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Englewood, Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press, 1993, p. 16.**

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THE HAUNTED CASTLE

Summary

When a peddler arrives in town on Halloween, he learns about a haunted castle. Thinking that he would like to collect the reward for ridding the castle of the ghost, he plans to have his dinner there and spend the night. The ghost arrives, piecemeal, while the peddler contentedly continues to eat his dinner. Finally, the ghost assembles itself and the peddler helps it depart for good. The peddler is rewarded and leads a happy life thereafter. This is an adaptation of a Spanish folktale. RL3

Presentation Suggestions

The narrator, peddler, and ghost have the most important roles. The readers can be arranged with the narrator to the far side and the ghost alongside. The peddler should come next with the women on his other side.

Props

Simple items that a peddler might use could be placed on stage. Students could create a mural of a castle, which could serve as a backdrop to the reading. The women could be dressed in peasant clothes, and the peddler could be dressed in tattered work clothes.

Delivery

The women should sound gossipy, while the peddler should sound cheerful and confident. The ghost should sound increasingly loud and threatening while dropping his body parts. Then he should sound grateful to the peddler.

Related Books

Barchers, Suzanne I. Scary Readers Theatre. Englewood, Colo.: Teacher Ideas Press, 1994.

Cox, Michael, and R. A. Gilbert, editors. The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Dalby, Richard, editor. The Mammoth Book of Ghost Stories. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Moser, Barry. Great Ghost Stories. New York: Morrow, 1998.

Characters

Narrator Woman 3

Peddler Woman 4

Woman 1 Woman 5

Woman 2 Ghost

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The Haunted Castle

Narrator: Everyone has heard about haunted houses. This story is about a haunted castle. Long ago in a dark and distant land, there was a grand castle. But no one dared to live there any more. Every Halloween a ghostly light appeared in the window, scaring even the holy people away. One Halloween a jolly peddler came to the town. As he repaired pots and pans, he asked about the castle.

Peddler: Who lives in that grand castle?

Woman 1: No one has lived there for many years.

Peddler: Why not?

Woman 2: Because of what happens on Halloween!

Peddler: What could be so scary?

Woman 3: They say it is haunted.

Woman 4: Brave men have tried to stay there, but they all run away after a few hours. No one will ever talk about what happened.

Woman 5: And most of us don't want to know.

Woman 1: We just stay away, especially this time of year.

Peddler: What about the owner? What does he have to say about this?

Woman 2: He won't stay there either. But he is offering a reward to anyone who can rid the castle of the ghost.

Narrator: The peddler, who fancied himself a brave man, couldn't resist boasting.

Peddler: I know I could stay the night. And I surely could use a reward.

Woman 3: That's not a wise idea, sir.

Peddler: But what do I have to lose? What possible harm could come to someone as poor as me.

Narrator: Before the peddler could go to the castle, he knew he would want to have something to eat and drink. He bought some bacon, eggs, potatoes, and cider. Then he took his frying pan and blanket and led his donkey to the castle.

Peddler: My, it is dark in here. A fire should cheer things up.

Narrator: He lit the fire and then began to cook his dinner. The bacon sizzled and smelled wonderful.

Ghost: Oh my. Oh my.

Peddler: What is that? Must be the ghost they speak of.

Narrator: The peddler broke an egg into his pan.

Ghost: Look out below! I'm falling!

Narrator: Suddenly there was a thump. A man's leg, covered in brown trousers, lay on the hearth. The peddler began eating his egg and bacon. He took a drink of his cider.

Ghost: Look out below! I'm falling!

Narrator: The peddler heard another thump! Down the chimney came a second leg, just like the first. The peddler sliced some potatoes into the pan. Then he added another egg.

Ghost: Look out below! I'm falling!

Peddler: Fall away. But don't spoil my dinner.

Narrator: This last thump came along with a body wearing a blue shirt and brown coat.

Ghost: Look out below! I'm falling!

Narrator: This time two arms fell down the chimney.

Peddler: Well, I think it's time that a head arrives. I'm sure it will be right along.

Ghost: Look out below! I'm falling! Falling! Falling!

Narrator: Down the chimney came the head. And before the peddler could finish his dinner, the parts of the body joined together. There stood the ghost, staring right at the peddler.

Peddler: Good evening. Would you like to have some eggs? Potatoes? A bit of bacon?

Ghost: I don't want food. But I do want to thank you for your bravery. Every other man who has come to this castle ran away before I could get my body parts together. They were too scared to stay.

Peddler: Perhaps they should have brought their dinner along to keep them busy. Now I think I will finish my dinner.

Ghost: Wait. Please help me get away from this castle forever. Out in the courtyard you'll find three bags of coins I buried. One is of copper, one is of silver, and one is of gold. I stole them from some thieves and buried them. But they murdered me and cut my body into pieces. If you give the copper coins to the

church and the silver coins to the poor, I can leave this place. You can keep the gold coins for yourself.

Narrator: The peddler agreed and dug up the bags of money.

Ghost: Will you promise to do with the money as I told you?

Peddler: Yes, I promise.

Ghost: Then do one more thing. Strip my clothes from me.

Narrator: The peddler did, and the ghost disappeared, leaving his clothes behind. Then the peddler went back into the castle. He finished his dinner and fell asleep. The next morning the people from the town came to see if he had survived the night.

Woman 4: Did you sleep here?

Peddler: Of course I did.

Woman 5: What happened?

Peddler: See for yourselves. The ghost is gone. You can find his clothes in the courtyard. And now I will go to the owner to collect my reward.

Narrator: And so the peddler loaded the bags of coins on his donkey's back. He kept his promise to the ghost, giving away the copper and silver coins. But with the gold coins and the reward, he lived a long and happy life.

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