

## **A REAL VAMPIRE?**

**“Hey Rabbi, you going trick or treating, Saturday?”**

**“Wouldn’t miss it,” Josh chuckles, shaking his head.**

**What costume you wearing?**

**“Wilt Chamberlain.”**

**The rabbi’s response brings a hearty round of laughter from the guys. For those of you new to the neighborhood, Josh stands about five foot five. Wilt, was seven two.**

**“How about you, Father?”**

**“Oh, definitely one of the Village People,” Ace says to more laughter.**

**Which one? Hammer asks.**

**I’m thinking, the cowboy,” Ace says, chuckling at the thought.**

**“Oh sure,” the priest deadpans, “all that experience roping cattle in Brooklyn when I was a boy.”**

**“No, Ace, I’m thinking the biker,” Josh laughs. “You know, that gang banger Bob was back in the day.”**

**Laughing with the gang, “Bullets” shakes his head. “A priest and his chopper ...**

**I can picture it now...”**

**Hi, Tony here. Tonight’s another movie night hosted by Pastor Williams. About a dozen of the neighborhood gang are here, along with Mr. Orville Krankus, Father Bob’s next-door neighbor at St. Kate’s. Tonight’s movie was Abbot and Costello meets Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Wolfman. An old classic from, I think, the 50’s. A bit of cinema history.**

**I’m guessing the guys decided on it because Halloween’s just around the corner. It’s a bit of campy fun; nothing deep or soul searching.**

**After all, what deep philosophical meanings can you find in Abbot and Costello? Then again, if anyone can, it's these guys.**

**Let's listen in...**

Pouring a cup of coffee, Father Bob chuckles.

“You know, that was one of the first movies I ever saw as a kid. I was about seven and had to beg my mom to let me watch it. If it hadn't been Abbot and Costello, she'd have definitely said no. But she loved Abbot and Costello so I guess she figured; how scary could it be.”

“Colonel, I'm a bit surprised to see you here,” Martin Williams says. “Didn't see you as the movie buff type.”

“Actually, Reverend, you're right. Oh, I did enjoy movies with my wife before she passed. But since then, honestly, sitting alone in a theatre is kinda depressing.”

A sympathetic look ambles across the Baptist minister's face. “I can imagine,” he says. “So, I'm curious, then why did you join us?”

“Well, the other day Bob and I were talking about the real, or maybe, hidden, meaning of things. When he told me about your movie night and tonight's film, I asked if I could join you fellas.”

“Well, welcome, hope to see you as a regular ...we'd love to have you.”

“Thanks Martin. I just might do that.”

Pausing, a reflective look ambles across the Colonel's face.

“I saw this movie a long time ago,” he says. “I was interested to see how you guys saw it. Whether as just simple entertainment, or if you see a deeper meaning in these ‘monsters.’”

Sipping his drink, ‘Bullets’ looks at the Colonel. “Sounds like you've given this some thought,” he says.

“And you see some of that deeper meaning, as you call it, in Bud and Lou’s three nemeses?” Hammer asks.

“Well, I’m not a churchgoer, Walt. But I do hold to the idea that in mankind are universal moral principles grounded in the intention and the will of a creator. A god you might say. And from listening to Bob talk of this film, I can see a “religious” meaning here.”

The conversation lapses. Then Father Bob nods in the Colonel’s direction. “Tell them what you told me, Orville.”

“Well, these ‘monsters’ in the movie and the original stories are morality tales,” the Colonel says. “Presenting truth through fiction.”

“Interesting,” Ace says, “anything else, sir?”

“Bob, why don’t you tell them what we were talking about,” Mr. K. says, turning to the gentleman sitting in the recliner. You’re better at this theological stuff than I am.

“Orville and I were talking about how evil is seductive,” the priest says, picking up the conversation. “That is what these monsters and Satan have in common. Dracula seduces with his hypnotic stare, where Frankenstein’s monster and the wolfman by the sheer power and terror of their very nature.”

“Interesting,” Josh says.

“Take these three. Dr. Frankenstein, attempting to assume the power of God, allows his pride to blind him. And the result was chaos, and death. The lesson in Frankenstein’s monster is the same as in the movie Jurassic Park.”

“And that would be,” Hammer asks.

“That because a man can do something, doesn’t mean he should.”

“And the wolfman?” Bullets asks.

“The Wolfman’s different,” the Colonel says, taking a piece of cake from the table. “A normal man who becomes a terrifying monster.”

Just then, in the background, the song, 'Bad Moon Rising' by CCR, plays. The irony brings a round of hearty laughter.

"I find the wolfman, interesting. He contracts his condition from a bite from an infected source," the priest says after the laughter fades. "And due to the virus, every full moon the monster appears. I always wondered why, when the moon was full, the man didn't just shut the windows, lock the doors and stay in the basement till the moment passed."

The priest's question brings another round of chuckles.

"Maybe he enjoyed the chaos?" Bobby 'Pretzels' asks.

Refilling his coffee cup, Orville nods. "Maybe, Bobby, maybe."

"The wolfman is an example of an innocent man, infected by another, who cannot, or chooses not to, reject the horror unleashed upon him," Father Bob says. "And, making no attempt to avoid the consequences of his choice, he inflicts death on others. Sort of like the habitual sinner."

"Dracula is the most interesting," Orville says, picking up the conversation from the priest. "The vampire, according to lore, cannot cross a threshold unless invited. Hypnotizing with his stare, Dracula seduces his victim. And then, when invited, he brings death."

"And in the end, it is the sun that kills Dracula," Pretzels adds.

Chuckling, the priest shakes his head. "Slow your roll, Bobby, you're getting ahead of me."

Sipping his coffee, he continues.

"Now look at the contrast between the monsters of fiction, and the real monster who prowls about the world, seeking to ruin men's souls."

At the mention of words of a prayer, several of the gang, chuckle, shaking their heads at Bob's ability to weave it into the discussion of an Abbot and Costello movie.

“Satan offers mankind an illusion,” the pastor says. That sin is inconsequential, fulfilling, even comforting. He hypnotizes; not with a stare or an awesome, terrifying power, but with a lie. If invited into one’s life, eventually Satan brings death. But, unlike the three monsters we saw tonight, killing in violent ways, Satan kills by draining the life of the soul. A death freely chosen by his victim.

Pausing to sip his coffee, Father Bob continues.

“Death imposed by these fictional monsters is fantasy and eventually their power is defeated. And, in the case of Dracula, his demise is ironic. As Bobby said, destroyed by the Son, born to a virgin in a stable. Destroyed, not by conquest, not by a sword, but by a sacrifice.

“Look around,” the Colonel says, picking up on Father Bob’s thought. “Doesn’t it seem society has invited evil to cross its threshold? Look at today’s moral climate; the legacy of ‘the sexual revolution’ of the 60’s. A legacy of broken marriages, children in broken or dysfunctional homes, single mothers living in poverty, lives snuffed out under the mantra of ‘freedom of choice, suicides born of desperation. Monsters, born of an immoral virus, invited into society. Behaviors previously condemned are now ‘rights’ to be cherished and protected; seductively presented as good, even noble.”

“We need to ask ourselves, is there a terrifying monster, endlessly and relentlessly stalking mankind?” Father Bob asks. “A monster killing his victims by the allure of his seductive lies. A monster ...

... accepted, even welcomed by his victims.”

### **Are we afraid of the wrong monsters?**

**Dracula, the Wolfman, and Dr. Frankenstein’s monster are a fantasy. On the other hand, Satan is real; Christ spoke of him, calling him, “the father of lies.’ And his greatest achievement has been to convince the multitudes he doesn’t exist.**

**Has the hypnotic drumbeat of a society seeking to increasingly throw God, His light and His law under the**

**bus, dulled our collective understanding of right and wrong?**

**Horror movies once scared us. People covered their eyes, watching through their fingers if they dared. No more. Horrors once unthinkable, are now praised and idolized as the mark of an enlightened and progressive people. And all the while, the voices of moral reason, are hunted and silenced by manmade, complicit, monsters, infected by the virus of a mindset seeking to turn liberty into mere license.**

**Ask yourself, is the real tragedy that ...**

**... too many people today are unafraid of the real monster in society?**

**Thinkabout it .. I'm Tony Baggz.**