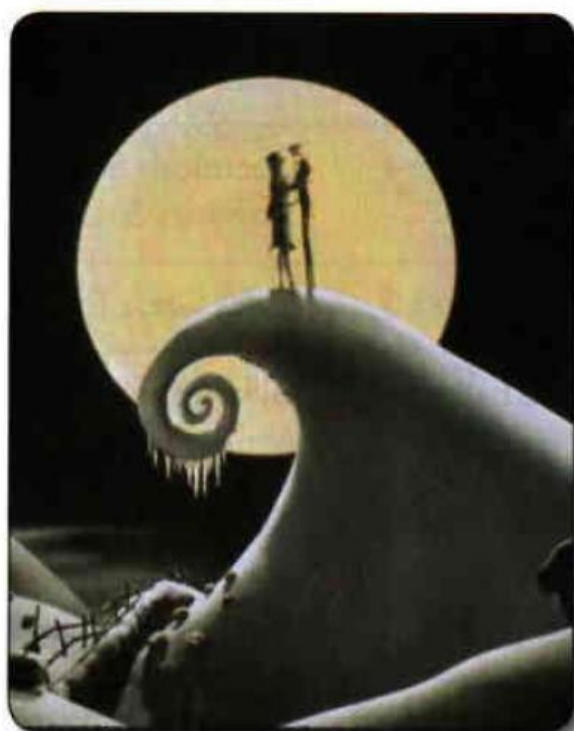


1.1 What's the book about?

- 1 Look at the picture on the front of this book and talk to another student. Do you know anything about the movie *The Nightmare Before Christmas*? What kind of story do you think it is?
- 2 Which of these words describe this story, do you think? Write them under the right picture.

funny strange happy scary boring exciting sad



a

c

b

d

1.2 What happens first?

On page 1 read the name of the chapter, the sentences in *italics*, and the new words at the bottom of the page. Then look at the pictures in Chapter 1 and answer these questions.

- 1 Who is Halloweentown's scariest skeleton?
- 2 Does he like to scare people every year?
- 3 Is Zero a skeleton or a dog?
- 4 Is the girl in the pictures happy or sad?

Halloweentown's Scariest Skeleton

*"I scare people every year, Zero," Jack Skellington said quietly to his dog.
"It's boring and I'm tired."*

On October 31 everybody in Halloweentown was excited. Halloween night was the most important night of their year and they were all afraid. Dead people came up from under the ground. Thirsty **vampires** happily drank a lot of **blood**. Ugly old **witches** changed some people into cats and other people into fish. Everybody ran from the **skeletons**, from the sound of their long, thin arms and legs. Black cats jumped in and out of trash cans. Black birds flew through the dark sky with loud, high cries. And Jack Skellington sang his **scary** songs and danced his dangerous dances. People **screamed**. They were afraid. They loved it.

At the end of the Halloween night, everybody went to the center of town. The **Mayor** of Halloweentown stood in front of them and spoke.

"Tonight was the best Halloween party in many years, and the hard work of one man made it possible," he said. He turned to the town's greatest skeleton. "Jack—thank you."



vampire /'væmpaɪə/ (n) A *vampire* lives inside a dead person and at night he drinks people's blood.

blood /blʌd/ (n) When you cut your finger, red *blood* runs out.

witch /wɪtʃ/ (n) A *witch* is a woman with a tall, black hat. *Witches* fly at night.

skeleton /'skelətən/ (n) Years after people die, only their *skeleton* is under the ground.

scary /'skəri/ (adj) Some people like *scary* movies. When somebody *scares* you, you are afraid.

scream /skriːm/ (v/n) People *scream* when they are very afraid.

mayor /'meɪə, mɛr/ (n) Most towns have a *mayor* and he or she is the boss.

“It was great, Jack!” people shouted. “We loved it! It was wild!”

“Yes,” the Mayor said. “We all enjoy Jack’s scary songs and dangerous dances. Jack, you’re the scariest skeleton in Halloweentown! Thank you for these wonderful **celebrations**...”

“No problem,” Jack said.

But Jack wasn’t happy. Every year he repeated the same songs and dances and he was bored with Halloween. Of course, he couldn’t tell anybody. How could he? The people of the town loved him and they waited all year for this night.

When the Mayor started talking about the scariest vampires and witches, Jack walked away quietly. He wanted to think about his future. He walked out of town and past the old churchyard. He walked past Sally, too, but he didn’t see her.

Sally was also sad. She watched Jack and she wanted to follow him.



But she had to be careful.

The Doctor didn’t like it when she left the house. And when she didn’t listen to him, he got very angry.

The Doctor was a very ugly, old skeleton and he was not a nice man. After his accident, he couldn’t walk. He made Sally, from old clothes, because he wanted a strong young woman in his house. Her clothes were not very pretty, but she had beautiful long red hair.

celebration /ˌseləˈbreɪʃən/ (n) Everybody enjoys a *celebration* with their friends and family. When you *celebrate* your birthday, people give presents to you.

The doctor could move around in his chair but Sally had to cook for him. She cleaned for him and did everything in the house. Her life was boring and she really wanted to run away. She tried to leave many times but he always caught her.

"Why is Jack sad tonight?" Sally thought. "He's the most wonderful man in Halloweentown and everybody loves him."

She listened hard. She could hear Jack's words to his little white dog, Zero. Zero came out from under the ground and flew behind Jack. He was dead, of course, so you could see through him. But he had a funny red nose and it shone in the dark.

"I scare people every year, Zero," Jack Skellington said quietly to his dog. "It's boring and I'm tired. I don't want to hear another scream. Why do I do it?"

"Now I understand...he's bored," Sally thought sadly. "He wants to change his life...and I want to change mine, too."

She looked around the churchyard.

"I'll take some of those flowers," she thought. "I'll put them in the Doctor's drink again tonight so he'll sleep. But this time, when he's sleeping, I'll run away. I'll find Jack and maybe he'll go with me. We'll be free!"

A sound came through the trees from a long way away.

"Sally? Where are you?" It was the Doctor and he was very angry.

"I'm coming!" Sally shouted.

