

# My Adventure in Pumpkinville

By Sarah Granade

I lay on my back, trying to identify some strange sounding footsteps that appeared to be anything but human: *thunk thunk thunk thunk thunk*....too hollow to be an adult's, and too heavy to be a child's. Here's how I even got here: I was walking through the annual Greenwich corn maze. I thought I saw the exit, so I shuffled my way through a row of corn, but suddenly the ground wasn't there and I fell into—well, I don't really know where. Just somewhere else, I guess. The ground was made of rich, soft and moist soil that looked very good for growing pumpkins. The thunking started pretty soon after I landed on my back. It was getting louder and faster, and soon, an orange circle with a little stick of brown on top came over the nearest hill. Once it got to the top, it rolled down the hill, getting bigger as it came closer. Finally, it came to a stop by my feet, and I realized it was a pumpkin! Then, it looked up at me.

"Are you okay?" it asked.

"Um...yeah?" I responded. (It was the first time I'd ever talked to a pumpkin.)

"Good. Well, hi," said the little pumpkin. "I'm Pip the sugar pumpkin. Let's see...you're clearly not a pumpkin. What are you?"

"I'm a human," I responded.

"Oh, okay. C'mon, I wanna show you around Pumpkinville!" Pip gushed. He seemed very excited and full of energy, so I agreed. Together, we hiked up the hill, Pip bouncing all the way. *Thunk thunk thunk thunk*....that explains the weird noise I heard. Soon, as we crested the hill, we came upon a sight! Down below, what must've been a hundred little houses (that all appeared to be made out of hay) were arranged into a small village, with farms, a playground or two (there might've been one in the back that I couldn't see, that's how big the village was), a school, the town square complete with a fountain well and a long, very busy street that connected to the town square which appeared to be the Pumpkinville version of Greenwich Ave, a hospital, a movie theater....the village had it all!

"This is pumpkinville. Over there there's Whitby school. Uptown there's Parkway, which is where I go. Right over here is Bruce park, and way up by the other side of the border there's Byram park. There's Binney park over off to the right, but it's really boring. The only thing to do there is feed the turtles bread and bike or jog around the path. C'mon, let's roll!" Pip exclaimed as he rolled away. I laughed, lay down on my side, and rolled after him. We landed on the outskirts of the town, which was actually really tiny. (The town buildings, I mean. Not the whole town.) The largest house I could see couldn't have been any bigger than half an average dining room table, and judging by the flagpole, it was probably the mayor's house or even the town hall. As we rolled closer, I was astounded by how well everything had been replicated on such a small scale!

"So, where do you wanna go?" Pip asked.

"Well, actually, I was hoping to head home," I said.

“Okay then,” Pip responded, sounding kinda sad. “We should head to the caves to the north of town. That’s where the portal is.”

“Well... I guess we could stop for a *few* detours along the way!” I said.

“Great!” Pip exclaimed. He led me through the small gates and into Pumpkinville. We walked through a ton of streets, but then he seemed to notice a candy store and told me to stay where I was. Suddenly, an ear of corn popped up out of nowhere and whispered to me,

“Hey, you see that kid over there?” he pointed at a small pumpkin off in the distance, who appeared to be preparing to roll down a hill and fly off a rock ramp into an exceedingly short pile of hay. “I bet you five bales,” he showed me five tiny little bronze discs that had images of hay bales stamped on them, “that that kid splats when he lands.” I felt a little nervous. After all, I wasn’t meant to make bets, especially with a currency that I didn’t even know existed.

“Ahh...” just then, Pip showed up. “Oh, shut up, corn,” he said, shoving the corn away.

“Sorry, they like to put you in debt. Oh, I bought you a stem ring!” Pip handed me a silver ring with a pumpkin picture on it. Then he handed me ten ‘bales’.

“Just in case.” he whispered to me.

“Thanks!” I exclaimed, giving him a little hug. I tried the ring on, and it fit perfectly.

“Let’s go!” Pip called, already a few places ahead. I followed him through a ton more streets until we reached a toy store.

“D’ya mind if I look around in there?” “Sure,” I said. Pip dashed inside and began browsing ‘stem blocks’, which kinda looked like Legos. The same ear of corn from earlier tapped me on the shoulder.

“Hey,” he hissed. “I bet you ten bales that that little girl over there doesn’t get asked to the high school dance.” he pointed at a not-so-pretty pumpkin. I sighed. I’d had enough of this corn.

“Get lost,” I said as I hit the corn away. Pip returned without a set. Then I noticed the prices through the window-fifty ‘bales’ for a house stem set!

“You handled yourself well with that corn!” he exclaimed. “Do you want to come over to my place for a bit?”

“Well, okay, but not for too long,” I responded. So Pip led me through several streets, through the town square, and through a handful more streets before stopping at a nice house. He led me inside and called,

“Mom! Dad! I brought a friend home with me!” Pip’s mother came into the kitchen from a side room, most likely the living room. When she looked at me, she sighed. Well, I was so big I couldn’t fit more than my head and one of my arms into the house, and even then I completely dominated the entryway. There wasn’t even room for Pip, so I really couldn’t blame her for saying,

“Oh, Pip. She’s not staying for dinner, is she? We’ll never be able to feed her. Also, she wouldn’t like red leaf stew, would you dear?” I shook my head.

“Nope. Where I come from, we don’t even eat any leaves that aren’t lettuce, mint, basil, or bok choy. And none of those leaves should be red.” I joked. Pip’s mom laughed.

“Warren! She called up the stairs as she stirred the pot of stew on the stove. “Come meet Pip’s new friend!” She turned to Pip. “Now, honey, don’t get too crazy with the sugar, hmm? Wouldn’t want you to spoil your dinner.” Pip’s father barreled down the stairs.

"What's up, Edna?" he asked. Then he turned his gaze to me. "Why, hello there, missus," he said. "You must be Pip's new friend. Pleasure to meet you! I'm Warren, and this is my wife Edna." he shook my hand with his stem.

"Mom, dad, can we go play?" Pip asked, energetic as ever.

"Sure, honey. Be back before dinner, okay?" called Pip's mom.

"Kay," Pip called from the street. "C'mon, let's go!" Pip showed me the uptown playground, which had a swing set, a merry-go-round, a slide, a play structure, and a jungle gym that had a net overhead and tons of monkey bars surrounding it. (The jungle gym was decorated like a jungle.) I pushed him on the swings and the merry-go-round, and I played explorers with him in the jungle gym and on the play structure. I was the monster, and Pip was the brave explorer mapping the area. The jungle gym was where he was trying to map, but the 'jungle' was my territory, too. The play structure was his 'base'. We played until our shadows began lengthening to just a little shorter than us, and then we left.

"Whoo-hoo, that was fun!" Pip was bouncing alongside me on the pathway. "Ooh, look! Black Forest bakery! Can we stop by?"

"Sure, why not? I did say we could make a few detours!" I handed him back his ten bales. "You didn't need to give me these anyways. But buy something for me, okay?"

"Kay!" Pip pranced through the door and started looking around. Then, the strangest thing happened. The same corn from earlier popped out from behind a tree, tapped me on the shoulder, and opened his mouth to say something. But I knew his game, and I was ready for his tricks. Before he tried to rope me into anything, I said,

"Y'know, corn, I'm gettin' tired of your bargains. Real tired." The corn frowned and opened his mouth, so I continued. "You keep trying to put me in debt. I have to eat, you know. And all this walking around Pumpkinville has made me hungry. So here's a deal for you: either you can leave me and Pip alone, or I can bring you back home with me and eat you for dinner." I said those last four words in the same deep, monstrous voice I'd used when I was playing in the jungle gym with Pip to scare him off. Sure enough, it did the trick and the corn ran off screaming.

"Well done!" Pip called as he exited the shop. "I don't think either of us is ever going to hear from him ever again." I laughed.

"It's almost a shame, though. I was kinda hoping he wouldn't back down, since he would have gone super well with my mom's pot roast." Pip staged an enormous gasp, and we both giggled. "I wonder what she would say, if I dragged that thing home and was like, 'hey mom, I'm back from the corn maze. Can you wash that off and put it in your pot roast or something?'" We both giggled even more.

"Oh, hey-I got you something!" Pip exclaimed and he handed me the bag he'd been carrying. Inside was a pumpkin-shaped sugar cookie, and it was regular sized! "I figured I'd buy you something, since you asked, so I bought this for both of us to share!"

"Oh, Pip. You really didn't have to do this for me! How much did it cost?" I said. Pip grinned sheepishly.

"The rest of my money. Don't worry, though, mom will probably replenish me when I get home." I grinned.

"Thanks, Pip. You're the best. Here." I split off an okay-sized chunk of the pumpkin's side (about what he would call a regular cookie) and gave it to him.

"Thanks! How 'bout we eat this on the walk to the portal caves?"

"Sounds great!" I responded. So together we walked for a while until we reached a large cave.

"There it is," Pip gushed. "The portal cave. Go in there, and you'll be right back where you started. And hey, could you visit me often?" I grinned.

"Every time the corn maze is up!" I promised. "Bye, Pip!" I walked into the cave and suddenly found myself standing at the exit of the corn maze. I smiled as I realized the ring was still on my finger. I traced over the orange pumpkin design. "Bye, Pip," I whispered softly. I'm definitely going back.