

MARIGOLD JUNCTION - PILOT TEASER

Written by

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We open on a picturesque grassy field. Idyllic cumulus clouds in the sky. Just the right amount of sunshine. Through the middle of the field runs a gentle dirt road. Alongside, a hand-carved wooden sign the size of a golden retriever proclaims: "Welcome to Marigold Junction!".

MITCH WALDING (FATHER)  
This is the place! Weird that  
there's no road though.

Pull wide to reveal that the view we're been lingering on is a Marigold Junction travel brochure. MITCH WALDING is holding the brochure up to compare it to real life. It's the same grassy field, but lacking a road.

We cut to the reverse to see we are...

EXT. THE OUTSKIRTS OF MARIGOLD JUNCTION - EARLY MORNING

Parked by the sign is a Ford Explorer filled to the brim with the possessions of a family on the move. A freshly-rented moving trailer is hitched to the back. A family of four (Dad, Mom, Son, Daughter) stands looking at the sign. Their clothes and demeanor are upper-middle class, but not in an ivory tower way. The blazer-wearing Jennifer Aniston-haircut mom jumps in, assuring the kids.

HEATHER WALDING (MOTHER)  
Probably because no one ever  
leaves! Look, says right there.  
"Marigold Junction: A Town So Nice,  
You'll Never Leave!"

TYLER WALDING (DAUGHTER)  
Cause they disembowel you if you  
try to escape!

The son is recording everything with his phone. And by his tone it's obvious that he's livestreaming the whole experience.

EMMA WALDING  
Oh come on. (beat) Slow  
dismemberment is much more likely.  
A small town like this? Not a lot  
of stable food sources. So they eat  
newcomers. But not all at once...

TYLER WALDING  
(talking to the livestream  
audience) What's gonna kill us?  
Place your bets in the chat!

MITCH WALDING

C'mon fam, don't be so cynical.  
Just cause it's not the city  
doesn't mean it's not a perfectly  
nice place with perfectly normal  
things happening and plenty of  
perfectly normal people.

An ODD BOY rises into frame behind the Waldings.

ODD BOY

Y'all lost?

The Waldings startle at the sudden sight in front of them: A 7'4" muscular boy with... the face of an 11-year old and oddly mismatching clothes...? Overalls with a cumberbun? Tuxedo shirt and bowtie? But capped with a trucker hat? Shiny oxford wingtips? He's smiling, but vaguely threatening in an indescribable way (think: Totoro). His voice is like if Kenneth the Page from *30 Rock* took thrice daily testosterone injections.

The Waldings recover quickly.

MITCH WALDING

I don't think we're lost? (showing the brochure) Seems like we're in the right place but--

ODD BOY

Hah, yeah, the road? Nobody's left Marigold Junction in 20ish years so the road's grown over. (staring off & smiling in reverence) Nature reclaims...

The kids give each other a look... Who is this "kid"? The mom cuts in, pleasant as always.

HEATHER WALDING

Well it's nice to meet you, um...

Heather goes for a handshake and trails off, clearly indicating a space for the boy to give his name. But the kid just keeps staring off.

HEATHER WALDING (CONT'D)

Well we're moving in today! Husbo here was gifted some land here and, well, we've always talked about retiring to the country to spend time raising these two so... here we are, off on an a wild adventure!

(MORE)

HEATHER WALDING (CONT'D)  
 (awkward "Karen" chuckling which  
 trails off to silence)

The awkward silence is cut by the sound of an engine choking. Mitch is in the driver's seat trying to start the car but it won't turn over.

MITCH WALDING  
 (talking to the car) C'mon,  
 Magellan. I had you checked just  
 before you left. What's wrong with  
 you?

The ODD BOY leans into the car, puts his hand on Mitch's shoulder, and intensely stares into his eyes.

ODD BOY  
 It's nature reclaiming. (intense  
 beat) I'll tow you!

The ODD BOY, still smiling, walks off. We're still on Mitch, in shock as one by one the odd boy places the Walding family in the Explorer. The whole family is... kinda weirded out. But... nothing dangerous or scary has happened? Tyler shakes out of it.

TYLER WALDING  
 (calling out) Thanks for the offer!  
 But where's your tow tru...

Tyler's interrupted by the nose of the car being raised. CUT WIDE to reveal: the ODD BOY has tied a rope to the front hitch of the Explorer. He's got the rope between his teeth and is towing the Explorer towards the town. Back in the car, the Waldings are doubly shocked. Tyler is filming out the window with his cameraphone, talking to the streaming audience again.

TYLER WALDING (CONT'D)  
 Who had "murdered by an eight foot  
 11-year old" on the betting wheel?  
 Cause it looks like that's gonna be  
 the payout.

EMMA WALDING  
 We're definitely gonna disappear  
 forever.

HEATHER WALDING  
 (chuckling awkwardly, trying to  
 cover) Eh heheheh, we're on an  
 adventure! Ehheheh!  
 Ehehehehehhhh...

The SUV is towed past the "Welcome to Marigold Junction" sign into a forest thicket as the Waldings force laughter to keep from panicking.

CUT TO BLACK.