

Reader's
Theater:

The Fall
Festival
Mystery



Characters

- Narrator
- Max (a kid who loves pranks)
- Lily (Max's little sister)
- Oliver (a curious friend)
- Grandma Hazel (the grandmother who tells spooky stories)
- Scarecrow Sam (a talking scarecrow)
- Pumpkin Pete (a friendly but clumsy pumpkin)

Optional Props:

- **Scarecrow:** A life-size or small scarecrow to represent Scarecrow Sam, complete with straw arms and a floppy hat.
- **Pumpkins:** Real or plastic pumpkins scattered around the stage or used as props for the characters to gather during the search for the missing pumpkins.
- **Pumpkin Pete:** A large, round pumpkin costume or a decorated pumpkin prop to represent Pumpkin Pete. You can also use a pumpkin with facial features to make him look clumsy and friendly.
- **Basket of Pumpkins:** A small basket of mini-pumpkins for Grandma Hazel to carry at the beginning of the play.
- **Autumn Leaves:** Fake autumn leaves to scatter on the ground to give a fall atmosphere. Some could be in a pile for Pumpkin Pete to roll into.
- **Wind Sound Effect:** A fan or a sound machine to create the sound of a breeze or wind, adding to the spooky and mysterious atmosphere.
- **Hay Bales:** Small or pretend hay bales placed around the stage to create the setting of a pumpkin patch or backyard during fall.
- **Flashlight:** A flashlight for the characters to "search" for the missing pumpkins, adding a sense of mystery as they explore.
- **Fall Decorations:** Additional fall-themed props like corn stalks, fall wreaths, or paper leaves to decorate the set.
- **Costumes:** Simple costumes for the characters, such as flannel shirts, scarves, and boots to give the feeling of fall. Scarecrow Sam can wear a plaid shirt, hat, and gloves stuffed with straw for a more authentic look.

Narrator:

It's a crisp fall evening, and Max, Lily, and Oliver are getting ready for the annual Fall Festival. But something feels different this year... a little spooky, even. Could it be the chilly wind, the rustling leaves, or something more mysterious? Let's find out as they head to Grandma Hazel's house.

(Scene: Max, Lily, and Oliver walk through Grandma Hazel's backyard, which is decorated with pumpkins, scarecrows, and hay bales.)

Max:

(Laughing) Hey, Oliver, I bet this year's festival won't be as exciting as last year. Remember how we spooked everyone with the fake ghost?

Oliver:

Yeah, that was hilarious! But... don't you think something feels weird this time?

Lily:

(Shrugging) It's just the wind. Besides, Grandma says fall is the perfect time for mysteries!

(Grandma Hazel enters, holding a basket of pumpkins.)

Grandma Hazel:

Ah, there you are! Just in time to help me with these pumpkins. And maybe... hear a little story?

Lily:

Oh no, not one of your spooky stories again.

Grandma Hazel:

(Smiling) Don't worry, this one's more of a mystery. They say that when the full moon rises during the Fall Festival, Scarecrow Sam comes to life!

Max:

(Scoffing) Come on, Grandma. Everyone knows scarecrows don't talk.

Grandma Hazel:

(Laughing) Maybe not during the day... but when the moon is full, anything is possible. Now, you three better hurry if you don't want to miss the fun. And watch out for Scarecrow Sam!

(Grandma Hazel exits. Max, Lily, and Oliver look at each other.)

Oliver:

(Shrugging) Well, guess we better go to the festival.

(They head towards the pumpkin patch. Suddenly, Scarecrow Sam starts moving behind them. His straw arms creak as he turns his head.)

Scarecrow Sam:

(Hoarsely) Psssst... I need your help!

Lily:

(Backing away) Did that scarecrow just... talk?

Max:

(Grinning) Okay, which one of you is pulling this prank?

Scarecrow Sam:

(Sighing) No prank. I'm Scarecrow Sam, and I need you to help solve the mystery of the missing pumpkins.

Oliver:

(Mind racing) Wait, you're really alive? What happened to the pumpkins?

Scarecrow Sam:

Every year, I protect the pumpkin patch. But this year, someone... or something... has been stealing them! If we don't find them before the festival starts, there'll be no pumpkin pies, no carving contest, nothing!

Max:

(Laughing nervously) So, you're saying we have to find these pumpkins... with a talking scarecrow?

Lily:

(Looking determined) We're on it, Sam! Let's solve this mystery!

(As they search the pumpkin patch, they see a pumpkin rolling down a hill and crash into a pile of leaves. They rush over and find Pumpkin Pete.)

Pumpkin Pete:

(Clumsily trying to get up) Oops! Sorry! I didn't mean to roll away again!

Oliver:

(Surprised) You've been rolling away... again? Wait, are you the one making all the pumpkins disappear?

Pumpkin Pete:

(Embarrassed) Well, yes, sort of. You see, I have trouble staying still. The wind picks me up, and I just roll and roll... and the next thing I know, I'm making the other pumpkins with me!

Max:

(Laughing) So, you're telling me you're an out-of-control pumpkin bowling ball?

Pumpkin Pete:

(Nodding) Pretty much! And the others just get caught up in my roll! I didn't mean to cause any trouble.

Scarecrow Sam:

(Laughing) Mystery solved! Pete, you've been the pumpkin thief all along, rolling away with half the patch!

Lily:

(Smiling) It's okay, Pete. We'll help you roll back all the pumpkins before the festival starts.

Narrator:

And so, Max, Lily, Oliver, and Scarecrow Sam worked together to gather all the missing pumpkins in time for the festival. Pumpkin Pete even made it back without rolling away again—for now!

Scarecrow Sam:

(Smiling) Sometimes, even a little mystery can bring friends together.

Narrator:

And the moral of the story is, don't jump to conclusions—sometimes the answer is right in front of you, even if it's a little clumsy! The end.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Who was accidentally causing the pumpkins to disappear?

What does Scarecrow Sam ask Max, Lily, and Oliver to do?

What is the moral of the story?

Max

A mischievous kid
who loves pranks.



Lily

A brave but
cautious little sister.



Oliver

A curious and
imaginative friend.



Grandma Hazel

A wise, quirky
grandmother who
tells spooky stories.



Scarecrow Sam

A mysterious,
talking scarecrow
with a kind face.



Pumpkin Pete

A clumsy, friendly
pumpkin character.



Narrator



Teacher Suggestions:

Assigning Roles: Consider your students' reading levels and confidence when assigning roles. Encourage students to practice their parts at home or during independent reading time.

Practicing Fluency: Have students practice their parts multiple times to build fluency and expression.

Props & Costumes: Use the optional props list to create simple, engaging props.

Character Labels: Students can also use the provided character names to either cut out to hang around their neck to help identify characters to the audience or alternatively draw and illustrate what they imagine their character to look like.

Performance: Arrange a space in the classroom where students can perform. Invite other students to watch the final performance to boost students' confidence and make it more special.

Reader Response Questions: Use the provided questions to facilitate a post-performance discussion. This will help assess comprehension and encourage students to think critically about the play.

Extension Activities:

1. Create Your Own Fall Mystery

- Have students brainstorm their own fall-themed mystery stories. They can choose a different setting (like a haunted house or a forest) and create their own characters. Each student or group can then perform their short play for the class.
- Objective: Encourages creativity, writing skills, and collaboration.

2. Character Portrait Drawing

- After performing the reader's theater, students can draw or color their own versions of the characters (Max, Lily, Oliver, Scarecrow Sam, etc.). Provide them with descriptions from the script to guide their artwork.
- Objective: Combines reading comprehension with visual art skills.

3. Fall-Themed Scavenger Hunt

- Organize a classroom or outdoor scavenger hunt where students look for fall-themed objects (like acorns, leaves, or pinecones) or clues that help them solve a mini-mystery inspired by the play.
- Objective: Promotes teamwork, problem-solving, and outdoor exploration.

4. Vocabulary Challenge

- Create a list of fall and mystery-related vocabulary words from the play (like "harvest," "mystery," "clue," "scarecrow"). Have students define the words and use them in sentences, or incorporate them into a word search or crossword puzzle.
- Objective: Expands vocabulary and comprehension skills.

5. Debate: Is Pumpkin Pete a Hero or a Villain?

- Divide the class into two groups. One group argues that Pumpkin Pete, despite his clumsiness, is a hero for being the key to solving the mystery. The other group argues that his accidental actions created a lot of trouble. The class can vote afterward.
- Objective: Develops critical thinking, public speaking, and debate skills.

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