

TREE O'MINE

By

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**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

BEN EWIG (8) is munching down corn flakes at the kitchen table. The TV is on.

SALESMAN (V.O.)

Have you always wanted to help others? But you just couldn't wrap your head around how to do it?

Ben turns his attention to the TV.

SALESMAN

Look no further, my friend. With the Green Lung Initiative you will save one life for every tree you plant. Don't waste any time. Credit cards are accepted.

BEN

Dad, can I have a tree?

Ben turns toward JOHN (30s), sitting at the table staring at a pile of overdue bills.

JOHN

What?

BEN

A tree for the backyard.

JOHN

We have trees in the backyard.

BEN

But not this one.

JOHN

Not today, okay?

John gets up, grabs all the bills and stuffs them in a drawer. He walks away.

BEN

(yells after him)

But Dad, it's important.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

Ben is on the phone. John's wallet and credit card are in front of him.

BEN

I would like to buy a tree... how old I am... eighteen. Yes, I have a credit card.

As Ben starts to read the numbers as John enters.

JOHN

What are you doing?

John looks at him for a second, then grabs the phone.

JOHN

Who is this? He what... we will not need a tree, thank you.

John hangs up.

JOHN

What is it with you and this tree?

John takes the wallet and credit card.

BEN

It's not for me it's for mom.

JOHN

For mom?

BEN

Yes, the commercial said you will save one life for every tree you plant.

John reacts.

Ben fights tears.

BEN

I'm sorry, Dad.

JOHN

It's okay.

(then)

Let's call them back and get you that tree.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

Warm, sunny day. The new tree is in a planter on the lawn next to Ben.

John is digging a hole. Ben gestures at the shovel. John hands it over and Ben tries to make the hole bigger, but he's not strong enough.

John puts his hands on top of the handle and applies pressure -- the shovel digs into the ground.

KRISTIN, frail and pale, observes them. She smiles.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

John enters, exhausted from work.

Kristin sits at the table, she lifts up the bills

KRISTIN

We're going to lose the house?

John reacts.

JOHN

No, we're not. I'll fix it.

KRISTIN

How?

JOHN

I don't know. But I don't want you to worry about it.

John takes the bills.

KRISTIN

How long do we have?

JOHN

(reluctantly)

A few months.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Ben sits in the chair, shaking his head.

BEN

We can't move. The tree is here. If we go, it won't work anymore. Please.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I know, it's hard to understand  
right now, you love that house and  
so do I, but there's no other way.  
I'm sorry.

Ben just sits there, brewing, arms crossed.

John sighs, when Kristin places a hand on his shoulder from  
behind. She signals him to leave. John does.

Kristin goes over to Ben and sits down next to him.

KRISTIN

I wish we had another option.

BEN

Is it because of money?

KRISTIN

Yes.

BEN

I've heard you can raise money  
online.

KRISTIN

What?

BEN

You can ask money from very  
generous people.

KRISTIN

And they just give it to you?

BEN

Yes.

KRISTIN

Sweetie, I know you want to help  
but--

BEN

It doesn't hurt to try. Please, Mom.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Kristin is now doing worse, coughing and fragile.

John is handing her a handful of her daily pills.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTIN  
I need to start packing.

JOHN  
I'll take care of that. You just  
focus on getting better.

John drops the pills in her hand. She looks at John.

KRISTIN  
I'm not getting better. You should  
know that by now.

Ben is hiding behind the wall, hearing it all, fighting  
tears.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

Ben is watering the tree.

BEN  
(to himself)  
C'mon, Mom.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Ben and Kristin stare at a computer screen.

John enters. Ben runs to him, all excited.

BEN  
Look, Dad. We saved the house.

JOHN  
What?

John glances at the computer at A CROWDFUNDING PAGE: HELP US  
SAVE OUR HOUSE.

With a picture of Ben and the tree.

Under it the amount they have raised: \$33,568

John is shocked.

JOHN  
(to Kristin)  
You did this?

KRISTIN  
It was all Ben.

BEN  
Can we stay here?

John hugs Ben.

JOHN  
Of course we can stay.

Kristin looks at them and smiles.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Kristin and John sit at the table. She's now so weak that John is feeding her.

Ben runs in, all rattled.

BEN  
The tree fell last night in the storm.

John gets up and looks outside where the tree is fallen over.

JOHN  
It's alright. We can replant it.

BEN  
But you don't understand, if it's not growing it won't work. It won't help Mom.

John and Kristin exchange sympathetic glances.

KRISTIN  
It's gonna be alright. Come here.

Ben goes over to Kristin and they hug.

KRISTIN  
We'll fix it. We'll make sure it grows.

John fights back tears.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Ben sits at the table, sobbing, wearing a black suit. John stops next to him, also in a black suit. Ben stares at the turned off TV.

BEN

They lied. Planting the tree didn't save a life.

John sits down next to Ben.

JOHN

Son, sometimes, even when you want something with all your heart, it doesn't happen... but it doesn't mean you should stop trying.

BEN

Is Mom still in pain?

JOHN

No... Not anymore.

BEN

That's good.

John takes a deep breath, almost choking up.

JOHN

Let's change. We have work in the backyard.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

Ben and John stand next to the fallen tree.

JOHN

What do you think. Can you help me save it?

Ben nods. The Boys lift up the tree.

JOHN

Now, we have to make sure that it's ready when the next storm hits.

John picks up a wooden post and rams it into the ground right next to the tree.

JOHN

Let's tie it together.

They tie the tree and the post together.

JOHN

I think we did it.

Standing side by side, they look at the tree...