

The Trick

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Johnny and Ryan were best friends, not only best friends, but cousins. They did many things together. One year, they had a very unusual experience.

Johnny was visiting his cousin and it just happened to be Halloween. They decided to go trick-or-treating in Ryan's neighborhood. Johnny dressed up as a ghost and Ryan was a monster. They found the biggest bags in the house so they could collect a lot of candy.

They knocked on the door of the first house and a nice lady opened the door. They both yelled, "Trick-or-Treat!" and the lady gave them a handful of chocolate candy, which they put into their bags.

The boys were excited. They had their first candy bars. They knew there was going to be a lot more.

They ran quickly to the next door and did the same thing.

"Trick-or-Treat!" they yelled.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know you were coming, so I didn't buy any candy," the man apologized.

The boys decided they needed to teach the man a lesson and needed to do a trick on him, so they ran into the house and began to throw things into the air.

The man was shocked.

"Stop that! or I will call the police," he yelled.

“Give us some candy and then we will stop,” Ryan answered.

“I don’t have any candy, but I can give you some money,” the man replied, angry at what the boys were doing to his house.

“Sure, we can take money!” Johnny said with a big smile of excitement. “How much are you going to give us?”

“How much do you want?” the man made the mistake of asking.

“We want a thousand dollars!” Johnny demanded. “If you don’t give it to us we will destroy your house.”

“OK, OK!” The man responded in a panic. “Give me a moment to get my wallet.”

He left to go to his room.

In the meantime, Ryan and Johnny jumped on his furniture, broke glasses and plates, and just goofed around, laughing at the fun they were having.

Suddenly, the front door flew open and two police officers came in. The man had called the police from his room.

“What are you boys doing!” one of the police officers asked.

“He didn’t give us any candy, so we are doing a trick on him,” Ryan answered, while still jumping on the couch.

“Oh,” said the other officer. “We understand. He should have given you candy. He deserves a trick. We’ll go now. Have fun boys, but don’t hurt anyone, OK?”

“We won’t,” said Johnny. “We’re just having some fun.”

The police left.

The man was upset because the police had left without getting the boys out of his house.

“Where is our thousand dollars you promised us,” Johnny demanded.

“I don’t have a thousand dollars in the house. How can I pay you if I don’t have the money?” he asked.

“How much money do you have?” Ryan inquired.

“Two hundred dollars. Is that enough?” he answered.

Johnny and Ryan looked at each other and agreed.

“Yep, we’ll leave you alone for two hundred dollars,” Ryan said, as he held out his hand to take the money.

The man opened his wallet and gave one hundred dollars to each of the boys. Then they left.

“What do you want to do now?” Johnny asked Ryan.

“Let’s go to the next house. Maybe we can get some more candy, and if not, we can get more money. What do you think?” Ryan suggested.

“GREAT! What an idea!” Johnny got excited.

The next house was down a dark road without any street lights. The house was old and the paint was peeling. The windows were covered, so no light came out. There were bats flying around the top of the tree in front.

“This looks like a haunted house. We should get a lot of candy here!” Johnny exclaimed, excited to go up to such a strange house.

They walked up to the house and knocked on the door. An old lady answered.

“Trick-or-Treat!” the boys yelled out.

“How about a trick for you!” she yelled at them.

“OK, you asked for it!” Johnny yelled back.

The boys ran into the house. It was very dark and there were very strange noises coming from a room at the back of the house.

Johnny looked over at Ryan.

“She doesn’t have any candy for us. What are we going to do to her?” he asked

Just then, the old lady closed the door behind them and locked it.

“He he he he,” she said in an evil voice. “Now the trick is on you!”

A look a fear crossed Johnny’s and Ryan’s faces. What had they gotten themselves into? This was supposed to be their trick, not hers.

The boys backed away from the old lady in fear. She kept walking toward them and scaring them. She laughed in a hideous tone.

“He he he he... I’m a witch, and on Halloween I capture all the young children. I take and keep them for myself. You are now mine. He he he he. This is going to be *sooo* much fun, you’ll see,” the old lady cackled as she spoke.

Now Ryan and Johnny were very frightened. They did not know what to do. How could they run? There was no way out. The old lady had them trapped.

Later that evening, when the boys did not come home, their families began to look for them, but they were not to be found.

They called the police. The police remembered that the boys had been in the man’s house and that they had played a big trick on him. After that the boys just disappeared.

They asked everyone in the neighborhood if they had seen the two boys. No one remembered seeing them after they had gone to the man’s house.

They searched the whole city and still did not find the boys. The families were sad and waited for the boys to return. Time passed and the boys were never found.

The man who had paid the boys two hundred dollars was arrested as a suspect, but they had to let him go because they couldn’t find any evidence.

Every Halloween from then on, more children became missing and no one found them. Finally, the mayor decided that trick-or-treating was no longer allowed in the city. It was just too dangerous.

Stories about an old witch who captured children spread around the city. Most people thought the stories were just a legend. Many were kids told the story every year in school, but no one knew where she lived.

The children were becoming angry. They loved getting candy and dressing up for Halloween. Every year some kids disobeyed their parents and went out in secret. Some of them never returned as well.

Several years later, two children named Jerry and Mandy, did just that. When it was dark, they snuck out of their house with big bags to get candy.

They joined with some other kids who had also decided to go trick-or-treating, even though they knew they were not supposed to go.

They made a plan to go the next city to trick-or-treat. It was still okay to ask for candy there. On their way to the other city, they went from house to house and got a lot of candy. Then they came to the old house on the dark street where the old lady lived.

The woman invited them to come in.

“Hello kids, do you want to see something very special?” the old witch asked them.

Not knowing what was going to happen, the children got excited and entered the old house. It was exciting as well as scary and fun at the same time. The house was like the haunted house they had visited at the library two days before.

Once inside the lady locked the door behind them.

“He he he he. I have caught more children. You should have listened to your parents. You’ll never see them again, he he he!” she screeched.

The house was dark. Only a few candles lit the room. The sounds of screams came from the back of the house.

“Do you hear that? Those are the children I have caught over the years, and you are going to join them, he he he he!” she said looking straight into their young eyes.

Mandy spoke up. “No, you’re not going to capture us. We’re too smart. We won’t be your prisoners. You’ll see.”

What the witch did not know was what the children had made a plan in case they got caught.

Jerry tried to use his cellphone to call the police, but it didn’t have a signal. That part of the plan turned out not to work.

“He he he he, your phone will not work in my house. I’ve made sure of that,” she informed them.

They still had other ideas that would make it hard for the witch to keep them.

One of the kids ran to the window to break it, but when he hit the window with a stick, it did not break. He tried again, but the same thing happened.

Once again, the old witch laughed, “He he he he. You’ll not be able to get out that

easily. Do you think I didn't anticipate you trying to break my windows? He he he he, you will have to do better than that!"

While this was going on, the parents of Jerry and Mandy realized their children were gone and it was very late. They called the police who searched for the missing children.

After searching for many hours, they ended up at the old lady's house. When she answered the door, she looked like a normal person.

"How may I help you?" she asked.

"We are looking for a group of children that went trick-or-treating tonight and they are missing. Have you seen any children tonight?" the police asked.

"Yes, they came by here a few hours ago. I gave them some cider and apples. They were happy children. I think they were having a lot of fun. I haven't seen them since. I hope you find them soon," she told the police.

(Every year the police talked to her, but never found a reason not to believe her.)

The police left.

In the back room of the house, the new kids were put into a cage next to many other kids. All of them looked hungry and tired.

Jerry talked to one of the boys in the cage next to them.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"My name is Johnny, what's yours?" he asked.

"My name is Jerry. Tell me, how long have you been here?" Jerry asked.

"I don't know. I think it was 1990 when I came here. What year is it now?" Johnny asked.

"It's 2020, but you still look like a boy. That was 30 years ago. How can that be?" Jerry asked.

"I don't know. The witch has put some kind of a spell on us and we don't get older. We just stay the same," Johnny responded.

Sitting next to Johnny was Ryan. He was very quiet and had his head between his

legs. He was very sad. He had no idea they had been there for so long.

There were about twenty cages in the room, and each one of them had four or five children inside.

Jerry asked Mandy, “I thought you had a plan if we got caught like this, didn’t you?”

“Don’t worry. I have everything under control. We just wait until the time is right. Then we will save everyone here. Just be patient,” Mandy answered.

“Okay, but I hope you don’t wait too long. I’m almost out of candy,” Jerry showed his impatience.

Jerry didn’t really believe her. They had no idea they would be in cages. They remembered the stories about children going missing and many other stories about how it might be a witch, or just a bad person who had taken all the children, but no one knew for sure. Now Jerry and Mandy knew the truth, but it was different than what they had expected.

The lights went out and the room went dark. It was time to get some sleep. Jerry and Mandy did not sleep at all. The floor was hard and they were just too scared to do anything but keep quiet.

In the morning, when the lights came back on, the doors to the cages opened. In the middle of the room were tables with bowls of candy.

“What is this?” asked Jerry.

Johnny answered, “This is what we have for every meal. We get Halloween candy to eat every day. I’m sick of it, but it’s all we get.”

Jerry spoke up, “How do we get out of here?”

Johnny answered, “If I knew the answer to that question, we wouldn’t still be here, now would we?”

“I guess that was a pretty stupid question,” Jerry said realizing he had not thought about the question very well.

Over the next few days, Jerry and Mandy watched what the witch was doing. The

witch did the same thing every day, so now they knew her schedule.

In the morning, the lights would turn on to wake them up. She would feed them candy. She would stay in the room watching the kids to see what they were doing. Mostly the kids just sat on the floor of their cages talking softly to each other. She would stay for two hours, and then she would leave them alone, locking the door as she left.

At lunchtime, she would come back to feed them again. It was always candy.

She would stay for one hour and then leave again to take a nap.

Then at dinnertime, she would come back with more candy. She would stay until it was time to sleep. Then she would turn off the lights and leave until the next morning. It was the same every day.

Jerry and Mandy began to make a plan to escape. The other children thought they were crazy. There was no way to get out of the house.

Every time they thought they had a good idea, one of the children told them they had already tried, but it had not worked.

As they watched the witch, they knew she would do the same thing every day. If they could find a way to open the cage when she was gone, then they could surprise her when she walked into the room, take her keys, unlock the doors, and run away.

The problem was how to unlock the cage before she came into the room.

Jerry came up with a plan. "When we leave the cage to eat I'll put something in the lock, so it won't lock when the witch puts us back inside."

Jerry thought for a moment and then added, "If we chew some gum, and then stick it into the hole, then the door won't lock."

Mandy said, "That's a great idea, but what do we do after we get out of the cage?"

Johnny jumped in with a suggestion, "When we get out I will hit her over the head with a stick!"

Everyone laughed and said, "You'll have to be very fast, so she won't see you."

Johnny answered, "I promise. I'll be fast enough."

"When are we going to do this?" asked Jerry.

“How about tomorrow night just before she turns out the lights,” Johnny responded with a big smile. “I’m excited about going home to see my parents.”

Then he had a thought, “Where are my parents? It has been twenty-five years since the witch took me. They might be dead by now.”

Johnny became sad. So, did the other kids who had been in the cages for a long time.

Mandy spoke up, “Isn’t it better to be free, even if we don’t see our families again?”

Everyone agreed. It was better to be free than prisoners of the witch. Even if they were dead, it would be better not to stay in the cages anymore.

The next day, Jerry did as he had suggested. He chewed a lot of gum and then put it into the hole for the lock. When the witch closed the door, it did not lock, just as he had planned.

“Good night my little children. He he he, I hope you sleep well tonight. Tomorrow is a special day. I hope you will be happy with what I have planned for you,” she told them. “It is Halloween and we will have a lot of fun.”

Mandy looked at Jerry and said, “We’ve been here one year already?”

The children looked at each other in surprise. What could she mean by that? What was going to be special about tomorrow?

When the witch turned her back, Jerry pushed the door open and Johnny hit the witch on the back of the head. She fell to the floor and lay motionless.

Mandy took the keys and unlocked the cages. The children ran out and began to hit the witch out of anger.

Meanwhile, Johnny opened the door that led to the house.

They ran up the stairs and into the living room. When the kids were out of the back room, Jerry locked the door, so the witch could not get out.

The house was dark and it was hard to see where they were going. When they got to the front door, the key did not work. The door was still locked.

Suddenly the witch was in front of the them. She had a light in her hand.

“Why do you want to get away from me? Haven’t I treated you well. I gave you candy every day. Tomorrow I was going to let you go. I’m going to move away from here and I cannot take you with me. But now you have made me angry, so I am just going to make you disappear forever!” she said to them in a scary voice.

She began to speak a spell, “Doubley, adda, mamoly, adda.....”

Just then, Johnny jumped at the witch and hit her over the head with the stick again, making her fall to the ground. She dropped the light and Mandy picked it up. When she pointed it at the door, the door swung open, and the light of the moon shown into the room. The children stood silently not believing that they might now be free!

Then like a herd of cows, they bolted toward the door and out into freedom.

Mandy and Jerry were the last ones out, and to their surprise, they were alone. None of the children were there.

They looked at each other in surprise.

“Where did everyone go?” asked Mandy.

“Maybe they went home in their own time,” Jerry suggested.

When they looked back at the old house, there was nothing there. The old house was gone and only the thing on the lot was the big oak tree with bats flying around it looking for insects.

“Now, that’s very strange!” Mandy spoke up. “Where did the old house go?”

Jerry replied, “I don’t care. I just want to go home.”

When they got home, everything was normal. It was the night they had left.

Jerry’s mom asked, “So, how was your trick-or-treating tonight? Did you have fun?”

“Actually, it was not fun at all.” Jerry responded.

“Did you get a lot of candy?” his mom inquired.

“Too much! Next year I think I will just stay home,” Jerry answered as he walked up the stairs to his room.

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. harmful _____ | a. captive, held in a cage |
| 2. wallet _____ | b. get away, run away |
| 3. disobey _____ | c. destructive, hurtful |
| 4. prisoner _____ | d. not the same |
| 5. anticipate _____ | e. place for money and credit cards |
| 6. different _____ | f. group of something |
| 7. escape _____ | g. not to do as told by someone |
| 8. surprise _____ | h. look forward to, expect something |
| 9. herd _____ | i. tolerant, enduring |
| 10. patient _____ | j. shock, amaze, stun |

TRUE / FALSE

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Johnny and Ryan were cousins. | T / F |
| 2. Ryan dressed as a ghost. | T / F |
| 3. The man gave Johnny and Ryan one thousand dollars. | T / F |
| 4. The police found Johnny and Ryan in the scary house. | T / F |
| 5. The old lady was a witch. | T / F |
| 6. The police looked for all the missing children. | T / F |
| 7. The man who paid two-hundred dollars was arrested. | T / F |
| 8. The mayor stopped trick-or-treating in his city. | T / F |
| 9. Jerry called the police on his cellphone. | T / F |
| 10. Johnny put gum in the lock. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Johnny dressed up as what? _____
 - a) clown
 - b) ghost
 - c) mummy
 - d) hobo

2. What did they eat for every meal? _____
 - a) popcorn
 - b) cider and apples
 - c) eggs and sausage
 - d) candy

3. What did the witch do in the morning? _____
 - a) turn on the light
 - b) open the cages
 - c) bring candy
 - d) all the above

4. Who hit the witch with a stick? _____
 - a) Mandy
 - b) Jerry
 - c) Johnny
 - d) Ryan

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. Who were cousins?

2. Who were siblings?

3. Who went looking for the children?

4. How much money did the man pay Johnny and Ryan?

5. Who said the kids could not go trick-or-treating in the city anymore?

6. What year did Johnny arrive at the old house?

7. Who tried to break the window?

8. What did the children do to the witch when she was on the ground?

9. When the door opened, what did the kids do?

10. What did Jerry decide not to do the next year?
