

MYSTERIOUS AND CREEPY

# GHOSTS

by Maddie Spalding



BrightPoint Press

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# AT A GLANCE

- Many people believe in ghosts. They say a ghost is the spirit or soul of a dead person.
- People have described ghosts in many ways. Some say ghosts are invisible. Others believe ghosts can be seen.
- People claim to have sensed ghosts. They believe ghosts can cause a drop in temperature. People may claim to hear ghosts.
- Some people think ghosts can control objects or people. This is called possession.
- Ghost stories have been around for thousands of years. Many ancient cultures told ghost stories.
- In ghost stories, hauntings may happen for many reasons. The ghost's dead body might not have been buried properly. Revenge is another common reason for hauntings in stories.

# WHAT ARE GHOSTS?

**P**eople in many cultures believe there is a spirit world. They think spirits go there. But they think spirits can also return to the world of the living. They say spirits can **haunt** the living. Many people call these spirits “ghosts.” Ghosts are supernatural. This means they cannot be



***People who capture strange lights or blurred figures in photos might think they've taken a picture of a ghost.***

explained by science. Other supernatural beings include zombies and vampires.

Some people believe ghosts can be seen. They have described ghosts in

many forms. In ghost stories, the ghost may look like a person who died. The ghost may be see-through. Some people claim to have photographed ghosts. They see strange things in their photos. There may be an outline of a person. There could be a blur in the background. People say these are images of ghosts.

In some stories, the ghost appears in a nonhuman form. The ghost may look like an animal. One story from England describes a ghost appearing as a rooster. This story dates back to the 1600s. A man was hosting a dinner at an inn. The guests





***The Covenanters' Prison at Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh, Scotland, is said to be haunted. Some people who have visited this part of the cemetery have reported strange bruises and scratches.***

ran out of wine. The man went to the cellar to get more wine. He tripped on the stairs. He fell and died. The next day, a rooster appeared in the village. The rooster



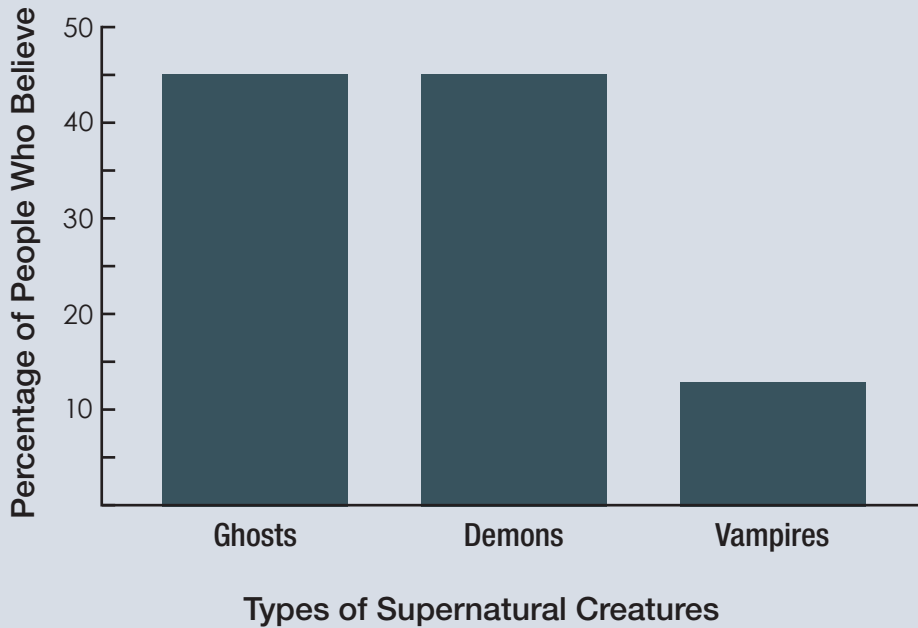
attacked the villagers. The villagers believed the rooster was the ghost of the man who died.

Some people believe animals also become ghosts when they die. There are many stories about the ghosts of animals.

### **THE GHOSTS OF GETTYSBURG**

There have been many reports of ghosts in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This town was the site of a battle in 1863. The battle happened during the American Civil War (1861–1865). It lasted three days in early July. More than 7,000 soldiers were killed. People in Gettysburg have reported hauntings. Some say they have heard the cries of soldiers. Others claim to have seen ghosts. They believe these are the ghosts of Civil War soldiers.

## SUPERNATURAL BELIEFS



Source: Jamie Ballard, "Many Americans Believe Ghosts and Demons Exist," YouGov, October 21, 2019. <https://today.yougov.com>.

*In 2019, researchers asked Americans about their supernatural beliefs. They surveyed more than 1,000 US adults. The above graph shows the results.*

### WHY DO PEOPLE BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?

People believe in ghosts for many reasons.

They may fear death. The idea that a person's soul lives on after death may

# GLOSSARY

**altars**

raised platforms on which people put offerings

**ancestor**

a relative from an earlier generation

**haunt**

when a ghost visits people, often for the purpose of scaring them

**Mesopotamians**

ancient people who lived in what is now Iraq, Turkey, and Syria

**rituals**

ceremonial acts or practices

**theme**

a common subject in books or other works of art

**thrillers**

scary stories that are full of action and mystery

**transcends**

goes beyond the normal limits or boundaries

**virus**

something that spreads and causes disease

# SOURCE NOTES

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