

**THERE'S A BIRD IN THE GARDEN**

*A Monologue*

By

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## **CHARACTER LIST**

**The Child:** Aged between 6-12 years old. There is something slightly off about them.

## **SETTING**

The setting is an ordinary house and garden.

This version was written specifically to address the COVID-19 situation, so it is set in 2020, during the first lockdown.

The monologue spans a non-descript amount of time.

## **NOTES**

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**DISCLAIMER:** This play was produced by Haywire Theater for The Pocketful Project, and cannot be associated with other parties as of 2020-21.

## THERE'S A BIRD IN THE GARDEN

### **The Child:**

There's a bird in the garden.

I found it while trying to bury myself. My mum sent me outside to play while my dad was hanging his coat up. She says his work has stopped, so she needs to talk to him. She says we all have to be tough over the next few months. I don't know what she means.

It's small and brown, a completely ordinary bird, but to me, it's beautiful. Even the fleshy bits, mixing pink and brown together like the coffee my mum drinks. She let me try it once, but I didn't like it.

I wonder what happened to the bird. It looks too young to be dead.

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There's my dad in the garden.

He says to leave the bird, but he's gone back inside before he sees me pick it up again.

I try to hold it gently. My dad always says I'm too clumsy. But this bird is special. I won't hurt it. It's my friend. My mum says I should make up some friends now that I can't go to school for a while. But I already do that. In our class, I have the least friends, because no one wants to sit and make games with me.

Should I give the bird a name? It would have to be special. A special name for a special bird. I can't give a dead bird a silly name.

I think about names for forever. But I never think of the right one.

I can hear my mum and dad yelling in the kitchen. My mum is yelling louder. I wonder if the bird had a family, or parents. Did they bury it?

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There's a bird in the garden.

I study its wings and feathers. I got a book from the library about animals a long time ago, and I don't have to return it for another long time. I've already read it, so a lot of it I already know. The bird eats the worm, then the cat eats the bird. Then which one am I? I don't eat cats.

My dad sits in the kitchen alone, watching me through the window. I don't like it. I try to ignore him, focusing on the bird. Its skin is starting to go green, so I sometimes lose it in the grass.

Maybe a cat got it, like the book says. Maybe a cat grabbed it in the middle of the night while it was asleep, stole it from its family and killed it. Did the cat bury it?

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There's a woman in the kitchen, and there's a bird in the garden.

She's talking with my dad. I can't hear her, but she's speaking very fast.

I touch the bird's beak gently, so its head won't fall off. I make it speak. When it was alive, it must have sung songs. I wish it would sing for me. It could sing me to sleep. I don't sleep very well, and my mum said ages ago that since I'm not at school I can stay up later. My dad stays up too. Once I woke up at 3am and saw him in the garden through my window. He was hunched next to the dirt. I was scared he'd find the bird, but he hasn't said anything. I won't tell him I saw him.

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There's the woman in the garden.

She has a mask on her face, which looks like a beak. I try to show her the bird, because they match. She scolds me. She doesn't understand the game. She's not even trying to play; I have my hands in the dirt and she keeps asking me questions. I don't know how my mum and dad are doing. My dad doesn't talk to me, and I haven't seen my mum for a long time.

The bird is starting to rot away. It smells like liquorice and something else. I hate liquorice, but I don't hate the smell. I am scared that the bird will disappear soon. Maybe the dirt's making it rot. Maybe I should put it in the freezer.

But the dirt feels warm, not too wet or too dry. It's comfy. Mushrooms have even begun to grow in the darker dirt that's a bit further away from us. I feel bad that I took the bird from it. Maybe its parents are also down there. Maybe a cat got them all.

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There's a bird in the garden.

It's just me and the bird again, like how it should be. I pull off all the bugs on its body, and the woman is gone. I didn't want to talk to her, because she didn't want to play. And I don't mind playing alone. My mum only wanted to play sometimes, because she was always too busy cleaning stuff up, and my dad never wants to play with me. I hear him yelling on the phone. Would the bird want to play, if it were alive? Maybe it wouldn't, when it could fly wherever it wanted. But now it's stuck in the ground like me, so playing might be the only good thing. I wonder if the bird got lonely down there in the dirt.

I wonder how lonely I'll be when its eyes are fully gone. I read that the bones stay. I'm not sure I can play with just bones.

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There's a body in the garden.

That's what the men say, the men who are all around it. They stand like a navy fence. They must mean the bird, because they won't let me play. They keep telling me to go back inside. They're digging up all the dirt, and I don't know where the bird is.

My dad says to leave them alone. The men say for my dad to leave me alone. I'm not allowed in the garden anymore. I can't be with the bird. I can't even say goodbye, they won't let me look. It's not fair. I cry. One man comforts me, but he doesn't mention the bird. I wonder what he's upset about then.

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There's my mum in the garden.

I hope she can look after the bird.

**END**