

How to adapt 'A Ceilidh Story'

By Bob Pegg

(In the days before radio and television, before computers and mobile phones, before video games and streaming, people would meet in the evenings to gossip and sing, tell stories and jokes, ask riddles and play a little music; they would often take with them some domestic work such as darning, or sewing, or spinning with the drop spindle. In the parts of Scotland where Gaelic was spoken, a gathering like this would be called a ceilidh, and the place where it happened would be well known in the community. It could be someone's house, but it might also be another important location; a smithy for instance, a mill, or a kiln for drying corn.)

In whatever location you choose there was a place where men and boys/ women and girls/young people/skateboarders gathered to tell stories. They sat in a row around the fire/ gathered on the hillside/perched on the stones/huddled around the brazier and the oldest woman/gang leader/baby of the bunch began with their story, followed by the others in turn. The rule they had – their 'law' – was that everyone there, with no exception, should contribute a tale.

On one occasion a young man/woman *from another district/gang/planet* was present at the session. He didn't know the house rules, and, when it came to his turn, he had no story to tell. The regulars were outraged at this flouting of protocol. Blows were close to being struck, when the chief storyteller suggested that the *young man/woman go outside to put some straw in a hole in the wall, as it was letting in the wind/fetch water from the river because everyone was parched/ go to the supermarket to buy some fags and cans etc...*

The *lad/girl* stepped out into the dusk, glad to be away from the prickly atmosphere of wherever...