

# Trick or Treat and the Purple Ghost

"I don't know what to be for Halloween tonight," said Marcus to his family sitting around the table. It was lunchtime already, and Marcus had spent days trying to pick a costume. He didn't want to be the same things his friends had chosen. So he was left empty-handed with only hours to go.

"What about a robot?" asked his sister.

"That would be hard to do now," said Marcus. "All the best costumes are already taken."

"What about the zombie costume from last year?" asked Dad. "It might still fit you."

"No, they aren't cool anymore," answered Marcus. He took another bite of his grilled cheese sandwich.

"I don't know what the problem is," said his mother. "When I was a kid, we would just make a costume out of stuff we had around the house. You know, throw a sheet over our heads and go out as a ghost, or put on a witch's hat and grab the broom."

Marcus sighed. He just could not make his mind up. He reached his hand out to take a sip of juice. At the same moment, his dog barked at a squirrel it saw through the backyard window. Marcus jumped, knocking his glass of grape juice all over the table. It dripped down onto the floor. The dog decided to come over and help by licking the juice.

"Shoo, Sparky," grumbled Marcus' mom, sending the dog away. "What a mess. I don't know if this stain will come out." She cleared some of the glasses and plates away to gather up the white tablecloth. It was now marked with purple spots. She threw it into the washing machine in the laundry room. "I'll give it a try and see."

"I'm sorry, Mom," said Marcus. He knew it was a clumsy mistake.

"It's okay, honey. Accidents happen. It was an old one, anyway. Finish your lunch now. It's time to carve the pumpkin." Marcus and his sister took the last bites of their sandwiches and dill pickles. They put their plates in the dishwasher. Then they began the messy job of scooping out the pumpkin seeds so Dad could carve it into a Jack-o'-lantern. Marcus still had no ideas for a costume. Maybe he should just give up on trick-or-treating this year.

When the laundry was washed, they pulled out the tablecloth and saw that the purple spots were still there. "I guess I'll throw it away," said Mom. "I wonder if I can use it for anything else."

Marcus jumped. "I have an idea!" He took the large tablecloth from his mother. "Can I have this? And do we have any more grape juice?" he asked. When his mom nodded, he ran off to the kitchen to get the juice. He put the fabric in the sink and started splashing it, making even more purple spots on the white cloth.

Next, he went back to the laundry room and put it in the dryer. In no time, it was ready. Marcus took it out, and smiled. He used scissors very carefully to cut out two eye holes. Then he put the cloth over his head.

Quietly, he crept up behind his sister, who was dressed like a race car driver. “Boo!” he shouted.

“Marcus!” She yelled in surprise. She looked at her brother, covered in the long cloth spotted with purple marks. “What are you supposed to be?”

“I’m a clumsy ghost. See! I’m covered in purple bruises. No one else will have this costume!” Marcus explained happily. “What are we waiting for? Let’s go trick-or-treating!”

**Questions**

1. Why couldn't Marcus decide on a Halloween costume?
2. What did Marcus have for lunch?
3. What happened to give Marcus the idea for his costume?
4. What are two other costumes mentioned in the story?

---

**Vocabulary List**

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. costume
2. empty-handed
3. cool
4. clumsy
5. fabric
6. carve

---

**Context Clues**

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) It was lunchtime already, and Marcus had spent days trying to pick a **costume**.

- a. outfit    b. sandwich    c. pair of shoes    d. snack

2) So he was left **empty-handed** with only hours to go.

- a. without lunch    b. without ideas    c. without candy    d. without clothing

3) “No, they aren’t **cool** anymore,” answered Marcus.

- a. cold    b. chilly    c. popular    d. unique

4) He knew it was a **clumsy** mistake.

- a. slippery    b. messy    c. typical    d. awkward

5) He put the **fabric** in the sink and started splashing it, making even more purple spots on the white cloth.

- a. tablecloth    b. lunch    c. costume    d. shirt

6) It’s time to **carve** the pumpkin.

- a. quickly eat    b. wildly slice    c. slowly draw on    d. carefully cut