

FANTASY MASTER

Written by

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INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Dice lands on a table. The camera pulls out to reveal that:

A huge table sits squarely in the middle of a dim, fully furnished basement, making every other piece of furniture seem like an afterthought.

On the table sits another world, a sprawling GAME BOARD decorated with magical countries and textured landscapes, game pieces strategically set up for adventure.

JEFFREY GAINES(36) rolls a NUMBERED DIE, as MEREDITH GAINES(30) holds their laughing daughter YOUNG LISA GAINES (6) against her waist, ensuring a clear view for the girl.

The dice lands again. A small hand reaches out to grab the dice, and-

CUT TO:

INT. THE GAINES KITCHEN - MORNING

A bigger, feminine hand grabs the handle of a mug.

LISA GAINES (18) pours coffee into a mug, leaving no room for milk.

As she sets the coffee pot down, Jeffrey Gaines, older and worse for wear, comes into the room.

JEFFREY

Lisa, come on. You're too young to need caffeine.

Lisa looks him right in the eye and downs the entire mug. And she's off, as quickly as she came.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Kids are buzzing around the lunchroom, enjoying the most treasured period of the day. Lisa's table is concentrated at one end with peers, namely Dixie (17), Haley (18), Joey (18), and co.

Lisa sits at the outskirts of the group and doodles in a sketch book, revealing the natural social order of the group- she is near the bottom.

Lisa allows their eager gossip to dissolve into a background hum as she sits back in her chair and halfheartedly sips her milk jug. Suddenly, a buzz word catches her ear:

DIXIE

Yes, Fantasy Dungeon. They were playing all night, they loved it.

LISA

I love that game.

The group immediately turns their attention to Lisa; her interjection is not a common occurrence. They take it in.

JOEY

You know how to play?

LISA

Yeah.

The group explodes into a chorus of excitement and Lisa is taken aback, now in a strange but wonderful territory of shared interest.

HALEY

That's fuckin' awesome!

DIXIE

Could you teach us, Lise?

HALEY

Oh my god, please.

JOEY

I'll give it a try, but it better be fun.

The words continue, becoming lost on Lisa, who is already plotting the world she intends to bring her friends into.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Lisa bursts in through the front door and straight towards the basement, tearing off her backpack and jacket as she walks.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The table is bare, no trace of the board game that once enlivened it. The room seems dead.

Lisa towers over the barren table silently.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

Lisa? Are you in the basement?

No answer from Lisa. Jeffrey lumbers down the stairs and sees her standing over the table. He joins her.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Are you looking for the Fantasy
Dungeon board?

LISA

Where is it?

JEFFREY

Honey, we haven't touched it in
years-

LISA

Did you throw it out?

JEFFREY

Yes.

LISA

I wanted that.

JEFFREY

I didn't know-

LISA

Well I did. You can't just throw
out her shit because it makes you
sad or whatever. I get a say too.

JEFFREY

Lisa-

But she's already gone, storming up the stairs.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Lisa sits on the ground, surrounded by posterboard,
thoroughly used notebooks, and a meager supply of basic art
supplies. She is deep in thought.

After a moment, she consults her notebook, picks up a pencil,
and draws.

A country borne from imagination appears on the paper.

The country is colored in.

Another country is developed on another piece of posterboard.

The two posterboards are taped together.

A fully formed map is coming together.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lights still on, Lisa is haphazardly slumped over her creation, asleep.

Her father peers in cautiously and takes in the scene. He clicks the lights off.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lisa greets the morning with a grunt and a wince. As she takes in the half constructed board in front of her, the excitement returns.

A plastic bag placed by the door catches her eye. She investigates.

Out of the bag, she pulls a menagerie of Fantasy Dungeon game pieces and landscaping, little trees and armored gremlins accumulating in a pile next to her as the stream never seems to stop.

Now her game can be completed.

INT. BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

That same dead basement has once more revitalized, table dutifully adorning the glorious board Lisa has constructed. Every chair around the table is filled with a friend.

Joey, Haley and Dixie have taken their places near the head of the table where Lisa rules her kingdom, notebook propped up to cover the bottom half of her face, and of course, her secret game plan.

LISA

Welcome, all, to the jungle of
Lonos.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

IMPROV: Chaos. They are loud, their requests unreasonable. Joey is the biggest perpetrator, calling out over the rest.

Lisa's frustration is apparent: this is not how she planned it.

It reaches a peak.

JOEY

I think my character should be able to fly.

LISA

Gremlins don't have a flying stat. Only fairies and birdtypes do.

JOEY

Well I think that's lame. Can't I just roll for it?

Their friends are loving the exchange.

LISA

Fine. Roll.

He rolls.

JOEY

Woah, a nat twenty! Nice!

He throws his player piece into the "sky". It gets stuck on a ceiling rafter and remains.

Uproarious laughter from all but Lisa.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

Lisa is alone in the room, surrounded by the remains of a game half played. Her head is buried in her arms.

Jeffrey slinks up behind her.

JEFFREY

Tough day at the office?

LISA

I don't wanna talk.

JEFFREY

That's okay.

Jeffrey goes over to the box filled with extra player pieces and picks up a horse piece.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Talk to Mikey. He's Pegasus race, but he's got a little bit of human in him too.

LISA

Dad, stop. Please.

JEFFREY

Mikey wants to use persuasion to
initiate conversation with Lisa.
Can he roll?

A long silence.

LISA

Roll.

JEFFREY

Oh look, a fifteen. Not bad, Mikey.

LISA

This is painful to watch.

JEFFREY

Look, Lisa. Your mom and I liked
this game because it was fun. Not
because it's good.

LISA

It was good.

JEFFREY

Sometimes. Sometimes it was stupid;
sometimes it didn't make sense. But
we loved it.

LISA

Yeah, well, you used to be fun too.

JEFFREY

Lisa-

LISA

You should be getting back to your
work, Jeffrey.

Stunned silence.

Lisa stands to leave. Right before she does, she turns
towards the board, and ruthlessly yanks a rip in the poster
material, creating a gash through the country labeled
"Pertania."

LISA (CONT'D)

Wasn't as good as mom's board
anyway.

Jeffrey watches his daughter leave. His attention turns
towards the board.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Lisa is walking down the hallway, taking her sweet time. Joey comes from the opposite direction

JOEY

Lisa!

LISA

Hey, Joey.

JOEY

When can we play again? I need to rescue my character!

LISA

You want another session?

JOEY

It's all me, Dixie, and Haley have been talking about! It was so fun!

LISA

It didn't really go how I-

JOEY

I can't even figure out how you came up with all that!
Look!

He pulls out a small, crummy, home made clay doll.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Last night, I made this!

LISA

And this is-?

JOEY

A girlfriend! For Snaggle, my gremlin!

Lisa starts laughing.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Awesome right? I was thinking you should play her, if that's allowed of course. I'm not really sure how being a Fantasy Master works. Or I can do her in a voice.

LISA

I can definitely fit her in, Joey.

Just then, MR. FINCH (40s), a teacher, turns the corner.

FINCH
Lisa, Joey, class. Now.

JOEY
Sorry, Mr. Finch.

As Joey scuttles away, Lisa starts to follow.

FINCH
Glad to see you're keeping your
chin up, Lisa.

She smiles, and continues on.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Lisa nearly catapults down the stairs, reinvigorated and with painters tape in hand.

She is surprised, however, to see the rip has already been neatly taped up.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Lisa frantically puts the finishing touches on a project set up on the kitchen table at her father's newspaper reading spot: a smaller, newly made Fantasy Dungeon game board.

She sets three different game pieces in front of the board in a neat line.

As Jeffrey enters she scrambles to down the last of her coffee and hide the evidence in the dishwasher.

JEFFREY
What's this?

LISA
Choose your player. We start this
campaign tomorrow morning.

This means the world to Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
Not today after school?

LISA
I can't. I have another game.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Again, the basement is packed with eager, energetic teens. This time Lisa stands, ready to spring into action.

LISA

Let's get started, guys. We need to figure out a way to get Snaggle out of the palm trees now that his gremlin jet pack ran out of fuel.

Dice rolls.

THE END.