

# THE DEEP

"Pilot"

by

Eric Wald

Story by

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# THE DEEP

Pilot - Salmon Revisions - October 6, 2016

## CAST LIST

BEN POWNALL.....ALEX ROE  
RYN.....ELINE POWELL  
MADDIE BISHOP.....FOLA EVANS  
HELEN HAWKINS.....RENA OWEN  
XANDER MCCLURE.....IAN VERDUN  
PROF. ALDON DECKER.....NTARE GUMA MBAHO MWINE  
CAPTAIN SEAN MCCLURE.....BRIAN ANTHONY WILSON  
TED POWNALL.....DAVID CUBITT  
ELAINE POWNALL.....SARAH-JANE REDMOND  
COLLEGE GIRL.....GEORGIA BRADNER  
FRIEND.....LATONYA WILLIAMS  
NARRATOR.....JAEDON SIEWERT  
YOUNG MERMAID.....DEVINA BRIGGS  
YOUNG CHARLES.....THOMAS GLUKLER  
PHOTOGRAPHER.....STEWART IGUIDEZ  
DOUG POWNALL.....ANDREW JENKINS  
JERRY.....DAVID KAYE  
DALE BISHOP.....GIL BIRMINGHAM  
ADMIRAL HARRISON.....ANTHONY HARRISON  
RYO.....KIRA CLAVELL  
SISTER.....CLAIRE CORLETT  
KID.....MALCOLM CRAIG  
DR. ABBOTT.....PATRICK GALLAGHER  
TODDLER.....PRESTON DRABBLE  
MOTHER.....ERIN CAMERON  
DONNIE.....TOBY LEVINS  
TEACHER.....NAIAH CUMMINS  
NURSE.....MEGAN HUI  
SCIENTIST.....RANJIT SAMRA  
CALVIN.....CURTIS LUM  
CHRIS MUELLER.....CHAD ROOK  
EMERGENCY DISPATCHER.....TBD  
GIRL (8 YEARS).....JACQUELINE BURROWS  
ANTHONY.....JASON ASUNCION  
KID #2.....MAKENA KRISTJANSON  
GIRL ON BEACH.....NATALIE FARROW

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## EXTERIORS

OCEAN (DAY/NIGHT)

FISHING TRAWLER "THE NORTH STAR" (NIGHT)

- BRIDGE

- DECK

TOWN (DAY)

- SIDE STREET

WATERFRONT PARK (DAY)

UNDERWATER (DAY)

- KELP FOREST

BRISTOL COVE (DAY)

BRISTOL COVE MARINA (DAY)

- DOCKS

THE GALLEY BAR (NIGHT)

MILITARY BASE (DAY)

COVE (DAY/NIGHT)

- BEACH

- OPEN WATER

ROAD (NIGHT)

FOREST (NIGHT)

HOUSEBOAT COMMUNITY (NIGHT)

OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN (NIGHT/DAY)

- DIRT LOT

- TRAILER PARK

BRISTOL COVER MARINE RESEARCH CENTER

HELEN'S ANTIQUITY SHOP

## **INTERIORS**

FISHING TRAWLER "THE NORTH STAR" (NIGHT)

- GALLEY

MADDIE'S HOME (EVENING/MORNING)

THE GALLEY BAR (NIGHT)

MILITARY BASE (DAY/NIGHT)

- BUILDING
- RESEARCH LAB
- MILITARY BUNKER

BRISTOL COVE MARINE RESEARCH CENTER (DAY/NIGHT)

- EXAMINATION ROOM
- OFFICE
- TREATMENT ROOM

BEN'S TRUCK (MOVING)

BEN'S HOUSEBOAT (DAY/NIGHT)

- BEDROOM LOFT

IMPALA (DAY)

HELEN'S ANTIQUITY SHOP

HOSPITAL ROOM

## TEASER

1 EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT 1

A brutal storm. It's hard to tell day from night.

TITLE OVER: "THE BERING SEA"

In the midst of the angry ocean, a FISHING VESSEL is battered by thirty-foot waves.

2 EXT. FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - SAME 2

The MEN onboard, all in storm gear, work undaunted by the treacherous conditions. A piece of rigging BREAKS like a twig in the gale force winds, exploding halogen lights on board.

3 EXT. FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - ON THE BRIDGE 3

CAPTAIN SEAN McCLURE, 50s, everything you'd expect an Alaskan fisherman to be and more, is at the helm. He's got one eye on the weather radar, one eye on the deck.

First mate XANDER McCLURE, 24, bearded, son of the Captain, lumbers in, pushes back his hood. If he wasn't working his dad's fishing boat, he might make a pretty good offensive lineman for the Huskies.

XANDER

Dad, we're gettin' hammered out here.

CAPT. SEAN

Crank the nets! Everything up.

4 EXT. FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - ON THE DECK 4

The winches drag in the trawl net. The men pull a massive haul of FISH. Tons of cod spill onto the deck. We glimpse SOMETHING BIG in amongst the roiling fish. A shark?

Xander plunges the catch into the hold, when suddenly, through the silvery flesh, something lunges at him, HISSING, with razor-sharp teeth. Xander falls backward to avoid its strike. The other men take note.

It's hard to make out in the harsh conditions. But this is some sort of predator. And it's in attack mode. A violent WHIP of a sharp tail sends a man crashing across the deck.

The creature scuttles away into the darkness. Xander helps the crewman, CALVIN (Asian American, 25), to his feet. They shout above the howling wind.

CALVIN

Shark?!

Xander grabs two long GAFFING HOOKS. Hands one to Calvin.

XANDER

That thing's no shark.

The monster slithers behind some crates, barely visible. It thrashes against the hull, a force of pure chaos.

In a darkened corner, it lunges for another crew member, its teeth RIPPING through his midsection. The guy screams in agony.

Across the main deck, Xander and Calvin wheel around. They grip their gaffing hooks and move cautiously toward the sound. The trawler pitches to and fro.

A dark shape suddenly bolts out at them with a terrifying shriek. They snare it up against the bulwark, and force it into the hold with the other fish. They slam the cover. The two men exchange a breathless glance.

CALVIN

What the hell--?

They're interrupted by a WHEEZING sound. It's CHRIS, 25, the injured crew member. His mates stagger through the howling wind toward him.

5

**EXT. FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - IN THE GALLEY**

5

CLOSE ON a nasty gash, soaked with blood. Xander rips open a gauze pack and applies it to the wound. The boat creaks and moans as it pushes through the violent sea.

Captain Sean appears, looks over his man. Xander glances up at his father.

XANDER

He's lost a lot of blood.

CAPT. SEAN

Tamp it down. Get it in there good and tight.

The Captain looks at Chris' young face. His eyes loll and close, passing out from the pain and blood loss.

CAPT. SEAN

Hang in there, son, think of your family, gonna call in evac. We're gonna get you out of here.

As Sean pushes out of the galley, Calvin regards him, a haunted look on his face.

CALVIN

What is that thing, Cap?

Sean shakes his head and ducks out through the door.

6      **EXT. FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - ON THE BRIDGE**      6

Sean gets on his radio. The wipers sweep back and forth. There are snapshots of Sean's family taped to the window.

CAPT. SEAN

(into radio)

This is Captain Sean McClure of The North Star, vessel #53422N. Position 57 25 North, 176 33 West, with a bearing of 228 degrees. We have a crew member in need of immediate medical evacuation. Over.

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Nature of injury? Over.

CAPT. SEAN

(into radio)

A bite to the abdomen. Severe blood loss. Over.

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)

What bit him? Over.

CAPT. SEAN

(mystified, into radio)

I got no idea.

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Alter course to 126 degrees, 12 knots. Confirm rendez-vous. Over.

Sean cuts the wheel hard, into the brunt of the storm--

7      **EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT**      7

The North Star pitches down a deep trough as it swings about, setting a new course.

8      **EXT. OCEAN - LATER**      8

At the edge of the storm, calmer seas, but still in the midst of an inky dark ocean. The fishing trawler powers through the night. An eery banging inside the hull.

9                    **INT. THE NORTH STAR - GALLEY - SAME**

9

Xander and Calvin huddle around a table. They're spooked to hell, listening to the banging, like it's been going on for hours.

And then, suddenly, it stops. All is quiet but for the sound of Chris wheezing in his bunk.

After a moment, an ethereal SINGING filters in, just sounds really, but lilting and beautiful. They stare at each other, unnerved.

10                   **EXT. THE NORTH STAR - SAME**

10

Xander and Calvin walk onto the deck, drawn by the enchanting sounds. Captain Sean joins them. They head to the fish hold, standing over it, mesmerized. Xander starts to lift the lid.

CAPT. SEAN

Xander, no.

Before Xander can open it, a BLINDING LIGHT cuts down from above, a building ROAR of turbine engines. The men look up.

A massive Naval Sikorsky Super Stallion, the largest and heaviest helicopter in the U.S. military, hovers over the trawler. The rotor wash blasts water everywhere.

NAVY SEALS drop like spiders onto the deck. At least half a dozen of them. They're armed.

The fishermen stand opposite. An African-American Man, 50, glasses, clad in black, steps through two of the Seals. This is Professor ALDON DECKER.

DECKER

Let's see what you caught tonight,  
Captain.

CAPT. SEAN

What I caught is none of your  
business. You're here for my  
injured crewman.

DECKER

Of course, where are my manners?  
We'll be needing him as well.

ANGLE ON a rescue basket. Chris lies inside, an oxygen mask over his mouth. The NAVY SEALS tighten the straps and he's lifted to the helicopter. Decker approaches the fish hold.

DECKER

Now then, Captain.

CAPT. SEAN

I'm entitled to my catch. That's the law.

DECKER

I'm sorry, Captain, but at this moment, I am the law.

The Seals lift open the fish hold.

CAPT. SEAN

Hey!

Two Seals train their weapons on him. Decker peers into the hold. What he sees has a great impact on him. Decker signals a Navy Seal, who loads a TRANQUILIZER cartridge into a rifle. He takes aim. POP!

ANGLE ON--The Seals guide a pod-like tank into the fish hold. They are precise and efficient. Sean is going ballistic.

CAPT. SEAN

That's my damn catch! That belongs to me!

His son Xander restrains him. They finish loading the creature into the tank, then hoist it out of the hold and into the chopper above. Throughout the process, the creature itself remains hidden. Decker nods respectfully to Sean.

DECKER

You've done a fine job, Captain.  
We'll take it from here.

He clips onto a winch cable and is lifted into the Super Stallion along with the other Navy Seals. The engines ROAR on the huge chopper.

It rises, banks hard, and powers away into the night.

The fishermen stand on the deck, staring in shock at the helicopter as it disappears. And they don't notice a hundred yards behind their stern, in the water--

An iridescent DORSAL FIN, cutting across the surface. It swiftly slips beneath the water, back to the murky depths.

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

11 EXT. TOWN - ESTABLISHING - DAY

11

A rainy fishing village along the Olympic Peninsula. A few neglected trawlers clank in the marina. A large FISH PROCESSING PLANT looms over the wharf with a sign, Pownall Seafood. Wholesale - Processing.

TITLE OVER: "BRISTOL COVE, WA"

12 EXT. WATERFRONT PARK - SAME

12

A banner announces the annual end of summer "MERMAID DAYS FESTIVAL." Bristol Cove is the unofficial Mermaid Capital of the World. And today is its big event.

There are DOGS DRESSED LIKE MERMAIDS... Kids lick MERMAID POPSICLES... Tourists wear MERMAID HATS and MERMAID JEWELRY... A chubby guy sports a MERMAN t-shirt... A band PLAYS... There are DUNK THE MERMAID booths.

It's a perverse slice of Americana, more David Lynch than Norman Rockwell.

13 EXT. TOWN - SIDE STREET - SAME

13

The sounds of the festival filter as mermaid-loving TOURISTS make their way down the sidewalk, past an old CURIO SHOP filled with skulls, mermaid diagrams, vintage maps, carved shells. On the window is lettered, "Helen's Antiquities."

The shop lady, HELEN HAWKINS, 50s, stands in the doorway, regarding the passers-by with a certain disdain. A tipsy COLLEGE GIRL, dressed in mermaid gear, stares at the oddities in the window.

COLLEGE GIRL

What is all this stuff?

Helen shakes her head dismissively, unwilling to answer. The Girl doesn't know what to make of it. Her FRIENDS, also dressed in silly mermaid gear, stumble up with drinks.

FRIEND

Hey, Chelsea, look what we found--  
Merqaritas! Woo-hoo!

The Girl takes her drink and heads off with her friends. Helen can only roll her eyes as she watches them leave.

14

**EXT. WATERFRONT PARK - LATER**

14

Our attention is now focused on a stage, where SCHOOL CHILDREN perform a play about the "history" of their town. The young NARRATOR shouts to be heard.

NARRATOR

It was more than a hundred and fifty years ago, that local fishing captain, Charles H. Pownall fell in love with a mermaid in these very waters, enchanted by her beautiful siren song.

A YOUNG BOY is dressed like an old time fisherman, he's even got a pipe. He rows a boat through cardboard waves. A young MERMAID emerges from the waves, singing a dainty song. They hug. Other Mermaids dance around them.

NARRATOR

They spent every day together.

YOUNG MERMAID

I love you, fisherman.

YOUNG CHARLES

I love you, mermaid.

NARRATOR

But one day, he went out in the bay, and his mermaid was gone, back to her home in the sea, never to return.

As Young Charles sits on the cardboard rock, a CHORUS of kids dressed like lobsters, crabs, squid, and fish moves onto the stage and joins in singing "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean."

NARRATOR

And that is how, thanks to Charles H. Pownall, Bristol Cove became the Mermaid Capital of the World.

A few small FIREWORKS go off. The crowd CHEERS. TEACHERS help the kids move the sets off the stage.

TED POWNALL, 50s, dressed casually, but still exuding wealth and power, sweeps onto the stage with a big smile.

TED

Thank you, and thank you to the fifth graders in Ms. Salazar's class at Oceanside Elementary for that charming performance.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

That's my great-great-great  
grandfather depicted up there, so  
as you can see, our family goes  
back a long ways in Bristol Cove.  
Please allow me to introduce my  
beautiful wife Elaine, and our two  
wonderful sons, Doug and Ben.

ELAINE, late 40s, beautiful, wheelchair bound, is pushed onto  
the stage by their son DOUG, 27, a clone of his father.  
Elaine is extremely well put together, with frosted blonde  
hair and a designer suit.

Their youngest son, Ben, is nowhere to be seen. Elaine  
whispers in Ted's ear.

TED

It seems, uh, Ben got caught in the  
parade traffic, but I assure you,  
he is here in spirit.

He is clearly furious, but presses on.

TED

To all the good people of Bristol  
Cove, on this 30th anniversary of  
our Mermaid Days Festival, it's our  
great honor to bestow this monument  
to one of our town's founding  
fathers, Charles H. Pownall!

They dramatically sweep the cover off to reveal a STATUE of  
Charles Pownall and the Mermaid. The crowd CLAPS. Music  
plays. Balloons are released.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ted, can we get a shot of you and  
your family?

Ted gathers with Elaine and Doug. He grits his teeth.

TED

Where the hell is Ben?

15      **EXT. UNDERWATER - KELP FOREST - DAY**

15

A SCUBA DIVER collects a CRAB from the sea floor and places it into a specimen bag. He turns and shines his light toward ANOTHER DIVER. He makes a signal to go up. His partner acknowledges it. They begin their ascent.

16      **EXT. OCEAN - DAY**

16

A small vessel bobs in the water. On its hull, in faded letters, is written, "BRISTOL COVE MARINE RESEARCH CENTER." REGGAE MUSIC plays. A stoner assistant, JERRY, 28, smokes a joint. He tosses it away, clears the air when he sees bubbles and the TWO DIVERS emerge from the kelpy water.

Jerry helps the divers on board. He takes off their tanks and masks, and we get our first glimpse at marine biologist BEN POWNALL, 25, handsome even with saltwater dripping all over him.

JERRY

How's the crabbin', boss?

Ben takes off his wetsuit.

BEN

We finished the grid but the numbers were super low.

JERRY

That's bad, right?

BEN

Yeah, bad.

Ben's co-worker strips off her wetsuit and we see MADDIE BISHOP (24)--Native American heritage, black nail polish, a punk rock vibe. She answers Jerry's question.

MADDIE

(to Jerry)

Means the population's dying. The sea lions are losing their food source.

Ben opens a waterproof laptop. Maddie measures the crabs from the specimen bags and places them into labeled bins.

BEN

(as he works)

It's a good thing we came out today.

Maddie looks over.

MADDIE

Not sure your dad would agree with that.

BEN

Add it to the list of things we don't agree on.

Maddie leans over and gives him a kiss on the neck.

MADDIE

Like you and me, being together?

BEN

If I did everything my parents said, well... I'd be my brother.

Maddie smiles. Ben opens a complex graph program on the laptop.

BEN

You got a count for P-1?

MADDIE

You were right, it's low. Only twenty-seven across the whole grid.

She leans over his shoulder as they study the laptop together. There's a shared intensity of these two young people for the work they're doing.

BEN

Let's test for pathogens, adjust for migration, calculate mortality rates.

MADDIE

Maybe we expand the zone, see if we can find a pattern.

But Ben doesn't answer, is staring out at the water now, concerned.

MADDIE

Hey, where'd you go?

BEN

It's so messed up, what's happening out here.

MADDIE

Hey, that's why we're doing the  
work, right? We're gonna stop it.

He smiles, almost comforted.

BEN

Yeah.

(then)

I'm gonna write this up, get the  
report in for the NCA.

Ben taps a few keys on the laptop. Jerry at the wheelhouse,  
hits the throttle. The boat rears up.

JERRY

Back to shore, yo.

17        **OMITTED.**

17

18        **OMITTED.**

18

19

**EXT. BRISTOL COVE MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - DOCK - DAY**

19

A collection of portable buildings and enclosures set upon docks. Various VOLUNTEERS move about, tending to the sea lions that call this research facility home.

Jerry ties the boat and busies himself with the dive gear, while Ben and Maddie load the crab bins onto the dock.

BEN  
Which tank is prepped?

MADDIE  
Number two.

BEN  
I'll load these in.

MADDIE  
Twelve degrees celsius.

BEN  
Straight seawater on mild  
filtration.

MADDIE  
I love it when you talk salination  
levels.

Maddie pulls Ben in for a sexy kiss. They're more than just co-workers. Ben grins as he embraces her, enjoying the moment.

BEN  
You wanna come over later? I could  
show you my tide log.

MADDIE  
I can't. I told my dad I'd make him  
dinner.

BEN  
Maddie, you can't always--

MADDIE  
The man can't cook ramen.

Maddie smiles awkwardly as she gives Ben one last kiss and starts to step away.

MADDIE  
I'm serious. It's disturbing.

Ben regards her. He loves her too much to press the issue.

20

**INT. MADDIE'S HOME - EVENING**

20

Maddie prepares dinner, boiling a shellfish stew. Through the window, a SHERIFF'S CAR pulls onto the driveway. Sheriff DALE BISHOP, 52, Maddie's father, gets out.

The kitchen door opens, and Dale enters. He's a proud Haida man who walks like he carries a weight on his shoulders.

MADDIE

Hey, Dad, good day at the office?

Dale takes off his gun belt. He washes his hands.

DALE

You know Chris Mueller, crews on  
Sean McClure's boat?

MADDIE

Yeah, I know him.

DALE

Got a call from his parents. Said  
he was medi-vacc'd by a military  
copter off Sean's boat in the  
strait and now they can't find him.  
Have me calling every base from  
here to Alaska looking for him.  
Nothing so far.

MADDIE

What do you think happened?

DALE

Don't know.

Maddie brings the stew to the table and serves it in bowls.  
They both sit down and join hands.

DALE

Creator, for the food, and for You,  
we give thanks.

Dale grips his napkin tightly in his other hand.

DALE

And for Susan, may she find peace  
on her journey and within herself  
and find her way back home.

They start to eat the stew.

MADDIE

It's been eight months since we've  
heard from her, might be time to  
start dropping her from the  
blessings.

DALE

I believe your mother is being  
guided.

Dale eats a clam from the stew. Maddie regards him, upset.

A tough working class bar situated alongside the docks.

22

**INT. THE GALLEY BAR - SAME**

22

It's decorated with a nautical theme and is populated by FISHERMEN. Lots of empty bottles on the bar.

Ben enters, looks around. The large figure of Xander steps up next to him. He seems edgy and nervous.

BEN

Hey, man, got your text. Thought you guys were out past Bowers Ridge? You're back early.

XANDER

Yeah, I, uh, need to talk to you about something. Come here.

Xander leads Ben to a table in the corner where Sean sits with Calvin. Ben takes a seat. He notices Sean wringing his hands. Calvin speaks up, tensely.

CALVIN

We said we keep this between us, don't tell anybody.

Xander exchanges a look with Calvin. They both seem skittish.

XANDER

Ben knows about this stuff, he can help us. He's one of us.

CALVIN

He wasn't on the boat. He doesn't fish with us no more.

They look to Sean, who nods, giving approval. Xander turns to Ben.

XANDER

We caught something out there, something we've never seen before. It attacked Chris, he was airlifted out. Big ass military commando helicopter.

CAPT. SEAN

Navy Seals, the whole deal. The CG says they have no record of the evac. Like it never happened.

XANDER

He's just gone.

BEN

Gone?

Ben listens, not sure what to make of this.

BEN

And you don't know what attacked him?

The men look at each other. Xander takes a deep breath. He nods hesitantly to a carved WOODEN MERMAID statue on the wall. Ben smirks, assuming they're pulling his leg.

BEN

A mermaid?

XANDER

Only it didn't look like that, it was a predator.

CAPT. SEAN

It's worth a fortune. It's the holy grail. And it belongs to me.

Ben looks at them for a moment, then he cracks up.

BEN

Okay, this was a good one. Very well done. Maybe they'll let you in the parade next year.

CALVIN

I told you.

Xander grabs Ben by the wrist, leans toward him.

XANDER

Dude, this is real. Why else would they take it away from us? Look--

He takes his phone out. It shows grainy video footage from a deck camera of the creature slithering across the fishing boat. It's very dark and hard to make out, but it's enough to make Ben question for a moment. He quickly dismisses it.

BEN

Xander, man, seriously, this could be anything.

He glances at the grainy frozen image on the phone.

BEN

I don't know what you caught, but trust me, it's not what you think it is.

23

**EXT. MILITARY INSTALLATION - DAY**

23

A late model SEDAN drives through the heavily fortified gates of a military installation. Armed soldiers stand guard.

TITLE OVER: "Hinckley Naval Installation. Tacoma, WA."

The vehicle pulls up to a plain, one-story building. Two men get out. One of them is Aldon Decker, the man from the opening scene. The other is a high-ranking MILITARY OFFICER.

24      **INT. BUILDING - SAME**

24

They pass through several security levels, descending deeper inside this subterranean bunker--

DECKER

\*

Just a matter of time, really. Had a report six weeks ago; Japanese fishermen claimed they saw a sea creature off the Kuril Islands. Then some carcasses washed ashore in Alaska with strange bite marks all over 'em. Five days ago, our NOAA research vessel started picking up unidentified frequencies from points in the Bering Strait. We knew something was out there.

ADMIRAL

\*

And you're sure this is what you think it is?

\*

\*

Decker and the Admiral reach a final security door. Decker pauses.

\*

\*

DECKER

\*

Why don't you judge for yourself.

\*

The doors open and they step into a RESEARCH LAB. There's a tall cylindrical tank in the center of the room.

\*

\*

25      **INT. MILITARY BUNKER - RESEARCH LAB - SAME**

25

As they sweep around, we get our first clear, full view of what's inside--

And holy fucking shit.

The captured MERMAID. She's floating motionless, as if in hibernation. Her coppery red hair fans out across the surface of the water like seaweed. She has jagged teeth, opalescent skin that blends into a powerful fluke-like tail.

She's scary and captivating all at once.

SCIENTISTS work at computers. Decker and the Admiral stand before the tank. The Admiral marvels at it.

ADMIRAL

Is it sleeping?

DECKER

She's been dormant since the  
tranquilizers wore off.

ADMIRAL

It attacked one of the fishermen  
who caught it?

DECKER

Did quite a lot of damage.

ADMIRAL

We'll need a risk assessment report  
ASAP.

DECKER

Right now, my priority is research  
and analysis.

ADMIRAL

(meets his eye)

I'll set your priorities,  
Professor. Don't forget who's  
paying for all this.

\*

The Admiral turns, stares at the creepy face of the mermaid,  
when suddenly it BOLTS TO LIFE, sending out an ear-splitting  
SHRIEK that shakes the tank, nearly knocks him off his feet.

And just as abruptly, the mermaid goes back to her dormant  
state. The Admiral gathers himself.

ADMIRAL

What the hell was that?

The creature floats eerily in the tank.

DECKER

We think it might be some sort of  
distress call.

ADMIRAL

We're buried a hundred feet in the  
ground, ain't gonna do a whole lot  
of good.

DECKER

You're missing the point. She's  
trying to signal others of her  
kind.

(MORE)

DECKER (CONT'D)  
(faces Admiral)  
If there's one, there's more.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO26      **EXT. COVE - NIGHT**

26

Something is lurking out in the cove. From its water level POV, we see a distant bonfire raging on a beach. We hear the sound of voices, music filtering out across the water--

27      **EXT. COVE - NIGHT - ON THE BEACH**

27

ON THE BEACH, a group of TWENTY-SOMETHINGS is partying, drinking. Ben and Maddie are part of the crowd. Jerry's there as well, holding court.

JERRY

Dude, Aberdeen, the best weed's in  
Aberdeen. Just ask my friend  
Maurice.

Maddie leans over, whispers in Ben's ear.

MADDIE

I don't remember him being such a  
burner in high school. That was  
more my crowd.

BEN

Not sure. I was too busy playing  
town golden boy.

Ben notices Xander sitting off by himself, staring blankly into the bonfire. Ben turns to Maddie.

BEN

Be right back.

As Ben walks over, a THIRTEEN YEAR-OLD KID, somebody's younger brother, runs past him and dives into the water with a Boogie Board. His older SISTER calls to him from the group of friends.

SISTER

I swear I'm gonna kill you if you  
go out too far!

The kid ignores her, just keeps paddling out in the darkened cove. Ben joins Xander by the fire.

BEN

Hey, how are you?

Xander doesn't respond.

BEN

Come on, you're not really pissed at me?

XANDER

I shouldn't have told you. I shoulda known better.

BEN

Think about what you're asking me to believe.

XANDER

I get it, you don't come out with us anymore. You weren't there. They took Chris. They don't want people to know about this.

BEN

I have no idea what happened to Chris. Maybe he's at a military hospital. We're gonna find him, Xan. But it's not part of some cover up. And it's not because of some mythological creature you guys say you caught.

Xander runs a hand through his beard.

XANDER

So you're saying you know everything there is to know?

BEN

No, of course not.

XANDER

Then look me in the eyes and tell me there might be some things down there we haven't seen yet.

BEN

Xander--

XANDER

Just do it.

Ben regards his friend sympathetically.

BEN

Okay, sure, ninety-five percent of the oceans remain unexplored.

Xander's eyes look a bit crazed in the fire light.

XANDER

So it could happen.

BEN

Xander, man, I love you, you know that. And as your friend, I'm tellin' you, you gotta stop talking like this.

XANDER

What's it gonna take, huh, for you to believe me?

Ben thinks about this for a while.

BEN

I'd need to see one.

Xander's face suddenly lights up with a wild grin.

XANDER

Yeah, that's it, that's exactly right. We gotta catch another one.

Ben shakes his head. He stares across the beach.

Amidst the party-goers, he notices the kid's sister has now made her way down to the water's edge, yelling to her brother out in the cove.

SISTER

Lucas, get back here!

OUT IN THE WATER, the boy keeps paddling. He stops to rest, atop the board. His teeth chatter from the frigid water.

He can hear his sister calling from the shore. The boy smiles, proud he's made it out this far. A shadow passes behind him. An ominous sense he's not alone--

The boy looks down, and through the murky water, a shape, getting bigger, coming towards him. The kid watches.

And then, once it's nearly upon him, we see the open jaws of a MAKO SHARK.

The kid wheels backward, falling off his board, SCREAMING like hell.

KID  
Shark! Shark!

He frantically back paddles, splashing like hell to get away. Others swim toward him.

The boy stops. Notices something. The "shark" is actually the SEVERED HEAD of a Mako, bobbing in the water. He regards it, breathing heavily.

29      **EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER**

29

People help pull the boy to shore. Others drag the shark head onto the sand.

GIRL ON BEACH  
That's like the most disgusting  
thing ever. It's so freaky.

Ben and Maddie kneel down beside the shark head.

MADDIE  
What are you thinking? Orca?

Ben studies it, uncertain. He looks up into the curious crowd and sees Xander standing there, staring at him.

30      **INT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT**

30

The decapitated SHARK HEAD rests on a metal table, bathed in a pool of light. Ben, wearing magnifying glasses, probes around the head. Maddie leans in close, engrossed.

BEN

This damage was not inflicted by an orca. The bite radius is too small.

MADDIE

So what then?

Ben is looking deep inside the head.

BEN

Well, it's not another shark.

MADDIE

There are a million explanations. It got caught in a boat prop. A sea lion bit the carcass.

None of this adds up and Ben knows it. He lifts his glasses and stares at the severed head, his mind racing.

BEN

What if there's a new predator out there, one we haven't seen before?

MADDIE

And it can rip the head clean off a mako shark? Then I might have to cancel my scuba trip next weekend.

OFF BEN, as he regards the puzzling disembodied shark head on the table before him--

31      **EXT. ROAD - LATER THAT NIGHT**      31

Ben's truck drives down the desolate road. On one side is the rocky beach, on the other side is forest.

32      **INT. BEN'S TRUCK (MOVING) - SAME**      32

Ben turns on the radio, searches for a station. He looks up and, out of nowhere, a NAKED GIRL dashes in front of his headlights. Ben swerves hard and skids into a ditch.

He gets out, sees the girl running away into the forest.

33      **EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**      33

The girl runs through the darkened forest on WOBBLY LEGS, like a drunk. Ben chases after her. She falls down, gets up, keeps going.

BEN

Hey, wait!

The girl weaves haphazardly through the forest. She trips over a fallen tree, lands in some pine needles.

Ben catches up. At last, a closer look. She curls up on the ground, shivering. Her dark hair tumbles in wild locks down her backside; her eyes a PIERCING BLUE. Let's call her RYN.

BEN

Are you okay?

Ryn is terrified, like a trapped animal. Her eyes dart about. She's having trouble breathing. She must be on drugs.

BEN

Were you at the party? Where are you from?

She doesn't speak.

BEN

Here, take my jacket.

He steps closer. Ryn bolts, knocking him down with surprising strength as she pushes past.

But her legs can't carry her far. She tumbles into a small ravine, passed out. Ben climbs down to get her.

34

**INT. BEN'S TRUCK (MOVING) - LATER**

34

Ryn, wrapped in his coat, is asleep in the passenger seat. Her breathing is WHEEZY and HEAVY. Her lungs sound wet. Ben is on his cell phone with the town doctor. He looks over at her.

BEN (INTO PHONE)

No, she's breathing fine, a little heavy. Someone probably gave her something at the party... Are you sure? 'Cause I'm happy to take her down to the hospital in Port Angeles... Okay, I'll see you there. Thanks, Dr. Abbott.

35

**EXT. HOUSEBOAT COMMUNITY - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT**

35

An eclectic collection of colorful houseboats. They creak gently on their moorings. We PUSH IN on one in particular--

36

**INT. BEN'S HOUSEBOAT - SAME**

36

Ben puts a log in the fire. Ryn lies on the sofa. She's dressed in one of his Marine Research Center t-shirts and a pair of oversized sweatpants. She stirs, opens her eyes.

She looks around nervously. She notices her ill-fitting clothes. Ben turns from the fireplace.

BEN

Sorry, it's all I had.

She still has yet to speak. Almost as if she's traumatized. The girl is enchanting and exotic. Feral. Other-worldly. There's something in her manner that Ben connects to.

Her eyes dart about the room. She picks up a SHELL on the side table, sniffs it.

BEN

Littleneck clam. From Malakh Bay.

Ryn doesn't respond, just stares at the shell.

BEN

You gonna say something?

He kneels down in front of her. He speaks gently.

BEN

I can help you. If you need to get back somewhere.

Ryn looks deep into his eyes, sizing him up. Ben awaits a response. He sighs, then rises and turns away.

BEN

If you're not gonna talk--

She begins to emit sounds, the same ETHEREAL MELODY we heard from the creature in the opening scene on The North Star.

Ben slowly turns back, mesmerized. Her song continues. It affects him. Like he's under her spell. This is no ordinary young woman.

Unnerved by it, he breaks off his stare. A KNOCK on the door.

BEN

That, uh, must be the doctor.

He crosses out of the room. Ben opens the front door to reveal DR. WINSTON ABBOTT, a rotund, good-natured man in his sixties, on the landing.

DR. ABBOTT

Good evening, Benjamin. So how is  
the naked overdosed damsel?

BEN

She's in here. And kind of weird.

They enter the living room. The fire is going. But Ryn is  
gone. Ben looks around, he opens a back door. No sign of her.

BEN

I don't know where she went.

The Doctor gives him a dubious look.

DR. ABBOTT

A slippery one, huh?

Off Ben, as he stares longingly outside, his mind racing--

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE37      **INT. HOUSEBOAT - BEDROOM LOFT - MORNING**

37

Morning light filters in. Ben is asleep in his bed. We PUSH IN slowly on his face. Po's SIREN SONG echoes softly in his dreams. It seems to be having an erotic effect on him.

There's a knock at the door. Ben cocks an eye open. Another knock. Ben rouses himself and heads for the door. He opens it.

38      **EXT. HOUSEBOAT**

38

A large Samoan MAN fills the doorway. The guy steps aside to reveal Ben's mother, Elaine, impeccably dressed as always, sitting in her wheelchair on the rickety dock.

ELAINE

Good morning, dear. Your father is terribly angry with you.

BEN

Good morning to you, too.

Elaine looks over at her Aide.

ELAINE

Give us a moment, Anthony.

The Aide exits. She waits until he's gone. Then faces Ben.

ELAINE

I don't give a rat's ass that your father's angry. A lot of things make him angry. The fact that a woman who can't walk insists on buying six hundred dollar shoes.

Ben listens from the doorway. There's a gap between the dock and the houseboat that his mother cannot cross.

ELAINE

You know what he called me the other day? Bitch on wheels.

BEN

That's actually pretty funny.

ELAINE

I thought so, too. And you know why it was okay? Because it was behind closed doors.

Elaine wheels a bit closer, lowers her voice.

ELAINE

Family rule. Say whatever the hell  
awful thing you want in private,  
but in public--

She puts on a smiling face that looks like Miss America.

ELAINE

This is the face that keeps mommy  
in her nice shoes.

BEN

(even)  
I get it.

The smile drops from Elaine's face.

ELAINE

No, I don't think you do. Because  
if you did, you'd show up, you'd  
flash that famous Pownall charm,  
you wouldn't leave your father up  
on stage with his pants around his  
ankles.

Ben studies her a moment, deciding whether to engage.

BEN

You know what, Mom? You guys want  
to put on a show for the whole  
town, that's your business. But  
leave me out of it. I've got other  
things to worry about.

ELAINE

Well, if the spawning habits of a  
bunch of plankton are more  
important than your family--

BEN

That's not what I'm saying. And I  
really don't want to have this  
conversation. Again.

ELAINE

I need this family to keep working.  
I'm not willing to suffer for  
nothing.

He regards her, softens.

BEN

Okay, I hear you.

He holds her gaze, sincere. But she isn't finished just yet.

ELAINE

Doug tells me you've been hot and heavy with Maddie Bishop.

BEN

Yeah, Mom. We're dating.

Elaine regards her son.

ELAINE

You've always had a thing for the wild girls.

Now he's had enough. He turns away.

BEN

I gotta get to work.

39 INT. BOAT - MORNING

39

Ryn wakes up inside the mildewy and trash-strewn hull of a boat. She stretches her legs, touches them. She wiggles and spreads her toes, regarding them with fascination.

A rodent scurries along the floorboards. Ryn snares it with animal-like reflexes. She holds the RAT in her fist, studies it, then raises it to her mouth to take a bite. Off the sound of CRUNCHING bones--

40 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DIRT LOT - SAME

40

The BOAT lies tilted on its side, abandoned amidst the weeds of a dirt lot. There's a big gash in its hull.

Ryn climbs out, chewing, wiping her mouth clean. She shivers in the chill morning air. In the distance, she observes a woman hanging CLOTHES on a line in a nearby trailer park.

41 EXT. BRISTOL COVE - DAY

41

Ryn, now wearing a University of Washington hoodie from the line, enters the town. She looks like a barefoot hippie college chick. Except her eyes are keen and focused. More like the Terminator.

She looks around at the sights with a mix of caution and intrigue:

41A - A KID on a skateboard whooshes past.

41A

41B - PEOPLE are tapping away on strange devices, commonly known as iPhones.

41B

41C        - She passes a NAIL SALON where women are getting manicures. Ryn looks at her own thick fingernails crusted in algae.

41C

41D She notices a MERMAID MURAL on main street. A tourist 41D  
family walks past with matching MERMAID HATS. She seems  
puzzled by all the mermaid-themed merchandise.

41D

41E Ryn passes a storefront. It's the old curio shop. Ryn 41E  
regards the antiquities in the window with interest. Helen is  
out sweeping the stoop, mumbling to herself per usual.

41E

HELEN

Come inside, have a look. The only  
real artifacts in town. Maybe buy  
something while you're--

Ryn's presence gives Helen pause. The two women stare at each other. Ryn cocks her head, sensing something.

After a moment, Ryn makes a series of staccato SCREECHES combined with low guttural SOUNDS. It's a primitive form of language. Helen is taken aback.

A loud group of TOURISTS, bedecked in mermaid memorabilia, comes down the sidewalk. Ryn gets spooked by the crowd and quickly moves away from Helen.

42 INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - SAME 42

Ben drives through town. Out of the corner of his eye, he spots Ryn. He hits his brakes, abruptly pulls over.

43 EXT. STREET - SAME 43

Ben hops out of his truck, runs across the street, dodging cars. HORNS BLARE.

BEN

Sorry!

He makes it across, looking in all directions for Ryn. But she's gone. He turns to Helen.

BEN

Ms. Hawkins, there was a girl just here.

Helen looks like she's seen a ghost.

HELEN

You saw her?

BEN

Yes, it looked like you were talking to her.

Helen abruptly turns back to her shop.

HELEN

I didn't see anyone.

She shuts the door, leaving Ben befuddled on the sidewalk.

44 EXT. TOWN - MOMENTS LATER 44

Ben moves swiftly down the street, pushing past people as he looks for Ryn. She's nowhere to be found.

45 EXT. DOCKS/FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - LATER 45

Ryn steps down the dock, past the fleet of fishing trawlers. She studies each vessel intently, and then she pauses--

THE NORTH STAR. A glint of recognition in Ryn's eyes. She touches the hull, then climbs aboard the empty vessel.

Ryn looks around the deck. She sniffs the trawl nets, like an animal tracking a scent. We PUSH IN on her face, as we--

46      **EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

46

FLASHBACK TO: Underwater. The faint shapes of TWO MERMAIDS in the half-lit water. One has coppery red hair, the other dark hair. A FISHING NET suddenly rips the red-haired one away.

The dark-haired mermaid reacts, swimming alongside, trying to help, but gets knocked sideways. A look of fear on both their faces. They reach out and touch hands, but it's too late, the net is lifted up out of the water and they're ripped apart.

The dark-haired mermaid left behind can only watch in horror. And from her face--

47      **EXT. FISHING TRAWLER ("THE NORTH STAR") - LATER**

47

BACK TO SCENE. It's Ryn's face. Yes, she's beautiful in human form, but it's clear that was her under the water.

Ryn whimpers as she runs the fishing net through her fingers, yearning for the red-haired mermaid.

48      **INT. MILITARY BUNKER - RESEARCH LAB - DAY**

48

The captured mermaid floats in her tank. Her skin looks pallid. Her powerful tail hangs limply. Aldon Decker stares at her through the glass. A SCIENTIST approaches the tank.

SCIENTIST  
DNA analysis came in.

He offers Decker a printed report. Decker examines it.

DECKER  
An abundance of glial cells in the  
cerebral cortex--

SCIENTIST  
It would suggest a highly advanced  
and adaptive mind, an extraordinary  
ability to process information.

DECKER  
(to mermaid)  
I wouldn't have expected anything  
less of you.

SCIENTIST

The glia also contain a clustering of pattern formation genes, neoblasts. We've seen it in species that have the ability to regenerate limbs, newts, salamanders, though never in a higher level vertebrate like this. Not in this density.

DECKER

You're saying she could grow new tissue?

SCIENTIST

Yes, potentially.

Decker gazes at the creature floating in the tank.

SCIENTIST

Admiral Harrison has requested a copy of the report.

DECKER

Let's hold off. We don't know what all this means... The medical implications... her DNA... helping the crippled walk again... amputees growing new limbs... giving sight to the blind.

(touches tank)

You're more special than we ever imagined.

The captured mermaid floats there in its watery cocoon, unmoving, eternal, full of promise.

END OF ACT THREE

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ACT FOUR49      **INT. BEN'S HOUSEBOAT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

49

A couple is in the throes of passion. Forceful, loud, and aggressive.

Ben pins Maddie to the bed. He increases his pace further, we PUSH IN on his face, nearly reaching the point of ecstasy.

They both climax loudly. Ben rolls off her and collapses onto the pillow. They're breathing hard. Maddie looks over.

MADDIE

What got into you, tiger?

50      **EXT. TRAILER PARK - OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - MORNING**

50

Ryn walks along a fence, past the rear of the run-down trailer park. She steps onto a scrap of metal and suddenly winces in pain. Ryn clutches her dirty foot, studies it intently.

ANGLE ON, a pair of RAIN BOOTS sitting outside a home. Ryn picks one up. She examines it, processing the information, then looks down at her foot.

She pulls up the leg of her pants and we notice--

HER ENTIRE LEG is covered in a plaque-like crust--the skin is blistered and raw, DRYING OUT in the most gruesome way.

Ryn tugs the rain boot on. She does the same for the other. Ryn regards her newly clad feet, satisfied. Something in the yard catches her eye--

A small TOY HELICOPTER. Ryn picks it up and studies it with great excitement and interest.

51      **EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

51

A QUICK FLASHBACK TO: The opening scene, played now from a WATER-LEVEL POV, as the giant Sikorsky lifts the mermaid tank off the deck of the fishing boat. Rotor wash everywhere.

52      **EXT. TRAILER PARK - OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - MORNING**

52

BACK TO SCENE. Ryn holds the toy helicopter. There's a strange NOISE coming from the home. Ryn steps up to the open window. A TV is playing a CHILDREN'S PROGRAM (TBD). A little TODDLER is holding a sippy cup, watching.

One of the goofy characters announces its name, "I am Ryn."  
Ryn mouths the words. And we learn the origin of her name.

RYN

I. Am. Ryn.

The toddler turns to see Ryn at the window. He giggles at her.

TODDLER

Hello, Ryn.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Tyler?

We can hear his mother coming from the other room. Ryn swiftly ducks out of the way.

MOTHER

Were you talking to someone?

TODDLER

I talk to Ryn.

FURTHER ALONG in the trailer park, a redneck guy, DONNIE, 35, is working on his old Impala.

Donnie lowers the hood of his car and notices Ryn standing across from him. He wipes his greasy hands with a rag.

DONNIE

Hey, little miss, didn't see you there.

She stares at him.

RYN

I. Am. Ryn.

DONNIE

Not from around here, are you?

She shows him the toy helicopter.

DONNIE

Whatcha got?

She continues to hold it up.

DONNIE

Helicopter.

He makes a spinning gesture with his finger and a ffft-ffft helicopter sound.

Ryn surprises him by suddenly getting in his car. Donnie smiles and decides to go for it.

DONNIE  
So you need a ride, huh?  
(beat)  
Okay. I'm headed down to Aberdeen.

53      **INT. IMPALA (MOVING) - DAY**

53

Donnie grips the wheel. Ryn is in the passenger seat. He looks over at her.

DONNIE  
Not much of a talker, huh?

He can't keep his eyes off her.

DONNIE  
That's okay. It's still nice to have company. Sometimes I'll pick up a hitcher, but it's mostly dudes, not a pretty thing like you.

Ryn again shows him the TOY HELICOPTER. He grins wolfishly.

DONNIE  
You like your little toy.

54      **EXT. ROAD - DAY**

54

The Impala pulls off the main road, onto a secluded dirt road surrounded by forest. It rolls to a stop. Donnie gets out and urinates in the bushes.

55      **INT. IMPALA - SAME**

55

He returns to the driver's seat. Donnie sits there a moment, then reaches across Ryn, into the glovebox. He takes out a whiskey flask and has a sip. He stares at her.

DONNIE  
You're like a little girl. A pretty little girl who doesn't know how to talk.

He takes another sip.

DONNIE  
Now I bet your momma told you not to get in cars with strangers. But you didn't listen to her. A little rebel, huh?

He reaches out and touches Po's neck.

DONNIE

Your skin is dry, you oughta put  
some cream on that, make it nice  
and soft.

Ryn tries to push on the door, but doesn't know how to get it open.

DONNIE

You don't need to get out.

He takes her hand and puts it between his legs.

DONNIE

Isn't that what you're lookin' for?  
Adventure. Little girl running away  
from home. Gettin' in a big man's  
car.

Donnie moves her hand back and forth. He moans.

DONNIE

Go on, yeah, see how it feels.

He moves on top of her, groping with his hands, pulling her pants down, fumbling for his belt. Ryn is terrified as he forces himself upon her.

56      **EXT. DIRT ROAD - SAME**

56

The Impala rocks back and forth on its springs. The windows are fogging up. Then there's a sudden HISS. The car jolts. Bodies thrash inside. BLOOD splatters across the windows.

Smash! Donnie's head is thrust through the windshield. He's lodged there up to his shoulders. His neck is broken.

The door opens and Ryn climbs out. She surveys the damage. She's breathing heavily. She runs away down the dirt road, ducks into the forest, and disappears.

57      **EXT. FOREST - LATER**

57

Ryn runs. At last she slows down. She notices blood on her sweatshirt. She takes it off. She's now just in Ben's t-shirt again. It reveals the skin on the inside of her arms has the same dry, blistered, crusty lesions as her legs.

58      **EXT. ROAD - DAY**

58

Ryn moves along the road. She comes upon a SIGN at the roadside. It's for the Bristol Cove Marine Research Center. Ryn looks at the t-shirt she's wearing. The symbol matches. Ryn stares at the sign, thinking.

59        **EXT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - MOMENTS LATER**

59

Ryn makes her way down the dock toward the facility. She's immediately swept up by a group of SCHOOLCHILDREN on a tour of the center.

TEACHER

Stay with your partners. Quiet,  
please.

Ryn, intrigued, joins in the group. The teacher gives her a quick once-over, noting her BCMRC t-shirt.

60        **INT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - SAME**

60

It's clear the dedication and passion of its employees and volunteers, not big funding, is what keeps this place going.

Ryn looks around curiously. The walls are filled with PICTURES of rescued marine animals. Maddie leads the kids through.

MADDIE

This is not a zoo. This is a  
research and rescue center for the  
many marine mammals that inhabit  
our region.

She leads them toward a glass-fronted room that looks like a doctor's examination room. Ryn regards the facility with fascination. It has a calming influence on her.

MADDIE

We're able to offer veterinary  
care, perform surgical procedures,  
and administer medication.

A KID, 9, points to a bank of CCTV monitors in the room.

KID

What're all the TV's for?

MADDIE

Those are so we can keep an eye on  
our animals and what they're doing,  
both in and out of the water.

Maddie moves on. The group follows. A GIRL in the front asks her a question.

GIRL

When you were a kid did you know  
you wanted to work here?

MADDIE

Actually, it was a couple years ago, I saw a video of a baby dolphin that had washed ashore. Instead of helping it, the people on the beach passed it around taking their picture with it. Even after it died, they kept taking selfies. That video made me sad and I wanted to do something. So I came here to volunteer. Now it's my job.

Maddie leads them into a room with industrial metal tables.

MADDIE

You might be wondering what our animals like to eat. This is our kitchen where we prepare one of their favorite treats.

She holds up a large blender filled with fish.

MADDIE

Our fish shake. A delicious blend of herring and cod, with various nutrients mixed in as well.

She blends it. The children squirm at the concoction.

MADDIE

Would anyone like a taste?

Everyone shakes their head "no" with grossed out looks.

TEACHER

Come, children, this way.

They file out. Ryn lingers as the group heads out. When nobody's looking, she takes the fish shake and hungrily drinks it down.

61

**EXT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - SAME**

61

We see enormous adult sea lions out on the dock and in various enclosures.

MADDIE

Once our animals have received the medical care they need, they come out here to recover and prepare for their journey back to the wild.

As soon as Ryn steps outside, the animals start panicking, BARKING, SQUEALING, trying to escape. They sense a predator in their midst.

TEACHER  
What's going on?

MADDIE  
I'm not sure.

It's scary as a huge sea lion rears up on the dock.

TEACHER  
Okay, everyone come with me. Now.

The Kid from earlier notices a seal cowering away from Ryn. Ben and the other workers rush into the area to check on the commotion. Barking. Squealing. Thrashing.

Ben is surprised to see Ryn amongst the group. The Kid at the back points to her as he's led away.

KID  
It was her, she did it.

BEN  
(to Ryn)  
Come with me.

She thinks for a moment, then follows him through the tunnel of noise. As soon as she's gone, things settle down.

Maddie and the other researchers look around at the animals, unaware Ryn had anything to do with it.

MADDIE  
That was weird.

62

**INT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - OFFICE - SAME**

62

Ben leads Ryn inside. She regards him, hesitantly. Ben smiles.

BEN  
We meet again. You gonna tell me  
who you are this time?

She backs away from him.

BEN  
It's okay, I'm not going to hurt  
you.

Ryn seems cautious, nervous. Her eyes dart about. Ben slowly steps toward her.

BEN

I can help you. My name is Ben.  
(points to his chest)  
Friend.

Her eyes look wan and sickly, the corners of her mouth are chapped and dry. She stares at him, trust slowly building.

RYN

I am Ryn.

BEN

Ryn. Okay. Nice to meet you. Where are you from?

She starts COUGHING. Her lungs sound dry and wheezy. Ben notices the fissures all along the inside of her arm.

BEN

Are you sick?

He reaches out and takes her arm. He gently touches her plaque-encrusted skin. Ryn lets him.

BEN

We have medication here. We can help you.

It's an oddly intimate moment. Ben lingers. This girl has a strange effect on him. He stares into her eyes.

BEN

The night we met, you sang a song.  
I can't get it out of my head.  
Everywhere I go, I hear it.

The moment is broken when Maddie enters the room. She's surprised to see Ben has a visitor.

MADDIE

Oh, hey. Um, everything's back to normal out there, not sure what that was all about--

Ben lets go of Po's arm.

BEN

This is Ryn. She's a visitor here.  
She doesn't really speak English.

Maddie notices her condition.

MADDIE

Is she okay?

BEN  
I'm not sure.

MADDIE  
I think we need to call a doctor.

BEN  
I'll do it. I'll take care of her.  
Why don't you finish closing things  
up out there and head home.

Maddie senses something is amiss with Ben. She regards the sickly, exotic girl in the corner, not sure what to make of it. Maddie steps closer to Ben.

MADDIE  
(gently)  
Dude, are you okay?

BEN  
Yeah, I'm good.

Maddie looks to Ryn. Then she gives Ben a quick kiss, marking her territory.

MADDIE  
You wanna come over? My dad's  
working tonight.

BEN  
Okay, sounds good.

Maddie gives Ryn a final glance, then turns and exits. Once she's gone, Ben faces Ryn.

BEN  
I'm gonna call the doctor for you.

63      **EXT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - EVENING**

63

Maddie shuts off some lights, locks a door. The facility is empty now. She heads up the dock, toward the exit ramp.

She pauses, looks back at the building with the light on in the window. She's considering going back down there. But she doesn't want to be THAT girlfriend. She heads up the ramp.

64      **INT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - OFFICE - SAME**

64

Ryn is slumped in the corner. Ben kneels in front of her.

BEN  
The doctor will be here soon. How  
are you doing?

Ryn scratches her arm.

BEN

I'll get some clobetasol, it's an ointment, we use it on our animals, it will help your skin. Don't go anywhere, I'll be right back.

He exits. Ryn lies against the wall. She's getting worse. Her skin is drying out all over her neck and face. She tries to get to her feet, but collapses. She WHEEZES, like her lungs aren't working anymore.

65

**EXT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - MOMENTS LATER**

65

Ryn drags herself down the dock, struggling to breathe. Her face and arms are encrusted with dried, fissured skin. With all her strength, she tugs herself to the edge of the dock.

Ryn rolls into the water with a splash. She floats there, bathed in the moonlight. She kicks and tugs off her clothes. They drift gently downward. And then, it begins--

We hear the slow, agonizing CRACK of bones. She SCREAMS in pain.

66

**INT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - EXAMINATION ROOM - SAME**

66

Ben rifles through a metal cabinet filled with first aid equipment when he hears the SCREAMING. It doesn't sound human. One of the sea lions, he assumes.

He turns to check the CCTV monitors. As we PAN across the screens, we settle on one that shows an underwater view.

And suddenly, a FACE. Ryn's face. Distorted. Something very wrong is happening with her. Off Ben's look of concern--

66A

**EXT. UNDERWATER - SAME**

66A

In the half-lit water, we find Ryn, and witness something no human has ever seen before--

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A MERMAID.

It's slow, painful, and grotesque. We're reminded of "An American Werewolf in London."

Her legs FUSE together with the sound of cracking bones and melding flesh. Ryn winces in agony.

67

**EXT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - SAME**

67

Ben blasts out of the office, a dive light in his hand. As he pushes through a gate, we INTERCUT WITH--

Ryn wails as her facial structure alters, teeth sharpen.

Chunks of MOLTING FLESH fall away. Scales push through the skin with a sickening crunch.

Ben charges down the dock. Knowing the girl is in some kind of danger, he DIVES into the water.

UNDERWATER, Ben shines his torch light all around. The shaft of light captures the figure of Ryn, facing away.

Her toes BREAK APART, fanning out as the powerful tail forms. Gill SLITS open along her ribcage. WEBBING fills in between fingers.

Ben watches as the massive tail UNFURLS.

And then, just like that, it's over. And all is calm. Ben, almost out of breath, is astonished by what he has just seen.

The mermaid slowly turns around in the shaft of light and becomes aware of his presence. They regard each other. It's an intimate and majestic moment.

But instantly her face twists into a menacing scowl. She swims toward him with a terrifying flash of teeth. In full predator mode. Aggressive. Wild. Transformed.

Ben manages to kick free and get to the surface. He gulps air before he's tugged under again. Blood fills the water.

Ben grabs a pole net from the edge of the dock and hopelessly attempts to fend her off.

She comes at him with open jaws. At the last second, he holds up the net, which she bites in half. She keeps coming, slams him up against the pylons with tremendous force.

The momentum flings Ben up onto the dock, where he rolls and lands heavily, crumpled, bloody, and unconscious. The mermaid angrily hisses at him, before dipping away into the ocean.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE68      **EXT. MARINE RESEARCH CENTER - DOCK - NIGHT**

68

A LIGHT SHINES in our eyes. It's Dr. Abbott, checking Ben's pupils. Ben is lying on the dock. His neck and jaw are badly scratched. He looks up at Dr. Abbott, starts to get up.

DR. ABBOTT

Easy there--

BEN

What happened?

DR. ABBOTT

Apparently one of the sea lions  
didn't like the herring you served  
him for dinner.

Ben is slowly coming to his senses. He struggles to his feet, steadies himself against a railing.

DR. ABBOTT

Please, lie down--

BEN

Where is she?

DR. ABBOTT

Ah yes, your mystery date.

Ben, agitated, is at the edge of the dock, his eyes searching out across the empty water. Abbott steps closer.

DR. ABBOTT

Ben, I've been caring for you and  
your family for a long time. If  
you're mixed up with someone who's  
in trouble, drugs, what have you, I  
can help. There are people I can  
refer you to.

Ben continues to stare out to the ocean--

68A      **OMITTED.**

68A      \*

68B      **OMITTED.**

68B      \*

69      **OMITTED.**

69

70

**EXT. STREET NEAR HELEN'S ANTIQUITIES SHOP - NIGHT**

70

Ben sits in his truck, staring at the shop. Rain pelts down.

There's a BUZZING sound. A series of texts from Maddie appear on his phone. Where r u? Waiting for u. And then a SEXY PICTURE of her in a t-shirt and panties.

Ben, still focused on the shop, ignores it. He reaches for the door handle and gets out.

Ben crosses the sidewalk in the pummeling rain. He KNOCKS on the shop door.

BEN

Hello? Ms. Hawkins? Hello?!

He peers in close to the window, and suddenly, there's a FACE staring out at him. It's Helen.

Ben startles back. He shouts to her through the rain.

BEN

That girl yesterday. I know you saw her. You said you didn't, but you did. You knew something about her.

Helen's face disappears from the window. Ben is crestfallen. Then the shop door creaks open.

HELEN

Come in.

71 **OMITTED.**

71

72 **INT. HELEN'S ANTIQUITIES - NIGHT**

72

Helen leads Ben inside. The collection of skulls and mermaid oddities are especially creepy at this time of night. Helen faces him in the half-lit shop.

HELEN

What is it you think I know?

Ben takes a breath.

BEN

That she's one of them. I saw it tonight.

The rain is coming down harder now, lashing the windows. Helen studies him, reads his troubled face.

HELEN

What did you see?

BEN

Lower half, cetacean, powerfully built, triangulated teeth. A top level predator.

She studies him as he picks up a dusty old tome entitled THE HISTORY OF MERMAIDS. The illustration of a mermaid on the cover bears a striking resemblance to the real thing.

BEN

Just like this.

Ben steps closer to Helen.

BEN

When I was a kid, we'd come in here and you'd tell us stories about the mermaids. We were always told they were just tall tales. Not to believe you. But they weren't made up, were they? They were true.

Helen regards him, torn between hostility and irony.

HELEN

So all these years you all laughed at me, ridiculed me--and now you want answers?

She stands amidst the artifacts, turns to him.

HELEN

Be careful what you wish for.

BEN

I don't get it. You want people to know the truth. It's here. It's happening. What are you afraid of all of a sudden?

HELEN

A lot.

(pained)

Your family's history in this town is bloodier than you know. Your ancestor lost his mind, obsessed. He and his shipmates slaughtered those beautiful creatures in cold blood. Genocide. That's your legacy. Why don't you ask your family about that?

She stares him down. Ben tries to process what she's telling him.

Ben, soaking wet, takes something out from under his jacket. It's the tome--THE HISTORY OF MERMAIDS.

In the dim light, he flips through pages. In it are gory ILLUSTRATIONS of death and murder:

- Mermaids and mermen being savagely HUNTED by fishermen in whaling boats.
- Mermaids attacking sailors, TEARING them to shreds.
- Men HACKING the heads off mermaids on a beach.

It suggests a much darker history than we ever imagined. Ben reads with both fascination and horror etched on his face.

OFF the image of a FISHERMAN wielding a harpoon--

74 OMITTED. 74

75               OMITTED.

75

76 OMITTED. 76

77 EXT. THE NORTH STAR - DAWN 77

Xander hands a HARPOON GUN to Sean, who carries it to the bridge. They're preparing their ship.

Xander notices someone coming down the dock toward the ship. It's BEN. He stands on the dock, below Xander.

BEN

Hey.

XANDER

(guarded)

Hey. What're you doing here?

BEN

I'm coming with you.

Xander regards him, sizing him up, realizing Ben believes him. Beat. He turns toward the bridge.

XANDER

Dad! We got room for one more?

Sean leans out, sees Ben. He nods.

Xander reaches his hand out. Ben takes it. Xander pulls him onto the boat.

78 EXT. BRISTOL COVE - MARINA - MOMENTS LATER 78

The North Star chugs out of the marina, rears up, and powers out toward the open ocean.

78A INT. MADDIE'S HOME - MORNING 78A

Eggs cook in a skillet. Maddie slides them onto a plate in front of her father. She's got a phone in the crook of her neck while she does this. Maddie hangs up.

DALE

What's wrong, Mads?

MADDIE

Just been trying to get a hold of  
Ben. He's not calling me back.

DALE

I'm sure he's just busy.

The phone RINGS. Maddie reaches for it.

DALE

See, there you go.

MADDIE  
(into phone)  
Hello?... Yeah. He's here, hang on.

She holds the phone out to her dad.

MADDIE  
For you. It's Clarence.

Her father regards her sympathetically as he takes the phone.

DALE  
(into phone)  
Hey, Clarence, what's up?...  
Okay... Where at?... All right,  
I'll be there.

He hangs up. Dale seems taken aback by what he's heard. He grabs his jacket and hat from the wall.

MADDIE  
What's going on?

DALE  
They found a body, some guy  
attacked in his car. Out by Stinson  
Lane. I gotta run.

He kisses Maddie on the head and exits without finishing his breakfast. Dale turns in the doorway and looks back at Maddie.

DALE  
Don't worry, he's gonna call you.

Maddie nods as her father leaves. She tosses the plate of eggs into the messy sink.

79      **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

79

A stark white room. It's antiseptic and lonely. Chris, the injured crewman from the opening, lies in a bed. A breathing tube down his throat.

A NURSE inspects the monitors, surprised. She checks the blood gas levels. Another surprise. She glances at Chris.

The Nurse quickly exits the room. She walks down a TOMB-LIKE CONCRETE CORRIDOR, through a security level. Clearly this is no ordinary hospital. She passes the now familiar research lab that houses the mermaid. It's all part of the same complex.

80      **INT. MILITARY BUNKER - RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT**

80

The Nurse enters the lab and finds Decker, standing at a monitor.

NURSE

The patient's heart rate has  
stabilized. Blood gases, liver  
function, all beginning to  
normalize as well.

Decker takes this in for a moment, absorbed by the implications --

DECKER

He's healing at an abnormally  
accelerated rate.

IN THE TANK, unbeknownst to him, the creature tightens her fist. Her eyes slowly open, revealing a menacing glare.

81 EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT 81

The North Star plows across the moonlit ocean.

82 INT. FISHING TRAWLER - SAME 82

Sean pilots his boat. Xander and Ben sit in the bridge as it rolls over the waves.

XANDER  
Just like old times.

Yeah. BEN

Xander looks over at him.

XANDER  
Maybe we catch one, military comes  
lookin' for us, leads us to Chris.

Ben nods.

82A EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - SAME 82A \*

Ryn, in mermaid form, in her element, swims into the frame  
and pauses. She stares up toward the surface, like she's  
tracking something. And with a thrust of her powerful tail,  
she launches forward once again.

82B INT. FISHING TRAWLER - SAME 82B \*

Sean's fish finder sonar starts BEEPING. He looks at the colorful monitor alight with curved lines. There's ONE that is much larger than the rest, and moving faster. Sean pushes his hat back as he regards it.

CAPT. SEAN  
Hey, we got something.

Xander and Ben gather around the monitor.

XANDER

It's big. \*

BEN  
Moving fast. \*

CAPT. SEAN  
Portside --

Sean grabs the harpoon gun and lumbers outside to the deck of the ship. Xander and Ben are behind him. \*

82C      **EXT. FISHING TRAWLER - SAME**

82C      \*

They all stare out at the still ocean. Sean grunts.

CAPT. SEAN

Show yourself, you lousy bastard! I  
know you're out there!

\*

Nothing. Then suddenly, breaking the surface a hundred meters  
off the portside, a fast-moving body.

\*

Sean takes aim. Ben watches tensely, thinking it might be Ryn  
in the water. He grabs Sean's shoulder.

BEN

Don't --

Sean shrugs him off, glares at him.

XANDER

(pointing)

Look--

We see it is just a breaching DOLPHIN. Sean curses to  
himself, breathing hard. He scowls at Ben.

\*

CAPT. SEAN

You don't pull that crap on my  
boat.

Xander stares at Ben, no longer sure which side his friend is  
on. We move around to the back of the boat. The fishing  
trawler rises and falls on the ocean swells, it almost seems  
peaceful, until, from out of the dark water--

AN ARM grabs onto the gunwale of the boat. A MERMAN, bigger,  
scarier, more powerfully built than Ryn or her sister, lifts  
itself up out of the water. It looks like a primordial  
warrior on the hunt with a whale bone SPEAR in hand.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

END OF PILOT