

Rasa Bugavičute-Pēce

The boy, who saw in the dark

Scene description

1st scene. A conversation in the kitchen

Today, Jēkabs is 30 years old and he has come to visit his mother, they describe their daily lives to each other, Jēkabs talks about his kids, his mother talks about the rhododendrons that she had seen and the blinds, to be put on the windows.

2nd scene. The dormitory and the shower.

The first childhood memories of Jēkabs are of the dormitory, where his parents had their first small apartment and they had to go to the basement to shower, from there either his mother or his father would carry him, wrapped up in a towel, back up to his bed. The parents do not see, but they hear Jēkabs speeding towards a busy street on his bicycle.

3rd scene. Daina needs her eye back.

Jēkabs begins to realize he is special – the only person, that is able to see, living in the house is him, a small boy. The others are either blind or have problems seeing. It is “normal” in his daily life to help his mother’s friend – aunt Daina – get her glass eye back, when it falls out and rolls under the bed, for example.

4th scene. Old Valters in the yard.

Valters smokes a lot and always tells Jēkabs to never do so, when he grows up. Jēkabs promises.

5th scene. Jēkabs helps everyone. Aunt Daina needs cookies. His father needs help finding his cigarette holder. He needs to check his mother’s clothes. He needs to help his father solder.

6th scene. His father injures his head. Jēkabs escorts his father who runs into a lamppost and wounds his head. Jēkabs is proud of his father for not being afraid of his head bleeding, because his father is after all big and strong.

7th scene. Mother is getting ready for celebrations. Jēkabs is watching her and getting excited about how beautiful she looks. Jēkabs’s mother points out that he should not watch blind people without warning them. Everyone needs their personal space, which nobody should secretly enter.

8th scene. The birthday. All the people living in the house are gathered at aunt Daina’s room. Jēkab’s mother is reading poetry. The men are talking about Jēkabs – what a great boy he has become.

Afterwards everyone is talking about how the cake is decorated, which surprises Jēkabs – why decorate the cake at all if nobody sees it anyway. When the birthday coffee is being served, Jēkabs uses the fact that nobody can see to his advantage and counts himself in as one of the coffee drinkers, even though as a child he is not allowed to drink coffee. His father, not knowing that Jēkabs has a cup of coffee on the table, accidentally knocks the cup over and the hot coffee burns Jēkabs. Both Jēkabs and his father stay silent.

9th scene. The waking up and a white piece of paper. Jēkabs wakes up with scalded skin, says nothing to his parents and tries to heal himself by holding a cold white piece of paper to his burns. His mother hugs him, but is angry that the men drank a lot last night. She tells Jēkabs to never do that, when he grows up. Jēkabs promises.

10th scene. The conversation between Jēkab's mother and Daina. They speak in Russian so Jēkabs can't understand. The conversation is about yesterday's drinking.

11th scene. Getting ready for September. Jēkabs and his parents move from the dormitory to a two-bedroom apartment. Jēkab's mother has bought him a school uniform, Jēkabs does not like the blue jacket, because it is made from wool and "bites".

12th scene. Everybody is watching. Jēkab's first day of school knocks him out of his daily routine for a long time, because suddenly everybody can see him. As a result, Jēkabs gets confused and does not speak to anyone.

13th scene. A wolf in the stairway. A teacher has called Jēkab's mother and told her that Jēkabs does not speak to anyone. Jēkab's mother begs him not to do that, because otherwise he will not have any friends and the teacher may decide, that Jēkabs must be sent to a school for special children. After this conversation, Jēkabs finds a stray kitten in the stairway, calls it Wolf and begs his parents to let him keep it. His mother does not allow it, because a cat needs a lot of care – who will do it while Jēkabs is in school. Nevertheless, Jēkabs tells everyone in school, that he has a cat. Jēkabs is talking!

14th scene. Jēkabs asks his parents, what cats they had in their childhood, his mother tells him about Muris, his father – about Murka. Jēkabs convinces his parents to keep Wolf, his mother agrees, but only if he follows three rules – the first rule, only Jēkabs will take care of the cat, the second rule – the cat needs to be brought to the vet for a check-up and the third – everything needs to stay in the usual places.

15th scene. Wolf is Jēkab's playmate. Jēkabs tells Wolf about school. But in the evening his mother is angry, because the cat attacked her while playing.

16th scene. Drawing homework. In school, during drawing class, the students must draw a drawing of their family, Jēkabs draws only him and Wolf. Without the parents. The teacher writes a note in his diary, but then realises that the parents will not be able to read it. She decides to call Jēkab's mother.

17th scene. Mother in despair. The cat has thrown up in the bed and ripped down the curtains.

18th scene. Jēkabs decides to take the cat to the forest and leave it there, without telling his parents, so he could be a good son to his mother again.

19th scene. Buying a jacket in the clothes shop. While Jēkabs chooses a jacket, his mother pretends to be looking at other clothes. Jēkabs describes different types of people – some pretend to not notice that his mother is blind, others turn away because they are afraid or they don't like it, others look at her with grief and compassion.

20th scene. The new jacket is on, but for the first time on the street, Jēkabs spurts away from his mother's hand, because he sees some classmates on the other side of the street.

21st scene. 50 santims and tearing the jacket. His father gives Jēkabs 50 santims, to spend while visiting his grandmother in Salacgrīva, Jēkabs walks around the house in his new jacket and tears his new jacket while winning a knight fight with a ruler.

22nd scene. The tear is repaired with some "MacGyver" tape, but his grandmother, in front of whom he planned to show how proud he is of his new jacket, does not even notice it.

23rd scene. Jēkabs returns home, his mother is crying, because aunt Daina has moved to live somewhere else. To calm his mother down, Jēkabs tells her about his new friend Matiass, who writes him letters now. While Jēkab's parents are getting ready to go to Salacgrīva in autumn to visit their grandmother, they decide to invite Jēkab's friend Matiass to the gathering. Jēkabs is panicking, because he cannot reveal that Matiass is actually a transformer – an imaginary friend. He has to figure out how to avoid going to Salacgrīva.

24th scene. Jēkabs tells his classmate Lauris about his problem, because he is the guy who finds a solution for everything, he has ideas. Lauris suggests him to eat a piece of lego, because then the parents will worry, but nothing serious will happen – it will come out after some time.

25th scene. The teacher has called and told the parents about a note she found with Jēkabs. It has two circles with crosses in them. The teacher and Jēkab's mother believe it is a secret message and it shows two blind people in a hole. Jēkabs tries to explain, that it is not what they think it is. His mother is angry. In reality the note shows two boys swimming in a lake – Lauris's invitation to go swimming together.

26th scene. Jēkab's father makes photos of Jēkabs and his mother.

27th scene. Jēkabs goes swimming to the lake together with Lauris and his parents, they drink fanta and eat cookies. He finally has a friend and can have fun like normal school kids.

28th scene. Lauris asks Jēkabs to come over, while his parents aren't home. Lauris is surprised because in his opinion the apartment is empty. There is nothing in it. When in reality, there is nothing unnecessary in there, that would bother the everyday life of Jēkab's parents. Jēkabs does not really have anything to show off to Lauris. But he finds an old tape player and they both decide to record some pop music over the recording of Jēkab's voice from his early childhood.

29th scene. When Jēkabs goes to the hospital because of appendicitis, he is embarrassed to tell the doctors that his parents won't be able to pick him up, because they do not know the way to the hospital. So Jēkabs sneaks out of the hospital in the hospital clothes, crosses half the city, comes home to tell his parents that he needs to be picked up from the hospital. His parents hug him, tuck him into bed and calm him down – they will take care of the paperwork the next day. The radio plays bedtime stories and Jēkabs feels safe.

30th scene. Since that day, Jēkab's mother doesn't go to work that often anymore, there is more anger and panic in the house, that manifests them as yelling at Jēkabs, as not talking to each other, as finding faults with how the clothes are organized in the closet...

31st scene. The first mobile phones and the first girlfriend Liene, they both chat with SMS's and make emojis from different punctuation marks. Until the phone bill comes and it is many times bigger than Jēkab's allowance. Jēkabs does not tell his parents the real amount of the phone bill, but even what he tells them makes the parents angry.

32nd scene. Jēkabs would be ready to go to Riga to donate blood, so he could get some money. But he escapes by lying, that he has grown out of his pants and needs new ones. His parents feel around Jēkab's legs, he has pulled his pants up and his parents give him part of the money. Jēkabs saves up the rest from his lunch money and by borrowing.

33rd scene. From now on, he meets with Liene in person, because she also got in trouble with her parents, they do not send anymore SMS's. They go on walks in the city, but Jēkabs always has to be at home in time. On one of such evenings they almost get into a fight, but then become blood brothers – by cutting into their thumbs with a pocket knife. Now they are “officially” friends.

34th scene. Jēkab's mother gets worse, she grabs the belt in anger, but Jēkabs is already big enough to stop her hand halfway. His mother breaks down – Jēkabs, her little son, her only purpose in life has grown up, which means he will inevitably leave her alone soon.

35th scene. Jēkabs wants his father's help, but his father has also become apathetic. Jēkabs feels left alone.

36th scene. Jēkabs escorts his mother to see a psychologist. His mother tries to analyse her feelings. How Jēkabs has been her emotional anchor that holds her together since he was born. And now she feels like at sea where nothing is stable or like walking on a familiar road where suddenly roadworks have started. All the psychologist can say is – while everything is bad for you, you have no problems, because only for a crazy person everything is good. Jēkab's mother asks the psychologist to talk to him alone, because maybe Jēkabs has some problems. Jēkabs rejects the psychologist by writing a provocative note in a notebook, asking what type of suicide is better. When the psychologist asks, what stopped Jēkabs from such action, Jēkabs replies – I am a good boy.

37th scene. Today. Back in the kitchen. Jēkabs puts his mother's hand to his face and says – you haven't seen me in a while.