

Here Be Dragons - Episode Seven

"Keera's Dance - Part One"

by

Jordan Cobb

Black Lace and Laser Beams
Productions

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SCENE ONE

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - GRAVEYARD SHIFT

Pip drags Harper onto the bridge.

HARPER
Pip, slow down!

PIP
We can't! We might have missed it
already.

HARPER
(yawning) Missed what? The sunrise?
It's two AM, this couldn't this
wait 'til I was awake?

PIP
Nope! Too important.

We hear Pip adjusting the controls.

HARPER
What are you even doing up this
late? Atlas hasn't been reading to
you again, has she?

PIP
No! ... Maybe... Nevermind. Look
the point is, I was sitting up
here, monitoring the sensors-

HARPER
You have got to stop letting her
doing that.

PIP
Will you just shut up a sec, and
listen? I'm trying to tell you I
saw something! There's somebody
outside!

HARPER
Outside... the submarine?

PIP
Yes.

HARPER
You saw a person outside the
submarine. Are you sure you're
feeling okay?

(CONTINUED)

PIP

I'm not crazy! She's-... She's there! Right there. See? On the monitor. She's still right there. Look!

HARPER

Pip, that's... that's not possible. We're almost 100 meters underwater, in the middle of the ocean. Nobody could survive-

PIP

I'm serious! She's waving at me!

HARPER

Pip, there is no way-

PIP

LOOK!

HARPER

Alright! Alright... Where-

Harper moves to look at Pip's monitor.

beat.

HARPER (cont'd)

That's... But... That's not possible...

PIP

I know...

HARPER

That's... she's...

CUT TO:

2

SCENE TWO

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - Moments Later

The whole of the crew is now gathered around Pip's monitor.

beat.

SCARLETT

That's a mermaid.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Yup.

SCARLETT

I'm not going insane? I'm not still sleeping... that's... that's a real live mermaid.

ATLAS

It would seem so...

SCARLETT

Okay... OKAY. ... Okay... Yeah.
I've gotta sit down.

HARPER

Look at all that purple and red in her tail... the way it bleeds together when she moves... like paint in the water...

ATLAS

It's like she's dancing...

PIP

(quietly) She's beautiful.

They are all silent for a moment, entranced.

PIP (cont'd)

She's waving again. Commander... I think she wants us to follow her.

ATLAS

Is that wise?

PIP

Wise?! Look at her... That's a mermaid! When was the last time you saw a real live mermaid? Okay, for you, probably like, last February. But when are the rest of us ever going to get a chance to do something like this again?

HARPER

I mean... technically speaking, as resident sea monster expert? This is sort of exactly the kind of thing we're supposed to do, right? Study sea monsters?

(CONTINUED)

PIP

And we DO have another 36 hours
before we need to resurface.

ATLAS

You two have been rehearsing this,
haven't you?

HARPER

I have no idea what you're talking
about.

PIP

We're just concerned about the
mission.

ATLAS

Smooth. Well... (glances at
Scarlett) they do have a point. She
does seem particularly eager for us
to follow. And it is a golden
opportunity.

SCARLETT

36 hours is plenty of time for a
little exploration. We can easily
track our way back here, if we
don't like what we find...

PIP

Oh man, this is SO COOL!!!

HARPER

The Rusalka Gang! Mermaid Chasers
Extraordinaire!

PIP

The coolest monster hunters under
the sea!

SCARLETT

Pipe down, Wonder Twins! I will
turn this sub around! (more to
herself than the others) Do NOT
make me regret this.

ATLAS

All hands ready, commander.

SCARLETT

Alright, doctor... Take us in.

We hear Atlas adjust the heading.

As we FADE OUT, there is the distant, eerie echo of a laugh...

3 SCENE THREE

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - Some Time Later

SCARLETT
Where is she?

ATLAS
I've got her. Just off to port, and heading down.

PIP
Look! (she points excitedly) There, do you see? There's another one! There, by the rocks... with the blue and green tail, do you see?

HARPER
There's another one... And another...

We start to hear an almost imperceptible melody in the background.

PIP
What are they doing?

ATLAS
Circling the ship. Looks like she's called out the welcoming committee.

HARPER
Where are they all coming from?

ATLAS
Commander... It looks like she's taking us into those caves.

SCARLETT
... No... I don't like the look of that. Those openings look pretty narrow. Turn us around.

There's a pause.

SCARLETT (cont'd)
Any day now, doctor.

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS

Umm... Just a minute.

The computer makes a VERY unhappy noise.

SCARLETT

Atlas...

ATLAS

Ahh... we seem to be locked into this course. The system's not responding. The autopilot seems to have just... engaged. ... I can't shut it off.

PIP

Ophelia, disengage autopilot.

The computer makes an error noise.

PIP (cont'd)

Ophelia, disengage autopilot!

Another error noise.

SCARLETT

Ophelia, reinstate manual control RIGHT NOW, or so help me I will take a blowtorch to your processors!

OPHELIA

I'm sorry, I can't do that Adrienne.

SCARLETT

... Did the computer just address me by my first name?

HARPER

Uh, more importantly, did the computer just go HAL 9000 on us?

OPHELIA

Recalculating... Adjusting descent...

The melody in the background is highly distorted, but by now clearly audible. The Rusalka lets out another creaking groan as it continues to descend.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT
Pip, shut it down.

PIP
I can't! There's something jamming
her control pathways.

ATLAS
We're heading into the caves!

SCARLETT
Brace yourselves!

The ship lets out another disturbing creak. Music is resonating through the cabin, and we can hear materials starting to shift around as the submarine weaves its way through the underwater tunnels. And then...

SPLASH!

The Rusalka bursts through the surface of the water. The music resonating through the ship abruptly dies away, and there is a musical chime as the autopilot disengages.

OPHELIA
Autopilot disengaged. Reinstating
manual control...

SCARLETT
Alright, THAT'S IT! Everybody off!

4 SCENE FOUR

EXT. U.S.S. Rusalka - Moments Later

Creak... BANG!

Scarlett throws open the hatch, and the crew climbs out of the submarine. Laughter, distant song, and the sound of dripping water echo around the huge cavern.

HARPER
Whoah.

PIP
It's so... glittery...

ATLAS
It's beautiful...

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

Where are we?

HARPER

Looks like some sort of...
underwater cove...

SCARLETT

Look at the size of these
stalagmites! They look like they
could punch a hole straight through
the ship... Pip, Atlas, get back
below. I want a damage report
before-

KEERA

(laughing) There's no need for
that, sugar, your ship is just
fine. We wouldn't let you wreck on
the rocks. All travelers are given
safe passageway into our home.

The girls yelp. KEERA, is leaning against the submarine. She waves at them.

PIP

It's her...

ATLAS

It talks...

SCARLETT

Yeah, I'd noticed...

KEERA

My, don't you ladies just look
delicious. I'm Keera, of the
Akheloios clan. What about you,
sugar?

She reaches out and strokes Pip's cheek.
What's your name?

PIP

(she... might have just
forgotten...) Pippa...

KEERA

Such a pretty face. I find there's
nothing more appealing than a woman
with a beautiful face. Who're your
friends, Pippa?

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

Uhh... I'm Commander Adrienne
Scarlett, of the U.S.S. Rusalka.
And this is the rest of my crew...
Dr. Natalya Atlas, and Harper
Bennett.

KEERA

Welcome. Why don't you come slip
into the water... Have a swim...
It's been so long since we've had
any visitors come this way, and my
sisters are expecting you...

There are soft splashes as more of the creatures appear,
poking their heads above the surface. They smile, and laugh,
reaching their hands up to the women on the submarine. The
whole crew is dazed.

KEERA (cont'd)

Do you dance, Pippa? Will you
dance... with me?

PIP

(unused to such attention) I...
O-okay... Yeah! Yeah, sure, I...
I'd like that.

KEERA

(laughs softly) Good. Come! Take my
hand, that's it... That's it, all
of you... My sisters will show you
the way... Stay close... Tonight,
we celebrate! And feast!

5 SCENE FOUR PART B

INT. The Grotto - NIGHT

Keera and her sisters lead the Rusalka crew into The Grotto.
Torches flicker, dazzling, and water laps softly against the
beach.

KEERA

Welcome to The Grotto.

HARPER

Whoah...

ATLAS

It's... stunning... These carvings
in the walls are magnificent.

(CONTINUED)

KEERA

Our family history. We were Greeks, originally... back in the days when ships came and went as often as the breeze... But that was a very long time ago... Our family was much bigger then, and we had visitors all the time. Now, we take what we can get.

Scarlett suddenly stumbles over something in the sand.

SCARLETT

Ouch!

ATLAS

Commander, are you alright?

SCARLETT

Yeah, I just... stepped on something in the sand.

KEERA

(smoothly, but quickly) A rock, I'm sure. I wouldn't worry about it, sugar. Ships often wreck in this area and leave behind all kinds of surprises. These waters can be treacherous. You never know what you may find.

One of Keera's sisters approaches the group.

LYSSA

Keera, the bonfire is lit. The musicians are waiting. Everything is prepared. Our sisters are anxious to begin.

KEERA

Then take our visitors to meet the rest of the family. Use them well. (to the crew) My sisters and I are at your disposal. Please, eat, drink. Make yourselves at home. It's our pleasure to please.

Lyssa links an arm through Scarlett, pulling her from the group.

LYSSA

Hey there sailor.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

I... um... H-hi... Thank you.
That's... very kind...

KEERA

Not at all.

beat.

She watches them go... and then...
You're staring.

PIP

I'm sorry.

KEERA

Don't you want to go and join your
friends?

PIP

I thought... I mean... I thought
maybe I could...

KEERA

(amused) Stay here with me?

PIP

(softly) If you don't mind.

KEERA

(somewhat disinterested, though not
unkindly) Be my guest.

PIP

... (blurting out) You're
beautiful.

KEERA

(laughs) You're sweet.

PIP

I mean it. I saw you dance and... I
wish I was-... I mean, I couldn't
do that. But the way you move...
You're so... free. ...It's the most
beautiful thing I've ever seen.

There's something in Pip's expression that catches Keera off guard, and makes her pause. She's surprised to find that she is actually touched.

(CONTINUED)

KEERA
(softening) Thank you.

PIP
It's just the truth.

KEERA
Let me get you something to drink.

PIP
I'm okay.

KEERA
... really?

PIP
Yeah. I'm happy to just-... watch
the water. (moves towards the
shore) We spend all day on a boat,
but there's never any time to-

KEERA
(following her) Slow down.

PIP
Exactly!

beat.

They look at one another. Pip is the first to look away.
I've... never been to the sea. I've
seen pictures... read articles and
textbooks... This is my first time.
The world seems a whole lot bigger
from here.

Keera considers her, then reaches out and takes her hand.

KEERA
Well, I'd be happy to be your
guide. And in the meantime, I can
show you how to dance.

Pip smiles.

PIP
I'd like that.

FADE TO:

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SCENE FIVE

INT. The Grotto - DAWN

The celebratory feast is in full swing. Drums and flutes play, filling The Grotto with beautiful melody.

Harper is looking around the Grotto as one of Keera's sisters, VARVARA, spins her around.

HARPER

You do this all the time?

VARVARA

Only when there's something worth celebrating...

HARPER

Sounds like paradise.

VARVARA

Isn't it just? ... You ever consider leaving that big, old, ugly ship of yours? Ever consider settling down?

HARPER

I... I don't-... I don't know, I'd never thought about it really.

VARVARA

You should. Traveling's such a lonely business. I can think of several other things you could do with that time... almost all of them require a friend. (She smiles) You look a little flushed. Why don't you relax? Take a seat, baby, and I'll get you something to drink.

HARPER

I- (clears her throat) Yeah. Uh... S-sure...

She watches Varvara go, distractedly.

HARPER (cont'd)

Whoah boy...

Harper sits down beside Atlas at the banquet table.

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS
Having fun?

HARPER
Yeah! I've got to sit down for a minute. All that spinning was making me dizzy... I had no idea Pip could dance so well.

ATLAS
No, nor I...

HARPER
What's that you're drinking?

ATLAS
I don't know... One of Keera's sisters... the big, muscular one... the gold one, over there, with the flute... she gave it to me. It's quite strong.

HARPER
Where's Scarlett?

ATLAS
I'm not-... oh... Ah... Over there.

HARPER
Where?

ATLAS
Straddling that little brunette, with the pale pink tail, over by those rocks. Mmm. Funny. I wouldn't have pegged her as the Commander's type.

HARPER
Oh... OH... Wow. ... That's... that's a lot of tongue. I'm just... So the food looks good! Any recommendations?

Atlas doesn't respond. She's staring at her cup, with an expression of mild interest and confusion.

... Dr. Atlas? ... uh... doc? You okay?

ATLAS
I'm not sure... My fingertips just went numb. (laughs) That's funny, isn't it? They shouldn't be going all numb...

(CONTINUED)

Atlas takes another sip of her drink.

HARPER

Maybe you better stop drinking that stuff.

ATLAS

Oh Harper, relax. It's a party!
There's nothing wrong with a
little... celebration...

The words are hardly out of her mouth before the drink slips from her fingers and smashes to the ground. Atlas slumps forward unconscious, her head thumping against the table.

HARPER

Atlas! Uh... Uh... okay... It's okay, I'm... I'm going to... I need to get... help! Right. Help. You... you stay here, and I'll... I'll go get help.

Harper starts to make her way across the beach.

VARVARA

Something to drink, little one?

HARPER

I... no. Thank you...

ALIANA

Care to dance?

HARPER

Yes... I-... No! No, I'm sorry... I have to help my friend.

ALIANA

She's alright. Why don't you come dance with me? Or we could... slip away... do a little close partnering, if you like?

HARPER

I... I have to go...

Harper breaks away from Keera's sisters, and makes her way over to Scarlett.

HARPER (cont'd)

Scarlett... Commander Scarlett!
Commander, we have to go.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

(dazed) ... What? What?

HARPER

Something's wrong with Dr. Atlas.
We have to leave. ... You... You
get off her. Commander, we-...
we've gotta go.

But LYSSA, the sister Scarlett's spent most of the night straddling, wraps her arms around the commander's waist.

LYSSA

She's not going.

SCARLETT

What... what's wrong with Atlas?
OUCH! Did you just bite me?

LYSSA

I wanted your attention...
Adrienne, you're not really leaving
me, are you? You don't want to do
that... She's jealous, and she's
trying to take you from me... Make
her go away...

SCARLETT

I... No... No, of course not, baby.
I'm not going anywhere. Harper,
leave.

HARPER

What?

SCARLETT

You heard me! Go. I'm busy.

HARPER

But what about-

SCARLETT

I don't care! Go splash some water
on her face, she'll be fine, I
don't care, just leave us alone.

HARPER

Water...

She turns, the sounds around her momentarily fade as she stares across the cove. We hear waves lapping against the rocks.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER (cont'd)
 (dawning realization) ... we're on
 the beach.

KEERA
 Something the matter, sugar?

Harper jumps. Keera is standing beside her.
 Aliana says you wouldn't dance...
 Varvara says you won't drink. We're
 not boring you, are we?

HARPER
 I... I have to go.

KEERA
 Back to the ship. So I've heard.
 Your friends don't seem to want to
 leave... They're doing alright.

HARPER
 Where's Dr. Atlas?

KEERA
 With my sisters. Don't you want to
 join her?

HARPER
 I... Yes- no! No... I... I don't
 know...

KEERA
 Why don't you just relax? Have a
 bite to eat... or we can arrange
 other entertainments... Sisters! A
 song. Raise your voices now,
 something high and sweet for our
 lovely new visitors...

Keera's sisters start to sing. Their voices rebound
 throughout the cavern, unearthly and mesmerizing. Keera
 turns her attention back to Harper.

It's a beautiful cove, isn't it?
 You feel it, don't you. The music
 filling every part of you.
 Surrounding you... Soothing, isn't
 it? Watching the waves... listening
 to the song...

HARPER
 (putting the puzzle together) No...
 This is... wrong. It's wrong. We
 shouldn't be... on the beach...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARPER (cont'd)

We're on the beach. You're standing!

KEERA

You're a sharp one, aren't you. I thought I'd have to keep an eye on you... And I was right. Pity. All that adrenaline will make you go sour.

HARPER

You're sirens.

KEERA

Well done! Feathers can be so deceiving under the water. You wouldn't be the first sailors to mistake us for our sweet cousins. And you won't be the last.

HARPER

Let me go!

KEERA

It's too late, sugar, I can see it in your eyes. We've got you. And your friends. Just relax. That's the way. Come... dance with me.

HARPER

No... No I don't want to...

KEERA

Yes you do. Come here. That's it... close your eyes... just give in... dance with me...

FADE TO:

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SCENE SIX

INT. The Grotto - Some Time Later

The sound of crashing waves. Harper wakes up with a groan. It's about half a second of peace before she's gasping as water hits her in the face. She shrieks, struggling, only to find herself bound to one of the stalagmites, unable to move.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

Harper?!

Harper turns to see Scarlett tied to the stalagmite beside her.

HARPER

Commander Scarlett?

SCARLETT

Oh thank god. You're alive. Atlas!
She's coming around! Are you okay?

HARPER

I'm fine...

Dr. Atlas' voice sounds from slightly farther away.

ATLAS

I'd like to point out that we're
tied to stalagmites, the tide is
coming in, we're all about to
drown, and I have a MASSIVE
hangover. *No one is fine!*

SCARLETT

What did they do to you?

HARPER

Nothing, I-... They sang. It was
Keera, she started talking to me
and-... Commander, they're sirens.

ATLAS

That would explain it.

SCARLETT

Does it? I thought sirens and
mermaids were the same thing?

HARPER

Common misconception. The sirens
were women, that were cursed by the
gods and became half-bird
monstrosities that live on an
island and sing sailors to their
deaths. Somewhere along the way,
they got mixed up with mermaids.
I'm starting to see why. Moving
underwater, feathers and scales
look just about the same.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

But they can't be. They drugged Atlas, Pippa was dancing, and I didn't hear anybody singing.

HARPER

I think they're more powerful than that. They've been around for thousands of years, they've had plenty of time to evolve. I think it's everything about them... the way they move, and look at you... the way they speak... That little pink one bit you, Commander, don't you remember?

SCARLETT

I... No...

HARPER

I think everything about them is poisonous... meant to draw us in. If everything about them is alluring-

SCARLETT

-then there's no way out. You can shut your ears against a song, but how can you fight something that's got a hold on all your senses...

ATLAS

That's brilliant.

SCARLETT

They're going to kill us!

ATLAS

Yes, but you have to appreciate the elegance of it. A beautiful woman's a dangerous thing.

SCARLETT

Okay, so how do we beat them? I'm thinking crowbars, see how pretty they'll be feeling then.

HARPER

Sirens usually drown their victims.

ATLAS

Yes, we'd noticed. But they could have done that themselves. Why all the theatrics?

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Keera said something about flavors... Adrenaline makes you go sour... Guessing she was hoping we'd just drown in our sleep.

ATLAS

I'm sorry I asked.

HARPER

We just have to get loose!

ATLAS

Of course! Now why didn't I think of that? Why don't I just grab my handy-dandy machete and cut us loose? Oh that's right, *because it's back on the ship!*

SCARLETT

Atlas, you are not helping! So either come up with a plan that's actually useful, or save your breath! It's not like you've got too many left.

ATLAS

That's an awful high horse you're sitting on, for someone who was too busy sticking her tongue down a woman's throat to notice whether or not she was planning to *drown and eat you!*

HARPER

Guys! Come on! Focus! Please, can ONE of you come up with some sort of life saving, rope slicing master plan? You don't happen to have a mini blowtorch stuffed up your sleeve, do you Pip? ... Pip?

But there's no reply. The crew looks around (as best they can) but there's no sign of her.

ATLAS

Oh no...

HARPER

Where is she?!

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

She must be back at the beach, with Keera and her sisters. Maybe she's still just dancing...

HARPER

Maybe she got away.

ATLAS

Not likely. If she wasn't captured like us-

SCARLETT

Atlas, shut up.

ATLAS

(quietly, and not unkindly) I just think we... might need to adjust ourselves to the possibility-

HARPER

She's not dead.

ATLAS

Harper-

HARPER

She's not!

beat.

Harper stares at Atlas, willing her to look away first. She doesn't.

ATLAS

Okay.

HARPER

... Commander, tell her. She's fine. Just because she wasn't captured-... She's probably already back on the ship! Tell her.

There is a long pause. Harper tries to meet Scarlett's eye, but Scarlett won't look at her.

SCARLETT

... Let's just get off this rock.

FADE OUT.

8

EPILOGUE

INT. Keera's Nest - DAY

KEERA

What your friends would do if they could see you now... You look good enough to eat.

PIP

Do you really think so?

KEERA

I do.

She shifts closer and starts to play with Pippa's hair.
Have you made your decision? Since you're so keen to stay, you must have a present... A welcome home gift...

PIP

And... I can have anything?

KEERA

So long as you stay, then yes.
Anything your heart desires.

There is a pause as Pip tries to decide... and then...

PIP

Make me like you.

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED...