



11:30 Halloween night and Steve Perry pulled up to the very dark and deserted pumpkin patch in his Toyota Land Cruiser. When he came to a stop he looked out through the gloom to see if anyone else was here and in his own way he was hoping, hoping that some of his old band mates would show but with the reaction he got he really didn't expect them to be here but he could hope couldn't he?

Every year he comes here and every year he subjects himself to the ridicule that he gets from the other guys but he cannot help himself, just for that one chance to see the Great Pumpkin. The other guys think that he is crazy, that is nothing new so a few days before Halloween Steve starts making phone calls and leaving messages, and this time he called everybody.

He talked to Neal and to Jon personally and basically they told him to go and jump in the lake and Ross, Smitty he left messages on their machines and Ross returned his phone call and left hysterical laughter on his machine, okay, well fine then! Steve will be the lucky one when he sees the Great Pumpkin and this year he brought a camera and when I do see the Great Pumpkin they will be sorry and jealous! Yes, they will! Steve thinks to himself as he puts his coat on and his gloves and then he grabs his camera and his trusty flashlight.

As Steve gets out of his truck he hangs the camera around his neck and turns on the flashlight, it is darker out here than the inside of a cow, Steve thinks to himself. He carefully makes his way over to the barbwire fence and gingerly climbs over it. Being carefully not to step on any pumpkins, he makes his way to the center of the patch.

Steve gets to the center of the patch and looks around and then he sits down on a hay bale that just happens to be there and he begins his vigil. Steve is not sitting there long when he hears the sound of a car approaching and then he sees the headlights. As Steve watches he sees, the car pull up next to his and stop and all four doors open. Steve stands up and shines his flashlight in their direction.

“Who goes there?”

Steve asks in the direction of the sound of footsteps approaching.

“Who do you think? Were you expecting the FTLOSM Band maybe Perry?”

Steve hears Neal say from the darkness and as he watches, two flashlights come on.

“Hello guys! Barbwire!”

Ross says and at that moment Steve hears the ripping of material and a string of curse words and a loud ‘slap’ that echoed through the darkness.

“Hey! That hurt! I thought we were family here!” Jon says.

“Damn frigging barbwire!! Those were my good pants Cain!!”

Steve hears Neal say as he watches the flashlights bobbing closer to him. As they get closer, Steve sees that Neal is carrying one flashlight and Ross the other and Smitty and Cain are bringing up the rear. Steve stands in the middle of the patch with his arms crossed over his chest and rocking back and forth on his feet.

“Boo!”

Ross says as he puts the flashlight up underneath his chin and Steve laughs.

“Well I must say, this is quite a surprise! I can’t believe you guys showed up!”

Steve says as Neal plays the flashlight back and forth across the ground.

“I don’t know about anybody else but I was bored! After all the trick or treaters left...”

Neal said but could not finish because Steve interrupted him.

“Oh really! What did Amber dress up as this year?! It must be way passed her bedtime by now!!!”

Steve says as he doubles over with laughter and everybody but Neal is laughing.

“Hey! That’s not funny!! “

Neal says as he looks around at everybody.

“I know! She dressed up as Steve Augeri but half the neighborhood didn’t buy it and you went home early!!!”

Now this time Smitty and Steve were the only ones laughing.

“Perry!!” Neal says.

“Hey! I do have a first name you know!!”

Steve says as he points his flashlight at Neal and that moment there is a rustling in the woods to their right, everybody jumps, and Jon lets out a little cry as he grabs a hold of Smitty.

“What was that!?” Jon says.

“Why are we out here in the first place?!” Smitty asks.

“We are here to look for the elusive Great Pumpkin! Every Halloween night at the stroke of midnight, the Great Pumpkin comes forth and gives everybody gifts and since you, guys are here now I know that he will show! Come on we have to get ready!”

“You know Perry you have lost your marbles!!” Neal says.

“Yeah but I still have the reins Neal!! They are out in my truck if you want them back!!!”

Steve says as he laughs and everybody else covers his or her eyes and look at the ground.

“The Great Pumpkin? Neal you said that we were going for a ride!!” Smitty says.

“Well! We did, didn’t we! We drove from your house to here!”

Neal says as he points the flashlight at the ground.

“Ohhh Great Pumpkin! That’s heavy guys!” Jon says.

“Hello! The Great Pumpkin!”

Ross says. Steve moves the bale of hay out of the way and he motions for everybody to come closer.

“Okay everybody we have to sit in a circle and hold hands.” Steve says.

“Sit in a circle but, but the ground is cold and wet!”

Jon says as he looks at the ground.

“Jon! Don’t be such a baby!!”

Steve says to him and immediately Jon starts looking around and turning in a circle.

“What! Is John Waite here too!!!”

Neal, Ross, and Jon laugh as the two Steve’s shake their heads and look at the ground.

“Alright stop it! Let’s just sit in a circle and hold hands okay!”

Soon after Steve says, this Jon pushes Neal closer to Steve.

"I have heard those rumors Neal you can hold Steve's hand!"

Jon laughs as Neal swats his hand away.

"I don't care who holds whose hand! We have to do this!! So sit down!!!"

Steve says as he waves his arms back and forth and sits down on the ground. Soon Neal and the rest of the guys follow Steve's lead and they sit in a circle. They place their flashlights in the center with the beams out so that they have some light. Neal is holding Steve's right hand and Smitty is holding Steve's left.

"Everybody close your eyes and repeat after me."

Steve watches as everybody closes their eyes and then Steve begins by saying, "When the lights go down in the city...!!!"

Steve opens one eye and looks at them as they open their eyes and look back at him and Steve is laughing.

"Ah ah just kidding!! Now repeat after me....oh, oh, oh great pumpkin. Oh, oh, oh great pumpkin."

After a few seconds of everybody repeating this, Steve lets go of Neal and Smitty's hands as he throws his up in the air to stop everybody.

"Wait! Hold on! That was just terrible!! Somebody is off key!!!"

Steve says and everybody turns and looks at everybody else and they begin to point at each other and talk all at once.

"Stop it! Smitty give me the scales!! Now!"

In the darkness, Steve sees Smitty turn and look at him and point to himself.

"The scales?!"

"The scales? What's up with that?" Jon says.

"Hello! The scales!" Ross says.

Finally, after they all have calmed down Smitty starts it off and they work their way around until they get to Neal. Neal begins it but even before he gets halfway through it he stops and clears his throat, everybody waits, and Neal looks at them with his arms outstretched.

"It's not that I don't like this chant but what am I supposed to do in it?!"

Everybody groans and cover their eyes with their hands as Steve looks at the ground and then he looks back up at Neal and Steve thinks that he could really kill him at this moment in time.

"Neal! Trust me the Great Pumpkin will love it! So come on! It is almost midnight!"

Steve says as he looks at the lighted dial on his watch and then he puts his hand out for Neal to hold it. So once again, they all hold hands and Steve begins the chant.

“Oh, oh, oh great pumpkin! We come together as one to welcome you! Grace us with your presence on this Halloween so that we may know that you are real! Oh, oh, oh great pumpkin!!!”

They repeat this a number of times and with each repeating they gradually get louder and after a few minutes, they grow silent waiting and listening.

“Perry! You got us out here on a wild goose chase!!! I don’t know about you but I have to get up early because I have to pay the bills....!!”

Neal says as he lets go of Steve’s hand and everyone else begins to follow suit.

“No! No! No guys wait! The five of us together we’re magic!!! I know if you just...”

Steve doesn’t finish because they hear from the woods, to their right, a slight rustling and twigs breaking and everybody stops and look in that direction.

“Hello guys tell me that was a squirrel!!!”

Ross says as Steve picks up the flashlight and shines it in the direction of the noise and immediately the noise gets louder and closer as if some big animal was crashing through the undergrowth. They heard heavy breathing and more branches breaking as they quickly get to their feet and they back up slightly. The crashing and banging and heavy breathing get louder until whatever it is standing directly in front of them in the slight clearing. Steve shines his flashlight, they see a huge figure wearing all black and a black cape blowing in the wind, and the figure, instead of a head, has a pumpkin atop his shoulders.

By now, Smitty bolted for the barbwire fence and they hear him curse as he makes contact and Ross is not far behind and Steve turns his head and see the light come on in the back seat of the car as Ross and Smitty dive in the back seat. Jon, as soon as Steve’s flashlight made contact with the figure’s head, fainted and Neal barely caught him before he hit the ground. Neal, holding Jon and Steve holding the flashlight on the Great Pumpkin both had dumbfounded looks on their faces.

“Perry!! It worked! It actually worked! You summoned the Great Pumpkin!”
Neal says as he struggles to hold up Jon.

“Oh Great Pumpkin we welcome you!”

Now Steve knows that anyone that successfully summons the Great Pumpkin will be granted three wishes or presents so he reaches over and slaps Jon a couple of times to bring him around.

“Jon! Jon! Hey man!!! Wake up!”

Jon finally stirs and shakes his head and Neal makes sure that he can stand before he lets him go and he points and Jon looks to where he is pointing. Jon screams and runs behind Neal. The Great Pumpkin is standing patiently with his arms crossed over his chest watching these three barbarians play.

“WHO SUMMONS ME ON THIS HALLOWEEN NIGHT!!!!”

Steve takes a few steps closer.

“I.. We do Great Pumpkin. I knew that you were real!!“

“VERY WELL THEN! YOU EACH HAVE THREE WISHES! YOU THERE! THE ONE THAT LOOKS A LITTLE BROAD IN THE BEAM YOU MAY START!!”

The Great Pumpkin points to Neal as Neal points to himself and looks behind him. Look whose calling whom broad in the beam Neal thinks to himself as he comes a little closer and then Jon runs and cowers behind Steve and Steve begins to bat his hands away.

“WHAT ARE YOU'RE THREE WISHES?”

Neal never really thought this far because he thought Steve was full of sawdust and he never believed that Steve could actually do this and he never actually believed in the Great Pumpkin but now Neal is just now realizing the power of Perry. Neal scratches his head as he thinks for a few minutes then he snaps his finger as he says,

“Arrival to go gold! “

Steve snorts and laughs as Jon makes a fist and brings it down in front of him.

“Yes!” Jon says.

Neal turns to look at them.

“I SAID ‘THREE WISHES’ NOT A MIRACLE! YOU HAVE TWO LEFT!”

Neal looks at him with his mouth open.

“Alright then! I want people to spell my name right damn it!!! N-E-A-L! Not N-E-I-L! I want some respect before I take the big dirt nap and my ten toes are pushing up daisies and for my ex-wives to go away!!!!”

“ALRIGHT SO BE IT!”

And with that the Great Pumpkin snapped his fingers and things suddenly changed. The older model car Neal drove up in was suddenly the latest and greatest, which caused Ross and Smitty to scream as they bolted from the new car and as they jumped in Steve’s truck. Jon and Steve watched as Neal dug around in his back pocket for his wallet and as he came closer to the flashlight that Steve was still holding. Neal took out his driver’s license and held it under the flashlight and then he begins to smile and laugh as he jumps up and down.

“Look guys look! My name is finally spelt right! I can’t believe it!! And look I have money in my wallet! “

Neal says as he flips through some \$20.00 bills that are now in his full wallet.

“NOW IT IS YOUR TURN!”

The Great Pumpkin says as he points to Jon and Jon points to himself as Steve pulls him around from behind him and shoves him up in front of him.

“YES! WHAT ARE YOUR THREE WISHES? I HOPE YOURS ARE MORE CREATIVE THAN HIS!”

The Great Pumpkin says as Jon turns and looks at Neal.

“Oh man this is heavy!!!”

Jon says as he scratches his head.

“I want the next album to go platinum! Neal to stop wearing those stupid earrings and for.....”

Jon suddenly stops and Neal and Steve both look at him.

“WELL?”

“And for Steve Perry to be our lead singer again!!”

Neal eyes widen as Steve’s does the same.

“Over my dead body Cain!!!”

Neal says as he points at him.

“Watch it Schon I still have three wishes coming!!!!”

Steve says back at him and Neal turns and looks at him with something close to horror on his face. Then Neal covers his eyes with his hands as Steve laughs.

“ALRIGHT SO BE IT!”

Once again the Great Pumpkin snaps his fingers and in an instant the earring is gone from Neal’s ear and from Steve’s truck they hear his cell phone ringing as they both turn and look at Jon and Jon shrugs his shoulders.

“I was elected to make the phone call.”

Jon says as he goes over and stands next to Neal and Neal grabs him.

“NOW! LAST BUT NOT LEAST! YOU’RE THREE WISHES!”

The Great Pumpkin says as he points to Steve and Steve comes closer to him.

Steve knew that he could do this so he already had his three wishes picked out.

“First, I will do another solo album and tour! Second, I want to feel like part of the band and when Hell freezes over Jon then maybe I might join Journey again!!! “

Steve says as he turns and points to Jon.

‘ALRIGHT SO BE IT!’

Steve suddenly turns and raises his hands up and waves them back and forth but it is too late the Great Pumpkin has already snapped his fingers.

“No! No! I was just kidding!!!!”

Suddenly the ground tilts to the left slightly and everybody struggles to keep their balance.

“Oh boy Perry you’ve done it now!!”

Neal says from behind him.

At that moment the Great Pumpkin reaches behind him and produces a newspaper, he hands it to Steve, and Steve cautiously takes it and opens it. Neal picks up a flashlight and turns it onto the newspaper as Steve opens it and sees the banner headline that says,

“NEWSFLASH! HELL HAS OFFICIALLY FROZEN OVER! STEVE PERRY HAS AGREED TO REUNITE WITH JOURNEY!”

And underneath in smaller letters it says,

“Book your ski vacations now! Space is limited!”

“Oh man this is heavy!!”

Jon says as they all three stare at the newspaper with wide eyes, Steve looks over the paper at the Great Pumpkin who is still standing with his arms crossed over his chest, and they watch as he raises a fat finger in their direction.

“NOW I TOO HAVE THREE WISHES!”

“Uh oh! I don’t like that tone.”

Steve says as he backs up into Neal and Neal backs up into Jon.

“I have to go! I hear my accountant calling me!”

Neal says as he backs up into Jon.

“Yeah! Yeah! Me too! I hear his accountant calling me too!!”

Jon says.

“Look you know Great Pumpkin, you are very good at what you do, but we don’t need all this...!”

“SILENCE!!!!”

The Great Pumpkin yells causing all three of our heroes to jump.

“FOR ME TO HAVE THE REINS BACK! FOR ME TO SEE MY FEET AGAIN AND.....”

With each word Neal, Jon and Steve’s eyes getter rounder and rounder and Jon has to cover his mouth so he doesn’t scream aloud and steadily they are slowly backing up.

“FOR ME TO BE YOUR MANAGER AGAIN! ALRIGHT SO BE IT!”

And with the snap of his fingers the pumpkin costume melted away like so much snow on a warm day and Jon screams, Neal gasps and Steve is speechless. Because when the costume melted away there stands Herbie.

“Okay, guys here the plan. 179 cities, nine months, no time off! And this new album will be called “Freedom” which you guys have none of! “

Herbie says as he comes up to Neal and Steve and puts his arms around them and leads them out of the pumpkin patch with Jon trailing behind them.

“Man this is heavy!”

Jon says. And as they walk up to Steve's truck Ross opens the door and gets out as he says.

"Ahhhhhhh Hello!!!"

Steve gets in his truck as Neal, Jon and Ross and Herbie get in Neal's car. Steve watches as they drive off and Steve turns and looks at Smitty who is still hiding in the back seat and he says,

"Smitty be careful what you wish for."

"Happy Halloween everybody"...

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