



The Ghost of Custard Castle
Six Stories about Custard Castle

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Introduction

Custard Castle had three hundred dusty rooms, and seven people.

There was the King, the Queen, and Princess Fifi.

There was Bella the maid, Jack the servant boy, and the Cook.

There was Wizard Watchit, who lived in the tallest tower.

And there was the ghost...

The Ghost in the Tower

Up in the tallest tower of Custard Castle, Wizard Watchit was getting hot and cross.

His spells weren't going right. It made him angry.

"Bother!" he grumbled, turning the pages of his spell book. He didn't see the white ghostly shape creeping up behind him.

"Woo!" wailed the ghostly shape in his ear. The wizard jumped, and dropped his book in the cauldron.



"Look what you made me do!" he shouted.

"Woo?"

"Yes, you! Go away, ghost! I'm busy."

"Woo woo?"

"Leave me alone!" snapped Wizard Watchit. He fished the spell book out of the cauldron. It was covered in spiders.

The ghost waited for a moment, and then began to rattle its chains.

Clinkety bong, clinkety bong...

"Stop it!" snapped Wizard Watchit. "I said I'm busy. Anyway, you don't scare me any more."

“Woo woo woo?”

“No! You don’t scare me one little bit! Now go away.”

“Woo?”

“I said *go away!*”

“Woo...” Slowly the ghost floated towards the door. It looked back at Wizard Watchit angrily flicking spiders off his spell book.

“Woo woo,” murmured the ghost sadly, as it drifted through the door and left the wizard’s tower behind.

The ghost felt very upset. It had always lived in the Wizard’s tower. It liked Wizard Watchit. It liked creeping up behind him and going “Woo!” so that the Wizard jumped.

And Wizard Watchit had always liked being scared by the ghost – until today. Now he wasn’t scared any more. He didn’t want the ghost around.

“Woo-hoo,” moaned the ghost unhappily.

A ghost was meant to be scary. That was its job.

So if Wizard Watchit wasn’t frightened of it any more, it would have to find somebody else to scare...

* * *

The ghost had never left the tower before. Now it set out to explore the three hundred dusty rooms of Custard Castle.

It drifted through walls and oozed under doors, looking for people to frighten. Apart from the Wizard, there were only six people living in the castle. So it took a long time for the ghost to find anyone at all.

It had almost given up hope when it drifted into the counting-house.

The King was in there, counting out his money, while Jack the servant-boy stood guard.

The ghost wafted around the counting-house, waiting for them to look up and see it.

But the King was too busy counting his money. And Jack was too busy having a little doze.

“Woo?” said the ghost hopefully.



Neither of them looked up. So the ghost began to rattle its chains.

Clinkety-clank! went the chains.

The King rattled his gold coins.

Clinkety-clank! went the coins.

The ghost rattled harder.

CLANK RATTLE BONG! went the chains.

The King poured the gold coins into his money box.

CLANK RATTLE BONG! went the coins.

The King could not hear the ghost. Neither could Jack.

“Right! I’ve counted the money!” announced the King. “Jack? Stand guard while I put it in the treasure room.”

Jack woke up and went over to the treasure room door. The ghost followed. It decided to slip behind the door and leap out at the King. That would really scare him!

So when Jack opened the door, the ghost wafted into the dark treasure room.

The King emptied his money box into the treasure room. The ghost was about to leap out of the dark and scare the King, when a Thing leapt out of the dark and scared the ghost.

“**RRARGH!!**” roared the Thing.



“Woo!” screamed the ghost. It shot out of the treasure-room so fast that the King did not even notice it.

The King slammed the door and mopped his brow.

“That Thing certainly does a good job of guarding the treasure,” he said.

The ghost did not hear him. It had rushed away faster than steam from a kettle. It sped through stone walls and hurtled through closed doors in its hurry to escape.

At last, as it grew tired, it had to slow down. It looked around.

It was in the Queen's bathroom. The Queen was cleaning her teeth. The bathroom was so steamy that she could not see the ghost.

"Woo woo!" moaned the ghost.

The Queen dropped her toothbrush. "What was that?"

"Woo!"

"What an odd noise!" exclaimed the Queen.

The ghost began to rattle its ghostly chains. *Clinkety bong!* went the chains.

The Queen gasped, looking very alarmed. The ghost was delighted. It rattled harder.

"Woo woo!" *Clinkety bong!*

"Air in the pipes!" announced the Queen.

"Woo?"

The Queen ran off to fetch her toolbox, and set to work on the bathroom pipes with a spanner. Soon she was banging and clanging so loudly that echoes bounced around the bathroom.

"Woo!" wailed the ghost in protest.

"More air in those pipes!" declared the Queen. She got out a hammer and began to bang even harder. Before long the ghost had a headache.

"Woo woo," it groaned, as it dived out of the bathroom.

It would have to look for someone else to scare...

So it wafted through walls and oozed under doors until it found itself in Princess Fifi's room.

Fifi was lying on her bed, eating chocolates and reading the Bumper Book of Princes.



“Woo woo,” said the ghost, without much hope.

Fifi sat up. “Who’s there?”

“Woo,” said the ghost, a little louder.

“Is that a ghost I hear?”

“Woo!”

“Is that a ghostly shape I see before me?”

“Woo woo!” it cried joyfully.

Fifi clasped her hands. “A ghost! How exciting! Oh, are you the ghost of a handsome Prince eaten by wolves on his way to claim my hand—”

“Woo?”

“—or are you the phantom of a brave knight chopped into tiny pieces in a duel for my sake?”

“*Woo!*” protested the ghost. It backed away nervously.

“Or were you munched by monsters, or guzzled by giants, or slowly squeezed to death by slimy serpents—”

“Woo!” The ghost didn’t wait to hear any more. Shuddering with horror, it fled from Fifi’s room and glided down the stairs.

“Woo!” it moaned miserably. It didn’t scare the King, or the Queen, or the Princess. Would it ever find anyone to scare?

As it wafted through the hall, it saw Bella sweeping the floor.

The ghost felt hopeful. Bella was only a maid. Surely a maid would be easier to frighten than a princess!

So it floated up to Bella, and hovered wispily in front of her.

Bella stared. Her mouth fell open in amazement.

“Big cobweb!” she cried. “What a whopper!”

And she walloped the ghost with her broom.

“Woo!” wailed the ghost, frantically trying to get away.

Wallop went the broom, *whap whap whap*, as Bella tried to sweep up the ghost.



“Woo woo woo!” wailed the ghost. It shot away in panic and dived through six more walls, one after another, until it was exhausted.

At last it could go no further, and it had to stop.

It found itself in the kitchen. The Cook was busy pouring flour into a mixing-bowl.

The ghost crept up behind the Cook.

“Woo?” it said faintly.

The Cook turned round and saw the ghost. She frowned.

“Drratted flour!” she said. “Clouds of it everywhere!” And she tried to catch the ghost and put in her mixing-bowl.

The ghost squirmed away. It fled into the fire-place and hid in the chimney.

Then it had another try at scaring the Cook.

“Woo woo!” it moaned in its spookiest voice.

“Drratted wind!” said the Cook. “It must be coming through the door.”

She shut the door tight. Then she lit the big oven in the fireplace. She rolled her sleeves up, and began to make the bread.

The oven roared. The kitchen grew hot. The ghost started to feel faint. It didn’t like the heat.

“Woo!” it whined.

“Drratted wind!” said the Cook. “It must be coming down the chimney.” And she put more wood in the oven.

The flames crackled fiercely. Hot air rushed past the ghost and up the chimney.

The ghost began to feel quite overcome with heat. Its head was swimming. It had to get out!

It shot down out of the chimney.



But when it tried to glide through the kitchen wall, it was so weak and tired that it couldn’t.

It fluttered to the door. But the door was closed tight. There was no room for the ghost to ooze under it.

The only way out of the kitchen was through the keyhole.

So the ghost squeezed and squeezed. It had to make itself as thin as a strip of spaghetti. It thought it would never manage it – but at last it popped through the keyhole, back into the hall.

By now, Bella had gone away. The ghost was alone.

“Woo!” it groaned wearily as it drifted across the hall.

And then a voice answered it.

“*Whoo...*”

“Woo?” The ghost stopped dead. It looked around, but it couldn’t see anyone.

“*Whoo...*” said the voice again. It came from the cupboard under the stairs. It sounded just like another ghost.

The ghost was overjoyed. Another ghost lived here! A friend!

The cupboard door wasn’t quite closed. A little wisp of cloud wafted through the crack. It looked just like a ghostly hand waving.

Eagerly the ghost flitted over to the cupboard. It slipped through the crack in the door, and saw–

–a dragon, fast asleep.



“Whoop,” snored the dragon. A long plume of smoke blew from its nose and wafted over the ghost.

“WOO!” screamed the ghost. It hurtled out of the cupboard, across the hall, and down the corridor. It had had enough of Castle Custard. It wanted to go home!

It flew all the way back to the Wizard’s tower as fast as it could. It floated up the stairs and hovered outside the door.

It could hear Wizard Watchit stamping up and down inside, and muttering crossly.

The Wizard was still angry. The ghost couldn’t go back in. It had no home.

The ghost began to weep big, ghostly tears.

* * *

Wizard Watchit’s spells kept going wrong. He couldn’t concentrate. He marched up and down, angrily reciting spells, but he was thinking about the ghost.

His tower didn’t feel the same without the ghost there. He missed its friendly “Woo” behind his back. He missed seeing its cloudy shape waft around his tower.

He was lonely. Where could the ghost have gone?

Wizard Watchit began to worry about the ghost. What if it found a better castle to haunt, and disappeared for good?

Or supposing it got lost, or blown away by a gale? He might never see it again!

Suddenly he felt scared. He wanted the ghost back.

“I’m going out to look for it!” he thought. He threw open the door.

There was the ghost, flapping forlornly around the stairs.

“Ghost!” cried Wizard Watchit. “I thought you’d gone away for ever!
You scared me!”

“Woo woo woo?” The ghost could hardly believe its ears.

“Yes, you really scared me!” said the Wizard. “Please don’t fly away
again.”

“Woo woo!” said the ghost.

“Well, come on in!” said Wizard Watchit.

The ghost drifted cautiously into the tower.

“Do you want to creep up behind me while I do this spell?” asked the
Wizard.

“Woo,” agreed the ghost.

“And a bit of rattling would be nice.”

The ghost shook its chains, with a CLINKETY-BONG.

“That’s better! I can’t do spells properly without you. Welcome
home!” said Wizard Watchit.

“Woo woo woo!” the happy ghost replied.

The Wrong Spell

The King was eating royal doughnuts for his breakfast.

“There’s a letter for you!” said Bella the maid. “It looks very royal. It’s written in gold ink.”

She handed the letter to the King. He opened it and began to read.

“Aha! It’s from my friends, the Duke and Duchess of – oh, no!”

The King dropped his doughnuts on the tablecloth. Wizard Watchit eyed them hungrily. Royal doughnuts had extra jam.

“Bad news?” Bella asked the King.

“Terrible news!” he groaned.

Princess Fifi asked, “Has somebody been killed in a battle with a dragon?”

“Worse than that,” the King replied.

“Drains?” asked the Queen.

“Worse than that!” wailed the King. “The Duke and Duchess want to come and stay!”



“Oh, no!” said the Queen. She turned very pale.

“What’s so terrible about that?” asked Princess Fifi.

“You’re too young to remember,” said the King dismally. “But last time the Duke and Duchess came to visit, they stayed for weeks.”

We couldn't get rid of them. They ate every single crumb of food in the castle."

"And they never stopped grumbling!" said the Queen. "They said Custard Castle was cold and dark and dirty. They were ever so rude about it – but they wouldn't leave!"

"Well, you'll just have to stop them coming," said Bella. "Tell them we're all ill."

"It's too late," moaned the King. "They're already on their way. What can we do? Wizard? Any ideas?"

Wizard Watchit wasn't listening. He was eyeing the doughnuts. His hand crept out sneakily towards them.

"Watch it, Watchit!" shouted the King. "Get your hands off! Those are royal doughnuts. You're not invisible, you know!"



"What a pity," sighed the Wizard.

Suddenly, the King laughed. "That's just given me a brilliant idea! I know exactly what we need. An invisibility spell!"

"A what?" asked the Queen.

"A spell to make us all invisible, of course. So that when the Duke and Duchess arrive at Custard Castle, they'll think there's nobody here. Then they'll go straight home again!"

"Genius!" said the Queen proudly.

"Not bad," said Fifi.

“It might just work,” said Bella.

“Well, don’t waste time, Watchit,” said the King. “What are you hanging around for? Off you go and cast that spell!”

Wizard Watchit plodded up to his room at the top of the tallest tower. He felt very put out.

“The King wouldn’t let me have a single doughnut!” he said crossly to the ghost. “He just told me to cast an invisibility spell! Where am I going to find an invisibility spell?”

“Woo woo woo,” the ghost suggested.

“I suppose so,” sighed the Wizard. He took down his big spell book from his shelf and began to leaf through it. “There must be one in here somewhere... I don’t know where, though. I’m too hungry to think properly. I need a doughnut.”

“Woo woo,” pointed out the ghost.

“Where?” The Wizard peered at the book. “Oh, yes! *Spell of invisibility*. I guess I’d better give it a try.”

He began to read out the spell. But all he could think about were doughnuts.

*“Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Dance around the cauldron twice,
Spider’s nose and hair of dog,
A big jam doughnut would be nice....*

Oops! I didn’t mean to say that!”

There was a gigantic flash and a bang. The Wizard closed his eyes tight. He felt the floor shudder beneath his feet.

“Has the spell worked?” he asked the ghost.

The ghost paused.

“Woo,” it said uncertainly.

Wizard Watchit opened his eyes and looked down.

He wasn't invisible at all. He could still see his feet.

"Bother," he said.

Then he realised that his feet were standing on nothing.

"Oh, help," he said. "I'm still here – but the floor's vanished!"

"Woo!" said the ghost, impressed.

"Oh dear, oh dear. The King is not going to be happy about this," said Wizard Watchit. "I'd better hide!"

He looked around. There was nothing to hide behind. There was no bed, no chair, no door and no cauldron. They were all invisible.

He put out a hand and felt around. He could feel his spell book open on the table. He could feel everything else. But he could not see them.

His whole room had just vanished.

* * *

So had Princess Fifi's room.

"What's happened?" screamed Princess Fifi. "The castle – it's gone! It's disappeared! Oh, woe is me! I think I'm going to faint."

She fell backwards on to her invisible bed, and bounced.

She sat up.

"That was fun!" she said, and did it again. And again. It was a lot of fun bouncing on an invisible bed.



Bella had been busy sweeping the corridor, when the corridor disappeared. So did her broom.

“No more cleaning today,” she decided. “There’s no point when I can’t see the dirt!”

She felt her way to the invisible stairs. It was hard to walk down an invisible staircase, so she slid down the invisible banister instead.

“That was fun!” she said. She went back up and slid down again. And again. It was a lot of fun sliding down invisible banisters.

Jack the servant-boy was helping the Queen put up a shelf, when suddenly the shelf vanished. So did the wall. Jack yelped in alarm.

The Queen did not yelp. She just laid down her hammer and said calmly, “Well, well! I think we’d better go and find the King.”

Jack and the Queen felt their way out of the invisible door and through the invisible Castle. Jack kept on walking into walls that he couldn’t see, and banging his nose. That was no fun at all.

So he stood still and gazed through the invisible walls. He could see everybody in the Castle. He could see Fifi bouncing on nothing. He could see Bella sliding down nothing.

He could see Wizard Watchit in his tower, trying to hide behind nothing. And he could see the King, getting very angry.

“*Watchit!*” bellowed the King. “I want a word with you!”

The Wizard gave up trying to hide. He plodded slowly down from his invisible tower.

“That was a hopeless spell!” shouted the King. “It’s useless – it’s ridiculous – it’s a total–” He stopped with his mouth open.

Something had caught his eye.

The King could see right through the castle walls for miles around. And in the distance, he had just spotted two small figures riding towards them.

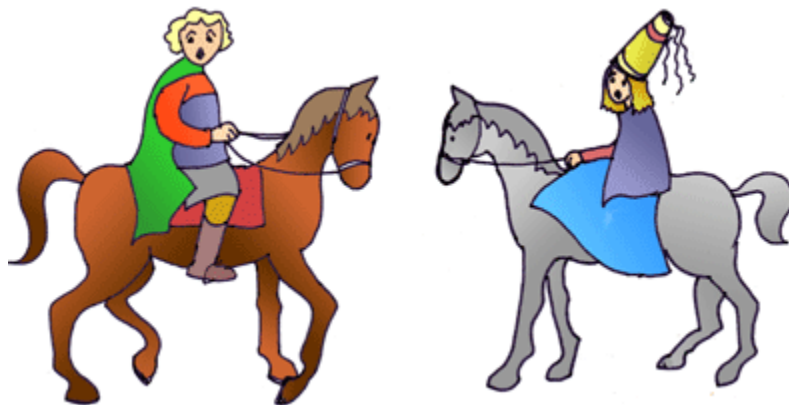
“Oh, no!” gasped the Queen. “It’s the Duke and Duchess! Here they come!”

“We’re done for,” groaned the King.

Fifi stopped bouncing. Bella stopped sliding.

Everyone kept very still and stared through the invisible walls.

They saw the tiny figures in the distance pull their horses up and stop. They saw them point, and scratch their heads, and look from side to side.



Then they saw them shrug. The Duke and Duchess turned their horses round, and rode off home the same way they had come.

“They can’t see the castle!” yelled the King.

“They must think it’s been knocked down!” cried the Queen.

“Or maybe they think they’ve gone the wrong way! Who cares? They’re going home again! Hooray!” The King gave the startled Wizard a big hug. “What a wonderful spell! It’s marvellous! It’s superb! Well done, Watchit!”

“Glad you like it,” said Wizard Watchit. “I thought all along that it should do the trick. Do you think as a reward I could have a royal doughnut?”

But the King wasn't listening. "All we need now," he said, "is another spell to bring the castle back. You can do it as soon as the Duke and Duchess are out of sight."

"But—"

"Well? What are you waiting for?" the King demanded. "Off you go!"

So the Wizard had to climb all the invisible stairs back up to his tower. By the time he reached the top, he felt even hungrier than before.

"Where's my spell book gone?" he growled.

"Woo woo," said the ghost.

"Oh, of course! It's invisible. That means I can't do any spells."

Wizard Watchit sighed. "Never mind. I expect the invisibility will wear off soon without my help."

He thought for a moment. Then he smiled.

"There's no hurry, after all," he told the ghost. "I've thought of something very important I should do before the spell stops working."

"Woo?"

"Oh, yes, it's vital. In fact, I must go and do it now! This minute!"

Wizard Watchit crept back down the stairs and headed for the invisible kitchen. He knew exactly where to find them...

...a big, invisible plate full of invisible royal doughnuts – with extra invisible jam.

The Skeleton in the Cupboard

Princess Fifi was bored.

Outside Custard Castle, the sun was shining. The breeze blew in the gardens.

But Fifi couldn't be bothered to go outside. She lay on her bed, feeling bored.

She had read her Bumper Book of Princes, twice. She'd eaten a whole box of chocolates.

She'd fanned herself with all her fans. She'd sorted out her ribbons and bows. Now she was *bored*.

"I know!" said Fifi. "I'll count my dresses!"

She pulled all her dresses out of the wardrobe, and heaped them on her bed. There were pink dresses, green dresses, frilly dresses and flowery dresses.



But Fifi wasn't satisfied.

“I’ve only got sixty-five dresses,” she complained. “And they’re all boring! I need more clothes.”

Fifi marched out of her room and went to find the Queen.

The Queen was in the parlour, knocking down a wall.

“Mother!” said Fifi. “I need some new clothes.”

“Not now, dear!” said the Queen. “I’m busy building a new bathroom. Go and ask Bella to make you some new clothes.”

Off went Fifi to find Bella, the maid.

Bella was in the garden. She had the dragon on a lead and was tugging at it. The dragon had wound its tail around a rosebush and was refusing to move.

“Bella!” said Fifi. “Make me some new clothes!”

“Not now,” said Bella. “I’ve got to take the dragon for a walk. Ask the King to buy you some new clothes.”

Off went Fifi to find the King, her father.

The King was outside his treasure room, looking very glum.

“Father!” said Fifi. “Buy me some new clothes!”

“Not likely,” said the King. “The Thing in the treasure room won’t let me get my money.”

He opened the door of the treasure room a crack.

“**RRARGHH!!**” went the Thing. It was a very small Thing, but very fierce. It was very good at guarding the King’s money; especially from the King.

“I can’t get near it,” sighed the King. “Go and ask Wizard Watchit. Maybe he can magic you some new clothes.”

So off went Fifi to Wizard Watchit’s tower.

Wizard Watchit lived in the tallest tower of Custard Castle. Fifi climbed the stone steps to his room right at the top, and banged on the door until the Wizard came out.

“Wizard Watchit!” she said. “I need some new clothes. The King won’t buy me any and the Queen won’t give me any and Bella won’t make me any.”

“Why don’t you make some yourself?” asked the Wizard.

Fifi stamped her foot. “I’m a princess! I don’t do sewing.”

“Well, why don’t you buy some yourself?”

“Certainly not!” said Fifi. “I need all my money for chocolate.”

“Well, what do you want me to do about it?” said the Wizard.

“Magic me some new clothes!” demanded Fifi.

Wizard Watchit scratched his head.

“Hmm,” he said. “I’m not very good at clothes. What if I just turned you into a frog instead?”

“No!” said Fifi.

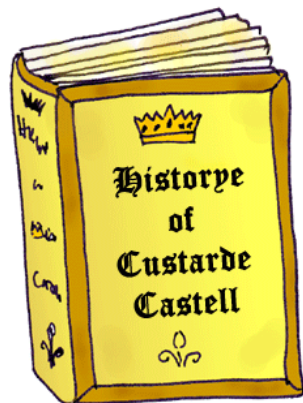
“But if you were a frog, you wouldn’t need clothes,” the Wizard pointed out.

Fifi stamped her foot harder. “I don’t want to be a frog! I want new clothes – and I want them *now!*”

The Wizard went to his bookshelf. He took down the biggest, heaviest book there.

It was not a spell book. It was called:

HISTORYE OF CUSTARDE CASTELL



Its old, yellow pages crackled as the Wizard turned them.

“Custard Castle is full of rooms where no-one ever goes,” he told the Princess. “Those rooms are full of cupboards that no-one ever opens. And it says here in my book, that somewhere there’s a big, black cupboard full of clothes that no-one ever wears.”

“Brilliant!” said Fifi. “Just what I need. Where is this cupboard?”

The Wizard peered at his book. “It doesn’t say exactly. It just says to look in the oldest, darkest room in Custard Castle.”

“Excellent!” said Fifi. “I’ll start looking right away!”

“Take care!” the Wizard warned her.

“Why?”

His voice sank to a whisper. “The reason no-one ever wears those clothes is because the cupboard’s haunted!”

“Pooh,” said Fifi. “I’m not scared.”

And she ran downstairs to start her search immediately.

Custard Castle had three hundred rooms and only seven people. Fifi crept along the corridors, tip-toeing into all the rooms that no-one ever went in.

The rooms were silent. No-one used them except spiders. They were full of dust and shadows and old, dark cupboards swathed in cobwebs.

Fifi *did* feel scared – but she also wanted those new clothes.

So she brushed aside the cobwebs and opened all the cupboards that no-one ever opened.

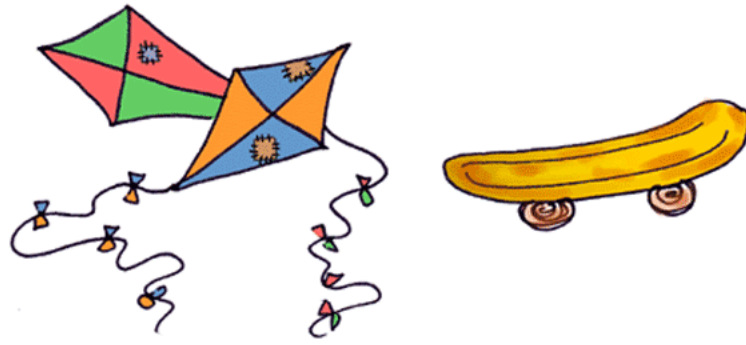
The first cupboard was full of rusty skate-boards.

“*They’re* no good!” said Fifi.

The second cupboard was full of mildewed bagpipes.

“*They’re* no good!” said Fifi.

The third cupboard was full of tattered kites.



“*They’re* no good!” said Fifi. She began to think that she would never find the cupboard full of clothes.

Then, in a dark, dark room in the depths of the castle, she came across the biggest cupboard she had ever seen.

It was *huge*. It was ten times bigger than Fifi’s wardrobe. It was big enough for an elephant. And the cupboard was as black as midnight.

“This must be the one!” declared Fifi, and she pulled on the handle.

The handle was stuck. She pulled and pulled, as hard as she could, until at last, with a gruesome groan, the door slowly swung open.

Fifi’s eyes widened.

The enormous cupboard was full of clothes! It was stuffed with dresses made of silk and lace and velvet. There were frilly frocks galore, all covered in ribbons and bows.

“Hundreds of dresses!” gasped Fifi in delight. “And they’re all mine!”

She reached into the cupboard.

Then she heard a sudden rattling sound, like dry sticks – and out of the huge black cupboard jumped a skeleton. It was wearing a yellow dress covered in daisies.

“All *mine!*” said the skeleton, and it glared at Fifi.

Fifi was terrified. She turned and ran. The skeleton ran after her, with all its bones rattling.

Fifi ran through dozens of dusty, shadowy rooms, with the skeleton chasing her. It loped after her with long, clattering strides, and grabbed at her with bony fingers.



Fifi ran all the way through Custard Castle with the skeleton at her heels. She ran to Wizard Watchit's tower, with the skeleton clattering right behind her.

She raced up the stone steps, and banged on the Wizard's door.

"Help!" she cried. "Wizard Watchit! *Help!*"

The skeleton bounded up the stairs after Fifi.

"Gotcha!" it hissed.

But just as it reached out its bony hand to grab her, it tripped over its yellow daisy dress. Down it fell with a *rattle bing clack*, and landed in a heap at Fifi's feet.

Wizard Watchit came out of his room. "What's the matter?"

"I found the oldest, darkest room, and I found the cupboard with the clothes," cried Fifi, "but then I found *that* too, and it won't go away!"

"Who are you?" the Wizard asked the skeleton sternly.

It sat up and rubbed its bony head.

"Don't know," it said sulkily.

"How did you get into the cupboard?"

“Can’t remember,” grumbled the skeleton.

“Well, whose are all the clothes in there?”

“Mine!” it cried. “All mine!”

“Hmm,” said the Wizard. He went back into his room and fetched down the HISTORYE OF CUSTARDE CASTELL from its shelf. He leafed through its crackling pages.

“Let me see,” he muttered. “Aha! I know who you are! You’re Princess Vinegar the Vain!”

“Princess?” Fifi was very put out. “I thought I was the only Princess in the castle!”

“You are *now*,” said the Wizard. “Princess Vinegar lived five hundred years ago. She was so vain that all she cared about were clothes. She had hundreds of dresses, and she spent all her time trying them on. Then, one day, she vanished!”

“Vanished?”

“No-one knew where she had gone,” said Wizard Watchit. “She was never seen again. But she must have been in the cupboard all along!”

“Door got stuck,” complained the skeleton.

“But now I’ve set you free!” cried Fifi. “I’ve rescued you! I’m a heroine! Hooray! You needn’t haunt the cupboard any more. You can come out for good!”

“Won’t!”

“And I can have all your clothes.”

“Can’t!” cried the skeleton. “All mine!” It jumped up, gathered up its yellow skirts with bony hands and clattered away down the stairs.

Fifi and the Wizard ran after it. They chased the skeleton as it click-clacked through dozens of shadowy, dusty rooms.

They followed it past all the cupboards full of kites and skateboards and bagpipes.



The skeleton raced all the way back to the dark, dark room in the depths of the castle. It ran to its big, black cupboard, jumped in and slammed the door.

The Wizard knocked on the cupboard door.

“Go away!” said the skeleton’s voice.

“Aren’t you coming out?”

“No. Like it here, with my dresses.”

“But there are so many dresses in there,” said the Wizard. “Can’t Fifi have any of them?”

“No! All mine!” screeched the skeleton.

Fifi and the Wizard looked at each other.

“They weren’t new, after all,” said Fifi. “And perhaps sixty-five dresses are enough.”

She looked out of the dusty window. Outside, the sun was shining and the breeze was blowing in the gardens.

“Do you want to come and fly a kite?” she asked the Wizard. “On a skate-board? While trying to play the bagpipes?”

“All right,” said Wizard Watchit.

So they did.

The Lost Room

“Bother!” said the Queen of Custard Castle. She looked extremely cross.

“What’s the matter?” asked the King.

“I left my toolbox in the Grand Dining Room,” she said. “I put it on the table. And now I’ve lost it!”

“You’ve lost your toolbox?” yawned the King.

“No! I’ve lost the dining room! It’s disappeared.”

The King closed his mouth with a snap. “Lost the dining room? Nonsense!” he announced. “Why, I was in there only this morning. You’ve just forgotten where it is. Come along and I’ll show you.”



He marched off down the corridor with the Queen hurrying behind.

“The Grand Dining Room is just around the corner h—” The King stopped. “It was just here,” he said. “Where’s it gone?”

“That’s what I’d like to know!” said the Queen.

The King scratched his head and stared at the place where the dining room door used to be. Now there was nothing but a blank wall.

“Call Wizard Watchit!” he declared. “I expect this is his fault. He can sort it out. I’ve got important royal business to get on with.”

He stomped off to his throne room and sat down for an important nap.



“*Watchit!*” yelled the Queen.

The Wizard came running down from his tower.

“The Grand Dining Room’s gone missing, and it’s got my toolbox,” said the Queen. “Have you been doing spells in there?”

“Me?” said the Wizard.

“Yes, you! The King thinks that this is all your fault. You’ve got to find the Dining Room. I want my toolbox back!”

“How do I find a lost Dining Room?” asked Wizard Watchit.

“With a spell, of course,” said the Queen. “*You’re* the Wizard. You should know how. I’ve got to do my nails.”

And she hurried off to her parlour to sort out her nails, bolts and screws.

Wizard Watchit did not know of any spells to find lost Dining Rooms. So he walked up and down the corridors, looking for the missing door.

He stopped by the King’s treasure room. The Thing was standing outside it, looking very unhappy.

“What’s wrong?” asked Wizard Watchit.

“AAROOGH,” wailed the Thing.

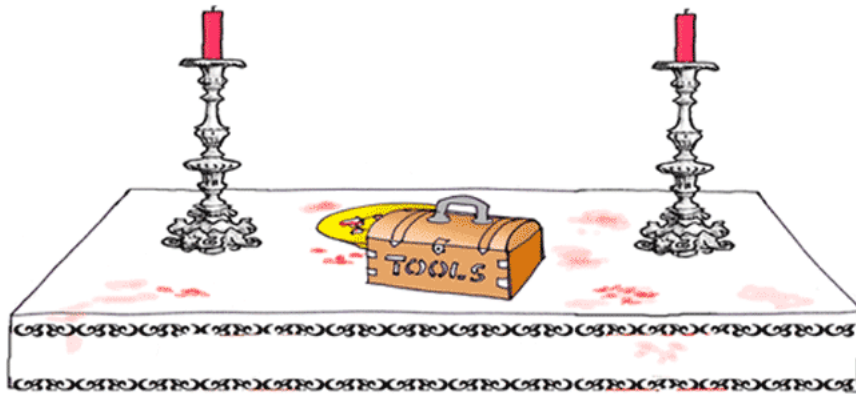
“Why aren’t you guarding the treasure?” said the Wizard sternly.

“WOORARLG.”

“But somebody might steal it!” The Wizard flung open the treasure room door.

Inside, he did not see any heaps of treasure.

He saw the Queen’s toolbox on a long table. He saw silver candlesticks and a huge golden dinner-plate.



There was a fancy purple carpet on the floor and emerald green silk wallpaper.

It was the Grand Dining Room; and it was very Grand indeed.

“Aha!” cried the Wizard. He was about to go in and grab the toolbox when the door slammed shut.

The Wizard rattled the handle. “Open up!” he shouted.

The door flew open. But now the dining room had gone. There was no table and no toolbox. There was nothing in there but a boring heap of treasure.

The Thing leapt in and sat on top of the treasure pile. It gnashed its tiny teeth at Wizard Watchit.

“GRROUH!!” it said.

“All right, I’m going,” said the Wizard.

He went outside and walked around the castle walls, hunting for the dining room.

He looked hard at all the windows. And at last he spotted a large window where no window used to be.

Wizard Watchit ran over and peered in. There it was! There were the candlesticks and toolbox on the table!

“Found it!” he cried. He was about to open the window and climb in—when the window disappeared. There was nothing in front of him but a flat stone wall.

“Drat!” said the Wizard. “It’s gone again. No, hang on. There it is!”

The large window had appeared again not far away. The Wizard hurried over.

But before he reached it, the window disappeared. Then it reappeared further down the wall.

Wizard Watchit ran around the castle, chasing the Grand Dining Room. Every time he spotted it, it disappeared before he could catch it up.



After an hour of running, the Wizard was hot and tired, and as grumpy as a walrus with toothache.

“I can’t chase runaway dining rooms all day!” he panted. “I’m going home to my tower.”

He trudged over to his tower and climbed the steps. The ghost was floating around unhappily outside his door.

“Woo woo woo woo!” cried the ghost.

“Really? Here?” said the Wizard. He flung the door open—

—and saw the Grand Dining Room, toolbox, huge gold plate and all.

The door slammed in his face. Wizard Watchit jumped back.

Cautiously he opened the door again—

—and saw his spell books, his cauldron and his collection of emergency pies.

“Bother! I can’t keep up with this dratted dining room. Now it’s gone off somewhere else! *You* go and find it,” Wizard Watchit told the ghost.

“Woo?”

“Yes, you! It’s probably haunted. You’re a ghost, so you should find it easily.” The exhausted Wizard flopped down in his chair and reached for a pie.

“Woo woo!” Nervously, the ghost floated down the stairs.

It was scared of leaving the tower. It did not like the three hundred echoing rooms of Custard Castle.

All the same, it wanted to please Wizard Watchit. So it timidly squeezed through walls and glided through doors in case the lost dining room was behind them.

It saw the King snoring on his throne. It saw the Queen counting her nails. It saw Princess Fifi doing a jigsaw of Top Ten Princes.

It saw Bella and Jack having tea with the Cook in the kitchen. But it did not see a lost dining room anywhere.

By now it had glided through every wall in the castle. It had looked in every room.

The ghost paused by the stairs to think.

The Grand Dining Room did not want to be found.

“Maybe it’s scared of something,” thought the ghost. “Maybe it’s hiding!”



Just then the ghost heard a faint clattering noise under the stairs. It came from the cupboard where the little dragon slept. They kept the dragon there for lighting fires.

But this noise did not sound like a dragon’s snores. It sounded like the rattle of a toolbox.

The ghost made itself as wispy as it could. Silently it glided through the cupboard door. It was so thin and faint that the dining room would not realise it was there.

Inside the cupboard, it saw the dragon, fast asleep.

But it was sleeping on a fancy purple carpet, underneath a long, grand dining table. On top of the table sat the toolbox, the silver candlesticks, and the huge gold plate.

The ghost looked closer.

“Woo!” it murmured in disgust. There was a squashy, sticky mess of something on the plate. There was a squashy mess of something on the tablecloth, and on the candlesticks, and all over the fancy purple carpet.

And the emerald-green silk wallpaper was covered in big, red, sticky fingerprints.

The ghost stared at the sticky mess – and then it knew exactly why the room had run away.

It glided back to the tower to tell the wizard where the Grand Dining Room had got to.

Wizard Watchit hurried off to tell the King.

“In the dragon’s cupboard?” exclaimed the King. He ran downstairs to see. So did the Queen and Fifi and Bella and Jack.

The King glared at the cupboard door.

“What a ridiculous place for a dining room!” he said. “I blame you for this, Watchit.”

The Wizard didn’t answer. Instead he put his mouth to the keyhole and whispered into the dining room.

“Don’t disappear! We’ve come to help.”

“Help?” said the King. “Why does a dining room need help? What have you done to it, Watchit?”

Still the Wizard didn’t answer. Very gently, he opened the door. He beckoned to Bella the maid, and Bella tiptoed in.

This time, the dining room did not disappear. It let Bella tiptoe round the dining table. She looked at the plate, and the carpet, and the walls.

“Well!” she said. “I’m not surprised it tried to run away. Look at the mess!”

The King turned to the Queen. “That’s *your* toolbox,” he said.

“I’m not talking about the toolbox,” Bella said severely. “*Who’s been eating jam doughnuts in here?*”

Everyone turned round and looked at the King. The King went red.

“I had a few this morning,” he mumbled.

“And?”

“I may have dropped a couple...” said the King, shame-faced.

“And?”

“I may have stood on one or two...”

“One or two? I’ve never seen such a sticky, jammy room! No wonder it’s not happy!” Bella said. “You’d better apologise.”

“Sorry.”

“Not to me! To *it!*”

“Apologise to a dining-room?” said the King.

“Yes,” said Bella firmly.



So the King apologised to the Grand Dining Room. Then Bella cleaned up all the smears of jam and squashy bits of doughnut. She polished the candlesticks and scrubbed the carpet and wiped the wallpaper until the room was spotless.

Once she had finished, she closed the door. When she opened it again, it was just a dragon’s cupboard.

Wizard Watchit ran down the corridor to check where the Grand Dining Room had gone. This time, it was back in its right place.

And there it stayed. But after that, whenever it saw the King coming near it with a doughnut, it slammed the door shut in his face.

The King had to eat his Royal Doughnuts in the bath, where he could make as much mess as he liked. The dining room refused point-blank to let him in.

After all, it was *extremely* Grand.

The Headless Knight

The ghost had never been so scared.

It thought it was the only ghost in Custard Castle. It had never seen any sign of another ghost.

Until now...

It was the dead of night. In his room at the top of the tower, Wizard Watchit was snoring in his bed. The ghost was curled up fast asleep inside the cauldron.

Suddenly they both sat up in a hurry. They could hear a dreadful noise outside the door.

Something was stamping and clanking up the steps to Wizard Watchit's room.

Wizard Watchit jumped up in his nightshirt. He lit a candle and peered out of the door into the dark.

"Who's there?" he called.

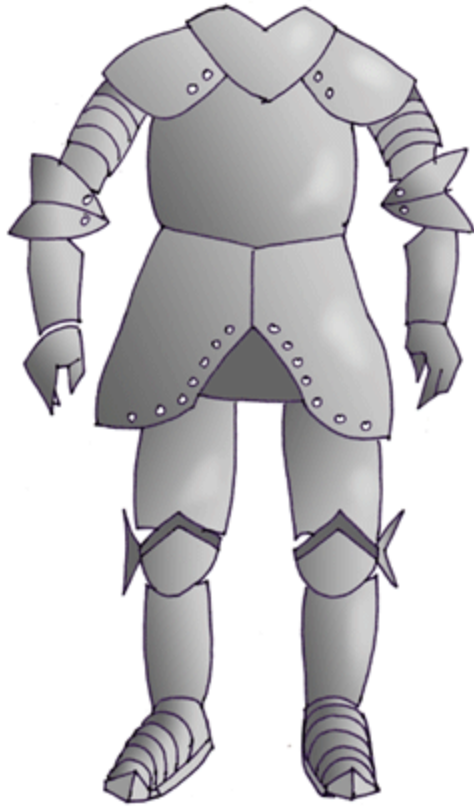
Nobody answered. But in the dark, he heard the clanking come closer and closer.

Whatever it was clanked right up to the top of the staircase.

And then it clanked right into Wizard Watchit's room.

By the light of the candle, the ghost and Wizard Watchit stared at it in horror. It was a knight in heavy, clanking armour.

Or rather, it was most of a knight... because it had no head.



The Wizard backed away.

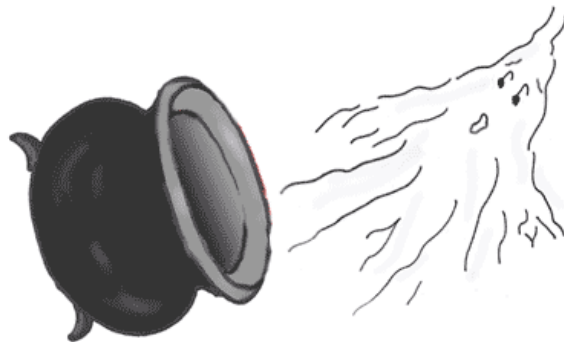
“Woo!” wailed the ghost, and it tried to hide inside the cauldron.

CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

The knight stamped across the room after the ghost. It grabbed the cauldron and tipped it upside down.

“Watch it!” shouted Wizard Watchit.

“Woo!” screamed the ghost. It shot out of the cauldron and tried to hide on the wizard’s shelves.



CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

The headless knight stamped over to the shelves. It swept everything off them with an iron fist.

“*Woo!*” shrieked the terrified ghost. It fled from the shelves, flew over to the window and dived straight out.

As it fluttered round the tower it heard the sound of iron feet clanking heavily down the stairs.

The headless knight was coming after it!

The ghost felt desperate. It had to get away.

Normally it never left the wizard’s tower. Now it swooped into Custard Castle to escape the headless knight.

A moment later it heard the heavy ***CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...*** as the knight followed.

The ghost flew up the staircase of Custard Castle.

The knight set an iron foot upon the lowest step. Then it began to climb.

The ghost hurtled into the nearest bedroom.

It was the Queen’s bedroom. The Queen was in bed, fast asleep. The ghost dived inside the toolbox that she kept beside her bed.

The knight strode in, picked up the toolbox and rattled it. There was a tremendous clash and clatter.

The Queen woke up with a start. “What’s going on?” she said.

The ghost did not answer. It squeezed out of the toolbox, dodged round the knight and fled from the room.

The knight stamped after the ghost; and the Queen jumped out of bed and ran after the knight.

The ghost flew down the corridor and shot into the King’s treasure room.

The Thing was in there sitting on a pile of coins. “**YROWL!!**” said the Thing indignantly.

The ghost did not reply. It plunged into the heap of treasure to hide there from the knight.

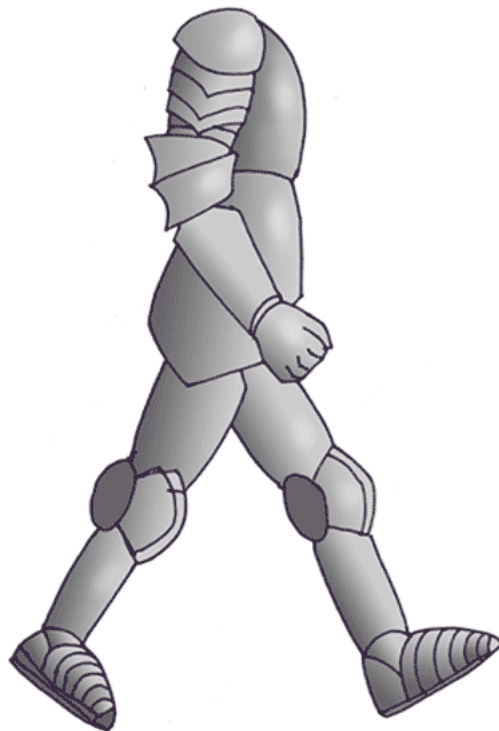
CLANK... CLANK... CLANK... came the iron feet.

The headless knight stamped into the treasure room and kicked at the treasure pile. Gold coins and goblets bounced around the room.

“**YEEK!!**” said the Thing. It leapt at the headless knight and tried to bite its leg; but its teeth slid off the iron armour.

The ghost fled from the treasure room. The knight stamped after it, with the Queen and the Thing both following.

The frantic ghost flew into Princess Fifi’s room. It dived into her wardrobe to hide behind her dresses.



CLANK... CLANK... CLANK... came the iron feet.

The headless knight stamped in and flung open the wardrobe door. Frilly frocks were tossed all over the place.

Princess Fifi sat up in bed. “Who’s there?” she cried.

But the ghost had already fled. The headless knight followed it.

So did the Queen, the Thing, and Princess Fifi.

Next, the ghost fluttered into the King’s bedroom. The King was snoring in his bed. The ghost dived into the chest where the King kept his spare crowns.

CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

The headless knight stamped after the ghost and tore open the chest. Crowns rolled around the floor. So did the King’s secret supply of royal doughnuts.

The King sat up in bed. “Who’s that?” he cried.

But the ghost did not reply. It was already out of the room and half way down the corridor.

And the headless knight still followed it. So did the King, the Queen, the Thing and Princess Fifi.

The terrified ghost fled up more staircases until it was in the attics where the servants slept. It hurtled into Bella’s room and hid inside the broom cupboard.

CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

The knight came up the narrow staircase after it. It stamped into the room. Brooms and brushes were tossed into the air.

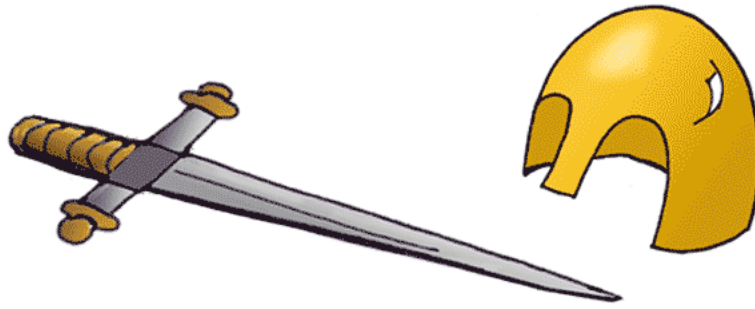
Bella sat up in bed. “What’s all the noise?” she said.

The poor ghost did not answer. By now it was exhausted.

It only had just enough strength to slip into the room next door. It did not have enough strength to hide anywhere.

So it slid to the floor in a helpless ghostly heap.

This was Jack’s room. Jack kept his sword and helmet by his bed, ready for when he had to stand guard.



CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

Jack sat up in bed. “What are you doing?” he said, as the headless knight stamped in.

The knight did not answer. It marched towards the trembling ghost.

Then it stopped. It picked up Jack’s helmet.

It put it carefully on to its shoulders.

The helmet was too small. It fell off the knight’s shoulders and rolled away.

At that, the headless knight grabbed Jack’s sword and slashed it furiously through the air. It looked very angry.

Jack jumped out of bed and ran. He ran right through the ghost.

With the ghost wrapped around him like a wispy scarf, Jack sprinted out of the room and raced towards the stairs.

So did Bella, the Queen, the King, the Thing and Princess Fifi. They all ran helter-skelter back down the staircase and dived into the cupboard under the stairs where the dragon lived.

Luckily the dragon was fast asleep. It did not notice that five people, a Thing and a ghost were all squashed in beside it.

Huddling there, they listened to the ***CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...*** of iron feet outside.

The headless knight was stamping up and down the castle, looking for them and slashing with the sword.

Then, after a while, everything fell quiet. The clanking and the stamping stopped.

The ghost was feeling stronger now, so it put its head cautiously through the door to see what was happening. Being a ghost, it did not need to open the door to do this.

It saw the headless knight sitting on the stairs. The knight's shoulders were slumped. The ghost could not help thinking that the knight looked very sad.

"Maybe he's sad because he's got no head," the ghost decided. "Maybe he's looking for a head! That's why he tried the helmet on – but it didn't fit."

The ghost began to feel a little sorry for the knight. It drifted through the door. Everyone else stayed hidden in the cupboard.

The ghost was all alone with the knight. It was still frightened; but it had a plan.

"Woo?" it said.

The headless knight sat up.

"Woo woo!"

The knight stood up, and waved the sword.

"WOO WOO WOO!" exclaimed the ghost. It turned and flew away.

But this time it wanted the knight to follow it. As it flew into the kitchen, it listened for the **CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...** of iron feet.

Just as it hoped, the knight stamped in behind it.

The kitchen was full of round things. There were copper saucepans and pewter mixing bowls and iron cooking pots. The ghost was sure that one of these would make a perfect helmet for a headless knight.

Sure enough, the knight stopped in the middle of the kitchen.

One by one, it picked up all the pots and pans and mixing bowls and put them on its shoulders.

But then, one by one, it threw the pots and pans and mixing bowls down on the flagstones with a crash. It kicked them furiously aside, looking angrier than ever.

The ghost was horrified. The knight did not like any of the cooking pots.

Its plan had failed! Now it did not know what to do.

“Woo woo!” it cried in panic, as it fled into the pantry.

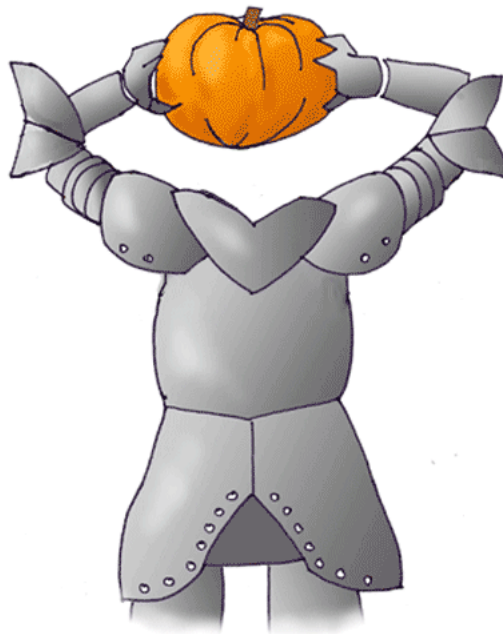
The headless knight ripped off the pantry door.

The ghost dived behind a pile of pumpkins in the corner and hid there, shivering.

CLANK... CLANK... CLANK... stamped the iron feet. The knight strode in and kicked away the pumpkins. They rolled around the pantry.

Then the headless knight paused. It stooped down.

It picked up the biggest, brightest orange pumpkin, and placed it on its shoulders.



It turned this way and that.

The ghost held its breath.

But then, to the ghost's despair, the knight took off the biggest pumpkin. It put it down and began to slash it with the sword. The terrified ghost trembled as pieces of pumpkin spattered the room.

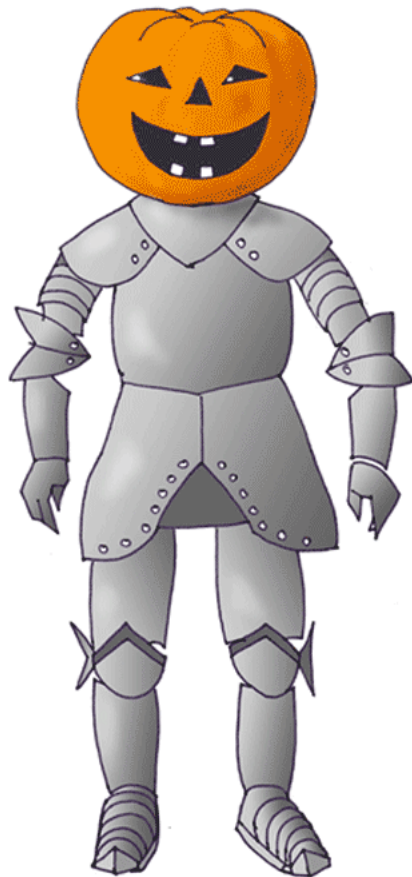
At last the knight stopped slashing. It picked the biggest pumpkin up again. It put it back onto its shoulders.

The ghost stared in admiration, as it realised what the headless knight had done.

"Woo woo," said the ghost politely. It thought the pumpkin head looked very nice, with its newly carved wide eyes and toothy smile.

The knight seemed to think so too. It did a little jig. The pumpkin stayed firmly on its shoulders.

Then the knight walked out of the pantry with its pumpkin head held high. ***CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...***



It stamped through Custard Castle all the way to the front door. Throwing the door open with a bang, it marched off down the road.

The Queen, the King, the Thing, Bella, Jack and Princess Fifi all came creeping out of the cupboard. They looked out of the window just in time to see the knight stamping away.

“Look at that!” said the Queen. “Our ghost has scared away that horrible headless knight! What a good, brave ghost we have!”

The ghost heard this and was extremely happy.

It could see that the knight was happy too. The huge orange head was nodding to and fro as the knight strode off into the distance. The head seemed to glow like a lantern, before it disappeared into the dark.

Everyone began to yawn and stumble back to bed. The tired ghost wafted up the wizard’s tower and floated through the door.

“Are you all right?” asked Wizard Watchit anxiously. “I heard some awful clanking noises over in the castle. Did that knight cause you any trouble?”

“Woo woo,” said the ghost airily, as it settled down inside the cauldron.

As it drifted off to sleep, it thought that it was nice to be the only ghost in all of Custard Castle...

And the best and bravest ghost, at that.

A Visit from Count Scapula

“Rat tata tat!”

There was a loud knock at the door of Custard Castle.

“Bother!” mumbled the Queen.

She had two iron nails in her mouth, and a hammer in her hand. She was busy in the bathroom, mending the royal water tank.



“Rat tata tata Rat!” went the door. It made the Queen jump, so that she hammered a nail right into the tank. The tank began to drip.

“Bother!” said the Queen. “Who can that be?” She ran to open the door.

In the doorway stood a tall, thin man, wrapped in a black cloak. He had sleek black hair and glittering red eyes.

He smiled at the Queen. Two long, sharp teeth stuck out of his mouth.

The Queen smiled politely back. Two long, sharp nails stuck out of *her* mouth.

The man blinked in surprise. He said, “Er – good morning, cousin!”

“Cousin?” asked the Queen.

“Yes, indeed. Don’t you remember me? I am your cousin, Count Scapula.” The man swept back his long cloak, and bowed so low that his sleek black hair almost swept the floor.

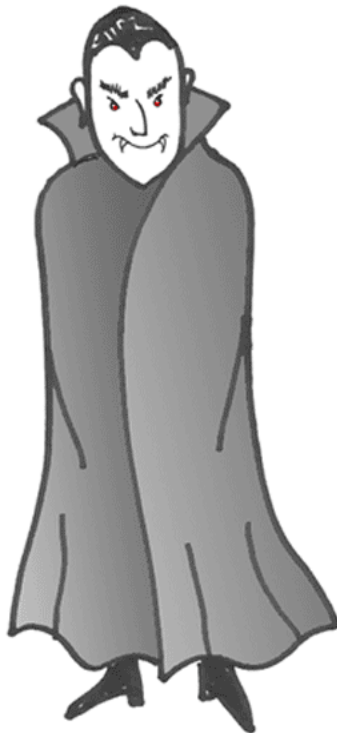
“Oh!” said the Queen. She didn’t remember a cousin called Scapula; but she had so many cousins that she could easily have forgotten one.

“May I come in?” asked the Count, sidling through the door. “I’m very hungry... and very thirsty!”

“Please do,” said the Queen. “So nice of you to visit. The King’s out shopping, but the princess will be back at any minute.”

“A princess?” The Count licked his pale lips. “Oh, good. I love princesses! I think I’m going to like it here!”

As he followed the Queen into the hall, his red eyes were shining.



“What would you like to drink, Count Scapula?” asked the Queen.
“We have tea, or lemonade, or—”

She stopped in mid-sentence. She could hear a drip – drip – drip coming from the bathroom.

“Flood!” she shouted.

“Blood?” The Count looked startled.

“Flood in the bathroom!” The Queen dashed to the bathroom door and peered inside.

The tank was leaking. There was water everywhere. She slammed the door shut so that Count Scapula wouldn’t see.

“Flood all over the floor,” she said.

“Blood all over the floor?” The Count was taken aback. “I like blood,” he muttered, “but not a whole bathroom full!”

“I’m afraid it’s a terrible mess,” said the Queen. “Oh, dear! Fifi will be cross! She’ll want a bath when she comes in.”

“Who’s Fifi?” asked the Count.

“She’s my daughter.”

“Of course! The beautiful princess,” sighed Count Scapula. “I’m very fond of princesses. So tasty – er, I mean, so tasteful...”

The front door crashed open. Fifi came in, very fast, on a skateboard. She whizzed across the hall.



“Out of the way! I can’t stop!” she yelled, as she whizzed right over the Count’s shiny black shoes.

“Ouch!” yelped Count Scapula, hopping on one foot.

“Sorry!” shouted Fifi. She crashed into the stairs, stopped, and looked back at the Count.

“Are you a Prince?” she asked hopefully.

The Count just groaned. His red eyes were watering.

“This is my cousin, Count Scapula,” said the Queen.

“A Count!” said Fifi. “That’s almost as good as a Prince! I’ll go and put a frilly frock on.” She gave the Count her sweetest smile.

“Would you like to see my collection of fans?” she asked.

The Count’s mouth fell open in surprise. “Your collection of fangs?”

“Oh, yes!” said Fifi. “I’ve got hundreds.”

“Hundreds of fangs?” repeated the Count.

“I got them from my admirers,” Fifi said. “Or I could show you my box full of ribbons and bows.”

“Ribs and bones?” said the Count faintly.

“Thousands of them!” said Fifi. “They’re my favourite things. No – actually my very favourite thing is my big jar full of shiny baubles.”

“A big jar full of slimy eyeballs?” whispered the Count. He began to back away.

“But first, I need a bath,” said Fifi. She shouted for the maid. “*Bella!* Go and run my bath!”

Bella appeared, carrying her mop and bucket. “There’s an awful mess in the bathroom,” she said.

“And I’m afraid there’s no hot water,” said the Queen.

Fifi stamped her foot. “But I want a bath! Bella? Get me some hot water – *now!*”

“Keep your hair on,” said Bella. She hurried over to the cupboard under the stairs. “We’ll heat the water up with this,” she said.

Out of the cupboard she took the small, sleepy dragon that they kept for lighting the fires. She poked it in the tummy to wake it up.



The dragon didn’t like being woken up. It huffed in protest. A jet of orange flame shot out of its mouth with a WHOOF, and set the Count’s black cloak on fire.

“Help! A dragon! Save me!” screamed Count Scapula, tearing off his cloak.

“Oops! Sorry,” said Bella. She picked up her mop bucket and emptied it over the burning cloak with a SLOOSH. The cloak steamed and sizzled.

Then Bella tucked the dragon under one arm, and set off to the bathroom with Fifi.

“Fans, ribbons and bows!” sang Fifi as she skipped away.

“Fangs, ribs and bones... a bathroom full of blood... and now a dragon!” moaned Count Scapula. “What sort of a castle is this?”

“Dear me, Count! You don’t look very well,” the Queen said kindly. “Come along to the kitchen, and have something to eat and drink.”

The Count picked up his soggy cloak.

“There aren’t any – any monsters in the kitchen, are there?” he said shakily.

“Of course not!” laughed the Queen. “Just tea and doughnuts. They’re special royal doughnuts, with extra jam.”

“Well, all right then,” said the Count. He followed her warily to the kitchen.

He thought he heard strange noises coming from the kitchen; but when he went in, there was nobody to be seen. Nervously, he glanced around.

“Now then,” said the Queen. “Where can those doughnuts be? I know! Let’s look in the scullery.”

“Scullery?” whispered the Count. “Is it full of... skulls?”

“Don’t be silly,” laughed the Queen. She threw open the scullery door.

There stood Wizard Watchit, staring at them. His eyes bulged like a bullfrog’s. So did his cheeks.

“RRGGGRPH!” said Wizard Watchit. **“BRRRAARGB!”**

The ghost peered over his shoulder, and waved.

“Woo woo,” it said.

“Hallo there,” said the Queen. “Wizard, I’d like you to meet my cousin, Count – where are you going, Count?”

The Count was halfway out the kitchen. “I’m getting out of here!” he yelled. “It’s ghostly! Frightful!”

“Mostly delightful?” said the Queen. “That’s very kind. But don’t leave yet! You haven’t seen—”

It was too late. The Count had fled. She heard the front door slam.

Wizard Watchit swallowed his royal doughnut with a gulp. He had stuffed it into his mouth whole when the Queen came in. He wasn’t supposed to eat the royal doughnuts.

“Harumph! I’m sorry I didn’t meet your cousin,” he said.

“The Count must have been in a hurry,” said the Queen. “But perhaps it’s just as well he didn’t stay for tea. We don’t seem to have any doughnuts left.”

“Maybe he’ll visit us again,” suggested Wizard Watchit, hiding the crumbs under his hat.

“Oh, I hope so!” said the Queen. “He never got to see the dungeons, or our terrible Thing, or the haunted cupboard! Never mind. I’m sure Count Scapula will love them all – next time he comes to stay!”



The End

* * *

You can find more stories about Custard Castle at Emma Laybourn’s website,

www.megamousebooks.com

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