

THE TREE

Written by

Heesoo Choi

306 New Hampshire Way, Placentia, CA
(310) 592-4066

Draft of
February 15th, 2021

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

People are busy working. The sound of phones ringing, keyboard typing, pages turning, and everyone's voice answering the phone are mixed in one big chaos. And JACK (late 20's) is one part of it. The top few buttons are unbuttoned, and the sleeves are rolled up. He's on the phone, looking exhausted.

JACK

No. Like I told you already, for thousand times, that's not gonna happen.

The person on the other side says something, but it only makes Jack more stressed out.

JACK (CONT'D)

I mean, there's nothing I can do from here either. The only way you can fix this is...

BANG.

A co-worker just put a big pile of documents on Jack's desk, making a loud noise. His already-messy-looking desk became messier.

JACK (CONT'D)

...just scrap everything and start again.

Jack supports the phone with his shoulder and checks the document on top. He sighs. He looks more stressed out now.

INT. GLENN'S HOUSE - MORNING

GLENN (late 20's) wakes up in his air mattress, carelessly thrown in his barn-looking house. He looks around and finds out there's dirt around him. He seems mildly startled, then turns calm. He touches and rubs it with his fingers, with a bit of curious look.

Then, he pokes inside his earhole with his finger. Dirt comes along. He shakes his head, and the dirt falls down.

He runs to the mirror, leaving trails of dirt. He looks at himself in the mirror and lifts up the shirt. His chest is dry and cracked, like a bark.

He stares at himself for a while.

INT. GLENN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Glenn is on the phone.

GLENN

Yeah, mom, it's me. It's started.

There's a mumbling sound of a woman crying coming from the phone.

GLENN (CONT'D)

Don't cry. It's okay. We knew it was happening sooner or later. And I feel fine. Really, I feel better.

Another mumbling sound from the phone.

GLENN (CONT'D)

No...not yet. But I have someone in mind...Yeah. I think he'd do it for me.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Jack is still on the phone, looking at the monitor.

JACK

Hold on, hold on. Let me check.

He clicks a few times, then suddenly error messages pop up, and the monitor starts to blink.

JACK (CONT'D)

No, no, no... Fuck! No, I wasn't talking to you. Fuck! Let me call you back.

He hangs up and hits the monitor. Now the computer breaks down completely. He bangs the tower with his fist, more and more loudly. He puts his hands to his face and rubs. He looks like he's about to explode.

RING. RING.

Jack neurotically picks up the phone and yells.

JACK (CONT'D)

I said I'll call you lat...er...

The call was not what he's expected.

Jack's face turns from surprise to ambiguous look.

I/E. GLENN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Glenn is standing towards the sunlight coming through the window. There's a big tree outside. Glenn stares at the tree for a while, then he tries to pose like it. He tries several different poses.

Glenn spots a shiny sedan approaching. It's Jack. Jack parks his car next to Glenn's rusty old pick-up truck.

Glenn goes outside to greet Jack. They look so different.

Glenn brings Jack inside, but there's no furniture besides the air mattress.

JACK

Are you moving somewhere?

GLENN

Ah, I'm not moving...Do you wanna sit by the tree? Just like old times?

EXT. THE TREE - SUNSET

Glenn sits on the ground while Jack stands. They both lean their backs against the trunk, under the shade.

Glenn's dirty clothes, cracked skin, bare feet, messy hair, dirt around ear and neck...Jack notices all of it but pretends not to care.

JACK

God...This tree got bigger! When's the last time I was here? 8 years maybe?

GLENN

Yeah...You never came here after you left for college.

Jack sits down next to Glenn.

JACK

I forgot what this feels like...I never thought I'd miss this, but now that I'm here with you...Maybe I should've come earlier.

GLENN

I'm proud of you, Jack. You look so different. You look successful.

JACK

Nah...I'm still lost with my life. Just surviving day after day, you know?

They look at each other and chuckle.

JACK (CONT'D)

But yeah, I mean, I'm glad you called. Thanks for inviting me. So I guess you never left here, huh?

GLENN

No...I was here all along. I didn't do much after high school. I used to do part-time in several places, but that's it.

JACK

Man, I miss that freedom. I feel like I'm just trapped under the world.

GLENN

But you're actually doing something for it. I was never a help to anything or anyone. And I think that's why I feel more comfortable this way.

JACK

Which way?

GLENN

The way I've been waiting for.

Beat. Their eyes meet, then Glenn looks away and stands up. He walks around the tree.

GLENN (CONT'D)

Do you remember how this tree grew after my dad died?

JACK

Of course. I was surprised how much it grew while I was gone.

Glenn keeps walking around the tree.

GLENN

It's because the root is still
alive.

JACK

I don't know much about trees, but
I always thought this tree was
beautiful.

GLENN

I'm on the way back to the root.

Beat. Jack gets up from his seat, perplexed. He looks like he
doesn't get what Glenn's saying.

Glenn appears sitting on one of the branches in the tree.
Jack looks up at him and squints because of the sun in his
eyes.

JACK

What do you mean you're on the way
back to the root?

GLENN

Literally.

Glenn jumps to the ground and looks at Jack.

GLENN (CONT'D)

And I want you to take me when I
get there.

JACK

Take you where?

GLENN

Wherever you want.

JACK

Glenn, I don't get what you're...

GLENN

Do you want some beer?

JACK

Ye, yeah. Sure.

GLENN

Let's go inside. It's getting dark.

Jack still looks confused but follows Glenn. The sun sets
over the horizon behind them.

INT. GLENN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Glenn and Jack are sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall. There are empty beer cans near Jack, while there's only a water bottle next to Glenn.

JACK
(little drunk)
Why did you call me after all these years? Why me?

GLENN
Because...You were the only friend who loved that tree as much as I did.

JACK
What's up with that tree? Why is it so important to you?

GLENN
Because...That tree...is in my root. Or I could say, it *is* my root.

Jack looks more drunk than before.

JACK
I always knew you were odd, but man, you're worse than I thought! Are you drunk? Am I drunk?

They both laugh.

Beat. Jack starts to dose off. His eyes are half-closed.

GLENN
After I turn...I'd be glad if you could come visit me from time to time. I can always be your best shade.

JACK
(drunk, almost asleep)
I don't know...What are you...

Jack drifts off. Glenn turns his head to Jack. He slowly moves his hand on top Jack's hand. Glenn's hand has begun to turn into bark like his chest.

GLENN
Don't worry. I'll always stand next to you.

Jack looks at Glenn before his eyes close.

INT. GLENN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jack wakes up to the birds chirping. The sun shines through the window, but Jack's face is covered by shade. He looks around, but there's no sign of Glenn.

Instead, Jack finds THE TREE, standing inside the house, facing Jack. THE TREE mimics the pose of the one outside.

Jack slowly stands up to greet his friend. He reaches out his hand and touches THE TREE, with a caring soft smile.

EXT. GLENN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jack puts THE TREE in his trunk. It doesn't fit inside the trunk. He leaves the door open, making THE TREE poke out from the trunk. He gives a satisfying smile.

Jack starts the car and drives away.

FADE OUT.