

IF A TREE FALLS FINAL - PINK REVISION

Written by

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1 EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

1

In the heart of a tranquil FOREST, birds chirp and trees sway in the breeze. Then-

A TREE CRASHES, heard in the distance.

2 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

2

LIZZIE

Charlieeee... Earth to Charlie!

LIZZIE (20's) raps her knuckles in front of an intently sketching CHARLIE, a young man wearing a plain grey hoodie and glasses (20's). Lizzie is dressed maximally in a band t-shirt and accessories.

He whips his headphones off, startled.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

(Laughing)

Crap, I scared you! Sorry- sorry.

CHARLIE

No, no, you didn't, I was just-

He starts to erase a bit of his drawing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Focused. I guess.

Lizzie pauses. She looks concerned.

LIZZIE

Sooooo... I take it you did not read my text then.

CHARLIE

(Sighing)

No, sorry. What was it?

LIZZIE

Oh, ya know just... trying to hang out with you. Like my last five texts implied...

Charlie looks up at her.

CHARLIE

Lizzie-

LIZZIE

Nope! Nope. It's cool. I know
there's been...

She looks down at his drawing. He follows her eyes. It depicts a group of people in protest- "Trans Rights" is featured on the banner.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
A lot going on lately. So, can we
like, catch up? Soon, please?

CHARLIE
Yeah, yes, I'll... text you.

LIZZIE
Mmmmm, very noncommittal but! I will
take it.

CHARLIE
Don't you have class right now?

LIZZIE
(getting up)
Awwww, you remember my schedule!

She begins to walk away.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
(mouthing)
Text me!

Charlie waves. As Lizzie exits, he closes his notebook.

3 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

3

On the board- "What does American Government mean to you?" is written in big letters.

PROFESSOR STEVENS
Alright, everyone- I hope you're all working on the project.
Remember- this is open for interpretation, I want to see that you thought about what you've learned in class and tie in personal experience. Any questions?
Yes-

PROFESSOR STEVENS voice begins to fade out. Charlie is scribbling at his drawing again. His classmates begin whispering in front of him.

CLASSMATE 1

(hushed)
No, seriously, I haven't even
started. This project is bullshit.

CLASSMATE 2
I know, like, what does it even
mean?

CLASSMATE 1
Exactly! None of this stuff even
affects me, like...

Charlie begins to erase away at parts of his drawing. A STATIC, buzzing noise begins to sound.

(CONT'D)
What does he even want? For me to
go all social justice shit on him?

CLASSMATE 2
(giggling)
Oh my god, you can't say that!

CLASSMATE 1
Yeah, well, it's what we're all
thinking-

Charlie rips a hole in his page with his eraser. The static sound grows.

PROFESSOR STEVENS
(O.S., muffled)
That's all for today's class-

Charlie hurriedly packs away and leaves class.

4 EXT. CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

4

Charlie bursts out of the building, accidentally bumping into another student. He rushes past.

The buzzing noise increases- it is accompanied with his CLASSMATEs voice; "None of this stuff even affects me-"

As Charlie makes his way through campus, more sounds filter in-

"New Executive Order-..." "Banned from military-..." "None of this even affects me-..." "Transgender removed from official government site-..."

Charlie rushes home.

5 INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - AFTERNOON

Charlie slams his door shut behind him. Charlie's room is dark, and sparsely decorated. His head begins to shift back to rest on the door-

CUT TO

6 EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

Charlie's head rests instead on a tree behind him.

It is quiet, save for the light sounds of the forest around him. He pulls in a deep breathe, and slowly lets it out. He lifts his head from the tree. He looks directly at the camera.

CHARLIE

It affects a lot of people,
actually. I think you knew that.

Charlie begins to walk through the forest, hands brushing the trees.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And I think you knew I could hear
you. Antagonize the trans kid at
the back of the class, right?

Charlie stops abruptly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Well, fuck that. You're cruel, you
know that?

He stops, and gazes up at the sky.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

But you can't hear me from here.

He leans back against the tree, slides down to sit. He lets out a deep breath, and closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK

7 INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

FADE UP

Charlie opens his eyes, laying down in bed. He gingerly gets up and sits at his desk. A text notification sounds. ON PHONE: (from LIZZIE) You said you'd text!!!!!!

Charlie gets out his notebook. He stares at the ruined page, then turns to a new one. His pen hovers...

BEAT.

He groans in frustration and lays his head down on the desk.

8 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

8

Lizzie sits at their usual spot, headphones in, head-bobbing to the beat, writing in her notebook. Charlie sneaks behind- he pokes her. She whips her headphones off.

LIZZIE

(startled, laughing)

Oh, my god! You're evil!

CHARLIE

Sweet, sweet revenge.

He sits across from her and pulls out his notebook.

LIZZIE

Wait! Oh my god, you won't believe what I found when I was cleaning last night-

Lizzie rustles through her bag.

CHARLIE

(sarcastic)

You? Cleaned?

LIZZIE

As a matter of fact, yes-

Lizzie whips out a polaroid.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

Look!

She hands him a polaroid selfie of a younger Charlie and Lizzie- their smiles are wide.

CHARLIE

Holy crap- is that from-

LIZZIE

(wistful)

Orientation week.

CHARLIE

No way. Look how cute we were.

LIZZIE
Best friends ever since.

CHARLIE
(smiling)
I'm taking this.

He tucks it away in his backpack. She watches him.

LIZZIE
I miss you.

Charlie freezes.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
Like- we were inseparable back
then, ya know?

CHARLIE
I know.

LIZZIE
(imploring)
So then why aren't we anymore?

CHARLIE
Lizzie, it's not like that- there's
just been a lot going on, okay? And
speaking of-

He pulls out his notebook. The ruined page sits on top.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I need to get my work done.

Charlie begins to busy himself with organizing his notebook,
avoiding her eyes. Lizzie watches him for a beat.

LIZZIE
Okay- okay. I get it.

She drops her eyes to her own work.

9 EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

9

Charlie walks through the forest. He looks up at the camera.

CHARLIE
We are inseparable, though.
Seriously- you've been there for...
everything.

He stops, pulls the polaroid out of his pocket.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 You can't be here for this though.
 You don't need me- bringing you
 down with all this.

He sits down and notices his notebook next to him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 I miss you too. Sorry I didn't tell
 you. Sorry that I- I won't tell
 you.

He puts the polaroid down on the dirt beside him. He grabs
 his notebook and begins to draw.

10 INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

10

MATCH the progress made in the forest- Charlie sees the
 drawing he's made but in reality. The static noise builds up
 again until he crumples up the attempt at tosses it away.

BEGIN MONTAGE - REPEAT:

10A EXT. THE FOREST

10A

- Drawing attempt in THE FOREST. Charlie is focused.

10B INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM

10B

- Attempt is seen in REALITY. He crumples/rips/tosses the
 page.

10C EXT. CAMPUS

10C

- Charlie walks through campus, dejected.

The pattern has consumed him. The images speed up, days
 blending into night, no distinction, until-

CYCLE IS BROKEN:

11 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

11

Charlie crumples his latest attempt from THE FOREST. He looks
 up- class has ended.

PROFESSOR STEVENS
 Hey, Charlie, could you stay back
 for a sec?

Charlie stops on his way out. He hears the STATIC, alongside SNICKERS and WHISPERS from his CLASSMATES-

As he approaches, Charlie looks around the classroom- they are the only two left.

PROFESSOR STEVENS (CONT'D)
(muffled)
Not an ambush, I promise.

Charlie looks back up at him, confused. Mr. Steven's words come into focus.

PROFESSOR STEVENS (CONT'D)
I just wanted to see how your project's coming along.

CHARLIE
Oh, uh, good? It's not due until-

PROFESSOR STEVENS
(Cautious)
No- no, it's not late. I was hoping to check in on your project specifically.

CHARLIE
Sorry?

PROFESSOR STEVENS
I understand that this may be... difficult, for you particularly. This is a difficult climate-

The STATIC reappears. CHARLIE takes a step away.

PROFESSOR STEVENS (CONT'D)
And a difficult assignment. But I'm excited to hear what you have to say. I hope you'll volunteer to present your work.

CHARLIE
Oh. I'll, um- I'll think about it.

PROFESSOR STEVENS
Please do. I really think your perspective is important here.

Charlie simply nods.

The STATIC continues. Charlie sits, looking at another empty page of his notebook. Lizzie approaches.

LIZZIE

There you are! Look, when you said you'd text me, I figured it'd be like, this millennia-

CHARLIE

Lizzie. Not now, okay?

LIZZIE

Oh. Okay.

She pauses. Sits down.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

No, actually- not okay. Meaning, I know that you're not okay.

CHARLIE

Um, I'm fine, actually, I'm trying to work-

LIZZIE

Wow! So believable. Truly. I'm the crazy one, then? You've barely spoken to me, you've like entirely disappeared but, yeah. You're fine!

CHARLIE

Jesus, Lizzie, what the hell do you want from me?

LIZZIE

For you to talk to me.

CHARLIE

Look, I'm sorry for not texting you-

LIZZIE

It's not even about the stupid texts- you've been shutting me out. I can feel it. Just- I know you're not okay! So just talk to me!

CHARLIE

You wouldn't even want to hear it anyways!

LIZZIE

What the hell does that even mean?!

CHARLIE
No one wants to actually hear it,
okay? So just- leave me alone.

Charlie exits. He has left behind a crumpled attempt at his project- she unravels it.

13 INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

13

Charlie is crumpling up another attempt.

BEGIN MONTAGE (AGAIN):

13A EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

13A

- Project attempt in THE FOREST.

13B INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

13B

- Crumpled in REALITY.

The sounds of his CLASSMATES and the NEWS HEADLINES begin to infiltrate, distorted. The sounds shift, and they become the voices of PROFESSOR STEVENS and LIZZIE -

"Just want to hear what you have to say-..."... "just talk to me!" building in volume-

13C EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

13C

Charlie SCREAMS into THE FOREST.

14 INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

14

The SCREAM reaches through to REALITY. Charlie quiets, exhausted. A notification sounds-

ON PHONE: (Voicemail from LIZZIE)

He presses play.

LIZZIE
(Voicemail, tinny)

Hey. I'm sorry about earlier. I wasn't trying to yell at you. I just- I can tell okay? But- but maybe I've been so focused on getting you to talk to me that I haven't even realized you might feel like you literally... can't.

Charlie sits at his desk.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
Look, shit is... it's scary right now. It's frankly overwhelming.
(beat) But I am here.

Charlie shifts his head back. As he does-

15 EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

15

He looks up at the branches swaying above him.

LIZZIE
I want to hear you. I want to hear you- rage about it, or cry or- just, all of it, okay?

Charlie sits on a tree trunk. He looks over. LIZZIE is there with him.

Her voice shifts, no longer heard through the phone.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
God, I wish I could fix it. Any of it. All of it. But- I can't. Nobody really can. But-

She reaches over, and grabs his hand.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
We can be loud about it. Hell, I'll scream with you! There's no... magic fix.

She releases his hand- she has left a pen in her wake.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
But, I think... let's not give up quietly, yeah? Let it out. I'll hear you. I'm listening.

CUT TO

16 INT. CHARLIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

16

Charlie holds the pen above an empty page.

LIZZIE
(Voicemail, tinny)
Anyways. Love you. Talk soon, okay?

The phone beeps- the voicemail has ended.

Charlie takes a deep breath, and begins to draw.

17 EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

17

Charlie walks through the forest, completed project in hand.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
If you listen closely, you can hear
it. The sound of people being
afraid. The sound of people being
silenced.

18 EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

18

MATCH to Charlie walking through campus- the project has made
it out of the forest.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I hear it all the time. I couldn't
even hear myself over it. But I can
yell louder. I can scream-

19 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

19

Charlie hands in his project to Professor Stevens. The sounds
of THE FOREST continue. He stands up in front of the class,
presenting his drawing, the complete depiction of a Trans
Rights protest.

CHARLIE
That we have, and always will,
exist. And even if there are those
who choose to ignore it-

20 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

20

Charlie finds Lizzie at their usual table. They speak, but it
is not heard.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

-There will always be someone who
hears us.

Lizzie and Charlie connect again.

As Charlie opens his mouth to laugh- we hear a tree begin to
fall.

THE END.