

Pond Life

By

eric fa gardner

ericfagardner@hotmail.com

+44 7802887250

A sensual young mother struggles with loneliness in an unfamiliar backwater to avoid history repeating itself as she and her precocious daughters come to terms with the return of her abusive husband.

Info@pomdpom.com

WWW.POMDPOM.COM ©2015 PomdPom Ltd. All rights reserved.

EXT. POND-DAY

Flo (14), in a swim-suit, stands behind a tree, staring intently into shrubbery near the pond, the favoured tree with blanket, book and rolled up towels near. Poppy (5) bounds up, tugs at her.

POPPY

You see it yet?

Flo gestures SHHHH to Poppy, waves her away. Flo GIGGLES, hands to her mouth, Poppy shrugs, SIGHS, walks to the tree. The shrubbery moves, parts, Damon (22) emerges in brief trunks, clothes over his arm. He looks at Flo, blushes, walks on.

Flo blushes, skips to the blanket, sits demurely beside Poppy. Damon throws down his jeans, reaches down to Flo.

DAMON

Last one in is a wuss.

Flo takes his hand and runs into the pond with him. Poppy leans across and picks up the USB strewn from the jeans. She examines it, pockets it, strolls off to the house.

SPLASH, SPLASH

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

Rose (29) runs into the bedroom, Poppy sits upright in bed CRYING, Flo kneels at the side of the bed, CRYING, being pushed away by Poppy, asleep, eyes open.

POPPY

No, let me finish. It's a simple verse.

Rose puts her arms around Poppy, she hugs her back.

ROSE

Hush Poppy, mom's here. I'll keep you safe, protect you.

POPPY

How can you, you know nothing.

ROSE

Poppy, no, its mom.

Poppy pulls away, runs to the window, opens the curtains.

POPPY

There is a salutary lesson here, but not from me, from him.

Poppy points out the window to the hare. Rose runs to Poppy, CRYING. Flo follows, grips Rose gently.

FLO

Leave her Mom, the teacher is trying to tell us something. Just listen.

Poppy turns to Flo, shakes her head contemptuously.

POPPY

Not the teacher, this is my story. My mill.

65 INT. ROSE BEDROOM DAY

C. 1874 John watches as two men mount a huge ornate, gilt saloon bar mirror on the wall facing the bed. He motions, they adjust its angle, he claps his hands in joy.

Alison, pregnant, enters, peers up at it, looks to John, he grins, she bows her head, shakes it, leaves.

The men restore the sideboard to its original position against the wall under the mirror, put the stand mounted stuffed buck hare in the centre. The men leave.

66 INT. ROSE BEDROOM NIGHT

Rose crosses the moonlit room, pauses to stare at the buck hare and nebula of blue light flickering across the pond.

Rose closes the curtains, turns to her bedside cabinet, removes a pebble, hefts it in her hand, turns it on, listens to the faint buzz, runs it over her abdomen, again, grins.

Rose SIGHS, turns it off, sits, lies on the bed, stares at her reflection in the saloon mirror, SIGHS, swings her legs onto the bed, lies back, pebble in hand, closes her eyes.

67 INT.KITCHEN NIGHT-

C. 1874. Alison puts Eve in her crib at the side of the sink, she moves to the sink, leans over, throws the window open. She straightens up and takes a dish, is thrown forward, her dress and petticoat lifted above her waist. John stands behind her, he takes her roughly, she GRUNTS, bends forward, SOBS

68 INT. ROSE BEDROOM NIGHT

Rose sits up abruptly in the dark, she stares up at the bright mirror where an oddly dressed man swings a fist, she CRIES out in pain, clutches her face, darkness.

ROSE  
No! Don't! No more!

Rose SOBS on her side, gets up gingerly, turns on the light, examines her body, her bruised face in the mirror, walks to the open curtains and window, stares out at nothing, shivers. The buck hare comes into view. No moon.

69 INT. ROSE BEDROOM NIGHT

Full moon. Rose wakes up abruptly, on top of the sheets, Poppy stands beside the bed smiling. Rose reaches out, hugs Poppy to her. Both in thin short night-wear.

ROSE  
Can't you sleep?

POPPY  
Not with all that noise.

ROSE  
What noise?

POPPY  
You'll see soon, well hear.

Poppy GIGGLES. Rose stands, shivers, closes the curtains, peeks at the buck hare and dancing blue lights on the pond.

ROSE  
And what do you think you're doing?

Poppy climbs onto the bed, makes herself comfortable.

POPPY  
You need me.

Rose LAUGHS, joins her.

ROSE  
Flo will be jealous.

POPPY  
She is, of what you do with Damon.

Rose stares at Poppy, reaches out to stroke her hair.

ROSE  
What an odd thing to say. Damon?

POPPY  
He'll protect her, will love her.  
Not like dad.

Rose shivers, moves closer to Poppy, hugs her.

ROSE

She is too young for Damon, for boys, just like you.

Rose cuddles, tickles, rubs noses with Poppy. They GIGGLE.

POPPY

Not too young for daddy.

ROSE

Forget daddy, daddy's gone, you're safe with me.

POPPY

Not yet, it's not safe yet. Soon, when daddy's gone for good.

Rose looks at Poppy in surprise, reconsiders, lies back.

ROSE

Sleep, just sleep.

70

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

No moon. Rose, pants only, tip toes into the bedroom to close the curtains, stares out at the glaring buck hare. Flo tosses on top of the bed, Poppy SNORES, light nightshirts.

FLO

No! Please don't. Don't!

Startled, Rose turns to Flo who sits up, pulls her knees up, pushes her arms out in front defensively.

FLO (CONT'D)

She's just a child. Leave her!

Flo backs up against the bed head, eyes staring, face contorted, asleep. Rose moves to comfort her.

FLO (CONT'D)

I promise. I promise. I'll say nothing. I'll keep her here!

Rose hugs Flo gently, is ignored, Flo SOBS, she starts at a touch on her arm, turns to Poppy standing at her side.

POPPY

Its Alison, the millers wife, he wants Flo too.

71

EXT. MILL-DAY

4 JULY 1875 John paces the raised bunting decorated porch talking begrudgingly to an older well dressed dignitary. John gestures dismissively towards Alison.

Alison, heavily pregnant, talks animatedly to a group of diversely dressed men and women, each wearing their national dress of their country. Alison takes a book from each, carries an armful of books to the porch. John hurries to her, knocks them from her arms, she runs indoors CRYING, he kicks the books away. The visitors look on aghast, start to leave.

72

EXT. PORCH DAY

Glenn (45), in singlet and shorts, SNORES on the wicker chair. A machete rests across his lap, empty beer bottles at his feet. He shifts around, GROANS with pleasure, moves languorously.

Flo and Poppy creep up behind him, GIGGLE, whisper in an ear each. Glenn rolls his head, GRUNTS, sits up abruptly, the machete falls, nicks his ankle, YELPS, bottles roll away.

GLENN

Shit! I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

Flo swings around the chair, puts one hand high up his thigh, her face close into his, grins. Glenn turns to her.

FLO

For what? What have you done?

Poppy swings around the chair, leaps on his lap, onto his bandaged hand, claws at his chest. Glenn panics.

POPPY

For what? What have you done?

Glenn GRUNTS, turns to Poppy, her face in his, pushes at the girls, staggers upright. They fall away, LAUGHING.

GLENN

Jesus! You girls are crazy.

Rose runs out to them, hands smeared with paint.

ROSE

Flo, Poppy, what is it? Glenn?

GLENN

I was sleeping, there was a... And then Flo, and

Glenn turns to her aghast, holds his bandaged hand, looks down at his soiled shorts, bleeding ankle, GROANS.

ROSE

You need to change your shorts. And do something with that machete!

Rose pulls her girls close, forgetful of the paint. He shakes his head, picks up the machete, walks away, head down, slips on a beer bottle, drops the machete, picks it up.

POPPY

Be careful with your chopper.

He composes himself, heads towards the yard, angrily embeds the machete in a chopping block at the edge of the porch.

73

INT. BATHROOM DAY

Eddie (20) inspects the old family bathroom thoroughly. Rose paces, opens the window wide, cool wind blows her hair, she fiddles with her dress buttons.

EDDIE

So shall I start in here?

ROSE

Are you as quick as your brother?

EDDIE

No, I'm more laid back, as you should be.

Rose grins, shakes her head, Eddie grins, pushes her hair back from her face. Rose smiles, one hand on his bare arm.

ROSE

You finally hitting on me?

EDDIE

Don't want to be left behind.

He embraces her, kisses her deeply, she responds hungrily, he kicks the door closed. She pushes against him intimately, touches him, pushes him away, hand lingers, she SIGHS.

ROSE

And are you are the big brother?

Eddie steps back, shakes his head, LAUGHS.

EDDIE

You know you're a real tease?

She pulls away fully, turns to the door, hands to her now open dress buttons. The door opens inwards independently.

POPPY

Mom, daddy likes striptease too.

74

INT. KITCHEN TWILIGHT

Rose stares out the window, turns to face Glenn. Leans back lightly on the sink. Glenn paces.

ROSE  
Blood's back?

GLENN  
You know him?

ROSE  
No, sorry, I meant are your blood test results back.

Glenn nods, sits, looks up, waves his floppy bandaged hand.

GLENN  
Found nothing, it's still useless, bloody cat.

Rose walk to him, touches his spongy bandaged hand gently. He flexes his good hand, stands close.

ROSE  
I'm sorry, I told you not to

Glenn embraces her, kisses her hard. She tries to push him away, her hand drops, lingers, finally pulls away, SIGHS.

GLENN  
Just the hand affected, everything else works, nothing soft there.

He grins at her, grimaces at Poppy, in the doorway.

POPPY  
Daddy won't like that mom, nor Angela.

75

INT. MILL DAY

C. 1875 John follows a teenage girl into the mill. He locks the door, a wooden latch across it. She drops her armful of sacks on a tall orderly pile, one of many against a wall.

John seizes her from behind, clamps a hand across her mouth, forces her face down on the pile of sacks. The girl SQUEALS and struggles as he lifts her dress roughly. He takes her.

76

INT. KITCHEN TWILIGHT

FAINT HAMMERING



Rose, in flimsy dress and apron leans over the sink washing dishes, She watches Flo and Poppy play with the cats and the hare. The hammering stops.

A hand grabs her waist under the apron, she starts, smiles to herself, leans forward a little, relaxes, expectant. Another hand moves under her dress slowly to her crotch, fondles her gently, she GASPS, submits, moves against the unseen hands, leans forward over the sink, breathes deep.

Outside the buck hare has gone, the girls wave to her. She waves a wet soapy hand back, bites her hand, grimaces.

ROSE

Don't, Eddie don't.

Rose turns to see Eddie standing in the door way, he turns away, walks quickly down the hall, she runs after him.

77

INT. KITCHEN NIGHT

Rose turns away from the sink, steps to the phone, sits, dials, listens, talks to the answer-phone.

ROSE

Rob, if you're there pick up. I need you! This place is becoming a nightmare. The Mahlens are weird, and I'm sinking.

Rose CRIES, SOBS into the phone.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I'll try your cellphone, call me.

Rose hangs up, SOBS, head in her hands. Flo strokes her hair.

FLO

Don't cry Mom, dad's coming. Poppy said. He'll look after us again

Rose raises her eyes to Flo and Poppy, hugs them to her, stands, looks out the window where the hare and Cheeky sit.

POPPY

Soon, he'll be here soon.

78

INT. KITCHEN DAY

C. 1876 A young full term pregnant girl sits sobbing on a rough stool near the sink, a pond of watery blood on the floor between her open legs and loose soiled gown.

Alison helps the young girl into the shoe bath. She SOBS continuously. Alison delivers the baby, the girl CRIES and GRUNTS with pushing and pain. The child emerges, silent.

John cuts the chord, clears its mouth of sputum. Alison takes the baby, blows gently into its mouth, nose, it CRIES.

Alison wraps the baby in linen, hands to the girl, SOBS.

79 INT.BEDROOM NIGHT-

Poppy sits on the bed in dim light, curtains open, her rabbit pyjama case in hand. She takes Glenn's phone from the case, sits the rabbit upright facing her, the buck hare looks up from the pond, she grins.

Poppy sets the video function on, holds in front of her.

POPPY  
So it's a deal. You leave Mom and  
Rose alone and I will share my  
flesh with you.

She nods (unseen behind her Flo stands making rabbit ears with her fingers) and turns the video function off. The buck hare bows and bounds away.

FLO (O.C.)  
There isn't a flash on Scott's.

Poppy turns, giggles, takes a flash photo of Flo standing on the bed looking down holding a towel. Flo drops the towel, hands to her face, naked beneath, Poppy takes another photo.

80 INT. ROSE BEDROOM NIGHT

Rose sits on the edge of the bed, looking out the window, Flo sits, facing the mirror, her knees to her chest.

ROSE  
Such dreams are normal at your age,  
hormones rage, you're body is  
changing, blossoming.

FLO  
Its not just dreams, it's

ROSE  
A crush, it'll pass.

Flo SIGHS deeply, stretches out, watches in the mirror.

FLO  
I don't want it to, I love Damon.

Rose turns to her, hugs her, strokes her hair.

ROSE  
You're too young, Damon would get  
into trouble, wait, it will pass.

Flo disengages, rolls across the bed, steps off it.

FLO

He'll wait. I know he will.

POPPY

He's a man, won't wait. Feeds,  
hungers, just like mom.

Rose puts her hands to her mouth, guilty. Flo runs out  
CRYING. In the mirror the Miller belly LAUGHS.

81

INT. KITCHEN NIGHT

Rose, in a flimsy dress leans over the sink washing a water  
jug, watches the cats through the window. Hands grab her  
waist roughly, she SIGHS, they move under her dress to her  
naked crotch, fondle her, she submits, moves against them.

She leans forward over the sink, breathes deep, she raises a  
leg, a knee, GASPS, rocks rhythmically, orgasms noisily.

She leans over the sink head in hands, regains her composure.  
She takes a paper towel, wipes thin blood from her inner  
thigh, stares at it, turns. No one. She slumps to the floor.

FLO (O.C)

Mom you OK?

Rose looks up to see Flo framed in the doorway, concerned.

ROSE

I am, just coming.

Rose LAUGHS, bursts into tears, bags the paper towel, puts at  
the back of the 'fridge. Flo runs and comforts her.

OMITTED

INT. KITCHEN NIGHT

Rose, in flimsy dress leans over the sink washing dishes,  
watches the cats and the rabbit. Hands grab her waist roughly  
she SIGHS, under her dress to her naked crotch, fondle her.

She submits to the articulate fingers, moves against the  
hands hungrily, she leans forward over the sink, breathes  
deep, she raises a leg, a knee on the sink lip, GASPS, rocks,  
GASPS rhythmically, orgasms noisily, LAUGHS loudly.

She regains her composure, reaches for a paper towel, wipes  
semen from her thigh. Turns to JOE (32), short, heavily built  
muscular male, the drawing, in rough work wear.

JOE

A woman's place, the kitchen.

ROSE  
You bastard! How long?

JOE  
Just so you missed me.

ROSE  
You could be too late.

JOE  
You didn't tell me you moved.

ROSE  
The court set an exclusion order,  
you know that.

JOE  
Just the girls, not you.

ROSE  
What do you want?

JOE  
More.

She SIGHS deeply, bites her lip, cocks her head, pauses,  
walks to him, kisses him passionately, he responds.

82 EXT. POND DAY

Flo sits making a flower chain on the car blanket. Poppy  
stalks Cheeky on her hands and knees, making cat noises.  
Cheeky's back arches, hisses, runs away. Flo looks up.

FLO  
Dad!

Joe walks forward, still dressed roughly, straw clinging to  
his clothes. He holds a rough dog lead and a mongrel dog.

JOE  
This is Justice, I guess you still  
have a cat.

Flo runs to him, embraces him warmly, he strokes her hair.

POPPY  
Told you.

Poppy approaches, strokes the dog, it WHIMPERS.

POPPY (CONT'D)  
Just is? That's a silly name. He  
scared Cheeky, but he has a good  
heart.

Joe drops into a squat, reaches out to Poppy who remains behind the dog. The dog turns, BARKS at nothing. Joe slips the lead, the dog bounds away, jumps into the pond.

SPLASH

Justice submerges. Poppy stands, claps with glee. Poppy runs after Justice, jumps in the pond, grabs his bobbing head.

SPLASH

ROSE (O.C)  
(shouts)  
Flo! Poppy! Where are you?

JOE  
She can swim?

Joe stands, shakes his head, looks to the house.

FLO  
(shouts)  
With dad. At the pond

83

INT. ROSE BEDROOM NIGHT

C. 1877 Alison, pregnant, runs, leans against the sideboard below the mirror, sobbing, head down, knocks over the stuffed hare. John, strides up, pulls her roughly around to face him, her nose streams with blood, nightgown heavily stained.

Alison shouts, he strikes her, she fall to her knees, crawls away. He stalks her, grabs her by the hair, throws her down. Her face strikes the sharp corner of the buck hare stand. She rears up clutching at an empty socket. He steps on the eye.

END OF EXTRACT