

THE REPAIR MAN

By

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INT. RACHEL'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Dressed in pajama pants and a tee, Rachel sits on the edge of the bed, her eyes closed and her head slightly down.

She lifts her head, opens her eyes and exhales.

She smiles. It's small and slight but it's still there.

She picks up the empty glass that is sitting on her bedside table...

The smile disappears the second she sees the water stain that the glass has left behind.

INT. RACHEL'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Rachel - now fully dressed - comes up from beneath the sink holding a spray bottle of Windex in her hand. She glances through the window and makes eye contact with her next door neighbor, an ELDERLY WOMAN, who stands directly across from her in her own kitchen.

Rachel smiles and gives her neighbor a wave. Seeing the blank look in her neighbor's eyes, Rachel lowers her hand and watches the old woman turn and walk away.

MONTAGE:

Rachel cleans EVERY surface in EVERY room with Windex and paper towels starting with the waterstain in the bedroom.

END MONTAGE

INT. RACHEL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rachel steps back and looks at her handiwork with a satisfied smile.

CUT TO:

Rachel is on the couch, polishing off her meal - a casserole of some kind - and laughing at some unseen YouTube video that's playing on her laptop.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOME - DAY

At the mailbox, Rachel sifts through the assortment of bills and catalogs she has in her hands all of which are addressed to her name: RACHEL NOWAK. She looks over at her neighbor's driveway and sees a nondescript white van parked in it.

INT. RACHEL'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Rachel is at the sink and washing the casserole dish when she looks up to see a UNIFORMED REPAIR MAN standing in her neighbor's kitchen.

She turns off the faucet and watches him walk around, peeking into cupboards and drawers. The old woman enters and he gives her a warm smile while he talks.

INT. RACHEL'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Rachel is at the dining table and writing out checks for the bills which are neatly stacked and ordered in front of her. She signs the last check - which corresponds with her name at the top of it, again Rachel Nowak - and looks out of the window...

She watches the repair man lead the old woman along the side of her house. He points to something on the roof and the confused old woman follows his finger.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOME - DAY

It's another day. The white van disappears down the street and Rachel steps out into view and heads for her neighbor's home with the casserole dish swinging at her side.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The old woman walks in with the casserole dish in her hands and with Rachel not too far behind.

OLD WOMAN

You didn't have to bring it back. I could have picked it up.

RACHEL

You just keep cooking and I'll do the rest.

OLD WOMAN

Ha! Do you want something to drink? I have tea.

RACHEL

I like tea.

The old woman leaves the room. Rachel walks over to a nearby armoire and looks at the assorted knick-knacks that line its shelves.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I saw that you have some damage to the roof.

OLD WOMAN (OS)

A repair man passing by said he saw it, too!

RACHEL

Did he say it looked expensive?

Rachel eyes fall on a blue Royal Dansk cookie container.

OLD WOMAN (OS)

Not at first but now he says it's worse than he thought.

Rachel gives the cookie tin a shake but it's empty.

RACHEL

Did he say when he would be back?

The sound of knocking is heard OS.

SOUND CROSSOVER TO:

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - DAY

More knocking at the front door. A second or two passes...

The door slowly opens and the repair man peeks his head in.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The repair man enters the room and heads straight for the cookie tin in the armoire.

RACHEL (OS)

Do you know the meaning of the term "confidence man"?

The repair man spins around and finds Rachel seated on the couch.

RACHEL

A "confidence man" or con man is someone posing as a trustworthy person and seeking the help of another trustworthy person. A good con man gives the mark the strength to do what's right even when its wrong. I've been on the grift a long time and I've seen a lot of

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RACHEL (CONT'D)

games but one night I saw one that made me walk away. I was at one of these sports bars in the city. Why? Because it's still a bar. Anyway, there was this little guy at the bar - maybe five-five, five-six - and he was buying a beer just like me. He pays for his beer, turns around and spills it all over the big guy standing behind him. Now when I say big guy I mean he was a Volkswagen. Now all big guys like to let everyone know that they're a big guy so he gets in the little guy's face, starts screaming about dry cleaning and blah blah blah. The little guy sets down his beer, smiles and says to the big guy, "I'm going to ask you a question and I need you to think before you answer. The reason why I'm telling you this is for legal reasons, for my legal protection. Do you understand what I'm saying?" The big guy laughs and says, "Whatever, dude." And then he laughs again. He thinks he's made a joke. The little guy isn't laughing. He isn't smiling anymore. He's just staring at the big guy and waiting. It gets quiet - well, as quiet as a sports bar can get - and the big guy looks annoyed and says, "What?" Pause. The little guy says, "I know that this sounds confusing right now but I want you to know why I'm doing this at all. I'm doing it because afterwards, after you give me the wrong answer to my question - and you will because guys like you always do - you'll remember this moment and realize that I gave you a chance. Every time after this, when you look into the mirror, you'll realize that this was the moment when nobody cared. Not the cops. Not the people in this bar. And not me. Definitely not me. You'll realize that this is when you had your chance to help

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RACHEL (CONT'D)
 yourself. Do you understand?" The big guy looks around and sees it in everyone's eyes: he's standing alone. The big guy says softly, "Yeah, okay." The little guys says loudly, "I need you to say, "Yes, I understand" and I need you to say it loud enough for everyone to hear." The big guys says - a little louder - "Yes I understand." "Good," says the little guy. "So get ready then and get that thinking cap on because I'm going to ask you that question now." Dramatic pause. The little guy asks, "Do you want to fight?" And all eyes go to the big guy. The big guy? He wilts. He crumbles, turtles up and says no without saying a word. The little guy picks up his beer, smiles and says to the big guy, "Then get out of my way." And the big guy does. What happened to the big guy? Who cares? I know what you're asking yourself: Where's the con? The little guy wasn't after the big guy's cash. He wanted everything else. I watched that little guy walk away and thought: no matter how long I play, I will never be the best. And if you have the chance to ask around, you'll find out that I like being the best.

Rachel stands up and talks while she walks towards the repair man.

RACHEL
 But now I like tuna casseroles and Windex and YouTube cat videos. I like little old ladies with bad memories.

She stands inches away from him, face to face. She adjusts his uniform and brushes imaginary dirt off of it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 This is how it starts: you're going back across town to that hovel you call a home and bring me back the
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(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
rest of the cash. You know where
it's at: in that sad little sock
that's hiding in the back of the
top dresser drawer.

The repair man opens his mouth to say something.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
No, don't do that. You see, I
still haven't resolved my feelings
for you. This means I still
haven't decided how I want this to
end. Are you listening?

The repair man nods.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I hate to do this but just so
there's no misunderstandings, I
need to hear you say so. Trust me:
this is for your benefit.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The old woman and Rachel sit at the couch.

OLD WOMAN
But what about the money? You're
taking too much time off from work.

RACHEL
I reminded my boss that he has a
mother, too. He stopped bothering
me after that.

OLD WOMAN
You're so clever. Where do you get
it from?

RACHEL
It's not from you?

OLD WOMAN
Ha! Maybe you're thinking of your
other mother.

RACHEL
Maybe.

OLD WOMAN
Do you want something to drink? I
have tea.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

I like tea.

Without warning, the life drains away from the old woman's eyes. She drops her smile and looks off to the side, her face a blank slate. Rachel waits a second or two.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Mom.

This snaps the old woman back into the present. She sees Rachel and snaps her fingers over at her guest.

OLD WOMAN

Tea.

The old woman gets up and exits the room.

Rachel gets up and heads straight for the Royal Dansk cookie tin in the armoire. She opens it and puts the wad of cash that she pulls from her pocket inside of it.

She puts the container back into its place and picks up the photograph sitting next to it. In it, the old woman and a younger woman - who looks nothing like Rachel - are hugging and smiling at the camera. Rachel turns it over and reads "June 2010 - Me and Emma, Cancun".

OLD WOMAN (OS)

Are you hungry, Emma? I can cook something.

RACHEL

No, I'm fine.

OLD WOMAN (OS)

It's no trouble. I have a casserole ready to go in the oven.

RACHEL

You do?

OLD WOMAN(OS)

How does tuna sound?

Rachel looks over at the kitchen and her eyes are bright with excitement. She smiles and it is anything but slight.

RACHEL

Tuna sounds fantastic.

THE END