

Jack-O-Lanterns

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Veronica loved the Fall. It was her favorite season. There were many good things about Fall. She loved the smells, the apples, the changing leaves, and the cool breezes. There were apple cider drinks and apple cider donuts. You could jump in piles of old leaves you raked up. She liked all of these things, but, most of all, the thing she loved most about Fall was pumpkins.



Pumpkins made great pies. They made great decorations, too. She liked big, round, orange pumpkins, though she'd seen yellow and white ones before, too. The little ones that mom called gourds were cute. During Fall, grandpa grew a lot of gourds and used them as decorations, along with Indian corn and hay bales.

Veronica liked carving pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns more than anything else, more than making pumpkin pie even. It was always fun to carve off the top and then scoop out the insides of the pumpkin. It smelled funny inside pumpkins, and the sound of her spoon scraping out stringy stuff and seeds always made her laugh. Some of the stuff inside was so slimy, but the seeds were delicious if mom baked them.

Then she could carve a face into the pumpkin. Triangles were easy to use, since other shapes could be hard, even with a sharp knife. She always did the mouth last, after the nose and eyes. Finally, she'd put a candle in the pumpkin, light it, put it outside on the porch, and stand back to look at her work.

Finished jack-o-lanterns were so pretty, but very spooky at times! What do you think?



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What is Veronica's favorite season?
 - A. Spring
 - B. Summer
 - C. Fall
 - D. Winter
2. Which of these is NOT something Veronica likes about Fall?
 - A. cookies
 - B. donuts
 - C. leaves
 - D. breezes
3. What is Veronica's favorite thing about Fall?
 - A. leaves
 - B. parties
 - C. pumpkins
 - D. weather
4. What does Veronica MOST like to do with pumpkins?
 - A. smash them
 - B. carve them
 - C. eat them
 - D. sell them
5. How does Veronica feel about jack-o-lanterns?
 - A. They're pretty but spooky.
 - B. They're pretty but ugly.
 - C. They're spooky and ugly.
 - D. They're smelly and cute.

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