

The Secret Island of Tortuga

by
Patricia Rust

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Patricia Rust trishrust@gmail.com
12021 Wilshire Blvd. #924 Los Angeles CA 90025
310 445 3250 office 310 663 1447 cell

THE SECRET ISLAND OF TORTUGA

FADE IN:

EXT. UNDERWATER ON A BEAUTIFUL SUN-DRENCHED DAY

Two pre-teen or teen siblings in SUB-AQUA OBSERVATION BUBBLES are operating their battery powered yellow and pink machines at feet below. They cruise the abundantly rich marine life as laughing bubbles stream out of their helmets.

As they maneuver the fish-filled waters, we see the smiles of a boy, RICK PHARR, and his sister, slightly younger and smaller, KATEY PHARR. Rick purposefully bumps his underwater high tech motorcycle into hers and throws up his hands as in, "WHOOOPS!" Above, we see a furry animal swimming to catch up.

DOG'S VOICE

(sotto voce, as arrogant
as Frasier Crane)

Wait up! Darn this body fat. I've
got to get it down...

Suddenly, a HUGE DARK SHADOW BLANKETS THEM. Are they under the belly of a great white shark? We see that the shadow is only that of a large boat (from which they are diving). Their fear is replaced with smiles of relief. The furry animal is their dog, who has jumped into the water to join them. We see TRITON dog paddle around but he can't dive down to reach them. The siblings see a school of barracuda ahead, looming large and moving right at them. Katey steers toward an underwater cave and Rick is right behind her...

INT. CORAL CAVE

Small fish swarm in slices of silver darts.

Katey points to an inflated puffer fish. An eel reaches out of its cave and almost makes Katey's pointing finger its lunch.

Rick leads the motorized way through the huge cavernous coral tube and they pass precariously close to a sleeping shark. Katey's eyes grow wide with fear as Rick laughs. Rick pokes at an octopus which shoots ink at them making it impossible to see anything but black as the ink diffuses into the ocean's masses.

EXT. UNINHABITED TROPICAL ISLAND - SEEMINGLY PERFECT
PARADISE, but...

A VOLCANO violently ERUPTS.

Hot LAVA SPEWS.

Sulfuric SMOKE LINGERS.

ANIMALS SCURRY.

A beetle digs furiously into the ground seeking protection.

The green jungle is flattened mercilessly by the lava --
death is at hand.

We watch as a piece of hot lava cools and freezes in time,
the life once there, now extinguished. The MOON descends.

As the SUN RISES, we montage in quick succession:

ROARING RAIN.

Sprouting VEGETATION pressing up through the lava.

Life beginning and growing in FAST MOTION.

Jungle life is everywhere as life renews itself.

EXT. OCEAN BELOW - DAY

Blue waves lap one another. The water acts as a mirror of the
sun's radiance creating a hypnotic rhythmic beauty. We can
make out the images of fish below.

INSERT PHOTO -- Close on a beaming family of four humans and
their cheerful looking and slightly pudgy dog.

EXT. BOAT - PICTURE PERFECT HIGH TECH RESEARCH VESSEL

The family from the photo is alive and active with their very
human-behaving dog, TRITON, still wet, shaking, and prancing
around looking for attention. He's not getting any either.

TRITON
Don't I look trimmer wet?

MOM, DAD, and their pre-teens: son, RICK, and daughter, KATEY busily rave about their adventures underwater.

RICK
It was way cool.

KATEY
But the water was warm.

With that, Rick empties his sea helmet bubble of water onto his sister. She recoils with a sisterly tolerance.

RICK
One of us, not to be naming names,
got a little freaked...

KATEY
There's so much down there!

Rick pinches his sister with his hands like a shark's jaws.

RICK
And it's all dangerous!

As Katey towels off the family of four cruises these azure waters. As Dad gathers sea samples round the deck, Mom, reads aloud, for the most part ignored:

MOM
(reading)
And so the Spanish Galleon,
returning stolen gold from Mexico
to Spain, was taking the treasure
back when it was intercepted by
pirates.

KATEY
Ruthless pirates?

RICK
Pirates have to be ruthless, dumb
dumb. Kind of like big brothers.

DAD
(over his shoulder)
Rick, did you put the boat on AUTO
PILOT?!

RICK
Of course.

DAD

Actually, as pirates go, these were not such bad guys. Returning gold...

MOM

Still, by definition, they were ruthless.

Triton SHAKES the water from his coat. No one reacts.

INT. RESEARCH VESSEL - BELOW DECK

Close on panel which reads: AUTO PILOT as it is pushed with a paw and LIGHTS UP in RED. Four fluffy black and white paws bound upstairs to the deck.

EXT. RESUME - ON DECK

Two of those four paws land in the father's studios lap.

DAD

Not now Triton. Time to fish.

Triton's eager and satisfied face is being ignored. Triton trots to the mother. She ignores him.

MOM

If we ever do find that gold, we'll see that it's returned to Mexico... Triton, go play with your ball.

Triton picks up a ball and carries it to Rick. Rick takes the ball and drops it without interest. Triton retrieves it anyway. He sits directly in front of Rick, ball in mouth. Rick ignores Triton as he puts the underwater mopeds away.

RICK

Or we could use it to buy a Ferrari.

Triton heads for the final family member, Katey, who has already disappeared to follow her brother. Rick then goes below with Katey on his heels as the dad switches gears to fish, leaving on his headset. Drs. Margaret and Bill Pharr fish as their kids navigate this custom boat which seems as easy for them as watching television.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Rick takes the craft off AUTO PILOT as Katey makes a disapproving face.

KATEY

Do you know what you have your hands on?

RICK

Of course.

Katey's big eyes stare hard at HUGE ROCKS looming ahead. They barely VEER around the BIG rocks. From up top, their mother and father SCREAM.

MOM AND DAD (O.S.)

Hey!!!

KATEY

Attitude. That's what you have.

Rick shoots her a look.

RICK

I also have control of this boat.

KATEY

You're so mean. You won't play fetch with Triton or ever play with me.

RICK

I don't know which is worse.
(looking round)
Have you seen the remote control?

Katey SIGHS and stares at the ROCKS now behind them.

KATEY

No, but I have seen the results of the Exxon Valdez.
(pause)
I don't remember you putting us on Auto Pilot.

RICK
(sarcastically)
Then Triton must have.

Showing off, Rick pushes a bunch of buttons, ignoring his command at the wheel. We see a SHARP EDGED REEF ahead. The clumsy Rick MISSES the REEF BY A HAIR. From above, Mom and Dad holler:

DAD (O.S.)
Yo! We don't have that much insurance! Katey leans into the buttons ready to push one, any one.

KATEY
We're here to help the oceans, not hurt them...

RICK
No oil around here...no oil I can see.

KATEY
Except on your pimply face.

Katey smiles smugly, backing off the control panel. Triton trots to her and she pets her beloved dog sweetly.

RICK
(with attitude)
Why don't you shut up?

KATEY
Why don't you learn to sail?

RICK
Maybe I could if you would be quiet.

KATEY
I love quiet. I thrive on it.

TRITON BARKS.

Rick searches for the cause of Triton's barking. He pushes AUTO PILOT and goes back up on deck with his sister. BARKS AHOY as Triton follows BARKING UP A STORM.

They quickly find why.

CLOSE

on a lone, lovely, long DOLPHIN who is riding the WAKE of the boat getting extra lift and speed every second. We follow the dolphin's sensuous magical movements.

BUT...

Triton's intrusive BARKS are THUNDEROUS. Is he jealous or just being territorial? We don't know. One thing is for sure: The dolphin has the MOVES ... and Triton has the BARKS.

MOM

Triton, hush. You'll wake the whole sea.

TRITON

(very uppity)

I hate show-offs. And that dolphin is the biggest show-off ever! The father, intent on his fishing, pulls off his headphone listening device, as though he is still hard at work.

DAD

We're supposed to be doing research. Science is a quiet kind of thing. The water-dancing dolphin lets out a SQUEAK and a WHISTLE.

KATEY

The dolphin is expressing itself.

DAD

Unlike that self-important dog of ours.

KATEY

I say we mutiny.

INTERCUT

Danielle leaps high and looks out of her magical black eyes.

DOLPHIN (DANIELLE)

Tsk. Tsk. Bad dog.

RESUME

Triton runs to the stern of the boat and BARKS loudly.

TRITON

I know you can't understand me but if the dolphin can express itself, then why can't I? After all, I am an animal of science. An educated one.

CLOSE ON DOLPHIN'S SMILE

The dolphin is a monument to loveliness as it LEAPS HIGH out of the water and seems to move out of pure joy. It SQUEAKS and WHISTLES and seems to be reaching out --

POV DOLPHIN

as Danielle DIVES BELOW and CORKSCREWS with the zest of being alive.

THE DOLPHIN'S UNDERWATER SMILE IS PRACTICALLY NEON

DOLPHIN (DANIELLE)
(spouting through blow
hole)
Squeaks Ahoy!

The dolphin returns to the surface and cruises in the boat WATER'S WAKE. Clearly, this dolphin wants company.

TRITON
That's cheating! Riding the wake!

Danielle the dolphin hears him and shouts back.

DANIELLE
At least I'm in the water, not on
it!

Katey and Rick watch the dolphin with wonder.

They lean into the SPLASHING SEA MIST and smile and laugh as they relish the dolphin's antics. Triton notices all the attention she's getting.

RICK
There's a born clown.

KATEY
Their brains are bigger than ours.

RICK
Speak for yourself.

KATEY
I'm speaking for all humans.

TRITON
That's not saying much. Triton
TEARS down to the CONTROL ROOM.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Triton PAWS a few control buttons as RED ALERT LIGHTS flash.
The AUTO PILOT LIGHT is no longer lit. Triton PAWS it.

TRITON
My animal intuition says Rick
should NEVER have put our boat on
cruise control.

Triton jumps up on the CAPTAIN'S CHAIR and PAWS some more.

TRITON (CONT'D)
(continuing; dogmatic)
This is not a toy to mess with. Dad
never knows what's going on and Mom
is so busy trying to tell everyone
what is. And they don't even notice
me. Except Katey. She makes up for
everyone.

He PAWS some more. Nothing. He TEARS back up to the deck.

EXT. DECK

Triton's BARKS are ever more earsplitting.

TRITON
Red alert. Auto pilot is out.

RICK
Triton! Be quiet!

KATEY
You'll scare the fish.

RICK
He probably already doled out a few
heart attacks...

UNDERWATER and AHEAD is a HUGE SHIPWRECK.

EXT. STERN OF BOAT

Blissfully unaware, we watch as their mother and father try to fish. In Triton's barking mania, he physically manages to dash from the BOW to the STERN and back again messing up the fishing lines. As the fishing lines go haywire, the SHIPWRECK LOOMS menacingly ahead this tangled web of fishing lines and

BARKING.

MOM

Dog gone it. Triton! Settle down or you're going to walk the plank!

In his frustrated effort to be understood, Triton literally walks precariously on an outstretched plank.

KATEY

He's just being a dog... Getting no reaction, he heads back to the control room.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Triton PAWS the STEERING COLUMN in an effort to miss the WRECK. We hear his family talking off-screen from up top.

DAD (O.S.)

That's the problem. When we get home, he's going to obedience school.

KATEY (O.S.)

I thought this was home. Besides, we tried that. He flunked out, remember?

Triton moves the WHEEL in a highly haughty body posture.

TRITON

I most certainly did not. We simply stopped going.

KATEY (O.S.)

I couldn't take him. I had chess practice...

RICK (O.S.)

That's so lame.

KATEY (O.S.)

You could have taken him.