

# ‘I woke up sweating’: Sunday scaries at U.Va.

For University students, Sunday mornings are when the real nightmare begins

Dana Douglas | Life Editor

For many University students, Sundays start with a throbbing headache. Whether Saturday night was spent locked in on Clem 2 or party-rocking on the balcony at Trin, students’ brains swirl with a plethora of morning-after anxieties. Will the professor grant this extension? Can Tide Rescue get that new-found stain out of the carpet?

Nonetheless, they rally, racing to catch up on the past week’s workload before Monday arrives. Some students can be seen clustering on the steps of Shannon Library in anticipation of its opening, while others trudge to attend their array of extracurricular meetings. In these dark times, it is clear that something sinister has settled upon the University — “Sunday scaries.”

“On a typical Sunday morning ... I’ll wake up sweating,” Carmen Miskel, Sunday scaries victim and second-year Engineering student, said. “I woke up this morning with my dress [from last night] on. Didn’t change out of that ... my contacts are still in my eyes.”

“Sunday scaries” is a term with which most University students are well-acquainted. It encapsulates the turmoil of waking up to a surplus of lingering assignments, rapidly approaching due dates and, for some, debilitating “hangxiety” from the memories — or lack thereof — of Saturday night.

Creators on platforms like TikTok and Instagram frequently refer to this widespread phenomenon in a comedic light. But, for most students at the University, there is nothing funny about it. In fact, many believe that the intensity of Sunday scaries is reflective of a larger issue on Grounds.

According to Miskel, students’ Sunday scaries result from the University’s borderline toxic “work hard, play hard” culture. Miskel said that the student body perpetuates the expectation to work hard and play equally as hard, which many students find exhausting and hardly attainable.

“[The University is] a school [where] you’re looked down upon if you’re stupid and you’re looked down upon if you’re not social. You have to do both,” Miskel said.

This often means that students go hard from Thursday to Saturday, spending their evenings with friends, only to cram days worth of work into one sitting on Sunday. Miskel said that the anticipation of her scary Sunday workload bleeds into her earlier weekend activities.



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“I almost feel guilty if I’m not in the library for literally hours at a time,” Miskel said. “And then [the homework anxiety] totally ruined the memories of my Saturdays and my Fridays.”

Third-year College student Owen O’Brien shared much of Miskel’s perspective. However, while he acknowledged the prevalence of Sunday scaries as an unfortunate hallmark of the college experience, he said that he tackles them with a more nonchalant attitude.

“[A] typical Sunday morning [for me] is waking up at 12 or 1 o’clock, kind of like [I] got hit by a bus,” O’Brien said. “Awesome time.”

Despite his relaxed approach, O’Brien agreed that University culture places unrealistic amounts of pressure on both academic and social performance.

“I think Sundays are overall set up for failure,” O’Brien said. “But ... I think that it’s especially bad [at the University] because of the hard party culture meeting in the middle with the rigorous academic culture.”

While University culture seldom leaves room for relaxation, Miskel said she appreciates that students across the University unite for the weekend’s grand finale — Sunday lock-ins in the library. Her friend group typically ventures to Shannon Library together for marathon study sessions, using Sun-

day as an academic catch-up.

“Part of [Sunday scaries] is nice, because there’s a little bit of a group mentality,” Miskel said. “It’s seriously like a group mindset ... to condense all of your work into this one day ... On Sunday, from early morning to midnight, you’re just writing away on your computer.”

But it is not just the high academic standard that makes Sundays scary. Miskel said she believes that the University’s infectious pre-professional culture also feeds the Sunday scaries epidemic, leading students to believe they are even more behind than they are.

“I feel like everybody is always seven steps ahead of me, all the time ... Everybody has [a] quintillion connections on LinkedIn ... Everybody’s networking,” Miskel said. “I just think that that adds to the pressure of having good grades.”

So every Sunday, the lock-in must go on. Sunday scaries unofficially begin at 10 a.m. when Shannon Library opens, and students pile into the building to grab their favorite table. Some students trek off-Grounds to 1515 or Grit Coffee on the Corner. Others fill the seats of Newcomb Ballroom and Minor Hall, venues for Greek organizations’ weekly chapter meetings. And there are always stragglers who work in bed, fearful that the light of day will induce a surge of nausea.

Whether they spend Sundays in the Clark Stacks or bedridden with a Liquid I.V., it is safe to say that many students perceive the Sunday scaries to be a manifestation of the University’s all-encompassing grind mentality.

However, rather than succumbing to the stress that blankets his peers, O’Brien said that he embraces the scaries with optimism. He invites his fellow weekend warriors to remember

that, despite the inconvenience and anxiety that accompanies the Sunday scaries, they are but a reminder of the unique season that is the undergraduate experience.

“You just gotta remember that, you know, it’s not that deep,” O’Brien said. “I think I’ll miss [Sunday scaries] honestly ... The loss of Sunday scaries [is also] the loss of the peak fun that’s being had [at the University].”

## U.Va. Class of 2025

### Charlie Healy



Congratulations Charlie! You have worked hard these past 4 years and we are so very proud of your accomplishments. Off to NYC you go! Wahoowa! Love, Mom, Dad & Nick