

= Death in Bloom =

" Death in Bloom " is the seventeenth episode of the second season of the American animated television series Adventure Time . The episode was written and storyboarded by Jesse Moynihan and Cole Sanchez , from a story by Mark Banker , Kent Osborne , Patrick McHale , and series creator Pendleton Ward . It originally aired on Cartoon Network on February 28 , 2011 . The episode guest stars Miguel Ferrer as Death ; Ferrer would later reprise his role in the fourth season episode " Sons of Mars " .

The series follows the adventures of Finn ( voiced by Jeremy Shada ) , a human boy , and his best friend and adoptive brother Jake ( voiced by John DiMaggio ) , a dog with magical powers to change shape and grow and shrink at will . In this episode , Finn and Jake make a trip to the Land of the Dead after killing Princess Bubblegum 's ( voiced by Hynden Walch ) plant when they were instructed to take care of it . After Jake 's memory is wiped and Finn loses a musical duel against Death ( voiced by Ferrer ) , the two are nearly killed until a lucky coincidence causes Death to spare them .

Originally , the episode was supposed to revolve around the duo trying to get the plant back , lest Princess Bubblegum turn into a man . In addition , the episode originally was supposed to feature a mysterious rabbit that guided Finn and Jake through the Underworld ; this character was later cut . The episode was watched by 1 @.@ 981 million people and received largely positive critical attention . Many critics applauded Ferrer 's voice acting work , and Matt Fowler of IGN singled the episode out as an example of the comedic darkening of Adventure Time .

= = Plot = =

While spending time with Finn and Jake , Princess Bubblegum realizes that she needs to leave for a science convention in the Veggie Village . She entrusts the two with guarding her Princess Plant . However , when she departs , Finn and Jake party too hard with the plant , killing it . They then decide on a way to journey into the Land of the Dead and to reclaim the flower 's soul from Death himself . For an unspecified price , Peppermint Butler ( voiced by Steve Little ) teaches the two how to get into the Underworld , and he instructs Finn and Jake also to tell Death that he said hello .

Once in the Land of the Death , Finn and Jake are nearly eaten by conscious skeletons , who crave flesh . While evading these monsters , Jake jumps into the " River of Forgetfulness " and loses his memory . Finn drags Jake all the way to Death 's castle . Once inside , Death reveals that he will return the flower 's soul if Finn can beat him in a musical showdown . Finn choose to play jingle bells , whereas Death plays drums and sings death metal . Jake , the now @-@ impartial judge due to his memory loss , rules that Death wins .

Because Finn and Jake lost the contest , Death decides to kill them . Before he dies , however , Finn tells Death that Peppermint Butler says hello ; Death ? revealed to be an acquaintance of Peppermint Butler ? suddenly relents and tells the two that they can have " anything [ they ] want . " Death then returns Princess Plant 's soul as well as Jake 's memory before zapping Finn and Jake to the Candy Kingdom . Bubblegum returns , only to eat part of the plant , causing her hair to change . Peppermint Butler then asks for his payment : he wants both Finn and Jake 's flesh , much to their horror .

= = Production = =

" Death in Bloom " was written and storyboarded by Jesse Moynihan and Cole Sanchez , from a story by Mark Banker , Kent Osborne , Patrick McHale , and series creator Pendleton Ward . The episode was directed by Larry Leichliter . Both Ward and fellow series storyboard artist Tom Herpich helped Moynihan and Sanchez clean up their story . One scene , in which Finn and Jake hide from the skeletons only to have Jake 's flatulence alert them to their presence , was supposed to be storyboarded by Ward . However , he was extremely tired and offered Herpich \$ 100 ? the amount Ward would have earned had he done it ? to storyboard the scene instead . The episode features

an extremely long pan showing much of the Land of the Dead . Moynihan noted that he " wanted to really go over the top and make it like 15 pages but 7 pages felt right " ; he later said that he wanted to " blow kids ' minds " with the shot . Moynihan 's original pan was redesigned by background designer Dan " Ghostshrimp " James , who also did some of the other backgrounds for the episode . Other background were done by Chris Tsirgiotis , who , according to Moynihan , was doing his " best Ghostshrimp impression " ; Tsirgiotis himself later noted that , " Matching Ghostshrimp ? s drawing style is pretty tricky . It looks simple at first glance , but it ? s actually very sophisticated and nuanced . "

The scene wherein Peppermint Butler teaches Finn and Jake to enter the land of the dead by crossing their eyes and staring at a corner was inspired by a story that Moynihan 's father told him when he was younger . According to the artist , his father told him that if you " concentrate really hard enough " , you would " walk into another dimension " . Moynihan recalled the story when he was penning the episode , and worked it into the episode . The climax featuring Death and Finn engaging in a musical competition was specifically written so as to not be " corny " . According to Ward , scenes featuring contests were often avoided because they were " the easiest traps to fall into when you 're writing an outline " . For " Death in Bloom " , the writing staff realized that a contest would work towards the story 's strengths . In original drafts of the episode , Finn and Jake were guided through the Land of the Dead by a mysterious rabbit . Sanchez continually felt that the rabbit was misplaced in the episode . When it came time to revise the story , the rabbit was inevitably cut because it was agreed by the writers and series staff that the character did not fit with the story . The rabbit 's role was later partially replaced by an ominous talking skull that tries to get Jake to drink from the " River of Forgetfulness " . According to storyboard artist Rebecca Sugar , a rough draft for the original ending featured Princess Bubblegum becoming a man without the Princess Plant . Moynihan later noted that the writers were being a " little reckless " when it was pitched , and Ward joked that he had to step in and be " quality control " to prevent the idea from making it into the final episode .

Death was voiced by Miguel Ferrer . Ferrer would later reprise his role in the fourth season episode " Sons of Mars " . Death 's look was designed by Moynihan ; he admitted that he was " sort of intimidated " in redesigning the iconic character , and that he strove to stay away from " the cowl and the sickle " . Before settling on the final design , Moynihan tried both a " Japanese cosmic alien thing " and a " Jodorowsky / Holy Mountain inspired " design . He then later changed the head into a horse skull . The design for the character was then finalized by Phil Rynda , who was the series ' lead character designer at the time .

= = Reception = =

" Death in Bloom " first aired on Cartoon Network on October 11 , 2010 . The episode was viewed by 1 @. @ 981 million viewers and scored a Nielsen rating of 1 @. @ 2 / 2 percent . This means it was seen by 1 @. @ 2 percent of all households and 2 percent of all households watching television at the time of the episode 's airing . The episode first saw physical release as part of the 2013 Fionna and Cake DVD , which included 16 episodes from the series ' first three seasons . It was later re @- @ released as part of the complete second season DVD in June 2013 .

Tyler Foster of DVD Talk wrote highly of the episode , and highlighted it as a stand @- @ out of the second season . He applauded the way in which the series reinvented the idea of the Underworld , noting that its presentation was " hilarious in and of itself " . In addition , he was complimentary towards Ferrer 's performance as Death ; in a review of the Fionna and Cake DVD , Foster referred to the actor 's work as " hilarious " in the episode , and in a review of the second season , he wrote that " if ' Miguel Ferrer as Death ' isn 't a perfect four @- @ word tease pitch for the show 's genius , I don 't know what is . " Matt Fowler of IGN cited the episode as a season highlight , writing that the episode 's best part is when " Finn has a ' death metal @- @ off ' with Death " . He also noted that the episode is important to the series as a whole , as it is one of the many second season entries that marks a " darkening effect " upon the series ; he specifically cited the scene wherein Peppermint Butler demands Finn and Jake 's flesh as payment .

