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A HOLIDAY BOOK

Halloween

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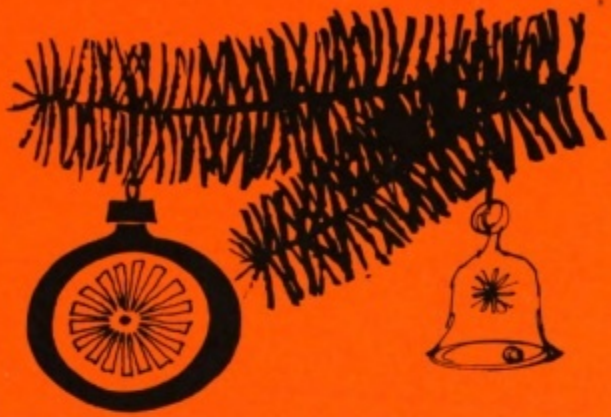

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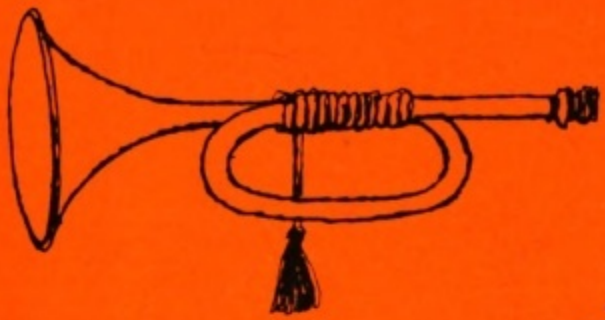

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A HOLIDAY BOOK

Halloween

BY LILLIE PATTERSON

ILLUSTRATED BY GIL MIRET

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

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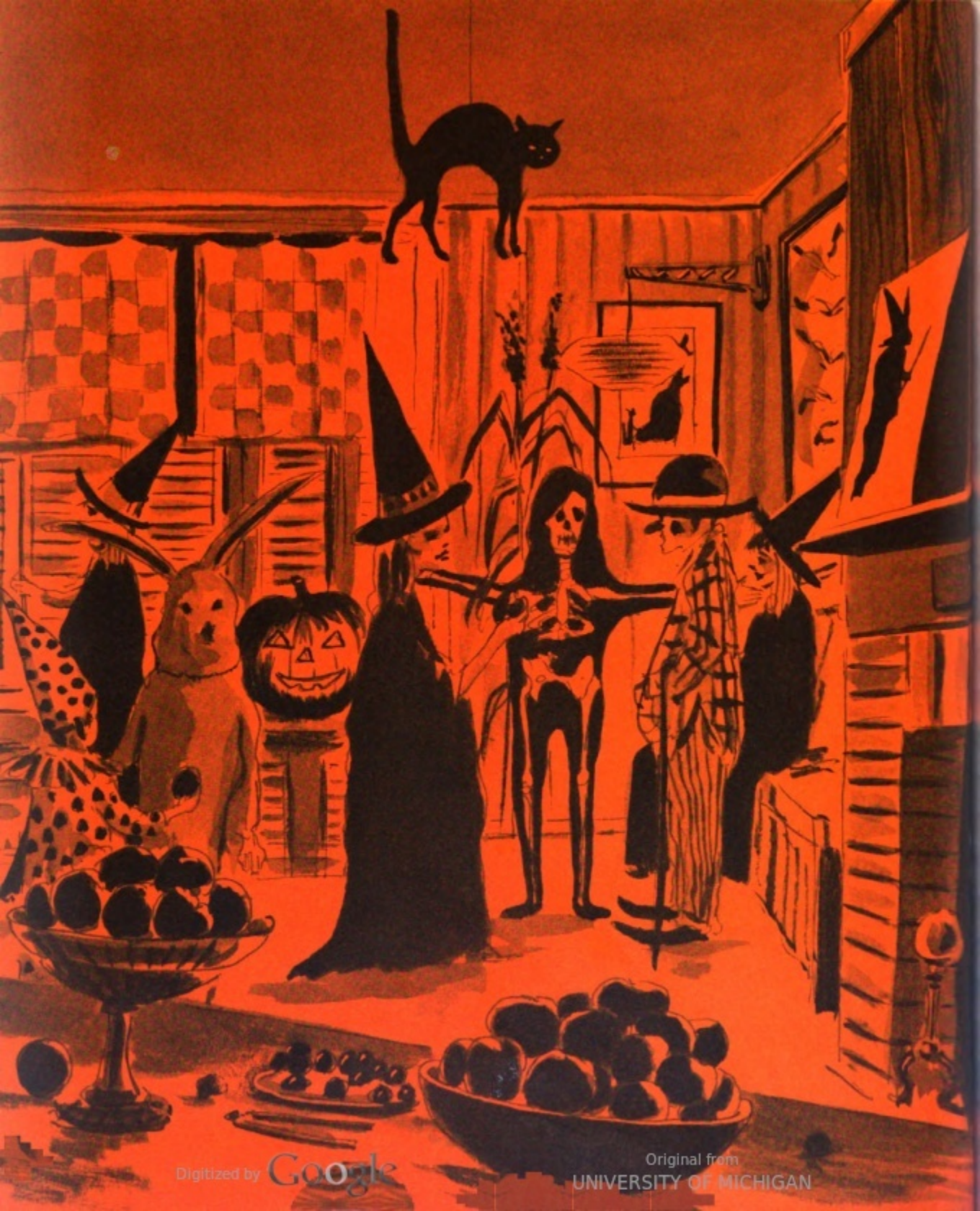

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1
It's Halloween

"Let the ghosts and witches out,
Bring the apples in;
Don't you know it's Halloween?
Let the fun begin!"

It's Halloween! It's a Witches' Party! The room is gaily decorated in orange and black. Grinning jack-o'-lanterns sit in the windows. Cornstalks stand in the dark corners. Halloween treats are waiting on the table. Pictures of witches and black cats are all about the room.

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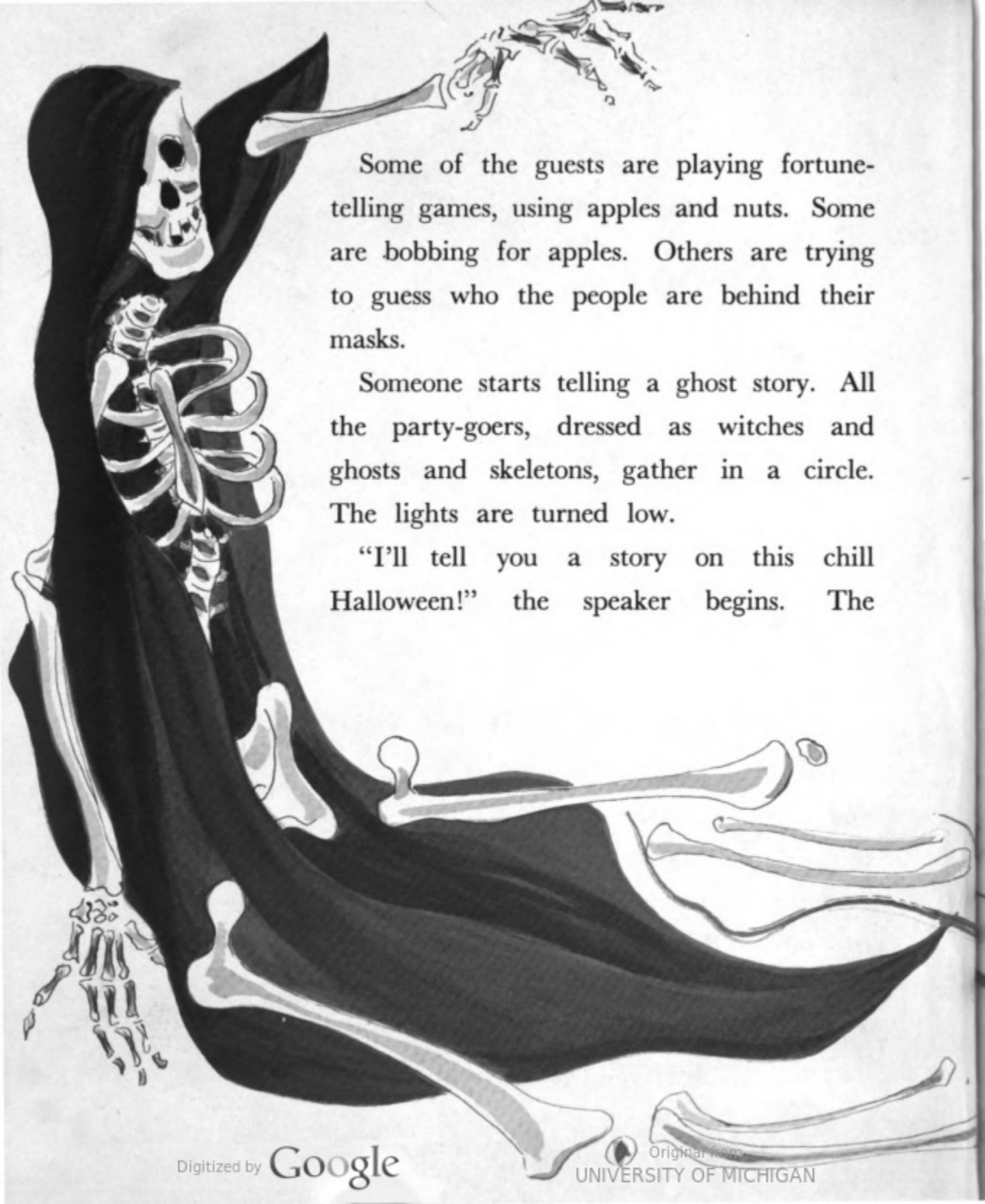

Some of the guests are playing fortune-telling games, using apples and nuts. Some are bobbing for apples. Others are trying to guess who the people are behind their masks.

Someone starts telling a ghost story. All the party-goers, dressed as witches and ghosts and skeletons, gather in a circle. The lights are turned low.

"I'll tell you a story on this chill Halloween!" the speaker begins. The

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listeners shiver and draw closer together.

"A woman sat spinning one Halloween night. 'How I wish I had some company,' she said.

Suddenly,

In came a pair of broad soles, and sat down at the fireside.

A pair of small legs sat down on the broad soles.

A pair of thick knees sat down on the small legs.

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A pair of thin thighs sat down on the thick knees.

A pair of huge hips sat down on the thin thighs.

A wee waist sat down on the huge hips.

A pair of broad shoulders sat down on the wee waist.

A pair of small arms sat down on the broad shoulders.

A pair of huge hands sat down on the small arms.

A small neck sat down on the broad shoulders.

A huge head sat down on the small neck.

'What do you come for?' asked the woman.

'FOR YOU!' cried the strange visitor."

From "The Strange Visitor," *English Fairy Tales* by Joseph Jacobs, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

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2
How It All Began

Ghosts and witches and jack-o'-lanterns are all part of a holiday thousands of years old. Halloween is one of our oldest and most colorful holidays. It goes back to early times before Christ was born.

Part of the Halloween story comes from a people called Celts. They lived where Great Britain and northern France are

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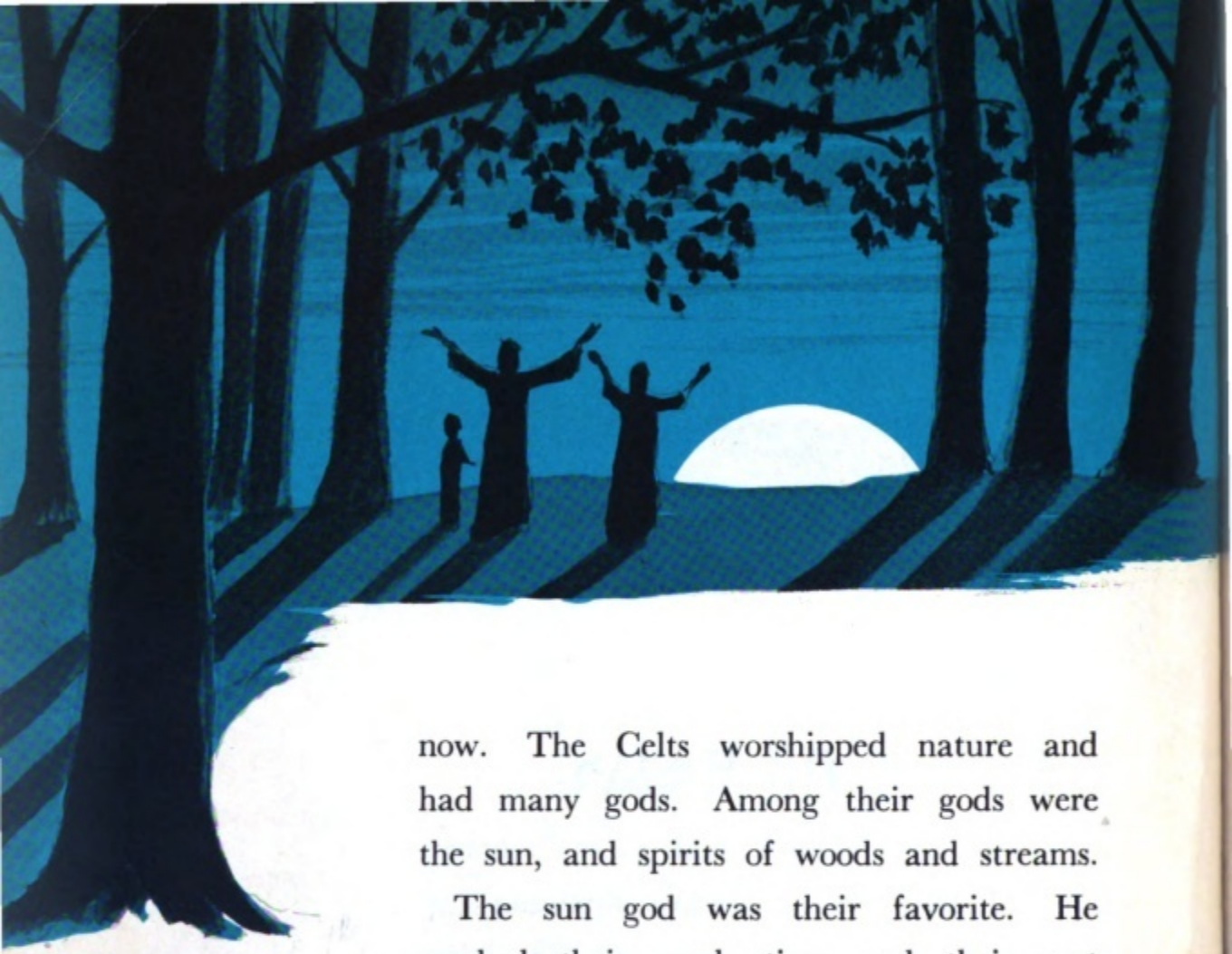

now. The Celts worshipped nature and had many gods. Among their gods were the sun, and spirits of woods and streams.

The sun god was their favorite. He marked their work time and their rest time. He made the earth beautiful. He made the crops grow.

Every year the Celts held a big festival on November 1. They celebrated the end of the season of sun, and the beginning

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The Druids meet high on a hilltop, in a dark oak forest. The oak is their sacred tree. The Druids are dressed in long white robes. They move around a stone altar, praying. They thank the sun god for a good harvest. They promise to help him get ready for his fight.

Fire will help him. Fire is strong and hot like the sun. Evil spirits fear fire. The Druids begin a new fire, for the new season. The fire is sacred, they say. They throw crops and animals into it. The Druids dance in a circle around the bonfire. From hilltop to hilltop new fires light the sky.

Midnight is the magic hour. The season of darkness begins. Now the Druids honor Samhain. He will rule for the next six months. They ask Samhain to let brightness and growth return to the earth.

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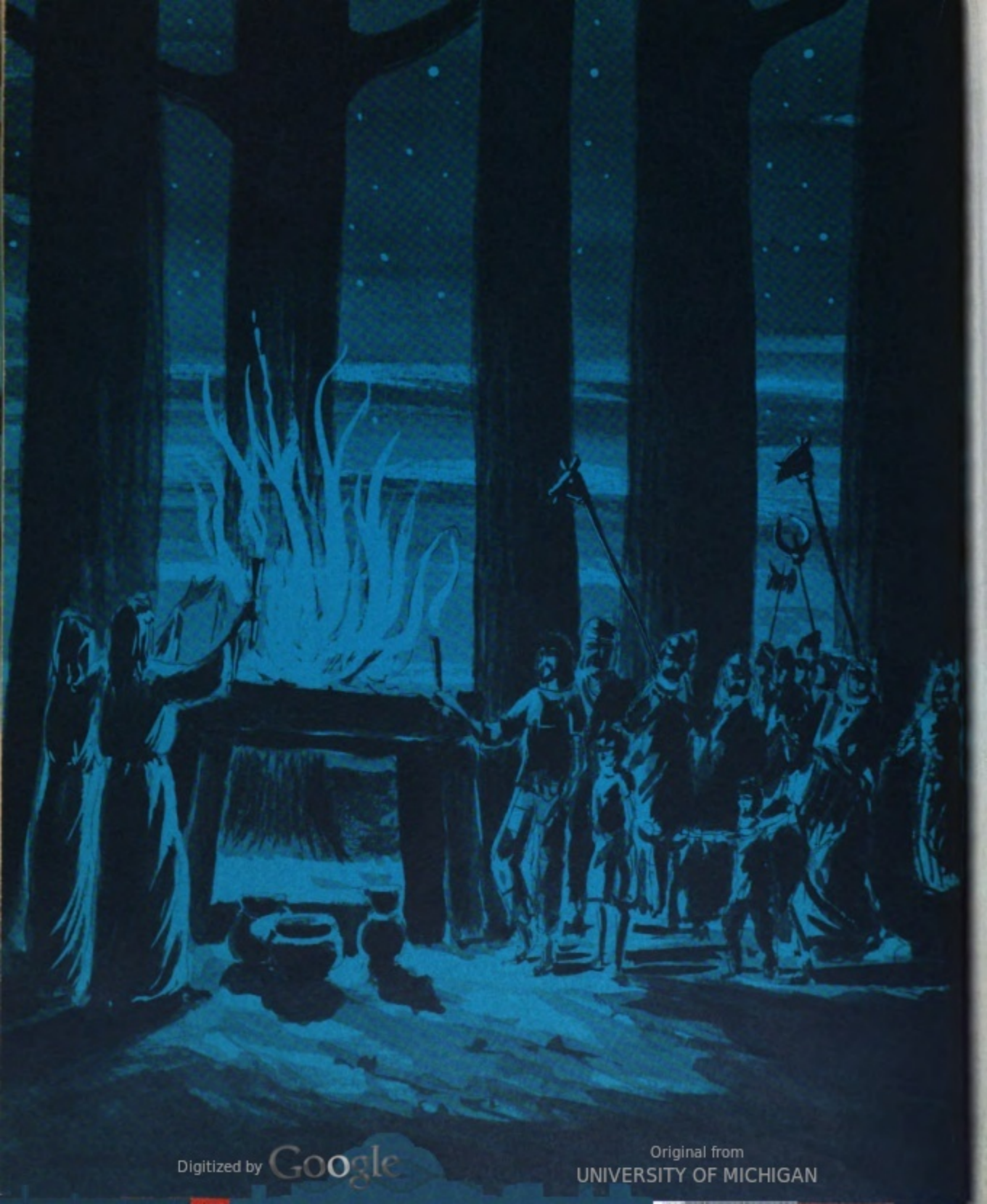

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3

The Apples of Pomona and the Eve of All Hallows

The city of Rome gives us another part of the Halloween story.

The early Romans also had many gods and goddesses. One was Pomona, goddess of their fruits and gardens. The Romans pictured Pomona as a beautiful girl with fruits in her arms and a crown of apples on her head. Some called her the Apple Queen.

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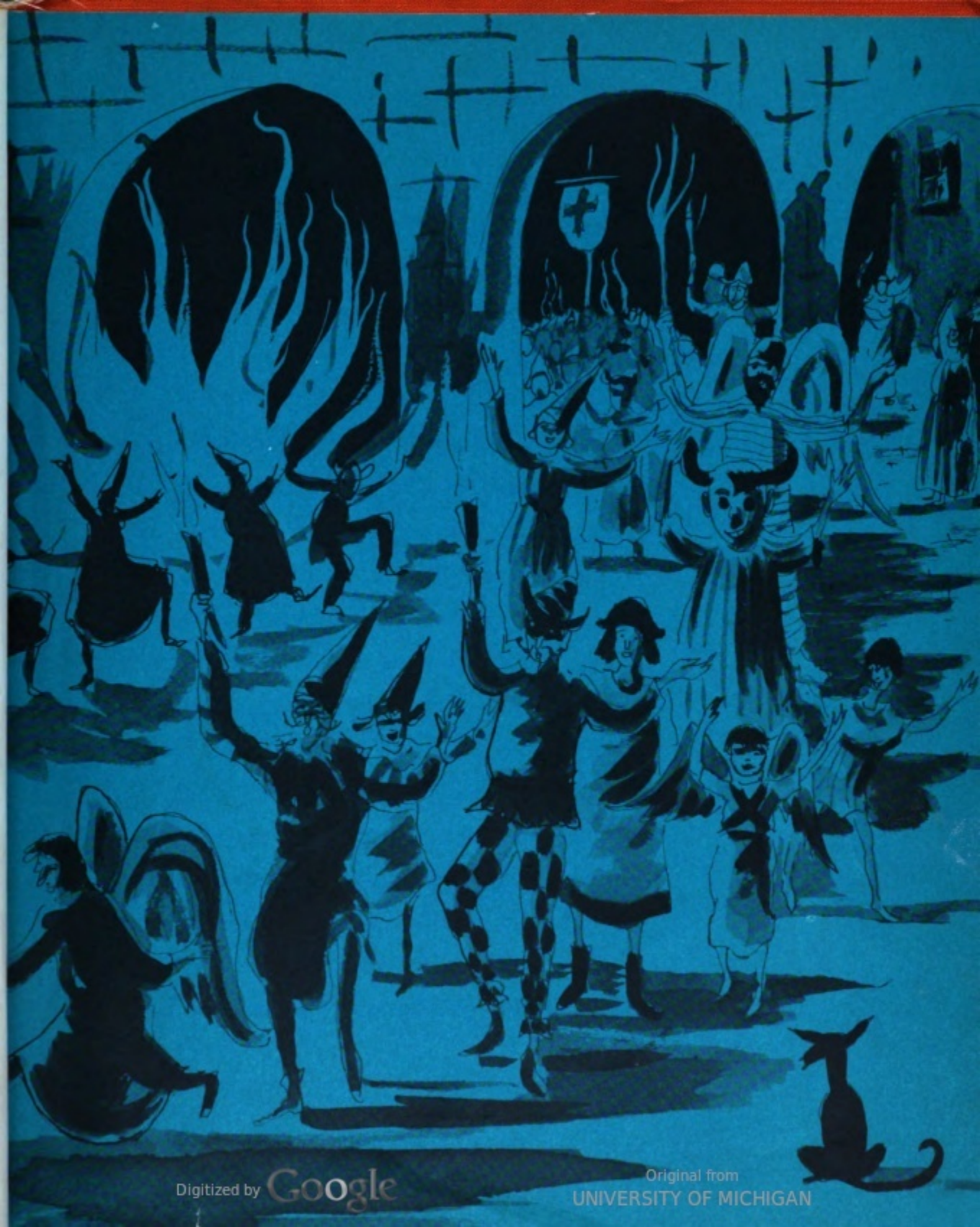

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In time, some of the customs from All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day mixed with those of Samhain and Pomona Day. The name of the holiday was shortened from All Hallow Even to Hallowe'en and then to Halloween.

Each celebration gave colorful customs to the holiday. Pomona Day gave the apples and the nuts, the harvest idea. Samhain honored the harvest too, and death. It gave the fortune-telling and magic, the black cats and evil spirits. All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day also honored the dead. They gave the ghosts and skeletons and skulls.

People learned more about science and nature. They were no longer afraid of the unknown. Still the old customs did not die out. Halloween was too much fun to give up. It just became merrier.

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4
Ghosts, Ghosts, Ghosts

On Halloween, many boys and girls dress in white sheets and pretend to be ghosts. Long ago people really believed in ghosts. They thought the dead came back to their homes once a year, between sunset October 31 and sunrise November 1.

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Ghosts who had no homes had to walk around all night. They would play scary tricks on people.

"A flash of white in the darkness,
'Who-oo-ooo?'
Hoots the owl on the post;
A creak and a groan,
A squeak and a moan,
'Ooo-oo-ooo!'
Comes the howl—
IT'S A GHOST!"

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Every Halloween, says the story, there is a strange dance in the graveyards. At midnight, Death raps on the gravestones to wake the sleepers. All the ghosts leave their graves and begin to dance. Skeletons rattle their bones to strange music. On and on they dance, faster and wilder. Suddenly at dawn, the cock crows. There is silence in the graveyard. The ghosts return to their graves until next Halloween.

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5
Witches and Black Cats

"Look out! Look out, boys! Clear the track!
The witches are here! They've all come back."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

People once were very busy keeping witches away. Most people believed in witches at one time or another. Witches

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worked magic and were given their power by evil spirits. Some female witches were young but most of them were old and ugly. Male witches were called warlocks.

Superstitions about witches were indeed strange. It was believed that witches held big meetings as seasons changed. Two meetings were very important. One came on April 30, the eve before May Day. It was called Roodmas in England and Walpurgis Night in Germany. The other fell on October 31. Halloween became the Witches' Night.

What a gay time the witches had! They flew to the meeting on broomsticks. The party was led by the Devil.

Witches had special powers on this night. Heh! Heh! Heh! They laughed as they thought up all sorts of mischief. Sickness! Bad luck! Storms! Ruined crops!

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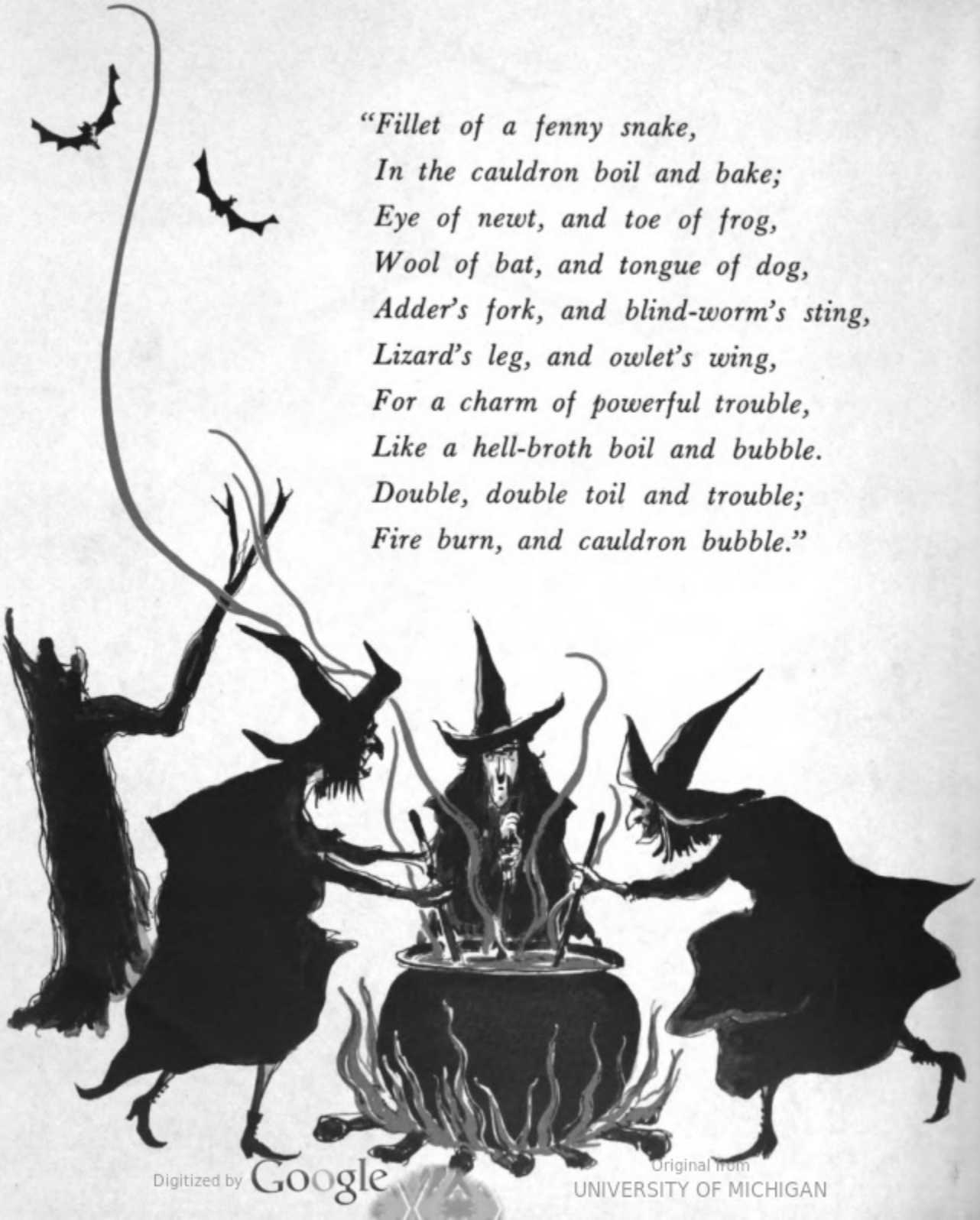

"Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble."

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6
Wee Folk

"Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!"

William Allingham

Watch out! The fairy folk are about.

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They go by many names. Fairies! Goblins! Elves! Leprechauns! Brownies! Trolls! Some wear green. Some wear bright red caps.

When the Celts became Christians they hated to give up their old ways. They had always thought there were spirits in forests and hills, caves and rocks. The country folk still believed in these spirits. But they began to think of them as "Little People." They were not as powerful as the old gods and goddesses, but they were magical. Halloween was their special holiday time. Anyone who saw them would have a strange adventure.

Some were Good Folk. They tried to help humans. Some were full of mischief. They liked to play tricks. Others were evil and did much harm.

The Wee Folk loved music and dancing.

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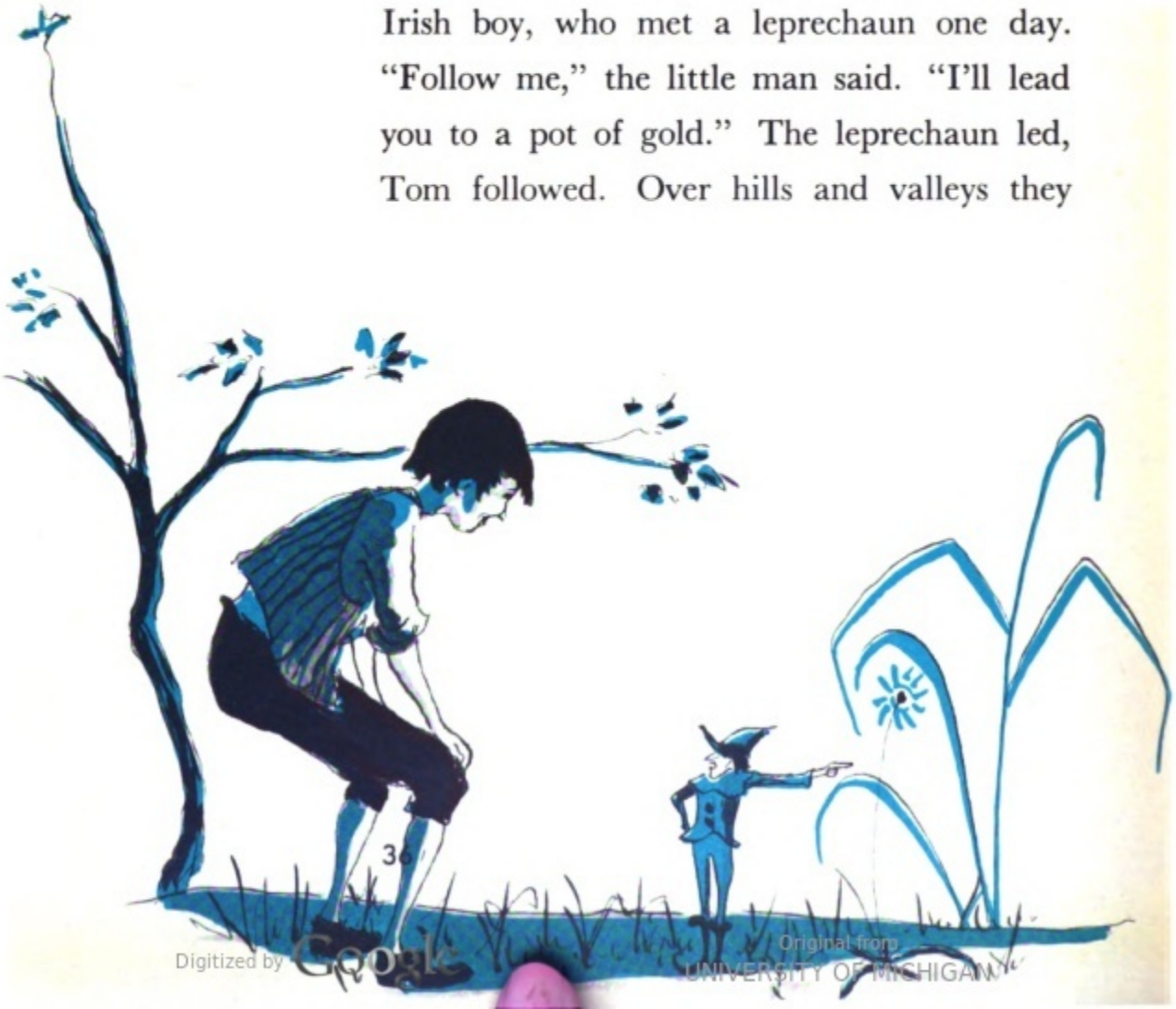
Ireland. The leprechauns were full of mischief. If you met one, he had to grant you a wish. You were never to take your eyes off him, though. If you did he would trick you.

An old folk tale tells about Tom, an Irish boy, who met a leprechaun one day. "Follow me," the little man said. "I'll lead you to a pot of gold." The leprechaun led, Tom followed. Over hills and valleys they



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Brownies and elves were helpful. There were many stories about them.

An old man and his wife had no children to help with their housework. The brownies decided to help. Every night they came and worked and danced and sang. They skipped back home before daylight. Brownies never like to be seen. One night the old man and his wife peeped. They saw that the brownies needed new clothes. "We'll make some," they decided. They sewed little brown suits and caps. On Halloween night they put the new clothes out. How happy the brownies were! They put on the new clothes, but never came back. Someone had seen them.

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7
Halloween Customs from Many Lands

Most Halloween customs came from the land of the Celts. This includes England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and part of France. The Druid religion lasted longest in Ireland and Scotland. Halloween was most important in these two countries.

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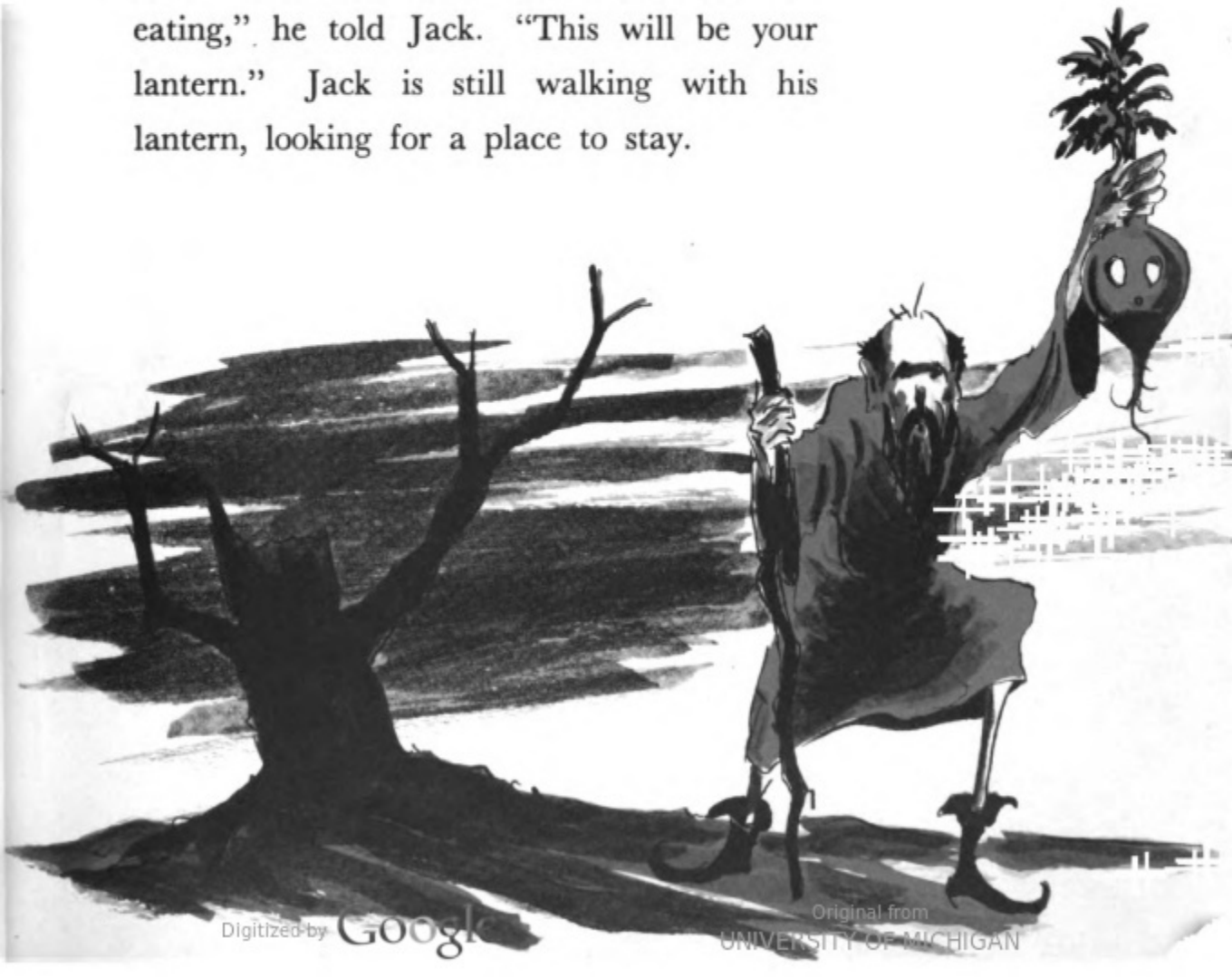
The name jack-o'-lantern is from an old Irish story. Once there was a man whose name was Jack. He was mean, stingy and tricky. When he died, he was too mean to go to heaven. He went to the Devil. The Devil threw Jack a piece of burning coal. "Put this inside the turnip you are eating," he told Jack. "This will be your lantern." Jack is still walking with his lantern, looking for a place to stay.



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bed with his eyes shut tight. No one wanted to see these midnight visitors. French children now beg for flowers on October 31. They use them to decorate churches and graves.

In Mexico, cakes and toys are set out on the evening before All Saints' Day. These are for the dead children of the families. Some parents shoot firecrackers before their homes. These are to light the way for the souls of the dead children.

All Souls' Day is an important national holiday in Mexico. It is called the Day of the Dead. Bakers sell "Dead Men's Bread" in the shape of skulls. Children buy toy skeletons and coffins. They eat candy skulls, candy coffins, and candy funeral wreaths. It is a strange but happy time. Picnic parties visit the graves. All is done in a holiday spirit.

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8
Magic Tests, Chants, Charms

The Druids were great fortune-tellers. The beginning of their new year was the best time for fortune-telling. Spirits were about then and had great power to see into the future.

Halloween became a great fortune-telling night. People used charms, or magic tests, to make the spirits tell their future. They said magic chants to make their wishes come true.

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"Throwing the Shoe" is another test. Throw one shoe over the rooftop or something high. If the shoe lands pointing toward the house, you will stay at home that year. If it points away, you will travel in that direction. If it lands with the sole up, you will have bad luck.

Many charms were tried to make dreams tell the future. Boys cut ten ivy leaves. They threw one away and put the others under their pillows. Girls put a small piece of wood in a glass of water. They slept with this beside their pillows. Many other things were done to bring on dreams.

Today, even though we don't believe in chants and charms, they add to the fun of Halloween.

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9
Halloween Comes to America

American settlers brought their holiday customs from the old countries. Some of these customs stayed as they were. Some were changed to fit new ways of living. Americans also made up new Halloween customs of their own.

Many early settlers came from England. They were religious and very strict. They did not have gay parties and celebrations.

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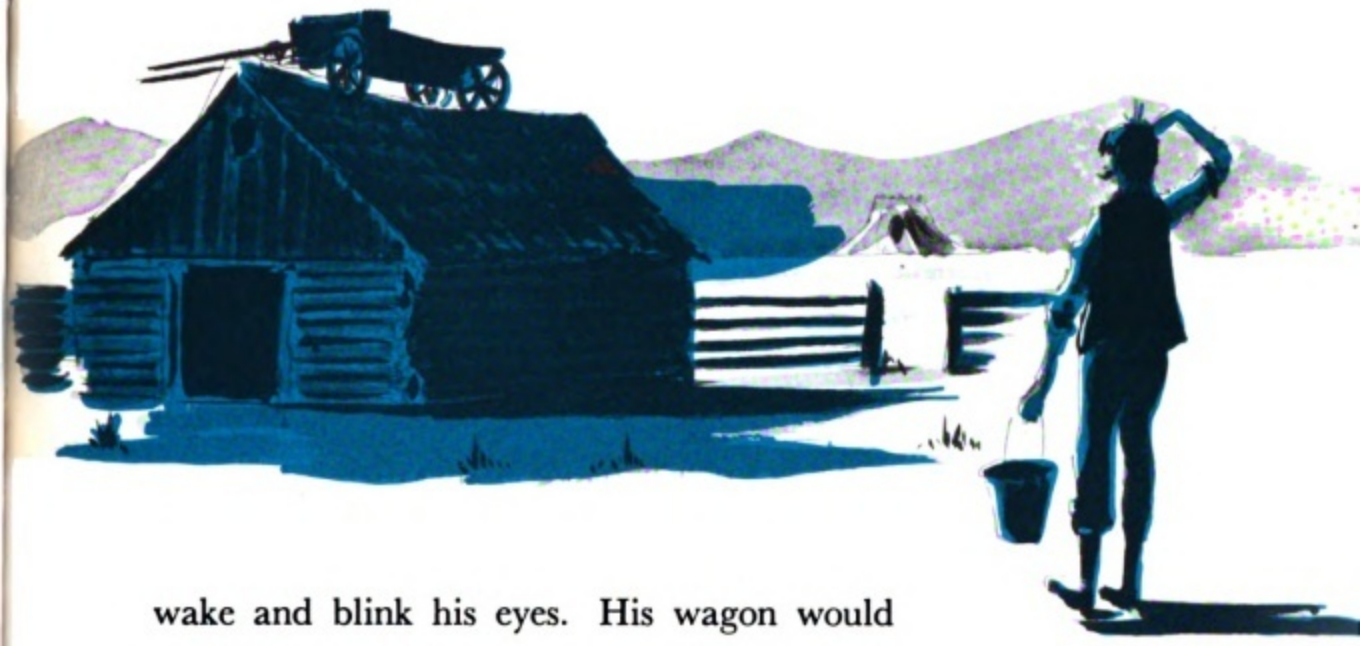

wake and blink his eyes. His wagon would be on top of the barn roof. Another would find his front gate hanging from a tree. Soap was rubbed over windows!

"The goblins must have done it," people would laugh and say.

Housewives started giving treats to keep from being tricked. Children began ringing doorbells and shouting, "Trick or TREAT!" This was much like the begging of the English "soulers" and the Irish "Muck Olla" parade.

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10
Halloween with a Heart

In 1950, American boys and girls began a new Halloween custom. They still dress up. They still have parties and parades. Spooks still ring doorbells. But many carry milk cartons instead of their Trick or Treat bags.

"Trick or Treat for UNICEF!" they cry.

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UNICEF was set up by the United Nations. UNICEF stands for United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. Recently the name has been shortened to United Nations Children's Fund.

The Fund helps children all over the world. Many of these children are sick, hungry or in need. The Fund provides badly needed milk and medicines. It helps poorer countries to take care of their own children. Many of these children would die if no one helped them.

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laughter. The world's children are happy to get this help.

Children in all 50 states take part. They sometimes collect over $2,000,000. Halloween has also become United Nations Children's Fund Day.*

American children got their Halloween customs from many countries. They are now giving to the children of many countries in return for the customs. Halloween is forming a ring of friendship around the world.

Children still have fun on Halloween. Ghosts still walk. Witches still have their black cats and broomsticks. Fairies and elves still dance. Goblins still play tricks. It is all now done for fun. All of this can happen on only one magical night—Halloween.

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* Official UNICEF collection and identification materials are available from the United States Committee for UNICEF, United Nations, New York.

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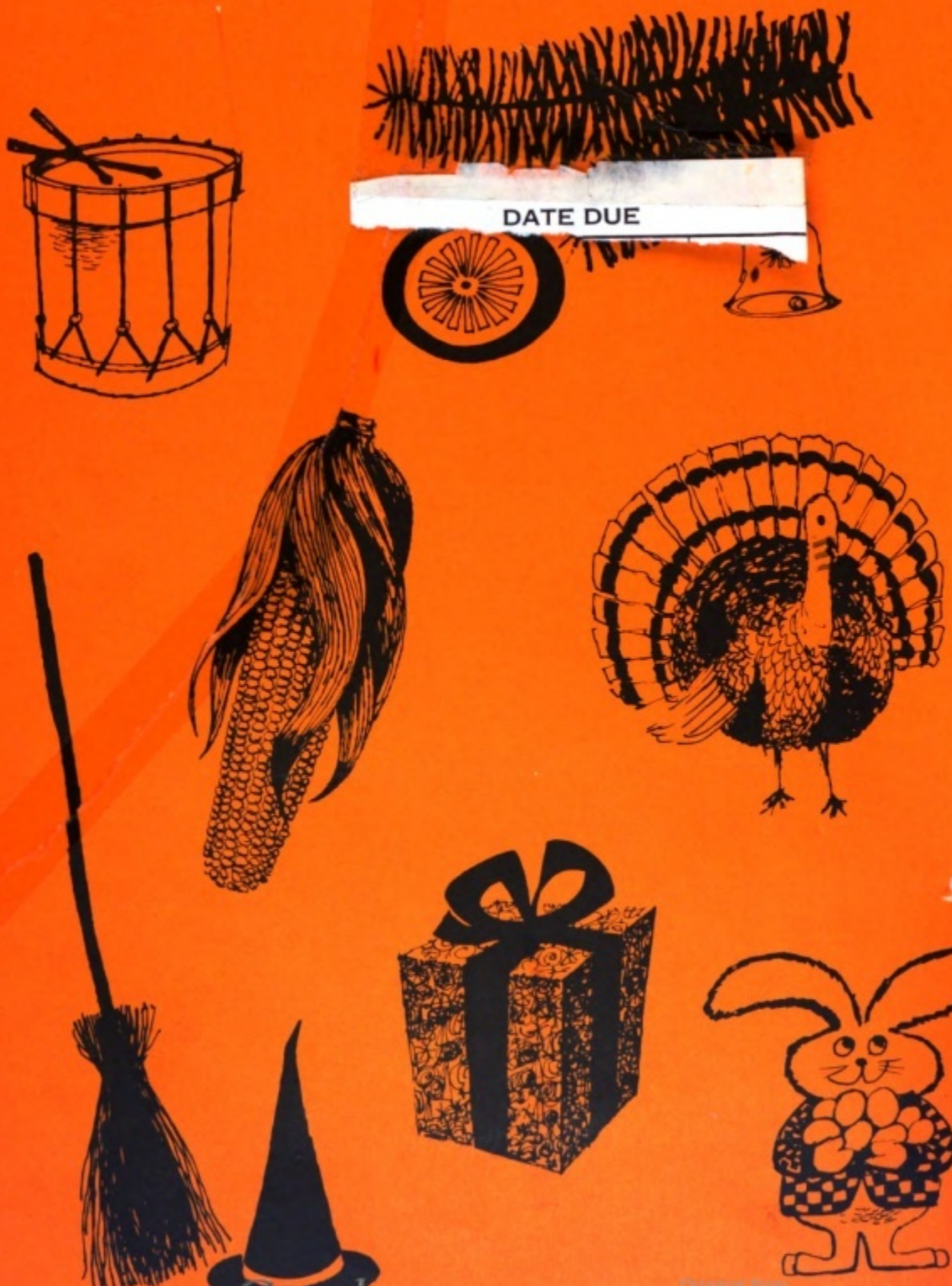

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