

SYMBIONT

by

Darikus Whalen

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE - EARTH

Cyclonic clouds encircle the Aurora Borealis.

EXT. UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY - NIGHT

Hailstorm batters the campus. Severe weather siren BLARES. Navy personnel scurry into buildings.

INT. HALL

Captain GAR BLAKE, a high-strung New Englander, early 40's, peeps through door window and enters an

AUDITORIUM

where midshipmen eyeball a hydrosphere on a vinyl screen.

At the projector: Commander MYLES DOUGLAS, a stout Native American, late 30's with a touch of gray, sporting bifocals.

MYLES

The Hadalpelagic Zone of the Antarctic Circle is an inhospitable environment. Yet, it is home to a vast number of species.

(notices Gar)

In separate essays, list three extremophiles indigenous to the Southern Ocean. Explain their roles that benefit the ecology.

LOBBY

Gar hands Myles an envelope.

MYLES

Reassignment?

GAR

We have a situation. I need you.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Myles, Gar, Rear Admiral DUFF, the CHIEF of NAVAL OPERATIONS, and other top officers sit at a round table. A media officer hands out folders.

C.N.O.

As you were.

Lights dim. At center of table appears a holographic Earth; its magnetic poles highlighted beneath cloud mass.

C.N.O.

At 21:00 hours a polar reversal occurred, which disrupted the geomagnetic field and altered our geologic and climatic systems
.....

Images appear: mega-tsunami, flood destruction, FEMA personnel in action, horrified survivors.

C.N.O.

... Satellites detected the source in the Devil's Triangle, 160 klicks off the Bahamas coast. Adm. Duff.

A holographic, spherical structure appears.

ADM. DUFF

The Abyssos, Kryo-Corp's latest subaqueous biosphere, was conducting research at the Triangle's sea floor. Moments before the poles shifted, it had gone silent.

Myles and Gar exchange looks.

ADM. DUFF

Gar, Myles: your mission's to secure the Abyssos, evacuate all survivors before the salvage crew arrives.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

ENA, a flame-haired belle, late 30's, German accent, stands beside Myles as he opens a suitcase.

ENA

You volunteered ... 6 months before retirement. Did you forget our 10th anniversary's coming up?

Myles packs clothes inside suitcase. TALA, a wolf hybrid, jumps on bed, licks Myles' face.

MYLES

Tala, down.

MYLES

I haven't forgotten. Look, Ena, an international emergency is at hand. My expertise is needed.

ENA

Your expertise is needed here ... to fix our relationship.

Ena turns angrily to pixillated newscaster on TV.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

Farmers around the world predict changing weather patterns will wipe out crops and livestock

MYLES

It takes two to tango.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

... Elsewhere: crowded airports and grounded planes spell frustration for travelers

ENA

Tell that to your dance instructor. Gar talked you into it, didn't he?

MYLES

This conversation's going nowhere.

Myles storms to the dresser, jerks open the drawer.

ENA

It goes nowhere because you don't want to listen

Myles sighs, reaches for a folded shirt, pauses with a surprised look. He pulls out a crystal dragonfly amulet, takes on a pensive look.

ENA

Don't expect me to wait for you.

Myles goes to hug Ena who slaps away his hand.

ENA

Don't. I can't.

MYLES

Ena, I'll be back soon.

ENA

How long is soon? Three months? Six months? I can't wait for what if's.

EXT./INT. TAXI - DAY

Myles loads suitcase in trunk, notices Ena in balcony doorway, raises hand. She closes blinds.

INT. BUILDING

Myles and Gar roll their bags. Navy personnel everywhere.

GAR

Face it. You're pussy-whipped.

MYLES

I disagree.

GAR

Old Red's lipstick is painted all over your long face.

Myles gives Gar a cut and dried expression of offense. Gar chuckles, pats Myles' shoulder.

GAR

It's liberating when you man up.

MYLES

Gar ... now I know why I avoided you all those years.

Myles and Gar approach the

CHECKPOINT

where inspectors run scanners up and down officers.

Myles' eyes fix on a flame-haired BELLE, mid-30's and curvy, among the inspectors. Gar nods his head.

GAR

She's not your type.

MYLES

Who says I'm interested?

BELLE (O.S.)
Your bags, sir.

MYLES
What? Oh, my bags.

Myles blushes, sets bags on conveyor, hands I.D. to the Belle, glances at her name tag that reads: LINDIE FAUNA. She scans the I.D. and looks over Myles' features.

MYLES
Lindie Fauna? You're a civvie?

LINDIE
A temp.

MYLES
You have a Kentucky accent.

LINDIE
(with a big smile)
Ya can step into the scanner now.

GAR
Better watch out. He's just coming out of the closet.

LINDIE
Is that right?

MYLES
Not the closet you're thinking.

LINDIE
At least ya didn't come out cross-eyed and bow-legged.

Gar snickers. Myles flushes as Lindie scans him.

MYLES
I remember that line in Gun Smoke.

LINDIE
My favorite show in my young years.
You're good to go, commander?

MYLES
Douglas. Myles Douglas. See you a round,
Lindie Fauna.

EXT. NAVAL YARD - EVENING

Myles and Gar walk along dock.

MYLES

I understand Dr. Vasuki will be tagging along?

GAR

Affirmative. You know him?

MYLES

Not personally. He's India's top oceanographer. The face of countless documentaries. A media sensation until he left the limelight for a career at Kryo-Corp.

GAR

Must've been offered something he couldn't pass up.

MYLES

Wow, what a beauty.

Myles stops, marvels at a black submarine.

GAR

The Jerry Rauen, world's most advanced boat, christened last week.

MYLES

And there was no media fiasco?

GAR

Negative. Pending Congressional approval, it'll be the flagship of a top secret all-submarine armada.

MASTER CHIEF D.J., a mountain of a man, leads a SEAL team toward Gar and Myles.

MYLES

Is that D.J.?

GAR

In the flesh. Master Chief.

D.J. nods at Gar and Myles.

D.J.

My boys are ready at your command

EXT. THE DEEP SEA - NIGHT

The USS Jerry Rauen wedges through darkness.

INT. MESS

Gar joins Myles reading documents at table. Folder open.

GAR

I know that look. Find something?

MYLES

There were two mega-tsunamis: the Devil's Triangle and the Dragon's Triangle off the Japanese coast.

GAR

And?

MYLES

I'd like to know what the brass hasn't told us.

GAR

Kryo-Corp initiated two identical experiments, not just one. Each involved EMP's, which may have caused the pole shift.

MYLES

Why SEALs when divers can do?

GAR

Precaution against potential subsurface pirates.

A Petty Officer appears.

PETTY OFFICER

We're at the rendezvous point. Kryo-Corps is standing by.

EXT. THE DEEP SEA

Submarine Rescue Vehicle launches off the Rauen and passes a submarine with the Kryo-Corps logo splashed on its hull.

THE ABYSS

The S.R.V. skims along a featureless seamount.

MYLES (V.O.)
Neptune to Rauen. We're approaching Davy
Jones' Locker. Over?

INT. THE S.R.V.

In the cockpit Myles stands by a navigator. In the compartment behind him, eight SEALs are geared up.

GAR (V.O.)
I read you. Do you have visual?

Sphere of faint lights emerge. Upper half is dark.

MYLES
Affirmative. Upper hemisphere shows signs
of structural damage. Lower sections
appear to be intact

Submersibles border the round base of Abyssos.

MYLES
I confirm six submersibles: Four with
company insignia. Two unmarked.

INT. U.S.S. JERRY RAUEN

Gar glances at SKIPPER and the Executive Officer.

GAR
Could be pirates.

SKIPPER
Yellow alert.

GAR
Board with caution, commander.

MYLES (V.O.)
Copy that.

EXT. THE ABYSSOS

The S.R.V. docks alongside submersibles.

INT. THE ABYSSOS - SEADOCK

Portal opens. Myles pauses, listens to sounds: air pressure hum and metallic knocks. He leans forward, gives hand-sign.

SEALs hustle into armed-and-ready position.

Myles eyeballs two portals, nods at Lieutenant WOLFE. Wielding SOCOM pistols, they press buttons.

Portals open. Both submersibles are uninhabited.

Myles and Wolfe exchange nods. Myles approaches hatch door, waves hand over biometric scanner. Hatch remains shut.

MYLES

Lt. Wolfe, how would pirates get past these biometric scanners?

WOLFE

Someone laid down a welcome mat.

Myles pulls out a computer pad, types.

MYLES

Sync up.
(into radio)
Neptune to Rauen: I need computer access to Abyssos systems.

INT. U.S.S. JERRY RAUEN

Ensign pushes button. Monitor displays VASUKI, a Hindi scientist, late 50's.

VASUKI (ON MONITOR)

I am Dr. Vasuki. I was summoned?

GAR

Vasuki: Capt. Blake here. I need the Abyssos command code.

VASUKI (ON MONITOR)

The salvage crew leader can provide that upon arrival.

GAR

Nobody boards Abyssos until my team crosses off a threat force, which controls your facility. My team needs the command code now.

VASUKI (ON MONITOR)

Understood. I require authorization.

Monitor goes blank. Gar sighs, glimpses at watch.

ENSIGN

Sir, I'm receiving the code.

GAR

Relay that to Neptune, ensign.

INT. ABYSSOS - CORRIDOR/OPERATIONS ROOM

Myles holds pad over biometric scanner. Hatch opens. Up in arms, Myles leads SEALs into the empty control room. Petty officers secure every corner.

Myles notices on console a half-full coffee cup and computer pad. He presses pad screen, which powers up and displays "NETWORK FAILURE." He glimpses at Wolfe.

MYLES

We need access.

Wolfe snaps at a Petty Officer who sits and types code combinations. Computer monitor displays a blinking image of Shiva, a Hindu godhead.

Myles glances outside of window. A huge, water-filled dome.

PETTY OFFICER

A virus, codenamed Shiva, is in the entire system. It has its own firewall. Won't be easy to get through it.

WOLFE

Do what you can.
(approaches Myles)
They gotta be in here somewhere.

Myles looks at a schematic on pad.

MYLES

Research Section, five levels up.

WOLFE

Comdr, the higher we go the farther away we're from the safe zone.

PETTY OFFICER

I've the backup files.

MYLES

Good work. Extract and upload to Rauen via secure comlink. Lets move.

Myles leads SEALs out.

INT. U.S.S. JERRY RAUEN

A yeoman serves coffee to Gar.

ENSIGN

Neptune's transmitting data.

SKIPPER

Gar, get a look at this.

Gar goes to sonar where Skipper points at a 3-D model of Abyssos on monitor.

SKIPPER

Energy readings spiking in this cavity. The reactor?

GAR

Yes. Ensign: get Vasuki on the horn.

ENSIGN

Aye sir.

VASUKI (ON MONITOR)

Capt. Blake, my salvage team has been waiting.

GAR

You wanna tell me what your friends were doing down here?

VASUKI (ON MONITOR)

I cannot discuss details. Sorry.

GAR

You're sorry? Your company tweaked the planet's magnetic field, doctor.

Monitor blinks off.

GAR
What the hell?

SKIPPER
Soon as we get the data, we're goina gain
some distance from that thing. I
recommend you recall your team.

INT. ABYSSOS - LEVEL 10 CORRIDOR

SEALs pass corpses strewn along floor. They stop in
combat position outside a hatch that reads "LAB 1."

Myles holds pad over biometric. Hatch opens. Myles
glimpses at blinking light on radio. SEALs hustle into

LAB 1

where pirates open fire. A petty officer drops dead.
SEALs fire back. Lab techs dodge bullets.

Pirates drop dead. Gunfire pauses. SEALs stand ready.

A Lab Tech inserts a flashdrive into computer. Monitor
displays the blinking Shiva.

Myles aims gun, approaches the lab techs.

MYLES
Don't move.

Lab techs raise arms in defeat.

MYLES
You speak English?

Lab techs nod yes. Myles notices the Kryo-Corps logo on
their lab coats.

MYLES
Wolfe, get these folks to the S.R.V.

WOLFE
(to a petty officer)
You heard the commander. Go.

GUNSHOTS from the mezzanine on the Second Level. Bullets
mow down the Lab Tech at computer. Myles and Wolfe dive
apart. SEALs fire back. Petty officer and lab techs
scurry out.

Bullets ricochet off a huge cylindrical aquarium at center of lab. A spiderweb crack spreads across the glass panel.

Lab Tech, mortally wounded, Myles grabs Myles' ankle.

LAB TECH

Symbiont

MYLES

What was that?

Lab Tech points finger. Myles turns to the

AQUARIUM

where a glowing blob, called the Symbiont, drifts. Its shapeless, bioluminescent mass begins to shimmer.

LAB 1 / AQUARIUM

Myles pulls out knife, slices open the Lab Tech's coat. Her chest spews blood. Myles presses coat on the wound, pulls out med kit, injects needle in her arm.

The Symbiont juts a tentacle. At the tip a flicker begins.

Myles shakes head, eyeballs the Symbiont.

Firefight pauses. Seals reload clips. Fast THUMPS on mezzanine above. Myles fixes on the Shooter.

LAB TECH

Symbiont... we found it ... ocean floor after ... gate opened.

MYLES

Gate? You mean the experiment?

Lab Tech nods yes. Her words soften to silence as her lips move. Eyes roll back. Mouth foams.

Myles closes Lab Tech's eyes, lays hand over her forehead.

The flicker of Symbiont's tentacle steadies to a glimmer.

Myles' eyes take on a trance-like gaze.

Bullets rip through Myles' torso and hand. He doubles over.

The glimmer of Symbiont's tentacle turns to a flicker.

Gunfight resumes. Pirates mow down a SEAL.

Myles rolls on back, fixes on the shooters above him, writhes as he stands up.

MYLES

All hands: pull back.

WOLFE

Sir, we ain't leaving without you.

MYLES

That's an order, lieutenant. You got 5 seconds.

Myles hobbles to the open floor, pulls out grenade.

WOLFE

Everyone, out. Move, move, move.

Wolfe and SEALs dash out.

Myles and a shooter make eye contact. The shooter grins, aims semi-automatic. Myles pulls key out of grenade, tosses grenade under metal support column. Shooter fires GUNSHOT. Myles ducks. Bullet skims his cheek and earlobe.

Grenade explodes, smashes column. Mezzanine collapses. Column crushes the shooters.

Aquarium glass shatters. Water gushes. The Symbiont flushes into the flooding lab.

Service box shorts out. Lights blink out. Red lights on.

INT. U.S.S. JERRY RAUEN

A PING draws concerned attention.

SKIPPER

What was that?

ENSIGN

An explosion on Abyssos.

GAR
Get the commander on the horn.

INT. ABYSSOS - SEADOCK

Wolfe and SEALs hustle into

S.R.V.

where SEALs and lab techs brace themselves. Wolfe rushes into cockpit.

NAVIGATOR
Super-cavitation drive engaged.

WOLFE
(into radio)
Neptune here.

GAR (V.O.)
The hell's going on down there? Where's Myles?

WOLFE
Pirates took out half the squad. We lost the commander

INT. U.S.S. JERRY RAUEN

Gar and Skipper exchange looks.

GAR
How?

WOLFE (V.O.)
Grenade burst. He saved the team. We're aborting, sir.

PETTY OFFICER
Abyssos plating is compromised.

GAR
It's a frail eggshell. When water hits that reactor --

SKIPPER
Evasive.

EXT. THE ABYSS

The S.R.V. launches off Abyssos. Seadock implodes.
Lights blink out across the whole biosphere.

INT. ABYSSOS - LAB 1

Bulkhead buckles. Water gushes. Lab floods in seconds.

UNDERWATER

A silhouette of Myles as he floats lifelessly. Blinking
lights in the silence.

The Symbiont latches to Myles' wrist, coils up his arm to
the bleeding shoulder, enters the flesh wound. Beneath
the skin a glow sprawls.

INTERSPACE

DNA of the Symbiont and Myles fuses at the base pairs.
The helices form a perfect figure 8. Blinding light
appears.

EXT. THE ABYSS

Fireball consumes the Abyssos. Blast wave fans out.

THE DEEP SEA

Shock front overtakes the S.R.V. and flanking submarines.

DISSOLVE TO: