

# HAUNTED CANADA 12

MORE FRIGHTENING TRUE TALES

JOEL A.  
SUTHERLAND

Illustrations by  
Steven P. Hughes

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*To all the brave souls who love a good ghost story as much as I do and dare to read on.*

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604 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1E1, Canada

**Scholastic Inc.**

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**Scholastic Australia Pty Limited**

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## **SHE FOLLOWS**

### ***Sussex and Hampton, New Brunswick***

Diane Hodgin was relaxing in her apartment one October day when a decorative brass bell mounted on the wall in the hallway rang frantically. She went to see what all the commotion was about, but there was no one there.

The bell rang again.

Then the hall doors slammed shut and swung open on their own.

It was clear to Diane that her apartment was haunted, and it was equally clear who the ghost was. Diane and her family had lived in the apartment building on Essex Street for many years, and they loved it there. So too did an elderly woman named Mrs. King who had lived in one of the other apartments before her death in 1989. Diane

had a feeling that the commotion was Mrs. King's way of announcing she hadn't left the building, nor would she any time soon.

Later that year, every bloom was mysteriously ripped off Diane's Christmas cactus for no apparent reason, so she assumed Mrs. King was to blame. Then the pervasive smell of lavender — Mrs. King's favourite scent — began to fill the family's dining room. And doors swung open and slammed shut at all hours of the day and night. Diane, her husband and their children became accustomed to the ghostly disturbances. The family chalked it up to Mrs. King not wanting to be ignored — she seemed to like the attention, or at the very least she wanted her presence to be noted. In a manner of speaking, she became a part of the household, always there, never forgotten.

A few years later, Diane and her family had a new house built forty kilometres southwest, in Hampton, and moved out of their apartment in Sussex. A young couple, the landlord's daughter and her husband, moved in, but Mrs. King . . . she stayed put.

A year later Diane and her husband were visiting friends in their old building when she happened to bump into the landlord. As they chatted, Diane got the impression something was on his mind. Soon he revealed what was bothering him.

"I wish you would take Mrs. King with you," he said.

This caught Diane off guard, so he explained that his daughter had been living in fear for the past year. The ghost of Mrs. King scared the living daylights out of her. She was on the verge of a breakdown. Out of compassion,

Diane agreed to talk with her.

She visited the apartment and told the landlord's daughter that Mrs. King was harmless and that her presence was nothing to be afraid of. But nothing she said provided the young woman any comfort. Like the Hodgins, the young couple was planning on building their own house so they could get out of the haunted apartment, but the woman doubted she'd be able to stay there until their new house was ready. Was there anything Diane could do?

Diane saw the desperation in the woman's eyes and heard it in her voice. She suggested that she could invite the ghost to leave Sussex and move in with her family in Hampton. Would it work? Unlikely. But Diane didn't let the landlord's daughter know she had doubts. If it gave the woman a little peace of mind — even if only for a day or two until Mrs. King made her presence known again — that would be a positive thing.

Diane entered the dining room and said, "Why don't you come home with us, Mrs. King?"

Nothing happened.

But it didn't matter. The young woman was ecstatic. She thanked Diane profusely. Diane felt like the woman had simply tricked herself into believing it had worked and Mrs. King would bother her no more. Diane said goodbye and went on her way.

The following night, back in their Hampton home, Diane was relaxing in her living room with her husband, kids and their cats.

*CRASH!*

Everyone in the house — humans and felines alike — jumped in the air. The ear-splitting racket had come from one of the bedrooms on the second floor. The family raced upstairs to see what had happened.

Diane's son kept an old ice cream container full of marbles on the dresser in his room. It had been thrown to the centre of the room, and the marbles had rolled every which way. They had never experienced anything like that in the house.

Diane and her husband shared a troubled look.

"Mrs. King," she said.

He raised his eyebrows knowingly.

In the days that followed, doors opened and closed on their own and the dining room smelled strongly of lavender. The children had forgotten what it was like to live with a ghost, and they weren't thrilled to be haunted once more.

One day Diane's son came charging up to her, shaking with anger. "She touched me!" he yelled. "I hate that!"

Her husband was touched by Mrs. King too. He was walking along the hall one afternoon when someone suddenly pushed up against him from behind and flew past. He spun around but didn't see anyone. He entered the kitchen and spotted his wife.

"Did you just walk by me?" he asked.

She shook her head and informed him that she had been in the kitchen for half an hour.

"Mrs. King?" he asked in disbelief. Then, with a sigh, he answered his own question. "Mrs. King."

As unsettling as Mrs. King's presence was, the

scariest was yet to come. One day Diane returned home alone. As soon as she entered, she came face to face with a man blocking her way. Well, “face to face” might not be completely accurate, since she couldn’t see his. Although his body was clearly visible, his entire head was surrounded by thick mist. After a few tense seconds, the man disappeared.

Diane believed Mrs. King had invited the other spirit into the home to keep her company. She clearly craved attention. The question that haunts the Hodgkin family is how many more ghosts might visit their home, all because they invited Mrs. King to come live — in a manner of speaking — with them?