

Text A: Extract from Jacob Have I Loved (Katherine Paterson)

What was left of the land was now all marsh, but the house, though neglected, had survived. We children had always regarded it as haunted. There were tales that Captain Wallace's ghost appeared to chase off intruders. It took me years to figure out that the purpose of the ghost story was to keep young courting couples from wandering down the path to the old Wallace place and taking advantage of the privacy.

One day I talked Call into exploring the house with me, but just as we stepped onto the porch, a huge orange-coloured tomcat came shrieking out a broken window at us. It was the only time in our lives that Call outran me.

We sat gasping for breath on my front stoop. One part of my mind was saying that it had only been one of Auntie Braxton's cats. She was said to keep sixteen, and anyone who had ever been as close as her front door would have sworn by the smell that there were at least that many and more. The other part of my mind was reluctant to let it go as simply as that.

"Have you ever heard," I asked, "have you ever heard that ghosts will take an animal form when they are angry?" Now that my breath was back I let my voice glide out in a dreamy way.

Call jerked around to look me in the face. "No!" he said.

"I was reading this book," I began to improvise (of course, I'd never seen any such book). "In this book, this scientist investigated places where ghosts were supposed to be. He started out saying that there was no such thing as ghosts, but being a scientist he had to admit finally that he couldn't explain certain things any other way."

"What things?"

"Oh—" I thought fast while drawing out the syllable. "Oh – certain furry beasts that took on the personality of a dead person."

Call was clearly shaken. "What do you mean?"

"Well, for instance, suppose old Captain Wallace when he was alive didn't want any visitors."

"He didn't," Call said darkly. "My grandma told me. After Hiram left, they lived all by themselves. Never spoke to nobody hardly."

"See?"

"See what?"

"We were fixing to visit him without an invitation," I whispered. "He was yelling at us and chasing us away."

Call's eyes were the size of clam shells. "You're making that up," he said. But I could tell that he believed every word of it.

"Only one way to be sure," I said.

"How do you mean?"

I leaned close and whispered again. "Go back and see what happens."

He jumped to his feet. "Suppertime!" He started out the yard.

I had done my work too well. I was never able to persuade Call to return to that old empty house with me, and somehow, I was never quite able to go there alone.

Adapted from Jacob Have I Loved (Katherine Paterson)

http://playpen.icomtek.csir.co.za/~acdc/education/Dr_Anvind_Gupa/Learners_Library_7_March_2007/Resources/books/jacob.pdf