



by Darleen Bailey Beard

Cast of Characters:

Narrator

Crowd gathered at the feed store window

Hattie

Ma

Pa

Pumpkin Man

Narrator: Long ago, about a hundred years to be exact, a girl named Hattie noticed a commotion in front of the feed store window.

Crowd: As I live and breathe! My stars! Would you look at that?

Narrator: There in the store front sat a pumpkin, not the everyday pumpkin that grew in her pa's field, but a glowing pumpkin with a face. It had three crooked teeth and a candle inside that flickered and danced. Hattie ran home to tell her parents.

Hattie: Guess what I saw? A smiling pumpkin named Jack-o'-lantern!

Ma: Now if that don't beat all!

Pa: Imagine that!

Hattie: Pa? Can we make a jack-o'-lantern?

Pa: The Pumpkin Man from Piney Creek is coming out tomorrow. Says he has a store that will buy every pumpkin we've raised, if they're good enough.

Hattie: But can't we keep just one?

Pa: We already have a four-pie pumpkin in the cellar. Ma's going to make her famous blue-ribbon pies for Thanksgiving. Sorry Hattie-Pattie.

Narrator: So early the next morning, Pa and Hattie walked to the pumpkin field. They worked their way from east to west leaving mounds of morning-wet pumpkins behind them. Just when Hattie thought her back would break, she spied the perfect pumpkin.

Hattie: It's just the right size for a jack-o'-lantern. Surely Pa won't miss it. I'll just hide it under some dry vines.

Pumpkin Man: Whoa! Tis a great pumpkin day!

Narrator: The Pumpkin Man from Piney Creek jumped off his high-spring seat, greeted Pa and Hattie, then inspected each heap, wheeling and dealing and talking pumpkins. He cut a pie-shaped cut into one of the pumpkins and pulled out its orange flesh, looking at several seeds.

Pumpkin Man: Tis the best I've found. I'll buy them all. How many do you have?

Pa: Exactly one hundred

Narrator: Hattie drooped. Was her pumpkin part of Pa's one hundred? Turning her face from Pa, she helped load the wagon.

Pumpkin Man: Tis ninety-nine. Where's the last one?

Narrator: Pa's eyes scanned the field. He kicked a clod of dirt, then headed for the cellar.

Hattie: No Pa! Don't sell Ma's four-pie pumpkin.

Pa: I'm a man of my word.

Narrator: And Pa disappeared into the cellar. Hattie ran to the spot where her perfect pumpkin lie and tossed aside the dry vines.

Hattie: Here. Maybe someone in Piney Creek will make a jack-o'-lantern with it.

Narrator: The Pumpkin Man took the pumpkin, shook hands with Pa, and jumped onto his high-spring seat. But he didn't leave. Instead he hopped down and walked over to Hattie and out from behind his back came the pumpkin with a pie-shaped cut.

Hattie: For me? But why?

Pumpkin Man: A pumpkin with a hole is of no use to a peddler. Can you find a use for it?

Hattie: Oh, yes. Thank you.

Narrator: And the pie shaped cut made the perfect nose for a jack-o'-lantern.

The End

