

"Knock!"

Eric Hoffstad

INT. SMALL APARTMENT KITCHEN -- EVENING

Harold Smalls brings a cigarette to his lips. He's in his late fifties, with a gnarled gray beard and slightly graying, equally gnarled hair. He adjusts himself creakily in a worn-out wooden seat. The table he sits at is cluttered with dirty plates and silverware. Behind him, a sink is completely filled with more dirty dishes.

Harold reaches into his breast pocket and retrieves a match book. He slowly pulls the single match left from the book, and lights it. He lights his cigarette and throws the empty matchbook to the floor, where it lands on a large pile of similarly empty match books.

Harold sips coffee from a dirty cup and stares at old newspaper on the table in front of him.

The headline on the newspaper reads:

MORE DISAPPEARANCES AHEAD, SAY SCIENTISTS!

Below the headline is printed a large picture of a barren street.

Harold glances out of the window next to him. The world outside is silent, unmoving. A line of abandoned cars crowd Harold's street.

Harold sighs. He smashes his cigarette into the newspaper.

Suddenly, there is a knock at the door.

Harold stops.

Harold slowly stands up and paces into the living room.

INT. SMALL LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Harold's living room is spotless. A couch and a television sit at opposite ends of the room, with a small coffee table in between. The room appears unused, except for a woman's bra laying on the coffee table.

Harold stops just before the front door. He hesitates for a moment, staring ahead. He turns to the mirror next to him and slicks his hair back, grinning smugly.

He wraps his hand around the doorknob and yanks the door open.

Hanging in front of the door is a female mannequin, fully dressed, suspended by a makeshift harness attached to the

ceiling.

The mannequin's left arm is attached to a pulley above it, and as Harold stares speechless, an alarm clock by his feet begins to ring.

Harold looks at the alarm clock, then notices a rope reaching from the clock to the pulley. Reacting to the alarm, the rope begins to roll through the pulley, drawing the mannequin's arm back, and suddenly releasing it.

The mannequin's fist knocks against the door frame next to where Harold is standing, giving the same type of knock as what was heard before.

The mannequin has an exaggerated amount of makeup on its face, along with lipstick and blush. It wears a long blonde wig that swings slightly behind it.

Harold smiles, and slowly detaches the mannequin's arm from the pulley.

HAROLD
(to the mannequin)
I've been waiting all night for you,
Rose.

Harold lovingly detaches the harness from the mannequin's back. He slowly lowers the mannequin in his arms until its outstretched plastic feet touch the floor.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Come on, it's warm inside.

Harold holds the upright mannequin close to himself, gripping it around the waist. He slowly moves back into the living room. He lays the mannequin softly on the couch.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
I think I know what you want.

He closes the door and locks it.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Rose the mannequin is now wearing a night gown, facing the other direction on the couch.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Harold stamps a cigarette into the floor, staring out the window.

He picks up the old newspaper and opens it, reading.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Harold sits next to Rose's head, cradling her in his lap.

HAROLD

Relax, dear. You're home now. Your
Harry's here.

Harold rubs Rose's head gently.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Harold wakes up quietly, Rose's head still in his lap. He
picks her up, and brings her to the door.

HAROLD
Be home for dinner.

Harold opens the front door and grabs the harness in front
of him. He softly hooks the harness to Rose's back,
suspending her in the air. He loops the rope around her
left arm, and connects the pulley to the alarm clock. He
sets the alarm clock and stands up again to face Rose.

He kisses her on the lips and goes back inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Harold locks the door behind him and looks at the bedroom
door to his right.

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Harold opens the bedroom door and peers inside. In the crack
of light creeping into the room, a small ratty bed is
illuminated next to a night stand piled with books and
clothing. Next to the bed, in the middle of the room, is a
small wooden crib.

Harold walks up to the crib. He smiles at something inside
the crib, and his hand grips the edge, rocking it back and
forth.

FADE TO BLACK