

Witch means wise one. It comes from the Saxon word wica. Witches were thought to be wise enough to tell the future.

Witches Outwitted

When Grandmother Eiler was young she had a cow of her own raising, of which she was very proud. One evening at milking time, a certain woman passed through the barnyard, stopped, and looked the cow all over. "I was foolish enough to tell her all about the cow, how gentle she was, how much milk she was giving, and all that, and she said I certainly had a fine cow. Well, the next morning that cow couldn't stand on her feet, and there she lay in the stable till father came home from the mountain, where he was cutting wood. He said it was all plain enough, when I told him everything, but he wondered I hadn't had better sense. However, he knew just what to do. He rubbed the cow all over with asafetida, saying words all the time. And the next day, when I went into the barn, there she stood on her four legs, eating like a hound. Witches can't stand asafetida."

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It was this witch-woman who, going to a neighbor's one day on an errand, prolonged her stay without apparent reason, till it was almost night. Though she was very uneasy all the time, and kept saying there was sickness at home and she ought to be there, still she didn't go. Finally, it was discovered that the broom had fallen across the door. When it was taken away, she fairly flew. Of course, this looked very suspicious. But, not to be rash in their judgment, the people of the house sought further proof. So, the next time she came, salt was thrown under her chair, and there she sat, as though bound until it was removed. Then, as her visits were now considered undesirable, nails were driven in



Orange and black became Halloween colors because of orange is associated with harvests and black is associated with death.

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her tracks, but the place in the ground

marked, in case the footprints became obliterated. It was soon known that she was laid up with sore feet, which refused to heal until the nails were dug up.

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Miss K's father, when a youth in Germany, had a friend whose rest was disturbed by nightmares. At last he concluded that a witch was troubling him, and proceeded to entrap her by stopping up every crevice and keyhole in the room. (Mindful of the fact, of course, that "for witches this is law-where they have entered in, there also they withdraw.") The next morning he found a beautiful girl cowering in the cupboard. He put her to work as a servant about the house. But eventually, thinking her reformation complete, he married her and lived happily for several years. Sometimes, though, she would sigh, and say she longed to see beautiful France again. One day she was missing, and her little child, just tall enough to reach the keyhole, told how she had removed the stopping for her. She was never seen again, having of course "taken French leave" through the keyhole. The same story is told of a miller in Frederick County. He, too, domesticated a witchmaiden, having caught her in the same way. But, years after, he incautiously opened the

keyhole, and found himself a grass widower.