

The Potato Chip Man

written by

Rob Herzog

Chicago, Illinois
robherzog@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

An old man hobbles with a cane. This is the POTATO CHIP MAN, 77. He's withered and hollowed out--a scarecrow of a man.

His lips glisten with spittle and stretch back too far, like they're stuck in a perpetual, rabid hiss.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

CHUCK and NICHOLAS, both 10, spot the approaching Potato Chip Man and greet him by the fence.

CHUCK
Hey, Potato Chip Man...Remember us?

NICHOLAS
You rot.

CHUCK
You smell like skunk.

NICHOLAS
Like fart.

CHUCK
You should just go ahead and die.

NICHOLAS
Right now.

The old man's wet sneer widens.

Chuck removes a half-eaten bag of potato chips from his pocket and tosses a few chips, landing one in the Potato Chip Man's hair.

Nicholas throws wood chips scooped from the ground.

CHUCK
C'mon, Billy, help us out.

BILLY, 10, hangs several feet back, eyes wide/afraid.

BILLY
Aw, leave him alone, guys.

Chuck flaps his arms and clucks at Billy, telling him that he's chicken.

The taunting continues until Billy picks up a wood chip and reluctantly hurls it at the Potato Chip Man, pegging him in the back of the head.

Billy takes two steps back.

BILLY
(softly)
I'm sorry.

Chuck sings a mocking tune at the Potato Chip Man...

CHUCK
Potato Chip Man, Potato Chip Man.
Why don't you die, Potato Chip Man?

Chuck and Nicholas hurl more items at the old fellow.

The Potato Chip Man turns his head toward the boys, giving them a full view of his pale eyes and sneering mouth.

Then he continues on his way, oblivious to the wood chips that pelt him.

Billy cringes/turns away.

INT. PLAYGROUND BATHROOM - DAY

The three boys loiter and goof off.

Chuck and Nicholas fling wet toilet paper onto the walls while Billy washes his hands.

One of the wet toilet paper gobs hits Billy in the ear. Chuck and Nicholas laugh.

BILLY
I'm sick of this. Sick of you guys.

CHUCK
What're you gonna do about it? Cry?

The boys face each other as the door swings open.

In steps the Potato Chip Man. The boys stammer with surprise.

The door slams shut. The Potato Chip Man blocks it. There's no way out.

The old man grunts and slowly pulls a nail clipper from his trousers. He flips out the semi-sharp tool used to dig out toe jam.

He's absurdly ready to attack the boys with it.

They scream. The Potato Chip Man's smile widens and he steps toward them. A string of drool oozes from his mouth.

Nicholas tries to run past the old man. The Potato Chip Man swipes and scratches the boy's nose with his grubby fingernails. Blood dribbles.

Chuck tries to slip by and the Potato Chip Man grabs his arm and bites it with his dull teeth.

Chuck's skin instantly becomes rotten, septic. Chuck screams, wriggles free, and dashes out the door. Nicholas follows.

Now Billy is alone with the Potato Chip Man.

BILLY

I'm sorry...Please...I'm not
friends with them anymore.

The Potato Chip Man's face changes. His weird grin splits along the sides to reveal razor teeth. A lizard's tongue flicks out. Saliva oozes.

The monstrous Potato Chip Man steps toward Billy, ready to crunch...

...Billy screams and screams.

The door swings. A PARK WORKER rushes inside.

PARK WORKER

Hey! Who's screaming?

Billy can't speak. He gulps for air. The Potato Chip Man transforms back to an old man just before he faces the worker.

PARK WORKER

How many times have I told you kids
to leave the flippin' old guy
alone. Now come on out of there.

Billy must walk past the old man to the door, and closes his eyes to do it. His fear is palpable. He lunges the final distance to the door and is gone.

PARK WORKER

Sir, are you okay? Can I help you
out of there?

The old man gives a wave indicating that he is okay. The worker closes the door.

The Potato Chip Man stands quietly and unnaturally for a moment. Then he bares his teeth--giant fangs once again.

His unnerving voice calls toward the door...

POTATO CHIP MAN
See you soon, Billy.

The Potato Chip Man grins with full fangs. He grins and grins and grins and grins. Hungry, crazy, dangerous.

POTATO CHIP MAN
Very, very soon...Billy.

FADE OUT:

THE END