

# **CEMETARY VANDALISM AND THE REGULAR GUY**

**By Deborah Karczewski**

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## CEMETERY VANDALISM AND THE REGULAR GUY

By Deborah Karczewski

***(Author's note: Post-its are small memo notes with self-adhesive backs. If the actor's colloquialism uses a different word or nickname for these sticky-backed papers, please substitute the appropriate word.)***

I'm not really sure whose idea it was – Stan's, Ax's, or even mine. I don't remember any major discussion. What's cool about those guys is that we never talk anything to death; we just *do*... we just *go*. My dad makes my brain explode with all of the discussion crap. (*imitates a stodgy, professorial father*) "Well family, let's decide where to eat dinner tonight. Fran prefers Italian, which I suppose we could do, but I just had pizza for lunch. Brian, you mentioned Mexican, which I know is the most reasonably priced, but it's on the other side of town; so, what we save via food, we lose via gas. I've actually had a taste in my mouth all day for a good sirloin. Fran honey, is that Okay with you? Good. Brian, your mother wants steak, so steak it is. Never try to say 'No' to a woman, right boy?"

That's what's so great about the guys. Somebody gets an idea, and *boom* – we're off. And it doesn't matter which one of us got the idea, either. That's another plus about the guys. It's, like, an unspoken code that we're... well... equal. In the (*makes invisible quotation marks in the air*) "real world" Stan'd be the...the "geek," I guess. Ax'd be the – oh, what would they call him – maybe the "thud" or the "thug." Me? (*thinking*) What would I be? I'm smart, but not as nerdy as a geek. I'm not as intimidating as Ax, but nobody messes with me, either. Hey, you know why he's called "Ax?" His real name is Axelrod, but if anyone called him by that name, he'd chop you off at the knees! So what would I be labeled? Come to think of it, I'm not really anything. I'm just regular, I guess. Man, how depressing! But it doesn't matter, because in the group... we're all the same. Stan – Ax – me – we're all one, ya see.

Anyway, somebody thought it'd be sweet to check out the cemetery at midnight. Yeah, yeah, I know. "Been there, done that," you're thinking. But Stan – he always has the best ideas – he says, (*imitates the nasal, crafty Stan*) "We can write notes from the deceased and attach them to the headstones!" "What the hell-'r-ya talkin' about?" asked Ax. "We'll read the stones and then personalize a message to the survivors!" Stan was laughing so hard that his glasses started to slip down his nose. Thank God for that big lump or

he would have lost them altogether! "Survivors? You mean like the TV show?" Ax looked totally confused. "Calm down, big guy. Okay – let's pretend we read a tombstone that says something like, 'In memory of Joe Shmoe... survived by his loving wife Mabel.' So we get a Post-it and write, 'Dear Mabel, forget about your dentures. We're *all* toothless down here! Love, Joe.'" That Stan, his brain should be preserved for future generations! (*laughs*)

So, there we are like Post-it bandits! Post-it Zorro! Leaving our mark on every stone we pass. Even Ax caught on after a while. His best one was, "Dear Henrietta, get that plumber out of my bed or he'll lose more than his toolbox!" (*laughs*) Everything was going great until we got to the new section, the area with the most recent graves. That part gave me the creeps. It was way in the back of the cemetery, the furthest field from the road where Stan had parked the car. It was dark, too, because it bordered on woods ready to be cleared for more burial plots. The ground was soft, and I kept imagining my feet sinking deeper into the freshly plowed earth. Suddenly, I saw Stan freeze. In the moonlight you could literally see the color rush from his cheeks down to his neck. My eyes followed his gaze. There, still as could be, was a figure slumped over a fresh mound of earth. "Holy S. H." gasped Ax. (*pronounces each letter separately like initials*) We bumped over to the grave, clumping into each other like catatonic bumper cars. The mysterious figure was the back of a little, old lady, obviously hugging the earth, protecting what I could only imagine was her little, old husband. "Ma'am?" I called softly. No answer. She was grieving too deeply to look up. "Ma'am, do you need some help?" Silence. "Ma'am? Is there somewhere we could walk you? It's really not that safe out here this late." I looked at the other two guys. "Why don't you think she's answering?" I whispered to Ax. "Oh. My. God! She saw us with the Post-its!" Ax exclaimed shamefully. "I'm sorry, Ma'am. We were just having some fun. Look! We'll pull them all off!" he said. "Yeah!" piped in Stan. "See? We'll remove every single one. Honestly, we didn't mean to insult anybody!"

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