Here Be Dragons – Episode Three

"Scavengineering"

by

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Black Lace and Laser Beams
Productions
SCENE ONE

INT. Ops - U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

Harper stands by the helm, her attention torn between the screen in front of her, and Pippa, who is underneath the station with a tool box. We hear her banging around a bit, before she pops her head out.

PIP
Okay! Try it now.

HARPER
Rodger dodger.

Harper types something into the interface. The station does not respond.

HARPER
Nothing.

Pippa slides back under the station and we hear her banging around again.

PIP
Now? Try turning her... um... 20 points to the... left.

HARPER
Points?

PIP
That's nautical, isn't it?

HARPER
(typing) Hello, Rusalka interface! Uh... please turn 20 'points' to the- My left or yours?

PIP
I don't know! Left! Starboard!

HARPER
Left is port, Pip.

PIP
Whatever! Just see if she turns!

HARPER
Okay (resumes typing) 20 points to Port. Aaaaaaand...
The computer lets out a horrible high pitched screeching sound. Harper claps her hands over her ears. Pippa yelps and bangs her head on the underside of the station.

Harper scrambles to turn off the machine, as Scarlett enters Ops.

**Harper (cont’d)**
Shut it off!

**Pip**
You shut it off!

**Scarlett**
What the hell is going on in here?!

**Harper**
Pippa!

Flustered, Pippa grabs a handful of wiring from the underside of the station and rips it out. The screeching noise dies instantly... so does the computer.

**Harper (cont’d)**
Oh no... Pip...

**Pip**
I... I...

**Scarlett**
What... the hell... do you two Idiots think you’re doing? (spotting the wires in Pippa’s hands and the toolbox) What did you do to my ship?!

**Harper**
(slightly awed) I think she just ripped out the central processing system...

**Pip**
And the auxiliary controls...

**Scarlett**
WHAT?!

**Pip**
I... It was an accident...

**Scarlett**
An ACCIDENT?!

She rushes over to the helm.

(Continued)
SCARLETT (cont’d)
An accident is spilling coffee, or hitting the switch for the central heating system. THIS (She kicks the toolbox, sending things flying)
I—... You SLAUGHTERED my ship! I... I... Out. OUT. BOTH OF YOU. Out. NOW.

HARPER
Where are we supposed to—

SCARLETT
I don’t care. Out of this room. Out of this ship! I don’t care! Just... Out of Ops. NEVER in Ops. You two are BANNED. BANNED.

HARPER
What?! You can’t ban us!

SCARLETT
Oh-ho-ho you wanna bet? (points at Pip) You! Banned! (and Harper) Banned! Banned, banned, BANNED! Now get out!

HARPER
We were just trying to help! See Pippa had this idea—

SCARLETT
(trying to calm herself down) Stop talking.

HARPER
We were just trying to connect a few of the systems! Sort of like an update for the auto-pilot—

SCARLETT
I said stop talking!

HARPER
But it’s a good idea! She was just trying to help—

SCARLETT
I DON’T NEED YOUR KIND OF HELP. I don’t need you touching things, and breaking my ship, and getting lost! What did I say to you two on day one, huh? What did I say? I am not (MORE)
Continued:

Scarlett (cont’d)
your mother. I am not here to
babysit you two! I can’t turn my
back on you for a second without
you two getting into trouble, can
I?

Harper
We... we’re sorry.

Scarlett
(glaring at Pippa) What, she can’t
speak?

Pippa
(about 1 mean word away from
jumping ship and swimming home)
I... I...

Harper
(gently, to Pip) It’s okay... We’ll
fix it. (to Scarlett) We’ll fix it.

Scarlett
Then fix it. ... NOW.

Harper and Pip both jump and scramble for the station. We
hear them rattling around, while Scarlett paces back and
forth, trying to cool down.

Pippa
(slightly muffled) Umm... I–...
um... o-okay... So... If we
just–... If you just pass me those
pliers there... And I’ll just put
this back here... And if I just–

There’s a strange, buzzing sound and the lights flicker and
abruptly die. Everyone freezes, and goes deadly quiet.

Scarlett starts to laugh. It’s not a nice sound. It’s the
laugh of a soon-to-be-serial-killer.

Scarlett
(Why God? Why me?) Well. ... Well!
That’s... that’s perfect, Pippa.
Really. I... What can I say? You
fixed it!

Pippa starts to cry. It’s soft, but there’s no doubt about
it.

(Continued)
SCARLETT (cont’d)
(taken aback) I—... Pippa...

Pip’s crying louder now, utterly panicked and upset. Harper wraps an arm around her. Scarlett, meanwhile, doesn’t have a clue what to do, but oh here comes that guilty feeling...

HARPER
Pip... Pip, it’s okay. Hey, you’re okay.

PIP
I’m sorry!

HARPER
I know... I know... It’s okay.

PIP
I d-didn’t... I didn’t m-mean to!

HARPER
I know you didn’t, Pip. It’s okay. Accidents happen. You’re okay...

Uncomfortably, Scarlett turns her back on the pair and pulls her walkie-talkie from her belt. We hear the device beep musically to life.

SCARLETT
(into the walkie) Atlas. This is Commander Scarlett to Dr. Atlas. Atlas, can you hear me?

A brief pause, and then...

ATLAS
(over the walkie) Is someone up there playing a bloody joke? Where’d all the lights go?

SCARLETT
Just the Wonder Twins at work again. Can you make it up to Ops in this? Officer Campbell will need your help in repairing one of the stations.

ATLAS
Of course. Tell Pippa I’ll be there in a minute.

(CONTINUED)
SCARLETT
Copy that.

Scarlett switches off the walkie and turns to Harper.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
Bennett. You’re with me.

HARPER
What?

SCARLETT
Do you hear the engines?

Harper listens. Scarlett has a point. The ship is eerily quiet.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
Yeah. Neither do I. Which means we’re either dead in the water, or they’re running and not connected to anything, which means they’re over-heating. You’re going to help me make sure they’ve been properly taken offline.

HARPER
I... But Pip-

SCARLETT
Pip stays here to think about what she did, and fix the ship. No aux-controls means we’re sitting in a submarine that can’t be steered, and doesn’t currently have an air filtration system. Do you like breathing Officer Bennett? I sure do!

HARPER
Yes, but-

SCARLETT
She’s a big girl. Look, see? She’s cried it out. Atlas will be here in a minute. She’s going to be okay. Now hurry up.

Scarlett leaves the room without a backwards glance. Harper hesitates, then gives Pip a quick hug, before following the commander.
CONTINUED:

HARPER
I’ll be back before you know it.
It’s... it’s gonna be okay. You’ve
got this.

FADE TO:

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SCENE TWO

INT. Corridor - U.S.S. Rusalka - Moments Later

Scarlett leads the way down the hall with a flashlight.
Harper is struggling to keep up, and glaring at the back of
the commander’s head.

HARPER
You didn’t have to be such a bully,
you know.

Scarlett doesn’t respond.

HARPER (cont’d)
She was doing her best. Just trying
to be helpful. What exactly was
yelling at her supposed to do?

SCARLETT
(eyes on the ground) Watch your
step.

HARPER
Are you going to answer me?

SCARLETT
I’m your commanding officer. I
don’t have to answer you if I don’t
want to.

HARPER
Well, I’m not in the army. Which
means nobody’s my commanding
officer. I don’t answer to you.

SCARLETT
You sure about that?

Harper falters. Scarlett sighs and shakes her head, and they
move on in silence.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
(after a moment) It’s not like I
WANTED to make her cry.

(CONTINUED)
HARPER
Well, you did.

SCARLETT
(snapping) I know I did! Thank you, Officer Bennett, I am VERY aware that I made a subordinate officer cry! I know that! (beat) I... didn’t think I was that scary.

HARPER
(not unkindly) You are.

SCARLETT
Yeah. Evidentially. (under her breath) Shit. (beat) Well. Maybe it’ll teach her not to screw around so much. The ship was fine the way it was.

Harper gives her a look.

And even if it wasn’t, there are PROTOCOLS for that sort of thing! You two colossal screw ups might know that if you’d ever been on a sub before.

HARPER
Well we haven’t. Are we supposed to just magically know this stuff?

SCARLETT
It’s called common sense? I don’t just go into your room and rip the circuits out of the walls. Aren’t you supposed to be the brainy one? Pick up a book.

HARPER
Or you could learn to communicate properly, like a real leader, instead of just screaming at people all the time.

It’s like Harper has slapped Scarlett in the face. The commander glares at the younger woman for a moment, then turns away.

SCARLETT
Well maybe, if Killian had given me a proper crew, I wouldn’t need to.

They’ve reached the engine room by this point, and Scarlett pulls open the door.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SCARLETT (cont’d)
Come on. Let’s get to work.

FADE TO:

3

SCENE THREE

INT. Engine Room - U.S.S. Rusalka - Moments Later

Scarlett is already busy checking one of the engines.

SCARLETT
Check the pressure gauge on that engine, there. If it’s still in the white, then we’re okay.

HARPER
Yeah. Fine.

Harper moves to the other engine. The atmosphere is tense. Neither woman has said half of what she’d like to, and it’s just a matter of who will break the silence first.

SCARLETT
This one’s okay. Looks like it was a clean shut down, with the rest of the systems.

Harper doesn’t respond.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
I’ll say this for your friend... she... appears to know her stuff. She didn’t kill us, anyway.

Still nothing.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
Look, I-... I’m sorry, okay? I know you guys all think that I’m some sort of... raging bitch, or whatever, but in case you haven’t noticed, somebody has to be. I’m just trying to make sure nothing catastrophic happens where we all end up dead, and you guys aren’t exactly making it easy for me! (beat) Not that... that’s your fault. We’re barely into the first leg of this thing, and... (sighs) Look, I don’t LIKE to be the bitch, okay? It’s not like I’m always like (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
SCARLETT (cont’d)
this. I don’t get my kicks
terrifying small children, and
yelling at my crew mates. I don’t
want to be the bully. I HATE
bullies... I don’t WANT to be
the big, mean, scary bad guy
everybody hates... but I will. If
it means everybody comes through
this thing in one piece, then I
will. No questions asked.

beat.

HARPER
(slightly chastened) We don’t hate
you.

SCARLETT
(Doesn’t believe her, and
pretending not to care with a HEAVY
layer of sarcasm) Just maybe shout
a bit less, yeah?

HARPER
It couldn’t hurt.

The buzzing hum of the fluorescents fills the room as the
lights suddenly come back on, quickly followed by the low
burr of the engines.

HARPER (cont’d)
Hey! And Pippa said, let there be
light! (grins) See? Just got to
have a little faith.

SCARLETT
(hiding a smile) Yeah, yeah. Nobody
likes a smartass.

Scarlett pulls out her walkie again and heads for the door,
Harper at her heels.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
(into the walkie) Atlas. I’m
guessing everything upstairs is in
working order?

ATLAS
(over the walkie) Ahh... well...

(CONTINUED)
SCARLETT
What is it?

ATLAS
Well the lights are back on, commander, and the central computers are running but...

SCARLETT
But?

ATLAS
You’d better come see for yourself.

CUT TO:

4 SCENE FOUR
INT. Ops - U.S.S. Rusalka - Moments Later

Everyone is gathered around the helm.

SCARLETT
What do you mean, no?

AUTO
I mean no.

SCARLETT
I’m sorry. I’m confused. Who is hell this, and why the hell won’t he let me access the navigational drive?

PIP
(still a little shaken) He... he’s the ship’s interface Harper was helping me to install... His name is Auto... And we can’t access the navigational drive because um... because we don’t... we don’t...

SCARLETT
(sighing) Because we don’t HAVE a navigational drive anymore... Is that it?

PIP
Umm...

(Continued)
AUTO
Correct.

SCARLETT
Right. Of course we don’t. Because it’s just that kind of day, isn’t it?

PIP
I—I’m sorry commander.

SCARLETT
It’s... not your fault. We just lost all of our mapping technology, and possibly our ability to steer, but it’s no one’s fault. It’s... it’s no one’s fault.

PIP
You’re mad.

SCARLETT
No. I’m not mad.

ATLAS
Commander, do you need to sit down?

SCARLETT
I’m not mad. I’m fine.

HARPER
Are you sure? You don’t look so good.

SCARLETT
I’m fine!

AUTO
Perhaps a glass of water? But not from around here! Fun fact: Salt water makes up about 71% of the Earth’s surface! It’s fun to swim in, but deadly to drink! If you tried, you’d die of dehydration!

SCARLETT
... did that thing just... spit an ocean fun-fact at me?

PIP
It works!
ATLAS
That was intentional?

HARPER
(laughing) Oh my god.

PIP
I... I thought it would be nice if we could interface with the ship from places other than Ops... in case something went wrong and we couldn’t get to the bridge... Auto can follow basic instructions, and he can indicate when something is wrong. A lot of the ship’s existing systems are outdated, and I knew there had to be a better way to cope with them all. So I developed an interface program to monitor everything and perform certain tasks around the ship. This boat’s meant to be crewed by WAY more than four people. Auto can serve as all the personnel we don’t have. But I think I overloaded the ship’s systems, and that’s why everything shut down... But now we have Auto, and it’s not like he’s, you know, actually sentient or anything, so he can’t, you know... go HAL 9000 on us.

AUTO
I’m standing right here.

PIP
You can’t stand, Auto, you don’t have legs.

SCARLETT
But how did you-

PIP
Those fun fact buttons were all over the place, so I just connected them to the central computer system-

ATLAS
(impressed) You did what? How?
PIP
It wasn’t hard… But… You know, now we have access from everywhere, and we can have fun facts whenever we want!

Everyone stares at her.

PIP (cont’d)
Don’t you guys like fun facts?

AUTO
I do.

SCARLETT
Okay. Fine. How do we get this thing to reload the navigational files?

ATLAS
Have you tried turning it off and turning it on again?

SCARLETT
Don’t you have some catheters to count?

ATLAS
No, but I’d be happy to set up an enema if you’d care to relax?

SCARLETT
I AM RELAXED! (beat) … I mean— ... I am relaxed. I’m fine. See?

ATLAS
Uh-huh.

PIP
A few of the systems still haven’t come back online yet. Maybe Auto just needs a bit of time to warm up?

ATLAS
If that were the case, then the navigations system would show up here (she indicates the screen). You can see all of the systems that are malfunctioning, or booting up, or offline. Navigation isn’t one of them. It’s just… gone.
HARPER
So we don’t know where we’re going?

ATLAS
We don’t even know what direction we’re pointed in. We’re flying blind.

SCARLETT
Pip, that thing doesn’t happen to have a GPS, does it?

PIP
Uhh, no, commander.

SCARLETT
Well, looks like we’re doing this the old fashioned way, then. (she takes the helm) Harper, didn’t you say something about a library?

HARPER
Yes...

SCARLETT
Think you can find it again?

HARPER
Well, maybe...

SCARLETT
Yes or no, Officer Bennett... (deliberately gentle) It’s okay to say no.

HARPER
No, I—... I mean yes! Yes. I can find it, commander.

SCARLETT
Good. Take Dr. Atlas with you, and bring me every map and star chart you can find.

HARPER
Star charts?

SCARLETT
You heard me. Can’t know where we’re going if we don’t know where we are. Constellations should be enough to give us a rough fix. So we’ll surface, cut the engines, and wait until dark.

(CONTINUED)
HARPER
You know how to do that?

SCARLETT
Sure. And I suggest bringing
snacks. We’ll be out there a while.

ATLAS
Oh! And blankets! I have the
perfect book to read.

HARPER
Sounds like a party.

PIP
And... me, commander?

SCARLETT
You? You stay here, and help me
figure out how to work this... (she
glances uncomfortably at the
transformed helm) ...thing.

AUTO
Auto.

SCARLETT
Auto...

PIP
Yes, commander.

SCARLETT
You have your assignments, ladies.
Hop to it!


SCARLETT (cont’d)
So. We have an auto-pilot now...

PIP
He’s... less of an auto-pilot...
more of a ship’s interface. I mean,
he COULD steer the ship... if he
wanted to... but he’s mostly
just... here to help.

SCARLETT
Yeah, I don’t like—... Technology
and I don’t really... Get along.
But this is—... I mean... (beat)
Good job, Pippa.
CONTINUED:

PIP
Commander-

SCARLETT
No, I mean it. You... This... You did a good job.

Pippa smiles.

beat.

SCARLETT (cont’d)
I don’t suppose... you could see if you could do something about that thing’s voice, could you? I was kind of enjoying the all-girl’s thing...

PIP
Yeah, sure.

SCARLETT
Of course... you’d need access to the bridge... and I can’t exactly run Ops without my Chief Engineer...

PIP
What about Harper?

SCARLETT
I... might be persuaded that you... need an assistant. From time to time. So long as you warn me before you start on any new projects.

PIP
(smiles) I’ll see what I can do.

FADE TO:

5
SCENE FIVE
EXT. U.S.S. Rusalka - Evening

Waves crash against the hull of the Rusalka. In the far distance, birds wheel and cry out. The crew is seated together around the escape hatch, wrapped in blankets as the sun sets over the water.

(CONTINUED)
ATLAS
(reading) "Stretching directly from the strange olden ruin on the far islet to the waning moon, my eyes seemed to trace a beam of faint quivering radiance having no reflection in the waters of the bog. And upward along that pallid path my fevered fancy pictured a thin shadow slowly writhing; a vague contorted shadow struggling as if drawn by unseen daemons. Crazed as I was, I saw in that awful shadow a monstrous resemblance—a nauseous, unbelievable caricature—a blasphemous effigy of him who had been Denys Barry."

HARPER
... Okay. THAT was freaky.

ATLAS
Well, Lovecraft was a freaky guy. The Moon-Bog isn’t even half of it.

SCARLETT
And you read this for fun? You’re gonna give the Wonder Twins nightmares.

ATLAS
(teasing) I thought you weren’t going to be acting as anyone’s mother? If they don’t want me to read any more, they’re old enough to say so...

SCARLETT
You’re enjoying this, aren’t you?

ATLAS
VERY much.

PIP
I see one!

Pippa is pointing straight up at the sky. Out of the gathering purplish blue, there shines a single point of light. The first star of the evening.
HARPER
Score one for Pippa!

SCARLETT
Better head down and let Auto know.

PIP
Actually, commander? She prefers Ophelia.

SCARLETT
Right. Well... let Ophelia know.

Pip climbs back down into the Rusalka, and heads for Ops. She seats herself at the helm.

PIP
Ophelia? You awake?

There is a brief pause, before the central computer system boots up with a musical chime.

OPHELIA
Good evening, Pippa. What can I do for you today?

FADE OUT.

END.