

FISHING BLUES-SCRIPT

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. A GLASSY STREAM IN THE WOODS - DAY

A dry fly lands, rippling the surface of the water. It twitches once, twice.

CUT TO:

A man's hands stripping in fly line.

CUT TO:

The fly cuts a small wake as it swings downstream.

CUT TO:

CLAY, a twentysomething guy in waders and a baseball hat, stands thigh-deep in the stream. He checks his watch, looks back towards the parking area, and then returns to his fishing. He yanks the fly out of the water and hurries his cast. The fly breaks off. He swears, then sets about tying on a new one.

A small dumpy car (15-year-old Accord or Celica, etc.) crunches down the gravel path and parks beside Clay's truck. MURIEL, a sporty-looking woman in her 20's, gets out.

CLAY

(watches her get out of the car; he can't read her emotional state)

Hey.

MURIEL

(opens the back door of her car and takes out waders. She puts them on.)

Sorry I'm late.

CLAY

(shrugs)

How can you be late? It's fishing. There's no schedule.

Muriel takes a rod case out of the car and assembles her rod. Clay fishes, throwing a glance her way once in a while. Rod assembled, she takes a small tupperware container from the back seat and closes the door.

CLAY
I didn't know if you were gonna show.

MURIEL
(walking to the river)
Well, I did.

CLAY
Sorry about... you know.

MURIEL
(brushing it off)
We all say stupid things when we're drunk.
(she opens the tupperware)
I called down to U-O and talked to a biology professor. He said stoneflies should be hatching.
(she holds up the tupperware)
Want one?

CLAY
(looks at the tupperware, the slightest smugness on his face)
They look good. But nah, I'm dry-flying.
(he casts again)
But you go ahead. Drifting is a great way for novices to, like, get the hang of it.

Muriel shrugs off his refusal (and condescension) and ties on a fly. She puts a hair tie in her teeth and adjusts her ponytail, then pulls off some line, and with a few smooth motions unfurls a smooth, delicate cast into the water.

CLAY
(surprised, impressed)
Nice cast.

MURIEL
(concentrating on the water)
Thanks. I've been practicing at lunch.

CLAY
Where?

MURIEL
 Out behind my office.
 (she pulls the line,
 trying to set the hook,
 but there's nothing on
 the line)
 I found some casting drills on the
 internet.

CLAY
Drills?

MURIEL
 You know, just to like, perfect
 the basics.

CLAY shakes his head—her type-A thing is relentless. He
 overpowers a cast and it tangles. His fingers work the
 knot. Muriel systematically drops her wet fly into
 different pockets of water.
 It's pretty here.

CLAY
 My dad used to bring me when I was
 I kid.
 (he gestures to a tree
 just downstream)
 Caught my first fish right over
 there.

MURIEL
 A trout?

CLAY
 Just a sunfish. But still...

They fish in silence. Clay thought she'd like his story,
 but in the end it felt catching just a sunfish wasn't good
 enough. It's small, and he's trying not to let it bug him.
 The knot comes free and he launches his dry fly upriver
 with a long double-haul cast.

MURIEL
 (yanking her rod tip
 upward)
 Ooh!

CLAY
 What? Got one?

MURIEL
 I think— yeah! It's all wiggly!
 (she reels)

CLAY
Easy now. Let 'im run if he needs
to.

Muriel keeps reeling and hauls up a small, beautiful
rainbow trout.

MURIEL
I did it! I got one!

CLAY
Congratulations.

MURIEL
I really did it!

CLAY
Sure did.

MURIEL
Do you see the stripe on his side?
It's like, it's like... like a
sunset.

CLAY
Uh-huh.

MURIEL
I just can't believe—

CLAY
Jeez, it's like you never caught a
fish before.

This kills her excitement and puts an immediate chill on
things.

Sorry.

MURIEL
(puts the fish back in
the water and coaxes it
along)
Bye, now.

CLAY
Yeah, sorry, I—

MURIEL
It's fine.
(she rinses her hands)

Clay double-hauls furiously, working a long cast out over
the river, and his line slaps the surface.

MURIEL
Doesn't that, I don't know, scare
the fish?

CLAY
(looks at her, trying
not to glare)

MURIEL
Sorry, I—

CLAY
No, it's ok. You're right.

Muriel gently works her fly line and unspools a cast across the width of the river, dropping her fly inches from an undercut bank.

Barely a second later, the line goes taut. Muriel exclaims and yanks upward, and suddenly the line is being pulled away downstream.

CLAY
Careful now, what you wanna do is—

MURIEL
Shh.
(she adjusts the drag on
her reel and lets the
fish run, alternately
reeling him in and
letting him take line)

CLAY
(under his breath)
Nevermind, then.

Muriel plays the fish, getting him closer and closer.

CLAY
Once you get him—

MURIEL
(concentrating
intensely, she cuts him
off)
One sec...

Now within fifteen feet of her, the fish jumps. A coppery torpedo, it almost floats in the air, eyeing her, and ahskes its head. It splashes back into the water and her line goes limp.

Aw shoot, I almost had him...
(she reels in the line)

and checks her fly)
The article I saw online said that
what you have to do in a situation
like that is apply pressure to the
butt of the rod, but not the tip,
or else you could-

(she looks up, but Clay
isn't standing in the
water)

CUT TO:

Clay's pickup truck driving away, rod sticking up from the
bed at an angle. Tires crunch on the dusty road, and then
he is gone.