

Here Be Dragons - Episode Nine

"The Ahklut"

by

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Black Lace and Laser Beams
Productions

SCENE ONE

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

The crew is gathered together in Ops. Scarlett is standing over Harper's shoulder, studying the navigational display.

SCARLETT
Check it again.

HARPER
Commander-

SCARLETT
Check. The charts. Again.

HARPER
(sighs) Running navigational
software and sonar sweep... Again.

We hear her typing, flicking a few switches.

HARPER (cont'd)
... Sonar is still nonfunctional.
(under her breath) No surprise
there. (louder) And analogue record
of our coordinates is the same.

SCARLETT
Officer Campbell, what's the status
on that diagnostic?

PIP
Ship's computer system is running
normally, commander. Ophelia's run
three self checks, and I've done
two manually. There's no problem
with the Rusalka's hardware or
software.

SCARLETT
There HAS to be. Look at these
coordinates! Look. Right now, we
should be here. See? There should
be islands, here, and here.
Somewhere to stock up on supplies,
refuel. But you look out the
window? Nothing. Just open ocean.
We're approximately 390,000 square
miles further south than we should
be. Which means we've been running
off course for... days. Maybe
weeks. And Ophelia hasn't caught

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT (cont'd)
it. (beat. for once, not in a rage)
It has to be a problem with
engineering. I need you to tell me
what you did.

PIP
I... I-

ATLAS
Pip didn't do anything. I did.

PIP
Dr. Atlas-

ATLAS
It's alright. (turning to Scarlett)
... I've been making adjustments to
the heading for the past few weeks.
Every night on the Graveyard Shift.

beat.

SCARLETT
... You? ...What?

BOOM! The whole ship shakes and there is a crunching,
scraping sound as the bottom of the hull hits something.

ATLAS
Is everyone okay?!

There is a general groan of ascent as the crew pushes
themselves up from the floor.

HARPER
What the hell was that? Did we hit
something?

PIP
It... it sounded like we've run
aground.

We hear a powering down sound. The lights flicker and die.

HARPER
Whoah! Okay, who turned out the
lights.

PIP
Ophelia's rebooting her systems...
Automatic damage check, it's a
safety precaution I installed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PIP (cont'd)
 Everything but life support shuts
 down after a bad crash so nothing
 blows up. She should be coming back
 online in a few minutes...

There is an eerie silence as they wait. Even the engine is quiet.

ATLAS
 I think we should take a look
 outside. See what it was we hit.
 Get a sense of the damage. ...
 Commander?

HARPER
 Commander Scarlett, are you okay?

SCARLETT
 (deadly calm) What do you mean
 you've been adjusting our heading?

beat.

ATLAS
 You really want to do this... now?
 (pause) Pip. Harper. Why don't you
 two go check out the crash. We'll
 be with you in a moment.

The Wonder Twins exchange a glance, then leave the room. We hear the door close behind them. There is a brief pause.

ATLAS (cont'd)
 Alright commander. Where would you
 like to start?

FADE TO:

2 SCENE TWO

INT. Corridor, U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

Harper and Pip are standing beneath the entry hatch,
 flashlights in hand.

PIP
 Are you sure about this?

HARPER
 Sure. We weren't submerged when we
 crashed. And we can get a better
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARPER (cont'd)
look at the damage from outside.
It'll at least give us a bit of
light. Hold the flashlight steady
while I open the hatch, will you?

PIP
There was nothing on the radar...

HARPER
Probably just a reef.

PIP
Maybe... (quiet for a moment)
Harper, do you think Commander
Scarlett-

HARPER
Was right? No. I think we're in a
boat that should've been
decommissioned before we were born,
and things are bound to break when
you try to integrate technologies
from different centuries. Don't
listen to Scarlett, okay? She's
just... I don't know... Stressed.
Things have been weird lately. But
you're doing fine. Things break,
but that's why we have you around.
She knows that.

She shivers.

Though I don't think it'd kill you
to do something about the heat.
It's freezing in here.

PIP
The reboot probably shut off the
central heating. But it shouldn't
be THIS cold.

HARPER
Yeah, well, as soon as we're done
outside, I'm getting a sweater.

Harper pushes open the hatch and she and Pip look out. We
hear wind moving across a deserted plane.

PIP
... whoah...

HARPER

... How far off course did Scarlett say we were?

CUT TO:

3

SCENE THREE

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - Meanwhile

ATLAS

WEEKS of research and calculations! All of the notes I've been acquiring, and YOU decide to throw it all down the drain! And for what? To satisfy your army of insecurities?

SCARLETT

We're here to track down your boyfriend's little pets, how EXACTLY are we supposed to do that if we don't cover every square inch of the territory?

ATLAS

But we have a brilliant opportunity to do so much more than that, AND YOU ARE MISSING IT!

SCARLETT

Oh, then BY ALL MEANS, do enlighten me doctor!

The door opens. Harper enters, unnoticed by either of them.

HARPER

Guys...

ATLAS

The fact of the matter is that the closer we have gotten to the center of the Bermuda Triangle, the more of these monsters we find. I have a theory that they are all concentrating there for a reason. And if we can just-

Scarlett starts laughing. She's either having an epiphany or a total breakdown. Possibly both, and it's not pretty.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Guys?

ATLAS

It's. Not. Funny.

SCARLETT

You're right! It's not. You're out of your mind! And you're either so arrogant, or think I'm so stupid that you honestly thought you could get away with hijacking my ship, to go off chasing fairy tales-

ATLAS

Well you'd know all about that, wouldn't you, captain.

HARPER

HEY!

SCARLETT AND ATLAS

WHAT?!

HARPER

You need to come outside.

SCARLETT

Are we sinking?

HARPER

Not exactly...

CUT TO:

4 SCENE FOUR

EXT. The Wasteland - DAY

The crew stares out at what looks like hundreds of miles of ice.

ATLAS

What the hell...

PIP

Harper thinks it's an iceberg. I think it's Antarctica.

ATLAS

(dazed and only half listening)
That's not possible...

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

But it's pretty cool, right? Check
it out!

Harper hops down onto the ice, her feet crunching in the
snow.

ATLAS

Harper! Get back here!

PIP

It's okay! It's totally safe, we've
already tested it.

ATLAS

It is NOT safe! You don't know if
that thing's solid or not! How far
it goes, or what's out in that
snow! You don't even know what it's
MADE of!

PIP

Ice?

ATLAS

We're in the tropics! There are no
icebergs or blizzards in the
tropics! (rounding on Scarlett) And
are you EVER going to have any sort
of opinion on this, or am I going
to have to deal with this all
myself?!

SCARLETT

This is your fault.

ATLAS

What?!

SCARLETT

You. You did this.

ATLAS

Yes. I made an iceberg and a
snowstorm appear out of thin air.
Brilliant deduction.

SCARLETT

Look at where we are, Atlas! You.
You and your stupid theories- You
scheme, and you screw around, and
for what? You've wasted time!
You've wasted resources! You went

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT (cont'd)

over my head, and your little games have nearly gotten us killed. And now this! You DELIBERATELY sailed us into danger BECAUSE YOU FELT LIKE IT, and have been doing so WITHOUT my consent for I don't even want to THINK about how long, and with the equipment on the fritz-... Do you even KNOW where we are?!

beat.

Yeah. That's what I was afraid of. A NORMAL person might have taken that into consideration. (Captain Mode Activated) We're turning back. As soon as Ophelia's done rebooting, we're heading back. Starting over.

ATLAS

But-

SCARLETT

END OF DISCUSSION. Everybody back inside.

Atlas doesn't move.

(warning) I said back inside.

ATLAS

(through gritted teeth) I will not let you throw away all of my hard work, just because YOU feel mildly uncomfortable.

SCARLETT

MILDLY UNCOMFORTABLE?!

ATLAS

Yes. Put your big girl panties on, Adrienne. This is what you signed up for. What exactly did you think this little adventure was all about? Stop stalling!

SCARLETT

I'm doing my job!

ATLAS

No, I'M doing your job. Unless otherwise explicitly stated in your military training manual what you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS (cont'd)
should do, YOU just stand by and
bully the crew. So do us all a
favor, and stay out of my way.

a very long beat.

Atlas has touched a nerve, and Scarlett is actually hurt.

ATLAS (cont'd)
(startled at her own viciousness)
I-... Command-... Adrienne, I-...
I'm... sorry. I didn't-

SCARLETT
... You know what? Fine.

She hops down onto the ice.

HARPER
Commander Scarlett?

SCARLETT
Fine.

ATLAS
Adrienne, wait!

SCARLETT
Nope! You want my job so bad? Keep
it!

Scarlett walks off into the gathering snowstorm. Atlas jumps
down from the ship, followed by Pip.

ATLAS
Adrienne, come back!

HARPER
Where are you going?!

PIP
Commander!

ATLAS
She'll freeze to death out there.

HARPER
I'll get her.

She doesn't wait for an answer, and takes off after
Scarlett.

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS
(exasperated) Harper- HARPER! Get
back here!

PIP
... are we just going to let them-

ATLAS
No. Come on. We'll all freeze
together.

PIP
Or not at all... Preferably not at
all.

In the distance, we hear Harper shriek.

PIP (cont'd)
Harper?!

They run to her.

PIP (cont'd)
Harper? Where-

HARPER
I'm here! I'm here, I'm okay.
Careful, there's a ledge or-... I
just slipped.

ATLAS
Let me see... You're alright.
Nothing broken. This is why we
don't go racing off in the middle
of a snowstorm.

HARPER
I lost her.

ATLAS
That's alright. Pip, get Harper
back to the Rusalka in one piece,
she's soaked. Make sure she
changes, and then we can work on
how to... to... Pippa, are you
listening to me?

PIP
It's a footprint.

HARPER
What?

(CONTINUED)

PIP

The ledge.

ATLAS

It's a ditch.

PIP

Only if you're sitting in it. Look.

Atlas and Harper climb out of the depression in the ice.
beat.

ATLAS

That... is a very big paw print.

HARPER

... it's... huge...

PIP

What IS it?

ATLAS

Don't look at me.

HARPER

I mean... There's a story...
A ghost story really. Something to
explain bodies in the snow, tracks
in the ice, people who don't come
home... The Inuit people have this
legend about this giant orca, that
shape-shifts into a wolf so it can
hunt on land and sea... It's
supposed to be the ultimate
predator. A brutal, merciless
hunter-tracker, that crawls out of
the sea devours anything it comes
across... They call it the Akhlut.

In the distance, we hear the strange, oddly distorted howl
of a wolf.

ATLAS

You two get back to the ship.

PIP

What about-

ATLAS

I will find Commander Scarlett. But
you two-

(CONTINUED)

HARPER
We're not leaving.

ATLAS
Harper-

Again, the "wolf" howls. It's much, MUCH closer.
beat.

ATLAS (cont'd)
Okay... Okay. On second though, you
two stay by me. Stay very...
very... close.

FADE TO:

5 SCENE FIVE

EXT. The Wasteland - DAY

Scarlett trudges through the snow. She'd be shivering, but her rage keeps her warm.

SCARLETT
Stupid... Useless... (a truly terrible impression of Atlas) "Oh, look at me! I'm Natalya Atlas! I wear leather jackets and practice medicine like a serial killer with a hacksaw! Nobody's smarter than me! What's that you say, Commander Scarlett? Be a reasonable second in command and just do what you tell me so we can complete our mission objectives without killing anyone? Hm... Well nobody else on the crew is doing that, so I'm not going to either! I think I'll get us all lost and crash the submarine into a freaking iceberg and let everyone freeze to death!" (dropping the impression) Yeah. See how that works out for you, doc. I'll take my chances out on the ice. There's a great big mountain up ahead... I'll just... find a cave. Go ice fishing. Spend the rest of my life trapped on this stupid frozen ball of crap. But I'll outlive you, that's for sure. I'll be a hermit. But I'll be a live hermit. YOU HEAR THAT? So. Screw you. I win.

(CONTINUED)

Scarlett pauses. Did she hear something? There's a faint crunching sound. Footsteps on the ice?
... hello? Atlas?

More crunching. Something is definitely following her.
What, you're just gonna hide behind snow banks, is that it? I can hear you out there! Come out where I can see you! ... Well?! ... This isn't funny you know! It's cold, and I can't see, enough with the games!
ATLAS!

We hear the howl of a wolf.
(realizing her mistake, very quiet)
Oh sh-

HARPER
Commander!

Scarlett screams.

SCARLETT
HARPER! Jesus! Don't DO that!

HARPER
You're okay!

Harper practically jumps on Scarlett, wrapping her up in a bear hug that nearly throws them both of balance.

SCARLETT
Oof! Harper, I-... (softens) I'm fine. I just... Needed some air. (trying to extricate herself) Get off. I'm... not much of a hugger. ... So you can let go now.

HARPER
It's not a hug. It's a safety precaution. It's freezing out here.

SCARLETT
... I'm not going anywhere.

HARPER
I know. ... Are you-... Are you sure you're okay.

SCARLETT
... Yeah. Sure. (off Harper's look) ... I will be. (beat) But I mean... it's all going wrong, isn't it. I
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT (cont'd)
did something and-... It's all going to hell. Everything is so... out of my control... The ship, the mission, the crew... Somebody's going to get themselves killed out here. And it's my fault.

HARPER
Scarlett... none of us would be alive right now if it weren't for you. I'd've drowned on like, day one. Atlas and Pip would've been eaten by sirens... You know that, right? We wouldn't be here without you.

SCARLETT
No offense, Harper? We're standing on an iceberg, where logically speaking, no icebergs should be. Ever. So... "here" isn't exactly where I want to be, and it's not where any competent leader would have landed her crew. Which means I screwed up. Again.

HARPER
Adrienne...

SCARLETT
I'm sick of everything going wrong.

Atlas and Pip come running up through the snow.

PIP
We heard shouting! Is everyone okay?

SCARLETT
Yeah. Yeah, that was me... Just got a little turned around in the snow. I was just trying to head back. Harper found me.

Atlas and Scarlett look at one another.

ATLAS
Adrienne, I-

SCARLETT
Forget it.

ATLAS

I'm sorry.

SCARLETT

... Yeah. Thanks.

HARPER

We should head back. I don't think this storm is letting up any time soon.

ATLAS

We won't make it back to the ship before dark. Temperature's already dropping, our best bet might be to find shelter out here.

SCARLETT

There's a mountain up ahead. I was thinking-... There might be a cave or something. We'll wait for the storm to pass.

PIP

Um... Commander?

SCARLETT

What is it Pip?

PIP

I don't think we should go that way.

SCARLETT

Why not?

ATLAS

Harper's been telling us ghost stories. It's nothing.

HARPER

Monster stories. And if you thought it was nothing, why didn't you send us back to the ship?

ATLAS

I didn't want you to be eaten by wolves. Or, more likely, to fall into a snow bank, or ice fissure.

HARPER

Yeah, okay.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

What are you talking about?

PIP

We found tracks. Big ones. Moving in this general direction. And there was this noise.

SCARLETT

(uneasy) That loud, creepy howling?

ATLAS

Oh, I was really hoping you were going to say 'That's just the wind.'

HARPER

We think there might be an akhlut out here.

SCARLETT

Gesundheit.

HARPER

Giant ancient Inuit wolf monster.

SCARLETT

Okay! Shelter. I vote we head back to the ship. Because guns and an engine. Atlas, you're not armed are you?

ATLAS

Not at the moment.

SCARLETT

Then you lead the way, and I'll cover the rear.

ATLAS

With what exactly?

SCARLETT

Pistol. ... What? It's not much, but it's better than a snowball.

PIP

Commander? Can we get moving? Please?

SCARLETT

Aww, are your toesies getting cold?

(CONTINUED)

PIP

Yes... And that mountain? Just moved.

They all freeze. For a moment, there's only the sound of the wind. And then a low, shuddering boom as a giant foot takes a giant step. Ice cracks under its weight. The ground shakes. And we hear the loud, bone chilling howl of a wolf.

We hear Scarlett rack her gun.

SCARLETT

Go. Now. Move fast, but stay together.

PIP

But-

SCARLETT

Predators aim for the smallest of the group and stragglers. DO NOT separate. And don't leave a woman behind.

ATLAS

In this storm?! We can't possibly outrun-

SCARLETT

I didn't ask you for statistics doctor, I asked you to have my back. Can you do that?

ATLAS

... yes. Always.

SCARLETT

Do you know the way back?

ATLAS

I-

SCARLETT

Doctor!

ATLAS

Yes! Yes.

SCARLETT

Good. Just... back away... slowly... And on my signal... We run.

(CONTINUED)

Another booming step. More cracking ice. We hear the akhlut sniffing, like a giant dog. It lets out a low snarl.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Back away... Back away... It can't see any better than we can...

PIP

You don't know that! It could have super blizzard vision!

SCARLETT

Pippa... shut up...

HARPER

Nice doggy... Nice giant murder puppy... good boy...

The akhlut howls.

SCARLETT

RUN!

The girls turn and flee, their feet crunching in the snow. We hear the akhlut snarl and bound after them, its giant feet pounding the ice.

ATLAS

I see it! I see the Rusalka!

PIP

We're not going to make it!

SCARLETT

We're going to make it! Keep moving!

There is a loud snapping sound.

HARPER

Commander! The ice!

PIP

It's breaking!

SCARLETT

Keep moving!

Louder snaps and crumbling noises. The iceberg is breaking up under their feet.

SCARLETT (cont'd)
Go! GO! GO!!!

HARPER
Adrienne!

SCARLETT
We're gonna make it!

The akhlut lets out a loud, terrifying howl. It leaps into the air, and we hear it come crashing down onto the ice. The iceberg shatters. Again the akhlut howls as it goes crashing into the sea. There is a loud splash, the sound of bubbles... silence. The crew is breathing hard, staring into the giant rift in the ice.

ATLAS
See? I told you... it wasn't solid...

SCARLETT
Is everyone okay?

PIP
Yeah... Yeah...

HARPER
That was WAY too close.

PIP
It just... went right through the ice. It fell right through the ice.

ATLAS
Is it dead?

HARPER
Don't count on it.

There is a moment's pause, but nothing happens.

SCARLETT
Come on... Let's get back to the ship.

As we FADE to the next scene, there is the muted scream of an orca...

6

SCENE SIX

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - NIGHT

Scarlett is sitting alone by the navigational controls. The door opens and Atlas enters.

beat.

ATLAS

Commander Scarlett. I thought you were in bed.

SCARLETT

Out for a midnight stroll, doctor?

ATLAS

Something like that.

beat.

SCARLETT

You've got a lot of nerve.

ATLAS

Adrienne-

SCARLETT

Don't. You really think I'm going to let you anywhere near these controls ever again? After the day we've just had?

ATLAS

I wish you could understand.

SCARLETT

Well, I can't. And you haven't exactly been forthcoming with answers. You say you know better, hell you've got the balls to go around acting like you're in command around here, so you've got to know SOMETHING. So come on. Share with the class. What the hell is going on?

Silence.

Scarlett lets out a mirthless laugh.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Fine. You want to be that way?
Fine. Do what you like. Get us
killed. You know what's best,
right?

ATLAS

I'm not-

SCARLETT

No. I obviously can't reel you in.
So I'm game. I'll go along for the
ride. You've obvious got some Grand
Master Plan. So just this once,
I'll let you have it your way.

Scarlett starts for the day, then pauses.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

You don't like me very much, do
you?

ATLAS

I like you fine. I just-...

SCARLETT

What?

ATLAS

... I know about you, "captain."
I've seen the reports. Your file.
And he was wrong. Killian was wrong
to choose you.

SCARLETT

If you want to lead this mission so
badly, then why don't you?

ATLAS

I could. Easily. And I think we
both know the girls would be happy
to follow me...

She sits down in front of navigation. We hear her making
adjustments to the heading.

But you're wrong. That's not what
Killian asked me to do. And I've
absolutely no interest in mutiny.
If I did, you'd be dead.

SCARLETT

Is that a threat?

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS

Just a fact. You might not like it, but it's the truth. I don't WANT to see you fail. I consider you my friend. But this mission means more to me than you do. I think Killian made a bad call. I don't blame you for that. But you're out of your depth. You don't know what you're up against. And the way you're running things, it's starting to look like failure is your only option.

SCARLETT

Unless I do things your way.

ATLAS

Unless we work together. I'm no leader. I'm not trying to take your place. I'm here to... facilitate. But there are some things-... I need you to trust me.

SCARLETT

I did. Now... I-... (she sighs)
Goodnight, doctor.

ATLAS

Goodnight, captain.

SCARLETT

Atlas?

ATLAS

Yes?

SCARLETT

Don't call me that. Ever.

ATLAS

... (smiles) Yes, commander.
Goodnight.

SCARLETT

(uneasy) Yeah. Night.

Scarlett leaves. The door closes. Atlas goes back to the controls.

FADE OUT.

7

EPILOGUE

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - Meanwhile

Atlas is sitting by the console, making small adjustments to the computer. We hear the door open, but Atlas doesn't look up.

beat.

PIP

Why did you lie to me?

ATLAS

(dryly) If you want an honest answer, you're going to need to be far more specific.

Pip sits down beside her.

PIP

(quietly) You said it would be alright if we adjusted the ship's course. You said we were following orders.

ATLAS

And we were. Just not commander Scarlett's.

PIP

Why didn't you tell me?

ATLAS

Because it might have changed your mind. And I enjoyed having your company. The Graveyard Shift is a lot less... depressing when there's someone to talk to. (pause) Are you angry with me?

PIP

I don't know... (changing topic)
Are we really lost?

Atlas considers Pip for a moment.

ATLAS

... no. But for now, I think it might be best that the commander not know that.

(CONTINUED)

PIP

Why?

ATLAS

Because she won't like where we're headed. And she's a proud woman... doesn't like to accept anyone else's help. I think she finds it threatening. And frankly, it would take too long to explain, and I'm not sure she'd understand anyway.

PIP

You told me.

ATLAS

Not much. But that's different. You were made for this. You have a better understanding.

PIP

So where are we headed.

ATLAS

South. Warmer waters. Weirder territory. I have a strong feeling we'll find Killian's hounds there. Amongst other things. (pause) How much of this have you told Harper?

PIP

Nothing.

ATLAS

She's your best friend.

PIP

You told me not to.

ATLAS

That I did... Because there's a very good chance that she'd tell Scarlett. And then-

PIP

Adventure's over.

ATLAS

Precisely. And I can't-... Killian would hate to see that happen.

(CONTINUED)

PIP

Are you two-

ATLAS

You want to think VERY carefully about the phrasing of that question.

PIP

... you guys have worked together for a long time.

ATLAS

A very long time. He's my best friend. And this project is... probably the closest thing either of us will ever have to a child. (pause) I realize I'm being... unfair. Underhanded. But it's very important that we get this right. We've been working towards this since we were your age, at least. And chances like this don't just happen. It's bad enough Killian's not here, I'm not going to lose everything just to let Scarlett feel better about being in charge.

PIP

... you and Killian aren't separated that often, are you?

ATLAS

(a little surprised) What makes you say that?

PIP

You're homesick.

beat.

ATLAS

... Yes. I suppose I am.

FADE OUT.

END.