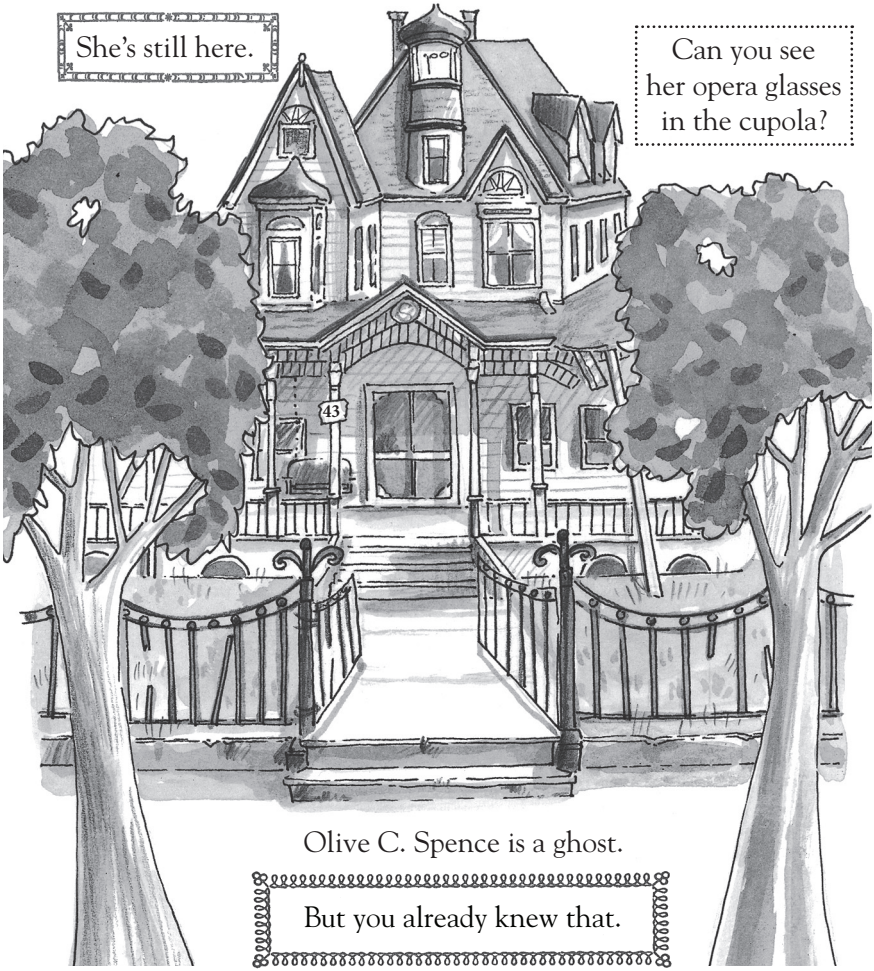
Welcome to Spence Mansion

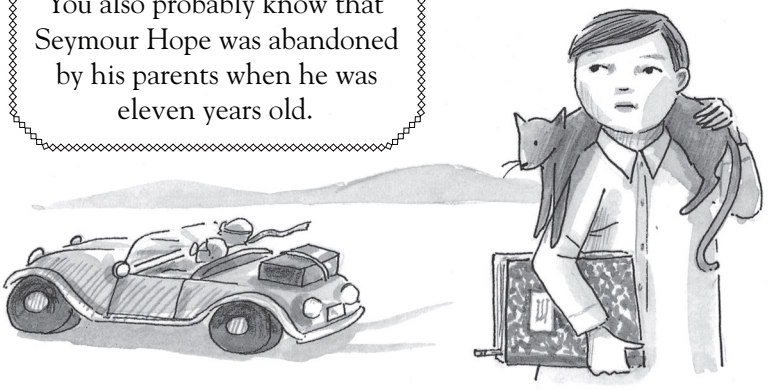
If you've visited before, you know Spence Mansion is a
32½-room house in Ghastly, Illinois.
It was built by Olive C. Spence in 1874.
She lived here until her death in 1911.



Olive C. Spence is a ghost.

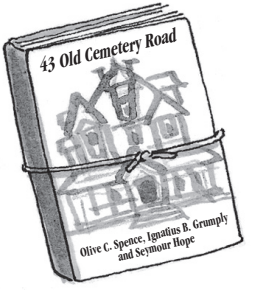
But you already knew that.

You also probably know that Seymour Hope was abandoned by his parents when he was eleven years old.



Lucky for Seymour, he was adopted by Olive C. Spence and Ignatius B. Grumply, a man who is often as grumpy as his name suggests.

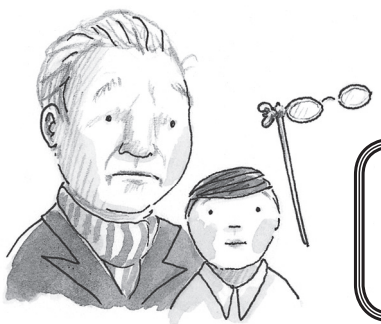
Together, this trio is creating the world's most popular ghost story, *43 Old Cemetery Road*. The book is published three chapters at a time and sent to readers by mail.



Olive and Ignatius write the words. Seymour draws the pictures.

Where do they find inspiration? Everywhere!

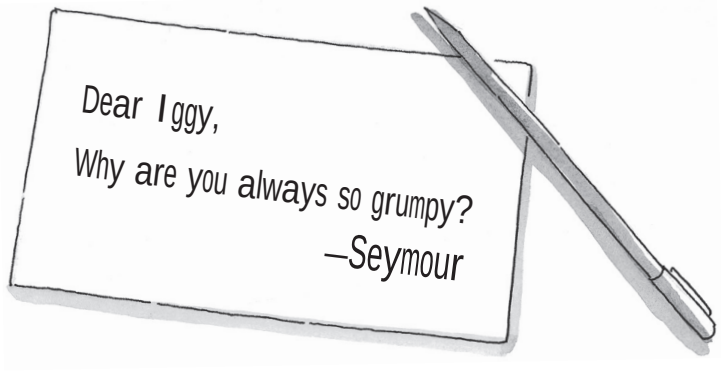
So far they've published chapters about Seymour's parents, Olive's best friend, Ignatius's former fiancée, and other assorted villains and scoundrels.



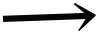
But there's one subject they've never explored in their book. It's a topic they've never even discussed as a family.

It was something Seymour had been wondering about for more than a year, ever since he first met Ignatius B. Grumply.

He finally asked it in a letter one summer day.



To answer that question, you must know about Iggy's childhood.
And you *will* when you read a letter that arrived from Scotland not long ago.



DR. IAN GRUMPLY
Psychiatrist
Specializing in Humor Research & Laugh Therapy

43 Old Castle Road
Loch Ness, Scotland

July 2

Ignatius B. Grumply
43 Old Cemetery Road
Ghastly, Illinois USA

Dear Ignatius,

I just finished reading *43 Old Cemetery Road*. What a delight! I had no idea you'd adopted a boy named Seymour, or that you were writing a book with the ghost of Olive C. Spence. How exciting!

I've been doing some writing, too. I just completed the final draft of my last will and testament. You know what a will is, don't you? A dead giveaway. Ha ha!

But seriously, as you know, I've never married or had children. My only brother is deceased. I have no living cousins. No aunts, uncles, nieces, or nephews—except you, Ignatius. When I die, you will inherit everything I own, including my home in Loch Ness. I bought a castle here years ago with you in mind. I thought Loch Ness would be a perfect place for us to talk about myths and monsters.

It's unfortunate that we haven't spoken in many years, but I hope you'll come visit so we can patch things up. Bring the whole family! I'd love to meet Olive and Seymour.

I suggest you hurry, as I don't have many days left. I'm almost out of jokes, too. Here's one you might like: What do you call an old psychiatrist who's on his last breath? A *sigh*-chiatrist. Ha!

Yours with a smile,

Uncle Ian

P.S. If I don't hear from you before I die, your next of kin will inherit everything I own, including Grumply Castle.

IGNATIUS B. GRUMPLY

A WRITER IN RESIDENCE

43 OLD CEMETERY ROAD 2ND FLOOR GHASTLY, ILLINOIS

July 9

Dr. Ian Grumply
43 Old Castle Road
Loch Ness, Scotland

Dear Uncle Ian,

I have no desire to see your castle or hear any more of your terrible jokes. Please do not contact me again.

Why must you always be such a grouch?

Olive, please. I'm trying to write a personal letter. Can I have a little privacy?

If you'll tell me why you're being so rude to an elderly relative.

You don't know my uncle.

No, I don't. Stop scowling and tell me. Who is Dr. Ian Grumply?

He's a world-famous psychiatrist. I spent every summer with him from the age of twelve until I left for college.

Fascinating! You've never told me anything about your childhood.

I don't like talking about it or Uncle Ian. He was the world's *worst* uncle.

But consider this: Your uncle is Seymour's great-uncle. It might be nice for our son to meet a relative. And Scotland is beautiful. I haven't been there since I was twelve. My family took a summer vacation to the Scottish Highlands in 1830. Iggy, *we* should take a family vacation.

I hate family vacations.

You'd rather stay home and keep doing the same thing month after month, year after year, and never take any time off for fun?

Yes.

Good grief. Don't you know life is for *living?*

Now you sound like Uncle Ian. That was one of his favorite sayings.

The more I hear about your uncle, the more I like the man.

You can like him all you want. I don't have to.

But aren't you *curious* about Grumply Castle? Don't you want to see Loch Ness?

I have no interest in Loch Ness or anything tha

Iggy, someone's knocking at the front door.

Who is it?

I don't know, but I see a truck parked at the curb. It says *International Telegram Service*.

Who would send a telegram in this day and age?

I have no idea. Go to the door and find out!

INTERNATIONAL

TELEGRAM SERVICE

To: IGNATIUS B. GRUMPLY
Fr: LOCH NESS LAW FIRM

JULY 9

IAN GRUMPLY DIED PEACEFULLY
IN HIS SLEEP TODAY = STOP =
PLEASE SEND SEYMOUR HOPE TO
SCOTLAND IMMEDIATELY TO CLAIM
HIS INHERITANCE = STOP