

CAKLE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS - NIGHT

Dark. Silent.

Moonlight struggles to find its way through the endless stretch of trees surrounding the --

Small, secluded one-story abode just off a narrow, gravel road hidden from the rest of the world.

An old, beaten-up STATION WAGON sits parked in the driveway.

A tire swing in the front yard gently sways to and fro, the SQUEAKING from its rusty chain interrupting a long and dreadful silence.

INT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SUSAN (mid 30s) lies asleep in bed. The bedsheets only half-cover her svelte, ballerina-like body.

A shred of moonlight cuts in through her window, shining on her face and adding a blue tint to her fair, China Doll skin.

She opens her eyes.

Listens.

She sits up, looking to her bedroom door - the dim hallway light peeks in through the gap at the bottom.

A SHADOW appears at the other side of her door.

SOMEONE stands just outside her room. Still. Quiet.

Susan watches with bated breath... then...

TAP-TAP... TAP-TAP...

SUSAN
(delayed)
Carol Anne?

The doorknob turns.

And the door slowly opens... revealing...

CAROL ANNE (10, wearing pajamas) tightly clutching her Teddy Bear, frightened. Nearly a spitting image, she's a smaller version of Susan.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Honey, what are you doing awake?

CAROL ANNE
There's somebody outside.

Susan exhales.

SUSAN
Probably just having a nightmare.

Carol Anne shakes her head indignantly.

CAROL ANNE
I saw him.

Susan slides out from under the covers and sits at the edge of the bed, feet on the floor.

She waves Carol Anne over.

The little girl abides, snuggling next to her mother at the edge of the bed. Susan with a comforting arm around her.

SUSAN
It's probably just those O'Rourke boys again, trying to scare you.

Carol Anne shakes her head.

CAROL ANNE
It was a man.

SUSAN
Yeah? And what was he doing?

CAROL ANNE
(delayed)
Laughing.

This sends a chill through Susan. But she tries to hide it.

INT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Susan shuffles towards the --

FRONT DOOR

As Carol Anne watches nervously from a distance. Clutching her Teddy Bear tightly.

Susan glances back - sees how frightened Carol Anne is.

Susan faces the door again, on edge.

She takes a peek outside...

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE--

The coast seems clear. Nobody there.

BACK TO SCENE

Susan turns to Carol Anne.

SUSAN
I don't see anyone, honey.

CAROL ANNE
I saw him, I swear!

Susan studies her.

SUSAN
Are you SURE you weren't just
having a dream?

Carol Anne nods.

One part of Susan believes her. Another part doesn't want to.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Susan waits with her cell phone to her ear. Behind her --

The glass, sliding door looking out to the dark backyard.
Curtains wide open.

Carol Anne sits at the table and watches, her Teddy Bear
propped up in the chair beside her.

EXT. O'ROURKE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Also secluded. Surrounded by woods. No other houses around.
Probably the only other home anywhere near Susan's.

INT. O'ROURKE RESIDENCE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A CELL PHONE lies on the floor, lighting up and VIBRATING,
stuttering along the hardwood.

NEARBY--

NANCY O'ROURKE (early 40s, in a night gown) lies dead on the floor, her arm reaching out for the cell phone. Her cheek matted to the hardwood.

Her lifeless eyes stare out at nothing. Terror frozen on her face. Throat slashed, a pool of blood beneath her.

ON THE COUCH--

BOB O'ROURKE (early 40) and his boys, TREVOR (12) and KYLE (14) sit huddled together, bound by rope. Their eyes open but lifeless. Throats also slashed.

As the PHONE continues to VIBRATE and illuminate off their lifeless expressions...

INT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Susan lowers her cell phone, looks to Carol Anne.

SUSAN
Nobody's answering.

CAROL ANNE
It wasn't the O'Rourke boys. It was a scary looking man. And he was laughing.

Susan hangs up. Exhales. Stares at Carol Anne, hands on her hips. Stern look on her face.

Behind her --

The dark backyard looms through the glass, sliding door. Everything very quiet. Very still. Hidden in shadows.

SUSAN
And why would a man be standing outside, laughing by himself at this time of night?

Carol Anne shrugs, still shaken.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
It's late, honey. Let's get to bed, huh?

Carol Anne nods, hanging her head. She grabs her Teddy Bear and disappears down the hall.

Susan follows, looking to the front door.

And she stops.

Listens to...

A FAINT NOISE from outside. WHISPERING.

She slowly approaches the...

FRONT DOOR

Leans forward with her ear out. Still listening.

The WHISPERING is louder. But indistinct.

She takes a glimpse outside.

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE--

A MAN paces back and forth, not far from the front porch.

Tall and rail thin, he wears a black suit along with a matching, out-of-fashion top-hat -- he looks like a cartoon villain who would tie a damsel to railroad tracks.

He just keeps pacing...

Back and forth... back and forth...

And mutters softly to himself... it sounds like nonsensical gibberish...

BACK TO SCENE

Susan takes a step back, away from the door. Petrified.

She leaves OS.

Then returns with her cell phone to her ear.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Hello, my name is Susan Taylor, I'm
home by myself with my daughter.
And there's a man outside of my
house.

She takes a peek outside again...

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE--

The Man continues to pace and murmur to himself. His gibberish interrupted by soft fits of laughter.

BACK TO SCENE

Susan, on the phone:

SUSAN (CONT'D)
I don't know. He's just pacing back
and forth... laughing...

She listens to the operator on the other end while...

KITCHEN

Marching to the counter.

She grabs a large kitchen knife out of its wooden block,
immediately returns to the --

FRONT DOOR

Slowly leans in towards the peephole while tightly clutching
onto the knife...

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE--

The Man's laughter grows louder. More hysterical. His words
even more nonsensical.

BACK TO SCENE

Susan keeps the phone to her ear.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Just stay on the line and --

Static.

SUSAN
Hello?

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
(interrupted by static)
Just... on the line...

The static soon dominates the line. Until it goes dead.

SUSAN
Hello? Hello?

She looks at her phone in disbelief. Immediately dials again.

A quivering gasp as she reaches a BUSY SIGNAL.

She lowers her phone. Thinks to herself.

Then looks to the door. Her expression hardens. Her knuckles turn white around the handle of the knife.

EXT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The door cracks open.

Susan half-way pokes her head out.

INT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS/FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Man continues to pace...

Back and forth... back and forth...

Laughing. His gibberish becoming louder.

SUSAN
(reluctant)
What do you want?

The Man paces faster... back and forth... back and forth...

His murmurs growing even louder... faster...

The fits of laughter disturbing and unsettling...

The he stops.

And slowly turns.

He faces Susan.

HIS FACE--

Pale, ghastly. Long and narrow. Pointed and angular features.

And wide, ghastly smile. Ear to ear.

BACK TO SCENE

They stare at each other.

The Man chuckles softly. The laughter gradually getting louder...

And louder... to the point of hysterics...

He slides his long, pointy finger across his throat. Then points at her while laughing madly --

And he CHARGES AT HER FULL SPEED!

She slams the door shut, immediately hitting the locks!

BOOM! He hits the door hard from the other side, frantically JIGGLING THE KNOB.

Susan staggers back, near tears. The knife hanging loosely from her fingers.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Carol Anne!

The knob continues to jiggle as she continues to back away.

CAROL ANNE (O.S.)
Mom?

Susan turns.

Sees Carol Anne in the kitchen, by the sliding, glass door looking out to the backyard.

KITCHEN

Susan hurries in, clutches Carol Anne tightly.

The doorknob STOPS JIGGLING.

Susan breathes heavily while embracing the little girl.

But she looks past her. To the sliding, glass door looking out to the dark backyard.

She slowly releases Carol Anne, eyes never leaving the back door. Then rises, standing up straight.

Susan approaches the sliding, glass door. Stares out...

Bated breath...

Then quickly shuts the curtains.

Silence...

The DOORBELL RINGS, giving Susan a jolt.

She turns, terrified. Looking down the dark hallway, to the front door.

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)
Did you see him?

Susan doesn't respond. Tiptoeing through the...

HALLWAY

Towards the front door...

Getting closer...

COP#1 (O.S.)
Ms. Taylor?

Hesitant, she glimpses out.

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE--

TWO COPS stand outside her door.

Red and blue lights flash in the background, PATROL CAR parked at the end of the driveway.

INT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Susan sets the kitchen knife by the sink.

She brings two cups of coffee to the --

DINNER TABLE

And sets them in front of COP#1 and COP#2.

COP#1
We literally got the same call from your neighbors down the road. Just an hour ago.

SUSAN
Yeah? What happened?

COP#1
We stopped by. Everything checked out fine. They didn't seem too spooked by it.

COP#2
You said the man tried breaking in?

Susan nods, wearing a faraway look. Still shaken.

SUSAN
That laugh. That smile on his face.

She looks up at them.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
It was the most horrifying thing
I've ever seen.

Cop#1 and Cop#2 exchange a glance. They face Susan again.

COP#1
I'll tell you what. We'll stick
around the area a little bit. Do a
couple rounds until morning. Just
to make sure.

Susan nods, unsettled.

SUSAN
Thank you.

FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

She sees the Cops out, shutting the door behind them.

CAROL ANNE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Susan cracks the door open. Peeks in.

Carol Anne sleeps peacefully in her bed.

Susan shuts the door - the room now pitch black.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Susan dumps their coffee mugs into the sink.

Looks to the window above the sink - it sits wide open, the
curtains fluttering from a gentle breeze.

She thinks to herself - *Was this open the whole time?*

Susan shuts it. Locks it. Still unsure.

She leaves OS.

ON THE COUNTER--

The knife is no longer by the sink.

INT. HOUSE IN THE WOODS/BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Moonlight slivers into the room. Glowing onto Susan, who lies
asleep in bed.

Her eyes open suddenly. As if from a nightmare.

She stares up at the ceiling. In deep thought.

Then sits up. Looks to her bedroom door where the hallway night-light peeks in from the gap beneath --

A SHADOW appears, from the other side of the door.

SUSAN
(delayed)
Carol Anne?

Silence. Until...

CAROL ANNE
Yeah?

Susan flinches - Carol Anne is lying next to her!

She looks to the door again. Frozen in fear. The --

DOORKNOB--

Turns slowly.

BACK TO SCENE

And the door opens revealing...

The Man. That smile. That laugh.

He stands at the doorway, his cackling growing louder as he stares across to his prey.

Carol Anne clutches onto her mother.

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)
Mom!

Susan sits up straight, heart pounding. She keeps Carol Anne back, behind her.

A long, creepy stare-down. Then --

The Man rushes towards the bed, ready to pounce!

Susan tosses the covers off of herself and --

SCCHWFFT!

The Man stops suddenly, at the foot of the bed, his smile now a look of shock.

Susan holds the kitchen knife into his chest.

SCCHWFFT! And yanks it out, blood gushing.

The Man staggers backwards, hand over his wound.

Susan flicks the light on, never taking her eyes off him.

He looks at the blood on his hand. Then slowly up at her.

And laughs. He licks the blood of his finger slowly but --

She rushes him again!

SCCHWFFT! SCCHWFFT! SCCHWFFT!

And plunges the knife into his chest several times.

He falls to his back, grimacing in pain, hand over his gushing wounds.

Susan straddles on top of him --

And stabs him repeatedly, blood spatter dotting her face with each plunge of the knife.

In the background --

Carol Anne looks on in shock.

Susan stops. Glaring down at him.

Then stabs him again. And again. And again. In a frenzy.

Until her face is completely coated in blood.

She catches her breath, staring down at him.

And weeps, hands over her eyes. Near hysterics.

But the weeping becomes laughter. Hysterical laughter.

FADE OUT:

THE END