

*CHARLIE tells her sister ANNIE the story of the night their father died.*

CHARLIE

It's my fault.

I told Oliver I'd leave with him. Start over. Hit reset. Even if I only got to Jackson and dropped dead right there, at least I would have got away.

But that ain't the way it works.

I came in the back door. I stood here. Right here. Daddy was already screamin' for me before I opened the door. I set my bag down and I stood here. And I just listened to him. Beggin'. And I all I could think about is listenin' to Ricky screamin' and how nobody ever came runnin' to help him. We all heard it, I mean it was right there. And loud enough to travel all the way back to the house, there were days when I could hear it in my bedroom, but, nobody else seemed to give a shit about it and so I would just sit there and pray in my room that Daddy would stop or that Ricky would give in or pass out or die so that the screamin'd stop.

Momma never did anything about it. And you never did anything about it. And I wasn't strong enough to do anything about it at the time. And now it's Daddy screamin' and gaspin' for air in the living room and nobody comes runnin'.

It's all the same.

I'm still workin' at the same goddamn store I been at for twenty years. I'm still holdin' on to a goddamn flame I had in highschool, in *highschool*, Annie. You think I don't know that's ridiculous? And when I finally do decide to move on it's with a fuckin' teenage boy who somehow, somewhere in there, reminds me of somebody else that some other version of me loved a long, long time ago. So there I am, in the same place, doin' the same thing and I can't get myself to stop. So I say to myself, goddammit Charlie, you ain't goin' this time. This time he can scream until he stops on his fuckin' own. This minute, this one fuckin' minute you ain't gonna do the same goddamn thing you always do.

And he did. He stopped screamin' on his own. He died in the goddamn living room while I was standin' here starin' out the window thinkin' oh woe-is me, oh my poor fuckin' life.