

HIDE AND SEEK

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EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DUSK

The sun has dipped below the horizon. Through the trees we see a beautifully modernised FARM HOUSE.

HAROLD GRAHAM, 57, is atop a ladder at the front of the building, scooping leaves out of the gutter.

KEVIN GRAHAM, 20, turns off a path and walks toward the immaculate house and is met enthusiastically by BOWSER, a golden retriever.

KEVIN

Hey dad.

Harold continues cleaning.

HAROLD

Dinner's been ready a while.

Kevin lets out a sigh. He crouches to pat Bowser.

KEVIN

Who's a hungry boy? Who's a hungry boy?

Harold descends the ladder.

INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kevin follows his father into the house.

He DROPS his bags near the doorway, where there are boxes stacked up high. Kevin let's out another long sigh.

He opens a box to look inside. Some books, video games.

Kevin lifts another box to reveal a large wooden trunk, adorned with exquisite CARVINGS.

We hear the sound of crockery being placed.

HAROLD (O.S.)

Come on lad.

INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - LATER

Harold and Kevin are seated around the table, eating.

HAROLD (cont'd)

I had to reheat it because you were late. Now it's overcooked. How is university?

KEVIN

You know, loads of work. Skint all the time.

Harold scowls.

HAROLD

Your mother said some of the other students had been making unpleasant comments.

KEVIN

You spoke to mum? I thought you weren't talking?

HAROLD

We don't let our differences get in the way when it comes to you.

Kevin breaks off another piece of bread.

KEVIN

Someone just said some stuff, like, when they found out who you are. Some of those student union dickheads. They're just jealous.

HAROLD

I don't go out of my way to make people homeless. I'm a landlord. I'm running a business not a charity.

KEVIN

I don't care about them. If they can't keep their finances in order that's on them.

HAROLD

Uh huh.

Harold cuts off another slab of slightly charred meat, puts it on Kevin's plate.

KEVIN

Hey, what about my graphic novels?

HAROLD

What about them?

KEVIN

I didn't see them in the pile.

HAROLD

Gave them away.

Kevin is taken aback.

KEVIN

Not the skateboard, please.

HAROLD  
Gave that away too.

KEVIN  
Ah dad, why?

HAROLD  
You haven't ridden that thing  
since you were fifteen. All your  
stuff is out in the hallway.

KEVIN  
Thank Christ.

HAROLD  
I don't think Jesus would get  
involved with your comics.

Kevin laughs a little, Harold smiles.

HAROLD (cont'd)  
But that trunk that you kept your  
comics in, I kept that for you.

KEVIN  
Yeah, I saw that. Wasn't that  
grandma's?

HAROLD  
Your Great uncle Kenny's trunk.  
Thought you might want it, family  
heirloom and all that.

Kevin smiles and nods.

KEVIN  
I used to play mad games with that  
thing when I was kid.

HAROLD  
You were a handful. Wouldn't have got  
away with that in my day.

KEVIN  
Tell you something a bit embarrassing  
about that trunk, and, I can't  
believe I used to be so loopy, but--

He covers his mouth, unsure of how to continue.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
I had this invisible friend. Oh  
god, it's so silly, an invisible  
friend called Archie.

Harold stops chewing and is stares at his son.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
 (air quotes)  
 'We' used to play hide and seek in  
 the trunk but he, god, I was so  
 weird, he'd find me so quickly.  
 When it was my turn to count--

Harold lets his fork CLATTER onto his plate.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
 What?

Harold gets up and walks away.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
 Dad? Sorry, I know it's a bit mental  
 but it was just a phase.

A door to one of the adjacent rooms SLAMS shut.

Kevin, rattled, struggles to continue eating.

EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - DAWN

Birdsong and sunlight sweep over the enchanting countryside.

INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE, SPARE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On the floor beside a bed, Bowser is snoozing. On the bed,  
 Kevin is out cold.

CRACK!

Bowser's ear flinches. Kevin stirs.

CRUNCH!

Kevin's eyes open.

CRACK! Followed by another loud CRUNCH!

He sits up.

The violent sounds continue.

Kevin springs out of bed and rushes to the door opposite and  
 THUMPS on it.

KEVIN  
 Dad?

The sounds of SMASHING continue. Kevin follows the noise. He  
 runs DOWNSTAIRS. The back door is open.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
 Dad?

He exits to the

EXT. BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

And sees Harold bringing an AXE down onto some wood.

We see the wood has intricate CARVINGS on it.

Harold PULVERIZES the remainder of the trunk's support and it collapses into a pile.

Bowser has come out and barks. Kevin pats him.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
Dad? What the hell?

Harold walks passed him and into a SHED. Kevin crosses his arms.

Harold comes out of the shed holding a CONTAINER of fuel.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
Dad, what is going on?

Harold POURS the fluid onto the pile of wood and walks back to the shed with the container.

He comes back holding a stick of tinder and a lighter.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
Why are you doing that?

Harold LIGHTS the stick and puts it to the fuel soaked wood.

Flames ROAR into life.

Kevin moves close to Harold.

Harold avoids eye contact.

KEVIN (cont'd)  
Dad. Please, take it easy.

Harold clears his throat.

HAROLD  
When your Great uncle was a child he loved playing in that trunk. He liked playing hide and seek in it. He had an invisible friend.

Kevin looks at the CRACKLING, burning pile of wood.

HAROLD (cont'd)  
An invisible friend called Archie.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. HAROLD'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - LATER

Kevin finishes loading his belongings into the back of his car, and slams the hatch.

He pats Bowser in an affectionate way.

Harold looks unsettled.

Kevin hugs his father an awkward way, then walks to the car.

KEVIN

I'll call you when I get in.

HAROLD

I won't hold my breath.

Harold watches the car as it drives away.

EXT. HAROLD'S BACKYARD - LATER

Harold is at the back of the house shoveling the remains of the trunk into a metal bin.

He hears a CLINK from within the shed. Harold steps the shovel into the earth leaving it standing.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Some tools appear to have been disturbed. He hears the SCRUNCH of feet on gravel.

Harold RUSHES out to see.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The shovel is all the way over, on some grass. Harold looks around at the trees that form a soft perimeter to the property.

Wind rustles the leaves. Almost inaudible over the leaves, we hear the sound of a RASPING voice. The voice is counting down numbers.

Harold walks over to the shovel.

He is picking it up when movement catches his eye. A dark BLUR, small in size, perhaps an animal.

We hear the voice again but this time we distinctly hear the word 'SIX'.

Gripping the shovel firmly in both hands, Harold walks over to the tree where the shape disappeared--

CLANG!

Harold whips round to see the metal bin has tipped over.

He looks around, some anxiety on his face now.

Someone WHISPERS.

He walks to the bin and pulls it upright.

Bowser can be heard BARKING.

Harold makes quick steps toward the sound of the disturbance.

Bowser is barking in the direction of the shed. The shed door is open but the interior is dark.

There's another SOUND from the shed.

HAROLD

Kevin. This isn't funny.

We hear a child giggle.

Harold drops the shovel and walks into the house.

INT. HAROLD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Harold opens a door to a small room. He kneels down to a safe, dials in the code, and on opening the little door pulls out a box of shotgun shells.

Bowser's barking is incessant.

He takes a shotgun from the wall.

We hear 'FIVE' in the rasping voice.

The barking stops.

The old man pauses, perspiration gleaming on his face.

He LOADS the shotgun and walks back out to

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Laid before him is the lifeless body of Bowser.

Harold grimaces, fury building in his whole body.

The door to the shed is now closed. He peers through the window but it's too dark to see.

Harold KICKS open the door.



INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

He switches on the light. It looks like a normal shed.

Harold enters.

He notices a GAP in the rack holding containers.

As it dawns on him which container that might be, the door CLOSES and the key is TURNED.

He rushes to the door and PULLS.

It's LOCKED.

Harold sees liquid pool around the bottom of the door frame.

HAROLD

Kevin!

We hear a child's voice say 'THREE'.

Harold aims the shotgun at the lock and pulls the trigger.

Half the wooden door EXPLODES into splinters.

The door SWINGS open to reveal the upended fuel container.

Harold RUNS out.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

He hears a giggle to one side and sees something RETREAT behind a tree.

Wheezing with the effort, Harold moves over to the tree.

Aiming the shotgun, Harold SIDESTEPS around the trunk.

A child shouts, 'TWO'.

Startled, Harold SHOOTS at nothing.

His BREATHING becomes labored.

We hear the HISSING, CRACKLING sound of wood burning.

He whips around.

Harold is frozen with terror.

We see a small, blackened and charred body, step into view.

A child screams 'ONE'.

Harold contorts with pain.

The shotgun drops from his hands.

He CLUTCHES his chest, gasping.

Harold's body is slumped against a tree.

We hear a child's voice giggling.

THE END