

OCEAN DEPTHS A DARKNESS

By Cheryl Lynn Sherman

FADE IN:

INT. THE SUNDERS GARAGE - LA JOLLA CA - AFTERNOON

The garage door opens, CALLISTA drives out into the pelting rain. She looks in her review mirrors back at the house.

She sees the lamp light on in her parent's upstairs bedroom, they never leave lights on when no one is home. It spooks her, she thinks of her recently passed on father. She looks both ways before she accelerates onto the street and whispers reverently --

CALLISTA

I got it Dad, it's a beacon, you want me to be careful, right?

1 EXT. LA JOLLA HIGHWAY ALONG PACIFIC OCEAN - AFTERNOON 1

The sheeting rain blasts the slow moving cars and trucks as Callista drives down the coastal highway. Visibility is bad, tail lights are hard to see.

Callista's truck is suddenly hit hard by another truck that's out of control. The teen-aged male driver's eyes meet hers in an instant. We see Callista's terror as she's slammed back in her seat, the seat belt and air bags pinning her there.

Her hands are wrenched from the steering wheel, her arms flailing in the cab of her truck as it skids to the edge of cliff.

CALLISTA

(SCREAMS)

3 EXT. LA JOLLA COAST - A CLIFF EDGE HALF WAY DOWN THE ROCK FACE - AFTERNOON 3

TRITON is on a ledge, looking up the cliff, hearing breaking glass, crunching metal, screeching tires. High winds whip sea spray all around as the rain pelts him. The thunder is booming.

Callista's truck hits the guardrail with a loud crash, snags it for a moment as if afraid to leave the asphalt before catapulting over the edge of the cliff.

Triton watches the cab area getting crushed smaller every time the truck body hits the rock and dirt.

It gathers speed and lift until it flies past the outcropping of rocks Triton is on and lands in the ocean right side up.

Several people gather at the cliff's edge, looking down the embankment, pointing. Triton is looking down at the truck in the ocean.

CROWD OF PEOPLE

(YELLS)

4

EXT. THE PACIFIC OCEAN - AFTERNOON

4

Callista's truck lands in the ocean upright. It doesn't sink, caught in a swirling eddy of sea water as the ocean bucks wildly.

We hear Callista's tense breaths, she's leaning sideways in the smashed cab. She's quiet for several seconds, then frantically grabs at her seat belt and air bag.

Triton dives into the waves and his human body changes into a merman. Propelling himself down, he goes under the truck.

He gets a good look inside the cab as he surfaces near the crushed driver side door. It won't open.

Callista doesn't notice Triton as she again struggles against the airbag and seat belt.

Triton swims to the front of the truck. Callista stops struggling with the seat belt and slumps in the cramped cab.

Triton grabs the front driver's side crumpled panel and rocks the truck. Callista's eyes fly open. She sits part way up, leaning sideways and her teeth chatter.

Lightning flashes across the sky, Callista sees a big wave coming. She takes a deep breath. The wave submerges the truck. Triton quickly helps it resurface.

Callista gulps in another breath and grapples for the glove box where the survival-hammer is. She burns her fingers on engine parts.

The mechanism to her seat belt is crushed. The air bags keep her pinned to the driver seat. She blacks out.

The truck severely jerks, Callista hits her head on the crushed cab ceiling, she wakes up. Her head is bleeding.

Something is banging on her ankle in the water. She uses her foot to pull it up the side of driver door. We see the survival-hammer.

Callista uses the survival-hammer to cut the seat belt strap, and frees herself. She takes off her heavy coat and puts on her pack.

Callista leans out the small windowless driver side opening. Triton is there. She stares past him into the darkness, not seeing him.

Callista's long hair clings to her as blood trickles down her face. She struggles against the water filling the cab.

She pushes her shoes against the passenger door, her head and shoulders are out of the driver side window underwater. Her pack catches on the jagged window frame as the truck begins to sink.

She twists, kicks and grabs at the buckles of her pack to free herself. Oxygen leaks out of her body. The truck sinks completely.

Triton frees her pack, pulls her out of the truck, up to the surface of the ocean. Callista takes a gasping breath of air as she's sprayed by sea water.

TRITON (NEAR HER EAR)
Take another deep breath and hold
it as long as you can -- now.

Callista does. Triton pulls her down under the ocean. They speed through the water, then stop, Triton holding her back against a rock face. Triton breaths air into her mouth.

Something bumps Callista's leg. She touches a dolphin body. Her thigh is painfully pricked. Callista grabs her thigh and blows out the air Triton has given her.

5 INT. CAVERNS UNDER TRITON'S ESTATE - EVENING

5

Triton breaches the water's surface. Callista automatically coughs and gulps in a big breath of humid, warm air.

Triton helps her onto a smooth rock shelf. They're in a dimly lit cave. Callista is shivering, she winces as she touches her painful thigh.

Triton lifts himself out of the water and sits next to Callista. Her teeth chatter, she coughs violently. Triton moves her waist long hair from her face, putting it in a braid, using a piece of leather to from his wrist.

He examines her forehead and rests his fingers on her head wound, healing it.

CALLISTA

Oh!

TRITON

Can you stand?

Callista doesn't know her head wound is healed as she pushes against Triton's thigh to stand. She slips. He catches her and helps her sit down. Her eyes are stinging from the salt water, she's dizzy.

CALLISTA

(Coughs) What a weird wet-suit, it feels (coughs) like ear lobe flaps.

She shivers more.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

Where are we?

Callista rubs her thigh and winces.

TRITON

My name is Triton Pacii. These are the caves under my home. I'll get you a blanket.

Callista nods and holds her thigh. (Triton shape-shifts>)Heat radiates from Triton and it makes Callista close her eyes as she hears the rustle of nylon material.

The air cools, she opens her eyes and sees Triton getting a blanket. Callista continues to shiver.

CALLISTA

(Coughs and clears her throat)
You changed out of your wet suit?

Triton takes her pack and covers her with a blanket. He clicks on a lantern. Callista sees that Triton is a blond, muscular(late teens)and very handsome.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

You showered and have on dry pants?
Thanks for saving me (coughs) out there.

TRITON

You're welcome. Can you stand?

She feels sick and grimaces.

CALLISTA
I don't know if ---

Triton lifts Callista, blanket and all, against his chest.
She frowns.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)
Where are we again?

TRITON
Ten minutes from your home.

CALLISTA
You know where (coughs) I live?

Triton doesn't answer. His body warms her as he walks.
Callista pushes against him.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)
(Clear her throat) I really should
walk.

Their eyes meet. She stares at the odd color of his eyes.
They look back lit. The lantern lights up the painted ocean
scenes on the caves walls as they pass.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)
(Hoarsely) Are you part of a sea
rescue team?

TRITON
Not officially. I was watching the
storm.

CALLISTA
(Croaks out) You were just OUT in
this storm?

TRITON
Yes.

They enter a huge cavern. Triton's lantern shines on several
wooden benches, room for 100, around a deep fire pit.

A raised dais on the left juts out from the cavern wall with
an ancient lectern for public speaking.

Callista blinks trying to clearly see the painted art on the
cavern walls of whales, dolphins, fish, and sea plants.
Cutouts in the stone hold oil lanterns. Their glass chimneys
blacken the cavern walls above them.

Large wooden chests sit along the walls, looking like they
came from a pirate's ship.

Triton carries Callista up chiseled out stairs. The sea paintings on the walls continue around and above them.

Callista sees the painting of a bare-breasted female mermaid looking out from tall seaweed forest. Her eyes are gold like Triton's, with a blue ring.

CALLISTA
(Clears her throat) Ah, Trenton

TRITON
My name is Triton. I need to open
the doors to my father's house.
I'll be right back.

Triton sits Callista down against the rock wall near the door. He puts her backpack next to her so she can lean against it.

TRITON (CONT'D)
No more harm will come to you
tonight, I promise.

Callista frowns at his odd words. Triton puts the lantern near her, then unlocks an old solidly built wooden door.

Going farther along the hallway there's an electronic keypad. He programs in a code. A thick metal fire-wall door hydraulically opens and a patch of brilliant interior light shows an elegant kitchen. Callista slumps against her pack, and blacks out.

6 INT. INSIDE TRITON'S ESTATE - EVENING

6

TRITON
I've called your family. An
ambulance is coming.

Triton is carrying Callista as a boom of thunder rattles the estate windows. A flash of lightning splits the sky. Callista shudders.

In the family room, Triton lays Callista on a comfortable overstuffed recliner.

TRITON (CONT'D)
Callista, I'm getting the lantern
and closing the doors. I'll be
right back.

He takes her hand, *warmth is flowing* into her from him. (< god-trait of healing/endorphins) Callista blinks.

CALLISTA

(Hoarsely) I didn't tell you my name. How did you get a hold of my family?

Triton's cell phone rings. He keeps hold of her hand as he turns away to talk.

TRITON

Hello Candice, (pause) Yes it's bad. Call Dr. Varn and tell him code black, he'll call Nurse Sue (pause) absolutely. (Pause) Keep track of her brother. (Pause) Yes, they'll arrange everything. Good-speed dear Candice, and thanks.

Triton turns to Callista as he puts his cell in his pocket.

CALLISTA (CROAKS)

Were you talking to Candice, Tad, umm, my brother's girlfriend?

Callista is thinking of asking for bottled water. Triton ignores her question and gets her a bottled water.

7 INT. INSIDE AN AMBULANCE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL - NIGHT 7

Callista awakes. Triton is holding her hand. She's strapped down in an ambulance. She hears the E.M.T's. There's an IV in her vein. She winces. Triton rests his fingers lightly on the taped IV site, her pain goes away.

TRITON

Your family's at the hospital.

She shivers. Triton looks older to her and now his eyes are blue.

CALLISTA (WHISPERS HOARSELY)

Your eyes, they're ---

She feels light headed and blacks out.

8 INT. TAD'S BEDROOM IN THE SUNDERS HOUSE - DAYS LATER, NIGHT 8

TAD strips down, drops his clothes on the floor and takes a short hot shower. He's extremely worried about Callista, his twin who is at the hospital in a coma.

Just barely dried off, he pulls back his blankets, sheets and slips into bed, too exhausted to study for tomorrow's exams or think of his girlfriend, Candice.

A few tears roll down his unshaven face to his pillow. He wearily closes his eyes and hopes sleep will come quickly ---

9 INT. (TAD'S VISION/DREAM SEQUENCE) IN THE OCEAN DEPTHS AT KING POSEIDON'S CASTLE - DAY 9

SIX GUARDS take merman Triton from his ocean cell through the ocean courtyard to the Cavern of Justice in King Poseidon's Castle that has sea water flowing through it.

The Merman Guards hold their sharp harpoons in a readied position. All see Triton's shame as they swim, two guards at each side of him, one at front and one in the back taking him to the cavern of justice to be charged as a traitor.

Prince Triton straightens his spine looking regal as they swim, still declaring him worthy and loyal.

The mermen and mermaids line the courtyard and watch the disturbing procession. Some weep, others gloat.

10 INT. THE CAVERN OF JUSTICE INSIDE THE CASTLE - DAY 10

The cavern of justice is a long oblong cave with a high ceiling and many places to gather while justice is being meted out for the most grievous of criminals.

Triton is escorted to the podium of justice by the six guards. His family, his closest friends, NEHALENNIA'S GRIEVING FAMILY and the KING'S ADMINISTRATORS are there.

Triton's face is neutral as he looks at the faces of his family one last time as a Royal Prince.

KING POSEIDON nods to the Guards who uncross their harpoons and move behind the podium. Triton swims up and holds onto the half circle railing.

King Poseidon's eyes are severe and disappointed as they bore into Triton's.

Triton closes his eyes at the depth of love he see on his mother's face, QUEEN AMPHITRITE. He bows his head as he works on gaining control.

PRINCE PROTEUS'S eyes jump to his best friend, NJORTH'S. A knowing passes between them. Proteus moves to the right of the podium.

PROTEUS (GROUP TELEPATHY - V.O.)

Triton, you were my brother on my father's side, but because of your actions regarding Nehalennia, my fiancée. I disown you this day as my kin and a royal. I desire never to see your face as long as we both live on this planet.

Proteus turns his back on Triton, gives a knowing look to Njorth and swims back to the royal family.

PRINCESS RHODE swims up to the left of the podium.

PRINCESS RHODE (GROUP TELEPATHY V.O.)

Triton you are my brother from both my father and mothers side. But because of what you have chosen, you and I will no longer work together in our Father's Kingdom. I will be tending to your workload and my own. Therefore, my life is now forfeit of the dreams my family, and I set aside for me on this planet because of your selfish decision. May you feel the burden you have placed on me forever!

Princess Rhode turns her back slowly as if the added weight of Triton's work is already hers and swims back to her family.

PRINCE ARYLAN swims to the right of the podium and faces Triton, his face taut with grief.

PRINCE ARYLAN (GROUP V.O.)

Triton you are my brother on both my father and on my mother's side. I will miss the future fellowship that was ours as family and Royals, and the good work you could have accomplished for the Crown. We will reign without you, but it will not be as it should have been.

Before Arylan turns his back on Triton, their eyes meet, and Triton senses the mercy that's hidden in Arylan's heart for him. Arylan nods in farewell before he swims back to his family.

Queen Amphitrite swims up to the podium and faces Triton, resting her hands over his. Her eyes show the depth of her feelings for her son. Her silent tears float away on the current.

QUEEN AMPHITRITE (GROUP V.O.)

From this day forward, unless proven otherwise, you will no longer be a Royal Prince. But you will always be my first born son.

She takes the circlet from Triton's head and holds her index and middle finger over the center gemstone of royalty, finally it falls in her hand. She holds it against her heart, then puts the stone in a small leather pouch she wears around her wrist. She puts the circlet-crown back on Triton's head.

QUEEN AMPHITRITE (GROUP V.O.) (CONT'D)

What had to be done is done.

Queen Amphitrite looks back at her family.

QUEEN AMPHITRITE (GROUP V.O.) (CONT'D)

It is finished.

She turns to Triton as agony washes over her face for him.

QUEEN AMPHITRITE (PRIVATE V.O. TO TRITON) (CONT'D)

With every loss there is gain and with every ending there is a beginning. Remember always, my first born son, that love does not end even when the heart is broken.

She turns away from him, her face stricken.

King Poseidon doesn't come forward to the podium. Instead, he takes several steps away from his family, placing them securely behind his back. He raises his trident and aims it squarely at Triton's heart.

KING POSEIDON (GROUP V.O.)

Triton, you are no longer a Prince of my realm. You are no longer Royalty, and all that your birth and title have given you is now gone. You will always be my subject and my son by flesh and blood. But my hopes for you have vanished like volcanic steam dissipating in the ocean, never to be seen again. Your actions alone have changed your fate forever on Mother Gaea.

King Poseidon fires his trident, the blast of it pushes through the water and hits Triton so hard, it slams him against the far cavern wall. His stunned body slides down to the cavern floor. The horrified shock of all in attendance makes them look like unmoving figures in an oil painting.

King Poseidon nods stiffly at his six guards who after a moment, almost gain control over their emotions as they swim to the slumped figure of Triton, who they once guarded.

They reverently gather him up, three at each side of him, as the large doors open and they carry him out beyond the distressed view of his family and friends.

11 INT. TAD'S BEDROOM IN THE SUNDERS HOUSE - NIGHT 11

Startled, Tad sits up in his bed as his bed clothes fall down around his waist. He stares out into his dark room.

TAD
WOW! I've gotta tell Triton about
that weird dream!

12 INT. INSIDE THE HOSPITAL IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY - DAY 12

GRANDMA ANNE
Callista Darling? Sweetie?

Callista doesn't respond. GRANDMA ANNE begins writing in her Grimoire. Time passes. She smooths Callista's hair. More hours slip by.

As Grandma Anne rummages in her art bag, her flat tin of colored art pencils falls on the floor with an abrasive clang. The lid pops open, and the pencils skitter across the hard floor.

Callista sits up abruptly and squints in the bright room.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)
Callista, you're awake!

Grandma Anne ignores the pencils that are under her feet as she kisses Callista's cheek.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)
Let's call the nurse!

She pushes the call button on the side of the bed. No one comes, she hurries out in search of help.

Callista slumps back against the hospital bed. She grips the bed railing. She begins hearing whispering voices in her head from outside her room, they get louder. Callista puts her hands over her ears, it doesn't help.

Grandma Anne and TWO NURSES rush in Callista's hospital room.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

Sweetie?

Callista stares at Grandma Anne. The two nurses are working on the medical machines in the room. Callista's throat hurts horribly, she can't speak.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

It's all right honey. You don't have to talk. You're in the hospital. Triton Pacii called an ambulance after he rescued you. He's such a nice young man. He's been here every day sitting with you. Your mom is on her way back home from her business trip. She was stranded because of a blizzard. Tad's asleep in the waiting room.

Callista has tears streaming down her face and tries to blink them away.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

Oh Sweetie, don't cry, here ---

Grandma Anne dabs Callista's cheeks with a tissue and pats her hand reassuringly.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

We're just glad you'll be all right.

DOCTOR VARN arrives. NURSE 1 monitors the machines. NURSE 2 has a log book, and writes as Dr. Varn checks Callista's vitals and reflexes.

Dr. Varn talks quietly to Nurse 2 as he covers up Callista's feet. They walk over to the door and keep talking, she flips open the log book. No one uses the computer next to the door.

Dr. Varn nods at Nurse 2. She leaves. Dr. Varn sits down in a chair on the opposite side of the bed from Grandma Anne.

DR. VARN

Callista, we aren't sure how a Stonefish got into our Pacific waters.

(MORE)

DR. VARN (CONT'D)

You were jabbed in your femoral artery by its dorsal spine. Sometimes the venom is lethal but you've been given several anti-venom injections and will be on continued drug therapy. You may have some hallucinations, but that's to be expected. You'll be weaker than what you're used too, but that will pass. I'll be back around later.

GRANDMA ANNE

Thanks for all your help, Dr. Varn.

Dr. Varn smiles graciously as he and Nurse 1 leaves. Callista sees Grandma Anne's aura reach out to her, cradling her, although she feels nothing. Callista is astonished.

Grandma Anne doesn't notice. She talks about Callista's friends at school - Matt, Jazz and the others who call to see how Callista is doing.

The voices in Callista's mind are making it hard for her to concentrate on what Grandma Anne is saying.

Grandma Anne lowers the dimmer switch on the spotlights by the TV alcove, then kisses Callista's cheek. Grandma Anne's aura continues to wrap protectively around Callista.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

Feeling better dear?

Callista nods, although she feels awful and is freaked by seeing the aura and hearing the voices. Grandma Anne gets a pen and paper out of her purse and puts it on the rolling table.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

If you need anything, write it down, and I'll see that you get it right away.

Grandma Anne gets a book out of her purse and pats Callista's hand. She places the small thick romantic novel on her blanket covered stomach.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)

Your mom would kill me if she knew I lent this to you. It's juicy. You won't sleep through it, I can guarantee that.

Callista tries to laugh, but no sound comes out, they hug.

GRANDMA ANNE (CONT'D)
 I'm going to get a bite of food.
 Would you like anything?

Callista shakes her head. Grandma Anne kisses her forehead, picks up her purse and leaves.

Callista opens the novel and starts reading. She closes her eyes for a moment and the book closes around her fingers. Her muscles twitch ---

13 EXT. CALLISTA'S VISION/DREAM SEQUENCE PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY 13

Callista, (doesn't know she is a mermaid) leaves the surface of the ocean. She goes deeper into the sea. The water isn't dark because her eyes use all the available light and reflect it back out into her surroundings like night vision, only in color.

Colorful fish swim past her as she rounds a ridge of coral and rock. She 'senses' (< mermaid trait) a pod of dolphins. Their vibrations echo in the water and flow around her before she sees them swimming together.

The dolphins are poking each other using clicks and whistles to communicate. The colorful sea plants and fish dazzle Callista.

Callista rests her hand with her fingers spread onto the rock ledge she's leaning against to keep her steady in the current.

Glancing at her hands, she sees they're webbed with skin connecting her fingers and thumb.

Shocked, she turns her hand over and examines it, fanning her fingers out by her hips and notices she's nude down the length of her torso.

Below her belly button is shimmering blue and aqua colored skin flaps that cover her down to where her legs and feet used to be.

Her body ends in a split-finned long flowing tail fluke that waves in and out of her view in the water below.

Her tail is supporting her stillness as she holds onto the ridge of rock with her other webbed hand. She wills her body to move farther into the nearby shadows, and her mertail obeys.

14 INT. THE HOSPITAL ROOM IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY - DAY 14

Callista gasps for air, sits up startled and spreads her fingers, expecting to see them webbed, they're normal.

She swallows, blinks and looks out into her hospital room. Triton is standing quietly to one side of her bed watching her.

TRITON
Hi Callista. You okay?

Callista nods automatically. She still can't talk, even though she tries.

Triton puts his index finger to her lips and shakes his head. His mouth is closed in a smile while Callista hears in her mind ---

TRITON (TELEPATHY V.O.) (CONT'D)
I can help you with this.

Callista watches his unmoving mouth as she continues to hear within her mind ---

TRITON (V.O.)
Direct your words to me and I'll hear them. We're communicating telepathically. You're allowing me to hear you, and I'm doing the same. We call it focusing. Just focus on me and say what you want in your mind.

Callista concentrates on Triton hoping he'll hear her in his head ---

CALLISTA (V.O.)
What, me communicating telepathically? How?

TRITON (V.O.)
I can hear you loud and clear. We don't know that yet.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
How will I talk to anyone besides you? Can you hear everything I'm thinking too?

Triton holds her hand and spreads out her fingers, examining them.

TRITON (V.O.)
Your throat will heal and you'll
get your voice back. But you'll
also be able to communicate
telepathically with those of us
that have that ability.

Callista lets out a long breath. She feels extreme warmth
coming from Triton's hand again like she did at his house.

TRITON (V.O.)
Have you been sensing people also?

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Sensing?

TRITON (V.O.)
That's when you hear others
thoughts as they think about their
lives and feel their emotions. And
yes, you've been allowing me to
sense your thoughts.

Callista blushes. Triton's face is neutral.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Isn't their privacy an issue? Isn't
mine, from you?

Triton watches Callista as she absently starts picking at the
threads in the thin hospital blanket.

TRITON (V.O.)
Picture shielding your mind. You
can block others trying to get in
your thoughts.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
What? How can that be real?

TRITON (V.O.)
It's as real as you need it to be.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
That doesn't make any sense.

She winces over the IV as she tries to move a lock of her
hair that's fallen over her face.

Triton moves her hair behind her ear and his touch makes her
shiver. He rests his fingers against her skin, just behind
her ear. They stare at each other, Callista's eyes dart away.

He puts his fingers over the injection site and warmth seeps under the tape. The stinging goes away.

Triton goes to the hospital door and locks it. He comes back and takes Callista's hands, sitting next to her. He's giving her his health through their contact.

Callista notices his eyes have dramatically changed color from light blue to dark blue, like a storm brewing.

Triton tightens his grip on Callista's hands and stares in her eyes. She can't wiggle free, nor look away because he's mesmerizing her (< a merman trait).

Callista's whole life in memory-form flashes past the two of them like a video. It hurts as Triton pulls the information from her. She resists but can't move out of his grasp.

She slowly sags. Triton shuts his eyes and helps her lean back on her pillows. She weakly pulls out of his hold.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Don't -- touch -- me!

She tries to hide her tears. Triton holds out a box of tissues. Callista ignores him.

TRITON (V.O.)
Callista.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
What?

TRITON (V.O.)
Here.

Callista angrily takes the tissues, dabbing at her eyes as she looks at the schedule on the door. It's way across the room. Seeing every letter, she's puzzled, she doesn't have her contacts in.

Triton puts his hand on her arm, he's secretly giving her his life force/healing.

TRITON (V.O.)
I'm sorry, but we needed to find out everything that's happened to you from before you were stabbed with the Stonefish venom, until now. I read the record of your body's existence. I've experienced everything you've lived through, but only in quick flashes.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
As if that's possible. Besides, do you think I'd want anyone to know me intimately every single day and night of my life? Would you?

Triton blanches over Callista's words as she pries his fingers one by one from my her arm.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
If you believe you can read me, does that mean you're delusional? I thought this was my hallucination.

Triton's jaw is working, then his face goes neutral

TRITON (V.O.)
Never-the-less, I've found out some vital things.

Triton turns and stares out the window.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Why do you look the same age as me, but sound like you're from a different century?

He gives her a glance then looks out the window again, ignoring her question.

TRITON (V.O.)
Many, I already knew.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
What! How could you know anything about me at all? What are you, a stalker?

TRITON (V.O.)
Doesn't it worry you that you have telepathy? How did you wake up and suddenly begin sensing people? I'm able to do that because of what I am. What I did to you hurt me too. We can't do that without experiencing the emotional trauma it does to those we read.

Callista fumes, thinking he sounds crazier then she feels. She reaches to rip the IV out of her body so it will alert the nurses. Triton stops her hand.

TRITON (V.O.)
Please don't pull your IV out.
It'll only hurt you. You can press
the call button if it makes you
feel any better.

Triton gets up and unlocks the door. He sits back on the chair by her bed.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
I'll write down everything you just
did to me and give it to the
nurses.

Triton frowns and she grimaces as she thinks about that.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Yeah, and the next doctor I'll see
will be a shrink.

She turns away from Triton and closes her eyes. Her hair slides down over her face along the edge of the bed to the floor like a shiny golden curtain, she's hiding behind.

Triton moves around the bed to talk to her, she looks away. He bends down, carefully moves her hair aside. He gently kisses her forehead. Callista sits up, startled and angry.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
NO! Don't you dare!

Triton is stunned by her reaction. That was his way of apologizing. She pulls the thin blanket around her like armor. The ugly hospital gown twists uncomfortably and slips ungracefully over her left shoulder. It isn't tied in the back anymore.

Callista sinks back against her pillows. A HEAVY-SET NURSE knocks on the hospital door, opens it and pulls in a medical cart.

Triton glances warily at Callista as he relaxes his stance and greets the heavy-set nurse pleasantly.

She bustles in with the stainless cart. It has a squeaky wheel. She smiles.

Callista tugs at the hospital gown, trying to keep her full breasts covered.

The nurse gets the injection ready. She reaches for Callista's arm that's holding her twisted gown and blanket. She doesn't give it to the nurse.

HEAVY-SET NURSE

There, there dear. Don't be afraid,
this won't hurt.

Triton watches them. Callista rolls her eyes and gives her arm to the nurse while staying haphazardly covered.

The nurse picks up on the tension in the room. A few stressful tears fall down Callista's face. The nurse gives her the box of tissues.

HEAVY-SET NURSE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if that hurt. I'm
finished. You can relax.

The Nurse checks all the IV feeds, makes adjustments to the machines, then leaves with the cart. Callista again fusses with her untied gown and blushes.

Triton steps in Callista's direction. Their eyes meet. She scowls at him. He shakes his head, his face bleak, turns and goes to the door.

Pausing with his hand on the knob, Triton' glances back. Callista won't ask for his help.

(CALLISTA focuses her words to
TRITON'S mind but involuntarily
croaks out --)

CALLISTA

Just go, please, so I can get my
gown fixed!

They both stall at the sound of her voice. Triton partially faces her. His jaw hardens and his eyes blaze.

TRITON

It's good to hear you talk again. I
meant what I said. I'm sorry, much
more than you know. I'll send a
nurse in to help you.

He leaves, pulling his aura stiffly away from Callista. He's having trouble getting it to cooperate. Her's is like cellophane armor. A small part of it trails after Triton. Callista reaches for it, curling her fingers toward her body. It sluggishly returns to her.

15 INT. AT THE HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

15

GRANDMA ANNE
Callista darling, How are you?
How's the novel?

Callista blinks and stretches, just waking up.

CALLISTA
Hey Grandma. What?

GRANDMA ANNE
Oh Sweetie, it's so good to hear
your voice! How does your throat
feel? Do you like the novel?

CALLISTA
It still hurts a little, but I'm
glad to be talking! Yeah, the
novel, umm... (Giggles)

Callista shrugs and they both blush. She pats the pillow the
novel is under. Grandma Anne braids Callista's hair.

GRANDMA ANNE
Sorry, it's a messy braid. Anyway
this is just a quick visit. I need
to pick up Tad because he has an
appointment with the dentist. Don't
you worry about your school work.
You'll have plenty of time to catch-
up. Your mom can't wait to get
here.

CALLISTA
I can't wait to see her! School
work, it's a worry. Anyway, give
TAD a hug for me.

Grandma Anne hugs Callista, goes to the door and waves. She
waves back as the door closes. Callista gets the novel from
under her pillow and fans it open, trying to find her place.

Someone knocks, she looks up. Triton opens the door, he
smiles and sits in the chair by her bed. She's frowns.

TRITON
Hi Callista.

CALLISTA
Hi.

He pulls out a masculine ornate hairbrush from his jacket
pocket.

(Mermen/mermaid brushes/combs/mirrors are magically powerful and dangerous to others who handle them) Callista's eyes involuntarily linger on the brush. It has a design on the back she can't make out because he shields it with his hand.

He reaches for her hand that isn't holding the book. She moves it of his reach. He sees the title on the cover of the novel. His lips twitch.

She puts the novel under her pillow and hides both hands under her three thin hospital blankets.

TRITON

It's good to hear your voice. How does the new hospital gown fit?

They stare at each other. Callista doesn't answer him. She's determined not to give in to his charm.

TRITON (CONT'D)

May I have your hand?

He continues to hold out his hand, palm up. She shakes her head. He drops his hand.

TRITON (CONT'D)

Will you allow me to brush your hair?

She shakes her head, closes her eyes and pretends to ignore him.

TRITON (CONT'D)

Please? Brushing your hair is my way of making up to you. That's all. There's no hidden agenda.

CALLISTA

Oh, like your I'm-sorry-kiss on my forehead? As if anyone could have a hidden agenda with a hair brush. You mean you'd feel less guilty about what you did to me?

TRITON

If that will make you feel better, yes.

CALLISTA

(Sighs)

She stares at his brush under his hand, knowing her hair needs brushing.

She frowns again, then turns her back to Triton. He unbraids her hair and brushes through it carefully.

She begins to relax. She closes her eyes and shivers as his lips touch her ear as he speaks ---

TRITON

Thanks Callista, for allowing me this.

He continues to brush her hair until it hangs down perfectly and the ends rest on the bed. She feels as if a spell is being directed at her by Triton with each stroke of his brush in her hair. As he finishes she tenses over her renewed suspicions of his motives.

CALLISTA

I've had my hair brushed all my life, and it never felt like that. So what kind of weird control are you exerting over me now?

TRITON

I'm purposely making you feel good. Is that so wrong?

She stays stubbornly quiet.

TRITON (CONT'D)

We all make mistakes Callista, especially when it's something that's complicated. Don't you want to find out the truth? You weren't just stung by a Stonefish.

CALLISTA

Purposely making me FEEL good? I wasn't JUST stung by a Stonefish? What in Hades are you talking about?

Her thigh suddenly stings, she winces. He puts his brush on the tray table as far from her as possible and sits next to her.

Putting his arm around her, he's fills her with his energy and health. After several minutes he gets his brush again. She's pain free.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

That's impossible, how did that level of pain go away. Who are you?

TRITON

I am who I am. And no it's not.

CALLISTA

What? You sound, I don't know, crazy? You say you read me, whatever that was. Now you take away my severe pain? You brush my hair and then all's right with my world?

They stare at each other, he frowns and shakes his head.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm sorry. So, is that brush an antique?

She eyes his brush again as he cups his hand over it

TRITON

Yes. It's a family heirloom my mother and father gave me.

Callista fights her urge to reach for Triton's brush. He puts the brush in his back pocket farthest from her.

TRITON (CONT'D)

Please, can you put the reading of you behind us?

CALLISTA

No. But I won't forget you saved my life and sat with me when I was in the coma. You seem like the conflicted superhero and the charming villain.

Triton smirks.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

Anyway, thanks for brushing my hair and whatever else you were doing to me.

TRITON

Conflicted superhero? Charming villain?

She gives him a reluctant half grin. His eyes dart to the door. Tad's laughing with Grandma Anne and Dr. Varn. The door begins to open.

Triton backs away from the bed about a foot. Callista shifts slightly away from Triton as they look in.

Dr. Varn smiles and waves. Triton nods. Grandma Anne and Tad come in with a deli pizza and drinks.

CALLISTA (WAVES)

Hi!

TRITON

Hello Anne, Tad.

TAD

Well, look who's awake, talking and beautiful as ever! How's my one and only twin?

CALLISTA

I'm great, except for being in a freaking hospital. Hey Tad, you went to the dentist already?

TAD

Yeah, it was just a cleaning, you know great fun.

GRANDMA ANNE

So sweetie, we thought you'd love some non-hospital food. Does pizza sound good?

CALLISTA

Perfect!

Triton takes the ornate brush out of his back pocket and puts it in his inner jacket pocket.

TAD

Oh yeah, brushing Callista's hair now? That's a bit intimate don't you think, Tri? (Nick-name for Triton)

Tad winks at Callista. Triton smiles, rolling his eyes. Grandma Anne serves everyone pizza and smiles warmly at Triton.

TAD (CONT'D)

Grandma told me you've been depressed. No twin of mine is supposed to be sad after surviving such an awesome accident! You're a legend, Girl! All of my friends want to date you more than ever.

Behind Tad, Triton has a jealous look on his face and his eyes bore into Callista's, silently commanding her attention. His aura wraps around her pulling hers toward him.

CALLISTA

(Gasps)

Tad turns half way around, trying to figure out what happened between them. Triton smiles charmingly.

TRITON

I've got to get some things wrapped up. Goodbye Anne, Tad -- Callista.

He walks to the door, turns, his eyes linger on Callista. She secretly doesn't want him to go. She blushes, he cocks his head.

CALLISTA (V.O.)

See you later?

Grandma Anne serves Tad more pizza, pretending not to notice the silent exchange between Triton and Callista.

TRITON (V.O.)

Only if you want.

She frowns, her hair-brushing-euphoric-feelings are fading fast as Triton leaves. Tad watches Callista between bites of pizza.

TAD

Got to make Tri jealous right? That will kick him into high gear.

She rolls her eyes and tries to punch him in his abs.

TAD (CONT'D)

Good one, little sister. You'll have to try harder next time! By the way, it's sure good to see you awake. We wondered if you were going to dream forever.

Callista frowns, and silently pushes her plate with the other piece of pizza toward Tad.

CALLISTA

I can't eat anymore, my stomach, you know, the meds.

Grandma Anne's eyes widen. Callista gives her a closed mouth smile and shrugs. Tad clears his throat and looks away, worried about Callista. She pats his arm.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)
 Hey I'm okay, we're fine, no
 worries.

They have a group hug. (The recent passing of Callista's
 father and grandfather is still painful for the family)

GRANDMA ANNE
 We're doing great, all of us.

16 INT. IN THE HOSPITAL - EVENING TO MORNING 16

Callista has a new set of X-rays taken. Nurses come and go
 with medications. A new shift along with another day begins.
 Callista has a hard time getting the food down, doesn't sleep
 well, and is anxious because Triton doesn't come back.

17 INT. DR. TRITON PACII'S SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH OFFICE AND 17
 HALLWAY AT THE HOSPITAL - MORNING

Triton sits at his desk and finishes reading Callista Ann
 Sunders' DNA results. He traces his fingers along the DNA
 sequence.

TRITON (TO HIMSELF)
 What are you up too? You never
 loved Nehalennia. And now you want
 to harm Callista?

Triton sits back. After a few moments more, his clenched fist
 slams down on the paperwork.

He puts the paperwork away in his private file cabinet,
 writes out a new prescription as Dr. Triton Pacii for
 Callista Ann Sunders. He leaves, the door shuts, and it locks
 on its own.

18 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE HOSPITAL - SAME TIME 18

Triton nods at Nurse Sue as he passes her station. They go to
 the conference room. He shuts and locks the door. He holds
 out a chair for her. They sit at the conference table.

TRITON (V.O.)
 I'll be gone for several days.
 I'm going to Pitcairn for a
 particular plant the will help
 Callista. It's 4,100 miles of open
 sea as the crow flies.

Nurse Sue shifts in her chair, her eyes curious.

TRITON (V.O.)
I've notified Dr. Varn. Both of you
will be monitoring Callista.

NURSE SUE (V.O.)
We'll care for her tirelessly.

TRITON (V.O.)
I know. Proteus's DNA piggybacked
on the stonefish venom injected
into Callista's body, and she
mysteriously, didn't reject it.

Triton hands Nurse Sue another of Callista's files. Her eyes
glance over it quickly, then she looks at it again.

TRITON (V.O.)
To stop Callista from morphing into
a mermaid and be lost to her human
family, we're injecting her with my
shape-shifting DNA. It masks itself
as hers so she won't reject it.

Nurse Sue watches Triton as he looks past her to the wall of
white board that has all kinds of calculations and DNA
sequences on it in his hand.

TRITON (V.O.)
I had a vision that Proteus decided
if his DNA was rejected by Callista
and made her sick, he didn't care.
If she died, she died. Proteus
never loved Nehalennia always
favoring her brother, Njorth, over
her and now he wants to harm me
through her.

NURSE SUE (V.O.)
Proteus has always been a conniving
liar. Njorth's even worse.

TRITON (V.O.)
To the infernal with them both.

They nod at each other.

NURSE SUE (V.O.)
We'll care for Callista tirelessly.
All you've disclosed will stay
between us. You and your mother
know where my loyalties lie.

Triton stands. He unlocks the door and they walk to Nurse
Sue's station.

They look at each other for a long moment and both nod.
Triton walks to the elevator. He leaves the hospital.

19 EXT. THE LA JOLLA COAST NEXT TO THE OCEAN - LATER MORNING 19

Shape-shifting into one of his nondescript human façades, Triton heads for the coast. His toes curl over the high cliff at La Jolla Shores. Several people notice, and they point their cell phones to document an apparent suicide in progress.

He ignores them, dives into the waves and rockets below the surface. His head surfaces twice so the onlookers know he didn't drown.

Triton speeds below swimmers and surfers. Going at a steady pace of 70 mph. He'll make the volcanic island of Pitcairn in two and a half days.

20 EXT. THE SHORES OF PITCAIRN ISLAND - TWO PLUS DAYS LATER - 20 MORNING

Avoiding the aggressive shark population along Pitcairn's coast, Triton looks for the specific plankton that would help Callista's organs heal from the Stonefish venom.

The volcanic activity has opened a vent that overheated the waters. The mineral content in the area has made it inhospitable to that one plant.

Triton swims away from Pitcairn, needing the help of Princess Rhode, his sister. She has a congenial relationship with Proteus. Triton needs a DNA sample from him. Triton will go to Prince Arylan first to gain an audience with her.

EXT. KING POSEIDON CASTLE UNDER THE PACIFIC OCEAN - AFTERNOON

Triton swims toward King Poseidon's castle. The King's Guards eye Triton suspiciously when he arrives at the compound around the Castle.

TRITON (V.O.)
I desire an audience with Prince
Arylan.

21 INT. THE ADMINISTRATION CAVERNS IN KING POSEIDON'S CASTLE 21 AFTERNOON

The GUARDS with harpoons, flank Triton on his right, left, in front and behind. They swim together as a unit, keeping him under constant surveillance.

Triton is taken directly to his younger brother, Prince Arylan's anti-chambers. The big doors open for Triton and the guards. They swim before Prince Arylan's throne, and bow respectfully at the same time.

With an authoritative nod, Prince Arylan studies Triton. The Guards swim out the massive doors that close behind them. Triton keeps his eyes lowered in respect.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)
 Brother, you may approach my
 throne.

Triton raises his head, their eyes meet and the two mermen look like twins. Prince Arylan smiles openly, undoes the rope across his lap. They embrace.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)
 You've been missed.

TRITON (V.O.)
 I've missed you and our family. How
 is your lovely wife, Princess
 Amadahy?

Prince Arylan swims back to his throne and sits.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)
 She is as wondrous and feisty as
 ever! She's with three of her Roan
 friends. The stories I'll hear from
 her will make up for her absence,
 of that I'm assured. But our family
 news isn't what you came here for.
 I sensed your tension and anxiety
 when you entered my anti-chamber.
 My Guards are worried about my
 safety. I assured them we are
 equally matched if it comes to a
 fight. They believe you are up to
 no good my brother. Are you?

Prince Arylan smiles, his eyes twinkle with mischief

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)
 Remember when we secretly left the
 castle as merboys to find new
 adventure long ago?

Prince Arylan smiles at Triton. He smiles but his eyes show his inner misery.

TRITON(V.O.)

Yes, dear brother, but at present I need an audience with Princess Rhode. I want permission to attend her birthday party that's in a few days.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)

Your request is to go to her party?

TRITON (V.O.)

Yes, among other things.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)

You want me to petition her for that? I would entertain your presence here any time, no questions asked. She's not that accessible, even to us who work alongside her. Doing her work and yours keeps her busy and rather disagreeable, as you might suspect.

Triton nods and closes his eyes in frustration.

TRITON (V.O.)

If I could relieve my sister of her workload, I would. That won't happen until I'm reinstated by King Poseidon. Without proof of my innocence, he can't change his decree.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)

We know that brother. Still, none of us sees you as the criminal.

TRITON (V.O.)

Our father and sister do. Anyway, you need not be involved in my problems. Our royal parents don't need two rogue prince sons. Princess Rhode will never be seen as an accomplice of mine as her behavior toward me has been cool after Nehalennia disappeared. She loved her dearly, almost as much as I did as our family well knows.

PRINCE ARYLAN(V.O.)

So, you not only want attendance to our sister's birthday party, but have another agenda? So it is of a secretive nature? Intriguing!

Triton frowns as his tail fluke moves steadily back and forth in the current.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)

Then there's no real reason I shouldn't grant your request. We all know that secrets abound within royal families, do we not? Go with the grace of the gods and I will see you at sister Rhode's party. The guards will take you to her anti-chambers while I speak to her on your behalf. Please visit more often and let it be in a less restrictive environment. I miss you, as does my wife. Please remember my love for you, dear brother. That has not changed, nor will it, ever. May those who created us be with you in your endeavors to solve your problems and serve the throne of King Poseidon once again as a royal.

TRITON. (V.O.)

I am in your debt, and will one day prove my loyalty to the Crown and you my forever-brother once again. Of that you can be assured.

Prince Arylan sees the sincerity on Triton's face and notices the stone of royalty that was removed by their mother from his brow band as his hair swirls in the current.

PRINCE ARYLAN (V.O.)

I will keep you to your promise then, and may you find only success.

The doors open, and the Guards swim next to Triton. They bow in unison to Prince Arylan. They take Triton to Princess Rhode's anti-chambers.

Tension rolls off Triton as he waits for his sister to grant him audience. She purposely keeps him waiting. The Guards eye Triton.

After the last subject has seen Princess Rhode, the Guards surround Triton and take him through her doors to her chambers.

They are reluctant to leave him alone with her, but she gives them a look full of meaning, and they exit respectfully.

Princess Rhode releases the rope across her lap and swims a few feet from her throne, her tail slowly waving beneath her in the water. Triton keeps his eyes down in respect.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)
Wayward brother, approach my
throne.

Triton grimaces over her way of addressing him as their eyes meet. He swims closer to hug her. She backs out of his reach.

She immediately notices the missing stone in his brow band. She turns her back on him, and sits back down, attaching the rope across her lap.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)
Our brother Prince Arylan asked me
to grant you audience on his behalf
so I will hear your request. I
won't guarantee you anything. By
the way, in spite of everything
it's good to see you after so long.
I'm surprised I can say that.

Triton smiles ruefully knowing she's on a fact-finding mission.

TRITON (V.O.)
Princess Rhode my only sister, I am
in your debt. Thank you for seeing
me. I'm sorry about the
inappropriate way I handled my
growing affection for Nehalennia so
long ago. I suspect her
disappearance is tied to our love
of one another. I can't change the
decision we made, or how it
affected our family, but I have new
information. I must pursue it in
hopes that I can repair some of the
damage I've done. Time is of the
essence, please excuse my
directness. I need to get an intact
hair follicle from Proteus. I'm
assuming you still have an amicable
relationship with him?

Taking the rope off her lap, she swims slowly away from her throne, no emotion registering on her face.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)
Amicable, is that what you call it?
Most of Proteus's time is spent
with Njorth as usual while they
tend to the vast sea mammal herds.
Besides, I can't just yank a hair
out of his head. That's if, or
when, I see him!

TRITON (V.O.)
Sister, please hear my plan before
you make up your mind against me.
Our parents have planned a gala
party for you. Proteus will be
invited. I will be seated at the
servants table in the back. My gift
will be the last you receive, a
stone carving of our parents. As
you shift around to open it, fall
against Proteus left shoulder, the
fingers of your right hand tangling
in his hair as the gift shifts with
you. Upright it and remove your
other hand from his hair while
pulling out some of his hair
follicles. When he reacts, just
laugh and say something about
having a little too much to drink.
If needed, profusely apologize as
you examine your gift from me.
Around the wrist of our mother's
statue, I've tied a small pouch
with a corked vial inside, the
pouch similar to the one we've all
seen her wearing around her wrist.
The pouch will release from the
statue's wrist when you pull on it,
and the vial within is where you
can put the hairs. After everyone
toasts you, excuse yourself and
meet me in the second hallway going
to the back exit. You can slip me
the vial there.

Princess Rhode shakes her head. Triton's gut twists as he
holds his anger in check, and his anxiety increases. She
spins around and faces him, her anger barely bridled.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)
Put your wall down wanton brother.
I want to know your real intentions
and I warn you, if I'm implicated
in any, I'll take you down.
(MORE)

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You'll be so low when I'm done with you that you'll never find your way back up. Why didn't you do what was expected of you as a royal so long ago? Are there not mer-females enough to satiate your lust? You are the second born of our father and first born of our mother! They had plans for you. Now you are no more than a common-caretaker! There are others who could have done that work. You brought all of this drama into our lives, and it's created much anguish within our family, especially our mother. Do you realize the shame we bare because of you? If you think my anger at you has waned after all of these centuries you're badly mistaken. Right now I want to call the Guards and tell them you're not allowed in my presence ever again. This plan of yours could derail me as a royal. Why did you put our younger brother up to asking me for an audience? Now he's implicated too! Our poor parents will have no children left to run their Kingdom by the time you get done hatching this next scheme of yours. Don't you understand how treasonous it sounds? Just what are you trying to pin on Proteus by taking a sample of his DNA?

She swims directly up to Triton, and her face is as hard as stone.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)

I'm right aren't I! Haven't you created enough problems? I will report this to our mother and father if you don't put your wall down right now, I swear.

Triton squares his shoulders, not letting his face show the defeat he feels as he puts his wall down. His skin prickles as his sister senses pointedly within him.

After several moments she swims backwards, away from him and sits down on her throne, fastening the rope across her lap. Her face is frozen over her thoughts.

He watches her gloomily, she being astute and beautiful as their mother, and as brilliant and fearsome as their father.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)

Why is this young woman, Callista a target of Proteus? She's no one! Why does Proteus care if you show her attention or not? So that's what all of this is about? You would endanger your younger brother and my standing as a royal over this young girl that you think has some connection to the Goddess Callista? You know she's been missing for the last millennia. So is this a battle of testosterone between the two of you, again?

TRITON (V.O.)

Regardless of what you think and how you feel about me, will you still help me? She'll die without my help. I'll never divulge any of this to anyone nor ask your help again.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)

This young girl was supposed to die in that accident! And she'll die eventually, no matter what you do. Our father will never grant her immortality! I don't care how many reincarnations this spirit has supposedly had during your lifetime here. So, just what trickery are you up to? You'll come to me needing something else and try to force my hand again. Once I've helped you, it will become a noose around my neck. Besides, I don't trust you! Why should I?

TRITON (V.O.)

I love Nehalennia as much as you. When I found her that night, I should have escorted her to the festivities still a virgin, delivering her into your safe arms as sisters and dear friends, not letting her heart take me away with it. Even though we wanted the rest of eternity together, Proteus had to reject Nehalennia verbally as his intended bride.

(MORE)

TRITON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You know we couldn't go to King Poseidon until then. Proteus did nothing. He left her in a state of limbo, alone with her grief and rejection. He never befriended, admired or simply loved her as we did. Nehalennia whole life was one of waiting for a decision Proteus never gave her.

Princess Rhode's face is grief stricken, then smooths over.

TRITON (V.O.)

Nehalennia gave up hope the night I found her. She wasn't wed, nor ruling as she had been prepared for all her life. She believed she was not good enough for the first born son of King Poseidon. Proteus demonstrated time and again that he had no interest in her. That drove the sharp knife of rejection deeper within her every year. When I finally found her she was so depressed that she felt her life was valueless. She beached herself on a mound of moss covered rock protruding from the writhing sea. It was close to Pitcairn where she hoped humans would find her. She wanted to die at someone else's hands and not her own. Because she didn't have her immortality, she decided death was her only option. But, she didn't want her last act on this planet to be one of dishonor. After I saved her, we made love, and I dishonored us both. All we ever wanted was to love each other forever and serve our royal families.

Triton's face contorts for a moment over his painful memories of Nehalennia, he knowing his sister didn't know Nehalennia wanted to die.

Princess Rhode's face shows the misery Triton's words have evoked in her over her dear friend and adopted sister. She stiffens her spine and releases her pain to the current.

TRITON (V.O.)

Please allow me to help Callista. It's just one merciful act among many that I do to try and atone for my horrendous mistake concerning our sister Nehalennia. It's all I have left. I'm no longer a royal, and many of my strengths as deity have been stripped from me by our father and king, King Poseidon, as was my due.

Princess Rhode's face is turned from Triton and still miserable. She faces him, her face becoming neutral.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)

I will do as you've requested for this suffering creature called Callista, but only in memory of our dear sister Nehalennia. No matter what you do, you can never atone for that night in my eyes. You were guilty the moment you decided to satiate yourself with our adopted sister, taking everything from her that she had been prepped for her whole life. No matter how you color it, you were wrong because you knew our laws. You could have approached our father and mother with the problem she experienced between her and Proteus. But you didn't! Instead, you took her in a heated moment and now you're living with the fruit of that decision. It's bitter, not only for you, but our family and the Kingdom! And don't think I didn't notice the darkness within you that hides part of your intent from me. But I weary of your plots, or I would have pursued that within you too. I could find out all, from the moment you were conceived until now. Every secret you have ever known or thought I could read as the Guards held you for me. But I have run out of time and patience. I have your duties as well as mine, which you are very well aware of! Regardless of whether I pull this off or not, I don't want to see you ever again. Don't you dare drag Arylan into any more of your so called plans!

(MORE)

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Our family, long ago wearied over the insufferable battle between you and Proteus. The only thing between us after tomorrow night will be our lineage. I promise, I will destroy you if my younger brother and I are implicated in any of this. You know I can and am capable. Remember this threat word for word the rest of your immortal life, and don't ever approach me again with anything that you need me to do for you! Are we clear?

TRITON (V.O.)

Yes, completely Princess Rhode.

Triton bows. Princess Rhode looks away, but not before Triton catches the disgust that flashes across her face. More than anything she has said, her expression hurts him deeply because she believes he is the villain Proteus has painted him to be.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)

After this audience with me, you will be escorted to the Kelp's Keep. Remember this, any well wishing at my birthday party from me toward you will be an act on my part. I will protect King Poseidon's kingdom on this planet even if it means the destruction of you and any connected to you. Go, and never return to my court!

Triton nods in acknowledgment as Princess Rhode's eyes bore into his and then look beyond him as the doors open. Four Guards enter, stationing themselves at Triton's right and left arms, one at his back, and one readies himself to lead the way. They bow to Princess Rhode respectfully. She nods, and they back out until the heavy doors shut just inches from their faces.

22 EXT. OUTSIDE KING POSEIDON'S CASTLE UNDER THE OCEAN - 22
AFTERNOON

The Guards escort Triton to the compound's gates. They close securely behind him as another Guard waits outside. Triton immediately recognizes BRANT, the Captain of the Guard and his long-ago personal bodyguard/loyal friend. His eyes are hooded, showing no emotion.

BRANT (V.O.)

Prince -- oh, Milord Triton, I am
to accompany you to your lodgings.

Triton nods regally, they silently swim to the Kelp's Keep following the instructions of Princess Rhode. They enter a small lush private garden where there is a back entrance to the Keep.

Brant squelches his reflex to bow in respect to Triton as he does for all royals. As he leaves Triton's presence facing him, he checks himself and turns his back on him.

In that moment Triton senses Brant's uneasiness over the lack of etiquette he's to afford a Prince knowing he's shaming Triton outright.

Brant's eyes momentarily pass over Triton's face, before he turns around. Triton sees loyalty there. Brant's shoulders drop over the strict protocol that forces him to ignore Triton's previous royal status and deity.

Buying time, Brant fingers the sheathed sword at his side as if it needs his attention.

TRITON (V.O.)

If I ever needed your help and it
didn't interfere with your duties
to our King Poseidon, could I
summon your aid?

Brant scans the garden. He and Triton are alone. He unsheathes his weapon as if inspecting it.

BRANT (V.O.)

Milord and Prince, forgive me for
my lack of royal decorum, but
discretion is warranted. In answer
to your question, my heart never
stopped serving you. I'm yours to
command within the Palace or
without.

Brant dips his head in respect and their friendship rekindles, the current of the ocean swirling around them.

TRITON (V.O.)

Would you be my ears within the
palace, especially in regards to my
older brother, Proteus? Also would
you note what Njorth and their
friends are up too? Miss nothing
that is said and done among them
when you can.

(MORE)

TRITON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Get word to me through my channels.
If there is redemption for me that
can be brought to light, we will
find it within Proteus's loosely
shared secrets and his drunken
boasts.

Brant bows slightly to Triton showing his deference. Their
eyes lock on each other one last moment.

BRANT (V.O.)

As you wish and have need. I will
do your bidding and am glad to be
at your service once again. You can
be assured of my cooperation. May I
take my leave now, Prince Triton?

TRITON (V.O.)

Yes, and thank you. May you prosper
in your efforts. Be well, as you
serve our King and his Kingdom.

BRANT (V.O.)

Be well my Prince, first born of
our Queen Amphitrite. May her work
not go unnoticed by King Poseidon.

As Brant swims away, Triton doesn't miss the fact that he
mentions Triton's mother and her work. Triton now knows Brant
is one of Queen Amphitrite's spies. After Brant leaves,
Triton swims to the back door of the Kelp's Keep.

TRITON(WHISPERS IN PRAYER)

Mother Goddess Amphitrite, thank
you for continuing to work on
clearing my name. My heart has ever
been loyal to you, and my father's
kingdom.

Triton shape-shifts into less than what he is, disguising his
appearance so he won't be recognized, except by the most
astute.

He swims through long corridors before entering the bustling
main lobby. Mermaids and mermen are busy with their travel
and business arrangements, this being the lodging closest to
the castle. Triton stops at the main kiosk.

KOLINA, the head hostess stationed to help with accommodations, smiles at Triton warmly. Her eyes flicker curiously over his plain browband that speaks of wealth and station, but nothing else. She has a long memory. He senses to her as the Prince Triton.

KOLINA (V.O.)
Milord may I help you?

Kolina watches his handsome face. If he isn't the Prince, he'll be flattered by her addressing him as Milord. Triton cocks his eyebrow and smiles charmingly at her.

TRITON (V.O.)
Yes, the Royal Administrator set up prepaid accommodations under the name, 'T. Pacii'.

Kolina nods and opens a chest where the stones are organized according to their symbols for each room. She looks in the section for the royal's rooms, but none are designated for 'T. Pacii'.

She composes herself and looks among the commoner's rooms seeing his name coupled with a stone there. She swallows her agitation, believing he is Prince Triton.

KOLINA (V.O.)
Milord Pacii, please come this way.

Kolina bows in a professional manner and swims with Triton to his accommodations. The stone she holds corresponds to a symbol engraved on the larger matching stone embedded in the cavern hallway next to the accommodation.

Passing the small stone in front of the thick wooden door, it unlocks when an orange pulse jumps from the stone to the door's mechanism.

KOLINA (V.O.)
We hope you're comfortable and enjoy your stay with us.

Triton knows she's worried at the lack of proper accommodations.

TRITON (V.O.)
Thank you Kolina. Your discretion on my behalf will be remembered and appreciated.

Kolina bows deeply. Triton takes her hand in his and turns it palm up. Her eyes dart to his face as he lays a lush black pearl in her hand. Royals don't touch commoners, as a rule.

KOLINA (V.O.)
 Milord Pacii, you need not gift me!
 An upgraded room was our next
 destination. Let me make different
 arrangements for you immediately.

She holds her webbed fingers out making sure the black pearl doesn't get lost in the current. Even though this room is Princess Rhode's way of disgracing Triton further, he doesn't want to go against her wishes. Triton closes Kolina's hand around the pearl.

TRITON (V.O.)
 No need, this room is fine. Please
 enjoy the gift. It is my pleasure
 to give it to you for your
 excellent services rendered.

KOLINA (V.O.)
 In all things, as you wish Milord
 Pacii.

Kolina bows, facing Triton and swims backward. When his door shuts, she quickly turns and goes to the head CHEF to order a proper meal for Milord Pacii, one befitting a royal.

Kolina instructs TWO SECURITY GUARDS to station themselves, one at each of the entrances to the corridor for Milord Pacii's privacy and protection.

Triton finds his small room barely adequate. At least he can meditate safely, he sensing the guards are out in the hall on his behalf.

24 INT. PRINCESS RHODES' PARTY IN KING POSEIDON'S CASTLE - 24
 EVENING

The invitation comes and Triton is invited to attend his sister's birthday party.

Triton is in the background of the festivities. He sits in a smaller alcove reserved for servants who attend to the royals. They sit apart from Triton knowing he's defrocked, being uncomfortable in his presence.

Laughter fills the lush cavern in the palace as food and drink flow freely among the royals. Telepathic communication is shared among the royal family, except Triton.

At the end of the evening, the servants place the many gifts in front of Princess Rhode. She sips a long drink of wine through her straw and purposely leans near Proteus. She falls awkwardly against him in the water.

Her fingers rake through the side of his long hair. He shoves her away as she pulls at the pouch from the statues wrist and puts her hands under the table. She places the long hair follicles in the vial, and closes the cork lid.

PROTEUS (V.O.)

Sister, I have seen you drink but never to the point of being clumsy. My head feels like I lost a good portion of my hair, roots and all.

PRINCESS RHODE (V.O.)

I'm very sorry for my klutzy drunkenness, please accept my apology. The wine is very good. Shall I blame our royal father because of his excellent choice of wine?

King Poseidon smiles at Rhode lovingly and the family erupts into laughter. Meanwhile the servants bring refreshed containers of wine and the family toasts Princess Rhode.

Triton holds his cup up to no one and wishes Rhode a good life. He gets up and goes toward the under sea garden. Princess Rhode excuses herself and meets Triton where the deity statues are posed, being a place of meditation.

TRITON (V.O.)

Thank you my sister. I am in your debt.

Rhodes doesn't smile as she unties the small container from her wrist and hands it to Triton.

PRINCESS RHODES (V.O.)

You're right, you'll forever be in my debt. From this day forward until time is no more! My Guards are waiting for you at the eastern doors. Go, or I will see to it that you are punished for spying. Am I clear, my wayward brother?

TRITON (V.O.)

Yes, Princess Rhodes.

Triton watches her turn her back on him and senses her deep disappointment in him. The Guards are waiting for him and escort him from the royal palace and its grounds. Brant meets Triton outside the palace gates.

BRANT (V.O.)

There is news, Prince Triton.

TRITON (V.O.)
 Let us meet then, you know the
 place and the hour.

Brant nods as they swim in different directions.

25 INT. IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 25

Callista awakes to her MOM'S voice through the propped open door of her room. She's out at the head nurses desk speaking quietly, but with authority.

MEREDITH
 Yes, but I want to know that you're giving my daughter the best of care. I need the details. Are you hydrating her properly and feeding her food she'll want to eat? She was lean to begin with and needs to gain her weight back. How about her pain medicine? Is it adequate so that she can rest and isn't suffering?

CALLISTA (WHISPERS TO HERSELF)
 Mom, you're so awesome in full lawyer mode. I pity the nurse that's in your sights! Can't wait to see you!

Callista continues to listen to her mother's self assured voice.

NURSE 1
 Would you like to see her chart Mrs. Sanders?

MEREDITH
 Yes and I'd like to talk to Dr. Varn also. Is he available?

NURSE 1
 I'll contact him.

Nurse 1 picks up the hospital phone and call's Dr. Varn. She turns to Meredith.

NURSE 1 (CONT'D)
 Dr. Varn will be here in fifteen minutes Mrs. Sanders. Do you mind waiting?

MEREDITH
I'll be in my daughter's room.

NURSE 1
That will be fine Mrs. Sanders.

Meredith comes through Callista's door, her face is white as a sheet. Her graceful, tall body crosses the hospital room and her pumps click lightly on the hospital floor. She reminds Callista of Grace Kelly, in her cream silk blouse, grey jacket, skirt and her hair up.

CALLISTA holds out her arms to her mom.

CALLISTA
MOM!

MEREDITH
Callista Ann, Oh Honey!

Meredith sits down on the hospital bed and hugs Callista. She smooths her hair.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Honey, I was so worried about you! I'm sorry I wasn't able to get here sooner. I was going nuts. The weather grounded all the planes in Chicago and New York. Cell phone towers were having trouble picking up the satellite feeds because of the deep snow; it was a mess! Anne kept me up to date whenever our calls got through. Weirdly, I had a few in-depth conversations with Triton Pacii. He must know someone pretty high up in government to get our calls through. I came straight from the airport. I love you very much!

CALLISTA
I love you too!

They both hug again. After a few nervous giggles, they both dab at their tears, patting their faces carefully.

Meredith asks several astute questions, and Callista gives the lawyer in her as many accurate details as she can about the accident, but excludes the strange things between her and Triton.

Dr. Varn knocks, Callista introduces him to her mom. They excuse themselves going to the conference room down the hall.

Meredith eventually comes back bringing a twelve-ounce container of cranberry-grape juice and ice complete with a straw.

MEREDITH

Drink!

Callista giggles and takes a big swig. Meredith watches her carefully, sizing up her health.

CALLISTA

I was just wondering when I get to go home.

MEREDITH

Not yet Callista Honey, but soon.

After a couple of hours of talking and playing cards, Meredith goes home.

Several boring days of medications, bad food and sleepless nights pass in the hospital. Callista wakes up feeling overheated. She winces, pulls back the sheet from her thighs, her skin is shimmering bluish-green.

CALLISTA

OH-my-GOD!

She touches the biggest bright green vein threading through her thigh, it pulses under her finger. She stares, watching the sickly green color of her blood under her skin.

When she presses her fingers against her thigh, the odd color of her skin becomes more teal the moment she takes her fingers away. Callista has to hide this. She leans back on her bed, and covers back up.

The door to her room opens and a slight built, INDIA NURSE comes in. To Callista's amazement, she disconnects her from the IVs.

INDIA NURSE

Hello Callista. Your release paperwork is done and you'll be going home soon. Right now it's time to medicate you.

Working efficiently, she smiles kindly and gives Callista three intramuscular injections and has her drink a yucky elixir.

Her Grandma and Mom come. After hugs and laughter, they help her change into street clothes and pack her things.

Tad pushes her in the wheelchair through the hospital corridors toward the patient pickup. Callista 'senses' for Triton but doesn't connect with him, she frowns.

26 EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE HOSPITAL - PASSENGER PICKUP - DAY 26

Tad rolls Callista's wheelchair out into the daylight and hands her a new \$10.00 pair of sunglasses shaped like something Buddy Holly would wear. They are in sea green with girly rhinestones on the top of the rims.

Callista loves them and smiles at Tad's thoughtfulness. Tad helps Callista into the front seat of Grandma Anne's SUV.

CALLISTA (SAYS BEGRUDGINGLY)

Thanks.

TAD

What are bigger twin brothers for, little Sis? I don't mind being your slave! Besides, you're kind of broken right now.

CALLISTA

(Giggles) I'll always be older than you by twenty minutes and I'm not an invalid.

She punches him in the shoulder, but there's no power behind it.

Tad grins, shuts the SUV's door and takes the wheelchair inside the hospital. Meredith passes Tad as she walks out of the hospital.

MEREDITH

Hurry back Tad.

Meredith gets in the SUV and shakes her head.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Hello Callista Darling. Hi Anne, thanks for driving. I thought lawyers had a lot of paperwork, but hospitals, they don't want to get sued. I've never signed such a stack as I put my pen to today! Callista your meds will be delivered to the house via a refrigerated van in an hour. Are you feeling okay?

CALLISTA
Yeah, thanks mom.

Tad gets in the SUV.

GRANDMA ANNE
Everyone have their seat belts on?

Callista clicks hers into place, and pokes at the button under the window rolling it down to let in the sea breeze as Grandma Anne pulls away from the sidewalk and heads for the exit.

CALLISTA
Wow, I almost forgot how much the ocean sparkles from a distance.
Wish I was surfing.

TAD
You, me, Jazz and Matt will be surfing again before you know it.

28 INT. CALLISTA'S HOME ON THE LA JOLLA COAST - DAY 28

Tad carries Callista up the stairs to her room in his arms. She's uncomfortable.

TAD
What did one twin ocean say to the other twin ocean?

Callista smirks and rolls her eyes.

TAD (CONT'D)
Nothing, they just waved.

CALLISTA
(Giggles) That's the dumbest twin joke I've ever heard!

Tad smirks at Callista as he sees the weariness in her face. He stands her up in my doorway.

TAD
Go forth, and conquer!

Callista snorts, sways on her feet. She reaches for the door frame and smiles bravely.

TAD (CONT'D)
Hey little sister, don't fall! Mom will kill me if anything happens to you.

(MORE)

TAD (CONT'D)

Then you wouldn't be a twin anymore. How would you manage life without me?

Tad gives Callista a charming smiles as she concentrates on staying upright. His brow dips with concern, but he keeps his smile in place.

CALLISTA

Not only that, how would the planet keep turning on its axis if you weren't here? Besides, Mom always loved you more than me!

TAD

(Laughs)

CALLISTA

Thanks for your help and the great sunglasses. Tell Mom I'm not hungry.

Tad salutes and Callista does the same. Callista closes her door and uses the wall to get herself to her closet. She takes off her jacket and shoes. She uses her furniture to get to the sliding glass door.

29

EXT. OUT ON THE DECK FACING THE PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

29

Callista goes out to her chaise lounge, using the furniture and walls for support. She sits down and takes in a long breath.

The inner thoughts of people down on the beach begin to filter through her mind as clear as if they were talking to her. She feels like she's eavesdropping. Then she hears her family in the first story kitchen ---

GRANDMA ANNE

Meredith, please trust my judgment. Triton isn't that much older than Callista -- Oh my, we need to start planning Callista's eighteenth birthday. It's only weeks away!

MEREDITH

Oh-my-god, I forgot too! With all that's been going on --- I'm failing as a mom.

GRANDMA ANNE

I'll get started tonight! You know Triton's license depends on his integrity. He's very accomplished, a genius in fact. Callista needs complete, and extraordinary care or she won't recover to a life that's pleasing to her. Her mind will wither without the strong and vibrant body she's been use to.

MEREDITH

With my schedule, I can't be here to keep tabs on Triton as he cares for my under age daughter! I have to bring in two incomes to keep up with our bills. With all the traveling I do, I can't monitor our family properly. You know how long it took to get back here. It was unbearable to be on the east coast while my daughter was struggling for her every breath on the west coast!

GRANDMA ANNE

I'll fill in Meredith, twenty four hours a day. You aren't without support. I know Triton and his family. They have good standing in our community. Let Triton do his job and if you or Callista aren't happy, we'll get another practitioner. So take this load off your hardworking back and let me shoulder it. I'll take care of our family from here. I can't stop you from worrying, but I promise everything will work out.

Tad comes in the front door. Callista hears his footsteps heading for the kitchen along with the crinkle of reusable bags.

MEREDITH

I'm not happy with this Anne, but we'll do it your way --- for a while.

GRANDMA ANNE

That's all I ask.

TAD

Hey ladies.

MEREDITH

Hi Tad.

GRANDMA ANNE

Hello Sweetie.

CALLISTA'S hears the synthetic grocery bags settle on the counter with a slight thump.

TAD

So, here's the fresh salad fixings.
Whoa, dinner smells great, working
your magick again huh!

GRANDMA ANNE

(Laughs)

Callista notices that her mother doesn't laugh. She chews at her lip over everything she's heard about Triton.

30 INT. IN CALLISTA'S BEDROOM - EVENING 30

Callista goes back in the house again using the furniture and sits at her desk where her laptop is.

CALLISTA (SOFTLY TO HERSELF)

So Triton has a secret identity.
Grandma Anne knows his family? So
he's Clark Kent and Superman? Or
maybe Bruce Wayne and Batman?

Callista clicks on her browser and sees an e-mail at the top from Triton-

*Callista,
I'm constantly thinking of you.
Would you mind if I came to see you?
Triton*

Callista chews at her lip.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

So Triton is a genius?

Callista starts drumming her fingers on the desk, then her fingers go over the keyboard-

*Triton,
You saved my life. I owe you. See you when you get here.*

*Are you a genius? At what age did you get your medical degree?
Do you have any other extraordinary abilities that I should know about?
Will I be safe from you? I guess that doesn't matter now.
Grandma Anne's on your side having known you for -- how long?
Mom's not so sure, neither am I. Can you blame me?
From my House of Glass,
Callista*

Callista doesn't push send, but rests her head on her arm, staring at the laptop screen. She falls asleep.

31 INT. IN CALLISTA'S BEDROOM & ADJOINING BATH AT HER HOUSE - 31 NIGHT

Callista wakes up, her head still on her arm and sees Triton.

TRITON (V.O.)
Callista do I have your permission
to help you?

Triton kneels and looks in Callista's weary eyes. She hears her mom Meredith and Grandma Anne talking quietly in the hall as they get something out of the hall closet.

Triton glances over at the computer screen that has gone into standby, and touches the keyboard. It flickers to life. Their messages fill it. Triton's eyes shyly dart to Callista's tired face.

TRITON (V.O.)
So, are you alright with me being
here?

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Does it matter? What are you, a
Vampire I have to give permission
too?

Triton grimaces.

TRITON (V.O.)
To me it does. When I didn't hear
from you, I called your mom. But
I'll leave if you want me to.

Callista sits up and wearily reaches for Triton's fingers that are raised over the laptop keyboard. She holds them for a second, then drops her hand to the desk.

He puts the computer in hibernation and moves her hair behind her ear that's hanging part way across her face.

TRITON (V.O.)
Let me help you to bed.

Triton pulls Callista's chair away from the desk, picks her up and lays her on her bed. Callista and Triton both look at the doorway as Meredith comes in the room. Triton steps back from the bed, relaxes his shoulders and his face, looking neutral.

MEREDITH
I don't mean to intrude, Callista
Honey. But I wondered how you're
doing.

CALLISTA
Sorry Mom. I fell asleep in my
clothes.

Meredith sits on the bed.

MEREDITH
Honey, would you like me to help
you get ready for bed?

CALLISTA
Please.

Meredith pulls off Callista's socks. Both women glance at Triton. He nods, looking professional as he and Meredith share a look.

Grandma Anne arrives and Triton smiles warmly, they leave the room together, talking softly. Callista watches them go.

Meredith helps Callista into a brand new set of pajamas and kisses her forehead. She tucks her under the sheets, folding the blankets, and bedspread back.

MEREDITH
I'll send Triton back in. I've
hired him to care for you and
administer your meds. I'll let him
explain it. If you have any
questions, ask him. He's a medical
professional, and you'll be well-
cared for. He has the credentials,
and Anne assures me he's the best.
I'll keep a close eye on him.

Meredith sighs, looks at the door. She's not happy.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Tomorrow you'll be going to Triton's home. It will make it easier for him to take care of you. If you're uncomfortable in any way you let me know immediately, understand? His license depends on his professionalism. The insurance company will be keeping tabs on you and him.

Callista frowns. She doesn't want leave her home, she just got here. But she's too tired to hash it out tonight.

Meredith watches Callista as she shakes her head. She gives Callista an unsure smile, kisses her cheek and leaves.

Callista hears Triton speaking with Grandma Anne, then her Mom out in the hallway. He comes in with a medical bag, shuts the door and turns up the heat.

CALLISTA (V.O.)

So, you're a professional, umm whatever and I'm going to your home in the morning?

TRITON (V.O.)

I'm a critical care nurse, and yes, it will be easier for me to care for you there. You can't be alone while your family works and goes to school. May I administer your meds to you now?

CALLISTA (V.O.)

You ask about giving me meds, but no one asks me about me going to your house? Go ahead, medicate me. It's not as if I can say no! It's the highlight of my days and nights nowadays.

Triton frowns, hands Callista a granola bar and a bottle of water. She eyes the medical supplies Triton is arranging on the sterile tray as she eats.

TRITON (V.O.)

I'm sorry you weren't consulted. We just want best for you. Of course, I feel bad for the pain you went through when I read you. But if I had to do it again, I would because the information I got helped us engineer your meds.

Callista has a hard time swallowing her last bite of food.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
So you still think that was real
and helped YOU engineer my meds?
Really? So you're a scientist too?
How many degrees do you have?

Triton shrugs, ignoring her sarcasm.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Sometimes you sound like an English
Professor from the turn of the
century. Why?

TRITON (V.O.)
I was raised out of the country.
Anyway, you were running out of
time, and there was no other way.
That's the truth.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Do you know how weird all of this
sounds? Do you think we both need a
shrink?

Triton smirks, goes to the bathroom, washes his hands and
snaps on sterile gloves. Callista closes her eyes as he
medicates her.

TRITON (V.O.)
CALLISTA?

Triton holds out two elixirs to Callista. She drinks them
quickly, they're bitter.

CALLISTA
(Coughs)

Triton hands her another bottle of water as he cleans up
everything.

TRITON (V.O.)
Would you like to brush your teeth?

She nods, he helps her get to the bathroom.

TRITON (V.O.)
I'll be right back after I get my
things.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
You're coming back, to MY room?

He doesn't answer as he leaves, shutting the bathroom door. Callista cleans up, makes it back to bed and pulls the covers up to her neck. Triton knocks on her door.

CALLISTA
Come in.

Triton opens the door. He's wearing gray lightweight cotton pants that tie at the waist and a white cotton tank top. Callista chews at her lip as she notices his broad shoulders, well-muscled arms and the way his pants rest on his hips. Turning off the desk light, Triton unrolls his bedding, opens it and fluffs his pillow.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Thanks for leaving the curtains open. I like to see the moon and stars at night.

TRITON (V.O.)
I know. Sleep well, Callista.

Callista frowns and doesn't fall asleep, thinking of Triton on his sleeping bag next to her bed. Finally she glances down at him. He's on his back on top of his sleeping bag, his eyes closed.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Triton?

TRITON (V.O.)
Callista?

CALLISTA (V.O.)
My brother is the only other guy that's ever slept in my room. Yeah and anyway, he doesn't count -- but umm -- how do you know I like my curtains open?

TRITON (V.O.)
I just do. Right now, you need your rest. Don't worry, just sleep. We'll talk in morning, it's late. Good-night.

Callista watches him, he still has his eyes closed. She bites at her lip.

CALLISTA (V.O.)
Night.

CALLISTA

(Moans)

Callista kicks her feet under the beds sheets, as if she's swimming --

EXT. CALLISTA'S DREAM/VISION SEQUENCE IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

Triton and Callista are swimming among a kelp forest, studying the numerous sea creatures that live there. Triton points out several colorful fish as they swim above a vegetation filled valley. A pod of Risso's Dolphins rests below them in the safe surroundings.

Triton takes Callista to a kelp-populated ledge that overlooks the valley of sleeping dolphins. As they hide there, Triton points out each member of the pod and who they're related to. He tells her their names that he says are similar to the squeaks and squeals they gave to each other.

CALLISTA (V.O.)

I had no idea sea mammals named one another.

TRITON (V.O.)

Animals are much more intelligent than humanity gives them credit for.

CALLISTA (V.O.)

Grandma Anne and I talked about that when I was seven. She told me to treat all living creatures with the same respect I wanted to be treated with.

A flash of silver cuts through the water and lands in the biggest male of the pod. He jerks and screams in pain. The rest of the pod flees from his anguish and fear.

Triton pulls Callista back from the point of the ledge deeper into the vegetation as his eyes plead with her.

TRITON (V.O.)

Callista, don't move! Don't focus on me, stay here and hide. Proteus and Njord masked their signature to appear as the Risso dolphins!

Triton brakes off a thick piece of the kelp and places it in Callista's hand.

TRITON (V.O.)

Rub on the kelp juice to mask your
scent. Keep your wall up tight
because your very life depends on
it.

With a strong kick of his tail, Triton speeds away and is hidden from Callista's view. With her wall up tight, she sinks deeper into the thick shadows of the tall leafy plants and rubs the kelp juice on her mermaid body.

Callista can see through the kelp at the poor dolphin as he groans. Triton is there and works the weapon from the dolphin. He pulls him left and deeper into the vegetation, hiding him from view.

To Callista's right she sees two mermen, one blond (Proteus), the other a red head (Njorth). They swim among the thick growth in the area. The current still has some of the dolphin's blood in it.

They stop and are sensing for the dolphin. Proteus has a weapon similar to the one that wounded the dolphin. His eyes travel to the rocky ledge where Callista is hiding.

She holds onto the sturdy kelp trunk and remains hidden. Callista's mermaid tail is still so she won't be noticed by him. Proteus eyes seem to pierce her very soul although he can't see her.

Proteus finally looks away, and grabs Njorth's arm as they move to where Callista had last seen Triton. Callista makes sure she isn't thinking of Triton, but picturing herself as if she's kelp.

Proteus and Njorth swim out of her view. No fish or mammals are in the valley, they all fled. The plants bend toward the currents around them.

After several tense minutes, Triton swims into Callista's view. He has the weapon that speared the dolphin shoved against the back of the Njorth. Triton's other arm has him in a strong choke hold, pushing him forward.

Anger distorts the face of Proteus as he swims just out of reach Triton, but as close as he can to Njorth. Proteus's spear is strapped across Triton's back.

Grim determination is on Triton's face and his eyes look cold and bitter as an arctic day. Callista remains hidden so she doesn't distract Triton.

Triton, Njorth and Proteus begin to swim away from Callista. Proteus stops and his merciless eyes ran up the ledge one more time where Callista is hidden as if he knows she's there.

She's nervous, feeling the malicious threat that he's directing at her. She keeps her body as still as a corpse.

INT. IN CALLISTA'S BEDROOM & ADJOINING BATH - MORNING

Callista wakes up with a jerk. She sits up and looks around her room, not believing she's in her own bed and not the ocean.

Triton's things are neatly folded and put against the far wall. She slowly stands up, feeling dizzy. She makes her way via the furniture to the bathroom. Looking at her sickly reflection in the mirror, she frowns.

She adjusts the shower water, takes her pajamas off and steps under the water and sighs. As she begins to soap up, her hands become stiff. She drops the soap and washcloth three times.

CALLISTA (MUTTERS)
Crap! I'm clumsy.

She manages to wash and condition her hair but her hands ache. She nicks her leg as she shaves. Sharp pains sting between each of her fingers feeling like her skin is being pierced by a sharp knife.

She holds her hands up in front of her face and slowly spreads her aching fingers. There's webbed skin between each of her fingers and it has a pearl like-teal sheen.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)
Oh -- My -- God! My hands --
they're like my dream!

Callista starts hyperventilating as she stares at her hands while her body trembles. She slumps down the shower wall and curls up under the falling water as she continues to shiver uncontrollably.

Triton calls her name, knocks on the door, tries the bathroom door handle, calls to her again, then picks the lock with a paperclip from the desk drawer.

TRITON
Callista?

Triton goes to the shower stall, opens the shower door, turns off the water, grabs three bath towels from the rack. He covers Callista's body, and picks her up.

Carrying her to her bed, he wraps her hair and pats the towel that covers her curled up body. He pulls up the sheet to cover her as he continues to pat her dry.

Drying her arm to her hand, Triton stops. Spreading her fingers gently open, he looks at the webbing. He examines her other hand, spreading those fingers too.

TRITON (CONT'D)
Oh, Callista.

Callista opens her eyes and stares at TRITON.

CALLISTA
(Sobs)

Triton clears his throat. He takes her hands in his as his aura wraps around her.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)
I'm a monster!

TRITON
No, you aren't. What do you need
right now?

Callista takes her hands from his and dries her tears with an edge of the towel.

CALLISTA
I need to be pain-free and not have
telepathy. I don't want to hear
what other people are thinking, or
feel their emotions. I don't want
webbed hands. I want to finish high
school with a high GPA and go to
University as a Marine Bio major.
That's what I want, not this!

Callista holds her hands up, fingers spread out in front of her, her face contorts with her anguish.

TRITON
You need to get dressed. Can you do
that alone?

Callista eyes fill with more unwanted tears.

CALLISTA

No. I don't want to go to your house, and I can't dress alone. My hands ache. I can't face any more of this! No more drugs, no more weird abilities, nothing, I just want to be ordinary me, living my ordinary life!

Triton's face goes neutral. Callista dabs her eyes. She sits up, pulling the sheet with her. Her eyes narrow, and she grits her teeth.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

In the end, it doesn't matter what I want, does it.

Callista slowly puts her legs over the bed, bringing the sheet with her. She has a determined look on her face. Triton moves back from the bed.

TRITON

Do you want my help?

CALLISTA

I've got this.

Triton walks to the door, then stops with his back to Callista.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

Please go before I change my mind about -- about everything.

Triton turns, their eyes meet and he nods.

A Gull screams outside the open slider to Callista's room. Triton's eyes dart to the sound then he walks out, closing her door with a small tug.

Callista lets out a ragged breath, stares at her closed door, and slowly clenches and unclenches her fists.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

Get dressed, and get on with your life.

Triton keeps his hand on her doorknob outside her room and continues to sense Callista, hearing her whisper while her irregular heartbeats stutter. He hears her move slowly around her room. He lets go of the knob and pulls in an agonized breath.

Triton gets Callista's supplies in his SUV so he can move her to his estate where he can care for her full time.

32 EXT. DECK ON WEST AT CALLISTA'S HOUSE - MORNING 32

After Callista is ready, she sits on the lawn chair out on the deck with the view of the ocean. She falls asleep and has a vision --

VISION SEQUENCE - EXT. IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN NEAR THE LA JOLLA SHORE

Callista as a mermaid is in rocking ocean swells near a cave. A pair of mated seals bark a warning at her, while their cubs play together within the cave's water.

She leaves the surface of the rocking water for the world below and sees bright orange-yellow Garibaldi fish. They dart out and then back into holes in the rocks, being aggravated by Callista's presence. Abundant sea life is everywhere swimming among colorful plants.

The dark mottled shapes of Leopard sharks skimming lazily along the sandy bottom follow schools of small fish as Callista swims out to the open sea. With her webbed hands, she swims expertly.

She's searching for Triton. Going into the lower parts of the ocean, the walls of a sea canyon rise in the distance.

She swims among the tall kelp. Callista doesn't notice the Great White shark off in the distance as it slowly swims along the rock wall heading in her direction. She suddenly senses his DNA signature and freezes.

Callista lets her body sink lower along the sea canyon wall and searches for its exact location as the shark gains on her.

She searches for a crevice in the rock wall large enough for her to slip into. She finds a thin slit of about ten inches wide with plant life obscuring it from sight.

She squeezes through the opening. The shark is gaining on her. The poignant presence of the shark tingles all her flight senses.

The shark bumps the water outside the hole as he works on finding a way of getting into where she's at.

She frantically looks around her and sees she's in a large cavern as it stretches out behind her.

Following the ridge to her right, she notices a merman, (It's Proteus) who has totally masked himself from being sensed.

She swims quickly toward his back with his flowing blond hair and a harpoon in his hand, she thinks it's Triton.

He turns, his eyes are black with fury. Callista freezes. He raises his harpoon. Her eyes dart around her surroundings, there's no place to hide.

(End of Vision)

Callista jerks awake, sitting up. She buries her face in her hands.

CALLISTA

(Sobs)

Triton quickly comes out on the deck, and kneels in front of her, putting his hands on her knees.

TRITON

It's alright. I'm here.

Callista remembers Proteus's hate filled stare while he aims his harpoon at her. She's embarrassed by her tears. Triton gets her tissues and waits as she dabs them away.

TRITON (CONT'D)

The car's ready to go with your suitcases, computer, tablet, cellphone and school books. But I'll unpack if you want and you can stay here.

CALLISTA

No, don't unpack, I need to get out of here. Let's go.

Callista stands as Triton helps her and they go to the garage on the lower level.

33 EXT. IN TRITON'S HIGH-END SUV ON THE COASTAL HIGHWAY - 33
MORNING

It's a short ten-minute drive to Triton's 25 acre estate that's far off of the road and fenced with a block and wrought iron spiked security fence. The tall ornate gates to his families estate open when Triton puts in the code on his cell.

One side of the gate is a metal likeness of a crowned merman holding his trident with fierce determination. The other side is of a beautiful mermaid brushing her long flowing hair.

Ancient Queen Palms line the driveway of stamped concrete. A life sized bronze statue of King Poseidon is on one side of the five story Pacii Estate next to the outside pool.

CALLISTA

Oh!

TRITON

Nice isn't it.

34 EXT - THE PACII ESTATE ON THE SAN DIEGO COAST - MORNING 34

Triton parks in the huge garage. Several expensive cars are parked at a slant. He helps her out of the car and they enter a elegant, sparkling clean, tiled mudroom off the kitchen.

CALLISTA

I know this sounds weird, but can we enter the house through the main entrance?

TRITON

Alright.

Triton nods and gives her a curious smile. They go outside and walk the path to the front door.

The tall, extra-wide double front doors have an ornate stained glass depiction of a merman riding the waves of the sea with white stallions in front of him, rising out of the frothy ocean. Callista stares at the stain glass doors.

TRITON (CONT'D)

My family commissioned Frederick Wilson, in the 1920's. He was a prominent designer at the Tiffany Glass Company. He was well known for doing strong, majestic figures. After seeing his work called 'Justice' at the Cuyahoga County Courthouse, they hired him to do 'Lord Poseidon from an oil painting we have in the house.'

Callista steps back from the stairs where there is two life-sized marble columns of rearing stallions. They rise out of curled stone waves at the first step going to the double front doors.

A red-tailed hawk screeches high above them. Callista's eyes dart to the bright sky. She notices several stone gargoyles on the roof lines of the Estate.

On the roof above the double front doors is a life-sized merman statue staring down at the entrance. His body ends in a double mertaill. He's springing from a huge wave and has a conch shell held at face level. Triton watches Callista's face.

CALLISTA

Wow, he looks as if he's getting ready to announce our arrival!

Her brow furrows as she continues to examine the statue.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

He -- looks just like you? Is that a circlet crown on his head?

Triton rolls his eyes and sighs.

TRITON

It was ostentatious of my mother. She had it done for my birthday and I wished she hadn't. Although, it is a good likeness, except for the double fluted tail.

CALLISTA

What?

Triton puts his arm around Callista's waist and takes her up the grandiose stairs and opens the massive stain glass doors.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

(Gasps)

The opulence of the entry is amazing as Triton closes the doors. They walk slowly passing several rooms, each a statement of luxury with impeccable old world taste. Oil paintings adorn the walls, along with statues and other expensive works of art.

TRITON

Ostentatious isn't it. But at the time, these were the art pieces and furnishings of the day.

Triton is excited as they walk through an arched doorway. A huge glistening indoor pool and bigger than life statues of goddesses and gods on marble pedestals are set back along the interior wall.

The ceiling above is glass set in ornate iron lattice work. The west wall running the length of the pool is glass with a view of the Pacific.

A waterfall cascades down a rock terrace into the pool at the largest end. Three dolphin statues in different versions of a leap are suspended from the pool-side decking, they're spewing water from their blowholes into the pool water.

CALLISTA

Oh Triton ---

TRITON

It's one of my favorite rooms in the whole house. Let's swim together when you're stronger.

CALLISTA

That'd be wonderful!

35 INT - THE FAMILY ROOM TRITON'S ESTATE - SAME 35

Triton walks Callista to the family room where he stops at the recliner she rested in the night of her accident. She runs her hand on its soft leather.

She notices a large oil painted seascape. A wild, frothing sea is under a wooden sailing ship with the name of H.M.S. Bounty. It's hanging over a white marble hearth.

The whole room is orientated toward the ocean view. Triton opens the sliding glass doors, the sea breeze flowing in, billowing the curtains inward.

Two matching love seats are positioned to face the hearth, sharing another end table. Next to the table is an exquisite life-sized, curvaceous redheaded mermaid statue whose holding a globe light fixture. In her other hand is a mirror, her face gazing at her reflection.

CALLISTA

Wow!

She stares at it, then glances around the room again.

CALLISTA (CONT'D)

The recliner doesn't match the other furniture. Is it for watching TV?

There's no TV.

TRITON

No. Why don't you rest in the recliner. I'll unpack the car. If you need anything, I'm listening.

Callista looks at him confused, as she sits in the recliner. He leans it back starting the warming massage mechanism.

CALLISTA

(Sighs)
Oh, this is nice. Thanks for unpacking. You'd hear me -- here?

TRITON

I thought you'd like it. You're very welcome and yes, I'll hear you.

Triton's eyes dart to the wall where an older intercom system is. He leaves to unpack the car.

CALLISTA (MUMBLES TO HERSELF)

I thought he had another power - Super Hearing! Yeah just like I heard my family talking in the kitchen and people down on the beach while I was upstairs in my bedroom, impossible. Goddess, I'm going nuts.

She closes her eyes ---

36 EXT. VISION SEQUENCE - PACIFIC OCEAN NEAR PITCAIRN ISLAND 36
NIGHT

The water is spraying high over the sheer edge of a small rock outcropping. Callista quickly uses a wave to get on it as her merrail powerfully slaps against the ocean. She's up on the rock, getting away from three sharks that are tracking her.

Looking across the rolling water, she hoped to make it to the steep coastline of Pitcairn Island. But the sharks presence changed her plans to swim into shore to find Triton.

Pitcairn glints white under the full moon. She hears a pod of dolphins warn each other of the sharks with their staccato clicks and sharp whistles.

The dolphins surround the small rock she's on. They ready themselves to ram any sharks.

Callista waits for the sharks to tire of hunting her as she lays down on her back and stares at the full moon while her mertaill rests partially in the ocean...

Callista jerks and sits up, gripping the arm rest of the recliner. Staring around at Triton's view of the Pacific ocean out the double sliding glass doors, she's freaked.

*****END - TV Pilot*****