

Second Floor Apartment
Tim Mikkelsen
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Series Bible

1. Title of Show Second Floor Apartment
2. Created by Tim Mikkelsen
3. Genre(s) Mystery, Thriller
4. Length of Show 12 episodes of 30 min each
5. References Lars Thorwald's side in Hitchcock's "Rear Window"

6. Log Line

What does it take to make salesman Lars Thorwald transform his unassuming life into one of infidelity, intrigue, and ultimately murdering and dismembering his wife (not to mention strangling the neighbor's dog)? It's the little things...

7. Series Synopsis

The series, set in 1953 New York, follows a salesman, Lars Thorwald. It opens with a long-suffering Lars living with his wife in their second floor apartment in New York in the 1950s. They seem to be doing okay, but his wife, Anna, is difficult to live with given her health and complaining. Lars tries his best with Anna, and tries to make her happy. But he feels trapped and constrained. He tries to get more money – to make her happy. They move into a new apartment – to make her happy. In his new job, he meets someone who open his eyes to new horizons. These new horizons ultimately take Lars down an ultimately deadly path. The story explores how Lars, a mild and unassuming man, came to this point in his life. (Although this is a derivative work set in Hitchcock's "Rear Window" universe, the intent is for this to be a stand-alone piece and to minimize scenes and interactions that were in the original "Rear Window" movie.)

8. Major Character List

- Lars Thorwald: Lars is a stocky white man in his mid thirties. Passive, unassuming.
- Lars' wife Anna Thorwald: Attractive woman. Hypochondriac, invalid, nag.
- Lars' mistress Betty: Attractive, hard working, supportive - everything Anna isn't.
- Lars' co-worker - Harold (Hershel): A small, thin, and probably Lars' best friend.

8. Minor Character List

- Lars' friend from childhood – Robert Johansen: Anna's fiancé killed at Normandy.
- Sergeant on landing craft – standard issue hard ass.
- Lars' dog Abby – a 5 year old Corgi. Lars emotional support at home.
- Lars' neighbor from the apartment building – Darla: a plain, but nice looking woman
- Darla's 7 year old son - Frankie
- A grocer in Lars' old neighborhood – Dominic
- A young woman shopper at the jewelry store: stylish, attractive.
- A middle-aged lady shopper at the jewelry store: nice looking, but with dated clothing.
- Lar's coworker at Lewinsky's - Jimmy
- Lars' new supervisor - Max Goldhirsch: A loud, barrel chested force of nature.
- Max Goldhirsch's receptionist: a nicely dressed younger woman
- Lars' new landlord - Tony: A slight man with a shady side.
- Lars' old boss - Joseph Lewinsky: A stooped older man. Friendly, but miserly.
- Lars' old landlord - Karl: A tough, older German immigrant. Mean when drunk.
- Gardening shop clerk - Bobby: A young man. Inexperienced and inattentive.

- Inspector Saber – a British radio character on an ABC mystery show
- Sergeant Maloney – a British radio character on an ABC mystery show
- Radio announcer
- Betty’s boss at the jewelry store (for later episodes)
- Betty’s female friend (for later episodes)
- Lar’s co-worker at the new job (for later episodes)
- L.B. Jeffries: A voyeuristic magazine photographer. Convalescing with a broken leg. (for much later episodes)
- Lisa Fremont: Jeffries’ fashion model girlfriend. Everything Anna wanted to be. (for much later episodes)

9. Episode Synopsis

Episode 1 (cold open): Lars, Harold, and Robert (Lars’ childhood friend) are in a landing craft on D-Day heading to Omaha Beach. All are nervous. Robert asks Lars to watch out for his fiancé Anna in case anything happens to Robert.

Episode 1 (new job): Lars is working in a working-class jewelry store. He and Anna are getting by – emotionally and financially. But Anna wants more and is nagging Lars about their lifestyle. Through a contact at work, he hears about a wholesale costume jewelry job and applies for it. Although Anna is happy about more money, she belittles Lars and his ability to get and do the job. He isn’t comfortable with going for it, but he feels he has to take a shot at it. He gets the job. Because Lars is getting the new job and the promise of more money coming in, Anna decides without Lars input to get a better apartment. She forges Lars’ signature to break the old lease. Lars finds out about this and comes home furious to confront Anna. (Music: Ella Fitzgerald “Stormy Weather”)

Episode 2 (new apartment): They argue, but Lars ultimately gives and accepts the situation since their apartment already has new renters. They find a new apartment. Lars continues to do well at the new job, in spite of the stress of the move. Anna does tell Lars what to do to get ready for the move, ordering and demanding. Anna is clearly excited about the new apartment. Surprisingly, things are better between Lars and Anna, possible because of the change of the new apartment – a change in scenery may make a change in relationship? The audience finds out more of how Lars married his late best friend’s fiancé’. (Music: Buddy & Ella Johnson “I’m Just Your Fool”)

Episode 3 (moving in): The move is a disaster. Lars moves what he can but Lars needs to borrow a coworker’s truck and get the coworker to help move some of their furniture. The move is happening in early March, but there is a bitter cold snap and snow. Some of the meager furniture they have is damaged by the inclement weather. During the move, Anna does little to help. And to make matters worse, she finds fault with how he is moving. During all this, Anna contracts tuberculosis. Lars is heartbroken over the diagnosis. (Music: Fats Domino “Something’s Wrong”)

Episode 4 (Anna’s illness): Lars is panic stricken that Anna has TB. Although serious and requiring medication, bed rest, and attention; her TB is not severe or life threatening. Lars is relieved that she will recover and happy. Anna, however, she milks the illness for everything it’s worth. During all of this, Lars is settling them into their new apartment and working at the new job. (Music: Eartha Kitt “C’est Si Bon”)

Episode 5 (new friends): Anna survives the bout with TB and things start to settle down. Beyond the stress of her illness, the doctor has suggested that they get rid of their dog Abby which breaks Lars’ heart. Lars is having success at the new job. He meets new people and starts to develop some contacts and even a few friendships. Lars does feel a lot of pressure

at home because of Anna's being an 'invalid' (whether she is or not). She was never a great homemaker - the previous apartment was a mess and she couldn't or wouldn't cook. Now her previous, poorly executed, role as the lady of the house is now totally falls on Lars' shoulders. And Anna doesn't appreciate it and, even worse, complains about every meal and load of laundry. (Music: Tony Bennett "Stranger In Paradise")

Episode 6 (gardening): With New York finally warming up with the spring weather, Lars decides to do a little gardening in the shared courtyard of the apartment. He grew up in upstate New York and misses the green of the countryside - he thinks this might help him have a little happiness (but mostly to get a little time away from Anna). One of the advantages of the new apartment is that he has a tiny plot for gardening - maybe 8' by 2'. He will ultimately wish it was bigger... He talks to gardening store and is directed to trying his hand at zinnias. Anna thinks this is the height of foolishness and tells him in no uncertain terms. The zinnias flourish, in spite of the neighbors in the apartment above Lars' having a 'yippy' dog that digs around the garden. (Music: Nat King Cole "Mother Nature Father Time")

Episode 7 (annoying neighbors): Some of Lars neighbors seem to have the same opinion of Lars gardening as his wife. A few of the women poke fun at a grown man raising flowers. Lars continues to flourish at work. Lars friendships continue to flourish. In Lars' sales territory, there is a small jewelry store. His normal circuit would have Lars' visit the store once every 6 weeks. But there's a pretty office clerk at this store - Betty. (Music: Marilyn Monroe "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend")

Episode 8 (new girlfriend): Lars is starting to feel something for Betty. He would normally go to Betty's store every couple of weeks. Now he finds himself coming back to the store weekly. He wasn't trying to find anyone... he doesn't have the time (with his wife's illness). He strikes up a friendship with her. She seems to be the exact opposite of Anna. He ultimately confides in her about Anna and what his home life is like. She understands and comforts him... Lars is dumbstruck and can't help but fall hopelessly and helplessly in love with her. (Music: Four Blazes "Perfect Woman")

Episode 9 (Coney Island 1): In the spell of their attraction for each other, Lars suggests an outing to Coney Island. Betty is thrilled at the prospect. They arrange to go during the work week - for obvious reasons. They wander through the aging amusement park that is past its prime, but they are oblivious and experience the magic of its bygone era. (Music: Dean Martin "That's Amore")

Episode 9 (Coney Island 2): Lars is feeling guilty about his feelings for Betty. He tries to be more affectionate and considerate of Anna and her needs. She responds by being critical of his attempts and reminding him of all the stupid mistakes he has made during her illness. He still works at this. Remembering the fun that Betty and he had, he suggests that he and Anna go to Coney Island and have a little bit of a holiday. They go, but all Anna can see is the grime and dilapidated state of the boardwalk. While they are there, one of the carnies recognizes and calls out to Lars. Lars quickly moves on ignoring the vendor. Anna, however, notices and starts to suspect. (Music: Hank Williams Jr. "Your Cheating Heart")

Episode 10 (that last straw): Things continue to deteriorate at home for Lars. Anna starts to rummage through his drawers when he's at work. When Lars is home, they are fighting more and more. One evening Betty calls Lars. Anna in the next room over hears Lars part of the conversation and gets out of bed and startles Lars. She laughs at him. Lars quickly hangs up. Lars calms his nerves with a drink. Or two. Or three. A little later that evening, Anna asks what sort of cheap whore would be interested in a chump like him. Lars has finally hit his limit. In a moment of rage, he strikes out to slap her. The blow surprises her

and she shouts out as she falls back and hits her head. She lingers for a few minutes, her face a study in disbelief and confusion, gasping and then dying. (Music: Dominoes "You Can't Keep A Good Man Down")

Episode 11 (cleaning up the mess): Lars is in a panic. He doesn't know what to do. He calls Betty. Initially shocked, she calms Lars down and they work out a plan... They both have a chance to find the happiness they think they deserve. Lars, with his farm experience, decides to butcher Anna's body in the bathtub. It's grizzly work, but he gets it done. He starts taking the various parts and drops them off at various places along the riverfront. It takes 3 trips. He has just her head left. For some reason, it is hard for him to just dump that in the river. So, he buries it under one of the zinnias that his wife belittled him for. It struck him as poetic justice. But now, they had to have a plausible explanation for Anna's absence. They didn't have any close family or friends, but people were aware of them and Anna's illness. They chose the plan of having Betty dressing as Anna and having Lars take her to take a train upstate. Everything went smoothly... until the damned dog started digging under the zinnias later that night. Lars easily dispatched the dog and removed the box underneath the flowers – hiding it in his apartment temporarily. Sitting in his darkened apartment, he heard the scream of the dog's owner. This was going to work... (Music: Percy Faith's "Where Is Your Heart")

Episode 12 (snooping neighbors): The next day, in the midst of getting packed to meet up with Betty, Lars hears something and finds an envelope with his name pushed under his door. In it is a note that asks 'what have you done with her'. His mind races... Someone must have seen. Maybe it was one of the neighbors? Shortly after he gets a menacing call from the writer of the note, Jeffries, asking for money to keep quiet. He doesn't have much money but he has to see if he can get out of this somehow. He goes to the meeting place with the couple of hundred dollars he has on him, but no one is there. When he comes back, he finds an attractive blond, Lisa, in his apartment. He sees she has his wife's ring and is obviously showing it to someone across the courtyard. He figures out that it is Jeffries and decides to confront him. He is caught after trying to push Jeffries off the balcony. He realizes, what few and little dreams he had are finished, like his wife's head - tied up neatly in a hat box in his apartment... (Music: Guitar Slim "The Things I Used To Do")