

Halloween Switch

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Dressed in a light blue nightgown and fluffy sheep slippers, Rosa got into bed. Clicking her bedside lamp off, dark flooded the room. The window beside her bed was open, sending whooshes of cold air across her face. Candles lined her room and small gourds added fall decoration.

Rosa felt as if she was a small Halloween queen inside her pumpkin filled palace. Halloween was tomorrow and Rosa was going trick-or-treating with her best friend, Marly. Marly was going to dress as a wolf and Rosa as Red Riding Hood. The best part was the fact that her parents finally let them go alone instead of them trailing behind the two girls. As sleep pressed around Rosa, she let it take hold of her mind as the peaceful rest washed her happy thoughts into the night.

Rosa awoke to a ringing alarm clock. She got up every morning at 6:00 am to start the day. Her costume for the night was tucked gently in her closet and her sweatshirt and jeans sat next to her bed. While she was dressing herself for the day, Marly texted her. She opened her phone to see an excited message.

I can't wait!!!

Marly H

Me neither, girl!! Eek!

Rosa P

I will be coming to your house for lunch, correct?

Marly H

Yes, and then we are going to the pumpkin patch
and then going trick-or-treating! Yay!!!

Rosa P

Rosa could tell that Marly was just as excited as her. She could hardly wait to see her best friend and go to the pumpkin patch. But first, lunch. By the time the mid-day meal came, Rosa was as fidgety as a squirrel. Halloween was by far her favorite holiday, and she was so happy to be spending the afternoon with her BFF.

Ding, Dong! Ding, Dong! The doorbell rang loudly throughout the house. Rosa rushed to the door and opened it to reveal her blonde haired best friend.

“Ahh! I’m so happy to see you! I’ve been waiting all morning!” cried Rosa, hugging Marly tightly.

“Me, too! Like we left from my house 5 minutes early because I was literally just waiting in the car.” Marly laughed lightly and stepped into the house.

Rosa’s mom came out from the kitchen holding a plate with two perfect grilled cheese sandwiches on it.

“Yum! You didn’t tell me we were having our favorite food!” Marly eyed the sandwiches and licked her lips.

“I didn’t know either!” Rosa sat down at the table and grabbed a still warm sandwich. Marly sat beside her and grabbed two plates for the girls.

Marly snarfed down the food in maybe three bites. Rosa was slower, but still went fast. They finished in five minutes and then Rosa ran upstairs to show Marly her costume.

“It’s absolutely adorable!” Marly plopped down on Rosa’s bed and petted Jace, her dalmatian puppy.

“I got it at Costume Galore yesterday. We found it on sale for only \$6.”

“Awesome!” Marly grabbed her phone from her pocket and scrolled through her pictures. Then she held the phone up to show Rosa one. “This is my costume.”

Her costume was a pair of wolf ears and a wolf onesie. The onesie even had a tail on the back. “Wow!” The costume looked amazing.

Jace crawled up behind Rosa carrying his purple leash. “Awroooo.” He moaned gently. She gave in and attached the leash to his collar, picking him up.

“You wanna go on a walk? You wanna go on a walk?” Rosa cooed and tickled his nose. “Let’s go.” She nodded to Marly and they went downstairs.

Two and a half hours later, Marly and Rosa came back from the pumpkin patch. Marly raced home to get her costume. Rosa excitedly got into her cloak and dress. Her Red Riding Hood costume looked great with her wavy chocolate brown hair. She tied it in a side braid just as Marly raced back into her room. Her onesie was gray and fluffy with a shaggy tail hanging at the back. Her headband was soft and absolutely awesome.

“You ready?” Marly squealed, jumping up and down.

“You bet!” Rosa opened the door to her bedroom and the pair walked down to the first floor.

Jace sat near the door, ready for trick-or-treating with Rosa and Marly. Rosa grabbed her woven basket for candy, and Marly grabbed a fluffy gray bag. Setting off, the girls came towards a dark blue house. “Trick or treat!” Rosa gratefully accepted a chocolate Hershey’s bar.

“Next house!” Marly whispered.

After 40 minutes, Marly’s bag bulged and Rosa’s basket was almost overflowing. A dark gray house loomed ahead. Spikey black fences lined the front yard and grayish-green ivy scaled the walls. A lopsided roof tilted on top of the tall house. A small black cauldron sat on the porch.

The girls approached hesitantly. The bucket had a sign that said “Take one.” A bright orange candy sat on top, like a rose in a patch of daisies. Rosa grabbed a Snickers but Marly went for the gummy candy on top, intrigued by its orange paper.

“Oh Marly! Off-brand candies are always the worst. And orange is your least favorite color!” Rosa laughed.

“I don’t know. It looks... good.” Marly unwrapped the candy and popped a bright red chew into her mouth. She stuck the wrapper in her bag.

Rosa and Marly walked along the street, coming to a couple more houses. Jace kept barking at Marly. “Arf to you too, pup.” She barked back a very realistic sound.

“Geez, have you been practicing?” Rosa joked.

Jace walked carefully around Rosa’s legs, as if afraid of Marly. “Nah, he’s probably just scared of my costume.” Marly shook her head.

“I guess.” Rosa turned back to the road.

It was 9:00. Most trick-or-treaters had disappeared, with only a few still wandering around. By the time they came to the last house they wanted to go to, Marly was silent.

“Trick or treat!” called Rosa through the door.

A dark haired woman came out holding a bowl of candy. “Agh!” She screamed, dropped the bowl, and ran back inside. A wolf came out from behind Rosa and ate the candy.

“Easy...” Rosa backed away slowly, looking around for Marly. Then it hit her. The wolf *was* Marly.

It must’ve been the weird candy that Marly ate! It turned her into her costume. How could Rosa get her friend back?

The wolf stood up on its hind legs, noticing Rosa. It bared its teeth and snarled.

Rosa had dropped her basket at the sight of Marly-wolf, and she grabbed Marly’s bag. She held it up defensively, but then Marly-wolf dropped back down and whimpered. Rosa softened her gaze, gently patting the wolf’s neck.

“I’ll get you back, don’t worry.” Rosa set the bag down next to her, and the candy wrapper fell out. “Wait a sec...” Rosa grabbed the wrapper and inside-outed it. A message written in tiny print showed up on the inside.

When 8 o'clock arrives, a surprise awaits, a bright red candy with a cinnamon taste.

“Well we know that part. You ate the red candy.” Rosa squinted to see the next line.

The costume you wear, will turn inside out, you will become scary, that I don't doubt.

“Ok... You definitely are your costume, and you are pretty scary. This doesn't say anything about how to get you back!” Rosa was agitated by the vague message, but continued reading.

When midnight strikes twelve clock chimes, the potion you need will wait in my house. If you don't get it in time, you will be forever mine.

Rosa took a deep breath. “Potion... Potion... We have to find the house with the candy!” And so, the pair set off. Marly-wolf had to hide if any people went by, but they didn't come across anyone on their way back to the spooky house. By 11:40, they had made it to the street that they needed to be on.

“Oh, Mom and Dad are going to be so worried!” Rosa was afraid, but she knew that she had to get her friend back.

The door creaked open to reveal a dim-lit room. What if this message was just a fake, and she was intruding? Rosa timidly walked forward. The clock on the wall ticked lightly. 11:46. Only 14 minutes to find a potion. Rosa wished she had a flashlight, but Marly-wolf seemed to be able to see well in the dark.

Marly-wolf led her into separate rooms and up and down staircases. Rosa was worried they would get lost. As she felt around, she couldn't find any potion. In one stretch of space, it was pitch-black in the room. Marly-wolf barked slightly. She pushed Rosa onto her hands and knees and then pushed her forward. Rosa was crawling through a tiny, damp tunnel.

A room appeared in front of her. Rosa could see again. A light flickered in the corner and a hard concrete floor was underneath her feet. Marly-wolf nodded towards a bubbling pot in the center of the room. Rosa and the wolf approached.

A gray-blue liquid fizzed and frothed in it, like a polluted lake. A small glass vial layed next to the cauldron on the floor. “Well, this is it.” Another clock hung on the wall. 11:59. Rosa dipped the vial into the potion. It burned against her bare skin. She begged the wolf to open its mouth.

“C'mon! You have to Marly!” Rosa felt a whoosh of dark air appear beside her. Wispy black hands reached for Marly-wolf. Finally, the animal gave in. Rosa poured the liquid into her mouth and the dark gray ghost cried behind her.

The wolf's skin began to shred and its fur shedded onto the ground. Marly appeared where the wolf had just been standing. The ghost cried out again, and tried to stick the fur onto Marly. Then, it disappeared into the air. The girls squeezed each other tightly.

“Thank you.” Tears rolled down Marly's face.

“What was it like?” Rosa asked.

“I felt like my whole mind was foggy. I could hardly think. When I saw you at the house, I calmed down a bit. As soon as we got near the potion, I started being able to react normally again. My senses were so much sharper. I could smell, hear, and see a lot better than I can as a human. Even though it was interesting, I never, ever, want to be a wolf again.” Marly’s palms were sweaty against Rosa’s.

“It was scary for me too. I mean, my best friend was a dangerous animal!” Rosa smiled weakly. “We should probably get home, our parents are for sure going to be worried about us.”

“And mad.” Marly began to walk back to the tunnel. “I hope I remember how to get us out.”

After what felt like an hour, both girls made it out of the scary house, intact and human. Their parents were so happy to see them, but didn’t think that Rosa and Marly were telling the truth.

“Don’t make up silly stories like that! Rosa, next time just tell me if you’re going to be late, ok?” Rosa’s mom scolded.

Marly had to go home, but promised to visit Rosa the next day. Rosa knew that she would never, and she meant never, forget this Halloween night.