

**RAIN. SOME FISH. NO ELEPHANTS.**

Y YORK

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Dedication  
this one was always for Mom

**CHARACTERS**

GENE: A white man in his late 50's.  
ESTHER: A white woman, 49. His wife.  
JUNE: A white woman in her early 20's. Their daughter.  
EMILY: A white girl, 12, she limps. JUNE's sister.  
JULIA: A white girl, 12. EMILY's classmate.  
BLACKIE: A black man in his mid 30's.

The curtain rises on an empty stage. The lighting on the cyclorama is blue. The location is the Chesapeake Bay. The stage is quiet for several seconds. Slowly, a sheep is lowered from the flies, then another, then another, until forty sheep are suspended in mid-sky. They represent clouds. A black man walks onto the stage carrying a torch. He sets fire to one, then another, then another of the sheep until all sheep are bleating and in flames. Just kidding. Turn page.

(Act I, Scene 1. The interior of a house, a white living room, somewhere along the Chesapeake Bay, sometime in the future. Fishing gear hangs on a wall near the front door. The quiet sound of a steady rain. ESTHER enters wearing rubber gloves; she maniacally dusts and cleans her way across the room. Enter EMILY from upstairs. She wears a strange prosthetic device on one foot.)

EMILY: Looks great, Mom.

ESTHER: Great? Do you think it really looks great?

EMILY: Great's the only word for it.

ESTHER: What about...clean?

EMILY: Yeah, that's it. Great and clean.

ESTHER: Thank you, dear. Emily! Why are you wearing your false foot?!

EMILY: I'm going out.

ESTHER: It's your birthdate, you don't have to go out. If you don't have to go out, you don't have to wear your false foot.

EMILY: I told June I'd go with her to get ice cream.

ESTHER: It's your birthdate! June can go out by herself.

EMILY: She won't.

ESTHER: She will. She's brave. Go take that off.

(JUNE enters from kitchen.)

JUNE: You ready, Emily? Hi, Mom.

ESTHER: Emily is not going out on her birthdate. Your Dad can go with you.

JUNE: He might not be back for hours.

EMILY: Why not? How long does it take to say "No thanks, buddy?"

JUNE: Dad is not going to say "No thanks, buddy."

EMILY: Is, too.

ESTHER: Come along, Emily. June, Emily and I are removing her false foot. She does not have to go out.

(ESTHER and EMILY go upstairs. JUNE sighs, exits to kitchen. GENE comes in from outside. He is carrying a fish and fishing rod. He wears a rainslicker. He is wet.)

GENE: Hey, everybody, come look at this. Esther!

ESTHER'S VOICE: In a minute, Gene.

(GENE looks around, goes to the closet, finds a rainslicker. Puts it on the table, puts the fish on the slicker, starts to gut it. JUNE enters wearing rubber boots, looks into the closet.)

JUNE: Why aren't you at the lab, Dad? I hope you were cooperative today. Where's my...What are you doing?

GENE: Don't yell. I hate it when you yell.

JUNE: That's my slicker!

GENE: How about this fish?

JUNE: Don't clean fish on my slicker.

GENE: It's a drum.

JUNE: Alright, it's a drum. Outside! You do that outside.

GENE: It's raining.

JUNE: Big news! It's been raining since '55. Why are you even here?!

(Enter ESTHER, she dusts the steps. JUNE blocks the view of the fish from her. ESTHER goes to the kitchen.)

ESTHER: Emily was wearing her false foot, today of all days. Gene, you can go with June to get ice cream. Nobody has to go outside on their birthdate. This banister looks very clean. And great. The cake is in the oven and it's going to be great. And clean, maybe. Better than anything you could purchase, I'll tell ya. Don't get too wet, June. Don't leave without saying goodbye.

(She disappears into the kitchen.)

JUNE: Did you see that?

GENE: No. I carefully avoided that that that you're referring to.

JUNE: You know what she's doing, don't you? She didn't even look at us.

GENE: Help me clean this.

JUNE: Not that there's anything here to see.

GENE: I want to have it ready for the party.

JUNE: Birthdate parties aren't for fish. They're for ice cream, and soda. They're for sugar rush! It's dripping on the rug!

GENE: For your Mom.

JUNE: You're just encouraging it.

GENE: It makes her happy. What else am I suppose to do?

JUNE: I don't know. Something. (Pause) What happened at the meeting? When are you going back? (No answer) Please don't play games with me. (Sigh, Resigned) Where'd you get the drum?

GENE: Caught it.

JUNE: Dad! You didn't catch it. They're extinct. Did you steal it from the lab? If they send an Inspector— if you embarrassed me—

GENE: Out on the Chesapeake Bay, three foot seas, by myself. Knew it was a drum. You can always tell when it's a drum on the line. Extinct? You just gotta know where to catch 'em.

JUNE: Whose boat?

GENE: Mine.

JUNE: Dad—

GENE: It was really cold. Cold and...guess what?

JUNE: What?

GENE: Raining!

JUNE: You don't have a boat anymore.

GENE: Found the Proud Esther in the middle of the fleet, sitting there all sad and little and unused. I could have taken a destroyer. Nobody woulda noticed.

JUNE: (sighs)

GENE: Maybe I'll take a destroyer next time.

JUNE: (Cleaning up the fish) You're not going to take a destroyer.

GENE: Ever think you'd see a drum again? What are you doing?

JUNE: I'm cleaning this up before Mom sees it and gets ideas. You've lost your whole mind.

(JUNE wraps up the fish in the slicker, exits to the kitchen.)

GENE: (Sings Mule Skinner Blues) "Hee hee hee hee hee hee! Ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

(Enter EMILY without her false foot. She limps.)

EMILY: Is this the entertainment for the party?

GENE: (Sings) "He he he he, hee hee hee! Ha Ha Ha ha ha ha!" Dance, Emily?

EMILY: That's a laugh.

ESTHER: (Peeks in from the kitchen) Gene, don't go picking on Emily. You can just leave her alone this one day of the year. What's that smell? (She enters the living room.) Hmm. Yes, I recognize it, but I can't identify it. Yes, it's a familiar, but as yet unidentified smell.

(ESTHER sniffs along the wall.)

EMILY: Where you going, Mom?

ESTHER: Where am I going? I'm going to the kitchen. The kitchen is where I go, and I am going there now.

EMILY: Behind you. (Guides her toward the kitchen) This way, Mom.

(JUNE enters from kitchen carrying her bloody slicker.)

JUNE: They'll never issue me a new slicker. You all right, Mom?

ESTHER: Fine, fine. You can sing your tune, Gene, just don't pick on Emily.

(She exits to the kitchen, sniffing and dusting.)

GENE: (Sings) "Hee hee hee hee heeeeee."

JUNE: Is anybody going with me? (Annoyed at the singing) Dad!

GENE: (Sings) "Ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

EMILY: No. If Dad's going to lose his mind, I want to stay and watch it.

JUNE: Do you think anybody'll show up?

EMILY: No! Nobody ever has and nobody ever will.

JUNE: I thought your teacher made an announcement.

EMILY: Yeah. That was a big laugh.

GENE: As big as (Talks) "Ha ha ha ha ha ha?"

JUNE: Well, why am I going out there, if nobody's coming?

EMILY: I like ice cream.

JUNE: All right, I'll get ice cream. I'm taking your slicker.

EMILY: What's wrong with yours?

JUNE: See for yourself.

EMILY: Yuk.

GENE: It was a crucial element in the burial of my drumfish.

EMILY: A drum? Great.

GENE: Yep. Caught it today. On the high sea, hee hee hee hee hee.

EMILY: You didn't go on the high sea hee hee. Where'd you get it?

JUNE: I'm taking the 8-wheeler.

GENE: Wait a minute. Call your Mom.

EMILY: You always forget.

JUNE: (Sighs) Mom! I'm going.

(ESTHER enters wearing her rubber gloves.)

ESTHER: Here I am. Goodby, June. I love you.

JUNE: Goodby, Mom. I love you. Goodby Dad. I love you.

GENE: Goodby, June. I love you.

EMILY: Goodby, June, I love you!

JUNE: Oh, brother. Goodby, all ready.

ESTHER: June, you know, you never know.

(JUNE exits.)

ESTHER: Emily, you don't have on your new dress. Is this a mistake?

EMILY: No.

ESTHER: But your new dress is for the birthdate party. It must be a mistake.

EMILY: Nobody's coming.

ESTHER: You should put on that new dress. Oh. Oh. Oh, my. What's this? What is this red? There is something red on the rug. It looks as if it's, yes, it is, it's wet. (Happy) There is a wet red spot on my white rug. Does anyone know what this might be? Well, I must know what it is before I can know how to deal with it. If it's wine, then I should put some very salty cold water on it, although I don't know where anyone in this house could find wine. If it's paint, why then I should get some paint remover. I hope it isn't blood. Why, if it were blood, it could be permanent. (Sad) I would have to look at this nasty red spot forever.

EMILY: It isn't blood. It's...magic marker. I was drawing a picture with magic markers and one of them leaked.

ESTHER: You were drawing! I'm so glad. You're such a talented girl. You draw; you make things. That's fine. I have to make the icing for the cake. Where are my gloves? Oh, right.

EMILY: Don't you want to fix the stain?

ESTHER: Of course, I want to fix the stain. I wouldn't leave a stain like that. I'll fix it later. (Exits to kitchen)

EMILY: But Mom...(Pause) What happened at the meeting, Dad? What did they say after you told them where to stuff their petri dishes? June thinks you're going back. I told her it'd be a sunny-dry day before you ever worked in a lab again. Were they really mad? I'll bet they were surprised. Nobody says no to them. I'll bet they're shaking in their shoes.

GENE: Put this rod away for me.

EMILY: But, Dad, what did they—

GENE: Away. In the closet away.

EMILY: ...Okay. I haven't seen a drum in ages. Where'd you get it?

GENE: I stole my boat back. Knew nobody'd be going out.

EMILY: Nobody ever goes out.

GENE: Just me and the old boat. No fish either. Except that drum. Tough fish. It pulled my boat around in a circle.

EMILY: Where'd you catch it?

GENE: I'll show ya.

(GENE pulls down a huge map of the Chesapeake Bay. This is not the bay as we know it; it includes much of what used to be the dry land of Washington, DC, Virginia, and Maryland.)

GENE: Here.

EMILY: By the monuments?

GENE: Yep. Tried the Smithsonian, but it was all fished out. Had a feeling this guy'd be lurking in the monuments.

EMILY: You could have capsized and drowned.

GENE: So what?

EMILY: For starters, it would have ruined my birthdate for me for all time.

GENE: I was just trying to get you the perfect gift. Remember this? (He points to an area of land on the map.)

EMILY: Arlington Burial Ground?

GENE: Gone.

EMILY: No!

GENE: Gone! Where's that crayon?

EMILY: I'll do it. (EMILY gets a blue crayon and colors the land area to match the water. Sad) Wow.

GENE: I was kind of surprised myself.

EMILY: I am going to put on my new dress.

GENE: Your Mom will like that.

EMILY: If she notices. (Exits upstairs)

GENE: Drowned? Capsized and drowned?! (Singing) "Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha."

(ESTHER enters with a book and a squirt bottle.)

ESTHER: I can't find anything about magic marker stains. Now, if I knew what was in magic markers, I could look up the component parts. What's in magic markers, Gene?

(It's a gentler Gene, alone with Esther.)

GENE: Nobody knows what's in magic markers, Esther.

ESTHER: (On hands and knees scrubbing) This is a solution of water and vinegar.

GENE: That's for cat piss.

ESTHER: Now, Gene, nothing gets out cat piss. That's documented. Did you get Emily a present?

GENE: I did, but June stole it. I'll go see if I can find it.  
(Exits to the kitchen.)



ESTHER: (She scrubs the rug for a second, then shouts to GENE in the kitchen.) Gene! Do you think I've become obsessed with stains because of this white carpet; or...do you think I got this carpet because I've become obsessed with stains?

GENE: (Entering with fish) Maybe.

ESTHER: (Pause) What's that?

GENE: Drumfish. Try fish oil for getting out the magic marker.

ESTHER: I've never heard of that.

GENE: Me neither. Might work.

ESTHER: Might. (She takes a piece of the fish skin and rubs it into the rug.) Hmm. I recognize this smell. It is a recent and familiar smell.

GENE: (Hopeful) Yeah, yeah?

ESTHER: Gene! This is a fish. I used to catch these. Big ones!

GENE: (Hopeful) Yes, you did. You were terrific, Esther.

ESTHER: (A degree of lucidity previously unseen) Hi.

GENE: (Quietly) Hi.

ESTHER: (Looks around) Looks like I've been busy.

GENE: Yeah.

ESTHER: Oh well. At least the place is clean.

GENE: Yeah.

ESTHER: Oh, Gene, I'm so worried...

GENE: Don't worry— I'll take care of you—

ESTHER: Not about me. June. She's becoming stuffy. A stuffy person. She doesn't sing anymore. Maybe you could remember another tune for us.

GENE: I could try again.

ESTHER: I remember when you first remembered the tune. You were tickling me. I went hee hee hee hee hee hee, and you sang "ha ha, ha ha ha ha." Too bad you can't remember the words.

GENE: Someday, maybe. (They kiss.)

ESTHER: June used to sing it with you. She isn't sweet to Emily anymore. I think it's those people at the lab. Half-people. I don't like it. I'm going to talk with her. She should be doing good things. Then she would be happy. She could stop the rain. She could neutralize the acid. (Drifting away, starting to clean) She could play with her sister, or even go fishing with you. (Gone away) She could help me...dust. She could help me clean the carpet! Where's that fish skin?

GENE: Here it is.

ESTHER: (Scrubbing) Thank you, Gene. How does this look, Gene? Is it better?

GENE: (Sad) Fine. It's fine.

(The doorbell rings. GENE and ESTHER look at each other.)

ESTHER: The doorbell. June is out, but isn't June because she doesn't ring. Everybody else is here. That must be the party!

A VOICE: Open up! It's raining!

GENE: A weather psychic.

ESTHER: Emily has a wide spectrum of friends.

GENE: No, she doesn't.

(Doorbell rings for a long time. GENE opens the door.)

GENE: (To JULIA) Stop that.

(Enter JULIA. She wears a fur coat, carries a satchel. A black arm is seen holding an umbrella over her.)

JULIA: Is this Emily's house?

GENE: It's my house.

(Pause, JULIA starts out)

ESTHER But Emily lives here.

JULIA: Is there a party?

GENE: What's it to you?

ESTHER: Yes, of course there's a party. It's Emily's birthdate and we're having a party. We're so glad you could come.

JULIA: My female elder made me. (To the black arm) Wait in the car. Keep the motor running, but don't asphyxiate yourself, Blackie. (The arm disappears, the door closes)

GENE: Blackie! This kid's got her own Blackie. La de da de da de da. And a Fakefur.

JULIA: This isn't a Fakefur. We don't have anything fake in our house. If it isn't real, my male elder won't buy it. We have real silver and real wood and real art.

GENE: I have a real pain in my behind.

(ESTHER pets JULIA's coat.)

JULIA: What are you doing?

ESTHER: The poor little things.

GENE: What do you do with all this really real stuff?

JULIA: We keep it in the vault, of course. Are you Emily's male elder?

GENE: Me? Noooooo. I'm her footman. And that's her lady-in- waiting.

JULIA: I'm Julia. I never get invited places. That's why Rena made me come. I wish she could see you both. I'd never have to leave the house again. (She sits down, makes herself comfortable) What are you doing with those big fish guts?

ESTHER: You see that stain? I was using those fish guts to get rid of that stain. But since the party's here, I'll put them away. (She exits to the kitchen.)

JULIA: Fishguts? Why doesn't she use Stainout?

GENE: She's a perfectionist.

JULIA: She's completely crackers. I didn't know people like her got past the eliminations.

GENE: Specimens of an earlier age. Like your Blackie.

JULIA: If it was up to me, anybody like that -- Zap! Through the Space Disposal.

(Enter EMILY in her new dress.)

EMILY: What are you doing here?

JULIA: I was invited. Remember? Yuk. Unsettle my calm! Where is your false foot?!

EMILY: I don't have to wear it at home.

JULIA: Put it on!

EMILY: Not at home. I don't have to.

JULIA: I can't even look at you!

EMILY: Then why don't you leave!

JULIA: I can't leave. I brought you a present.

EMILY: (Lying) We...don't have presents at birthdates!

JULIA: Well, I can't take it back. Rena said I had to give it to you.

EMILY: Dad, uh, I mean, Gene, why don't you hang up her coat?

JULIA: Did you say Dad?

GENE: Of course not. She said "gad." "Eee gad, why don't you hang up her coat?"

EMILY: Well, why don't you?

GENE: It might bite me.

EMILY: I know. Poor little things. (She pets the coat.)

JULIA: Don't touch me! Put on your foot!

GENE: Emily, leave your foot where it is.

JULIA: This is awful! (She takes a pill.)

(A brief silence.)

GENE: Do you want your coat hanged or not?

JULIA: (Happy from her pill) I'll wear it, thank you.

ESTHER'S VOICE: Gene, come help me fold this fish skin!

GENE: Excuse me, miss, I'm going to help your female elder with my drum. Don't worry, I'll be back.  
(Exits)

JULIA: Can I see it?

EMILY: See what?

JULIA: Your foot. I want to see your foot.

EMILY: Okay.

JULIA: Wow. Walk a bunch.

EMILY: No.

JULIA: I say so so you have to.

EMILY: (Sighs, walks)

JULIA: That is so weird.

EMILY: It isn't weird, it's great. It's the one and only walk like this in the whole world.

JULIA: What's great about that? Do you really not give presents?

EMILY: Yes. We think it's barbaric.

JULIA: This whole domestic unit is a mess. Both female youngers are mutants and your elders are eliminatable.

EMILY: We are not mutants.

JULIA: Are, too. You got that weird foot and June works in a lab. Females don't work in labs. They only code female zygotes to eight.

EMILY: She's smart from being around Gene.

JULIA: It doesn't work like that! I told Rena nobody'd come to your party. Nobody likes you. You walk funny. You're a crippled freako strange thing.

EMILY: So what?! We are weird. You know what else? Gene has a boat. He caught a drumfish on it just today.

JULIA: No he didn't. Nobody has a boat. They fill up with rain and sink.

EMILY: I'll show you. (EMILY runs into the kitchen. JULIA runs over to snap secret pictures of the books.)

JULIA: Wow, look at them all!(EMILY comes back in with the fish.)

EMILY: What are you looking for?

JULIA: Nothing.

EMILY: You spy. You creepy snoop. Why don't you call your male elder and tell him we have books? I'll bet he's just dying to know.

JULIA: He knows you have books.

EMILY: You better tell him about this one. Serious Stain Removal. It's my...uh...Esther's favorite book. She reads it day and night. Sometimes she quotes from it. You better call him quick. I'm sure this is subversive. (Pause) Nobody likes you, either.

JULIA: Your female elder reads?

EMILY: So what?

JULIA: Unsettle my calm! (Takes a pill. Smiles. Pause) Is that a real dead fish?

EMILY: Yeah, fresh-caught today, you can tell by the blood. They don't sell them this messy, you got to catch it to get it to look like this. Gene is a hearty seaman, brave and true, with a boat. And this is a new dress. And we don't give presents because it's barbaric.

JULIA: How come you have a new dress if you don't give presents?

EMILY: It isn't a present. It's a coincidence. (Pause) Why don't you go home?

JULIA: I can't. Rena said I had to stay for the whole party.

EMILY: Why don't you wait in your 8-wheeler?

JULIA: We don't have an 8-wheeler. We have a stretch. With triple-thick protective glass. Rena told my Blackie to drive me home after the party. If he takes me home now, she'll yell at me.

EMILY: Esther never yells at me.

JULIA: Really? Never?

EMILY: Never.

JULIA: Not even when you get really dirty and bring mud in? You have a white carpet. I'd get killed if we had a white carpet.

EMILY: No. Esther likes dirt. It's her hobby.

JULIA: Come on.

EMILY: She talks to it and chases it around. She walks around all day looking for it and she's miserable until she finds it. Sometimes we have to bring it in special so she has something to do.

JULIA: Sounds like Stage 3 to me.

EMILY: No, it isn't!

JULIA: Then Stage 4, then Zap, the Suicide!

EMILY: It isn't the suicide, it isn't. (Lying) She's always been like this.

JULIA: Oh, sure. What do you care, anyway? My female elder started, and I'm glad. (Pause) Are there going to be any games?

EMILY: I don't know. I didn't think anybody would come.

JULIA: Let's play Eliminator!

EMILY: No.

JULIA: I say so so we will.

EMILY: I don't know how.

JULIA: I'll show you. It's easy. It's fun. I have a kit.

(JULIA goes to her satchel and takes out her Eliminator Kit. It contains a black sack, rope for tying hands, and a gag. She hands the sack to EMILY.)

JULIA: Put this on.

EMILY: No. Let me be the Eliminator, and you put on the sack.

JULIA: Don't be ridiculous! I'd never be eliminated. Put this on. (The gag) Hurry up. I get to tie your hands. (She does) And now, the sack. (She pulls the sack over EMILY.)