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Freaky Tales from Far and Wide; Moon Tales

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Lupton is a storyteller who has selected seven excellent stories, one each from Indian, English, Inuit, Seneca, Scottish, Russian and Nigerian traditions. They are linked by a humorous, but nevertheless slightly spine chilling sense of the bizarre: a blackbird seeking to free his kidnapped wife conceals a fox, a rope, a swarm of ants and river inside his head; a variety of homeless animals take up residence inside an abandoned skull before being squashed by a bear; England is represented by the gruesome plight of the gingerbread man and Scotland by the nightmarish tale of the strange visitor who creeps into a woman's living room bit by bit.

All of the stories are beautifully concise; this and the pure clarity of the oral style make them very powerful indeed as read alouds. The book is printed in big bold type and Berkshire's full and half page paintings are bright and dramatic.

Moon Tales is another fascinating collection of themed stories, gathering ten moon myths from Chinese, Jewish, West African, Polynesian, Siberian, Canadian, Indian, English, Japanese and Australian traditions. The storylines are more involved here and the style more literary. Readers who are not yet familiar with the wise elders of Chelm (who try to seal the reflection of the moon in a barrel) or with the adventures of Anansi will find explanatory role of myth is also well illustrated, with fascinating accounts from Canada of why the moon has a blotchy face, and from Australia of why it waxes and wanes. Again, the illustrations are rich and colourful, blending the crepuscular hues of night with the brightness of dramatic episodes and characters.

Running Order:

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