



# 'I see DEAD people'

Ghosts don't scare Stephanie Brookes, 26, from Hertfordshire. She's seen three, and they've inspired a new career...

I can clearly remember the first time I saw a ghost. I was seven years old and lying in bed, when, suddenly, I felt as though I was being watched. Peering out from under my duvet, I saw an old man and woman, both in their seventies, standing very still. The woman was much smaller and slightly hunched, and they were both smiling at me. I was so frightened, I jumped back under the bed covers and closed my eyes. My whole body froze in panic, and I could feel the sweat prickling at the back of my neck and on my hands. The room was really quiet, and I became aware of my own breathing getting faster and faster. I lay still under my duvet for what seemed like hours before I eventually fell asleep. In the morning, they were gone. I don't know why, but I never mentioned them to my parents. I was just so scared.

They came back five or six times over the next few months, appearing only at night and never saying a word. The more I saw them, the less

frightened I became. They weren't threatening, and I felt as though the old man was looking out for me.

It was only recently that I found out who they were. I was helping my Dad move house, and, as I was packing his stuff into boxes, I came across a photo of a man I recognised. At first, I was confused. How did I know this man? Then, suddenly, it hit me. My mouth became dry and the hairs stood up on my arms. He looked just like the man who had appeared in my room. He had the same frail look and the same dark, old-fashioned coat. I asked Dad who he was and he said it was my great grandfather, who'd died long before I was born. I couldn't believe it. I told my dad why I recognised him. He was

*'The spirit I saw was my great grandfather, who died before I was born'*

really understanding and didn't try to say it must have been my "overactive imagination". He's as fascinated by ghosts as I am.

As I got older, the couple visited me less. Looking back, as a teenager, I didn't want to be seen as someone who believed in ghosts – so I must have blocked my mind off to them. None of my friends believed in ghosts and, although we'd tell each other spooky stories, it was only to scare each other.

That changed in October 2001, when I was doing an English and creative studies course at Portsmouth University. I was lying in bed in my flat, when I looked up and saw another ghost. This time, it was an American Indian chief standing at the end of my bed. He was wearing a feather headdress,

and his face was blurred. Instead of panicking, I was fascinated. Somehow, I knew he wasn't there to hurt me.

It was only later, after researching Native Americans and their beliefs, that I realised he was my spirit guide, and had come to offer me support and guidance.

Inspired by my course, I had been thinking about writing a book for a while, and seeing the Indian chief made me realise I should start. My novel is a story about guardian angels, and on the cover is a picture of my Indian chief. I wanted to thank him for inspiring me.

When I left university, I set up Spiritual Philosophy Publishing with my Dad, who is also interested in the supernatural. We help lots of first-time writers, like me, to get their work published. It's the perfect job for me.

Recently, I've become a lot more intuitive and I can often tell when the phone is about to ring, and who's on the other end. My friends love the fact that I'm in touch with the spirit world. I think, deep down, they're fascinated by it. I know people find it strange to think of an afterlife, but they shouldn't be scared of ghosts. Most spirits come to offer support to people they once knew or loved. I don't see them every day, but I know they're there. I believe everyone has the ability to see ghosts – they're just too scared to open their eyes.

● Stephanie's novel, *Some Silent Hero*, is available at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), £7.99

