

THE WAKER-UPPER

Written by

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EXT. MANCHESTER CITY, ALLEY - NIGHT

MR. PEELS, 74, white hair and glasses, not too tall, neither too short, blows his hands and rubs them together. On his shoulder, there is a long, bamboo stick.

He looks at a second-floor, half-opened window and taps on it with his stick.

MR. PEELS
(gently)
It's time to wake up, Mr. Edwards.

He waits a few seconds. From an inner pocket of his coat, he takes a small device, like a tiny pail. He fills it with water from a near puddle.

As an accessory, he adds this tiny pail to the tip of his stick. He takes some distance and maneuvers the stick through the open window. In a rapid movement, he twists the stick.

MR. EDWARDS (O.S.)
Wow! It's cold, it's cold.

The window opens. Mr. EDWARDS, 50s, with a long and pointy nose, appears from the other side.

MR. EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Thanks, Mr. Peels. I'm up now.

MR. PEELS
It's "Peels," Mr. Edwards. Peels. I wake you up every day.

Mr. Peels points at something on his chest.

MR. PEELS (CONT'D)
And it's written on my badge.

MR. EDWARDS
Whatever.

Mr. Edwards throws him a couple of pennies and closes the window. Mr. Peels picks them up from the cobbled floor.

MR. PEELS
Thanks, I guess.

The sun starts to rise and the night turns to day.

EXT. MANCHESTER CITY, STREET - DAY

Mr. Peels walks from house to house. All the houses look the same, but not for him, who knocks at each window with a different rhythm each time.

Every time he knocks at a window, a few coins fall from the other side. He catches the coins in the air.

He stops at a new house and knocks on the window.

MR. PEELS

Ms. Kristen, you're going to be late for work; and Terry, for school.

Mr. Peels looks up at the window and sees MS. KRISTEN, 36, angelical face, kissing her little boy on the forehead. Mr. Peels takes his pocket watch out of his coat and opens it.

In the inner face of the gadget, there is a photo of himself with his bamboo stick. He sighs.

Mr. Peels hears the sound of the window, which opens. Ms. Kristen's voice breaks the silence of the morning.

MS. KRISTEN

Thanks, Mr. Peels, we're up.

She throws him a coin from her window.

MR. PEELS

Just doing my job, Ms. Kristen.

Mr. Peels bends to pick up his payment. When he stands, he notices that his stick isn't there anymore. A has it in its mouth, and it's leaving. Mr. Peels runs after the dog.

MR. PEELS (CONT'D)

Hey, leave that stick there! I need it!

EXT. MANCHESTER CITY, DOWNTOWN - DAY

Mr. Peels chases the dog up to a street, where several commercial stores are settled. The dog follows some doves and leaves the stick. Mr. Peels takes it back.

When he looks up, something catches his attention.

A crowd stands at the entrance of a shop. He approaches. He makes his way across the crowd to the shop and stares at the name of the store: "D' NOTOFF'S ALARM-CLOCKS."

The owner, MR. D' NOTOFF, 42, tall and skinny, with top hat, stands over a wooden box and speaks through a megaphone to the crowd.

D' NOTOFF
(vigorously)
Ladies and gentlemen, the future
has come to your homes. Get one of
my alarm-clocks and you will never
be late again.

The crowd, with money in their hands, pushes Mr. Peels, who falls. Mr. Peels stands up, cleans his pant and sleeves.

MR. PEELS
Claptraps.

He goes his own way.

EXT. MANCHESTER CITY, STREET - DAY

Mr. Peels walks across a street, holding a paper. He looks at the houses while reading.

MR. PEELS
Four hundred and nineteen, four
hundred and twenty, four hundred
and twenty one. This is it.

He looks at his pocket watch. It's time. He takes his wooden stick and, when he raises it, a strange and loud sound RINGS.

The annoying sound comes from the window he is about to knock at. He knocks at the window.

The window opens. MR. WEATHERSTONE, 68, bold, huge glasses, appears.

MR. WEATHERSTONE
You must be Mr. Peels. I was
testing my new alarm-clock. It
rings, doesn't it?

MR. PEELS
It surely seems so.

MR. WEATHERSTONE
Well, thanks for coming. From now
on, I won't need your services
anymore.

Mr. Weatherstone closes the window. A pile of snow, accumulated on the window's edge, falls on Mr. Peels' head.

MR. PEELS
 (muttering under the snow)
 Nice to meet you.

He shakes his head, looks at his paper and crosses Mr. Weatherstone's name out of the client list. He goes his way.

A FEW BLOCKS AHEAD

On a wall, hangs an advertising of Mr. D' Notoff showing an alarm-clock. Mr. Peels stares at it.

D' NOTOFF (O.S.)
 Pretty good, isn't it?

Mr. Peels turns to see D'Notoff walking towards him.

D' NOTOFF (CONT'D)
 I'm told that you were the town waker-upper, weren't you?

MR. PEELS
 In fact, still I --

D' NOTOFF
 -- as I see it, my dear old man.
 There is no space in this town for a waker-upper.

D' Notoff holds Mr. Peels on his shoulder and makes him turn to face the advertising.

D' NOTOFF (CONT'D)
 It's time to accept the new technologies and step aside, you know?

MR. PEELS
 Step asi--

D' NOTOFF
 -- I know. It must be difficult right know. But ...

D' Notoff turns Mr. Peels back.

D' NOTOFF (CONT'D)
 ... there is no other way, to your generation, than to adapt to a changing world. Just a suggestion.

He gives Mr. Peels a pat on the shoulder and disappears in the daze of the street.

D' NOTOFF (CONT'D) (O.S.)
Take it or leave it, old man.

As Mr. Peels returns, he hears alarm-clocks RING from every house he passes by.

INT. MR. PEELS' HOUSE - DAY

Inside a small, damp, slate-made house, Mr. Peels leaves his stick in a basket full of other handmade, wooden sticks.

He takes his coat off and puts the coins in a round, glass jar that says "SAVINGS."

Mr. Peels stares at the wall above the jar.

Hundreds of little portraits hang from the wall. Each one holds a picture of a smiley Mr. Peel, with his bamboo stick. On its frame, every portrait reads: "WAKER-UPPER OF THE MONTH."

Mr. Peels looks at his clients list.

INSERT - CLIENTS LIST

Mr. Edwards, Mr. and Ms. Kent, Mr. Coal, Ms. Kristen: All the names are crossed out.

BACK TO SCENE

He takes a newspaper and opens it in the section of "JOB OPPORTUNITIES."

MONTAGE - MR. PEELS TRYING NEW JOBS

-- He marks with a pencil an offering for a chimney-sweeper position. Mr. Peels tries to sweep a dirty chimney in a house. The dark soot covers his face and his glasses get dirty.

MR. PEELS
Cough, cough, cough.

He can't see. He spreads his hands, walks and breaks a fancy vase. The amount of coins in his jar decreases.

-- Still with soot on his hands, he marks with a pencil an offering as a weave-machine operator. In a factory, he sits beside other operators (men and women.) He focuses on the weaving machine.

A piece of cotton enters in his nose and he sneezes. Because of the sudden move, the spinning wheel gets stuck and the machine breaks down.

MR. PEELS (CONT'D)

Oh, no.

The amount of coins in his jar decreases again.

-- With threads around his hand, he marks with a pencil an offering as a match-seller. In the city square, he shows boxes of matches to the citizens. He teaches a pedestrian how to light a match. He burns his hand and the match falls on the other boxes. All the matches catch on fire and the flames scare a horse, that flees. The horse crashes the cart he is attached to against a vase store, where the owner of the other vase is about to buy a new one.

MR. PEELS (CONT'D) (O.S.)

Sorry!

The amount of coins in his jar decreases a lot.

END MONTAGE

INT. MR. PEELS' HOUSE - DAY

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