

# The Plunge

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## CHARACTERS

Dad

Girl

SETTING: A river. Other scenery optional.

*(At rise, DAD is approaching the river with a fishbowl with GIRL is walking alongside of him with her eyes glued to the fishbowl.)*

GIRL: Careful Dad!

DAD: He's just fine.

GIRL: His pebbles are floating and his seaweed shifted.

DAD: He's just fine.

GIRL: I don't think he wants to go.

DAD: We can't take him with us.

*(DAD and GIRL reach the river.)*

GIRL: We can't do it today.

DAD: We can't turn back and go home.

GIRL: We *always* can.

DAD: *(Gesturing the fishbowl towards GIRL.)* Do you want to do it?

GIRL: No. *(DAD begins to kneel.)* Wait! I'll do it.

*(GIRL takes fishbowl from DAD as he stands up. She stands for a few minutes looking straight into the bowl.)*

DAD: Our truck's leaving in an hour. We need to do this now.

GIRL: Mandarin. I named him Mandarin.

DAD: Yes you did. After the fish wallpaper in your bathroom.

GIRL: And he has a home. With water and pebbles and seaweed and food and—

DAD: There will be plenty of water and pebbles and food in the river.

GIRL: The river has no seaweed.

DAD: No, but—

GIRL: That's what makes his fishbowl *his*. His seaweed.

DAD: *(Kneeling down and pointing to river.)* See the moss? That's a type of plant.

GIRL: It's not the same.

DAD: *(Standing up.)* He might come across a lily pad or two.

GIRL: *(Clinging to fishbowl.)* Where he'll be eaten!

DAD: Mandarin won't get—well he might—but that's not the point.

GIRL: Of course it's the point. We're taking him somewhere unpleasant. *(DAD slowly takes the fishbowl from*

*GIRL. She watches him kneel by the river.)* But we had so many good times together with him in the fishbowl.

Like when we first brought him home from the store and—

DAD: Did Mandarin like leaving the store?

GIRL: What are you talking about, Dad?

DAD: Did Mandarin like leaving his dripping bag from the store so that he could come to the fishbowl in our house?

*(GIRL pauses.)*

GIRL: I hope so.

DAD: Don't you think we're giving him an even better home in the river? *(He points to the river.)*

Look! Do you see

all those fish? Will you let me introduce him?

GIRL: *(Crosses arms.)* Fine.

*(DAD starts to tilt bowl.)*

GIRL: *(Throws hands in the air.)* Stop! You said you were going to introduce them.

DAD: I can't introduce fish to fish. Mandarin has to do it on his own.

GIRL: But you said—

DAD: River fish, this is Mandarin. Mandarin, these are your new friends.

GIRL: It's not that easy, Dad.

DAD: Of course not. But they'll be friends soon enough. Can I pour him in?

GIRL: *(Crosses arms.)* Fine. But he's *not* going to like it.

*(DAD pours the fishbowl into the river. He leaves the fishbowl on the ground before standing up.)*

DAD: See?

GIRL: Nothing's happening. He's right where you put him.

DAD: He's getting a feel of the place. He's getting his fins wet.

*(They watch the fish for a few seconds.)*

GIRL: Still hasn't moved. He's a fish out of water *in* water.

DAD: He'll be fine. The other fish haven't swam off yet.

GIRL: Face it, Dad. You put Mandarin in a river where he is not welcome in the fish school and where he is most

likely going to be attacked by predators. You ruined his life. *(GIRL walks a few steps away.)*

DAD: It's not going to be that bad. Of course there will be bad days. Everyone has bad days.

Maybe even weeks.

It's for his own good. What kind of a fish would he be if he always stayed in his bowl?

GIRL: A very, very happy fish.

DAD: An ignorant fish. He would never know what kinds of rivers or ponds or lakes or oceans there were in the

world.

GIRL: But he's left his fishbowl with the seaweed.

DAD: He's outgrown his seaweed.

GIRL: But what if—

DAD: I don't know.

GIRL: Or how about—

DAD: I can't say. We have to let time tell. *(DAD hugs GIRL. They loosen embrace to look at river.)*

*He moved. Look*

*where he is now.*

GIRL: A couple of feet.

DAD: That's a couple of miles to them. Do you realize that he has swam the farthest distance ever in his life just

now? And he's doing it again. Look at him go.

GIRL: Why are the fish still around? What do they care?

DAD: Maybe they already care about him.

GIRL: The fish are leaving.

DAD: And so is he.

GIRL: He *is* leaving. I can't believe he's ok. (*Looks at DAD.*) Will everything be ok?

DAD: If not, we always have each other.

(*DAD and GIRL walk together upstage.*)

*BLACKOUT*