

THE DISCONTENTED PUMPKIN

by Elvína Granlie, age 9

"I know I was meant for a better life than this," grumbled the biggest pumpkin in the corn patch.

"I'm contented as it is," said a smaller one.

"The best is yet to come," continued another one. "Halloween is but a few days off now, and then we will be brought into the barn and made Jack O' Lanterns of. I'm sure that will be fun."

"Fun!", snorted the biggest one. "Fun! Is it fun to cut to pieces, your insides scraped out, and a horrid face cut on the prettiest part of your skin? I don't call that "fun!"

"Call it what you please then," retorted the other one. "I'm sure I'm satisfied as it is."

"My lot is worse than any of yours," cried a little pumpkin in a squeaky voice. "I have to stay right here at the end of the corn patch, and Jack Frost can get at me easier than any of you. Still I don't grumble."

"Be quiet, will you?", yelled the biggest again. "Things are bad enough without you making things worse," and he tried to cover himself with leaves, but he was too big. This made him angrier than ever.

"If I was quite as large as you, I would find no reason to grumble," continued the little one.

"Keep still and mind your own business, I say!", screamed the big one, so loud that a little rabbit hiding in the corn patch hopped up and bound away in fright.

"Now don't quarrel," said a middle sized one.

"Hush!" I hear something coming," warned one. and then all was quiet.

By and by, a farmer came into the corn patch with a wheelbarrow. "Children," he called. "Come and see how large the pumpkins have grown. We shall bring them to the barn now, and make Jack O' Lanterns of them."

"Oh, oh, how big they are!", and "Oh, Oh, look at the biggest one! That will make a splendid Jack O' Lantern," cried the children.

At that, the biggest one drew himself up and said proudly, "I don't choose to be made a lantern of, so keep your hands off me." Neither, the farmer, nor his children heard him (or else they did not understand him) as they picked him up and placed him in the wheelbarrow on top of the others.

"Hurrah! Now we shall be made lanterns of," squeaked the little yellow pumpkin.

"What was that?", one of the children asked.

"The wheelbarrow squeaked," answered the farmer, which made the pumpkins laugh.

After that the pumpkins kept quiet. The farmer brought them into the barn.

"We shall leave them here until tomorrow," he said. "Then you may make the lanterns for our party."

One by one, the pumpkins were lifted out and placed on the barn floor. Then the farmer and the children left.

"That surely was some adventure," spoke up the yellow one again. He was very talkative.

"Yes, it was a very good ride, even though it was only a wheelbarrow."

"Those children seem to think we can't talk. Well, we can just as well as they do." -- this from the middle sized one.

"I like them," said another sleepily. "I'm sure they wouldn't make as good of pies as we would, all cut up and soaked," squeaked the little yellow one.

"They never make pies out of children, silly!", said one, and then they all laughed.

"Will you please keep quiet, so I can sleep?", cried the biggest one. He was still angry as he had been squeezed in the wheelbarrow.

"Yes, let's all try to go to sleep. I declare I'm quite tired," said one, and he tried to yawn, but how could he when he hadn't any mouth?

After that, all were quiet until the smallest one noticed that the farmer had left the barn door open.

"Something may come in and eat us up," he said. Everyone was wide awake and terribly frightened.

By and by, something did come. It was a big fat hen. "Cluck, cluck," she said, walking up to the smallest one and picking at him.

"Ouch! Help!", he squeaked, frightening the hen so that she jumped up on the feed box and cackled with all her might. At length, she flew away.

The middle-sized pumpkin suggested they appoint a guard to keep watch while they slept.

"Yes, yes, that is a good idea," they said. "We are not helpless, though we can't run."

"We pumpkins surely are ... " -- the little yellow one fell asleep right in the middle of his sentence and the other pumpkin never got to know what he meant to say.

In ten minutes, they were all fast asleep. They did not wake up till morning when the children came and found them. When they were made Jack O' Lanterns of, they were brought into the house to be lit when evening came.

Everyone was happy, but the biggest one. He was frowning with all his might.

When evening came, the candles in the lanterns were lit and brought into the parlor where the visitors were. "What lovely Jack O' Lanterns!", they exclaimed. Then how proud the pumpkins were! They grinned with all their might and the candles inside of them shown very brightly. Only the biggest one was frowning.

"I like that one best of all," said a little curly headed girl, pointing at the biggest pumpkin. Oh, how proud he felt then! He ceased frowning and grinned with all his might at the little girl. Really then, he was the prettiest lantern in the room. He looked happily around until he saw a big boy who did not seem very happy, standing by the door. He called out, "Say, Mr. Boy! If you want to be happy, grin like I do." Oh! How happy his voice was, but nobody heard him.

"Oh well," he said. "I have learned a lesson tonight. It does not help to be discontented. Why, I declare, I m the jolliest lantern in the whole room!", and he grinned with all his might.

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