

**The Ghost-Eye Tree**  
by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

A Reader's Theatre Script

- Brother: One dark and windy autumn night when the sun had long gone down,  
Mama asked my sister and me to take the road to the end of the town to  
get a bucket of milk.  
Oooo . . .  
I dreaded to go . . .  
I dreaded the tree . . .  
Why does Mama always choose me when the night is so dark and the  
mind runs free?
- Sister: Come on, 'fraidy cat! Don't hang back!
- Brother: I'm not hangin' back. I'm getting my hat.
- Sister: Your dumb hat. It's too big for you.
- Brother: Well, you don't have to wear it.
- Sister: No, but I have to look at it.
- Brother: Then look the other way.
- Narrator: Oooo . . .  
how dark it was . . .  
how dread it was . . .  
walking the road . . .  
to the end of the town . . .  
for the halfway tree . . .  
the Ghost-Eye tree . . .  
was feared by all . . .  
the great and small . . .  
who walked the road  
to the end of town . . .
- Sister: What's the matter now?
- Brother: My hat. It slipped off.
- Sister: You're afraid, that's what!
- Brother: I am not. I'm getting my hat.
- Narrator: As they neared the tree,  
their walk slowed down . . .  
halfway down  
to the end of town . . .

hiding what they feared the most . . .  
pretending there would be no ghost . . .  
pretending . . .  
not to be . . .  
afraid . . .

Sister: There's nothing to fear. There's nothing here but an old oak tree.

Brother: No, there's nothing here. There's nothing to fear in an old oak tree.

Narrator: But they ran past the tree as fast as they could . . .  
Nothing happened!  
Nothing happened!  
They felt so good that they started to sing.

Brother and Sister: There's no such thing as a ghost! There's no such thing as a ghost!

Sister: It's only a dream. It's only a fooly inside your head. There's nothing to dread in an old oak tree.

Narrator: He pulled his hat down over one eye . . .  
to look tough  
like Mike Barber  
in the movies.

Brother: (to himself) I'm tough! Real tough!

Sister: What?

Brother: I didn't say anything

Sister: You did too! You were muttering to yourself.

Brother: I was not.

Sister: Then push up your hat.

Narrator: Oh how glad were they,  
how free to be  
walking down the road  
to the end of town . . .  
for the halfway tree,  
the Ghost-Eye tree,  
his sister and he  
had passed it by . . .  
and the road led down  
to the end of the town  
where they got the bucket of milk.

Milkman: That's a fine hat you got. 'Twould make a good milk bucket.

Brother: (to himself) Nobody's gonna put milk in my hat.

Milkman: What?

Brother: I didn't say anything.

Sister: Yes, you did. You were muttering again. Mr. Cowlander, that hat makes him crazy. It's a crazy hat!

Brother: Well, come on. Help me carry the milk.

Narrator: First he carried . . .  
then she carried . . .  
walking home  
from the end of the town . . .  
they couldn't walk fast,  
the milk slowed them down . . .  
walking home  
from the end of the town . . .  
Oooo, how dark . . .  
Oooo, how dread . . .

Sister: Hurry up. We're halfway home.

Brother: Oooo, what's that?

Sister: I didn't hear anything.

Brother: But I heard . . . something . . . I really heard it . . . Let's go back to Mr. Cowlander's.

Sister: No . . . no! There's nothing here,  
nothing to fear . . .

Brother: Oooo . . .  
Why does Mama always choose me  
when the night is so dark  
and the mind runs free . . .  
Oooo  
look . . . look . . .  
The halfway tree,  
the Ghost-Eye tree . . .  
turned its head  
and looked at me . . .  
Oooo . . .  
The halfway tree . . .  
the Ghost-Eye tree . . .  
shook its arms . . .

and reached . . .  
for ME!

Narrator: Oh! Ooooooohhhh!  
They ran . . .  
His sister and he . . .  
Oh how they ran!  
They ran . . .  
all the way home . . .  
as fast as they could . . .  
They set the bucket down . . .  
flopped on the ground . . .  
gasping . . .  
for breath . . .

Sister: Oooo. I was so scared . . .

Brother: Me, too. I saw the ghost . . . Did you?

Sister: Yes. Don't tell Mama . . . She'll worry . . .

Brother: But she'll know. We spilt a lot of milk.

Sister: That doesn't matter. I'll put some water in the bucket. She'll never know the difference. Say! Where's your hat?

Brother: Oooo . . . my hat . . . I lost it . . . I lost it!

Sister: here?

Brother: Back there . . . b-b-by the Ghost-Eye tree . . .

Sister: Oooo.

Brother: But it don't matter.

Sister: Yes it does matter.

Brother: No. It makes me look stupid.

Sister: It does not! It's a beautiful hat. Come on . . .  
Let's . . .  
Let's go get it.

Brother: No. It don't matter. Really, it don't matter.

Narrator: Up she jumped,  
that sister of his  
and took to the road  
that led through the town,

to the halfway tree,  
the Ghost-Eye tree,  
where his hat lay fallen  
on the haunted ground.

Brother: Ellie! Ellie! Come back! Ghost-Eye'll get you! He's right by your side!

Narrator: But faster than foolies that flash through your mind,  
Ellie came back leaving Ghost-Eye behind.

Sister: Here's your dumb hat. It makes you look stupid.

Brother: It does not. It's a beautiful hat.

Narrator: He put it on his head,  
pulled it down over one eye . . .  
to look tough . . .  
like Mike Barber . . .

Brother: (to himself) I'm tough! Real tough! I ain't 'fraid of no ghost.

Narrator: But . . .  
since that dread night at the halfway tree  
when Ghost-Eye tried to frighten him,  
by some lucky chance  
he's never around . . .  
when Mama wants milk . . .  
from the end of town . . .