The funk of six-thousand years

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The funk of six-thousand years

by real_fanta_sea

Summary

The town of Tadfield is getting ready for Halloween. However, nobody knows that the thin boundary between our and magic world bursts and unleashes powers beyond our comprehension. What does the local witch has to say about it? Can people save their souls? And - oh dear, what are those two props doing?

Notes

rated M for profanity and referenced (but not explicit) sexual activity.

Chapter 1: The foulest stench is in the air

A stormy night befell the town of Tadfield. When a lightning bolt scarred the sky red, neither the masked children nor the adults waiting for them knew the night would soon turn into a macabre display beyond their wildest nightmares. And it all started with a simple echo of thunder.

“Oh, bloody hell!”

The plastic crunched as a skeleton cracked its spine and stretched. It scrambled onto bony feet, wiggled and hissed as it pulled a black metal rod from its pelvis. Then it looked around, scanning the street filled with screams and rushing footsteps. It was ready to step over the short hedge and go after a particularly annoying-looking child in a zombie costume when it heard a dull rap on glass. It turned around, looking the house of its owners up and down, but all windows were candle-lit yet empty. Still, the tapping resonated again, this time with urgency. Oh! There! The skeleton finally saw the source. Behind the glass of a tiny basement window hovered a pair of glowing blue eyes.

“Thank goodness you heard me!”

The skeleton tsked. “What do you want? It’s not Christmas yet!”

“Don’t play dumb, we’ve talked about this!”

“Yes, talked, but are you ready to actually do this?”

“Boney! Let me out this instant!”

Boney opened the little window. It gestured to the basement inhabitant to get out, but the task proved complicated. First, the fuzzy mittens appeared, and then the head with a fluffy beard and red cap squeezed out, and everything seemed fine. But then, with a dull screech, the creature started flailing and thrashing around, not moving forward or back.

“Umm… a little help, please?”

Boney’s sigh was impressive given it lacked lungs. It grasped the ridiculous mittens, planted heels into the lawn and pulled, and puuuulllleeeedd, and pppppuuuuuuullllllllleeeeeeeddddddd……

POP!

The creature came flying right through Boney’s middle. In a second, the lawn was full of an inflatable Santa, scattered plastic vertebrae, and a pair of legs sticking out. Boney’s head, which rolled under the hedge, sighed again.

“I hope you’re happy now, Santiraphale.”

“Ooopsie!”

With a snap of chubby fingers, Boney’s body assembled and stood in front of the Santa almost right. Well, only its skull faced backwards. Minor oversight. Boney corrected it with a crack and a frown.

“You can’t go trick-or-treating looking this adorable!”

Santiraphale’s LED lights blinked red. “I am adorable?”

“Yes! You need to look menacing! Like this!” Boney growled and hunched over, shadows filling hollow eye sockets.

“Grrrr!!!”

“No, no, stop, you look constipated.”

“Well, clearly you don’t know the horrors of not passing a stool.”

Boney ran a hand down its face, grasped Santiraphale and marched toward the closest door. When they finally reached it, it pushed him forward. Santiraphale faltered.

“I thought we were doing this together?”

“You said you’re ready. Show me.”

“Um, you knock, I talk?”

“No.”

Santiraphale’s lights turned yellow-green as he nodded, then stepped closer and gave the door three resolute knocks. Boney stuck fingers to the space between its ribs, fully expecting a failure. And then, the windows lit up with a soft orange glow. Footsteps grew louder, and an old man holding a dachshund appeared.

“Piss off! I pass no treats when Bakeoff’s on!”

Santiraphale dipped his hand into his sack so fast neither the old man nor Boney could register it, and aimed a shotgun right at his face. The man’s eyes grew three sizes.

“You’re on the naughty list, codger!”

A loud boink sliced through the night. A suction cup stuck to the man’s forehead with a smack. Before he fainted, a scream of agony filled the entry hall as the BANG! flag unfurled between his eyes. When he collapsed, spilling sweets, his dog yelped and ran into the street, joining the children being chased by a pair of giant spiders.

Boney’s jaw almost unhinged.

“You… He’s… Wow.”

Santiraphale smiled and grasped its hand.

“I take it as a compliment, darling,” he giggled. “Ah, I fucking love Halloween!”

Chapter 2: grizzly ghouls from every tomb

“I thought you were supposed to be the good guy,” Boney grumbled.

It and Santiraphale walked down the row of houses, hand in hand. Boney occasionally stuck out a limb to trip a running child or kicked a post box, emptying it into a conveniently placed wood chipper. Santiraphale’s LED blinked merrily when it did. He swiftly confiscated the sweets and pushed them into his mouth. The more he ate, the more they rustled in his big inflatable belly, and when his lights blinked, they cast fuzzy shadows on his plastic skin.

“Oh, pish posh. I’m not a real Santa.”

Boney unhinged its femur for a moment to bonk a running teenager over the head, cricket-style, and hopped in place from the effort. Santiraphale quickly steadied it and lit up bright red.

“I had no idea you would object to casual violence?”

Boney’s hip joint clicked back into place, and it hissed. “I am a skeleton. I don’t like shooting people’s heads. Gives me phantom pain.”

The pair opened a small gate and headed towards another door. “But the stories you told me?”

Boney sighed. It really should have kept count because dead people were not supposed to breathe that often. “Are just that. Fiction.”

Santiraphale’s lights violently blinked as he knocked on the door. “You foul fiend! And I really thought you impaled our previous owner with pitchforks!”

The door opened to reveal an orange-painted skeleton in a velvet robe, holding a steaming mug. If skulls could look unimpressed, they would look exactly like that one, quizzical brow lifted behind thick gold-rimmed glasses.

“This house is occupied. Get lost.”

“Or what?” Santiraphale pushed.

The skeleton sipped on the drink. It trickled at its feet and soaked into its fluffy socks. Boney tugged on Santiraphale’s hand. “Come on, let’s go.”

“Or I’ll let Gaston out.”

Santiraphale ignored Boney, who pushed him, groaning with exertion. The sweet wrappers sloshed with each boink to his belly.

“Alright, go on! I’m not afraid!”

The resident skeleton shrugged and stepped aside. Immediately, a giant white dog appeared and growled at the intruders, its neck hair bristling.

“Aww, what a lovely little… OW!” Santiraphale leaned in to pet it, but the dog chomped down on his hand. A cut in the plastic pfffftttted out air.

Boney finally turned on its heel and ran for it, a rush of rattling bones. Santiraphale was only a step behind, plugging the tear with his other hand.

“Boney! Do something!”

“Yeah, because I provoked it!”

As they rushed across the lawn, growling on their heels, Boney spotted a plaster gnome smoking a bubble-gum cigarette, uninterested in the chase. It took two rattly steps aside, grabbed the critter, and threw him behind its shoulder. The gnome exploded the moment it hit the ground, but the dog dodged both shrapnel pieces and the deadly German profanity the gnome screamed before it blew up.

“Fuck!”

They rushed onto the street. The dog jumped and attempted to chomp through Boney’s fibula, and only narrowly missed. This time, Santiraphale decided to save his partner. He stuck his thumb into his mouth, took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and bowed. The next second, a mighty gust of hot air shot out of his rear valve, blasting the dog with wrappers and undigested sweets. Gaston faltered, shook and then set out after them again.

“Well, that went down like…”

“I’m running out of air, and you are joking about balloons?” Santiraphale huffed and puffed and sagged two steps behind Boney. “Sometimes you are a massive pillock!”

“I’m out of ideas, ok?” Boney jumped over the remains of a blue phone box. “The stupid dog breaks all Geneva conventions by being indestructible!”

“Awww, look at that doggie!”

As they rounded another corner, all three stopped. A group of little girls dressed as witches stood in front of them, each holding a fairy stick. The air around them shimmered with glitter and giant bubbles, and they all stared intently at Gaston. He gulped.

Chapter 3: no mere mortal can resist the evil of the thriller

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Boney’s ribcage bobbed up and down. Santiraphale stepped back. Gaston keened and reversed into a tree.

The tallest girl raised her fairy stick above her head, clenched in a fist. It flashed rainbow lightning. “Pet. The. Dooooog!”

All the tiny feet set off running. “I want to paint its nails!” “I want to braid its tail hair!” “I want to put a costume on it!” They screamed and aimed their sticks. Gaston turned on the spot, skidded a couple of times and then sprinted back home. A stampede of witches stomped past Boney and Santiraphale, one of them accidentally mending the hole in Santiraphale’s hand.

“Whew! That was close!”

Boney collapsed against the closest fence. “I’m never going trick-or-treating with you again!”

“Don’t let this dampen your spirits, my dear!” Santiraphale bounced. “There are plenty more houses to go and knock at!”

So, Boney, groaning and whining, was pushed to the door adorned with a wreath and fairy lights. Santiraphale bounced behind the skeleton, the adrenaline of the chase setting his lights into a mad rave of colours.

“Go on, knock!”

“I dunno, Santi,” Boney scratched its skull, “I don’t feel very spooky after, well, everything.”

“Fine. I knock,” Santiraphale gave the door a hefty punch, “you talk.”

“Bastard!” Boney growled as dragging steps rushed closer. An owl-looking man in an oversized flannel shirt and duck slippers emerged, his tussled hair sticking out in all directions like little antennas.

“Oh, hullo - can I help you?”

“Trrrrrrick or trrrrrrrrreat, morrrrrrrrrtal!” Boney shook as its voice deepened.

“Wait, I can barely hear you. Let me switch on the lights,” the man said, reaching somewhere behind the door. The next second, an explosion of sparks kicked him out the hall, and the town sank into darkness. Most people took half a second to start screaming, except a certain Mildred Dunning, who was giddy, as she always kept her great-grandmother’s lamp ready for an apocalyptic blackout. The only raindrop on her parade was that she didn't light it

beforehand, and the matches weren't where she usually kept them, so she sat in the dark and ate chocolates instead.

“Newton! What did I tell you about NOT messing around with electricity tonight?” At the darkened door where Boney and Santiraphale waited, a tall young lady appeared holding a medieval torch. All three backed off, intimidated by the flame.

“We’re terribly sorry, Miss,” Santiraphale murmured, his lights dimming. “It was our fault.”

“Shut it!” Boney hissed.

“Huh?” She scrunched her nose. “Are those animated decorations?”

“That’s why I wanted to switch on the lights,” Newton remarked weakly.

Boney growled again and spun its skull. “Trrrrrick orrrrr trrrreeeat!!! Bleeeeeeehhh!!!!”

The lady pinched the bridge of her nose. “Shit, not again!”

“Eh? Anathema?”

“Do you remember our first Halloween? The… spell?”

Newton nodded, blushing.

“Well, it seems like it happened again.”

“You were-”

“NO!” Anathema’s howl startled two passing ghosts. “Not with the torch, dummy.”

“But you can fix it, right?”

Anathema shrugged and snapped her fingers. A bright purple lightning bolt slit the sky. All the giant spiders petrified, all the spirits turned back into bedsheets, and the gnomes stood still; only Boney and Santiraphale remained, hand in hand. The lights came back on lamp by lamp, and people all around started cheering.

“Hmm,” Anathema circled the pair. “There seems to be some protection against my counterspell.”

“Does that make us real people?” Santiraphale’s lights went mad again.

Boney tugged on Santiraphale’s hand and stuck it through its ribs. “I don’t think you can do this to real people.”

“Right.” The lights dimmed.

“But we don’t need to be people to, um, have each other, eh?”

“Oh, Boney!” Santiraphale flashed bright red.

Ever since then, whenever Tadfield's children reimagined stories of Halloween’s horrors, Anathema and Newton made tea and scones and left them in front of an abandoned tree seat. When night fell, one could occasionally hear someone near the seat talking softly, eating, and, when the forest briefly flashed red, kissing too.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you very much for reading! Were you spooked? Did you laugh? What do you think Boney and Santiraphale do in the forest while waiting for Halloween? I'd love to hear in the comments!

A massive shout out to my wonderful beta, peitrikpro, for his patience and concrit - it is much appreciated!

This story was posted as a part of GOAD Guess the author, but due to the unfortunate AO3 situation, it was impossible to post it as whole there. I will update the story on AO3 too once it's up. In the meantime, I will continue posting here. (Btw I'm sorry I forgot how I tagged the story and of course I did not back up the summary so it differs. I'll update the tags to match the ones on AO3 once it is up and running again).

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!