

Excerpt (2) from "The Tree" (feature film)

written by

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INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Under the gaze of faded saint statues is a cheap casket with a flower bouquet on top.

A FUNERAL DIRECTOR, 50s, raspy voice, delivers an uninspired speech to a crowd of mostly old folks, their offspring and a few bored teenagers.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

... a man with a remarkable sense
of adventure, an avid hunter,
fisherman, and a lifelong
congregation member with unshakable
faith.

Emile and Colette, dressed for the occasion, sit at the back.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

George will be remembered as a
loyal friend and a valued pillar of
of the community.

The Funeral Director steps away from the microphone as GENEVIEVE, 60s, walks in, and uncovers a synthesizer parked in a corner.

Genevieve unfolds a portable stool and fixes the music sheet on a stand. She strikes a few cords and sings... surprisingly well.

INT. FUNERAL RECEPTION - DAY

People are scattered in a room with tables laden with food and drinks. A morose couple eats cake. A handful of teenagers are glued to their phones. A toddler cries somewhere.

Colette sits by herself. She bites into a tiny sandwich and scans the crowd, mildly entertained.

Meanwhile, Emile pours himself a glass of juice at the drink station.

ALAN (O.S.)

Emile?

Emile turns around to face ALAN, late 60s, big mouthed redneck with a shirt one size too large.

EMILE

Hey Alan.

ALAN

Didn't think I'd ever see you again! How' you been?

EMILE

I'm doing okay.

Alan gestures towards JAY, early 40s, burly, with a drinker's nose.

ALAN

Jay, come over here and say hi to my old pal.

Jay shuffles towards them.

JAY

Hey.

Emile acknowledges Jay with a nod.

ALAN

This is my son Jay. Jay, this is Emile. We grew up together back in the old town.

(sizing up Emile)

Can't believe you're here! Emile left us a long time ago. He was too good for the farm life.

EMILE

That's not what happened.

ALAN

So, how's your boy? Rob?

EMILE

Tom.

ALAN

Yeah, Tom.

EMILE

He's alright. Busy. Got a job in the city.

ALAN

Good, Good. Jay here is takin' over George's farm.

Jay smiles proudly.

ALAN (CONT'D)

What about Chris? Is he around? The last time we saw him, he got arrested for pissing on the bank's front door after having one too many.

EMILE

He's better now.

Alan smirks. Doesn't buy it.

ALAN

Good. I was hoping to run into him, you know, to talk about the land and the farm and all that. Jay says the place doesn't look too good. Seems no one's workin' there.

EMILE

He's still there, working the fields.

ALAN

Well, if he's ever interested in sellin', I'd be happy to take it off his hands. It seems a bit much for him.

EMILE

What do you mean?

ALAN

It doesn't look like he can take care of all that. Or himself. Well, that's what I hear anyway.

EMILE

The farm is not for sale. And he's doing just fine.

ALAN

I guess me and Jay should pay him a visit and ask him directly. Right, Jay?

JAY

T'sright.

EMILE

I think you should stay on your fucking side of the fence.

Alan raises his glass with a grin.

ALAN

It's good to see you, Emile. You haven't changed a bit.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Colette steps out of the funeral home. She spots Emile sitting on a flight of stairs. She joins him.

COLETTE

Here you are. There's cake.

EMILE

I'm not going back in there.

COLETTE

What happened?

EMILE

Alan Stevens.

COLETTE

Huh. Is he still a prick?

EMILE

Yeah.

Emile stares at the parking lot ahead.

COLETTE

Well, what did he say?

Emile takes his glasses from his shirtpocket, puts them on, and double takes. He gets up and walks toward the cars.

EXT. PARKING LOT, FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

Emile pushes past a line of parked cars and trucks. Colette trails behind him.

COLETTE

Emile?

Emile stops, picks up a stone from a nearby ditch, and SMASHES the side mirror of a pickup truck.

COLETTE (CONT'D)

I've you lost your mind?!

Colette watches Emile SHATTER a headlight. He points at the license plate: *STV1NS*.

EMILE

Come on!

Colette timidly pulls on a wiper until it bends.

Emile CRACKS the windshield. The truck's ALARM goes off.

Colette spots an EMPLOYEE step out of the funeral home and glances in their direction.

COLETTE

(giddy with adrenaline)

We have to go.

Emile HITS the windshield one more time.

COLETTE (CONT'D)

Emile!

Colette pulls Emile away from the car. He grabs her hand, and together they duck into a tree line.