

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL TOWN RESIDENTIAL STREET - DUSK

CLOSE on a JACK O'LANTERN perched on a front porch step. The light from within flickers gayly. Delighted SCREAMS and LAUGHTER of CHILDREN fill the air. The costumed trick or treaters scamper from door to door collecting Halloween treasure.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME - NIGHT - A LITTLE LATER

The FRONT DOOR bursts open and in rushes CHLOE (8), dressed as a WITCH followed closely by her father, JACKSON (30s). Her cheeks are flushed with excitement. Her mother, LIZ (30s) is refilling a candy bowl.

LIZ

You two are back early, but I've already had a busy night keeping all the ghosts and goblins filled with candy!

JACKSON

Her treat bag is overflowing already. It'll take weeks for her to come off the sugar high.

Liz laughs in agreement. And then to Chloe...

LIZ

Well, Miss Brunhilda, did you have fun?

CHLOE

(confused)

Who's Brunhilda?

Liz chuckles.

LIZ

A famous witch, silly.

CHLOE

I'm not Brunhilda, I'm Witch Chloe.

JACKSON

Well "Witch Chloe" it's time for your bath and then to bed. It's a school night.

Chloe wrinkles her nose in protest, but then brightens with an idea.

CHLOE
If I hurry and get ready for bed,
will you read me a story?

JACKSON
Chloe....

CHLOE
Please, Daddy. Pleeeeease....

JACKSON
(defeated)
Ok, one story. But a short one.

CHLOE
Yesssss!

Chloe, victorious, turns and scampers down the hall to the bath.

INT. CHLOE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - AWHILE LATER

Chloe, freshly scrubbed face, free of witch makeup and now in pajamas piles into bed and settles in.

CHLOE
(calling out)
Daddy! I'm ready for my story.

A beat and then Jackson appears in the doorway. Chloe scoots over and pats the spot beside her. Jackson struggles to wedge his adult body into her child size bed but finally settles in.

JACKSON
Okay, what kind of story do you
want to hear?

CHLOE
One about Halloween.

JACKSON
Halloween...hmmm. Ok. Scary or not
scary?

CHLOE
Scary!

Her eyes widen in childlike anticipation.

JACKSON

Ok, but not too scary. I don't want you having nightmares. What do you want a story about?

Chloe ponders for a moment and then looks to the smiling jack o'lantern flickering on the dresser in front of her bed.

CHLOE

Why do we have jack o'lanterns?

Jackson is stumped for a moment, but then pulls out his phone and searches.

A beat as he reads to himself.

JACKSON

Well, Mr. Google says it's because of a character named "Stingy Jack".

CHLOE

(giggling)

Stingy Jack? That's a funny name.

JACKSON

Says here the story started when Stingy Jack played a trick on the Devil in a card game. Seems Jack talked the Devil into turning himself into a coin so Jack could pay his debt. Afterward, instead of paying the debt, Jack put the coin in his pocket next to a silver cross to keep the Devil from changing back until he agreed not to bother Jack for a year.

CHLOE

Why would a silver cross keep him from turning back into the Devil?

Jackson smiles at her.

JACKSON

That's a story for another day.

Chloe shrugs.

CHLOE

So then what happened?

JACKSON

Well, the story continues that the Devil left for a year as promised but then visited Stingy Jack again.

Chloe's eyes widen in suspense.

CHLOE

What did Stingy Jack do?

JACKSON

This time Stingy Jack persuaded the Devil to climb a tree to pick a piece of fruit. When he did, Jack carved a cross into the trunk of the tree to keep the Devil from coming down. And then he made him promise not to bother him for ten more years and not to claim his soul if he died.

Jackson looks to Chloe who's face is showing a little discomfort.

CHLOE

I don't like the Devil.

JACKSON

Honey, if this is too scary, Daddy will pick another story.

Chloe swallows hard, bites her lip and then fibs...

CHLOE

I'm not scared, Daddy. You can finish the story.

Jackson looks doubtful but continues.

JACKSON

So, not long after that meeting, old Stingy Jack died. Seems he was such a cad that St. Peter wouldn't let him into heaven and sent him to call on the Devil. But the Devil, true to his word, wouldn't take Jack's soul...so he was cursed to roam the Earth forever carrying a lighted gourd... looking for a new soul. From that day forward he was known as "Jack of the Lantern".

Chloe pulls the blanket up to her chin.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
You okay, honey? I didn't mean to
scare you.

CHLOE
Daddy...your name is Jack.

Jackson chuckles.

JACKSON
Yeah, some of my friends call me
that - it's a nickname, that's all.

He reaches to comfort Chloe, putting his arms around her.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
That's enough story telling for
tonight. You go to sleep now,
Witch Chloe.

He kisses her on the forehead, rises and tucks her in, and switches the light off as he exits the room. In the darkness now, the friendly jack o'lantern is the only illumination in the room. Chloe pulls the blanket closer under her chin as her eyes are drawn to the orange light it emits.

A GUST of WIND suddenly blows through the open window and POOF the light is extinguished.

A beat and then...

The jack o'lantern suddenly REIGNITES. The jovial face replaced by eyes glowing with evil and its once friendly smile now a demonic maw.

CHLOE
(screaming out)
Daaaaaaddy! Daaaaaddy!

Slow, measured footsteps make their way to the closed door before it opens and Jackson stands in the shadows.

JACKSON
Don't be afraid, Chloe. It was
just a Halloween story, remember?

He quizzically follows Chloe's terrified gaze and looks toward the jack o'lantern. He is stunned by the hideous transformation.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
What the HELL??

Suddenly a huge PLUME of FIRE shoots upward from it and reaches out to engulf Jackson and pull him bodily into it's depths.

REFLECTED in Chloe's EYES, the jack o'lantern now rises to a man's full height standing over her. It's flaming hand reaches toward her..

SLAM TO BLACK

CHLOE (O.S.)
Daaaaaddy!

Her horrified scream echoes as we....

FADE OUT.