

DAGON

By

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FADE IN

EXT. PLANET ARTEMIS - DAY

SUPER: Year 3050

PLANET ARTEMIS: Owned by Extreme Sports Worlds, Inc. (ESWI)

Extreme Sports: Wing gliding, kayaking, skiing, snow boarding, X-biking

Under the glare of a red dwarf star, almost too close for comfort, a dense jungle grows like a living blanket. It's beautiful, lush and deadly. Sound is smothered by a continuous ROAR from a source yet unknown.

Bushes sway, and part. FIVE BLACK-SUITED FIGURES emerge where jungle meets rock. Clad from head to foot, they all look alike except for different accent colors. Tinted face plates obscure facial features. They stop in their tracks.

Even with built-in headsets, they have to yell to be heard above the noise.

BRIGHT PINK (DIANE)

This is amazing.

BRIGHT BLUE (PATRICK)

Oh, my God.

POV

A mountain range so immense, the base cannot be seen. Jagged peaks like daggers stick up from the depths below. As they watch, several float to the side, shredding thunderheads to mist. You're not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

The roar is revealed to be a massive bright green waterfall nearly a half mile across and miles down. Sprays of water droplets saturate the air giving it an emerald glow.

BACK ON FIGURES

Bright Blue walks to the edge and peers over. He picks up a rock and drops it off the precipice.

DIANE

Patrick get back. You're not properly suited to fly, yet.

Patrick is patient, but come on, he's an adult.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK

Diane, I'm not going to fall.

DIANE

No one intends to fall, now get back.

Patrick steps to Diane's side. You can almost hear the sigh.

BRIGHT GREEN (TOMMY)

So, when does the show start?

DIANE

They should emerge at any time.

PATRICK

How do the little buggers know how to do this?

BRIGHT YELLOW (WREN)

Instinct. They're born with it. Remember, follow close and do what they do.

BRIGHT RED (JOEL)

Or get splattered in the attempt.

A nervous Tommy grabs his arm and swings him around.

TOMMY

Not funny, Joel.

Joel pushes him away.

JOEL

If you can't handle it, Tommy, then turn around and leave.

TOMMY

(angry, defensive)

I didn't say I couldn't do it.

Diane stands between them, facing Tommy.

DIANE

No one is saying you can't. But if you don't think you can do this, then leave now before you get someone killed.

TOMMY  
(more defensive)  
I'm fine.

WREN  
Guys, look.

At a point on the jungle floor, dense foliage slowly parts to reveal a small rodent nose. Large eyes and ears like plates soon follow. It hesitates, uncertain of the humans, but instinct is too strong. A squirrel-like body creeps out ending in a long paddle-shaped tail.

WREN  
It's the fiscue. Don't move.

DIANE  
Kind of cute, aren't they?

No sooner had one emerged, then it is joined by two. Then ten. The ten quickly becomes a stream of living, migrating babies heading for the cliff.

They hesitate, milling about and gathering their courage. Then:

DIANE  
There they go.

They jump. Spreading their legs they become Rocky, the Flying Squirrel. After the first ones jump, the living dam breaks to become a furry waterfall.

DIANE  
This is it. Let's fly. Remember,  
watch your gauges and stay behind  
the fiscue.

Each figure pulls down zippers that stretch from wrists to hips. Synthetic ribs emerge connecting super-light para sail material that create gliding wings. They look like human pterodactyls. Shuffling through the fiscue, they stand on the brink of eternity.

PATRICK  
Fly safe.

The words are repeated by all.

Diane spreads her arms and swan dives off the cliff followed by Patrick and the others.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY

Does it bother anyone that we're  
staking our lives on a bunch of  
rodents?

TRAVELING - FOLLOWING GLIDERS - DAY

Diane and Patrick fly side-by-side just behind a pack of  
fiscue. Tommy is close on Diane's tail while Yellow and  
Joel stay to the side.

Without warning, the fiscue curve right, diving for a cut  
between two shifting mountains that are coming  
together. Three humans follow.

They race for a quickly narrowing gap. It's going to be  
close. The fiscue literally bounce off one mountain and  
fling themselves back into the air.

DIANE

Use your wings to brake then kick  
off with your feet.

TOMMY

There's not enough time. We'll be  
crushed.

DIANE

Just Do It.

Diane throws up her wings, feet extended. Patrick  
duplicates her motions. They hit hard, run a few steps,  
then launch themselves again. Tommy's attempt is clumsier,  
but he makes it. The mountains come together with a CRASH.

DIANE

Joel, Wren, where are you?

JOEL (V.O.)

On the other side of this  
thing. The rats we followed took a  
different trail.

PATRICK

We'll see you at the bottom.

A few moments of easy gliding are not allowed to last.

A FLASH OF GRAY. The fiscue scatter.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK

What was that?

Ahead, a bird the size of a human flies up with a fiscue in its razor sharp talons.

DIANE

Guys, there are birds the size of horses up here. They're hard to spot. Watch out.

More birds dive past. One clips Diane with a wing, sending her into a spin.

PATRICK

Diane.

Patrick tucks his wings and dives after her. Tommy overshoots and flies ahead.

Diane rolls to the side and extends her left wing, stabilizing. Patrick glides to her side.

PATRICK

Good recovery.

TOMMY

(near panic)

Where are you? I've lost you.

PATRICK

Follow the fiscue like you're supposed to.

TOMMY

I don't see any. They've all scattered. I don't know where to go.

DIANE

Drop your altitude. We're just above the clouds. You're probably ahead of us.

PATRICK

Diane, look to your left. There's a pack of fiscue.

Diane and Patrick roll sideways until they are just behind the babies. Through their headsets, they can hear Tommy's panicked breathing.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

Tommy, you need to calm down. You panic, you'll make mistakes.

TOMMY

I dropped like you told me to, but I don't know where I am. I don't see you, the rats, or anyone. You've got to help me. You have to tell me where I am.

DIANE

Joel or Wren, can you get a visual on Tommy?

WREN (V.O.)

Negative. We're about a mile from your position. We'll be entering the clouds in approximately three minutes.

PATRICK

Same here. Tommy, how far are you above the clouds?

TOMMY

I'm already going around the tops of them.

PATRICK

Diane, look.

Patrick points.

POV

A single black figure with bright green accent stripes glides in and out of the tops of thunderheads.

ON DIANE

DIANE

He's heading for that mountain.

POV - WIDER ANGLE

A floating mountain lumbers directly into Tommy's path. It's obvious he can't see it through the cloud tops.

ON DIANE AND PATRICK

DIANE  
Tommy, bank left. Now.

TOMMY  
I can't see where I'm going. I'm going to hit something.

DIANE  
Do what I tell you. Bank left - NOW.

TOMMY  
I...I can't see.

DIANE  
Damn it!

Diane banks right and tucks her wings. She arrows straight for Tommy.

PATRICK  
Diane, no.

DIANE  
Stay there. I'll need eyes to help me know where to go.

FOLLOW DIANE

The gap is closing fast. Ahead, Tommy is almost in total cloud cover.

DIANE  
Tommy, I'm coming up behind you. Be ready.

Tommy disappears into a white sea of vapors. Diane marks the spot and follows.

POV

In seconds, Diane is blind. From her mask, she sees only a wall of white.

DIANE

Okay, Tommy, I should be right on your tail. See if you can brake a little.

RESUME

Diane extends her wings to stop her mad rush.

DIANE

Patrick, see anything?

PATRICK (V.O.)

Nothing, you're both gone. You need to hurry. That mountain is getting close.

The clouds are dense. She could fly right by him and never know it.

DIANE

(low)

Where are you, Tommy?

Without warning, a black form emerges right in her path. She almost runs into him.

DIANE

I'm here Tommy. Now bank left.

TOMMY

I..

DIANE

Now, Tommy.

Nothing

PATRICK

He's panicked. Leave him and get out of there. The mountain is right in front of you.

Diane glides forward until she is just above him.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

Tommy, I'm just above you. Keep your arms extended.

Pushing against the flow of air that keeps her flying, Diane reaches down and grabs Tommy's arms. Wrapping her legs around his, she pushes them both into a left banking maneuver. They barely move. Tommy has frozen up.

DIANE

Tommy, relax and move with me or we're both dead.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Diane, leave him. You're going to hit.

Diane feels the slightest relaxation of Tommy's muscles. Dropping her left shoulder, she pulls them to the side. Their glide path shifts, then turns left.

The mountain emerges out of the fog. Too close. They fly along the face mere inches from the razor-sharp rocks.

Diane continues their curve until they head away from the moving mountain.

DIANE

Patrick, we made it. Where are you?

PATRICK

I'm below the clouds and just to the left of that rock you almost splattered.

DIANE

Then, you're just below us. We're headed your way.

(To Tommy)

Tommy, I'm letting you go. Follow me down.

Still no response from her companion.

Diane releases him, tucks her wings and shoots forward. A few feet away, she pulls back into glide position. They break out of the clouds.

The shadowed land lays deep and rugged. Far below, a tiny ribbon of green shows the river. Ahead, sheer, sharp cliffs tower over the landscape, breaking up into thousands of maze-like valleys. Just below, a black figure with bright blue stripes glides peacefully.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

I see you, Patrick. I'm just above you.

PATRICK

Which direction do we take?

DIANE

Only the fiscue know the way through this maze. Even from an aerial view, the overhanging cliffs and brush obscure the valleys making it impossible to tell which is the correct route.

PATRICK

Well, we're in luck. I see a pack just below us.

DIANE

Let's fly.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Diane, Patrick, and Tommy back-flap to gently land on the ground. Diane turns to look behind her. She takes off her helmet. Rich dark brown hair flows out to lay just below her shoulders.

Behind her is a forest alive with the teeming bodies and shrieks of thousands of fiscue. Further, towering over trees and meadow, the mountains stand, silent and majestic.

She turns back and for the first time we meet DIANE PALMER (22), strong, successful, an extreme sports fanatic, and more alive than most people. And right now, she's blazing mad.

Beside her, PATRICK WEBB (25) reveals himself. Rich to the point that work is a four-letter word, he's happy to follow Diane in her exploits. He tucks his helmet under one arm, following Diane to the third person.

TOMMY SORENBURG (22) pulls off his helmet. He barely has time to breathe before Diane is in his face.

DIANE

What were you doing back there? You almost got us killed.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY

It wasn't my fault. You disappeared.

DIANE

You weren't supposed to be following me. You said you could do this.

TOMMY

And I would have, but where did you go?

PATRICK

She was hit by one of the birds. You should have been able to keep going no matter what happened. Why didn't you?

He swallows, hesitates.

TOMMY

I... I froze.

DIANE

I'll say you did. And now you're out.

TOMMY

What?

DIANE

O. U. T. - Out. Pack your gear and get lost.

TOMMY

This isn't fair.

DIANE

Fair is me knocking your teeth out for almost getting me killed. Now, go before I decide to do it anyway.

Tommy spins and walks away in humiliated defeat.

When he's disappeared over a hill, Diane folds up and hits the ground, head in hands. Her helmet rolls away, forgotten. Patrick joins her, holding her close.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Extreme Sports World, Inc. has all the luxury a person could want at a price most cannot afford. Included in the package, each room has a huge picture window overlooking the world they have chosen for their recreation.

Diane walks out of her bedroom. Framed by the majestic beauty of forests and mountains, she's changed into a comfortable blouse and slacks.

At a desk, a round device creates a halo-projection at the touch of her finger. A pretty FEMALE smiles at her.

FEMALE

Good morning, Ms. Palmer. Who would you like to contact?

DIANE

Get me Marsha. She should be at my office on Altrium.

FEMALE

Yes, Ms. Palmer. Right away.

The image shivers and is replaced by another. MARSHA (30's) is Diane's anchor while she is away. Smart, organized, and efficient, she's every exec's dream co-worker. Diane knows how lucky she is.

MARSHA

Hey, fly girl. How was the trip?

DIANE

Except for the fact I almost became a permanent addition to a moving mountain, not bad.

MARSHA

What happened?

DIANE

The new guy, Tommy, panicked and froze up. I was able to grab him and get us both out of there before we crashed.

MARSHA

And yet, you persist.

DIANE

The danger is the fun. If there wasn't danger, what's the point?

(CONTINUED)

MARSHA

Perhaps living to at least thirty?

DIANE

Safe is boring. I might as well be dead.

MARSHA

Just remember to leave the company to me in your will.

DIANE

Already done.

MARSHA

So, are you ready to relay your article?

Diane gives her a cat-in-the-cream grin.

DIANE

Cath is going to have a seizure.

MARSHA

Girl, I would tremble being your enemy. I'll start recording. Proceed.

DIANE

Hey, everyone. Diane from Extreme Sports Network. In this broadcast, I'll be giving my feedback on the newest extreme sports world - Artemis...

INT. EARTH - OFFICE OF EXTREME SPORTS WORLDS, INC. - DAY

A conference room backed by a huge glass wall. Outside is a teeming city, huge skyscrapers, monorail, flying vehicles. Peeking through in the distance is the Statue of Liberty sitting in a dry harbor.

CATHERINE PALMER (45), President of ESWI, control freak, and royal capital "B", follows the broadcast on a reflective screen. Behind her, several BOARD MEMBERS and EXECUTIVES, watch intently.

## WATCHERS POV

DIANE

In summary, I would say, the adventure was stimulating, but for overall experience, I would rate it below high grade, especially when the cost is factored in. This is too bad since there's such unfulfilled potential.

In a few weeks, I'll be visiting Dagon; a planet ninety five percent water. This one has been advertised to offer every water sport available. I'll let you know. Diane Palmer. Good bye and fly safe.

## BACK TO THE OFFICE

The mood is somber and angry. Everyone focuses on any distraction while they collect their thoughts. The silence is broken by the CEO, SCOTT PARKER (60's) raised in the company. Voice low, almost to himself.

SCOTT

Makes you wish she had hit that blasted mountain.

Catherine stiffens. Scott notices and defends himself.

SCOTT

Damn it, Cath, Every time she does one of these broadcasts, our revenues hit the floor. There is nothing wrong with the service or professionalism on Artemis. My guess is, she's doing it out of spite.

CATHERINE

Of course, she is. She's always been this way. The question we need to ask is: how do we stop it.

Board Member FRANCO MARCUVIO jumps in.

FRANCO

I've been to Artemis a dozen times. I've always been treated like royalty.

(CONTINUED)

He's answered by TRISHA INGRAM.

TRISHA

That's because you are. Everyone knows you're a board member. Any of us would get special treatment.

CATHERINE

Which is why I'm sending in people who are unknown to the staff and can report honestly. If there is sub-standard service being given, I want to know. I will not allow Diane to have the final say. If she expects us to deny it and be defensive, then we do just the opposite.

SCOTT

Which will make her look petty and whiny.

CATHERINE

Exactly. In the meantime, I'm going to Triton, Dagon's moon base and personally ensure everything is ready for her visit.

SCOTT

I'll have Steven do a media blitz demonstrating Artemus' luxury and efficiency to see if we can do some damage control.

CATHERINE

Sounds good.

As the flood of humanity exits the door, Scott stays seated.

SCOTT

Catherine, have a seat. We need to talk.

Scott is the only person in the galaxy that can make Catherine nervous. She slowly sits. Scott enjoys the power.

SCOTT

Do you know the history of ESWI?

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

(curious, surprised)

A bit. I know your family started it.

SCOTT

In a small shack in Hawaii selling surfboards. Shaggy grew it from nothing into a full-fledged sports equipment business. His son had the brilliant idea of creating extreme sports packages.

CATHERINE

Then expanded to the main land in California and Florida.

SCOTT

Correct. By the time corporations became large enough to take control of economies and countries, Extreme Sports, Inc. was an empire. When light drive was discovered opening up new territory on other planets, my great grandfather saw the potential and put billions into finding hospitable worlds for habitation and playgrounds. That's how Extreme Sports Worlds, Inc. was born.

He pauses for effect, but Catherine is waiting for the punch line. He sighs.

SCOTT (CONT.)

The reason I'm telling you this is because I'll be retiring soon.

Catherine perks up.

SCOTT (CONT.)

I don't have an heir to pass the company to, so I've been looking around to see who I could trust to keep this ship cruising in the right direction, and I think that person is you.

Catherine looks like a lioness who has just seen her prey.

SCOTT (CONT.)

You have vision to not only see what needs to be done, but what can

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT (CONT.) (cont'd)  
be done and, the ruthlessness  
needed to accomplish it.

He sees her look of triumph. Time to rein her in.

SCOTT (CONT.)  
However, I've talked to several  
board members and not everyone is  
comfortable with this decision.

Her eyes narrow. Scott shudders at the thought of being her  
enemy.

SCOTT (CONT.)  
They're afraid of the baggage you  
would bring with you. Mainly, your  
daughter. Diane already has a  
vendetta against you and it's  
punching holes in our  
profits. What will she do when you  
become head of the company?

CATHERINE  
(cold)  
I'll do whatever needs to be done.

SCOTT  
I knew you would. Prove to me I'm  
making the right choice.  
(Sigh)  
I'm tired, Cath. I want to enjoy  
the rest of my life, but I need to  
know this company is in good hands  
before I do.

Her smile is anything but warm.

CATHERINE  
You can trust me.

Scott sobers.

SCOTT  
One other thing. There's another  
corporation looking at Dagon for  
it's mineral and food  
potential. If not handled  
properly, this could turn into  
another border war.

CATHERINE

ESWI owns the rights to Dagon.

SCOTT

Possession is ninety percent of ownership. A hostile takeover is not out of the question. I don't want to have to use our profits to raise an army and defend what's ours.

CATHERINE

Yes, sir.

INT. CATHERINE'S OFFICE - SAME

The room is like Catherine - rigid, strict, no frills. The only family photos are all of her other daughter, Tristan. Diane is glaringly absent.

TRISTAN PALMER (17) enters. Intelligent but lacks the strength to break free of her mother's hold.

Checking notes, Catherine misses seeing her.

TRISTAN

Hey, Mom.

Catherine's head jerks up.

CATHERINE

What are you doing here?

TRISTAN

I need to talk to you about something.

CATHERINE

It'll have to wait. I have to make several H.P. calls.

TRISTAN

It will only take a few minutes.

A small suffering sigh escapes.

CATHERINE

Okay, what is it?

Small hesitation while she gathers her courage.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

The Interstellar College of Biology is sending out an exploration ship in a few months time. For three years...

CATHERINE

Absolutely not. You're not going out to explore the galaxy for that much time. You're way too young.

TRISTAN

I've already graduated. The director said that my scholarship would guarantee me a position. This is what I want to do with my life.

CATHERINE

You went behind my back and talked to the director?

Tristan visibly winces.

TRISTAN

I just wanted to find out more about it.

CATHERINE

I could have saved you the call. No.

Defiance is not a natural trait, but she finds the strength for one last appeal.

TRISTAN

Mom, please. I will be eighteen soon, but the ship leaves before then. I need your permission.

Catherine slams the flat of her hand on the table. Tristan jumps.

CATHERINE

I said no and that ends it. I decide what you are going to do, and it doesn't involve traipsing through the stars scouting for bugs. Anyway, there are still border wars going on.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

But they won't be going any where  
near that system.

Catherine gives her a scathing look. Tristan's courage well grounded under her mother's heel, she ducks her head, turns, and leaves. Catherine watches, satisfied.

EXT. ALTRIUM - PATRICK'S ESTATE - DAY

SUPER: PLANET ALTRIUM

A planet for the rich and famous and those who cater to them. Residents have the choice of a large country estate or the fast city life. For some, a hop on a shuttle craft gives them both.

Patrick's estate would put a royal palace to shame. A large lake resides at the base of a perfectly manicured lawn.

Next to the house, a pool party is in progress. GUESTS mingle, talk and swim. SERVANTS walk about, offering drinks. Some things don't change no matter what the century.

Patrick lounges at a table conversing with several FRIENDS. To his right, Diane retells her close call.

DIANE

Then, after saving his butt, he had  
the audacity to say it was my  
fault.

SUNDOWN THOMPSON (22), a woman so full of herself there's room for no one else, cracks up.

SUNDOWN

I hope you sent him packing.

DIANE

Faster than a comet. He started  
whining about it not being fair  
until I threatened to remove a few  
teeth.

Her companion, CECILIAN OTTO (30) jumps in.

CECIL

Bravo. Extreme sporting is not for  
the cowardly nor  
thefaint-of-heart. It not only

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CECIL (cont'd)  
gets you killed, but those around  
you as well.

DIANE  
Exactly. I will not have someone  
on my team that I can't  
trust. Which means there's an  
opening. How about it Cecil? Want  
to try out?

He shakes his head.

CECIL  
No, no. I love watching, but  
competing is just too damn  
dangerous. I'll continue to stay  
safe and cheer you on.

SUNDOWN  
(To Patrick, flirty)  
Is it true that you plan on  
streaming your next adventure live?

PATRICK  
We're still discussing...

Diane jumps in like a jealous lap dog.

DIANE  
I haven't decided yet. On Dagon,  
we'll be in the middle of an ocean  
with one hundred and fifty foot  
swells. I'm not sure how much we  
can stream out.

Sundown pouts and throws Patrick a little smile.

DIANE (CONT.)  
I have to go in and give Marsha a  
call. I'll be right back.

Once Diane has left, Cecil snubs Sundown's next move before  
she can make it.

CECIL  
Sunny, would you mind going inside  
and getting me a drink? You know  
just how I like them.

Another pout. Another smile thrown at Patrick.

SUNDOWN

Of course, dear.

The men watch her retreating figure.

CECIL

Sorry about that. She has no loyalty except to herself.

PATRICK

I totally understand.

CECIL

And how about yours? Someone like Diane can't be easy to be with.

PATRICK

(chuckles)

You have no idea.

CECIL

If you don't mind my asking. Why do you bother? I can understand the thrill of the sports, but there's more to a relationship than that.

Patrick contemplates the glass in his hand for a moment. He answers, slow, thoughtful.

PATRICK

Because every once in a while, she changes and I see a totally different person. I see someone vulnerable; someone who needs me. And, I think, I've fallen in love with that person.

CECIL

But what if you never saw that person again.

PATRICK

I will forever live in hope.

Cecil smiles.

CECIL

Bravo.

EXT. EARTH - NEW YORK AIRPORT - DAY

In the distance, a dot approaches and takes on the appearance of a TRANSPORT SHUTTLE. It flies by the Statue of Liberty to the airport. Slowing, it brakes and lands with a QUIET SIGH.

Diane is the first to embark. She walks to a smaller vehicle waiting at the side, boards, and in moments they are air born.

EXT. WINDOVER RESTAURANT - ROOF - DAY

Is it a roof or a garden? It's hard to tell. Landscaped to perfection, an area of marble tiles surrounded by an open lawn awaits the taxi shuttle. In this beautifully manicured world Diane walks a marble path to an awaiting elevator.

INT. WINDOVER RESTAURANT - DAY

She steps out and is immediately greeted by the MAITRE D.

MAITRE D.

Good afternoon, Ms. Palmer. Your table is this way.

They cruise the channels between tables and people to a large pane of glass. Inside is a jungle of bushes exploding with exotic flowers. Colorful butterflies flutter aimlessly among the blooms. Immediately in front, Tristan Palmer occupies a table. She doesn't smile.

DIANE

Hey, sis. You were able to slip away.

TRISTAN

Mom's working as usual. She won't even notice I'm gone.

Diane notes the frown and immediately goes on alert.

DIANE (CONT.)

What's up?

TRISTAN

Need you ask?

DIANE

Mom.

(CONTINUED)

Tristan turns her head. Diane sits across from her. A WAITRESS puts down two glasses of water.

DIANE

I'll have my usual.

TRISTAN

I'll have the same.

DIANE

(To Tristan)

What has she said no to now?

There's a catch in Tristan's voice.

TRISTAN

The Interstellar College of Biology is launching an exploration ship in a few months.

DIANE

How long will they be gone?

TRISTAN

Three years.

DIANE

No wonder Mom said no. She'd never let you off the leash for that long. She'd be afraid you'd never put it back on.

TRISTAN

But it's what I've always wanted to do. I love learning about different life forms. This opportunity is my dream.

DIANE

You couldn't just defy her and go?

TRISTAN

No. I won't be eighteen until after the ship leaves. I have to have her permission.

DIANE

Maybe I could forge a letter.

Tristan visibly blanches.

TRISTAN

Oh, God, no. I couldn't handle the explosion. I'm not like you, Diane. I'm not that strong.

DIANE

You're stronger than you think, and if you don't find that out now, you'll always be under her thumb.

TRISTAN

But when I'm eighteen, then I'll be an adult.

Diane leans forward. Intense.

DIANE

You don't get it. It won't matter. She will find some way to keep you with her. She will break you down until you won't have a thought in your head that isn't hers. That's what she wants, a replica of herself.

The thought horrifies Tristan.

TRISTAN

I could never be like her.

DIANE

No, but you'll still not have your own life.

To have her worst fears confirmed is a crushing blow, and Tristan can't help the tears.

The waitress returns and puts down two plates of broiled fish with rice. She gives Tristan a sympathetic glance.

WAITRESS

Would like like anything else?

DIANE

We're fine.

Diane eats while Tristan pretends.

TRISTAN

I thought about communicating with Dad and asking him to write a letter.

Diane is already shaking her head.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

You know he won't do anything against Mom's wishes. The Spineless Wonder is more scared of her than you are.

TRISTAN

I feel so trapped.

DIANE

I have an idea. I'm on my way to Dagon for a few days. Why don't you come with me.

Tristan almost chokes.

TRISTAN

Are you kidding? She'd kill me. After your broadcast about Artemis, she's close to hating you.

DIANE

But you see, the difference between you and me is that I don't care.

TRISTAN

That's because you don't have to live with her anymore.

Diane leans forward.

DIANE

And neither do you.

Tristan stiffens.

DIANE (CONT.)

You can stay with me.

TRISTAN

I don't think I can do that. Anyway, Altrium doesn't have any colleges. What about my scholarship?

DIANE

Do you really think Mom is going to let you go to college? She's not going to allow you to be a biologist or any kind of "ologist". She has your life already mapped out and your plans are not definitely included.

Tristan gazes into the glass enclosure, tears streaming. Something catches her eye.

POV

A chrysalis has opened and a BUTTERFLY EMERGES.

TRISTAN

(softly)

If I go with you, she won't let me come back.

DIANE

Leave that to me.

INT. - ALTRIUM - DIANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Pictures of Diane and friends doing extreme sports. A surf board mounted on the wall. Relegated to the corner, out of the limelight, are certificates and awards in journalism. A forgotten time gone by.

Lounging in a large chair, one leg thrown over the arm, Diane concentrates on a hand held tablet. A CHIMING sounds. Reaching out, she touches a spot on her desk. Patrick's image APPEARS.

PATRICK

What are you doing?

DIANE

Watching the promos on Dagon. I wanted to get a feel on what we'll find.

PATRICK

When are we leaving.

DIANE

A couple of days. Wren and Joel won't be able to make this one. Mom's on her way to her office on Triton, Dagon's moon, and I want to give her plenty of anxiety time.

Patrick just shakes his head.

DIANE (CONT.)

By the way, Tristan is coming with us.

(CONTINUED)

Patrick's head snaps up.

DIANE  
(defensive)  
She needs time away from mother and  
to have some fun.

PATRICK  
Diane, don't do this.

DIANE  
Do what? I'm just giving her a  
vacation.

Patrick's image stares at her, accusing and pleading.

Diane responds in anger.

DIANE  
Look, I'm not doing anything except  
have time with my sister. If you  
don't want to come, just say the  
word.

Patrick, as always, backs down.

PATRICK  
You know I won't do that.

DIANE  
Fine. Then I'll see you in a  
couple of days.

Diane hits her desk and the image evaporates. She flings  
the tablet into a chair across from her.

INT. EARTH - TRISTAN'S ROOM - DAY

Animal pictures, an aquarium, a chinchilla cage all  
surrounded by light lavender and white.

She finishes packing a bag and takes a long look  
around. Will she ever come back? Takes the chinchilla from  
its enclosure. A hug and a kiss. Replaces it. Shoulders  
her bag and leaves.

EXT. PLANET DAGON

SUPER: DAGON

Extreme Sports: Surfing, sailing, wave runners, hurricane wave pod riding

A huge indigo sphere. Bands of cloud lines ribbon it's sleek surface. At the equator, two opposing jet streams collide creating a perpetual hurricane the size of Texas.

The ghostly form of Tristan reflecting off glass enters and stands to the side. Stepping back, we are now:

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT

Tristan stands before a viewing window watching the planet approach. Is she more scared or excited? This bright blue planet represents a step away from everything secure and familiar and into a future of freedom. But at what price?

Diane steps to her side.

DIANE

Ready to have fun?

TRISTAN

I'm not sure.

DIANE

Sis, it's going to be okay. I'll take care of you.

Diane gives her a little hip bump.

DIANE

Did you know Dagon is virtually unexplored?

TRISTAN

How do they keep the people safe in the water?

DIANE

Sound repellents, advanced sonar equipment and other things. They'll give us the tour when we get there. They have an aqua zoo with live specimens you can see.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

That, I can get into.

Diane gives her a buddy hug.

DIANE

Enjoy it. College will come soon enough.

TRISTAN

You did talk with Mom, right?

If she hesitated, Tristan didn't notice.

DIANE

Yea. It's all good.

INT. TRITON - ESWI MOON BASE - CATHERINE'S OFFICE - DAY

A KNOCK at the DOOR interrupts Catherine at her desk.

CATHERINE

Yes?

Her assistant, DAN STEELE (40's) ambitious and desperate enough to move up to the next level that he's able to put up with Catherine, pops his head in.

DAN

You wanted to know when your daughter arrived.

CATHERINE

Thank you.

She continues to work without looking up.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Like a high-tech war room, the command center boast numerous work stations with the latest in computer and graphic equipment. A huge screen showing ESWI Island surround by a grid pattern dominates the wall.

CARLTON WESTON (50's), Supervisor of Dagon Operations, competent to the point of being arrogant, holds a general meeting with his staff. He stands on a platform, just outside of his office that allows him a view of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON

In about an hour we're going to receive a VIP guest. Anyone who has heard her broadcasts knows that Diane Palmer carries a lot of clout with the public. She has yet to find anything positive to say about an ESWI world. Well, we're going to change that.

HUGH HICKS (45) muscular with short cropped hair more salt than pepper, his military bearing in his head rather than on his resume pipes up.

HUGH

And why should we give a jellyfish's fart what she thinks.

Carlton sighs. Wannabe aside, he puts up with him because he's good at his job.

CARLTON

Because every world she has criticized had a major drop in revenue, and that's your salary we're talking about.

Hugh snorts in contempt.

CARLTON (CONT.)

Your job, Hugh, is to make sure she has the best and safest ride possible, and I know you're professional enough to put your own opinions aside to see that that happens.

ANDRE SERENTO, (50) Dagon's Head of Security, ex-military and everything Hugh wishes he was and isn't smirks. Hugh notices.

HUGH

And what will the squids be doing while I'm babysitting?

CARLTON

What they always do, only at a heightened state.

Carlton scans every face.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON (CONT.)

You are all here because you're the best at what you do. Stay focused, stay professional. Andre, may I see you a minute?

Personnel  
evacuate to their jobs. Andre steps forward.

CARLTON

There's something you need to know. It's not common knowledge, but the name Diane Palmer is as in Catherine Palmer.

Andre stiffens.

ANDRE

Daughter?

CARLTON

Yea. In fact, I found out that both her daughters, Diane and Tristan, will be on this trip.

ANDRE

That does change a few things.

CARLTON

Keep it to yourself.

Andre nods and leaves.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Hugh steps out of the meeting to find several of Andre's MUSCLE MEN waiting for him. They block his way. Two slide behind him. Hugh sneers in contempt.

MAN ONE

When you say "squid" we expect to hear more respect.

HUGH

The only respect you'll get from me will be with my fist in your damn face.

The man smiles, it's not a friendly gesture.

(CONTINUED)

MAN ONE

Big words from a babysitter.

HUGH

At least I'm doing something. You guys just stand around, eat, fart, and pretend you're bad. The problem with squids is they have no spines.

Faster than Hugh can react, the man wraps his arm around his throat and slams him on his back. Too easy. He's on his knee, inches from Hugh's face.

MAN ONE

You want to talk about spineless? At least we walked the talk. We've been there and fought the border wars.

He stands up, the others gather around him.

MAN ONE

Your problem is, you want all the glory without the guts.

They walk away leaving Hugh to pick himself up.

INT. TRITON - ESWI MOON BASE - SHUTTLE BAY

Diane strides quickly past working crewmen and parked shuttles followed by Patrick. Tristan has to hustle to keep up.

TRISTAN

Where are we going?

DIANE

The ground shuttle

TRISTAN

We're not staying here?

DIANE

I was able to get special executive suites on Dagon.

PATRICK

They're making sure you get the royal treatment for this trip.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

They'd better. I hear their revenues take a nose dive after every broadcast.

TRISTAN

Why do you always give a bad review? Can't you find anything good to say?

Diane and Patrick share a glance.

DIANE

I keep them on their toes. There's always room for improvement. I just help them see where it is. There's the shuttle.

CAPTAIN BILLY GLADSTONE (60's) stands by the plane waiting for them. He extends his hand at their approach.

CAP. GLADSTONE

Welcome. I'm Captain Gladstone. You must be Diane. And who is this pretty young lady?

Tristan starts to answer, but Diane cuts her off.

DIANE

My sister. And this is Patrick Webb.

CAP. GLADSTONE

I'm quite familiar with the Webb family. I flew for them when I was just starting out.

PATRICK

I'm glad to meet you.

CAP. GLADSTONE

Shall we board? She's fueled and ready to go.

The SHUTTLE LIFTS with a QUIET HISS and travels through the atmospheric shield into space.

INT. DAGON - EXECUTIVE SUITE - DAY

Pristine but simple, created for executive comfort as well as sports promotion. One wall is a ghostly video of a surfer coming down a wave. Opposite, a large picture window gives a stunning view of the island and sea to the west.

Diane steps out in a bathrobe, head bound in a towel. Tristan mopes on a sofa, twirling a strand hair with a finger. Beside her is a barely touched breakfast.

TRISTAN

I want to call Mom.

Diane stops in her tracks.

DIANE

Why?

TRISTAN

I just want to make sure everything is all right.

Diane continues to a receptacle in the wall.

DIANE

Coffee, cream.

(To Tristan)

I already told you it's taken care of.

A cup of coffee materializes. Diane picks it up and takes a sip.

TRISTAN

I know, I just want to...Was she mad?

DIANE

Catherine is Catherine. That's all she knows how to be.

Tristan pulls herself into a ball. Afraid to face her mother. Afraid she's doing the wrong thing. Her eyes plead with Diane to be honest.

DIANE (CONT.)

Sis, trust me. I've been dealing with her a lot longer than you have. You just have a good time, I'll deal with Catherine.

Heads back to her room.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE (CONT.)

As soon as I'm dressed, we'll meet Patrick and then visit the museum and aquarium.

TRISTAN

Diane, when did you stop calling her Mom?

She stops, sighs, remembers.

DIANE

The day she threw me to the wolves.

INT. MUSEUM ENTRANCE

Framed by two habitat aquariums, one on either side, where luminescent jelly-fish flutter about, their natural glow manifested by hidden lighting. They're beautiful, entrancing and deadly.

Between the tanks, a darkness like the sea's depths awaits visitors. Green ribbons of light swirl through the room like the reflection of the sun underwater. VISITORS walk about looking like submerged mer-people.

As Diane, Tristan, and Patrick pass the first station, a halo image of Dagon comes to life followed by a soft female voice.

NARRATOR

Dagon, fourth planet of the solar system. Ninety-five percent water, it is mostly unexplored. All life forms on Dagon are aquatic.

TRISTAN

To have no life on land is highly unusual.

The halo rotates and focuses on a large storm system.

NARRATOR

The most famous feature of Dagon is the immense storm system at the equator. Fueled by two powerful jet streams, it covers approximately three hundred thousand square miles.

It is this storm, and its resulting waves that allows extreme sports

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
enthusiasts an experience they can  
find no where else.

The halo ends and is replaced by projections on every wall  
of the different sports offered. Diane is attracted to the  
image of a clear sphere with a rider inside.

DIANE  
Hey guys, look at this.

The sphere floats to the crest of a wave, then is flung over  
the edge. White foam follows its rapid decent into a  
trough. A second later, a crashing wave hides it from view  
only to have it pop up again taking the next wave up.

TRISTAN  
Why isn't the rider thrown around?

PATRICK  
They're harnessed into a chair  
that's centered by gyros. No  
matter what, the rider will stay  
upright.

Diane is mesmerized. With all the awe of an extreme sports  
fanatic:

DIANE  
There's nothing else like it in  
existence.

Reluctantly, she allows her friends to pull her to the next  
section labeled: SECURITY AND PROTECTION. Another image of  
Dagon flashes into being, this time with a grid pattern  
superimposed on its surface.

NARRATOR  
Extreme Sports World boasts the  
most extensive customer protection  
system in the galaxy.

The image rotates a full circle.

NARRATOR  
This image shows the position of  
every early detection buoy on the  
planet. These buoys not only  
provide the latest in sonar and  
visual feedback, but can emit a  
sub-frequency sound proven to deter  
all life forms making Water World  
Extreme one of the safest extreme  
sports locations available.

(CONTINUED)

Presentation over, the images flash out reverting the room to its strange underwater semblance.

PATRICK

It makes you wonder what life forms need to be deterred.

TRISTAN

It does sound like they're hiding something.

DIANE

But they have been doing this for years without an incident. If something was down there, it would have shown up by now - right?

INT. AQUARIUM ROOM

Tristan gazes into a tank labeled "Pupfish". Inside, a small fish with large, endearing eyes and ear-like nodules gazes back at her. She touches the glass with her finger and is delighted to see the pupfish touch the same spot on the other side. She moves her finger - the pupfish follows. They soon have a game in play.

TRISTAN

Hey guys, look at this.

REVERSE ANGLE

Perusing another tank with Patrick, Diane turns, but a movement catches her eye. She looks to the entrance.

WHAT SHE SEES

Dan Steele has walked in.

RESUME

Diane glances at Tristan and realizes the angle does not allow him to see her - yet. She hurries to cut him off. Patrick follows more slowly. Diane passes Dan and leads him out the door.

DIANE

Mr. Steele, it's been a while.

Dan is turning circles trying to figure out what just happened.

(CONTINUED)

DAN  
(speaking carefully)  
ESWI just wanted to ensure that  
your visit has been to your liking.

ON TRISTAN

The pupfish has retreated and Tristan meanders to the next tank.

ON DIANE

DIANE  
So far it's been a very positive  
experience. Your presentation was  
informative.

PATRICK  
However, it does beg the question:  
in the vastness of an ocean, how  
much can you ever know of its sea  
life and fully protect against it.

DAN  
A good question. We've had the  
best ocean biologists in the  
business working round the clock to  
catalog as much life as possible  
and study its behavior. And so  
far, everything we've found has  
responded to the sound system. In  
the time we've been in business,  
not a single person has had a close  
encounter with any sea creature.

DIANE  
Impressive. I'm looking forward to  
my pod ride tomorrow.

ON TRISTAN

She has worked her way to a separate room. The door is  
marked: *Predators* She walks in.

ON DIANE

Dan has clearly been dismissed, but he's still trying to figure out if Diane is hiding something. He gives up, nods, and leaves.

PATRICK

You play a dangerous game.

DIANE

I'm not playing any game. I'm protecting my sister.

Patrick shakes and ducks his head.

ON TRISTAN

She gazes up in awe. Whatever has caught her attention is huge and frightening. In the other room, Diane calls:

DIANE (V.O.)

Tristan, time to go.

Reluctant, she leaves.

The CAMERA lets her go, focusing instead on what she was looking at: A representative figure of a gigantic apex predator. A sea monster, at least a hundred feet long, with a head like a dragon, mouth open, rows of deadly teeth. The neck flows down into two large flippers then continues into a scaly, eel-like body. The sign below it reads: ZYPHYR.

INT. MUSEUM ENTRANCE

Silhouetted by the hall lights, three shadowed figures head for the entrance.

TRISTAN

You've got to see this.

DIANE

Later. We have to get to orientation.

INT. POD STORAGE FACILITY

Just off the hanger bay where the pods can easily be loaded onto the transport planes, the room is narrow but deep. Well-lit and sterile. Tracks on the floors hold the round spheres and allow the crew to easily maneuver

(CONTINUED)

them. At the end of the room, stands an area dedicated to their maintenance and repair. Close to the door, one pod is on permanent display for training purposes. Diane, Patrick, and Tristan study it.

The DOOR SIGHS open and Hugh glides in wearing a one-piece gray ESWI uniform.

HUGH

Shall we get started?

The question is rhetorical. Hugh keeps talking.

HUGH (CONT.)

These pods are constructed of a new material that is virtually indestructible. Once strapped into the command chairs, you will be able to ride anything the ocean can throw at you in total safety. The chair is equipped with a gyro system that keeps it in an upright position fully independent of the sphere.

PATRICK

How does it stay centered?

Hugh shoots him a look that says he doesn't like being interrupted.

HUGH

The same technology that keeps our planes in the air only on a smaller scale.

Hugh crawls into the pod to demonstrate the next phase.

HUGH (CONT.)

Each pod is equipped with a homing beacon and magnetic strips. These strips are what allows the planes to bring the pods out of the water and load them. They will also let you stay connected to the other pods. By increasing or decreasing the frequency, you can determine how close you want to stay to the pod next to you.

DIANE

(To Tristan)

We can stay next to each other.

(CONTINUED)

Tristan nods, clearly relieved.

HUGH

As you can see, there are four storage ribs. They hold the controls for the internal and external lights and communications, compartments for water, bodily waste, emergency medical kits, and we've even thrown in some power bars.

TRISTAN

Bodily waste?

Hugh grins. It's not pretty.

HUGH

I suggest you don't eat a large meal before going out. Once inside, you will be sealed in. However, in case of an emergency, this lever will open the hatch. We've placed it where it is hard to get to so it's not accidentally triggered.

PATRICK

How does the oxygen system work?

HUGH

Where the ribs meet is a water convergence system. It extracts water from the ocean and transforms it into oxygen. At the other juncture, the stale air is released. Any questions?

TRISTAN

You're sure it's safe?

Hugh gives her a gleeful, almost sadistic grin.

HUGH

As safe as riding in a child's hover toy. Okay, I'll see you tomorrow morning at nine.

He marches out.

(CONTINUED)

Diane gets in and sits in the command chair. It hovers in perfect placement. Two arms with upright handles extend on each side. She rests her arms and grabs them. Her eyes shine with an almost manic intensity. Tristan watches, concerned.

TRISTAN

Sis?

Diane snaps back. Smiles.

DIANE

This is going to be the best yet.

INT. POD STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

In the silence that comes with early morning work, crews ROLL out the PODS onto connecting rails. From there, they are carefully ROLLED into the waiting shuttle plane and secured. The only voice is Hugh's militaristic ordering of every detail.

To one side, their three clients watch. In deep sea blue watertight jumpsuits, they could pass for the seal-like creatures that inhabit Dagon.

Patrick glances back at Tristan. Standing next to the wall, arms across her middle, head down, she looks anything but the happy rider. He throws a glance at Diane and cocks his head at her. Diane shakes her head - *she's fine*. Patrick's eyes flare with anger. He walks over to Tristan.

PATRICK

You don't look like you're having fun.

Not used to being asked about her feelings, she's not sure what to say.

PATRICK

Just tell me what's wrong.

Hesitates. Is he real? Is he sincere?

TRISTAN

I'm scared.

PATRICK

You don't have to go if you don't want to.

She throws a glance at Diane. Patrick follows it. He smiles at her and walks away to Diane.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK

(low)

Tristan doesn't want to go.

DIANE

She'll be all right.

PATRICK

I don't think so. She's scared. Let her know she can stay and give her the opportunity to decide.

DIANE

Once she gets out there, she'll have fun, you'll see.

PATRICK

(Frustrated)

That's not the point.

Diane knows exactly what he means, but she's not giving in.

DIANE

She's scared of Catherine. If she gives in now, she'll never get out from under her thumb.

PATRICK

As opposed to yours?

Pause. He sees the anger building.

PATRICK (CONT.)

I'm just saying, give her the chance to make her own decision.

DIANE

If I do, she'll run right back into her hellhole. After this trip, when she sees she can stand up to that woman, you'll see a whole new person.

PATRICK

Someone like you.

DIANE

If that's what it takes to free her. If you don't like it, you can leave.

Pause. Anger, hurt. His answer is like an arrow of truth.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK

No, I'll stay for Tristan's sake  
because you scare me, Diane. Every  
day, I'm seeing you become more and  
more like your mother.

Patrick walks away leaving Diane to process the most  
frightening and crushing words she's ever heard. It takes  
but a moment for pride to throw it off and resolve to  
return.

Hugh's head pops out of the plane.

HUGH

Time to go.

INT. SHUTTLE PLANE - DAY

For being so large, it is surprisingly quiet and  
stable. The only indication they are flying is a little  
turbulence every now and then.

Diane watches the sea skim past. Just ahead, the cloud line  
for the hurricane approaches. Ducking under it, the sun is  
dimmed like a light switch. But the sudden darkness reveals  
something else. Diane peers closer.

POV

The horizon glows like a bright city just over the next  
hill.

DIANE

What is that?

Tristan stands beside her.

TRISTAN

It's the luminescent jelly  
fish. Like the ones at the  
aquarium. They swarm by the  
millions and can cover up to ten  
miles.

Diane smiles at her sister, impressed.

TRISTAN (CONT.

It was part of the museum  
presentation.

(CONTINUED)

HUGH

Okay, everyone, get to your pods.

They do. Through the open hatches, Hugh is giving last minutes instructions.

HUGH

Remember, when you land in the water, your magnetic setting will automatically keep a fifty foot distance between you and the other pods. You'll need to adjust that if you want to go out on your own. You'll be on the outskirts of the storm, but the waves are still approximately two hundred feet high. Are there any last minute questions?

TRISTAN

How about Zyphyr's?

HUGH

Where did you hear that?

TRISTAN

There was a likeness of one at the aquarium.

DIANE

What's a Zyphyr?

HUGH

It's like a whale. They stay on the other side of the planet. There's never been one sighted anywhere near here. That's it? Okay guys, seal them in.

Tensions rise while the crew CLOSE and SEAL each POD. Expectancy is becoming reality. Hugh slides the side door open. The first pod is rolled to the edge. A MAGNETIC ARM EXTENDS outward from the roof of the plane.

In the first pod, Diane views what it will be like to ride a hurricane.

POV

Raw. Primal. Clouds roll and writhe; the death throws of the monster storm in the distance. But it has still captured the sun, allowing the barest of light to exist. Thus illuminated, the tumultuous SEA CRASHES against itself. Peaks and swirling foam highlighted while valleys remain a hidden mystery.

DIANE

Oh, my God.

HUGH

Here we go. Good sailing.

Diane is ROLLED to the door. Breath deep and rapid. Fear fights excitement. Over the edge, the pod begins its slow descent. By the time the last one is away, Diane has touched water.

EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY

Dropped on the descending side of a rising crest, the pods surf to the bottom. A roller coaster ride in a washing machine. In the shared intercom, Diane can hear Tristan's scream.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Tristan, are you okay?

TRISTAN (V.O.)

No. I don't like this.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Just hang on. You'll be all right.

Diane reaches up and turns the intercom and all lights off. It's just her and the ocean. A distance away, she can see the glowing spheres of her friends. Her finger hovers over the magnetic controls, then lowers.

A shadow blots out the sky nanoseconds before the pod is SLAMMED underwater by a powerful fist of water. Streams of bubbles. Thrown back against her seat, the pod jets to the surface. She whoops with excitement. Like a baby being birthed, she emerges from the depths to discover she's on a forming wave riding to the next crest. Behind her, two spheres of light follow.

INT. ESWI ISLAND OFFICE - DAY

Carlton works at his desk. He keeps one eye on the giant wall map where colored dots indicate the placement of all clients in the water, while the other studies a tablet. In his hand, he spins a small toy to alleviate stress.

A LOW HUM interrupts him. He pushes a button and SERENITY PARKS (20's), a newby administrator in the buoy tracking station, comes up.

CARLTON

Yes?

SERENITY

Sir, the buoy's are picking up a large object entering the one hundred mile demarcation zone of the island.

CARLTON

How fast is it going?

SERENITY

You're not going to believe this.

CARLTON

Cut the dramatics and just tell me.

SERENITY

Eighty five knots, sir.

CARLTON

You're right, I don't believe you.

SERENITY

It's being tracked by several buoys. There's no doubt.

CARLTON

Can you estimate how big it is?

SERENITY

Approximately, one hundred and fifty feet long.

CARLTON

My God, how could something that big get this close without being noticed?

(CONTINUED)

SERENITY

It came up from a trench in the deep ocean.

CARLTON

Turn on the all sound deterrents. Let's see if we can turn it around.

SERENITY

Yes, sir.

Serenity blinks off. Carlton hits another button. Hugh's visage materializes.

CARLTON

Hugh, we've got something big approaching. I want all crews on standby alert, but make sure you don't spook the guests.

HUGH

How big?

CARLTON

One fifty feet, eighty five knots.

Low whistle.

HUGH

That doesn't give us much time. We have three pod riders in open ocean. I'll go get them.

CARLTON

Not yet. Let's see if the S. D. S. works first. Remember who's out there. She'll crucify us if we cut her ride short for no reason.

Hugh's lips tighten, but he gives a quick nod.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Serenity works in coordination with DEREK FOWLER (20's) expert in all things electrical. Several buttons are flicked on.

SERENITY

Turning on power to grids fifty to sixty.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK  
Starting up S.D.S.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

A buoy floats calmly. Lights come on. It begins to HUM.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

On the wall map, several sections of buoy markers turn white.

SERENITY  
Active and ready.

Derek flicks a few buttons.

DEREK  
S.D.S. powered up and ready.

SERENITY  
Let's do it.

Derek hits a button.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

The buoy's HUM builds into a LARGE WHINE until it is so high, the frequency becomes inaudible.

UNDERWATER - SAME

A tuna-size fish spasms. Gradually, the contortions slow, stop, until it is dead. A huge creature flashes by. A quick snap and the fish is gone.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

On the wall grid, a large blip has appeared, traveling at an amazing speed. It barrels through the buoys as though they are not there.

INT. ESWI ISLAND OFFICE - DAY

Serenity's form pops up on Carlton's desk.

SERENITY

Sir, it's not stopping. It's swimming right past the buoys.

CARLTON

Keep track of it. Let me know where it goes.

SERENITY

Yes, sir.

She winks out.

The finger toy whirls faster than the eye can watch. Carlton reaches over and hits a button.

Andre's form pops up.

ANDRE

Yes, sir?

CARLTON

Andre, we have something big coming in fast and the buoys aren't stopping it.

ANDRE

How big is it?

CARLTON

Possibly a hundred and fifty feet.

ANDRE

Wow. I'll take a couple of jets and cut it off.

CARLTON

I need you to stop it, no matter what it takes.

ANDRE

Understood.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

Two jets race at top speed, their shadows skimming the surface of the water.

INT. JET - SAME

Behind the pilots, Andre studies a grid projection of section sixty. It's impossible to miss the large blip barreling past the buoys.

ANDRE

Janice, slow down and increase our altitude. We should be pretty close to it.

CAPTAIN JANICE HALL (30's) pulls back on the controls. She instructs the second plane.

JANICE

Beta, pull back and climb to one thousand.

Glancing back, Andre checks the WEAPONS TEAM ready and waiting. He smiles. There's enough firepower in these planes to blow up half the island.

JANICE

Sir, just ahead.

Andre moves forward to look between the pilots.

POV.

A long form undulates in the water, its wake hiding its true size.

RESUME

ANDRE

Bring us down and hover just above it. I want to see what this is.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

Both planes drop down to hover fifty feet over the monster. The creature stops. A scaly, reptilian head breaks the surface.

INT. JET - SAME

ANDRE

My god, it's a Zyphyr.

JANICE

They're not supposed to be on this side of the planet.

ANDRE

He missed the memo. Captain, I want two sonic torpedoes detonated right in front of it.

JANICE

Aye, aye, sir.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

The planes maneuver into position. In tandem, identical MISSILES SPEAR the ocean just in front of the Zyphyr. The planes bolt for higher altitude.

Seconds later, TWO EXPLOSIONS rip the water sending out powerful SHOCK WAVES.

The Zyphyr THRASHES violently. Tries to submerge, but it's too late. A moment later, it floats back to the surface.

INT. JET - SAME

ANDRE

That was almost too easy. Have Beta put a shot in its head to make sure its dead. I'll call Carlton.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

Beta jet floats gracefully downwards, rotating to place the side door just over the body. Framed by the door, a SNIPER stands ready.

CLOSE ON ZYPHYR

The eye opens, focuses.

RESUME

The sniper places the weapon to his shoulder. Aims through the scope.

THROUGH SCOPE

Nothing is there.

RESUME

He lowers the weapon and looks. The sea is empty. He looks over his shoulder.

The OCEAN EXPLODES. The man turns back to see the sea monster rising up. He begins to scream, but never makes it. The ZYPHYR GRABS the bottom of the plane and SHAKES it. He TOSSES it like a toy towards Alpha jet.

INT. JET - SAME

On the video with Carlton, Andre is giving him the good news when all hell breaks loose. A VIOLENT IMPACT SLAMS everyone against the wall.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

The collision causes Beta to BURST into FLAMES. Fused by wreckage, it slowly FALLS to the sea, DRAGGING ALPHA with it.

In the distance, the Zyphyr continues its course.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

A halo blinks on Carlton's desk.

SERENITY

Sir, Beta jet is no longer on grid.

CARLTON

What about Alpha?

SERENITY

Still transmitting, but it's on the ocean surface. And, sir, the creature is back on course.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON

Send out a rescue shuttle. Those planes are too light to sink. There could be survivors.

The image blinks off. Carlton hits a button.

Hugh's face appears.

CARLTON

It's still coming. Get everyone out of the water.

Hugh nods and Carlton disconnects the call. Another button and Catherine's form appears.

INT. CATHERINE'S OFFICE - SAME

At her desk. Dan sits across from her. She's not happy about the interruption.

CATHERINE

What is it? I'm busy.

CARLTON

We have a large creature approaching the island.

CATHERINE

(Interrupts)

And you know what to do.

CARLTON

And I have. It's taken out two jets and is still coming.

This catches Catherine's attention.

CATHERINE

What is it?

CARLTON

Before I lost connection, Andre said it was a Zyphyr. At least one hundred and fifty feet, traveling at over eighty knots.

Catherine SNAPS her FINGERS at Dan and points to the wall projector. In seconds, an image similar to the one in the control room comes to life. She studies it.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE  
You've begun evacuations?

CARLTON  
Yes.

CATHERINE  
Let's hope we get to them before  
this thing does.

Carlton fades out. Catherine watches the screen with mixed  
fear and disbelief.

DAN  
Your daughter...

Catherine waves him off.

CATHERINE  
Diane can take care of herself.

DAN  
Diane is your daughter?

CATHERINE  
Of course. Who else would you be  
talking about?

A beat

DAN  
I was talking about Tristan.

Shock.

CATHERINE  
(Almost a whisper)  
What about Tristan?

DAN  
She's out there in a pod. I  
thought you knew.

CATHERINE  
(practically growls)  
Why would I know?

Was that the sound of his career crashing?

DAN  
I told you when she arrived. You  
didn't even look up.

Ready to explode.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

I thought you were talking about Diane.

He's right there with her.

DAN

I didn't know she was your daughter. I was talking about Tristan.

CATHERINE

My God, she took Tristan with her. I'll kill her. Get me a shuttle - NOW.

Dan races out.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

ROGER HELMAN (25), an extreme windsurfer has his hands full. The waves are perfection, breeze just the way he likes it. Now, if he can only dodge the guys in the boat a little longer. He ducks between two waves and rides the trough away from them.

A crest is forming he can't resist. Heading for it, the board skims the water. Up, up, he uses the thrust of the crest to start a perfect back flip.

A movement catches his eye. Literally upside down, the momentum of his maneuver carries him over an enormous creature swimming at the surface. Only instinct allows him to land without falling. Watching it swim away, he heads for the boat.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Carlton studies the grid like a living version of the old game of Battleship. Catherine barrels in. As usual, she takes over.

CATHERINE

Where's that stinking fish?

Carlton runs to intercept.

CARLTON

You can see on the grid. It's almost to the pods.

Catherine turns white.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

How long until they get them out of there?

CARLTON

The blue dot is the transport plane. However...

CATHERINE

What?

CARLTON

It takes time to load pods in a quiet ocean. It'll take longer in the rough seas they're in.

CATHERINE

So the creature could get there before they're safe.

CARLTON

(softly)

Yes.

Catherine begins to tremble. She balls her fists and stiffens her back.

CATHERINE

I want to communicate with the pods.

Carlton SNAPS his FINGERS at a CONSOLE TECHNICIAN. Buttons are pushed. Over a loud speaker, MULTIPLE VOICES clamor together. Over everything, Tristan screams.

CATHERINE

Tristan, are you okay?

Silent pause.

TRISTAN (V.O.)

Mom, is that you? What are you doing here?

CATHERINE

I need to talk to Diane.

TRISTAN (V.O.)

She turned off her communication.

CATHERINE

Is there any way you can get her attention? Can you see her?

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK (V.O.)

Ms. Palmer, this is Patrick. She's also turned off her lights. We don't know if she's deactivated her magnetic strip or not.

CATHERINE

It's imperative I talk to her. You are all in great danger.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Let me try something. I'm flashing my lights on and off.

TRISTAN (V.O.)

Mom, what are you talking about? What danger?

CATHERINE

There's a Zyphyr heading straight for you. The transport plane should be there in a few minutes. You need to be ready.

PATRICK (V.O.)

It's not working. In these waves, she may not be able to see me.

CATHERINE

Patrick, please make sure Tristan gets on that plane.

PATRICK (V.O.)

I'll do what I can, but she's between me and Diane. If Tristan turns off her magnetic link, we could lose Diane.

CATHERINE

I don't give a...

DIANE (V.O.)

Thank you, MOTHER. It's nice to know how much you care.

CATHERINE

Diane, what the hell did you think you were doing?

DIANE (V.O.)

You mean actually giving my sister an enjoyable vacation away from you?

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN (V.O.)  
Diane, you said you had her  
permission.

CATHERINE  
She lied, like she's always lies to  
get what she wants.

DIANE (V.O.)  
You would never have allowed her to  
come.

CATHERINE  
Don't make it sound like you're  
doing this for her. We both know  
that everything you do is  
calculated to get back at me.

Pause

TRISTAN (V.O.)  
Diane?

DIANE (V.O.)  
Tristan...

TRISTAN (V.O.)  
You've been using me? I trusted  
you.

DIANE (V.O.)  
I'm sorry.

CATHERINE  
Diane, you're selfishness has put  
your sister's life in danger. I  
will never forgive you for this.

INSIDE POD - SAME

DIANE  
I don't expect you to.

The fun is over. What was once a thrill ride is now a race  
against approaching death. Lights off, every wave, froth,  
and splash of water is studied with increased anxiety.

HUGH (V.O.)  
Okay, tourists, we're right above  
you. Hope you enjoyed your ride,  
because you're headed home.

(CONTINUED)

A passing ridge sends Diane skidding down into the trough. Within the wall, a form glides by, accessing, wondering. IT BUMPS the strange object.

Diane feels the bump. Her heart rate and breathing increase. Searching. Where is it? There, just to the side, a head slides up from the water. Drakonish and deadly. It watches her just as she's watching it.

A wave pounds her under. She twists and turns, desperate to find it. The bubbles clear and she sees it. Coming straight at her, mouth open. She's mesmerized by the teeth.

The attack is quick but short. The sphere is too big. The ZYPHYR SCREAMS in frustration; a high-pitched whale-like sound.

DIANE

It's here. It's attacking.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Get Tristan out of there. I can't lose her.

Diane hears what she never believed to be true - her mother actually loves her sister.

DIANE

Tristan, turn off your lights and I'll disengage my magnetic strip until you're safe.

TRISTAN

But, you'll float away.

DIANE

These things have a homing beacon, remember? They'll find me. Patrick, take care of her.

PATRICK

You know I will.

Fifty feet away, Tristan's sphere goes dark. Just beyond, Patrick rises to meet the plane. Diane turns on the outside lights. The glow illuminates the turbulent sea and a monster coming right for her. A POWERFUL BLOW sends her spinning.

The pods slows. The attacks stopped. She breathes hard to calm nerves. In the distance, Tristan rises to meet the plane. She watches, at least Tristan is safe. She turns her strip back on.

INT. SHUTTLE PLANE - DAY

The side door open, men work in the BLASTING WIND to bring up the second pod. Behind them, Patrick waits for Tristan.

CARLTON (V.O.)

Hugh, get that plane out of there - NOW.

HUGH

We almost have her.

CARLTON (V.O.)

The Zyphyr went deep and is coming up fast. Right under you.

Hugh is no hero.

HUGH

You heard him, guys. Drop the pod and let's get out of here.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Don't you dare leave Tristan. You drop her and I'll destroy all of you.

CREWMAN

We can do this. She's right here.

Hesitation.

HUGH

Okay. but when I say go, get us the hell out of here - fast.

The top of the pod rises to meet the door.

CARLTON (V.O.)

You don't have time. Get out of there.

HUGH

Grab it, boys.

Using handles designed for the pods, the men grab it and pull.

HUGH

GO!

INT. POD - DAY

Diane can't help watching. The plane banks to the right just as the SEA beside her EXPLODES. Foot by foot, the Zyphyr climbs upwards past the pod, reaching for the plane.

INT. SHUTTLE PLANE - DAY

HUGH

Here it comes.

Several men hold Tristan's pod while the rest hold on for dear life. Through the open side door, the Zyphyr's head emerges beside the plane. It turns it's head to follow the retreating jet. Teeth flash, then it falls back into the water.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

The Zyphyr hovers over Diane's pod, before CRASHING down on top of it.

INSIDE POD - SAME

Even in the suspended chair, Diane is SLAMMED down. She screams.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Carlton watches the plane blip receding from the area.

CARLTON

Diane, what's happening?

DIANE (V.O.)

It came down on top of me. I hope these pods are indestructible.

CARLTON

Diane, this is Carlton, Head of Operations. Those pods are designed to take several tons of pressure. You should be all right.

DIANE (V.O.)

Good to know, but has anyone weighed this thing lately?

Carlton chuckles.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON

We'll make sure to do that next chance we get.

CATHERINE

I'm going to meet Tristan.

She leaves.

DIANE (V.O.)

Can you get me out of here?

CARLTON

Here's our problem. This thing has already taken down two jets and almost got the transport. Anything we send out will be a target.

DIANE (V.O.)

So, what does that mean for me?

CARLTON

It means, we'll have to create a diversion. What's it doing now?

DIANE (V.O.)

It's cruising about, batting me around like a toy.

CARLTON

Okay, help will be there soon. Until then, we'll keep this channel open.

DIANE (V.O.)

Make it quick.

INT. POD - DAY

Hands shaking, Diane reaches up and opens a storage bin, pulls out a bottle of water, uncaps it and drinks deeply. Just outside, the Zyphyr rests and studies her. She puts the bottle back. Looking eye to eye - she realizes:

DIANE

It's intelligent.

CARLTON (V.O.)

What?

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

I said, it's intelligent. I can see it in its eyes. It's thinking. It's been toying with me, trying to find a weakness...Here it comes.

In a burst of speed, the Zyphyr grabs the pod between its head and both fins, then dives.

DIANE

It's taking me under.

CARLTON (V.O.)

Diane, you should be fine, those pods are pressurized. Once it lets go, you'll come right back to the surface.

DIANE

Like a giant air bubble.

CARLTON (V.O.)

(Low with static)

Exactly.

The connection terminates. Totally alone, Diane holds onto the two hand supports, knuckles white. Will it hold? Will it burst? Except for the outside lights shining on the Zyphyr, there's totally blackness.

A drop of water hits her head. She looks up. Another drop falls from the air filtration unit onto her face. True fear rises.

DIANE

It's leaking!

No answer - static.

DIANE (CONT.)

Please, someone. I need help.

More water drips down, faster. Diane sobs. An ELECTRIC SIZZLE. The lights flash. The Zyphyr turns its head, one armored eye assess her.

DIANE (CONT.)

Think. Think.

Shaking hands turn off the lights and the magnetic strips. The Zyphyr lets go.

(CONTINUED)

She shoots up like a blast out of a cannon. A force so intense, the pod flies several feet out of the water before SPLASHING back down. Inside, she's tossed like a rag doll.

A ray of sun breaks through the disbanding clouds. She's at the edge of the hurricane. It brings no joy. She has no control, little hope, and a lot of fear. The tears can't help but fall.

INT. ESWI ISLAND OFFICE - DAY

Carlton holds a war council. Andre, his arm in a sling, sits across from him as well as SALBIDE DIXON, (35) Marine Biologist. Carlton's toy is flying faster than the eye can follow.

CARLTON

It knows how to bring down planes  
and no boat would be fast enough to  
outrun it. We need ideas.

ANDRE

And what the hell is it doing here?

SALBIDE

If it came up from the deep ocean,  
then it could be migrating or  
following a food source.

ANDRE

In that case there would be more of  
them. And how did it get past the  
S.D.S. so easily? Not to mention  
we hit it with two sonic torpedoes  
and they only stunned it.

SALBIDE

It obviously has a built in  
resistance to high  
pressure. Possibly the armor  
around its head.

CARLTON

Diane seems to think it's  
intelligent.

SALBIDE

That's possible, but unlikely. We  
know very little about them.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRE

So, it could be learning.

SALBIDE

Yes.

CARLTON

Why would it shoot right past swimmers in the water and go straight for the pods?

Pause, thinking.

SALBIDE

The pods have several features a swimmer doesn't: lights, communications, magnetic strips.

CARLTON

We can probably rule out the lights. We had well-lit boats on the water and it swam right past them.

ANDRE

The same with communications. That just leaves the magnetic strips.

SALBIDE

Which would actually make sense because a lot of life forms are drawn to magnetic fields. It's how some birds migrate.

CARLTON

Then the first thing we do is have Diane turn off her magnetic strips. Can we use another pod to divert the creature?

ANDRE

We can have an empty one dropped a distance away. If it goes for it, that will give us time to pick her up.

CARLTON

How about a fast boat? In - pick her up - out.

ANDRE

Once the decoy is down, I'll have a sharpshooter keep the beast

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDRE (cont'd)  
busy. I'll be on the boat. We'll  
extract her before it knows what  
happened.

SALBIDE  
I wish we could capture it for  
study.

CARLTON  
Not happening.

ANDRE  
If I can, I'll bring you the  
carcass. It killed some good men.

INT. POD - DAY

The waves have decreased, but this only allows the Zyphyr an  
easier time to play. Using its nose to throw her into the  
air, its fins and TAIL to SLAP her into the water.

Carlton's voice is a welcome intrusion.

CARLTON (V.O.)  
Diane, how are you doing?

DIANE  
Ready for this ride to be over.

CARLTON (V.O.)  
I can imagine. I've met with a  
marine biologist and we've got some  
theories. What I want you to do is  
turn off your magnetic strips.

DIANE  
Already done. That's when it let  
me go and I came back to the  
surface.

CARLTON (V.O.)  
Then you've proven the thing is  
drawn to the magnetic pull of the  
pods. What's it doing now?

What it's doing is jumping on the pod and pushing it under  
water, then turning over and letting it blast back to the  
surface.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

Playing with me like a kitten with  
a favorite ball.

SALBIDE (V.O.)

Diane, this is Dr. Salbide Dixon,  
Marine Biology. Did you say that,  
when you turned off the magnetic  
strip, the Zyphyr stopped  
attacking?

DIANE

In a way. It was taking me  
underwater. When I turned the  
strip off, it released me.

SALBIDE (V.O.)

And now it's just playing with you.

DIANE

Yes.

SALBIDE (V.O.)

It sounds like the magnetic field  
might have actually caused the  
hostile behavior.

CARLTON (V.O.)

We're going to create a  
diversion. A plane will drop a pod  
with its fields on to draw the  
creature away. Then a boat will  
come in and pick you up.

DIANE

What do you need me to do?

CARLTON (V.O.)

Just keep that strip off and be  
ready.

DIANE

I hope it's soon.

CARLTON (V.O.)

The time it takes to get them out  
there.

DIANE

Won't be soon enough.

INT. ESWI HANGER BAY - DAY

Catherine taps her feet, waiting for the pod transport plane to arrive. A small dot in the distance grows, taking on the shape of a plane. It slows as it approaches, then gently lands.

Running just as the side door opens, she envelopes Tristan in her arms. They hug with shared relief. Patrick jumps down beside them.

CATHERINE

Thank you, Patrick, for watching  
over her.

Patrick only nods and walks away.

CATHERINE

(To Tristan)

Come on, let's go home.

Tristan doesn't move. Catherine looks at her.

TRISTAN

What about Diane?

Anger flashes.

CATHERINE

Right now, I really don't care.

TRISTAN

How can you say that? She's being  
attacked by a monster. She could  
be dead already, and you don't  
care?

CATHERINE

Diane and I went our separate ways  
a long time ago.

TRISTAN

But she's still your  
daughter. Will you throw me away  
too if I don't do exactly what you  
want?

CATHERINE

You are even beginning to sound  
like Diane.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN  
Well, imagine that.

They're interrupted by a MAN, rifle in hand running for the plane. Hugh stands at the door.

HUGH  
What do you think you're doing?

MAN  
Sniper. Andre's orders.

HUGH  
I don't care, I can do this myself.

MAN  
Look, man, I don't give a damn what you want. I'm following orders.

Catherine takes over.

CATHERINE  
You Will take him with you.

Hugh glares, hackles up.

HUGH  
Yes, Ma'am.

TRISTAN  
Please, bring her back.

Hugh grins big. He's in his element.

HUGH  
Oh, we will.

He SLIDES the DOOR closed.

Catherine and Tristan run for the building. Behind them, the PLANE POWERS UP.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER- DAY

Catherine and Tristan, clothes changed, enter to find controlled chaos. Buoys are being monitored, radar watched, communication coordinated with plane and boat.

A full rescue operation is underway with Carlton in the center, toy whirling. He looks at Catherine over his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON

I need you to stay out of the way  
right now.

Her feathers ruffle.

CATHERINE

Last time I looked, I was still  
President of this company.

CARLTON

And I'm the one in control of this  
operation. You can stay and watch,  
or you're welcome to use my  
office.

CATHERINE

When this is over, we'll be having  
a discussion regarding your  
employment.

He gives her a *I don't believe you just said that at this  
moment* look.

CARLTON

Fine. Now, be a nice President and  
let us get back to saving Diane's  
life.

She can't order Carlton, so she orders Tristan.

CATHERINE

Come on, let's go home.

TRISTAN

Mom, I'm not leaving.

CATHERINE

I didn't ask you, I told  
you. We're leaving.

She marches for the door. Halfway there, she realizes  
Tristan is not behind her. Turns, back stiffened.

Tristan stands, defiant.

CATHERINE

Fine, I'll be in the office.

Tristan looks around at everyone watching  
them. Embarrassed, but in awe that her mother backed down,  
she manages a little smile.

(CONTINUED)

Carlton smiles back and indicates a chair to the side. Tristan sits down.

CARLTON

Diane, how are you doing?

DIANE (V.O.)

I'll never see a mouse the same way again.

He smiles at her courage.

CARLTON

Help is on the way. I have someone here who wants to say hello.

He indicates to Tristan.

TRISTAN

Hey, big sister.

DIANE (V.O.)

Tristan? Thank God you're alright.

The door opens and Patrick slips in. He's changed clothes.

TRISTAN

Patrick is here, too.

DIANE (V.O.)

Patrick, you were right, and I can't say how sorry I am.

Tristan throws him a questioning look, but he shakes and ducks his head. She realizes that he loves her. His voice is tight.

PATRICK

Right now, we just need to get you back here.

DIANE (V.O.)

You'll get no argument from me on that one.

EXT. MOVING - SHUTTLE PLANE - DAY

The plane moves rapidly over the open water. It slows, hovers. The side DOOR SLIDES open.

(CONTINUED)

HUGH

We're in position. Dropping pods.

They don't bother using the magnetic arm. The pods are thrown into the water.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER- DAY

CARLTON

Diane, the plane has dropped the pods. Let us know what happens.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

The Zyphyr is still playing. It hesitates, gazing at the horizon, nudges Diane a final time, then dives.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Everyone is waiting, barely breathing.

DIANE (V.O.)

I think it has left.

Cheers. Carlton hushes them, but he can't help the excitement in his voice.

CARLTON

Radar indicates it's heading towards the decoy pods. Your boat should be there in a few minutes. Be ready.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

The plane hovers high above the empty pods. At the side door, Hugh and the sniper watch. The waves are high and choppy. Spotting a dark gray head will be a challenge.

Hugh listens with his ear piece.

HUGH

Carlton says the Zyphyr is only a mile away. It'll be here any minute.

The sniper nods and lifts his rifle.

## ON WATER

The Zyphyr slowly surfaces. He's drawn to the pods but sees the plane. Ducks back under the waves and comes up keeping the pod between himself and the plane. Nudges it, peers inside. It's empty. He turns his head back the way he came. Thinking, calculating. He submerges.

## ON PLANE

HUGH

(To Carlton)

Carl, are you sure he's here. We see nothing.

CARLTON (V.O.)

He's right under you.

HUGH

Is it diving for another jump?

CARLTON (V.O.)

Negative. It's staying just under the surface. Wait. It's leaving. It's not taking the bait.

HUGH

(softly)

It knows its a trap.

CARLTON (V.O.)

Damn. Diane said it was intelligent. You have to get to Diane and give the boat cover or they won't have a chance.

HUGH

On our way.

Hugh runs to the cockpit.

HUGH

We have to get back to Diane. A bonus if you get us there before the Zyphyr.

PILOT

Yes, sir.

The PLANE banks and BURSTS forward.

EXT. RESCUE BOAT - DAY

The BOAT ZIPS across the ocean. Thirty feet long, it's made for speed as much as utility. Andre stands next to the PILOT, watching the water. He touches his ear piece.

ANDRE

I can't hear you. Wait a minute.

He ducks inside the cabin. At a console, he brings up Carlton's image.

CARLTON

The decoy didn't work. It's heading back towards you.

Andre slams his fist on the table.

ANDRE

How much time do we have?

CARLTON

Not much, it's moving fast.

ANDRE

How far are we from our target?

CARLTON

About five miles. The plane is heading your way to give you cover.

ANDRE

Thanks.

He turns it off.

Dashing upstairs he tells the pilot.

ANDRE

The Zyphyr turned back. We only have moments until it arrives.

The pilot answers by putting on more speed.

INT. CARLTON'S OFFICE - SAME

Tristan slips in to find her mother working on a computer. She sits.

TRISTAN

What happened between you and Diane?

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

It's none of your business.

TRISTAN

She's my sister. It's my business.

Catherine stops and assess her.

CATHERINE

She already has you challenging me.

Tristan has to decide how far she wants this to go - and if it is worth the changes it will make. She tries to choose her words carefully.

TRISTAN

As long as I can remember, I've been the doll you two have fought over. Whoever won me, won the prize, and I never understood why.

CATHERINE

She has always used you to get to me.

TRISTAN

And you use me to get back. Can't you understand, I love you both, but I hate the enmity between you? Diane said you threw her to the wolves.

A small laugh.

CATHERINE

Of course she would bring that up. Okay.

Catherine closes the computer.

CATHERINE (CONT.)

When Diane was sixteen, she decided to defy me. Against my wishes, she went to a party with some friends. I knew what was going to happen, but would she listen? No. The party was busted and Diane went to jail with her friends for underage drinking.

TRISTA

I remember you had taken me shopping for something and when we

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TRISTA (cont'd)  
returned, Diane was gone. So, had she been drinking?

CATHERINE  
She said, she'd only had a sip. Tox records confirmed it, but I told the arresting officer to keep her with her friends.

TRISTAN  
You knew she was innocent, yet you had them keep her in jail?

CATHERINE  
She wasn't innocent, she had defied me. I wanted her to see the consequences of her actions. When she got out, she left with her friends and never came back.

TRISTAN  
And you've hated her ever since.

CATHERINE  
I don't hate...

Tristan's look stops her.

CATHERINE (CONT.)  
I don't hate her. I'm angry because she does everything she can to get revenge. Her love of extreme sports is a defiance of my authority.

TRISTAN  
And here I thought she had a death wish.  
(pause)  
You know, watching you two, I think I've finally figured out what's wrong.

Catherine give her a cynical smile.

CATHERINE  
And what would that be?

TRISTAN  
I think you two hate each other because, every time you see one another, it's like looking into a mirror.

Tristan leaves.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - ZYPHYR/RESCUE BOAT/PLANE - SPLIT SCREEN - DAY

The three are racing. Who will be first to reach the helpless pod?

INT. POD - DAY

In the distance, a bright light breaks past the swells. Exhausted, Diane barely notices. It's not until it grows even brighter that her mind registers help has arrived. Sobs of relief. She fumbles with the straps that hold her.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

The boat pulls up beside her. Andre uses a suction arm designed for holding the wet spheres and pulls it close. He rotates the door to face him, manipulates the latch and throws it open.

ANDRE

We have to move - NOW!

Diane fumbles with one last buckle, her hands shaking too much to get it right.

ANDRE

Come on, come on, come on.

WHAM.

The pod is thrown sideways with the force of a violent impact. Diane screams. Andre watches in horror as she's pushed away, the door still open. He has a split second image of a draconian head watching him before it slips back under. He disappears in the cabin, emerging with a large rifle-like weapon.

ANDRE

(To Carlton)

It's here. Where's that damn plane?

PLANE - SAME

Hugh leans out the side door, rifle in hand. the sniper beside him. Below, he's watching the pod drift away from the boat in the turbulent water. The Zyphyr is no where in sight.

HUGH

I'm right above you, you stupid squid.

BOAT - SAME

ANDRE

Hugh, we don't have time for your petty grievances. Stay professional.

We'll take a lap around the area to see if we can draw it out. Carlton, keep us apprised of every move it makes.

He taps the pilot's shoulder, circles his finger in the air, then points straight ahead. The pilot GUNS the BOAT.

PLANE - SAME

Hugh watches the boat speed away. A dark shadow trails under the water.

HUGH

It's following the boat. I'll lower down by rope and see if I can snag her while it's gone.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Carlton paces, watching the monitors and screen. He sees Catherine standing just outside his door, watching. He nods. Patrick holds Tristan in a comforting arm embrace.

CARLTON

Ten-four. I'll let you know the second it starts coming back.

INT. OPEN OCEAN - PLANE - SAME

Hands trembling, Hugh straps on a harness. A CREWMAN stands beside him.

CREWMAN

You want me to go?

Hugh snaps back.

HUGH

No, damn it. I can do this.

The plane lowers to hover just above Diane. Through the open pod door, barely above water level, small waves throw in their wet tentacles.

The crewman gives one final check. Thumbs up. A glance at the sniper prepared to cover him who gives him a small smile of respect and a nod. Hugh steps out over open water.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

He drops towards the water. The pilot does his best to stay with the pod, but it's hard going with the constant waves.

ZYPHYR

Faster than the boat, it bumps it on the side. Lights from the plane distract it. Slows, head breaches surface. Watching. Realizing its prize is in danger, it dives and circles back.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The room watches the large blip turn and head back. No sound, no words, just nerve-racking intensity. Finally:

SERENITY

Oh, no.

CARLTON

(In mic)

Andre, Hugh, it's turned back and it's going deep.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - PLANE - DAY

Hugh dangles just above the pod. Diane is up and reaching for him. Just when it seems they'll touch, a wave throws them apart.

HUGH  
(To Carlton)  
I almost have her.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Catherine walks forward to stand close to Carlton. Tristan stands next to her, their arms around each other. Carlton throws them an apologetic look.

CARLTON  
No time. Pull up and get out of range.

CATHERINE  
(fearful)  
No. He has to get her.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - PLANE - DAY

Hugh stretches, hand extended. Just out of reach. He yells through his mic to the pilot.

HUGH  
Drop this thing. She's right here.

A wave hits the pod, pushing it away.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

CARLTON  
(almost screaming)  
Leave - NOW.

INT. PLANE - SAME

The pilot pulls back to begin ascending.

EXT. PLANE - SAME

Hugh screams in frustration, helpless as Diane drifts away. He sees the ocean just below him swirl and churn unnaturally. The Zyphyr has arrived. He has only a moment to realize what is about to happen.

HUGH

Damn.

SLOW MOTION

The ZYPHYR EXPLODES upwards. Jaws opening wide.

The sniper takes one shot, but it's useless

It engulfs Hugh and continues upwards to grab the plane. With the plane in its mouth, it CRASHES sideways into the ocean.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The blip that used to be the plane, winks out. An astonished silence.

Catherine and Tristan look ready to collapse.

CATHERINE

Oh, my God. Diane.

TRISTAN

Is she dead?

Carlton calls out:

CARLTON

Hugh. Hugh. Rescue plane come in.

A small voice answers.

DIANE (V.O.)

It's gone. The plane is gone.

CARLTON

Diane, are you okay?

DIANE (V.O.)

I'm okay, but my door is open and the pod is taking in water.

Catherine steps forward to Carlton. Almost in his face.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Can she close it?

CARLTON

No. They're designed to be sealed from the outside.

CATHERINE

Why would they make it like that?

CARLTON

So that clients wouldn't be tempted to open it for any reason other than an emergency.

CATHERINE

That is unacceptable.

Carlton snaps back.

CARLTON

I'm sure it is, but right now I still have your daughter to rescue and a boat in the water. Please, Ms. Palmer stand back and let me do this.

Tristan pulls her mother away giving Carlton the room he needs. She sees looks of astonishment from the command crew. *Why?*

CARLTON

Andre, did you hear?

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - BOAT - SAME

The boat hovers a distance away, watching the wreckage and the pod float at the mercy of the waves.

ANDRE

Yea, I saw it. I never believed the guy had it in him. Where's the damn thing now?

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Carlton studies the board.

CARLTON

Just below the plane. It's stationary for the moment.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRE (V.O.)

The only way we're going to win  
this is to kill it.

CARLTON

Agreed. What do you have in mind?

ANDRE (V.O.)

We have one more jet. Send it out  
with sonic torpedoes and the energy  
cannon. In the meantime, we'll  
keep the thing occupied and away  
from Diane.

CARLTON

You got it. Be careful.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - BOAT - SAME

Andre breathes out a skeptical laugh.

ANDRE

Right.

(To boat pilot)

We can't outrun this thing, but  
maybe we can out maneuver it.

He lifts his rifle.

ANDRE (CONT.)

Give me a few passes. Let's see if  
we can bring it to the surface.

The pilot nods and guns the boat.

INT. POD - SAME

Water continues to stream in with every wave. Diane stands  
knee deep. Eventually, it's going to fill up and sink. The  
plane wreckage floats about fifty feet away. Close enough  
to swim, but where is the Zyphyr?

An ENGINE ROARS. The rescue boat leaps forward and ZOOMS  
towards the downed plane.

EXT. BOAT - SAME

Andre can see Diane standing at the door of the sinking pod, contemplating a swim to the plane. He smiles - *good girl*.

Full speed, they zip past the plane, making a turn that creates a swell several feet high. Andre FIRES into the water under the plane.

They make a large circle, setting up for another pass. By the wreckage, the Zyphyr's head has emerged from the water. They pass again. Andre FIRES several shots into the open jaws. A SCREAM, high-pitched and piercing. The Zyphyr attacks the thing that dared to harm it.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

A distance away, a SIMILAR CRY fills the air.

EXT. POD - SAME

Diane watches the Zyphyr leave to chase the boat. Prepared to jump, the sound stops her. Another Zyphyr? It doesn't matter, the pod is sinking. She leaps.

EXT. BOAT - SAME

Andre hears it too.

ANDRE

Carlton, I hear another one of these damned things.

The boat swerves hard left. Andre fires two more shots into the swimming behemoth.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - SAME

The radar screen had been placed on a tight area around the rescue attempt.

CARLTON

Give me a wide screen - NOW.

The coverage area goes wider. It reveals another blip headed towards the site at an unbelievable speed.

(CONTINUED)

SERENITY

Sir, that thing is four times the size of the first one.

CARLTON

(snaps)

I can see that.

(small, to himself)

And we have absolutely no way of stopping it.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

Diane swims for all she's worth.

EXT. BOAT - SAME

Banking right, they notice the Zyphyr has stopped, studying the plane wreckage.

ANDRE

No you don't, you overgrown tuna.

He FIRES several shots.

ANOTHER CRY, closer, louder.

ANDRE

Carlton, what's happening?

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - SAME

CARLTON

Andre, you have another one on the way, and, I hate to say this, but it's even bigger than the first one.

He glances at Catherine, surprised at the intensity of her fear. It unnerves him. He wrenches his eyes away to focus on the problem at hand. Something on the board scares him.

CARLTON

Tight screen again.

The image comes forward to reveal the Zyphyr has turned back towards the wreckage.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON  
Andre, it's headed back.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - SAME

The plane's side door is just in front of her, but every time she reaches for it, the waves push it away. Close to panic. Where is the Zyphyr?

Breath ragged with small sobs escaping, she swims closer, reaches up, her fingers touch. With an effort, she pushes up and latches on with her hand. Now, both hands.

With the strength only an extreme sports athlete can have, pulls herself up and out of the water.

INT. PLANE - SAME

She rolls away from the door.

The Zyphyr's head emerges, TEETH SNAPPING only a few feet from her. She screams, backing away. It follows, forcing itself into an opening almost too narrow.

The plane tilts. Diane starts to slide. She grabs a pod rail, holding tight. Her feet dangling just above the Zyphyr's jaws.

Outside, she hears TWO SHOTS. The creature slides out and submerges. The plane levels. Diane staggers to the cockpit.

COCKPIT - SAME

A gaping hole indicates where the windshield used to be. WATER SLOSHES on the floor. Strange and quiet. All crew gone. She checks the radio - dead.

The boat races past again, its projection all sharp angles and turns. What should she do?

A HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM, louder than anything she's heard fills the air. She has to see and leaves the cockpit.

PLANE - SAME

At the side door, she gazes over the water. A mountain rises from the ocean, water running in rivulets from the crest, then settles back down. Fascinated, she waits.

Slowly, foot-by-foot, a drakonian head emerges. Up, up, up, unbelievably huge, its eyes focused on Diane. Terrified, shaking, yet in awe, she watches it. It would only take one snap.

DIANE  
(softly)  
Mom, I'm so sorry.

The Zyphyr's head tilts. It studies her. They lock eyes. She takes a deep breath as though a crazy thought has touched her mind.

DIANE  
(to Zyphyr)  
What?

The Zyphyr's mouth opens revealing four foot teeth in what looks to be a smile. Diane's mouth opens in astonishment.

Leaving the small safety of the plane, she cautiously steps onto the stubbed wing. Only feet away.

DIANE  
He attacked and they were trying to  
rescue me. They didn't know.

The Zyphyr closes its mouth with a snap. The head turns while producing a calling sound.

The young Zyphyr floats up, head lowered like a spanked puppy. The female hisses over him. He rolls once in submission.

The boat zips around the plane. Andrea raises a rifle, but instantly realizes how inadequate the weapon is. The Zyphyr turns to watch him, humored. He looks relieved when Diane raises her hand.

A light appears in the distance.

INT. PLANE COCKPIT - OVER THE SHOULDER

In the confusion of wreckage, waves and filtered light, the PILOT sees a monstrous dragon head lifted above the surface. It hovers above a woman standing on the downed plane.

Scoping lights target the serpent.

PILOT  
I have visual and locked on target.

EXT. BOAT - SAME

Andre waves both hands in the air.

ANDRE  
Negative. Abort.

INT. PLANE COCKPIT - SAME

PILOT  
Are you sure? I can take the shot without endangering the civilian.

EXT. BOAT - SAME

ANDRE  
Affirmative. The situation is too volatile. Anyway, I'm not sure that thing can be hurt by anything you've got on board.

EXT. PLANE WING - SAME

Diane watches the plane back away. She addresses the Zyphyr.

DIANE  
They just want to protect me and take me home.

The Zyphyr gazes at her a moment.

DIANE  
Yes, we are much alike.

(CONTINUED)

Diane lifts her hand and the female lowers her head to touch it. A final communication makes Diane suck in her breath. The female backs up, turns, and swims away taking her kit with her.

The boat pulls up. Andre helps her aboard.

ANDRE

I thought you were dead. Mind  
telling me what that was all about?

Still dazed, her reply is curt.

DIANE

Later.

ANDRE

(in mic to pilot)  
Shows over. Meet you back at base.

The boat spins and takes her away.

INT. ESWI ISLAND COMMAND CENTER - DAY

A collection of deep sighs of relief and cheers.

CARLTON

(To Catherine)  
Let's go meet your daughter.

INT. BOAT DOCK ROOM - DAY

In a room provided for guests waiting for their boats, Catherine, Tristan, Patrick and Carlton watch the glass doors leading to the docks slide open. Diane, wrapped in a warm blanket steps in followed by Andre and his pilot.

Catherine's eyes are misted. She starts to step forward, but is pushed aside by Tristan who grabs Diane in a tight embrace and kisses her cheek.

TRISTAN

I thought I lost you.

Catherine's softened eyes turn hard. Fear and jealousy fills her. She stays in the back, silent.

Tristan steps back allowing Patrick to smother Diane in an embrace. When they separate, Diane looks around. She's taken back by her mother's anger, but doesn't want to deal with it.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE  
Who's in charge?

CARLTON  
I am.

He gives her his hand.

CARLTON (CONT.)  
Carlton Weston.

DIANE  
Thank you for being there with  
me. You helped keep me sane.

He smiles.

CARLTON  
No problem.

DIANE  
As soon as I change, there's  
something important I need to tell  
you and Mom.

CARLTON  
Of course. I can't speak for your  
mother, but I'll be in my office  
whenever you need me.

Leaning on Patrick, his arm around her, they leave.

INT. DIANE'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Clouds turned pink and orange by the setting sun are framed  
by the large window. The wall video is off giving it a  
calmer feel.

Patrick, lounging on a sofa, looks up as Diane enters from  
her bedroom. Newly showered, she's changed back into her  
regular clothes. Plopping down beside him, she snuggles  
into his side.

Patrick rests his chin on her head.

PATRICK  
Do you want to talk?

DIANE  
No. Yes. I've never been so  
scared. I knew I was going to  
die. I've never felt that before.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK  
Facing mortality is a daunting  
task, even for a Palmer.

DIANE  
Ha, ha.

PATRICK  
What happened when the big one  
showed up?

DIANE  
Actually, let me process this a  
bit. Will you come to the meeting  
with me?

PATRICK  
You're asking me?

She jabs him with her elbow. He laughs, low, with  
affection.

PATRICK (CONT.)  
Okay, okay. You want something to  
eat first?

DIANE  
No. Let's get this over  
with. Once this is behind me, then  
I can relax.

Patrick stands, pulling Diane up with him.

PATRICK  
Then let's go because I'm starving.

DIANE  
I'll let Carlton know we're coming.

INT. CARLTON'S OFFICE - EVENING

A few chairs have been added. Catherine, Tristan, and  
Salbide are already seated. Andre stands, leaning against a  
wall, explaining what he saw. Conversation stops when Diane  
and Patrick walk in and take a seat.

CARLTON  
I've taken the liberty of adding  
two more people to this meeting. I  
believe you've met Andre, my head  
of security.

Andre waves his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CARLTON (CONT.)

This young lady is Salbide, our  
Chief Marine Biologist.

DIANE

(To Salbide)

Pleased to meet you.

(To Andre)

I want to thank you for risking  
your life for me. I'm sorry for  
the men you lost.

Andre nods.

CARLTON

Hugh was a good man. They all  
were. I can't tell you how sorry  
we are for what happened. Never in  
our wildest dreams did we ever  
think the Zyphyr would come to this  
side of the planet. They've never  
left their normal range.

DIANE

That's what I wanted to talk to you  
about. When I said they were  
intelligent, I didn't realize how  
much.

Salbide sits forward, eager.

SALBIDE

So, how much intelligence are we  
talking about?

DIANE

The big one, the female, she  
communicated with me.

CARLTON

Communicated as in...

DIANE

She talked to me.

Andre coughs, shaking his head. Diane glances at him,  
defensive.

DIANE

Not verbally. In my head. You saw  
what happened. She could have  
easily killed me. Instead, I got  
these pictures of what she wanted

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DIANE (cont'd)  
to tell me. I also got the  
impression she was reading my mind.

SALBIDE  
They're telepathic? What did she  
say?

DIANE  
They've have been purposely staying  
away from this place, but yesterday  
they were chasing their favorite  
prey in a deep trench when they  
felt the magnetic pull of the  
pods. The older ones ignored it,  
but her kit, her infant male, came  
to investigate.

Carlton leans forward.

CARLTON  
That thing was a baby?

Andre snickers.

ANDRE  
You should have seen the size of  
the mother.

DIANE  
She didn't realize he was missing  
until they heard him scream. By  
then, she was far away.

Carlton falls back, mouth open.

CARLTON  
So all this was about a baby  
playing with toys?

DIANE  
Pretty much. The blue suits look  
just like the blue seals they prey  
on. Put that in a clear bubble and  
you have a toy no baby predator can  
resist.

ANDRE  
Yet, he brought down three planes.

SALBIDE  
You fired on him first.

DIANE

He did it out of self defense and ignorance. He's still a baby.

CARLTON

We need to make sure the magnetic strips are taken off the pods.

ANDRE

Then, how will we load and drop them?

CARLTON

We'll think of something.

Salbide has a sudden thought.

SALBIDE

If they had killed the baby, God help us.

Diane shakes her head in fear of the thought.

DIANE

The whole pod would have torn this place apart.

ANDRE

Then how do we protect ourselves next time baby wants to play?

DIANE

All I can say is: get out of its way.

SALBIDE

Maybe we can rig up a transmitter and create a distress signal to let the Zyphyrns know.

CARLTON

That would mean finding and communicating with them.

SALBIDE

I would love to do it.

Tristan lights up like a Christmas tree.

TRISTAN

I want to help. I'm majoring in biological studies. This is exactly what I want to do.

(CONTINUED)

And is crushed by mommy.

CATHERINE  
Absolutely not.

TRISTAN  
Mom, I'll be eighteen in a  
month. I can do what I want.

CATHERINE  
And I'm still president of this  
company. They can't hire you if I  
say no.

Tristan starts to argue, but Diane intervenes.

DIANE  
Catherine, we'll talk later.

Catherine purses her lips, anger flowing.

DIANE  
From reading my mind, she  
understands that we are not a  
threat. We were just defending  
ourselves. And she regrets  
everything her son did.

ANDRE  
(sarcastic)  
Well, that's comforting.

CARLTON  
Well, this is something that I for  
one, did not see coming.

He points a finger at Andre and Salbide.

CARLTON (CONT.)  
Think on this for the next two days  
and then we'll have another  
meeting. I want ideas on what  
needs to be done to keep this from  
happening again, and what to do if  
it does.

Clearly dismissed, Salbide and Andre leave.

CARLTON (CONT.)  
Ladies, Patrick, once again I can't  
tell you how sorry I am for all  
this. I don't know of any way I  
can make it up to you.

DIANE

How about a lifetime pass to Dagon  
that includes the executive suites.

Carlton's mouth drops open.

CARLTON

You would want to come back?

DIANE

Zyphyr kit aside, that was the  
funnest ride I've ever been on. I  
would love to try the diving and  
surfing.

CARLTON

It's yours. All three of you.

CATHERINE

Two. Two of them.

A long beat.

DIANE

(To Carlton)

Is the meeting finished?

CARLTON

I can't think of anything else  
right now.

DIANE

Good. Will you forgive me if I run  
you out of your office? I need to  
talk to Catherine alone.

Carlton glances between the two women. He stands up.

CARLTON

Of course. Miss Tristan, Patrick,  
I've had dinner set up in the  
executive lounge if you would like  
to join me?

(To Diane and Catherine)

We'll be expecting you when you're  
finished.

The two women barely wait until the door is shut. They're  
like two bulls facing each other.

CATHERINE

Diane, I will not allow you...

(CONTINUED)

DIANE  
Mother, Shut Up.

Catherine crashes to a stop. Anger rises like a volcano about to erupt.

DIANE  
You can bully everyone else, but not me.

CATHERINE  
I can do more than you can possibly imagine.

DIANE  
And all I have to do is tell my audience what happened today, and your empire will come crashing down. Do you think anyone will come here knowing there are monster predators in the water ready to kill them?

Silence. Catherine cannot deny the truth. She trembles in rage.

Diane is tired; of the day, the fighting, everything. Can reconciliation be possible?

DIANE  
When I was out there with the mother Zyphyr in front of me, I knew I was going to die. Suddenly, I wanted nothing more than to be reconciled with you. I think it was that thought that got the mother's attention.

She pauses.

DIANE (CONT.)  
She told me her son was strong-willed and rebellious. She laughed and said that I was just like him.

Diane notices a look of triumph in Catherine's eyes. Her hackles raise.

DIANE (CONT.)  
Did it ever occur to you I'm more like you than you think? Patrick says I'm becoming more like you  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DIANE (CONT.) (cont'd)  
every day and it scares him. Well,  
it scares me too.

Catherine takes a deep breath.

CATHERINE  
Tristan said we were like two  
people looking in a mirror.

DIANE  
Exactly. So, if we hate each  
other, does that mean we hate  
ourselves?

Catherine is taken back. She ponders.

DIANE (CONT.)  
I know I do. I don't want to be  
like you; controlling, pushing  
people away, alone. And, I've  
decided I'm not going to be.

A sneer raises Catherine's lip.

CATHERINE  
So, you're going to change just  
like that?

DIANE  
No, but I can work on it a little  
every day. And if you want to keep  
Tristan, then you need to change a  
little too. You need to start  
letting her go.

CATHERINE  
Leave Tristan out of this.

DIANE  
I can't. She's my sister and I  
love her, and right now, she's  
miserable.

CATHERINE  
I love her, too. And I can't  
forgive you for putting her in  
danger.

Diane doesn't miss that she said nothing of herself.

DIANE

I'm not asking you to, but you're backing her into a corner. Either she stays under your thumb and surrenders everything she wants to be, or defies you, and you end up losing two daughters.

CATHERINE

Tristan will do what I say.

Anger, frustration.

DIANE

That's not love, that's selfishness. Let me put this plainly; either you allow Tristan to work here on Dagon with Salbide, or I'll create such a stink on my next broadcast that you'll have to resign your presidency.

CATHERINE

You would enjoy that, wouldn't you? You've spent your life finding ways to get revenge.

DIANE

Believe it or not - no. But for Tristan, I'll do it.

She gets up and steps to the door.

DIANE (CONT.)

I was hoping we could come to an agreement, but it's not going to happen, is it? I'll see you at dinner.

She leaves. Catherine is left between fear and fuming.

INT. DIANE'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Outside the glass wall, the sky radiates gold and pink, shining off passing wisps of clouds born in the violence of a hurricane, now peaceful and tame. The window reflects Diane's image as she stands and ponders. Another joins and mingles with her own.

Patrick puts his arm around her shoulder and pulls her close. She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

DIANE

It's funny, having had the mother show up makes it feel as though the chaos and fear is now under control.

Pause

DIANE (CONT.)

Tristan will be alright.

Patrick stiffens.

DIANE (CONT.)

It's okay. I know you feel protective towards her.

PATRICK

I just wish your mother would allow her do what her hearts wants to do.

DIANE

She will.

PATRICK

How do you know?

DIANE

I shamelessly blackmailed her.

Patrick laughs.

PATRICK

And just when I thought there's a new Diane.

Diane turns and gazes into his eyes.

DIANE

There will be. It's just going to take time to learn who she is. I'm going to need help.

He leans his forehead against hers, gently embracing her face with his hands. His caress becomes a kiss.

SERIES OF SHOTS/VOICE OVER

DIANE (V.O.)

This is Diane Palmer. What can I say about Dagon but that riding a hurricane was the most incredible

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DIANE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
time of my life. Some people say we enjoy extreme sports because we have a death wish. Some say it's the adrenaline rush. For me, being that close to death reminds me of just how alive I am. But there are times when being close to death also shows you just how empty your life is. That is what happened to me. Confronted with my true self, I discovered it was not a pleasant picture. So, I've decided to do something about it. Will I return to Dagon - you bet. I can't wait. And when I do, I hope I can sincerely say, I'm not the person I used to be.

Diane and Patrick enter the shuttle for the trip home. The door closes. Gently lifting, the shuttle turns and begins a rapid ascent into space.

Catherine and Tristan talk as they walk down a hallway. Suddenly, Tristan leaps up and gives Catherine a big hug. She's happy, exuberant, jumping up and down. Catherine her gives a small, insincere smile.

Andre cleans out Hugh's locker, throwing his things in a box. In the back, he pulls out a frame.

POV

A young boy and woman stand beside a man in a hover chair. He has only one arm and, under a lap blanket, an indentation indicates where his legs should be. He's holding up a purple heart. The boy is trying hard to smile, but the fear and pain are just too evident. Next to the picture, the purple heart sits in a silk bed.

Andre bows his head - now he understands.

The young Zyphyr follows his mother, leaping and splashing. A movement catches his eyes. He stops and looks skyward where a shuttle races towards the heavens. He dives deep, races up and leaps. FREEZE FRAME

FADE OUT

THE END.