Summer of the Shark

An Original Screenplay

By

Dana L Goudreault

Contact Writer at: agfs@comcast.net

WGA #2070289
Copyright 2020
FADE IN:

EXT. KING KONE ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

INSERT: OCTOBER 4, 2004

A 2002 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 biologist Greg Skomal lead two boat teams that ultimately ushered the reluctant fish to freedom today.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

ALAN BROWN(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 LOST DAYS OF SUMMER (A MEMOIR).

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 occurred to me. How different would the reaction have been thirty years ago, when the only good shark was a dead shark?

Alan snorts loudly, looks across at the ice cream stand and, after rubbing his goatee, TURNS OFF the radio and lays back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(adult voice of Alan Brown)
How different? Well, truth be told, only a handful could honestly answer that. My sister Mardie and I for starters. But over the years, details have begun to escape the island. And today, it is spoken of 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 "6TH SMASH WEEK!", "See it BEFORE you go SWIMMING!" And "May be TOO intense for YOUNGER children."

NARRATOR (V.O.)
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.

INT. STATION WAGON - CONTINUOUS

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, kiddo. You need a miracle. But you know I'm pulling for you.

Mardie gives Alan a friendly punch in the arm.

NELSON
I'm not liking the 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 Mom and Dad's bedroom crying zillions more times than me too.

NELSON
Ha!

ALAN
Not funny, Uncle Nel!

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 - CONTINUOUS

The pickup that struck the dog continues on after a brief stop and the 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 tries pulling her back.

NELSON
Mardie, careful. 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 BARKING.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
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
Was that a bark, or the killer truck from Duel?

Mardie, staring up the driveway, gives Alan the SHH SIGNAL and starts slowly walking up the driveway. Alan follows.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Our nature-loving parents had instilled in us a deep admiration and respect for all of God's creatures, though I still struggle at times when my personal space is invaded by a moth.
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 dog skids to a stop in front of Mardie, and even sitting 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 massive 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
Oh God, 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 NAMETAG.

MARDIE
Thor? What a cool name, boy.
NARRATOR (V.O.)
And that was my sister. Had we been raised in Montana, I have little doubt she would have one day stared down a Grizzly bear, and I would have grown up an only child.

Alan reaches out and nervously pats the drooling beast.

ALAN
Good doggie, Thor.

BACK TO SCENE

Mardie and Alan are sobbing as they pat Thor's head.

MARDIE
I'm so sorry, boy.

The dog's breathing speeds up and his eyes open wide. Sobbing, 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 sitting on a couch and his brother-in-law, BUD(35) is sitting across from him in a chair. On a LARGE CONSOLE TV, the local news is on, but the volume is off.

On a BOOKSHELF, several NATURE REFERENCE BOOKS fill the TOP TWO SHELVES along with a large collection of JAMES HERRIOT BOOKS including ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL.

SOBBING can be heard coming from another room.

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
As always, it was Mardie and Alan 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.

BUD
How are they?

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

SARAH
She wouldn't even acknowledge them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Kung Fu had been my sister's favorite tv show, up until its abrupt end back in April.

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 (V.O.)
Her love for it was so strong, she even attempted to get forearm tattoos like her hero, Cain, utilizing our Mom's favorite spaghetti pot.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Standing in front of the kitchen STOVE, a large POT of water is BOILING OVER as Mardie peels off the backing of a rub-on
DRAGON TATTOO on her RIGHT FOREARM, and we see she already has a TIGER TATTOO in place on her LEFT FOREARM.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I saved her from doing something very stupid that day by ratting her out to my parents.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Bud's reading a paper, Sarah's reading a book as Alan enters.

ALAN
Mom, Dad...Mardie's doing something stupid.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

As Mardie is about to bring her forearms down upon the boiling pot, Alan and her parents walk into the kitchen.

SARAH
Mardie!

BUD
What the hell are you doing!

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Not her finest moment. And she was peeved at me for a very long time. But, eventually she got over it.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

NELSON
I'm so sorry, Sarah.

SARAH
Well, I know I am likely to regret this, but...

BUD
You got something else up your sleeve?

SARAH
What if we let Alan tag along with Mardie to see Jaws?

She covers her mouth to stifle a cry. Nelson comforts her as Bud lifts one of the Kung Fu books up for a look.
BUD
Y'know, I think that just might work.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
My Mom's intuition was right, though
the memory of Thor would haunt Mardie
and I for a very long time.

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
But Mom, we don't want to go!

ALAN
We've heard you, it's for old people!

BUD
What? No, you heard us wrong, Alan!

Bud exhales, struggling to regain his composure.

BUD
Look, your Aunt and Uncle were
heartbroken when they couldn't rent
the place last year, so now they
really want you guys to go and explore
it with them. It'll be fun!

SARAH
Besides, what's there to do here?

MARDIE
Hang out with our friends?

ALAN
Go to the movies!

SARAH
Damn it all with the movies!

Sarah looks directly at Bud.

SARAH
This is all your fault.
Sarah walks past Bud and secretly hands him a wrapped package, about the size of a paperback, behind his back and 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! Hey! Alright! It's for both of you. But you can't open it until you're on the island.

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

BUD
I promise you, it's not a thesaurus.

MARDIE
Why are you forcing us to go?

ALAN
Seriously, you live to torture us!

Sarah walks back into the room.

SARAH
Oh, says the boy who just saw Jaws?

Alan lowers his head and walks out of the room.

MARDIE
Is it really a cabin? I hate cabins.

SARAH
It's nothing like Bear Hill camp, trust me. Your Uncle Nel says he's been informed that it even has a loft bedroom with its own claw bathtub right there in the room.

A slight change in Mardie's look and attitude.

MARDIE
Cool. I call that room.

BUD
You two are in for a great escape.
Alan walks back into the room, still frowning.

ALAN
Yeah, escape to the Island of boredom.

SARAH (O.S.)
Hey! I heard that!

Bud and Mardie are unable to hold in a laugh.

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!

Alan is unconvinced.

ALAN
If you say so, Mom.

Bud lifts Alan's sagging chin with his pointing finger.

BUD
Hey, I grabbed this from the Barbershop this morning. It's a bit beaten up, but still readable.

Bud hands him 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 (V.O.)
It was the most amazing magazine cover we had ever seen, including covers of Famous Monsters magazines that I treasure to this day.

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

MARDIE
Bye Mom, bye Dad! Thank you!