

THE BIG BLUE

by

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"God is at the bottom of the sea and
I dive to find him."

Enzo Maiorca

FADE IN:

EXT. GREEK ISLAND - SUNSET

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

The image is in black and white.

The sun disappears behind arid cliffs which cast giant shadows on the sea.

A little boy around 8 years old -- tanned from head to toe -- sprints along the cliffs, scrambles from one rock to another with amazing agility.

In one hand, he carries a transparent plastic bag. In the other, a net bag containing flippers, mask, pants and sweater.

The only thing that slows him down is his bathing suit -- obvious hand-me-downs -- way too big. He tugs on them as he goes, holding them up... Until they slide again... as he leaps again... and pulls them up...

The little boy is JACQUES MAYOL.

End credits.

EXT. GREEK ISLAND - SUNSET

JACQUES reaches a ledge jutting out over a deserted cove.

He spits in his mask... expertly spreads the spit with a finger... locks his feet into the flippers... and dives.

He surfaces a long way out... adjusts his mask... and swims away from shore.

IN OPEN SEA

The boy stops swimming -- starts to gulp air -- sucks it in -- oxygenating his blood in a series of deep rapid breaths -- almost hyperventilating, almost alarming if we've never seen this before.

His gaze is glued to the ocean floor. Clear clear water. 40 feet deep. And intensely blue.

Suddenly, he catches his breath and dives -- into the blue.

UNDERWATER

JACQUES touches bottom. Clamps his legs around a rock to hold himself down. Unhurried, thoroughly at home, 40 feet under... he opens the plastic bag. A huge speckled moray eel appears in a hole in the rock, slithers toward him. The carnivore's jaws are bigger than the boy's head.

The boy smiles at him. Pulls a piece of raw meat out of his bag and holds it out. The eel takes the morsel delicately -- and slithers back into his hole.

Gravely, JACQUES takes another morsel out of the bag.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

JACQUES walks up a steep road bordering the port, almost dry now.

Two boys about his age run up the streets; call out, catch up with him and gesture toward the port.

THE BOYS

Jacques! Come quick!

EXT. PIER - DUSK

The little boys tug JACQUES to the end of the pier and point to something in the water.

BOYS

Look! Right there! It's shining!

JACQUES walks over, and sure enough sees something shining a few feet down in the water.

JACQUES

(squinting)

A coin.

FIRST BOY

I found it.

SECOND BOY

Liar!

Camera pans and we see a middle-aged PRIEST loading supplies into a small boat. He stops to watch the children's negotiations. Little JACQUES is putting his flippers on.

JACQUES

Ok. I'll get it, but no fighting,
all right?

The two boys nod as they point to the coin.

JACQUES

We'll split it.

FIRST BOY

You can't split a coin. That's
stupid.

SECOND BOY

He's right. You're stupid.

The pope smiles.

JACQUES

Then we'll buy something and split
that.

SECOND BOY

A helicopter...

JACQUES

It's a small coin.

FIRST BOY

A Ferrari.

SECOND BOY

I don't want a Ferrari... What is
it?

JACQUES

(interrupting them)
Maybe a little radio.

The two boys look at each other.

JACQUES

Well. We'll decide later. The light
is going.

SECOND BOY

I get the radio from after school,
until midnight.

FIRST BOY

Since when do you stay up until
midnight?

JACQUES

All right, all right... Can I concentrate? And you can stop pointing. I've seen it.

VOICE (O.S.)

I've seen it too.

The voice is ENZO'S. Another young boy wearing little round glasses.

FIRST BOY

(annoyed)

Shit, it's the Italian!

He is slightly older than JACQUES but he is taller. ENZO is with ROBERTO, his younger brother, the only one allowed to carry his flippers. Five kids are behind him.

ENZO

Well, if it isn't the little Frenchman! How is the little Frenchman?

JACQUES

(cool)

Fine!

ENZO pats JACQUES on the shoulder and leaves his hand there -- a lightly intimidating gesture.

ENZO

You don't mind if I go instead, do you?

JACQUES

(intimidated, and pretending not to be)

No...

ENZO

If you did mind, you'd tell me, wouldn't you?

ENZO pats his shoulder reassuringly.

ENZO

(to his brother)

Roberto, mio palmo!

ROBERTO who has already started to moisten his big

brother's gear in the water, holds a pair of dripping flippers and a glistening mask. The pope watches the scene with obvious pleasure.

ENZO

(to his brother on
the edge of the
pier)

Count!

Sure of himself, ENZO takes a deep breath and dives in the water. ROBERTO counts out loud.

ROBERTO

1... 2... 3...

The kids all walk over to the edge of the pier. A few feet away, JACQUES takes off his flippers.

ROBERTO

4... 5... 6...

ENZO bursts out of the water, the coin in his hand. The children cheer and clap. ROBERTO rushes to catch the equipment that comes flying at him, piece by piece. ENZO walks over to JACQUES.

ENZO

(showing him the
coin)

Who's is it now? You saw it but I
dove for it!

JACQUES doesn't answer.

ENZO smiles and slowly puts the coin in his pocket. He pulls it out again and waves it under JACQUES' nose.

ENZO

(without turning
around)

Roberto? How long?

ROBERTO

Six seconds.

ENZO looks at JACQUES for a while.

ENZO

I'll throw it back into the water.
You dive and if you do less than
six, it's yours.

JACQUES doesn't say anything, then finally shakes his head, negatively. ENZO smiles, taps him on the shoulder.

ENZO

Brava!

The first boy finally sums up his courage to speak.

BOY

(timidly)

Enzo? I saw the coin first... We split?

ENZO

(smiling)

You can't split a coin, stupid.

ENZO laughing, sticks the coin in his pocket and leaves the pier with his gang.

The pope smiles and pulls a coin from his pocket.

With his flippers dangling from one hand, JACQUES sadly stares out at the sea. The pope calls him over.

PRIEST

Jacques... Come, look.

JACQUES goes over to him, sees where he is pointing, the faint gleam of the coin underwater.

PRIEST

Is it a coin shining down there?

JACQUES

(overjoyed)

It is. It's a coin! I'll get it for you, Father!

PRIEST

It'll be for the poor.

JACQUES, intent on the coin's glimmer, quickly slips on his fins, prepares his mask. He swims in the water like a fish, goes directly to the coin. Scoops it up, brings it to the surface.

He breaks water, waves the coin, looks for the priest and sees he is no longer there.

JACQUES

Padre?

He looks at the ancient impression on the coin -- "Boy on a Dolphin".

DISSOLVE

TO:

ON JACQUES - UNDERWATER

He's swimming near the spot where he fed the moray eel. He senses something behind him and turns around. He sees a dolphin, still and silent, floating vertically. It seems to be watching him. The surprise is such that JACQUES is in a panic, leaps up to the surface...

ON JACQUES - IN BED

He bolts upright, as if suddenly awakening from a dream.

INT. ROOM - ON JACQUES' FATHER - DARK

A BURLY MAN, around fifty, crosses the room in the shadows and throws open the shutters with a bang. Sunlight pours in. He walks over to JACQUES' bed in the one room house, and runs his hand through his hair.

FATHER

(with a smile)

... Come on, time to get up,
Jacques!

JACQUES rubs his eyes. His father walks over to a pile of blankets on the floor, on the other side of the room. He gives the pile a kick.

FATHER

(screaming at the
top of his lungs)

Louis, wake up!

He uncovers a kettle on the fire and ladles up a big bowl of soup for Jacques. A fifty year old man pokes his head out from under the pile of blankets. It's UNCLE LOUIS, who is having a very hard time, waking up.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

JACQUES bursts out of the house, running. Diving gear

under his arm. A piece of buttered bread in his mouth.

He catches up with his father and UNCLE LOUIS. They're on a path winding down to the port. JACQUES slows down abruptly. Tries to imitate their stride. The weather is balmy and the sea lies before them, peaceful and blue.

EXT. SEA - DAY

Their boat on the water. The chug of its ENGINE ECHOES off the cliffs. A few gulls -- drawn by the sound -- skim the waves of its wake.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

On board. JACQUES' Father checks the antique air pump. JACQUES polishes the enormous copper diver's helmet and lays out the rest of an old fashioned deep sea diver's suit.

At the foot of an old monastery another boat passes. The Priest is in it.

JACQUES' Father and LOUIS take off their caps. JACQUES takes the gold coin out of his pocket.

The pope nods to JACQUES. His father looks over at him without understanding. The child quickly puts the coin back in his pocket.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

LOUIS casts anchor. A few feet away, sitting on a rock, the kid with little round glasses is fishing. He turns around to the boat. JACQUES smiles and waves at him. ENZO waves back, obviously disturbed in his fishing session.

FATHER

Jacques, come help me.

JACQUES helps his father into the diver's suit. The burly man struggles into a pair of weighted lead shoes. He seems sluggish and tired. JACQUES watches worriedly. He has a weird feeling.

JACQUES

You shouldn't dive everyday, Papa.

UNCLE LOUIS

Then you shouldn't eat everyday,
Jacques.

His father catches him fondly by the scruff of the neck.

FATHER

(winks at him)
Don't worry. When I'm tired down
there, the mermaids help me out.

Father and son smile at each other. Then his father puts
the helmet on. JACQUES joins LOUIS at the pump.

The heavy diver's suit disappears slowly underwater. The
gleaming copper helmet is the last thing to slide out of
sight.

JACQUES and LOUIS work the pump. Regular, steady motions
to maintain the flow of air.

UNCLE LOUIS

(to Jacques)
Hey! Have you ever seen a mermaid?

JACQUES

No.

They keep on pumping for a while, then...

UNCLE LOUIS

I've seen them.

UNCLE LOUIS goes on. JACQUES doesn't budge.

UNCLE LOUIS

Don't you want to know where?

JACQUES looks at the bottom to watch his father.
He doesn't answer.

UNDERWATER - JACQUES' FATHER

He moves along slowly in his cumbersome diving suit. He
is working the top of a rock outcrop on the sea floor. He
sees a sponge, hooks it; puts it in a bag that's attached
to a life line from the boat fastened to his waist. He
moves on.

INT. BOAT - JACQUES AND LOUIS PUMPING

They keep up the rhythm. Sitting on a rock at a distance, ENZO watches them. UNCLE LOUIS is bored stiff.

UNCLE LOUIS

Why don't you ask me?

JACQUES

What?

UNCLE LOUIS

Where I saw the mermaids?! Why don't you ever ask any question? I'm always the one asking the question! We're sitting here like two stones and I'm taking to myself. Ask me something, Goddamnit!

JACQUES calmly looks over at him, slows down his pumping and almost serenely asks him:

JACQUES

(in a completely
flat tone)

Why did my mother leave?

UNCLE LOUIS seems disturbed by the question. A beat.

UNCLE LOUIS

(ill at ease)
Come on now, pump!

UNDERWATER - JACQUES' FATHER

He is walking with difficulty at the bottom. His bag is full of sponges. He seems to be having trouble breathing.

EXT. BOAT - JACQUES AND LOUIS

JACQUES and LOUIS are pumping silently. UNCLE LOUIS feels obliged to answer JACQUES' question.

UNCLE LOUIS finally breaks the silence and explains:

UNCLE LOUIS

Your mother didn't leave. She went back to America, that's all. It's her home. She's allergic to this Island. She likes refrigerators and machines that clean the floor... so

one day she left. Woman are like
that, unpredictable, like the sea.

They haven't been paying attention to the bubbles gushing
at the surface. The air hose is being pulled down in a
very worrisome way.

JACQUES

(with a slight grin)
So where did you see mermaids?

UNCLE LOUIS smiles.

UNCLE LOUIS

In the bars in Athens!

Very pleased with himself, UNCLE LOUIS burst out laughing.
JACQUES shyly shrugs his shoulders. The air hose is
suddenly yanked down. JACQUES immediately sees all the
bubbles. He is white as a sheet.

JACQUES rushes to the side of the boat and starts yelling
down at his father. He grabs the life line and starts
pulling at it hysterically. The air hose snaps and
starts flying around like some crazy snake. JACQUES tries
to jump overboard. UNCLE LOUIS catches hold of his foot
at the last second. JACQUES is slapping the water with
his hands, trying to go down but UNCLE LOUIS won't let
him. JACQUES is yelling desperately. ENZO is now
standing on his rock, watching the scene, horrified.

The sea now looks as if it were boiling.

UNCLE LOUIS grabs hold of JACQUES and hugs him in his
arms. Standing on his rock, ENZO is now crying
desperately.

ENZO

(screaming)
Jacques! Jacques!

The last air bubbles are now breaking on the surface; it
looks as if they will never stop.

DISSOLVE

TO:

EXT. ITALIAN VILLAGE STREET - DAY

The image is now in color.

A rocky pink cliff over looks the very bright sea which

fills the screen.

SUPERIMPOSED: 1987 SICILY

ALFREDO runs (skips) up the cobbled street as fast as he can go, surprisingly fast.

He runs to the large terrace of a restaurant which he enters. We have time to read the sign carrying the restaurant's name: "LA MAMMA".

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

ALFREDO skips in. He is panting, covered in sweat. His panic is palpable. The whole room watches him approach a long table where a large family is having a birthday party for a very old lady.

He has to stop a second and catch his breath before he can get the words out. Then leans over and whispers in the ear of a great big man -- around 30 -- built like a bull, wearing little round glasses.

The man listens, then stiffens.

EXT. HARBOR - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A beat-up FIAT, towing an equally beat-up trailer, stops.

ENZO unfolds out of the driver's seat, like a circus clown emerging from a toy car.

The construction SUPERVISOR, an American, wearing a three piece suit, hurries over to him.

ENZO has already started undressing. ROBERTO unloads the diving gear from the trailer.

SUPERVISOR

(exhausted)
Signore Molinari?

ROBERTO

(shaking his hand)
Yes.

ENZO

(calmly undressing,
expressionless)
How did it happen?

SUPERVISOR

(upset)

The company asked me to extract everything I could from the wreck; so the divers were trying to get at the engine... and then the boat turned over... in the current... and... look, I fucked up! Can you help?

ENZO

How many are, down there?

ENZO goes back to the car.

SUPERVISOR

Just one... We're feeding him air, but he's not breathing regularly... You've got to get him out fast.

ENZO glances at the map, then at the accident site.

ENZO

(a beat)

Ten thousand.

SUPERVISOR

Lira?

ENZO

Dollars.

SUPERVISOR

You're going to hold me up at a time like this?

ROBERTO

You do understand you're talking to the champion diver of the world?

SUPERVISOR

Yes, but ten thousand dollars...

ENZO opens the trunk of his FIAT and pulls out the jack. He slams the trunk shut, and stands looking at the American, straight in the eyes.

ENZO

Okay. You tell me. How much would you say the man's life is worth?

Extremely uncomfortable, the SUPERVISOR doesn't answer.

ENZO

In my village, we have a saying:
when the wind blows, the flags of
all nations flap in the same
direction.

SUPERVISOR

(baffled)
What does that mean?

ROBERTO

That you should get your checkbook.
Damn quick.

EXT. UNFINISHED PIER - ENZO

He's at the end of the pier, his feet dangling in the muddy water of the port. A few feet away a pump sends air HISSING through a rubber tube to the diver trapped below.

ENZO inhales steadily, his chest heaving like a bellow. He carefully puts his spectacles inside his shoes, dons his flippers, etc., with his usual flair of suspense.

Behind him the SUPERVISOR and other construction workers watch expectantly. ROBERTO heaves a stone weight into the bay, a cable attached to it plays out from a drum on the pier.

ENZO ignoring everyone, grabs the ordinary tire jack, flip-flops over to the now taut cable, the stone has hit bottom. He takes a deep breath and dives into the bay.

UNDERWATER - WRECK

ENZO dives down a chimney of muck. Picks his way over and around every hazard, until he reaches the diver, trapped under a huge piece of debris.

He pats his shoulder to comfort him, he then inserts the tire jack under a piece of concrete... And, as if he were changing a tire, begins to pump the handle...

Slowly, in a swirl of mud and water, the chunk of debris rises off the diver's leg.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Everyone is staring at the water silently, suspensefully. The SUPERVISOR has his checkbook in hand, but has completely forgotten it, intent upon what's going on underwater. ROBERTO taps him on the shoulder.

ROBERTO

Since we have a little time, what do you say you write that check?

UNDERWATER - WRECK

ENZO cuts the cables tangled around the diver's torso. Then he takes off his flippers, plants his bare feet on the concrete, grabs the diver by the shoulders and pulls him free.

The diver drops the air tube and climbs as quickly as possible toward the surface.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The diver surfaces, gasping for breath. A cheer goes up from the crowd. Several men hurry to pull him onto dry land. But there is no sign of ENZO. Everyone waits, breathless.

ROBERTO

(to the Supervisor)

Sign here.

Suddenly, ENZO appears, burst out of the water, holding his flippers up in the air like a trophy. The onlookers cheer, help him out of the water, slapping him on the back.

ENZO tosses the jack and his flippers to ROBERTO. Impassive and silent, he slips his arms into the prize fighter's robe that ROBERTO holds out for him, walks solemnly back to his car.

ROBERTO takes the check and walks over to the car. ENZO bends down into the car and opens the roof.

SUPERVISOR

(through the open
roof smiling)

Thanks, thanks a lot. I mean that too... You extortionist bastard!

The car rushes off. In the distance we see a police (carabinieri) car and an old fire engine rolling in the direction of the construction site.

INSIDE FIAT - DRIVING AWAY

ENZO'S car drives past them. ENZO looks at ROBERTO out of the corner of his eye, then suddenly explodes with joy.

ENZO

Dollars, Roberto! We took him for ten thousand dollars!

ROBERTO whoops and whistles. ENZO reaches over and leans on the horn. The little car races by and finally stops at the top of the cliff facing the sea.

EXT. TOP OF CLIFF - DAY

The two brothers sit back, relax.

Stare out to sea.

ROBERTO

(after a while)

Enzo, what are you going to do with the money?

ENZO

Have the car painted.

ROBERTO

Santini will do that for 25 dollars!

ENZO

Then tell him to wax it too.

ROBERTO

Enzo, really. What are you going to get?

ENZO

(thinking)

A rosary for Mama, a dress for Angelica, something with rhinestones for what's her name, and get yourself a suit that fits... But most important...

ROBERTO

Yes?

ENZO

Find the Frenchman. Find me Mayol.

EXT. FLAKES OF SNOW - MOUNTAINS - DAY

Mountain peaks, stark and white. A winter sky which is strangely and disquietingly dark. A landscape swept by snow.

SUPERIMPOSED ON SCREEN: PERU - LAKE HUACRACOCHA - MAY 1987

A yellow light comes out of the storm -- advances toward us. The headlight of a train.

A narrow gauge locomotive steams up grade pushing piles of snow in front of it.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Sitting in the train, leaning against the misty window, JOHANA CROSS, 27, has clear quick charm and a sort of romantic fragility. She is dressed simply but warmly. She looks through the window; all she sees is white.

It is clear that she was not the one who decided on this trip. Reading the key phrases from a beat-up note book, she calls upon an old Peruvian.

JOHANA

(in Spanish)

Is this the Lago del Demonio?
(Es bien aqui el Lago del Demonio)
... Huacracocha?

The old man goes into a long, rambling explanation. JOHANA nods without understanding a thing.

JOHANA

Gracias.

OLD MAN

You welcome.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

The train pulls in, slowly pushing piles of snow in front of it and finally stops in front of an old shack which

serves as the station.

A man, FRANK, bundled in a parka, comes out of a snowmobile parked by the station, and walks up to the train.

JOHANA steps down, carrying her suitcase and drops two feet in the snow as she comes off the last step. FRANK walks over and leans down towards her.

FRANK

(smiling)

Welcome to Peru!

INT. SNOWMOBILE - DAY

FRANK throws the luggage into the back of the snowmobile, jumps in and turns the ignition on. JOHANA takes her hat, scarf and gloves off. FRANK glances over at her, he is both amused and charmed.

JOHANA

Don't you have a heater?

FRANK

(hitting at the
dashboard)

Yeah... Sure... Is this your first
trip to Peru?

JOHANA

Does anybody live to make a second?

FRANK smiles and kicks the heating system, then leans over to check it, his eyes off the road.

JOHANA

(a little worried)

Forget about the heater!

EXT. LAKE OF THE DEMON - CAMP - DAY

The storm is at its peak. The frozen snowmobile plows along side the lake HUACRACOCHA and stops in front of a cluster of quonset huts almost completely buried in snow.

FRANK gets the bags out of the back. The suitcases are by now frozen stiff. JOHANA follows in his steps.

A couple of llamas are huddled up against the hut in

attempt to protect themselves from the storm.

JOHANA is bewildered. Shacks in the middle of the Andes, the lake of the "Demon", and now llama that have to be pushed aside to enter one's home.

As FRANK opens the door, a man is leaving the hut. The man is JACQUES MAYOL. JOHANA and JACQUES pass each other in slow motion. Everything seems suddenly suspended: time, sound, cold...

JACQUES MAYOL instantly makes an impression on her. He is now 34, still dark-haired, with dark eyes. He is wearing a red diving suit and a pair of round goggles. He looks like some legendary creature one would dream about.

Everything finally regains its formal speed. The door slams, the man is gone. She and FRANK are in the middle of the entrance hall. JOHANA hasn't yet gotten over the vision she has just had, but she regains composure and enters the next room.

INT. QUONSET HUT

JOHANA happily takes her gloves off.

FRANK puts down the bags and walks into the next room. It's a sort of laboratory, filled with ultra modern equipment.

A big bay window overlooks the lake on which is built a long wooden dock.

Sitting in a corner, an old Peruvian man is preparing hot drinks. JOHANA drops into a chair.

FRANK

A drink to warm up?

JOHANA

Yes, thank you. Intravenous if possible.

FRANK

(pulling out a flask)
Tea... or whiskey?

JOHANA

... both. Did I just see a man in a red suit and goggles?

FRANK smiles and pours some whiskey in her tea cup.

FRANK

... right.

(calling out)

Dr. Lawrence? The insurance man...
uh... The insurance person is here!

LAWRENCE

It's about time!

FRANK smiles and pours JOHANA some tea. She warms her hands on the cup. She asks blankly.

JOHANA

Would it be out of place to ask what he's doing?

FRANK

Who?

JOHANA

The guy in the Halloween suit!

LAWRENCE comes in from the other side of the room.

He walks straight over to the bay window.

LAWRENCE

Did you have a nice trip? We were getting restless, it's been three weeks since the accident.

JOHANA walks over to the bay window and starts staring at something in the distance.

EXT. DOCK - ON JACQUES

At the end of the dock, JACQUES who is sitting on the edge of a hole which is cut in the ice, is putting a pair of gloves on. He then grabs the handles of a strange machine which emerges from the water and starts taking deep breaths, oblivious to the cold, his mind completely elsewhere.

BACK IN LAB

JOHANA watches JACQUES. She just can't believe her eyes. LAWRENCE is bent over one of his machines, fiddling with different switches.

LAWRENCE

(to Johana)

You should get things moving, you know. We're out of equipment and we can't do half of our experiments...! Frank, check the program!

JOHANA is finally able to speak.

JOHANA

Who... Who is that?

LAWRENCE

Mayol... Jacques Mayol.

JOHANA

That's the experiment? Dumping a guy into a frozen lake?

LAWRENCE turns one last knob.

LAWRENCE

... The truck fell into a very deep crevasse. We weren't able to save the equipment.

JOHANA

I'll have to talk to the driver.

LAWRENCE

In the spring when he melts!

JOHANA walks closer to the window. She isn't hearing a thing he's saying.

JACQUES is putting on his flippers.

JOHANA can't believe it.

JACQUES is standing by a hole cut in the ice. He is holding onto the machine in the water. He is waving a mask.

JOHANA

(dumbfounded)

You really send him under the ice? He isn't a slave or a convict or anything?

LAWRENCE

My dear, science is a cruel

mistress.

JOHANA

But... how is he going to breathe?

LAWRENCE

He isn't going to breathe.

JACQUES takes a deep breath, turns a handle and a weight yanks him straight down into the water. LAWRENCE sets his stop watch off and flips a few switches.

JOHANA grabs his arm as if they could do something about it.

LAWRENCE

Listen...

He raises the volume: we hear the man's heartbeat through a small speaker.

LAWRENCE

That's his heartbeat.

(excited)

Can you hear the speed at which it's slowing down, it's incredible.

LAWRENCE tears off the sheet with the heartbeat measures on it and hands it to JOHANA.

JOHANA feels she's on the verge of crying, and can't figure it out.

UNDERWATER - JACQUES

JACQUES stops his machine by turning one of the handles. He's deep beneath the surface of the frozen lake. He swims deliberately, carefully into a large tube which is hinged open. He closes it around himself. His heart is still slowing down. He pushes a button on the machine, and a flash of light bursts in the opaque night surrounding him.

BACK IN LAB - ON VIDEO SCREEN

We see a moving X-ray image.

LAWRENCE

He's in the fluoroscope now. Listen to his heart. Impressive, huh? The

flow of blood is concentrated in the brain and doesn't even feed the limbs anymore. It's a phenomena that has only been observed with dolphins... until now.

JOHANA

How long can he stay down? Without breathing?

LAWRENCE

It depends. He should come up soon.
(smiling)
Unless he's decided to stay for the night.

JOHANA

Why is he doing this?

LAWRENCE

For one thing, it's his job... as for the rest of it, I wish I knew.

JOHANA sighs with relief as JACQUES appears at the surface in one big breath.

JOHANA

Shouldn't somebody take him a blanket or something?

LAWRENCE

(smiling at Frank)
Coffee might be nice.

She heads towards the Old Peruvian and pours a cup of coffee...

JOHANA

(afterthought)
Will he understand Spanish?

LAWRENCE

His mother's an American. He spent half of his life in the states. I'd try English if I were you.

EXT. DOCK - JACQUES SURFACING

He's groggy, half hypnotized. He looks up at the dock, sees JOHANA with a cup of coffee. He stares at her. She hands him the coffee.

JACQUES

(puzzled)
I recognize you.

JOHANA

We saw each other a little while ago.

JACQUES

(serious)
In the lake?

JOHANA

(wondering whether he
is joking or not)
No... in the hut.

After a long beat...

JACQUES

(with a beautiful
smile)
Then it was somebody that looked a
lot like you... Thank you.

JACQUES then turns around and walks toward the huts.

JOHANA still hasn't moved, as if petrified by her emotions and the severe cold. She then walks up to the hole in the ice and peers into the dark water. She shudders.

INT. CABIN - DAWN

JOHANA emerges from a down sleeping bag. She's wearing a big sweater and a wool hat. She is not sleeping.

Intrigued by the sound of the snowmobile, she gets up and walks over to the frozen window. JACQUES and FRANK are loading their luggage onto the snowmobile.

Outside, LAWRENCE is saying "Goodbye" to JACQUES. Unseen, JOHANA also waves from behind her curtain. JACQUES senses something: he turns around toward the cabin and smiles, waving his hand at JOHANA. She hides behind the curtain and shyly waves back.

JACQUES gets into the snowmobile and drives out of the frame. We are left with an endless array of snow-capped mountains.

DISSOLVE

TO:

EXT. COTE D'AZUR - DAY

Fixed image of the Cote d'Azur. The sparkling blue sea fades into the distance.

A French taxi rides along the winding road overlooking the creeks.

INT. - TAXI

From behind all his bags, JACQUES obsessively stares at the sea.

The driver smiles.

DRIVER

It's beautiful, isn't it?

JACQUES smiles.

DRIVER

We had some bad wind this week. The "Mistral"!! "Peuchere"! There isn't one olive left on its tree. It suddenly left us this morning... I sure won't be the one to call it back.

EXT. ANTIBES - ROAD TO MARINELAND

The taxi comes to a stop in front of Marineland. JACQUES gets out, carrying one of his bags.

JACQUES

(to the driver)
I'll only be five minutes.

He enters Marineland.

EXT. MARINELAND - ON JACQUES

The park is closed, the paths are deserted. JACQUES approaches the Dolphin's tank. All three dolphins rise up in the water. Greet him with a click and clatter of tongues. JACQUES sits down at the edge of the tank.

JACQUES

Good morning, everybody! Did you sleep well? I slept in a plane, and it wasn't too great.

He opens his duffel bag. Hunts around, comes up with two packages wrapped in brownpaper. The dolphins stare at him, intrigued.

JACQUES

(calling out)

Hey! presents.

The dolphins CACKLE some more.

JACQUES

You think I'd forget you?

He laughs. The driver, who seems to be quite familiar with the place, walks in heading straight over to the soda machine. Out of the corner of his eye, he takes in the scene, very intrigued.

JACQUES has not noticed him.

He starts unwrapping the first package.

JACQUES

For Bathsheba.

He produces a little ceramic Llama.

ON BATHSHEBA

looking at the llama, bewildered. As bewildered as a dolphin can be. JACQUES turns the llama upside down. It moos: HIAK, HIAK...

JACQUES

It's a Llama. You understand? From Peru. It's fighting.

BATHSHEBA shakes her head. JACQUES throws the llama into the water. He unwraps the second package. A pair of Peruvian gloves and hat. Wide eyed, the driver sits in the stands to watch the show.

JACQUES

That's for you, Darjeeling. We wouldn't want you to catch cold!

He throws them to DARJEELING who catches them.

JACQUES

And now...
(singing out)
"Ta, da..." For you Tina.

He pulls out a thermos.

JACQUES

Something you've never seen either.

He opens the thermos.

JACQUES

Snow!

He sprinkles snow flakes on TINA'S head. She tries to taste it.

JACQUES

(smiling like a
child)
A new experience, Tina.
(nostalgic)
I missed you little rascals. Did
you get my post card?

The three dolphins leap into the air and land with a huge splash which soaks JACQUES. He takes his shirt off.

JACQUES

(pretending to be
serious)
Oh? Is that what you want?
Alright, but five minutes, no more.
I have a taxi waiting.

He takes off his pants. The taxi driver gets up, as if to keep him from going in. JACQUES dives into the pool.

UNDERWATER - ON JACQUES

He swims under the dolphin, reaches out and grabs hold of the dolphin's snout.

The dolphin pulls JACQUES around and around the basin while JACQUES pets his chest and belly. We have never seen JACQUES so relaxed and happy.

DISSOLVE

TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAWN

Overview of a gray and dirty Manhattan morning. JOHANA depressed, stares blankly out of the window of a yellow cab. She watches the muddy brown water flow under the Brooklyn Bridge.

The driver keeps yelling obscenities to all the cars around him.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

A suitcase in each hand, JOHANA gets out of the cab and walks up the stairs of her apartment.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

JOHANA puts down her suitcase wearily. Catches her breath and gets out her keys. She tries one in the top lock. It doesn't work. She tries harder. There's a woman's voice yelling angrily from inside the apartment.

SALLY (O.S.)

I changed the lock you son of a bitch!

JOHANA

... Sally?

The door opens.

SALLY

You're back! Hello. We were burgled.

JOHANA

Again?

SALLY

They got the new T.V.

JOHANA comes in, looks at the ransacked apartment.

SALLY

... And the new stereo.

JOHANA

I hope they remembered to take the microwave this time?

SALLY

Yep. How was your trip...? Help me clean up, okay?

JOHANA

You called the police?

SALLY

They're going to send detectives. When they get around to it.

JOHANA

(shrugging)

So what, all they ever want is your phone number anyway.

JOHANA goes over, slumps into an easy chair and sighs.

After a beat...

SALLY

Well?

JOHANA

What?

SALLY

How was your trip?

JOHANA

(flatly)

Nice... Very interesting... Great!
(doubtfully)
... I guess.

SALLY

(ironically)

Okay... Who'd you meet?

JOHANA opens her handbag, takes out the strip of electrocardiogram paper, hands it to her.

SALLY

A cardiogram...? You met a doctor! Congratulations, you're in the chips...

(an afterthought)

Unless they have socialized medicine in Peru. Do they?

JOHANA

(indicating paper)
It's his heartbeat.

SALLY

Oh Jesus...! I'll make some coffee.
(starts toward
kitchen)
They left the stove.

TIME

DISSOLVE:

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

The living room is almost completely put back together...
SALLY is replacing books in the bookcase, JOHANA is using
a carpet sweeper, and talking away.

JOHANA

(nonstop)
6'3", 6'1", maybe 5'9" -- You can't
be sure, you know the flippers, they
add height or they take it away, or
something. Anyway short dark hair...
Not punk or anything, just short.
And the cutest smile. He wasn't
smiling at me, I don't think -- just
smiling. And he thought he saw me in
the lake. I mean that was a figure
of speech... They're so romantic,
the French.

SALLY

(bored, half asleep)
I thought you said he was Peruvian?

JOHANA

(annoyed)
Haven't you been listening?

SALLY opens the drapes, revealing it's dawn outside.

SALLY

... Since eight o'clock last
night...! You're in love.

JOHANA

Don't be a jerk.
(emphatically)
There's no such thing as love at
first sight.

DISSOLVE

TO:

UNDERWATER - SWIMMING POOL

JACQUES is swimming alone at the bottom of a gigantic swimming pool. He wears a monofin, his head and chest are wired up to an assistant who runs back and forth alongside the pool.

A man's feet are seen walking over to the side of the pool.

JACQUES is swimming laps, arching his body like a dolphin.

As he approaches one end of the pool, he sees a coin slowly falling in front of him. JACQUES picks it up and looks at it: it's an old Greek coin.

JACQUES smiles and swims to the surface.

EXT. ON SIDE OF SWIMMING POOL - DAY

JACQUES pokes his head out of the water and pulls off his goggles.

ENZO stands over him, smiling.

ENZO

Jacques, my friend, how are you?

JACQUES

(happy)

Enzo...

A beat.

ENZO

I leave you swimming and twenty years later, you're still in the water! What the hell are you doing? Training?

JACQUES

Yes.

An uneasiness sweeps over ENZO'S face and quickly disappears.

ENZO

That's good.

(smiling again)
You never would have recognized me,
huh? Check out the suit! Looking
good, no? You know I'm the world
champion?

JACQUES

Yes, I know.

ENZO

I dove 315 feet!

JACQUES

Great!

ENZO

They say I'm like Lazarus. You
know, the guy who was raised from
the dead?!

He laughs. JACQUES smiles. ENZO goes on.

ENZO

(serious)
Doesn't it surprise you that I just
show up like this... Listen, the
world championship starts in ten
days in Taormina. Be my guest.

ENZO puts down an airplane ticket on the side of the pool.

ENZO

Your ticket.

Surprised, JACQUES looks over at the ticket.

JACQUES

Why?

ENZO

Because I'm sure you're dying to
beat me.

JACQUES

(shaking his head)
I don't want to be in any
competition... I dive because I like
to, not to beat a record... don't
you have to be very mad at somebody
to want to beat him?

ENZO

No. All you need is to want to be the best.

JACQUES

(smiles)

You're the best, Enzo!

ENZO

(with a tense grin
on his face)

That's too easy! Every time I beat a record there's always some dumbshit asking me: "D'you know that French guy, Mayol? He's supposed to be very good! Too bad he doesn't compete." So, you're going to come with me to Taormina! First, because you're my friend and second, because you don't have one reason to keep on spoiling my pleasure.

(he pushes the
airplane ticket to
Jacques)

... I'll see you there...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NEW YORK - DAY

INT. DUFFY'S OFFICE - DUFFY - JOHANA

She is seated across the desk from him. He's reading through her report. Behind him, outside the large plate glass window, window-washers are seated on a scaffold suspended far above the city. They eat lunch.

JOHANA'S eyes wander (bored) around the office as DUFFY reads. He looks up.

DUFFY

(indicating report)

This is good work... unfortunately it's incomplete.

(he glances at the
window)

Could you eat a sandwich 40 floors above the street.

JOHANA

(absently)

What kind?

DUFFY

Johana, am I boring you?

JOHANA

Sorry. Of course not, definitely not... well, maybe a little. What did you say?

DUFFY

I said that the file is incomplete. See if you can get through to this Lawrence character and have him send the Peruvian registration for his missing truck... and don't let him tell you it was in the glove compartment.

JOHANA

Right Chief!

She starts out of the office.

DUFFY

(to her back)

Did the driver really freeze?

JOHANA

Like a popsicle. They're keeping him on a stick until spring.

DUFFY

My God! I'm glad I didn't go.

JOHANA

(under her breath,
leaving)

... So am I.

INT. QUONSET HUT - PERU - DAY

Doctor LAWRENCE covers one ear with his hand as he yells into the phone.

LAWRENCE

(screaming)

... I said, all the truck papers are in the glove compartment!

INT. JOHANA'S OFFICE - MANHATTAN

JOHANA sits at her desk, she too is yelling into the telephone. Her colleague looks over at her and smiles.

JOHANA

(with a sigh)

Okay, listen, just get the custom's office to send me a copy as fast as possible. We can't send you new equipment until our file is complete. Okay?

INT. QUONSET HUT - PERU - DAY

LAWRENCE

Okay, okay. You'll have it by the end of the week, how's that?

JOHANA (V.O.)

You've made me a happy insurance person.

LAWRENCE

Then, goodbye.

He is just about to hang up.

INT. JOHANA'S OFFICE - MANHATTAN

JOHANA jumps up.

JOHANA

Wait! Professor...?

LAWRENCE (V.O.)

... Yes?

JOHANA starts snooping around the papers on her desk, embarrassed by the presence of her colleague.

JOHANA

(as softly as possible)

You don't know how I could reach that diver of yours... Mayol... We need some additional information... I mean, we have a few questions to ask him.

INT. QUONSET HUT - PERU - DAY

LAWRENCE

The last thing I heard, he was off to Taormina for the world diving championships. That's Taormina, in Sicily!

INT. DUFFY'S OFFICE - DAY

JOHANA dashes in without knocking.

JOHANA

Listen, I just found out we've got real problems in Sicily!

DUFFY

(alarmed)
What d'you mean?

JOHANA

(improvising)
The mafia! La Cosa Nostra!
Coppola! De Niro...! I knew it! I knew we shouldn't have written that policy!!

DUFFY

(pale)
What's happened??

JOHANA

The documents are forged.

DUFFY

No!

JOHANA

Yes! The notary is a phony. He has the same signature as the contractor!

DUFFY

(outraged)
It can't be true!

JOHANA

(fast talking)
We have to send somebody over there immediately! If we prove the forgery we can cancel the policy.

We'll be off the hook. There's a flight to Rome in two hours and from there its just a short hop to Sicily.

DUFFY

(reaching for phone)
I'll send Cardoza, he'll be able to...

JOHANA

(interrupting)
I tried him, he can't go. His son is being Bar Mitzvohed tomorrow... I'll go, boss.

DUFFY

I thought it was Spanish that you spoke?

JOHANA

(after a beat)
Italian is practically the same thing.

EXT. PORT OF MESSINE - DAY

A ferry comes into the dock, as a plank is slowly lowered.

As it descends, four rail cars lie in wait in its belly. JOHANA comes off the boat, carrying her suitcase, she wears a light summer dress. She looks around, seeming a little lost.

A white FIAT taxi screeches to a halt beside her. JOHANA jumps. The driver whose arm loosely dangles from the car window, grins at her.

DRIVER

... Taxi?

EXT. SAN DOMENICO - DAY

The white FIAT taxi pulls up in front of the SAN DOMENICO hotel, but it is JACQUES who gets out of it. The driver helps him with his bags.

RECEPTIONIST

(checking the books)
Mayol... Mayol... No reservation.

JACQUES

(uncomfortable)
... Are you sure?

RECEPTIONIST

Positive, Sir.

JACQUES looks down at the piece of paper stapled to his ticket.

JACQUES

This is the hotel San Domenico?

RECEPTIONIST

Yes Sir, and it has been so for 127 years.

JACQUES

(more and more
uncomfortable)
Yes, but... So, you haven't got a room left?

RECEPTIONIST

No Sir, the hotel is full because of the Diving championship.

JACQUES

Ah?!

The Receptionist starts working on his papers again. JACQUES, completely lost, stares blankly at the hotel clerk, wondering what to do next.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

The tiny FIAT clatters onto the sidewalk in front of the hotel narrowly avoiding the Countess' limo. Parks its frontwheels on the sidewalk, rear end in the road.

ENZO, followed by ROBERTO, get out of his car, like a king descending from his carriage. On the way, he stops and kisses a distinguished elderly woman's hand? The hotel's **CONTESSA**.

ENZO tosses his keys to a doorman who stepped up to complain.

ENZO

(to doorman)

Be careful with that car, it's a new
paint job.

ENZO enters the hotel and sees JACQUES.

ENZO

(yelling across the
lobby)

Giacomino! My friend! My brother!

ENZO and JACQUES. The two men kiss each other on both
cheeks, pound each others back. They are both moved.

ENZO

(looking at him)

So you finally decided to join us?
You did the right thing!

ENZO

(to the desk clerk)

Hey Paolo! Come stai? Get my key!

(to Jacques,
gesturing over his
shoulder)

You remember my little brother
Roberto?

Roberto (26) nods to JACQUES who shakes his hand.

JACQUES

I remember. Hi Roberto!

ENZO

What room have you got?

JACQUES

I don't have one.

ENZO

You don't have a room?

(at the top of his
lungs)

Paolo? What did I just hear? I
personally called you to reserve a
room for my good friend Jacques
Mayol and you treat him like a
stranger?!

JACQUES

(embarrassed)

It's okay, Enzo. I'll go somewhere
else.

ENZO

Not only is Jacques Mayol a very special friend, but he happens to be one of the best divers in the world! And you're throwing him out! Are you crazy, or what? Stupido!

JACQUES

(really embarrassed
now)

Enzo drop it, I'll find something.

ENZO looks at him for a moment and gives him a warm smile.

He hands him his own keys.

ENZO

Take mine. I'll take the Countess' suite. She told me she was leaving for the cemetery... She'll be more comfortable there.

PAOLO half-heartedly, hands him the key. ENZO glances at JACQUES to make sure he's properly impressed. He throws his arm around JACQUES' shoulder, hugs him and gives him a real smile.

ENZO

(sincerely)

I'm glad you're here.

EXT. HOTEL TERRACE TAORMINA - JACQUES - ENZO - DAY

They're at a table on a terrace that overlooks the sea. They've just arrived and all around them people are lunching away furiously.

ENZO beckons to a passing WAITER who comes to the table. He's a very handsome, slightly effeminate young man.

ENZO

(to waiter)

"Spaghetti del mare"

(to Jacques)

It's delicious here. It's the one thing they really know how to make.

WAITER

Del mare for two?

JACQUES

(nodding quickly)

Yes, sure, for two.

ENZO

And a bottle of "Frascati". Two bottles!

WAITER

Si Signore, grazie mille.

The waiter hurries away. ENZO watches his departure, then thoughtfully.

ENZO

He moves just like a woman.

(then, as if he were
speaking to Jacques)

It must be hard to live in two worlds like that, huh? To breathe in one, swim in the other...

JACQUES nods without really knowing.

ENZO

(suddenly louder)

Anyway! Nothing beats a sexy broad!
Huh, Jacques!

ENZO starts laughing. JACQUES would like to crawl under the table.

TIME DISSOLVE

TO:

EXT. HOTEL TERRACE TAORMINA - JACQUES - ENZO - LATER

Their lunch is on the table, half eaten.

ENZO

... So, after all these years, you must have lots of questions to ask. Am I right?

JACQUES

(quickly)

Yes, of course. Lots of questions.

JACQUES is satisfied with his answer. He thinks that the subject is closed. They eat silently for a moment. ENZO watches him. Then:

ENZO

Well, what are they?

JACQUES

(giving up)

I'm sorry... I don't know how to ask the questions.

ENZO bursts out laughing.

ENZO

Well, then. I'll do the asking for you. "Tell me dear Enzo, how did you become World Champion?" Oh, that's a long story.

(his voice changes)

Well, after you left Amorgos, I went back to Italy and joined the Navy. So you now have in front of you -- Captain Molinari, who's been on leave of absence for the past 14 years...

JACQUES

That's good.

ENZO

How do you make a living? Your experiments, does it pay well?

JACQUES

It's okay.

ENZO

... You married?

JACQUES doesn't seem to have ever thought about marriage.

JACQUES

No.

ENZO

Me neither, 'cause of my Mother. She's a curse, my Mamma, a tornado. Stubborn as a mule! I was engaged... for a week. After that, Mamma was so mad, I tell you, pasta was bouncing off the walls.

JACQUES smiles.

ENZO

So, not married. Well, good for you. You play the field, like me. A girl in every port, huh?

JACQUES

(bluffing)

Exactly, I mean, after all, we're men!

ENZO

(slapping the table top)

Damn right! That's what I tell them when people say you've turned into a fish.

JACQUES

(concerned)

People say that?

ENZO

(sorry he went too far)

Forget it. I was joking.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO TERRACE - ON JOHANA

JOHANA comes out of the stone tunnel which leads to the terrace. She looks over the crowd, trying to find someone.

JACQUES is sitting with his back to her. She finally spots him and walks over to the table.

ENZO

Eh! La Madonna! This one is for me. I'll bet you my watch that she's in my bed tonight.

JACQUES turns around and recognizes her. JOHANA smiles and walks up to the table. ENZO takes his watch off and puts it on the table.

ENZO

(quickly)

I tell you she's mine!

JOHANA

(to Jacques)

Hello!

ENZO

(surprised)
You know each other?

JOHANA

Yes.

ENZO

Enzo Molinari.

ENZO kisses her hand and brushes his watch off the table in the same movement.

ENZO

This is a great pleasure.

JOHANA

(laughing at the
protocol)
Johana Cross, pleased to meet you.
(then to Jacques,
faking surprise)
Well! Isn't this a coincidence. I
really wasn't expecting this... All
the way out here. It's incredible!

JACQUES

Please, have a seat.

JOHANA

Thank you. I wouldn't want to
interrupt anything.

JOHANA sits down.

JACQUES

No, no!

ENZO

Not at all!

JACQUES

You're staying at the hotel?

JOHANA

I wish, but it's full. They
recommended a pension in town. They
say that all of Taormina is full.
What's going on here?

ENZO

It's the Free Diving World

Championship. I am by the way world
champion!

JOHANA has turned toward JACQUES, paying no attention to
ENZO. JACQUES can't stop looking at JOHANA.

JACQUES

But what brought you to Sicily?

JOHANA

I was doing an insurance
investigation in Palermo.

(to Enzo)

I work for an insurance company.

(back to Jacques)

So, I decided to take a few days
off.

(uncomfortable)

I don't know this island at all. It
really is gorgeous.

ENZO

There is no place in the world more
beautiful than Sicily!

The waiter passes behind them. ENZO reaches out, grabs
him by the arm, pulls him to the table.

ENZO

(to waiter)

A spaghetti del mare for the super
dedicated traveling insurance
agent.

JOHANA

(smiling)

I think I'll have a coffee.

JACQUES

No, no. You'll like it. It's
superb.

JOHANA

... Okay. I'll try.

ENZO pours the wine.

JOHANA shrugs fatalistically. The waiter leaves.
JACQUES, intrigued, stares at JOHANA. She pretends not to
notice.

ENZO

(impatient)
Where did you two meet?

JOHANA

In a lake.

ENZO

I might have known.
(to Johana)
As I was telling you earlier, I'm
the world champion free diver.

JOHANA

Congratulations.

ENZO

Some people say it's the most virile
sport in the world. One has to
admit that when you see those men
diving head first in that deep blue
sea, all muscles contracted in one
super human effort...

JACQUES

(interrupting)
Enzo?

ENZO

(annoyed)
What?

JACQUES

Your mother?

ENZO

Ahi, ahi, cazzo! Ma mamia!
Where...? God, she'll kill me...
(pushing the plate
in front of Johana)
... if she catches me eating pasta
in a restaurant.

He quickly brushes off the crumbs in front of him.

ON ENZO'S MOTHER

heading toward them. She's a huge woman in widow's black.
She shoulders her way through the tables.

ROBERTO carrying her suitcases follows at her heels.

ENZO jumps to his feet. Throws his arms around her.

ENZO

... Mamma!

MAMMA MOLINARI

(expressionless)

You expect me to carry all the
luggage myself?

ENZO

Mamma. Roberto and an elevator...
Isn't that enough?

A beat. Signora MOLINARI inspects the plates on the
table.

MAMMA MOLINARI

(suspiciously)

What have you been eating?

ENZO

Coffee only, I'm diving tomorrow.
You remember little Jacques, Jacques
Mayol...

JACQUES

(timidly)

Madame...

ENZO

... And his friend, Johana...

Signora MOLINARI nods grudgingly.

WAITER

(arriving proudly)

Spaghetti del mare!

Dead silence.

ENZO is the only one with no plate in front of him.
Signora MOLINARI'S eyebrows condense into a dark stripe
across her forehead.

JOHANA hands ENZO'S plate to the WAITER and takes the full
one.

JOHANA

(to waiter)

Thank you.

And begins to eat, ignoring the expressions of amazement

all around her.

MAMMA MOLINARI

Americana?

JOHANA nods enthusiastically, her mouth too full to speak.

MAMMA MOLINARI

(impressed, to
Johana)

Benvenuto!

MAMMA MOLINARI has a huge grin on her face.

EXT. TAORMINA STREET - JACQUES, JOHANA - TWILIGHT

They emerge onto the street in front of the entrance of a small rooming house.

JACQUES is carrying JOHANA'S luggage. The old pension is covered in bright pink bougainvilliers, there is laundry hanging on the other side of the street.

JOHANA

Thanks for helping with the bag.
(she looks up at the
pension with little
enthusiasm)
It looks great!

JACQUES

I thought it was a nice place.
(suddenly doubting)
Isn't it?

JOHANA

I'm being a pain in the ass.
(looking at him)
It's beautiful here.

They look at each other. JACQUES is silent. He just stands there, a suitcase in each hand.

JOHANA breaks the silence.

JOHANA

You're going to be very busy these
days aren't you?

JACQUES

I don't know... why?

JOHANA

Just because... I would have liked to visit the town... See the coast... I don't know anybody... Expect for you.

(feeling she has gone too far)

But you are going to be very busy. You must have tons of things to prepare, interviews... And a competition like this one must require a great deal of concentration, right?

JACQUES

(shakes his head negatively)

Yes... Maybe... I don't know. I don't like competitions... It ruins the fun. Don't you think?

JOHANA

(with a faint smile)

I guess... But you know... I'm American and I've mostly been taught to be competitive... There's always pleasure of being the best?

JACQUES

Maybe on earth there is one... but not when you dive... You see, to dive deep into the sea, for no reason... just to do it. It's a feeling... I don't know how to say this... Voluptuous?

He looks up at her as he pronounces the last word. She smiles at him, lovingly.

JOHANA

(laughing)

You can put down the suitcases, you know.

He lets go of the suitcases. Suddenly, behind them, there is a loud screech of tires. The FIAT tears across the street.

ENZO in his FIAT. He pokes his head out of the window.

ENZO

C'mon, you two... Jacques, we have to get ready for the ceremony tonight. We have a new world champion.

JACQUES

I'm a little tired, I don't know if...

ENZO

Get in the car!

INT. ENZO'S SUITE - ENZO, JACQUES, ROBERTO - NIGHT

They're in front of a wardrobe looking JACQUES over in the full-length mirrors. He's wearing an evening shirt and a tuxedo of ENZO'S. The collar is too big, the sleeves hangover his hands. He looks at himself dubiously in the mirror.

ENZO

Roberto! The bow-tie!

ROBERTO hands ENZO the bow-tie, he hooks it around JACQUES' collar.

ENZO

(taking a few steps
back)

Very good.

JACQUES looks down at his tennis shoes.

ROBERTO

What about the shoes?

ENZO

Very chic.

(hesitates)

Anyway, you don't have anything else, do you?

JACQUES

No.

ENZO

Then, it's very chic. Avanti!

EXT. RECEPTION ON TERRACE - NIGHT

A big reception is organized on the terrace of the hotel. The official divers and technicians are all gathered in front of a podium. The terrace is loaded with photographers.

ROBERTO keeps turning round and round the long buffet table.

JACQUES is alone at the bar. Incongruous detail: a whiskey bottle on the table beside him.

JOHANA enters. She has also had a few drinks.

JOHANA

I thought you'd be at the dinner.

JACQUES

It's too loud for me.

He tugs at his over-sized tuxedo.

JOHANA

You look adorable.

JACQUES

Thank you...

JOHANA

(smiling)

... Especially the sneakers.

JACQUES looks down at his feet, doesn't know what to make of her comment. JOHANA sits down beside him and pours herself a drink. They touch glasses.

EXT. ON PODIUM - NIGHT

On the podium, NOVELLI, the organizer of the championship, stands in his tuxedo, talking into a microphone. An older man in a worn out suit, stands next to him.

NOVELLI

Ladies and Gentlemen, your attention, please. Mr. Andre Bonnet, President of the International Diving Championship Committee, is going to present this trophy to the new world champion of free diving. This afternoon, our new champion descended to the remarkable depth of 280 feet.

The audience applauds.

NOVELLI

This young man Tia...

NOVELLI can't quite read his notes.

NOVELLI

Tiraro... Tirao-re... Moa...

ANDRE BONNET takes his turn to read the note. A young Tahitian jumps up, heads for the podium.

TAHITIAN

Tiraero Moameora.

NOVELLI hesitates to repeat the name.

NOVELLI

... Let's all give him a big hand.

The audience cheers and applauds the new champion. ENZO sits at a table, watching the ceremony.

ENZO

(very sarcastic)

A one day hero!

He gets up and walks out of the room.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

JACQUES and JOHANA are sitting at the bar. The whiskeys have gone to their heads. ENZO walks over to them.

ENZO

A new world record! That's great!
It gives me something to beat
tomorrow!

(to Johana)

You ever been to Tahiti?

JOHANA

No.

ENZO

I'll take you there. We'll live in
the sun. You'll cook fresh fish and
we'll make love under the coconut
trees.

JOHANA smiles and shakes her head.

JOHANA

You forgot the Hula!

ENZO

Yes, of course, I'll do the Hula!

JOHANA

You'll be lovely, but no thanks.

(to Jacques)

Jacques, would you do a native dance for me?

JACQUES

I don't know how... Excuse me.

JACQUES leaves the bar. JOHANA watches him go. ENZO notices her way of watching him. He's a little jealous.

ENZO

He looks strange, doesn't he? Like a baby that just learned to walk.

JOHANA

Have you known him long?

ENZO

Forever. We used to live on the same island in Greece, when we were kids.

JOHANA

What was he like, when he was little?

ENZO

Little. Very little. And skinny, very skinny too. That is compared to me.

JOHANA

(amused)

I get it, Enzo you were a superior child.

ENZO

Exactly! What is it Johana? You're so crazy about him, you don't see the truth?!

She doesn't answer.

ENZO

Forget it, don't think of Jacques as a human being. He's from another world.

She smiles.

JOHANA

And just where are you from?

ENZO

Italy!

EXT. TERRACE OF THE HOTEL - NIGHT

ENZO sits at the grand piano in the corner of the terrace. Beethoven was always a favorite of his.

JACQUES, very tipsy by now walks over, a glass in each hand. He hands ENZO a glass, then takes off his tennis shoes and sits them neatly on the piano.

ENZO

There is nothing like music. It speaks from the heart. Can you tell me why we bother diving in the dark, the cold, without ever taking the time to breathe? Huh? Can you tell me why we do it?

JACQUES nods.

ENZO

Why?

JACQUES

... For the mermaids.

ENZO smiles, moved.

ENZO

My father used to see them everywhere too... but the only one he ever caught was my mother... Actually she caught him.

A beat.

JACQUES

Today at lunch, you asked me if I

had any questions.

ENZO

Ah ha. You finally want to know about women.

JACQUES

Why? Are they what's most important?

ENZO

No... It depends... Sometimes they are... What, exactly do you want to know?

JACQUES

... Everything.

ENZO

Everything about what?

JACQUES

(thinking)

Well... about everything.

ENZO grins at JACQUES and starts playing again.

TIME DISSOLVE TO

LATER:

JACQUES AND ENZO

There are now several empty champagne bottles around. They are both quite drunk. ENZO is philosophizing. JOHANA is looking for them.

ENZO

... So, between Mamma, Roberto and the sisters, we yell and scream all day long. Except with Angelica. She just cries. And then finally, we all end up kissing. Can you explain that to me?

JACQUES can't answer.

ENZO

Because that's what love is all about. It's a pain in the ass but keeps us together.

(then, in a half
dreaming, half

desperate tone)
A large and beautiful family!

JOHANA walks over to them.

JACQUES

(suddenly)
Enzo... We must quit the
competition.

ENZO hits a wrong note on the piano.

ENZO

(worried)
Why?

JACQUES

If we don't... I'm going to beat
you.

JOHANA stands next to JACQUES.

ENZO

(with a nervous
laugh)
Huh? Well listen to him!
(to Johana)
Do you hear that?

JOHANA

No.

ENZO

He looks me in the eye like some
fuckin' gold fish, and says: "I'm
going to beat you".

JOHANA

(with a smile)
... That's what he's here for, isn't
he?

ENZO

Listen to her! "That's what he's
here for"! He's here to loose,
that's what he's here for. First of
all, I'm unbeatable. Second, how
old are you?

JACQUES

Two years younger than you.

ENZO

As I said, second of all you're too skinny. You've got tiny lungs. I still don't understand how you can dive without getting sick.

JACQUES

The size of the lungs has nothing to do with it!

ENZO

Look at me. These aren't lungs. These are... Tanks. How long can you hold your breath?

ENZO is getting really angry. The drinks have a lot to do with it.

JACQUES

(impatiently)

I don't know. Longer than you.

ENZO pulls open his collar and rises.

ENZO

We'll see.

EXT. HOTEL - SWIMMING POOL - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

JACQUES and ENZO dive into the pool in their Tuxedos. Each one carries a beach umbrella in a concrete base to help them stay at the bottom.

ENZO takes two goblets out of his pocket, hands them to JACQUES. Takes a bottle of Champagne out of the other pocket and opens it. The cork floats out of the bottle.

Above on the surface of the pool there's a splash. JOHANA finds a mask on the side of the pool and watches them. Her dress is soaked by now.

ENZO pours champagne. Courteous and grave, they clink glasses and begin to drink. They have already been underwater longer than a minute. They can't really drink out of the glasses and ENZO offers JACQUES the bottle. JACQUES studies the label like a connoisseur. He drinks, passes the bottle back to ENZO.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Paramedics roll two stretchers toward the elevators at full speed. ENZO on one, JACQUES on the other. Both men keep throwing up water.

INT. JACQUES'S ROOM - NIGHT

The paramedics roll the stretcher toward the bed. JOHANA very worried, follows them.

JOHANA

Take it easy...

PARAMEDIC

Don't worry, he's empty now. He needs sleep, that's all.

The two men leave the room.

JOHANA walks over to the chair and rearranges JACQUES' shirt and jacket which the paramedic had thrown down. JACQUES looks like he's just had a very rough night. He sits up and grabs the sides of the bed, as if he were on a moving boat.

JACQUES

Who won?

JOHANA turns around, furious.

JOHANA

Won what? The Ass Hole Award?
Well, let me tell you, it's a tie!

She walks over to the bed.

JOHANA

Acting like a pair of two year olds!
You could have died in that damn pool!

JACQUES

Please move slowly, you're rocking the boat.

JOHANA

(smiling)
Lucky I was there to save you.

JACQUES

(seeing her wet dress)

You jumped in?

JOHANA

Only to help the medics, I assure you.

JACQUES

My wallet.

JOHANA wet, walks over to the wet clothes on the chair. She pulls out JACQUES soaking wallet from one of the jacket pockets.

JOHANA

It's still here.

She tries to wipe it.

JACQUES

No. I want to show you. Is it ruined?

JOHANA

Well, water isn't exactly the best thing for pictures... Not even for pictures of dolphins...

JACQUES

Give it to me.

JOHANA hands him the photograph. He stares at it, looking very sad. Worried JOHANA sits down next to him.

JACQUES

(on the verge of tears)

My real family...

(he looks at the picture and cries)

What kind of man has such a family?

She takes the picture out of his hands.

He is so upset that JOHANA can hardly help from crying with him. She sits next to him and strokes his hair.

JACQUES

I'm sick of never feeling at home anywhere.

JOHANA takes him in her arms. He breaks down.

EXT. HOTEL - DAWN

The early morning sun slowly lights up the water. A yacht has left the hotel dock. It is moving out to sea off the coast of TAORMINA.

EXT. YACHT - ON DECK

This is the Committee Boat for the diving competition.

On the boat, ROBERTO is worried. He checks his watch and finally decides to wake up his brother. ENZO is asleep in the fore peak, curled up on a coil of line, snoring away. He wears his tuxedo jacket over a skimpy bathing suit.

ROBERTO

Enzo, wake up!

ENZO

(pulled from his
dream)

Eh? Si! Avanti!

He gets up on one arm.

ROBERTO

The medics are looking all over for you.

ENZO

(irritated)

I'm meditating, can't you see?
Jacques does two hours of yoga
before going down. I can take a
five minute nap, can't I?

The boat stops. The anchor is thrown over board.

The sailors, technicians and officials are getting ready for the competition. Today is ENZO'S turn to dive. A man is hooking a plaque indicating the depth (324 feet) onto a lead disk which he heaves into the water on a cable.

INT. YACHT - DOCTOR'S CABIN - DAY

A medic is bending over ENZO, taking his blood pressure.

ROBERTO pulls the tuxedo jacket down. The doctor puts a blood pressure band around ENZO'S upper arm, pumps it up.

He listens with his stethoscope.

DOCTOR

Mr. Molinari, I'm terribly sorry but
I cannot allow you to dive in such
an advanced state of exhaustion.

ENZO jumps to his feet, grabs the doctor by his lapels,
lifts him in the air.

ENZO

(outraged)

What do you know about the sea?
Huh? Nothing! So you just put your
tubes and tin cans away. The sea is
mine! I know when she is ready for
me and when she isn't. And today,
she is ready. Understand?

DOCTOR

You dive at your own risk. You're
been warned.

ENZO smiles and pats the doctor on the shoulder.

ENZO

Brave.

EXT. YACHT - ON DIVING PLATFORM

It's a large float, rigged to the stern of the Committee
Boat. ROBERTO and an assistant help ENZO down the swim
ladder to the platform. He's wearing a wet suit and fins.
He flip-flops to the end of the platform.

ROBERTO hands him his mask. The goggles are filled with
polystyrene to eliminate as much air pressure as possible.
Only two pinholes to see through. The mask fits tightly
over his nose. When ENZO puts it on, he looks like an
astonished insect. ENZO breathes faster and faster.
ROBERTO holds the wire controlling the weighted diving
apparatus. ENZO crosses himself, takes a last long gulp
of air.

ROBERTO releases the weight. It sinks and drags ENZO
down, he quickly disappears into the dark water...

BLACK AND WHITE

But this is JACQUES as he was a child. He swims along the

bottom, finds and picks up a gold coin. We can see its ancient markings, a youth on a dolphin.

JACQUES looks up. In front of him is a dolphin, floating vertically, still, apparently just watching. JACQUES isn't scared anymore. But every time he swims toward the dolphin, it moves further away. It finally disappears.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - JACQUES - DAY

He sits bolt upright in bed, awakened by his dream. He looks around the room, trying to get his bearings.

JOHANA is asleep in a chair across the room. On the wall behind her, her last night's dress is drying on a hanger. She's wrapped up in a hotel bathrobe fast asleep.

JACQUES finally awake from his dream, sees JOHANA sleeping. He walks over to her, touches her shoulder. She wakes up, starts out of the chair. She grabs the blanket to cover herself, and in doing so, a book falls on the floor. It's one of his.

JOHANA

You scared me!

JACQUES picks up the book. JOHANA smiles.

JOHANA

Just checking up on your family.

(then embarrassed)

I guess I was drunker than I thought and the idea of going back to my hotel in a wet dress... Well...

JACQUES

I'm glad you stayed. Thank you.

JOHANA

(getting up)

I'd better get back now.

JACQUES

You... You wouldn't want to spend the day with me?

She sits back in her chair, amazed that he would even ask.

JACQUES

(self conscious)

... No?

JOHANA

No? Huh?

(she says "No" as if
she had asked the
question)

Yes, of course!!

EXT. MARINELAND - TAORMINA - DAY

JACQUES and JOHANA enter the dolphinarium. JOHANA is wearing an old pair of JACQUES SHORTS along with an oversized T-shirt and rolled up sweater. She seems quite pleased with her new attire.

JACQUES and JOHANA walk straight through MARINELAND and head toward the dolphin pool. It's pretty crowded, mostly kids.

The dolphins are lying motionless at the bottom of the pool. The trainer is tired of throwing fish in the pool and getting absolutely no reaction.

JACQUES

What's the matter?

TRAINER

I don't understand. We've tried for two days. They won't eat. They won't perform. It's since we got the new one.

CLOSE ON DOLPHIN

surfacing. It thrusts its head over the edge of the pool, looks to JACQUES and SPEAKS.

JACQUES

Is she the new one?

Surprised, the trainer nods.

JOHANA looks over at JACQUES then at the dolphin. She doesn't understand.

JOHANA

How can you tell it's a female?

JACQUES

... The way she moves.

Three other dolphins gather around the one that JACQUES is patting.

JACQUES is staring at the female dolphin. It looks like the animal is trying to tell him something. Suddenly the dolphin grabs him by the sleeve and pulls him into the pool.

UNDERWATER - DOLPHIN POOL

JACQUES hangs onto the dolphin's muzzle. Let's it pull him along. The dolphin swims to a far corner of the pool, and pulls JACQUES to the bottom. The other dolphins circle above.

EXT. DOLPHIN POOL - DAY

JACQUES pops up. As he does, three dolphins leap in the air behind him. JOHANA walks closer to the pool. She is so excited by what JACQUES is doing, she finally falls into the pool.

After a while, JACQUES gets out of the pool and helps JOHANA out.

TRAINER

Did you ever think of trying the public pool?

JOHANA

He's a dolphin specialist.

TRAINER

In that case what's wrong with the new one? Is she sick or not.

JACQUES

(taking his time to answer)

Not the way you mean.

TRAINER

What am I supposed to do? Do I call the dealer...? The investment, you understand... I certainly am entitled to complain!

JACQUES

It's going to cost you more than you think!

JACQUES turns around and walks off. JOHANA catches up with him.

JACQUES

She's not like the others. She can't stand to be away from the sea.

JOHANA

(impressed)
How do you know that?

JACQUES

(stopping)
I don't know, I just feel it.

INT. HALL - HOTEL - DAY

JACQUES and JOHANA are walking across the corridor.

ENZO walks up to them, followed by his tribe. Everybody is congratulating him.

ROBERTO is screaming, MAMMA MOLINARI is crying. ENZO smiles as he talks back to them. He sees JACQUES.

ENZO

(screaming)
Ah! Jacques!

ENZO grabs hold of his shoulders. JACQUES and JOHANA are completely soaked.

ENZO

Don't be sad, I only took back what was mine.

He gives JACQUES the diving plaque, it reads 280 feet.

ENZO

Here, it's a present.

JOHANA and JACQUES smile at each other. JACQUES has won his bet.

JACQUES

(touched)
... Thank you.

ENZO slaps him on the shoulder.

ENZO

(to Johana)

Tonight we're having a little party among ourselves. 8 o'clock in my suite?

JOHANA

Okay.

ENZO walks off then turns back toward them. He whispers in JACQUES' ear.

ENZO

Tell me... Can you explain why you are soaking wet?

A beat.

JOHANA

... We're in training.

ENZO walks off.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Three formally dressed officials are waiting in front of one of the hotel rooms. One of them holds a medal in his hand, a glass of champagne in the other.

NOVELLI

(through the door)

Mr. Roberto, tell your brother to be reasonable. Everyone is waiting for him upstairs. The photographers are there, the press...

ROBERTO (O.S.)

He can't, he's indisposed.

NOVELLI

(trying to keep his
calm)

Shall we call a doctor?

ROBERTO

No, it's okay. Mamma is going to try something.

JACQUES and JOHANA walk up from the other side of the hall and stop in front of the same door.

NOVELLI

Mr. Mayol, help us. He refuses to receive his medal and everybody is waiting for him up there. We already have problems with the press because of the danger, and if we don't even have the divers help...!

JACQUES

(dubious)
... I'll do my best.

NOVELLI

That's very kind of you.

JACQUES knocks on the door.

JACQUES

It's Jacques... Mayol!

A beat. Then ENZO opens the door himself.

ENZO

Jacques! My friend! Come on in!

The officials look at each other baffled.

NOVELLI

Mr. Enzo Molinari, allow me to impress upon you the importance of your attending the Award Ceremony... For the press...

ENZO

(loosing his temper)
I think my brother told you I was indisposed, that should do it, no? I'm allowed to be indisposed, right? So, you just tell the press that the "big" Enzo Molinari, overwhelmed by his inspiring descent to 324 feet, will not be able to receive this trinket because he is...

He looks inquisitively at the three men. ENZO loses his temper.

ENZO

Because he is?!

ONE OF THE THREE MEN

... Indisposed.

ENZO

(smiling)

Brave!

He slams the door in their face.

INT. HOTEL - ENZO'S ROOM - NIGHT

JACQUES

Tell me, why don't you go and get your medal?

ENZO

Because pasta should be eaten "Al Dente". So the trinket will just have to wait a bit.

ENZO takes JACQUES by the shoulder. Inside his room is absolute chaos: dancing, singing, eating. Wet suits hung out to dry everywhere. MAMMA MOLINARI is whipping up mountains of spaghetti on an improvised stove in the middle of the room. A lot of smoke... steam... color... noise... All of Italy crammed into a few square feet.

JOHANA taken in by the warm atmosphere, sits in a corner of the room. JACQUES walks over and sits down at her side.

ENZO

(to Mamma)

Mamma! La pasta?!

MAMMA MOLINARI

Arrivo! Arrivo!

She points at ROBERTO who is taking forever to grate the cheese. ENZO grabs the guitar from his other brother's hands and starts playing.

ENZO

... It's easy. You go down. You come up.

(to Johana)

... Right, Johana?

JOHANA

(smiling)

Congratulations, Enzo.

ENZO

Don't you agree, Jacques?

JACQUES

... You always were the best.

ENZO laughs then sees his mother.

ENZO

Ah! La pasta!

ENZO starts singing in Italian. MAMMA MOLINARI serves the pasta, ROBERTO follows her around, sprinkling his cheese on the plates. She serves JOHANA a huge plate of pasta, enough for three giants.

MAMMA MOLINARI

(with a smile)

Buon appetito, Signorina!

JOHANA who isn't even hungry, grins uncertainly. JACQUES has walked up to ENZO. He doesn't dare ask his question.

ENZO

(smiling)

What's the matter? You still have a bunch of things to ask me? You want to know the price of tea in China or how we landed on the moon? Is that it?

ENZO laughs. JACQUES is serious.

JACQUES

No, I have to ask you a favor...

(a beat)

You're the only one who'll understand.

ENZO

(seriously)

... I'm listening.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

MAMMA MOLINARI

Tutto va bene?

The three officials are eating pasta, plates on their knees. Their mouths are too full to speak, they nod enthusiastically.

NOVELLI

(mouth full)

Gracie mille, chignora.

MAMMA MOLINARI smiles and slams the door.

INT. FIAT - NIGHT

JACQUES is driving, JOHANA sits beside him. ENZO crammed in the back seat, very uncomfortably, because of a stretcher which takes up all the space.

They are dressed as they were at ENZO'S party.

ENZO

(leaning forward)

Hey! Will you slow down! When did you learn how to drive?

JACQUES

Driving isn't the problem, it's remembering the right road.

JACQUES runs a red light.

ENZO

And the lights! Running lights, stealing stretchers...! You'll have us in jail.

JOHANA

Enzo, stop bitching, will you?

EXT. MARINELAND PARKING LOT - FIAT - NIGHT

They get out of the car. JACQUES starts to change into his swimming trunks. ENZO shakes his head, can't believe he's really come along. He laughs and starts undressing.

INT./ EXT. FIAT - STREET TAORMINA - NIGHT

It's a very narrow street. The car moves down it quickly. JACQUES drives. The back seat is now occupied by the dolphin. Its nose and tail protruding through the windows.

JOHANA is in the front seat, turned around, spraying the dolphin with a watering can.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

They have driven to the public beach. They slowly lower the stretcher into the water. The dolphin, leaving the stretcher, swims around a little but won't go away.

He won't leave JACQUES.

JACQUES

(moved)

You can't stay here! Come on! Go away!

JACQUES swims off with her for a while.

ENZO walks back toward the car with the stretcher.

JOHANA, standing by the water looks at JACQUES and the dolphin who are swimming off together.

JACQUES keeps splashing the dolphin as they swim.

ENZO

You can stop that now, she has all the water she needs.

JACQUES cannot get rid of the dolphin.

ENZO

All right, we did it. Let's go back to the party.

JACQUES and the dolphin can't seem to part.

JACQUES

Just one minute.

JOHANA is worried, she walks up to ENZO who goes back into the water and takes JACQUES by the arm.

ENZO

Jacques, the dolphin is home now. And that's where we're going. Come on! Hurry up now. Our girlfriend is freezing over there.

The dolphin starts swimming off. JACQUES follows ENZO half-heartedly.

EXT. JOHANA'S PENSION - NIGHT

ENZO stops the FIAT in front of the pension. The three of them get out. ENZO hasn't bothered to dress.

JOHANA heads for the gate, she obviously has no desire of leaving JACQUES.

JOHANA

Well, good night, then...

ENZO

You going to sleep here, all by yourself?

JOHANA

Yes...

She looks over at the pension, having a hard time concealing her lack of enthusiasm.

JOHANA

... It's a comfortable place.

ENZO

Sinister is what I'd call it...!
Ours is so much cheerful! Why don't you come and stay with me... There's plenty of room in my suite.

JOHANA

(smiles)

The Mamma's there too.

ENZO

(face clouds up)

Yes, the Mamma is is there.

JOHANA

Good night Enzo, Good night Jacques.

JACQUES

Good night.

ENZO

(to Jacques)

You don't need a stretcher to take her with you. You know that, don't you?

JACQUES

What?

ENZO

The dolphins aren't the only ones
who don't feel very good sometimes.

JOHANA

Leave it alone, Enzo, it's okay.

She rings the bell for the concierge, then looks back at
JACQUES.

JOHANA

Can I come watch you dive tomorrow?

JACQUES

(lost)

Uh... Yes, of course!

The concierge comes out and opens the iron gate for her.
JOHANA disappears into the parc. ENZO turns to JACQUES.

ENZO

You really do have a few things to
learn about women!

EXT. SEA - DAY

The sun is rising on a rough sea. The Committee Boat is
anchored in the open sea, 600 feet above the sea bed.

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT - BAY OF TAORMINA - DAY

JACQUES who is on the foredeck of a boat at sea has just
laid a towel down before him. He's suited up, sitting in
the lotus position, staring straight ahead, clearly self-
hypnotized.

JOHANA, NOVELLI, and other officials are in the stern of
the boat watching last minute preparations.

The scuba divers in brightly colored wetsuits and
aqualungs, flop out onto the diving platform, plunge into
the water, disappear.

JOHANA

What are they for?

NOVELLI

They're paramedics. They wait at
180 feet.

JOHANA

(just checking)

If there was a problem, they could do something right?

NOVELLI

Of course, that's what they're for.

JOHANA sees scuba divers with weird air tanks.

JOHANA

(pointing)

... And those?

NOVELLI

Those are the divers who go down 300 to 330 feet. They dive with a Helium-oxygen mixture. At that depth, compressed air is too dangerous because it contains carbon dioxide.

JOHANA

What's that little air bottle on the machine?

NOVELLI

That isn't for the divers actually. It's for the balloon. It blows up and pulls the diver up like an elevator. Without it, with the pressure at the bottom, the diver would just stay pinned to the sea bed.

JOHANA

(shocked)

But doesn't Jacques dive without anything?

NOVELLI

(smiling)

Yes... It's magic.

INT. BOAT - DAY - LATER

On the boat, NOVELLI checks his watch. JACQUES comes out of his room. He's dressed to dive. He ignores everyone as he goes down the ladder to the diving platform. He seems to be in another world. All sounds coming to him are drowned out.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - DAY

JACQUES sits in the diver's slot. Opens his eyes slowly and looks around. He puts his flippers on, an assistant stands at his side.

HIS POV

The figures on the platform are vague, the VOICES are GARBLED and incomprehensible. Moving almost in slow motion he raises three fingers.

TECHNICIAN

Tre minuti!

BACK TO SCENE

Ten other divers have waited for this signal to dive. They disappear one by one into the blue.

JACQUES uses contact lenses instead of a mask. He puts them in, and now, his view of the world is as distorted as his hearing... bodies deform... sounds fade...

Already euphoric from the vast amount of oxygen in his system, he moves into another reality altogether... seems to empty himself out.

TECHNICIAN

Due minuti!

JACQUES fills a small tube with water. Pours it into his nostrils... tilts his head... then lets it run out... He puts on his gloves... all his movements are slow, he seems to be operating in a different time zone... He seems unable to take his eyes off the water.

EXT. END OF DIVING PLATFORM - DAY

TECHNICIAN

Uno minuto!

JACQUES puts his nose clip on. He puts his hand on the gueuse. Closes his eyes and inhales slowly. Then he takes a sudden last breath, nods, the technician releases the gueuse and in one flashing movement, he disappears.

UNDERWATER

The gueuse slides down the cable. JACQUES hangs on like a ribbon in the wind, past a marker, 90 feet down.

Above him, the boat disappears from sight.

He moves faster and faster... through a sea that looks like a cloudy sky. The light fades rapidly around him.

Below, white spotlights pierce an ocean dark as night. JACQUES reaches them in a matter of seconds. Turns the brakes, brings his machine to a halt, 180 feet down.

The medics are waiting for him there. They take his pulse. Check his eyes... 15 seconds... normal... the bubbles from there scuba tanks churn the water around them...

JACQUES closes his eyes... a tap on the shoulder, he releases the brake on the gueuse. Plunges further, this time into pitch black.

Below him a faint spotlight glows on the bottom. He reaches it and the dark diver moves to him. JACQUES brakes his machine. Moving very slowly, turns his body right side up. Like a sleep walker, JACQUES starts to take the plaque off the plumblines... pauses in the middle of the gesture.

The dark diver flashes the high sign to JACQUES, thumb and forefinger touching, fingers extended, all clear. JACQUES does not respond. The diver repeats the signal. JACQUES does not respond.

The diver taps JACQUES on the shoulder... a beat... and then JACQUES responds, thumb and forefinger touching okay. Slowly, reluctantly, he wraps his hand around the handle of the balloon.

The dark diver quickly turns the handle for him. The balloon inflates. JACQUES hangs on... lets it carry him up.

At the plaque marking 210 feet, JACQUES lets go of the the balloon. With a burst of speed, it darts toward the surface.

JACQUES follows slowly, undulating like a fish... He's getting warm now... He closes his eyes.

Passes the medical control without stopping... without even seeing it like someone asleep.

He's moving faster now, toward the warmth, toward the air. JACQUES opens his eyes, watches the lights grow brighter.

The silhouette of the boat comes back into view. 60 feet to go.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - DAY

In slow motion JACQUES' hand holding the plaque breaks out of the water followed by his arm, in one continuous movement, his shoulders and head.

He gasps for air.

A trickle of blood comes from his nose.

Flashbulbs flicker, spectators cheer.

EXT. OPEN SEA - A DOLPHIN

The dolphin, the one rescued last night, leaps into the air, in perfect harmony with JACQUES' triumph.

EXT. DOLPHINARIUM

The dolphins in the dolphinarium leap into the air at the exact same moment.

The trainer doesn't understand what's going on.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - DAY

JACQUES falls back into the water. Two divers run over and pull him up onto the dock.

JACQUES seems completely dazed, almost in a trance. He slowly comes to and starts screaming louder and louder. It is the scream of his body in need of the surface, reality and the feel of the land.

JOHANA is terrified. She can hardly breathe. Everybody applauds.

EXT. HOTEL DOCK - DAY

JACQUES and JOHANA walk down the gangway. NOVELLI has

lead the way and the news has been spread.

JACQUES looks very weak and punchy.

JOHANA holds him up.

The spectators applaud as he goes by. Intrigued, JACQUES looks at them all.

JOHANA

(excited)

Jacques, listen to the applause.

He doesn't respond.

JOHANA

(trying to keep up)

Jacques, you set a world record.

JACQUES

I did?

JOHANA

Aren't you happy? Don't you feel proud...? I feel proud and all I did was watch.

He is staring at her, he's returning to the real world. Slowly he smiles.

She grabs hold of his arm and gives him a proud kiss on the mouth. JACQUES is a little stunned.

EXT. TERRACE - SWIMMING POOL - DAY

ENZO walks into the hotel, his arms filled with packages. He sees JACQUES and JOHANA. From the look on his face we can tell he knows that JACQUES has beaten his record. He deliberately puts on a huge smile as he walks over to them.

INT. TERRACE - SWIMMING POOL

ENZO

Congratulations Jacques! It's wonderful! Wonderful!

He drops his packages on the bar and gives Jacques a big hug.

ENZO

I'm happy for you!

He kisses him and starts handing out his presents.

ENZO

(to Jacques)

Here...

(to Johana)

Here...

JACQUES

What is it?

ENZO

Little presents, nothing much... I
knew it, I just knew it! Look here!

He holds up his arm: he is wearing two watches.

ENZO

Roberto's watch! I won it! He bet
that you couldn't beat me!

JACQUES opens his present. It's a little ceramic dolphin.

ENZO

You still collect them?

JACQUES

Yes.

ENZO

You don't have that one, do you?

JACQUES

No. Thank you. It's really
beautiful.

ENZO

Oh it's nothing. I knew it. I told
Roberto "He's very good that little
Frenchman, very good". I lost my
title but I won a watch!

JOHANA has opened her package. It's a big plate with a
text engraved on it.

JOHANA

Is it a poem?

ENZO

No, it's the recipe for spaghetti
"Frutti del mare".

(to Jacques)

You see I was right in getting you
out here. You're a world champion,
my friend!

JACQUES has opened the last small package. It's a
measuring tape. He looks at it without understanding.

ENZO explains:

ENZO

It's a measuring tape.

He grabs hold of the tape and lets it roll to the ground.

ENZO

You see this is your record, three
feet more than mine! Looking at it
from here, it doesn't look like
much, does it?

JACQUES looks at him without saying a word.

ENZO hands him the measuring tape.

ENZO

Keep your little measuring tape, my
friend, it will be a nice souvenir
when I beat you next.

ENZO taps his shoulder and smiles.

INT. ELEVATOR ASCENDING - JACQUES - JOHANA

They're locked in a long kiss. He untucks the bottom of
her shirt and slides his hands under it.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - JACQUES - JOHANA - TWILIGHT

They're in bed, making love in their fashion. Moonlight
shines in the silver sea. In the background are the
lights of the bay of TAORMINA.

LATER

JACQUES is in bed with JOHANA. They are both asleep.
Suddenly, he sits up, as he always does after his
recurrent dream.

He's wide awake, looks over at her sleeping. She sleeps peacefully like a baby. Quietly, gently, he eases out of bed and walks to the open window.

He stands on the balcony, staring at the sea. Then in the distance in the moonlight, a dolphin leaps out of the water, once, twice, a third time.

JACQUES laughs and goes back to the bed where he sits down next to JOHANA. She is still sound asleep.

EXT. HOTEL - PIER - NIGHT

JACQUES quickly gets into one of his diving suits. He puts on his flippers. The dolphin is still jumping in and out of the water. JACQUES jumps off the pier and swims over to her.

INT. JACQUES' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JOHANA rolls over and feels the bed in her sleep.

JACQUES' absence wakes her.

JOHANA

Jacques?

She gets up and walks over to the balcony. She doesn't see anything.

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

JOHANA walks down the pier and notices the little pile of clothes JACQUES has left behind. She looks around but still can't see anything. She decides to sit next to the pile of clothes, and waits, her eyes riveted to the sea.

EXT. PIER - DAWN

The sky has just begun to light up again. JOHANA is still sitting next to the pile of clothes.

She is wearing JACQUES' sweater. She looks sad, yet serene. The look of a woman who has been thinking over the situation and who has made up her mind.

Tired, JACQUES swims back to the pier. It looks as if he

has come out of nowhere.

He is exhausted. He takes off his flippers and gets up onto the pier in front of JOHANA. He looks at her, a little surprised to find her there.

JACQUES

(warm)

What are you doing here?

She answers in a far away voice, with the same serene sadness.

JOHANA

I'm going to leave, Jacques.

Dripping with water, he sits down next to her. His face is drawn from fatigue. She continues.

JOHANA

I'm going back home.

JACQUES

Why?

JOHANA

Because one shouldn't fall in love with creatures from the sea.

JACQUES

I'm not from the sea... I don't understand what you're talking about.

JOHANA

Yes you do. You know exactly what I'm talking about. You're afraid I want to hold onto you, and I do, but you're not ready... at least not for me.

JACQUES

But it's not true, I feel good with you... It feels right...

She looks at him for a moment, then takes his face in her hands and rests it on her bosom, as if a small child.

JOHANA

I've got to get back to the hotel... and get my suitcase packed.

INT. TRAIN STATION - JACQUES - JOHANA - DAY

The train station faces the sea. JACQUES and JOHANA are standing on the platform, amid others. In the distance we hear the rumble and whistle of a train.

JOHANA gets on the train. The station master blows his whistle.

JACQUES

Will... will we see each other again?

JOHANA'S eyes are filled with tears.

JOHANA

Take good care of yourself, Jacques.

The train starts pulling out of the station.

JACQUES

Where can I call you? Johana, tell me where can I call you?

JOHANA doesn't answer. JACQUES stands helplessly in the station, his eyes filled with tears.

INT. ENZO'S ROOM - DAY

ENZO opens the door of his suite. His hair is messed up, he's got "sheet prints" on his face and is wearing the top of a diving suit.

JACQUES

Can I come in?

ENZO

No problem, I enjoy talking in my sleep.

ENZO walks back into the apartment and crashes on the bed. He's lying on his stomach. JACQUES walks in and lets himself drop in a chair.

ENZO

Wake me up at 11:00.

ENZO closes his eyes. JACQUES looks over at the clock, it says 11:25. JACQUES doesn't say anything and stares blankly out of the window.

ENZO

(opening one eye)
Hmmm! Something wrong?

JACQUES doesn't answer.

ENZO

Is it the girl?

JACQUES stares out the window.

ENZO

Did she leave?

No answer. ENZO gets up and sits on the side of the bed.

ENZO

Hey! I'm going to take care of you!
I've got this job, on an oil rig, no
sweat! I'm taking you along... Come
on! Get your bags packed! You're
coming with me, I tell you!

He pats him on the back.

ENZO

We'll make a great team, the two of
us. You'll see!

EXT. OIL DRILLING PLATFORM - AT SEA - DAY

The platform shines in the morning light.

There are several stories of crew housing and offices
above the deck. Long steel legs disappear into the
swelling slate-gray ocean. We hear WHOP-WHOP-WHOP of a
helicopter.

EXT. HELICOPTER - PLATFORM

The helicopter is landing. Crewmen rush to secure it to
the oil rig's deck. Doors open and two passengers get
off: JACQUES and ENZO. They each carry a duffel bag of
personal belongings. They're both wearing fluorescent
diving suits.

The DRILLING SUPERINTENDENT comes to meet them.

SUPERINTENDENT

Mayol, Molinari...?

They nod.

SUPERINTENDENT

We've been waiting for you for three days. Goddamnit!

ENZO

Is that the way you talk to the best diver in the world...? And to his friend Jacques Mayol!

The SUPERINTENDENT smiles sourly, and gestures to a crewman.

SUPERINTENDENT

Show them their quarters.

Five minutes later, JACQUES and ENZO are following the crewman.

JACQUES

(whispering)

He doesn't like us.

ENZO

So what!? His job is to hand out the paychecks. And he does that very well, let me tell you.

INT. DIVING CAPSULE - DAY

The diving capsule, suspended by cables, begins its descent through a trap door in the deck. It plunges into the sea.

The three men in the capsule are: JACQUES, ENZO and the tough looking CAPSULE COMMANDER NOIREUTER, who is much too professional for ENZO'S tastes.

ENZO watches through a porthole while the COMMANDER concentrates on the control console. He runs through a checklist of systems. JACQUES responds with a "check" as he verifies each one. ENZO is already bored and fed up by the procedures.

JACQUES is lost in thought, they don't look cheerful.

ENZO

(suddenly)

You still thinking about her?

JACQUES doesn't answer. ENZO goes on.

ENZO

Don't think about her anymore! Let me tell you, you're just making yourself unhappy! There are so many women in the world!

He takes a cigarette from a pouch in his diving suit and stares at NOIREUTER.

ENZO

Plenty of women everywhere right?

NOIREUTER

(coldly)

Smoking is absolutely forbidden.

ENZO

It isn't lit yet.

NOIREUTER

You shouldn't even carry cigarettes on board!

ENZO

Listen we're not supposed to piss either but that doesn't stop you from carrying "it" on board?!

NOIREUTER

(stubborn)

The rules are the rules.

ENZO

(checking out this creature)

... What's your name again?

NOIREUTER

Noireuter.

ENZO

And where did you say you were from?

NOIREUTER

I didn't say...

(contemptuous)

Brussels!

ENZO smiles sardonically, shaking his head very slowly.
The COMMANDER'S answer explains it all.

INT. DRILLING PLATFORM - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A technician is overlooking the capsule descent on a video screen.

The SUPERINTENDENT watches over the technician's shoulder.

TECHNICIAN

They're at 450 feet.

INT. DIVING CAPSULE - DAY

ENZO, a cigarette dangling from his lips, looks through the porthole.

ENZO

... I was seventeen, I loved her so much I tried to die for her. Two years later I couldn't even remember her name! Let me tell you, time erases everything!

JACQUES

I don't want to erase anything.

ENZO

You'd rather think about it and make yourself miserable?

JACQUES

(after thinking about it)

... Yes.

ENZO

(smiles)

I give you this. You're stubborn...
Dumb, but stubborn.

JACQUES

(taking it as a compliment)

Thank you.

INT. CAPSULE - DAY

The technician fiddles with a few knobs.

TECHNICIAN

Minus 800 feet. End of descent.

INT. DIVING CAPSULE

The diving capsule ends its descent. The COMMANDER turns to ENZO and JACQUES who is still staring out the porthole.

NOIREUTER

(with a Mickey Mouse
voice)

You have enough air for 15 minutes.

ENZO bursts out laughing.

ENZO

(with Donald Ducks
voice)

What's with the voice?

NOIREUTER

It's nothing. It's just the helium,
because of the air pressure.

ENZO

(worried)

And... does the voice come back?

NOIREUTER

For others, yes... For you, who
knows?

ENZO

(still a little
worried, to Jacques)

Try speaking to me?

JACQUES

(with Daffy Ducks
voice)

I don't find this funny. We were
having a serious conversation.

ENZO and JACQUES burst out laughing. They keep these same
voice till the end of the scene.

ENZO pulls out a tiny silver flask out of his pocket.

ENZO

(to Jacques)
Here, give me your finger.

ENZO taps a drop onto JACQUES' finger, then on his own.
Then NOIREUTER blows up.

NOIREUTER

(in a panic)
Is that alcohol? Are you out of
your mind? Alcohol is strictly
forbidden.

ENZO

(loosing his temper)
Hey! D'you have any other
complaints? Just make a list and
we'll stick it on the porthole!
Okay?

ENZO pours a second drop on his own finger.

ENZO

Go on, suck your finger.

JACQUES hesitates. ENZO has no qualms about it and sucks
his own finger. NOIREUTER is petrified.

NOIREUTER

Are you crazy? At this pressure?

JACQUES

It's very deep down here.

ENZO

Come on, suck your finger, you'll be
seeing mermaids everywhere!

JACQUES, convinced sucks his finger too. ENZO smiles.
The alcohol has an immediate effect on them.

ENZO

(to Jacques)
A thousand commanders and we get a
Belgian from Alcoholic's Anonymous.

UNDERWATER

ENZO gets out of the diving capsule, head first.
He is connected to the capsule by a number of cables.

JACQUES, who follows him, gets completely tangled up in

them. They are both hilariously drunk.

INT. DRILLING PLATFORM - CONTROL ROOM

The SUPERINTENDENT hears them laughing through the control room speakers. He flips a communication switch.

SUPERINTENDENT

Can you hear me? What's going on?
(to the technician)
Are you sure you're on the right
channel?

The technician nods back to him.

UNDERWATER

The two divers have gotten to the spot they are supposed to be working on. They have their arms around each other and are dancing.

NOIREUTER watches them through the porthole. He shakes his head in complete disbelief.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

We hear the two friends humming the tune of a Viennese waltz.

SUPERINTENDENT

If those guys are playing a radio
down there they'd just better watch
out!!

INT. JOHANA'S APARTMENT

SALLY is talking away, pointing around the apartment.

SALLY

... And if we repaint the walls,
we'll need new curtains, you put the
painters on you Visa and I'll do the
curtains on American Express... for
the couch there's Bloomingdales...
or are you still over your limit?

JOHANA

(flatly)

Way past it.

SALLY

Does that have a hidden meaning?

JOHANA

No. I'm just depressed.

SALLY

You look it too. You haven't been working out, you haven't been taking your vitamins! You haven't been drinking your herbs, you haven't been...

JOHANA

(stopping her)

I know, I know! I'm a terrible person...

(after a beat)

It's... I'm so damn, damn sad.

SALLY

What is it honey... the frenchy?

JOHANA

(tentatively)

Do you think I should have stayed? Don't you think maybe I should have stayed? I've been a jerk, right?

(then, emphatically)

I should have stayed! I was supposed to be in love... I was in love! I am in love, why did I act like a bitch? He went swimming. All the man did was go swimming! I must be crazy. It was too good to be true.

SALLY

Vitamins, exercise, herb tea... and see a doctor, will ya?

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - JOHANA - DAY

The doctor enters with a folder, speaks to JOHANA

DOCTOR

Well Miss Cross, herbs aren't going to do the trick this time.

JOHANA

(worried)
It's serious, right?

DOCTOR

I think so. You're pregnant...
Congratulations! If that's in
order?

JOHANA breaks into a wide grin.

JOHANA

It's in order! Thank you. Thank
you.

DOCTOR

I don't think it's me you have to
thank.

INT. DUFFY'S OFFICE - DUFFY - DAY

DUFFY is at his desk. His lunch is spread out in front of
him. Outside the window, the window-washers are eating
their lunch too. JOHANA hurries in.

DUFFY

Good afternoon.

JOHANA

(agitated)
I came to make a clean breast of
everything... the whole business.

DUFFY

(bluffing, with his
mouth full of
sandwich)
Yes. Of course. Very wise.

JOHANA

(in a rush)
Remember when I went to Italy and
canceled the policy on the new
stadium. Well, we weren't being
cheated by the Mafia or anybody
except maybe by me...

(she sees the window-
washers)

... Do they come for lunch everyday?
I really went on my own business, to
see a man that I happen to be in

love with... and I'm glad I did it,
but I'm sorry about the policy and
I'll be happy to make up the money
the company didn't get... of course
just now I don't have...

(she checks a note
she's holding)

One million, four hundred and ten
thousand dollars. But if you were
to dock my salary, say, twenty
dollars a week, in a few hundred
years we'd be even... and I think
this is where you fire me?

DUFFY

(swallowing sandwich)
You're right. You're fired.

JOHANA

Will that interfere with my getting
maternity leave? I'm pregnant.

DUFFY

The Italian, I presume?

JOHANA

No. He's French, he was just in
Italy for the competition.

DUFFY

(smiling)
He seems to have won it.

JOHANA

Yes, isn't it wonderful? I'm so
happy. I'll bet I'm the happiest
pregnant fired person in the world!

She starts to leave... calls out to the window-washers.

JOHANA

Bon appetit and Adieu!

INT. JOHANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JOHANA stares out of the bay window of her Manhattan
apartment. Hesitant, she walks around her telephone.
Finally she makes up her mind, picks up her address book
and dials the number.

JACQUES (V.O.)

Hello?

JOHANA

It's me... Johana.

INT. JACQUES' APARTMENT

JACQUES is on the telephone, in front of a little window overlooking the sea. He is very glad to hear her voice.

JACQUES

How are you?

INT. JOHANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JOHANA

I got fired.

JACQUES (V.O.)

... That's funny... I had this job with Enzo... we got fired too.

JOHANA'S face lights up with a huge smile.

DISSOLVE

TO:

LATER

JOHANA is still on the phone, sitting in front of the bay window. Day is dawning.

JOHANA

(looking out at the skyline)

It's getting light out.

JACQUES (V.O.)

Here, it's getting dark.

JOHANA smiles. She stretches, lies down on the carpeted floor. JACQUES seems to have gone through all topics of conversation.

JACQUES

I've been thinking about you a lot, you know...

JOHANA is by now completely stretched out on the floor.

JOHANA

So have I.
(a beat)
... Hello?

JACQUES

I'm still here.

JOHANA

Well, then, talk to me some more.

JACQUES

... It's hard you know. You're so far away and I don't know what else to say.

JOHANA

Then, tell me a story.

JACQUES

Uh... Ah! A story?

He turns around and sits on the window sill, his feet dangling in mid air.

He looks at the sea, seeking inspiration.

JACQUES

Do you know how it is?
(starting again)
Do you know what you're supposed to do to meet a mermaid?

JOHANA

(with a smile)
No... tell me.

JACQUES

You go down to the bottom of the sea, where the water isn't even blue anymore, where the sky is only a memory... and you float there, quietly, quietly and stay there... and you decide that you will die for them... Only then do they start coming out. They come and greet you and they judge the love you have for them... If it's sincere. If it's pure... They will be with you and take you away forever.

JOHANA listens with the abandon of a child being put to

sleep.

INT. JACQUES' ROOM - ANTIBES

The sun hits the roof tops. The sea is sparkling.
The phone rings on the window sill. JACQUES answers.

JACQUES

Hello?

JOHANA (V.O.)

It's me again.

JACQUES smiles.

JOHANA

(after a silence)

I'm being a pain, huh?

JACQUES

... Not at all.

JOHANA (V.O.)

You sure?

JACQUES

(smiling)

Absolutely positive.

JOHANA (V.O.)

Okay. In that case... I'm at the
airport in Nice.

JACQUES doesn't know what to say. He looks around him,
can't figure out what to do.

JACQUES

(lost)

Okay... huh, I'll be right over.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

JOHANA is standing in front of the airport.

JACQUES sees her. They smile shyly at each other.

EXT. STREET - NICE - OPPOSITE THE NEGRESCO HOTEL

JACQUES and JOHANA are sitting in the back of a taxi. The

driver stops in front of the hotel.

DRIVER

(loud)

The Carlton! Enjoy your siesta.

JACQUES and JOHANA look at each other.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - JACQUES - JOHANA - DAY

The room is in semi-darkness, despite the blazing sunlight coming through cracks in the shutters. JACQUES and JOHANA are making love. JACQUES is on top of her, his whole body covered in sweat. The ruffled sheets and the movements of their bodies suggest the movements of the sea. ALL SOUNDS are disproportionate and slightly distorted, they are underwater...

ALL JOHANA'S reluctance has vanished. Both of them act like people who have never felt anything like this before. A certain astonishment at the depth of their feeling. An increasing freedom. All the muscles of their bodies stretch to their limits.

JACQUES, progressively, finds himself disappearing. His image dissolves point by point... disintegrates into unbroken blue... The effect creates the impression of someone melting, the screen is now totally blue.

A thin, HIGH-PITCHED SOUND.

From the bottom of the image, a tiny pinpoint starts TOWARD the CAMERA. It is JACQUES, naked, swimming out of the deep blue ocean toward the light as if he were coming out of a dive. He comes CLOSER and CLOSER to the **CAMERA...**

Until his head almost touches the lens...

A sudden DEAFENING NOISE... and we find JACQUES on top of JOHANA. He looks down at her, speechless.

JOHANA

(a little frightened)

Are you okay?

After a long beat.

JACQUES

... I think I love you.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ANTIBES - DAY

JACQUES and JOHANA step out of the elevator of a 19th century building.

JACQUES is carrying her suitcases.

JOHANA

Why did you take me to the hotel, if you live here.

JACQUES

You'll understand.

JACQUES rings the door bell and sticks his key in the door.

JOHANA

(surprised)

Someone in there?

JACQUES nods and pushes the door open with the bags he's carrying. They enter a huge, very old apartment filled with models and paintings of boats.

JACQUES leads JOHANA to the other end of the apartment.

INT. BATHROOM - ON UNCLE LOUIS (SORT OF)

It's a huge old-fashioned bathroom. The centerpiece is a deep ancient bathtub on faded gild feet. There's a rippling shadow of a body under the bath water.

JOHANA gasps.

JACQUES

Don't be afraid. It's my Uncle...
Louis.

He goes to the tub and pinches the end of a tube. UNCLE LOUIS, underwater, has been breathing through it. LOUIS' head pops out of the water, furious.

UNCLE LOUIS

Assassin!

JACQUES

(loud, as if speaking
to a deaf man)

Uncle Louis, this is my friend

Johana.

UNCLE LOUIS

Did you buy the cassettes? The
Wagner, the Berlioz?

JACQUES

I brought Johana to meet you.

UNCLE LOUIS

Are you crazy? I have no use for a
woman! Since my accident.

JACQUES

No, no. Johana is visiting me.

JOHANA

(tentatively)
Bonjour Monsieur... Louis.
(she looks to
Jacques)

JACQUES

(whispering to
Johana)
Uncle Louis. He's a 75 year old
amazing guy, isn't he?

JOHANA

I'm very pleased to meet you, Uncle
Louis.

UNCLE LOUIS

(to Johana)
Did you bring the cassettes, the
Wagner, the Berlioz?
(pointing to Jacques)
This idiot never listens to anything
I say. Sometimes I wonder if he
isn't deaf.

LOUIS climbs out of the bathtub, and pulls on a bathrobe.
Behind him he's pulling two insulated wires out of the
bathtub. We see that they're connected to small
underwater speakers. As they surface, incredibly LOUD
MUSIC BLASTS: the finale of the "1812 Overture",
(trumpets, timpani, cannons, etc...) The sound fills the
room, the apartment, and probably all of ANTIBES.

INT. DINING ROOM - JACQUES - JOHANA - LOUIS - LATER

The three of them are at the table. There are a few scraps on their plates on a threadbare lace tablecloth.

Incredibly LOUD SYMPHONIC MUSIC is PLAYING. LOUIS is as deaf as a fence post.

Everyone has to scream over the music.

UNCLE LOUIS

Where are you from, Henrietta?

JACQUES

(correcting him)

Johana... New York.

UNCLE LOUIS

What kind of name is that? To be named after a city?

JACQUES

(smiling)

He doesn't hear too well.

JOHANA

(yelling)

I said I was from New York.

UNCLE LOUIS

(yelling at Jacques)

That explains it! The best lays are from New York!

JACQUES

Uncle Louis!

UNCLE LOUIS

No, no. It's true. When I was in New York, oh boy!

(to Johana)

Before my accident, you understand?

(then back to

Jacques)

JACQUES stands up and lowers the music.

JACQUES

(impatient)

Uncle Louis! Johana is my friend. She's come to stay with me for a while.

UNCLE LOUIS

Good. That way I'll see more of you... Where are you going to stay?

JACQUES

Well... here.

UNCLE LOUIS

(outraged)

In my apartment?

JACQUES

(with a sigh)

It's my apartment.

UNCLE LOUIS

(jumping up)

Liar! Thief! Torturer! When you were an orphan I nursed you at my breast.

JACQUES

Uncle Louis, we have a guest!

UNCLE LOUIS

I'm going to put a lock on the telephone.

(them calming down,
to Johana)

Did you bring the cassettes?

INT. BEDROOM - JACQUES - JOHANA

JACQUES' room looks like a diving equipment storage room with a bed in it. JACQUES notices JOHANA'S gaze.

JACQUES

(solicitously)

You think it'll be all right?
You'll be comfortable here?

JOHANA

(catching her breath)

It's going to be... interesting.

EXT. PORT OF ANTIBES - DAY

JACQUES, JOHANA and ROBERTO are waiting at the port.

ROBERTO

(glancing at his

watch)
... It's not like him to be late.
Of course sometimes he doesn't show
up at all. Once in Capri, he...

JOHANA

(interrupting)
We get the picture, Roberto.
(looks over her
shoulder)
Jacques, I think Louis needs help.

JACQUES turns around. UNCLE LOUIS is a few yards behind them at a fish stand on the dock. He's holding up an eel and screaming at the fishmonger.

UNCLE LOUIS

(yelling)
Two dollars for this! This fish
wasn't caught. It died of cancer!

JACQUES shrugs his shoulders and gives up on the idea of interfering.

ROBERTO

(pointing)
Here he comes!

A speed boat races along the water. It's a beautiful highly-varnished mahogany Riva. It races into the port. Standing at the helm, looking like Christopher Columbus his hair brushed back by the wind, is ENZO.

Next to him hanging on to the windscreen is an impressive six foot, dark haired beauty. She has a scarf over her hair. She wears a purple leather micro-mini with a cerise halter top and her ruby fingernails are three inches long. If she ever actually would get cast in a movie, she'd make Raquel Welch hide in shame. Her stage name is BONITA **MARIPOSA.**

ENZO kills the THROTTLE, swings the speedboat into a perfect landing at the dock. ROBERTO takes the lines.

ENZO

Jacques! Johana!

JOHANA

Enzo!

JACQUES

Enzo!

During all of this, everyone's attention is actually on BONITA who is tugging at her long black hair. They're all awestruck except for ROBERTO.

ROBERTO

(meaning the speed
boat)

Where did you get that?

ENZO

(meaning Bonita)

"That"! This is not a "that"...
This is Bonita Mariposa, the famous
Spanish actress.

(whispering to
Bonita)

... Who is going to be careful with
the varnish...

(back to Roberto)

And who has come to spend a few days
with us.

(and very quickly)

Where's Mamma?

ROBERTO

(checking watch)

You have eight hours before she gets
here.

ENZO glances at his watch and sighs with relief. BONITA says hello to JACQUES, kisses JOHANA.

INT. LIVING ROOM IN JACQUES' APARTMENT - DAY

Loud classical music booms from the stereo. The noise pins JACQUES, ENZO and ROBERTO to their chairs.

UNCLE LOUIS gets a bottle of whiskey and serves everybody.

ENZO

He's really going totally deaf!

UNCLE LOUIS

I'm not as deaf as you are blind, my
boy! You take care of your eyes,
I'll take care of my ears!

ENZO

(laughing)

I'm sorry Uncle Louis.

UNCLE LOUIS pours him a whiskey.

UNCLE LOUIS

Come on, drink up, my boy! It might
just save us from your bullshit.

The bottle is empty. UNCLE LOUIS goes to the kitchen.
JACQUES turns down the music, and finally hears the bell
which has been ringing. JACQUES opens the apartment door:
it's Professor LAWRENCE. Suit and tie and carrying a
bottle.

JACQUES

I'm glad you could come. I want you
to meet Enzo.

ENZO and LAWRENCE shake hands.

LAWRENCE

(with a smile)
So you're the famous Enzo Molinari?

ENZO

(with an even bigger
smile)
In the flesh. I have that honor!

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

JOHANA comes into the bathroom, closes the door, cutting
down the blaring music. The paint is peeling off the
ceiling.

BONITA is standing under a 40 watt lamp, putting on make-
up in front of JACQUES' cracked shaving mirror.

BONITA

You're going to live here
permanently?

JOHANA

... Maybe, if Jacques will let me
fix up the place a little.

JOHANA walks over to the mirror and watches BONITA put on
her make-up like a professional.

BONITA

(wistfully)
He's shy, not like Enzo.

JOHANA

Yes. Not like Enzo.

BONITA

(putting on
eyelashes)

I think, he's really nice... He's a
funny guy... sometimes even very
moving.

JOHANA

(after a long
silence)

... I'm pregnant, Bonita!

BONITA stops working on her make-up and looks pensively at
JOHANA.

BONITA

Are you going to keep it?

JOHANA

Yes.

BONITA

Does he know?

JOHANA

No.

BONITA

(thinking)

Maybe you should talk to him about
it.

JOHANA

I can't... I just don't know how
to...

BONITA looks at her with the same pensive look.

JOHANA goes on.

JOHANA

I was thinking of something kinda
stupid last night. You know those
women in the greek mythology that
made love with the Gods. Take Leda
for example, sleeping with Jupiter,
who came to earth as a swan... Well,
can you imagine Leda announcing to

her swan "You're going to be a father, my little chick-a-dee"?

BONITA

(starts laughing)

But your man isn't quite a God!

JOHANA

(smiles)

Probably not, but I still don't have the nerve to tell him.

BONITA

Well, you're going to have to tell him, sometime!

Unconvinced, JOHANA nods. She changes the subject.

JOHANA

And you...? Do you love Enzo?

BONITA

(earnestly)

Very much, I think.

(a beat)

But, there's going to be a problem.

EXT. TERRACE OF RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The "problem": MAMMA MOLINARI sits between ENZO and ROBERTO, looking like a malevolent storm cloud, staring across at BONITA.

ROBERTO

(desperately)

Mamma, calimari fritti... Zuppa de pesci. Sono buoni.

MAMMA MOLINARI

(eyeing Bonita)

Nothing. I'm not hungry.

ENZO

Mamma, Bonita is an actress like Sophia Loren, Anna Magnani...

BONITA

(icy)

Sarah Bernhardt. I sing too... a hell of a Carmen. Want to hear?

MAMMA MOLINARI

(coldly)

No thank you.

There's an interminable awkward silence. Then UNCLE LOUIS at last finds his way to the table. JACQUES who is too grateful for the interruption springs to his feet.

JACQUES

Uncle Louis, you remember Enzo's mother Signora Molinari from Amorgos?

UNCLE LOUIS

(screaming)

The whale! How could I forget? Always was something fishy about that woman!

MAMMA MOLINARI is having trouble breathing.

UNCLE LOUIS

What were Italians doing living in Greece anyway?

JACQUES

Louis, we were French!

UNCLE LOUIS

That's different! What's the matter with you?

ROBERTO

(complete panic)

Mamma, pesce di spada?

All of them are gasping for air, trying so hard not to laugh.

UNCLE LOUIS

(to Mamma)

Hey, whale! Can you pass down the squids?

They all burst out laughing.

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT AT SEA - DAY

The diving platform is out. The competition has begun. ENZO is at the guese, getting ready to dive. ROBERTO works around him busily.

BONITA on deck above him is making little gestures of encouragement. ENZO isn't amused.

Other competitors watch from the Committee Boat.

ENZO turns the handle on the guese, plunges into the water.

Professor LAWRENCE, taking notes, stands a few feet away.

UNDERWATER - ON ENZO

He dives down, further and further down. He approaches the two medics in aqualungs at the control point (210 feet).

They move toward him.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - ENZO

Surfacing. Assistants help him onto the platform. ROBERTO pulls off his fins. ENZO rips off his mask. He looks furious. He tosses the depth plaque (which proves he is qualified) back into the water.

ENZO

A shit dive.

He looks around angrily for an official. Sees NOVELLI.

ENZO

Those goddamned frogmen doctors waiting around at 200 feet they just kill your concentration.

NOVELLI

They're required by law.

ENZO

(climbing off
platform)

There's no law down there! The only law is what your lungs can take.

(to the next diver)

... Have fun! They waiting for you down there, to take the temperature of your ass.

He keeps on walking across the boat, runs into JACQUES,

who's just about to begin his yoga preparation.

JACQUES sees ENZO'S expression, looks concerned.

ENZO

(defensively)

Anybody can have a bad day!

JACQUES

I've had many... when the sea
doesn't want you.

ENZO

(disgusted)

It's never the sea! It's Roberto,
Mamma, that stupid actress... Oh
shit! Jacques, what do you know?
Go do your Hindu exercises and don't
break my balls!

ENZO stamps into one of the cabins.

INT. JACQUES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

JOHANA is reading a child birth catalog. She throws it
away upside down, as soon as she hears JACQUES
approaching. JACQUES comes in and sits opposite her. He
seems bitter.

JOHANA

Well, how was it?

In an involuntary gesture, JACQUES flips through the
catalog.

JACQUES

(sadly)

Enzo had a bad day.

JOHANA wonders if JACQUES will understand the presence of
the baby magazine.

JOHANA

(tense)

And you?

JACQUES

I didn't dive.

JOHANA

(she takes the

magazine)
You'll try again tomorrow?

JACQUES

I don't know... it didn't feel
right. I'm going to bed. I'm tired.

He goes away.

JOHANA

You forgot your magazine!

He hasn't heard.

JACQUES goes to the bedroom, and throws himself on the
bed.

JOHANA looks as if she had wished he'd put two and two
together.

JACQUES

What?

JOHANA

... Nothing.

DISSOLVE

TO:

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT AT SEA - DAY

ENZO bursts out of the water. He rips off his face mask,
throws it on the diving platform, roaring with pleasure.
He tosses the depth gauge to ROBERTO.

ENZO

Let them try.

INT. JACQUES' APARTMENT - DAY

JOHANA opens the apartment door. BONITA is standing
there, a suitcase in one hand.

BONITA

I wanted to say goodbye, Johana.

They kiss each other goodbye.

JOHANA is very uncomfortable.

JOHANA

You're leaving?

BONITA

Yes...

(she hands her a
note)

Could you please give this to Enzo.

JOHANA

Of course.

BONITA grabs the note back and tears it up.

BONITA

It's no use... Just tell him I said
goodbye... And give him a kiss for
me, Okay?

The two women hug again.

JOHANA

(sorry)

Bonita, you shouldn't be discouraged
so easily.

BONITA

I don't have the strength to fight
off la Mamma... Anyway who wants to
spend their whole life waiting at
the end of a pier.

BONITA rests her hand on JOHANA'S stomach.

BONITA

Did you tell him?

JOHANA

Not yet... I'm waiting for the right
moment.

BONITA

... You take care of yourself,
Johana.

BONITA smiles at her and disappears down the stairs.

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT - DOCKING - DAY

Officials, NOVELLI, LAWRENCE, ROBERTO and of course ENZO
disembark. There is a lot of excitement on the dock.
Everyone has already heard the news.

People swarm around ENZO.

LAWRENCE spots JACQUES in the crowd, and goes to him.

JACQUES

(smiling)

Good huh?

LAWRENCE

He really was unbelievable, 328 feet, deeper than the world record...

(then eagerly)

... And, Jacques! He held his breath for four minutes and fifty seconds!

JACQUES

(smiles too)

Good... I guess I have tomorrow's work cut out for me as Enzo would say...

LAWRENCE

(seriously)

You must be very careful, Jacques. At these depths, to hold your breath for over five minutes is... You'd really be pushing it. I think it's very, very dangerous.

JACQUES sees ENZO being carried past on the shoulders of the crowd. He ignores LAWRENCE, runs beside ENZO.

JACQUES

(yelling)

Enzo, Enzo! Congratulations!

EXT. AWARD CEREMONY - NIGHT

ENZO

(in answer to the crowd's applause)

Thank you, thank you very much!

ENZO and NOVELLI stand on a little stage facing the crowd. ENZO is holding a gold trophy, waving to friends in the audience.

NOVELLI

... Now I'm sure you've heard that

some people have suggested it is too dangerous for us to continue. Dangerous, because we don't know how to measure the physiological consequences of this type of dive and also because the scuba divers are not used to going down below 300 feet.

While the attentive crowd listens to NOVELLI, ENZO is gesturing to ROBERTO, explaining what appetizers he wants from the cocktail trays.

The crowd laughs.

NOVELLI

But, we polled the free divers and they insist that the competition continue!

There's wild applause. ENZO lifts the trophy over his head, smiles like a champ and yells into the microphone.

ENZO

(yelling)
Good luck to you all!

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT - DAY

ENZO and ROBERTO are on the front deck watching the divers.

A German diver comes up to the surface, empty handed. ENZO smiles.

The Tahitian comes out of the water in a semi-coma. The doctors carry him away. Once he's sure that the diver is out of danger, ENZO smiles again.

A whole team of Japanese walk over to the diving platform. The team consists of one diver and six assistants, three of them playing music to help the diver concentrate. The diver wears a white wet suit with a red circle on his forehead. He is concentrating very hard, so much that ENZO walks over to him to make sure he's okay. The Japanese diver concentrates with such strength that he faints.

ENZO

(smiling to his brother)

Fabulous, what a dive, huh?

ROBERTO smiles.

The diver from the Philippines stands at the end of the diving platform. He concentrates for a moment then gives up and walks away.

ENZO

He's right. What's the point of knocking yourself out?

INT. BEDROOM - JACQUES - JOHANA - NIGHT

They're in bed, side by side, both of them half asleep. The only light in the room comes from the open windows. He rolls over and watches her sleep, looking down at her adoringly. He slips off the chain with the gold coin. Slowly, holding the chain, he runs the coin gently over her body, stops at the level of her stomach and lets it rest there. She opens her eyes and looks at him, wondering if he senses something.

JOHANA

(softly)

What are you doing?

JACQUES

I'm putting you on the coin... Your essence... That way you'll always be with me when I dive.

She smiles, closes her eyes. He swings the coin over her face gently, some kind of private ceremony. She looks just a little intimidated.

The coin is now dangling in front of her mouth. She hesitates then opens her mouth, JACQUES lets the coin slide into it.

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT - DAY

JACQUES walks up to the diving platform.

LAWRENCE has fixed scientific equipment on his chest. JACQUES wets and slowly puts them on.

ENZO watches from the deck, his expression has changed.

JOHANA, on the deck also, opposite ENZO, watches a little

worried. JACQUES concentrates then releases the gueuse and lets himself disappear under the water.

UNDERWATER

JACQUES dives down very fast. The control takes place at 200 feet, the doctors check him and let him go. He continues his descent, it's getting darker and darker around him.

The gueuse stops at the level of the underwater platform, just below the diver, who swims over to him in a sea of bubbles from his oxygen bottles. He asks JACQUES if he is alright, JACQUES nods and gives him a huge smile before swimming off, downwards!

The diver realizes and starts after him. He grabs JACQUES by one of his fins and pulls him back to the round platform. JACQUES lets go of the balloon.

The diver panics. JACQUES slowly motions that everything is fine and slowly paddles up to the surface.

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT - DAY

The boat's huge stop watch indicates min: 4:50, then 5:00, then 5:10. JACQUES has been down there for over 5 minutes.

JOHANA is worried sick. ENZO doesn't know what to make of it and LAWRENCE feels completely helpless. The stopwatch indicates 5:20, then 5:25 and JACQUES, half unconscious, brakes through the surface of the water.

JOHANA screams and cries with joy when she sees him. The crowd applauds. ENZO is somber.

NOVELLI takes the plaque from JACQUES' hands and turns to the crowd.

NOVELLI

(stunned)

360 feet! He dove 360 feet!!!

The crowd cheers in excitement.

ENZO is sullen. LAWRENCE is very worried.

EXT. ON PORT - END OF THE DAY

There's a pile of gear on the dock.

ENZO is in the boat loading one piece of luggage at a time, JACQUES comes up to the boat. Parked in the background, we see a taxi waiting with JOHANA sitting in the back seat. ENZO pretends not to notice JACQUES' arrival.

JACQUES watches him for a moment then finally dares to speak.

JACQUES

(pointing at taxi)
... There's a party at the hotel
tonight.

ENZO keeps loading up the boat.

ENZO

(busy)
That's good.

JACQUES

(after a beat)
Enzo, don't be angry. I was
lucky... that's all.

ENZO throws the last duffel bag into the cockpit.

ENZO

(serious)
I'll see you in Amorgos.

ENZO turns around and jumps onto his boat.

JACQUES walks off the dock, past the cab. JOHANA opens the door to let him in, but he keeps walking.

JOHANA

Jacques...?

JACQUES

You go back, I'll walk.

He walks off.

EXT. MARINELAND - DOLPHIN POOL - ANTIBES - NIGHT

The park is empty as JACQUES approaches the pool.

TINA the dolphin, jumps out of the water, swims to meet JACQUES. JACQUES pats her and kneels to talk to TINA
NINA.

JACQUES

(sadly)
I won today. I dove very deep,
Tina.

The dolphin giggles.

JACQUES

What's so funny? Can you dive
deeper?

The dolphin nods "yes".

JACQUES smiles.

JACQUES

(smiling)
So you understand everything?

The dolphin nods.

JACQUES

That's good... So tell me why
they're all angry at me? Why is
Enzo angry? I never wanted to
compete with him. I never wanted to
be champion of anything... All I
want is to escape from them all...
For just a few minutes, no people...
No noise... Nothing but the sea.

The dolphin nods and giggles.

JACQUES

Do you really understand me? Huh?
Are we actually having a
conversation here?

Again the dolphin nods "yes".

JACQUES

All right then, tell me: can I ever
dive as deep as you? Stay under as
long...?

A beat. Then the dolphin nods "yes".

JACQUES

Are you sure?

The two other dolphins stick their heads out of the water. They all nod together.

JACQUES is awed and perplexed at the same time.

EXT. AMORGOS - DAY

The little town of Amorgos is beautiful, mountainous. It's surrounded by a luminous turquoise sea, with white villas clinging to hillsides. There is a small port. (we saw it in the opening sequence) Further along the coast, we see the Diving Federation Committee Boat surrounded by all sorts of activity.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - JACQUES - JOHANA - DAY

Through the open windows we can see parts of the village where JACQUES grew up. He's staring out the window, lost in his own thoughts.

JACQUES

It's beautiful, isn't it?

Behind him, JOHANA is hiding and throwing up. He walks to her.

JACQUES

What's wrong?

JOHANA

It's nothing. Just the long trip. I'm a little jet-lagged.

JACQUES

You want to lie down for a while?

JOHANA

No, I'll be fine. Can you just hand me a glass of water?

While JACQUES gets her the water, JOHANA stares at the view.

EXT. ENZO'S BOAT - IN THE LITTLE PORT

ROBERTO stands on the port, waiting for his brother. Suddenly the sound of a motor boat and twelve note horn

echoes in the bay.

The boat has just arrived at the town dock.

ENZO, tears rolling down his cheeks from the wind, throws a duffel bag on the dock and looks up at ROBERTO.

ENZO

Is he here?

ROBERTO

(uncomfortable)

He's training.

ENZO makes a face.

EXT. SMALL PORT - DAY

JOHANA sits on the little dock in front of the hotel. JACQUES pulls on his fins, looks out into the water.

She clutches a stopwatch, ready to set it off.

A few yards behind, hidden between two bungalows, ENZO watches them. JACQUES takes a few deep breaths and dives a few feet underwater.

JOHANA starts the stopwatch.

ENZO, who sees JACQUES disappear, walks over to JOHANA and sits down beside her.

ENZO

Okay, now we have a good five minutes to have a nice peaceful talk.

JOHANA

What are you doing here?

ENZO

Checking out the competition.

JOHANA

Enzo, why do you guys do this?

ENZO

(teasing)
What else is there?

JOHANA

(seriously)
You know what I'm talking about.
Why do you and Jacques risk your
lives diving?

ENZO

(avoiding the
question)
You risk your life when you cross
the street.

JOHANA

(frustrated)
Damn it! Why won't you give me a
straight answer, for once?!

ENZO

Because you'd laugh.

JOHANA

I won't, I swear.

ENZO

(seriously)
I dive in search of God. If I go
deep enough I'm going to find him.
To me, the sea is a religion... That
surprises you, doesn't it?

JOHANA

(looking down at
Jacques in the
water)
A little... You think it's the same
for Jacques?

ENZO

(shaking his head)
No. Jacques is a creature of the
sea. He isn't meant to live on
earth, among us... You should know
this, Johana.

JOHANA

(reassuring herself)
He can learn. He is learning.

ENZO

You really think so? Did you tell
him you were pregnant?

JOHANA

(surprised)
How do you know that?

ENZO

You told Bonita, but you didn't tell
him, right?

JOHANA shakes her head negatively.

JOHANA

... Not yet.

ENZO

Don't.

JOHANA

Why?

ENZO

Because he won't understand and it
will just hurt you... Jacques has
been put on earth by complete
mistake. And he's only waiting for
one thing: that some God up there
will turn him into a fish! How long
has that moron been down there?

JOHANA

(looking at the
stopwatch)

Five minutes and fifty seconds.

ENZO

(grabbing away the
stopwatch)

That idiot!

They jump up. ENZO dives into the water.

As JOHANA watches panicky, ENZO pulls JACQUES up onto the
dock, in his arms. JACQUES is unconscious.

ENZO is furious. The fear of losing his friend has
absolutely enraged him. He starts pacing up and down the
dock.

JOHANA

Is he alright? What happened?

ENZO

(furious)

The fool was asleep! If I weren't

around, he'd already be dead!!! Is that who you want to live with? Well, good luck! You better learn to look after him because I won't always be here to do it!

Once again he marches off, then comes back.

JACQUES

(mumbling)
... How long was I asleep?

ENZO

(to Jacques)
Long enough to die. Listen, if you really want to die, that's your problem, but don't do it under my nose, okay?

A few steps away, then coming back.

ENZO

(to Jacques)
I'll never let you take away my title. D'you hear me? Never!

ENZO stalks off defiantly.

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT - ANCHORED OFF THE COAST

There's activity. The competition has begun.

MUSIC

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS of different competitors at various points in their dives.

The Tahitian comes up unconscious.
The German comes up unconscious.
So does the diver from the Philippines.

NOVELLI doesn't know what to think.

EXT. TERRACE OF RESTAURANT - JACQUES - JOHANA - SUNSET

JACQUES is in a T-shirt and jeans, rope-sole sandals.
JOHANA wears a light white cotton dress. They both sit on the restaurant's terrace overlooking the sea.

Below them, a small boat passes. In it are baskets filled

with sponges. JACQUES stares at them for a long time.

JOHANA

Do you ever sometimes just stop and think how sweet life can be?

A beat.

JACQUES

... Sure.

JOHANA wants to say something.

JOHANA

... When you dive... with that machine... What does it feel like?

JACQUES

(after thinking about it)

... The feeling of slipping without falling... The hardest is once you are at the bottom.

JOHANA

Why?

JACQUES

Because you have to find a good reason to come back up again... And I always have a hard time finding one.

JOHANA has never looked so sad and lost.

JACQUES doesn't notice.

ENZO who is sitting at the piano behind them, starts to play, staring at the sea.

JACQUES and JOHANA turn around and look at him.

ENZO

(smiling)

... You should start playing the piano, the piano is really refreshing, it clears the sinuses. Very good the piano! Tomorrow is going to be a big day!

EXT. COMMITTEE BOAT UNDERWAY - ON JACQUES

He's alone in the bow. The others are clustered in the saloon, cockpit in the stern. The boat is moving close to the cliffs. The monastery looms above them.

CLOSE ON JACQUES

He's scanning the apparently abandoned monastery searching for signs of life.

A red and blue taxi-boat pulls up alongside the Committee Boat. In it, LAWRENCE waits to climb on board.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - DAY

ENZO puts his flippers on and grabs his gueuse. He is serious, concentrating hard.

LAWRENCE'S boat slides along the big Committee Boat and the DOCTOR climbs onto it.

INT. COMMITTEE BOAT - LAWRENCE - NOVELLI - OTHERS

LAWRENCE'S briefcase is open. There's a stack of graph paper on a cabin table.

LAWRENCE

... When I analyzed the data from Mayol's last dive, it became apparent...

(taps the graph paper)

... At the depths these men are diving, it is a physiological impossibility that they can retain enough oxygen in their blood to make it back to the surface. It's a function of how long it takes to get to the bottom, orient themselves and to return... To attempt to break Mayol's record is simple suicide.

(to Novelli)

For the last time. I'm telling you cancel the competition.

NOVELLI and the MEDIC look over at the diving platform where ENZO is concentrating.

MEDIC

Molinari's a seventeen time world

champion. Do you want to tell him
he can't dive.

LAWRENCE doesn't answer. NOVELLI is thinking.

NOVELLI

Get Mayol in here.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - ENZO

ENZO is preparing. He sits at the edge of the platform
hyperventilating, almost in a trance.

We see JACQUES in the background, talking to NOVELLI, he
then walks over to ENZO and climbs down next to him.

JACQUES

Enzo?

(no response)

Enzo... I know you're angry at me.

(no response)

Enzo, it's important.

ENZO opens one eye.

ENZO

I'm concentrating.

JACQUES

(quickly)

We can't dive anymore. They want to
cancel the competition for a while.

ENZO looks at him coldly. Takes another deep breath.

JACQUES

(rushing on)

It's not safe, they say. The
doctors say it isn't possible to go
deeper and live. Free diving is
over as a sport.

ENZO

You say that because you have the
title!

JACQUES

No! I would never cheat you.

ENZO

Well that's very nice of you.

He takes a last breath, signs himself and reaching for the geuse, disappears into the water.

LAWRENCE, NOVELLI, the MEDICS, and others are arguing. LAWRENCE is furious that ENZO is diving. NOVELLI is balling out his assistants.

JACQUES is on the platform watching the others as if they were a gaggle of geese. He listens to the sound of the geuse playing out, watches the depth indicator, the stopwatches. He knows something is wrong.

He walks over to the edge and grabs hold of a little oxygen bottle which is there for security. He takes a few breaths of the oxygen as he puts on his flippers and dives down after ENZO.

UNDERWATER - JACQUES

JACQUES pulls himself down the cable, hand over hand. 80 or 90 feet down he sees a group of MEDICS coming toward him carrying ENZO'S unconscious body.

JACQUES struggles with them, pushes them away, takes ENZO in his arms and climbs toward the surface, frantic, screaming silently at him, desperate to get away from the flow of air bubbles from the scuba tanks, the commotion, the memory of death.

ENZO has a big serene smile on his face. The MEDICS push both divers toward the surface.

As if they were on land, JACQUES starts shaking ENZO to wake him up. He then slaps his face but ENZO remains unconscious.

They finally break the surface in each others arms.

EXT. ON DIVING PLATFORM

They pull ENZO out of the water. The doctors open his jacket. ENZO motions to JACQUES to come close. He still has that long smile.

ENZO

(faintly)

You were right.

JACQUES

(moved)
... I was right about what?

ENZO

(after a long
silence)
... It is much better down there.
It's a better place.

He tries to take a deep breath, the effort is exhausting.
JACQUES smiles, holding back his tears.

ENZO

... Push me back in the water...

JACQUES

(crying)
I can't.

ENZO

Jacques, take me back down...
Please.

His smile freezes, he stops breathing. His eyes close.

JACQUES puts his head down on his friend's chest and sobs.
The doctors gently try to move him away, but JACQUES
resists.

LAWRENCE

Just give him five minutes! What
does it matter now, anyway... Come
on, just leave him alone!

LAWRENCE encourages everybody to leave the platform.

JACQUES quickly grabs the nearest rope and ties it to his
belt. Before anybody can stop him, JACQUES rolls ENZO'S
body back into the water and dives after it.

UNDERWATER - JACQUES

He holds ENZO in his arms. Lets the dead weight of the
body pull him down, deeper and deeper. The rope around
JACQUES' waist runs out, stops his descent with an abrupt
jerk. When he feels it, JACQUES lets go... watches as
ENZO'S body continues to drift by itself into the
bottomless blue...

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM

The doctors have run over and are pulling the cable that JACQUES is attached to. He is unconscious when they pull him up. They hold him up by his feet. JACQUES throws up gallons of water. They put an oxygen mask on his face.

A DOCTOR

(listening to his
heartbeat)

The heart is going to stop! The
stimulator, quickly.

Suddenly, everything collapses for JACQUES. Sounds disappear. The image slows down, the light fades.

JACQUES only hears his heartbeat, which slows down.

His heart stops.

Among the crowd around him, he sees JOHANA, fresh, gentle, smiling. Her movements are smooth and slowed down. She smiles at him, simply. JACQUES smiles back. The heart starts again slowly.

The image goes back to normal.

Sounds multiply (doctors, the panic, etc...) and slowly come back.

JACQUES falls unconscious.

A DOCTOR

The heart started again! It's all
right!

NOVELLI falls back in his chair, relieved.

INT. JACQUES' ROOM - NIGHT

JACQUES is lying on the bed, he has a strong fever.

JOHANA sits at his feet.

LAWRENCE rummages through a medical kit. He takes a pill from a bottle and gives it to him.

LAWRENCE

Take this. Have a good sleep.

JACQUES swallows the pills. JOHANA walks over from the balcony.

LAWRENCE

Sweet dreams.

LAWRENCE motions to JOHANA that they should let him sleep.
He goes out of the room.

JACQUES

(tenderly to Johana,
who had started to
leave the room)

Kiss me.

JOHANA bends over and kisses him.

JACQUES holds her by the arm, doesn't want her to leave.

JOHANA

Sleep now. We'll talk later.

JOHANA kisses him on the forehead and leaves the room.

EXT. HOTEL BAR - ON TERRACE - LAWRENCE - JOHANA

They're at the little zinc bar. Not talking, not really
drinking either, just toying with their glasses.

ROBERTO passes, stops.

ROBERTO

I've packed all of... Enzo's
clothes.

(a beat)

I'm going to the radio telephone...

(swallowing)

... to call Mamma.

They watch sadly as he leaves.

INT. JACQUES ROOM - NIGHT

JACQUES sitting up in bed finally lies down under the
sheets. He turns off the light by the bed.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - LAWRENCE - JOHANA

They've moved from the bar to the table. There is uneaten
food in front of them. A third place is set.

JOHANA looks at the wall clock.

JOHANA

I'll go see how he's doing.

LAWRENCE

Let him sleep.

INT. JACQUES ROOM - JACQUES

JACQUES is lying on the bed, he is not moving anymore. He is breathing loudly, as if tired out. From his POV the room becomes very dark and blue. The noise is unbearable. The ceiling turns into water.

JACQUES' eyes are wide open. His face is sweating. The water level, from the ceiling, comes down to him, until he is swallowed by it.

As he falls into the water, we see a dolphin gulping air at the surface and going back very quickly to the blue.

The dolphin meets his group, about ten of them, 250 Kg of muscles, swimming at more than 40 km/H underwater. They all break through the surface to gulp air regularly.

Suddenly, one of them, leaves the group. He crosses the blue and seems to make sonar-like sounds. We see a sonar picture. It's an image in which the dolphin will appear a few seconds later. The dolphin comes up like a rocket, gulps air and goes back down.

The sonar image appears again. Finally, the dolphin, locates a group of fish and starts hunting them, exactly like a war plane. He manages to break the group in two, then in four, and this way, he isolates his victim.

He breaks the surface to gulp air and goes back down. He goes full power. The fish he is after are even more divided. There is only one left, totally lost and in a panic.

The exhausted fish is swallowed.

The dolphin slows down, goes back up, breaks the surface in slow motion. Images becomes pale and bright.

He screams inhumanly.

Image is white, black, silence.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - JACQUES

JOHANA opens the shutters.

The room is a shamble of broken glass, water pitcher and glasses, lamps and vases. The windows are blown out.

JACQUES is lying in bed. There is a thin trickle of blood coming from his nose and ears.

JOHANA

(in a panic)

Jacques... Are you alright?

EXT. DOCK - JACQUES - JOHANA - NIGHT

JACQUES jumps into ENZO'S boat.

JOHANA

(still worried)

Jacques? Are you alright? Answer me! Are you alright?

She jumps down into ENZO'S boat. He starts the engine. The boat is racing out of the port. JOHANA yells over the sound of the engine.

JOHANA

You've got to tell me what happened?

JACQUES

I saw how it has to be.

JACQUES parks the boat in front of the COMMITTEE BOAT'S DIVING PLATFORM. He turns on the platform lights: above and underwater. He throws down the diving cable: 60, 90, 120 feet...

JACQUES gets undressed and sits down in the lotus position, concentrating...

JOHANA sits down a few feet away and watches him, wondering just how far he is going to push this whole thing.

As the cable unrolls, JOHANA starts crying. She understands that JACQUES is going to dive to the bottom, into the blue, into himself.

JOHANA

Jacques, you know I love you.

JACQUES is putting on his flippers, and stands facing his gueuse.

JACQUES

(after a silence)

Don't be sad... It's not because of you, it's me. It's all going on inside me!

(a beat)

I've gotta go and see.

JOHANA starts pacing up and down the diving platform.

JOHANA

See what? There is nothing to see! It's pitch black down there! It's cold. You'll be all alone! Look at me, Jacques! I am here! I exist! Look!!!

(she starts waving her arms)

I'm real! I am not a dream! Jacques will you look at me?

(she breaks down)

Please!

JACQUES has not moved, he still sits motionless, facing his gueuse.

JOHANA doesn't know what to do or say. She is totally drained.

JOHANA

Jacques? I'm pregnant.

JACQUES

That's good... that's wonderful. It's wonderful for you.

JOHANA

You are the father.

Silence. JACQUES is petrified, without any reaction. He doesn't understand. She realizes it's hopeless and stares at the sea.

JOHANA

(after a while)

I lied... to keep you here.

She kisses him.

JOHANA

Promise me one thing.

JACQUES

Anything.

JOHANA

Promise you won't forget me.

She pulls the line releasing the gueuse.

JACQUES takes a deep breath and grabbing hold of the gueuse, disappears into the water -- as if swallowed by the ocean.

UNDERWATER

JACQUES slides along the cable, pulled by the weight of the gueuse. He has a beautiful smile on his face. He is in his element. Night has closed in around him. He turns on the headlight of the gueuse, it casts a dim light around him.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - NIGHT

JOHANA has walked over to the edge of the platform. She is holding the cable, to "hear" JACQUES' descent.

The counter shows that JACQUES is quickly passing the 300 feet mark.

UNDERWATER

JACQUES keeps going down, as serene as ever. He has gained a lot of speed.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - NIGHT

JOHANA holds her face in her hands. The counter indicates that JACQUES is going very fast.

UNDERWATER

The gueuse jerks to a stop and shakes the cable. JACQUES turns his body right side up.

EXT. DIVING PLATFORM - NIGHT

The counter now indicates a depth of 600 feet.

JOHANA has felt the jolt of the cable. She cries her tears and looks down at the water.

UNDERWATER

The headlight on the gueuse illuminates only a few feet around JACQUES, as if he were standing in a circle of light. He stays there, patiently floating around and around his cable... as if he were waiting for something.

A long form circles the border between the darkness and the light.

JACQUES holds out his hand. A dolphin comes and presses its body against it. Two other dolphins come out of the night. JACQUES watches in amazement.

A dolphin lays his muzzle in JACQUES' hand, ready to lead him off. JACQUES hesitates.

JACQUES lets go of the cable and lets himself be led away. Their silhouettes disappear in the deep blue night.

THE END