

Drama strategy		Teacher guidance and comments
<b>1</b>	<b>Story Part One</b> Still Image	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell them about the Hooky Man, Jack o' Lanterns, Bogles and Witches on giant cats. Ask them to individually make a still image for each. Then ask them to move around the space as a frightened villager walking across the fens at night. Each time you call out 'Hooky Man', 'Jack o' Lantern' or 'Witch' or 'Bogle', they become a still image of that creature, until you call, 'Walk on'.</li> </ul> <p><i>This helps the children become familiar with some fen creatures, in an embodied, memorable way.</i></p>
<b>2</b>	Small Group Play-making  Freeze Frame	<b>Groups of 4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some villagers had encountered these creatures on the fens. Ask them to devise a short group scene, for performance, presenting a villager's experience. The scenes need to start and end with a freeze-frame.</li> </ul> <p><i>This establishes some background incidents that are shared and gives some co-ownership of the drama to the children.</i></p>
<b>3</b>	Performance Carousel	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each group now performs in turn. As one group melts their closing image, the next group forms their opening image and so on until all groups have performed their scenes. This results in a whole class performance, comprised of several scenes.</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity requires them to pay attention to each other's work and provides them with scenes they have eye-witnessed and can then go on to recount during Activity 4.</i></p>
<b>4</b>	Teacher in Role	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain that you will now be in role as Moon and they will be in role as the stars. They need to tell Moon about the evil things they have seen and heard happening on the fens at night. They can talk about the incidents from the group scenes, (activity 3) but can also make up other incidents. The teacher in role needs to listen and ask questions, to get the class thinking more deeply and adding detail in role.</li> </ul> <p><i>The Teacher in Role requires the children to recount scenes that they have created or watched during the previous activity but also gives opportunity for further creative thinking because it enables the children to add new ideas too.</i></p>
<b>5</b>	Soundscape	<b>Whole class (divided into two halves)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Half the class (A) stand at the edge of the space. They are travellers at night. The other half (B) spread out and stand in individual spaces. The B group will talk and/or make fen and creature sounds, to frighten the travellers (A group with eyes closed), who are passing by. They should not touch the 'blind' travellers. You can just let a few children pass through at a time. Once group A have all crossed the fen space, then group B become the travellers and group A become the fen and evil creatures making sounds.</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity generates vocal and auditory stimuli, which can help the 'blind' passers-by to more vividly imagine and visualise the scene, in their mind's eye. It also is enabling interactivity and improvisation between groups A and B.</i></p>
<b>6</b>	<b>Story Part Two</b> Storytelling (using sound sequences)	<b>Groups of 4 to 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the groups to find a way of telling the next part of the story, using their voices, body percussion, available objects and maybe some musical instruments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moon lands on earth</li> <li>She walks and then her feet get stuck in roots and reeds</li> <li>She hears a lost man calling</li> <li>She throws back her hood and shines light</li> <li>Her hood falls and her light becomes hidden again</li> <li>The fen creatures quickly capture Moon</li> <li>They put her in a bog and place a boulder and heavy log on top of her</li> </ol> </li> <li>They need to rehearse their sound sequences for a performance to their peers.</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity requires the children to remember the story sequence and link it to a series of sounds. Afterwards, they could be asked to voice words instead of sounds (or words and sounds).</i></p>
<b>7</b>	Performance Carousel (‘blind’)	<b>Whole class and groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The class sit together on the floor, with their eyes closed. Each group in turn performs their sound sequence, positioning themselves around the 'blind' class.</li> <li>This could conclude with a whole class improvised 'blind' performance, maybe with the teacher telling this part of the story.</li> </ul> <p><i>They need to listen to the story carefully, so that they can make appropriate sounds at the right moments.</i></p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Story Part Three</b> Mime/Ritual	<b>Small groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The villagers (in household groups), carry out tasks and rituals each night, to keep them safe from the fen creatures. The creatures are getting closer every night.</li> <li>Ask them to devise and rehearse a group mime showing them carrying out their precautionary tasks and rituals that they do each night, before bedtime. Some nightly actions are mentioned in the legend, i.e. putting salt on their window-sills and straw crosses on their doorsteps. Invite them to create and mime other nightly actions too.</li> </ul> <p><i>This is interactively involving them in creating and enacting movements repeatedly and ritualistically.</i></p>
<b>9</b>	Eye-witness Freeze-Frame  Teacher as Storyteller	<b>Small groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain that you will now pass by each group scene in turn. When you stand near to a group, they will perform their ritualistic scene. Once you have passed by, they will 'freeze' the action but continue if you stand close to them again.</li> <li>You can remain silent as you pass by each group or you could improvise a commentary between scenes, storytelling what you have just witnessed, e.g. 'The villagers dreaded bedtime. Each night they ...'</li> </ul> <p><i>You could draw their attention to the connections that people have made throughout time, between repeated actions, superstitions and warding off the supernatural.</i></p>
<b>10</b>	Movement  Dance Drama  Performance Carousel	<b>Groups of 4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The villagers are frightened and have nightmares. Each group will now create a slow-motion nightmare about the ongoing situation. You decide whether they can use speech and make sounds or whether you want them to perform the nightmare silently. The nightmare could take some movements from activity 9 and exaggerate them and/or they could come up with other ideas.</li> <li>Tell them that the nightmare will be performed twice, seamlessly. You could provide background music, e.g. Atrium Carceri (Nightmare Music on YouTube).</li> <li>The groups' nightmares can then be seamlessly performed in turn, using a Performance Carousel.</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity is an opportunity for using more symbolic, rather than naturalistic movements. Because they will be repeating the nightmare seamlessly, they need to work on a seamless transition. If you use music during this activity, it helps blend the group performances into one whole class performance.</i></p>

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<b>11</b>	<b>Story Part Four</b> Rumours	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The villagers chatted with each other about their fears and problems. Ask them to move around the room as villagers in the street, stopping and chatting with each other from time to time, gathering and spreading gossip and rumours. You join in with this activity if you wish.</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity encourages them to empathise with fellow fen villagers and gives an opportunity for them to add their own ideas. They can elaborate on the known story, as long as their contributions fit with it.</i></p>
<b>12</b>	Eavesdropping	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freeze the 'Rumours' activity. Now explain that you will move around the frozen scene. When you are standing near villagers they should chat out loud but must freeze and become silent again, once you have passed by.</li> </ul> <p><i>This gives all the children the opportunity to share some of their 'in role' rumours, first with each other and then with the whole class listening. They are more likely to speak confidently in front of the class, when repeating what they have said already, to someone else.</i></p>
<b>13</b>	Teacher in Role  Improvisation	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are the Wise Woman. They come to your door knocking and you let them in and ask them to explain in detail why they have come. Then you build up dramatic tension, as you look deep in your cauldron, stare into your mirror and then slowly turn the pages of your book. End by telling them that you can't see where Moon is. Tell them to leave and come back if/when they can give you more information.</li> </ul> <p><i>Teacher in Role is being used here to gather information from the children in the form of a detailed, well sequenced verbal recount. It is also being used to help build an atmosphere of unease and tension amongst the villagers.</i></p>
<b>14</b>	<b>Story Part Five</b> Teacher in Role  Improvisation	<b>Small group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask for 4 to 6 volunteers to become a group, who will improvise a pub scene with you. Explain that they will be talking together about the ongoing problems with Moon missing and that the Wise Woman could not help them. You are a local from a neighbouring village standing at the bar and listening in. The rest of the class stand in a circle around the scene, listening in.</li> <li>The group chats for a while and then you go to them and say, 'I think I have just realised where Moon might be.' Then tell them about what happened to you, when you were lost in the dark on the fens and were saved by a sudden bright light. Welcome and answer their questions.</li> <li>Freeze the scene and then story-tell it to a close, for example, 'And so, the villagers decided that to go back to the Wise Woman again and tell her what the man had said'.</li> </ul> <p><i>Teacher in Role is being used here to give information and provoke questions, responses and action, that will move them towards the next episode, that is, revisiting the Wise Woman.</i></p>
<b>15</b>	<b>Story Part Six</b> Collective Role  Teacher in Role	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The class gather in role, as villagers. You stand before them as the Wise Woman. Explain first (out of role), that they are going to now recount to you in detail, what the man said about the sudden light that saved him, when he was lost on the fens. Tell them that each villager is only allowed to speak one sentence at a time and no villager may speak two consecutive sentences in a row. Collaboratively, they need to recount the whole incident to you, (one sentence and one person at a time).</li> <li>When they have finished, you (as the Wise Woman) tell them to stay still and silent. You then look into your cauldron, at your mirror and then at your book. Draw the scene to a close by giving them clear instructions about what they must do that night, (see Story Part Seven). Then tell them to leave.</li> </ul> <p><i>Teacher in Role is being used here, to require the children (as villagers), to give a collaborative recount and to build up the dramatic tension and provide information that moves them towards the next episode.</i></p>
<b>16</b>	Thought Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the villagers walk home from the Wise Woman's house, what are they each thinking? Ask them to walk around the room, speaking their 'in role' thoughts aloud to themselves, as they return home.</li> </ul> <p><i>This Thought Walk gives everyone the opportunity to speak their 'in role' thoughts aloud. Their spoken thoughts could then be shared with each other, (optional).</i></p>
<b>17</b>	<b>Story Part Seven</b> Conscience Alley	<b>Whole class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The class get into two straight lines facing each other. Villagers will pass between the lines. One line of voices will be persuading the villagers to keep walking across the marsh to try and find Moon. The other line are voices persuading them to give up, turn around and go back home.</li> <li>Let a few children at a time (as villagers) put imaginary stones in their mouths, pick up imaginary twigs, then close their eyes and walk 'blind' along the 'corridor of voices'. Each child in the lines, will speak only when a villager is closest to them. Those waiting can make some night sounds, to help build a spooky atmosphere.</li> </ul> <p><i>The use of Conscience Alley here enables the villagers' conflicting thoughts to be considered, voiced and shared. This activity is inclusive and offers all children the opportunity to engage physically, affectively, cognitively and verbally at a particularly tense moment within the story.</i></p>
<b>18</b>	Mime	<b>Class circle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain that the whole class will now silently improvise (as villagers), the following collaborative actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lifting the heavy oak log away</li> <li>rolling the heavy boulder aside</li> <li>staring at Moon's lovely face below them</li> <li>watching Moon rise up, high into the sky</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><i>This silent, whole class mime requires the children to pay close attention to each other's non-verbal signals and to respond promptly and collaboratively to them.</i></p>
<b>19</b>	<b>Story Part Eight</b> Eye-witness recount	<b>Pairs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain that years have passed. Now, an old villager, (one of those who set Moon free), is telling their grandchild about the time when Moon went missing and how they found Moon and set her free again. The story needs to end with a warning to the child, for example, 'If you ever do go out on the fens at night, you must take great care. The evil fen creatures are still there!'</li> <li>The pairs could either take it in turns to recount the whole story or else, you could ask them to pass the story back and forth between them, with the storyteller clapping to signal that they are now passing the story on to their partner, who will seamlessly continue telling it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Whole class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternatively, ask the class to sit in a circle and all become old villagers who helped free Moon. The story is passed around the circle, with each person telling the next bit of the story, when it is their turn. The active storyteller passes the story on to the next person by clapping.</li> </ul> <p><i>This is a way of getting the children as villagers, to recall and recount the whole story together at the end. This activity can be made more challenging by asking them to recount (and then maybe write), the whole story as if they are a different character or an object in the story, for example as Moon, or as of one of the evil creatures or the boulder or the stars looking down!</i></p>

## Practical Primary Drama *by Patrice Baldwin*

### *The Missing Moon – an East Anglian Legend*

Regional myths and legends are culturally significant stories that have been passed down through generations and are an important part of our heritage. Children need to be given opportunities to get to know and understand some of their regional stories. Most schools include Norse and Greek myths and legends in their curriculum but need to consider including some regional myths and legends too.

**D**rama brings stories alive and is a perfect medium for entering, exploring, and understanding any story together. Drama enables children to interactively create, engage with and explore, settings, characters and plots, in meaningful and memorable ways. It also provides rich opportunities for children to develop and practice and develop their individual and collaborative story-making and story-telling skills. Learning the 'old stories' can help give children a different and deeper understanding of local places and landscapes and help them become familiar with some folklore terminology. Drama also helps children to make personal and emotional connections, both with the fictional people within the stories and real people who lived in the past, and who also listened to and recounted these same stories.

The following Drama unit is based on the East Anglian legend of 'The Missing Moon' (also referred to sometimes as 'The Lost Moon' or 'The Dead Moon' or 'The Buried Moon'). It is set in the south Lincolnshire fens (before they were drained), and was probably told to children, to try and keep them away from the dangerous marshes and bogs. It first appeared in print, in Volume 2 of Mrs Balfour's *Legends of the Lincolnshire Cars* (1891) and she was first told the story by a child. It has since been rewritten, published and sometimes recorded, by great East Anglian writers and storytellers, such as Hugh Lupton and Kevin Crossley-Holland.

I live in Norfolk and am sometimes asked to deliver Drama training sessions and demonstration lessons, which are based around the East Anglian legends, for example, 'The Green Children of Woolpit', 'The Wild Man of Orford' and 'The Pedlar of Swaffham'. Between 2014 and 2017, I developed an East Anglian project called, 'Drama for Thought, Talk and Writing' and worked with various groups of schools in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk. Some of my sessions and lessons for this project were based on regional myths and legends because I want teachers and children to know, enjoy, remember and keep retelling, their region's 'old stories'.

I have written my own simple version of 'The Missing Moon', with the paragraphs cross-referenced within the Drama unit that follows.

### The Story

**Part One** The villagers avoided walking across the Fens at night. They knew there were evil creatures, lurking in and around the marshes, dykes and rivers. They crept and swept around in darkness, taunting, trapping and drowning travellers at night. The stars told the Moon about the Hooky Man who used his hooked stick to pull travellers down into the bubbling bogs. They told her about Jack-o-Lanterns (Will o' the Wisps), who carried flickering blue lanterns on their bent backs and tricked travellers into following their lights. They told her about the ghostly goblin-like Boggles and about the wicked Witches, swishing through the darkness on the backs of huge black cats. Moon decided to go down to earth and see these evil creatures for herself. She hid her beaming light under a black, hooded cloak, drifted silently to earth and stepped lightly onto a path, with only her glowing feet lighting the way.

**Part Two** Soon she tripped and her lovely feet became tangled in roots and reeds. She tried to pull herself free but the more she tugged, the more trapped she became. Suddenly, she heard the terrified cry of a man lost on the marshes. Kind Moon threw back her hood, to let her hair and face shine brightly through the darkness. The lost man could now see his homeward path. Exhausted Moon lowered her head, her hood fell forward again and covered her light. In a wicked scuffle and rush, the evil fen creatures leapt on her, grabbed, pushed and tugged at her, until they had her face down in a stinking, dark and bubbling bog. Cackling and cawing, hissing and hooting, they rolled a giant boulder on top of her and then a heavy oak log, before triumphantly screeching, howling, sliding, slithering and jumping away into the deep darkness. Only two flickering Jack-a-Lanterns stayed, keeping guard over their prisoner.

**Part Three** Night after dark night passed, and the villagers wondered where the Moon had gone. They loved Moon and needed her light. Ghastly and ghostly fen creatures crept closer to the village each night and the villagers had to keep their turf fires burning, lock and bolt their doors, put saucers of salt on their window-sills and place crossed straws on their doorsteps each night, to keep the fen creatures from getting inside their homes. The villagers were frightened and all slept badly now. Most had terrifying nightmares.

**Part Four** The villagers met together and decided they needed to go and talk with the Wise Woman and ask for her help. They knocked nervously on her windmill door. She knew why they had come and beckoned them inside. They asked her where Moon had gone, then watched and waited, as she looked deep into her cauldron, gazed long into her mirror and then slowly turned the pages of her sacred book. She then stared into their fearful eyes and said that she did not know where Moon was. She needed more information. Disappointed, they thanked her and left.

**Part Five** A few days later, some reed-cutters rowed to a village further upstream. They unloaded reed bundles from their boats and then went to the local inn for a well-earned drink. They were sitting, talking about the missing Moon and a man at the bar overheard their conversation. He rushed across and excitedly said, *I think I know where Moon is!* He told them about the night he was lost on the marshes and was saved suddenly and unexpectedly by a beautiful, silvery light. He now realised, that it might have been Moon that saved him.

**Part Six** So, the villagers went back to the Wise Woman and told her what the man in the inn had said. Again, she looked deep into her cauldron, her mirror and her book but this time she said, *You must go this night, to the marshes. Put round stones in your mouths, to remind you not to speak until you are safely home again. Carry hazel twigs in your hands and keep walking until you see a flickering candle, a coffin, and a cross. When you see these things, you will have found the place where Moon is hidden. I can say no more. Now go.*

**Part Seven** So, the men of the village met at dusk, put stones in their mouths and held hazel twigs in their hands. With trembling hands they set off together across the marshes, sometimes slipping and slithering in the darkness, hearing strange sounds and all the time, feeling the presence of evil nearby. At last, they saw a flickering blue light by a bog. It dimly lit a coffin shaped boulder. It had a log on top, that looked like a cross. They had found the place! Silently, they moved together, towards the water's edge, mouthing the Lord's Prayer as they went, first forwards then backwards, to keep evil away. Together they lifted the log, rolled away the boulder and for a glorious moment, they gazed on Moon's beautiful, shining face. She dazzled them with her light and beauty. Next moment, she was high above them, beaming down on them from the night sky and lighting their pathway home.

**Part Eight** And so, Moon was free and back in the sky again. She still lights the way for travellers crossing the fens at night. The fen creatures are still there, hiding and waiting, so if you ever do go out on the fens at night take great care!

### References

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Roberston, M. P. (2004) *The Moon in Swampland*. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books  
*The Buried Moon* (a recording) [online] Available at: <https://www.storynory.com/the-buried-moon/>

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