



The Writing

I do not remember how I reached the car, but somewhere in the middle of a crowded bazaar, I found myself braking to a halt. I had just avoided a cow! I sat for a minute in the middle of chaos, surrounded by bicycles, vendors and people. Quickly opening my bag, I stared at the piece of paper. Had this really happened – had my son “talked” to me? With doubts still gnawing at my insides, I drove home with a mind that raced with questions. What if all this was a hoax? How could I be sure? What was I to say to my family? How was I to explain what I had done? Would they be as intrigued as I was? Should I tell them at the risk of their disapproval or should I hold back till I had made up my mind and there was more proof?

In the quiet of the night, I read Karl’s message over and over again. I tossed and I turned and I cried. I looked at Jimmy, longing to awaken him so that I could share what had happened to me. I stood at the balcony till it was dawn and watched the early morning light slowly break over the racecourse. So much of Karl was out there I thought, so many memories. Did I want to keep it that way? What if I tried to reach him and failed, I would only have myself to answer to. With the last thought uppermost in my mind, I resolved to “find” Karl by myself.

As soon as everyone was awake, I went through the motions of handling the morning chores, trying hard not to reveal my true feelings. I was so sure that the family would see through my nervousness and guess that something was going on within me, but somehow, I got through the few hours till it was time for Jimmy to leave. Such was my growing excitement, that I almost pushed him out of the door. The moment had arrived.

I locked my bedroom door and with trembling hands, I set up as Mrs. Bhavnagri had instructed. I held the pen over the paper and closed my eyes. "Please Karl, if you are really there, write something – anything," I begged. I waited, unsure of what would happen.

Suddenly, there was a movement. No, it couldn't be! Slowly, very slowly, the pen began to move across the page. I held my breath and watched, fascinated. The initial dot became a faint wavering line. Without warning, it gave way to big sweeping movements. Round the page my hand moved, up and down, and round and round, till just as suddenly, it stopped.

I dashed to the phone, dialled Mrs. Bhavnagri's number and shouted with excitement. "The pen moved, it moved! I can write, I can write!" I don't know what she must have made of my hysteria as I babbled on and on, unable to stop. I can't describe the joy that swept me up into a world that had suddenly changed. Had I really stumbled into contact with my spirit son? Claspng Karl's photograph to my heart, I whirled around the room not willing to let go of a moment of the heady sensation. But the family soon trooped back. I looked at them, yearning to tell them of my new experience, but somehow, I got through the rest of the day holding onto my secret.

With Mrs. Bhavnagri's encouragement, I sat down every single day and watched over the writing. After what seemed an age, the scribble changed to loops. It remained that way for pages and pages, till suddenly the loops began making beautiful patterns. One day the patterned loops changed to letters; e e e e... and o o o... began repeating themselves over and over again, followed by m m m... and w w w... I felt as if I had my life over again with Karl and that somehow he was learning the alphabet once more, but this time from another dimension – and without the horses!

On September 11, more than a month after I had begun, the first word appeared. All the letters I had been writing suddenly joined together and made a full word, "WHEREVER." This word ran for many pages until the next word came and that really touched the innermost core of my heart. "MUM" he wrote, "Mum, mum, mum." Exactly fourteen days later these two words joined together with a third word, and finally read, "WHEREVER MUM HOME."

I sat and wept.

I went back in time to the scene in the hospital room where Karl had held my hand and looked beseechingly into my eyes. "I want to go home," he had said, "Mum, I want to go home." "I will never leave you Karl," I remember saying, "I am right here to help you fight this battle. I promise I will take you home." At that time, I did not know that I would not be able to keep my word, nor did I know that this request would be his last.

Now here it was – dancing on a page right in front of me – *"WHEREVER MUM HOME!"*

The tears flowed as I rocked myself, with my arms tightly wrapped around my chest. A new found life-source began to creep through my body till there remained no doubt in my mind. I was certain. My son Karl had returned home.

The years of emptiness receded as each morning Karl diligently practiced. Each word, no matter how often repeated, brought infinite joy to my soul.

Karl soon spelt out another word, *"MEHER."*

I was puzzled, for there was no one of that name in my family or in my group of close friends. So back I went to Mrs. Bhavnagri with my pages filled with the words, "Meher." Who or what was "Meher?" Mrs. Bhavnagri suggested that I direct my inquiries through another medium, a Mrs. Prabhavati Rishi, whose expertise lay in the handling of the ouija board. I had absolutely no idea of what she was talking about, but having come this far, my inner spirit seemed to have assumed an inexplicable drive. I simply had to find out more about the word – "Meher."

Following directions, I found myself outside an old, decrepit building opposite the Portuguese Church in a locality known as Girgaum. As I climbed the rickety stairs, doubts assailed my mind, "Good Lord, where have I come?" On the landing, a door opened and an old Maharashtrian lady asked me my business. "I wish to contact my son," I said, recalling advice not to give any names. Looking into her diary filled with appointments, she gave me a time for a month later. "Thirty days!" I thought to myself incredulously, "I have to wait thirty days before satisfying my curiosity!" Disappointed, I made my way back home wondering how she could possibly have such a long list of people with queries about the spirit world. Was I the only ignorant one who did not know of the availability of a contact such as this?