# Monica Raymond From A to Z

This play tracks the relationship of Annie and Zafiya through forty years of U.S. history and all the letters of the alphabet. In this scene, it's 1968. Annie is Zafiya's literacy tutor in a juvenile detention center.

## **SCENE 12**

#### READER

Lilies. Languor. Lake.

Bird and insect sounds. Water plashing, wind in the grass.

# **ZAFIYA**

What is this? "Send this child to camp?"

### **ANNIE**

I told them I thought we needed a field trip.

#### **ZAFIYA**

You are *good*, girl. Bet you can talk your way out of anything. All them slime-chiatrists, you just tell them what they want to hear.

(slapping herself) What are these things? Chiggers?

**ANNIE** 

I guess.

## ZAFIYA

Bet you could walk out of Macys in one of them fur coats, everybody think you come in with 'em. Waltz your way out of the A& P with pork chops in your hip pockets, girl, nobody even blink twice.

#### **ANNIE**

I try not to do those things.

I mean I don't really need things like fur coats.

It's just the way I was raised, I guess.

ZAFIYA

(swatting) Damn chiggers.

**ANNIE** 

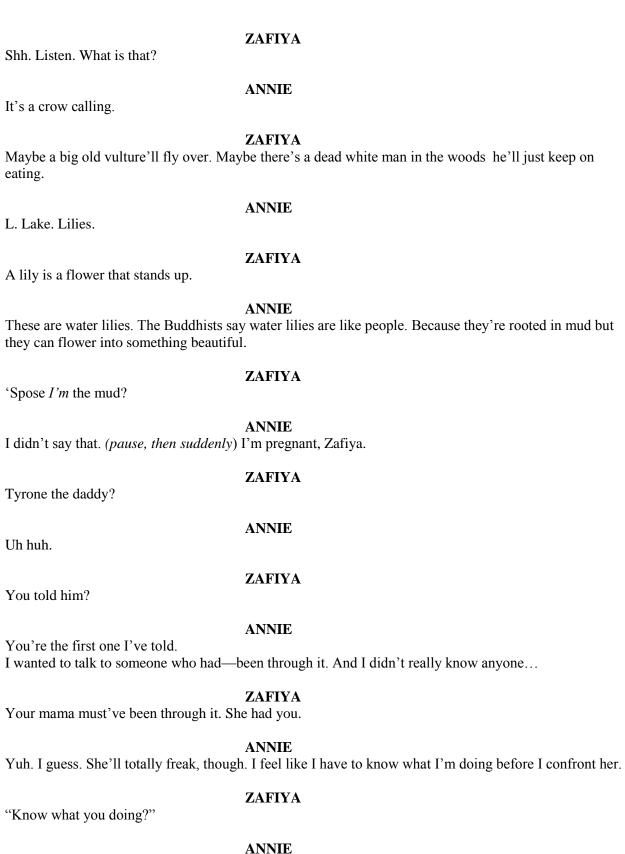
When I was growing up, we lived pretty close to this lake.

ZAFIYA

This lake?

#### **ANNIE**

No. Another one. And I would always go there when I wanted to think things through.



I mean, am I going to have it, or have an abortion, or have it and give it up for adoption. I mean I want to have Tyrone's baby, sure, but it's just that we've never talked about it and I don't know if he's going to

want to have a baby with a white girl, plus he's busy working for "the people" and it's not like he has any money to support a kid. I mean sure a kid I'd have with Tyrone would be totally adorable and really revolutionary-And then there's the whole thing with Berenice— I'm sorry, Zafiya, this must all sound just like "Love of Life," like some soap opera... **ZAFIYA** The lily can be the soap. **ANNIE** What? ZAFIYA The lake be a bathtub, and that pink flower there be the soap in a green dish. **ANNIE** Oh, Zafiya. **ZAFIYA** And you be singing the opera of your days. (pause) How big this lake? Can you see the other side? **ANNIE** Just barely. I think that brown line's trees. **ZAFIYA** I'm going in. ANNIE grabs ZAFIYA **ANNIE** Zafiya, no! **ZAFIYA** Don't hold me, I'm going ZAFIYA plunges forward again. **ANNIE** Can you even swim? **ZAFIYA** No, but that don't matter. Don't hold me back, girl, or I have to hurt you.

ZAFIYA pushes against ANNIE. They tussle.

ANNIE

You'll drown!

ZAFIYA I don't care if I do, it better than going back. I won't be some piece of meat for them doctors. You seen me, I tried everything—I ain't going back. **ANNIE** I promised— **ZAFIYA** Think I care what you promise? I drown *myself*, ain't nothing to do with you. **ANNIE** Don't drown yourself. We'll figure something out. We could go back and I could find out exactly what you need to do— ZAFIYA I ain't going back. **ANNIE** I wish you would've told me before— **ZAFIYA** So you could do what? Never take me nowhere? **ANNIE** I can't just leave you here. ZAFIYA Why not? **ANNIE** In the woods? I can't. **ZAFIYA** All right, then. How 'bout this? You drive to some gas station. And I go to the commode. And I don't come out again. And you go looking. And you don't find me nowhere. **ANNIE** And you do what? ZAFIYA Ain't your concern. Only drive around a bit before heading back. Tell 'em you got lost. You gonna call the cops? **ANNIE** The pigs? I couldn't.

**ZAFIYA** 

You drive around, wait till it's good and dark before you go back. You ready?

That's good.

We gonna get in the car. We stop at a station, and I go out to the—

**ANNIE** 

I know what's going to happen.

I better give you some--here, here's thirty, that's all I've got.

ANNIE scribbles on some paper from her purse.

And this is my phone number. If you ever need me, call, OK?

ZAFIYA

Thank you.

**ANNIE** 

You'll be okay?

# **ZAFIYA**

I don't know about that. But night's coming on. And night is gonna be my friend. You know where we are? You know how to get yourself back home?

**ANNIE** 

I'm lost, Zafiya.

Lost.