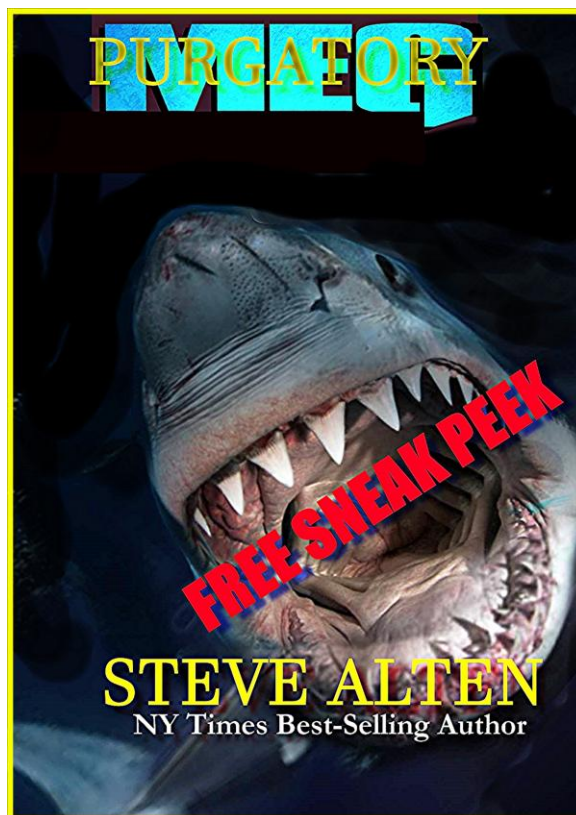


# MEG

## PURGATORY



BOOK 7 IN THE BEST-SELLING MEG SERIES  
BY  
STEVE ALTEN

**Exclusive MEGhead Sneak Peek**  
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UNEDITED

Steve Alten

# **MEG** **Generations**

**EXCERPTED FROM THE FINAL CHAPTER...**

# 33

*Aboard Manta-4  
Panthalassa Sea*

**THE SONAR ALARM STARTLED JONAS;** in all his years of piloting the Manta he had never heard the bizarre warning sound outside of Mac’s workshop.

Glancing at the screen, his first reaction was that the system had malfunctioned. How else could there be thousands of predatory life forms ahead of him?

Unsure of what to do, he shut down the system and rebooted.

A minute later, the same configuration appeared.

He had avoided using the night vision optics because it strained his eyes—leading to migraine headaches. But he switched to it now, fearful of what lay ahead.

“Oh, geez...”

They were everywhere—dozens of different species, all heading to the northwest. Directly in front of him, blocking the Manta’s way was a school of long-necked Elasmosaurs and there appeared to be no way around them.

Without warning, a head the size of a Volkswagen Beetle circled back, its mouth filled with two-foot-long stiletto-shaped teeth.

Pulling back on the joystick, Jonas barrel-rolled the Manta over the plesiosaur’s snapping jaws—only to be bashed sideways by one body part after the other, the sea floor rushing up at him...



*Mac had described Dr. Michael Day as “Eastern philosophy applied to Western fears.”*

*“You need someone trained to deal with these kinds of issues, J.T. His office is in Suite 208; go up the stairs and turn right ... he’s expecting you.”*

*Jonas exited the Cadillac convertible, angry at Mac’s deception in getting him to meet with his shrink.*

*“What brings you here, Mr. Taylor?”*

*“James Mackereides.”*

*“I asked ‘what’ not ‘who.’ Surely there must be something in your life that I might be able to offer you a few tools to deal with better.”*

*“All right. How about fear?”*

*“That depends. There is healthy fear and there is unhealthy fear. For instance, the fear of death is not constructive—death is merely the soul’s passage into a higher realm. The key to overcoming the fear of death is to meet this inevitability with a controlled mind.”*

*“What about the fear of being trapped?”*

*“All fear, Mr. Taylor comes from our own uncontrolled thoughts. To quote Shantideva in the Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life, ‘all fears and all infinite sufferings arise from the mind. While it is not possible to control all external events; if I simply control my mind, what need is there to control other things?’”*

*“And how does one control the fear and anxiety of being separated from the person you love more than anyone in the world? My wife ... she’s been in a coma for ten months.”*

*“I am so sorry. And how does that make you feel?”*

*“Angry.”*

*“Because there is nothing you can do about it?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“The root of all fear, Mr. Taylor, comes from our ignorance of our own existence. Without getting too deeply into this profound subject, life is the dream; what follows is the true reality, and it is our conviction that things exist independently of our mind that is the source of all our fear.”*

*“And how do I deal with it?”*

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*“By understanding that while we are in the samsara—the process of birth, death, and rebirth—we will continuously be separated from all the conditions that make us feel safe—our home, our family, our friends, our money and possessions, and our physical health. If we are not separated from these conditions before death, we will be separated from them at death. What happens to us afterward depends on the karma we have created in this life or in previous lives. This is not something we like to hear, but it is the truth.*

*“When you are frightened, ask yourself what you are actually frightened of. Our fear of death is unhealthy; it is simply part of the process. A healthy fear of death would be the fear of dying unprepared. Our focus, therefore, should be on the things that we can actually take with us—the imprints of the positive and negative actions we have generated. Instead of fear, our focus should be on purifying our negative karma while accumulating as much good karma as we can.”*

*“And how do I do that?”*

*“The greatest protector against fear, Mr. Taylor, is love.”*



Jonas opened his eyes to a throbbing headache and a dark cabin, framed by a soft glow coming from outside. It took several disorienting moments to realize he was hanging upside down from his bucket seat, the Manta buried nose-first in the sea floor’s muddy bog.

Pressing the balls of his feet to the dashboard, he redistributed his weight, allowing just enough slack to release the seat’s harness. He caught himself as he dropped, the redistributed weight sending the sub’s tail flipping over onto its back, pancaking the craft upside down.

“Sonuva bitch!”

Standing on the ceiling, he reached up to the power button and restarted the sub’s engines. Unable to climb up and strap himself into the inverted chair, he pushed the joystick all the way to the right and tapped one of the accelerator pedals with his free hand, flipping the Manta right-side up while sending himself flying headfirst into the starboard bucket seat.

“Ow ... damn it!”

Climbing over the dashboard divider, he resituated himself at the port controls and gazed out the windshield—just as the 60-foot Mosasaur charged.

“Shit!” Slamming his right foot to the starboard pedal, he wrenched the joystick hard to the right, swerving around the charging crocodilian monster.

Jonas quickly buckled in before stealing a glance at sonar. The creatures were everywhere—all swimming in the same direction as if being summoned to the Panthalassa’s version of Mecca.

*The Dragon Pods ... could the spheres be attracting them?*

Remaining close to the sea floor, he replotted his course, the Manta shadowing a school of enormous Leed’s fish as he raced the submersible to the northwest.

A flicker of light danced among the moving masses, leading him to the DP-3. The sphere’s orange glow defined an arena of light that kept the circling beasts at bay, illuminating a barren seafloor pockmarked with hundreds of holes, each nearly wide enough to accommodate one of Dr. Hon’s mini pods.

Perched up to its equator in one of these holes like a golf ball in a sand trap was Dragon Pod-2.

“This is Captain Ng aboard Dragon Pod-3. Who is piloting the Manta?”

He reached for the radio. “Jonas Taylor. My wife ... is she—”

“Jonas!”

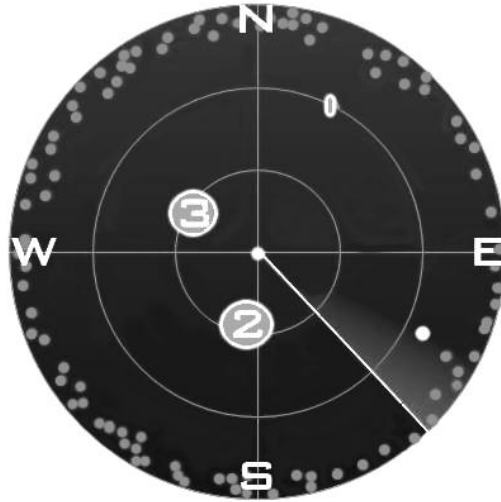
Tears poured from his eyes, his limbs trembling as he recognized his wife’s voice. “Terry ... thank God. Is Dulce with you?”

“Yes. Jonas, we were able to establish communications with the survivors on-board DP-2. They’re running out of air.”

“Have them open the outer door of the wet dock, I’m on my way.”

“Jonas, wait ... there’s a Meg circling the killing field ... it’s black, with gray stripes and underbelly. Very difficult to see ... She’s bigger than Angel and just as aggressive.”

Jonas glanced at his sonar.



The blip appeared in the northeast quadrant, the Meg's presence scattering the clusters of life forms gathered along the perimeter. His pulse raced as the large animal accelerated straight for him, its intentions clear.

“Jonas—”

“I see her. Tell DP-2 I'm on my way.” Jamming both foot pedals to the floor, he raced to the downed pod—

—the blip on sonar intent on cutting him off before he reached the sphere.

He arrived ten seconds ahead of her, but still could not see the camouflaged beast. Knowing the Meg queen was close, he looped around the southeast side of the DP-2, his eyes searching the olive-green void for the entrance to the wet dock.

A blinking red light appeared up ahead along the sphere's western flank as the blip closed on him from the south. *How am I supposed to dock moving this fast?*

Jonas passed the flooded open hangar. Pulling back on the joystick, he executed a tight barrel roll to the west, followed by a stomach-churning 360-degree loop—

—the maneuver placing the open wet dock directly in front of him and the Manta in the path of

the charging Megalodon!

Pushing down hard on the joystick, he soared beneath the shark's massive pectoral fins and entered the open passage doing twenty knots.

Jonas pulled back on the joystick at the last second, raising the Manta's prow so that the sub's curved belly rolled up along the dock's back wall, the impact reduced by a thick protective net.



“Huh?” Jonas opened his eyes to bright lights and bare fists pounding on the Manta's cockpit glass. Reaching his right hand into the central console, he popped open the hatch, the dull ache in the front of his head introducing him to his mild concussion.

Warm, salty air rushed into the cockpit, accompanied by enthusiastic backslaps and “thank yous,” directed at him in English and Chinese. Introductions were made as the crew hurriedly climbed inside the two-man cockpit.

“Lee Huang, helmsman.”

“Ling Midway, assistant to Dr. Jernigan.”

“Chenli Gan, biologist.”

“Dr. Vicky Xu, oncologist.”

“Danny Wu, Captain.”

“Sara Jernigan. This is my mission; if there is no more room I'll remain behind.”

Jonas glanced at the three women squeezed in together in the co-pilot's seat and the two men lying prone in the storage compartment in back. “I guess I'm making a second trip, doc.”

“Excuse me,” said Dr. Wu, “why could Dr. Jernigan not ride in your lap?”

“I need to be able to pilot the sub. That means two legs and my right arm—unrestricted. Not to mention we're already running heavy. Everyone onboard has to be strapped in tight enough to handle a barrel roll without flying free.”

“We're good,” said the three women in the co-pilot's seat.



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“Good back here,” said the two men wedged in storage.

Sara shrugged. “Be careful.”

“I’ll be back soon,” Jonas said. Activating the Lexan dome, he resealed the cockpit.

Dr. Jernigan waved and then returned to the wet dock control room.

Two minutes later the chamber began filling with seawater.

Jonas grabbed the radio’s mic. “DP-3, come in.”

Static.

*Damn ... no telling where that Meg is. And we’re a lot heavier now.*

He activated the Manta’s headlights, turning the beams on high.

The chamber began pressurizing: 5,000 psi ... 8,000 ...

At 19,460 psi the chamber’s internal lights flashed green, the outer door opening—

Jonas jammed both feet to the propulsion pedals, sending the Manta accelerating out the open passage—the drag on the craft immediately noticeable.

The radio crackled to life.

“...circling back to intercept.”

“Terry?”

“We see you, Jonas. So does the Meg. Come to course three-zero-five; we’ll escort you in.”

“Escort me in?” He looked down at his sonar screen. The Meg was coming at him from below and to the west, another sub racing in from above.

*They’re in the Sting Ray ...*



Dulce pushed down on the joystick, sending the Sting Ray racing past the rising Manta on a collision course with the dark-striped monster. “Charge ready?”

“Ready,” Terry yelled back.

“Crank it up!”

The 10,000-volt electromagnetic pulse rippled out from the dual antenna anchored beneath the sub's prow, scrambling the Megalodon's ampullae of Lorenzini. The 80-ton predator gyrated from side to side before veering away, racing back to the sea floor.

The two women high-fived. "That'll teach that bitch to mess with my man."

"Amen, Momma."



Jonas's face hurt from smiling. "Ladies, that was awesome. I'm dropping off this first group; then I have one more passenger to pickup."

"Roger, dodger. We'll escort you in."



It took twenty minutes to wet dock the Manta aboard Dragon Pod-3. Alone again in the sub, Jonas accelerated out of the flooded chamber, reaching for the radio.

"Dulce, where are you?"

"On your six. You need to make this pickup fast, something's happening out there."

"What do you mean?"

Terry responded. "Jonas, there are huge holes along the sea floor ... we think they could be magma tubes. The other life forms are abandoning the area—an eruption may be imminent."

"Geez. Okay, I'll be quick."

The Manta entered DP-2's open wet dock. Jonas set the sub down facing the exit as the chamber resealed.

Two minutes passed ... and nothing happened, the compartment remaining flooded and under pressure.

*Come on!*

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He tried the radio, but there was only static.

Another minute passed in darkness.

Jonas was on the verge of freaking out. *Stay calm ... breathe!*

Metallic clicks echoed inside the dark, sealed space.

*The backup generator is shot. There's no power to activate the pumps.*

Sweat poured down his face. *You're trapped.*

His limbs began to shake uncontrollably.

*You saw this coming when we landed in Guam, yet here you are!* He recalled his high school football coach's favorite saying, "Fellas, do you know what a shithead is? A shithead is someone who sees a pile of shit on the sidewalk, knows it's a pile of shit, and steps in it anyway."

*Jonas Taylor ... shithead.*

The interior lights flickered on.

*Come on, baby!*

The pressure gauge illuminated, descending backwards from 19,460 PSI.

*That a girl!*

At 0.00 the pumps engaged, the water draining quickly.

Green light! Jonas popped the hatch as Dr. Jernigan dashed out of the control room carrying a heavy backpack, the chamber already starting to refill. Tossing the bag inside, she climbed in after it as Jonas resealed the cockpit.

"Sorry. Backup generator was shot after the first load. I had to drain the last ounce of power from the life-support system."

"Will that be enough?"

"Ask me again in seven minutes."

The chamber filled with seawater, the internal pressure rising—  
—the gauge stopping at 12,729 psi.

Jonas punched the cushioned panel by his left elbow. “Oh, come on.”

Sara Jernigan laid her head back and sighed. “Welcome to the last two weeks of my existence. Sorry you were dragged down here with me.”

Jonas grabbed the radio. “Terry, if you can hear me—we’re trapped inside the flooded wet dock. If there’s any way for you to blast open the outside door—do it!”

“I didn’t know these subs were armed with weapons?” Sara rasped.

“They weren’t. They were re-equipped after the DP-2 was attacked.”

“How long will your life support system last?”

Jonas glanced at one of the gauges mounted on the central console. “Longer than our water supply. The immediate problem are those magma tubes.”

“What magma tubes?”

“The ones surrounding this fossil graveyard. An eruption must be coming; the sea creatures are circling, staying clear of this area.”

“That means they’re back...”

“They? Who’s they?”

“Sweetie, you don’t want to—”

A brilliant flash ignited as the Panthalassa Sea engulfed the chamber door, the water, and the Manta in one massive gulp.



“Hey fella, you okay?”

Jonas opened his eyes. The Manta was resting on the sea floor, the Sting Ray hovering above and in front of them.

“What happened?”

“Your friends in that sub must have blasted open the wet dock door. We gotta haul ass; we’re

right by its lair.”

The sonar alert cut him off.

Jonas caught a glance of it as its massive head emerged from the hole behind the Sting Ray, its outstretched jaw nearly dislocating as the 187-foot long *Titanoboa Panthalassic* engulfed the entire sub in one horrific bite, the craft's contours visible as it was propelled down the sea snake's expanding gullet.

For a long second its viperous yellow eyes, translucent in the Manta's headlights, stared at Jonas Taylor.

And then the soulless creature disappeared tail-first into its lair...

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# 1

## *Aboard Manta-4 Panthalassa Sea*

Jonas Taylor stared wide-eyed through the sub's night vision glass at the dark olive-green void, his mind unable to grasp what he had just witnessed.

Sara Jernigan covered her mouth, swallowing the bile rising in her throat. "Oh my God."

"What the hell was that thing and where did it go?"

"It was a Titanaboa. This entire area... all these holes – it's a Titanaboa nest. Taylor, what are you doing?"

Jonas powered up the Manta's engines. "I'm going after the one that swallowed the Sting Ray."

"No!" She grabbed his wrist as he reached for the joy stick. "Enter the nest and you'll kill us and everyone aboard the Dragon Pod – your wife too if she's still alive. The predators circling this area... they're here for the feast. The Titanaboa are in their mating season. The females are releasing powerful pheromones, inciting the males to abandon the nest and perform in what will essentially turn into an orgy. When that happens the other sea creatures will swarm upon them – apparently Titanaboa are a delicacy. Right now the light coming from the DP-3 is preventing the males from leaving the nest. Go after the Sting Ray and all hell will break loose. That's what happened to us; the current carried the Dragon Pod-2 across the killing field and the creatures went berserk, they nearly destroyed our vessel."

"I can't just sit here while my wife and my future daughter-in-law are being digested."

"The sub's lodged in the serpent's trachea; it may end up choking the damn thing to death. Plus the Sting Ray has weapons; we don't. Better to let them blast their way out."

“Yeah... okay.” He forced himself to take a few deep breaths. Seeing the chronometer located on the lower left side of his control panel, he started the timer.

“So now what?”

“Now we need to dock with the DP-3 without pissing off the Queen.”

“The Queen?”

“The Queen of the Panthalassa... that massive Megalodon.” She pointed to the sonar screen and a solitary blip that was moving freely inside the kill zone. “That’s the Queen. She’s the boss; nobody messes with her, not even the Titanaboa. She’s another reason why you don’t want to do anything rash.”

The radio crackled to life. “DP-3 to Manta, it’s Misha. Are you guys okay?”

“Jernigan here. We’re good, but we lost the Sting Ray.”

“We’re attempting to contact the crew. No luck yet but those holes run deep. Captain Ng wants you to dock immediately. The Queen hasn’t fed in days and she’s getting agitated.”

Jonas stared at the sonar screen, his eyes drawn to the blip moving erratically two kilometers to the north...

\* \* \*

The creature moved through depths’ eternal darkness virtually undetected, its skin coloring the result of its species’ three divergent paths of evolution.

For most of the last 30 million years, *Carcharodon megalodon* dominated Earth’s oceans, its size and senses combining with the most powerful bite in history – ten foot jaws laced with six to seven inch serrated teeth delivered behind 40,000 pounds per square inch of pressure – rendering it the apex predator of all time. Still, every species has an Achilles heel and for the giant pre-historic Great Whites it was their own ferocity which rendered them rogue hunters. With the rise of Orca some 2 million years ago, the Meg suddenly found themselves competing with intelligent surface-dwelling mammals which hunted in packs. With their shallow water nurseries under attack, the giant sharks’



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numbers dwindled – all save for the Megalodon of the Philippine Sea. It was here that nature had created two distinct deepwater habitats that the Meg's new air-breathing enemies could not access.

The first was a tropical layer located at the bottom of the Mariana Trench; the second; an isolated purgatory of existence located beneath the Philippine Sea Plate which traced back over 250 million years ago to the Panthalassa Ocean.

Megs quarantined in the former had breeding limitations imposed by the scarcity of large prey. These sharks adapted like other species in the trench by losing their pigment and becoming albino, their white hides laced with Luciferns which added an almost ghostly glow.

Megalodon isolated in the Panthalassa Sea had to deal with an abundance of both prey and super predators. As new species of hunters found their way into the warm water purgatory, the species which preceded them adapted to these more advanced killers by growing bigger – an adaptation of evolution known as gigantism.

At eighty-one feet and 190,000 pounds, the Meg – a mature female like her mother and grandmother and every female before her was an absolute brute, for each shared the exact same genetics as their maternal parent. In fact, nearly every species inhabiting the Panthalassa was a parthenogenic female, capable of self-fertilizing their own eggs within the womb. The process was an evolutionary adaptation for life forms living in habitats that were not hospitable, a term that certainly applied to the Panthalassa Sea which harbored the most vicious predators in Earth's history.

Unlike its albino cousins inhabiting the Mariana Trench where both prey and males were scarce, the Megs of the Panthalassa possessed ebony hides along their dorsal surfaces with black and gray tiger stripes camouflaging their flanks, melding into dark gray abdomens.

The “Queen of the Panthalassa” effortlessly propelled its neutrally buoyant girth across the killing field harboring the Titanaboa nests, its nostrils detecting fleeting traces of succulent pheromones wafting out of the massive holes. Despite her hunger, the Meg was not about to risk

entering her enemy's lair no matter how ravished she was. Having participated in nearly every feast since adolescence, the Meg knew the Titanaboa males would emerge from their nests at any moment – igniting an orgy of blood and teeth absent of any jungle hierarchy, survival coming down to one simple reality – feed and flee and then feed again until the madness was satiated.

The pungent scent of estrus was inescapable, driving the herds of killers circling along the periphery insane. They jostled and gnawed at one another, skirmishes breaking out as they waited for the feast to begin. Still, the Titanaboa females refused to leave the nest – only the Queen's presence keeping her subjects in check.

As she crossed the arena of death once more, the Meg detected the presence of another life form – not by scent nor movement, but by sight – an attribute rarely used by the inhabitants of the Panthalassa. Hovering high above the arena was a bright scarlet glow emanating from an otherwise lifeless creature, the intruder's presence clearly detected by the Titanaboa.

The Megalodon rose to investigate, its back arching, its pectoral fins going rigid and pointing down as it launched its attack.

### ***Aboard Dragon Pod-3***

Captain Simon Ng stood before the enormous curved view windows in the command center, his eyes pressed against the night vision glasses as he searched the darkness. “Mr. Zheng, where is she?”

“Sonar indicates she is rising; unfortunately we cannot establish an accurate heading without going active—”

“—which we know would only irritate her, potentially unleashing holy hell.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Increase shell luminosity to 150,000 candles. Maybe we can chase her off long enough to allow Jonas to dock.”

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“Yes, sir.” The sphere’s amber glow brightened to an orange-yellow fireball, the artificial sun illuminating a swirling sand storm consuming the periphery, along with hundreds – perhaps thousands of large predators circling the Titanaboa nesting grounds three hundred feet below.

. Ng was surprised to see so many predators in one place and in such confined quarters. Long-necked plesiosaurs like Mauisaurus and Styxosaurus allowed their short-necked pliosaur cousins to swim between them. Every so often the gaping crocodilian jaws of a Kronosaur or Mosasaur would convulse as its body was wedged out of the ring, forcing it to give chase.

“There!” Misha pointed to the upper right portion of the window where a neon blue and green light was sparkling in the dark.

“What is that?”

“Sir, it’s the Queen.”

The Meg approached its larger challenger, its jaws slack and open. Located along the creature's flanks were tiger stripes – the black composed of Luciferase, the gray – Luciferin. The increased volume of oxygen generated by its gills became a catalyst to a chemical reaction which caused the compounds to combine to produce a blue-green bioluminescent light.

As Captain Ng watched, the immense shark charged his ship.

“Mr. Zheng, right full rudder!”

“Sir—”

The Meg’s snout struck the ten-inch-thick window with a dull thud, the impact popping two of its upper teeth from its pink gum line. Shaking its enormous head, it swam along the concave glass, the notch atop the shark’s half moon-shaped caudal fin “knuckled down” to catch the sea, stimulating the creature’s bladder and blasting the window with urine.

Misha laughed, breaking the tension—

--her gaze catching a brief spark where the Meg’s body fluid met the crack in the glass.

“Computer, emergency seal!”

The sphere shuddered as the steel shutters slammed shut over the fractured window a split second before 19,460 pounds per square inch of pressure could slip past the fragmenting glass.

Captain Ng was tossed sideways as an explosion rocked the vessel. The lights shut off, the back-up generator kicking in to ignite red emergency lights.

“Mr. Zheng, why are we sinking?”

“Sir, we’ve lost ballast tank number three. Attempting to compensate... it’s no good.”

The captain reached for the ship’s communication system. “Brace for impact!”

### ***Aboard Manta-4***

The man-made sphere brightened like a harvest moon, its increased orange luminosity illuminating a sandstorm of movement surrounding the killing field—

--and revealing an oily discharge rising from the Titanaboa’s nest before them, the substance sparkling in the Manta’s headlights as it dissipated.

And then, without warning, the light vanished.

“What the hell?” Sara Jernigan searched the sea using her night glasses. “Where’d you go... gotcha. Why did they kill the lights?”

“Maybe they want us to dock? Try the radio.”

“Jernigan to DP-3. Why have you gone dark? Respond please.”

Jonas kept his night glasses trained on the crater ahead of them, the Manta’s forward lights barely cutting through the darkness.

“Something’s wrong with the DP-3. It’s descending. Taylor, did you hear me? The ship is—”

“I’m not deaf. The monster that ate the Sting Ray... I think it’s coming up.”

The copper-brown head of the 187-foot long *Titanoboa Pantbalassic* rose majestically from its hole, the viper’s skull as large as a two car garage, its girth – twice the width of a passenger train. The creature’s skin appeared slick and oily, reflecting the sub’s lights, its neck no longer bulged from the

submersible that had been lodged in its trachea only minutes ago, its esophagus clear as well.

*Maybe they escaped? .*

As he watched, the Titanaboa stopped rising, its mid-section lodged against the walls of the exit. Agitated, the giant sea snake flexed its torso's powerful muscles, squeezing its abdomen tighter as it pulled itself free.

Jonas pointed. "There it is!"

The telltale bulge was not nearly as noticeable as it had been in the monster's throat, but Jonas knew it had to be the Stingray. He glanced at the chronometer... 00:11:28.

*Not even twelve minutes and the sub's nearly in the thing's abdomen. What happens when its digestive acids start working on the Stingray's hull...*

"We can't just sit here and do... whoa."

As they watched, dozens of smaller Titanaboa shot out of the hole, the excited males perhaps half the size of their intended mate – it was impossible to tell as they entwined their gyrating bodies around the ripe Queen in writhing knots.

"This is insane."

"It's nature, Taylor. The females rule the nest, the males—"

The sub's sonar alarm sounded, cutting her off. Jonas turned to the screen, shocked to see a shrinking circumference of blips – hundreds of them, maybe thousands – racing towards the center of the collapsing periphery.

"It's a feeding frenzy!"

"Hold on—" Pulling back on the joystick, Jonas slammed both feet to the pedals, accelerating the Manta away from the sea floor—

--as a frenetic wall of jowls and jaws and slapping tails swept them sideways toward a maelstrom of golden brown uncoiling bodies – the male Titanaboa meeting the charging Helicoprion and Dunks, Mosasaur and Kronosaur head on, instinctively sacrificing themselves to

safeguard their Queen—

--the female blasting through the assault, plunging head-first down the hole to the safety of her nest.

Hopelessly pinned between countless bodies, body parts and blood, Jonas spun the Manta wing over wing in continuous loops, seeing refuge on the sea floor before the larger wave of blips arrived – *Liopleurodon and Leeds fish and God-know-what other monsters are trapped down here in this bellhole.*

He rechecked his sonar and spotted the DP-3 as it dropped into view on his screen. The massive sphere was descending like an anchor, sweeping up bodies seconds before crushing them into pulp along the bottom.

The wall of prehistoric predators parted – revealing their actual angel of mercy charging at them from above.

“It’s the Queen! Move—”

Jonas jammed his right foot to the starboard thruster and the joystick to the three o’clock position, sending the two man submersible barrel-rolling out of the path of the tiger-striped Megalodon, following the female Titanaboa into its nest.

## **MEG: Purgatory**

Pub date will be announced in Steve Alten’s monthly newsletter (probably 2021)

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