

To Climb a Willow Tree

by

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1 INT. APARTMENT - DUSK

A shaky pen writes down a list of grocery items on a paper.

MRS. WEAVER
Coughs (fuck) sorry honey.

Mrs. Weaver hands a girl the list and a cash.

MRS. WEAVER (CONT'D)
Please be back before dark

2 EXT. STREET - DUSK

We see AMELIA WEAVER (13) starts walking down the street, she looks down and pulls out a shopping list.

AMELIA
Shit, another bottle

As she walks down the block towards the corner she passes a homeless man (LEO) sitting on the ground by a wall in front of her apartment.

LEO
Hey, you got 5 bucks, I'll take anything

AMELIA
no, sorry sir.

Amelia keeps walking with the money peering out of her pocket.

LEO
You ought not lie, even to a stranger

AMELIA
My mom told me to not talk to strangers.

LEO
Stranger, such a funny word, a word made solely to keep people apart. Now friend all I'm asking for is a few dollars.

AMELIA
Friends? Friends tend to know each other, I don't even know your name.

=LEO
Far enough, it's Leo, Leonardo
Francisa to be exact and what is
yours?

Amelia takes a pause.

AMELIA
Amelia, but people call me Mia. I'm on
my way to the store right now and
there's a burger joint on the way
would you like a meal?

Leo stands up. brush his jacket and they start walk down the
street.

3 INT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

Amelia and Leo sit in a empty burger joint eating there meal.
Leo is devouring his burger while Amelia sits there sipping
on her drink.

AMELIA
So how long have you been...

LEO
Homeless?

AMELIA
Yeah

LEO
Well I'm coming up on 2 years now.

AMELIA
What happened

LEO
Well, lets see hear, came back from
Iraq in 2021. VA got be some temp
housing. Then I tried blowing my
brains out. Was put in a hospital for
a bit and then boom got my ass kick to
the curb. Went to a veterans housing
program, waiting time was 3 years so
hear am now.

pause between the two.

LEO (CONT'D)
You gonna finish that?

Leo mentions to her nuggets.

AMELIA

oh, yeah sure you can have them.

LEO

So, I told you my story. How bout you
whats your story. I only ever see you
and sometimes your mom.

AMELIA

Recently mom's been sick, I just wish
she went to a real doctor, but I know
we can't afford it.

LEO

No one can afford doctors anymore. You
know I remember when I was kid,
couldn't of been more then 7-8 there
was a big tree near my mom house and
that particular summer I decided I
would climb it and well I didn't make
more then 15 feet till a branch broke
underneath me fell right to ground.
Went to the doctors and sure enough
broke my right arm in two spots. Took
all summer to heal. Still gets stuck
every now and then.

He shakes his arm to unlock his elbow.

AMELIA

What type of tree was it?

LEO

uh, Willow tree

AMELIA

Well thats why, you had it coming

LEO

Oh and since when are you a tree
expert?

AMELIA

When I was 6 my dad took us camping.
We were hiking and I ran ahead and saw
a huge willow tree and started
climbing and well sure enough a branch
broke beneath me and fell right on the
grass. My mom and dad found me on the
(MORE)

AMELIA (CONT'D)
ground all scraped up. My dad pick me
up and carried me the rest of the way
back, but

LEO
break anything?

AMELIA
Nope. Just got this cut that left a
big scar.

Amelia pulls up her right sleeve to show her arm have 5 inch
scar on her forearm

LEO
You got Lucky, shit hella lucky.
Always remember if you do enough dumb
shit, it will catch up too. How you
think I got here.

AMELIA
Wait, don't the good stuff matter to?

LEO
Ah, I wish, but that's not how life
works. Good things are like smoke from
a fire, looks nice from a far but if
your in it wrong, it sucks. You sure
you don't want the last nugget?

AMELIA
I think I have to get going, I have to
go to the store and its almost dark.

4 EXT. OUT SIDE OF MCDONALDS - NIGHT

Amelia and Leo are walking to the sidewalk about to go there
separate ways.

LEO
Well, you better get going, thank you
for the food, and most of all thank
you for the conversation.

AMELIA
You know your wrong, right?

LEO
About what

AMELIA
Doing good does pay off.

LEO
Yeah will see.

He turns his back to walk away.

AMELIA
Wait!

She goes to hand him a few dollars, he stops her.

LEO
Thank you, but you have given me
enough for the night. I'm all filled
up.

The two walk away and go there separate way.

5 INT. CONVENIENCE SHOP - NIGHT

Amelia pulls open the door (ringing the bell) and walks in and grabs a basket. She starts walking through the aisles of the store.

STORE CLERK (O.S.)
Be there in a minute.

Amelia walks through the candy aisle, stoping to pickup a Milk Shiner bar. A large man (56) is standing behind the counter.

STORE CLERK
We got gushers too

AMELIA
huh?

STORE CLERK
We got gushers, just got them last
week. There what every little girl
been buying.

Amelia puts down the candy bar and continues to pick up the items on the list. She walks up to the counter and empties her basket.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)
Is that all for you today?

AMELIA

Yep, wait-

Amelia goes back to the candy aisle. She slaps the Milk Shiner on the counter.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I change my mind.

Store Clerk rings her up and hands her, her change and receipt. As he does three (slightly buzzed) college guys walk in. They are right by the counter and Amelia.

GUY #1

Hey, what's your name?

Amelia remains silent as they surround her with her back to the counter.

GUY #2

My friend here ask what your name was, it would be rude not to answer.

GUY #3

What's that, a Milk Shiner? I haven't one of these since I was kid.

Guy #3 takes the bar from her.

GUY #3 (CONT'D)

I mean I feel like I have to.

Guy #3 opens up the bar and starts eating it in front of Amelia. He eats the entire thing and throws the wrapper.

GUY #3 (CONT'D)

Oh, that's so good

Guy 3# leans down and gets in her face.

GUY #3 (CONT'D)

Thank you, I needed that, now that candy bar was mighty tasty. Now I just wonder how you taste if I took a bite?

A woman opens the door to walk in

AMELIA

See ya

Amelia kicks him in the nuts and runs through the open door

into the dark. The three men chase after her.

6 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Amelia is running down the street, still holding the bag of groceries. She passes the burger joint and keeps running.

GUY #2

Where you going to? missy.

Amelia continues to sprint, she turns the corner she can see the lamppost by the apartment complex. She passes Leo who is back at his normal spot. Leo hears the guys footsteps come hurling down the street. He kicks a couple of pipes into the sidewalk as they run past him Guy 2# and 3# trip. Leo gets up and starts to beat up the guys with the pipe. Guy #3 pulls out a knife and stabs him in side. Amelia reaches the gate but looks back. The police lights and sirens are heard down the street and the guys start running away. Amelia turns back and runs to Leo. He is on the ground by his spot.

LEO

You ok?

AMELIA

I'm fine, how you doing?

LEO

Better that your here. Well, to be honest it's not looking good for me.

AMELIA

Don't talk like that were gonna get you to a hospital and your gonna be fine.

LEO

Does it look like I can afford a hospital. Now promise me something.

AMELIA

What?

Leo coughs

LEO

It takes a special person to help another in need, especially if your struggling to survive your self. Don't stop being that special person. In world full of hate and greed, be the
(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)
person who listens.

Amelia cries and hugs him

AMELIA
I will, I will. I'll never stop.

A ambulance arrives and puts him on a stretcher and starts to
left him up in the ambulance. Leo looks at Amelia and gives
her a slight wave as the doors close. Amelia waves back as
the ambulance drives away.

The End...