

JUST FOR FUN: A HORROR LOVER'S FANZINE

Written by

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A callous former fraternity guy learns a little too late that his careless words and actions can have deadly consequences.

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INT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "MONDAY"

CHAD MILLER, a guy in his 30s, wearing a faded t-shirt with a fraternity's Greek letters and Bermuda shorts, drags a large moving box across the apartment building lobby floor, heading toward the staircase at the opposite end. He grimaces at the sight of the rank, moldy walls.

The building's CARETAKER, a balding middle-aged potbellied man, stands next to the lobby mail drop box, clenching a clipboard with an application, a pen and a set of keys.

He stares at Chad and holds out his clipboard. The caretaker has a tattoo of two eyes on his wrist. One of the eyes is almost obliterated as if the result of an unsuccessful removal attempt, the other tattooed eye stares out intently, undamaged.

CARETAKER
(re: the paperwork)
You forgot to sign your
application, Chad.

Chad stops and signs his application and the caretaker hands him a set of keys. Chad looks away to sneer at the caretaker before continuing on to the staircase.

The caretaker stands still, continuing to watch Chad.

Chad glances at the caretaker once more when he reaches the staircase and hoists his box up into his arms.

CHAD
(muttering re: the
caretaker)
Loser!

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE OF SQUALID APT. BUILDING - DAY

Chad unloads a heavy box from the trunk of his old Chevy. He notices a REDHEADED WOMAN with a small dog on the sidewalk. Her back is turned and she's rummaging through her purse.

Chad ignores the woman as he carries his box up the apartment building's front steps. When he reaches the front door he sniffs and grimaces as he spots dog poop on his shoe.

CHAD
(spitting out the word at
the woman)
Bitch!

Chad enters the building.

INT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

The caretaker is in the lobby. He stares at Chad who struggles to kick off his filthy shoe as he leaves a trail of crap across the lobby floor.

CHAD
(to the caretaker)
I stepped in that redheaded bitch's
dog shit. You should tell her to
pick it up.

Chad's shoe flies off his foot and hits a wall. He leaves it behind and lugs his heavy load up the stairs.

EXT. FRONT STEPS OUTSIDE OF SQUALID APT. BUILDING - DAY

Chad struggles up the front steps with a heavy oversized box. He has the feeling of being watched. He looks around and spots a tall guy wearing sunglasses on the sidewalk, who is staring directly at him.

CHAD
(muttering to himself)
Jesus. What's up with the staring?
It's like no-one's ever seen a
person move before.

At the front door Chad struggles to reach around his oversized box to grab the door handle. He can't reach it.

CHAD (CONT'D)
(to the tall guy with
sunglasses)
Hello? I could use a little help
here!

The tall guy with sunglasses stands still and continues to stare at Chad.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Asshole!

Chad's box splits, slips, and falls, landing with a THUD.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Fuck.

He shoves the front door open and thrusts his damaged box over the threshold.

INT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Chad pushes his damaged box across the floor. The caretaker is in the lobby cleaning up Chad's trail of dog crap.

The caretaker stares at Chad.

Chad stares back.

CHAD

What are you looking at? Loser!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CHAD'S TOP FLOOR APARTMENT - DAY

Breathing hard and sweating profusely, Chad pushes his damaged oversized box through the open door of his top floor single apartment.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - DAY

Chad abandons his damaged oversized box in the middle of his dingy top floor single apartment and collapses onto the solitary chair. He closes his eyes, taking a break.

He's jarred by a sudden BLAST of waltz music, turned up way too loud, coming from a nearby apartment.

CHAD

(to himself)

You've got to be kidding me!

INT. GRUNGY APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Chad stops at Apartment #508 where the waltz music is BLARING, vibrating the closed door. He POUNDS on the door. No one answers. Chad POUNDS harder.

A SAD ELDERLY MAN wearing an old suit answers the door. Chad needs to yell to be heard.

CHAD

Your music, it's too loud! Turn it down!

The old man acknowledges Chad's request. As Chad heads back to his apartment, the music is shut off.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sitting in a sea of unopened boxes, Chad has a slice of pizza and a beer. He hears a WHOOSH as something is slipped underneath his door.

Curious, Chad sets aside his beer and navigates his way through the boxes to pick the item up. It's an amateur magazine, a daily publication titled "Just for Fun: A Horror Lover's Fanzine." It appears to have been typed on a manual typewriter.

Chad opens his door and looks down the hallway. No one is there. He closes his door and returns to his chair to read the leaflet.

The fanzine notes "This week we're having a contest. On Monday through Thursday, we're providing a daily question for you to answer. We'll be enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope each day for your response. At the end of the week, on Sunday, we'll select a few reader's replies for publication."

Included on a separate reply form, is Monday's fanzine question: "Just for fun, if you could pick three people to kill, who would they be?"

CHAD
Perfect timing!

Chad writes down each of his three victims, listing off the three people who pissed him off during the day.

CHAD (CONT'D)
The redheaded bitch who didn't pick up her dog's shit. The tall guy with sunglasses who simply stared at me as I struggled to open the front door. The old man in apartment #508 who plays his music way too loud.

As he stuffs his handwritten reply into the return envelope, Chad notices a warning typed on the back cover of the zine: "WARNING: Do no harm. Everything matters. Beware of the rule of three."

Chad sets aside the fanzine and seals the reply form in the return envelope.

CHAD (CONT'D)
(chuckling to himself re:
the zine)
(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

At least there's one good thing
about staying at this dump.

INT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "TUESDAY"

Still wearing yesterday's faded fraternity t-shirt, Chad deposits his fanzine return envelope into the lobby's mail drop box as he heads out.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE SQUALID APT. BUILDING - AFTERNOON

On the front steps of the apartment building the caretaker hands a MAIL CARRIER a plastic bin full of mail. The carrier stuffs the mail into a mailbag and returns the empty bin to the caretaker.

MAIL CARRIER

See you tomorrow.

The mail carrier leaves, heading down the sidewalk.

A blob of bird shit SPLATS at the caretaker's feet. He looks up and spots a few pigeons on the apartment building's rooftop.

EXT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON

Breathing hard, the caretaker appears on the rooftop holding a machete. He takes a swing at the pigeons, decapitating them all at once.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carrying a fast food bag and wearing his worn fraternity t-shirt, Chad quickly overtakes the elderly man from Apt. #508 who is hobbling down the hallway with a heavy grocery bag.

Chad spots one of the man's hearing aids which has popped out of his ear and hangs on his hair for a moment before falling to the floor unnoticed.

Chad picks up the fallen hearing aid and taps the old man on his back. He stops and turns.

CHAD

(handing the hearing aid)
You dropped your hearing aid, old
man.

OLD MAN

Thank you son. I'm sorry about the loud music the other day, my hearing has gotten worse ever since my wife died. I still love to listen to the waltz music that we danced to.

Chad isn't sure what to say. He simply nods.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

What's your name? I'm Fred Dickerson.

CHAD

I'm Chad.

OLD MAN

(re: Chad's fraternity t-shirt)

Were you in a fraternity?

CHAD

I was.

(re: his t-shirt)

My two drinking buddies gave me this t-shirt. We used to be tight. Like the three musketeers. Haven't heard from them since graduation. I'm sure they're both in cushy jobs now living on the West Side with a hot sorority wife and a kid on the way.

OLD MAN

Why don't you give them a call?

CHAD

I did. They both ghosted me.

OLD MAN

Well, you can always make new friends, Chad.

CHAD

Great to meet you, Fred. I've got to go, gotta get up early for work tomorrow.

Fred nods. Chad continues on his way.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad enters and strips off his fraternity t-shirt and flings it into the trash. After a beat, he has a change of heart and retrieves his worn t-shirt from the garbage, setting it aside.

Chad spots Tuesday's issue of the horror fanzine which has been slipped underneath his door. He grabs it and sits down to read the new edition.

Tuesday's question is: "Just for fun, if you had to choose three household items to be used as murder weapons, what would they be?"

Chad looks at the items stacked on his bookcase. There's a worn dog leash, an old radio, and prescription pills. He grabs the Tuesday's response form and writes down the three items as his murder weapons.

CHAD
 (muttering to himself as
 he writes)
 An old dog leash. A radio. And my
 prescription drugs.

Once again Chad notices the warning on the back cover of the zine. It's the same warning that appeared in Monday's issue.

INT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "WEDNESDAY"

Chad drops off his fanzine return envelope into mail dropbox as the redheaded woman from Monday, enters the building with her small dog. She's carrying a bag of cookies. Chad is surprised to see her full figure. She's pregnant. She approaches him.

REDHEADED WOMAN
 You're Chad, right?

Chad nods.

REDHEADED WOMAN (CONT'D)
 I'm Sarah. The caretaker told me
 you stepped in my dog's poop the
 other day. I didn't know. I'm very
 sorry.

She hands Chad the bag of cookies.

REDHEADED WOMAN (CONT'D)

I know it's not much, but I thought you might like some of my favorite cookies. I have a lot going on as a single mom working full time, and sometimes I forget to bring poop bags when I take Jax for a walk.

Chad surprised himself by bending down to pet her dog.

CHAD

I used to have a dog. After it died, I kept its leash. I know it's stupid, I'm not sure why.

REDHEADED WOMAN

I understand. If you like, you can walk Jax sometime.

CHAD

I'd like that.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Once again Chad finds the next issue of the horror fanzine has been slipped under his door when he enters.

He picks it up and reads Wednesday's reader question: "Just for fun, if you had to choose three ways to torment your chosen murder victims, before dealing the final blow, how would you do it?"

Chad hesitates before grabbing the reply form. He stares at the question for a beat before setting it aside without answering it.

CHAD

(to himself)

Jesus. Don't be such a pussy.

Chad grabs the form and scribbles his answers on the form. He notices the same warning on the back cover of the fanzine. He flips over the booklet so that the warning is no longer on display.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE SQUALID APT. BUILDING - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "THURSDAY"

As Chad leaves the apartment building he sees the tall guy wearing sunglasses. Like before, he's standing on the sidewalk staring at Chad.

Chad approaches him and gets into his face. The tall guy steps back and removes his sunglasses. His eyes are milky white. He's blind.

TALL BLIND GUY
Hello, who are you?

CHAD
Chad Miller.

TALL BLIND GUY
I'm Benjamin Shumaker.

He extends his hand to shake Chad's. Benjamin's name sounds familiar to Chad.

CHAD
Did you used to tell stories to the kids at the downtown library on Saturday?

TALL BLIND GUY
I still do.

CHAD
One of my fraternity buddies had a kid sister who always went to that. She always raved about Benjamin, the blind guy who was an amazing storyteller.

TALL BLIND GUY
I'm glad she liked it.

He points to Chad's apartment building.

TALL BLIND GUY (CONT'D)
My brother used to live in this building. He died of cancer last fall. I know it's weird and sentimental, but I can still feel his presence when I stare at his building. Even though I can't see. Sometimes I stop by on my way to work.

Chad isn't sure how to respond.

CHAD

Well, it was nice meeting you,
Benjamin.

TALL BLIND GUY

Have a good day, Chad.

Benjamin calls his seeing eye dog who is sitting on the sidewalk nearby. The dog nudges Benjamin who picks up the dog's working harness and it leads him away.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Thursday's fanzine is under Chad's door that evening. He turns to the page with the reader question it states: "Just for fun, describe how you would murder your three victims."

He stares at the question for a beat.

CHAD

(to himself)

Fuck. These really are a sick set
of questions.

Despite his words, he picks up a pen and writes down the methods that pop into his head: "hanging, electrocution, and being drugged and pushed off a building."

CHAD (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

He seals the reply form with his written responses.

INT. SQUALID APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "FRIDAY"

On Friday, as Chad drops his reply form into the mailbox, he's followed by a ATHLETIC WOMAN wearing sweats and running shoes. She deposits a few envelopes in the mail dropbox.

Curious, Chad looks at the woman.

CHAD

(to the woman)

Have you been answering the
questions in this week's horror
lover's fanzine?

The woman gives Chad a strange look.

ATHLETIC WOMAN

What?

CHAD

It's a daily magazine called 'Just for Fun: A Horror Lover's Fanzine.' This week they asked readers to invent ways to torture and kill people.

She answers, backing away.

ATHLETIC WOMAN

Never heard of it.

She turns and quickly hurries out of the building.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE OF SQUALID APT. BUILDING - LATE AT NIGHT

Late at night when Chad returns to his building, he's shocked to find emergency vehicles and police gathered. A section of the street is restricted with yellow crime scene tape. Police hold back a growing crowd of spectators. Chad questions a spectator.

CHAD

What's going on?

SPECTATOR

There was some sort of killing spree. An old man was electrocuted in his bathtub, a pregnant woman was hung in her apartment, and a blind guy was drugged and pushed off the fire escape.

CHAD

Jesus!

SPECTATOR

I know, right! It blows my mind. It's really sick stuff.

Chad spots the caretaker nearby talking to a bystander and overhears his words.

CARETAKER

People today are carelessly brutal, acting without thinking. It's as if everything is just a video game to them. I wouldn't be surprised if the murderer was killing 'just for fun'.

Chad moves toward the caretaker and is about to speak with him but changes his mind as a policeman with a clipboard approaches to take the caretaker's statement.

INT. CHAD'S DINGY TOP FLOOR SINGLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "SATURDAY"

Chad mechanically finishes unpacking a few items, including a shaver, from his last box. In a distracted state, he stows his shaver in his tiny refrigerator without realizing what he just did.

Chad sits down to eat his fast-food dinner. He twists opens a beer, noticing that the top is oddly loose. He drinks from the bottle anyway.

Chad hears another fanzine being slipped under his door. Suddenly dizzy, Chad tires to steady himself as he stands, but he stumbles onto the floor.

CHAD'S APARTMENT - MONTAGE

Chad drifts in and out of consciousness during the evening, experiencing the night's events in a hazy, terrifying, semi-paralyzed state:

A man concealed in a black mask and wearing gloves, enters Chad's apartment and closes the door, locking it behind him. He helps Chad sit up.

Moments later, Chad desperately gasps for air as he hangs from his ceiling by a dog leash noose, until he passes out.

Chad wakes as his body burns and jerks erratically in his bathtub full of water. Pain pounds through his body as a hand pulls a radio out of the water.

Chad shivers as he becomes vaguely aware of being slumped over the fire escape railing outside his apartment. The man in the black mask's voice that seems familiar to Chad but he can't seem to place where he heard it.

MASKED MAN

(whispering in Chad's ear)

My mother was killed 'just for fun'
by a three drunk frat guys on a joy
ride. You were one of them Chad. Do
you even remember? I'm sure you
thought it was just a 'harmless'
prank, gone bad. Actions and words
have consequences, Chad. You were
warned, but you didn't listen.

Barely conscious, Chad mumbles a question.

CHAD

What's the rule of three?

MASKED MAN

What goes around, comes around. You
reap what you sow, Chad.

Chad notices the man's gloves, which fall short of his wrist. He recognizes the Caretaker's eyes tattoo on the masked man's wrist; one tattooed eye is almost obliterated, the other eye is intact. The Masked Man/Caretaker notices.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

(re: his tattoo)

An eye for an eye, Chad; that's how
it works.

The Masked Man/Caretaker shoves Chad off the fire escape, into a free fall. A car swerves to avoid Chad as he lands in the street with a THUD. He's killed by the fall.

INT. GRIMY APARTMENT BUILDING BASEMENT - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "SUNDAY"

In the apartment building's basement, the caretaker reads the Sunday newspaper. Chad has made the front page as the prime suspect in Friday's murders. The headlines read "New Resident, Chad Miller Prime Suspect in Friday's Apartment Killing Spree."

The article notes that "the apartment building's caretaker provided vital evidence in the case, including the killer's notes that listed his murder victims, weapons, and methods. The murderer's fingerprints and DNA were found on the murder weapons and his apartment application provided a perfect handwriting match to the handwriting of the killer."

The caretaker sets aside the newspaper. He grabs a piece of paper and feeds it into his manual typewriter. He types the words: "Just for Fun: A Horror Lover's Fanzine."

The caretaker mutters to himself.

CARETAKE

One down, two to go.