

AISHA & THE WATER DRAGON

Written by

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1 EXT. RIVERFRONT VILLAGE - MORNING 1956

1

NOTE: All scenes depicting 1956 are in BLACK and WHITE.

OPEN upon a sleepy Long Island village on the second to last day of school before the start of summer vacation. Pretty little boats anchored at the marina along the river front bob in the early rays of light. A SCHOOL BUS makes its route along the river road, into the business district, past little flower shops, small cafes, and fish market trucks parked in the streets. The bus continues on into a pleasant and cozy residential neighborhood where it stops; And waits.

2 INT. THE FLOWER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS (MODERN DAY)

2

NOTE: All scenes depicting modern day are in COLOR.

Inside, twelve year old AISHA FLOWER is dressed, and wearing an unstylish backpack ready for school. She stands motionless just inside the front door, unable to move and stares through the glass at the distorted yellow blob that is the bus. Her mom, GAIL FLOWER enters the hallway from the kitchen with a bag lunch.

GAIL FLOWER

Dear, the bus is here - time to
fish or cut bait.

Her dad, JOSHUA FLOWER stands at the end of the hall holding a closed fist in the air. He opens his palm to reveal a set of keys and jingles them.

JOSHUA FLOWER

I'll drive.

GAIL FLOWER

Too, soon, dear? How about
tomorrow? It's your last day.

AISHA

(lies)

Maybe tomorrow.

JOSHUA FLOWER

That's all right, honey. I'll take
her in again today.

GAIL FLOWER

I had a talk with Principal Meyers.
I'm sure the issue is resolved.

JOSHUA FLOWER

Let's go, Squirt!

Gail opens the door and waves the driver on.

3 EXT. THE FLOWER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS 1956 3

Gail opens the door and waves the driver on.

4 I/E. THE FLOWER FAMILY CAR - LATER 4

NOTE: Shots of the car INTERIOR are modern day while shots of the car EXTERIOR are from 1956.

Father and daughter drive in silence. They've done this routine before. Aisha holds her backpack protectively upon her lap, then brings it up to her chest, holding it closer.

JOSHUA FLOWER
What's the song de jour?

AISHA
Beyond The Sea.

JOSHUA FLOWER
Whose version?

AISHA
Roger Williams, 1956.

JOSHUA FLOWER
That's your favorite. Have I told you that I love you?

AISHA
Yeah, Dad.

JOSHUA FLOWER
Have I mentioned it at all today?

AISHA
Yes, Dad. Twice.

JOSHUA FLOWER
Oh good. You would have reminded me if I had forgotten?

AISHA
But you never forget.

JOSHUA FLOWER
Forget what?

AISHA
Dad! You know?

JOSHUA FLOWER
I do but I forget sometimes.

AISHA
Don't worry. I'd remind you because
I would miss it. I know I would.
But that's never gonna' happen
'cause you say it all the time.

JOSHUA FLOWER
Say what?

AISHA
You know!

JOSHUA FLOWER
I do but I forget to say it
sometimes.

AISHA
Dad?

JOSHUA FLOWER
Yeah, Squirt.

AISHA
Does it ever stop?

JOSHUA FLOWER
I hope so, darling.

AISHA
Yeah, me too.

The car pulls up in front of the school. Aisha remains
inside, pensive.

5 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER (MODERN DAY)

5

Aisha is at her locker trying to remember the combination.
Even after a year, she still messes it up sometimes. She
tries another set of numbers. Three kids gather around her.

BULLY GIRL
We missed ya on the bus, Pointy
Ears.

AISHA
My dad drove me.

BULLY GIRL
Her daddy drove her again.

BRAT BOY

Did he also give you your stupid name?

BAD BOY

Of course he did. What kind of name is Aisha?

BRAT BOY

I know the answer, teacher. The stupid kind.

BULLY GIRL

If ya think that's stupid, I know what your middle name is.

AISHA

Do not!

BULLY GIRL

Do so. I heard Principal Meyers say it when she was talking to mommy.

BRAT BOY

You are in the office a lot, aren't you?

BULLY GIRL

I know I am, but that's where I learn things.

BAD BOY

So tell us.

BULLY GIRL

Her middle name is... wait for it.

BAD BOY

C'mon, tell us!

BRAT BOY

Say it! Say it!

BULLY GIRL

It's Moon.

BAD BOY

Moon?

BULLY GIRL

Yep. Moon.

BRAT BOY

(Wolf Howl)

Mooooon! Moooooooon! That's so stupid.

BULLY GIRL

Oh, look. She's crying!

Aisha's locker opens and she quickly tries to put her backpack carefully inside. The door is slammed shut.

BULLY GIRL (CONT'D)

What d'ya got in the backpack? Oh, look. It's a broken record.

BAD BOY

Lemme see.

AISHA

Give that back to me!

BAD BOY

I got it. Hey, look it is cracked - just like you.

BRAT BOY

What is it?

BAD BOY

Beyond The Sea. La Mar.

BRAT BOY

La mare? It's about a horse?

BAD BOY

Yeah, gotta' be some dumb moldy oldie.

BULLY GIRL

Hey, I like horses. Let me see that?

She takes the little black forty-five inch record and smashes it against the locker as the class bell rings. The bullies start to walk away.

BULLY GIRL (CONT'D)

My dentist shows Top Gun at full volume while I'm in the chair getting my teeth fixed.

BRAT BOY

That's so lame.

BULLY GIRL

I know, but I don't think he likes
to hear me screaming. Let's go,
boys. We've got other small fish to
fry.

Aisha is left behind in the empty hallway to pick up the
pieces of her favorite old record.

AISHA

I wish I never had to go back to
school.

6

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - LATER (MODERN DAY)

6

Aisha stands alone holding her bag lunch as she surveys the
chaos of the lunch room. Her brown bag is torn and squashed
with oily stains seeping through the paper thin walls.
PRINCIPAL MEYERS, a wise Latino woman in her forties
approaches with a look of stern kindness.

PRINCIPAL MEYERS

No home lunches, dear.

AISHA

Right.

The principal discreetly motions to one of the trash bins
before refocusing her attention upon the student body.

PRINCIPAL MEYERS

Settle down now everyone. Let's eat
our lunch.

Aisha sadly dumps her bag into the trash. Its contents are
her favorites: refried beans in a wrap, ants on a log,
homemade Swiss chard soup, a tiny loaf of poppy seed bread,
and a thin slice of mocha cheesecake from her grandmother's
recipe on her mother's side.

She returns to the same spot that she was standing in, only
this time, holding a school tray lunch of fish sticks as she
surveys the chaos of the student body.

Aisha hears the taunts around her as she maneuvers to find an
empty seat.

MEAN GIRL

Anyone see the moon last night? I
can see it clear as day now.

BULLY GIRL

Who knew the man in the moon had
such pointy ears?

One small boy holds up a half-moon cookie that he has
smuggled in. He rocks it back and forth next to his face,
tauntingly.

SNOOTY GIRL

Everyone make way for the Princess
Aisha Moon Flower. Where's your bag
lunch, Moon Princess?

BRAT BOY

(to Aisha)
You're not going to eat your
gelatin are you?

Aisha is frozen in place. She feels too warm inside. She
looks around but there is no place to sit. She sees a hand
reach out for her dessert. The gelatin is green and wobbly
and there are chopped green beans and carrots inside it. She
fixates upon the gelatin as it shimmers and wriggles. She
sees faces around her. They are shimmering and wriggling too.

SNOOTY GIRL

What's the matter Princess Moon?
Cat got your tongue?

BRAT BOY

Guys, guys! Watch me slurpy this.

He brings the plate of gelatin up to his mouth and inhales
the entire piece all at once quickly before choking on the
vegetables inside. He vomits the gelatin back up and spews
the green and orange mess all over Aisha.

SNOOTY GIRL

So gross!

BULLY GIRL

Cool!

BAD BOY

Dumb ass, you can't slurp
vegetables.

Aisha's eyes roll back into her head. Her body jerks as if
she too is about to throw up. She is having one of her
seizures and falls to the floor in convulsions. Her tray of
food is projectile vomited upon the students that have been
taunting her.

PRINCIPAL MEYERS

Get the school nurse Call the
paramedics! I'll notify the
parents. You know the drill!

Aisha lay upon the cafeteria floor with her arms and legs
kicking as if she were running away.

7

EXT. RIVERFRONT VILLAGE - EVENING 1956

7

The last fish market truck is packed up and makes its route
out of the business district as venders bring in flowers and
turn out the lights. The truck turns onto the riverine
highway and drives past pretty little boats anchored at the
marina and bobbing in the evening rays of light. Behind the
boats, the sleepy village recedes into the distance as the
lights of the peaceful community reflect out over the river
in undulating shimmers.

8

INT. THE FLOWER RESIDENCE - LATER (MODERN DAY)

8

Inside her bedroom, Aisha is awake, and lying on top of the
bed. Beside her lay an unstylish and rumpled backpack and
shattered pieces of broken record. Aisha loves old forty-five
records; she has dozens of them in her room. She never leaves
the house without at least one in her book bag. Her mom, Gail
enters the room with a small pitcher of water on a tray with
a glass.

GAIL FLOWER

Thirsty, dear?

AISHA

A little.

Her mom sets the tray down beside the bed and pours a glass.

GAIL FLOWER

Drink this.

Her dad enters.

JOSHUA FLOWER

How do you feel, Squirt?

AISHA

I'm okay.

Aisha lay motionless upon the bed, and stares through the
water glass in her hand at the distorted black blobs that had
once been a record that she is holding.

JOSHUA FLOWER
That was a bad one.

AISHA
How long this time?

GAIL FLOWER
Just a few minutes, dear.

AISHA
It felt longer.

JOSHUA FLOWER
Let's all keep in mind the doctor
believes that you will grow out of
these seizures in time.

AISHA
It has been a while, hasn't it?

JOSHUA FLOWER
That's right. The last one was just
after Thanksgiving.

AISHA
(holding up a shard)
They broke my record.

GAIL FLOWER
That can be replaced, dearest.

JOSHUA FLOWER
We spoke to Principal Meyers and
the bad news is that she can't
suspend them again with only one
day left of school, but the good
news is that you don't have to go
back tomorrow if you don't want to.

AISHA
Thank you.

GAIL FLOWER
We also discussed the possibility
of having you go to a new school
for next Fall.

AISHA
What if I get bullied there? Going
to another school won't change my
pointed ears or remove my seizures.

GAIL FLOWER

True, but your father and I feel that it might help you meet and make friends with a fresh start.

AISHA

And it doesn't help that my middle name is Moon.

JOSHUA FLOWER

You don't like your name?

AISHA

I didn't say that. They called me Princess Moon.

JOSHUA FLOWER

That's a bad thing?

GAIL FLOWER

Honey.

JOSHUA FLOWER

I just meant that.. Well, I used to call you a princess, when you were a baby. Princess Pukealot.

AISHA

(resigned)

I know, I puked a lot.

JOSHUA FLOWER

I never had a clean shirt, but I do miss those days. Well, sometimes.

AISHA

Dad!

GAIL FLOWER

Bullying is serious, Joshua.

JOSHUA FLOWER

But Dad is funny.

AISHA

(tearful)

I loved my record.

JOSHUA FLOWER

We know, and that's why I thought that since your birthday is coming up anyway that we should end this day by watching you open presents.