

Creepy Roads

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You've probably heard many stories about haunted houses in your lifetime. But have you heard about haunted roads? Maybe there's one near you. Have you seen headlights up ahead that suddenly disappear? Or maybe you have noticed a shadowy figure walking along a sidewalk. These kinds of legends are common all over the world. It's up to you to decide if they are fact or fiction.

In the Midwest, there is a large, well-known cemetery. It is one of the biggest in our country—and according to some, one of the most haunted. There is an old road that leads to the cemetery and many people claim to have experienced ghost sightings while traveling along it. One story tells of a young man named Jerry who went to a dance and met a girl named Mary. Jerry happily danced with Mary all night and then offered to drive her home. Oddly, she asked to be dropped off at the cemetery and not at her house. When Mary got out of the car, she walked toward the cemetery gate and vanished into the air. The next day, Jerry went to the house where Mary said she lived. The woman who answered the door told him that Mary was her daughter and that she had died five years ago!

In New Jersey, there is a long, creepy street where many people say they see phantoms walking around. They tell stories about ghostly figures

floating in the fog above a nearby lake and spirit children running across a bridge at night. No one knows who they are, or if they really exist.

In Georgia, on Old Ghost Road, they say that if you park your car and wait patiently in the pitch dark, you will eventually see a flashing orange light in the distance. If you drive closer to the light, a man appears on the side of the road digging for something. Some say he disappears and then comes back when you leave. Others say he is busy digging a grave.

In Kentucky, there is another old road with a spine-chilling history. One evening, two boys were on their way to a dance. They picked up a lovely girl standing on the side of the road and invited her to come along. On the way home, one of the boys gave the girl his jacket because she was cold. When he went to get it back the next day, someone at the girl's house told the young man that the same girl he had met died in a car accident on that road long ago. The boy found her grave in the cemetery and his jacket was lying on the grass next to it.

Do these stories make your hair stand on end? Or are they just silly tales? Are they make-believe or could they have really happened? We may never know, but if you find yourself walking along a dark, creepy road late at night, you might want to bring a flashlight!

Teacher Resources - Vocabulary

Words for Quick Discussion: These words may need to be discussed with students as they are encountered, to help with comprehension of the passage. It is best to do this with a quick discussion while reading the text, in student-friendly language.

legends (*n*) very old and popular stories that may be true

phantom (*n*) a ghost

vanish (*v*) to disappear suddenly or in a way that cannot be explained

Words for Further Study: These words not only help with comprehension of the passage, they also appear more frequently in a wide spectrum of reading, especially in academic text. Therefore, further study of the meaning of these words may be beneficial. The words on this list can be incorporated into subsequent lessons.

fiction (*n*) books and stories about imaginary people and events, rather than about real people and events

Definition Source: *Collin's CoBuild Learner's Dictionary*, Concise Ed. Vol. 2. HarperCollins Publishers, Great Britain, 2003.

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