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# The Screaming Field; Bump in the Night

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Two of the three titles in Lions' 'Stories Under the Bedclothes' series, exploiting the child's tense delight in the supernatural. In both books all the stories are set within contemporary environments, and both authors summon the occult into the mundane with a sly skill that delighted my listeners when I read a selection to them.

Mary Hoffman's stories are typically humane and wistful: departed souls ache their way back from beyond the grave, striving to salve their remorse for unfinished business. In my favourite, an entire house resurrects itself in an attempt to rescue the birthday party it was anticipating at the moment of its destruction in the blitz. Wendy Eyton deals with stronger stuff; in her tales, moral and physical putrefaction seep out into the daylight like suspicious liquid dripping from a coffin. In one of the most striking, a timid girl endeavours to embolden herself by touching the hologram of a witch, who promptly devours her.

A restive classroom first thing on a Monday morning might be a more propitious setting than under the bedclothes for the reading of these very enjoyable stories.

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