



## Episode Transcript

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. Do you like ghosts? Do you like chocolate? Yes. Everyone likes ghosts and chocolate, don't they?

I think so, especially the chocolate. I'm not sure about the ghosts.

Yeah, but we love ghost stories. It's nice to eat chocolate and listen to a ghost story at the same time.

So if you like ghosts, at least hearing people talking about them, and if you like chocolate, then this episode is for you. Today I'm joined by Anna Brooke, who is a returning guest. Third time on the podcast.

Is it? Third time? Third time. Third time lucky. That's right.

The other two were lucky too. Yeah, they went down well. Triple whammy of luckiness.

Yes, absolutely. Welcome back to the podcast, Anna. Thank you.

It's a pleasure. How are you doing today? Very well, thank you. Yes.

Yeah, sun is shining. It's a beautiful Parisian day today. Isn't it? It's fantastic.

So let me just, before we continue and talk about books, uh, chocolate ghosts. Yeah. The paranormal.

Yeah. I can't wait to hear more about the things you talked about last time. Actually, uh, so listeners, just a reminder, Anna is an author, a writer of children's books.

That's right. I brought some with me. Do you want me to show them to the camera? She's got loads of books here.

I'm going to do my little self publish, uh, publishing, advertising. Help! Little dicky birds, two little dicky birds, picture books. So these, uh, these, so Anna has just held up two books.

This I'm talking to the audio listeners here who can't see things. So these are the two books that you've written since and had published since the last time you were on this podcast, I think. Uh, probably.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

I would think so. Can I just talk about these two? Yeah. My son loves this.

Uh, I don't know if we haven't got that. Maybe we haven't got that one, but, uh, these are the two books I'm looking at at the moment. One is called two little dicky birds.

The other one is called help and therefore little ones. Yeah. Like two to six, two to six years old.

And then previously you talked about your two other books, which are for a slightly higher age group. Yeah. Monster bogey, monster stink, which are for sort of seven to 11 and they're kind of raucous comedies about bogey monsters, monsters with lots of snot and sticky gooey stuff and music.

Lots of a few QR codes to listen to the original music from the books. Yeah. That was monster bogey.

We talked about bogeys and stuff that comes out of your nose. Yeah. That's right.

The stuff you don't learn in the course books and also monster stink, which is this, is it the sequel? And we talked about farts and had a great time talking about farts. And actually I wanted to read out one comment that I got that we got, uh, following the last episode. This is from @elifijjal.

How do I say this? @elifijjal. Yeah. It sounds good.

Yep. And it said this, I'm a really experienced listener of your podcast. And the conversation you had with Anna impressed me so much that I thought if almost all the episodes were similar to this and then the thought is not completed.

Yes. So it's just, if all the episodes were similar to this, yes, that would be amazing. And then please, please, please, please invite Anna again because her energy is incredible.

The dialogue you've established together is incredible. I loved it and thank you for showing it to us. In addition, of course, I want to read her books as soon as possible.

Wow. What a lovely comment. Thank you.

That's really nice to know. That's made my day actually. Thanks.

So monster stink, monster bogey, help. Uh, two little dickie birds, all written by Anna Brooke and the new book. The new book, which is out only just out, out in time for Easter, but it will do for the whole year is called death by chocolate.

And it's about a girl called Coco bean, whose parents have moved from England to buy a tumble down house, a tumble down hotel, actually in the South of France. And Coco doesn't want to go. And she especially doesn't want to be there when she discovers that it's, it's, um, it's haunted by Monsieur from Boise, who is a ghost chocolatier who met a sticky end.

And, uh, and they, and he, she has to solve his murder in order to help him move on. And in exchange, she gives her chocolate recipes. So wait a minute.

He is a ghost chocolatier who met a sticky end. I've got a couple of things to explain there. Yeah.

A chocolatier. So it's a chocolate maker, a chocolatier. It's come from, comes from the French word.

I suppose in England, sometimes we say chocolatier now, don't we? I guess so. But, uh, it's, um, if you want to do it properly, it's chocolatier. Yeah.

Yeah. Chocolatier. Yeah.

Okay. And he met a sticky end. Yeah.

That's a nice phrase. Yeah. So it's sort of a play on words because of course, chocolate's sticky, isn't it? But to meet a sticky end means to die in a, in an unpleasant way.

Usually, isn't it? Yeah. Like maybe you're murdered. You're murdered.

You often, perhaps inexplicably, there's kind of a, an air of mystery. Often. There's an accident.

An accident. Yeah. An accident or a bad death in some way.

Yeah. So often like a bad guy in a movie would meet a sticky end. I'm trying to think of good examples.

Like for example, the Emperor in Star Wars. Spoiler alert. I don't know if you've ever seen Return of the Jedi, but he meets a sticky end.

Yeah. Yeah. He meets a sticky end.

I mean, it's not technically sticky because he falls down a big hole. But isn't there, I mean, I suppose by the time his body splatters, it would all be sticky. I think he sort of vaporises.

I think he vaporises. Maybe there's like a moment in the vaporisation that gets to like a state of stickiness before it evaporates. I suppose so.

I'm imagining a lot of snot boiling out of his nose. And then he would probably poo his pants, you know. And so he met a sticky, yeah, he probably met a sticky end before he was vaporised.

But anyway, this Chocolatier, how do you say it again? Chocolatier. Yeah. Chocolatier.

Okay. Because in French he's a chocolatier. Yeah.

And he's French in the story. He's French. Yeah.

He's French. Monsieur Framboise. Monsieur Framboise.

Which means Mr. Raspberry. Yes. Can you reveal any details? How did he meet his sticky end? I can't reveal that because that's the investigation in the book.

I see. So yeah, they have to try and work out how he was murdered because he can't remember. He can't remember how he died, which is of great frustration to him.

I see. Should I put the book behind here? Yeah. It's called Death by Chocolate by Anna Brooke.

Available now from all good bookshops and probably bad bookshops as well. All sorts of bookshops. Okay.

Right. So what was your inspiration for writing a book about a ghostly chocolatier? Right. So, well, who doesn't like chocolate? I don't know.

Ghosts? Well, he particularly likes chocolate. So I will go straight into it. So one of the main things that inspired me for the character of Monsieur Framboise, what were ghostly happenings in our apartment? Yeah.

Which I touched upon on a previous podcast and which I think is part of what your listener was saying that she'd liked or he'd liked. Yeah. Because we went into some detail actually about your paranormal experiences at home.

We probably need to do a summary of the story so far. Can you give us the summary? So basically about six years ago, we heard people doing some building work in the building. We don't know whether it was in our building or in next door's building because in Paris, all the apartments communicate.

So you never really know where the sound's coming from exactly. And then strangely, we started hearing children's footsteps running in the corridor upstairs,

but there were no children living upstairs. And it went on for a long time and we started making jokes about it because it was always like at 10 o'clock at night and we're like, oh, they've let the children out.

But anyway, there was no one there. And so we started asking around to our neighbours whether they could hear children running as well. And several of the neighbours were like, yeah, we can hear it in the apartment above us.

And we're on the third floor, they were on the fourth floor. And they thought it was weird because there was no one in the apartment on the fifth floor. And it was really like the pitter-patter of little children's footsteps.

There's this particular pitter-patter to it, particular sound to it. And that you can't, it's not a dog, it's not a cat. They didn't have a dog or a cat anyway.

So we asked our neighbour downstairs whether she had heard footsteps. And she said that she thought it was our son, who at the time was a kind of 2 and a half, three. So he had the right kind of pitter-patter, which is the sound of d-d-d-d-d-d-d-d.

Sound of children. Yeah. Running.

And that she thought it was him until we went away for the weekend and she still heard it in our apartment. So that was sort of the kind of almost like just an anecdote. It didn't really affect us particularly.

I found it mysterious, quite interesting because I thought, well, is it something spooky? But there were no bad vibes. And then during lockdown, so that was 2020 when the COVID pandemic came, we were in our flat all the time, and we could still hear this pitter-patter. And one night, and our son would move from the bedroom to our bed, and so one night we were woken up by the sound of him running down the corridor, and we had a desk in the corridor with a chair.

The chair was whacked and moved, and my husband woke up and jumped out of bed and said, is everything all right? But our son was in bed, fast asleep. So he hadn't been running down the corridor. So that was very odd.

And then also our son, he would say that he'd seen a child walking past the lounge with light coming out of his head. So he'd be in the room and he'd see a child walking past the doorway. Yeah, yeah.

With light coming out of his head. He saw that once, and the second time he saw, and we didn't, you know, he was three. We didn't say, oh, we think the apartment's haunted, my dear.

It's just something a three-year-old says. Yeah, he just said, I saw it, mummy. And one time he was sitting on his potty, and he saw a pair of feet walk past down the corridor.

He's like, mummy, I saw a child's children's feet. Just feet? Just the feet, yeah. And another time he saw a dog.

I mean, and he said it went through the wall, and we were like, right, okay. And when we tapped on the wall, the place where he'd seen the dog go through sounded hollow, like there was a door. There had been a door there, which in fact, retrospectively would make sense because our lounge used to be two rooms that were split.

And that we put, we sort of turned it back into two rooms so that our son could have his bedroom. And yeah, so that was, that's sort of that part of the weirdness. And I am getting to Monsieur Framboise eventually, you just have to stick with me.

And then gradually, we start, the atmosphere in our apartment changed. So when we moved in, we've been there since 2014. So that'll be 12 years this year.

And the apartment has always had a lovely, lovely home, homey atmosphere. And then suddenly about two years ago, so that we're four years into this ghostly running, something changed in the apartment. And our son was getting so scared that he wouldn't even go to the toilet by himself.

So bearing in mind that, you know, Parisian apartments are small. And the door to the toilet is, I don't know, five footsteps from the door into the lounge. I'm looking in the wrong place, door into the lounge.

So, and he wouldn't go into the kitchen, he wouldn't, he just was scared. And I started to feel frightened too, I felt as if I was being watched. And I felt as if I was becoming unwelcome.

It's very, very odd. And the, I would, so there were two parts to this section of the story. So I would, when our bedroom is right by the front door.

And so when you look out, when you're lying in bed, you can look out at the door into the hallway. And I would wake up at night and feel as if someone was watching me. And it was just very unsettling.

Yeah, unsettling. But further down the corridor, where my son's bedroom is, it was, the atmosphere was thick. It was very odd.

I felt, I felt, almost felt threatened in a way, very, very weird. And one day, my husband, he didn't tell me for two days because he had also noticed the change in the apartment. He, so the kitchen is opposite our son's bedroom.

And he felt something move through him from the kitchen and go into Max's bedroom. Like I said, like, how do you describe it? And he, he said it was, it was just like, it was almost like, I suppose a wind, but it wasn't a wind because wind doesn't go through you. He just sort of felt that he'd been crossed by something.

Ooh. So all of this was very, very odd. Very odd.

And, and then last, so last year, so last year, probably one of the strangest things that I've ever had happen in my entire life happened. So my husband was coming back from a trip. He was in the hall, putting his coat up on the hook when next to him.

So if his hook is here next to him about, I don't know, a good 60 centimetres or so, I saw a hat suddenly appear and fall to the floor. It just kind of fell out of nowhere. And it was a flat cap, like, like the sort of hats that elderly gentlemen would wear.

A flat cap. A flat cap. And it was, it was like patchwork and I picked it up.

And as I held it, I got the smell of an old man and it wasn't an unpleasant smell. It was just sort of that musky, uh, kind of old man-y smell. And I sort of, I said, did you, were you next to someone on the train? Cause he'd been on the train.

Could it have been in his hood and, you know, somehow fallen out? Yeah. Maybe he took his jacket off. And it had been stuck in there.

And it was somehow in the sleeve or something. Yeah. I mean, maybe.

It's possible. It's possible. But he was like, I wasn't sat next to anyone on the train and he'd taken two trains and both times he'd been by himself.

Anyway, we had lots of things to do. We put the hat on the hook, uh, which, which afterwards made me think of that song. Wherever I lay my hat, that's my home.

And I thought, my gosh, I should not have done that. Anyway, I shouldn't have put that hat on the hook. Um, anyway, the next day.

So I was, so both, both of us, both me and my husband worked from home. We were sat eating and I am obsessed with crispy chilli. I don't know whether you've ever tried it.

Crispy chilli. Crispy chilli. It's a Chinese condiment.

I suppose they have it in lots of Asian countries, but it's, it's just, oh my goodness. It's so delicious. It's sweet.

It's salty. It's spicy. My mouth is watering, just thinking about it.

And it sometimes has Szechuan pepper in it. And it's just, I just love it. Anyway, I was talking about how I can't get enough of this crispy chilli and the pot had already been opened.

So there shouldn't have been a buildup of air in the pot. And I put the lid back on. And as I sat back down, the lid popped off and flew two metres, at least through the air, like high into the air.

And it was just like poltergeist stuff you see in films. It was, it really felt as if it had done it on its own accord or it had gone against the laws of nature that we know about to do it. So I was quite spooked by this.

Anyway, that night we went to bed. And so, as I said, our lounge, we had put bookcases up to split it into two rooms again. So when you're in our bed, you can hear everything that's happening in the lounge because it's just a bookcase.

A bookcase that separates the two. It's not a real wall. Yeah.

And you are familiar with the sounds of your own house. They become part of the woodwork, as we say. And so I was woken up to the familiar sound of our dining room chair moving when someone wants to sit down at the table.

Right, so this is new stuff now. This is new stuff. This is separate from the running, from the feeling, the threatening feeling.

This is like a third. And this is stuff that you didn't tell us about before. No, no.

This is, yeah. Okay, so this is all new. This is new.

And I thought, goodness me, we have got... I felt it was linked to this hat. So wait, you heard the sound of a dining room chair being dragged along the floor? Well, just like sort of how you move when you sort of do this to sit down. Yeah, you're just sliding.

You wiggle to get into the right place. Yeah, you kind of shimmy it to one side or something like that. And I thought, we have got a poltergeist ghost who likes food.

He wanted to taste my crispy chilli and now he's sitting down at the table. Because he's listening to you talking about how amazing it is. About food, yeah.

And he wants to try it. He wants to try it. That was my interpretation, of course, which I can prove in no way at all.

But it led me to think of the character of Monsieur Framboise, who is a foodie. He loves his chocolate. In the book, he paces around, he makes objects move by themselves, he takes objects away.

And of course, he loves flavour and is frustrated he can't taste anything anymore, because he doesn't have a physical body that have sort of taste buds. So he's got his motivation, which is to be able to taste food again. Yeah.

And also maybe to. So a lot of the time when we talk about ghosts, one of the sort of from the paranormal side, the paranormal explanation, one of those is that ghosts are essentially people who are kind of trapped, or a spirit, like someone has died, and their spirit is somehow trapped in a space because they died in the wrong way. Or unfinished business.

Unfinished business, something like that, which leaves some trace or a spirit behind. Or maybe the ghost is attached to a location for some reason. So your character, Monsieur Framboise.

Well, yeah. In the book, he's attached to the hotel. Okay.

Yeah, in the book. In real life, I think this, I shall say, ghost, because this is what I think it is. Everyone is open to interpretation, of course.

But I figured that he was attached to his hat, this hat that appeared, because we didn't have any of the weird poltergeist stuff until this had appeared. So just quickly to end, to encapsulate, to end this story. The next day, I took the hat away.

I announced to the apartment, I said, I'm sorry, if you're here, you need to go into the light. I'm taking this hat. Outside, you can't stay here.

We're living here right now. And I left it on a post. And that is the end of that story.

You left it on a post outside. Outside, two streets away. That's the end.

I never saw the hat again. Nothing of that type of activity. That kind of poltergeist energy, things moving.

None of that happened again. None of that happened. Because I feel like there's two things here.

There's the children running and, you know. The threatening feeling at the end of the apartment. Threatening.

So maybe even three things. Three things, yeah. Sound of footsteps, your son seeing something moving, someone moving.

Yeah. That's one thing. The very strange threatening feeling down at the end of the corridor, and a different atmosphere, and your husband saying that he felt something pass through him.

And then the third thing, relating to the hat. The hat comes in, you don't know where it's come from. And then you get this poltergeist activity with the top flying off the thing.

And the chair moving. And also there was, well, the person running and pushing the chair, that was the children. I associate that with the child.

Or the running. But that's odd though, isn't it? Because it's three separate things. Three separate things.

From an apartment that felt empty. Felt great. Felt homey.

And so something had happened. So anyway, that was the end of the hat thing. But by this time, it was really starting to affect me.

Because I felt like I wasn't welcome in our own home. And I started asking around, asking friends if they'd had any strange experiences. I even actually went to the doctors, because I was feeling quite down about it.

I felt almost like my energy was being sapped. And I thought, goodness me, I'm 47. Could it be the perimenopause? Could it be because when you're freelancing, you work a lot? Could it be that? I mean, it could have been all of those things.

But at the doctors, I said, in Paris, do you ever have other people who come to you because they think their apartment is haunted? And he said, yes. He said he has quite a few patients who have come with their own. I mean, he didn't go into detail, obviously, but with their own stories.

And so I thought, okay, I need to try and do something about it. And one of my friends said that they had had this medium come into their apartment to cleanse it before they moved in. A medium, right? Yeah, so a psychic.

Yeah, someone who's somehow able to communicate with the spirit world. That's right. I think medium means they can communicate with those who have passed on.

They're sort of a medium. They're a conduit between the two dimensions, I suppose. And so we caught, so I looked up this lady, and she had a little section on manifestation, which means entities in French.

I thought that was, I thought it meant... Yeah, it does mean... Protests. Protests. It does mean that as well.

Because manifestation in French is like demonstration or protest, going in the street to protest against something. But it also means... Something that manifests itself. Yeah, like phenomena, like unexplained phenomena.

Yeah. So I thought, I have got nothing to lose. I called her up, explained the situation, and she explained that she would come round and that she would sort of check the apartment, see what she found, that we had to leave it for three hours so that she could look at everything.

And she sort of assessed, she assessed, assessed, is that the right word? Assesses. Assesses. There you are.

Silly me. Native speakers struggle with English too. Especially when you live in a foreign country.

And yeah, she wanted to assess sort of the energy flow in the apartment. Just generally, I suppose she knew what she was doing. Just generally get a feel for anything that might be there.

Can I just ask one question here? She didn't afterwards, this is my sort of sceptical side coming through, she didn't afterwards do some sort of cold reading, tell you things about yourself? No. Okay. Because there she was for three hours in your apartment.

Maybe doing research and going, you know, you don't have a sister called blah, blah, blah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, she didn't do anything.

No, she didn't do any of that. No, she didn't do any, she didn't tell us anything about our lives. No, okay.

No, she was there just for that. Okay. So three hours, she was alone in the apartment.

Yeah. Cleansing the apartment, as you say. Cleansing the apartment.

Do you know what she was doing? So she uses Tibetan bowls to change the frequency of, so she, from what I gather, from talking to her afterwards, her way of interpreting the world and the phenomenon, the inexplicable phenomenon that happen is that we're all energy, we're all frequencies, we're all vibrations. And sometimes through events that happen through energy that gets blocked because

of objects or because of, I don't know, there's a new metro line or there's, there are things changing all the time, works that are happening in the apartment or in other apartments. The frequency of the space is altered.

And so it can lower the frequency. And she says that entities can be attracted to lower frequencies. So that's when, I suppose that would make sense why, you know, houses that look spooky are often derelict places.

You know, they're the places where the energy's low, where, I don't know, there's no, there's no life pumping new stuff in. And yeah, so you're welcome to be sceptical. I mean, I am personally sceptical, but I'm absolutely fascinated by these stories.

Having lived it and I have no, I have no explanation. All I know is, well, I get to the end, is that now everything is okay. Spoiler alert, everything is okay now.

So she, so she said that, so she, you said, what was she using? Tibetan bowl, like one of those meditation bowls that makes a sort of humming sound. Yeah, the sort of ringing that's used in, well, in lots of meditation frequencies. And she used sage and rosemary to sort of general, oh, what's it called? When you, when you cleanse the area.

Yeah. Using sort of aroma. Aroma, like the smoke cleanses the energy.

I've heard that burning sage is a thing that can sort of, cleanse a space from spirits. Yeah. Yeah.

And she also had worked with shamans in South America, I think. So she, in her mind would associate totems to the spaces. So she would set up protections.

I don't know. Totems like sort of objects, animals, objects that represent animals. Uh, okay.

Yeah. I don't really understand that part either, but that was, that was sort of her package. Yeah.

Okay. And, um, and I, I don't really need to understand it to, um, just have the feeling that it works, but, um, so yeah, so she spent her three hours and what came out was quite interesting. So she knew that there was, we'd heard a child running, so she knew the child part.

She didn't know anything else. Um, she said that she had found the spirit of a child who was looking for his mom and that he was in the spot where she didn't know that I woke up at night and could see the thing. So I thought that was quite interesting.

And she said, she did, he was looking for his mother and his mother didn't come, but she managed to get him to move on because his grandma welcomed him into the, the ether. And, um, anyway, so that, but take it or leave it. All I know is that when we stepped back into this apartment, it felt different, completely different.

Three hours later, it felt different. You could say it's psychological maybe, but who cares? And she also said that there was an entity in my son's bedroom. And that had been a bit weird when she'd arrived in the flat because, um, when she stepped in, it was really like in a horror film, she said, Oh, I can feel as if someone's pulling on my collar and they don't want me to be here.

And we were like, Oh my goodness, I don't want to be, I don't want to be in a horror film. Oh my goodness. And, um, so she explained that this, um, person entity, she, she didn't say whether he was linked to the apartment or whether he had travelled from somewhere else within the, the block or whatever.

Um, because for her, the energies meant you, you, you could move around, but he explained to her that he, I can't believe I'm telling this, this, this sounds, sounds very, very odd. So stay with me. So, um, he had said, she said that he told her he had had an abusive mum.

So this is another child. No, this is an adult who was in, had sort of like a child's attitude to life. So she wondered if he wasn't disabled in some way.

Okay. Um, and he, he's, she said, he had said he liked it there because there were lots of toys and he had had an abusive mum and he died jumping out of a window. Oh gosh.

I mean, this is like, that's horrible. This is real precise detail. And this is really quite horrible.

Yeah. You're right. So it's a story of a, a man who'd been abused as a child and who'd committed suicide.

Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

And, um, yeah. So anyway, he didn't want him, he didn't want to go. So she put up, I don't know what she did.

She sort of energetic barriers or whatever and said she will come back in two weeks. No extra money. It cost, I shall say how much it costs.

It was like 300 euros or something, which to me is the best 300 I've ever spent because it really did change the apartment. Yeah. And, um, she kept, so she came back two weeks later and she managed to get him to move on into the light.

And apparently he had told her that one of the reasons he'd stayed is that he couldn't understand how a mother could love their son so much. Um, so perhaps if this is true, perhaps somehow we had our living there and being there at that moment had helped him, his soul to move on, you know, who knows? So, um, yeah. So after that total, total peace in the apartment, well, our son who, um, so this is like now is, was six, seven, eight.

No, how old is he? He's been eight, seven. He was seven last year. So eight, nearly eight.

He suddenly wasn't scared anymore. He would travel around the apartment. Absolutely no problem.

Did he know that this woman had come? So he knew that she'd come, um, because, uh, but not for ghosts. We'd said she was coming to sort of remove if there was any negative energy that shouldn't be there. And, uh, that was it.

Yeah. We didn't say, Oh, we think our flat's haunted son. That's fascinating as well, because you might think, okay, uh, it's just the suggestion of, of it being fixed, which then has a psychosomatic effect.

And you know, it's psychological, purely psychological. And you just know it has someone telling you, yes, I've removed the spirit. It kind of just resets your mind.

So you interpret the situation in a much nicer way. But, um, um, but I can't understand how similar in the same way suggesting to him. Yeah.

I don't know. It wasn't clearly suggested to him initially that there was a spirit or a ghost. He kind of came up with that himself.

Yeah. Yeah. Also, I forgot one key moment of fear from his bedroom.

So obviously before she came, um, so we have this thing where when one parent leaves, the child will sleep in the parent, who stays behind bed. So let's say your husband's gone away for the weekend. Your son stays with you in the beds.

Yeah. And then when my husband gets back, he's allowed to sleep in the bed with my husband and I'll sleep in his bed because he's got a double bed and it's fine. Yeah.

And, uh, and on one particular night I was sleeping in his bed. So by myself in this bedroom that I didn't feel welcoming. Yeah.

And I heard a, I felt watched. And then I heard a bouncy ball. So, you know, these, these children's balls that you drop and they go boing, boing, boing, boing, boing, boing, boing.

Kind of a small rubber ball, solid rubber all the way through the sort of thing. You throw it and it bounces really high, a bouncy ball. So I heard it bounce in the wardrobe, which, you know, there were toys in the wardrobe.

The Metro moves underneath. It could have moved it, but it happened three times in a row, and I don't see, and there was only one bouncy ball, I don't see how it could have happened. There were even only two shelves, so, I mean the door was shut so it couldn't have fallen from a shelf to a shelf anyway.

But it, yeah, so that, that spooked me. But jumping back forward, so this, I suppose you could say this was quite a life changing experience, just because it's opened my mind to other possibilities. I'm not saying where the truth lies, you know, everyone has their own interpretation, everyone has their own intuition, everyone has their own susceptibility to vibrations or things like that, but for me I, I, I, it changed, totally changed our apartment, and changed my, my mood.

I suddenly felt that I wasn't being, I didn't, I wasn't have energy being taken from me. Very odd. One last detail about this medium.

So, our apartment, again, we, we rent it, and we rent it with furniture, but there's a lot of the furniture, we didn't need the furniture, so a lot of it is in the basement. And then I love antiques, so there was a few, there were a few antique objects that were there, like a beautiful lamp, with a sort of a, an old porcelain base and stuff like this, that we kept, a lovely mirror. She didn't know which objects belonged to us, and which belonged to the apartment.

But every object she pointed out in the apartment, she said the energy around this object isn't right for you, it doesn't correlate to what you need right now, belonged to the apartment and not to us. Wow. Which is really interesting.

Yes. And she, and we're very messy, we hate tidying. And so she did say that in order for energy to keep flowing, I suppose it's Feng Shui, isn't it? The idea that energy flows in the right direction and makes, you know, sets, creates harmony in your, in your living spaces and in where you work and everything.

She said, you know, we needed to tidy up, which I had to agree with. But yeah, I just thought, just so, so interesting. It's, it's, it's almost created more questions than it, than it's given answers.

And, and of course, as an author, all of this, you know, I, I'm feeding in on, on, on its own level because it's for children. But on, on these, on these experiences, these own questions, these own, um, all these things that have happened. Um, there were little tiny traces of it in, in death by chocolate.

I'm not surprised that it was inspiring because, you know, where does inspiration come from? God knows where it comes from, but it just, you just feed on the experiences that you've had and you put it into your work in some way. So it's an inspired book and it's fascinating. This story that, um, you just told, I mean, you know, like I've said before, I'm a sceptic about these things.

I'm completely sceptical and I tend to take the more sort of rational scientific view, but at the same time, I'm always fascinated by stories of ghosts and I love to watch documentaries. There are loads of them on YouTube. Loads of these old BBC documentaries about the, the ghosts of the London underground and all these, and there's so many stories.

There is a fantastic podcast that I recommend. It's a ghost and sort of weird happenings podcast that from the BBC in Britain called Uncanny. And it's, it's sort of set off this whole community because it, because of course when you, when you

talk, telling people your, these, these ghost stories, you're actually making yourself quite susceptible to crit, to critique, you know, because a lot of people don't believe and, and, and Uncanny in particular has created this safe space where people can tell their stories.

And there are some, there's stuff that's far wilder than anything I've just said. And, um, and, and it's become quite a phenomenon in Britain. They have like, um, they have huge events like Uncanny con, cons and stuff like that, cons.

And, uh, yeah. So I recommend listening to it. But what's fascinating is that, so there are so many anecdotes, so many accounts, stories across all cultures.

Yeah. And it's always the people who, a lot of the time, the people who tell these stories are just like ordinary people. You don't get the impression that they are making it up.

Yeah. You might think, well, they're just making it up. Uh, but you don't really get that sense that they're making it up for any reason.

They just seemed, and they often say, well, I'm not the sort of person who normally believes in this, this sort of thing. And then they tell a story about how something extraordinary happened to them and they encountered something. So I find that fascinating.

Um, I don't understand it, but yeah, I've always been interested in these sorts of stories. Like when I was a kid, um, my brother and I had these books. I don't know if you ever saw them as well.

It was the Usborne book of ghosts. Oh yes. You know that? Yeah.

And the Usborne book of monsters. I didn't see the monsters one, but I think I remember the ghosts one. The ghosts one.

I just loved that, but it terrified me. And in the book, there were lots of accounts of different famous ghost stories and also photographs. Loads of apparently, apparent photographs of ghosts.

I mean, I'm pretty sure almost all of them are fake, you know? Um, but there are some pretty interesting ones. You see like the exoplasm and things like that. They debunked a lot of double exposures where it's like a picture and there's clearly,

they've somehow added, um, you know, a ghost on the top of a staircase or something like that.

Um, but what's interesting is that there are loads of these anecdotal accounts, but then in terms of science, there's no zero scientific evidence, but there are actually a lot of, um, academics in famous universities who are studying paranormal experiences. And, uh, and if you sort of delve into delve into it on the internet, there's a lot of information that is being studied. It's just, I suppose it's like UFOs, isn't it? There's, it's taken till, um, till, um, the, the American government has released these, they, um, you know, the videos of, of, uh, unidentified, uh, what they call them UAPs, unidentified, um, air phenomenon.

Right. Okay. Cause they're changing it from the UFO, which has all the alien connotations.

Um, and, uh, I think things are kind of coming out now and they are studying, I mean, the CIA has been using remote viewing for years or trying, trying to, I don't know if they ever successfully did a, uh, any remote viewing. If you look, look stuff, well, look stuff up, maybe we can put some links into the comments. We'll find some remote viewing though.

This is where one person sits in a room and uses their psychic abilities to see what's happening somewhere else in the world. Have they actually ever done it? They've successfully done it really. And I recently, so all of this has made me quite interested in, um, in other sort of questionable paranormal sort of areas, supernatural paranormal things.

And, um, and, uh, I have, um, again, um, a friend who went to the States and met at this, um, at this conference was don't think it had anything to do with psychics necessarily, but he met a woman who had worked for the FBI and the CIA as a, um, as a, um, as a, as a psychic, because she was able to tell like you see in films, she was able to tell, help them with, with cases where they weren't sure what had happened. Yeah. And, uh, and, and give information to the police to help them with their, and it was real that she, she actually had actually had done that.

Yeah. I don't know how to explain it. I know that because I have since talked to her, um, and yeah, seen her, yeah, her cases and things like that.

But, um, it's fascinating. So the, the, the, the children that was explained, what about the, the old man that you thought with an old man with a hat? Not explained.

So yeah, not, not explained at all, but getting back to this idea that, um, the, the, the medium told us about vibrations.

I suppose that if our apartment was vibrating at a rate that was attracting these entities, it didn't necessarily have to have been. Yeah. They're just sort of, I think, wonder if it wasn't a place of just passing through almost.

Yeah. The other spirits somehow kind of were brought in to that, that kind of crossroads or something like that. It's really weird.

Really? And you feel okay at home now you don't want to move. You don't want to move. No, there were moments when I was like, I can't live here anymore.

We've got to get out. Um, but now I just want to redecorate. It's fine.

And also we've now got a dog. Does it walk through the wall? No, she doesn't. Thank goodness.

But she, um, I, I, I, she, she doesn't bark at, you know, at, uh, nothing. Yeah. She barks at the sound of dogs outside.

Yeah. She doesn't seem perturbed by the apartment. So she arrived after the medium and that yes, she did.

She arrived after. And also I didn't want to get a dog until I felt that we'd sorted out the problem either by moving or by, uh, seeing what would happen after this intervention. Wow.

Well, listeners, what do you think? I mean, uh, I'd love to know if anyone else has ever had any kind of similar experience. Have you ever had some kind of encounter with the paranormal? In fact, if you, if you write in and tell your story, maybe for the best one, I could give a death by chocolate signed if you'd like it. Okay.

Right. So here's what we're going to do. If you write in your, in the comment section, either on my website or on Spotify or on YouTube, um, write in an account of a paranormal experience and I'll collect them.

Yeah. I'll send them to you. Yeah.

And together we can decide which one we think is the best. Yeah. The best written because we're trying out for English.

So in, all right, so now we have to talk about assessment criteria. So in terms of assessment criteria, so there's the, the task is describe a paranormal experience. Um, so that has to do that.

Um, but then it has to be, well, what, how do you decide, uh, whether something is well written? It's not just about accuracy. No, it's not. I suppose it would be about stirring your emotions, making you feel that you're, you're with you when, when you're reading it with the person when you're reading it.

That's in, uh, my professional, uh, arena that is known as effect on the reader. Yes. Right.

So it has to have a certain effect on the reader has to be effective, has to do the job. And basically it has to be sort of moving in some way. Obviously that will involve control over language and range of language as well.

But if you can clearly describe what happened and it doesn't have to be particularly long necessarily. No, it doesn't have to be long. You don't have to like feed in a thousand details just to, to bump up the word count.

No, no, there's no word counts. Uh, you can email it to me as well. Luke teacher at hotmail.com. Yes.

I'm still using hotmail. Uh, you can email me. Um, Hmm.

So please feel free to do that. Um, I'll find it. I'll, I'll find a way to add a sort of an end date to that.

Yes. Okay. But we'll then judge, um, the entries and then we'll choose the winner who will receive a copy of death by chocolate.

Yeah. Yeah. Uh, it'll be a good, it'll be a good opportunity to sort of recap, but we'll just to get a sense of anything that's happened to other people as well.

Because yeah, humans have been having inexplicable ghostly encounters throughout human history. Let's face it. And there's, there's a lot in Britain, like Britain is, seems to be full of ghosts, but I'm sure it's the same everywhere.

So, you know, I've got an international audience, so I'd love to hear stories from around the world as well. That would be fascinating. I don't think ghosts always have to be seen in a negative light.

Like, um, so I remember when, um, when the first time my husband came home to England and stayed at my parents' house, my, my, so when my grandma died, which she, she didn't leave much, but she, she had a little cat picture of a cat and it's happens to be on my old bedroom wall at home. And it's very solidly attached to the wall. And in the middle of the night, it fell off and I woke up and saw the shape of my grandma at the end of the bed, sitting at that, sitting on the bed.

And I felt that she was saying, this is a keeper. And so it was, uh, I mean, it could have been, could have been a dream. I mean, your husband, your husband to be was a keeper.

You should keep him. Yeah. And, um, and I, I felt that was a, it was a soothing sort of encounter.

Very different. So it doesn't have to be, it doesn't have to be negative. Yeah.

Very interesting. I actually like looked up some stuff, um, about, um, explanations, the various explanations for these sorts of things. Uh, most widely accepted explanations in science, psychological and perceptual explanations, um, misinterpretation of sensory input.

So apparently our brains constantly fill gaps in what we see in here in low light or ambiguous situations, we might see figures or faces. This is called pareidolia. Have you ever heard of pareidolia? Yes.

It's because through our evolution, we, we need to interpret things for our own safety. So we can see, we often see faces and that's why you can see a face in a rock or, um, you know, you can see a cloud, a cloud. Yeah.

You'd see as a shape or something wholly in a banana, you know, so it's like all sorts of, um, yeah. Or tea leaves, you know, looking at tea leaves in the bottom of the cup and the monster's face appears or exactly. And also that works for sound as well.

Hearing like white noise, like, you know, the sort of sound that you might hear on an old telephone line and you, that sort of random white noise can be interpreted by your brain as the sound of a voice. You might hear voices or words in there. So that's pareidolia.

Yeah. A shadow in the dark, or, you know, even when you wake up and you look over the other side of the room and you see your dressing gown on the back of the chair and it's a person, your brain sees a person. Yeah.

Um, yeah, I had that once when I was, I was probably about six and I was on holiday. We were on holiday in a, in a, so staying in the, in an unfamiliar place. And I remember waking up and it was, it was at the time where like your, your, um, corduroy, you know, they had those old corduroy covers where they were sort of thick ridges on.

You're talking about a corduroy cover on a bed. On a bed. Yeah.

Like a thick kind of corduroy cover on a bed. Yes. And I remember waking up and it was, it was pink, sort of, sort of, sort of white person, skin colour.

And, uh, and I saw this shrivelled old man and I couldn't get out of bed, but it was, it was just that it was pareidolia. It was like, yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Coming from the idea that way back in our history that we, uh, the people who, let's say looking in some trees or grass, the ones who saw the, the, the, the, the large, the big cat are the ones who survived. And so when you'd look at ambiguous things, your brain automatically sees them in order to keep you alive.

It's sort of ready to see those sorts of things. Um, sleep related hallucinations, sleep paralysis. We talked about it before sleep paralysis.

I told you the story of how one night I woke up in the middle of the night and I couldn't move. And it's actually, I had it a lot of times, many times in my old apartment. I used to wake up in the middle of the night, couldn't move.

And I was convinced there were people trying to get in the front door and I was frozen with fear or I would be lying there frozen with fear, convinced there was a person in the room standing over me. Sometimes people feel weight on their chest as well. And that is because when you fall asleep, when you're asleep, your brain floods your body with a chemical, I think, or to stop you moving.

And sometimes you can wake up when you're in that state and you physically can't move, but you're kind of half awake and that can lead to that feeling. And that's historically has been interpreted as the of a ghost or a demon or a spirit in your bedroom at night. Emotional and cognitive factors, just grief, fear, stress can lead to feeling a presence, hearing voices.

It's especially common after losing a loved one. I don't know if you were feeling particularly stressed these last few years. Who isn't? No more than normal.

Yeah. Yeah. Memory and suggestion.

The, the, the, the power of suggestion. Once you think a place is haunted, then you, you're looking out for signs that are going to confirm it. You interpret it's cognitive bias, confirmation bias.

Um, yeah. And then environmental and physical explanations, infrasound, low frequency sound. Yes.

Yes. There've been experiments where people hearing infrasound cause you cut, you don't physically realise that you're hearing it. Um, get scared.

It's almost like it's the scared frequency. Okay. So a very deep frequency it's unsettling because you subconsciously register something, something, but you cut, yeah.

It's not, it's not like you, you hearing it now as talking, but you just get scared and you don't really know why. And maybe it's just a low frequency rumble may be caused by like a Metro line or I don't know. Yes.

Who knows something like that? But yeah. Frequencies below human hearing create unease and a sense of presence. Yeah.

I actually went downstairs knowing this, I went downstairs to our, um, to our florists because they have, um, a, um, a fridge where they keep all the flowers, a big fridge, a big fridge. And I wondered whether the fridges had been on during these moments. Yeah.

And in fact they hadn't. So that sort of put that aside. But, um, I did go, I did check.

I did think about it. I mean, these are just like the scientific explanations, obviously. I mean, I'm not suggesting that these are all the case, but still, um, electromagnetic fields.

Some studies suggest that strong electromagnetic fields can affect brain activity and create feelings of paranoia or presence building condition conditions. Old buildings can produce strange noises, drafts, flickering lights. Um, I don't think any of those were, I mean, the sound of pad, the pitter patter of feet.

I don't know if that, I can't really know. And what's weird is it stopped afterwards. So yeah.

And the, the conditions, the, uh, as far as we know, the only intervener intervention was this lady. Yeah. Yeah.

Um, they won't, they weren't, there weren't any other changes in the building that we knew about. About see. Yeah.

Um, and then there's obviously the, the idea of fraud or tricks or hoaxes, like people deliberately creating fake photographs or, um, finding ways to, unlike you were saying, cold reading, cold reading by psychics. And I personally believe that most of the time those people are lying and they're doing it for money, but they're very good at it. But then there are some people who are able to do it and they actually believe it themselves.

Yeah. You know, it's, that's absolutely fascinating for me. Fascinating.

Do you know what? I have got something on my telephone. I wonder if I can show it to the camera. So talking about ghosts, should I, should I get it out to show you and I'll see.

Yeah. What have you got a photo of a ghost? So, um, yeah, well possibly. So I don't know whether it is this, but I like, I, I do it when I do, I do presentations in schools about death by chocolate and I've put this in my presentation.

So I have a friend. So we're going to show this on camera, but for the audio listeners in audio land, we'll have to describe what's, what's, um. And I have to find, I have to find it.

So, and maybe switch my phone back on because I turned it off for this. Make sure it doesn't go beep. Right.

So I have a friend whose husband used to live, um, in a town close to where my parents are in Yorkshire. And it's, it's these new buildings and they were built on the site of a hospital called the Margaret Hepton hospital. It's already scary.

It's already scary. That was run by nuns. It was a religious hospital.

Okay. And so again, scary. And so one day he was, um, hang on, I have to find the right message.

Cause this is, this is spontaneous. I hadn't prepared this. Um, so one day, um, he was, um, just taking a photo of his son.

He was doing a scooter thing on his little scooter with his helmet on. And for some reason he noticed, so this is the picture of the, um, I'll, I'll, I don't know that he'd want me to show his son in the picture, but I'll show you, you can blur it. Yeah.

And so, and in the window behind it, he noticed the shape of a religious nun, the nurse. Yeah. I don't want to put the whole full light on my phone.

Maybe it's not light enough. Okay. Yeah.

I don't know if you can see it. Okay. Let me just hold this right up to the camera so that people can see that.

Can you, okay. So audio listeners, I'm showing a picture of a window, um, in the distance, although it's quite clear and there's, there are a couple of leaves in front. Whoops.

But then, yeah, there's definitely looks like the, uh, a nun standing with her head pointed downwards. And let me show you, I can, let me see if I can get the, so the, the old hospital has a blog spot thing, a blog, a blog. Yeah.

It's just as blog spot was the, there was the old site wasn't it for blogs eight years ago. Uh, hang on. Let me write the name down.

Uh, see that may be pareidolia because it might just be a few reflections on the glass. Oh, you haven't, I can't get some internet here. Uh, Oh, okay.

I've, I've got internet. If I can, we could do it here on my computer. And if you look down, they have some old photos from the people who used to work there.

Can you see that with the nurses uniform, these nurses, they're not dissimilar, uh, to what looks like a nurse or a nun. And I showed it to, um, a friend of mine, uh, just the other day actually, who used to be a nurse and she worked in a religious hospital, uh, at the beginning of her career. And she said that the outfit that she could make out in this picture is very similar to the special occasion outfits that they would wear for the, for the hospital.

So weird. So weird. Yeah.

But then I kind of love sharing this. I could talk, I mean, we were talking for hours about it. I could talk for hours about it because I just find it so fascinating.

And as I said, like throws up so many questions, but there's always this thing of like a photograph of some children playing in the garden. If you look in the distance, there's a window and there's appears to be a person in window. Why don't ghosts just appeared normally? Why do they, why are they like always in the background in a blurry photograph? Why aren't they just like, hi guys.

You know, they're always some kind of like in this weird ambiguous zone, you know, maybe that maybe there are only areas of vibration and space that they can show up in. I don't know. I don't know.

I don't even know what that means. You know, well, I know that when I'm like, so my father-in-law passed away four or five years ago now. And I remember when, so my husband, he, he wrote a graphic novel and I remember one day he was looking at the, the final layout of the graphic novel on his iPad at my mother-in-law's.

And Max said, sorry, my son said, um, um, daddy is standing behind you. He saw him. He saw him.

He saw him standing behind your husband behind him. Yeah. And, uh, and, but it wasn't remotely scary and there was no, there was no reason for him to make it up in that moment.

It was just, you know, he was how old was he four years ago? Five. Yeah. You know, yeah.

Just saying, Oh, you know, he knew he'd died. And it didn't perturb him. He didn't, he wasn't, it didn't make him question life and death.

And he was just like, matter of fact, matter of fact, when my grandmother died, um, she was cremated and my mum, my uncle, and my granddad went to a specific place in Yorkshire, uh, in the countryside and they scattered her ashes next to this tree. And they walked back up to the road and they turned round to have a look. And there was a rainbow over that spot.

It wasn't raining where they were. There might've been some rain between them, but they turned round and there was a rainbow right over that spot for them. It was very symbolic.

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's a, it must be a coincidence, but at the same time, it was a very comforting.

But then if you want to really get into it, what is coincidence? You know, it's like what, yeah, is so random, the random nature of the chaotic nature of, of the universe. But, uh, that, that will mean something to someone in one place and not to someone else sort of. Yeah.

Can, do we always, we always look for meaning in everything we do, don't we? That's the thing like, like coincidences happen. They're bound to happen. Two things are bound to sort of happen at the same time.

It's just in the way that we interpret it. So like two things happening at the same time becomes significant. We have, it has to be significant for us.

Whereas it's of course, coincidences are going to happen. They're going to happen all the time. So just, um, going back to something.

So in the next book, so, uh, I'm, so this, the death by chocolate is the first in a, in a, in a series and the series is Coco Investigate. And so I'm currently writing the second book, which is going to come out at Christmas. And I decided that I wanted to pay tribute to my aunties, aunties, my aunties, aunties, aunties, aunties, aunties is my accent from Birmingham and Yorkshire, probably auntie.

Yeah. I'd say auntie. I've got that Southern accent.

Yeah. I'd say, I'd, I'd say I have one, I'd call auntie when I individually, I'd say auntie. And then their names.

Cause one's from the South, the other ones from Birmingham South Birmingham and South, but collectively I call them aunties. Right. Okay.

There you are. And, um, so my aunties and my mum are going to feature in the book as the ghosts. Cause there are more ghosts in the story, obviously, um, more chocolate, more ghosts, more adventure, more murder mystery.

And I, um, we talked about it and I'd, um, I sort of felt, um, I felt that it was like a fun thing to do. And then there was, um, so we know each other through our children's school and there was a parents evening with, where we're all having drinks in a bar. And one of the, one of the mums is a photographer.

So we went to this bar where she had, was displaying her photographs and I wore my grandma's coat. So my grandma was called Sally. And I put the coat down next to this between a mum and a lady that I didn't know.

And I said, hi to the lady. I said, Oh, what's your name? And she said, my name is Sally. So I said, Oh, that's funny because my nan whose coats right next to you was called Sally.

Then we were talking about the photographs on the walls and one of them was called Sally. Oh wow. And this, uh, and then her, so that's three Sally.

So I was like, Oh, this, this is interesting. And, um, coincidence again. Yeah.

Which you then, which, which my brain then now wants to feed into to validate something that I'm doing, going to do in the book or gave me the idea for something I'm going to do in this next book. And, um, and so, uh, we're chatting and, uh, and, and my, my, my nan Sally had a very big personality. She was very hilarious.

She would swear. She would, she would, uh, she has, uh, yeah, she has all sorts of great, she had used to have great stories to tell from during the war because she was, um, she used to help deliver babies because there weren't enough doctors and nurses and she happened to be very good at it. And then we, so we got, so we got talking about grandparents and things the next day.

Um, I took the dog out for her morning walk and we met. So I've got a Cocker Spaniel who incidentally is in the book. Um, I'm a type of dog.

Yeah. Cocker Spaniel is a type of dog. There's a picture of her at the end.

You can see video viewers. I'm showing, uh, audio listeners. I'm showing a picture of the Cocker Spaniel, the Cocker Spaniel, lovely little Brown, uh, dog with floppy ears.

Yeah. And, um, so I went out with my Cocker Spaniel and bumped into another Cocker Spaniel. I said, Oh, how cute.

What's her name? And she was called Sally. So it's like, okay. I think my nan wants to be in this book too.

And so you put Sally in the book. Yeah. It's going to be a, yeah.

One of the characters. Okay. That's great.

Sort of coincidence. So just to end, let me, um, let me just go back to the book again. Death by Chocolate.

Now it's not a scary book, is it? We've, we've talked about scary stuff. And there's nothing heavy like the stories we've told today. Cause we talked about some sort of more adults sort of grown up things relating to ghosts, but this book, it was just inspired by some of those things, but yeah, it's a fun book.

For children, eight to 12 year olds. Um, and, uh, yeah. I'm looking forward to reading this with my daughter.

It's going to be good fun. Um, okay, great. Well, yes.

Remember everyone, if you've had some sort of paranormal experience, anything you can think of, feel free to write in, in the comment section, website, YouTube, Spotify, or email. Um, then feel free and who knows, maybe I will end up sending you a copy of this book from Anna herself signed no doubt by you too. We can arrange that.

Oh yes, definitely. Of course I'll sign it. Yeah.

Okay. I live to sign my books. Do you, do you love doing that? Oh my gosh, I love it.

Those events when you sit at a table and you. Absolutely love it. Yeah.

Yeah. Cause, cause you get to, cause writing is quite a solitary activity by yourself. And then when you sit, when it, when you finalise the text and, or even while you're working, you might have back and forths of email with your editor, but you are physically very isolated.

And, um, and then of course, when you go to events, be it schools, because of course I write children's books, so it's for children or bookshops and you get to meet people. And it's the moment where you realise that your baby is out in the world. It's kind of not yours anymore.

And even, even some, sometimes when I read it back, I think, goodness me, did I write that? It's like, wow. And, um, yeah, so that's a very, a part I love is signing it. It's like, it's like being a film star.

Are you signing this one at some point? Yeah, I will. Do you know when? Oh, sorry. This one? Uh, yes.

I don't, I don't know when I know that they, the bookshops in Paris have them. So, um, I shall go and do some signing this week, I think. But, uh, an actual, um, an actual event for, for me, it'll, it'll be in a few weeks, probably after, after Easter, I think.

Okay. All right. I don't know when this is going to go out, so I don't know if, if I'll be able to announce that, but you know, I do have some listeners in Paris who might want to come.

Okay. Uh, Anna, thank you very much for coming back. Thank you.

It was a pleasure. Absolutely. I can't wait to hear all the stories.

All right, then. Nice one. Thank you.

And until next time. Until next time. Good.

Bye. Au revoir. Bye. Bye.

## Ending

Right. So you just heard me say bye, bye, bye at the end there, but we're not done yet because I just want to say a few more things at the end of this episode.

The first thing is thank you very much to Anna for coming back on the podcast and telling us about her latest book, but also about her paranormal experiences. And, uh, uh, that are just unexplainable. I don't know how to explain those things.

Um, as always, we're curious to know what you think. So please get into the comments section and leave your thoughts. I always want to encourage you to respond in some way and write a comment, um, if only just to practise your English, but also just to get responses.

You know, we're always curious to know what you think. And also you heard us talk about that competition, which we launched in this episode. So let me just kind of reestablish or properly establish the rules for this competition.

Okay. Um, so what we want is a description from you of a strange paranormal, or at least unexplained experience that you've had. Okay.

Think have you ever had a weird experience that you can't really explain, write your description in the comment section or send me an email. Okay. So a description of a strange paranormal or just unexplained experience that you've had, there's no word count for this, uh, but there's no need to make it like really long.

Um, but no particular word count. You can send your description either in the comment section of this episode on YouTube, on Spotify, or on my website. And if you do it on my website, make sure you leave your comment under the episode page, not just on the main page, but under the specific page for this episode, you'll find the link for that in the episode archive on my website, teacher, luke.co.uk. So you can write your description in the comment section, or you can just send it to me by email directly.

Luke teacher at hotmail.com. Okay. In terms of judging criteria, how are we going to judge these? So by, by the way, when I've received, uh, your descriptions, I'll read them. I'll share them with Anna.

She'll read them too. And together we will decide which one we like the best. I don't know how many descriptions I'm going to get from this, because I wonder how many of my listeners have paranormal experiences that they can share, but it's, you know, it's not that common, is it? They're quite extraordinary things, but I really, really want to appeal to you listeners.

If you've got anything to just to describe at all, please do send in your description. Okay. Because just as much as anything else, as well as just making this competition work, we just would love to know your stories.

Okay. So if you just rack your brain and think to yourself, well, yeah, that I did have that weird experience that time, uh, put it into words, describe it for us and send it to us judging criteria. Then how are we going to judge your, your writing? We're not going to judge it very harshly.

What we're looking for mainly is something that has effect on the reader. Like something that has a good effect on us when we read it. That's the main thing.

We want something that's going to clearly describe what happened. And we're looking for something that's kind of creepy. That's interesting.

That's mysterious. So mainly we want you to be able to communicate that strange, unexplained feeling. We need you to be able to describe the experience clearly so that we understand exactly what happened and for it to have a slightly creepy feeling to it.

That's the main thing. Basically just it has to just do the job. Um, but obviously a certain level of control of English and a range of vocabulary will help you to achieve that.

Um, consider organisation, consider the way you organise your description. You should probably plan it a little bit in advance rather than just writing it out in one go. You should edit and plan and think about it.

Um, but the main thing is the effect on the reader. And, uh, does it do the basic job of describing a strange experience clearly with a, maybe a slightly creepy atmosphere. I'm aware of course, that whenever I ask, um, learners, my learners to do some writing that AI could be involved.

So I'd like to encourage you to avoid using AI to just write the whole thing from scratch, please. I'd like to encourage you to do that because well, first of all, I can usually tell, I can usually tell when something has been written by AI. So if you just ask chat GPT to come up with something, you know, normally we can tell, right.

Um, and blatant AI obvious artificial intelligence, uh, use in your writing will count against you. Okay. So we, the human touch is okay.

Like a few little errors is okay. And it's to be expected from learners of English. So I don't necessarily need something that's completely flawless with no errors.

The human touch is okay. And if it's obvious, if it's obvious, if it's blatantly obvious that you've used chat GPT or something, that's not going to work in your favour. Maybe you'll use it.

Maybe you can use it as a tool to help you develop your, your writing to help you, um, improve it, but just from scratch, um, try to avoid doing that. The closing date for this competition is midnight of the 30th of April, 2026 midnight, wherever you are in the world, midnight, your time. So if you're way over on the other side of the world and midnight is actually the 1st of May where I am, don't worry about it.

Midnight, your time of, uh, midnight, the 30th of April, 2026. That's the closing time for this, a reminder of the prize. The prize is a copy of death by chocolate by Anna Brooke.

Okay. Uh, I will send it to you, uh, a copy of death by chocolate, uh, will be sent to you as your prize. Uh, and also I will read out your story on the podcast at some point, and maybe I'll read out some others.

If we get enough, if we get, you know, some good ones, I might read out more than one, but the best one, the one that Anna and I choose is the best. We'll receive the book as a prize. So this is just a bit of fun.

Okay. It's, it should just be a bit of fun really, and a way to encourage you to do a bit of writing, but also to perhaps gather some potentially interesting stories. Again, I've no idea how many stories I'm going to get because I wonder how many paranormal or, or just even unexplained experiences there are out there among my listeners, but let's see, let's see what we get.

It doesn't have to be paranormal. It doesn't have to be about ghosts. Just anything that you can't really explain is interesting.

Okay. Right. So there you go.

That's, that would be good. Uh, death by chocolate by Anna Brooke is available from chicken house publishing available from all good bookshops. Um, a description from the chicken house website of the book packed full of humour and chocolate.

This mystery is the perfect gift for middle grade readers. This Easter Coco's parents have poured everything into the struggling French hotel, but the hotel is haunted by a bitter old ghost, Monsieur Franboise, a chocolatier who met a sticky end. He agrees to share his legendary skills with Coco and her new friend, Louis, in exchange for their help in uncovering the truth behind his murder.

Can Coco and Louis save the family hotel and solve the mystery by Easter? So this is a sort of creepy murder mystery with chocolate for middle grade kids. Um, and I'm sure it's really good fun and your kids will love it. So there you go.

Death by chocolate and a Brooke available now. Uh, that's it. That's the end of the episode.

Thanks very much for listening. Thanks very much for watching. If you've been watching the video version, have a lovely morning, afternoon, evening, or night.

And, um, if something weird, creepy or unexplained happens to you, or indeed happened to you while you're listening to this, let us know in the comment section. Um, all right. Have a lovely time out there.

I hope this didn't creep you out too much. It's fascinating stuff. Speak to you next time on the podcast, but for now, it's just time to say good.

Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.