**SA MULI**

*Logline: Two star-crossed lovers in the past were given a chance to meet in the present times only to find that they are just figment of imagination.*

*Genre: Horror, Speculative Fiction*

*TRT: Full Length Film*

We first meet ISABEL, 26, inside her MA night class. Her professor is discussing the many deities and different local mythologies of our country. ISABEL can’t focus because of lightning and thunder outside. After class ISABEL approaches her professor to ask him to be her thesis adviser but the professor offers her a calling card of a colleague and a renowned author, MS. BELLE, 82, instead. He tells her it would be best to seek her help since his list of advisees is already full and MS. BELLE has an PhD in Asian literature majoring in Philippine mythology. She had retired in her manor and is working on her last novel.

ISABEL tries to get to her car in the parking lot when she freezes over because the rain starts to drizzle. Apparently, ISABEL experiences deep seated and inexplicable emptiness when it rains. A girl takes a hold of her wrist and pulls her to the cover of the hallway.

When she gets home, she lies on her bed and has a nightmare where she is trap inside a well, trying to claw her way to the walls. As she turns, she feels a presence at her back and she blacks out.

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The next day, ISABEL drives out to the town of Sta. Monica in the middle of nowhere. After getting lost in the unknown town, she finally finds the old manor. The gate opens and a pair of eyes belonging to a 12 year old girl watches her drive her car into the landing, in front of the house. When she goes down, we are transported back to the 1950’s to a jolly and bright JOSEFA ISABEL, coming home to their manor from the US after the war. She goes in the courtyard and we come back to the present times of ISABEL finding a strange looking statue, white and marble except for it’s long flowing black hair, in a fountain at the middle of the courtyard. When she turns to go back to the house, a stranger is standing behind her. He introduces his self as ADRIANE, 24, caretaker of the manor. He helps her check in and tells her, his services are available from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM only and that if she needs anything it would be best to tell him since she won’t be able to leave the premises anymore.

ISABEL opens her room, match cut to 1950s, JOSEFA ISABEL plops down on her room, her things being organized by her mother, CORALINE. A typewriter is put down on her table and they talk about the many changes in the manor after she left. She walks to her windows, the view that opens to the courtyard and sees a boy of her age and a 12 year old girl. CORALINE explains that the boy is her childhood friend ADRIANE, who is now under her father’s scholarship and the girl is his younger sister, ARABELLA. The two are children of their family’s driver. JOSEFA ISABEL studies the two and when they turn to her, they don’t have faces.

ISABEL wakes up from the dream. It’s day again. She goes out of her room and runs over ADRIANE. The two of them walks to the living room with ISABEL looking for a signal. ADRIANE tells her there is no wifi or phone signal in the manor because MS. BELLE prefers it that way. There is a library at the end of the hallway if she needs to do research. There is also a river in the woods if she wants to relax.

1950s, JOSEFA ISABEL is playing and bathing in the river with her friends, CARMEN, 24 and LUCY, 24. They talk about the upcoming *Sagala (Flores de Mayo)* that also coincides with their patron saint’s day, Sta. Monica. Carmen talks about getting ADRIANE as her escort but the boy is a snob and doesn’t talk to anyone. ADRIANE and ARABELLA happen to pass by, coming from peeking mangos in the woods. JOSEFA ISABEL approaches them and asks if ADRIANE is free on the day of the fiesta. ADRIANE answers no and walks away.

Present times, the sky is overcast. ADRIANE takes ISABEL to a clearing behind the manor, where an old well stood at the middle. It thunders and ISABEL freezes over, remembering her nightmare of well. ADRIANE Asks her if she remembers anything but ISABEL already left the moment the lightning came.

The next day, ISABEL explores the library and finally meets MS. BELLE. She tells ISABEL that the 2nd floor balcony is off limits since it’s her writing space. They talk about her works on local deities and mythology, explaining how STA. MONICA is the Christianized name of the deity, ALUNSINA and that she is the patron saint of marriage. Lovers who pledges their vow to her must remain true to their love even after their death and that a lover who was forgotten will suffer her curse of relieving his/her death everyday for the next 50 years unless the lover is finally remembered. MS. BELLE also adds that in a few days, the town will be celebrating the feast of STA MONICA, will ISABEL stay until then?

1950s, JOSEFA ISABEL runs through her parents, ROGELIO, 50s, and CORALINE who just bought tons of new dresses and candles for the statue of Sta. Monica in their living room. They talk about the feast that ROGELIO, as a mayor, will throw after the *Sagala* and confirms that JOSEFA ISABEL will be the *Reyna Elena.* JOSEFA ISABEL rejects it and jokes that maybe she would if ADRIANE will become her escort. ADRIANE at that moment comes up to the house to hand the candles that CORALINE forgot in the car and also rebuffs JOSEFA ISABEL’s request upfront and walks away. JOSEFA ISABEL is astounded at the rejection again and becomes more attracted to ADRIANE, who seemed bent into staying away from her as much as he can. In all these, ARABELLA who is dusting in the hallway, watches silently.

Later on, ARABELLA knocks on JOSEFA ISABEL’S room to bring her her laundered sheets. She finds JOSEFA ISABEL in front of her typewriter, busily finishing her piece for a magazine entry. After finishing it, JOSEFA ISABEL asks ARABELLA what class level is she in and what does she want when she grows-up. ARABELLA tells her that her father thinks that being able to read and write are enough for a girl already. She doesn’t go to school. She would be marrying anyway. JOSEFA ISABEL rejects this notion and explains that women have as much right to have careers as men and that she shouldn’t be afraid to dream. JOSEFA ISABEL rises from her seat and goes to the bathroom. She leaves the door ajar and starts undressing, preparing to take her bath. ARABELLA is distracted with JOSEFA ISABEL’S talk of dreams and careers and her belongings. Being a poor girl, she doesn’t have access to these things that JOSEFA ISABEL talks about. She is quite fascinated with JOSEFA ISABEL’S typewriter. JOSEFA ISABEL watches her in the mirror from the open door of the bathroom. She tells ARABELLA, she can teach her the basics of novel writing if she is interested and then calls for ARABELLA to help her undress. ARABELLA hesitatingly comes in. Nude, JOSEFA ISABEL goes in her tub.

Match cut to present, ISABEL rises from the water of her tub. To her surprise, the 12 year old kid is waiting for her and tells her, it’s time for dinner and leaves. ISABEL is confused. It’s her first time to see this kid.

At the dining room, MS. BELLE is already seated at the table and eating. ISABEL asks if they will be joined by the kid or by the caretaker. MS. BELLE sternly answers, there’s only the two of them. They discussed MS. BELLE’S work, particularly the sad endings on her novels and the last novel that she is writing. It’s an autobiography based on people that MS. BELLE used to know in her childhood years. Cryptically, she tells ISABEL she wants to give her brother an ending he deserves. An ending he never got because of her.

We next see them at the library. ISABEL works on her paper and we hear a stab of typebar to the typewriter. This is MS. BELLE working on her novel. Lightning comes in the windows. Thunder next. ISABEL freezes over. We hear the grandpa clock somewhere striking 10PM. ISABEL is counting it in the hopes of calming herself. As her anxiety settles on her chest, she rises to go to the kitchen and get some water. When she reaches the fridge, she sees a door in the corner ajar. Curious, she slowly approaches the room and finds ADRIANE on the floor, who seemed drowning even when the whole room is dry. The kid is also beside him, attending to him. There is a gash on his head. His fingers are bleeding. His nails are broken as if he scratched them on the walls. ISABEL pushes the door open to help but when she opens the door, the whole room is empty. She comes out, panicking looking for ADRIANE. She comes to the main door, banging it and trying to open it but it won’t. From the stairs, MS. BELLE asks her what’s wrong and all around ISABEL, it’s day. The rain and thunder is gone. MS. BELLE advises her to go back to her room. It seems that the anxiety of finishing her paper is getting to her. She needs to rest. She goes back to her room, unable to leave the manor.

Outside in the courtyard, ADRIANE and the kid are cleaning the wax of candles upon the foot of ALUNSINA’s statue in the fountain. They are talking about ADRIANE, running out of time and ISABEL still doesn’t remember him. ISABEL comes out. The kid avoids her and leaves. With concern and confusedly, ISABEL asks if ADRIANE is alright.

We next see MS. BELLE in the library, typing on her typewriter. Match cut to the typewriter of JOSEFA ISABEL’s typewriter on her room in the 1950s. ARABELLA is studying the typewriter. She goes to the windows and sees JOSEFA ISABEL and her friends having picnic under the tree. They talk about the blessing of a first rain in May. JOSEFA ISABEL looks up from the book that she is reading and spots ADRIANE walking towards the back of manor, with book in hand. JOSEFA ISABEL leaves her friends and finds ADRIANE, sitting at the well, reading his book. JOSEFA ISABEL confronts him on why he kept rebuffing and avoiding her. They argue until ADRIANE finally confesses that he resents her for leaving him and that he waited for 13 years. JOSEFA ISABEL kisses him and that shuts him up, clearing the air between them. The first rain of summer falls, soaking them both.

Next day, ADRIANE fetches JOSEFA ISABEL home. Her parents are entertaining a family of three – MANUEL, the vice mayor of their town, PACITA, his wife and their son MIGUEL. About to have lunch, they invite ADRIANE to dine with them. ROGELIO reveals that MIGUEL will be escorting JOSEFA ISABEL to the *Sagala* and that they will announce their engagement in the upcoming mayor’s party after. JOSEFA ISABEL is stunned and walks away.

We see ARABELLA in the hallway, with candles at hand about to light candles at the statue of Alunsina in the courtyard. She witnesses JOSEFA ISABEL arguing with her parents in the *commedor*. We don’t hear their argument, just stab of typebar in the typewriter. At some point, JOSEFA ISABEL is slapped by her father and falls to the floor.

We pan to the courtyard outside and it’s the magic hour in the present times. ADRIANE is lighting candles at the statue of Sta. Monica in the fountain. ISABEL strides to the courtyard with books at hand. She was researching about Alunsina a while ago and came out to study the statue. ADRIANE explains that this statue and the one at the living room is the same. Only, the one in the living room is Alunsina dressed as Sta. Monica while this one, is the bare form of her before she was Christianized. He also expounds about a story he knows off. About lovers who once pledged their love on this statue and the scene transforms to 1950s with JOSEFA ISABEL and ADRIANE lighting candles at the same fountain and praying for the saint’s blessing. ADRIANE asks her to stay until the feast of STA. MONICA in two days. ISABEL says she would think about it since, she’d already been here for a week and that she’s almost finished with her paper.

Later in the library, ISABEL finally finishes a draft of her dissertation and she takes a peak at the balcony of the library, when she is about to take a step in the stairs, MS. BELLES enters the library and reprimands her for trying to go to the balcony. ISABEL profusely apologizes and hands her paper to MS. BELLE for checking. As ISABEL is about to leave, she asks MS. BELLE about the kid around ADRIANE. MS. BELLE avoids the question by saying she needs to review her paper now.

At the hallway, ISABEL spots the kid hurrying to the end of the corridor. Curiously, ISABEL follows her and finds ADRIANE about to enter his room by the kitchen. He too is in a hurry but ISABEL stops him and tells him she might be leaving in the morning since she already finished her paper and MS. BELLE is in the process of checking it now. She thanks him and leaves but ADRIANE stops her, telling her she can’t leave yet. The thunder and lightning comes again, in time with the grandfather clock ringing 10 PM. ADRIANE collapses in the floor as if drowning, his head and hand start to bleed. The kid appears at the door and pushes ISABEL away, accusing her that it’s all her fault. ISABEL topples over a glass on the kitchen counter and it breaks. The kid gets a hold one of the sharp glasses and brandishes it on ISABEL. She tells ISABEL she needs to remember. As the kid is about to slash her wrist, we match cut to 1950’s in the well. JOSEFA ISABEL is holding a broken part of a teacup that she and ADRIANE were drinking a while ago. Behind them is ARABELLA, with a book at hand, reading by the well, one of those books on JOSEFA ISABEL’S room. JOSEFA ISABEL and ADRIANE are arguing about JOSEFA ISABEL’s engagement. She pleads with ADRIANE to take her away. They come to an agreement to elope and meet here at the day of *fiesta*, when everybody is busy with the party happening at JOSEFA ISABEL’S HOUSE.

ISABEL awakes on her sun-drenched room in a new day, wondering if what happened last night is all just a nightmare brought about by the rain that comes every night. She looks for her medicines and drinks. She starts packing her things and comes out to search for MS. BELLE. She runs into ADRIANE who seemed fine from last night. ISABEL ponders if she’s loosing her mind. She asks for MS. BELLE but ADRIANE only shrugs. ADRIANE tells her, they will have a feast tonight so she should stay at least until tomorrow. ISABEL apologizes and wanders of the corridor looking for MS. BELLE.

ADRIANE and his sister argue by the kitchen. The kid insists they are running out of time. She doesn’t think ISABEL would remember. Maybe if she doesn’t have use for them, she might as well get rid of her. ADRIANE pleads with her sister to not hurt ISABEL but the kid already decided her course of action.

The kid appears in the hallway, where ISABEL is still searching for MS. BELLE. When ISABEL tries to approach her, she notices the animosity coming off from her, her face creepily contorting. The kid pushes her inside her room and locks the door. MATCH CUT to 1950s where JOSEFA ISABEL is being locked by her parents for trying to run away. She bangs at her door. In the present times, ISABEL is frantically banging on her door too. Water starts to cascade on her walls, in the ceiling. ISABEL panics. When she finally opens the door, it’s the evening and the manor is decorated in a festive fiesta.

ISABEL reaches the living room full of people dressed in the 1950s. She’s confused and scared. She has no idea what’s going on. She was sucked in a waltz, passed over from one person to another. They know her but she doesn’t know them. ADRIANE addresses MS. BELLE as ARABELLA and pleads with her to make it stop but she can't hear him. MS. BELLE says, it’s too late. Outside, it’s raining coupled with thunder and lightning. ISABEL’s anxiety weighs heavily on her, she’s losing her mind. She manages to escape from the clutches of phantoms of people.

She gets in her car, drive to the gate. ADRIANE appears on her passenger seat. ISABEL screams in terror and demands to know what is happening. ADRIANE tells her, she can’t leave no matter what. ISABEL doesn’t listen and tries to run the gate over. It fails and she sustains a concussion for bumping her head on the dashboard. Injured she gets out of her car, bangs at the gate. ADRIANE still pleads with her. ISABEL runs away from him.

She ends up at the well. She sees men walking up to her. Match cut to the night of fiesta when ADRIANE is waiting for JOSEFA ISABEL to elope. ROGELIO wind up about their plan through ARABELLA and had JOSEFA ISABEL locked in her room while sending his lackeys to beat ADRIANE. They throw him in the well afterwards. ADRIANE dies of drowning in the well while trying to scratch his way out, calling JOSEFA ISABEL’s name. Track out to wide, we reveal ADRIANE’S tombstone dated with a year 1952. ISABEL backs away from the well and run into MS. BELLE, asking her if she finally remembers. ISABEL can’t answer. MS. BELLE brandishes a letter opener and stabs ISABEL once, twice, many times until she loses consciousness.

ISABEL awakes in the courtyard, in front of ALUNSINA’a statue. She’s confused, was it all just a nightmare? Her clothes are the same as the first time she came here. Still scared, she comes inside the house that seemed very much different from how she first saw it. It’s as if, it was stripped of color and is now dull. The silence in the manor is eerily unnerving as she comes up. She starts hearing a stabbing of typebar from a typewriter. She goes to the library and notices beats and pieces of thorn papers. It seemed like a page that MS. BELLE is working on. She follows the pieces of paper up in the balcony where she finds MS. BELLE’s novel. She picks up the pages and reads scenes of her day to day life, heavily detailed, things MS. BELLE shouldn’t know about her. MS. BELLE suddenly appears beside her. It is revealed that ISABEL is not real, that she is just a character based on a person MS. BELLE used to know in the 1950s, explaining the gaps and the strange things on her memory. Every time MS. BELLE rewrites, a part of ISABEL’s memory is also rewritten. We hear about the real JOSEFA ISABEL’s end that she was sent to US the next day of the fiesta. In later years, she moved on and got married, never looking back. She never heard what happened about ADRIANE and ADRIANE’s soul had long since perished because JOSEFA ISABEL never remembered him.

ADRIANE shimmers beside the windows, asking if ISABEL finally understands why she can never leave again. He offers his hand. ISABEL hesitantly takes it and they disappear, leaving a sad MS. BELLE behind. The pages gently flop to the ground.