

FOREVER, OKAY?

By Sandra de Helen

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CAST: *IDA, a female vampire.*

SETTING: A bare, or nearly bare stage. Perhaps a stool, a fern, a piano for accompaniment.

TIME: Now

(A spot on IDA, who is dressed in full vampire costume. Or not.)

IDA

(Speaking directly to the audience) You needn't look at me like that. I never ASKED to be a vampire.

I don't know anybody who ever wanted to grow up to be a vampire. Not a real one.

Little children generally want to grow up to be cowpokes or astronauts or to be homemakers like their mothers.

Not too many kids sit around imagining what it would be like to live on blood and to live forever.

Forever, okay? It's not all that great, actually.

Oh sure, it's fun not having to worry about where your money will come from, but that next meal is always a challenge.

And there are some people you would prefer to be friends with for a few years, and then one night you get hungry - well, there you are, that's life.

The worst part of that is, when you have their money, and I always end up taking some little trinket to remind me of my friend. Then the guilt sets in.

It's a lot like being a vegetarian.

Well, it is. Think about it. Most vegetarians are opposed to eating meat, not because it isn't good for them, because that's debatable, but because they're opposed to killing.

So then, they have to pretend that they don't have to kill in order to eat.

But do they eat only nuts that fall on their sidewalks in October? Do they eat only fruit after it hits the ground?

And if they do, do they carefully take out the seeds from the fruit and scatter them around as the trees intended?

OF COURSE THEY DON'T! THEY FEEL GUILTY!

See, everybody has to eat. Or we die. The instinct for survival is just as strong in vampires as it is in humans.

For one thing, vampires all start out as humans.

Didn't you know that? Pretty scary, huh? That means you could become a vampire - even if you don't want to. That happens about ninety-nine times out of a hundred, because as I said, not too many children sit around planning for the day when they grow up to be a vampire.

For example, my own childhood was perfectly normal.

I was born in Virginia, when Virginia was the West Coast.

My folks had a little piece of land, raised vegetables, a few chickens, a couple of cows, and several hunting dogs. And kids.

I had six brothers and six sisters. I was the thirteenth child.

Unlucky number? I didn't think so at the time. My family all took care of each other, especially me. I was coddled as far as chores went.

Compared to the others, I had very little to do: just gathering eggs, cooking, baking, cleaning, and washing up, and about nine thousand hours of needlework by the time I turned ten.

Idle hands, you know. We were a God-fearing bunch, Puritans really.

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