

You loved your last book...but what
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new
books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

Mozart's Ghost

Written by Julia Cameron

Published by Hay House

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Mozart's Ghost

JULIA CAMERON



HAY HOUSE

Australia • Canada • Hong Kong • India
South Africa • United Kingdom • United States

**First published in the United States of America by St. Martin's Press,
a division of Macmillan.**

First published and distributed in the United Kingdom by:
Hay House UK Ltd, 292B Kensal Rd, London W10 5BE. Tel.: (44) 20 8962 1230;
Fax: (44) 20 8962 1239. www.hayhouse.co.uk

Published and distributed in Australia by:
Hay House Australia Ltd, 18/36 Ralph St, Alexandria NSW 2015.
Tel.: (61) 2 9669 4299; Fax: (61) 2 9669 4144. www.hayhouse.com.au

Published and distributed in the Republic of South Africa by:
Hay House SA (Pty), Ltd, PO Box 990, Witkoppen 2068. Tel./Fax: (27) 11 467 8904.
www.hayhouse.co.za

Published and distributed in India by:
Hay House Publishers India, Muskaan Complex, Plot No.3, B-2, Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi – 110 070. Tel.: (91) 11 4176 1620; Fax: (91) 11 4176 1630.
www.hayhouse.co.in

Copyright © Julia Cameron, 2008, 2010

The moral rights of the author have been asserted.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic recording; nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or otherwise be copied for public or private use, other than for 'fair use' as brief quotations embodied in articles and reviews, without prior written permission of the publisher.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-8485-0226-0

Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Bookmarque, Croydon, CR0 4TD.

Chapter 1

She was late. She had cut it too close again. Someday, she told herself, she was going to arrive at her classroom early—refreshed, relaxed and grounded. But someday was not today. The ancient elevator in her apartment building chugged its way slowly toward the lobby. Anna tapped an impatient foot. When the elevator door slid open, she found her exit squarely blocked. A gargantuan beetle-black grand piano was wedged sideways into the minuscule lobby. Short of crawling on her hands and knees, she could not get past it.

“Hey! Some people need to get out of here,” she called out. “Please! Somebody!”

Alec, the superintendent, who was supervising the moving of the piano, saw her plight. “Ride back up,” he suggested. “Take the stairs back down.”

“But I’m late!”

That’s when the tall, redheaded stranger spoke up. He had been standing just to one side with two uniformed moving men.

“We tried to wait until everybody had gone to work,” he said. “This won’t take much longer.”

“Well, it’s taking too long for me. Oh, never mind!” Anna stabbed at the elevator buttons. As the door slid shut, she caught one last glimpse of the redhead. He smiled apologetically. Was it

her imagination? Despite his frizz of red hair and his Buddy Holly glasses, he looked quite attractive.

The elevator door slid shut and that is when she heard the voice, scolding her in heavily accented English. *"You could have been more civil to him. You could have made him feel welcome."*

"Well, he's not welcome," Anna explained, aware that she was arguing mentally with a ghost. *"This building is lovely and quiet, which is necessary for my work. The last thing I need is someone pounding on a grand piano at all hours of the day and night."* A quick glance around the elevator told her the ghost was settling for an auditory appearance only.

"Pounding?" The ghost sounded outraged. *"His music is sublime—and I should know."*

"Well, it's not welcome," Anna persisted. *"And neither are you!"*

"You could have pretended," the ghost pressed on. *"What's wrong with a little feminine grace?"*

"I'm late," Anna announced the obvious. *"And he's making me even later. And besides, what business is it of yours? You're a ghost."*

"Don't remind me," the ghost sighed. *"His happiness is my business. His comfort. His ease. I want the best for him, you see—and I intend to see that he gets it."*

"Well, count me out of your plans," Anna retorted as the elevator stopped. *"And if you're going to visit me, do it when I am working."*

"Let me get this straight," the ghost sputtered. *"Kings vied for my attention. The pope himself knighted me. With you, I need to make an appointment?"* Clearly, the ghost was used to getting its way.

"That's absolutely right. I'll speak to you during business hours."

With that, the elevator door opened and Anna hurled herself toward the stairs, leaving the ghost behind.

Chapter 2

Was it her midwestern imagination or were New Yorkers' faces inherently more interesting, perhaps more craggy or clearly etched than the vaguely Scandinavian ovals of her Michigan childhood? It was in part to escape a fate wed to a Scandinavian oval that Anna had come to New York. In Ann Arbor, she would have ended up as someone's eccentric, misfit wife. New York offered a chance to be loved for her entire self, or, since the city was filled with single women, a chance to be loveless without shame. In Ann Arbor, she was a spinster. In New York, she was single.

At age thirty-two, Anna lived in a one-room apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Her studio was on the fifth floor of a prewar building erected in the twenties. From her two north-facing windows, she enjoyed a view across rooftops where her neighbors, slightly miniaturized, held barbecues and sunned themselves on tiny rooftop decks.

If Anna leaned far out of her fire escape window, she could catch a leafy sliver of Central Park—that was as close to the trees of Ann Arbor as she ever wanted to get again.

Like so many other New York transplants, Anna had been a misfit where she came from. With its welcoming anonymity, New York was a mecca for oddballs longing to blend in. Back home

in Ann Arbor, she had not blended in. There, in the conventional and conservative Midwest, her interest in the paranormal had branded her an outcast, although her peers regarded her with a wary fascination.

Under the careful guidance of a spiritualist teacher, Bernice Murphy, she had honed her skills—but also achieved an unwelcome notoriety. “Teen Ghostbuster Helps Police,” one unfortunate headline had trumpeted. Anna was torn between the thrill of practicing her gifts and her longing to be a teenager amid teenagers. To add to her woes, her twin brother, Alan, seemed to dine out on her escapades. He would initiate conversations with remarks like, “Let me tell you about my weird sister.” Indeed, as the “weird sister,” Anna had been only too glad to escape to New York.

If Alan, back in Michigan, asked her about her work, Anna kept it vague. She knew he pictured crystal balls and tilting tables, and envisioned her wearing a turban—as many of the storefront psychics along lower Broadway in fact did. She had long since tired of trying to make her brother understand that to her, ghosts were simply a fact of life.

The first time it had happened, Anna was five years old. She was staying at her grandmother’s house and she had been tucked into bed early. “Don’t let the bed bugs bite,” her grandma said, kissing her forehead, smoothing her covers, shutting the door.

What bed bugs? Anna wondered, staring at the ceiling where something hazy and bluish seemed to be floating. She squinted and the shape took on form. It was a woman, with her hair in ringlets around her face, wearing a high-collared dress that was clearly etched, although after the bodice, the dress trailed into nothingness.

Anna observed the ghost with astonishment. Handkerchief

Mozart's Ghost

pressed to its lips, it appeared to be viewing her the same way. She should have been scared, but what she felt was curiosity. She watched with fascination to see what would happen next. She knew enough to know it was a ghost, but it didn't seem threatening in any way. It coughed into its lace handkerchief.

Anna reached a hand from beneath the covers and extended it over to the night table where her grandmother had left a small bell—"A sick bell, for emergencies or if you need me." Anna rang the bell. The apparition smiled regretfully and started to fade. By the time her grandmother opened the door, it had vanished.

As an introduction to the paranormal, it had felt, well, *normal*, but how would her brother feel if he knew that most Sunday afternoons, as a thirty-something adult, she attended a tiny spiritualist church where a diehard band of six to eight worshippers gathered together and tried to receive messages from the other side? This prospect was made problematic since the "church" was actually a tiny rented rehearsal hall, mirrored along one wall, with a rickety stand-up piano on which the minister, with her minimal piano skills, pecked and pounded out nineteenth-century hymns. The ragged congregation raised its communal voice in scraggly song, but rarely succeeded in drowning out the opera singer who rented a rehearsal space two doors down.

Anna attended out of affection for Miss Carolina, the wizened Jamaican woman with her crooked walk and more crooked wig who presided over her dwindling flock. Despite herself, sometimes Anna felt foolish, riding up to the fourth floor in a tiny jammed elevator prone to distressing lurches, often in the company of Zoreida the Magnificent who taught a belly dancing class just down the hall.

"Pretty girl like you, you should learn to belly dance," Zoreida

often urged her.

“No, no. I’m here for church,” Anna always answered.

Once, under the shepherding of its late charismatic founder, Doctor Lucian, the church had been robust and healthy. Now, a decade after Dr. Lucian’s death, a mere handful of followers remained. Anna worried that the lamp of their faith would flicker out entirely without Miss Carolina’s sad and lilting sermons, without her cryptic but often astoundingly precise messages from the other side.

“You have the gift,” Miss Carolina had confronted Anna after her initial service.

“Yes.” Anna saw no point in denial.

“But you fight it.” Miss Carolina went on, sounding gently dismayed.

“I try to cooperate,” Anna protested. “I *do* cooperate.”

“Exactly. You ‘cooperate’ instead of celebrate. It’s a gift. A rare and wonderful gift, but you don’t like being ‘different.’ Ah, well, it’s hard when you’re young.”

“I’m thirty-two. Not so young,” Anna argued. But Miss Carolina had correctly nailed her private conflict. As much as she loved her contacts with the other side—and she did love them—normal had always seemed eminently desirable to her, just impossibly out of reach.

“Well, it feels good to be around others, doesn’t it?” Miss Carolina clucked sympathetically. Anna had to admit that it did and so for the admitted pleasure of “being around others,” she became a regular at the tiny, ailing church.

No, Anna did not share this aspect of her life with Alan. Of course, Alan had his own weirdnesses, but Anna was loath to point them out. They were, after all, fraternal twins, two very

Mozart's Ghost

different beings who had once swum together peaceably in their mother's womb. Twins had to count for something, Anna felt.

"Let Alan be weird," she often lectured herself. Let him live in Kalamazoo, Michigan, building handcrafted violins in his garage, poring over his obscure mathematical calculations, certain that he would eventually rival Stradivarius. Who was she to disabuse him—or anyone—of an obscure obsession, an eccentric ruling passion? No, Anna held her tongue.

Chapter 3

If she held her tongue with Alan, Anna did not hold it that afternoon with her new musical neighbor. Waiting for the elevator, in what was no longer the quiet and cavelike lobby, she found her attention snagged by a rising crescendo of notes. The piece of music was turbulent and impassioned. It dragged her attention in its stormy wake.

An invisible presence loudly cleared its throat. "*Magnificent, don't you think? It's almost like hearing myself play.*" The ghost was back.

"*What are you doing loitering in my lobby?*" Anna accused.

"*Loitering? I am enjoying the concert. Anyone but a philistine would recognize the opportunity.*"

"*Do not call me a philistine. Scat!*" Anna waved a hand at empty air. She distinctly heard a derisive snicker but with that, the ghost was blessedly gone.

The elevator was as slow as always at arriving. While she

waited, her “concert” played on. The notes rose in drama and pitch. They unfurled with greater and greater velocity and intensity. An inexorable climax was clearly building. Anna felt a sympathetic anxiety rising in her chest despite her attempts to focus her thoughts calmly. When the elevator door wheezed open, she was only too glad to escape.

I chose this building for its peace and quiet. I need to be able to bear myself think! If I'm distracted, I can't make contact. If I can't make contact, I can't make a living...

Anna's thoughts churned upward, floor by floor. She was slightly panicked. Distractions endangered her livelihood, which depended on her ability to focus on subtle vibrations. She had trained herself to listen through sirens and jackhammers, the rolling surf of the city, but this music was far more intrusive. Its very beauty held far more danger. How would she hear the other world when this one so compelled her consciousness?

The elevator door slid slowly open on her floor. The music greeted her again. Clearly it climbed straight up the stairwell. It was softer than it had been down below but still quite audible. Opening her apartment door, Anna found that a wave of music met her as she stepped inside. She had left a window open for ventilation and now the music leaped straight over the sill. Anna marched to the window. She leaned out and shouted down, “Will you *please* be quiet?” Into a rising crescendo of notes, she shouted again, “Please shut up, would you?” She found herself near tears with frustration.

The music continued unabated, and a now familiar, quarrelsome voice spoke out. “*Shut up? Is that what you said to him?*” Now the ghost was right in her apartment and determined to have

Mozart's Ghost

her ear. *"You must admit that he is talented. Listen to his phrasing! Listen to his expressiveness! It's a privilege to live within earshot. You're a very lucky young woman."* The ghost rattled on.

But Anna did not feel lucky. She felt hurried and harried, trying hurriedly to put away clothes and straighten pillows. She liked her home to be a serene and neutral environment for her to work. She scolded the ghost. *"Get out! You can't just come here willy-nilly. Please leave! And don't come back without an invitation!"*

But the ghost did not leave. In an outraged voice, it went on. *"Not invited by you, perhaps! Marie Antoinette welcomed me. And Louis the Fifteenth. Or, if you prefer the English crowd, George the Third. I assure you, that pianist would greet me with respect. Just listen to him, would you? What rhapsody! Surely you can bear it! Just listen to his musicality!"*

"No, I will not listen to him. And I will not listen to you, either!" Anna retorted. She grabbed for a rattle and shook it vigorously just as her mentor, Mrs. Murphy, had taught her.

As a rule, ghosts hate the sound of a rattle and this ghost was no exception. It sputtered a final protest. *"Very well then, I'm leaving. But you could try to be civil. He's very sensitive and even if he didn't bear you this time, I did, and next time he just might. I can't have him getting discouraged."*

With that, the ghost was gone. Anna spritzed lavender water to clear the air of his obnoxious presence. She slumped into a chair, waiting for her buzzer to sound. She had an appointment scheduled in moments. The music pounded on.

Chapter 4

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Oliver,

I am writing to thank you (as always) for your generous help. You cannot imagine—or perhaps you can—exactly how much pressure you have taken off of me. And, in another sense, how much pressure you have put on me. A year's free rent! Time to practice! The leisure to actually prepare for competitions! I am one lucky fellow. My friends all think I am living on air or have come into a secret inheritance. As you requested, I have told no one of your scholarship or stake or "bet," whatever you want to call your generosity. Again, I am grateful.

Let me try to give you a picture of my apartment. It is on 86th Street near Central Park, on the ground floor of an old prewar building. Since it is a rental, they allow pianos. My friends tell me many New York co-op boards are hard on musicians. They consider our practicing mere noise. I suppose it is to some ears—not, thankfully, yours.

Where was I?

The apartment has ample room for my piano and enough extra for a futon and the desk I am writing you on. Don't get me wrong. To me, it feels like a penthouse. The ceiling is high. There are two windows looking north onto—you'd say an alley—but there is a tree out there and the leaves are just barely turning as I imagine they already have at home in Maine. (Pardon my writing. It's rusty and tiny. I am used to jotting notation.) New York is hot one day and cool the next. If I keep a window cracked, I get a nice breeze.

Mrs. Oliver, thank you for your suggestion. I'll try a geranium. I am afraid I have a black thumb. Not gangrene. (Just kidding.) I know you worry about my hands. They are fine.

Mr. Oliver, the landlord says he will accept checks from any postal zone, as long as they are on time. As I am sure they will be, don't get me wrong.

I play a little better every day. (Not in my personal opinion, of

Mozart's Ghost

course, but I try to ignore that.) What I am trying to say is that I am working hard to live up to your faith in me. I will keep you posted.

Sincerely yours,

Edward

P.S. I am working a little on the Schumann. That, the Bartók, the Bach, and pretty much the kitchen sink. The Rachmaninoff, the Chopin, the Liszt, and the Mozart, of course. I am getting ready. Four months and counting until the competition. If I win, it's a year's living money, three years' worth of concerts and a CD. That would certainly be a good launch for anyone's career. Let's just hope I win.

P.P.S. Sorry I am such a self-conscious correspondent.

Chapter 5

When Anna first moved to New York, she endured a series of sublets, hopscotching around the city, learning its neighborhoods and moods, before settling on the middle-class bohemia of the Upper West Side. When she finally rented her studio there, she was evasive on her landlord's questionnaire. On the slot that listed "occupation," she did not write "medium" as her business cards read. There was no point in inviting questions, so she simply wrote "teacher." This was stretching the truth, but not too far. For her work reference, she listed her friend Harold, a grammar school principal, who understood her employment dilemma and consented to speak on her behalf—provided she actually do some substitute teaching for him. She did, to help cover her exorbitant, ever-escalating rent.

Harold was a gay man in his early fifties. He was carefully preserved and could pass for fifteen years younger. Trying to look wholesome for her job interview with him, she had worn her most dowdy and conservative outfit. “Oh well,” she thought to herself, observing the effect, “Lassie’s mother.” She loved vintage clothes but there was a fine line between vintage and frumpy. For the sake of her interview, she had crossed it. She wanted the job and was determined to appear “normal.” When her business card spilled onto Harold’s floor and he snatched it up, she braced herself for the inevitable rejection of her teacher’s application. “Medium” the card said in plain black and white. So much for “normal.”

“What does this mean, ‘medium?’” Harold did not return the card but fingered it curiously as if it might nip at his fingers.

“Ah, just a little sideline,” Anna ventured, grabbing for her card.

“Not so fast,” Harold said. “This is all very interesting.” He motioned her to a chair and took his own seat behind an imposing wooden desk. He slid her business card under the edge of his desk calendar. “We all have our little secrets, don’t we?” he asked.

Anna felt a moment of panic. People, men especially, often reacted badly to the news of her profession. Take the matter of romance. One date, two, sooner or later her profession would come out—often with her brother’s help—and the invitations for dinner or a drink would promptly stop. She expected such rejection from Harold.

“Look,” Anna managed defensively, “you don’t have to give me a job. I can make ends meet without being a substitute teacher. I can type. I can wait tables. I’m an adequate salesperson. I’m good with plants. I can walk dogs, although I’d prefer not to. I have lots of skills.” Even to her own ear, she sounded defiant.

“And you can see ghosts,” Harold said. He fingered a pen.

Mozart's Ghost

“Something like that, yes,” Anna answered.

Harold chuckled. “Maybe that would come in handy too. All your other specialties make you sound like an ideal candidate.” He wrote “yes” on a small lined tablet. He used block-style kindergarten letters.

Anna saw that he had a fat sheaf of papers in front of him. Her resumé and paperwork, she presumed. It was harder to get a substitute teacher’s job than it was to work for the CIA.

“You don’t smoke? You don’t have a drinking problem?” Harold looked at her with a genuine twinkle.

“I amuse you?” Anna asked.

“You interest me, not amuse,” he said.

“You make me sound like a science project.” Anna sounded as defensive as she felt.

“I suppose it is a science.” Harold nodded to himself. “Yes, I suppose it is.”

“What is?”

“Parapsychology of course.”

“Oh, of course.”

“But let’s quite quibbling about semantics—you’re hired.”

Chapter 6

Westside Aquarium occupied the basement and ground floors of a vintage brownstone on 74th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam. It was just a block out of her way walking home from school and Anna stopped there most

afternoons. The basement was freshwater fish. The ground floor was saltwater. Anna preferred the basement.

“You again,” the clerk greeted her each day as she arrived. His name was Tommy. He had elaborate tattoos running up both of his arms. His head was shaved and featured pierced ears, nose and lower lip. Despite his fierce appearance, he remained very handsome and he seemed like a sweet young man.

“Me again.” Anna smiled as she made her way to the back of the store past the neon tetras and the cichlids, past the angelfish and red-tailed sharks, to her favorites, the swordtails. “Swords,” as she called them, were good swimmers, quick and zippy. When she approached the tank, they spun in unison and headed to the rear, behind the coral formation. If she waited patiently, they ventured back out.

“I got a new shipment of angels,” Tommy interrupted her viewing. “Want to see them?” Anna felt an unfamiliar spark. He was watching her with his piercing blue eyes.

“I don’t really like angels. They’re too aggressive for me,” Anna volunteered.

“I got a pair of blacks. They’re really cool. I’ve named them ‘Darth Vader’ and ‘Lady Macbeth.’ What do you think?”

“That sounds sinister enough,” Anna said. Was it her imagination or was he staring at her? She glanced quickly away. Tommy was in a talkative mood and he had stories to tell.

“I kacked a whole tank full of zebra danios,” he told her morosely. “I think I overcleaned the tank and screwed up their nitrogen cycle. I came in this morning to a whole tank of floaters.”

“That’s too bad.”

“Not as bad as when I was working upstairs and kacked the puffer fish. That was a real mess.”

Mozart's Ghost

"I remember."

"I almost lost my job over that one."

"Almost as bad as when the cat got the marble hatchet fish," Anna sympathized.

"Yeah, I came in for work and found Barney enjoying some sushi," Tommy chuckled and reached a hand out to stroke Barney's orange coat. "They ask for it, though, those fish swim right on the surface. All he had to do was dip a paw in and scoop one out."

"Yeah. Our Barney is quite the cannibal," Anna agreed. She reached out a hand to scratch Barney behind one ear and her fingers brushed Tommy's. He didn't pull back.

"I am getting more swords," he volunteered. "They're really cool. Black and white translucent ones with black fins and swords."

"A little like tiger barbs?" Anna asked. She could talk fish for hours.

"Not quite as flashy. No red but the same general idea."

"I can't wait."

"So, how was school? Want a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup?" Tommy offered her the candy from a basket on the counter. He was flirting. She took a candy.

"Why not? School was okay. I've only got three troublemakers."

"I suppose it's just like here. Never put two male betas in the same tank."

"It's something like that," Anna laughed. "It's all a matter of who's compatible."

"Say, you wouldn't want to see a movie Sunday night, would you? 'Bluewater, White Death' is being revived."

"No kidding. What a great movie. It's great that they're bringing it back," Anna said enthusiastically.

“We could meet here, grab a bite, see the early show and you’d be home before you turned into a pumpkin.” Tommy was coaxing her now. Was he asking her on a date? Anna stalled for time. She had always assumed Tommy was gay. Evidently not.

“Sure. That sounds great.” Anna could tell she didn’t sound convincing. She tried again. “I’d love to. Sunday night.”

“Great,” said Tommy. “Now let me show you my new corydoras.”

Chapter 7

Anna was never sure what made Harold trust her—either as a substitute teacher or as a medium. He had watched her closely during her early days at his school. She would be shepherding her students to a bathroom break or lunch and there would be Harold, looming at her from behind lockers or the stacks in the student library. Chestnut-haired, mustachioed, and prone to wearing theatrical red suspenders, he reminded her of the Cheshire cat. Not that she said so.

Harold-the-Cat, she had come to think of him, because sometimes his plump, rounded shape *did* bare an uncanny resemblance to the Cheshire cat. Whenever she would catch him at it—spying on her—he would give her a big benevolent grin. One morning, one of her students, Jeremy, came to school armed with a water pistol and roundly drenched two classmates, Abby and Dylan, who shrieked and retaliated with kicks and punches. Anna was trying unsuccessfully to break them up when Harold loomed out

Mozart's Ghost

at her from behind the classroom door—grinning.

“Trouble?” Harold asked.

“I can handle it,” Anna said, grabbing Jeremy in a nonpolitically correct head lock.

“I see that you can,” Harold said. “But come see me on your break.”

And so, expecting to be fired or suspended, Anna made her way to his office. He produced a chicken salad sandwich on pumpernickel bread and a thermos of coffee from a bottom desk drawer.

“What do you think?” he asked.

“It’s a great school,” she said. “Really first-rate. In my opinion, that is.”

“I meant what did you think about the chicken salad? It’s my mother’s recipe. She got it from her mother. I add a dash of chutney. Well?”

“Well, I, it’s...” Anna needed a napkin. Harold produced one, cloth, from a different drawer. “It’s delicious—and so’s the bread.”

“I think so,” Harold said with satisfaction. “Coffee?”

“Love some,” she admitted. Harold’s coffee was rich and strong and caffeine was her one remaining vice.

“So. Listen. I’ve decided I’d like to make an appointment.”

“I thought this was an appointment,” Anna said. “Can’t we talk now, over lunch?” Fired was fired, wasn’t it?

Anna *did* love teaching at Harold’s school, and hoped she would not have to find another venue. An administrator could call any name on an entire roster of New York subs. She wanted Harold to keep calling her. (Not to mention that she was acquiring a fondness for some of her pupils, the naughty ones in particular.)

“An appointment with *you*, to talk to someone. You see, my

partner has passed on.” He held up her business card, sliding it out from under his blotter.

“You’re hiring me, not firing me! ... Don’t tell me anything more,” Anna shushed him. “It’s best that I know as little as possible. That way, you won’t feel duped.”

“I see.”

“Sorry to be such a stickler, but it’s really for the best.”

“When then?” Harold was eager to close the deal. Anna took out her daybook. They set an appointment for two days later, after school.

“I shouldn’t bring anything? A photo? His watch?”

“That won’t be necessary,” Anna assured him. “You’re the draw.”



Anna’s studio had a loft bed and she had trained philodendrons to climb the four-by-fours that held it up. Inside the leafy bower this created, she had established her reading area: an overstuffed love seat graced by a few needlepoint pillows she’d made herself, a velvet Victorian chair rescued from the sidewalk and carefully repaired, and a small table flanked by a wrought-iron chair. She sat at the table. The love seat and the Victorian were for guests who needed something to make them feel comfortable. As a rule, she offered them a nonalcoholic drink. (“No spirits except the ones you invite,” Mrs. Murphy phrased her anti-alcohol rule.)

“I’m just curious; I don’t *really* believe in any of this,” Harold said as she closed the door behind him. She was used to such protestations. They were almost routine. “*He* believed,” Harold continued, but Anna held up a stern warning hand. She had been

Mozart's Ghost

carefully taught to not allow clients to divulge any information about those they were trying to contact.

"I don't want to know," she told Harold. "The more I know in advance, the less you'll trust me, the more you'll suspect a hoax." Anna tried for a casual, matter-of-fact air. She knew how nervous her clients were, how much the contact they were seeking to make meant to them.

"I see your point," Harold allowed.

Anna closed her eyes. She laid her palms flat upon the table.

"Will it move?" Harold asked.

"What?" she had lost her focus.

"The table," Harold explained.

"You've seen a lot of movies, haven't you?" Anna asked. Clients' questions seldom annoyed her, but the music drifting upward through the open window did. *It was as bad as life with Alan*. She had spent her entire—their entire—adolescence with a sound track. Was she doomed to having one always? Couldn't he play more softly?

"Excuse me," she said and got up to close the window. Maybe in winter she wouldn't hear him. The window was swollen in its frame and she could not get it totally closed. She managed to shut it all but a crack.

"It was pretty," Harold objected, "Schubert, I think. Maybe Schumann."

"I wouldn't know," Anna sniffed, which startled Harold a little. Maybe he was expecting her to be a little more "spiritual"? Oh, well. Mrs. Murphy had assured her that sainthood wasn't a necessity. Anna closed her eyes to regain her focus. The music still distracted her. She frowned.

"What is it?" Harold worried. "Oh dear, is he all right?" Anna

held a finger to her lips. She was beginning to get an impression.

Harold's "Andrew" came to her first as a voice saying clearly, "Hello, darling." She repeated the greeting to Harold. Next, she "saw" Andrew in her mind's eye as a tall, well-dressed man with silver hair and a ruddy complexion. She had an impression of good humor and considerable erudition. He muttered something in Latin that she didn't understand. She repeated it carefully, a syllable at a time. "*Non illegitimi te carborundum,*" she enunciated slowly.

Harold sucked in his breath. "We were together thirty years." Tears sprang to his eyes. After he composed himself he explained, "It means 'Don't let the bastards get you down.' Andrew always said it to me after a rough day at school. Oh, dear. Oh, dear God." Anna offered Harold the box of Kleenex that sat between them on the table.

"I suppose you see this sort of thing all the time," Harold said.

"I'm prepared," Anna told him. "But I am afraid Andrew is fading out."

"Tell him I love him!"

"He can hear you. He just can't transmit anymore. The first contact can take a lot."

"I love you, dear," Harold breathed into the ethers.

"It's mutual," Anna recounted Andrew's fading voice.

"It must be wonderful, witnessing reunions," Harold insisted after a long moment during which the music played delicately.

"It is wonderful," Anna admitted. "Really wonderful." Although she often longed to be normal, there were moments like these when her gift did feel like a gift.

After that first session, Harold set a regular appointment, weekly at five on Fridays. "Happy Hour," he called it. Anna felt glad to be a bridge.