

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

Substitute

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FADE IN:

SCENE 1 - EXT. SMALL REMOTE HOUSE - DAY  
SUPERIMPOSE: DECEMBER 25TH, 2019.

The snow crunches under Andrews feet along the flower bed. The wind whistles through the desolate forest behind the house.

Andrew, 46, continues to dress the crucifix in the middle of the garden. A big red Santa suit covers the crucifix with lights wrapped around the base.

Joe, 15, slides the patio door open.

He runs towards Andrew with a Santa hat in his hand.

Andrew lifts Joe up ready to place the hat on top. They both laugh.

Andrew notices a silhouette in the distance and stares at it.

JOE  
Dad? You can put me down now.

He looks back at Joe's face and puts him on the floor.

Andrew looks back up to see the silhouette has disappeared.

He takes Joe under his arm as they both walk towards the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Photo frames are scattered throughout the house.

The main centre piece showcases a FAMILY PHOTO. Andrew dressed in grey cargo shorts. MARY, 43, in a pink summer dress and baby Joe in her arms with a Barney toy.

Joe enters the house with Andrew following slowly behind.

He slides the patio door closed and they both head to the basement.

Andrew reaches into his pocket and jangles some keys out of them, unlocking the basement door.

He enters with Joe slowly following.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

A single light bulb hangs from the ceiling.

Andrew yanks the string above the door and the light flickers on.

They both sit in rotting wooden chairs.

Facing them is a blank white mannequin, dressed in a blouse and skirt. With its head tied to the chair it stares at them both.

Andrew closes his eyes.

ANDREW  
(Under his breath)  
I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

His speech becomes unclear.

Joe continues to stare at the mannequin.

He begins to bite his nails, tap his feet. Unable to stay in one position in his chair.

He looks up at his father, his eyes still closed and his words still muttered.

He looks back at the mannequin and closes his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Little Joe and Mary are sat under the Christmas tree unwrapping presents.

Behind them Andrew sits in his chair with a glass of whiskey watching TV.

Mary looks back at him and smiles, Andrew's expression does not change.

The joy in Joe cannot be contained, he grabs his toy plane and runs around the living room.

Jumping over the couches, him and Mary laughing at each other.

MARY  
Calm down kiddo, you're gonna hurt yourself. Andrew tell him to be careful.

ANDREW  
Move your blocking the TV. JOE! Stop  
now! Your mother already said stop  
now listen otherwise...

Joe looks up at him and begins to cry.

Andrew stares at him until Mary picks him up.

They both go upstairs leaving Andrew staring at the TV.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Joe crying looks down at his hands. His nails bitten to the  
edge of his fingers, his thumbnail bleeding.

He puts his thumb in his mouth and sucks on it as he looks  
up to see Andrew towering over him.

Joe stands and leaves the room.

He looks behind to see his father staring back at the  
mannequin before pulling the string.

The room descends into darkness as both of them leave,  
Andrew locks the door behind them.

SCENE 2 INT. LIVING ROOM  
SUPERIMPOSE: FEBRUARY 14TH, 2020.

Joe rages at his video games.

He glances out the patio doors to see his father standing in  
the garden, staring into the distance.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Andrew heads to one of his many flower beds and kneels.

He reaches down and places a petal on his finger.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Andrew kneels down to pick a rose from his flower bed.

He turns and places it behind Mary's ear.

He holds both of her hands and begins to hum a song to her.

They both raise an arm and slow dance around the garden to the beat of Andrew's song.

They stare into each others eyes while spinning in circles before they kiss.

EXT. GARDEN - BACK TO PRESENT

Andrew snatches a handful of flowers before heading towards the house.

He slides the patio door open.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Andrew crosses Joe's path between the TV and heads towards the basement door.

Andrew enters and locks the door behind him.

Joe pauses his game and heads towards the basement door.

On reaching the door he places his ear against it.

He hears Andrew scream down below.

ANDREW  
AHH! Why did you do this to us!

Joe tries the door handle but it does not budge. The shouting stops.

Joe hears footsteps ascending.

The doorknob rattles and opens, Joe is faced with crushed petals in Andrew's hand.

Joe takes a few steps backwards, Andrew enraged with a bright red face drops the flowers and locks the door.

He heads upstairs as Joe continues to stare at the door, frozen in position.

SCENE 3 - INT. LIVING ROOM

SUPERIMPOSE: MARCH 19TH, 2020. JOE'S BIRTHDAY

Joe walks down the stairs to see his father sat in his lounge chair sipping at his whiskey in hand.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Joe's face is covered by his hands at the bottom of the stairs.

MARY  
Now open your eyes!

Joe stares at his mother to see a slice of cake in her hand.

He looks behind her to see a plethora of presents spread along the floor.

He looks back at his mother.

MARY (cont'd)  
Happy Birthday son, I love you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Joe glances at the floor to see an old dusty rug.

He approaches Andrew slowly kicking up some of the dust.

Andrew turns his head and stands without a word.

He heads over to the basement door with Joe following him, he unlocks the door.

INT. BASEMENT

Joe enters the basement as the door locks behind him.

He creeps down the stairs into the darkness.

He leaves the light bulb off.

A stream of light gleams onto the mannequin sat in the middle of the room.

Joe sits facing the mannequin and looks down at the floor to see a present wrapped.

He glances around the dark room.

Hesitant to what the present is, he picks it up and shakes it.

Joe gently opens the box and stares down into it.

He quickly stashes the contents under his clothes before chucking the box into the corner.

Joe continues to stare at the mannequin before he hears the door being unlocked again.

Andrew heads into the basement and turns the light on.

He looks down at Joe before dragging him out of the basement.

SCENE 4 - EXT. LIVING ROOM  
SUPERIMPOSE: APRIL 10TH

Joe walks down the stairs passing empty boxes.

He looks outside to see his father stood dressing the crucifix.

He slides the patio door open and steps outside.

EXT. GARDEN

Joe walks towards his father and sees a box old clothes at his feet.

JOE  
Dad, what are you doing?

Andrew grabs another set of clothes from the box and holds them up against the crucifix.

ANDREW  
I thought I'd give it some life.

He continues to try different clothes.

Joe looks into the distant forest behind his house to see a small silhouette in the distance.

JOE  
Dad, who's that looking at us in the trees?

Andrew looks up into the trees to see the same silhouette as before.

ANDREW  
Shush, be quiet. We don't wanna disturb it.

Joe confused freezes in position before shouting.

JOE  
Hey, who are you?

The silhouette scurries into the distance.

Andrew slaps the back of Joe's head.

ANDREW  
Are you an idiot? I told you not to  
disturb it and you go and do that.

JOE  
What! It looks like a person are you  
blind? It could be someone who's  
scared, or, or someone who needs  
help.  
(beat)  
It could be mother...

Andrew grabs Joe by the collar of his shirt.

ANDREW  
Don't you ever mention your mother.  
You hear me. Never again.

Andrew shoves Joe towards the house and picks the box up  
from the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM

As they both enter the house Andrew closes the patio door  
behind him.

He chucks the box of clothes into the corner of the room,  
joining the other boxes.

He looks up to see the silhouette still gone, putting his  
hand on the glass.

He then turns around and walks towards the basement door. He  
takes the keys from his pocket and unlocks it.

INT. BASEMENT

As they enter Andrew yanks the string and the light flickers  
on.

They both sit in the rotting wooden chairs.



Joe closes his eyes and begins to speak to the mannequin.  
His speech is unclear.

Andrew looks at him in confusion. He too closes his eyes,  
his words muttered under his breath.

SCENE 5 - EXT. GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK  
SUPERIMPOSE: 25TH MAY, 2020. MARY'S BIRTHDAY

Mary kneels at the flower bed and attends to the garden.

Behind her Joe stands with a little cupcake, placed in it is  
a candle.

JOE  
Happy Birthday Mummy!

Mary sheds a tear and blows out the candle.

She smiles at Joe and they both begin to laugh.

Joe jumps into her lap and she cuddles him.

Andrew looks at them through the patio door taking a sip  
from his whiskey glass.

EXT. GARDEN - BACK TO PRESENT

Joe sits next to the flower beds inspecting them.

Most of the flowers are dying except one Lilly. He takes it  
from the flower bed.

He holds it in front of him and begins to pick the petals,  
one at a time.

He looks into the forest to see the silhouette again.

He stares and waves at the silhouette.

It waves back before slowly walking into the forest.

SCENE 6 - EXT. GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Joe sits in the middle of the garden.

He plays with his toy plane that he got for Christmas.

With his back to the house he faces the forest with the wind  
blowing into his face.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mary leans against the counter as Andrew stands from his chair.

MARY

I can't live like this anymore.  
Andrew you need some help.

ANDREW

I need help? Me? You're the  
delusional one who thinks every  
marriage is happy all the time.

Andrew grabs the bottle of whiskey out of the cabinet and takes a large gulp. The bottle is nearly empty.

MARY

Delusional? You're the one with the  
alcohol problem look at you. All of  
our money wasted on your shitty  
little drinks. We can barely keep the  
house standing. Think about Joe.

Andrew looks down at the bottle and shakes it.

MARY (cont'd)

Andrew! Are you even listening to a  
word I say.

Andrew launches an empty glass at a wall near Mary.

ANDREW

Don't you dare raise your voice at  
me.

He takes another gulp from the bottle.

He begins to slur his words.

ANDREW (cont'd)

This isn't a problem. I can stop  
whenever I want I just choose not to.

Mary walks towards the patio door but Andrew crosses her path.

ANDREW (cont'd)

You are not going out there.

MARY

I'm taking Joe and we're leaving, I can't do this. It's not safe for me or him. Sort yourself out and maybe we will come back!

Andrew pushes Mary away from the door.

She tries to pass him but he keeps pushing her until she falls to the floor.

ANDREW

If you want to leave then leave, but you are not taking my son away from me.

Mary looks out the window to see Joe still playing with his little plane.

She looks back at Andrew taking another swig while staring down at her.

Mary runs up the stairs.

Andrew drinks the rest of the bottle.

Mary returns with a small bag of clothes.

She takes one last look towards Joe but Andrew blocks her view.

ANDREW (cont'd)

If I ever see you again it will be the last time you see anything. Ever.

Mary turns for the front door.

She takes one last look at Joe before leaving.

As it closes Andrew launches the bottle of whiskey at it.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Joe and Andrew continue to argue.

JOE

You're gonna tell me what happened to her. So she just disappeared yeah, no words no nothing, gone like magic.

ANDREW

I've told you this once and I'll tell you again we do not speak of your mother in this house. She left us.

Joe begins to cry.

JOE

You're lying, you are lying about it all just tell me the truth.

ANDREW

(raises his voice)

So whats the truth ey?

JOE

The truth is she left because of you, she didn't love you anymore.

Andrew slaps Joe across the face and points at him.

ANDREW

You better shut up kid I'm warning you.

JOE

Or what? You're gonna make me disappear too like mum did. Is that it. Is that why you keep that mannequin down there? Because you can't forgive yourself? Force me to go down there with you, I've had enough.

Andrew pushes Joe to the floor.

ANDREW

You... you... trust me kid, shut the fuck up.

Joe continues to cry and runs up the stairs.

Andrew watches him scurry away before reaching for his bottle of whiskey and drinking straight from it.

SCENE 7 - EXT. GARDEN - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 31ST AUGUST, 2020.

The mist settles throughout the garden as Joe stands looking up at the crucifix.

He brushes the clothes hanging from it while checking it's condition.

He looks back at the house to see his father asleep in his armchair.

He turns back around to see a woman standing next to the crucifix.

She quickly covers his mouth with her hands.

MARY

Hey kiddo.

She slowly takes her hand away from his mouth.

MARY (cont'd)

Be quiet I don't wanna wake your Dad up.

JOE

Mu... Mummy.

Mary squeezes him tight.

MARY

I came back for you, but we need to leave now. I've been watching for months waiting for the right moment Joe...

Mary continues to speak but her voice is unclear.

Mary moves him back and stares into his eyes continuing to talk, her arms grabbing his shoulders.

Joe's whole body begins to shake, his face turns pale as if he's seen a ghost.

He begins to hear Mary's voice again.

MARY (cont'd)

Joe? Are listening to me, we need to leave.

Joe looks down at the floor.

JOE

You left me.

MARY

I had no choice Joe.

Joe looks up at Mary.

She looks directly into his eyes.

JOE  
You left me here... with him.

MATCH CUT:

SCENE 8 - INT. BASEMENT

Joe's eyes are wide open as he sits on his own in the darkness.

He bites his nails to the edges of his finger.

His leg shakes repeatedly tapping against the floor.

His breath in a panicked rush.

He looks up from the floor slowly.

CUT TO:

TILT UPWARDS POV

Joe sees the legs and body of a person.

A pink summer dress gleams in the light from the corner of the room. Several rips in the dress.

The face revealed shows Mary dead, with a cut across her throat, blood pouring down her neck. Her head secured to the back of the chair.

Joe smiles lovingly.

Joe leans to the side looking past his dead mother.

He stares at Andrew's dead body, wearing grey cargo shorts and a green shirt. His head also secured to the back of the chair.

Blood drips down his neck where it has been cut.

Joe looks down into his lap to see a barney toy.

He squeezes it hard while looking back at his dead parents.

It sings "I love you, you love me. We're a happy family...".

FADE OUT.