ACT I SCENE I- PITCH BLACK- VOICE OVER SCENE

Title card: MARINA TRENCH

[The Trench is a lightless world. It is the kind of black that is as if you see when you close your eyes. It is a solid oppressive presence, like living in a thunder cloud. There is something, a voice-]

V.O. CRICK [Scottish]

Captain Alice Crick of the HMS Vasco de Gama speaking. Whom am I addressing?

ACT I SCENE II- INSIDE- DOOR to HMS VASCO DE GAMA’s MAIN CHAMBER-THE MARINA TRENCH

[ Alice Crick is 20s, Scottish, kind of person who constantly assesses those around her. She seems made for the practical khaki, a wrench in her hand. The only thing exceptional in all her utility is the word DAD tattooed to her wrist. She listens at the door for a moment before entering.]

ACT I SCENE II- INSIDE- HMS VASCO DE GAMA’s MAIN CHAMBER-THE MARINA TRENCH

[Everything is claustrophobic in the bathyscope. How can it be anything else? The circular room’s walls curve with displays, and a fireman’s pole in the centre of it for getting down to the next floor.]

[Two other personal sit amiably arguing. ABBAS MOHAMMED, mid-30s, tall and broad, but somehow, not threatening, ENGINEER written on his uniform, fiddles with a ring on a chain on his neck. He listens bemused to the complaints of LETICIA RYLANCE, late 20s, posh, with curly exploding off her head, invading the space. She pages through a detective novel, then throws it down, bored.]

ABBAS

As I was saying, all I do my night is mix the rations together. If you have a problem, just go via a MacDonald’s. Cheers for the wrench, lost my one.

ALICE (Cutting across them)...[Pause] I got a call from Whitehall. A meteor is going to hit the world soon. Nothing is going to survive. [Pause]. Except us. Maybe...

ABBAS

OK, OK, back up a sec. Why will we survive? We’re experimental. We don’t have the rations-

[ A picture appears on the screen of a blueprint with Cyrillic above it.]

ALICE

It’s Russian. It’s called the Kirsk, and it has some sort of energy supply that allows it submerge for...well the guy on the phone, said indefinitely. They even have their own garden.

LETICIA

But everyone we know... friends, parents- [pause] I get bloody seventy-five centimetres square for all my stuff and food’s bad...! [Pause.] I outrank you both. Go up!

ABBAS

We won’t survive being on the surface!

ALICE

I wish to tender my resignation from Her Majesty’s Navy.

[LETICIA looks at ABBAS imploringly. ABBAS is scratching his chin then stops, stock still.]

ABBAS
But…what about contact? I wanna call Hamida and the kids-

[ALICE fidgets, LETICIA looks over at her, an eyebrow raised.]

ALICE

Can’t, love…oh Abbas, no internet; we’ve only got terrestrial down here, remember. [Pause]. If- If there were a chance of talking to them, -my dad,- but they said people were rioting- Nothing could get done.

ABBAS [Quietly]

Alice, what happens when we get down to the ship? Other than improvement on my cooking.-[he pushes LETICIA playfully] Whitehall about repopulating the planet- Do they have a cloning machine as well the Kirsk…?

[LETICIA’s lips twitch at this. However, Alice says nothing. Silence pours into the close room.]

ABBAS [very, very quietly].

I’m married, and I love my wife.

[ALICE shrugs. ABBAS takes the chain with the ring on it off his neck, and throws it at ALICE, who grabs it and puts on a char.]

ABBAS [Deadly soft]

Are you lying to us?

[He picks up the wrench. ABBAS no longer seems just one size to big; it seems as if he grows as the already confined room shrinks to fit his shape like memory foam.]

LETICIA

Stay cool, everyone. [ Heads to the door.]

ABBAS

You outrank her!

[LETICIA heads to the door, leaving her novel in the main cabin. Silence, as ABBAS’ breathing becomes regular.]

ABBAS [choking a little]

Sorry,...I am sorry, Alice...

[ALICE hugs ABBAS, who is a little taken a back, and looks down at her suspiciously.]

ALICE

I need to tell you something…I- [Pauses for a moment.] Can you look at that engine? We’ll need it either way.

ABBAS nods.

[ABBAS slips out. LETICIA comes back in, half her hair cut back into a sheerer, less spacious cut, walking towards the novel, then just looks at ALICE for a long moment. ALICE raises a finger to her lips. ALICE turns back to her drink and stares out the dark, unchanging window. LETICIA looks at ABBAS’ wedding ring on the chain.]

LETICIA pauses, then nods curtly. CUT TO BLACK