

Scary

FAIRY TALES

3RD
Grade

Banchō Sarayashiki

Japan

A LONG TIME AGO there was a beautiful woman named Okiku. She worked as a maid for a samurai named Aoyama and his family...



The Daughter Who Married a Skull

Nigeria

ONCE THERE WAS A MAN named Effiong, who had one beautiful daughter, named Afiong...



The Wild Hunt

Germany

A LONG TIME AGO there was a hunter named Hackelbarend. Hackelbarend loved to hunt, more than anything else in life, and he spent all his time stalking in the woods...



Fred Fisher's Ghost

New South Wales, Australia

IN THE 1800's in the small town of Campbelltown, there was a man named Fred Fisher. Fred had just arrived from England...



The Raven Steals the Light

Native America (Haida)

A LONG TIME AGO a man lived in a house on the bank of a river with his only child...

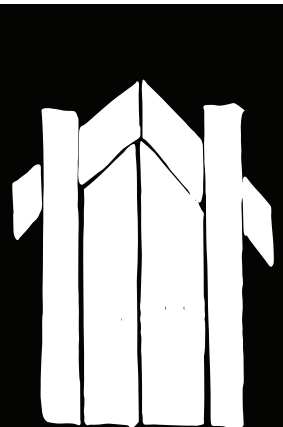


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Certificate of Completion

Banchō Sarayashiki

Japan

MULTIPLE CHOICE

A LONG TIME AGO, there was a beautiful woman named Okiku. She worked as a maid for a samurai named Aoyama and his family. Aoyama was madly in love with her. Okiku did not feel the same way, and often she had to turn down his proposals.

Having exhausted all his other options, Aoyama decided to try and trick Okiku into marrying him. One night while she was asleep, he hid one of the ten plates in the family's collection of fine porcelain. "Perfect. She'll think she was the one to lose it, and she'll have to come to me to for help! Then I'll take care of the matter, and she'll have to marry me because I helped her."

The next day, Okiku noticed that one of the plates was missing. Knowing that Aoyama and his family would assume she stole it, she frantically began counting the plates over and over. Alas, there were only nine.

Okiku became terrified that the family may send her to jail for stealing. As Aoyama was fetching water from the well, Okiku came running up to him in tears. "Where is it? The tenth plate is missing! Oh, that has been in the family for years; your father will be furious!"

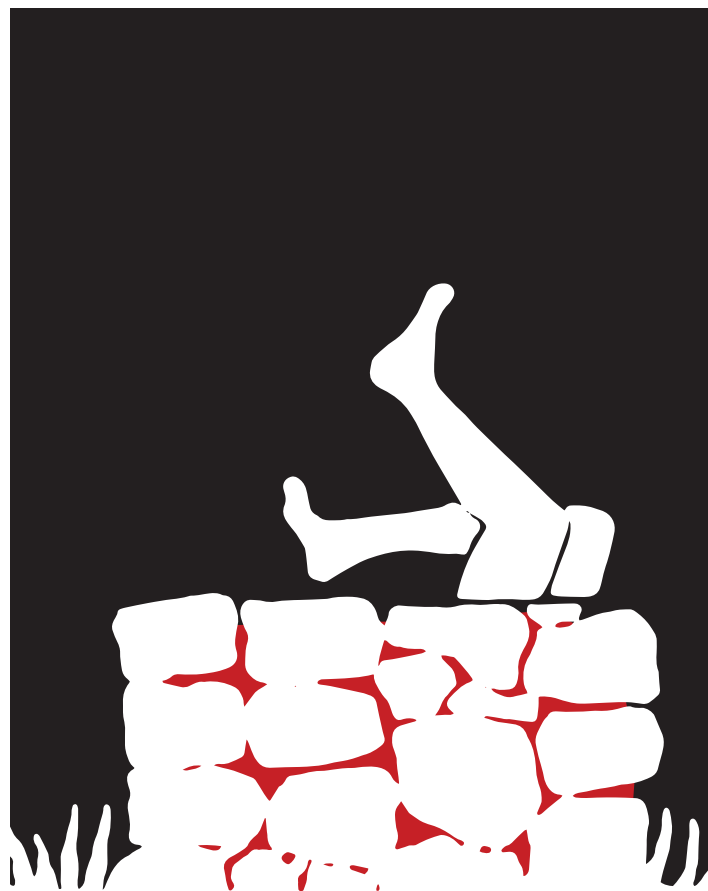
"There there," Aoyama said. "You needn't worry. I won't tell my father that the plate has gone missing... if you will be my bride."

Okiku couldn't believe it. How dare he bargain with her in that way! She was disgusted. "Never. I don't love you, and I never will."

Aoyama couldn't contain his anger and pushed her into the well. To this day, if you wander by the well at night, you'll hear a soft voice count to nine. At ten, the voice unleashes a piercing shriek!



1. Why was Okiku scared when she noticed the missing plate?
 - a. She worried the dog had eaten it.
 - b. She thought a ghost had stolen it.
 - c. She could be sent to jail for stealing.
2. Okiku was angry at Aoyama because:
 - a. He tricked her into thinking she had lost the plate.
 - b. He blamed her for losing the plate.
 - c. He told the police she had lost the plate.
3. Why do you think Okiku's ghost stops counting at nine?
 - a. Nine is her favorite number
 - b. She was only able to find nine plates
 - c. Aoyama proposed to her nine times



Fred Fisher's Ghost

New South Wales, Australia

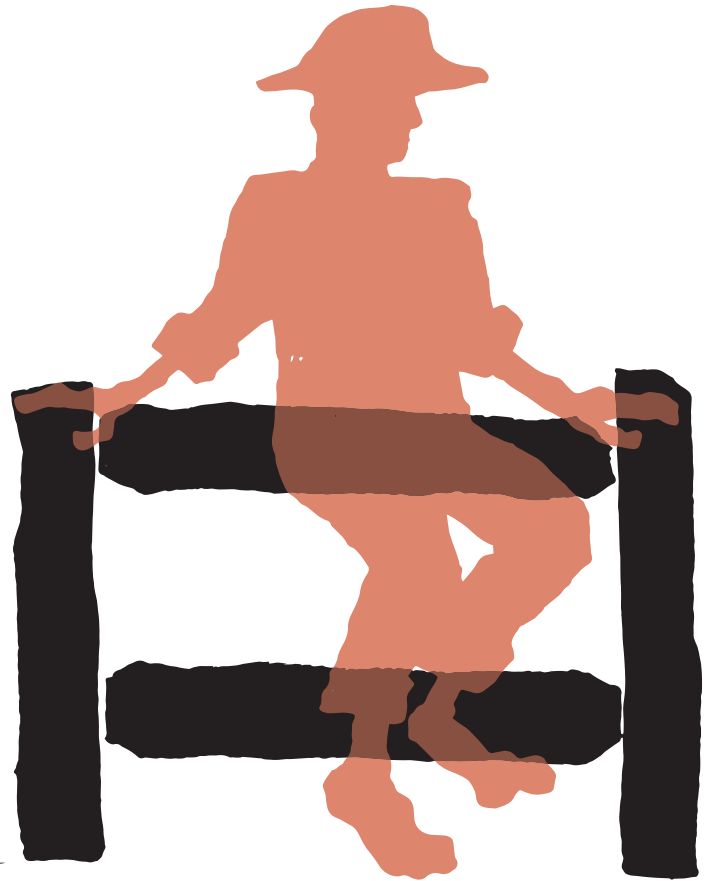
IN THE 1800s in the small town of Campbelltown, there was a man named Fred Fisher. Fred had just arrived from England, where he had been caught with forged bank notes, and had been sent away to Australia as punishment. He bought a piece of property in Campbelltown, a little town just outside of Sydney.

Fred had a neighbor named George. They became good friends. When Fred got into a fight over money with another person in town a few months later, he was sent to jail. Fred asked his neighbor George to look after his property while he was gone.

Fred returned to town a year later, but George still had control of his property. June 17, 1826 was the last time anyone saw Fred Fisher. The townsfolk began to suspect George, as he was the last person seen with Fred, and had also begun to sell Fred's belongings. George was arrested in Fred's disappearance, but he claimed Fred had gone back to England. They searched for him, but turned up no trace of Fred himself. As time went on, the search for Fred went cold.

Months later, a local farmer burst into the lobby of a hotel, looking terrified. He told the man at the desk what happened: He had been walking down the road when he saw the ghost of Fred Fisher sitting on a fence. The ghost said nothing; just slowly pointed a finger toward an old barn.

At first, people laughed it off, but then they began to wonder. When police searched the area, they found a skeleton buried deep underneath the floor of the barn – right where the ghost had pointed.



Often times, fictional stories contain real elements. It is said that this story is based on real people that lived in Campbelltown in the 19th century.

What sounds real?

What sounds made-up?

The Soldier and the Stranger

Russia

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a soldier from a small village. When it came time for him to go home on leave, he decided to walk there.

Just outside the village lived a miller. They had been good friends before he joined the army, and as he approached his house, he wondered if his old friend still lived there.

He knocked on the door and the miller greeted him warmly. He invited him inside for some food and drink, and the soldier ended up staying for hours, the two of them talking late into the night.

The soldier looked outside and noticed it was very dark. "I should be on my way. My family must be wondering where I am."

"Nonsense. You'll stay here tonight and set out to finish your journey in the morning," said the miller. "It's dangerous out there at night."

"Dangerous? What do you mean?"

"Lately, townsfolk have told of a strange creature that wanders near the graveyard. At night he haunts the village, and scares everyone!"

"Oh, come now. Listen to yourself – that's just silly gossip. Besides, I'm a soldier – I've seen much worse. I'll be on my way. Thank you, friend, for the food and conversation. I'll see you in the morning."

Off he went towards his family's home. He continued on down the road, which passed the graveyard. When he got close to it, he noticed a dark figure darting about. For a moment, he was spooked.

"Oh, come on," he thought to himself. "It's just silly gossip, remember? I'll bet it's nothing." He summoned up his courage and got closer. As he approached he could see it was a man, sewing a hole in a pair of boots. He seemed to be struggling.

"What are you doing here?" the man said when he noticed the soldier, sounding startled.

"I wanted to make sure you were alright."

"Ah, I'm fine," said the stranger. "I'm on my way to a wedding. Come, enjoy some food and friends with me."

They walked along the road and came upon the wedding party. They were given food and drink and

welcomed as if they were great friends of the family. At first, everything went smoothly, but as the night went on the man started acting strange. After so much food and dancing, the bride and groom grew tired and fell asleep. He pricked their fingers with a small pin and drained a few drops of their blood in vials he brought with him.

"What was that for?" asked the soldier as they began to walk home.

"Mark my words: Tomorrow morning no one will be able to wake them."

"How do you know this?"

"The only way to revive them would be to pour their missing blood back into those wounds. I've got the blood."

The soldier stood silently, astounded. Could this man be the creature the townsfolk were afraid of?

The man continued to talk as they walked along the road. "I am invincible," he said. "Even moreso than you. I can take on anything! The only thing that can defeat me is a fire. If any of it were to touch me, I would turn to dust."

Finally, they came upon the graveyard.

"Well, here we are," said the man. The soldier was just about to say his goodbyes when he noticed the man staring at him strangely.

"This is where I must leave you ... but not before I eat you!"

"What?" cried the soldier, but before he knew it the stranger sprang up and knocked him to the ground, flashing two long, sharp fangs at him. They struggled, and the soldier was sure he was finished.

But then, all of a sudden, he heard a rooster crowing. It was morning! The man fell backwards onto the ground, motionless. The soldier snatched the vials of blood out of his pocket and ran home.

When he got there, his family was waiting at the door

"Thank goodness you're here! There's been a tragedy in town."

"What's the matter?" he asked, but he was pretty sure of the answer.

"There was a wedding last night," replied his father, "but the bride and bridegroom have fallen asleep in the night and can't be woken. We fear they will never wake again."

"I can bring them to life again. Tell me, where are they?"

"Make your way back to their home. Don't waste a

minute!”

The soldier took off down the road. He did just as the strange man had told him: He found the tiny pinpricks in their fingers, and poured their blood over it. Suddenly, just like magic, they were revived!

“How did you do that?” their family wondered in awe.

“That strange man at the wedding last night,” said the soldier, “he is the creature that’s been stalking your town. He told me all his secrets ... including how to defeat him. Tonight, we shall go to the graveyard and build a fire. Then, he will turn to dust.”

The next evening, he called the townsfolk together and asked them all to bring wood with them to the graveyard. They marched in, dragged the monster out of his grave, and set their wood on fire. The second he smelled smoke, he suddenly dissolved into a pile of dust. The townsfolk cheered, and the soldier collected his ashes and threw them into the wind, so he would never be in the town again. From that time forth there was peace in the village.



The monster in this story lives in a graveyard and likes blood.

What monster is he most like?

- a. Vampire
- b. Witch
- c. Werewolf

How is the monster most like the monster you chose?

How is he different?



La Llorona

Mexico and South America

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a beautiful young widow named Maria who lived in a small village. She was the loveliest woman in town, full of joy and passion.

Then, things changed. As she got older, the others in the village began to gossip about her. “She is not as beautiful as she once was,” they would whisper as she passed by. “It is not right for her to be raising those children all alone. With the way her looks are, she might never be able to find a stepfather for them.”

One day, a handsome stranger arrived in town. That day at the market, the stranger walked straight up to Maria as she shopped. “Hello, my dear,” he said, taking her hand. “Pardon me, but I couldn’t help noticing you. You are so beautiful, and it would be my honor to make you my bride.”

Maria couldn’t believe it. “Oh, I am so happy to have a family once again!”

“...What?” he asked. He seemed surprised.

“A family. I have two beautiful children, and I can’t wait for you to meet them.”

The man looked away. “I’m not so sure about that,” he said quietly. “You are beautiful Maria, but I cannot marry a woman who has children that are not my own.”

Before she could ask why, the stranger turned away and headed home.

Maria was heartbroken. She had hoped this man would bring the same happiness to her life that her first husband had. That night, she took her children to a river far away from town and left them there.

The next day, she went to the man’s home to tell him what she had done, hoping he would now agree to marry her. He was horrified, and told her never to contact him again.

Devastated with guilt, she went back to the river the next night. She called out her children’s names into the woods. Try as she might, she could not find them. Every night for the rest of her life, she went to the woods to search for her children.

Even today, if you go to a lake or river late at night, you may come across a dark figure, dressed all in black, crying for her lost children.

The Black Lady of Bradley Woods

Lincolnshire, England

ALONG TIME AGO, deep in the forest, a young woman lived with her husband and small child in a cozy cottage. Her husband was a soldier, and they had a very happy life together.

One day, the husband was called to war. Though she was sad to see him go, she knew it was what he had to do. A week later, the three of them walked to the little road at the edge of the woods; the only road for miles. He kissed his wife and baby goodbye, and headed off.

Days, weeks, months went by, and there was no news of her husband. Every day, she would take her baby to the edge of the woods and look down the road, hoping to see her beloved husband returning home. Day after day she stood in the same spot, peering down the road as far as she could see, but she never saw him – in fact, she never saw anyone.

One day, she went to the edge of the woods with her baby, as she had been doing for years now. She waited and waited, and suddenly she saw two soldiers coming up the road. She couldn’t believe her eyes – could it be her husband, coming home after so long?

As the two men got closer, she saw that neither of them was her husband. She feared that they were bringing bad news.

As it turns out, the soldiers were on their way to attack a neighboring town. As they rode by, one of them grabbed her baby right out of her arms. She screamed and pleaded with them to give it back, but they rode away laughing. She was heartbroken. Every day for the rest of her life, she went to the edge of the woods to wait for her husband and her child to be returned to her.

It is said that if you visit the woods late at night, you will see a figure dressed all in black wandering the woods, searching for the family that was taken from her.



Compare *La Llorona* with *The Black Lady of Bradley Woods*

The stories different?

How are...

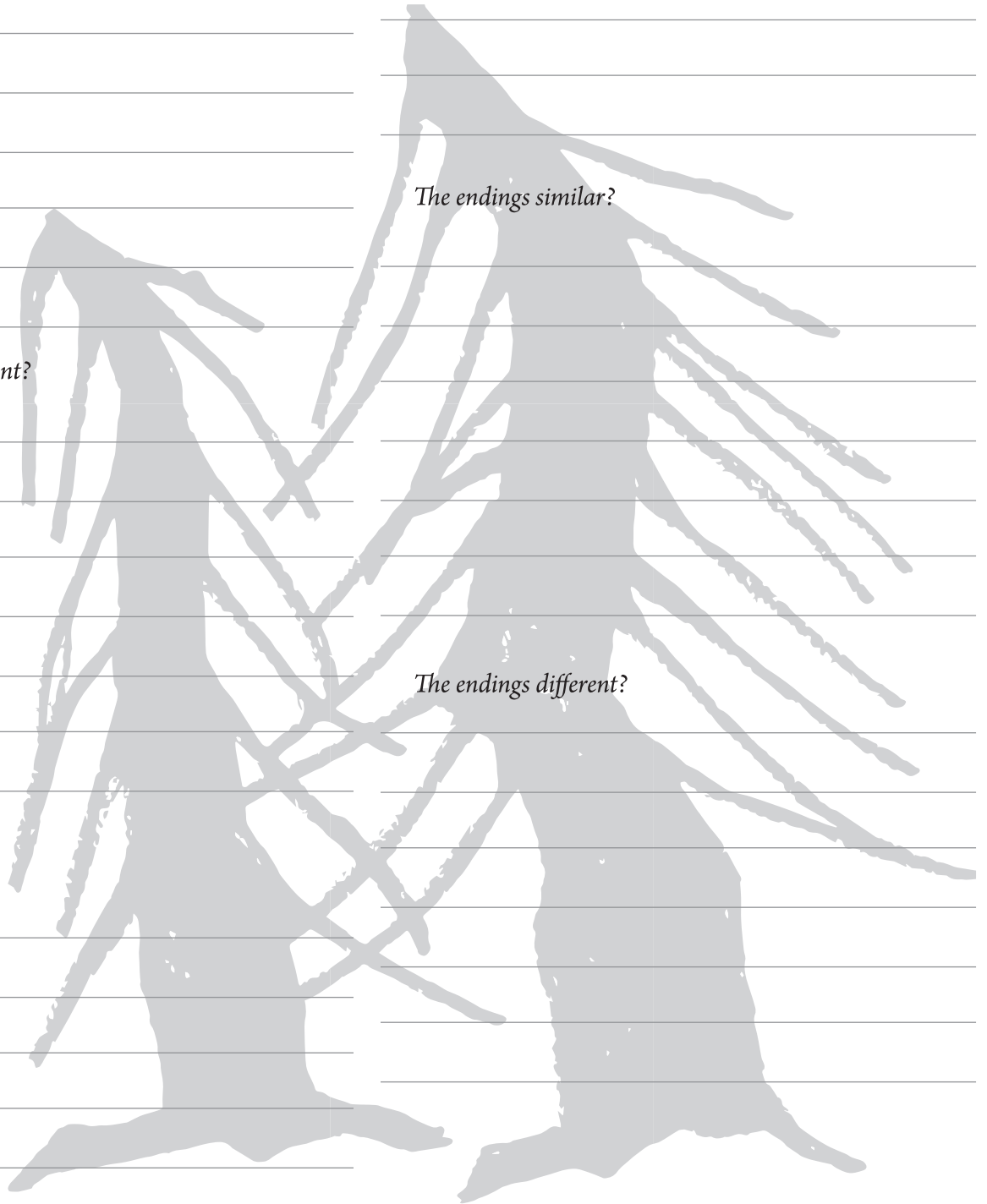
The characters similar?

The endings similar?

The characters different?

The endings different?

The stories similar?



The Daughter Who Married a Skull

Nigeria

ONCE THERE WAS A MAN named Effiong, who had one beautiful daughter, named Afiong. Afiong had many suitors fighting for her hand in marriage. Though they were all very wealthy, they were old and dull. Afiong refused to marry any of them, hoping to one day meet a man who was as charming and youthful as she.

Down in the spirit world, there lived a skull who heard of Afiong's dilemma. He also thought she was very beautiful, and hoped to marry her as well. He went to his friends in the underworld and borrowed some body parts – an arm here, a leg there – and soon made himself a convincing human suit. He made sure to make it up to Afiong's expectations: he was young, handsome and intelligent.

The next day, he left the spirit world and went to Afiong's village. Before long, she noticed him shopping at the market. She was immediately taken with him, and invited him to come and meet her parents. Her parents were suspicious, as they had never seen this man in town before. Still, they wanted her to be happy, so they agreed.

"Perfect," said the skull. "Tomorrow I will take you back to my home to meet my parents."

The next day, the two left Afiong's village. Days went by, and Effiong and his wife heard nothing from their daughter. He began to worry, so he visited the fortune teller. After casting some lots, he looked down and frowned. "This is not good," he said. "Your daughter has been taken by an evil spirit. She may not return home safely."

After walking for several days, Afiong and the skull, still in his disguise, crossed over into the spirit world. As soon as they entered, a mob of people rushed the skull. One man demanded his legs back, the other his torso, another his head. Soon, there was nothing left but the skull.

Afiong screamed. "Let me out! I want to go back home!" but it was too late. The rift had already closed behind them. "Come, let me show you my home," said the skull.

When they arrived at the Skull's house they found his

mother. She was very old, and needed help taking care of the house and herself. Afiong helped her cook and clean, and brought her firewood to warm the house and water to drink. "What a sweet young woman you are," said the skull's mother. She began to become worried – the spirit world was not a safe place for a human like her.

That evening, she had to tell Afiong the bad news. "Listen. You must leave soon," she warned. "The spirits that live here are not kind to humans. If they find you, they will make you one, too."

It didn't take long – the skull had already told the rest of the spirits that he had brought someone to join them. They mobbed the house, gnashing their teeth and stretching out their bony arms, but the skull's mother hid Afiong under the floor. They ransacked the house, but brought up no trace of a human.

After they had left, the old woman brought Afiong back up into the house. First, she went to her dresser and took out a pair of gold anklets, giving them to Afiong. "These are for the kindness you have shown me in your short time here," she said. Next, she conjured up a spell that called the wind to come take Afiong home. A gentle breeze arrived, and she told it to carry Afiong to her mother's house. Soon afterwards, the breeze dropped Afiong outside her front door.

When her parents saw her, they were very glad, as they had given her up as lost. Her father called all the village to come and dance, and the feasting and dancing was kept up for eight days and nights.



The Man Who Was Afraid of Nothing

Native American (Sioux)

ONCE UPON A TIME, four ghosts sat together. They were laughing and talking, when one of them told of a mortal man he had heard of. “I hear he isn’t afraid of anything. Not even us!”

“I’ll bet I could scare him,” said one ghost.

“Let’s make a bet,” said another ghost. “Whoever can scare him the most wins.” They bet their horses on it.

The next day, the man came walking by. The ghosts showed themselves to him as skeletons.

“Hello,” said the ghost, making an eerie noise.

“Hello, sir,” said the man. “Please move. You’re in my way.”

“Not so fast. We haven’t played a game yet!”

“Huh?”

“The hoop-and-stick game. If you lose, you become a skeleton like me!”

The young man laughed. He grabbed at the skeleton and bent it into a big circle. Then, he took one of the skeleton’s bones and rolled the skeleton down the street.

“Well, I guess I won this round,” said the man when he was done. “Wanna play some ball next?” he said, taking the skeleton’s skull and kicking it around like a ball.

“Ow, stop!” cried the skull. “I’m getting a headache.

“You sure? I want to give you a fair chance here.”

“Stop, stop, stop!” the skull pleaded.

“Well, OK. Good game, stranger,” said the man, and he walked on.

A little further down the road he ran into the second ghost, also made up to look like a skeleton. “Let’s dance,” he said.

“Great idea!” said the young man. “But we will need music first. How can we make it...? Oh, wait, I have just the thing!” he said, taking the ghost’s thighbone, beating his skull like a drum.

“Stop, please!” cried the skeleton. “I’m getting a headache.”

“For a ghost, you’re sure scared of me,” he said.

Next, he came upon the third ghost. “Now, this is just getting silly,” he said. “Didn’t I meet you earlier?”

“No, those were my friends. They want to dance and play games; I am here to fight. Let’s wrestle,” he said. “If I win, you become a skeleton like me.”

The young man rolled his eyes. “I am not much in the mood for wrestling. I feel like sledding!” He grabbed the skeleton’s ribcage and slid down a hill.

“Ouch, stop! That hurts!”

“Oh, see, you’re just like your friends,” said the young man. “You talk a good game, but in the end, you’re not that tough.”

Lastly, he came upon the chief ghost, riding on his ghost horse and casting a long, dark shadow on the ground in front of the man. For the first time, the young man got a little chill standing in his presence.

“Hello,” he said solemnly. “Come with me. I am going to take you away to another world, where you will become a skeleton like me.”

At first, he was a little frightened and didn’t know what to do. But then, he had an idea. He began to pretend to be a ghost, making spooky moaning noises and moving slowly. “Your friend at the head of the trail, he already got me! And now... now I’m coming for YOU!”

The chief ghost was terrified! He tried to run away, but the man, seeing that his trick worked, grabbed at the horse’s bridle and stole it from him. He hopped on and rode back into town. When the villagers saw the ghostly horse coming, they screamed and fled in terror!

Later on that day, he met up with some friends. They sat around talking and laughing, and the man began to brag about how he scared all four ghosts away. “You should have seen them. Every single one ran away in fright!”

Just then, a tiny spider descended from the ceiling and grazed his arm. The man froze. Then, he screamed! “Get it off! Oh, I HATE spiders!” he flew up from his seat, running wildly around the room, shaking his arm to try and get rid of it. His friends just laughed and laughed.



The Wild Hunt

Germany

Many different versions of “the wild hunt” story have been told in Europe since ancient times. This is a very old version from Germany.

A LONG TIME AGO, there was a hunter named Hackelbarend. Hackelbarend loved to hunt, more than anything else in life, and he spent all his time stalking in the woods, hunting wild game.

He even did this on Sundays. Back then, Sundays were supposed to be used only for church, and doing anything else could mean punishment not only by law, but by the gods themselves.

In time, Hackelbarend was caught. He was banished by the gods to another realm, doomed to hunt for all eternity for a prey that could never be found.

One evening, two young men were walking through the woods, on their way to visit their sweethearts. They laughed and joked on the way there, their laughter breaking through the peacefulness of the woods at night.

Suddenly, they heard a strange noise.

“What is that?” one of them said.

“I don’t know. It sounds like ... like dogs barking,” He said nervously.

“Let’s just keep walking,” the first one said, and they tiptoed further into the woods.

The barking got louder and louder, but the two walked on, trying not to show the other one his fright. As they came to a clearing, they saw a pack of huge, ghostly hounds race across the sky. At the back was Hackelbarend, shouting at his spectral horde.

The two men froze. They were both very scared, so to lighten the mood, one of the men began barking back at the dogs. “Woof! Woof!” he said. “You can’t scare us! You’re nothing but a ghost. You’re not even real.”

The noises suddenly stopped. The two men looked around them to see what happened. When they looked back up to the sky, the dogs had disappeared.

Then, the sounds started again; this time much, much closer. The sound seemed to get closer and closer, until it sounded as if the dogs were right behind them!

The two men were never heard from again. It is said

that, if you walk through the forest late at night, you may see Hackelbarend and his wild hunt soaring through the skies. If they can’t find the prey they’re looking for... they just might take you instead!



The Werewolf of Klein-Krams

Germany

NEAR THE TOWN of Klein-Krams, there were once lush forests, so full of wildlife that people would come from all over Germany to hunt its grounds. During these hunts, many people claimed to see a werewolf. The wolf was fierce. He had sharp claws, black eyes and a mouth full of terrible fangs. Many hunters tried to capture him, but he could never be caught.

One day, a man named Hans was traveling through Klein-Krams after a hunt, and happened upon the house that belonged to the Feeg family. As he passed by the house, he heard a great crash, and thought he heard a low growl. Next thing he knew, all the Feeg children came running out, screaming. He smiled to himself. "Ah, children have such great imaginations," he said. But as he walked past the doorway, he noticed a dark figure darting by.

He knew then that it was not a game, and that the children may be in danger. Carefully, he stepped inside the house. He peered around the corner where he saw the wolf go, but instead a small boy stood in his place.

"Is everything alright?" he asked.

"Everything is fine," said the boy.

"But your brothers and sisters all sounded so frightened. Will you please tell me what is wrong?"

"I was playing with my grandmother's magic belt," he said in a guilty voice. "Sometimes I take it from her and chase my brothers and sisters."

"Magic belt?" asked Hans.

"My grandmother has a magic belt," he said.

"Whoever puts it on becomes a werewolf."

"That's so strange. May I see it?"

The boy went back to get the belt and brought it to Hans. Hans inspected it closely. It didn't look any different from an ordinary leather belt to him. He thanked the child and went on his way.

Afterward, he went to see his friend, a lumberjack that he often hunted with. He told the man what he had seen at Feeg's house. "That's good news," said the lumberjack. "All this time I've thought it was a hideous monster. But if it's part human, it must not be so dangerous. Why, if it's part human, we may be able to

catch it!"

The lumberjack rounded up his friends and they went into the woods to see if they could find the werewolf. It didn't take long before they caught a glimpse of it. "There he is!" whispered the lumberjack, and the party took up the chase. But the werewolf was fast! It leapt over bushes and scrambled up hills. It ran and ran until it began to approach the town, soon running right into the Feeg's yard.

They quietly crept onto the Feeg's property, tiptoeing around the house in search of the werewolf as quietly as they could. Hans stayed close to his lumberjack friend, who moved slowly down the hall. At the entrance to the bedroom, he stopped, motioning silently to the rest of the team to come closer. He pointed to the bed, where they could just barely see a tail sticking out from under the sheets.

"A-ha!" the lumberjack leapt into the room and whipped the covers back, only to reveal a frail old woman in the bed! The hunters were stunned.

"I must have forgotten to take it off," the woman said. She was clearly frightened from her ordeal. The hunters then took the belt away and cut it up into tiny pieces so it could never be used again.



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Where was the werewolf most often seen?

- a. In the town
- b. In the forest
- c. In the shopping mall

Who did the werewolf turn out to be?

- A. the boy
- b. the grandmother
- c. Hans

How did the hunters make sure the werewolf would never haunt the forest again?

- a. They hid the belt
- b. They gave the belt to another family
- c. They cut up the belt

The Korrigan

Brittany, France

IF YOU'RE TRAVELING THROUGH BRITTANY, you'll come upon many moss-covered fountains. They're very beautiful, but you'll notice over every one of them is a cross or a little statue of the Virgin and Child to guard the fountain. You see, in the old days people were very frightened of these fountains. They thought they belonged to korrigans; spirits who haunt these fountains.

One day long ago, there was a farmer's wife. She went down to speak to her husband in the fields one afternoon and left her baby in the cradle. He was a lovely baby, just about six months old, with hair like ripe wheat and blue eyes like cornflowers. His mother kissed him goodbye and went down to the fields.

Just then, a korrigan passed by. Spying the open door, she looked in and saw the beautiful baby. She wanted him so she picked him up and took him, replacing him with her own wrinkled, ugly spawn.

When the mother came home, she wondered what was wrong with her baby. He'd always been so sunny and sweet; now he was cranky and upset. She said to her husband, "I think there's something wrong."

"Oh, he's just changing," her husband said. "Babies grow. He'll soon be a child."

Days went by. He didn't grow much bigger, but he grew cleverer. He watched her all the time, but in a spiteful sort of way. The wife wondered what could be wrong with him. She spoke to her husband again and he said, "Well, he's not a baby anymore. He's a little child."

As the years went by, he could walk and he could talk, but he never was nice. He never was loving. And he never smiled.

One day, a neighbor came home. It was a rainy night, and he'd come from the market where he'd bought a little calf. In order to stay dry, he wrapped his cloak around himself with the calf under his arm; the back of it draping over the horse. As he passed by, he heard the child say.

*Egg before white hen I knew,
Acorn before oak.*

But never before saw I three heads under one cloak!

Now that, thought the neighbor, was a strange thing. The child couldn't be more than six years old, but he sounded like an old man. He told the farmer's wife, and she became even more frightened. But when she told her husband, he brushed it away.

She decided to test him. One day, she got an eggshell and put some porridge into it, then put it in a pot to boil. The child said, "Mama, what are you doing?"

And she said, "I'm making supper for your father's workmen."

"Supper?" he said.

"Yes," she said, "this is how you make supper for workmen."

He looked at her and he said:

Acorn before oak I knew,

Egg before white hen.

But never saw I in one eggshell supper for twenty men!

The mother became terrified. That night, after the child had gone to bed, she and her husband sat up talking. She told of how, when she sent him out to milk the cows, he tormented them; when she sent him out to mind the chickens, he hurt the chickens, too. He hurt everything he came across, and he watched her all the time. "I fear he will do us harm next," she said to her husband.

"You're right," he said. "I was a boy once myself, but I didn't do things like he does. I'm going up to his room, and we'll see what's going on."

He went up to the room where the boy was sleeping. Though he looked asleep, the boy was watching him under his eyelids. As soon as the boy saw his father, he let out a screech – it was such a terrible screech, you could have heard it miles away. A moment later, the door was flung open and a woman appeared. She had with her a little boy about ten years old, with hair the color of ripe wheat, and eyes as blue as cornflowers!

"Take him! Take him!" she screamed wildly. "Give me back my own!"

And out of the bed leapt the korrigan's child and into his mother's arms. The farmer and his wife had their own child again, and they lived happily ever afterwards.



The Raven Steals the Light

Native American (Haida)

A LONG TIME AGO, an old man lived in a house on the bank of a river with his only child, a daughter. At that time the whole world was dark. Inky, pitchy dark, blacker than a thousand stormy winter midnights, blacker than anything anywhere has been since. The reason for all this darkness had to do with the old man in the house by the river, who had a box which contained many other boxes, each nested in a box slightly larger than itself until finally there was a box so small it contained all the light in the universe.

There was a raven who didn't like the darkness so much, since it led to an awful lot of blundering around and bumping into things, and slowed him down a good deal in his pursuit of food and troublemaking.

Eventually, he found his way to the home of the old man. As he walked by, he heard a little sing-song voice coming from it. When he followed the voice, he found himself at the wall of the house, and there, placing his ear against the it, he could just make out the words, "I have a box and inside the box is another box and inside it are many more boxes, and in the smallest box of all is all the light in the world, and it is all mine and I'll never give any of it to anyone, not even to my daughter." It took only an instant for the raven to decide to steal the light for himself.

The raven thought and thought about how he could enter the house. Finally, he found the solution to his problem. He waited until the young woman, whose footsteps he could now tell from those of her father, went to the river to gather water. Then he changed himself into a single hemlock needle, dropped himself into the river and floated down just in time to be caught in the basket that the girl was dipping in the river.

Even as a hemlock needle, the raven was able to make at least a little magic – enough to make the girl so thirsty she took a big drink from the basket, and in doing so,

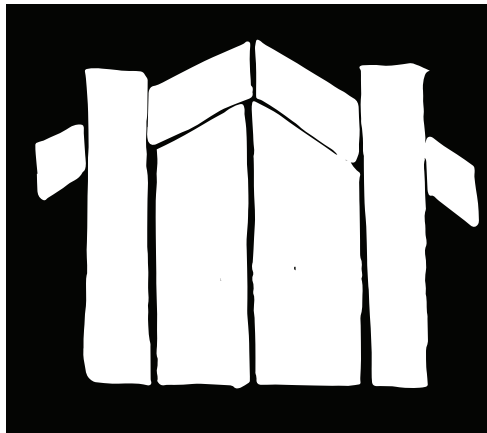
swallowed the needle. The Raven slithered down deep into her warm insides and found a soft, comfortable spot, where he transformed himself into a very small human being, and he went to sleep for a long while. As he slept, he grew.

The girl didn't know what was happening to her, and her father didn't notice anything unusual because it was so dark. Weeks later, he suddenly noticed another person in the house: the raven had turned himself into a human boy. He was – or would have been, if anyone could have seen him – a strange-looking boy, with a long beaklike nose and a few feathers here and there. In addition, he had the shining eyes of a raven, which would have given his face a bright, inquisitive appearance – if anyone could have seen it. And he was noisy! He had a cry that contained all the noises of a spoiled child and an angry raven – yet he could sometimes speak as softly as the wind in the hemlock boughs.

As time went on, the old man grew to love this strange new member of his household and spent many hours playing with him, making him toys and inventing games for him. As the old man began to trust him, the raven continued his search for the box of light. After much looking, he was convinced it was kept in the big box which stood in the corner of the house. One day he cautiously lifted the lid, but of course could see nothing – all he could feel was another box.

He went to his new grandfather and begged him to let him have the biggest box. That box, the raven said, was the one thing he needed to make him truly happy. As most grandparents do, the old man gave in and gave his grandchild the outermost box. This pleased the boy for a short time – but as most grandchildren do, the raven soon demanded the next box.

It took many days, with many well-planned tantrums, but one by one the boxes were removed. When only a few were left, a strange radiance, never before seen, began to infuse the darkness of the house, revealing dim shapes and their shadows. The raven then begged in his most pitiful voice to be allowed to hold the light for just a moment. His grandfather first would not let him, but soon gave in. The old man lifted the light, in the form of



a beautiful bright ball, from the box and tossed it to his grandson.

He had only a glimpse of the child, for even as the light was traveling toward him, the child changed from his human form to a huge black shadow, wings spread and beak open, waiting. The Raven snapped up the light in his jaws, thrust his great wings downward and shot through the smokehole of the house into the darkness.

The world was at once transformed. Mountains and valleys were starkly silhouetted, the river sparkled with broken reflections, and everywhere life began to stir. The raven flew on, proud of his new possession, admiring the effect it had on the world below. He was having such a good time that he didn't see the eagle that was coming toward him until it was almost too late. In a panic he swerved to escape it, and in doing so he dropped a good half of the light he was carrying. It fell to the rocky ground below and there broke into pieces – one large piece and too many small ones to count. They bounced back into the sky and remain there even today as the moon and the stars that glorify the night.

The eagle chased the raven beyond the edge of the world, and there, tired from the long chase, the raven finally let go of his last piece of light. It floated gently on the clouds and started up over the mountains lying to the east and still travels across the sky as the sun.

How was the raven able to enter the house?

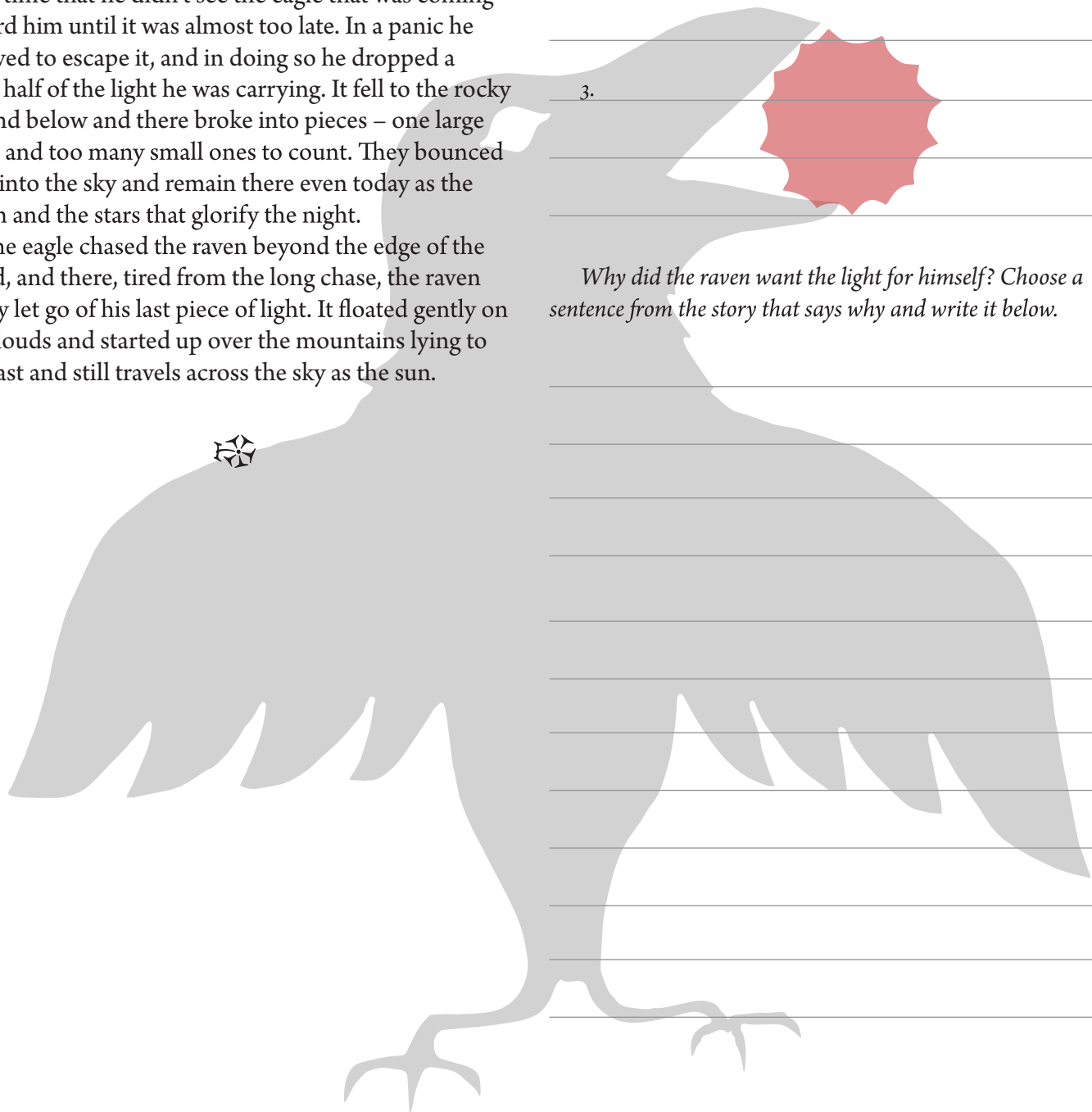
Describe the steps he took below.

1.

2.

3.

Why did the raven want the light for himself? Choose a sentence from the story that says why and write it below.



Vasilisa the Brave

Russia

MANY YEARS AGO, there lived a girl named Vasilisa. Some say she was the most beautiful girl in her village, and very smart too.

When she was young, her mother died, leaving her a small wooden doll as a token of remembrance. “Keep it close,” her mother said. “As long as you feed it every day, it will help you in times of need.”

Vasilisa grew up, and fed the doll every day. Her father remarried, but Vasilisa’s stepmother and stepsisters did not like her. They were very mean to her. The stepmother made her work very hard, but with the help of the doll, Vasilisa was able to complete every task her stepmother gave her. Friends would often come by to visit Vasilisa, and as she grew older, suitors came to the house to ask for her hand in marriage. Her stepmother ordered them all to leave, as she wanted Vasilisa to work for her instead of start a life of her own.

One day, her father had to leave on a business trip. While he was away, his wife sold the house and moved Vasilisa and her stepsisters to a small hut in a dark forest. In this forest lived a witch named Baba Yaga, whom all the villagers feared.

One evening, the stepmother decided to play a trick on Vasilisa. While she was working, she blew out all the candles except for one. “You can’t work in darkness!” she said, “Go to Baba Yaga and ask to borrow a light.”

Vasilisa went out into the forest. She was afraid, so she fed her doll and asked it for advice. “What should I do? All the townsfolk say Baba Yaga is old and mean. Some even say she possesses strange and evil powers.”

“Do not be afraid,” her doll said. “I can keep you safe.”

She walked all day until at last she came to Baba Yaga’s hut. It was hard to miss – it stood on two chicken legs, and the fence was made of bones, with lamps made of skulls along the top. The gate was made of long, fearsome teeth that locked together. She was very afraid, but she knew her doll would keep her safe. She took a deep breath and walked inside.

She entered to find Baba Yaga sitting at her table. “Who is there?” the witch said, turning around.

Vasilisa gulped. “It is I, Vasilisa. My stepmother has

sent me to ask you for a light.”

“Ah, yes. I have heard of her. I will give you a light, but you must work for it. Stay here the night and help me do some chores. If you are good, I will send you home with the light you need.” Behind Vasilisa, the gates closed their teeth, shutting her in.

First, Baba Yaga asked Vasilisa to bring her dinner. When she got to the stove, there was enough food to feed the whole town! Baba Yaga ate it all, leaving Vasilisa only scraps.

“I am finished, and am going to bed,” said Baba Yaga as she finished her meal. “In the barn, there is a barrel of corn. In the morning, you shall pick out all the rotten kernels. After that, you must clean the house, cook my meals, and wash the linens and clothing. If you do not complete these tasks, right down to every rotten kernel, I will keep you here forever.”

When she heard Baba Yaga sleeping, she pulled her doll out of her pocket. “How can I possibly finish all those chores? Oh, I will never get out of here! I’ll never see my father again!”

“Don’t worry,” assured the doll. “I’ll help you. Get some rest, and we’ll start our work in the morning.”

When she awoke the next day, Baba Yaga was already awake and gone. Vasilisa trod out to the barn to start her work. To her surprise, she found the corn already sorted – the doll had done it! “All you need to do is prepare supper. I will help with the rest,” whispered the doll. All day, Vasilisa and the doll worked side by side. When Baba Yaga returned, she was shocked to find a spotless house, with a hot meal waiting on the table!

“Very well,” she said, though she was suspicious. “Tomorrow, you must do the same, and also separate the poppy seeds from the dirt.”

“No problem,” said Vasilisa.

The next morning, Baba Yaga once again rode off, and when she returned, Vasilisa had once again exceeded her expectations. “Come, sit with me,” she said as she ate the meal Vasilisa had prepared. She was beginning to see that Vasilisa was not only beautiful, but had courage and confidence. Everyone else in the village was afraid of her, but Vasilisa was not.

They sat in silence and ate their food. Though Baba Yaga had turned out to be much nicer than she had been made out to be, Vasilisa was still nervous around her.

Then, Baba Yaga said, “Let me ask you a question. How have you been able to finish the tremendous

amount of work I have given you?”

Shyly, Vasilisa responded: “Before she died, my mother gave me a charm. The magic of this charm helps me accomplish the impossible.”

“I knew it!” cried Baba Yaga, jumping out of her chair in anger. “You had help. I won’t have any charms or sorcery in this house. Leave at once,” she said, pointing toward the gate, its twisted grin holding back the night.

“Here,” she said, handing Vasilisa a skull from the fence. “A light to guide you home. All you needed was a light, correct?”

All night and day she walked, and by the next evening, she had reached her home again. She was just about to throw out the skull when she heard it speak: “Better keep me, dear. Your stepmother still needs light.”

Vasilisa went bounding up the steps to her house, sure her stepmother was livid. “I am home!” she cried as she flew in the door. “You will not believe what I – “

She stopped short and gasped. As soon as she entered, the skull fixed its gaze on her stepmother and stepsisters. All night, it held them in its grasp – try as they might, they could not leave its sight. When Vasilisa awoke in the morning, she could not find her stepmother and stepsisters at all – just piles of dust where they had been the night before.



How is Baba Yaga different from other witches you have read about?


What makes this story scary?

What makes it a fairy tale?

Put these events in the order that they happened.

- _____ Baba Yaga tells Vasilisa to sort the poppy seeds.
- _____ Vasilisa’s father remarries.
- _____ Vasilisa’s stepmother moves the family into the woods.
- _____ Baba Yaga gets angry and sends Vasilisa back home.
- _____ Vasilisa’s father leaves on a business trip.
- _____ Vasilisa’s stepmother tells her to get a light from Baba Yaga.
- _____ Baba Yaga tells Vasilisa to sort the corn.





Great job!

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