

# “Dey Ain’t No Ghosts”

By Ellis Parker Butler

Once ’pon a time dey was a li’l’ black boy whut he name was Mose. An’ whin he come erlong to be ’bout nose-high to a mewel, he ’gin to git powerful ’fraid ob ghosts, ’ca’s’e dat am sure a mighty ghostly location whut he lib’ in, ’ca’s’e dey’s a grabeyard in de hollow, an’ a bury’in-ground on de hill, an’ a cemuntary in betwixt an’ between, an’ dey ain’t nuffin’ but trees nowhar exceipt in de clearin’ by de shanty an’ down de hollow whar de pumpkin-patch am.

An’ whin de night come’ erlong, dey ain’t no sounds *at* all whut kin be heard in dat locality but de rain-doves, whut mourn out, “Oo-oo-o-o-o!” jes dat trembulous *an’* scary, an’ de owls, whut mourn out, “Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!” more trembulous an’ scary dan dat, an’ de wind, whut mourn out, “You-you-o-o-o!” mos’ scandalous’ trembulous an’ scary ob all. Dat a powerful onpleasant locality for a li’l’ black boy whut he name was Mose.

’Ca’s’e dat li’l’ black boy he so specially black he can’t be seen in de dark *at* all ’cept by de whites ob he eyes. So whin he go’ outen de house *at* night, he ain’t dast shut he eyes, ’ca’s’e den ain’t nobody can see him in de least. He jest as invidsible as nuffin’. An’ who know’ but whut a great, big ghost bump right into him ’ca’s’e it can’t see him? An’ dat shore w’u’d scare dat li’l’ black boy powerful’ bad, ’ca’s’e yever’body knows whut a cold, damp pussonality a ghost is.

So whin dat li’l’ black Mose go’ outen de shanty at night, he keep’ he eyes wide open, you may be shore. By day he eyes ’bout de size ob butter-pats, an’ come sundown he eyes ’bout de size ob saucers; but whin he go’ outen de shanty at night, he eyes am de size ob de white chiny plate whut set on de mantel; an’ it powerful’ hard to keep eyes whut am de size ob dat from a-winkin’ an’ a-blinkin’.

So whin Hallowe’en come erlong, dat li’l’ black Mose he jes mek’ up he mind he ain’t gwine outen he shack *at* all. He cogitate’ he gwine stay right snug in de shack wid he pa an’ he ma, ’ca’s’e de rain-doves tek notice dat de ghosts are philanderin’ roun’ de country, ’ca’s’e dey mourn out, “Oo-oo-o-o-o!” an’ de owls dey mourn out, “Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!” and de wind mourn out, “You-you-o-o-o!” De eyes ob dat li’l’ black Mose dey as big as de white chiny plate whut set on de mantel by side de clock, an’ de sun jes a-settin’.

So dat all right. Li’l’ black Mose he scrooge’ back in de corner by de fireplace, an’ he ’low’ he gwine stay dere till he gwine *to* bed. But byme-by Sally Ann, whut live’ up de road, draps in, an’ Mistah Sally Ann, whut is her husban’, he draps in, an’ Zack Badget an’ de school-teacher whut board’ at Unc’ Silas Diggs’s house drap in, an’ a powerful lot ob folks drap in. An’ li’l’ black Mose he seen dat gwine be one s’prise-party, an’ he right down cheerful ’bout dat.

So all dem folks shake dere hands an’ ’low “Howdy,” an’ some ob dem say: “Why, dere ’s li’l Mose! Howdy, li’l Mose?” An’ he so please’ he jes grin’ an’ grin’, ’ca he aint reckon whut gwine happen. So byme-by Sally Ann, whut live up de road, she say’, “Ain’t no sort o’ Hallowe’en lest we got a jack-o’-lantern.” An’ de school-teacher, whut board at Unc’ Silas Diggs’s house, she ’low’, “Halloween jes no Hallowe’en *at* all ’thout we got a jack-o’-lantern.” An’ li’l’ black Mose he stop’ a-grinnin’, an’ he scrooge’ so far back in de corner he ’mos’ scrooge frough de wall. But dat ain’t no use, ’ca’s’e he ma say’, “Mose, go on down to de pumpkin-patch an’ fotch a pumpkin.”

“I ain’t want to go,” say’ li’l’ black Mose.

“Go on erlong wid yo’,” say’ he ma, right commandin’.

“I ain’t want to go,” say’ Mose ag’in:

“Why ain’t yo’ want to go?” he ma ask’.

“Case I ’s afraid oh de ghosts,” say’ li’l’ black Mose, an’ dat de particular truth an’ no mistake.

“Dey ain’t no ghosts,” say’ de school-teacher, whut board at Silas Diggs’s house, right peart.

“Cose dey ain’t no ghosts,” say’ Zack Badget, whut dat’fear’d oh ghosts he ain’t dar’ come to li’l’ black Mose’s house ef de school-teacher ain’t ercompany him.

“Go ’long wid your ghosts!” say’ li’l’ black Mose’s ma. “What’ yo’ pick up dat nomsense?” say’ he pa. “Dey ain’t no ghosts.”

An’ dat whut all dat s’prise-party ’low: dey ain’t no ghosts. An’ dey ’low dey mus’ hab a jack-o’-lantern or de fun all sp’iled. So dat li’l’ black boy whut he name is Mose he done got to fotch a pumpkin from de pumpkin-patch down de hollow. So he step’ outen de shanty an’ he stan’ on de door-step twell he get’ he eyes pried open as big as de bottom ob he ma’s wash-tub, mostly, an’ he say’, “Dey ain’t no ghosts.” An’ he put’ one foot on de ground, an’ dat was de fust step.

An de rain-dove say’, “Oo-oo-o-o-o!”

An li’l’ black Mose he tuck anudder step.

An de owl mourn’ out, “Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!”

An li’l’ black Mose he tuck anudder step.

An de wind sob’ out, “You-*you*-o-o-o!”

An li’l’ black Mose he tuck one look ober he shoulder, an’ he shut he eyes so tight dey hurt round de aidges, an’ up he pick up he foots an’ run. Yas, sah, he run’ right peart fast. An’ he say’: “Dey ain’t no ghosts. Dey ain’t no ghost.” An’ he run’ erlong de paff whut lead’ by de bury-in’-ground on de hill, ’ca’s e dey ain’t no fince eround dat buryin’-ground *at all*.

No fince; jes de big trees whut de owls an’ de rain-doves sot in an’ mourn an’ sob, an’ whut de wind sigh an’ cry frough. An’ byme-by somefin’ jes *brush*’ li’l’ Mose on de arm which mek’ him run jes a bit more faster. An’ bym-by somefin’ jes *brush*’ li’l’ Mose on de cheek, which mek’ him run erbout as fast as he can. An’ byme-by somefin’ *grab* li’l’ Mose by de aidge of he coat, an’ he fight’ an’ e’ struggle an’ cry’ out: “Dey ain’t no ghosts. Dey ain’t no ghosts.” An’ dat ain’t nuffin’ but de wild brier whut grab’ him, an’ dat ain’t nuffin’ but de leaf ob a tree whut brush he cheek, an’ dat ain’t nuffin’ but de branch oh a hazel-bush whut brush he arm. But he downright scared jes de same, an’ he ain’t lose no time, ’ca’s e de wind an’ de owls an’ de rain-doves dey signerfy whut ain’t no good. So he scoot’ past dat buryin’-ground whut on de hill, an’ dat cemuntary whut betwixt an’ between, an’ dat grabe-yard in de hollow, twell he come’ to de pumpkin-patch, an’ he rotch’ down an’ tek’ erhold ob de bestest pumpkin whut in de patch. An’ he right smart scared. He jes de mostest scared li’l’ black boy whut yever was. He ain’t gwine open he eyes fo’ nuffin’, ’ca’s e de wind go, “You-*you*-o-o-o!” an’ de owls go, “Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!” an’ de rain-doves go, “Oo-oo-o-o-o!”

He jes speculate’, “Dey ain’t no ghosts,” an’ wish’ he hair don’t stand on end dat way. An’ he jes cogitate’, “Dey ain’t no ghosts,” an’ wish’ he goose-pimples don’t rise up dat way. An’ he jes ’low’, “Dey ain’t no ghosts,” an’ wish’ he backbone ain’t all trembulous wid chills dat way. So he rotch’ down, an’ he rotch’ down, twell he git’ a good hold on dat pricklesome stem of dat bestest pumpkin whut in de patch, an’ he jes yank’ dat stem wid all he might.

“*Let loosen my head!*” say’ a big voice all on a suddent.

Dat li’l’ black boy whut he name is Mose he jump’ ’most outen he skin. He open’ he eyes, an’ he ’gin’ to shake like de aspen-tree, ’ca’s e whut dat a-standin’ right dar be-hint him but a

'mendjous big ghost! Yas, sah, dat de bigges', whites' ghost whut yever was. An' it ain't got no head. Ain't got no head *at all!* Li'l' black Mose he jes drap' on he knees an' he beg' an' pray':

"Oh, 'scuse me! 'Scuse me, Mistah Ghost!" he beg'. "Ah ain't mean no harm at all."

"Whut for you try to take my head?" ask' de ghost in dat fearsome voice whut like de damp wind outen de cellar.

"'Scuse me! 'Scuse me!" beg' li'l' Mose. "Ah ain't know dat was yo' hcad, an' I ain't know you was dar at all. 'Scuse me!"

"Ah 'scuse you ef you do me dis favor," say' de ghost. "Ah got somefin' powerful *important* to say unto you, an' Ah can't say hit 'ca'se Ah ain't got no head; an' whin Au ain't got no head, Ah ain't got no mouf, an' whin Ma ain't got no mouf, Ah can't talk at all."

An dat right logical fo' shore. Can't nobody talk whin he ain't got no mouf, an' can't nobody have no mouf whin he ain't got no head, an' whin li'l' black Mose he look', he see dat ghost ain't got no head at all. Nary head.

So de ghost say':

"Ah come on down yere fo' to git a pumpkin fo' a head, an' Ah pick' dat *ixact* pumpkin whut yo' gwine tek, an' Ah don't like dat one bit. No, sah. Ah feel like Ah pick you' up an' carry yo' away, an' nobody see you no more for yever. But Ah got somefin' powerful *important* to say unto you', an' if yo' pick up dat pumpkin an' sot in on de place whar my head ought to be, Ah let you off dis time, 'ca'se Ah ain't been able to talk fo' so long Ah right hongry to say somefin'."

So li'l' black Mose he heft up dat pumpkin, an' de ghost he bend down, an' li'l' black Mose he sot dat pumpkin on dat ghostses neck. An' right off dat pumpkin head 'gin' to wink an' blink like a jack-o'-lantern, an' right off dat pumpkin head 'gin' to glimmer an' glow frough de mouf like a jack-o'-lantern, an' right off dat ghost start' to speak. Yas, sah, dass so.

"Whut yo' want to say unto me?" *inquire*' li'l' black Mose.

"Ah want to tell yo'," say' de ghost, "dat yo' ain't need yever be skeered of ghosts, 'ca'se dey ain't no ghosts."

An' whin he say dat, de ghost jes vanish' away like de smoke in July. He ain't even linger round dat locality like de smoke in Yoctober. He jes dissipate' outen de air, an' he gone *intirely*.

So li'l' Mose he grab' up de nex' bestest pumpkin an' he scoot'. An' whin he come' to be grabeyard in de hollow, he goin' erlong same as yever, on'y faster, whin he reckon' he 'll pick up a club *in* case he gwine have trouble. An' he rotch' down an' rotch' down an' tek' hold of a likely appearin' hunk o' wood whut right dar. An' whin he grab' dat hunk of wood—

"*Let loosen my leg!*" say' a big voice all on a suddent.

Dat li'l' black boy 'most jump' outen he skin, 'ca'se right dar in de pail is six 'mendjus big ghostes, an' de bigges' ain't got but one leg. So li'l' black Mose jes natchully handed dat hunk of wood to dat bigges' ghost, an' he say':

"'Scuse me, Mistah Ghost; Ah ain't know dis your leg."

An' whut dem six ghostes do but stand round an' confabulate? Yas, sah, dass so. An' whin dey do so, one say':

"'Pears like dis a mighty likely li'l' black boy. Whut we gwine do fo' to reward him fo' politeness?"

An' anudder say':

"Tell him whut de truth is 'bout ghostes."

So de bigges' ghost he say':

"Ma gwine tell yo' somefin' *important* whut yever'body don't know: Dey *ain't* no ghosts."

An' whin he say' dat, de ghostes jes natchully vanish away, an' li'l' black Mose he proceed' up de paff. He so scared he hair jes yank' at de roots, an' whin de wind go', "Oo-oo-o-o-o!" an' de owl go', "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" an' de rain-doves go, "You-you-o-o-o!" he jes tremble' an' shake'. An' byme-by he come' to de cemuntary whut betwixt an' between, an' he shore is mighty skeered, 'ca'se dey is a whole comp'ny of ghostes lined up along de road, an' he 'low' he ain't gwine spind no more time palaverin' wid ghostes. So he step' offen de road fo' to go round erbout, an' he step' on a pine-stump whut lay right dar.

"*Git offen my chest!*" say' a big voice all on a suddent, 'ca'se dat stump am been selected by de captain oh de ghostes for to be he chest, 'ca'se he ain't got no chest betwixt he shoulders an' he legs. An' li'l' black Mose he hop' offen dat stump right peart. Yes, *sah*; right peart.

"'Scuse me! 'Scuse me!" dat li'l' black Mose beg' an' plead, an' de ghostes ain't know whuther to eat him all up or not, 'ca'se he step' on de boss ghostes's chest dat a-way. But byme-by they 'low they let him go 'ca'se dat was an accident, an' de captain ghost he say', "Mose, you Mose, Ah gwine let you off dis time, 'ca'se you ain't nuffin' but a misabul li'l' tremblin' nigger; but Ah want you should *remimimber* one thing mos' particular'."

"Ya-yas, *sah*," say' dat li'l' black boy; "Ah'll remimber. Whut is dat Ah got to remimber?"

De captain ghost he swell' up, an' he swell' up, twell he asbig as a house, an' he say' in a voice whut shake' de ground:

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

So lil'l black Mose he bound to remimber dat, an' he rise' up an' mek' a how, an' he proceed' toward home right libely. He do, indeed.

An' he gwine along jes as fast as he kin' whin he come' to de aidge ob de buryin'-ground whut on de hill, an' right dar he bound to stop, 'ca'se de kentry round about am so populate' he ain't able to go frough. Yas, *sah*, seem' like all de ghostes in de world habin' a conferince right dar. Seem' like all de ghosteses whut yever was am havin' a convintion on dat spot. An' dat li'l' black Mose so skeered he jes fall' down on a' old log whut dar an' screech' an' moan'. An' all on a suddent de log up and spoke to li'l Mose:

"*Get offen me! Get offen me!*" yell' dat log.

So lil'l Mose he git' offen dat log, an' no mistake.

An' soon as he git' offen de log, de log uprise, an' li'l' black Mose he see' dat dat log am de king oh all de ghostes. An' whin de king uprise, all de congregation crowd round lil'l black Mose, an' dey am about leben millium an' a few lift over. Yes, *sah*; dat de reg'lar annyul Hallowe'en convintion li'l' black Mose interrump'. Right dar am all de sperits in de world, an' all de ha'nts in de world, an' all de hobgoblins in de world, an' all de ghouls in de world, an' all de spicters in de world, an' all de ghostes in de world. An whin dey see li'l' black Mose, dey all gnash dey teef an' grin' 'ca'se it gettin' erlong toward dey-all's lunch-time. So de king, whut he name old Skull-an'-Bones, he step' on top ob li'l' Mose's head, an' he say':

"Gin'l'min, de convintion will come to order. De sirectary please note who is prisint. De firs' business whut come before de convintion am: whut we gwine do to a li'l' black boy whut stip' on de king an' maul' all ober de king an' treat de king dat disrespectful'."

An lil'l black Mose jes moan' an' sob':

"'Scuse me! 'Scuse me, Mistah King! Ah ain't mean no harm *at* all."

But nobody ain't pay no *attintion* to him *at* all, 'ca'se yeverly one lookin' at a monstrous big ha'nt whut name Bloody Bones, whut rose up an' spoke.

"Your Honor, Mistah King, an' gin'l'min *an'* ladies," he say', "dis am a right bad case ob *lazy mujesty*, 'ca'se de king been step on. Whin yivery li'l' black boy whut choose', gwine wander

round *at* night an' stip on de king ob ghostes, it ain't no time for to palaver, it ain't no time for to prevaricate, it ain't no time for to cogitate, it ain't no time do nuffin' but tell de truth, an' de whole truth, an' nuffin' but de truth."

An' all dem ghostes sicond de motion, an' dey confabulate out loud erbout dat, an' de noise soun' like de raindoves goin', "Oo-oo-o-o-o!" an' de owls goin', "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" an' de wind goin', "You-*you*-o-o-o!" So dat risalution am passed unanermous, an' no mistake.

So de king oh de ghostes, whut name old Skull-an'-Bones, he place' he hand on de head ob li'l' black Mose, an' he hand feel like a wet rag, an' he say':

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

An' one oh de hairs whut on de head oh li'l' black Mose turn' white.

An' de monstrous big ha'nt whut he name Bloody Bones he lay he hand on de head ob li'l' black Mose, an' he hand feel like a toadstool in de cool oh de day, an' he say':

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

An' anudder ob de hairs whut on de head oh li'l' black Mose turn' white.

An' a heejus spent whut he name Moldy Pa'm place' he hand on de head oh li'l' black Mose, an' he hand feel like de yunner side ob a lizard, an' he say':

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

An' anudder ob de hairs whut on de head oh li'l' black Mose turn' white *as* snow.

An' a perticklar bend-up hobgoblin he put' he hand on de head oh li'l' black Mose, an' he mek' dat same *remark*, an' dat whole convintion ob ghostes an' spicters an' ha'nts an' yiver-thing, which am more 'n a millium, pass by so quick dey-all's hands feel lak de wind whut blow outen de cellar whin de day am hot, an' dey-all say, "Dey ain't no ghosts." Yas, sah, dey-all say dem wo'ds so fas' it souun' like de wind whin it moan frough de turkentine-trees whut behind de cider-priss. An' yivery hair whut on lil'l' black Mose's head turn' white. Dat whut happen' whin a li'l' black boy gwine meet a ghost convintion dat-a-way. Dat 's so he ain't gwine forgit to remimber dey ain't no ghostes. 'Ca'se ef a li'l' black boy gwine imagine dey *is* ghostes, he gwine be skeered in de dark. An' dat a foolish thing for to imagine.

So prisintly all de ghostes am whiff away, like de fog outen de holler whin de wind blow' on it, an' li'l' black Mose he ain' see no ca'se for to remain in dat locality no longer. He rotch' down, an' he raise' up de pumpkin, an' he peramplate' right quick to he ma's shack, an' he lift' up de latch, an' he open' de do', an' he yenter' in. An' he say':

"Yere 's de pumpkin."

An' he ma an' he pa, an' Sally Ann, whut live up de road, an' Mistah Sally Ann, whut her husban', an' Zack Badget, an' de school-teacher whut board at Unc'-Silas Diggs's house, an' all de powerful lot of folks whut come to doin's, dey all scrooged back in de cornder ob de shack, 'ca'se Zack Badget he been done tell a ghost-tale, an' de rain-doves gwine, "Oo-oo-o-o-o!" an' de owls am gwsne, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" and de wind it gwine, "You-*you*-o-o-o" an' yiver-body powerful skeered. 'Ca'se li'l' black Mose he come' a-fumblin' an' a-rattlin' at de do' jes whin dat ghost-tale mos' skeery, an' yiver-body gwine imagine dat he a ghost a-fumblin' an' a-rattlin' at de do'. Yas, sah. So li'l' black Mose he turn' he white head, an' he look' roun' an' peer' roun', an' he say':

"What you all skeered fo'?"

'Ca'se ef anybody skeered, he want' to be sheered, too. Dat 's natural. But de school-teacher, whut live at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, she say':

"Fo' de lan's sake, we fought you was a ghost!"

So li'l' black Mose he sort ob sniff an' he sort ob sneer, an he 'low':

“Huh! dey ain’t no ghosts.”

Den he ma she powerful took back dat li’l’ black Mose he gwine be so uppish an’ contrydict folks whut know ’rifmeticks an’ algebricks an’ gin’ral countin’ widout fingers like de school-teacher whut board at Unc’ Silas Diggs’ house knows, an’ she say’:

“Huh! whut you know ’bout ghosts, anner ways?”

An’ li’l’ black Mose he jes kinder stan’ on one foot, an’ he jes kinder suck’ he thumb, an’ he jes kinder ’low’:

“I don’ know nuffin’ erbout ghosts, ’ca’s’e dey ain’t no ghosts.”

So he pa gwine whop him fo’ tellin’ a fib ’bout dey ain’ no ghosts whin yiver’body know’ dey is ghosts; but de school-teacher, whut board at Unc’ Silas Diggs’s house, she tek’ note de hair ob li’l’ black Mose’s head am plumb white, an’ she tek’ note li’l’ black Mose’s face am de color ob wood-ash, so she jes retch’ one arm round dat li’l’ black boy, an’ she jes snuggle’ him up, an’ she say’:

“Honey lamb, don’t you be skeered; am’ nobody gwine hurt you. How you know dey ain’t no ghosts?”

An’ li’l’ black Mose he kinder lean’ up ’g’inst de schoolteacher whut board at Unc’ Silas Diggs’s house, an’ he ’low’:

“’Ca’s’e—’ca’s’e—’ca’s’e I met de cap’n ghost, an’ I met de gin’ral ghost, an’ I met de king ghost, an’ I met all de ghostes whut yiver was in de whole worl’, an’ yivery ghost say’ de same thing: ‘Dey ain’t no ghosts.’ An’ if de cap’n ghost an’ de gin’ral ghost an’ de king ghost an’ all de ghostes in de whole worl’ don’ know ef dar am ghostes, who does?”

“Das right; das right, honey lamb,” say’ de schoolteacher. And she say’: “I been s’picious dey am’ no ghostes dis long whiles, an’ now I know. Ef all de ghostes say dey ain’ no ghosts, dey *ain’* no ghosts.”

So yiver’body ’low’ dat so ’cep’ Zack Badget, whut been tellin’ de ghost-tale, an’ he ain’ gwine say “Yis” an’ he ain’ gwine say “No,” ’ca’s’e he right sweet on de school-teacher; but he know right well he done seen plinty ghostes in he day. So he boun’ to be sure fust. So he say’ to li’l’ black Mose:

“’Tain’ likely you met up wid a monstrous big ha’nt whut live’ down de lane whut he name Bloody Bones?”

“Yas,” say’ li’l’ black Mose, “I done met up wid him.”

“An’ did old Bloody Bones done tol’ you dey ain’ no ghost?” say Zack Badget.

“Yas,” say’ li’l’ black Mose, “he done tell me perzackly dat.”

“Well, if *he* tol’ you dey ain’t no ghosts,” say’ Zack Badget. “I got to ’low dey ain’t no ghosts, ’ca’s’e he ain’ gwin tell no lie erbout it. I know dat Bloody Bones ghost sence I was a piccaninny, an’ I done met up wif him a powerful lot o’ times, an’ he ain’ gwine tell no lie erbout it. Ef dat perticklar ghost say’ dey ain’t no ghosts, dey *ain’t* no ghosts.”

So yiver-body say’:

“Das right; dey ain’t no ghosts.”

An’ dat mek’ li’l’ black Mose feel mighty good, ’ca’s’e he ain’ lak ghostes. He reckon’ he gwine be a heap mo’ comfortable in he mind sence he know’ dey ain’ no ghosts, an’ he reckon’ he ain’ gwine be skeered of nuffin’ never no more. He ain’ gwine min’ de dark, an’ he ain’ gwine min’ de rain-doves whut go’, “Oo-oo-o-o-o!” an’ he ain’ gwine min’ de owls whut go’, “Who-*whoo*-o-o-o!” an’ he ain’ gwine min’ de wi’nd whut go’, “You-*you*-o-o-o!” nor nuffin’, nohow. He gwine be brave as a lion, sence he know’ fo’ sure dey ain’ no ghosts. So prisintly he ma say’:

“Well, time fo’ a li’l’ black boy whut he name is Mose to be gwine up de ladder to de loft to bed.”

An’ li’l’ black Mose he ’low’ he gwine wait a bit. He ’low he gwine jes wait a li’l’ bit. How ’low’ he gwine be no trouble *at* all ef he jes been let wait twell he ma she gwine up de ladder to de loft to bed, too. So he ma she say’:

“Git erlong wid yo’! Whut yo’ skeered ob whin dey ain’ no ghosts?”

An’ li’l’ black Mose he scrooge’, and he twist’, an’ he pucker’ up he mouf, an’ he rub’ he eyes, an’ prisintly he say’ right low:

“I ain’ skeered ob ghosts whut am, ’ca’s e dey ain’ no ghost.”

“Den whut *am* yo’ skeered ob?” ask he ma.

“Nuffin’,” say’ de li’l’ black boy whut he name is Mose; “but I jes feel kinder oneasy ’bout de ghosts whut ain’t.”

Jes lak white folks! Jes lak white folks!