



THE SHAPE OF WATER
a TV Land For the Computer Original Series
"PILOT"
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Based upon characters created by Guillermo Del Toro, Vanessa Taylor, and Daniel Kraus

INT. ELISA'S KITCHEN, AFTERNOON

ELISA, SHAPEY the sexual fishman, ZELDA, GILES, and DMITRI are sitting down to a big brunch.

DMITRI

Thanks you for invitink us into
your lovely home.

ELISA

(Signing)

Thank you, for all your help.

ZELDA

She says thank you, for all your
help.

DMITRI

I did not do it for special brunch,
I did it for science and the
greater good. But I suppose it
would be rude to refuse you.

Dmitri loads his plate up with eggs and sausage.

GILES

Jeez, easy on the sausage, you
don't want to get gout.

ZELDA

Might help his cover story. If
there's something you hear about
the Soviet Union, it ain't that
there's too much delicious meat
going around.

Shapey pours a plate of deviled eggs down into his mouth and messily chews them. Elisa kisses him on the cheek.

ELISA

(Signing)

My big hungry man.

DMITRI

Da, we are all havink big fun, but
there is serious business to
discuss. Strickland is gettink wery
suspicious that Shapey was freed by
somebody from the lab. We are all
goink to have to be careful not to
be discovered!

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Shapey, you know what that means.

Shapey and Giles' eyes both widen in alarm.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 If you go outside, you have to wear
 your disguise.

GILES
 Sending him out in my wig and one
 of my old suits is NOT a proper
 disguise and NONE of it dries
 right.

SHAPEY
 (Signing)
 Clothes. Horrible. Nude. Wonderful.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Shapey, please. For me.

SHAPEY
 (Signing)
 Anything for you.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Anything?

Elisa knocks a deviled eggs into her lap.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Could you...get that for me?

Shapey moves his hand under the table. Elisa tilts her head
 back and bites her lip.

There is a silence.

Zelda extends her hand to Giles.

ZELDA
 I'm Zelda by the way, I know Elisa
 from work.

GILES
 So nice to meet you.

OPENING CREDITS

An animated intro akin to I Dream of Jeannie, showing Elisa meeting Shapey, springing him from the lab, and taking him home.

INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM, NIGHT

Elisa's alarm goes off. She goes to start making a ton of hard-boiled eggs but opens the fridge to find they're fresh out! She walks over to Shapey's bedroom, the bathroom.

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM

Shapey is sitting on the toilet, drinking mouthwash and lifting weights. Elisa enters.

ELISA

(Signing)

Can you get some groceries? I need to take a shower. The list's on the fridge.

SHAPEY

(Signing)

Groceries.

Elisa smiles and nods with great enthusiasm.

INT. ELISA'S KITCHEN, LATER

Elisa comes out of the bathroom in a towel. Shapey is strangling a seal on the kitchen counter. She runs over to stop him, slapping his arms. He is startled and in his panic he unhinges his jaw and swallows the seal whole.

ELISA

(Signing)

Where are the groceries, Shapey?

Shapey points to his now engorged tummy.

ELISA

(Signing)

That was a seal.

She moves her hands very deliberately

ELISA (cont'd)
 (Signing)
 Seal.

She opens the refrigerator and points to the food in it.

ELISA (cont'd)
 (Signing)
 Groceries.

Shapey unhinges his jaw and pulls the twitching, partially digested seal out.

SHAPEY
 (Signing)
 Groceries.

Elisa shakes her head but then a thought dawns on her. Elisa points to the seal.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 This is food, for you. But it's not
 groceries. Groceries come from the
 store, downstairs. Do you
 understand store?

SHAPEY
 (Signing)
 Yes. Store.

He unhinges his jaw and swallows the seal again.

SHAPEY (cont'd)
 (Signing)
 Groceries store.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Aw brudder. You haven't been
 practicing your signs from the
 book, have you?

Shapey pulls out a book with a giant bite taken out of it.

SHAPEY
 (Signing)
 Bad groceries.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 How would you feel if someone came
 to the house, someone nice, to show
 you how to talk better?

SHAPEY
 (Signing)
 Horny.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 You rascal!

She glances at the clock.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Yeah ok.

She jumps on him.

INT. LAB CAFETERIA

Elisa, Zelda, and Dmitri are eating a hearty dinner of borscht.

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Is it okay, you think?

ZELDA
 Oh, I'm sure, yeah, you've got that wig.

STRICKLAND walks over, slamming his tray on the table, splashing borscht all around.

STRICKLAND
 Can you believe this crap is all they've got for dinner tonight? It's the same color as my fingers!

He holds his hand and the two reattached, rotting fingers up to the soup for comparison.

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
 What were you gals talking about? Having a few too many rights?

ZELDA
 Oh, we just have a...friend whose...dog needs a tutor.

STRICKLAND
 Only tutor a dog needs is a raw steak at the top of a ladder and a shock collar. Bob, are you as
 (MORE)

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
 disgusted by this Cossack crap
 they're feeding us as I am?

DMITRI
 (overdoing his American accent
 by 30%)
 This purple bastard water is as
 unfamiliar to me as it is wrong
 tasting. What we should have for
 dinner is a hammed burger, and his
 slim golden daughters, the french
 fries.

STRICKLAND
 Uh huh. Say, I thought a nice
 morale booster for all the senior
 staff would be an American history
 trivia contest. What do you think,
 Bob?

DMITRI
 Hang ten!

STRICKLAND
 I'm so glad you like my idea. And
 just between you and me, the person
 who scores the lowest is going to
 get tortured for days for
 information about who stole the
 Asset.

DMITRI
 Wow what a good news.

STRICKLAND
 Be seeing you.

Strickland gets up and starts walking away.

ZELDA
 Excuse me, Mr. Strickland, your
 tray.

Strickland turns around.

STRICKLAND
 Oh, sorry about that.

Strickland picks up his tray and throws it across the room.

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
Clean that up, will ya?

Strickland exits.

ZELDA
Why Shapey couldn't have bit his
neck out instead of his fingers
I'll never understand.

Dmitri is shaking.

DMITRI
We are dead. We are deadeast meat
for to feed dog. When I lose that
contest he's going to do stuff to
my ass with a knife and I want to
say I won't give you two up, but
that is my nobility speakink, and I
don't know how many serious cuts to
the ass my nobility can withstand.

ZELDA
Don't you know anything about
American history?

DMITRI
I know your first king had wooden
teeth and everyone thinks he is
cool even though he had lots and
lots of slaves.

ELISA
(Signing)
Why don't you ask Giles? I'm sure
he could help you out.

ZELDA
She said you should ask Giles to
help you out, even though I have an
associate's degree in history,
which you know, I've for sure told
both of you.

DMITRI
If you could help me I would be
wery grateful.

ZELDA
Nah you should ask Giles, I got
actual stuff to do in my life and
he just spends all day talkin' to
his cats while he draws swimmers

(MORE)

ZELDA (cont'd)
wrestling. He probably kinda needs
this.

INT. ELISA'S KITCHEN, MORNING

Elisa and Shapey have just finished making love on the
kitchen table and she is getting dressed.

ELISA
(Signing)
Put on clothes, Shapey. The tutor
is coming soon.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
But I am a god.

ELISA
(Signing)
You'll be the god of JOing if you
don't get some slacks on, mister.

CUT TO: the kitchen, as before, but Shapey is wearing one of
Giles' suits and his wig. The doorbell rings.

ELISA
(Signing)
That will be him now!

She opens the door and in comes DR. HOLCRUMB (special guest
star Rene Auberjonois.)

ELISA
(Signing)
Dr. Holcrumb, welcome!

DR. HOLCRUMB
You have a lovely home, Elisa. I'm
glad to see you've done so well for
yourself.

ELISA
(Signing)
Dr. Holcrumb taught me how to sign
back at the orphanage when I was
just a girl.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
Whatever.

ELISA

(Signing)

I'm sorry, Dr. Holcrumb, he's a bit sensitive about this.

DR. HOLCRUMB

Oh, that's quite alright. It's a sensitive thing, isn't it? Communication is one of the cornerstones of life itself. But Shapey, understand this: neither I or Elisa think any less of you because you aren't as proficient in sign language as you are. We simply wish to communicate with you better.

SHAPEY

Fine.

INT. GILES' APARTMENT

Giles is working on a huge oil painting of a banana with the text "BANANAS: AVAILABLE AT THE STORE" underneath. There is a knock on his door and he hastily throws a sheet over his work. He opens the door, revealing Dmitri, holding a suitcase.

DMITRI

May I comink in?

GILES

Of course, of course. What's happening, is Shapey alright? Do we need to flee the country? I have a bag packed at all times, I alternate which cat is in the carrier so it's just chance that decides who gets to come with me, is Elisa o-

Dmitri smiles and gently smacks Giles across the face.

GILES (cont'd)

Thank you.

DMITRI

I am here to ask for your help to make sure I am not tortured and forced to give up your name as someone who for sure did some crimes against the state.

GILES

Is that how people ask for favors
in Russia, with a threat?

DMITRI

Would it be more polite to give you
option of saying no and *then* say
you may be in grave physical
danger?

GILES

Yeah, alright. So what's the caper?

DMITRI

Strickland is havink big mandatory
American history trivia contest.
Loser gets tortured.

GILES

So you want me to help you study?

DMITRI

What? No. That sounds borink and
dumb.

Dmitri opens his suitcase. Inside is a radio transmitter and
a microphone.

DMITRI

This is special spy gear. You'll be
able to hear what I'm hearink and
speak to me through special implant
that is luckily already surgically
installed in my face.

GILES

Alright! Just uh, promise me I'll
be treated well when Mother Russia
invades.

DMITRI

Uhh okay sure.

GILES

Did I come on a little strong? I
figured, if I'm going to commit
treason I might as well really
double down on it. What are they
gonna do, execute me twice?

INT. ELISA'S KITCHEN, LATER

Dr. Holcrumb is doing flashcards with Shapey. He pulls out a card with the image of a car on it. Elisa is watching, proud and pleased.

DR. HOLCRUMB
And this?

SHAPEY
(Signing)
Car.

DR. HOLCRUMB
Excellent!

He pulls out a card with the image of a pig on it.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
Pig.

DR. HOLCRUMB
Terrific!

He pulls out a card with a picture of the Earth on it.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
My dominion.

DR. HOLCRUMB
(Signing)
Earth.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
That over which I reign.

ELISA
(Signing)
Maybe we should skip.

He pulls out a card with the image of a ferris wheel on it.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
Ferris wheel.

DR. HOLCRUMB
There we go! You really are doing very well, Shapey. You should be proud of yourself.

He pulls out a card with the image of a seal on it.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
Groceries.

DR. HOLCRUMB
(Signing)
Seal.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
Groceries.

ELISA
(Signing)
Darling we went over this.

DR. HOLCRUMB
(Signing)
Seal.

Shapey rises to his feet, fins flaring so hard they break out of Giles' suit, glowing with blue energy

SHAPEY
(screaming in a horrifying and
uncanny approximation of the
human voice)
GROCERIES!

Shapey expels the half digested seal's head. It lands at Dr. Holcrumb's feet and when he looks at it, it looks back. It opens it's mouth, trying to scream. Dr. Holcrumb falls over backwards in his chair.

DR. HOLCRUMB
Well. It appears we've made all the
progress we can today. Elisa, my
bill will arrive in the mail.

Dr. Holcrumb walks out in a huff.

ELISA
(Signing, furious)
You didn't have to scream at him. I
know what you are, that you're more
than a man, but you don't have to
wield it like that. You don't have
to show him how big you are just so
you don't feel small.

An alarm goes off.

ELISA (cont'd)
 (Signing)
 Great. I have to leave for work.
 Try to stay out of trouble.

She storms out. Shapey, truly unaccustomed to reproach, is reeling. He looks out the window and sees her getting on the bus. He waves. She doesn't see. He looks at the kitchen table...where the brown bag containing her big egg lunch is still sitting! He looks out the window again, the bus is gone. He starts pacing, panicked over what to do.

INT. MENSWEAR STORE

Shapey is still wearing Giles' wig, but is now wearing a sharp, black suit with a white shirt and blue tie. Our guy is lookin' good and he can tell. The elderly store clerk walks over to Shapey.

CLERK
 It's a very dashing suit, sir. Will you be wearing it out?

Shapey nods and begins making his way out. The clerk grabs his arm.

CLERK (cont'd)
 Excuse me, sir. You still have to pay.

Shapey hits his own head to express "of course, of course." He then puts his hand on the clerk's head. In a flash of blue light, the clerk becomes young, strong, and beautiful.

CLERK (cont'd)
 (Gazing at his hands)
 My...my skin. My SKIN!

The clerk weeps with joy and confusion as Shapey slowly backs out of the store.

INT. LAB CAFETERIA

Elisa and Zelda are setting the room up for the big quiz.

ZELDA
 No, you're not being unreasonable.
 He's your first...would you say
 boyfriend? Fishfriend?

ELISA
 (Signing)
 Gill-friend?

Zelda cracks up for like a full thirty seconds
 She regains her composure.

ZELDA
 It's confusing the first time you
 fall in love, what the rules are.
 And you're right, he should be
 putting in more of an effort with
 his signing. I don't know how
 mermen do it, but with humans,
 eventually the sheer rush of having
 sex with somebody dies down. Not
 that it dies completely, when me
 and Brewster do husband and wife
 stuff we DO it but sometimes you're
 just gonna wanna lay together,
 talking. And that ain't gonna work
 if he doesn't know how the hell to
 talk to you. But you gotta
 remember, neither of you wants to
 hurt each other. Even if he's
 acting a fool or you're so mad
 you're seeing red, neither of you
 wants to actually make the other
 one feel bad, right?

ELISA
 (Signing)
 I suppose.

STRICKLAND
 Make sure the tables are in a semi
 circle.

Elisa and Zelda are both startled to see Strickland.

ZELDA
 Mr. Strickland, I, gosh, I didn't
 see you there sir. How much of
 that...did you hear?

STRICKLAND
 I make a good effort not to hear
 anything a woman says unless it's
 absolutely necessary. What were you
 talking about, underwear? Dirty
 underwear?

He flips a table over.

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
The US government does NOT pay you
to talk about your huge, dirty
underwear!

Elsewhere in the cafeteria, Dmitri is pretending to drink a
cup of coffee but really just covering his mouth.

DMITRI
Giles, come in. Giles, do you
copying?

GILES
(In Dmitri's ear)
Dmitri! Hello! How are you?

DMITRI
I'm fine.

GILES
(In Dmitri's ear)
Oh, good. I was worried you might
be nervous. Don't worry, I got
straight Bs in American history.

DMITRI
Is B...a favorable grade?

GILES
(In Dmitri's ear)
It kind of depends how well the
people around you are doing? For my
school it was great.

Dmitri takes the cup away from his mouth, thoughtlessly
pouring coffee everywhere.

DMITRI
(quiet, defeated)
I am goink to be stabbed in my ass.

INT. LAB SECURITY GATE

Shapey is trying to sneak by undetected but is spotted by a
guard, to whom he has his back turned.

GUARD
Halt! What's going on here?
Credentials, now.

Shapey turns around.

GUARD (cont'd)
 Sir! Forgive me, I had no idea you
 were coming to the lab, let me tell
 the higher-ups you're visiting, you
 go right on in.

The camera pans to a newspaper in the guard's booth, with a
 picture of a man who looks exactly like Shapey in a wig on
 the front page with the headline "HIDEOUS NEW PRESIDENT
 SWORN IN."

INT. LAB CAFETERIA

Dmitri and the rest of the senior staff are sitting at
 tables while Strickland stands at a podium with a stack of
 cards.

STRICKLAND
 Alright, first question. Who was
 the third President of the United
 States?

GILES
 (In Dmitri's ear)
 Oh, easy one, Thomas Jefferson.

DMITRI
 Thomas Jefferson!

STRICKLAND
 Correct...hrrm...

Strickland swaps some cards around.

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
 What is the 14th amendment to the
 US Constitution?

FLEMING (returning film cast member David Hewlett) runs up
 to Strickland and whispers in his ear.

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
 The PRESIDENT?! Alright, keep this
 dink show going, I have something
 actual to do.

Shapey walks in and is immediately startled to see
 Strickland, who walks up to Shapey and shakes his hand.

STRICKLAND (cont'd)
 Mr. President, it is an honor to
 meet you. What brings you to the
 lab today?

SHAPEY

(In a nightmarish and uncanny approximation of the human voice)

PRESIDENT.

STRICKLAND

Yes sir, yes sir. Well, anything you need - and that includes in DC - I'm your man. I'll move to DC in a heartbeat if you ask. I won't even tell my family.

Shapey wanders off in search of Elisa.

STRICKLAND

I'm getting out of Baltimore. I can feel it. It's all happening!

He crosses his two reattached fingers, which immediately pop off.

STRICKLAND

Jeez Louise!

Over at the tables, Dmitri is doing great.

FLEMING

What was the result of the 1783 Treaty of Paris?

DMITRI

It ended the revolutionary war and forced Britain to recognize the US as an independent nation.

FLEMING

Correct!

INT. GILES' APARTMENT

There is a ring at the doorbell. Giles runs over to get it.

INT. LAB CAFETERIA

FLEMING

What is the system of checks and balances?

DMITRI
I didn't order a pizza!

FLEMING
Incorrect.

Elsewhere in the cafeteria, Elisa is mopping up when she spots Shapey. She stomps twice and he looks over. He runs to her with her lunch bag.

ELISA
(Signing)
What are you doing here?!

SHAPEY
(Signing)
You forgot. Need to eat.

He hands her the bag.

ELISA
(Signing)
You came back here just for this?

She kisses him on the head.

ELISA
(Signing)
We have to get you out of here.

SHAPEY
(Signing)
It's ok I'm their king now.

Elisa is deeply puzzled. Strickland comes over.

STRICKLAND
Mr. President, I hope this disgusting, sensual cripple isn't bothering you. I'd like you to come see the American history trivia contest we're having for a normal reason.

ELISA
(Signing)
Shapey, they think you're the new President! Say everything I sign to you, okay?

Shapey nods.

FLEMING

Who was Frederick Douglass?

DMITRI

I don't care if they told you my address, I didn't order a pizza, I don't LIKE pizza, and unless you want to pose for a few hours in a viking helmet and a tasteful loincloth I need you to get out of here!

FLEMING

Incor-

DMITRI

Oh you're going to warn the other delivery boys? What are you gonna say, that you almost broadened your horizons but, thank God, you were able to keep your mind nice and shut!

Strickland and Shapey walk over to the podium.

STRICKLAND

I'm thrilled to announce that the disgusting new President of the United States is here to watch our little contest.

Elisa starts signing to Shapey.

SHAPEY

(In a beautiful, smooth, and booming voice)

My fellow Americans. It's plain to me that you're all patriots with no secret agendas. But using my Presidential Ears, I have determined the winner of this contest to be my friend and fellow American citizen Dr. Robert Hoffstetler. God bless you, and God bless America.

STRICKLAND

Aren't you going to take me with you? Away from all this?!

Shapey and Elisa run off. Strickland begrudgingly gives Dmitri a huge ornate trophy in the shape of a bald eagle.

STRICKLAND

You didn't tell me you're friends
with the President.

DMITRI

Maybe if you're a little nicer to
me I'll put in a good word for you.

Dmitri walks off.

STRICKLAND

Fleming, who lost?

FLEMING

I suppose it would be Dr. Stein,
sir.

Strickland signals and several guards grab Dr. Stein.

STRICKLAND

I'm sorry Dr. Stein, but I got some
stuff I have to work out and you're
gonna have to be my canvas.

INT. DARK ROOM

Shapey and Elisa are holding one another, shrouded in
darkness, lit by a single crack in the wall.

ELISA

(Signing)

I still can't believe you risked
your life like that.

SHAPEY

(Signing)

You are important.

She kisses him.

ELISA

(Signing)

Never do that again though. The
room where we were, the whole point
of it was that it was full of food.
I would have been fine.

SHAPEY

(Signing)

I'm sorry for how I acted.

ELISA
(Signing)
You'll keep trying, won't you?

Shapey nods.

ELISA (cont'd)
(Signing)
All we can do is move forward,
making sure to treat each other
with love and kindness.

Shapey nods. The little "hatch" on his groin opens and his huge, glowing penis comes out.

ELISA (cont'd)
(Signing)
Now there's something I can treat
with love and kindness!

They begin having sex. The door to the room opens a bit, revealing two things: that it is a utility closet and Zelda's awestruck face in the doorway. Elisa and Shapey don't even notice. Zelda closes the door and walks away. Fifteen seconds pass and the door opens just a crack, through which you can see Zelda's eye.

ZELDA
(Quietly)
Can't pass a thing like this up.