

STORMCATCHERS

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FADE IN:

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

An opaque green swirl of foaming water. A deep SONOROUS noise. Dark shapes flicker past. The sound getting LOUDER.

An explosion of bubbles. SOMETHING rockets through the water. Leaves a comet trail of FOAM --

STORMCATCHER - 1

Peppered with hatches, torpedo tubes and a wraparound armoured observation window. A metal SHARK with a glass smile travelling in a cocoon of air. Powered by CAVITATION ENGINES with a top speed of MACH-3 (This technology really exists.)

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 - BRIDGE - DAY

This is not STAR-TREK. No squeaky clean hi-tech here. Imagine you're inside a dump truck or an oil rig.

All surfaces are rounded. Rubberized. A craft designed to go to hell and back on a daily basis.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
My Father was Captain of
Stormcatcher 1, the first SubJet
craft able to travel above and
beneath the oceans, specifically
designed to take on a Superstorm.

A tall man with flecks of grey in his hair and slate green eyes occupies the middle seat on the control deck. HOWARD J. MALLICK (50s) Captain of Stormcatcher 1

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
Their mission, to protect the crew
on the base, along with the
millions locked in cryo-sleep
hoping to awaken to a new world.

On the control desk. A couple of photos. A younger Mallick leaning against an old Chevy TRUCK with an attractive woman and one of him in a boxing pose wearing a winners belt.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
Give me a clear path to the drop
zone Tara. This used to be the
busiest shipping lane in America.
There's gonna be a lot of wreckage
floating about.

Analyst TARA GREEN(30s), hair dark as a raven's wing, flicks the deep sea RADAR up onto screens around the bridge.

A collection of small knitted animals dangle above her. When she's not working the computers her hands are busy knitting another small wool animal creation. Fingers always moving.

TARA

Getting a lot of clutter here.

She projects a 3-D HOLO display in front of them. It's full of moving thermal signatures -- all headed their way.

JONES MASON (30s) Chief Engineer and Pilot, a bluff retro TEXAN wears all black. A bolo tie with a silver clasp. A Johnny Cash fan. Sugar and black coffee his drug of choice.

He heads over to his console. Treads on something. Scoops up a small knitted animal.

JONES

The hell...thought I'd trodden on a damn kitten.

Tara snatches it from him.

TARA

That's Benji, I've been looking for him.

JONES

You and your fancy knitting, don't you have enough to keep your fingers busy on the computer.

Jones settles behind his controls. Flicks displays up.

TARA

It's not knitting, it's Amigurami, Japanese. Chou the geophysicist on the base taught me. I have RFS, restless finger syndrome, helps keep them in check.

Jones smiles, shakes his head.

JONES

I had a girlfriend like that.

TARA

Really?

(beat)

You had a girlfriend?

Jones shoots her a wry smile. Focuses on a large red mass that dwarfs the other radar signatures. Alters course.

JONES

I don't like meeting anything I ain't been properly introduced to.

CRUSOE "QUANT" WILSON (30s) mind like a razor and a sharp tongue. Intelligence trumping sensitivity. Checks readings.

QUANT

Fifteen hundred feet long. Over five hundred tons...metallic in composition.

JONES

That's gonna' put a big hole in the fence

Jones gives it a wide berth. The MASS swings towards them.

JONES (CONT'D)

Damn.

TARA

The force of the current is pushing it into our path.

The RADAR MAP a sea of RED as --

A RUSTED STEEL BOW looms up in front of them --

Jones yanks the controls -- nearly makes it --

BLAM!

They careen down the side of rusty --

SUPERTANKER

Hundreds of tons of barnacle encrusted hull SCRAPES past. Jones wrestles with the controls, tries to pull clear.

As a huge --

PROPELLER

Thrashes past. Misses them by inches. And then it's gone.

JONES

Damn! That was close.

The radar screen is full of smaller signatures.

QUANT

Getting busy again.

Jones heaves at the controls as more wrecks whirl past. A FISHING BOAT, upside down -- dragging nets.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Jettison the charges.

A PASSENGER LINER rumbles past them. Lights still on --

PROPELLERS - CHURNING

TARA
Charges primed...

EXT. STORMCATCHER 1 - HULL

Two CANISTERS tumble into the depths.

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 - BRIDGE - SAME

Jones is still taking avoiding action -- the stream of obstacles getting smaller. A POD of DOLPHINS speed past.

TARA
Charges away and set for maximum depth.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
Okay Jonesy get us out of here.

JONES
You got it. One hundred watts of C and W...what do we say?

Jones hits PLAY on a battered old CD deck. Johnny Cash's "Man in black." Fills the bridge. Tara smiles.

TARA
Cash is king.

QUANT
I so hate country and western.

Mallick shakes his head.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
He's like a surgeon, it helps him concentrate.

Jones slams the throttles wide open. The ship leans over -- rockets through the water and blasts out of the side of a Four-thousand feet high --

WATERSPOUT!

Rockets through the air above the ocean surface as --

KABOOM!

The depth charges DETONATE. The base of the spout pulses with light. The whirling funnel COLLAPSES. A Billion tons of water rains back into the sea.

As we go high above the --

EARTH

Swirling circles of dark cloud. Superstorms, tornadoes, typhoons. Bursts of light flare into the atmosphere above the thunderclouds. Spewing GAMMA RAYS into darkest space.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)

It all started back in 2050 with super computers that could predict the weather with uncanny accuracy...

INT. M.P.C - METEOROLOGICAL PREDICTION CENTRE - FLASHBACK

A vast space with wall to wall SCREENS. Computerised prediction software fills the screens with swirling jetstream tracking, Isobars, wind speed and precipitation.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)

Pretty soon the weather became just another futures derivative to be traded on the markets.

NEW YORK - STOCK MARKET - DAY

Trades are being taken on temperature, wind speed and hours of sunshine. Meteorological futures are being traded for billions of dollars. A way to hedge against crop failure.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)

It was only a matter of time before someone reverse engineered the predictive patterns in the computer and tried to control the weather.

EXT. WOOMERA TEST RANGE - AUSTRALIA - DAY

Rockets launch into a clear blue sky. Seed clouds with chemicals to induce rain.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)

The days when a butterfly flapping its wings in Japan could affect the worlds weather were gone forever.

ON SCREEN

NEWS FOOTAGE. Floods swamp India. Tornadoes leave a trail of devastation across America. Earthquakes rip Japan apart.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)

After we meddled with the Earth's weather and unleashed Superstorms too powerful to survive, Mankind went back to where it came from.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Vast SUBMERSIBLE constructions being assembled in shipyards around the world.

GIANT FLOATING structures being towed out to sea by TUGS.

Controlled submersions of undersea BASES in the OCEANS.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
Nations scrambled to complete the construction of undersea survival BASES before the Earth was overwhelmed.

The destruction of the world's weather system plays out through increasingly sensationalist media.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
America completed SUB-1. Japan SUB-2 and Russia SUB-3, the rest of the world were driven to find whatever shelter they could.

A CROWD of people fight to get past ARMED TROOPS protecting the entrance to a gangplank leading to SUB-1. POLICE use batons to drive them back.

A Japanese GIRL with long dark hair held by a BUTTERFLY clasp SCREAMS from the deck -- hands outstretched. While below her family are cruelly beaten back as they try to join her.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
The criteria for entry was harsh...whole families were ripped apart leaving wounds that would never heal.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT

A flash of light illuminates the dark clouds. BALL LIGHTNING rains from the sky. A vortex of wind and rain twist the ocean waters into jagged shapes. As we drop below the surface...

EXT. SUB-1 PACIFIC OCEAN, SUBDUCTION ZONE - ESTABLISHING

Plunging through the foaming turmoil. A vast structure looms into view. A square mile of barnacle encrusted metal.

Muted light leaks from portholes along it's length. A modern day Atlantis of armoured carbon fibre and rusted steel.

INT. CRYO-DECK - NIGHT

Rows of metal and PLEXIGLAS PODS, Cryo-Sleep units, wreathed in frost fill the cavernous deck. Icy vapour drifts along the floor.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
 With space and oxygen supplies limited, a decision about who should live and who should merely exist had to be made.

FACEPLATE

A glimpse of a human face -- in frozen stasis.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
 Inside SUB-1, mankind's greatest conflict was being orchestrated. A war against nature itself.

INT. SUB 1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL DECK - NIGHT

A hundred screens of data populate the deck. On a vast curved vid-screen -- computers map SUPERSTORMS sweeping the planet.

SCIENTISTS work computers. Analysts pore over DATA. A 3D-HOLO of an individual CYCLONE spins in mid air above their heads.

Imagine a spiralling triangle of colour. A monstrous heat engine with blue descending air through the EYE, surrounded by the EYEWALL. And deep within the belly of the beast, the dark red heart. Its thermal engine producing the same energy as a twenty kiloton nuclear warhead -- every ten minutes.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
 The scientists having failed to halt hundreds of years of abuse on the planet were now charged with the task of trying to control and reverse the cycle of superstorms.

INT. LAUNCH DECK - SAME

A collection of battered and scorched Sub-Spacecraft, **STORMCATCHERS**. Their hulls peppered by lightning strikes.

Stormcatchers 12, 13 and 14 sit alongside --

STORMCATCHER 1.

More battered than the rest. It sits on rusted steel rails. Icons of tornadoes crossed out along it's bow. Ten of them.

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
 Ten ships had been lost inside
 storms too massive to survive.
 Amongst the crews were my mother
 and my Father's best friend, Chief
 Engineer Woody Jensen.

Captain Howard J Mallick heads up the ramp into the ship.
 The weight of responsibility evident in his tired features..

LUCAS MALLICK (V.O.)
 From the moment I arrived on SUB-1
 I wanted to join the Stormcatcher
 fleet. A destiny my Father did
 everything in his power to stop.

INT. STOREROOM - STORMCATCHER 1 - DAY

Captain Mallick stripped to the waist pummels a punch bag --
 precise powerful punches. Moves to a hanging SPEEDBAG --
 slams it rhythmically, dances nimbly around it.

Pinned to the backboard photos of an old GYM, and some fight
 posters. "Hurricane Mallick" VS "Big Jim Brewster"

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 - CORRIDOR

Captain Mallick wipes his face with a towel. Turns a corner.
 Comes face to face with LUCAS MALLICK, his son, (20s) well
 muscled like his father. Blonde hair with piecing blue eyes --
 right now blazing with anger. Waves print outs at his father.

LUCAS
 One hundred percent...

He holds up a sheet each time he makes the point.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 Flight simulator...predictive
 meteorology...thermal
 dynamics...systems engineering...

He produces a final sheet of paper. Holds it up.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 So why do you think I got a fail?

His father drops his eyes.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
 You hacked into the system?

LUCAS

That would be dishonest. Almost as dishonest as rigging the results to prevent your own son getting into the Stormcatcher command fleet.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

You don't have the temperament for it.

(beat)

Do you have any idea what it takes to make a decision that could result in the death of people you care about...

LUCAS

We've lost ten ships in a month. We need more people like you.

(beat)

People like me.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

A lot of people thought they were the next best thing. They're gone.

LUCAS

It was Woodys theory wasn't it?

(beat, then)

You and him were always coming up with theories about the storms, the Gaia principle and ways to shut them down. Was that what he was trying to prove that day?

His Father turns away. Lucas shakes his head.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

I'm twenty years old dad...the only change I can make from down here is to go up there and destroy the one thing you hate more than anything else in the world...the storms...

Off his father's worried face.

EXT. STORMCATCHER LAUNCH DECK - DAY

CREW load BOXES into the hold of STORMCATCHER 1.

FOOD SUPPLIES, OXYGEN CYLINDERS. Various TANKS with chemical symbols on the side. A short, heavyset MAN grumbles to his stooped companion as he drags a heavy wooden box up the ramp.

HEAVYSET MAN

Isn't this supposed to be a test flight? There's more supplies here than in the damn Ark...check again.

His companion studies a glass TABLET. While watching from...

BEHIND A FUEL STORE

Lucas works another sliver of glass. Information scrolling across it. He taps in some code.

EXT. STORMCATCHER LAUNCH DECK - DAY

The stooped man taps the glass tablet. Shrugs.

STOOPS

All checks out.

LUCAS

Stands next to a LONG wooden box. He slides the wooden lid open. Inside it's half full of food. He TAPS the computer.

EXT. STORMCATCHER LAUNCH DECK - DAY

Stoops computer PINGS. He looks at the screen.

STOOPS

Hold on. Another box to go.
Should be here somewhere.

(spots the box)

Over here.

Heavysset ambles over.

HEAVYSET MAN

Great, another heavy one.

He tries to lift it -- too heavy. Stoops looks at him.

STOOPS

I'll get the hydraulic.

EXT. STORMCATCHER LAUNCH DECK - DAY

STORMCATCHER 1 groans like an old ship straining against an anchor as the vast DRY DOCK floods. TURBINES pick up speed.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - SAME

An explosion of spray as the craft bursts through the surface of the storm lashed ocean. Into boiling black clouds above.

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 - LOWER DECK - CONTINUOUS

The long wooden box SHAKES. Lucas climbs out.

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 - BRIDGE - SAME

Captain Mallick runs the engines through stress tests. Swooping down and round -- blasting through the clouds. Skimming above the waves below. He levels the craft out.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Dad.

Captain Mallick jerks round.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

What the hell are you doing here?

Lucas tries to speak. But immediately throws up.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)

How did you get on board?

He hands Lucas a cloth to wipe his mouth.

LUCAS

I hacked into the base computer and ordered extra food supplies.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Why?

Lucas slumps down onto the floor.

LUCAS

I needed to prove I was good enough to become a Stormcatcher.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

We already had this discussion.

Captain Mallick pulls Lucas to his feet. Sits him in the copilot's seat.

LUCAS

I miss mum as well.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

So you know why I'm not letting you get a command.

Before Lucas has a chance to respond Klaxons BLARE. Warning indicators flash on the control deck.

Captain Mallick runs diagnostics on the control desk screens. An icon flashes on the power generators. RADIATION ALERT - PULSE ENGINE SYSTEMS CORRUPTED.

LUCAS
What's happening?

His father pulls up a radar picture. Overlays thermal readouts of approaching storms on the screens.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
Electromagnetic fields from the storm are disrupting the pulse engine control circuits.

He pulls an old diary out of a drawer. Flicks through it.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)
I've been keeping records of the electromagnet force fields that appear when cyclones show up.

The ship shudders like a car engine running on two cylinders.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)
Thunderstorms release electrical energy into the atmosphere above them.

LUCAS
Like lightning?

CAPTAIN MALLICK
Newton's third law of physics.

LUCAS
For every action there's an equal and opposite reaction.

Feels like this is the nearest thing to a meeting of minds they've had in twenty years.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
When lightning strikes the earth an equal amount of Dark Lightning breaches the atmosphere above the storm...hits the Van Allen belt...the gamma rays produced are reflected off the ionosphere. Like radio waves...

LUCAS
So our engines are being messed up by radiation from a cyclone over a hundred miles away?

His father throws him the diary.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
It's just a theory, I have plenty of those.

Lucas flicks through the diary. It's full of sketches and diagrams, including the inner workings of a CYCLONE and its thermal components. At the top of the CYCLONE sketch his father has drawn a question mark.

LUCAS

Can't we glide? Then switch to the pulse engines once we're clear of the electromagnetic fields?

CAPTAIN MALLICK

We don't have enough forward momentum to generate lift...

Lucas looks at the distant cyclone, thinking.

LUCAS

A cyclone generates lift...

Hi father looks at him. A flicker of hope in his eyes.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

The electromagnetic field would swamp us.

LUCAS

Not necessarily. Dark Lightning radiates upwards. The magnetic field beneath the cyclone...

CAPTAIN MALLICK

(getting it)

Is much weaker.

Lucas shoots a look at the altimeter. Their rate of descent precipitous.

LUCAS

What if we use momentum. Short bursts from the engines to give us altitude and then dive at an angle to pick up lift and speed...

His father nods, thinking.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

What the hell. Might work.

He reaches over and cuts the engines. The ship goes into a steep dive. The vessel shakes as it's buffeted by the force of the wind. The altimeter reading accelerates.

He slams the throttles wide open. The G-force pins them back into to their seats as they loop out of the dive. The craft soars upwards. He cuts the engines. The ship drops again.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)
Did I tell you the story about when
I was going out with your mother?

LUCAS
Do we have the time?

CAPTAIN MALLICK
We were driving back from a concert
in my dads old Chevy.

LUCAS
That thing was a whale. No wonder
there's no oil left in the world.

His father slams the throttles open again and the engines
scream. The ship claws its way back up through the clouds.
The cyclone getting nearer in the distance.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
We hardly had any gas left so we'd
coast down the hill to pick up
speed and then gun it at the top to
keep the momentum going. Barely
made it home on fumes.

He cuts the engines. An eerie silence as the craft tips over
and drops back down.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)
We were so buzzed we didn't climb
out of that old car for hours. Nine
months later you were born.

LUCAS
Oh thanks for that.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
Heh, you didn't turn out so bad.

LUCAS
Maybe, but a Chevy?

His father slams the throttles open again. Sends the ship
speeding away from the surface of the ocean down below.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
Lotta space in those old Chevies.

Lucas gives him a look.

LUCAS
Dad!

His father smiles. Been a long time since Lucas called him
that. He cuts the engines. They drop like a stone.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
 It's working. One more skip and
 we'll be in the Cyclones updraft.
 Then the real fun starts.

The ship plunges ever nearer to oblivion. Lucas watches as
 the altimeter spins towards zero.

500Ft -- 400Ft -- 300Ft -- 200Ft...

LUCAS
 DAD!!!!

BOOM!

The engines flare into life.

ALARMS sound as airframe overloads are approached and passed.

Pieces of equipment go into freefall as the colossal G-Force
 hits.

Stormcatcher 1 slices foam off the surface of the ocean.

Corkscrews up and over hundred foot waves.

Clears them by inches.

And then they're soaring towards the dark spinning tower of
 unimaginable power that is the CYCLONE.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 You factored in the height of the
 waves right?

His father gives him a look. Lies.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
 Of course.

And then it all goes BLACK as they're swallowed up by the --
 CYCLONE

Flashes of lightning flicker through the windows as they head
 for the eye of the storm. Captain Mallick uses short bursts
 from the engines to keep them level. They slowly gain height.

EXT. EYE WALL OF THE CYCLONE - CONTINUOUS

STORMCATCHER 1. Trapped like a fly in the rotating vortex of
 the cyclone's EYEWALL. A screaming RED HELL.

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 BRIDGE - SAME

Stones and lumps of wood smash against the crafts observation window. Something explodes against it. A smear of blood.

LUCAS

We stay in here any longer it'll
rip us apart.

Captain Mallick unbuckles his seat harness. Something in his eyes -- fear maybe?

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Come with me.

LUCAS

Really? Who's flying the ship?

CAPTAIN MALLICK

That's in the lap of the Gods.

LUCAS

What!?

CAPTAIN MALLICK

G.O.D.S Geospatial Orientation Data
System. Keeps the ship headed
heavenwards rather than down to
hell when you don't have a horizon.

LUCAS

I though you'd gone all religious
for a moment.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

I'll take all the religions I can
get right now.

He leaves the bridge. Heads for the steel steps leading down to the lower deck. Lucas shouts after him.

LUCAS

Does the Goddess Gaia know you're
being unfaithful?

Lucas unbuckles and follows him.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (O.C.)

She has her hands full without
worrying about me.

INT. LOWER STORAGE DECK - CONTINUOUS

Things have been thrown around. FOOD spilt from the wooden box that Lucas hid in rolls across the floor.

Captain Mallick walks over to a steel capsule about six feet long. It sits on a small wheeled trolley strapped to steel eyelets on the deck.

Stabiliser fins on each side. A propulsion unit at the rear.

LUCAS

What are you doing?

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Sample probe. It collects data from inside the storm.

LUCAS

I know that. I got a hundred percent, remember. You can also use it to deliver Silver Iodide into the heart of the cyclone...causes it to release moisture, weakening it.

Mallick hits a button. A sealed hatch hisses open.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Normally we have two on board. But it seems somebody messed with our inventory.

(to his son)

Still, at least I have a years worth of food. That'll come in handy.

LUCAS

Shit. If I'd known about these I could have stowed away in one.

His father looks at him.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

You still can.

Lucas shakes his head.

LUCAS

No way. We're going to ride this sucker like an elevator until we get to clean air then hightail it back to base. Now you've told me I'm good enough to be a Stormcatcher there's no way you're wriggling out of getting me a commission...

BLAM! His dad delivers a piledriver to his jaw. Knocks him out cold. Catches him before he hits the floor.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Sorry son, I really don't have the time to argue the point with you.

He places him inside the probe. Uncouples a cylinder marked Silver Iodide from the bottom of the capsule. Swaps it for an OXYGEN tank.

He picks up an oxygen mask and places it over his son's mouth. Turns the feed on. Slips the DIARY into his son's pocket. Takes a last look at his son.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)

Sorry we didn't get to talk more son.

He seals the capsule. Touches the cold metal surface of the capsule with his hand.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)

I guess it took this for us to get over the hump.

He unclips the straps from the deck eyelets and wheels the capsule down to an opening in the side of the ship.

AIRLOCK - PROBE LAUNCH POINT: DANGER

He releases the catch and swings open the circular steel pressure hatch. He slides the probe capsule into the opening. Closes and seals the hatch.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (CONT'D)

Have a good trip son. See you on the other side.

He hits the release button.

EXT. CYCLONE - STORMCATCHER 1

The PROBE is ejected into the EYE OF THE CYCLONE. It's motor ignites.

Blasts through the EYE WALL and out into free air.

A PARACHUTE deploys.

The capsule drifts over the ocean surface.

An EMERGENCY high intensity light flares -- a radio distress beacon BEEPS as it drifts down towards the ocean.

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 BRIDGE - SAME

Captain Mallick straps himself into his seat. Reaches for the engine controls. Slams the throttles wide open.

The engines ROAR.

Overload warning lights and Klaxons flash and blare.

EXT. STORMCATCHER 1 - CYCLONE - CONTINUOUS

The craft tears itself free from the --

EYEWALL of the cyclone.

Hurtles upwards through the --

EYE OF THE STORM.

Rockets towards the blazing canopy of Dark Lightning and Gamma Ray radiation that crisscrosses the sky above.

INT. STORMCATCHER 1 BRIDGE - SAME

Tinted filters slide down over the observation window as the ship hurtles towards the flaring radiation above.

The bridge fills with a golden light -- everything begins to lose definition.

Solid objects become transparent -- and then.

In a blinding flash of light, everything is GONE!

EXT. SUB-1 - PACIFIC OCEAN - CASCADI SUBDUCTION ZONE

A square mile of rusted subsea living quarters. Sand and sediment piled higher against the walls. Like the structure is being assimilated into the rift.

TITLE - ONE YEAR LATER

Fissures in the seabed snake towards the base. Volcanic SMOKERS pump out foaming hot water from magma chambers deep beneath the ocean's floor. Sea creatures with glowing tendrils dart past.

INT. SUB-1 - STORMCATCHER LAUNCH DECK - CONTINUOUS

Engineers prepare STORMCATCHER 12 for launch. The crew, Tara, Jones, Quant and new addition, febrile blonde, CATHERINE "CAT" JENSEN, (20s) head towards the steel ramp leading into the hull from the loading bay.

Cat points a palm sized video-camera at a familiar figure. Lucas Mallick. More grown up than when we last saw him because now he's wearing a Captain's uniform.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 BRIDGE - IN FLIGHT

Lucas rides the ship like an ancient seafarer, legs braced, unruly shock of blonde hair framing his piercing blue eyes. Born to command. He's become a man since losing his father.

LUCAS

Switch to immersive display.
Standby to fire drone. It's already
at EF10 and growing. If it keeps on
course it'll pass right over SUB-1
and that's one visitor we do not
want to put out the welcome mat
for.

A 3-D - HOLO display shows a huge, swirling storm. Digital information runs alongside. An analysis of the storm. Wind speed. Thermal, and moisture content. All climbing.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

And counting. Five, four, three,
two...

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - OUTER HULL - DRONE TUBE - SAME

A DRONE blasts out of the tube. Sprouts wings. Rockets towards the approaching storm.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

A secondary screen flares into life. Visual and telemetry data from the drone fill the screen. The main display updates. Numbers rising exponentially. Tara works her touchscreen, analyses data on the fly.

TARA

Its already got a ten mile
footprint. If it keeps building
we'll never shut it down.

Cat films Lucas as he issues orders.

CAT

Is this the biggest one you've
tackled?

Lucas shoots her a look. Not overjoyed at being filmed.

LUCAS

Well as it's still growing I can't
answer that.

Cat continues filming. Unfazed by his tone.

CAT

It's already an EF10 and growing,
if it went all the way to twelve,
would that be the biggest one
you've ever handled?

Lucas sits on it.

LUCAS

It would be the biggest one I've
handled...

CAT

But not the biggest one the fleet
has encountered?

She's pushing him. He stewes. Doesn't give her an answer.

CAT (CONT'D)

Your Father was Captain of
Stormcatcher 1. Didn't he take on
an EF15 during his last flight?

LUCAS

I don't have time for school
projects right now.

Jones watches the power feeds of all the engines. A Johnny
Cash CD propped up against an ancient CD PLAYER. He slugs
from a spill-proof beaker of coffee.

Antique instruments, a brass COMPASS and ALTIMETER sit
alongside a Victorian ANEMOMETER, a wind speed measuring
device. Out of place alongside the hi-tech control displays.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

How long before we hit?

JONES

Thirty seconds to the perimeter,
one minute to the eye...

Cat stares at a screen. Stunned at what she sees below her..

CAT'S POINT OF VIEW OF THE SCREEN

A vast gouge ripped in the Earths surface -- fifty square
miles of total devastation.

CAT (O.C.)

Jesus!

Looks like a giant digger scooped up a billion tons of earth.

JONES

(to Cat)

One minute it was there, the next...gone. No more Golden gate bridge, no more San Francisco.

CAT

What kind of a storm does that?

Tara looks up from her screens.

TARA

Something new. Gamma ray readings were off the scale. Whatever it was ruptured the Van Allen belt.

QUANT

Created an electromagnet vortex that screwed with gravity...ripped fifty square miles of city up like a piece of old carpet...

Lucas looks at the mutilated earth below.

LUCAS

My father said the storms would evolve, become more powerful.

CAT

You talk about it as if it's a living creature.

LUCAS

My father had his own theories.

CAT

Yeah, I know. My dad told me he believed in the Goddess Gaia...thought that the Earth was a self regulating entity.

LUCAS

Well its done a pretty good job of ridding itself of humanity so far...

Cat's in his face with the camera again. A dog with a bone.

CAT

He knew how dangerous it was in the storms plasma stream, and yet he headed straight for it.

She hits a nerve.

LUCAS

You think my father took too many chances?

CAT

I don't know I wasn't there. But you were...until he knocked you out. Why'd you think he did that?

LUCAS

You're here as an observer to monitor the operational performance of the new plasma drive your father designed...

CAT

We designed. I came up with the ion stream control mechanism. What did you come up with?

They glare at each other. Quant squints at data on the screens. Chews on some sort of dried meat.

LUCAS

You get in the way of running this ship and you can stick that plasma drive right up your a...

Quant butts in.

QUANT

Assuming you two have finished your piece to camera, we're gonna have to shave some time off our entry point...we got company.

Lucas stares at the 3-D HOLO display. Thermal pictures of two swirling cloud masses. The PRIMARY cyclone they're headed for, and a secondary CYCLONE closing in on them. Two vast Supercells on a collision course.

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - SAME

A tiny dot against the roiling black THUNDERHEADS of the CYCLONES. Threads of LIGHTNING crackle between them.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Lucas paces the deck. Mind racing.

LUCAS

We need to slow one of them down. If they combine...

QUANT

You're punching against an energy source that makes Hiroshima look like a kid's firework.

Lucas studies the screen.

LUCAS

I'm not getting into a fight here.
Just need to give one of them a
nudge. Get it to change course.

JONES

Better strap in. We'll be hitting
the edge in ten...

Lucas straps himself into the Captains seat. Everyone else tightens their seat-belts. The deck vibrates. Lights dim.

Jones slips a CD into the battered old deck. The bridge fills with "I Walk the line." By Johnny Cash. Quant rolls his eyes. Sticks his fingers in his ears.

Tara flicks up some close up pictures of the second Cyclone.

TARA

It's a monster.

JONES

Got some wind shear pockets dead
ahead. Yeha!

The ship drops like a stone. Anything not anchored down flies across the cabin. Cat tries to mask her fear. Focuses on documenting the process.

JONES (CONT'D)

Breaking the cloudbarrier in three
two...

BLAM. Stormcatcher 12 enters the --

PRIMARY CYCLONE.

Pitches violently. Corkscrewing through layers of wind shear.

The HOLO DISPLAY switches to the forward cameras.

A wall of moisture and gaseous clouds whip past the observation window. HAILSTONES rattle against the glass.

LUCAS

Give me a Drone-cam shot of the
secondary thunderhead.

Tara works her console. The view from the drone's front camera fills one side of the main display. The secondary Thunderhead looms alongside the primary...it's closing.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Okay, release the seed missiles on
my mark. Three, two, one...

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - PRIMARY THUNDERCLOUD - SAME

A fusillade of missiles loaded with Silver Iodide burst out from the primary Thundercloud.

Streak between the two cyclones --

Disappear into the secondary cyclone and detonate.

Flashes of light illuminate the dark clouds.

JONES (O.C.)
 Readying another load.

LUCAS (O.C.)
 Hit it.

WHOOSH.

Another group of missiles are swallowed up by the secondary thunderhead.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Tara monitors the thermal readouts.

TARA
 Thirty percent less moisture
 content. She's losing mass. But
 it's not slowing her down.

LUCAS
 Ready the Disulfide.

Jones works the controls. Tara checks readouts. Studies a swirling HOLO of the thermal engine driving the Cyclone.

TARA
 Setting range to the thermal
 centre. Locked.

INT. PRIMARY CYCLONE THUNDERHEAD - CONTINUOUS

A missile drops clear of the craft.

IGNITES.

Blasts out of the primary Cyclone thunderhead -- rockets towards the centre of the secondary Cyclone.

KABOOM.

Superconductive CARBON DISULFIDE liquid spews into the thermal engine of the storm.

BLAM. BLAM. BLAM.

Forks of lightning explode from within the cloud. Jagged spikes of electricity crackle beneath the thunderhead earthing it to the planets surface -- draining its power.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Tara throws up thermal analysis on the screens.

TARA
Temperature's dropping...

JONES
Let it go bitch.

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - SAME

The secondary Thunderhead...

SHUDDERS.

Black boiling clouds ripping down the middle.

Lightning explodes around the fracture as it...

BLOWS APART!

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The crew cheer as the Cyclone disintegrates.

BAM! The ship is rocked by an explosion. It pitches to one side. Tara studies the readouts.

TARA
We're drawing lightning strikes.

BAM. BAM. BAM. The craft shudders as massive bolts strike. Millions of volts crackle down its carbon fibre frame.

A sub-panel on a bank of equipment bursts into flames. Triggers auto-extinguishers. Dousing the panel.

TARA (CONT'D)
Wind speed's approaching three hundred and fifty miles an hour, covering an area of twenty square miles. Cloud mass forty-thousand feet and climbing...

CAT
How powerful is the storm now?

TARA
We've been at mesocyclone level for twenty minutes.
(MORE)

TARA (CONT'D)

If the speed of the updraft goes
critical it'll turn into a twister.
Suck up everything in its path.

Jones grunts. Starts tapping his control screen.

JONES

Including the base.

The ship starts to vibrate violently.

LUCAS

It's turning. Hit it with the
lasers.

Quant sucks in his cheeks. A born pessimist.

QUANT

Might be best to get the hell out
of here.

LUCAS

Jones?

JONES

I say we finish the bitch off.

LUCAS

Do it.

Jones hits the controls.

EXT. PRIMARY CYCLONE - SAME

Reticulated bursts of LASER flare out of the ship. Cutting
through the moisture clouds fuelling the supercell.

But the Cyclone -- EXPANDS.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 BRIDGE - SAME

Tara watches her readings.

TARA

Windspeed three hundred and fifty,
sixty, seventy...moisture content
at thirty percent, twenty-nine,
twenty-eight...

Jones battles to keep the engines balanced. KABOOM!

JONES

Hang on.

The ship is sucked into the -- EYE WALL. The dark baleful
rotating cloud that surrounds the EYE of the storm.

INT. PRIMARY CYCLONE - CONTINUOUS

A roaring explosion of sound. Dark clouds billow around the ship. Spinning at unimaginable speed.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

The ship bucks. Thrown around like a piece of straw.

TARA

Moisture content's climbing...

QUANT

We'll be over land soon.

The ship starts to shudder. Clouds outside the observation window turn a hellish BLACK.

TARA

It's turned...we're in a twister.

Cat films Lucas. Zooms in on his face.

CAT

What do we do now?

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Things start to smash into the craft. Black and white objects swirl past.

A pod of DOLPHINS!

We see now that the smaller objects are FISH.

Thousands of them. Plucked from the ocean below as the twister feeds its engine -- grows more powerful.

JONES

Time to leave the party.

A flash of wind torn terrain fills a screen -- rushing past below them.

TARA

We're over land.

Debris flies past the craft.

Wrecked vehicles. Fence posts -- sheets of corrugated iron.

Jones wrestles with the controls. Fights to keep it level.

LUCAS

Go round the wall, use the
tornadoes direction to give us the
momentum we need.

CAT
Need for what?

TARA
We don't have enough power to get
back out through the eyewall. We're
going to use the rotational force
of the Twister to throw us clear.

Quant sees something that gives him pause.

QUANT
I don't think that's going to work.

Jones yanks on the controls. Narrowly misses a TRACTOR.
Tara looks at the displays. Sees what's worrying Quant.
The VORTEX. The neck of the tornado is SHRINKING.

TARA
The vortex...it's closing.

JONES
Up or down Captain?

Lucas hesitates. Cat looks at him.

JONES (CONT'D)
Captain?

Tara and Quant turn to look at Lucas...something's not right.

TARA
I'm getting Dark Lightning readings
up to two hundred kilometres above
us...

Lucas shakes off his indecision.

LUCAS
Take us down Jonesy. Maximum speed.

Jones hits the control screens.

JONES
We're outta here.

EXT. TWISTER WALL - SAME

A swirling vortex of unimaginable power.

A black boiling funnel whirling around the screaming core of
the SUPERSTORM.

The sides of the funnel peppered with objects.

A BARN.

Hundreds of VEHICLES.

TREES trailing root systems.

Rusted SHIPWRECKS, tangled together by weed and barnacles.

And riding this four-hundred mile an hour maelstrom...

STORMCATCHER 12

Plummeting down into the spinning mouth of madness.

Dodging a million swirling pieces of debris.

While above the --

EXT. ABOVE THE EARTH - SAME

Thousands of miles above the storm. It's circular devastation visible from space. A giant MUSHROOM of raw power trailing a twisting stalk of devastation.

And as we watch...

BOOM!

The electric field at the top of the thunderstorm spews electrons into the atmosphere. Emitting the most powerful light energy known to man.

GAMMA RAYS.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Jones is starting to sweat. Debris rattles off the ship like shrapnel as they hurtle down through the belly of the twister.

TARA

Gamma ray readings are
rising...I've never seen anything
like it...

The lights and computer displays die.

The craft is plunged into blackness.

THE ENGINES CUT OUT.

Emergency lights flicker on.

JONES

That's the back pulse. Switching to
manual thrusters.

He operates some levers. Liquid fuel rockets ROAR into life.

CAT

We don't have any computer systems.

Jones taps the ancient brass instrument cabinet.

JONES

That's why we have these. Old school. Altimeter, wind speed and compass...magnetic fields don't bother these babies. Apart from the compass of course...but that's okay, 'cos I know where we are.

QUANT

And where's that?

JONES

(dry)
In the shit.

Cat stares at the ALTIMETER. The dial spins towards zero.

CAT

How accurate is that?

Jones taps the altimeter dial. It drops and then stabilises.

JONES

Within fifty feet. We should get the systems back up before we hit the deck.

CAT

Good to know.

LUCAS

We only have a few seconds before we punch out of the base of the twister so if anyone has anything they need to say, now's the time.

TARA

You owe me ten bucks.

LUCAS

I was thinking more in the spiritual sense.

JONES

A slug of JB wouldn't go amiss.

The altimeter winds inexorably towards zero. Still no sign of the ground through the observation glass.

LUCAS

Dump some Disulphide crystals.

Tara operates a pair of levers. Slams them open.

TARA
Eat that!

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - SAME

TONS of DISULPHIDE crystals pour out of a hatch below the ship -- produce a supercooling effect at the base of the storm.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Everyone stares at the Altimeter. 500 FEET! Then... ZERO!

EXT. THE TWISTER - SAME

The base of the Twister. Dust. Earsplitting sound. Hell on earth. And from it...

STORMCATCHER 12

Blasts through a wall of dust. While behind it --

THE TWISTER

Moves on.

Over a CLIFF.

Stormcatcher 12 gouges a foam flecked trail across the water below.

The TWISTER heads back out across the ocean.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Tara studies the thermal readouts.

TARA
She's weakening.

On the screen the thermal engine readings drop: 30%,29%,28%.

TARA (CONT'D)
Dammit!

The readings falter -- 28%,29%...

TARA (CONT'D)
It's picking up more heat from the
ocean surface...

Lucas unstraps from his seat.

LUCAS

Not on my watch. Jonesy, you have
the com. Bring her down. Quant,
prep the leveller.

Quant punches up a control interface. Lucas grabs a set of
HUD (Heads Up Display) GOGGLES. Jogs out of the bridge...

INT. LOWER DECK - SAME

Lucas climbs into what looks like a small tubular glass
elevator.

EXT. STORMCATCHER - SAME - DAY

Stormcatcher 12 smacks down onto the oceans surface.
A CONNING TOWER rises out of the deck --

It's the armoured glass elevator from inside the ship. The
curved door slides open. Lucas climbs out.

A cover slides open in front of him. An armoured DECK GUN
rises up from below. He climbs onto a seat behind it. Slips
on his goggles. Activates a weatherproof control panel.

LUCAS

Okay, lets see what you're made of.

LUCAS'S VIEW THROUGH THE GOGGLES.

A thermal readout of the retreating TWISTER. The dull red
glow of its heart blooming in the display. Digital percentile
readouts of its power flickering down one side. Increasing.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Time for your dessert.

He grasps two gimble mounted firing yokes. Swivels the gun
turret to bear on the TWISTER. He sights the gun. A small
display on the control panel flashes. TARGET LOCKED.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Open wide.

He squeezes the trigger.

BRRRRRRUUUUUP!

Projectiles rocket out from the gun -- hurtle into the heart
of the --

TWISTER

The readings collapse as the DISULPHIDE SHELLS...

Detonate deep inside its thermal heart.

WHUMP! WHUMP! WHUMP!

The TWISTER unravels.

Dissipates over the ocean.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - DAY

Stormcatcher 12 DIVES beneath the surface.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 BRIDGE - SAME

Water covers the viewing windows. An electronic landing display on the monitor guides them towards the base. Distant lights wink. A speaker crackles into life.

MONITOR (FILTER)

Stormcatcher twelve this is SUB-1
you are cleared to enter docking
complex. Please be aware there is
an active smoker on the port side
of your approach vector...

Jones taps a switch.

JONES

Copy that.

EXT. SUB-1 - SAME

Muted lights glow around its perimeter. A square mile of America clinging to the sea bed.

Stormcatcher-12 heads for it -- swings to the right to avoid the SMOKER. A hydrothermal vent that juts out of the seabed.

A blast of dark liquid BOILS out of the vent -- followed by a jet of foaming bubbles as superheated Magma meets seawater.

Stormcatcher 12 heads towards a rusted HATCHWAY -- that slides open.

The ship glides in.

INT. SUB-1 - DRYDOCK - NIGHT

Water drains away. Leaves the ship resting on a metal platform. A hatchway swings open to reveal a stepped steel ramp. The crew make their way out.

A group of ENGINEERS give a ragged cheer as the crew disembark. Survey the damage to the ship.

ENGINEER

Jeez. Looks like you went the full twelve rounds. I haven't seen this much damage since your father flew Stormcatcher 1...

An embarrassed silence.

LUCAS

(recovering)

You should see the other guy.

Lucas strides away from the ship putting distance between himself and Cat. She jogs to keep up. Still filming.

CAT

What are you running from?

Lucas whirls round. Eyes blazing.

LUCAS

Why don't you go find someone else to bother?

CAT

Oh, I'm bothering you am I? You're a hero now, but what if you'd lost the ship and your crew.

Lucas turns away. Keeps on walking.

LUCAS

But I didn't, and if I have to take risks to keep the base safe than that's my call.

Cat draws level.

CAT

So what are you running away from?

Lucas stops. Looks her in the eye.

LUCAS

Maybe I'm not running away from anything. Maybe I'm running towards it.

She stops. Lowers the camera. He walks away. Off Cat. Worried as hell.

INT. BASE COMMANDER'S QUARTERS - DAY

Cat stands next to COMMANDER MORNEAU, (50s) a shock of iron grey hair. A man used to making hard decisions.

He stares at a monitor. Cats footage finishes playing.
The way it's edited makes Lucas look unbalanced.

The Commander rubs his face. Doesn't need this problem on top
of all his other ones.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

You know he's the best we've got,
maybe even better than his father.

CAT

His Father's dead.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

I owe your father a great debt,
otherwise we wouldn't be having
this discussion.

CAT

I promised him...

COMMANDER MORNEAU

I know. But this is a war we're not
winning. We lost San Francisco last
week, there's hardly anything left
of Philadelphia. We've lost ten
ships this month alone...it only
takes one cyclone to get too near
and this base is history.

CAT

I know that.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Do you really want to put a million
people in Cryo-Sleep at risk
because of a promise...

CAT

It's not just that.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

You think he's unstable?

CAT

It's like he's on some kind of a
personal mission, and until we find
out what that is...

COMMANDER MORNEAU

You believe he's got a death wish?

CAT

Maybe.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Maybe he needs a death wish just to keep going back out there...putting himself into the middle of something that killed his father and his mother...

CAT

So what does he have to live for?

COMMANDER MORNEAU

I don't know. You lost your father...how did you feel?

CAT

I felt empty.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Every time we send them out there it's a potential suicide mission.

CAT

At least give him a psych test.

The Commander nods. Goes over to his desk. Keys a comms unit.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Send the Chief medical officer to my quarters.

COMMS (FILTER)

Yes Commander.

He turns to Cat.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

I hope I don't live to regret this.

CAT

I'm just trying to give him a chance.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Well lets hope he takes it.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Jones, Tara and Quant stand in stunned silence.

TARA

I saw her coming out of Commander Morneau's quarters.

JONES

Morneau was pretty tight with her father.

QUANT

Maybe she's right. Maybe he doesn't care if he lives or dies. He's been behaving a bit strange lately.

JONES

Hell, anybody doing this job is strange by definition.

QUANT

What do we do now?

JONES

I'm not serving under anybody else.

TARA

What if there's a call out?

JONES

Then it's someone else's call.

He looks around at the crew.

JONES (CONT'D)

Well?

They all reluctantly nod. Faces grim.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICERS STATION - DAY

Lucas sits opposite Psychologist JOSIE HARPER (30s), a thoughtful face with a calming ambiance. Lucas looks at his watch. Wants to be somewhere else -- anywhere but there.

JOSIE

We won't be much longer.

LUCAS

Good.

JOSIE

You said that on the last mission you felt frightened...why was that?

LUCAS

It's like being at war. Every shell that misses you moves you nearer to the chance of being hit by the next one.

Josie studies him. Makes a note.

JOSIE

You see this as a war?

LUCAS

It is a war. Unless we win,
everyone on the base and a million
people in Cryo-Sleep will die.

JOSIE

Do you believe we can win?

LUCAS

I believe there is a way...

JOSIE

And why do you think that?

LUCAS

Because of my father. I think he
thought he'd found a way to end
them...

JOSIE

The storms?

LUCAS

Yes.

JOSIE

Do you ever feel that you want to
join him?

Off Lucas's angry face.

INT. STOREROOM - SUB-1 - DAY

Lucas pummels a heavy PUNCHBAG. The same pictures on the
backboard his father had. He switches to a SPEEDBAG -- takes
out his anger and frustration on it.

He stops. Wipes his face with a towel. Goes over to a shelf.
Picks up his Father's battered DIARY. Flicks through it.
Pauses at the picture of the Cyclone with the question mark.

LUCAS

What are you trying to tell me?

INT. SUB-1 - DAY

A burning orb in the sky. A gentle breeze. CORN rustles in
the wind. Sunlight blazes down. But we're not in a cornfield.

INT. HYDROPONICS DECK SIX - SAME

Lucas leans against a guard rail above a vast hydroponics
level. The field of corn is only six inches high. Floating in
a bed of water and nutrients.

There isn't any sunlight. Ultraviolet light bathes the nascent crop in a purple glow.

TARA (O.C.)
Wanna share?

A small KNITTED DOG appears next to Lucas's face. Held by TARA. Lucas turns to look at her. Gives a weary smile.

LUCAS
My grandfather spent five years building up his farm. Sowing the seeds, fighting to control the bugs, trying to get the harvest in before the rains came.
(beat)
And then one day a storm came and took it all away. Five years of his life, gone in an hour.

Tara squeezes her knitted dog, gives it a sad expression.

TARA
We didn't know then it was going to get a whole lot worse. Despite the fact that every scientist on the planet was telling us it was.

LUCAS
I miss the smell of the corn, the sun on my face. Maybe I'm stir crazy?

TARA
Naa, you're just good old fashioned crazy. I mean, you know what I mean. What did she say...the witch doctor?

Lucas smiles.

LUCAS
Beware of Greeks bearing knitted horses.

TARA
To be fair, I'm only Greek on my grandmothers side...and this is Benji, he's a dog. I have so got to get more lessons from Chou. So?

LUCAS
She wants me to take a break. Thinks I'm stressed out.

TARA

It doesn't take a PHD to work out
we're under stress here. How long
are you grounded?

LUCAS

Until I stop walking out from her
sessions.

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL CENTRE - SAME

A sea of screens. Computerised prediction software fills
displays with swirling jetstream tracking, Isobars, wind
speed and precipitation mapping. RED warning lights flash.

Analyst CHOU (20s) an intense Japanese girl with long dark
hair held in place by a butterfly clasp and intense eyes
waves a hand at Administrator FRANZ CLEAVER (50s) a tall
bespectacled, bearded man. He runs the room.

Cleaver lopes over with long strides.

CLEAVER

What ya got?

Chou punches up a pulsing thermal readout of the seabed below
the Pacific, off the Californian coast. Zooms in on the
thermal map. In particular an angry red oval shape.

CHOU

On the surface this would be lava.
Two thousand miles beneath the
seabed it's a magma ocean.

She punches up a satellite picture.

CHOU (CONT'D)

I was able to stitch together
fragments from the satellites that
still work, resolution's not great.

She zooms into a vast swirl of cloud.

CHOU (CONT'D)

Category 5 cyclone. Wind speeds of
two-hundred and eighty miles an
hour and growing.

She flicks up some more over satellite pictures. Taps another
swirling cloud formation.

CHOU (CONT'D)

Another one coming in from the
east...predictive modelling has
them meeting here.

A computer simulation shows the two cyclones intersecting in the Pacific. Chou zooms in on another feature on screen.

An icon flashes up. AXIEL SEAMOUNT.

CHOU (CONT'D)

The Axiel Seamount, a dormant volcano three hundred miles off the coast of Oregon.

Chou hits a key. Starts another simulation. Two cyclones merge -- figures scroll down the sidebar.

CHOU (CONT'D)

The atmospheric pressure around the cyclones cause seismic shifts on land and across the seabed which in turn triggers earthquakes and unlocks pressure zones...like dormant volcanoes.

Cleaver adds it up.

CLEAVER

The Seamount!

CHOU

If they combine we'll be hit by an underwater tsunami so powerful we won't survive it.

CLEAVER

How long have we got?

Chou triggers a simulation where the tornadoes meet, and the volcano blows...a time clock spins towards 24:00.

CHOU

It could hit SUB-1 around midnight.

INT. STORMCATCHER - LAUNCH DECK - SAME

ALARM WARNINGS blare from the heavy duty SPEAKER HORNS on the top of the STORMCATCHERS. Engineers and CREW gather.

A tall muscular man with a mane of flaxen hair addresses the CREW of STORMCATCHER 13. Captain LARS RAYNE (20s), still learning but thinks he knows it all.

Lucas walks towards them. He stands in front of the crews, arms folded. Listens to Rayne giving a pep talk to his crew.

RAYNE

Okay men, as you know, the Captain and crew of Stormcatcher twelve are officially pussies, so it's our duty to go out and do their job for them.

Quant, Jones and Tara give him the finger.

LUCAS

You've got a big mouth for a man wearing such a small dick.

Raynes walks over to Lucas. Gets in his face. He's got a few inches on him.

RAYNE

Oh. It can talk but can it do the walk?

BLAM!

Lucas slugs him in the gut. Winds him. He recovers fast.

Lunges at Lucas.

WHUMP!

Lucas slams him with a haymaker. Sends him staggering backwards.

Rayne's engineer GUNNAR, a giant of a man lumbers towards Lucas but is blocked by Jones. Then everything kicks off as the two crews get into an out and out brawl.

Tara and Raynes's Communications officer and data analyst African American, MARSHA (30s) stand away from the action. Occasionally stepping to one side as combatants hurtle past.

TARA

He doesn't change much does he?

MARSHA

Nope. Long on the insults and short on the subtlety. He could start a fight in an empty room.

Lucas and Rayne hurtle past -- locked in a neck hold. Smash into some stacked stores. Send them flying. They face off. Lucas closes in on Raynes. Pummels his head like a speedball and then -- BLAM!

Hits him with an uppercut that sends him crashing to the ground in front of Tara and Marsha. He tries to get up, then flops back down -- out for the count.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

There goes the art of diplomacy.

INT. STORMCATCHER - LAUNCH DECK - LATER

The crew of Stormcatcher 13 help Captain Rayne up the ramp into the underbelly of the ship. Lucas's crew watches them. Tara wipes blood from Jones's nose with a cloth.

JONES

Don't worry we'll be here to clear up after you get back.

They watch as the hatches are secured and the ship fires up its engines. It rumbles along guide rails. Through a rusted steel hatch leading to the dry dock.

JONES (CONT'D)

Pig headed ego jockey.

LUCAS

We should be going out there. Rayne doesn't have the experience.

JONES

There's nothing you can do about it until you're cleared to hold your command again.

TARA

Chou sent me the statistics on the cyclones. If they meet the worst case scenario is the tsunami could hit SUB-1 tonight.

JONES

Chou knows her stuff. She was the only one they let into the base when the shit hit the fan. She had to leave her whole family behind when the San Andreas Superstorm hit...

TARA

That's tough.

LUCAS

I've so messed up.

TARA

Chou sent me the video clip Cat showed the Commander. She edited it to make you look like a psycho with a death wish.

LUCAS

I guess she thought she was doing the right thing.

JONES

And what was that?

Lucas turns to his crew.

LUCAS
You need to see something.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CYCLONE

A swirling maelstrom. A vast cyclone screams across the surface of the water. Smashing the sea into foam.

In the distance and closing -- THE SECOND SUPER-CYCLONE.

And heading towards these Goliaths --

A small speck in the distance. STORMCATCHER 13.

INT. STORMCATCHER 13 - BRIDGE - SAME

A vast screen filled with the approaching cyclones.

On the bridge Captain Rayne and Engineer Gunnar, checking his readings so many times a second it looks like a nervous tic. Marsha sits next to him.

MARSHA
No way do we want those two to become friends.

RAYNE
How soon before we can hit it with the Silver?

GUNNAR
We'll be in range within five minutes.

RAYNE
Okay, once we launch we'll head for the base of the primary and hit the eyewall with the lasers...should take the wind out of her sails...

GUNNAR
Missiles prepped and locked on.

RAYNE
Okay, stand by. Can't wait to see Malc's face when we kick it's ass.

Off Rayne's cocksure look.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

The crew are spread around the bridge watching. Cat for once is not filming. A bad quality video clip plays on one of the screens above the control deck.

Lucas's father looks into the camera from the bridge of STORMCATCHER 1.

CAPTAIN MALLICK
 Moments before we lost contact with
 Woody he sent a voice only
 transmission...

He reaches forwards and presses something out of shot. A crackly voice --

VOICE (FILTER)
 ...something above us...can't make
 it out...too bright...not sure
 if...the rapture...

The transmission cuts off. Lucas freezes the clip.

CAT
 What do you think he meant?

LUCAS
 The Rapture? I don't know.

CAT
 Those are the last words he spoke
 before...

Cat shakes her head. Overcome with emotion.

CAT (CONT'D)
 Why did you hide it from me...from
 all of us?

LUCAS
 My father embedded the video code
 within a broadcast. He must have
 known he wasn't going to make it.
 The decryption code was in his
 diary. He and Woody didn't want
 people to hear them talking about
 their theories...people already
 thought they were pretty off the
 wall. I only managed to access it a
 few days ago...I was going to tell
 the Commander...

TARA
 (to Cat)
 Woody was really close to Lucas's
 Father wasn't he?

CAT

They were always having arguments about why the Earth's weather system was so fucked.

QUANT

We know why. It wasn't just some butterfly flapping its wings in Japan. The high frequency traders started messing with the science to make a fast buck and pretty soon people were launching missiles to try and turn the weather whatever way they wanted to make their millions.

LUCAS

That was then, but now it's evolving.

QUANT

The Saturn polar vortex had an eye over 4,000 kilometres in diameter. Who's to say our weather won't go the same way?

CAT

My Father and Lucas's made me promise that if anything happened to them I would watch out for Lucas.

TARA

In what way?

CAT

I thought I was doing the right thing.

TARA

(to Cat)

So that's why you went to the commander.

CAT

I'm sorry.

Jones cuts to the chase. Pins Cat with a look.

JONES

You need to fix this.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - SAME

The giant PRIMARY CYCLONE rips the ocean surface to shreds. Dwarfing STORMCATCHER 13 hanging in front of the whirling vortex.

INT. STORMCATCHER 13 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The observation screens are full of the cyclone. Marsha tracks the internal thermal signature inside the eyewall. A swirling mass of angry pulsing red, growing exponentially.

MARSHA

Energy levels are off the scale, if we don't drain the power out of this it won't have to merge with the other one it'll take SUB-1 down all by itself.

Rayne looks into the engine of the storm.

RAYNE

What's the outer wall speed?

MARSHA

Three hundred miles an hour and accelerating.

RAYNE

We need to get nearer the core...

Marsha looks worried.

MARSHA

Something that big has its own gravitational field...we get too near it could drag us in. We'll never make it back.

RAYNE

If we don't neutralise the core we won't have a base to go back to.
(beat)
Warm up the lasers.

INT. SUB-1 - COMMANDER'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The Commander is dealing with reports piled high on his desk. There's a muted bleep from the door. Chou looks up at the camera. The Commander presses a button to let her in.

CHOU

I think you need to see this.

INT. SUB - 1 LOWER-DECK ELEVATOR - SAME

An ELEVATOR sinking down through a glass tube. Dropping past the cornfields of the HYDROPONICS LEVEL.

The elevator glides to a halt. The doors hiss open. A large hanger like complex stretches as far as the eye can see.

INT. CRYO LEVEL - SAME

Bathed in ultraviolet light. Thousands of rows of curved glass pods. Each one containing a refugee from the storm.

The Commander follows Chou as she walks down past the sleeping, glass clad faces.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Millions of years ago man was forced to shelter from the storms inside caves. Thousands of years of later and we're back in our high tech caves again.

They come to a steel door. Chou hits a button and the door slides open. They step through into --

INT. CRYO PUMP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A warren of frosted pipes, pumps and steel pressurised containers fill the room. A bank of dials and digital readouts cover one wall. Chou walks over to the dials.

CHOU

The heat pump keeps the pods at a stable temperature which combined with liquid nitrogen enables us to maintain the correct balance for long term stasis.

She goes over to a readout.

CHOU (CONT'D)

For the heat pump to work there has to be a differential of temperature.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Between SUB-1 and the ocean outside, yes.

CHOU

But that differential is shifting.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

The sea's getting hotter?

CHOU

Five more degrees and they'll start coming out of Cryo-sleep.

The Commander looks around the cavernous space.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

A million people without enough food or air.

CHOU
We'll be killing each other long
before we die of oxygen starvation.

COMMANDER MORNEAU
What's causing it?

CHOU
The cyclones are altering the
atmospheric pressure. Allowing the
magma chambers to release lava into
the rifts...fueling the dormant
seamounts and heating up the
surrounding water.

COMMANDER MORNEAU
What can we do?

CHOU
Either we stop the cyclone
coming...
(a long beat, then)
Or we stop the people waking up.

Off Commander Morneau as the cruel irony hits him.

INT. SUB-1 - CORRIDOR - STORES - DAY

Chou carries an empty Ruck-sac. Hurries along past sealed doors towards a large steel door at the end of the corridor. A SIGN: TECHNICAL STORES.

She looks around. Keys in a number from a piece of paper into a KEYPAD. The door hums open. She steps into the --

STORE

RACKS of chemical canisters. RE-BREATHER masks. MISSILES, Sacks of Disulphide CRYSTALS. She moves deeper into the store.

Stops at a rack with a HAZARDOUS - EXPLOSIVE MATERIAL sign above it. Stacked with squat tubes of explosives. SEISMIC CHARGES with built in remote access circuits. Chou looks around. Loads the charges into her Ruck-Sac. Closes the ruck sack.

Pulls a photo out of her pocket. A faded shot of her as a young woman surrounded by her large family. She touches their faces fondly. Stows it back in her pocket and heads out.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Lucas, Jones, Tara and Quant study the radar screens. Tracking the progress of Stormcatcher 13.

The icon depicting Stormcatcher 13 winks out.

JONES
They're gone!

They watch the screens. Nothing.

LUCAS
(to Tara)
Can't you get a thermal reading
from their engines?

Tara taps on the control screen. A sea of red within the cyclone growing in size. She shakes her head.

TARA
The cyclone has too big a heat
source to distinguish them...

Cat runs towards them.

CAT
As of now you're reinstated.

JONES
Okay, lets get going.

Lucas nods thanks at Cat.

LUCAS
We need to stop that cyclone before
it joins with the other one.

Jones looks at the screen feed from the dry dock. Sees Chou heading towards the loading ramp carrying her ruck-sack.

JONES
It's Chou.

He triggers the outer hatch. Chou comes in hefting her ruck-sack.

LUCAS
What are you doing here?

CHOU
We have a problem.

Chou flicks outside thermal information onto the HOLO displays. Displays temperature readouts from the sea floor surrounding SUB-1. Veins of red run across the seabed around and beneath them.

TARA
Volcanic rifts...it's already
started.

CHOU

The increase in seawater temperature will stop the heat pumps working. Everybody in Cryo-Sleep will start to wake up.

TARA

The air supply on the base couldn't cope.

CHOU

No. SUB-1 was originally designed as a shelter and an operations base in the event of a nuclear war...there's only enough supplies for the crews. The Cryo Sleep units were retro fitted once the Supercells started to hit and we began the evacuation.

LUCAS

We have to save them.

QUANT

We have cyclones on a collision course, the Seamount primed to blow when they meet and now seismic pressure waves are opening up rifts all around the base.

TARA

Wow, aren't you Mr. Good News.

QUANT

Just telling it how it is.

LUCAS

Prepare for launch. Switch to cavitational engines. We need to see what's happening around the base...on the ocean floor.

Jones operates the dry dock floodgates. Water pours in from outside. The level rising swiftly to submerge the ship. Jones fires up a control panel. An icon winks on the display:
PRIMING CAVITATIONAL ENGINES

EXT. SUB-1 - CONTINUOUS

The outer dry dock doors slide open. Stormcatcher 12 glides out. A burst of foaming bubbles envelopes the craft and BOOM!

It streaks through the water leaving a trail of foam flecked water behind it as it rockets across the seabed.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Water blurs past the observation window. Advanced long distance radar mapping fills the screens. A dull red object grows in size as they approach.

LUCAS

Cut the engines.

Jones kills the engines. The ship glides to a halt. The observation window clears to reveal the Axiel Seamount.

CAT

Looks like she's still sleeping.

Tara studies the screens. Thermal patterns are punched up and analysed.

TARA

Not for long. Heat signature beneath the Seamount's climbing.

LUCAS

Punch up the rift thermals within a twenty miles radius of the base.

Tara throws up a three dimensional view around SUB-1. Multicoloured layers beneath the seabed around the base. Ribbons of red stretch from the base of the active cyclone towards SUB-1 -- growing cooler as they get nearer the base.

TARA

Cyclones are pulling the ocean's surface up...lowering the atmospheric pressure on the seabed beneath them causing magma leakage through the rifts.

She switches the readouts to atmospheric pressures. The pressure readouts are less beneath the base of the cyclone.

TARA (CONT'D)

The rifts run beneath the base.

CAT

So the nearer the cyclone gets, the wider the rifts become and the higher the water temperature going into the SUB-1 cooling intakes.

TARA

Yes.

CHOU

The rift moves around thirty-six millimetres a year. At the moment we can absorb that, but if it moves much more it'll tear us apart.

LUCAS

Show me the thermal geology around
SUB-1.

Tara punches up a topographical thermal view of the sea bed. It shows the seamount as a mound of red amongst the greens and blues of the cooler rock.

Round the base there are smaller, light pink mounds growing beneath the seabed linked by red veins of HEAT. Two of the pink mounds are beneath SUB-1. Seamounts. Sub-sea Volcanoes.

CHOU

Each one of them is fed from a magma chamber, the nearer the cyclone gets to the base the less water pressure containing the magma in the chambers.

TARA

If they erupt it'll be like standing underneath a Saturn booster rocket on launch day.

Off Lucas. Mind racing as he searches for a solution.

EXT. CYCLONE - SAME

A swirling vortex of satanic black clouds. Flashes of lightning illuminate the turbulent EYE WALL around the centre of the cyclone. The engine of its destructive power -- over five miles in circumference and still growing.

And trapped in this revolving meteorological grinder a metallic SPECK that is STORMCATCHER - 13 tumbles end over end as it is sucked higher and deeper into the screaming maw of the beast...

EXT. SUB-1 - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

All around the base the sea bed is in motion. Seismic pressure drives tendrils of lava into the sea through fissures. Boiling water as they cool into basalt stalagmites.

Weird creatures race through the water. Dragon Fish, Red eyed Vampire squid, with their cloak like webbing, Ghost Sharks, and Spook fish. Fleeing from the area as fast as they can.

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL DECK - CONTINUOUS

Pandemonium. The room is shaking. Camera feeds are breaking up. Alarm klaxons BLARE. Thermal temperatures rising.

Administrator Cleaver stares at the screens. Calls out to a passing analyst. CAMERON RILEY (30s), Squinting, clearly needs glasses but won't admit it.

CLEAVER
Where's Chou?

CAMERON
She went with Lucas.

CLEAVER
What the hell's she playing at?

CAMERON
I guess she thought she could be
more use out there.

Cameron hands him a printout.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
She took these from the store.

CLEAVER
(reads it)
Twenty seismic charges?

Cameron shrugs. Cleaver is knocked off his feet as the base is hit by a massive jolt.

CLEAVER (CONT'D)
The tremors are getting stronger.

Another alarm flashes on the screen. CRYO-LEVEL - 1

CLEAVER (CONT'D)
(to Cameron)
How long before they're triggered?

CAMERON
If the seawater temperature keeps
rising...thirty minutes maybe.

Cleaver nods. Picks up an internal phone. Dials.

CLEAVER
Commander? It's time.

INT. COMMANDER MORNEAU'S QUARTERS - SAME

INTERCUT

COMMANDER MORNEAU
You're sure?

CLEAVER
Thirty minutes max.

He covers the mouthpiece.

CLEAVER (CONT'D)
 (to Cameron)
 Anything from Lucas?

CAMERON
 There's no communication while the
 cavitation engines are running.

CLEAVER
 Still waiting to hear from Lucas
 Commander.

The Commander pauses. The burden of a million souls weighs
 heavy.

COMMANDER MORNEAU
 If he's half as good as his father
 he deserves a shot. Thirty minutes,
 then do what you've got to do.

He puts the phone down.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - NOW

Stormcatcher 12 drifts over the seabed. In the darkness red
 arteries of glowing heat show where the fissures are being
 fed from the magma chambers beneath.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Lucas and his crew study a thermal map of the imminent
 fracture points surrounding the area. And in the middle of
 this, the dull red glow of SUB-1.

LUCAS
 They're everywhere.

CHOU
 A nudge from the cyclone and this
 whole area will be one giant
 volcano.

Chou nods. Mind working.

CHOU (CONT'D)
 In my country we have a fighting
 technique called *Kuzushi*...where
 you strike your opponent along his
 weak line...

JONES
 We're going to have to do more than
 arm wrestle this sucker to the
 floor.

CHOU
 But we can guide the seismic force
 in a different direction.

Chou goes over to Jones.

CHOU (CONT'D)
 I borrow?

JONES
 I guess.

She picks up his plastic tub of SUGAR and another one of COFFEE granules. Goes over to a flat surface.

Pours the sugar out, forms a mound, does the same with the coffee. Her hands flicker amongst the white and brown granules as she talks.

CHOU
 The seismic rifts stretch along the
 Escanaba Trough and travel beneath
 the base.

HANDS flutter through the heaped granules. Her speed mercurial. Within seconds she's created an astonishingly accurate outline of the base and the rifts around it.

JONES
 Whoa, how'd you do that?

CHOU
 It's Bonseki, sand painting. My
 grandmother taught me.

A moment of sadness flickers behind her eyes at the mention of her Grandmother. She swiftly draws another pattern of rifts leading from the Seamount towards the base.

CHOU (CONT'D)
 If we use a Boka-Tai...
 (off everyone's look)
 A firebreak...

She swiftly draws a ring of coffee granules -- encircles the base. Lucas stares at the sand map.

LUCAS
 Start our own earthquake?

Chou picks up a cup of water. Pours it onto the lines of coffee granules running towards the sugar circle around the base.

CHOU
 A controlled one.

The brown liquid hits the white sugar ring -- turns it brown as it's absorbed. Diverting the liquid around the base.

JONES
Our own ring of fire.

CHOU
It'll form a basalt ridge around the base. Protect it from the water pressure and after shocks.

LUCAS
Sounds like a plan.

JONES
Hell yes. Only one thing...

They all turn to look at him.

JONES (CONT'D)
How are you going to get my sugar and coffee back into the containers?

Lucas smiles. Jones hits the CD play button.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - NOW

Stormcatcher 12 ploughs through the murky depths as if it was flying through air...which it is. Cocooned in its own cloak of bubbles it has zero resistance as it approaches Mach 2.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The screens are set to thermal and radar. Ring Of Fire by Johnny Cash booms out as Jones rockets across the ocean bed.

Amongst the blue, white and green topography of the thermal radar, the ship follows the red thermal SIGNATURE of the magma fissure snaking beneath the trough.

JONES
We're coming up to the first intersection.

A fork in the magma rift appears on the screen.

JONES (CONT'D)
Shutting down cavitation drives.

The ship settles onto the seabed.

LUCAS
Okay. Lets drop the first charge.

Chou sits in front of a...

CAMERA VIEWPOINT

The SEABED beneath the ship. Bubbles trickle out of a dark fissure. She manipulates a REMOTE GRAB ARM that swivels from the side of the ship. A seismic canister in its metal claw.

CHOU

Jettisoning the charge.

ON SCREEN

The claw releases the CANISTER. It tumbles down into the dark. Red LED winking as it sinks from view.

CHOU (CONT'D)

We need to set the rest of them up fast...those canisters are only designed to withstand temperatures up to 1200 degrees centigrade.

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL CENTRE - SAME

The screens are full of the approaching cyclone and the thermal activity around the base. Administrator Cleaver looks at a countdown on a screen. *T-Minus 22 Mins 45 Secs.*

Cameron comes over clutching a printout.

CAMERON

The numbers are still climbing.

The base suddenly lurches. Klaxons BLARE. A massive shockwave runs through the base. The armour glass above the control deck spiders -- but holds. An engineer runs up to them.

ENGINEER

One of the support legs has gone, another one is starting to buckle.

CLEAVER

Do what you can to stabilise it.

CAMERON

What about the Cryo-Deck?

CLEAVER

I promised Lucas thirty minutes.

CAMERON

If anymore people start to come out of Cryo-sleep our oxygen supply will be compromised...

CLEAVER

I'm not abandoning a million people until I have to.

Cleaver nods at the thermal screens.

CLEAVER (CONT'D)
What's happening.

Cameron frowns -- then looks terrified. Pulses of red are erupting around the base.

CAMERON
I don't understand...I thought we had more time.

CLEAVER
Something's triggering the magma rifts.

Cameron nods. Puts it together.

CAMERON
Chou.

CLEAVER
What the hell's she doing?

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - NOW

A boiling maelstrom of oily black plumes. Gouts of boiling red magma erupt through rifts along the seabed. And through this underwater hell--

STORMCATCHER 12

Trailing bubbles from its cavitation drives. Pursued by a wall of exploding rocks and smoke. Using all of its speed to stay ahead of the erupting rifts.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The atmosphere is above tense. The thermal screens full of unimaginable heat. Closing on them at the speed of sound. Cat films, but less compulsively now. She's scared.

JONES
When we reach the next rift point we'll only have minutes to lay the charge...

He leaves it unfinished.

TARA
Thirty seconds to the rift.

JONES
Hold on to something.

He reverses the throttle. The craft slams to a halt. Grinds down on the seabed.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

Stormcatcher-12 sits in a cloud of swirling sediment. The coat of bubbles surrounding it drift away. Behind them in the distance something takes shape.

A DARK WALL advancing.

INT. STORMCATCHER-12 BRIDGE - SAME

Chou works the GRAB ARM. Studies the video feed from outside the ship. A canister held in its claws. She lowers it down towards the glowing crevice beneath them.

TARA

Thirty seconds.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

The dark maelstrom is nearly upon them. A boiling wall of rock and swirling dust. The incandescent glow from the magma bubbling beneath it.

INT. STORMCATCHER-12 BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

A current jolts the ship. The canister breaks free from the grab arm.

CHOU

Jesus!

She moves like lightning. Snakes the telescopic grab arm out -
- catches the canister.

JONES

Starting cavitation.

CHOU

Give me a second.

She flips the grab arm 360 degrees and fires the canister into the glowing crevice below.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - NOW

The hull of the Stormcatcher glitters with the bubble skin of the cavitation cloaking. And right behind it -- a wall of darkness.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jones hits the throttles.

JONES
Gotta' go!

The outside screens go black and the thermal readings go red as a giant hand picks up the ship and hurls it end over end.

JONES (CONT'D)
We're losing the cavitation
drives. Hold on.

Jones wrestles with the controls. Tries to get back some sort of balance.

LUCAS
Use the pulse motors to get us
ahead of the magma...

JONES
I'm trying. Might not be enough
oxygen in the water.

TARA
Use the gas pumps to build up the
oxygen...

Jones shoots her a look. Impressed.

JONES
Done and done.

The ship levels out -- surges forwards.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - NOW

A wall of boiling, dust laden water. From out of which -- STORMCATCHER-12 explodes into view. Trailing bubbles and belching gas from its pulse engines.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The thermal feeds drop in temperature. The view through the external camera feeds grows lighter.

LUCAS
Go to full power on the
cavitation. Disengage the pulse
engines.

JONES
Engaging cavitation.

TARA

Another few seconds and we'd have been toast.

CHOU

We need to deliver the canisters faster...

LUCAS

The Disulphide missiles.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - LOWER DECK - CONTINUOUS

Chou and Tara hoist six small missiles onto a work deck. Unscrew the Disulphide canisters. Substitute the seismic charges. Chou adjusts the settings. Shuts the control unit hatches of each missile.

CHOU

I've set them to trigger at one thousand centigrade and a depth of five hundred feet.

They wheel the missiles to a line of circular loading hatches. Slide them in to the tubes and close the hatches.

CHOU (CONT'D)

They'll arm themselves at five minute intervals. That way they'll close the circle around the base.

Chou turns a key. Flips up a cover over a push button firing switch. The ship starts to slow. Chou presses the button. The missiles ignite. Speed out of the firing tubes.

The ship lurches -- engines on full reverse thrust. People are thrown around.

CHOU (CONT'D)

Why are we stopping?

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Lucas looks at the screens.

LUCAS

What is it?

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

Fibrous growths. Glacial fronds spiralling down from the surface thousands of feet above them.

Hitting the seabed. Spreading across the ocean floor -- freezing and killing every living thing in their path.

CHOU
What are those things?

JONES
Icicles?

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The screens are full of the ghostly ice stalagmites.

TARA
Not icicles, brinicles.

CAT
How is ice coming from a mile above us?

LUCAS
When my Father told me nature would take back control of the Earth. I thought he was nuts.

JONES
I hate to break up the tree huggers convention, but we need to find a way through these mothers.

Tara switches the display to long range thermal radar. An icy blue underwater forest stretches ahead of them for miles.

TARA
Can't we go around them?

CHOU
It's too late for that.

She punches up the view from behind the ship. Another forest of brinicles has grown up behind them. They're cut off.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

A moving mountain of whirling mud. Rocks and explosive gas racing across the seabed in an underwater pyroclastic flow.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

CHOU
We need to get out of here.

The craft struggles to coat its hull with the isolation bubbles. Jones hits buttons. Nothing responds.

JONES
It's not happening.

CHOU
It's too cold for the cavitation
engines. We only have normal drive.

Tara throws up camera views from outside.

TARA
Doesn't matter what we have...we're
trapped...

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

Stormcatcher is surrounded by BRINICLES -- The HULL groans
under the pressure of the icy tentacles tightening around
them with their deadly grip.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Lucas's mind races. He turns to Quant.

LUCAS
Do you still have those
transducers...the ones you used to
check the integrity of the hull?

QUANT
I guess...

TARA
What are you thinking?

LUCAS
I'm thinking of a wine glass...when
an opera singer hits a high note...

QUANT
Resonant frequency...of the ice

LUCAS
Jones has a hundred watt amp...

TARA
We'd need a frequency generator.

Quant rushes off.

QUANT
I got one, I'll go get the
transducers.

He runs to the exit down to the lower deck.

TARA
What are you going to attach them
to?

LUCAS

The hull.
(beat)
Outside.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - ESCAPE TRUNK CHAMBER - DAY

Lucas wears a diving suit fitted with a re-breather unit. Clutches a bag containing the TRANSDUCERS -- small circular magnetic puck shaped cylinders.

QUANT

They're wireless.

LUCAS

How do we get enough power?

QUANT

We'll use the deck horn...produce harmonic distortion...we just need to cycle through the frequencies until we find the resonance of the ice...

Tara hands Lucas a diving helmet.

TARA

At this depth, even with the suit you've only got five minutes before you go into hyperthermic shock...

Off Lucas's worried expression.

INT. ESCAPE TRUNK - SAME

Water floods into the chamber. Submerges Lucas.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

The crew watch Lucas through CAMERA FEEDS as the chamber floods. Lucas gives a thumbs up. Jones hits the hatch release

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - ESCAPE HATCH - CONTINUOUS

The hatch swings upwards and --

JAMS!

An icy TENDRIL blocking it.

JONES (O.S.)

Something's blocking the hatch.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

An exterior camera looks down from the conning tower at the --
HATCH

Lucas slams his shoulder against the hatch -- smashes it into
the icy TENTACLE.

His suit...TEARS!

He keeps going.

The ICE breaks. The hatch opens. Lucas looks at the tear in
his suit. Freezing water rushes in.

He climbs out of the hatch. Pulls himself up the side of the
metal rungs sticking out of the squat...

CONNING TOWER

Each step an effort as freezing water pours into his suit --
His CORE TEMPERATURE PLUNGES.

He reaches into the bag. Pulls out a TRANSDUCER. Clamps it
onto one side of the tower. Reaches in for another one --

DROPS IT!

It bounces off his other hand. Falls past him and -- CLANG!

Sticks to the metal deck. He bends down. Pulls it off. Clamps
it to the other side of the tower.

Lucas reaches for another transducer. Moving slower now, each
finger a lead weight. Vision starting to blur.

LUCAS'S VIEWPOINT THROUGH HIS FACEPLATE

The transducer drifts in and out of focus.

Jones's voice echoes in his ears.

JONES (FILTER)
Only two more and we're golden.

His body in cold shock response.

Breathing deeply and uncontrollably..

His arm holding the transducer impossibly long -- the third
transducer clangs onto the conning tower --

Metal on metal. The sound booming like some vast bell in his
head.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

His suit readings and vital signs are all dangerously low.

CAT

He needs to get back in.

TARA

There's something wrong with his
suit...his readings are way too
low.

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - CONNING TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Lucas fumbles for the last transducer. The bag drifts away.
He snags the transducer as it breaks free. Lowers it towards
the bottom of the conning tower.

It slips from his nerveless fingers.

CLUNK! It sticks to the bottom of the tower.

LUCAS

Looks around -- tries to orientate himself. Reaches for one
of the rungs on the side of the Conning Tower.

He can't grip the rung with his fingers -- paralysed with the
cold he slides past the rungs. Drops down between the ice
closing against the hull and the side of the ship.

Struggles to pull himself clear. Deadly tentacles of ICE
reaching towards him --

LUCAS'S VIEW THROUGH HIS HELMET

A BRINICAL TENTACLE -- reaching towards him -- grabbing his
arm with its ICY GRIP.

Pulling him upwards. Towards the open --

ESCAPE HATCH

Releasing him to float down into the flooded chamber.

EXT. ESCAPE CHAMBER

It isn't a BRINACLE, but a robot GRAB ARM which releases him
and...

Closes the chamber hatch.

A rotating spigot in the grab-arm SPINS THE LOCKING
MECHANISM. Seals the hatch before retracting back into the
side of the ship.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Chou releases the virtual hands that link her to the external GRAB ARMS.

CHOU

He's in.

Tara works the control screen.

TARA

I'm pumping it clear.

Cat and Tara run towards the stairs leading down to the lower deck.

CAT

I'll grab some thermal blankets on the way...

QUANT

Okay lets get some harmonics going before the ice crushes the life out of us.

JONES

I've hooked up the amp to the deck horn...

Quant works a SIGNAL GENERATOR on a computer screen. Dials up lower frequencies.

A deep drone vibrates through the ships hull.

Sound waves spike across the screen as he runs up and down the scale looking for a harmonic echo.

QUANT

C'mon bitch...tell us you're favourite tune...

INT. ESCAPE TRUNK - SAME

Cat and Tara drag a pale Lucas out of the dripping chamber. Wrap him in a thermal blanket which they plug into a power outlet. He slumps onto a ledge next to the chamber.

TARA

He's in shock. We need to get his core heat back up.

She grabs a self heating can from a shelf and pulls the tab.

TARA (CONT'D)

You need to drink this.

She offers him the tin. He looks at her -- eyes dull, trying to focus. She gently tips some warm liquid between his lips. He gradually stops shaking -- his eyes focus.

LUCAS

Did I do it?

CAT

Yes. You nailed it. Quant's trying to find the resonant frequency and punch it through the deck horn.

The hull of the ship groans under the pressure of the ice pack surrounding it.

LUCAS

I need to get back to the bridge.

TARA

Give it a second, we don't want you going into shock.

Lucas tries to get up -- slumps back down. The frequency droning through the hull increases.

LUCAS

Maybe I should take it easy for a second.

TARA

Good idea. There's nothing you can do right now. Until we're clear of the ice we can't use the engines.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Quant increases the frequency to the transducers.

JONES

We're running out of time.

Quant flicks a look to a thermal display. A wall of RED rolls towards them. An underwater pyroclastic flow. Molten rock spewing from the magma chambers beneath the ocean floor.

QUANT

Looks like the firebreak's not happening.

JONES

We stay here we'll be crushed by ice and then boiled in molten rock.

Quant alters the frequency. A wavelength on a secondary screen pulses. Harmonics beating into distortion.

QUANT

Gotcha!

Lucas comes onto the bridge, wrapped in the blanket and supported by Cat and Tara. He eases into the Captains seat. Cat gives him a cup of hot coffee. He drinks it down.

JONES

Welcome back boss. For a moment there I thought you were a frozen fish finger.

LUCAS

Me too...

QUANT

We got a harmonic. Crank up the volume Jonesy.

JONES

You got it.

Jones winds up the volume on the power amp.

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - ESCANABA TROUGH - CONTINUOUS

The frequency drones out of the DECK HORN. The ICE surrounding the hull begins to --

VIBRATE

Flakes of ice begin to crack and fall away.

FISSURES open up along the tentacles of ice spiralling down from above.

CRACK!

A vast stalactite of ice falls away. More columns of ice tumble down alongside the ship. The vibration spreading -- resonating through the BRINICLES -- striking deep into its ice cold heart.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The ship shudders as it breaks free from the grip of the ice.

LUCAS

Get us out of here Jonesy.

JONES

You got it...

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

Jones navigates the ship away from the blocks of ICE crashing down around them.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Jones studies the blue thermal display.

ICE shards hurtle down from above. Jones ZIG-ZAGS the ship to avoid them.

JONES

It's going to get rough.

Ice continues to rain down from above as the vibrations from the ship destroy the BRINACLE FOREST stretching out ahead of them.

TARA

We need to move. Now.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

A moving mountain of whirling mud. Rocks and explosive gas racing across the seabed -- headed right at them.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Chou looks at the deep RADAR screen showing the area behind.

CHOU

Temperature's off the scale.

TARA

That magma's coming from the Earth's core. That's hotter than the sun.

JONES

Ouch. Pass me the oven gloves.

The screens show a wall of burning rock closing in on them.

LUCAS

(to Chou)

Can you give me a temperature gradient chart up ahead?

Chou nods. Fingers fly across her computer screen.

ON SCREEN

A gradient coloured view of the ocean and seabed in front of them. Ranging through the spectrum of temperature. In the middle a dark blue CHANNEL. Lucas points to it.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
What's that?

CHOU
A Brine stream. Super-chilled
water.

LUCAS

Mind racing as the TIDAL WAVE of MAGMA hurtles towards them.

LUCAS
(to Jones)
Put us inside it.

Jones eases the throttles open -- slides the ship into the channel of super-chilled water. Increases speed.

TARA
Temperature behind us is dropping.

Chou throws up a thermal of the activity behind the ship. A dark red wall of rock -- getting darker.

EXT. ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - CONTINUOUS

The wall of pyroclastic rock slows. The supercold brine stream eating into its thermal reserves. An unimaginable heat source hitting an ocean of supercooled water.

The ship slowly opens up the distance between it and the solidifying rock. And then they're free. The dark wall of rock just another feature on the SEABED.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

The ship speeds through the BRINESTREAM. Leaves the fallen ice forest behind.

LUCAS
Show me the area around the base.

Tara punches up a thermal image of the area around SUB-1. Angry red veins snake towards it. Magma rifts getting nearer to the base. Tara's face drops.

TARA
The charges...they didn't go off.

QUANT

I don't understand. We placed all
of the charges. Chou set the
trigger points...

Tara checks something on the Seismic control systems
information readouts.

TARA

There's something not right here.

LUCAS

What is it?

TARA

These are the readings from the
seismic charge control settings...

Lucas studies the screen his face grim.

LUCAS

Some of the charges weren't armed.

TARA

Must have been some kind of
computer malfunction...I can arm
them from here. But they're
approaching maximum temperature,
another few minutes and they'll
shut down.

CLICK!

They turn to see

CHOU.

A GUN in her hand -- and it's pointed at Tara's head.

CHOU

Take your hands away from the
screens.

TARA

What are you doing? There's a
million people depending on...

Chou gives a cold smile.

CHOU

They're not my people.

Chou waves the gun -- Lucas and Tara take a step back.

CHOU (CONT'D)

The only reason I got onto Sub 1 was because I was a Geophysicist...otherwise I'd just have been another alien...like the family I had to leave behind.

TARA

That's not true.

CHOU

Really? There's a million white faces in Cryo-Sleep that say I'm right. You don't even know what my name means do you?

TARA

Don't do this.

CHOU

It means Butterfly. I'm going to be the butterfly wing that changes the world.

Tara looks at the temperature readout of the Seismic Charges. They're headed towards 1150F...fifty degrees away from shutting down for good. Lucas follows her look.

TARA

I thought we were friends...

CHOU

And I thought the United States government was fair...what they did was the biggest act of racism on American soil since the slave trade in the seventeenth century...

Lucas moves nearer Chou. Her gun swings round to target him.

LUCAS

You say America is racist. What about Sub 2 and 3...don't you think it would be the same story there? It's about preserving the genetic line...

Tara picks something off the console. Holds it behind her back.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

My father taught me a couple of things about human nature. One you should never look back, and the other...

He throws a lightning fast punch at Chou as Tara simultaneously hurls herself forwards.

CHOU

Sidesteps in the blink of an eye -- chops Lucas down with a vicious punch to the side of the neck, sends him crashing to the floor and --

BANG!

Fires a shot at Tara. Knocks her backwards -- blood spurts from her shoulder. Jones catches Tara as she slumps.

JONES

Okay...you made your point.

Chou stares at him. Her gun arm droops. Breath rasping. Eyes wide as she looks at the blood oozing from her chest.

Pulls at the KNITTING NEEDLE poking out -- driven there by Tara. Air whistles through her fingers. The gun clatters to the floor. Jones snatches it up. Quant goes over to Chou.

QUANT

Her lungs collapsed. She'll die if we don't do something.

Cat comes over.

CAT

We need to draw the air from out of her chest...

Lucas groans. Comes to. Rubs his neck.

TARA

There's a syringe in the medical kit. We can draw the air out, reinflate her lung and bandage her up.

CAT

That's not going to hold her for long.

LUCAS

There's a Cryo-Unit on the lower deck for medical emergencies. We put her in that. It'll reduce her core temperature and heart rate...keep her alive till we can get her help.

Quant and Jones carry Chou between them. Tara holds her hand over her wounded shoulder. Heads towards the control desk. Cat follows her.

CAT

Take it easy. You're losing blood.

TARA

I take it easy and a million people die. The seismic charges will shut down in minutes -- I'm going to have to detonate them remotely...

Her fingers fly across the touch screen. Readouts of temperature on the charges nudge 1185F. One by one the charges wink from red to green. An ICON WINKS: ARMED.

LUCAS

Do you think it will work?

TARA

The science was sound. It had to be, otherwise we would have known what she was doing. She only armed some of them.

LUCAS

And pretended to arm the rest.
(beat)
If you hadn't checked...

TARA

Okay. Here goes.

She activates the charges.

The icons blink to -- DETONATING.

On a thermal screen showing the area around SUB-1.

SCREEN

Pulses of red bloom around the base. Forming a circular magma firebreak.

TARA (CONT'D)

This is our only hope if we can't stop the cyclone.

Cat comes over.

CAT

They've put her into Cryo-Stasis. Her vitals are reading okay, oxygen's a little low, but she'll live. I can't believe she's been planning this for over a year.

Lucas shakes his head.

LUCAS

Family...her bond was stronger to them than to us.

Tara reaches down and picks up Chou's BUTTERFLY CLASP from the floor. Turns it over in her hand.

TARA

She used to tell me stories about the Samurai code of Bushido and the story of the forty-seven Ronin...traditions of honour run so deep in their culture it's difficult for us to comprehend how painful losing her parents must have been...or the lengths she'd go to for revenge...

LUCAS

But a million people...that's cold.

Jones and Quant come back up from the lower deck.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Lets get back to the base.

JONES

You got it.

Jones hits the engine thrusters. The ship rockets towards the surface.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

An explosion of spray as Stormcatcher 12 leaves the water at over MACH-2. Trailing foam and bubbles as it switches from cavitation drive to pulse jet mode.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Clear sky through the viewing screens. In the distance the grey whirling mass that is the cyclone. Lucas keys a video communicator on the console..

LUCAS

Stormcatcher 12 to SUB-1.

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL DECK - SAME

Cleaver stares at Lucas on the communicator screen.

CLEAVER

We thought you'd been caught in the eruption. It's been pretty rocky down here.

LUCAS

Sorry about that. We had a situation.

CLEAVER

Cryo-deck temperatures are at a critical level.

LUCAS

We'll be at the cyclone within the next five minutes. Is there anything else you can do?

CLEAVER

If I was a religious man I'd pray. Hell I'll be doing that anyway.

LUCAS

Copy that.

JONES

We're coming up on it now Captain.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Stormcatcher 12 hangs like a bug in front of the grey outer wall of the cyclone. David and Goliath.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

Every screen on the ship is full of CYCLONE. Visual. Thermal and electromagnetic readings.

LUCAS

Estimated ETA of her ugly sister?

Tara's shoulder is now bandaged. She studies a wide range radar. The other cyclone's projected path is estimated. Simulated plots are run. The monster cyclone's collision site fills the screens.

TARA

She's peaking at around three hundred and seventy five miles an hour...

JONES

Jesus! She does not want to miss the ball.

TARA

Unless we can break up the party they'll merge in approximately fifteen minutes.

LUCAS

(To Tara)

Ready the Disulphide missiles.
Quant, give me a lock on the
maximum thermal energy of that
mother...

Tara readies the missiles to launch. Quant flips up a thermal display of the Cyclone's inner heat range -- zones in on the highest temperature. The area of the cyclones maximum energy.

QUANT

Target locked.

Tara has four winking icons flashing. MISSILES ARMED.

TARA

Ready to fire.

LUCAS

Jonesy?

Jones flicks a switch. Johnny Cash's "Any Old Wind That Blows." pours from the speakers.

JONES

I'll put you right in her belly,
give her some serious heartburn.

Everybody straps in. Lucas nods to Jones. He slides the throttles to max as --

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Stormcatcher 12 hurtles towards the wall of the Cyclone. MISSILES fly ahead of it into the heart of the storm.

Beams of steely blue LASER flicker from the Stormcatcher. Stab at the power base of the storm.

THE CYCLONE

HOWLS like a wounded beast.

Sucks up a million gallons of water from the ocean beneath --

Widens its foot print by miles in the blink of an eye.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Almost on top of the Cyclone -- BLAM!

They're swallowed up by blackness.

The ship tossed around like a feather in the wind.

JONES

She does not like that.

Tara stares at the screens. A vast mass of red growing larger at an impossible rate.

TARA

The central core...it's getting larger. We're not slowing it down.

QUANT

It's taking the heat from the laser.

LUCAS

Cut the laser.

Tara switches the laser off.

CAT

How's that possible...it's like...

She trails off. Shutting the impossible thought down.

TARA

It's intelligent?

JONES

We're almost at the Eye wall.

Lucas nods. Working out a new game plan.

LUCAS

We get into the inner core, hit the Eyewall with everything we've got...from inside the eye.

Everyone shares a look. It's either genius or the worst idea they've ever heard. Cat's the first to blink.

CAT

How do we get out of the eye...I mean if it doesn't work?

They all look at him. Glad someone else asked the question.

LUCAS

We use the force of the storm and our pulse engines to flip us out.

CAT

It's already used the heat from our lasers to increase its power...what if it drains the energy from our pulse engines?

TARA
 We'd be at the mercy of the
 cyclone's updraft...

The ship suddenly stops shuddering. An eerie silence. Just the muted roar of the engines through the hull.

EXT. CYCLONE - THE EYE

A blood red funnel of whirling dust surrounds a five mile zone of still air.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The computer screens start to flicker -- wink out.

Every single electronic device starts to shut down --

Until finally.

THE ENGINES DIE!

JONES
 Crap!

The ship heels over. Drawn to the Eyewall by the massive centrifugal force.

Only the old fashioned INSTRUMENTS still work.

CAT
 It's shut down everything.

TARA
 This thing has the power of a hundred nuclear bombs...generating an electromagnetic pulse is child's play.

JONES
 Will everybody stop talking about this thing as if it was a person.

QUANT
 If we can get any sort of power we can use it along with the cyclones centrifugal force to throw us clear.

LUCAS
 Cat? Is there any way to get the pulse engines working again.

They share a look. A spark of something we haven't seen before. Cat comes over to the control desk. This is the closest they've been without her pointing a camera at him.

CAT

The pulse engines use gas turbines to spin the magnetic core up to speed before they fire.

A glimmer of hope.

LUCAS

Like an old fashioned jet engine?

Cat reaches for a pad. Starts to scribble figures.

CAT

There's enough gas to fire the engines for a few minutes...kick start the pulse system.

LUCAS

We'll have to manually switch the fuel valves on the engines.

CAT

(smiling)

Better get your tool.

And with that she's running to the metal steps leading down to the lower deck. Lucas grabs a tool roll from a drawer. Hurries off after Cat. Tara and Jones exchange a look.

TARA

Remember that engineer, worked the dry dock...large hands?

Jones nods.

JONES

Used to hate the thin girl in the loading bay.

TARA

Yeah. You could cut the atmosphere with a laser drill whenever they were together.

(beat)

Been married a couple of years now.

And off her knowing look.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - LOWER DECK - NOW

Cat already has the top plate off one of the sleek metal cowlings set into the floor of the lower level. She tosses a wrench to Lucas.

CAT

You get the other cowling off I'll reroute the valves.

Lucas works the wrench. BRRRRUUUP! BRRRRUUUP! BRRRRUUUP! He has the cowling off in seconds. An engineer at heart.

LUCAS

I got it.

He reaches in and twists some taps. Re-routes the valves. Seals the cowling. Hands the wrench back to Cat. BRRRRUUUP! BRRRRUUUP! BRRRRUUUP! Like a matched pair of pit mechanics.

They share another look. Start to climb up the stairs when --

BLAM!

Something massive smashes along side the hull. The ship lurches. Throws them both off balance.

Lucas spins. Catches Cat before she can plunge down the slippery metal stairway. She nods a thank you. Gives him another of those looks.

And then they're back on the--

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

They strap themselves in. Cat smiles at Lucas. Jones catches the look, shakes his head. Focuses on the job in hand.

CAT

On my mark you hit the spark.

Cat works a pump handle. Builds up pressure in the fuel lines. Holds onto a lever. Shoots a look at Jones.

CAT (CONT'D)

On three. One, Two, THREE.

She slams the fuel flow lever wide open. Jones rotates a steel flange -- spins it around. CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

There's a ROAR from beneath the ship.

JONES

Number one is alright. Where's number two?

He works the spark generator. KABOOM! The second one ignites.

LUCAS

Go to full power. Follow the direction of the cyclone...

Cat scribbles calculations.

CAT

We're going to need to achieve
twice the speed of the cyclone to
break through the eyewall.

Jones looks at an Anemometer, an old brass and wood Victorian
wind speed measuring device. The needle is bent against the
end stop at 100MPH.

JONES

Well it's over 100 miles an hour
that's for sure.

He pushes the fuel levers wide open. The ship surges
forwards.

EXT. CYCLONE - EYEWALL - CONTINUOUS

Stormcatcher-12 accelerates round the EYEWALL. Surrounded by
whirling debris. Water spumes and lightning.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The ship vibrates with the power of the turbines. Only the
view through the observation window to guide them and a
vintage altimeter to show their height above the ground.

JONES

We keep this up the engines are
going to rip the tail off...

LUCAS

Stand by to bring her up...once
we've cleared the top of the
eyewall we'll cut loose.

Jones stares at the murky view through the window. A glimpse
of clear air above the blood red eyewall -- something to aim
for. He takes a chance.

JONES

There's a gap up ahead.

LUCAS

Take it.

Jones pulls the stick back. The window goes dark as they
climb the eyewall --

JONES

C'mon...

BANG!

Something obliterates their view through the window. The ship ploughs through it. Debris clings to the glass. STRAW! A glimpse of wood and metal and they're through.

CAT
Was that a barn?

And then THE ENGINES STOP.

JONES
We're out of fuel.

They plummet down the face of the eyewall. Twist and turn as hurricane force winds tear at the fuselage.

CAT
Once we're clear of the electromagnetic field we'll have the pulse engines back up.

JONES
Not without fuel to kick start them.

Jones looks at the Altimeter. They're falling fast.

Lucas stares the HYGROMETER. A device that measures the moisture content of the atmosphere outside. Something triggers in his mind. He taps the Hygrometer -- it reads 20%.

LUCAS
Where's the maximum moisture content in the cyclone?

QUANT
Near the base.

LUCAS
(to Cat)
How much water do we need through the cavitation vanes to generate thrust?

Cat does some calculations.

CAT
Around fifty percent.

Lucas looks at the Hygrometer. It's up to 30%. Jones battles to trim the craft. Without hydraulic assistance it requires all of his formidable strength.

JONES
C'mon...

CAT
We're at forty percent.

TARA
We're only a thousand feet above
sea level.

CAT
Forty-five percent...

TARA
Five hundred feet!

CAT
Fifty-percent!

LUCAS
Open the ports.

Jones slams two levers down. Opens the entry tubes on the
outside of the ship.

Water streams through the cavitation tubes.

The ENGINES roar into life.

The ship levels out and --

EXT. CYCLONE - DAY

BURSTS out of the side of the Cyclone.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

ALL THE INSTRUMENTS COME BACK ON

Monitors light up.

Jones switches to PULSE ENGINES.

Yanks the control yoke back as --

EXT. CYCLONE - SEA LEVEL

Stormcatcher 12 crests the surface of the ocean.

Levels out and climbs upwards.

Rockets towards the SECONDARY CYCLONE.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Through the advance radar the secondary --
CYCLONE.

It's getting closer.

LUCAS
Hit it with the laser...

Tara fires up the laser. The power readout climbs to 100%.
She uses the thermal radar to pinpoint the cyclones HOT SPOT.

TARA
Firing.

She sends bursts of laser light punching into its thermal
centre. Destabilizing its structure -- the energy levels in
the storm start to drop.

TARA (CONT'D)
We're hurting it.

LUCAS
Load two more Disulphide missiles.

Quant darts off to load up the missiles.

EXT. SUB-1 - ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - SAME

Volcanic thermal vents bubble. Crabs scurry across from the
shaking seabed.

The ocean floor CRACKS -- shaken by seismic waves. The seabed
shudders and starts to --

RISE --

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL DECK

Commander Morneau and Cleaver overlook the control centre as
ENGINEERS and ANALYSTS monitor the approaching Cyclones.

The base SHUDDERS.

Alarms BLARE. Everybody hangs on to something. Cleaver looks
at Cameron.

CLEAVER
What's happening?

Cameron turns to him.

CAMERON
It's rising.

The Commander nods grimly. Ready to make the hardest decision
of his life.

COMMANDER MORNEAU
The temperature?

Cameron shakes his head. Points to an underwater camera view from outside the base.

CAMERON

No, not the temperature...the Base!

Off the Commander's shell shocked face.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - SAME

Stormcatcher - 12 hangs between the two Cyclones. Pours laser fire into the base of both of them. They keep on moving. Headed towards each other -- UNSTOPPABLE.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The crew stare at the twin towers of malignant force spinning towards them. Tara works the laser -- tries to destabilise the Cyclones. Quant appears on the bridge.

QUANT

Missiles are primed.

He looks out the window.

QUANT (CONT'D)

Jeez! How fast are they moving?

TARA

Too fast, if the missiles don't stop them they'll combine. They'll be too big for us to stop.

QUANT

We don't have enough missiles to take them both down.

They all look to Lucas.

LUCAS

What's their energy readout?

Tara punches up some readings.

TARA

Ugly sister is nearly twice the power of the primary.

LUCAS

Okay. Keep the laser on the primary and let her sister have both the missiles.

Tara swings the laser to focus on the primary cyclone. Pours fire into the base of the storm. Quant goes over to the missile control section.

QUANT

Missiles primed and locked on.

Lucas nods. Quant flicks the switches into armed state. Hits both of the launch buttons.

The missiles streak from the ship towards the primary cyclone. Are swallowed up by the whirling clouds.

QUANT (CONT'D)

Direct hit.

Lucas looks at Tara as she works the laser.

LUCAS

Any change.

Quant looks at the readings. Throws up a HOLO display of the thermals. Percentages flicker alongside the display.

QUANT

Power's down twenty percent.

The percentage readings drop like a stone. The Primary Cyclone seems to stumble. The clouds whirl apart -- water vapour and clouds fall away -- tons of debris smash into the ocean's surface.

The PRIMARY CYCLONE DIES.

The crew cheer. But Jones doesn't join in. Because he's seen something through the observation window.

The secondary cyclone now has TWO THUNDERHEADS!

JONES

Holy crap! How many butterflies do they have in Japan!

The rest of them stare in disbelief.

LUCAS

Tell me that's not happening.

Tara shakes her head. Cat films it.

TARA

It's like a Hydra...we cut off one head and another one takes its place.

JONES

Now what?

Lucas stares at the twin headed monster. As if he can read its mind.

LUCAS
There's only one way we can bring
them down.

They all look at him.

JONES
How?

LUCAS
From inside.

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL DECK

All hell breaks loose.

INT. CRYO-DECK - CONTINUOUS

Alarms SCREAM. Vapour HISSES. While in a --

POD

The Plexiglas faceplate MISTS.

A MOUTH SCREAMING

Around the CRYO-DECK the scene repeats itself a thousand
times.

PODS flip open. Triggered by the rising temperature. Pale
hands claw their way out of the steel coffins they've existed
in for so long.

Translucent skinned faces STARE. BEWILDERED. Years of
blankness replaced by movement and noise.

A WOMEN. On her knees sobs.

A MAN. Screams. Pulls at his hair. Whirls round at every
sound.

The whole deck shudders.

People start to panic.

Stagger around. Zombies back from the dead.

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL CENTRE - SAME

Commander Morneau stares at the chaos. Conflicted. Picks up a
communicator.

COMMANDER MORNEAU
Clever. Call the guards.

INT. GUARD QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

A pack of thirty guards, kevlar'd up, armed with compact weapons. Sit waiting. Their leader. ORSON FLEET (30s) looks like he might have been gym toned once, in a different life.

The men look like they'd rather be doing anything else than waiting for their orders. A SQUAT GUARD raises his hand.

SQUAT GUARD

What happens if they don't get back
in the pods Sir?

Orson looks at him. The way you might look at a bug.

ORSON

You see that thing weighing your
arm down?

The Squat Guard nods. Shuffles his feet. Drops his gaze. The terrifying reality of the task ahead hitting him hard.

The floor starts to shake. The men look at each other. What the fuck is happening!?

EXT. SUB-1 - ESCANABA TROUGH - MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE - SAME

The vast BASE is on the move. The rocky substrata beneath is breaking up. Something is forcing the ocean floor upwards.

A dull red glow encircles the base. The ground shakes.

EXPLOSIONS beneath the ocean floor rip across the seabed.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The twin thunderheads of the cyclone fill the observation screen. The Video-communicator crackles into life. Commander Morneau's face comes onto the screen. The camera is shaking.

LUCAS

What's happening there Commander?

COMMANDER MORNEAU

The Cryo-pods are tripping...if
more than a thousand come out we're
going to start running out of
oxygen.

LUCAS

How bad are the tremors?

COMMANDER MORNEAU

They're peaking around 4.5 On the
Richter scale. You need to stop
those cyclones...

The screen goes blank.

TARA

What happened...?

LUCAS

I don't know. But if we're going in
we need to do it now.

Lucas goes over to the real time thermal HOLO display. Using his hand movements to control the computer display. Adding a simulation on top of the HOLO. Walking them through his plan.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Okay. We go in low. Hit the base of
the Cyclone with our torpedoes
...follow behind them and head into
the eye. The upwards momentum will
carry us into the heart of the
cyclone.

A graphic of the Stormcatcher spins upwards through the heart of the twin headed cyclone.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

When we reach the storms maximum
velocity we drop the Disulphide
canisters and use our pulse engines
to give us enough upwards momentum
to punch through the top of the
cyclone before the magnetic fields
shut us down.

The simulation shows the Stormcatcher ship blasting through the top of one side of the cyclone.

The bombs explode below them -- robbing the cyclone engine of heat with the superconductive Disulphide particles.

The base of the twin headed cyclone collapses. Its foundations destroyed.

JONES

And what happens to the ship?

They all look to Lucas.

LUCAS

If my father was here I would know.

Jones scans the faces. Slides his Johnny Cash CD into the battered player. "Out Among The Stars" fills the ship.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Take us in Jonesy.
(to Tara)
Hit it with the torpedoes on my
mark.

Tara nods. Arms the torpedoes on her screen. Jones slams the throttles wide. They rocket towards the base of the cyclone. It fills the observation window. Then...

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Now!

Tara hits the FIRING BUTTON.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NOW

The TORPEDOES rocket into the side of the cyclones base. A pulse of light spews through the dark clouds ahead of the Stormcatcher. And then they're in --

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Boiling wet blackness. The ship bucks. Twists and turns. Jones fights to keep it level. The thermal readout shows them the cool colours of the cyclones inner EYE.

The craft steadies and then they're through the wall and into the dense white cloud that is the --

EYE OF THE STORM

LUCAS

Rotate. Max power.

Jones yanks the stick back and applies full power. The craft stands on its end -- claws upwards through the whiteness.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

(to Tara)

Get ready to drop the Disulphide...

Tara flicks up some switches. Watches the displays.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Now!

Tara hits the drop switches. As the --

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - CYCLONE EYE - CONTINUOUS

DISULPHIDE MISSILES

Eject from the ship. Spin through the air. ENGINES IGNITE. Tail fin stabilisers flick out. They rocket down towards the weakened base of the cyclone.

BOOM!

The CANISTERS EXPLODE

Filling the air with supercooled Disulphide crystals. Sucking the heat from the supercell. Its banshee wail falters.

EXT. PACIFIC - TWIN HEADED CYCLONE - CONTINUOUS

The hydra headed monster wobbles -- buckles over to one side.

Starts to collapse from the top down.

Like a skyscraper demolition.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

HOLO DISPLAY

The thermal energy drains from the cyclone's thermal engine.

The HOLO display shifts through the spectrum from red to blue as it falls apart.

EXT. PACIFIC - TWIN HEADED CYCLONE - CONTINUOUS

STORMCATCHER 12

Blasts upwards as the cyclone unravels below it.

The darkness falls away as the thunderhead turns to rain and lightning. And then a mile above them they glimpse --

THE RAPTURE

A cosmic tapestry of unimaginable energy.

Woven by GAMMA RAYS the most powerful form of light known to man. An intense avalanche of antimatter particles spiralling into outer space.

The ship's ENGINES DIE

Jones stares at THE RAPTURE -- Mesmerised.

JONES

The hell is that?

LUCAS

Ancient mariners called it St. Elmo's Fire. I think Woody called it...The Rapture.

TARA

Same kind of energy put out by primordial black holes.

Cat films the glowing power above them.

CAT

Awesome.

TARA

Without the cyclone below us we should be dropping back down.

QUANT

Something is pulling us up.

The craft speeds silently upwards. A brilliant white light floods the ship through the observation window -- bleaching out our frame as we go to --

INT. SUB-1 - METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL DECK - SAME

Pitching and heaving. The water through the viewing window growing lighter. Motion alarms still sound.

One ALARM goes silent. Commander Morneau looks at the flashing alarm light as it flicks back to GREEN.

The temperature on the cryo-deck has dropped -- stabilised. Cameron stares at the readings.

CAMERON

That's not possible...

COMMANDER MORNEAU

What?

CAMERON

The temperature on the cryo-deck. It's normal...

COMMANDER MORNEAU

That's good. Right?

CAMERON

Yes. But according to this reading...

He points to a numerical readout alongside a HOLO of the ocean floors TOPOGRAPHY. The figures heading for ZERO.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

What is that?

CAMERON

Our height above sea level...

On Commander Morneau's face as a searing light floods the METEOROLOGICAL CONTROL deck -- bleaching our frame and sending us back to --

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - SAME

BLINDING WHITE -- A crackling sound -- the smell of ozone and then everything changes.

Like an X-RAY.

The crew are delineated -- so bright there aren't any shadows.

They're reaching out -- trying to hold onto anything, or anyone.

But their hands pass through solid objects.

BLACKNESS

A ringing sound. Metallic tinnitus. And then --

STARS illuminate the BLACKNESS like a switch has been pulled.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE EARTH.

But it's not empty. Hanging in the inky blackness are twelve familiar objects.

STORMCATCHERS

Stormcatcher 12 sits nearest to us. Behind them the vastness of space dwarfs a piece of our planet measuring over fifty square miles. The wrecked city of --

SAN FRANCISCO

Hanging in space. The Stormcatcher ships float in front of it.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The crew feel their bodies. Frightened to check the solidarity of flesh that moments ago was transparent and without form.

JONES

What just happened?

CAT

I have no idea, but I damn well hope I caught it on film.

They stare out of the observation window. Lucas stares at one Stormcatcher in particular. STORMCATCHER 1 -- His father's ship. STORMCATCHER 13 floats nearby.

Lucas looks across the gulf of space at the ghostly ships. Not daring to hope. He goes over to the control desk.

Everything is dead.

LUCAS

The electromagnetic field has shut
down everything.

Cat holds up her CAMERA.

CAT

Not everything. This is ex-NASA.
Designed for the Jupiter
exploration mission that never
happened. It's heavily shielded.

TARA

The electromagnetic fields could be
the only thing that's holding us in
orbit.

JONES

We've got no comms, no pulse drives
no instrumentation...we're dead in
the water.

Something flashes in the distance.

CAT

Did you see that?

They look out of the observation window. Another flash. It's
coming from Stormcatcher 2 - another flash. A signal?

JONES

Someone's using a mirror.

Cat has been filming the flashing light from Stormcatcher 2.
She plays it back. Concentrating. An idea.

CAT

It's Morse code. Dots and dashes.

Jones fumbles around in his drawer. Pulls out a battered old
NAVY SIGNALS handbook. Flicks through some pages.

JONES

I knew I'd seen it somewhere.
Playback the file.

Cat plays the video file back. Jones notes the dots and
dashes. Starts to decipher them -- scribbles on a pad.

JONES (CONT'D)

It's Woody...

EXT. OUTER SPACE - LUCAS'S EPIPHANY

LUCAS (V.O.)
 They'd been drawn into The
 Rapture...trapped in an
 electromagnetic web like so many
 metal flies...

A Stormcatcher appears in a blaze of Gamma Rays above the storm. Joins the other ships trapped in the magnetic field. They communicate using mirrors reflecting the Earth's light.

LUCAS (V.O.)
 My father had the extra food I'd
 loaded on board, and the other
 ships had their own supplies.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

Jones looks up from his pad.

JONES
 By the time the other ships got up
 her Stormcatcher 1 was already
 dark. I'm sorry Lucas.

Lucas looks over at the dark, motionless ship.

LUCAS
 He could be ill...

Cat comes over. Puts a hand on his shoulder.

CAT
 Even with the extra food you
 loaded, the ships temperature and
 atmospheric system would have lost
 power...

Lucas struggles to accept the tragic truth.

LUCAS
 He knew something like this could
 happen. His diary, the
 sketches...the rapture. It all
 makes sense. I'm going over there.

CAT
 No one's going anywhere until we
 have power.

Lucas stares out at the silent dark Stormcatcher. Looks at Cat's video recorder.

LUCAS
 Whatever's keeping us trapped here
 must have a power source.
 (MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)
(to Quant)
How much voltage and computer power
does it take to control the laser?

Quant thinks about this for a moment. Shrugs.

QUANT
It needs to control a few
solenoids, activate a gas primer
feed...I dunno, not much.

Lucas holds up Cat's video recorder.

LUCAS
Can you rig a pass thru...use the
control circuits and the power from
this to activate the laser?

QUANT
Should be possible. Wanna' tell me
why?

Cat jumps in. Excited. Ahead of him.

CAT
Because we use them to destabilise
the cyclones...

TARA
By earthing them...drains their
electrical charge.

Quant nods excitedly, starting to see the bigger picture.

QUANT
It produces an electrically
conductive laser-induced plasma
channel.

LUCAS
So if we target a Superstorm on
Earth...

TARA
Use the storm as a conduit...

QUANT
And drain the electromagnetic field
holding us up here and shutting our
electronic systems down. It's a
long shot...

QUANT (CONT'D)
Long is my middle name.

Quant gets to work on the VIDEO CAMERA. Rigs up connecting
leads. Jogs off down to the lower deck and the laser.

Lucas goes over to Cat.

LUCAS
I always hated you and your camera.
(beat)
And now it's probably the only
thing that can get us out of here.

CAT
(Smiling)
Better the devil you know huh?

There's a moment. But Quant tramples on it. Runs up the steps from the lower deck.

QUANT
Okay, ready to go.

They all strap in to their seats.

QUANT (CONT'D)
...once it strikes we'll be able to
manually aim it from here.

JONES
What are we aiming at?

Lucas looks down at the Earth through the observation window. A dull green and blue orb. Black whirling sores erupting over the surface. SUPERSTORMS tearing the planet apart.

LUCAS
The cyclone nearest SUB-1

EXT. STORMCATCHER 12 - SAME

A dull blue glow leaks from a recessed section below the nose of the ship. The LASER NODE. It glows brightly then FLARES.

Sends an incandescent charged PLASMA STREAM streaking towards the maelstrom of cloud whirling across the Pacific Ocean.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The crew watch as the laser beam tears into the massive cyclone far below.

JONES
Eat that!

TARA
Nothing's happening.

QUANT
Wait. Look!

The CYCLONE below them crackles with lightning. An unholy latticework of jagged streaks form a living electrical cage around the storm --

And then it JUMPS!

A billion volts of pure energy bridging the gap between one cyclone and another -- and another -- linking a hundred superstorms across the planet -- a pulsing spider's web of power.

LUCAS

It's started a chain reaction
...it's not just earthing one of
them, it's earthing them all!

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CYCLONE - CONTINUOUS

Above the CHURNING SEA the cyclone FALLS APART. Debris tumbles into the sea in a torrent of rain. The surface of the ocean awash with a million objects torn from the nearby land.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - HIGH AND WIDE

Huge SUPERSTORMS across the ocean crumple into VAPOUR as one by one they are earthed and destroyed.

The wind drops.

RAIN ceases.

The SUN comes out.

An eerie silence.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Lucas and the crew stare at the Earth below them. The storms across the planet are breaking up. The Earth starts to look like it did years before.

QUANT

We did it.

JONES

We still don't have power and the
laser isn't going to last much
longer.

TARA

Look!

EXT. OUTER SPACE - SAME

The area of space around the floating Stormcatchers and the drifting city of San Francisco begins to change.

The ships and buildings in the city start to pulse with electricity -- a crackling corolla surrounding them.

The night sky takes on an iridescent sheen --

Electromagnetic clouds swirl around them --

A vast AURORA BOREALIS display as the magnetic field surrounding them collapses.

Light flickers through the windows of the ships. Pulse motors burn. Everything comes back on line.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The systems boot up. Lights flicker on. Jones checks the pulse drive.

JONES

Power levels are back up to maximum.

EXT. OUTER SPACE - SAME

The LIGHTS come on in all of the ships.

Except Stormcatcher 1.

INT. STORMCATCHER 12 - BRIDGE

The communicator flickers on. A face Lucas recognises -- Woody, Cat's Father...and alongside him.

LUCAS'S MOTHER

LUCAS'S MOTHER

Lucas...is that really you?

Lucas looks at the screen. Welling up. But holding it in.

LUCAS

Yes mum. Is everybody alright?

LUCAS'S MOTHER

Yes...your Father?

Lucas looks at her. Pulls himself together. Forces a smile.

LUCAS

I'm going to bring him back.

EXT. OUTER SPACE. LATER

Stormcatcher 12 glides towards Stormcatcher 1. An extendable DOCKING BAY clamps onto the hatch on the side of the ship.

INT. DOCKING BAY - CONTINUOUS

Lucas, Cat and Quant move through the docking bay. They all wear SPACESUITS They head into --

STORMCATCHER 1

DIM emergency lights flicker on. It's eerily silent. Everything is covered with a thin layer of frost. Their feet crunch as they move down the corridor and into the --

BRIDGE

Deserted. Everything as if someone had just stepped out. An empty plate. A half full glass of frozen water. Lucas looks around.

LUCAS
Where would he be?

Quant looks around. Studies the control systems. Operates some switches. The lights come on. FANS WHIR. Computer screens flicker on. The sound of a distant generator.

QUANT
Looks like he shut everything down.

LUCAS
What about the backup systems?

Quant studies readings on the computer screens.

QUANT
Hydrogen fuel cells would have given him six months of low level atmosphere...

LUCAS
Is there any way he could have jury rigged something?

Cat looks at SIX SPACESUITS hanging up in a storage cupboard. She checks the oxygen gauges.

CAT
All the air supplies have been used. Each suit is fitted with a re-breather...

LUCAS
How long...?

CAT

Each suit could provide up to
twenty-four hours...dependant on
levels of exertion.

Quant looks at a gauge on his wrist.

QUANT

We've got an atmosphere.

He takes off his helmet. Lucas and Cat follow suit. Quant flicks up a schematic of the ships atmospheric systems on a handheld tablet. One area of the ship FLASHES.

LUCAS

What's that?

QUANT

He shut down the air and heat
supply to everywhere apart from
here...

LUCAS

The lower deck...

They head down to the --

LOWER DECK

Lights flicker on as they head down corridors, iluminating their way through the ship. They reach the --

SLEEPING QUARTERS

Open the door. Empty. A notebook on a desk. A pencil beside it. Lucas picks it up. It's dated. He reads the last entry.

CAPTAIN MALLICK (V.O.)

I've had my last meal. Done a lot
of thinking over the course of a
year...things I should have said
and done with Lucas...I don't know
how long it will be before I see
him again...if ever.

Quant looks at the date above the last entry in the diary.

QUANT

It's dated a month ago...

CAT

Did your father believe in the
afterlife?

Lucas shakes his head.

LUCAS

As far as I know he was a sinner through and through. He used to quote Einstein a lot. Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe.

CAT

Well, he's probably right. But where is he?

QUANT

What's that sound?

They listen. A distant BEEPING. Some kind of electronic warning. They head back down the --

CORRIDOR

Heading towards the engines and storage area.

QUANT

It's coming from the engine room.

They reach a sealed hatchway. Quant opens the door --

ENGINE ROOM

Plasma ENGINE TUBES. Banks of electronic control circuits. CAVITATIONAL ENGINES stretching the length of the ship. STORAGE BAYS containing CANISTERS of CHEMICALS to sow into the storms.

QUANT

Down here...

Lucas and Cat follow him towards the end of the engine room.

A red light FLASHES in sync with the BEEP. The red light is on a small control panel set into the side of a --

CRYO-POD

Lucas goes over to it. Wipes mist away from the faceplate. Reveals the cold dead face of --

HOWARD J. MALLICK. His FATHER.

LUCAS

Dad?

Quant looks at the warning light.

QUANT

It's a battery warning light. When the power came back on it must have switched over from battery power to mains.

LUCAS

Is he...?

Cat checks the readouts on the side panel.

CAT

He's alive!

QUANT

The liquid nitrogen and the standby battery kept him in stasis for a month.

CAT

Lets bring him out.

She reaches over to the control panel. Presses a button. The pod fills with warm air flowing through the vents. Hidden fans suck the freezing gas out of the pod.

Mallicks eyes --

FLICK OPEN

The pod front panel swings open.

Mallick gives a deep shuddering breath. Coughs -- sits up.

Struggles to focus --

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Lucas?

Lucas goes over. Helps him out of the pod. Mallick stands up, Lucas supports him. An awkward hug.

LUCAS

I though you were dead.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Not quite. Still got a few punches left in me.

LUCAS

I remember.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

The other ships...?

Lucas smiles.

LUCAS

Everyone's okay. A little bored of rations, but they'll make it.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

The base?

LUCAS

We lost contact with them.

Captain Mallick nods.

CAPTAIN MALLICK

Then we need to get down there. You have the com.

EXT. SPACE - LATER

Heading down towards planet Earth. Twelve battle scarred Stormcatchers form a tight formation behind STORMCATCHER-1. Plasma drives flaring like comets as they drop down through the atmosphere.

Through cotton wool clouds set against the deepest blue anybody has seen for years.

INT. STORMCATCHER BRIDGE - DAY

White clouds stream past the observation window. The ships drop towards the ocean's surface. A warm mist obscures the surface -- remnants of the colossal forces recently at play.

QUANT

I'm getting some readings...infra red. There are thousands of them.

CAT

Fish?

QUANT

Too warm for fish...

Which is when the mist clears.

QUANT'S POINT OF VIEW THROUGH THE OBSERVATION WINDOW

A new ISLAND has pushed it's way through the surface of the ocean.

Basalt cliffs five hundred feet high and still steaming from the heat of the magma and cooling rock that formed them.

And in the middle of the five mile circle of volcanic island

SUB-I. Like some vast beached carbon fibre whale.

And all around it, bathed in the sunshine -- a MILLION human beings stare up at the approaching ships.

CAT (O.C.)

It worked! The firewall formed its own Seamount...

EXT. SUB-1 SEAMOUNT

Commander Morneau and Administrator Cleaver look at the approaching fleet. The men and women cheer.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

This is something to tell the grand children eh Franz?

Cleaver smiles.

CLEAVER

Gonna' have to find me a wife before I can do that.

The Commander looks around at all the people.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

We'll you've got more of a chance of finding one now, that's for sure.

LANDING SITE

The thirteen STORMCATCHERS circle round the Seamount -- a victory flyby -- settle down away from the crowds that run to greet them.

Landing ramps swing down. Captains and crew disembark.

Lucas helps his father down the ramp from Stormcatcher 1. Captain Mallick gives his son a look. The look of a proud father. And then they are mobbed by the crowds.

Cat is jostled along beside Lucas. He holds her hand to stop her being swept away. Looks up at the golden sun. Lifting his face up to feel its warmth.

LUCAS

God I missed the sun.

Cat looks at him.

CAT

Is that all you've missed?

He bends down. Gives her a kiss. It's a long one. Tara and Jones share a look -- told you. They break off.

LUCAS

I guess there are some other things
I miss.

In the background the Cryo-Sleep pod with Chou in it is carried out by medics.

Commander Morneau comes up to them.

COMMANDER MORNEAU

Japan and Russia have been in
contact...they're coming back out
onto land. Looks like we may have a
chance to get things right this
time.

CLEAVER

We can use the Stormcatchers to
ferry people to the mainland.

Jones appears with Quant. He carries an old BOOMBOX CD player. Hands it to Quant.

JONES

I just know you're gonna' miss it.

He hits PLAY. Johnny Cash's "*Ghost Riders in the Sky*." booms out. And suddenly its a party with a million people dancing in the sunshine.

Lucas looks at Cat -- at all the people milling around.

LUCAS

Looks like we have a world to
rebuild.

FLARE TO WHITE.