

Halloween Stories

Scary Stories about Haints, Ghosts and Things-That-Go-Bump-in-the-Night

Collected and adapted for telling by Chuck Larkin

Part 1 of 2

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Tail Een Po

The version I first heard was many years ago in my childhood. In the early '70s I heard a similar version in the Cookville area of Tennessee. Later I started telling this story as a jump story. I have no idea which images reflected in the story came from what I heard or what I created. After the popular published version involving an old man surfaced I had to readjust the front end set up in order to break the listeners free from the other variation during my telling of this version.

Two interesting information nuggets are the definitions of the words "Een" (Irish Gael) meaning "dear one" and "Po" as a spoken abbreviation includes "Point or tip". Tail een po perhaps once meant the end of my dear tail. I have been told by a folklorist that this version is a transition version between the older Irish form and the popular published version of the old man in the mountain cabin.

Today I'm going to share with you a true story. This occurred to a neighbor I knew. He rode the same school bus I rode. I lived on a farm out past the end of the school bus route on a dirt road and Augustine (we called him Aggie) lived on a farm near the Nassawango creek about three miles toward town, just before the paved road began.

Years later a writer apparently heard about what happened to Aggie and wrote a book with the story. But in the book he changed the names, kind of changed what really happened and changed Aggie into an old man. First time I heard the book version I thought it sounded like what happened to my neighbor Aggie. As you hear what really happened to Aggie and if you know the other story this might help you later to think of an experience you had and how to change your adventure to write a story.

When I was in the fifth grade when Aggie's story occurred it was about 1937 in the period of the great depression. Nobody on the farms in those days had any cash money. We were so poor our Dalmatian dog only had one spot. In fact our house was so small our dog had to wag his tail up and down to keep from hitting the walls. My Momma used to bring home the butcher's aprons to wash but first she boiled the aprons in a big pot to make soup. Our pockets were made out of rubber so we could carry soup to school for lunch. To make coffee Momma also used to boil our coffee grounds over and over again until the coffee grinds bleached out white. Then we would bag the white coffee grounds and ship them up to the Yankees and sell them for grits. That's why even today Yankees don't like grits.

I got my first pair of trouser pants when I went to the first grade. For shoes we painted our feet and laced up our toes. After sitting in the old time rough wooden chairs we would come home with holes in the seat of our pants. Momma would make us stand on our heads in order to sew

up our pants. That's why a lot of old men my age have bald heads. We wore off the hair getting our one pair of pants sewed up. Well let me tell Aggie's story.

Aggie lived in a log cabin. When people built a log cabin they started with one room about 16 feet by 16 feet. After they started living in the one room they would later build on additional rooms. Aggie's mom and dad slept on a homemade mattress back against the wall. Above their heads was a platform half way up the wall just big enough for Aggie's mattress with two poles holding the platform and a ladder to climb up and down. To the left of the bed was a fireplace and to the right was one window. Across from the beds was the front door.

This day Aggie was out in the garden chopping weeds with a big grubbing hoe. That's a long handle with a big flat steel head like a big number 7. As Aggie was swinging the hoe and digging up weeds he suddenly saw a whole head of cabbage disappear straight down into the ground. That surprised him because there were no varmints big enough to pull a whole head of cabbage under ground.

In those days all your food to eat was growing in the garden and Aggie knew he had a problem. When he saw another great big watermelon disappear under ground he raced over and started swinging that huge hoe at the spot. Whatever was in the dirt turned and was digging down faster than Aggie could dig. He made one more swing as hard as he could and hit something but he could hear a squeal going deeper into the ground.

When he cleared the dirt away from down in the big hole, he pulled out a bloody, muddy tip of a tail with no hair, about five inches long, pointed on the end and real thick and meaty where it was cut. Aggie carried it up to the pump. He was pumping up water to wash the tail tip off when the mailman came driving up. The mailman told the Sheriff this part of the story that Aggie told him. The mailman Bob Williams also told the Sheriff that there was no varmint that he'd ever seen with a tail like the one Aggie was washing off. That night he told his parents the rest of the story.

Aggie carried the tail in the house. His mom and dad had gone to town. His mom had a big pot of greens cooking in the fireplace. Aggie put the tail into the iron pot to cook with the greens and went back out into the garden to continue cutting out the weeds in the garden. He finished his chores about two hours later and washed up at the pump. After he went back into the cabin he could smell the cooked tail and that meat sure smelled good. His parents had not returned and Aggie had not eaten any meat for about nine days. The only meat the family ate was game they caught in traps and they had not caught any lately. Aggie fished the tail out of the simmering water, wrapped

it in a cloth because it was hot and carried it out behind the barn. He ate the whole tail and did not save any for his parents. He buried the bones in the ground.

It was late that night when Aggie woke up. Some noise had woke him, his parents and their three hound dogs. The dogs were growling and barking at the door. Aggie's daddy Orville got up and let the dogs out. They took off after something that had been in the yard. Orville closed the door and placed the locking bar down. Next he put a log on in the fireplace and stirred up the fire. Last he closed and locked down the big shutter over the window and went back to bed. Aggie and his folks listened to the dogs and they could hear them chasing something down into the Nassawanga swamp. Slowly their barks got fainter and fainter as they went deeper and deeper into the swamp.

Aggie up on his sleeping platform told his mom and dad what happened that day. His ma said that it was alright she didn't think she would have eaten meat from a varmint's tail that she didn't know. His paw said the same thing. After it got quiet they fell asleep.

The next time Aggie woke up the fire in the fire place had burned out. The inside of the cabin was dark, dark, dark. With the door and window shutters closed there was no light. Aggie wondered what woke him up and then way off in the distance he faintly heard what sounded like a voice. Slowly Aggie heard the voice coming a little closer and getting a little louder, a little closer a little louder until he realized something outside in the dark coming closer was whimpering

"Tail een po, tail een po where is my tail een po?"

Aggie thought "Oh oh time to get up, climb down and get in bed with my mommy and daddy. (Good time to ask someone in the front of the audience. Does that make sense to you? Respond appropriately and continue.) But when Aggie started to get up he found he was unable to move or speak. All he could do was wiggle his fingers and toes and roll his eyes. The voice came closer and louder

"Tail een po, tail een po where is my tail een po?"

By this time Aggie's mom and dad were awake and they told us later that they could hear this eerie voice moaning "Tail een po, tail een po where is my tail een po?" but they could not move or speak! Aggie thought "it's in the yard, that's a weird voice. I can feel goose bumps on my arms and down my back."

"Tail een po, tail een po where is my tail een po?"

Wham! Something hit the front door.

"Tail een po, tail een po where is my tail een po?"

Aggie thought "I ain't scarred. My daddy bolted the door, ain't nothing gone to get in."

"Tail een po, tail een po where is my tail een po?"

Then Aggie heard something big slowly dragging itself around the cabin toward the window now quietly whimpering

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

"I ain't scarred my daddy closed and bolted the shutters over the window, ain't nothing gone to get in."

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

Wham bam bam bam, it hit the window hard several times and still whispered with quiet fury

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

Now the thing was crawling slowly around the cabin until it reached the logs next to where Aggie's parents were frozen still. Aggie could hear it slowly creeping up the logs next to where he was sleeping. He could hear what sounded like claws sinking into the wood as the creature slowly crawled up over his head furiously whispering

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

"Well I ain't scarred my daddy put thick strong overlapped shingles of oak wood on the roof, ain't nothing can get through that roof."

The thing still whispered

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

Now Aggie could catch a small whiff of some distinct ghastly smell coming through tiny spaces between the logs.

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

Now it's on the roof and, and, and it's heading for the chimney. "I ain't scared. Nothing can get down that chimney well at least nothing that big." Then he heard this bizarre angry voice whispering and muttering

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

"Oh oh that sounds like something is sliding and sliming down inside the Chimney. It's in the fireplace."

"Tail een po, tail een po where's my tail een po?"

Well it can't get up here on this platform. It can't climb a ladder. I ain't scared!" But then he could hear what sounded like claws on the bottom rungs of the ladder and he could feel the platform shake a little bit as something slowly climbed up the ladder.

“Tail een po, tail een po where’s my tail een po?”

Aggie could feel a presence coming over the mattress at his feet.

“Tail een po, tail een po where’s my tail een po?”

Now it was right over his face. Aggie held his breath the stench was horrible. Then two little red beady eyes opened up right above his face and quietly whimpered

“Tail een po, tail een po” then screaming “have you got my tail een po?”

The next morning all Aggie’s parents found were his fingers and toes. After the thing ate the rest of Aggie it went over and unlocked the cabin door and left.

A week later the three hounds were found several miles away in the next county and brought home.

AND THAT’S A TRUE STORY

A Lighthouse Ghost

I collected this story from an English Storyteller from London

Once upon a time, a long time ago, a story was told about a postman who had to deliver mail to a lighthouse. The lighthouse in this strange story stood tall on a small island surrounded by the sea.

Once a year the ocean tide was so low that one could peddle a bicycle as fast as possible, across a low causeway to the lighthouse while the tide changed. The visitor had to spend the night and catch the next turning of the low tide 12 hours later exactly or spend the year at the lighthouse with the lighthouse keeper. Boats could not land at this lighthouse and food was transferred by a boatswain's rigging line from the supply boat to the lighthouse keeper.

This was an exciting day for the people of the village. When the postman arrived on his bicycle with all of the years mail. Which also included small packages of cookies and candy for the lighthouse keeper. All stored in a huge bag on his back and a second huge bag in the basket sitting on the front wheel of his bicycle.

Everybody watched the sea and when the tide touched the "get ready marker" the whole village started counting down "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1" and the postman started pedaling his bicycle out between the waves as fast as he could. Just as he reached the island the waves came crashing in over the causeway.

The postman next slowly climbed up the 234 circular lighthouse stairs to the top where the lighthouse keeper lived.

It was a comfortable home with two guest bedrooms. The lighthouse keeper gave the postman a nice supper and after a short visit the postman exhausted after his bicycle ride and climbing 234 stairs went to one of the guest rooms and fell asleep.

That night the postman heard a bloodcurdling scream. He sat up in bed but in the darkness he could see nothing so he stayed in bed under his covers. The next morning the postman had to run down the stairs in order to catch the changing of the tide but he did take a quick look into the second guest room.

The window was broken, the bed was turned around and pushed across the room against the opposite wall, a chair was turned over and a rope hung down from the ceiling dripping smelly oozing dark stuff from the tip onto the floor. He did not see the lighthouse keeper. He grabbed

his bicycle and pedaled as fast as he could back over the causeway.

All year he wondered about what he heard and was the lighthouse keeper still there? The next year the postman returned with his bags of mail.

(Repeat the above scenario *****)

Exhausted the postman climbed round and round up the stairs up to the top of the lighthouse. And there was the lighthouse keeper! "What happened to you? Are you OK? What was that awful scream I heard in the other guest bedroom?"

"I'm fine postman but let's not talk now, let me finish cooking and we will eat."

The tired postman ate his supper, sat down in one of the stuffed chairs and while asking the lighthouse keeper about the scream he fell asleep.

That night he again heard the same blood curdling scream and the next morning as he raced down the stairs he again looked into the guest bedroom and saw (repeat the first description). He did not see the lighthouse keeper as he raced down the 234 steps and raced his bicycle back across the causeway before the waves crashed over. All year he wondered about what he had heard and seen.

The next year the postman returned with his bags of mail.

(Repeat the above scenario *****)

Exhausted he climbed to the top of the lighthouse and again found the lighthouse keeper fixing their supper.

"Please you have to tell me what that scream was I have heard it twice and the guest room was all torn up." (repeat the description)

"Postman I will tell you if you give me your word that you will tell no one!"

The postman gave his word and the lighthouse keeper told him the story.

After supper that night he again heard the terrible scream and as he raced down the next morning he took a quick look into the second guest room and again the (repeat the description). He leaped on his bicycle and madly pedaled as fast as he could back across the causeway.

People in the village asked him if he found out what was the screaming and torn up room and he nodded, yes he did, but as far as I know he never broke his word and told anybody.

AND THAT'S A TRUE STORY.

Soldier Jack

Jack had been in the Army for nine years and one day Jack said to himself "Jack! Jack! I'm tired of being a soldier!" So Jack went to his sergeant and said, "Sergeant I'm tired of being a soldier I want to get out of the army!"

"OK Jack we'll let you out tomorrow."

The next day the army gave Jack a brand new set of clothes and a pair of galluses to hold up his britches. (AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) do you know what suspenders are? Well the old word is galluses! Say that word. Galluses. Some people call them "braces" some call them "suspenders" but the old word when they are buttoned on your britches is galluses!

So Jack now had a brand new suit of clothes and the Sergeant said, "Here Jack take these two loaves of bread!"

"Sergeant, I don't want to carry no loaves of bread! I been a soldier for nine years and I'm tired of carrying things!"

"Jack it's the rules take these two loaves of bread!"

"Yes sir Sergeant."

(AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) Jack saluted the sergeant. This is the old way of saluting. Make your hand do a circle up to your head and a circle coming back down. Try that! OK, back to the story.

Jack took the two loaves of bread and put them up under his arm pits to carry them. Jack left the army and started walking down the road. He didn't know where he was going. Jack's Momma and daddy had died while he was in the army.

Jack had two brothers living over in Blue Ridge, Georgia but Jack didn't think much of his brothers and Jack's brothers didn't care much for him either. Jack thought he'd just walk down the road until he found a town he liked and just live there. That makes sense doesn't it? Well it makes sense to me!

Jack was walking along and it was a warm fall day. Sweat was running down his face like water down a hill. As Jack came around a bend in the road he saw an old man standing at a cross road up in front of him. A cross road is where two dirt roads cross each other up in the mountains.

As Jack was passing he tipped his hat and said, "Howdy mister. How are you?"

"Oh I ain't too good Jack"

"You know my name?"

"Oh yes Jack everybody knows you."

"Well you can see from my new clothes I just got out of the army today, but what's wrong with you?"

"Jack, I haven't had any thing to eat in three days. Could I have a bite of one of them loaves of bread?"

"Here Mister take the whole loaf. I'm tired of carrying it. Besides it's only getting sweaty here under my arm."

"Why thank you Jack. Here I got something for you."

"Mister, I don't want anything. I'll just have to carry it."

"Oh I'll think you might like this Jack." The old man unwrapped a string from around his galluses button and handed Jack a sack.

Jack looked at it and said, "thank you mister that's a nice looking sack. Is it used for anything?"

"Oh yes, Jack! That's a magic sack. You aim it at anything you want and slap it on the side three times and say, wackity whack whack jump into my sack. What ever you aimed it at will jump into your sack."

"Oh wow, mister. A magic sack like that can be real useful. Thank you very much."

Jack wrapped the sack's string around his galluses button and started on walking down the road. That afternoon Jack came around another bend in the road and there in front of him was another cross road and another old man sitting on a stump.

As Jack walked by he tipped his hat and said, "Howdy, mister. How are you doing today?"

"Howdy to you Jack."

"You know my name too. Well you can see from my new clothes I just got out of the army today and I'm walking down this road until I find me a town I like and I'm going to live there."

"Oh ain't that nice Jack. Say Jack! I ain't had nothing to eat today could I have bite from that loaf of bread?"

"Sure mister, take the whole loaf I'm tired of carrying it."

"Well thank you, Jack. Here I got something in my pocket for you." The old man pulled out and handed Jack a great big chunk of crystal glass.

Jack took it. Held it up and looked at it. "My that's a fine chunk of crystal glass mister. What do you use it for?"

"Jack, you soak that crystal in cool spring water and look through it and if the death angel is any where around you can see the death ang--."

"I don't want to see no death angel!"

"You never know when it may come in handy Jack."

"Yep! That's true mister and I appreciate the gift."

Jack kept walking down the road. Just about dark Jack came to a small town. Near the edge of town was Mrs. Murphy's boarding house. Back in the old days they didn't have motels and hotels. Traveling people stayed in boarding houses something like the Bed and Breakfast houses they have today. Jack went up and knocked on Mrs. Murphy's boarding house door.

(AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) Here is how you pretend to knock on a door when you are telling a story. Pretend the door is right in front of you. Make a fist and bounce it off the pretend door. Don't let your hand go through the door! Now make a popping sound by pulling your tongue down from the top of your mouth while you are knocking.

OK now Jack knocked on the door and Mrs. Murphy opened the door.

(AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) This is how you open the door on stage. Put your hand across your chest and move it across like a door opening and make a squeaking sound like a squeaky door.

Mrs. Murphy opened the door. "Why hello Jack. How are you."

"I'm fine Mrs. Murphy and you know my name?"

"Why yes, Jack. Everybody knows you."

"Well, Mrs. Murphy, you can see from my new clothes I just got out of the army this morning and I am looking for a place to sleep and something to eat."

"Do you have any money Jack?"

"Ah, no ma'am. The army just gave me this new suit of clothes and two loaves of bread which I have done given away."

"Well, I'm sorry, Jack, but you need money to stay in a boarding house."

"Thank you Mrs. Murphy I didn't know, I am sorry to disturb you ma'am."

Jack turned away and went back to the edge of town where there was a great big Oak tree. Jack pulled some leaves together for a bed and sat down. "I sure wish I had kept a piece of that bread for my supper. Oh, oh what's that noise up in the tree. Well look at all those wild turkeys roosting up in that tree. I wonder if I can catch me one."

Jack unwrapped that string from his gullus button, aimed the sack, hit it and said, "Wackity wack wack jump

Into my sack!" (while slapping your hands together) All nine of those wild turkeys jumped into Jack's sack. He closed them up in the sack and returned to Mrs. Murphy's boarding house.

Jack knocked on the door. (AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) Do it with me. Knock, knock, knock. Mrs. Murphy came and answered the door. Hand across your chest. Errrrrrrrrrrk.

"Jack, are you back here again?"

"Yes maim, but I'm here on business. Would you like to buy some turkeys?"

"Why yes I would. I need a bunch of turkeys to get ready for thanksgiving."

"I've got about nine fat wild ones here, Mrs. Murphy, in my sack." Jack handed the sack to

Mrs. Murphy. "But bring me my sack back!"

"I will, I will, Jack and I'll pay you nine dollars for the nine turkeys."

That's how you know that this is an old story. Nine dollars in those days is equal to a hundred dollars today. Jack had enough money to have a place to sleep eat some supper and breakfast the next morning.

Jack the next day decided he'd take a look at this town. He crossed the creek at the bridge, over to the east side and walked through some trees and stopped and looked at this huge white house on the top of a hill with large columns in the front.

"Oh wow" said Jack.

There was a man leaning nearby on a fence. "Hey Mister, that big house there. Is that where rich people live? I've never seen a house that big where I come from."

"Nope, Jack, nobody lives in that house Jack."

"You know my name too?"

"Everybody knows your name, Jack."

"If nobody lives in that house do you think I could buy or rent that house? Oh! I sure would like to live in a big house like that!"

"No! You can't buy or rent that house Jack. That's my house Jack but I could give you that house."

"You would give me that house? What do I have to do to get you to give me that house?"

"If you will sleep in that house tonight, I will give you that house tomorrow."

"Is that all! Well I'll sleep in that house tonight, but first I'm going to Mrs. Murphy's boarding house and fetch me a paper sack supper and. Hold on here. What's wrong with that house?"

“Jack that house is filled with nine ugly green haints.”

Do you all know the difference between ghosts and haints? Well the words ghosts and haints almost mean the same thing. The difference is some ghost stories are real and some ghost stories are made up but haint stories are always real.

Jack said, “Haints, I ain’t scared of haints. You can see from my new suit of clothes I been soldering for nine years I ain’t scared of no haints. I’m going to Mrs. Murphy and get me some supper and a sleeping quilt and I’m going to sleep in that house tonight.”

“Well Jack, you better plan to eat that supper by eleven o’clock and if you are going to sleep you better do that before midnight because at midnight them haints are going to eat you up.”

“I ain’t scared . They ain’t going to eat me up, I’ll see you in the morning.”

Jack went to Mrs. Murphy boarding house and got some supper and a sleeping quilt and went up to that house. He carried a bunch of firewood in and stacked it by the fireplace. Next Jack built a fire in the fireplace and pulled up a big rocking chair. Jack sat down in a serious relax in the rocking chair and began to eat his supper.

After supper Jack just continued rocking and dozing right down to midnight. Then Jack heard down in the basement. Roorooroorooroorooroooo. “Oh wow it sure gets noisy down in the cellar.”

Then Jack heard up in the attic. Yower yower yower yower. “It sure gets noisy up in the attic too.”

Whoopbang! There was a clap in front of Jack. When he looked down there was a green ball. Pop out come a head. Pop, pop, pop, pop out came two green arms and two green legs with long green nails looking like claws.

Next popped open two red beady eyes, a long thin dripping nose, a big mouth with long green teeth dripping red stuff. Two long green ears and two little horns. That thing was so ugly it looked like it’s neck had barfed.

“We going to eat you up.”

“You don’t scare me! I’ve been soldering for nine years I ain’t scarred of you!”

“We don’t care if you are scarred or not we going to eat you up.”

Just then Jack heard this slobbering air sucking in and out right behind him. Hikkk hikkk hikkk hikkk hikkk.

Jack looked behind him and there were eight more green haints, uglier then the one in front of him.

“You sure make a lot of disgusting noise but you don’t scare me.”

“We going to eat you, Jack, we don’t care if you are scarred.”

“Hold on fellows, Jack, can you play cards?”

“Of course I can play cards. I told you I been a soldier for nine years.”

“Hey fellows, lets not eat Jack now let’s eat him later after we play cards.”

The nine haint’s went over and sat down on one side of a long dinning room table. Jack sat down on the other side. The haints stuck their fingers out in front of them and wiggled their fingers. Gold and silver nuggets fell out of their fingers on the table.

Jack looked at all that money and said, “Hey, if were going to bet money I ain’t got no money to bet with.”

All the haints reached in front of Jack and wiggled their fingers until Jack had a huge pile of nuggets. They dealt the cards.

Jack won the first hand then the haints won a hand.

(AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - START FAST AND SLOW DOWN BORED)

Jack won a hand, then who? The haints won a hand.

Then Jack, then the haints. Then Jack, then the haints.

Then Jack, then the haints.

Then Jack, then the haints.

(SLOW) Then Jack, then the haints. Then Jack, then the haints. Then Jack, then the haints.

“I’m getting board let’s eat him now.”

Jack leaned back and unwrapped the string from around his galluses button aimed his sack and said, “Wackity whack, whack jump into my sack. All nine haints jumped in his sack.

Jack set the sack over by the front door then laid down and went to sleep. The next morning Jack opened the front door, (AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) hand across your chest “Errrrrrrrrrriik”. The man was standing outside. He looked surprised at Jack.

“Jack you are still alive? What happened to them haints?”

“There right here in this sack. Here take the sack to the creek and dump them in the deepest part. But bring me my sack back!”

“I will I will Jack and the house is yours.”

Jack went back in the house. He hid some of the gold and silver nuggets in the attic, hid some in the basement, hid some behind the walls, hid some under his bed and filled up his pockets. Jack was a rich man. But Jack still hadn't seen the rest of the town yet. Had he?

Jack went out the front door turned left and started walking. As he passed through some trees there on the next farm was the King's house. Sitting on the front porch was the King's daughter the Princess. She was about 18 years old. Jack looked at the Princess. The Princess looked at Jack. Jack and the Princess both flat out fell in love!

Now you know how it is today. I can ask that (Lady or Gentleman) over their. Would you leave your family, marry me and live in my home town? They may say yes or no but either way I can ask. Not in the old days. All Jack could do was to walk by the King's house tip his hat and call out, "how do Princess how do, how do!"

In the old days young women sitting on the front porch carried a fan. There is a fan language. When the Princess looked at Jack she started beating that fan as fast as she could. That meant, "I love you Jack."

Every day, three times a day for three months, Jack would walk by tip his hat and holler, "How do Princess, how do, how do," and the Princess would fan back fast and holler, "How do Jack, how do, how do."

Finally after the three months were up Jack could go to the King's house but before he could talk to the Princess he first had to talk to the King. When Jack arrived at the King's house the Princess wasn't on the front porch. Jack knocked on the King's door. (AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) Do it with me. "Knock, knock, knock."

The King came and answered the door. Open the door with me. "Errrrrrrrriik."

The King was weeping and crying and said, "hello Jack boo hoo, boo hoo. How are you, Jack."

"What's the matter King?"

"Oh Jack the doctor just left. Boo hoo, the Princess is sick and dying and the doctor says there is nothing I can do. Boo hoo."

"King I don't know what to say. I came down here to ask you if I could marry the Princess."

"Jack I wish you could marry my daughter the Princess. Boo hoo, you have that fine suit of clothes, boo hoo, you were a soldier for nine years, and boo hoo Jack you are so rich, boo hoo I wish you could marry the Princess."

"King, could I go say goodbye to the Princess before she does die?"

"Yes, Jack. Come on."

The King walked Jack back to the Princess's room and when Jack walked into the room he could tell she was about to go. Jack looked around the room and saw a pitcher of cool spring water on the bed side table. Jack reached into his pocket and pulled out his chunk of crystal and soaked it in the water. Jack held the wet crystal up to his eye and started to look around the room. There, there behind the Princess's bed getting ready to reach down and get hold of the Princess was the death angel. Jack lined him up, put the crystal in his pocket, unwrapped the string from around his galluses button, lined up the sack and said, "Wackity whack, whack jump into my sack."

The death angel jumped into the sack. Jack carried the sack out into the woods and climbed a big Oak tree and stuck the sack into a fork in the high branches. By the time Jack climbed down and went back to the King's house the Princess was sitting up in bed and feeling good.

Three weeks later Jack and the Princess got married. And they lived for a long time. (AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION) I mean they lived for a long, long time. How long? A long, long, long time. How long? A long, long, long time. How long? A long, long, long time.

Jack got so old that he was walking down the road one day dragging his nose in the dirt.

True fact. A teenager named John Deer saw Jack walking by dragging his nose and cutting a furrow in the dirt. He went home and invented the first plough.

As Jack was walking along he met a man who was so old, he was dragging his nose, chin and both ears. Jack said, "Mister how old are you?"

"Why, Jack, I'm over 700 years old."

"Seven hundred years old then I must be over 600 years. How did we get so old?"

"Jack, I heard some fool caught up the death angel and we can't pass over. All we do is get older and more miserable and walk closer to the ground. Ain't it awful!"

Jack remembered he was the one that had caught up the death angel. He turned around and spent three days walking one block back to the King's house. Jack got his shotgun and some shells and went out into the woods until he found the Oak tree. He sat down and started shooting at the sack. About the fifth shot he cut the sack string and the death angel flew out.

Of course Jack was the first one he got. And that's a true story. Well that's the way I heard it anyhow. Jack was one of my kin and I still got that crystal rock at home.

Mary Culhaine

A few years back a school board religious fuss over this story resulted in a need for a script. I found that both the Folk Tellers and Carol Birch had a manuscript version available from National Storytelling Association (NSA) on audio cassettes based on a published version from the early '70s.

One will note that the dialogue between the characters returning to the grave yard in the published version is in an illogical reverse order. Logically the Cadaver asks the questions and Mary answers. I have included the Bible with holy water in order to upgrade to southern USA culture (our Bible thumping kids do not know "Holy Water"). The substitution of dirty water in some variations also is not logical.

Manuscript variants can be found titled "Mary Culhane and the Dead Man" in The Goblins Giggle, by Molly Bang and "The Blood Drawing Ghost" in Robert D. San Souci's collection "Even More Short and Shivery." I have also listened to a version told by a storyteller from Belfast, Ireland and this old Irish legend has many variations as the story involved teenagers and was quite different.

Jim Culhaine was walking home during the long shadows of the late afternoon. He was swinging his blackthorn walking stick, feeling good. Jim had been drinking with his friends and was a bit late for supper. He decided to take a short cut through the cemetery. Just as he was about to step over the wall to the woods path he noticed a fresh opened grave! "Ah, now that's a bit strange I wonder why the new grave? No one in Carlisle has died or I would have heard about the wake." As Jim stood there thinking he heard a strange groaning sound from the open grave. The noise startled him! He gave a jump, dropped his blackthorn walking stick, turned and leaped over the wall. Jim being a bit skittish quickly went through the woods path and the streets to his house.

The family was already seated at the dinner table. As Jim sat down he said, "ah, I dropped my walking stick!" His daughter Mary Culhaine, who was about 18 years old at the time said, "Daddy where did you drop it?" "I remember something startled me as I was crossing the graveyard and I dropped it just inside of the wall by the woods path. I'll fetch it in the morning." "Daddy I'll fetch it for you now." Before any body could stop her Mary was up and running out the door. She ran down the street through the woods path and hopped over the wall. It was now dusk. In the darkness she could still see the long slender black walking stick in the grass.

As Mary was bending over to pick up the stick when she heard. "Mary, Mary Culhaine, come over here and help

me out of this grave." Mary started to turn and head for the wall but she found she could not move. A force held her and she found herself standing and turning. Slowly, struggling she was being forced to walk toward a gaping hole of an open grave which looked like a deeper blackness on the dark ground. "Mary reach down here and help me up out of this grave." Mary found herself kneeling down on the side of the grave and then her hand on its' own began to reach down into the darkness. Something cold and clammy grabbed hold of her hand and began pulling itself up out of the grave. The creature next climbed onto her back, wrapped its' arms around her neck and legs around her waist. "All right Mary stand up and take me into the town." Mary found herself slowly standing and with the creature holding and ridding her piggy back turned and crossed the graveyard wall.

Mary left the woods path and started walking down the street. As she was passing the first house the creature said, "Mary stop here." "Sniff, sniff, sniff. Keep going to the next house Mary." Mary found herself being stopped at each house while the creature sniffed the air. When they reached the corner the creature lifted one arm and pointed. "Mary turn that way." In the moonlight Mary could see the outstretched arm. She could see where the flesh had rotted off the bones and parts of the creature's skeleton were visible, plus it smelt pretty bad! "What is it you are smelling for?" "Mary I am smelling each house looking for a house without any holy water or Bibles in it. Keep moving. Stop here, sniff, sniff, sniff. Now the next house."

House after house they stopped and the creature, an old dead cadaver sniffed the air. Finally the creature said, "ah Mary here is a house with no holy water or Bibles. We will go in here." Mary looked up at the house in the moonlight and recognized the Finnagin home. She knew that there were three teenage boys upstairs sleeping in the front bedroom and there parents were sleeping in the upstairs back bedroom. "I don't want to go in their home, we will wake them up!" "No one wakes up Mary when we go into their homes. Now do it." Mary tried to resist but the creatures power was too strong and they entered the house. "Take me into the kitchen Mary."

When they reached the kitchen the cadaver slipped off Mary's back and sat on a chair by the kitchen table. "Mary fix me two bowls of oatmeal." Mary went over to the old wood stove and opened it up. She placed some kindling wood on the banked coals and blew softly to restart the fire. Next she placed in some firewood and closed the stove. Mary opened the cupboard and found the oatmeal. She pored water into a pot, placed the pot on the stove and stirred in the oatmeal. "Mary pick up that bowl and come

over here.” The creature again climbed piggy back on Mary. “Now Mary go upstairs and into the bathroom. Pick up that razor and go into the boy’s room.” “I don’t want to go into the boy’s room!” “Do what I say!”

As Mary was forced to turn to walk into the boy’s room the door opened slowly in front of her. “Mary take the razor and cut that boy’s finger and catch the blood in the bowl.” “I don’t want to do that!” “Do it!” Mary had no control over her body and as her hand reached down with the razor and cut the tip of the boy’s finger, her other hand with the bowl caught the blood. Not much blood came from the boy’s finger. Less than an ounce when the boy’s finger stopped bleeding and the boy stopped breathing. “Now Mary get some blood from each of the other boys.” Mary noticed when she was done that all three boys had stopped breathing. “Mary put the razor back into the bathroom and then go back into the kitchen. When they got back into the kitchen the creature again slipped off of Mary’s back into the chair. “Mary mix the blood into the oatmeal and serve it to me in two bowls.” Mary stirred the blood into the cooked oatmeal and pored it into two bowl and placed the bowls and a spoon before the creature.

The creature pushed one bowl across the table, “you eat that bowl Mary.” “I don’t want to eat any bloody oatmeal” “Do it. Mary’s hand picked up another spoon, sat down and her hand dipped the spoon into the bloody oatmeal and started moving the spoon toward her mouth. Mary struggled as hard as she could and just as the spoon reached her chin she was able to turn her shaking hand over and spilled the oatmeal into her neck kerchief. She looked at the creature but it was looking down at its’ own bowl. Mary was able to finish first and drop each spoonful into her kerchief without being caught. “All right Mary clean up everything so nobody knows we were in this house.” Mary cleaned the bowls, spoons and the pot and banked the fire. As she was returning things to the cupboard she was able to slip the kerchief off from around her head and hide it behind a stack of dishes without being seen. “I’m done.” “Then let’s leave now.”

The creature again climbed on Mary’s back and they went out the front door. “Are those boy’s dead?” “They might as well be Mary only some of that bloody oatmeal on their lips would bring them back to life again. He, he, he we ate it all. Say Mary do you see that pile of rocks over there in that empty field?” “Yes,” “What do you call that field Mary?” “We call that the haunted field no one goes in that field.” “Oh that is funny Mary, he, he, he that field is not haunted Mary we just got people thinking that. We keep our gold and silver in that field under those rocks.” “Why did you tell me that I don’t want to know that?” “Because you are going back into the grave with me Mary and live under the

ground.” “I don’t want to do that!” “You’re going to Mary.” URRACH “What was that sound Mary?” “I don’t know it sounded like a baby lamb bleating for its’ mother.” “Well, lets hurry to the graveyard Mary.” As they were walking through the graveyard again they heard URRACH. “What was that Mary?” “Well, it sounded like an old hoot owl.” “Hurry Mary into the graveyard. Stop resisting me!” Mary did all she could to keep from moving forward but the creatures power was too much. She stepped across the stone wall and tried everything she could to keep away from that open grave. She found herself kneeling down on her hands and knees as the creature slid off her body into the grave. The suddenly again the sound UR UR UR URACH. “Mary you lied to me those sounds were the rooster crowing. You lied to me, get down here in this grave.” But Mary knew that when the Rooster crows for the third time the first beam of morning sunlight was rushing over the trees and hit the graveyard. Immediately the creatures power started to drop off of her. Mary held on until she was able to break free and roll over away from the grave. She picked up her daddy’s walking stick and ran home. Mary placed the blackthorn walking stick by the front door and went up to bed.

About ten o’clock Mary’s mother woke her up. “Mary I’ve terrible news. The Finnagin boys have died in their sleep and we are having the wake.” “Momma I’ve been up all night I’ll be over later.” Mary got up about two in the afternoon and went over to the Finnagin’s home. When the Irish die they have a party we call a wake. People do cry but they are the Keeners not everybody. In fact Father Kelly was doing his magic tricks when Mary arrived.

Mary went up to Mrs. Finnagin. “Ah Ms. Finnagin I’m sad for your loss but may I ask you a question?” “Sure you can Mary, what can I do for you?” “Ms. Finnagin don’t you own that old piece of rocky land they call the haunted field?” “Yes, I do Mary why do you ask about that now at the wake?” “Well, Ms. Finnagin if you will give me that wee piece of land I can bring your three boys back to life, I can, I can!” “Oh Mary if you can, the haunted field is yours.” Well, the village attorney was at the wake and she drew up the necessary papers to transfer ownership of the land to Mary. Then Mary chased everybody out of the house and retrieved that kerchief with the bloody oatmeal from behind the dishes. She carried it upstairs and put some on each of the boys lips and they started breathing at once. Within five minutes they were sitting up feeling good and did not know anything was wrong.

Mary hired some young men to move that pile of rocks and found a catch of gold and silver coins that were worth more to the museums then the value of the gold and silver. Mary built a huge white house with pillars holding up the front roof. And inside by every door is a box nailed to the

A traditional Irish tale collected and adapted by Chuck Larkin

wall that has a small vial of holy water and a Bible. This story took place in western Ireland close to three hundred years ago. Since the Storytelling renaissance began in 1970 so many Storytellers have told this story that the village of Carlisle has not only remodeled the Mary Culhaine home but the Holiday Inn has built a motel in Carlisle to handle the tourist from all over the world. When you visit Carlisle

you will find that every building even the barns have boxes next to the doors with bottles of holy water and a Bible. I've been told that every motel room has a box with a glass front so you can see the vial of holy water and the enclosed Gideon Bible.

Bridget

Collected from Jack Kenny and adapted by Bluegrass Storyteller Chuck Larkin Atlanta, GA, USA

Hello to Storytellers

I gift thee this and as was in the olden Sencha Bardic days blessed be those who learn the flowing image and tell before adding their own souls to the story.

Bridget Kenny was born, I was told, on one of the Islands off the Irish coast towards the close of the last century. Which island I don't recall. She lived at the time of this story with her mother May Kenny in the home of her Uncle Jim Fitzpatrick, a Pastor of the local church.

Bridget as a child was not unlike like any of the other Island children with the exception of her reputation of being fearless. By the time she was in her teens she had withstood so many attempts by the children of her village to frighten her they had given up trying to even startle her. And this is the story of her strange adventure.

Bridget was passing her uncle's church on the way home when she seen some friends over in the Church's graveyard opening a new grave and stopped to visit.

"Hay Bridg did you come to give us a hand with the digging?"

"Ah no you seem to have plenty of hands and time to do your work."

It was a bit after she had stopped and was chatting with her friends when one of the digger's shovel hit a hard object. Clearing out the dirt Shawn uncovered a huge leg bone and with a grin lifted it up for the others to see.

"Hay Bridg what do you think?"

" Pass it up here Shawn and let me hold it." Bridget stood there holding the huge leg bone in both hands.

"Aye this once must have been a huge man."

"Shawn you need to rebury this'un."

"We'll do it Bridg, it must have been one of the old Fianna warriors"

"But I'll tell you boys one thing, I, Bridget Kenny, would love to kiss a man this big." And with that comment and

the chuckles from the fellows the leg bone was returned to the grave.

That evening after supper, Pastor Jim said, "Bridget would you do me a favor and run a short errand. I left some papers on the pulpit at the church that I need for the sermon I'm working on. Would you mind fetching them for me?"

"Yes Uncle I'll be back in a bit." The night was dark, with a bit of star and moon light, enough to see by as Bridget went up along the path to the church. When she entered the sanctuary she lit a bit of a candle she was carrying and set it in the holder by the door. Going up to the front she found and picked up the papers and turned to leave.

That is when she noticed a man, a huge man, sitting in the last pew, although hardly sitting because by candle light he appeared to be barely able to wedge himself into the pew. As Bridget came down the isle she said,

"Good evening to you sir, and how are you?"

"Well I don't really know Ms. Bridget. In the light I seem to be covered with a bit of dirt and grime and agh my beard is badly tangled. But it was a kiss you asked for so I have come to oblige you if you wish."

"Oh my, well thank you sir and why not?" Bridget leaned over just a tad and kissed him on the lips.

"I thank you for your" - but the man was fading from sight.

"Good night!" Bridget picked up the candle, snuffed out the flame closed the doors and went home.

"Here are the papers Uncle."

"Thank you Bridget and did you have any trouble finding them?"

"Oh no Uncle but I did learn something tonight."

"And what was that you learned?"

"I learned that sometimes you get your wishes."

A Blend of Three Stories for Halloween

This Story is a blend of three traditional stories collected over the years and blended together in the telling structure I frequently use.

One Summer a few years ago, I was flying into Louisville, Kentucky when one of the great storm fronts came as we flew out of North Dakota. I was late as usual and boarded the 8:00 AM flight without breakfast. Well to make a long story short I arrived in Louisville about 9:30 PM on a day of three bags of peanuts for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. By the time I reached my motel on the outskirts of the city it was after 10 PM. I checked in and found out from the desk clerk that the motel restaurant was closed.

“Is there anyplace I can get some food within walking distance?”

“Yes sir, see those lights, out the front door, over about a block or two?”

“Yes, I see them!”

“Well that’s a late night restaurant and bar. You can eat there but you will have to walk out the left about a half mile turn right at the first street and then turn right at the next street and come back down to the restaurant.”

“Why can’t I just walk straight toward the lights?”

“Well you can but there’s a graveyard that you would have to cross.”

“I’m not scared of graveyards, day or night, see you later.”

I walked into the grave yard, the moon was out I could see fair to middling. The problem in a graveyard is the little roads twist and turn so I had to leave the road and cross the graves but I could see the grave stones clear enough so not to bump into them. Why wasn’t I scared?

Well from my Celtic - medium training, I knew that if I made a fist with my thumb between my fingers with two fingers on both sides of my thumb like the deaf sign for “N”, I would bring in the protective power of motherhood and nothing negative would bother me.

If you’re African descent you make a fist with the middle three fingers and with the thumb sticking up and the pinky sticking down. Mediterranean ancients used the bull horns closing thumb and two middle fingers and using the first finger and little finger straight out as horns. You can also use all three if you got time.

I did have a problem that night. When the local folks opened a new grave that day to use the next morning they covered up the grave with a big piece of canvas. You can’t see a sheet of gray canvas in the moon light and when you

weigh three hundred pounds it’s like stepping on a down escalator.

Graves are six feet deep and I’m about five foot nine. I learned two things that night. When you are a tad over weight you cannot crawl out and you can holler all you want nobodies going to come into a graveyard at night.

I pulled that canvas to one end, folded it for a cushion and sat down on one end of that grave. That’s when your mind turns to ghostly encounters. I had a protective fist on both hands although one hand is enough. All I could think of was bony hands reaching out through the dirt sides of that grave and touching me.

I remembered coming home late from a buddies house when I was nine years old and in order to get home for supper on time, I had to take a short cut by an old graveyard. All of a sudden that afternoon with the long shadows I heard a rat tap tap. I stopped and looked over about three tombstones and saw a little man sitting cross legged in front of a tombstone with a hammer and chisel tapping away.

“Mister what are you doing? You could scare somebody, not me but somebody!”

He stopped and turned and looked at me and said, “Would you, would you wa wa would you believe they’ve misspelled my name!”

I ran on home but I wasn’t scarred I just didn’t want to be late to dinner.

The other time I was performing up in north Georgia and the local folks had put me up in a hundred year old bed and board house. I don’t like them places they flat out suck in ghosts and haints.

After the concert about 11:30 PM I climbed into bed and felt a small chill. I got back up and fixed my shoes by setting them side by side with one shoe pointing toward the door and the other shoe pointing toward my bed. Climbed back in this old four poster antique bed with a canopy on top of the four posts.

First time I ever slept in one of them things and I don’t like them either. But at least after I fixed my shoes the haint’s chill left the room. See nothing can come in a room when you fix your shoes right. I fell asleep.

Sometime later I heard my door squeak. I opened my eyes and watched the door open. In the moonlight I could see this cloud of smoke kind of hanging in the air. I grabbed my thumb in a fist.

A monotone slow speaking voice came into my brain. “Chuck I heard you tell stories tonight and I loved your old stories. I buried gold and silver outback ‘fore this house

was built. I don't need it, you can have it, come on I'll show you where."

Greed got hold of me. I got up put my feet in my old brown moccasins I use for slippers and I sleep in an old time night shirt that breaks at my knees. I followed that haint, still looking like a cloud of smoke, holding onto both thumbs about ten feet behind. Well at my weight every time I stepped in that old house the floor boards creaked. There was about a dozen guest rooms I was surprised no one woke up as we went out through the back door.

The woods were about 25 yards behind the house and I could see the smoke cloud drifting in front of me. It entered the trees about 20 feet and stopped next to a tree trunk. The voice again came into my head but not through my ears.

"Chuck you dig on the East side next to the roots and the money is yours, thanks for the old stories."

The cloud in the moon light disappeared. I stepped over and put my hand on the trunk and looked around. All the trees looked like this one.

I got down and tried to find a digging stone or stick. Nothing and the ground was too hard for fingers. I had a problem. How to mark the tree. My old brown moccasins were the same color as the dead leaves. I thought of tying my night shirt around the tree but then I would have to go back to my room sky clad and if anybody woke up and saw me without any clothes they'd put me under the local jail.

Only thing was to gash and mark the tree and the only tool was my teeth. I Bit and spit. Bit and spit. Bit and spit. Bit and spit. I kept backing up to see if I could see the gash from the tree line. I finely got a decent size gash and needed just a little more biting and spitting. With my last bite there was this sudden noise, I woke up on my knees at the foot of the bed. I had chewed all the way through one of them antique bed post and the whole canopy had crashed down.

Best I could figure, that haint had gotten into my head and made me dream that whole scenario. It was mad because I'd run him out of the room with my shoes. It cost me a \$128.36 to have a wood craftsman cut, shape and match a post for that antique bed.

Well some time as I was remembering these experiences, I must have fallen asleep in that grave. I woke up a little chilly in the night air and realized that some drunk was coming back from the bar-restaurant singing. I am so glad he woke me up first by drunken singing, because he fell into the other end of this grave. If I had been asleep I believe today I would have only been a memory in a few minds. But I still sat stunned for a few moments listening to him trying to climb out.

I said, "Mister you can't get out by yourself I'll have to help you!"

He jumped out of that grave!

I said, "Mister don't leave me down here, help me out. I'm getting cold down here."

He looked down. "No wonder you're cold you have kicked all your dirt off."

He started to kick dirt down on top of me.

I jumped up. "You fool, get me some help and get me out of here."

"I don't talk to no ghost."

He left me. Luckily when he reached the motel he told the desk clerk about arguing with a ghost down in a grave. The desk clerk described me and asked if he say me at the restaurant and the fellah said no, so the Desk Clerk got a ladder and a flashlight and came and got me out of the grave, even shared one of his late night sandwiches with me.

AND THAT'S A TRUE STORY.

Spearfinger

Collected and adapted by Bluegrass Storyteller Chuck Larkin Atlanta, GA, USA

I give permission to all storytellers to tell this story variant and as was in the olden Sencha Bardic days blessed be those who learn the story's flowing images and tell in their own words before adding their own creations to the story. Credit for this variant in my name is not necessary.

This story is a blend of a couple of Cherokee legends from the southern Appalachian Mountains in the USA that I collected years ago. This story variant is based on traditional stories and my contribution is limited to the structure and assimilation of the various flowing images. The story is in oral language

A long time ago before African, Asian and European folks lived in the southern Appalachian Mountains of the USA the Cherokee and Creek people had a terrible problem with two creatures who ate human flesh. Spearfinger the wife was a shape shifter. She was able to shape shift to look like members of your family or friends.

Spearfinger could change out of her stone body and would turn herself into a bush or a rock or maybe be hiding in a tree, looking like a squirrel or a bird. Spearfinger would watch your house until someone in your family left the house and went on an errand. Spearfinger would then shape shift and change to look just like who ever she saw leaving your house.

She would call your name, "Mary honey, come over here and let Sister comb your hair." While you were sitting on her lap, and thinking spearfinger was your Sister, spearfinger would be, maybe, singing to you while she was combing your hair. But with her special stone finger, old spearfinger would open up your side and without you feeling anything she would reach in and steal your liver. Spearfinger then with that special finger would close up your side. You would not know spearfinger had taken out and would eat your liver, oh she loved to eat children's livers. Your family would know because without your liver you became sick and died a couple of days later.

Maybe you were outside playing and you tripped and fell down and skinned your knee and your Momma would call out, "Billie did you hurt your self, here let me help you." Your Momma would come over and pick you up and wipe the dirt off your skinned knee and hug and kiss you. You would go back to playing but that wasn't your mother that was old spearfinger and she had gotten your liver and put it in her carrying basket.

Stoneskin, Spearfinger's husband, was a bad one too. He looked like an old man, wading along with a walking stick like a cane. He preferred to eat men who were out hunting by themselves. He would see a hunter out in the mountains and would start chasing the hunter. Stoneskin

could run but he was slow and the hunters were fast runners but they could not get away. Old Stoneskin would chase a hunter to the top of a hill or a mountain and then put his cane on the ground and the cane would stretch like a bridge over to the next hill top while the hunter he was after had to run all the way down the hill, cross a creek and climb up the next hill.

No matter how fast the hunter ran he could not get away from Stoneskin who only had to walk from hill top to hill top while chasing the hunter. When the hunter at last fell down from exhaustion old Stoneskin would catch him, hit him with his cane until he cracked open his skull and while he carried the body back to the cave he would snack on the hunter's brains and enjoy the rest of the hunter for supper while spearfinger would sit and enjoy the livers of children she had collected in her carrying basket that day.

It is said that the Cherokees called a great council. A Pow Wow to study the problem. Many plans were discussed but all were dismissed. Because of their stone skins spears and arrows would bounce off. Some warriors had seen spearfinger when she had shape changed back to herself and had tried to kill her. Others had seen Stoneskin carrying bodies of hunters home and could not kill him.

Finely they came up with a solution. The plan was to dig a great hole and cover the hole with thin branches and leaves to be a trap on the trail that led to the cave home of Stoneskin and spearfinger and they built the trap near a Cherokee village where they brought together all the children in that area of the mountains.

After the trap was set up, one night several of the fastest running hunters when out along the trail near the top of several hills. All the hunters were dressed to look alike and they found hiding places near the top of a hill and down in the bottom of the valley toward the village.

When the first sun rays came up one of the hunters ran past the cave and Old spearfinger saw him and started chasing him and spearfinger came along with her husband. The hunter ran up to the top of a hill and got on the trail to the village that was several miles away. The hunter ran down the hill across the creek and up the next hill ahead of Old Stoneskin and spearfinger who was about half way over on his cane bridge. The hunter ran down into the next valley and hid. As Old Stoneskin and spearfinger was crossing on the second bridge a new hunter appeared from where he was hiding and ran along the trail down the next hill and hid while a third hunter appeared at the top of the third hill. The hunters, this way were able to stay close but in front of Old Stoneskin and spearfinger until the last runner reached the trap where he jumped over the trap and laid down on the ground as if he was exhausted.

When Old Stoneskin saw the hunter laying down he came down off the hill running and spearfinger, smelling all the children in the village, also started running with her husband. When both of the creatures ran out on the trap the branches gave way and they fell into the deep pit. They were angry for being tricked. Also sad to say that in their stoneskins they were not hurt.

Quickly the Cherokees came out of hiding. They gathered around the pit and began shooting arrows and throwing spears. Spearfinger and Stoneskin just laughed as the arrows and spears bounced off their stone skins.

“We’re going to kill all of you when we get out of this pit.”

Both Stoneskin and Stone finger tried to climb the steep walls but they were too heavy and the walls too slick. The cane could reach the top but the people pored grease on the cane bridge and they slipped when they tried to climb. Spearfinger could shape change but knew that once out of her stone skin she could be hurt. The people tried and tried to shoot arrows but it was of no use.

One of the warriors got so angry that she picked up a rock and threw it. She thought she saw something so she threw another rock. Yes, each rock had chipped a tiny piece of the rock skin off spearfinger. She shouted, “listen to me, listen to me! Hit them with rocks it chips off their stone bodies!” The Cherokees began raining rocks down and each hit chipped off a piece of their bodies.

“We will get you! We will get you and we will drink your blood! You cannot kill us and we will get you and suck your blood! We will suck your blood!”

The voices of the two got weaker and weaker and eventually stopped as the rocks continued to pelt them and chip off tiny little pieces until the whole bottom of the pit was filled with a huge pile of tiny, tiny chips.

The Cherokees also stopped and fell silent. Finally they turned around and began to return to the village. Many suddenly stopped, they heard a strange high pitched buzzing noise. They turned around and from the pit rose a black cloud of tiny black flying insects. And to this day those critters suck our blood. For that is how Mosquitoes came to be.