

5 MOONS OF PLUTO

Screenplay by

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5 MOONS OF PLUTO

Bereft from the loss of her mother, an eleven-year-old school girl struggles to overcome the five stages of loss and grief, but finds hope in the infinite possibilities of the cosmos.

FADE IN:

1 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT 1

From high above an illuminated suburban street, we descend upon a middle-class home.

We HEAR eerie sounds of STATIC and ethereal SPACE MUSIC.

2 INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

A girl's bedroom, amidst floral linens, is decorated with space posters and images of Astronauts.

We HEAR sounds of STATIC and NASA COMMUNICATIONS.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Discovery, this is Houston. Come in,
Discovery?

PIPER, a withdrawn 11 yr-old girl, wears pyjamas and beanie over the earplugs of an ipod. With sharp eyes she completes a plastic mobile solar system.

In rapid succession, Piper suspends bright colored planets, each labelled with a name, on fishing-line across the ceiling.

She hangs a brown ball, 'PLUTO', right across the room from the other planets.

ASTRONAUT (V.O.)

Houston this is Discovery. We have a
visual.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger that, Discovery. Proceed.

Piper hangs a model Astronaut beside Pluto. She stares up at it as the rhythmic sound of EARTH WHISTLERS, WHISTLES produced from Earths rotation, come WHOOSHING from the ipod.

3 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING 3

Audio of EARTH WHISTLERS continue. Piper, in school uniform, is ipod-connected under her beanie. Listlessly, she stirs her cereal.

Piper's DAD, 35 yrs-old, in collar and tie, is at the kitchen sink. He puts five dollars on the table. Piper looks at it.

DAD

(muffled, distant)
...lunch.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

Dad exits. Piper eats a mouthful of cereal.

4 EXT. FORESHORE - MORNING

4

To the sound of NASA COMMUNICATIONS and rousing, ELECTRONIC ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

ASTRONAUT (V.O.)
Exiting atmosphere.

From the air, we fly down to Piper, on a bicycle. She travels a winding path along a serene bay-side waterfront.

In a bike helmet covered in space stickers, Piper listens to her ipod as she races down the path.

HOUSTON (V.O.)
Prepare to dislodge.

Piper angrily changes gears. The spokes a spinning blur.

Up ahead, two eleven year-old Schoolboys, AARON and ETHAN, jump aside.

ETHAN
(yells at Piper)
WEIRDO!

Aaron, bespectacled, thoughtful, watches Piper ride off into the distance.

5 EXT. CLEVELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL - DAY

5

A primary school adorned with foliage.

Beside one building stands bicycle racks where Piper parks her bike. She removes her helmet. The menacing sound of COMETS APPROACHING.

Two 11 yr-old Schoolgirls, KYLIE, short and mean, and CHARLENE, tall and gawky, circle Piper.

KYLIE
(muffled, distant)
...money, weirdo!

Piper tries to dodge them. Charlene blocks her way.

CHARLENE
PAY-UP!

Piper hands over her five dollars. Kylie pockets it.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

TROY
(muffled sneer)
...CRAY-CRAY!

6 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

6

STUDENTS, eleven, seated behind desks. A TEACHER, thirty years old, in floral dress, sits at the back and scrolls an ipad.

A monitor shows the orbit of planets in the solar system each labelled with its name.

PIPER (V.O.)
(monotone, from monitor)
There are eight planets in our solar system.

In beanie and ear-plugs, Piper nervously fronts the class. She presses a remote. The monitor shows Pluto on the outer rim.

PIPER (V.O. CONT'D)
Discovered in 1930 Pluto was first classified as the ninth planet. Made of rock and ice, it has five moons.

Piper hits the remote. The screen displays Pluto and five grey moons circling it.

Students chit-chat. Kylie and Charlene make obscene gestures at her. Only Aaron watches Piper intently.

KYLIE (O.S.)
(muffled)
...Bor-ring.

TEACHER
(Muffled yell)
...attention!

She scans her ipad. A website displays a Planetarium beside a photo of KONSTANTIN TSIOLKOVSKY. The caption, 'The Father of Cosmonautics'.

PIPER (V.O.)
In 2006 Pluto was declassified as a planet.

She hits the remote. Pluto is deleted from the solar system. The presentation ends. Piper is still. Teacher rises, claps.

TEACHER
Very interesting, Piper, well done.

Students half-clap. Kylie sneers. Aaron applauds.

7 EXT. CLASSROOM, VERANDAH - LATER 7

The sound of EARTH WHISTLERS and ELECTRIC ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

At line of lockers, Piper, ipod connected, is crouched over her schoolbag. A male hand taps her shoulder. She turns to see Aaron speaking and nodding. We can't hear what he says but he gives Piper a big 'thumbs-up'. Baffled, Piper nods.

Piper watches Aaron walk off. He looks back, smiles. She looks away.

A hand whacks Piper over the head! Kylie and Charlene stand over her. Charlene feigns a mad person.

KYLIE
(muffled, distant)
...LOONEY!

Kylie pretends to hit Piper. Piper cowers. Kylie and Charlene cackle.

8 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT 8

Piper listens to her ipod with her bike helmet on. Seated opposite her Dad at the dinner table, she plays with her food.

Dad feigns a smile. He MUMBLES SOMETHING distant,

DAD
...school OK?

Dad's mobile lights-up. He grabs it and rushes off.

9 LOUNGE-ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 9

The deep, menacing sounds of the SOLAR WIND.

Piper sits on a couch, opens her laptop. A page displays the 'Theory Of Rocket Propulsion' with the photo of Tsiolkovsky.

In the background, Piper's Father paces and gestures angrily.

DAD
(into mobile, muffled)
I'm not on call!

Piper turns up her ipod and the sound of the SOLAR WIND increases with ELECTRIC ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

She looks at a framed photo of her MOTHER, 30, with a radiant smile. Piper is seated between her Mother and Father by a swimming pool.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

In BG Dad looks to Piper, sees the photo. Torn, Dad frowns. He exits. A door SLAMS. Piper flinches.

10 INT. DAD'S STUDY - LATER 10

A computer monitor illuminates a stethoscope on an oak desk.

Piper clicks the screen alive. She stares.

On the screen, a website, 'THE 5 STAGES OF LOSS AND GRIEF'.

Piper scrolls through the list: 'DENIAL, ANGER, DEPRESSION, BARGAINING, ACCEPTANCE.'

Piper laughs. Then, stares at the screen.

11 EXT. HOUSE, SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT 11

The pool is surrounded by a gated fence and palm trees.

To NASA COMMUNICATION and ELECTRIC ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

ASTRONAUT (V.O.)

This is a new and strange environment,
Houston.

Piper dives into the pool and floats on her back. She stares at the stars above.

ASTRONAUT (V.O. CONT'D)

Weightlessness, a feeling of
connectedness with the universe.

From underwater, Piper's silhouette floats on the surface. The stars glisten around her.

From high in the air, we look down upon Piper in the pool.

12 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 12

The cacophony of a METEOR SHOWER and ELECTRIC SYMPHONY.

Wet, Piper storms into the bedroom. She destroys the model but, when about to smash Pluto, spares it.

She lies back on her bed, adjusts her ipod.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Discovery, this is Houston. Confirm
communication.

- 13 EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE/BUS - DAY 13
- A School Bus is parked by the entrance.
- To STATIC and NASA COMMUNICATION.
- ASTRONAUT (V.O.)
This is Discovery. Preparing to
board.
- The Students board the bus. Piper, in beanie and earplugs, hangs back.
- Aaron follows Ethan and glances back at Piper. Kylie and Charlene shove her aside and enter.
- Piper scowls and climbs aboard. The bus departs.
- 14 INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER 14
- To COMET WHISTLERS and the ELECTRIC ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.
- Kylie and Charlene occupy the rear seat with some rough-looking boys. Aaron and Charlene sit in the middle. Piper sits alone at the front.
- Kylie and Charlene chew paper and flick spit-balls at the back of Piper's head. Piper seethes.
- 15 EXT. BUS/PLANETARIUM, ENTRANCE - DAY 15
- The Planetarium has a domed roof above surrounding foliage.
- The EARTH'S WHISTLER'S reprise as the Students run toward the Planetarium entrance.
- Piper stops before a towering statue of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky. Elderly, bespectacled. In shorts and hat, his eyes raised to the heavens.
- Piper climbs in and copies his pose.
- At the doorway, the Teacher gestures Piper to come in.
- 16 INT. THEATRE - MOMENTS LATER 16
- A tripod projector is encircled with theatre chairs.
- EARTH WHISTLERS and ELECTRIC SYMPHONY MUSIC.
- Kylie and Charlene look bored and poke the Students beside them.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

Aaron sits beside Ethan. He looks across at Piper, who sits alone. She meets his gaze, nods and points to the ceiling. Kylie and Charlene catch the exchange and feign nausea.

On a podium, a short, bearded PROJECTIONIST works controls, like an Ancient Dwarf.

The tripod rotates projecting the SOLAR SYSTEM on the domed ceiling.

The Students, even Kylie and Charlene, are mesmerized.

PLUTO appears with its five moons.

Aaron looks from the heavens to Piper. Piper stares at the domed ceiling, spellbound.

17 EXT. PLANETARIUM - LATER

17

The Students line up before the bus. Piper, ipod connected, joins the queue.

The reckoning sound of an approaching METEOR as Kylie and Charlene arrive. They push and shove Piper behind them.

Piper stands her ground. Kylie glowers.

KYLIE
(muffled, distant)
...gonna do, Freak?

Piper drives her fist into Kylie's face!

She turns to Charlene. Charlene steps back. Aaron watches agog.

18 INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

18

At the rear, Kylie, with a swelling eye, sits with Charlene. Charlene shakes her head at the injury. Kylie glowers.

Piper, with bloodied cheek, is thrust into a forward seat.

TEACHER (O.S.)
(muffled, distant)
Sit down!

NASA COMMUNICATIONS.

HOUSTON (V.O.)
Five, four, three.

Aaron sits beside Piper. He points to her earplugs.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
(muffled, distant)
...listening to?

Piper removes an earplug and passes it to Aaron. He inserts it in his ear.

HOUSTON (V.O.)
Lift off! We have lift off.

Aaron smiles excitedly at Piper. Piper smiles back. She looks out the window at the sky above.

We fly above the bus as it travels down the road, then fly up into the blue sky.

An ethereal ELECTRIC SYMPHONY.

THE END