

Lulu Poole's School for Ghouls



CULPEPPER WAS A little ghost. He lived in a large, old barn. "I'm too little to scare anyone," he complained sadly to his friends.

"Let me hear you moan," said Archibald.

Culpepper took a deep breath. He let it out slowly.

"Moo," he said. "Moo, moo."

"You sound like a cow," Archibald said, shaking his head.

First, let's hang my papel picado banners.



You cut these out yourself from paper? They're beautiful!

by Joanne Lamond
Art by Daniel Powers



“Let me hear you scream,” said Selena.

Culpepper took a big, deep breath. He let it out quickly. “Eek, eek,” he squeaked.

“That sounds like a mouse,” Selena said, trying hard not to laugh.

“Let me hear you wail,” said Deacon.

Culpepper threw his head back. He sucked in a great gob of air. He let out his best wail. “Whooo.” His wail was no louder than a whisper.

Deacon rolled his eyes. “You sound like a very quiet owl.”

“I’m in trouble,” Culpepper said. “How will I scare anyone on Halloween?”

“You need help,” Archibald said.

“You need lessons,” Selena said.

“You need to get out of the barn,” Deacon said.

“Go to school!” said Culpepper’s three friends.

That night Culpepper left his friends in the old barn. He drifted up Cemetery Lane. He turned left on Dead End Drive. At the top of the hill he saw a rickety building. Words were painted crookedly on the front: **LULU POOLE’S SCHOOL FOR GHOULS**. Culpepper floated up the front steps.

Careful, Sam. That ladder looks like it’s pretty rickety—falling apart.

Nonsense. It’ll be fine.

Do I make a funny skelling-ton?

Perfecto.



He saw a sign in the window:
OPEN ALL NIGHT.

He saw a sign over the door:
**COME IN AND WE'LL BEGIN.
ALL YOUR WORRIES ARE
BEHIND YOU!**

Culpepper passed through the door.
Two candles glowed in the dim hall.

“Hello,” Culpepper said. “Is
anyone here?”

No one answered.

A door at the end of the hall
opened. Culpepper floated toward it.

“Lulu Poole,” Culpepper said.
“Are you here?”

No one answered.

He peeked through the open
door. The door led to the kitchen.
Culpepper went in. The door
slammed shut.

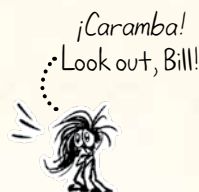
A log fire burned in the stone
fireplace. A black pot hung on a
hook in the fire. Something strange
bubbled in the pot and spattered
into the ashes.

“Lulu Poole, it’s me, Culpepper.
I’ve come for lessons. Can you teach
me to be scary?”

No one answered.

A gray-green cloud rose from
the pot. Culpepper pinched his
nose. “Ooooh, this stinks!”

Culpepper’s eyes watered.



His head hurt. He wanted to leave the kitchen, but an orange cat with blue eyes blocked the door. It hissed and spat at the little ghost.



The stinky cloud grew larger until it filled the kitchen. “OOOOOH!” Culpepper moaned.

The cat arched its back and yowled. It scampered behind a broom to hide.

The kitchen door opened. From behind Culpepper, a blast of air pushed him into the hallway. Up, up he rose, up to the top of the house.

Culpepper was tossed through the attic door. He grabbed a rafter and hung on tight. Soon the wind stopped blowing. The little ghost peered around the room.

“Lulu Poole, are you here?” Culpepper asked.

No one answered.

Moonlight streamed through a hole in the roof. On the attic floor Culpepper could see a basket with worn clothes. He could smell a box of old shoes.

“Lulu Poole, it’s me, Culpepper. I’ve come for lessons. Can you teach me to be scary?”

No one answered.

Now THAT was scary!

Get off, Sam. I ain’t a Day of the Dead spirit yet.



High in a dark corner something moved. Culpepper could hear the beating of great wings. Bats!

“Eek, eek!” Culpepper twisted to the right and swerved to the left as the bats swarmed around him.

“Stop,” said Culpepper as the bats circled his head. “EEEEAAK!” He screamed. The bats fled through the hole in the roof.

Culpepper was ready to go home. Lulu Poole was not here to give him lessons. He would come back some other night. But the strange wind returned. He felt a huge blast of air from above him. He tumbled out of the attic door and down the staircase. Down, down the little ghost dropped, down to the cellar.

Culpepper landed in a tumble. *Floop!* The cellar was dim. He picked himself up off the floor. Cobwebs stuck to him. He saw wet, drippy walls. The air was heavy with the smell of rot.

“Lulu Poole,” Culpepper demanded. “Are you here?”

No one answered.



It looked as if dead flowers were hanging from the ceiling. Chains hung on nails against the walls.

“Lulu Poole, it’s me, Culpepper. I’ve come for lessons. Can you teach me to be scary?”

I always wondered . . . is it *Día de los Muertos* or *Día de Muertos*?



It depends where you come from. Both are right!



And it’s not just one day, but three days?



What’s up with that?



No one answered.

Culpepper sighed. He looked at the dead flowers. They seemed to be crawling on the ceiling. Then each bloom dropped from its place and swayed gently on a thin silver thread.

“Spiders,” Culpepper said, smiling. “Let’s play!” He grabbed a chain from the wall and shook it at the spiders.

“WHOOOO, AAAHHHH!” Culpepper wailed and rattled the chain. The spiders scurried into every crack in the cellar ceiling.

“Well done, little ghost,” whispered a voice.

Culpepper turned. A haggish figure, covered in glowing green mist, floated toward him. Yellow bulging eyes glared from an ashen face. The little ghost shuddered at the odor that seeped from the creature’s mouth as it spoke.

“Tonight you scared the cat, banished the bats, and startled the spiders,” it wheezed. “Now, show Lulu Poole the best you can do.”

Culpepper moaned his deepest moan. “OOOOOOH!”

He screamed his highest scream. “EEEEAAAK!”

He wailed his loudest wail. “WHOOOOO, AAAHHHHH!”

Lulu Poole disappeared in a stinky, gray-green puff of smoke.

Isn't it a very old tradition?



Si, but years ago, in Northern Mexico, it had been all but banished—got rid of—in favor of the Catholic holidays All Hallows’ Eve, All Saints’ Day, and All Souls’ Day. But over time it seeped back in—slowly flowed back into our culture.



A whisper reached Culpepper's ears. "You have learned your lessons well. Refresher courses are offered at a discount. Don't forget to study. School is dismissed."

The wind swept Culpepper out the cellar door, into the hallway, and through the front door of Lulu Poole's School for Ghouls. He hurried back to the barn. His friends were waiting.

"Did you go to Lulu Poole's school?" Archibald asked.

Culpepper nodded.

"Did you learn your lessons?" Selena asked.

Culpepper nodded.

"Can you be scary on Halloween?" Deacon asked.

"What do you think?" Culpepper answered. And he practiced his homework.

"OOOOOOH!"

"EEEEAAAAK!"

"WHOOOOO,

AAAHHHHH!" 

Now, every year, Día de Muertos begins on Halloween.



And that's today!



Well then, let's celebrate!



treats?



No tricks.