

DULLAHAN

BY RECKLESSFICTION & ILLUSTRATION BY GID!

Your mother will have told you, on those nights where the fog is thick and the cries of the crows grow harsh and loud, that you mustn't venture too deeply into the woods. She will have told you, beware the sound of hooves, beware the creak of coaches on those long, dirt roads. There is a man from town who has lost his head, and he will be looking for it.

It is to him that Hell lends its horses; great, towering beasts, standing taller than any man with bleeding eyes aflame like torches. You can see them glowing in the dark of night; God help those poor fools who mistake them for lamplight. He rides alone atop his steed, or perhaps, some say, on a coach that rattles and creaks. That is where he keeps the heads, strung along the top railings, decaying and blooming with rot. The skulls rattle and scream, filling the night air with their shrieking laughter while the horseman cracks his terrible whip. They say the handle is bone and the cord flesh, a human spine, still covered with blood and viscera.

The stump of his neck weeps openly and it will never close. No fire can cauterize nor needle suture that open wound and no head will that neck take to, save its own. So he collects in the hopes that one day, perhaps, he will find the one who wears his head and steal it back.

Each night, the sound of its hunting can be heard on the wind; the cries of its victims, severed heads caught in the terror of their final moments. You will hear their screams all through the night, even separated from their bodies as they are. Keep to your homes, keep off the roads.

When the horseman rides, it does not pay to stick your neck out.

