



This Lovely Haunting

By Ingrid Anders

We hope you know: we love you. After everything, your father and I love you as much as ever. And we will do whatever we can to help you.

My child, we want you to know we are not upset. The pain, the worry, the doctor's visits, the bills—all nothing compared to the joy and love we felt when you were here. And now that you are here again!

My angel, I know it is you. I knew it at the first shortened breath, the first stomach cramp, the first odd craving. All uncomfortable symptoms, yes—but oh, how sublime to feel them again! Even though the pregnancy test was

negative, I knew immediately you were there.

And then you appeared! As an orb. Right there in our holiday photo. For the camera you shone like the Christmas star—the most radiant ornament we had ever seen—exposing our family trio to be the divine quartet that it is.

The poor photographer! How she wiped the lens. How she shot us from different angles. How she closed the blinds. But your light would not disappear. Ultimately, she gave us the photos for free. And while we won't exactly send them out to family and friends, we were overjoyed to paste them into our album.

You see, my sweet, we knew instinctively what the paranormal specialist later confirmed for us: that you meant us no harm, that your return was nothing to fear. She informed us that some ghosts return because their life was happy. Others because of unfinished business. Or unanswered questions.

In pondering your reasons, we asked ourselves what business of yours was not unfinished! But we knew that wasn't it. And while I would want my womb to have been a place of great warmth and comfort for you, I knew that wasn't it either. Only this morning—when the list of baby girl names fell from my planner—did I know why you had come back.

So this evening, with your brother in bed, your father and I sat down together with your sonogram printout and the list of names. We passed the papers back and forth between us, searching them with our balmy eyes, beseeching them with our deepest sighs, until we knew your name. Which I will tell you now. Though I selfishly would like to withhold it, so that you would stay with us just a little bit longer.

Oh, what I wouldn't do to prolong this lovely haunting! But, alas, as your parents, we do want what is best for you. You must continue on your journey. Yes. And who are we to keep you here when your foremothers and forefathers are waiting for you?

So, my angel, may you now move on knowing better who you are. Most importantly, my child, our little Rosalie Jean—named for your grandmother and her mother—may you now rest in peace.