

Howl-een Fun

by Philip Sacco, Lunatic #82

This list was compiled two years ago, and mysteriously manages to elude me or....'disappear' two months before the Howl-een season. Now that It is posted maybe you will have a chance to track some of these monsters down as they will be rising soon...

Well it's that time of year again...Witches, Ghosts and Goblins and 'Things that go Bump in the Dark' . . .Yeep. . . Hard to believe it's almost Halloween again. This is a time of year when we prepare ourselves for the unusual, the scary things to present themselves. But more curious than that, is the fact that many of us will go out of our way to go do something a little unusual or even spooky in the 'Spirit of the Season'.

If you are one of those individuals who like to hunt out the unusual and scary. . . than this "Halloween Trick-or-Treat List" will be right up your alley! So fix yourself a cup of hot witches brew, put on something warm and take a trip on the Dark Side with a friend for an evening of a Howl-een good time.....!

The Howl-een Hunt- or 13 Un-Lucky Objects

1) Let's do a little observing warm up before we get to the "13 Un-Lucky Objects" and do a little naked eye hunting to get in the mood of the evening. If we're going to have ghosts and goblins and such creatures of the night. . . everything has a beginning and 'the end' is no different, so to start off this seasonal pleasure. . . something needs to be laid to rest. First stop will be somewhere high overhead by mid evening. Commonly known as the constellation 'Delphinus,' located just N.E. of the Eagle(Aquila) this little constellation was at one time called 'Job's Coffin'. I figure the name comes from the odd ol' timey coffin shape of this small group of stars.

2) The second constellation to hunt down is just south of Pegasus. . .find the Sea Monster Cetus.

3) The third easy monster to hunt down is the constellation Draco- The Dragon. A little hunting thru some old atlas' will be required to locate the following lost constellations, but to the intrepid hunter of the obscure, these will bring you some satisfaction once you have learned them and found them. . .after all this is a Hunt!

4) The False Cross- I'll give you a hint. . . Iota and epsilon Carinae and Kappa and Delta Velorum. . . good luck these are 'deep in the ground' so to say. . . hehehehehe. . . or is that. . . "Ah-Haa-Haaaa!"

5) The Horse and Rider- Zeta and 80 Ursae Majoris. . .

6) The Sickle- Just Try to find this one at this time of year. . . This ones a real Trick~!

7) Cerberus- The three headed dog guardian of hell. . . I'll give a Halloween treat to anyone who can tell me where to avoid this beast. . . wellll, I did say you may have to get out an old atlas~didn't I? (this is a very uncommon constellation. . . after all.. . How many Three Headed Flesh Eating dogs have YOU seen?! Find this one and you will have a real Treat to share with others...

8) This last constellation I have included not so much for it's content- Tubus Herschelii Minorbut

rather for the fact that it was created by a Jesuit astronomer named Father Maximilian Hell!
Now, if you began this trek about 9PM, you should now be approaching the 'Witching Hour' so let's get to the good stuff. . . after one last easy naked eye object. Turn your attention to the constellation Perseus and hunt down "The Demon Star" commonly known as Algol. This star is a short term variable star, and can be seen to brighten and dim in the course of just a few days!

OK~OK~~ it's dark out now and the sky is full of creatures of the night, you just need to spy them out now: It's time for the "13 objects for a Howl-een Good Time"! A telescope will be required for these little monsters, after all~ they would rather you didn't see them and they can only be found under cover of night!

1. Markarians Chain- M84/86/88...You'll have to hunt early to find this chain in a woman's hair!
Wellll~ it was a LOT of hair so maybe a chain was necessary!?

2. The Dragon Nebula- NGC 5623, M 8...reputed to live in a tea pot!

3. The Ghost of Jupiter- NGC 3242...under the tail of Hydra....Good LUCK!

4. The Cat's Eye- NGC 6543...can be found under the first curl of the dragon....

5. The Owl Nebula- NGC 3587, M 97...you'll have to crawl under the belly of the Big Bear to find this guy...

6. The Owl Cluster- NGC 457...This one is a treasure of a Queen!

7. The Veil- NGC 6960...Just slipped off Job's Coffin!

8. The Blinking Nebula- NGC 6826...careful or this one will drop on your head when your not looking....or rather when you can't see it! Tricky little fella'....now ya' see him...now ya' don't!
Flies with swans....

9. The Ghost Ring- IC 5148...hehehehehe Happy Hunting!! Dig REAL DEEP to find this one. . . and up comes a GHOST. . . BOO!

10. Miracks Ghost- NGC 404. . . this guy is related to a Chained up Princess~Monster Meat if you will, he'll be hovering over head soon. . .

11. The Spider- NGC 5829...no tellin' where you will find this little guy. . . try looking under your chair~!

12. Medusa- This one is an unable-Abell 21.....Are you sure you want to look for this one?!

(13.) The Witch Head Nebula- IC 2118 this one will be up early in the morning near the right foot of Orion.

Well there you are! Looks like you made the trip OK. . .you did; didn't you AH-HAA-AAAA