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Opening extract from

The Diaries of Bluebell Gadsby After Iris

Written by

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The Film Diaries Of Bluebell Gadsby

Scene One (Transcript)
Another Perfect Day in Paradise

DAYTIME. THE GADSBY FAMILY HOME. GARDEN.

CAMERAMAN (BLUEBELL) lingers on a pair of feet in frayed canvas All-Stars (her own), before panning down stone steps to the garden where FLORA (16, her oldest sibling) is sunbathing in a bikini. Spread around her are her iPod, her mobile, a bottle of suntan lotion, a bottle of water and several magazines. She is reading a book.

Pan right, following the sound of squealing, to where younger siblings JASMINE (8) and TWIG (10) are playing on the swing under the plane tree. Jasmine falls. Twig whoops. Jasmine howls. Blood pours from her split lip,

staining her torn pink dress. Twig – no longer whooping – runs towards the house. Pan left, back to Flora turning up the volume on her iPod, then indoors to kitchen. Picture shakes as cameraman (still Blue) plucks a tea-towel from the cooker. Back outdoors to close-up of Jasmine's blood-smeared face. Picture is inverted as cameraman applies the tea-towel to Jasmine's lip.

JASMINE

Agh! Agh!! Agh!!!

TWIG

It's not my fault! It's not my fault!

FLORA

I AM *TRYING* TO LISTEN TO MY MUSIC?

Flora heard something in the kitchen this morning and said it wasn't fair to make her go down alone.

'Just because I am the oldest,' Flora said, 'does not mean I have to be the first to die.'

So we grabbed what we could, which was a cricket bat for Twig and tennis rackets for Jas and me, and the big oar Dad got in Oxford with all his boat crew's names on it for Flora. For a family that never plays sport we have an awful lot of equipment. Jas said Dad would kill Flora if she broke the oar and Flora said she'd remember that when her entire family had been murdered because she hadn't been properly armed. But in the end we didn't need to hit the burglar, because when we got to the kitchen he turned out to be Zoran, and even though we didn't know yet that it was him, he was wearing a flowery apron and sandals and a little goatee beard that made him look like Mr Tumnus in *Narnia*, who everybody knows was on the right side in the end even if he did have his moments.

'Who are you and what are you doing here?' demanded Flora.

'I am your new babysitter,' said Zoran.

'A babysitter!' cried Flora. 'But why?'

Zoran gave Jas what Dad calls *a laden look* and she bit her lip so we couldn't see the stitches they gave her at the hospital.

'Your mother called me last night,' said Zoran. 'She was worried.'

'But how does she even *know* you?' asked Flora.

We all stared at him. It seemed so unlikely that Mum should know someone like Zoran.

'Through your father,' said Zoran.

'Ah,' said Flora.

And that was that. Zoran didn't elaborate and we didn't ask.

'Let's tidy up, shall we?' he said instead. 'Then we can all have breakfast.'

His shoulders drooped a bit when he said the tidying up bit and looking round the kitchen, I have to say I could see why. Flora keeps her room tidy but treats the rest of the house like a squat. The rest of us just squat.

'Does *anybody* do the dishes?' Zoran gazed up at the ceiling when he said that, like God might actually care.

'They're only last night's,' said Flora.

Zoran smirked as he picked up a stack of plates. I could have warned him, but I didn't. He took one step backwards, landed on Twig's remote-controlled

Aston Martin DB2/4 Competition Spider, and vanished in a crash of china.

*

Zoran announced he had concussion. The Babes (aka Twig and Jas) sat cross-legged at his feet and cut bandages out of a sheet they found in the washing machine, which Flora wound around his head while they explained about the Aston Martin.

'They're for the rats,' said Jas. 'We have three. White, with pink eyes.'

'We use Daddy's ties to strap them in and then we race them,' said Twig. 'We've got lots of different models. The Spider's mine but it's OK because you didn't damage it.'

'I've got a Jag XK120,' said Jas. 'The rats love it, they really do.'

'There!' Flora stopped winding and turned Zoran towards the mirror.

Zoran gasped. Jas started to cry because laughing stretched her stitches. Twig snorted so hard snot came out of his nose.

'Oh my *God*!' cried Zoran. 'I look like an Egyptian mummy!'

'You said you were concussed!' protested Flora.

Zoran looked cross but Flora gave him her

scrunched-up nose grin, the one that makes her look like she's about ten years old instead of sixteen. Nobody can ever resist that grin.

'Thank you for rescuing me,' Zoran grumbled.

Flora started to laugh then too, and then they were all laughing, except Zoran laughed less than the others.

'I wish I'd filmed this,' I said.

They all stared at me.

'You spoke!' said Zoran. 'I was wondering if you knew how.'

He was standing up now and the Babes walked round and round him with a roll of toilet paper, finishing off the process Flora had started on his head. That would have made a good film too, but what I wanted to get – what I was cross I'd missed – was that look between him and Flora, when she said she thought he was concussed and he said he looked like an Egyptian mummy.

She grinned and he melted.

That was when I knew we had nothing to fear from him.

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Scene Two (Transcript)
Mother and Daughter

DAY. THE GADSBY GARDEN.

The garden again, this time seen from above through the branches of the plane tree. MOTHER, barefoot but otherwise still dressed for work, is harvesting a lavender bush with a pair of rusty shears. When all the stalks are cut, she crouches to gather them into a waiting basket. She buries her face in her hands, and her shoulders relax as she inhales the scent of the flowers.

FLORA, also barefoot but in denim cut-offs, appears on the stone veranda at the top of the steps. Sound does not reach the camera, but it is obvious she is annoyed. Mother takes a step

towards her then stops to pick a stalk from her basket. She runs her index finger and thumb along the stem to strip it of its flowers, which she crushes in her fist. She inhales again then opens her hand and holds it out before her. The breeze scatters the flowers. Mother squares her shoulders and turns towards her angry daughter.

Picture fades to black as CAMERAMAN (BLUE) turns camera off to climb back down to the ground.