
THE
GHOST HUNTER
POCKET
BOOK



The 23 year long-running, ever-popular & media-acclaimed “Mystery Ghost Tours of South Africa”, which have become such a household name that they've featured on TV soap opera's like “7de Laan”, and internationally won the top tourism awards – will now also run in Heidelberg, Gauteng. For upcoming dates visit .....

WWW.MYSTERYGHOSTPRODUCTIONS.CO.ZA



Referred to by the media as “A Man of Many Firsts”, Mark has appeared in every Major Newspaper, clocked up over 200 Radio Hours, and appeared in over 100 TV programmes in SA and Overseas. Not just because of the ghost tours, but far more... let me tell you.

After obtaining 2 degrees in Psychology & Sociology, and also becoming SA's only degreed Para-Psychologist - which means a Paranormalist if you don't know the term well - he became a Film & TV Producer, producing for SA Television by the age of 22 already.

At a young age of 24, he Produced, Directed and Played the Lead Role of “Judas” in the South African Premiere of “Jesus Christ Superstar” - a massive first for SA.

Even when David Copperfield was not advancing the Art of Magic & Illusion, and which led to the TV series “Magic Secrets Revealed”, Mark then gave the art a long-awaited Facelift with totally new illusions – which was a first for the Entire World.

This led Mark to performing for none other than Pres. George Bush Senior in the USA.

Then, Mark's name appeared in the famous London Magic Circle's “Who's Who of Magic in the World”.

And then Mark's signed Photograph was hung in The Hall Of Fame at the International Home of Magicians... The Magic Castle... in Hollywood.

Mark Rose Christie

We also run the “Mystery Ghosts Bus” (Groups only)All Details @ www.MysteryGhostProductions.co.za where we run most (not all) of our different productions in 7 cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cullinan, Parys, Cape Town, Durban & Port Elizabeth).

Like our Facebook Page called “Mystery Ghost Productions (previously known as Mystery Ghost Bus of South Africa)”, and look at the Album there called Best Ghost Photos (captured over the years).



13 GHOST-HUNTING APPS THAT CLAIM TO FIND PARANORMAL ACTIVITY



You don't have to wait for Halloween to use a ghost hunting app. It's a thrilling thing to do if you're stuck at home, and even more fun to do with friends. Whether you go down to your creepy basement to talk to spirts, or venture through the woods looking for apparitions, you never know what you might find lurking in the dark. Some are free, some are not.

In fact, an October 2021 survey of 2,000 people conducted by OnePoll on behalf of Phantom Wines revealed that over 63% of respondents believe in the paranormal in some form, and 44% have even had a personal paranormal encounter of their own. A third of respondents said they've felt a vague "unexplained presence" in their home, whether it was due to flickering lights or doors closing at random. And for the 23% who said they don't believe in the paranormal, they admitted that they still wouldn't want to "provoke" anything. (Looking at you, Ouija boards.)

Whether you want to debunk these claims, or prove once and for all that your hallway really is haunted, a ghost hunting app will come in handy. Most of them have heavy disclaimers stating that they can't actually verify the presence of ghosts. But you know what? That shouldn't stop you from playing around with tools like EMF meters or EVP recorders — and having yourself a spooky time.

Here, the 13 best ghost hunting apps that might help you detect paranormal activity.

Ghostcom Radar Spirit Detector
This highly-rated ghost hunting app allows you to exchange messages with ghosts while locating where they're standing. (Yikes!) It also provides "spiritual statistics" about the ghost's emotional state, zodiac sign, etc. The creators call it spooky, mysterious — and a great party game.

GhostTube SLS
The GhostTube SLS app uses your phone's technology to detect "humanoid bodies" in your environment by projecting a grid of infrared light. If your phone is new enough, it'll also give you night vision capabilities. Open the app the next time the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, and see if someone — or something — is hanging out in the shadows.

Ghost Hunting Tools
Ghost Hunting Tools, available for iPhone and Android, includes an EMF reader that detects fluctuations in the electromagnetic field, and an EVP recorder, which picks up electronic voice phenomena — things IRL ghost hunters rely on to detect otherworldly spirits. It uses a 1000-word dictionary to help you guess the intention of the spirit. And while the app says it's just for fun, the reviews claim otherwise. One June 2021 review is titled, in all-caps, "100% REAL."

iOvilus
This ghost hunting app produces speech from ghosts, called instrumental trans communication, based on changes to sensors on your phone. Who knows if it's real, or if it just relies on what your phone already knows about you to send you scary messages? Either way, it's sure to be creepy. Note: iOvilus does not provide privacy details about how the app handles your data, meaning it could be potentially unsafe.

Spirit Board
Ask the Spirit Board questions, or input text, and then wait for a ghost to respond. To really set the mood, the creators suggest darkening your room and lighting a few candles. Then, place your fingers on the planchette, Ouija-board style, to initiate a ghostly convo. If a spirit responds to your questions, the planchette will move to show their answer. With four stars and over 30,000 reviews on the App Store, you know you'll be in for a spooky time.





Ghost Detector — Haunted Radar
The Ghost Detector — Haunted Radar app claims to be the most accurate ghost detecting app. It works by picking up changes in electromagnetic fields to identify whether or not ghosts are present. Use it to search for spirits, or to scare your friends.

Ghost Radar: CLASSIC
If you're a skilled ghost hunter, then you probably already know that traditional paranormal equipment can malfunction if "normal energy" interferes with the readings. Ghost Radar: CLASSIC solves that problem for you by analyzing the readings only when interesting patterns occur. So rest assured that you can go about your investigation without being fooled by something mundane, like the sound of wind or water messing with your reading. Note: Users report that this app has distracting full-screen pop-up ads that link out to sites.

Ghost Tracker EMF EVP Recorder
The Ghost Tracker EMF EVP Recorder is said to be one of the most accurate and veteran-approved ghost hunting trackers out there, according to a real paranormal researcher. In fact, in an interview with VICE in 2018, Kim Johnston, a paranormal researcher from Birmingham, Alabama, said, "I find that [app] useful because it's built by genuine researchers and not people who are just trying to have fun or make an app that's kind of a joke." Rely on this one if you want to get good data.

Sono X10 Spirit Box
To switch things up, try the Sono X10 Spirit Box, which is another tool Johnston likes to use. To sum up what a spirit box is, the creators of the app made it simple: "It is not the spirit's voice you hear, but the spirit can create words from the voice bank by manipulating the mobile's sensors." Um, creepy!

Paranormal EMF Recorder and Scanner
This app is aimed at anyone who has an interest in paranormal investigation and research. It offers “fun and easy to use” EMF detection, automated EMF recording, and the ability analyze your findings right in the app. Get ready to hear some ~ghostly voices~.

OVERNIGHT Ghost Hunt Toolbox
Here’s one that has everything you need to conduct a full paranormal investigation. You’ll get a spirit box, digital dowsing rods, an entity detector, and more. Once you’ve finished collecting data, go ahead and share what you found in the “community” section.

Ghosthunting Toolkit
This app supplies you with five powerful ghost-hunting tools, including an EMF detector, a vibration detector, power detector, an EVP recorder, and even an interrogation tool to interview intelligent haunts. Use the vibration detector to verify if your furniture is, in fact, shaking all on its own, and the power detector to “coax entities into revealing their manifestation strength.”

Ghost Detector Radar Camera
Beware: This app is horrifying. To use it, brace yourself and walk around using the screen to hunt for ghosts. If one pops up, use the app to ask them questions. It’s an “ultra-realistic experience” that might as well be real, especially if you’re using the app alone.



GhostTube VOX Synthesizer is a video toolkit and sound synthesizer for paranormal investigators and video creators. The app uses the environmental sensors in your phone to measure fluctuations in the environment. Using these readings, it synthesizes commonly used sounds, syllables, words and phrases from online digital broadcasts when specific magnetic signatures are detected. The theory being tested by this app is that spirits can communicate by influencing their environment to select and/or manipulate sounds. Users can also adjust the echo, reverb and distortion of synthesized sounds, and best of all, unlike other paranormal apps, GhostTube comes with NO pre-recorded sounds. All sounds are synthesized in realtime from radio streams.






GhostTube Paranormal Videos uses your mobile device's actual sensors to detect fluctuations in magnetic energy, select words from the pre-populated data bank, and track audio recordings during your paranormal investigations. No special sound or visual FX added - Just raw readings from your device. Read more about how GhostTube works over at GhostTube.com

Features included with the GhostTube paranormal app:
- Magnetic Field Detector (EMF Detector), using the phones built-in magnetometer (on compatible devices only)

GhostTube SEER is the world's first AI-powered paranormal investigative tool. The app combines theories of spiritual communication and the human psyche, mind and interpretation using the power of modern-day artificial intelligence. GhostTube SEER adds a new dimension to experimental spiritual communication that is unmatched by traditional tools and experimental techniques.

GhostTube SEER uses your mobile device's actual sensors to detect fluctuations in the environment, and uses these to select words from the pre-populated word bank. It runs selected words through an advanced artificial intelligence algorithm to produce unique, AI-generated visuals. It can also be used with GhostTube Lens, the world's first virtual reality headset for paranormal investigators, for a more immersive experience and adding a whole new dimension to your paranormal experiments.



Conger, the protagonist, is given a chance to get out of jail if he agrees to kill a man who had died 200 years ago in the 1960's. This man gave a speech urging non-violent lifestyle before being arrested and killed by police. Months later those that listened to this speech reported seeing the man again after his death and believed it a sign of his divinity. From the teachings of the man emerged a cult that quickly spread, eventually becoming opposed to technological and industrial advancement. Conger is given a skull from which he can identify the man, and is sent back in time in a capsule. First arriving several months after the man's death, Conger then travels back to a few days prior to when the man will give his speech. During this, Conger falls under suspicion of being a Communist as he is dressed up strangely and has a strange accent. As Conger prepares for the man's arrival, he discovers that the skull is his own, and he is the man who will change the world. As the time for the man's speech arrives, police and a town mob surround Conger. Due to the use of time travel, Conger realizes that even though he will die, another version of himself will reappear in a few months, as if resurrected. He tells the gathered crowd: "Those who take lives will lose their own. Those who kill, will die. But he who gives his own life away will live again!"


THE
SKULL

Skull symbolism is the attachment of symbolic meaning to the human skull. The most common symbolic use of the skull is as a representation of death.

Humans can often recognize the buried fragments of an only partially revealed cranium even when other bones may look like shards of stone. The human brain has a specific region for recognizing faces,[1] and is so attuned to finding them that it can see faces in a few dots and lines or punctuation marks; the human brain cannot separate the image of the human skull from the familiar human face. Because of this, both the death and the now-past life of the skull are symbolized.

Hindu temples and depiction of some Hindu deities have displayed association with skulls.

Moreover, a human skull with its large eye sockets displays a degree of neoteny, which humans often find visually appealing—yet a skull is also obviously dead, and to some can even seem to look sad due to the downward facing slope on the ends of the eye sockets. A skull with the lower jaw intact may also appear to be grinning or laughing due to the exposed teeth. As such, human skulls often have a greater visual appeal than the other bones of the human skeleton, and can fascinate even as they repel. Societies predominantly associate skulls with death and evil.

Unicode reserves character U+1F480 (💀) for a human skull pictogram.

Throughout the centuries skulls symbolized either warnings of various threats or as reminder of the vanity of earthly pleasures in contrast with our own mortality. Nevertheless, the skull seems to be omnipresent in the first decade of the twenty-first century, appearing on jeweler, bags, clothing and in the shape of various decorative items. However, the increasing use of the skull as a visual symbol in popular culture reduces its original meaning as well as its traditional connotation.[2][3]



HOW TO CONDUCT A GHOST INVESTIGATION FOR BEGINNERS

GENERAL GUIDELINES:
Here are some basic tips before you begin a ghost investigation.

- NEVER GO ALONE. Especially if you are investigating at night. Always bring a group or at least a buddy, and always have parental permission or a chaperone.

- MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE NOT TRESPASSING. Do research into your location and ask the owners for permission first. If you are investigating city property like a graveyard, get permission from the city. You might need a permit or to notify the local police that you will be there. DO NOT trespass on anyone's property.

- PROTECT YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY. Whatever religion you are a part of, practice your protective prayers, spells, etc. If you are not religious, do whatever makes you feel comfortable.

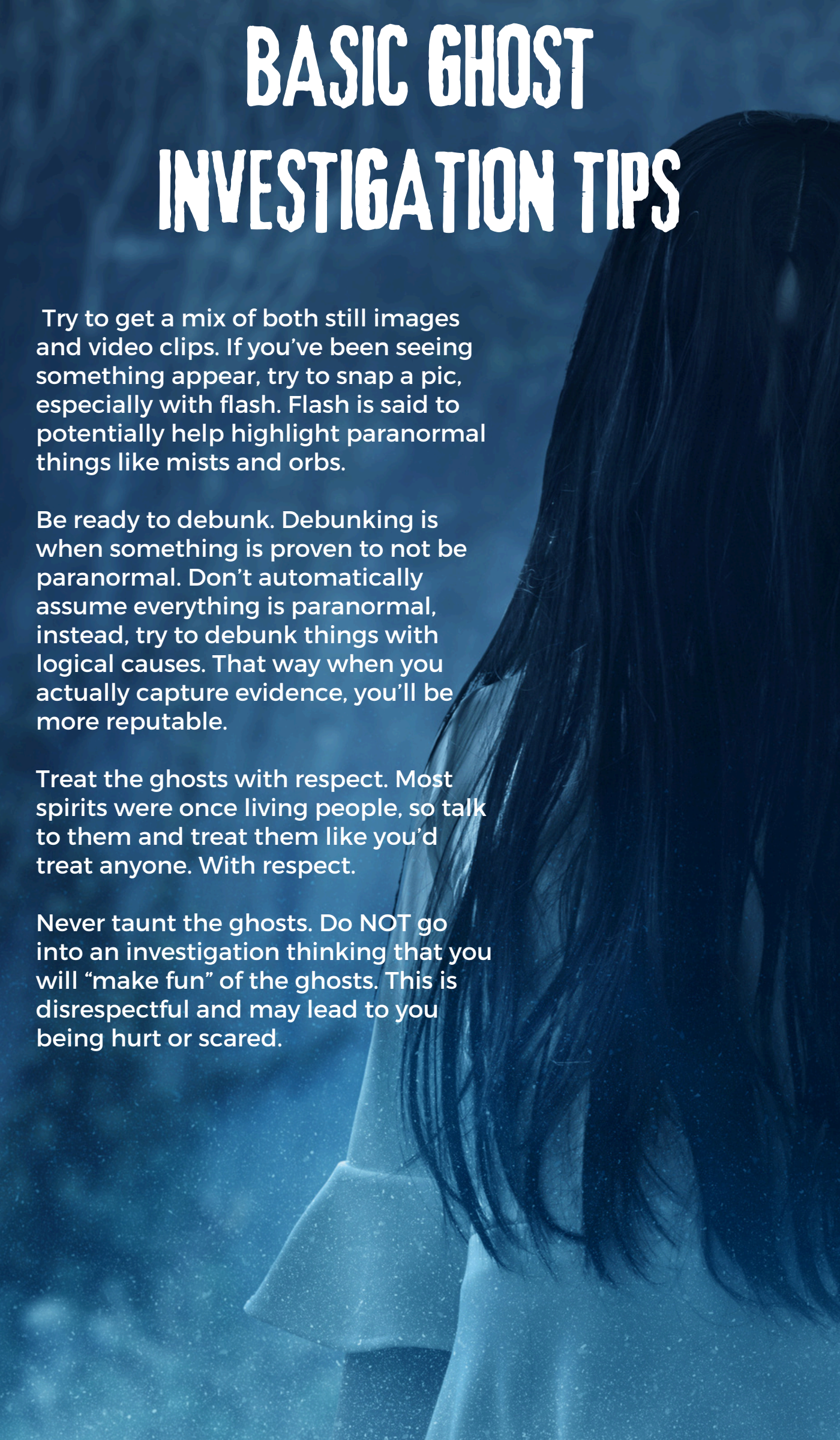
- PROTECT YOURSELF PHYSICALLY. Look over the location during the day to see any obstacles you may trip on in the dark. Bring flashlights and ways to see easily. As always, stay in groups/buddy system.

- BRING ID. In case someone stops you, bring ID like a drivers license or something so you can prove who you are. But like I said earlier, you NEED to get permission to investigate your location, do NOT trespass on private property.

- GET EQUIPMENT. You don't need fancy equipment to investigate. A flashlight, camera, phone, and maybe sound recorder are ideal. You can also bring any other equipment you may want. If you wish to get serious about ghost investigation, you could bring EMF detectors and other devices.

- DO RESEARCH. Find out everything you can about the history of the place you are investigating and why it might be haunted. Battlefields, hospitals, graveyards, etc. might be hotbeds for activity, do some research into local urban legends to find out more.

BASIC GHOST INVESTIGATION TIPS



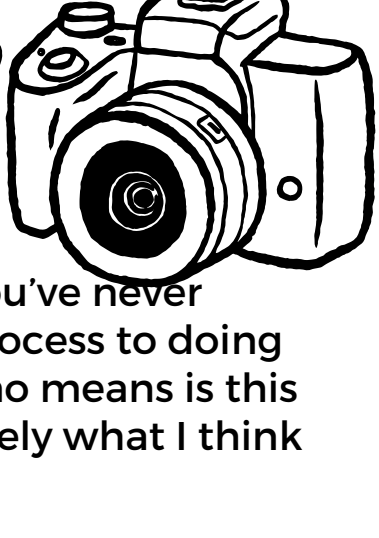
Try to get a mix of both still images and video clips. If you've been seeing something appear, try to snap a pic, especially with flash. Flash is said to potentially help highlight paranormal things like mists and orbs.

Be ready to debunk. Debunking is when something is proven to not be paranormal. Don't automatically assume everything is paranormal, instead, try to debunk things with logical causes. That way when you actually capture evidence, you'll be more reputable.

Treat the ghosts with respect. Most spirits were once living people, so talk to them and treat them like you'd treat anyone. With respect.

Never taunt the ghosts. Do NOT go into an investigation thinking that you will "make fun" of the ghosts. This is disrespectful and may lead to you being hurt or scared.

HOW TO CONDUCT A BASIC GHOST INVESTIGATION



Ghost investigations can be a bit daunting if you've never conducted one. I've provided a basic 10 step process to doing ghost investigations for beginners, though by no means is this the only way to do an investigation. This is merely what I think about them.

- Do all the prior research required about your location. Acquire needed permissions to investigate your desired location. Look into local legends/stories about the location.

- Visit the location during the day. This can be the day of the investigation or the day before, or even weeks before, this is up to you. Visit the location during the day so that you can become acquainted with it and familiar with the layout.

- Get your equipment together. Gather any needed equipment, including but not limited to: flashlight, camera, sound recorder, EMF devices, phone, ID, First aid kit, etc.



- Before entering the location, do your necessary spiritual protections.

- Begin by entering the location and explaining calmly to the ghosts your intentions, whether that is to capture evidence, communicate, or simply to prove their existence.

- You can begin to investigate here any way you see fit. I would first ask a few questions of the spirits and try to record EVP's. I feel that trying to spark some communication is a good way to start leading into potentially capturing some evidence of the paranormal.

- From there, I would begin to snap still images of the area. If you don't have any Ultra-Violet, Night-Vision, or Full-Spectrum camera, simply use your camera's flash feature.

- After this, or during the above process (if you have multiple cameras), record some video clips while asking some questions.

- When concluding the investigation, thank the ghosts for allowing you to investigate the location.

- After leaving the location, do any cleansing rituals you feel comfortable with, so that you do not carry any spirits with you from the location.



ON THE NIGHT OF THE INVESTIGATION

9 SIGNS

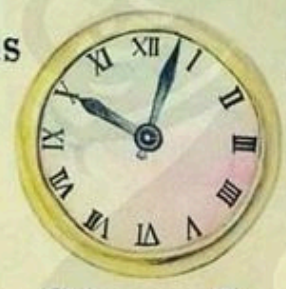
A DECEASED LOVED ONE CONTACTS YOU





MAGICALRECIPESONLINE

Sign 1:
Appears in Dreams



Sign 6:
Catching the same Song





Sign 2:
Black Feathers



Sign 7:
Butterflies & Dragonflies

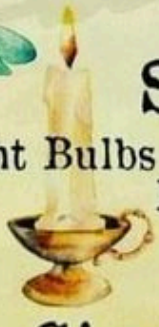
Sign 5:
Clocks keep stopping







Sign 8:
Light Bulbs &Candles Flickering



Sign 3:
Electronic devices
Reboot (without prompt)





Sign 4:
You can smell them!

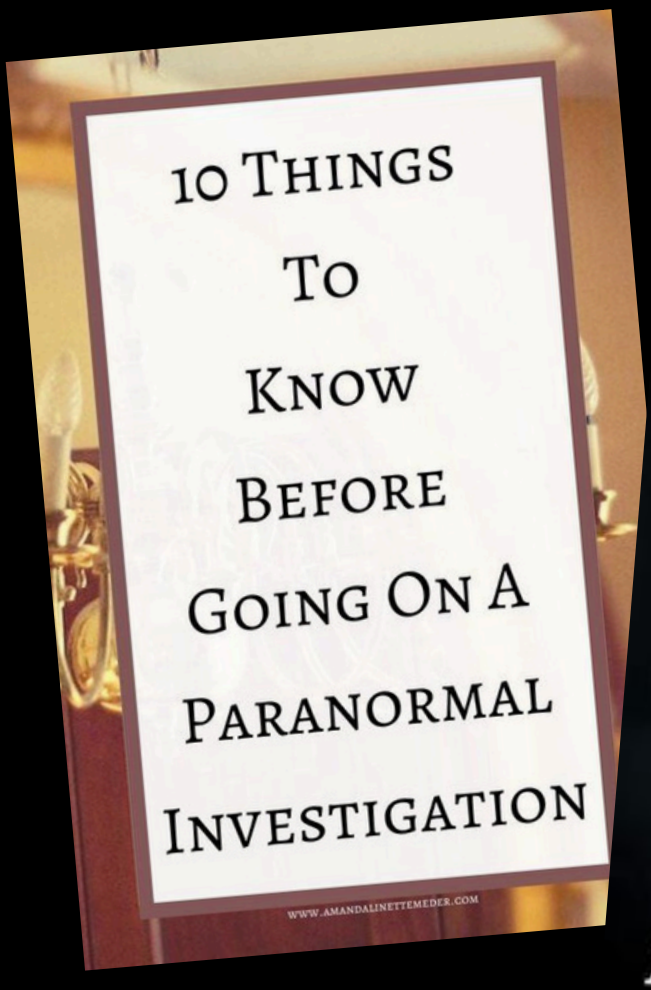
Sign 9:
Sudden Change of Temperature



Have you noticed these 9 Signs?

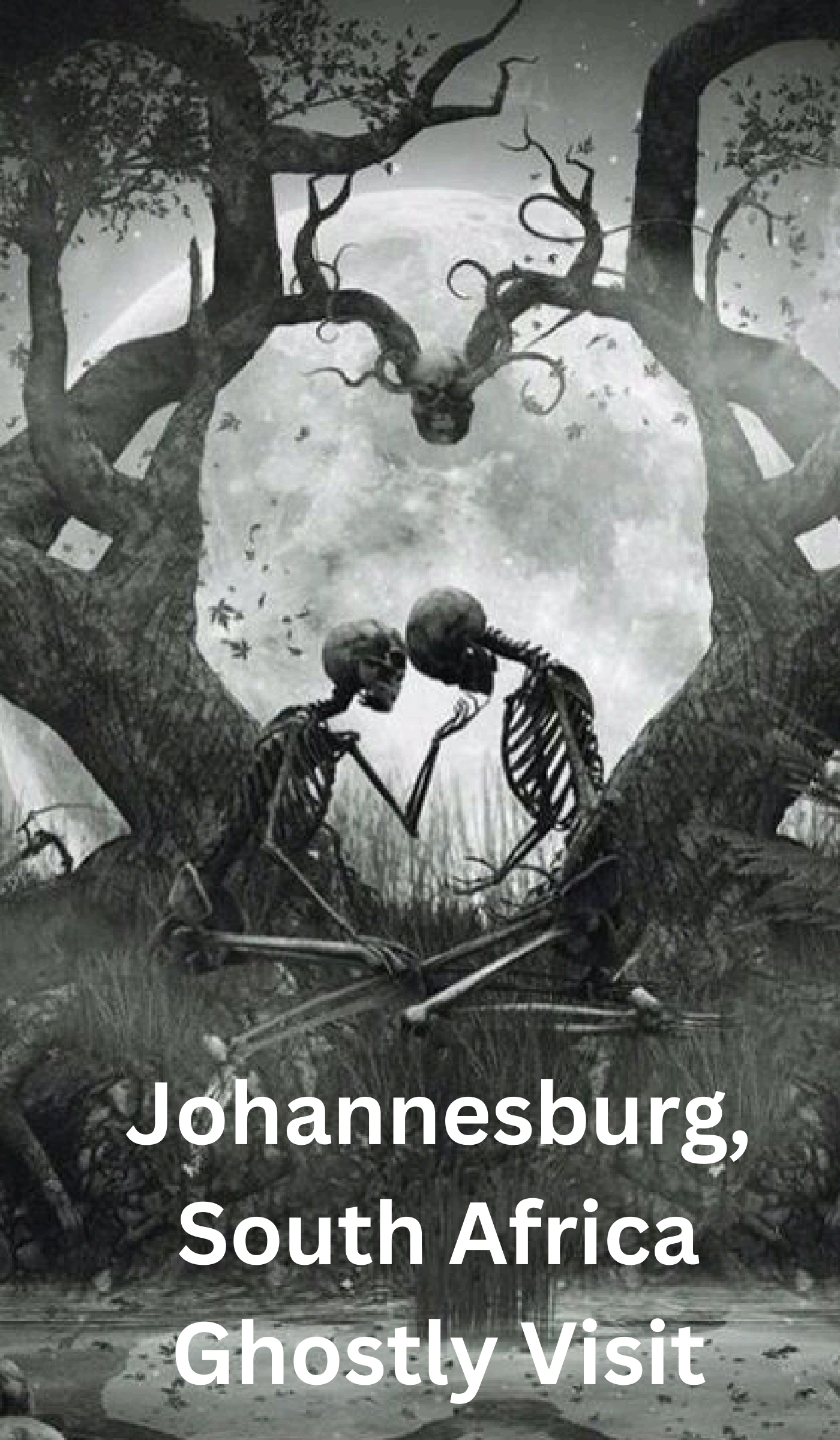
Communicating
with spirits
opens a door
within ourselves,
giving them
permission
to enter our
personal space.

Be careful who
you invite in.


10 Things
To
Know
Before
Going On A
Paranormal
Investigation
WWW.AMANDALINETTEMEDER.COM


16 Signs
A Ghost or Spirit
is Paying You a Visit
By Tanaaz Chubb
THE MINDS JOURNAL


RIP
RIP



Johannesburg, South Africa Ghostly Visit



PONTE BUILDING

After the Ponte building (with the red Vodacom sign on the top of it) was completed in the early 1980s, some would use the building to try to commit suicide, but not all jumped from a floor high enough, and wound up in hospital with severe injuries.

In several cases people undergoing an operation, report leaving their physical bodies and floating upwards, where they look down upon themselves.

Overseas, the famous Dr Sam Parnia - a professor who conducts research into cardiopulmonary resuscitation - conducted a small study called AWARE “1”. One of the patients, whilst undergoing an NDE (Near Death Experience), had an OOBE (Out Of Body Experience), and was able to accurately describe what was going on in another ward far from his ward. Dr Parnia planned another study with a far bigger group, called the AWARE “2”, which was to finish in 2020, but was put on hold due to Covid-19.

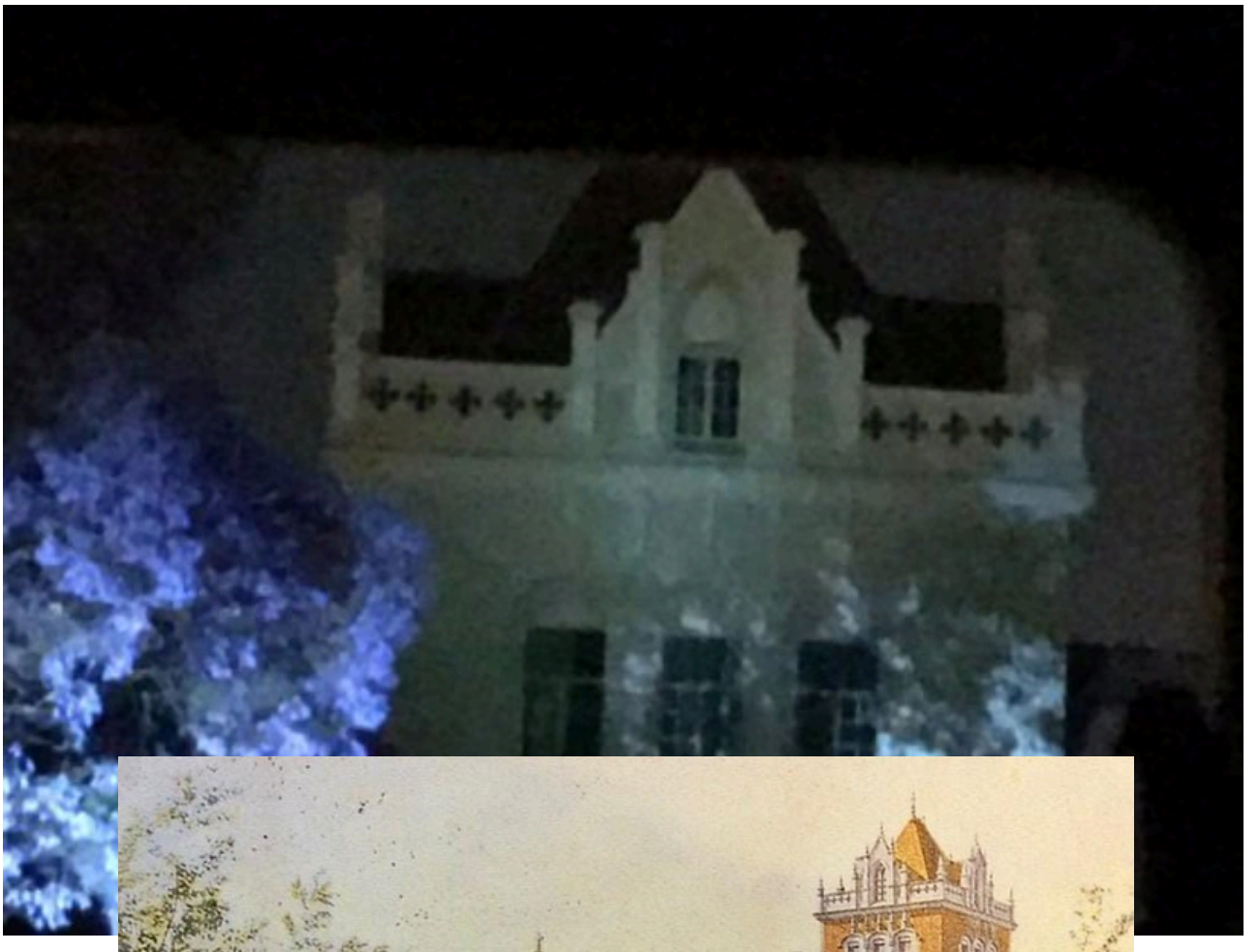
But, this doesn't matter, there are many other studies by other professionals. Many who undergo NDEs report that they see themselves going through a tunnel of light. However, the hardcore 'Materialist' type scientists - mainly neuro-scientists - remain sceptical. They say Consciousness is just a by-product caused by the brain (ie: Matter), and that NDEs and OOBEs are mere hallucinations.

One of the main arguments made by neuro-scientists & other sceptics, is that the tunnel of light hallucination occurs because of the person remembering their trip down the birth canal when they were born.

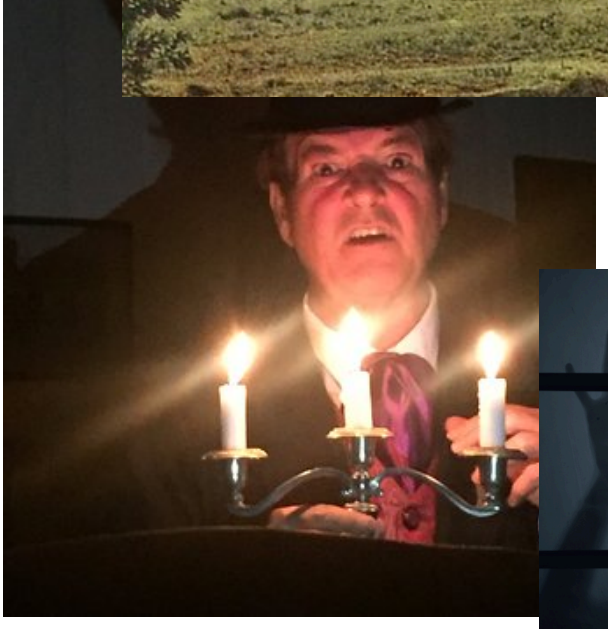
However, humans have something called "Childhood Amnesia". This means the Hippocampus and Prefrontal Cortex of the brain - which are 2 key structures for memory - don't develop until ages 3 to 4. So it's impossible to remember anything. Also, when the baby goes down the birth canal, it would need to have eyes on the top of its head to see a tunnel.



KENSINGTON SANITARIUM





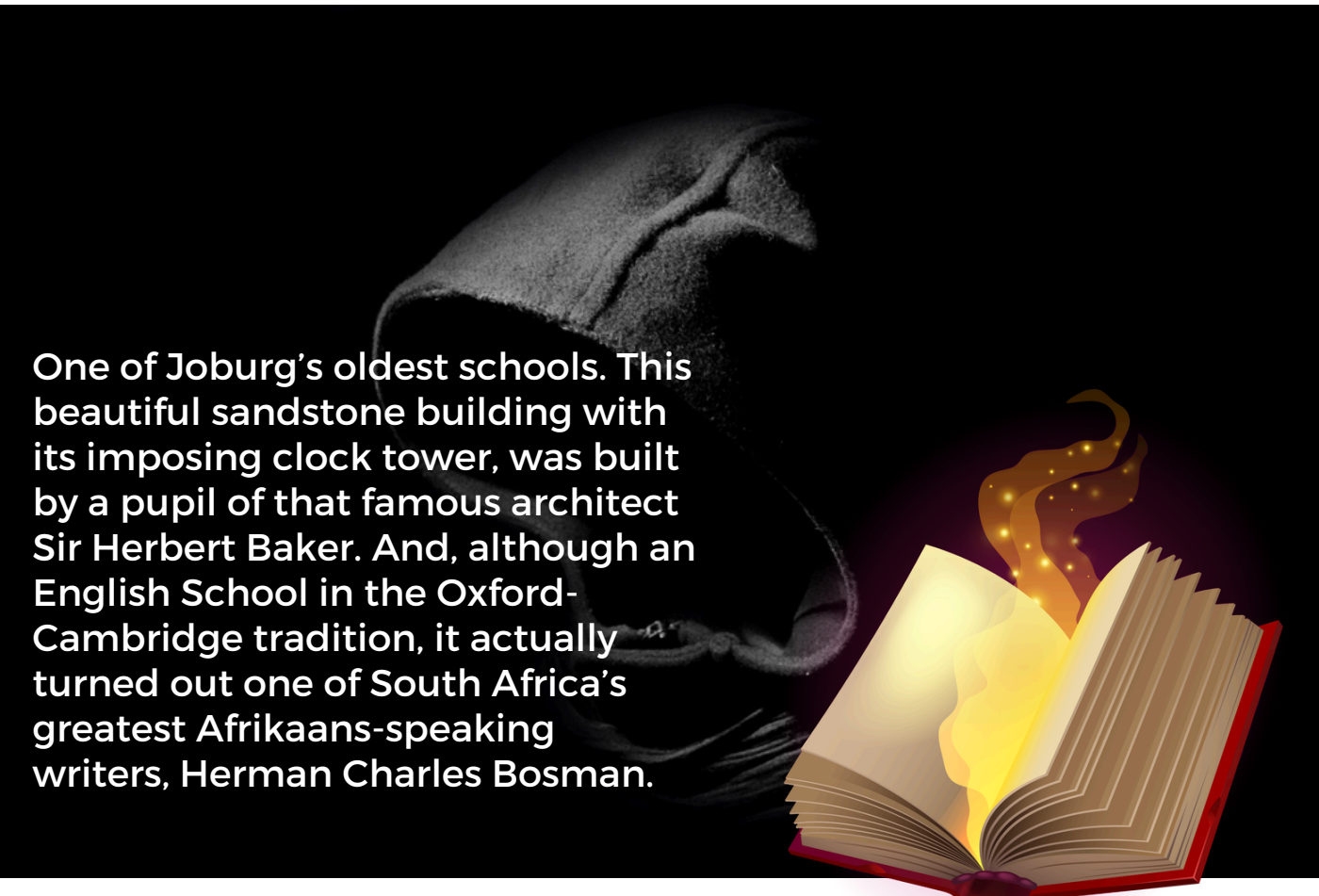




KENSINGTON POLTERGEIST HOUSE



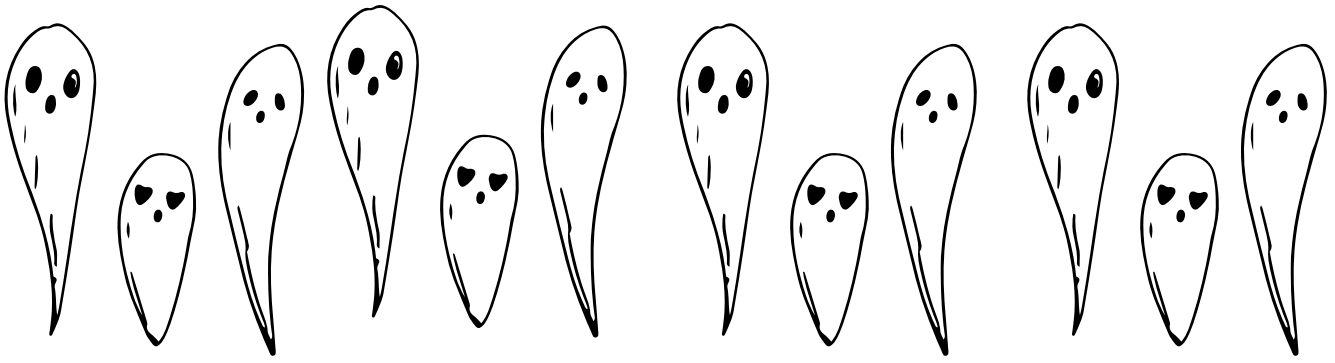
JEPPE BOYS HIGH



One of Joburg's oldest schools. This beautiful sandstone building with its imposing clock tower, was built by a pupil of that famous architect Sir Herbert Baker. And, although an English School in the Oxford-Cambridge tradition, it actually turned out one of South Africa's greatest Afrikaans-speaking writers, Herman Charles Bosman.

The most famous ghost at the school appears at the one boarding house, Tsessebe House, and she is referred to as 'The Afkop Vrou', which translated from Afrikaans means "The Headless Woman". She always visits the boarding house the night before the annual 'inter-house' athletics day, which terrifies any of the blonde-haired boys, since her son was blonde, and sadly died on the night before the athletics day from a heart attack. And so, she still comes to look for him.

The story is true, except that the aspect of her being without a head is simply made up by the boarding house prefects to scare the younger boys. But, yes she does visit and she does have a head... and in fact inside the boarding house is a photograph of the outside of the boarding house, and in the one window pane can be seen the face of a little boy. Is he the little boy who died?




BEWARE
THIS PROPERTY IS
PROTECTED
BY
24 HRS
WARNING!





DICKY FRITZ

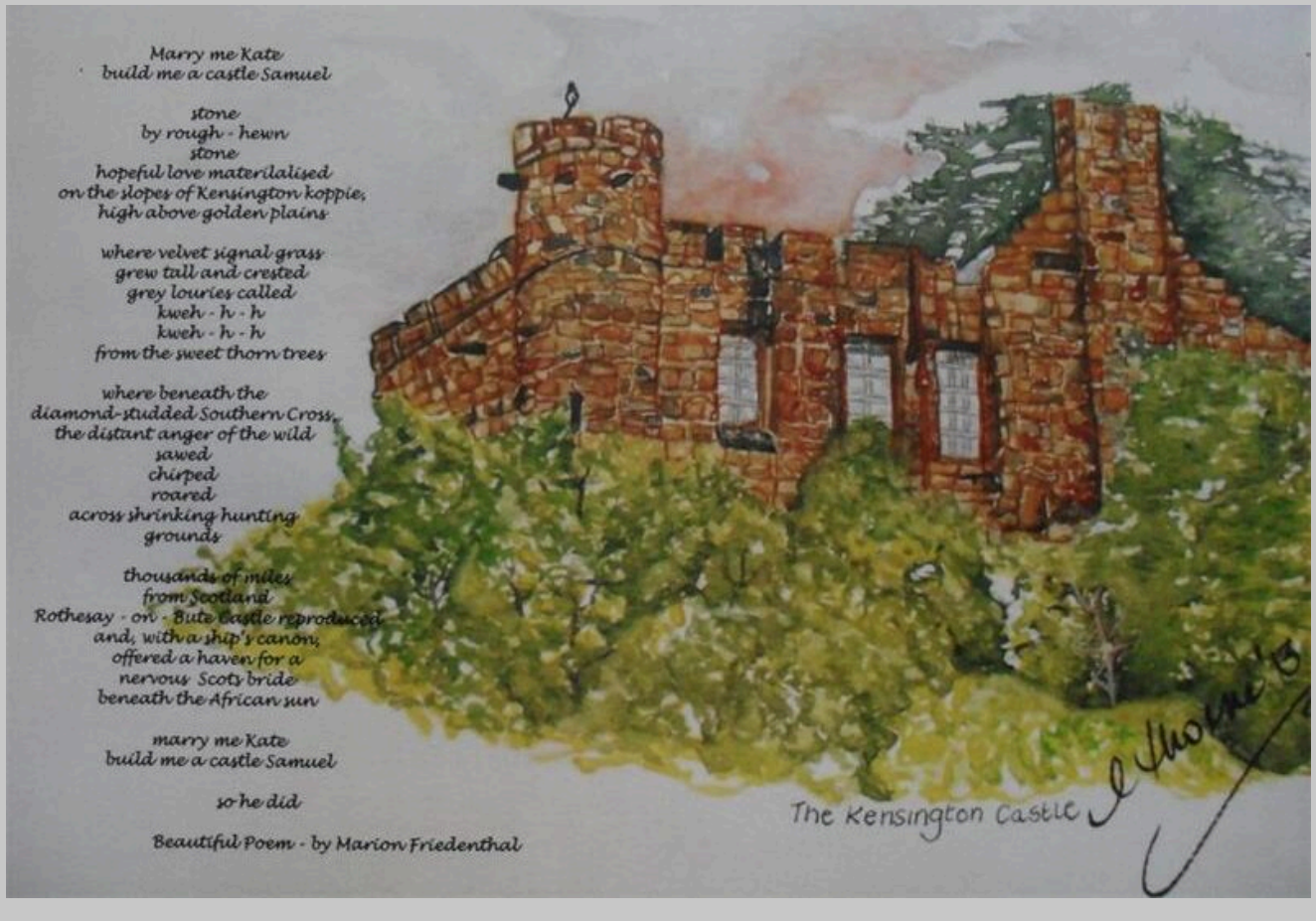
The Dome War Memorial on your RIGHT, pays tribute to 169 old-boys and 2 masters of the school, who fought in both World Wars, you will shortly see the front gates and the pillars – that were mentioned in the directions above.

The 2 masters were Dickie Dashwood and Fritz von Linsingen. Their names are on the 2 plaques just mentioned, and the gates were named after them as "The Dickie-Fritz Gates". Their story is an interesting one, and rather sad, and ties up with what Carl Jung called "Synchronicity" (ie: a coincidence that is not just mere coincidence). You see, both masters were born in Queenstown, went to the same schools, both became teachers, and both taught here at Jeppe. But the similarities didn't stop there, because the 2 young men were to always be life-long friends. With the outbreak of hostilities in the 2nd World War, both enlisted. But, sadly, a final and fatal similarity occurred, where both were killed in action at the Battle Of Bardia in Libya.

(READ SLOWLY & SADLY. This is your chance to be an actor/actress) And... so sadly... as it was during lives... so it was with their deaths... as both died on precisely the same day... the 31st of December 1941. But think of it... the 31st of December...a few hours longer, and they would have at least seen the New Year in. However, sadly... all that stood in their memory were some hastily dug graves, with small wooden crosses - and in a country far, far away... just like a ghost is removed very far away from its temporal body. And so, these 2 gates were erected in their memory, where their spirits live on.

And now, at the end of every day, when the 2 gates are closed, it's as if the 2 friends are still here, walking towards each other. And when the latch is thrown over the top of the gates, it's as if the 2 friends are shaking hands... reminding us of a companionship that endured throughout their lives...and now... even regarding..... their untimely deaths.

KENSINGTON CASTLE



SIR GEORGE FARRAR'S GRAVE



THE GHOST OF NOTTIES HOTEL

One farmer, Christopher Groom, trying to reach the hotel to shelter from a storm, was unable to reach the hotel in time and was struck by a bolt of lightning just outside (where the first tennis courts were located). He and his dead horse were discovered some time later when the storm had passed over, the unconscious man quite unaware of his narrow escape. A hole straight through his saddle showed where the bolt of lightning had struck.

Like all hotels with a history, Notties Hotel is reputed to be haunted. In the past, guests and staff have reported that the spirit of a woman roams the hotel (especially room 10) and its grounds. This house-proud, gentle ghost apparently moves flower arrangements, tidies away clothes and straightens bedding. Legend has it that she is 'Charlotte', a lady of loose morals or a chamber maid depending on the source of the tale, who apparently threw herself to her death over the balcony outside her room after being jilted.

Or was she pushed ?...



THE HISTORY OF NOTTIES HOTEL

History at Notties Hotel
Legend has it that there has been an inn situated here since 1854. While the actual building we know today is not as old, there could certainly have been on this site a “Notties” inn or a tavern for the soldiers stationed at Fort Nottingham, who were supposed to protect the area from Bushmen who were stealing local livestock. Situated at the crossroads where the road to the interior met the road to Fort Nottingham, it would have served the horse-drawn coaches that travelled the area before the railway line was constructed.

The first recorded facts about the hotel we know today indicate that the land for the Notties Hotel was bought by George Orwin in 1889, following the death of landowner James Ellis and his sister Janet King, the land being sold by the family to pay off the siblings’ estates. The price received for the land, the princely sum of 125 pounds per acre, was extremely high for the time. Presumably it was the favourable location that drove the price so high.
Orwin erected the Railway Hotel, as it was first named, to serve the station that was built at the tiny Nottingham Road settlement. The railway changed the lives of the Midlands’ settlers forever.

There was a daily postal system, and almost anything they needed could now be ordered from Durban or Pietermaritzburg. Produce from the area could be quickly sent to the city centres for sale, and travel between the coast and the interior was a matter of hours rather than weeks or days. The railway also led to the development of the Midlands as a viable area for settlement.

The Nottingham Road Hotel was always the local’s favourite haunt, whether for a social drink in the pub or for supposedly more serious matters such as meetings of the Nottingham Road Farmers’ Association. Apparently the farmers often only arrived home safely because their faithful horses knew the way back to their stables! The system worked smoothly until a prankster swopped the horses between the different traps and carts, so that drink-befuddled farmers were taken off in completely the wrong direction! Often the locals would decide to stay over at the hotel, especially if the weather was bad



SA's Mystery GHOST Tours



A Public Tour, with an info-taining mix of exciting entertainment, intriguing history, the awe-inspiring science of the paranormal (quantum physics & force fields, plus dowsing rods, key-bending & ESP live demonstrations), ghost hunting cellphone apps, poltergeist phenomena, a host of exotic haunted venues, and finally winding up inside an eerie graveyard with a thrilling visual climax – all in one night.

A night out doesn't get better than this. So, gather family, friends (or even workmates), and bring a picnic basket with delectable drinks & sumptuous snacks, as we meander into the mysteries of the night. (We also run private tours for birthdays, corporates, year-end parties, overseas tourist groups, etc. - apart from our public tours).

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Daisy de Melker





FINAL FACTS, MYTHS & GHOST?

Birth name: Daisy Louisa Hancorn-Smith

Classification: Serial killer
Characteristics: Poisoner - Parricide - To collect insurance money
Number of victims: 3
Date of murders: 1923 / 1927 / 1932
Date of arrest: April 1932
Date of birth: June 1, 1886
Victims profile: William Alfred Cowle, 50 (her husband) / Robert Sproat, 44 (her second husband) / Rhodes Cecil Cowle, 20 (her son)
Method of murder: Poisoning (strychnine - arsenic)
Location: Germiston, Gauteng, South Africa
Status: Executed by hanging at Pretoria Central Prison on December 30, 1932

The case attracted almost unprecedented public interest. Queues of spectators lined up for hours each day before the proceedings began. On the final day of the trial, some spectators who had waited overnight to ensure a place in the court sold their seats for up to 30 dollars each!

At that time it was normal for anyone accused of murder under South African law to be tried by a judge and jury, although the law allowed them the option of being tried by a judge and two assessors. Since public opinion weighed so heavily against Mrs de Melker, she had opted, on the advice of her legal counsel, for the latter.

The proceedings were opened before Mr Justice Greenberg and two senior magistrates, Mr J.M.Graham and Mr A.A. Stanford. Mrs De Melker faced three charges. Firstly that, on or about 11 January, 1923, and at or near Bertrams, in the district of Johannesburg, she had murdered her husband, William Alfred Cowle, by poisoning him with strychnine. Secondly, that on about 6 November, 1927, in the same district, she had murdered her second husband, Robert Sproat, by poisoning him with strychnine and, thirdly, that on or about 5 March, 1932, in the district of Germiston, she had murdered her son, Rhodes Cecil Cowle, by administering him poison, namely arsenic.

Daisy De Melker (nee Hancorn-Smith) was born on 1 June, 1886, at Seven Fountains near Grahamstown. She was one of eleven children. When she was twelve, she went to Bulawayo to live with her father and two of her brothers.

Three years later, she become a boarder at the Good Hope Seminary School in Cape Town. She returned to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1903, but apparently found rural life unexciting, because it was not long before she returned to South Africa and enrolled at the Berea Nursing Home in Durban.

On one of her holidays in Rhodesia, she met and fell in love with a young man named Bert Fuller who was a civil servant in the Native Affairs Department at Broken Hill. They planned to marry in October, 1907. However, Fuller contracted black-water fever and died, with Daisy at his bedside, on the very day they had planned to marry. Fuller left a will bequeathing £100 to his fiance.

In March 1909, about eighteen months after the death of Bert Fuller, Daisy Hancorn-Smith married William Alfred Cowle, a plumber, in Johannesburg. She was 23; he was 36. The couple had five children, four of whom died. The first were twins, who died in infancy; their third child died of an abscess on the liver; and the fourth suffered convulsions and bowel trouble and died at the age of 15 months. Their last, and only surviving child, Rhodes Cecil, was born in June 1911.

Early on the morning of 11 January, 1923, William Cowle become ill soon after taking Epsom salts prepared by his wife. The first doctor who attended him did not consider his condition serious and prescribed a bromide mixture. But, Cowle's condition deteriorated rapidly. Not long after the doctor had left, he took a turn for the worse. His wife summoned the neighbours to help and called for another doctor.



Cowle was in excruciating pain when the second doctor arrived. He foamed at the mouth, was blue in the face, and screamed in agony if anyone touched him until he died. Faced with these symptoms, the second doctor suspected strychnine poisoning and refused to sign the death certificate. A postmortem was subsequently performed by the acting District Surgeon, Dr Fergus. The cause of death was certified to be chronic nephritis and cerebral hemorrhage. Daisy Cowle, the sole beneficiary of her husband's will, inherited £1795

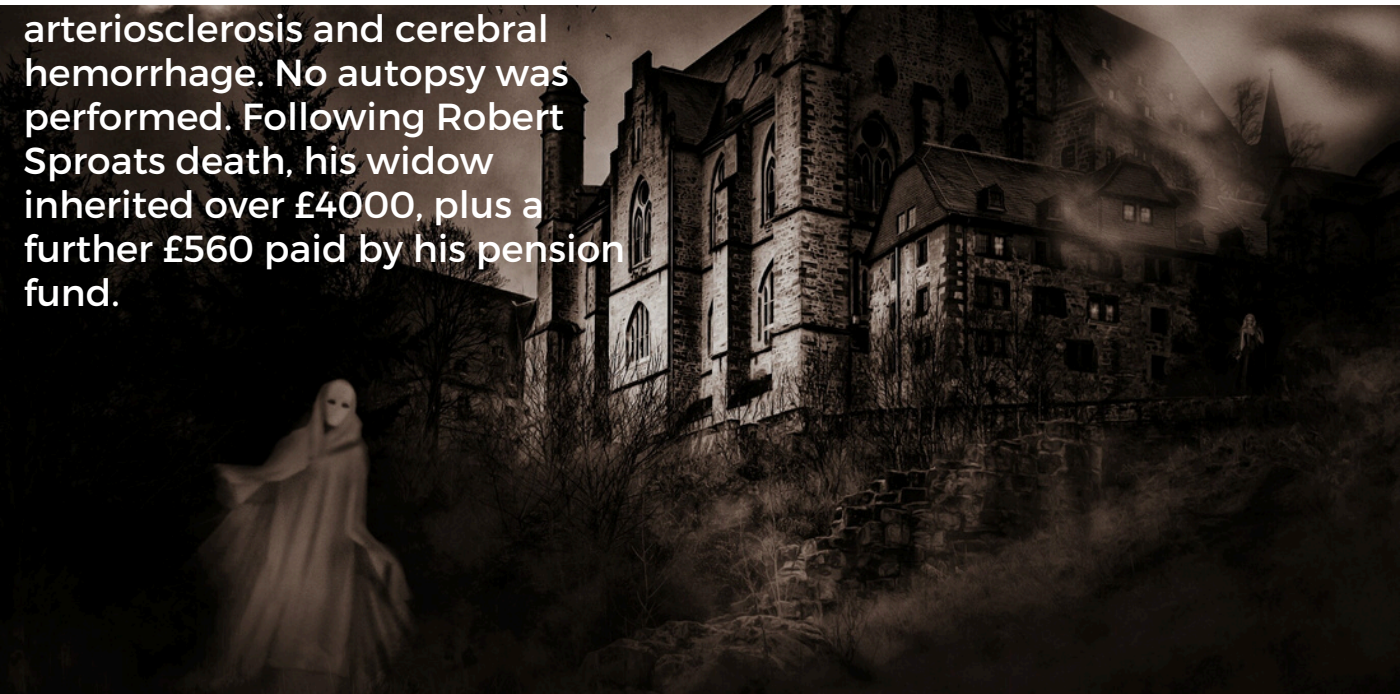
.At the age of thirty-six, and three years to the day after the death of her first husband, Daisy Cowle married another plumber. His name was Robert Sproat, and he was ten years her senior. In October 1927, Robert Sproat became violently ill. He was in great agony and suffered severe muscle spasms similar to those experienced by William Cowle. He recovered.

A few weeks later, he suffered a second fatal attack after drinking some beer in the company of his wife and stepson, Rhodes. He died on 6 November, 1927. Dr Mallinick, the attending physician, certified that the cause of death was arteriosclerosis and cerebral hemorrhage. No autopsy was performed. Following Robert Sproats death, his widow inherited over £4000, plus a further £560 paid by his pension fund.

On 21 January, 1931, Daisy Sproat married for the third time. Her husband was a widower, Sydney Clarence De Melker, who like her previous two husbands was a plumber. By this time, Rhodes Cowle was 19. His sister in law, Eileen De Melker thought him lazy and remarked that he was often unwilling to get up for work in the morning.

However, another witness at his mother's trial described him as 'bright and conscientious'. A girl who met Rhodes at a party a few weeks before his death maintained that he was a real gentleman. Certainly the evidence conflicted, but none of it explained why Daisy De Melker decided to kill Rhodes. In the case of her first two husbands, the motive seemed clearly to be financial gain. But why kill her son?

Rhodes seems to have been under the impression that he would come into an inheritance at the age of 21. Perhaps he was demanding more than she could give him and was becoming a burden to her? The most obvious answer is that she simply didn't like him. He was a disappointment to her. She had pampered him all his life, but he rarely showed her any consideration in return.



Whatever the cause, late in February 1932, Mrs de Melker traveled many kilometers from Germiston to Turffontein, to obtain a quantity of arsenic from a Chemist there. She used her former name, Sproat, and claimed that she required the poison to destroy a sick cat.

Less than a week later, on Wednesday, 2 March, 1927, Rhodes took ill at work after drinking coffee from a thermos flask which his mother had prepared for him. A fellow worker, James Webster, also became violently sick. Webster, who had drunk very little of the coffee, recovered within a few days, but Rhodes died at home at midday on the following Saturday. A post-mortem followed and the cause of death was given as Cerebal malaria. Rhodes was buried at New Brixton cemetery the following day.



On 1 April, Mrs de Melker received £100 from Rhodes life insurance policy. But the story does not end there. By this time, William Sproat, her dead husband's brother, had become, suspicious. Eventually these suspicions were conveyed to the authorities.

On 15 April, the police obtained a court order permitting them to exhume the bodies of Rhodes Cowle, Robert Sproat and William Cowle. The first body to be removed was that of Rhodes Cowle. The corpse was found to be in an unusually good state of preservation - which is characteristic of the presence of arsenic in large quantities.

Sure enough, the government analyst was able to isolate traces of arsenic in the viscera, backbone and hair. Although the bodies of William Cowle and Robert Sproat were largely decomposed, traces of strychnine were found in the vertebrae of each man. Their bones also had a pinkish discolouration, suggesting that the men had taken pink strychnine, which was common at the time. Traces of arsenic were also found in the hair and fingernails of James Webster, Rhodes' colleague.

A true crime classic about Daisy de Melker in ragtime Joburg –a city of murder, mayhem and gold. Ted Botha takes the reader into the underbelly of Johannesburg in the 1920s and 1930s as he traces the fascinating story of the mysterious Daisy de Melker, who was hanged for poisoning her son. Many also believed she poisoned two husbands for their life insurance money.In the shadow of ever-growing mine dumps, she went about her business quietly and unnoticed–the most unlikely of killers. Even though people close to her kept dying, no one suspected a thing for twenty years. When someone finally spoke up, it led to one of South Africa’s most sensational trials. De Melker’s story unfolds in tandem with those of colourful Johannesburg characters of the same period such as the Foster Gang, Herman Charles Bosman, the dashing conman Baron von Veltheim and a Bonny-and-Clyde-style couple, Dicky Mallalieu and Gwen Tolputt. Some cross paths with each other and also those of famous writers of era such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sarah Gertrude Millin.

A week later, the police arrested Mrs de Melker and charged her with the murder of all three men. Public interest in the De Melker case grew, and the newspapers gave the story a great deal of coverage. The Turffontein chemist from whom she had bought the arson that killed her son, recognized De Melker from a newspaper photograph as being Mrs D.L. Sproat who had signed the poisons register and went to the police.

The De Melker trial lasted thirty days. Sixty witnesses were called for the Crown and less than half this number, for the defense. To present the forensic evidence, the Crown employed the services of Dr J. M. Watt, an expert toxicologist and Professor of Pharmacology at the Witwatersrand University. In summing up, before giving his verdict, the judge pointed out that the State had been unable to prove conclusively that Cowle and Sproat had died of strychnine poisoning. 'It does not convince me, nor does it convict the accused,' he said. On the third count, however, he had come to the 'inescapable conclusion' that Mrs De Melker had murdered her son. This was evident because:

(a)Rhodes Cowle had died of arsenic poisoning;

(b)The coffee flask held traces of arsenic;

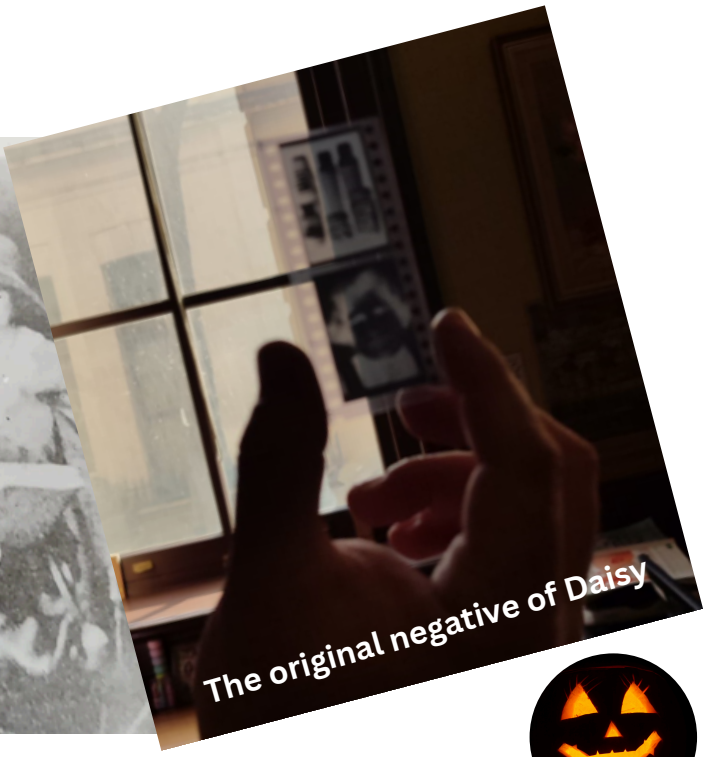
(c)The accused had put the arsenic into the flask (I can see no escape from the conclusion that the accused put arsenic into the flask..,') on the Wednesday prior to Rhodes Cowle's death; and

(d)The defense of suicide was untenable.

When the judge finally turned to pass sentence on Mrs De Melker, her face whitened, and for a moment all the strength seemed to leave her body. 'You have been found guilty of the murder of your son, Rhodes Cecil Cowle. Do you have anything to say before 1 pass sentence of death on you?' A hushed silence fell over the court. 'I am not guilty of poisoning my son.' 'There is only one sentence 1 can pass,' responded the judge, and, so saying, he condemned her to death by hanging.

On the morning of 30 December, 1932, Daisy de Melker was hanged.





Photos by Michael Sorensen



HERE ARE THE BEST HORROR NOVELS OF THE PAST 3 YEARS, ACCORDING TO GOODREADS

Goodreads has released a list of the top 66 horror novels published in the past three years. These are the most popular books with their users — presumably, this means the books that are the most often added by users to their shelves as well as the highest rated, though the exact method of how this list was put together and how titles are ordered was not specified.

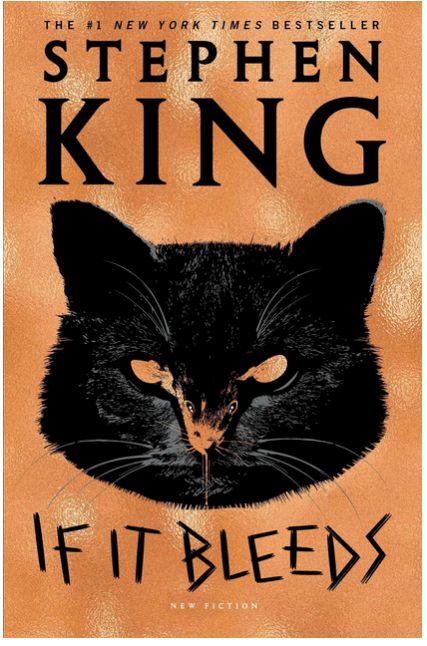
The list includes well known authors in the genre, like Stephen King, as well as writers that just got their start in horror in the past few years, like Alexis Henderson. The tone in these stories ranges from delightfully creepy to nightmare-inducing.

Most of these books are ones we loved here at Book Riot, so we've included our thoughts about these from previous posts on the site. Below are just a few of the titles included, but be sure to check out the full list for all 66 books!

MEXICAN GOTHIC BY SILVIA MORENO-GARCIA

"In my humble opinion, Mexican Gothic is Moreno-Garcia's best novel to date. It's modern gothic horror at its finest, a speculative Rebecca set in the 1950s Mexican countryside. The star is Noemí Taboada, a Mexico City socialite who is a perfect representation of a Moreno-Garcia heroine. Noemí is stubborn, sure of herself, and an anathema to the traditional culture around her. A strange letter from her cousin Catalina summons Noemí to High Place, the remote estate of Catalina's well-to-do in-laws. Noemí is there to rescue Catalina, but from what exactly remains out-of-focus until the creepy and bizarre denouement." — Nicole Hill, Reading Pathways: Silvia Moreno-Garcia Books

Check out the full list at Goodreads.
Find more news and stories of interest from the book world in Breaking in Books.

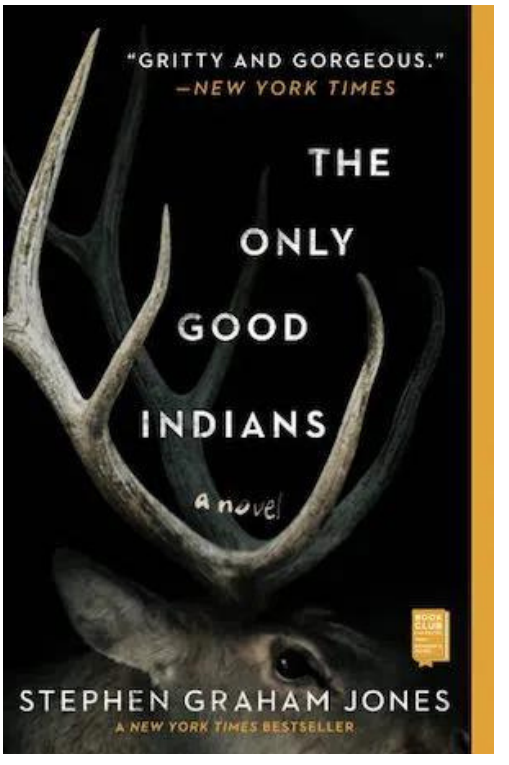


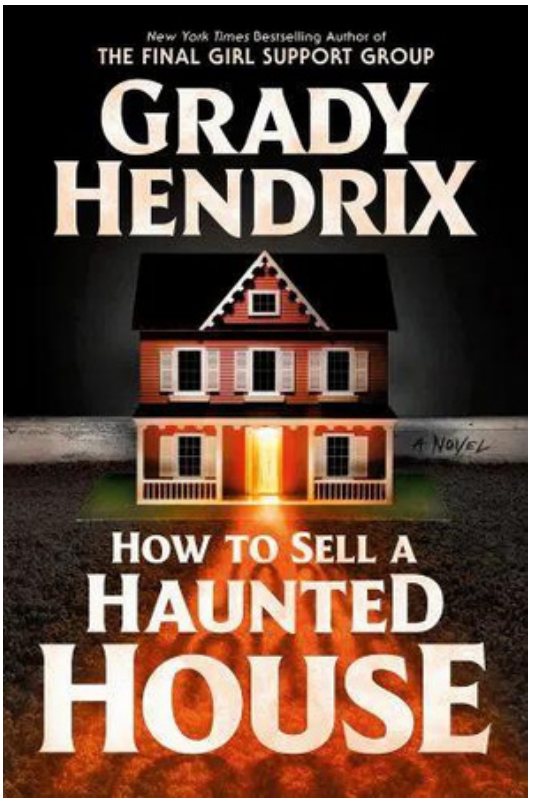
IF IT BLEEDS BY STEPHEN KING

“Stephen King’s latest collection of novellas was, of course, a necessary addition to this list of the best horror novels of 2020. The title novella, If It Bleeds, is a standalone sequel to The Outsider. And there are three more creepy novellas (or maybe they’re long stories?) included as well: Mr. Harrigan’s Phone, The Life of Chuck, and Rat.” — Emily Martin, The 16 Best Horror Books of 2020 You Don’t Want to Miss

HE ONLY GOOD INDIANS BY STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES

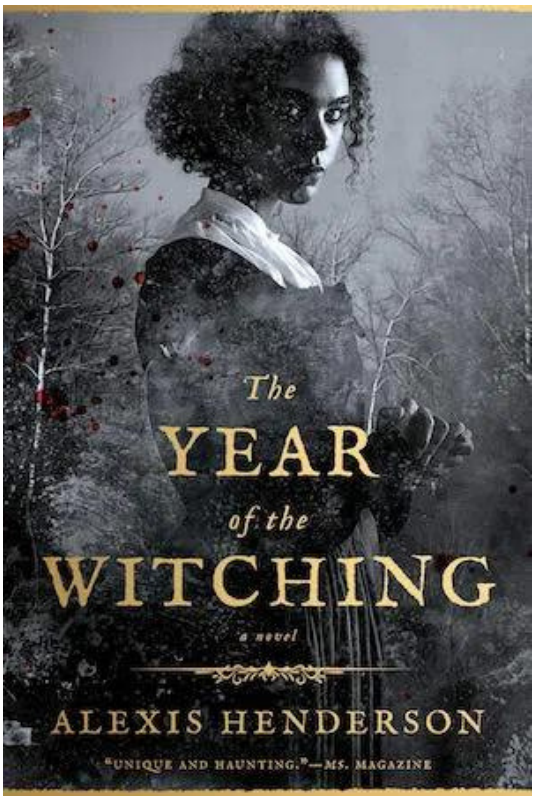
“Dear The Only Good Indians (or, should I say, Deer, hahaha),
I think about you about at least once a week, sometimes more.
Thank you for being one of my favourite books out there, for introducing me to the possibilities of horror, and for making me sound absolutely unhinged when I talk about you to other people.
It’s okay you have ruined ceiling fans for me. Staying cool is overrated, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.” — Carina Pereira, A Love Letter To The Only Good Indians





HOW TO SELL A HAUNTED HOUSE BY GRADY HENDRIX

“Think haunted houses are scary? What about a haunted house filled with haunted dolls? Louise and Mark Joyner are two estranged siblings with nothing in common. But when their parents die at the end of the coronavirus pandemic, the siblings are forced to work together to put their home on the market. But something is off about the house. Before their parents died, they taped newspaper over the mirrors and nailed the attic door shut. And things only get weirder from there.” — Emily Martin, 20 Must-Read Stories of Eerie Cabins and Haunted Homes
by Taboola

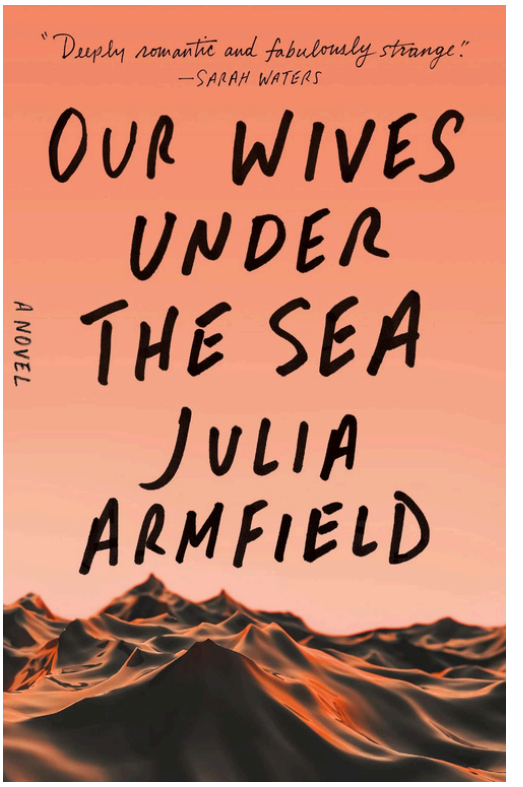


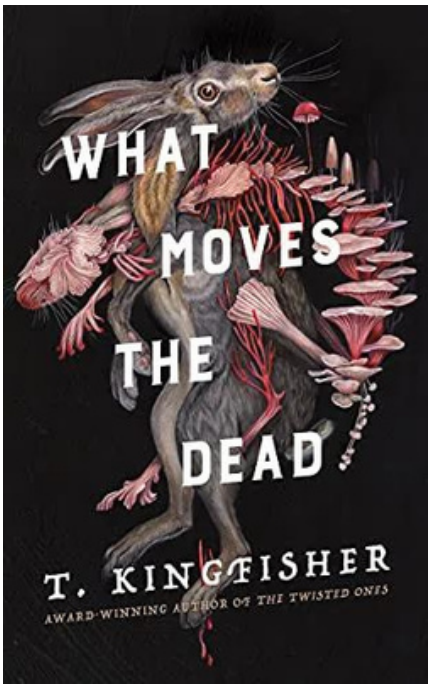
THE YEAR OF THE WITCHING BY ALEXIS HENDERSON

"The Year of the Witching is a historical horror/fantasy about a cursed town named Bethel. Bethel is a place where the Prophet's word is law, and our protagonist Immanuelle Moore's very existence is blasphemy because her mother is white and her father is Black. Immanuelle tries her best to keep her head down and follow the word of the Prophet. But then she founds herself drawn to the forbidden Darkwood surrounding Bethel, where the first prophet once chased and killed four witches. The spirits of the witches still lurk there, and they have a surprising connection to Immanuelle and her dead mother." — Emily Martin, 8 Horror Books About Witches That Are Truly Scary

OUR WIVES UNDER THE SEA BY JULIA ARMFIELD

"After Leah's deep-sea mission runs nearly half a year longer than expected, her wife Miri is relieved to have her back. But Leah isn't the same as she was. She spends hours in the bathroom running water and craves saltier and saltier drinks. And her body isn't the same either. With alternating perspectives, Miri and Leah recount their history, their present, and what they can do to stay together going forward." — Addison Rizer, 9 Body Horror Novels by Women about Losing Control

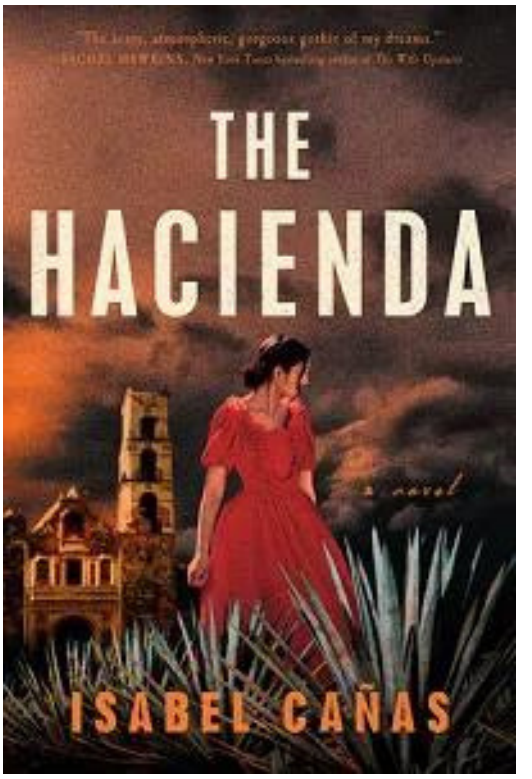




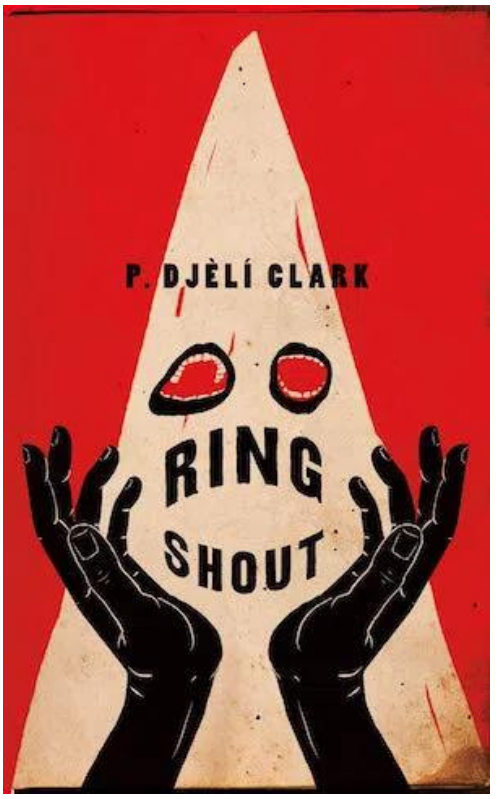
WHAT MOVES THE DEAD BY T. KINGFISHER

"In this lush retelling of Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher, it's not ghosts but a mind-altering fungus that haunts the Usher home in remote Ruravia. A nonbinary retired soldier has come to investigate claims that their friend Madeline Usher is dying. What they find is straight out of a nightmare: fungal growths overtaking the house, sleepwalking, possessed wildlife, and strange voices talking at night. Can this deadly knot be untangled, or will whatever is overtaking the House of Usher consume them all?" — Rachel Brittain, 10 Queer Haunted House Books To Scare Your Socks Off

THE HACIENDA BY ISABEL CAÑAS

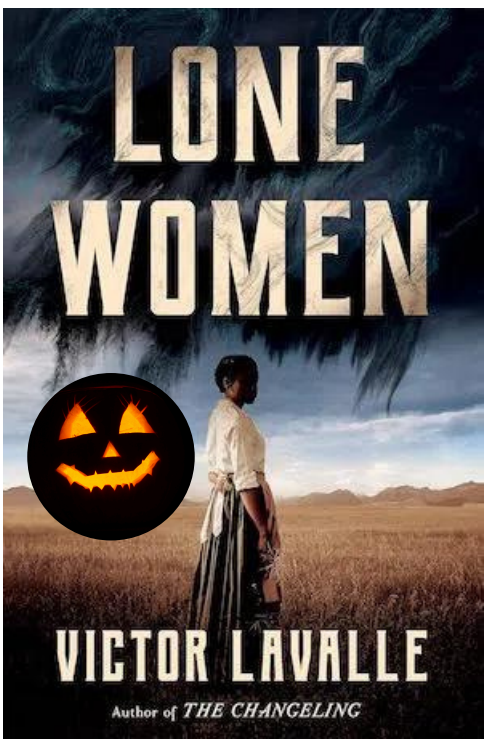


"The Mexican government has been overthrown, and Beatriz is at a loss. In a man's world, Beatriz needs to marry as quickly as possible to ensure that she can be safe and secure moving forward. So when the recently widowed Don Rodolfo Solórzano proposes, she jumps at the opportunity. But was it a mistake to move to Hacienda San Isidro? What actually happened to his first wife? Isolated, haunted by voices, it begins to dawn on Beatriz that maybe this house is even more dangerous than the one she left behind." — Leah Rachel von Essen, New and Recent Gothic Horror



RING SHOUT BY P. DJÈLÍ CLARK

"The Birth of a Nation, a movie released in 1915 that acts as a sort of spell to spread hate, opens a rift between worlds and demons called Ku Klux run rampant. Enter Maryse Boudreaux, a bloodthirsty bootlegger with a sword that can send the Klan back where they came from. With a team of monster killers Sadie and Chef, the trio departs on a journey to send the Klan back to where they belong and, well, save the world." — Addison Rizer, 20 Must-Read Historical Horror Novels



LONE WOMEN BY VICTOR LAVALLE

"The latest from acclaimed author Victor LaValle takes readers into the American West in the year 1915. Adelaide Henry is on the run after her secret sin killed her parents and forced her to leave her hometown of Redondo, California. Her journey will take her to Montana to be one of the 'lone women' who will take advantage of the government's offer of free land for those who can cultivate it. But Adelaide isn't alone. With her, she carries an enormous steamer trunk that must always stay locked. When the trunk gets unlocked, people around her start disappearing. The locked trunk holds the secrets to Adelaide's past. And that secret she's keeping locked away might also be the only thing keeping her alive." — Emily Martin, The 25 Best Horror Books of 2023


BODY AND THE BLOOD
THE
EXORCIST
BELIEVER
STARTS 6 OCTOBER ONLY IN CINEMAS

THE EXORCIST - BELIEVER

Exactly 50 years ago this fall, the most terrifying horror film in history landed on screens, shocking audiences around the world. Now, a new chapter begins. From Blumhouse and director DAVID GORDON GREEN, who shattered the status quo with their resurrection of the Halloween franchise, comes The Exorcist: Believer.

Since the death of his pregnant wife in a Haitian earthquake 13 years ago, Victor Fielding (Tony winner and Oscar® nominee LESLIE ODOM, JR.; One Night in Miami, Hamilton) has raised their daughter, Angela (LIDYA JEWETT, Good Girls) on his own.

But when Angela and her friend Katherine (newcomer OLIVIA O'NEILL), disappear in the woods, only to return three days later with no memory of what happened to them, it unleashes a chain of events that will force Victor to confront the nadir of evil and, in his terror and desperation, seek out the only person alive who has witnessed anything like it before: Chris MacNeil.

For the first time since the 1973 film, Oscar® winner ELLEN BURSTYN reprises her iconic role as Chris MacNeil, an actress who has been forever altered by what happened to her daughter Regan five decades before.

The film also stars Emmy Award winner ANN DOWD (The Handmaid's Tale, Hereditary) as Ann, Victor and Angela's neighbor, and three-time Grammy winner JENNIFER NETTLES (Harriet, The Righteous Gemstones) and two-time Tony winner NORBERT LEO BUTZ (Fosse/Verdon, Bloodline) as Miranda and Tony, the parents of Katherine.

The cast includes RAPHAEL SBARGE (Once Upon a Time) as Pastor Don Revans, OKWUI OKPOKWASILI (Julie Taymor's A Midsummer Night's Dream) as Doctor Beehibe, DANNY MCCARTHY (Somebody Somewhere) as Stuart, E.J. BONILLA (Gemini Man) as Father Maddox, TRACEY GRAVES (On Ten) as Sorenne Fielding and CELESTE OLIVIA (We Own This City) as Detective Konick.

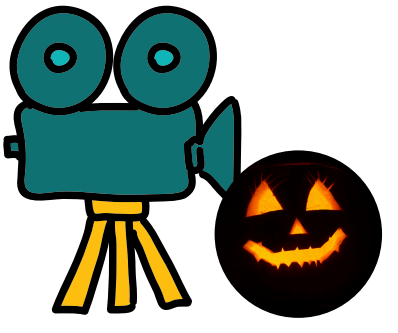
When The Exorcist, based on the best-selling book by William Peter Blatty, was released, it changed the culture forever, obliterating box-office records and earning 10 Academy Award® nominations, becoming the first horror film ever nominated for Best Picture.

The Exorcist: Believer is directed by DAVID GORDON GREEN from a screenplay by PETER SATTLER (Camp X-Ray) & DAVID GORDON GREEN, from a story by SCOTT TEEMS (Halloween Kills) & DANNY MCBRIDE (Halloween trilogy) & DAVID GORDON GREEN.

The film is produced by JASON BLUM p.g.a. for Blumhouse and by DAVID ROBINSON p.g.a. and JAMES G. ROBINSON for Morgan Creek Entertainment.

THE EXORCIST: BELIEVER opens at cinemas on Friday, 06 October nationally .





A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS
ONE TOWN'S STRANGE JOURNEY FROM PARANOIA TO PARDON

Jess Blumberg



The Salem witch trials occurred in colonial Massachusetts between early 1692 and mid-1693. More than 200 people were accused of practicing witchcraft—the devil's magic—and 20 were executed. In 1711, colonial authorities pardoned some of the accused and compensated their families. But it was only in July 2022 that Elizabeth Johnson Jr., the last convicted Salem "witch" whose name had yet to be cleared, was officially exonerated.

Since the 17th century, the story of the trials has become synonymous with paranoia and injustice. Fueled by xenophobia, religious extremism and long-brewing social tensions, the witch hunt continues to beguile the popular imagination more than 300 years later.

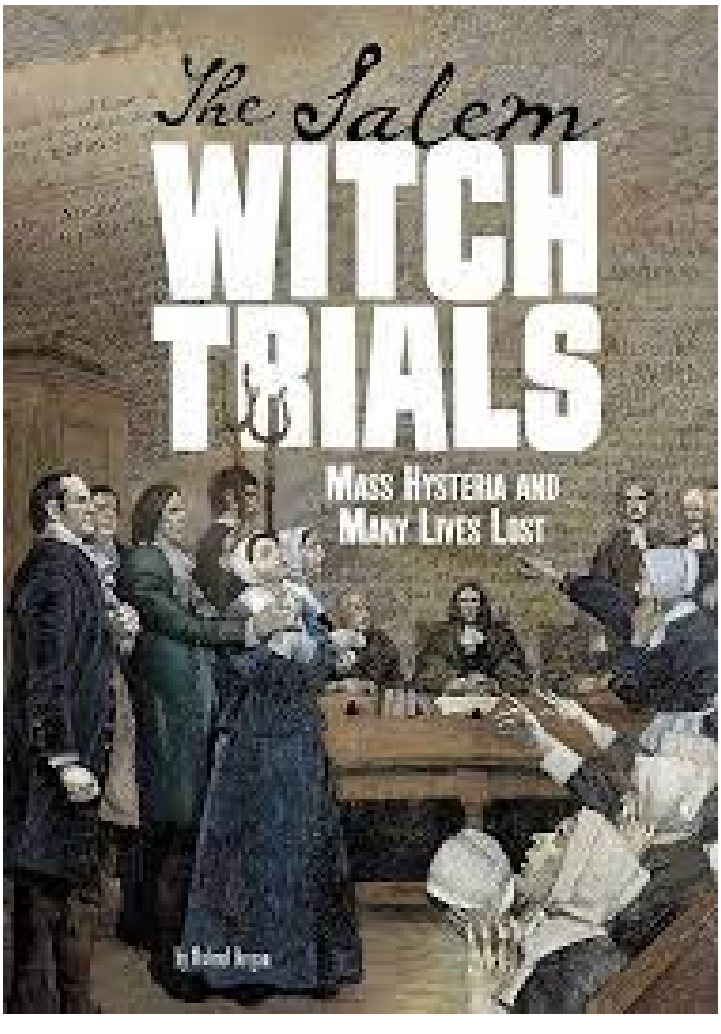
Tensions in Salem

In the medieval and early modern eras, many religions, including Christianity, taught that the devil could give people known as witches the power to harm others in return for their loyalty. A "witchcraft craze" rippled through Europe from the 1300s to the end of the 1600s. Tens of thousands of supposed witches—mostly women—were executed. Though the Salem trials took place just as the European craze was winding down, local circumstances explain their onset. In 1689, English monarchs William and Mary started a war with France in the American colonies. Known as King William's War to colonists, the conflict ravaged regions of upstate New York, Nova Scotia and Quebec, sending refugees into the county of Essex—and, specifically, Salem Village—in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. (Salem Village is present-day Danvers, Massachusetts; colonial Salem Town became what's now Salem.)

The displaced people placed a strain on Salem's resources, aggravating the existing rivalry between families with ties to the wealth of the port of Salem and those who still depended on agriculture. Controversy also brewed over the Reverend Samuel Parris, who became Salem Village's first ordained minister in 1689 and quickly gained a reputation for his rigid ways and greedy nature. The Puritan villagers believed all the quarreling was the work of the devil.

In January 1692, Parris' daughter Elizabeth (or Betty), age 9, and niece Abigail Williams, age 11, started having "fits." They screamed, threw things, uttered peculiar sounds and contorted themselves into strange positions. A local doctor blamed the supernatural. Another girl, 12-year-old Ann Putnam Jr., experienced similar episodes. On February 29, under pressure from magistrates Jonathan Corwin and John Hathorne, colonial officials who tried local cases, the girls blamed three women for afflicting them: Tituba, a Caribbean woman enslaved by the Parris family; Sarah Good, a homeless beggar; and Sarah Osborne, an elderly impoverished woman.

The witch hunt begins



All three women were brought before the local magistrates and interrogated for several days, starting on March 1, 1692. Osborne claimed innocence, as did Good. But Tituba confessed, "The devil came to me and bid me serve him." She described elaborate images of black dogs, red cats, yellow birds and a "tall man with white hair" who wanted her to sign his book. She admitted that she'd signed the book and claimed there were several other witches looking to destroy the Puritans.

With the seeds of paranoia planted, a stream of accusations followed over the next few months. Charges against Martha Corey, a loyal member of the church in Salem Village, greatly concerned the community; if she could be a witch, then anyone could. Magistrates even questioned Good's 4-year-old daughter, Dorothy, whose timid answers were construed as a confession. The questioning got more serious in April, when the colony's deputy governor, Thomas Danforth, and his assistants attended the hearings. Dozens of people from Salem and other Massachusetts villages were brought in for questioning.

On May 27, 1692, Governor William Phips ordered the establishment of a Special Court of Oyer (to hear) and Terminer (to decide) for Suffolk, Essex and Middlesex counties. The first accused witch brought in front of the special court was Bridget Bishop, an older woman known for her gossipy habits and promiscuity. When asked if she committed witchcraft, Bishop responded, "I am as innocent as the child unborn." The defense must not have been convincing, because she was found guilty and, on June 10, became the first person hanged on what was later called Gallows Hill.

Just a few days after the court was established, respected minister Cotton Mather wrote a letter imploring the court not to allow spectral evidence—testimony about dreams and visions. The court largely ignored this request, sentencing the hangings of five people in July, five more in August and eight in September. On October 3, following in his son Cotton's footsteps, Increase Mather, then-president of Harvard, denounced the use of spectral evidence: "It were better that ten suspected witches should escape than one innocent person be condemned."

Phips, in response to these pleas and his own wife's questioning as a suspected witch, prohibited further arrests and released many accused witches. He dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 29, replacing it with a Superior Court of Judicature, which disallowed spectral evidence and condemned just 3 out of 56 defendants.

By May 1693, Phips had pardoned all those imprisoned on witchcraft charges. But the damage was already done. Nineteen men and women had been hanged on Gallows Hill. Giles Corey, Martha's 71-year-old husband, was pressed to death in September 1692 with heavy stones after refusing to submit himself to a trial. At least five of the accused died in jail.

Even animals fell victim to the mass hysteria, with colonists in Andover and Salem Village killing two dogs believed to be linked to the devil.



Restoring good names

In the years following the trials and executions, some involved, like judge Samuel Sewall and accuser Ann Putnam, publicly confessed error and guilt. On January 14, 1697, Massachusetts' General Court ordered a day of fasting and soul-searching over the tragedy of Salem. In 1702, the court declared the trials unlawful. And in 1711, the colony passed a bill restoring the rights and good names of many of the accused, as well as granting a total of £600 in restitution to their heirs. But it wasn't until 1957—more than 250 years later—that Massachusetts formally apologized for the events of 1692. Johnson, the accused woman exonerated in July 2022, was left out of the 1957 resolution for reasons unknown but received an official pardon after a successful lobbying campaign by a class of eighth-grade civics students.

In the 20th century, artists and scientists alike continued to be fascinated by the Salem witch trials. Playwright Arthur Miller resurrected the tale with his 1953 play The Crucible, using the trials as an allegory for the anti-communist McCarthyism then sweeping the country. Scholars offered up competing explanations for the strange behavior that occurred in Salem, with scientists seeking a medical cause for the accusers' afflictions and historians more often grounding their theories in the community's tense sociopolitical environment.

An early hypothesis now viewed as "fringe, especially in historical circles," according to Vox, posited that the accusers suffered from ergotism, a condition caused by eating foods contaminated with the fungus ergot. Symptoms include muscle spasms, vomiting, delusions and hallucinations. Other theories emphasize a "combination of church politics, family feuds and hysterical children, all of which unfolded in a vacuum of political authority," as Encyclopedia Britannica notes. Ultimately, the causes of the witch hunt remain subject to much debate.

In August 1992, to mark the 300th anniversary of the trials, Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel dedicated the Witch Trials Memorial in Salem. Also in Salem, the Peabody Essex Museum, which houses the original court documents, mounted an exhibition reckoning with and reclaiming the tragedy in late 2021 and early 2022. Finally, the town's most-visited attraction, the Salem Witch Museum, attests to the public's enduring enthrallment with the 17th-century hysteria.
Editor's Note, October 24, 2022: This article has been updated to reflect the latest research on the Salem witch trials.





DAY OF THE DEAD - CELEBRATE DIA DE LOS MUERTOS - 2 NOVEMBER 2023



WHETHER YOU CALL IT HALLOWEEN, SAMHAIN, OR ALL HALLOW'S EVE, THIS TIME OF YEAR IS OFTEN MARKED BY WATCHING SCARY MOVIES, DRESSING UP IN DARING COSTUMES, AND EATING YOUR WEIGHT IN CANDY. HOWEVER, IN MEXICO, DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS (DAY OF THE DEAD) TAKES ON AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MEANING AND IMPORTANCE. FOR MEXICANS, THIS IS FAR FROM A SPOOKY FESTIVITY – IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR THAT THE SOULS OF LOVED ONES ARE BELIEVED TO RETURN HOME. BECKONED BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING BY ALTARS SPREAD WITH THEIR FAVORITE FOODS AND BEVERAGES AND BEAUTIFUL DECORATIONS, THESE SOULS RETURN TO SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

During Día de Muertos, the tradition is to build private altars ("ofrendas") containing the favorite foods and beverages, as well as photos and memorabilia, of the departed. The intent is to encourage visits by the souls, so the souls will hear the prayers and the words of the living directed to them. These altars are often placed at home or in public spaces such as schools and libraries, but it is also common for people to go to cemeteries to place these altars next to the tombs of the departed



The Day of the Dead (Spanish: Día de Muertos or Día de los Muertos) is a holiday traditionally celebrated on November 1 and 2, though other days, such as October 31 or November 6, may be included depending on the locality. It is widely observed in Mexico, where it largely developed, and is also observed in other places, especially by people of Mexican heritage. Although related to the simultaneous Christian remembrances for Hallowtide, it has a much less solemn tone and is portrayed as a holiday of joyful celebration rather than mourning. The multi-day holiday involves family and friends gathering to pay respects and to remember friends and family members who have died. These celebrations can take a humorous tone, as celebrants remember funny events and anecdotes about the departed.

Traditions connected with the holiday include honoring the deceased using calaveras and marigold flowers known as cempazúchitl, building home altars called ofrendas with the favorite foods and beverages of the departed, and visiting graves with these items as gifts for the deceased. The celebration is not solely focused on the dead, as it is also common to give gifts to friends such as candy sugar skulls, to share traditional pan de muerto with family and friends, and to write light-hearted and often irreverent verses in the form of mock epitaphs dedicated to living friends and acquaintances, a literary form known as calaveras literarias.

In 2008, the tradition was inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.



Article Supplied by Wikipedia





Plans for the day are made throughout the year, including gathering the goods to be offered to the dead. During the three-day period families usually clean and decorate graves; most visit the cemeteries where their loved ones are buried and decorate their graves with ofrendas (altars), which often include orange Mexican marigolds (Tagetes erecta) called cempasúchil (originally named cempōhualxōchitl, Nāhuatl for 'twenty flowers').

In modern Mexico the marigold is sometimes called Flor de Muerto ('Flower of Dead'). These flowers are thought to attract souls of the dead to the offerings. It is also believed the bright petals with a strong scent can guide the souls from cemeteries to their family homes.

Toys are brought for dead children (los angelitos, or 'the little angels'), and bottles of tequila, mezcal or pulque or jars of atole for adults. Families will also offer trinkets or the deceased's favorite candies on the grave. Some families have ofrendas in homes, usually with foods such as candied pumpkin, pan de muerto ('bread of dead'), and sugar skulls; and beverages such as atole.

The ofrendas are left out in the homes as a welcoming gesture for the deceased. Some people believe the spirits of the dead eat the "spiritual essence" of the ofrendas' food, so though the celebrators eat the food after the festivities, they believe it lacks nutritional value. Pillows and blankets are left out so the deceased can rest after their long journey. In some parts of Mexico, such as the towns of Mixquic, Pátzcuaro and Janitzio, people spend all night beside the graves of their relatives. In many places, people have picnics at the grave site, as well.

GhostTube VOX Synthesizer is a video toolkit and sound synthesizer for paranormal investigators and video creators. The app uses the environmental sensors in your phone to measure fluctuations in the environment. Using these readings, it synthesizes commonly used sounds, syllables, words and phrases from online digital broadcasts when specific magnetic signatures are detected. The theory being tested by this app is that spirits can communicate by influencing their environment to select and/or manipulate sounds. Users can also adjust the echo, reverb and distortion of synthesized sounds, and best of all, unlike other paranormal apps, GhostTube comes with NO pre-recorded sounds. All sounds are synthesized in realtime from radio streams.









GhostTube Paranormal Videos uses your mobile device's actual sensors to detect fluctuations in magnetic energy, select words from the pre-populated data bank, and track audio recordings during your paranormal investigations. No special sound or visual FX added - Just raw readings from your device. Read more about how GhostTube works over at GhostTube.com

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GhostTube SEER uses your mobile device's actual sensors to detect fluctuations in the environment, and uses these to select words from the pre-populated word bank. It runs selected words through an advanced artificial intelligence algorithm to produce unique, AI-generated visuals. It can also be used with GhostTube Lens, the world's first virtual reality headset for paranormal investigators, for a more immersive experience and adding a whole new dimension to your paranormal experiments.

BACKGROUND STORY

Why do so many ghosts seem to appear in people's homes? Maybe it's because home is where the heart is, or maybe it's because home is the only place that we can feel at peace, whether we are living or dead.

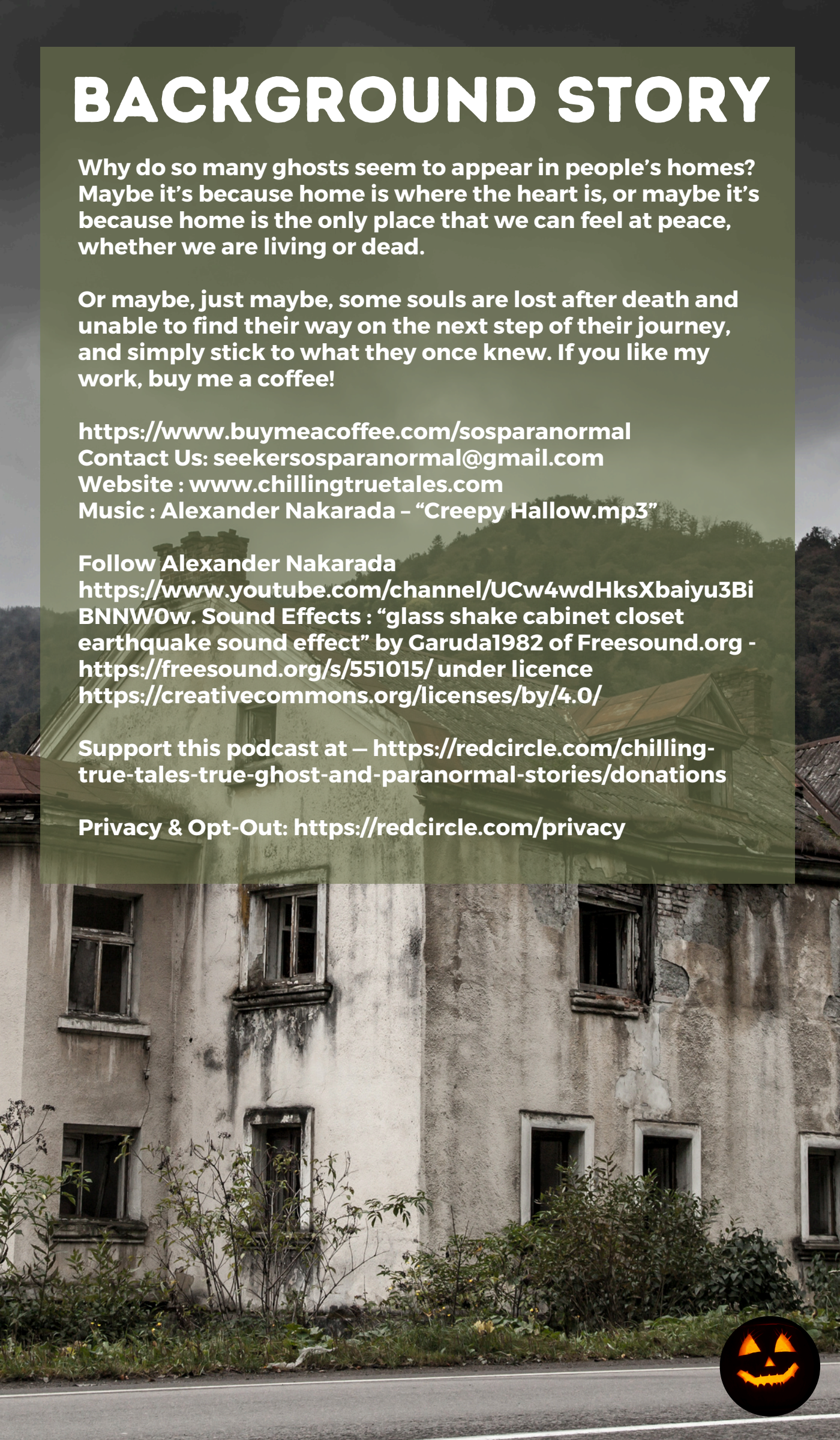
Or maybe, just maybe, some souls are lost after death and unable to find their way on the next step of their journey, and simply stick to what they once knew. If you like my work, buy me a coffee!

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CULLINAN GHOST TOUR

OCTOBER 14TH, 2023

For some reason, Cullinan certainly has more Crisis ghosts than other towns. Such ghosts are expected at the diamond mine, often appearing to warn miners of impending danger or an accident that is about to occur. Crisis ghosts also appear at various buildings, one of which is an old sandstone building that once belonged to one of the senior staff members of the mine. They are the spectres of an elderly man pushing and equally elderly lady in a wheelchair, who seem to be in a rush. It seems to be some sort of emergency that they must have faced long ago.



Mc Hardy House (Cullinan's famous haunted house) (Photo supplied



Cullinan is a small, well-preserved 19th-Century mining town east of Pretoria. Founded in 1902 and named after the founder of the Premier Diamond Mine, Sir Thomas Major Cullinan, this semi-rural community consists of mining families, farmers, artists and, on weekends, bikers and families looking to escape to the country.

Cullinan village, once a farm called Elandsfontein, was acquired by prospector Thomas Cullinan when he established the farm's diamond-bearing potential. It became the Premier (Transvaal) Diamond Mining Company Ltd, now the Cullinan Diamond Mine.

Cullinan village is situated in Dinokeng, the north-east corner of Gauteng province. Its close proximity to Pretoria and Johannesburg, its Victorian charm, and its reputation for yielding some of the largest diamonds ever discovered, make it a fascinating destination.

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Quirky and quaint, the town of Cullinan's focal point is Oak Avenue, which is lined with jacaranda and oak trees, cottages with intricate wrought-iron work and picket fences, bric-a-brac shops, restaurants, and the must-visit Jan Harmsgat se Agterplaas (literally, 'Jan Harmsgat's backyard'), a garden theatre-cum-gallery (and wedding venue) that rarely fails to delight visitors with its junkyard glamour.

Diamond mine tours are de rigueur when visiting Cullinan; choose a surface, motorised, or underground tour of the working mine.

Cullinan's open-cast mine is among the biggest in the world, three times the size of the more famous Kimberley Big Hole. When you've finished goggling at this enormous crater, visit the Diamond Hub next door, where you'll be able to see diamond-cutting demonstrations and replicas of the mine's most famous gems.

Then you can check out the historical and cultural attractions of Cullinan, including murals painted by Italian prisoners of war during the Second World War, St George's Anglican Church designed by Sir Herbert Baker, the Sammy Marks Museum and Cullinan Station.

Dig below Cullinan's surface, and you'll find fascinating stories – the town offers more than its famous diamonds. For instance, you can take a local tour with a specialised guide, visit game ranches, enjoy outdoor sports, or even embark on adventure activities and steam train trips.



Grave of James Grant who died in a mining accident. (Photo supplied)



Creepy-looking abandoned building at old hospital. (Photo supplied)

Lady Anne Cullinan (wife of Sir Thomas Cullinan, who found the largest gem quality diamond in the world) appears as a Replay Ghost (a.k.a. Residual Apparition) at the old St. George's church, which also has a mysterious trap door which has to do with some hidden diamonds. Inside the church is a stone pulpit where a golden goblet is buried inside, but nobody knows why.

The old Cullinan hospital with some of its abandoned ghostly-looking white-washed buildings and mortuary have some gruesome tales, one of which is called "Little Boy Lost" – which is about a little boy who died in the hospital before his only nearby relative, his grandmother, could visit him. Another tale is about the hospital's own Florence Nightingale.

