

It took three months for Joan to realize that her apartment was haunted.

It started out as little things. She noticed a couple days after she moved in that her keys were always on the hook by the door in the morning, no matter where she actually left them. Then the cans in her pantry were reorganized. One morning she walked into the kitchen to find that all the junk food in her fridge had rotted overnight.

It always happened when she was asleep, or at work. Her shoes were sorted by color. The living room was vacuumed and the windows washed. The moldy pizza in the back of the fridge was thrown out. The sheets on her bed were changed.

At first, she was worried that someone was breaking into the apartment to do these things. Or, like in a bad horror movie, someone else was actually *living* in the apartment with her and she didn't know. So, she bought a few cheap cameras and hid them in her bedroom, the living room, and the kitchen. She left for work like she did every day, and when she returned she found all the cameras stacked on the kitchen table.

She reported it to the landlord. She called the police. She stayed home from work every day for a week, and never saw a trace of anything strange. It only happened when she was asleep, or when she stepped out for a few hours. No one believed her when she talked about it. The police stopped responding to her calls, dubbing her a 'prankster' and warned her that she could be fined for wasting their time.

So, three months after moving in, Joan decided that she had had enough.

"I'm speaking to the ghost that haunts this apartment." Joan said loudly, feeling ridiculous as she stood in the middle of her living room, hands on her hips. "I wish to communicate with you."

Nothing happened.

"I know you're in here." Joan snapped, glancing over her shoulder. A chill ran down her spine. "I want to talk to you."

Silence. Then the TV turned on, the voice of a weather man suddenly filling the room and making Joan jump. She grabbed the remote off the table and turned the TV off again, throwing the remote onto the couch.

There was a soft clatter. Joan turned around. The remote sat on the table again, lined up neatly with the edge of the table. She smiled.

"You like things neat?" Joan asked the empty room, but it wasn't really a question. The thing did her laundry, cleaned her bathroom, made her bed. It was like having an invisible mom living with her, and if she had learned anything in six months, it was that the thing did not like messes.

Joan walked to the table and casually knocked the remote onto the floor. She closed her eyes tight, and a few seconds later heard it land back on the table. Without opening her eyes, Joan reached out and knocked it off again. The remote was put back with a little more force. Joan swiped it back to the floor.

The temperature in the room dropped by twenty degrees, and Joan cried out in shock, her eyes flying open. Her breath crystallized in the air in front of her, and she wrapped her arms around her stomach.

*What are you doing?*

The voice echoed in Joan's ears, and she turned around slowly. An old woman stood behind her, arms crossed and expression angry. She had long gray hair, and was dressed in a checkered dress and shawl. She was also translucent.

"I'm..." Joan started, staring at the ghost in shock. She hadn't expected a grandma. Ghosts could be old? "I'm trying to talk to you."

*You're making a mess.*

The ghost's mouth didn't move, but the reproachful expression on her face did lessen a little. Joan just stared at her in shock, another puff of breath misting in front of her. The ghost's glare finally disappeared, and her shoulders drooped as if she were sighing.

*I have tried to talk to you before, dear.*

“You...” Joan couldn't form a whole sentence anymore. She had been convinced that her home was haunted, but seeing the evidence right in front of her was more shocking than she had expected. It was also much colder. “Are you trying to freeze me?” Joan asked, and wanted to kick herself for being so rude. The ghost grimaced.

*I can't do anything about that, I'm afraid. It comes with the package.*

“Package?” Joan asked.

*Me, dear.* The ghost tilted her head, a slight smile playing on her lips. *You get my old place, you get me as well. I know I can be a bit of a pain to live with, so I try to take care of things when you're not around. Make your life a bit easier.*

“You used to live here?” Joan said, homing in on the only part of that sentence that made sense to her.

*I died sitting on that couch.* The ghost said, tipping her head at the old leather couch that had come with the apartment. Joan stared at it, aghast.

“I've slept on that.”

*Well, it's not like the couch killed me.* The ghost sounded amused, and Joan took a few steps back, rubbing her temples.

“This . . . this is . . .”

And just like that, the ghost disappeared. The temperature in the room rose again, and sweat beaded on Joan's forehead.

“What the h-” Joan cried, stumbling back and bumping into the table. The remote control fell to the floor again. Halfway down it froze in midair, hovered for a second, then rose back up and settled on the table. Joan left the apartment in a hurry, grabbing her keys off the hook and ignoring the chill that ran up her spine when she passed through the door.

'I'm rooming with a ghost,' she thought. 'A ghost grandma.'

Then, 'Nobody will ever believe me.'