

OPEN HOUSE

by
Mr. and Mrs. Smith

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERTED HOUSE - DAY

An old house. Isolated. Not as decrepit--someone lives here-- but it ain't exactly in "Better Homes and Gardens" either. A For Sale Sign hangs out front.

PAIGE, 30s, attractive, suburban prim in a flattering blouse and skirt, stands near her 72 FORD PINTO, on its car phone.

PAIGE

Mrs. Weisinger, Paige Baxter. You were suppose to meet me.

MRS. WEISINGER (V.O.)

Oh, sorry, a big developer wants the property. Plans on tearing it down. Don't you read the news?

PAIGE

(upset)

No. Well... Mark Twain said, *"If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed, if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed."*

MRS. WEISINGER (V.O.)

(laughs)

Look, there's no deal on the table yet. Our man Briggs is there. It's an open house.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Paige looks around, taking it all in. There's occasional pieces of furniture, suggesting that some have been taken away.

Even in the hazy light of day, this place is creepy as hell.

PAIGE

Mr. Briggs?

Paige resumes her tour. Nobody around. Just bad vibes.

Paige finds a DOOR. There's a tiny stairway leading into a DARK BASEMENT. The kind you don't go down. There's a NOISE from the darkness below. Could be nothing.

She is almost ready to dismiss the whole thing when she hears the noise again. Distantly. From below.

PAIGE

Mr. Briggs?

Paige freezes and listens, but hears nothing. Pounding heart. Blood pulsating through her veins. Someone could be down there.

Not brave, she shuts the door.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A roomy country kitchen, with a breakfast nook. Paige surveys the room.

A HALF-EATEN BREAKFAST, rotted and crawling with MAGGOTS, as if it was simply abandoned mid meal.

Paige frowns. Disgusting.

Paige approaches the back door. Pulls on the knob. It's practically fused SHUT. She pulls harder as-- something SKITTERS across her hand.

A COCKROACH. She SCREAMS, drops her cell and falls back.

BEAT. When Paige straightens up and turns around she ---

-- nearly runs into CADE BRODY, 40, scarred face, in a somewhat ill-fitted suit. He's a jittery, with a haunted, quivering voice...

BRODY

What the hell are you doing here?!

Paige stares at him a second - taken aback.

PAIGE

I'm here about the house. Mrs. Weisinger from your office sent me. You are Mr. Briggs?

A puzzled look on his face, and it dawns on him. He nods.

Paige continues to inspect the space. He follows, moves with a *pronounced limp*--

BRODY

It ain't for sale.

PAIGE

Then why do you have that sign out there?

As Paige exits the kitchen...

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Paige steps in, Brody right behind her. Sheets have been tacked over windows to darken the room.

She cases the place. Brody stalks right up to Paige, who wisely backs away but circles the room to keep talking.

BRODY

You don't belong here. It's not right for you. The longer you stay... the worse it will be. LEAVE NOW.

And that makes Paige even more suspicious.

PAIGE

I beg your pardon? My husband and I are going to fix it up, and make it our dream home.

BRODY

Keep dreaming.

An awkward beat between them. Neither sure what to say.

Paige, her radar up, seizes the opportunity to quiz him.

PAIGE

How many bedrooms again?

Brody just stares down Paige, ignoring the question.

PAIGE

So what happened to the family who lived here?

Brody twitches nervously, and Paige gets the sense he's hiding something. Before she can press him further,

A TEXT ALERT. Loud. Startling them. Digs out her phone. And very bizarre timing. She steps away from him.

PAIGE

'Scuse me.

Paige steals a look back, sees him staring, something off behind his dark eyes... predatory... hungry -- a weirdo.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Paige reads a BREAKING NEWS ALERT on her cell phone-- The HUNT FOR ESCAPED MURDERER, SERIAL KILLER, CADE BRODY ENTERS IT'S FOURTH DAY.

Under it, a MUGSHOT OF OUR ESCAPEE pops up; it's him.

Paige can't hide a brief flicker of panic but she covers quickly. Her mind races. She needs to get the hell out of here. And NOW.

A HAND GRABS HER-- Paige SHRIEKS! She snaps around, to see him. His knowing gaze bores into Paige.

BRODY

What's the matter?

PAIGE

You were right. This house won't do. It's not what I'm looking for.

She heads out, he blocks her path. It's a tense standoff.

BRODY

Don't you want to see the basement?

PAIGE

No, I have to get back. It's this house, something about it that gives me the creeps.

Brody leans in close. Scary as fuck--

BRODY

Let's cut the bull, shall we?

On synchronized instinct, Brody wraps one arm around Paige, pulls his BUCK KNIFE with the other, and holds it to Paige's throat.

Paige SCREAMS bloody murder, struggles to get free, no dice, he's much too strong--

BRODY

Go ahead, scream! No one will hear you out here.

PAIGE

Get the hell away from me!

RINGRING! The doorbell startles them.

Paige sucks in the air to scream, but Brody's hand covers her face. At the same time, ushers her towards the window to see --

BRODY

Make a sound and the girl dies.

Paige's breathing fast and shallow, crying with fear and panic-- bravely nods.

He leaves to see about our guests.

She grits her teeth, knows she has to move, and now.

Paige rushes off, staring at the "NO SERVICE" on her phone.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Paige continues to pull on the door, desperate to get out. She searches for another way out, but there's none.

Paige tries to force open the window, but it's stuck.

EXT. DESERTED HOUSE - DAY

Brody opens the door, notices a MOM and her YOUNG DAUGHTER, who clutches her mom's leg in TERROR.

BRODY

It's sold.

Before they can speak, he slams the door in their faces.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Paige beelines to the basement door, turns the knob, slowly pulls it open. It starts to creak. She freezes. Shit!

Nudging it open but a little, the door creaks again. No escaping the noise.

Paige gently opens the door wide enough to slip, descends the stairs softly.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

It's claustrophobic and dark, except for light coming from Paige's cell, as she pans the light side to side, the shadows playing tricks on her eyes.

She pulls a chain hanging from the ceiling, a naked bulb turns only, barely providing any light.

Old FURNITURE covered with dusty sheets. Stray pieces of lumber. GARDENING EQUIPMENT strewn everywhere.

As Paige ventures on... a shovel trips her and she falls hard. WE follow her gaze to... a pool of fucking BLOOD.

Now a wave of fear washes over her. She gets brave.

She gets up, moves closer, checking it out. She disappears into the shadows. A BEAT. Then her voice --

PAIGE (O.S.)

Oh My God...

A few more steps before Paige stops dead in her tracks as she discovers--

A MAN, 40, short, chubby, glasses, half-naked. DEAD. A pool of blood beneath him. GUTTED. It's obvious, MR. BRIGGS.

Paige grabs her mouth, trying to take back her reaction. It's quiet. *Did he hear her?*

Then she hears something, FOOTSTEPS coming from above. She tracks the sound with her eyes.

Frantic, Paige looks for a hiding spot. There's no good options.

Paige refocuses, thinks fast-- picks up that shovel as a weapon. Then steps on a piece of furniture, unscrews the bulb, sending the room into darkness.

A split-second later, the door CREAKS OPEN and...

In a fit of rage, Brody bounds down the steps, yanks on the chain but nothing happens. He sees the bulb gone.

BRODY

You sneaky bitch!

PAIGE (O.S.)

Over here, you bastard!

Brody turns to look-- a SHOVEL meets his face. Swung hard by Paige. He falls like a pine. His head CRACKS against the concrete. Silence.

A beat, she beats feet up the stairs when --

His hand grabs her ankle. Another draws his blade which glints from some unknown light.

Paige kicks, crawling backward up the stairs, before throwing the bloody lumber, catching Brody in the face.

A second is bought and she spends it separating herself-- two feet, three-- from Brody before spinning to run.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - DAY

Paige runs for the front door. It won't bulge. Her eyes widen. Her hands scrabble at the door knob. Then notices the KEY BROKEN OFF in the lock.

Slams her eyes shut-- like *"can you believe this shit?!"*

THUNK! His knife flies through the air and sticks in the wood an inch from her head.

Jarring her back to reality. She's got COMPANY. She runs.

Brody retrieves the knife, turns to finish off Paige.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - 2ND FLOOR - DAY

On her cell, Paige's desperate heels sprint through the hall.

PAIGE

911--have an armed intruder in the house--I don't have time, send someone now--

She looks behind in terror. No one there... yet.

She slams the door to a room on one side of the hall-- a decoy, then runs further up the hall, into another room.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Paige slams the door shut, locks it, pushes a heavy chair in front of it. Collapses to the floor, hyperventilates --

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - 2ND FLOOR - DAY

Brody slowly stalks down the hall, a deliberate pace. The hatchets dangle and sway with each step.

BRODY

I love it when they run.

He settles the sharp point of the knife against the door.

Brody-- the tiniest of grins. With almost dispassionate nostalgia--

BRODY

Time to slice and dice.

He slams his shoulder against the door, over and over.

INT. DESERTED HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Bam!. Paige flinches each time the noise impacts as a slat in the door buckles!

Paige gets a grip. Turns to the towel rack. Pulls at it. It snaps. She positions herself.

The shaft from the rack in her hand, its jagged end a wicked looking gaff: hefted and ready to impale anyone who enters. Wood splinters.

The door gives. He pushes the chair away, rages into --

Paige plunges her gaff into his belly. Scary Man gasps.

Looks down at the handle protruding from his abdomen. His throat erupts in a geyser of blood, spraying Paige.

He collapses, squirms, gurgling, as blood drains out of him... until his body is still.

EXT. DESERTED HOUSE - DUSK

The sun peacefully goes down across this serene countryside.

Paige closes her eyes, takes a moment to absorb her relief.

Then-- a SIREN wails in the distance.

FADE OUT.