



Ghostly Encounters  
The Power of Love

Anne Ireland

Ghostly Encounters  
The Power of Love

Copyright © 2008 by Anne Ireland.

Photo used in cover art is from [www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu) Stock Xchng. Photographers are cooljinny for girl in red picture, and creazine for soldier.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any way, shape, or form such as scanning, printing, storing or distributing in any electronic format without the express permission in writing of the author. Please don't participate in piracy of copyrighted materials. This is a violation of the author's rights.

Sandra swooped on the letter with the overseas postmark. It was the first she'd had from her husband since his last leave and she had begun to worry. She accepted that she had married a soldier, and that meant he had to spend long periods away from home. It also meant that each time he left her she could not be sure that he would return.

She read her letter eagerly. Mark seemed to be missing her as much as she missed him. His letter was all of the things they'd done together when he was home. He talked about the fun they'd had walking in Scotland on the brief holiday they had taken, and of the meals they'd shared by candlelight – and the times they had made love.

*I think of you in my arms all the time, Mark had written. I imagine that I am with you, and I can almost touch you, taste you. Sometimes I can smell your perfume – the perfume that is yours alone. I picture your body naked and I stroke you, I kiss you and then I slip inside you and I feel the magic you weave. I want you so much my darling. Please think of me like this, because whenever you do I shall come to you.*

Sandra felt the tears sting her eyes. She felt so lonely at times, but she wasn't living on the edge of danger all the time the way Mark had to be out there, knowing that at any moment he could be killed. She pressed her lips to his letter, then took it through to the bedroom and lay down. She summoned her favourite picture of Mark – wearing jeans and stripped to the waist, his skin tanned and smooth. How much she wanted him here right now.

*Think of me and I shall come to you...*

Sandra moved her hand down over her stomach, whimpering with need. It was Mark she wanted, Mark she needed here with her, but he wasn't here. Could she really bring him to her if she tried? She slipped her hand between her thighs, stroking herself,

her eyes closed, her mind conjuring up Mark's face as he bent over her, kissing her, touching her. She breathed faster as the moisture began to flow and she arched her body up to meet his. She could feel the touch of his lips on her lips, trailing down her throat. She smoothed her hands over her breasts, rubbing at the nipples until they hardened – but it was Mark's hands that touched her. She brought the sight, smell and taste of him back to her mind, letting her body relax, believing he was there, loving her. Now she could feel the burn of his flesh against hers, feel him inside her, moving slowly, tantalisingly, bringing her to a climax that sent shudders of delight rippling through her.

When she woke later, Sandra laughed at herself. Her dream had been so good. Mark had come to her. They had made love again and again, in bed, on a beach, in the ocean...all the romantic places she had dreamed they would visit one day when he was no longer a soldier.

She got up, showered and dressed for work. Dreaming was all very well, but she wished that she had Mark's child. Each time he came back for a visit she had hoped it would happen this time, but as yet she hadn't been lucky. She sighed as she left the house, because Mark had told her to be patient.

“We'll have plenty of time once my last duty is over,” he'd told her. “When I get my discharge we'll travel. We'll go to all those places – maybe we'll run a bar somewhere warm. And we'll have a child.”

Sandra couldn't wait for the day he came home for good!

Sandra stared at the telegram. Her hand was shaking. She was afraid to open it because she knew what was in it. If she didn't read it, it wouldn't be true! She felt sick

and ill, her throat tight. She wouldn't open the telegram and she wouldn't let the tears fall. Mark would come home to her. He would!

She took a coffee into the sitting room and sat down on the old couch. She closed her eyes, willing herself to think of Mark.

*Think of me and I'll come to you.*

Sandra slipped her hand into her panties. She touched herself with one finger, bringing her pictures of Mark to mind. She could see him in the kitchen making coffee and the smell of it was tantalising. She could see him in this room, laughing at her, his eyes warm with love and desire. Her lips parted as she felt his kiss.

"I love you, Sandra," he whispered against her ear. His hands were stroking her, touching her. He had undone her shirt and his mouth was at her breast, his tongue teasing, nudging her, grazing her nipple. 'I love you so much...'

"Mark..." she gasped. "Oh, Mark...it's so good so good..."

"Cum for me," he whispered, thrusting into her in a way that made her shout and dig her nails into his naked back. She opened her eyes and looked into his, seeing them hot and smoky with desire as he pleased her. "That's it...give it to me, my darling...I want it all..."

Sandra moaned. She ran her hands through his dark hair, her teeth teasing at his ear, her nails raking his back as the climax shot through her and she came again and again in quick succession. It had never been this good...never been quite this good...

Afterwards, Sandra slept. She woke with tears on her cheeks. Getting up to make herself a cup of coffee she saw the telegram lying on the kitchen table and her heart felt as if it would break in two. She picked it up and tore it open.

*We regret to tell you that Captain Mark Hammond was killed in action yesterday...*

Sandra's eyes stung with tears. She buried her face in her hands and wept. It wasn't true. They had made a mistake. Mark had been here with her, making love to her. She knew it wasn't all a dream, but the telegram lay on the table in front of her and her heart felt like stone. Her life was over. Mark was dead and she had nothing left.

A month later, Sandra let herself into the house. She was feeling slightly stunned, disbelieving, because it wasn't possible. She'd had a heavy period after Mark left on his last tour of duty. Yet the doctor had just told her she was having a child. She hadn't been with anyone else. She couldn't bear the thought of it. One day perhaps but for the moment her grief was like a stone in her breast – or it had been until the news that had knocked her sideways. It wasn't possible that she was having Mark's child – or was it? The doctor had said something about how occasionally women still had a period even though they had conceived, but she hadn't really listened. She was too stunned.

It was only now that the joy was beginning to seep in. She was having Mark's baby! A part of him was still with her, would always be with her.

"Mark..." she whispered, the tears trickling down her cheeks. "I love you...need you so much..."

*Think of me and I shall come to you. I am always near you, my darling. I shall be here for as long as you need me. All you have to do is bring me to you...and you will have our son...*

Sandra stared as she saw something...a light...no it was a figure. She trembled as she saw a face...his face. Just for a moment she could see Mark. He was wearing his

favourite jeans and no shirt and he was smiling. He held out his hand to her and Sandra reached for it, but then he was gone.

*It can't be the same, but I am here, my darling. You are never alone.*

“Oh Mark,” Sandra whispered. “You did come to me that time, I know you did. Our son...he was conceived after...” She choked back a sob, because she knew she could never tell anyone else what she believed. Mark had somehow come to her after he was killed and they had made love. Perhaps she could make it happen again if she tried...or perhaps it was just that once in a window of time after the spirit left the body. She didn't know, because she had never believed in things like that, but she knew that her child would surprise the doctors by being born late...

## Anne Ireland

Anne writes as herself and under several other names. As Linda Sole she is currently published by Severn House of UK and USA. She also writes as Anne Herries for Harlequin Mills & Boon. She is happily married and lives in England with her husband. Linda enjoys visiting Spain where she loves to walk, swim and lie in the sun. Writing is her passion and she manages a few words every day, but she also loves animals and especially squirrels. She is known as the squirrel lady at her local supermarket because of all the nuts she buys for them! She invites readers to visit her website at <http://www.lindasole.co.uk>