

Ruins

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CHARACTERS

Adam	M, late 20s
Caroline	F, late 20s
Tree Guy	M, 40s-50s

SETTING

The nearly empty lot of a North Texas home, covered in bits of rubble still stuck to the foundation.

HOMECOMING

Adam and Grace stand at a distance. Both are around 30. Adam wears fine clothes but looks haphazardly put together. He holds a tall gift bag. Grace is dressed like the cool young third grade teacher you wish you remembered.

The air is thick with history. They're on the flip side of a long and awkward pause. Adam looks around at the wreckage of the house and surrounding block. Grace watches him, pretending like she isn't. There is a long silence.

ADAM

God. The trees look like scarecrows, stripped to the trunk / like that...

GRACE

It's pretty surreal.

ADAM

How much was gone, before the crews..?

GRACE

Enough.

ADAM

I'm so sorry.

GRACE

It's not your fault.

ADAM

Oh, shit, did I not tell you? My dad's sort of the god of the winds. You know. No big / thing.

GRACE

That's almost funny.

ADAM

Almost? I'll / take that.

GRACE

And no longer funny.

Beat.

ADAM

What was going through your head? When you first saw... You know.

GRACE

"Oh fuck"?

ADAM

Eloquent.

GRACE

Well, brevity is purest eloquence.

ADAM

Oh, shit! What was that, one of Barry's / mantras?

GRACE

Weinberg's.

They smile at each other only briefly before they catch themselves.

A distant whirr as a chainsaw starts to cut into a tree a few lots away.

ADAM

What's that?

GRACE

What?

ADAM

That buzzing.

GRACE

...it's a chainsaw.

ADAM

A..? What do they need a chainsaw for?

GRACE

To clear the trees past saving.

Oh.

ADAM

GRACE
You sure you've got boy parts down there?

ADAM
There's a witness somewhere around here I could call...

GRACE
Really, who?

ADAM
Hardy Har Har.

The TREE GUY enters.

TREE GUY
Which one of you's Mendoza?

GRACE
Excuse me?

TREE GUY
You Mendoza?

GRACE
... I'm Garson.

TREE GUY
(to Adam)
Ok, Mendoza, I talked to my boss, they're telling us you've / gotta-

ADAM
I'm not Mendoza.

TREE GUY
So where's / Men-

ADAM
(overlapping)
I'm Smith.

TREE GUY
(looking at his pad)

Smith... Smith..?
There's no Smith.

GRACE

I'm sorry, who are you?

TREE GUY

I'm Green.

GRACE

Ok, Mr. Green, can I / help you-

TREE GUY
(looking at his pad)

What'd the girl say her name is again?

GRACE

Garson, Grace / Garson-

TREE GUY

Right. Garson. Shit. Sorry, was looking at the wrong block. Imma go talk to Mendoza. I'll be back.

The Tree Guy goes off, talking into his radio.

ADAM

...That wasn't weird.

GRACE

These guys are circling like vultures. I read some of them came down from as far away as Michigan, there's so much business.

ADAM

No shit?

GRACE

Not everybody's house is...

Most people, they've got maybe some roof damage, but nothing so bad they can't go to work. And you can't afford to take off. Lay offs keep coming, you can't be seen as anything less than invaluable or they'll see you as worthless. So when you've got trees down blocking your driveway, your street, you pay whatever you have to get it cleared. I heard some of these assholes take two, three grand to clear one tree.

ADAM

That's insane.

GRACE

Welcome to the new American Dream.

ADAM

How much did you get hit for?

GRACE

Oh, we were lucky. Storm cleared it all pretty much for free.

ADAM

Jesus...

GRACE

Tracy Raeford, you remember her? She said she saw what looked like our dining room pretty much intact on top of an eighteen wheeler down by the Sam Rayburn.

ADAM

I didn't know. I'm sorry.

GRACE

(hard)
No. How would you.

A long silence.

Adam walks to a different part of the rubble.

ADAM

I can still see it. Just how it was.

No response.

ADAM

This was your mom's room, right, and... Yeah, oh my god, right here there was that picture of you after you cut your hair? You were like what, eight, gap toothed, and with that badass lopsided mullet...

GRACE

I glad that's how you remember me.

ADAM

It's a hard image to forget.

GRACE

Adam...

ADAM

And then here was that piano! Jesus, I'd totally forgotten about-
You remember that time I tried to finally tune the damn thing, ended up snapping / the-

GRACE

Adam. Stop. Please.

Silence.

GRACE

Where are you staying?

ADAM

Rob and Stacy got this ridiculous beast of a house a couple of doors down from my folks' old place. You have to see it, it's like something off the shitty backlot set of an old Zorro movie.

GRACE

Oh. Crazy.

ADAM

Yeah. All around here, those plaster chateaus have just spread like crabs...

GRACE

It's really sad. The old ranch houses had like actual character.

ADAM

Yeah, but also like actual structural integrity. I mean, or so I thought... And these McMansions just, their walls are like rice paper, you get 30 years out of them you're lucky, but so many of them are still up, while...

GRACE

Yeah. What'd you take?

ADAM

To get here?

GRACE

Or drugs. Whatever.

ADAM

Right, yeah. Snorted some Adderall, you know. Keeping / it classy.

GRACE

Classy.

Beat. They smile.

ADAM

Jinx. Now you have to kiss me.

GRACE

...that's not a thing.

ADAM

It was.

GRACE

It's not.

Silence.

ADAM

Hey, did you..?

GRACE

What?

ADAM

Nothing.

GRACE

What?

ADAM

No, just...

I left you a voicemail? A couple months ago?

GRACE

Did you.

ADAM

Yeah, and uh, in the message I... Did you listen to it?

GRACE

You know, I don't remember.

Oh. ADAM

So? GRACE

I called. ADAM

Okay... GRACE

I called you. ADAM
(beat)
Listen. I'm really sorry.
(beat)
And I know that probably doesn't help...

It's fine. GRACE

But if there's anything I can do, or... ADAM
Please. I hope you'll tell me.

It's fine. GRACE

It's not, and... ADAM
I know I've-
I know. But just, anything, okay? Just ask.

Grace laughs, almost a bark.

What? ADAM

Nothing. GRACE

Come on, what? ADAM

GRACE

Nothing.

(beat)

“Anything! Just Ask!”

God, it’s always the same bullshit with you.

ADAM

I mean it.

GRACE

It’s been seven years. You’re a little late.

ADAM

I was talking about the house...

A long silence. Adam walks to the driveway.

GRACE

Listen. It's nice of you to, what, check up on me, but I'm not sure we have anything to say to / each other anymore-

ADAM

You remember that night with your mom's Beamer?

GRACE

What?

ADAM

I remember standing, like, we stood right here while you went back and forth and back and...

She was, what, out of town, or..?

GRACE

Oh.

ADAM

You called me to come over, wouldn't tell me anything, and when I got here you were just standing. Right here. Like hovering beside the thing like you were hypnotized or something.

GRACE

You make it sound so dramatic.

ADAM

Dramatic? You? Never.

GRACE

If you're here to pick at old scabs, / then please just-

ADAM

Hey. I'm sorry. Just making a joke.

GRACE

I'm so glad you haven't lost your knack.

ADAM

I have a knack? For what?

She gives him a look. He shifts gears.

ADAM

Do you remember that night, though?

GRACE

What night?

ADAM

With the car. The little two-seater / BMW-

GRACE

Sure.

ADAM

You drove us way out on 75, past where the lights slip away. So we could floor it, feel that just, raw speed.

GRACE

Yeah. We were idiots.

ADAM

Maybe. But badass idiots. What, like, seventeen, and just flying, roof down. Music blaring, cause you were getting freaked out by the wind just like exploding in your ears, so you turned it all the way up... Who was it, like- Fuck! Was it the The Darkness?

GRACE

(laughing in spite of herself)

Yeah.

Adam starts to sing "I Believe in a Thing Called Love."