

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: She must have noticed. I left so much, at least a pound. . . .

DAVID OSSLOW: I'm so bad, I start thinking about my next meal before I've even finished the one I'm eating!

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: I wonder what she thought? If she was hurt that I could never get it down. . . .

DAVID OSSLOW: Now *that's* serious! . . .

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: I lived in constant fear that she'd tell my parents. You see I was terribly underweight. . . .

DAVID OSSLOW: I love to eat!

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: Or worse, that she'd sneak into my room some night, lugging all those bulging napkins . . . and spill everything out . . . from one end of my bed to the other . . . and *force* me to eat it . . .

DAVID OSSLOW: I've always loved to eat. . . . It will be the death of me. . . . Every time I see my doctor, he says the same thing. He says, "David, you've got to lose some of that weight!"

(*A silence.*)

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: I used to bite my nails. I think it was because I was so hungry all the time.

DAVID OSSLOW: (*Hands her back her empty soup bowl.*) Thank you, it was delicious.

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: (*Hiding her hands.*) I still bite them sometimes. (*A silence. She looks around the room, a sigh.*) This is wonderful.

(*Another silence.*)

DAVID OSSLOW: Oh! I forgot to return your spoon!

(*He hands it to her, covering her hand with both of his.*)

ELIZABETH BARROW COLT: (*Grasps it, turns it gently in her hands, sneaks it up against her cheek for a moment . . . and then drops it into her pocketbook.*) I can't believe this is happening.

(*The lights fade . . .*)

Asian Shade

Larry Ketron

Characters: Tom (19), Kaylene (21)

Setting: A lakeside cabin in East Tennessee, 1967-68

Premiere: WPA Theatre, New York City, 1983

Publisher: Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

It is June 1967, and Tom and Ernie are going to Vietnam. They have finished Basic Training and now have a one-week furlough before they go overseas. Neal, a World War II veteran, gives the two boys the use of his lakeside cabin so they can escape from their sentimental families and "raise a little hell." They spend a large part of the week with two local girls, Casey and Jean, roasting hot dogs, swimming, and trying to stave off their fears about going to war. Neal tells them that a World War II buddy of his can pull a few strings and change their posting to Fort Ord, California. The boys are initially dubious, but as their departure gets closer, they cling more and more to this hope. When it turns out that Neal's contact has retired from the service and can't do them a bit of good, the boys are devastated. Neal is mortally embarrassed, and promises them he'll do something good for them when they come back.

This scene, the play's last, takes place one year later. Tom has come back from the war alone; Ernie is dead. Neal brings Tom out to visit the cabin, leaving him there with his daughter, Kaylene.

Note: Harry (of Harry's Market) lost a son in Vietnam.

(*TOM looks the joint over. With one finger he tips the lamp that kept falling over last year. KAYLENE reappears in the door frame with a paper bag; she startles TOM.*)

TOM: Jesus Christ! (*She comes in, sets bag down on coffee table.*)

KAYLENE: This is from Janis.

TOM: Who's that? *(She pushes the bag down, revealing a bottle of Southern Comfort, hands it to TOM.)*

KAYLENE: Joplin. It's her brand. It was my dad's for the fishing, but it's been reappropriated.

TOM: *(Gratefully.)* My sister Cheryl was going to get me some, but this'll come in.

KAYLENE: Yeah, I turned twenty-one in April. I like to buy booze, it's fun. Showing them my driver's license. They look at *it*, they look at *me*, they look at *it*. But I win. I buy all Neal's whiskey, all his beer, he throws a fit.

TOM: Is Neal waiting on you?

KAYLENE: Well . . . no.

TOM: Maybe I can find a couple of glasses.

KAYLENE: Uh, I don't drink it, are you kidding? *(Then.)* You know, I never come out here. I love the sun and the fish, but I never use this dump.

TOM: Say you love to fish?

KAYLENE: No, I love *the* fish. I hate *to* fish. It's cruel.

TOM: Yeah, I don't fish.

KAYLENE: It's cruel. Let's take that theory that as large as you can go, you can go that small.

TOM: *(Thinking about it.)* As large as you can go . . .

KAYLENE: You can go that small. We could be anywhere on the scale. Assume for a second we are not "earth." I mean, we are, but in the "grand plan," let's say, we're on the head of a pin—the whole world. No, this whole universe, we could go through the eye of a needle. Being so microscopic we've escaped annihilation from the outside, from outside forces, like other life, because the odds have been with us. We're too small. But at any instant some big shoe could come smashing down on the entire planet, on all of us. It would just be some guy walking to work. Get it? Some very large man.

TOM: What does this have to do with why you don't fish?

KAYLENE: So assume we're a little bigger, Tom, now don't be thick . . . *(She smiles and nudges him.)* We're not quite as teensy-tiny as I just said, we're a little further along the scale?

We're sitting around . . . all of a sudden a giant fish hook comes down out of some gargantuan vastness and . . . *(Finger in her mouth, acts it out.)* Ugh——! *(The!..)* It could happen to us like it happens to fish everyday. There they are swimming along in their own world, literally, and bam!

TOM: I got news for you, Kaylene, it does happen to us.

KAYLENE: No, Tom, I mean metaphysically. *(Then.)* I'll take that cigarette now. *(Then.)* Fishing, no, fishing is a loser.

TOM: *(He lights one, then hands it to her.)* Uh . . . I don't know what you're doing here.

KAYLENE: I wanted to stay. Was it all right? *(TOM shrugs; she smokes, moving around the room, righting the lamp.)* Your daddy's a real charmer, I guess you know. We were picking out my car and he goes on and on about you. Said you were getting home, uh—

TOM: Last night.

KAYLENE: Or something like that. Then Daddy was coming out here today. I thought to myself, who knows?

TOM: Who knows what?

KAYLENE: Who knows? *(Then.)* You had a girlfriend when you were out here last year, where's she these days?

TOM: I couldn't tell you.

KAYLENE: Well who was it?

TOM: Casey Nichols.

KAYLENE: Oh, her . . . ! She got married. Married an asshole, but nevertheless.

TOM: That makes me feel better.

KAYLENE: I knew your good friend. I mean just marginally. *(TOM looks at her, no change.)* We used to say hey in the halls back in high school.

TOM: He had a crush on you.

KAYLENE: No . . . ! Yeah?

TOM: I think so, yeah, maybe.

KAYLENE: I went to see his family. I said, I never really knew your son but we went to high school together, and I just wanted to . . . *(Then.)* Tom, I don't know how anybody stands it. If one of my sisters was to die, I'd die too. I just would.

TOM: The thing is, Kaylene, you wouldn't. You can't.

KAYLENE: (*She crosses to him.*) Now. What do you say we go into The Texas Steer and have a peanut butter milkshake?

TOM: That makes me sick to think about.

KAYLENE: So bring your bottle, I'll buy you a Coke. Or, hey, Tom, you know what's fun at night?

TOM: I guess we've established it's not fishing.

KAYLENE: A swim. And I make a very mean hamburger on the barbecue.

TOM: (*Walking away from her.*) We'd have to go down to Harry's Market, I don't wanna do that.

KAYLENE: No, no, at *my* house. I wouldn't cook in this dive, I'm talking about at home. (*TOM goes to chest of drawers, his back to KAYLENE, pulls top drawer out, slides it in and out.*)

TOM: What, at Neal's place?

KAYLENE: It's my house, too. We take a dip in the pool, we slap on some hamburgers.

TOM: You guys got a pool?

KAYLENE: I know, it's disgusting, we got everything, I'm sorry. What do you say? (*Pause.*)

TOM: (*Slams drawer shut, turns on her.*) How come you're here?

KAYLENE: I thought I told you. Neal was coming fishing and—

TOM: No, shit, no: I mean this year. I stayed out there awhile last year, ya know, you never came around.

KAYLENE: I did know you were out here last year, but the time Dad mentioned it he said there were a couple of girls out here with you'all.

TOM: So what if there was?

KAYLENE: Was it "Casey"?

TOM: Hey. Yeah. It wasn't *you*. Where were *you*?

KAYLENE: I was going to bust in?

TOM: It wouldn't have hurt to have somebody bust in back then, even *some* people. You knew we were out here and leaving and you didn't even come out? That's beautiful, I love that.

KAYLENE: Tom . . .

TOM: What attention we got was appreciated, that's all.

KAYLENE: Tom, I told you!

TOM: So your old man saw Casey out here a night or two, so what? Maybe she just stopped by, brought a basket of fruit. You could have called, you could have come out.

KAYLENE: (*Quietly.*) I'm sorry.

TOM: Yeah, you oughta be. You should have risked it. Young people take chances, don't they? That's why there's so many young people over where I was, Kaylene.

KAYLENE: I don't understand . . .

TOM: Young people take chances. But you wouldn't even risk coming out here last year and saying hello cause you thought there might be another girl here, that's disappointing.

KAYLENE: My fault.

TOM: Tell me to fuck off, will ya? You don't owe me nothin'.

KAYLENE: No, don't on my account.

TOM: *Now* you want to know me, why is that?

KAYLENE: Oh, fuck off. (*Pause.*) I'll sit down if you will. (*She sits. TOM sits at a distance. KAYLENE, holding up two fingers for a cigarette.*) Please?

TOM: (*Setting the pack and matches down between them.*) Anybody ever call you "Kay"?

KAYLENE: It happens.

TOM: Seems like, be simpler. (*Then.*) I'm not a hero. I was a Saigon Warrior, that's how lucky I got. Some went North, I got Saigon because I could type. I didn't have to fight the war, hell, I didn't even have to fight the heat. I had it made. I had it made in the shade. Then I come back and everybody says "ooh, wow!" Well, shit.

KAYLENE: You feel guilty because you didn't die?

TOM: Hey, what are you—stupid?

KAYLENE: No, I'm not stupid.

TOM: Well that was a stupid thing to say.

KAYLENE: You were over there. I imagine you woulda gone the extra bit, like, to combat or whatever it was, long as you were there anyway.

TOM: Thanks, you're trying to make me a movie star.

KAYLENE: I don't think you're a movie star or a glory hog or anything else! And if you were or aren't, that's not why I'm here.

TOM: Did Neal make you come out here, Kay?

KAYLENE: I wouldn't be here if it was his idea, I'm at a rebellious age. I'm here because I think you're cute.

TOM: Oh. Why didn't you just say that? After you say that, you can get away with anything.

KAYLENE: Tom . . . what are you going to do?

TOM: Uh-oh. You mean along the lines of with the rest of my life? I don't know . . . school, I guess. Did you go to college?

KAYLENE: I graduated early. I'm probably a genius.

TOM: I think I could do okay in school now, if I can get over this feeling everybody owes me something.

KAYLENE: *Owes* you something? You just got through saying you feel like a rat because you weren't actually in the combat.

TOM: Forget that. Forget I even said it. I take it all back, I'm Audie Murphy, baby. I *went*. That's all you need to know.

KAYLENE: You didn't get out of it where others got completely out of it, so—

TOM: So, yeah, you betcha! (*Then.*) Genius, I don't know, but you *are* bright, I like that, it's a plus for you.

KAYLENE: (*Playfully nods her approval. Then.*) Where do you go from here?

TOM: I thought we went to your house.

KAYLENE: I mean where do you have to report?

TOM: Savannah. First I'm going down to Miami to visit a friend of mine.

KAYLENE: Miami?

TOM: Come on, a guy like me, you gotta figure, I got friends all over the world.

KAYLENE: What if you spent your leave, I'm just making this up, around here somewhere?

TOM: Can't do it. I've got to go, I can't sit still yet.

KAYLENE: You don't have to explain, it was just an offer. We seem to be able to talk, that's all.

TOM: I hate talking.

KAYLENE: Fine.

TOM: I shoulda told you.

KAYLENE: Okay. Good-bye forever. (*But she just stands there.*)

TOM: See ya. (*Pause.*) I'll go cause that's a good friend down there, but I could come back.

KAYLENE: Don't put yourself out.

TOM: No real sweat, I could return, you never know. But if I were to come back early to see you, let's don't have any talking.

KAYLENE: I can't say a word?

TOM: Absolutely not.

KAYLENE: I guess I'll just have to think.

TOM: Think, yeah. We'll both . . . uh . . . I don't know, we'll both think. (*She hugs him.*) Get in my car, I'll be there in a minute. (*She kisses him, exits. TOM alone.*) Yeah, okay, Neal, way to come through. (*He picks up the whiskey bottle and follows KAYLENE Off.*)

Betrayal

Harold Pinter

Characters: Emma (36), Jerry (38)

Setting: England and Venice, Italy, 1968–77

Premiere: National Theatre, London, 1978

Publisher: Grove Press

Jerry and Emma have been having an affair for seven years. Both are married with families. Jerry is an old friend of Emma's husband, Robert. In fact, he was best man at Emma and Robert's wedding. In this scene, the two lovers break off their affair.

Note: The play starts in 1977 and moves backward in time. This scene takes place in a flat in the winter of 1975.

(*Silence.*)

JERRY: What do you want to do then?