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## Ben Deadly, P.I.: Deadly Maneuvers

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Ben Deadly, P.I. :  
Deadly Maneuvers

"It's better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all."  
Bull poopie! When you lose someone you love, it's a heartbreaking experience that changes your life forever, or at least a couple of weeks. I should know. It happened to me.

Most people have human friends. Others have pets. Still others have wicked half-human, half-animal crossbreeds that prey on bugs and rodents in dark, damp cellars. I, on the other hand, had Mr. Quackers.

Mr. Quackers was like any other seven-foot-tall duck who talked. He smoked cigars, watched soap operas, and enjoyed the occasional alcoholic beverage. He spoke with a Brooklyn accent, which was odd due to the fact that he was from Toledo. He hand-quilted doilies in his spare time, and of course, like all mallards, he was Communist (although he preferred the term "Socialist").

Mr. Quackers and I did everything together. From handing out anti-Democracy pamphlets outside the neighborhood Piggly Wiggly, to making fun of old people in the park, the two of us were inseparable. He used to tell me that if there were more people like me in the world, he would have no need for his handgun. Mom and Dad said that Mr. Quackers was my "imaginary" friend. They said that he wasn't real and was just a figment of my imagination. When I asked Mr. Quackers about it, he said Mom and Dad were racist and that it was just another case of the white man's persecution and oppression of the yellow duck. Either way, I loved Mr. Quackers, and he loved me. Until the day he broke my heart.

It was a Saturday morning. I ran down stairs anticipating the fruity deliciousness of my usual Toasty Pop brand breakfast pastry. Strolling into the kitchen, I was amazed to find Mr. Quackers half way out the door with a suitcase in his hand.

"Where ya goin'?" I asked.

"Oh, son of a ...," he said stepping back into the kitchen. "Kid, sit down. I gotta talk to ya for a minute."

"You didn't drive Dad's car into a pond again did ya?"

"It was a ditch! And no I didn't. Kid, sometimes life gives you lemons. When it does it's your job to divide those lemons among the common people, therefore abolishing all classes and rank. Of course the lemons can't be obtained without a bloody revolution and the establishment of a dictator, but anyway, my point is I'm leavin'. Well, see ya."

"Wait! You can't go! Who's gonna teach me to fly a kite or ride a bike or make those fart sounds with my armpit?"

"I dunno, ask your mother. I hope it works out. Have a nice life."

"But where ya goin'? Why ya leavin'?"

"Uh, I'm flyin' south for the winter."

"But it's August."

"Uh, I'm a slow flyer."

"But we're already in Florida."

"Look kid, you're not makin' this any easier for me! You're gonna have to learn that you can't get everything you want outta life. Haven't you ever seen that movie where the kid thinks he can get everything he wants outta life, but he doesn't get everything he wants outta life because you can't get everything you want outta life? And then at the end the kid says to himself, 'Gee,

I guess I really can't get everything I want outta life.' Didn't ya ever see that movie?"

"No. What movie was that?"

"I think it was the sequel to Jurassic Park. I'm not sure."

"Oh. Was it any good?"

"It was all right. The character development was a little off. But anyway, what I'm tryin' to say is that you can't get everything you want outta life."

"But, you're my best friend, and I love you."

"I know kid. I know. But now you're gonna close your eyes, and when you open 'em I'll be gone."

As I closed my eyes I couldn't stop the tears from flowing. I opened my eyes thinking to see Mr. Quackers gone, but he wasn't. There he was in the refrigerator peeling the Saran Wrap off the plate of leftover pot roast.

"Hey," I yelled, "that's my dinner!"

"Keep 'em shut!" he screamed. "Oh yeah, kiss your mom goodbye for me. Heh, heh, heh."

I closed my eyes and then he was gone. The leftover pot roast wasn't all he stole from me that day. He also stole my heart. I also think he stole my ATM card, but I prefer to think I misplaced it somewhere.

Some think Mr. Quackers had other kids to befriend. Some think he was running from his bookie. Some think that I'm an idiot with a neural disorder. I like to think that Mr. Quackers had a fear of intimacy. He got scared of the fact that our friendship grew to that of siblings, two-headed circus freaks, or those bugs that come out in the summer whose butts are connected.

Having love is good. Losing love is not good. Making love, however, is something completely different altogether. My parents say they'll tell me about it when I'm older. Doctor Wesler said studies have shown that it takes about six months to cope with the loss of a loved one. All I know is, it's been five weeks since Mr. Quackers left, and I'm still miserable.