

Grown Up Children

By

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EXT. COMMUNITY SOCIAL AREA - DAY

CLARA (25), redhead, is inside the pool, resting her head on the rocky edge, wearing a soaking wet maxi dress. She lets go and falls back to float with her eyes closed. She remembers last night.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

We hear chatter from outside of the room. Clara is sitting on the bed, looking around in silence, waiting for someone to tell her what happened. SAMANTHA (38), a recently graduated nurse, walks in the room with a banana and some paperwork.

SAMANTHA

Clara, how are you feeling?

CLARA

(confused) I don't remember how I got here.

SAMANTHA

That's alright. You came here for some blood tests but fainted while we were prepping you. You will be okay, just get some rest.

Clara grabs her head with both her hands due to a headache.

INT. CLARA'S ROOM - NIGHT TWO MONTHS AGO

Clara is on a video call with MICHAEL (25), her boyfriend.

MICHAEL

(lacking energy) How was your day?

CLARA

It wasn't great, but it's better now.

Michael acts uncomfortable

CLARA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

MICHAEL

I want to talk to you but I don't know how to.

BACK TO HOSPITAL ROOM

Samantha leaves the banana and paperwork on the table next to the bed, grabs one of Clara's hands and holds it in both of hers.

SAMANTHA

Clara... I think you are depressed.

She grabs the banana from the table and gives it to Clara.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Here, try to eat this to help balance your potassium levels. I understand you're not hungry, but I think you'll thank me later.

Clara looks up at her as if defeated. She begins to peel the banana.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING (LATER)

Clara wakes up from a short nap. She opens her eyes but can't move immediately, and when she regains control of her body, she gets out of bed and gets dressed in her regular clothes. She opens the door, sees that no one is near, and leaves her room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Clara walks a few miles with her arms wrapped around her, as if she were hugging herself.

EXT. COMMUNITY SOCIAL AREA - NIGHT

Clara cries in silence, inside the pool of the neighborhood where she used to live with her now ex-boyfriend. She cries herself to sleep.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. COMMUNITY SOCIAL AREA - DAY

In the back on the left corner we see JIM (67), the one in charge of basically everything in a small neighborhood of East Hollywood, getting ready to start cleaning the pool. He notices Clara and taps her body twice with the leaf rake, acting confused but as if it weren't the first time this happens. Clara opens her eyes, her face shows slight

embarrassment but numbness all at once.

CLARA

Hey!

JIM

Rough night, huh?

Clara starts to regain consciousness.

CLARA

I- I'm sorry. I just...

JIM

I'm Jim. Have I seen you around here before?

CLARA

I used to live here a few months ago... Moved out but now I had to come back for a few days.

JIM

Where's home now?

CLARA

Well, I come from Barcelona, but I don't see it as home.

JIM

I see.

She reminds him of her daughter. Jim extends his hand to help Clara out of the pool.

CLARA

Jim... I think I hit pool bottom.

Jim has a smirk on his face. When he's about to say something, Clara starts speaking.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Ok that sounded better in my head. Most things do.

JIM

Come, I'll make you some tea.

They make their way into the staff cafeteria that's across the game room and event hall. Clara slows down to brush her hand through some plants, listens carefully to a wasp pass

closely by without panicking, and breathes deep to smell the wet grass.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Clara sits on the chair next to the stove where Jim is boiling water for the tea.

JIM

You remind me of my daughter.

Clara looks confused but expects a story to come after that sentence.

JIM (CONT'D)

Vivian. She was the happiest little child, always smiling at birds and dancing wherever she went. Something happened when she moved out, I never really knew what it was, but when she came back home she came back different. She became afraid of birds, and embarrassed of being seen dancing. She had that same look you have. What's making you wanting to give up?

Clara cries. She holds the teacup he hands him with one hand and wipes her tears off with the other. Jim notices a bracelet on her wrist with her patient information.

JIM (CONT'D)

Clara?

CLARA

(Crying) I really don't know what to do. I don't want to settle for the cruelties of life that everyone keeps dealing with.

JIM

What's hurting you?

CLARA

Everyone and everything keeps leaving me behind. It feels like a punishment for not being like everyone else and just growing thick skin. And I know this sounds like a twelve year-old tantrum, or so I've been told countless times but...

JIM

It does, but because your soul is hurting, and that is nothing to be embarrassed about. We are all children, we just get a little bit of experience as we grow and sometimes it builds us up and some others it tears us apart. I want to tell you it gets easier, but it really doesn't. But you know what can happen?

Clara is still crying and looks at Jim as if trying to contain hope.

JIM (CONT'D)

You can become softer, appreciate the little things more and find incredible joy in the simplest of moments. You have to let that child be again and connect with others who will allow you stay true to yourself. If someone or something chooses to leave you alone along that journey...

JIM

Say thank you and let them go.

CLARA

Say thank you and let them go.

CLARA

That's what my mom used to say.