

A SPECIAL DAY

Written by

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Act One

Revision

EXT. PARK - DAY

RACHEL (20) sits on the edge of a pond, legs dangling in the water, eating a sandwich, watching the fish chase each other.

Next to her is a bottle of water, a half-empty pack of cigarettes and a bright red lighter. She appears serene, but a closer look reveals red swollen eyes.

PEOPLE mill around, jump fully clothed into the ponds - ignoring the NO SWIMMING/BATHING signs - or quietly sit on benches. A few TEENAGERS SING to a GUITAR. CHILDREN play, run to and fro, SCREAM in delight.

Occasionally a CRY, a SOB, SHUSHING SOUNDS, but RACHEL pays no mind.

A shadow falls on Rachel, who looks up to discover CLARA (6) standing next to her.

CLARA

What you doing? You crying?

RACHEL

Not anymore.

(pause)

I'm eating a sandwich and pretending to have a pedicure.

CLARA

A pediwhat?

RACHEL

A pedicure. When fish nibble on the dead skin on your feet.

CLARA

Why?

RACHEL

Always wanted to, never could afford it. Where's your mom?

Clara points to a figure lying in the grass under a tree.

CLARA

Over there.

RACHEL

Is she okay?

CLARA

She's taking a nap. She said "come, Clara, today is a special day." She made a special drink. She said "let's go take a nap in the park."

RACHEL

Oh!.. Well, you're not asleep.

CLARA

I threw it away when she wasn't looking. I'm not a baby, I'm 6 years old, I don't need naps.

Rachel looks at Clara's mom, half-rises, hesitates, sits back down, resumes gazing at the water rippled by a gentle wind. Clara watches the fish around Rachel's feet with interest.

RACHEL

You want some ham sandwich?

CLARA

No, thank you. Can I put my feet in the water too?

RACHEL

Sure.

Clara sits next to her, takes off her sandals, puts one foot, then the other, in the water. A second later, she GIGGLES, wiggles her toes, reaches for the fish with her feet.

CLARA

Can I throw them some bread?

Rachel hands her the half-eaten sandwich, lights a cigarette, watches the fish fight for the crumbs Clara throws them.

CLARA

(laughing in joy)
Mom was right: It IS a special day.

RACHEL

Sure is.

She puts her arm around Clara's waist.

CUT TO

EXT. PARK - DAY - LATER

The wind blows stronger now. The sky is crimson on the horizon. Clara stands knee-deep in the pond, reaches for the fish swimming around her legs, misses, SQUEALS in excitement.

Rachel inhales a last drag from her cigarette, throws the butt in the water, rises to a crouch.

RACHEL

Clara, I'm thirsty. You thirsty?
You think there's more of your
mom's drink?

Clara looks up, takes in the people CRYING, PRAYING, holding each other. She is startled by the cacophony around them. Now her frightened eyes fix on Rachel's in a silent question, then travel to her mom's prone body. She wipes beads of sweat from her face, casts a last look at the fish.

She nods.