



## STUDIO OCHENTA ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

### CULTUREVERSE – EPISODE 2: THE WATER DRAGON

#### *INTRO MUSIC*

[0:06]

NARRATOR: We interrupt your regular scrolling, tweeting, Instagramming, and Tik Toking to bring you a message from your cultural past. You are about to step into the **Cultureverse...** a place where myths and legends come alive in the modern world. For the next few minutes, listen carefully. Hopefully, you'll find something unexpected, something you've never heard before, or maybe, something you have.

NARRATOR: I'm your host, Kelly Marie Tran.

[0:40]

NARRATOR: Episode 2: The Water Dragon. Today's story is about a Chinese-American family living in Alhambra, California, during one of the longest droughts in southern California's history. 13-year-old-David, a skaterboi, falls asleep while watching the news about the devastating drought. His younger sister Jenny is an environmentalist, she is obsessed with climate change and can't stop watching... and as David falls deeper into sleep he begins to dream...

*(SFX: DREAMSCAPE SOUNDS FOLLOWED BY THE FRIENDLY ROAR OF A DRAGON + DRAGON MUSICAL SOUND)*

[1:24]

WATER DRAGON: David!

DAVID (half asleep): Hmmh... huh... who's that... whoever you are, lemme catch a few more hours of-

NARRATION: He falls deeper into sleep and the dream continues, getting weirder and weirder. His living room ceiling opens up revealing the sky and out of nowhere---a bright blue dragon appears with a big smile on his face and flies down to meet him.

[1:55]

WATER DRAGON (A friendly roar): DAVID!

DAVID (Screaming): WHAT THE-

WATER DRAGON(Laughing) [This phrase in Cantonese]: 唔使驚, 戴海 (*M sai geng, Dai Hoi*).  
[Switches to English] Dai Hoi, don't be afraid.

DAVID (freaking out): Wha... what are you-

WATER DRAGON: [This phrase in Cantonese] 我係水龍, 我係嚟向你傳遞信息嘅. I'll translate for you. [*Says the same phrase in English*] I am the Water Dragon and I have come to deliver a message.

[2:27]

DAVID: (Sleepily): Water? Wha? Am I... am I dreaming?

WATER DRAGON: I need you to do something important David. I need you to save the town from the drought.

(SFX: WAKES UP FROM A DREAM)

(SFX: Muffled news from phone playing in the background brings him out of the dream)

*SANDY POPLORE: I'm Sandy Poplore with KPLA News. It has been 100 days since Los Angeles has had a single drop of rain! And as a reminder from the mayor's office, you are mandated to limit your water use, do not wash your car, do not water your lawn and... (FADE OUT)*

[2:57]

DAVID: Jenny, turn that down. It's bummin' me out.

JENNY: Don't you care that we're running out of water?

DAVID: Relax, it will rain eventually. It always does.

NARRATOR: Jenny turns down the TV and pulls up her favorite Youtuber who has been following the wildfires that are raging throughout southern California because of the drought.

*YOUTUBER: HEY GUYS I'M HERE AT THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS AND THE WILDFIRES HAVEN'T STOPPED, SEE???) [SFX: FIRE CRACKLING SOUNDS]*

[3:22]

JENNY: Oh my god, David check this out!

*YOUTUBER: [SFX: FIRE CRACKLING SOUNDS WITH FIREFIGHTERS' SIRENS] IT'S SUPER SUPER HOT AND YOU CAN BARELY BREATHE (coughs) WITH ALL THE SMOKE...(coughs harder) UMMMM, ERRR, THIS IS A LITTLE TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT--THE FIREFIGHTERS ARE MOVING US AWAY---SO...WE'RE OUTTA HERE!*

DAVID: What?? That's only a... couple miles away...

[3:47]

JENNY: Seeee!! Our house might be in flames by tomorrow night!

AUNTIE MING: Kids, are you on your phones again? Your brains are turning to mush! Go outside and play!

DAVID: Auntie Ming, we're just watching the news.

AUNTIE MING: What's new? Why don't you go for a bike ride? Do like that guy with the cranberry juice and skate to Fleetwood Mac or something!

[4:08]

JENNY: You've seen that?

AUNTIE MING: I' down with Tik Tok I like to watch the cooking videos before bed, hehehe

JENNY Um... Okay, Auntie. Let's get outta here, bro... who knows maybe we'll get lucky and it'll rain!

*(SFX: DRAGON MUSIC)*

NARRATOR:As they head out the door, David suddenly catches the reflection of the same Dragon that appeared in his dream, this time in the screen of the TV.

*(WATER DRAGON SFX FADES)*

[4:35]

JENNY: David, you OK? You look shook!! (No answer) DAVID!

DAVID: Wha... Yeah! What's up?

JENNY: Never mind. Grab your board, race you to the end of the block!

*(MUSIC + SFX: SKATEBOARDING AND ROLLERBLADING SOUNDS)*

NARRATOR:David and Jenny skate down their block when David sees something shining in the dirt and turns back.

JENNY: (out of breath)What's that??

DAVID: It's a weird shaped stone, it's kinda blue on the inside. And it looks like there are... No way! There are waves inside, and they're... moving...

[5:11]

Narrator: David is hypnotized by the waves crashing inside the object in this hand.

JENNY: Lemme seee!!!

DAVID: No, leave me alone...

Narrator: David skates away but Jenny catches up to him outside their house.

JENNY(mad):Come on, David, why are you always so salty!

[5:29]

DAVID: Chill, why are you always so pressed?

NARRATOR: As David puts the key in the lock, something catches his attention off to the side; it's another reflection of the bright blue dragon in the glass pane of the door -- this time it speaks:

*(SFX DRAGON SOUND)*

WATER DRAGON(Whispering): Dai Hoi. (Pause) DAI HOI!

DAVID: Yes?

[5:51]

NARRATOR: David is lost in the image of the dragon in the windowpane.

WATER DRAGON: I'm calling you by your Chinese name, I assume you know what that means.

DAVID: "Big Water..."

DAVID: I don't understand why you keep following me; what do you want??

[6:13]

WATER DRAGON: You are the one who will save the town from the drought.

JENNY: What's going on with you?

DAVID: Nothing!

[6:25]

NARRATOR: David snaps out of it, clutches the stone and runs inside. Jenny follows. He plops down on the couch and stares at the stone. Jenny tries to grab it.

*(SFX: ARGUING )*

*JENNY: It's mine!!!*

*DAVID: No, I found it first!*

*JENNY: Come on stop being so selfish!*

*DAVID: What are you saying I FOUND IT FIRST!!*

NARRATOR: Auntie Ming is preparing dinner when she hears them arguing...

AUNTIE MING (Yelling): STOP IT, YOU TWO!

NARRATOR: They continue to fight over the stone until it slips out of David's hands and it flies through the air. It ricochets off the wall, hits the side of a lamp, and flies right into Auntie's new high-tech rice cooker just before she closes it. She doesn't see it but the kids do.

[7:01]

NARRATOR: The rice cooker is soooooo smart that it knows how to say "Thank you" in Cantonese:

RICE COOKER: 多谢! (Doh Jie!)

*(SFX: KIDS SCUFFLING)*

AUNTIE MING: You're welcome! Now quit it you two I'm gonna go watch my Chinese Dramas in peace!

*(SFX: MING LEAVES ROOM, sounds turns on the TV)*

Narrator: Auntie Ming puts on headphones to drown out the noise. David is now nervously staring at the rice cooker.

[7:26]

DAVID: Well that can't be good.

JENNY: It's just a little stone. It's not going to ruin the rice, if anything it'll give it some flavor.

[7:35]

DAVID: Alright, whatever you say. But when it's done, that stone is mine.

Narrator: Jenny and David return to the living room

*(SFX: RICE COOKER MAKES BEEPP BEEPP BEEPP DANGEROUS ALARM SOUND)*

Narrator: The rice cooker starts beeping loudly. And then... it explodes. And not just a little explosion. It's an atomic explosion blasting millions of grains of half-cooked rice in the air, and on the floor, on the walls and on the ceiling. It's...

*(SFX: Rice raining sound)*

[8:11]

JENNY: EVERYWHERE! OMG, it's everywhere. I can't even see my feet!

DAVID: It's filling up sooooo fast. Now I can't see my knees! How do we stop it ??? Where's Auntie Ming?

[8:24]

JENNY: Auntie Ming!

*(Cut to Auntie Ming watching soaps with headphones) (Chinese tv sounds)*

AUNTIE MING: Jing-mi, girl, he's lying to you! Your father is still alive! He's still alive!

DAVID: She's got her headphones on, she can't hear you.

*(SFX: RICE SOUNDS)*

DAVID: Whoa... I can't even see my legs anymore!

[8:42]

NARRATOR: Jenny and David are literally in a thunderstorm of rice!

*(SFX RICE STORM SOUNDS)*

JENNY: We have to do something!

DAVID: Um... Maybe if we can get to the rice cooker we can unplug it! Yeah??

NARRATOR: They trudge through waist-high rice when suddenly a beam of blue light streams out of the cooker casting images of ocean waves throughout the entire kitchen.

[9:08]

JENNY: Whoa!! What is going on??!

DAVID: It's the stone!

NARRATOR: David carefully retrieves the stone which is pulsating and glowing. The dragon appears within the light cast on the walls of the kitchen and repeats the message:

*(SFX: DRAGON SOUND)*

[9:22]

WATER DRAGON: Dai Hoi, you are the one who will save the town from the drought.

JENNY: Wait, what--who is that? What is going on? You can stop the drought?

[9:39]

DAVID: I don't know why , he keeps saying that!

JENNY: Well, I don't know exactly what is going on here but I do know I'm the environmentalist here and I want in!

NARRATOR: The dragon says nothing. He simply fades away and in his place a picture comes into focus: It is a vision of a large body of water--possibly a lake... and water gushing out of the stone, the same stone David has in his hand.



[10:07]

DAVID: I get what I am supposed to do! I get it now! We have to get to a reservoir, now!

JENNY: A reservoir? What's at the reservoir?

[10:16]

DAVID: I don't have time to explain it to you now, we just have to get there.

JENNY: Do you even know how to get there?

AUNTIE MING: What's all that racket???

JENNY: Yeah... we better get outta here now before she finds this mess!

NARRATOR: They quickly run out the front door, just as Auntie Ming steps out into the kitchen to make some tea.

AUNTIE MING: AIYA! WHAT HAPPENED HERE????????!!!!

*(SFX: MUSIC TRANSITION)*

NARRATOR: The kids escape their auntie and bolt down the block to the corner.

[10:41]

DAVID: Okay Siri, where is the closest reservoir?

SIRI: Which restaurant would you like me to make reservations at?

DAVID: Nooo, UGHHH...

JENNY: Let me try! You have to say it French like: Where is the closest REZ EY **VOIR??**

SIRI: Voilà is french expression commonly used in English to present objects. Example: "Voilà, my new winter outfit!"

[11:04]

DAVID: Ohhh my god! Just type it! Quick!

JENNY: Oh alright, gimme a sec...

*(MUSIC TRANSITION)*

NARRATOR: Once they get Siri to cooperate, they discover that the nearest reservoir is nearly ten miles away so they Uber it and reach the massive concrete reservoir. There is a security guard at the entrance but he's busy watching the news:

SANDY POPLORE: I'm Sandy Poplore with KPLA News here in downtown Los Angeles, confirming that-- there is still no rain!

*(SFX: Switches channel a to a random commercial and fades underneath).*

[11:34]

NARRATOR: They take advantage of the distracted guard and make their way up to the water basin. David clutches the stone tightly. He has a plan.

JENNY: David, what are we doing here? I don't-

*(SFX: DRAGON SOUND)*

DAVID: Shhhhhh. I can feel him. He's near.

[11:49]

JENNY: Who, the dragon?

NARRATOR: David starts climbing up to the water basin. Jenny hesitates.

JENNY: Bro, I don't know if we should do this...

DAVID: Come on 縮頭龜 (*sook tau gwai*), you scaredy-cat. Follow me!

[12:00]

JENNY: Don't call me that! I'll go!

(SFX: CLIMBING)

NARRATOR: They climb up and stand over the reservoir. David holds the stone over the water, hesitantly.

DAVID: Um... Nothing's happening...

JENNY: Maybe it's raining across town, lemme check the weather app. (reading) Santa Monica, clear skies, Hollywood, clear, Big Bear, clear...

[12:24]

Narrator: Suddenly, there is a brilliant burst of light. It comes from the stone. And what looks like the Dragon begins to appear in the sky. It's bright blue and flies around them, encircling the siblings.

DAVID: Whoa! It's you again!

JENNY: Who again?

DAVID: The dragon! duh.

[12:43]

WATER DRAGON:[This phrase in Cantonese] 小朋友, 你做得好好. 此地需要幫助, 我會盡我所能。呢嚟石會起作用嘅, 但係你要有耐心。

JENNY: What's he saying??

DAVID (SPEAKING slightly out of tune with the dragon): "You've done well children. This place really needs some help. The stone will work, just be patient."

[12:59]

JENNY: I should DEF practice my Chinese more... How come you get to see dragons in your dreams?

DAVID: I don't know... (To the dragon) How do I make it work, Dragon?

WATER DRAGON:[This phrase in Cantonese] 用嗰嚟石，嚟拯救人民啦

DAVID: "Save.. the people... Use the stone???" How do I do that???

[13:16]

JENNY:The rice cooker! Like how we dropped the stone into the rice cooker and it exploded! Drop it in the water! Drop it in the water!

NARRATOR: DAVID is standing on top of the huge water basin, wind blowing through his hair. He holds the stone tightly in his fist and takes a deep breath. And then...

DAVID:[This phrase in Cantonese] 呢個石是大家的。(Nee go sek high die ga ge). [This phrase in English] This stone is for everyone.

NARRATOR: He drops the stone in the water.

*(SFX POWERFUL BEAM OF LIGHT)*

[13:49]

NARRATOR: A burst of light emerges from the stone again, visions of water appear on the walls of the empty basin. And then as quickly as it appeared, the dragon is gone. Jenny and David wait for a while but nothing happens. They start getting ready to go when...

JENNY:Wait, I think I just felt some rain drops... Look it's raining!

[14:13]

DAVID (Confidently):It worked.

NARRATOR: In the droplets falling down on the Los Angeles sky they see the dragon again...

JENNY: David, look he's back.

WATER DRAGON: You have done well, children!

[14:27]

DAVID: Thank you, but...

WATER DRAGON: Yes, Dai Ho?

DAVID: Why did... why did you choose *me*?

WATER DRAGON: [This phrase in Cantonese] 我出現喺好多人嘅夢度，但係你係唯一一個醒返過嚟嘅 (*ngoh cheut yim hai hou do yan geh mung dou, daan hai nay hai wai yut yut goe seng faan gwo lai geh*)

NARRATOR: "I appeared in the dreams of many, but you were one who finally awoke."

*(SFX: MUSIC RISES)*

Narrator: The dragon slowly fades away into the clouds. Jenny and David stare up at the sky with their mouths open in awe as the fresh rain begins to fall more heavily. Slowly the sound of the storm draws people across Los Angeles outside.

*(SFX: RAIN AND PEOPLE CELEBRATING)*

[15:04]

Narrator: And in the city of Alhambra, Jenny and David can hear the cheers of the community in the distance and join in too.

*(SFX: JENNY AND DAVID LAUGHING)*

They jump and laugh as the Water Dragon floats away, smiling.

- **STORY ENDS** -

- **CREDITS** -

*(SFX: CREDITS MUSIC)*

[15:21]

NARRATOR: This story is based on the ancient Chinese legend of The Water Dragon in which a young boy in the countryside finds a stone that brings him a lot of luck. He hopes to use it to bring rain to his village during a terrible drought. The boy ultimately learns to harness the magic of the stone and he himself transforms into a "water dragon", and then gives the gift of water to

all of China and their crops. The dragon is also one of the most revered animals in the Chinese zodiac, as it represents divinity, dignity, power and good fortune.

[15:55]

NARRATOR: For more information on the original tale you can read *The Water Dragon: A Chinese Legend*, by Li Jian and *Chinese Myths and Legends: The Monkey King and Other Adventures*, by Shelley Fu and Patrick Yee.

[16:08]

NARRATOR: This podcast was produced by Studio Ochenta for TRAX on PRX. David was voiced by Ivan Mok. Jenny was voiced by Jenny W. Chan. The Water Dragon was interpreted by Andy Lowe. Auntie Ming was voiced by Hua Szu Yang, and Sandy Poplore is Cherie B. Tay.

[16:27]

NARRATOR: Special thanks to our Cultureverse editorial team for this episode: Yilan Batista, Dorothy Li and Alan Z, who brought their experiences as Chinese and Chinese-Americans to this story. And also to our Cantonese translators, Jane Lui, Leqi Zhong and Dorothy Li.

[16:43]

NARRATOR: The creative director and executive producer for this series is Lory Martínez, founder of Studio Ochenta. Dr. Kiona is our consulting producer for all things culture. Our Senior Fiction Producer is Maru Lombardo. All original opening songs for this series were composed by Gabriel Dalmaso. Sound design by Luis Raúl López Levi. Music by Luis Raúl López Levi and DanJFilms. And our art is by Steve Aparicio.

[17:11]

NARRATOR: The Executive Producer for TRAX is Michelle Smawley and our scripts were edited by Nathan Yungberg. Follow us on TikTok & IG @cultureversepod. Transcripts are available at [ochentastudio.com/cultureverse](https://ochentastudio.com/cultureverse).

[17:26]

NARRATOR: And I'm Kelly Marie Tran, your host. Thanks for listening!