

The Happy Bunny Family and the Enormous Publisher's Clearing House Check

by Robert Swartwood

The Happy Bunny Family had a secret: They weren't very happy.

Everyone in town knew it, but of course no one said anything. Mr. Happy Bunny would stroll through the center of town on his way to work and people would smile and nod and wish him a good day and he would return the salutations but in his head he would be thinking of how they would die, either in a car wreck or in a hospital bed or maybe just smashed in the side of a head with a hammer. Then he would arrive to work and sit at his desk and stare at the wall and count down the minutes until he would sneak into the restroom to masturbate.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Happy Bunny made her children breakfast, packed them lunch, and got them on the bus. She stood on the doorstep watching the yellow bus retreat down the street, then hurried inside to get ready. An hour later the door bell rang and there was Sappy Fox, looking his best. He said, Hey there, gorgeous, and she pulled him into the house, slammed the door shut, and they went at it like ... well, like a bunch of animals.

Later, in nest, Sappy Fox smoking one of his cigarettes, he said, This is stupid.

What do you mean?

All this sneaking around. Why do we keep doing it?

You know why. The children and my husband ...

But you don't even love your husband.

She watched the tendrils of smoke rise to the ceiling. That's not true, she whispered.

A little while later, Sappy Fox said, Come with me.

Where?

I don't know. Just ... away. You and me, we'll go someplace. For good.

Oh I don't know ...

Come on. What's keeping you here anyway?

She was silent, thinking about it.

See, you know I'm right. He leaned forward and kissed her on her snout. Now what do you say?

Back at Mr. Happy Bunny's place of employment, Mr. Happy Bunny's boss called him into his office.

I've got something to tell you, his boss said.

Mr. Happy Bunny raised an ear.

It's your wife.

What about her?

I think ...

Yes?

I think she's cheating on you.

The ear fell back in place. What are you talking about?

You know how I came into work late today? Well, I drove by your place and I saw Sappy Fox at the door and your wife was there and

...

Mr. Happy Bunny leaned forward in his seat. And?

They were kissing.

Mr. Happy Bunny rose to his feet. His foot started thumping. He looked around the room wildly, not sure what he was looking for, until his gaze settled on the desk lamp — such a large, heavy thing — and before he knew it he had picked it up and stepped forward and slammed it into the side of his boss's head.

Back at the Happy Bunny house, Sappy Fox was getting dressed. I can't believe you're kicking me out.

I can't believe you don't think I love my husband, Mrs. Happy Bunny said.

Well let's see, you and I have been meeting like this for the last three months. Forgive me if I misunderstood the situation.

I do love my husband.

Sure you do, Sappy Fox said, buttoning his shirt.

And I love my children.

Of course, he said, putting on his shoes.

And this ... this was a mistake.

He paused, looked up at her.

I don't think you should come back here again.

She walked him to the door, staying a couple paces back. She wondered if he would try to kiss her and then wondered what she would do if that happened and then he did pause at the door, started to turn around, and that's when the door burst open and in came Mr. Happy Bunny.

You slut! he shouted, raising a desk lamp in his paw (which he'd carried the entire way across town, the thing dripping blood), and while his glare was focused on his wife it was Sappy Fox he bashed in the side of the head with the lamp, Sappy going down at once.

Mr. Happy Bunny bashed him again and again, shouting, You — bash — piece — bash — of — bash — shit!

Then he paused, the desk lamp covered in even more blood, and glanced up at his wife. Smiling, he said, Hi, honey, I'm home.

Later, the bodies rolled up in plastic and placed in the garage, Mr. Happy Bunny having taken a long bath, he sat on the porch and waited for his children. He didn't know what he was going to do. They couldn't stay here, in this town. Not after what he'd done. On the other paw, they couldn't ...

A van drove down the street, slowed, and pulled into his driveway. At once, the doors opened and a group of raccoons and possums and squirrels scrambled out. The squirrels carried a large video camera. The raccoons carried large floodlights. And the possum, dressed in a cheap suit, carried a gigantic check.

The possum was smiling as he approached the porch, holding the gigantic check at such an angle Mr. Happy Bunny could see his name and the seven-figure amount.

Mr. Happy Bunny? the possum said as he climbed the steps. I believe today is your lucky day.

