



The Weekly Man

Episode 62: Saturday - Jac

Jac had expected this. He wasn't disappointed.

I can't even begin to express my happiness that this piece of shit writer is dead. He never deserved to live in the first place and the world is a better place without him. I hope he's rotting in hell. I hope he suffers forever. I hope his suicide was painful. I hope he wished he didn't do it just before he died. Time for the world to rejoice. Simon Pierce is dead!

GavinTRigger

Well, I seem to have made a few people happy. But, GavinTRipper, I think you might be coming off as a little on the harsh side.

There were dozens of comments on his book site, and no mercy. It seemed to Jac that the world was rejoicing. Not one person suggested that by killing himself and destroying his books, maybe there was hope for him at the end.

Not gonna happen, Simon. They hate you. They hated you alive and they hate you dead. Good thing you're not me anymore.

There was something in the meaning of these words that disturbed him in some faraway mindset, like seeing a mosquito flying out the window and wondering if it had already bitten you.

But you were me. You were me since I was a child. You were me as you wrote every single word. I was the monster that you were and you are the monster that I was.

Jac realized that it was going to take some time before he fully accepted this new view on life. It would take time to completely accept that it was OK to value things, that it was OK to love things—including life—and want to hang on to them for however long he could.

Maybe I'll get a dog.

Hey Simon, baby, I'm not falling for any of this bullshit. You're still alive. You're pretending to be dead because you're afraid of the flack that's coming your way after you talked that kid into killing himself and his dog. Nice work on that. You must be proud. But nothings stopping you from getting yours. I'm getting closer Simon.

I'm getting closer.

Have a nice day.

A. Fan

Fuck you A. Fan. I'll be closing down every Simon Pierce link that leads to me and Simon Pierce will be dead and way beyond your empty threats.

Asshole.

Increasingly, a disturbing image crossed his mind: that of a young boy cutting his wrists after cutting his pet dog's throat and somehow it seemed all the more macabre that he even thought to kill his dog before killing himself.

Why haven't I thought about that until now?

It was a puppy. The kid killed his puppy.

He couldn't remember feeling anything like remorse in his entire life. He'd felt pain and loss when his mother died, but he'd never felt bad about anything he'd done himself. His view of life had always been inspired from his own experiences. Sharing that view with others through his writing was something he felt, at some level, was the right thing to do, to warn others. To help others to not feel the pain of loss.

But he wondered if that was that really what he'd been doing?

He thought about the dead boy and his dead dog. He thought about the reports of kids with emotional problems from reading his books. In the past, he'd ignored this, let it bounce off whatever conscience he allowed himself to have. But then, he was good at ignoring things, at selecting his realities.

Don't get into that. Not now. Just accept that you fucked up and get on with things. That's all you can do now. Let Simon Pierce die and let Jac Munroe live.

He did a search on owning a pet dog and was surprised by the number of them that used the word "adoption" as though you were buying a family member as opposed to a pet. And the prices were through the ceiling, even at the animal shelters.

They want me to pay over two hundred bucks for a dog that nobody wants?

He looked at the bad photographs of dogs waiting to be adopted, the red-eye glare obscuring what was supposed to be big brown eyes "looking for a loving home." They were mostly full body shots of animals that looked like their bodies had been through hell.

Portraits would be so much better. You can't tell the character of a dog, or any living thing, through its body. You need to see the eyes, the curvature of the face.

He'd never had a dog but he knew this to be true of life; thus, it was true of dogs. He studied the images of terriers, boxers, shih tzus, Siberian huskies and breeds he imagined the people placing the ads were making wild guesses at. There seemed to be more terriers than other breeds.

He wondered if terriers had bad tempers, if they bit children or if they weren't really looking for a loving family and just wanted to be left alone.

Do I really deserve to own a dog after what I did? Do I deserve to feel comforted with the body heat of a dog pressed against me on a cold night? I made children kill their pets. Their dogs, their hamsters. Janie was a virus I created to infect the lives of innocent children who suffered because of my writing.

It occurred to him that he needed to right a wrong. He needed to do something good to balance out the bad that he'd done. At first, he wasn't too hot about the idea and questioned his sincerity. He questioned if there was anything he could ever do to balance things.

You can't bring a ten-year old boy and his dog back from the dead.

But the more he thought about it, the more he liked the idea of turning his writing towards hope and the idea that everything in life should be cherished rather than abandoned.

But what am I going to write about? What do I know enough about that I can write stories that'll inspire positive feelings toward life? Positive feelings.

He scrolled down the page of pathetic looking animals with severe red-eye. He scrolled past a picture of a Beagle and quickly scrolled back up. It was a skinny excuse for a dog but there was something about it that attracted Jac. It was \$150 but it came with all its shots taken care of. There was something about the way its head was cocked to one side, as if it knew what the picture was for, as if it were posing for that "loving" home. He called the shelter and asked if the dog were still available. It was. The girl on the other end started asking questions about him. He said he would call back and hung up.

This is it. This is where I go next.

It was all so clear: the next step in his writing career. He would buy the Beagle and he would go on adventures with it in the park and he would write children's stories about him and his dog. He would need a new pen name, one that would sum up his love for his dog and wouldn't be associated with the ire of a hateful reading public. He would have to come up with a name for the dog.

What do you call a Beagle? Snoopy?

He visited sites on raising dogs, dog health, how to properly feed a dog, medical care for dogs, dog training, dog psychology, dog toys, dog clothing, dog owner support groups, dog accessories, dog vacations, dog rights...

There's a lot more to this dog thing than initially meets the eye.

He navigated back to the picture of the Beagle and imagined himself walking down the street with the Beagle on a leash walking proudly in front of Jac, woofing hello to passersby and others walking their dogs. He imagined himself sitting on the couch looking out the window with the dog asleep on the couch beside him. He imagined throwing Frisbees in the park, the dog jumping into the air to make brilliant catches. Women passing by and seeing Jac and his Beagle would stop and ask him questions about the dog.

Anything's possible now. Anything.

He looked out the window. Shadows of buildings stretched across the park as the sun set. It was getting dark earlier each day and from where he sat, the bare branches of trees looked like surreal plumbing in the sky framed by the windows. It suddenly occurred to him that he wanted to go for a walk in the park and think about his future.

First, though, he went online and sent a message.

He savored the pastrami and mustard burp. He'd eaten slowly, relishing each bite, letting the flavors roll across his tongue, the textures rub against the flesh of his mouth. The twilight shadows and highlights of trees in the park as the sun went down created a fascinating park silhouette outlined by the lamps that lined its paths. There were still joggers and walkers, people sitting on benches but the baby strollers were in for the day and the park was quiet. People still nodded as they passed him.

He found an empty bench surrounded by bushes. He sat down and stretched his legs out in front of him. It was all so strange to him. Everything he'd believed in for as long as he could remember was suddenly the stuff of memory. He didn't believe any of it. There was value to life and value in valuing life. It was OK to want things, to love things, to hold things in your hand and tell yourself, "This is mine and I love it." Even if you lost it, it was yours until you lost it.

He still missed his mother and he sometimes thought about Alex, wondering where he was and what kind of adult he'd grown up to be. He missed the house in the country and the kitchen where he'd spent so much time with his mother. He remembered the aromas of things baking in the oven or cooking in skillet on the stove, the delicious heaviness of food smell, making his mouth water, his stomach ache. He remembered warmth and comfort, in spite of his mother's teachings and warnings.

All that had changed when his mother died and the dreams started. He barely remembered the years after his mother's death, the same routine each day, but with Miss Winchester. He barely remembered what she looked like or the sound of her voice. His memory of her and every minute spent with her was a blur.

And that made him wonder about the memory lapses, the tiny anomalies over the years that he couldn't put his finger on and say, "I remember this clearly. Here's what happened..." A part of him knew that was never going to happen. A part of him wanted desperately for that to happen. Another part of him gaped fearfully at the possibility of that ever happening.

What is that? What is there about my life, hidden from me through all this forgetting and ignoring things that I should be afraid of? What am I afraid of?

The night was surprisingly warm for the time of year. The park was quiet, serene and comfortable. Sitting on the bench, savoring the scent of dead leaves, he suddenly felt a wave of relaxation course through his body. The questions and doubts evaporated into a cloud of uncaring as his head slumped to one side and he fell asleep.

Natalie was frantic. It was long past the time for Jac and he still wasn't home. She hadn't seen him leave the building.

They're all going out more often now. Out on their own. Where I can't keep an eye on them. How long can I keep this up with them going off on their own like this?

What will happen if Jackie wakes up before the transformation is complete?

What?