

"Olivia's Swing"

by
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1 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

1

It is a beautiful day. The sun is shining brightly, and the birds are chirping. In the distance, many excited, vocal children are at play on the swings, seesaws, and climbing structures adjacent to the grammar school.

OLIVIA DUNN, a petite, beautiful seven-year-old girl with blonde pigtails, skips along, whistling a happy tune.

A car appears at the far end of the parking lot and, with tires squealing and music blaring out of the windows, starts fishtailing *wildly* about.

ANDY DUNN, 38, Olivia's father, runs behind her, trying to catch up. Olivia is oblivious to the danger she is in.

DUNN

(windes)

Olivia! *Olivia*, wait!

The car comes closer to Olivia as Dunn slips on a rock and falls hard on his belly, knocking the wind out of him. He struggles to get to his feet.

DUNN

Olivia!!!

Olivia stops whistling and screams as she sees what is about to happen. With a sickening *thump*, the car hits her, sending her reeling, and then takes off.

DUNN

No!!!!

FADE TO:

2 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - THREE WEEKS LATER

2

Another beautiful day with sunshine and birds. The playground, though, is empty, it being a couple of hours since school let out for the day.

Dunn slowly approaches from a nearby copse of trees, walking unsteadily toward the playground. He looks terrible: His clothes are wrinkled, he has several days' growth of beard, and dark circles have formed under his eyes.

He reaches the swing set and grabs one of the posts for support.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. RUTH KOMACK, 56, the school principal, walks slowly toward him. Her gray hair is pulled back into a bun, and she is wearing a blue business suit. She is uncertain of what she should do.

KOMACK

Mr. Dunn?

Dunn seems to come out of a trance. He looks around, surprised at where he is.

DUNN

Principal Komack.

KOMACK

Can I. . . help you with. . . something?

DUNN

The school playground? How did I. . .

KOMACK

Are you OK?

DUNN

I just *had* to leave the house.
It's been three weeks since. . .
(starts choking up)
I don't even remember walking here.

KOMACK

You *walked* here from your house?
That must be. . . three miles!

DUNN

(trying to keep
composed)
I didn't even think about it. I
haven't been thinking about much
but. . . Olivia lately.

KOMACK

She was a lovely young girl, and
she is *dearly* missed.

Dunn wipes at the corner of an eye with a knuckle, catching a tear.

DUNN

You and her teachers have been
very kind.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DUNN (CONT'D)

Your floral arrangement was the biggest one I've ever seen!

KOMACK

It was the least we could do.

DUNN

(growing teary)
First, my wife, Sabrina, dies of breast cancer, and now. . . I've lost *both* my girls.

KOMACK

I. . . uhm. . . I heard the police caught the. . . drunk driver.

DUNN

They did. A lot of good that does Olivia.

(angry)

It was *three* in the afternoon.
Who's drunk at three in the goddamn afternoon?

KOMACK

May I give you a ride home?

Dunn looks down at some rocks scattered about the swing set.

DUNN

It was a rock, you know?

KOMACK

Excuse me?

DUNN

A *rock* - that's what I fell on.
That's why I couldn't reach Olivia in time to. . . to. . .

(sniffs)

She *loved* coming to school here.

KOMACK

(trying not to cry)
We loved having her.

DUNN

(chuckles slightly)
I've never seen *anyone* hop out of bed like she did every weekday morning.

(CONTINUED)

Dunn starts walking around the swing set.

DUNN

And she *loved* this playground. We used to come here on weekends sometimes. I. . . I hope that's OK.

KOMACK

It's fine.

Dunn touches the farthest-left swing of the three hanging down from the set's top bar. It is yellow and low to the ground.

DUNN

This was her favorite.

KOMACK

I remember seeing her wait for it at recess even though the other two weren't being used.

DUNN

It's yellow - her favorite color.

KOMACK

It's also closest to the ground - easier to climb onto.

DUNN

Oh, she'd play on the monkey bars and con me into riding on a seesaw with her, but she always came back to *this* swing.

He holds onto one of the chains and moves the swing about. It squeaks noticeably. Komack sighs.

KOMACK

I've *personally* sprayed a whole can of WD-40 up there, but the squeak *won't* go away.

DUNN

It shows the swing's well loved.

(chuckles slightly)

If I had a buck for every minute I pushed her back and forth.

"Higher, Daddy!" she'd yell.

(chokes up)

"Higher!"

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (4)

2

KOMACK

Perhaps you should rest? There's a
bench right -

Dunn gestures at the yellow swing.

DUNN

There's a place to sit right *here*.

(beat)

If it was good enough for Olivia,
it's good enough for me.

He sits on Olivia's swing. He grows lost in thought.

FADE TO:

3 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - FLASHBACK

3

Dunn - now kempt, shaven, and well dressed - is pushing Olivia on the yellow swing. She is facing the parking lot, pumping her legs quickly. Olivia's pigtails are flying in the swing-made breeze. Other kids are scattered about the playground.

OLIVIA

Higher, Daddy. Higher!

Dunn smiles.

DUNN

How high do you want to go?

Olivia giggles.

OLIVIA

To the sky!

DUNN

Is *that* all? I thought you'd want
to touch the moon.

OLIVIA

Yes, *please!* To the moon! The
moon!

FADE TO:

4 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

4

Komack is crouched by Dunn, who is still seated on the yellow swing.

(CONTINUED)

KOMACK

Mr. Dunn?
(beat)
Mr. Dunn?

With a shake of his head, Dunn comes back to the world of the living. He looks at Komack.

KOMACK

Are you alright?

DUNN

(coming around)
Yes, I'm. . . fine. Thank you.

KOMACK

You, uhm, kind of. . . glazed over.

DUNN

I was having a. . . a flashback.

Using the swing's chains, he pulls himself to a standing position.

DUNN

I was pushing Olivia higher and higher. I could *feel* her sweater, and the lilacs sure smelled nice.

KOMACK

Lilacs?

DUNN

From the bush over -

He points to a now-barren bush.

KOMACK

It *barely* bloomed this year.
(beat)

Lilacs are *always* fleeting, but there haven't been any flowers there for -

DUNN

Three weeks?

KOMACK

Y-Yes.

(CONTINUED)

DUNN

Mrs. Komack, I think I'll take you
up on that offer of a ride home.

FADE TO:

Dunn is on the telephone talking to his older brother,
STEVE (who we see on a split screen).

STEVE

That sounds like *quite* a dream,
little brother.

DUNN

It *wasn't* a dream.

STEVE

What would you call it?

DUNN

A flashback.

STEVE

Andy -

DUNN

Is it big brother advice time
again?

STEVE

I think you *might* need to see a
psychiatrist.

DUNN

No way.

STEVE

There's no shame in seeking help.

DUNN

I never said there was.

STEVE

That "flashback" of yours is
disturbing.

DUNN

Not for me. I *enjoyed* it.

(CONTINUED)

STEVE

*I saw a psychiatrist back when Mom
passed away.*

DUNN

*I know you did, and I'm glad it
helped you.*

(beat)

Case closed.

STEVE

But -

DUNN

At least for now.

STEVE

So you're leaving that door open?

DUNN

*If I need to see a shrink, I'll be
the first to admit it.*

STEVE

Dr. Flynn was great.

DUNN

*If I decide I need to lie down on
a couch and vent, I'll call him.*

STEVE

Her.

DUNN

Is advice time done?

STEVE

*Yes. . . but I reserve the right
to start it up again later.*

DUNN

(chuckles slightly)

I wouldn't have it any other way.

FADE TO:

*Dunn is in a light, fitful sleep, snoring and squirming
about on his bed. He is wearing sweatpants and a white T-
shirt. He wakes with a start when he hears Olivia's voice
all around him in an odd echo.*

(CONTINUED)

OLIVIA

Daaaaadyyyyyy.

(beat)

Help me!

DUNN

Olivia?

He jumps out of bed and runs down the hall to her room. He throws open the door and rushes in. Her bedroom has been preserved as it was when she died, with many, many stuffed animals about. He looks around and, of course, does not see her.

He stands panting in the center of the room.

DUNN

I know I. . . She needs me. Where could. . . Of course!

He runs out of her room.

FADE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - EARLY MORNING

Dunn is still dressed in his sweatpants and T-shirt, though he has hastily put his untied sneakers on his feet. His car can be seen in the parking lot.

He sits down - facing the lot - on the yellow swing. He hears Olivia's voice again, still in an odd echo.

OLIVIA

Daddy, help!

Dunn speaks loudly to the sky.

DUNN

How? Tell me *how*!

OLIVIA

Swing, Daddy! Hard! Pump with your legs!

Dunn starts swinging as fast as he can.

OLIVIA

The *moon*. Reach for the moon!

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Summoning all of his strength, he swings even *faster*.

FADE TO:

8 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND PARKING LOT - LATER

8

A police cruiser slowly parks nose to nose with Dunn's car. There are two uniformed officers inside - one male (SHIBLEY) and one female (LEHMAN) - both in their early 30s.

LEHMAN

Who could be here at *this* time of night?

Shibley grabs the squawk box mike.

SHIBLEY

I'll run a check on the plate.
Once we know who the car's
registered to, we'll go have a
look around.

FADE TO:

9 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

9

The officers walk toward the playground and Dunn, who is seated on the yellow swing, motionless but *smiling*.

Shibley shines his flashlight on him. Lehman kneels before him.

LEHMAN

(gently)
Sir?

Dunn doesn't so much as blink. Lehman turns to look at her partner.

LEHMAN

Who's the car registered to?

Shibley opens a sheet of paper. He holds the beam from his flashlight upon the paper and reads from it.

SHIBLEY

Andrew Dunn. 126 Cedar Road.
(beat)
Here's his license photo.

(CONTINUED)

He hands the paper to Lehman while continuing to shine the flashlight on it.

LEHMAN

Hair's a little grayer, but that's him alright.

She hands the paper back to Shibley, who folds it and puts it in his shirt pocket.

SHIBLEY

What's he doing out here at this time of night. . . and dressed like that?

LEHMAN

Drunk maybe?
(gently)
Mr. Dunn?

Lehman snaps her fingers a few times before Dunn's face.

SHIBLEY

It's like he's. . . frozen.

LEHMAN

Maybe we should shake him.

SHIBLEY

We'd better *not*. I read somewhere that it's dangerous to try to wake up a sleepwalker.

Lehman looks up at her partner.

LEHMAN

What makes you think he's a sleepwalker?

SHIBLEY

I don't know *what* he is.
(beat)
It's a possibility, right?

LEHMAN

I *suppose*. . . but his car's in the parking lot. He'd have to be a *sleepdriver*.

SHIBLEY

Look at that smile on his face.
(beat)
What's he so happy about?

(CONTINUED)

LEHMAN

No idea.

She stands.

LEHMAN

Is it me, or is that smile kind of
. . . creepy?

SHIBLEY

No, I'm with you there.

(beat)

What should we do?

LEHMAN

Well, he's not harming anybody.

SHIBLEY

And he's breathing.

LEHMAN

(suddenly)

Your girl goes to school here,
doesn't she?

SHIBLEY

Yeah.

LEHMAN

What's the principal's name?

SHIBLEY

It's, uhm, "Ko" something.

LEHMAN

"Ko" what?

SHIBLEY

(longish beat)

Komack. Yeah, that's it: Mrs.
Komack.

LEHMAN

Do you have her phone number?

SHIBLEY

Not on me.

(beat)

Laurie would have it. I'll call
her.

(CONTINUED)

LEHMAN

Now? It's quarter of two in the
a.m.

SHIBLEY

She'll be awake. The baby isn't
sleeping through the night yet.
He's probably already up for his
2:00 a.m. feeding.

LEHMAN

And what if she *is* asleep and you
wake her - *and* the baby - up?

SHIBLEY

Then I'd better look for an all-
night flower place before I go
home.

FADE TO:

Mrs. Komack and her husband are both sound asleep in
their very dark bedroom when the telephone rings. MR.
KOMACK yawns.

MR. KOMACK

Who the *hell*. . .

KOMACK

(stifling a yawn)
I'll get it.

MR. KOMACK

It's nearly 2:00, for crying out
loud. I'll bet you it's some drunk
upset about closing time at his
local bar.

Mrs. Komack clicks on the lamp on her night stand.
Squinting from the light, she answers the phone. We hear
Shibley through the receiver.

KOMACK

H-Hello?

SHIBLEY

This is Officer Shibley of the
police department. I'm looking for
Ruth Komack.

(CONTINUED)

KOMACK
(stifling a yawn)
Speaking.

SHIBLEY
I'm sorry to call at such an hour.

KOMACK
What. . . What's wrong?

SHIBLEY
You're the principal of the Horace
Mann Elementary School?

KOMACK
Yes.

SHIBLEY
My partner and I have answered a
call about a trespasser on your
school's playground.

KOMACK
At *this* hour?

MR. KOMACK
(stifling a yawn)
What is it, Ruth?

KOMACK
Shhh, dear!

SHIBLEY
Yes, ma'am. We called in the plate
on the car. The man's name is
Andrew Dunn.

KOMACK
Mr. Dunn?

MR. KOMACK
What about him?

SHIBLEY
You know the man?

KOMACK
Yes, I. . . I do.
(beat)
Is he OK?

(CONTINUED)

SHIBLEY

Tough to tell. He's just sitting
on one of the swings - not saying
a word, not moving.

(beat)

Should we call a doctor?

KOMACK

No. I'll. . . I'll be there in
twenty minutes.

FADE TO:

Komack kneels before Dunn, the officers behind her.

KOMACK

Has he moved at all since we
spoke?

SHIBLEY

No, ma'am. He just sits there. . .
smiling.

LEHMAN

What do you want to do? It's your
school.

Uncertain, Komack looks at Dunn.

KOMACK

I'm. . . I'm not sure.

LEHMAN

Do you want to press trespassing
charges?

KOMACK

Oh no!

(beat)

Mr. Dunn? It's Ruth Komack.

Nothing.

KOMACK

Have you tried shaking him?

SHIBLEY

No, ma'am.

She gently pushes on Dunn's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

KOMACK

Mr. Dunn, can you hear me?

Dunn starts groggily coming to. Confused, he looks about and sees the officers. He quickly rises from the swing. Komack puts a hand on his right shoulder.

KOMACK

It's OK.

DUNN

The playground *again*?

KOMACK

What do you remember?

DUNN

It's all. . . kind of a blur.
(yawns slightly)
What time is it?

Lehman looks at her watch.

LEHMAN

2:25 a.m., sir.

DUNN

Did I walk here again?

KOMACK

No. Your car's in the lot.

SHIBLEY

You don't remember driving here,
Mr. Dunn?

DUNN

Not really.

LEHMAN

Have you been drinking?

KOMACK

Officer! How could -

DUNN

Not a drop.
(beat)
Why are you two here?

LEHMAN

Someone called the station about
an intruder on the school grounds.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LEHMAN (CONT'D)

We found your car in the lot and
then found you sitting on that
swing.

He gestures at the yellow swing.

DUNN

(sighs heavily)
I'm not sure *what* possessed me to
drive here.

Lehman uneasily shifts from foot to foot.

LEHMAN

Are we done, ma'am?

KOMACK

Yes.

LEHMAN

We'll give you a ride home, Mr.
Dunn.

DUNN

No thanks. I don't -

SHIBLEY

It would be for the best, sir. If
you don't remember driving here -

DUNN

But -

LEHMAN

I agree with Officer Shibley. He
can give you a ride home in our
cruiser, and I'll follow behind in
your car.

DUNN

(defeated)
Better safe than sorry, I suppose.

LEHMAN

That's the spirit! After some
sleep and a cup of java, you'll be
right as rain. You'll see!

FADE TO:

12 INT. DUNN KITCHEN - LATE MORNING

12

Dunn is seated at the table having a cup of coffee.
Olivia speaks again in an eerie echo.

OLIVIA
Daaaaadyyyyyy!

He stands so quickly that he knocks his chair to the floor. He looks wildly about.

DUNN
Olivia?

OLIVIA
Help me!

DUNN
Where. . . Where are. . .

OLIVIA
You know where.

DUNN
(longish beat)
The *playground*.

OLIVIA
We didn't finish. The officers
came. We didn't have enough time.
(beat)
Hurry. We have *one* more chance.

DUNN
To do *what*?

OLIVIA
To make things right.

DUNN
I. . . I can't go there *now*. The
school's open. I'll be -

Her voice starts fading to nothing.

OLIVIA
I'm tired. *So* tired. . .

DUNN
Olivia!

FADE TO:

13 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - LATER

13

Dunn, facing toward the parking lot, sits on the squeaky yellow swing. He looks around nervously, hoping that no one is watching him.

DUNN
(sotto voce)
Help me, Olivia.

OLIVIA
Now swing. . . *fast*.

As he did the previous night, Dunn starts frantically swinging.

FADE TO:

14 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

14

(NOTE: PULL BOLDED PART OF THIS SCENE FROM SCENE 1.)

It is a beautiful day. The sun is shining brightly, and the birds are chirping. In the distance, many excited, vocal children are at play on the swings, seesaws, and climbing structures adjacent to the grammar school.

Olivia skips along, whistling a happy tune.

A car appears at the far end of the parking lot and, with tires squealing and music blaring out of the windows, starts fishtailing wildly about.

Dunn runs behind her, trying to catch up. Olivia is oblivious to the danger she is in.

DUNN
(winded)
Olivia! Olivia, wait!

Olivia stops whistling and screams as she sees what is about to happen.

Dunn reaches her and grabs her out of the way with mere seconds to spare.

DUNN
(very winded)
Gotcha!

The car's tires squeal as it turns wildly and peels away.

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED:

14

Olivia, frightened and sobbing, hugs her dad. She buries her face in his chest. Dunn pulls her close.

OLIVIA

Daddy. Oh, Daddy!

DUNN

It's OK, sweetheart. You're safe.

You're. . .

(confused)

. . . safe.

FADE TO:

15

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

15

Dunn, Olivia on his lap, is seated on the swing as it winds down. Olivia's voice is no longer in echo. She is dressed as she was on the day she died. Dunn notices, to his surprise, that he is also.

Olivia looks around excitedly at her surroundings and the other kids at play. She turns in her father's lap to face him.

OLIVIA

We did it!

DUNN

(very confused)

How. . . How could. . .

OLIVIA

It's alright now, Daddy. I'm *back*,
and only the two of us will ever
know I was gone.

The swing stops. Mrs. Komack approaches them cheerfully.

KOMACK

Hello, you two.

(beat)

It's nice to see a parent and a
child having such fun together.

Olivia jumps from her dad's lap.

DUNN

But, Prin-

(CONTINUED)

KOMACK

Isn't it about time to be heading home for dinner, though? It will be dark soon.

OLIVIA

Yes, dinner. I'm *so* hungry.
(beat)
Let's go, Daddy!

FADE TO:

A very confused Dunn sits at his table, nursing a beer. He rubs his eyes and scratches his head.

DUNN

How the *hell* could. . .

Olivia *screams* from upstairs. Dunn takes off for her room. He throws open the door and sees her *faintly* in her bed. She is fading in and out of reality, and her voice is back in an echo. She is very nervous.

OLIVIA

Something's wrong. I. . . I don't know what.

She winces in pain.

OLIVIA

It hurts so bad!
(beat)
Help me!

DUNN

How can -

A wind chime-like sound grows in the room. Between Dunn and Olivia, SABRINA, Dunn's late wife, appears in a strange glow. She is dressed in a white gown, her blonde hair loose about her shoulders. Her voice is heard in an echo, like Olivia's.

SABRINA

I'll tell you how.

Dunn is amazed.

DUNN

It *can't*. . . Sweetheart. . .

(CONTINUED)

SABRINA

We don't have time for talking,
I'm afraid.

(beat)

The playground. You *must* get
Olivia to the playground.

FADE TO:

The moon is shining brightly as Dunn carries the
fluctuating form of his daughter in his arms. Olivia
occasionally winces in pain or sobs. Sabrina floats just
above the ground beside them both.

SABRINA

Put her on the swing.

OLIVIA

It *hurts*, Daddy.

SABRINA

Her pain will lessen once she's
there.

Dunn gently puts Olivia on the yellow swing - facing the
parking lot - and crouches in front of her.

DUNN

Is. . . Is that better?

OLIVIA

A. . . A *little*.

Dunn turns to Sabrina's ghostly form.

SABRINA

We have to *hurry*. My time here is
short - hopefully enough to save
our girl.

DUNN

But I *did* save her. . . earlier
today.

SABRINA

You *couldn't* save her three weeks
ago. She died then.

DUNN

But she's *back* now!

(CONTINUED)

SABRINA

No. She isn't with you *or* me.
She's stuck in the middle, being
tugged in both directions. *That's*
why she's in such pain.

DUNN

But she *showed* me how to save her.

SABRINA

She was scared. She shouldn't have
done what she did. If she stays
with you, she'll keep appearing
and disappearing, and be in
frequent pain.

Dunn paces briefly.

DUNN

I. . . I *can't* let her go. Not
again.

SABRINA

You *must*. I know it will be hard -

DUNN

Hard? Try *excruciating*.

SABRINA

Only with me can Olivia be at
peace. I'll take good care of her.

Olivia moans from the swing.

SABRINA

I *know* you love Olivia.

DUNN

Of course I do!

SABRINA

Enough to let her go?

Dunn starts misting up. Olivia lets out a low moan.

DUNN

What do I have to do?

SABRINA

Get on the swing with her. Go as
fast as you can.

(CONTINUED)

Dunn turns and walks to Olivia. He gently picks her up from the swing, sits down himself, and places her on his lap. She turns to look at him.

OLIVIA

My tummy hurts.

SABRINA

Quickly, Andy! There isn't much time!

OLIVIA

(sniffs)

Daddy, I'm. . . I'm frightened.

DUNN

(trying to keep
control)

You don't have to be. Mommy will take care of you and, one day, I'll join you both.

OLIVIA

I love you.

DUNN

(fighting tears)

I love you too.

(beat)

We have to get going.

OLIVIA

To the moon?

DUNN

To the *moon*.

Olivia on his lap, Dunn starts swinging fast.

FADE TO:

(NOTE: PULL BOLDED PART OF THIS SCENE FROM SCENE 1.)

The car comes closer to Olivia as Dunn slips on a rock and falls hard on his belly, knocking the wind out of him. He struggles to get to his feet.

DUNN

Olivia!!!

(CONTINUED)

Olivia stops whistling and screams as she sees what is about to happen. With a sickening thump, the car hits her, sending her reeling, and then takes off.

On the ground, Dunn weeps profusely.

FADE TO:

It is another beautiful day.

The playground has been renovated and is now having its re-opening ceremony. A plaque on the side of the swing set reads "The Olivia J. Dunn Memorial Playground."

Dunn ascends a stage. Principal Komack and many teachers are seated there in chairs. He steps behind a miked lectern and looks out at the newly renovated playground and the dozen or so people seated in folding chairs before him.

DUNN

(clears throat)

It gives me great pleasure to
dedicate the brand-new Olivia J.
Dunn Memorial Playground here at
the Horace Mann Elementary School.

Some people applaud.

DUNN

It's hard to believe that she's
been gone for nearly a year. I'm
sure the Horace Mann teachers and
students will be very happy to
have their playground back -
complete with new slides, seesaws,
and monkey bars, but with one
familiar yellow swing.

We see the new/old playground, as described.

A light wind starts blowing. It moves the yellow swing about slightly. It squeaks.

FADE TO BLACK.