

A Tree Disappears

by

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SAMPLE

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CHARACTERS

CHARLES Late 20's/early 30's.  
JANE Charles's ex-girlfriend, same age.  
TOM Charles's old friend, same age.  
ANNE Charles's dying mother, in her late 80's.  
HUNTER Barman at Bar 23; in his 50's.

SAMPLE

## SETTING

## The House:

A living room stage right, and a smaller dining area stage left: more wide than it is deep.

The living room has a three-person couch facing the audience. Stage left, a sofa armchair rests facing the reading window (of which only two of its windows are shown to the audience, the side window running into the apron). There's a coffee table in front of the couch (and a carpet underneath), and a side table with a lamp in the corner of the armchair and the couch. A bit down the from the reading window is the door leading out to the porch. The wall runs down and bends stage left into a longer hallway, invisible to the audience. The back wall is a stairwell which comes down facing the door, and then opens up a bit downstage.

After a bit of space, the living room runs into a thin separator wall with a spacious half-arch leading into the dining room. The dining room has an antique, wooden (aged oak) table that sits lengthwise-parallel-to the side walls. There are six chairs around it. In the center of the back wall, a door leads into the kitchen.

The floor is an aged oak.  
The walls are a slight, off-white.

## The Bar:

In addition to the house, a half-bar for the front of the stage. It curves in an L-shape, the lower edge facing the audience, with the longer bit facing stage left. It's a polished wood, rich with age, as are the two stools in front. It's a simple and rustic look, the kind of bar you'd see if you were a local.

## TIME

Early fall; Oakport, California

## SONG LIST

These are songs I listened to while writing this piece. A Spotify playlist can be found at: [goo.gl/R9YWmc](https://goo.gl/R9YWmc)

1. Take Me Home, Country Roads – John Denver
2. Big Rock Candy Mountain – Harry McClintock
3. Mighty Mountains – National Park Radio
4. Cumberland Gap – Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit
5. We Used To Vacation – Cold War Kids
6. House Of The Rising Sun – The Animals
7. What If We Could – Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross
8. Secrets Of The Stars – The Milk Carton Kids
9. Once Upon A Time – National Park Radio
10. Landslide – Fleetwood Mac
11. Anyone Who Knows What Love Is – Irma Thomas
12. Time Of The Season – The Zombies
13. Last Of My Kind – Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit
14. Fathers & Sons – Ghost Quartet
15. This Too Shall Pass – OK Go
16. Waiting Around To Die – Townes Van Zandt
17. San Francisco Scene – Jack Kerouac
18. Kansas City – The New Basement Tapes
19. I'll Be Here In The Morning – Townes Van Zandt
20. Oh My Heart – National Park Radio
21. Brother – X-Ambassadors
22. Reverie – Claude Debussy
23. Midnight Has Come And Gone – Charlie Parr

## PROLOGUE

(The stage is dark, quiet, and peaceful. A dim moonlight streams through the reading window illuminating the scene.)

(CHARLES and JANE burst through the living room door, stage right, from outside carrying TOM stretcher-style (except without the stretcher) through the door. They speak in hushed, hurried, agitated voices.)

CHARLES  
Down there!

JANE  
You don't have a bed!?

CHARLES  
No!

JANE  
There's a pullout in the den, right? just use-

CHARLES  
No! The den's being repainted.

JANE  
Well use your bed!

CHARLES  
My bed!?

JANE  
Yes!

CHARLES  
He's the one who got himself beat up. I'm not just gonna put him in my bed!

JANE  
You have no sense of hospitality.

CHARLES  
(accusingly, defensively)  
Oh? Well then where's your bed? Why don't we let him sleep on your bed!?

JANE  
O.K... Just...

CHARLES

Come on! Over here!

(Charles, at the head of Tom, moves to the couch. Jane, at the feet of Tom, yanks towards the stairs. Jane loosens her grip, and the sudden loss of force makes Charles stumble and fall (Tom on top of him) into the table, causing it to collapse loudly.)

JANE

Oh my God!

(Jane rushes over to Charles frantically. Charles groans, slowly pushing Tom off and away.)

JANE

(Cont.)

I'm so. So. So so sor

CHARLES

Just get him on the God-damn couch!

(Charles pushes Jane off and gets up painfully.)

JANE

Ok ok! I'm sorry.

CHARLES

It's fine.

(Upstairs, a light turns on, it's dim as it comes from a bedside lamp from Anne's room. Charles and Jane pause and look at each other.)

CHARLES

(Cont.)

Ok come on, come on, let's go!

(The hurriedly get Tom onto the couch as a brighter light (the hallway light) turns on from upstairs, and louder shuffling is heard.)

ANNE

(Offstage)

Chris? Is that you?

CHARLES

(To Jane)

I'll take care of this.

(Charles heads upstairs. Downstairs, Jane starts to pick up the broken side table, and places it against the stairway wall.)

CHARLES  
(walking upstairs)  
Hey mom, it's me.

ANNE  
(offstage)  
Oh Chris! I'm so glad it's you. I thought a burglar had come to kill me!

CHARLES  
(now offstage)  
No mom, it's just me. Go back to bed.

ANNE  
You know just yesterday the Gregors had their house burgled! You can never be too

CHARLES  
Yes yes. You're safe here. No one comes out this far. Let's go back to bed, alright?

ANNE  
Yes. Yes that would be good.

CHARLES  
Everything's fine. I'll see you in the morning.

ANNE  
Alright, if you say so. Oh I'm so glad to have you here, keeping me safe.

CHARLES  
Yes mom, goodnight.

ANNE  
Goodnight.

(The hallway light turns off, and the sound of a door shutting plunges the stage back into the moonlight. Charles comes back down.)

JANE  
She's calling you Chris?

CHARLES  
Yeah.

JANE  
That's... You've taken her to the-

CHARLES  
Yes, who do you think I am?

JANE  
Someone who refuses to go to the doctor himself.

CHARLES  
I don't need a doctor to tell me my arm's broken, or I shattered some weird bone in my foot.

JANE  
Right... Well I'm going home, call me if you need something.

CHARLES  
Thanks.

(beat)  
For your help.

JANE  
(dismissively)  
Sure.

CHARLES  
No, I mean it, really.

JANE  
(curtly)  
Well, no problem.

(Jane walks to the door, opening it. She hesitates, and turns around.)

JANE  
Take care.

CHARLES  
Drive safe.

(There's a pause, and Jane closes the door behind her, walking offstage to her car. Charles stares numbly at the door a bit, his hands on his hips, before turning to survey the damage of the living room. He breathes in deeply, holds his breath to clear his mind, and exhales, slumping down a bit before climbing upstairs to his room.)

BLACKOUT