

Name:

Date:

Instructions: Read the passage carefully. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Shadows on Maple Street

Mia adjusted her witch's hat as she and her best friend Jordan stepped onto Maple Street, their plastic pumpkin buckets already heavy with candy. The sky had darkened into a deep indigo, and most of the trick-or-treaters had gone home. Only the crunch of their footsteps and the occasional rustle of wind filled the silence.

"This street is creepier than I remember," Jordan muttered, glancing at the tall trees swaying above them. "Are you sure we should go down here?"

Mia grinned. "Come on, scaredy-cat. Old Mr. Tanner gives out king-sized candy bars. Totally worth it."

They kept walking, but after the third house, something changed. The wind stilled. A sound echoed behind them—**crunch... crunch... crunch.** Like footsteps. Slow. Steady. Following.

Mia turned. No one was there. "It's probably just leaves falling," she said quickly, though her heart thumped hard.

But then came the breathing.

It was low and raspy, like something big. And close.

Jordan spun around. "Did you hear that?" His voice cracked. "Someone's behind us."

They broke into a fast walk. Then a jog. The sound followed. Crunching leaves. Heavy breathing. Something large. Something not stopping.

Mia dropped her candy bucket. Jordan grabbed her sleeve. "Run!"

They sprinted the rest of the way to Mia's house, hearts pounding, lungs burning. As they stumbled into her yard, a dark shape leapt from the shadows—and **knocked Mia to the ground.**



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She screamed. Jordan yelled.

And then—a **warm tongue licked her face.**

“Luna?” Mia gasped.

Her giant golden retriever wagged her tail like it was the best game ever. She barked once, proudly, and flopped onto the grass.

“She must’ve escaped the backyard,” Mia said, laughing with relief.

Jordan dropped his sword prop and sat down hard. “I really thought we were being hunted by a monster.”

“Turns out it was just my fluffy beast,” Mia said, petting Luna’s head.

Behind them, the wind picked up again. The leaves rustled across the street. But this time, it didn’t sound so scary.

Vocabulary

Indigo	A deep blue-purple color, often used to describe the evening sky
Creepier	More frightening or unsettling
Crunch... crunch	Repeated sound effects are used to build tension and suggest footsteps
Raspy	A rough, harsh-sounding noise (often used to describe breathing or voices)
Thumped	A loud or heavy beating sound, like a heart pounding
Flopped	Dropped down loosely or heavily, often in a relaxed way (Luna “flopped” down)

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1. Where does most of the story take place, and how does the setting help build suspense?

2. How do Mia and Jordan respond to the sounds they hear? What does this tell you about how they're feeling?

3. List the major events in the order they happen, from when the kids start trick-or-treating on Maple Street to the moment they discover it was just Luna.

4. Why do you think Mia dropped her candy bucket when they were running?

5. How did the author surprise the reader at the end of the story?

6. What message or lesson can readers learn from Mia and Jordan's experience?

ANSWERS

1. Setting

Where does most of the story take place, and how does the setting help build suspense?

Answer: Most of the story takes place on Maple Street, a quiet, dark suburban neighborhood on Halloween night. The lack of people, dim lighting, and eerie silence make the setting feel spooky and unsafe, which builds suspense and makes the mysterious sounds feel more threatening.

2. Character Reactions

How do Mia and Jordan respond to the sounds they hear? What does this tell you about how they're feeling?

Answer: Mia and Jordan become frightened and anxious when they hear footsteps and breathing behind them. They first try to convince themselves it's nothing, but quickly panic and run. This shows that they feel scared and believe something dangerous might be following them.

3. Sequence of Events

List the major events in the order they happen, from when the kids start trick-or-treating on Maple Street to the moment they discover it was just Luna.

Answer:

1. Mia and Jordan begin trick-or-treating on Maple Street.
2. They notice how dark and quiet the street is.
3. They hear crunching footsteps and breathing behind them.
4. They get scared and start walking faster, then running.
5. They reach Mia's yard and think something is about to catch them.
6. A shape jumps from the bushes—it's Mia's dog, Luna, who had followed them.

4. Inference

Why do you think Mia dropped her candy bucket when they were running?

Answer: Mia likely dropped her candy bucket because she was scared and focused on getting away quickly. In her panic, she may not have realized she let go of it, showing how frightened and distracted she was.

5. Plot Twist

How did the author surprise the reader at the end of the story?

Answer: The author surprised the reader by revealing that the frightening noises were not caused by a monster or a stranger, but by Mia's playful dog, Luna. This twist changes the story from scary to humorous and lighthearted.

6. Theme

What message or lesson can readers learn from Mia and Jordan's experience?

Answer: One possible lesson is that fear can sometimes make us imagine the worst, even when there's a simple explanation. The story also shows that things are not always as scary as they seem.



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