

MILWAUKEE DEEP

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An unidentified sound is coming from the bottom of the Puerto Rico Trench. When an unmanned probe fails, a marine biologist makes a solo expedition to the ocean floor.

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FADE IN:

EXT. CLIFFSIDE PARK - DAY

The infinite blue of a featureless sky. A woman's laughter mixes with the call of gulls and a gentle sea breeze.

LUCY PRICE (30s) lies on her back in ankle-deep grass, giggling to herself.

MAN

Lucy?

LUCY

Sorry, I was miles away. What did you say?

FRANCESCO (30s) lies next to Lucy, resting his head on her belly. The couple look so carefree, they could be Adam and Eve in Eden, before the fall.

FRANCESCO

"Lucy in the sky". I asked if you'd heard of the purring hypothesis.

Lucy lifts her head to look at him and shakes it.

FRANCESCO (CONT'D)

There's a theory that one purpose of a cat's purr is to calm down struggling prey.

LUCY

Mmm?

FRANCESCO

They think that certain frequencies can interfere with, and in some cases, override, the natural survival responses.

LUCY

In mice?

FRANCESCO

Not just mice.

They lock eyes for a moment while Lucy thinks about this. Francesco starts to purr.

LUCY

You're a cat now?

Francesco mimes taking a bite out of her exposed belly.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Hey, no, I need that!

She sits up. They're the only people in the park. Off in the distance, the sky meets the ocean at a hazy border.

Suddenly Francesco embraces Lucy tightly.

FRANCESCO
I don't want you to go. I'm scared.

LUCY
Francesco, baby! Don't be scared.
C'mon, this is me. I've done dives.
This is the same, only... deeper.

Francesco gets to his feet and steps closer to the edge.

FRANCESCO
I just don't see why you need to go.

LUCY
Something's making that sound,
Francesco. Something down there.

Francesco picks up a large, round stone.

FRANCESCO
Why don't they just send a probe?

He hurls the stone over the edge. It tumbles in a high parabola, reaches apex, and falls.

LUCY
They did.

The stone vanishes into the water.

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY

Lucy and Francesco look up at a vast spotlit squid hanging from the ceiling of a dark aquarium hall. All around the room deep sea creatures drift through inky tanks.

FRANCESCO
Wow. And it just washed up?

LUCY
We used to think these were rare.

FRANCESCO
Always after the sound?

LUCY
Twenty three days later, without fail. Not many were as intact.

FRANCESCO
So what's the sound like?

LUCY
Weird. It's... kind of like throat singing, only much, much lower.

Francesco attempts to throat sing, but stops when a nearby exhibit catches his eye.

FRANCESCO
Friend of yours?

LUCY
Oh! They have a model of Bubo. Hi Bubo. I hope you're doing OK.

FRANCESCO
This is the probe you lost? Did you at least get pictures back?

LUCY
No, it's really hard to transmit data through water. Best we can do is text, on a very low frequency band. Need to recover the hard drives to get real data. See those weights on the side?

Lucy points to blocks hanging on the side of the model.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Galvanic release. When they corrode, the weights detach and the probe surfaces.

FRANCESCO
How long does that take?

LUCY
About twelve hours.

FRANCESCO
So where is it?

LUCY
I wish I knew.

Francesco looks at the glowing interactible plaque beneath the model probe. There's a large dial. As he turns it, a little cartoon probe descends into a cross section of ocean. At each layer, informative text lights up.

FRANCESCO

(reading from plaque)

Abyssopelagic. Here the pressure is so intense that if an oxygen tank were to be punctured, rather than gas rushing out, water would rush in. Hadopelagic. Named for Hades, god of the underworld...

Lucy grins at a tank with a large, ugly angler fish inside.

LUCY

Biomimicry, and bioluminescence.
Hunting with light.

She looks back from the tank to Francesco, but he's not there.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Francesco?

Lucy looks around for him. He's nowhere to be seen. She hears a faint beeping, coming from one portal lined corridor, the tanks so dark as to appear black. There are no visible fish in any of them.

At the end of the corridor, beneath a final portal is a bright interactible plaque, beeping. She approaches it.

On the plaque is a touchscreen interface, and a readout for power and oxygen, both dangerously low. There's an on-screen keyboard, and a flashing message feed:

> DEPTH LOOKS GOOD. CALM UP HERE

> STATUS REPORT PLEASE

> LUCY REPORT

> ARE YOU OK

Lucy doesn't understand what she's reading. In the tank ahead of her, a dim light shines in the darkness.

> LUCY RESPOND

> OUT OF TIME. SURFACE NOW

The light grows.

> MISSION ABORT. BALLAST RELEASE OVERRIDE

The light keeps growing, then splits, becoming a shape.

> PREPPING MINERVA RESCUE SUB. RESPOND IF ABLE

It's Bubo, the missing probe.

> PLEASE BE OK LUCY

The probe slams into the portal.

INT. ANDROMEDA DEEP SEA VEHICLE - DAY

Lucy is shocked awake inside the cramped pilot sphere of the Andromeda DSV. Below is the touchscreen, and in front, a video feed of the outside. She tries to maneuver the craft with a joystick, but the thrusters groan without effect.

Lucy can see Bubo in the video feed, its corroded weights separated, yet suspended alongside it. She tilts her searchlights and sees that both Bubo and Andromeda are encased in a vast gelatinous substance. Where the light touches it, ripples of blue light flow over its surface.

Then, THE SOUND.

An immense, resonant roar, with vast pulses of infrasound that threaten to shake the world apart.

Lucy screams. She clutches her head, but it's no use. Gradually, her terror turns to laughter. As her eyes go bloodshot, her expression slackens. It's all she can do to type out a message to the surface before she loses it completely.

> DONT COME

EXT. CLIFFSIDE PARK - DAY

Lucy lies on her back in the deep grass, laughing uncontrollably at the sky. Francesco tickles her body all over. She struggles halfheartedly against the tickling. Lucy laughs so hard that her gasps for air become hoarse and choked, but still she laughs.

Her eyes are bloodshot, her fingers and lips are blue.

Lucy laughs, and laughs, and laughs.

FADE TO BLACK.