

Trick or Treat

The wind **whistled** through the bare branches as the last bit of daylight faded from Maple Lane. Shadows stretched long across the pavement, and the air smelled faintly of smoke from carved pumpkins glowing on doorsteps.

Lily and her best friend Ben were out **determined** to visit every house on their street before their buckets overflowed. Lily was dressed as a witch, her black hat tilting every time she laughed. Ben wore a skeleton costume with glow-in-the-dark bones that flickered in the streetlight.

They had almost finished when Ben pointed toward the end of the road. “What about that one?”

Lily followed his gaze. At the very end stood an old, narrow house that looked forgotten by time. Its paint was **peeling**, its windows were clouded with **dust**, and a single crooked tree leaned across the path. No pumpkins glowed there — only darkness.

“People say no one’s lived there for years,” Lily whispered.

Ben grinned. “Then we’ll get extra sweets for being brave!”

They crept up the path, their shoes crunching on **gravel**. The gate gave a low **creak** as they pushed it open. A faint light flickered behind the door’s frosted glass.

Lily hesitated. “Maybe we shouldn’t—”

Before she could finish, the door swung open on its own. A gust of **cold** air swept out, carrying the scent of damp wood and something sweet — like toffee, but older.

“Trick or treat?” Ben called, his voice shaking only a little.

Inside, a narrow hallway stretched into the dark. A candle burned on a small wooden table. Next to it sat a bowl of shiny wrapped sweets — untouched, as if waiting for someone.

Ben stepped forward and reached out a hand. The candle flame suddenly **flickered**, and the door slammed shut behind them with a **bang**. Lily gasped. The candlelight shimmered, throwing shadows that twisted across the walls.

From the end of the hall came the faint sound of footsteps — slow, dragging ones.

“Hello?” Lily called.

A whisper answered: “Trick... or... treat...”

Ben froze. “Who’s there?”

Something **shimmered** in the air — a pale figure drifting closer, wearing a torn cloak. Its face was hidden, but its voice sounded almost... lonely.

“Every Halloween,” it murmured, “children come for treats... but forget to say thank you.”

Lily’s heart thudded. “Th-thank you!” she blurted out.

The ghostly figure paused, then nodded. The bowl of sweets lifted gently into the air, tipping forward until chocolate coins and caramel bars poured into their buckets.

The front door creaked open again, and a soft wind pushed them back outside. The figure faded away, leaving only the whisper: “Good manners matter...”

Lily and Ben ran all the way home, breathless and laughing. When they looked in their buckets later, every sweet was wrapped in silver paper — each one stamped with a tiny smiling ghost.

Lily smiled. “Best Halloween ever.”

Ben nodded. “Next year, we say thank you first.”

Glossary

1. **Whistled** – made a high, soft sound as air moved quickly.
2. **Determined** – having a strong purpose or decision to do something.
3. **Peeling** – coming away from a surface in thin layers.
4. **Dust** – tiny dry particles that gather on surfaces when not cleaned.
5. **Gravel** – small loose stones that cover the ground.
6. **Creak** – a long, squeaky sound made by something old moving slowly.
7. **Flickered** – flashed or moved unsteadily between bright and dim.
8. **Bang** – a sudden, loud noise caused by something hitting or closing hard.
9. **Shimmered** – glowed or shined with a wavering, soft light.
10. **Murmured** – spoke softly or quietly, often hard to hear clearly.