

MASTERS OF HORROR

"Family"

by

Brent Hanley

FADE IN:

1 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC -- DAY

1

The sun shines brightly over the upper-middle class houses with their well-manicured lawns lining the big broad streets. A HOUSEWIFE unloads groceries from the back of her SUV in one of the driveways. A few CHILDREN run across one of the lawns, screaming with delight as they chase after one another with toy guns.

A POSTMAN walks past the children onto a cul-de-sac, stopping at the mailboxes, some made of stone, others made of brick, that sit even with the curb in front of each house, delivering the mail. He makes it to the end of the cul-de-sac and walks past a one-story limestone house with a Realtor's sign in the yard, the word "sold" stenciled across it, without stopping.

The Postman stops at the next house on the circle and then moves to the next house where the circle ends and the street straightens out again. It is a big two-story, red-brick house with white trim, though most of the front of the house is hidden behind heavy overhanging trees and hedges. The Postman puts the mail in the red-brick mailbox and walks off down the street. There is the faint sound of classical music coming from somewhere inside the house.

2 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - MAIN FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS

2

The music is a little louder here, but still somewhat muted. The first floor of the house is immaculately clean and tastefully decorated. All the blinds are open, flooding the big living room with sunlight. Back behind the living room there is a big spacious kitchen where pots and pans hang over an island stove. Next to the big shiny silver refrigerator there is a closed door with a key lock on it. The music seems to be coming from the other side of the door.

3 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

3

The music is much louder in here, no longer muted. It is also much darker in here. Somewhere unseen, a man whistles along with the music. The basement is huge. Across from a small flight of wooden stairs there are a few small windows at the top of the wall, all hidden behind thick black curtains. There are two light fixtures on the low ceiling, spaced about fifteen feet apart, though neither puts off much light.

Below the covered windows sits a long wooden workbench where a radio with a cassette player sits, playing the classical music.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

The workbench goes all the way down to the far wall of the basement and wraps around in a sort of backwards L shape. Beyond the end of the L there is another large room where a man in his early-fifties, HAROLD THOMPSON, sits in a wooden chair in front of a large steel tub. He wears a long black rubber-apron and long black rubber-gloves that go all the way up to his elbows.

He whistles along with the music as he pours something from a big metal bottle into the tub. There is a small hiss as the liquid hits something, and little tendrils of smoke rise from the tub. Harold empties the bottle, then gets up and goes to the workbench where there are dozens more of the metal bottles.

In the steel tub lies the naked dead body of an old man, his face half-decomposed from the acid that Harold has just poured on him.

Harold returns with another bottle and pours it on the rest of the old man's face, burning the skin away and exposing little patches of the white bone underneath. A small alarm clock on the workbench goes off. Harold looks over at it. It reads: 1:00. He pours the rest of the acid into the tub, then smiles down at the old man.

HAROLD

Time for lunch, Dad.

He puts the empty bottle down and begins taking off his gloves and apron.

4 EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

4

Harold comes out of the front door and walks down his driveway to his mailbox. Out on the street a big truck, with "Green Family Movers Inc" written on the side, drives slowly past him. He watches the truck drive down to the last house in the middle of the cul-de-sac where an attractive couple, both in their early thirties, CELIA FULLER and DAVID FULLER, wait in the drive-way, waving at the driver.

David watches the truck, but Celia sees Harold looking at them. She smiles and waves at him. A little startled, Harold gives a brisk wave and then quickly takes his mail and walks back toward his house.

5 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

5

Harold looks through his mail as he walks to the kitchen where a pot of soup is boiling on the stove.

6 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - MAIN FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER 6

Harold carries a wooden tray with his food and drink on it out of the kitchen and down a short hallway where there is a back stairwell.

7 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER 7

Harold comes off the top stair to the landing of the second floor where there is a long dark hallway. He walks down it, past closed doors on both sides, and enters a second living room where a woman with long brown hair, JANE THOMPSON, sits in a chair next to a standing lamp, reading a magazine, her back to him. All the windows are covered by heavy black curtains in this part of the house.

HAROLD

(carrying his tray)

Looks like we've got some new neighbors at the Harper's old place.

JANE (O.S.)

Oh yeah? That's good. Maybe they'll be quieter than the Harpers were.

Harold puts his tray down on the coffee-table in front of the couch.

JANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Coming and going at all hours of the night.

Harold sits on the couch and looks to the opposite side of the room where there is a little girl with blonde hair, SARAH THOMPSON, in a little green dress, sitting on the floor in front of the television, her back to him.

HAROLD

You're sitting too close to the television again, Sarah. Move back.

Sarah doesn't move or respond to him. He sighs and gets up and walks over to her.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Come on, honey. You know that's bad for your eyes.

He reaches down and drags her back a few feet, then walks around her and grabs the remote control from the top of the television.

SARAH (O.S.)

When is Grandpa going to get here?

He turns to her, and we see her face for the first time: Underneath that blonde hair there is no face, only a small human skull. He smiles at her.

HAROLD

Oh in the next day or so.

JANE (O.S.)

So soon?

Harold looks over at Jane, and we see her for the first time: Underneath her brown hair there is also a skull. Her hands are just skeletal bones wired together, holding the magazine in place.

HAROLD

(walking to the couch)

It's not going to take as long as I thought it would.

He sits down on the couch and begins to eat his soup.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. FULLER HOUSE -- NIGHT

8

The sun is down. The mover's truck is gone, and only David's car with California plates sits in the driveway. All the lights in the house are on.

9 INT. FULLER HOUSE - KITCHEN AREA -- NIGHT

9

There are boxes everywhere, and the furniture is stacked and pushed up against the walls. Celia, her hair in a ponytail, stands in the kitchen, unloading glasses and putting them into a cabinet next to the sink. David comes in carrying a box, a frown on his face.

DAVID

I found another kitchen box in the bedroom.

CELIA

So much for labeling everything for the movers.

DAVID
(angry)
I fucking hate moving!

Celia looks over at him.

CELIA
Why are you so uptight?

DAVID
I don't know.
(sighs)
I thought this would be...I don't
know.

Celia puts down the glass in her hand and goes to him.

CELIA
What is it?

DAVID
I thought I would feel different
now that we've moved here. But I
don't. I'm
still...unsure...scared...I don't
know.

She takes his face in her hands.

CELIA
This is going to be a new start for
us. A new beginning.

DAVID
I know.

She kisses him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I just can't stop thinking that
this could all be a huge mistake.

She frowns, but turns it quickly into a smile.

CELIA
You're just tired. Why don't we
stop for awhile and go get
something to eat?

DAVID
A drink sounds better.

CELIA
(smiles at him)
How about both?

He nods and forces a smile.

10 INT. FULLER'S CAR -- LATER

10

It is completely dark outside as David drives. Celia sits in the passenger seat, her eyes closed. Celia stirs and looks over at him.

CELIA
(yawns)
Where are we?

DAVID
(a slight slur in his
speech)
We're almost home. Those two
glasses of wine really put you
down.

CELIA
I'm not usually such a lightweight.

DAVID
The move's been hard on you.

CELIA
You were sure sucking down those
martinis.

DAVID
Liquid courage.

She reaches out and caresses his face.

CELIA
It's all going to be all right.
You'll see.

He takes her hand and kisses it. She closes her eyes again.

11 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - HAROLD'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

11

David's car turns onto the cul-de-sac and drives toward their house. Right as they are nearing Harold's house the Fuller's car suddenly veers to the left and smashes into Harold's red-brick mailbox with a huge crash, and stops with one wheel on his lawn.

12 INT. FULLER'S CAR - CUL-DE-SAC -- CONTINUOUS 12

David looks over at Celia.

DAVID
Are you all right?

CELIA
I think so. Are you?

David nods and opens his car door.

13 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - HAROLD'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS 13

David climbs out. Celia gets out as David walks to the front of the Fuller's car. She looks around at the surrounding houses, but there are no lights on at any of them.

CELIA
That had to wake someone up.

David checks the damage. The front fender of the Fuller's car is a little dented, but nothing major. The mailbox however is in ruins. It is smashed sideways though still somewhat standing at its base, red bricks and pieces of red brick lay everywhere on the ground. Celia comes around to David's side and joins him at the front of the Fuller's car. She looks to Harold's house, but all the lights are off.

CELIA (CONT'D)
I can't believe no one heard that.

DAVID
What should we do?

CELIA
(starts to walk toward the house)
Come on.

DAVID
Wait, I should get my insurance card.

She walks toward the house as David goes back to the car. She reaches the porch and rings the doorbell.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are they home?

CELIA
(calls to him)
I don't know.

She rings the doorbell again, then knocks on the door. No one answers, and no lights come on. She walks off down the driveway where David is walking toward her, carrying paper and a pen.

DAVID
No one answered?

She shakes her head no and shrugs.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I guess I'll just leave a note.

He walks to the door, and starts to write on the paper. Celia waits for him in the driveway. She hears something rustling in the bushes at the side of the house. She looks toward the sound, but doesn't see anything.

CELIA
(a little scared)
David?

He comes walking down the driveway.

DAVID
I left a note with our address on it. I suppose it shouldn't be too hard to get in touch with us.

They walk back to the Fuller's car.

CELIA
I hope they're not too upset about this.

DAVID
Well, it's a hell of a way to meet your new neighbors. But I wouldn't worry too much about it. We're insured and besides, it's just a mailbox.

They both get back into the Fuller's car. David backs up and then drives the short distance to his own driveway.

On the side of the house, Harold stands in the shadows, watching them get out of their car and go into their house.

13 CONTINUED:

13

He steps quietly across the lawn, watching their house. He reaches the smashed mailbox and looks at it.

On the ground amidst all those red brick pieces are a few tiny pieces of white bone. He toes at them with his shoe then sticks his hand into the half standing base of the mailbox and pulls out a piece of a broken human skull. He looks from the piece of skull to their house.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE -- MORNING

14

The sun is just coming up. A car drives down the cul-de-sac, stopping in front of each house as the DRIVER throws a paper into each driveway. It stops in front of Harold's house and the driver throws a paper into the driveway, and then drives off. The mailbox is completely repaired, and there are hardly any traces of the accident except for a little red dust here and there on the ground.

15 EXT. FULLER HOUSE -- LATER

15

The sun is fully up now. Kids play kick ball up toward the front of the street. David and Celia walk up their driveway toward Harold's house. David looks hung-over, his eyes a little bloodshot. He sees the mailbox first.

DAVID
(surprised)
Look at that.

Celia sees it. They look at each other.

CELIA
That's weird.

DAVID
Maybe the guy's a bricklayer or something.

16 EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER

16

David and Celia reach the porch.

DAVID
(looking around)
Well, he must have got the note I left. It's not here.

David knocks loudly on the door.

CELIA

(smirks)

Maybe we just dreamed the whole thing.

David rolls his eyes at her. After a moment the door opens to reveal Harold. He looks at them with a quizzical expression.

HAROLD

Can I help you?

DAVID

Hey, I'm David Fuller and this is my wife Celia. Unfortunately we're the ones that hit your mailbox last night.

Harold smiles and puts out his hand to David.

HAROLD

Harold Thompson.

They shake hands. Harold opens the door wider.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Would you like to come in? I've got some fresh coffee brewing.

Celia and David sit in the living room, looking around at the tastefully decorated room as Harold comes in from the kitchen carrying a tray of coffee.

CELIA

I love your house. Did your wife decorate it herself?

Harold smiles as he puts the tray down.

HAROLD

No, I'm afraid I'm just an old bachelor.

(looks around proudly)

I did the whole house myself.

CELIA

(follows his gaze)

Impressive.

Harold pours a cup and hands it to Celia.

DAVID

If I had to decorate our place by myself, it'd look like squatters had moved in.

Harold pours another cup and hands it to David.

HAROLD

(to both of them)
Cream or sugar?

CELIA

No thank you.

David shakes his head no.

CELIA (CONT'D)

(to Harold)
So what line of work are you in?

Harold pours himself a cup.

HAROLD

A type of independent salesman.
It's a little hard to understand.
(pours some cream into his cup)
I make hunting and fishing licenses.

DAVID

I love to hunt. Maybe you could help me get a license.

HAROLD

(stirs his coffee)
Well, I don't actually make or sell them. I develop these exotic plastic films that the licenses are made on.

Celia and David both look a little confused. He reads their look and smiles.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

It's a pretty specific line of work. Not many people quite get it. I like it though. It allows me to work out of the house, which is nice.

Harold takes a sip of his coffee.

CELIA

I couldn't agree more. I love it.
No co-workers, no bosses.

HAROLD

What do you do?

CELIA

Investigative reporter, mostly
freelance work.

Celia takes a sip of her coffee. David looks at her and smiles.

DAVID

I swear she is part bloodhound.
She can track down the smallest of
leads.

HAROLD

That sounds like a fascinating job.

CELIA

Kind of boring work to be honest,
but sometimes it has its rewards.

HAROLD

(to David)
And what about you?

DAVID

I'm an ER doctor.

HAROLD

(clearly impressed)
You must have started school young.

David chuckles.

DAVID

I'm older than I look.

HAROLD

Are you already working here?

DAVID

No, not yet. I'm taking a little
time off to get settled in before I
start over at Westphal.

HAROLD

That's a really good hospital. Is that what brought you two all the way from California?

DAVID

That and a few other things.

HAROLD

Do you have any family here?

DAVID

(shakes his head no)
Both our parents passed away a long time ago.

CELIA

We figured this would be a nice place to start a family of our own.

David looks uncomfortable and places his cup on the coffee-table. Harold and Celia both notice. There is an awkward pause, and then Celia looks to Harold and breaks it...

CELIA (CONT'D)

How did you know we came from California?

HAROLD

(smiles)
You can certainly tell you're a reporter.

CELIA

I'm sorry, I...

Harold shakes his head with a smile and waves her off.

HAROLD

I saw your license plate. I used to live in California myself. The L.A. area.

Harold picks up the coffee pot and tops his cup off.

CELIA (O.S.)

I'm not very satisfied sexually or emotionally.

He looks up from his coffee to her.

HAROLD
(startled)
I'm sorry...what did you say?

CELIA
I said, where did you live in L.A.?

HAROLD
Burbank.

David and Celia look to each other and smile.

CELIA
That's crazy. We lived right down
the road in Studio City.

HAROLD
(smiles)
It guess it really is a small
world.

DAVID
I tell you though, we are so glad
to be out of there. Just too much
crime. Too much traffic. Wasn't
safe anywhere.

Harold nods in agreement and looks to Celia, his eyes glazed
over in thought. Her lips move, but they don't match the
words she is saying.

CELIA (O.S.)
David has a really small penis. I
bet yours is big though. Thick and
long. Isn't it?

Celia has finished talking, and is looking at Harold
expectantly.

CELIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll suck your cock until you come
so good.

Harold's eyes widen a little. Celia looks confused by his
expression.

HAROLD
(snaps out of it)
I'm sorry. I'm afraid I'm a little
deaf in this ear.

CELIA

(a little louder)

I was just saying how sorry we are
about your mailbox.

DAVID

(nods)

You've been very nice about it.

HAROLD

Oh, it's nothing. Gave me
something to do.

CELIA

We were very impressed that you
fixed it so quickly.

David looks to Celia and gives a little nod to the door when
Harold isn't looking.

HAROLD

(shrugs)

I get up early and I had a bunch of
bricks and mortar out back since
I've been doing a little
landscaping out there in my free
time.

DAVID

I'd feel better about it if you'd
let me write you a check.

HAROLD

I wouldn't hear of it. Accidents
happen. The mailboxes are too
close to the curb anyway, if you
ask me.

Celia puts her coffee cup down and stands.

CELIA

(to David)

We should go.

(to Harold)

We've got a million things to do.

HAROLD

(stands)

I bet you do.

David stands and they all start to walk toward the front
door.

DAVID
(to Harold)
You sure I can't give you...

HAROLD
(waves him off)
Forget it.

They reach the door and David opens it. Celia turns to Harold.

CELIA
How about we have you over for
dinner when we're a little more
settled?

HAROLD
(smiles wide)
I would really like that.

David and Celia smile back at him.

CUT TO:

18 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- EVENING 18

Harold stands over the big steel tub, wearing his long black rubber-gloves. The classical music plays from the little radio. The tub is full of reddish black goo. He reaches down into it with one arm and pulls out a Femur bone. He puts it into a steel pan and then sticks his arm back in the goo, reaching around, then pulls out another bone, a Tibia.

19 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- AFTERNOON 19

Harold stands at a big steel sink next to the workbench, washing the bones off with a little hose and a scouring pad.

20 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- MORNING 20

The bones boil in several big metal pots sitting on several big bunson-burners in the corner of the basement.

21 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- AFTERNOON 21

Harold stands at his workbench, unspooling a ream of wire. On the long workbench sits all the clean white bones of the old man, all laid out. Next to the bones there sits a pile of neatly folded clothes and a grey wig. He cuts a long piece of wire off with a pair of wire-cutters.

22 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- MORNING 22

A perfect human skeleton lays. Harold finishes wiring it together.

23 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- NIGHT 23

Harold wires the skeleton to a big black metal stand.

24 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- AFTERNOON 24

Harold takes the small pile of clothes from the workbench and begins to dress the skeleton.

25 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- NIGHT 25

Harold comes into dimly lit living room, a little out of breath, carrying the skeleton of the old man, which is now on a stand and fully dressed and wearing a grey wig. The Jane skeleton still sits next to the lamp in her chair, holding her magazine, and the Sarah skeleton in the little green dress still sits at her place in front of the television, though it is now turned on. Harold puts the old man's skeleton down to the side of the entrance to the living room.

HAROLD

(excited)

Hey everybody, guess who's here!?

SARAH (O.S.)

Grandpa! Grandpa!

HAROLD

(laughs)

That's right! Come give him a hug!

Harold turns and suddenly Sarah gets up from the television, now alive and a pretty little girl with long blonde hair.

JANE

Grandpa!

She runs past Jane, now also alive, and a very attractive woman with long brown hair. Jane stands and looks to Sarah as she runs to Grandpa, now a real man with grey hair, and hugs his legs.

GRANDPA

Hey there, cutie. Did you miss me?

She looks up at him and nods excitedly. He picks her up in his arms and hugs her to him as she giggles.

25 CONTINUED:

25

Jane walks to Harold and puts an arm around him. Harold looks from Jane to Grandpa and Sarah, and smiles happily.

HAROLD

Come on in and make yourself at home, Dad. We've been waiting for you.

26 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- LATER

26

Harold sits on the couch, reading a newspaper. Grandpa sits in the chair in the corner reading a book to Sarah as she sits in his lap. Jane flips through her magazine in the other chair.

JANE

You sure seemed to get along well with the new neighbors.

HAROLD

The husband is a waste of skin, but I really like her. Celia. Pretty name, don't you think?

Jane lowers her magazine and looks at him with a frown.

JANE

I know what you're thinking and I would just stop this instant if I were you.

HAROLD

(grins)
What?

JANE

You know what. We don't need anymore family members. We have enough.

HAROLD

I agree.

Sarah looks up from the book Grandpa is holding in front of her.

SARAH

But Daddy, you said Grandma was going to come soon.

HAROLD

She is honey, don't worry. We're talking about something else.

(CONTINUED)

Sarah goes back to the book with Grandpa.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

(to Jane)

You sound jealous. It's not that I'm attracted to her.

JANE

Yes you are.

HAROLD

No, I'm not.

Jane's frown deepens.

JANE

It's too close to home, Harold.
It's too risky.

Harold thinks about it for a moment.

HAROLD

I think the husband saw the bones.

JANE

You want to think he saw the bones.
You know he didn't.

HAROLD

I don't see how he could have missed them.

JANE

It was dark, he was probably drunk.
You saw how bloodshot his eyes were
when they came over here.

Harold frowns and folds his paper.

JANE (CONT'D)

And if he did, they wouldn't have come over here to have coffee with you. He would have gone to the police. All that crap about crime in L.A.

HAROLD

L.A.'s not so bad. After all that's where we met.

JANE

You should be careful with him.
There's something brewing behind
those eyes. He could be dangerous
to you.

HAROLD

Oh, you worry too much. I can take
care of myself.

Harold opens his paper and begins to read.

JANE

(sighs)
You're going to do it anyway,
aren't you?

HAROLD

(behind his paper)
Do what?

JANE

Harold.

HAROLD

(annoyed)
That's enough, Jane.

JANE

You need to really thi...

Harold lowers his paper and looks at her.

HAROLD

(darkly)
Drop it.

Jane frowns and goes back to flipping through her magazine.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. GROCERY STORE -- MORNING

27

Harold's car pulls into the half-full parking lot and parks
near the front of the mall, backing into the space.

28 INT. HAROLD'S CAR - GROCERY STORE -- CONTINUOUS

28

Harold, wearing a nice suit and tie, kills the engine, and
looks out his window at the mall entrance. Beside him is a
nice leather briefcase.

29 EXT. GROCERY STORE -- LATER 29

Harold sits in his parked car, watching the entrance. An OLD WOMAN WITH SILVER HAIR comes out of the store, walking slowly with a severe limp. A BAG-BOY follows behind her, pushing a cart loaded with several full grocery bags. The woman limps to one of the handicap spots near the front of the store and unlocks the trunk of a beaten up old Buick.

30 EXT. OLD RESIDENTIAL STREET -- LATER 30

The old Buick drives down the street and pulls into a cracked driveway to the side of an old faded white frame house.

About a block down, Harold's car pulls over to the side of the road. He watches the old woman through his windshield as she takes out one of the bags from the trunk, and then limps toward her house, leaving the trunk open. Harold grabs his briefcase and gets out of his car.

31 EXT. OLD RESIDENTIAL STREET -- MOMENTS LATER 31

Harold walks down the sidewalk toward the old woman's house. He casually looks around the street and sees that it is empty. He approaches her house and looks at the number stenciled on the mailbox: 1501. He sees the woman limping back down the small driveway to her car. Back behind her he can see an open door on the side of the house.

HAROLD

Excuse me, ma'm. Is this 1501
Major Drive?

The old woman looks at him, a little startled.

OLD WOMAN

Yes it is.

Harold walks up to the edge of the driveway and stops.

HAROLD

Are you Mrs. Helen Chase?

The old woman shakes her head no.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

(with a confused frown)
But this is 1501 Major Drive?

The old woman nods. Harold shakes his head and sighs.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

This is the second time my office
has given me the wrong address.

The old woman limps toward the open trunk of the car.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

(looks at his watch)

I had a noon appointment with Mrs.
Chase to go over her insurance
policy.

OLD WOMAN

Sorry, I don't know any Mrs. Chase.

The old woman reaches the trunk.

HAROLD

Well, sorry to bother you. You
have yourself a nice day.

OLD WOMAN

You too.

Harold starts to turn, but sees her struggling with one of
the grocery bags.

HAROLD

Ma'm, can I help you with those?

OLD WOMAN

Oh, I'll manage.

HAROLD

Are you sure? They look kind of
heavy.

The old woman looks unsure, but looks at Harold in his nice
suit and tie, and reconsiders.

OLD WOMAN

If you're sure it's no bother.

HAROLD

(smiles)

No bother at all if you don't mind
carrying my briefcase for me. It's
pretty light.

OLD WOMAN

(smiles)

It's a deal.

He walks up to the trunk, hands her his briefcase, and then gathers all the bags into his arms. The old woman limps up the driveway, carrying the briefcase, as Harold shuts the trunk with his elbow and follows after her with the grocery bags.

The old woman makes her way carefully up the few steps of the porch to the side of the house. Behind her, Harold looks around, sees no one, and then follows her up the steps. He follows her inside the door, shifts the bags into one arm, and shuts the door quietly behind him.

32 INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CITY STREET -- NIGHT

32

It is dark out now as Harold drives, lost in thought. The old woman lays on the back-seat with a blanket over her. Outside the city lights go by. Suddenly there are flashing lights behind him. He looks in the rear-view mirror and sees a police car following him. He looks at the speedometer.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)

You weren't paying attention. You were speeding.

Harold eyes the police car in the rear-view mirror, worried.

HAROLD

Oh my God.

Harold slowly reaches over and opens the glove compartment, where there is a revolver. He takes the gun out and puts it in his lap. Behind him the police car blasts its siren.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)

He doesn't know what you've done. I look asleep back here.

Harold pulls his car over and stops on the side of the road. He watches in the rear-view as the police car pulls over behind him and stops.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You can get out of this.

Harold raises the gun in front of him and puts it under his chin. In the rear-view, the POLICE OFFICER gets out of his car, carrying a flashlight.

HAROLD

All I wanted was my own family.

Harold's finger lingers on the trigger.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)
You've got to think of them,
Harold. What would they do without
you?

Harold watches the Officer walk toward his car, and then quickly lowers the gun and hides it underneath his seat. Harold rolls down his window as the Officer walks up and shines his flashlight on Harold's face.

OFFICER
License and registration.

As Harold leans over to the glove compartment, the Officer shines his flashlight into the back of the car where the old woman lays: she does look like she is sleeping.

HAROLD
I'm sorry if I was speeding
Officer. I was trying to get my
mother home.

Harold hands out his registration paper to the Officer. The Officer takes it and shines his light on it. Harold fishes his wallet out of his coat pocket.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
We had a family reunion out in
Thurman today. The drive back
really put her out. She's just
exhausted.

Harold hands the Officer his license. The Officer looks at it and then looks at Harold.

OFFICER
Your mother sure is a heavy
sleeper.

HAROLD
It's been a really long day for
her, lots of excitement at the
reunion.

The Officer looks back at her and then looks to Harold and smiles.

OFFICER
You go ahead and get her home Mr.
Thompson.

He hands Harold his license and registration.

32 CONTINUED:

32

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Just watch your speed.

HAROLD
Yes sir.

The Officer walks away as Harold rolls his window up.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)
You did good, son.

33 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC -- NIGHT

33

Harold's car drives down the street to his house where the garage door is opening. Across the cul-de-sac all the lights at the Fullers' house are on. Harold's car pulls into the garage and the door starts to close.

34 INT. FULLER HOUSE - BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

34

The house looks a little more lived in now, and almost all the boxes are gone. The furniture is all arranged in the living room and in the dining room, and a few pictures hang on the walls here and there.

David sits in the floor of the hallway bathroom, attaching a new toilet seat to the commode. He finishes screwing it in and then tests it by opening and closing it. The old toilet seat sits on the bathroom counter.

CELIA (O.S.)
(calls to him)
David.

DAVID
(getting up)
Yeah?

CELIA (O.S.)
You coming to bed?

He picks up the old toilet seat and puts it in a trash bag.

DAVID
Just about. I'm almost done.

He turns on the faucet and starts to wash his hands.

35 INT. FULLER HOUSE - BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

35

David enters.

DAVID

Well, all the toilet seats are
repla...

He walks into the bedroom and sees Celia laying on the bed dressed in sexy black lingerie. She looks at him seductively.

CELIA

Come here, handsome.

He frowns.

DAVID

I need to take a shower. That was
kind of disgusting work.

CELIA

(sits up)
Come here. I like you dirty.

DAVID

Not now, Celia.

David walks toward the bathroom.

CELIA

(softly)
David, please come here.

He looks to her, and then walks over to the bed and sits down next to her.

CELIA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

DAVID

I'm not ready for this, not yet.

CELIA

Why not?

He looks at her for a long moment, and then sighs.

DAVID

I'm not sure I'm really ready to
have another child.

CELIA

But you said you were. You even
told me to stop taking my pills.

DAVID

I know, it's just...it's not time.
(he shakes his head)
Not yet.

CELIA

(frustrated)
David, I need you to fully commit
to this. To all of it.

He looks away from her, but she takes his face in her hands,
and makes him look at her.

CELIA (CONT'D)

You can't back out on me now. Not
now. We've planned all this for
years.

DAVID

I know. I just need a little more
time.

She lets go of his face and lays back on the bed, looking at
the ceiling, clearly upset. He tries to touch her arm, but
she pulls away and turns over. He frowns and rubs his face.

36 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - HAROLD'S HOUSE -- MORNING

36

The sun shines brightly overhead as the birds chirp merrily
from the trees.

37 INT. HAROLD'S BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

37

Harold, wearing his rubber-gloves and apron, kneels beside
the steel tub, pouring acid into it. The radio on the
workbench plays classical music.

GRANDMA (O.S.)

I am so happy to finally be here,
Harold.

Harold smiles down at the tub and the old woman with silver
hair looks up from inside the tub, and smiles back at him.

HAROLD

I know you are, Mom.

Instead of the bottle of acid, Harold's hands now hold a bar
of soap and a washrag as he washes her back with them.

GRANDMA

I'm going to be such a good mother to you. Better than that lousy whore that gave birth to you ever was.

HAROLD

You shouldn't talk that way, Mom. It's not dignified.

GRANDMA

I know honey, I just get so angry when I think about...

The doorbell rings faintly beneath the music. Harold looks up, looks back to the dead and decomposing body of the old woman, then gets up and puts the bottle of acid down. The doorbell rings again. Harold begins to remove his gloves.

38 EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER 38

Harold opens his front door and sees Celia walking away.

HAROLD

(calls from the door)
Celia?

She turns and sees him. She smiles and walks toward him.

CELIA

I didn't think you were home.

HAROLD

I was doing some cleaning in the basement, had the radio on too loud.

She walks up to the porch and stops.

CELIA

I thought I heard music. I just came over to see if you'd like to join us for dinner Friday night.

HAROLD

(smiles)
That would be lovely.

JANE (O.S.)

(from behind him)
Harold!?

CELIA
How about around seven?

JANE (O.S.)
(yells again)
Who's at the door!? Is that her!?

Harold looks annoyed, but quickly covers it with a big smile.

HAROLD
Sounds good. I'll see you then.

CELIA
(smiles)
Okay, see you then.

Celia turns and walks off. Harold watches her until she gets nearly to the driveway, then turns and shuts the door.

Harold turns angrily from the door and yells out...

HAROLD
Damn it Jane, don't you ever
embarrass me like that again!

JANE (O.S.)
(sarcastically)
Oh, I wouldn't want to embarrass
you in front of your new
girlfriend.

HAROLD
She's not my girlfriend.

He walks off angrily back toward the basement door, but the voice follows him though the house as though it is right behind him.

JANE (O.S.)
(mocking him)
That would be love-ly.

HAROLD
Shut-up.

JANE (O.S.)
You're going to get caught this
time.

HAROLD
Just shut-up!

He storms into the basement and slams the door shut behind him.

CUT TO:

40 INT. FULLER HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE / KITCHEN -- NIGHT 40

David opens the door to a smiling Harold.

DAVID
(shakes his hand)
Come on in.

Harold comes in the door, carrying a bottle of wine.

HAROLD
I brought you a little housewarming
present.

He hands the bottle to David as Celia comes in from the kitchen.

CELIA
Welcome to our home. Sorry if it
is still a little unfurnished. Our
last house was much smaller.

HAROLD
No, no, it looks fine.

David looks at the bottle of wine.

DAVID
This is a really nice bottle,
Harold. Thank you. You mind if I
open it now?

HAROLD
Go right ahead.
(looks around)
This is a very nice house. I've
never actually been in here before.

DAVID
(to Celia)
Honey, why don't you give him the
tour while I open this?

40 CONTINUED:

CELIA
(nods)
Don't forget to stir the sauce.

David nods and walks off toward the kitchen.

CELIA (CONT'D)
(to Harold)
Ready for the grand tour?

41 INT. FULLER BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 41

Celia walks into the room and flips on the light.

CELIA
This is the master bedroom.

Harold follows her into the room.

HAROLD
Very nice.

He looks around the room, and sees that blinds are open on the large window across from the bed. Celia walks to the bathroom, and he follows her.

42 INT. FULLER KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER 42

Celia walks into the kitchen with Harold following behind her to find David stirring the sauce on the stove.

CELIA
And this is, of course, the
kitchen, where my wonderful husband
is making one of the best spaghetti
sauces you'll ever taste.

DAVID
(smiles)
Suck up.

CELIA
And that concludes our tour.

Harold looks around, appreciatively.

HAROLD
You certainly have a beautiful
home.

David walks over to the counter, where the bottle of wine and three wine glasses sit.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

We've got another ten or fifteen minutes before dinner is ready. Would anyone like some wine?

Celia and Harold both nod. David pours the wine. Harold eyes the door next to the open pantry.

HAROLD

(nods toward it)
Is that to the basement?

David and Celia follow his gaze to the door.

DAVID

Yeah. We haven't been down there much yet. It's a little funky.

Harold walks toward the door.

HAROLD

Mind if I take a look? I'd like to compare it to mine.

DAVID

Sorry, but the lights are all out. I just haven't had time to replace the bulbs yet.

Harold looks a little disappointed, but neither Celia nor David notice.

CELIA

(to David)
We need to add a light bulb to our list before we go to Home Depot tomorrow.

David hands Celia a glass of wine and then hands one to Harold. David picks up his glass and raises it toward Harold.

DAVID

Here's to our new neighbor.

Harold smiles, and they all three clink their glasses together.

43 INT. FULLER DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

43

Soft jazz plays from the living room as David and Celia and Harold all sit at the dining room table, laughing and drinking, their empty dinner plates in front of them.

DAVID
So we're driving down Sunset
Boulevard one day...

Celia is clearly a little drunk.

CELIA
Just a few days after we moved
there.

DAVID
(nods)
And I'm looking around as I drive,
not really paying attention, when
suddenly Celia screams...

CELIA
I didn't scream. I yelled out.

DAVID
(rolls his eyes)
She yells out, okay? And I look up
to see this woman walking right out
into the street in front of me. I
wasn't going very fast, maybe
thirty, thirty-five, but I have to
slam on the breaks...

CELIA
We screech to a halt, and this
woman, she's standing in front of
our car, maybe a foot or less in
front of us, and she's looking
right at us...

DAVID
And it's Zsa Zsa Gabor.

Celia and David both laugh.

HAROLD
Zsa Zsa Gabor?

They both nod.

DAVID

Celia and I were both just dumbstruck. I mean we almost creamed this woman, and on top of that, it's this person we both recognize. So we're just staring at her, right? Well, she looks back at us for a moment and then she raises her hand...

CELIA

And flips us off.

They all three laugh.

DAVID

I tell you, only in L.A.

HAROLD

That's hilarious.

(takes a drink)

The only celebrity I ever saw the whole time I lived there was Jay Leno once at the supermarket. But he didn't give me the finger.

David chuckles. Celia lights a cigarette. She notices a look of distaste on Harold's face.

CELIA

Is the smoke going to bother you?

HAROLD

No, no it's fine.

CELIA

(exhales)

So how long did you live there?

HAROLD

Oh just a couple of years. I followed a woman out there...but it didn't work out.

Celia pours herself some more wine. David watches her with a small frown.

CELIA

Why did you leave L.A.?

DAVID
(grins)
Following another woman?

HAROLD
No, no. I'm originally from here,
and it just seemed to make sense.

She offers the bottle to David, who shakes his head no.

CELIA
How long ago did you move here?

She offers the bottle to Harold.

HAROLD
(nods)
Just a little more, thanks.

She pours some more wine into his glass.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Oh, about four years ago I suppose.

Harold takes a drink from his glass.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
I love it here. So quiet and
peaceful. Perfect place for
children.

CELIA
Isn't it? That's the whole reason
we moved here, really. To have
little babies.

David frowns at Celia. She sees him frown and takes a big
swig of her wine.

HAROLD
So you two are planning on starting
a family soon?

CELIA
We already started a family, but it
got stopped.

David's frown deepens, but Celia doesn't look at him. Harold
looks a little confused. She crushes her cigarette out.

CELIA (CONT'D)
We had a child, a daughter, but
she...
(looks a little sad)
Died.

Celia drains the rest of her glass. David looks away from her to Harold.

DAVID
Cancer.

HAROLD
I'm so sorry...that's awful.

There is an awkward silence. Celia reaches for the bottle. David stands up from the table.

DAVID
I think it's time for dessert.

44 EXT. FULLER HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE -- LATER

44

The front door opens and Harold walks out onto the porch. He turns to look at David and Celia, who stand in the doorway.

HAROLD
Thank you so much for dinner. I
had a wonderful time.

DAVID
Us too.

HAROLD
Well, good-night.

David and Celia wave as Harold starts to walk off.

DAVID
Walk safe.

Harold laughs and waves as he walks off. David and Celia go inside the house, and shut the door behind them. The porch-light goes out. Harold walks past the Fuller's car to the end of their driveway, turns to see their darkened porch, looks around, and then walks quickly toward the house next door. He walks across the neighbor's lawn to the side of David and Celia's house and opens the wooden gate there.

45 EXT. BACK OF FULLER HOUSE - BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 45

Harold walks quietly across the backyard to where a window is lit. He sneaks up to the window and looks in, watching from the darkness. He sees Celia and David in their bedroom. Celia is taking off her clothes as David talks to her. They look like they are fighting though Harold can't hear what they are saying.

46 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- LATER 46

Harold comes up the stairs and walks into the dim living room. Jane looks up at him from her chair. Harold sees that she has a glass of wine in her hand, and that there is a near empty bottle sitting on the coffee-table.

HAROLD
(groans)
Perfect.

Jane lifts her glass to him.

JANE
The great and powerful Harold has returned.

HAROLD
(sighs)
Do we have to do this tonight?

JANE
You know we do.

He goes to the coffee-table, picks up the bottle of wine, and pours himself a drink.

JANE (CONT'D)
(clearly drunk)
So did you have a good time with your little whore tonight?

HAROLD
(sharply)
Don't you dare talk about her like that.

Jane lunges off of her chair and gets right in his face.

JANE
Or what!?

Harold gives her a dark look. She laughs in his face.

JANE (CONT'D)

You couldn't live without me! I
was your first!

HAROLD

You know you were not my first.

He grips the wine bottle by the neck. Jane steps back.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

(darkly)

You also know what happened to my
first, don't you?

JANE

(with a little nod)

It was her bones that you hid in
the mailbox.

HAROLD

That's right.

Harold moves slowly toward her with the bottle. She watches
him, and suddenly looks sad.

JANE

But I was the one you started this
family with.

Harold raises the bottle like a club, a few drops of red wine
spilling down his arm like blood.

SARAH (O.S.)

Daddy?

Harold stops and looks over at Sarah, still wearing the
little green dress, rubbing her eyes sleepily.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Why are you and Mommy fighting?

Harold lowers the bottle.

JANE

Because your Daddy doesn't love me
anymore.

Harold walks over and scoops Sarah up into his arms.

JANE (CONT'D)

He's going to replace me!

HAROLD
(holding Sarah)
Stop it, Jane. Just stop it.

JANE
He's going to replace all of us!

HAROLD
I can't take this anymore. You're
nuts, you know that? Fucking nuts.

Jane laughs wildly. Harold walks out with Sarah and takes her down the hallway.

47 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

47

The room is painted a light pink and is filled with all sorts of toys and stuffed animals. Harold carries Sarah to her bed, and lays her down. She looks up at him.

SARAH
I'm scared, Daddy.

He lays down next to her and puts his arm around her.

HAROLD
There's nothing to be scared of
sweet-pea.

SARAH
You're not going to replace me, are
you Daddy?

Harold hugs her tightly to him.

HAROLD
I could never replace you, Sarah.
Never in a million years. I love
you more than anything in this
world.

SARAH
I love you too, Daddy.

He kisses her on top of her head.

HAROLD
Now come on, it's time to go to
sleep.

She looks up at him.

SARAH

Daddy, can I have a sister?

Harold thinks about it for a moment then smiles at her.

HAROLD

How about an older sister?

Sarah smiles and nods enthusiastically.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I'll get you one as soon as I can.
Now, you go ahead and close your
eyes. It's night night time.

She snuggles into him and closes her eyes.

Harold lays in bed next to the little skeleton of Sarah,
holding her to him, staring blankly at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

Harold sits in his car in front of the school. TEENAGERS
pour out of the school. Harold watches as a few GIRLS walk
toward him, talking and giggling among themselves. As they
get closer, one of the girls, a pretty BLONDE, stops talking
to her friends and looks right at Harold.

BLONDE GIRL

(seductively)

I could be your daughter. You
could come into my room late at
night and...

Harold looks away from her in disgust. He looks at another
GIRL WITH DYED BLACK HAIR, who is standing alone by the steps
of the school, lighting a cigarette. She looks over at him.

BLACK HAIR GIRL

I do a lot of drugs and I fuck
anything that moves, but you could
save me. I need a real father
to...

The fantasy is interrupted as a TEENAGE BOY walks up to the
girl and they kiss. Harold frowns and looks away. Behind
the teenage couple, a PLAIN GIRL come down the steps. She
walks down the pathway toward Harold, looking right at him.

(CONTINUED)

PLAIN GIRL

No one will miss me. I hate my
life. I'd be better off with you.

Harold watches as she walks past his car and crosses the
street. She turns and looks at him.

PLAIN GIRL (CONT'D)

Come take me. I won't put up much
of a fight.

She walks off toward one of the residential streets across
from the school. Harold starts his engine.

49 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- MOMENTS LATER 49

Harold drives slowly down the street. Up ahead the Plain
Girl walks down the sidewalk.

50 INT. HAROLD'S CAR - RESIDENTIAL STREET -- CONTINUOUS 50

Harold drives, watching the Plain Girl through his
windshield. He hears her speaking to him as he drives.

PLAIN GIRL (O.S.)

I'll be a good big sister to Sarah.
I know what it's like to be lonely.
I probably won't even scream.

To his right a station wagon backs out of its driveway, but
Harold's eyes are on the Plain Girl.

PLAIN GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'll be grateful. I'll have
someone to love me. Someone to
finally...

The station wagon slams into the side of Harold's car and
everything goes black.

51 INT. HAROLD'S CAR - RESIDENTIAL STREET -- MOMENTS LATER 51

Harold comes to. There is blood running down his face from a
cut on his forehead. He looks over to his left and sees a
HOUSEWIFE looking at him through the window, saying
something.

52 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- CONTINUOUS 52

Harold gets out of the car.

HOUSEWIFE

(freaking out)

Are you sure you should get up?
I'm so sorry. I didn't see you.
It's those damn hedges. I keep
telling my husband to trim them. I
have insurance.

Harold looks at her, dazed.

HOUSEWIFE (CONT'D)

That cut looks bad. Should I call
an ambulance? I should call an
ambulance. You need an ambulance.

HAROLD

(steadying himself)

No. I think I'm alright.

HOUSEWIFE

I have insurance. It's those damn
hedges. I keep...

The Housewife keeps rambling on as Harold looks around. There are a few GAWKERS standing over on the sidewalk. He sees the Plain Girl among them. She looks right at him.

PLAIN GIRL

It would have been beautiful, but
it just wasn't meant to be.

Harold sits in the emergency room, holding a compress to his forehead, filling out a form.

DAVID (O.S.)

Harold?

Harold looks up and sees David walking toward him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?
(sees Harold's forehead)
What happened?

HAROLD

Car accident. No big deal, just a
fender bender.

DAVID

Come with me, I'll take care of you.

HAROLD

But I haven't finished filling out my form.

DAVID

I can't let you sit here and bleed to death. Celia would never forgive me. Come on.

Harold gets up and follows David.

54 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER

54

Harold sits on the little hospital table as David shines a little light in Harold's eyes, and then clicks it off.

DAVID

No signs of a concussion.

David inspects the wound on Harold's forehead.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That's a nasty cut, but it isn't as bad as it looks. You're not even going to need stitches. You really lucked out on this one.

David goes over to the medical counter in the corner.

HAROLD

I've always been lucky with things like this. I've never been seriously hurt or sick, never even spent the night in a hospital.

DAVID

Take it from me, luck like that eventually runs out.

David rummages through a drawer and pulls out a bandage.

HAROLD

So how are you and Celia doing?

David looks over at him, sharply.

DAVID

Excuse me?

HAROLD

I mean, are you settled in yet?

David walks back to him with the bandage.

DAVID

Pretty much. Since I've gone back to work, Celia's been dealing with the house.

HAROLD

You're really the lucky one, to have a wife like her.

DAVID

(smiles)

You don't know the half of it.

He puts the bandage on Harold's forehead.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We're all done here, Harold. Good as new.

HAROLD

I really appreciate this. I'd still be out there in the waiting room if it wasn't for you.

DAVID

It's nothing. Besides, like I said, Celia would never forgive me if I let anything happen to you.

Harold smiles.

CUT TO:

David lays wide awake in the dark as Celia lays next to him sleeping. He rolls over and turns on the lamp. Celia stirs, but doesn't wake up.

DAVID

Celia?

CELIA

(sleepily)

Wha...what?

DAVID

Wake up, baby. I need to tell you something.

Celia turns over and looks at him.

CELIA

(still groggy)

What? What's wrong?

David looks at her for a long moment.

DAVID

I've been thinking. You're right. I'm not going to fight it anymore.

Celia sits up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm ready to do it. All of it.

CELIA

Are you sure?

DAVID

I am.

She smiles and leans in and kisses him. He takes her into his arms and kisses her passionately as he rolls on top of her, and they begin to make love.
Omit

Harold sits at a window upstairs, looking out, watching David get his mail. Behind Harold is the skeleton of Grandma, posed in a rocking chair, a book in her skeletal hands.

HAROLD

(looking out the window)

He doesn't deserve her.

GRANDMA (O.S.)

It's you that can give her the family she wants.

HAROLD

I know.

(sighs)

Jane is right though. It's too risky so close to home.

56 CONTINUED:

56

GRANDMA (O.S.)
You shouldn't listen to Jane. You
should listen to your heart, son.

Harold stares out the window at David, his face dark.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC -- AFTERNOON 57

Harold's car turns onto the cul-de-sac.

58 INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CUL-DE-SAC -- CONTINUOUS 58

Harold drives down his street and sees a police car parked in front of David and Celia's house. The Fuller's car is not in the driveway. He pulls his car into his garage and the door closes.

59 EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE -- LATER 59

The sun is going down. Harold walks to his mailbox. He looks over at the Fuller house and sees that the police car is gone. Their driveway is empty, though there are a few lights on inside the house. Harold pretends to check his mailbox, though it is empty. He looks around, sees no one, and then starts to walk toward their house.

60 EXT. FULLER HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER 60

Celia opens the door to see Harold standing on the porch. Celia looks like she has been crying.

HAROLD

I just came over to see if
everything was alright. I saw the
police car earlier and...

Celia starts to cry.

CELIA

David's disappeared.

61 INT. FULLER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 61

Harold sits in a chair in the living room. Celia sits across from him on the couch.

HAROLD

How long has he been gone?

(CONTINUED)

CELIA
(pained)
Since yesterday morning.

HAROLD
What did the police say?

CELIA
They took the report, but they
don't believe he's missing. They
think he left me. I mean we have
been fighting a lot lately...
(tearfully)
But he wouldn't do that. He
wouldn't. Something's happened to
him.

She breaks down into sobs. Harold goes to her awkwardly and
puts his arms around her. She grabs onto him, crying. He
holds her, gently stroking her hair.

HAROLD
(softly)
It's going to be alright.
Everything is going to be just
fine.

62 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- NIGHT

62

Harold comes into the second floor living room. Jane sits in
her chair, flipping through her magazine. Grandpa sits on
the couch, reading a newspaper, and Grandma sits in the floor
with Sarah playing a game with her. They all look up at him
as he comes in. Harold looks to Jane.

HAROLD
You and I need to talk.

Jane flinches. Harold looks to Grandma.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Mom, I need you to watch Sarah.

GRANDMA
Okay, son.

Harold looks back to Jane.

HAROLD
Come with me.

Jane doesn't move.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I said, come with me.

She looks scared. Harold moves toward her. Harold picks up Jane's skeleton.

63 INT. HAROLD'S BASEMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

63

Harold puts Jane's skeleton down near the workbench, and walks to another section of the bench where several tools hang on the wall by hooks.

JANE (O.S.)

I've been waiting for this.

He turns to her, and she is now a real person again.

JANE (CONT'D)

Now that you've killed David,
you're going to replace me with
her.

HAROLD

I didn't do anything to David. He
left her.

JANE

You're such a liar.

He takes a hammer down from its hook above the workbench.

HAROLD

You know I didn't do anything to
him, but you can't accept that.

He walks toward her. She eyes the hammer in his hand, but doesn't move.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

You can't accept that it's fate
that sent David away, that it is
proof Celia and I are meant for
each other.

He stops, inches away from her. She looks him in the eye.

JANE

She'll never love you.

HAROLD

Yes...yes she will.

63 CONTINUED:

63

Harold swings the hammer hard at her head and knocks her to the ground. He bends down and strikes her with the hammer again and again.

64 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC -- MORNING

64

Harold walks toward the Fuller house.

65 INT. FULLER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

65

All the curtains are closed. The place is a bit of a wreck. Celia and Harold are in the living room, talking. Celia sits on the couch. On the cushion next to her is a cordless phone and a cell phone. She looks tired, her hair is unkempt, and she's wearing an old bathrobe. Harold sits across from her.

HAROLD

The police still haven't found anything?

CELIA

(shakes her head)

It's been a full seven days, and nothing. Not one clue. Not a sign of him.

(sighs)

I don't know how hard they're looking since they probably still think he left me.

She lights a cigarette. Harold frowns a little.

HAROLD

How are you holding up?

Celia lets out a desperate little laugh.

CELIA

I haven't done any work. I've cried myself to sleep every night. I feel like I'm losing my mind.

HAROLD

Have you been out at all?

Celia shakes her head and takes a long drag off of her cigarette.

CELIA

(exhales)

I've been too afraid to leave.

(MORE)

CELIA (cont'd)
I could miss a call from the
police...or David.

She looks like she is going to start crying again, but she keeps it under control.

HAROLD
You need to get out of here for a
little while. It isn't healthy for
you to stay cooped up in here like
this.

CELIA
I know. But I...
(sighs)
I just don't know what to do with
myself anymore. I'm a wreck.

HAROLD
You look like you haven't had a
decent meal in days. Why don't you
come over to my house for dinner
tonight?

She looks to the phones next to her, and shakes her head no.

CELIA
That's really sweet of you
Harold... but I really shouldn't.

HAROLD
I'm sure David wouldn't want you
sitting around here like this,
wasting away. You need a good home-
cooked meal.

CELIA
I need to be here in case someone
calls.

HAROLD
You can bring your cell phone with
you.

She looks unsure.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
(coaxing)
Come on. It'll take your mind off
of things. You can take a long hot
shower, put on some fresh clothes,
and then come over and let me get
some food into you.

65 CONTINUED:

Celia looks down at her dirty bathrobe.

CELIA
I guess I could use a shower.

HAROLD
Why don't you come over around
seven or so? I guarantee you won't
regret it.

Celia looks reluctant, but nods. Harold smiles.

66 INT. HAROLD'S KITCHEN -- LATER 66

Harold stands at the counter, whistling happily, as he chops
some scallions.

67 INT. HAROLD'S KITCHEN -- LATER 67

Harold arranges some flowers.

68 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE -- LATER 68

Harold, dressed in a suit, ties his neck-tie in the mirror on
his open closet door.

69 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- LATER 69

Harold walks into the dim living room where the skeletons of
Grandma and Grandpa and Sarah all sit in their positions
around the living room. He picks up Grandpa, and straightens
him into a standing position.

SARAH (O.S.)
Is my new mommy coming tonight?

DAVID
She sure is, honey.

Harold picks up Grandpa and carries him toward the entrance
of the living room.

70 INT. HAROLD'S BASEMENT -- LATER 70

Harold stands at the workbench, looking at his tools. He
reaches for the hammer, decides against it, and leaves it
hanging on the hook. He thinks for a moment, and then takes
a little hatchet from the hook, and opens a drawer underneath
the bench.

He takes out a thick coil of rope from the drawer. He straightens out a few feet of it, then cuts it off with the hatchet. He puts the hatchet down on the bench, and wraps one end of the rope around his hand, pulling the rope taut with his other hand. He pulls it tighter and tighter until his hands begin to shake.

71 INT. / EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE -- NIGHT 71

Celia, looking fresh and clean in a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, rings the doorbell. After a moment, Harold opens the door with a big smile on his face.

72 INT. HAROLD'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER 72

Celia follows Harold into the kitchen where several pots simmer on the island stove.

CELIA

Am I going to get the full tour
this time?

HAROLD

Sure. A little later though, after
dinner.

She looks at his suit.

CELIA

I didn't know this was going to be
so formal.

He looks to her and follows her eyes down to his suit.

HAROLD

I guess I got a little excited
about having company for dinner.
It's been awhile.

CELIA

You look very nice.

He smiles at her and pours one of the pots into a bowl. She walks over to the adjoining breakfast nook, and pulls out a pack of cigarettes from her jean pocket.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Do you mind if I smoke in here?

HAROLD

(grimaces a little)
Actually, I'd prefer if you didn't.

She looks to the backdoor in the nook.

CELIA
(nods to it)
Mind if I step out back then?

HAROLD
Do you think you can wait?

He nods down to the bowl in his hands.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Dinner is pretty much ready.

Celia looks a little jittery, but forces a smile.

CELIA
Sure, I should cut down anyway.

HAROLD
Follow me.

Harold takes the bowl, and walks out of the kitchen. Celia looks back to the backdoor with a sigh and then follows after him.

73 INT. HAROLD'S DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

73

The dining room lights are dimmed. Celia comes in to find Harold lighting candles on the table. The table is immaculately set with an embroidered tablecloth, linen napkins, china dishes, crystal glasses, and real silverware. Celia sees the table, and looks a little uncomfortable. He looks to her and looks kind of guilty.

HAROLD
I hope this is alright. I really never get the chance to entertain much so I tend to go a little overboard.

CELIA
No, no. It's very nice.

He moves to one of the chairs and pulls it out for her. She seems even more uncomfortable by the gesture, but forces a smile, and sits down.

CELIA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

He picks up a bottle of wine from the table and fills her glass.

HAROLD

You wait here and enjoy your wine
while I go get the rest of our
dinner.

He walks off. Celia takes a deep breath, and then takes a drink of her wine.

74 INT. HAROLD'S DINING ROOM -- LATER

74

Harold sits across from Celia, both of them eating. Celia looks at the food on her plate as she eats. Harold watches her from across the table. She looks up, notices him looking at her, and looks uncomfortably back down at her plate.

HAROLD

You sure are quiet tonight.

Celia looks up at him.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

(smiles)

You're usually asking me questions.

CELIA

I'm sorry. I'm afraid I'm not very
good company. I can't help but
keep wondering where Dav...

HAROLD

(interrupts her)

Let's not talk about David tonight.
No sense in upsetting yourself
while you eat. It's bad for
digestion.

Celia looks back down at her plate, and moves some food around with her fork. Harold takes a roll from the basket on the table.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

(nods to her plate)

How is everything?

CELIA

Delicious. You really didn't have
to go to all this trouble.

HAROLD

Nonsense. I wanted to do something nice for you. You deserve someone who does nice things for you.

She looks at him and sees him looking at her lovingly. She bites at her bottom lip, and then picks up her glass and drinks down the last of her wine.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Would you like some more wine?

CELIA

(looks at her plate)
No thank you. I think I've had enough.

HAROLD

(frowns)
You picking tonight to get sober?

Celia looks up at him, sharply.

CELIA

What did you say?

HAROLD

(smiles)
I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that. Just a bad joke.

They eat in an uncomfortable silence for a moment. Celia puts her fork down and wipes her mouth with her napkin.

CELIA

(lets out a breath)
That was great, but I'm stuffed.

Harold looks down at her plate, which has barely been touched.

HAROLD

Stuffed? You've hardly eaten a thing.

CELIA

I'm sorry, it really was delicious, I just don't have much of an appetite.

Harold looks at Celia and his eyes glaze over.

CELIA (CONT'D)
(seductively)
I don't want any more food, Harold.
I want you.

She sweeps the dishes, glasses, candles, and silverware off of the table onto the floor.

CELIA (CONT'D)
I want you inside me right now.
Let's do it here on the table.

Harold snaps out of it and Celia is still sitting in her chair, but she is looking at him with a raised eyebrow.

HAROLD
I'm sorry, what did you say?

CELIA
I said I really appreciate the dinner, but I think I should be going.

HAROLD
(alarmed)
What...why?

She gets up from her chair.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
(standing)
We haven't even had dessert yet.
I've got a very nice bottle of champagne I was going to open.

CELIA
I have to be honest Harold, I don't feel comfortable with this. I'm a married woman.

Harold laughs. She starts to walk out.

HAROLD
(moves toward her)
Wait, wait. I didn't mean to give you the wrong impression. I just want to be your friend, nothing more.

CELIA

(unconvinced)

This is coming off as romantic, not friendly.

HAROLD

I brought out the good stuff to impress you, not seduce you.

(sincerely)

I know you're having a hard time, and I just wanted you to enjoy yourself tonight.

Celia sags a little and looks embarrassed.

CELIA

I'm sorry, of course you did. I'm just a complete mess right now.

HAROLD

(waves it off)

It's completely understandable. You've been through a lot.

CELIA

Now I really should go.

HAROLD

No, no. Please don't leave like this. We can skip the champagne, but I bought a delicious chocolate torte that I would hate to see go to waste.

Celia looks hesitant for a moment, but then nods.

CELIA

That sounds good.

She moves back to her chair. Harold smiles.

HAROLD

I'll go get it now.

CELIA

No, please, finish your dinner.

HAROLD

(waves her off)

If I eat anymore, I won't want dessert. I'll be right back.

74 CONTINUED:

74

He walks off toward the kitchen.

75 INT. HAROLD'S KITCHEN - BACK DECK -- MOMENTS LATER

75

Harold is putting the torte onto a platter when Celia comes in behind him, looking a little jittery.

CELIA

I don't want to be rude, but I think I'm going to skip dessert.

HAROLD

Are you sure? I mean look at it.

He holds the torte out to her.

CELIA

Tempting, but I'm really not in the mood. What I need is a cigarette.

HAROLD

Why don't you step out on the back-porch and have one?

CELIA

Are you sure you don't mind?

HAROLD

(forces a smile)

Of course, I'll save this for another night.

He puts the torte down and walks toward the backdoor. He fishes a key out of his pocket, and unlocks the dead lock with it. He opens the door for her, leaving the key in the lock. She walks out onto the back-porch.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

You go ahead and smoke, I'm going to start clearing the dishes.

She nods as she lights her cigarette, and inhales deeply. He walks off, leaving the door open.

76 INT. HAROLD'S DINING ROOM -- LATER

76

All of the dishes are gone now, and Harold is taking the tablecloth off of the table when Celia walks in looking a little more relaxed.

CELIA

Much, much better now.

(CONTINUED)

HAROLD

Good.

CELIA

So how about that grand tour?

He looks a little surprised.

HAROLD

(smiles)

Sure.

Celia smiles back at him.

77 INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

77

Harold comes off the top stair and walks down the dark hallway, past the closed doors, toward the soft dim light of the living room. Celia follows a few steps behind him.

CELIA

(sees the closed doors)

Are these bedrooms?

HAROLD

(looks back at her)

I'll show you those in a second, I want to show you my favorite room.

He stops a few steps short of the entrance to the living room, and moves to the side of the hallway, putting one hand into his front coat pocket, and motioning with his other hand for her to go on ahead of him.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I spend most of my time up here.

She walks past him, and he pulls his hand out of his pocket, and the piece of rope dangles from his hand down toward the ground.

Celia walks into the living room and suddenly stops, her face filling with terror.

In the center of the living room stands the clothed skeletons of Grandma, Grandpa, and Sarah. Grandma and Grandpa's arms are both posed in welcoming waves. Sarah is positioned between them with her little arms outstretched, as if wanting to be picked up.

(CONTINUED)

Celia screams, but the sound is cut abruptly off by the rope suddenly around her neck. Harold stands behind her, pulling the rope tighter and tighter.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Do you like your new family Celia?

Celia struggles against the rope, strangling. Her hands flail for the rope, but it is too tight to get a hold. Harold buries his face in her hair.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

You see, I can give you what David wouldn't.

Celia reaches back behind her with one hand, grabbing at Harold's suit pants.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

You are going to be so happy wi...

She grabs hold of his crotch with her hand, and twists violently. Harold yells out in pain. Celia jerks forward and Harold loses his grip and drops one end of the rope. Celia turns around quickly and kicks Harold right in the groin, and he falls.

She jumps over him in the hallway, but he catches her leg, and she goes sprawling onto the floor. He tries to pull himself toward her, but she kicks him right in the face. There is a distinct crunch and he lets go of her leg with a howl of pain. She scrambles down the hallway, getting to her feet, and runs down the stairs.

INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE / KITCHEN-- MOMENTS LATER 78

Celia runs down the stairs to the front door. She tries to open it, but it is locked and the key is gone. She pulls on it again in disbelief, then quickly runs to the kitchen and tries the back door.

Harold comes down the bottom of the stairs right as she reaches the hallway. He smiles at her, blood dripping from his nose. Celia turns the corner and runs toward the front of the house with Harold right behind her. She reaches the front door and grabs hold of the knob and pulls...but it is also locked. She starts to turn, but before she can, the rope slips around her neck and pulls her backward.

HAROLD
(strangling her)
Stop fighting it, Celia.

She struggles, but it does no good.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
You're going to be so happy here.

He pulls the rope tighter, lifting her off of the ground.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
I'm going to take good ca...

Suddenly a gloved hand slips around Harold's face, pressing a piece of white cloth over his mouth. Harold's eyes go wide and he tries to move his head, but his eyes suddenly droop and close. He falls back, letting go of Celia, and collapses to the floor, revealing David. In David's other gloved hand there is a bottle of chloroform. David puts down the rag and bottle, and goes to Celia. He takes her in his arms and looks at her.

DAVID
(concerned)
Are you alright?

She gasps for breath, holding her throat.

CELIA
He...almost...killed me.

DAVID
I'm so sorry, baby. I'm so sorry.

CELIA
(catching her breath)
You were...supposed to leave the...
backdoor unlocked.

DAVID
I heard something out there, and
thought it would be safer to take
him in here.

He moves her hands and looks at her throat where there is a distinct rope burn.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This doesn't look too bad. Are you
okay?

She takes a breath and nods. He helps her to her feet.

CELIA
She's upstairs.

DAVID
(suddenly hopeful)
You...you saw her?

She looks at David, and tears well up in her eyes.

CELIA
(the tears fall)
She has on the same green dress,
David. The same gree...

She breaks down into sobs. David takes her into his arms and holds her as she cries

79 INT. FULLER BASEMENT -- NIGHT

79

Harold comes to, tied and gagged in a chair, dried blood below his nose. Next to him there are all kinds of medical equipment: an IV, a heart monitor, and a medical tray full of scalpels and other sharp and painful looking things.

Harold looks over to see David and Celia watching him. They are both wearing hospital scrubs. Harold tries to say something, but it is muffled by the gag. David walks over to him and takes out the gag.

HAROLD
(catches his breath)
What...what the hell is going on
here?

David looks from him to Celia.

CELIA
My husband has always said I'm part
bloodhound, and it turns out he's
right. I tracked you down.

DAVID
(nods)
It took her years, but she did it.

HAROLD
(confused)
What...what are you...

Celia punches him square in the face, and fresh blood squirts from his nose.

CELIA

You killed our daughter you son of a bitch!

Harold shakes his head, and little droplets of blood run down his face.

HAROLD

You...you said she died of cancer.

DAVID

(steps toward him)

You are a fucking cancer.

He holds out a photograph to him: it is of the little girl from Harold's demented fantasies. Harold looks from the photograph to Celia's face, and for the first time, he looks scared.

HAROLD

What are you going to do?

Celia laughs though there is absolutely nothing funny about her laughter.

CELIA

We're going to kill you.

DAVID

(nods)

Before we do though, we're going to make you experience every single bit of pain you've ever caused.

Harold nervously eyes the medical tray next to him.

HAROLD

(desperately)

But...but, someone will eventually notice that I'm gone. Two missing persons on one street? It'll raise suspicion.

CELIA

We never filed a missing person's report.

DAVID

We called them to report that someone had been lurking around in our backyard. You fucking pervert.

Celia hits him again.

CELIA

(to Harold)

In case you haven't figured it out yet, this has all been a trap.

DAVID

Hitting your mailbox was no accident.

CELIA

We've been planning this for years.

David looks to Celia with a little demented smile.

DAVID

I don't know why I was so hesitant to do this. You were right. This feels good.

CELIA

It's strange, isn't it?

David puts down the photograph, and picks up a scalpel from the tray and moves slowly toward Harold.

DAVID

(to Harold)

We were never violent people until you took our daughter away from us.

Harold eyes the scalpel as it comes closer and closer to his face. He tries to scream, but Celia stuffs the gag back into his mouth.

David and Celia stand in the basement, both of their faces and clothes streaked with blood. The sound of the heart monitor mixes in with Harold's moans somewhere in front of them. David yawns and looks to Celia.

DAVID

I'm getting about ready for bed.

CELIA

Me too.

Celia looks in front of them at the unseen Harold.

CELIA (CONT'D)

But I don't really want to stop.

DAVID

I know, me either. But we've got
weeks, maybe months, to enjoy this.

She looks to him and smiles.

CELIA

I love you, David.

DAVID

(smiles back)
I love you too, baby.

He takes her into his arms, and they kiss passionately.

FADE OUT:

THE END