

BLACK ABYSS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP OCEAN / UNDERWATER - DAY

The ocean's black abyss comes alive as light slowly illuminates the plankton. A growing BUBBLING SOUND. A RUMBLE. A one-man deep-sea submersible plummets past. It's light fades leaving the plankton in pitch black.

INT. ONE-MAN DEEP-SEA SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

It's cramped. A hand frantically flicks switches and pushes buttons. TOM, early 30s, panics as sweat dribbles down his face. He grabs a radio handset and pushes the button to talk.

TOM

Mayday, Mayday, can anyone hear me?
Major malfunction! Multiple systems
down. Thrusters gone. Depth at -

He notices the depth gauge plummeting past 10,114 feet and taps it as METAL GROANS. Shock grips him.

TOM

Oh God...

He hits a button labelled "EMERGENCY BALLAST". Nothing. Confusion. He starts slamming the button violently as a jet of water bursts through above the button panel like a fire hose and smashes him against the wall.

He recovers and reaches down to an emergency handle near his wet shoes. He pulls. Another burst of spray comes in. Water quickly rises around the handle. He pulls harder as he roars.

Water laps his waist. He ducks under and pulls at the handle. He rises and water splashes under his chin. Terror grows before it morphs into sobbing. He takes his last breath.

Water covers his nose and fills the submersible. His face contorts in fear as his chest convulses. Bubbles escape his mouth as he fights to hold his breath. More bubbles.

Then the bubbles stop. He twitches with pure fear as his body gulps for air, breathing in the water. Shock punishes him as his eyes cross and his twitching slows.

THUMP! The submersible hits something hard and his body jerks. The rumble stops as pure silence takes hold.

EXT. OCEAN / UNDERWATER - DAY

In the dim light of the depths, two hundred meters down. Fluid goggles cover a woman's eyes. She has a nose clamp -

TESS, 26, a tour guide submersible pilot who would die to protect her passengers. Always in the mood for excitement. She's at her best when she's on the verge of death.

A pipe extends from her mouth to a 1.25 litre Coke bottle which has holes cut into the bottom. Her head shakes from side to side inside a buoyancy dome that covers her head as her short hair sways in the water which rushes up past her.

She wears a skin-tight wet suit, revealing her compressed ribs and stomach. A harness holds her firm in a steel rig.

She pulls a break lever and the rig stops sliding down a tight cable which stretches down from the surface.

She pauses in the silence of the depths.

Her foot pushes a latch open, which holds a big lead weight onto the base of the rig, but the weight doesn't move. She panics as she kicks at the trigger. Her face twitches.

She unstraps and pulls herself down. Her foot touches the weight, before she lifts her foot and kicks it.

CLUNK! The weight breaks free. The rig powers up, wrenching hard on her arm. She strains to pull herself into the rig. She straps herself in.

Relief, as she hurtles up at nearly eight knots. Things shake. She adjusts herself and prepares.

The light gets brighter. The rig races up. The fractal light of the surface dances on her body.

Near the surface, she pulls the break and stops. She goes to unclip the strap. It's stuck. She pulls harder. With an angry grit of the teeth, she strains. The clip breaks free. She dislodges from the rig. DIVERS swim around her.

She holds her fingers to gesture "OKAY." She slowly pulls herself up the cable.

She convulses, trying to breathe, fading. Her fingertips break the surface to touch the sky. Her hands grip the cable.

She pulls herself through the surface.

EXT. OCEAN / SURFACE - DAY

Tess pauses. A slow breath in that seems to last forever.

She has trouble breathing but hides it. Tess coughs and covers her mouth. She pulls her hand away to reveal a small amount of blood on her fingers. She washes it off.

In a rigid inflatable boat -

JOE, 50s, Tess' father and boss, an operations manager for a submersible support vessel, leans on the side of the boat and peers at her with a sorrowful gaze.

TESS
What's wrong?

INT. SUPPORT VESSEL / SLEEPING QUARTERS - DAY

Tess, dressed in sport shorts and a tank top, relaxes on the bed. She opens her eyes to see her daughter, SALLY, 8, sitting at a bench playing a game on an iPad.

Tess winces at the sounds.

TESS
Sally, enough of that okay?

Sally ignores her.

Tess gets up, goes over and pulls the iPad off her.

SALLY
Hey Mummy, I was playin' -

TESS
Obviously. What, you think I
couldn't see -

SALLY
You never let me -

Tess' eyes plead to her.

TESS
Please...

Sally backs down and nods. Tess turns the iPad off and puts it down before she leans down to one arm hug Sally who reluctantly hugs her back.

The steel door clunks open and Joe comes in.

He notices them hugging and hesitates, realising he interrupted. Tess rises and looks at him.

JOE
You okay Princess?

Tess forces a smile.

TESS
Hundred percent.

They share a gaze. He swallows.

JOE
It's time.

INT. SUPPORT VESSEL / BRIDGE - DAY

Tess leads Sally up the steps toward Joe. Sally glances around. Joe helps them up.

TESS
Where we at?

Tess' eyes adjust. She sees the HELMSMAN steering the ship.

Joe heads over to the navigation table.

JOE
We lost contact three hours ago. We were hoping it was just comms and he would just come back up. Telemetry showed everything was fine but then nothing. We dropped the tether to try to get a better signal but so far, we haven't been able to locate his exact position. The emergency beacon's last signal has him located around here.

He points at the navigation table at a contour map of the ocean floor.

JOE

The beacon suggests he landed on a shelf in the trench. He's near crush depth but we haven't picked up an implosion so that's good news.

Tess ventures over and looks with a sense of dread as Sally holds her hand tight.

TESS

Three hours?

Tess looks down at Sally before looking over at her backpack that's up against the wall.

JOE

Yeah hour down, hour there, hour back up.

TESS

So get down there, hook up the tether, move out of the way and you guys pull him up.

Tess goes over to her backpack and lifts it onto the navigation table.

JOE

Pretty straight forward.

Tess checks the contents of her backpack.

TESS

He might be freezing. Make sure you have warm clothes ready. If he's having pressure issues, you gotta be careful. Last thing I want is you bringing him up too fast and giving him the bends.

Tess pulls out a waterproof sandwich bag with snacks inside.

JOE

We'll follow your lead.

TESS

Any idea what happened?

She opens the bag and smells the contents.

JOE

No idea. Something electrical. But the magnetic ballast should've dropped and instantly brought him up. Manual release should have worked too. I can't explain it. Once Dave has more information, he should be able to make a better evaluation.

She takes a wrapped cookie and gives it to Sally.

TESS

So when are we launching?

Tess stuffs the snack bag back in her pack.

JOE

We're prepping now.

Sally unwraps the cookie and eats.

TESS

Still? What's taking so long?

Joe hesitates as Tess pulls out a water bottle.

JOE

It's been tested.

Tess takes a sip, swishes it around and tastes. She swallows.

TESS

What are you talking about?

He pauses as Sally throws the wrapper in the bin. Tess puts the bottle in her backpack.

TESS

Betsy should be -

JOE

We're not using Betsy.

TESS

What?

JOE

Betsy can't go that deep.

Tess deflates a little and shakes her head in disbelief.

TESS
I don't know the prototype.

JOE
You read the manual. You know your
job backwards. It's a Sunday drive.

TESS
You're kidding right?...

Sally sees her mum's gaze. Joe observes them both.

TESS
Who else have I got?

JOE
Now don't worry. I'm making sure
you've got the best help on this
one. Dave will -

TESS
No.

Tess' eyes dart as she pulls clothes from her backpack and
checks them.

JOE
You need him -

TESS
He's a perv. You've seen the way he
looks at me. Ever since I was a
kid. Every time you took me
swimming, he would look at me like
-

JOE
Yeah I know but he used to be like
an uncle to you before the looks.
He hasn't done anything... wrong.
And he did stop when I stepped in.
If I had any other choice, I swear
I'd pick them. The thing is I can't
find anyone who knows Betsy like
him and no one else knows the
prototype. I wish there was some
other way... If you have any
questions down there, you can just
ask him. And he can check Tom's
situation and advise.

Tess looks at Sally who stares out the window as she finishes her cookie.

TESS

He's not a diver. He has no idea what it's like down there.

JOE

You look after him and he'll be fine. Just tell him what to expect and he'll be ready for it. You can teach him what it's like down there. Explain it all so he'll be ready for anything.

Tess stuffs her clothes back into the pack as Sally licks the cookie crumbs off her fingers.

TESS

Fine. But he better not freak out down there.

JOE

Even if he does, you'll handle it. You and your saviour complex.

He smiles at Tess. She doesn't look impressed.

Joe sighs. He hands her a beacon tracker as Sally turns to see.

JOE

This'll start beeping when you get close to the beacon.

Tess grabs the beacon locator and slots it into her backpack before zipping it shut.

JOE (CONT'D)

You should be pretty much right on top of him when we launch. Once you get that tether set, we'll pull you both back up. Don't worry. We'll bring Tom home. You'll see.

She pulls her backpack over her shoulder. Sally tugs on Tess' arm for attention.

SALLY

Is Daddy gonna be okay?

Tess kneels to her level and looks her in the eye, hand on Sally's shoulder.

TESS
Daddy's fine, okay Honey? He's just
a little stuck. Mummy's gonna go
pick him up.

Tess smiles and Sally smiles back. Sally hugs Tess who looks up at Joe, concerned.

TESS
Mummy's gotta go to work now, so
you stay with Gramps and play on
your iPad.

SALLY
Okay. Love you Mummy.

TESS
Love you too Sweetheart.

They part from the embrace but Sally cups Tess' ear with love. Tess pauses, almost tearing up over her daughter holding her ear. Time almost freezes in the special moment.

Tess nods and Sally lets go as they smile. Sally sighs and turns to Joe who picks her up.

TESS
Back soon.

Tess heads through the side doorway and around toward the rear deck. Sally waves goodbye but Tess doesn't see.

Sally looks at Joe with a worried gaze. Joe shows a goofy smile to cheer Sally up.

EXT. SUPPORT VESSEL / REAR DECK - DAY

Tess rounds the corner. She sees the submersible lying flat on the deck. It looks like the top of two pointy missiles, which have been welded together. It's about ten meters long and about three meters in diameter in the middle.

Toward one end, there are three evenly spaced, man-sized porthole windows which can look down past the pointy nose of the submersible. The front porthole currently faces the sky.

Around the middle, there are six propeller thrusters. Near the front porthole but lower on the nose, a steel frame has hinges connecting to two robotic arms which are tucked away inside the nose cone, ready for their covers to be closed.

Over near the side railing of the ship's deck is -

DAVE, 40s, a geeky stoner with a nervous side. Super intelligent but a weirdo and a bit of a creep. His eyes squint in torment as he struggles to hold back tears.

He sucks on a joint, taking the last deep breath, holding it in before he throws the smouldering stinger overboard.

A crane moves into position, preparing to lift the submersible into the water. The crane clunks and whines down.

Dave notices and pulls himself together to show a cheerful gaze at the CRANE OPERATOR.

DAVE

'Sokay! I got it! Probably just a burnt relay!

He grabs his toolbox and races over to the crane's control box. He turns the main power switch off.

Tess walks over to the submersible and runs her hand over the body near the side porthole. She then watches Dave out of the corner of her eye.

He flicks the latch on the panel and opens it. Dave scans over the contents. He struggles to concentrate but manages to focus. He checks over relays with expertise. He grabs a screwdriver from his toolbox and pries at the wires as if it's second nature.

Tess moves down to check the submersible's thrusters.

Dave brutally rams the screwdriver under a relay and wrenches it onto the deck as if he's done it a thousand times before.

DAVE

I'll have it singing in a jiffy.

Tess moves down a little further past the manipulator frame to check the robot-like manipulator arm tucked away inside the nose cone.

Dave slams another relay into place. He flicks the circuit breaker back on and snaps the panel shut.

Tess shuts the panel for the manipulator arm to conceal it before she looks back at Dave who nervously notices her. He swallows before he sheepishly turns the power back on. He waves at the crane operator.

DAVE
Good as new!

Dave picks up the relay and throws it in his toolbox. He grabs a cloth and wipes his hands. He saunters over to Tess and shyly smiles.

DAVE
G'day Tess. I got her all sparkling
for you. Beautiful, eh?

Tess gives a friendly smile back.

TESS
Yeah... beautiful... Let's get
started.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE PERSONNEL SPHERE - DAY

The inside walls are made from a three-meter diameter solid steel sphere with the three man-sized portholes around the floor section for visibility.

It's currently sideways like the cockpit of a space shuttle before launch but instead of the seats side by side, one is up the front and the other is down the back. There's a front porthole that's near the leg area of the front seat, which is open to the sky. The other two side portholes sit either side of the back seat near the floor.

Panels, cables, switches and monitors line the middle of the curved walls and the roof to make it square shaped inside.

Tess climbs down through the front porthole, past the front seat. She stands on the cable-filled back wall.

The back seat comes out past her thighs. The front seat extends out past her chest. She looks up at the front porthole. Beside the porthole is the mounted marine radio that looks like a truck driver's CB radio.

She sees two full-faced rebreathers, two deflated life jackets, a first aid kit, toolbox, and a fire extinguisher near her feet. Tess grabs a small handheld waterproof radio from beside the front seat. She studies it, impressed.

An interior light flickers ominously. She clips the handheld waterproof radio back into place before she taps the flickering interior light. The light strikes solid. She suspiciously gazes at it.

Dave climbs down the other side of the seats and rests his feet on the back wall. He smiles over the front seat at Tess.

DAVE
Ready for some fun?

Tess glares back at the light.

She grabs the marine radio handset and presses the button.

TESS
Deck, this is Vostok. I got a
flickering interior light. Anything
I need to know?

She looks at Dave who turns and faces the front porthole.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Nothing my end. Is it something we
should be concerned about?

Tess watches Dave grab his bag from the support crew. He drops it beside the rear rebreather.

She presses the radio handset button.

TESS
Negative. Not essential. We can
live without it.

Dave reaches up to grab Tess' backpack.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Roger that. Let me know if there's
any trouble and gimme updates at
comms check.

Dave hands her the pack.

TESS
Wilco. Out.

She puts the handset back. She grabs her pack and smiles. As she unzips her pack and pulls out the beacon locator, Dave watches her.

DAVE

Gonna be an awesome day.

She nods as if to sarcastically say, "Yeah great."

He smiles as she slots the beacon locator into a rack near the marine radio.

The porthole seals them in.

MONTAGE:

- The submersible lifts off the deck, raised by the crane.
- Joe watches the submersible. It swings over the side.
- The submersible splashes gently into the water.
- Joe nods to the divers who get to work.
- The submersible turns vertical and bobs in the water. They lower it under the waves.
- Joe checks his watch, then looks at the sun's position.
- Underwater, the divers attach a cable to the manipulator frame. They move away. The sub jerks and accelerates into the deep. It fades away into the dark blue below.
- Joe's eyes dart in worry. He turns to lift Sally with a smile. They head toward the front deck.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE PERSONNEL SPHERE - DAY

Tess, moist hair, sits in the front seat. Sweat runs down her cheek. She checks the indicators.

One shows the depth pass: 593 feet.

She peers out the porthole. The blue tinge fades to black.

She checks the speed indicator which ticks over to: 2.7 knots.

Dave, behind her, admires her before torment sets in. He pulls his phone out and stares at it.

DAVE

So what are we in for?

TESS

Well checks are done. Fifteen minutes of relaxation before I tell Deck how much fun we're having.

Dave lights up his phone to check the time. The last reception bar vanishes.

Tess notices the extra light. She turns.

Dave hides the phone in his lap.

Tess looks at him. He squints, thinking.

DAVE

Nah I meant, what's it like?

TESS

What's the dive like?

He nods with a smile.

She sighs and turns back to face the front. She daydreams, staring out the porthole. The last bit of light vanishes.

TESS

Well... standard dive. You know... We splash down, pass the twilight zone and into the black abyss. I flick the floodlight switch and light up the plankton.

Tess reaches out and flicks the switch.

She peers through the porthole to see the little specs of light reflected off the plankton which zooms past.

TESS

Soon Deck jumps on the radio.
(acts out Joe on the radio)
"Vostok, this is Deck. Comms check."
(back to normal)
I pick up. "Deck, this is Vostok. Everything is peachy."

Dave pulls his phone back out. His hand covers the screen.

DAVE
Sounds pretty frickin' awesome.

Dave covertly checks the time again, while holding back his torment.

TESS
Yeah can be. In about an hour,
we'll get to the bottom, blow the
descent ballast, and let the sonar
guide us to the ocean floor. We'll
crank up the thrusters and might
even pass that black smoker. Crazy
marine life there. Like a tangled
web of albino snakes and crabs, all
fighting over a feed.

DAVE
Sick!... And... Tom?

Tess' smile fades.

TESS
Yeah... thrusters to the beacon.
(feigns a smile)
That's when I see Tom looking out
his porthole as if to say, "Boy am
I glad to see you".

Torment overwhelms Dave before he wipes his face and pulls himself together.

DAVE
And then you save him.

TESS
That's the plan. Grab the tether
with the manipulators, attach it to
his sub, and watch Dad pull him up
to the surface. Pretty boring
really.

DAVE
And if something goes wrong?

TESS
Well we can sort that out when the
time comes.

DAVE
What if you can't?

She pauses before she shrugs it off with a scoff.

TESS
Well we'll just drop the ascent
weights and hurtle back up. Fix the
problem and head back down to save
the day. Nothing to worry about,
okay?

Dave's blank stare scans over the switches.

DAVE
Sounds like a sick trip.

TESS
(scoffs)
Yeah... I suppose you can say that.

Dave checks the time. He puts the phone into his top pocket.

He glances at the control panel.

DAVE
You'll make it seem like a dream.

He reaches out his hand and flicks a switch as Tess squints
at his odd comment, about to turn back to look at him but
something catches Tess' eye.

She focuses on the voltage indicators for the two battery
packs.

The reserve reads: 120 volts. The main reads: 1.2 volts.

She taps the indicator.

Dave sees her tapping the glass.

TESS
Why is the voltage -

DAVE
'Sall good. I got it.

Dave reaches again to flick another switch.

Tess, worried, grabs the radio handset.

Dave points at the voltage indicators.

Both voltages read: 120 volts.

DAVE
See? No worries.

She glares at him, puzzled. He smiles.

INT. MAIN BATTERY PACK COMPARTMENT - DAY

It's small and tight with large thick cables connecting many large lithium-ion batteries. Some begin to expand.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE PERSONNEL SPHERE - DAY

Tess studies Dave with a suspicious gaze.

TESS
So what was that?

DAVE
Was what?

TESS
The switch.

DAVE
A switch. Obviously.

She looks at the control panel.

TESS
What's the switch for?

DAVE
Checking auxiliary for the
floodlight. Just the usual. Pretty
boring really. Everything's fine.

She puzzles over the comment. She looks at her flood light switch before she spins to face the porthole. It's pitch black with no plankton lit up at all. She moves her head around looking for light. Worry strikes.

TESS
Except that.

Tess finds the auxiliary switch and flicks it off and on.

DAVE
Except what?

She tries the main floodlight switch. Nothing changes.

She turns them both off. She lifts the radio handset and presses the button.

TESS
Deck, this is Vostok.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Go ahead Vostok.

Tess feels the switch to see if it's loose.

TESS
We just had a glitch with the voltage on main dropping to one point two before both packs stabilised at one twenty. End result is a floodlight malfunction. Any advice? Over.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Roger. What's Dave think?

She looks back at Dave who plays with a loop of cable.

TESS
Um... Dave's having a bit of trouble down here at the moment. You think this floodlight is anything to worry about?

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Roger. Wait one.

Tess taps the voltage indicators.

DAVE
It's easy fixed.

She scans over the controls.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Techs say it sounds like a short on
the floodlight caused the voltage
drop. Might just be the relay. So
to be clear, it's only a floodlight
issue. Confirm?

She pauses and checks things. She lifts the handset to talk.

TESS
Affirmative. It's just a floodlight
issue... I'm gonna see if I can
rectify the problem.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Roger Vostok. You should be fine
but do you still want us to prepare
for abort procedure?

Dave leans around the chair.

DAVE
It's just a light. If we can't fix
that then we shouldn't be down
here.

Tess focuses on the panel. She pushes the handset button.

TESS
Negative Deck. I'm sure I can sort
this one out. Worst case, I can
attach the tether using the
external emergency lights. Over.

JOE (V.O.)
(over radio)
Roger Vostok. Just remember, if
something doesn't wanna work
properly, bash it until it does.

Tess chuckles.

TESS
Wilco. Out.

She puts the handset away and looks back at Dave.

TESS
Toolbox.

Dave reaches down to the floor to unclip the toolbox. He gingerly holds it out to her, a bit insecure.

She reaches her fingertips to the toolbox.

DAVE
I'll help you -

Dave lets go before she can grab it properly. It falls. Tools scatter.

DAVE
Shit... I... I'm so sor-

TESS
Hey it's okay. We got this. You seem a bit on edge. Everything okay?

Dave swallows. He bends down to grab the tools.

The phone slides from his top pocket and hits hard, falling apart. The battery spills across the floor.

Shock grips Dave. He falls to his knees.

DAVE
(panicky)
It's fine, I got it.

Tess watches him grovel on the floor, trying to find the parts to his phone.

Sympathetic, she moves around to help him search.

TESS
Hey, no stresses okay? It's just a phone.

He finds the back plate and the body. He checks them. The battery and SIM card are gone. He scans more.

He finds the SIM card and keeps searching.

Tess finds the battery and grabs it.

Dave sees the battery in her hand as she stands up next to her seat to face him. They share a gaze.

TESS
Phone means a lot, right?

She offers the battery.

Dave grabs it, but she holds it tight, refusing to let go.

TESS
What's eating you?

Dave's eyes dart.

DAVE
Just not used to the thought of
being inside this thing down here.
Bit cramped you know? Shit loads of
water out there. Could probably
crush a tank. Just a bit... scary.

Her compassionate gaze turns stern.

TESS
And your phone helps with that?

Dave pauses.

DAVE
Photos. Happy memories you know?
I...

Dave's eyes plead. She relents her stern gaze and releases the battery.

Dave assembles his phone while he stands beside his seat.

Tess kneels to search for tools, putting them back in the toolbox.

TESS
Someone you care about?

Dave pauses, looking at the parts of his phone.

DAVE
Yeah a... little girl. Means a lot
to me.

TESS
I didn't know you had a daughter.

Tess finds a voltage tester.

Dave pauses with the parts of his phone in hand.

Tess drops other tools in the toolbox. She glances at Dave.

TESS
No other family?

He puts the phone back together, SIM card first.

DAVE
Nah... her mother passed a long
time ago. In a better place you
know?

Tess empathises as she scans for the last of the tools.

TESS
I'm sorry... I know how that feels.

Tess spots the pointy nose pliers. She grabs them.

Dave slots the battery in and clips the cover onto the phone.

DAVE
Hey gotta forget the past. Gotta
cherish these moments we have now.
Don't need my shit bringing you
down.

He smiles, calmer. He turns the phone to gaze at the blank screen.

Tess finds a small screwdriver. She grabs it and glances at the panel. She looks around on the floor but can't see the few odd tools laying around in the shadows. She sighs and stands, looking up at Dave.

TESS
Your daughter must have had a hard
time growing up without a mother.

Tess opens the panel as Dave watches her work.

DAVE
Well this little princess is okay
now. She's a little angel you know?

She nods and checks the circuit breakers. The auxiliary floodlight breaker and the main floodlight breaker, have both been tripped. The main floodlight relay is burnt out.

She pulls out the relay and prepares the tester. She glances at Dave who looks a little sad.

TESS
It'll be okay.

Dave's countenance doesn't change.

TESS
I'm sure she'll be fine. I know
it's not easy though. I remember
growing up on the boat with Dad
while Mum was in the city. Used to
get calls from her all the time.
Then one day the call didn't come.

She checks terminals with the tester, careful not to blow it
up. All the terminals are 0 volts.

TESS (CONT'D)
When we got home, the cops said
they found Mum in an alley. Seems
some drunk thought she was trying
to hurt him, so he punched her...
After that I used to stare at the
phone too.

She switches the tester to ohms and tests the terminals to
the door frame.

TESS (CONT'D)
It gets easier though. I soon
realised we can't let the past stop
us. We have to let go and move on.
Appreciate the awesome people we
still have. Because all that
matters is the here and now.

The main power terminals read 0 ohms. The floodlight terminal
shows the floodlight's resistance.

She looks through spare relays and finds one that matches.

DAVE
Totally agree. The here and now...
After this, I plan on being
together with her for a long time,
just hanging around, doing
absolutely nothing.

TESS
Sounds boring.

She puts the relay in, flicks the circuit breakers, and closes the panel. Dave watches her sit back down in her seat. He's hiding his torment.

DAVE

Yeah I s'pose. But that's exactly the way I want it. Us free of the shit of the world. Just... resting... In peace you know?

TESS

Just like Heaven huh?

She reaches for the main floodlight switch. His smile fades.

DAVE

Yeah... Just like Heaven.

INT. MAIN BATTERY PACK COMPARTMENT - DAY

Several batteries bulge, fizzling, about to burst.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE PERSONNEL SPHERE - DAY

Tess checks the depth indicator. It ticks past: 3,074 feet.

Dave steps a little closer watching her flick the switch.

Tess peers out the front porthole. A dim light shows.

INT. MAIN BATTERY PACK COMPARTMENT - DAY

The batteries fizzle profusely. A spark ignites. BOOM!

INT. SUBMERSIBLE PERSONNEL SPHERE - DAY

The submersible shudders. Screwdrivers slide from the shadows as the emergency lighting takes over with its red glow.

Dave steadies himself but steps on the handle of a flat-head screwdriver. He slips and falls backwards onto his side, on top of a Phillips head screwdriver. He lands hard, groaning in pain, facing his seat.

Tess holds on tight as she recovers from the blast. Her gaze darts around the instruments.

Major power failure. Monitors die. Systems fail. The only working lights are the red emergency lighting and a few L.E.D.s on the marine radio.

She hears the life support air circulation fan slow and stop.

TESS
Okay... Now we abort.

She goes straight to the floodlight switch and turns it off.

A slight sway, forward and backward. Dave's wide eyes narrow as he swallows his pain. He peers down to his wound as he touches the blood.

The screwdriver has punctured just under his ribs. He wipes his hand clean. He just freezes in shock, closing his eyes and not moving a muscle, as if trying to wish it all away.

Tess focuses on the depth indicator which ticks over even faster: 3,264 feet.

Speed ticks up to: 4.3 knots.

TESS
Dave we're speeding up!

She grabs the radio handset. She's pumped now.

TESS
(into the radio)
Deck, this is Vostok. We just had a major explosion. Read back.

She waits. Static noise.

She reaches for the emergency release panel.

TESS
(into the radio)
Deck, this is Vostok. Radio check, over.

More static. She tries the switch to release the emergency magnetic ascent weight.

TESS
(into the radio)
God damn it Dad, answer me!!!

Nothing on the radio or from the magnetic ascent weight switch. She angrily throws the handset. The sway grows.

She calms herself. Her shoulders drop.

Something out the porthole grabs her attention. She looks as the tether starts to tension tighter and tighter.

Worry strikes.

TESS

No, Dad we're too fast -

The cable tensions and the sub moans as the cable pulls tight. The sub slows until, BANG! The cable snaps the manipulator frame and the submersible shudders.

She stabilises herself as Dave shudders in fear for a split second, returning to his mostly perfectly still state.

Torment grips Tess. Freaking out, she rubs her forehead with no clue what to do. She starts to calm down as she thinks.

TESS

Okay... we're riding solo. Dave, we need to drop some weight!

She tries the emergency release switches for the thrusters and manipulator arms. Nothing but an ever-increasing sway.

TESS

No brakes, Dave! Time to get serious!

She tries the switch to blow the descent ballast. Nothing. She flicks a bunch of switches. Nothing. She scoffs.

TESS

Okay... that's serious. No power... But the magnets are still...

She turns to the manual and flicks through the pages. She finds the emergency release diagrams. She pops open the emergency release panel and scans.

She grabs the pliers and cuts a red wire with a yellow stripe that is connected to the magnetic ascent weight switch.

She anxiously checks the speed: 4.7 knots. She pauses, stunned.

TESS
No no, this can't... I just cut the
power... Shit!

She turns to Dave, who isn't there. She peers down.

Dave lays dead still on the floor, as if he's out cold.

TESS
Dave?

She approaches, but he doesn't even flinch.

TESS
Hey champ, get up.

She leans close to his mouth as he lays there as if dead. She hears him breathe.

TESS
Dave, wake up!

She gently slaps him. No response as he lays dead still, pretending this is all a dream.

She rises.

The vessel sways more.

She steadies herself and focuses on her feet.

A SHUDDER SOUND grows each time the submersible sways.

She grabs the electrical tester and rushes over to the emergency release control panel. She shakes, adrenaline filled. She tests the wires.

TESS
Okay... Where the hell are you
getting power from?

Test after test reveals no power.

She grabs the red wire with a yellow stripe and pulls. It tightens to a conduit at the base of the control panel.

She shuts the panel and drops to the floor. She pops open the larger relay panel at the base. Wires and relays are everywhere.

She checks the manual. On the page, she traces the wire to a relay on the left.

In the panel, she finds the red wire with a yellow stripe, coming from above. It leads to a relay on the right.

She glances between the manual and the wires.

TESS

Dave, what the hell? How the hell
am I supposed to fix this when the
wires don't match the friggin'
diagram?

She calms a little as she thinks.

TESS

So ummm... we improvise.

She grabs the right-hand relay and rips it out.

She checks the speed: 4.7 knots. No change.

She looks at the relay in her hand and back to the empty socket in disbelief.

She taps the speed indicator frantically. Her taps slow. She stands back and glances over the entire situation.

TESS

Oh God....

Her eyes dart over toward the indicators. She locks onto the voltage readings for the battery packs. A closer look. Reserves are at: 110 volts. She taps it. She sees the main voltage at 0. She taps that.

TESS

That can't be!

She thumps it.

Dave squints, tormented before he sinks back into his denial, trying to wish it all away.

TESS

What the hell is going on?

Tess glances at Dave who lays completely still.

Her gaze darts around the interior. She locks onto her pack.

She races over and pulls out her water bottle. She heads back to Dave. She pops the lid up. With a flick of her arm, water splashes in his face.

Dave jerks alert. He pauses, smashed by reality.

The vessel sways more.

Tess smacks the lid shut and gets in his face.

TESS
Emergency release, now!

As the shudder grows, Tess struggles to keep herself up.

DAVE
(laboured)
But... I...

She grabs him by the shirt, lifts him and drags him to the front of the sub. He cradles his wound, covering the handle of the screwdriver. She thrusts him at the wire mess.

TESS
Even though it would probably be a
blast, I don't particularly wanna
smash into the ocean floor.

Dave's eyes dart, confused.

DAVE
(less laboured)
Yeah um... don't have to worry
about that.

TESS
Buoyancy loss, ballast malfunction,
ascent weight malfunction. Comms
are gone. Ride of a lifetime but
some pretty serious shit, no?

He straightens up as he looks into her eyes, calm, confident as if nothing's wrong.

DAVE
You're exaggerating a little
aren'tcha?

She balances with the sway, stunned. She calms, slows and controls herself.

TESS

Dave you're a smart guy. Stay with me here. Why would the ascent weight still have power when obviously everything else doesn't?

DAVE

Well... you gotta flick the switch.

He clambers to his feet, rests against the wall, reaches out to the ascent weight switch and flicks it.

Nothing happens.

DAVE

So um... you already dropped the ascent weights? So... no worries then?

She looks at him as if he's mental, utterly dumbfounded.

TESS

Yeah Dave. All the marbles are accounted for.

She sighs and turns away to face the other side of the sub.

DAVE

I got no idea what'cha worried about. Bit of a rush now right?

TESS

Yeah, ultimate buzz.

Tess slumps. She looks back and watches him smile at the switches, as if he's an old man with dementia.

She turns to the mess of wires.

Dave saunters back to the back of the sub. Tess has her back to him as she tries to sort through the mess. Dave's gaze drops to the hidden screwdriver handle in his gut.

Tess takes a deep breath and meditates, trying to calm down.

Dave watches. He sneakily lifts his bag onto his seat and unzips it.

The shudder and sway are like a boat in rough seas. Joints in the vessel slightly CREAK under the stress.

Tess is much calmer now.

Dave pulls a jumper from his bag and covers his wound. He drops his backpack in front of him as he smiles at the situation.

DAVE
(sings badly)
We all live in a yellow submarine,
a yellow submarine, a yellow
submarine...

Dave keeps singing.

Tess takes another deep breath. Now she's in control as her eyes snap open. She opens the manual to the relay panel page.

TESS
So you wired it up your way and now
it's blown up in our faces... You
just sit there and do nothing okay?
Somehow I think my way will be
better.

She feels the wires, sussing it out.

TESS
Can't be that different.

She studies the diagram. Wires go up and others go down.

TESS
So up must still be up and down
must still be down. Just gotta find
the real ascent wire and cut it.

Dave stops singing and shuffles around to watch. He sees her reach for the cables at the bottom.

DAVE
Pretty good work, eh?

TESS
Yeah really simple to follow.

DAVE
I knew you'd appreciate it.

TESS

Of course. It's not easy to wire these things up let alone get them to pass the pre-dives.

DAVE

Yeah, some bits were a bit hard but I worked it out in the end.

TESS

Yeah it's always the end that matters, right?

She pauses as she gets an idea.

TESS

So let's start at the end.

Dave stands there silent, watching her.

She grabs the manual and turns through the pages. She locks onto the diagram of the ascent weights located in the nose of the submersible.

She leans to the side to see where the ascent weights are located. She taps her foot on the floor, searching.

Dave steps back toward the back of the sub, giving her room.

DAVE

You think you should be dancin' at a time like this?

She kneels down and visually traces her finger along the paths to the box.

DAVE

All fours, eh? Um... I don't think that's appropriate.

TESS

It's just the process of elimination. Killing off the ones that don't belong here anymore.

She pauses in thought. She scans the cables inside the box, which come from below.

Dave starts freaking out.

DAVE

Wh... Who said anything about
killing?

She notices him panicking.

TESS

Hey I didn't mean literally... umm
how do I put it?... You know about
the U-boats in World War Two right?

He starts to calm a little as curiosity takes over.

DAVE

Yes a lot of seamen.

Tess locks onto specific wires in a few locations.

TESS

Yeah... well these wires are like
the... seamen. This one U-boat had
fifty three on board in the Gulf of
Oman when a British bomber peppered
them with depth charges. Smacked
them.

She reverts back to the diagram which shows the other powered
components underneath.

TESS (CONT'D)

See some men would've been near the
breach so that would have removed
them from the equation straight
away. Then there were others that
would've struggled to escape the
flooding compartments only to be
locked in and drown.

She traces the cable pathways into the box where they all
come up through the one fitting.

TESS (CONT'D)

One by one the crew were
eliminated, leaving a sunk sub at
two hundred feet with a sailor and
an officer trapped in the conning
tower. That was the only place with
any air left.

Inside the box, she grabs the wires that come through the
bottom, closest to the ascent weight.

TESS (CONT'D)

By this time the pressures were starting to equalise. What other choice did they have?

One by one she pulls them tight, swaying them each direction to see where they lead.

TESS (CONT'D)

So as the others went the wrong direction, these two went straight up. The officer opened the hatch and they swam to the surface.

Some wires pull away from the ascent weights. Two wires lead toward the weights.

TESS (CONT'D)

The sailor got to the surface but the officer passed out. The sailor looked after this unconscious guy for like an hour before the officer died.

She grabs the tester and follows the wires up. She tests one wire that reads 0.

TESS (CONT'D)

So there was one sailor left who survived without a life jacket for over a day before a boat picked him up. In the end, the only guy who could possibly survive, avoided everything that could eliminate him.

She tests the other wire: 106 volts.

Dave painfully kneels beside her with the jumper in his lap.

TESS (CONT'D)

They nabbed him and stuck him in a POW camp for the rest of the war.

DAVE

What's that got to do with us?

TESS (CONT'D)

There's only one wire that's coming
up from down there and I've
eliminated all the other
possibilities.

She grabs the pointy nose pliers and reaches for the cable.

Dave grabs her wrist.

DAVE

Hey wait wait... are you sure you
wanna do that?

TESS

This is the right wire. I need to
cut it. So can I cut it now,
please?

DAVE

But I worked hard on this. You
can't just go cutting up my work.
She's like... my... baby you know?
She's my way of showing everyone...

TESS

Dave... let go.

They pause in a stalemate.

Dave reaches for the pliers, struggling.

TESS

Hey... hey... enough!

DAVE

No please don't mess this up.

They struggle more. Tess pushes the pliers closer.

TESS

It's already a mess. I'm the one
that's cleaning it up.

DAVE

But I need to show everybody...
she's perfect.

TESS

Nothing's perfect! Now stop trying
to piss me off!

She thrusts the pliers and latches onto the wire. Snip. She lets go and falls back.

Dave pulls the pliers away.

They sit, wait and sway.

The submersible shudders with each swing.

SHTOONK.

She listens to the ascent weights dislodge. Elation splashes across her face.

TESS

Shit yeah!

She turns to the speed and depth indicator.

She watches the speed drop: 4.5, 4.2, 3.9.

The shudder fades a little. The creak of the hull increases. The sway worsens.

The speed counts down but stabilises on: 1.7 knots.

TESS

Now that's just not funny.

She checks the depth indicator that hits: 7,618 feet.

Tess punches the depth indicator.

Dave looks down and notices blood seeping through his jumper onto his hand. He wipes it off and adjusts his jumper.

DAVE

Hey... 'Sokay. We'll get there.

Tess looks at the emergency release switches. She flicks a couple in vain.

TESS

Okay I get these switches powered up and ditch everything. Should get us back to the surface within a few hours.

She grabs the tester, opens the panel and tests wires.

DAVE

You constantly blow me away you know that? Handling everything so well.

TESS

We've got about ten minutes before we smash into the bottom.

Dave adjusts himself, hiding the pain. He rests against the back seat.

DAVE

Considering how the last mission went... you're still so strong. Constantly inspiring me to dream big you know?

She finishes testing wires. She looks at the other panels.

TESS

Plenty of time to get some power back up and running.

The sway doesn't make it easy for either of them. The shudder lets them know it's still there. The creak sounds like an eerie door that needs oil.

Dave swallows, glancing at the jumper.

Tess grabs the manual and flicks through.

DAVE

How do you do it?

She opens the page that shows the wiring diagram for the emergency release panel.

TESS

With one step at a time. Focus on what's important in the here and now and get on with it.

She traces the wires and moves across to the breaker box.

DAVE

So... what? You... bury the truth?

She pauses. Her eyes dart.

She tests for power in the breaker box. Everything's dead.

TESS
So we got power down there.

She points to the ascent weight wire that she cut.

Dave nurses his wound.

DAVE
It amazes me how much you bury.

TESS
We got no power to the circuit
breaker there.

She points to the circuit breaker box next to the emergency
release switches.

DAVE
You got a bit of an abyss under the
surface, eh? And everyone else has
no clue about it.

TESS
And we've got a spare bit of cable
right there.

She points at the ascent weight release switch.

TESS
Okay.

Tess grabs the cut red wire with a yellow stripe. She pulls
and pokes it through the side into the breaker box.

Dave stumbles slightly, a bit weak. He shakes it off and gets
into a comfortable relaxed position.

DAVE
You know, everyone who cares
about'cha wants to share that
burden. They don't want'cha to
bottle things up. They want you to
open up you know?

She opens the breaker box and traces the power wire for the
release switches to the emergency circuit breaker. She flicks
off the breaker.

TESS
Let's get you some power.

She holds out her hand, gesturing to the pliers that Dave has.

DAVE

If you don't open up, it can eat
you up inside. It can send you
nuts.

TESS

Gimme the pliers.

He pulls the pliers away, playing hard to get.

DAVE

You gotta open up about -

TESS

No I don't okay? I got a job to do
and I'm not gonna let the same
thing happen again! Now just give
me the pliers, sit your ass down
and please, let me focus alright?

DAVE

'Sokay Tess. 'Sokay to be relieved
about him killing himself -

She grabs him, pulls him close and wrenches the pliers from his hand.

She glares at him, catches herself and lets go.

The vessel throws her. She stumbles and grabs her seat.

The slight shudder groans like a monster's whisper. The creak sounds for the finishing touch.

TESS

(pissed off)

I... like... you, Dave. I think you
are a great engineer. But please,
just let me get back to work.

Dave adjusts himself. He hides his wound. He eyeballs the tools.

She approaches the yellow stripe wire.

DAVE

Wow. Getting serious now? Not gonna share? It's alright. You can tell me later.

She strips the plastic off the wire, twists the copper with the pliers and cuts it neat.

Dave sways, weak. He rests more on the chair, moving slightly closer to the tools.

Tess is too busy to notice. She grabs the screwdriver and undoes the top screw terminal of the emergency breaker.

Dave studies her with a probing cheeky grin.

DAVE

You know, love's a powerful emotion. Lot of pleasure... and pain.

She pulls the old wire out from the top screw terminal and pushes the yellow stripe wire in. She then does the screw up and locks it tight. Dave watches her.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Like that first kiss. That tension builds. That nervousness. Craving to touch the one you love, but at the same time, you're scared of losing them.

She moves to the relay panel and focuses on the empty socket.

Dave staggers more from the wound, closer to the tools.

DAVE (CONT'D)

But that's nothing, eh? 'Cause nothing compares to loving your family.

She uses the screwdriver to loosen the terminal for the yellow stripe wire. She pulls the wire out.

She straightens and unwinds the wire.

Dave tries to hide his weakness. He slightly reaches for the tools but steadies himself.

The vessel moans, creaks and sways.

DAVE

You know... everyone on the boat
thinks you're awesome. Like family.
You know they'd die for you?

She gingerly pulls the yellow stripe wire over to the live
ascent weight wire she cut.

She grabs the high voltage top half and the pliers. She uses
the pliers to carefully cut the plastic to strip the wire.
She tries to pull the plastic insulation off but it's stuck.

DAVE

That's the power of love. Makes
people do crazy things. Like...
self-sacrifice. It's true power.

The pliers gingerly cut the plastic coating more, then she
pulls harder, trying to rip the plastic off the wire.

The pliers touch the metal box and spark.

She jerks in fright.

DAVE

It's electric, eh? Gets the heart
racing. It's a buzz.

She sighs before psyching herself up to get the job done once
and for all. She grabs the metal part of the pliers.

She roars with an electric shock that jerks her hand away and
throws her back. She slams against the seat.

She blinks a few times. She trembles with adrenaline. In her
hand are the pliers and the plastic insulation she was trying
to strip off the wire. A micro expressive smile twitches
through.

Dave leans over a little to look her in the face.

DAVE

You'd do almost anything for love
like that. Like a drug. Craving to
touch the one you love again. But
then there's that fear of pain.

She stands.

TESS

Have you got a point?

Blood drips from Dave's gut onto the floor.

Tess reaches for the wires.

Dave sighs. He looks back down at the tools.

DAVE

I remember feeling that way
about... my little girl. Every day
I did everything to cheer her up.
Every day, I tried so hard, 'cause
of that smile you know? 'Cause of
that glimpse of true happiness.
Sorta like I was saving the world.

Tess stops. She turns to see Dave's blank gaze.

Her heart sinks. She realises.

The vessel sways, shudders and creaks.

TESS

You miss her?

Dave smiles and scoffs.

DAVE

Everyday... But everything's gonna
be fine. I got it all worked out.
Gonna be awesome. You know, like...
chocolate.

Tess sadly nods. She turns back to the stripped wire.

TESS

Yeah I like chocolate too Dave. I
like chocolate too.

Dave is about to pass out. Anxiety grips him.

DAVE

God damn I'm sick of standing here
like a stunned mullet. Let me help
you with -

He darts for the tools, but Tess' hand slams down on the toolbox and protects the tools as if they were her life. She swallows her anger.

TESS

We stay on mission. I'm here to make sure we all live. It doesn't matter what you do, or how much you screw up. I'm going to get us all through this. But if you touch my stuff again, I'll friggin' drill you! Understand?

Tess glares at him as his eyes dart anxiously. He nods and backs away as Tess turns back to the wires.

She uses the pliers to carefully twist the wires together.

Power jolts through the submersible's veins. Monitors flicker into life. The life support air circulation fan starts.

TESS

Alright good news. Pumped up and ready to go.

Thump! Dave falls to the floor.

She turns to see him. She drops to his aid.

As she rolls him over, he grips the screwdriver handle in his side.

Shock grips her as she reaches to stop his hand.

TESS

No!

Dave rips the screwdriver out, grunts in pain and stares at the screwdriver.

Blood runs from the wound.

His fingers loose and the screwdriver drops to the floor.

She pauses, stunned.

TESS

Shit.

She scurries to the first aid kit near the handheld waterproof radio. She grabs the first aid.

She races to his side and opens the kit.

TESS

Damn it! Real bloody nice of you to let me know.

She pulls dressings out and gauze.

DAVE

You were doing so well. I didn't wanna bother you.

TESS

Yeah well this bothers me Dave. This really bothers me.

She pulls the jumper away from the wound which leaks blood.

DAVE

It's alright. I'm okay.

TESS

Jesus, you're gonna have major internal bleeding.

She puts gauze and dressing on the wound.

DAVE

It's fine. Doesn't hurt much now.

TESS

God damn it you should've told me earlier. You should've left the screwdriver in there.

She prepares a roll of bandages but blood pours through the dressing. She sets the rolled up bandages aside.

DAVE

Nah screw that... I had enough of it being in there. As good a time as any to pull that sucker out. She'll be right.

She gets anxious, drops the bloody dressing and puts fresh dressing on.

Blood saturates those dressings too.

Dave puts his hand on her shoulder.

DAVE

Hey don't stress okay? It's
alright. No rush. Make sure you
focus on what's important. Take
your time. Do what you have to do.

She gazes at him. He smiles.

She calms herself, scans around and locks onto the Phillips
screwdriver which rolls with each sway of the vessel.

As it stops against the chair, she looks at the operations
manual open on the seat. Focus grips her.

TESS

Hold that, now.

Dave reluctantly holds the dressing.

Tess grabs the manual. She flicks through the pages. She
pauses on the life support page.

TESS

We got climate control.

DAVE

Yeah gotta love that. It's like a
spring day in here.

The diagram shows a long thin element slotted into a heat
exchanger.

TESS

Okay, hopefully this works.

She checks the climate control breakers. One for the fan and
one for the heating element. She looks around the bottom
control panels searching for the heat exchanger.

DAVE

In a way, this is like a holiday.
Taking it easy. Not a care in the
world.

She feels behind the sonar control panel. She stops.

Her fingers feel the large nut shaped element with a cable
coming from the centre.

She slumps.

TESS
This may take a bit.

Dave watches her struggle to rip the control panel off.

DAVE
Hey what are you doing? Don't break
it! Jesus, you never heard of a
screwdriver? You just gotta clean
the blood off -

The panel snaps free. She falls back a little. She throws the
panel to the side. She sees the back of the element.

DAVE
What's wrong with using a
screwdriver?

She grabs a shifter and locks on, twisting hard. It's stuck.

TESS
Yeah excuse me if I'm a little
impatient.

She checks the depth indicator: 9,245 feet.

She mouths expletives.

She grabs another spanner. She uses it as a hammer to hit the
shifter while she twists hard. One hit, another and crack! It
breaks the seal. She unscrews the element by hand.

DAVE
You're too nice you know that? Look
there must be something else you
can do. Just forget about this idea
okay?

She pulls the heating element out which looks like a dark
grey round pencil sticking out of the round metal cap only
this heating element is hot and it starts to glow.

TESS
Not gonna happen.

She holds up the heating element like a mad doctor's utensil.

TESS
Perfect.

DAVE

Hey I'm fine. If it gets worse
later, deal with it then. You don't
need to -

She turns to him.

TESS

Don't worry you'll probably pass
out and wake up on deck. Easy.

Dave glances over the element and swallows.

DAVE

Just stitch the hole. Simple.

TESS

You'll puff up like a balloon.

DAVE

She'll be right. It's not like I'll
bleed to death.

TESS

Inside outside, doesn't matter. The
blood still isn't where it's meant
to be. And inside it will put
pressure on your other organs.

DAVE

Just stop and think about it.
There's always other ways around
the problem.

Dave sits quiet, watching blood drip onto the floor.

Tess slowly moves toward Dave.

DAVE

We need the climate control. Just
put it back and then sort me out.

They share a gaze. He gives a little smile.

TESS

I can't let you die.

She moves close to his wound and hesitates.

Dave gets worried. He watches the element sway as they do.

DAVE

Exaggerate much? I ain't gonna
snuff it that easily. You got work
to do so get it done.

TESS

Not alone.

She pulls the dressing off and moves closer to the bleeding.

DAVE

Hey it's okay. Maybe this is the
way it's meant to be?

He snatches her hand which holds the red-hot element.

She struggles with him. She stresses.

TESS

It's gotta be done!

She looks him in the eye as his eyes plead.

DAVE

Why?

She pauses. Tears well in her eyes as she looks him over.
Torment grips her as she's torn between helping or not.

Suddenly, she leans in and hugs him.

He's stunned. Slowly he relaxes, reciprocating the embrace.

As he relaxes his grip, she shoves the element into the
wound.

He roars and pushes.

She falls back and the element pulls from the wound.

DAVE

You little bitch!

He swallows the pain.

Realising what he said, he looks up with dread.

TESS

You're welcome.

They both stare at the element which sizzles the last bit of blood into a whiff of smoke.

The joints eerily creak.

DAVE

Please I... I didn't mean... I
just... I'm so sorry I...

She slams the heating element back into the heat exchanger and twists it in a few times by hand.

She grabs cleansing wipes to clean the wound.

They both see that the hole is sealed.

TESS

Okay, where was I?

She peers at the emergency release switches.

DAVE

God, please, don't break the sub
more. She's in a bad enough way as
it is. These things cost a shitload
of money you know?

TESS

The sub won't be worth anything if
we smash into the seabed.

She rises about to flick the switches.

DAVE

Come on, we're not gonna smash into
the bottom. Especially if we float
down into the trench.

TESS

At this point in time, that's not a
place I wanna go.

She flicks the switch to blow the descent ballast.

She scans inside, listening to the high-pressure air fill the descent ballast chamber, and the creaking of the joints.

She grabs the joystick and pushes to the side. Nothing. Then the other side. Nothing. She pushes forward and the thrusters wind up. She twists the joystick to the side, and it turns slowly, then the other way and it turns back.

TESS

At least we have two.

She locates the six thruster jettison switches. She flicks the jettison switches for Thrusters 1 2 3 and 4, which result in GUNSHOT-LIKE SOUNDS coming through the hull.

She gets through to the manipulator switches and flicks the left one. BANG. She pauses on the right manipulator. Torment grips her as she forces herself to flick the switch.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

BOOM! The panel of the right concealed manipulator arm in the nose cone cracks open with a small explosion.

The manipulator arm falls through the emergency light and into the darkness, following the other manipulator arm and the busted thrusters.

INT. SUBMERSIBLE PERSONNEL SPHERE - DAY

Tess peers out the porthole. The detached parts fall away.

Dave watches her turn to the indicators.

Depth: 10,023 feet. Speed drops to: 1.1 knots.

She waits as they sway.

TESS

Come on be enough.

It ticks over to: 0.8 knots.

DAVE

Well I s'pose smashing into the ocean floor ain't that bad.

TESS

We don't have to worry about that anymore.

She waits more. Dave notices the gauges and her gaze.

DAVE

Oh so... instant pop?

Tess waits. Her gaze sours.

Speed ticks over to: 0.6 knots and holds steady.

The sway gets worse.

She slumps. She scans over the inside of the submersible.

DAVE

Not gonna smash? Well if we end up down the trench, at least we'll get to see an implosion with our own eyes.

TESS

Yeah that would be a story to tell.

She grabs the shifter and heads back to the heat exchanger.

Dave taps on the steel wall, listening.

DAVE

Freaky as. Just imagine how much bone crunching water there is out there. Miles right? Must be pretty sick now. 'Bout three Empire State Buildings trying to squash us, right?

TESS

Yeah about that.

DAVE

Like a giant nutcracker. Cracking bit by bit until the shell gives way.

Tess twists the heater element all the way in and locks it tight with the shifter.

DAVE

I'm glad you're here with me. Would suck to be down here alone. I s'pose if we implode, there won't be much left afterwards. Will take a while for another living thing down here to find the bits. We're like a speck of dust in space. But that's like... peaceful, serene, a world away. As if no-one can ever mess with us ever again.

Tess focuses on the touchscreen which flashes red alerts.

TESS
Okay, systems check.

She stands and goes to her seat. She sits and touches the alert.

A voltage and current graph show usage, reserves and how long it will last.

She seems puzzled.

TESS
That's not good.

DAVE
Everything has something good about it. You just need to find it.

TESS
At this rate we'll have no power in fifteen minutes. Tell me what's good about that.

She checks the voltage indicator: 103 volts.

DAVE
There's a lot we could do in fifteen minutes. How about we gas bag about it?

TESS
You chat. I'll get us some more time so you can keep breathing.

Tess goes to the breaker box and trips auxiliary breakers.

DAVE
Oi don't do that. Keep the power on. You really wanna spend this time together in the freezing cold? You'll ruin the party.

TESS
Seems comms and power are the issue as well as buoyancy, but everything else looks fine so yeah, I'm gonna shut the party down.

She flicks more breakers off.

DAVE

You always have to fight. Always
have to do what daddy wants, eh?
You need to chillax and just
accept.

She scans through the manual for things she can turn off.

She flicks off some more breakers.

Dave watches her.

Tess goes through the menus on the screen, checking systems.

They sway in the eerie sounds.

Dave leans more to see what she checks.

TESS

I dare say the main battery pack's
gone and the reserve was damaged.

She goes back to the voltage graph.

TESS

Well now we've got three hours.

DAVE

Three hours, eh? So maybe you could
share a bit more about... you know.

TESS

Not if we're dead.

She checks through the manual more. She notices the galvanic
release device image. She smiles.

DAVE

Hey we're all gotta go sometime. At
least this is a great way to go.
Dying ain't that bad.

She moves over to peer through the side porthole.

TESS

As opposed to what?

In the faint light, she can see the galvanic release device
attached to the back of the porthole. A spring-loaded latch,
secured by a rod that slightly bubbles in the saltwater.

She goes to the other side.

DAVE

As opposed to day after day of an
agonising fate worse than death.
Like how the one who loves you
would feel if he didn't kill
himself for you.

She pauses and swallows her anger. She looks through the
other side porthole.

Another spring-loaded latch.

She grabs Dave's bag and throws it to him.

TESS

You're probably gonna need to keep
warm.

She gets back to the manual.

DAVE

Nah I'll be warm and cosy soon
enough. You know what I mean?

TESS

Nope.

Dave sneakily smiles.

DAVE

I know that look. You got a plan
buzzing around that little head of
yours. What'cha thinking?

Tess contemplates. She flicks off the last of the other
circuit breakers. The only breakers left on are the life
support fan, the heating element, and the touchscreen.

TESS

Fail-safe.

Dave's smile fades.

DAVE

And what are we supposed to do with
that?

She checks the touchscreen power graphs.

TESS

Just gotta wait. After we come to rest on the ocean floor, the salt water will eat through the galvanic release and drop the nose cone.

DAVE

Wait? That's eight hours. You said we've got three.

TESS

Unless we shut down everything and pray to God the life support will last. It's gonna get a little cold, wet and stuffy in here but at least we won't die.

Tess flicks off the heating element breaker.

Dave watches her looking over the other switches.

DAVE

Um that sounds like it really sucks.

She goes back to check the manual. She relaxes and sways with the creaking sounds. Dave eyeballs the rolled up bandages.

TESS

It's just a case of sitting back and relaxing. We're all going home Dave... We're going home.

She reaches out to the life support fan breaker. She pauses before she switches it off. The fan whines down and stops.

DAVE

But what about the rescue?

TESS

We get back up top and then I'll work out a way to get Tom -

DAVE

You can't -

TESS

Don't tell me what I can't do. I'm not gonna quit trying to save us all. I gotta make this happen.

While she checks the voltage graph, she sighs, hopeful.

An evil gaze washes over Dave's face. He secretly grabs the bloody screwdriver and the rolled up bandages.

She turns off the touchscreen breaker. It's just the red glow of the emergency lights, the sway, and the eerie creaking.

He pushes the screwdriver through the roll of bandages.

DAVE
Or die trying.

He jams the bandage wrapped screwdriver into the circuit breaker box.

Sparks fly.

Tess turns.

TESS
What the...

The sparks burst into flames!

Adrenaline strikes. She jumps from her chair.

TESS
Extinguisher!

Dave backs away from the flames and jams his back against the fire extinguisher.

DAVE
Hey hey now that's better. That'll
keep us warm.

Tess pulls the neck of her tank top over her mouth.

The space fills with smoke as Dave sucks it in like it's a drug.

TESS
Get the God damn extinguisher!

She shuffles her way to the back, unable to see.

The sway has her stumbling.

She drops low to peer behind the seat. She sees Dave against the extinguisher. She moves forward and grabs hold. She wrenches hard.

Dave presses firm against it.

She coughs.

TESS

Move!

She lifts her foot to push against his shoulder.

The extinguisher dislodges and she falls back hard into a panel, extinguisher in hand.

She stands in the smoke and guides the extinguisher nozzle at the glow. With a quick burst, the flames die.

She moves closer.

Sparks come from something in the panel. She grips it and rips it from the breakers.

She drops the screwdriver and coughs, trying to breathe.

TESS

Masks!

She kneels to the floor and searches.

Dave puts his rebreather mask on. He presses his feet against the front rebreather.

Tess feels around on the floor for her mask. Her fingers latch onto her rebreather. She pulls but it's stuck. More but it won't move. She wrenches in vain. She needs to breathe.

Her hands fondle her rebreather, searching for her face mask. She leans forward and sees Dave's feet.

She forces her face into her mask and gasps for breath. She coughs.

Dave hears her and lowers his feet from her rebreather.

Tess rips her rebreather free and gains some composure.

TESS

Dave!

She feels around and coughs more.

TESS
Talk to me!

He sits silent.

The vessel sways.

Her fingers touch his hair. She reaches to his rebreather.

TESS
Are you okay?

He coughs a couple of times.

DAVE
Hell yeah! Now that was
breathtaking.

She has one last cough before a deep calm breath. She cautiously feels her way to the life support fan breaker. She moves in close to see. She flicks the breaker on.

The fan starts very slowly. The air starts to clear as the fan speed gets slower.

TESS
What the hell happened?

She flicks the touchscreen breaker on.

The touchscreen flickers and boots up.

DAVE
I don't know. You're the one fixing
the breakers.

She scans more.

TESS
I don't know how... There was
something jammed...

Dave feels around on the floor.

His fingers fondle the screwdriver handle.

He pulls it under his legs.

DAVE

Tess I have to thank you. That's
twice you've saved my life. How can
I ever repay you?

She turns to the touchscreen monitor and goes through the
menu to check the levels.

TESS

It's my job. Even if I wanted you
dead, I'd still have to save you.

DAVE

Nah I think it's more than that.

The air clears more. The fan spins slower.

She sees the levels on the power graph. She pauses.

The smoke clears until a slight mist is left.

She turns off the breakers, stunned. The fan and touch screen
turn off.

TESS

This can't be happening.

She removes her mask and breathes the thick air.

Dave lifts his mask.

She gazes at him, devastated.

The sway creaks around them.

DAVE

Hey hey please... don't be
disheartened. I'm here for you
okay?

Her gaze drops. He notices.

DAVE

Look I'm sure this mission won't
turn out like the last one okay? I
promise.

Dave grabs a cookie packet from his bag.

She struggles to hold her composure. She calms herself.

DAVE
It'll be okay.

He opens his cookie packet and starts eating.

Tess stares at the breaker box which has black marks over it.

TESS
You just don't get it do you?
Batteries are drained. Lucky to get
another two minutes of air out of
them. We've got an hour max. Maybe
three with the rebreathers. Does
that mean anything to you?

He swallows.

DAVE
I can give you mine.

TESS
Five hours? For what?

Dave takes another bite of his cookie. Tess turns to the indicators.

Depth: 10,469 feet. Speed: 0.6 knots. Main volts: 0. Reserve: 13.

DAVE
Hey it'll be fine. We'll rest on
the bottom soon. Nice and peaceful.
Resting in peace.

He offers her the half-eaten cookie.

DAVE
Here, have a cookie. It'll cheer
you up.

She shakes her head and turns away.

TESS
No that -

She focuses on the breakers. She sees burnt bandages.

TESS
What the -

DAVE

What? You have a new way outta
this? What's the plan?

Tess pauses, serious. She reaches out to touch the bandages.

Dave playfully throws his biscuit at her and it bounces off
her head. She glares at him as he smiles.

DAVE

What's up? You thinking of Tom?

He sees her anguish.

DAVE

You regret him going alone?

She struggles to keep calm.

She reaches to the floor and scans around.

Dave gently takes her hand and tries to see her face.

She doesn't even look. She's seriously focused.

DAVE

What if Tom's dead?

TESS

I still don't understand how that
fire -

DAVE

Hey forget about that. What
happened to you focusing on finding
a way outta this?

He leans down trying to look her in the eyes.

TESS

Nah there's something... it's
bugging me.

DAVE

Hey at the moment, every second is
precious. You said it yourself.
Focus on what's important in the
here and now. Well I'm here for
you. Like I used to be.

He gently lifts her chin.

She shies away. Something catches her eye rolling across the floor behind Dave.

The burnt Phillips screwdriver.

DAVE

What do you want me to do?

She pushes him to the back of the sub and grabs the screwdriver. She studies it.

Dave grabs the toolbox and holds it out for her to put the screwdriver away.

DAVE

It's a tense time. We miss our loved ones. Even the screwdriver misses his friends.

TESS

How'd it get -

DAVE

Look if we clean up the place, maybe we can get a new perspective.

She pauses. She glares straight at Dave.

He smiles and reaches for the screwdriver.

She flicks his hand away and points the screwdriver straight at him.

TESS

You did this?

He pauses, speechless.

The creaking is all she hears as the screwdriver sways.

TESS

Answer me!

DAVE

Focus on the positives.

She grabs him with one hand pushing him back as he drops the toolbox before hitting the back wall. She struggles to hold back the trembling screwdriver, ready to stab him.

TESS
I trusted you. I even saved your
God damn life!

DAVE
There's no point getting into a
hissy fit -

TESS
You're sick... You know that?

He looks her stern in the face.

DAVE
Hey that's not nice. I'm good ol'
Uncle Dave.

She pulls away and throws the screwdriver in anger. It falls
to the floor near the base of the front seat.

She kicks and punches panels.

She pants, distraught.

TESS
Yeah yeah go on and tell yourself
that. Lie to yourself as much as
you want but I know as well as you
do that you must be seriously nuts.

He glares at her.

DAVE
Hey hey that's a bit much. How is
it insane to be positive. To accept
things as they are and be okay with
it. That's not a bad thing.

TESS
Yeah right. If you're not insane,
the why the hell would you be such
a piece of shit?

She kicks the panel again.

She slides down into a ball in the front corner.

Dave watches her sit motionless. Torment starts to grip him
as his heart aches to comfort her.

He peers down at his wound, then glances at the open first aid kit. Remorse overwhelms him.

He pulls his phone out.

DAVE

You don't understand... She... She
was my life.

She pauses and glares at him out of the corner of her eye.

He opens the video viewer and locates a video.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Every day I struggled to make her
happy. But then... God, I don't
even know what happened. All I know
is that realisation. That she was
taken from me... Not just a
possibility, but completely. Gone.
Everyday my heart was brutally
stabbed. But the worst thing was
the hope. I kept working, kept
going, hoping that one day
everything would be fixed. 'Cause
there were good times. She was
happy. She was...

He plays the video and slides the phone to her side.

DAVE (CONT'D)

... my little princess. Everyday I
took care of her. She'd sit on my
knee and laugh. She'd dance and
swim and...

She observes the screen.

ON THE PHONE

A selfie view. Dave looks a little younger sitting on the
deck of a ship. A happy eight-year-old girl in a swim suit
sits on Dave's knee, smiling at him as he smiles back at her
like a loving father. It's Tess, young and happy. She laughs.

IN THE SUBMERSIBLE

Dave waits for Tess' response. She screws up her face,
containing herself.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Joe made me watch you. Made me...
think of you like a daughter. I
tried not to but you were so happy.
I gave in for you. I let myself
love you like a daughter. And for
that...

He grits his teeth in tormented fury. Tears well in his eyes.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Joe took you from me. After that,
you wouldn't even smile at me.

Tess watches the video

ON THE PHONE

Young Tess has trouble doing the selfie video, but it shows
the awesome relationship that Tess and Dave had.

Young Tess turns the phone to see Joe near the bridge. Joe
looks as if he's getting her away from a pedophile.

JOE

(via phone)

Hey Tess, come to Daddy okay?

IN THE SUBMERSIBLE

Dave looks at the phone as he wipes the welling tears from
his eyes and pulls himself together.

DAVE

Do you have any idea how hard it is
to know your daughter has been
taken from you, never to show you
love ever again. All that's left is
a reminder but inside, everything
she was is gone. It's like living
with some traumatised impostor
who's wearing your daughter's
corpse.

She watches the video

ON THE PHONE

Young Tess smiles up at Dave's direction. The image pauses on
young Tess' smile.

IN THE SUBMERSIBLE

Tess pulls her hand from the phone.

DAVE

But it'll all work out in the end.
Joe will know how it feels to lose
a daughter and we'll be together...
forever.

Her gaze diverts past the phone's edge to see Dave's hand sliding along the floor. She looks up to his face to see the psychotically tormented gaze in his eyes.

TESS

What the -

She moves the phone to the seat to pull herself up as he psychotically reaches for the screwdriver near her feet.

Realisation sinks in. She drops the phone on the seat and darts forward to stop him, snatching his arm.

He struggles to get to the screwdriver.

She holds him tight as he pulls his knees off the floor, stabilising his stance.

DAVE

I'm so sorry, but I can't let'cha
stop me.

He pushes her back hard with his free hand.

She staggers back and her head hits the control panel behind her, but she holds still onto Dave's hand. She glares at him, dumbfounded.

He strains with the other hand for the screwdriver but she grabs that hand too and pushes him back to his seat.

DAVE

So you're serious now?

He forces one hand to his other hand, wedging his fingers under hers.

TESS

Dave, please!

DAVE
It's too late. It's time to let go.
Time to accept our destiny. I'm
sorry.

He wrenches her fingers back. She releases her grip.

He pushes her away. She falls amongst the front seat and panels.

He searches for the screwdriver.

DAVE
'Sokay Tess. You were born to die
in the ocean.

Tess glances around to get her bearings. She sees Dave and lifts herself up, preparing to stand.

TESS
Don't think so.

Dave's fingertips touch the screwdriver. A twitch of a smile.

DAVE
There you are.

He leans in hard.

Tess steadies herself and grabs his shoulders.

TESS
Enough!

As she pushes Dave back, he grabs the screwdriver handle.

She rises as Dave staggers back. He braces himself, screwdriver in hand. Dave swings the screwdriver.

Tess freaks out and darts back.

The bloody steel whooshes past her arm.

Dave steadies himself with a psycho glare.

TESS
What happened to the positive side?

DAVE
I'm positive this dive is doomed.

He swings at her.

She hides behind the front chair.

The screwdriver stabs into the seat.

Dave wrenches it out, ready for another attack.

TESS

We can get some other girl for you.

DAVE

Why would I want some other girl
when I have my little princess with
me right now?

TESS

Yet you'll sacrifice both of us?

He pauses, tormented.

DAVE

You... abandon me. You abandon Tom.
You... killed me like you killed -

TESS

I didn't kill him!

A pause. The vessel sways. She struggles to keep her
composure as torment grips her.

TESS

I... I didn't...

She starts to breakdown.

Dave empathises. He relaxes his stance, no longer posing a
threat at all. He steadies himself against the back seat,
somewhat feeling for her, somewhat sorry for her. Completely
returning to that caring uncle sentimentality.

DAVE

Then what?

A tear runs down her cheek as she remembers, trying to cope.

Dave turns his body toward the seat and leans in behind it,
looking away but glancing back to her every now and again.

Tess glances at him, notices his calmer posture. She pulls
herself together a little.

TESS

It was meant to be easy... Checked everything... It was all fine. I... I checked everything...

Her eyes dart around the interior.

TESS (CONT'D)

A simple trip while I free dive. I never thought... But then I saw Dad. Tom was meant to be there. He was meant to...

She moves to get solid footing.

TESS (CONT'D)

I think about him, happily waiting with his hand up against the porthole. But then it fills with water as he...

Torment grips her.

Dave's gaze transforms into psychotic depression in spades.

DAVE

So you understand the pain of losing someone you love. You understand the love taken from me. I hoped one day that Joe would let us talk. I hoped that you would talk to me. But then... Tom... With him, I knew there was no chance for me.

He holds back the torment with a wall of hate.

TESS

But you have a chance now.

DAVE

Joe sent Tom down. He was in charge of both dives. He was responsible. Now we just have to make him understand how it feels to lose someone he loves. I s'pose it's a bit cliché, but if I can't have you...

She pauses, stunned. Dave pulls himself back into his psycho positive aura, and comes out from behind the back seat.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You know Tom had the same problem as us? Lithium batteries can really go off with a bang. I think I did well. It's not easy to make one battery pack overcharge a defective pack.

He smiles as Tess' shock and torment overwhelms her. Time almost stops.

Silence. Then rage strikes her. She leans forward and punches him in the head.

He takes it with ease, cupping his jaw with love.

DAVE

Now that's the spirit!

He thrusts the screwdriver at her.

She ducks in front of the front seat.

The screwdriver stabs a monitor.

He pulls back and swings the screwdriver around the seat.

She rises on the other side and punches him in the head.

He takes the hit and swings the screwdriver at her face.

She grabs his wrist.

The screwdriver tip presses into her cheek. They struggle.

DAVE

This isn't the way it was supposed to go. I just don't have any other choice.

She notices his wide stance near her leg.

TESS

Well I do.

She knees him in the balls and pushes him.

He collapses over the back seat.

He rises and swipes blindly.

He sees her at the front.

DAVE

(laboured)

How about we talk about this? We're adults. Can we maybe come to some agreement?

TESS

You wanted to get serious? Well I'm pumped up and ready for a fucking ride.

He's a bit confused.

DAVE

Oh... okay. Now you're having fun?

He charges and spears the screwdriver at her chest.

She grabs the sonar panel, rips it off and pulls it around to block the attack.

Dave pauses, surprised. He launches into a frenzy of attacks.

She blocks the screwdriver attacks with her shield. Deflections come swift. She backs away to the other side.

She knocks the screwdriver down where it stabs into a plastic control box cover which splits, holding the screwdriver firm.

He punches her in the head.

She moves the sonar panel back against the wall to brace herself.

He sees the panel against the wall. He lifts his foot, stands firm against the panel, and locks it down.

She lifts her foot and kicks his hand from the screwdriver which stays stuck in the control panel.

He grabs her leg and pulls her around beside the back seat where she falls hard.

He lowers his leg, letting the sonar panel fall.

He pulls the screwdriver out of the split panel and turns.

He charges.

She swings a backhand with the fire extinguisher, which smacks into his arm.

His arm slams into the split panel. He drops the screwdriver.

She punches with the other hand but he grabs her arm.

She thrusts the extinguisher at his head but he grabs that arm. She struggles but he has her firm in his grip.

He climbs over the seat, forcing her down into the back corner.

DAVE

There's no other way out of this. I gotta win.

She sees his wound above the top of the seat.

TESS

Sorry to disappoint you.

She pulls him down.

His wound thumps into the seat. He shudders in pain.

She grabs the extinguisher with both hands and smacks him in the head.

He falls back and grabs the front seat.

She rises with the extinguisher in hand.

DAVE

(dazed)

Okay!... okay... Just kill me just like you killed Sally's dad.

He fondles a large spanner.

She hesitates.

TESS

No... I'm not a killer.

He grabs the spanner and launches.

She smacks him in the head with the extinguisher.

He drops, knocked out. He lays motionless on the floor.

She steps onto his gut, and raises the extinguisher about to cave his head in. He doesn't even flinch in pain.

She struggles to hold her brutality back. She roars as she throws the extinguisher to the side.

She kneels to his head and unleashes a series of punches to Dave's jaw. With one final punch, she pants.

TESS
Piece of shit!

She wrenches herself away.

She counters the sway as she listens to the creaking.

She peers at Dave.

TESS
I saved your God damn life!

Torment grips her. She scans the inside of the submersible.

Tears well in her eyes.

TESS
I saved your life.

She scans around at how hopeless it is. The burnt-out panel, the depth gauge, and the speed.

TESS
So that's it then.

She coughs, her breathing gets harder. Torment grips her as a tear drips from her eye. She calms into her fate.

TESS
Screw it.

She flicks on the life support fan breaker.

The fan kicks in and slowly circulates the last of the air.

She climbs forward and drops into the front seat. She slumps back, something under her is uncomfortable. She reaches down and pulls up the phone.

The breeze calms her. She sinks into a despondent gaze.

Her breathing eases. A big deep breath of fresh air. As she relaxes, she checks the indicators.

Depth: 11,118 feet. Speed: 0.6 knots.

TESS

Rock bottom any second now.

She watches the screwdriver roll on the floor.

TESS

I suppose I'd lose the plot too if
someone took Sally from me.

She scans over the burnt circuit breakers. Torment starts to grow.

TESS

God damn...

She turns the phone on and holds the phone up for reception before she scoffs at how stupid her actions are.

She notices the screen shows Dave's video, paused on young Tess smiling while looking in Dave's direction.

Tess presses play.

It shows young Tess' smile at Dave, but her smile fades as confusion sets in.

YOUNG TESS

(via phone)

Sorry Dave. I have to go.

The image blurs as young Tess hands the phone to Dave. The image stabilises to show her run to Joe, who glares at Dave with hatred, before escorting Tess inside the bridge.

The image turns to show Dave as his tear escapes, realizing Tess has been taken from him, forever. The video stops.

Tess empathises and struggles to keep her composure.

TESS

Oh God...

She lifts her hand to hold her ear the exact same way that Sally did, remembering that special moment with Sally.

A tear dribbles down Tess' cheek to her chin and falls onto the phone. She nearly cries but catches herself and wipes the tears away.

She calms. Tess' eyes wander over the phone. She opens the camera icon and starts the video recording. She turns the camera to her face. She pauses, speechless.

TESS

I donno if you'll get this. I
just... I don't wanna be here.

She looks around the vessel.

TESS (CONT'D)

I can't do it anymore. I just... I
can't be down here this deep...
It's taking Tom and now it's gonna
take me... And all I can think
about is Sally. I just wanna hold
my baby girl... I swear if I had
the chance I wouldn't let a God
damn thing get in my way.

Torment grips her. She forces herself to smile.

TESS (CONT'D)

Pity your wisdom won't work this
time.

She scoffs.

TESS (CONT'D)

(pretending to be Joe)
"If something doesn't want to work
properly, bash it until it does."

She glances over at Dave.

TESS (CONT'D)

If only that were true...

Torment grows. She stops the video and turns away.

She focuses on the video file of Dave and her when she was young. She deletes it.

She grabs the waterproof sandwich bag from her backpack. She opens it and empties the contents.

She seals the phone in the waterproof bag and throws it back into her pack.

She glares at Dave.

She kicks him.

He doesn't budge.

TESS

So what now, Mr Positive?

A BEEP SOUNDS from the beacon locator. She opens it and sees her location relevant to the beacon. Realisation strikes.

She darts for the thruster control and pushes on the joystick. She fights the sub to push it towards the beacon.

The thruster whines down as the power drains. So does the life support fan. She manages to line up the dot to the centre of the screen.

She tries the thruster again but there's nothing. The life support fan stops.

She reaches over to the breaker to turn it off and back on.

Nothing. It's as dead as they will be.

TESS

Great.

She checks the distance to the beacon. The distance reduces, 45 feet, 40 feet, 35 feet...

She looks out the porthole.

TESS

Come on...

A glimpse of rocks passes the front porthole.

She stops and looks.

Blackness.

She focuses more intently.

The vessel sways forward.

She watches a rocky overhang come into view. In the emergency light outside, she sees Tom's submersible.

Hope sparks in her eye as she waits.

TESS

Tom.

She sees his face up against the porthole but as she passes, she can see him clear as day, floating inside the submersible, dead.

Torment grips her as she bursts into tears.

TESS

No...

The sway moves the submersible away from the edge. Outside is darkness until it sways back in. A CLUNK and a jerk of the submersible grabs her attention.

She looks out to see how close the cliff is as it moves away. She then sees a cliff overhang coming up from below as the submersible starts swaying straight for it.

Worry strikes her.

The submersible swings closer.

The top of the personnel sphere slams into the overhang.

CRUNCH!

Tess is thrown into the porthole.

Water punches through above the control panels like an industrial high-pressure cleaner. The jet of water passes over the back seat to smash into the cables and panels at the back of the submersible.

The spray water bounces off and hits Dave who gasps awake as the submersible jerks down the trench wall. The GRINDING CRUNCHES stop as the submersible clears the rocky face.

Tess sees the water pounding the back.

Out a side portal, she notices a completely smashed galvanic release.

She peers over the other side at the twisted clamp, barely hanging on.

The spray mist thickens.

She drops and feels for the extinguisher.

Dave rises, trying to see.

Water builds at their feet.

Tess latches onto the extinguisher.

Dave peers through the mist. He sees her charge for the porthole. He dives and tackles her into the back seat.

DAVE

Uh aaah. No screwing up our chance
to go out in a blaze of glory.

She arches on her back. He lays on top of her.

Spray pours over their faces.

He viciously punches into her ribs.

She struggles in pain. She tries to tilt her head to headbutt. It's useless.

TESS

Get... off me!

The pain shudders through her. She strains to turn her head to his ear. She bites a chunk from his lobe. He screams in agony.

He pulls his head away from her as she spits the chunk.

Water sprays over them while the sway continues.

He holds his bloody ear.

DAVE

Little bitch!

Dave headbutts her in the side of the head.

He rises to see her a bit dazed.

DAVE

Sweet dreams.

He prepares to headbutt her again.

She pulls an arm free and covers her brow.
He constantly smashes her arm with his head.
She roars and presses her feet against the wall.
Her back slides over the seat. Her head drops.
Dave's head hits a control panel. He recovers.
She reaches to grab his throat.
Their legs dangle over the seat.

TESS

Come on. Show me what you got.

She squeezes his throat.
He glances between her and the water.
He lunges and pushes her head to the floor.
Her head ploughs into the water. Fear grips her.
Dave turns her head to the side.
The water laps her nose and mouth. She struggles.
The water rises as the vessel sways.
Her mouth and nose dip under.
She strains with all her might and lifts her head high enough
to take a massive breath. Dave watches her lungs fill.
She sees the water jet close to Dave's legs.
Dave pushes hard.
She lets go and calms herself. She relaxes, finally at peace.
The MUFLED SOUNDS are hardly heard.
Carefully, she feels with her hands, building a visual map of
where his body is.
Dave studies her total peace, confused by her fondling hands.

DAVE

Hey... you're giving up already?
Letting me win? You're supposed to
have more fight than that.

Her hand crawls up his leg. She grips his hip bone.

DAVE

I bet everyone would give me a
little respect now.

She smiles.

She reaches up and drives her thumb into the wound.

Dave roars in pain. He struggles to escape her hand.

She jabs harder. He grunts in pain.

DAVE

You... can't stop me!

He gets his footing and lifts his ribs from her reach.

She strains hard to raise her head a fraction, releases and falls back.

She jams her foot into his thigh.

Dave notices. His eyes widen in dread.

She forces him into the water jet that brutally grabs and wrenches him toward the back.

His chest hits the chair, flings up and twists him around.

The jet slams him against the wall, his knee and shin jamming behind a control box. The jet pins him among the panel brackets and cables. His head at the top, clear of the spray.

He roars as if smashed by a fire hose.

Tess clambers to her feet and breathes calmly.

She steadies herself as the vessel sways.

She tries to see through the foggy mist.

She moves around the water jet to see his body twisted and awkward with his head up near the top. He struggles to pull his leg out but it's jammed.

TESS

Hang in there while I get to work.

She reaches down. Her hands search through the water.

Dave struggles as water splashes off his chest and up under his chin. He tries to keep his face out of the spray.

DAVE

'Sokay! Don't worry about me! Save yourself!

TESS

Don't worry. That's exactly what I plan to do.

She searches the other side.

DAVE

So what happened to my little princess who was scared shitless that she'd have another death on her hands?... Did she give up on trying to save everyone?

TESS

No... you killed her. And now Mummy's more serious than ever.

She latches onto the fire extinguisher. She rises.

She glares at Dave, a pathetic twisted man.

The hull groans like a monster of the abyss, about to swallow them whole. Both of them listen. The ominous moan builds over the top of the noisy water jet.

DAVE

Is that crush depth? It's coming. Any second now. Pop.

She checks the depth indicator.

She watches it tick over to: 11,502 feet.

Panic strikes.

She goes to the porthole with the twisted galvanic release.

DAVE

Tick tock Tess. Is this how you
wanna spend your final seconds
before we're crushed together into
the size of a coke bottle? We'll
soon be a jellified mess. Feeding
marine life together. We'll finally
be at one with the ocean.

Tess holds the extinguisher up at the back of the porthole.
She then constantly smashes the extinguisher into a spot near
the galvanic trigger. The water level licks that area.

TESS

No NO!

DAVE

'Sokay Tess. Don't be worried. Just
accept our fate.

She moves her aim up an inch. She smacks it hard a few times.
Another inch. Harder hits. The water rises halfway over the
porthole. She panics more.

DAVE

Embrace the thought of being
squashed together. On the bright
side, you won't go through years of
suffering like I did.

Her rage builds. She roars and unleashes her barrage into the
water. Bang bang bang!

CLUNK.

She pauses.

She peers out the porthole but the spray makes it difficult
to see. She covers the porthole with her body. It clears. She
watches the entire nose cone fall away.

She drops the fire extinguisher and races to the depth
indicator: 11,564 feet. It slowly ticks over. The sway slows.

TESS

Come on you bastard.

She checks the speed indicator that ticks over to: 0.4 knots.

DAVE

Hey no need to call things names.

0.2 knots.

DAVE
(scoffs)
Always some cruel dangling carrot
of hope, forever stringing you
along.

TESS
Shut up before I knock you out.

0.0 knots. No more swaying.

She scoffs.

The hull creaks and groans under the pressure.

The sounds fade to silence.

The speed hovers at 0 for what seems like eternity.

She palms the indicator.

Depth indicator ticks from: 11,587 feet, to: 11,586 feet.

Excitement grips her. The speed accelerates faster toward the
surface: 0.1, 0.2, 0.4, 0.7.

TESS
Yes!

The SHUDDERING SOUND of buoyancy foam starts. Dave listens.

DAVE
Sounds like some of that buoyancy
foam is flopping around.

She focuses on the spray coming in.

The water level reaches her thighs. Her drink bottle crinkles
under the pressure.

DAVE
Oooh feel that pressure? That's
sick!

She pauses and swallows.

She sees the pressure squeezing her water bottle more.

The foam shudders louder. Dave's eyes dart around.

DAVE

Oh wow! So... all this air will be
squashed into that little box up
there?

He looks at the control panel up top.

She follows his gaze.

TESS

I'll be fine.

The hull shakes with a growing thudding sound.

The water jet slows.

The water rises to their hips.

She checks the speed indicator: 7.4 knots and climbing.

DAVE

Bit of a race to the top. Water in
here or the submersible to the
surface. My bet's on the water.

TESS

Hey we're passing nearly eight
knots. Express elevator to the
surface.

DAVE

Sure? Two miles at eight knots?
What's that... about fifteen
minutes? I think we have about
twelve before we start getting
embolisms. Rebreathers won't help
much then.

TESS

They won't need to help that much.

She grabs his rebreather and takes it to him. She sees his
knee and shin jammed behind the control box. She hands the
rebreather to him. He reluctantly grabs the rebreather.

The spray dies down more.

Her water bottle crinkles under the pressure.

They can see better now. Tess looks up and feels around near
the water coming in. She's a fraction too short to see.

Tess steps onto the front seat, scrunched up, but more able to investigate the leak. Her hands try to access the hull breach but a panel covering that area makes it difficult.

DAVE

Speed will rip that foam off soon.
We're still dead no matter what.
Still, I wish things were
different. I wish I was allowed to
be your uncle Dave. But I screwed
up. I let myself care about you.
All this is my mistake.

TESS

You call this a mistake?

She notices screws securing the top panel cover tight.

DAVE

I stayed on the boat. I kept
working. I let Joe break me. I
never thought he'd take you away. I
say that's a pretty big mistake.
But maybe Joe can see what he did
to me.

She drops and searches for the screwdriver in the water.

TESS

So you expect me to just tell them
you were a victim?

DAVE

I can't help it. I still think
you're a good person. You care
about life. You cared about me a
long time ago. I made a mistake.
Yet you still cared about saving
me.

She backhands the water in frustration.

DAVE

But if you survive, I think you
should tell the truth. Make sure
they know I tried to kill you. Make
sure they know I killed Tom. Make
sure they know that I took away
Sally's daddy. In the end, I'm just
a psycho like you said.

TESS
It's not gonna work.

DAVE
What do you mean?

TESS
I tell them all that and they have
to live with the thought of letting
a psycho stay on board?

She feels around the floor with her leg, struggling to find
the screwdriver in the deep water.

DAVE
What choice do you have? Tell them
I was the victim, or tell them I
was the killer. The truth will set
you free.

TESS
You really are delusional.

The water level has half-filled the sphere. She slows the
search with her foot, as she glances between the panel screws
and the water.

DAVE
I got the ocean on my side. You
won't stop two tonnes of pressure
squashing every inch of you.

She punches the water. She roars, then calms. She gives up.

Dave tries to get up from the tangled mess but the fading
water jet keeps pushing him back and his leg is still jammed.

DAVE
Getting hot. All that pressure
heating the air. You think it will
get hot enough to boil your lungs?

She glances around.

The pressure dints her water bottle.

TESS
Well we better get prepared then.

She prepares her deflated life jacket and rebreather.

DAVE

Wow. Now that's positive thinking.

TESS

No it's being serious. Big difference.

The water level reaches Dave's chest and the water jet is now ploughing into the water before him, splashing up into his face. He starts to wiggle free but his leg is stuck.

DAVE

What do you expect to do? Three thousand feet with a six hundred feet rebreather? That's delusional even for saturation dives. We're screwed.

TESS

Just like free diving. Calm and collected. Pressure builds until the peak pressure, then the pressure releases as we go back up.

She throws a deflated life jacket to Dave who pauses, confused as he glances between the life jacket and Tess.

She stands back and meditates. She sinks into a state of almost sleeping. Oblivious, until the water level splashes close to her chin. She opens her eyes. Her breathing is laboured as she squints with the heat.

The water level is up to Dave's chin as he tries to pull his leg free.

DAVE

Even if you try, you'll die from the bends before you get to the top. Just accept it already.

The water jet fades.

The pressure crushes her water bottle.

DAVE

I... I'm sorry, Tess. If there was any other way. I still love you. I just wish you could've forgiven me... Sleep well.

Dave puts his rebreather mask on. The water rises over him.

Tess' nose and lips barely break the surface next to the panel box. The water jet stops as the pressures equalise.

She struggles to breathe and squints in pain. A moment of calm. She relaxes. She hears a hiss as the pressure outside decreases.

The water level rises more as the air is sucked out.

She ducks under as the inside of the submersible becomes completely full. Tess looks around as her hair floats.

The thudding of the outside foam grows.

She grabs the rebreather.

Her water bottle expands as the pressure reduces.

She copes better. She peers over at Dave who just glares at her. She puts the rebreather mask on and blows out the water.

She breathes as the sound of her breath mixes with the thudding and shaking. She's calm.

She grabs the handheld waterproof radio. She turns the knob to an emergency signal. She clicks the button near her ear and static noise comes through.

Dave smiles.

DAVE
(through his mask)
That won't work at this depth.

She sees him talk. It's muffled. She clips the handheld waterproof radio onto the shoulder of the life jacket, moves over closer and points her ear to him.

TESS
(through her mask)
What?

She hears his muffled voice through the water.

DAVE
(through his mask)
It's too deep for the radio!

She smiles and nods.

TESS
(through her mask)
That's okay.

She relaxes and prepares herself. Eyes closed. Very slow breaths. An aura of serenity, calm, peace. Like riding an elevator. She slips back into her sleep-like world.

CRUNCH! She's snapped back to reality.

The submersible sways violently.

Tess' eyes snap open.

The foam thudding disappears.

The porthole catches her eye.

Outside, she sees the faintest hint of blue light.

The ride is much smoother. She checks the speed indicator, which slows dramatically: 6.4, 5.0, 3.6, etc.

She taps it, then madly bashes it.

She watches it balance to: 1.4 knots.

She starts preparing to put the deflated life jacket on as her ears slightly ring. She gets slight tunnel vision. Slight twitches. The early signs of Oxygen Toxicity.

She stops her breathing. She slightly freaks.

She focuses on Dave who holds up a rebreather valve with a forced tormented smile.

DAVE
(through his mask)
Oh two regulator valve! Say hello
to Oxygen Toxicity!

She races toward him as torment grips him.

DAVE
(through his mask)
Goodbye Tess.

He rips his rebreather apart.

She's shocked.

He smiles at her in a sorrowful loving gaze.

She panics, then sees the hatch and makes a charge for it.

Dave lunges forward to grab her rebreather.

She panics more. She breathes out and takes one last breath.

As she kicks at Dave, she pops the front hatch. The pressure yanks her slightly out. She peers back at Dave.

They share a gaze. His eyes plead as if he loves her. She relaxes and releases the rebreather. They part in peace.

She grabs the deflated life jacket and pushes her way outside, like an astronaut on a spacewalk, with Dave left in the submersible to die.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

She watches the submersible slowly float toward the surface, leaving her behind. She sees the instruments and cables inside the nose of the submersible.

She searches over the life jacket for the inflation cord.

The handheld radio HISSES MUFFLED SOUNDS from the surface.

JOE
(over radio)
... Ca-... -ency...

She struggles with the life jacket, working out which is front and back.

The submersible gets further above her in the dim light.

She finds the life jacket cord and pulls. Nothing happens. She pulls again. Still nothing. Sick of the hassles, she wrenches the cord.

The life jacket swells slightly with a short RUSH OF COMPRESSED AIR and the buoyancy launches her skyward.

She rises toward to the submersible. She lets air out of her lungs.

A few more muffled words come through the radio.

JOE
(over radio)
... I... but... hear you...

The submersible is in her way.

Her eyes widen at the exposed cables and instruments inside the framework of the submersible's nose.

She pulls herself up to the life jacket, which incrementally expands as the water pressure decreases. She lifts her legs to steer her ascent.

The life jacket veers away from the submersible but her shoulder slams into the submersible's nose frame. Thump!

She spins from the impact and her foot swings around and gets caught in the cables.

She loses grip of the life jacket which slips away with the strap snaking around her arm toward the light.

She gains some composure. She tries to reach for the strap. Her grabs miss. The end of the strap flicks out. She thrusts her hand to catch it. Her fingertip snatches the loop which wrenches on her arm.

She winces. More bubbles escape her lungs. She calms herself.

JOE
(over radio)
... Tess, is that... coming...

She reaches to her leg that's jammed between cables. She tries to pull herself free. She can't.

She looks around and up to see through the porthole. Inside, she sees Dave using her rebreather, he has a full-on oxygen toxicity seizure and passes out. Gone.

JOE
(over radio)
... hear the emergency...

Worry strikes. She brutally yanks her foot which pulls her down each time.

She reaches with her free hand to grab the porthole. She pulls harder and shakes her leg. The cables on her leg finally give way. Back toward the surface.

She flies past the damaged syntactic foam. The entire side ripped open. The remnants of the blast that destroyed so much.

JOE
(over radio)
... on my way... can't hear you...

She floats away from the submersible. She watches it fade against the backdrop of the abyss.

She lets more bubbles out. The damaged submersible disappears.

Tess stares at the life jacket which seems half inflated now. She pulls herself up the strap. She grabs the base of the life jacket. It slips from her grip.

The jacket races away but the strap pulls tight in her hand. She steadies herself. More air from her lungs.

JOE
(over radio)
Tess your signal is getting
clearer. Can you hear me?

Slower, more focused, she climbs the strap, hand over hand. She grabs the base on the life jacket firm and pulls. Her other hand snatches the neck of the jacket which is closer to full size now.

She lets out more air. She forces her head through the neck hole. The jacket flicks up into her view. She pushes it down to her stomach. She struggles to reach the back which floats behind her head.

JOE
(over radio)
I'm on my way but I can't hear you.
Are you okay?

She slaps behind her to grab something. She reaches down further and grasps the strap. She pulls. It's wrapped around her leg, wedged between her legs.

She pulls harder. The strap slowly snakes around her leg, until it comes free. She lets out more of her breath.

JOE
(over radio)
Tess we can hear the emergency
signal from your radio. We are
triangulating your position. I'm on
my way but I can't hear you.

She pulls the back of the fully inflated jacket down and follows the straps to the clips. She pulls the clips around the life jacket. She pauses and looks up.

JOE
(over radio)
You must be pretty close to the
surface. The signal is coming
through much clearer.

The light above is brighter almost white.

She convulses, wanting to breathe. She struggles to pull the last clip around her waist. She starts to black out. She relaxes, fading away.

JOE
(over radio)
Please Tess you can make it. Don't
give up. Don't give up...

She opens her eyes for a glimpse of the crystallised refracted light from the surface.

She grits her teeth. With one last push, she clicks the clips together. She glimpses the waves above, slips away and passes out.

EXT. RIGID INFLATABLE RESCUE BOAT - DAY

Joe, ready to dive, glances over the water. He holds the radio in his hand. He scours the surface where several large pieces of syntactic foam float ominously.

A TRACKING GUY sits behind him and has a tracking device with headphones. The boat DRIVER scans the distance.

Joe presses the button on the radio.

JOE
Tess I'm here. I'm looking for you.
Just tell me you're okay.

He scours the water, checking for any sign.

The tracking guy flicks double fingers, three times to the right. The driver turns and revs the motor to go that way.

Joe pushes the button again.

JOE

Come on Tess give me a sign.

He waits.

The driver slows.

They sit quiet.

The waves lap the boat.

The engine bubbles the water and idles.

In front of them, bubbles rise.

Joe points.

JOE

There!

They idle closer.

Joe peers down at where the bubbles came from.

Suddenly, a piece of foam bursts from the water.

He pauses, stunned.

The boat idles over.

Joe grabs the piece of foam. He studies it with a gaze of dread.

THUMP!

Something rocks the front of the boat.

Joe races to the front and glances over the side.

Tess rises in front of his eyes. Hands grab her.

Blackness.

INT. DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER - DAY

A gasp of breath! Tess rises.

A MEDICAL OFFICER helps her over the side of a bed where she vomits watery goop.

She coughs and pants to catch her breath. She grabs her head in pain. She tries to see.

Claustrophobic walls.

TESS

No...

She freaks and rises to punch at the door.

TESS (CONT'D)

No get me outta here!

She coughs more.

Joe rests his hands on her shoulders.

JOE

Hey hey it's okay.

She spins to see his face. They gaze at each other.

JOE (CONT'D)

Just calm down... Serious case of the bends okay? Gonna be in decompression for a while, but the doc says you're gonna be fine.

She calms.

He sits her on the bed.

She coughs more.

JOE

Tom?

Her face says it all. Joe struggles to hold back his torment.

As he calms, he hands her a bottle of water.

She gingerly grabs it and takes a sip.

JOE

So what happened down there?

She doesn't answer.

He gives an angry gaze.

JOE

This is serious, Tess.

She sits quiet, recovering.

Joe sighs.

JOE

Look we found this phone in the vessel. Some of the stuff we found on there... he was...

She sees the mobile phone in his hand.

JOE (CONT'D)

There's nothing I wouldn't do for my daughter...

She pauses and gazes at him.

JOE (CONT'D)

... but if that psycho did -

TESS

Dave messed up. He just... made mistakes. He tried to fix them but... He just made mistakes.

Her eyes plead to Joe who releases his anger and relaxes into acceptance as she gives him a comforting hug.

TESS

Everything's gonna be okay.

EXT. DEEP OCEAN / UNDERWATER - DAY

WRITTEN: 3 YEARS LATER.

A jet-like submersible streams through the water. It flies exceptionally fast through the plankton. It then slows.

INT. JET-LIKE SUBMERSIBLE - DAY

Tess pilots the vessel with a content peace about her. Behind her is a passenger.

TESS
So here it is. Peaceful, beautiful,
amazing... It's a whole new world
in the black abyss.

The passenger is Sally. She peers through the canopy at a vampire squid which flares open in a wondrous display.

Tess turns to see Sally's fascination, and as a proud mother, she smiles.

EXT. DEEP OCEAN / UNDERWATER - DAY

The submersible dives and fades into the black abyss.

FADE OUT.