

RAIN RACER

by El Schaefer

## RAIN RACER

FADE IN

EXT. FOREST ROAD—MIDDAY

Rain pours from an overcast sky.

TITLE CARD  
RAIN RACER

A raindrop falls through the title,  
down past dense pine treetops,  
toward the winding, empty road,  
landing SPLAT on the windshield of a STATION WAGON.

In the car, DAD is driving, scanning the road, while MOM in  
the passenger seat looks between her PHONE and a paper MAP,  
looking for directions.

A windshield wiper swipes the raindrop off the windshield. It  
runs along the driver's side and clings to the edge of the  
backseat window.

In the backseat, 4-year-old DANICA is strapped into a CAR  
SEAT.

INT. STATION WAGON—MIDDAY (CONTINUOUS)

Danica stares into space, afro puffs squished against the  
headrest where she leans, pink sneakers kicking against the  
driver's seat.

Mom turns to the backseat, placing her hand on Danica's knee  
with a pointed look. Danica pouts, slumping her shoulders, but  
stops kicking. Mom turns back to her search for directions.

Danica fidgets with the edge of her RACECAR T-SHIRT.  
She stares at the silent CAR RADIO in the front seat. Looking  
down again, she begins to HUM, getting louder and sitting up  
as the song takes form.

Just as she starts bouncing to the beat, Dad half-turns to the  
backseat, still focused on the road, and SHUSHES her.

Danica slumps back down into the car seat with a HUFF, lolling her head back as Mom and Dad return to their conversation. Out of the corner of her eye, her eyes lighting up, she spots her purple BACKPACK, her name embroidered on the front pocket, slumped on the opposite side of the backseat.

Danica leans over, straining against the car seat, stretching her little arm out until she gets a grip on the backpack. With a triumphant smile, Danica unzips the main pocket and digs past folded clothes, closing her hand around her Lava Lady superhero ACTION FIGURE.

Just as Danica pulls the toy from her backpack, the car goes over a pothole and jolts - as Dad rights the car and Mom gasps, Danica loses her grip on the action figure. Her face falls as it tumbles down to the floor, out of her reach.

Danica throws herself back into the car seat with a prolonged frustrated GROWL. Mom, frazzled, turns and SHUSHES Danica, her eyes hard.

As Mom turns back, Danica sinks into her seat, sulking. Her head against the door, Danica's eyes catch the movement of raindrops on the window.

Perking up, she focuses in on one drop clinging to the front edge of the window, agitated by the wind, about to break free. As Danica begins again to fidget with the edge of her racecar shirt, she stares at that drop as it begins to shift shape.

#### EXT. IMAGINARY RACETRACK—MIDDAY

The TAPPING RAIN becomes the POP of a starting gun and ROAR of a crowd as imagination transforms the wet car window into a racetrack - smooth, green-tinted glass instead of asphalt, rubber window seals turned into crash barriers and stands of cheering fans. The raindrops themselves are now racecars in watery shades, which tear out past the starting line.

At the center of the pack, in a white car with sea-blue racing stripes, is RAINEY. She looks like a teenaged Danica, afro puffs popping through her helmet and a smile plastered across her face as she takes off.

Rainey's car weaves through the others - slips between two converging racers to overtake them, slaloms between drifting cars, and when a storm grey car with a mustachioed driver, FROST, tries to pincer her into the wall, she falls back and lets him nearly crash instead as she zips around him - smiling all the while.

Behind Rainey, a car skids out and collides with another, the two melding together in a splash of water and metal. Rainey GASPS sharply, expression going serious as she swerves to avoid the newly formed double-size car barreling forward. As the double's two drivers (DRIP and DROP) panic and argue, it spins out of control and crashes against the wall, leaving Rainey an opening to move forward.

Rainey pulls ahead of the other cars. Before her smile can fully return though, in the corner of her eye she sees another racer approaching - WINDY, dark haired and determined in a sky-blue car.

Rainey's eyes narrow as she attempts to weave in front of the newcomer, but Windy punches the gas, her car lurching forward and forcing Rainey to dodge back.

Their cars neck-and-neck, the two get a good look at each other. Windy offers a proud smile, but Rainey frowns as she peels away. She tries again, once, twice, to pull ahead, but Windy keeps up with her every move.

Snarling, Rainey starts angling toward the stands, forcing Windy to do the same, driving her rival closer and closer to the wall. Windy looks back to Rainey, scared and indignant, but Rainey is determined, focused on overtaking the other.

Just as Rainey is about to pull ahead, barreling up behind them comes Frost in his grey car. He clips Rainey, nearly driving both her and Windy into the wall. As the women jolt and swerve, Frost CACKLES, a true moustache-twirling villain.

INT. RAINEY'S CAR-MIDDAY (CONTINUOUS)

Rainey eyes dart around -  
at Frost skidding ahead,  
at her speedometer as her car loses speed,  
at the other racers leaving her in the dust.

As she guns the engine and starts to pull ahead again, trying to salvage this loss, she notices a sky-blue car in her rearview. Looking back, Rainey sees Windy falling further behind, one hand clutching her head, her car smoking.

Rainey looks out at the cars in front of her, then to Windy in the rearview, and with a frustrated huff she hits the brake, falling behind to come neck-and-neck with Windy again.

EXT. IMAGINARY RACETRACK-MIDDAY (CONTINUOUS)

Windy looks up as Rainey's car comes level with hers. Rainey leans out the window towards her and, looking Windy in the eye, reaches out her hand. Windy looks at it but doesn't offer hers. Rainey jerks her head, indicating the other racers overtaking them, before returning the smile Windy gave her earlier. Steeling herself, Windy leans out to accept the hand, in a splash of water and metal.

INT. FROST'S CAR-MIDDAY (CONTINUOUS)

Watching the other cars in his rearview, Frost chuckles and relaxes into his seat. Then, the sound of an ENGINE, louder than the others and getting louder still. Checking his rearview, his eyes widen. He leans out the window to look back and his face goes slack with terror.

EXT. IMAGINARY RACETRACK-MIDDAY (CONTINUOUS)

Coming up from the back are Rainey and Windy in their now-combined car. Rainey steers, weaving between the others, while Windy works the gas and brakes. As the other racers look on in awe, the duo overtakes Frost as he swerves hard to avoid them, spinning out and falling to the roadside. Working in perfect sync as they approach the finish line, the crowd cheering them on, the other racers coming up behind them, Rainey and Windy smile and HIGH-FIVE.

SMASH CUT:

INT. STATION WAGON-CONTINUOUS

Danica stares as a fat raindrop passes the end of the window, hands splayed against the glass, when a tap on her knee pulls her out of her trance.

Mom is leaned back into the backseat, with a JUICE BOX and an apologetic look. In the front seat, the map is put away and Dad is focused on the road.

Danica takes the juice box and SLURPS. As Mom starts to turn back, she notices the action figure on the floor with surprise, picking it up and handing it back to her. Danica smiles at Mom as she gives her a pat on the cheek and they both sit back.

Danica fiddles with the action figure for a moment, but stops and looks back up. Taking another slurp from the juice box, she looks out the window and begins to imagine again.

EXT. FOREST ROAD—CONTINUOUS

An imaginary NINJA - purple scarf flying out behind her, afro puffs sticking out of her hood - runs alongside the car on the road barrier fence. The car passes a road sign, which the Ninja jumps over with a flip.

Danica fixates on the Ninja as she sips her juice. The Ninja in tow, the car continues down the forest road.

FADE OUT