

Movies & Languages 2018-2019

The Shape of Water

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	Guillermo Del Toro
YEAR/COUNTRY	2017 / USA
GENRE	Fantasy / Drama
ACTORS	Sally Hawkins, Michael Shannon, Doug Jones, Richard Jenkins, Octavia Spencer, Michael Stuhlbarg, David Hewlett, Nick Searcy



PLOT

The setting is 1962, during the height of the Cold War, Baltimore, Maryland. Elisa Esposito who was found abandoned as a baby with scars on her neck, has been mute all her life, a disability which has largely led her to not having many opportunities. Despite being a bright person, she works as a manual laborer at cleaning job at a military research facility, where she has long been friends with fellow cleaner, Zelda Fuller, who often translates her mute sign language to others at the facility.

She has no romance in her life, her major emotional support in her life, besides Zelda, being her aging closeted gay artist neighbor, Giles, who live in adjoining apartment units above a movie theatre. Like Elisa, Giles is lonely, his homosexuality complicating both his personal and professional life.

Elisa's life changes when Colonel Richard Strickland brings new "asset" into the facility, a mixed human/amphibious creature found in the waters of the Amazon in Brazil. Secretly visiting with creature, Elisa is immediately attracted to him, despite his having a violent side to his behavior. Eventually the two find a way to communicate with each other and end up forming a type of bond.

Elisa has to decide what do when she discovers that although the reason for bringing the creature to the facility was to test the possibility of him being sent into space, Colonel Strickland ultimately wants to kill him through vivisection.

Complicating her strategy to save the creature there are also Soviet agents who know the creature and have infiltrated the facility with plans of their own.

The film received critical acclaim for its acting, screenplay, direction, visuals, production design, and musical score and was nominated for thirteen Academy Awards, winning four including Best Picture and Best Director.

LANGUAGE

English Sign Language, Standard American English, some Russian.

VOCABULARY

Muffled: sounds heard indistinctly

Sloshing: water moving noisily

Creature: living being, especially an animal	Vivisection: the cutting or operation on a living animal for experimental reasons
Hand in hand: linked together	Blasphemy: swearing or cursing using the name of God
Craving: to have strong desire for something	Hair piece: false hair worn to increase the amount of natural hair
Asset: a valuable property (the creature)	Cattle prod: a stick like instrument with an electrical charge used for moving cattle and other animals
Mermaid: a mythical creature having the body of woman but a fish's tail instead of legs	Siblings: brothers and sisters
Stammering: speak with sudden pauses and a tendency to repeat rapidly the same sound or syllable	Loneliness: deep sense of feeling lonely
Mute: a person who is unable to speak	Cold War: state of hostility between nations using propaganda and economic with no actual fight
Sign language: a language using gestures instead of words	Cadillac: a high priced American automobile
Toupee: another word for hair piece	Gills: opening on the side of a fish's head through which it breathes
Year 1962: height of the Cold War between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.	Amphibious creature: a creature that lives in water
Heist: robbery	Gramophone: early record-player
Misogynist: person who hates women	Surf and turf: a combination of sea and land
To have a lead: to have some clues	