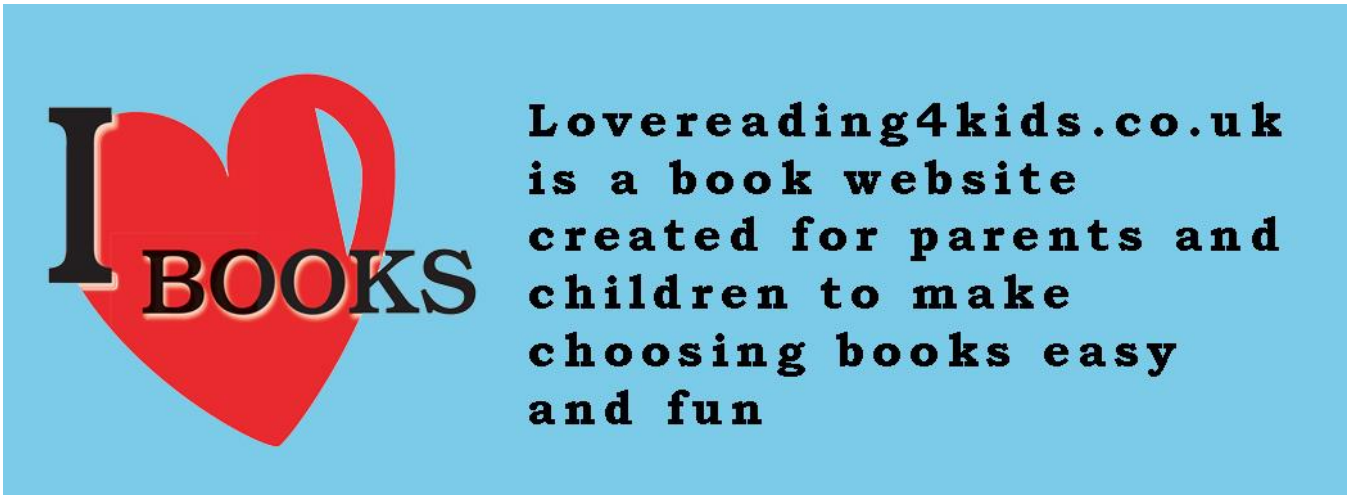


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100 Most: Unexplained

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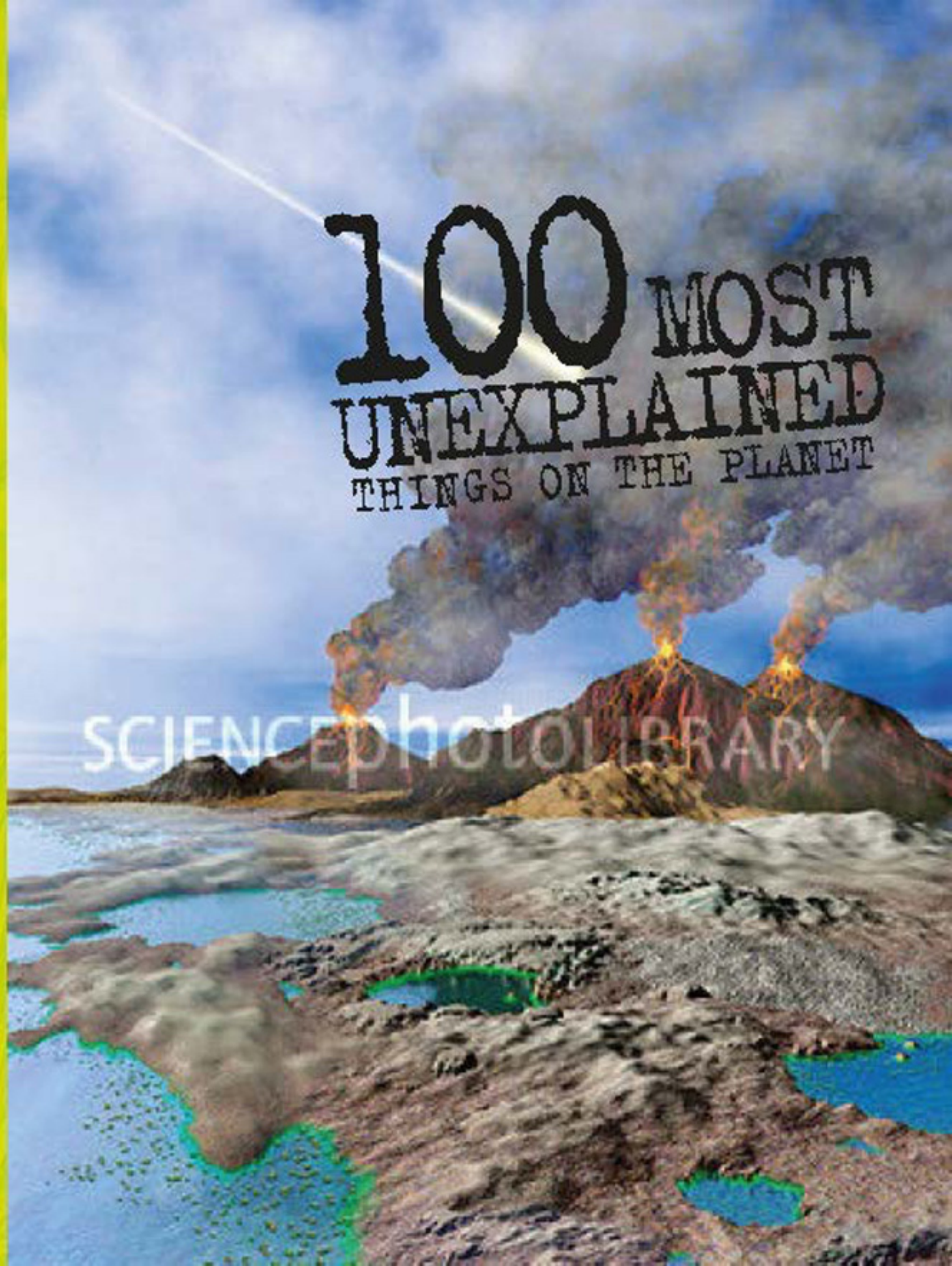
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100 MOST UNEXPLAINED THINGS ON THE PLANET



BERMUDA TRIANGLE

The Bermuda Triangle is an area of the Atlantic Ocean famous for its disappearances. Dozens of boats and planes have met a watery end on their way through the triangle, some of them vanishing forever without a trace. What happened to them?

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

This terrifying triangle is not actually as strange as it might seem.

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ISLE OF DEVILS

Even hundreds of years ago, sailors knew the waters around Bermuda were dangerous – they called it the "Isle of Devils". After a number of unexplained 20th century disasters, magazines began publishing articles about the "sea mystery" in the area, and in 1964 the name "Bermuda Triangle" was born. Theories to explain the mystery have included alien abductions, sea monsters or even mysterious portals into space!

But the truth is probably a bit more boring. The Bermuda Triangle has many shallow reefs, rocky islands, and frequent deadly hurricanes – as well as a lot of sea and air traffic. Ships and planes do go missing, but that happens in other places too. In fact, statistics show several areas of the world's seas and oceans are even MORE dangerous. They are just not as busy or as well-known.



▲ The Bermuda Triangle isn't a real thing – it's a triangle-shaped area usually said to lie between Miami, Florida, USA, and the islands of Bermuda and Puerto Rico.

DEADLY DISASTER

One of the deadliest Bermuda Triangle disasters was the disappearance of a ship, the USS Cyclops, in 1918, carrying a cargo of mineral ore and 306 passengers and crew. None of them were ever seen again.

SAILING STONES

If you left a large rock on a flat piece of ground, you'd expect it to stay there. But at Racetrack Playa, a completely flat, dried-out lake bed in California, USA, there are rocks that wander around. BY THEMSELVES!

TRACKS IN THE MUD

The rocks are known as the sailing stones. For over 100 years, people have been observing and measuring their slow movements. Each stone also leaves a trail in the dry mud, revealing its path. But no one has ever seen the stones in motion!

UP OR DOWN?

One theory claimed the rocks were simply gradually slipping downhill. The lake bed was measured, and it was found to have a very shallow slope – but in the other direction! The rocks actually slide very slightly uphill.

▼ Some of the rocks are huge – far too big for a human to lift!

MUD, WATER AND ICE

Geologists have different theories to explain the mystery. The playa floods with shallow water, making it muddy. Some believe wind could blow the stones along the slippery mud. Others say it happens when the water freezes, making ice sheets that slide around and carry the stones with them. So far, the scientists can't agree.

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

There must be an explanation. But we don't know what it is!

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GEORGIA GUIDESTONES

Most of the structures and monuments you'll find in this book are pretty ancient. It's hard to explain how and why they were built, because it happened so long ago. But that's NOT the case with the Georgia Guidestones. These towering, text-inscribed standing stones were built in 1980!



▲ The Georgia Guidstones are big – they stand over 6 metres (almost 19 feet) tall – and have become a tourist attraction in Georgia, USA.

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

Whoever is responsible has done a great job of keeping their identity secret!

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INSTRUCTIONS

The monument is made up of four granite slabs arranged around a central stone. Written on the main slabs is a set of 10 instructions, or rules, as a guide for the people of the world. The last rule urges humans to "Leave room for nature."

But it's not clear who paid for them to be built, designed them, and came up with the "instructions". Whoever it was used a false name when he employed the builders to put the stones up!

STONES, SUN, AND STARS

Like older monuments, such as Stonehenge (see page 26), the Georgia Guidestones are aligned with the directions of the setting and rising sun at certain times of year. The central stone also has a hole cut in it, though which you can see Polaris, or the Pole Star.

SKELETON LAKE

5,000 metres (16,500 feet) up in the Indian Himalayas lies a shallow lake that spends most of the year frozen. But when it melts, for just a month or two every summer, up to 200 skeletons are revealed lying around the lake's edges and under the shallow water. Spoooky!

LEAVE THOSE BONES ALONE!

Many trekkers and tourists visit the lake today, and some of them have been stealing the bones to take home! The Indian government is now trying to stop this happening, before there are no skeletons left.

WHO DIED HERE?

Locals have always known about the bones, but in 1942, the lake became better known after a forest ranger came across the skeletons. Some claimed the bones came from an ancient battle, or a group of travellers ambushed by enemies or caught in a landslide.

▼ Skeleton Lake is located in an uninhabited corner of the Himalayan Mountains.



▲ When the lake melts, skeletons are revealed.

BASHED ON THE HEAD

In 2004, scientists found that the lake contained frozen bodies, along with clothes and jewellery. They dated the victims to the 800s, and found that they all had blows to the head. The latest theory is that the people, en route to a shrine, were wiped out by a storm of giant hailstones!

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

This one may have been solved, though it's hard to know for sure.

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ATLANTIS

The unexplained legend of Atlantis dates from more than 2,000 years ago. Yet people are still fascinated by it, and many think the remains of this ancient, sunken civilization might still be discovered somewhere on the sea floor.

WHAT WAS IT?

The philosopher Plato described Atlantis in around 360 BC. He said a land of islands, with a great city on a round island in the middle, once lay in the Atlantic Ocean. It was home to an advanced civilization, but their power came to an end when earthquakes and volcanic eruptions sank it beneath the waves.

◀ Could the ancient civilization of Atlantis lie at the bottom of the ocean?

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

There's no clear explanation so far – unless Plato was making it up!

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SANTORINI

One theory is that Atlantis was really Santorini, an island in the Mediterranean. It is ring-shaped, with an island in the middle, and was home to the ancient and complex Minoan civilization. Around 1600 BC, it was devastated by a volcanic eruption which buried the city and also caused a tsunami. The time and place are wrong, but could a garbled version of this event lie behind Plato's story?

WHERE IS IT?

In several parts of the world, underwater ruins have been found. It's rare, but buildings and streets really can get covered by the sea, thanks to changing sea levels, or earthquakes that shift sections of land around. But there's no sign of a city where Atlantis was supposed to be.

YONAGUNI MONUMENT

This underwater structure, lying in the sea near Yonaguni island in Japan, is mind-bogglingly mysterious. Some claim it's a pyramid or boat-dock carved by humans, while others say it could be a natural formation, shaped by the sea. What do you think?

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

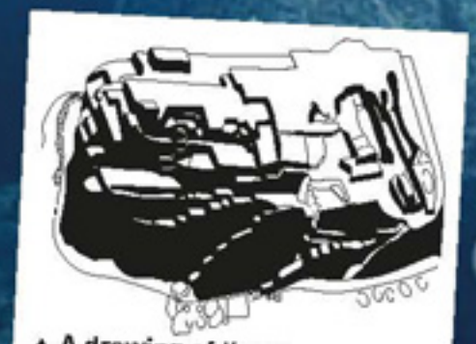
Either not strange at all, or one of the most mysterious monuments ever found.

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▼ Could this structure have been created by humans – or is it a natural formation?

STEPS, SHAPES AND PLATFORMS

Since being discovered in 1987, the monument has been measured, mapped and photographed. It's 150 metres (500 feet) long, 40 metres (130 feet) wide, and 25 metres (80 feet) tall, and covered in platforms and staircases. There is a star-shaped platform on the top, and a carving on one side that looks like a long face with two hollow eyes.



▲ A drawing of the monument's shape and layout.

LAYERS OF ROCK

The monument is made from sandstone, which can break apart into neatly shaped layers and sections. But the shapes seem so carefully designed, it is hard to believe they formed by themselves.

◀ Could this be a carved face – or just a natural formation?

PSYCHOKINESIS

Psychokinesis means "mind-movement". It's also known as telekinesis, or "distance-movement". Basically, it means being able to make things move using the power of your mind.

MOVING OBJECTS

In the early 1900s, Stanislawa Tomczyk from Poland was photographed making objects levitate. In the 1960s, films showed Nina Kulagina from Russia moving matches and small boxes on a table in front of her without touching them.

◀ Polish medium Stanislawa Tomczyk levitates a pair of scissors while in a trance.



WHY ISN'T IT EASIER?

If psychokinesis does exist, it must be very rare and hard to do. As some scientists have pointed out, if it was real, it should be easy to measure, and more of us would be doing it.

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

Attempts to prove psychokinesis exists have not got very far.

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HANG ON A MINUTE!

These sound impressive, but if you think about it, they could be exaggerated claims, and the films and photos – which are very old and blurry – could be faked using hidden magnets or strings. Modern scientists have tried to test psychokinesis properly in the laboratory, and they have found no clear, solid evidence for it.

TELEPATHY

Telepathy is the ability to send messages to someone else using just your mind. It often features in sci-fi films, but is it real?

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

Many people are convinced they are telepathic – but it's still hard to prove.

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I KNEW IT WAS YOU!

Many people think they've experienced telepathy. The most common example is when the phone rings, and before answering it, you "just know" who is calling. Other examples of telepathy involve suddenly worrying about someone, only to find that at that moment they were in danger.

TELEPATHY TESTS

However, like many other mysterious phenomena, strict scientific tests for telepathy don't seem to prove much – just a very slight effect in some experiments. This could be because telepathy only happens occasionally, or is affected by strong emotions, which are hard to create in a lab.

DO YOUR OWN TEST!

To test for telepathy, scientists use cards with symbols on them. One person chooses a card and tries to "send" the symbol on it to another person, who sits somewhere else out of sight, using their mind. The "receiver" has to draw the picture they think is being sent.



▲ Zenner cards are often used in telepathy experiments.

MYRTLES PLANTATION

Myrtles Plantation in Louisiana is famous for being one of the most haunted houses in the USA. And if you'd like to try to spot its ghosts, you can actually go and stay overnight there, as it's now a guest house!

IN THE MIRROR

Some visitors believe the ghosts are trapped in a haunted mirror, and look to see if they can spot them.

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

It may not be as spooky as it seems, but where these legends came from is a mystery.

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▲ The Myrtles Plantation.

◀ Has this photo captured the ghost of Chloe hiding behind a pillar? Or is it just a shadow?



HOW MANY GHOSTS?

At least 10 ghosts are reported to roam the house. The best-known is the ghost of a slave girl named Chloe, who is said to have worked there in the 1820s. According to legend, she accidentally killed the plantation owner's family with a cake containing deadly poison – so they all haunt the house as well! Another scary ghost is William Winter, who was shot at the house in 1871 and died after crawling up the stairs – where some say he can still be seen....

ROSE HALL

According to legend, haunted Rose Hall in Jamaica is the site of as series of unimaginably horrible happenings – including murders and scary magic curses. But how terrifying is it really?

UNEXPLAINED FACTOR

The story seems to be made up, but some people still claim to see Annie's ghost.

?

THE WHITE WITCH

The story says that in the 1820s, an English woman named Annie Palmer was the mistress of the house, and ruled her slaves and servants mercilessly. If any of them annoyed her, she had them killed or cast terrible curses on them. Finally, she was killed herself when her angry slaves turned against her. She gained the nickname "The White Witch of Rose Hall" and is said to haunt the mansion to this day.



▲ This tomb in the grounds of Rose Hall is known as Annie Palmer's grave, but the real Annie was buried somewhere else. Also, although Annie did exist, there's no evidence she was the scary witch of legend!

ROMANTIC ROSE HALL

Rose Hall fell into ruins, but was restored in the 1960s. Now the beautiful house and gardens are home to a museum and restaurant, and are a popular venue for weddings!

▼ Rose Hall, Jamaica.

