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### The Weeping Willow

The Lane family takes pride in their simple but attractive landscaping. The yard is always well manicured, and the grass is a dark, luscious green that makes everything pop. Elephant ears grow on both sides of the porch steps; blue morning glories attach themselves to the white lattice on the porch; and scented flowers such as peonies, tulips, roses, and hydrangeas line the fence. But what set off this stunning yard for the Lane family for many years was their magnificent weeping willow tree. The father in the family planted two weeping willows, but only one managed to survive. Although it was unfortunate to lose one of the trees, the loss made the surviving one even more meaningful to the family.

Its long and wispy limbs hung over the fence, touching the dark, cracked pavement of the road. The limbs inside the yard hung beautifully, like decorations. The rustling of the leaves was a welcome and relaxing sound when the wind blew. One branch was large enough for the family to hang a small swing so that their little niece could swing back and forth and giggle when the leaves grazed her face. Their granddaughter also enjoyed the same swing and branch, giggling with enjoyment. It's amazing to think how one tree brought so much happiness to a family.

But it wasn't just the Lane family who was blessed with enjoying the glorious view of the tree. Neighbors would also comment on the weeping willow's beauty and how it seemed to be the center of attraction for everyone who lived on John Wright Lane. The people of the city of

Mountainburg frequently mentioned their appreciation of the tree's beautiful and agile limbs. When the popular TV series *True Detectives* was filming there, the producers also eyed the willow in the Lane family's yard and wanted to capture it in a small scene for their show.

In April of 2018, the tree was taken away quickly and unexpectedly. The local news station had been saying strong storms and tornados were possible that day, but like a lot of people, the Lanes didn't pay too much attention to the warning. Then in the middle of the day, a tornado blew by Mountainburg and another nearby town. After the Lanes left their safe spot in their home, they went outside to survey the damage. There was damage to the roof of their home and to their garage. Trees were uprooted and blown over on the ground everywhere, including their weeping willow. Half of the tree was laid over on a fence, barely missing one of their cars. The roots were now above ground and made a trail in the dirt where the wind tried picking it up. Although everyone in the Lane family was grateful to be safe, the family was still upset about losing the weeping willow tree.

Old memories of the tree will be treasured and stored in their hearts forever, but they have plans to plant another willow tree in the future. New memories will be made. They are excited to watch the new tree grow and witness the limbs create a beautiful canopy of shade and comfort to enjoy for generations to come.