

# Brothers

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*Who'd would ever think that Jack would have a identical twin brother, thats a PIRATE!!!???*

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# 1 - The Letter

Gracie and her friends walked out of their high school. It was raining confetti. The girls turned around and saw a big sign on the school. It read; Have a Great Summer. See You in the Fall. "Oh we will." said Gracie.

"Gracie wake up the light changed!" yelled Melissa. "Huh what oh!" Gracie then slammed her foot on the gas pedal. "What were you dreaming about now." asked Deseree. "Yesterday." said Gracie. Just the previous day Gracie and her friends graduated from their sophomore year in high school. "Oh." said Kelsey. Melissa, Kelsey, and Deseree were Gracie's friends for as long as she could remember (well technically ever since 4th grade) and the girls did everything together; shopping, getting drivers licenses, and their favorite thing, go to Halloween Town. Melissa was the sporty one of the friends, she loved every sport known to man and was good at every sport known to man, she had long blond hair that was always in a ponytail and had fair skin. Kelsey liked soccer but was the musical one of the group, she has long blond hair and fair skin. Deseree is the only one of the group that is African American but that doesn't matter really because these girls' friendship goes beyond skin color, she also has short black hair but always wears black hair extensions. And Gracie is the insane Tim Burton fan of the group, she has long, frizzy, brown hair and fair skin. "Boy I'm so glad our all of our parents decided to take a month long vacation to Hawaii." said Deseree. "Remind me again why didn't we go?" asked Kelsey. "Because we will be having our own vacation at Halloween Town." said Gracie. The girls have been going to the burtonesque town of Halloween Town ever since they were 10 years old. In Halloween Town the girls were great friends with the pumpkin royal family which included; Jack Skellington, a very tall skellington who tried to take over Christmas in the year 1993. It was that Christmas that brought Gracie and her friends together, Sally Skellington, despite the name Sally isn't a skellington she is a living ragdoll she only got the name because she married Jack in the year 1999, and their kids; Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince. "Yea with our parents gone we won't have to worry about getting caught." said Melissa. "And we will have more time to work on Halloween." said Gracie. Then Gracie drove her car, well technically it was her dad's but he gave it to her to use while they were away, into the garage of the brick 2 story house. Despite the toys that were never played with, the garage was rather empty because her mom's mini-van was gone. Gracie and her friends got out of the car and went to the trunk to get the suitcases. Then they walked to the door and opened it. Inside Gracie's dog Abby greeted them. Abby is Gracie's sheltie dog, she has long brown fur everywhere except her neck which had white fur. "Ok you can unpack later now we gotta go to Halloween Town." said Gracie. "Thanks again Gracie for letting us stay the month at your house." said Kelsey. "Hey thats what friends are for." said Gracie putting her right hand out. On her hand was a red cloth bracelet. When the girls met in 1993 they made these red bracelets from the scraps of cloth that Jack left behind when he was shot out of the sky. "Ok." they said in unison. Then they put their hand on top of Gracie's. Then a portal appeared where the window was. The girls, including Abby, walked inside and they found themselves in a circle of trees that had paintings on them. The girls ran to the pumpkin one and turned the triangle nose and in a swoosh of leaves the girls and dog were dragged into the tree. Moments later Gracie and her friends landed in a pile of leaves. They got up and brushed off the dirt from their black Halloween Town dresses and ran into town. On the way to their friend Jack's house they were stopped by the monstrous citizens of the town so that the girls can approve certain items for their Halloween. When that was done with the girls walked up the long twisting stairs that led to Jack's house. "Hey Mel get up here!" yelled Deseree. Melissa was at the bottom the stairs by the mailbox. She quickly closed it and ran to catch up with her friends. Then the girls entered the house. "Its

finally summer!!" said Gracie as she sat down in Jack's chair, she started to twirl it around. "These next three months will be the best of our lives." said Deseree. "I know." said Melissa. Gracie continued to twirl the chair as she sat in it but it stopped suddenly. Gracie turned around and saw a very tall skellington who had large holes in his head for eyes, he was wearing a black and white pinstriped suit and on his neck was a bat bowtie. "Let me guess, you had too much java this morning didn't you?" he asked. "Oh hi Jack. And to answer your question nope I didn't have any java this morning. I'm just happy that summer vacation is finally here." said Gracie as she got out of the chair. "Ok now I'm dizzy." said Gracie trying to walk but ended up falling onto the couch. "Well yea you have been spinning in that chair for 2 minutes." said Kelsey.

"I don't get it. What makes this summer different from the others?" said a voice. Everyone turned around and they saw a ragdoll with long red hair and a patchwork dress. "We already told you Sally." said Gracie. "Yea our parents are gone for the entire month of June." said Melissa. "So we get to stay in Halloween Town without worry of getting discovered." said Deseree. "Yea." said Kelsey.

"Yea Gracie and her friends are here!!" said a voice. Everyone looked up and they saw 4 kids. 2 girls that looked like they were 5 years old and 2 boys who looked like they were 4 years old. The first girl had a skellington face that was covered in stitches, she had long red-orange hair that had a purple headband in it, she wore a long purple dress similar to Gracie and her friends'. The girl next to her had the same face but had long black hair that was in a ponytail on the very top of her head, she wore a black leotard and over that was a red poncho. Next to her was a boy skellington that looked exactly like Jack, he wore a blood-red hoodie that had spikes around the hood that was over his head, the hoodie also had a black spider on it, he also wore black jeans that had tons of chains on them. Next to him was another skellington that looked exactly like Jack. He wore an orange and black striped suit, the stripes were going in a /// direction. In his hands was a bat toy that was similar to Jack's bat bowtie. The 4 skellington kids ran down the stairs. "Hi Ann, Kim, Michael, Vince." said Gracie and her friends in unison. "So Ann are you practicing your parts for Halloween?" asked Kelsey. "Yes I am." said Ann (she's the one in the purple dress). "Hey Kim when can I be expecting my Prisoner of Askaban book back?" asked Gracie. "Oh very soon I'm on the final chapter." said Kim (she has the poncho). "All you do is read." said Michael (he's the one in the hoodie). "And the books you read are scary." said Vince (he's the one with the bat toy).

"Oh Jack I got you the mail." said Melissa as she handed Jack a letter. "Thank you Melissa." said Jack as he opened the letter. "Well I'll be." said Jack when he finished the letter. "Let me see." said Gracie as she took the letter out of Jack's hands. "Hey!!!" said Jack trying to get the letter back. "You'll get it back when I'm done with it." said Gracie. Then Gracie cleared her throat and read the letter.

"Dear Jack,

I'll be coming into town tomorrow for a week long holiday. I'm hoping I can stay at your house. I just can't wait to see what you have done to the town while I was away.

Sincerely,

Zack." read Gracie.

"Who's Zack?" asked Deseree. "He's my brother." said Jack. "NO WAY!!!" said Kelsey. "You have a brother?!?!" asked Melissa. "We have an uncle?!?!" said all the twins in unison. "He's not just a brother, he's my identical twin brother." said Jack. "Should we be worried?" asked Gracie. "Ha ha very funny." said Jack sarcastaly. "How come he doesn't live in Halloween Town?" asked Melissa. "He left Halloween Town many, many, years ago to persue his dream to become a pirate." said Jack. "Cool I'm related to a pirate!" said Michael. "He's a pirate like...like...Jack Sparrow?" said Gracie. "Who?" asked Jack. Gracie then told him about the movie Pirates of the Carribean. "Let me guess. Its a Tim Burton movie." said Jack. "Nope it just stars Johnny Depp, who played in a lot Tim's movies." said Gracie. "And thats the only reason why Gracie dragged us to see the movie." said Deseree.

Then Sally grabbed the letter and read it to herself. "It says he's coming tomorrow." she said in a soft voice. "Hey we gotta clean this place up then." said Melissa. "Good idea. You four clean your rooms and my friends and I will take the guest room." said Gracie pointing to the kids. "And I'll be up in a minuite to make sure you don't mess anything up." said Jack. Then everyone except Jack and Sally went upstairs. Jack walked up to Sally and put an arm around her. "Are you ok with this?" he asked. "Oh you mean Zack. I think I'll be ok." said Sally. "I know he made fun of you a lot when we were little and if he tries anything funny around you I'll..." said Jack. "Its ok. Who knows maybe he's changed. And its not like we can stop him from coming anyway. I'm gonna clean the kitchen." said Sally as she left the room. "Ok I'm gonna go upstairs to check up on the cleaning." said Jack as he went upstairs.

Meanwhile upstairs Ann walked into her room. Her walls were painted a light purple, she had a black 4 poster bed in the middle of the room, and off to the corner by the window was a set of child-sized drums she got as a gift from Gracie and her friends for Christmas. She walked by her gray nightstand and grabbed a feather duster and started to dust the room madly. Meanwhile in Kim's room, Kim's room was painted a midnight blue and her bed was a white canopy twin-sized bed, Kim walked by her bookcase, that was filled with many books, a good half were given to her by Gracie and her friends for Christmas, and grabbed the book Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Askaban and opened it to the final chapter. She read the book as she picked up the toys on the ground. In Michael's gray room, Michael sat on his black twin-sized bed and threw darts at a big Oogie poster, then he walked by his guitar that Gracie and her friends gave him for Christmas and started to pick up the clothes that were scattered on the ground. And in Vince's room, Vince walked up to a weird lantern, he opened the latch and inside was 3 candles, Vince lit a match and lit the candles, he closed the latch and looked watched as images of bats danced on his green walls. Vince was scared of many things but he wasn't scared of bats. He blew out the match and sat on his normal-sized bed and started to polish his black recorder that Gracie and her friends gave him for Christmas.

"AAAAA...CHO!!" said Gracie. "Jack when was the last time you dusted this bookcase?" asked Gracie in between sneeses. "Well, I haven't seen this room ever since Zack left. So I guess 29 years." said Jack. "You haven't seen your brother in 29 years?!?" asked Melissa as she put new sheets on the bed. "Dang thats a long time." said Deseree as she organised the bookcase. "Where is your family?" asked Kelsey as she put new cases on the pillows. "Well my dad, Thomas Skellington died 30 years ago and my mom Lisa Skellington died 29 years ago." said Jack sadly. "Oh my, I'm so sorry." said Kelsey. "Its not your fault. I'll tell you how they died another time now we gotta clean this room." said Jack. "Good idea." they said in unison.

"Ok we're done." said the girls in unison. Then Gracie walked up to the bookcase and grabbed a photo album. "Can you show us a picture of Zack?" asked Gracie as she put the book on the bed. "Sure." said Jack as he opened the book. After a few seconds of looking through the book he stopped. "Here's a picture. But its very old." said Jack as he showed them the picture. "Hey he looks like a skellington version of Will Turner." said Gracie. "Let me guess, Pitares of the Carribean?" asked Jack. "Yup." said Gracie. "Hey who's the older twin? You or Zack?" asked Kelsey. "Its obivious." said Deseree. "Yea Jack's the older twin." said Melissa. "If he was the younger twin then he wouldn't be pumpkin king." said Gracie. "Actually Zack's the older twin. See one month after Mom died Zack was supposed to be crowned king but he dissapered the night before. I'm the only one who knows where he dissapered to." said Jack.

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## 2 - Sally's Premonition

Meanwhile in the kitchen Sally had finished cleaning so she started cooking vulture for Zack's arrival. "Why?" she said to herself. Memories of Zack calling her useless ragdoll swamped her mind. She looked on the ground and saw Abby, Zero, and her cat were staring hungrily at the food. "Its not like I hate Zack or anything, but its just so hard to believe that Zack the troublemaker is related to Jack the nice, wonderful, charming man." she continued. The pets were still staring at the food. "You 3 aren't listening to a word I say aren't you? You just want some food don't you?" she asked. "Well ok. Oops." she said as she dropped 3 pieces of vulture meat on the ground. The pets fought over it like canibales. Then Sally started to feel sleepy, she quickly put the vulture in the fridge so that the pets won't get to it, and went into the family room to take a nap.

While she slept she had a dream. In her dream she saw Jack and the kids being thrown in jail. Then that vision faded into a piece of parchment. On the parchment there was Gracie, Melissa, Deseree, and Kelsey's names and under the names were the words BANISHED from all towns. Then that faded into a vision of herself running into Zack's arms. Sally awoke covered in sweat and out of breath.

Meanwhile upstairs Gracie and her friends were looking at the photo album. "Awwwwww look first day of school photos." said Gracie. "Ok thats enough." said Jack taking the album out of Gracie's hands and puting it back on the shelf. "So this was Zack's room?" asked Deseree. "Yes." said Jack. "Cool you each had your own room." said Melissa. "Do you think Zack likes humans?" asked Kelsey. "I hope so." said Gracie. "Yea this town has enough human haters." said Deseree. "I thought Lock, Shock, and Barrel were the only human haters in this town." said Kelsey. "Yea thats 3 people too many." said Gracie. "Why do they hate us?" asked Melissa. "Who knows but everyone else likes you so we shouldn't really worry." said Jack. "Woa its 10:00 pm on earth." said Gracie looking at her watch. "Your point?" asked Melissa. "Its 4:00 pm here meaning we have to work on Halloween." said Gracie. "Oh your right." said Kelsey. "Bye Jack." said Deseree as they all walked out the door.

The girls ran down the stairs. "Bye Sally we're gonna go work on Halloween then go back to Earth." they said as they ran out the door. "Wait girls I had a premonition." said Sally but it was too late the girls were already out the door followed by Abby.

Meanwhile upstairs Jack had just walked out of the guest room when he heard music coming out of Ann, Michael, and Vince's rooms. "These rooms better be clean!" yelled Jack. The music stoped for a few seconds. "Their clean!" the kids yelled from behind closed doors. "Ok carry on then." said Jack. Then the music started again.

Then Jack walked downstairs. Sally was looking out the window biting her lip. "You had a premonition didn't you?" asked Jack as he walked up next to her. "Is it that obivious?" asked Sally. "What was it about?" asked Jack. Sally told Jack of her dream. "Hmmm. Well you know I'm not good at figuring out your premonitions, thats a job for Gracie and her friends." said Jack. "Yea with all the mystery books they read." said Sally. "Anyway, somehow those 3 visions are connected. But how? Why would the kids and I be in jail? Why would Gracie and her friends be banished? And why would you hug Zack?" asked Jack. "Wait! Zack's coming tomorrow may have something to do with these premonitions." said Sally. "But no matter what Zack is coming tomorrow. We'll just have to keep a close eye on him while he's here." said Jack. "I don't know. I still have a bad feeling about this." said Sally as she hugged Jack.

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Who is Zack? Find out in my next chapter.

### 3 - Zack's Arrival

Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince stared out the window. "When is Zack gonna come?" asked Ann. "He's usually late to things so I guess in a few hours." said Jack. "HOURS?!?! I hate waiting." said Kim. "I still can't believe our uncle is a pirate." said Michael. "I just hope he isn't a scary pirate." said Vince. "Dude you gotta toughen up." said Ann. "You can't go through life being scared of your own shadow." said Michael. "Your right." said Kim starting to hide behind Vince. "You don't know when someone is gonna come up behind you and scare you." she said as she put her hands on his shoulders, making Vince jump. "MOM!!!" yelled Vince. "Kim please stop scarring your brother." said Sally as she walked in from the kitchen. "I'm bored." said Ann as she started to walk up the stairs. "I'm gonna go practice my drums." she continued. "Yea I'm gonna go practice my guitar solo." said Michael following Ann. "Gracie, will you please tell me why did you and your friends give them instruments for Christmas?" asked Jack. "We already told you." said Gracie walking in from Jack's study. Following her was Melissa, Deseree, and Kelsey "In the song we're using for Halloween it contains some instruments that the street band don't have." said Kelsey. "It was a great decision to use the song Haunted from Evanescence's CD." said Deseree. "It really sets the mood for Halloween." said Melissa. "Its also great to dance to." said Gracie starting to dance. "Hey. I think I see him." said Kim. Jack ran to the window. "I think your right. Well, lets go greet him." said Jack. "I'll get Ann and Michael." said Kelsey as she started to walk up the stairs. Upstairs, Kelsey heard blasts of drums and guitars from Ann's room and Michael's room. She went into Ann's room where she saw Ann hitting at the cymbals(SP). Kelsey walked up to Ann and took the drumsticks out of her hands. "Hey!" said Ann. "Zack's here." said Kelsey. "Oh." said Ann as she walked out of her room. Then Kelsey walked to Michael's room. Inside Michael was playing his guitar. Even though it was child-sized it sounded like a real guitar. Kelsey walked up and unplugged it. "Hey!" said Michael. "Zack's here." said Kelsey. Then they both left the room and went downstairs. When Kelsey, Ann, and Michael got downstairs everyone went outside, Jack, Sally, and the kids went down the long stairs and Gracie and her friends waited at the top of the stairs. "I just hope Zack likes humans." said Gracie petting Abby. "Ah home sweet home." thought Zack. He looked around and saw Jack waving. "I see my dear twin got the letter." he thought. "Ahoy." said Zack. "Nice to see you again." said Jack as he and Zack shook hands. "Same here." said Zack. "Hi." said Sally very quietly. "Why hello there Sally." said Zack as he kissed Sally's hand. "Hi Uncle Zack!" said Ann and Kim in unison. "Wow an actual pirate." said Michael. "Are you a mean pirate?" asked Vince. "Oh, Zack let me introduce you to Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince." said Jack as he pointed to each child as he said their name. "So these little buckaneers(SP) must be yours." said Zack pointing to Jack and Sally. "Barbosa!" said Gracie still sitting on top of the stairs. "Huh?" asked Melissa. "Zack looks like Jack in a Captain Barbosa costume." said Gracie. "You mean Captain Barbosa from Pirates of the Caribbean?" asked Deseree. "Yes" said Gracie. "Oh my gosh I just noticed that." said Kelsey. Then all of a sudden Abby broke free from Gracie's grip and ran down the stairs barking. She then ran up to Zack and bit him in the leg. Gracie and her friends ran down the stairs to where Jack and Zack were. Gracie grabbed Abby, pulled out a mussels from her red purse, and attached it on Abby. "TIME!" yelled Gracie. "1.33 seconds. New record!" said Melissa stopping her stopwatch. "Uh Gracie." said Deseree. "Oh. Zack I'm so sorry. Abby's not normally like that." said Gracie walking up to Zack. "Boy I can't believe I'm meeting an actual pirate." said Melissa. "Jack told us so much about you." said Deseree. "Well he told us everything about you yesterday." said Kelsey. "WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!?!?" yelled Zack. "Oh my god,

where are my manners? My name is Gracie." said Gracie. "My name is Melissa." said Melissa. "The name's Deseree." said Deseree. And I'm Kelsey." said Kelsey. "Your humans aren't you?" asked Zack. "Yes. We are living breathing humans." said Gracie. "Humans!!! In Halloween Town!! How did you all get here?" asked Zack. "Its a long story." said Jack. "And I'll be happy to tell it to you." said Gracie. Then Gracie and her friends took turns telling the story on how they met and how they get to Halloween Town. "So...in the year 1993 my brother Jack 'took over' a holiday called Christmas and because of his horrible gifts he was shot down. But you 4 liked the gifts and went to a graveyard that was the same one that Jack fell in. You 4 made 'friendship bracelets' out of scraps of cloth that Jack left behind. Then 5 years later you all put the bracelets together and you ended up here. So now you are friends with my brother and you plan the yearly Halloween celebration." said Zack. "Yup thats it." said Melissa. "Wow. I always knew that Jack would change Halloween Town but never like this!! Are there any more humans here?" asked Zack. "Nope. Jack told us to keep this town and the others a secret." said Deseree. "If we don't someone important will probably find out and a war would probably start and this burtonesque town will be destroyed." said Gracie. "Burtonesque?" asked Zack. "Don't ask." said Jack. "Hey speaking of Halloween we better start working!!" said Melissa. "Bye Zack!! C'ya in an hour." said Gracie. Then they left.

One hour later Gracie and her friends walked inside Jack's house. "You'd think these people would know how to rise up from graves." said Gracie as her friends and herself walked inside the kitchen. For the beginning of her Halloween the citizens were going to rise up from the ground and, using stunt ropes, the citizens were to levitate until the words 'I know your still there' then the ropes would be cut and they would start dancing. "Oh well they have 5 months to get this down." said Deseree. "Hey girls." said Jack and Sally in unison. Abby ran to the girls. She had the look of mercy in her eyes because she still had the mussle on her mouth. "No girl I can't take off the mussle because you may bite Zack again." said Gracie as she petted Abby. "Why do you think Abby bit Zack?" asked Melissa. "Maybe she thought he was the UPS dude." said Kelsey. "UPS?" asked Jack. "United Parsal Service. They are the people who deliver my dad's golf clubs. And Abby hates them." said Gracie. "Speaking of Zack, where is he?" asked Melissa. "Oh he's in the study telling the kids pirate storys." said Sally. "He started telling storys without us!!" said Deseree. "Oh my!" said Kelsey sarcastly. "Hey I wanna know some of his storys too." said Melissa. "How about we all go into the study and listen to them." said Gracie. "Besides I need to get my Order of the Phoneix book out of there." said Gracie. "Didn't you already read that book?" asked Deseree. "Yes, but the new book is comin out soon and I just wanna review." said Gracie. Then they all went into the study. Melissa, Kelsey, and Deseree sat on the floor with Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince. Gracie grabbed her book and sat on the couch half reading, half listening to Zack's story.

"So there we were under the ocean, with no food, water, or air for 1 month. I was in my study, sleeping on my desk, when a centipede, now this isn't your everyday centipede he was as tall as your human friend Gracie (And Gracie was the tallest of her friends). Anyway he comes up to me and steals me compass. I get up and grab him by the overalls he was wearing, he tries to run away but me skellington crew stops him. So after we's caught him we's started to streetch him out. But little did we's know he'd had friends on the surface. A little boy and his spider, and this wasn't your everyday spider, she'd be as tall as Sally. They free the centipede and they fought me crew to the death. Then they start to leave, but I wouldn't let them get away that easily, so I climbed up to the very top of my ship and grabbed the centipede by the leg and brought him back down to the ship. We fight face to face, he throws a punch at me's and I get knocked out. When I's woke up he was gone with me compass and me hat. So, crewless, I swam away from the ruins and up to the surface where I comendered (SP) a new ship and gots meself a new crew." said Zack. "Wow." said Ann. "Interesting." said Kim. "That was the best story ever!" said Michael. "Is...is...it...it...oo...over?" asked Vince nerviously peaking out from behind Melissa. "That was a great story." said Melissa. "Yea." said Kelsey. "You should write a book." said Deseree. "Yup and I know

just the title. Zack's Book of Pirate Lies." said Gracie looking up from her book. "What do you mean by Pirate Lies?" asked Zack. "Oh please. That story sounds like it came out of Edward Bloom's mouth. It pure fiction." said Gracie. "How is this story fiction? Humor me." said Zack. "Well...ok. Question 1: How can you all survive 1 month underwater when the average person can survive only 3 minutes without air, 3 days without water, and 3 weeks without food?" asked Gracie. "Well I am a skellin..." started Zack. "Question 2: Bugs as tall as Sally and me? Thats impossible. The biggest bugs known to man are about 6 inches long." said Gracie. "Well the water does magnify." said Zack. "And question 3: Why didn't you and your crew just swim away in the first place? You know what? Before you go and make-up some amazing story I suggest you check your facts." said Gracie. "Well, it looks like you know alot." said Zack. "Why thank you." said Gracie. "For a human that is." said Zack. "Whats that supposed to mean?" asked Melissa. "Yea. We're not stupid." said Deseree. "Well I don't know about you, Zack but I'm not stupid." said Kelsey. "You know what it was nice meeting you Zack, but look at the time we gotta go. We'll see you tomorrow." said Gracie as she look at her watch. They quickly called Abby and they all left. "Did we miss something?" asked Jack and Sally as they walked into the room. "Oh your human friends just left." said Zack. "Thats weird. Its 9:00pm where they are." said Jack. "They usually stay untill 11:00pm Earth time." said Sally. "Huh? I thought it was 3:00 pm." asked Zack. "Oh, there's a 6 hour time zone difference between Earth and Halloween Town." said Jack. "Oh Ann would you please show Zack to his room?" asked Sally. "No prob Mom." said Ann as she took Zack's bags and they both went upstairs. "What happened?" asked Jack. "What do you mean?" asked Michael. "Well, its not normal for Gracie and her friends to leave early. Did Zack say something?" asked Sally. "Well, Zack was telling us this completely deadly-vu pirate story." said Kim. "And when he was done Gracie started to ask him some questions. Zack said Gracie was very smart...for a human." said Vince. "Thats just like Zack. Speaking his mind before his mind can think it over." said Jack. "I hope the girls wern't too offended to not come back tomorrow morning for the town meeting." said Sally. "That jerk!" said Melissa. "How dare he question our intelligence!" said Deseree. "Who does he think he his?" asked Kelsey. "I don't know but he really..." said Gracie. "Gracie keep it PG." said Melissa. "Sorry. He just makes me so mad!" said Gracie shaking her fists. Then they entered a clearing where they were at the trees that had paintings on them. They entered a portal and found themselves home and in their normal clothes. "And this is your room." said Ann when they arrived at the guest room. "Thank you...ummm Kim right?" asked Zack as they walked inside. "No, silly I'm Ann. Kim has black hair, mine is red-orange" said Ann. "Oh sorry. Well tell your parents that I'll be down in a few hours for dinner." said Zack. "K." said Ann as she left the room. "Humans. My mortal foe. And my little brother is letting them run around this town like they own it. Jack is too blind to see that they are destroying this town little by little. Oh well my little plan of hostile takeover will have Halloween Town in the palm of my hand. I'll crown myself Pumpkin King, get that wretched Sally to love me, and I'll get rid of those blasted humans. The best part is that Jack can't do anything about it because he will be me." said Zack to himself. "Kim please call Zack down for dinner." said Sally. "Sure." said Kim as she walked up the stairs. Sally put the vulture on the dining room table and sat down next to Jack. She looked at the clock and it said 6:00pm. "Hello eveyone." said Zack as he walked in. "Zack please take a seat." said Jack. Zack sat at the head of the table across from Jack. Sally then put some of the food on everyone's plate and they started eating. Durring dinner Zack amazed everyone (especcilly the kids) with more pirate storys. When dinner was over Sally took the plates. "Why Sally that was the best meal I'd had in years." said Zack as Sally took away his plate. "Why thank you." said Sally in amazement. "Yup it looks like yous arent that much of a worthless ragdoll after all." said Zack. "Zack can I please talk to you in the study?" asked Jack as he got up from his chair. "Sure." said Zack following him. "Zack you can't just go mouthing off the first thing that comes to your mind." said Jack when they

entered the study. "And why not?" asked Zack. "Because its rude and offensive. You realize now that Sally is my wife and you can't treat her the way you did when we were in college." said Jack. "She's just a useless ragdoll." said Zack. "That 'useless ragdoll' has made me the happiest skellington in Halloween Town. The next time you make fun of her or any of my other friends again you will be sorry." said Jack. "Does that mean I can't poke fun at the humans?" asked Zack. "And another thing, those humans do have names and they are, Gracie, Melissa, Deseree, and Kelsey. I'd advise that you use those names. I heard of what you said to them and they are not stupid. You better get your act under control for tomorrow's town meeting." said Jack as he left.

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## 4 - Town Meeting Disaster

"Hi everybody!" said Gracie and her friends as they walked inside Jack's house. "What are you doing here?" asked Jack happily. "What do you not want us here or somethin?" asked Deseree. "No, of coarse not. You are always welcomed here." said Sally. "Its just that we thought you wouldn't come back because of what Uncle Zack said." said Ann and Kim in unison. "Oh no. Nothing will ever stop us from coming here." said Kelsey. "We've learned to get over what Zack said." said Melissa. "And besides, I wanna appoligize to Zack anyway." said Gracie. "Why?" asked Michael. "Well I should of known that pirates like to make their stories all fancy and stuff." said Gracie. "Where is Zack anyway?" asked Deseree. "He's still sleeping." said Jack. "But its, like, 10:00am here and the town meeting is in a half hour." said Kelsey. "Well, I sent Vince upstairs to get him up half an hour ago but I haven't seen him since." said Sally.

Meanwhile upstairs Vince ran into his room and grabbed his recorder. "I didn't want it to come to this." he thought as he walked back into Zack's room. He went up to the king sized bed and blew a high pitched note right into Zack's ear. "Man the lifeboats!! Swab the deck!! Check my gold!!" yelled Zack as he jumped out of bed. "Uhh Uncle Zack?" asked Vince. "Oh I see I'm not on my ship. Michael why did you wake me up so early?" asked Zack as he look at the eyeball shaped clock. "I'm Vince. And you only have a half hour to get ready for the town meeting." said Vince. Then Michael walked into the room. "Hey Vince, mom wants to know why you're taking so long. Oh and by the way Gracie and her friends are here." said Michael. "Why didn't you say so?" asked Vince as he ran out of the room. "The humans are back? I thought I got rid of them. Oh well this town meeting will be my chance to get rid of them once and for all." said Zack as he got ready.

"Whats this town meeting for anyway?" asked Melissa. "I just want to re-introduce Zack to the citizens." said Jack. "Well, well, well. Look who came back! If it isn't the huma..." Zack was about to say humans but Jack gave him the evilest look known to man. "I mean Gracie, Melissa, Kelsey, Deseree. Its (gulp) nice to see you." said Zack as he walked down the stairs. "Hi Zack." said Gracie as she walked up to him. "Hi Gracie." said Zack. "Listen I think we got off the wrong foot yesterday..." started Gracie. "Oh you mean Abby. Its ok." said Zack. "Uh not exactly but I'm glad to hear it. Anyway I mean about the story thing. I just wanted to say that your story was great and I had no right to question it." said Gracie. "Thats right you had no right to question it, but I'll forgive you." said Zack extending his hand out. "Oh, great. So we have a truce then." said Gracie as she shook Zack's hand. Gracie was really mad at Zack's comment but she wasn't in the mood to fight again. "Say where is that dumb mutt of yours anyway?" asked Zack. Gracie was outraged by this comment but she still didn't want to start another fight. "I decided to keep Abby at home." said Gracie. "Good idea. We don't want her to ruin everything like she always does." said Zack. Gracie was about to explode on Zack. "Uh Zack hurry up we don't wanna be late." said Jack. Then Zack left. "I know you wanted to but thanks Gracie for not exploding on Zack." said Jack. "Oh no problem." said Gracie. Gracie's head was cocked to the right and she had the fakest smile in the universe on. "Don't do that." said Jack as he left.

"I don't like Zack at all." said Gracie when Jack left. "I know but he is Jack's brother." said Melissa. "Its so hard to believe that he is related to Jack." said Deseree. "I know they're complete opposites." said Kelsey. "There's something fishy about Zack." said Gracie. "Despite the fact that he's a pirate." said the kids in unison. "Yes despite that." said Gracie. "I have a bad feeling about him being here." said Sally. "You're having a premonition?" asked Melissa. "No, I had one the other day." said Sally. "Well tell us about it." said Kelsey. "Yea girl spill it." said Deseree. Then Sally told the girls about her premonition.

"Woa." said Kelsey when Sally was done. "Back up here." said Deseree. "Why would we be banished from all towns!?!?" asked Gracie. "We haven't even been to all the towns." said Melissa. "And Jack would never banish you all. He know that you all follow the pumpkin code so there is no reason for him to banish you all." said Sally. "Why would we be in jail with daddy?" asked the kids in unison. "Thats another weird part of the premonition. You all are too perfect for jail." said Kelsey. "Why would you hug Zack?" asked Deseree. Then they heard the sound of a bell. "Well we can figure that out later. Now we gotta go to Town Hall." said Sally.

Meanwhile at Town Hall Jack was backstage with Zack. "You sure you know what you're doing?" asked Jack. "I have everything under control." said Zack. "Thats what I'm worried about." said Jack as he walked on stage. He walked up to the podium and saw everyone sitting down talking among themselves. "Listen everybody!" said Jack. But no one listened. "SHUT UP!!!" yelled Gracie and her friends in unison. Then everyone gave their undivided attention to Jack. "Thank you. Now you are probably wondering why I called you all here. My brother Zack is in town." said Jack. The audience responded with gasps of horror. "Not to worry, he's only staying for a week. Anyway, while he is here I would want everyone to treat him nicely, even if he doesn't do the same. So here he is my brother Zack." said Jack as he started to walk off stage as Zack walked on. Everyone, reluctantly, clapped. "Thank you." said Zack as he got to the podium. "Even though I've only been here for a day I can already see the changes my brother has made. Why last time I was here the Mayor could barely switch his head." said Zack. "Hey!!!" said the Mayor, then he tried to switch his head from happy to sad but it got stuck in mid-turn. "Oh no not again." said Gracie. "Ok who's turn is it now?" asked Melissa. "I did it last time." said Kelsey. "Fine I'll do it." said Deseree. Then Deseree walked to the Mayor and switched his head to sad. "Thank you." said Mayor. "And by the looks of it he still can't." said Zack. "Its only been 3 minuites and Zack has already messed this up." said Jack from backstage. "But the biggest change I've seen has got to be the fact that my brother is letting humans roam the town." said Zack. "What's that supposed to mean?!?!?!?!?" said Gracie and her friends in unison as they got up from the bench. "Well I'm just saying that Halloween Town is a place for monsters, not humans." said Zack. "But they made an exception for us because we work on Halloween." said Melissa. "Do you even know the true meaning of Halloween?" asked Zack. "Of course we do!!" said Kelsey. "We've known the true meaning ever since our first night of trick-or-treating." said Deseree. "See thats what I mean. Humans only see Halloween as a night when they can dress up as monsters and go get candy. Thats not what Halloween is about." said Zack. "We do know the true meaning of Halloween! And we show that we know it every year in our Halloweens. If you didn't leave this town then you would know it." said Gracie. Then Gracie and her friends were so mad that they started to leave. "All work on Halloween shall be postphoned until next week. For we will be home...away from him!!" the girls said as they pointed fingers at Zack.

On their way out the girls heard giggles. They looked around and they saw a girl in a lavender witch costume, one boy in a devil suit, and another boy in a skellington suit. They jumped out from under the bench and took off their masks. "Lock!" said the boy in the devil suit. "Shock!" said the girl in the witch costume. "Barrel!" said the boy in the skellington costume. Lock, Shock, and Barrel are the only citizens who hate Gracie and her friends. "Oh great who invited you three?" asked Melissa. "Its about time someone started a conspiracy aganst you humans." said Shock. "Yea this town should of gotten rid of you all years ago." said Lock. "No one is getting rid of us!" said Gracie. "We are just cooling our jets at home." said Deseree. "Either way you are away from this town." said Barrel. "We're only gonna be gone for a week." said Kelsey. Then the girls left Town Hall. "Now look what you've done Zack!!" yelled someone. "Because of you, Zack, we will get very far behind in planning for Halloween." said another. Then Jack walked on stage and grabbed Zack by the arm and dragged him offstage. "Thanks for getting me off that stage, Jack. If I was on there for any longer they would of killed me!" said Zack. "You're lucky that I don't kill you. I told you yesterday to watch your tounge but do you listen? No! Now thanks to you

Gracie and her friends may never come back!!" said Jack as he walked onstage. He walked up to the podium and tried to get everyone's attention, but nothing worked, then Jack decided to make a scary face. (Its the same face he used when Lock, Shock, and Barrel brought in the bunny.) "Now everyone calm down. We won't get behind in Halloween. In fact we'll do what we do during the girls' school year. Vampires, you are in charge of dancing, Ann, Kim, Michael, Vince you are in charge of music, Sally and Jewel are in charge of costumes, and big witch and small witch are in charge of sets and props. Now get out there and start working! Oh and if anyone sees Gracie or any of her friends please bring them to me so that Zack can appoligize to them." said Jack. And with those words the citizens left the building, except for Zack. "Everything is going to plan. This unsuspecting town won't know what hit it!" he said. Meanwhile in Gracie's room, Gracie and her friends just got back to the real world. Gracie got onto her starry light-blue queen-sized bed and started to punch a pillow. "Stupid Zack!" she said. "We try to be nice and what does he do?" said Melissa. "He treats us like curd thats what!" said Deseree. "I can't stand him!" said Kelsey. "Thanks to him our month long Halloween vacation was cut short by a week." said Gracie. "Now what are we gonna do?" asked Melissa. "Anyone up for the pool?" asked Deseree. "Ok." they all said in unison.

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## 5 - The Old Switch-Aroo and Jack in Jail

Zack sneaked into Jack's room. It was his last night in Halloween Town so he knew he had to put his plan into action or he wouldn't have another chance. Jack's room was very dark, the only light Zack had was the fireplace behind the bed. Zack was too busy searching for something he didn't realize that Zero was asleep in his little basket bed. Zack tripped over Zero. Zero started to bark madly, but surprisingly neither Jack nor Sally woke up. "Good thing I put Deadly Nightshade in the tea." thought Zack. Zack kicked Zero out of the room and continued his search. "Where is it?" thought Zack. Then he looked on the desk and saw what he was searching for. It was the bat bowtie in a glass case. He walked up to it and took off the case. "Ah the symbol of the Pumpkin King. The crown." said Zack as he picked up the bowtie. He quickly opened up a secret latch on the back and pressed a few buttons. He closed the latch and aimed the bowtie at Jack. Zack pressed one of the eyes of the bat and in a matter of seconds Jack looked exactly like Zack. Zack pressed another eye and Jack was gone. "From this moment on I shall be Zack the Pumpkin King!!!" yelled Zack.

The sun shone through the window. Jack opened his eyes to the morning daylight. "(Yawn) Good morning Sal..." Jack looked around and saw that Sally wasn't there he also noticed that the room was smaller. "Where the heck am I?" asked Jack as he got up out of the small bed, he walked up to a small window and looked out of it. "Holy crud!!! I'm on a ship!!!" said Jack. He continued to look around and he saw a mirror. He looked in it and his jaw dropped. "I look like Zack!!!" said Jack as he touched the mirror to see if it was real, indeed it was. "I don't know how he did this but when I get back to town Zack will pay! But how will I get back? We must be millions of miles away from home." said Jack. Jack started to think for a while but then an idea hit him. "I know I'll just tell the crew what happened, they'll understand and turn the ship around." said Jack as he started to walk to the deck.

On the deck Zack's skellington crew was playing cards. "Sheesh it looks like Oogie's lair." thought Jack. Jack walked up to who looked like the first mate and tapped him on the shoulder. "Umm excuse me." said Jack. "Ah Captain Zack. Welcome back. How was your visit with your brother?" said the first mate as he turned around. The first mate had an oval-shaped head and he had a red bandana on his head, and big holes in his head for eyes. He wore an outfit very similar to Zack's. "Well, thats what I want to talk to you about. We need to turn the ship around. There was a mix-up. See I'm Jack. Not Zack. And..." started Jack. "Well, well, well look what we have here. Its a stowaway. You know what we's do to stowaways?" asked the first mate. "Uhh send them home?" asked Jack hopefully. "Nice try. Send him to the brig!!!" yelled the first mate. Then heavy-set pirate skellingtons walked up to Jack and grabbed him. "Wait you got it all wrong. Please send me home!!" yelled Jack. Then the pirates stopped at a big door that had 1 small window that had bars on it. They threw Jack inside and locked the door.

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## 6 - A Premonition Comes True

Just a reminder before I post this chapter; the citizens still don't know about Jack and Zack's switch so they call Zack Jack because they're stupid and can't tell the difference between them.

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"I look like a lobster!!" yelled Kelsey as she walked inside Jack's house. "If you've just wore some sun tan lotion then we wouldn't have this prob." said Gracie as she followed Kelsey. "Don't rub it in." said Kelsey. Over the week off Kelsey's fair skin turned red because she layed out in the sun for too long. "Kel look on the bright side. At least you don't have green hair." said Melissa pointing to her green ponytail. "That would of never happened if you would just get out of the pool and not swim a hundred billizion laps around the pool." said Deseree. "At least I didn't spend all my time at the Junior Grill flirting." said Melissa. "Girls you came back!!" said Sally hapily as she walked into the room, she was trying not to laugh at Kelsey and Melissa's new looks. Then Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince walked in and burst into laughter. "You look funny." said Ann in between giggles. "Hey where's Jack?" asked Gracie. "He's still sleeping." said Kim. "What!? I must have water in my ears. Did you say that Jack, the early bird, is still sleeping?" asked Melissa. "Yes." said Michael. "But its, like, 10:00 am." said Deseree. "Is he sick?" asked Kelsey. "No, I don't think so." said Vince.

Zack jumped out of bed. "Ah my first day as pumpkin king. Now this little town will feel the wrath of Zack!" he said as he walked to Jack's closet. He opened it and inside was a lot of black and white pinstripe suits. He grabbed one and quickly put it on.

"So what else did you do over your week off?" asked Sally. "We went to the movies a lot." said Gracie. "But other than that we did nothing." said Melissa. "We also went to the pool." said Deseree. "Yea, Des like they didn't know that when we walked in." said Kelsey. "Good morning." said Zack trying to hide the pirate accent in his voice. "Why did you sleep in?" asked Sally when Zack came down. "Oh umm...I stayed up late last night saying good-bye to Zack." said Zack. Then at the sound of the name Zack, Abby, who was having a play fight with Zero and Sally's cat, got up. She looked at Zack, growled, and ran up to him and bit him in the leg. "Ouch!!" cried Zack frogetting to hide his accent. "ABBY!! BAD DOG!!" said Gracie as she ran up to Zack to take Abby off his leg. Then Gracie reached into her red purse and put a mussle on Abby. "Take that dumb mutt out of here NOW!!" yelled Zack once again frogetting to hide his accent. Then Gracie picked Abby up and put her outside. "I'm terribly sorry. I don't know what got into her. You know she's not normally like that." said Gracie. "Well, its ok. Welcome back." said Zack frogetting to hide the accent. "Hey whats wrong with your voice?" asked Melissa. "Uhh..what do you mean?" asked Zack disguising his voice. "Well it sounds raspy, like Zack's." said Deseree. "Oh umm...last night Zack tried to teach me pirate talk." said Zack. "Pirate talk?" asked Kelsey. "Yea and now my voice is suffering." said Zack. "I'll get you some water for that." said Ann. "Oh no thanks Kim. I think it will heal on its own." said Zack. "I'm Ann." said Ann. "Of coarse you are. I'm sorry I'm still waking up," said Zack "well I'm gonna go." He then kissed Sally on the forehead and left before more questions could be asked.

"My Nancy Drew sence is going crazy." said Gracie. "Huh?" asked her friends in unison. "You know, Nancy Drew, one of the most popular girl crime solvers of the 70's." her friends gave Gracie confused looks. "Those books I always read. Anyway is it just me or is Jack acting weird?" asked Gracie. "No, I noticed that too." said Sally. "Yea his voice is weird." said Melissa. "Its not just that, he never sleeps in and today he sleeps in until 10:00." said Gracie. "He messes up the kids names. He never does that, no

matter how early it is." said Sally. "Abby bit him. And Abby would never bite him no matter what. And he called her a dumb mutt. Zack is the only one that calls her a dumb mutt. You don't think...?" asked Gracie. "That's proposterious." said Deseree. "I didn't even get to say what I was thinking." said Gracie. "We already know." said Melissa. "Yea you were gonna say that Jack and Zack switched places. Which would never happen." said Kelsey. "Oh come on twins, with the exception of Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince, always switch places." said Gracie. "But Jack would never agree to do something so childish." said Sally. "Maybe Zack found some way to switch places with Jack without Jack knowing." said Gracie. "That was close." said Zack when he was out of the house. "I thought I got rid of those wretched humans!! Oh well. If I can't get them out of this town by questions or embarrassment then I'll just have to scare them." while Zack was talking he took off the bowtie and pressed a few buttons. In a matter of seconds a dark hooded grim reaper-like creature appeared in front of him. You couldn't see his face because of the big hood he was wearing. Then more of creatures appeared. "Hide out in Town Hall. I'm gonna go make a new law, making it so that those stupid humans may never walk the streets of Halloween Town EVER again!!" the creatures followed Zack's orders and flew to Town Hall.

"Hey Gracie I finished Harry Potter." said Kim. "I had a feeling you would. That's why I brought you this." said Gracie as she reached into her red purse and took out the book Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. "Woa. Gracie you carried that big book in this purse!!" said Melissa. "Wasn't it heavy?" asked Deseree. "Nope." said Gracie. Gracie then gave the book to Kim who almost fell over under the weight of the book. "You are actually gonna read this book?" asked Ann as she opened the book. "Yes." said Kim as she closed it. "It's gotta be at least 10000 pages long." said Michael. "734 to be exact." said Kim. "That's still a lot." said Vince. "Then I should start..." Then everyone heard the sound of a bell. "After the town meeting." finished Kim. "Strange." said Kelsey. "Sally did Jack tell you anything about a town meeting?" asked Deseree. "Why no. I'm just as surprised as you are." said Sally. "Another thing to add to my list of suspicions." said Gracie. "Well lets go and see what it's about." said Melissa.

On the way to Town Hall the girls were stopped by the citizens, who just wanted to say hi. "Yes we missed you too." said Gracie as she got out of the big crowd. "Now I know how a famous person feels." said Melissa. "Boy, I'm so glad you all worked on Halloween while we were gone." said Deseree. "Yea they did a months work in a week. That's amazing." said Kelsey.

"Welcome back." said a voice. The girls turned around and they saw the Mayor. "Oh hi Mayor." said Deseree. "Say, Mayor did Jack tell you anything about this town meeting?" asked Gracie. "Nope." said the Mayor who switched his happy face to worry. "Strange. Jack would never hold a town meeting without telling us or you, Mayor. Are you sure he didn't even give you a hint?" asked Gracie. "Yes. He didn't tell me a single thing." said the Mayor. "Well we will just have to find out what this meeting is about then." said Melissa. Then they all started to walk into Town Hall.

Inside, the girls sat down in the front row. "Psst Melissa, Kelsey." said a voice. Everyone turned around and they saw big witch and small witch, who was trying to hide her giggles. "Shut up. Listen come by our hut after the town meeting and we'll find a cure for your new looks." said Big Witch. "Oh thank you." said Melissa and Kelsey in unison. Then everyone turned around just as Zack walked onto the stage. "Listen everyone." said Zack trying to imitate his brother. Yet no one listened. "SHUT UP!!!" yelled Gracie and her friends. "Uhh...thank you." said Zack as he took out a piece of parchment. "Jack just wrote up a new law." whispered Kelsey. "There hasn't been a new law in Halloween Town in ages." whispered Sally. "Then what could this law be about?" asked Gracie. "Ahem. Gracie, Melissa, Kelsey, Deseree would you please stand up?" asked Zack. "Uhh...sure." the girls said in unison as they stood up.

While Zack was reading aloud from the parchment the girls listened carefully to him. "Furthermore from this day forth Gracie, Melissa, Kelsey, and Deseree shall be BANISHED from this town and all the others." said Zack. "WHAT!!!" yelled Gracie and her friends when they were sure he was done. "Guards, seize them!!" yelled Zack as he pulled a rope opening the curtain behind him. Everyone gasped in

horror when they saw the hooded creatures. "Whats with the dementors?" asked Kim. "These creatures are not dementors, Ann. They are shadows. They do what ever I tell them to do and now I order them to take the humans out of Halloween Town and make it so that they can never return." said Zack. Then the shadows flew to Gracie and her friends, grabbed them by the arms, and lifted them in the air. "Let go of me!!" yelled Gracie kicking her feet trying to get to the ground. Her friends were doing the same but they too were unsuccessful. Everyone watched in horror as their friends were dragged out of town hall screaming, everyone that is except for Lock, Shock, and Barrel who were prancing around in a happy circle chanting a happy chant.

Then everyone started to yell at Zack. Zack looked around and he saw Sally backstage. "One minuite." he said as he got off the stage. "Sally. Isn't my new law horrible? Just think no more stupid humans to disturb us." he said as he started to hug Sally. "How could you? Those girls are our best friends and you banish them without giving it a second thought." said Sally breaking free from his hug. "You know as well as I do that those humans are a nuisance." said Zack. "Jack, how could you say such a thing? Whats gotten into you? You've been acting so weird lately, its like I don't even know you. Wait a minuite. Your not Jack, your Zack!!!" said Sally in horror. "Bingo. But you must keep this a secret." said Zack. "WHERE'S JACK?!?!?!?!?!?" yelled Sally. "Wouldn't you like to know you worthless ragdoll. SHADOW!!!!" yelled Zack. Then a shadow appeared in front of him. "This worthless ragdoll has found out too much. Open her eyes." said Zack as he took off the bowtie and pressed a few buttons. Then the shadow got behind Sally and, using its black skellington hands, literally, oppened her eyes. Sally screamed in horror. "What are you going to do with me?" asked Sally. "Nothing much, love, I'm just gonna zap your memory of what just happened and make you love me and not my idiot brother Jack." said Zack. "Thats never gonna happen. My heart belongs to Jack and only Jack." said Sally. "Not for long." said Zack. Then Zack aimed the bowtie at Sally's eyes. Pink rays beamed from the bat's eyes onto Sally's. She tried to blink but the shadow's hands got in the way. Soon she stopped squirming and relaxed. "Thats enough!!" said Zack as the pink rays stopped. Then the shadow let go of Sally. Then Sally ran into Zack's arms. "I love you...Zack." said Sally. "Perfect." said Zack.

Then Sally went back to her seat. "So mom did you talk to dad?" asked Ann. "Are Gracie and her friends allowed back here?" asked Kim. "Those wretched girls never belonged here in the first place." said Sally. "Mom are you ok?" asked Michael. "I'm perfectly fine." said Sally. Then Zack walked back onstage. "If anyone tries to get the humans back here they will have to deal with the shadow army." said Zack. Then more shadows appeared and they started to fly around town hall, striking fear into even the most brave monsters.

"LET GO OF ME YOU SORRY EXCUSE FOR A GRIM REAPER!!!" yelled Gracie trying to get out of the shadow's grip. The girls and the shadows were in the holiday woods. Gracie looked around and saw that her friends were also trying to get out of the shadow grip. Then the shadows put the girls down by the portal. They siezed the girls' right arms and took off their red bracelets. "Hey give that back." the girls said in unison while they were trying to get back their bracelets. Then the shadows opened some bottles of weird smelling toxins. Then the girls fainted and the shadows threw them into the portal. Gracie awoke, what seemed like, hours later when she felt a wet tongue on her face. She oppened her eyes and saw Abby. Gracie got up and started to pet Abby. "Hey girl how'd you get out of your mussle?" asked Gracie. She looked around and saw her friends sleeping and she saw the mussle in shreds on the ground. Gracie looked at her right arm and remembered what just happened. She ran to the window and started to pound it. "Gracie what are you doing?" asked Melissa. "Trying to get the portal back," yelled Gracie "we gotta go back to Halloween Town!!" "But Gracie we can never go back." said Deseree. "Jack banished us remember?" asked Kelsey. "Of coarse I remember. But we gotta go back. Something tells me that Halloween Town is in trouble and if we don't go back the citizens are doomed forever!" said Gracie. Then Gracie got on her knees and started to cry. Then her friends walked to her to try to comfort

her but they too started to cry.



## 7 - Ann and Kim's Plan

Vince was running in the Holiday woods. In one arm he had a bag of Frosted Bat Wings and in his other hand he had his bat toy. Vince was constantly looking over his shoulder to make sure he wasn't followed. Then, out of breath, Vince stopped in the middle of the forrest, a few yards away from the holiday trees. "Ann, Kim, Michael. Where are you?" he yelled. Then Vince felt a bony hand on his mouth. He was pulled behind a nearby tree. Vince looked up and he saw Kim. "Mim?" asked Vince in a muffled voice. "Shhhh do you want those shadows to hear you?" barked Kim. Vince looked around and saw Ann and Michael hiding behind trees. They peaked out their heads from their hiding places. Kim and Vince did the same. "I could of swore I saw someone here." said a shadow in a harsh whisper. "Lets go back." said another. Then the shadows flew out of sight. The kids stood still for almost a minuite just to make sure the shadows were gone. Then Kim took her hand off of Vince's mouth. "YOU FOOL YOU ALMOST GOT US CAUGHT!!!" yelled Ann. "Please tell me you brought the food." said Michael. Then Vince threw the bag of Frosted Bat Wings to Michael. "Thank gosh I was starving." said Michael as he oppened the bag and put a handfull of the bat wings in his mouth. "Hey save some for me I risked my life to get the bag here." said Vince as he reached for the bag. "Foanafjkkllks." (translation: you also risked our lives.) said Michael spitting out some crumbs as he talked. Then Vince grabbed the bag and put a handfull in his mouth. "Your lucky skellingtons can't gain weight." said Kim. "Yea with all the food you eat you'd be as big as Sandy Claws." said Ann. "Ernklaus?" (translation: want some?) said Vince giving the bag to Ann. "No thanks." said Ann. "I don't understand how you 2 can eat. Just look at Halloween Town. Ever since Gracie and her friends were banished Dad has been acting weird." said Kim. "Yea, Mom has been acting weird too. Dad also took away Halloween and my drums." said Ann. "He also took away my books. I was just getting to a good part in Harry Potter too." said Kim. "Joanflfndslkfjgjfaklsfjloiejfkljsjen." (translation: he took away my guitar.) said Michael. "Ruoiauronicasjfr." (translation: he took away my recorder.) said Vince. "Not to mention those shadows running around terrorizing the town." said Kim. "I'D HAD ALL I CAN STANDS AND I CAN'T STANDS NO MORE!!!" said Ann. "Yous thinking what I'm thinking?" asked Kim. "Yes." said Ann. "Riownc?salfpioew!!!" (translation: what are you thinking? Don't leave us hanging!!!) said Michael and Vince in unison. ((If you wanted to know Michael and Vince were talking like that because they had food in their mouths)) "Ok, this whole prob can be solved with 2 words." said Ann. "Sandy and Calws." said Kim holding up 2 bony fingers. Michael and Vince gave them blank stares. "Hello he has that sleigh and reindeer." said Ann. "We can use them to fly to Gracie and her friends' house's so that we can bring them back to Halloween Town." said Kim. "Then Gracie and her friends can talk to Daddy and get him and Mommy back to normal." said Ann. "Oh I get it." said Vince. "Umm there's just one prob. What about the shadows? If they catch us who knows what they'd do to us?" said Michael. Then before Ann or Kim could answer a shadow appeared behind Vince. "Vince don't move." said Ann. "Don't be alarmed but there's a shadow right behind you." said Michael. Then Vince turned around and screamed in horror. "Leave my brother alone!" said Kim as she ran up behind the shadow. Then Vince ran behind a tree. "Now lets see what lies behind the cloak." said Kim as she pulled on the shadow's robe. She got the robe off the shadow and underneith was a big black skellington. The pumpkin sun shined above it and the skellington turned to ash and was blown away by the wind. "Is it dead?" asked Michael. "I think so." said Kim. "Look what it left behind." said Ann as she picked up the robe. Then an idea struck her. "We can use this robe to disguise Gracie and her friends so that they can blend in with the other shadows." said Ann. "Thats a great idea." said Kim. "Umm so we need more robes so that we can disguise them." said Vince walking away from his hiding place. "Your

right this robe is too small for all of them to hide under. So we need 3 more." said Ann. "And I think we are gonna get them right now!!!" said Michael as 3 more shadows appeared in front of them. Ann, Kim and Michael ran behind the shadows and took off the robes revealing more black skellingtons that turned to ash under the pumpkin sun. "Ok this has to be enough to disguise Gracie and her friends." said Kim as she gathered up all the robes. Then she gave them to Vince. "Since you were too scared to fight you are gonna be in charge of the robes." she said. "Now lets go to Christmas Town so that we can save Halloween Town." said Michael. Then they started to walk to the Holiday Trees, but little would they know of the surprise that awaited them when they got there.

"SHADOWS!!!" yelled the kids in unison. The kids just arrived in the Holiday trees and by each tree was a shadow. The shadows flew to the kids and grabbed Kim. "Let go of my sister!!!" yelled Ann as she ran up to the shadow. She tried to get rid of the robe but another shadow came up behind her and grabbed her. Michael and Vince froze in horror. Kim then bit the hand of the shadow that was holding her captive. "Michael, Vince stop staring and go to Christmas Town!!" she yelled before the shadow could place his hand on her mouth again. Michael and Vince then ran to the Christmas Tree. The shadows tried to fly after them but they were already swept away by the snow. "Well, go after them!!" said a shadow. Then 2 shadows opened the door to Christmas Town and, just like Michael and Vince, they were dragged into the tree by snow.

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## 8 - Christmas Town

"Oomh." said Vince as he fell into a mountain of snow. "Eww I just ate some yellow snow!!!" said Michael as he spit some snow from his mouth. "At least your not freezing your butt off." said Vince shivering. Then they both got up from the snow. "Wow its even prettier in June." said Michael looking upon the town of Christmas. "Yup just like Daddy said, color everywhere, white things in the air." said Vince. Christmas Town was way different than Halloween Town. Every house was red and had Christmas lights in the windows, but the coolest thing was the 10 ft Christmas Tree that was in the middle of the town. "It looks like that Dr. Seuss book Gracie and her friends always read us. I think it was The Grince that Stole Christmas or something like that." said Vince. "Hey speaking of Gracie and her friends we need to carry out Ann and Kim's plan if we ever want to see them again. And besides, we've been to Christmas Town every Christmas whats so different about today?" said Michael. "Umm we aren't here to help Sandy fill his sleigh." said Vince as he gathered up the robes. Then they started to walk down the hill.

"C'mon we need to get ready for Christmas in July." said a voice. Michael and Vince looked inside a window. "There's Sandy Claws." said Michael pointing at a small, fat guy wearing a red suit and cap. He also had a beard as white as snow. Then Michael and Vince ran to the door and rang the bell. The familiar tune of Jingle Bells rang through the air. "Oh now who can that be?" asked Santa as he went to the door.

Santa then answered the door. "Michael? Vince? What in the name of holly berries are you all doing here?" asked Santa. "Who's at the door?" asked Christene. Christene is Santa's wife, she is short and pudgy, and she wears a long red dress that has a white trim. "Michael and Vince." answered Santa. "Well let them in already, we don't want them to catch cold now do we?" asked Christene. Then Michael and Vince walked inside the warm house. Christene then set out Christmas cookies on the table. "Please help yourselves." she said. "No thanks." said Michael trying to hold Vince back away from the cookies. "Sandy we need your help." said Michael. "Why?" asked Santa. Then Michael and Vince told Santa what had happened to Halloween Town, and of the narrow escape they had from the shadows. "Oh my." said Christene. "I always knew your dad was crazy but I would never think he would do anything like this. How can I help?" asked Santa. Then Michael and Vince told Santa Ann and Kim's plan. "I'll be happy to take you to earth and get Gracie and her friends back. Lets go now before your dad finds out your here." said Santa. "Your gonna help them after what they have done to you." said Christene. Santa knew that she was talking about the Christmas ordeal that happened 13 years ago. (Remember, in this story its the year 2006) "Christene, its the least I can do. I mean Jack did save me from Oogie. Don't you worry. We'll be fine." he said. Then he kissed her on the cheek. "If you need me you can always call me on the raidar." said Santa as he left the house sith Michael and Vince at his side. Outside they went to a redish-brownish cabin where the reindeer and sleigh were kept. Santa, with the help of his elves, got everything ready. When they were done Vince put the robes in the back and he and Michael sat in the front next to Santa. Santa quickly said the reindeer's names and they were off into the sky.

They were barely halfway to Earth when Christene came in on the radar. "Chris, your in grave danger," Christene said "I just saw some weird grim reaper creatures flying your way!!" "Mrs. Claws can you describe the creatures?" asked Michael. "They wore all black and they had on big robes." said Christene. "Shadows!!!" said Vince. Then the sleigh stopped. "What happened? Why did we stop?" asked Michael. "I don't know but the reindeer seem to be acting strange." said Santa. The reindeer were

making weird noises and trembling, as if they were scared. Vince looked over the edge of the sleigh. Then a black skellington hand reached out and grabbed him by the throat! "Vince!" yelled Michael he looked where Vince was and saw a shadow choking Vince. Vince was trying to remove the hand from his throat but his fear of the shadows overtook him. Then Michael ran to the shadow and tried to help Vince but the shadow's grip was too tight. Michael knew that the shadow would not let go unless it had himself or Vince, better him then Vince. Michael went to the very edge of the sleigh and looked like he was gonna jump off. "Vince its up to you. Good luck." he said. Then he jumped. "You fool grab him!!" said the shadow that was under the one choking Vince. "But what about this one?" asked the shadow choking Vince. "We'll come back for him later." said the other. Then the shadow let go of Vince's neck and they both went after Michael. And all Vince could do was watch in horror as the shadows grabbed Michael and dragged him away. "Ok the reindeer seem to be getting back to normal. Lets hope we can get out of here before those shadows return. I'm terribly sorry for your brother." said Santa. Vince sat back down and took out his bat toy from his pocket. "Don't worry guys. I won't let you down." said Vince as he stroked the wings. He then put the toy back in his pocket.

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## 9 - Zack's Plan

Then the shadows who caught Michael dragged him to the shadows who caught Ann and Kim. "Oh no Michael!" said Ann. "You got caught too." said Kim. "Where's Vince?" asked Ann. "He's with Sandy Claws. Carrying out your plan." said Michael. "I hope they make it to Earth." said Ann. "Me too." said Kim. Then the shadows flew their prisoners to Jack's tower and took them to the basement. "Zack we brought you prisoners." said the shadows in unison. "Zack? Our dad's name is Jack!" said Kim. "Well, well, well look what we have here. If it ain't my nieces and nephews." said Zack walking out of the darkness of the room. He still looked like his brother. "Uncle Zack? What are you doing here? You left last week!" said Ann. "But I didn't. I was here posing as your dear old daddy." said Zack. "Huh? But...but why?" asked Michael. "Why!? I'll tell you why?! I'm fulfilling a lost dream." whispered Zack. "Huh? What did you say?" asked Ann. "Your dad was always the center of attention. I was always left in the dust, even though I was 5 minutes older. It was always Jack this and Jack that. It drove me crazy! So I thought I should get away and pursue my own dreams." said Zack. "So if you went to get away from my daddy's fame then why did you come back?" asked Kim. "Because I was a terrible pirate. I wanted to try my luck as pumpkin king," said Zack "But little would I know of my dear brother's 'improvements' to Halloweentown. The humans, Sally, you kids. I had to get rid of those blasted humans first. I knew they would jeopardize the plan. And besides I hate humans." said Zack. "But why? Humans are nice, caring, and cool." said Kim. "If they're so nice why did they steal everything from me? Human pirates were the people who stole the girl I love away from me. When I saw her being dragged away I swore to get revenge on all humans for what they done!" said Zack. "Seesh talk about holding a grudge." said Ann. Then Zack gave Ann an evil stare. "You have a lot of spunk, Kim. You take after your worthless mother." said Zack looking at Ann. "Ok first things first, I'm Kim. And second, you must of brainwashed mommy so that she would love you and wouldn't suspect anything." said Kim. "Ahh your very clever. But I bet you didn't even think that I used this to do the job!" said Zack pointing to the bat bowtie. "That thing? Its just a fashion statement." said Ann. "Oh its more than that. Its foretold that this bowtie has magical powers that your dad didn't even know about. Heck my dad didn't know either." said Zack. "Your crazy." said Michael. "I'm not crazy Vince." said Zack. "I'm Michael!" said Michael. "Hey wait where's Vince?" asked Zack. "He's with Sandy Claws and they are gonna get Gracie and her friends here to kick your butt." said Ann. "WHAT!!! Shadows!" said Zack. Then some shadows appeared in front of him. "Go find Vince. He couldn't have gotten far." said Zack pointing to the door. Then the shadows left. "As for you three. Say hello to your dad for me." said Zack. Zack pressed a button on the bowtie and the shadows and prisoners were gone. Jack was looking around his small jail cell. He picked up some rocks that looked like bird seed. "This better trick that bird into giving me the keys." said Jack as he rolled some of the rocks in his hand. He walked up to the small window on the door of his cell and looked outside. He saw a skellington parrot. The parrot was Zack's, its name is Parlay and the reason why Jack wanted it was because it had the keys to his prison in its claws. Jack stuck his hand between the bars. "Here little birdy. Come here you poor excuse for a rat with wings." said Jack. Parlay was about to come to Jack when he heard someone and flew away from Jack. "No wait I didn't mean it come back!!!" said Jack trying to get the bird back. Then Jack heard footsteps. He hid in the darkness of his cell. He saw a weird hooded figure open the door magically and shove 3 kids in. Not just any kids, his own kids. The door closed with a bang. "NO!!!" said Michael as he and Ann tried to open the door. Kim walked around the prison cell trying to find another way out. Jack walked out of the darkness and up to Kim. "DAD?!?! IS THAT YOU?!?!" said Kim. "Dad? Dad's here?" asked Ann getting away from the door. Ann,

Kim, and Michael were shocked at the state their dad was in. He wore a red and black striped shirt (the stripes were going in a horizontal direction), black pants, and a big black pirate hat that had a skull and cross bones on it. Jack fell to his knees and hugged each of his kids. "Are you all ok? Where's Vince?" asked Jack. Ann, Kim, and Michael told their dad what had happened to Halloween Town during his absence. At the mention of Sally being brainwashed, Jack got up and punched a wall. "Zack, you will pay!!" said Jack. "Oh he will. Once Gracie and her friends kick his butt." said Michael. "Now lets find a way out of here!" said Ann. "Its no use. I've searched this blasted place countless times and there isn't any way out other than the door." said Jack. "Are you sure? Maybe there's a loose floorboard or a secret passage somewhere. Like in the books I read." said Kim. "This isn't a book." said Michael. "There are no loose floorboards or any secret passageways. Believe me, if I found one we wouldn't be here now." said Jack. "I guess we would just have to wait until Gracie and her friends defeat Zack, when they do Zack will tell them where we are." said Michael. "Hey daddy, did Zack want to be pumpkin king?" asked Ann. "Nope. He would always flinch at the thought of it." said Jack. "So what was the lost dream he was talking about?" asked Ann. "Wait! That girl! Maybe the girl that Zack loved wanted to be pumpkin queen and Zack her king. Maybe Zack is doing this in her memory." said Kim. Jack was somewhat confused until Ann, Kim, and Michael explained what Zack had just told them. "Well we know why he did this but that still doesn't help us get out of here." said Michael. "We'll just have to hope that Vince can get Gracie and her friends here to help." said Ann. "I hope he can." said Kim.

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## 10 - Earth

"Why?" questioned Gracie as she layed face up, on her tear stained bed, staring at the white celing(SP). Despite the warm weather outside Gracie was wearing a black hoodie and blue jean capris. Her room was unusually dark. There was no music bouncing off her light blue walls. The only sounds in her room were the sounds of Abby sleeping and Gracie's breathing.

"I'm scared. Gracie may kill herself." said Melissa, her voice sounded worried. Melissa had gotten rid of her green hair. She was wearing a white t-shirt that had a basketball on the front and on the back were the words Basketball is Life, she also wore black biker shorts. "I know. Gracie has been really depressed ever since we were banished last week." said Kelsey sadly. Kelsey's sunburn has healed somewhat, she still had some on her face. She wore a light purple tank top and blue jean shorts. "Lets take her to the mall. That would cheer her up." said Deseree in a hopeful tone. Deseree was wearing a red t-shirt and black jean shorts.

Then the door oppened and Melissa, Kelsey, and Deseree walked into the room. "Yo Frizzo!" yelled Melissa. Usually Gracie would of laughed at her nickname, but she just replied with a heavy sigh. "We're going to the mall and we want you to come with." said Deseree. "I hear they're havin a sale on Edward Scissorhands and Beetlejuice things at Hot Topic." said Kelsey hoping that would get her friend exiced. "I don't care." muttered Gracie. Then Melissa walked over to the window. She almost tripped over Abby. "Hey Gracie. Tim Burton is outside!" said Melissa trying to hide the giggles from her obvious lie. "Tell him to go back to England." muttered Gracie. Melissa's jaw dropped in shock, normally Gracie would of ran to the window to see if her idol was really there. "WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY BEST FRIEND!!!" yelled Melissa at the top of her lungs. "C'mon. This Lydia Deets depression is getting to the point when it feels like your gonna kill yourself. Lets go outside and get you some much needed sun." said Deseree getting Gracie off her bed and on her feet.

Before Gracie could protest everyone heard the pitter patter of, what sounded like, reindeer on the roof. Then they heard a crash. "What was that!?" questioned Gracie, actually showing emotion in her voice. Then they heard 2 sets of feet walking on the roof. "It sounds like there going towards the chimney(SP)! C'mon lets go catch them!" said Gracie running ahead of her friends.

Gracie ran down the steps 2 at a time. She did not stop for her friends, she just continued running. Finally she reached the family room where the red brick chimney was. "Gracie wait up!" yelled Melissa out of breath. "Girl, what happened?" questioned Deseree. "One minuite you were, all, like, depressed and now you are your normal self." said Kelsey. Before Gracie could answer a big cloud of ash appeared at the oppening of the chimney. Gracie and her friends were coughing and gaging at the ash. "Oh its not that bad." said a low cheery voice. "I (cough) know (cough) that (cough) voice!" said Gracie in between coughs. Finally the ash cloud dissapeared and standing on the heart of the chimney was Santa!

"Santa is that you?" questioned Gracie. "Yes the one and only." replied Santa. "But its the middle of June." said Melissa in a confused tone. "I'm very well aware of that Melissa." Santa snaped back. "Why are you here?" questioned Deseree. "We need your help." replied Santa. "We? Who's we? I only see one." said Kelsey looking around.

Then another ash cloud appeared leaving the girls, and Santa, coughing up a storm. When that cloud settled there stood Vince.

"VINCE?!?!?!?" yelled Gracie and her friends at the top of their lungs. "What are you doing here?" questioned Gracie in a happy tone. Vince then told the girls what had happened to Halloween Town ever

since they were banished. "Jack has gone too far." said Melissa when Vince was done with his story. "That is not Jack...its Zack." said Gracie. "Uhh earth to Gracie," said Deseree as she tapped Gracie on the head, " Zack left last week!" "No he didn't. He's been in Halloween Town posing as Jack." said Gracie trying to sound like a dective. "Not this crud again. Jack and Zack switched places and Jack didn't know about it. Now Zack is posing as Jack and he, somehow, made Sally love him and not Jack." said Melissa in an annoyed tone. "Yes those were my thoughts exactaly. How can we help?" questioned Gracie. "HELP! Girl, we can't help them!" yelled Kelsey. "And why not?" asked Gracie in an angry tone. "Hello! Did you forget about the shadows???. If we go to town they will catch us and we'll be in jail along with Ann, Kim, and Michael." yelled Deseree. "No you won't. We have costumes of the shadows so that you all will blend in the other shadows." said Vince in a reashuring(SP) tone. "Oh yea Ann and Kim's plan. I almost forgot." said Gracie. "Hey Sherlock! How will we get Ann, Kim, and Michael out of jail?" questioned Melissa. "Santa do you know where Zack's pirate ship is?" asked Gracie in a hopeful tone. "Yes." said Santa. "What does Zack's ship have to do with all this?" asked Melissa in a confused tone. "I bet that Ann, Kim, and Michael are being held captive there. Plus if I was right about Jack and Zack switicing places then we will find Jack on Zack's ship also." replied Gracie in a know-it-all tone. "Well then what are we doing here? Lets go and save them!!" yelled Vince. "Good idea." they all said in unison.

Then Santa put a finger by his nose and in a matter of seconds everyone that was in the room had found themselves on Gracie's roof. "Wow!! You can see the whole neighborhood from here!" said Melissa in an excited tone. "Quick! Put these on!" yelled Vince as he threw the girls the robes. "Eww!! This is the tackiest shade of black I've ever seen!!!" said Kelsey in an disgusted tone. "Oh stop complaining and put the robe on you little Clare Brewster wanna-be." said Gracie in an annoyed tone as she put her robe on over her outfit. "Clare Brewster? Oh that bully from the Beetlejuice tv show!" said Deseree as she put her robe on over her outfit. When the robes were on the girls put the hoods over their heads. You would acutally mistake them for acutal shadows.

"Hey wait a min! Didn't those shadow tingys fly?" asked Melissa in an confused tone. "Oh your right!! We're gonna stick out like sore thumbs if we walk. Santa do you have anything that can make us fly?" questioned Gracie in an worried tone. "You girls don't need it." said Santa in an ashuring tone. "Look down." said Vince in a nervious tone. The girls looked down and noticed that their feet weren't touching the ground! "We're flying!!" said Deseree in an excited tone. "More like levitating(SP). I wonder how they work?" questioned Gracie as she put her hood down, resulting in her falling on her butt. "Ouch. Ok they're hood activated. Not magical." said Gracie painfully as she put the hood over her head again, resulting in her floating upwards. "Huh?" asked Gracie looking around. "What is it?" questioned Melissa in a worried tone. "I thought I heard the sound of Abby's collar and tags." replied Gracie. "Your ears are playing tricks on you." said Deseree in a lets-just-get-out-of-here tone. Then Santa and Vince jumped in the front of the sleigh, Santa said the names of his reindeer and they were off with Gracie and her friends following behind. The girls did not get in the sleigh because they wanted to get the hang of flying.

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## 11 - Zack's Past

I decided to devote a chapter to Zack's past. Its a continuation of the bug story that Zack talked about in Chapter 3.

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Zack opened his eyes and looked around at the underwater wasteland. His crew was dead. "That stupid human boy and his bug friends ruined everything. Now me ship is ruined and me crew is dead!" yelled Zack. Even though he was underwater Zack could breathe and talk, for he was a skellington and could survive such harsh conditions. Then it became dark. Zack looked up and saw an anchor coming right at his head!

Zack jumped out of the way before the anchor could bonk him. After he caught his breath, Zack looked up again to see what dropped the anchor that almost killed him. It was a ship!

Without thinking Zack swam up to the surface and looked at the ship. Written in blood red paint on the ship were the words The Bloody Skull. "The Bloody Skull? Now thats a ship I'd like to be captain of!" thought Zack excitedly. Zack crawled like a spider onto the side of the ship and spyed on the crew on deck.

The captain was a human male. He had white hair, that was somewhat hidden by his black pirate hat, and fair skin. He wore navy blue englishman robes. He was walking around ordering his skellington crew like slaves. Kicking them whenever he felt like it. "Me thinks that this ship is in need of a new captain. And who better than myself?" thought Zack evilly.

Zack jumped onto the deck of the ship. "No need to be scared. I'm just going to take over this ship and free your crew of your wrath!" said Zack triumphly. The crew stopped scrubbing the floor and looked at Zack with saddness and hope in their hollow eye sockets. The captain laughed. "Well, well, well look at what we have here, a stowaway. SEND HIM TO THE BRIG!!" yelled the captain. At first the crew didn't resopnd. "THATS AN ORDER!! FOLLOW IT OR YOU ALL WILL WALK THE PLANK!!!" yelled the captain again. Then 2 heavy set skellingtons grabbed Zack and dragged him to the prison cells underneith the deck.

"We're terribly sorry." said the skellingtons as they walked away from Zack. Zack looked around his 2 person cell. The door was made of solid steel and had one window that had bars on it. "Hello? Who's there?" asked a voice that was a soft as a coo of a dove.

"Who's there?!?!" yelled Zack. There was no answer. "SHOW YOURSELF!!" Zack yelled again. "Hello." said the voice again in a happy tone. Then a girl walked up to Zack. She was a black skellington that had long brown hair and a red pirate bandana on her head, she had piercing yellow eyes. She wore a black shirt, that a skull and cross bones on the front, she also wore black capri pants. "My name is Hally. Whats yours?" she questioned. "I am Captain Zack Skellington." said Zack. "Captain? Whats a captain, like you, doing in the brig?" questioned Hally in a confusing tone. "I will be captain when I get out of here and get rid of the current captain." said Zack. "Oh you mean Captain Jake." said Hally sadly. "You know him?" questioned Zack. "Everyone knows him. He's the one who threw me in here." replied Hally starting to cry. Then Zack put a comforting arm on her shoulder. "What happened?" questioned Zack whipping away a tear from Hally's face. "I rather not talk about it." replied Hally looking up at Zack. "I understand." said Zack in an understanding tone.

That night Zack could not sleep. He couldn't stop thinking about Hally. He looked at the bed across from him. Hally was sleeping like the dead. "I want to know more about her but she doesn't trust me. I can see it in her eyes. I'll gain her trust." thought Zack. With that thought in his head Zack fell asleep.

Zack woke up, yawned, and stretched. "Well, look at who finally decided to wake up." said Hally. Hally was standing up looking out of the barred window. Zack gave a bone chilling laugh. "So when's breakfast?" he asked. "The captain feels that prisoners should not eat. But as skellingtons we don't need food, we just like it. I think I was a human when I was first locked up though." said Hally with a giggle. "You were a human when he locked you up?" questioned Zack surprisingly. "No, it was a joke. I was a skellington ever since I was dragged onto this ship." Hally sorrowfully said. Zack got up from the bed and walked up behind Hally. "Want to talk about it?" questioned Zack hoping to find out more about his mysterious prison cell mate. "No. I don't." replied Hally in an annoyed tone. "Oh come on. A fine lass like yourself should not have to keep such burden locked up inside. You'll feel better anyway." said Zack in a promising tone. "Well. Ok but I must warn you. Its very sad.

"I don't remember exactly when this all happened. But I know it happened many years ago. It all happened back when I was a human. I was to be wed by sea. But some human pirates came onboard and ruined everything!! Then they tied some rocks on me and threw me overboard because I refused to go out with the captain. I sank to the bottom instantly. Then after what felt like years of waiting under the ocean, an anchor dragged me to the surface and onto a ship. It was this ship. I found out that because of the years of isolation and no food have killed the human me, but my skellington was still alive. I was taken out of my wedding clothes and was given the clothes I'm wearing today. I was given a job at scrubbing floors like the other skellingtons. Then one day the captain noticed that I missed a spot and threw me in here. That was one month ago yesterday." said Hally, tears were starting to form in her yellow eyes.

"So, he threw you in here because you missed a spot. There must be more to it." said Zack in an angry tone. "There is, sorta. The captain believes that having a woman aboard a pirate ship is bad luck. I've also been known to yell at him for the way he treats us skellingtons. He hates us! But he likes bossing us skellingtons around thats why he's the blasted captain!" Hally yelled, the tears starting to fall. Then Zack sat on his bed and motioned Hally over to his side with his hand. Hally sat down next to Zack and started to sob on his shoulder. "Don't worry Hally. We'll get out of here and show this captain what for." said Zack triumphly, placing a comforting arm around her waist. "Really?" questioned Hally looking up at Zack. "You can bet the ships gold on it." said Zack triumphly.

"Hey Zack?" questioned Hally looking at Zack from her usual spot at the window. "Yes." replied Zack standing up from his bed and walked up next to Hally and put an arm around her. Zack and Hally have been locked up for one month. Over that month they have become great friends, talking about their pasts. Hally loved the stories Zack told of Halloween Town. "I just wanted to ask you something." said Hally looking at Zack. "Ask away my friend." said Zack in a happy tone. "Why are you here? Shouldn't you be in Halloween Town being a king?" questioned Hally. "Well, yes but I never wanted to be king." replied Zack. "Why?" questioned Hally. "Too much work, responsibility, and publicity," replied Zack "And besides I rather be a pirate any day. Just think, if I wasn't a pirate then you would be all alone." "I know but maybe you should go back to town and try to be king," said Hally "Just try it for a week or so." "Hm...me pumpkin king and you pumpkin queen. I like the sound of that. Remind me about this when we get out of this blasted place," said Zack in a loving tone "But seriously. What about my brother? If he's still the same old Jack I shared a house with then he must love the job as pumpkin king." "What about being a pirate? Won't your brother like that?" questioned Hally. "I don't know." replied Zack. "You don't have to ask. You just have to zap him here with that bat thingy you told me about." said Hally in a thoughtful tone. "You have a point there."

Then they heard gunpowder shots on the deck. "It sounds like we're under attack!" yelled Zack. The sounds of yelling, gunpowder, and sword clanging rang in the air. The wood that was above Zack and Hally sat starting to weaken. Zack and Hally huddled together in fear on Zack's bed. Then they heard a parrot by the window. "Parlay?" questioned Zack referring to his parrot. Zack got up and looked out of the

window and saw his skellington parrot. "Don't worry Hally we're going to be out of here in no time. Parlay pick the lock with your beak!" ordered Zack. Parlay did what his master told him to do and in a matter of seconds the door oppened. Zack took Hally by the hand and led her out of the prizon.

When they got to the deck, Zack and Hally saw the crew fighting the human pirate invaders. Zack drew out his sword. "Hally hide!" yelled Zack. Hally and Parlay hid behind some barrels and watched Zack start to fight the invaders. Then 2 human pirates came behind them and placed a gag in Hally's mouth. "ZACK!" cried Hally in a muffled tone. Zack did not hear her. After he was done with the invaders, Zack ran up to Captain Jake. "So you escaped," said Jake "When this is done you are going back into that cell." Then Captain Jake's crew ran up to Jake and tied some rocks on him and they were about to throw him overboard when Zack walked up to Jake and took off Jake's pirate hat and put it on his head. "All to shore who's going to shore." said Zack triumphly. Then they threw him overboard with the other bodies. "3 cheers for our new captain!!" yelled the first mate. Cheers of happiness rang in the air. But they were stopped when Parlay started squaking. "HALLY!" yelled Zack as he ran to the barrels. "Looking for this?" questioned 2 human pirates. Standing in front of them was Hally all tied up and a gag in her mouth. Then the crew ran up to them and started attacking the humans. But the humans slipped away with Hally.

Zack saw them running away with Hally. They were taking her to their ship, which was right next to The Bloody Skull. Zack ran onboard and drew his sword. "Now, now. You don't want to hurt the lass don't you?" questioned the human. He was using Hally as a sheild. Zack put his sword away. Then the other human drew his gun and shot Zack in the leg!

The humans, literaly, threw Zack back on his ship and sailed away with Hally. "We're sorry Captain Zack." said the first mate in a sorrow tone. "From this day forth I shall hate humans whith every whim of my being!!!" yelled Zack.

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## 12 - Escape

"Ok do we all remember the plan?" questioned Gracie to her friends. They have just landed in the holiday trees. "Could you repeat the plan?" questioned Melissa. "Don't tell me you forgot already!! Fine I'll explain the plan again. See we will take Vince to Zack saying we caught him and would like to take him to jail. Then Zack will, somehow, take us to his pirate ship so that we can put Vince in jail. When he leaves we will unlock the cell that Ann, Kim, and Michael are in using one of Kel's credit cards. Then we will go out on deck, find Jack, and call out to Santa, who will be waiting a few miles away from the ship on his sleigh. And thats all I have so far." said Gracie in an annoyed tone. "Wait, why would Zack put them on his old ship?" questioned Deseree. "For convience and so that no one will hear them screaming for help." replied Gracie. "Why would we need one of my credit cards?" questioned Kelsey. "Credit cards can be used to pick locks. I read that in a Nancy Drew book." replied Gracie. "Why don't we just fly to the ship with Santa?" questioned Melissa. "Because the crew will notice if we just walk on deck we want to get on the ship in the sneekest way possible and that is through the jail cells." said Gracie in an annoyed tone. "Well then. I guess I better get going so that I'll be at the ship on time." said Santa. Then Santa called all his reindeer and they were off.

"Gracie you need to disguise your voice." said Vince in a reminding tone. Gracie then cleared her throat. "How's this?" questioned Gracie her voice was in a harsh whisper. "You sound like Golum from Lord of the Rings." said Melissa in a grossed-out tone. "Lets hope he doesn't notice." said Kelsey in a timid tone. Then they opened the door to Halloween Town and were sucked in.

When they arrived at town there was complete scilence. No ravens squawking. No crows. Nothing. "Its..its..so..bare." said Deseree in a surprised tone. "Everyone's afraid of the shadows so they hide inside." Vince told the girls. "I have a haunch that the shadows hide out in the bacement of your house, Vince." said Gracie starting to sound like a dective. Then the girls ran (Well flew, they have the hoods over their heads) to the bacement of Jack's house.

"Zack. We have captured Vince." said Gracie in a harsh tone. "Ah excellent. You'll be joining your father and sibilngs very soon," said Zack in a happy tone. "By the way. What's wrong with your voice?" "Uhh...I have a bad cough see (cough) (cough)." said Gracie coughing. Then Zack gave Gracie a suspicious look. "You should get some water for that." said Zack sounding like a doctor. "I'll do that after I put Vince away." said Gracie. Then Zack pressed a button on the bowtie and Gracie, her friends, and Vince were gone.

"Zack! Zack!" yelled some shadows running to their master. "We're terribly sorry but we could not locate Vince." said the shadow in a dissapoited tone. "What do you mean? Some shadows just brought Vince to me and I just zaped them away." said Zack in a confused tone. "WAIT A MINUTE!! Those shadows weren't shadows. Those shadows were those blasted humans in disguise!!" yelled Zack at the top of his lungs "Well I'll show them! No one messes with Captain Zack Skellington! No one!!"

"Did he just?" questioned Melissa. "Zap us with..." started Deseree. "The bat bowtie?" questioned Kelsey. "It appears so. But how did he do it?" questioned Gracie in a thoughtful tone. "That doesn't matter. Can we just please save my family?" questioned Vince in an annoyed tone. "Wow. Look who's brave." said Melissa in a surprised tone. "But he has a point." said Deseree in a reminding tone. "Right. Ann, Kim, and Michael are in here somewhere and we gotta free them." said Kelsey matter of factly. The girls lowered their hoods so that they can walk. They looked inside the little barred windows of the cells hoping to find their friends.

"Ok we're at the last one. Please let them be in here." said Gracie in a begging tone. Gracie looked

inside. "Ann, Kim, Michael! Are you in here?!" called Gracie. "GRACIE!!!" yelled Ann. "YOU FOUND US!!!" yelled Kim. "Thanks to Vince." said Melissa "if it weren't for him we wouldn't of ever know about Halloween Town." "Alrigh Vince. I knew you could do it." said Michael in a congratulating(SP) tone. "Are you girls ok?" questioned Jack. "Yea we're ok Jack. Wait a min. JACK YOUR IN HERE TOO?!?" yelled Deseree. "You...you...look like Zack." said Kelsey. "Don't worry. We'll have you out of here faster than you can say Beetlejuice 3 times. Kel credit card please." said Gracie in a promising tone. Kelsey then took off her shadow outfit and reached into her pocket of her jeans and gave Gracie a credit card. "Thank you." said Gracie as she grabbed the credit card from Kelsey. Gracie then tried to swipe the card in the door but she had no luck. The door was still locked.

"Ok we're boned." said Kelsey in a sorrow tone when Gracie gave her credit card back. Kelsey put the credit card back in her jean pocket and put her shadow costume back on. "Maybe not," Gracie then took off her shadow costume and took out a box from the pocket on her hoodie. "Remember a few years back when I joined the Nancy Drew fan club?" questioned Gracie hoping her friends would remember. "What about it?" questioned Deseree. "Well when you joined the club you got (1: a years supply of Nancy Drew books, (2: a note from the author, and (3: a Nancy Drew dective kit." said Gracie in a reminding tone as she showed them the box. "Your point?" questioned Melissa. "The kit contains a notebook, a portable flashlight, a codebreaker book, and an instrument used to pick locks!" said Gracie in an excited tone. She took out the instrument and put the box back in her pocket.

"Your joking right?" questioned Kelsey in a false happy tone. "No, I'm as serious as heck." snapped Gracie. "Girl, that stuff doesn't work lets just look for the keys to the cell." Deseree said. "The keys flew away." said Jack in a sorrow tone. "See, we have to use my pick-lock thingy. Besides I tried it on all of our lockers at school and it works like a charm." said Gracie in a happy tone. "Thats where my history book went." said Melissa in an angry tone. "Uhhhhh...don't worry guys I'll get you out in a jiffy." said Gracie quickly changing the subject.

Gracie then put the instrument in the lock and moved it around, listening for a click that would tell her the door was open. "This is pointless." said Deseree in a bored tone. "Shhh I need complete concentration(SP) and quietness." said Gracie in an annoyed tone. Then they heard a click and the door was open!

"I told you this thing works like a charm." said Gracie in a I-told-you-so tone of voice. Gracie then put the pick-lock instrument away and put her shadow outfit on over her original outfit. "Thank you girls so much for getting us out of that jail." said Jack in a happy tone. "Hey Jack I like the pirate look. Any chance of you keeping it?" asked Kelsey in a joking tone. "No." said Jack in an annoyed tone.

"So how do we get out of here?" questioned Gracie. "Down the hall." said Jack in know-it-all tone. Then they ran down the hall and stopped at a dead end. "Ok it looks like the only way out is," then Gracie looked up and saw a closed door "out that door." "But its so high up. Not even daddy can reach that." said Ann in a worried tone. Ann did have a point. The door looked a good mile and a half up from where they were standing and there was no ladder anywhere in sight. "Ok now its my turn to have an idea." said Melissa in a happy tone "we're gonna fly out of here." "Fly?" questioned Jack in a confused tone. "Yea." said Deseree in a happy tone. "See, these shadow costumes make us fly." said Kelsey demonstrating by putting her hood over head, resulting in her floating upwards.

"THATS AMAZING!!!" Jack said in a surprized and shocked tone. "Their hood activated. When the hoods are..." Gracie started to explain but was interrupted. "Magic. Got it. Lets just get out of here." said Michael in a bored tone. "But we can't fly out of here like Gracie and her friends." said Kim. "Hitch a ride with us." said Kelsey in a happy tone. Then Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince grabbed onto Melissa, Kelsey, and Deseree. Gracie grabbed Jack's hand and took flight.

Gracie and her friends busted out the door and landed, gracefully, on the deck of the ship. "Is everyone ok?" questioned Gracie in a worried tone as she let go of Jack's hand. Everyone nodded their heads,

meaning they were ok. "Good. Lets get outta here!" yelled Melissa.

The group walked further out on deck when all of a sudden they saw some skellington pirates coming their way! "I see Zack has a welcoming committee(SP)." said Kelsey in a worried tone. Then the pirates drew their swords. "A very sharp welcoming committee(SP)." said Deseree in a worried tone. "Hey Jack you wouldn't happen to have some swords for us. Would ya?" questioned Gracie in a worried-hopeful tone. "No I only have one sword. But I know where some other swords are!" said Jack in an excited tone. "Well go get 'em!" yelled Melissa. "I'm taking Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince with me. This fight may prove to be a bit too violent for them." said Jack. "You do that." said Gracie.

Then Jack took his kids into the captain's quarters. He remembered seeing some swords in that room before he was locked up. He quickly grabbed 4 swords. "But dad we wanna see the fight." the kids cried in unison. "Oh no. Its too violent. Now stay in here and don't touch anything sharp, pointy, or shiny." said Jack as he walked out of the room.

Back outside Gracie and her friends were doing a great job of dodging sword moves. "I hope Jack hurries up!" yelled Melissa. "Just give him a min maybe 2 and he'll be here." said Gracie as she ducked under a sword.

Then Jack appeared and tossed the swords to his friends. The girls caught the swords without getting hurt. "Now it looks like we have a chance." said Deseree in a hopeful tone. The sounds of sword clashing rang in the air. After what felt like hours the pirate crew layed on the deck of the ship, defeated and dead. "Glad thats over." said Kelsey in a relieved tone dropping her sword on the ground.

Then Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince came out on deck, stepping over the skellingtons as they got closer to their father. "We saw the whole fight from a window inside the captain's room. You all were awesome!!" said Ann in an excited tone. "Yea it was very exciting." said Kim in an excited tone. "Where did you learn all those sword movements?" questioned Michael. "You wern't supposed to watch that fight." said Jack in an angry tone. "Well I didn't watch the fight." said Vince in a I'm-so-perfect tone of voice. "You were too busy looking at the swords." said Kim looking angerly at her brother. "STOP FIGHTING!" yelled Jack. "Now lets just get outta here before Zack decides to burn down Halloween Town!" said Gracie in an angry tone. "Good point." said Gracie's friends in unison.

Then the group walked to the edge of the ship and called Santa's name. "Just give him a min maybe 2 and he'll be here." said Gracie in a hopeful tone. "Wait until Zack finds out what happened to his crew." said Melissa laughing. Everyone was laughing except for Jack. Gracie looked at her skeletal friend who was staring out into the ocean. "Don't worry, Jack. We'll get Sally back to normal and we will get you your rightful position as pumpkin king," said Gracie in a promising tone as she put a hand on Jack's shoulder "I bet my so-called-life on it." They both laughed. Gracie's laughter was cut short when she thought she heard footsteps. But how? All her friends were next to her. Gracie turned around and saw the first mate coming at them with a sword in his hands and it was aimed for Jack!

Gracie jumped on Jack to get him out of the way of the pirate and landed on the floor next to Jack. "Are you ok?!" Gracie questioned in a very worried tone. "Yes I'm fine. Thanks for saving me." Jack replied. Then Gracie got up and helped Jack to his feet. She turned around and saw the first mate trying to get his sword out of the edge of the ship she also saw her other friends hiding behind some barrels. Gracie sighed a breath of relief and walked over to the first mate. "Well, that was a great trick. Trying to kill one of my best friends. But tell me, after killing Jack what were you planin to do?" questioned Gracie in a humorful tone. The first mate muttered something having to do with the name Hally but Gracie didn't hear him. "I mean you have no weapon so what are you gonna do?" she said. The first mate walked up to Jack and pushed him overboard!!!

Gracie ran to where the first mate pushed Jack and tried to catch him but she was too late. Jack was too far down for Gracie's arms to reach. Gracie looked at the first mate, who had a triumphant smile on his face, she had fire burning in her eyes.

Gracie's mind was in a blur, the next thing she saw was the severed body of the first mate falling overboard on the other side of the ship and disappearing under the ocean.

Gracie turned around and started to put her hood over her head "Cover me I'm going after Jack." said Gracie in a very serious tone. Her friends got up from their hiding place and looked at her through their tears. "Girl are you insane?!" yelled Deseree. "YES! Jack is probably still alive and I'm gonna save him from a watery grave!" Gracie yelled back in a very serious tone. "He had too much of a head start. By the time you actually catch up to him he'd be dead." said Melissa trying to calm Gracie. Gracie took off her hood and looked at Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince. They were crying bucketfuls. "Just face it. He's dead." said Kelsey trying to hold back tears. They all were trying to hold back tears but they were unsuccessful. "Get off of me!!" yelled a voice that sounded like Jack.

"I must be going insane. I swear I just heard Jack's voice!" said Gracie in a surprized tone. "If your going insane then your takin us with ya because we just heard Jack too." everyone else said in unison. "Your not going insane!" said a low, cheery voice in a joking tone. Everyone turned around and they saw Santa's sleigh. "Santa!" yelled everyone except Gracie. Gracie walked up to the sleigh and looked inside. Then Jack stood up and looked at Gracie.

"JACK!" yelled Gracie in a overjoyed tone. She jumped onto the sleigh and gave Jack a bone-crushing hug, "YOUR ALIVE!!!" "Nice to see you too, Gracie, but could you please let go before my bones break?" questioned Jack trying to breathe. Then Gracie felt something furry brush up by her leg. She let go of Jack and looked down and saw Abby. Then Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince jumped onto the sleigh and hugged their father. "Don't ever scare us like that again Daddy!" they said in unison.

"Abby? How'd you get here?" questioned Gracie. "Abby's here!" yelled her friends in unison, shock in their voice. "She must of been in the family room when I got you to the roof." said Santa. "I guess I owe my life to Abby." said Jack sitting down, his kids at his side. "Why? What happened?" questioned Melissa. "Well, I was on my way to pick you all up when I saw Jack fall. I tried to catch him in the sleigh, but I missed. Then Abby came out of nowhere and grabbed Jack by the collar of his shirt and pulled him into the sleigh." said Santa. "I guess Abby really missed me because she couldn't stop licking my face." said Jack jokingly. Gracie and her friends laughed at the joke. "I'm so glad your alive Jack." said Gracie when the laughter died down. "Dad, you should of seen Gracie! She killed the first mate." said the kids in unison. "I did?" questioned Gracie. "You don't remember?" questioned Deseree. "My mind was a big blur during the whole thing." said Gracie. "Well I don't blame ya. We all were devisated by what happened to Jack but you took your rage out on the first mate." said Kelsey in a sad tone. "Can someone tell me what happened?" questioned Gracie.

"Sure. See Jack had just fell and you tried to catch him. But you didn't. Then you looked at the first mate and I swear that you had fire in your eyes. Then you started to punch the first mate making him fall to the ground. Then you started to kick him in the stomach. Then you took off his head and threw it overboard. Then you threw the body in after it. I swear, Gracie you scared us to, like, bits." said Deseree in a oh-my-god tone of voice. "I had fire in my eyes?" questioned Gracie in a confused tone, "And I threw him overboard? I...I I don't know what to say." "And all that just because he pushed me off the ship. Gracie I can't believe you would do such a thing." said Jack in a shocked tone. "We didn't know either." said the kids in unison. "If Gracie fights Zack like she just did now then we'd actually have a chance." said Kelsey. "Oh believe me Kel. Zack has it coming, big time. When I see that no good excuse for a skellington I will show no mercy whatsoever!" said Gracie in an angry tone, "How could he do this to us? Banishing myself and my friends, putting Jack in jail, brainwashing Sally, and taking Jack's place as Pumpkin King. Whatever happenes to him after all this is too good for him!" "Amen to that!" said Melissa in a happy tone. Then they flew away from the ship. Gracie took one look back. "The Bloody Skull," she read to herself, "Good riddence!" then she left to catch up with her friends

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## 13 - A New Shadow

"Oomph!" Gracie landed on her butt on the hard ground that the holiday trees were planted on. "I guess I'm still getting the hang of flying." she said with a giggle. Then Jack walked up to her and extended his arm out. "Need some help?" questioned Jack. Gracie grabbed it and Jack helped her to her feet. Then they walked to Santa's sleigh. "This is as far as I'm going," said Santa "I wish you all the best of luck because believe it or not I don't want Halloween Town to fall to the ground." "Thank you Santa for all your help." said Gracie in a happy tone while shaking Santa's hand. "We don't know what we'd do without ya Santa." said Melissa in a happy tone. "If you need help with anything please don't hesitate to ask." said Deseree in a happy tone. Then Santa let out a little giggle. "Gracie, Melissa, Kelsey, Deseree expect something special in your stockings this year." said Santa in a happy tone. "It better not be socks." whispered Kelsey when Santa was out of earshot.

"So what are we gonna do with Abby?" questioned Ann. Kim was holding Abby in her hands. "If they see Abby they'll know Gracie and her friends are back and the shadows will capture us again." said Kim in a worried tone. "Maybe we should try sending her home." said Michael in a thoughtful tone. "We can't. Those shadows stole our bracelets." Gracie and her friends cried out in unison. "Maybe we should just let her play with Zero and Percy." said Vince (Percy is the name of Sally's cat) When hearing Zero and Percy's names Abby's ears perked up and her tail started to wag. Then Kim put Abby down on the ground and Abby ran to the pumpkin tree. "I see she missed her friends." said Jack in a joking tone. "Ok we know how we're gonna hide Abby but what about Jack?" questioned Melissa. "What do you mean?" questioned Jack in a confused tone. "Well the citizens think Zack left last week. If they see you dressed like...like...that then they will start to get suspicious." said Gracie pointing to Jack's outfit. "I see your point." said Jack in an understanding tone. "Maybe we can make a bodyguard circle around Jack so no one sees him." said Deseree in a hopeful tone. "That may work but lets see if we can think of something different first." said Gracie in a thoughtful tone. Then Abby started to bark madly. "What is it girl?" questioned Kelsey petting Abby. Then the group looked in the direction that Abby was barking at and looking right back at them was a shadow!

"Oh no! It saw us in our human form! We're boned!" yelled Deseree at the top of her lungs. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE YOU STUPID HUMANS?!" yelled the shadow. "No one calls my friends stupid!" yelled Vince. Then Vince ran behind the shadow, ignoring the desperate cries from his friends and family telling him to come back, and pulled off the robe. The shadow was a black skellington. Then the skellington turned to ash and was blown away by the oncoming wind.

"What in heck just happened?" questioned Gracie in a confused tone. "He just pulled his robe and he turned to ash." said Melissa in a confused tone. "Thats how you defeat the shadows." said Kim. "Thats how we got the costumes Gracie and her friends are wearing." said Ann. "So your tellin us that these outfits were worn by skellingtons?" questioned Deseree in disgusted tone. "Yup." said Michael in a happy tone. "Eww gross!" yelled Kelsey in a disgusted tone. "Oh shut up Kel." said Gracie in an annoyed tone. Then Vince brought the robe, worn by the shadow, to his dad. "Here daddy put this on." said Vince giving Jack the robe. "Oh I get it. Jack can put on the shadow costume so that he will blend in with us. Good idea Vince." said Gracie in a happy tone. Then Jack put the shadow costume on over his outfit. "How does this fly again?" he questioned. "You just put the hood over your head." said Melissa. Then Jack put the hood over his head and tried to fly. But he flew straight into a tree. "Ouch!" yelled Jack taking off the hood and walking back to his friends. "I see we're gonna have a big prob here." said Deseree in a worried tone.

"Well we don't have time to teach him how to fly." said Kelsey in a dramatic tone. "We'll just let him hang on to one of us." said Melissa in a thoughtful tone. "Now lets go to Halloween Town before things get worse." said Gracie in a serious tone. Then she opened the door to Halloween Town and they all were swooped into the tree.

"What happened here? This isn't the Halloween Town I remember." said Jack in a shocked tone as he looked around. "Nothing really changed its just that its so bare." explained Deseree. "Its like Specter...the second time Edward Bloom arrived." said Gracie in a sad tone. "Is this really the time to compare Tim Burton and what has happened to Halloween Town?" questioned Melissa in an angry tone. Gracie sighed and let Abby down on the ground. "Now Abby I want you to go to Zero's doghouse grave and wait for us to go after you." said Gracie. Then Abby ran to the direction of Zero's doghouse. "Now Jack here is some advise. Don't do anything...stupid." said Gracie looking at Jack. "What makes you think I'd do something stupid?" questioned Jack in an angry tone. "Honestly, it's because your honest, and you never know when honest people might do something incredibly...stupid. You now have to act like a shadow. Meaning you only live to serve your master. In this case its Zack. So I'd also advise you to keep quiet and let me do all the talking." explained Gracie. "Do you even have a plan?" questioned Jack. "Uh...no but I'll...uh...you know what when we see Zack just play along with me." said Gracie in a nervous tone. "Thats it we're doomed." said Kelsey in a timid tone. "No we're not. Remember I took classes on improv at the old fire house. I'm an expert on coming up with things on the spot." said Gracie in a happy tone. "Lets hope so." said the kids in unison.

The group flew into town and were on their way to Jack's house. "Hey look its the Mayor." whispered Kelsey. The group looked around and they saw the Mayor. "Maybe if we tell the Mayor the situation he will help us." Jack whispered in a hopeful tone. Then Jack started to fly on his own to the Mayor but was stopped by Gracie. "Think again Boneman. This is what I ment by not doing anything stupid. That was something stupid. Though you may not see it this place is swarming with shadows. If they see you talking to the Mayor they will catch us and put us all in jail." said Gracie in a serious tone. Then they headed back towards the group.

Then they went into Jack's house and went to the bacement. "Just leave it to me and everything will be fine." whispered Gracie. "How come I have a feeling that everything won't be fine?" questioned Jack whispering to Deseree. Gracie then cleared her throat. "Zack," she said in a harsh whisper, "The prizoners have escaped." "I can see why." said Zack coming into view, he still looked like Jack, he walked up to Gracie, "You, Gracie and your little human friends have helped them get out." Then Zack took off Gracie's hood. "How'd you know it was me?" questioned Gracie in a nervous tone. "I have my ways. I'm not as stupid as my brother said I was." said Zack in a mysterious tone. "Speaking of Jack." said Melissa in a serious tone, pulling down her hood. "Take a look at this." said Deseree, she too had her hood down and so did Kelsey. Then Kelsey pulled down Jack's hood revealing to Zack that his brother was standing in front of him. "Uhh...hi...Jack" said Zack in a nervous tone. "Don't 'Hi Jack' him." said Gracie in an angry tone. "Don't think your gonna get away easily with all this." said Melissa in an angry tone. "Yea." said Deseree in an angry tone. "You'll pay you good for nothing pile of..." started Kelsey in an angry tone. "I think I can take it over from here, girls. Thank you." said Jack interrupting Kelsey. Then Jack started to walk angerly towards his brother. "How can you do this to me? Stealing my crown, putting me on that ship, banishing my friends, brainwashing my wife..." started Jack. "Speaking of which," Zack interrupted, "Sally will you please come in here?"

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## 14 - Breaking a Trance

Then Sally walked into the room. "Sally!" yelled Jack and ran to his wife and hugged her, "Are you ok? Did Zack hurt you?" But instead of replying to Jack's questions, Sally slapped Jack in the face! Jack backed away, dumbfounded. "Don't touch me!" Sally yelled angrily. "Sally its me Jack, your husband." said Jack in a loving tone. "Your not my husband! I've always loved Zack, never you Jack!" Sally yelled angrily. Then Gracie walked up to Jack. "Remember she's been brainwashed, she doesn't mean any of this." said Gracie in a calm tone. "I know but how are we going to get the real Sally back?" questioned Jack in a worried tone. "Maybe if we just remind her of who she really is then she will go back to normal." said Melissa in a reashuring tone. "But what if that doesn't work?" questioned Kelsey in a worried tone. "Then we would have to go drastic." said Deseree in a serious tone.

Then Zack walked up to Sally. "You see dear brother that Sally now belongs to me. And there is nothing you can do about it." he said as he put an arm around Sally. "But why Zack? Why did you brainwash Sally? You didn't even like her. You always called her a worthless ragdoll." questioned Jack in a hurt tone. "Zack never called me a worthless ragdoll, you always called me that!" yelled Sally angrily at the top of her lungs. "She won't listen to you. She is under my control." Zack explained. "But you hated Sally." Gracie explained. Then Ann tugged on Gracie's robe. Gracie got to her knees so that she can see eye to eye socket with them. "Zack brainwashed Mom because he didn't want Sally to try and stop him." explained Kim. "And besides, the citizens would notice something if our mom and dad started fighting." said Michael. "Oh I get it now. Zack is using Sally as a pawn in all this." Gracie said in an understanding tone.

Then Zack drew Sally closer. He was about to kiss her! Jack, in all his rage, ran up to his brother and punched him in the face before his lips can touch Sally's! "Stay away from my wife!" yelled Jack angrily. "So this is how you want to settle this. Ok fine. Bring it on brother!" yelled Zack. Then Jack and Zack started fistfighting and wrestling each other to the ground. "Go Jack!" cheered Gracie. "Don't be a fool. Zack is going to win this and you stupid humans won't step foot in Halloween Town ever again!" said Sally in an angry tone. Then Gracie grabbed Sally by the arm and took her away from the fight so that she wouldn't get hurt.

"Get your bloody paws off me!!" yelled Sally as she got her arm free from Gracie's grip. "Sally this isn't like you. We're your friends please listen." said Melissa in a begging tone. "Why would I listen to you freeks? You were never my friends." snapped Sally in responce. "Yes we were your friends! Sally please listen! We were bridesmaids in your wedding with Jack." yelled Kelsey hoping that would make Sally remember. "I never married Jack! I married Zack, the true pumkin king!" yelled Sally the anger rising in her voice. "NO YOU DIDN'T! DON'T YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING?" Deseree yelled at the top of her lungs. "You love JACK, NOT Zack. You risked your life for Jack during the Christmas insident.

Remember?" questioned Gracie in a hopeful tone. "I did not save Jack on that day. I saved Zack." said Sally in an angry tone. "This is hopeless! Whatever Zack did to have Sally forget he did a good job of doing it." said Melissa in a stressed tone. Then Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince walked up to Sally.

"Mommy please listen to Gracie and her friends." said Kim in a sad tone. "Please, we want you to get back to normal." said Michael in a sad tone. "We want you to love Daddy again." said Ann in a sad tone. "Why, I have always loved your father. And I will always love Zack." said Sally in a loving motherly tone. "Oh great! Its getting worse!" said Deseree. "Now she thinks Zack is the true father of Ann, Kim, Michael, and Vince." said Kelsey.

Back at the fight it looked like Jack was winning. "I don't get it. Of all the ghouls in Halloween Town you

had to choose Sally as yours. Why?" questioned Zack dodging some of Jack's punches. "Sally means everything to me. I love her with my dear heart. And you, Zack, shall pay for what you have done to her!" yelled Jack in an angry tone throwing more punches at Zack. "She's just a worthless ragdoll." said Zack in an evil tone. "NO SHE ISN'T" yelled Jack at the top of his lungs. Then Jack threw one final punch at Zack and it knocked him to the ground, defeated.

Sally moaned a little and rubbed her eyes. "Jack?" she questioned in a soft tone. She looked at Jack and ran into his arms. "I'm so sorry. I should of kno..." started Sally in between sobs. "Its ok Sally. I'm here now and thats all that matters." said Jack in a loving tone, he was rubbing her back calming her down while she was sobbing on his shoulder.

"Well Zack," said Gracie "It looks like your plan is done for." "Thats what you think." said Zack in an evil tone.

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