

GRAVEYARD GOSSIP

Written by

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INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Sewage waste flows and rats scurry about. An OLD MAN, 80s, drags LEE, 27, a thin, an unconscious Korean man with glasses. The man sets Lee against a wall.

OLD MAN
Wake up, you insolent fool.

The Old Man slaps Lee.

LEE
(drunk)
Wah? Who're you? Are you a monk?

OLD MAN
How in the hell did you get to that conclusion? More importantly, I'm doing my rounds. You shouldn't be here.

A rotting FISH flops out of the sewage waste.

FISH
(in a Brooklyn accent)
Hey, boss, is that the guy that's been wandering around here?

OLD MAN
No, Joey, he's too alive. I'm still looking for him.

Lee throws up, then sways to and fro.

JOEY
He don't look too alive to me.
Come on, I'll slap him real good.
That'll do him in.

LEE
Woooah, you have talking fish?

Lee's expression jumps to exasperation.

LEE (CONT'D)
Are you a wizard or something?

OLD MAN
This isn't some tabletop campaign.
You need to go, now.

LEE
Are you a cop, then? Are you gonna arrest me?

JOEY
Come on, boss. One slap, and he
will be down.

The Old Man leaves Lee and approaches Joey.

OLD MAN
For the last time, no. We already
have one dead man walking. I'd
rather not deal with two tonight.

Lee gets up and staggers around. He finds a bottle and picks
it up.

LEE
Is this alcohol?

OLD MAN
Hey, don't touch that!

Lee downs the entire bottle. He drops the glass and it
shatters.

LEE
Wah? Who're you? Are you a monk?

OLD MAN
You're not supposed to drink an
entire amnesia brew at once, you
wombledoof, and I was saving that
for a special occasion.

Joey hops out of the sewage, and slaps Lee with a half-boney
tail.

JOEY
I'll get 'em, boss!
(to Lee)
You're fish food, bud.

Lee puts up his arms to defend himself.

LEE
Oh, God, why is there a fish
attacking me?

The Old Man's face emanates the definition of "done".

OLD MAN
If there was a God, I wish he would
just smite me now.

Lee feels around, and finds a hefty book to defend himself
with.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Just let him leave, Joey. He isn't
even a threat to us.

JOEY
I've almost got him, Boss. Just
one more smack and --

Lee hits the fish back into the sewage. He runs away, book
still in hand.

JOEY (CONT'D)
I'm hit. Oh, I can see the light.
Tell my wife and kids I love them.

OLD MAN
You're already dead, Joey. Get
over yourself. Just help me tidy
up around here so I can continue my
search.

The Old Man searches the area for a beat.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Hey, where is my grimoire?

INT. SEWER TUNNELS - NIGHT

Lee wanders around the tunnels, aimless.

LEE
Why am I here, and why do I have
this book?

Lee opens the book, and studies the text.

His face lights up like a Christmas tree.

LEE (CONT'D)
I found a spell book! Now I'm a
wizard.

Lee makes fake spell noises with his mouth. He points his
palm at a rat's carcace, and repeats a passage from the
grimoire:

LEE (CONT'D)
Guranja!

The carcace glows, then animates.

DEAD RAT
At your service, master.

LEE

Woah, I am a wizard! This is the best dream ever. Wait, where did I get this book at?

DEAD RAT

And I get paired with an idiot. Terrific.

LEE

If I'm an idiot, then how come you're a rat?

The rat grimaces.

DEAD RAT

Can you just name me and get this over with?

A BODY collapses down next to Lee and the rat. Lee snaps his fingers.

LEE

I've got it. Your name will be Fall.

FALL

Really?

LEE

Woah, a talking rat.

Lee looks down at his feet, blood pooling towards his shoes.

LEE (CONT'D)

When did this body get here?

FALL

Look at that thing in your hand, genius.

Lee looks down to the open page in the grimoire.

LEE

Guranja!

The dead body glows and animates. The body opens its eyes, and then screams.

Voices echo from another part of the sewer tunnel.

POLICE OFFICER
I heard screams coming from over
here. Don't let this bastard
escape.

Lee covers up the body's mouth.

LEE
What have I done? No, really, I
don't remember how we got here.

Fall scrambles to the dead body. Lee removes his hand from
the body's mouth, and Fall crawls into his mouth to prevent
further screaming.

FALL
What are you waiting for? De-
animate him.

LEE
Do what?

FALL
Just say Guranja again.

LEE
Guranja?

The body stops screaming and goes limp. Fall crawls up Lee's
arm. The voices draw closer.

FALL
Unless you want to get shot, you
better run.

LEE
Run from what?

FALL
From whatever the hell you're
scared of most.

LEE
Like furries?

FALL
Yes, furries are coming to get you.
You better move your ass.

Lee books it out of the sewer, leaving a fading trail of
blood footprints behind him.

END OF EPISODE ONE

EPISODE TWO

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Lee is asleep. His room is a pigsty. He snores and rolls over onto the grimoire.

He wakes.

LEE
(to himself)
What happened last night?

FALL
A lot of things, pal.

LEE
Woah, a talking rat. What's your name?

FALL
You're kidding me. It's Fall, remember?

LEE
Hey, I'm no kid, I'm 27.

A knock comes from the front door of Lee's apartment.

LEE (CONT'D)
I don't do anything, and don't touch anything.

FALL
No promises there, kiddo.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lee peeks through the peep hole. A MAN dressed in a suit stands on the other side.

LEE
(whispering)
Oh, shit.

Fall scampers up to a table near the front door.

FALL
So, who is it?

LEE

Hey, I told you to not do anything,
and keep your voice down.

FALL

I figured standing around was doing
something, so I decided to listen
to your advice and stopped doing
something.

The man POUNDS at the door.

MAN

Mr. Xu? I can hear you in there.
This is the police.

LEE

Coming.

Lee takes a hat from a coat rack near the front door, and
throws it on top of Fall.

Lee opens the door.

LEE (CONT'D)

Hey there, Mister, uh --

MAN

Boehner. Detective Boehner.

Lee tries to hold in a laugh.

LEE

Oh, hello, detective. What's up?

Boehner enters, observing the apartment.

BOEHNER

Where were you last night at
approximately 11 PM?

Fall starts to move under the hat. Boehner is unaware. Lee
looks to Boehner and the hat repeatedly.

LEE

I was, uh, at the, the one store.

BOEHNER

The one store? You're going to
have to be more specific.

Lee picks up the hat Fall is under, and places it on his
head. Fall scurries around on Lee's head.

LEE
The hat store.

Lee squirms from the scurrying.

BOEHNER
The hat store?

LEE
(strained)
Yeah.

Boehner walks a lap around the living room.

BOEHNER
We have witnesses that say
otherwise. Were you at or around
the sewers at all?

Fall bites Lee's scalp. Lee shakes his head, jostling Fall.
The rat falls from the hat onto the floor. He scurries away.

BOEHNER (CONT'D)
I don't have time for lies, Mr. Xu.
I'm going to give you one last
chance, and I expect the truth.

LEE
Sorry, detective Boehner. I'm sure
your investigation is hard.

BOEHNER
Hard doesn't even begin to describe
it. No one has the balls like I do
to catch this murderer, so I want
you to come clean.

LEE
(smirking)
I was with friends last night, just
dicking around.

Fall scampers up a cupboard above Detective Boehner's head.
He begins pushing a plate over the edge.

BOEHNER
I don't have the patience for this,
Mr. Xu. Where were you last night?

The plate falls from the edge. Lee pretends to trip, pushing
the detective out of the way, and catches the plate.

LEE
Woah. Sorry, detective.

Boehner pushes Lee off of him.

BOEHNER

I have half a mind to arrest you on the spot, Mr. Xu.

LEE

No, no, I was with friends. I can prove it.

(pointing to bedroom)

My phone's in my bedroom right over there.

Boehner walks to the bedroom. Fall pushes a glass over the edge where Boehner is. Lee catches the glass before it hits Boehner.

LEE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

What do you think you're doing?
I'm going to get arrested because of you.

FALL

It's okay, boss. You're a necromancer. Once we kill him, you can easily dispose of the body.

LEE

I don't want to get in more trouble, and I am not a necromancer, whatever that means.

BOEHNER (O.S.)

Mr. Xu? What is this strange book you have here?

FALL

See? Now we have to kill him.

Lee shoves the plate and glass into the cupboard. He shuts the cupboard on Fall.

Lee rushes into the bedroom.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Boehner examines the grimoire. It glows to the touch.

Lee enters.

BOEHNER

Interesting book you have here.

Lee snatches it from Boehner.

LEE

It's for a costume. I'm going to be a, uh, necromancer for Halloween.

BOEHNER

October isn't around for another month.

LEE

Gotta start early, right? Here's my phone. Let me show you where I was last night.

Lee pulls out his phone. He shows Boehner pictures from the previous night with timestamps. They range from 9:42 PM to 11:15 PM.

BOEHNER

You're cutting it close, Mr. Xu. There's something else you're hiding. You've been acting strange ever since I got here.

Fall jumps up onto a dresser. He wields a small knife. He raises it to Boehner's head.

LEE

Because I have a rat problem!

Lee grabs the knife from Fall, and smacks fall to the floor.

LEE (CONT'D)

See?

Boehner looks at Fall, who scurries away. He jumps.

BOEHNER

Oh, shit. I'm out of here. I can't stand rats.

Boehner bolts out of Lee's apartment.

Fall looks up to Lee.

FALL

What'd you do that for?

LEE

Because you were about to stab him.

FALL

Uh, no. I was about to kill him.
There's a clear difference.

LEE

I don't want you hurting anyone,
okay?

A POUND comes from the front door once more.

LEE (CONT'D)

Coming, detective.
(to Fall)
Stay here. Stay put. I want you
to literally just stand right
there, and continue standing there.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lee opens the door.

LEE

I'm sorry, Boehner, I know I was
acting like a dick, but --

The Old Man stands on the other side of the door.

JOEY

You messed with the wrong fish,
buddy.

The Old Man slaps Lee with Joey. Lee is knocked out cold.

END OF EPISODE TWO

EPISODE THREE

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Lee is tied up with clothes and sheets. His mouth is stuffed with socks. The Old Man reads the grimoire. Joey keeps fall held up against a corner.

FALL

Hey, this isn't right. I never asked to be born, or brought back to life.

OLD MAN

Well, this is the hand we were all dealt. I never asked for any of this, either.

Lee comes to.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Oh, thank Necros. You're finally awake.

Lee tries to speak, but he is inaudible with the socks in his mouth.

The old man removes the socks.

LEE

Who are you? What do you want? Don't kill me, please.

OLD MAN

Even if I wanted to kill you, I couldn't. You're a necromancer now, after all.

LEE

Again with this necromancer bullshit. What's going on?

Joey turns his attention to Lee.

JOEY

Don't talk back to master like that. You wouldn't want another slapping, would you?

Fall takes the opportunity to run off.

LEE

I would prefer you keep your fins
to yourself.

JOEY

Yeah, that's what I thought.

OLD MAN

Joey, that's quite enough.

(to Lee)

You're a necromancer now, boy. You
brought something back from the
dead, and it is what a necromancer
does after all.

LEE

But I didn't bring anything back
from the dead.

OLD MAN

Oh, but you have, boy. Look at
your rat friend over there.

The Old Man points to the corner where Fall was.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Damn it all to hell.

Fall leaps from the ceiling fan, knife in hand again, and
plunges down towards the old man.

FALL

Death to the elderly!

The Old Man catches the rat and knife in a hand. The knife
punctures his hand, but no blood comes out.

OLD MAN

You're better off praying me away
than trying to kill me with
violence, you know.

FALL

Hey, I was technically just born
yesterday, you know.

The Old Man takes the knife out of his hand. He takes Fall,
and holds him in the air.

OLD MAN

(to Lee)

This is your familiar, huh?

LEE
I'm not exactly familiar with it,
though.

OLD MAN
Tough. The first thing you
resurrect is your familiar, so
you're bonded with him now.

LEE FALL

You've got to be kidding me. You've got to be kidding me.

JOEY
Nope. You're stuck with each other
until true death. Isn't that
right, master?

OLD MAN
(annoyed)
Yes, Joey.

LEE
Why are you even here in the first place?

OLD MAN
You stole my grimoire. I simply
came to track it down.

LEE
Now that you have it, we can forget
that any of this ever happened,
right?

OLD MAN
I would, but you see, you also
resurrected someone, and you're
bonded to their soul.

LEE
Their soul?

OLD MAN
When you resurrect anything, and I
mean anything, that person's soul
is bound to yours.

Lee looks over to Fall.

LEE
So, I have a rat soul within me?

OLD MAN
Simply put, yes.

LEE

Dude, I'm like, the grim reaper!

The Old Man gets up and walks over to Lee.

OLD MAN

That's more of my job.

The Old Man puts a hand over Lee's mouth.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

And you don't need to tell the whole world, you drangletoof.

LEE

A what?

OLD MAN

Nothing. Look, the point is, I can't just let you go. I transfer souls to the underworld, and I need you to locate the body you resurrected so I can transfer their soul.

LEE

So, I'm basically here to do your job.

JOEY

He was doing his job before you interrupted him last night.

LEE

Well excuse me. I had no idea that there was some sort of soul stock exchange going on underneath the city.

OLD MAN

It's Michigan, kid. Everything happens underneath the city.

Fall jumps up on Lee's knees.

FALL

Wait, how did you even find us in the first place?

The Old Man holds up the grimoire.

OLD MAN

This is my book of sorts. It is as much a part of me as a familiar is a part of you.

JOEY

Yeah, so you better respect it.

LEE

But I don't know what I'm doing. I don't even know your name.

OLD MAN

My name isn't important, but educating you is.

The Old Man opens the grimoire, and begins an incantation.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Otto. Calla. Portalis. Entranas.

A portal opens up next to Lee's bed.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Come on, you have some learning to do before you go on this little quest of yours.

The Old Man grabs Lee and jumps into the portal. Fall hangs on for dear life.

LEE

Hey. Woah!

Joey flops to the portal.

JOEY

Wait for me, master.

The portal closes, leaving Lee's apartment empty.

END OF EPISODE THREE