

Activities and Resources

# STRANGE TALES



DANIEL MORDEN



[www.fireflypress.co.uk](http://www.fireflypress.co.uk)



'...wickedly funny and deliciously dark...'

Damaris Young

# Strange Tales

A beguiling collection of tales from award-winning master storyteller

**Daniel Morden**

## Summary

A boy who cannot feel fear... A girl pursued by a ghostly figure... Two sisters turned into beasts... A wild party where all the guests are skeletons. These extraordinary stories from long ago have been shaped over a lifetime of performance in schools, festivals and theatres by master storyteller, Daniel Morden, into thrilling adventures, brimming with mystery and magic.

To open these pages is to journey into a strange world where invisible beings move among us; animals speak, and luck, spells and fortune are never to be treated lightly!

Themes and topics include:

- Power
- Friendship
- Kindness
- Identity
- Fear
- Fairytales
- Folktales

'...an enchanting labyrinth of tales that feel ancient and timeless both...'

A stunning addition to any bookcase.'

Gabriela Houston



Since 1989 Daniel Morden has made his living telling stories: folktales, fairytales, myths, legends – and fibs! He has travelled the world sharing stories, from Swansea to Sydney, from the Arctic to the Pacific to the Caribbean. His stories range from awful jokes to magical adventures and haunting myths. His books have twice won the Books Council of Wales' Tir Na n-Og Prize and he was awarded the Hay Festival Medal in 2017.

[danielmorden.org](http://danielmorden.org)

'Daniel Morden is a sorcerer who will cast a spell on you with the power of these sparkling stories.'

Catherine Fisher

# The Moon's Gift



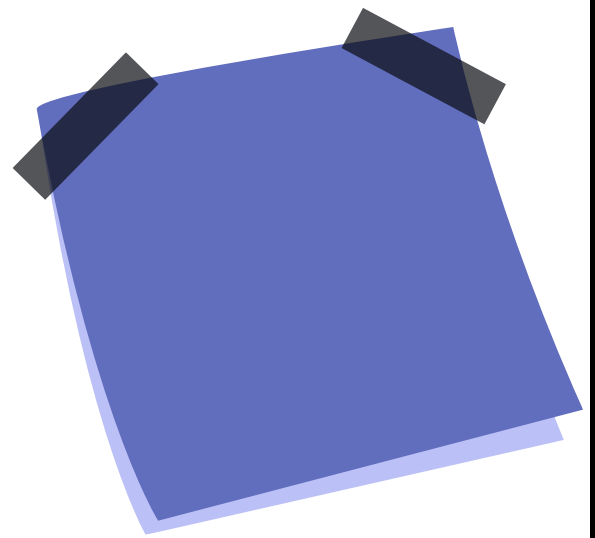
In 'The Moon's Gift', there are two boxes:  
a white box and a red one.

The white box contains all good things, while the red box contains the opposite.

## Group Task

Take two boxes (a white and a red). Now, on one Post-it write something good about the world and put it in the white box. On the other, write something bad about the world and put it in the red box.

Choose one Post-it from each box (if you pick your own, put it back and choose another).



10

OUT CAME  
DISEASE  
AND MADNESS  
AND JEALOUSY  
AND GREED.

SNAKES  
AND SCORPIONS  
AND PAIN  
AND DEATH.



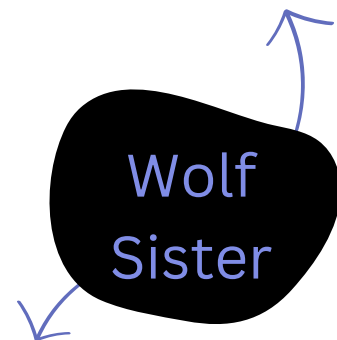
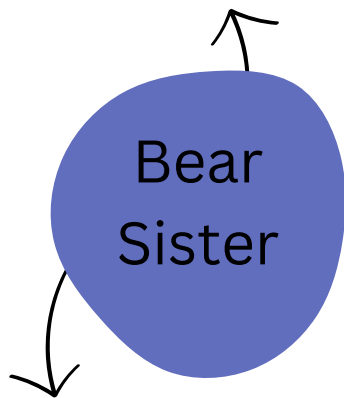
## Creative Writing

Plan your own tale about opposites, using the Post-its as inspiration.

What kind of world do your characters live in? How will the good and bad things appear? Are they already in the world, or do they arrive later?

# Bear Sister, Wolf Sister

Imagine you could interview the sisters in this tale.  
What would you ask them? Write your questions here:



10  
100%

AT FIRST,  
SHE COULD SEE  
**NOTHING...**  
THEN SHE SAW  
SOMETHING  
**BLACKER**  
THAN THE  
**SHADOW.**

BEAR SISTER,  
WOLF SISTER



## Hot Seat

### Group Task

Choose two people to play the sisters, and  
put them in the hot seat(s).

Take it in turns to ask them your questions.



# Shudder

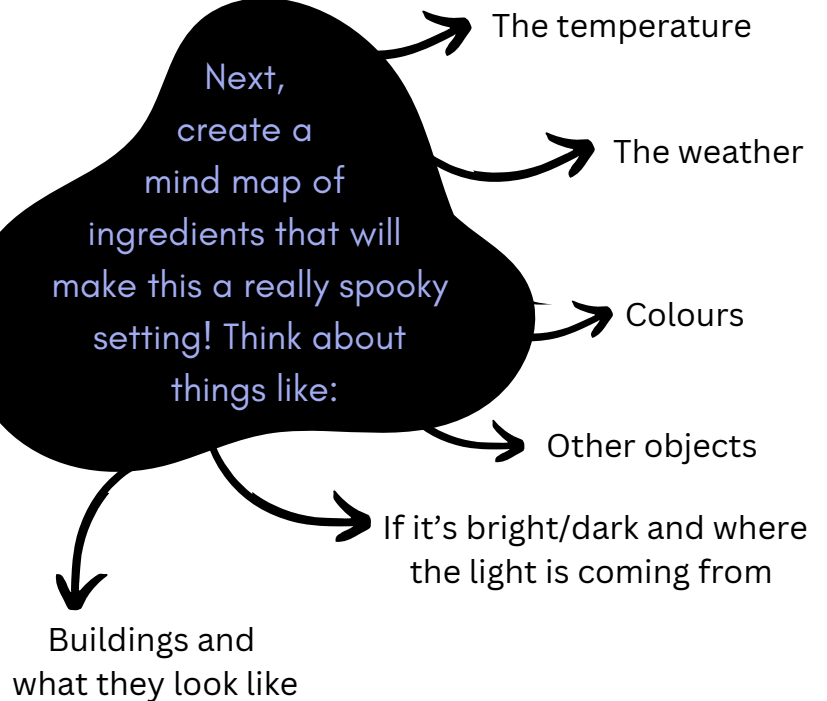
*'In front of The House of The Devil no grass grew, and no birds sang. The leafless trees on either side stretched like veins into the cold sky. The house looked like a head, the windows like eyes, the door a mouth...'*

(p.34 *Strange Tales*)

There are some very creepy settings in 'Shudder'. Let's create our own! First, choose from one of these settings (or think of one of your own):

- Abandoned building
- Forest
- Swamp
- Castle

Next, create a mind map of ingredients that will make this a really spooky setting! Think about things like:



## Let's make it even creepier!

Using **senses** will make your setting even more terrifying!

What can you see, taste?

What sounds can you hear? The creak of a door, perhaps.

Any smells? Maybe a mouldy or musty stench.

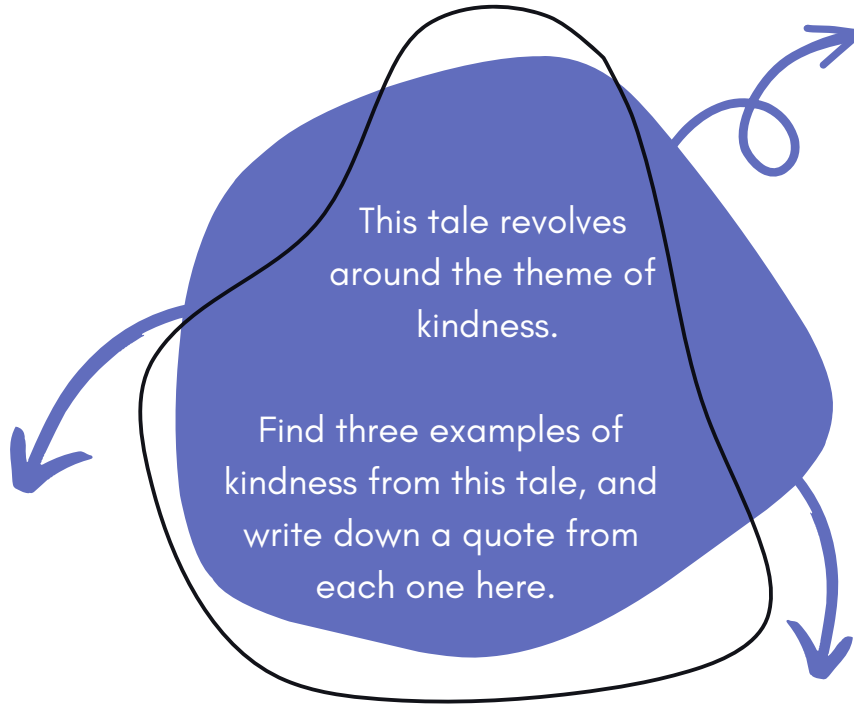
What can you feel around you? Cobwebs? Dust?

Branches tapping you on the shoulder...?

It's completely up to you! The scarier, the better!



# Miss Fortune



10



## Extra Activity

Answer the following question:

How is the theme of kindness presented in the tale 'Miss Fortune'? Use an example quote in your answer.



# The Luck Child



The king in this tale has many flaws which lead to his downfall. What do you think they are? Can you find example quotes to support your points?

10  
Fluency

THERE,  
FLOATING  
ON THE  
SURFACE  
OF THE  
WATER,  
WAS A  
BABY.

THE  
LUCK  
CHILD



## Extra Activity

Think of a flaw or a fear, and create a short tale inspired by this.

Will they overcome their fear?

Will their flaw be their downfall?

You decide...

# The Other Eye

**Imagine you have the power to see things no one else can.**

What can you see? \_\_\_\_\_

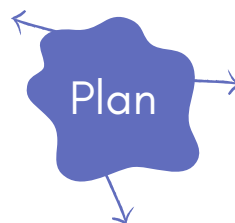
Is it good or bad? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it an advantage or disadvantage? \_\_\_\_\_

**Plan a story about a character who has this ability.**

What is the character's goal?

How will their new sight help/hinder them in their mission/problem/quest?



## Extra Activity

Write the opening of this story

### Top Tips:

- Try creating an attention grabbing first line
- Don't give away too much detail in the opening. Keep some surprises for later...



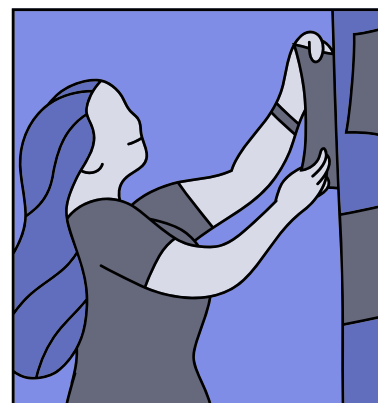
# Spellbound

In 'Spellbound', the queen offers three hundred pieces of gold to any woman who will stay all night in the haunted room.

**You have been given the job of creating a poster, advertising this reward.**

## Top Tips:

1. Look at other print adverts and posters for inspiration.
2. What kind of information needs to go on the advert/poster you are creating?
3. Can you use any persuasive devices to encourage people to take up the queen's offer?
4. Think about the images and fonts you use.  
What should you make bold? What should be in small print?

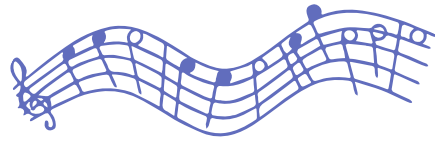


## Extra Activity

### Discussion:

What do you think was the key to breaking the spell, and freeing the prince?

# The Tale of Daniel Crowley

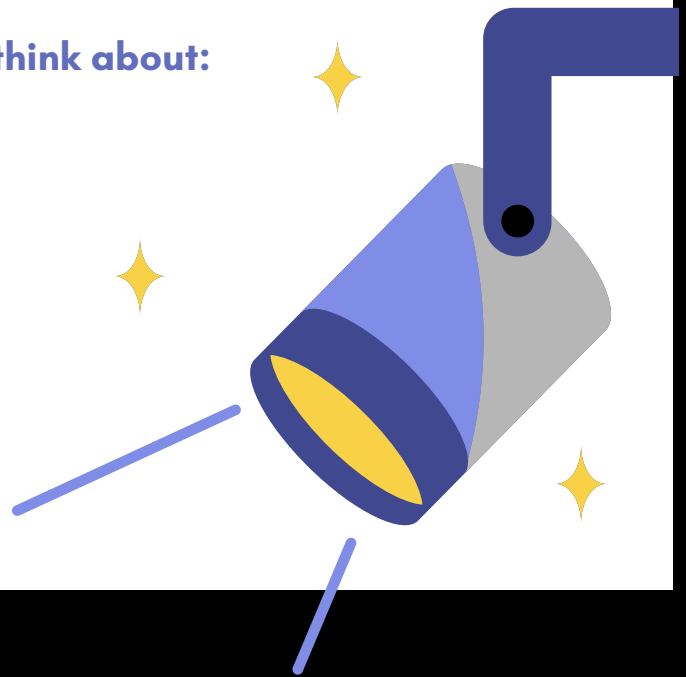


The author of *Strange Tales*, Daniel Morden, is a storyteller and performs tales all over the world.

In small groups, create a performance of 'The Tale of Daniel Crowley'.

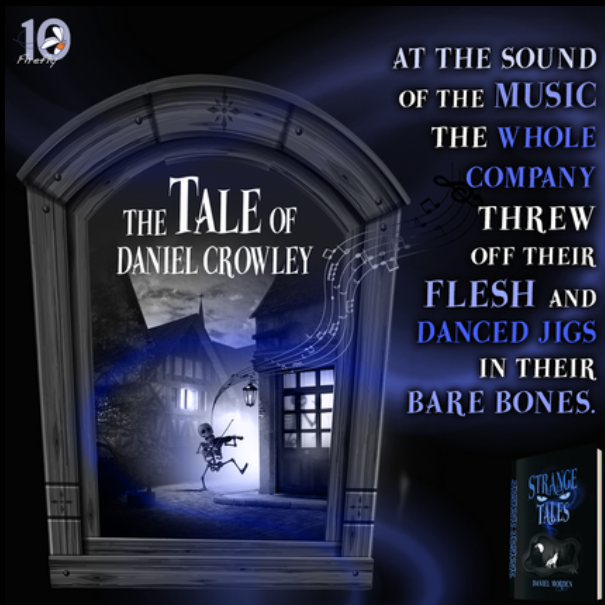
You might want to think about:

- Your role
- Actions/body language
- Voice
- Emotion
- How will you start the tale, and how you want to end it.

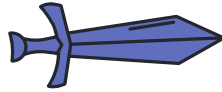


## Challenge

Try and tell the tale without reading from the book. Don't worry if you forget bits; make the story your own.



# The Boy Who Kept a Secret



In 'The Boy Who Kept a Secret', there are many riddles.

## What is a riddle?

A riddle is a puzzle to be solved.

Usually a statement or question with a hidden meaning.

**Create your own 'What am I?' riddle.**

## Riddle Writing Tips:

1. Look up some existing riddles to see how they work
2. Start with the answer - a place, an animal, an object etc. What is it you want people to guess?
3. Then work backwards to create the riddle. What clues and hints can you include to help. Don't make it too easy!
4. Keep your riddle around five lines long, and end it with 'What am I?'.



## Creative Writing

Create a short tale with your riddle at the centre (you can use one of existing riddles you've researched instead, if you'd rather).

What will happen if the riddle isn't solved?

Does your hero succeed?  
If so, how do they work it out?



You can find other resources, including listening to author Daniel Morden share a sneak peek of one his tales, on our YouTube channel: @fireflypress.

We also have a wide range of resources for many of our titles, and for a variety of ages, available on our website:

**[fireflypress.co.uk/resources](https://fireflypress.co.uk/resources)**

