occasions the materialised forms were visible simultaneously with that of the medium. As further evidence of the genuineness of these materialised forms Rohan permitted us to witness the entire process of materialisation.

First of all, there appeared what seemed to be a white rod which thrust itself along the floor from under the cabinet curtains. It moved as if it were alive and stopped about a yard in front of the curtains. The end began to enlarge into a ball until there was a mass of moving, pulsating ectoplasm about the size of a large stone. It became elongated vertically until it was the height of a human being. Gradually, as if it were being sculptured, there appeared a face and then a head. Soon the form was completely human, clothed in ectoplasmic draperies.

The materialised spirit began to walk about the room and was able to speak to us. As the power waned we saw the spirit dissolve and collapse into empty space! Then occurred the most wonderful and beautiful manifestation of the entire seance. A charming Spanish girl gracefully glided through the curtains and enthralled us with a dancing display.

It was fascinating to watch her elegant movements. As she turned quickly on her toes, the hem of her billowing white dress flicked my cheek. It felt as soft and sensitive as gossamer.

Then she came to the main purpose of her visit, to prove human survival by demonstrating to us that she was indeed

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a female and not the medium (a male) masquerading in disguise.

Slowly she parted her robes revealing, beyond all doubt, a nude feminine figure.

Quite the most extraordinary phenomenon that happened to Alec was when he was dematerialised and re-materialised in a place outside the seance room. It was a Saturday night. We were giving a circle for the church. I always made a point of including among the sitters one of our regulars. Graham Watkins attended that night.

Toi-Toi materialised. A man asked the spirit child, "Do you remember the night you took off Alec's trousers?"

"Hush!" I chided him, but before I could utter another word Alec's trousers came hurtling through the air. Amid the laughter, I found myself thinking, "Thank goodness the circle is nearly over." Then Christopher, a spirit friend, requested us all to leave the room very quietly.

Knowing Alec did not like being left alone to come out of trance, Graham offered to stay behind with him. I said I would do likewise. But Christopher was emphatic. No, he insisted, we all had to go immediately. "Leave the medium's trousers by the cabinet," he added. As the sitters filed out, Graham saw my concern and whispered: "Don't worry. I will sit just outside the door. When I hear the slightest movement I'll slip in and see to Alec."

Somewhat relieved, I went downstairs to make the tea. The front door bell rang. I rushed to open the door. As I did so, I could not stifle a little scream as

I saw my husband, now out of trance, standing there, a bewildered expression on his face and now wearing his trousers.

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Graham, who heard my scream, rushed downstairs to investigate. His face registered shock on seeing Alec in the doorway. Graham's expression of amazement was almost comical as he stammered, "But ... but ... he never ... I mean I never ... but how?"

He had not heard anything untoward from the seance room, and was mystified as to how Alec got out. Alec was not much help either. His only explanation was that he suddenly found himself in the front garden, with his trousers on. He had no recollection of getting there.

There was no normal way in which Alec could have left the room of his own accord. Graham guarded the door. The only window was permanently closed, fixed by a wooden frame, fitted for black-out purposes. In any case it had become warped by the sun and was immovable. On checking it was found to be jammed tight. There were no signs it had been tampered with.

I was thankful that my husband was all right. Obviously he had been in good and competent hands. I had to concede that to the spirit world nothing is impossible!

In August 1946, Maurice Barbanell, the editor of "Psychic News", and well-known medium Helen Hughes, visited Cardiff. They approached us to hold a circle for them. So it came to pass that ten years after Helen had prophesied this very sitting-it took place. Here is Mr. Barbanell's report:

There is in South Wales one of our most remarkable materialisation mediums. At his séances spirit forms not

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only show themselves in good red light, but hold sustained conversations-
after having walked about ten feet from the cabinet!

At a sitting which I attended I saw 30 forms materialise during two-and-a-half hours. Alec Harris does not use his gift professionally, deriving his income from his work for a Government department. The sittings have to be held fairly late at night because his wife is engaged in an orchestra at a local theatre.

It was not until almost 10.30 pm that 27 of us assembled in the seance room. As most of the sitters had come by coach from valleys about 25 miles away, few got to bed before four am.

The story behind the sitting is a fascinating one. About ten years ago, the medium's wife had a private sitting with Helen Hughes. She was then told that, if she and her husband sat in their home for development, they would one day obtain full-form materialisations.

Moreover, it was stated that Helen would witness the phenomena. She did at this seance I attended.

I was asked beforehand to make a thorough examination of the room, of the cabinet, which was merely some curtains across one corner, and of the medium, who wore only a thin pair of trousers made of black material and a black vest.

The black was deliberate, because the forms always appear clothed in dazzlingly white ectoplasm, which I noticed as usual did not reflect the red light. I was so close to the cabinet that several of the forms had to walk over my feet. On several occasions I handled the flowing ectoplasmic draperies, which were soft and silky to the touch.

I shook hands with two forms. Their hands were firm and normal.

Helen Hughes received two outstanding proofs. One was the materialisation of Douglas Hogg, a Battle of Britain pilot who has proved his survival to his parents through her mediumship. He showed his features distinctly and asked her to stand up so he could talk to her face to face. He gripped her by the hands, thanked her for all she had done, and kissed her, almost with reverence, on the forehead. She had no difficulty in identifying him; clairvoyantly she has seen him on many occasions.

Douglas Hogg also gave a greeting to Charles Glover Botham, another medium through whom he has given evidence of his survival to his parents.

The other spirit form to show himself to Helen was her Red Indian guide, a magnificent figure complete with headdress, who gave his name. The cast of his features was typical of his race.

Another Red Indian guide, completely different in appearance, manifested and spoke to the medium's 13-yearold son who has been brought up to regard spirit visitors as a normal part of his life.

From the standpoint of evidence, the highlight of the sitting was the materialisation of a man known to several people present and particularly to Tom and Mabel Hibbs, leading figures in the South Wales District Council of the Spiritualists' National Union.

He came right out of the cabinet, walked about ten feet to the corner of the room and showed himself to Mrs Hibbs. At first he did not give his name, though asked to do so, because he declared that he ought to be easily

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identified by his features and his voice. He was right!

Mrs Hibbs soon recognised this man, who had passed on recently, and who was one of the officials of the district council.

To appreciate the remarkable nature of the sitting, you must remember that it is very rare to get materialisations venturing beyond the cabinet because there is an invisible lifeline connecting them with the medium.

Yet the "dead" official, as well as several others, walked to the corner of the room, sat in a chair and carried on a long discussion. Some of the forms, after maintaining these conversations, were heard to say that they must return to the cabinet for "more rations". They walked back and a few minutes later came out, moved across to the corner of the room, sat down and continued where they had left off

Several turned round and showed their backs, to prove they were solid figures. Once a form stooped to straighten a rug which had been rucked by somebody else.

From the spectacular point of view, the most extraordinary incident was the materialisation of a girl. She disposed of any suggestion that the results could be explained away by trickery by revealing part of her feminine form! Then one materialisation parted the curtains so we could see the figure and the medium at the same time.

Frequently throughout the seance I heard some of the guides conversing with the medium in the cabinet. Apparently there are intervals when he is almost conscious.

It was an impressive demonstration of materialisation at its best. The medium and his wife devote their spare time to Spiritualism and make a speciality of healing. Already they have several striking successes to their credit. But no

sceptic could attend one of these materialisation séances and still remain a sceptic.'

I would like to tell of the conjurer who attended one of our séances Mr. A. G. Fletcher-Desborough, a professional stage illusionist, would have been able to judge, if anybody could, whether the materialisations he saw were produced by a magician's "tricks". He pronounced the spirit forms authentic, calling them "unique".

He was biased against the phenomena before coming to the circle. A self-declared sceptic, the illusionist disbelieved all the stories he had heard. But, after witnessing several of his loved ones materialise, he was convinced. Fletcher-Desborough wrote with conviction to the Liverpool Evening Express:

"I examined the cabinet which Alec Harris used. Having been on the stage as an illusionist and magician I knew exactly where to look for such things as panel and floor escapes, ceiling and wall slides. I was satisfied that nothing could make an exit or an entrance in any way. There was no chance for deception."

Of a short, stout man who materialised from the cabinet and went straight to him, giving the name "Bertie", he said: "It was my father. In his mumbling way of speaking, he gave a pet name used by my parents. No one but the family knew it."

Then a young man came who hobbled and walked with difficulty. He grasped the sitter's hand and said: "Bertie! I am your brother, Walter." The form was recognised immediately by the conjurer. He explained that his brother had had his left ankle shot away in the Boer War.

"No one there knew I had a brother," he said. "So who learnt his name, and that he hobbled when walking in life? There certainly could have been no deception in this case.

Then from the cabinet walked a stiff, upright young fellow. Like the others the figure went towards the conjurer. Then he swerved and throwing out his arms "embraced my wife, saying in a very pathetic voice, 'Mother, Mother, I'm your son Ronnie'."

This, apparently, was their third son, born under fire during the Sinn Fein rising in 1916. He was captured in Singapore Harbour by the Japanese and beheaded.

"He turned to me after embracing his mother," said the magician, "and put his head against mine. I recognised his voice.

Fletcher-Desborough concluded his article with the question: "Why all these manifestations on my behalf? Because I was an unbeliever."

In 1952 our circle was visited by T. J. Haarhoff, professor of classics at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. He had remarkable evidence when a materialisation spoke to him in ancient Greek, a language about which Alec knew nothing.

Professor Haarhoff told "Psychic News" readers:

University men are usually very shy to acknowledge psychic phenomena because in most cases they cannot produce scientific proof.

I was no exception until I was privileged to share a type of experience that enabled me reliably to correlate theory to fact.

Recently I had a new type of experience in which subjective factors were completely eliminated.

It was at the house of Mr and Mrs Alec Harris. I want to say at once that no praise is too great for the high motives, the integrity and the self-sacrificing service of Mrs Harris; and that the materialising powers of Mr Harris are astounding, unique and entirely above suspicion.

I make these statements after many years of investigation and many disappointments and experience of fraudulent mediums.

Some ten years ago, in Johannesburg, I was brought into touch with a Greek philosopher, who gave me convincing proof of his identity and entrusted a certain very difficult task to me. He does not wish his name to be mentioned at this stage, but I was given descriptions of him.

The Harris circle knew nothing of all this. But at the sitting a week ago, this philosopher materialised. He walked out and took me firmly by the hand.

He brought his face close to mine. I saw that it corresponded to the descriptions I had been given.

He held up his white robe for me to feel. The texture was that of linen but not so smooth. It had a fibrous yet silky quality.

He spoke to me in ancient Greek, which is certainly unknown to the medium. He said, "Autos Elelutha" (I have come in person).

He is one who very seldom "comes" and who had the reputation of being unsociable. But he came because, unknown to me, something happened of which I heard only the following day. Margaret Lloyd, through whom I had contact with him, passed on in the Johannesburg Hospital.

He wanted to encourage me to go on with the work and to say that help would be given in other ways. Otherwise I should have concluded that the work had come to an end.

A small point for scholars. He pronounced "Autos" very clearly so that the first syllable rhymed with "cow". Those who try to tell us that ancient Greek was pronounced exactly like modern Greek should note that he did not say Aftos.

Others might note that he did not pronounce the first syllable like the sound in "raw" and so did not justify the public school master, who, when a boy pronounced Graus, old woman, like the English word "grouse", said, "Don't make game of the old woman!" Of course our traditional accent in pronouncing Greek words is all wrong, as the Philosopher said.

Harris strips and has nothing about his person. His chair and the corner where he sits were examined by me and found absolutely bare.

The ectoplasm which issues in abundance from his body and which the etheric entities use to make themselves visible, streams like a mist and assumes all sorts of shapes yet can be compacted into something absolutely solid while the power lasts-and what amazing power it is!

These manifestations take place in accordance with definite laws which have not yet been adequately studied by men of science.

The ultimate aim is to teach men the reality of moral law and the blindness of those who in public or in private life do not base action on that law.

The enormous importance of the thoughts we think becomes manifest. Physical law goes hand in hand with mental and spiritual law.

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At the cost of much sacrifice on the part of the medium and his wife as well as of those who communicate, the reality of the other world is demonstrated

objectively so that all sitters hear and see the same things in order that men may be at last convinced of the existence of those who have passed on, and of the importance of progressing morally by keeping in touch with the higher entities.

If all did this, we could have peace in our time.

What better testimony could one have than this? My husband and I were very grateful to Professor Haarhoff, who voluntarily vouched for Alec's mediumship. In later years many materialisations spoke in different tongues which were unknown to Alec, proving time and again that not only was his mediumship genuine but also of a very high order.

Another eminent sitter was a medical man, Sir Alexander Cannon. We were taken to his mansion where a circle was arranged for a few nights later.

It proved to be a very good sitting. The highlight of the evening was the materialisation of Mahatma Gandhi who came especially for Sir Alexander. The little Indian holy man was exactly as on earth. He was painfully thin, almost emaciated, through many long fasts. Gandhi wore his customary loin cloth and the well remembered steelrimmed spectacles.

He conversed at length with Sir Alexander in Hindustani, a language familiar to the doctor, but certainly not to Alec.

Our eminent sitter was "very impressed" with the

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materialisation, particularly at the accuracy of the form's detail, and the timbre of his voice. Sir Alexander knew the holy man extremely well. Gandhi conversing in his vernacular tongue was even more convincing evidence as far as he was concerned.

But the doctor had further indisputable evidence. Two Tibetan monks materialised. They conversed with him in a little known tongue. Cannon averred he was one of the few white people in the world who understood this ancient Tibetan language.

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Chapter Eight

PRESS "EXPOSURE" FAILS

IN March 1957 came a big change in our lives when we emigrated to join our married son and his wife, Doney, in South Africa. Alec gave a number of public circles. Private ones were held to provide for our living costs-and no more. The rest were free.

Four years later, we had our first spirit warning that Alec was likely to be in danger. It came during the penultimate circle prior to our departure for Durban. Alec and I were to have a couple of months' much needed and well earned holiday with our son and his family.

Being a Tuesday we assembled in the sanctuary for our weekly private sitting. A most unusual manifestation happened, something quite foreign to the normal phenomena which usually occurred. Alec, in trance, stepped out of the cabinet and stood before us with ectoplasm streaming copiously from his solar plexus, mouth and nose. It literally poured from his body, forming a large pool. After a few minutes, it started to build into a spirit figure. The process was arrested; the form's outlines were indistinct and shapeless, only half built. It began to move, resembling an animated piece of cloth. Without warning it rose swiftly into the air and, with wisps of ectoplasm trailing from it, floated eerily around the room. The semi-built form was

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attached to and manipulated by a long rod which came from the lower part of Alec's chest. At the end of it were two finger-like protrusions which grasped and activated the ectoplasmic structure. After a few excursions around the room the apparition and its trailing ectoplasm returned to Alec's body to be re-absorbed. There was consternation and much discussion among us over this.

Alec turned to re-enter the cabinet. Still in trance, he walked in a slow, dazed manner. As the curtains parted and he stepped inside, the old scientist who visited us simultaneously came out without a second's delay to materialise. The pair passed one another in the cabinet's entrance. It was as if the guide had been standing behind the curtains awaiting his cue to appear. He bustled towards us, stocky of build, with an authoritative manner and an incisive tone of speech.

"I see you are all surprised by the floating form which you have just witnessed," said the guide. "That is what a lot of people believe materialisation is really like, and what they expect to see at your séances. Because we come in a body as solid as their own they do not believe the evidence of their eyes. They cannot. Therein lies the danger. I come to warn you that you are continually jeopardizing the medium's safety by allowing such people into your circles. The confirmed disbeliever always constitutes a danger. More care must be taken to weed them out beforehand. This medium is valuable to us in our efforts to prove survival. There are so few in your world we can use in this way. I implore you to select your sitters most carefully."

He turned to me and said: "Before you undertook the task of physical mediumship we stressed we could protect the medium only 'three parts of the way'. The other part

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was your responsibility. See that you take steps to ensure he is protected at all future séances." I assured the scientist I always did so. He nodded curtly

and left. His warning greatly alarmed me. This guide rarely appeared. When he did it was always to impart important instructions.

There was only one more sitting planned before we left on holiday. I was so perturbed about the spirit warning that I asked Vidie Carlton Jones to cancel it.

Vidie's husband was a prominent mining magnate. After he materialised at one of our circles, she became a confirmed and dedicated Spiritualist.

"Please do not disappoint these sitters," begged Vidie. "They have waited patiently for such a long time for this circle. Anyway I have vetted them all very carefully. They've all sat before."

Much against my better judgment, I agreed that the circle take place as arranged. "After all," I thought, "Vidie is right. All the people coming can be trusted."

But I had not bargained for treachery. Despite Vidie's rigid precautions, an evil element entered our band of trusted sitters. A Judas came among us, one deemed to be above suspicion. He was the secretary of the Spiritualist church in a nearby town. I would have staked my life on his integrity. Because of his position of trust his deed was all the more despicable.

At the very last minute the man, who had booked two seats, approached Vidie and asked if he and his friend might transfer their seats to two acquaintances for whom he could vouch. The idea of collusion never entered Vidie's head. Thinking that the substituted sitters would be from the same church, she agreed to the exchange. Never for one

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moment did Vidie realise what dreadful plans these four had to break Alec's wonderful mediumship.

The two substitute sitters later turned out to be journalists from a small magazine. It was their intention to expose what they firmly believed was a gigantic hoax to hoodwink gullible sitters. In so doing the pair hoped, no doubt, to come up with an exciting story which would please their editor. They duly presented themselves on the appointed night.

The substitutes arrived about an hour before the others. Alec let them in. They asked to inspect the sanctuary. Being a reasonable request, Alec readily agreed and led them to the room. They made a thorough inspection and professed satisfaction. The journalists - we did not know their true role - asked if they might be left alone to meditate in the sanctuary. Somewhat surprised at this unusual request, Alec agreed.

Unaware of this intrusion into the sanctuary, I came downstairs and went to greet the other sitters when I encountered the men leaving the seance room. The sight of them caused me to stop in my tracks. Over their heads I saw a dark cloud.

When placing the sitters immediately before the seance began, I remembered the evil cloud and deemed it wise to seat the strange couple on either side of my niece's husband. This was in the second row, where I felt they could do no harm. However, there was an opening in the centre of the front row which afforded access to the cabinet should backrow sitters be called by spirit friends.

I said a special prayer for protection when opening the circle. Bearing in mind the old scientist's warning I felt a

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heavy responsibility for Alec's safety. I was worried because the exchange of the two sitters had been permitted. The prayer completed, we sang a hymn, some bright songs and waited. When nothing happened, we sang again. There followed a longer period of waiting. Still nothing happened. The spirit

entities seemed disinclined to materialise. I felt that something was decidedly wrong.

At last there was movement from the cabinet curtain. The slim, bearded figure of Rohan appeared, standing uncertainly in the aperture before the cabinet. This calm, strong guide always opened our circles with greetings, explanations and advice. It was his habit to come straight out and speak to each sitter in turn, taking his or her hands in his own slender ones. With his deep, soft voice he would welcome each one warmly. But this night things seemed different. Rohan remained for a long while within the opening of the cabinet curtains, standing very still. He surveyed the two semi-circular rows of sitters before him, searching the faces intently. I knew instinctively something was amiss.

After a pause he came hesitantly forward and commenced his welcoming gesture, taking the hands of each sitter in the front row. Somehow Rohan seemed wary, not as relaxed as usual. When he held my hands, Rohan looked deeply into my eyes. Seeing I was troubled, he gently squeezed my hands in reassurance. I felt all the guides were present and would help should there be any trouble. Despite that, my anxiety persisted.

Rohan released my hands and returned to the cabinet. He took hold of the black curtains which hung down to conceal Alec. He parted them, then held one side high above

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his head to reveal the entranced Alec. Seated in his chair, he was clearly visible to all. Rohan, still holding the curtain, backed away to stand by the window some distance from Alec. It was obvious there were two separate entities before the sitters.

"Can you see the medium clearly?" asked Rohan. "Here am I, standing quite apart from him. Are you sure you can see us both?"

There were excited cries of "Yes" and "Wonderful!" from the sitters. Rohan let the curtain fall back, and came forward to take the hands of those seated in the back row. He always made sure everyone was similarly greeted, that they saw and touched him.

Eventually, it was the turn of one of the substitute sitters to be greeted. As Rohan was about to take his hands in welcome, the man sprang forward and grabbed him! Throwing his arms around the spirit figure, he held on to him tightly, shouting, "I've got you!" The sitter was obviously convinced he had captured the draped medium in the act of duplicity, masquerading as a spirit form.

As Rohan's figure quickly dematerialised there was a loud groan from Alec in the cabinet. Then came a cry of pain as the ectoplasm swiftly returned to his body with the impact of a sledge-hammer.

The treacherous sitter fell dazed to the floor as the "solid" body he had held so tightly minutes before disappeared. I threw myself on him, desperately flailing with my hands, sobbing: "Oh don't! You'll kill my husband! You fool, you'll kill him!"

The man looked up at me, his eyes wide, terrified. The realisation dawned on him it had not been the medium he

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had grasped, but what it purported to be, a fully materialised spirit form.

Meanwhile the second impostor, taking advantage of the commotion that ensued, rushed to the window and pulled aside the closed curtains, having previously tampered with them during the "meditation" session earlier. This revealed his confederates outside the window. They had a battery of cameras focused on the seance room, on the cabinet in particular.

Lenses immediately clicked furiously as flash bulbs exploded. I glanced frantically in the cabinet's direction, and realised with profound relief that our guides were doing all in their power to protect their medium. They had swathed the curtains around Alec, completely enveloping him so that he was immune to the blinding flashes of light being so ruthlessly directed at him. I was utterly bewildered and sick with dread for Alec, knowing what he must have suffered by the sudden impact of the returning ectoplasm. It all happened so quickly everybody was stunned.

The two journalists were the first to recover. They made a dash for the door in a bid to escape, but my niece Phyllis and her husband, Trevor, followed close on their heels in hot pursuit. One chose the kitchen exit. Trevor rescued him from the clutches of the dog who added its services in intercepting the fleeing man. The other ran wildly down the passage and was cornered by a very irate Phyllis and several male sitters in the lounge. This, to his chagrin, he found securely locked. Escape was impossible. All arrogance deserted him. He cringed apologetically.

"You tried to kill my uncle," Phyllis raged. "Why? Did you think he was a fake?" When the man did not answer,

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Phyllis went on angrily, "Now you know he isn't." In disgust she told him to leave and take his friend with him. Two very frightened men, sobered by what they had seen, ran off into the night to join their confederates in a waiting car parked some distance down the street.

When Alec came out of trance he was patently very ill. He had a severe pain which persisted for some weeks in his solar plexus. A doctor was called. He treated Alec weekly for many months. Rohan, too, suffered adverse effects and needed, we were told by the scientist, a period of recuperation.

There was a sequel to this unhappy encounter. A short time after the "exposure", Alec and I were sitting in conversation with a doctor friend when my husband stopped speaking in mid sentence and was entranced. Alec's eyes closed, his face became relaxed. A soft baritone voice announced, "Rohan."

"I have come to tell you," he said, "that greater care must be taken of the medium. If there should be a repetition of the accident which took place a few weeks ago we will not be able to protect the medium as we then did. It was fortunate it was I who was materialised at the time. I knew what to do and was able to take the full shock of the encounter. By the time it reached the medium it was less severe. But I doubt that I shall be able to do this again. Take care!" I thanked Rohan and promised it would never occur again if it was humanly possible to avoid such a catastrophe. I then raised a point which had been worrying me.

"Rohan, what about all those photographs they took and are going to publish?" I asked.

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"Do not worry about that," he said. "We have made certain all the films will be blank."

So it turned out to be. The magazine had promised readers in a previous issue it would give full photo coverage to the "exposure" of Alec's mediumship. These pictures never appeared. Obviously there were no photographs to print.

When Vidie heard how the exchange of seats had been engineered she was very upset and reacted in her typical outspoken manner. She wrote a letter to the man who had originally secured the two seats. "Herewith your 30 pieces of silver!" were among her words. The Biblical inference was appropriate and, she hoped, humiliating to the perpetrator of such shameful treachery.

I noticed a great change in Alec after the exposure attempt. His health was not as robust as before. Something seemed to have gone out of him. He slowed down considerably. Alec had always been such an energetic person, constantly looking for things to do about the home. Now everything seemed to be an effort.

Vidie thought a trip to Britain might help Alec, and restore his zest for living. In May 1962 we accompanied her to the United Kingdom. Alec did not look at all well. I decided that as soon as we reached Cardiff he should see our doctor and have a check-up.

We visited Peggy, our dear pianist friend of yore, and spent happy hours chatting of the old days.

After we left her, and were on our way to visit Alec's brother I noticed that Alec's driving was very erratic. He seemed to have difficulty keeping the car on a straight course. Alec managed to negotiate the vehicle through

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Cardiff's busy streets without mishap. We were driving slowly along a quiet road where his brother lived when the car suddenly swerved violently and landed on the pavement, where it came to a halt. Alec was slumped in his seat looking very strange.

"I can't feel anything down my right side," he gasped. "My right leg and arm are numb." His speech was slightly slurred.

Fortunately my brother-in-law, anticipating our arrival, was waiting by his gate. He saw the mishap take place and quickly ran to give assistance. Moving Alec into the passenger seat, he got behind the wheel and took us to his house. He then drove us back to an aunt's home. Alec refused to allow a doctor to be called. He did not wish to disturb the household. By then, it was midnight.

The doctor came early next morning and told me he would get my husband to hospital at once. As we were in Cardiff where all our old healing circle members lived, I felt Alec would be better at home receiving treatment from them. The doctor reluctantly agreed, provided Alec was watched very carefully.

Alec was sedated for five days. When the doctor made another examination he was very surprised at the improvement in my husband's condition. But Alec continued to make good progress. We remained in Cardiff for a further four weeks. Vidie came down to drive us back to London.

The sea air and plenty of rest on our return trip did Alec a lot of good. He seemed very much better. When we arrived in Durban to stay with our children they were dismayed at the change in their father. It took two years before he was anything like his old self again.

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Once home, we gave occasional circles, but only for immediate friends, not the public. Alec's confidence in sitters had been sadly shaken. He could never again be completely relaxed and at ease as in the days before the seance room betrayal. His health was not as good as previously. Spirit friends had difficulty in materialising. When we first sat nothing happened, but we were asked to be patient as there would have to be a period of redevelopment. There did not seem to be enough power for materialisations to form completely, or as strongly, as before. Sometimes they could not build to their proper height. On other occasions only portions of their figures took shape, perhaps an arm, leg or face, unrecognisable in incompleteness. When a form did build fully there would be a long wait until the next materialisation. Before the incident, when one spirit form returned to the cabinet another would step out almost immediately. There would be the minimum of delay.

It was decided Alec should give up materialisation and concentrate on voice phenomena only. At the next circle we sat around the room, instead of in two semi-circular rows, and extinguished the lights.

When this voice circle opened who should leave the cabinet but the fully materialised scientist. He raised his arm and pulled the cord attached to the lights; the room was bathed in a dull red glow.

"Sir," I explained, "we intend having a voice circle tonight."

"Oh," he said sharply, "if that is what you want ..." The scientist pulled the cord, extinguished the lights and returned to the cabinet.

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It was an amusing circle, a constant battle of wills between the spirit people who were determined to materialise, and me, equally determined that it should be a voice seance. They compromised by materialising in one place, but speaking so that their voices came through the trumpet elsewhere. I determined that at the next circle I would obstruct their efforts by removing the globes from their sockets and leaving them outside the room. This plan was put into operation, but the communicators defeated me by bringing their own psychic blue-white lights with them. These showed the materialisations to even better advantage. Every detail of their faces was absolutely clear.

White Wing explained that the spirit scientists had worked hard to perfect the physical manifestations and wanted to carry on the good work. He said that though Alec's health had deteriorated and the materialisations would not be as strong as previously, they would still bring comfort and enlightenment to many. The guide added they would protect Alec, but insisted that only thoroughly reliable people should be included among the sitters.

When I told Alec what White Wing had said, he agreed, reluctantly, to carry on dedicating his life to this service.

However, in 1974 when the New Year dawned, Alec appeared to be listless and very tired. These symptoms persisted throughout the next five or six weeks.

One evening as he sat in our cosy living-room smoking quietly, deep in thought, he said, "You know, Lou, I'm not going to be with you for long."

"Remember, darling," I replied, " we are soon going to have our golden wedding. We're going to celebrate that special milestone together."

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Alec looked thoughtfully at me for a moment, then smiled, saying: "One of us has to go first. Better it's me than you. When I'm gone you will be able to carry on for sure.

Two weeks later, on February 12, I awoke suddenly in the early hours with a feeling that something was wrong. I reached out, switched on the light and glanced at Alec's bed. He wasn't in it, but sitting slumped on the edge, breathing heavily.

"I have a queer, tight feeling," he explained.

"I'll get the doctor," I said, reaching for the telephone and dialing quickly. "No," said Alec. "He won't be in time.

I sat down next to him. Alec raised his head and looked at me for a long moment. Then he put his arms about me, holding me in a close embrace. With a suddenness that took me by surprise Alec pressed his lips to mine and kissed me with desperate urgency. Then his body went limp. I realised he had passed on.

I sat and held him to my breast, dazed and uncomprehending. I could not believe that that last fond kiss Alec had given me was his farewell.

Even with my knowledge of the spirit world and its inhabitants, the shock of Alec's sudden passing was almost unbearable. I missed him, just as much as all the bereaved souls who had attended our remarkable circles over the years must have missed their loved ones. Momentarily, in my grief, I forgot that Alec would never leave me.

Twenty-four hours later, at about the same time as he passed the previous night, Alec returned. As I lay on my bed, I felt a man's hand, strong, warm and well materialised,

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take hold of my arm and gently squeeze it in the old, familiar, loving way.

A few weeks later I had a remarkable experience. Again, I was lying on my bed. I was on the point of entering the sleep state when I felt the weight of a body as someone lay beside me. I felt no fear, only a sense of keen expectancy. An arm reached over my waist while a hand took hold of mine, as it had so often done in the past. I knew beyond doubt that my Alec had come back.

I experienced a strange sensation and, in a flash, found myself out of my physical body. I saw Alec standing in the room. His whole being seemed to be bathed in a mystic blue light. He appeared so much younger than when I had last seen him, looking no more than 30. I went to Alec. He placed his arms around me, murmuring tenderly, "I had to come, Lou, I had to come."

I remember putting my arms round his neck, gazing up at his thick golden hair. "Oh, Alec," I said, "isn't it wonderful to be together again?" Suddenly, I felt a strange trembling sensation. With a jerk that left me breathless I was back in my physical body.

I shall always remember the sweetness of that out-of-the body encounter with my husband. It was certainly no dream.

From personal experience, I can now appreciate just what it means to have communications from a "dead" loved one. How much more rewarding is the sight of a face, the touch of a hand and the sound of a familiar voice.

Alec held sacred his gift of mediumship. Never once did he abuse it in 40 years. I realise now how blessed I was to have had the privilege of being chosen to help him with his great work.

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Alec was a selfless man. Because of his great love for humanity, he dedicated his life to the service of his fellows, performing his demanding, and often difficult, work with humility, seeking only to be of service to others.

Ours was a happy marriage; our work brought us very close together. I look back over almost half a century of working with our beloved spirit friends with a deep sense of gratitude that we were chosen to be so used. I sincerely pray that our psychic experiences, shared with countless others along the way, will convince many that truly there is no death.

End