



Sample Pages from
The Shadow Stories - A Cursed Play

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THE SHADOW STORIES – A CURSED PLAY

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Matt Webster



The Shadow Stories – A Cursed Play
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Printed in the USA

Characters

8M 8W + 15AG

Can be done with 6-31 performers

Characters

Storyteller: (Any) Cursed to tell these stories against their will

Shadow 1/La Llorona: (F) The Weeping Woman – the damned specter of a mother searching for her children

Shadow 2/WWII Soldier: (M) The ghost of a dead Hawaiian warrior

Shadow 3/Night Hag: (F) The physical embodiment of a deadly nightmare

Shadow 4/Vampire: (M) A vampire on the hunt

Shadow 5/Kuchisake Onna: (F) A vengeful, disfigured spirit – The Slit Faced Woman

La Llorona

La Llorona/Shadow 1: (F)

Maria: (F) A beautiful young woman

Person 1: (Any) A villager

Person 2 [Carlos/Carlita]: (Any) A villager

Person 3: (Any) A villager

Person 4: (Any) A villager

Antonio: (M) A wealthy man who marries, and abandons, Maria

Esmerelda: (F) Antonio's new love [Non-speaking]

2 Boys: (M) [Non speaking/Optionally puppets]

The Night Marchers

WW 2 Soldier/Shadow 2: (M)

Derrick: (M) A newlywed on his honeymoon

Loni: (F) A newlywed on her honeymoon

Soldier 1: (Any) Ghost soldier of the Night Marchers [Non-speaking]

Solder 2: (Any) Ghost soldier of the Night Marchers [Non-speaking]

The Terror of the Night Hag

Night Hag/Shadow 3: (F)

Body: (Any) The body of the sleeper

Mind: (Any) The mind of the sleeper

Mother: (F) Mother of the sleeper

Puppeteer(s): (Any) [Non-speaking]

The Vampire of Croglin Grange

Vampire/Shadow 4: (M)

Emma: (F) A young woman vacationing in the country with her siblings

George: (Any) Emma's brother/sister

Daniel: (Any) Emma's brother/sister

George and Daniel are not inherently male. If casting requires a different gender, names can be changed to Georgina and/or Daniella and the pronouns in the story can be adjusted accordingly.

The Kuchisake Onna

Kuchisake Onna/Shadow 5: (F)

Jealous Husband: (M) A jealous man prone to violence

The Other Man: (M) [Non-speaking]

Traveler 1: (Any) An unsuspecting traveller

Traveler 2: (Any) An unsuspecting traveller

Traveler 3: (Any) An unsuspecting traveller

Casting Doubling/Tripling etc.

It is possible to produce this show with a minimum of six actors. To stage this show with only six actors, the Shadow characters would double as characters in each other's stories. (In *La Llorona*, Shadow I would play both Maria and La Llorona. The actor would add a wig and veil to transition from Maria to La Llorona.) To keep character transitions as minimal as possible, the Shadow characters would need to be costumed in neutral clothing under their shadow robes. These neutral costumes could then be supplemented by simple additions such as scarves or hats, as needed, to differentiate between characters.

Otherwise, performers can be single, double or multiple cast at the discretion of the director.

Staging Notes

Sets

The stories are designed to be told with minimum set pieces. One or two simple pieces for each story – such as stage blocks, large pieces of fabric, or a window frame – will be enough to create the 'world' of a story. This allows for quicker, smoother transitions between stories. However, if you wish to create more elaborate scenic designs, feel free to do so.

Costumes

Costumes are the most effective way to create the world of a story. When at all possible, please costume characters in clothing that is appropriate for

the culture in which the story is set. These costumes do not need to be elaborate to be effective.

The Shadow characters wear cloaks with hoods in order to hide their character costume when their story is not being told. This also helps the actors who play the Shadows to differentiate between their “Shadow” character and assigned story character.

Sound/Music

It is recommended that culturally recognizable music (simple Spanish guitar during *La Llorona*, Hawaiian slack key guitar during *The Night Marchers*, Japanese flute during *The Kuchisake Onna*, etc.) is played as an introduction to each of the stories. This will add another layer to the ‘world’ of the stories you are creating. Look for music that matches the quality/tone of the stories. In the original production, music was used to great effect as a way to set both the culture and the mood. Once the story is established, additional appropriate music and/or sound can be included as needed.

Puppets

In *La Llorona*, Maria’s two sons can be portrayed by inanimate figures. These do not need to be realistic, moveable puppets. They can simply be large dolls. The boys do not speak or interact with any other characters, and it can add to the surrealistic nature of the story if the boys are not real. For ease of movement, they can be placed on small wheeled platforms or some other simple conveyance.

If, however, you decide to use puppets for these characters I would recommend creating simple puppets that are large enough to be believed as Maria’s children, and are manipulated by separate, individual puppeteers.

In *The Terror of the Night Hag*, the Night Hag is designed to be a ‘large’ puppet that literally sits on the chest of Body throughout the scene. Because of this, the Night Hag should LOOK heavy without actually BEING heavy. The Night Hag puppet DOES NOT need to look realistic, or even “human.” The puppet does not need literal eyes or a mouth, but can be designed using more abstract shapes to suggest facial features. When designing this puppet, think of a large, rotund, semi-human shape – think more ‘snowman’ shape than ‘human’ shape. This puppet can simply be a round-ish head, wearing a veiled hat, attached to a large round body, stuffed with cloth or stuffing. The Night Hag does not need realistic ‘arms’ or ‘legs’ – simple static appendages can be attached to the Night Hag’s body – but movable limbs can be included if it enhances your production. However, the head of the puppet should move enough so the puppeteer(s) can make the Night Hag “look” at, and menace, the Body.

Cutting for Competition or Otherwise

If you need to shorten this script for competition purposes, simply reduce the number of stories being told by The Storyteller, and adjust the dialogue accordingly. If you need to cut the script for time, it is recommended by the playwright to cut story 4 – *The Vampire of Croglin Grange*. Removing that story should reduce the length of the play to between 30 and 35 minutes.

Word Pronunciations

La Llorona

For *La Llorona*, the best option is to utilize any native Spanish speakers for proper pronunciations.

La Llorona – La Yo-ro-na

Dios Mio – Dee-ohs Mee-oh

Mi amor – Mee am-oor

Mi corazón – Mee core-ah-zone

Mis hijo's – Mee hos (long O, like open)

Si – See

Hasta luego – Ah-stah loo-eggo

Niños – Neen-yo's

Donde están mis niños – Don-day es-tahn mis neen-yo's

Madre de Dios – Mah-dray day Dee-ohs

The Night Marchers

Loni – Lawn-ee (ee = long E, like evil)

Pali – Pah-lee

Kapu – Kah-poo

Na'u – [2 syllables] Nah-oo (oo, like Boo)

O-ia – [3 syllables] Oh-ee-ah (ee = long E, like evil)

Pili koko – Pee-lee koh-koh

The Night Hag

Daeva – Day-va (this word means devil or demon)

The Kuchisake Onna

Kuchisake Onna – Koo-chee-Sa-kay Oh-nah

The Shadow Stories – A Cursed Play was originally performed at Ronald W. Reagan High School in Pfafftown, North Carolina. It was produced under the title *Ghost Stories: A Cursed Play* with the following cast and crew:

Storyteller: Noah Boyce

Shadow 1/La Llorona: Annabelle Aller

Shadow 2/Soldier: Phoenix Orion Harris

Shadow 3/Night Hag: Sahara Arneson

Shadow 4/Vampire: Ben Black

Shadow 5/Kuchisake Onna: Heather Lewis

Maria: Melyn Piper

Maria's Boys: Sullivan Bryant and Speer Bryant

Wealthy Man: Haikem Southerland

Person 1: Yasmine Ajam

Person 2: Nigel Anderson

Person 3: Emerson Finney

Person 4: Ashlyn Bradley

Derrick: Turner Janus

Loni: Kya Rishak

Soldier 1: Melyn Piper

Soldier 2: Ashlyn Bradley

Body: Rue Dougherty

Mind: Amy Grilliot

Mother: Cleo Engelkins

George: Haikem Southerland

Daniella: Ella Kiser

Emma: Yasmine Ajam

Samurai: Haikem Southerland

Traveler 1: Ashlyn Bradley

Traveler 2: Emerson Finney

Traveler 3: Carrington Finney

Director: Jenn Janus

Student Director: Charlie Hicks

Stage Manager: Rachel Lowe

Light Operator: Lily Hayes

Spot Light Operators: Addison Powell, Alexa Robinson

Stage is dark. Eerie, otherworldly sounds begin to be heard. The sounds begin to resolve into voices. The voices are ghostly and raspy. They are not benevolent...

SHADOW 1: Looooook...!

SHADOW 2: Ooooh...Loooooooook!

SHADOW 3: It woooorked...

SHADOW 1: ...wooorked.

SHADOW 4: They caaaame...

SHADOW 5: ...they're heeeeeerree...

ALL SHADOWS: ...Peeeeooooopppllllleeeee!

Lights slowly come up to a dim blue wash. As the lights come up we see five figures on the stage – the SHADOWS. They are dressed in cloaks and hoods that cover their faces. Under their cloaks, they wear the costume of their story character. As the lights come up to the point where the audience can see them, they become “real” people and react to the audience. They transform from shadows to “people” during these first few lines.

SHADOW 2: With ears...

SHADOW 1: ...eeeaars...

SHADOW 4: ...and eyes...

SHADOW 2: ...eeyeesss...

SHADOW 5: ...and hearts...

SHADOW 4: ...heaaaaarrrts...

SHADOW 3: ...and fear....!

ALL SHADOWS: ...Feeeeeeaaaaarrrrr...!!

SHADOW 1: Call it...

SHADOW 2: ...Summon it...

SHADOW 3: ...make it appear...

SHADOW 4: ...Bring it forth...!!!

SHADOW 5: Come to us...

ALL SHADOWS: Coommmmeeee ttoooooooo uuuuuuussss....!!!

STORYTELLER: (*offstage*) No. No please... not again...

SHADOW 1: It will do what it is told...

SHADOW 2: ...it has no choice...

SHADOW 1: ...choooooiiccee...

SHADOW 3: ...it has no will...

SHADOW 2: ...wwiiilllll...

SHADOW 4: ...it belongs to us....

SHADOW 3: ...uuuuuuss....

SHADOW 5: ...it is cuuurrrsed...

ALL SHADOWS: ...cursed.....!!

The STORYTELLER slowly enters from stage right, scared, weary, but attempting to resist.

STORYTELLER: No, please... I can't. Not again...

SHADOW 1: It will...!

SHADOW 2: It must...!

SHADOW 3: ...the curssse...

ALL SHADOWS: ...THE CURSE.....!!

STORYTELLER: Yes, I know, the curse. But I can't... I can't do it. Not to these people... they don't know...

SHADOW 4: Telllll them...

SHADOW 5: ...tell the stories....

ALL SHADOWS: Oouur stooorriieess....!!

STORYTELLER: ...Please...

SHADOW 1: Tell them or we will eat your heart...

SHADOW 2: ...eeeaattt...

SHADOW 3: ...tell them or we will rot your mind...

SHADOW 1:rrroooott....

SHADOW 4: ...tell them or we will poison your soul...

SHADOW 5: ...pooooiison...

ALL SHADOWS: ...TELL THEM!!

STORYTELLER: All right...! All right... no more please...

SHADOW 1: Tell them our stories and perhaps...

SHADOW 3: ...just perhaps...

SHADOW 5: ...the curssse will passss....

The SHADOWS quietly laugh a knowing laugh.

STORYTELLER: Fine. You win. Whose story do I tell first?

SHADOW 1: Mine...! Me... Start with mmeee...

STORYTELLER: All right, whatever... (*rushed and sloppy*) So, once upon a time...

ALL SHADOWS: (*loud and genuinely threatening*) NNNNNOOOOOO!!

The STORYTELLER cowers as the SHADOWS surround them.

SHADOW 2: Respect!

SHADOW 3: You will tell the stories with respect!

SHADOW 4: You will respect the storiesss!!

SHADOW 5: You will tell the stories as they were told to you...!

SHADOW 1: You are cursssed...!!!

ALL SHADOWS: (*threateningly, towards the storyteller*)
Cuuuuurrrrsseedd!!

STORYTELLER: (*scared and helpless*) All right! All right. No more. You win...

SHADOW 1: Now, wretched and forsaken narrator... telllll myyy stooory....

The STORYTELLER is broken and realizes they must do as they are told. A dim pool of light appears above a lectern or music stand downstage right with a large book on it, and the STORYTELLER crosses to the light.

Just before they get into the light a shiver of revulsion passes through them, and then, with a determined effort, they step into the light. Once the STORYTELLER steps into the light, we watch a transformation take place. The STORYTELLER's facial expression and posture changes. Right before our eyes they become the consummate storyteller – engaging, entertaining, captivating – everything an audience could want from a skillful, accomplished storyteller. As long as they are in the light and “onstage” they are compelled by the curse to be the best storyteller anyone could hope for. The STORYTELLER opens the book and “reads” the stories to the audience. The STORYTELLER can reference the book, but in reality, they have the stories memorized and are using the book as a prop.

When the STORYTELLER steps into the light and begins to tell the stories, the scenes shift to create the world of each story being told. This shift can be done by the SHADOWS, or by a ghostly tech crew who wear neutral masks. Each story will exist in its own unique world while that story is being told. This will be done using simple set pieces like blocks, benches, door frames, large pieces of fabric etc., as well as lights, costumes, puppets, and simple props as appropriate. The characters of the stories appear organically within these worlds.

STORYTELLER: *(with enthusiasm, almost possessed)* Esteemed guests! Fellow travellers. Woeful and unwilling participants in tonight's impending nightmare. Welcome. Welcome one and all to a collection of stories guaranteed to infect your brain and unsettle your heart. Stories craftily curated to cause constant consternation, and cleverly choreographed to corrupt your catatonic cranium. Five stories from around the world designed to disquiet you long after the lights dim and the curtain drops. This is what you will see tonight: Stories you will never forget – stories that infest your mind and take root in your brain – stories that will stay with you forever! Let us begin, shall we...

By this time the stage has been rearranged for the first story. The SHADOWS that are not in this story can either hide or disappear into the wings.

The Story of La Llorona – The Weeping Woman

STORYTELLER: For your consideration: *The Story of La Llorona – The Weeping Woman* – a story of unrequited love, humiliating betrayal, misguided murder and cursed regret from old Mexico.

MARIA appears in a pool of light center stage.

Long ago, in a small village in Mexico, there was a beautiful young woman named Maria. Maria came from a poor family, but because of her beauty, she was always the center of attention.

A small group of people gather around MARIA, fawning and waving at her.

PERSON 1: Oh, Maria, you are so beautiful!

PERSON 2: Maria, won't you walk with me in the moonlight down by the river?

PERSON 3: Maria! Every man in town wants you for their wife!

PERSON 4: Look Maria, I brought you some wildflowers...

STORYTELLER: But Maria wasn't interested in anyone's attention.

MARIA turns up her nose to all the attention and the people wander away from her stage right, to the edge of the stage.

At least, not until HE came to town.

ANTONIO – a rich, handsome man – appears from stage right.

He was from another village, and he was both handsome AND wealthy. He saw Maria and was instantly smitten by her.

ANTONIO: Dios Mio! Who is that ravishing creature?

PERSON 1: That's Maria.

PERSON 2: The most beautiful woman in the entire village.

ANTONIO: I must have her for my wife.

PERSON 3: Ha! Good luck!

PERSON 4: She's not interested in any man, let alone marriage.

ANTONIO: No? Well we will see about that...!

STORYTELLER: The man thought it would be amusing to woo Maria and make her his wife, so he began to lavish her with gifts and affection.

ANTONIO: (*crosses to MARIA*) Mi amor... Mi corazón... your beauty steals my breath! Your elegance captures my heart! Your glory makes the sun go cold and the moon dim. Even the angels weep jealous tears when they see the perfection of your face. Please take this necklace as a token of my great affection for you.

STORYTELLER: Maria was instantly charmed and fell head over heels in love with him. It wasn't long after that that they were married. Church bells rang out and the beautiful couple started their life together. Before long they even had two children together. Two handsome, strapping young boys.

Two BOYS join the couple onstage.

But after a while, the wealthy man lost interest in Maria. He started traveling more and more, and coming home less and less.

ANTONIO hugs the BOYS goodbye and turns to leave, MARIA holds out her arms for a hug and ANTONIO walks right by without looking at her. MARIA is broken-hearted.

And then one day, the man left and never came back. He didn't even say goodbye to Maria, he just left her a coldly written note telling her it was over between them and he was going to find someone who was more worthy of his name and reputation. Maria was devastated. She felt nothing but shame and embarrassment. And every time she went into town to get food for her sons she could hear the whispers behind her back.

MARIA, holding the BOYS' hands, moves across the stage as though she is shopping, miming picking things off shelves or out of baskets. As she moves from place to place the other people enter, whisper and gossip.

PERSON 1: Oh, look. There's Maria...

PERSON 2: Did you hear about her husband?

PERSON 1: No, what?

PERSON 2: He left her.

PERSON 1: No!

PERSON 2: Yes!

PERSON 1: I wonder what she did that drove him away?

PERSON 2: Who knows? Maybe she's not so perfect after all...

MARIA moves to another part of the stage, still "shopping."

PERSON 3: *(in mid-conversation)* ...he just left her! That's what I heard. Didn't even say goodbye...

PERSON 4: Scandalous!

PERSON 3: *(sees MARIA)* Oh, shhh... shhh... she's right there. Poor thing.

PERSON 4: *(whispering)* Well it's her own fault. If she had been a better wife he wouldn't have left her.

PERSON 3: *(whispering)* No wonder he couldn't stand her anymore. Look at her, she's a mess!

PERSON 4: Can you blame him?

They both stare at MARIA as she leaves. As MARIA leaves the "market" she crosses offstage. While she is off, a long, flowing piece of blue fabric is brought on to create the "river". The fabric is held on either side by a stagehand dressed in black, and gently waved to show the movement of the water. She then enters again downstage with her two BOYS, holding their hands.

STORYTELLER: Maria did the best she could to take care of herself and her two sons and get on with her life after her husband left. But one day, a few years later, she and her sons were walking along the river when she noticed a man and woman standing on the riverbank, holding hands. To her shock, she recognized the man as her former husband – the man she foolishly fell in love with. The man who broke her heart. Maria tried to speak, but the words caught in her throat. Just then the man looked over and saw the boys.

ANTONIO: Look who it is! My sons! Mis hijos! Hello boys, how wonderful to see you! Look how tall you have gotten! And so handsome!

STORYTELLER: He didn't say a word to Maria. It was like she wasn't even there.

ANTONIO: I can't believe that we found each other out here by the river. How fortunate! There are so many things I want to tell you.

STORYTELLER: Maria stood there seething. She was standing there, HOLDING THE BOYS' HANDS, and he didn't even LOOK at her.

ANTONIO: I've got great news! I am moving back to this town. Yes! Si! I will be right here in town with you where you can see me every day.

STORYTELLER: Maria had never felt so disrespected and embarrassed in all her life...

ANTONIO: And here is the best news of all: I am getting married! Yes! This is Esmerelda, she is from a RESPECTABLE family and she is going to be your new madre, isn't that wonderful?

STORYTELLER: Hatred flooded Maria's heart and rage poisoned her mind. The woman he was with was young and beautiful. She was obviously well-heeled and came from a wealthy family.

ANTONIO: From now on, I'm going to be around every day and we are going to spend a lot of time together. In fact, you will probably come to live with me and Esmerelda forever! Won't that be fun? All right boys, it was so good to see you. Hasta luego! See you soon!

STORYTELLER: And with that, he walked off. He never once looked at Maria. Not once! And as he walked away with his new love, Maria thought she could hear her former love say something hateful under his breath to the woman, and they both laughed. A nasty, taunting laugh. And at that moment, something inside Maria snapped...

The lights shift to a red wash. MARIA is out of her head with rage. She wants to scream, but can only manage a low growl to begin with.

The mocking, spiteful face of the man she once loved burned into Maria's brain. The cruel and haughty laughter of the beautiful young woman echoed in her ears.

MARIA screams with rage.

In her mind, every insult echoed again and again. Every embarrassing moment was magnified, and metastasized into a wicked, violent thought.

MARIA screams again, longer and more violent.

In a fit of absolute blind rage Maria dragged her sons to the edge of the river, and without even knowing what she was doing, she flung the two boys into the raging water!

MARIA has dragged the BOYS to the edge of the “water”. With one last crazed scream, she throws the BOYS in the water. This happens in slow motion and we see the BOYS, who are shocked and scared, as they fly through the air and land in the water. Once in the water, they bob up and down in slow motion, silently flailing and struggling against the current, and then sinking under the water and disappearing. [If you are using puppets or dolls, make sure this is performed in slow motion. The puppeteers should portray the shock and fear the boys feel when they are thrown in the river. For maximum effect, it is suggested that you hide two performers behind the “water.” When the puppets are thrown into the river, the arms of the hidden performers appear over the water and we see the hands thrash and struggle and then slowly sink under the water.]

The lights slowly shift back from the red wash.

Maria stood there for a moment, still not seeing. Still not hearing. And then, slowly, she noticed that her hands were empty. Her boys weren't holding her hands.

MARIA: Niños?

STORYTELLER: Maria realized that her children were gone.

MARIA: Mis niños. ¿Dónde están mis niños?

STORYTELLER: Maria looked around but couldn't see her sons. She began to panic, she screamed...

MARIA: My children! WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN?!

STORYTELLER: Suddenly, Maria saw two small bodies floating away down the river and she understood what she had done.

MARIA: MY CHILDREN!! MIS NINOS!! NOOOO...!!!!

MARIA drops to her knees with her back to the audience. She silently sobs.

STORYTELLER: Tragically, Maria knew her children were dead. And she knew she had killed them. She had drowned the only things that brought joy into her life. How could she go on living without

her children? It was all too much for her. Maria stood up, and without saying another word, walked straight into the river – knowing she would die, but hoping she would join her children in the afterlife.

Almost as in a trance, MARIA stands. She calmly walks into the “river” and then slowly goes under. The river is then taken offstage with MARIA hidden behind it so we don’t see her exit.

But that is not what happened. Instead of following her children into the afterlife, Maria was damned for what she had done. She was trapped between the worlds of the living and the dead and was cursed to wander the earth. Unable to rest until she finds her children.

MARIA: *(offstage crying – scary and haunting)* “Mis niñooooos! Donde están mis niñooooos!”

STORYTELLER: The people of the village soon began to hear the haunting wailing of a woman crying for her children, and they began seeing a ghostly vision walking near the river after dark.

While this scene is playing out on downstage, we see the ghostly figure of LA LLORONA – (played by SHADOW I for the rest of the story) move across the stage. She is dressed in a tattered white dress with long black hair and her face is covered by a veil.

PERSON 1: I’m telling you, I saw Maria last night! Walking on the other side of the river!

PERSON 2: But Maria’s dead!

PERSON 1: Then I saw her ghost. It looked just like her. It was wearing a white dress and had long black hair just like Maria used to have.

PERSON 2: Madre de Dios! What did you do?

PERSON 1: I hid in the bushes and waited, praying, until she passed.

PERSON 2: Madre de Dios! Did she see you? Did she say anything to you?

PERSON 1: No! She just kept walking up and down the riverbank wailing the same miserable question over and over –

SHADOW I & PERSON 1: “...My children! Where are my children?!”

PERSON 2: Madre de Dios!

SHADOW I exits.

STORYTELLER: After a while, the people of the village stopped calling her Maria. Because of her unnerving, inconsolable crying for her children she became known as “La Llorona – The Weeping Woman”...

SHADOW I: (*offstage crying – scary and haunting*) “Mis niiiñoos! Donde están mis niñoos!”

STORYTELLER: As time passed, even more terrifying stories began to be told...

As this story is recounted upstage left, it is played out by SHADOW I (LA LLORONA) and her victim downstage right. [Depending on casting, CARLOS can be changed to Carlita, with pronouns changed accordingly.]

PERSON 3: Did you hear about Carlos?

PERSON 4: No, what happened?

PERSON 3: He was almost grabbed by La Llorona!

PERSON 4: The Weeping Woman?!

PERSON 3: Si! He was walking along the river last night when he suddenly heard La Llorona wailing for her children...

PERSON 2 (CARLOS) steps just onto the stage facing center.

SHADOW I: (*offstage*) “Mis niiiñoos! Donde están mis niñoos!”

PERSON 3: ...all of a sudden, he felt her hand on his shoulder!

SHADOW I/LA LLORONA's hand appears from offstage and grabs CARLOS' shoulder.

PERSON 4: What?! Why?!

PERSON 3: She thought he was her child, of course!

PERSON 4: Aye Dios Mio! What happened?

PERSON 3: Carlos turned and saw it was La Llorona. She saw that he wasn't one of her children and she was furious! She screamed:

CARLOS has turned to look, sees SHADOW I/LA LLORONA, still offstage, unseen by the audience, and starts to back away.

SHADOW 1: (we see only her hand, pointing accusingly at CARLOS)
YOU'RE NOT MY CHILD!!

CARLOS exits, running to the other side of the stage.

PERSON 3: Carlos ran as fast as he could, and all the while he could hear her screaming...

SHADOW 1/LA LLORONA enters.

SHADOW 1: My children! Where are my children!?

PERSON 3: ...he barely got away!

PERSON 3 and 4 exit the stage. During this last section, SHADOW 1/LA LLORONA moves to center stage in a dim and foreboding red light, her face hidden by a veil. She slowly moves downstage towards the audience.

STORYTELLER: So now, people are terrified to go anywhere near the river after dark. Many people tell stories of hearing La Llorona's dreadful weeping.

SHADOW 1: (softly crying – scary and haunting) “Mis niiiñooooos! Donde están mis niñooooos!”

STORYTELLER: Some people see her ghostly figure searching the riverbanks, and an unlucky few claim they felt her boney hand on their shoulder, but managed to run away just in time.

SHADOW 1: (angry – threatening) My children! Where are my children!?

SHADOW 1/LA LLORONA begins pacing back and forth across the edge of the stage.

STORYTELLER: But it is the children who should fear La Llorona the most. Because if La Llorona ever gets her hands on a child she will think she has found her son...

LA LLORONA sees someone in the audience, a boy, and stares at him.

SHADOW 1: Niño...? Son...?

STORYTELLER: ...But as soon as she realizes it is not her child she will fly into a rage...

SHADOW 1: ...YOU ARE NOT MY SON!!

SHADOW 1/LA LLORONA grows.

STORYTELLER: So beware. Be watchful. And be alert. And if you are ever near a river after dark, and you hear a woman's voice crying out...

SHADOW 1/LA LLORONA continues pacing back and forth, looking out into the audience. She should be desperate and terrifying.

LA LLORONA: My children! WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN!?

STORYTELLER: ...RUN!

SHADOW 1/LA LLORONA screams as the lights go to... BLACKOUT.

The lights shift back to an eerie blue wash and unsettling mood music plays softly in the background. The STORYTELLER moves away from the lectern and is again, a tired, broken figure. The SHADOWS make their way back onto the stage.

SHADOW 2: Well done....weeeeelll doonnnnnnee!

SHADOW 3: I can smell the fear in the aaaiirr...

SHADOW 4: I can see it on their faces...

SHADOW 5: I can feel it in their heartssss...

SHADOW 1: It feels dreadfullll...!

ALL SHADOWS: Well done....weeeeelll doonnnnnnee!

STORYTELLER: Am I done? Is it over? Can I go?

SHADOW 2: Overrr....???

All SHADOWS laugh a dangerous, taunting laugh.

SHADOW 3: Is it over it asksss...

SHADOW 4: Am I done it asksss...

SHADOW 5: Can I goooo it asks...

All SHADOWS laugh again.

SHADOW 1: We are just getting started, you dismal puppet... Who is next?

SHADOW 2: Me...! Make it talk. Make it tell my storyyy...

SHADOW 3: You heard them...

SHADOW 4: You will tell their storyyy...

SHADOW 5: You are cursed!

STORYTELLER: Alright! Alright.

The STORYTELLER cowers away from the SHADOWS and steps towards the light. The SHADOWS exit the stage leaving it empty. When the STORYTELLER gets into their light they are once again transformed.

STORYTELLER: This next story takes us to the island paradise that is Hawaii! Home of trade winds, flower leis and plenty of Aloha. What is Aloha, you ask? Why, it is the typical Hawaiian greeting and it conveys love, affection, peace and mercy. However, there are deeper meanings to Aloha as well. In fact, a famous Hawaiian queen is quoted as saying: "Aloha is to learn what is not said, to see what cannot be seen, and to know the unknowable." That is the Aloha of this story – the unsaid, the unseen and the unknowable. This is the Aloha that causes anxiety and chicken skin. This is the Hawaii that the travel guides don't dare tell you about. This is the story of The Night Marchers...

The Night Marchers

For this story, the couple pantomime the actions described by the STORYTELLER. Once they take their places center stage, they will remain there, planted in place, until the end. They should perform their actions in an exaggerated way, as if they are dolls being handled by a giant's hands. For the most part their lines should be said out to the audience in a stylized way unless noted otherwise. The expressions on their faces should also be large and exaggerated, almost to the point of being comical, at the start of the story. However, as the story progresses, their fear and terror should become more and more realistic and disturbing to the audience.

STORYTELLER: Our story begins with a young couple in love...

DERRICK and LONI enter and stand center facing the audience. They are holding hands, big, blank smiles on their faces.

One day they decided to get married!

DERRICK: (*turning to LONI*) Let's get married!

LONI: Yay!

DERRICK and LONI “kiss” – they turn towards each other and air kiss – then turn back out to the audience smiling still holding hands.

STORYTELLER: They planned a lovely wedding. And more importantly, a wonderful honeymoon...

LONI: Where should we go?

DERRICK: Albuquerque!

LONI: No...

DERRICK: Pasadena!

LONI: I don't think so.

DERRICK: _____.!! (*names a local location that would be completely inappropriate for a honeymoon trip*)

LONI: Silly Goose.

DERRICK: Well, where do you think we should go?

LONI: Hawaii!

DERRICK: Hawaii?!

LONI: Yes! I have always wanted to go there.

DERRICK: You have?

LONI: Yes!

DERRICK: Why?

LONI: It is very pretty. And I think I had family there.

DERRICK: Really?

LONI: A long, long time ago.

DERRICK: That's neat! Let's go to Hawaii!

LONI: Yay!

STORYTELLER: So Derrick and Loni had a lovely wedding...

DERRICK: I do!

LONI: I do too!

DERRICK and LONI air kiss again.

STORYTELLER: ...and flew off to Hawaii!

DERRICK and LONI produce leis and put them around each other's necks

They had the most wonderful time and saw the most amazing things. They saw the Diamond Head crater...

DERRICK and LONI, as tourists, turn and point stage left.

...Waikiki Beach...

DERRICK and LONI point stage right.

...and the famous North Shore!

DERRICK and LONI point out over the audience.

DERRICK: Cowabunga!

STORYTELLER: On their last day they decided to hike up to the Pali Lookout.

LONI: Yay!

STORYTELLER: This was their first mistake. Because there are some places in Hawaii that are not meant for tourists. They are kapu. Forbidden. But Derrick and Loni didn't know this, so they hiked up to the lookout...

DERRICK and LONI pantomime hiking and looking around – walking in place, shading their eyes, pointing to unseen things around them and ooo-ing and aah-ing at what they see.

STORYTELLER: Unfortunately, they lost track of time, and before they knew it the sun was going down and darkness was creeping in all around them.

The stage gets dark and spooky.

LONI: Oh, dear! It's getting dark.

DERRICK: And a little spooky.

STORYTELLER: This was their second mistake. They should have turned for home long before darkness fell. Because after dark... they come.

*A long note is blown on an Hawaiian conch shell.
DERRICK and LONI freeze.*

Sure enough, as the last ray of sunlight faded, the couple heard a sound in the distance...

A second long note from the conch shell is blown.

...and they began to see torch lights flickering through the forest.

DERRICK and LONI slowly look out over the heads of the audience into the distance. The conch shell is blown a third time and we begin to hear marching feet. The marching is quiet and distant at first, but gets louder as the scene goes on and the marchers get closer.

LONI: Derrick, what is that?

DERRICK: I don't know.

STORYTELLER: The torches and the marching came closer... and closer... until suddenly the young couple could start to see the figures holding the torches. Ghostly figures. The Night Marchers...

DERRICK and LONI stare over the audience wide-eyed and scared at the ghost army assembled in front of them. They are not comical anymore.

LONI: I'm scared, Derrick.

DERRICK: Stay next to me, Loni.

STORYTELLER: And before they could say another thing, they were surrounded...

Marching stops. DERRICK and LONI look around them in all directions. They are surrounded by a ghost army. DERRICK and LONI are cornered and scared.

STORYTELLER: ...surrounded by a ghost army of Hawaiian warriors. Hundreds of ancient warriors with gourd helmets and shark-toothed clubs. And scattered among their ranks were other soldiers. Soldiers from other wars. World War II soldiers with the number 442 on one arm and an emblem of a hand holding a

torch on the other. Soldiers with old woolen uniforms with red crosses on the sleeves. Derrick decided to speak...

DERRICK: Who are you? What do you want?

STORYTELLER: ...and this was the final mistake. The worst mistake. Because if you dare speak to the Night Marchers, it is the last mistake you will ever make. In that moment, all hell broke loose! But as Loni would describe it, years later, it's like everything happened in slow motion.

Lights shift to an ominous dark green wash. Action shifts to slow motion. Scary sounds or tense music starts.

First, from all directions the warriors advanced...

DERRICK and LONI react in slow motion to the unseen figures rushing towards them from the front. DERRICK puts up his fists to fight invisible attackers coming from the audience, and LONI covers her head and crouches down to protect herself.

...and two ghost soldiers from the Second World War reached the couple first.

Two SOLDIERS, dressed in WWII uniforms, attack in slow motion. Although moving in slow motion, the SOLDIERS should move in such a way that there is no doubt they are a mortal threat. When they reach the couple they restrain DERRICK and LONI.

Caught in their grasp, they knew there was no escape. The entire warrior army was almost upon them, clubs and spears at the ready...

DERRICK and LONI, still moving in slow motion, see their deaths coming from out over the audience and are powerless to stop it. DERRICK thrashes around in slow motion in an attempt to escape the grasp of his SOLDIER and LONI is silently screaming and crying.

...when suddenly from out of the ranks they heard:

SHADOW 2: (as WWII SOLDIER, from offstage) Na'u!!

Everything freezes. SHADOW 2, dressed in a WWII uniform emerges and slowly walks up to LONI. He looks at her for a beat...

Na'u. She's mine.

The SOLDIER holding LONI releases her and she slowly falls to her knees. SHADOW 2 looks at DERRICK, still frozen, and still being held, and says:

O-ia!

From offstage comes a loud shout of O-ia!! from the rest of the warrior army.

Let him be pierced.

The two SOLDIERS onstage each grab one of DERRICK's arms and drag him away, still in slow motion, kicking and screaming. The lights shift back to an eerie blue wash. LONI, still on her knees, looks at SHADOW 2/WWII SOLDIER.

LONI: Why? Why him? Why not me?

SHADOW 2: Pili koko. (*Hawaiian for "blood relative"*)

LONI: What? I don't understand.

SHADOW 2: (*points to LONI*) You are mine. My blood. My ohana. You are safe. (*points to where DERRICK was dragged off*) He is not... let him be pierced. (*he follows where DERRICK was dragged off and shouts one last time*) LET HIM BE PIERCED!

SHADOW 2/WWII SOLDIER walks off. LONI is left on her knees, head in her hands as the stage fades to black.

STORYTELLER: And with that, the soldiers continued on their never ending march. Derrick was never seen again, and Loni... well, Loni was never the same again. She never smiled again. She never married again. And she never, NEVER went back to Hawaii.

Lights fade to blackout.

The lights shift back to an eerie blue wash and unsettling mood music plays softly in the background. The STORYTELLER moves away from the lectern but seems more resolved to their fate. The SHADOWS make their way back onto the stage.

SHADOW 1: Can you sense it...?

SHADOW 2: Can you feeeel it...?

SHADOW 3: It grows stronger!

SHADOW 4: It comes neeaarreeerr!

SHADOW 5: Soon it will creep into their brains...

SHADOW 1: Soon it will take root in their dreams...

SHADOW 2: We are almost theerree...!

SHADOW 3: Quickly!

SHADOW 4: Bring the nightmare...

STORYTELLER: Nightmare?

ALL 5 SHADOWS: Bring the nightmaaaaaare...!

SHADOW 5: From across the world...

SHADOW 1: From the mists of time...

SHADOW 2: From the pits of despair...!

SHADOW 3: Cursed mortal... Tell my story! Bring me to them!

While the STORYTELLER makes their introduction, the stage shifts to a simple “bedroom.” However, the only furniture in the room is a “bed” that is downstage center with the head of the bed stage right. The bed is in a pool of light and the rest of the stage should be as dark as possible with the exception of the STORYTELLER in their own dim pool of light.

The “sleeper” is divided into two roles: BODY and MIND. BODY will be lying in the bed and MIND stands at the head of the bed facing the audience and narrates the thoughts of BODY while BODY is trapped. The NIGHT HAG is a large puppet that is controlled by one or two puppeteers and “voiced” by SHADOW 3. The NIGHT HAG should be played as an other-worldly evil presence.

STORYTELLER: (steps into the light and comes to life) Gather round, everyone! It's time for a bedtime story. It is a story that is told all around the world and goes by many different names: In Iceland it's called a Mara, in Swahili it's a Jinamizi, in Korea it's called Gawi Nulim, and in the good old USA, folks in the south refer to this experience as Riding the Witch. But today only, just for you, we are traveling to the Middle East to hear a Persian version of this worldwide nightmarish phenomenon. So pour yourself a glass of

warm milk, put on your softest PJ's, and curl up with your bravest teddy bear, because this story will literally take your breath away! This is *The Terror of the Night Hag*...

The Terror of the Night Hag

BODY and MIND enter. BODY climbs into bed and lies down flat with their face turned toward the audience. During the scene, BODY can move their head to look at the audience or the NIGHT HAG, but cannot move any part of their body while the NIGHT HAG is in place. MIND stands at the head of the bed, watching, commenting and experiencing what BODY endures throughout the scene. The STORYTELLER and MIND's dialogue should indicate that they are trying to work together to figure out how to save BODY. Both BODY and MIND should play the rising fear and panic felt throughout the scene.

BODY & MIND: (as BODY climbs into bed) Now I lay me down to sleep...

STORYTELLER: Into your bed a nightmare creeps.

BODY: For as I close my eyes to rest,

The NIGHT HAG appears and climbs onto BODY's chest facing BODY's head. The NIGHT HAG is a puppet that is physically manipulated by a puppeteer [or puppeteers] separate from SHADOW 3. The puppeteer manipulates the NIGHT HAG puppet to embody SHADOW 3's dialogue. SHADOW 3 stands at the foot of the bed and portrays the NIGHT HAG character, providing the "voice" of the NIGHT HAG puppet.

SHADOW 3: (as NIGHT HAG) A Night Hag climbs upon your chest.

The NIGHT HAG settles heavily onto BODY's chest. Once she is in place, the NIGHT HAG should be played with slow, deliberate movements, as if once she is on her perch, she will not leave until BODY is crushed.

MIND: I tell myself this can't be real!

BODY: But suddenly I cannot feel.
My limbs won't move and I'm aware –

SHADOW 3: Of beady eyes that only stare.

BODY: I stare at her –

SHADOW 3: and she stares back.

MIND: Her face is pale, her hair is black.

BODY: She wears a hat with a tattered veil,
Her withered hands have ragged nails.

SHADOW 3: She pulls the veil upon her face
(puppeteer pulls the veil down the puppet's 'face')
While firmly pinning you in place.

BODY: Her fussy shape prevents my breath.
And pushes downward towards my death.

MIND: From her no smile, frown or blinking...
There is no telling what she's thinking.

BODY: I only know my lungs compress
Beneath this vile nocturnal guest.

MIND: My frame is numb, there is no doubt.

BODY: I can not kick or thrash about.

MIND: In the dark, my mind starts racing,

BODY: I wonder what the hell I'm facing!

SHADOW 3: You can't escape, your body's useless –

STORYTELLER: – Your mind however, remains lucid!

BODY: And as my lungs begin to smother

MIND: I suddenly recall my mother...!
A story from her Persian youth
That I had long dismissed as truth.

SHADOW 3: About a hag that comes at night
And steals your breath in the pale moonlight.

MIND: Each night at bedtime came the story.
And though it's telling caused me worry –
I realize, though horrifying,
She told it to prevent me dying!

BODY: The story told was meant to teach
 And free me from this monsters' reach –
 – A sure escape from this deathbed!

MIND: What was it that my mother said?!

BODY: Horror growing. Vision fading...

MIND: Panic ever escalating!

BODY: Lungs on fire and brain beseeching...

MIND: I'm desperate for my mother's teaching!
(MOTHER appears in a pool of light)
 And in a flash comes my salvation...
 The means to vanquish this vexation!
 My mother said –

MOTHER: 'The hat's the key'

MIND: – To stop this beast from plaguing me.
 The moral of her bedtime fable:

MOTHER: 'Remove the hat and turn the table.
 But if from fear you hesitate
 You'll be abandoned to your fate'.

Light out on MOTHER.

MIND: "I have the key!" I want to shout
 "The means to cast this daeva out!"

STORYTELLER: But you must apply the lesson learned
 Before the point of no return...

BODY: The creature sits there motionless –

MIND: – A monument to loathsomeness.

SHADOW 3: She squints her eyes eager to see

BODY: My final breath escaping me...

MIND: I concentrate with all my might
 Knowing I must get this right.
 I focus hard on my left hand,
 And think the do-or-die command.

BODY: My hand jerks up across her face
 And loops around her veil lace.
 My left hand drops back to the bed

MIND: And pulls the hat from off her head!

SHADOW 3: Her eyes go wide and she is stunned!

MIND: She knows her curse has been undone!

SHADOW 3: With twisted face both vile and stark –

MIND: – She vanishes into the dark!

The NIGHT HAG puppet leaps off BODY, and both the puppet and SHADOW 3 exit. BODY sits bolt upright in bed, gasping for breath.

BODY: The weight is gone! I'm wide awake.
And with each gasping breath I take,

MIND: Two thoughts take hold inside my head –
Alternating hope and dread.
The first a quote by countless others:

MOTHER: (*appearing in her pool of light*) “Always listen to your mother.”

BODY: And as I lie here scared and pale,
I'm thankful for my mother's tale.

MOTHER smiles and nods and her light goes out.

MIND: But the next thought turns my blood to ice,

BODY: And grips my heart in an iron vice.

MIND: “I'm not safe yet” I think with fright...

STORYTELLER: ...“She'll be back tomorrow night”...

BODY and MIND look out to the audience, horrified, as the lights fade to black.

The lights shift to the eerie blue wash and the unsettling sounds begin again, perhaps a little louder and more ominous. The SHADOWS make their way back out to the stage as the bed is removed and the stage is emptied.

SHADOW 3: Yes! Yeeesssss! It has passed! I feeel them.

SHADOW 2: We are so close now!

SHADOW 1: Who is left?

SHADOW 4: Me! It is meee.

SHADOW 5: And me. There are two stories left...

SHADOW 4: Make it tell mine. I can wait no longer. It is time for my story...

SHADOW 5: Very well. It is fitting that my story will seal the fate of the accursed.

SHADOW 4: Tell my story you woeful vessel.

STORYTELLER: It's too much. If I could just rest for a moment...

SHADOW 4: TELL MY STORY!!

SHADOW 5: Desolate human, anger us no further...

STORYTELLER: ...please, no.

SHADOW 5: ...tell them the story, NOW!

The STORYTELLER moves back towards the lectern. The SHADOWS/crew rearrange the stage in preparation for the next story. When the STORYTELLER gets in the light, they are again transformed.

STORYTELLER: Our next story of doom and despair comes from Jolly Ol' England, where creatures of the night stalk their prey from out of the mist, and three happy-go-lucky siblings barely escape with their lives when their summer house turns out to be the hunting grounds for a ghoul... I give you *The Vampire of Croglin Grange*.

The Vampire of Croglin Grange

STORYTELLER: Our story begins in late spring, when the Chesterfield brothers, George and Daniel, and their delightful sister Emma managed to rent a charming Gothic estate for the entire summer.

Lights up on a different part of the stage where GEORGE, DANIEL, and EMMA enter, taking in their surroundings.

The Chesterfield siblings were looking forward to spending the season surrounded by bucolic bliss. Once they had a chance to explore the various rooms in the house, choices were made...

Lights out on the STORYTELLER.

GEORGE: I'll take this room on the left.

DANIEL: I claim the one next to it!

EMMA: Very well, I shall take the room across the hall. The one with the spectacular view of the gardens.

DANIEL: Wait, there are views of the garden? I claim that room!

EMMA: Oh no you don't! You've made your choice and now you have to live with it. No backsies!

DANIEL: No backsies?!

GEORGE: She has you there, Daniel! I haven't heard that phrase since we were children. Well played, Emma!

EMMA: Thank you.

DANIEL: Drat!

GEORGE: All right you two, enough of this frivolity – unpack your things and let's meet back in the kitchen for supper.

The three siblings exit to their "rooms." Lights up on the STORYTELLER.

STORYTELLER: So off they went to unpack and tidy up before supper. Little did they know this trivial choice would lead to horrifying consequences. But I am getting ahead of myself. For now, the siblings had a wonderful supper and proceeded to settle into their new surroundings. However, it wasn't very long before one of them became rather... unsettled.

Lights out on the STORYTELLER. Lights come up on a different part of the stage. The two brothers are sitting at breakfast with their coffee cups when EMMA enters looking tired and a little disheveled.

DANIEL: My, oh my! Look what the cat dragged in. Good morning, sleepyhead.

EMMA: Good morning. Is there still coffee?

GEORGE: (*pointing*) Right over there. Bad night?

EMMA: Something woke me up in the middle of the night.

GEORGE: Oh? And what was that?

EMMA: I don't know. Something at my window. Tapping.

DANIEL: Oh, I get that all the time from the tree outside my window. Any time the wind blows – tap – tap – tap – You'll get used to it.

EMMA: Yes, except there are no trees outside my window, remember.
I have a view of the gardens.

GEORGE: Interesting. A bird maybe? Or a mouse?

EMMA: Maybe. I don't know why a bird would be tapping on my
window in the middle of the night, however.

DANIEL: Perhaps it saw you eating biscuits in bed.

EMMA: Very funny, Daniel...

GEORGE: Well whatever it is, I'm sure it won't bother you again.

EMMA: I hope not. I can barely keep my eyes open this morning.

DANIEL: Get yourself some coffee and see if you can't wake up. We
need to plan out the day...

*Lights go down on the scene. Lights come up on the
STORYTELLER.*

STORYTELLER: But it did bother her again. In fact, it bothered her the
next three nights in a row. Finally, on the fourth night she decided
she would stay awake and see what the source of the tapping was.

*Lights to half on the STORYTELLER. Lights up on
EMMA, sitting on a chair. She is facing a "window"
that is covered by a curtain. The window should be
large enough for the VAMPIRE to easily enter the
space, like a floor-length window or French Door. The
window is facing the audience and the audience can
not see what is "outside" the window. Each time the
STORYTELLER says "Tap," we should hear a tap from
the window.*

STORYTELLER: Sure enough, just after midnight, Emma began to hear
a tap (*tap*), tap (*tap*), tapping (*tap*) on her window...

We hear a tapping behind the window curtain.

Slowly, Emma crossed to the window. Tap (*tap*). Tap (*tap*). Tap
(*tap*). She quietly reached for the curtains. Tap (*tap*). Tap (*tap*).
Tap (*tap*). She gathered her courage and with one swift motion
she drew (*tap*) the curtains (*tap*) ...OPEN!

*EMMA throws the curtains open and we see the
ghoulish face of a VAMPIRE played by SHADOW 4.*

STORYTELLER: Emma found herself face-to-face with a ghoulish white
face with dark eyes. She wanted to scream, but before she could

make a sound, she looked into his eyes and she felt a strange sensation suddenly wash over her. Her mind went blank, and she could barely feel her body. She felt like she was walking through a thick fog in a dream. After staring blankly for a moment, Emma asked, almost in a daze...

EMMA: Who are you? And why are you tapping on my window?

SHADOW 4: (as VAMPIRE) Let me in, Emma, and I will tell you.

EMMA: How do you know my name?

SHADOW 4: I know much more than your name, but it is difficult to talk with this window between us. Won't you open it? There is so much I want to tell you...

STORYTELLER: Moving as if she were in a trance, Emma had unlatched the window and opened it.

EMMA opens the window.

SHADOW 4: Aren't you going to ask me in, my dear?

EMMA: Inside? You want to come inside?

SHADOW 4: Very much so. But I cannot enter unless you invite me. It would be... rude.

EMMA: Of course. Where are my manners? Please, won't you come in?

SHADOW 4: Yes. Thank you. Would you be so kind as to help me? Please give me your hand...

STORYTELLER: As the creature stepped through the window, Emma reached out her hand, and as soon as she touched him, she knew she had made a terrible mistake. The hypnotic spell on her was broken and she was instantly aware of the extraordinary danger she was in. His hand was as cold as ice. And touching him turned her hand to ice as well. In fact, her entire body started to go cold as he smiled a murderous smile that revealed... not teeth, but fangs! Emma was paralyzed with terror as he slowly moved towards her neck. Her body was frozen. She couldn't fight, she couldn't run. She couldn't move at all... But she could scream...

EMMA screams.

...and her scream was enough to bring her brothers running!

GEORGE and DANIEL run on.

STORYTELLER: Her brothers burst into the room, and seeing their sister transfixed and terrified by the ghoulish figure, they leapt to her aid! But before they could lay their hands on the intruder, he turned into the night, and disappeared! One brother gave chase while the other helped Emma back to her chair...

DANIEL: Are you all right?

EMMA: I don't know. I think so. I feel faint.

DANIEL: Here, sit. Good lord! Your hand is as cold as ice!

EMMA: Is it? I wouldn't know. My arm has gone completely numb.

DANIEL: (*referring to the ghoul*) What was that?!

EMMA: That's what was tapping at my window...

DANIEL: Why didn't you call us?

EMMA: I thought I could handle it myself. I tried to speak to it...

DANIEL: What?! What were you thinking?

EMMA: I don't know. I know it seems foolish as we talk about it now, but in the moment it all made sense. Unfortunately, as soon as I looked into its eyes everything began to go... fuzzy. It was like I was falling under some kind of spell...

GEORGE returns.

DANIEL: Did you catch it?!

GEORGE: No. I chased it across the garden and into the churchyard, but it disappeared into the cemetery. I think it went into the crypts, but I couldn't get past the gates.

DANIEL: What do we do now?

GEORGE: What do we do?! I'll tell you what we do. We leave this house and we never come back!

DANIEL: But we've only just got here!

GEORGE: Yes, and look at what happened to Emma! She was hunted down and attacked by... by a...

DANIEL: By a what?!

EMMA: A vampire. That was a vampire.

The three are silent for a beat.



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