

GOTHIC BOURNES

**An Apparition of a Deceased
Wife to her Husband in
Edinburgh
(1775)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY
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EDITING GOTHIC TEXTS
TWELFTH SERIES, 2025
Nº 3

THE
HISTORY
OF
WITCHES, GHOSTS,
AND
HIGHLAND SHEERS:
CONTAINING
Many wonderful well-attested RELATIONS
OF
SUPERNATURAL APPEARANCES,
Not Published before in any similar Collection.

DESIGNED

For the conviction of the UNBELIEVER, and
The Amusement of the CURIOUS.

*Somnia, terrores Magicos, miracula, Sagas,
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque, Thessala rides?*

Say, can you laugh indignant at the shemes
Of magick terrours, visionary dreams,
Portentous wonders, witching imps of Hell,
The nightly goblin and enchanting spell?

BERWICK:
PRINTED FOR R. TAYLOR.
[PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.]

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*An Apparition of a deceased Wife to her Husband at
Edinburgh.*

[223] SIR, that which I narrated to you the other day, I have now sent it under my hand, as a thing very certain and sure. I knew a servant maid that served a gentlewoman in the old provost's close, as they call it, who was married to a butcher called John Ritchey, about twelve years ago. She lived about five years with him, and had four children to him, and then died. Within a few days after her burial, he went in suit of a young woman, courting her for marriage. He had a comrade of the same trade, to whom he revealed his intention, and desired him to meet him at a [sic] such a house, near to the court of guard, down some close or other, that he might see his new mistress. The appointment was kept [sic]. The two lovers sat down together on a bed-side, and the comrade sat opposite to them, there being a table between them, and a window or shot at the head of the room, that gave them light, the close or wynd was narrow to which they had a sight. And while the two are dallying together in bed, the other smiling at them, behold, while this man is casting his eye about the room, he perceived distinctly the body and face of the dead wife, in her cloaths [sic], looking towards them from an opposite window; at which this man, his comrade, rose up affrighted, saying to the other, "John, what [224] is that?" Whereupon all stood up looking, and saw perfectly the buried woman lifting up her hands (as appeared) to take the dead dress from her head, but could not reach it. The man threw her out of his arms, with a purpose to be gone quickly; but his comrade vowed he would not stir till he got something to comfort his heart; they got a little brandy, and then went away, not without wondering and fear. Upon this the man took sickness for three or four days, and his comrade coming to give him a visit, counselled him to delay, or wholly to desist from that purpose of marriage; but affection would not suffer him to forbear, and though not fully recovered of his frenzy, he made a new address to his mistress: But while he is putting on his shoes, his dead wife appears again in her ordinary habit, and, crossing the room in his sight, says, "John, will you not come to me?" and with that vanished. Upon this he took sickness again, and called for his comrade, and told

him of this second apparition, who most freely entreated him to desist, or at least to delay. His sickness increasing, he died. About which time, he spoke of a third visit his wife gave him, blaming him, as if he had too soon forgotten her, but did not tell it distinctly; and therefore his comrade could not be positive in it. He was buried within a month of his wife's decease.

One of the ministers of Edinburgh, who had been acquaint in the house where she served, hearing some whisper of the apparition, sent a servant secretly to call for the man's comrade, who gave him a just and true narration of all that I have [225] written. Adding, that he having seen the vision first, some told him he would quickly die, but he is yet living in the town a flesher, the minister having married him to two wives since. The deceased wife's name was Helen Brown. I intended to have published another relation anent the devil's coming in the night-time, and knocking three several times at such a man's door, but I was desired to forbear.