



“GHOST WRITER”

by Debbie Kuhn

Hallo. My name is Marjory Ellen Fielding and I was ten years old when I died on the twenty-seventh of September, 1940. It happened near my home in Westminster during the London Blitz, but it wasn't the war that killed me.

That's right – I'm a ghost, though I won't be one for much longer. More than anything, I want to tell my story while I still have time – but first, allow me to explain how you came to be reading my Afterlife Journal. I think it's simply brilliant that it was found by you, since I'll be going to so much trouble to get the pages written. Possessing sleepwalkers isn't as easy as you might think. I must rely on children to get the job done.

And only girls. Squirming around inside a boy's body would make me feel most improper. Anyway, I can only stay inside my hosts for an hour or two at a time. I plan to write

as quickly as I can and then hide what I've written in a safe place. The lucky ducks won't even know I was around when they wake up in their beds the next morning.

Clever, right?

Perhaps you're wondering why I refused to cross over to the other side. Although I longed to see my mum, who died when I was two, I had an important reason for staying earthbound and avoiding Heaven.

I couldn't leave my father alone, could I? Well, I suppose technically I already had when I got killed by that lorry driver. But that wasn't my fault. Nigel Hanley was horsing around with his schoolmates and ended up knocking me into the street. I never liked that sorry sod before the accident, and you can imagine how I feel about him now.

I don't think my father ever forgave Nigel. Daddy had treated me like a princess. I was all he had left. Sometimes I'd see tears well up in his eyes when he kissed me goodnight. I became even more special to him as time went on because the older I got, the more I looked like my mum with my blonde, curly hair. I'd even inherited her odd eyes – one blue and one green.

Not to boast, but I was very fortunate to have Mummy's good looks and my father's keen intelligence. What a pity my life had to be cut so drastically short.

At least dying wasn't painful for me – it was over in an instant. In a way, passing on is like being reborn. Your only worry is learning how to exist on a different plane and still affect the world around you. Baby steps. It takes time for a spirit to grow strong.

I think I adjusted to the changes much faster than most ghosts my age. And when I felt confident enough, I went searching for my daddy.

The first place I looked was our old home on Marigold Court in Westminster. The war was almost over by then, and it was sad to see how many buildings had been damaged by the

German bombing raids. A crumbling chimney and some stone steps were all that remained of our neighbor's place. Our house seemed perfectly normal - except for one thing.

My father didn't live there anymore. Strangers had moved in and everything looked different. My once pink bedroom belonged to a teenage boy – an obnoxious, pimply-faced slob who reminded me of Nigel.

If I hadn't been so anxious to find my father, I would have lingered long enough to scare him senseless.

Another month would pass before I found Daddy outside the church we used to attend – St. Jude's Cathedral. The sun shone brightly on the quiet churchgoers as they filed out of the stone building onto the sidewalk. I believe it was Easter.

Everyone had on such fetching outfits. I loved staring at the frilly dresses and fancy suits, and I couldn't help wishing I'd died wearing my Sunday best instead of a dull school uniform.

My father looked just as handsome as I remembered, except now he had a thin mustache. I wanted to run up to him and throw myself in his arms, but I knew that he couldn't see me.

I stood right next to him when he paused at the bottom of the church steps. He seemed to be waiting for someone.

“I love you, Daddy, and I've missed you so much. I wish you knew I was here.”

My father smiled, almost like he'd heard me, but his eyes were on a pretty blonde woman who was making her way down the uneven steps toward him. A little girl in a pink dress held tightly to her hand.

A little girl with long golden curls.

“Annabelle, my sweet,” my father said, “would you like to stop at the candy shop on the way home?”

“Oh, yes, please!”

The pretty woman laughed. “Honestly, Jonathan, you’re going to spoil the child rotten soon.”

“Well, it’s her birthday, isn’t it? She deserves a special treat.”

“Say yes, Mummy, please say yes!”

Her mother sighed. “One piece of candy – just one. Remember I’m making you a chocolate birthday cake this afternoon.”

“Will I have candles, too?”

“Of course you will,” my father replied. “Five pink candles.”

The three of them walked away from the church, hand in hand.

I decided right then that I hated Annabelle. I hated her with all my heart.
