

Your House Is My House

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. KATE'S FRONT LAWN - DAY

Using extra-sharp garden shears, KATE GRAHAM, 30s, prunes the flowers and shrubs that accentuate her impeccable front lawn.

All the houses in this tree-lined neighborhood are elegant, but Kate's is the most impressive of all.

The woodwork, tiles, windows, and masonry project warmth, charm, and painstaking artisanship.

This house must have sprouted from the glorious Earth on a radiant morning. Such is its natural beauty.

Kate, likewise, is a woman of strong stature, blessed with an athlete's physique and a sensible, weathered-around-the-edges attractiveness.

She's so attuned to her pruning that she doesn't notice that an admirer has settled in front of her house.

Gazing over the elegant structure is CHRISTOPH BRADFORD, 30s. His face is as flat and plain as the American prairie.

He calls out enthusiastically to Kate, jarring her out of her blissful Saturday morning gardening.

CHRISTOPH

I love your home.

Kate holds up her hand to keep the sunlight from her vision.

KATE

Hey. Thanks.

CHRISTOPH

I'm envious.

Kate steps out of her flower bed to get a better view.

KATE

Well, it's a ton of maintenance.  
The wiring needs an upgrade.

A complete view of Christoph emerges. His white dress shirt is buttoned uncomfortably to the top, abutting a craggy, oversized Adam's apple--the only feature on him that stands out.

Looped around Christoph's neck is an old-fashioned flash camera, a weighty relic from the 1960s.

KATE

That camera is a throwback.

Christoph's smile widens. His camera lens catches the sun as he steps forward.

CHRISTOPH

Do you mind if I take a picture of your house?

Kate shoos a few gnats.

KATE

Are you from the neighborhood?

CHRISTOPH

No. Only in my wildest dreams could I live around here.

A downward glance at his shoes: Extra-thick black soles.

CHRISTOPH

I'm just an architecture buff.

KATE

Yeah. We get some of those.

She shrugs.

KATE

Knock yourself out. Take some pictures.

Kate steps aside, granting him access.

KATE

My great grandparents bought this house over a century ago.

CHRISTOPH

You've been blessed.

Christoph aims the camera, but hesitates.

CHRISTOPH

I think you should be in the shot.

KATE

Me?

Immediate skepticism.

KATE  
Why would you want me in your  
picture?

CHRISTOPH  
You don't own this house?

KATE  
I do, but I'd prefer not to be  
photographed.

A deadpan look from Christoph. He doesn't quite get it.

KATE  
I'm careful with my privacy.

CHRISTOPH  
If this was my house, I'd make sure  
that everyone knew it.

He shrugs.

CHRISTOPH  
But if you want to be left out,  
I'll do that. You won't be in the  
picture.

He snaps two quick pictures of the house's facade.

CHRISTOPH  
This is so great. I appreciate it.

Click. Click. Two more pictures.

CHRISTOPH  
Thank you so much.

Kate nods. Great. Okay.

CHRISTOPH  
But could I trouble you with one  
more request?

A sheepish smile.

CHRISTOPH  
Could you take a picture of me in  
front of the house?

Kate's eyes narrow. Really? Does this look like a public  
attraction to you? Is it the freaking Lincoln Monument?

She very nearly utters this rejection, but rolls her eyes and  
gives in. Better to move this along and be done with it.

KATE

Okay. Fine. Hand over that camera.

He briefly instructs her on the shutter button's location.

In front of the house he goes. Kate aims the camera as he smiles stiffly. Completely unnatural.

Snap. Kate takes the picture and hands the camera back to him as quickly as she can. She doesn't look him in the eye.

CHRISTOPH

Do you live here with your husband?

She stares with full annoyance.

CHRISTOPH

Or are you a widow?

KATE

I'm sorry, but I really need to get back to my garden.

He thanks her, but she's not even listening, getting back to her gardening without delay.

Snip. Snip. She lops off the dead leaves on her plants. Soon Christoph is out of sight, but perhaps not out of mind.

INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kate finishes up an online yoga workout amid the elegant furnishings in the room.

Her movements are skillful and precise. Sweat glistens.

The session ends. Kate waves goodbye to the instructor and sips from her water bottle.

To catch a cooling night breeze, Kate goes to the window.

She looks outside. A small gasp. Disbelief. Shock. Anger.

Standing squarely on her front lawn is Christoph Bradford. He stares directly at her house. Motionless. Out of place.

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate charges out the front door and confronts Christoph, her shoulders thrown back, her fists clenched.

Every inch of her screams "Don't mess with me."

KATE

What are you doing out here?

He grins. His long shadow stretches over the dark lawn.

KATE

It's bullshit for you to be standing here at this late.

CHRISTOPH

I just wanted to get one more look at this beautiful house.

KATE

Visiting hours are over. Go the fuck home before I call the police.

CHRISTOPH

I'm just admiring. I was hoping to get a look inside.

KATE

What's your name? Tell me.

CHRISTOPH

Sure. It's Christoph.

He sways a little.

CHRISTOPH

I'm a warlock.

Kate steps back. Her discussion with this weirdo is over.

KATE

I'm calling the police.

He steps close to her.

CHRISTOPH

That's not necessary.

Without warning he scoops some powder from his pocket and flings it into Kate's face.

She coughs, spits, wheezes, wobbles. In an instant, she's in a glassy-eyed daze.

Christoph takes her hand and guides her.

CHRISTOPH

Now, lets go inside my house.

He leads her in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kate is spread across the floor, trying to regain her bearings.

Darkness. The only light comes from the faint screensaver glow of Kate's laptop. No sign of Christoph.

The room spins and trembles in her vision--an effect of the hallucinogenic powder tossed into her face, no doubt.

Strange images flash in her view: demons with twisted grins, old-world witches, freakish onlookers, bizarre artifacts.

Christoph's voice chants over these images.

CHRISTOPH (V.O.)  
Your house is my house.

Spinning, whirling. Christoph's voice distorts like an old record moving backwards:

CHRISTOPH (V.O.)  
Sowh eyem si sowh roy.

Kate blinks. Tries to shake it off.

CHRISTOPH (V.O.)  
Your house is my house.

A bit of clarity. The spinning and strange images stop.

In a dark corner of the room comes a soft tapping sound.

Kate tries to focus. She wobbles.

Tap. Tick. Tap.

From out of the shadows emerges a jittery, nightmarish puppet on strings--a miniaturized version of Christoph.

Puppet Christoph is not glossy or well-constructed. It looks like it was half-melted in a microwave.

A chilling sneer stretches across Puppet Christoph's lumpy paper mache face. His flimsy arms wave haphazardly.

His legs are grotesquely thin, but his hard, black wooden shoes tap against the floor whenever he moves.

Tap. Tick. Tap.

A PUPPETEER pulls the strings for Puppet Christoph, but this person is shrouded in black clothing and remains silently inconsequential.

And this puppeteer is not particularly skilled, so Puppet Christoph lurches at strange, frightening, random angles. It could whirl in any direction. Completely out of control.

Puppet Christoph "dances" across the floor, overjoyed to be in this gorgeous house. He's feeling quite at home.

Your house is my house: Tap. Tick. Tap. Weirdly hypnotic.

KATE

What is this? What's happening?

Jittery toy Christoph totters closer to Kate.

She recoils, wanting no contact whatsoever with this revolting thing.

Puppet Christoph's eyes are bigger than poker chips--shiny, black, entrancing, full of danger.

Kate wobbles to her feet and tries to run.

Puppet Christoph jangles at her heels. His tapping shoes are in overdrive. Tap tick tap tap tap!

The Puppeteer adds a few sound effects--sputtering and growling like a rabid little animal.

The chase goes around the room. Quick. Agonizing. Deadly.

Kate slips.

Puppet Christoph is upon her, dancing on her face with his awful little shoes.

Kate screams and the room begins to whirl again.

When it stops, Kate is no longer Kate anymore.

A transformation has taken place. Like Christoph, Kate has become a puppet on strings.

Her painted puppet eyes are wide with terror. Her mouth is locked forever in a scream.

The dark-clad puppeteer guides Puppet Kate to her feet and then lets her collapse to the floor in a heap.

Chanting fills the room. Ritualistic. Tribal. This is a ceremony.

Whirling, spinning. Christoph's voice bellows:

CHRISTOPH (V.O.)  
Your house is my house!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The hallucinogenic ceremony is over. Kate groans and awakens on her couch--no strings attached, completely human.

The same applies to Christoph, who stands in the flesh and studies Kate closely, full of sugary cheer.

CHRISTOPH  
Good morning, Kate!

Kate's eyes are haunted and entranced. The puppet hallucination has ended, but the strange spell continues.

CHRISTOPH  
Did you enjoy your visit to my wonderful house?

With freaked-out eyes, Kate nods. It's all she can do.

CHRISTOPH  
Isn't this a great place? Aren't you glad that you dropped by and spent some time here with me?

He waves his arms dramatically.

CHRISTOPH  
You can leave now, but only if you're ready.

Kate struggles, nods.

CHRISTOPH  
Okay. I'll walk you to the door.

As they move toward the door, Kate spots the garden shears she used yesterday. They sit on a small table.

The shears are open. The sharp edge is exposed.

Kate reaches for the shears--a potential weapon against Christoph. But she but pulls her hand back at the last instant.

The spell she's under won't let her defend herself like this.

It's Christoph who grabs the shears.

CHRISTOPH  
Great idea. The front yard could  
use a little more pruning.

EXT. KATE'S FRONT LAWN - DAY

Kate and Christoph stare at the house.

CHRISTOPH  
Don't you wish you could live here?

A slight twitch, but Kate simply nods, stuck in a trance.

CHRISTOPH  
My grandparents purchased this  
house over a century ago. Did I  
mention that?

Kate blinks. She tries to correct Christoph, but she can't.

CHRISTOPH  
You're envious of me, aren't you?

The sun shines oppressively.

CHRISTOPH  
I assume that you got all the  
pictures you wanted of this place.

She stammers. Her voice is far away.

KATE  
Yes. Thank you.

CHRISTOPH  
I'm happy to let an architectural  
fan like you admire my house.

Yes. Kate nods in agreement.

CHRISTOPH  
Well, I have to get back to my  
gardening now. So we are going to  
have to part ways.

Tears form in Kate's eyes.

KATE  
Yes...Thank you.

A wild, sinister, dangerous, demonic smile spreads on  
Christoph's lips.

CHRISTOPH  
Goodbye. Farewell.

One more thing:

CHRISTOPH  
Maybe one day you'll be lucky  
enough to have a house like mine.

He whispers something in Kate's ear, but it isn't heard.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Kate staggers away from the house, disoriented. After walking a good distance, she veers into the street.

She continues for several yards and then sits in the middle of the road.

Her eyes are vacant. She seems to have knowledge whatsoever what she is doing out here.

She cannot remember that the most beautiful house on the block belongs to her and not Christoph.

But there's nothing she can do.

She lies down in the road. Far off, a car approaches. It's headed right in her direction.

EXT. CHRISTOPH'S (FORMERLY KATE'S) FRONT LAWN - DAY

Christoph prunes the garden, lopping off the heads of Kate's flowers. He is unmerciful in his clipping.

Snip, snip, snip. Petals drop to the dirt. An afterthought.

Soon there won't be any flowers in front of this house at all.

Christoph has made himself quite at home.

FADE OUT: