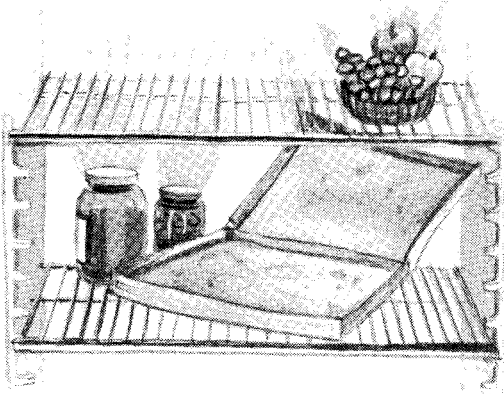


Chapter 5



Creak, Creak, Thud

That night, Howard dreaded going to bed.

First, he did two sets of homework.

He did them very slowly. He even typed Punch's. Since he didn't know how to type, that took a very long time.

"That's my boy," said his father, walking by with a ladder.

Howard asked his parents if he could sleep with them, but they said they were going to stay up late, wallpapering.

He didn't think he wanted to stay in their

room by himself. It was even bigger and creakier than his.

He settled for curling up with Scruffy Monkey, and he hoped that Chokey was curled up asleep somewhere, too. Somewhere far away.

He could hear his dad whistling and his mother humming below him. Soon, even though he thought it would never happen, he was fast asleep.

In the middle of the night he woke up.

He thought he heard something.

Creak. Creak. Thud. Creak. Creak.

He definitely heard something.

Howard jumped out of bed and raced to his parents' room, sure every step of the way that the ghost was going to grab him.

"Mom! Dad!" he called.

"M-mm?" his mother answered.

"The ghost! I heard the ghost!" Howard leaped onto his parents' bed and threw himself between them.

"Howie! Get off! We just got to sleep!" his father said crankily.