

The Piñata Killer (Piñata TF)

A terrible giggling tickled her ears, juvenile yet gigantic, as if an evil child had just succeeded in balancing a water bucket over the door of the whole world.

Sophie, her heart pounding, whirled on the spot, one hand clasping the strap of her bag even as the other fumbled inside it for pepper spray. “Who’s there?” she called, trying to keep the tremor out of her voice.

The wind slipped between her feet, catching her ankles and making her shiver. She’d picked a classic sexy Harley costume for the party, and while it went great with her bestie’s Poison Ivy outfit, the fishnet stockings weren’t doing much to keep her legs warm. The cold had kept most of the trick-or-treaters inside this Halloween, but she’d made the mistake of walking home in person, and why not? It was only a couple of blocks, after all. Now she felt like an idiot.

“Who’s there?” she repeated, certain she could see someone standing at the other end of the street. Above, the streetlights flickered – they’d always been useless in this part of town – and when the light returned, the shape she thought she’d seen was gone.

She remained there for several seconds anyway, her hands tight around her spray just in case, until at last her embarrassment overwhelmed her caution. Slipping the can back into her purse, she sighed. “Jesus Christ, Sophie, get a hold of yourself. You’re not exactly Jamie Lee Curtis.”

She marched on, clinging to the strap of her bag like a lifeline, and behind her, that evil child giggled in the darkness again.

Half a block farther on, her phone started ringing. Coming to a stop under a streetlight, she leaned against it and scanned the screen. Another text from Amy, naturally, asking her whether she’d gotten home safely yet – it was nice of her to be concerned, considering she was the reason Sophie was on her own in the first place. They were supposed to be walking home together, but, oh, *someone* had to sneak off with a cute guy, didn’t she?

Sending what she hoped was a spitefully curt reply, Sophie set off again. And no sooner had she stepped out of the light than she heard the rustling again on the wind again. There, drifting in on the breeze from the nearby trees: a sound like someone shaking a bag of leaves. And maybe it was just the leaves, but it slammed an icicle into her spine and made her shiver all the same. Swallowing, her hand fumbling for her pepper spray, she advanced on the trees, using her phone as a flashlight. She knew it was probably just a cat or something, but–

It wasn’t a cat.

The man in the trees stood at seven feet at minimum, broad-shouldered and muscled like a bodybuilder, though the clothes wrapped tight around his form couldn’t have been more juvenile: denim dungarees, a stripey shirt, one of those ridiculous helicopter caps that you

always saw in the old cartoons and which you never ever imagined anyone would actually wear in real life. To complement it: a big red balloon swinging wildly in the wind, and a gigantic baseball bat which he dragged along the ground. Someone had wrapped a blindfold around his head, but she was certain he could see her.

“Candy,” he said, and he took a step towards her, the leather of his comically-underized sneakers creaking as it met the sidewalk. “Can-dy...”

Sophie took a step back, trembling from head down to her toes. Only when her pepper spray fell from her hands, striking the sidewalk with a crack, did she finally snap out of her trance. Screaming, she snatched it up and took aim at the freak’s face, ready to squeeze at any second. “St-stay away from me! Stay away! Stay—!”

The monster’s bat swung with a whippish crack, too fast for the eye to properly see. He swung the thing like it was a fucking rapier – one handed, as if it weighed nothing – and when it met her pepper spray it exploded. Only, instead of the cloud of gas you might have expected, it produced nothing more than a fine rain of peppermint candy.

Sophie was too shocked to notice. Hissing, she recoiled, clasping her fingers with a grimace. He’d almost taken her hand off!

“Can-dy,” repeated the creature, taking another step towards her, and on trembling legs, she stumbled back, her heart pounding so hard in her chest it was a miracle it didn’t come flying out of her mouth.

The heel of her Harley Quinn boots caught in a crack in the sidewalk, and with a scream she toppled and landed on her denim-clad ass. Not a second later, the monster was over her, its balloon bobbing in one hand while it raised its bat with the other, raised it high, ready to bring it down on her head and—

She rolled just in time to avoid it. Striking the sidewalk instead, it made a strange sound: not the crack of wood on stone you might have expected, but a soft *crunch*, as if it had struck cardboard instead. Sophie screamed and scrabbled at the ground, ripping one of her false nails off in her scramble back to her feet.

For all her panic, she wasn’t fast enough. Not half a second later, the monster swung again, and this time the bat crashed into her left leg with a sickening crunch. Sophie screamed, though there was no pain, no pain at all. Just a terrible tingling, like pins and needles, only infinitely more intense.

Leaping forward, she grabbed the streetlight and struggled to support herself. Where the monster’s bat had struck, her leg had gone dead, and when she tried to place her weight on it, it felt like it would give at any second.

Breathing hard now, she turned just in time to see the creature raising its bat for another swing – this time, it was aiming for her arm.

With a scream, she turned and hobbled off, as fast as she could while dragging her broken leg behind. The creature laughed and lopped after her at a steady, playful pace, like a child chasing a friend at a birthday party, and its balloon trailed behind it like a blood moon in the sky.

As she fled, Sophie scrambled in her purse for her phone and barely managed to find Amy's number. "Amy! Amy, please!" she cried, barely able to speak through the panic. "Amy, please you've got to help me! Please, there's this fucking freak with a bat and I think he's broken my leg and— and— and I—"

"Sophie?" said Amy, sounding almost as panicked as her. "Amy, where are you? Amy?! I—"

The baseball bat struck her arm just under the wrist, producing a crack like a snapping Twix. Sophie screamed, her phone flying from her hand, and stumbled back, sweat dripping from her face and her heart pounding so hard she could barely hear anything over its beating. Where the killer's bat had struck her wrist, her skin was ragged and torn and—

In her panic, it took her a second to realize exactly what she was looking at. No, her skin wasn't damaged at all — it was *gone*. Where her smooth, pale flesh had been was a layer of sugar paper strips, bright pink, and that wasn't even the worst of it: even as she watched, her fingers melded together into a dark lump, more like the hoof of a horse than part of a human body. Looking down, she realized the same was true of her leg: no wonder she couldn't walk on it properly. It looked like it belonged to a—

As this last little piece of the puzzle slipped into Sophie's head, the reality of her situation congealed like spilled blood. She stared at her arm, her heart thudding in her chest. A piñata! He was turning her into a—

The creature's next strike slammed into her right arm just under the shoulder, with a sound like a crumpling can. With a squeal, Sophie flew to the left and, landing on her bad leg with an equally terrifying crunch, ended up on her back on the floor, unable to do anything as the killer's bat came crashing down on her again. This time, it struck her in the chest, and with a crack, her breasts, her beautiful breasts, vanished, replaced by a plumage of tiny pink strips. A terrified laugh escaped her lips — it was all too much, all too much. He was turning her into a piñata! Into a piñata!

Then she saw the glint of that awful balloon in the moonlight again, and with a scream rolled just in time to avoid taking the bat to the head. It struck her ass instead, and as she yelped in pain, a long, pink tail — not horse hair, but long strips of paper — sprang from her tail bone.

Tears in her eyes and a scream halfway up her throat, she scrambled forward, desperate, desperate to escape, but it was impossible to crawl with a hoof for a hand and another for a foot, and not a moment later she heard the creak of the monster's sneakers as he marched calmly after her. "Can-dy."

With a moan, she rolled over. "Please!" she cried. "Please! I'll give you anything! I'll get you as much candy as you want! Please!"

The killer's eyes, hidden behind its blindfold, bored into her without mercy. "Can-dy."

This time, the bat struck her jaw.

With a scream, Sophie jerked back, teeth – actually little mints – flying from her mouth. When she touched it with her one remaining good hand, it didn't feel like her face anymore. Looking down, she saw a long, equine snout, pink and papery. A sound escaped her throat, but it was less a scream and more a whiney.

The bat crashed into her remaining foot, instantly smashing it into a second hoof. When she kicked anyway, scrambling to get away, he did the same to her remaining hand as well. Perversely, it actually helped – now she could canter, just like a real horse!

If she'd adjusted faster, she might actually have been able to put some distance between them. Instead, she took off on trembling legs, shuddering like a newborn filly, and the killer finished her off with one final strike to the back of the head.

All at once, everything went very black and very sweet.

When Sophie woke, she found herself dangling, swinging slowly to-and-fro from the ceiling of a murky basement. In a flash of panic, she struggled to suck in air and scream, but her mouth refused to open and no sound emerged from her lips, not even an equine whine. All she achieved was making herself swing back and forth a little harder.

In turning, she came face to face with an elaborate window in the wall. On the other side of it hung a piñata, a bright pink piñata in the shape of a stylized horse. It swung back and forth, back and forth and back again, and though she was certain it was nothing more than paper-mache and paper, it had human eyes, big, blue human eyes, staring back at her in terror.

Belatedly, she realized she wasn't looking through a window.

The creak of sneakers behind her. A hand grabbed Sophie's rump and spun her to face the blindfold of the maniac.

Please! she cried, shaking in her panic now. *Please, turn me back! Turn me back!*

The creature simply took a step back. "Candy," it said, raising its bat.

Sophie's heart stopped. *Please! Please, you can't do this! You can't do it! You can't--! You can't--! You--!*

The bat struck her with a crack, just under the chin, spilling her candy all over the basement.