

HALCYON

Written by

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OVER BLACKNESS the repetitive WHIR and heavy CLUNK of a slow moving machine.

INT. GUS'S SPORTING GOODS - DARTMOUTH, NH - DAY

The sound of a REVOLVING STAIR CLIMBER caught in an endless cycle, indefinitely climbing to nowhere.

The store's clean automatic doors open with a SWOOSH as torn loafers step inside.

PAUL ADAM (50s) shuffles in. His preppy, upper class clothes are wrinkled and stained. His normally distinguished salt and pepper hair is matted with something dark and sticky. He's had a rough night. The losing end of a battle.

His blood shot eyes hold single focus as he passes by the elaborate displays of exercise and sporting equipment.

A long expired in summer banner exclaims - New Year New You! With a woman in a bikini.

He doesn't even glance at any of it. Beelines for the back of the store where one entire wall is lined with shotguns. He stares at them unblinking.

A portly, middle-aged SALESWOMAN approaches cautiously, stepping behind a glass counter that displays the handguns.

SALESWOMAN

Help you hun?

Paul answers automatically, with little emotion.

PAUL

Thinking of a new one for hunting season.

She studies his appearance with suspicion.

SALESWOMAN

Well season don't start till fall, but you're in luck we got a few on sale cause'a that.

She reaches up and hands him one marked - SALE.

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)

We don't keep any ammunition in the store you know... safer...

She lets that hang as he examines the gun. Holds it's weight in his hand. Feels it's cold steel. He closes his eyes.

PAUL

That's not a problem.

He opens his eyes, looks into hers.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Can you show me how to load it?

The woman takes it from him, opens it up to show him -

SALESWOMAN
This here is a twelve gauge. It's light, takes a two an' a half to two'n three fourths target load. We got twin action bars for a smooth non-binding cycle. It's a good gun, specially for this price. Last year I got myself a thirteen pound turkey. Big sucker, my brother and sister in law come over and we roasted it up, best bird I had in years.

PAUL
Can I see something bigger?

SALESWOMAN
'Scuse me?

PAUL
Something that takes a 3 1/2.

SALESWOMAN
Magnum? Sure. But them better for deer only. You get that into a bird, won't be much for chewing.

She digs into a shelf below the wall, pulls out the gun model, hands it to him. He struggles to open it up, obviously doesn't know much about guns. She assists, opening it up.

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)
Where you hunt normally?

But Paul's not listening, he's staring down the gun barrel.

PAUL
What? Oh, up north mostly.

SALESWOMAN
Cross the border you mean?

PAUL
Um.. the top of the state.

SALESWOMAN
Oh, well there's some mighty fine hunting in the North Woods, but if you ask me the best in the state's in Merrimack. Better habitat.

She studies his face, her mouth tightening.

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)
Course there's a process to
purchase any of these. Gotta fill
out all the paperwork, run it
through the system for anything....

Paul continues to study the gun, one hand in his pocket.

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)
So whatta you think?

He grips the gun tightly, weighing a decision much more grave than a purchase. He looks up at her with clear eyes full of finality. He's decided.

PAUL
I'm sorry. I have no choice.

He pulls his hand out of his pocket, a shell casing gripped in his palm.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I've done a terrible thing.

With one sudden motion he shoves it into the shotgun, closing it with a pump -

PAUL (CONT'D)
Without our suffering we are no
longer human. We become monsters.

The Saleswoman lets out a scream to raise the devil.

SALESWOMAN
He's got a gun - run!

She shuffles out to the front door as fast as her little legs will take her. Chaos erupts as customers and clerks alike run for the hills, clogging up the overworked automatic door.

But Paul is not interested in any of them. He's only got one thing on his mind -

He angles the gun into his forehead, pressing it into his flesh.

PAUL
(Whispering to himself)
I have not changed the world. I've
destroyed it.

He steels himself, finger on the trigger, face tight and closed.