



The Weekly Man

Episode 14: Saturday – Jac

He woke to cold wet bedding. He hated it when he sweated the dream. Images of exploding eyes and steam spewing from children’s ears still lingered like a gruesome hangover of the inner mind. But this was good. This was his inspiration. This would be the food his masterpiece would dine on.

He’d thought it out from beginning to end, working out every detail in his head. He knew exactly what he wanted to do with this novel; he knew the characters and the story. It was all fleshed out in his mind and he was ready to start the writing today.

Today.

It was like he’d been looking forward to this all his life. He’d never understood why he had the dream. He’d never been to India and the dream had started even before he could read and scour the internet for information.

One of the things he hoped would happen from writing *Circus of No Hope* was, maybe the dream would finally go away. Maybe by writing it, he would exorcise it. Maybe he would never have to wake up to a cold wet bed again.

Lots of emails today. He looked at the subject lines and knew that no one had anything good to say to him. A. Fan was back. All he had to say this time was:

Getting closer.

A. Fan

“Good for you, A. Fan,” he said out loud. “You are so full of shit.” He never worried about the threats. He knew the A. Fans would never find him. He was barricaded by too many levels of internet security. They couldn’t trace his email. They couldn’t trace his publisher because he was

his publisher and he had layers of security surrounding the publishing, the royalties, the contact information—everything.

A subject line caught his attention:

When you read this I'll be dead.

He opened it.

Mr. Pierce. My name is Timothy. I am 10 yrs old and I red your book Janie and her Hamster and my dog Ringo died last week. I loved my dog and it really really hurt me that he died. Please don't tell anyone else that I said this but I went up to my bedroom and I cried. I really loved him. I was in a really really bad mood for a few days and then I read Janie and Her Hamster and it started to make sense to me. My parents got me a new dog today. A german shepard and they said he cost them a fortune but they want me to be happy. But after reading your book I know there is only one way I can be happy. I named him Chico and then I cut his throat with my camping knife. He didn't make much noise when he died. He just looked into my eyes and looked like he was confused. I knew I would grow to love him and that he would die someday and it would really really hurt just like when Janie's hamster died. And when Ringo died. And I don't ever want to be hurt anymore so I am going to cut my wrists and go to bed. I'm going to take Chico with me and maybe we'll go to heaven together. My mom says there's no pain there. I hope she's right. What do you think?

Timothy

Something that Jac had learned long ago was to not hit the panic button too early. First, he didn't know if the email was on the level. It could have been sent by someone pretending to be a kid who'd just killed his dog, someone like an adult who wanted to mess with his head. There were plenty of them out there. Best strategy at his point: Ignore the email. Don't even respond to it. There was no way to know if it was on the level or not and he had a sense that the writing style seemed like an adult writing as a child. He decided to slide this one off the table until he heard more... if he heard more.

He looked at his daily notification telling him all the places where his name had been mentioned. He liked this app. It allowed him to find out what people were saying about him, where his work had been reviewed and where he was making an impact. It seemed that he was making a big impact in parent and family forums. He didn't have to read any of these to know nothing good was being said about him.

He saw a blog in the list, *The Word and Its Many Meanings*. He clicked the link. It took him to a cookie cutter blog with a bright sunny background of a pasture and an obnoxious font that pretty much erased the background theme. The top posting was titled **HE MUST BE STOPPED. IMMEDIATELY**. Apparently, he, Simon Pierce, was the one who needed stopping. He was a soul-poisoning demon who was at war with humanity and the author of the posting was suggesting that the world rise up and carry him out to an ocean of oblivion.

This nutcase is trying to get someone to kill me.

He looked at the comments section. Nothing. He browsed through the other postings, all of which appeared to be rants about the human race being on the precipice of disaster but some kind of supreme being was going to save everybody if we all just listened to his word. And the author really had it in for plastic. None of the postings had comments.

So nobody's reading your bullshit, whoever you are.

He was tempted to write something in the comments section but decided it might be best to just ignore it.

Enough mail for today. Time to write.

He opened the folder labeled Circus. There was one document in it. Of No Hope. He liked the way the folder name segued into the document name. He opened the document. The title at the top of the page read Circus of No Hope.

And that was it. Nothing else. He put his fingers on the keyboard. He stared at the title as images of screaming children and burning clowns raced through his mind. He could almost feel the heat and smell the burning flesh. He sat for over an hour with his fingers on the keyboard and the space under the title was still blank. He shrugged his shoulders and took his fingers off the keyboard.

Maybe later. Maybe the words just aren't ready to flow.

He knew they would come eventually. They always did.

Later that afternoon, he stared out the window at the people in the park and the ones filling benches on the sidewalks around the park. The trees were losing their leaves, the green giving way to patches of red, yellow and lime. He never watched TV or went to any news or entertainment sites. He never engaged in chat sessions or anything else that might bring him into contact with other people at any personal level. Friends died or moved away or deceived you or did something that would cause you pain. He remembered the only friend he'd ever had. He was ten years old at the time.

Jac's life was different than other kids his age. He was home schooled by his mother and spent most of his time around their house in a rural area miles from the city. It was a big house in the center of several acres of woods and unused pasture. His memories of that time were vague with the exception of almost crystal clear memories of a big bedroom with high ceilings and his very own fireplace. He spent most of his time in his bedroom and most of that time was spent with the son of their next door neighbors, Alex. Next door was over a mile away.

Alex and Jac played games like Snakes and Ladders and Fish and I See With My Little Eye. Alex almost always won, but Jac didn't mind; he played the games just for the pleasure of playing. He had a feeling that Alex played that way as well but he had an ability to focus that fascinated Jac. When they played Fish, it was like everything in the world disappeared and there was only the cards and the game. He rarely spoke and when he did it was with short sentences, just enough to get his meaning across. He remembered his mother referring to Alex once as autistic. At the time, Jac wasn't entirely sure what that meant but he was sure it had something to do with Alex's ability to focus so deeply. They were friends for about a year.

One day, Alex didn't show up. Jac asked his mother about it and she told him that Alex wouldn't be coming over anymore. When he asked why, she said that it was complicated and left it at that. Jac clearly remembered crying and feeling like, suddenly, he was the only person in the world.

A few months later, his mother died and Jac lost and remaining interest in owning anything or growing close to anyone.