



Boring (At Least You're Not)

Beetlejuice (Cartoon 1989) · Beetlejuice (Movies) · Not Rated · 3262 words

by Arukir

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Fandom: Beetlejuice (Cartoon 1989), Beetlejuice (Movies) Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Characters: Lydia Deetz, Beetlejuice (Beetlejuice)

Tags: Present Tense, Summoning, Lies, Truth Spells, Sort Of, more like something went wrong with the summoning and now BJ can't lie to Lydia, Lydia is a depressed/bored CHILD, so maybe she isn't making the best decisions, Swearing, No Pedophilia, no beetlebabes, beginning of platonic friendship at MOST, Art, Fanart, Demon Deals, Magic, Good person beetlejuice, sorta - Freeform, Beetlejuice's Magic Reacts To Puns And Word-play

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Lydia Deetz has accidentally summoned a demon-ghost-monster thing, and she has absolutely no idea what to do about it. But, hey, at least he isn't boring.

My 133rd fanfic! ☺

Fanart of Lydia (drawn by me) at the end of the fic. :)

My version of BJ is the type of guy to crack joke about throwing a kid to a Sandworm, but would rather throw himself to the worms than ever put a child in danger. He talks a big talk, with 90% of what he says being jokes or lies. He's a trickster and a jokester.

All of this is to say, sorry if he seems a little OOC. The truth thing has been fun to write, but it means BJ isn't quite acting like normal right now. :/

I was allowed to curse at twelve, so I'm letting Lydia do it as well. For those that don't know, Percy was Lydia's cat in the cartoon.

I'm having a bit of trouble with BJ's accent, so any tips would be very much appreciated! ☺

I'm honestly really proud of my Lydia drawing (it only took me 39 minutes! :D), but I really hate the hand...

"I'm telling you, Dad, I just said this word three times and he appeared out of thin air!" Lydia insists frantically, waving the flyer for a 'bio-exorcist' in her father's face. "He was like a monster or something!"

"Honey, come here, it's alright." Dad hugs her tightly, and it feels like the fear of the past few minutes is a little farther away. "I don't know what happened, precious, but I promise you there isn't a monster in the attic."

"But there is!" She saw him, she knows he had really been there, no matter how crazy it sounds. She'd gone up to the attic of their new house, found the model with the flyer laying on it, and said the weird name. Then he or it or whatever had appeared, and

she'd run screaming into the living room. He was too real for her to have just imagined it or whatever.

"Honey—" Dad starts, but she cuts him off.

"I'll prove it to you, I'll make him appear again." She's not entirely sure she *can* do that, but she still stubbornly backs away from her father and into the center of the living room, hoping she isn't about to make herself look foolish. At least Delia's out setting up some art project or whatever, so only Dad will see if she *does* make a fool of herself. She clears her throat, loudly repeating, "Beetlejuice! Beetlejuice! B-Beetlejuice!"

There isn't a flash of light or a crack of thunder or anything one might expect. Instead, he slowly fades into existence in front of her, like someone changing the transparency filter on an art app. He's frowning, floating crosslegged as if gravity doesn't matter one bit to him, leaning forward with his arms resting on his knees. He bobs up and down slightly, like a rubber duck in water, making her stare for a few mesmerized seconds.

She snaps herself out of it with a shake of her head, turning to look back at Dad, wondering how he's going to react. He's staring with a look of heavy concern, but it's not directed at the *creature* — it's directed at *her*.

"Lydia, are you alright?" Dad asks carefully, still not looking at the thing. She gestures a few times, and he glances in the right direction, but doesn't seem to see anything out of the ordinary. "Honey, there's nothing there."

"I'm invisible to 'im, kiddo." The mystery man smirks, head tilting in amusement. "An' I'm not changin' that, so I recommend ya play this off as a joke before pops sends ya ta the nuthouse."

(For a bizarre second, she thinks he looks like a black-and-white striped acorn with windows and a chimney, but he's back to 'normal' in a blink of her eyes).

Lydia wants to argue, wants to say she'd never lie to her father like that, but one look at Dad's expression tells her that he's right; she has no way to prove she isn't crazy or messing around, not for now at least.

"Got you!" She forces her mouth into a grin, telling herself she'd figure out a way to prove it to him later. "You should've seen the look on your face, Dad."

"Oh. Oh! It's a joke." Dad gives a strained laugh, sounding relieved in his usual stressed-out way. "That was very funny, dear."

No, it really wasn't.

Lydia quickly excuses herself, making her way back up the attic steps. The whatever-he-is floats after her, looking almost as wary as she feels.

She pauses in the attic, letting him pass her before she closes the door, trying not to think about how foreboding the soft click sounds. She paces for a second, trying to think of what to say, before leaning back with her hands on the town model. The entire time, he just watches her, not saying a word.

Finally, she speaks. "What are you?"

He grins, drawing himself up, finger pointing dramatically. "I have absolutely no idea!" His face drops, eyes widening. "Huh. Well, that's not what wanted to say..."

"Is it not true?" She asks, feeling like maybe she should move on to more important questions, such as *are you dangerous?* or *how do I get rid of you?*. Or at least she should probably feel more panicked. Now that the initial shock has passed, though, she's mostly just curious. It's not every day one learns magic's real, after all, much less *performs* it.

"That's th' problem, kid; it's perfectly true!" He growls, scowl directed more at himself than at her, looking off to the side in thought. He glances back towards her, sizing her up. "Are ya a witch or somethin'?"

"No." She answers, still feeling like this situation was totally unreal. If someone had asked her the day before what she'd do if she accidentally summoned a magical man to her attic, she very much doubts 'calm conversation' would've been a part of her answer.

"Ya sure?" He asks, as if he thinks she might be lying.

"Of course I'm sure." She frowns, tilting her head. "Unlike you, apparently. How could you not know what you are?"

"None of yer business." He crosses his arms, glaring as if silently daring her to keep asking. Remembering that she has absolutely no idea what kind of powers he has, Lydia decides to move on for now.

"Fine, then." She nods. "If you can't tell me *what* you are, can you at least tell me *who* you are?"

"Ya already know that one." He holds out his hand, an identical flyer to the one she'd found hanging from a pointed nail. (Or was it a claw?)

"Beetlejuice?" She asks, incredulous. She still doesn't think it really sounds like a proper name.

"That's me, kiddo!" He winks. "But, uh, maybe be a bit more careful 'bout saying it, alright?"

"Why?" Why would someone not want their own *name* spoken aloud?

"Say it three times and I'm outta here." He jerks his thumb backwards, once again looking surprised at his own words. "But y-ya aren't gonna do that, right?"

She should send him back right then, but she doesn't. Something in his voice... Lydia might be young, but she has a talent for reading people, and he seems like he's only a step away from outright *begging* her not to send him away.

"If you're that worried about me making you leave, why didn't you just hide from me like you did with Dad?" She asks, eyes narrowing. No matter how scared he had sounded just then, she isn't ready to forgive him for forcing her to lie. "Let me think I was going crazy or imagining things or whatever? What are the chances I would've said your name three times in a row once I thought you weren't real?"

"Ya summoned me..." Beetlejuice answers slowly, face twisting in open confusion.

"So?"

"Ya honestly have no idea how this works, d'ya, kid?" He chuckles, but there is little humor in it. It's a sound of shocked disbelief more than anything else. "I.. my magic won't let me hide from ya, 'cause ya summoned me. Get it, kid? You. Are. My. *Summon-er*." He makes the last four words appear in midair, each replacing the last, as if to drive the point in.

"Well, I didn't *mean* to summon you." For some reason, she feels a bit defensive about that. "And how does this even work?*" What's going to happen if I don't send you away?"

"What d'ya mean?" He asks, floating behind her to absently fiddle with the model. She turns to watch him, wondering if he's purposefully avoiding her eye for some reason.

What does it feel like to be summoned, she wonders? As much as Beetlejuice apparently doesn't want to be sent away, it can't be pleasant for him, knowing she can just force him to come and go as she pleases. She pushes those curious thoughts to the side, focusing on the matter at hand.

"What are you going to do, just hang out in my attic?" She asks. She gestures to his floating form. "You've got magic powers, obviously, and the flyer says you're a bio-exorcist — what does that mean? Are you going to hurt someone if I don't stop you?"

"That's an old gig, it's been decades since I scared any humans outta the way." He dismisses flippantly, adding under his breath, "Well, since I was paid for it, anyways."

She's not entirely sure if he even realizes he'd said the last bit, or if it's part of the whole truth thing that keeps happening. Either way, it's more than a little worrying. "That doesn't really answer my question. What are you going to do if I let you stay?"

Why is she even considering letting him stay? But she knows the answer to that. Whatever else he is, he's the most interesting thing to happen to her in her life. What if she never sees another trace of magic ever again? Can she really just give up this chance?

What if he's dangerous? A far more reasonable part of her asks. But then she remembers how terrified he'd sounded, and compassion joins with curiosity to gang up on common sense. Unless he gives her a good reason to do otherwise, she's seeing where this goes.

"What I want is ta have fun, cause trouble, be free." He says, after a moment of thought. He grins, sharp and wicked, as he adds, "So how's about I offer ya a deal o' sorts?"

"A deal?" She repeats, cautious but intrigued. And, okay, maybe what she's doing isn't the smartest — maybe it's even downright dangerous — but it's sure to be interesting.

"I want out, kid." He explains, shooting into the air before twisting upside down to look her in the eye. "The place I was before... well, it was Hell, to put it bluntly."

"You were in Hell?!" She recoils, horrified by the idea that such a place is real.

"Not literally." He sighs, as if he has absolutely any right to be the exasperated one right now. It wasn't her fault he was confusing her. "I just mean it was very *unpleasant*, an' I'd rather not go back. So as much as it pains me, I'm willing ta sign a contract to achieve that; ya let me stay here in th' human world, I help ya out."

"Help me how?"

"However ya want!" He grins, tossing his arms out theatrically as he flips rightside up. "Cheatin' on yer homework, prankin' people ya don' like, art projects. I'll even help ya with, ugh, chores if I really hafta." His face twists into a faint look of dread at the word 'chores', as if the concept of cleaning was only slightly better going back to wherever he'd been before this.

Based on the grime in his hair, teeth, and clothes, she somehow thinks he really did see it that way.

The phrase 'deal with the devil' pops into her head, and suddenly her common sense gains the high ground again. As much fun as this has been, signing a contract with a magical being without Dad knowing really didn't seem like the best idea. Can she even sign it? Do magical contracts have the same age requirements normal ones do?

(And see? These questions are precisely why she still isn't sending him back. She's been bored out of her mind the entire move, the entire last couple of years if she's being honest, how can she just throw this away? But, on the other hand, stranger danger is a thing for a reason...)

"Tell you what, I'll consider it if you reveal yourself to Dad." She says with as much confidence as she can muster. She's still a little uncertain about whether he would harm or not, but comforts herself with the knowledge that he seems scared enough about being sent back that he'll probably think twice about it. The thought isn't quite as comforting as she hoped.

"No can do, kiddo." He shakes his head, going back to his hunched-over, crosslegged position. He's frowning again, looking downright panicked. "I mean, I technically could, but trust me — ya don't want that!"

"Yes I do." She scowls. "I'm not going to just keep lying to Dad. If you won't help me convince him you're real, then I'm not letting you stay here." Just to prove she's serious, she adds "Beetlej—"

"W-wait!" He interrupts, eyes wide again. He groans, tugging at his hair, apparently figuring out what to say. "It's complicated, kid, but the gist is that humans aren't supposed ta know about the Neitherworld."

"Neitherworld?"

"Yeah, that's where I'm from." For a second, he looks sad rather than scared, but it passes too quickly for her to really think much about it. "Anyways, I'm not really the rule-following type, but even I don't mess with this law. I'm simplifyin' a bit, but basically if I let yer pops know about me, Netherworld authorities might decide to contain the situation."

Something told her that 'contain' didn't mean anything good for her dad. "But I already know about you?"

Giving her a flat look, Beetlejuice snaps his fingers, bringing back the floating words from before: You Are My Summoner.

"Okay, well..." She taps her foot, thinking. There has to be a way around this. "Couldn't I just have Dad read the name and summon you? Then we'd both be 'summoners' and could know, right?"

"I, um..." He fiddles his fingers, face scrunched up in thought. He starts muttering to himself in a language she doesn't recognize, books appearing and disappearing around him too fast for her to really see what they say, eyes spinning even faster than the pages. Finally, he sighs loudly, all the books gone. "Fuck, an' that was such a good idea, too."

He glances at her, then coughs almost sheepishly. "Uh, don't repeat that word I just said, kid. It's a no-no grownup word."

Rolling her eyes, Lydia promptly replies. "Care to tell me what the fuck is wrong with having Dad summon you?"

Beetlejuice blinks for a second, then briefly grins before answering more somberly. "Ya aren't the first ta think of it. Apparently someone tried ta use that little loophole to reveal th' Neitherworld to humanity a few centuries back. Now there's a whole buncha boring-ass laws concerning timeframes, an' number of residents, an' *whether it's me*,"

This last bit is said particularly bitterly, but as well smugly, as if he's as proud as he is annoyed that the law specifies him,

"But all they mean is that either of us tryin' to tell yer pop could be really bad for all o' us." He thinks a second longer, then adds, "There's a chance it'll work, kid, I'm not that good with law so who knows what I'm missin'? But it's not a great one, an' the consequences if we get it wrong... I'm not puttin' a child through that, so take my deal or send me back, but either way yer pops ain't hearing it from me. Got it?"

"I..." She isn't sure what to say to that. Making deals with strange men without her Dad's knowledge, much less permission, seems like a horrible idea. Especially since there's apparently a Neitherworld out there ready to rain Hell on her family if something goes wrong.

On the other hand, *magic*. Magic is real, she's talking to a magical man who isn't *human*, and he's offering to use that magic to help her. She can send him away whenever she wants, so is it even really that dangerous?

Damnit, this is not a decision for a twelve year old girl! But it's still her decision to make, so...

"Come on, kid!" He spreads his arms out, and suddenly the boxes in the room are all rattling and floating. He grins at the amazed look on her face. "I'm offerin' ya a full-time spectre!"

"Spectre?" She blinks, once again feeling curious, but in a more normal 'kid asking what a word means' way than the 'kid asking how magic works' way she'd been feeling most of their conversation.

"Spectre. Ya know, ghost?" He says, as if it's completely obvious. Maybe it is to most people, but she is still a rather young child, as she barely stops herself from snapping at him.

Maybe reminding the powerful being trying to make a contract with her that she's not even old enough to be legally allowed to sign contracts isn't the best idea. Don't show weakness or whatever.

Wait, did he say *ghost*?

"I thought you said you didn't know what you are?" She backs away, bumping into the attic door. Somehow, 'dead guy' is a lot more creepy than 'demon' or 'alien' or whatever the Hell else he might've been.

"I don't!" He growls, wincing. "Okay, however yer makin' me tell th' truth, could ya cut it out?!" He shouts.

"I'm not the one doing it!" She shouts back at him, immediately covering her own mouth. Beetlejuice rolls his eyes, and suddenly all the sounds from outside disappear.

Huh. Well, at least now Dad won't hear any of this. (She decides to ignore the part of her that realizes that's a bad thing. Scared as she is, this is still so damn *interesting*.)

"If it's not ya, then..." He trails off, shaking his head. "Nevermind, I'll figure it out later, I guess. Point is, kid, I'm not sure what I am. But there's only so many things I could be, and ghost is a pretty safe bet. Maybe not a *human* ghost, but still." He shrugs, looking at her calmly but warily.

She knows the next move is hers, and it's such a simple choice. Play it safe, play it smart, send away the crazy magic ghost man. Or keep him around without Dad knowing and learn more about *real life magic*.

Smart, well-behaved daughter. Girl who knows about magic. Safety. Magic. Dad. Magic. Whatever was terrifying enough for Beetlejuice to describe it as Hell. A contract with a ghost-demon-fey-thing.

It's too much to process, too big of a decision. She needs to... She needs...

"I need some time to think about it, alright?" She reaches behind her for the doorknob, pulling it open and backing out without taking her eyes off him. "I won't send you back yet, I promise, so just stay *here* while I decide. I'll be back soon."

Without waiting for an answer, she turns and flees down the stairs for the second time that day. She runs into her room on the second floor, flopping on her bed, letting Percy curl up on her chest. There's a lot of things she should be thinking about, a lot of things she should consider, but one rings so much louder than the rest.

I just talked to a *fucking* ghost. She grins at her ceiling. At least this town isn't as dull as the last one.

— end of "Boring (At Least You're Not)" —