

"FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD"

treatment by William C. Martell

LINDA THOMAS wakes up screaming.

Twelve years ago, "UNCLE" RON SALVATORE, the day care worker/serial killer, cut a murderous path through Linda's home town of Santiago, New Mexico. Ten year old Linda, nine year old GEARY REYNOLDS, and seven year old TINA ROMERO survived by hiding in the crawlspace under her house as Salvatore went berserk and tried to kill all of the town's children.

At first the police were shocked by "The Pied Piper"s killing spree - Sweet, funny, cherubic - Uncle Ron transformed his home into the ultimate day care facility... a funhouse complete with slides, secrets passages and toys in every room. Santiago's most prominent citizens trusted their children to his care. Uncle Ron loved children... he seemed to be just a big kid himself. Then allegations of molestation and Satanic rituals began to surface... was this another McMartin Pre-school scandal? The allegations were unbelievable - shocking - Mayor FRANCINE FORD spoke out in his defense. But as evidence mounted, SHERIFF KELLER had no choice but to arrest Uncle Ron. "You gave me your children, I gave them the love you denied them. They belong to me! They will never know the pain of adulthood!"

When darkness fell on the "Day Of The Dead" (November 1st) Uncle Ron escaped and began killing all of Santiago's children - the Pied Piper claiming the town's kids.. Sheriff Keller captured him just after midnight... but by then Santiago's grade school had become a ghost town. Further investigation uncovered child murders in other

cities where Uncle Ron had run day care centers, hundreds of them. Everybody's favorite daycare owner was a serial killer. "The Pied Piper"s trial was lead story on every network. Sentenced to life in the Maximum Security wing of the State Hospital For The Criminally Insane, Uncle Ron told the press "My day will come once more."

The Thomas family moved to San Francisco, but the horrors of Santiago still lives on in Linda's nightmares. Linda's mother comes into her room, asks if she's okay. "It was only a dream." Her mother knows about the nightmares.

At twenty, Linda is a beautiful raven haired woman. Strong willed, intelligent, she has never been in love. The only man to share her bed has been the killer in her dreams - until she is divorced from her fears, she will not be able to lead a normal life.

RON SALVATORE reads the latest Harry Potter book in his maximum security cell. Sweet, cherubic - with dimpled cheeks - Uncle Ron is the opposite of gritty and slimly psychos we usually see in film.

Dr. EMELIO DEUTCH, an authority on serial killers, tells the prison's CHIEF PSYCHIATRIST that he believes Uncle Ron may hold the key to understanding compulsive killers. And Dr. Deutch would like to ask Uncle Ron about his birthmark. Similar birthmarks were found on other serial killers.

The three separate barred doors are unlocked, and Deutch enters Uncle Ron's cell. "It has been almost ten years since the terrors of Santiago." "Yes," Uncle Ron smiles, "almost time to celebrate. Doesn't the Bible say 'Suffer the little children'?" When Deutch asks about the birthmark, he answers that they all have one. "Who?" "The

chosen ones." Uncle Ron refuses to say anything else. Deutch says he'll be back next week to continue the questioning, and Uncle Ron smiles... "I won't be here."

GEARY REYNOLDS comes home from his classes at Santiago Community College and flicks on the television. A network news special on Santiago and the killings twelve years ago. A photo of the three child survivors is shown, then individual pictures of the three. When Geary's photo is shown, he turns away from the television and begins opening his mail.

Junk mail, a phone bill, and a greeting card. Geary studies the card envelope, realizing it's not his birthday, and Christmas is still two months away. Inside the envelope, a kid's card that says "I missed you!" - no signature.

LINDA watches the news special on Santiago. The frightened town of Santiago has hired JACK SCHRADER ('THE GUNSLINGER') as sheriff. Schrader is famous for hunting down and killing seven other serial killers. In the Clint Eastwood mold, the left side of Schrader's face is disfigured with a scar from a run-in with another psycho. They wrap the news special with a shot of Uncle Ron's Daycare Center, where it all started. Then they drop the bombshell: Uncle Ron has escaped from his high security cell. He is on the loose.

"Oh my God," the phone rings, making Linda jump.

Geary asks "Have you heard?" Linda also has a greeting card.

IN SANTIAGO, wanted posters are stapled on a wall showing the smiling face of

Uncle Ron. "Have you seen this man? Serial Killer On The Loose!"

Linda's mother wants her to forget about the past. But Linda believes she has spent too much time running away. She won't be able to sleep until she CONFRONTS her nightmares. Linda leaves home, headed for Santiago.

SANTIAGO: Skeletons hang in windows to celebrate the Mexican 'Day Of The Dead'. Children laugh roll tumbleweeds across the street. A gardener hacks at an overgrown cactus with a machete... It's fall in New Mexico.

Tina sets religious candles on the graves of her class-mates killed ten years ago. She is quiet, withdrawn, horrified by remembrances of things past. Around her, the graveyard is festive: decorated with paper mache skeletons. One of the skeletons seems to be moving... a man dressed as a skeleton with a painted on face? When she turns to take a closer look, she knocks over her candle. When she rights the candle the skull face is gone. Just a decoration.

As Tina walks through town on her way to Santiago Community College, she gets the feeling that someone is following her. When she turns around, no one there.

In class, the professor lectures on what the Mexican 'Day Of The Dead' and how it's different than Halloween, being a celebration of life after death. Eternal life.

Tina isn't paying attention to the lecture. She is staring out the window. A skeleton, face painted, floats past the window. Tina gets spooked. Just a kid on a bicycle in costume.

After class, Tina talks to HOLLY CRANE and her boyfriend CARTER SWAN in

the hallway. Holly is the pretty blonde gymnast who lives next door to Tina. Carter is Holly's jokester boyfriend, who sports a thick bandito moustache. They kiss, and Carter's moustache comes off on Holly's lip.

It's a fake: "Comedy is Swan's way." Holly tells Tina to come next door tonight if she doesn't feel like being alone.

After school, Tina is walking down the empty corridors of the Community College. The halls are spooky, foreboding. Shadows and echoes. Tina's fears mount. Suddenly, a hand reaches out and grabs her.

It is Linda. She questions Tina about their shared past. Has Uncle Ron contacted her? Mailed her anything? Tina reluctantly tells her about her greeting card - she is no more than a shadow of her former self. Linda advises her to fight the fear, rather than give in to it. She gives Tina her phone number at the Santiago Motel, and tells her to call if she needs help.

Linda drives to Uncle Ron's Daycare. An ancient fence surrounds the daycare - gate unopened for the past ten years. Beyond the fence - rusted swing sets creek in the breeze. Old tricycles overturned near upside down red wagons. Everything covered with ten years of dust. Taking a deep breath, Linda climbs the creaking wooden steps to the abandoned house, pushes open the door and steps inside.

UNCLE RON'S DAY CARE is dark. Linda creeps through the house, looking from shadow to shadow. Wondering where he's hiding. In a playroom she finds a pile of animal bones.

Some are fresh, bits of meat still sticking to the bones.

There are secret passages, funhouse mirrors, playrooms filled with dirty stuffed animals. In a play room painted with rainbows she finds evidence that a human is sleeping here - dirty blankets on the floor, recent newspapers. Suspense and paranoia build. She goes back to the door. A hand grabs her shoulder, spinning her around.

It is SCHRADER, the Gunslinger. He tells her that he is staying in Uncle Ron's Daycare, now that he's sheriff. He tells her that Mayor Ford and Santiago hired him after they found the first piece. "Piece of what?" "Old man Keller. They found parts of him scattered all over Santiago. I figure Uncle Ron was marking his territory. Today's his day, you know - The Day Of The Dead." Schrader notices Linda looking at the strange pattern on the wall.

"Recognize it?" Linda nods. "It's the same mark Uncle Ron had on his arm. His birthmark." Schrader explains that eight of the ten serial killers he's hunted have that birthmark - as if they're from the same gene-pool. "The psychos have learned how to network. If they started working together, who knows what would happen."

With his strange intensity and disfigured face, Schrader reminds Linda of Captain Ahab from Moby Dick. He tells Linda that killing Uncle Ron is his job, and she should stay out of it. Linda disagrees, "He came back for the three of us... sent us greeting cards before he escaped. He's coming for me, so I've come for him." Linda leaves Uncle Ron's Daycare. Schrader slowly closes the door. When Linda gets to the edge of the sidewalk, something slams into her back.

It's a bicycle. On the bike is GEARY, he looks from Uncle Ron's Daycare to Linda, "Come here often?" She laughs. As children they had a crush on each other - shared a first kiss. Then Uncle Ron's killing spree changed all of that. They walk through

town together, talking of old times. Linda keeps getting the feeling that someone is walking behind them, but no one is ever there. At an open shopping mall, Linda notices three sets of footsteps. She turns her head, and spots Uncle Ron, face painted with a skull; standing behind a fountain a hundred feet away. "Oh my God, do you see him?" Geary turns, but there is no one behind the fountain. Geary realizes that just being in Santiago isn't easy for Linda. She's seeing Uncle Ron when he isn't there. He holds her close and tells her that he will protect her. Count on him. They kiss.

Geary and Linda have dinner together, and their new relationship grows. They may not share the same dreams, but they share the same nightmares.

SCHRADER spreads 24 'baseball cards' with pictures of serial killers around him. Weird ones, like Diana The Huntress - who kills with bow and arrows, Captain Hook - who uses his metal claws to kill, the Snake Charmer - who uses trained cobras to track his victims. "The Pied Piper" Ron Salvatore is on top. Schrader readies his arsenal for the battle... eventually he's going to kill all 24.

TINA sits in the living room while her parents get ready to go to a party. The doorbell rings. She slowly moves up to the front door and opens it. No one is there. Some kids yell "Doorbell ditch!" and jump up from behind the bushes, laughing and running away.

Tina's mother sees a face outside the kitchen window and moves up closer to peer out at it. It is Uncle Ron! Tina's mom steps backwards, turns her head and calls for her husband, but when she turns back, Uncle Ron is gone. "Who was that masked

man?" "Just a prank. A peeping tom."

Before her mom and dad leave, they ask if Tina will be okay. She says yes.

"There are paper bags on the table, and candles in the garage, if you want to decorate the walk." They leave her alone in the house... alone in the darkness.

On one end of the kitchen table are the colored paper bags. On the other end sits Tina. From outside the house, Uncle Ron watches Tina, "Soon, all the children will be mine." Tina decides to decorate the walk, grabs the bags.

The doorbell rings.

She goes to the front door, opens it slowly, and hears "Doorbell ditch!" from behind the bushes. Closing the front door, she goes to the garage to get the candles.

The garage is filled with junk. Spooky. Wall to wall shadows. The 40 watt bulb does little to illuminate it. She looks in the darkness for the candles, and suspense grows. She finds the candles and the cat at the same time. The cat shrieks and jumps down at her from a shelf, knocking a jug of fabric softener on Tina's blouse. Swearing at the cat, she takes the candles inside the house.

NEXT DOOR, Holly and Carter say goodnight to Mr. and Mrs. Crane, who leave for a party, then get ready to neck and watch "Creature Features" with Bob Wilkins on TV. Carter chows down on the Halloween candy. The doorbell rings. Holly takes the candy bowl from Carter and heads to the door. She opens it, and... Three trick or treaters take some candy.

Holly sets the candy bowl down next to the door and snuggles up with Carter. But he moves out of her clutches, retrieves the candy bowl, then goes back to the couch.

Guy's got to have his priorities straight.

TINA changes shirts, then goes back downstairs. She pops open the colored lunch bags, puts a candle in each, and places them on the walkway leading to the house. She lights the candles, admires her work, then goes back into the house.

When she goes back into the dining room, there's a candle lit inside a paper bag on the table. She doesn't remember putting the candle inside. But she must have.

The doorbell rings.

Tina goes to the front door, and there are a trio of trick or treaters there. She bends down and offers them candy. A cute little girl asks where Tina's mask is. "I'm too old for masks." "Then how come your daddy's wearing one?" The little girl says as she sees Uncle Ron - skull mask and skeleton costume - on the far side of the living room. Tina turns her head slowly, but no one is there.

Tina closes the door slowly, totally spooked. She moves towards the phone, picks it up, dials Linda's number. She tells Linda says that she is scared. Linda says she and Geary will come over to spend the night with her. Tina hangs up and goes back to the dining room.

Uncle Ron jerks on her hair; pushing Tina back against the wall. She tries to grab him, but he uses a paring knife from the kitchen to peg her hand to the wall. Then he raises a big machete overhead, looks at Tina, and brings the blade down swiftly. "I missed you... the first time. Santiago owes me their children... time to pay the piper."

THERE IS A SCREAM on the TV as a vampire bites a female victim's neck. Holly asks Carter if he'll turn down the volume. She turns off the lights in the living room.

"What about the trick or treaters?" "It's 9:00; curfew. No one's going to be out past nine with that maniac on the loose." "Except the doorbell ditchers," Carter says.

Holly begins to do a slow, sexy, strip as she crosses to the staircase. Under her clothes, she's wearing a lace teddy, garters, and seamed nylons. Carter gets up from the couch. "Hey, little girl, want to swing on my monkey bar?" Holly laughs, turns, and runs up the stairs.

Carter almost bolts after her, but stops for some Halloween candy first.

After searching the house, Carter finally finds her in the bathroom. She jumps out at him and yells "Boo!". He laughs and they wrestle for a while. They end up taking a bath in a tub filled with Mr. Bubble, steam fogging through the bathroom and bedroom like ground fog.

AT UNCLE RON'S DAYCARE, Schrader realizes that Uncle Ron isn't coming back to the house... So he fills his pockets with 44 magnum shells and leaves.

HOLLY and Carter take a break in the action. She smiles at him. "There's a bottle of champagne in the fridge. It's been waiting there all night for us." Carter gets out of the tub and heads downstairs to fetch it, but Holly stops him. "You can't go downstairs like that. Put something on." Carter looks around, spots a big Richard Nixon mask, and places it over his genitals. He smiles at Holly. "Tricky Dicky." Then heads downstairs to get the champagne, grabbing a trenchcoat along the way.

Downstairs, Carter grabs the champagne and two glasses. Then notices that the back door is open. He closes it, walks through the dark living room to the stairway.

The doorbell rings. "Damned doorbell ditch kids."

Setting the champagne and glasses down, he creeps towards the front door and pulls it open, "Trick or treat!"

Expecting no one on the other side of the door...

There is no one there. Carter steps out onto the porch, yelling "Trick or treat on this!" flashing the kids running away, then re-enters the house.

When he passes the living room curtain, the shape of a face is underneath it.

Carter grabs the champagne, notices the TV still on. Holly yells for him, and he says he'll be there in a minute. Grabbing a handful of candy, he goes to turn off the TV. On screen, a Preacher with a huge wooden stake sneaks up behind a sexy female vampire.

Carter turns off the TV, but the image is still on the screen... It's Uncle Ron behind him! Before he can scream, Uncle Ron grabs him by the neck and lifts him off the ground. Then the machete begins descending.

UPSTAIRS, Holly stands in front of the fogged bathroom mirror, a towel wrapped around her. She sees a silhouette enter the bedroom behind her. "Just pop the cork and bring me a glass." Not a word from the silhouette. She wipes off a space on the mirror and sees... Uncle Ron!

Quickly she turns to slam the bathroom door, but it's too late. He's halfway through the door. The door hits him in the face and Holly tries to muscle it closed. He pushes back, reaching a hand inside to grab her. They push back and forth on the door, Uncle Ron trying to get in, Holly trying to keep him out. "Come on. Be a good little

girl and let me in.”

Uncle Ron almost gets in at one point. Holly pushes him back out. She struggles against the door, and finally pushes it closed and flips the lock.

Taking a step back, she hits the counter. Trapped in the little bathroom, a maniac with a machete outside the door.

The machete blade pops between the door and the jamb, splintering wood. Holly screams. She looks around the small bathroom, sees the window, opens it up and screams for help.

No answer.

The blade continues traveling around the door, splintering the frame. Holly realizes that if the frame is splintered, Uncle Ron can open the door.

She's trapped in the bathroom. No way out.

The blade rips the door to bits.

Taking the lid off the toilet tank, Holly slams it into the window, breaking it open.

Uncle Ron splinters the last of the door frame with his machete.

Holly begins climbing out of the little window, just as Uncle Ron shatters the bathroom door. It is a SECOND storey bathroom. Only a three inch eve between her and the ground.

Uncle Ron grabs her leg and begins pulling her back inside the bathroom... singing nursery rhymes the whole time.

Holly kicks with all of her strength and continues pulling herself out.

Uncle Ron and Holly play a deadly game of tug-of-war with Holly's leg as the rope. They fight back and forth, he pulls her in and she pulls out. Finally she gives him a

solid kick in the face and he lets go completely. Holly falls out of the window!

Grabbing the first storey eave, she does a flip, landing on her feet in the grass. Looking up at the bathroom window, she sees Uncle Ron looking down at her. "Don't you want to play anymore? I thought we were having fun."

Holly BOLTS out of the yard and onto the street. Running to Tina's house, she pounds on the door. No answer. She tries the next door. No answer. She pounds on another door. Someone from an upstairs window yells "Go away!" She pleads, but the window is shut. She tries another door, then another. No one is helping her. They think it's doorbell ditch kids, or worse. She goes to every house on the court, but no one will help her. Backing towards the cross street in fear, a hand grabs her shoulder.

She spins and screams. It is Schrader. "Is he here? Is The Pied Piper here?" "Yes, in that house." She points to her house. Schrader smiles and puts his arm around her. "Good. He will go after you, and then I'll kill him."

Schrader begins leading Holly back to her house. Holly tries to break away, but Schrader's grip is STRONG. He leads her down the street to the house. "No. No. I'm not going in there. No. No." He leads her down the walk. "No. No." Up the steps. "No. No." She notices the strange birthmark on his arm. "No. No." Across the porch. "No!" Holly turns and head butts Schrader. Schrader pulls his 44 magnum. Holly kicks it out of his hands. Breaking away from him, she runs down the court to the church on the cross street. Schrader heads back to Holly's house, gun ready.

Schrader finds the house empty... but a little red wagon on the lawn.

Holly runs inside the church and kneels down in front of the altar and prays. "Oh, God. I've never believed in you before. But I promise. If you get me out of this, I'll start.

Just get me out of this, okay?" The church doors open behind her and she turns to see a limping man enter the shadows of the church.

"No. I'm not going back into that house. You're crazy. You want to use me as bait. You're as crazy as HE is."

But when the figure steps into the pool of red light from the stained glass window, we see that it is Uncle Ron in his skeleton suit.

Holly grabs a silver crucifix and holds it in front of her. Uncle Ron continues towards her. She tosses the crucifix to the ground. "Well, I tried." Then bolts to the side aisle of the church. A row of pews separates Uncle Ron and Holly. He giggles, playing hide and go seek with her.

Holly runs back down the aisle, trying for the doors, but Uncle Ron gets there first. She tries the center aisle, the side aisle, but it is a game of cat and mouse. Finally, she jumps up onto the backs of the pews and runs atop them towards the altar. "Hey! That's not fair!"

When she turns around, Uncle Ron is gone.

Hopping off the back of the pew, she scans the church interior. He is gone. Suddenly, a hand reaches out from behind the pulpit and grabs her shoulder. Holly spins around, but Uncle Ron's machete cuts off her scream... and her head!

LINDA AND GEARY show up at Tina's house. They walk up to the front door and get ready to knock, but the door is open. "Tina?" No answer. They creep into the house, eyes scanning the darkness. Shadows and more shadows. Linda stops, shaking her head at her foolishness, and goes to the light switch next to the drapes. Her hand

reaches out and flips on the lights.

The living room is empty. The dining room is empty. "Tina?" Geary notices the candle burning in the bag, but the kitchen is empty.

They climb the stairway into the darkness above. "Tina?"

The stairway is dark, save for the light spilling through the landing window from the landing window of the house next door. "Tina?"

The upstairs hallway is dark, empty, foreboding. They stay close to each other, pushing doors open slowly. When they open the bathroom door, the cat jumps out at them. After they regain their composure, they check the last bedroom door. Empty.

"Where is she?" "The garage."

They start down the stairs to the garage, but at the landing, Linda looks out the window and sees Uncle Ron drop a hefty trash bag into a little red wagon. Uncle Ron stops, turns, and looks at her. Their eyes lock, then Uncle Ron turns away and pulls the red wagon piled with trash bags down the street... singing Barney songs.

Linda turns to Geary. "Go get Sheriff Schrader, he's at the daycare center, tell him we need help." They run down the stairs. "What are you going to do?" "What I came here to do." Linda grabs the firepoker from the fireplace. Geary frowns, wants to argue, but doesn't. He runs out of the house, hops onto his bicycle, and peddles like a madman towards the other side of town.

Linda follows Uncle Ron, clinging to the shadows so that she can't be seen. A few times Uncle Ron gets the feeling that someone is following him, stops, looks around. But sees no one. When he continues pulling the little red wagon, Linda emerges from the shadows and follows him. Stalking the killer.

GEARY takes a short cut through the cemetery. In the distance, the flickering candles from the "Day Of The Dead" procession. He rides through the darkness. Suddenly, a skeleton jumps out of the bushes in front of him. Geary loses control of his bike and crashes. His glasses go flying to the pavement, and we hear them break. Through blurry eyes, he sees the skeleton stalk him. Geary scrambles to his feet. Something is wrong with his bike, the front wheel won't spin. The figure moves closer. Geary limps away quickly, dragging his injured bicycle behind him like a dead animal. The figure continues towards him, something in its right hand catches the moonlight. Geary whimpers in panic and tries to move faster, but he's hurt. No matter how fast he moves, the figure WALKS faster. Geary turns and sees the figure only ten feet behind him, right hand raised and object glittering in the moonlight.

Geary trips. He falls onto his bike, helpless, as the skeleton walks right up to him. The glittering object moves down to Geary's face. "Here, dude, you dropped your glasses." Geary puts the glasses on. One lens is shattered like Dustin Hoffman's in "Straw Dogs". He sees a long haired kid in a skeleton outfit smoking a joint. "Want a hit?" Geary says no and looks down at his bike. The front wheel is bent. He kicks it back to shape, and peddles off into the night, passing the procession.

AT UNCLE RON'S DAYCARE, Geary parks his bike and walks slowly up the steps to the front doors. "Schrader?" No answer. He opens the door and steps inside. "Schrader?" He creeps through the dark house, passing piles of Kentucky Fried Chicken boxes, piles of chicken bones. He checks the secret passages, the play rooms, the kitchen. "Schrader?" No answer. Nobody's home. The empty day care is spooky.

Geary backs down the steps towards his bicycle. A hand grabs his shoulder. He spins. It is Schrader. "Linda needs help. She's found him." Schrader goes into the house to get some more guns, then they run to his pick-up truck and tear off.

Just as they leave, the back door to the daycare opens and Uncle Ron enters with his little red wagon... the trash bags are dripping!

LINDA enters Uncle Ron's Daycare, firepoker up and ready like a Samurai sword. She creeps through the house, ready to swing at anything that moves. Funhouse mirrors, secret passages, trapdoors - all of the things that are fun as a kid become frightening as an adult. She searches each playroom. No one is downstairs.

She climbs the stairway to the darkness above - the residence. Steps bathed in darkness. Shadows surround Linda. She takes the stairway slowly, never knowing what's above her. At the landing, she stops, sweat dribbling down her brow. Shadows and more shadows. She continues climbing.

The second storey hallway stretches out in front of her. Dark.

She moves to a door, tenses, then pulls it open.

A linen closet. She moves down the hall to the next door, tenses, then opens it. A dark bedroom. She enters the room, poker ready, and flips on the light.

A child's room - done up in cowboys. No one is in the room, but the bed is covered with dirty old toys - stuffed animals with limbs missing. She backs slowly into the hall and moves to the next door. She opens the door, flips on the light.

And screams. Tina - skinned face - is pegged to the wall with knives. Carter's torso is stuck to the wall nearby. Parts of Holly hangs nearby. The body parts form the

shape of the birthmark (with one piece missing... Linda?). Candles flicker around the shrine, creating crazy shadows. Weird Satanic murals on the walls and that birthmark symbol. Linda backs out of the room... Uncle Ron stands behind her in the hall.

She spins and faces him. "I'm not afraid of you. You can't hurt me. You're just a bad dream. That's all. And now it's time to wake up."

Uncle Ron's machete flashes out and cuts her shoulder. "I missed you little Linda. Remember how I used to push you on the swing? We used to play hide and seek? You don't want to play with me anymore? You want to grow up?"

Linda panics and runs down the hall. The wrong way. To the dead end.

Uncle Ron moves towards her. Linda remembers the firepoker in her hands and holds it up. When Uncle Ron gets close, she swings it at him. It hits with a thud, but he doesn't seem to notice. "This is my day - you can't hurt me. I've been given eternal life. That's what the Day Of The Dead is all about, you know." She swings again, this time aiming for the machete. Clang! He parries with the machete. "Every child I take makes me younger - makes me immortal. Santiago owes me their children.. And now it's time to pay the piper." She swings again. Clang! They trade positions, and she boxes him into the hallway end. Clang! He thrusts outward, forcing Linda back. She swings the firepoker. Clang! It's like an Errol Flynn/Basil Rathbone sword fight, but with a maniac. Clang! Uncle Ron forces her back towards the first bedroom. Clang! Linda is forced inside the room. Clang! She takes another step back. He is stronger than she is. Clang! She is losing ground fast. Clang! Clang! Uncle Ron forces her to the edge of the bed covered with dirty toys. "You and your little boyfriend, then I'll have been paid in full."

Clang! She takes a step backwards into the bed. Uncle Ron moves in for the kill.

The machete stabs out at Linda. She catches it in her left hand, protecting her body. The blade sinks into her flesh and she screams. Uncle Ron pulls the machete back, ready to jab again. Blood splashes onto Uncle Ron's skeleton face. He licks it off.

“Go to hell!” Linda thrusts the firepoker with all of her might, hitting Uncle Ron in the chest and pegging him to the wall. He stops moving, hanging there. Dead.

Linda takes a look at dead Uncle Ron, hanging on the wall, hauls back her foot, and kicks him in the groin. He doesn't move. He's dead.

She looks down at her bleeding left hand. It hurts like hell, but she has to get out of there. She begins limping towards the bedroom door.

Behind her, Uncle Ron grabs the firepoker and pulls it out of the wall, and his body. Linda turns around in fear. Uncle Ron taps the bloody end of the poker on his palm and takes a step towards her. “Naughty little girl. You’ll have to be punished.” She bolts out of the bedroom and runs at full speed down the stairs.

SCHRADER AND GEARY search both Tina’s and Holly’s houses - find nothing. “Linda! Linda!” No answer. That’s when Schrader notices the blood drops on the street. “He left a trail... we follow.” They get back in the truck and creep down the dark streets, following the drops of blood on the street.

LINDA runs downstairs and ducks into a downstairs playroom and hides. But Uncle Ron finds her instantly. The poker slashes out at her. She catches it in her right hand, moves aside, and runs to hide in another room. Again Uncle Ron finds her right away. Uncle Ron and Linda play a deadly game of hide and seek in the downstairs

rooms. Everyplace that Linda hides, Uncle Ron immediately finds her. She is panicked. How can he keep finding her so quick? Then she looks down at her bleeding left hand. And the trail of blood on the floor.

In the rainbow room, Linda rips off the bottom of her skirt, wraps it around her hand, stopping the flow of blood.

Uncle Ron opens the door and attacks. She wards him off and runs down a hall. She wipes her bloody right hand off on a door to the left, then ducks into a door on the right... A closet. She holds her breath, listening as Uncle Ron walks down the hall towards her. The footsteps stop. Sweat breaks out on Linda's brow. Uncle Ron falls for the bloody handprint trick and opens the door across from her and enters the den.

Linda runs out of the closet and bolts through the house, speeding through the kitchen and outside.

The backyard is quiet. The fence is high. No one is there. No one to help her.

Uncle Ron enters the kitchen, drops the poker and finds a Bowie knife.

Linda dives. She crawls under the house. She hears the kitchen door open. Uncle Ron steps out.

AS UNCLE RON STEPS OUT OF THE HOUSE, Geary and Schrader enter it. They climb the stairs, and open the door to the weird shrine-room. Body parts. "Linda!" Geary freaks, thinking that Linda might be one of the dead. He flips through the body parts. "Where is she?" Geary runs downstairs and out the front door of the daycare. "Linda! Linda! It's Geary! Where are you?"

UNDER THE HOUSE, Linda looks out a vent to her left at a pair of leather shoes. She looks out a vent to her right: another pair of leather shoes. One is Geary, one is Uncle Ron. Geary's voice to her right. She crawls towards the shoes. At the vent, she sees that the shoes are covered with blood. Wrong shoes! She crawls to left.

At the vent, she says: "He's on the other side of the house, Geary. Help me." A hand grabs her and pulls her out. A hand covered with blood. Uncle Ron! "Gotcha!"

Linda screams.

Uncle Ron stabs down at her. She pushes the blade aside. They fight in the backyard, watched only by a pair of hanging skeleton decorations. Geary runs around the house towards the scream. Schrader comes out of the kitchen door and aims the gun at Uncle Ron. "Eat lead, Pied Piper!" He fires both of his guns, but Uncle Ron doesn't go down! Eight direct hits! But Linda is in the way of a clear shot. The knife sweeps down at her face. Linda blocks it, then reaches up to tear off his skull-face... But only the blood comes off. It's as if the skull mask is permanent. Uncle Ron stops fighting for a moment and smiles at her, "Today, I AM death... YOUR death."

Schrader aims his gun at the psycho. "It's over!"

Uncle Ron looks at Schrader. They lock eyes. Uncle Ron pulls up his sleeve to expose his birthmark, gestures to Schrader's birthmark. They're IDENTICAL. Schrader drops his gun, backs up. "No! No! I'm not you. I will not become you!"

"You're one of us. One of us. One of us."

Uncle Ron goes for his fallen knife. Linda crawls for the fallen gun. Uncle Ron picks up the knife, but Linda shoots him. The bullet hits him in the chest.

In the background, church bells chime midnight, the "Day of The Dead" is over.

Uncle Ron looks at the church tower in shock, "No! I'm not done playing!"

"Your day is OVER," Linda empties the gun into Uncle Ron's chest, slamming him to the ground. Linda drops the gun, and starts walking away...

BUT Uncle Ron's head pops up behind her!

Right into Schrader's noose. A skeleton decoration lays on the ground, as Schrader hoists Uncle Ron off his feet. Hanging him. Uncle Ron struggles... but soon looks just like the other hanging skeleton: Motionless.

Schrader walks up to the corpse. "Another one bites the dust." Linda grabs Geary and they move away from Schrader - he has the mark.... he's a serial killer of serial killers! In the background, the church bells chime for the last time.

AT THE GRAVEYARD, bells ring as Uncle Ron's coffin is lowered into a grave. Dead at last. All of Santiago is there. So is NBC, CBS, ABC, and CNN.

Townpeople talk about how hiring Schrader was worth the outrageous cost. But after getting his pay this morning, he drove out of town in his pick up truck. Mayor Ford and the rest of Santiago hails Schrader as a hero.

But Linda and Geary saw that birthmark on Schrader's wrist. She knows there's more to Schrader's psycho hunting than meets the eye. Schrader is a serial killer of serial killers... and must be stopped. But which of the 24 cards will he pick to go after?

Linda and Geary decide to find out... walking away hand in hand.

THE END.

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