

TRICK? OR TREAT?

By

Linda Hullinger

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- HALLOWEEN NIGHT

Even though ANNA BLAKE (20s) stands by the window peeking out the curtain, fully clad in a witch costume, face painted green, long sharp fingernails, and a pointed hat, a visitor would never know by the lack of decorations in her drab apartment that it was October 31st. Save one small wickedly carved TURNIP.

A KNOCK at the door startles her. She releases the curtain. Recoils.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Trick or treat!

Frozen in fear, Anna waits. Listens.

Eyes the clock on the wall. Nine o'clock.

Wrinkles her brow in confusion. Too late for trick or treaters.

Gaze goes back to the door. Anxiously awaits another startling knock.

Silence.

Tilts her head toward the door as she hears

Footsteps walking away.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Anna sits on the sofa. Still in costume. Disappointed. JACK, her husband still hasn't gotten home.

Her gaze seeks out the time once again. Ten sixteen.

She pulls off the dollar store sharp fingernails one by one. Drops them into her lap.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM -- LATER

Standing in front of the mirror, she gingerly wipes off the green makeup from her face.

Winces when she reveals the deep purple bruise marks around her right eye. Sighs. Takes in her reflection. A mixture of sadness and shame.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Anna sits on the sofa, no longer in costume. Just a long tattered robe wrapped around her. Now only fear and dread paint her face.

Glances at the ticking clock. After midnight.

A POUNDING ON THE FRONT DOOR startles her.

JACK (O.S.)
Open the door, Anna! I forgot my
key!

Anna hesitates. Clearly she doesn't want to open the door. But, she knows not opening it would make matters worse.

When she pulls it open, JACK (30s) stands there, the front of his pants wet on one side. He's angry.

JACK (CONT'D)
(off her look) Idiot bumped into
me. Spilled beer all over my lap.

Anna recognizes his state of anger. Steps back.

He kicks a small PACKAGE on the doorstep through the doorway, then steps past it. It RATTLES.

JACK (CONT'D)
Your grandmother send you another
one of those pathetic handmade
decorations?

He gestures toward the carved turnip on the end table.

She shrugs. Closes the door behind him. Eyes the package on the floor but makes no move to retrieve it.

He looks down at his soaked pants, frustrated.

JACK (CONT'D)
Had to leave the casino because of
this. I was winning, too!

He peels his wet pants leg away from his skin.

ANNA
(softly to herself) Casino?

But, he hears her.

JACK
What? You thought we were going to
that stupid party?

ANNA
Jack, you told Haley we would go.

JACK
You. Know. I. Hate. Your. Friend.

Anna looks down.

JACK (CONT'D)
And that I hate Halloween! It was a
damn witch in a costume who bumped
into me.

Jack heads toward the bedroom. Turns back for a moment.

JACK (CONT'D)
Reminded me of your grandmother.

The way he says grandmother indicates his contempt for her.

Huffs. Heads back toward the bedroom.

Anna eyes the package. Debates if satisfying her curiosity is
worth another argument.

Decides it is. Picks it up and sets it on the coffee table.

Stares at her typewritten name on the top: ANNA BLAKE.

No return address.

Hoping to elicit no further confrontation from Jack, she
opens it as carefully and quietly as she can. But the
cardboard flaps scrape as she pulls them apart. She cringes.

Inside, a small carved PUMPKIN, with a chain connected to the
stump on top, SMILES up at her.

Anna takes it out and turns it around. The other side has a
SMASHED IN EYE and frightening SNEER.

Anna shudders.

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Well, what did the old hag send you
this time?

She reads the note that came with it.

ANNA

I'm not sure it's from Grandma.

She walks to the bedroom doorway. Holds it up for him to see.

ANNA (CONT'D)

There's a note inside that says
this jack-o-lantern gives three
wishes.

Jack, already undressed and sitting up in bed, scowls.

JACK

Well, this Jack wishes you would
disappear into the kitchen and get
me another beer.

Not wanting to fuel the fire, she turns around, heads toward
the kitchen, and whispers to herself.

ANNA

I wish you would just disappear.

The jack-o-lantern's chain RATTLES in her hand.

Stunned, she drops it to the floor.

The SMILING side is facing upward.

Cautiously, she picks it up and turns toward the bedroom.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Did you see that?

But, Jack is gone.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Anna scans the room. On edge with each step, she peeks into
the open bathroom door. Thinks he's playing a prank.

ANNA

Jack?

Silence.

A breeze WHISTLES through the open window. With trepidation,
she approaches it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Jack? Are you trying to scare me?

Silence.

Peers out the window. Only darkness.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Seriously, Jack. This isn't funny.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Anna still alone, sits on the edge of the sofa and stares at the pumpkin on the coffee table. Frightened. Unsure of what to do.

The clock on the wall appears to tick louder, beckoning her to heed its time: 12:42.

Sighs. Leans back against the sofa. Another long night of dreading his return.

ANNA
I wish I had the money to leave
before he comes back.

The jack-o-lantern's chain RATTLES. Jars her out of her sense of dread.

After a moment, an idea comes to her.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Opening Jack's wallet on the dresser, she discovers it's stuffed with one hundred dollar bills.

Amazed, she takes out the cash, eyes darting in fear of Jack's return, crams it into her robe pocket, and heads toward the living room.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

She sits back down on the edge of the sofa.

The jack-o-lantern on the coffee table faces her, SMILING side up.

She rereads the note aloud.

ANNA
However, the wishes will come
undone and be taken back if you
don't deliver the package to
someone else within eleven hours of
receiving it.

She picks up the jack-o-lantern.

Studies it. Puts it and the note back into the box.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I wish I knew who to give it to.

The jack-o-lantern's chain RATTLES inside the box as she closes the lid.

On the lid that previously read her name now reads: BELINDA MASON.

She blinks hard at the name change. Realizes unseen forces are behind this Halloween care package.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Belinda, who lives just around the corner?

The chain inside the box RATTLES again.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -- NIGHT

Anna, wearing jeans and a hooded jacket that shrouds her face, cautiously steps up to the porch. Places the package down.

Coming from inside the house, she hears shouting. Glass breaking.

She pounds on the door.

ANNA
Trick or treat!

Turns quickly and hurries away.

FADE OUT.