

**THE FINAL PIECE**

by

Brian Williams

FADE IN:

EXT. THE OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

A light shines on the first floor of this lonely domicile that sits at the edge of a thick forest.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

MARGOT SHADD, 67, sits at her small table, a nearly completed jigsaw puzzle splayed out before her.

A large bay window behind her provides a view of the black woods. Gusts of wind sway the trees.

Margot adjusts her glasses, rubs her gnarled fingers as she pushes in the final piece of the puzzle -- a charming view of a colorful French garden.

She smiles in satisfaction, then sighs.

MARGOT

So easy. Where's the challenge?

She runs her hands through the pieces, turning the garden into a chaotic mess.

Then she slides them into the cardboard box they came from and slaps on the lid.

She rises gingerly and walks over to a large cabinet. It's absolutely stocked with dozens and dozens of jigsaw puzzles.

She turns off the light, walks to the stairway.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margot wears her nightgown, prepares for bed.

A THUMP from the first floor draws her attention.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

She walks down the stairs, turns on the light.

A THIN RECTANGULAR PACKAGE, wrapped in brown paper, lies next to the door. Someone has slipped it through the mail slot.

Margot opens the door, takes one step on the creaky front porch. The wind howls. But there is no one there.

She steps back in and closes the door. Then she picks up the box, inspects it, tears off the wrapping.

It's an unmarked cardboard box. She walks into the--

KITCHEN

where she lays the box on the table. She pulls off the lid to reveal--

A jigsaw puzzle. A jumbled mess of pieces.

MARGOT

Well, who could of...

She grins a bit. The challenge of a jigsaw is irresistible to her.

MARGOT

Oh, well. No sense in waiting.

She dumps the pieces on the table, throws the box on the floor. Eagerly, she lays all the pieces picture side up.

She holds up one piece, strokes her chin. It's impossible to tell what it could be. She searches for its mate.

LATER

She slides one piece into another. Perfect fit. A corner of the image takes shape.

LATER

The upper half of the puzzle is partially done. Margot fits one more piece in.

She furrows her brow as she stares at the fragmented picture. Something oddly familiar here...

LATER

Half the puzzle is completed. Margot has a look of concern on her face.

She puts another piece in place, then slowly looks up. This part of the image looks just like... the kitchen she's sitting in. The cabinets, the wallpaper.

It's a match.

She shakes her head. It can't be. Just coincidence.

She quickly grabs a handful of pieces, clumsily tries to jam them in place.

LATER

Over three quarters completed now, and there is no doubt, this is a picture of her kitchen.

The outline of a figure sitting at the kitchen table has taken shape. Frantic, Margot quickly slaps more pieces into place.

She gasps when shes sees the image of HERSELF sitting at the table. Only two more pieces remain.

With quivering hands, she fills in the last of the puzzle -- the bay window looking out on the woods.

Her eyes widen in horror as she stares at the completed puzzle. The silhouette of a MAN in a trenchcoat stands at the window, ax in hand.

Slowly, Margot turns around, to see the man in the trenchcoat staring back at her.

She screams, staggers away from the window.

The Man disappears from view. A moment later, the lights go out. The house is utterly pitch black.

Creaking footsteps from the front porch reverberate through the house.

The front door slowly opens. The man's slender silhouette fills the door frame. He steps in, shuts the door behind him.

His heavy breathing is the only sound.

Then, the CRACK of wood on bone, followed by a thunderous crash. Moments later, the lights go on.

Margot stands over the body of the unconscious man. She holds a baseball bat. She bends down, removes the ax from his hand.

She takes a step back, hunches over and breathes deeply as relief washes over her. Moments later, she's composed.

She drops the bat, picks up the nearby cell phone, begins to dial.

But then, she regards the ax -- its hickory handle, its remarkably polished steel blade.

Her gaze falls to the completed jigsaw puzzle on the table, then to her uninvited visitor.

She stops dialing.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

THE MAN blinks his eyes a few times, his head resting against the concrete floor. He struggles back to consciousness. He lets out a confused groan.

MAN

Where... where am I...

MARGOT (O.S.)

You like puzzles, do you? Me too.

As his senses rush back to him, he lifts his head.

An astounded look of horror contorts his face.

Margot smiles as she stands over him, bloody ax in hand.

The man can't form words now. He can only emit stupefied whimpers as he looks down at his body...

...and sees his slender arms and legs have been fully removed. Ropes are tied tightly around the remaining stumps to prevent him from bleeding out.

He shakes his head, looks to the side to see his fingers, hands, feet, toes, arms and legs dissected into tiny pieces. They sit in a bloody, jumbled pile.

MARGOT

Jigsaws are just too easy for me these days. What I need is a challenge.

She strands over his torso, raises the ax.

5.

MARGOT  
Now, the insides, that's where it  
really gets hard.

He SCREAMS as she plunges the ax into his gut.

FADE OUT.