

Angela

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY - WINTER

HOUSE after HOUSE on this suburban street is a picture of Christmas bliss. Twinkle LIGHTS and holiday decorations cast a warm and happy glow over the snow covered ground. FAMILIES are gathered inside.

"Let it Snow" plays.

As we come toward the end of the road, however, we pass a NO OUTLET sign. The houses begin to thin. A forest of barren trees starts to take over - their branches heavy with snow.

At the very end of the road is a little FARM HOUSE surrounded by a low stone wall. No lights, no decorations.

We approach it's front door.

BLACK

INT. THE LITTLE FARM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A log is thrown on a dying FIRE.

PEOPLE are standing around: Family, Friends, a Priest, and a Doctor. All very grey and muted, and starring into their drinks.

Ice CLINKS in glasses: an eerie toast.

In the middle of the room sits, ANGIE, well into her 50s, trying to grasp onto any shred of hope for her future. Tears push against the back of her eyes.

Angie is cleaning a REVOLVER, and nobody cares.

That's not true. Through the sight, Angie can see:

ANGLE ON: Her MOTHER, Claudine, a shriveled old woman chain smoking cigarettes in the corner, is watching Angie. Mother looks as serious as the CRUCIFIX hanging above her.

Angie lowers the revolver in shame.

Angie looks up to realize EVERYONE is looking down on her with the same harsh judgement as Mother.

The Priest steps forward, and Angie hides the revolver under the table.

But then Angie's BROTHER, Luke, shoves The Priest out of the way and approaches Angie.

The Family is shocked and horrified.

But Brother is a big guy, a hunter, and not to be messed with. He has the day's kill, a pair of RABBITS, draped over his shoulder.

Brother hands Angie a SHOT GUN BULLET, and she is grateful to him. He leaves Angie to her business.

Spiteful of her Family, Angie tries to load it into her gun, but of course it is far too big.

Annoyed, Angie flings the useless bullet in Brother's general direction:

But it whizzes past him as he turns out of sight, going back to the outdoors where he belongs.

Mother smiles with smug condensation.

Angie throws down the gun, and stands to confront her Mother.

The Family moves in to block Angie from doing so.

They crowd

Loom

Bear down

Until Angie is forced to sit again.

Mother is disappointed in Angie's behavior.

Angie solemnly picks up the revolver again; but The Doctor puts a handful of pills in front of her.

The Family agrees - pills are good, pills will help.

Angie takes them. She puts loads a pill into the chamber:

Then another pill

And another and another until the chambers are full.

Angie lifts the gun up to her ear and shakes it. The pills RATTLE around...

Angie loses her focus; her eyes go bleary. Her body goes limp, and she sinks back into the chair.

The Family is relieved, but still worried about outbursts. They huddle around The Doctor, who speaks in incomprehensible whispers. The Family sneaks patronizing glances at Angie. They are determined for this "cure" to work.

Angie limply waves the gun in protest.

The Doctor checks her pupils. His work here is done.

The Family shakes hands with The Doctor, pat him on the back, and applaud The Doctor as he bids the party adieu.

Angie tries to spit at The Doctor, but in her drug addled state she only succeeds in producing a bubbly drool that rolls down her chin.

The music is cues up again.

A log thrown on the fire.

The Family resumes milling about with ice CLINKING in their glasses.

Humiliated, Angie stares her Mother down.

Mother smokes, unperturbed.

Angie slides out of her chair onto the floor. Unnoticed by the Family, Angie begins crawling toward her Mother.

But Angie stops when one of the pills pops silently out of the barrel of the gun.

The PILL bounces off the ankle of The Priest. He looks down to find...

Angie on her hands and knees.

Despite the Priest's gaze, Angie decides to try going for her Mother anyway.

Tempting the Priest to stop her, Angie takes one crawling step toward her Mother in the corner; the revolver scratches the floor.

Angie checks to see if The Priest is going to stop her.

He makes no sign.

Angie lifts her hand to take another move in the direction of her Mother, but The Priest puts his hand under Angie's, stopping her progress.

This is not what she expected, and the human contact brings the tears back to Angie's eyes.

The Priest holds out his other hand for Angie to take, and she grasps on to it, wanting to beg for forgiveness and understanding.

The Priest is not heartless, but he is what he is: he takes Angie's hands and forms them into the steeples of prayer position - around the revolver - and then he lowers his head to guide Angie in prayer.

With the revolver peaking out at her, Angie cannot pray. Instead, she rubs her face on The Priest's hands.

The Priest is disturbed by this, but decides it is a good sign.

The Priest pulls on Angie's hands, so that in following them, she stands face to face with the man of God.

He leads her in a waltz - the revolver held between both of their outstretched hands.

As Angie and the Priest start to move, The Family takes notice. The revolver no longer frightens them. They are proud.

Mother is proud.

Angie and The Priest turn in circles made of box-steps, and the The Family moves in turn, forming a loose circle around the pair.

And the end of the dance, The Family claps for Angie's return into their circle.

Another log is thrown on the fire.

The crackling embers, and wave of warmth sends a chill down Angie's spine, but The Family lights up with joy. They clink their glasses.

They take Angie by the hand and lead her to her Mother.

Mother sits smoking. Angie holds out her hand for her Mother to take.

Mother offers Angie a CIGARETTE.

The Family is watching. Angie is expected to take the cigarette, so she takes it.

Angie doesn't know what else to do with it but try to load it into her revolver.

The Family is dismayed. They grab Angie by the elbows and drag her to the other side of the room. Angie kicks and struggles to get free, but they are much stronger than her.

The Family plunks Angie down in a chair by the fire.

The Family shivers and shakes at Angie's coldness, her atrocities.

The Priest shakes his head at Angie. He picks up his hat, a sure sign that he is leaving.

The Family huddles around him much like they did with The Doctor. The Priest has no words to comfort them. He is resigned...

Angie is a lost soul.

The Priest makes the sign of the cross as he backs out of the room.

This frightens some of The Family, and a few members mimic The Priest. Those who do not want to be touched by evil, make the sign of the cross and back out of the room.

The remaining members of the Family glare at Angie, as they swirl their drinks and CLINK the bits of ice around.

As they have turned from her, Angie turns away from her Family.

Angie looks deep into the fire, and with every jump of the flames, and CRACKLE of the wood, Angie grows hot with anger.

Mother smokes.

Angie picks up the revolver and the cigarette, trying once again to fashion the cigarette as a bullet.

One of the MEN wrests the revolver out of Angie's hand. She does not let go easily, and makes a grab for it once he has taken it away from her.

The Family forms a wall between Angie and The Man.

The Man takes the revolver to Mother.

Mother continues to smoke impassively.

When Mother doesn't take the gun, The Man tucks it into the gap in the couch cushions beside her.

The same broken record is cued up on the Victrola.

Angie covers her ears against that awful sound.

The party resumes as before.

A log bursts in the fire, making a loud CRACKING noise.

The Family likes the sound and lifts their glasses for a toast: CLINK.

Angie decides to try something. She takes the poker and stokes the fire.

Another CRACK...

Another toast - CLINK.

Angie stokes the fire again:

Another CRACK

Another toast - CLINK.

Angie picks up the pace, furiously breaking logs.

CRACK, CLINK, CRACK, CLINK, CRACK, CLINK. Until...

A large chunk of burning ember flies out of the fireplace...

And lands on the pant leg of The Man who took Angie's gun. His pants quickly catch on fire. Horrified, he bats at the flames, but to no avail.

With the whole Family looking at him in fear, The Man does the only sensible thing; he runs straight out of the house.

The Family watches from the window as the The Man jumps in the snow, and flames die down. They are relieved.

But only momentarily. Angie has picked up the BELLOWS and is pointing them threateningly at the fire.

The Family puts up their hands in surrender, but even as they do so, they cautiously inch toward Angie. They want to get the new found weapon out of Angie's hands.

Angie knows she's got them. She blows the bellows and sparks fly out of the fire in the direction of her Family.

The EMBERS land on the long holiday dresses of The Women, and pants of The Men. They bat at the flames, but cannot stop the fire from spreading.

Outside the window, The Man beckons to The Family, urging them to come outside.

They do not go immediately, so Angie blows the bellows once more.

Burning embers catch on the carpet and the curtains.

The whole room is going up in flames, but Mother continues to smoke.

Thinking only of themselves, The Family runs outside and jumps in the snow.

Angie and Mother are alone now. The FIRE swells up around them.

Angie approaches her Mother. Slowly. One. Step. At. A. Time.

For every puff Mother takes on her cigarette, Angie blows smoke out of the bellows.

At last, Angie stands over her Mother - Angie's rage matched by the fire around them.

Mother holds out her hand to Angie.

That's all Angie needed. She drops to her knees before her Mother. The bellows fall, while Angie, sobbing now, hurls her body down onto Mother's lap.

But Mother is not there. Mother has vanished.

Angie is startled to find that she is hugging the couch.

Angie scratches at the cushions, trying to bring her Mother back. But Mother is gone.

Angie runs to the window, but nobody is outside. And there's no sign that anybody every was.

The only things that remain are Angie, the fire...

...and the crucifix looming on the wall behind her.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

House after house on this suburban street is a picture of Christmas bliss...except for the little farm house at the end of the road.

The house is now ablaze with fire. The snow, street, and what's left of the house are all cast in the LIGHTS and SIRENS of FIRE TRUCKS, and AMBULANCES.