



FADE IN:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

Calm sea, blue sky, hot sun. Small, gentle waves cresting as we PAN ACROSS the ocean.

Far, far away, a SHIP, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, cuts through the water, a tiny speck on the huge horizon.

INT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - SONAR SYSTEMS ROOM - DAY

A very dark room, like a basement inside the ship. SONAR TECHNICIANS sit around their consoles, headphones on, staring at their screens.

A PING. The sonar picking something up. ANOTHER PING, and then ANOTHER and ANOTHER. They're getting closer and closer together.

One technician rips off his headphones and stands up.

TECHNICIAN

Uh...someone should probably...get someone.

INT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - STAIRWAY - DAY

THE CAPTAIN, flanked by A PAIR OF OFFICERS, descends the stairs rapidly, heading to the heart of the ship.

INT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - SONAR SYSTEMS ROOM - DAY

The captain enters the room. All the techs STAND as he enters.

THE CAPTAIN

As you were.

He looks to the senior tech.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Where was the...

SENIOR TECH

Over here, sir.

The SENIOR TECH leads the captain over to the first technician's console.

TECHNICIAN

It was just a few minutes ago, sir, I got a ping from underneath. It keeps getting closer.

THE CAPTAIN

What is it?

TECHNICIAN

That's -- I have no idea, sir. It's something huge.

THE CAPTAIN

Probably just a --

TECHNICIAN

It's bigger than the ship, sir.

The captain stops at this and gives the technician a hard look.

THE CAPTAIN

Are you sure?

TECHNICIAN

That's what the equipment says.

The captain bolts out of the room and towards the stairs.

INT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - BRIDGE - DAY

The captain bursts onto the bridge, all the MEN present snapping to attention. The captain ignores them, instead grabbing the radio transmitter and pressing the button.

THE CAPTAIN

(into radio)

This is Captain Maddox. All men to battle stations. This is a code red. Repeat, all men to battle stations. This is not a drill.

He hangs up the transmitter and looks around the bridge.

None of the men have moved.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

I said battle stations!

The men instantly SNAP INTO ACTION, running to their posts, pressing buttons and putting on headsets. One of the men presses a button and a RED LIGHT starts flashing, a KLAXON BLARING in accompaniment.

INT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - SONAR SYSTEMS ROOM - DAY

The sonar room has its own red light flashing away. The technician who discovered the object sits at his console, listening, eyes closed, keeping time with his fingers.

TECHNICIAN
(shouting)
Contact in twenty seconds.
(beat)
Seventeen.

ALL THROUGHOUT THE SHIP, soldiers scramble to their stations.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
Eleven.

INT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - BRIDGE - DAY

The captain rests his hands on the console, a dark look on his face.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
Six.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE SHIP.

The sea around the ship starts to churn, water moving out in a circle, with the *Roosevelt* at the center.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
Two.

A LOUD, DEEP, WAILING ROAR.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
One.

And nothing happens.

For a long beat, nothing happens.

The ship LURCHES.

ON THE HULL OF THE SHIP.

Microfractures appear along the ship.

Another roar.

THE SHIP SPLINTERS.

It's in two large pieces, like the Titanic, with each half slowly SINKING into the water.

EXT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT - DECK - DAY

Crew members SCREAM as the slide down the deck, towards the sea below.

Men sink into the water.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

The fragments of the ship float in a circle around the center point where it all started. No one is moving. There's no sound.

The whole thing takes less than a minute.

FADE TO:

INT. PALACE - ANTECHAMBER - DAY

A small room, simply decorated. It leads into a larger room beyond, but the doors to that room -- heavy stone affairs, with elaborate carvings over the surface -- are shut tight.

Sitting outside the room on a small bench is a young, strong-looking man. CAL DURHAM. He looks towards the door, wincing as the sound of SHOUTING leaks out.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Are you Cal?

Cal turns.

Standing at the entrance to the antechamber is a beautiful YOUNG WOMAN. She's dressed strangely, her clothing designed to look like the scales of a fish, her hair pulled back into waves and thick knots, cloth bracelets around her elbows. It's all in greens and blues, very oceanic colors.

CAL

Yeah.

WOMAN

(stepping into the room)

Is it true what they say about you?

Cal barely resists rolling his eyes -- he's heard this before.

CAL

What do they say?

WOMAN
(giggling nervously)
That you come from...

She points towards the ceiling. Cal nods in response.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Then why are you down here?

CAL
I'm kind of...an ambassador. They
thought it would be a good idea
to have an independent source of
information.

The girl looks Cal up and down, blushing. She opens her
mouth to say something else, but --

MAN (O.S.)
I said we'll talk about it
tomorrow!

Cal stands up, flexing the muscles in his back.

CAL
I'd get out of here if I were
you.

WOMAN
Why --

The two large doors BURST OPEN and a man steps out from the
room beyond. For just a second he's darkened in silhouette,
but as he steps into the light of the antechamber, the
woman GASPS.

He's a tall man, well-muscled, lean and strong. His boots
are green, matching his pants. Both are patterned after
scales. His belt is gold, gleaming, regal. His shirt an
orange work of art. It's the same pattern as the pants, but
more solid -- it's almost metallic, like a form of light
armor. His hair is blond, and his face looks older than it
is due to his dark scowl.

He is ORIN, KING OF ATLANTIS.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(curtseying)
Your Majesty!

Orin SLAMS the two doors behind him.

ORIN
I can't take it, Cal. I can't.
The whole Council, they're all a
bunch of --

He stops, apparently noticing the woman for the first time.

ORIN (CONT'D)

(to Cal)
Who is this?

CAL

Oh, she --

WOMAN

(frightened)
I -- I was just leaving, Your Majesty!

She quickly backs out of the room, curtsying all the way.

Once she's gone:

CAL

So that didn't go well.

ORIN

Civil unrest. Economic trouble.
It's all...I'm pretty sure I'm a bad king.

He starts walking, out of the antechamber. Cal follows.

INT. PALACE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Orin looks over his shoulder to Cal as they walk.

ORIN

So who was that?

CAL

I dunno. Some girl.

ORIN

What'd she want?

CAL

To know who I was.

ORIN

And you said?

CAL

I'm an ambassador from the surface.

ORIN

You didn't tell her I made you my Chancellor?

CAL

It's not something I like to talk about.

ORIN

Why not? The fact that you're the second-most powerful man in the kingdom has to be pretty impressive.

CAL

Nah. Then it becomes all, "Can I meet the king?" Less fun for me.

Orin laughs.

CAL (CONT'D)

You're not a bad king.

ORIN

Yes I am. It's one city, and I can't hold it together.

CAL

It was a mess after the last king ran off, the war made it worse. You're fixing it.

ORIN

You don't think...he would have been better?

Cal doesn't answer, but the look on his face says it all: Hell no.

Orin rubs his smooth face with his hands. He's tired.

The men stop their walk in front of a door.

ORIN (CONT'D)

I think I just want to be alone for a while.

CAL

(nodding)

Okay. I have some work to do anyway.

He pats Orin on the shoulder as he continues on. Once Cal is out of the hall, Orin presses a small button beside the door. It parts down the middle and Orin enters the next room.

INT. THE PALACE - AIRLOCK - DAY

A small chamber, identical metal doors on either side. Orin presses a button on a panel. The first door, the one he entered through, closes and the second door opens.

WATER pours into the room, slowly filling the chamber. When the second set of doors is completely open, Orin steps out - he doesn't float up like a human would.

EXT. THE PALACE - BALCONY - DAY

As Orin steps out onto the balcony, we get our first look at the city.

ATLANTIS.

A beautiful city, tall, spiraling buildings connected by bridges. The city is under a huge, transparent dome, filled with water, which the buildings' airlocks keep out.

The architecture is strange -- domes and spires, rectangular human-esque structures, and complete spheres supported by bridges all linked together. Most of the simpler buildings are at the city's edges. Suburbs. The more elegant buildings are the centers of the economy and the government.

At intervals in the huge dome are double-doors, which lead to the outer ocean. They open and close as people approach, just like the airlock, letting people in and out.

But people aren't the only thing they let in -- FISH of all different kinds swim through Atlantis. Dolphins, sea turtles, schools of clown fish, every form of ocean life imaginable cuts through the waters of Atlantis.

A dolphin swims past, and we FOLLOW IT through the spires and marble halls of the city as the CREDITS roll...

RYAN GOSLING

IS

AQUAMAN

SHEMAR MOORE

DULE HILL

ALYSON HANNIGAN

AND

MANDY PATINKIN

BASED ON CHARACTERS
OWNED BY DC COMICS

PRODUCED BY
A. J. BLACK

WRITTEN BY
TYLER MOODY

FADE IN:

EXT. ATLANTIS - NIGHT

The dolphin SWIMS PAST Orin again, and keeps going.

Orin grips the rail of the balcony and looks out over his kingdom. The huge CRYSTALS which provide the submerged city its light glow white, but are gradually fading as it approaches nightfall.

Orin takes a deep breath, breathing in the water. He exhales, bubbles releasing out of his nose.

Atlantis is very big. And he is very small.

FADE TO:

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

MERA (30), a redhead who would be thin if she weren't so immensely pregnant, lounges in a plush chair in the marble chamber, reading a book. It's a king's chamber, richly decorated and very comfortable.

FOOTSTEPS, light, clacking sounds against the marble, echo into the chamber. Mera puts the book down, tries to turn to the entrance, but can't because of her pregnancy.

Orin enters the chamber, still fuming from the meeting. He's not a man who lets things go. But when he sees Mera, his anger fades away and he smiles.

ORIN

Hey.

Mera tries to stand up but again fails. Orin rushes to her side to catch her, gently lowers her back to the chair.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Be careful.

MERA

I am careful. I almost made it.

ORIN

Almost doesn't count, sweetie.

She smiles at him and gives him a light kiss on the cheek.

MERA

You're done with your meeting?

ORIN

(bitter)

A little while an hour ago.

MERA
That's not a happy voice.

Orin grunts.

 MERA (CONT'D)
It didn't go well?

Mera leads Orin to the bed beside her. They sit together.

 ORIN
There's...trouble. Some protests
outside the square, some student
thing, it -- I don't know.
 (changing directions)
Something took out an American
ship in the middle of the ocean.
Their Navy asked us to
investigate, but I don't see why
we should help them when --

He cuts himself off, shaking his head in anger.

 ORIN (CONT'D)
The Council told me to do it
anyway. For diplomacy.

Mera rests her head on Orin's shoulder.

 MERA
You're too stressed.

 ORIN
 (nodding)
Just a lot of things on my mind.
This whole city is falling down
on my head. And I don't know what
to do about it.

 MERA
 (beat)
Remember what you used to do when
you got like this?

Orin nods.

 MERA (CONT'D)
It helped. Maybe you should do it
now.

Orin looks up at her, thoughtful.

INT. THE PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Just outside Orin's chamber. Several of Orin's GUARDS wait
outside in the hall.

Orin emerges from his chamber.

ORIN
Anyone want to come swimming?

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

Orin and his guards swim through the ocean, outside the dome, whipping around in circles and swirls. Their hair and clothes toss about in the water. The guards can't quite keep up with Orin, of course. Orin keeps looking over his shoulder, to see how far back they are.

GUARD #1
Something wrong, sir?

ORIN
Just wondering if I'm actually
this fast or you're going to slow
to boost my ego.

The guard grins and speeds up, sending a burst of water behind him as he torpedoes forward. The guard overtakes Orin and continues ahead.

Orin smiles at the challenge.

EXT. UNDERWATER - ROCK FORMATION - LATER

Orin and the guard are racing -- neck and neck, continually edging in front of each other, only to be overtaken. They're coming up on two large spires of rock, which seems to have become the makeshift finish line.

Orin passes through gap between the rock towers just a second before the guard.

GUARD #1
Very nice, Your Majesty.

Orin and the guard float down to sit on one of the rock towers.

ORIN
(distracted)
You're not so bad yourself.

The guard looks to his king, who's staring off into the ocean.

GUARD #1
Is everything all right, sir?

ORIN

Yeah. I'm fine. Hey, can you and your men hang back? I want some time alone.

GUARD #1

(nodding)
Absolutely, sir.

The guard pushes off from the rock, swimming back towards the other guards. Orin shifts down on the rock, leaning against it. He stares out into the water.

ORIN'S POV.

The ocean stretches on forever, just a dark green void. No fish swim through this part of the ocean. Orin sits alone, deep in thought.

BACK TO SCENE.

Orin takes a deep breath. Something catches his attention. He sniffs, his nostrils flaring. Slowly, he pushes off from the rock, swimming towards some faraway point.

As he swims, he breathes in through his nose, following a scent. Occasionally, he stops, adjusting course based on the trail only he can sense.

EXT. UNDERWATER - SHIPWRECK - DAY

The ocean floor slopes down as Orin approaches, an underwater crater. Orin stops, floating in the water. He looks around.

Below him is a SPANISH GALLEON, its masts not quite collapsed after centuries of water damage. It's cracked through the hull, broken into two pieces on the ocean floor. The wood has rotted through in many places, and barnacles grow in others. Most of the ship's cargo has spilled out, still-sealed barrels and crates littering the seabed.

Orin sniffs again. He dives down, towards the ship, still on the trail.

Finally, he sees what he's been smelling -- there's a WOUNDED SHARK caught in the netting on the ship, and it's bleeding from its back. Orin floats just above the deck of the ship.

ORIN

What happened to you?

He starts to gently untangle the shark, stroking the fish's fin.

A DARK SHAPE rushes past in the background, but Orin doesn't notice. He's got the shark sorted and pats it.

ORIN (CONT'D)

There you go.

The shark looks at Orin like it understands what Orin is saying. After a beat, it swims off, and Orin smiles.

BLACK MANTA (O.S.)

Good afternoon, Your Majesty.

Orin whirls around in the water.

Floating in front of him, arms crossed, is BLACK MANTA. He's a strong, dark-skinned Atlantean, wearing clothing exactly like Orin's, but grey and black. His eyes are pure, vibrant red, and he's grinning at Orin as he bobs in the water.

ORIN

What are you doing here?

BLACK MANTA

Out for a swim. This isn't your ocean.

ORIN

Yes. It is.

Manta drops his grin, glares hard at Orin.

BLACK MANTA

Prove it.

ORIN

I have once. Want me to again?

BLACK MANTA

You stole my throne.

A FLASH:

--ATLANTIS, years ago. TWO ARMIES lined up in the water. One is dressed in green and orange, with Orin in their center. The other, grey and black, led by Manta.

BACK TO SCENE.

As before.

ORIN

I didn't steal anything. You lost. And you ran away.

BLACK MANTA

You sent me away. To live out here like an animal!

Orin LAUGHS.

ORIN

You trapped that shark here, didn't you? Just to get my attention.

(off Manta's look)

Oh, how sad. You are like an animal, Manta. Desperate and pathetic.

With a ROAR, Manta charges Orin, rushing through the water, driving his shoulder into Orin's gut. Orin GASPS as he loses his wind, a burst of bubbles pouring out of his mouth and nose.

Manta continues his push forward, SLAMMING Orin into one of the masts of the galleon.

Orin recovers from the blow. He clasps his fists together and beats them down into the small of Manta's back. Manta loses his grip on Orin, and Orin KICKS him in the chest.

Manta doesn't hesitate -- he charges forward towards Orin again. Orin kicks against the water, sliding out of the way.

Manta rushes past him, stopping before he crashes into the bow of the ship. Manta turns, and gets a fist in the face for his trouble.

Manta GROWLS. He flexes his arm and a long, thin SPIKE shoots out of a device on his wrist. The spike detaches from the device and Manta grabs it. He tries to STAB Orin with it, but Orin grabs Manta's wrist, redirecting the blow.

Orin KICKS Manta again. Wrapping both hands around Manta's arm, Orin extends the limb and DRIVES HIS KNEE into Manta's elbow.

Manta loses his grip on the spike and Orin grabs it, kicking Manta away in the same motion.

This time Orin doesn't wait to react. He DIVES towards Manta, the spike weapon held between his hands, horizontally.

He pins it against Manta's neck and forces him down through the water to the deck of the ship.

Orin kneels on Manta's chest, turning the spike so it pokes into Manta's neck. A thin trickle of blood spills out, seeping into the water.

BLACK MANTA

You gonna kill me, Orin? Finally
get rid of me?

ORIN

(smiling)

"Finally get rid" of you? Do you
think I stay up nights, wondering
what you're doing out here?

Orin leans in close, inches from Manta's face.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Don't flatter yourself. I think
about my toenails more than I
think about you.

Orin stands up, moving the spike away.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Now get out of my water.

Slowly, Manta stands up.

BLACK MANTA

You know something, I'd watch
myself if I were you, "King"
Orin. There's much, much bigger
things than you, out here in the
water.

ORIN

Go.

Manta pushes off from the deck of the ship. Orin watches
until Manta has completely disappeared into the deep. Then,
he exhales a breath he's been holding for a long time and
turns around.

A GROUP OF SHARKS have gathered around him, attracted to
the scent of Manta's blood. Orin doesn't flinch -- he
coolly regards the animals.

One of the sharks edges forward. Orin glares at it, hard.

Immediately, like a pack of frightened dogs, the sharks
turn tail and swim away. Orin tries to suppress his rage,
kicking off from the water in the direction of his guards.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

The next morning. Orin, Mera, and a HOST OF ATTENDANTS fill
the room. They're helping their king and Queen dress.

Forcing his way through the crowd is Cal Durham.

CAL
Your Majesty!

ORIN
Cal. Hey, move over, let him
through...

Orin gently pushes aside the attendant that's draping a rich cloak around his shoulders, letting Cal get close to the monarch.

CAL
Thank you.

ORIN
Busy day.

CAL
Well, special occasions. Comes
with the territory.

ORIN
Apparently.

CAL
Today's the day the king plays
the judge.

Orin rolls his eyes, moving away from the crowd. A couple of his servants who are still working on his royal outfit are dragged along for the ride as he and Cal step away.

ORIN
It's a tradition.

CAL
And a darn good one, you ask me.
Every ruler should see how his
justice system works from the
inside.

Cal shifts uncomfortably in his Atlantean clothes.

CAL (CONT'D)
Hate these damn things. I wish I
could wear my suit.

Orin pulls at the fabric of Cal's shirt.

ORIN
Waterproof thread. Show me a
surface suit made of this stuff,
I'll wear it myself.

Cal laughs.

ORIN (CONT'D)
Who has the files about the --

CAL
Right here, sir.

He hands Orin a plastic folder containing pages and pages of material. Orin flips through it as the attendants finalize his clothes.

ORIN
The Day of Trials.

He snaps the folder shut.

ORIN (CONT'D)
It is not my favorite day.

CAL
Well, I don't think it's anyone's favorite day, sir, but since you didn't abolish it when you had the chance you're going to have to struggle through.

ORIN
Of all my subjects, you are the most mouthy.

CAL
Tell truth to power, sir.

Orin smiles.

ORIN
I want you to go with Mera today.

CAL
Why?

ORIN
Extra pair of eyes?

CAL
Her guards are capable, sir.

ORIN
I know, but...I trust you more.

Cal smiles.

INT. THE PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

A very pregnant Mera, swarmed by her court and dressed in royal finery, proceeds down the hall. Her DOCTOR catches up to her, frantic.

DOCTOR
Please, Your Highness, I wish you'd reconsider...

MERA

What's to reconsider? I've done this before. I'll be fine.

DOCTOR

But the baby --

MERA

The baby'll be fine. He's strong.

DOCTOR

Babies are fragile, and the people aren't all in good health like we are. You could catch sick.

MERA

You worry too much.

DOCTOR

Do you have to do the shaking hands? Just, please, don't --

MERA

I'm going to do all the parts.

The doctor sighs.

DOCTOR

I went to school for a decade to learn medicine. No one ever listens to me. No one ever listens to the experts.

Mera laughs.

MERA

You worry far too much.

DOCTOR

Yes well. It's been said.

He watches the queen go, shaking his head.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A host of ATLANTEANS, sharply dressed, pack the seats of the huge courtroom. The room is furnished with deep, rich colors -- red and gold and orange. There's TALKING, low mumbles and conversation. The large, royal-looking seat at the front of the room is empty, for now.

The courtroom doors are pushed open from the outside. Two ROYAL GUARDS flank the entrance, less a sign of force than old tradition.

A FANFARE plays. At the cue, everyone in the courtroom stands immediately. THE PROCESSION enters the court, a host of regal display. Following them is, of course, Orin himself.

Orin looks around at the crowd as he strides through the aisle. The procession reaches the row of stairs that lead up to the central chair, and it splits in half, flanking either side. Orin climbs the stairs. He turns, facing out towards the crowd. Sits down, slowly, making sure his robes don't get tangled.

Once he sits, everyone else sits.

A COURT OFFICIAL unrolls a piece of paper, reads off it:

COURT OFFICIAL

His Majesty will now hold court.
All verdicts rendered by His
Majesty are final and may not be
appealed. The crowd will remain
at order throughout the
proceedings.

He takes a beat for drama, an old hand at this.

COURT OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Bring in the accused!

From a side door at the front of the courtroom, a SHACKLED MAN and a pair of GUARDS emerge. The man's been kept well, but he's very much a prisoner -- rough clothing, a bit unkempt.

As he takes his position in a seat at the front, the ROYAL PROSECUTOR and DEFENDER each take their place before the king.

ORIN

(immensely bored)

Are the parties prepared?

EXT. ATLANTIS SQUARE - DAY

An absolute MOB of people has gathered in the square. It's the center of the city, the country, and it's ridiculously ornate. Marble paving, crystal spirals, draped in banners and the turquoise flag of Atlantis. The city's tallest buildings rise up high above the square.

The mob are cheering, clapping. Excited. It's a holiday. And the center of their adulation is Queen Mera, making her way through the crowd along with her attendants and guards.

CAL

follows behind Mera, his head slowly, consistently turning from side to side to scope the crowd.

CAL

I don't like this.

Mera keeps smiling and shaking hands as she responds.

MERA

I'm absolutely stunned that you feel that way.

CAL

Well ma'am, I don't think sarcasm was called for, but I take your point.

MERA

It's a nice thing to do.

CAL

There are too many people. I know I'm pretty amazing just in general, but if all these people decided to kill you, I could only stop maybe two thousand of them before they got past me.

Mera laughs. They're getting further and further into the crowd, and this only makes Cal more nervous.

MERA

You worry too much. Just like my husband.

CAL

I don't think a husband can worry too much.

MERA

I had no idea you were so romantic, Cal Durham.

CAL

I am a man of mystery.

CITIZEN (O.S.)

Go home, dry-lung!

A PIECE OF FRUIT flies into frame, headed for Cal. Without flinching he CATCHES it before it can hit him and lets it fall to the ground. A couple of guards rush to the crowd to grab the person responsible, but Cal stops them.

CAL

Don't bother, I don't care.

Mera maintains her friendly disposition, but it cracks a bit as she turns slightly to Cal.

MERA
What was that?

CAL
Some people don't like me 'cause of the whole "foreign national" thing.

MERA
Well, that's silly.

CAL
I appreciate that.

They continue to make their way into the crowd, greeting the citizens.

INT. OCEAN CAVE - DAY

A dark cave, filled with water. An EEL slithers across as we MOVE THROUGH the cave. It's murky. Hard to see. A voice echoes out on the stone walls.

BLACK MANTA (O.S.)
No. He's...he still lives.

We ROUND A CORNER in the cave. A SHAPE in the distance.

BLACK MANTA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He outfought me. I failed.

Finally the shape becomes clear -- Black Manta, kneeling on the floor of the cave. But there's no one else there. He's talking to the back of the cave wall.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
I'll do better. Please -- I have a plan.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Orin's head rests against his fist, propped on the arm of the chair. His eyelids droop. As the man addressing the court finishes his argument, Orin leans forward to nudge one of his attendants with the tip of his boot.

ATTENDANT
Yes, sir?

ORIN
How many more of these?

ATTENDANT

Seven, my lord.

Orin winces. The attendant can't help but smile.

EXT. ATLANTIS SQUARE - DAY

An area of the square has been cleared of commoners, making way for Mera and her entourage. But the horde is pressing in, desperate to get close to the queen.

Cal turns to one of the guards.

CAL

Okay. You need to tell them to step back.

The guard nods.

GUARD

(shouting)

Everyone, please stand away from the queen.

He motions to his men. They push forward against the crowd, keeping them from getting too close.

CAL

It's a real fine job you boys do.

GUARD

Thank you, sir.

A TRUMPET blows further away in the city. The pressing crowd stops, turning toward the source. Except Cal. He continues to scan the crowd. He frowns.

CAL

Okay...

IN THE CROWD, a woman points out something to her child. Completely innocuous.

CAL

puts his hands on the top of his head. Something's wrong.

Everything SLOWS DOWN, the sound of the crowd fading away. Cal starts to turn on his heel in a circle, taking in the whole of the gathered crowd.

Something GLINTS, catching the light, but it disappears before Cal can figure it. Someone pushes past someone else in the crowd. Everything seems very innocuous.

Then it happens.

The ASSASSIN rushes out of the crowd, into the square. A wicked knife in his hand.

Cal PUSHES forward off the ground, flying through the water.

The assassin draws the knife back. He's aimed right for Mera.

Cal stretches his arms out. The other guards have just caught on and they now launch towards the assassin as well.

Too little, too late.

Mera turns -- sees the assassin hurtling towards her. Tries to throw herself out of the way.

Cal grabs the assassin's arm -- but the knife SINKS INTO Mera's ribs as Cal forces the assassin away.

Everything returns to NORMAL SPEED as Cal SLAMS the man's head into the marble floor. The knife is stuck in Mera's side. The guards swarm the assassin, restraining him, as Mera's attendants try their best to support their unconscious queen without injuring her further.

CAL (CONT'D)
(to a guard)
Go get the doctor! Now!!

And the guard takes off.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Orin's practically asleep, forcing himself to listen to the lawyers.

The door in the back opens and a MESSENGER slips inside. She makes her way through the aisles, trying to be discrete. The messenger walks up to the king's attendants and whispers something in one of their ears.

The attendant's eyes widen and the message and he clears the way for the messenger to proceed up the stairs towards the king. She climbs them in a hurry.

Orin looks to her. She leans down to whisper in his ear, not bothering with any of the typical formalities. Orin listens with barely cognizant interest -- for a moment. But then her message becomes clear.

Orin's off his feet, face locked in blind, hot rage. Without even a word to the lawyer he's interrupting, he PUSHES OFF the platform, speeding through the chamber. His finery casts off, sinking to the ground below.

INT. COURTROOM - ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Orin PUNCHES the button to open the outer doors. It doesn't go fast enough for his liking, so he grabs the manual release mechanism and PULLS it loose. The outer door swings open, letting a FLOOD OF WATER into the courtroom. Orin's out like a shot.

EXT. ATLANTIS - DAY

Orin soars over all but the tallest buildings in Atlantis. He's on his way to the square, just visible in the distance because of the huge crowd.

Someone is swimming towards him -- Cal. But Orin shoots right past him. So Cal flips over in the water and accelerates to catch up.

CAL

Sir --

ORIN

What the hell happened?

CAL

There was a guy, he had a knife -- you're not gonna do any good like this.

ORIN

Mera --

CAL

Is on her way to the hospital.
Uh, Your Majesty...

Orin stops mid-stream floating in the water.

ORIN

What.

CAL

Mera's on her way to the hospital. The shock -- the baby's coming.

And Orin's rage instantly fades.

INT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE - DAY

Orin storms into the hospital. He grabs a MALE NURSE by the collar.

MALE NURSE

Your Majesty --

ORIN
Is Mera okay?

MALE NURSE
Uh...

ORIN
(shaking him)
Is she?!

MALE NURSE
Yes! Yes, sir, she's fine, they
closed the wound and she's in the
birthing tank.

Cal catches up finally.

CAL
(out of breath)
What happened?

ORIN
(letting the nurse go)
She's...she's fine. She's having
the baby...

CAL
You're gonna be a daddy.

ORIN
(smiling)
Yeah.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

A marble room with a large bed. Mera lays in it, relaxed now. Orin's tucked beside her, supporting her. And in her arms is the newborn BABY prince.

MERA
He's so cute!

ORIN
He looks like his mother.

Mera manages to break her gaze from the baby to Orin.

MERA
You are such a cliché.

Orin laughs.

Mera rocks the baby back and forth gently. He's resting for now. He is tiny, smooth, pale. With thin blond hair, just like his father.

MERA (CONT'D)
He's got his daddy's hair.

ORIN
Poor kid.

MERA
Why? The Curse?

She rolls her eyes.

MERA (CONT'D)
I think that legend died when a
blond man became king, sweetie.

ORIN
I don't know. Atlantis has never
been very...receptive to blondes.

MERA
Only the fundamentalists care
about the Curse of Kordax
anymore. It's a myth we tell kids
to scare them because our parents
scared us.

She pulls the new baby closer to her and whispers in his
ear.

MERA (CONT'D)
He's a big scary man, with scales
like a fish, tentacles all over!
He's got blonde hair, and he cut
off his own hand and replaced it
with a sword!

Orin rubs Mera's shoulder, smiling despite himself.

ORIN
You're gonna give him nightmares.
His first ever nap and he's going
to dream about Kordax.

MERA
We can't just keep calling him
"him" all the time, can we?

ORIN
He'll need a name sooner or
later.

Mera thinks for a moment. Smiles.

MERA
Orin the Second.

Orin squints at her. Not amused. She bursts into laughter.

MERA (CONT'D)

Come on. It's regal.

ORIN

It's ridiculous.

MERA

What would you call him, then?

Orin thinks. Clearly nothing comes to mind.

ORIN

I don't know. Names are important. They have to...mean something.

MERA

(beat)

I've got it.

ORIN

What?

MERA

Arthur.

Orin winces.

ORIN

He won't get made fun of enough for the hair?

MERA

It's a good name. Doesn't it mean something up there?

ORIN

He was a king. Maybe. They don't know. Mera, we can't call him that.

MERA

Nope. That's his name. I decided.

ORIN

I don't know if you're allowed to make that kind of unilateral decision.

She looks up at him, big puppy dog eyes.

MERA

I got stabbed.

ORIN

(beat; sighs)

So we'll call him Arthur.

Mera instantly goes from pathetic to happy. She pecks him on the cheek and they both turn their attention to the newly-christened ARTHUR.

A KNOCK on the door interrupts the happy scene. Orin brushes Mera's hair behind her ear.

ORIN (CONT'D)
I'll be right back.

He hops off the bed and opens the door.

Cal and a pair of royal guards stand at the door.

CAL
Uh, sorry to interrupt, sir, but we have something...

Orin nods and steps out into the hall, shutting the door behind him.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALL - CONTINUOUS

Cal holds something out to Orin. It's a slender package, wrapped in a piece of white cloth.

Orin looks down at it, then up at Cal, who nods. Orin opens it.

A CURVED KNIFE appears as Orin pulls the cloth away. It's the knife that was used to stab Mera.

ORIN
Whoa.

CAL
I know. It's a miracle she didn't die, frankly. Shaky hands, bad aim, whatever. This guy wasn't a pro.

ORIN
(re: the knife)
What's this symbol on the guard?

ON THE KNIFE

The guard of the knife has a strange symbol on it: Two tridents, their prongs locked together.

BACK TO SCENE

Cal shrugs.

CAL

Might be from a cult or one of your weirder religions. I'll ask around. Right now it looks like the guy was acting alone, but if that symbol does turn out to mean something...I'll let you know.

Orin puts a hand on Cal's shoulder.

ORIN

Thanks, man.

CAL

(smiling)

Ain't nothing. Just my job. Go be a daddy now.

Cal nods goodbye and he and the guards exit. Orin watches, conflicted.

Finally he walks away from the hospital room.

INT. ATLAN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

This room lacks the normal, human feel of the rest of Atlantis. It's like a cave, the rock walls and floors glaring bright blue. The lamps are arranged so that the light appears on the walls like it's reflecting off the ocean.

ATLAN -- older, balding, cute in an old-man way -- sits at a large desk, poring over an old thick book under a lamp.

Orin enters the room.

ORIN

Atlan.

Atlan looks up. When he recognizes the king, he stands, crossing the room to meet him.

ATLAN

Your Majesty. This is a surprise.

ORIN

You don't have to call me that. You can be the one person who calls me something else.

Atlan smiles.

ATLAN

I don't want to displease the Crown.

Orin rolls his eyes.

ORIN

Shut up.

He looks around the room.

ORIN (CONT'D)

We could get you a better place,
if you wanted. Like, with carpet.

(beat)

Or windows.

Atlan shrugs.

ATLAN

I like it here. It's closed off.
Quiet. Old. It's like I can feel
the roots of Atlantis's magic.
Her foundations.

He puts his hand on one of the cave walls.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

I touch these walls, I can feel
the pulse of this city.

Atlan grabs Orin's hand and puts it against the wall too.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

Take a moment. Just feel it.

He closes his eyes. Orin looks around awkwardly, hand on
the wall.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

What do you feel?

ORIN

(beat)

Nothing.

Atlan opens his eyes.

ATLAN

You've got no romance.

Orin laughs. Atlan moves back to his desk, marking his
place in the book and closing it.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

So what brings you here?

ORIN

I don't...I don't know. I guess I
just need advice. Or help.

ATLAN

You sound confused.

Orin sighs. Atlan points to a chair across from his desk.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
Want to sit?

Orin nods, sitting down.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
(also sitting)
What's on your mind?

Orin thinks for a moment. He grabs a pen off Atlan's desk and scratches something onto a piece of paper. It's the symbol on the knife, the dual tridents.

Atlan picks the paper up and studies it.

ORIN
It was on the knife. Do you have
any idea what it is?

Atlan shakes his head, holding the drawing up to the light.

ATLAN
No. No, I've never seen anything
like this.
(turning to Orin)
I can look into it for you. If
it's old enough to mean anything
I'm sure it'll be in one of my
books.

ORIN
Good. Find out what it is. Find
out who'd use a knife like that.
Because then I'm going to kill
the son of a bitch.

Atlan sighs and puts the drawing down. He sits in front of Orin, leaning in close.

ATLAN
Listen, Orin.

Orin reacts to this use of his name, his face softening.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
I understand why you're angry. I
do. But you can't let that
control you. Your temper has
always been your greatest
weakness.

He chuckles to himself.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
You're very quick to anger, ever
since you were a child.

But then he stops, catching himself.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
Just clear your head. Relax.
Don't do anything without
thinking, okay?

Orin nods.

ORIN
If you find anything, you'll get
me?

ATLAN
Of course.

Orin stands up.

ORIN
I'm going to go be with my child.
(beat)
Wow. I have a child.

Atlan smiles, also standing.

ATLAN
You'll get used to it.

He puts his hands on Orin's shoulders.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
Go to your family. And remember
to relax.

Orin smiles and exits the cave. Atlan sits back at his desk.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
(once Orin is gone)
How long have you been there?

CAL (O.S.)
Long enough.

CAL

steps out of the shadows of the corner of the cave.

CAL (CONT'D)
So the king has a son.

ATLAN
It would appear.

CAL
The royal line continues.

Atlan doesn't respond.

CAL (CONT'D)
Won't be a civil war when this
king dies.

ATLAN
Thank Poseidon.

Cal chuckles.

CAL
Yeah.

Atlan stands up, not wavering under Cal's hard stare.

ATLAN
Is there something I can help you
with?

CAL
(beat)
When you do figure out that
symbol, don't tell him first. You
know?

Atlan nods.

Silently, Cal leaves.

FADE OUT.

UNDERWATER

RUSHING through the dark water. The SOUND of the ocean,
whirling around like an underwater tornado. A SHAPE
flickers in front of us, quickly out of frame.

A burst of BUBBLES.

The SHAPE returns, more definite now, swimming along in
front of us. It's humanoid, but covered in tentacles.

Suddenly it turns.

Its skin is green. Scaly. Covered in some kind of slime.
One of its hands writhes with tiny tentacles. The other
hand is nonexistent. It's just a stump, with a BLADE
ATTACHED.

And it's got flowing locks of BLONDE HAIR.

JUMP CUT TO:

ORIN

Wakes up. Gasping for air.

PULL BACK to reveal we're

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Orin stands up. He'd been sleeping in a chair, Mera and the baby asleep together in the bed.

Orin looks down at his hands.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Orin runs water from the sink over his hands. Splashes his face.

ON HIS REFLECTION.

He needs a shave. He rubs the blonde stubble on his face, irritated.

ON HIS HANDS.

He rubs them together. They're shaking.

A KNOCK on the bathroom door.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALL - DAY

Cal stands outside the bathroom door. Orin pokes his head out.

ORIN

Cal.

CAL

Your Majesty, there's something, I don't know exactly how to put it, there's something happening a few miles outside the city.

Orin steps out of the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

ORIN

Is everything all right?

CAL

I -- well, probably. It's the kind of thing someone needs to check out.

Orin starts walking. Cal hurries to follow.

CAL (CONT'D)

No one's sayin' it has to be you.
(MORE)

CAL (CONT'D)

You take some time with Mera
and...the kid, whatever his name -
-

ORIN

Arthur. That's his name.

CAL

Well, okay. Like I was saying,
you can stay here, we just need
you to send some guys out to
monitor the situation.

ORIN

No, I'll go. I...I want to get
out of here. For a little while.

CAL

If you insist.

ORIN

So what's the situation that
needs monitoring?

Cal hesitates before he answers.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - DAY

Orin (holding the Trident), Cal, and pair of guards float
under the water. They each look absolutely blown away.

ORIN

This is...a real thing, right?

CAL

It would appear so. However, if
it did turn out to be some weird
prank? I would not be a bit
surprised.

Orin runs a hand through his hair.

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal:

FISH.

Every fish.

Any kind of fish that could possibly be imagined.

Sharks, clownfish, angel fish, manta rays. Every color,
shape, and type of fish. They're circled up in the ocean
like the Great Wall of China, a huge circle near the
surface of the water.

ORIN (O.S.)
I've never seen anything like
this before.

CAL
I haven't either. Although I
don't exactly hang out in the
open ocean a lot.

Orin doesn't respond. He's staring hard at this collection
of fish, who aren't moving -- just bobbing in the water.

ORIN
(long beat)
Do you hear that?

CAL
What?

Orin holds his hand up. Shuts his eyes and strains to
listen.

Finally Cal seems to notice what Orin's been hearing: A
pervasive HUMMING SOUND, a sustained bass note, strange and
foreign.

CAL (CONT'D)
Where the hell is that coming
from?

ORIN
(long beat)
Everywhere.

He turns in the water to face Cal.

ORIN (CONT'D)
I can almost...feel it. The whole
ocean is vibrating.

The wall of fish haven't moved. Haven't done anything. Orin
floats closer to them. Slowly reaches out to touch one of
the sharks. It doesn't respond.

CAL
What is this, are they asleep?

ORIN
No. They're hypnotized. Or
something. I don't -- I've never
seen anything like this.

Orin strokes the fish in front of him. He closes his eyes,
concentrating hard. It's clear something is happening, but
whatever it is, it's imperceptible.

ORIN (CONT'D)
 (faint)
 Come on...move...

Nothing. The fish are still hypnotized by the other, deeper sound. Orin whirls around in anger.

ORIN (CONT'D)
 Dammit.

CAL
 Was that your mind thing?

ORIN
 Yeah. Didn't work, though.
 (beat)
 Hold this.

He hands the Trident to Cal, who takes it carefully in both hands, showing great respect to this object.

Orin descends in the water, allowing himself to sink deep, out of sight. The king's guards search for him. They start to drop, as well, but Cal holds out his hand to stop them.

BUBBLES rise up slowly, then more quickly. Something rushing up quickly.

ORIN

rising up like a missile through the water, almost unrecognizable, just a green and orange blur. PAN UP QUICKLY as he shoots by, following him as he reaches the surface.

EXT. OCEAN - SURFACE - DAY

The water's moving here, being blown around by the blades of a HELICOPTER hovering over the ocean.

ORIN

breaks the surface of the water, launching high up into the air!

The force of his exit propels him up and he extends his arms, kicking his feet to give him an extra boost.

Orin CLEARS the chopper, getting a good look inside as he arcs over it.

ORIN'S POV

The PILOT of the chopper is just as mesmerized as the fish below him.

BACK TO SCENE

as Orin dives back into the water perfectly, barely disturbing the water at all.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - DAY

Orin flips around underwater, sinking so he's level with Cal again.

Cal merely floats there, holding the Trident out, a bit stunned.

CAL
I didn't know you could do that.

ORIN
(grinning)
I can do lots of things, Calvin.

He takes the Trident back, gripping it tightly. Cal looks up towards the surface.

CAL
What's going on up there?

ORIN
No idea. There's a...you know --

He can't think of the word, so he moves his finger in a circular motion, like a helicopter's propellers.

ORIN (CONT'D)
The flying thing.

CAL
Helicopter?

ORIN
(nods)
Right. One of those up there.
Just hovering.

CAL
What does that mean?

ORIN
Whatever's doing this to the
fish...it can do it to things on
the surface too.

Cal's eyes widen and he looks up again.

CAL
We have to stop this.

Orin nods.

ORIN

I'd move away now, if I were you.

Cal backpedals, taking a position near the guards.

Orin grips the trident tightly in his hands, focusing his will on it.

A moment passes.

The fish don't move. Cal cocks a skeptical eyebrow.

Orin concentrates even harder. His knuckles whiten as they grip the Trident.

TWO DARK SHAPES begin to slowly emerge behind Cal and the guards. If Orin opened his eyes, he could see them, but they're shut tight. He's completely focused on his powers.

The shapes begin to take form now -- sleek, curved, very distinctive. Their approach disturbs the water, sending ripples towards Orin, Cal, and the guards.

Slowly Cal turns. The guards follow suit, but Orin continues to focus himself.

CAL

Oh hell.

The shapes are closer now.

They're HUGE. Twenty times longer than most men, easily. Wide, tall, blubbery. Two fully grown BLUE WHALES now float in the water, mere inches from Cal.

CAL (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Some notice woulda been nice.

ORIN

(through gritted teeth)

Shut. Up.

CAL

Big damn fish three feet from my head, not a word of warning. That's not right.

Then, the whales begin to SING.

It's guttural, high and low at the same time, with clicks, screeches, and hums. It's the most beautiful thing you could possibly imagine.

Cal's mouth drops.

The combined songs of the whales is enough to overpower the hypnotic noise.

Slowly, the hypnotized fish start to snap out of their trance. They break apart, swarming around each other as if nothing ever happened.

One of the sharks SNAPS at a school of smaller fish. Orin WHIRLS around to face it, focusing his will on the shark. It stops attacking and swims away, completely docile.

The cluster of fish are gone now. The whale song stops and Orin relaxes his grip on the Trident.

CAL (CONT'D)

I didn't know you could do that, either.

ORIN

You've never seen me call whales before?

Cal shakes his head.

ORIN (CONT'D)

It's something I do on special occasions.

He grins.

EXT. OCEAN - SURFACE - DAY

The helicopter starts flying forward again, its pilot apparently unaware of whatever had happened to him moments ago.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - DAY

They're heading back now, Orin at the lead. The whales have gone. Cal looks around, jumpy.

ORIN

What's wrong?

CAL

I don't -- now I'm afraid there's huge-ass whales all over the damn place. It's like Pinocchio.

ORIN

(cocking an eyebrow)
It's like what?

CAL

Never mind. The point is, it's freaky.

ORIN

There are only about a thousand blue whales left in the world. It's a big ocean, Cal. These just happened to be nearby.

CAL

Only a thousand? That's...not a lot. Species-wise.

ORIN

I know.

CAL

So where'd the rest go?

Orin turns away, to spare Cal the dark, angry look that crosses his face.

GUARD (O.S.)

Your Majesty!

Orin and Cal turn to the guard. He's pointing out into the water.

A DOLPHIN swims through the sea. Not in a straight line like normal dolphins, though. It's taking a schizophrenic, lazy circle, like half of it wants to go in one direction and the other half wants to go somewhere else.

Orin regards the dolphin for a moment and then makes a motion with his hands. The guards nod and swim over to the animal, gently grabbing it and bringing it over to Orin.

Orin places his hands on the dolphin.

ORIN

I thought I fixed all of you.

CAL

That sound is gone. This must be something else. Maybe it's sick?

ORIN

(beat)

Maybe...

He runs his hands over the sleek creature. Confusion crosses his face.

ORIN (CONT'D)

What's this?

Orin turns the dolphin over carefully.

On its belly is a DISGUSTING GREY PARASITE.

It looks like a mutant squid, but much smaller. Its tentacles have pierced the dolphin's flesh and dug deep into the body. The parasite doesn't appear to have a mouth or eyes. Something slimy drips out of its pores.

Orin pokes the parasite lightly. It doesn't react.

CAL
That's really gross.

ORIN
I've never seen anything like this before.

CAL
Wanna bring it with you?

Orin thinks for a minute.

ORIN
Yeah.
(to the guards)
Hey. Carry him along with us, okay?

The guards nod and take the dolphin from Orin. It doesn't struggle as the group start back for the city again.

INT. ATLANTIS - DAY

The four swim over the city, the dolphin suspended between the two guards.

ORIN
(to the guards)
Take it to the University, get whichever scientist is in charge of biology to look it over.

The guards break off, heading for one of the taller towers in the city -- the University.

Orin and Cal continue on towards the palace.

CAL
What are you gonna do while you wait for the results?

ORIN
(smiling)
We're going to go see the man who tried to kill my wife.

Cal grins.

INT. PALACE - PRISON - DAY

A well-lit stone hallway, completely bare but for doors to individual prison cells. Orin and Cal walk through the narrow passage, stopping in front of the farthest cell door.

CAL

You sure you want to go in there?

ORIN

Yeah.

CAL

You're not gonna break his neck or anything.

ORIN

No.

(firmly)

No.

Cal opens the door.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

A room, divided in half by a transparent glass barrier. The assassin sits on the far side of the barrier, knees up to his chin. Orin and Cal stand on the other, looking in. Cal closes the cell door behind them.

ORIN

What's your name.

The assassin doesn't answer.

Cal leans forward.

CAL

It's Kurin. We ID'd him not too long after we got him in here.

Orin steps closer to the glass. There's a handle on a section of the barrier, a door in the glass. Orin puts his hand on it.

ORIN

Kurin. Look at me.

Kurin looks up, but only for a second.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Why'd you do it?

No answer.

Orin POUNDS the glass.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Hey!

He stops. Draws a deep breath.

ORIN (CONT'D)

He's not gonna talk. Not yet.

Cal shakes his head.

CAL

You want me to go in there?
Persuade him to answer questions?

ORIN

How are you gonna do that?

Cal doesn't answer. Orin turns back to him, reads the look on his face.

ORIN (CONT'D)

No. Not yet. Let's...

He sighs.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Just leave him for now. He'll
keep.

CAL

You sure?

ORIN

I'm sure. We'll come back later.
Maybe he'll have softened up by
then.

He and Cal start to leave the cell. As they close the door behind them:

ORIN (CONT'D)

We need to find out what that
thing out in the ocean was.

The door closes.

In his cell, Kurin looks up, GRINNING to himself.

FADE TO:

INT. ORIN'S OFFICE - LATER

Orin stands in his office, paying full attention to Cal and an Atlantean SCIENTIST, who's holding the strange squid-like creature in the jar.

CAL

It can live...anywhere.

SCIENTIST

It's parasitic -- it find a host
and burrows into the flesh,
hiding beneath the outer layers
of skin most of the time.

Orin nods, taking this in. He clearly doesn't think
anything of it yet.

ORIN

So what's the big deal?

Cal nods pointedly at the scientist.

SCIENTIST

It's...when we examined the
dolphin Your Majesty brought in,
we found this creature not merely
under the skin, but in the
nervous system.

ORIN

Wait...what?

SCIENTIST

The spinal cord, to be exact. The
ends of the tentacles, here, have
these spikes which latch on to
the nerve bundles. While there,
it broadcasts some sort
of...mental signal, the exact
nature of which we've been unable
to determine.

Orin looks to Cal for the punch line.

CAL

It could -- theoretically -- take
over whatever it grabbed onto.

SCIENTIST

(insistent)

And while exerting control over a
specific kind of creature, a
dolphin let's say, it could
conceivably use high-frequency
echolocation to control other,
similar biological entities in
the surrounding area.

And the dots connect.

ORIN

The ring of fish.

CAL
I was thinking.

ORIN
Why have we never encountered any
of these things before?

SCIENTIST
Well, I mean...they're
impossible.

ORIN
How?

SCIENTIST
What we're talking about, high-
frequency echolocation, it's
basically, you know, magic.
Telepathy. Nothing should be able
to just evolve psychic powers.

ORIN
So these aren't natural. They're,
what, man-made?

SCIENTIST
Man-altered, at the very least.

CAL
So who did the altering?

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PALACE - PRISON - NIGHT

Cal and Orin storm through the prison.

CAL
I don't get why we're going to
see Kurin.

ORIN
Someone tries to kill my wife.
And my child. Some impossible
monster tries to take over the
ocean. I don't believe in
coincidences.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Kurin sits in exactly the same way as before. Almost like
he never moved in the first place.

Orin and Cal enter.

ORIN

Hey!

No response.

Orin punches the glass. It cracks. He raises his fist to punch again, but Cal catches his hand.

CAL

Let me give it a shot?

Orin looks at Kurin. Nods.

Cal motions towards the door. Orin heads out, slamming the door behind him.

INT. PRISON - NIGHT

Orin leans against the wall, tapping his foot. His arms are crossed against his chest.

There's a THUD from inside the cell. The sound of shattering glass.

A moment passes. The door opens. Cal enters, closing and bolting the door behind him.

CAL

Yeah...someone's gonna need to put him in another cell.

ORIN

He's still alive, right?

CAL

Someone's gonna need to check on that.

INT. ATLAN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Morning now. Atlan, Orin, and Cal stand in his chambers. There's hardly a square inch of space not covered by books now.

CAL

He said he was a member of a group called the Hands of Poseidon.

ATLAN

The Hands of...

He rushes over to his desk, ducking down behind a huge pile of books. Orin and Cal exchange a look.

ORIN

Are you okay, Atlan?

ATLAN

I read something last night. I have to find the book.

CAL

Well, you're kinda spoiled for choice.

ATLAN

No, a specific book, the oldest book...

He stands up, slamming a dusty, ancient collection of papers down on his desk. It's hardly more than parchment bound with string.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

The Dweller's journal.

Atlan flips through the book, finding a chapter in the middle. He points at it violently.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

The Hands of Poseidon. It's the oldest religion in Atlantis. Forgotten now, long forgotten, barely more than a cult.

ORIN

Were they particularly violent?

CAL

They tried to kill your wife not two weeks ago, so --

ATLAN

There's no record of them being a violent group, no. But that was a long time ago. Who knows what's changed since then?

Orin looks around, unsure of what to do.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

Your Majesty...

ORIN

I thought we talked about that. Orin.

CAL

Why does he get to call you by your name?

ORIN

Seniority.

ATLAN

Sir! When I found this group in the book, I looked it up in more modern records. There's one devotee in particular I thought you might be interested in.

ORIN

Who?

Atlan takes a moment, more to let Orin's tension drop than to take a breath.

ATLAN

Black Manta.

Any good Atlan's pause may have done is immediately destroyed. Orin pounds his fist on the table. Atlan winces.

ORIN

Manta tried to kill my wife?

ATLAN

I don't know. I -- during the war, he had the symbol on all his uniforms.

CAL

It might not mean anything.

ORIN

It means something. It has to.

CAL

You can't blame Manta for everything.

Orin looks at Cal, his expression clear -- "Yes I can."

ORIN

Can you find out where they're hiding?

CAL

(smiling)

I think I can arrange that.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Orin is dressing. Mera watches, concerned, bouncing Arthur lightly in her arms.

MERA

I can't believe you're going out.

Orin fastens on his tight orange shirt. It's light armor, made of hardened scales.

ORIN

I have to, Mera. These people tried to kill you. They'll try again.

MERA

We're taking Arthur to the Ridge today. It's been a week since he was born, it's time --

ORIN

You're right.

He's buckling up his green boots now, sitting on the corner of the bed. He looks up at Mera.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You take him. You can get through the ceremony without me.

MERA

Unbelievable.

ORIN

What do you want me to do? Let them be? Do nothing while they make plans to kill you?

MERA

I want you to be a father. Today, just today, I want that to be first.

ORIN

Part of being a father is keeping the mother of my child safe!

MERA

I'll be safe if I'm with you.

This makes Orin smile, but only for a moment.

ORIN

Mera. There'll be other things -- I need to take care of this. This is my job, I'm supposed to keep Atlantis safe. Letting a murderous cult stew is the exact opposite of safe.

Mera shakes her head.

MERA

Fine. I'll go by myself. But you owe Arthur. He will not grow up without his father.

ORIN

I grew up without my father, I turned out okay.

Mera pats him on the hand as she passes by, leaving the room.

MERA

Sure you did, sweetie.

Orin finishes dressing in a huff.

INT. THE PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Orin exits his chambers, Trident in hand. Cal is waiting for him, dressed in the same style of armor, but in black.

CAL

You taking that?

ORIN

The king carries the Trident. It's the rules. Plus, it's pointy. Are the rest ready?

CAL

A dozen of your best soldiers are waiting outside. I've got the location. We're just waiting on your orders.

ORIN

(nodding)

Let's go.

EXT. THE PALACE - BALCONY - DAY

A DOZEN SOLDIERS, dressed like Cal in their black scale armor and armed with swords, wait outside on the balcony.

Orin and Cal come out of the airlock. The soldiers stand to attention.

ORIN

Let's go.

He grips the edge of the balcony, then PUSHES OFF, launching himself into the water. He swims upward, till all but the few tallest buildings in the city are below him.

Behind him, Cal and the soldiers do likewise. They've each got their hands on their swords.

They ascend until they're almost brushing the dome of the city, faint specks to anyone on the ground below.

EXT. ATLANTIS - LATER

Orin, Cal, and the soldiers have formed a circle above a district of the city.

CAL

If the information Kurin gave us is accurate, the Hands of Poseidon's base should be directly below us.

ORIN

What's the plan?

CAL

How does Your Majesty feel about overwhelming force?

Orin nods.

Cal gives the soldiers the signal and they descend, feet-first, towards the city.

EXT. ATLANTIS - MARKET DISTRICT - DAY

The party lands on the stone streets of Atlantis. Groups of Atlantean citizens gasp and bow as they spot Orin, but he doesn't acknowledge them. He's moving too fast.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The party rushes through a back alley, Orin at the center.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

A small, narrow street. Modest homes on either side.

Orin's men pour into the street from the alley. Cal breaks off from the group and studies the houses one by one.

ORIN

What are you looking for?

CAL

He said...

CAL'S POV:

One of the houses has a symbol carved over the door -- two interlocking tridents.

BACK TO SCENE

Cal points.

CAL (CONT'D)

There.

EXT. CULT'S BASE - DAY

Two of the soldiers flank the door of the house, the rest assembled outside, waiting.

SOLDIER #1

Whenever you're ready, sir.

Cal nods at the soldier.

CAL

(turning to Orin)

Just say the word.

ORIN

Go.

INT. CULT'S BASE - DAY

An empty, dark, apparently abandoned house.

The front door CAVES IN!

The soldiers flood the room, swords out.

SOLDIER #1

Clear!

Orin and Cal follow the soldiers into the house.

Orin looks around. He kicks over a table in frustration.

ORIN

Dammit!

CAL

He said they'd be here.

ORIN

Yeah, well. Look around!

He sweeps his arms around the empty house.

ORIN (CONT'D)

He was wrong!

Cal heads for the door.

CAL

When we get back I'm gonna tear
Kurin's throat out, I swear to --

ORIN

Wait...

Cal turns back. Orin is staring at the floor.

CAL

What?

ORIN'S POV:

On the floor under the table Orin kicked over is a
partially-covered trap door.

ORIN (O.S.)

Let's look around.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

A dark underground lair. Dimly lit, with old furniture and
musty books everywhere.

SEVEN CULTISTS fill the room, looking at books or maps,
some just sitting down.

The trap door to the room above EXPLODES.

Orin's soldiers drop into the room, swords out!

The cultists grab for weapons, their own swords or knives,
which each bear the symbol of the Hands of Poseidon.

SOLDIER #1

Drop your weapons!

CULTIST #1

Take them!

The cultists charge forward.

Steel clashes against steel, cultists slashing out at the
better-trained soldiers. It's military precision against
desperate militia force, and it's evenly matched.

Until Cal drops down from the house above, swordless.

He pushes past his soldier, advancing on the cultists. He ducks a pair of swords and KICKS one of the cultists hard in the gut.

Without looking back, Cal grabs another cultist's wrist and TWISTS it, driving the man to his knees.

He picks up the man by his neck and lifts him, SLAMMING him into one of his fellow cultists. Both go down.

Cal decks one cultist, then another, dropping to his knees as a cultist stabs at him. Cal hits the cultist on the back of the knee, dropping him. He then PUNCHES the man in the face twice.

He rises and steps to the side at the same time, barely dodging another sword. Cal kicks the man's arm, knocking the sword into the air. He catches the sword and STABS it into the cultist's leg!

The cultist HOWLS in pain and collapses, the sword sticking straight out of him.

Cal looks around, ready for more action, but the remaining cultists have been rounded up by the soldiers. He looks down.

The man he stuck with the sword tries to pull the blade out. Cal puts a foot on his chest to stop him.

CAL

Don't do that. You'll bleed to death.

He looks to the soldiers.

CAL (CONT'D)

Good job.

FADE TO:

EXT. ATLANTIS - DAY

The soldiers drag the now-bound cultists through the city. Cal and Orin swim behind them.

CAL

You want us to put 'em in separate cells?

ORIN

(distracted)
Yeah.

CAL

Something wrong?

ORIN

The Ceremony was today. Arthur's.

Cal nods.

CAL

You missed it?

ORIN

This was more important.

CAL

You sure about that?

ORIN

I...I don't know. I thought I was. But now...I dunno. I have a feeling. I should have been there.

CAL

Damn right.

ORIN

What?

CAL

You're a father now. And sometimes that's more important than being a king.

Orin doesn't respond.

EXT. THE PALACE - BALCONY - DAY

Orin and Cal land on the balcony. The soldiers continue on, carrying the cultists to the prison.

INT. THE PALACE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Cal and Orin enter the castle, walking through the corridor. Orin runs his hands through his hair, sending beads of water onto the floor.

ORIN

I wonder if they're back by now...

They approach Orin's chambers just as an AIDE runs out of the room.

AIDE

(bumping into them)
Oh -- Your Majesty!

He bows deeply. He's out of breath.

ORIN
What's going on?

AIDE
Sir, uh, something -- something happened -- it's a...well, when they went out...

CAL
Talk straight or shut up, kid --

AIDE
The party at the Ridge has been attacked!

ORIN
(beat)
What?

INT. THE PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Orin, Cal and the aide rush through the corridor. The aide keeps talking but Orin is barely listening.

AIDE
Some of the guards were strong enough to get the rest back. The ones who are awake are saying it's...

CAL
It's what?

AIDE
A sea monster.

CAL
Well, that doesn't make any sense.

AIDE
It's what they said, sir, it's possible they're confused because of their injuries, but --

Orin stops dead in the hall. Cal plows into him, unable to react in time.

Orin glares at the aide, a cold rage.

ORIN
Is my wife okay?

The aide can barely respond. He's afraid of the fire in Orin's eyes. But he manages a nod.

AIDE
 She's a little bruised, b-but,
 she'll be fine. Sir.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Orin blows past the guards at the door and pushes his way through the crowd of doctors to Mera. She's lying on the hospital bed again.

Orin crouches down beside her.

ORIN
 Mera --

MERA
 (frantic)
 I'm okay, but -- Orin, it...it --

ORIN
 Tell me what happened.

Mera pushes away the panic, just enough to get through her story, and focuses on Orin.

MERA
 We were at the Ridge...

FADE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - THE FAR RIDGE - FLASHBACK

Mera and her attendants, all dressed in elaborate ceremonial robes, stand on top of a huge craggy expanse under the water. It's like an old mountain, sunk three millennia's worth of erosion. The Ridge overlooks a deep crack in the ocean floor.

At the peak of the Ridge stands a PRIEST, shaved head and blue clothes. He holds Arthur high up in the air, speaking the words of the Atlantean religious ritual.

Guards hover in the water around the Ridge. They're all focused on the priest...

MERA (V.O.)
 Everybody was paying attention to the priest. He was almost done with the ceremony.

...so they don't notice the DARK SHAPE which rises out of the water behind the Ridge.

A DART flies through the water and lodges in one of the guard's neck. The man CONVULSES like he's been shocked and passes out, bubbles of air escaping his mouth.

The darts come in waves now, dropping the half-dozen guards almost instantly.

The Shape BURSTS UP, rushing forward. Mera SCREAMS.

The Shape tears past the priest, slicing him apart with claws and spikes! Blood fills the water as Arthur slowly begins to sink.

The Shape shoots forward, knocking Mera over and descending on her entourage.

FLASHES of claws slicing into skin. SCREAMS of pain. More blood.

A SHADOW falls over Arthur.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRESENT

Orin grabs Mera's hand.

ORIN
Mera, what are you saying --

MERA
It took our son.

EXT. THE PALACE - BALCONY - DAY

Orin bursts out of the airlock and jumps up on the balcony. As he pushes off, Cal runs out behind him.

CAL
Orin!

But Orin's gone, launched into the water without looking back.

EXT. ATLANTIS - DAY

Orin zips through the water, a blur of orange and green, the dome of Atlantis fading away into the sea behind him.

EXT. OCEAN - THE FAR RIDGE - DAY

Orin stands on the rock, looking around. He sniffs, drawing water into his lungs.

A thin trickle of red blood floats past. Orin catches the scent. Leaps off the rock in pursuit.

He speeds through the ocean, past rock formations, schools of fish, seaweed clusters.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Orin's unstoppable, zipping through the water, a being of pure rage.

The trail of blood ends just before the ocean floor suddenly dips down into a craggy, molten red hole -- a MAGMA PIT.

Orin stands at the lip of the pit. He looks down into it.

ORIN'S POV:

Nothing more remarkable than a deep, deep hole. But this is where the trail led him, so this is where he's going.

He DIVES DOWN into the pit.

EXT. MAGMA PIT - DAY

Orin floats in the center of the craggy pit. Underneath him is an underwater volcano, bubbling up, casting murky liquid up around him.

He slowly turns in the water.

ORIN'S POV:

Just bare, huge rock. Wide and tall. Nothing else in the green water.

VOICE (O.S.)
Welcome, Your Majesty.

It's a deep voice, angry but confident. Distorted. Not just by the water -- something very different.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Didn't think you'd get here this fast. Thought for sure they'd keep you busy longer....

BUBBLES.

Orin spins around.

A dark shape rushes past, too fast to look at.

Orin spins around again.

The shape floats a ways behind him. It's a large, man-sized shape. Hideous-looking wing shapes project from its back.

VOICE (CONT'D)
But I was ready to go, in any
case.

The shape advances, clearing the murkiness of the water and
coming into full view --

Orin GASPS --

It's Black Manta. But he's changed.

He's no longer wearing the black Atlantean clothing. He's
wearing grey rubbery armor. Almost like superthick skin.
The wing-shapes are manta-like flaps of skin connected to
his body and arms. His feet have become almost completely
fins. And he's got a long, spiked tail growing out of his
back.

He's a literal man-ray.

ORIN
Manta.

BLACK MANTA
You recognize me?

He looks down at his new body with glowing red eyes.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
I thought for sure my new suit
would get you confused.

ORIN
What happened to you?

BLACK MANTA
I have been transformed. Remade
by the powers of the god of the
seas.

ORIN
Poseidon? He --

BLACK MANTA
No.
(growling)
Not Poseidon. Poseidon is
nothing. There is no Poseidon.

Manta pushes forward, water flowing over his wings, giving
him extra grace.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
You couldn't even conceive of the
power I serve.

Orin doesn't back down, even as Manta gets right in his
face.

ORIN
Where's my son?

BLACK MANTA
(beat)
I killed him.

Orin PUNCHES Manta in the face!

ORIN
You bastard!

He grabs the back of Manta's neck and punches him AGAIN AND AGAIN, splitting Manta's face, filling the water with blood.

Orin DRIVES his knee into Manta's stomach -- it doesn't do much, because of Manta's new body, but it drives the wind out of him.

Taking advantage, Orin grabs Manta's arm and SPINS the monster around, pulling Manta into his chest. He wraps an elbow around Manta's throat.

ORIN (CONT'D)
If Arthur --

BLACK MANTA
You named your kid after your
surface-name? Even for you,
that's pretty pathetic --

Orin SQUEEZES Manta's throat, cutting off his speech.

ORIN
I'm going to kill you if you
don't tell me where my son is.

BLACK MANTA
Don't worry, Your Majesty...

Manta GRABS Orin's wrists and HEAVES HIM forward!

Orin flips over Manta's body and Manta loops his arms between Orin's shoulders and neck in a full-nelson.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
You'll see him soon enough.

And he SLAMS Orin forward, smashing his head against a rock!

BLACKOUT.

THE OCEAN

flickers into view for just a brief second. Then everything goes BLACK again.

INT. OCEAN CAVE

A WOMAN and A MAN stand in the cave. Glowing rocks illuminate the scene.

The woman is wearing a blue dress that looks like it's made of water. It flows over her, obscuring but emphasizing.

The man has long blonde hair, flowing down his shoulders and back. His beard is thick and well-kept. One of his hands is pale blue, translucent -- like it, too, is made of water.

MAN

I didn't know --

WOMAN

You knew the consequences. You made this deal. And I gave you the power.

MAN

I don't think I can do it.

WOMAN

I know you can.

Suddenly, both the man and the woman turn to look into the camera.

MAN

It's rising.

WOMAN

You have to stop it.

JUMP CUT TO:

ORIN

waking up. Cuts and bruises on his face. Blood washed away by the water.

PULL BACK to reveal we're still

EXT. MAGMA PIT - DAY

Orin's CHAINED by his left hand to one of the large rocks. His orange armored shirt is gone.

As he blinks several times, he realizes his predicament.

ORIN
What the hell?

He TUGS against the chain. It doesn't budge.

BLACK MANTA (O.S.)
Don't bother.

Manta swims up from behind the rest of the rocks, hovering over the bubbling pit of orange lava. He's holding something in his arms.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
Those chains are strong. Got 'em off a shipwreck a few miles away. They'll hold long enough for you to enjoy my show.

ORIN
What show?

BLACK MANTA
Calm down. I told you, you'll get to see.

He swims forward, his new wings rippling in the water.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
You know where we are?

Orin doesn't answer. He's still struggling with the chain, but it holds fast.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
There are thousands of spots like these, all over the ocean. Magma pits. Underwater volcanoes. Just bubbling with the blood of the planet.

Manta's just close enough that, if Orin's hand was free, he'd get his throat ripped out.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
All those cracks...waiting to erupt. And here you are, chained right on top of one.

Manta closes his eyes, screws up his face in concentration.

ORIN
What are you doing?

BLACK MANTA

(eyes closed)

I'm doing what you do. The Boon of Atlantis. Poseidon's gift.

ORIN

You're...talking to fish?

BLACK MANTA

(opening one eye)

Only much, much bigger.

(beat)

I'm talking to the sea.

The magma pit RUMBLES.

Orin pulls away from Manta, looking down into the pit.

ORIN

Are you...what the hell are you doing?

BLACK MANTA

The power granted to me is so much greater than anything you can imagine, Orin. My master enabled me to do many, many things. Things you couldn't --

He chuckles.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

But you don't have to worry about that.

ORIN

This is your big plan? Blow me up in a volcano? You could have just killed me when I was unconscious.

(beat)

Or could you just not resist the gloating?

Manta slides backwards, directly over the pit again. He's smiling. Like he's just won a game.

BLACK MANTA

No, sir. That wasn't my plan. I just wanted you to watch.

ORIN

Watch what?

And Manta pulls aside part of the package he's holding --

ARTHUR lies in Manta's arms, sleeping peacefully. There's a small cut over the babe's left cheek.

Orin YANKS the chain.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You son of a bitch!

BLACK MANTA

Such language to use around a baby.

He smiles as Orin pulls against the rock, gently rocking Arthur back and forth.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

He's gonna grow up rotten, you keep talking like that. Who knows, maybe he'll be another me?

ORIN

Let him go or I will bring Poseidon's own wrath down on your head. Your rapidly shortening life will be a living hell, Manta.

BLACK MANTA

I'm not the one in hell, Orin. You are. You're in the worst hell I can imagine -- a state of helplessness. You're going to have to watch. While your only son dies.

The smile on his face grows even wider, revealing his rows and rows of shark-like teeth.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

And then, you'll die too. Buried under all this molten rock. They'll probably never even find your body.

Orin plants his feet on the rock and pushes, using the muscles in his legs and the weight of his body to pull at the chain. It doesn't budge.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

Keep struggling. I'm sure it'll help.

He drifts down in the water, towards a small rock overhang above the magma pit. Carefully, almost lovingly, he places Arthur on the overhang.

ORIN

Manta...please, don't.

BLACK MANTA

What? What did I just hear? The King of Atlantis -- begging.

He LAUGHS.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

Oh, this is too good. I wish I could, like, freeze this moment forever.

Manta floats closer to Orin. His smile fades, revealing what he really is: A predator.

Orin LUNGES forward, but the chain pulls up short when he's just half an inch away. Manta smirks.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

Almost.

Pushing off, Manta ascends up, out of the pit. Orin watches from below, pulling frantically on the chain.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, Your Majesty...I have a kingdom to reclaim.

Orin SCREAMS in rage.

Arthur CRIES in response, waving his tiny arms around. His wrapping has come undone and he's wriggling around.

ORIN

It's okay, son. Everything is gonna be okay.

Orin wraps the length of the chain around his hands and pulls. Nothing.

ON THE BASE OF THE CHAIN

Driven in to the rock by Manta's brute strength. Orin's hands scrape around the rock, looking for any cracks or weaknesses. He can't find any.

THE MAGMA PIT

begins to RUMBLE. Lava bubbles up slowly, glowing orange and red.

ORIN

looks down, eyes widening in panic. Groaning with effort, he tugs the chain as hard as he can. There's absolutely no give.

Arthur cries out louder now. The overhang he's on shakes with the tremors of the pit.

Orin looks from the chain to his son. The baby is just out of reach.

In desperation, Orin raises his fists above his head. He SMASHES them into the rock, over and over again. A few small shards of stone fleck off, but the chain remains intact.

STEAM! Venting up out of the magma pit, superheated water. A curtain of blazing hot steam separates Orin from his son.

ORIN (CONT'D)

No, no, no...

He POUNDS the rock harder and harder.

When he draws his hands back, they're scraped and bloodied.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Dammit.

Orin looks around, straining against the chain, desperate to find any way out.

A JAGGED ROCK sticks out from one of the crags in the wall of the pit. Orin reaches out -- he can just barely grip it.

With a firm tug, he breaks the rock free of the wall.

Grunting savagely, he bashes the base of the chain with the rock.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

But the chain is harder than the rock, which is more sharp than heavy. More useful for cutting than smashing.

A BURST of lava shoots up from the pit, a miniature eruption. The gooey red-hot sludge lands on the rock just beside Orin.

He stares at it for a beat, then tentatively reaches out with the chain. He gets it just over the boiling hot lava, almost close enough for the heat to melt through the metal.

The lava POPS and bubbles as Orin lowers the chain down. One of the thick bubbles EXPLODES. A stream of sizzling fluid lands on Orin's arm.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Gaah!

He jerks his arm back, scraping it across the rock to get the burning lava off. His left wrist is burned, scarred. The skin black.

The curtain of steam separating Orin from his son dissipates as the pit gears up for a second, more powerful wave.

ARTHUR

struggles on the overhang, worming around without direction. Still crying loudly.

ORIN

reaches out towards his son. It's futile. He knows that. But he has to try.

THE MAGMA PIT

Bubbling. Bursting. The entire rock structure around it shaking. Falling apart.

ORIN (CONT'D)

No...

ORIN'S HAND

chained to the rock. Curled into a fist, veins bulging. Skin rubbed raw from the strain.

Orin looks from his chained hand to his free hand, clutching the rock. Then down to the magma pit. And finally to his tiny, desperate, screaming son.

Orin clutches the rock tightly. If he were a bit stronger his fingers could smash it into dust.

He raises the jagged rock over his head, sharp end pointed out.

ORIN (CONT'D)

GAAAAAAHHH!

And he brings it down, right at the chain --

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Cal paces nervously in the hospital. Mera watches. It isn't making her feel any better.

MERA
Will you please stop that?

CAL
He's been gone too long.

MERA
He'll be back.
(faint)
I know it.

CAL
I can't believe he'd just...all
on his own? He doesn't think.

MERA
He has a temper, Cal. Don't act
surprised.

Cal stops talking, keeps pacing.

A winded Atlan bursts into the room. He's run the length of the palace by the look of him. He searches the room for Orin.

ATLAN
Where's the king?

MERA
Gone.

CAL
His temper.

MERA
(angrily)
His son is gone, what the hell
did you expect him to do?!

CAL
Act like the goddamn king he's
supposed to be!

MERA
He. Is.

Atlan holds his hands up, looking for peace.

ATLAN
There's something he doesn't
know, something I have to tell
him.

CAL
I guess you're just going to have
to wait.

ATLAN
For how long?

ORIN (O.S.)
Not very long...

Everyone turns to the door.

Orin's at the entrance, Arthur in his arms, asleep or
unconscious. His blanket is gone.

MERA
Orin!

She jumps off the hospital bed and runs across the room.
Halfway there she LEAPS into Orin's arms. He winces.

ORIN
We're fine, Mera. Everything's
fine.

MERA
(sobbing)
I was so scared --

ORIN
I need you to take Arthur now.

MERA
(pulling back)
What?

ORIN
Take him...please?

Mera just seems to realize Orin's supporting himself on the
wall of the hospital. He's only using one arm to hold
Arthur, and he hasn't hugged her back.

MERA
What's going on?

He passes Arthur to her, on the verge of collapse.

CAL
Sir, are you...

ATLAN
(quietly)
Get a doctor.

CAL
Why --

Orin starts to TOPPLE OVER.

Atlan RUSHES FORWARD.

ATLAN
Get a doctor!

Orin hits the ground, his arms flopping out in front of him...

...revealing the bloody, blanket-wrapped STUMP where his left hand used to be.

BLACKOUT.

MERA (O.S.)
 ...his hand...

CAL
 ...the hell happened out there?

DOCTOR
 If everyone would just step back -
 -

SILENCE.

A QUICK FLASH: Orin's left hand, limp and lifeless, bound by the chain.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Orin JERKS AWAKE!

ORIN
 No!!

Cal rushes over, pushes down on Orin's shoulders to hold him to the bed.

CAL
 Sir --

He has to fight, though, as Orin keeps struggling, disoriented and panicked.

CAL (CONT'D)
 Your Majesty -- Orin!

Orin stops. Relaxes.

ORIN
 Where am I?

CAL
Hospital. You lost...a lot.
(quickly)
Of blood.

ORIN
Arthur, is he --

CAL
Fine. He's with Mera, they're
outside. She didn't want his
crying to wake you. You've been
asleep for twelve hours.

Orin starts scratching at his left wrist.

ORIN
My hand itches...

Orin fiddles with the blanket covering his left hand.

CAL
Sir, I don't think you should --

Orin tosses the blanket aside. There's a sharp, GOLDEN HOOK
in place of his left hand.

ORIN
Oh.
(beat)
Oh.

Cal kneels down, eye-level with Orin.

CAL
When they...the doctors said they
didn't have a choice. There was
nothing left.

Orin hasn't looked away from the hook.

ORIN
My hand.

CAL
What happened to it?

A QUICK FLASH: Orin raises the jagged rock over his head --

BACK TO SCENE

Before Orin can answer, the door bursts open.

Mera rushes in, Arthur in her arms.

MERA
You're awake! I knew I heard
voices.

ORIN

Were you listening at the door?

Mera doesn't look the least bit sorry.

MERA

I'm a worried wife! What did you expect?

Orin smiles. He looks to his son.

ORIN

He's okay, right?

MERA

Oh yes. Just a little confused.

(to Arthur)

Weren't you? You were so scared, weren't you, but then Daddy saved you.

(looking up)

Daddy's a real hero.

ORIN

Dad's just a dad.

He looks to Cal.

Cal nods, smiling. Proud.

CAL

I'll give you three your privacy.

He backs out of the room, closing the door very quietly.

MERA

We gotta stop meeting like this.

Orin can't help but smile as Mera sits on the edge of the bed.

MERA (CONT'D)

What happened out there?

ORIN

Manta.

MERA

That...thing was Manta?

ORIN

(nodding)

I don't know what he did to himself, but it was him. He was going to kill us both. In a -- a volcano. He had me chained to a rock.

MERA

How'd you get away?

With only the briefest of glances to his missing hand:

ORIN

Just...I'm lucky.

Mera hands Arthur to Orin. Orin takes the baby with his good arm and cradles him gently.

Mera climbs onto the bed.

MERA

Ouch!

ORIN

Be careful!

Mera shifts. She landed on Orin's hook. He looks heartbroken.

Mera takes Orin's left wrist and brings it to her lips. She kisses it gently. Then down his arm, towards his elbow. She trails kisses to his shoulder and his neck, finally kissing him on the lips.

MERA

You're like a storybook knight.
All coming to the rescue.

Orin smiles.

ORIN

Are you going to be my beautiful princess?

MERA

(mock outrage)
I thought I was already!

Orin LAUGHS, resting his head on the pillow. Mera follows suit, laying against his chest. They shift so Arthur lies between them, supported by both their bodies.

ORIN

(beat)
I love you.

MERA

I love you, too.

They settle down comfortably. Orin closes his eyes, exhausted.

EXT. ATLANTIS - NIGHT

The huge domed city. The great crystals that illuminate it during its artificial day are dimmed, just enough to silhouette the city.

It's quiet. Peaceful. The fish which fill the dome can just be made out against the slight crystal glow. Nothing's happening.

Until the water in the city starts to get darker.

It's changing color, while the water on the outside remains the same.

The crystals BURST to life, illuminating the dome. The water is red.

Turned to BLOOD.

ATLAN (O.S.)
Your Majesty!

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Orin wakes up. Confused. Sweating. He rubs at his face -- with his hook. Stops himself.

ATLAN (O.S.)
Be careful!

Atlan stands beside the bed. He reaches out to steady Orin's wrist, moving it from his face.

ORIN
Gonna have to get used to that.

ATLAN
You could have taken your eye out.

Orin wipes the sweat away with his good hand.

ORIN
What are you doing here?

ATLAN
I came to warn you.

He pulls up a chair and drags it next to the bed. Once he's seated, he opens several large books and a notebook across the bed, balanced on Orin's legs.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
I've been studying. That strange life form you found --

ORIN
The weird squid?

ATLAN
(looking up)
No. No. Not a squid. You thought
it was a squid.

Orin nods hesitantly.

ORIN
Well...a dozen legs, weird beak,
the biologists said it was a
squid. So yes.
(beat)
It's not?

ATLAN
I've been thinking. I knew I'd
seen something like this before.

He points to an open page in one of the older books.

ON THE PAGE

A drawing. It's scratchy, rough. But it's recognizable.

The strange squid found on the dolphin, and on the rogue
sailor.

BACK TO SCENE

Atlan taps the picture gently.

ATLAN (CONT'D)
This picture is ancient. This
particular page is a recreation
of a carving found on the stones
at the base of Atlantis's
foundations. Where the first *homo*
magi built their civilization.

ORIN
They're really old squid?

ATLAN
No. They predate Atlantis.

ORIN
So do squid.

ATLAN
Would you forget about squid?

Orin shuts up.

ATLAN (CONT'D)

The creature is older than the written record. Older than us. They appear sporadically in the historical record, but the site where the original *magi* built Atlantis was filled with them.

ORIN

This is their nest?

ATLAN

Or was. Hundreds of thousands of years ago. But that isn't what's important. These creatures were central to the worship of one of the oldest religions in Atlantis. They were said to herald the return of a false king, a powerful enemy who Poseidon fought and sealed beneath the ocean floor. Whenever the creatures resurged, it was seen as a sign that the enemy was preparing his escape.

ORIN

What kind of enemy is this?

ATLAN

Something powerful enough to take on a god.

Orin leans back in the bed. Concern flashes across his face.

ORIN

Which group was it that had this story?

The shadows in the room cast Atlan's face in darkness as he answers.

ATLAN

The Hands of Poseidon.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Orin storms through the hospital, tearing off his hospital gown. He's pulled on his green pants.

Atlan and the doctor try to keep pace with him. He's moving very fast.

DOCTOR

I do wish you'd stay in bed. I wish anyone would do anything I tell them.

ORIN

I have work to do.

DOCTOR

You lost too much blood, Your Majesty! You still need --

ORIN

I need to find out what the hell's going on in my kingdom.

And he leaves Atlan and the doctor in his wake.

INT. PRISON - NIGHT

Orin is dressed properly now, orange and green. Cal succeeds where Atlan and the doctor failed -- he keeps perfect pace with the king.

CAL

You sure about this?

ORIN

Oh, yes. Time to finish this.

CAL

Last time they weren't exactly in the talking mood.

ORIN

Well, I'm going to have to motivate them.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

A much larger cell than the one that previously housed Kurin (who is curled up here in the corner). The dozen or so cultists stand or sit around, unhappy.

The door to the cell opens. Orin stands there, his good hand on his hip. The light from the cell glints off his hook.

The leader of the cult a heavily-scarred man named JAFFAR, stands up.

JAFFAR

Something happen to your hand?
Your Majesty?

ORIN

Yeah.
 (beat)
 I cut it off.

Jaffar's smirk vanishes. He takes a step back. Orin takes a step forward.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Little fight with an old enemy of mine.

He runs a finger over the surface of the hook, grinning.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Maybe you've heard of him? Black Manta?

JAFFAR

No, I -- not --

ORIN

Oh, I think you have.

A QUICK FLASH: An army, clad in black, lined up over Atlantis. Black Manta at their center, calm, ready for battle. And Jaffar to his right, sword in hand.

ORIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I remember you, Jaffar.

BACK TO SCENE

Jaffar takes a step back. Orin takes a step forward again.

ORIN (CONT'D)

So tell me. Tell me why Manta kidnapped my son. Tried to kill my wife. Tell me why ancient creatures from before time tried to sneak into Atlantis. Why they tried to assassinate a Surface leader. Why don't you tell me what the hell is going on?

A beat.

Jaffar goes from scared to confident. Predatory. He steps forward, getting right in Orin's face.

JAFFAR

There things in motion you can't possibly imagine. Events so far beyond your comprehension your mind would die out if you even tried to think about them. Soon the Leviathan will rise.

(MORE)

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

The waters of Atlantis will turn
to blood and your pathetic city
will crumble --

Orin HEADBUTTS Jaffar!

Jaffar stumbles back, grabbing at his face.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

What was --

Orin GRABS Jaffar by the shirt and pulls him close.

ORIN

(cold)

Tell me what is going on in my
kingdom.

Jaffar doesn't answer. He's trying to pull away from Orin.

Orin sighs.

Then he STABS his hook into Jaffar's shoulder.

JAFFAR

Gaaah!

Jaffar collapses to his knees in pain. Orin leans in close.

ORIN

I want answers.

He lets Jaffar go and turns to the rest of the cult, who've
stepped back against the wall, terrified.

Orin approaches them slowly. Blood drips off the tip of the
hook.

ORIN (CONT'D)

He won't give them to me. What
about you?

He grabs a bald cultist and hauls him out of the line.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Huh? You gonna talk?

The man's mouth opens and closes, no sound and no words.

Orin STABS him, too.

The cultist HOWLS in pain. Orin pushes him out of the way
and moves on to the next.

ORIN (CONT'D)

What. Are you people. Trying. To
do.

No answer. He stabs the cultist.

ORIN (CONT'D)
I can keep doing this.
(to the next)
You have something to share?

No answer. Stab.

ORIN (CONT'D)
Nobody wants to talk? Everybody's
shy?

He turns to Kurin, who's curled up in the corner like he's trying to hide.

ORIN (CONT'D)
What about you?

He kneels down, pulls Kurin close.

ORIN (CONT'D)
Your boss gave me this hook, I'm
gonna keep on using it.

KURIN
(throwing out his hands)
No, no! Please! I'll tell you!

Orin SLAMS Kurin into the far wall. Presses the point of the hook against Kurin's throat. His hair's a mess, his eyes are wide and bloodshot. A fine red mist, blood spray from the wounds he inflicted on the other cultists, coats his face.

ORIN
Well?
(beat)
Talk.

At the DOOR to the cell have appeared Two PRISON GUARDS, alerted by all the commotion. Their swords are out as they rush in.

GUARD #1
Your Majesty, are you --

JAFFAR
You've got to stop him! He's
crazy!

ORIN
(over his shoulder)
Stay the hell out of this.
(to Kurin)
I said talk.

KURIN

We, well -- we were trying to --
in the book, there was this part
where...we were trying --

JAFFAR (O.S.)

Oh, shut up, Kurin.

Orin turns to Jaffar, letting Kurin slump to the ground.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

We were trying to bring forth
something more powerful than
anything this world has ever
seen.

ORIN

What are you talking about?

JAFFAR

The true god of the sea. The
Leviathan.

Orin narrows his eyes.

ORIN

I thought the Leviathan was
supposed to be your enemy.

JAFFAR

Times change. We changed. You and
your moronic subjects decided to
let the Surfacers destroy our
oceans. Dump their waste right
over our heads. They're boiling
the sea from above, and do you
care? No. You're diplomatic. You
help them. With their trade
routes and sunken Navy ships. And
if Poseidon is just gonna let you
destroy our world...we have to
find someone who'll stop you.

ORIN

You people destroyed that ship.

JAFFAR

The Leviathan did. It destroyed
the ship. Something invading Its
territory.

ORIN

So...wait, if it did that, you
already summoned it. Why keep --

JAFFAR

It wasn't strong enough the last
time. It needed the ship.

(MORE)

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

For food. But this time it'll
have all the power it needs.

ORIN

So you're going to...summon this
thing again, from whatever
dimension it's trapped in?

Jaffar grins.

JAFFAR

We're not gonna summon it. We're
going to wake it up.

Orin clenches his jaw.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Orin leans against the wall, arms crossed, anger rolling
off him like steam. Cal, a bit more calm, sits halfway
across the room.

CAL

They wouldn't tell you where
their little alarm clock ritual
was supposed to happen?

ORIN

(shaking his head)
I'm considering alternative
interrogation techniques.

CAL

You can't torture them. It
doesn't work.

ORIN

I know that.

CAL

(beat)
Do you want me to try?

Orin smiles.

INT. SMALL ROOM - NIGHT

Dark room. Narrow. One chair.

Jaffar sits in the chair, looking very uncomfortable and
confused. His shoulder wound is bandaged.

Cal stands in front of the door, arms crossed. He stares,
unblinking, at Jaffar.

JAFFAR

Are you gonna beat the crap out of me now? 'Cause your boss already did that, and I didn't tell him anything I didn't want him to know.

Cal doesn't answer.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

And, I mean, just staring at me isn't really scarier than an angry man with a hook for a hand.

Cal's expression doesn't even change. He's yet to blink, or look away from Jaffar's increasingly disturbed face.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

Come on. Say something. Are we just gonna sit here till one of us passes out?

Cal moves forward a few steps, but remains stone-faced.

Jaffar tries to scoot the chair back, but it's bolted to the floor. He looks around the room, fixating on a point on the wall.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

So how does it feel being the king's lap-dog?

Cal continues his steady walk forward.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

Uh...

Just a few inches from Jaffar, Cal squats down, hands on his knees. With that same unblinking stare on his face.

Jaffar desperately tries to avoid Cal's gaze. But he can't. The chair is secured to the floor and there's no place for him to hide.

JAFFAR (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

And Cal smiles.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - LATER

Orin sits at his desk, nervous and tired.

A KNOCK on the door.

ORIN

Yeah?

Cal enters, a folded piece of paper in his hand.

ORIN (CONT'D)
 (standing)
 How'd it go?

Cal tosses the paper to Orin.

CAL
 He drew me a map.

Orin unfolds the paper.

ON THE PAPER

It's a crudely-drawn map, with Atlantis marked by a large "A." Features of the ocean -- rock formations, trenches, debris -- are drawn in rough outline. A line leads from Atlantis to a spot in the middle of nowhere, marked with the symbol of the Hands of Poseidon.

ATLAN (O.S.)
 That doesn't make any sense.

PULL BACK to reveal we're

INT. ATLAN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Still ON THE MAP. It's on Atlan's table now, illuminated by a series of candles.

Atlan, Cal, and Orin stand at the table.

ATLAN
 That's just an empty stretch of ocean.

CAL
 He said that's where the ritual is supposed to take place.

ATLAN
 Did he say when?

CAL
 No. It could happen any day now.

ORIN
 We've got them all locked up. They couldn't do anything from their cell, could they?

CAL

If even one of them managed to not get caught, they could do the ritual alone. At least, that's what Jaffar says.

ORIN

Of course.

Atlan turns to Orin.

ATLAN

What are you going to do?

ORIN

I have to try to stop it.

CAL

You realize this is a trap.

ORIN

Yeah. But...what if he didn't lie? What if they do release the Leviathan? Even if we missed one of them, what could one person do to stop me?

CAL

I don't know. Manta's just one person. He managed to almost kill you by himself.

Orin doesn't answer. But Cal's learned by now how to read Orin's face.

CAL (CONT'D)

Promise me you'll at least sleep on this. I don't need you running off in the middle of the night to go slay a dragon.

ORIN

(confused)
What?

CAL

Never mind.

ATLAN

It's a Surface myth.

CAL

(nodding)
Yeah. Just promise?

Orin meets Cal's eyes. Both men look grimly back at the other.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Orin and Mera lie asleep in bed. Orin tosses around, settling on his back.

ON ORIN'S FACE

Conflicted. Confused. Sweating in his sleep.

EXT. THE OCEAN

Swirling seas. Almost silent, except for the ambient sea noise. A cloud of BUBBLES rush by.

They're swept up in the current of a large, moving body -- not really a solid body, but a huge group of smaller animals.

The SQUID-LIKE CREATURES.

Millions of them.

A cloud of the creatures, miles across. They're all we can see.

And they're heading for Atlantis.

It's just visible in the background, the creatures pushing forward towards the huge dome.

EXT. ATLANTIS

The city is abandoned. Completely empty. The immense crystals that provide the city its light are dim now.

A SHADOW falls over the marble streets of Atlantis.

ON THE DOME

The squid-like creatures press against the dome, a mass of writhing, prehistoric flesh. The sheer weight of the monsters are enough to CRACK the glass!

Creatures flood the city.

A HIDEOUS ROAR!

The buildings of Atlantis begin to CRUMBLE.

The huge spiral that tops the palace BREAKS OFF and falls directly down towards --

A SCREAMING BABY, lost and abandoned, caught in the path of the wreckage.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

ORIN

Gah!

He JERKS AWAKE. Sweat drips off his body. He wipes his face with his good hand, turning around to check on Mera.

She's still sleeping soundly, her hand rubbing the empty space on the bed where Orin lay moments before.

Orin lets out a SIGH.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

A small side room, like a walk-in closet, off in the corner of the king's chambers.

Orin paces the room, cradling Arthur in his arms.

ORIN

Daddy's about to do something really stupid, son. I hope you don't take after me too much.

MONTAGE:

--Orin's GREEN PANTS sliding up his legs.

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

What I have to do is dangerous.

--His BOOTS. New boots. Instead of lacing, they zip. Orin quickly does the zippers on both boots with his right hand.

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

If I don't come back, you're gonna...you're gonna be in charge of a lot of things.

--Orin's BELT, with the curved, stylized "A" buckle, clicking into place.

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

You'll have your mother to help you, and Cal.

--Orin gently placing Arthur down in his crib.

ORIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This...this isn't the life I
 wanted for you.

--The MAP Orin swiped off Atlan's desk, being folded up and tucked into a pocket.

ORIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 My father wasn't a king...I never
 knew him. This just fell on me.
 After the war.

--The ORANGE armor-shirt, as Orin awkwardly fastens it around himself.

ORIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But none of this matters to you.
 Just remember this, okay, Arthur?
 It's all about the trident.

--POSEIDON'S TRIDENT, in its place in the stone shrine in Orin's room. Orin takes it down gently.

ORIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 No matter what happens, I'll make
 sure this gets back to you. It's
 the sign of the king, son. You'll
 need it.

--Orin pulling on his sole GREEN GLOVE with his teeth.

ORIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I love you, son.

--Orin gently rubbing Arthur's blond head.

ORIN (CONT'D)
 I really do.

--Orin kissing Mera's forehead.

END MONTAGE.

INT. PALACE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Just outside Orin's chambers. Two royal guards stand at the door, ever-vigilante.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - SAME TIME

Orin, fully dressed, trident in hand. He sneaks through the room, very careful not to rouse Mera or excite Arthur.

At the door, he stops. Focuses hard, eyes screwing shut.

He opens the door.

INT. PALACE - CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Orin silently slips out of his chambers, slowly lowering his hand onto the head of the left guard.

The guard immediately COLLAPSES, unconscious.

The guard on the right turns.

GUARD

What's --

But Orin's hand covers the guard's face, and he too FALLS to the ground.

ORIN

(softly)

Sorry, boys. But we all came from fish, and we've still got some of them in our brains.

He continues on, leaving the sleeping guards behind.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Orin stands on the balcony again, watching the fish swim. But instead of just watching, this time he joins them, pushing off towards one of Atlantis's exits.

INT. ATLAN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Atlan stands at a small window in his cave-like room. He looks out over at Atlantis in the night.

He can just make out the figure of Orin, trident in hand, swimming over the smaller buildings.

A warm look crosses his face. He's happy. Pleased.

Proud?

EXT. ATLANTIS - NIGHT

Orin approaches the exit door. He drifts to a stop in front of the DOOR GUARD.

DOOR GUARD

Your Majesty? What are you doing out here alone?

Orin grabs the man's forehead.

He, like his predecessors, instantly falls to the ground. Orin begins working the door mechanism.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Orin cuts through the water, trident grasped firmly, pointing the way.

Beneath him, a rock ledge rises up, a natural slope getting higher as he swims along its horizontal axis.

Orin stops. He looks down at the rock below. Slowly, he allows himself to float down till he's standing on the surface of the rock.

He kneels down like he's bowing, planting the trident firmly on the ground.

ORIN

Poseidon, grant me your strength.
For I --

He stops. Stands up, suddenly angry.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You know, I'm basically doing
your job here! Killing a god to
protect your realm! I think you
owe me some help.

(beat)

And a new hand.

Orin waits just a second, like he's expecting an answer. But no. The only sound is the swirling ocean water.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Well. Okay then.

EXT. OCEAN - GALLERY - NIGHT

Orin continues his swim.

Suddenly the ocean floor drops off. Orin is above a huge, deep indentation in the floor. It's a crater, the only thing that remains of some ancient asteroid crashing into the Earth millions of years ago.

Orin allows himself to drift down till he's within the rim of the crater, closer to the floor.

ORIN

(whispering)
Unbelievable...

ORIN'S POV:

At the bottom of the crater, on the ground, are hundreds and hundreds of STATUES.

Hand-carved, beautiful works of art, weathered by years and years underwater.

BACK TO SCENE.

Orin sinks down in a cloud of exhaled bubbles, until he's level with the statues.

The ones closest to the edge of the crater are Atlantean, clearly. They have the A-shaped belt buckle of Atlantean soldiers. Many of them carry swords.

But as Orin moves inwards, the statues begin to look different. First, the style of clothing the human figures wear shifts. Regresses, from the recognizable Atlantean armor to bulkier, less stylized clothing.

With further progress through the field of statues, the human figures begin to change. Now all the fingers and toes web together. The clothes become even more simple, till they're just long robes.

And then they start to get strange.

Elbows elongate in the back, forming curved triangles -- fins. Lines like cuts on the neck become noticeable. They're small at first, paper-thin, but begin to widen until they're as thick as a finger. Gill slits.

They're regressing into previous evolutionary stages.

Filling out the rows are statues of animals. Dolphins, sharks, octopi, jellyfish. These too regress into their earlier forms, until Orin is surrounded by something out of prehistory.

And eventually, all the statues are nothing more than the strange squid-like creatures Orin found on the dolphin.

Orin continues on, walking across the ocean floor now. He's breathing very gently, subconsciously trying not to make noise.

Orin stops. He's noticed something ahead of him, and he PLANTS the trident firmly in the ground.

ORIN'S POV

Ahead, past the rows of statues, a HAZY FIGURE stands.

EXT. OCEAN - GREAT SEAL - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON BLACK MANTA

standing on the ocean floor. He holds between his hands a wooden box with an ornate lock. His eyes are closed.

BLACK MANTA

I offer this gift to you, Master.
The blood of son. Laced with
Poseidon's own strength.

PAN DOWN to the ground beneath Manta's feet...

AND RISE UP, up and up and up through the water, high above Manta's head, revealing just where he's standing.

A massive stone tablet, embedded in the sea floor. Carved upon it, an image -- the seal of the Hands of Poseidon.

Statues, mere dots from this angle, circle the seal. They go out and out and out in the rows Orin saw, the seal at the center of the statues, and at the center of the crater.

Manta is visible below, just a dark speck.

Behind him, another dark speck draws closer and closer to Manta.

ON MANTA

As he continues his speech:

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

Drink of your enemy's power,
Leviathan, and be freed.

Manta bends down on one knee and opens the wooden box.

And the dark shape LIFTS OFF and SPEEDS TOWARDS Manta, slamming into him!

ORIN

pins Manta to the ground, his elbow against Manta's throat.

ORIN

You.

BLACK MANTA

You?! I killed you.

ORIN

You did your best.

He PUNCHES Manta's deformed face, drawing blood from the side of one of his glowing red eye sockets.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Now, let me show you how to
finish the job.

Orin raises his fist for another punch --

-- but Manta CATCHES it and HEAVES up with his hips, throwing Orin up into an arc through the water and back to the ground again.

Manta doesn't let go of Orin's hand, and he uses the leverage to swing on to Orin's body, pinning him in a reversal.

BLACK MANTA
(looking at Orin)
What's that you got there?

With his free hand, he grabs Orin's left wrist and brings it to eye level.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
Looks like you're missin' a hand.
What happened, Orin?

Orin YANKS his hands in towards him, throwing Manta off balance. Without hesitating, Orin spins to his feet.

Manta rises just as quickly, throwing a punch. Orin sidesteps and KICKS Manta in the chest.

Manta staggers back, but he brings his wrists up. The thin, barbed stingers raise up from his flesh and he FIRES them.

But Orin kicks off against the ground, soaring up through the water and over the stingers!

Manta thrusts himself upwards to match, catching Orin around the waist and DRIVING him into the ground!

He grabs a handful of Orin's blonde hair and SLAMS the king into the ocean floor.

Orin MOANS weakly.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
Now watch while your kingdom is
undone.

Manta stands up, staggering back over to the wooden box. He draws up a GLASS VIAL half-filled with crimson blood.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)
Watch as Atlantis falls.

And he makes his way towards the seal, vial in hand.

He smirks, confident, victorious. He's just a few feet away now -- and he STOPS. Pulls against some halting force.

ON MANTA'S FEET

A green-gloved hand grabs one of Manta's webbed feet at the ankle.

Black Manta KICKS at Orin with his free foot, but Orin holds fast. He TUGS -- sending Manta sprawling to the ground!

Orin drags himself up till he's next to Manta. He grabs Manta's closed fist and SLAMS it into the ground once, twice, three times. Manta's fist opens and the vial slips out.

Orin isn't done. He slides his arm under Manta's head and wraps it around the neck, choking Manta in the crook of his elbow.

Manta struggles, ROLLING OVER so Orin is on his back. Orin throws his legs around Manta to keep his body still and tightens the choke.

As Manta pales, he gets an arm free. Like lightning, he ELBOWS Orin in the temple. Orin's grip slips and Manta slips free, quickly jumping to his feet and KICKING Orin in the stomach!

He kicks Orin OVER and OVER again, his foot slamming into the orange armor shirt. Bubbles escape from Orin's mouth as he loses a little breath with every blow.

Once he's contented himself that Orin's down, Manta limps over to where the vial lays in the sand. He picks it up again.

Behind him, Orin GROANS gently.

Furious, Manta spins around and KICKS Orin again.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

Stay down, dammit. For once in your life you don't beat me. For once, Orin, I win and you lose.

He draws back his foot to kick again.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

And when the Leviathan rises, and your kingdom falls to me, you can watch as your wife and son are dragged out into the streets --

And he SWINGS his foot, right into Orin's stomach --

-- but Orin CATCHES it.

A hard YANK sends Manta flat on his back. He's up in an instant, but not quick enough...

Orin slowly rises, wiping blood from his lip.

ORIN

You know why you would have been
a lousy king, Manta?

He staggers forward, fist raised.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You talk too much.

Orin PUNCHES Manta right in the face.

Manta stumbles back, blood pouring from his nose. But he's soon on his guard again, DODGING another of Orin's punches and returning with a blow of his own!

Orin absorbs the hit and lashes out with his hook.

It CUTS Manta's leathery black chest. Manta shrugs it off. SLUGS Orin.

And then they're locked up, trading BLOW after BLOW, evenly matched.

Manta's fists slam into Orin's face and body, drawing blood.

Orin punches with his good hand and STABS with the other, shallow puncture wounds all over Manta's body.

But then, as the men fight their way on top of the Seal, Manta gets a LUCKY SHOT. Right to Orin's diaphragm.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Guhh!

He DROPS TO HIS KNEES.

Manta stands over Orin, who's gasping for breath, good hand supporting his weight on the ground.

BLACK MANTA

It was always going to end like
this.

Two LONG STINGERS, the deadly blades, slide out of Manta's wrists. He grabs them, feeling their weight, wielding them like swords.

BLACK MANTA (CONT'D)

You. And me. Last man standing.

He raises the stingers, CRIES OUT, brings the blades down --

And meets Orin's hand and hook in the middle.

The hook deflects one blade, the hand catches the other around the middle.

With a tugs, Orin sends Manta off-balance.

Now in possession of one of the stingers, he SLAMS it into Manta's knees, knocking him to the ground.

Orin crawls his way up Manta's body, raises up over him.

PLUNGES the stinger into Manta's gut!

ORIN

I know.

THE GLASS VIAL

rolls away from Manta, towards the center of the Seal. The blood bright red as it sloshes around the glass.

MANTA

throws his hands up, trying to defend himself.

BLACK MANTA

(weakly)

Please...

ORIN

Gaaahh!!

Orin STABS HIS HOOK into Manta's chest!

Blood pours out of the wound. Manta's mouth opens and closes, air escaping. His arms go limp.

Orin pulls the hook out of Manta's body roughly. Stands up.

As Manta dies, a SMILE crosses his face.

ON MANTA'S ARM

falling through the air. Hand open. Coming down directly on the glass vial.

The vial SMASHES against the Seal.

The blood inside seeps out, falling into the cracks in the seal. Like magic, the amount of blood seems to increase exponentially, running through the lines that make up the image on the seal.

Orin jumps back, off the Seal, before any of the blood can touch him.

ORIN (CONT'D)
What the hell?

ON THE SEAL

as the blood fills the image.

BOOM!

A sound like an underwater thunderclap blows through the gallery, just as the Seal's lines fully fill with blood.

ORIN (CONT'D)
That can't be good.

The ocean floor beneath his feet begins to RUMBLE.

Spiderweb cracks appear across the face of the Seal. The rumble intensifies.

ON THE STATUES

which begin to crumble, weakened by age and pushed to the breaking point to by the earthquake. Limbs fall off, weapons shatter.

Orin can't move. He stares at the Seal as the cracks widen.

Beneath the Seal, visible now because of the cracking, is a DEEP HOLE, a trench in the bottom of the ocean. More and more pieces of the Seal, millennia old chunks of rock, fall into the hole.

As does Manta's body.

Orin steps towards the edge of the Seal. He doesn't want to do it, but he does -- he looks down into the hole beneath.

ORIN'S POV

Blackness, no end in sight. A tunnel to the center of the Earth.

And as Orin stares into the pit...something MOVES.

BACK TO SCENE

Orin jumps back, away from the pit. He jumps so hard he loses his footing and lands on his back.

And something clears the surface of the pit.

A HEAVY GREY TENTACLE, thick as a a tree, pokes its way over the lip of the hole. TWO MORE identical limbs shoot up, SLAMMING onto the ground outside the seal!

Then, from within the pit, comes an otherworldly ROAR.

Deep, sustained, a bass note that reaches for miles and miles.

Orin's paralyzed in shock. He can't tear his eyes away from the tentacles on the ground. They curve into the pit, connected to some unseen monster, to source of the roar.

And they PRESS DOWN on the ground.

With this new grip, the creature inside begins to RISE out of the pit. At first, it's just more tentacles rising up. But as the shaking intensifies, the full creature comes in to view.

It's a writhing grey ball of tentacles, spikes, and mouths. Razor sharp teeth fill the constantly-gnashing cavities. It's a huge, monstrous animal, bigger than most buildings, maybe as big as Atlantis itself. It has no front or back. No eyes. No head. Nothing we would recognize as Earthly.

It is THE LEVIATHAN.

Orin scoots away from the edge of the Seal, his arms and legs pushing against the ocean floor. But he doesn't stand up. Something about this creature's sheer presence keeps him on the ground.

Until one of the tentacles drives right towards him!

Orin ROLLS out of the way just as the tentacle SLAMS into the ground where he lay.

He's on his feet now, running for his life as tentacles lash out at him.

One of the Leviathan's beaked mouths opens and WAILS, and the creature takes off after Orin.

It's gaining on him, impossibly fast for something of its size, with no visible means of propulsion. It continuously attacks, whipping its tentacles towards him. Orin always manages to dodge out of the way, though.

Finally, Orin LEAPS UP into the water. He's off, head tucked down, spiralling through the ocean.

But the Leviathan's above him now. One of its limbs CLIPS his shoulder, breaking through his armor. Orin SCREAMS in pain as blood oozes forth from his wound.

A network of horrible slimy tentacles shoots out in front of him.

But Orin is graceful in the water, spinning out of the way, rising and falling to fit through the narrow holes in the creature's web.

He doesn't realize the tentacles are herding him. Up and up he's forced to swim, avoiding the death grip of the Leviathan. Until finally, just above him, on the underside of the monster, he's inches away from its MOUTH.

Orin stares up in horror at the huge maw. It's circular, with rows of teeth like a shark, each of them black as midnight and sharper than a serpent's tooth.

Saliva, great thick green serum, leaks from the Mouth. It drips down into the sea and hangs there, suspended.

The creature SNAPS its jaws at Orin --

-- who instantly DIVES as fast as he can!

Dodging tentacle after tentacle, weaving left and right and left again!

He never looks back, never to the sides. Just straight ahead. Straight towards the bottom of the sea.

Mere inches from crashing into the hard seabed, he LEVELS OFF and swims faster than he ever has before. His stomach skims the sandy floor. His arms and legs are tucked back, feet pointed out, head down. Completely hydrodynamic.

The Leviathan is fast. Orin is faster.

He finally makes it out from under the creature. With a twist of his hips he's swimming along on his back, looking behind him.

The Leviathan ROARS again, longer this time. A howl of rage. And hunger. It breaks off from its pursuit of Orin.

And begins to head out of the gallery.

Orin takes a knee on the ground, PANTING, gasping for air. Water fills his lungs and he exhales bubbles, draining the sea for its oxygen.

He watches the creature as it crests the surface of the crater and slips off into the sea.

A look crosses Orin's face -- confusion. Realization. Horror.

ORIN (CONT'D)
(faintly)
Atlantis.

He looks around desperately --

-- and sees the TRIDENT, stuck into the ground where he left it, mere feet away.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The Leviathan rampages through the ocean.

Its tentacles lash out, DESTROYING rock formations, undersea mountains, sea vegetation.

A SHARK swims too close to the monster and is snapped up in one of the thing's lesser mouths. Blood seeps out.

Way off in the horizon is a smooth dome shape. It's tiny from here, unrecognizable, but the Leviathan is headed for it. For Atlantis.

ORIN (O.S.)

Gaah!

One of the Leviathan's tentacles FALLS OFF, cut in half in a flash of gold.

ORIN

swimming through the tangled web of tentacles and spikes, HACKING AWAY with his Trident.

A thrust forward. One tentacle caught on the prongs of the golden weapon. With a tug, the tentacle SNAPS off and falls away.

The Leviathan HOWLS with every strike, whirling around in desperation, trying to shake Orin off or catch him with a blind strike.

But Orin keeps up the pace, blocking attacks with the Trident while he hacks away at the Leviathan's body with his hook.

He's a whirlwind, slashing and cutting, doing his best to tear the Leviathan apart. But it's a drop in a bucket. The monster is many, many times larger than Orin, and no matter what he does, the Leviathan just gets angrier.

Orin is completely caught up in destroying the monster. So caught up that he doesn't notice the two slender grey tentacles curling around behind him.

He brings his trident down -- and one of the tentacles wraps around his wrist! He turns, raising his hook to cut the first tentacle. But the second tentacle wraps around his other wrist, pulling his arms apart.

The Leviathan pulls Orin in. The tentacles recede into the hideous body of the creature, Orin getting closer and closer to one of the snapping mouths.

Orin TUGS against the tentacles. No give.

The side mouth opens wide, a TONGUE poking out between the teeth, drool sloughing off.

Orin tries to get leverage to swing his Trident, but his wrists are locked into place.

The tongue lashes out, wrapping itself around Orin's boot!

ORIN (CONT'D)

Oh, come on.

He tries to pull his boot free, but the tongue is supernaturally strong. Orin KICKS with his free foot, desperate blows.

Inches from the mouth now. Shuddering MOANS belie the creature's hunger after so long in captivity.

Orin strains to pull away. The jaws SNAP shut -- but he's not quite there yet. The mouth opens again and the tentacles pull him in even closer. They also pull his limbs apart, straining his body to the breaking point!

And just as he's within the mouth's range...he TWISTS his entire body!

Orin rotates himself faster and faster, like an underwater tornado, too fast to see clearly!

The tentacles holding his limbs wrap together, a tangled knot. One of them loses its grip...and Orin SLASHES with the Trident!

Tentacle after tentacle falls, until finally Orin is free! He jets out of the slimy grey mass, a look of pure rage on his face.

He turns the Trident around so it's pointing down. With a ROAR he dives for the center of the beast!

And a tentacle the size of a tree trunk SLAMS INTO him!

Orin goes limp again, falling through the water. He CRASHES into the ground in a cloud of wet sand.

But he gets up.

Using the Trident to pull his weight, Orin rises up out of the tiny pit he made. He looks up at the Leviathan.

It ignores him, continuing its trek through the ocean towards Orin's kingdom.

Orin gets a firm grip on the golden Trident. He plants his feet firmly on the ground. Bends his knees.

With another feral ROAR he pushes up into the water, faster than ever before, an orange blur, Trident pointed forward!

He's on a course for the dead center of the Leviathan. Ready to finish the job. Darting between grasping tentacles, around the razor-sharp spikes.

Then, a SOUND.

A bass note, pervasive. A strange hum.

INSERT: a huge circle of fish in the water. Hypnotized, floating gently in place.

Orin stops his charge.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You.

A RAZORBACK WHALE barrels into Orin!

It's huge. The second-largest whale in the ocean. The only reason Orin isn't dead is because the whale wasn't swimming very fast.

As it is, all the air is FORCED out of Orin's body in a rush of bursting bubbles. He drops the Trident. Struggles to keep consciousness as the whale pushes him through water.

ON THE TRIDENT

Tumbling through the ocean. It lands upside-down, spikes driven into a large rock half-buried in the ocean floor.

Orin hits the ground yet again, yards away from the trident. His eyes closed.

Blearily, he opens them.

ORIN'S POV

The water is suddenly filled with FISH.

There's no other word for it than swarm.

Whales swim with sharks, manta rays with dolphins, octopi and schools of smaller golden fish. Jellyfish and huge squid. All swimming in a circular patten around the Leviathan. A guard.

Orin looks down. To the Trident. Out of reach, but close.

BACK TO SCENE

as Orin stands up shakily. His hand goes to his chest -- his orange armor is dented to hell. It pokes into his flesh, drawing blood.

With his good hand, he reaches for the buckles. Lets the shirt fall off his body to the ground. Starts to stagger over to where the Trident rests.

A group of SHARKS, attracted to the scent of his blood or sent down by the Leviathan, swim towards Orin.

ORIN (CONT'D)

No.

One shark takes the lead, on a collision course. It opens its mouth, exposing the rows of white, razor-sharp teeth.

And Orin PUNCHES IT stoutly on the nose.

It instantly REVERSES course, jetting off in the opposite direction, whimpering.

Orin doesn't waste any time. He takes out his rage on the other two sharks, whapping them about the nose and gills, sending them packing along with their leader.

ORIN (CONT'D)

(looking up)

You want a fight? Huh?

He presses on, slow steps in the direction of his Trident.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Try to kill me. Attack my kingdom. Use Poseidon's own powers against me?

Orin reaches out. Grasps the Trident with a green-gloved hand.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You declared war, you bastard. And I'm not a good king. I'm not good with the law, or money. Or even my family.

He YANKS the Trident out of the stone! Raises it above his head!

ORIN (CONT'D)

But I'm good at war.

And he closes his eyes. Concentrates.

ROTATE AROUND him as he stands perfectly still. At first, nothing happens.

But then.

Even more fish swarm towards him.

From the farthest depths of the sea they come, called by their true king, prepared to fight and die for him.

It's a marvelous army, all the kinds of ocean life man has seen, and some it hasn't, raging forth in one huge, sentient wave behind Orin.

Without opening his eyes he points the Trident forward. Right at the Leviathan.

And his army surges in that direction. They part around Orin and immediately shore up once they've cleared him, like he's a stone in a river.

The Leviathan HOWLS. The sea creatures in its thrall turn towards the opposing army. And they charge!

The two armies meet.

Whales collide with each other.

Sharks chomp through dolphins. Dolphins triple-team sharks, ramming them to death.

Octopi wrap around the bodies of anything not quick enough to get out of the way. They choke the life out of their captured prey.

Jellyfish sting. Eels slither around, zapping anything that contacts them.

And Orin stands on the rock, suddenly calm. He watches the carnage before him, as the water runs red with blood from the dead or the dying.

He sees his opening.

A small hole in the Leviathan's living shield.

Orin doesn't hesitate. He LAUNCHES UP, Trident in hand, still as calm as ever.

Past a giant squid, bigger than any boat, with one unblinking eye staring out at the battle.

Just dodging the chomping jaws of a tiger shark. Narrowly avoiding the poisonous barbs of a puffer fish.

Things with claws, teeth, and weapons unlike anything found on land try to hamper Orin's progress. But his loyal army smash into them, tear through them, clearing his path.

A Lion's mane JELLYFISH, seven feet across, with tentacles a hundred feet long, brushes against Orin.

He GROWLS in pain, huge red welts forming instantly across his back. The venom works fast.

A NARWHAL, no bigger than Orin but with a spiked nose as long as his body, rises up from beneath. It PIERCES Orin's left shoulder and keeps swimming, pushing him back. The spike goes further and further through Orin's arm.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Gaaah!!

Out of nowhere a HAMMERHEAD SHARK snaps the narwhal in half, chomping the body up in its lethal maw. It continues on, looking for more prey.

Orin THROWS his trident into the half of the narwhal still attached to the spike and uses his free hand to slowly, painfully draw the blood-covered weapon from his arm. Then he lets the spike go, grabbing the Trident out and continuing on.

He picks up speed, zooming away from danger.

Until finally he's out of the middle of the shield wall. Just ten feet of clear water between him and the Leviathan's snapping main Mouth.

ORIN (CONT'D)

(muttering)

You and me.

Giant tentacles lash out! Orin dodges left, right, up down! He's untouchable.

The Mouth opens wider. Too wide. It's half as big as the rest of the creature now. A pink and black hole.

Orin swims right into it!

The Mouth SNAPS shut. The jaw GRINDS, tooth on tooth, relishing this meal.

And then...

...everything stops.

The war of the fish comes to an end. The sea creatures all turn towards the Leviathan. As if bowing to their new king.

The Leviathan SCREAMS in victory!

Or pain.

INT. THE LEVIATHAN'S MOUTH

The dark mouth. Orin dodges the searching tongue, the gnashing teeth. He SLASHES with the Trident, tearing a hole into the creature's body.

INT. THE LEVIATHAN

Red. Black. Green.

Flesh and ooze and strange juices.

The Leviathan's interior is nothing more than a huge cavern. Orin emerges from the Mouth into this chamber.

Suddenly, three HUGE BLACK TENTACLES, thicker and more muscled than any on the outside, wrap around each of Orin's arms and his legs.

Orin pulls and yanks, but can't get free.

The tentacles tilt him down, towards the heart of the Leviathan.

Orin's jaw drops.

At the center of the beast's body, staring up at Orin, is a HUGE, LIDLESS GREEN EYE.

A SCREAM!

The Leviathan howling in triumph!

The sound shakes the thing's entire body.

And then, more MOUTHS open up. Mouths inside the creature's body.

The mouths start to move forward, towards Orin. They're mounted on the ends of identical thick tentacles.

ORIN

No! No!

They BITE AND TEAR at his flesh! His green pants almost completely torn away. His glove gone.

Chunks of his leg. His arms. His chest and stomach.

Blood GUSHES out of Orin. First red, then black.

But the Leviathan makes a mistake.

One of the mouths chomps blindly, cutting through the tentacle holding Orin's right hand.

Weakly, Orin turns to his right. Sees the Trident in his hand. Down, to where the eye stares up at him.

ORIN (CONT'D)
(groaning)
Die with me.

A golden blur falling through the water, a shooting star.

It strikes the green eye and keeps going, tearing a hole right through the heart of the monster!

The Leviathan gives one huge, deafening, painful SHRIEK!

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The Leviathan shudders as the Trident, infinitesimally small compared to the body.

And the Leviathan FALLS.

The Mouth at the bottom of the creature opens.

Orin FALLS OUT. Unconscious. Caked in black ichor and blood.

The Leviathan SLAMS into the ground. It creates a new crater, denting the ocean floor thirty feet. Tentacles slap futilely at the ground, the Leviathan's death shudders.

Orin's body lands beside the Leviathan, arms spread out. He doesn't move.

Not a foot away, the Trident lays in the crater, just out of reach of Orin's hand.

BLACKOUT.

INT. ORIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Mera, Cal, and Atlan have gathered in the King's room. Mera's been crying. Cal stands at a window, looking out at the city.

ATLAN
I'm sure he's...

MERA
What? Fine? He's been gone for hours. The Trident is gone.

CAL
He told me he'd wait till morning.

MERA

Well, maybe he figured if he was out until morning that still counted.

ATLAN

He'll be back soon. He's protected. Poseidon wouldn't --

MERA

(jumping up)
Don't talk to me about Poseidon! Where was Poseidon when Orin lost his hand? Seems like Poseidon is content to let my husband do everything for this kingdom and give nothing in return.

Atlan falls silent. How do you argue with a grieving wife?

CAL

(distracted)
What the hell?

Atlan turns to Cal.

ATLAN

Do you see something?

CAL

I sure do.

CAL'S POV:

A PROCESSION through the city streets. A row of dolphins sweep up and around the city.

They bear the Trident on their backs.

CAL (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

MERA (O.S.)

What?!

BACK TO SCENE

Cal doesn't answer. He jumps over the desk and tears out of Orin's room. Atlan looks to the window. Sees what Cal saw. Immediately follows, running faster than a man of his age should. Mera doesn't even bother to look -- she's right on their heels.

EXT. ATLANTIS - BALCONY - DAY

Mera, Atlan and Cal stand at the balcony, watching.

The dolphins get closer and closer, not performing any of their usual tricks.

When they reach the palace balcony, they stop.

MERA

That's...

ATLAN

The Trident.

Cal reaches out tenderly, picks up the golden weapon. As soon as the weight is lifted, the dolphins RUSH OFF.

MERA

But then where's Orin?

CAL

(gently)

If he lost the Trident...I can only think of one reason why he'd do that.

Mera bursts into tears again.

MERA

No! No, no...

CAL

Mera, I'm sorry, I --

She collapses against Cal! He holds her tight, leaning the Trident against the wall. Atlan continues looking out at the city.

MERA

He can't! He's probably just --

CAL

Mera --

MERA

(pulling away)

You let him do this! You knew what he'd do! You killed him!

CAL

Mera, I --

MERA

You let him die!

ATLAN
 (to them both)
Wait.

Temporarily distracted, they both look to Atlan. Follow his gaze.

There's another procession.

Bigger than before. Moving more slowly. Still dolphins. They bear a DARK SHAPE, unrecognizable from this far away.

But as they draw closer, the figure comes into focus.

It's ORIN.

Torn apart, bleeding badly, eyes shut. But breathing.

MERA
 Orin!

Before anyone can react Mera JUMPS off the balcony. She's halfway across the city before Cal or Atlan think to follow her.

A group of GUARDS rush the scene, panicked.

GUARD #1
 What's going on?

CAL
 (catching up)
 He's an idiot.

GUARD #1
 H-he's the king!

CAL
 Yeah, well. Clearly he got eaten by piranhas or something.

Mera leans over Orin. The dolphins have stopped, as if sensing that these are the people Orin needs.

MERA
 Orin, please. Wake up.

Orin's eyes flutter open.

ORIN
 (faintly)
 Mera...?

MERA
 He's -- Orin? Sweetie? Are you okay?

ORIN
I killed it. I did.

MERA
(to Cal)
What's he --

CAL
I don't know.

ORIN
I killed it. But it killed me,
too.

MERA
What? No. Orin, you're not --
nothing killed you. You're alive!

ORIN
Can feel it. Flowing out of me.

MERA
We need to get the doctor.

ATLAN
I'll go.

Atlan takes off towards the palace, swimming rather quickly for an old man. Mera grabs Orin's hand tightly, like she's trying to hold the life inside him.

MERA
Just a minute, sweetie, and
you'll be okay.
(to the guards, Cal)
Help me get him inside!

Orin's eyes flutter.

ORIN
I killed it. I killed the
Leviathan.

Cal spins around.

CAL
What did he say?

But Orin slips away into unconsciousness again, his eyes closing. He slumps down on his marine chariot as Mera tries to rush him towards the palace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

A recovering, heavily-bandaged Orin sits in the otherwise-empty meeting hall, holding Arthur in his arms. He looks out a window in the chamber, towards Atlantis. Peaceful. Calm. Safe.

A KNOCK startles Orin. He turns towards the entrance.

Atlan stands there, hands clasped together.

ATLAN

Can I...?

ORIN

Sure.

Atlan takes a seat near Orin.

ORIN (CONT'D)

It's quiet in here. I just wanted to get away from the...from everyone.

He looks down to his infant son.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Well, everyone who can ask me questions.

ATLAN

I hear Black Manta died in the --

ORIN

Yeah.

ATLAN

Think things will get better? More peaceful, now that he's not there to cause trouble from the outside?

ORIN

(shaking his head)
Manta wasn't the problem. He was a symptom. I think I let Atlantis down.

ATLAN

(beat)
Your recovery's been...remarkable.

ORIN

That's what the doctor said. Just lucky, I guess.

ATLAN

Or protected.

(off Orin's look)

You killed an ancient god and lived to tell about it. Have to consider the possibility that something out here is on your side.

Orin doesn't answer. He stares out into space for a long moment.

ORIN

I wonder how the kings before me did it. Managed this place.

ATLAN

(hesitant)

They...did the best they could. They learned from their mistakes, like everyone does. They listened to the people they loved, the people they trusted. They tried to make things a little better for whoever came next. It's all they could do.

(beat)

It's all anyone can do.

Orin considers this. After a silent moment, he stands up.

ORIN

You're very wise, Atlan.

Atlan laughs.

ORIN (CONT'D)

One day you have to tell me how you learned all this.

ATLAN

(quietly)

No I don't.

Orin joins Atlan at the window, gently rocking his sleeping son in his arms.

ORIN

Almost daytime. I can see the crystals glowing brighter.

ATLAN

What are you going to do tomorrow?

ORIN

(beat)

Try to make things a little
better.

Turning a bit so Orin can't see, Atlan smiles. Orin looks
down at Arthur thoughtfully.

PULL BACK SLOWLY, out of the window where the three men
stand, through the city, glowing like twilight.

FADE OUT.

AQUAMAN

