

Here Be Dragons - Pilot Episode

"Harper"

by

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Black Lace and Laser Beams
Productions

SCENE ONE

INT. Harper's Bedroom - WAY TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING

HARPER BENNETT is in bed, curled up and fast asleep. The only sounds are her steady breathing, and those of the night around her.

Then the phone rings.

And rings.

And rings.

HARPER
(waking up, and not exactly happy
about it) Christ.

She shifts to look at the clock. It's four in the morning. Harper whines, and buries her face in the pillow. The phone continues to ring, but maybe it will go away if she just ignores it?

HARPER (cont'd)
No... Shut up... Go away...

No such luck. She is forced to answer it.

HARPER (cont'd)
Alright! Alright... (fumbling for a
moment, then into the phone) Hello?

KILLIAN
Harper Bennett?

HARPER
Yes?

KILLIAN
Are you alone?

HARPER
What?

KILLIAN
(humoring her, but still with a
slight air of condescension) Are
you alone?

HARPER
It's four in the morning.

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN

Yes.

HARPER

Four. In the morning. On a Tuesday.

KILLIAN

Congratulations! You can read a clock. And a calendar, it would seem. As it happens, so can I. But what I asked you was-

HARPER

Yes! I am alone! (Who *is* this asshole?) Jesus...

KILLIAN

Good. A car is about to park in front of your apartment building. A black car, with no license plates, that will take you to the airport. I'd like you to get in it.

HARPER

Wait, what?

KILLIAN

Your application has been accepted. Congratulations, Harper. You start work in... fifteen minutes. Better get packed.

HARPER

My... application?

KILLIAN

That's right.

HARPER

No... No, I'm sorry, but... I haven't... applied to-... Is this Best Buy? You're hazing me, right? Look, I'm sorry, but I didn't think that the cashier thing was going to be so-

KILLIAN

No, this is not Best Buy. This is... something a little more... interesting? Not a desk job.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Then I have no idea who-

KILLIAN

You are Harper Anne Bennett?

HARPER

Yes...

KILLIAN

You're 22 years old. Born in New Jersey, but you've been... well! Just about everywhere. Let's see... You were supposed to go to Yale, but for some reason -- personal reasons -- you relocated to NYU to study classical mythology of all things. I hear they even put you on a fast track for a PhD before you dropped out. Which was... unexpected. Straight-A Student. Kind of a bookworm. And yet somehow you managed to get yourself expelled from two different schools before the age of seventeen, and you haven't been able to hold down a job for more than a month. ... oh, and your favorite book is Robinson Crusoe. Rather adventurous for someone who spends at least four hours a day in the reference section of the library. And your first cat's name was Mittens. (beat) Or am I mistaken?

HARPER

... How did you-

KILLIAN

Word travels. Your recommendations were impressive to say the least. Our latest project is right up your alley. We thought it was about time to reach out.

HARPER

My... recommendations?

KILLIAN

Of course. Nobody gets seen without one. (pause) So. Your car leaves in... 11 minutes. (not bothering to wait for her to catch up) The man

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN (cont'd)
inside will show you some papers.
Assurances, that we are who we say
we are.

HARPER
Which is who exactly?

KILLIAN
Oh I'm sorry. The United States
Government. Why, are you expecting
someone else?

HARPER
Is this a joke?

KILLIAN
Oh no. Quite the opposite. In fact,
this is probably the most serious
call you're ever going to get in
your life.

HARPER
Am I being abducted?

KILLIAN
(cheerfully) You've been recruited!
Big difference! (pause) My name is
Killian Rhys. I've been keeping an
eye on you... And we've just found
something I think you might like.

HARPER
Which is what, exactly?

KILLIAN
Your ticket out. To... bigger, and
better and more... interesting
things. Adventure. Mystery. That's
what you want, isn't it? Unusual
people doing... extraordinary
things. If you're up for it. (beat)
But by all means, feel free to go
back to sleep. You've got an
important call from Best Buy coming
in the morning. The thing is...
Harper. Can I call you Harper?

HARPER
Uh...

KILLIAN

I'm in charge of putting a team together to investigate something... new. And your name came up in conversation twice. (beat) I don't believe in coincidence. Or interviews. Or repeating myself. So I'm going to ask you, just this once... and then it's gone. Forever. Harper Bennett... would you like to go on an adventure?

beat.

HARPER

Where?

KILLIAN

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

HARPER

Doing what?

KILLIAN

That's classified.

HARPER

What did you find?

KILLIAN

Why don't you come and see?

beat. Harper considers. This is too weird to be real. Too good to be true.

KILLIAN

8 minutes. (he smiles) See you soon.

FADE TO:

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SCENE TWO

EXT. Cape Canaveral - DAY

Hours later...

A helicopter is coming to land. Harper disembarks, and moves over to Killian who is standing on the edge of the air field, grinning at her.

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN

Harper!

HARPER

Mr. Rhys.

KILLIAN

So glad you could make it.

HARPER

Did I have a choice?

KILLIAN

(laughs. A very clear 'no') Let's take a walk, shall we?

CUT TO:

INT. Cape Canaveral - DAY

Killian leads Harper down a long hallway. It's conspicuously empty, and their footsteps echo eerily as they walk.

KILLIAN (cont'd)

It's lucky we caught you when we did. Our friends here at Cape Canaveral have been hounding us for information like you wouldn't believe. They've been gracious enough to let us borrow the facilities for a few hours.

HARPER

Is that why it's so-

KILLIAN

Well. I say 'borrow', they're all still skulking around here SOMEWHERE.

We hear another pair of footsteps as CPT. CHARLES EDESSA and AGENT SIERRA MARINA come around the corner.

KILLIAN (cont'd)

And speak of the Devil! The Suits upstairs thought it might be a good idea to give us a little supervision, given the confidential nature of this meeting. May I introduce the babysitters; Captain Charles Edessa, formerly of the US Navy, and Agent Sierra Marina. They're C.I.A. He's here to tell

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN (cont'd)
you what you're not supposed to touch, and she's here to tell you what you didn't see.

HARPER
Nice to meet you.

EDESSA
(shaking her hand) Likewise.

MARINA
Real charmer, isn't he? You must be Ms. Bennett.

KILLIAN
The one and only.

EDESSA
Everything's ready for you, Mr. Killian. Your security measures are in place, and the base has been vacated.

MARINA
They're not going to appreciate having all the security cameras shut down.

KILLIAN
We all have to learn to live with disappointment sooner or later. But don't sell yourself short, agent! I'm sure your report will be more than adequate for your superiors.

EDESSA
We've set up on lower level 3, whenever you're ready.

HARPER
Seems like a lot of space for just four people.

KILLIAN
Four? (laughs) Oh my goodness. Oh sweetie, no. No, you're late! The others have been here for hours. Now that you're here, we can finally get started.

(CONTINUED)

They have reached a door, which Killian unlocks and opens to reveal a small conference room. Gathered around the table inside are LT. COM. ADRIENNE SCARLETT, DR. NATALYA ATLAS, and PIPPA "PIP" CAMPBELL.

PIP

Finally! I was starting to think you weren't going to come back! I've had to pee for like, two hours, but I think the door accidentally locked behind you?

KILLIAN

Oh, that was no accident.

PIP

It... wasn't?

KILLIAN

No. I mean, I can't have you girls wandering all over the base, now can I?

He laughs. No one else does.

KILLIAN (cont'd)

So. Have you ladies enjoyed your little siesta?

SCARLETT

Sir, with all due respect, what the hell is going on? I was told there was some sort of 'urgent life-or-death situation,' but you've kept us waiting in here for hours, with no explanation.

KILLIAN

(sizing her up) It's Scarlett, isn't it?

SCARLETT

Yes, sir.

KILLIAN

They told me about you. I can see why.

ATLAS

Who's this?

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN
Fresh blood. Harper Bennett.

ATLAS
Ah. Historian?

KILLIAN
Yet to be determined. Harper, I'd like to introduce you to the rest of the crew! This is the project's chief scientific officer, Dr. Natalya Atlas.

HARPER
Nice to meet you.

ATLAS
Charmed.

KILLIAN
And this is Pippa Campbell, your engineer.

PIP
Call me, 'Pip.' Everybody does.

HARPER
(startled) You're an engineer?

KILLIAN
Oh, our Pip's a lot of things. Engineer, computer specialist, amateur inventor... She's a regular little genius.

PIP
I like to tinker.

HARPER
Wow... No offense, but... how old are you?

PIP
I'm 19. But everybody's gotta start somewhere, right?

HARPER
(smiles) Yeah, guess so.

KILLIAN
And last, but certainly not least, our friends at Lemoore were kind enough to loan us our dear

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN (cont'd)
Lieutenant Commander Adrienne
Scarlett. If the stories are true,
she bites. Given what you're about
to go through, you'll need it.

beat.

KILLIAN (cont'd)
Well! Now that we're all best
friends... I think it's about time
you girls get to know why you're
here. Shall we?

3 SCENE THREE

INT. Cape Canaveral Laboratory - DAY

We hear the sound of Killian placing his palm against a locking mechanism, and a musical beep and a series of low clicks as the locks disengage. The sound is followed by the mechanical whoosh and hiss of a set of high security doors being opened.

The doors open to reveal a laboratory, huge, sterile, and completely empty except for a large shape on a lab table, covered by a tarpaulin.

HARPER
Whoah.

KILLIAN
Whoah indeed. Step lively ladies.
You won't want to miss this.

HARPER
What is this place?

EDESSA
That's classifi-

ATLAS
One of the smaller research labs at
Canaveral. Probably used for
developing tech, or examining
bio-matter the astronauts bring
back for close study.

PIP
Bio-matter? What, you mean...
aliens?

(CONTINUED)

MARINA

Bingo.

ATLAS

Funguses and single-celled organisms mostly.

HARPER

Space fungus? You're joking, right? Aliens aren't real.

ATLAS

No? Mmm. It looks like I have some papers to re-write.

SCARLETT

What kind of doctor did you say you were again?

ATLAS

I didn't.

KILLIAN

If I could just re-direct your attention for just a moment...

They gather around the lab table, and with a flourish, Killian pulls the tarp off, revealing the thing underneath.

HARPER

(overlapping) Jesus Christ!

PIP

(overlapping) (shrieks)

SCARLETT

(overlapping) What the hell?!

ATLAS

Killian...

SCARLETT

What is that thing?

KILLIAN

This is the reason you're all here. Oh don't worry. He's quite dead.

ATLAS

(circling the table, studying the beast) My god... Look at the size of it. It must be, what, nine feet long?

(CONTINUED)

EDESSA

Nine and a half.

ATLAS

And so pale. It's practically translucent. Like it'd never seen the sunlight. And... No eyes...

HARPER

Looks like someone shaved a wolf and left it in the bath too long.

MARINA

That's what I said. Could be a hoax?

ATLAS

No... Look at these shoulder joints.

MARINA

What about them?

ATLAS

Well for one thing, they're in entirely the wrong place for any canine. This thing would move like a spider. And have you ever seen a wolf with teeth the size of a human hand? And look here! How the claws are slightly webbed in between... It must be a powerful predator, but it's like nothing I've ever seen before... No... this... this is something altogether... new. (beat) He's a beautiful specimen.

PIP

Okay... Okay... Is that-? That's an alien, right? Tell me that's an alien.

KILLIAN

I hate to break your heart, but it is not an alien. He is... very much terrestrial.

HARPER

What is it?

KILLIAN

We call him The Hound.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Where did it come from?

KILLIAN

You tell me.

Harper laughs. When Killian doesn't, she realizes he's serious.

HARPER

What, me? I don't-

KILLIAN

That's what you're here for. That's the fun part. You're the expert on this sort of thing. Somebody's going to give me an answer, and it might as well be you.

HARPER

I mean, I've read a lot of mythology, but I've never seen anything like that.

PIP

Are you SURE it's not an alien?

EDESSA

It washed up on the beach down by the Canaveral launch pad at around 0200 hours this morning. Some patrollers found it and brought it back to the base.

KILLIAN

Their superior called me, and I called you.

MARINA

That's all we know.

KILLIAN

Now I want the rest.

PIP

The rest?

KILLIAN

Yes. We've had some... interesting reports coming in for the past few months. More interesting than they have been in half a century. Disturbances. Boats disappearing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN (cont'd)
Odd sightings. But this is the first proof that's turned up. Something's out there, and I want to know what. That thing came out of the sea. That's where my answers are. And that's where I'm sending all of you.

HARPER
What?

KILLIAN
The ocean, Ms. Bennett. The very, very bottom. Nobody can handle it better than you four. And I want this cleared up. I want to know what this is. I want to know where it came from, and what else is down there.

EDESSA
We've been meaning to put up an expedition like this for YEARS, but frankly, we just haven't had the time, or the budget, until Mr. Rhys offered his resources...

KILLIAN
Which means you lucky ladies get to be the first! (pause) We've taken the liberty to have your things brought down to the docks. Your boat leaves in an hour. (off their collective look of disbelief and dismay) Cheer up, ladies. This is going to be fun!

4 SCENE FOUR

INT. Killian's Office - Moment's Later

We hear the sounds of Killian at his desk. Moments later, there is a knock on the door.

KILLIAN
Come in.

Lt. Scarlett enters, somewhat hesitantly. We hear Killian put down his pen.

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN (cont'd)

Ah... Lt. Scarlett. I thought you'd be busy down at the docks, what with your imminent departure. What can I do for you?

She sits down.

SCARLETT

I'm... I'm sorry to bother you, sir-

KILLIAN

Bother me? You couldn't if you tried. I'm here for you, remember Adrienne? So. Tell me. What's on your mind?

SCARLETT

I have some... concerns.

KILLIAN

About your mission objective?

SCARLETT

No... No... It's... It's not that.

KILLIAN

Then what is it?

SCARLETT

... It's the crew.

beat.

KILLIAN

Ah. (pause) I see.

SCARLETT

It's not that I don't think- I mean, they all seem very... capable. But...

KILLIAN

... but?

SCARLETT

(takes a deep breath.) I don't want Ms. Campbell or Ms. Bennett on my crew, sir. (pause) They're too... young. I'm not a babysitter. And I can't guarantee their safety on a trip like this.

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN

No one is asking you to.

SCARLETT

That is exactly what you are asking me to do. If I'm going to be commanding this expedition, it means I'm responsible for whatever happens out there. And I can't do my job if I'm spending the whole day chasing after a couple of kids, knowing that if anyone screws up, we're all going to drown. I don't know if this is going to work, with half a crew who legally, can't even go to a bar.

KILLIAN

I'm sure Harper and Pippa are more than capable of looking after themselves. (pause) But, if that's how you feel... We'll find someone else.

SCARLETT

Thank you, sir.

KILLIAN

It's a shame. I really had hoped you were the woman for the job.

SCARLETT

Sir?

KILLIAN

I thought you would've leaped at the opportunity. Second chances and all that.

SCARLETT

No... Sir, I-... That's not what I meant-

KILLIAN

Then what did you mean? (pause) Let me make myself abundantly clear, lieutenant... This is the crew you've got. Now, you can take these... admittedly young, but very capable women. Or I can find someone else who will. Will that inconvenience me? Yes. But it's no skin off my back. And I'm happy to do it. If that's what you want?

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT
... I... No, sir.

KILLIAN
Good. Don't worry. I'm sure you'll
warm up to them soon enough.

Killian moves back to his work.

SCARLETT
I can't take care of them.

KILLIAN
(patient, icy sweet, and
dangerously patronizing)
Adrienne... What I asked you to do,
was to get me viable, useful,
information. Whatever you choose to
do or not do with your crew is
entirely your business. (he smiles)
The mission is everything. First
law of the sea. You understand?

SCARLETT
... yes, sir.

KILLIAN
Excellent! Now! As I recall, you've
got a boat to catch. In... thirty
minutes. Better hop to it!

SCARLETT
Yes, sir.

The door suddenly opens, revealing Dr. Atlas.

ATLAS
Oh... Commander Scarlett. I didn't
realize-

KILLIAN
It's perfectly alright, Natalya. We
were just finishing up.

It's a slap of a dismissal, but Scarlett gets up just the
same.

SCARLETT
Thank you for your... time. Sir.

KILLIAN
Always happy to be of service...
And Adrienne... I'm just a phone
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KILLIAN (cont'd)
call away, if you need me. Remember that. So feel free to call. Any time. And relax! You've done this before, remember? I expect great things!

SCARLETT
Yes, sir.

KILLIAN
Good... Happy voyaging!

There is silence as Scarlett leaves the room. The door shuts forcefully behind her.

ATLAS
You wanted to see me, darling?

KILLIAN
Yes. Sit down, Natalya... There are a few things you should know before you leave.

FADE TO:

5 SCENE FIVE

INT. Cape Canaveral Laboratory - Meanwhile

Harper stands alone, staring at The Hound. Edessa and Marina approach her.

EDESSA
Ms. Bennett. A word?

MARINA
How are you enjoying Canaveral?

HARPER
Fine... You know, it's-

EDESSA
Not what you expected?

HARPER
Not even close.

MARINA
And Mr. Rhys? What do you think of him?

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

I wouldn't even know where to begin answering that.

MARINA

Neither do we.

EDESSA

You know, he single-handedly put this whole expedition together in about eight hours? I think that's got to be some sort of record.

HARPER

Wait, I thought you two were his associates... like... business partners or something?

The agents exchange a look.

EDESSA

... no...

MARINA

We only met Mr. Rhys a few hours ago.

EDESSA

We were assigned to monitor these proceedings once The Hound was pulled off the shore.

MARINA

We don't know much more than you do. And what's more, he's deliberately shutting us out.

EDESSA

If we were following protocol, one of us would be going with you.

MARINA

But we're not. We don't even have access to the case file.

EDESSA

Mr. Rhys has a tendency not to do things by the book. So, we were hoping... maybe you could help us.

HARPER

Me?

(CONTINUED)

MARINA

You'll be out there, right at ground zero, gathering information... experiencing it all first hand. And if you just so happened to let some of that information come our way-

EDESSA

We'd be incredibly grateful.

HARPER

You... want me to spy?

EDESSA

Well, that's a really-

MARINA

Yes.

HARPER

... why?

MARINA

That's-

HARPER

Classified. Right. ... well... That's... flattering. I think? But I'm not exactly spy material. Can't keep a secret.

MARINA

Well. I think we all know THAT'S not true.

EDESSA

Listen, we get it. It was a shot in the dark. But if you change your mind (hands her a card)... that's my personal line. So if you need help, or find something out. Or... anything...

The door bangs open. Pip calls from the doorway.

PIP

The submarine is here! Harper, are you coming?

EDESSA

Think about it.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER
Yeah... thanks...

EDESSA
Anytime.

PIP
Harper!

HARPER
Coming!

We hear her footsteps recede, and the door closes.

MARINA
Was that supposed to be your
imitation of flirting? I didn't
realize you had feelings!

EDESSA
Shut up.

MARINA
Is that wise? She'll probably wind
up dead by the end of all this.

EDESSA
Probably. But, if it gives her a
little extra incentive to give us a
call...

MARINA
Charlie, you're just not that
charming.

EDESSA
Gee, thanks Si. ... Think she'll do
it?

MARINA
(considers, then) No. Not unless
something changes.

EDESSA
Something always does.

MARINA
We'll see.

FADE TO:

6

SCENE SIX

EXT. The Docks - DAY

The crew stands on a dock, staring down at the U.S.S. Rusalka. What might once have been a proud, beautiful and top of the line submarine now looks like little more than a large, grey tin can. Waves crash in the stunned silence.

HARPER

You have got to be kidding me.

PIP

It's beautiful!

HARPER

(she MUST be out of her mind)
That's not the word I would have used for it. Maybe... death-trap?

ATLAS

Is that... The Ophelia?

SCARLETT

No. This is the Rusalka.

ATLAS

It's The Ophelia.

HARPER

What's the Ophelia?

SCARLETT

She used to be the Ophelia. She's been renovated. Repurposed and renamed... courtesy of Mr. Rhys.

HARPER

What's the Ophelia?

SCARLETT

The Ophelia was one of the best submarines in the German Navy, back in World War Two.

ATLAS

Until the captain panicked at the first sign of trouble, and rammed her into the bottom of the sea. Not before he rammed it into a few other things, of course.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Other things?

ATLAS

Namely the rest of his fleet.

PIP

Didn't Ophelia drown?

ATLAS

Yes. In this case, twice.

SCARLETT

Alright, listen up. This... boat... is what we've got, okay? You don't like it, stay here, or feel free to swim out to the drop coordinates.

She takes a moment, sizing them all up and studying their faces.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

... Okay. First things first, I want to set some ground rules. I don't know how many of you have been on a sub before, but one way or another, you're gonna learn fast. You do as you're told, when you're told. We work hard, and we work together, because if we don't... if we don't, we all pay the price. Second, and I want to be very clear about this; We are a team. Not a family. Which means, I'm not anybody's mother. As long as I'm in charge, this is a military operation, not a day at the beach. Okay?

Everyone nods. Scarlett is palpably relieved. Hell, she might even crack a smile.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Okay. Alright then, ladies... Let's get to work.

They start to head towards the submarine. Harper runs ahead slightly to catch Scarlett's attention.

HARPER

Uh, captain?

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

Commander.

HARPER

Right... Sorry... Commander. So...
About this... drop location. Where
is it, exactly?

SCARLETT

There's only one place to go if you
want to find a sea-monster, Ms.
Bennett. Haven't you ever heard of
the Bermuda Triangle?

FADE OUT.

END.