

Water
Drowning (Ep01)

by
Mark A. Brown

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Mark A. Brown 2010-12-01

Mark A. Brown
2802, 50 Alexander St.
Toronto, ON, M4Y 1B6
416-413-0921
mark_a_brown@yahoo.com

WATER: DROWNING

FADE IN:

INT. CARROL HOUSE - DAY

A drab, pre-fab survival structure. The basic necessities for a small family. The building only holds the beginnings of furnishing; crates and boxes are still scattered around being unpacked.

The CARROL family consists of three people; KRISTOF (40s) the father, GRACE (40s) the mother, and their son ANSELM (15) --slightly pudgy from rich food, slightly pale, clearly a city dweller.

In his room, Anselm drops his luggage on a bare cot, then touches a light switch. Nothing happens. He tries again, with the same result.

ANSELM

This sucks!

Elsewhere, Kristof and Grace look up.

ANSELM (CONT'D)

There's no power in here.

KRISTOF

Easy, there, sport. It's probably just a loose connection. Let me check the box.

Anselm opens his one window, revealing a view of the next house in line. Anselm sighs dejectedly.

EXT. COLONY - DAY

Establish: Coralis colony; an assemblage of pre-fab housing, service buildings, and landing platforms built onto a ring-shaped Atoll. In the centre of the ring, boats and platforms are arranged, supporting some sort of underwater construction (sinking pylons). Half-completed bridges point toward the space where something will stand.

Clear blue ocean stretches away in every direction, glowing in the sunlight.

SUPER: Coralis Atoll, Planet Auramera.

ANSELM (V.O.)

I hate this place.

MORE VIEWS to establish: this is the foundation of a human colony. Buildings are still being erected. Construction is everywhere. Ships arrive, disgorging new colonists. Uniformed MILITIA OFFICERS are visible, serving as a general-purpose police/security force.

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

There's nothing here. Just empty water.

ELSEWHERE, we see Kristof and Grace again, setting up their yacht-like HYDROSKIMMER. This is no pleasure craft, but a small floating laboratory.

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

Mom and dad are thrilled, of course. It's a chance to do "real science," they say. Right, like there's anything to learn from more water.

From a distance, we see Anselm watching them. He's wearing a light shirt, carrying a school bag, and looking miserable.

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

They had to drag me along too. I had friends on Kalabash. There was stuff to do.

Anselm turns to look over the lagoon.

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

This planet is barely even habitable. There's only one town, no holotheatres, no vidnet, no malls.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE - DAY

Like the rest of the colony, the single classroom is a mix of cheap and high-tech --the kind of technology that can travel the stars, but mass-produced and simple. At the front of the class is the flag of the VANEL EMPIRE.

Children of every age are represented here; from grade one to high school. The entire colony has barely enough children to fill a classroom. Anselm is one of the oldest students here, and is clearly bored out of his wits.

CLOSER, and we see that he's palming a small card-like computer pad. The display flashes "UNABLE TO CONNECT."

ANSELM (V.O.)

There's not even a datanet here.

MISS FERNIS (O.S.)
Anselm Carrol. . .

ANSELM (V.O.)
I might as well just be luggage that gets
dragged along--

MISS FERNIS (O.S.)
(louder)
Anselm Carrol.

Anselm reacts and looks front. MISS FERNIS is young and plain-looking.

MISS FERNIS (CONT'D)
Thank you. Eyes front, please. Now then,
who can tell me the meaning of
"Auramera?"
(beat)
Naia?

Elsewhere, NAIA (15) stands, looking bored. Her school uniform is rumpled, and her hair is shaggy and uncombed. A seashell earring hangs from one ear.

NAIA
"Auramera," from an ancient Earthican language. It means "the Glowing Sea." The name was given to this planet by the Scout Guild, based on the high reflectivity of the planet's surface.

Naia sits without waiting for confirmation, and continues staring into space.

MISS FERNIS
Correct, thank you, Naia.

Miss Fernis touches a control, and the blackboard becomes a SCREEN, showing us the globe of Auramera; a blue, jewel-like world.

MISS FERNIS (CONT'D)
Auramera is unusual in this part of the galaxy because of its high concentration of surface water; over 99% of the planet is covered, with the only appreciable landmasses being the Tanhauser Archipelago, the New Darwin Islands, and Coralis Atoll. Of these three, only Coralis sits on the planet's equator, which is why it was chosen to be the basis of the colony.
(MORE)

MISS FERNIS (CONT'D)

(beat)

There may not be much here at the moment, but eventually, Coralis colony is expected to become a haven of industry, trade, and science, as scientists from across the Empire gather to study and exploit Auramera's unique environment and wildlife.

Anselm rolls his eyes and slouches lower, staring out the window.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

This is a small pedestrian bridge that connects two parts of the atoll, with a waist-high railing on one side, and various small shops and kiosks on the other.

Anselm is dragging himself home. The sun is low in the sky, and he wipes away sweat with one sleeve. As he squints into the light, he reacts to something.

Naia is standing further ahead on the bridge, staring over the sea. She's standing on the railing, actually, wearing her normal clothes (her crumpled-up uniform is poking out of her bookbag, which sits on the walkway); tattered shorts, a midriff-bearing tank-top, and bare feet.

As Anselm watches, Naia lets herself fall face-first off the bridge.

ANSELM

What the--? Hey! Wait!

He runs forward.

Below the bridge, Naia floats face-down, unmoving.

Anselm looks around for help, but the boardwalk is empty. Anselm scrambles down through the railing, climbing down to the edge of the water.

ANSELM (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey, are you okay?

EXT. SHORE - CONTINUOUS

He pauses as his feet hit the edge of the water. Naia still isn't moving. Anselm shuffles for a bit, then screws up his courage and wades out, still wearing his shoes. The ground drops off quickly, and Anselm raises his arms, clearly uncomfortable with the water.

ANSELM

C'mon, wake up!

Underwater, Naia's eyes are open, but blank. Suddenly, her gaze sharpens and shifts to the side.

Anselm is now neck deep, and having trouble as the water drags at him. His head starts to sink, and he paddles ineffectually, not managing to do more than splash.

Naia as scowls, then jack-knifes in the water, twisting like a fish as she darts toward Anselm. She grabs a fistful of his clothing as she passes.

Once they're back on land (below the bridge), she drops him. Anselm gasps, and gapes up at her, silhouetted against the sun. Quiet, trance-like Naia is gone; she's angry and animated.

NAIA

What the hell did you think you were doing?

ANSELM

(gasping)

I was. . . Trying to. . . Help.

NAIA

You're not gonna be much help to anyone in the water if you can't even swim.

ANSELM

You were. . . Drowning.

NAIA

I wasn't drowning, idiot. I was training.

She looks out into the water again.

NAIA (CONT'D)

Not even six minutes.

ANSELM

Huh?

NAIA

I wasn't even out there six minutes. I can hold my breath for eight. The record for an adult human is just a shade over eleven. I need to be able to at least hit ten.

ANSELM

Wh-- why?

Naia gives him a glare, then turns away.

NAIA

Get dried off. You obviously don't belong in the water.

She walks to the bridge pylons, and begins effortlessly climbing up.

EXT. BOARDWALK/SIDEWALKS - DAY

Naia and Anselm walk home. Anselm is still sopping, making squishy sounds with each step.

ANSELM

How are you dried off already?

NAIA

Sunlight. You're overdressed. That's why to almost drowned; your clothes weigh you down, and you can't feel the water on your skin. You should wear as little as possible in the water.

Anselm glances at what she's wearing and reddens slightly. She doesn't notice or care.

NAIA (CONT'D)

You also don't know how to move. You were exhausting yourself splashing around like that.

ANSELM

Okay, I get it, I can't swim, okay? I just don't like water.

NAIA

Then what the hell are you doing on Auramera?

ANSELM

Ask my parents.

Naia gets quiet.

ANSELM (CONT'D)

What are you doing here, anyway? What were you training for?

Beat.

NAIA

The Ocean. It's alive. Maybe even Aware. The Ocean only gives up its secrets to someone who can earn its respect. If not, it can be deadly. I intend to know everything about it. I need to know.

ANSELM

What's there to know? If it's so deadly, why not just stay the hell away from it?

Naia scowls even harder.

By now they're near Anselm's house.

NAIA

Because some people--

KRISTOF

(off, interrupting)
Hey, Anselm!

GRACE

(off)
Where have you been?

ANSELM

Man, it's my parents. I better go. I'll see you tomorrow.

He walks off. Naia stops where she is, affected by something.

GRACE

(off)
Oh my gosh, what happened?

ANSELM

(off)
I fell in the water.

KRISTOF

(off)
Are you okay? Let's get you dried off.

Naia turns and walks away.

FADE TO:

EXT. SPACE - AURAMERA ORBIT - UNDEFINED

The edge of night moves across the planet below.

From space, a meteor approaches, falling toward the planet. Utterly nondescript, too small to worry about, it draws closer, closer.

EXT. AURAMERA - NIGHT

Elsewhere on the Ocean, the meteor streaks across the sky, carving a trail of fire as it falls to the water.

Something watches. Below the surface, below the clear water, below the pelagic, below the abyss, below the deep zone. Among the sulphuric vents and black smokers, the deepest floors of the ocean SLITHER in the darkness. Something here breathes. Something here awakens. Something here SCREAMS.

INT. NAIA'S HUT - NIGHT

Unlike the Carrols' house, this ramshackle hut is clearly a home.

Naia awakens with a panicked shriek, flinching away from the Dark Things in her dream. Panting, she draws her knees up and hugs them, whimpering.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. MILITARY PIER - DAY

Anselm walks to school again. As he walks, he passes the public piers, where his parents' boat is moored. Nearby, a group of MILITIA perform drills on a PATROL HYDROSKIMMER --basically a large police boat.

The drills are being overseen by CAPTAIN STEINER (20s), a crew-cut soldier-type.

STEINER
 (loud)
 Clear and heave-to!

Officers scramble to obey.

STEINER (CONT'D)
 Faster! Terriman: coil those lines
 properly.

The officers complete the task, and the skimmer floats
 free. Steiner checks a wristwatch.

STEINER (CONT'D)
 Four minutes, forty-seven seconds. That
 is not acceptable. Terriman, Hawkins,
 Crouse: re-secure that skimmer and try
 again.

OFFICERS
 Yes, sir.

As they work, an expensive-looking car drives up and
 GOVERNOR ELLISON (40s) climbs out. Ellison is a lean,
 hatchet-faced man. He's carrying a clipboard-sized data
 reader.

ELLISON
 Captain Steiner!

STEINER
 Sir?

ELLISON
 Captain, I want you to get your men out
 to these coordinates.

He shows Steiner the data reader. Steiner produces his
 own reader (smaller, more rugged and utilitarian) and
 copies the data.

ELLISON (CONT'D)
 Something came down last night.

STEINER
 (nonplussed)
 Last night?

ELLISON
 We caught it on satellite. Orbit control
 thinks it's a meteorite, but you know--

STEINER
 (interrupting)
 Security protocols. Check everything,
 understood, sir.

Steiner turns to his men.

STEINER (CONT'D)
 Hawkins, Garrison, Claymore; gear up. We
 have potential non-authorized planetfall.
 Standard threat coding, scout load-out.
 Terriman; I want you on remote telemetry.
 Crouse; clear all lines.

As the officers scramble to obey, Steiner turns back to
 Ellison.

STEINER (CONT'D)
 Sir, did satellite scans detect anything
 unusual about the intruder?

ELLISON
 No, no, nothing like that. Look, I know
 what Imperial Combat Regular Standard-
 whatever says, but between you and me, we
 cannot afford this now. The last thing we
 need is the real military stomping in
 here and killing our profit margin. You
 just get out there and confirm that this
 thing last night was a spacerock or
 something. Nothing that needs to go
 beyond us. Clear?

Steiner does a good job of capping his annoyance.

STEINER
 Yes, sir.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

After school. Anselm emerges and looks around, eventually
 spotting Naia.

ANSELM
 Hey! Naia!

She turns, and Anselm jogs a bit to keep up.

NAIA
 What?

ANSELM

I just wanted to know if you wanted to hang out today. My dad's out on some research thing, and mom's at the hospital.

(off her look)

No, nothing like that. She's a doctor.

NAIA

I don't hang out.

ANSELM

Okay. So, you going "training" or back to your parents?

Naia stops.

NAIA

I don't have any.

Anselm looks like he just swallowed his tongue.

ANSELM

Oh, geez. I'm sorry. I didn't--

NAIA

Save it.

(softer)

There's no way you could have.

She starts walking again, in a different direction.

NAIA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I have things to do.

She walks off a ways, then turns back.

NAIA (CONT'D)

(sighing)

Do you want me to teach you how to swim?

Anselm shrugs.

ANSELM

Not really. I don't like water much, anyway.

NAIA

If you're going to live here, you should get used to it.

ANSELM

Don't like living here much either. This place is dead; there's nothing to do.

Naia glares.

NAIA

It's not dead. This world is more alive than most. Look.

She leads him onto the piers as they pass.

EXT. PIER - CONTINUOUS

As they walk, she removes her bookbag and hands it to him.

NAIA

Here.

She then starts pulling off her uniform, revealing her usual swim clothes underneath. Anselm reddens.

ANSELM

Wha- People are staring.

She hands him her shirt and skirt, then slips her shoes off and dives off the pier without pausing.

Anselm looks nonplussed for a beat.

Naia surfaces, carrying small shellfish-like things. She shows them to Anselm.

NAIA

These are stonecrawlers. Their shells look like beach pebbles until you turn them over.

(a bubbly purple mass)

And this is froth algae. It floats on the surface and attaches to solid objects. Normally there isn't much around, but now that we've arrived and started building, you can find it all over the atoll.

She drops the algae, which seems to direct itself back to the pier, where it attaches to the pylon.

NAIA (CONT'D)

Humans have only been on this planet for five years, and we've already changed the local ecosystem.

(MORE)

NAIA (CONT'D)

Because there's so much froth algae, the fish that eat it are multiplying out of stasis, and the fish that eat them are getting bigger and forcing out other predators. Their range is expanding, which forces other life forms to move around to make room.

ANSELM

How do you know so much about this place?

NAIA

Because unlike you, this world is my home. My. . . My parents and I were in the first wave of settlers.

EXT. BOARDWALK PATIO - DAY

Naia has dried off, and the two are sitting at a patio table.

NAIA

I was seven when we arrived. I'd grown up on Heisenberg Drift; I'd never seen this much water in my life. Mom was the one who taught me how to swim.

A battered robotic server rolls up and places a tray of greasy-looking french fries in front of Anselm. Naia looks nauseated. The robot gives her a plate of bite-sized fish nuggets.

ANSELM

You're eating fish?

NAIA

You're eating something that had to be frozen and shipped twenty light years.

ANSELM

Well, yeah, but I figured you'd be a vegetarian.

NAIA

It's natural. Fish eat other fish. Everything that lives in the Ocean is connected.

ANSELM

Yeah, but you're a human.

Naia looks at her hands, seeing a glimpse of the slithering blackness from her nightmare.

NAIA
Yeah. I'm human.

Anselm looks past her, back to the pier.

ANSELM
Hey, that's dad's skimmer.

EXT. PIER - DAY

Anselm and Naia come running up as Kristof's skimmer approaches. Governor Ellison and another militia OFFICER are standing by.

Kristof's skimmer pulls up to the dock.

ELLISON
Attention! Dr. Carrol?

KRISTOF
What's all this about?

ELLISON
Are you Dr. Kristof Carrol?

KRISTOF
Yes, I am. What's going on?

ELLISON
Sir, I'm going to commandeer this vehicle. We have a security emergency. If you'll--

KRISTOF
(interrupting)
Now, hold on a minute here, you can't just--

ELLISON
(interrupting)
Sir, I can and I will, under Imperial colonial law, section 14-dash-b, I am commandeering this vehicle for--

KRISTOF
(interrupting)
Like hell! I came to this planet to get away from this kind of--

ELLISON
(interrupting)

Sir, we have an unidentified vessel that has entered this planet's atmosphere, and we have a civil defense skimmer that has lost contact, now I am going to take this skimmer of yours and resolve the situation, or. . .

As Ellison CONTINUES, Naia grabs Anselm's arm tightly enough that he flinches.

NAIA
Anselm, I've gotta get out there.

ANSELM
What? Why?

NAIA
I. . . I can't explain, but that ship he mentioned, I know about it. I need to see it.

She starts to drift toward the edge of the pier.

ANSELM
Wait, where are you going?

NAIA
I'll drop underwater and hitch a ride under the hull.

ANSELM
What? That's insane, it's--

NAIA
It's either that or stow away.

Elsewhere, Ellison and Kristof are reaching an accord.

KRISTOF
It's my skimmer, I'm driving it.

ELLISON
That's acceptable, but understand that this is a military situation, and that as the Imperial-appointed governor, I will be in charge.

KRISTOF
Yes, sir.

ELLISON
Excellent, we should leave ASAP.

KRISTOF
I just got in, so I need to swap out fuel cells.

ELLISON
Well, let's get it done, then.
(to pier worker)
You there, get another fuel cell.
(to officer)
Major Fossey, gather the rest of your team.

Elsewhere, Anselm waves to get his dad's attention.

ANSELM
(calling across pier)
Dad!

KRISTOF
(calling)
Anselm! Go tell your mom what's happening, and wait there.

Naia grabs Anselm's arm.

NAIA
Come on, we have to go now.

ANSELM
But--

NAIA
Now!

While Kristof and Ellison are distracted with the fuel cell change, Nia races up the gangplank, Anselm following.

EXT. OCEAN - SKIMMER - DAY

The science skimmer is similar to a small yacht, modified to serve as a fully-functional laboratory. It has plenty of room for Kristof, Ellison, three OFFICERS, and a deck cluttered with equipment, where Anselm and Naia are hiding under a tarp.

Kristof is manning the conn as Ellison approaches.

ELLISON

Doctor Carrol.

(beat)

I wanted to apologize. I understand the imposition I'm making, but understand that I do have a responsibility to protect my men.

KRISTOF

And thus the colony. Yeah, I know that excuse.

ELLISON

Then you understand that--

KRISTOF

(interrupting)

I understand that the Empire believes it has a mandate to protect us from ourselves. I just don't believe that the Empire's kind of "security" is all that effective.

(beat)

I'm a scientist. Freedom to explore and to question are very important to me. That's the whole reason I brought my family out here.

From his hiding place, Anselm hears this. Naia elbows him.

NAIA

(whispered)

Move, I can't see.

He shifts slightly, as she does.

Naia is watching a table, where the officers are cleaning and checking their equipment; a wicked-looking array of guns, knives, and armour. They're clearly expecting a fight.

ELLISON

(off)

I respect that, Doctor, but we're dealing with what is clearly a military situation. We have a potentially hostile presence--

Naia cranes her neck, studying the officers.

KRISTOF

(off, interrupting)

Potentially hostile? You see? You haven't even seen anything yet, and you assume it's a threat.

ELLISON

(off)

We are on the edge of Imperial-controlled space. We need to assume that we are under threat until we can confirm otherwise.

She shifts to get a better look, and brushes Anselm. He tries to give her room, but knocks over an air tank beside their hiding place.

KRISTOF

(off)

Guilty until proven harmless? That's no way to--

Anselm tries to grab the air tank, but pulls the tarp, which causes Naia to lose her balance.

She falls into the open, and looks up --to find an officer pointing a gun at her face.

ELLISON

Stand down! Stand down!

KRISTOF

Anselm!

Ellison rushes over. Kristof punches the auto guidance and does the same.

KRISTOF (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?!

Anselm looks scared, but Naia rallies.

NAIA

I need to see it. The ship you're looking for. I had a dream about it last night. It's--

ELLISON

(interrupting)

A dream? Young lady, you are trespassing in an official operation.

KRISTOF
I'm missing something.

ELLISON
(to Kristof)
Doctor, this is Naia Hartwell. Her parents died several years ago under mysterious circumstances and she became a ward of the colony. I'm afraid she's become somewhat troublesome.

Kristof glares at his son.

KRISTOF
Yeah, I can tell. I oughta turn this boat around and drop you both off.

ELLISON
I'm sorry, Doctor, but that's not acceptable. We've already wasted too much time. I'm afraid I'm going to have to remand these two into your custody. I trust you can keep them out of trouble while my men and I do our work?

KRISTOF
Yeah. Yeah, I'll look after them.

ELLISON
(pointed)
Good. I'm glad to know you're willing to keep them safe.

He turns away as Kristof fumes.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. DERELICT - DAY

The skimmer approaches the alien DERELICT; the ship (for that's clearly what it is) is huge and ominous; a misshapen mass of coral-like growth and organic lines. The abandoned PATROL HYDROSKIMMER looks tiny as it floats nearby, tethered near a pore-like airlock.

Anselm and Naia are standing with Kristof; all three react in awe. Ellison looks repulsed, and his men ready weapons.

ELLISON
 Doctor Carrol, moor us next to the
 skimmer.

KRISTOF
 Right, right.

ELLISON
 (to his men)
 Secure the skimmer, then make entry.

The troops check their weapons. As they go about their
 business, Ellison turns to Kristof.

ELLISON (CONT'D)
 Doctor, remain on station until we
 return.

KRISTOF
 You're going in too?

ELLISON
 Captain Steiner is my subordinate, it's
 my responsibility.

NAIA
 What about us?

ELLISON
 You are going to remain on this skimmer
 until we return to dock. I'll decide what
 to do with you after that.
 (to Kristof)
 If we don't return in an hour, return to
 the colony and have my office contact the
 Imperial Navy.

KRISTOF
 Understood.
 (Ellison turns to leave)
 Mr. Ellison. . .
 (off his reaction)
 Good luck.

ELLISON
 Thank you, Dr. Carrol.

Ellison and his troops enter the derelict.

Naia starts to move, but Kristof clamps a hand on her
 shoulder. She looks to Anselm for help, but he just
 sulks.

Naia turns away, and reacts as she spots SOMETHING moving under the water. Something human-shaped, watching them.

INT. DERELICT - DAY

The troops move through the alien wreck. The inside is as twisted and organic as the outside; it's hard to tell what's damage and what's just alien. Puddles of dark, oily liquid dot the floor.

The troops fan out with practiced military precision. Ellison has an earpiece commlink.

ELLISON

Captain Steiner, respond.

(beat)

Captain Steiner, do you read.

(beat, disgusted)

Comms aren't working. Must be some sort of jamming.

(yelling)

Captain Steiner! Can you hear me?

As the troops move further, one of the dark puddles along the corridor ripples suddenly, though there's nothing nearby.

EXT. DERELICT - SKIMMER - DAY

Anselm sits to one side, looking out at the water, looking slightly ill.

KRISTOF

Seasick?

He settles down next to his son.

KRISTOF (CONT'D)

Took me a while to get my sea legs too. It helps to focus on the horizon; don't look at the waves themselves.

Anselm raises his eyes, trying to find a point on the horizon.

Elsewhere, Naia is ignoring them, staring fixedly into the water, searching. She takes a glance around, then, seeing that Kristof is distracted, suddenly leaps overboard.

Kristof turns at the splash.

KRISTOF (CONT'D)

Hey!

EXT. DERELICT - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Naia splashes into the blue void, head swivelling.

In the distance, she spots a blurry human-like form, hiding among the twisted protuberances from the alien ship. She swims after it.

INT. DERELICT - DAY

Ellison and his troops continue to search.

As they move, the dark puddles around them continue to ripple and move, unnoticed. Unconnected pools seem to move in unison, as though intelligent.

As the squad passes, one puddle extrudes a bulbous pseudopod, drawing mass it shouldn't have.

One of the soldiers spots it.

SOLDIER 1

Sir!

Everyone reacts and turns.

The pseudopod extrudes a spear-tipped tentacle which streaks toward the nearest trooper. He dodges, and the tentacle TURNS toward Ellison. Major FOSSEY pushes the governor aside and steps into the way.

SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)

It's attacking!

The tentacle stabs Fossey's shoulder, and he YELLS.

FOSSEY

Look out --AAGH!

SOLDIER 1

Defensive positions! Open fire!

The soldiers start blasting. As the shots hit the tentacle, the whole length pops like a soap bubble.

As one soldier backpedals, another puddle extrudes a tentacle, which wraps around his leg and flings him off balance. As he SCREAMS, the soldiers turn and continue firing.

EXT. DERELICT - UNDERWATER - DAY

Naia approaches the underside of the derelict, passing out of the sunlight.

Among the tangle of spines and projections, she finds the SAMARRA. Massive and alien, they look like humanoid sharks. As she watches, they're ripping great chunks of coral out of the ship and carrying them away into the depths.

As Naia observes, a shape looms behind her, she turns and finds a Samarra racing toward her, jaws open. We'll call this particular specimen TIBURON.

INT. DERELICT - DAY

Ellison and his remaining troops are now running through the derelict. Fossey is holding his wounded shoulder. Ahead of Fossey and Ellison is another soldier, who rounds a corner--

And is brought up short by a massive clawed hand around his throat. Ellison and Fossey pull up short as a Samarra steps into view, its skin stained with tendrils of oil-like slime. It turns a pair of glassy, dead eyes to them and ROARS.

Fossey struggles to aim one-handed, but gunfire rips into the Samarra from another direction. Fossey and Ellison turn as Steiner appears from another corridor. He's battered and wounded, and his clothes are torn.

ELLISON

Captain!

The Samarra staggers and collapses, dropping the other soldier.

ELLISON (CONT'D)

Captain, are you alright? We've come to rescue you.

Steiner sags.

STEINER

Sir. You shouldn't be here. We need to. .
. To get out.

ELLISON

I agree, Captain, but we're cut off from
our entrance, and--

STEINER

(interrupting)

I know. . Another way around.

Ellison takes Steiner's arm and helps him move.

The remaining soldiers stagger after them, still shooting
at shadows.

Fossey staggers a bit, and we see that his vision is
starting to blur. On his arm, black tendrils are creeping
from the wound.

EXT. DERELICT - UNDERWATER - DAY

Naia tries to dodge Tiburon's charge, but he reaches out
and grabs her arm, wrenching her around.

NAIA

(grunts)

Tiburon's other hand PUNCHES her hard across the face,
and her mouth opens --bubbles flow forth. He curls up and
shoves both feet into her stomach, pushing them apart.
Naia spits a cloud of bubbles and clutches her throat,
beginning to drown.

Tiburon swoops around for another pass, jaws open.

By now, Naia is going limp, and Tiburon snags her arm in
his jaws, dragging her along. He suddenly seems to
realize that she's not struggling, and looks confused.

EXT. DERELICT - SKIMMER - DAY

Anselm is leaning over the railing, looking at the water.

ANSELM

(yelling)

Naia! Naia!

Kristof is manning one of the computers.

KRISTOF

I can't get a good reading; there's too much. . . Whatever down there. It's like a school of fish or something.

(beat, considering)

Anselm, hand me that dive tank, I'm going after her.

ANSELM

But--

He's interrupted by the sound of GUNFIRE from inside the derelict. Ellison and Steiner come staggering out, followed by Fossey and another soldier.

ELLISON

Doctor Carrol! Get us out of here!

KRISTOF

But Naia is--

ELLISON

(interrupting)

That is an order, Doctor!

Fossey begins convulsing.

FOSSEY

(groaning)

Gnggg. . . Wraaaa.

Ellison sets Steiner down as Kristof grabs a first aid kit for Fossey. There's a faint SPLASH, and Anselm looks around.

KRISTOF

Good Lord. What happened? Where are--

ELLISON

(interrupting)

That derelict is sinking, We need to get away from it.

Anselm spots Naia, floating facedown. This time she's not okay; there's a red slick around her arm.

KRISTOF

(off)

But your men--

ANSELM

Dad! Dad, it's Naia!

Anselm and his father reach over the rail to pull Naia aboard. Steiner (still woozy) spots a dark shape in the water, and raises his sidearm, spraying the spot with gunfire.

Anselm and Kristof pull Naia aboard.

ANSELM (CONT'D)
She's not breathing! Dad!

KRISTOF
I know.

He wrestles her into position and gives her the Heimlich Manoeuvre. She spits up a mouthful of water, and he then lays her out and applies CPR: two rescue breaths, then he begins pumping her chest.

KRISTOF (CONT'D)
(as he pumps)
One, two, three, four, five. . .

Before he gets to ten, Naia coughs wetly, and spits up another mouthful of water. He helps her sit up, then listens to her chest as she tries to settle her breathing.

KRISTOF (CONT'D)
Don't try to talk. Just breathe.

ELLISON
(off)
Doctor Carrol! We need to leave now!

KRISTOF
She needs a hospital.

He scrambles to the helm.

ELLISON
I'll pay for it myself if it'll get us
out of here faster.

The other soldier is tending to Fossey; his convulsions have stopped, but he's whimpering as he lies unconscious.

As the skimmer departs, the derelict slips beneath the waves.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Naia is sitting in a bed, staring out a window at the water. She has a bandage around one arm, and she's rubbing it absently.

The door slides open and Anselm pokes his head in.

ANSELM

Naia?

NAIA

Hey.

Anselm enters, carrying a datareader.

ANSELM

I, uh, I got your stuff from school.

NAIA

Thanks.

She reaches for it, then flinches, and uses her good arm.

ANSELM

Hey, careful.

(beat)

Is--

NAIA

(interrupting)

My arm will be fine. They've already fixed the muscle and nerve damage, and the bone wasn't cracked anyway.

She turns back to the window.

ANSELM

So, what attacked you?

NAIA

I didn't get a good look. It definitely wasn't human, but it wasn't like any other fish on this planet either.

ANSELM

So, they're right, then. We're being invaded.

NAIA

I don't think so. The one that attacked me, I don't think it was out for blood.

(MORE)

NAIA (CONT'D)

It seemed. . . Scared, I think. There's something else going on.

INT. SECURE LAB HALLWAY - DAY

Ellison is standing near a large window, looking into the secured room. FOOTSTEPS sound, and he turns to see Steiner approaching.

The door to the secured room opens, and two scientists step out in sealed HAZMAT SUITS. One walks away, but the other removes her hood --this is DR. LEE.

ELLISON

Well, what's his status?

LEE

We still haven't been able to analyze the substance in his bloodstream. It's not organic, but it's not like any synthetic toxin I'm familiar with either.

STEINER

Some sort of alien bioweapon?

LEE

Possible. It seems highly infectious. I can't tell what it's doing to him, but his survival is unlikely.

Steiner turns to Ellison.

STEINER

Sir, I recommend we contact the Empire--

ELLISON

(interrupting)

I'll take that under advisement, Captain.

STEINER

Sir, we--

ELLISON

(interrupting, sharp)

Thank you, Captain. I don't need to remind you what will happen if the Empire takes an active interest in Auramera. It's only one ship so far. We don't need the Empire to step in quite yet.

STEINER

And if others arrive, sir?

ELLISON

If more ships arrive, we'll deal with them when they come. This is our planet now, it belongs to us and us alone.

INT. SECURE LAB - CONTINUOUS

Inside, strapped to a bed, the thing that was once Fossey strains and arches its back. It opens its mouth, revealing a mass of pointed teeth, and ROARS.

FADE OUT