

Primordial Deep
Episode Three - "Forest of Tooth and Bone"

by

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No Such Thing Productions

PROLOGUE

The sound of pen on paper. Marella, alone.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

Have you ever made a mistake? Taken a misstep -- crossed a line in the sand. I think I have. Here. Now. This. I'm not sure I have a right to be here. Sometimes I wonder if we get so caught up chasing horizons, trying to dig our fingers into something distant and fantastic and new... that we fail to realize how far from home we've strayed... That we've reached uncharted territory... someone else's back yard. And they weren't expecting company.

We have... misstepped... And the neighbors don't take kindly to strangers.

FADE TO:

SCENE ONE

EXT. Shark Cage, Open Ocean - DAY

We hear the sound of metal doors sliding open, and the rattling of a chain, as the Tiamat's shark cage is lowered into the water. Spinner and Matti, both in diving suits, float in the cage.

Over the comms, we hear the voices of the rest of the crew.

LOIRE

You two doing alright down there?

SPINNER

Fine and dandy, Cap.

MATTI

This is SO COOL! I've always wanted to go swimming with sharks.

SPINNER

(grinning) Last time wasn't enough for you?

MATTI

That doesn't count!

ASHERAH

Try not to get too excited -- You're there to make ground observations. It's probably better if you DON'T find yourself swimming with the wildlife.

SPINNER

My thoughts exactly, LT.

DESTAN

Are you SURE that cage is going to hold?

MATTI

I patched it myself, didn't I? The fall banged it up more than the scorpions did. Besides... this is the perfect way to test my handiwork.

SPINNER

Sure it's not Cap's perfect way of getting you to stop nagging him about taking it out for a test drive?

MATTI

Fuck you, Spinner.

LOIRE

I never said that!

ASHERAH

(quietly) You didn't exactly have to.

LOIRE

This is a great way to test the Tiamat's maneuverability, and the field-readiness of our equipment. We need a working cage, we needed to test the Tiamat's legs, so to speak... I mean, they don't call her a mobile unit for nothing. And it's never a bad thing to have a working map of our surroundings. It's three birds with one stone.

SPINNER

Four, if it means Matti stops whining.

MATTI

Shut up!

She punches him in the arm.

SPINNER

Ow! Cap! Matti hit me.

ASHERAH

Good.

SPINNER

(rubbing his shoulder) You hit like my sister. I think you broke my arm.

MATTI

You're fine.

SPINNER

I don't know, I think I need you to kiss it better.

MATTI

You heard him doc, we've got a medical emergency down here...

SPINNER

Oooh, yes please. The more the merrier.

ASHERAH

Are you two going to be doing this the entire time?

MATTI

No!

SPINNER

Absolutely.

They start snapping pictures, and we switch perspectives, so that we are up on the bridge.

LOIRE

How's she running?

ASHERAH

This station handles like an elephant... She's slow, but she cuts the water smooth. Just a big old baby, ain't you, Tia?

LOIRE

Doc, how much ground have we covered so far?

DESTAN

We're approximately 40 klicks from our starting point.

LOIRE

How much farther to those mountains?

DESTAN

Well, they're not showing up on the radar just yet, but I think we could reach them by this evening... tomorrow morning at the latest.

LOIRE

Any chance we can cut that time, Lieutenant?

ASHERAH

Sure, if you want to pull in her legs and risk running on engine only. But I don't know if we'll have enough clearance to tow the cage.

LOIRE

Well, I guess there's nothing wrong with the scenic route...

We switch perspectives again, returning to the cage.

SPINNER

You wouldn't be callin' it that if you were down here with all the dead fishes. It's like walking through an uncovered graveyard down here.

ASHERAH

If you don't like it, you shouldn't have volunteered.

SPINNER

And let you sent the Squirt on her own to attract the sharks?

MATTI

Marella could have come.

SPINNER

Yeah, that'll be the day.

MATTI

And my leg is fine! Don't pretend you're doing this for my sake. You like the dead fish.

SPINNER

Better than the live ones, anyway.

MATTI

It's wild though, Cap. We must've passed four whale carcasses, since we passed over that last section of trenches.

SPINNER

Pieces of 'em, anyway. Only that last one was whole.

DESTAN

Is that normal?

SPINNER

Circle of life, doc. Everything's gotta decay, and everybody's gotta eat. I've seen cats rip a carcass in half and carry it up a tree when they were in enough of a hurry.

MATTI

It's just eerie... The ribcages look like these big, contorted towers, or broken spires.

SPINNER

And you should see the stuff hanging off 'em... worms... crabs... little bits of flesh twisting in the currents... The big guy we just passed looked like he'd had his throat torn out...

MATTI

Sharks, maybe. Or killer whales?

SPINNER

Predators don't just abandon a kill that size. I haven't seen any big scavengers around, have you?

There is a sudden high pitched sound like nails on a blackboard as the cage grinds and scrapes against one of the towering bone structures.

MATTI

Ah!!

SPINNER

EY! Easy on the controls up there, LT, we're in this thing! Steer the cage AWAY from the bones! AWAY!

ASHERAH

Sorry.

SPINNER

I thought you said you knew how to drive this thing.

ASHERAH

I can pilot the station just fine.

LOIRE

Aww, did she scare you?

SPINNER

Who said anything about being scared?

MATTI

I don't know, the water felt a little warmer for a second there.

SPINNER

Must've been you.

ASHERAH

Well maybe that'll teach you not to tell ghost stories.

Their voices fade as the station moves on, but the sound of the cage scraping on bone seems to linger.

There is a moment's silence...

And then, in the distance, we hear a soft, hooting cry.

FADE TO:

SCENE TWO

INT. Marella's Laboratory, The Tiamat - MEANWHILE

Marella sits in front of one of the computer stations. On a video call, Kiran watches her through the screen.

KIRAN

A Jaekelopterus.

MARELLA

Yes.

KIRAN

Inside the filtration unit?

MARELLA

That's right.

KIRAN

Sounds like you've had an eventful first few weeks.

MARELLA

I suppose that's one way to put it. I think we're all grateful that things have calmed down since then.

KIRAN

I'm sure. And you say you managed to recover a sample of the eggs?

MARELLA

Two of them, yes.

KIRAN

And how are they progressing?

MARELLA

As far as I can tell, normally. Arthropods aren't my area of expertise, but from what I gather they seem to be alright. The embryos are showing some signs of movement, and they've adjusted to their new habitat...

KIRAN

Good. Keep a close eye on them. I'd like to pass your findings on to our scientific team up top.

MARELLA

And once they start getting to big for the station, and start stabbing people

in the ankles?

KIRAN

We'll have them transported to our facilities, and have our secondary teams take over from there.

MARELLA

(frowning) It almost sounds like you were prepared for this.

KIRAN

(laughs) Well we always knew you were going to find SOMETHING. And a live specimen of any kind is always a welcome addition in the laboratory.

MARELLA

I suppose...

KIRAN

If you find anything else... Keep it. Take notes. Take pictures. Videos... The more of these creatures you encounter, the better. Start a menagerie if you like! You have plenty of space... I want to know EVERYTHING about these animals... How they interact, what they eat-

MARELLA

Where they come from?

KIRAN

Knew you'd understand. We're witnessing something wonderful here, Marella... I need you to be all my senses...

MARELLA

Yes, sir.

KIRAN

Kiran... Please...

MARELLA

Kiran.

KIRAN

I'm relying on you, Marella... We're going to do incredible things

together, you and I... Keep me updated. We'll talk soon.

He signs off. Marella sighs and switches off the computer, and leans back in her chair.

Destan observes her, standing in the doorway.

DESTAN

Good talk?

MARELLA

(sitting up) Destan... How long have you been-

DESTAN

Not long. ... Everything okay?

MARELLA

It's fine.

DESTAN

Is it?

MARELLA

Yes. (beat) ... He knew. About the eurypterids. Not... that they were here but... that we'd find... something. He wasn't surprised, he wasn't even shaken... He knew these things were down here...

DESTAN

But... I mean... That's why we're here, isn't it?

MARELLA

Yes. But he wasn't JUST expecting the Xiphactinus. We aren't JUST looking for one monster out of time... And he knew that. So why didn't he say anything?

Distracted, she falls into silence. After a moment, she seems to remember Destan is there.

MARELLA

Did you need something?

DESTAN

No. Just wanted to check in on you.

See how you were... We've been watching the scenery roll by up on the bridge. It's fascinating! The station lights up the sea for miles around... You should come take a look!

MARELLA
(turning away) I'm busy.

DESTAN
(joking) Egg-sitting?

MARELLA
You know, unlike MOST people around here, I actually take my job rather seriously. I've got a lot of research that needs conducting, I can't just... wander off! Sit around telling jokes all day.

DESTAN
You could do both? Everyone else seems to.

MARELLA
Well I'm not everyone else.

DESTAN
I know you're not.

MARELLA
... I'm snapping again.

DESTAN
Nah...

MARELLA
I just... I'm fine, Destan. I've... I just... I've got a lot of work to do. Too many questions to answer.

DESTAN
Okay.

He starts to leave, then pauses, and glances back at her.

DESTAN
For the record... they have been asking about you. I know it's not easy... And I can't exactly speak for everyone but... I think they do want

to get to know you. I know I do.

MARELLA

... I don't... do so well... around people. I get-... I don't know.

DESTAN

Well, then... forget the people! They'll be there but you don't have to say anything... Or... think of it this way, it's not good for you to stay cooped up like this... talking to scorpion eggs and people through screens...

MARELLA

(wry smile) Are you saying, in your medical opinion, that I should go make more friends?

DESTAN

(smiles) I'm saying the human body craves connection. Even if it's just a quick little walk upstairs. Stretch your legs... watch the ocean go rolling by... with... people in the general vicinity. Who you don't have to talk to.

(he holds out his hand) It's better than hiding, isn't it?

Marella looks at him, and shakes her head, unable to hide a small smile.

FADE TO:

SCENE THREE

INT. The Bridge, The Tiamat - DAY

We hear the door slide open, and Destan and Marella enter the bridge.

LOIRE

Well! Morning doctors.

MARELLA

Morning, captain. Lieutenant.

SPINNER

(via comms) Is that Rey I hear? Holy shit, doc, you actually did it. I don't believe it.

MATTI

(via comms) Told you so. Pony up.

ASHERAH

How's your research coming?

MARELLA

Well. I thought I might just... sit up here and get a little work done... I you don't mind?

LOIRE

Of course, Marella, you're always welcome up on the bridge. We could use the good company.

MARELLA

Thank you, captain.

DESTAN

Not to mention the expertise.

MARELLA

Oh?

ASHERAH

The captain has us mapping out some new territory. Nothing terribly exciting just yet-

LOIRE

-but given the past couple of weeks, I'd say that's not such a bad thing.

SPINNER

You wouldn't say that if you were down here in the cage, LT. Swingin' around like a goddamn yo-yo.

MATTI

You should give it a try, Marella! It's incredible. The number of whales we've seen down here-

MARELLA

Whales?

MATTI

Well, dead ones, but it's still really cool! It's like a forest of bones...

MARELLA

(suddenly alert) How many carcasses have you passed?

MATTI

About six or seven now.

MARELLA

(turning to Loire) Turn around.

LOIRE

What?

MARELLA

We shouldn't be here. Jesus! Why didn't somebody say something?!

DESTAN

Marella, what's wrong?

MARELLA

What's wrong is seven dead whales. We're floating through a graveyard.

ASHERAH

So?

MARELLA

Whales don't die in one place, in those kinds of numbers, unless something is wrong. And what about the scavengers?! Captain, you can't possibly be okay with them being down there with all those sharks.

LOIRE

(baffled) There haven't been any sharks!

beat. Marella stares at him.

MARELLA

(forced calm) You need to get them back inside. Right now.

LOIRE

Why?

SPINNER
(realizing) Aw... Shit!

ASHERAH
Spinner?

SPINNER
Haul us up.

ASHERAH
Is everything alright?

SPINNER
(bitterly) No scavengers, LT. This much free food lying around, and we haven't seen anybody bigger than a crab.

MARELLA
Which means somebody much bigger has been keeping them away.

Over the comms, we hear a low, hooting cry.

MATTI
(nervously) What was that?

SPINNER
(putting on a brave face) Probably just another whale...

MARELLA
No. Whales can't dive down this deep, they'd be crushed under their own body weight at this pressure.

SPINNER
(sarcastic) Thanks for that, Frost.

We hear the hooting cry again, louder and closer this time. A moment later, a light on the dashboard comes to life, and one of the consoles lets out a warning blip.

ASHERAH
Captain. I've got something coming up on the radar screen... Five clicks out and closing fast.

LOIRE
Doc, get down to the loading bay. Get them out of there, NOW. (as Destan

runs out of the room) Matti, Spinner,
hang tight. We're pulling you up.

ASHERAH

Four and a half clicks, captain.

LOIRE

How soon til we have eyes on this
thing?

ASHERAH

At this rate? Give it a minute.

LOIRE

Doctor. Any idea what could be moving
at that speed?

MARELLA

Nothing natural that would be big
enough to show up on our radar AND at
this depth...

ASHERAH

Three clicks and closing, captain.

MARELLA

(realizing) They're not going to make
it back to the ship in time.

LOIRE

Asherah, engage evasive maneuvers!

ASHERAH

I can shift the station, Captain, but
it's not going to buy us more than a
couple of minutes.

LOIRE

A couple of minutes is all we need.

ASHERAH

Aye, sir!

She flips a few switches, and we hear a rumble of motors and
gears echoing though the Tiamat, as yet another cry cuts
through the water.

Marella moves up to one of the window banks and starts
flipping through The Creatures Beneath.

MARELLA

Captain Loire, how big do you estimate something would need to be to show up at five klicks on the Tiamat's radar?

LOIRE

What?

MARELLA

I need a minimum size estimate! How big does that thing coming towards us have to be?

LOIRE

Forty... fifty feet long at the very least. What are you doing?

MARELLA

Weeding out the little guys. (to herself) Too small... Maybe... if they were traveling in a shoal? Mmm... No... Too small... Too small... Oh please FUCK not that...

ASHERAH

Two klicks, captain... No- Two and a half... I don't know how much longer we can keep up this breathing room...

Loire presses a button, and we hear the buzz and static of an internal speaker system.

LOIRE

Doc! I could use a bit of sunshine... tell me we're close to getting them out of there?

DESTAN

(over speakers) I just made it to the loading bay! I've got the winch going now.

LOIRE

Any chance of us speeding that up?

DESTAN

Not unless you want two of your crew down with the bends.

LOIRE

Alright. How much time do you need?

DESTAN

The cage should be up in two more minutes. But getting them out of there... I'll take as much time as you can give me.

LOIRE

Okay. Keep me posted.

DESTAN

Aye, sir.

Loire switches off the intercom.

ASHERAH

Clarion. We could buy them a little more time with the targeted weapons systems.

LOIRE

No, do not engage! Starting a firefight with an unknown opponent puts the whole crew at risk. We don't know what that thing is, and there's still a chance it could pass us by.

ASHERAH

(tightly) Sir, we're at one and a half clicks, and closing-

LOIRE

I said do not engage!

SPINNER

(suddenly) Hoooooooooooly shit... Matti-

MATTI

I see it!

MARELLA (NARRATING)

At first, it looked like a grayish smudge on the observation screen... The smudge became a smear... The smear a rapidly moving blur, that seemed to draw itself out, swelling and elongating as it sliced through the water.

The creature lets out another low, hooting cry.

SPINNER

(almost relieved) See! Look at that! I told you... It's fine! Just a tiny baby whale...

MARELLA

No... its not...

The creature cries out again.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

Seventy feet long. Two powerful front flippers ripped through the water, the back two pressing tight against the leviathan's sides, as the creature's snake-like body drove toward us like a bullet. Its head tapered into a long, thin snout, and as it opened its mouth again, row after row of serrated teeth the size of bananas, glittered in the glow of the station's lights.

Its jaws stretched wide, reaching for us out of the dark, and for a moment, it was all we could see. A forest of teeth. Bright, white eyes, that seemed to stare through us. Dark gray skin, lined with a strange, spiderwebbing pattern of blue-white cracks...

MARELLA

(breathless) Basilosaurus.

FADE TO:

SCENE FOUR

INT. Loading Bay, The Tiamat - MEANWHILE

We hear the sound of the winch churning, and then a clatter and the sound of the shark cage impacting on the hull. Destan presses a button, and we hear a series of docking clamps latch into place. He hits another button for the intercom.

DESTAN

Captain! Cage is secured!

We hear water churning as Matti and Spinner try to push open the cage door from below. Destan moves to assist them. There is a creak and another clatter as he pulls open the cage door.

Matti surfaces with a splash, and Destan grabs ahold of her.

DESTAN

Easy! Easy, I've got you, Matti.

MATTI

Jesus fuck, did you see how BIG that thing is?!

With Destan's help, she pulls herself free of the water. She pulls off her helmet, and there is a hiss of escaping air. She throws it to the ground, breathing deeply.

MATTI

FUCK! I think that's the biggest animal I've ever seen in my life!

DESTAN

What is it?

MATTI

No idea. I heard Marella say... Basil-something over the comms.

They move back over to the open cage, as Spinner splashes up.

DESTAN

(excitedly) Basilosaurus?!

MATTI

That's the one.

SPINNER

I don't care WHAT she calls it. Still looks like a goddamn whale to me.

DESTAN

Technically, it's a cetacean forerunner from the late Eocene.

MATTI AND SPINNER

English, doc.

DESTAN

Prehistoric whale. Carnivorous. Highly aggressive. God I'd give ANYTHING to be up on the bridge right now for a closer look.

SPINNER

(grinning) Why not switch places with

me? Hop on down into the cage, get as close as you like! Pull me up, and I'll make you some space.

Matti and Destan reach out to grab hold of Spinner's arms.

MATTI

Those teeth though! Had to be half as thick as my forearm at least.

SPINNER

(laughing) Bet you'd hate to be on the wrong side of his dentist chair!

DESTAN

Okay. Hoist on the count of three. One... Two...

BANG! Something massive slams into the Tiamat with enough force to rock the station. At the same time, we hear a sound like jaws snapping shut, the rattling of the winch chain, and twisting and crunching of metal as something impacts the cage. Spinner starts to scream, but it is abruptly cut off as he is yanked out of the other's grip, and vanishes under the water.

Alarms begin to blare.

MATTI

SPINNER!

She rushes towards where the cage was, but Destan grabs her.

DESTAN

Matti, DON'T!

The water roils, and we hear the Basilosaurus' eerie call again.

The intercom switches on.

LOIRE

Is everybody okay?!

MATTI

He's down there! We have to do something! Somebody has to go get him!

LOIRE

Matti? Slow down. What happened? Who's down where?

DESTAN

The cage, Captain! It just went after
the cage, and its gone! The whole cage
is just gone!

MATTI

Spinner's still down there!

LOIRE

Son of a bitch!

MATTI

I'm going to get him.

LOIRE

NO! Matti, stay where you are.

MATTI

We have to do something!

LOIRE

Doc, don't let her-

DESTAN

I won't!

Matti snaps on her helmet, and switches on the suit comms.
There is nothing but static.

MATTI

Spinner? Spinner are you okay?!
Spinner can you hear me?!

Nothing.

Everyone waits.

Nothing. Static.

And then-... An explosive burst of coughing shatters the
static. Spinner, desperately gasping for air.

SPINNER

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!

MATTI

Spinner! Spinner are you okay?!

LOIRE

What happened?! Spinner, can you hear
us? Where are you?

SPINNER

Under the fucking station! Cage is... hanging on by a fucking thread. That thing just clamped down its jaws and twisted-... Took the whole cage right off the docking port...

LOIRE

Spinner, I need you to calm down. Take a deep breath.

SPINNER

I can't-

LOIRE

Yes you can. You're going to be okay. You've still got half a tank of oxygen left. We're coming to get you now-

SPINNER

(grimacing, struggling and starting to panic) No, I mean I can't... breathe! The cage is twisted. I'm pinned. It's crushing me! I can't... get out! I can't breathe! I'm trapped!

FADE TO:

SCENE FIVE

INT. The Bridge, The Tiamat - DAY

BOOM! Another impact shudders across the hull of the Tiamat. Everyone staggers and tries to keep their footing.

ASHERAH

Can we shoot it now?

LOIRE

We need to drive it off.

MARELLA

We're not GOING to drive it off. According to The Creatures Beneath, Basilosaurus are a HIGHLY territorial species. This is a prime hunting ground, he's not going to give it up without a fight.

BOOM! We hear the scraping of metal and a screech from the creature outside. BOOM!

MARELLA

We have to get out of here.

ASHERAH

I can pull the Tiamat's leg units in, and turn on the jets, but I can't guarantee we won't lose the cage if I do.

MATTI

We HAVE to get Spinner. I'm already suited up, I just have to get my tools.

ASHERAH

It's too dangerous to go out there by yourself!

MATTI

By the time one of you gets down here, suits up, and we head out to save him, that thing could've decided to swing around again have half of him for lunch, go for a swim, and then come back for the leftovers. I'm equipped, I'm here now, and I'm not asking for your permission! I'm telling you to buy me some time!

MARELLA

Matti-

LOIRE

She's right.

MATTI

Thank you!

LOIRE

We'll have a discussion about the way you speak to your superior officers later. Give us three minutes to give you a window, where that thing is distracted. Get into the water quiet, don't draw any attention to yourself.

MATTI

Aye, captain.

LOIRE

Doc, I want you on deck to take

Spinner to the med bay as soon as he's out.

DESTAN

Yes, captain.

LOIRE

You hear that Spinner? Just sit tight. We're gonna get you out of there.

SPINNER

Fantastic, cap. PLEASE don't say tight.

MARELLA

(curious) You're not claustrophobic, are you?

SPINNER

(intensely sarcastic, but trying VERY HARD not to panic) Who, ME?! No! I love it when the walls come closing in! What the hell would a big, bulky guy like me have to worry about getting caught in tight, crushingly small spaces, slowly running out of air and getting squeezed to death with no chance of escape! Hanging here, freezing my ass off, while the goddamn walls are caving in!

He's very close to hyperventilating.

ASHERAH

(calmly) Okay, okay! Just breath in slowly. In through your nose, out through your mouth. Try to relax and stay still.

SPINNER

Relax?! You're kidding me, right LT?

ASHERAH

(just as calm) No, I'm not kidding you. Because the more you panic and thrash around and try to struggle your way free, the more likely it is you're going to hurt yourself, or tear your suit, or puncture your breathing apparatus, or better still, get the attention of our big friend out there.

DESTAN
(appalled) Lieutenant!

As if in response, the Basilosaurus strikes at the Tiamat again.

ASHERAH
Now you listen to me, Spinner. If the Captain says we're coming to get you, that is a promise you can count on him to keep. We are not going to abandon you, and we are not going to let anything happen to you. You are going to get through this. If you want to get through it faster, then I need you to calm down. Okay?

SPINNER
... O-okay.

ASHERAH
We are going to help you. You are going to be fine. Come on. Just... breathe with me.

Asherah leads Spinner into taking several deep, slow breaths. As she does, Loire turns to Marella.

LOIRE
Any ideas, Marella?

MARELLA
We could try firing some flares? See if we can lure the Basilosaurus away from the ship? If we can get them a good enough distance away, it'll give Matti time to get Spinner, and we could even get a head start on our escape.

LOIRE
You think that'll work?

MARELLA
It's defending its territory... And sort of movement it detects will likely set it off... If we cut all the lights on the station, and fire the flares, it HAS to see them, and maybe it'll leave us alone.

LOIRE
Matti, do you think you can work
Spinner loose in the dark?

MATTI
If I have to.

LOIRE
(sighs) I don't like this.

ASHERAH
(gently) We might not have time to
think up anything else.

BOOM! BOOM! Scraaaaaaaape... The Basilosaurus lets out a
hooting cry that reverberates through the ship.

LOIRE
... Okay. Lieutenant, cue up the port
side emergency flares. Matti, to your
station.

MATTI
Aye, captain.

ASHERAH
Flares are primed, sir.

LOIRE
Kill the lights.

Asherah hits a switch, and across the station, we hear the
lights flicker and die.

A heartbeat's silence.

The Basilosaurus cries.

LOIRE
Fire.

Thwip! Hiss! A flare goes streaking through the dark. The
Basilosaurus lets out a shriek, and we hear something large
moving through the water.

ASHERAH
I think it's working...

A soft splash over the comms, as Matti drops into the water.

MATTI

Rodger that! Spinner? I'm on my way.

Matti moves through the water, and we hear the echo of the Basilosaurus' hooting cry.

FADE TO:

SCENE SIX

EXT. Shark Cage, Open Ocean - DAY

An eerie, muffled silence. Spinner is struggling to keep his breathing under control. We hear a soft, sharp buzzing as Matti touches one of her tools to the cage.

MATTI

You holding up okay?

SPINNER

Peachy! Sure. I'm just... just...

MATTI

It's okay if you're not, you know.

SPINNER

I know. (beat) I'm nearly out of this thing, right?

MATTI

Almost.

SPINNER

Allllllmost.

MATTI

Just got to get through a couple more of this bars. Then I'll be able to peel this section back and- OUCH!

SPINNER

Matti?!

MATTI

Ow! SHIT! Just... nicked my thumb.

SPINNER

You okay?

MATTI

Yeah... Motherfucker that hurt... Who

decided to let me around power tools
in the dark?

SPINNER

Bet you're glad there aren't any
sharks around now, huh?

MATTI

Yeah, no kidding. (beat) You sure
you're okay?

SPINNER

Yeah... Sure. No. Yeah, I just...
(beat) ... Jesus, this really isn't
the way I expected to die. Just...
Fuck, y'know?

MATTI

You're not going to die.

SPINNER

Sure I am! So are you. We've all got
to go sometime, right? Circle of life.
That's just how it is. I knew it was
coming, I just... don't want to go out
like this.

MATTI

Like what?

SPINNER

Scared. ... I always sort of knew I'd
kill myself screwing something up. Not
some... freak accident. Giant, stupid
whale. It'd be my fault, y'know? Me.
Wrong place. Wrong time. Say exactly
the perfect stupid thing. Laugh. And
the next thing I know, Gabriel's
playin' me home.

MATTI

You seriously think you're THAT much
of a screw up?

SPINNER

It's been said, once or twice. But
hey. Maybe I should be grateful. It's
not every day you get bitten by a
whale.

MATTI

(laughs) That's true. Guessing that's not what you had in mind though... I'm assuming... topless babes, and strapping hunks, all dancing around in a rain of confetti while you have a heart attack in the middle of an orgy, yeah?

SPINNER

Thought it was gonna be back when I was in the marines... when the ship was going down... Or back in highschool, walking down the street... Guys like me, we don't get to grow up to die in big, grand adventures. We catch it in bar fights... back alleys... jail cells with the security cams turned off... routine stop and search... playing in the park... Guys like me go down statistics... nobody remembers who we were. (he shudders, and lets out a low moan) Jesus, I'm cold.

MATTI

This is NOT where you die. Just stay with me, Spinner. We'll get you out of there soon. Just stay with me.

SPINNER

(labored, weakly) I can't breathe...

FADE TO:

SCENE SEVEN

INT. The Bridge, The Tiamat - MEANWHILE

An eerie silence has settled over the bridge. Loire taps his fingers impatiently against the control console, and Marella paces the length of the room.

She stops suddenly, then turns to the others

MARELLA

Don't you think it's odd?

LOIRE

(distracted) What?

MARELLA
The Basilosaurus.

ASHERAH
(wry smile) I wouldn't exactly call it
normal-

LOIRE
-but it's not exactly any stranger
than anything else we've encountered
down here.

MARELLA
Captain, it is EXACTLY as strange as
everything else we've seen down here,
that's entirely my point. Did either
of you get a good look at those
markings on its skin?

ASHERAH
No... Why?

LOIRE
Honestly, I was a little too busy
looking at its teeth.

MARELLA
It was covered in cracks. Like its
skin was coming apart, and something
was pushing its way up from
underneath.

ASHERAH
Could be old battle scars? Or new
wounds? Maybe even seaweed or tangled
fishing line?

MARELLA
They were the same color as the
Jaekelopterus.

LOIRE
Are you sure?

MARELLA
I'm positive. I've never seen a
natural shade of blue-white like that
before, but since we got here, I've
seen it twice.

LOIRE

You think there's something in the water.

MARELLA

I don't know. But something is affecting these animals. Until we find out what, I can't say. But I'd like to take samples whenever possible.

LOIRE

You think there's a chance this could affect the crew?

MARELLA

There's always a chance, captain, but it couldn't hurt to keep an eye out. We don't know what's out there, and we are only bio-matter after all...

ASHERAH

(frustrated) God... DAMNIT.

MARELLA

(startled, nervous) This is only a theory, lieutenant, I don't think it's anything we should be seriously concerned about. At least not immediately.

ASHERAH

What? No. Sorry, Marella. It's this equipment.

LOIRE

What's wrong?

ASHERAH

We must have tripped a system somewhere when we shut down the lights. My screens are going nuts. I'm getting flare ups, and false pings, and feedback all across my boards. And this clicking in my headphones.

LOIRE

(moving towards her) Let me see? ...
(sighs) Ah hell.

ASHERAH

Soon as this is over, I'm gonna have

to reconfigure everything up here...
 get Matti to help me take a look at
 this thing... See, THIS is why I hate
 new boats. Too unpredictable. They
 always sell you on the "everything is
 shiny, so it MUST be fine!" but nobody
 knows where the hell the bugs'll be.
 Just listen to this!

She hits a switch, and the cabin is filled with an eerie,
 insect-like clicking.

ASHERAH

I don't know what the hell I'm
 supposed to do with that. But whatever
 it is, it's tripping our systems...
 See? Look here... The radar keeps
 jumping, and scrambling every time the
 clicking starts up.

LOIRE

Maybe the Tiamat's computers are
 trying to reboot the system... Might
 be a kink in the coding, and it's got
 itself caught in a loop.

ASHERAH

(frowning) No... it's too... irregular
 for a computer. And I'm not reading
 any errors on the dash -- which either
 means something up here is wrong-

MARELLA

(realizing) Oh god...

ASHERAH

Marella?

MARELLA

It's coming back.

ASHERAH

The Basilosaurus?

MARELLA

That sound... It's using echolocation.

LOIRE

Fuck!

ASHERAH

What?

MARELLA

Toothed whales can use echolocation like a battering ram, tightening the beam to stun their prey. Your systems aren't malfunctioning, Asherah, they're being targeted!

LOIRE

It can't see us, so it's trying to find us.

MARELLA

It already has. Hit the lights!

LOIRE

But Matti and Spinner-

MARELLA

Will be dead if they can't see this thing coming!

ASHERAH

Wait! This thing still isn't even showing up on our radar! Sonar is picking it up, but if it was that close, we would have seen something! Heard something-

CRACK.

Everyone freezes, as something rolls down the window pane, and lands softly on the sill.

LOIRE

Flashlight!

Asherah hands one to him, and Loire clicks it on. He walks slowly up to the window, and stares at the object resting there.

ASHERAH

... is that...

MARELLA

A flare. ... he snapped it in half...

LOIRE

... Get them out of there. Get them

out of there, NOW.

FADE TO:

SCENE EIGHT

EXT. Shark Cage, Open Ocean - MEANWHILE

The buzzing of Matti's tools, and in the distance, a low, insectoid clicking. Spinner, trying to distract himself...

SPINNER

*(singing) The night was mighty dark so
you could hardly see
For the moon refused to shine
Couple sitting underneath the willow
tree
For love, they pined*

*Little May was kinda 'fraid of
darkness
So she says "I guess I'll go."
Boy began to sigh, looked up to the
sky
Told the sky his little tale of woe-*

(breaking off) This is stupid.

MATTI

Keep singing! We're nearly done...

SPINNER

You said that an hour ago!

MATTI

It was five minutes ago... Come on...
Keep going.

SPINNER

(sighing) You got it, Coach.

MATTI

You're doing your choir proud.

SPINNER

Oh I wish I hadn't told you that.

MATTI

Yeah, I'll bet you don't.

SPINNER

What was that? Missed that last part, Mat. Got this... clicking in my ears... Oh god... Am I running out of oxygen? Is that a thing? Can that happen?

MATTI

You're fine on oxygen, Spinner. I hear it too... must be a breakdown in the comms tech.

SPINNER

Funnily enough, that's not reassuring.

MATTI

Just keep singing.

Spinner sighs.

SPINNER

*So shine on
Shine on harvest moon
Up in the sky-*

There is a burst of static and we hear Asherah's voice, splintered and unintelligible coming over the comms.

SPINNER

You catch that?

MATTI

(frowning) No... (clicking a button)
Say again, Lieutenant?

Static. Asherah's voice, again, splintered. Close by, we hear a burst of insectoid clicking.

MATTI

Asherah? Lieutenant I can't hear you-
... We're almost done here! ...
Lieutenant? Spinner, put your arms
against the bars. Right here.

Asherah, I've got him now. Just got to
pry this section loose! Spinner, push.

Matti pulls, and Spinner pushes as best he can. There's a sound of twisting metal, and then a snap as the cage breaks apart. The broken section drifts, discarded, to settle on the ocean floor.

MATTI
Got it! You okay?

SPINNER
Yeah- (he hisses in pain) Mmm... Nope.
I think I cut up my side.

MATTI
Let's get you back to the station. Go
on. I'll grab the cameras.

Another static-y, splintered burst.

MATTI
Say again, LT?

ASHERAH
Light!

MATTI
Asherah?

ASHERAH
YOUR LIGHT! Turn on your light! Matti,
can you hear me?! GET OUT OF THE
WATER!

From behind her, comes the sound of eerie, insect-like
clicking, and a low ominous growl.

SPINNER
Matti...

MATTI
I heard it...

SPINNER
I can't see-

MATTI
It's okay. I'm gonna turn on the
light.

Matti turns slowly. Shaking, she raises the camera into the
dark, and snaps a photo. The flash illuminates the
Basilosaurus, lurking only a few feet away -- blinded and
enraged, the creature lets out a hideous scream. Matti
screams.

SPINNER
MATTI!

ASHERAH

GO!

Matti and Spinner both make a break for the Tiamat. Behind them, the disoriented Basilosaurus thrashes, its powerful tail crashing into the underside of the station. It screams again, and lets out a snarl.

MATTI

There's the air lock!

SPINNER

Matti-... I can't-

MATTI

Oh yes you can! MOVE! Come on! This is not where we die!

They reach the airlock. Matti hits a button, the outer doors slide open, and with a great deal of splashing, Matti pushes Spinner in ahead of her.

MATTI

Destan! We're in!

SPINNER

The door! Get the door!

Matti leaps for the door and hits the button. As the door slides shut, we hear the Basilosaurus cry out, it's jaws snapping violently -- then the door slams, and a second later, the creature smashes into the Tiamat's hull.

Spinner and Matti stand there, shaking. They look at one another.

SPINNER

... Thanks.

MATTI

Yeah... No problem...

The inner door slides open and Destan appears in the doorway.

DESTAN

Are you alright?!

SPINNER

(exhausted) Oh sure, doc. We were just having a little fun.

DESTAN

You're bleeding! Jesus Christ,
Spinner, is that a tooth?!

Spinner looks down. One of the Basilosaurus' massive fangs is embedded into his side.

SPINNER

(more surprised than alarmed) Huh...
Holy shit, would you look at that...
The bastard bit me.

DESTAN

(steadying him) Don't touch it. It'll
keep the pressure on, until I can
remove it. Matti. Get his other side.
We have to get him to the med bay,
before he bleeds to death. Hurry!

FADE TO:

SCENE NINE

INT. The Bridge, The Tiamat - MOMENTS LATER

Asherah switches off the comms, just as the Basilosaurus slams its massive bulk into the side of the Tiamat again.

ASHERAH

All hands aboard and secured, Captain!

LOIRE

Bring up the legs!

Asherah presses a few controls. There is a metallic whirring as the legs of the Tiamat retract, and then the motor bursts into life. We hear the Basilosaurus roar.

LOIRE

Get us out of here, Lieutenant!

ASHERAH

Aye, sir!

She guns the engine. Behind them, we can hear the Basilosaurus cutting through the water, letting out its hooting cry. It bashes into the Tiamat again.

ASHERAH

I can't shake him, sir!

MARELLA

He's not going to shake, until we're out of his territory!

ASHERAH

That could be from here to the mountains for all we know! Sir, I can't hold him off for that long. This is a research station, not a warship, she's not going to hold!

BANG! The Basilosaurus cries out again.

LOIRE

Then find us a defensible position! We can hold him off for a couple of hours until he gets bored or we exhaust him.

ASHERAH

Aye, sir!

MARELLA

(pointing) There! That dark line in the earth. That's a trench. He can't be able to dive much deeper than this-

LOIRE

(realizing) But we can!

ASHERAH

Everybody hold onto something!

The Tiamat lets out a groaning creak as she dives. Metal scrapes against the rocky sides of the trench, and the station judders violently as it falls deeper and deeper.

Above, the Basilosaurus lets out a shriek of frustration. We hear the water thrashing, and the clicks of its echolocation.

ASHERAH

Sir, we go any deeper, and the hull isn't going to hold.

LOIRE

Then this is as far as we go.

ASHERAH

If that thing finds its way down here, it's going to tear us apart.

LOIRE

Then give him a good reason not to.

ASHERAH

Aye sir.

She flips a few switches, and we hear the sounds of the Tiamat's weapons systems coming online.

ASHERAH

Weapons system primed, Captain.

LOIRE

Fire at will.

She does. There is a sputtering series of coughs as the projectiles whip through the water. We hear the Basilosaurus scream and thrash. Something large moves away through the water, and the creature's hooting cry echoes long and low...

Then silence...

MARELLA

... did you kill it?

ASHERAH

(looks at her strangely) I wasn't aiming to. Just looking to buy us some time.

LOIRE

Should be enough to scare him off, for now.

MARELLA

And if it wasn't?

ASHERAH

Then I'll be right here, on the bridge, to make sure he learns the lesson.

LOIRE

Give it an hour. If there's no movement, and nothing on the screens, send off a 10 second burst once a minute, for three minutes to clear the waters... then take us up, with as much speed as the Tiamat can handle.

ASHERAH

Aye, sir.

LOIRE

Marella... Come with me... There's something I think you should see.

Loire leads Marella towards the door. As he pulls it open, Asherah calls out after him.

ASHERAH

Our heading, Captain?

LOIRE

The horizon, Talise. I want to see what's on the other side of those mountains... We can't go back the way we came...

FADE TO:

SCENE TEN

INT. Med Bay, The Tiamat - NIGHT

Spinner lies on a cot, picking at the bandages on his side.

SPINNER

Ow... Shit...

DESTAN

You know it'll stop hurting and start healing the sooner you leave it alone.

SPINNER

YOU leave it alone. I was impaled by a whale.

DESTAN

(snickering) You mean "Whale-paled?"

The door swings open, and Matti steps in.

SPINNER

Christ, doc, is that supposed to be a joke? I'm dying here!

MATTI

You're not dying. Don't be such a baby.

SPINNER

I AM dying. Here I am, half bled out and traumatized, and you abandoned me, Doc's standing over there cracking "wise", and Rey stole my tooth, so I don't even get a goddamn souvenir!

DESTAN

What were you going to do? Wear it as a necklace?

SPINNER

Yes!

DESTAN

Do you have any idea how much that thing weighs?

SPINNER

Given what I had to do to earn it in the first place? Yeah doc, I'd say I could give a fair estimate!

MATTI

You can have it back when Marella's done looking it over. Asherah said she'd be happy to carve you a knife handle out of it... she might even be able to get you two.

SPINNER

... Okay. Fine... Consider me appeased.

Destan glances between the two of them, and lightly clears his throat.

DESTAN

I've just... got to check on something with the Captain... Matti, would you mind?

MATTI

Not at all.

Destan slips out of the room, shutting the door behind him. Matti sits down on the edge of Spinner's bed.

SPINNER

Guess we're even now, huh?

MATTI

Only if you're keeping score... How're you feeling?

SPINNER

Ah, you know me. Give me a little bit of breathing space, and I'll fill it. Nice to finally have a bit of leg room.

... Listen... Matti... About-... Y'know, all that... stuff. I said. Down there. About dying and all... I didn't-... Cracking is one thing, but I don't-... I mean, I'm not-... (he takes a deep breath, gathering himself)

I don't shake easy.

So... Thanks. For being so... solid.

MATTI

Anytime.

SPINNER

Yeah?

MATTI

Of course. (and then, teasing) I'll never pass up a chance to hear you singing.

Spinner laughs, and leans back against his pillows. After a moment, he starts to hum -- *Shine On, Harvest Moon*. Matti smiles, and joins him.

FADE OUT.

EPILOGUE

INT. Asherah's Quarters, The Tiamat - NIGHT

We hear the clicking of a padlock, and then the creaking of a safe door swinging open. Loire removes the scale from Asherah's safe, and hands it to Marella, who stares at it.

LOIRE

Well?

MARELLA

You found this in the wreckage of the sub?

LOIRE

Embedded into the side. Something had scraped up against it, and left that behind.

MARELLA

(musing, thoughtfully) Blue-white...

LOIRE

That's right.

MARELLA

But I don't understand... Why do you want me to keep this from the others?

LOIRE

(studying her) Marella... You did good today. You had your eyes open, and you kept your head...

There's no one else down here, doctor. And after everything that's happened... everything we've seen?

MARELLA

You don't want to start a panic.

LOIRE

People panic, and they lose control. We lose control in a situation like this and we die... it's as simple as that. Above anything else, I aim to keep this crew safe. If that means omitting certain truths, then so be it.

MARELLA

That's a hard line to take, Captain.

LOIRE

Losing a crew member is harder. I just want to make sure everybody gets home.

MARELLA

... What about Kiran? How much does he know about all of this?

LOIRE

Frankly, I haven't to the language to tell him. Til we figure that out? Nothing. But I'd say Mr. Flint isn't above holding back a few secrets of his own... would you?

MARELLA

Understood, sir.

LOIRE

Good. (beat) ... I wouldn't ask if it wasn't important, Marella... And I ask now because I think that I can trust you. Please don't prove me wrong.

He shuts the safe, and the sound of it echoes through the room.

FADE OUT.

END.