

Jack's Christmas Plans

*"Do toys scare little boys?" asked an ugly old witch. Jack thought,
"They'll never understand Christmas."*

On the night of December 24, the night before Christmas, everybody in Christmastown was very happy. Santa Claus came on this night every year with **toys** for good girls and boys. At nine o'clock most of the children were in their beds and the youngest were asleep. But a lot of older children couldn't sleep because they were very excited. So they closed their eyes and waited for the sound of Santa Claus's feet.

Jack Skellington walked around the town and looked through the windows of the pretty little houses. He saw the children in their beds and he could see a Christmas tree in every house. Each tree had beautiful red and green decorations on it and pretty lights. He loved everything in this place. Suddenly, he had a great idea.

"I'm going to go back to Halloweentown," he thought. "I've got a great plan!"



toy /tɔɪ/ (n) Children play with toys. Toy cars are not really cars.

Sally was busy in her kitchen with the flowers for the Doctor's drink.

"He'll sleep a long time after he drinks this," she thought.

"Where's my drink?" the Doctor shouted from another room.

"It's almost ready," Sally shouted.

She took it to him and watched carefully. He put his nose near the cup.

"What did you put in my drink tonight?" he asked her.

"I put some hot water, some milk, some sugar..."

"You didn't put any flowers in it, I hope," said the old man. "You did that to me before. I remember! You wanted to run away. I remember that, too!"

"Flowers? You are funny," said Sally. "Drink it and then I'll bring your dinner."

"I want you to drink some first," he said.

"It's very hot, so I'll take a little on my spoon," she said.

Sally took a spoon with **holes** in it from her skirt. She put the cup near her mouth and used the spoon. The drink fell through the holes and back into the cup. The old man's eyes were not very good, so he didn't see it.

"Very nice," said Sally. "Now you drink it."

She gave him the cup and the Doctor drank it. Then he fell asleep with his head on the table. Sally put a warm jacket over him and she ran out the door.

It was late at night but nobody in Halloweentown was asleep. They were very sad about Jack. Where was he? The witches didn't scream and the vampire children didn't want to play. Everything was quiet. The Mayor was the saddest because he couldn't plan the next Halloween without Jack.

Suddenly, he heard a dog.

"Listen! Is that Zero?" shouted the Mayor.

Then another sound—a strange sound—came from behind the large doors in the wall around Halloweentown. When the doors opened, Jack

hole /hool/ (n) When you cut a *hole* in something, you can see through it .

arrived in a big red **sleigh**. Zero flew behind him and his big red nose lit the way. The witches, skeletons, and vampires jumped up and down and laughed.

Everybody shouted, "Jack's back!"

"Jack! Where were you?" asked the Mayor.

"I'll tell you...I'll tell everybody!" Jack said loudly. "I want everybody in town to come here in two hours."

Sally was in the woods when she heard about Jack from one of the witches. She wanted to listen to Jack so she went back into town.

"The Doctor's asleep, so I have time," she thought.

In the center of town Jack, stood on a box in front of the witches, skeletons, and vampires. A lot of small black animals flew around excitedly.

"I want to tell you about a wonderful place! Its name is Christmastown," Jack said.



sleigh /sleɪ/ (n) Santa Claus drives a *sleigh* across the sky on the night before Christmas.

“Christmastown? What’s that?” some witches asked.

“It’s a world of wonderful white snow. It’s a beautiful place, a happy place. Look at this!” Jack said.

He showed them a Christmas tree. Everybody’s eyes opened wide.

“And look! This is a **present!**” he shouted.

He took a box with pretty paper from under the tree and showed it to them.

“What is it?” an ugly old vampire asked. He had a very white face, very black hair, and a very red mouth.

“A present is a box with pretty paper around it...and inside...,” Jack said slowly.

“What’s inside?” called a witch.

“We don’t know,” Jack answered.

“Don’t know? Why not?” The people of Halloweentown didn’t understand.

Quickly, Jack took off the paper and opened the box.

“Inside, there’s a toy!” said Jack. He showed them a child’s toy.

“A boy? That *is* strange!” said one of the skeletons.

“Not a boy! A *toy!*” shouted Jack.

“Do toys scare little boys?” asked an ugly old witch.

Jack thought, “They’ll never understand Christmas.”



Then he had a good idea. “Maybe they’ll understand this.”

He looked at each of them very carefully and he spoke quietly and slowly.

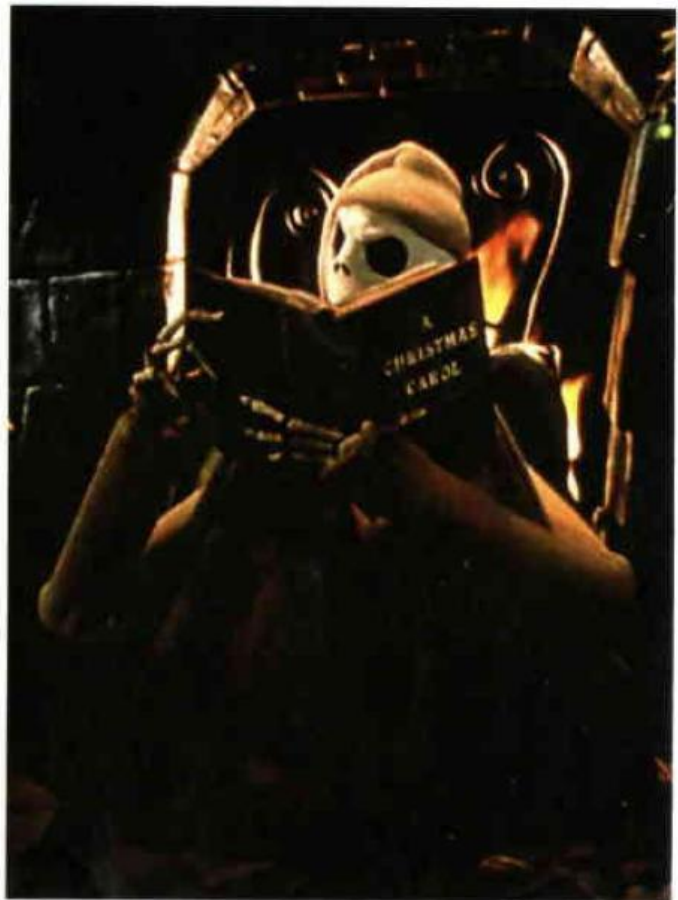
“There’s a very old man in Christmastown,” Jack said. “He’s big and round with long, white hair. His clothes are red and he flies through the night sky in a big red sleigh. He shouts loudly and laughs! They call him Santa Claus! He puts presents under Christmas trees inside every house. When the children wake up in the morning, they find them. Then they open them.”

Everybody was excited when Jack finished his story. They were a little scared, too, and that *was* good.

Jack left and went home. “How can I tell them about Christmas?” he thought. “I have to find a better way. First, *I* have to understand.”

Later that night in his bed, Jack looked in a lot of books. He read Christmas stories and he found Christmas songs. But what were they really about?

“Maybe the Doctor can help me,” Jack thought. “Maybe his **chemicals** will teach me more about toys, decorations, and Christmas trees! I’ll go to his house and discuss everything with him in the morning.”



chemicals /'kemɪkəlz/ (n) Doctors use bottles of *chemicals* when they want answers to questions. They use the *chemicals* for tests.

Chemicals for Jack

*Sally thought, "What does this mean? Does Jack love me, or not?
Or is something bad going to happen?"*

Sally's drink for the Doctor didn't work very well. It wasn't very strong, so the Doctor woke up after three hours. He could move fast in his chair and he found Sally. He took her back home and put her in her room at the top of the old house.

"You won't do that to me again!" the Doctor shouted angrily.

"It was a...a mistake!" she said.

She thought, "Why didn't I put more flowers in the drink? How did I make *that* stupid mistake?"

Now she was in her room and couldn't get out.

Jack arrived in the morning. Sally heard him from her room.

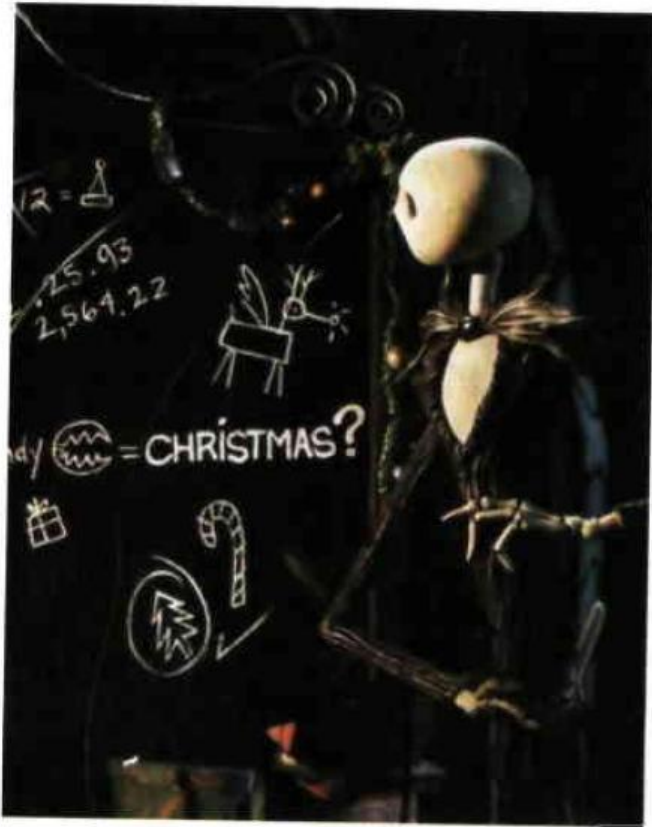
"Why is Jack here?" she thought.

She tried to listen to the conversation between the Doctor and Jack. She couldn't hear Jack very well, but she heard the Doctor.

"Take these chemicals, Jack, but be careful. They're very dangerous. I made a mistake one time and...look at me in this chair."

Jack took the bottles of chemicals and went home. He opened some of the bottles. Very carefully, he put them over fire. He put a toy boat into the bottle of green chemicals. He put the bottle over the fire and watched.





Nothing happened. Then he cut some Christmas paper and put it into some red chemicals. Again, nothing happened. He worked for hours, but he didn't learn very much about Christmas.

"What will happen when I put decorations into these chemicals?" Jack thought. He put some in and a green light shone.

From Sally's window, she saw the green light in Jack's window. She wanted to go to him and

help him. She felt something strange inside—a happy and sad feeling. For the first time in her life she felt love. She really was in love with Jack.

"I want to be his wife," Sally thought. "How can I get away from the Doctor? I can't stay here!"

Sally stood at her window for a long time, without much hope.

"I have to help Jack!" she thought.

So she made a present for him. She put some dry flowers, some black vegetables, and some green water into a bottle. With the bottle in her hand, she stood at her open window and looked down. It was a long way to the ground, but she wasn't afraid. She jumped.

When she hit the ground, one of her arms fell off.

"Not again!" she said. But she took the arm with her other hand and put it on again very quickly.

Then she ran to Jack's house as fast as she could. She stood under his window and looked up. At that same minute, Jack looked down. When their eyes met, he smiled. Suddenly, he felt really happy—but why? He couldn't understand.

Sally put her bottle into his mailbox and ran away. She couldn't stay and talk to him. She wanted to but she couldn't. Sally was a quiet girl and she never said very much to anybody.

Jack watched her and felt warm inside.

When she was near the walls of the town, Sally sat down.

"He smiled at *me!*" she thought excitedly.

There was a pretty flower next to her and she pulled it out of the ground. She began to pull off the **petals** and to repeat these words:

"He loves me," she said. She pulled off the second petal. "He loves me not..." she said. She did this again and again.

Strangely, the flower in her hand began going around and around very fast. It changed into a beautiful, small Christmas tree with pretty lights! Then, suddenly, the little Christmas tree was on fire. There was nothing in her hand. She sat there in the cold, dark night for a long time and tried to understand.

"What does this mean?" she thought. "Does Jack love me, or not? Or is something bad going to happen? Are Jack's plans for Christmas a big mistake?"



petal /'petl/ (n) Red flowers have a lot of red *petals*.

3.1 Were you right?

1 Look back at Activity 2.4. Match the pictures with the words.



toys
presents



Santa Claus
sleigh

2 Now write the same words in these sentences.

On the night before Christmas, ^a
fills his ^b with bags of
^c for good girls and boys. When they
open them, they find wonderful ^d

3.2 What more did you learn?

Circle the best word.

- 1 Sally's spoon has *holes* / *ice* in it.
- 2 Jack arrives in Halloweentown in a *bus* / *sleigh*.
- 3 When Jack opens the present, there is a *boy* / *toy* inside.
- 4 Jack tells everybody in Halloweentown about *Santa Claus* / *witches*.
- 5 Jack's books about Christmas *help* / *don't help* him.
- 6 The Doctor gives Jack some strong *drinks* / *chemicals*.
- 7 Sally wants to *visit* / *marry* Jack.
- 8 Sally thinks that everybody will have a *good* / *bad* Christmas.

Language in use

Look at the sentences in the box.
Then make two sentences into one
with **so** or **because**.

It's very hot, **so** I'll take a little on my spoon.

The Mayor was the saddest **because** he couldn't plan next Halloween without Jack.

- 1 The Doctor was asleep. Sally went to the town's center.
.....
The Doctor was asleep, so Sally went to the town's center.....
- 2 Jack told a scary story about Santa Claus. Nobody knew anything about Christmas.
.....
.....
- 3 Jack had to find a better way. They didn't really understand.
.....
.....
- 4 Jack wanted some help. He went to the Doctor for some chemicals.
.....
.....
- 5 Sally wanted to help Jack. She made a present for him.
.....
.....

What's next?

Read the name of Chapter 6 and the sentences in *italics* below it. Then discuss the pictures in that chapter. What do you think of Jack's helpers? Circle your answers.

- 1 Are they young or old?
- 2 Are they good or bad?
- 3 Are they going to do something dangerous or funny?
- 4 Are they going to make Jack happy or unhappy?
- 5 Are they intelligent or stupid?
- 6 Do they understand Halloween or Christmas?

