

THE SIGN
A monologue
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Cast of Characters

TED: Late 20s to 30s, lawyer, not wearing the right clothes for the outdoors. Any race.

Setting:

Deep in some woods, any woods, really.

Time:

Modern day-ish.

CONTENT WARNING:

Character is depicted with an injury and discusses alcoholism.

[We probably hear the singing before we see TED.]

TED *[in the distance, off-key]*:

"I saw the sign... and it opened up my eyes..."

[TED appears. Even covered in dirt, mud, blood, etc., you can tell his clothes were of the utmost quality. He probably has one of those fleece vests that finance bros in Midtown Manhattan are stereotyped to wear. He is really in bad shape, but before that, he was a pretty together guy, obviously. He pulls himself along with a makeshift cane made from a large stick, limping dramatically. His leg is broken and if it's tied to a splint, it's a bad splint.]

TED:

"And I am happy now living without you... I've left you all alone... I saw the sign... and it opened up my eyes..."

Karaoke king, baby.

Dear God, if you're there—yeah, it's me again, sorry, asshole—I promise I'll go to Curry Hill Karaoke and actually sing next time. No more making fun of people. No more pretending. That guy singing Fall Out Boy wasn't even that bad. I'm sorry about that. Tell him I'm sorry.

And if we're making a list.

Well.

I don't know, actually, I'm not that sorry about a lot of people. I don't want to lie to you, bud. If I can call you bud.

[He makes himself laugh with this, which questions his balance a bit, so he stops.]

Sorry. Sorry about calling you bud. Message received. I'll keep going with the list and I'll call you your name. God. Or something else. Almighty. Can I call you Mightys for short?

[He tests his cane. Seems to hold.]

So. Mightys. I'mma keep it real with you. In my industry, you can't like, sit around being sorry for people. It's M&A so—[to

the sky] Mergers and Acquisitions, not sure if you know... well, I guess you created it, in a way... so never mind. But I can't be sorry for people all the damn time. I gotta do what's best for the client. What makes them the most. Gets them the most.

[A realization:] Okay. Gets *me* the most. Fine.

But is that not, like, created in your image? Dog eat dog? Survival of the fittest? You know, predators born with their eyes facing forward... and with like, the canine teeth... I don't know, I got braces and some teeth pulled and shit in like fifth grade...

[Looking around] I don't feel much like a predator right now, Might's.

I guess that's why I didn't make partner. Maybe next year. More of a predator next year. If I make it to next year.

[A pause while he focuses on hobbling forward. This gets boring pretty quickly.]

"I can feel it... coming in the air tonight..."

I don't know any more words.

[He looks around for some more guidance, listening.]

I don't know where I'm going. There. I said it.

I think I heard something from this direction. So I'm going there. In case Might's was wondering why I'm going. Towards more of your heavenly creations, man. Hopefully they've got like a... first aid kit or something. Or some food. Or a Corona sounds great now. With a lime.

Or just some water? I don't know, if you like—don't want me to party anymore. Is that why this is happening? Is it—what's the word—payback for partying?

I'll go clean, totes clean, all the way sober bro, if it means I make it out of this. I don't know what else to do with my Friday nights but I'll figure something out. My Saturday nights too, I guess. And some Sundays, when there's a holiday on Monday. And Thursdays, when there's a deal at Cornerstone Tavern.

I want to be at Cornerstone Tavern so bad right now. But I'll find another outlet. If you want me to. I don't know what it is yet, or where to go.

[This gives him pause for a second. Maybe he also just needs to catch his breath or readjust his walking stick. Then he decides: the only place to go is forward. He starts walking again.]

Maybe if I stop drinking I'll meet new people. Not that I really want to meet new people. Maybe I just want to meet new girls - yeah, that'd be-no that's a lie. That's a fucking lie. Sorry, Mights. I can't lie to you. If we're gonna make this work. I don't wanna find any new girls. I want Sarah to like me again. God, fuck her. I'm doing this for her and she doesn't even notice. And even if she did, she wouldn't care. Not like she would invite me on any of her stupid useless hiking trips. They're all for girls anyway. Female empowerment trips or whatever. And they're probably not gonna want some guy who can keep his legs straight in the forest. Fine. I wouldn't want me either.

[Another adjustment needed. He tries not to let it stop him, but the next sad thought keeps slowing him down.]

Why doesn't she want me either?

I tried to do all the stuff she wanted. Like I bought the whole dinner plate set. I'm not even home for dinner half the time. But I bought it. You're welcome! You're welcome, Sarah!

[When he hears himself echo, he also hears some sort of creature around him - it could be a real, discernible animal noise, or the snapping of branches, or it could just be all in his head.]

He tests moving again and making another noise to see if it attracts attention to himself. Nothing seems to jump out at him yet. When he starts walking/limping again, it's with renewed urgency. When he speaks to the sky again, it's quieter.]

Alright, alright. Heard. Stop complaining about her. When she didn't do anything. I guess she didn't really do anything, okay. I mean, yeah, like, she could have been more forthcoming if she felt that strongly. Instead of saying like, "you need more dinner plates", she could have been like, "If you don't do more

than get more dinner plates, I'm gonna ghost you after six months of dating. Really good dating. Really fucking good dating where I bought so many meals and iced coffees for her and that damn Kate Spade purse for her birthday and the ubers and also really liked her, after all that, after you start liking me, really liking me, then I'm gonna ghost you."

Like, she could have said that. But alright. I'm done now.

I am. I'm done now.

[Saying that phrase out loud was kind of a bummer. In an act of desperation:]

"I get knocked down... but I get up again. You're never gonna keep me down..."

Where was I. Right. No more partying. No more ragging on Sarah. Even though she won't be able to hear it because she blocked me. But yeah, no more ragging on Sarah. Is that it? Is there anything else I can do?

Like how hard should I go? Do you want me to like, join Al-Anon or something?

I mean, fine. Okay. I'll do it. It couldn't hurt, right? I don't really think I'm an alcoholic. I just think I'm a guy who likes to party for fun. I like a jello shot. I like a kegger. And I'm not sorry. And I—

Well, maybe. I'm a little sorry. I shouldn't have brought those White Claws to the campsite. I didn't know the ground was uneven. I didn't know my—I didn't know my car would overheat and I didn't know I wouldn't know where I was and I didn't know a LOT okay?? I'm sorry. I didn't know anything then and I don't know anything now. I don't even know if there are people where I'm going. But if there are, I swear I will find my way out. Get my car back and do everything right and go to a support group and do better at my job and— leave Sarah alone because she wants that which sucks but I'll do it. And.

[He looks up further toward where he's going.]

Ohmygod there's light. There's light! There's smoke! There's a fire!!

[He moves forward with moree renewed vigor than ever before.]

"Ease on down... ease on down... the roooooaad..."

What is that even fro—

[Too much vigor. His sticks snaps. He takes a nasty fall. It probably hurt his bad leg even more, and started something new in his good leg. He kind of tries to scream as much as someone who's this severely dehydrated can.]

It's a long moment on the ground.]

WHAT WAS THAT FOR?

WHICH PART?

WAS THAT FOR SARAH? OR MAKING FUN OF PEOPLE AT KARAOKE? OR JUST GOING OUT INTO THE WORLD AT ALL? EXISTING IN IT? I SAID I'M SORRY. SORRY FOR EXISTING.

[Eventually he tries to pick himself up, but this is incredibly difficult and painful. He reaches for the stick. It's no use.]

And sorry for lying. Because I'm not sorry for existing. I'm just sorry for not doing it right.

[While reaching for it, he looks forward again. He wonders what he should do. Eventually he decides on:]

"And it opened up my eyes..."

[He starts to crawl.]

"I saw the sign."

[Lights out.]