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Sign Warns Against Talking to Satan

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The sign bearing the warning, "Don't Talk to Strangers." **Alexander Vilensky**

A street sign that shows three main characters from Mikhail Bulgakov's classic novel "The Master and Margarita" above the warning, "Don't Talk to Strangers," will not be taken down, City Hall said Wednesday.

The three figures are recognizable as Professor Woland, an incarnation of Satan, and his assistants the demon Koroviev and the oversized black cat Behemoth, who wreak havoc in 1930s Moscow.

Patriarch's Ponds, where the sign is located, is the setting of the novel's first chapter, titled "Never Talk With Strangers."

In that chapter, Woland materializes and engages two writers in a debate about the existence of Christ. The scene ends with one of the writers being beheaded in a freak tram accident.

The other writer ends up in an insane asylum.

"The authorities of the Central Administrative District do not intend to take any measures

to remove the sign that has appeared at Patriarch's Ponds," a City Hall spokesperson told RIA-Novosti on Wednesday.

"It is not hindering anyone and breaks no law but, on the contrary, serves as a reminder of events associated with this place in Bulgakov's immortal work 'The Master and Margarita,'" the spokesperson said.

Facebook user Alexander Vilensky has claimed credit for installing the sign after being tormented by a "deep sense of bitterness and injustice" during a drunken stroll around the downtown neighborhood because it had no memorial to Bulgakov's work.

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