



INTRODUCTION

*“From ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties
And things that go bump in the Night
Good Lord, deliver us!”*

In the ancient days though people of the countryside repeated such counterspells as these, yet they loved stories of those same ghoulies and ghosties. Black Dog Shuck ran dark lanes at midnight for the unlucky traveler to meet. In the midst of wild autumn storms Herne the Hunter led his mad crew across country, and woeful indeed was the fate of those who saw *them*!

Shuck and Herne were old, old things out of the misty past, and became so worn in the telling that they no longer raised shudders. Then masters of tale-making began to create their own ghostly visitants for the frightening of kinsmen or neighbors.

Ghosts must, of course, have the proper settings in which to appear. We can readily accept a Grey Lady or a headless horseman or a Black Monk where ruined buildings show broken teeth of walls against a half-clouded moon. But a ghost who pads—or clanks dismally—along the hallways of a modern apartment—NO!

The nineteenth and the very early years of the present century brought us ghosts to the very best patterns. Certainly their like will never be seen again—for their haunts have become parking lots and supermarkets—if not worse. We

have destroyed the stages on which they appeared with the bulldozer and all the rest of modern clutter.

Therefore to savor the best in shakes and quivers one must return to books thirty, forty, fifty, eighty years old.

Recently it was my task to check through a collection of such volumes to list the tales included. And that task impressed me with the fact that many of the most telling and exciting stories in these books (now largely long out of print) dealt with children and young people whom the evil or twilight half-world had captured for better or worse.

So here is a collection of small ghosts, young ghosts, but no less potent for their size and age.

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