



The Static in the Static

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Leo sat alone in the living room, the rhythmic ticking of the wall clock the only sound breaking the midnight silence. The television screen suddenly flickered to life, buzzing with a strange, unnatural static that seemed to twist into the shape of a distorted silhouette. A raspy whisper echoed from the speakers, calling Leo by his name and daring him not to look away.



Mesmerized and terrified, Leo watched as the silhouette on the screen mimicked his exact movements, lifting its arm just as he did. The room grew freezing cold, and the smell of ozone filled the air as the entity in the static smiled, revealing a row of sharp, mismatched teeth. When Leo tried to grab the remote, it slid across the coffee table on its own, crashing onto the hardwood floor.



The television screen began to warp and stretch outward like warm plastic, the static humming at a deafening pitch that vibrated through Leo's bones. A pale, slender hand pressed against the inside of the glass, the fingers elongating as they found a seam in the screen. With a sickening tear, the hand broke through into the physical world, dropping a small, blood-red velvet ribbon onto the rug.



Panicking, Leo bolted toward the front door, but the locks refused to turn, rusted shut in a matter of seconds by an unseen force. He spun around to see the television static spreading across the wallpaper, painting the room in monochrome shadows that stretched toward him. The entity's voice now echoed from everywhere at once, whispering that the game had only just begun.



Leo retreated to the kitchen, grabbing a flashlight and a heavy iron skillet, his heart hammering against his ribs like a trapped bird. The digital clock on the microwave began spinning backward rapidly, counting down to an unknown, ominous deadline. Through the window, he noticed that the stars in the night sky had vanished, replaced by a swirling void of gray static.



A soft tapping sound drew Leo's eyes to the floorboards, where the shadows of the furniture began to detach themselves and stand upright. The pale hand from the television slid out from under the refrigerator, its fingers clicking against the linoleum as it dragged a larger, faceless torso behind it. Leo threw the heavy skillet, but it passed harmlessly through the creature, clattering loudly into the sink.



Fleeing upstairs, Leo locked himself in his bedroom, shoving his heavy oak desk against the door as a makeshift barricade. The television on his dresser suddenly turned on, broadcasting a live video feed of Leo himself sitting on the bed, terrified. In the live broadcast, a dark figure was standing directly behind him, raised hands poised over his shoulders.



Leo spun around wildly, but the space behind him was completely empty, though the television screen still showed the monster closing in. Realizing the entity existed only within the perception of the screens, Leo grabbed a baseball bat and shattered the bedroom display into a web of cracks. For a moment, there was absolute silence, and the oppressive cold in the air began to lift.



Relief washed over Leo as he walked back downstairs, the house seemingly returning to its normal, quiet midnight state. He approached the main living room television, which was now dark and completely shattered from the entity's violent exit earlier. However, as Leo caught his own reflection in the broken glass, he realized with horror that his reflection wasn't moving.



The reflection smiled an impossible, jagged smile and waved a pale hand, trapping the real Leo inside the dark, glass prison of the screen. On the outside, the entity stepped into Leo's shoes, picked up the remote, and turned the house lights off, leaving Leo to scream silently into the endless, unyielding static.