

Diving Blind
By
Franck Benayoun

frnkb9@gmail.com
917 573 2861

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The moon casts its silver glow across the water, illuminating ripples that stretch into the dark horizon.

A YACHT bobs gently on the waves, pulsing with THE LAUGHTER AND MUSIC of a lively party.

Near the boat's edge, THE SILHOUETTE OF A PONY-TAILED MAN, A BEER CAN in his hand, sways unsteadily.

He fumbles with his zipper. Relieves himself overboard aiming poorly. Downs the last of his beer, wobbly.

Job done, he zips up, spins around and smashes the empty beer can against his forehead--CRUNCH.

The force sends him teetering backward, and he FALLS OVERBOARD, arms flailing.

PONY-TAILED MAN

Oops!

His SPLASH is drowned by the party's clamor.

He breaks the surface, spits out water. Flounders toward the boat's ladder.

His fingers grip the rung just when A SOFT SWOOSH behind him draws his attention.

He glances back, brow furrowed--

Nothing to see, EMPTY WATER.

He shrugs. Starts climbing when--

SOMETHING YANKS HIM UNDER SO ABRUPTLY THAT HE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO GASP.

Bubbles break the surface...then still...until...

TENDRILS OF BLOOD swirl in his wake...

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

A sunny, glorious day.

AERIAL VIEW--

A SMALL MOTORBOAT anchored in the bluest of oceans, glitters in the under coral.

The name on the boat's hull reads *Safe Haven*.

INT. MOTORBOAT - DAY

ISLA (24), adventurous despite hardship, SCARRED FOREHEAD, and MARKUS (50), overprotective teddy bear of a man, slip into their diving wetsuits--only Isla's movements are more calculated than one would expect.

She carefully tucks HER NECKLACE WITH AN ANCHOR PENDANT beneath the suit. Wrestles to zip her suit in the back.

Markus rushes to help. A GROAN from Isla thanks him.

ISLA

I could've managed on my own.

MARKUS

It won't kill you to ask for help once in a while, Ms. Stubborn.

They slide their diving masks over their heads. Secure their oxygen tanks. He grabs her hand, gives it a single squeeze.

They walk carefully to the boat's edge, when A SUDDEN BARK behind them startles them--WOOF!

They check in its direction--

A LABRADOR RETRIEVER stares at them, tongue hanging and tail wagging. Wants to join in on the fun.

He stands by AN ORANGE THREE-PRONGED FISHING SPEAR MOUNTED INSIDE THE BOAT'S HULL.

ISLA

Sorry, dog, no can do.

The dog stills, fixing her with heart-melting puppy eyes.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Oh, I know what you're trying to pull. You should know better. Maybe later, if you behave.

He wags his tail again, happy with the compromise.

MARKUS

He's way more playful than Benji. How about "Waggy" for a name?

He chuckles. She shrugs at the suggestion--"meh".

Back to what they were ready to do.

They turn around, tanks to water. Slide their masks over their eyes--Isla's are as striking as deep green marbles.

She closes them.

MARKUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

1...

She takes a deep breath in...

MARKUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

2...

She exhales...

MARKUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

3!

She opens her eyes, and they fall backwards--SPLASH!

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

They glide downward through a sunlit beam holding hands.

As they near a school of fish, he gives her hand a squeeze.

They swim through it--RIPPLES FLUTTER AROUND THEIR FACES.

Isla's expression blossoms with wonder, her eyes wide.

INT. OCEAN REEF - DAY

A CHIRPING NOISE welcomes them by the reef.

They swim along it, a mosaic of life both peaceful and full of energy, filled with visual wonder and beauty--

Branching coral structures like sprawling fans and intricate mazes in shades of pink, blue, orange, yellow...

Schools of colorful fish dart between the corals, their scales flashing in brilliant hues of blue, green, and gold...

Isla extends her free hand towards a BROWN CORAL. Markus hastily pulls her away from it. Gives her hand TWO SQUEEZES.

Isla signs "thanks" with her free hand--the gesture looks like she blows a kiss at him.

They pass starfish, sea urchins, a clown fish hiding among swaying anemones...

CLACK! CLACK! Crabs feed on a dead fish on the sandy floor...

A manta ray swoops gracefully over the reef, casting a shadow over the vibrant scene...

A CR-CR-CRUNCHING NOISE catches Isla's attention. She squeezes Markus' hand once, points at her ear.

Markus scans around, doesn't spot anything. Gives her hand two squeezes.

She points confidently at a specific spot on the reef.

He follows her finger... There--a PARROT FISH.

He gives her one squeeze. She beams.

INT. MOTORBOAT - DAY

Markus sorts out the scuba gear while Isla rests, soaking in the sun behind her sunglasses.

SPLASHY noises nearby--the dog paddles merrily by the boat.

MARKUS

Seems like you enjoyed that one,
you look as happy as a clam.

He chuckles.

She smiles, content--until her expression abruptly shifts to a frown and she sits up, head tilted, listening intently.

Markus cuts her a quizzical look.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

ISLA

I thought I heard something.

He scans around. Shrugs.

MARKUS

All I see is our four-legged friend
going nuts in the water.

She FINGER-WHISTLES for the dog to come back.

The dog dutifully paddles back as Markus starts the engine.

AERIAL VIEW--

The dog reaches the boat just as...

A MASSIVE 30 FEET LONG SHADOWY FIGURE GLIDES UNDER IT.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Isla, sunglasses on, gazes out an open window, the breeze stirring her hair gently. The picture of serenity.

THROUGH THE WINDOW--

The FAINT HUM OF DISTANT INSECTS.

The sun sets over an island of breathtaking beauty, the sky a stunning palette of oranges, pinks...

Palm trees RUSTLE and sway in the wind, casting playful shadows on the sandy beach with WHISPERS OF WAVES...

In the distance, rolling green hills rise, dotted with colorful houses and tropical flowers...

Isla swivels her head--

Her gaze lands first on Markus sipping a beer across the table, then on a BUSTLING DIVE BAR--kitschy tropical decor, a neon sign: *Het Saint Marteens Surf Shack*.

A band plays BAD SOFT ROCK on a makeshift stage in the back.

The music and a LIVELY BABEL OF OVERLAPPING ENGLISH, DUTCH, AND FRENCH replace nature's harmony.

ISLA

Ain't Bikini Bottom, that's for sure.

Markus chuckles, although he doesn't quite get the reference.

MARKUS

I heard the bartender say a storm might roll in tomorrow. That means no diving on our last day I'm afraid, can't take the risk.

Isla makes a pleading face.

ISLA

But we could take a chance?

Before Markus can interject--

ISLA (CONT'D)

Dad trained me for this--remember
how I'd go swimming with him in
Lake Michigan on rainy days?

Markus chuckles.

MARKUS

Ha, yes--his famous "soaked swims"!
He always tried to drag me along
when we were kids. But getting
drenched before even hitting the
water? Hard pass.

He shakes his head, nostalgia flickering in his eyes...

He brushes it away, wags a finger at Isla like a teacher
scolding a stubborn pupil.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

I'm pretty sure they weren't meant
to prepare you for a Caribbean
storm. And I promised your parents--
may they rest in peace--that I'd
keep you safe. This is a send-off
trip, Isla, not a death wish.

Isla groans.

ISLA

Contrary to what people think, I'm
not made of porcelain.

(a shrug)

Whatev. Maybe I'll just go on my
own.

She brings her beer to her mouth to hide a facetious grin.
Turns her head towards the bar twirling a strand of hair.

She's baiting him big time. Knows he'll bite.

AT THE BAR--

WOUTER (29), handsome and devil-may-care, chats with a
SCRUFFY COUPLE (40s).

The MAN shows Wouter something on his smartphone, while the
WOMAN feels her nose, slightly wincing in pain.

As Wouter glances at the phone absentmindedly, he spots Isla
grinning and twirling her hair right at him, looking flirty.

He checks around to see if it's meant for someone else.

BACK ON MARKUS AND ISLA AT THEIR TABLE--

Markus shakes his head, visibly upset, on the verge of speaking, but Isla beats him to it.

ISLA (CONT'D)
I was kidding. Relax.

MARKUS
Not funny, Ms. Jokester. FYI, the Coastal Police still haven't found the man who went missing the other night. See, you saying things like that makes me wonder if you're ready to live on your own.

She sighs a tired sigh. Gathers herself for *that* conversation, again.

ISLA
I am ready. The real question is, are you?

Markus scoffs, as if it was the most ridiculous of questions.

ISLA (CONT'D)
You know how hard I've worked to get to that point. And I'm only moving a few miles away, not to Timbuktu. Look on the bright side-- you'll have more time for yourself... Maybe even to start dating?

A loaded silence. A sore topic.

Markus kills his beer. Stands up.

MARKUS
These dives are exhausting. Let's call it a night and go pack up.

But Isla doesn't move, instead turns her face back to the window.

Markus heaves. Gets it.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
See you later. Don't drown in beer.

She takes a deliberate sip of her beer.

He grunts--she got under his skin.

He ambles away, shaking his head.

She sighs, feeling a tad guilty. Finishes her beer.

She scans around for a waiter when wouter materializes right in front of her.

All dialogue in italics is in Dutch.

WOUTER
(Dutch accent)
Hi.

Isla jerks, startled.

ISLA
Oh, I didn't hear you coming.

Wouter frowns, puzzled by the odd remark.

She wags her empty bottle at him.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Another, please.

His frown deepens. She remains unfazed.

He scoffs, amused. Decides to play along.

He grabs the arm of blasé waitress FAMKE (30) who passes by them.

FAMKE
(Dutch accent)
(doesn't make eye contact)
Yeah, what can I get you?

WOUTER
*Hi, Famke. Two beers, please,
thanks.*

Her face lights up realizing it is Wouter. She flashes him a flirty smile.

FAMKE
Hey, you're back in town!

Her gaze shifts to Isla, and her smile fades.

FAMKE (CONT'D)
Onto your next prey, huh?

She gives Isla a once-over.

FAMKE (CONT'D)

Don't know what you see in her.

She stampedes away clearly unhappy.

Isla frowns, puzzled at what is going on.

ISLA

That was a lot of Dutch for a beer.

WOUTER

She's been here too long, has a textbook case of island fever.

ISLA

Oh? And does creeping up on people one of the symptoms, too?

Wouter scoffs, taken aback by the accusation.

WOUTER

Wait a second, I saw you checking me out with my own--

An ANGRY GROWL from under the table interrupts him.

He looks down, oblivious to Isla removing her sunglasses.

THE DOG'S EYES GLINT IN THE SHADOWS, ITS BARED TEETH A SILENT WARNING--he means business.

Wouter exhales sharply, surprised. Lifts his gaze back to Isla, shaking his head.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

And here I was thinking the hottest girl in the room was actually into me. How stupid of me.

Isla blushes--flattered, not used to it.

A practiced confident smile paints Wouter's lips.

It falters as he notices HER GAZE IS SLIGHTLY OFF...

Something's not quite right here...

He gasps loudly as realization strikes him--

SHE IS BLIND.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
 (apologetic)
Het spijt me zo! I'm so sorry!

He wheels around, red in the face.

Hearing him stepping away, Isla acts fast.

ISLA
 I'm not contagious!

He stops in his tracks. Turns around.

She flashes him a pearly smile.

He purses his lips. Considers, intrigued. Walks back to her.

As he sits down, the dog peeks out from under the table--HE
 NOW WEARS A SERVICE DOG VEST.

Wouter shows him his hand.

WOUTER (O.S.)
 Hey, buddy, what's your name?

The dog sniffs it.

ISLA (O.S.)
 TBD, open to suggestions.

The dog licks it.

WOUTER (O.S.)
 My mom thinks Wouter's a cool name.

Isla giggles--cute. She extends a hand just slightly off the
 mark.

ISLA
 Hi, I'm Isla.

He clasps her hand in a firm shake.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Are you here on a vacay with your
 overbearing uncle, too?

Wouter shakes his head no, catches him.

WOUTER
 No, I'm heading out on a dive with
 a couple of French scientists.
 (MORE)

WOUTER (CONT'D)

We're going to check out the seafloor and measure water temps around the island, for climate research.

Isla nods, genuinely interested.

Wouter bites his lip. Ponders. Waves his hand in her face.

She snatches it instantly. He gasps--caught red-handed.

The dog GROWLS.

ISLA

No, I didn't see it. But I felt it.

She lets go of his hand, takes a breath, bracing herself for the same tired explanation she's given a thousand times.

ISLA (CONT'D)

I have optic atrophy--blurry edges, no depth or color. It's like seeing through a very frosted window. A brain tumor pressed on my optic nerves when I was nine.

POV ISLA

Wouter's face is a blur--no details, just a desaturated haze.

The center fades into a gray void, the edges swallowed by shifting shadows.

A formless blob, hard to decipher.

END POV ISLA

Isla raises her hand to Wouter's face--he instinctively pulls his head back.

ISLA (CONT'D)

I don't bite, promise.

He relaxes. Lets her run her fingers over his face... Then drift down to his torso...

ISLA (CONT'D)

Not too shabby.

She chuckles just like Markus.

The ice is broken.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Empty but for Isla and Wouter at their table, a few empty beer bottles in front of them. The dog snoozes at their feet.

Famke dries glasses behind the bar, glaring at them.

WOUTER

How do you communicate underwater?

ISLA

Hands protocol. My uncle distrusts tech, says it breeds false security. So, he teaches me the hard way. It's fun, until it's not.

Wouter shakes his head in disbelief.

WOUTER

I had no idea blind people could dive.

She leans forward, agitated.

ISLA

We can do more than what you imagine. It's like, not seeing makes us invisible to others. Yeah, I've bumped into plenty--

She points at the scar on her forehead.

ISLA (CONT'D)

--not a Harry Potter cosplay. But it hasn't stopped me. I've learned to trust my other senses to navigate the world.

She leans back. Relaxes.

ISLA (CONT'D)

But underwater... I don't have to worry about footsteps, or cars...I just breathe, listen to the coral's crackle, and focus on what I'm experiencing instead of what I can't see.

Wouter gazes at her, admiration evident in his eyes.

He leans in, jerks the dog awake by accident, who yawns in response.

Wouter grabs Isla's hand--she slouches at the touch and a small smile tugs at her lips.

WOUTER
Come dive with us... me...
tomorrow, to a special place...

Her smile falters, her expression shifting to concern.

ISLA
I heard a storm's on the way...

WOUTER
We're not in its path--the French
showed me their AI prediction
earlier. We'll be quick--in and
out, an hour tops.

ISLA
What about them, the scientists?

WOUTER
Are you kidding me? They'll totally
geek out over having a blind diver
join us.

ISLA
You don't know our hands protocol.

WOUTER
True. But would we need if we use
masks with an advanced integrated
voice system?

Isla's eyes go big. She bites her lip. So tempting.

The dog nuzzles her ankle, as if to say "Don't". She gently pushes him away with her leg.

Wouter senses her hesitation.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
Do you need to check with your
uncle?

She jolts upright, as if he insulted her. Defiance hardens her features, and she shakes her head firm, resolute.

ISLA
I don't need his permission. I'm
in.

Wouter beams.

WOUTER

Then it's a date--a real blind date!

He laughs at his pun, but Isla doesn't. Panic flashes across his face.

After a beat, she cracks up.

ISLA

Now, that's funny.

He sighs, relieved.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Wanna know the signal for sharks?

WOUTER

Wow, wow! We'll stay under 1,000 feet, they don't roam at that depth.

Isla ignores his remark. Undulates her hand like a shark fin towards him while HUMMING THE THEME OF THE MOVIE *JAWS*.

She laughs--it's hysterical to her.

He stares at her slack-jawed--"isn't she something?"

EXT. RESORT ROOM - DAY

Early morning light. The quiet stillness broken only by the distant sounds of the island stirring to life.

Isla shuffles out of her room holding the dog's harness in one hand, her cellphone in the other.

She talks into the phone as they walk.

ISLA

Good morning, Uncle Markus. I went for a last swim at the beach. Will be back by lunchtime, promise.

A PING echoes from the door they pass--Markus' room.

Isla stops in her tracks, worried it will wake him up.

She tilts her head, listens intently...

LOUD SNORES echo from the room.

She sighs in relief. Walks away.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL STERN - DAY

Wouter works on A SEISMIC AIR GUN--a cylindrical metallic device mounted on the vessel with a big nozzle at the front.

Cables snake from the device to a CONSOLE WITH A DIAL, TWO BUTTONS AND A SCREEN.

Pipes lead to a separate TANK LABELED AIR.

He turns the dial to the *Min.* level, pushes the *Release* BUTTON--

AIR HISSES going from the tank into the device.

The gun HUMS and FAINT VIBRATIONS appear.

ON SCREEN--A green low-amplitude waveform oscillates.

ISLA (O.S.)
(strained)
What is going on?

Wouter checks in her direction--

She and the dog stand by the vessel ladder, directly in the gun's line of fire, both clearly distressed,

She winces, hands pressed over her ears. The dog WHIMPERS, head down.

Wouter quickly presses the *Stop* button--the hum fades away and the vibrations disappear.

She lowers her hands from her ears. The dog barks--WOOF!

WOUTER
Sorry, I was testing the seismic air gun. You actually felt it?

ISLA
Yep. Works fine.

Wouter gapes, can't believe it.

WOUTER
Amazing...

As he hops off the boat to help her aboard, a SMALL DEAD FISH silently plops onto the surface, going unnoticed.

The dog gives Wouter's hand a friendly lick, unprompted.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
 Good morning to you too, TBD.

The dog leaps gracefully onto the boat.

Wouter lets out a low whistle, clearly impressed.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
 Nice jump, buddy. You should
 consider naming him "Jumper".

He grabs Isla's hand, gets a smile. Helps her climb aboard.

ISLA
 What's an air gun, anyway?

WOUTER
 They're used to studying tectonic
 activity and explore climate
 history. Here, let me show you.

He leads her to the console. Positions her to oversee it,
 standing very close behind her.

He places one of her hands on the dial, leans into her ear--
 she shivers slightly in pleasure as he talks.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
 You set the dial to the frequency
 you want the compressed air to
 burst into the ocean...

He puts her other hand on the *Release* button.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
 Then you press the release button
 to shoot them off so they can
 penetrate the seafloor and reflect
 off geological layers. Cool, isn't
 it?

Before Isla can respond, a VOICE booms behind them.

FRED (O.S.)
 (thick French accent)
 Sure--if you enjoy killing marine
 wildlife. Not on today's program,
 though.

Isla frowns, taken aback by the remark.

Wouter releases his grip on her, turns around and squints at
 the man he was talking to at the bar.

FREDERIC "FRED", nerdy, opinionated scientist, gestures toward the dead fish floating nearby as proof of his claim.

WOUTER

Science always comes at a price--
you know that, Fred.

They stare at each other in a silent standoff.

Isla senses the tension, extends her hand to break it.

ISLA

*Bonjour, je suis Isla. Comment
allez-vous ?*

It works wonder, as Fred's eyes widen, impressed.

FRED

She's blind, she dives, and she
speaks French? You surpassed
yourself this time, Wouter.

Isla frowns, unsure how to take this.

Wouter shoots Fred a glare. Diverts the conversation.

WOUTER

Why don't you show Isla your lemon,
while I get us going?

Fred lights up at the suggestion.

FRED

Avec grand plaisir!

He passes an arm under Isla's, and leads her away.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL BOW - DAY

All dialogue in italics is in French.

A bright yellow, teardrop-shaped SUBMERSIBLE, 9 feet long and 8 feet wide, is harnessed to the vessel.

Its name emblazoned on its side reads *Le Citron Plongeur*.

Motherly, newly nose-ringed CAROLINE "CARO", the other scientist/woman from the bar, checks the cockpit.

FRED

Caro, let me introduce you to Isla.

ISLA
Bonjour.

CARO
Salut.

ISLA
 I just want to say, I have lots of
 admiration for what you are doing--
 -you're the real heroes of our
 time.

FRED
 Did you hear that, Caro? Does it
 make you rethink joining the circus
 now that you've got a nose ring?

He leans toward Isla, but doesn't bother lowering his voice.

FRED (CONT'D)
 She thinks it makes her look cool.

Caro sends pretend-daggers at him.

CARO
 You wouldn't know cool if it
 slapped you in the face, Fred.

Fred doesn't reply, moves on, gestures toward the sub like a
 ringmaster presenting the main attraction.

FRED
 Behold, our underwater mini science
 lab, *le bien nommé Le Citron*
Plongeur--The Diving Lemon!

CARO
 (sarcastic)
 Speaking of cool, here comes
 Professor Nerdy.

Isla lets out a giggle. Fred carries on, unfazed.

FRED
 It might look like a lemon, but
 trust me, it's anything but. It can
 dive to 6,000 meters--for you,
 Americans who still cling to the
 archaic imperial system, that's...
 uh...

He winces, clearly struggling with the math. Starts counting
 on his fingers.

CARO
Almost four miles.

He flashes her a grateful glance.

FRED
The cockpit's window is made from
hyper-strong acrylic polymer,
cutting-edge French technology--*oui*
Mademoiselle.

He knocks on it--HOLLOW. Points to a hatch.

FRED (CONT'D)
It's got a hatch if we feel like
taking a swim--but we'll leave that
to you two birds today.

Isla blushes, caught off guard. He moves on to the thrusters.

FRED (CONT'D)
The six thrusters give us full 360-
degree maneuverability.

He climbs into the cockpit.

FRED (CONT'D)
Granted, the inside's a bit of a
squeeze. But hey, you know what
they say, when life gives you...

He doesn't finish his bad joke. Cracks up.

FRED (CONT'D)
Get it? Squeeze, lemon...

CARO
You forgot the most important
feature, Fred.

Fred frowns at the statement. Racks his brain, when--

WAGNER'S *THE VALKYRIE* BLASTS FROM THE SUB, startling everyone
except Caro, who bursts into mischievous laughter.

CARO (CONT'D)
(loud over the music)
The MP3 player!

Isla laughs. She is thrilled to be with this crazy crew.

They all sway in sync as the vessel pulls away from the bay.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

AERIAL VIEW--

OVERCAST. The vessel is anchored in the ocean.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL BOW - DAY

All dialogue in italics is in French.

Isla and Wouter suit up, while behind them Caro and Fred get ready in the sub.

The dog waits patiently beside Isla, harness-less.

Isla raises her face to the sky.

ISLA

It doesn't feel very sunny. Are you sure about the AI prediction?

Caro gives Fred a nervous glance.

He speaks with confidence, counting off on his fingers--

FRED

The storm's following the atmospheric highway set by steering winds, the Coriolis effect is making it curve away from us, the cooler ocean waters are making our area not particularly enticing-- we're in the clear.

He shifts the topic, giving no one a chance to ask questions.

FRED (CONT'D)

Did you check the valves, Caro?

CARO

That's your job, Fred!

They grunt like only French know how.

Isla tucks the anchor pendant beneath her suit. Struggles to zip up in the back again.

Wouter goes to help her out, but just as he reaches her--

ISLA

(curtly)

I'm good, thanks.

After a bit more struggle, she finally zips up.

Wouter brings her a FULL-FACE MASK WITH A PANORAMIC VISOR.

WOUTER

I'll secure your mask, since it's
your first time using one like
this.

As he stands inches from her, Isla catches a whiff of his
scent and her lips curl into a smile of delight.

Wouter notices, smiles, delighted as well, when--

A POD OF DOLPHINS breaks the spell as they SQUEAL and jump
out of the water a few yards away from them.

Isla grins and claps excited.

ISLA

Dolphins!

The dolphins run past them, the last one close enough to
spray, before they slip away further into the ocean.

WOUTER

Weird. I only ever spotted lone
ones around here.

CARO

Global warming is fucking up the
oceans' ecosystem real bad.

FRED

The data we're collecting will be
added proof--the world can't stay
blind to the truth much longer.

Caro and Wouter shoot daggers at him.

Fred shrugs--"what?"

A BEEEEEP from the sub breaks the tension.

CARO

The valves are working.

Wouter slides the mask over Isla's head--it seals around her
entire face, including the eyes, nose, and mouth.

She runs her fingers over it. Reaches the name *AQUAVOX*
engraved in it, "reads" it like braille.

WOUTER

Communication's enabled through a microphone near your mouth. You'll hear through bone conduction headphones.

Isla makes a "what now?" face.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

Traditional headphones use air to send sound to your eardrums. These send vibrations through your skull bones straight to your inner ear.

ISLA

Wow...

WOUTER

We've all got compatible receivers, so we can chat with each other.

He adjusts the straps for a secure fit.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

You breathe through the built-in regulator. It's got sensors to track the pressure, too.

She stares, wide-eyed, amazed by this marvel of technology.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

Maybe after this dive, you can convince your uncle that technology isn't always the enemy.

He gives the mask a firm tug to make sure it's secured.

He presses a side-button--the mask BZZZ's and lights up, glowing inside and out.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Oxygen at maximum level.

A smile spreads across Isla's face, like a child who just got her dream gift.

He puts on his own mask--BZZZ!

MAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Oxygen at maximum level.

WOUTER

Test. Test. Do you copy, Isla?

Isla gawks like she's heard Santa.

ISLA
OMG, it's crystal clear!

SHE SINGS A LULLABY.

Wouter smiles, smitten. Turns to Fred and Caro, thumb up.

WOUTER/SUB SPEAKER
See you down there.

Fred raises his thumb up back at him.

Caro's eyes dart from the clouds on the horizon to the divers, concerned. Wouter doesn't notice.

Isla crouches to talk to the dog.

ISLA
Be good. We'll play fetch when I
get back.

The dog wags his tail, happy--WOOF!

Wouter grabs Isla's hand. Leads her to the boat's edge.

They turn, tank to water.

She grins--she is so excited. Then turns serious.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Remember--

WOUTER
--we must hold hands at all times--
I know. I'd do it even on dry land,
if you let me.

He winks at her. Rolls his eyes at the stupid move.

ISLA
Did you wink? I bet you winked.

She winks back.

He laughs.

WOUTER
OK...1...2...3!

They jump--SPLASH!

The ocean swallows them.

Caro checks the clouds again--darker, bigger...and moving their way.

She turns to Fred, worry growing.

He speaks without losing a beat, no eye contact.

FRED

You know we don't have the money to postpone the dive. It'll be fine.

She sighs, reality hitting her hard.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

ISLA'S POV

Black, with pinpricks of light that almost look like stars...

A contrast between light and dark...

A big, vague shape before her...

A LOUD GASP.

END OF ISLA'S POV

SMALL RIPPLES OF WATER SURROUND HER FACE. She reacts to them.

ISLA

I'm sensing something--what is it?

WOUTER

Welcome to the Fishermen's Grave!

Before them looms A MASSIVE ANCIENT HARPOON SHIPWRECK, resting tilted on the side in its underwater grave.

The large wooden frame is remarkably preserved despite being overgrown with marine life and weathered by time.

A dense KELP FOREST encircles it, strands swaying, creating an eerie yet mesmerizing embrace around the forgotten ship.

WOUTER (CONT'D, O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's a respected place, we must honor the divers code--no one moves or takes anything. Like we say, "Take only pictures, leave only bubbles"...

He trails off, realizing the saying doesn't quite fit here.

In any case, Isla is too absorbed in the moment to react.

Schools of fish weave through the hull's broken beams, anemones cling to the jagged wood and corroded metal.

As they near the ship's entrance, INTENSE RIPPLES OF WATER SURROUND ISLA.

ISLA

Wow, the vibrations are insane.

A FEW YARDS BEHIND THEM, THE SILHOUETTE OF A LARGE SHARK GLIDES BY, UNNOTICED...

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

They reach the ship's entrance, *Ocean's Fang* etched above it.

The door has been torn open, leaving the doorway twisted into the shape of a gaping, deformed mouth.

WOUTER

We're going in. Be careful--the ocean erosion's softened things up, but there are still a lot of sharp edges.

Isla tugs at his hand.

ISLA

And you're sure it's safe?

WOUTER

I've brought lots of people here, never had any issues.

Isla still hesitates.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

You trust me, right?

He squeezes her hand once with a smile.

She smiles back, squeezes his hand back.

He leads her inside the ship.

As they enter, Isla brushes the ragged edge of the door frame with her fingertips, shivering with excitement and fear...

INT. SHIPWRECK - DAY

Wouter guides them through dark, narrow corridors, filled by a ghostly stillness.

ISLA'S FEELS EVERYTHING ALONG THEIR JOURNEY WITH HER FREE HAND.

Their masks' lights sweep across, showing how decay mingles with the beauty of deep-sea life.

The ship's ribs arch upward hauntingly, like the skeleton of a creature out of this world.

The once-sturdy wooden beams lining the low ceiling are now draped with seaweed and barnacles. They CREAK softly.

Long shadows fall on the walls, revealing corals and strands of seaweed clinging to every surface.

Fish dart in and out of the shadows, slipping through portholes crusted with barnacles and tiny anemones.

ISLA

It... It's amazing! It's like Mother Nature has claimed the ship for herself.

WOUTER

As it should be.

ISLA

How did it end up here?

WOUTER

Nobody knows for sure.

They enter...

INT. SHIPWRECK MAIN CARGO HOLD - DAY

A vast room with nets hanging in tattered shreds from hooks along the walls.

WOUTER

Some say it was a brutal storm, others a giant fish. And, of course, you have your usual conspiracy theorists claiming it was a--

(in a creepy voice)

--sea monst-eeeeer!

Isla giggles.

A few broken crates hold the remnants of their contents--splintered wood, tarnished metal, clumps of mud and sand.

Old big fish bones, likely from past expeditions, rest half-buried in the silt at the base of the hold.

They head further toward the bow, into...

INT. SHIPWRECK CREW QUARTERS - DAY

Small interconnected rooms, where hammocks have rotted away on a few rusted metal hooks attached to the beams.

WOUTER

I like to think of it a resting
place for the long-forgotten
sailors...

Items lie around--a tarnished belt buckle, a cracked lantern.

They go through an ornately carved iron-bound door, into...

INT. SHIPWRECK CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

A more spacious room with a large wooden desk tilted to one side, covered in thick layers of sediment and debris.

Most of the shelves on the walls have collapsed.

WOUTER

...and a sanctuary for the ocean's
creatures.

He gently pulls Isla back to let A BIG OCTOPUS glide past them gracefully, its large eyes goggling them.

As they swim by the desk, Isla touches a rusted compass resting atop a brittle and decayed map.

They move on to...

INT. SHIPWRECK DECK - DAY

They hover by the HARPOON LAUNCHER, its dilapidated state still radiating strength and adventure.

WOUTER

This harpoon was the beating heart
of the ship, the sailors'
livelihood. Back then, it was
considered a marvel of precision
engineering.

Isla runs her hand over it.

Her fingers go over patches of deep orange-brown rust
intermingled with faded hints of its original color...

They move to its barrel, slightly warped and pitted...

They continue to the mechanism adorned with flakes of rust...

They get to the grip, its wooden components splintered...

Finally, they reach the jagged harpoon, lying in wait like a
predator.

As she feels the harpoon's tip, she cuts her glove/finger on
it, and A DROP OF BLOOD escapes in the water.

She winces in pain. Doesn't tell, too proud.

Wouter beams.

WOUTER (CONT'D)

So, was I right or was I right?
Totally worth it, yes?

Just then, THE SHARK FLASHES BEHIND HIM, triggering water
vibrations that startle Isla. She frowns.

ISLA

Did you feel that?

He pulls her close.

WOUTER

If you mean the electricity between
us...

She pushes him back.

ISLA

Nuh-uh.

Wouter's face falls, not the reaction he was expecting.

He scans around, indulging her.

WOUTER
All I see are little fish.

He clicks his teeth.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
You may be getting newbie jitters,
just like Famke did.

ISLA
It's something else.

Wouter raises an eyebrow, unconvinced. Scans the area again,
does a double take, squints.

WOUTER
Wait, you may be right, I think I
saw something...

HE LETS GO OF HER HAND and swims away to investigate.

Isla panics, her voice rising in distress.

ISLA
Don't leave me!

WOUTER
I'll be just a minute.

He disappears into the dark waters.

Isla listens intently, her senses heightened on high alert.

ISLA
Wouter, do you copy?

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 75%

HER HEART IS POUNDING IN HER EARS--BUBAM! BUBAM! BUBAM!

She hears BUBBLES rising behind her--

She quickly draws her DIVING KNIFE, spins around brandishing
it--

A hand grabs her knife wielding wrist--WOUTER.

WOUTER
It's me, everything's cool. I think
it was a dolphin swimming off. We
must have freaked it out. To them,
we're real--

(MORE)

WOUTER (CONT'D)
 (in a creepy voice again)
 --sea monst-eeeeers!

She thumps his chest in anger.

ISLA
 You promised not to leave me!

WOUTER
 I didn't want to risk exposing you
 to any danger.

He puts a comforting hand on her shoulder.

She calms down, her heart stabilizes--BU-BAM...BU-BAM...BU-BAM...

But then, a faint, almost imperceptible tremor ripples across her face.

She shivers as THE WATER AROUND HER TAKES A GLACIAL TINT.

ISLA
 The water's getting colder...

Wouter rolls his eyes--"come on, now". Assesses for himself.

He frowns realizing that it is indeed getting colder...

WOUTER
 You're right, actually...

ISLA
 I'm telling you--we're not alone.

He scans around again... Freezes.

His eyes widen and his pupils dilate in a mix of shock, disbelief, and a glimmer of...awe?

WOUTER
 We have to leave now! Snel!

He pulls Isla back by the arm, fast, in survival mode.

Isla's heart leaps into her throat--BABUMBABUMBABUM!

ISLA
 What is it?

They kick hard through the ship, the way they came in.

Wouter's movements are jerky and frantic.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Wouter, tell me what--

The ship CREAKS LOUDLY... A VIOLENT SURGE OF WATER HITS THEM.
He yanks her, his grip firm and desperate.
She cries in pain.

ISLA (CONT'D)
You're hurting me!

He spots the entrance. Laser focused on it.

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

They stand by the door frame.
Wouter peeks his head out, checks around, nervous--
The open water is eerily calm.

WOUTER
(to himself)
They're not supposed to be here.

Isla lets out a small gasp.

ISLA
You mean, it's a--

He cuts her off before she can finish.

WOUTER
--We're gonna go up fast.

ISLA
Wait, what about the bends?

He doesn't answer. Leads her out by the hand.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

They swim fast into the sunlit beam, their surrounding calm
and serene, until--

THE UPPER BODY OF PONY-TAILED MAN DRIFT IN THEIR PATH, HIS
INSIDES TRAILING IN A GRUESOME WEIGHTLESS DISPLAY.

WOUTER
Fuck!

MAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Alert! Rapid change in
pressure!

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Alert! Rapid Change in
pressure!

ISLA
Wouter--

WOUTER
--Brace yourself!

He's making a run for it, when--

THE SHARK LUNGES AT HIM, JAWS SNAPPING OPEN TO REVEAL
GLISTENING AND RAZOR-SHARP TEETH.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
NEUKEN!

THE SHARK SINKS HIS TEETH INTO HIS TORSO.

Wouter SCREAMS in agonizing pain, his voice raw and filled
with despair.

WOUTER (CONT'D)
ARGH!

Isla tries to escape, but he won't let her go.

The SOUND OF THRASHING fills the air as the shark shakes his
head, tearing into Wouter's flesh with ferocity.

BLOOD CLOUDS THE WATER, stark against the clear blue.

Wouter fumbles to pull his DIVING KNIFE out. Gets it. STAB-
STAB-STABS the shark's body--utterly useless.

He raises a weak trembling arm in a last-ditch effort...

STAB! CRUNCH!

THE KNIFE PLUNGES INTO ONE OF THE SHARK'S EYES.

*From there on, the shark will always be seen with the knife
in his eye.*

The animal redoubles its fury, hastening Wouter's fate.

Wouter takes a last look at Isla...

IN ISLA'S TERRIFIED TEARY EYES--Wouter's sorry eyes...

She gets yanked forward violently, dragged for a moment,
before it stops, leaving her adrift in the open water...

THE NOISE OF WOUTER'S BUBBLES rescinds, until all she hears is the HAMMERING OF HER OWN HEART...

Blood slowly creeps toward her... Eventually envelops her whole body...

She lifts her hand to her face in the crimson water...

SHE IS STILL CLUTCHING WOUTER'S SEVERED HAND.

She gags. Drops it in disgust and agony.

What. The. Fuck.

EXT. RESORT ROOM - DAY

Markus, carrying a backpack and diving gear, KNOCKS on Isla's door with a yawn.

No answer.

Another louder KNOCK.

MARKUS

Wake up, Ms. Sleepyhead.

Still nothing.

He tries the door handle--locked.

He frowns. Unusual.

He pats his pockets. Pulls out an OLD-SCHOOL FLIP PHONE--

The notification light blinks.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

Isla floats still, petrified, in shock. Pale as a ghost.

Her mind screams at her to move, but fear pins her in place.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Oxygen level: 50%

It jolts up to life. Her whole body shakes.

ISLA

Shit...

The shipwreck CREAKS an eerie, mournful sound... She knows--

THE MONSTER IS CIRCLING BACK.

Quick! She swims up with frantic speed like an underwater Duracell Bunny toward the light she faintly distinguishes--

... Up...

Her EARS RING...

..... Up...

She stretches a hopeful hand toward the surface, so close, yet impossibly far, when--

A THUNDEROUS SPLASH SHATTERS THE SILENCE.

The sub plunges into the water, sending shock waves rippling through the depths.

The force of its entry spins her in a dizzying loop, like a wild waterslide. She tumbles helplessly downward.

POV ISLA

A swirling kaleidoscopic blur of light and color...

Streaks of distorted brilliance weave together, spin faster and faster...

THE DEAFENING SOUND OF RUSHING BUBBLES...

END POV

She tries to regain control...

..... Down...

She slows down...

... Down...

She stabilizes. Blinks wildly as she gets her bearings.

Her hand shoots to her leg. Fumbles for her DIVING KNIFE.

She grips it tightly, even though she knows how futile it is. Stays still, every muscle taut, straining to listen.

An eerie silence...

Shattered by A BURST OF STATIC.

CARO (O.S.)

Allo?

Isla lets out a JOYFUL SOB.

ISLA
Yes! Yes! I'm here! Please, help me
get out of here!

A glint of hope sparkles in her eyes.

EXT. SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

The beam of the vehicle's spotlight sweeps the water...

FRED (O.S.)
There!

The spotlight goes back. Stops on Isla waving her arms.

CARO (O.S.)
OK, we have eyes on you. Where's--

THUMP! WOUTER'S LEG HITS THE SUB COCKPIT WINDOW.

CARO (O.S.) (CONT'D) FRED (O.S.)
Shit! Fuck!

ISLA
Did you see him?

The severed leg moves on in a trail of blood.

Fred gags.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

Isla hovers in the spotlight beam from the sub, suspended in the eerie glow.

The water around her is calm, unnervingly still...

Until it isn't anymore, and--

Sudden ripples break, wild and erratic. They spread around her like a warning.

She realizes the shark is near, the weight of his body cutting through the water just beyond her reach.

ISLA
PLEASE, COME QUI--

A GUST OF CURRENT SLAMS INTO HER AS THE SHARK BRUSHES AGAINST HER SIDE.

She drops the knife on impact--it falls into the abyss, disappearing with the beast.

The vicious m-fucker is testing her.

CARO (O.S.)

What the fuck is a shark doing here?

FRED (O.S.)

They're not supposed to be swimming at this depth--the data doesn't back that up.

ISLA

Fuck your science fair--come get me right now!

CARO (O.S.)

On our way. But we need to move slowly to avoid drawing his attention. We have electric shark deterrents, but I'm not sure they will do much against one that size...

An AUDIBLE GULP on Isla's end.

The sub starts its descent into the depths.

Above, ROLLING THUNDER GROWLS, a distant but ominous reminder of the storm brewing overhead.

ISLA

What's that sound? Is that him again?

A SKIN-SLAP is heard from the sub.

FRED (O.S.)

Of course! He must have sensed the barometric pressure changes through his lateral line system!

ISLA

(totally lost)
What?

FRED (O.S.)

Sharks have a network of sensory cells along their body that detect pressure changes in the water.

(MORE)

FRED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The storm must have triggered it,
 and he probably tried to escape,
 ending up here by accident.

ISLA
STORM? But you said we were safe
 from it!

FRED'S CLEARING IS THROAT is heard from the sub.

FRED (O.S.)
 Must be a bug in the AI software.
 I'll definitely report it to the
 developers.

Isla scoffs, incredulous, can't believe what she hears.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

Caro and Fred's eyes are fixated on Isla. They make slow
 progress towards her.

SUDDENLY THROUGH THE COCKPIT--

THE SHARK SURGES TOWARD THEM, JAWS OPEN WIDE AND TEETH BARED.

CARO
 Mother of...

Fred stands frozen, mesmerized by the sight.

Caro shakes him by the arm.

CARO (CONT'D)
 Turn, Fred, turn!

Fred comes to. Jerks the joystick hard to the left, a bit too
 late--

THE SHARK'S TEETH IMPALE THE WINDOW, SCRAPING AND PRESSING
 AGAINST IT, HIS GAPING MAW FULLY EXPOSED.

All they see now are the shark's rough gums, his spongy
 tongue, and his throat narrowing into a slick dark tunnel.

CARO (CONT'D)
 You're certain your hyper-strong
 acrylic polymer will withstand
 this?

FRED
 It's-it's French cutting-edge...

He swallows a lump in his throat, not so sure.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

The shark thrashes the sub in his jaws like a toy, sending powerful ripples through the water.

Isla feels each one reverberate around her.

ISLA
Watch out, he's here!

EXT./INT. SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

The sub rocks violently, shaking Caro and Fred like dolls inside a snow globe.

FRED
No shit, Sherlock!

CRACK!

Caro's eyes widen as she spots a JAGGED FRACTURE SPIDERING ACROSS THE GLASS--pressure from the shark's powerful bite.

CARO
(urgent)
Fred, the ESD--now!

Fred fumbles to lift the cover of the ESD switch.

His hands shake as he finally gets it open.

But just as he reaches the switch, a violent jolt sends his hand flying away.

CRACK!

THE FRACTURE DEEPENS--the glass splinters like ice under heavy weight.

ISLA (O.S.)
(desperate)
Caro, do you copy?

The shark's teeth grind against the sub's window with a SICKENING SCRAPE.

Fred steadies himself, tries to flip the switch again...

His trembling fingers reach for the switch...CLICK! Success.

AN ELECTRIC FIELD FLICKERS TO LIFE AROUND THE SUB, shimmering with a low, ominous BUZZ.

The shark freezes... His good eye dilates, as he senses the growing pulse of electricity...

CRACK!

Another splinter--the window's integrity hangs by a thread...

TINY RIPPLES RADIATE OUTWARD, JOINED BY BUBBLES DANCING ALONG SHIMMERING LINES OF ENERGY...

The shark jerks... Recoils as the field intensifies. Its massive body twitches, clearly in pain.

Caro clutches Fred's hand, her eyes shut tight.

CARO
(muttering)
Please...

Fred is transfixed, unable to look away from the beast. Sweat trickles down his temple.

The shark's pectoral fin flicks...

CRACK!

Fred's gaze darts nervously to the spreading cracks, now dangerously fragile...

ISLA (O.S.)
(pleading)
Fred, Caro, do you copy?

Then, the shark jerks violently and retreats fast, his hulking form disappearing into the shadowy depths.

Fred exhales sharply, relieved. Squeezes Caro's hand.

She opens her eyes. Stares at A BROKEN TOOTH EMBEDDED IN THE WINDOW, a souvenir left behind by the shark.

Tears stream down her cheeks.

Fred reaches for the tooth with a trembling finger. He brushed its sharp edge. Shivers.

He then traces the crack, feeling the HUMID MIST OF SEAWATER LEAKING THROUGH. Glances at Caro--not good.

Caro's face crumples as she pleads silently.

He points at the crack. Then at her. Then himself. Then Isla. Finally makes a slow, deliberate cut-throat gesture.

The message could not be clearer...

Caro chokes back a sob.

ISLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
Please... Tell me you copy...

FRED
(steady but grim)
We're here, Isla.

Isla cries out with relief.

FRED (CONT'D)
We have bad news and..."good" news,
so to speak. The bad news is, the
shark has badly damaged the sub's
window.

Isla SOBS intensifies.

ISLA (O.S.)
What's the "good" news?

FRED
We can patch it on the boat.

ISLA (O.S.)
Wait, no! You can't just leave me
here--if he doesn't kill me, the
lack of oxygen sure will!

FRED
How much do you think you have left
in your tank?

Isla chokes back a sob.

ISLA (O.S.)
Thirty minutes, maybe?...

FRED
That should be enough time.

Caro glances at Fred. He nods at her, confident.

Isla lets out a CRY.

Caro wipes her tears with the back of her hand. Addresses Isla with a quivering yet gentle voice.

CARO

Isla, I'm sorry, but we don't have a choice. It's either this, or we all die. We'll be fast--I promise.

She adjusts the sub's spotlight, sweeping it across the seafloor until it lands on the ship's entrance.

CARO (CONT'D)

We'll guide you to the ship's entrance so you can get inside for shelter. Lets hurry--the ESD effects won't last forever.

A heavy silence lingers.

ISLA (O.S.)

(through sobs)

Okay...

Fred jerks his knee, scanning the water with nervous urgency.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

Isla hovers in place, awaiting instructions.

CARO (O.S.)

(calm but urgent)

Turn slightly to your right.

Isla summons every ounce of strength to move.

CARO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Stop. Now swim down, slowly.

Isla begins to swim downward, each movement slow and deliberate, her legs kicking with careful precision.

CARO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Slower.

Isla complies, her body trembling with every inch she descends, her breath shallow and ragged.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

Caro swivels the spotlight, scanning the darkness for any sign of the shark.

Fred's knee jerking intensifies.

No sign of the beast.

Caro redirects the light back toward Isla--she's almost at the entrance.

CARO
You're almost there.

RIGHT THEN, THE SHARK GLIDES INTO THE BEAM OF LIGHT, HIS BODY SLICING THROUGH THE WATER, HIS GOOD EYE LOCKING ONTO THE SUB.

FRED
FUCK!

His entire body jerks in shock.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

Isla freezes, her body tense.

ISLA
He's here, isn't he?

CARO (O.S.)
Just...don't move.

Isla's eyes flicker nervously, her voice trembling as she whispers her next question.

ISLA
Can his lateral line feel my fear?

CARO (O.S.)
Feel your...fear?

ISLA
I can feel people's hearts race
when they're scared and close by.
Can he sense that, too?

The deafening sound of her own heart pounding pulses in her ears--BUBAM! BUBAM! BUBAM!

INT. SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

Fred frowns, giving the question a scientific consideration.

FRED
That's an interesting question...

Caro shoots him a sharp, pointed look. He quickly catches himself. Answers, stumbling over his words.

FRED (CONT'D)

Huh, I...I don't think so? It's too subtle for them... I think?

He glances at Caro, shrugs--"I have no idea".

Caro swivels the spotlight back over Isla.

CARO

He's not around right now anyway,
so go for it.

Isla resumes her slow descent. She moves with careful precision under the watchful eyes of the scientists.

CARO (CONT'D)

(to herself)

She's going to make it...

RIGHT THEN, THE OCTOPUS FROM EARLIER SLAMS AGAINST THE SUB WINDOW, ITS TENTACLES WRITHING, BLOCKING MOST OF THE VIEW.

FRED

Jesus!

ISLA (O.S.)

(alarmed)

Is it him?

FRED

No, but a freaking cephalopod decided to make a pit stop on our window!

ISLA (O.S.)

(confused)

Huh?

CARO

An octopus is latching onto the cockpit and is obstructing our view.

ISLA (O.S.)

Should I keep going?

Caro leans in, peers through a small uncovered area of the window, cranes her neck to scan.

CARO

Yes.

Her voice cracks slightly. She swallows it down, doing her best to remain calm.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

Isla swims with slow and deliberate movements, until ANOTHER RUSH OF WATER slams into her and pushes her off course.

ISLA
He's back!

Her instinct kicks in--she shifts to high gear, kicks hard and swims with everything she has left.

In her haste, she collides with the ship's frame, and scrapes along it.

She reaches the entrance, recognizes the jagged edge. A wave of relief washes over her, but just as she slips inside--

THE SHARK SURGES FROM THE SHADOWS, WHACKING HER ASIDE WITH A BRUTAL STRIKE OF HIS NOSE.

Her body slams hard against the door frame. Her shoulder tears against the sharp edge.

ISLA (CONT'D)
OWWW!

Her face contorts as pain flares through her BLOODY SHOULDER.

Her breath comes in shallow, frantic gasps.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 35%.

CARO (O.S.)
(frantic, worried)
Isla, are you okay?

ISLA
(sarcastic)
What do you think?

She squeezes her eyes shut, tries to block out the pain. Her chest heaves with every ragged breath.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

Caro leans in to peer through the small uncovered window. Her eyes scan the dark waters in search of Isla.

CARO
I can't see her.

FRED
But do you see him?

As if on cue, the octopus unlatches itself from the window and glides away, its body twisting in the water.

FRED (CONT'D)
Finally!

But as it swims off, it EJECTS A CLOUD OF BLACK INK that obscures their view completely again.

Fred lets out a frustrated grunt.

FRED (CONT'D)
Damn ocean!

Caro squints into the swirling ink-black water. Her eyes dart frantically as she tries to locate Isla again.

ISLA (O.S.)
What's happening?

CARO
We keep losing sight.

ISLA (O.S.)
Welcome to the club.

She lets out a nervous laughter, followed by Fred's, then Caro's, as the tension breaks for a much-needed moment.

The ink finally begins to dissipate.

CARO
Okay, we're back on.

She swings the spotlight quickly over the water to Isla.

CARO (CONT'D)
The entrance is just on your left.

ISLA (O.S.)
Roger that.

Isla begins her journey.

Caro and Fred both lean back in sync, and release a collective sigh of relief.

But the respite is short-lived--A VIOLENT WHACK shakes them.

They grip the sides of the sub, brace themselves.

ANOTHER WHACK.

The shark swims in front of them, with what looks like a smirk on his face. He enjoys the torment.

FRED
(through gritted teeth)
We're his fucking playthings.

With renewed energy and resolve, Fred switches on the engine.

FRED (CONT'D)
We have to leave now!

Caro checks on Isla--she enters the ship.

ISLA (O.S.)
I'm in! Hurry, please!

CARO
We will. In the meantime, control your breathing to save oxygen.

ISLA (O.S.)
You mean, try to stay alive...

Fred slams the throttle forward to engage the engine at full speed.

The sub jerks forward, pushing against the water's pressure.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

The sub ascends, slow and steady...

BASH!

THE SHARK SLAMS INTO THE VEHICLE WITH BRUTAL FORCE.

The sub lurches, tumbles violently down. Lights flash in a chaotic strobe, EMERGENCY ALARMS BLARE.

FRED (O.S.)
SHIT!

The sub shudders violently. Its metal hull groans under the immense pressure as it spirals downward uncontrollably.

ISLA (O.S.)
(panicked)
What's going on?!

The BEEPING intensifies, it sounds like a countdown to disaster.

CARO (O.S.)
Fred! Do something!

FRED (O.S.)
It's not responding! Son of a--

The sub plunges closer and closer to the ocean floor...

Isla carefully peers her head out of the ship's entrance...
REFLECTED IN THE GLOSSY SURFACE OF HER MASK--

THE SUB CRASHES VIOLENTLY ONTO THE OCEAN FLOOR AND--
EXPLODES!

A burst of blinding light erupts from the impact, followed by a DEAFENING BLAST.

The force of the explosion sends SHOCK WAVES through the ocean that shake Isla.

Sand and sediment churn in a thick, swirling fog of debris that clouds everything in a haze...

Tears begin to roll down Isla's face...

She backs away into the wreck, disappears into it just as...

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

The SHARK'S NOSE brushes past the door frame...

Then his JAGGED TEETH follow...

Then his EYE WITH THE KNIFE...

Then his GLISTENING BODY...

Finally, his TAIL...

INT. BAR - DAY

Famke wipes down the counter half-heartedly in a motion she's done a thousand times before.

Markus bursts in, scanning the room like a madman.

Famke doesn't look up, unbothered by the outburst, seen it all before.

FAMKE

We're not open yet, dude. Maybe go grab some breakfast first?

MARKUS

I'm looking for my niece. I was with her last here.

He gestures toward the table by the window, his face a mix of frustration and worry.

Outside the window, DARK CLOUDS SWIRL OMINOUSLY OVER THE HORIZON.

Famke pauses, squints at Markus.

FAMKE

Oh, her... Yeah, she got caught in Wouter's net, they talked till closing.

Markus clenches his hands into fists.

MARKUS

Any idea where they might've gone?

Famke's eyes flicker to the diving gear over his shoulder.

FAMKE

She dives, your niece?

MARKUS

Yes. Even though she's blind.

Famke's eyes widen at the revelation. She stumbles slightly, as if the weight of his words hits her harder than expected.

Her gaze quickly darts away in an attempt to hide the shame that flickers across her face.

FAMKE

Knowing him, he probably pulled the Fishermen's Grave card on her.

Markus stares at her, confused.

FAMKE (CONT'D)

It's a shipwreck about 25 miles off the coast.

Markus nods thanks, promptly wheels around to leave.

MARKUS

I have to tell the Police.

FAMKE

They won't help, what with the storm coming. They even paused the search for the missing man.

Markus freezes. Panic surges in his eyes.

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

Isla floats, her face drained of all energy, a ghost of herself.

ISLA

Nobody's coming to my rescue... I'm on my own...

She freezes in thought, the only sound being the steady, somehow soothing hiss of air cycling through her regulator.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Oxygen level: 20%

She comes back to herself. Takes a slow, deep breath.

ISLA

What would Uncle Markus do?

She frowns, thinking... Sighs, returning empty-handed.

ISLA (CONT'D)

I know he wouldn't just sit here doing nothing, that's for sure.

She begins to move, guided by a glimmer of that same strength Uncle Markus would insist on.

INT. SHIPWRECK CREW'S QUARTERS - DAY

Isla feels around for something--anything--that may be of help.

Her fingers graze the beams, snag on something rough--a rusted metal hook with something dangling from it.

She runs her fingers down over it--a cracked wooden handle... A rusted blade streaked with green algae...

A LARGE WEATHERED KNIFE.

She smiles a hopeful smile at the find. Carefully slides it into the sheath of her old knife.

She moves on further into the room. Bangs her ankle on something hard.

ISLA

Ow!

She kneels to investigate--an OPEN WOODEN CRATE.

Her hand digs inside. She pulls PONY-TAILED MAN'S CRUSHED BEER CAN.

ISLA (CONT'D)

So much for respecting the sanctity of this place.

She's ready to toss it back, pauses.

She pockets it, the futile gesture anchoring her with a fleeting sense of purpose.

INT. SHIPWRECK CAPTAIN CABIN - DAY

Isla rummages through the desk. Pauses as she finds something. Pulls it out--

A HUMAN SKULL.

As she begins to run a finger along its contours, a SPIDER CRAB emerges from an eye socket, creeps up her arm, and settles atop her head, unnoticed.

She feels the pitted and worn bone, the eye sockets, the jagged teeth. Gasps realizing what she holds, drops it.

ISLA

Jesus!

The spider crab, startled, scuttles across her visor--its TAP-TAP-TAP echo sharply.

Isla jerks her head, frantic, to shake it loose.

The crab tumbles to the floor. Scurries back into the skull.

Isla takes a breath. Resumes her search.

Her fingers brush against SOMETHING UNSEEN. Her breath catches as her mind races to identify it.

Her eyes widen and she lets out a short, hopeful gasp--could it be...?

She pulls the find free--AN OLD FLARE GUN, the weapon heavy in her grip.

She runs her fingers along the metal frame, anticipation rising as the rough texture of rust and calcified layers meets her touch.

Her hand moves to the barrel--she grunts, the obstruction of sediment palpable beneath her fingers.

With a steady push, she forces a finger in, working to clear the blockage. After a moment of effort, she succeeds.

She places a tentative finger on the trigger. Looks skyward.

ISLA (CONT'D)

I don't believe in miracles, but
hey, here's your shot--no pun
intended.

She winces as she slowly squeezes the trigger...

CLICK! A dry mechanism, but functional.

Hope flickers in her eyes.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Flares.

Desperation fuels her as she tears through the desk.

Nothing.

She moves to the room, scares shadows of fish darting away.

Crawls under a collapsed shelf. Reaches into the darkness.

BENEATH THE SHELF, TWO BEAD-LIKE EYES GLEAM AND BLINK.

Her hand brushes against something smooth. She stops, assesses... Then THE EYES LUNGE--

AN ELECTRIC EEL BITES DOWN ON HER HAND.

She screams as a powerful jolt surges through her. Her head snaps back against the shelf above--BANG!

She scrambles out just as the eel lunges again and narrowly misses her.

She clutches her bitten hand against her opposite armpit and cradles her throbbing head with her good hand.

ISLA (CONT'D)
(exasperated)
This isn't supposed to happen down
here!

She raises her bitten hand--it hangs limp and useless. Her eyes squeeze shut. She trembles on the edge of breaking down.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 15%

Isla exhales. Steels herself. Back on.

She moves her good hand cautiously along the standing shelves.

Her fingers find something, hesitate, drag it toward her.

A CORRODED MUSIC BOX, its intricate engravings obscured by salt crust and algae.

She considers it, fears another lurking creature...

She goes for it, flips it open and pulls her hand back fast-- a TINY CRAB scrambles out and vanishes into the murk.

Inside the music box, the mechanism is clogged with grime, gears fused together, and the tattered lining barely intact.

Yet, impossibly, A FAINT LULLABY BEGINS TO PLAY.

Haunting, broken notes echo softly.

Isla gasps, frozen, as the melody weaves through the oppressive quiet.

For a moment, she is elsewhere, far from this nightmare.

Then the music fades and stops.

Tears well in Isla's eyes.

Desperation, exhaustion, and hopelessness pour out. Her shoulders shake as she cries.

She instinctively reaches to wipe her face--TAP! Her hand hits her visor. She snorts bitterly at the foolishness of her gesture.

She closes the box. Resumes searching the shelf until...

She finds it--A FLARE.

She clutches it tightly, as if it were a holy relic.

She loads it careful into the gun her hands shaking...It slips, nearly falls, she catches it just as.

She pauses, breathes deeply, steadies herself, tries again... The flare slides into place this time--CLICK!

She hugs the loaded gun to her chest, her jaw tight, her gaze sharp with unyielding determination.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Markus sprints, panic etched across his face.

Behind him, palm trees bend and sway under the gathering strength of the wind.

He passes the yacht where the pony-tailed man fell--blood stains its hull.

He skids to a stop at the *Safe Haven* boat he and Isla used.

A LOCAL MAN (45) and HIS SON (13) wrestle a tarp to secure it into place.

Markus pulls out a few HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS from his pocket.

MARKUS

Hey, man, I need your boat again!

The Local glances at the bills, then at the storm on the horizon. Shakes his head no, firm.

Desperation cracks Markus' voice.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

Please! My niece is out there--I have to find her.

He pleads with his eyes, motions toward the man's son--"You should understand."

The Local hesitates. Catches his son looking up at him with wide, expectant eyes.

A beat.

The Local exhales, nods a reluctant but understanding yes.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He offers the money, but the Local refuses it. They exchange a knowing glance.

Markus dives in to help remove the tarp, fighting the wind.

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

Isla BANGS her fist against the ship's wall.

Nothing.

She slams it again, harder.

Still nothing.

ISLA

Come on!

As if summoned, the water shifts around her, and A SHADOW FLICKERS IN THE CORNER OF HER VISOR.

She takes a big breath.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Here we go...

She swims through the doorway, EXPOSING HERSELF FULLY, every muscle taut with anticipation.

The water churns violently to her right, nearly throwing her off balance.

She whirls, the flare gun aimed straight at--

THE SHARK HEADING STRAIGHT FOR HER.

She squeezes the trigger--CLICK!

The gun fires with a muted pop, releases a burst of red-hot light that illuminates the predator in his monstrous glory.

But then, the flare sputters... Falls... And thuds unceremoniously onto the ocean bed.

Isla blinks, horrified. Of course, the flare was too old.

The shark lunges.

She kicks hard, propels herself toward the ship's entrance, every stroke fueled by desperation.

The water surges, drags her back.

THE SHARK IS AT HER HEELS.

She's almost there.

HE OPENS HIS JAW.

She fights the current to reach the ship's entrance, but the pull drags her toward the beast's gaping maw instead.

She knows she has to change course to survive--with a swift flip, she dives, narrowly evading the shark's snapping jaws.

The shark twists to follow her, but it's too slow, and it slams into the ship's doorway with a sickening THUNK.

The impact drives the rusted knife deeper into its eye, the blade burying itself fully.

He jerks violently, thrashes his tail in a frenzied rhythm of pain and rage.

Isla reaches the kelp forest, grasps at the slippery ribbons to pull herself into the tangled sanctuary.

The strands resist her grip, writhing like they have a will of their own.

As her fingers finally lock onto a thick bundle, the shark recovers, and his shadow grows larger as it closes in.

She yanks herself downward, vanishing into the forest just as the beast lunges.

She crouches low beneath the kelp canopy, gripping the strands tightly and holding her breath.

Above her, the shark hovers, scanning the swaying forest with a cold, predatory stillness.

Isla's face turns blue, can't hold it anymore, breathes--

A SINGLE AIR BUBBLE ESCAPES HER MASK.

Drifts upward...

Breaks the surface of the kelp...

Crosses path with the octopus from before...

The octopus stops, its eyes follow the bubbles, when--

THE SHARK SURGES AND SWALLOWS IT WHOLE, and retreats into the abyss.

Isla feels the water settle. Exhales shakily, relief washing over her.

She moves to swim upward, but something pulls her back--

Kelp.

The strands have coiled around her arm, leg, torso, and they wind tighter with every tug.

She struggles, panicked--but the more she fights, the more the strands constrict.

She pauses, thinks.

Her fingers carefully feel along her leg, until they find the handle of the old knife she picked up on the ship.

She pulls it, almost drops it. Grabs it tight.

She starts to cut the strand around her leg with slow, deliberate movements. The dull blade meets strong resistance.

ISLA (CONT'D)
(through clenched teeth)
Come on...

Finally, the strand snaps.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Yes!

Then another. And another.

One last pull, and she's free.

She swims upward carefully to avoid the snaring ribbons, breaks free of the forest.

She floats above it, needs a moment to assess.

ISLA (CONT'D)
The ship's entrance must be close
by, but in what direction?

She hesitates, her breath quickening as she doesn't have all the time in the world.

She settles on left. Swims fast for a while. Stops.

ISLA (CONT'D)
No, it wasn't that far.

She doubles back, moves faster, her movements jerky with frustration. Water ripples ahead. Her heart stops.

The ripples grow stronger--SOMETHING BIG CHARGES TOWARD HER.

Her hand instinctively shoots to the slippery kelp.

POV ISLA

A BLURRED MASS APPROACHES FAST.

END POV

She doesn't manage to pull herself in the kelp, shuts her eyes bracing for impact--

A SEA TURTLE SWIMS PAST HER IN A RUSH, VANISHES INTO THE DEPTHS.

Isla opens her eyes, stunned to still be alive.

She quickly comes to, powers toward the ship.

THUMP! She slams into its hull, glides along it until she reaches the entrance. Scrambles inside.

Safe, at last, even if for temporarily...

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

Isla heaves, then a nervous laugh escapes her lips, relief bubbling up.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 10%.

Her laughter dies instantly.

INT. MOTORBOAT - DAY

Markus grips the wheel of the motorboat, his knuckles white as he scans the churning waves for any sign of Isla.

The ocean heaves beneath him and the WIND HOWLS around him, slamming salty spray into his face.

In the sky, dark clouds gather like a bruise spreading.

MARKUS
Come on, Isla, where are you?

He squints, heart pounding, as each passing moment ratchet his fear tighter.

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

A FAINT, MUFFLED NOISE echoes from deep within the shipwreck.

Isla freezes, turns toward the source.

TWO BLURRY FIGURES glide in the murky water with eerie, deliberate grace.

She squints hard to try to make sense of what they are.

Wait... OTHER DIVERS?

Hope flickers across her face, mingled with nervous anticipation.

ISLA
Hey! Over here!

She waves frantically, and swims without hesitation toward them, her movements fueled by excitement.

As she glides unconcerned through a school of fish, they scatter around her in a frenzied swirl.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CONTINUOUS

Isla's hand stretches eagerly, brushes against AN ARM.

Her face lights up with joy.

ISLA
I'm so happy to find you, you have
no idea!

Her expression then falters and shifts with sudden gravity.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Listen--there's a big fucking shark
roaming around.

She waits for a response. Silence. Her frown deepens, until she scoffs as a realization dawns on her.

ISLA (CONT'D)
You don't have masks with a voice
system--duh!

She makes the shark hand gesture she showed Wouter earlier.

They still don't react.

Isla repeats the motion, frustrated.

Still nothing from them.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 You're really not getting it?

She gropes for the person's hand. Her brow furrows as something feels...off...

She slowly raises her hand to touch their face, a sense of dread growing...

She grimaces at the touch...

REVEAL--

HER HAND RESTS ON A FACE CHARRED BEYOND RECOGNITION--

BLISTERS, EXPOSED TISSUE, SWOLLEN EYES BARELY VISIBLE, SCORCHED LIPS, THE NOSE A MISSHAPEN LUMP WITH A RING IN IT.

It's CARO. She holds hands with Fred, in the same state.

Isla's mouth opens, but no sound comes out.

Her face pales as she shakes her head, unable to process.

She gags, retches--

THICK, MURKY VOMIT FLOODS THE MASK AND SURGES OUT IN BURSTS THROUGH THE EXHAUST VALVE.

It clouds the water in nauseating trails.

Isla recoils, slams her head hard against a beam--BAM!

One of her pupils dilates dramatically under the shock.

BLACKNESS.

SILENCE.

THREE FIGURES, a short one flanked by two elongated ones, walk forward in a BLUR OF MOTION...

Behind them, ILLEGIBLE RED LETTERING...

The scene comes slowly into focus...

A CHILD (9) clasps an adult's hand on either side, her head bobbing gently with the rhythm of walking.

The red lettering finally reads *HOSPITAL*.

THE CHILD'S EYES ARE CONCEALED BENEATH BANDAGES, AND AN ADHESIVE STRIP CROSSES HER FOREHEAD--

It's Isla with her parents, MORGAN (35) and GREG (38), who remain UNSEEN.

Beneath each bandage is a dried river of tears, a testament to heavy crying. Her bottom lip still quivers from it.

MORGAN (O.S.)

Dr Verra thinks you're doing great,
honey. Isn't that good news?

Isla halts. The quivering of her lip intensifies. She cries.

An AUDIBLE SAD SIGH from Morgan.

Greg crouches to be at Isla's level. Places his hands on her shoulders. Speaks with a warm and steady voice.

GREG (O.S.)

I know things feel really hard
right now, Doodlebug. And it's okay
to be upset about it. This... It's
a fucking big change.

Isla can't help but stifle a small, bittersweet laugh as she hears her father swear.

MORGAN (O.S.)

Greg!

GREG (O.S.)

She deserves to hear the truth,
Morgan--she's a big girl now.

He squeezes her daughter's shoulders gently.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Listen to me-it doesn't mean the
end of everything, you're still
that incredible, strong and brave
girl you've always been.

Isla remains unmoved by her father's attempt to comfort her.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Remember the lyrics to that song I
play that you hate--"There is a
crack, a crack, in everything"...

He pauses, baiting her to complete the lyrics.

She stares down at her feet sheepishly.

MORGAN (O.S.)
I don't think now's the time for
karaoke, Greg.

Isla raises her face.

ISLA
(in between sobs)
"That's how the light gets in."

GREG (O.S.)
Attagirl. You know why they're
great lyrics?

Isla shakes her head no.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Because it's true.

Isla's crying subsides a bit.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
When you were just that tall--

He places his hand midway ON her body to specify a height.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
--you used to climb that big tree
in the garden, always reaching for
the highest branch, no matter how
impossible it seemed.

MORGAN (O.S.)
I hated it when you did that. You
could have seriously hurt yourself.

Isla frowns trying to remember.

GREG (O.S.)
What's happening to you now is like
that-another climb, the toughest
you'll ever take. And your mom and
I, we know you've got what it takes
to reach the top again.

Isla's crying subsides more.

SOUND OF MORGAN STIFLING A SOB.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You will have to learn new ways of
doing things, and I'm not gonna
lie, it won't be easy.

(MORE)

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Hell, it'll be fucking hard. But
 you're a tough cookie, not the kind
 that--

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D) ISLA
 --crumbles. --crumbles.

Isla sniffles.

SOUND OF MORGAN CRYING.

Isla wipes her nose on her sleeve.

SOUNDS OF MORGAN BLOWING NOSE IN A TISSUE.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Can...can we go back swimming in
 Lake Michigan after they remove the
 bandages, Dad?

GREG (O.S.)
 You bet.

Greg gently ruffles her hair.

SHUFFLING NOISES.

Greg's hands put AN ADULT NECKLACE WITH AN ANCHOR PENDANT
 around Isla's neck. It hangs too big on her.

He presses the anchor pendant on her forehead.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Remember, we'll always be there for
 you. You got this, Doodlebug.

He pulls her in for a tight reassuring hug.

A SINGLE TEARDROP lands on her head, a testament to the
 weight of the moment.

BLACKNESS.

SILENCE.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
 Oxygen level: 7%.

Isla comes to gasping for air.

ISLA
 I can figure it out...

She closes her eyes. Swivels her head, listens intently--

CLICKING NOISES from the busy marine life...

LOW-FREQUENCY MOANING from the currents...

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 5%.

FAINT BUBBLING from...

She does a double take. Holds her breath. Her own bubbling fades, but the faint bubbling sound lingers.

She opens her eyes, intrigued.

She moves slowly, meticulously, tracking the sound...

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE (CONT'D)
Oxygen level: 3%.

The sound grows louder, until it's all she hears...

It's just there, close-by...

She extends a hesitant hand, touches SOMETHING...

Her face scrunches as she tries to identify it.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE (CONT'D)
Oxygen level: 1%.

She gasps as she realizes what it is--

A FULL ON DIVING MASK.

Her lips tremble at the thought of whom it belongs.

She runs her trembling fingers along its sides... Reaches the brand name engraved in it... "Reads" it like braille...

She lets out a pained moan realizing whose it is.

ISLA
NO!

She cries.

REVEAL--

WOUTER'S TORN AND MANGLED BODY lays inert, missing an arm, the other one hand-less.

Jagged, deep gashes mark where the shark's teeth shredded through flesh and muscle.

Crabs feast on it, fighting for the best pieces like they are at an all-you-can-eat aquatic buffet.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
OXYGEN DEPLETED! OXYGEN DEPLETED!

Isla can't linger--she kicks into overdrive.

Her heart rate increases as it tries to compensate for the lack of oxygen--BABUMBABUMBABUM!

She feels around Wouter's mask to figure out how to unclip it while maintaining control of the hose and regulator and prevent tangling.

She can't know that his lifeless eyes are locked onto hers.

She finally manages to unclip it.

Her breathing turns rapid and shallow as she struggles to draw in air.

She removes the regulator from her own mask.

The skin around her lips quickly turn blue.

She fumbles switching her regulator out with Wouter's.

Her movements become weak, and her eyes roll backwards.

She GURGLES.

GREG (V.O.)
You've got this, Doodlebug...

She fights off...

A last ditch effort...

CLICK! Success.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 15%.

Isla takes deep, frantic breaths. Her chest rises and falls rapidly. Her whole body shudders.

Gradually, her shallow breathing slows... Her face flushes with color... She blinks rapidly, coming back to life...

INT. MOTORBOAT - DAY

The rain comes down hard, a curtain of water.

Markus strains to see through it, hand to his brow like a visor.

MARKUS
Fucking soaked swim!

His eyes catch movement ahead--he gasps, quints hard...

Harder...

There, barely visible through the downpour...

THE RESEARCH VESSEL.

A surge of hope overtakes him.

He screams, his voice raw, carrying everything he has left.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
ISLA!

The storm is his only answer...until...

A FAINT AND DISTANT SINGLE BARK drifts back to him.

INT. SHIPWRECK - DAY

Isla discards her empty tank. Slides on Wouter's.

ISLA
I have to slow my breathing if I
want the oxygen to last.

She places a hand on her heart--BABUMBABUMBABUM!

She shuts her eyes, takes a deep breath in through her nose--her chest expands.

She holds the breath for a moment, then slowly exhales through her mouth.

Her breathing slows down--BABUM--BABUM--BABUM!

She does it again--BABUM...BABUM...BABUM...

And again--BA...BUM...BA...BUM...BA...BUM...

She opens her eyes, frowns, thinking...

WOUTER (V.O.)

This harpoon was the beating heart
of the ship...

She swims away, determined.

INT. SHIPWRECK DECK - DAY

Isla runs her fingers over the harpoon launcher again.

Her touch finds the jagged tip of the harpoon. The cut on her
finger brushes against it. She pauses.

Her face hardens, determined, jaws clenched.

She presses her wounded finger firmly onto the tip, lets it
sink deep--blood wells up, yet she doesn't flinch.

She nods to herself--"good". Carefully withdraws her finger--
the blood drifts into the water.

She turns her attention to the rope tied to the harpoon.

Her fingers trace its length, go over mold, frayed strands,
brittle fibers... She reaches the end, anchored to the deck.

ISLA

Let's hope it'll hold.

She shifts to the launcher's mechanism.

Her hand grazes flakes of rust and barnacles. She pulls out
her knife, scrapes them away with precision.

She inspects the grip. Tugs gently--locked. Works it back and
forth to loosen it. No luck.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Shit.

She wedges the knife blade into the seams around the grip,
applies light pressure to pry it apart.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Oxygen level: 12%.

Isla grunts, presses harder with impatience.

The knife blade SNAPS.

ISLA

Fuck!

She tries the grip again, desperate.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Please...

Nothing.

ISLA (CONT'D)
"Marvel of precision engineering"
my ass!

She slams her fist against the mechanism in frustration--it jolts, unlocks.

Her eyes widen in disbelief. She clasps her hands in prayer, looks upward.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Thank you!

She begins to saw the rope where it's anchored to the deck with the broken knife, each stroke a struggle, but she pushes through.

Finally, the rope snaps free.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 10%.

Isla glares at the voice.

ISLA
I hate you so much.

She winds the cut rope tightly around her hand. Swims out.

INT. SHIPWRECK ENTRANCE - DAY

Isla hovers by the gaping entrance, the vast, dark waters before her.

She pulls the anchor pendant out from her wetsuit, presses it firmly against her masked forehead.

ISLA
It is so fucking hard...

A nervous giggle slips out, unbidden. She stifles it, her face hardening with resolve.

She steels herself, closes her eyes.

ISLA (CONT'D)

1...

A deep breath fills her lungs.

ISLA (CONT'D)

2...

She exhales slowly.

ISLA (CONT'D)

3!

Her eyes snap open, filled with determination.

She pushes off, exiting the ship with purpose, like a gladiator stepping into the arena, ready to face whatever comes.

INT. OPEN WATERS - DAY

Isla swims out, her movements controlled but tinged with unease.

Fish scatter at her approach, as if they sense her purpose.

The rope tightens, stops her mid-way between the ship and the shimmering surface above.

She hangs there, suspended in the water, exposed and vulnerable--

SHE'S PURPOSEFULLY MAKING HERSELF AN EASY TARGET.

ISLA

This is either a stroke of genius,
or a total catastrophe...

She stills, listens. Her senses sharpen.

HER OWN HEARTBEAT IN HER EARS...

THE PATTERN OF RAIN AT THE SURFACE...

THE RHYTHMIC CLICK AND HISS OF HER REGULATOR...

Her eyes widen as an idea strikes her like lightning.

She presses a hand against her chest, feels the rhythm.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Let's figure out if that fancy
 lateral line of yours can actually
 sense fear...

She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath, steadies herself.

Then, deliberately, she summons the terror...

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Imagine...those teeth tearing into
 you, like they tore into Wouter...

AN IMAGE FLASHES--Wouter's mangled body.

Her heart race...

Her eyelids flutter...

Her breathing quicken...

ISLA (CONT'D)
 He's out there...taking his time,
 playing with you...like he did with
 Caro and Fred...

AN IMAGE FLASHES--Caro and Fred's charred bodies.

Her heart beats harder, faster.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 No goodbyes to your loved ones...

AN IMAGE FLASHES--Markus laugh, the dog wags his tail.

Her heart POUNDS now, until...

ALL SOUND FADES...AND SILENCE TAKES OVER...

Isla blinks--what's happening?

BLOOD FILLS THE INSIDE OF HER MASK--A CRIMSON SPREAD.

Her nose twitches at the scent, her lips curl at the taste.
 Unmistakable--

BLOOD.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Shit! My eardrum ruptured, I didn't
 equalize properly.

Her body trembles. She starts hyperventilating, struggles to
 steady her breath.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 9%.

Isla's trembling hand flies out to scan the water around her, a desperate and futile gesture.

The water shifts on her left. A pulse of movement.

She pivots sharply to it, on high alert, her hand holding the rope on the ready to pull at a moment's notice...

She winces trying to discern if it's him...

POV ISLA - BLURRY AND UNEVEN

A MASSIVE, SHAPELESS BLOB looms in the murky water. It undulates erratically as it approaches...

ISLA
Is that you, son of a bitch?

Her fingers tighten around the rope, giving it a tentative tug.

The blob moves closer, its outline wavering, indistinct...

She hesitates, caught between the urge to fight and to flee.

It draws nearer. She shuts her eyes tightly, pulling the rope again, heart hammering in her chest...

Now it's just feet away...

She CRIES OUT, her grip faltering. The rope slips slightly as she loosens the pull.

END OF POV

A SWARM OF JELLYFISH drifts past her.

Their translucent and glowing bodies pulse in perfect, hypnotic harmony, like an otherworldly aquatic ballet...

Beyond them, Isla's silhouette appears distorted, a mirage through the aquatic veil...

The jellyfish glide onward, and vanish into the void...

Isla opens her eyes, blinks in confusion, lets out a shaky sigh of relief.

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE
Oxygen level: 8%.

She barely registers the warning when another wave of vibrations ripples through the water, stronger this time.

Could it be him again?

The vibrations grow stronger, the water around her trembles.

ISLA
There you are!

The current surges violently... A shadow looms...

THE CREATURE BARRELS TOWARD HER WITH DEADLY INTENT.

She yanks the rope hard. Nothing.

The shark surges toward her, its mouth wide open.

Isla pulls again, desperate. This time, the mechanism triggers--THWIP!

As the shark lunges, jaws inches from her, THE SHIP'S HARPOON SLAMS INTO ITS TAIL WITH BRUTAL FORCE.

The beast thrashes violently in furious agony.

Isla wastes no time--

She releases the rope, kicks hard, and propels herself toward the surface pouring every ounce of strength into her escape.

Behind her, the shark tries to shake free of the harpoon embedded in its tail.

As he writhes, twists and tumbles into the dark depths, the vibrations fade.

Isla slows, lets out a shaky laugh of relief.

ISLA (CONT'D)
It worked!

From above comes a muffled WOOF!

Isla gasps, happy.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Dog!

She stretches her hand toward the surface, almost there, when--

MASSIVE RIPPLES SURROUND HER.

She freezes, confusion on her face.

From the abyss below, THE SHARK ROCKETS TOWARD HER, the harpoon still in its tail, the rope now shredded and tangled-- he had chewed its way free.

ISLA (CONT'D)

FUCK!

She kicks harder, desperation fueling her.

The surface now feels impossibly far.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

WOMAN'S COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Alert! Rapid change in pressure!

She ascends too fast--

THE BENDS HIT HER LIKE A TIDAL WAVE.

Agonizing pain rips through her body. She screams, her muscles lock, her movements falter.

She tumbles downward, spinning into the void.

Above her, the shark closes in, its massive jaws widening to engulf her.

As its teeth near her flesh--FSHHH! CRUNCH!

A BRIGHT ORANGE THREE-PRONG SPEAR HURTLES THROUGH THE WATER, SLAMS INTO THE SHARK'S REMAINING EYE, BLINDING IT.

The beast recoils violently, in pain. Darts away in erratic zigzags, a furious blur into the depths.

Isla continues her descent, unconscious, her body lifeless.

From the haze, AN ARM REACHES OUT AND GRABS HER.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The storm is raging--

Dark clouds blanket the sky and cast an eerie gloom.

Sheets of rain pelt the surface and create a frenzy of ripples that vanish as quickly as they appear.

The waves rise in chaotic peaks, their white crests illuminated by flickers of lightning.

A DEAFENING CRASH OF THUNDER REVERBERATES.

Markus bursts through the surface of the water. Gasps for air, with Isla, unconscious, cradled under his arm.

MARKUS
Stay with me, Isla!

He powers through with all his strength toward the motorboat anchored beside the research vessel.

WOOF! WOOF!

The soaked dog watches them from the research vessel, eager and ready to jump in.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
Don't think about it, dog--I won't
be able to rescue you!

The dog obeys, stills.

Markus reaches the motorboat. Hoists Isla's limp body over the side with a surge of effort.

INT. MOTORBOAT - DAY

Isla's body THUDS on the boat.

The shock jolts her awake--her eyes open, she gasps for air.

She tries to remove her mask. Struggles, panicked.

Markus, exhausted, grips the edge of the boat. Tries desperately to pull himself aboard, while behind him--

A DORSAL FIN EMERGES, THEN DISAPPEARS BACK INTO THE WATER.

Isla still struggles with her mask... Her eyes rolls in the back of her head... She is on the verge of passing out...

Just as Markus is about to hoist himself aboard--

THE SHARK EXPLODES FROM THE WATER BESIDE HIM.

His massive body crashes into Markus with brutal force, sending him hurtling back into the churning ocean.

MARKUS
ARGH!

WOOF! WOOF!

The boat lurches violently under the impact, tipping precariously and sending Isla sliding across the deck.

She SLAMS head first into the opposite side--the mask's visor SHATTERS into pieces--SHARDS OF GLASS EMBED INTO HER BLOODY FACE.

She gasps for fresh air, coughs violently.

The boat tips in the opposite direction now, sending her sliding back across the deck again.

She desperately fumbles for anything to grab onto and halt her descent, finds nothing--

She CRASHES again. CRIES IN PAIN.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The shark slams against the hull, tilting the motorboat violently to one side.

Water gushes over the edge as the boat lurches, its structure groaning under the strain.

The tilt deepens, and within moments--

THE MOTORBOAT BEGINS TO SINK, swallowed inch by inch, by the churning waves.

INT. MOTORBOAT - DAY

Isla inches on her stomach toward the water and the waiting maw below...

She desperately fumbles for something to grab onto...

She is a foot away from her demise...

She manages to brace her fins against THE BOAT'S CLEATS...

She clings hard, nearly slips...

The shark shakes the boat, trying to dislodge her...

He succeeds--she slides further towards his mouth...

She manages to grab onto a cleat with a hand, barely...

The shark's about to close on her...

She closes her eyes knowing she is going to die...

A FIERCE GROWL.

THE DOG LEAPS FROM THE RESEARCH VESSEL RIGHT INTO THE SHARK MOUTH--A SURREAL SIGHT.

ISLA

Dog, no!

A FRENZIED BLUR OF MOTION--

The dog's jaws snap and bite at anything within reach--the tongue, the gum line.

He snarls, his movements wild and relentless.

Its paws claw and scratch furiously.

The shark jerks his head and tail, trying to shake him loose.

Isla struggles to latch onto the edge of the boat's hull, and slides down.

The shark plunges into the water, dragging the dog down with him, just as Isla dives in headfirst.

Blood starts clouding the water--BUT WHOSE?

Isla bursts through the surface, gasping for air.

She grimaces at the taste of blood in her mouth.

She calls out, desperation in her voice.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Uncle Markus? Dog?

The only response she gets are the storm and the RESEARCH VESSEL CREAKING LOUDLY, rocked by the relentless waves.

She swims urgently toward it, cutting through the debris of the motorboat, including a piece with its name *Safe Haven*.

A SLEEK DARK SHAPE HURTLES TOWARD HER WITH DEADLY PRECISION.

The shark's head bursts from the surface, KNIFE AND HARPOON PROTRUDING FROM HIS EYES LIKE TWISTED HORNS OF EVIL.

Isla can feel his ominous vibrations.

She digs, redoubles her effort, SCREAMS a surge of courage that propels her forward.

THUMP! She reaches the research vessel.

She feels for something to climb up...

The sharks is nearing...

She finds the LADDER. Seizes it with all her might, uses her last ounce of strength to climb it furiously. Hard to do with fins, she has to rely on her upper body strength.

The shark slams his head into the research vessel just below her with a DEAFENING THUD.

Isla's grip falters--she slips and slides down the ladder.

Her fingers grasp the rail at the last possible moment.

The shark, stunned and disoriented from the impact, hesitates, only to retreat into the bloodied water.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL STERN - DAY

Isla pulls herself aboard the research vessel, her body shaking from sheer exhaustion.

She collapses onto the deck. Draws her knees tightly to her chest. Shaky breathing.

Safe, at last... But the relief is fleeting, her eyes well up with tears.

ISLA
(whispers)
Uncle Markus... Dog... You took
away what mattered most to me...

She closes her eyes, her face weighted down by grief.

Silence hangs in the air, broken only by the crash of waves...

She winces, her brow furrows--something stirs in her memory...

She opens her eyes wide, remembering--

FRED (V.O.)
Sure, if you enjoy killing marine
wildlife...

Her face shows unshakable resolve--the pity party is over.

She removes her fins. Pushes herself to her feet. Wobbly.

She feels her way to the air gun console.

She searches for the dial with one hand. Locates it. Turns it to level *Max*. written in red.

Her other hand moves swiftly to locate the *Release* button.

She steadies herself, her HEART POUNDING.

She calls out to the ocean, her voice fierce and raw.

ISLA
COME GET ME!

Lightning splits the stormy sky, casting a blinding flash of light over the sea when--

THE SHARK ERUPTS BEFORE HER, HIS BLOOD-SLICKED MOUTH GAPING WIDE.

His injured eyes seem to lock into Isla's--they burn with a frantic, crazed energy teetering on the edge of madness.

ISLA (CONT'D)
DIE, MOTHERFUCKER, DIE!

She slams the *Release* button with all her strength.

A LOUD HISS fills the air as the pressure from the tank surges into the device.

The gun HUMS, RAW AND AGONIZING.

INTENSE VIBRATIONS ripple through the console.

Isla grimaces in utter pain, clutches her ears.

ON SCREEN--A HIGH-AMPLITUDE WAVEFORM oscillates in red, *WARNING* flashing in bold.

THE SEISMIC AIR GUN BLAST TEARS THROUGH THE SHARK'S HEAD, SHATTERING IT IN A BURST OF JAGGED SHARDS OF FLESH AND BONE.

Some pelt Isla.

The shark's mutilated body seems to hang in the air for a second...

ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING ILLUMINATES THE HEADLESS CARCASS BEFORE IT CRASHES BACK INTO THE WATER WITH A SICKENING THUD.

It slowly sinks, vanishing into the blood-tinged depths...

Isla scrambles to find the *Stop* button... Slams it down with one final frantic motion.

The hum and vibrations gradually fade.

She removes her hand from her ears. Focuses her senses to assess whether he is truly gone...

BUBBLY NOISE--

THE SHARK'S EYE PIERCED BY THE KNIFE, AND THE ONE SKEWERED BY THE SPEAR, SURFACE AND FLOAT OMINOUSLY.

The storm subsides...

Isla drops her head, exhausted, numb.

The air is heavy with silence, until--

The eerie, distant HUM OF THE *JAWS* THEME echoes.

She gapes. Turns her head in its direction. Cries tears of relief, as she knows--

ISLA (CONT'D)
Uncle Markus!

Markus barely stays afloat clinging onto the piece of the motorboat with *Safe Haven* on it.

ISLA (CONT'D)
Talk to me!

He sings badly that same lullaby melody she sang when trying the mask with Wouter.

She feels around for a buoy.

ISLA (CONT'D)
You have a terrible voice--you know that, right?

Finds one.

ISLA (CONT'D)
I hated it when you sang it to me at bedtime.

They share a pained chuckle.

She throws the buoy his way.

It lands in his vicinity. Grabs onto it.

She pulls him, tapping into a hidden strength that only love can unlock.

He reaches the research vessel. She helps him climb up.

They embrace, crying.

He cups her face between his hands, stares into her eyes, sighs a deep sigh, equal parts relief and worry--it expresses his emotions better than words ever could.

ISLA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, I never meant for any of this to happen. Thank you for coming--I don't know what I would've done without you.

With a hint of pride in his voice--

MARKUS

Looks like you held your own for a while down there... Your dad was right: you're a strong cookie.

A faint smile tugs at their lips.

SPLASHY NOISE interrupts the moment.

Isla quickly shoves Markus behind her, using her body to shield him from harm.

ISLA

(raging)

There's no fucking way!

Markus cranes his neck to see for himself.

WOOF!

They both gape, incredulous.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Dog! You're alive!

The dog paddles towards them with efforts.

They pull him aboard.

ONE OF HIS EARS IS CHEWED OFF, and his body has a GUSHY WOUND.

The dog eagerly lavishes them with affectionate licks--a most joyful reunion.

MARKUS

You really have to give him a name.

She and the dog's eyes lock in.

ISLA
I think I got one.

A small smile paints her lips.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL - DAY

The storm has passed, leaving behind a clear, cloudless blue sky, as if it had never even occurred.

Markus pilots the research vessel.

Isla and the dog, their wounds bandaged, lie on the deck, letting the warmth of the sun sooth them.

The water around them is serene now, in a way that feels cruel after the nightmare they just endured.

Then, she bolts up with a frown, concerned. Cocks her head to listen intently.

Markus gasps.

MARKUS
That's impossible!

A POD OF DOLPHINS jumps and SQUEALS by the boat.

Markus lets out a relieved chuckle.

Isla relaxes, smiles.

WOOF!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A group of LOCALS AND STRANGERS (DIVERSE) faces the ocean, solemn, united to honor the lives of Caro, Fred, and Wouter.

Famke stands at the front, her shoulders trembling with each quiet sob.

The bar band plays a SOFT BALLAD, the melody drifting through the breeze as waves gently lap against the shore.

Isla stands beside Markus, her arm in a sling. Tears roll down her face, the weight of the tragedy still fresh.

The Local owner of the *Safe Haven* motorboat places THREE PALM LEAVES on the water, holding his son's hand.

Everyone watch as the leaves are gently carried away by the ocean's current...

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

SUPER OVER an overcast day--6 MONTHS LATER

Isla slips into her wetsuit.

She presses the anchor pendant against her forehead. Tucks it beneath the suit.

She struggles to zip up the back, as usual, but instead of persevering this time--

ISLA

Do you think you could give me a hand?

Markus jerks in pretend-surprise.

MARKUS

Are you sure?

She gives him an understanding smile.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

Nothing would please me more.

He zips her up.

MARKUS (CONT'D)

How's the new place?

ISLA

Not much has changed since you last visited...yesterday.

They chuckle. Tender banter, no animosity this time.

ISLA (CONT'D)

How's Sandra?

Markus clears his throat.

MARKUS

We're going on our third date tonight...

ISLA

You know what happens on the third date, right?

She wags her eyebrows.

He blushes, gawks. Before he can speak, ISLA CLASPS HER HANDS SHARPLY.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Alright, everyone, listen up!

She addresses SIX BLIND CHILDREN (DIVERSE), each partnered with A SEEING VOLUNTEER (DIVERSE).

They stand by A LAKE, wearing WETSUITS EMBLAZONED WITH *Bold Laps in New Depths--BLIND*.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Today, you're not just jumping into Lake Michigan--you're diving into confidence, strength, and fun! Swimming is all about feeling it, you don't need to see the water to own it. Every stroke you make shows the world what you're capable of. So, take a deep breath and go make some waves, in and out of the water! And remember, don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it.

She reaches for Markus' hand, confidently grabs it, as if guided by instinct.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 One squeeze--all good.

Markus squeezes her hand once.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 Two squeeze--careful.

Markus squeezes her hand twice.

The volunteers squeeze their kids hands. They're all pumped.

ISLA (CONT'D)
 1...2...3! Last one in the water is a rotten egg!

They rush towards the water, GIGGLING AND LAUGHING.

TAP...TAP...TAP... Raindrops.

Markus looks up to the sky. GRUNTS.

MARKUS

Oh, come on!

He shakes his head defeated. Shuffles towards the water.

Isla pauses for a moment of quiet reflection, her hands into the pockets of her wetsuit.

The wind brushes against her face.

She smiles, proud and happy, when--

The smile turns into a frown, and concern clouds her face.

She pulls something out of her pocket--

THE PONY-TAILED MAN'S SMASHED BEER CAN THAT SHE PICKED UP AT THE SHIPWRECK.

She shudders, remembering. Tosses it by the group's bags.

She then addresses someone by her side.

ISLA

Ready, Doodlebug?

WOOF!

The dog stands by her ready, tongue hanging and tail wagging.

ISLA (CONT'D)

1...2...3!

They start for the water.

AERIAL VIEW--

Isla and Doodlebug run to join the others in the lake.

THE END