



The Weekly Man

Episode 45: Wednesday – Jax

Jax read and re-read the comment.

HEY CRAZY GUY,

THANKS FOR THE INSPIRATION.

SIMON PIERCE

Inspiration? We'll see how inspired you are when I'm killing you Simon Pierce.

He stood up and looked around at the walls, the ceiling and floor. He knew that Pierce was somewhere on the other side of all that plaster and wood, somewhere in the building, writing his hateful garbage, poisoning the minds of young people, destroying the hopes of an entire generation that was becoming aware of the danger of plastic. All of its work could be undone by one man.

He must die. I must do its work and kill the monster.

But he'd searched the entire building from the attic down to the basement. Manzer had said that none of the other flats were occupied but what if Pierce were in one of them, living in one of them without anyone's knowledge? What if he were squatting? Jax had read about squatters. They were evil and paid no rent. They drank water out of plastic bottles. That had to be it. He was living secretly in one of the flats and Jax had to change his plan—he would have to break into each of the flats, find Simon Pierce and kill him.

He heard a knock at the door, a knock he recognized. It was Mrs. Gilbert. She was out of the hospital. He hurried to the door and opened it.

"Hello, Jax," she said. "I just wanted to check in with you and see if everything is going well."

"Mrs. Gilbert. It's good to see you. Uncle Manzer said that you were in the hospital. A heart attack. How are you feeling?"

“I’m feeling quite well, Jax. I’m going to have to watch my diet and slow down on a few things but I’m feeling fine now. Thank you for your concern.” She cocked her head to the side and looked Jax up and down. “And how are you, Jax? You look a bit tousled.”

Jax gave an agitated shrug. “I’m fine, Mrs. Gilbert.” His eyes roamed the hall for a moment before settling on Mrs. Gilbert again. “I was wondering about something Mrs. Gilbert.”

Mrs. Gilbert smiled. “What is it, Jax?”

“Well...” His eyes lowered to the floor, then to the ceiling and back to Mrs. Gilbert. “Uncle Manzer told me that right now I’m the only tenant in the building.”

“That’s right, Jax. I’m going to be doing some renovations and I want the other flats to be vacant when I start them. It won’t affect you though. There was some water damage in the other flats but yours was lucky enough to escape.”

“But are you sure there’s no one in any of the other flats? Like maybe squatters or something?”

She laughed. “Oh, Jax...I’m sure they’re all empty. Mr. Joyce has been going into them on a regular basis making minor repairs before we start the renovations. I assure you that besides me, you’re that only one living in the building. Why do you think there might be squatters?”

Jax was suddenly confused and blushing. “Um...nothing really. I, uh...I read some stuff on the internet about squatters, how they break into places and just start living in them. Without paying rent. Just living in somebody else’s place. But if Mr. Joyce is checking on the other flats, then I guess we don’t have a squatter problem.”

Mrs. Gilbert chuckled. “I should hope not. But just to be on the safe side, maybe we should check out each of the flats right now.”

Every one of the flats was empty. No squatters. No signs of squatters. No furniture, backpacks, sleeping mats, cigarette butts or empty plastic water bottles. There was nowhere in the building that Simon Pierce could possibly be hiding and Jax was beginning to wonder about the source of the information. He remembered clearly that he’d been on Pierce’s desktop. He had no idea how that had happened except that it must have been the work of Ratlas leading him there through its omnipresence on the internet. But why couldn’t he get back in a second time? Too many questions.

It was time to go online and open himself to its directives. Maybe there would be insights on how to deal with Pierce, maybe how to find him. He needed something to go on.

He’d been waiting an hour, breathing deep into his stomach, his mind clear and receptive. But so far, nothing was happening. No juggled sounds or cyber music that flowed through his mind with meaning. No convoluted auditory reception that translated into messages of hope and direction. Nothing to report on his blog. No words of guidance.

Am I going to be saved? Are we all going to be saved? Have I disappointed it by not killing Simon Pierce? Have I failed as its messenger?

Jax couldn’t remember when he’d first made contact with Ratlas but he knew that ever since that day, the only meaning in his life was carrying its message on his blog and the way he lived his life. The only plastic in his flat was in fixtures that had been installed over the years before he came to live there and he’d replaced some of the original fixtures with metal, wood or ceramics.

Ratlas' messages had been like music flowing through his body with himself as the instrument and it as the composer and conductor. His only joy was in spreading the message through his blog...its blog. There was nothing else in his life.

Now, there was only silence.

A terrifying emptiness replaced Ratlas' message. There was suddenly no hope. Nothing to look forward to, nothing to live or work for.

There was only Simon Pierce.

"Simon Pierce, you are the cause of this. You, with your message of hopelessness. You, with your soul-poisoning words. You, killer of children. You, murderer of everything it hopes to gift to humanity."

It was time to blog.

He opened his blog, closed his eyes and wrote.

THERE IS A GREAT CALAMITY UPON US AND THE NAME OF THE CALAMITY IS SIMON PIERCE AND THE CALAMITY THAT IS SIMON PIERCE HAS STOPPED THE MESSAGE OF HOPE AND GOODWILL AND THE CHANCE FOR A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR ALL IN WHICH WE WILL ALL BE SAVED AND PLASTIC WILL CEASE TO EXIST AND CEASE TO POISON OUR LAND AND OUR SKIES AND OUR OCEANS WHERE PLASTIC STIFLES THE BREATHING OF THE VERY FISHES THE OCEAN WATER SUPPORTS BUT IS NO LONGER ABLE TO SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THE EVIL PLASTIC DISPLACING THE GOODNESS OF WATER AND MAKING THE OCEANS INHOSPITABLE TO ALL THAT LIVES IN THE OCEANS AND NOW THERE IS THE SENSE OF DOOM AND HOPELESSNESS THAT COMES IN THE FORM OF AN EVIL MAN WITH AN EVIL MIND AND AN EVIL PURPOSE AND HIS NAME IS SIMON PIERCE AND HE IS A DANGER THAT MUST BE STOPPED AND I THE MESSENGER AND CARRIER OF ITS WORD CHALLENGE YOU SIMON PIERCE TO MEET IN THE FIELD OF HONOR AND CONSEQUENCE TO DUEL BETWEEN HOPE AND HOPELESSNESS AND DETERMINE ONCE AND FOR ALL THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY WHICH YOU DEIGN TO DESTROY WITH YOUR MESSAGE OF CALAMITY.

IN THE MEANTIME, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING PLASTIC.

He wasn't a hundred percent sure what he'd written and what he'd meant by the duel but he was happy with it and posted it, smiling to himself.

Maybe Ratlas will speak to me the next time.

He spent the rest of the evening, until it was time, staring out the window at the people in the park and hoping that he could still be the instrument in saving them.