

GHOULY TALES

Pilot

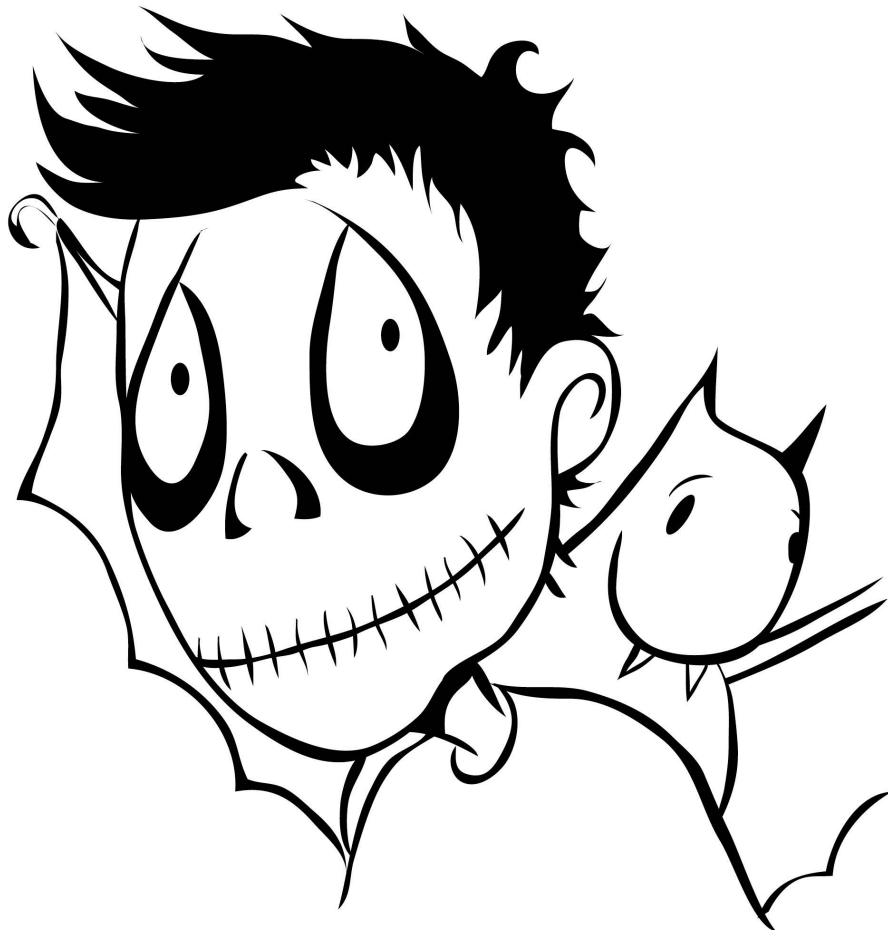
"Book One: Zombie Boy and Fat Bat"

By

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Based on:

"The Ghoully Boys" comic book series
by Christopher Higginson



EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's a lovely day and we may as well be in a grassy park if not for rows of tombstones and stone statues.

Leaves dance in the breeze past an upright headstone that reads: Chapter 1: The Death and Life of Zombie Boy

A little boy is lying on his stomach beside a headstone. As he reads a comic book, a cemetery angel almost seems to be looking down at him. This is ZOMBIE BOY (9-10 yrs old). His skin is a pale light blue/grey. He has stitches sealing his mouth shut. 13 stitches to be exact. Yet despite his ghoulish nature, he looks sweet, lovable, and innocent. He is grinning from ear to ear as a grey oversized, overweight bat, with long fangs is snuggled next to him. FAT BAT.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This is a story about a boy and his pet. About who they both are and how they both met.

MUSIC PLAYS AS THE CAMERA DRIFTS DOWN into the grass, and DOWNWARD still. INTO the dirt. We see roots... worms... little crawly bugs...

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But to tell this tale, we must take a few steps back.

EXT. A SHACK ON THE BANK OF A BAYOU - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The dirt and roots become a canopy of Spanish moss hanging from cypress trees. In the foreground, two large trees frame the scene on each side. As we move in on a shack, the trees move out of frame... like parting curtains.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Our story begins in a swamp and this shack.

A small house sits on the edge of a bayou with a dock that extends into the water. At the edge sits Zombie Boy. It's hard to make out his features in the night shadows, but we can tell it's him just from his silhouette. However, he looks "normal" now. No stitches, no blue/grey skin. He sits with his feet dangling above the water as he casts a fishing rod.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The boy and his mother lived all alone. The swamp and the shack was

where they called home.

The boy gets up and walks along the dock and toward the shack. The door opens and his MOMMA (20's) greets him smiling as he holds up a string of catfish he has caught. She wears a humble dress and has a headscarf over her long dark hair.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

People would rarely visit the two, but they'd speak in hushed whispers 'bout what his Momma could do.

There is a sign on a post outside the door. In hand-painted text it reads: Fortunes Told. Potions Brewed. Curses Lifted.

INT. THE SHACK - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Zombie Boy sits on the floor playing with his toys. Books, bottles, potions, candles, and various knickknacks adorn shelves along the walls. His Momma sits at a table with a black cat on her lap. At the center of the table is a crystal ball and on the opposite side is a MAN (30's). Smoke and lights swirl inside the crystal ball. Their conversation is inaudible. Within the ball, we catch a brief glimpse of some numbers made up of luminous smoke: "1,352"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

You see, she dabbled in this and she dabbled in that. She'd even been known to chat with a cat.

THE CAT

(whispering to Momma)
Illllll forrrrrtuuuune.

The cat's words appear as hand-scrawled text drifting from its mouth and up toward Momma's ear.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And when anyone needed a change in their luck, they'd trudge through the marsh and trudge through the muck.

Upon seeing the numbers in the crystal ball, the man quickly gets up to leave. Humble, hat in hand, he is grateful for whatever the boy's Momma has told him.

THE MAN

Hot dog! Thanks, ma'am!

MOMMA

(reaching for him as he exits)
Wait, please-

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Then they'd thank her kindly for the gifts and advice, but she'd always warn them...

MOMMA

With a gift comes a price!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Now excuse me dear viewer, but I must digress. For this is a point that I truly must stress.

The crystal ball now shows a vision of the man as he happily walks away from the shack along a trail in the swampy forest.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"With a gift comes a price." Her words ring true. This is the moral I pass on to you.

EXT. CITY - SIDEWALK - DAY

The man from the shack now struts down a sidewalk with renewed confidence. From the look of the cars, clothing, and architecture, we now realize that this story takes place around the late 1930's or early 1940's.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Our tale has a message and a lesson to be learned. To be granted a boon, that boon must be earned.

The man walks past a shop with a large jar of jelly beans in the window under a sign that says "Win Big \$\$\$!" The SHOP OWNER stands outside, puffing a cigar and gesturing at the crowd that has gathered around. The man stops at the edge of the crowd and looks at the giant jar.

SHOP OWNER

Big money! Big money! A purchase earns you a guess!

The man confidently walks in front of the crowd, picks up a stick of gum, hands the Shop Owner a coin, and says...

THE MAN

1,352

The Shop Owner's cigar falls out of his mouth as his jaw drops wide open. The crowd leans in around him...

CUT TO:

Smiling victoriously, the man thumbs through a large stack of money. The Shop Owner stands outside the shop in the background, absolutely baffled. The man continues down the sidewalk and toward a bank.

INT. BANK - DAY

The man walks up to a bank teller window, cash in hand. We don't hear what he says, but he hands over the cash to a teller who then motions for a manager.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

If you don't earn the things that you get, the powers that be will remember your debt. And they'll even things out, somehow and some way. Maintaining the balance by making you pay.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The man, giddy now, walks down a sidewalk and past picket fences in a modest neighborhood. A fire engine rushes past him. Oblivious to it he turns a corner, a huge smile as he waves some documents in the air.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And you cannot haggle on the form of the trade...

A woman stands on the sidewalk ahead of him, her hair in curlers as she holds a crying baby. Behind her, a small two-bedroom house is covered in flames. Firefighters struggle to put out the large blaze. A wall collapses.

The documents slip out of the man's hand as his shoulders slump. The documents show an icon of a house with large letters written below that says "Deed" and "Loan repaid in full". They fall to the sidewalk and drift off in the breeze.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Only the fates can decide how the fates will be paid.

The smoke from the house fire flows up into the sky, THE CAMERA DRIFTS UP with it, the smoke begins to swirl and fill the screen.

INT. THE SHACK - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Smoke swirls within the crystal ball on Momma's table. Gradually the smoke stops swirling until the ball is just transparent glass.

EXT. THE SHACK - BACK YARD - DUSK - FLASHBACK

Zombie Boy (still in his living form) is in the yard outside of the shack running toward a tree as Momma can be seen through a window in the kitchen, cooking.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so... one day while his Momma was cooking a stew, the boy grew bored with nothing to do.

He begins to climb the tree as a tire swing dangles below.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He went out back and started to play. Climbing a tree...

He's pretty high as... a branch snaps! The boy is shocked.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When a tree branch gave way.

TIME SLOWS AS HE FALLS

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He slipped and he tumbled and fell to the ground. Past all the branches. Down. Down. Down.

He lies in a mound of grass as leaves drift gently down around him. It is serene and peaceful.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And when the boy landed, he took such a spill... that he didn't get up. He just lay silent and still.

INT. THE SHACK - KITCHEN - DUSK - FLASHBACK

Through the kitchen window, Momma sees her son lying motionless in the yard. Momma rushes out of the kitchen,

through the small shack and out the back door.

EXT. THE SHACK - BACK YARD - DUSK - FLASHBACK

She runs through the yard and up to the lifeless boy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When his mother found him she wanted to cry. To sob and to shout, "Why, oh why?"

She quickly scoops him up and races back into their home.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But she gathered her wits before she could start and refused to allow her boy to depart.

INT. THE SHACK - LIVING ROOM - DUSK - FLASHBACK

The boy lies on the table in the center of the room, cleared off now with the crystal ball shattered on the floor. Momma scrambles from shelf to shelf, gathering various items. A bottle of potion, a small burlap pouch, containers...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She knew of a secret, she knew just the trick, but for it to work she had to be quick.

As Momma scrambles through shelves in the foreground, we RACK FOCUS on the background to see the boy's vapor-like spirit rising up and out of his mouth. The upper half is a ghostly version of him, tapering down to a swirling mist emanating from out of his lifeless body. Small spectral vapors swirl out from all around him.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She grabbed a pouch, some leaves, and some brew...

Clutching the pouch in one fist Momma stands defiantly in front of the table, arms spread wide. The boy's spirit is now fully out of his mouth and floating in the air above him, pausing to look at her.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She began to recite a spell that she knew.

The MUSIC INTENSIFIES and her incantation is barely audible,

but whatever she's saying, it does not sound like English. The boy's spirit begins to drift away from his body.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
She used the spell to lure his soul
back...

Light radiates from Momma and the lamps and candles in the living room flicker and burn brighter.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
and summoned it into a small burlap
sack.

As if being pulled in by a powerful force, the boy's spirit is sucked into the small pouch in Momma's hand. Despite the human size of his spirit, it all seems to fit inside as the pouch bulges to capacity.

CUT TO:

Momma stands over the boy. Pulling a thread from a row of stitches sealing his mouth shut.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
She placed the bag between his icy
cold lips and sewed them up with some
thread and some snips.

She cuts the last thread...

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then, once his spirit was back in its
place he opened his eyes and looked at
her face.

The boy's eyes flutter open and he looks up at his Momma with a sweet loving smile. He now has the cute, sweet, yet undead look that we saw from the opening scene. He has fully become the Zombie Boy.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And smiled at his Momma who helped him
to stay, despite the price she knew
that she'd pay.

Momma smiles back at him, relieved but with a hint of uncertainty in her eyes as she briefly glances upward. Suddenly, Momma clutches her chest. Her face an expression of painful realization.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But...

Zombie Boy sits up on the table. Momma staggers and falls to the ground.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Their joy was cut short as she stumbled and fell. She got very dizzy and wasn't feeling too well.

Zombie Boy steps off the table and kneels over Momma.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The boy tried hard to wake her, he'd tug and he'd pull...

Now it's Momma's spirit rising out from her mouth as she exhales her last breath. Her ghostly form forlorn and calm.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

but fate had collected. All debts paid in full.

EXT. THE SHACK - THE DOCK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Zombie Boy races out of the shack and along the dock chasing Momma's spirit as it drifts out the door, along the dock, and gliding gradually upward. In one hand he holds a small burlap pouch. The other hand tosses an empty potion bottle aside as he runs after her.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The boy was a sharp one and reached for the potion. He found a small pouch and set into motion.

Momma's spirit turns to look back at him from the end of the dock and begins to slowly drift upward.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He tried to repeat the spell that he heard...

ZOMBIE BOY

(shock as he touches the stitches)
Mm--?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But his lips were sewn shut. He couldn't utter a word.

Momma's spirit glides up, up, up into the night sky, high above the shack and the bayou as Zombie Boy stands at the edge of the dock reaching helplessly into the air.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He just moaned and mumbled and stared
at the sky...

Momma looks peacefully down at him. Her spirit drifting away.

ZOMBIE BOY

MMMMmmmmMMmmmmmmmm...!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

as his mothered departed and
whispered-

MOMMA

Goodbye.

She vanishes into the moonlit sky, leaving Zombie Boy all
alone on the dock below.

OPENING TITLE