

The Shawl Ghost

Activities developed by Andrew Cox and Wendy Smith at Beechwood Junior School in Bedfordshire in January 1998

The webaddress for this activity is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/shawlghost.pdf>

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COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals throughout the European Union to promote inclusive education. We develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening . They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

The Shawl Ghost

Activity 1

Children, in small groups, listen to the story. They have a set of cards with statements. They have to decide whether the statements are true or false and sort their cards.

Activity 2

Children, in small groups, have pictures of the characters in the story (enlarged to A3) and a set of speech bubbles. They have to decide which character might have said what and place the bubbles with the character

The Shawl Ghost

Many years ago there lived in the little village of Trewey in the far west of Cornwall, a poor and very old woman. She had no children or grandchildren of her own, but she cherished and loved a little girl called Alanna, the daughter of a neighbour. To the child she was always known as Aunt Kitty, and the little girl cried for many hours when her mother told her the old lady was dying.

Knowing her end was near, Aunt Kitty summoned her neighbour to her bedside and told her she had nothing of value to leave to the little girl she loved so much except for a fine silk shawl. As a young woman it had been given to her by a sailor who had travelled to foreign parts. She had pledged him her heart, but when he next sailed away, he was lost in a storm off Biscay and never returned. Alanna's mother promised to do as she was bid, but learning after the funeral that such a fine shawl could be worth as much as a guinea, she said nothing to her daughter and hid the shawl in a little pewter pot, which she sealed and buried under the stone-paved floor of their cottage.

A few evenings after the old woman's funeral, the child became restless in bed, then suddenly startled the household by bursting into shrieks as she pointed her finger to the far corner of the room. The others crowded around her and asked her what had made her screech.

"Can't you see 'er? Can't you see 'er? There! Over there - it's Aunt Kitty with 'er face tied up in a white napkin and nothin' on 'er but a sheet!"

Night after night the old woman's ghost continued to haunt little Alanna, until her father, a strong man of great faith, picked up the child and took her outdoors. Almost immediately, the little girl pointed across the garden, exclaiming, "There she is again!"

Her father for the first time saw the spirit, and although his face went white and there was a tremble to his hands, he walked toward it shouting: "In the name of goodness I command thee to answer why you 'ave come back to 'aunt this little child!"

The ghost of the old woman remained silent for several seconds. Then its lips began to move: "Because the shawl was not given to the child, I cannot rest."

"The shawl? What shawl?" asked the girl's father, for his wife had said nothing to him about the valuable gift.

Again the spirit spoke: "Because the shawl was not given to the child, I cannot rest."

The man stared at the ghost in silence, then nodded his head. "It shall be done, I promise you. Now depart in peace." As he spoke the words, the spirit of the old lady vanished as an owl swooped low over the Trewey fields.

The same night the weeping mother dug up the pewter pot and handed it over to the child's father. He broke the sealing wax took the tip of the silken shawl and gradually, pulled it forth into the lamplight. "This is for you, Alanna. Aunt Kitty told us to keep it safe." The girl nodded and gazed proudly at the shawl on her shoulders in the cracked old mirror on the wall.

All the Trewey folk were sure that no more would be seen or heard of the old woman's ghost. However three days later when the little girl was out on the moors playing Cornish Hide-and-seek with several of her friends she vanished utterly and completely! Several of the children said that they saw her spirited away up and over the furze bushes, high over the haystacks, and all of them ran home to tell the tale breathlessly to their parents.

When darkness fell, many of the Trewey villagers gave up hope of ever again seeing the child alive and when her father came back from searching the moors, shaking his head and close to tears, they crowded around Alanna's cottage to console the weeping mother. Then, suddenly, the girl was standing there among them with only one shoe on.

Questioned as to where she had been and how she had lost her shoe, the child answered that she didn't know. All she could remember was being whisked high in the air over the houses and haystacks until she gently descended to a strange churchtown with lots of trees. She found herself lying on a newly filled grave with the sound of singing in her ears. She saw nobody, But suddenly felt someone kiss her - a cold kiss that had her shivering as she was carried once again high in the air back to her own churchtown. And here she was!

From what the child had said, all the Trewey people thought she must have been spirited away to Perranporth, for that was where the trees grew best. There were no trees on the south coast area, for the storms and gales were fierce in their possession of the land, while on the soft south flank around Perranporth and Penzance the hills broke the fury of the wind so that it could only sigh. or so it was said in Wadebridge. It was in Perranporth that the old woman had been buried, for that was where her folk had their plot.

The next day several villagers, Alanna's mother and father among them, hurried over the moors to Perranporth Churchtown to push open the old iron gate of the churchyard. There, in the far corner was Aunt Kitty's freshly dug grave, and as they reached it, the matter was put beyond any doubt. Alanna's missing shoe lay there on the soil. They turned away and left it where it lay, so that the old woman might have something belonging to the little girl she loved, to put her to rest, as they said.

It was proved. She has kept quiet from that day to this



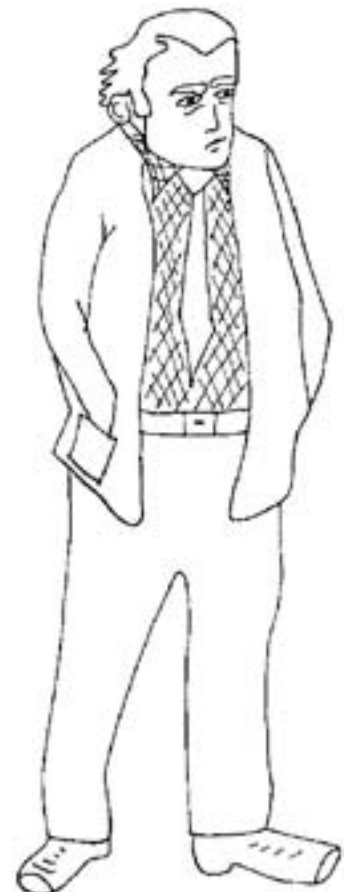
Allanna's mother



Aunt Kitty



Allanna



Allanna's father

Quotes

Can't you see her?

I'm scared!

This is a good, safe hiding place.

I'm sorry I kept the shawl.

Where am I?

This is too good to give to Alanna.

I must go and check on Aunt Kitty.

I love my little daughter.

Where has Alanna gone?

What shawl is she talking about?

Come into the garden.

What were you children doing before she was spirited away?

Quotes

I want Alanna
to have my shawl.

I can't rest!

Where is my
shawl?

Alanna is the nearest
I've got
to a grandchild.

What beautiful
music!

I'm now at rest.

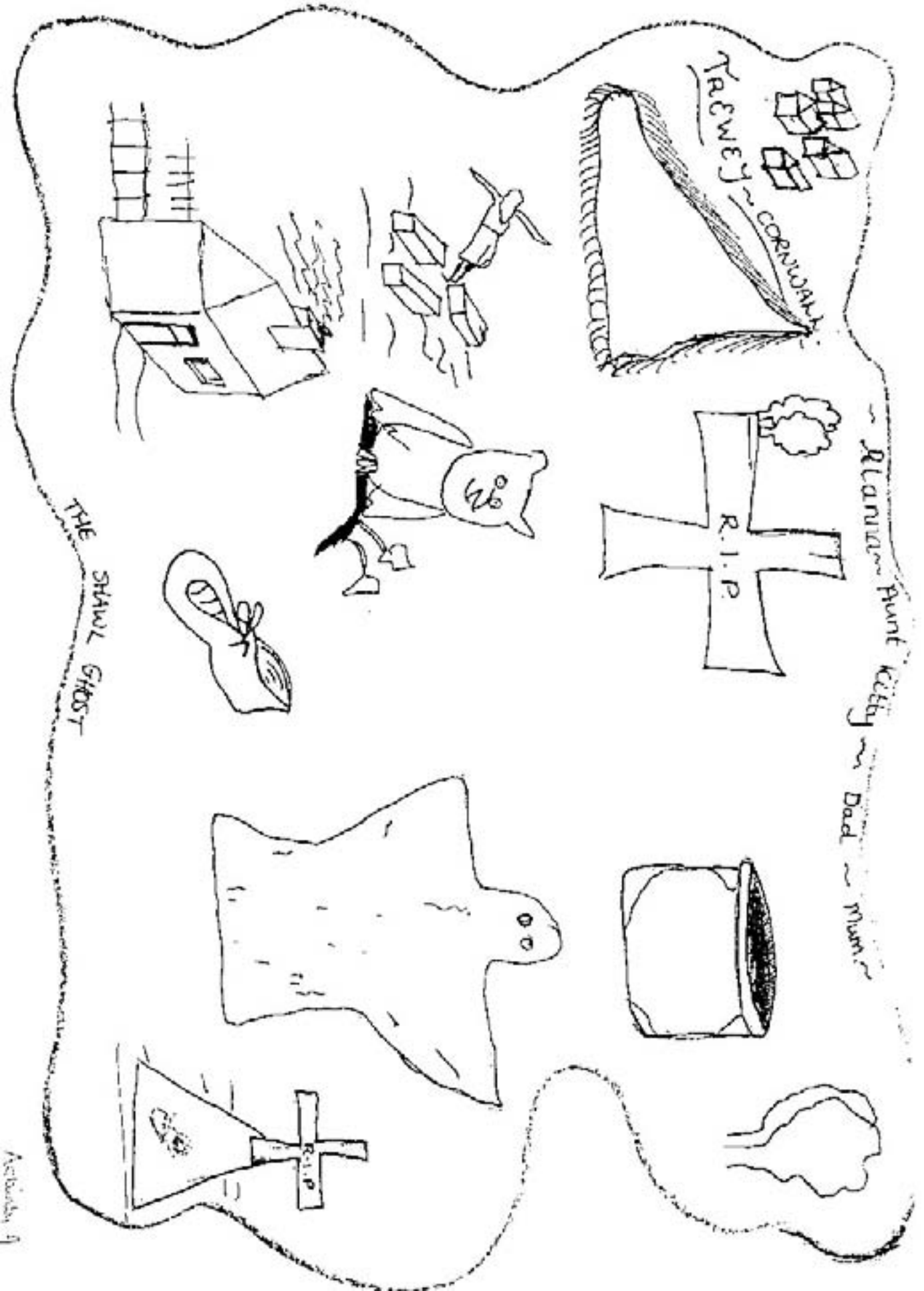
I can sleep now.

I've lost a
shoe!

Oooh! I'm flying!

I should've given
it to Alanna.

Let's visit the
churchyard.



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