
Last Summer

An Alsid Francis Production

(Produced by Alfred Crown and Sidney Beckerman), 1969

Screenplay by Eleanor Perry

Based on the novel by Evan Hunter

Directed by Frank Perry

Time: 1969

Place: Affluent beach community

Three upper-middle-class teenagers, adrift one summer at their parents' beach houses, encounter an ungainly, sensitive girl, Rhoda, also at the beach for the season. The group of three are savvy, manipulative, and curious about their new acquaintance. They see how uncomfortable Rhoda is with their faster, more sophisticated behavior but press her to become more involved in their precocious activities. One rainy afternoon the four sprawl out at one of their parents' houses, and Rhoda begins to reveal the painful story of her mother's death.

RHODA

It was a bet my mother made with this man. She bet she could swim out to the sandbar and back without stopping to rest. Everyone was at a party at our house—there'd been a party on Friday night and another one on Saturday night and this was Sunday and I suppose they were all a little bored. I don't know exactly how it started—I was in my nightgown going around kissing everyone goodnight. They were saying that my mother was a great swimmer and one of the men said that women have an extra layer of fat around their bodies so they can stay in the water for a long time without getting chilled and my mother got mad about this extra layer of fat talk because she was very slim. I have a picture of her in my Memory Book that shows she was practically skinny. Well, my mother said she had a lot of endurance and she certainly did *not* have an extra layer of fat. Then my father said that my mother had swum to this sandbar about a half mile off shore and back without stopping and this man said that was impossible and my mother said she could do it again any time and the man said how about right now? They all smelled of whiskey when I kissed them. I remember this man who made the bet cupped my behind with both hands and kissed me goodnight right on the mouth—and then my mother took me upstairs and changed into her bathing suit. Afterwards she came into my room. Her suit was red and she was wearing a short white terry cloth robe and she looked very pretty and excited. She smelled of whiskey too but she didn't drink a lot—only enough to feel happy, she always said. She acted very happy that night and she turned out my lamp and closed the door and that was the last time I ever saw her—
