

OLD CREEP

Written by

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INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The dwelling is dreary, devoid of personal belongings except a few aged furnishings. An old wall clock reads "Sunday 1st."

The sound of a key turning in the lock fills the space. ANNIE (20s), a dowdy woman exuding glum solitude, enters, shouldering a bulky backpack.

She opens the curtains, allowing sunlight to expose the worn-out interior.

Putting her bag in the sparse kitchenette, she finds a note from the landlord on the counter. It reads: "Welcome. Rent due monthly. Heating works but pilot light is tricky. Call if any issues."

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Annie collects her meagre belongings from her beat-up car. She struggles with a heavy box, trying to carry it inside.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Annie labours, lugging the heavy box up several flights of stairs. Exhausted, she sits down for a break.

She lights a cigarette and pulls out her mobile phone, seeking solace in the digital world.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Having settled in, Annie pours herself a generous glass of red wine. Turning her attention to the hot water boiler, she notices the extinguished pilot light.

She tries to reignite it with no success.

Retrieving her mobile phone, Annie dials her landlord, but there's no answer. With a sense of resignation, she hangs up.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Annie undresses, then steps into the shower hesitantly. She turns on the faucet, bracing for the inevitable chill.

Gasping at the shock, she quickly lathers up and rinses off, enduring the discomfort.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Annie steps out her front door in work uniform, name badge reading 'Annie'. She walks with melancholy, lighting a cigarette on her way to the staircase.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Annie mechanically operates the checkout counter, her boredom and indifference palpable. She offers only perfunctory smiles to customers, her interactions minimal.

EXT. SMOKING SHELTER - DAY

On her work break, Annie stands by a spacious bench with two chatty co-workers. She lights a cigarette and scrolls through her phone, eyeing a pricey new T.V.

A handsome co-worker arrives, catching Annie's attention. She stiffens, unable to look away as he hands out flyers.

He offers one to Annie with a warm smile. She accepts it with a mere nod, feigning indifference.

After he leaves, Annie examines the flyer, discovering an invitation for a party on Friday the 6th. She stashes it in her pocket, her face briefly lighting up with excitement.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie returns to her abode, now bearing her unpacked belongings. She finds a letter on the doormat and deposits her keys and name badge in a bowl before opening it.

It's an overdue credit card bill. Annie hastily sets it aside and opens a new bottle of wine, taking a large swig to ease her anxiety.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Standing before an open wardrobe, Annie sifts through her dull array of clothes until she finds a vibrant red dress.

With care, she lays the pristine garment on the bed, and retrieves the flyer from her pocket.

As she gazes at the invitation, self-doubt crosses her face.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie tries in vain to ignite the pilot light, fervently pressing the ignition switch repeatedly. She calls her landlord, but it goes straight to voicemail.

Determined to resolve the issue, she tries to remove the access panel, but it won't budge. Frustrated, she reaches under the boiler to push it out from the inside.

Suddenly, a sharp pain shoots through Annie's arm, and she recoils in agony. Nursing her injured hand, she finds a small bleeding wound on her fingertip.

Curious to know the cause, she uses her phone's torch to illuminate the space under the boiler where her hand was placed. Peering up, she spots something peculiar stuck to the back of the panel.

With cautious fingers, she retrieves a polaroid of an elderly man with grey hair and a prominent scar under his left eye. A draw pin is oddly pierced through the middle of the picture.

Turning it over, she notices a hand-drawn symbol with the sharp pin protruding from its centre. A few drops of her blood permeate the heart of the symbol, marking it with an ominous significance.

Annoyed and perplexed, she throws the photo in the bin and sucks on her injured fingertip to soothe the discomfort.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Annie steps into the shower reluctantly, bracing for the inevitable cold blast. With a sigh, she turns the faucet and quickly washes herself under the chilly water.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adorned in the red dress, Annie stands before the mirror, her damp hair clinging to her skin. She scrutinizes her reflection, battling uncertainty.

She attempts to feign confidence, forcing a smile that fades quickly. Glumly, she stares at herself, insecurity marring her expression.

Collecting a glass of wine and the flyer from a bedside table, she scoffs, downing the drink in one gulp. With a dismissive gesture, she crumples the flyer and tosses it over her shoulder.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie lounges on her sofa in pyjamas, munching on comfort food while watching her new TV and browsing online deals on her phone. Her attention never fully focused on either.

Reaching for a cigarette, she discovers the pack is empty. Glancing at the clock—21:55—she sighs resignedly. She slips on her shoes and coat, grabs her keys from the bowl, and leaves the apartment.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Annie exits the supermarket, passing through the automatic doors. She walks across the dimly lit parking lot, her footsteps echoing in the quiet night.

Reaching her car, she unlocks it and settles into the driver's seat. With a twist of the key, the engine SPUTTERS to life, and the vehicle pulls away into the night.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Exiting her car, Annie heads toward her building. She notices a slender, grey-haired old man in a black trench coat standing about twenty meters away, his back turned to her.

Annie pauses, suspicious about his presence. She shakes off the unease and continues walking, but the man starts stepping backward in her direction.

She stops, her attention drawn to the odd sight. The old man halts too, prompting her to shoot him a questioning glare.

Frowning, she considers her options. Despite her hesitation, she moves forward, but the man continues to walk backward toward her.

Annie quickens her pace, so do the synchronized FOOTSTEPS behind her.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Annie rushes up the stairs, the sound of two sets of FOOTSTEPS echoing in the enclosed space. Breathless, she stops and listens, but hears only silence.

Anxiety creeps in as she leans over the handrail, scanning the stairs below.

She spots the old man's hand resting on a lower handrail, his body still facing backward. Annie continues upward, each step mirrored by the mysterious man pursuing her.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Annie hurries toward her apartment, constantly glancing over her shoulder.

Reaching her front door, she notices the old man turning the corner backward at the far end of the corridor, stopping about twenty meters away.

Frantically, she tries to unlock the door, her hands trembling as she fumbles with her keys, dropping them to the floor.

With rising panic, she swiftly retrieves the keys, stealing a glance down the corridor, but the man has vanished.

As her tension alleviates, Annie calmly unlocks the door and steps inside, unnerved by the encounter.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Annie mechanically scans items at the checkout counter, devoid of any enthusiasm, her blank expression reflecting the monotony of her job.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie lounges in her pyjamas on the sofa, indulging in junk food and beer. She flicks through TV channels while browsing boiler repair websites on her phone.

Suddenly, the doorbell RINGS incessantly, startling her with its lateness. Glancing at the clock, it reads 22:11.

She mutes the TV and approaches the front door, but the bell simultaneously ceases the moment she does. Peering through the peephole, she finds no one outside.

Shrugging it off, Annie returns to the sofa, only to be interrupted by another continuous RING of the bell the instant she sits down.

Growing irritated, she strides to the door, the ringing halting again. Checking the peephole once more reveals nothing. Armed with a small frying pan, she cautiously cracks the door open, warily peeking outside through the narrow gap.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Annie spots the old man halfway down the corridor, his back to her. Deciding to confront him, she steps out, only for him to move away in tandem.

ANNIE

Leave me alone, you old creep.

She brandishes the frying pan and advances, only to suddenly realize he mimics her every footstep.

Experimenting, Annie takes a few steps closer and then farther from the man, who mirrors her perfectly, always maintaining the same distance between them.

Freaked out, Annie quickly retreats into her apartment and shuts the door.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie steps back from the door, her apprehensive gaze fixed on it. She listens intently but hears nothing.

Cautiously, she sits on the sofa, wary of what might happen, but the bell remains silent.

She edges toward the door again and cracks it open. Peering outside, she finds no sign of the man.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Annie operates the checkout counter, but her usual mechanical efficiency is tainted by distraction. She barely acknowledges the customers, lost in troubled thoughts.

EXT. SMOKING SHELTER - DAY

Several supermarket staff members gather on the bench, chatting during their break. Annie stands alone, smoking and focused on her phone.

She types "Previous occupants of my home" into a search engine and intently scrolls through the various websites.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie, still in her creased work uniform, slumps on the sofa with a glass of wine in hand. The blaring TV serves as mere background noise, her attention fixed on her phone.

Finally, she finds a webpage revealing her apartment's previous tenant: "Charles Woodburn," registered as deceased.

Lighting a cigarette, she types "Charles Woodburn death" into the search bar, delving deeper into her investigation.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie lies in bed in her pyjamas, illuminated by the bedside lamp's soft glow. Her focus remains tethered to her phone until she stumbles upon a recent local news article about Charles Woodburn.

The story recounts his tragic suicide at 88 in his flat. A photo accompanies the article, showing a grey-haired man in his 70s wearing a black trench coat. Zooming in, Annie spots the distinctive scar beneath his left eye.

Suddenly, a loud THUD echoes through the room. Annie freezes, staring at the silent wardrobe. Glancing at the time, her eyes widen with fear as it reads 22:11. She sits up, and the wardrobe begins to CREAK open.

Terrified, she backs against the wall as the wardrobe door opens wider, revealing a leg stepping out backwards from the darkness.

Keeping her wits, she quickly inches closer to the wardrobe. As she does, the leg retreats in unison, and the door shuts.

With bated breath, Annie approaches the door, hand trembling on the handle. Just before opening it, she hesitates, releasing the handle and turning away.

Suddenly, a blood-curdling scream escapes her lips. In the corner of the room stands the old man, facing the wall. Startled, Annie stumbles backward, collapsing onto the floor.

When she looks up, the man has vanished. She frantically dials 999 on her phone, hands shaking with fear.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie watches with despondence as two sceptical police officers see themselves out from her apartment. She sinks onto the sofa, lighting a cigarette, consumed by unease.

With a sudden realization, she resolutely retrieves the polaroid from the bin. Holding it, she stares at the man's face before flipping it over to the blood stained symbol on the back.

Determined, she ignites the photo with her lighter, placing it in an ashtray. Her gaze stays unwavering as the flames consume the picture, reducing it to ash.

EXT. SMOKING SHELTER - DAY

Annie, tired and dishevelled, anxiously smokes a cigarette while typing "Cheap hotels near me" into her phone, scrutinizing the results.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Annie is a bundle of nerves, huddled in bed in the cramped room. Every light is on, casting harsh illumination. An empty wine bottle and cup rest on the bedside table.

Anxiously checking her phone—22:10—she pulls the duvet over her head and stares at the clock.

At 22:11, the mattress dips beside her, startling Annie. Wide-eyed with horror, she freezes, clutching the sheets tightly as chilling, RASPY BREATHING emanates from beside her.

Paralyzed with fear, she waits for the terrifying moment to pass. As the clock strikes 22:12, the weight on the mattress suddenly lifts.

Annie exhales slowly, her heart racing. Summoning her courage, she peeks above the sheets, scanning the empty room. Her gaze settles on the indentation in the duvet beside her, a haunting reminder of the recent presence.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DUSK

Annie exits the supermarket at the end of her shift, her tired and unkempt appearance accentuated. She struggles with empty cardboard boxes, carrying them awkwardly to her car.

She loads them into the front passenger seat, leaving no room to spare, while the back seats are already crammed to capacity with more boxes.

Annie settles into the vacant driver's seat, glancing at the dashboard clock: 20:05. She lights a cigarette, sinks back, and waits.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Annie sits in her vehicle in the dimly lit supermarket lot, cigarette between her fingers, eyes fixed on the clock.

At 22:00, she flicks her cigarette out, buckles up, and tries to start the engine, but it won't turn over.

Despair sets in as she repeatedly tries again, each attempt met with silence. Just when she's about to lose hope, the engine SPUTTERS to life. With a surge of urgency, she shifts into gear and speeds away.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Annie's car swiftly navigates bustling city streets, passing her apartment building without pause. Manoeuvring around a corner, the vehicle leaves the congested urban traffic behind, venturing beyond the city limits.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

The car speeds down a lonely country road, flanked by dark fields. The straining engine emits a GROAN as the headlights cut through the night, illuminating the desolate path ahead.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Annie grips the wheel tightly, eyes darting to the clock: 22:10. With mounting apprehension, she shifts gear, accelerating. The engine WHINES with exertion.

On the stroke of 22:11, Annie emits a long, raspy gasp, alarm flashing across her face. She abruptly adjusts the rear-view mirror, but to her horror, sees the reflection of another woman with piercing blue eyes, gleaming with wicked delight.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

The car's brake lights glow, casting a crimson hue as it halts on the deserted road. After idling briefly, the vehicle smoothly executes a U-turn, cruising back along the tarmac at a steady pace.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie enters the darkened apartment, flicking on the lights. She hangs her keys on a hook in the kitchenette and checks the date on the wall clock: Friday the 6th.

With curiosity, she surveys the room, examining some of her personal belongings as if seeing them for the first time.

Stumbling upon the credit card bill, Annie's eyes lock onto the recipient's name - 'Annie Perkins'.

She swings open every kitchen cupboard and the fridge, revealing an array of unhealthy food items alongside beer and wine bottles.

Disapproval evident, she retrieves bin bags from beneath the sink and meticulously clears out the apartment, disposing of all the junk food and alcohol.

Not yet satisfied with her purge, she searches her pockets and finds a pack of cigarettes and her phone. Without hesitation, she tosses both into the bin bag, firm in her decision to rid herself of these vices.

Eyeing her work uniform with disdain, she quickly sheds her clothes, stripping down to her underwear. She stuffs the garments into the bag and ties it up, sealing away the remnants of her former self.

Annie admires her reflection in the mirror, appreciating her womanly form. Suddenly, she detects an unpleasant odour and sniffs her armpit, wrinkling her nose in distaste.

Turning to the boiler, she notices the pilot light is out. With practiced ease, she swiftly ignites it on her first attempt, pressing the ignition switch in a precise manner.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Annie enjoys a hot, steamy shower, smiling blissfully as she luxuriates in the soothing warmth, humming softly to herself.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wrapped in a towel, hair still damp, Annie strides to the bedside table with purpose. She moves it aside, kneels, and lifts the carpet, unveiling a loose floorboard.

Retrieving a small suitcase stashed beneath, she unzips it, revealing its contents: a modern polaroid camera, a leather-bound book adorned with the same ominous symbol from Charles Woodburn's photo, and neatly stacked wads of cash.

Annie takes the camera and extends her arm, smiling radiantly as she snaps a picture of herself. The camera WHIRS as it ejects the developing photo, which she gently fans.

Returning her attention to the suitcase, she picks up the book and flips it open.

An aged portrait painting with a small hole in its centre is affixed to the first page.

The picture depicts a woman (30s) with piercing blue eyes and a wicked grin. Handwritten words above the image read, "The Many Lives Of Temperance Lloyd," and beneath it, "1650-1682."

Turning the page unveils two more aged portrait paintings in the same artistic style as the first, each adhered to separate pages.

One portrays a smiling young woman named 'Grace Thomas' with the years '1682-1740' below. The other showcases a grinning middle-aged man identified as 'William Ashton' with the dates '1740-1788.'

Flipping through the next pages, Annie finds a series of portraits depicting happy individuals of different ages and genders, each accompanied by a name and a corresponding date.

As she progresses through the book, the images transition from paintings to photographs, reflecting the passage of time, until she reaches a blank page opposite an older-style polaroid photograph.

The picture shows a smiling young man in his twenties with a notable scar beneath his left eye. Above the photo, the name 'Charles Woodburn' is written, followed by '1961-2024.'

Collecting a pen and sticky tape stashed in the suitcase, she meticulously attaches her developed polaroid portrait onto the blank page.

Taking delicate care, she writes 'Annie Perkins' above and '2024-' below the image, matching the handwriting on the other pages. With contentment, she SNAPS the book closed.

Annie notices the crumpled flyer on the floor. She picks it up, and reads it. An audacious smile spreads across her face as she absorbs the invitation's contents.

Brimming with excitement, she rummages through the wardrobe, seeking the ideal outfit. Amid the lacklustre options, a hint of disappointment creeps in until her fingers land upon the red dress.

With care, she lifts the garment from its hanger, drapes it against her body, and gazes into the mirror. A look of pure joy blossoms as she envisions herself wearing it.

EXT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Annie steps out of her apartment, epitomizing glamour in the striking red dress and flawless makeup, ready for a night on the town.

Confidence radiates from her every step as she struts down the corridor, her face adorned with a beaming smile and a wicked glint in her eyes.

THE END