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Joyce's Journal

A monthly dispatch from Joyce A. Miller, Writer



THE LEGEND OF "STINGY JACK"!

People have been making jack-o'-lanterns at Halloween for centuries. They're even mentioned in Chapter 18 of **Joe Harris, the Moon**:

"When he got back to Franklin, Pearl asked him to go to the cinema on Halloween before he left on his hunting trip. He was so down on himself, and she wanted to distract him. Pearl was accustomed to the life of a baseball wife. Not only was there glamour, but also there was the challenge of supporting her husband when he had the worst season of his career. As they walked holding hands, they enjoyed seeing the children dressed up in their clown, witch, and hobo costumes, running from house to house. Houses along the street were decorated with carved jack-o-lanterns and paper skeletons. Once inside the theatre, they laughed and laughed at Steamboat Willie on the screen. It was just the relief that Joe needed after his shaky year at the ballpark."

The practice of carving pumpkins originated from an Irish myth about a man nicknamed "Stingy Jack." Stingy Jack had several run-ins with the Devil, tricking him each time. When Jack died, he wasn't allowed into heaven or hell. At the gates of hell, the Devil sent Jack off into the dark night with only a

A GLIMPSE OF
WHAT'S INCLUDED:

**Link to "Joe Harris at
bat" pumpkin
carving stencil!**

burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with it ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as “Jack of the Lantern,” and then, simply “Jack O’Lantern.”

In Ireland and Scotland, people began to make their own versions of Jack’s lanterns by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes and placing them into windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering evil spirits. In England, large beets are used. Immigrants from these countries brought the jack-o’-lantern tradition with them when they came to the United States. They soon found that pumpkins, a fruit native to America, made perfect jack-o’-lanterns.

As the bonus for October’s newsletter, I’m enclosing a pumpkin carving template of Joe Harris at the bat. If you use it to carve your pumpkin, I’d love to see a photo of it. Tag me on Instagram @joyceamillerwriter

I live in the Church Hill section of Richmond, VA with my husband and my retired racing greyhound. Before I started writing, I worked for 30 years at a nuclear physics research laboratory.

Show up and shine!



JOYCE A. MILLER, WRITER

www.joyceamiller.com

@JOYCEAMILLERWRITER on Instagram

