

26 INT. TASHA'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM -- DAY (1988)

26

A goldfish lies on a napkin on the night stand of Tasha's room in The Southerland School.

It lacks the girly quality of most little girl's rooms. The walls are plastered with posters of great works of art.

YOUNG TASHA, 5, stands with her arms crossed behind her back. She watches the door expectantly.

Ed sticks his head in.

ED

I was sent for?

Young Tasha points at the dead goldfish.

YOUNG TASHA

What's this?

ED

It's Pascal, if I'm not mistaken.

YOUNG TASHA

Yes, but he's not moving. I like the way Pascal moves.

Ed comes in and pushes the door closed.

ED

Yes. Yes, I know you do.

YOUNG TASHA

He hasn't moved in over an hour, in or out of the water.

ED

I see.

YOUNG TASHA

No one else will speak to me about it. They all keep telling me they'd rather you do it. Miss Fuller says it's "a hard nut to crack." What does that mean, a hard nut to crack?

Ed pulls up a chair and sits down.

ED

That means she thinks it's a hard something for you to hear.

YOUNG TASHA

Why? There must be an explanation why Pascal's stopped moving.

ED

Oh, there certainly is. And a simple one. He's dead.

YOUNG TASHA

Dead? Like Wylie Coyote?

ED

No. Like Yorrick.

YOUNG TASHA

The jester?

ED

Yes, the jester. Pascal's gills, his stomach, his mind... They've all stopped working.

YOUNG TASHA

Well let's fix them.

ED

We can't fix this. They're permanently broken.

She stares at the fish. Her features are tight, as though piecing together a riddle.

YOUNG TASHA

A hard nut to crack.

ED

No. Not at all.

YOUNG TASHA

But you said it's a hard something to explain.

ED

No. I said, Miss Fuller and the others think it's a hard something for you to hear. That's very different.

He picks up the fish and holds it out toward her.

ED

People think that because it was hard for *them* to hear. But you are different than all of us. Better. You think more clearly than we do. And upon thinking, you will recognize that this is as simple a fact as the sunrise or the sunset. It simply *is*.

YOUNG TASHA

What?

ED

Death. Death is guaranteed to us all equally. I will stop working and never move some day. So will your parents. So will the other fish. So will you, but not for a long time.

YOUNG TASHA

But...why?

ED

There is no why. That's why Miss Fuller says it's a hard nut to crack.

She reaches into Ed's hand and takes the fish.

YOUNG TASHA

But what about my tank? What happens when my other fish stop moving?

ED

That's your choice. We can replace them. Or we can leave an open spot, in memory of them.

YOUNG TASHA

I want another Pascal.

ED

You can get another fish, but Pascal was one of a kind. Understand that, Tasha. When we stop moving... When we die, there is no coming back.

REBECCA (O.S.)

Look at you.

27 INT. FITZPATRICK'S LIVING ROOM (PRESENT)

27

Tasha, in the hallway as before, looks up from her father's picture.

REBECCA stands at the end of the hall, her mascara in streaks down her face.

REBECCA

Not a single tear. I don't even have you to share the rest of it with! He's gone and left me alone.

Rebecca cries. Tasha rolls her eyes.