

Tales from Crestfall: The Deceitful Bones

Obituary Writer (Voiceover): Hello. I am the Obituary Writer of this foxy town of Crestfall, Idaho, and this is a Tale from Crestfall.

[quirky “welcome back to the show” music - strings, oboe, flutes]

As an Obituary Writer and amateur fanatic of Idaho history, I thought I would direct your attention to an utter classic. A story that has stood the test of time and passed it with flying colors. It is both hauntingly miserable – and fun for the whole family. I present to you the quintessential Crestfallen folktale... *The Deceitful Bones*.

[page flip]

[twinkling storybook music, but a lil’ more ominous]

Desmond Drear was a man of incessant vanity and repugnant egocentrism. No one could be better than him, not even Death. In fact, just to prove it, he had gotten rather good at *cheating* death. The trick was to almost die – take your second-to-last breath, but never the last. Drink just a smidge of ammonia to get that warm, fuzzy feeling, but never enough to perish. Lather yourself in peanut butter or cat dander or your favorite fatal allergy, but with a hypodermic needle nearby, of course. For Desmond, cheating death was a hobby, like collecting stamps or pressing maple leaves into books about the Prussian War. Sometimes, when he was feeling particularly daring, Desmond listened to his bones.

Deceitful Bones (*layered whispering*): *Ahhhhhhhhh...*

OW VO: His bones would speak to him, whispering sweet nothings.

Deceitful Bones: *Dessmmmmooonnnd...*

OW VO: His forearm was forever. His tibia was timeless. His marrow would see every tomorrow. Desmond knew, even if his flesh melted away, his bones would always be there.

Deceitful Bones: *ALWAYS.*

OW VO: His bones were immortal. And so, as *his* logic would have it, he was immortal too.

[*thunder rumbling*]

That is, until one fateful day, when he died during a time in which he was not trying to die. You see, it was a stormy morning when Desmond did what any sensible man would do: Take a stroll with his trusty silver-tipped umbrella whilst walking in a flat field.

[*electricity building*]

Desmond: Uh oh.

[*lightning strike!*]

Desmond: AHHHHH!

OW VO: Shortly after the incident, the Angel of Death appeared towering over him.

Angel of Death: It's about time.

OW VO: Desmond got an uneasy feeling that started somewhere in the hollow of his spine and ended somewhere in his left nostril.

Desmond: Am I dead?

AoD: Oh how quickly they catch on. Come with me, foolish mortal.

Desmond: I'm sorry?

OW VO: Said Desmond, still a little peeved about the whole being-permanently-dead thing. The Angel of Death would have rolled her eyes if she had any.

AoD: I would hope you are sorry. I have been ready to collect your soul for years.

Button-Eyed Raven: Haaaah!

OW VO: Cried the Button-Eyed Raven.

Button-Eyed Raven: You played yourself!

Desmond: But I don't want to be dead.

AoD: I'm afraid you don't have much of a choice. But if it is any consolation, you are being banished to purgatory. You have cheated death so many times everyone in the afterlife is irritated with you.

Desmond: Is purgatory any fun? Being dead is boring.

AoD: I wouldn't know. Death doesn't have fun. But I hear they have snacks, so that's nice.

Button-Eyed Raven: Ahhh! But be warned... You may be safe from the Angel of Death, but beware the *Centipede Prince*...

[crazy descent into purgatory, violent swirling music, screeching violin strings, Desmond screaming, intensity building – before cutting into silence... a chattering crowd fades in]

OW VO: When he first arrived in purgatory, Desmond found himself in a waiting room for departed spirits, who were waiting to be judged, blessed or damned. The line was long... and there were no magazines to read. The Ram-Horned Secretary–

[distant bahhh-ing]

OW VO: –had decided quite suddenly that she wasn't getting the employee satisfaction she was looking for in the afterlife, and quit dramatically to become a masseuse. The remaining spirits were left unattended and un-judged. The traffic between Up and Down became exceptionally dense. While in line, Desmond met a Drunken Rockstar Priest.

Drunken Rockstar Priest: So what's your story?

OW VO: He asked.

Desmond: I cheated death too many times. And you?

Drunken Rockstar Priest: I was a rockstar, I was. Played the electric mandolin, I did.

[concert crowd fades in, electric mandolin starts playing, everyone goes nuts]

Drunken Rockstar Priest: Everyone loved me. The mandolin is a very seductive instrument, you see. And you make it electric? Pffffffssssshhhhhh. Forget about it! But an electric mandolin rockstar life takes its toll. So I turned to religion to save myself.

[concert fades away, waiting room background returns]

Desmond: What happened?

Drunken Rockstar Priest: Well I created my own religion about myself, now didn't I! Enjoyed the holy wine a little too much. When I died, I was so much equal parts holy and sinful that they didn't know what to do with me. So now here I am in the middle.

[gross scuttling of a thousand legs rapidly approaching]

Centipede Prince: AHHHHHH AH HAHAHA!

[suspicious music, like uh oh, what's this...]

OW VO: Upon the scene, the Centipede Prince arrived. He slithered into the waiting room, beckoning Desmond with his many arms.

Centipede Prince: You shall come with me to the Pits of Pessimism, you handsome sprite!

OW VO: He declared.

Desmond: Are the Pits of Pessimism any fun? This waiting room is *boring*.

Centipede Prince: Why of course! The funnest of fun! Only *truly remarkable people* go to the Pits of Pessimism.

OW VO: Desmond rather liked thinking of himself as a truly remarkable person, so he followed the Centipede Prince down a hidden staircase.

Drunken Rockstar Priest: Oi! Do wait up for me, I say!

OW VO: The Drunken Rockstar Priest tagged along. He too enjoyed the idea of being considered a truly remarkable person. Through a twisting labyrinth Desmond and the Priest were led by the Centipede Prince, until they came upon a Big Red Door.

[building violin strings, something is cominnnggggg...]

The Prince opened the Big Red Door to reveal a chamber of raging fire.

[door groaning open, explosion of raging fire, wild epic choir music of doom]

Centipede Prince: THE PITS OF PESSIMISM! AH HH YAAA HA HA HA!!!

[whoosh!]

[cut to complete silence for a moment while Desmond says:]

Desmond: Oh I gotta get outta here.

[music and raging fire return]

OW VO: The Centipede Prince had tricked them! The Drunken Rockstar Priest was the first to be hurled into the flames.

Centipede Prince: Alrighty, in ya go! Heeeya!

Drunken Rockstar Priest: NOOOOOOOO! WHAT AN UNFORTUNATE END TO A TRULY REMARKABLE PERSOOOOOOOOOOOOON!!!

[*erupting flames*]

OW VO: Before Desmond met the same demise, the Centipede Prince was accosted by a friendly haunted housecoat.

[*music settles down to a lull*]

[*whooooo, whooshes of cloth thwapping about*]

Centipede Prince: Oh dear! Oh me! Oh my! A floating robe?!? Hoot and holler, gibbery giblets. Oof, aaf, eef! Ahhhhh!

[*a thousand legs frantically skedaddling*]

OW VO: And the Centipede Prince scurried away. The haunted housecoat closed the red door and guided Desmond to safety.

[*wings flapping*]

The Button-Eyed Raven fluttered into the labyrinth and watched Desmond disappear around the corner.

Button-Eyed Raven: How dreadful! How disastrous! You may be safe from the Centipede Prince, but beware the *Decent Devil*.

OW VO: Desmond emerged from the labyrinth and found himself on a bluff overlooking a vast and strange monochrome landscape.

[*whimsical “hey check this out” music*]

OW VO: But at the snap of an unseen finger—

[*snap! clinking and clattering of china and silverware materializing*]

A vibrant and lavish feast materialized in front of Desmond. Sumptuous meats, creamy potatoes, the sweetest of jellies, the flakiest of biscuits. It was a feast fit for a king. Without as much as a second thought, he dove down and gorged himself on the delectable food.

Desmond (*whilst eatin'*): Hmm, oh god, hm! Scrumpt-chulescent. Oh the flavors to be had! Mhhmm.

[*Desmond chowing down*]

Decent Devil: Delicious, is it not?

OW VO: Before Desmond appeared a mild-mannered demon dressed in tweed, tailored to his angular figure. Together they celebrated, and the Decent Devil offered a toast.

Decent Devil: To our youth! To our vitality! To our own little eternities!

Desmond: Couldn't have said it better myself!

[*CLINK of glasses*]

OW VO: They drank beneath the vacant moon and partied through the caliginous night. As the night waned, the Decent Devil took the party to the edge of the lonesome cliff that hung over the haunting shores of an empty lake.

[*dramatic horn like wow this is foreboding*]

Decent Devil: Come... *closer*.

OW VO: He said to Desmond Drear.

[*bring in woodwinds, giving us a vibe of wonder*]

Decent Devil: Look to the mountains of the far east... and the empty lake of the closest south. And straight below, you'll see quite clearly, awaits the Yawning Chasm.

[*unsettling drone*]

OW VO: Desmond looked down. His eyes widened as he saw nothing but complete and utter darkness. The Yawning Chasm was a void, an abyss, the absolute absence of all things. He was struck by a wild vertigo.

Decent Devil: You are special, Desmond.

OW VO: The Decent Devil whispered in his ear.

Decent Devil: You have transcended life. You are greater than death. Let me show you what becomes of those who try to be better than everyone and everything else.

Desmond: Is it any fun?

Decent Devil: I couldn't think of a grander time...

Desmond: AHHHHHHH!

OW VO: The Decent Devil promptly pushed Desmond off the cliff, but at the last moment—

[dirt as Desmond scrambles to save himself, hand grabbing hold of something]

—he latched onto a solitary branch.

Decent Devil: *(cackling like a madman)*

[wings flapping]

Button-Eyed Raven: Ahhh! How deadly!

OW VO: Despaired the Button-Eyed Raven.

Button-Eyed Raven: How detrimental! You may have been tricked by the Decent Devil, but beware the *Deceitful Bones*.

[dramatic impact]

Deceitful Bones: *(raspy, echoing moaning)*

OW VO: Desmond Drear clung to the lonesome cliff, the Yawning Chasm yawning larger and larger beneath him. Far worse was it than anything he had experienced before, for it promised total oblivion – a fatal boredom.

[a metallic-like dramatic impact... oh no]

It was a place where Desmond could never prove himself to be the best of anything, for he would become nothing at all. He hugged the cliff desperately. His strength was only so bold, but his esteem was bolder, and his bones cheered in tiny voices that he was the strongest ghost alive.

[building emotional music, some serious determination vibes]

Deceitful Bones *(overlapped, talking over each other):* *You can do it! Don't let go! Hooollld oooooon! We believe in youuuuu.*

Desmond: Should I let go? No... I'm-I'm Desmond Drear... this... this can't be the end.

Deceitful Bones: *Hooollld oooooonnnn! You're a god amongst ghosts. Never let go. This is your show. You are Desmond Drear. This your fate.*

Desmond: You know what? You're right. I can do anything... can't I?

Deceitful Bones: *Yes, yes, YES. BECOME THE BEST. You can do it. Forget the rest. Hold on!*

Desmond: *[cliff efforts, moaning, strain]*

OW VO: Desmond couldn't help but listen to his bones. They were saying exactly what he wanted to hear. He wanted to be special. He wanted to be remarkable. He wanted to be superior. So he held onto the cliff with all his might, just to prove that he was the greatest, alive or dead. But alas–

[silence]

[*CRACK! Bones snapping*]

Deceitful Bones: (*gasping*)

Desmond: AHHHHHH!!!

Deceitful Bones: DESSSSMMMooooNNNNDDDD!

[*chaotic swelling music, full orchestra, powerful choir*]

OW VO: His bones inevitably gave way. A cracking sound, like twigs in a sharp fire, as his bones snapped in two. At the sight of the ghastly scene, the Button-Eyed Raven's heavy thoughts sunk him involuntarily into the Yawning Chasm.

Button-Eyed Raven (*fading into the chasm*): Ahhhgggg!

[*choir reaches a climax, then cuts to silence*]

Button-Eyed Raven: I warned you, didn't I???

[*gentle sad strings*]

OW VO: That was it for Desmond Drear. He was no more, and it was by his own naive hand that he met his dismal end. One thing was for sure. Vanity can be fatal. Illusions of grandeur can bring you nothing but grief. Narcissism never leads to happiness. He would now spend an eternity surrounded by a darkness that would suffocate his every last selfish desire.

[*book closing*]

OW VO: There you have it folks: The Tale of *The Deceitful Bones*. A personal favorite of mine to be sure. Now if you'll excuse me, my three man-eating cats are hungry.

[*MEOW!! The cats attack*]

[*man screaming*]

Er... for cat food, *normal* cat food. Until next time, gentle reader...

Evening Post: This has been a Tale from Crestfall.

[*Tales from Crestfall theme*]

Writer and Director - Evan Gulock. Producer and Voiceover Director - Niko Gerentes. Featuring the voices of Evan Gulock as The Obituary Writer and the Button-Eyed Raven. Stephen Wilkes as Desmond Drear. Lauren Denby as the Angel of Death. Felix Trench as the Drunken Rockstar Priest. Jordan Cornwell as the Centipede Prince. River Kanoff as the Decent Devil. And Niko Gerentes as the Deceitful Bones. With music composed by Chris Cozzi, Steven O'Brien, ErikMMusic, Cinematicwaves, and Scott Buckley. Sound effects courtesy of Freesound.org. If any of you deceitful listeners would like to send their condolences, comments, hopes, fears, or dreams, you can contact The Obituary Writer personally at TheObituaryWriter@gmail.com. Or follow on FaceBook, Instagram, and Twitter, [@DeathByDyingPod](https://www.instagram.com/DeathByDyingPod). And remember... If you are going to encounter a Centipede Prince, shake all of his hands.