



Baxter's Key
Alwyne Ashweth

Published: 2009

Categorie(s):

Tag(s): "Micro Fiction" Fiction Horror Serial Killer "Serial Killer" murder

Baxter's Key

By Alwyne Ashweth

Copyright © 2008 Alwyne Ashweth (All rights reserved)

Micro-fiction from Strange Circle: www.strangecircle.org.uk

The man stood out like a beacon against the greyness of the rest of the world. With the sight of him came a deep yearning in the pit of Baxter's stomach. He had this feeling regularly, but each time is caught him off guard. Each time was like fist around his balls, pulling him firmly towards an outcome he couldn't have controlled even if he wanted to.

Oh, but he didn't want to control this impulse. It always led to that exquisite moment of death, and the unlocking of the vision of the world beyond this one. Each time was a confirmation of his own existence; a direct message from God telling him he was tickety-boo and hunky-dory. And if God thought that, then everybody else could go to hell.

Baxter ran a hand across his shaved head, thinking carefully and quickly about his next move. When these visions came, they always hit him without warning, so he was always prepared on some level. The issue was where he was when he was called. Today, he was on a crowded street filled with weekend shoppers. He would have to follow this new *Key*, perhaps to where he lived. There would be fewer eyes to see him there and less chance of being caught.

In his head this man was now *the Key*. He followed him efficiently, as it was not his first time, petrified now of losing him. It was a sin to lose a *Key* once one had been given, and the reprisals were severe. He had only failed twice before. The first time had been a young girl who saw him following her. She ran so fast away from him that he had lost her in a park. The second had been a middle-aged man, fat and unhealthy. He had died on Baxter's kitchen table of a heart attack; a natural death did not work to open the doorway, even if it was caused by the terror of seeing Baxter standing before him holding a large axe.

Both times he had chastised himself, whipping his back with a knotted rope until he had been bleeding and begging himself to stop. He had no desire to make that mistake again. He followed his *Key* as he walked away from the main streets of the town and towards the houses in the suburbs. The afternoon brightness failed to a dull twilight as they walked. When the man got onto a bus Baxter had to run full-pelt in order to get on as well. He just made it, and he had his fare-money in his

pocket so everything was fine. The *Key* had sat upstairs so Baxter had waited patiently on one of the back seats until he had come down again to get off. He left a few people between his *Key* and himself before he followed him onto the pavement.

They were nearly home. He could feel it. A few minutes later his prey turned into the driveway of a squat bungalow. Baxter walked straight past, taking in as much detail as he could from the corner of his eye. Tidy garden, no children's toys. That was something. Less complicated. There was probably a wife though, as there were lights on in the room nearest the street. Someone else was in there, anyway.

He walked on for a while, then doubled-back when he knew he wasn't being watched. He could wait until it was completely dark, the middle of the night, creeping in to where his *Key* was sleeping. But he usually trusted his instincts on such things, and they were telling him to go in now, and fast!

Baxter jogged down the driveway to the back of the house. There was a glass door there with a kitchen beyond and he tried the handle quietly. It opened without a sound. He pulled open the kitchen drawers until he found one containing a suitable knife. It was eight inches long with a wide blade. He slipped off his shoes and left them neatly by bottom of the fridge.

He padded out of the room towards the sound of voices. In the hallway outside he could see a man silhouetted in an open doorway. Orange light was streaming past him, but it was nothing to the holy glow emanating from his *Key*. The man was talking to someone inside the room, and Baxter crept slowly along the carpeted floor anticipating the moment of his discovery. Whenever it came, he was ready to deal with the consequences.

He made it within a few steps of the man before he seemed to sense something behind him. As he turned, Baxter brought round his slightly outstretched left hand. It flew in an arc, slapping against the side of the man's head, pushing it hard against the jam of the door. Baxter did not hesitate. He ran past the collapsing man into a cosy living-room. The woman in the arm-chair started to rise, started to scream out, but he was on her, the knife in his right hand rising and falling again and again. It plunged into her chest, ribs cracking beneath with satisfying snapping sounds. Each time he raised the knife again the freshets of blood were caught on the steel blade and flung backwards across the room behind him.

He had to force himself to stop, as always. This was not his *Key*. This was just someone in the way. The *Key* was behind him, still alive, waiting to be used.

Baxter turned just as the man launched himself towards his attacker. His mouth opened in a mournful wail. "You bastard!" he said as Baxter sidestepped nimbly. The man fell forwards into the body of his wife, his face slapping wetly into the mess that was her chest.

A deep moan issued from the *Key* as Baxter grabbed him by the neck of his shirt and pulled him backwards so he lay flat out on the floor. He stood over his victim now, a leg on each side of the man's petrified body. Baxter raised his head to the sky, and spoke to God, asking for the door to his wonders to be opened.

You just have to use your Key, God answered.

From the same author on Feedbooks

First Sitting (2009)

Strange Circle Micro-Fiction:
Horror waits beyond the veil!



www.feedbooks.com
Food for the mind