

SEASON'S CREEPINGS

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TITLECARD:

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TITLE DISAPPEARS:

EXT. MIDDLECOMBE VILLAGE - NIGHT.

A small village, snuggled in a valley, stretches out beneath us as we gently swoop over it.

A few of the houses have their lights on, but most are darkened as the residents sleep.

In the middle sits the village green decorated with a Christmas tree, wrapped in a multitude of coloured lights, shining brightly, illuminating the grass and nearby houses around it.

We continue further, sidewinding down a quiet, moonlit street, soaring past a curbside signpost reading:

"WELCOME TO MIDDLECOMBE. ESTB: 1823".

EXT. VILLAGE PUB

Beyond the twisty road we approach the local pub. Music pounds from inside along with laughter and cheering from a few late drinking punters.

We rest outside the front until a few moments later, a drunken gentleman stumbles out. He's the classic country type - dressed in tweed, riding boots and a flat cap. His name is HENRY LAYLAND (80's).

He hobbles into the road, orienting himself, BELLOWING and HOWLING songs loudly into the night sky as he begins his bumbling walk. Clutched in one hand, is a bottle-shaped present wrapped in tacky Christmas wrapping paper. In the other hand, his car keys.

EXT. STREET

He staggers further down the road, unwrapping the present whilst slurring his words reading the label.

HENRY

To... Mister... Layla... Merry
Christm... Merry Christmas...

He squints-

HENRY (CONT'D)
Secret... Santa. Oh. What a good
boy I've been this year.

He reaches his car that's parked shoddily on the curb side.

Before he attempts to climb in he begins peeling off the wrapping paper until he realises it's a bottle of whiskey.

Excitedly, he grips the lid, ready to take a swig for a cheeky nightcap on his way home, but drops his keys on the ground.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Bollocks.

Bending down, he GROANS as his joints creek. He nabs the keys from the floor and lifts up until something catches his eye on the opposite side of the road.

He pauses - squints hard.

Something's standing there, but he needs his spectacles on so he reaches into his top pocket and pulls them out.

With his vision BETTER IN FOCUS, he sees what's opposite him. A tall FIGURE, standing well over seven feet high, silhouetted beneath the street lamp.

Hidden in shadow, it's profile is lean, but emaciated looking. No clothes or materials, just skin and muscle.

Wisps of long, straggly hair gently undulate from its bare scalp and chin.

We can't see the detail of its face, just a shiny glint of its right eye, glistening like a coin, reflecting under the street light. The other eye seems to be missing along with a big chunk of its face.

One arm is angled slightly; its hand tightly clutching an unusually large black sack that's so big, it disappears into the darkness beside it.

A long drawn out mist of breath is exhaled as it stands static, observing Henry from the opposite side.

This is BELSNICKEL - a Christmas nightmare.

Henry, quickly sobering up, stands aghast.

HENRY (CONT'D)
What the bloody hell do you want?

The Figure's head twitches sharply to one side.

Henry jolts back in fright, dropping the keys under the car again.

He scurries on the ground searching, but it's too dark and he's too drunk and distracted by the presence in front of him.

The Figure opposite grips the sack's neck tightly and lurches forward.

Henry flinches, edging back onto the Village Green behind him near the Christmas tree.

EXT. VILLAGE GREEN

Backing away he stumbles up the verge as he hears the Figure lunging forward behind him, dragging the sack behind it.

HENRY
Oh Christ alive!

Henry pivots and picks up the pace but he's an old man. He's too slow and unfit and quickly runs out of stamina before stumbling to his knees.

He struggles to crawl...

The Figure gains on him...

Henry shuffles toward the Christmas tree as it's his only source of light. *Maybe someone will see him?*

But it's all too much for him. He's exhausted.

He slumps on his front, gasping for breath, listening to the footsteps of the Figure creeping closer behind him.

Henry rolls onto his back, wheezing and coughing, watching as the outline of the Figure towers above him, eclipsing the moonlight.

HENRY (CONT'D)
But I was a good boy!

Before we or Henry can get a look at the Figure, it stretches open the sack-

Henry's eyes widen in pure fear-

HENRY (CONT'D)
Please? Don't!

It flings the sack over him without hesitation-

-Engulfing Henry inside, stifling his SCREAMS and CRIES.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. ROAD LAY-BY - DAY

STERLING (30), young, black, handsome, is stood on the side of a busy road, legs apart, taking a piss whilst smoking a cigarette with not a care in the world.

Next to him sits a large, white Mercedes Sprinter courier van with a big corporate logo - WHIZZ IT - pasted on the side.

Cars HONK and BEEP as they fly past.

Sterling casually raises his right arm above his head and flips them the bird, not even bothering to turn around.

After he's finished his business, he zips up and hops back in the van.

INT. VAN CAB

Inside it's a mess: Crisp packets, drinks cans, empty cigarette boxes and litter line the dashboard. The seats aren't clean and the floor-mats are covered in dirt and mud.

Without sanitising his hands, he switches on the radio to blare out some classic Christmas tunes before reaching into the glove compartment and grabbing his lunchbox.

He pries the lid off and tosses it into a mound of other rubbish that's not been tidied up for days, before tucking into a flat, unappetising cheese sandwich.

After a few mouthfuls, he remembers something. Leaning over he lifts up a box and removes a cute RUDOLPH REINDEER STUFFED TEDDY TOY with a bunch of jingly BELLS hanging on its antlers. On its tummy it has the words:

"DELILAH'S FIRST CHRISTMAS" written on it.

He smiles at it and then carefully places it back in the box.

His phone RINGS. He raises it up and we see DELILAH'S cute little face on his home screen.

Eyeing who it is, he chuckles, then fiddles in his pocket to remove a red Santa's Christmas hat. He dons it quickly and answers his phone on video chat.

STERLING
HO HO HO mo-fucker.

On the other end of the call is colleague - SCOTT (40), overweight and jovial. He also dons a Christmas hat and bursts out laughing at Sterling's intro.

SCOTT
(squeaky mocking voice)
Have you been a good little girl?

STERLING
'Course I have!

SCOTT
I got a cracker for you mate.
Listen to this. Why's Santa's sack
so blue?

Sterling shrugs.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
'Cause he only comes once a year!

Sterling chuckles.

STERLING
That's gold mate.

SCOTT
Yeah the best way to do it though -
when you're all sat around the
dinner table pulling crackers and
what-not, and your little joke
falls out. Tell this one real
casually like it's written on it.
And don't punchline it! Bound to
put a smile on Grandma's face, I'm
tellin' ya.

STERLING
Yeah sounds like the best way to
end Christmas early.

SCOTT
Talkin' of which mate. How you
gettin' on? Nearly finito?

STERLING
Yeah. Errm, nope. Not even half
way. Pete got me on the double
shift man.

SCOTT

(shocked)

Fuck Rudolph's rear mate. You're gonna be working Christmas Day! He's got you runnin' 'round like a little Elf he has. Was gonna ask if you wanted to join for Karaoke later? Some of the lads are joinin' and probably another special someone...

Scott flutters his eyes jokingly. Sterling inhales deeply, SMILING, joyed by the information.

STERLING

Alexandra?

SCOTT

Thought that'd interest you, you little slag. Just make sure you keep it in your pants this time.

STERLING

Oh fuck off.

Scott chuckles.

STATIC bursts through on the "TrackIt" handheld device - a small portable device used by the depot to communicate with drivers whilst on the road.

PETE O.S

Sterling it's Pete, come in. Over.

STERLING

Oh fuck mate, Pete's badgering me.

Scott chuckles again.

SCOTT

That's 'cause you're flavour of the month. You better answer it, BUT, before you go I left a present under your seat.

He pulls out a LONG CYLINDRICAL CARDBOARD TUBE.

Sterling smiles in appreciation.

STERLING

Cheers mate, you didn't have to.

He attaches his phone to the dashboard, so Scott can see.

Right before he pops one end of the tube open, he realises it's a COMBUSTABLE GLITTER BOMB.

STERLING (CONT'D)

Oh fuck right off mate. I know what this is! You tryna completely ruin my day?

SCOTT

Noooo! HAAHAHAAA!

Scott bursts out laughing on the video chat.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Oh so close! Mate, You better make like Santa, or Pete'll be climbin' up your chimney tonight.

Scott chuckles to himself and hangs up.

STATIC bursts through again on the TrackIt device.

Sterling reaches forward and reluctantly answers it.

STERLING

Pete, this is Sterling. Over.

A few seconds pass. Sterling waits in anticipation.

PETE O.S

You've been idle for nearly half an hour. Do you need me to remind you what day of the year it is? I'm fed up to the back teeth. Remember, you're my little Elf today and you've got presents to deliver. So why you hangin' about?

STERLING

It was a lunch break!

PETE O.S

At half-two in the afternoon on Christmas Eve? You're still not out in the sticks yet so I'd chop-chop. There ain't no overtime here. I wanna see every one of those neatly wrapped presents tucked nice and snug under them Christmas tree's. If not? You're done pal. No more last chances. I've run out of shits to give and you've run out of time.

Sterling leans forward, head in hands, upset and angry. He crushes the handheld in his palm, wishing to destroy it in a fit of rage.

A few seconds pass.

PETE O.S (CONT'D)

Over?

STERLING

Alright. I'm on it.

Sterling places the handset back, switches the van into gear and pulls away.

INT. VAN CAB - LATER

BEGIN MONTAGE:

We stay in the drivers cab as we watch:

- Sterling driving the van around a network of residential roads.

- Hopping out with the handheld and some parcels every few moments, before-

- Re-entering the van and driving off again.

- He winds the window down, scans the parcel and then launches it out toward a customers door, before accelerating away quickly.

- Whilst driving, Sterling checks his pack of cigarettes. He's out.

- Empty cab. Sterling's away from the vehicle.

EXT. ROADSIDE

Parked up and stood by the side of the van we see Sterling vacantly peering inside the cargo space. There's still a tonne of parcels to be delivered.

He checks his watch - three-thirty.

He SLAMS the door shut and climbs back inside the van cab.

INT. VAN CAB

Deflated and tired, he turns on the ignition ready to battle through the next load.

His phone rings. It's KAY - his girlfriend. She's calling for a video chat. He hesitates with his fingers, floating them above the answer button. He chooses VOICE chat instead.

STERLING

Hey.

KAY

Hey! I was video'ing you.

STERLING

I know, I've got hardly any battery.

KAY

Oh. OK. No worries. Just calling to see how you're getting on.

STERLING

Urgh. Got loads to go yet.

KAY

Really? But it's Christmas Eve? When will you finish?

STERLING

Not for a while, and then Scott's invited me...

Before he can finish his sentence, a loud baby's CRY is heard in the background of the phone.

Kay begins to 'HUSH' and 'SHHH' the baby.

KAY O.S

Awww little squidge. No need to cry. Aghh, where's your dummy?

Sterling pushes the phone closer to his ear, listening to his daughter BABBLE in the background. He smiles.

STERLING

Put her closer to the phone.

But Kay doesn't hear. She's still talking to the baby.

KAY O.S

Do you miss your Daddy? Is that it? Daddy's late. Again!

STERLING

Do you need anything Kay, or...?

KAY

Yeah, I wanted you to grab some teething gel on your way home if you can. I think I can see a few little gnashers appearing.

STERLING

The shops'll close before I'm done. You'll have to get it.

KAY

Oh, alright. I just thought if you were passing any shops?

STERLING

(snappily)

No, I'm not! Got too much to do.

Sterling shakes his head in the negative, displaying his frustration. There's a deliberate pause from Kay.

KAY

Sterling, is everything alright?

Sterling receives a TEXT MESSAGE at the same time from Scott-

SCOTT (TEXT)

Alexandras defo coming mate ;)

STERLING

(distracted)

Yeah -- Yeah I'm fine. Just tired is all. Listen I gotta go OK. Give Delilah a kiss for me OK.

Sterling hangs up the phone and poises his fingers ready to type a message back before-

-STATIC erupts through again as we hear Pete's voice.

PETE O.S

Sterling. You're idle! Over.

STERLING

(screams)

OH FUCK OFF PETE!

He switches the engine on again and drives off.