

Guilt Just Keeps Screaming

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

A young man sits by an unmarked grave in his backyard. The leaves are browning above him, like some unwarranted advice from the world is telling him to let go. But he won't listen, even as the leaves fall at his feet. The sun streaks across his forehead, and his eyes that are falling on the overturned dirt.

BOY

Yeah, so. Um. That one was on me.

BOY laughs. The trees above him rustle.

BOY (CONT'D)

Yeah. Definitely on me.

Boy's laugh turns to a grimace. He faces the tree above him, where A BIRD crouches--watching him.

A BIRD

(opening its mouth)

Cheep.

BOY

(startled)

What?

A BIRD

(aggressive)

Cheep.

BOY

No. I didn't mean to. It was an accident. I didn't see him. I promise. I never would have--I mean, I'm not a monster, I just...

A Bird tufts out its wings and picks at the wood on the tree branch.

A BIRD

Cheep, cheep, cheep.

BOY

Her. Sorry. I didn't see her.

The backyard is silent. A Bird takes a leap off of his branch, and flies to a tree branch in Boy's neighbor's yard, where he begins circling a female bird. Boy snaps out of it; his

guilt-lined trance where the world can speak and it chooses only accusations against him.

BOY (CONT'D)

God, I'm losing it.

Boy turns his gaze back to the overturned dirt.

BOY (CONT'D)

It was an accident. I promise. I just didn't see you... ma'am?

THE TREE above Boy rustles.

THE TREE

Ma'am? God, could you get any more pathetic?

Boy doesn't move his gaze from the overturned dirt. He doesn't move.

THE TREE (CONT'D)

Did you not hear me, Boy? You are pathetic. You drive right over her, and don't even ask her her name, and now you won't even look at me.

AN ACORN falls on Boy's head.

AN ACORN

Personally, I think ma'am is a nice alternative if he never knew her name. I mean, he is a murderer so at least he resolves to give her some kind of respect in death.

A LEAF falls at Boy's feet.

A LEAF

No, I think he just doesn't have the guts to give her a real name. I mean, doesn't a murderer at least admit that they're guilty at one point or another? He just ran her over, buried her and moved on.

THE WIND above Boy's downturned head whistles through The Tree.

THE WIND

Guilt is a powerful tool. If you let it, it will become a haunting thing. It will turn your landscape into an accusation, and you will always be on trial.

Boy's eyes well with tears. His head spins. He looks up. The Sun has already begun to set. A shovel sits at his feet. His legs are tucked underneath him. Everything is silent other than his mind.

BOY

(on the verge of crying)

I am so, so sorry.

Boy bursts into tears, and falls onto the overturned dirt. He begins to hum a song his mother used to sing to him before bed each night. He imagines THE CAT--resting six feet under in a cardboard box--singing with him.

BOY AND THE CAT

(singing)

I'LL BE SEEING YOU
IN ALL THE OLD FAMILIAR PLACES
THAT THIS HEART OF MINE EMBRACES
ALL DAY THROUGH

END.