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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Halloween traditions

On the eve of Hallowe'en, the Spirit of the Year gathered beings from various nations, ready to share their customs and superstitions. The Spirit, a spectral entity garbed in a long, white robe, was the master of ceremonies, orchestrating the curious congregation of characters.

A wise Owl, its hoot echoing eerily throughout the realm, had its presence masked, appearing as nothing more than a haunting whisper in the wind. A mysterious Cat, also behind a mask, let out a strange meow that resounded like an old tale. The two creatures filled the atmosphere with eerie noises, drawing out their cries as the tableau of nations took shape behind the metaphorical curtain.

As the Spirit of the Year announced each character, an unseen curtain was drawn open, revealing one nation after the other. The first to appear was an Egyptian girl, draped in a flowing white robe and head-dress. She sat by a spinning wheel, reciting a tale about Osiris, the sun god, and his brother Seton, the god of darkness who ruled their land in the winter days.

Following her, an English boy emerged, attired in hunter's breeches, a red coat, and a cap. He held a short whip and shared a story about the Spectre Hunter who led a hunting party on Hallowe'en night. He warned about the "Little People" and the goblins one

might see on a steeple if they didn't leave berries as an offering.

Next, a Welsh boy appeared in a long, dark cloak and high-pointed black hat. His tale revolved around the Druid's altar, the fires lit once a year, and the superstition that those caught alone on Hallowe'en night might be turned into stone.

Japanese girls, clad in their traditional costumes, took their turn. They spoke of ghosts returning with parasols and fans, and of lanterns kept alight to guide the spirits. The American representative, a girl styled as the Goddess of Liberty, talked about the charm of a horseshoe and its protective properties against the sinister forces of ghosts, witches, and hobgoblins.

An Irish girl, dressed in a green skirt, white blouse, and apron, spun a tale of fairies, gnomes, earth spirits, and leprechauns. This was followed by the Druids, solemn boys in priestly robes who relit the fires of homes to

ward off any harm in the coming year.

The tale ended with six Scottish boys in kilts, sharing stories of spirits, wild huntsmen, and Hallowe'en fairies. They enacted a torch-light procession and warned

others not to linger at crossroads where Hallowe'en fairies were known to pass. They then scampered off, mimicking the quick escape one must make from such spirits.



To conclude the gathering, all those who participated returned, led by the American representative carrying a large flag. As the final act, they sang one verse of the "Star Spangled Banner", each character's voice blending with the others, creating a harmonious end to the mystical Hallowe'en gathering.