

DAKOTA SMITH

an original script
by Daniel G. Robinson

Note to the reader:

A Gastonia is an armored dinosaur

A Utahraptor is the largest of the raptors yet found

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FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL YARD -- AUTUMN MORNING

DAKOTA SMITH is on the only piece of raised ground in the school yard, sitting under a small tree. She is wearing jeans and a hooded sweatshirt, sits with her backpack between her feet. Dakota watches -

The boys play base ball. ROGER RAMPARTS is pitching. Roger looks a little bigger than the rest of the boys. The boys keep up a chatter that is louder than a flock of scared geese. PETER is batting.

Dakota watches -

The girls skip rope. ROBERTA RAMPARTS is holding court. The girls have self arranged so that the favored ones are close to Roberta, the less favored are farther out. There are a couple of girls who stand apart. JOY is near the fringe of the crowd around Roberta.

Dakota is now flanked by the ghosts of two dinosaurs, CRUSH, a Utahraptor, and OLD, a Gastonia. The ghosts are slightly more than human size.

On the diamond, Roger pitches and hits Peter. Peter goes down.

DAKOTA (O.S.)

Jerk!

Crush's two scythe-like ripping claws tap the ground.

CRUSH {ADOLESCENT MALE VOICE}

He ought to rip his guts out.

Old's tail plates clack together as she shifts her weight.

OLD {GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE}

You're good at that, aren't you,
meat-breath.

CRUSH

Good enough for you.

OLD

Yeah, and I didn't cut you in half
with my tail.

CRUSH

You got lucky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter is up and crying and embarrassed by crying. He walks to first, rubbing the tears from his eyes, dusty hands leaving dark marks on his face.

DAKOTA

I'd hit the ball right back up the middle. That Roger Ramparts is scared of letting me play. He knows I'm better than he is.

OLD

They ain't worth you time, honey.

CRUSH

You ought to hit him with that stick.

DAKOTA

It's called a bat.

Peter is on first.

ROGER

Stop bawling or go jump rope.

The girls in Roberta's court take notice of the game before Roberta draws them back in.

ROBERTA

Joy, when are you going to wear that pink and black skirt again?

JOY

You said you liked it.

ROBERTA

Yeah, right.

Roberta leads the tittering giggle with her inner circle.

DAKOTA

She can wear whatever she wants to wear.

CRUSH

Why wear anything?

OLD

Your momma had to crack your egg for you, didn't she, boy.

Peter is walking away from first, toward Dakota.

Roger yells after him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER
You don't get to play at recess!

The bell rings. The kids start to turn toward the school door.

Dakota meets Peter walking toward the door.

PETER
Hi.

DAKOTA
Hi. You wanna do something at lunch?

PETER
Like what?

DAKOTA
I don't know.

Roger comes up to them as they walk.

ROGER
Hey, Peter, you can play at recess.
I was just joking.

PETER
I was thinking of doing something
with Dakota.

ROGER
Yeah, well, I can show you how to
handle that inside pitch.

DAKOTA
You threw it right at him.

ROGER
Did not.

DAKOTA
Did too.

Roger stares daggers at Dakota, smiles at Peter.

ROGER
Hey, Peter, come on out at recess.

Roger moves away.

Dakota and Peter walk toward the door and pass Roberta and Joy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERTA

I liked it. I really did. Hey, would you like to come over to my house and try on clothes sometime?

JOY

Really ?!?

Dakota and Peter look at Roger and Roberta.

PETER

Are they really twins? They don't look the same.

DAKOTA

Wrong kinda twins.

INT. CLASS ROOM -- MORNING

Dakota is braced at her desk by MS. CAUSTIC, a battle-axe in her 50's.

There is a leaf collection binder on Dakota's desk.

Roberta looks on from her nearby desk.

MISS CAUSTIC

And what progress have you made on your leaf collection?

DAKOTA

I have some of the leaves, Miss Caustic, but I'm trying to get an South American Chamburo.

ROBERTA

I have one of those. I got it last summer when I went on an adventure expedition with my dad. Want to see it?

Roberta pats her binder, which is inches thicker than Dakota's.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I knew I would need the leaves when we went last year.

Roberta beams at Ms. Caustic.

MS. CAUSTIC

Thank you, Roberta.

(to Dakota)

You should have planned for this last summer!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAKOTA

Yeah? Well, last summer, I didn't
know I would be here!

Miss Caustic takes Dakota by the ear and marches her toward
the door.

MS. CAUSTIC

All right, young lady, I think you
should see Principal Piaget with
that attitude!

Roberta has an haughty chuckle as Dakota exits the door.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD -- AFTERNOON

Dakota is playing by the schoolyard side gate and casing the
fastest way out of the joint. Crush and Old are surveying
the school yard.

The boys are playing baseball again and the girls are jumping
rope and doing doll play.

Dakota looks up and Peter is just about in front of her.

Crush and Old are surprised.

PETER

Hi. I looked for you at lunch.

Crush and Old flank Peter.

DAKOTA

I ate quick.

PETER

What are you doing?

DAKOTA

Nothing.

PETER

Are you going to skip school?

DAKOTA

No.

PETER

Well, that's what Ms. Caustic thinks.
She's watching you from her window.

Across the yard they look and, yup, framed in the school
window is Ms. Caustic, watching them through binoculars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAKOTA

I gotta get those leaves from that yard over there.

Across the street, in an artistic yard, is a tree with exotic leaves.

PETER

Don't go over there! You're not supposed to leave school!

DAKOTA

But I need those for my collection! I'll bet Roberta doesn't have those.

PETER

Don't do it, Dakota. You'll get caught!

DAKOTA

It'll be worth it.

She darts out the side entrance flanked by Crush and Old -- across the street -- slips into the yard -- runs to the tree and --

Comes out of the yard, led by PRINCIPAL PIAGET by the ear, followed by Crush and Old, about 10 feet tall, menacing Piaget.

Piaget is mid-50s, dumpy gray suit, fringe of hair, chrome-dome, round wire-rims.

PETER (O.S.)

Principal Pidget! I should've told her that was his house.

PIAGET

Miss Smith! I thought one trip to my office would be enough in one day. Not that your mother seems to mind. And with a name like Lotus-Blossom, why should she? Come along.

EXT. DAKOTA'S YARD -- AFTERNOON

Dakota and Peter are sitting on the front steps of a house on professor row at the University of Washington.

Dakota watches Crush and Old, Dakota-sized, on the sidewalk. Crush gets into Old's face. They spar.

PETER

What are those dinosaurs you have in your backpack?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAKOTA

A Utahraptor and a Gastonia. My dad found them in Utah. He thinks that they killed each other about 100 million years ago.

PETER

Why did the dinosaurs die out?

Crush and Old come over and inspect Peter.

DAKOTA

I don't know.

PETER

Are you grounded?

DAKOTA

Yeah, sorta. Thanks for coming over.

PETER

Yeah, okay. What do you want to do?

DAKOTA

Go to your house.

(yelling)

Mom? Can I go to Peter's house?

LOTUS (O.S.)

Yes, honey, be home for dinner. Do you have a watch?

DAKOTA

Yeah, Mom. Bye.

They leave the steps Peter turns left, Dakota turns right, flanked by Crush and Old.

Peter hangs back and points in the opposite direction.

PETER

My house is that way. Where are you going?

DAKOTA

The Arboretum.

PETER

Are you crazy? How do we get there?

DAKOTA

The bus.

PETER

We'll get in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAKOTA

I've done this before. What could go wrong?

EXT. ABORETUM -- LATER

The rich foliage of the trees is split by the roar of groundskeeper's utility trucks as Peter and Dakota burst through the trees, trucks hard on their heels.

They dodge around a tree and under a bush as the truck goes over the edge of a hill -

Soaring -

BANG! To the ground, the driver holding hard to the wheel -

Spin! Slide! To a stop!

The driver scans the trees for them, nothing there. He starts up and idles slowly away.

DAKOTA

I guess they meant it when they said not to touch.

PETER

Let's go home now, please?

DAKOTA

I'm bummed. I'll never get those leaves now. And I gotta turn it in tomorrow. And Roberta will have the best leaf collection.

PETER

So? Your's is great. So you don't get to travel to South America. Nobody else did either.

DAKOTA

I just wanted to beat her at something.

Peter stands up.

PETER

Let's go home.

Dakota joins him and they start walking away followed by the dinos.

DAKOTA

Okay.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- EVENING

LOTUS and ZACH are swinging the baby ADAM in the swing.

Dakota and Peter are playing at a basketball court away from them. Crush and Old watch them play.

PETER

Why did you want to come here?

Dakota points to the zoo entrance on the other side of the parking lot.

PETER (CONT'D)

Aw, Dakota, come on, don't do it.

DAKOTA

This is my last chance. There are plants there from all over the world. I missed some the last time I was here. There's a tree from Africa by the lions.

PETER

I'm not going.

DAKOTA

Okay. See ya.

Dakota heads for the zoo led by Crush, followed by Old.

Peter watches her go.

PETER

Girls!

EXT. ZOO -- EVENING

The shadows are long as Dakota, flanked by Old and Crush, Dakota-sized, approach the lion exhibit.

She spies the African trees, runs up and gets leaves with one hand while opening her backpack with the other.

She sees another tree inside the fence. It is behind the other trees.

DAKOTA (O.S.)

I just can't see it.

Dakota climbs on the fence to get a better look.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dakota stretches for the tree and - Over she goes!

SPLASH! Into the moat!

CRUSH

I'm coming!

Crush and Old are in the moat with her. Framed against the sky six feet above them is -

A LION!

Mane in glorious silhouette.

DAKOTA

HELP!

Crush and Old grow to full size, 20 feet long, and tower over the Lion.

LION (Murmur - growl)

What? What's going on? Oh, it's a little one.

CRUSH

I'll get him.

Crush jumps on the Lion and tries to rip him open, but his great claws pass through the Lion harmlessly.

OLD

Get out of the way!

Old swings her tail in a practiced way, plates clacking together like so many knives, but her tail passes harmlessly through the Lion.

The Lion lifts his nose to sniff the air.

LION

What was that on the wind?

DAKOTA

HELP!

Crush and Old continue to pummel the Lion to no avail.

LION

Those veggie burgers always give me gas. They aren't meat, that's for sure.

DAKOTA

SOMEBODY! HELP ME PLEASE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A LIONESS appears next to the Lion, head rubs him.

LIONESS (Murmur - growl)
Oh, it's a young one. Those are
gooooood eating.

The Lion bellows.

LIONESS (CONT'D)
Gas again? That's what you get for
going first and being a little pig.

CRUSH
Oh, to have my real rippers back!

OLD
(panting)
Save your breath, meat head, and
jump on the other one.

LION
Well, I would have gone for pig.

WHIFF! Old's tail passes through the Lion again.

LIONESS
What was that?

LION
I don't know. The wind is weird
tonight. You going to eat that little
one?

LIONESS
Naw, they don't like it if you eat
their cubs. I can hear them coming,
anyway. Let's see if they can get
the cub out without hurting it.

Dakota sees the lion heads on the crest of the bank, looking
down at her in the moat.

DAKOTA
HELP! HELP! HELLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLP!!!

PETER (O.S.)
She's over here!

Lion belch-roars, licks his lips.

LION
I HATE those veggie burgers! The
after taste! Yuck!

EXT. ZOO GATES - NIGHT

Dakota, Peter, Lotus, Zach and Adam are walking away from the gates. Crush and Old, people sized, follow behind.

ZACH

Honey, if you wanted some leaves, I could have helped you.

DAKOTA

Sorry, Dad.

ZACH

If you want some exotic leaf rubbings, why not fossils? Can you use them?

DAKOTA

Don't know. Maybe.

(a light bulb!)

Roberta doesn't have fossil rubbings!

Dakota and Peter look at each other and -- high five! Zach turns and almost catches them.

ZACH

Now, was that hard?

DAKOTA

Uh, no, dad.

ZACH

Good. Now let's go home.

CRUSH

Did you see my spin move? I still have it.

OLD

Spin this.

Old does a fast move and swings her tail, smacking Crush and he goes down fast, rolling away.

CRUSH

I saw that coming.

Crush jumps at Old, but she easily sidesteps him and smacks him again.

CRUSH (CONT'D)

Ouch!

FADE OUT