

MAL THE GRAVEYARD MAN



I was three when Mal the graveyard man killed my mother. I think it's my first memory. The police said she was mauled by a bear, or a pack of coyotes, they weren't entirely consistent on that. But I was there. It wasn't any of those things. It was the crows. They answered the commands of Mal. They plucked my mother apart while I watched. I don't think I even cried. I just stood there as they pecked out her eyes, pulled the teeth from her mouth, and guzzled down her flesh.

Mal stood there watching. At the time I didn't understand what he was doing with his pants around his ankles but now I do. He stood there, eyes twinkling like little nightmares. He was thin. Very thin, with greasy black hair like a crow's feathers. His smile was like a dagger, his pearly teeth glinting in the twilight. He wore a coat made of feathers and dead human skin, and he just grinned at me as my mother was torn apart.

When he told them to stop, the crows did as they were bidden. Then, Mal pulled up his pants and walked back into the graveyard and disappeared among the tombstones.

Nobody believed me. The police said Mal didn't exist, but I knew he did... I knew it....

I was seven when Mal killed my little sister. She was four. I was walking her home from school when we passed the graveyard and I saw Mal. He smiled at me, and I froze. There he was. He hadn't aged a day, he just stood there as he had before. This time there were no crows. This time Mal used one hand to smash her into a tombstone while his other was inside his trousers. I was too young to realize what he was doing. I remember him giggling. Giggling like a schoolgirl. Then he threw the mutilated body into the road.

The police said she'd been hit by a car.

But there was no car.

It was Mal.

Nobody believed me.

I was ten when Mal killed my older brother. He beat him to death with a baseball bat.

I remember. We were running through the graveyard. My brother didn't believe me about Mal. But that didn't stop Mal from breaking all the bones in his body. I remember standing there, stunned, while Mal smacked him again and again. My brother cried like a toddler. But Mal just kept on beating him. He snapped all my brother's bones. The police even told me he snapped his femurs, which is very hard to do apparently.

This time, they thought I might have done it. I told them about Mal, but once again they didn't believe me.

They couldn't prove anything though, and so they sent me home. They said he fell into an open grave.

But he didn't.

I was fifteen when Mal killed my father. Dad was an alcoholic by then. It was just us two left. Mal had killed everyone else.

Our car got a flat tire next to the graveyard. I begged dad not to get out. I could see Mal's smile in the bushes. I could see him waiting. I could smell him too. By then I knew what he smelt of.

When dad got out, Mal waltzed on over and smiled at me. He had a Jerry can slung under one arm. Dad didn't notice Mal until it was too late. Mal socked him right in the face before he could react. Mal then punched his teeth out and poured a gallon of petrol down my dad's throat. I just sat there and watched.

The police said my dad committed suicide. They still didn't believe that Mal was real.

I got the house, but I had to go and live with my uncle after that. He was my dad's younger brother. He wasn't very good with kids. That was fine. I just needed to get away from Mal and his god-forsaken graveyard.

I didn't see Mal again for many years.

I was eighteen when Mal killed my girlfriend. It was on our prom night. We got into the limo together after the dance, and when I got in I smelled him. He hadn't aged a day but the smell had gotten worse. Oh, so much worse. Mal was my driver. He took me and Valery to a graveyard and I just sat there like a child, trembling with fear as he defiled her. For the sake of Valery's memory I shan't describe what Mal did to her. I'm not sure I could. I didn't think human beings could bend like that, or make sounds like that. I still hear her screams in my nightmares.

They didn't believe me about Mal then either. They said my limo had crashed and that was how Valery died. They never explained what happened to the driver.

I was twenty-six when Mal killed my pregnant wife. I had moved far away. Far away, to a big city. Got a nice job in a nice bank. I came home one day and there she was. The love of my life. Her womb had been cut open. My unborn daughter was dashed upon the ground. Mal had hanged my wife with our daughter's umbilical cord. I knew it was him. He left some clues behind.

The police said my wife killed herself.

Fuck them.

I was thirty when I killed Mal the Graveyard Man.

I was in a club in Amsterdam. I was trying to drink and drug my life away. But I saw him. Well, I smelled him first. He hadn't aged a day. But there he was. He was sitting in a booth with a drunk English college girl.

He was pulling her fingernails off one-by-one.

He smiled at me. He said hello.

I picked him up by his scrawny neck and dragged him outside. He cackled and frothed like a rabid dog, and I beat him to death. He begged. How he begged. He pleaded with me, and his pleading got more insistent as I broke his bones and pummeled him to death with my bare hands. But as I continued to assault him, I realized he was in ecstasy. He was not begging for his life. He was begging for me to continue.

And I did.

As I killed the monster, he let out a shrill roar of passion, and then fell still.

I turned myself into the police. I told them I killed Mal.

They let me go.

They still didn't believe me even after they found the body.

They said he got hit by a car.

They wouldn't even let me have my revenge.