

Delicate

By

Catarina Macena

kk.macena@gmail.com

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

FADE IN. GABRIEL enters the living room running, jumps on the sofa and turns the TV on. He's a 4 years old boy wearing an school uniform. He looks skinny and a little bit geek with his rounded glasses. There's something strange about him: no matter what he does, his right hand is kept totally closed. A few moments later, MARIA, Gabriel's mother, finds him sleeping, with his closed hand next to his chest.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Maria tries to put Gabriel inside the bathroom, against his will, and finally manages to put him inside the bathtub. He struggles to not get his hand wet anyway. Even when he dips inside the water, his hand stays outside. Maria notices it. She smiles and nods her head, finding it funny. She tries to wash Gabriel's hand but he tries to bite her and she finally gives up.

INT. GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Maria dries Gabriel's skin, brushes his hair, and puts his pajamas. She carries him to the bed, whispering lullabies. Gabriel is sleepy but when MARIA tries to open his hand, he runs. MARIA calls her husband, Andre.

MARIA
(shouting)
Honey, could you give me a little
hand here, please?

Andre runs to her and they start chasing Gabriel. He goes inside the wardrobe and finally gets caught by his daddy. Before Andre can open his hand, Gabriel bites him and goes under the bed. Maria closes the door. They wait outside the bedroom.

MARIA (O.S.)
(pretending to be serious)
Oh, we'll never reach him under the
bed. What we gonna do now, Andre?

ANDRE (O.S.)
What a smart boy! I think all we
can do is wait and see.

INT. GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sun shines through the window. Andre opens the door carefully, with Maria behind him. They look for Gabriel under the bed, but he's not there. Maria is terrified and Andre is trying to look calm. They run outside the room looking for the kid.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

By the time Maria and Andre reach the kitchen, Gabriel has done a complete mess. There's more cereal in the floor than in his bowl, but the boy is set up to go to school, with his hand still closed. On the wall, a calendar marks Feb 15th, 2012.

ANDRE (CLEANING THE MESS)
What's happening, buddy? Why such a hurry?

GABRIEL (WITH HIS MOUTH FULL OF CEREAL)
I'm late for school, daddy.

MARIA (DRINKING A GLASS OF MILK)
You're just in time, baby. Is there anything special in the school today?

Gabriel pretends he's not listening to her and drinks the milk in the bowl making a lot of noise.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY (THE DAY BEFORE)

The scene is a little bit faded. Gabriel is sitting on a swing when suddenly a 6 years old girl appears. She's chubby, wears pink lipstick and has a golden crown in her hair. She kisses Gabriel in the cheek and goes away, skipping merrily while he closes his eyes as hard as he can. When he opens his eyes, she has gone. He immediately covers the "kiss" with the right hand. By his side, there's a colorful handmade card with a childish handwriting that says: "Happy Valentines Day. With love, Nina."

BACK TO THE PRESENT

They hear the school's bus arriving. Gabriel stops daydreaming. He takes the schoolbag and, turning his back to his parents, opens his hand to see if the lipstick mark is still there. He smiles and runs to the door. FADE OUT.