

STARLA'S BAD MOOD

The weather was particularly cold and wet as Starla and Gavin walked home from school. Gavin, Starla's younger brother, could tell something was wrong because Starla wasn't in her usual happy mood. She was always thrilled when school was over because it meant she could go home to practice her violin, but today something was on her mind.

"What the matter, Starla?" Gavin asked.

"Nothing. Leave me alone", she snapped. **It's cold and windy, and I just want to get home"**.

Gavin thought it was best to leave Starla alone, so he decided not to say another word as they turned the corner and continued towards their house. As they walked, Starla started to feel bad for how she had talked to Gavin, and decided to strike up a conversation to lighten the mood.

"Hey, Gavin. Have you ever noticed how weird the trees look with no leaves on them?" she asked.

"Not really" Gavin answered, looking around at the trees which lined the street. It was Halloween and by now the trees had lost all their leaves.

"I used to always think they looked like witch hands, growing out of the ground!" Starla said in her best scary voice. Gavin stopped in his tracks and looked at her, eyes wide. **"Of course, I'm MUCH too grown up and mature to think anything that silly now"** Starla added with a smirk.

"Yeah... that's pretty silly, I would never think anything like that either!" Gavin responded, but as he looked at the leafless trees, swaying in the cold October wind, he couldn't help thinking they did kind of look like witch hands (**WIND SOUND**). As they continued home, he stayed a little closer to Starla's side. Starla noticed this and smiled. She hadn't apologized to Gavin for her rude answer, but she had managed to patch things up in her own way.

When they finally arrived home, Gavin was the one to pull the big wooden door open. The door was heavy and the hinges were rusted from old age. Gavin always liked to open it to prove how strong he is. As Gavin pulled the door open with all this might, the old hinges let out their signature creak (**CREAK**).

Once in the house, Gavin went to get a snack and Starla went straight to her room.

"Hey baby!" their mom said, giving Gavin a big hug as soon as he came into the kitchen. **"Where's your sister? No snack for her today?"**

"I don't know. She's in a bad mood or something." Gavin answered.

"I think I know what that's about" Mom said. **"I asked her if she could help my sister Rhody hand out candy to trick or treaters tonight. You know she's still recovering from her surgery, and she'd really appreciate the help. Starla wants to go trick or treating with her friends instead, so she's upset."**

“That sounds like fun, Can I go too?” Gavin asked. He was too young to go trick or treating without a parent anyway, so he wasn’t bothered by the thought of spending halloween with Rhody, his favorite aunt. Besides, she always decorated her house to be super spooky, which Gavin thought was cool.

“Sure” Mom said. **“I bet Aunt Rhody would love to have your help too!”**

In her bedroom, Starla was practicing her violin. There are a lot of things Starla doesn’t like to do when she’s in a bad mood, but she always enjoys practicing her violin. Today, she decided to practice her minor scales, because their sad sound matched her mood. *Why do I have to go hand out candy to those little kids, when all my friends will be out trick or treating without me,* she thought to herself. *It’s not fair!*

When Starla is in a bad mood, she likes to change all of her Suzuki songs from major to minor, and as a teenager, she’s had plenty of practice being in a bad mood! She liked to turn Twinkle in “Sad Twinkle”. She had perfected her own version of “Sadly Row”, and today, in honor of Aunt Rhody ruining her Halloween, she decided to practice “Go Tell Sad Aunt Rhody”. Starla liked that she could use her violin to express her feelings.

“Come on kids! Time to go” their mom called, just as it was starting to get dark. Gavin had been ready for some time, already dressed in his Star Wars Storm Trooper costume. Begrudgingly, Starla came out of her room, still in her school clothes.

“Aren’t you going to wear a costume?” Mom asked her.

“Why should I?” Starla sighed, **“My halloween is already ruined, what’s the point of pretending to have fun.”**

“Oh, you’re so dramatic” mom said back. **“You know how much Aunt Rhody loves you, and she really needs some help tonight! This could be fun if you just had a positive attitude.”**

“I doubt it” Starla responded as they all headed towards the car.

“Come on in kids!” Aunt Rhody said as she opened the door for Starla and Gavin. She was dressed in a black dress and pointy witch’s hat. This was the same costume she wore every year, but she made it work. As the kids came in, Aunt Rhody’s black cat, Midnight, greeted them **(CAT MEOW)**. Aunt Rhody’s house was pretty old, and she loved having Midnight around because he helped keep the mice under control **(MICE SQUEAK)**.

“I’m so glad you’re here. Oh Gavin, I see your a storm trooper. How cool!” she said, looking him up and down. **“And Starla, you’re dressed as a...”** She trailed off as she noticed Starla’s lack of costume

“She dressed as a moody teenager” their mom said. Everyone had a good laugh at this, except Starla.

“Now kids, you know I recently had knee surgery” Aunt Rhody said, pointing to her knee which was bandaged. **“You’re old Aunty is gonna be right as rain soon enough, but it’s a little hard for me to get to the door quickly, so I need you kids to be in charge of answering the door and handing our candy. How does that sound?”**

“Sounds AWESOME!” Gavin answered enthusiastically.

“Yeah, that’s fine” Starla added.

As the night progressed, trick or treaters started arriving. Gavin was quick to open the door when he heard a knock (**KNOCK**). Starla was in charge of handing out the treats, because the big basket was so heavy and full of candy that Gavin could barely lift it. Aunt Rhody sat nearby so she could see and compliment all the adorable costumes.

As trick or treaters came to the door, Aunt Rhody would say things like **“Oooh! Count Dracula. Please don’t suck my blood!”** or **“Spongebob Squarepants! What are you doing out of the ocean?”**. She seemed to have a clever response for almost any costume imaginable. In spite of herself, Starla starting finding Aunt Rhody’s commentary pretty funny, and she even found herself laughing a few times. When Aunt Rhody told a little girl in a cat costume to have a **“Happy Meowloween”** Starla laughed so hard she almost dropped the basket of candy.

One little boy, about 4 years old, came to door dressed as a star. Starla, who by now had almost completely forgotten about not trick or treating with her friends, told him how cute he looked. The boy was pretty shy, but his mom who was with him said **“Thanks! He just started learning Suzuki Violin, so we thought a star was the perfect costume for him!”**

“Oh my gosh. I play suzuki violin too!” Starla said. **“I still remember when I started learning twinkle. It was so much fun!”** The boy looked up and gave a big smile when he heard this. Starla secretly gave him a few extra pieces of candy and even said **“Happy Halloween”** as they left.

As it got later, he trick or treaters eventually stopped coming.

“How about I make you kids some cocoa while we wait for your mom” Aunt Rhody suggested.

“Sure!” both kids responded. As they sat drinking their cocoa, Aunt Rhody shared stories about when she and their mom were kids and how much fun they had on Halloween. She even got out a photo album and showed them pictures of Starla as a baby on Halloween, dressed up a pea pod. Gavin thought this was hilarious, and even Starla had to admit she made a pretty adorable pea pod.

“Sounds like your mom’s here!” Aunt Rhody said as a car pull up. Just before they headed out the door, Aunt Rhody said she had a surprise. **“You didn’t think I’d let my two helpers go home empty handed, did you?”** she asked, handing them each a huge bag of candy. **“Thanks Aunt Rhody”** they both said happily.

In the car ride home, mom asked them how their night was. Gavin rambled excitedly about this and that. He obviously had a good time. Starla talked about a few of the best costumes she'd seen, and made a special point of telling her mom about the little boy in the star costume.

“Well, I’m glad you didn’t have too horrible of a time” mom said with a wink after Starla had finished her story.

“Yeah, it wasn’t that bad after all” Starla added nonchalantly as they pulled into their driveway. Secretly Starla thought this was the best Halloween she'd ever had, and even though she didn't say so, her mom could tell too.

THE END

WHISPER/WIND - Bow while gently running a finger over the string

CREAK NOISE - Rub bow against back of violin

KNOCK - knock gently on violin

CAT MEOW - Play while pulling finger down the string

MICE SQUEAK - Play above the bridge