

CHAPTER 1
a shadowy form



Here is a story

that's stranger than strange.

Before we begin you may want to arrange:

a blanket,

a cushion,

a comfortable seat,

and maybe some cocoa and something to eat.

I'll warn you, of course, before we commence,
my story is eerie and full of suspense,
brimming with danger and narrow escapes,
and creatures of many remarkable shapes.
Dragons and ogres and gorgons and more,
and creatures you've not even heard of before.
And faraway places? There's plenty of those!
(And menacing villains to tingle your toes.)

So ready your mettle and steady your heart.
It's time for my story's mysterious start...

We begin in a subway, under the ground,
where people in trains go rolling around,
in hurrying haste and in scurrying mobs,
wandering off to their ponderous jobs.

Much of the time they would linger in vain.
They would stand in the station awaiting a train.
They would push in between the ticket machines,
like fish huddled into a tin of sardines.

They clutched at the purses and cases they brought,
anxious and angry and overly wrought,

hoping a train would come barreling past,
pick them up quick, and dash away fast!

There was one little girl who waited as well:
a girl by the name of

Katrina Katrell.

While everyone else was busy or bored,
this one little girl should not be ignored.
For unlike the crowd, she was never inert.
Her senses were sharp and awake and alert.

She kept to herself, but she wasn't alone.
She was joined by her guardian, Mrs. Krabone,
who stood with Katrina, clutching her hand,
in the flickering light of the passenger stand.

They were hunched near the tunnel
of mortar and brick
where the lighting was dim and shadows were thick,
where Katrina was curious, squinting her eye...
she could swear that a *creature* was shuffling by.