



# The Brunswickian

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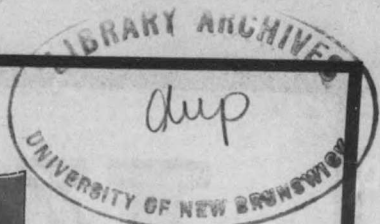
Published Weekly

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B.

Second Class Mail #8120

VOLUME 126, ISSUE 7

October 25, 1991



"The witch is dead, she has been killed, and here is the knife she was killed with."  
 He handed over the knife. It was passed from hand to hand, down and around the circle, with the chuckles and little odd cries and comments from the adults.  
 "The witch is dead, and this is her head," whispered the husband, and handed an item to the nearest person.  
 "Oh, I know how this game is played," some child cried, happily, in the dark. "He gets some old chicken innards from the icebox and hands them around and says, 'These are her innards!' And he make a clay head and passes it for her head, and passes a soup bone for her arm. And he takes a marble and says, 'This is her eye!' And he takes some corn and says, 'This is her teeth!' And he takes a sack of plum pudding and gives that and says, 'This is her stomach!' I know how this is played!"  
 "Hush, you'll spoil everything," some girl said.  
 "The witch came to harm, and this is her arm," said Mich.  
 "Eeeee!"  
 The items were passed and passed, like hot potatoes, around the circle. Some children screamed, wouldn't touch them. Some ran from their chairs to stand in the center of the cellar until the grisly items had passed.  
 "Aw, it's only chicken insides," scoffed a boy. "Come back, Helen!"  
 Shot from hand to hand, with small scream after scream, the items went down, down, to be followed by another and another.  
 "The witch cut apart, and this is her heart," said the husband.  
 Six or seven items moving at once through the laughing, trembling dark.  
 Louise spoke up. "Marion, don't be afraid; it's only play."  
 Marion didn't say anything.  
 "Marion?" asked Louise. "Are you afraid?"  
 Marion didn't speak.  
 "She's all right," said the husband. "She's not afraid."  
 On and on the passing, the screams, the hilarity.  
 The autumn wind sighed about the house. And he, the husband, stood at the head of the dark cellar, intoning the words, handing out the items.  
 "Marion?" asked Louise again, from far across the cellar.  
 Everybody was talking.  
 "Marion?" called Louise.  
 Everybody quieted.  
 The husband stood there, at the bottom of the cellar steps.  
 Louise called, "Marion, are you there?"  
 No answer. The room was silent.

"Where's Marion?" called Louise.  
 "She was here," said the boy.  
 "Maybe she's upstairs."  
 "Marion!"

No answer. It was quiet.  
 Louise cried out, "Marion, Marion!"  
 "Turn on the lights," said one of the adults.  
 The items stopped passing. The children and adults sat with the witch's items in their hands.  
 "No," Louise gasped. There was a scraping of her chair, wildly, in the dark. "No. Don't turn on the lights, oh, God, God, God, don't turn them on, please, please don't turn on the lights, don't!" Louise was shrieking now. The entire cellar froze with the scream.  
 Nobody moved.

Everyone sat in the dark cellar, suspended in the suddenly frozen task of this October game; the wind blew outside, banging the house, the smell of pumpkins and apples filled the room with the smell of the objects in their fingers while one boy cried, "I'll go upstairs and look!" and he ran upstairs hopefully and out around the house, four times around the house, calling, "Marion, Marion, Marion!" over and over and at last coming slowly down the stairs into the waiting breathing cellar and saying to the darkness, "I can't find her."

Then... some idiot turned on the lights.

—Ray Bradbury  
 The October Game

Happy Hallowe-en From  
 The Bruns

