

The Hughes Chronicles



Step Inside

An Adventure Like No Other

DuGallan

THE DUGALLAN CHRONICLES

The Beginning

Durban Harbour, 1937

The steamliner arrived at Durban Port sometime in the late 1930s, which is how Samuel Thomas Isaac Hughes — known as ST — brought his two daughters back to South Africa. He had accompanied them from England. Daphne was young. Peggy was younger. And neither of them had ever seen a port quite like Durban.

In those days, passengers disembarking at Durban were required to leave their shoes on the dock before coming ashore. Nobody is entirely sure why. It was simply the rule — shoes off, lined up on the dock, collected again once you had cleared the port. Hundreds of pairs, side by side in the African sun.

Somewhere on that dock, Daphne and Peggy found a tin of yellow paint.

What happened next created quite an uproar. By the time anyone noticed, the shoes were done. Every pair. Bright, particular, impossible yellow. Two hundred pairs of shoes, painted on a Durban dock by a fourteen-year-old and her younger sister while their father was somewhere inside arguing about paperwork.

ST came out to find a dock full of yellow shoes and a harbour official who had very firm opinions about this sort of thing. He looked at Daphne. He looked at Peggy. He looked at the shoes.

Then he laughed. A long, helpless, deeply inconvenient laugh — the kind that makes things considerably worse with harbour officials.

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The shoes were repainted. Mostly. The harbour official was pacified. Eventually. And ST Hughes stood on that Durban dock with paint on his hands and tears of laughter still drying on his face, and he looked at his daughters and said something that Daphne never forgot.

She never told DuGallan exactly what it was. She said it was just for her.

But she painted her front door yellow for the rest of her life.

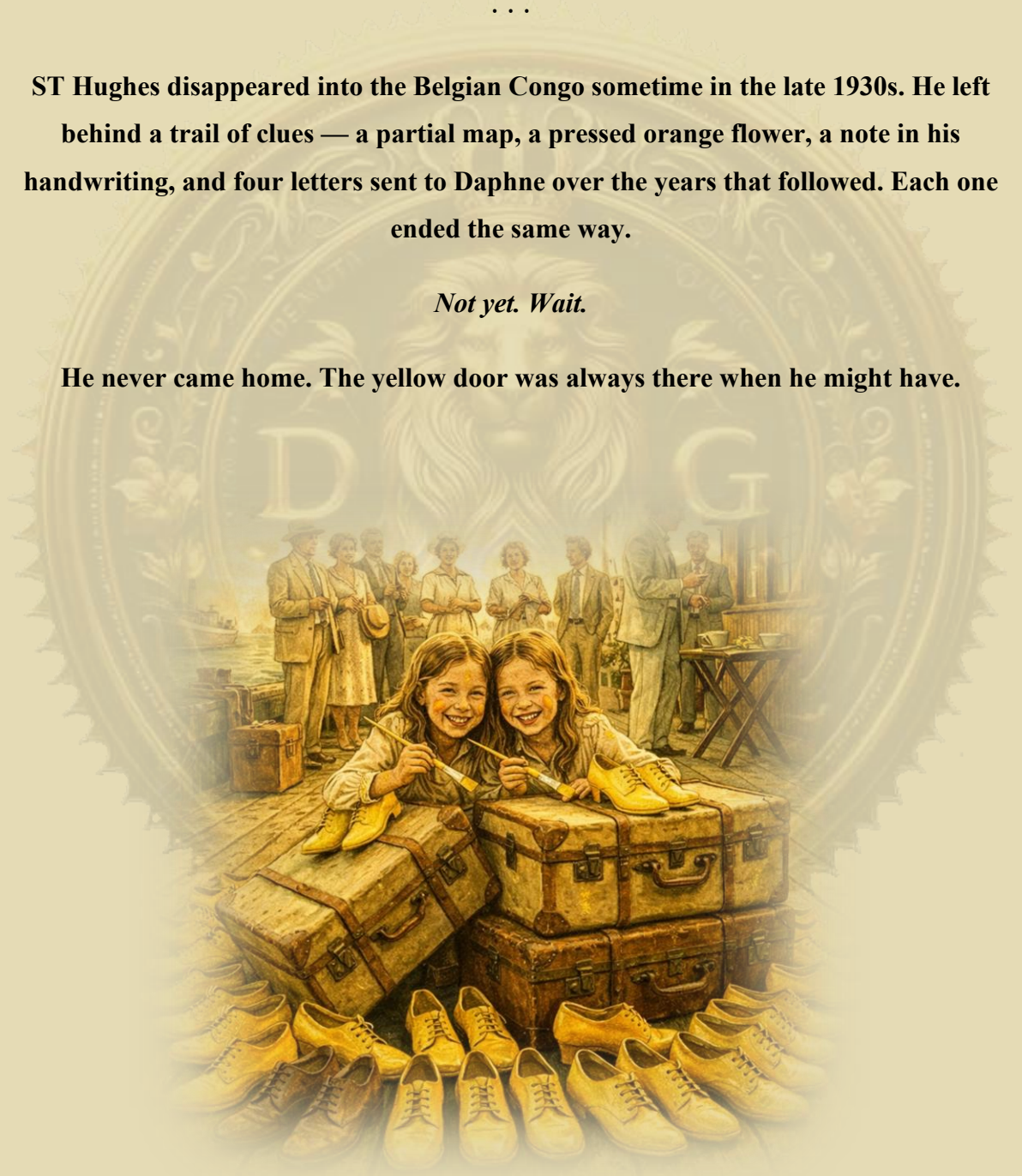
Every house. Every flat. Every room she ever lived in that had a door she could paint. Yellow — that particular, impossible yellow from a Durban dock in 1937. Nobody who visited ever asked why. It simply felt right. It felt like a decision made a long time ago that had never needed revisiting.

...

ST Hughes disappeared into the Belgian Congo sometime in the late 1930s. He left behind a trail of clues — a partial map, a pressed orange flower, a note in his handwriting, and four letters sent to Daphne over the years that followed. Each one ended the same way.

Not yet. Wait.

He never came home. The yellow door was always there when he might have.



THE TRAILHEAD

Step inside.

*Based on a true family story — and where the story needed wings to fly, it was given them.
Every picture is a hidden clue and has its own story to tell.*



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The Real Beginning



This part is true.

A girl named Daphne grew up on a farm in Shannon, in the Orange Free State, and one day her father was simply gone. He had gone to the Belgian Congo, chasing something he believed in completely. He never came home.

Nobody ever found him.

Daphne spent the rest of her life looking. Not in a dramatic way — in the way real searches actually happen. A letter never collected. A name mentioned once, then never again. A drawer that nobody had opened in years.

She was the author's mother.

Everything that follows grew out of her search — and it is still growing.

Where Story Meets Truth



The Hughes Chronicles is based on a true family adventure—still alive today.

But underneath the story is something that actually happened to the Hughes family, its siblings and more, pieced together from real letters, real documents, and real silences that lasted decades.

Where the truth was enough, we kept it.

Where the story needed wings to fly, it was given them.

You are about to meet a family who will feel, very quickly, like your own.



Shannon



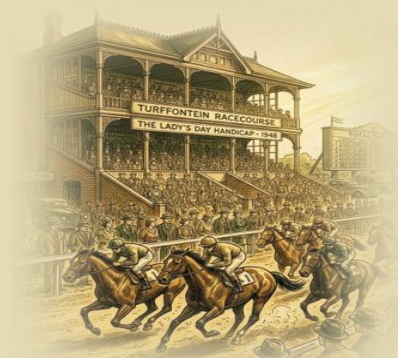
Picture a farmhouse. A tin trunk in the corner of a room nobody goes into anymore.

Picture a fourteen-year-old girl who decides, one ordinary afternoon, to open it.

Inside: a half-finished map. A pressed flower the colour of late afternoon sun. A single handwritten line that doesn't explain anything and changes everything —

Start where the horses ran.

That's all she has. That's all she needs.



The Colour That Follows Her



There is a yellow door in a valley most maps don't bother naming.

There are yellow shoes, kicked off on a dock in Durban, the year everything began.

There is a canary, in a cage someone built by hand, that sings every single morning — and the morning it stops singing is the morning everything changes.

Yellow turns up everywhere in this story. Not as decoration. As a signature.

Fourteen Years



Here is something the family did not know for a very long time.

The man they were searching for did not vanish once, in one place, in one terrible moment.

There is a much harder question underneath that — about a man who may have been closer than anyone ever imagined, for far longer than anyone ever knew, and about why staying hidden might have been the only way he knew how to keep the people he loved safe.

We are not going to answer that question here.

Some doors, you have to open yourself.



Not A Mystery You Solve. A Mystery You Live In.



This is not a series where someone explains everything in the last chapter.

ST is never found. That's not a spoiler — that's the rule the whole series is built on. Every book adds a piece. No book gives you the whole picture.

Daphne searched her entire life and never stopped believing.

Her grandchildren are still searching now.

That is the kind of story this is.



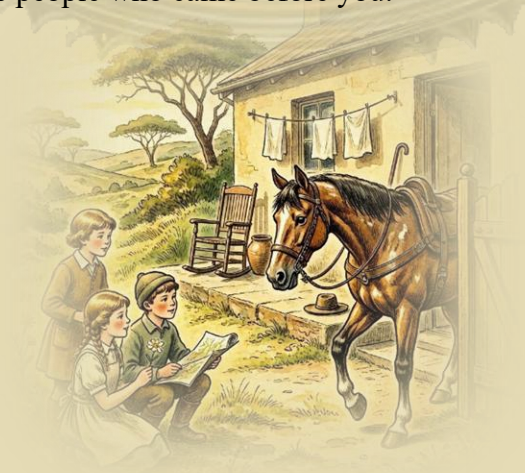
Why It's Told This Way



This series exists because a family's true story was too good, and too strange, and too full of love to leave folded up in a drawer.

It is written for the readers who still believe a flower can be a clue, a horse can matter more than anyone admits, and a grandfather's disappearance might not be the end of the story after all.

It is written, just as much, for the grandparents and parents who read it aloud — because some of you are looking for your own Shannon. Your own tin trunk. Your own reason to start asking questions about the people who came before you.



The Trail Has No End Date



Here is a promise, not a sales pitch.

This is not a series with a fixed number of books and a tidy ending already decided. There will be more books after these — for as long as there is more trail to follow, and there always seems to be more trail to follow.

The canary is still singing. We have no plans to let it stop.

The Trail So Far



This is not the first page of a story that's only just begun.

By the time you finish Book One, there will already be a second book waiting. And a third. Two complete arcs of Daphne's search already sit on the shelf — a girl following a tin trunk's worth of clues, and the sons who picked up the trail after her, each carrying a different piece.

There is more, too, for readers who want to stay a little longer between books.

A memoir, for the parts of this story that needed no fiction at all.

A recipe book, for the kitchen the family actually cooked in — because some trails are followed with a teapot close at hand.

You are not waiting for this world to begin.

You are walking into one that's already moving.

Step Inside



Somewhere, a tin trunk is waiting to be opened.

Somewhere, a map is missing its other half.

Somewhere, a girl is about to read four words that will shape the rest of her life — and yours, for as many books as it takes to follow them all the way.

Start Where The Horses Ran

The Hughes Chronicles, Book One

Available now wherever you found this.



A closing word from DuGallan.

This trailhead is yours to share. If you're a grandparent, a parent, a teacher, a librarian — pass it on to anyone who might love it. That's exactly what it's for.

The trail was always meant to be followed by more than one person at a time.

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*The DuGallan Chronicles*

*Follow the clues.*

