
THE GRIM LIFE OF MR. HAPPY

Posted by bulldust - 2018/01/31 18:04

The Bull is back from his battle with cell phone providers and smartphone manufacturers. Let me tell you, those cell phone companies really piss me off. I had multiple conversations with these people that resulted in nothing. Even after I threatened to trample the kiosk in "Worst Purchase" store, they refused to revive my poor phone. They told me my Samsung Galaxy S (1) was no longer support and would not even let me have the firmware image for it. Finally, the Bullmeister found a website with the ROMs stored, like golden images of days gone by. The phone has been restored, with no help of these bastards that try to persistently make me upgrade. This whole endeavor almost made me lose my shit and go postal on the phone company, which brings me to the subject of this new cap that came in.

First of all, there is nothing new under the sun. We all know that even the most far-fetched speculative fiction harks back to familiar human situations. Star Wars was a groundbreaking movie but largely a retelling of the Japanese movie "The Hidden Fortress". This is common and expected. So when I started reading this cap, it did not bother me too much that this was a familiar theme.

In the comic book realm, it is a common trope for the horribly disfigured good guy to turn bad, look at Harvey Dent, Two-Face in Batman. That's what we see here with Lyles. He tried to save a girl, fails and gets horribly burned in the process. The psychological and physical scars take a toll on his personality.

The thing is, the moment he snapped didn't really make sense to me. Yeah, there was some build up. In fact, there was almost too much groundwork laid out. There was a great deal of expository description, followed by this leap:

On the day of his next therapy session, he sat at his kitchen table, fully clothed in hood and gloves, talking to himself.
"How does that make you feel, Lyles?"
"It makes me feel angry."
"And how does that make you, Lyles?"
"It makes me feel sad."
"But how does that make you feel, Lyles?"
"It makes me feel happy!" Lyles laughed and stood up, catching his own reflection in his microwave.

So, effectively Lyles went from being annoyed that therapy was taking too long, to feeling unresolved about his anger and sorrow, to just suddenly being completely batshit insane. He starts burning little girls in an attempt to save them. But when he does try to save them, he freezes. He moves on from children to anyone he can grab. Soon he forgets that he was supposed to be trying to save his victims.

He eventually ends up burning himself and when his old fire captain finds his body, he states:

"It almost looks like he's happy."

Technically, this cap is okay. I think there were only a few commas out of place, a missing "the" and the word lamppost was lamp post. There is nothing wrong with this cap. However, I found nothing spectacular with this cap either. It left me flat. It felt like just another psycho killer story. Too much explanation, too little to be emotionally connected to. I could not really sympathize with Lyles. I couldn't feel his human condition.

So, unfortunately, no. This needs to be more relatable before it is ready for the Monkey.

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Re:THE GRIM LIFE OF MR. HAPPY

Posted by rockefeller - 2018/02/03 17:15

What the Bullmeister said. Especially regarding cell phones. Rocks didn't want The Plan, just wanted to pay for usage. But this cannot be done anymore. Today it's all about The Plan. So, a trip to Wal-mart, two trips to the Virgin Mobile kiosk, an hour or two on the phone with an "awesome" Virgin "customer care specialist" (never getting the same info anywhere twice), another trip to Wal-mart for another hour on the horn with more support specialists, and Rocks got locked into a working phone for two years on The Plan. He lost his new cell phone the next day at the supermarket. But, fortunately, a customer turned it in, or Rocks would've had to buy another two phones (the one he lost and the one to replace it) for The Plan. So, unlike this cap, this story has a happy ending.

But also regarding this cap. Rocks totally concurs with his behorned colleague. Let's see... Lyles becomes a firefighter. Lyles is badly burned trying (but failing) to save a little blonde girl. Lyles undergoes physical and, later, psychological therapy, but is still unfit for duty. People gawk at him because he's hideous. Sometimes they make unkind remarks. Lyles

takes to abducting young blonde school girls and burning them alive in his apartment. (Rocks figures Lyles must have disabled all his smoke alarms even though, as an ex-firefighter, he should know better. Rocks also thinks none of Lyles' neighbors had any sort of sense of smell. Like once, just to see what would happen and because he's kind of a pig when naked, Rocks tossed a little piece of fingernail onto the coils in the club's sauna. It stank like a motherfucker for quite a while, and was kind of embarrassing. Rocks thinks cremating a whole living person tied to a chair in your living room would probably stink a lot more.) Eventually Lyles becomes less discriminating in those he incinerates in his apartment, but only the abduction and burning of little blonde school girls is described in what's probably borderline gratuitous detail. This continues until Lyles accidentally burns himself to death while trying to burn an uncooperative little blonde school girl.

The prose, while technically correct, the odd missing hyphen and confusion of the verbs to lie and to lay notwithstanding, falls short. In other words, its reach does not exceed its grasp, but which sort of exacerbates the whole gratuitous vibe. Also, somehow, it's very slow paced overall. Too much banal, wandering-from-point-A-to-point-B narrative.

In case it's not clear, Rocks did not like this one. Maybe he'll mosey down to the Floor and throw it in the Porthole where Boli, normally a very shrewd judge of character, would have if he hadn't been mesmerized by Carol's tits. No.

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