

12 Foot Giant-Sized Skeleton

“12 Foot Giant-Sized Skeleton?” Shelly puzzledly read off the ginormous box delivered to her doorstep. The note attached read,

“Dear Mom, I know it has been hard without Dad this past year on top of handling this pandemic, so we got you a (not so) little friend to keep you company this Halloween!”

A tear escaped Shelly’s eye as she remembered that this would be her first Halloween alone without her late husband, Steve, who passed away last fall. She wiped her left cheek and put on a tough face, knowing he wouldn’t want her to be upset this close to their favorite holiday. Shelly began assembling her new gift from her son, who she had been deprived of seeing for 9 months due to being in her 70’s and at high risk for Covid-19.

The box said the assembly would take 1 hour for 2 people, but unfortunately, she had to build the massive decoration on her own, so she started in the early morning and finished just before the sun dipped beneath the horizon, her favorite part of the day. She reminisced of the days when she would watch the amber sunset with her late husband, indulging in cups of hot chocolate. Shelly found comfort in this new outrageously large Halloween decoration, as it gave her a sense of protection, something she hadn’t truly felt since her husband passed. Steve was always glued to Shelly's hip, and she called him her personal bodyguard. The first time they met was on a Halloween night over 60 years ago.

It was when Shelly was out late cleaning up the toilet paper off her front lawn with her mom, as the targets of vain Halloween pranks due to being the only African American family in the predominantly white neighborhood at the time. Steve, who had just moved to the small town in Massachusetts, the setting of the future couple’s entire life, saw the family struggling to clean the mess. Although he would be ostracized by the entire town for helping them, he generously stepped in to help. The next morning Shelly went to Steve’s home to thank him, noticing his house was also consumed by toilet paper, most likely as retribution by the neighborhood kids for his actions the previous night. So, returning the favor, she helped him clean it up. Over the next few weeks, Steve was targeted by many of the bigotted classmates for helping Shelly and was even scolded by his parents. But he didn’t care about any of their remarks, and neither did she.

A neighbor ambling in front of Shelly's home saw the enormous, newly erected decoration on her front lawn and questioned, "What's the name of your new pal?". Shelly looked the skeleton up and down and said to the passerby, "Hmm... I think I'll call him Steve. Steve the Skeleton." So, Steve the Skeleton was born, and together they watched the sun set as Shelly blissfully sipped her afternoon hot chocolate.