

IN LIGHT AND IN SHADE

The Inspirational Story Of A Love That Refused To Die,
Even After Death

PATRICIA IRVINE

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'Even if you are a minority of one, the truth is the truth'
~ Mahatma Gandhi

The Healing Power of Words

The following are comments and endorsements received from beta readers:

“Thank you for asking me to check your manuscript, I read it straight through as it grasped my attention immediately.”
~ Julie Francis

“What a magnificent, spiritual story!” ~ D Graham

“How comforting it was to read your enthralling and fascinating book.” ~ J Edwards

“...your words mean so much to us and we have found them to be both interesting and reassuring.” ~ Julie Francis

“Thank you for your wonderful words I shall keep your writings in my mind.” ~J Edwards

“Knowing you to be straight, frank and honest, your ‘revelations’ are even more compelling.” ~ Julie Francis

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved husband,

Malcolm Campbell Irvine

And also
To the memory of

Frederick Stephen Aldridge and Mary Elizabeth Aldridge,

My beloved parents

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the book who travelled this journey with me,
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Prologue

Our lives changed on 1 March 1996. Prior to that date, life with Malcolm Campbell Irvine had been like living in a golden bubble, where we were treasured and protected. My sons and I were the centre of Malcolm's universe, surrounded by his love. We knew it and felt it, always.

Early that day Malcolm had set off from Mulberry Down, our Surrey home, to board his yacht *Mulberry*, moored at Port Solent, Portsmouth. He was smiling broadly and was armed with a fresh batch of his favourite homemade cakes, joyfully anticipating the weekend ahead. Malcolm was always a very private person and normally undemonstrative in public, so I was pleasantly surprised when he doubled-back to the doorway and kissed me firmly goodbye before leaving.

Malcolm was planning to step back a little from the arduous hours that he worked in the family business and he hoped to spend some of his newly anticipated free time giving sailing lessons on board the *Mulberry*, to young people less fortunate than his own children.

He had already passed his Yachtmaster's Certificate but had chosen to repeat it this particular weekend with Clare and Bryan, two of his regular young crew. He wanted to ensure that his qualifications were first class and totally up to the mark if he was to be responsible for youngsters.

It was a warm spring day. I remained in Surrey and was out for several hours with friends enjoying it fully before returning home in good time to collect our youngest son, Duncan, from school. Golden rays of sun poured through the conservatory windows, lighting the blooms I was arranging in a vase. As I placed the final piece of greenery, the doorbell rang ...

Moments later, our protective bubble burst and our glorious family life was shattered. Clare, Malcolm's sailing companion, was at the door. Intuitively, I knew that something was very, very wrong and that she had come to give me dreadful news. My initial fear was that Malcolm had drowned.

But he hadn't drowned. While still full of anticipation for the weekend ahead, Malcolm had suffered an aortic heart aneurysm and died that morning on board his beloved yacht. Clare explained that Malcolm, the instructor and the crew had been enjoying coffee and cakes, chatting together, while sailing through the Portsmouth Harbour entrance. Never one to make a fuss or complain, Malcolm had suddenly said, very quietly, "I have a pain in my chest. It really is quite severe." He then slumped to the cockpit floor.

The instructor leapt into action and within minutes a helicopter and crew from Royal Hospital Haslar, Gosport, were in attendance. Malcolm had the very best possible attention but nothing could be done. He was dead. From that moment and yet, completely unknown to us at the time, the colour of our lives was being washed from gold ... to grey.

Brave young Clare had insisted on telling me herself; she couldn't bear the thought of me receiving such news from police strangers. She had driven past Mulberry Down several times that day waiting for my car to reappear in the driveway. Finally it had.

Inexplicably, there were no tears from me. A deep, deep sadness filled me from the very core of my being but there were no tears. There was an immense feeling of calm, of logic, and most definitely, being 'in charge'. A great, long list of things to do was clicking into place in my brain. It was as though I was being told 'not to waste time on tears but to get on with the job in hand'. I was being pushed, gently, from behind ...

I couldn't understand it at all but was powerless to do anything else but follow the calm, quiet orders I was receiving. It made sense to do exactly as directed at that time. I immediately rang Malcolm's brother, Ian, at the office. Clare stayed with me. I ensured that Ian was alone and asked him to close the door and sit down before I told him the news.

The next priority was Duncan. He was twelve years old, still at school, and needed to be collected. Clare offered to do this for me and brought him home. Then I took him into the lounge and told him, as gently as I could, the devastating news. “My father? Not my *father*?” he repeated several times as the awful reality sank in.

Knowing that I must travel to Charles and Alastair, at school in Canterbury, I rang my stepdaughter Karen’s mother and explained what had happened. She was distraught but I asked her to speak to Karen on my behalf, as I couldn’t possibly be in two places at once.

By this time, Bryan, the other crew member, having returned from re-berthing the *Mulberry*, had joined Clare, Duncan and I in Surrey. I telephoned the housemaster at King’s Canterbury saying that I needed to visit in order to speak urgently to my sons that evening.

We hastily packed overnight bags and set off for Kent. Bryan drove my car. Clare sat in the front and I remained in the back with Duncan. The shocked silence was tangible and the awful enormity of the situation threatened to chip away at my calm façade. I knew I had to remain resolute. I could not dissolve. My sons needed me to remain strong, dependable, and reliable. Breaking down was a luxury I couldn’t afford.

On arrival, Duncan and I were taken to the matron’s office and shortly joined by my two bewildered-looking sons, Alastair and Charlie. Telling my sons that day of their father’s death was one of the most difficult and horrendous tasks of my life. The colour drained from their faces. They were stunned but they too kept calm, as we all silently clasped one another in a much-needed family hug.

They returned to their dorms to pack and then, with Clare and Bryan, we travelled to Mulberry Cottage, our home in Kent, where we spent that night.

I arranged for my brother, Stephen, to call the next morning. There was still this inexplicable influence filling my mind with calm and logic but there was also a crushing sadness that reached every part of me. It was as though I had ‘stepped outside’ my own body and was watching my actions from a different perspective. I felt like a puppet with an invisible puppet master.

Stephen arrived and explaining what had happened to him was a daunting task as he was a very close friend of Malcolm. Together, he and I drove the short distance to my parents' home where I repeated the awful news once more. Watching my beloved parents' faces crumple as I repeated the events of the previous day was heartbreaking. They loved Malcolm like a son and bringing this pain to them equalled my own despicable sadness.

Little did I know at the time that I had only just taken the first steps of what would prove to be an incredible journey of realisation and proof that life continues after death. And, as we later discovered, we would not only have to deal with Malcolm's death, but also cope with a long court battle with his brother over the family business.

'I flourish in light and in shade' is the Irvine family motto. That is what we, Malcolm Campbell Irvine's family, tried hard to do. Love can be glorious, wonderful and enthralling. It can be deeply painful too. But, as I was about to learn, love can be stronger, *far* stronger, than anything else seen or unseen.

*The names and identifying details of some individuals
have been changed to protect their privacy.*

Chapter 1

As Black and White as a Zebra!

February 1999

I was still reeling from Malcolm's tragic death, when I was approached by Derrick, a friend and member of our local operatic society, who said quietly, "Patricia, I can see your distress. I belong to the Belgravia branch of the Spiritual Association of Great Britain and if you ever need my help, please, just ask."

I had been a member of Betchworth Operatic & Dramatic Society (BODS) for many years and had remained involved following Malcolm's death as I had been made chairwoman and did not want to let down my friends and fellow members halfway through a production.

Derrick was in his sixties and had known Malcolm and me for around seventeen years. The subject of 'spiritualism' had never before been mentioned. I had no real knowledge of the subject and had always felt that it was rather irreverent. I wasn't remotely interested in pursuing a spiritualist path at all. My Christian upbringing made me fear that it could possibly be downright dangerous.

My reply was fairly typical of my character at that time. I was shocked, sceptical and a little afraid. Jokingly, I replied, "Oh Lord, Derrick, I couldn't bear the thought of Malcolm telling me that I'm doing everything wrong and my not being able to answer him back." I dismissed the entire subject from my mind. In those days, my views on spiritualism were totally black and white.

Feeling terribly alone, and with three sons to care for, I had more than enough to deal with. I certainly had no wish to dabble in things which felt completely foreign to me. I battled on, trying to cope with wearing both mother and father hats for my young sons;

organising our lives and homes, desperately trying to keep all our heads above water. No more was said and life ground on much as before.

But by the winter of 1998–99 I had reached an all-time low. I found I could not stem the frequent flow of tears when I was alone. Friends, who realised that I was not the person I once was, began insisting that I go to the doctor. But I feared the suggested solution would be Prozac or similar, which I did not want. I did not want a suppressant. What I needed was reassurance.

I longed for the promise of my Christian childhood upbringing that death is not an end, but a new beginning. This was something I had been taught since birth, that there is a safe haven where life continues after death on earth. If ever there was a time when I needed proof, it was now. I needed to know that the man I married still cared for me, still loved me and would continue to guide me after his death.

I was forty-five years old. I had been loved, cherished and protected by my wonderful husband. Now, in my depths of despair, I needed solid reassurance. I wanted absolute proof in order to help me accept and continue forward in this game called life. Somewhere, in the depths of my mind from all those many months previously, I remembered Derrick's words. One evening, when the children were in bed I decided to ring him.

His response was immediate. He and his wife, Diane, invited me to accompany them to Belgravia the following Tuesday so that they, in a safe environment, could introduce me to the spiritualist experience. It was their generosity of spirit which enabled me to explore the possibility that spiritualism might offer a way to soothe my deeply troubled soul.

We spoke little on the journey. Derrick and Diane responded to any questions I had, but there were few. They knew me very well. No attempt was made to convince me of anything. They were simply allowing me to go with them in the hope that it would help me in some way.

What I recall most clearly is that, within those walls, I felt an immense peace. It calmed my soul. It was virtually tangible. My experience that evening, quite simply, broke any taboo I'd previously

harboured in my mind about the concept of spiritualism and, more importantly, I knew I had felt the first stirrings of healing.

Yet, alone again the next day, I once more felt desolate. With my sons and an extended family, it was my duty to pull myself together somehow. My despair was accentuated by the fact that I knew the reassurance I required was from Malcolm, no one else. As I recalled the experiences of the previous evening, I felt more confident that I would find a way forward. I knew now that there was hope.

I had recently read about mediums in Rita Rogers's autobiography, *From One World to Another*, following the death of Princess Diana, whom, it was reported, had been a client of hers. This was the first book I had read on the subject and then, only with a mild curiosity, simply because her book had been featured in a newspaper.

According to Rita, she had also helped people via the telephone. I was so desperate at that time that I had gone as far as finding her number from directory enquiries but my courage had failed me and I didn't pursue it any further.

However, on that day in February 1999 I was so totally desolate and in despair, I summoned my courage. I felt that there was little to lose by trying. After all, how much worse could I feel than I did already?

I tried Rita's number but it was constantly engaged. Since the death of the Princess, she had become extremely busy. I explored the local *Yellow Pages* where there were four or five clairvoyants listed. One, Nina, was based in Brighton and stated in her advertisement, 'also by telephone'.

Nervous and uncertain, I dialled. I knew from reading Rita's book that I should give no information about myself and, when Nina answered, I asked her for her confirmation. "You don't need to," was the reply.

An appointment was made for the next afternoon. I was anxious while waiting. However, I decided that hope, no matter how tenuous, was better than the desolation I had been living through.

This took place prior to my visiting our home in the West Country alone. Malcolm had bought Westfield in Devon two months before he died. It was his dream home for us and I didn't

have the heart to sell the property after his death. I let it instead, which would allow me breathing space before making any big decisions. I let it for short-term holidays so the boys and I could use it occasionally, while I made up my mind what to do.

Several months earlier, I had begun discussing plans with an architect about a proposed extension to Westfield. However, I was unhappy with his attitude, his initial plans and his inability to listen to me. He seemed to forget that I was the client and his misogynistic attitude towards me was one which my husband would most definitely not have approved of. It was as though he was designing the extension in order to win an award, or for his own personal ego, rather than my needs.

I discussed this with three architect friends and a quantity surveyor who knew of my concerns. They had studied the proposed plans and were appalled at their lack of detail. They were also astonished at the fees I had paid to date and I was advised by them to sack him and find a more suitable Devon architect. I was grateful for their input but still nervous of what I had to do.

I was without my husband's influence and support. There was no one with whom to share and resolve the complications or to enjoy the project with. I was not looking forward to facing this particular problem, which seemed to stretch out before me like a swathe of quicksand. I felt sick with apprehension.

However, I had spoken to Stephen, my brother, about the situation. His reply was profound, "If you find the courage to do this, you will probably find people thank you for it in the future." He was right, of course. We were brought up to have the courage of our convictions and my intuition regarding this particular matter was very strong. I decided I would take action and end the business relationship when I next went to Devon.

All this was playing heavily on my mind, which is why I contacted Nina. At the agreed time, I telephoned her. Apart from my Christian name and telephone number she knew absolutely nothing about me. No questions were asked by her. Replies only were made by me. I merely listened and noted down her gentle monologue, with pauses occasionally for her silent meditation.

“I have here a grandmother figure,” said Nina. *“Several long-haired animals surround her; they could be cats or dogs. Definitely they have long hair. This lady loves animals.”*

“My paternal grandmother had seven long-haired cats,” I replied.

“Her message to you is clear. Indeed, she is a strong spirit and is very definite in her views. She knows there is an event you are not looking forward to. You are full of anxiety and don’t want to make a decision. You are to stick up for yourself and say your piece. Live for yourself rather than anyone else. Ask the angels for help. You must have faith in yourself.”

This shocked me. Nina was describing my grandmother’s character exactly. It was remarkable. This was precisely the way my grandmother would have spoken to me. I was anxious, of course, about the architect’s planned visit and also, by this time, about the family company, Campbell Irvine Limited (CIL), and the profit share concerns which had recently arisen.

“I have another person here,” Nina continued. *“There is a soft, mild-mannered man here now. He is a gentleman. He waited and stood back to allow Granny to finish. Is there something wrong with his voice? No, he has a quiet voice, an exceptionally quiet voice. He is strong but not forceful. He also has a gentle soul. He has tender, romantic, but also protective, feelings towards you. He is a very spiritual person.”*

She was describing my husband perfectly. Malcolm had a very soft and gentle speaking voice. It was one of the things I found most attractive about him. And he was most certainly always a gentleman towards me.

She continued, *“You are full of grief. He knows this. You are intent on protecting your young and he says you are making a great job of this, well done. This shy, gentle man has his head in his hands. He says he is so sorry to have left you with all this responsibility. He is adamant, you must stick up for yourself, do what you think is right. He realises it is hard but you must do it. It is right for you and for your children. He knows you have a lot of integrity. He knows you are right and true. You are to face your fear. The other side will back down. You will get help from above.”*

“He is laughing now, and saying that you are stronger than he is. He is also saying, ‘Well done,’ he is so very proud of you.” My eyes welled with tears. I desperately tried to swallow a lump which had risen in my throat.

“Wait!” There was urgency in her voice. *“There is a daughter figure. Do you have a daughter?”*

This was the only question asked. “My husband’s daughter from a previous marriage,” I said.

Nina continued, *“There is a daughter who has clairvoyant gifts. Question her. She has both heard and seen her father but has said nothing. She doesn’t want to upset you. You also have the power to hear. If you learn to listen for his voice, you will hear him also.”*

The session was over. I was absolutely astonished. Nina had clearly accessed a route which was open between Malcolm and me. She had spoken with reassurance, yes, but it was more than that. She had spoken with a *knowing*.

I was drained. She had correctly identified Malcolm and had tapped into something that supplied knowledge in order to give me an accurate description of my husband and this resonated so very deeply within me. I felt emotionally exhausted and tearful. However, this time, they were tears of joy, realisation and, above all, hope.

My niece was expected that afternoon and was to spend the weekend with me. The poor girl arrived shortly after my call to Nina. She was dismayed to find me in such a state and I had to try and explain to her, as sensibly as I could, the reason why.

I had taken notes during the telephone reading to aid my memory. I have since learned that some mediums allow sessions to be taped but I knew nothing of this at the time.

Following a good night’s sleep, I woke refreshed. I felt as though a great weight had been lifted from me and, once more, a glorious feeling of peace protected me. It was quite wonderful. The healing had indeed begun. The survival evidence I had received helped me incredibly and I began to recover from the deep depression I’d been feeling and I was so very grateful for the reintroduction of hope into my life.

Obviously, I realised that this was not something to discuss over the telephone with my sons. In fact, at that time, I was not sure I would be discussing it with them at all. However, when the Easter holidays came and they all seemed just as deeply sad as I had been, I decided that if Nina's words had helped me, then they could help them too. I kept vigilant and hoped for suitable private moments to occur but I didn't hold out much hope as they were constantly together.

Amazingly, by the end of the weekend, I found that I had indeed found opportunities to speak to Alastair, Charles and Duncan alone. I showed them, independently, the notes I had made during the phone call with Nina in Brighton. They were equally amazed and quietly receptive.

My middle son, Charlie, was very close to his half-sister, Karen. Immediately, he insisted that I should speak to her as soon as possible. He didn't tell me why but he was adamant. My eldest son, Alastair, also asked me to speak to their sister. I was puzzled and explained that I had every intention of speaking to Karen but, naturally, I had wanted to speak to the three of them first.

Because of their insistence, that same weekend, I rang and made plans to visit Karen and her husband, Paul, on the following Wednesday. I arrived at their home in the early evening. Naturally, they were very curious as to why I had asked to see them with such urgency.

I knew that Paul had to go to work and, therefore, decided to read my notes to them aloud, simultaneously to save time. They instantly recognised Malcolm's character and were equally moved. Paul said, "My God, that's Malcolm!"

Soon afterwards, Paul had to leave for work and I stayed longer with Karen. She said, "Tricia, of all the people in my life I had no idea that it would be you who could help me with this problem."

I was puzzled. "What problem, Karen? What do you mean?" I asked.

It was then that she told me she had recently visited a medium herself. Her need was not for reassurance like my own, but to confirm the feelings that she'd experienced first hand. Karen explained that she had been conversant with knowing the future

for years, since being a child, and had accurately predicted people's deaths. Many technical developments such as the CD player had also been visualised by her, long before they were developed.

She had tried to discuss such things with her family in the past to no avail. Karen told me that she had recently seen her father in an upstairs mirror, which had frightened her. She'd had no one to turn to, to speak about such things, and it was troubling her a great deal. Karen said that her experiences had become more frequent and stronger since Malcolm's death.

In fact, two weeks prior to her father's death she had told her mother that someone in the family was going to die. She also said that the death would be to do with water and boats. Naturally, I was astonished, as Malcolm had died while sailing.

Karen said that before I arrived, she knew that I was coming to say two particular things. One, that I had had spoken with a medium. Two, that the medium had told me that she is also gifted in this way and I should question her about it. She was right. I was there, unexpectedly, in her lounge, doing exactly that, although the subject had never been discussed by the two of us before.

Karen had been ill, on and off, for years with minor, inexplicable and often unnamed illnesses. She was in hospital more than once and the doctors were at a loss to name either the cause or a cure for her problems. Karen's health had only improved since she began going to a natural healer just over a year previously. I had read that if psychic gifts are not used, and the messages received not passed on, this could result in illness to the medium. Retained information, I understood, could cause harm. This was a possible explanation and I knew that I must try to help.

I spoke to Derrick again, explaining Karen's plight, and said that I wished to help her if I could and to put my own mind at rest. He organised a meeting for Karen and me with the past president of The College of Psychic Studies in Queensberry Place, London.

Clare accompanied us. She had read the notes from Nina's reading as she had always been interested in the subject. Clare had studied several aspects of healing and in the light of recent events was equally keen to explore the subject of spiritualism. As we were stepping into totally uncharted waters, Karen and I were glad of her

company.

The only logical explanation I could think of was that Malcolm, distressed to see the enormity of the responsibility Karen has been keeping to herself for years, devised a way for Clare and me to assist her.

Malcolm would never have chosen to leave unfinished business, particularly if it related to one of his children, and I knew that if he found that he was still able to influence things on their behalf, he would do so. It seemed that he drew Clare and me together in order to give relief to me and assistance to Karen. It was as though he had engineered a situation for us to work together, in order to achieve this.

Chapter 2

Exploration and Education

April 1999

Karen, Clare and I visited The College of Psychic Studies as arranged. Prior to our appointment, we waited together for twenty minutes or so in the library. It was a beautiful room, with wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling, books on a wide assortment of theological subjects and spiritualism. We were amazed by the fascinating choice of ancient and modern books and we began to delve into one or two. We came to the conclusion, later confirmed during our meeting, that spiritualism is universally tolerant of all religions. The books in the library covered Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Christian and Jewish philosophies, etc. Spiritualism is like an umbrella encompassing all, without the constant world-weary, ethnic battles which are sadly so prevalent today.

Clare stayed in the library, while I took Karen into the meeting. We were greeted by a graceful, elderly lady who impressed us both. She was intelligent, sharp-witted and very matter-of-fact about the whole subject. She treated psychic phenomena as though it was commonplace and normal to everyone. I explained that, as her stepmother, I was concerned about Karen. My recent discovery of her ability, coupled with the fact that she had been alone with the knowledge for so many years, troubled me. We were hoping someone could explain the subject more fully to help her.

I took a seat in the corner of the room and listened as Karen discussed her previous experiences. She grew more positive, assertive and stronger in voice and manner than I had realised was possible. She quite literally blossomed. So glad was Karen to be discussing all her worries and fears with someone who believed

and understood her that she seemed to be like a flower bud opening before my eyes.

More importantly, Karen began to understand the entire concept and not to think of herself as 'different'. She came away feeling a good deal better and much more confident than ever before.

Karen had lived for years with knowledge that she had neither invited nor wanted. She had been frightened and uncertain of what to do about it. After this experience, however, she was made aware that if she receives information, she can get in touch with the college to unburden herself. Satisfied, and grateful that Karen was on the road to recovery, we said thanks and joined Clare in the library. We later returned home brimming over with our new-found knowledge, totally in awe of all that we had witnessed and learned that day.

After our meeting in London I attended BODS. It was the first time since giving up the chair in order to spend more time in Devon. Earlier in the year I realised that I should get my health in order. Having already attended a medical check-up, I decided that, perhaps, my spiritual health was equally important. So I spoke to a friend at the rehearsal who I knew was involved in alternative therapies and healing remedies. I asked her to suggest a spiritual healer and she gave me Betty Blackburn's details. I telephoned the next day to make an appointment.

Reading: 29 April - Betty Blackburn

Betty was warm and welcoming. Her fabulous smile made me feel instantly at home. The room was light, airy and pretty. There were two chairs and a treatment bed. That was all.

I explained that I needed her help because I was still feeling particularly low after the death of my husband in 1996. I said that she had been recommended as a possible way forward. I gave no further details. It wasn't necessary. I was simply there for healing. There was little time for conversation anyway, for Betty spoke almost immediately.

"Patricia, you are very lucky. I don't normally allow survival evidence from spirit to be channelled through me. I specialise in

healing, not mediumship. But I am being asked by a man, a really lovely man, if I will allow him to come through. He loves you very much and the message is very strong, will you allow it?"

"Yes!" I said, shocked.

"His name begins with M ... Michael? No, it's Malcolm. He wants you to know he is aware that you are about to go to Devon for two weeks on your own.

"He says that you will feel his presence most strongly there. It will be a happy occasion. He is asking if you remember how wonderful it was, the one time you were there together."

I did. Malcolm and I had only had one weekend together visiting Westfield after its purchase. This was before the house was properly furnished. He had bought beds but they were still covered in plastic and we had to stay in a local B&B. Malcolm died before he'd had the opportunity to sleep in his beloved Westfield.

"He wants you to know that he is always with you, he never leaves you and is constantly guiding you." Betty paused, before adding, *"I don't understand this. He is saying how greatly you are loved and yet he is holding a blue flower. Just a minute ..."* She concentrated again. *"Yes, it is a blue flower. I would expect it to be a red rose but it is definitely blue. Does this have any significance at all?"*

I answered immediately, "Yes, it makes complete sense. Blue is my favourite colour and our homes in Kent and Devon have blue flowers everywhere. Malcolm once bought me a blue porcelain rose, which I treasure."

Betty continued, *"This place you are going to in Devon he loves. He says it was meant for the two of you together, but now it is for you. He is adamant that it is to be yours once the children have left home. It is right for you and the family.*

"He has very strong opinions your husband, doesn't he?" Betty smiled. *"You are to trust your instincts. He adores this place and so will you. You are to wait before extending; you will know when the time is right.*

"You are to learn to meditate, which will open a channel between you, for him to come to you. It will happen at Westfield; it did once before but you were frightened."

This was true. Previously, I *had* experienced something extraordinary there. Normally, I sleep well, even when alone in the house. However, one particular night I simply could not sleep at all. Unusually, I was not frustrated or angry, I just accepted it, and the night was punctuated with me reading a book, making a few notes and fetching glasses of water.

Early in the morning, between three and four, I was lying completely still when I realised that I was quite unable to move. I was totally leaden and had no ability to get up from the bed. Initially, I was unafraid, simply hoping that, perhaps, this was an unusual onset for sleep at last. I was perfectly comfortable. But then I heard strange noises in my head.

To even try to describe these is almost impossible. The closest I can come to it really is remembering the old black-and-white films, where the scene is set below deck on a submarine. The sounds were exactly like the indecipherable instructions barked into a speaking tube and piped below. I became scared. I remember thinking, *Malcolm, please don't frighten me*. No sooner had I thought these words, the voices ceased and I could move again.

Betty continued, *"It will be stronger next time. But you asked him to go previously, so you will have to ask him back, it is the Universal Law. He cannot return unless you ask him to.*

"Well!" Betty exclaimed, *"I have never had to do this before. He is instructing me to heal you in the chair, not on the bed."* Betty got up and moved the bed to one side and repositioned my chair centrally. She continued, *"He is aware that you are a very private person and that you will feel vulnerable lying down and will not concentrate. He is laughing now and saying, 'If you can get her to sit down for five minutes you are a better man than I.' He is also saying, 'She worries too much and tries too hard. She must learn to relax to open the channel between us.'*

"I don't understand this, Patricia, but I am being shown a pair of braces. He is trying to cheer you up, my dear, it's a joke. He says he knew how much you hated him wearing them particularly if he insisted on putting them on to go out."

This shocked me again, as it was absolutely true and was, indeed, a private joke between Malcolm and me. He would put on

these awful red braces and jokingly threaten to wear them out of the house. Not even our sons knew about this.

“Your relationship with Malcolm was very strong. You had a wonderful marriage, family and life together. You still have your family and life. You still have Malcolm, but in a different form, and you are just beginning to realise this.

“Malcolm wants you to know that he is fine, he is home. You will meet again and he is waiting for you but you have much to do before that time. There is a pathway unfolding before you. You will help others by talking to them. Not by counselling nor by platform performances, that is not your way. But you will help others by talking to them in one form or another. You will heal with words.

“A strong bond is developing between you and a young woman. There is a triangle, three of you.” A thought went through my mind, *Karen, Clare and myself? “You will be drawn closer together. This is developing rapidly now. Do nothing until you are ready. You will be told when the time is right. You are greatly loved!”*

The reading ended there.

With these words ringing in my ears, some two and half hours after arriving, I left Betty. I was astonished and decided that, regardless of the things I had to do elsewhere, I would return home and write everything down as I remembered it.

Later that afternoon, I drove into Reigate to collect my eldest son's suit from the cleaners. A woman I knew only vaguely served me. She looked thin, drawn and very unhappy. After the usual greetings she told me that her husband had died two years previously. Suddenly, her desolate look made complete sense. I said, “I know exactly how you feel.”

She replied, “I hate the house, the garden, everything. I feel as though I am not living but simply existing. Tell me, Patricia, does it ever end? Will it ever get any better?”

I felt rather awkward. Following my visit to Betty earlier that day, I felt as though my life had been changed forever. I was almost upbeat and, in front of me, there was this lady I barely knew, staring at me with dead eyes, completely without hope. There was a notion inside my head. *Well, what will you do? Walk out of the door and leave her to suffer? Or will you find the courage to speak?*

One more look at the desolate face in front of me made the action required obvious. After a few moments of awkward silence I spoke. “You might think what I am about to say is a bit odd but I think I can help you.”

“Anything, Patricia, any help at all will be better than how I am feeling at the moment.”

So, with a deep breath, I told her how, until February, I had felt as though I was only existing myself. I explained how the desolation and sense of hopelessness I had felt at that time had caused me to open the *Yellow Pages* and by doing so, I had found the number in Brighton, which had helped me to begin my own path of recovery. I believe she could see my sincerity because she asked for the number. I found it for her and, as we said goodbye, I was comforted to see there was a renewed spark of hope in her eyes.