

# Summer of the Shark

An Original Screenplay

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. KING KONE ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

**INSERT: NEW HAMPSHIRE, OCTOBER 2004**

A 2004 SILVER SATURN VUE abruptly pulls to the side of a RURAL ROAD across from a BOARDED UP ICE CREAM STAND.

RADIO (O.S.)

Hundreds of people with signs and cameras cheered on the large shark as marine biologists in two boats ultimately ushered the reluctant fish to freedom today.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

ALAN(39), a freelance writer, pumps his fist.

ALAN

Yes! Way to go, Greg!

As Alan reaches to TURN UP the VOLUME, we see on the passenger seat sits a MANUSCRIPT titled: **A GIANT FISH STORY (A MEMOIR)** and a THICK ENVELOPE, YELLOWED BY AGE, MARKED: **MARDIE'S PHOTOS FROM MARTHA'S VINEYARD-SUMMER 1975**

RADIO

It's been nearly two weeks since the two-thousand pound shark entered the salt pond that lies in the shadow of Martha's Vineyard, ironically enough, the setting for the blockbuster movie Jaws. And, as the crowd cheered on the shark, a thought struck me. What would the reaction have been thirty years ago, when the only good shark was a dead shark? Can you imagine?

Alan snorts, looks to the ice cream stand and, after rubbing his goatee, TURNS OFF the radio and picks up the YELLOWED ENVELOPE, gently swiping his fingers across the name MARDIE.

NARRATOR

(adult voice of Alan)

Truth be told, only a handful could answer that. My sister Mardie and I for starters. And, a few close friends. But over the years, snippets of our adventure have escaped the island, and nowadays, our experience that summer is often shared as kind of...a giant fish story.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KING KONE ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

A 1971 COUNTRY SQUIRE STATION WAGON backs out of the parking lot onto the two-lane road, then drives off.

INSERT: NEW HAMPSHIRE, JULY 1975

The car drives past a BILLBOARD for BEDFORD MALL CINEMA I and II. The marquee shows the title JAWS in big, red letters along with "3RD SMASH WEEK!", "See it BEFORE you go SWIMMING!" And "May be TOO intense for YOUNGER children."

NARRATOR

I remember that summer in two parts. One very clearly and at a pace that always seems as dreamlike as it actually was. The other part, not so much. My Dad once said, nothing in life moves faster than a perfect summer. How right he was.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

NELSON(47) is driving. His niece MARDIE(12) and nephew ALAN(9) are licking away at their ICE CREAM CONES in the front seat.

ALAN

Mom says I'll see Jaws over her dead body. But Dad's working on her.

MARDIE

Two days. You need a miracle.

NELSON

Yeah, I'm not liking your odds, buddy.

ALAN

She has to let me see it! That would be so bogus! I've seen zillions more scary movies than Mardie!

MARDIE

And you've run into their bedroom crying, zillions of times too.

NELSON

Ha!

ALAN

Not funny, Uncle Nel.

Mardie playfully punches him in the arm.

MARDIE

I'm pulling for you, kiddo.

The car hits a pot hole and Alan's Ice Cream pops out of his cone and onto his lap. Nelson and Mardie laugh.

ALAN

Really not funny guys!

A giant ROTTWEILER comes running out of a yard and into the street. Nelson slams the brakes.

MARDIE AND ALAN

Thor!

The dog bolts passed the station wagon and into the path of an oncoming PICKUP that slams into the dog, sending it twenty yards up the road.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The pickup continues on after a brief stop and the mortally injured dog lays TWITCHING in the road.

Everyone exits the station wagon and runs toward the dog.

The mighty dog is struggling to breathe, a growing stream of BLOOD escaping from under its crumpled body as Nelson and the kids come running up to it before slowing at the sight.

Mardie kneels beside the dog's massive head, his bloody mouth rhythmically gasping for air. Nelson pulls Mardie back.

NELSON

Careful, Mardie. He could bite.

MARDIE

Thor would never hurt us, Uncle Nel.

NELSON

You know this dog?

FLASHBACK

Mardie and Alan are walking along a sidewalk and they stop in front of a driveway when they hear GROWLING and BARKING.

NARRATOR

Growing up, curiosity always won out over fear for my sister and I, though admittedly, I rarely took the lead. Mardie was the bravest kid ever and following her always made me feel so much braver than I actually was.

ALAN

Is that growling or the killer truck  
from Duel?

Mardie, staring up the driveway, gives Alan the SHHH SIGNAL.

The barking grows louder, intermixed with the SOUND of a  
HEAVY CHAIN being DRAGGED.

They walk up the driveway toward a DILAPIDATED GARAGE. The  
door is wide open and the BARKING grows louder and fiercer  
from within the darkness of the garage. The kids stop.

ALAN

Mardie, this isn't such...

An escalation of the CHAIN NOISE fills the air and suddenly  
a massive ROTTWEILER is nearly upon the kids who SCREAM!

Just as the dog reaches the kids, the chain pulls taught and  
the dog falls to the ground hard.

The kids turn to run, but Alan is so petrified, his legs  
won't move.

MARDIE

Alan! C'mon!

Mardie pulls her brother along just as the dog rises and  
lunges toward them yet again, this time SNAPPING THE CHAIN.

Alan screams as Mardie puts herself between Alan and the  
charging dog, waving her fist.

MARDIE

Stop! Stop! Don't you dare!

The massive dog skids to a stop in front of Mardie, and even  
on his haunches, he towers over the two frightened kids.

Slowly, Mardie reaches up with her hand. The dog growls.  
Mardie hesitates, then pets the dog's giant head. He growls  
again, clears his throat with a mighty shake of his head,  
then licks Mardie across the face.

Alan grabs Mardie by the shoulders.

ALAN

He's gonna eat us!

The dog licks Alan's face.

ALAN

AAHHH!!

Mardie laughs and takes hold of the dog's collar, reading his bright RED NAME TAG.

MARDIE

Thor? What a cool name, boy.

NARRATOR

That was my sister. Had we been raised in Montana, I have little doubt she'd have tried staring down a Grizzly one day, and I would've grown up an only child.

Alan reaches out and nervously pats the drooling beast.

ALAN

Good doggie, Thor.

BACK TO SCENE

Mardie and Alan sob as they pat Thor's head.

MARDIE

I'm so sorry, boy.

The dog's breathing speeds up and his eyes open wide. Alan kisses the dog's head.

ALAN

You're the best dog ever, Thor.

Nelson comforts both kids as the dog's breathing escalates for a moment and then suddenly stops. His huge mouth then makes one final gasp and the remaining air from his lungs escapes as his body stops moving.

Nelson pulls Mardie and Alan into his arms as they both cry.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Nelson is on a couch and his brother-in-law, BUD(35) is across from him in a chair. LOCAL NEWS is on a LARGE CONSOLE TV.

On a BOOKSHELF, several NATURE REFERENCE BOOKS fill the TOP SHELVES along with a collection of JAMES HERRIOT BOOKS including ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL. From another room, SOBBING can be heard.

BUD

Those poor kids. I just knew something like this was going to happen someday. That dog broke his chain at least twice a week, bolt right out of the yard and across the street, gone.

Tears well-up in Bud's eyes.

NELSON

I am truly sorry, Bud.

BUD

Mardie and Alan were always fetching him and bringing him back.

NELSON

What about the owner? Jesus, man.

BUD

Mrs Wallace? Well, she's 86 for one. And two, she's only watching the dog until her daughter gets back.

NELSON

Oh. How long she been gone?

BUD

Three years. Three damn years.

The sobbing in the other room has stopped and a door opens then closes. Bud's wife, SARAH(35) enters the room, lowering the volume on the TV as she passes by it.

BUD

How are they, Hun? Any better?

Sarah wipes her eyes and drops A SET OF FOUR PAPERBACK BOOKS from the tv series KUNG FU onto the coffee table.

SARAH

Nope. She barely acknowledged them.

FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mardie sits transfixed in front of the TV SET as she watches CAIN lift a SMOLDERING CAULDRON, with a DRAGON on one side and a TIGER on the other, by his forearms, during the opening credits of KUNG FU.

NARRATOR

Mardie's love for Cain, the hero of Kung Fu, was so intense, she would emulate him at every opportunity, for better or worse.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Standing at the STOVE, a large POT of water is BOILING OVER as Mardie peels off the backing of a RUB-ON DRAGON TATTOO.

NARRATOR  
I saved her from doing something  
really stupid that day.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Bud's doing a puzzle and Sarah's reading a book as Alan enters.

ALAN  
Mom? Dad? Mardie's doing something  
really stupid.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

As Mardie is about to bring her newly TATTOOED FOREARMS down upon the boiling pot, Alan and her parents walk in.

SARAH  
Mardie!

BUD  
What the hell are you doing!

Spooked, Mardie shrieks, knocking the pot of boiling water off the stove and scattering her parents and little brother.

NARRATOR  
Clearly not her finest moment.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

NELSON  
Sarah, I am so sorry.

Sarah drops her head and lets out a deep, long sigh.

SARAH  
I know I'll regret this, but...

Nelson looks on as Sarah and Bud share a look of desperation.

SARAH  
What if we let Alan tag along to  
Jaws?

She covers her mouth to stifle a cry. Nelson comforts her.

BUD  
Y'know, I think that just might work.

NARRATOR

Mom was right. It did help. But the memory of losing Thor that day would haunt Mardie and I for a long time to come.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Mardie and Alan are sharing a popcorn, shocked looks on their faces, tears welling up in their eyes.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Pipit? Pipit?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah and Bud are in a heated discussion with the kids.

MARDIE

Mom, we don't want to go!

Sarah exhales, struggling to regain her composure.

SARAH

Your Aunt and Uncle were heartbroken when plans fell through last year, so they really want you guys to go there and enjoy it with them!

BUD

Besides, what's there to do here?

MARDIE

Hang out with our friends?

ALAN

Go to the movies.

Sarah looks directly at Bud.

SARAH

This is all your fault.

Sarah walks past Bud and STEALTHILY hands him a wrapped package, the size of a paperback, then walks out of the room.

BUD

Alright guys, listen up.

MARDIE

What did she just hand you?

Mardie reaches for it, but Bud pulls it away.

BUD

Hey! Alright, it's for both of you.  
But not until you're on the island.

ALAN

Your bribery needs work Dad. I know  
a thesaurus when I see one.

BUD

It is not a thesaurus, smart-guy.

MARDIE

Why are you forcing us?

ALAN

Seriously, you live to torture us!

Sarah sticks her head back into the room.

SARAH

Oh, says the boy who just saw Jaws?

Alan lowers his head and exits the room.

MARDIE

Is it really a cabin? I hate cabins.

SARAH

It's nothing like Bear Hill camp,  
trust me. Uncle Nel says it even  
has a loft bedroom with its own tub.

A slight change in Mardie's look and attitude.

MARDIE

Cool. I call that room.

BUD

Excellent! Your great escape awaits.

Alan walks back into the room just then.

ALAN

Yeah, escape to the Island of boredom.

SARAH (O.S.)

I heard that!

EXT. BUS STATION - EVENING

Mardie and Alan are boarding a CONCORD TRAILWAYS BUS and  
getting hugs from Bud and Sarah. The kids are unenthusiastic.

SARAH  
C'mon guys, cheer up! You're going  
to have a fabulous time, trust me!

MARDIE  
If you say so, Mom.

Sarah hands Mardie an INSTAMATIC CAMERA.

SARAH  
In case something catches your eye.

Bud hands Alan a MAGAZINE.

BUD  
I grabbed this at the Barbershop  
this morning.

It's a TIME MAGAZINE with a GIANT SHARK ON THE COVER and the  
words SUPER SHARK. Alan's jaw literally drops.

ALAN  
What?! Are you kidding me?!

MARDIE  
What is it, let me see.

ALAN  
This!

Alan shows her the cover. Another jaw drops.

NARRATOR  
It was the most amazing magazine  
cover we had ever seen.

Mardie snatches it and runs up the steps of the bus.

MARDIE  
Bye Mom, bye Dad! Thank you!

Alan quickly hugs his parents and then runs onto the bus.

ALAN  
Love you guys! Bye!

BUD AND SARAH  
Call us!

NARRATOR  
On our 3 hour journey south, we  
devoured the magazine and came to  
realize we couldn't have been more  
wrong about Martha's Vineyard. We  
could hardly contain ourselves.