

A Fishbowl Sonata

written by

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1 EXT - MAGICAL FOREST - NIGHT

A two-headed FIGURE stands silhouetted by a sheer curtain in the middle of a purple-hued forest. A halo of light emanates from the figure.

The figure slowly bends and begins to split into TWO DISTINCT BODIES, peeling apart like a flower blooming. The two bodies gracefully melt into their own separate darkness.

FADE TO BLACK

2 INT. ALINE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

A tiny arts-and-crafts, cluttered bedroom. ALINE, (18) brunette and baby-faced, lays dead asleep.

The wind ruffles the lace drapes of the window next to her. Golden light filters through, casting floral shadows over her face.

ALINE (V.O)

Have you ever wondered what life would be like if the sky always glowed pink, like it does during the sunrise?

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

3 A) INT. DANCE ROOM - DAY

Romantic MUSIC swells.

Aline's a ballerina. She sparkles in the sunny dance room, gliding and twirling through the air like she's floating.

4 B) EXT. PARK - DAY

LEO (17), charming, sits across from Aline in the grass. Flowers surround them but their eyes are glued to each other, they're the picture of love.

ALINE (V.O)

Well, that's what it felt like. That's what all the dreams felt like.

5 C) EXT. GARDEN - GOLDEN HOUR

Aline, wearing an angelic white dress, leaps through a garden with the grace of a ballerina. She's beaming, face flushed.

LEO (O.S)
C'mon!! Come with me!

Aline giggles, hops forward and out of frame.

END SEQUENCE

6 INT. ALINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Aline lays on her stomach on the bed, chin resting in her hands as she studies the GOLDFISH swimming around in a tiny fishbowl on the nightstand.

The fish opens its mouth, bubbles fly upward. Aline imitates the fish, mouthing the movement: they have a connection.

7 INT. DANCE ROOM - DAY

Aline, wearing an all black leotard and tie-skirt, spins and leaps around the grand space, stumbling when she lands.

Her face shifts from concentration to INSECURITY as she attempts each successive move. Sweat gathers on the edges of her tightly tied up hair.

8 INT. ALINE'S CAR - EVENING

Suburbia blurs past Aline as she stomps on the gas. Wind blows through the open window, tickling her hair.

Aline turns up the MUSIC and leans back, letting the shoegazey dreaminess overtake her.

LEO (O.S)
(whisper)
Aline!!

Aline JUMPS, looks around the car, but sees NO ONE.

9 EXT. JUNIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

She rolls to a stop in front of a quaint house. JUNIE, her bestie, sticks her head out of the front door.

JUNIE

Alineeee!

Aline hops out of the car, waving to her. Junie smiles and jogs up to the car, hugging her.

JUNIE (CONT'D)

Happy birthday!

Aline chuckles they head toward the house together.

ALINE

You sure your cousin wants to host tonight? We can always just chill at mine.

JUNIE

No, yeah of course.

Aline nods, unconvinced. Junie slides through the front door.

JUNIE (CONT'D)

It'll be fun!

ALINE

Yeah, okay.

10 INT. JUNIE'S ROOM - LATER

Aline slouches against the bed, gazing out the window. Junie braids her hair at the desk.

ALINE

I had that dream again.

JUNIE

Which one?

ALINE

The one I told you about. It always feels so real.

A smile creeps on Junie's face, she's not listening. She spins around to look at Aline.

JUNIE

Oh my god I forgot to tell you.

ALINE

Hm?

Junie covers her mouth, making a deal out of it.

JUNIE

I got it.

Aline gulps.

ALINE

...Got what?

JUNIE

I'm gonna be Odette!

ALINE

It was announced already?

JUNIE

Yeah, an hour ago. Didn't they call you?

Aline blinks, raises her brows.

ALINE

Oh! Oh wow, that's great!
That's...huge! Congrats.

She looks over at Junie, forces a smile. Junie's face falls, she stops braiding her hair and sits down across from Aline.

JUNIE

Oh no, Aline. I'm sorry.

ALINE

No! You're gonna be amazing, you
deserve it.

Aline nods. Junie reaches over and hugs Aline.

ALINE (CONT'D)

It's okay! Really!

11 EXT. STREET - EVENING

The car zooms down the road as the sun dips below the horizon, leaving the street under the spotty glow of the street lamps.

12 INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Kitschy disco lights fill the hazy room. BODIES bop to MUSIC.

Junie and Aline lean against the wall, watching the partiers. Aline wears a pointy birthday hat.

ALINE

...Maybe I should go home.

JUNIE

(polite disapproval)
Go home??

ALINE

I don't know.

Aline listlessly looks back at the party crowd. MARNIE, preppy, runs up to Junie.

MARNIE

Can you believe it! Odette and Odile!

Junie SHRIEKS and hugs her.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

Let's dance!

Junie briefly looks back at Aline as Marnie pulls her away. Aline watches Junie disappear into the crowd.

ALINE

Junie wait—

Aline stands by the wall, alone.

BOY (20), cheesy face and absolutely no game, spins into frame, landing shoulder to shoulder with Aline.

BOY

How's it feel to be 18?

Aline shifts uncomfortably.

ALINE

Good?

Boy leans in almost as if he's trying to kiss her. Aline looks away and runs her mouth nervously.

ALINE (CONT'D)

I mean I don't really *feel* like I should be 18 yet but—

Aline's eyes fall onto a dark corner where a birthday cake sits on a small table.

Without excusing herself, she steps over to it. The cake has sprinkles and a few unlit candles sticking out of it.

Aline grabs the lighter from the table and lights the candles. None of the partiers notice her or the cake. Aline bends down to be level with the cake, gazing at the flames.

Suddenly Aline's eyes lock onto something and LIGHT UP: Through the blur of the flames, she sees Leo (from the dream) across the room. Her world turns to slow motion.

They make brief but monumental eye contact.

Aline forgets to breathe.

...Until she sees Leo heading toward the back door.

Aline is struck with both confusion and urgency: she shoots up and pushes her way through bodies until she reaches the back door, looking out at a single silhouetted Leo running off and disappearing in the shadows of the trees.

13 EXT. BACKYARD/FOREST - NIGHT

Aline trots through the yard, eyes wide and searching. She slows to a stop in front of a FOREST.

Gentle leaves sway in the deep violet light of the night.

The forest seems to be ALIVE: a distant light glows from within. Birds CHIRP softly.

Aline JUMPS, startled: a FIGURE in a white drapery gown twirls in front of her, placing a small white flower in her hand. Aline watches with awe as the figure gracefully leaps away and disappears into the brush.

In the distance, the shadows of two, three, four FIGURES dance through the forest.

Echoing from deep within, a friendly call....

LEO (O.S)

Alineee!

Aline snaps to attention, an ounce of fear in her eyes. She picks at her nails and tip-toes backward.

She TRIPS, stumbles backward and runs back toward the party, leaving the magical forest in her dust.

14 INT. ALINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Aline rolls over, blinded by the warm afternoon light seeping through her window. She lifts her head and her eyes fall on the fish bowl on the nightstand. She squints:

The goldfish is erratic, swimming like it's trying to escape.

Aline, still eyeing the fish, slowly removes herself from her bed. She freezes when she sees the white flower from earlier on the floor.

Aline picks it up and examines it before tossing it on the bed.

Aline pulls a colorful sweater and jeans on.

She yawns, looking in the mirror. Her eyes grow wide, she gulps down her yawn. In her reflection she wears a WHITE SILK GOWN with a crown.

The goldfish spazzes out in its bowl.

Aline stares at herself in the mirror, unable to move.

She blinks twice and looks down at her clothes, taking a sigh of relief: she wears her colorful sweater just like earlier.

The wind picks up and the drapes FLAP, Aline runs over to her open window and shuts it.

15 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Aline wanders down the middle of the hallway. She dodges STUDENTS walking at her. They carry books and chat with each other, no one acknowledges her presence.

The DANCE INSTRUCTOR (40), tapes up a poster advertising "SWAN LAKE, THIS SPRING."

Aline pulls her sleeves over her hands and steps toward her.

ALINE
S'cuse me....

The Dance Instructor doesn't flinch, smoothes out the poster.

ALINE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to ask—

STUDENT steps in front of Aline. The Dance Instructor turns around.

The horrible fluorescent lights BUZZ above her. She listens...the buzz starts to sound like birds CHIRPING and leaves SWAYING. Aline stares at the light. The noise gets LOUDER AND LOUDER.

Aline covers her ears and bolts down the hallway and out the school doors.

16 INT./EXT. ALINE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Aline zooms down the road. The SOUNDS chase her. Aline looks back, paranoid. She drives FAST, the speedometer soars.

Suddenly, the sounds cut out: it's QUIET, peaceful.

She slows to a stop and finds herself in front of the forest. She stares out the window. Then steps out, eyes fixed ahead.

17 EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Aline stands still, illuminated by the light of her headlights and entranced by the soft purple-pink glow of the trees. The sky is dim now.

She takes a few cautious steps forward and enters into the forest.

The FIGURES dance and leap fleetingly in the distance, just like before.

Aline FLINCHES. Two hands gently place a white CROWN on Aline's head. Suddenly, she is wearing the white dress that appeared in the mirror.

Aline turns around to see Leo. She immediately relaxes, a shy smile grows on her face. Leo smiles and reaches out their hand, Aline grabs hold of it.

Aline slightly shakes her head in amazement, a grin growing on her face.

Leo turns and leads Aline by the hand, running and leaping deep into the forest.

Two dancing figures join Aline's side. Then two more...suddenly, Aline is running with a POSSE of four angelic-looking dancers.

Leo turns to Aline and nods at her encouragingly.

Aline does a small leap. She seems to SOAR. She leaps again, then twirls and spins. It's as if she's floating.

Aline's face brightens with a giddy sense of joy, she LAUGHS. They all softly laugh with her. Aline moves through the forest with the graceful flair of a ballerina, encapsulating the role of Odette effortlessly.

They slow to a stop at a clearing in the woods. A flowy curtain hangs from the trees creating a theatrical stage-like setting.

Aline stands facing Leo, still holding onto their hand. The dancing figures spin away.

Aline and Leo run behind the curtain, silhouetted by a purple light. Flowers decorate the forest around them.

In shadow, they begin to sway and dance, merging into each other as one figure: a completion of the opening image.

18 INT. ALINE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Everything is quiet. The wind ruffles the lace drapes. The covers on Aline's bed are messily drawn back and clothes still lay atop the sheets.

The fish bowl is empty.