

## Run B 4 Death

Excerpt from: Lamia: Resurrection Redeemer

The man wearing the long black coat and wide brimmed hat, sat on the green park bench, which immediately turned black after he sat down on it, one leg crossed over the other. He cracked the shell away from several peanuts, tossing some to the black swans in the murky water in front of him and some to the squirrel at the end of the bench he was sitting on but never eating any himself. He stood up purposely and brushed the peanut flakes from his coat, just as a homely looking girl in a tattered dress was walking up.

"Isn't it a wonderful place we reside in?" asked the girl, trying not to be afraid of Lamar.

He slowly raised his head and tried to peer into her eyes but she was too busy staring at the bag holding the peanuts. He looked down at the bag then offered it to her. When she reached out for it, he tilted his head back, opening his mouth almost as wide as the pond the ducks were in, scattering them and the squirrel then sucked the girl inside of his gully-like mouth. He had to force her heavy booted feet down past his teeth, as he swallowed hard. The large lump could be seen as the girl's body snaked down his throat.

The man removed his hat then returned to his spot on the bench. Only a few strands of hair lay across his burned scalp. His eyes were dark and sunken in his skull. He leaned his head back again and regurgitated first, the girl's boots then slowly pulled the dress from his throat then looked over at the squirrel as it returned. He replaced his hat, prepped his coat back to acceptable form then swiftly sucked the squirrel in his funnel trap, swallowing it whole.

When the man saw his next victim walking up the dirt trail toward him, he instantly felt different about her. The girl was the same as him and the others, dead but there was business he had with this one, he was sure.

"Ah, I see it is you my dear Eleanor."

"That is my name, yes, but how do you know me?" the girl looked down at her bare feet, rather than looking into the man's eyes. She carried her sandals tied over her shoulder.

"I make it a point to know all that goes on among the dead. Why not have a seat and talk for a spell?"

"Well, I don't know. I really have to be getting...my mom is waiting for me."

"Nonsense. Remember, here is where I know all. No one, certainly not down here, is waiting for you. Seeking is one thing but waiting, I doubt that."

Lamar lightly took her hand then guided her down on the bench next to him then turned from her and coughed out the squirrels hair and bones. The girl scooted away, making sure there was enough space between her and the stranger. Her hair was unkept. Her face, clothes, shorts and t-shirt, were all smudged with death dirt, ripped in several places.

"Such a nasty fall your family suffered." The man wiped his mouth, removing the remaining strands of squirrel hairs, as he turned back and faced the girl.

"Now, just how the hell did you know about that? Nobody knows about that." The girl jumped up from the seat, shuffling away. She was about to turn and run away but the man convinced her to stay and listen to him.

"Come now, what were you when it happened?" he looked up in the Alaska-like sky as though he were thinking then said, "Twenty one. You are the eldest of five children. Lets see, your sister under you, Heather, then Evelyn, James and young Timothy. Such a shame because you have such a beautiful family, Oh let me not forget your mom and dad, Oliver and Olivia."

Eleanor stepped back then eased back down on the bench as if she were a controlled robot but stayed at the end and edge of it, in case she has to make a run from the stranger.

"My dear, you should know that it is I and only I who can grant your most precious wish."

"Yeah? What makes you think I have a wish?"

The man prepped his coat once again then removed his hat, turned the inside toward her so she could see inside then told her to look. She looked at him first. By now, she was use to some of the dead being in the man's awful condition. Some suffered horrible deaths and came down in worse condition than others and some, like Eleanor's family, came down in fair condition.

She looked at the hat then leaned in closer, looked at the man again then peered inside and immediately shuffled away.

"That my dear was on the day you all fell. It is your wish to return, your siblings wish. You have been searching for so long for the day you could return." He placed the hat back over his head. "And yes, I can make that happen for you but you all must agree to it. You and every member of your family, or it simply cannot be done."

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