

## THE HAUNTING: KIM HAMILTON

Firstly. We are *all* only a step - or short stumble - away from death.

Secondly. It was *not* your fault. The culprit was that grinning child in the second last pew. That he was placated by a bag of chocolate and praline was a miracle in itself. At his young age, Reverend Dole's monotone was, no doubt, spurring him on. I *know* this. I too was a child that could not stop at one lolly and had to eat the whole crop. And your high heels *were* magnificent. Taking after me, at five-foot-*nothing*, you did the only sensible thing to match the height of your sister and two cousins that benefit from the Dutch side of our pedigree. With your thinking, the casket *was* balanced on all your four shoulders, square and equally. That you came a 'cropper', stiletto sliding on the sliver of tinsel wrapping from a Columbine wrapper - *was* extraordinary.

Yes, the coffin came down with a bang. Yes, the congregation were a gasp at the sight of it. I didn't feel any pain. I *was* dead, don't forget. *Please* don't fret so much at my not wearing underwear. You, your mother and sister were rushed that day, and right not to confine me in whale bone brassiere and girdle - for what you thought eternity. *Thank you* for choosing a diaphanous nightgown, ivory and sheer as it was, for my last dance. I felt like a bride again - *and* a ghost - pre my grand conflagration. With splayed breasts and legs, varicose veins and vagina veiled in chiffon, it was *not* the tittle-tattle *crash site* of talk at the wake. *Far* more serious was Reverend Dole's spruiking of chastity, in the wake of his cross examination on protecting child sex abusers in *his* flock.

I'll *halt* the haunting for now, having seen into your dreams of wanting to *act*. I, like you, wanted to grace and *grimace* the stage - *church aisle* if it be. Why? It's in our bloodline. On mother's side. Sheila, your great-great grandmother, suffered for her art. We all do. It's entrenched and will pull us down, and up again. Like a ladder in a well - in a garden. The rungs require steps, we miss some and climb others, and the stumbles are superb! So go with the bang over a whimper - *always* my love.