



## El Chupacabra in El Barrio de Guadalupe

To make learning fun and interesting my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Zamora, put together a spelling list of scary fantasmas y monstruos, ghosts and monsters. On the list were names like La Llorona, El Cucuy, and El Chupacabra. If you read my first two mysteries you know all about El Cucuy and La Llorona, but you might not know about El Chupacabra. This monster gets its name from the Spanish word *chupar*, which means "to suck", and *cabra*, the Spanish word for "goat". If you're thinking this sounds like a Vampire, then you're right! El Chupacabra sucks the blood of goats and animals! The good news is that El Chupacabra, like a vampire, is not real, only make-believe. The bad news is that some children, especially mean bullies, like my classmate Carlo, like to scare other children by making them think fantasmas and monstrous, like El Chupacabra, are real! Can you believe that?

As always happens, Mrs. Zamora passed out her list of words on Monday. This gave us the entire week to study for the test on Friday. Well, over the next few days word got around the school that El Chupacabra was chasing children as the sun was going down when they were walking home from the library, the park, or the grocery store. The teachers at the school heard all about it and the principal of our school, Mr. Esparza, announced over the loudspeaker that if the person pretending to be El Chupacabra was a student at the school, they would be in serious trouble when they were caught.

After Principal Esparza's announcement, our teacher, Mrs. Zamora said, "It's interesting how El Chupacabra showed up in el barrio after I passed out my spelling list." Then she said if the person pretending to be the monster was from her class she'd be very disappointed.

You would think the person pretending to be El Chupacabra would've stopped, but he, or she, didn't. On Thursday, a day before our spelling test, Esmeralda, a second grader showed up to school with bandages over both of her knees. El Chupacabra had scared her so badly while chasing her that she'd tripped on a curb and scraped her knees!

Principal Esparza was so upset about what had happened to Esmeralda that he demanded the student, if indeed it was a student pretending to be El Chupacabra, write a letter apologizing to Esmeralda for what he, or she, had done. The next day he found this letter on top of his desk. It read:

*Dear Principle Esparza, I am sorry for what happened to Esmeralda. I am done being El Chupikabra.*

Knowing that I was the best mystery buster in El Barrio de Guadalupe, Principal Esparza asked me to read the letter to see if I could help him figure out who had pretended to be El Chupacabra.

To tell you the truth I was worried about reading the letter. I mean what if the person pretending to be El Chupacabra was a student from my class? How would that make my teacher, Mrs. Zamora, feel? After all, the person had probably gotten the idea to be El Chupacabra from her spelling list. What if it was Carlos, the school bully? I'd have to turn him in. After all, not only did I know he was not a very nice person, but, after being in the same classroom with him for three years, I also recognized his handwriting.

Well, I read the letter twice, and then I handed it back to Principal Esparza.

"What do you think, Perla?" Principal Esparza asked me, "Do you know who was pretending to be El Chupacabra?"

I told him I wasn't sure who the culprit was, but that I was certain that whoever was pretending to be El Chupacabra, he, or she, wasn't from my class.

Principal Esparza then asked, "Perla, how did you know it wasn't anybody from your class?"

I told the principal what I thought. I also told him that if the fake El Chupacabra ever returned to El Barrio de Guadalupe, Valiente and I would figure out who it was.

Do you know how I knew it wasn't anybody from my class? Give it some thought, and then go to the Answer's Page to see if you were right. Good luck!