



Readers Theater:

The Mystery of the Haunted Library



Characters:

- Narrator
- Harper (brave and curious leader)
- Diego (funny, always hungry, lightens the mood)
- Lila (smart and observant, loves books)
- Marcus (jumpy but loyal friend)
- Mrs. Willow (kind but secretive librarian)
- Mr. Grimes (grumpy janitor)
- The “Ghost” (creepy figure haunting the library—later revealed)

Optional Props:

- Flashlights
- Old books, scrolls, or boxes
- A white sheet or cloth (for the “ghost”)
- Fake cobwebs or Halloween decorations
- Ring of keys for Mr. Grimes
- Glasses and a cardigan for Mrs. Willow
- Magnifying glass for Lila

Narrator:

It was a windy October evening at Maplewood School. The library's lights flickered as Harper, Diego, Lila, and Marcus volunteered to help tidy up for the big Halloween Reading Night. But something... or someone... was haunting the shelves.

Marcus:

(Whispering) Did you see that shadow move?

Diego:

(Relieved laugh) Maybe it's just my stomach growling. Spooky hunger!

Harper:

Stay sharp, team. We promised Mrs. Willow we'd figure out who's been scaring people away from the library.

Narrator:

The kids searched aisle by aisle. Suddenly, a cold draft blew past, and a pale figure glided between the stacks.

Marcus:

(Shouting) Ghost! Ghost in the history section!

Lila:

Wait, let's not panic. Look for evidence.

Harper:

Right. Diego, check near the window. Marcus, come with me.

Narrator:

They discovered a trail of white threads on the carpet, almost the screens of cloth. Lila spotted a set of footprints in the dust.

Lila:

These footprints look small, smaller than Mr. Grimes's boots. See? The stride is short, too.

Marcus:

So maybe it's Mrs. Willow?

Harper:

Not so fast. Let's keep collecting clues.

Narrator:

They crept toward the reading corner. On a desk sat an open book - "Famous Ghosts and Legends of New England."

Diego:

(Pointing) Someone was studying how to act like a ghost.

Lila:

And look—this margin note says, “Check flashlight batteries.” That’s not something a ghost would write!

Narrator:

A sudden wind whistled through the hall. The children froze, but Harper spotted a creak rattling above them.

Harper:

That sound came from the vent, not from a ghost. Probably just the wind.

Marcus:

(Shivering) Or a ghost using the wind...

Narrator:

They hurried to the science corner, where Mrs. Willow was sorting returned books.

Harper:

Mrs. Willow, were you just in the history section?

Mrs. Willow:

(Shaking her head) Oh, heavens! I've been here the whole time. Why do you ask?

Lila:

We found footprints that looked small like yours.

Mrs. Willow:

(Surprised) Well, I do wear small shoes, but look—mine squeak. (She takes a step, her shoes squeak loudly.)

Diego:

(Grinning) The footprints we saw were silent. Science rules you out, Mrs. Willow!

Mrs. Willow:

(Smiling nervously) Then I suppose you'd better keep searching.

Narrator:

Later, near the supply closet, they found another clue: a smudge of cleaning powder on the floor.

Marcus:

That has to mean Mr. Crimes. He's always cleaning with this stuff.

Diego:

Maybe... but ghosts don't need cleaning supplies.

Harper:

Let's test it. Lila, can you check?

Lila:

(Picking up some powder) It glows faintly under the blacklight from the science fair kit! Look—on the ghost sheet too! Whoever wore this walked through the powder.

Narrator:

They turned a corner—and came face to face with the ghostly figure again!

Ghost:

(Spooky voice) Llllllleave the place or be trapped forever!

Marcus:

(Screams, hiding behind Harper) Told you it was real!

Harper:

Not this time. Everyone, grab it!

Narrator:

The ghost tried to run, but tripped on the loose sheet. With one pull, the disguise came off...

Everyone:

Mr. Grimes?!

Mr. Grimes:

(Sighing) Finally you got me. I just wanted peace and quiet to finish my work without kids running around. Pretending to be a ghost kept everyone away.

Mrs. Willow

(entering):

Mr. Grimes! That was unfair and frightening. The library is for everyone.

Lila:

The clues made sense: the cleaning powder, the footprints that didn't match Mrs. Willow, and the sheet with glowing dust.

Diego:

Plus, real ghosts don't wear sneakers!

Marcus:

(Relieved) So it wasn't a ghost at all.

Harper:

Mystery solved!

Narrator:

And so, the kids solved the haunted library case. The lesson? Use science, teamwork, and observation before jumping to spooky conclusions. And maybe—don't let Mr. Grimes borrow the costume closet again.

Everyone:

(Laughing together)

Narrator:

The end.

Name: _____

Date: _____

How did science help them rule out Mrs. Willow as a suspect?

Why did Mr. Grimes pretend to be a ghost?

Which character do you think was the most helpful in solving the case?

Harper



Diego



Lila



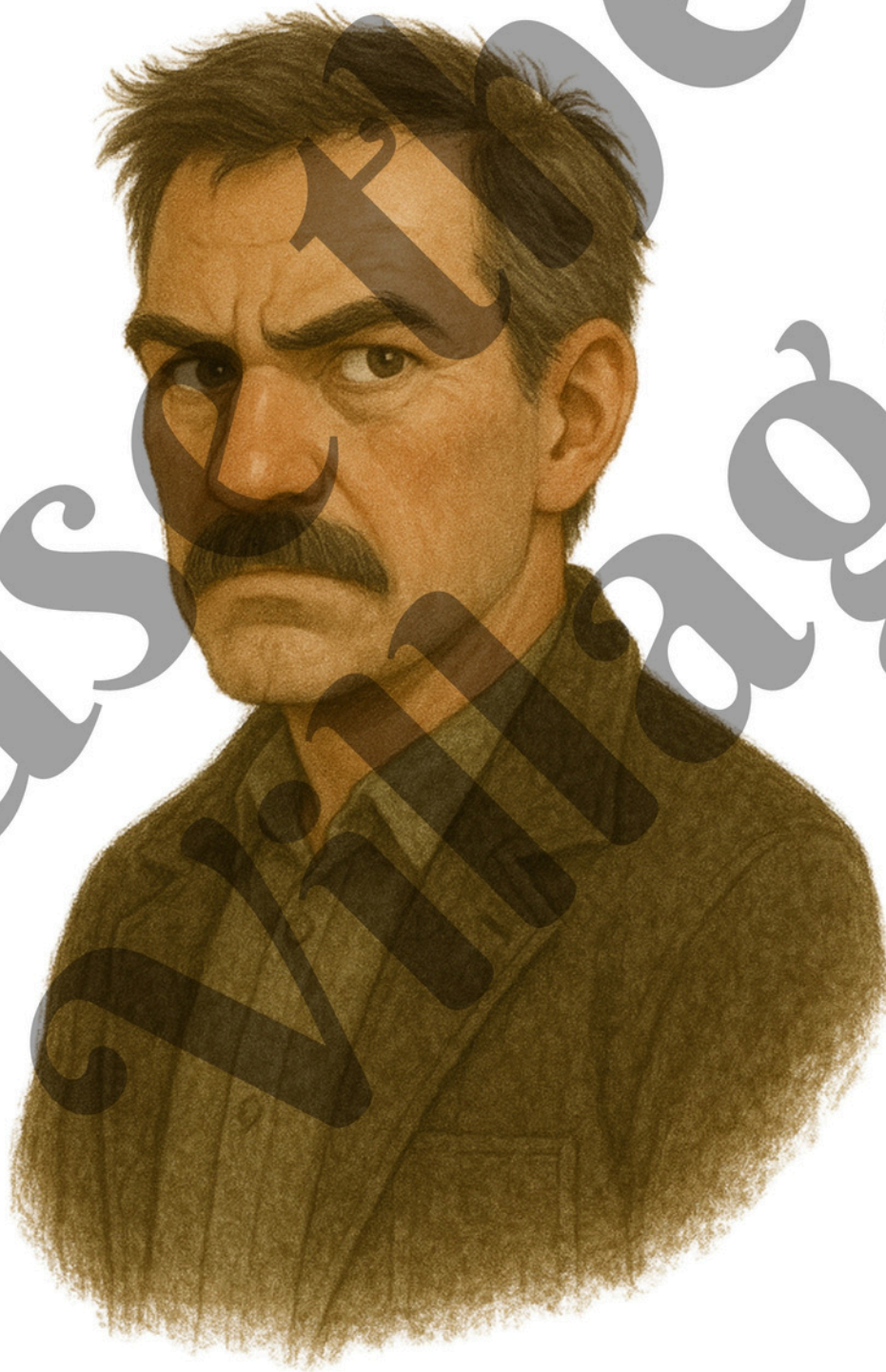
Marcus



Mrs. Willow



Mr. Grimes



The Ghost



Narrator



Diego



Harper



Lila



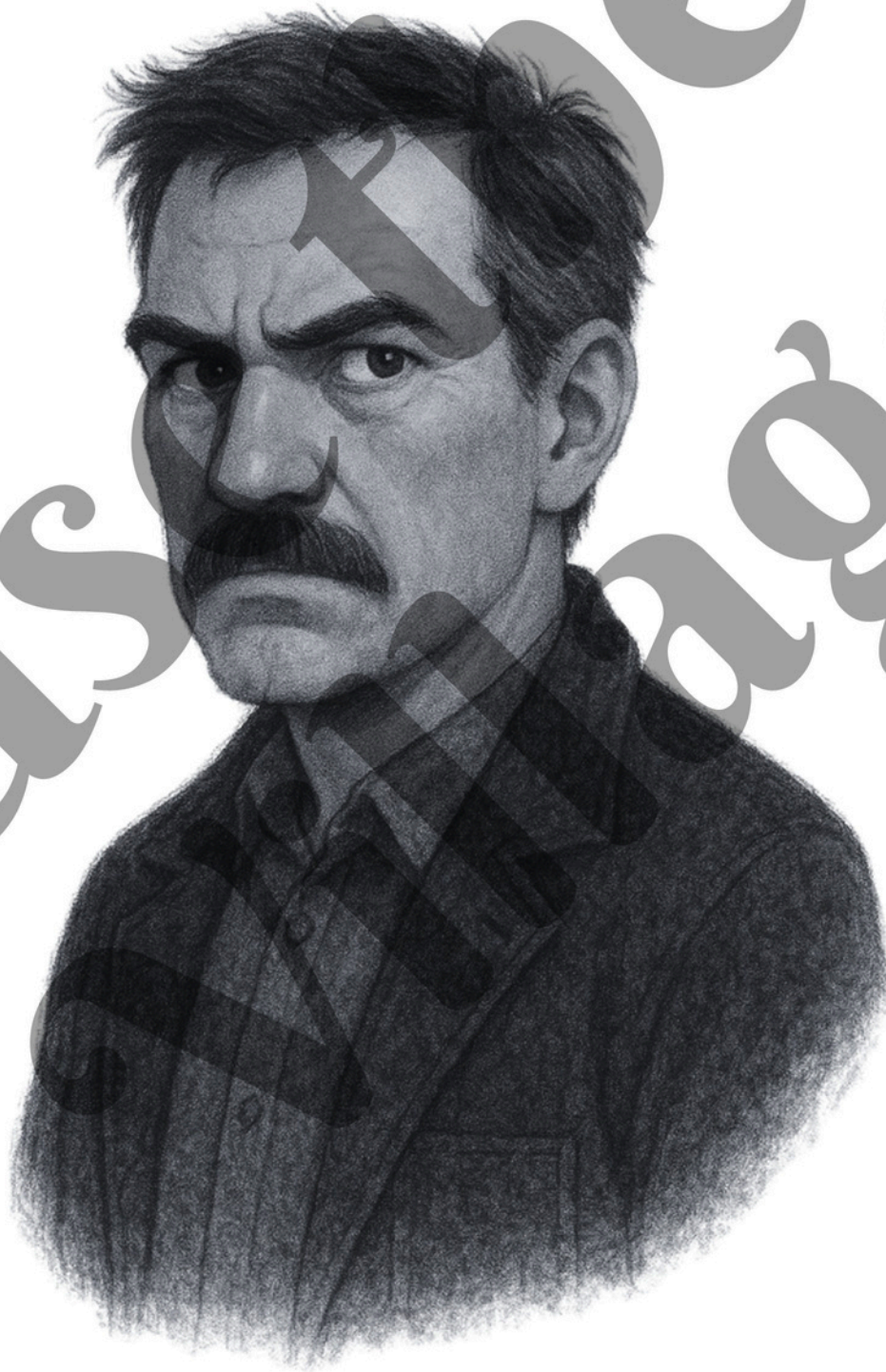
Marcus



Mrs. Willow



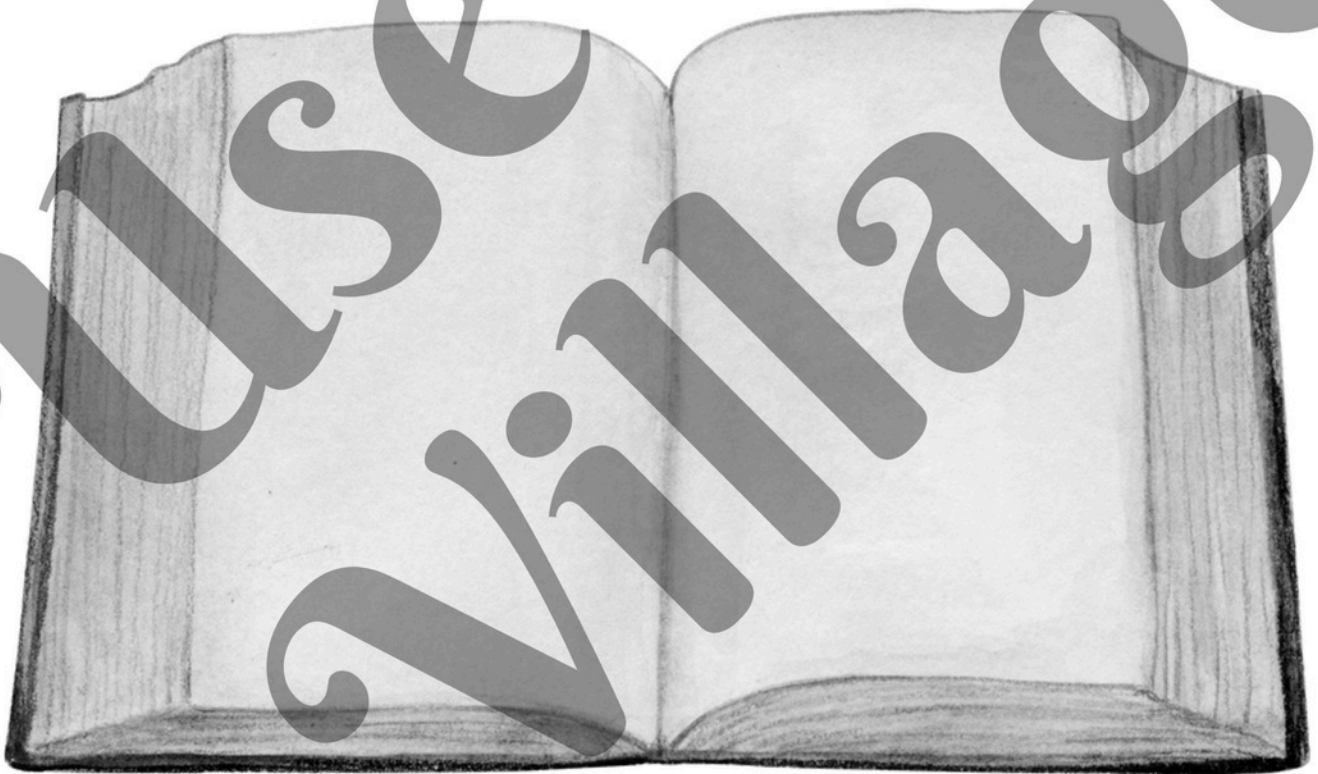
Mr. Grimes



The Ghost



Narrator



Teacher Suggestions:

Assigning Roles: Consider your students' reading levels and confidence when assigning roles. Encourage students to practice their parts at home or during independent reading time.

Practicing Fluency: Have students practice their parts multiple times to build fluency and expression.

Props & Costumes: Use the optional props list to create simple, engaging props.

Character Labels: Students can also use the provided character names to either cut out to hang around their neck to help identify characters to the audience or alternatively draw and illustrate what they imagine their character to look like.

Performance: Arrange a space in the classroom where students can perform. Invite other students to watch the final performance to boost students' confidence and make it more special.

Reader Response Questions: Use the provided questions to facilitate a post-performance discussion. This will help assess comprehension and encourage students to think critically about the play.

Extension Activities:

- Footprint Experiment – Have students compare different shoe prints in flour or sand to see how size and shape can be used to identify a person.
- Design Your Own Ghost Trap – Students create a plan or drawing for how they'd catch a "ghost" in the library.
- Mystery Map – Draw a map of the library and label where each clue was found.
- Red Herring Rewrite – Write a short extra scene where the kids think they solved it, but it's actually a trick.
- Ghost Sound Effects – Students record or perform sound effects (wind, footsteps, creaks) to enhance the performance.
- Spooky Shadows – Shine flashlights on objects to see how shadows can look bigger or scarier than they are.
- Write a Newspaper Report – Students pretend to be reporters writing about "The Haunted Library Mystery Solved."