DELL

2079

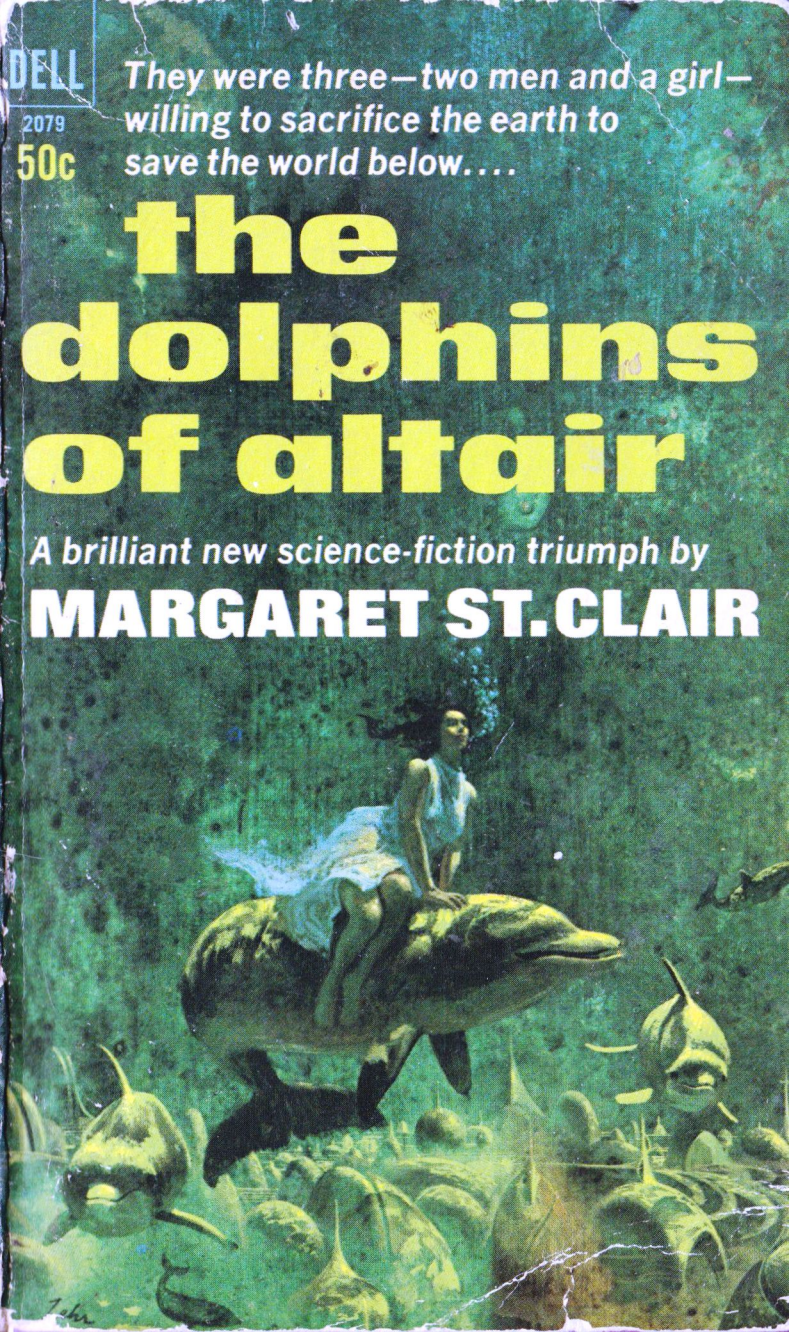
50c

They were three—two men and a girl—willing to sacrifice the earth to save the world below....

the dolphins of altair

A brilliant new science-fiction triumph by

MARGARET ST. CLAIR



BIRTH OF A HOLOCAUST

"Dr. Lawrence," Madelaine said steadily, "will you help us? We can't have anybody knowing about us who isn't on our side."

"That's something I can't answer until I know what you're trying to do."

"We want to free the sea people who are in the research stations. That's the first thing. Then we want to make sure that human beings will never molest them again."

"A large order," Lawrence answered, unsmiling. "Yes, I'll help you. But I'd like to point out that what you have said amounts to a declaration of war on the whole human race. . . ."

The Dolphins of Altair

by MARGARET ST. CLAIR

A DELL BOOK/AN ORIGINAL NOVEL

Published by
DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC.
750 Third Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

First Dell Printing—May, 1967

Printed in Canada

The Dolphins of Altair

CHAPTER 1

The three human beings who helped us came to Noonday Rock by different ways. Madelaine came because we called her; Sven came because he could not help hearing the voice of our distress. But Dr. Lawrence was moved by nothing but his own curiosity, his unquenched thirst for marvels. We would never have pitched on *him* as an ally, and yet he was more crucial to what happened than any of the others. It was he who suggested—

But I had better introduce myself. I am Amtor, a dolphin historian. I took an active part in most of what I am about to describe, and what I did not witness myself, I learned of from the actors. This is a reliable account of what happened when the world, as Madelaine put it—Madelaine always had a gift of words—when the world stood at the hinge of time.

For tens of thousands of years we had not concerned ourselves with the land people. What the Splits, as we called them, did to each other was none of our business. We helped them when we could; we took no part in their quarrels. Then they began to invade what was ours by the terms of the covenant—the sea.

The pollution of the waters was what affected us first. The fish on which we depended for food began to diminish, and our females gave birth to children who were more or less seriously deformed. I myself am one of those whose deformity was not so serious that it interfered with their survival—I have a rudimentary hand growing on the left side of my chest, but it does not interfere badly with my speed in swimming, though it tends to unbalance me.

The contamination of our environment was bad enough, but we might have been able to adapt ourselves to it in time, if it had grown no worse. But then the Splits, particularly those who lived along the edge of the North American

continent, began to capture us in numbers. They tested us for intelligence, and those who were recalcitrant, or whom they considered stupid, they killed. They used our flesh for food for their pets. The dolphins who were not killed were trained, by means of electrodes inserted in their brains, in tasks the Splits thought would be militarily useful to them. At the time Madelaine came to Noonday Rock, almost three hundred of our people were penned up, undergoing training, in the three big Naval Research Stations along the Pacific coast.

We realized we were in danger. The covenant was being broken. We began to look about for allies.

The first we got was Madelaine. Her full name was Madelaine Paxton. She worked as a secretary at the Naval Research Station at Half Moon Bay. And that was all she knew about herself.

I mean that she could remember nothing of her past. Her present consciousness of herself had come to her one afternoon in March, about halfway through a letter she had been typing. What she had been doing before that—who her friends were, where she was living, where she had gone to school, even of how old she was—of none of these things had she any idea.

She was badly frightened. She hunted through the handbag that was lying on the desk where she was sitting. She found a couple of bills and a receipt from a dentist, neither of which meant anything to her, but the driver's license she found in the wallet was more helpful.

From it she learned that she was twenty-three years old, unmarried, and living at an address in San Francisco. The license described her as ash blonde, with gray eyes, and the photograph on the license agreed with the description. Madelaine looked at the picture but felt no sense of identity with it.

At five o'clock one of the other secretaries, whose name seemed to be Frances, came up to remind her that she, Frances, was driving the car back to the city today. Frances added that they could wait for Eleanor at the car.

The three girls got in the Peugeot. Frances and Eleanor talked a good deal on the drive to San Francisco, and Madelaine listened avidly to their chatter, trying to fill in her background for herself. Once Frances said, "What's the matter, Maddy? Cat got your tongue?" and Madelaine an-

swered that she was just tired.

When they let her out in front of her apartment, Frances said, "Don't forget, Maddy, you're picking me up tomorrow at the corner of Geary and Judah," and Madelaine, after asking, "At what time, exactly?" said that she wouldn't forget.

Madelaine got through the next two days without making any bad mistakes. The other girls in the secretary pool kidded her about her absentmindedness, and told her she must be in love. She might have got used to her situation—once or twice she seemed to be remembering things, and this encouraged her—except that she began to hear voices. (They were, of course, the voices of our distress. We dolphins have a certain psychic reach that we can exert, if we choose; and we were, as I said, looking about for allies.)

The voices were too much for Madelaine's equanimity. She looked up the name of the station's staff psychologist in the *Employee's Handbook*—her fingers were shaking so much she could hardly turn the pages—and made an appointment for herself with him.

Dr. Lawrence was the staff psychologist. He was a shortish man with a handsome, inexpressive face and languid dark eyes. Ordinarily Madelaine would have had trouble in confiding in him, but she was too frightened to be cautious. She poured out her symptoms in a rush, weeping and trembling and twisting her fingers as she sat opposite Dr. Lawrence in a brown armchair.

"What do the voices say?" Lawrence asked when she seemed to have finished.

"Just words. 'Help,' and 'They're hurting us,' and sometimes, 'the covenant.' "

"Um. Well, of course, it's always possible that you really are picking up somebody's thinking. But I can see it would be disconcerting.

"As to the amnesia, that's usually the result of an acute conflict. I imagine we can uncover what it is. Would you like me to see you on Mondays, at eight in the morning? We can see if a little therapy helps you."

Madelaine, a little calmer now, blew her nose and told Lawrence yes, she'd be glad to see him on Mondays.

She met with him twice. Lawrence had looked up her record in personnel, and tried to prod her memory with facts from it, but it did no good. On the third Monday

morning she woke early, before her alarm clock could go off.

She had been having a whale dream. She lay flat on her back, remembering it.

She had been standing on an islet in the midst of roaring water. She had not known what time of day it was. The yellowish air was full of spray, and the wind drove salt in her mouth. Even in her dream she could taste the salt. She had felt a desolate surprise at being where she was. In this waste of driven waters, was she expected to live?

Then the dream changed. She stood knee-deep, waist-deep, breast-deep in the tingling waters, while the sweet sea beasts crowded around her. Her hands were under her breasts, supporting them, and there were rainbows around her nipples. Her breasts were the bridge between worlds.

Worlds upon worlds. Her breasts spanned them; she was the nursing mother of the archangelic whales. Glory, said her dream, glory, glory, glory to Madelaine, the mother of all the whales. She had waked from her dream with the word "glory" ringing in her ears like the noise of a vast bell.

What an odd dream! She must be sure to tell it to Dr. Lawrence when she saw him this morning.

Madelaine was abruptly seized with a feeling of urgency. She jumped out of bed, bathed quickly, and hurried into her clothes. The thought of food repelled her. She would leave early, while the highway was still uncrowded, and perhaps, if she were lucky, Dr. Lawrence would be in his office when she got there. For today was surely the day when she would remember, when she would realize who she was and what she was hunting for.

The research station's parking lot was nearly empty when she drove in. Early as it was, Dr. Lawrence was in his office; he opened the door to her knock.

"Hello," he greeted her, "is something wrong? You're almost an hour before your time. But come on in."

The girl obeyed. "It seemed important," she said when she had sat down opposite him. "I had such a strange dream. I dreamed . . ."

"What was the emotional tone of the dream?" Lawrence asked when she had finished.

"Distress, at first. But after the whales came, I felt—more than human. Uplifted. Glorified."

"A sort of goddess?" Lawrence inquired, covering his mouth to hide a yawn.

"I suppose so. I certainly wasn't human, in the dream."

"Have you heard lately the voices that you mentioned?" Lawrence asked.

"No, not for more than a week."

"If you did hear them, what do you think they'd say?"

Madelaine's body grew rigid. She shot a startled glance at Lawrence, who was contemplating a hangnail on his thumb. Then she got up from her chair.

"Let me out, please," she said. She moved toward the door.

"Did I say something to offend you?" Lawrence asked. "Your time's not nearly up."

"No. But I've remembered."

"Who you are, you mean?"

"Oh, that!" She laughed. "I'm Madelaine Paxton, and I think I went to high school in east Oakland. That's enough. No, I mean I've remembered what I have to do. Please let me out."

Silently Dr. Lawrence rose and unlatched the office door for her. He watched her with a slight frown as she hurried down the corridor.

She walked across the parking lot and got back into her car. The guard at the gate gave her a startled look as she drove out.

She headed up the peninsula, toward San Francisco, and crossed the Golden Gate Bridge. In Marin County, she turned west. Once she stopped for gas. Road signs she ignored. Her actions were as unhesitating as those of a sleepwalker.

She stopped the car at Drake's Bay. The beach, at that hour on a weekday, was completely deserted.

Madelaine took off her shoes and stockings and left them on the seat of the car. Her purse she left beside them, but she buttoned her wallet carefully into the pocket of her white linen dress. Then she walked slowly across the sand and out into the water. She was shivering a little. The water was tinglingly cold.

When she was out about waist-deep, she paused and looked about her. I think in a moment she would have tried to call us, but there was no need. The three of us were already swimming toward where she stood.

When she saw us coming, her face cleared. "My darlings, my beautiful darlings!" she cried joyfully. "I was sure you would be here!"

So we knew she remembered the covenant.

We did not call Sven to us personally. He was sensitive to the voices of our distress, and they added to his already existing disquiet and disillusionment. But it took a series of accidents to bring him to us.

That night he was drinking, and playing darts for the drinks, with a friend in a nondescript bar at the end of Fisherman's Wharf. Sven was in his late twenties, with excellent coordination, but he had never been able to master the knack of dart throwing—which, I suppose, is why he played the game so persistently.

He and Frank had already had a good deal to drink. They were playing the simplified form of darts in which each player throws four darts and the player with the highest total score wins. Frank, who was pretty good at the game, had just made a score of three hundred and twenty-five.

Sven picked up one of his darts and balanced it. He positioned his feet and tested the distribution of his weight. Once more he balanced the dart. Then he let fly.

The dart struck dead in the center of the board and stuck there, quivering.

"Pretty good," said Frank.

"Just a fluke," Sven answered. "Wait'll you see what I do next time."

He threw the second dart. It joined its brother unerringly in the center of the board.

"Keep it up," Frank said approvingly.

"If I can."

Sven threw the last two darts. Both went in the bull's-eye to make him the maximum possible score, four hundred points.

"Pretty good, old pal, old pal," Frank said. "I didn't know you could throw like that."

"Neither did I. I don't understand it. It's the first time they've ever gone where I wanted them to." He frowned, and looked down at his right hand. It seemed to him that his will, and not his hand, had propelled the darts to their home in the target, and he had an exhilarating sense of

having stepped momentarily from the real world, where the will is powerless, into the sphere where the will governs everything.

"It's getting late," Frank said. "Let's have one more drink, and then go home. Want to play for it?"

"Sure, why not?"

This time Frank was more careful with his throws than usual. He scored three hundred and fifty. But again Sven's four darts went dead to the center, for a total of four hundred points.

"I don't know why you say you can't play darts," Frank said, a little aggrieved.

"I didn't have anything to do with it," Sven replied.

They finished their drinks and left the bar. "The war seems to be hotting up," Frank remarked, stopping to scan the headlines on the newspaper racks.

"Yeah. You know, Frank, sometimes I hate people."

"I don't like them very well myself. Good night, boy."

"Good night."

They parted. Sven started along the Embarcadero. He lived in a rooming house at the foot of Bay Street.

The Embarcadero at two-thirty in the morning is not precisely unsafe, but it is not very well lighted. Sven did not anticipate any trouble. There was less than four dollars in his pockets, and he was dressed in dungarees, sneakers and a sweatshirt. He didn't think anybody would bother him.

He walked along steadily, his hands thrust in his pockets. He was thinking about his future. It didn't look very good. What was he going to do with himself?

Some six months ago, he had finished a hitch in the army, serving in the Middle East, the latest part of the world in which his country had seen fit to embroil itself militarily. Sven had been a demolitions expert. He had performed his duties conscientiously, but with an increasing distaste that ended being almost nausea. He had thought he would feel better after his discharge, once he was home again, but he hadn't. Mildred had married somebody else while he was gone. Maybe he ought to get married himself. But he was afraid it wouldn't help.

The real trouble, as he had indicated to Frank, was that the army had made him feel he hated people. What good were they? All their pretensions ended in trying to inflict

damage on one another. Maybe he was just drunk. But it seemed to him that *Homo sapiens* was the only animal that was habitually merciless toward itself.

His shadow kept pace with him steadily, disappearing when he entered a shadow and springing out again when he passed under a light. —Oh, the hell with it! Tomorrow he'd go down to the hiring hall and see about getting a work permit. Bethlehem was said to be hiring fitters now.

Just as he passed Pier Nineteen, he caught a flicker of motion behind him. He turned his head quickly. His movement caused the blow that was aimed at him to go wild; instead of the sap falling hard on the back of Sven's head, it struck the bulge behind his right temple, and only glancingly. Sven was dazed, but by no means knocked out.

He turned to grapple with his attacker. The man—somewhat smaller than Sven, and dressed in black—made another attempt to hit him with the sap. Sven dodged and, remembering an old army lesson, levered the man's arm over and out. There was a whimper. The sap fell on the pavement. The mugger regarded Sven loweringly for an instant, but when Sven moved toward him, he turned and ran. Sven was left alone in the street.

He drew a deep breath. He felt sick and dizzy. In a minute, he realized, he was going to vomit.

With some foggy idea of not fouling up the sidewalk, Sven walked wobblingly over to the edge of the dock. Much better, if one had to vomit, to do it in the water.

There was a wooden railing, not quite waist-high, at the edge of the concrete. Sven leaned on it, waiting for the spasm to take him. He must have blacked out for a moment. The next thing he knew, he was struggling in the cold, filthy water of the slip.

He got to the surface and gasped for air. He must have struck his head on a floating piece of wood; there was a sharp pain behind his ear, and he went under once more.

He tried for the surface again, but couldn't make it. A noise of roaring filled his ears. Impersonally, he decided that he was going to drown. The knowledge did not bother him. He felt objective and detached about the whole thing.

Abruptly he was borne up from below. A broad smooth curving surface was between his legs. A voice—high-pitched, quick, and slightly gobbling—said, "Take it easy, now. You're all right."

Dazed and half-drowned as he was, Sven felt a thrill run down his spine. It must be the night watchman, attracted by the sound of his splashing. But the voice had seemed to come from *below* him.

He drew in air pantingly. When he could talk, he said, "Who are you? Where are you speaking from?"

"I'm in the water," the voice answered. "My name is Djuna. I was following you."

"Following? But—"

"Can you hold on now?" said the voice. "Lean forward and put your hands under my flukes. You'll be better balanced that way."

Sven obeyed. The flukes must be those triangular fleshy flaps, and that meant—"Why, you're a dolphin!" he said. He did not know why the realization should please him so much.

"Yesss. We call ourselves the sea people, though."

"You can talk!"

"Yes. The navy was training me. But I managed to get away."

The dolphin had turned around, noiselessly and effortlessly, and was swimming out through the slip into the bay. "Where are you taking me?" Sven asked.

"Where do you want to go?" Djuna replied.

"To Fisherman's Wharf, I guess. I think I could climb up on the pier there. Or—where are *you* going?"

"To the Farallons, to meet some—" The animal was moving more slowly now. "I know quite a lot about you," it said in what seemed to be a thoughtful tone. "When you were playing darts in the bar, I was helping you."

"You were? Well, I'm not surprised. I didn't think I could throw that well by myself. But I don't know how you did it."

"It's called Udra," Djuna answered. "We can do it with people sometimes, the right kind of people. You don't like human beings very much, do you?"

"No. Whatever we do, it always seems to end up in hurting somebody. With the best motives, of course. But I'm sick of it."

"If you only hurt other human beings, Splits, it wouldn't matter." Djuna was swimming even more slowly now.

Abruptly the animal seemed to have made up its—her?—mind. "Look here, would you like to come with me?" it

said. "We won't hurt anybody if we can possibly help it. But the sea people are in danger. We need allies."

For a moment Sven hesitated. He didn't know what he might be letting himself in for, and—then his caution was washed out by an irresistible attraction. "Yes, I'd like to go with you," he said. "I'll help you all I can. Yes."

They got to Noonday Rock about four, when the late-rising moon was filling the sky with light. Djuna had been unable to make her accustomed speed with Sven on her back, and she had had to make wide detours around shipping for fear he might be seen.

"Here we are," she said in her high, somewhat gobbling voice. "This is Noonday Rock. Nobody comes here, ordinarily." Sven felt sand under his feet. He put his legs down, and Djuna slid out from under him. "Is there anybody else here now?" he asked the animal as he regarded the rock's black, steep bulk.

"Lots of sea people. Only one other Split. Here she comes now."

A girl was coming toward him. She wore a white dress; her pale hair was loose about her shoulders; in the moonlight she seemed made of silver.

"Hello," she said. "Djuna brought you?"

"Yes. My name is Sven Erickson."

"You'll help us? My name is Madelaine. The world is at the hinge of time, I think."

Dr. Lawrence's case was the strangest of the three. When it became plain that Madelaine Paxton had disappeared (she did not show up for work at the research station, she was not at her apartment, and her car had been found abandoned at Drake's Bay), the navy assigned an investigator to try to find out what had become of her. This was not because Madelaine's work had brought her into contact with anything in the least secret—the investigation was routine, part of a general navy policy.

The investigator, after talking to Madelaine's friends in the office, had an interview with Dr. Lawrence.

"I see by her record that you were giving her psychiatric treatment," the investigator said.

"Yes. She was suffering from acute amnesia at first. Then she began to hear voices."

"What does that indicate?"

"Amnesia, when it's genuine, is usually the result of a serious psychic conflict. As to the voices, I am inclined to think they were nothing more than a projection onto the external world of Miss Paxton's thoughts.

"Joan of Arc, for example, claimed to hear voices. Most historians think that she expressed her own sense of her historic mission by speaking of it in this way."

"I don't quite understand you."

"Well, if I feel an impulse to steal something, and my super-ego forbids me to, I may say, 'My conscience told me not to.' With most people that's just a way of speaking. But with certain individuals there may actually be an impression of a voice coming from outside." This was not quite what Dr. Lawrence had said to Madelaine herself about the voices; but, since he was fairly certain his office wasn't bugged, he saw no reason to strain for consistency.

"Um. You know her car was found abandoned at Drake's Bay?"

"So I've been informed."

"What do you think happened to her? Do you think she has committed suicide?"

"It's possible. She didn't seem suicidal to me the last time I saw her, on the morning of the 26th. She left the office saying that she'd remembered what she had to do, which could mean just about anything."

"Don't most suicides leave notes?"

"Yes. It's possible that she decided to go swimming, went out too far, and drowned."

"No normal person would go swimming in March at Drake's Bay."

"I didn't say she was normal," Dr. Lawrence replied, scoring a minor point. "I said I didn't think she was suicidal the last time I saw her."

The investigator moved uneasily in his chair. "But what do you think has happened, Dr. Lawrence? I mean, what's your best guess?"

"I think she was on the point of remembering what the conflict was that had caused her amnesia. Perhaps the conflict was too painful for her to handle, and she became amnesiac again. In that case, she may have wandered out on the highway, hitched a ride with somebody, and might be anywhere by now."

The investigator was silent. Perhaps he was reflecting

that the fact that Madelaine's shoes and stockings had been found in her car made it unlikely that she had walked very far. At last he said, "Well, thank you, Doctor. If you think of anything that might be helpful, you'll let me know, won't you?"

"Yes, of course. I'm sorry I wasn't of more use. Goodbye."

On his way home next evening—he lived in San Bruno—Dr. Lawrence stopped at a pay telephone and called a local number. As I said before, he was a man with an unslaked thirst for marvels, and outside of office hours he knew some unusual people.

Over the telephone he was told to bring something the person he was interested in had handled. An appointment was made for eight the next night.

Next evening, Dr. Lawrence was punctual. He handed Mrs. Casson, the psychometrist, a sheet of paper. "This is the best I could do," he said. "It's a drawing the person I'm interested in made when I asked her to draw a picture of herself. I didn't have access to anything that had belonged to her, like a comb or a piece of jewelry."

"The picture will do nicely," Mrs. Casson answered. She was a plump, soft woman who wore her graying hair in two heavy braids down her back. "You haven't sat with me before, have you, Doctor?"

"No, I haven't had that pleasure," Dr. Lawrence replied.

"It's quite simple. We sit opposite each other, and I hold to my forehead whatever my sitter has brought. Sometimes nothing happens, sometimes I go into a light trance, sometimes I can give information in my normal state. Sit down there, Doctor, and I'll light some incense. It establishes the atmosphere."

The incense was lit. It smelled, Dr. Lawrence thought, better than he had expected. Coils of smoke began to roll between him and Mrs. Casson.

They sat in silence. Once or twice Mrs. Casson cleared her throat. She was sitting, as far as he could see in the dull light, with her elbows on the arms of her chair and her forehead resting on the sheet of paper she held in her hands.

The moments passed. Dr. Lawrence began to wonder when Mrs. Casson would say that she was sorry, but she couldn't get anything. Then he became aware that she was humming a tune.

What was it? Oh, yes, "Sailing, Sailing, Over the Bounding Main." Yes, he thought that was it.

She began to speak. Her voice was considerably deeper than it had been earlier. "There's a ship, an old, old ship with sails.

"There's a mast in the middle. Now it's beginning to sprout leaves. The vines are spreading out from it, there are leaves all over the ship. And the god—the god in the middle—the god—" Her voice faltered, and then strengthened. "The pirates threw him into the water. But the sweet sea beasts bore him up. He played the lyre and rode safe on their backs to Corinth." Mrs. Casson breathed deeply. Then, almost in a shriek, she said, *"Madelaine!"*

She was still sitting with her head resting on her fingers. Very softly the doctor ventured a question. "Where did they take her? Is it far?"

"No, not far. Out—outside the Gate. To the Rock." Mrs. Casson exhaled deeply. Her body slowly collapsed to the right. Her hands dropped to her sides. Her head lolled back.

Dr. Lawrence did not know whether he ought to try to revive her. But after a moment she sat up and yawned. "I went into trance then," she said. "Did I say anything?"

"Yes, quite a bit."

"Was it what you wanted?"

"I think so. I can't be sure."

"Good. I think I told you what my fee is. If you want to sit with me again, I'll be glad—"

"I'll keep you in mind, indeed," the doctor said. He put a bill in her hand. "Thank you very much for your help."

Lawrence drove home slowly, pondering. The stuff about the ship sprouting vines sounded like something from Greek mythology—Dionysus, he rather thought. Mrs. Casson seemed to have fused it with another story, that of Arion and the dolphin. Well. If Madelaine had been taken away from Drake's Bay by a dolphin, or dolphins—well, where would she have gone?

Mrs. Casson had said, "Not far." "The Rock," to anybody who lived near San Francisco bay, would mean Alcatraz, the former site of a Federal prison. But, apart from the fact that the Rock was under continual observation by bay shipping, and hence was an unsuitable place for anyone who wanted not to be seen, it was *inside* the Gate, since it was within San Francisco Bay. Was there any place that was

"not far" from the bay area and outside the Golden Gate that was called "the Rock"?

When he got home, the doctor looked long and thoughtfully at a large-scale map of the central California coast.

Early next morning Lawrence called his secretary at the station and told her that he had been unexpectedly called to Los Angeles. An uncle of his was dying. He would be gone at least a week, perhaps more. He was sorry. He'd be back as soon as he could.

He drove to San Francisco, taking care never to exceed the legal speed limit. He didn't want to be stopped by a highway patrolman. In the city, he left his car at a public garage in Union Square, and took the cable car to Fisherman's Wharf.

Since it was almost the middle of the morning, almost all of the boats that took fishing parties out to fish had already gone. Only two were still at their moorings. Dr. Lawrence went up to the nearer of them.

"Could you take me out to the Farallons?" he said to the skipper.

"The Farallons? What do you want to go there for?"

"Sorry," Lawrence said. He walked on to where the other boat was moored. Here he repeated his question.

"The Farallons? There are twelve of them, mister. There's the Northwest Farallons, and—would you be wanting any special one of them?"

"I want to go to Noonday Rock. Do you know it?"

"Oh, yes, I know the Rock." The man—his name was probably Ben, since the sign over his berth said "Ben's Private Fishing Trips"—nodded slowly. "It's nothing but a rock, though. Straight up and down, about a third of a mile across."

"Yes, I know. Can your boat take me there?"

"I think so," Ben answered a little doubtfully. "It's a good deal farther out than I usually go. It would take about three hours. Be an expensive trip."

"How much?" Lawrence asked.

Ben named a sum. The doctor shifted his polished briefcase to his left hand and got out his wallet. He took out two bills and handed them to the skipper. "Half now, the rest when we get there."

"Would you be wanting to stay long, mister?" Ben asked, folding up the bills and putting them in his purse. He

looked doubtfully at the doctor—a small, neatly dressed man holding a briefcase, while the wind flapped his sharply creased trousers around his legs. "I'd have to get back before dark."

"You won't have to wait for me at all," Lawrence answered. "I want you to leave me there." And then, before the skipper could say anything, "I'm working for the government."

"Oh!" Ben nodded, as if he had received a full and satisfying explanation. "Well, we'd better get started. I want to pick up an extra can of gasoline. Do you get sick?"

"Not usually."

"Well, it'll be a rough trip."

They talked little on the way out. Once Lawrence said, "If anybody comes asking for me, it might be better to say you didn't see me," and Ben replied, "OK." Then the water grew rougher, and Lawrence had to concentrate on keeping his breakfast in place.

They got to the Rock about noon. "This is it," Ben said. "I can't get in any nearer, but it's only a couple of feet deep here.

"You sure you'll be all right? Wait, I'll give you a canteen. There's no water here at all." He handed Lawrence a canvas-wrapped canteen.

The doctor took it. He got out his wallet and paid the rest of his fare. "I think I'll be OK, but come back for me in the morning—oh—five days from now." He gave Ben two more bills, and let himself over the side.

"All right. Good luck. I hope you know what you're doing." He started the engine, and the broad-beamed little boat moved off.

Lawrence watched him go. He felt an instant of panic. Had he marooned himself on this barren rock with only the water in a quart canteen? Five days in this wild spot because a clairvoyant had said something that might mean the girl he was hunting might be here? Then a patch of white moved round the edge of the rock, and his heart steadied.

"Hello," he said when she was near enough. "I thought you'd be here."

"Dr. Lawrence! How did you know where to look for me?"

"A clairvoyant told me," he answered absently. "What

do you do for water and food? There's nothing at all here."

"Oh, we go over to the big island—the one with the automatic lighthouse—at night and bring back water and canned food. There's a cistern there for rainwater, and a shed with lots of surplus canned stuff."

"Who's 'we'? Is there anybody here besides yourself?"

"One man." She looked at him steadily. "Dr. Lawrence, will you help us? We can't have anybody knowing about us who isn't on our side."

Lawrence bent over and began wringing water out of his pants cuffs. "That's something I can't answer until I know what you're trying to do," he said, straightening up.

"We want to free the sea people who are in the research stations. That's the first thing. Then we want to make sure that human beings will never molest them again."

"A large order," Lawrence answered, unsmiling. "Yesss, I'll help you. But I'd like to point out, young lady, that what you have said amounts to a declaration of war on the whole human race."

"Does it? I'm sorry. But we can't help that."

CHAPTER 2

It was a gray day, with the sky lowering and dull and an oily swell on the slate-colored water. Sea gulls wheeled and banked endlessly over the heads of the three Splits who were sitting on the pebbly beach, as close as they could get to us in the water. We—at least a hundred sea people and the three who sat facing us—were holding a council of war.

It had been going on since early morning. There was no disagreement about what we wanted to accomplish; as Madelaine had told Dr. Lawrence, the first thing was to free the imprisoned sea people. But there was much argument as to how we could accomplish it.

The dolphin research and training project—DRAT—was top secret. From the land, only a handful of high-ranking navy officers had access to it, and even they had to pass check points and wait for the opening of locked doors. From the sea, a series of concrete walls and baffles cut our people off from contact with their free element. It was not going to be easy to break down those massive concrete walls.

Madelaine listened to the discussion, her head propped on her hand. Dr. Lawrence sat on her left. His rolled-up trouser legs and sprouting beard gave him a raffish appearance, but he still carried the polished briefcase he had had when he came to the Rock.

Sven sat at Madelaine's right. I was not as used to the faces of Splits then as I afterwards became, but I thought he looked much happier than he had when I first saw him, though he frowned from time to time at what the speakers said. His eyes were often fixed on the girl.

Djuna had been speaking. She had been describing how armed guards were posted on the seaward parts of the walls. "Nobody could get close enough to the concrete to set off a bomb," she told us positively. (The bomb had been a suggestion of Sven's, made about half an hour earlier.)

"There are searchlights, and the guards shoot at anything they see in the water. The navy has nets out, too, and an alarm rings if the mesh is broken. But the guards and the lights are the main trouble. They started stationing guards after a couple of us sea people got out of the pools at Capitola."

Djuna's high, rapid speech stopped. (When we sea people talk to Splits, we have to take pains to pitch our voices low and speak slowly; our communication with each other is out of human auditory range, and very rapid.) There was a silence. The gulls overhead gave their harsh cries. Then Dr. Lawrence, still holding his briefcase, got to his feet.

He cleared his throat and teetered on the balls of his feet for a moment. Then he said, "It's obviously impossible to get the dolphins out by land. Transporting three hundred pygmy whales, each seven feet long, back to the water is something that couldn't possibly be done secretly. We'd be stopped before we got more than a couple out. And Djuna has told us, pretty convincingly, that nobody can get close enough to the sea walls to set off a bomb. But a severe earthquake would break down the walls and give the dolphins access to the sea. We must have an earthquake."

"You mean that we must have a miracle?" Madelaine asked wonderingly.

"No, we must make it happen," Dr. Lawrence answered.

Rain began to fall from the leaden sky, at first a soft pattering, and then bigger drops. "How?" Sven asked, over the growing noise of the rain. He glanced at Madelaine. "It seems to me it would be more difficult to cause an earthquake to order than it would be to get through the guards with a bomb."

Dr. Lawrence squatted down on his heels. He seemed to be uncomfortable standing upright in the increasing rain. "I'm no geologist," he answered. "But sometimes a small initial cause can create great effects.

"The whole California coast is part of the Pacific ring of fire. The San Andreas Rift—a major fault—runs through the San Francisco Bay area, and can be traced along the coast for about six hundred miles. All the DRAT stations are located within this six-hundred-mile stretch.

"A big quake on this part of the coast is long overdue. Sooner or later there *will* be a major quake, and without human intervention. But we need not wait for that. A quake

is, so to speak, waiting to happen. It is up to us to trigger it."

Sven was frowning intently. "How?" he asked again.

Dr. Lawrence drew a handkerchief out of his pocket and mopped at his streaming face. The rain was coming down steadily now. "With a bomb," he said.

He coughed. "If a powerful bomb were placed at a suitable spot, a spot underwater, which would augment the force of the explosion, I think it might do the trick. Of course, we can't be sure till we try it. But I think it would work."

"What would be a suitable spot?" Sven asked.

Dr. Lawrence rubbed the lower part of his face with his right hand. "Ask your sea people," he said. "They must be familiar with the edges of the continental shelf. Ask them if they know a suitable spot."

Through the blurring rain, I could see that Sven and Madelaine were looking at me. "Amtor, do you know of a place like that?" asked Madelaine.

I would have liked to avoid answering. "Yes," I replied reluctantly, "I think I do."

"Where?" Madelaine asked.

"Perhaps—off the coast near Monterey. There's a submarine canyon there."

"Would one bomb do it?" Sven inquired.

"I think so, if it were powerful."

"How do you know that the submarine canyon would be a good place to trigger an earthquake?" Sven asked, frowning. "How can you know a thing like that?"

I was silent, baffled by the impossibility of communicating to him any of the grounds for my belief. Sven was an ally, and almost as close to us psychologically as Madelaine. Even so, our contacts were contacts between a "human" species and a nonhuman one. We communicated across a narrow bridge.

"Our senses are different from yours," I said at last. "You would have to be one of us to know how we know. But we have been aware for a long time that in the canyon was a sensitive spot."

"You didn't mention this when we were discussing how to break down the sea walls on the pools," Dr. Lawrence observed mildly.

"Of course not," I answered. "To cause a quake deliberately would be a violation of the covenant."

Pettrus—a half-brother of mine, and the other dolphin who had escaped with Djuna from the pools at Capitola—came coasting through the water and stopped as close as he could get to where the Splits were sitting on the beach. "A violation of the covenant would be justified in self-defense," he said in his high-pitched voice. "But a quake would kill people, perhaps millions of them, who haven't harmed us and whose deaths wouldn't benefit us. We can't do that."

"But it—" said Dr. Lawrence, and then stopped. He got to his feet, peering through the blur of raindrops toward a commotion in the distant water, a hundred yards or so from the rocky shore. Madelaine had risen, too, and was pressing her hands to her head. She told me afterwards that she had had a sharp, sudden impression of urgency and distress.

We had all turned and were swimming outward. The water held the smell of suffering. Djuna and I bore the messenger—it was Baldus, a full brother of mine—up between our bodies and swam gently with him through the parting ranks of the sea people toward the beach. He was hurt; he would have drowned without our help.

"What is it?" Sven asked. "What's happening?"

No one answered him immediately. We were all clustered around Baldus, listening to his painfully gasped message. Then his body relaxed, and Djuna and I knew he was dead. The smell of death spread through the sea.

"What is it?" Sven repeated. "What's happening?"

We let his body drop gently to the bottom. We would take Baldus later to one of the places where we leave our dead.

"He was a messenger," I told the Splits, who were looking eagerly toward us. "He came to say that the navy has been hunting down sea people with an electric shock device. They have captured about fifty more of us. He was hurt, but managed to escape to tell us what was happening. Now —he is dead."

Dr. Lawrence coughed. The rain showed no sign of slackening. "There's your answer," he said. "If your scruples still bother you, let me point out that human beings wouldn't be bothered by them for an instant. Generally speaking, they are not deterred from an action by respect for their own or any other sort of life."

"Yes," Pettrus answered, rather wobblingly (Baldus had been his half-brother, too, and we sea people love one an-

other), "but we have rather higher standards of conduct for ourselves than Splits do."

Madelaine had been standing immobile, her hands pressed to her breast. Now she said, in a low, carrying voice, "There must be a quake."

We were all looking at her, sea people and Splits alike. "Dr. Lawrence forgot the final argument," she went on slowly. "He says that a quake is long overdue, that it may happen at any time. That means—there might be a quake on a weekday, when children were in school, the stores full of people, the freeways roaring with traffic. But if we make the quake, we can choose the time for it. We can select a time for it when the loss of life will be kept to a minimum.

"Late Sunday night—before sunrise Monday morning—would be best, I think. Yes, that would be a good time. But we must have a quake."

"I ought to have thought of that," Dr. Lawrence said in a rather dissatisfied voice. "But she's right, of course. There will be much less destruction this way than if we merely leave it to nature."

"Can't we warn them a quake is coming?" Pettrus asked hesitantly.

"No. If we warned them, they would strengthen the walls or evacuate the dolphins," Madelaine answered. There was something odd in her voice—there had been something odd ever since she had said, "There must be a quake"—and she stood in the pouring rain without appearing to notice it at all. I did not realize until much later what was affecting her.

"Let's have a vote on it," Dr. Lawrence said, stepping forward. "We three are in favor of having a quake, I know. Amtor, what do your sea people say?"

I felt their minds. It seemed to be unanimous, but I wanted to be positive. "Is there anyone opposed to triggering an earthquake by exploding a bomb in Benthis Canyon?" I asked in the high pitch that is inaudible to human ears.

Silence. "We all think we should try to cause the quake," Pettrus said after a minute. "But it must be on Sunday night, as Moonlight" (that was one of the names we had for Madelaine) "said."

"We are all in favor of the earthquake," I reported. "But it must be on Sunday night."

"Good," said Dr. Lawrence. "Today is Thursday. Sven,

you used to be a demolitions expert. Do you think you can get a bomb for us, perhaps from Port Chicago or Benecia, by sometime on Saturday?"

The doctor seemed to have elected himself our leader. He was intelligent, his plans were realistic. And yet, I did not trust him. I did not trust him at all.

CHAPTER 3

How can an unarmed man get safely away with a bomb from a U.S. Navy arsenal? Sven had devoted a lot of thought to this problem, but the plan of action he had come up with was rudimentary indeed. For the most part, he felt he would have to rely on luck.

He left the Rock before sunset. Madelaine and Dr. Lawrence gave him what money they had with them, and Dr. Lawrence got a prescription pad out of his briefcase and wrote a prescription for a powerful, quick-acting hypnotic.

"I've made the signature 'To be taken as needed,' " he told Sven, unsmiling. "Any drugstore ought to be able to fill it for you." He put the prescription inside his rubber-lined tobacco pouch and handed it to Sven.

Sven put the pouch in his pants pocket, beside his pocket knife. "Does the stuff dissolve quickly?" he asked.

"Yes. It might taste a little bitter. Beer would be a good medium to administer it in."

They shook hands. The doctor wished Sven good luck. Madelaine, more demonstrative, kissed him on both cheeks. Then Sven got on Djuna's back—Djuna and Pettrus were ferrying him to Port Chicago—and was carried away from the Rock. He turned to wave good-bye at Madelaine and Lawrence, standing on the shingle in the glowing light. He was gone.

I should have liked to go with them. A historian ought to be where the action is. But my deformity would have slowed the party down, and three dolphins and a man were a little more apt to attract attention than two dolphins and a man. We didn't want to attract any attention at all. So I stayed behind, near Noonday Rock.

Sven, astride Djuna's back, experienced again the extraordinary contentment he had found before in physical contact with one of the sea people. The contentment was always

there, like a basic theme in a piece of music, and when he speculated about it, he was always surprised by its intensity. The conscious part of his mind was occupied, however, with the problem of the night: how can an unarmed man get safely away with a bomb from a navy arsenal? Not quite unarmed, perhaps—the knife in his pocket had a sharp two-and-a-half-inch blade. But it was splitting hairs to think of the knife in his dungarees as a weapon. He had never used it for anything more serious than stripping the insulation from electric wires.

Sven had been stationed at Port Chicago for two months' special training before he had been shipped out to the Middle East. He'd got to know several of the civilian dockside workers well enough to be on drinking terms with them. He'd liked a fellow Scandinavian, a man named Karl Eting, particularly well. If he could find Karl now—but it had been several years; Karl might not be working at the arsenal any more.

Sven shifted his position on Djuna. To cut down wind resistance, he was leaning far forward, like a jockey. Even so, he knew that carrying him had more than halved her normal cruising speed. Pettrus swam beside them silently, making hardly a ripple in the water. And how cold the water was! When they got to Port Chi, Sven thought, he would have to spend some time rubbing his feet before they would be much use for walking.

The man and the dolphins passed under the Golden Gate Bridge. Sven saw the lights and heard the rush of traffic high over his head. Then they were inside the bay. The water was very slightly warmer here.

The moon had come up. San Francisco was a long blaze of light away to the south. Abruptly Djuna's sleek body shuddered. Sven saw ripples run away from it in the moonlit water. In her high, quick voice she said, "Get on Pettrus' back. Be quick."

Sven made the transfer hastily, asking no questions. When Djuna was relieved of his weight, she shot away northeastward in a great burst of speed.

"What's the trouble?" Sven asked Pettrus. The male dolphin was swimming strongly straight on; Sven had the impression he too was using his reserves of speed.

"Shark," Pettrus said in his quick gabble. "She's gone to try to head it off."

Sven felt a thrill of alarm. He knew, without being told, that the sea people would have nothing to fear from any shark if it were not for him. Their speed, their incredible speed—they were the fastest thing in the whole world of water—was their great safety. But Pettrus was burdened with Sven's weight. And Djuna had shot unhesitatingly away to try to divert the shark.

Sven swallowed and licked his lips. He had said that he would help the sea people. He had not meant that his friends should run any risk because of *him.*

He was bent almost flat against Pettrus' back. The question was no longer, how can an unarmed man get safely away with a bomb? but, more immediately and pressingly, how can a man, armed only with a pocket knife, fight off a shark? His head pressed close to the dolphin's, Sven said, "I have a pocket knife."

"Good. Get it ready." Pettrus plainly didn't want to waste breath on words.

For a few moments Pettrus swam steadily on to the east. Sven had got the knife from his pocket and was holding it open in his hand. As the moments lengthened, he began to hope that Djuna had succeeded in her mission and that the shark had gone after easier prey. Then a quiver ran through Pettrus' body. Sven raised his head quickly. To the right, unmistakable in the moonlight, was a triangular fin.

Well, but it might not attack; sharks were cautious, wary animals. It might find a man on a dolphin's back a combination too disconcerting to molest, it might not attack, it might not . . . might not . . .

Pettrus appeared to share Sven's uncertainty as to the predator's intentions. He had almost ceased to move through the water. Then the fin cut sharply across Pettrus' forward path. It banked, returned, banked, and came back again, each time closer to Pettrus and Sven. The shark was moving in.

There wasn't much doubt now what it intended. Sven felt an odd sort of pressure inside his head, over his eyeballs. It wasn't fear, it came from outside; and Sven, though he disliked it, had sense enough not to resist. He opened his mind to it.

The shark made another pass at them, this time so close that Sven felt the water it disturbed churn around his legs. In a moment it would turn belly up and—

Pettrus attacked. He gave Sven no instructions; it wasn't necessary. Sven knew he must try for the enemy's eyes.

He bent far over, his arm outstretched. Even burdened with a rider, Pettrus could get up a very respectable speed. He had launched himself toward the shark like an arrow shot from a bow.

The shark—angry?, frightened?—had stopped its ominous cruising and was bearing down on them with equal speed. At the last moment Pettrus winced aside. Sven leaned over and struck.

Even a shark's eye is tough. But Sven's knife had the whole force of Pettrus' muscular body behind it. The blade drove in.

The force of the impact almost wrenched the knife from Sven's hand. He held on, gripping Pettrus with his knees. The dolphin turned sharply, at an angle to his former course, and the knife was dragged out of the eye again. A gush of blood followed it.

The shark had gone wild with pain and rage. The water frothed white with the fury of its movements. But it still had one eye left; Sven and Pettrus must try again.

The shark had turned belly up and was driving at them. Sven caught a glimpse of its enormous open shearing jaws. Pettrus veered accurately, at the last moment, but Sven's blow went wild. The shark's file-rough hide took off part of his trouser leg.

Once more. The shark was losing blood, but this did not make it any less formidable an antagonist. Pettrus had been motionless for an instant, trying, Sven thought, to guess what the enemy would do next. Now he gathered himself and drove toward the shark's tail.

It was a feint. Pettrus turned, raking his velvet body against the cruel integument. Sven struck. The knife went deep into the eye. Sven felt it grate against the bone of the eye socket.

Pettrus made a quick turn. The knife stayed in the eye. But this time it did not matter. The enemy was blind. The shark could not even track them by smell; the water was too full of the smell of its own blood.

Sven drew a deep breath. The sense of pressure in his head relaxed. Pettrus began to swim eastward again, toward Port Chicago. They left the shark behind them, churning the water dirty white with its furious blood.

"That was good, Sven," Pettrus said after a little while.

Sven did not answer immediately. He felt that in the struggle just over he had been as much a part of Pettrus as if he had been an arm the dolphin had grown to help in the fight.

"Was it Udra?" he asked at last.

"Yes-s-s. Something like Udra, anyhow. I'm sorry I had to do it so quickly. There wasn't time to ask your permission, Sven. It was an emergency."

"I'm glad you did it," Sven answered sincerely. "How about you? I notice you're swimming a little less smoothly than usual."

Pettrus made a blowing noise with his lips. "I lost some skin that last time, when you put out the other eye. That's one reason we sea people hate the sharks—their hides are so rough. But it's not serious, only unpleasant. It will grow back."

"Is Djuna all right?"

"I think so. There was only the one shark. I think—Yes-s, she's coming this way. She ought to be here in a little while."

Sure enough, in two or three minutes Djuna came coasting up. She nuzzled Sven's bare leg interestedly, and ran her snout along Pettrus' side. She said nothing that was audible to Sven's ears, but he was sure that she was in possession of a full account of the encounter with the shark.

"Get on my back, Sven," she said after a moment. "Pettrus is tired."

Sven was still riding Djuna when they got to their destination. "How will you know when to come for me?" the young man asked as he felt the pebbles of the beach under his feet.

"Don't worry, we just will," Djuna replied. Her voice was a little higher than Pettrus': now that he was used to the sea people, Sven found that their voices were as individual as those of human beings. "But we'll stay away from shore. We don't want to be noticed or picked up." They swam away.

As he walked up from the beach, Sven realized that the adventure with the shark had shaken him considerably. Odd that in an age of nuclear explosives and biological warfare, a shark's jaws could still retain their archaic terribleness.

His shoes were squelching wetly. He took them off one

at a time and drained them. He wrung out his trouser legs. He was wet up to mid-thigh, but the wind ought to dry him. Then he started to look for a pharmacy.

The clerk looked at him a little oddly as Sven gave the prescription to him. The paper the prescription was written on was a little damp, though the words themselves were legible enough; and Sven's sneakers left damp spots on the pharmacy's linoleum floor. But the pharmacist filled the prescription without comment. Sven went out with a plastic vial containing twelve five-grain pale pink tablets, two of which, Dr. Lawrence had said, would be enough to put anyone to sleep for four or five hours.

The hardware store next door to the pharmacy was still open. Sven went in and bought a hunting knife in a leather sheath, which he hung from his belt. He hoped he'd never tangle with another shark. But if he did, it would be good to have a proper knife.

He rubbed his hand over his whiskers. Did he look too disreputable to get into a bar? He thought not—Port Chi was an easygoing sort of place. He'd try the Tantivy—he and Karl Eting used to go there for a drink.

The Tantivy was in the next block. Sven pushed open the swing doors, glad his torn pants leg was on the side away from the bartender. He walked toward the back of the room. And there, just as if they had had an appointment, was Karl Eting sitting at a table over a bottle of beer.

Karl looked up as Sven approached him. "I'll be darned," he said, getting to his feet and extending a hand toward Sven, "if it isn't Mrs. Erickson's little boy Sven! Greetings, my pal! What brings you to this neck of the woods?"

Sven took the outstretched hand and shook it solemnly. "Glad to see you again, Karl. Oh, I just happened to be in Port Chi."

"Girl?" Karl asked, raising his eyebrows. (He was, Sven thought, slightly drunk. The people were haywire who told you you couldn't get drunk on beer.) "I don't think much of your taste. The girls in this town are pigs."

Sven sat down beside Karl. "Not all of them," he replied mildly. "What about Darleen?"

"Darleen and I split up last week," Karl answered moodily. "Waiter, bring my friend a bottle of eastern beer.—I can't stand a woman telling me how to spend my money."

"Um," Sven answered. He had worked the cork out of the plastic vial in his pocket and was surreptitiously shaking out a couple of pills from it.

"This dame you're chasing must be a hell-cat," Karl said sourly. "I never knew you to wear a knife before. Or is she married?"

"I've joined the Boy Scouts, that's all," Sven answered.

Karl found this reply excruciatingly funny. He laughed so hard he choked on the beer he was drinking. Sven might have used the distraction to drop the pills into Karl's glass, but he wasn't sure it would do any particular good to drug Karl, and while he was hesitating, the waiter came up with his own bottle of beer.

"You still working on the dock?" Sven asked as he picked up his glass. "Cheers, Karl."

"Yeah, off and on. See my hard hat? They took new pictures of us yesterday for our badges. Do you think I really look like that?" He tipped the badge on his chest forward for Sven to see.

"It doesn't look much like you," Sven answered. "It could be anybody, just about."

"Yeah, it looks as much like you as it does like me."

"What shift you working?" Sven wanted to know. He must be careful not to act too interested.

"Graveyard. We're loading the *Mauna Loa III* tonight."

"That so? Anything new in boom-booms since I was here?"

Karl finished his beer. "Well, they do say some of the new little ones are mighty powerful stuff."

"Nuclear, you mean? They would be."

"Naw, I don't think so. Just conventional, but awfully, awfully hot. They're underwater mines in pretty little gold cases, about so size." Karl sketched a four-inch shape on the tabletop. "I heard they were a sort of takeoff on cyclonite."

Sven swallowed. It sounded like what he was looking for. Nuclear explosives were out, because they might leave a radioactive residue in the water. It would never do for anybody to suspect a link between a stolen bomb, an underwater commotion, and an earthquake.

"They think up new stuff all the time," he said idly. "Waiter, two more of the same."

"I'm getting near my limit," Karl said warningly.

"Oh, another beer won't hurt you. It's hours before you have to go to work."

"Yeah. Well—"

The waiter brought the beer. Sven filled Karl's glass for him. He was holding the two pink pills against the palm of his hand with two fingers. With a sureness and accuracy that surprised him, he dropped them neatly into Karl's drink.

He slid the glass over to his friend. Karl picked it up and looked thoughtfully down into it. Sven felt a prickle of alarm along his spine. If Karl saw the pills—but the beer had a good head, and the light was poor. Probably he wouldn't notice anything.

Karl sighed and put his glass down without drinking from it. "Sometimes I think I ought not to have busted with Darleen," he said. "She had a good sense of humor, and I could usually get her to sew buttons on my shirts."

"There'll be another dame along pretty soon," Sven said encouragingly.

"Yeah. But it's lonesome right now." Karl sighed again. "Oh, well." He lifted the glass of beer and drank about half of it.

"Wow, that beer's bitter," he said as he lowered the glass. "Tastes more like ale than beer."

"Mine's all right," Sven said. "Maybe he brought you a different brand."

Karl looked at the label. "No, it's the same old Burgie. But they ought to make it this way all the time. This bottle really has some taste."

"You still got the same lead man, Karl?" Sven asked. "When I was here you were working for, I think, his name was Jefferson."

"No. Jeff's been promoted. Abrams is my boss now. He looks just like a gorilla in a comic strip." Karl yawned. "I'm getting awfully sleepy all of a sudden," he complained. "I must have had too much beer."

"It's hot in here," Sven replied. "What do you say we go outside? The cool air would wake you up."

"All right." Karl yawned again and tried to get up from the padded plastic bench. He sank back, looking surprised. "Can't make it," he said. "Mighty peculiar."

"I'll help you," Sven answered. He put his arm around

Karl, under his armpits, and got him on his feet. Then he maneuvered him around the table and started to walk him toward the front of the tavern. Karl cooperated feebly.

As they passed the bartender, Sven pulled a bill from his pocket and handed it to him. "Keep the change," he said.

"OK." The bartender rang up the sale on the cash register. "Your friend looks like he's about to pass out."

"He'll be all right when I get him outside."

The night air, chilly after the damp warmth of the tavern, did indeed revive Karl somewhat. "Where . . . going?" he asked bewilderedly.

"Home."

"Can't. Got . . . go work."

"Home first, work later," Sven answered.

"Awright. Need . . . sleep."

Sven, supporting Karl, stood looking around him. Where was he to deposit Karl after he had taken his friend's identification badge away from him? A warehouse would be a good place, but the nearest warehouse was two or three blocks distant, and Karl could never be made to walk that far. Wait, though. There was a small public park only about a block away from the Tantivy. Sven might be able to stash Karl away under one of the picnic benches in the park. If a cop came along, or he attracted any attention, he'd be done for.

Sven began to propel Karl in the direction of the park. Some of the time Karl's feet moved, but more of the time Sven had to drag him along, like a sled; and Sven's arm was trembling with the strain of keeping Karl upright and in motion before they had gone half a block.

Still, he kept him going. At the end of ten minutes, the park was just across the street from them. Sven began to feel more hopeful. Then a small black and white dog ran out of the shadows of the cross street and began to bark furiously at Sven and his companion.

The animal's short coat was glossy and well cared-for, and tags jingled from its collar. Obviously it was somebody's pet. Equally obviously, it was a yappy, nervous and aggressive animal, what Sven's mother would have called a "nasty little feist." Probably it was barking because it smelled the salt water and shark's blood on Sven's clothing.

The reason didn't matter. The animal's owner couldn't be far away, and if it kept on barking, the owner would come

to see what the trouble was. Sven tried to whistle ingratiatingly. "Here, boy!" he called, "Good fellow! Whew-whew-whew!"

The sound seemed to infuriate the animal. It began barking in paroxysms, its stiff forelegs bouncing up from the sidewalk with the fury of each outburst. Sven felt sweat trickling down his sides.

What was he to do? He couldn't throttle the animal with one hand, and that one his left, and the same objection applied to trying to use the hunting knife. Sven couldn't even kick out at the miserable yapper without overbalancing. Was he, who had blinded a hungry shark with a weapon no more substantial than a penknife, to fail because of a bad-tempered terrier?

Inspiration came. Sven pulled Dr. Lawrence's tobacco pouch out of his pocket. He shifted his grip on Karl from his friend's shoulders to his waist, and bent forward. Then he slapped out at the dog's nose with the tobacco pouch.

The animal jumped back, growling, and then leaped forward again, barking more wildly than ever. Sven repeated the slap. This time, when the dog jumped forward after its recoil, Sven drew back as if frightened. The dog jumped in. And Sven crammed the tobacco pouch into its mouth.

The dog made a choking noise. It began to roll on the ground and paw at its face. Sven was able to get Karl back into position and walk him across the street and into the park. There was still no sound from the dog except muffled gasps.

Sven grinned. He didn't think he had done the dog any real harm; in fact, he had probably improved its manners. If it was still in a barking mood after it got rid of the tobacco pouch, he thought he'd be able to deal with it.

He sat Karl down on a picnic bench. He started to unpin Karl's identification badge, and then paused. Better take Karl's jacket, too—Karl usually wore it to work, and the guard might associate a gray windbreaker with badge number 583. The jacket wasn't exactly a disguise, but it might help.

He worked Karl's lax arms out of the jacket sleeves and put on the garment himself. He felt in Karl's hip pocket, and appropriated the pair of cotton work gloves he found there. Karl's wallet was in the inside pocket of the windbreaker; Sven put the wallet in Karl's shirt pocket, and

carefully buttoned the pocket flap. He put Karl's hard hat on his head. Then he rolled Karl gently off the picnic bench and under the picnic table. Somebody had left a copy of the *Richmond Independent* on the table, and Sven covered his friend up with the sheets of newspaper. He didn't want Karl to catch cold.

Sven left the park. As he passed the cross street, he saw the tobacco pouch, wet with saliva, lying on the pavement. The dog was nowhere to be seen.

What time was it getting to be? Sven's watch, not being waterproof, had stopped running shortly after Djuna had first taken him to Noonday Rock, but he thought it must be somewhat after eleven. If he walked slowly, he'd get to the dock just about the right time.

There was a crowd of men waiting outside the dock gate. Sven joined it, feeling inconspicuous enough in the poor light. The real test would be when he went past the guards.

The crowd of waiting workers was not a talkative one. People who work graveyard are usually sleepy and morose when they go on shift. Some loudmouth was carrying on a monologue about the Giants, but nobody seemed to be listening to him.

The whistle for the end of swing shift blew. The exit gate opened and people came hurrying out. A little later, the entrance gate was opened. The men of the next shift began to file in.

The guards, Marines armed with rifles, stood one on either side of the gate, and the men went past them two abreast. Sven was familiar with the procedure from the time he had spent at Port Chi earlier; he did not think the identity check would be a severe one. Nonetheless, he was considerably relieved when the guard on his side, glancing quickly from Sven's badge to his face, let him by without remark.

The check-in booth, plastered with NO SMOKING signs, was just ahead. Here too another Marine with a rifle stood on guard. Sven passed him, found his time card in the rack inside the booth, and punched it in the time clock. He put the punched card in the appropriate place in the "Out" rack, dropped the two folders of matches Karl's windbreaker had contained in the box labeled "Leave Matches Here," and walked on out. So far so good.

But now he was confronted with a really acute problem.

The *Mauna Loa III*, brilliant with floodlights and temporary lights, was just ahead. Should Sven report for work to Abrams, Karl's lead man, or make himself busy on the dock, or go up the gangplank onto the ship? The proper answer to these questions depended on something he had no way of knowing—whether Karl had been on Abrams' crew long enough for Abrams to associate badge number 583 with Karl's face. Sven couldn't possibly be mistaken for Karl by anybody who knew him well.

On the other hand, if he made a show of activity on the dock, say in the warehouse, piling cases of ammo on pallets for the fork-lift operators, he might be able to escape attention for a good while, and he ought to have a chance of locating one of the mines Karl had told him about. He'd try that.

He walked toward the warehouse on the left. A lot of men were busy there. He was just inside the door when a man whose hard hat bore the insigne of a supervisor spoke to him.

"Where you going, man?"

Sven's heart was beating fast. If he answered that he'd been told to work in the warehouse, the supervisor would ask who told him to, and—"Looking for Abrams, sir," Sven replied.

"He's behind you, on the dock." The supervisor pointed.

"Thank you, sir." Sven turned around and walked toward the man the supervisor had indicated. There was no help for it. The supervisor was watching him. He'd have to risk speaking to Abrams.

Abrams—he really did look a lot like a gorilla in a comic strip—had his hands full of papers. He was frowning and preoccupied. When he looked up, Sven said, "I'm on your crew, Mr. Abrams."

"New man?" Abrams answered, hardly looking at him.

"Transfer from day, sir."

"What's your name?"

"Harry Olsen."

"I guess your transfer slip hasn't come through yet. Well, Harry, go down in number two hold and help unload the skips."

"Yessir."

Sven went up the gangplank, crossed the ammunition

ship's deck, and clambered down into the hold. Whew. But he was all right now.

The men in the hold were moving cases of mortar shells from the skip and stacking them in tiers parallel to the bulkhead. Sven pulled on his cotton work gloves and began stacking cases like the others. The only trouble with his present situation was that he wasn't interested in mortar shells. What he wanted was one of the mines Karl had described to him.

The skip was emptied. The crane took it away. The next load, to Sven's disappointment, was more mortar shells, and after that a skip full of machine-gun rounds.

Time passed. It must be getting near the lunch hour. Karl would be beginning to wake up in thirty minutes or so. And still nothing but ammunition for guns of one or another sort.

The crane let down another load. "Mines," said one of Sven's fellow workers. "Well, it's a change. They don't weigh as much as those damned mortar shells."

Sven licked his lips. Yes, this was what Karl had been talking about. The mines were packed in shallow trays molded to fit them, rather like lidless egg cartons, six to a tray. Each mine appeared to be encapsuled in transparent plastic, with a plastic ring at one end for ease of handling. They were rather pretty, really—elongated spheres of gold-colored metal, gleaming softly through their transparent covering. They reminded Sven of overgrown hand grenades.

"I've never loaded mines before," Sven said to the man who had spoken. "How come they don't have covers on the boxes?"

"Oh, we put plastic dividers between the rows when we load them. I guess it's because when you need mines you don't want to have to waste time taking covers off cases. Or maybe some contractor sold the navy a bill of goods. Who knows why the navy does anything?"

Sven nodded. He picked up a case of mines and carried it over to where the others were putting the cases down. He didn't know what to do. It would be easy enough to pick up one of the mines and put it inside his windbreaker; the hold was full of shadows, and he could take the bomb while he was laying down the plastic divider. His jacket had an elastic strip at the bottom that would help keep the thing in place.

The trouble was the size of the mine. Inside his windbreaker —or anywhere else on his person—it would make a large, prominent, unnatural bulge. The first person who glanced at him would say, "What the hell have you got inside your shirt?"

And yet, he had to act quickly. Karl would be waking up in the next few minutes, and as soon as he realized what had happened, he would go to the police. He would tell them that his jacket, his identification badge and his hard hat had been stolen. It shouldn't take even a Port Chicago policeman more than a few minutes to locate Sven, illegally working in a U.S. Navy arsenal.

The crane lowered another skip into the hold. This time the skip's load was cases of mortar shells. It looked as if no more mines would be coming down for a while.

He'd have to risk it. It might be his only opportunity. Sven began laying down the plastic divider over the top of the last row of mines. When he got to the third box he picked up a mine by the plastic ring and put it in the front of his windbreaker. It was even more prominent than he had thought it would be. It made him look pigeon-breasted. He'd have to try to stay in the shadows. It was the best he could do.

Abrams stuck his head over the hatch coaming. "See if you can't get those shells off the skip before lunch, men," he yelled. "You, Harry—aren't you done with the mines yet?"

"In a minute, sir," Sven answered, "I—"

The whistle blew for lunch.

Sven felt an intense relief. At the first note of the whistle everybody had put his load down and hurried toward the foot of the hatch ladder. Now they were swarming up it, one after the other. It would take only a reasonable amount of dawdling for Sven to manage to be the last man out of the hatch.

It worked. Everyone was in a hurry to be off the ship and start eating lunch. Sven got out of the hold and up on deck without anyone seeming to notice him. But as he started to go behind the deckhouse, where he would be safe from observation by anybody on the dock, Abrams, who was going down the gangplank, turned and caught sight of him.

"Harry! Where are you going?" he yelled.

"After my lunch, sir. I left it on the deck."

"OK. Remember, you're not supposed to eat on the ship."

"Yessir."

He hadn't seemed to notice the unnatural bulge of Sven's chest. Perhaps Abrams was nearsighted, perhaps he was in too much of a hurry for his lunch to be observant. It didn't matter. Sven had no time to waste in speculation.

The *Mauna Loa* was riding lower in the water now. Sven stepped over the deck rail. He hesitated for the fraction of a second. Then he let himself down into the water as noiselessly as he could. He began to swim away from the ship.

CHAPTER 4

"Do you see the little knob, there, inside of the plastic?" Sven asked. Djuna and Pettrus had brought him safely back to the Rock about dawn; and now, late Saturday afternoon, he was explaining to us the working of what he had stolen.

"Pulling the knob out activates the mine. If it's pulled out only a little way, the explosion takes place at the end of ninety seconds. If the knob's pulled out fully, the mine goes off in about ten minutes. Of course, we want to delay the explosion as long as we can, so that whoever drops the mine into the submarine canyon will have time to get as far away as he can, to avoid the shock waves.

"Pulling out the knob also activates a magnet, so the mine will adhere to a metallic surface. We don't have to worry about that one way or the other. Until the knob is pulled—and it takes a considerable tug to start these things ticking—the mine is as harmless as a block of wood."

Sven had been showing the mine to us sea people, who were clustered around him in the shallow water. Now he turned and waded back to the rocky beach, where the other two Splits were. He laid the mine down on the sand, among the pebbles, and looked at it a little ruefully.

"I wish we didn't have to use it," he said. "I don't suppose any other mine in history has caused as much damage as this one will. It's in a good cause, of course. But human history is full of people hurting other people for what they considered good reasons."

Dr. Lawrence raised his eyebrows a little. "How high-minded you all are," he said mockingly. "Even the dolphins, whose very existence is at stake, have scruples about incidentally killing some of their enemies. Speaking personally, I can regard the elimination of half the human species without emotion. If we don't do it, they'll do it themselves. Are

you trying to tell us, Sven, that you object to detonating the mine?"

Sven's face turned red. "Of course not. I stole it, didn't I? I only wish we didn't have to use it, that's all."

Dr. Lawrence turned his attention to the girl. "How about you, Madelaine? You were willing to declare war on the whole human race. Do you have qualms about it now?"

Moonlight got to her feet, rubbing the round red dents the pebbles had made in her knees. "Qualms, of course. But it must be done," she said.

"Good, I'm glad we agree about that," Lawrence answered.

"Yes. How long will it be after the mine is exploded before the earthquake occurs?"

Sven and the doctor looked at each other. "I have no idea," Lawrence said. "Amtor, can you make a guess?"

I blew water for a moment. "It depends on a series of things. We sea people are familiar with underwater disturbances, of course, but we're not geologists. I think—between four and twelve hours. Certainly not more than twelve hours."

"And how long will it take us to get from here to Monterey?" Madelaine asked.

"Carrying you? About ten hours. We could make it in three hours, by ourselves."

"So, if we detonate the mine at six tomorrow evening, the quake should occur between ten o'clock at night and six in the morning. I suppose that's as accurate as we can get," Madelaine said.

"Yes. Well, I think that will do," Lawrence replied. "Pettrus, you, Ivry and Djuna will leave tomorrow morning about eight, taking Sven on your backs. When you get to the proper spot, which you can ascertain by diving, Sven will pull the knob and drop the mine.

"Madelaine and I will wait here on the Rock. If it looks as if the Rock were going to be inundated by a tidal wave, we'll ride the quake out on the backs of a couple of the dolphins."

"No, that won't do," Madelaine said. She faced the doctor, looking directly into his eyes. She was a little shorter than he, so she had to look up to do it, but her gaze was unwavering. After a moment, Lawrence's eyes dropped.

"Amtor must go with Djuna and Ivry—not Pettrus, because he has lost too much skin—and I must go with them," Madelaine went on. "It will be better that way."

"Why Amtor?" Lawrence asked with a frown. "He can't swim as fast as the others."

"I know. But it must be Amtor, because he has a usable hand.

"If Sven drops the activated mine from the surface, it will be difficult to control where it explodes. There are too many currents to take into account. But if Amtor dives with the mine in his mouth, he can use his hand to pull out the knob when he is as deep as he can go. Then he can drop the mine at the best spot. You could do that, couldn't you, Amtor?"

"Yes, I think so," I answered. "I have no thumb, but I can catch the knob between two of my fingers and pull on it. I can pull fairly hard with my fingers. I can pull the fins off a fish with them."

"Why can't Djuna dive with the activated mine in her mouth?" Lawrence demanded critically.

"It would cut down her escape time too much. When the dolphins go down their maximum depth, they have to do it slowly. No, Amtor is the one."

Moonlight was obviously right. "Very well," Lawrence agreed stiffly. "But why must you go with them, Madelaine? One person riding a dolphin can escape observation more easily than two can. Your going with them doubles the risk."

"Oh, yes. But I had better go with them. I feel sure of it."

"Precognition?" the doctor asked keenly, forgetting his annoyance.

"I suppose so. Anyhow, I'd better go with them."

"Very well," Dr. Lawrence repeated. "Since Amtor is going with you, you had better start a little early, say about seven o'clock."

He seemed to think that Madelaine would object to this suggestion also, but she nodded agreeably. "All right. Sven, have we enough canned food for supper? I'm getting hungry."

"I don't remember what we have. Let's go see." Sven picked up the mine from the sand and put it inside his jacket. He and Madelaine walked away together.

It was time for us sea people to be thinking about supper,

too. The others were already swimming away from Noonday Rock. As I started after them, I turned to look at Dr. Lawrence. I could not see his expression. His head was inclined thoughtfully. He was still holding his briefcase by the handle.

We left the Rock a little before seven Sunday morning. Dr. Lawrence held up his hand to us in salute as we left. The eternal briefcase was still in his other hand.

It was a fine morning. I think we all were happy. Madelaine was radiant, and Sven looked almost as happy as she did. As for us sea people, if we hadn't been carrying passengers, we would have leaped from the water in our joy over and over again.

Madelaine was riding Ivry, a cousin of mine, and Sven sat on Djuna's back. I carried nobody, but of course it was planned that I should take my turn when the other two got tired. Sven had a package of food inside his jacket, next to the mine, and Moonlight was wearing Dr. Lawrence's canteen on a strap around her neck. It was rather slender equipment for people who were setting out to produce a major earthquake, but we hoped it would be enough.

As the morning wore on, Madelaine's euphoria seemed to wane. I thought at first that she was getting tired—the Splits say that riding one of us for more than a few hours is exhausting, because they cannot change position—and then that she must be depressed by the thought of all the destruction we were going to cause. She told me later that it was neither of these, but a cloud of foreboding that had settled over her. Some peril lay ahead of us, and she could not guess what it might be.

We were swimming well out from shore, to avoid being seen, but about noon we put in to a little cove, quite deserted, and let our passengers off to stretch their legs and eat the food they had brought with them. Then we resumed our journey down the coast.

We got to Benthis Canyon about five. This was good; it meant I would have time for an exploratory dive before I went down with the bomb.

We sea people are good divers. We can go down almost as far as a Split can in a diving suit, and of course we can descend and come up considerably more quickly. The sun was low, but I thought I should be able to see as much as

was necessary. Our vision is excellent—I have heard a Split who dissected a number of us say that the dolphin eye was "an anatomical marvel"—and we have other quasi-visual senses besides.

I dived. There is no use in my trying to describe what a dolphin sees when it dives. The sea people know what it is like already, and Splits are not yet ready to understand. But when I came up to the surface again, a few minutes later, I was puzzled by what I had seen and sensed. The light was poor, it was true, and I had been almost at my maximum depth. But there was something odd about the bottom. It was other than I had remembered it, though I couldn't be sure what the difference was. Still, the currents seemed unchanged. If I dropped the mine where I had planned to, it should drift downward with the current to the right spot.

"All OK?" Sven asked. He seemed aware of my puzzlement.

"I think so. I think it's all right to drop the bomb."

"Good." He got the heavy little object out of his windbreaker and stripped the plastic covering from it. "See the knob on the side? Pull it out as far as it will go, about six inches. You won't have any trouble pulling it while the mine is in your mouth?"

"I don't think so. But, Sven, the sea people must start swimming north with you and Moonlight before I go down. You must be at least a mile away when I pull the knob. There is no use in having the rest of you run any extra risk."

"All right." He gave me the bomb.

Ivry and Djuna began swimming away northward with their passengers. I saw Madelaine looking at me anxiously, her hands pressed to her breast. I went under again.

I was a little nervous, I do not mind admitting it. Sven was familiar with high explosives, but I had never carried such a thing in my mouth before. I kept wondering what I would do if the knob stuck when it was only a little way out. My descent was necessarily rather slow, and I had time to have a good many unpleasant ideas. Then I was at the point where I would have to release the activated mine.

I bent my head forward and found the knob on the mine with my fingers. Yes, that was it. Now. I gave a good hard pull.

The thing in my mouth had begun to tick. The knob

seemed to be pulled out about six inches—anyhow, it wouldn't go any farther. I let it fall.

Again I had the sense of something different about the bottom. Too late now to worry about it. I began to swim toward the surface in a long upward slant.

There was no sign from the depths behind me. I reached the surface, breathed deeply and gratefully, and looked about for the others.

There was still a little red in the west. I had no difficulty at all in finding the Splits and the dolphins against the smooth, reflecting surface of the sea.

They were moving northward at a fair speed. I exerted myself, and was soon almost up with them. I would have nuzzled Djuna's side in a moment, when Madelaine, turning toward me, cried loudly and imperatively, "Swim! As fast as you can! All of you! Quick! Swim! Swim!"

It never entered any of our heads to question or disobey her. Djuna and Ivry shot through the water, and I, though my acceleration is poor, kept up with them. If we ever slowed down, Madelaine screamed at us to swim faster. Her voice was harsh with fear.

There came a confused roar from behind. "Hurry, hurry!" Madelaine cried. None of us looked back.

A pulsation in the water struck our bodies. It was not strong enough to be dangerous, and I wondered why Madelaine was so frightened. I may have slowed down a little, for Moonlight cried anxiously, "Hurry! We're not safe yet!"

The water around us was full of small particles. We were almost at our limit of endurance; we would have to slacken speed soon. Madelaine must have known this, for she said encouragingly, "Only a little farther. . . . All right. You can go slower now."

It wasn't any too soon. For a while we were all silent, except for the noises of our breathing. The sunset glow had left the sky, and the moon had not come up. Then Sven said, "What was the danger, Maddy? Why did they have to swim so fast?"

"Because—Amtor, when you dived in the canyon, did you notice anything unusual about the bottom?"

"Yes." I was still out of breath. "Thought so. Not sure."

"Could what you noticed have been a number of big metal drums?"

"Yes."

"Metal drums? What was in them?" Sven asked.

"Radioactive wastes from nuclear reactors," Madelaine answered. "I expect the canyon seemed a safe place to dispose of them."

Sven drew in his breath. Madelaine went on, "Just before I called to the dolphins to swim as fast as they could, I saw a—a picture of the mine exploding against a big metal drum. I didn't know what it was. It frightened me. Then the drum broke, and I saw a fountain of deadliness shooting up from it. I knew then what it was. That was when I cried out.

"We're safe now, I think. Only the fringe of it brushed us."

We were swimming quite slowly now. We sea people have great endurance—we can keep pace with a ship for days—but we were carrying passengers, and we had had to draw on our reserves of energy in a way that was unusual even for an emergency. Also, we were beginning to get hungry, and of course we couldn't hunt fish while we were carrying Sven and Moonlight.

Sven said, "I suppose the magnet in the mine attracted it to the drum. But if the force of the mine was expended against the drum, will there be an earthquake? We hadn't calculated on the explosion happening that way."

"I don't know. Amtor might."

"Makes no difference," I answered. "Lateral force is the same. There will be a quake."

"When?" the young man asked.

"I don't know. Before we get back to the Rock."

"Will we know when it happens?" Madelaine asked.

"I don't think you will," Djuna replied. "We'll stay well out at sea. *We* will. The water feels different to us."

Sven said, "Are you hungry, Madelaine? There's lots more corned beef."

"Why—yes, I guess I am. Perhaps the dolphins would like some of it, too."

Sven broke a piece of meat from the slices he was carrying. He reached over and held it to Djuna's nose. She sniffed at it.

"We can't eat it," she said. "It is too salty for us to handle. But you Splits might as well eat."

"All right." Sven and the girl ate the meat and washed it down with water from the canteen.

Madelaine bent over Ivry's back and dabbled her fingers

in the sea water to clean them. "I'm getting sleepy," she said, straightening up. "Ivry, when do you sea people sleep?"

"While we are going through the water," he answered her. "I slept a little just now. That is how we can swim such distances."

"You mustn't go to sleep, Moonlight," I said. "Talk to Sven. We can listen. Talking will help both of you to stay awake."

"All right," Sven said. "When you were washing your hands just now, Maddy, I noticed you were feeling your feet. Are they cold?"

"Cold!" She laughed. "They're so cold they don't seem to be my feet any more. They might belong to somebody else. They're swollen, too, and I ache all over from sitting in one position for so long. And yet I'm happy. I'm always happy when I'm with the people of the sea. Do you know what I mean, Sven?"

"Of course. I feel it, too. The halves are made whole with them."

"That's because you remember the covenant," I said.

"What do you mean by that?" Sven asked.

"It's a little difficult to explain. I—excuse me a moment, please." I had perceived that a fish, large and meaty, was swimming along unconcernedly a few feet away from me.

I was after it in a flash. It took alarm, but of course I was much faster than it, and I caught it with no difficulty at all.

Where there is one fish there are apt to be others, so I gave half my catch to Djuna and the other half to Ivry, and went after another for myself. They were good fish, with plenty of firm fat meat, and we all felt better after the snack.

"When you say you 'saw a picture,' what do you mean?" Sven was saying when I began listening again. "Do you see a real picture of something happening?"

"No. Not exactly. Sometimes it's just words. When Amtor was trying to get in touch with me, I heard words. But when I saw the mine exploding, I did see a picture. It was a picture on a black background, with the detail done in faint glowing lines, something like a photographic negative."

"Do you think the mine and the metal drums really looked like the picture you saw?"

"No, they wouldn't have been luminous. I don't suppose there was any light at all at that depth.

"You sound like Dr. Lawrence, Sven. He always wants to know how it is when I see things."

Sven laughed. "Did you have foreknowledge of it? You were sure we'd need you when we exploded the mine."

"I guess so. I'm not trying to be mysterious, Sven. I really don't know."

"How do you feel about the quake? The dolphins seem sure there's going to be one."

"Oh, something is going to happen. I feel anxious about it. I said I was happy, but there's a cloud of fear. Trouble is coming."

"And after the trouble?" Sven pressed her.

"I can't see that far. But we're with the sea people. I feel happy *now*."

"I wonder what time it is," Sven said.

"About ten," I told him. "We can tell from the tide."

"Out at sea like this?" he said.

"Oh, yes-s-s. The stars help us, too."

Now that we had eaten and rested, we were swimming faster. Madelaine looked up at the sky. "Look, the pointers of the Dipper are pointing straight down at Polaris. How odd that such an insignificant star should be the pivot of our heavens."

"I've heard it's a compound star," Sven answered.

"Is it? That must be Vega, coming up in the northeast, but I don't see Altair. It must be too early for it yet." She yawned and shivered.

"Would you like my jacket, Maddy?" Sven said.

"No, thank you. Being cold helps me to stay awake."

About ten-thirty I took Sven on my back to let Djuna rest. He made the transfer awkwardly, and I realized that his joints were stiff with cold.

Time passed. A little after eleven, Djuna said, "Do you Splits feel any difference in the water on your legs?"

"No," Madelaine answered, "but my legs are so cold I doubt I could feel anything. How about you, Sven?"

"I don't notice anything. Is it—?"

"Yes-s," Djuna answered. "There's been an earthquake shock."

Madelaine let out her breath. "I think we've all been waiting for it. Now it's come. Will there be more shocks?"

"Of course. A lot of pressure had built up in the earth."

"I'm sorry we had to do it," Madelaine said soberly, "but I don't regret having done it. How about Noonday Rock? Will the quake be felt there?"

"I don't think so," I told her. "It's not on the San Andreas Rift. There might be heavy waves sweeping over the Rock. Don't worry about Dr. Lawrence, Moonlight. If there is any danger, one of our people will have taken the doctor on his back and gone out to open sea with him."

"Oh, I'm not worried about him." She laughed. "The doctor impresses me as a person who would always take good care of himself."

From then on, as we swam up the coast, there was a quake every few minutes, and we reported each of them to our passengers. Out at sea as we were, the only gross sign of the series of earthquakes was the choppy surface of the water, but it must have been a night of increasing terror on land.

About three a drizzling rain began to fall, and Sven made Madelaine, who was shivering violently, take his windbreaker. A little later the moon rose, and the light was a comfort to all of us.

"I wonder if the concrete walls around the training pools have broken yet?" Madelaine said. "And if they have, did the sea people all manage to get out? You know the spiritual, Sven, about how 'Joshua fit de battle of Jericho'? We started an earthquake. *Did* 'de walls come a-tumblin' down'?"

"We ought to know pretty soon," Sven said.

The east began to lighten. The sun was about half above the horizon when we saw, coming across the water toward us from the north, a marvelous sight.

It was a flotilla of sea people, more than two hundred of them, and though they were coming very fast, they hardly seemed to move in the water so much as in the air. They leapt and tumbled, they turned head over tail in their exuberance, they seemed to frolic in the air like birds, free creatures in their free element. The light glinted from their glistening bodies. The surface of the water seemed to laugh.

"What is it?" Madelaine cried. She was leaning forward eagerly, shading her eyes from the rising sun with one hand. "Amtor, Amtor! Is it what I think?"

"Yes," I told her. I was so excited I could hardly talk. It

was a real effort for me to force my speech into the slow tempo and low pitch of human communication. "They're free. I think they're all free, all the dolphins that were in DRAT training centers. They're saying that the walls broke and crumbled, the walls fell into bits all along the coast. They swam away unhindered. They're free."

The fleet of dolphins was all about us now. I recognized many friends and kinsmen, and among them one who was not a kinsman and who was dearer to me than any friend could be—Blitta, my mate, who had been shut up in a DRAT station for more than two years. Even now, I feel much emotion at her name.

"It worked, then," Madelaine said. Her voice was full of astonished fruition. "I didn't really think it would. You stole the mine, Sven, Amtor dropped it, and now the sea people are free."

She drew a deep breath. "Whatever happens, we can always remember this, the morning when the air seemed full of joy like the sound of singing voices. The morning when the sea people were set free."

The sun was well up now, golden among clouds in the east. The first shock of delight had abated a little, and we began to swim northward more soberly. Sven looked around at the dolphins in the water.

"Isn't that you, Pettrus?" he said. "What happened on Noonday Rock when the quakes came? Where is Doctor Lawrence?"

"Lawrence is all right," Pettrus answered. "There were only two little shocks on the Rock, but there were a lot of waves. One big one swept almost over the Rock.

"When we knew the waves were coming, I had the doctor get on my back and I swam well out to sea with him. He stayed on my back for several hours. He never let go of his briefcase the whole time." Pettrus made the grunting noise that indicates amusement with us.

"When the dolphins from the DRAT pens began to arrive on the Rock—oh, we were so excited!—he suggested that we should all go to meet you. I asked him to come with us, but he said he'd had enough of sitting on a dolphin's back with his legs in the water. He said to leave him on the Rock.

"We were too excited to argue with him, and we didn't think there would be any more waves. We were eager to

meet you and let you see that the quake had broken down the walls and let our people escape. So we left him there, on the Rock."

"Weren't there more dolphins in the pens at the naval research stations than this?" Madelaine asked.

"Oh, of course. Only the ones from the northernmost station swam out to the Rock. The others made for the open sea. They must be many miles away from the coast by now."

Madelaine did not ask how Pettrus knew this; and indeed, it would have been hard for him to give her an explanation she could understand. Our senses—even our extrasensory senses—are different from those of Splits.

As we swam north our entourage of dolphins began to drop away from us. This was partly because we knew that such a large number of sea people would be bound to attract attention, even under post-earthquake conditions, and partly because we knew there weren't enough fish in these coastal waters to keep such a large group of dolphins fed. It takes a lot of fish to keep a full-grown dolphin adequately nourished. By the time we reached Noonday Rock, there were only about ten sea people still with the party—those of us who had been at the Rock more or less permanently, plus two or three from the DRAT station. My own Blitta stayed, of course.

Sven, though stiff, managed to clamber off my back and wade ashore. But Moonlight was almost unable to move. He had to lift her off Ivry and half-carry her up on the beach.

Her feet were no longer swollen, but shrunken and blue. He wanted to help her rub them, but she insisted he take care of himself first. It took a lot of massage before either of them could walk normally.

"Where's Dr. Lawrence?" Sven asked as he helped Madelaine to her feet after the rubbing. "I'm surprised he hasn't come to meet us."

"Let's go look for him."

They set off hand in hand to walk around the Rock, stopping now and then to call, "Dr. Lawrence! Dr. Lawrence!" We sea people watched them silently.

They came back in about fifteen minutes. "He's not on the Rock," Sven said positively. "I even climbed up to see if he could be hiding at the top. He's not here."

Madelaine was looking disturbed. "What could have happened to him?" she said. She fingered her lips uncertainly. "Perhaps there was another wave, a big one, and it swept him clean off the Rock. It's the only thing I can think of. Anyhow, he seems to be gone."

"Certainly does," Sven agreed.

I said nothing. I did not think Dr. Lawrence had been swept off Noonday Rock. I remembered my earlier mistrust of him.

CHAPTER 5

When I think of what happened next, I always see it against a background of raging waters, a boiling sea whose froth is muddy pink. And that is odd, for it happened a little after noon on a bright, calm, windless day. The pink tinge in the water is an accurate recollection, though. I wish it were not.

We ought to have left the Rock as soon as we realized Dr. Lawrence was gone, of course. Looking back on it, I find it strange that we took his disappearance so calmly. Even I, who mistrusted him, was not much alarmed. Partly this was because we could not be sure what *had* happened to him—the little fishing boat that had brought him to Noonday Rock in the first place might have taken him away again, and in too much of a hurry for him to have left a note—and partly because we sea people were in a mood of great euphoria.

We dolphins are normally optimistic and good-tempered, and the unexpected rescue of our friends from the DRAT pens had made us feel that nothing bad could ever happen to us again. Our world has always been a good place, except for sharks.

Sven and Madelaine, being human, could reasonably have been expected to be more suspicious than we, and Madelaine was certainly apprehensive of trouble to come. But neither of them seemed to connect the danger with Dr. Lawrence at all. Perhaps the navy's experiments in the use of psi phenomena had something to do with their myopia.

Dr. Lawrence had told us once that the navy had been investigating psi phenomena with a view to military use. Perhaps an experiment was being carried out that morning that had the unintended effect of blunting Madelaine's normal perceptiveness. I have never been able to find out for sure.

At any rate, we were still at the Rock a little after noon

on Monday. Sven and Madelaine had slept for a few hours after our arrival there, and Sven had then gone with Djuna to the big island to bring back some canned goods and drinking water. He did not think there would be any danger of being observed, even in broad daylight, so soon after a major earthquake had shaken the coast. People would be too occupied with their own troubles to notice one man on an unimportant island.

Moonlight—she had grown so tanned from exposure that the name was no longer apt for her—was sitting on the rocky beach talking to us. The sea people had been released from their prisons, but the hardest part of what we had undertaken—making sure that human beings would never molest us again—was still in front of us. As Dr. Lawrence had said, it was a large order. None of us had a clear idea how it was to be done.

Blitta was close beside me in the water. We were so happy to be together again! The sea was too cold for us to think much about mating, but we were planning to slip away for a few days to the warm blue South Pacific. We had been separated for two years.

Abruptly Madelaine got to her feet, pressing her hands against her breast. She seemed to be listening. Then she yelled at us, "Dive, all of you! Swim out and dive! Quick!"

She turned and ran up from the beach toward the rock.

We acted on her warning instantly. But Blitta, who was not used to trusting Splits, was a little slower about obeying than the rest of us. This momentary hesitation of hers was certainly the reason why . . .

A plane appeared out of the empty sky. It was a very fast reconnaissance plane. It swooped down over the Rock.

It came so low that Madelaine, who had pressed herself against the rock face for protection, said she thought it was going to gut itself on the granite crest. She could see the big navy insignia on its belly and wings.

The plane pulled out of its dive at the last minute. It was only a few yards above the rocky beach. Bullets began to patter. The plane was straffing the water and the shore.

The barrage lasted only an instant. Then the plane was up and high in the air again like a flash of light.

It circled the Rock twice, very high. Madelaine, hugging the granite wall, hoped it was going away. Then it made another swoop. Bullets pocked and whined against the hard

surface. This time the plane was straffing the Rock.

I don't know whether or not the pilot saw Madelaine. Probably not, or he would have continued his straffing until he killed her. At any rate, he made one more pass over the top of the crest, while the bullets spatted. Then he shot up and away. In an instant he had vanished in the east.

Madelaine came running down to the water. "Amtor! Blitta! Ivry!" she called. "Are you—"

She stopped. She had seen the pink tinge in the ripples on the little beach. "Who's hurt?" she demanded anxiously. "Who's been hurt?"

"It's Blitta," I replied after an instant. "She's—Moonlight, I think she's dead."

"Oh, Amtor!"

"The pilot hit her twice. The first bullet went in her back, I think. The second—it must have gone into her heart."

Madelaine was silent. For the first time since the straffing, I looked at her. Then I saw that she had been wounded. Her left shoulder was streaming with blood.

"Maddy, you've been wounded," I said.

"Have I?" she replied absently. "It doesn't hurt."

"It will. We must get Sven and have him bandage it for you."

"There's no time," she answered. "There's not time for anything, Amtor. We haven't even time to warn Sven. Dr. Lawrence has betrayed us. That was a navy scouting plane. There'll be fifty planes here soon. We must leave the Rock."

Was this the trouble Madelaine had forseen for us? There was no time for speculation—no time even for grief. She was right. The air would be full of bombers in a few minutes. Lawrence had betrayed us. We must leave the Rock.

CHAPTER 6

Madelaine's shoulder kept bleeding. The left side of her dress was soaked with blood. From the look of the wound and what happened later, I think it must have been made by a flying rock splinter chipped off one of the places where the sea gulls used to perch. It was a long gash, not very deep, but it ought to have been stitched up by a doctor.

We did not discuss where we should go. Really, we had little choice. It was plainly impossible to take Sosa (we called Madelaine that sometimes, after a dolphin heroine) westward, to the open sea. The nearest land in that direction was China. North or south, along the coast, the nearest place where we could put Madelaine ashore was the Channel Islands, and that was much too far.

That left the east, back to the shaken California coast, with forty miles of water between us and the mainland. What place should we head for? Sosa, on Ivry's back, said, "Try for Drake's Bay. There's water there." She passed her tongue over her lips.

Her wound, I thought, was making her thirsty. But Drake's Bay seemed a good idea. Since it was a public beach, there would be drinking fountains with fresh water, and it was most unlikely anybody would be there, bathing or fishing, on the day after a full-scale earthquake. Sosa-Madelaine could rest there for a day or two. She could even make a fire without rousing suspicion, and do a little cooking. We could catch fish for her.

My mind held other thoughts than these, of course—concern for Sven, worry about the bombers that were certainly approaching, and constant, not yet fully apprehended grief for Blitta's death. As we began to leave the Farallons behind, Sosa turned to look at the lighthouse, still visible above the horizon. "I hope Sven saw the plane," she said. She swallowed. "If he did, he'll realize what happened. Can

any of you make mental contact with him?"

"No," Pettrus answered. "Or with Djuna, either."

The girl sighed. "I ought to have realized the navy plane was coming before I did," she said. "Something is getting in the way of our minds."

Nobody said anything for a while. Ivry was swimming in the middle, with Pettrus on his right and me on his left. I began to wonder why we hadn't heard the bombers yet. Would they see us from the air, or would they be so intent on their target, Noonday Rock, that we could hope to go unnoticed? Moonlight's shoulder had stopped bleeding, anyhow.

She stirred uneasily on Ivry's back. "I think—yes, yes, they're coming. Dive, all of you! Ivry, too. I'll hold my breath. Don't come up until I kick you, Ivry. Dive!"

She filled her lungs. Ivry and the rest of us went under as smoothly as we could.

Ivry said afterwards that he was torn between a wish to go as deep as he could and a fear that Sosa couldn't stand the sudden increase in pressure. We all were afraid the bombers would see the disturbance in the water and drop explosives on us. One bomb in the right place, and Madelaine's "war against the human race" would have come to an end then and there.

Under the water, I looked anxiously at Madelaine. She had gripped her legs hard against Ivry's sides and was bent over against him with her hands behind his flukes. I didn't know how much air her lungs could hold. Blood from her shoulder made a faint haze in the water. She was very pale.

We could hear the roar of the planes overhead. It seemed to go on for a long time. We didn't know whether or not the girl could hear it. Ivry said he thought she was never going to give him the signal to go up. We were all afraid that she might faint. But at last I saw her left foot move against Ivry. It was the sign to surface. We could go back to the air.

We had been swimming forward while we were under water. We came up a good many yards from where we had submerged. Sosa was breathing in deep gasps. The blood stains on her white dress had turned to a rusty pink. But we seemed to be safe for a while.

Then I saw that the submersion had washed the blood clot from her shoulder. The wound was bleeding again. She

lost more blood before a new clot formed.

We got to Drake's Bay a little before sunset. As far as we could see from the water, there was nobody at all there. Madelaine got off Ivry's back and walked unsteadily through the surf to the beach.

"I'm so thirsty," she said. "I'll try to get a drink. I'll be back."

We waited silently. In about five minutes she came out into the surf again, still walking unsteadily.

"The drinking fountain was working," she said. "I was afraid the pipes might have broken in the quake, but they hadn't. I had a big drink." She giggled. I thought she sounded a little light-headed.

"There must have been a big wave here last night," she said. "Wood's been washed high up on the beach. But I found a place, sheltered from the wind, where there are still coals from a picnic fire. I can bring wood and make up a fire. I can sleep in the sand. There's nobody here."

"Would you like us to bring you fish to cook?" I asked. The broad red disk of the sun was almost under the horizon.

"No, I'm not hungry. Water is all I want." She looked at us thoughtfully, pinching her lip. "Don't go back to the Rock tonight, any of you," she said. "I don't know what's happened to Sven. I wish I knew. But you mustn't go back to find out about him or—or for anything." (She was thinking, I knew, about Blitta.) "The navy will be sweeping the water around the Rock and the other islands, trying to catch any of the sea people they can. Don't go."

"All right."

"Tomorrow," she said, swallowing—her throat was dry again—"we'll talk about what to do. Tonight—I'm too dizzy. My head's not clear."

We were all nuzzling her hands. "Good night, dear Amtor," she said. "Good night, dear Ivry, dear Pettrus. Good night."

"Good night."

After she had been gone a while, we saw a red glow spring up under the cliffs to the right of where we had put Madelaine ashore. So we knew she had managed to make her fire.

The night passed. We caught fish, we slept in snatches, we talked a good deal. I kept thinking about Blitta, wondering whether her body was still rolling in the water near

Noonday Rock, or whether the navy had found her and had taken her away to dissect. They were always eager to dissect us, so they could find out more about how our bodies worked.

Several times during the night we tried to make mental contact with Sven, but we always failed. We couldn't reach Djuna either, and that made us afraid of what might have happened to them. We discussed Dr. Lawrence's defection, too. We speculated about how he had left the Rock, and what had led him to betray us, when he had seemed less disturbed by the prospect of the earthquake than the rest of us had.

About three o'clock, when Regulus was setting, there was a slight earthquake shock, and a few minutes later we felt another one. There were no more shocks after that. The earth had settled down to a new period of repose. We heard planes during the night, too, but I don't know whether they were navy planes out scouting for us, or just the ordinary air traffic.

Dawn came. We expected Madelaine from moment to moment, but she didn't come. It was broad daylight, nearly eight o'clock, before she came wading out through the surf to us.

"A man saw me," she said without preamble. Her eyes were large and luminous, and she was trembling. "I went to the fountain for water, and he saw me. I think he works for the park service.

"He looked at me as if I were a ghost." She laughed, her teeth chattering. "He asked me what was wrong with my arm—it was bleeding again—and I told him I'd been hurt in the quake. I don't know whether or not he believed me, but he tied my arm up with his handkerchief.

"Then he went to call the Highway Patrol to have somebody take me to a hospital. He says I need medical care. We must get away before he gets back."

I hesitated. Perhaps it would be better for Moonlight to let herself be taken to a doctor. Certainly she needed medical attention, and perhaps she could join us later, after her wound had been dressed. As to our pursuers being able to extract damaging information from her, she could not tell them anything that Dr. Lawrence would not have already told.

She seemed to read my thoughts. "Take me with you,"

she said urgently. "If we are once separated, we will never be able to find each other again. They'll hold me without bail once they know who I am, and the navy will be hunting you dolphins all along the coast. Take me with you! I don't want to leave you. And I can still be of help to you."

"All right," Pettrus said, speaking for us all. "Get on my back. But where shall we go?"

"To—it's darkest under the lamp," Sosa said, climbing on his back. Movement was obviously not easy for her. "To —yes, they say—to Sausalito. It's not far. We ought to be safe there, for a while. We can hide under the docks."

Sausalito is a small city inside San Francisco Bay, more or less opposite the city of San Francisco. It is not a deep-water or industrial port, and its docking facilities are modest. Sosa might be right in thinking we could hide there for a while.

Nonetheless, as we swam southwards, toward the Golden Gate Bridge, I felt exceedingly uncertain that we were doing the right thing. Madelaine might prefer hiding under the docks to being in jail, but at least they would dress her wound and give her food and water in jail. As far as we sea people ourselves were concerned, we rather dislike getting inside closed bodies of water, even waters as extensive as those of San Francisco bay. We are happier with the open sea before us. We have an animal dislike of anything that might be a trap, and the level of radioactivity in the bay is uncomfortably high.

We passed under the Gate Bridge. There was no sound of traffic on it at all. Later we learned that the bridge had been closed to traffic ever since the first earth tremor Sunday morning, which had made the whole structure sway dangerously. Subsequent shocks had cracked some of the concrete slabs on the bridge approach straight across. It would be another week before the engineers would decide the big bridge was sound enough to open to traffic again.

We got to Sausalito a little after nine. Here too there were signs of tidal damage—a boat smashed against the pilings, a slab of concrete broken from a little jetty and hurled high up on land. Nobody at all seemed to be about.

"Keep on going," Madelaine said softly, aware of how sound carries over water. "Do you see that boat anchored at the end of the rock? Take me around behind it."

"But—" I answered cautiously.

"Nobody will think of looking for me behind a boat at anchor. They say, they say. . . . I'll be safe there."

What did she mean? We obeyed her unwillingly. As her feet touched bottom she slipped off Pettrus' back and staggered toward the dank sand at the end of the striped, fish-smelling darkness.

"My shoulder hurts so," she said softly. It was the first time we had heard her complain. "I wish we had Sven." She lurched a few steps forward and collapsed at the far end of the dock.

"Madelaine," I breathed. "Are you—?"

"Oh, yes, my darlings. I'll be all right. —Traitor! Traitor! We trusted you!"

Even in the poor light, from the water, we could see a red streak running down her arm from her wound. With a start I realized that her wound was infected, and that she was becoming delirious. It was Dr. Lawrence she was speaking to.

Our brave dear Moonlight! Had we brought her to this dubious refuge to die? I felt a terrible sense of the biological gulf between us. We had no hands, we could not even bring her water. What were we to do?

CHAPTER 7

There are billions of minds in the world. Each has its separate individuality and its unique character. But to try to isolate any one from all the rest is like trying to pick out a particular grain of sand from a sandy beach.

We thought of using Udra, of course, as soon as we realized how much Madelaine needed help. We knew she did not want to be separated from us; she had already made that clear, and now, even in her delirium, she kept saying, "Don't let them take me away!" and calling us by name over and over again. But how could we get help that would not involve her being taken away, if only to a hospital? Udra seemed the only possible way out. But there were objections to our using it.

In the first place, the vast majority of Splits are not receptive to Udra at all. Only about one in a hundred thousand makes any response to it. So we would be hunting for one particular grain of sand without having any assurance that the grain really existed.

In the second place, using Udra takes intense concentration. When a dolphin really exerts this faculty, he loses most of his awareness of the world around him. And he is, of course, much more susceptible to attack by an enemy.

Finally, we were afraid that the navy would be able to track us down through our use of Udra. Lawrence had mentioned that various government agencies had been working on the military possibilities of ESP. We did not think the danger was very great—it was a risk we were willing to run—but it bothered us.

We were also bothered by our ignorance of the current state of the navy's war against the sea people. Probably they were still hunting us; it hardly seemed likely that they would have been satisfied merely to bomb Noonday Rock. But had the navy leaked the substance of Dr. Lawrence's revelations

to the general public? We did not know whether any human being who saw us would feel in duty bound to try to kill us, or whether we dolphins were still among their tolerated animals. We could probably find out by using Udra. But by the time we found out, it might be too late.

Nonetheless, we decided we must try it. Our hope was that we could draw a physician to the dock and that, after he had attended Madelaine, we might be able to assure his silence by appealing to his professional ethics. We knew there was something called the "Hippocratic Oath." And we might be able to influence the doctor in the direction of silence by using Udra, too.

By the time we had come to this decision, Madelaine, who had been talking so much for a while, had fallen into a sort of stupor. Even in the dim light we could see that the red streak down her arm was longer and brighter. We were so worried that it was hard for us to attain the necessary concentration to begin our Udra use.

I doubt that we would ever have been able to do it, except that the tide began to come in. The radioactivity of the foul water in which we were floating had been a constant vexation to us. The cleaner influx put us more at ease. So our minds were more free.

We floated silently side by side in the freshening water. The world around us began to grow dim. We were reaching out to review minds.

We kept on for several hours, getting deeper and deeper into the typical Udra-state of remoteness. About two o'clock we heard steps along the dock—they seemed to come from a long way off—and then somebody jumped down on the deck of the boat behind which Moonlight was lying. He cast off the boat's moorings, and a little later the engine started up.

The noise partly roused us, though it was pretty obvious that the boat owner hadn't come in answer to any summons of ours. We swam a little apart for safety, and submerged. He got the boat out without seeing either us or Madelaine, though he went so close to Pettrus he almost bumped into him.

We went back to our work. We had an impression that we were contacting somebody. About an hour later we heard wobbling, uneven footsteps on the dock.

The footsteps stopped. A man leaned over the edge. He

cupped his hands and shouted, "You! You there in the water! What do you want?"

We had been floating under the dock and in its immediate shadow. Now the shout from above roused us. It might be the person we were hunting for. A little doubtfully, I swam into the sunlight and looked up at the man.

He was barefooted, with a sparse, patchy beard, and his clothes were dungarees and a cotton T-shirt with a hole ripped in the shoulder. He held a wine bottle in one hand.

"Why, it's a dolphin!" he said, regarding me. "Porpp—purpp—anyhow, a dolphin. Smart animals. Can you talk?"

He didn't seem to be automatically alarmed at seeing me, so perhaps the navy had kept Dr. Lawrence's revelations to itself. "Yes-s," I said.

He sat down on the edge of the dock, letting his feet dangle over the side. He took a drink from the bottle he was holding. "Sherry," he said. " 'Oud you like some?"

"No, thank you." I was still uncertain whether to ask him to help Madelaine.

"Well, what *would* you like?" he asked. "I heard you calling and calling. Crying, really. Is something wrong?"

I decided to trust him. "Yes-s. We need help. Come down under the dock, and I'll show you."

"Help?" he said, drinking again. "I couldn't help anybody. I'm—even my girl calls me a bum. I drink sherry because it makes me number than pot.—All right. You don't need to keep asking. I'll come down."

He rose, walked back along the dock, and rather unsteadily let himself down into the shallow water. "What're you talking about?" he demanded. "I don't see anything."

"*Under* the dock," I said. "Go on back. You'll see."

He bent over and obeyed. It seemed to take a little while for his eyes to get adjusted to the light. Then he saw Madelaine.

"Why, it's a girl!" he exclaimed. "Wha's she doing here? Is she sick?"

"Not sick, hurt. We want to get help for her."

He drank from the bottle, a long drink. I had the idea that he would always take a long drink from the bottle in an emergency. "Wha' do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Get a doctor. Bring him here. Tell him—tell him he must promise not to take her to a hospital or turn her over

to the police. She has a wound in the shoulder. It's infected. The doctor must sew it up and give her medicine. He must promise not to call the police."

"The police! Wha' she done?" He giggled and drank more wine. He must have emptied the bottle, for he shook it ruefully and then tossed it out into the water. "She mus' be some sort of public en'my."

"Never mind that. She doesn't want to be separated from us. Go get a doctor. We have money." Madelaine did indeed have about five dollars in the bosom of her blood-stained dress. "We can pay."

"Public en'my!" he repeated. "Well, I guess I'm a sort public en'my myself. I'll try get doctor. I know one hangs out at bar. He—broad-minded chap."

The man in the dungarees wobbled out from under the dock—once he banged his head on a cross-timber—and then clambered up onto the structure. "Don't forget," I said from the water. "And don't tell anyone except the doctor."

"Eh? Oh, sure. Get doctor. Won't tell. Be back."

We heard his feet retreating landward. They did not go very far before they hesitated and stopped. Then we heard a noise that might have been made by a man falling. We did not know much about the drinking habits of Splits, but it was all too clear that he had collapsed on the dock.

When he came to, would he remember his mission? Probably not; and if we tried to contact him a second time, he would, in all likelihood, only pass out again. He had seemed friendly and well-disposed to us. But nobody could have taken him for a reliable man. There was no hope of Madelaine's getting help from him.

Yet the episode had not been entirely wasted. We had learned that the navy had apparently not yet given the signal for a general dolphin hunt. And we had found that a Split, though a drunken one, could respond to Udra in considerably less time than it had taken us to call Madelaine to us originally. Really, we would have felt encouraged except that Madelaine seemed to be getting steadily worse. We must hurry and try what we could do with Udra again.

It was not so hard for us to withdraw our attention from our surroundings this time, at least at first. But getting into the later stages of concentration proved remarkably diffi-

cult. There was opposition from somewhere, and after about half an hour I realized what it was. An alien mind was trying to contact me.

I say "alien," but the word is not really accurate. "Odd" or "extraordinary" would be a better characterization. And the peculiarity was that, though the mind seemed familiar enough to me, I never could identify it. I was always on the edge of recognizing it, and yet I always failed.

It disturbed me. I let my Udra efforts lapse, and returned to full awareness of where I was. Ivry was looking at me questioningly.

"Did you feel it?" I asked.

"Yes. A mind—a Split, I think, but I'm not quite sure. There's something odd about it. It's a mind—a mind that's carrying a passenger."

That was exactly it. Ivry had expressed it very well. I said, "Is it Sven?"

"No, I don't think so. I'm sure I'd recognize him. But it's a familiar mind. Or it seemed familiar, part of the time."

Pettrus was still in the Udra-state. We nudged him from either side until his expression showed that he realized where he was.

"Did you feel it?" he asked. "Somebody's trying to contact us."

"Yes, we know. Did you accept contact with it, Pettrus?"

"No. It was a peculiar mind. I got a feeling of doubledness."

I said, "We can't get anywhere with Udra as long as it's trying to contact us. Perhaps we—"

We were interrupted by a wail from Madelaine. She had raised herself on one elbow and was staring up at the timbers of the dock. "Can't I have water?" she said wildly. "I'm so thirsty. Oh, please, no matter how much you hate us, can't I have a drink?"

Her face was dusky red. We were silent for a moment. Then Pettrus said, "We'd better accept contact, no matter who it is. Moonlight needs help too much for us to be particular. And I did get an impression of helpfulness from the alien mind, once or twice."

He was right, we agreed wordlessly. Once more we settled down to the state of physical withdrawal and psychological reaching-out that initiates genuine Udra-use. Madelaine had fallen back into a stupor. I remember being thankful, as I

tried to concentrate, that Blitta had not had time to suffer very much.

The contact, when it came, was very brief—a quick glancing, almost a flickering, as the mind with a passenger brushed us and then darted aside. It was gone. But whoever it was seemed to have been satisfied.

We tried to go on with Udra, but couldn't. Whether we were too excited or whether that brief contact with the odd mind was responsible, I don't know. But we never could manage it, though we kept trying for what must have been more than an hour.

At last I said, "We'd better swim along the shore and try to attract the attention of a Split. We can make the sort of noises people expect from dolphins, and lead him or her to where Moonlight it. It would be better to have her taken away from us than to have her die from fever and thirst where she is."

"Perhaps she wouldn't think so," Pettrus answered slowly.

"Perhaps not. But can we stand staying here and watching her die?"

Before Pettrus could answer, there came the sound of footsteps on the dock overhead. They got to the edge of the dock and then we heard a splash in the water.

It had begun to get dark, but we could make out the silhouette of a man with a little bag in one hand. It looked like the triangular-topped bags doctors carry, and I felt a flash of hope. Had we succeeded in getting help for Sosa after all?

"I got here as soon as I could," the man said.

I knew the voice instantly. It was Doctor Lawrence who was standing there.

I felt an unspeakable bitterness. He had been behind the strangely familiar mind that had sought contact with us, he had used that contact to track us down. It was our fault that he knew where Madelaine was.

"So, you traitor, you came," I said when I could command myself enough to speak. "Did you come to make sure of her death this time?"

CHAPTER 8

Dr. Lawrence listened to my accusation without moving. "Your resentment is justified, Amtor," he said slowly. "What I've done is hard to—but my apologies and explanations can come later. I came here to try to help. Madelaine is sick, isn't she? We got a strong impression that she was sick or hurt."

I was floating between him and where Moonlight was lying, though of course he could make a dash around me up on the sand. "Who's 'We'?" I demanded. "You and the navy? Are you working with the navy to try to trace us down?"

"No. No, I'm not. 'We' is Mrs. Casson and I. She's the psychometrist I told you about when we were on the Rock. It was both our minds, coupled, that you felt today when we were trying to locate you." He added, with an odd note of pride in his voice, "It's the first time I was ever able to do anything like that."

"Does the navy know you came here?" I asked.

"I don't think so. I tried to cover my tracks. I left a letter —but we can talk about that after I've taken care of Madelaine.

"I don't blame you for distrusting me, Amtor. I *am* sincere—I've made up my mind once and for all—but of course you can't know that. But let me take care of Madelaine no matter how you feel about me. I'm a physician, after all. And she needs help."

I was silent. Pettrus, speaking in the high pitch that is inaudible to human ears, said, "I think we ought to trust him, Amtor. Even if he's not sincere, he won't find out anything more than he already knows by taking care of Moonlight. And she's pretty sick. We ought to let him try to help."

"What if he kills her?" I asked. "He betrayed us once before."

"Then we can try to kill *him*. But I think we ought to let him see what he can do for her."

"Ivry?" I asked.

"I agree with Pettrus."

Yes, I thought a little bitterly, they are more trustful than I am. No wonder. Neither of them had a mate killed in the attack on the Rock. Aloud I said, "All right."

Dr. Lawrence was still standing waiting, with his black bag in his hand. I told him, "Moonlight is under the dock, far back on the sand. We'll let you go to her. But we'll be watching what you do."

He nodded silently. He stooped and began making his way through the water to where the girl was lying. Her white dress glimmered faintly in the dim light.

He knelt beside her. He must have touched her, for she mumbled, "Water . . . water . . ." and then was silent again.

We heard a faint clink. We could not see very well, but he seemed to be getting something out of his pocket. There was a gurgle. He must be pouring water from a flask.

He put his arm under her head and raised her a little. We heard her drinking, and an indistinct "Thanks." He put her down gently again.

He opened the black bag and took out a tiny flashlight. He ran the weak beam slowly over Madelaine's body, pausing a long time at her shoulder. "Is that the only injury she has?" he asked us softly, putting the flashlight down. "I can't make a real examination here."

"Yes, that's the only place she was hurt," I answered. "It bled quite a bit."

"Un-hunh. She's pretty sick." Holding the flashlight in one hand, he began to hunt through his bag with the other.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Give her as big an injection of penicillin as I think she can take." He was sterilizing and filling a syringe as he spoke. "The first thing to do is to try to reduce the infection in her arm a bit."

He wiped a spot on her arm with cotton and plunged the hypodermic needle in. It took quite a long time for him to empty the syringe. "I'll give her another shot in four hours," he said, looking at his watch. "Right now I'm going to clean out her wound and put a bandage on it. There's too much infection there for me to think of sewing it up.—This is a

terrible place to try to take care of a patient in. Not even any lights."

Ivry had been swimming around agitatedly while Dr. Lawrence was giving the injection. Now he said, in a low, anxious gabble, "There's a boat coming. Put out that light, Doctor. Hide."

After a very slight hesitation, Dr. Lawrence obeyed. He dropped the flashlight into his bag and stretched himself out on the dank sand in front of Madelaine—thinking, I suppose, that his neutral-colored clothing would be less visible than her whitish dress.

Almost immediately we heard the putt-putt of a motor, and a little while later a boat—the same boat that had been there earlier—tied up at the dock.

This time there were two men on her. As they were fastening the ropes, one of them said, "I thought I saw a light back under the dock."

"Yeah, so did I," answered the other. "Sometimes light shines down through the holes in the planking. Or maybe it was the eyes of a rat."

"Must have been something like that," the first man said. We heard him yawn. "Let's have a can of beer before we go ashore."

They stood in the bow of the boat, drinking beer and talking desultorily, for an annoyingly long time. We were all impatient for them to go away, so Dr. Lawrence could get on with his treatment of Madelaine. But when they began to talk about the earthquake, we listened with more interest.

"For a big quake, it didn't kill many people," the man who seemed to own the boat was saying. "Millions and millions of dollars' worth of property damage, though. Suppose it had happened in the daytime on a working day! There'd have been thousands killed."

"Yeah, the timing was lucky. Did it damage your house much?"

"Shook the chimney down, that was all. How about that four-plex you own?"

"It did a lot of damage, Bill, but I think the insurance company will cover most of it. Say, did you see that thing in the *Chronicle* gossip-column about the admiral?"

"No, what did it say?"

"Oh, that some navy big-shot had an idea about what

caused the quake he was trying to sell his superiors on making public. It was headed, 'The Softly-Flapping Admiral.' "

"I don't see what could have caused the quake, except stresses building up in the earth." There was a plop as he tossed his empty beer can in the water. "The air force is usually the goofy service, though. I wonder what the admiral meant."

"Well, whatever caused it, I guess we're safe for another fifty years. Let's get going, Bill. We've got a big day in front of us."

"OK." He finished his beer and threw the can out to bob beside the other one. The two men scrambled up on the dock. We heard them walking away.

Dr. Lawrence sat up, brushing sand from his jacket. He said nothing, but we felt he was annoyed. He turned the flashlight on and began to get things out of his bag.

When he had cleaned and dressed Sosa's wound, he gave her another drink. Then, still stooping, he waded out toward where we were.

"Madelaine can't stay here," he said softly. "She ought to be in a hospital, or at least in a decent bed. This is a hell of a place for a sick woman. I want to take her away."

"No. We forbid you to." I knew I spoke for all of us.

"Why? It would be better for her."

"Would it? As long as she was conscious, she said she wanted to stay with us. She begged us not to let us be separated. If we let you take her away, how do we know we'll ever see her again?"

"But I promise—"

"I'm sorry. I'm afraid we just don't trust you that much."

He was silent, his head bent. "It's very difficult for me to take proper care of her here," he said at last.

"Whose fault is it she's lying there?" Ivry asked.

Lawrence sighed. "While we're on this subject," Pettrus said, "what about the explanations and apologies you were going to give us? Now would be a good time for them."

"Yes." Lawrence waded back up under the dock and sat down on the dank sand.

"I've always been a believer in luck and fate," he said slowly, as if he were arranging his ideas. "The unexpected seems to me more important in human affairs than the expected and the rational. It's a gambler's temperament, in

a way. Or perhaps it's what Madelaine meant when she said I had an appetite for the marvelous.

"At any rate, when I decided to try to get to Noonday Rock, I had no way of knowing what I should find there. I thought it was likely—or at least possible—that Madelaine was on the Rock, and that dolphins had taken her there. But I didn't know how many other people were there with her, or what their attitude to an intruder would be.

"I was willing to risk it. The possibilities were too interesting to be ignored. But I thought it was wise to try to reduce the risk."

"Do you call that gambling?" I said. "It's the action of a cautious man."

"There was an element of gambling in it," he protested. "There was less than one chance in three that what I brought with me would work."

"Well, go on. What did you bring with you when you came to Noonday Rock?"

"A communication device."

"You didn't mention this when you told us about your preparations for coming to the Rock. Why, after you found we were friendly, were you so secretive?"

"I don't know," he answered. "Perhaps I wasn't quite sure."

"I know why you didn't tell us," Ivry said. (Ivry was the most excitable of the three of us, just as Pettrus was the biggest and I was the one who knew the most genealogies.) "You were spying on us for the navy the whole time!" Emotion overcame him, and he flapped his tail furiously.

"No," Lawrence answered. "The navy didn't even know I had the device. I stole it, actually."

"What was the name of the device?" I asked. "Where did you have it hidden?"

"It's something called COLABS—collimated laser beam signal. What I stole was an experimental model, very much miniaturized. I had it in my briefcase."

"So that's why you kept such a hold on the briefcase," I said. "When did you decide to use the COLABS thing?"

"It wasn't really a decision," he said. "I'd promised to help Madelaine in her war against the human race. But I'm a human being myself. I couldn't help feeling, part of the time, that I was engaged in something treasonable."

"You were the most bitter against Splits of any of us!"

Ivry gabbled. "Whenever we had scruples, you argued us out of them!"

"Oh, I know. I expect I was trying to repress my own doubts."

"Well, go on. You sent out a signal with the COLABS thing, didn't you?" I said.

"I tried the COLABS to see if it would send out a signal," he corrected.

"You mean you never sent out a message at all?" I asked, puzzled at what he meant.

"Oh, I sent out a message. But it was only because . . ."

"Dr. Lawrence, you said you had an explanation to make. You're not explaining anything, or even apologizing. Tell us what your actions were, what you actually did."

"All right." It was obviously hard for him to speak.

"On Sunday morning," he said finally, "after the worst part of the quake was over, the dolphins left me alone on the Rock."

"They left you because you told them to!" Ivry said. "You sound as if they'd deserted you!"

"Do I? I didn't mean to. Anyhow, I was alone for the first time in several days, with an opportunity to think.

"It seemed to me that I'd done a terrible thing. I thought of all the damage I'd helped to cause, of all the people who'd been hurt or killed. On impulse—useful word, impulse," he said wryly, "I opened my briefcase and took the COLABS out. I set it up on the Rock, and turned the switch. The monitor light came on. And I knew it would work.

"Up until that time, I hadn't been sure what I meant to do. But this seemed like a—a nudge from fate. I thought, I'll go ahead and see if anybody answers my signal. Because, if there was only about one chance in three that the COLABS was capable of sending out a focused signal, it was even more uncertain that anybody would be listening."

"Why was it so unlikely that the COLABS device would work?" Pettrus asked. "Don't communication devices generally work?"

"I suppose it seems like that, to a dolphin. Actually, they had all sorts of trouble with the power source. I had one of the engineers in therapy with me for a couple of months because he was so upset over the difficulties. And the adjustment of such a small mechanism was delicate. Carrying it around in my briefcase might have jarred it loose.

"Anyhow, I pressed the signal button. It sends out an impulse that is received by the beamed station as a steady buzzing.

"I held the button down for about a minute and a half, and nothing happened. I was just about to take my finger off it, and forget the whole thing and pack the COLABS device back in my briefcase, when I heard a voice say, 'COLABS 32! COLABS 32! We get your signal! Where are you speaking from?' "

Dr. Lawrence sighed. "I could have refused to answer, of course," he said. "But that my signal had been received at all seemed a kind of miracle. Nobody was regularly stationed at the receptor; it wasn't even turned on most of the time. I found out later that a technician had just happened to go into that lab to do some soldering on an electrical connection. While he was waiting for the soldering iron to warm up, he'd switched the receptor on. And he heard my signal coming out of it. If the timing had been off a little, nobody would have heard me."

"It was bad luck for us that he did," I said.

"Yes. But he answered me. And again, I felt it was fate. I—well, that's the way it was.

"I told him where I was speaking from, and said that I knew something about the earthquake. He called somebody, and that person called somebody else. They sent a 'copter out to the Rock for me. By nine o'clock, I was telling my story to a rear admiral."

"The admiral that was mentioned in the piece in the *Chronicle?*" Pettrus asked.

"Yes. I was surprised how easily he believed me. The quake had damaged a good many of the craft in his command, and I suppose he was rather shaken up."

"Did you advise him to strafe and bomb the rock?" I asked.

"I wasn't responsible for the measures he took," Lawrence replied evasively.

There seemed no particular point in trying to get an admission of guilt from him. "Do you know what's happened to Sven?" I said.

"As a matter of fact, I do," Lawrence replied quickly. He seemed relieved to change the subject. "I heard that a man had been picked up near the lighthouse."

"Where is he now?"

"They have him in custody."

"How about Djuna?"

"I'm not sure. I heard that a dolphin that was swimming near the big island had been wounded but had managed to get away."

Djuna wounded, and Sven in custody. If Dr. Lawrence had been in the water at that moment, I am sure Pettrus and Ivry and I would have managed to kill him. Our armament is not much, compared to that of a shark, but we do have over a hundred strong sharp teeth. We were so angry we had even forgotten about Madelaine.

Dr. Lawrence was speaking. "It was learning that Sven had been captured that made me realize what I'd done," he said slowly. "Fate and chance? No, *I'd* done it. If I'd felt a sort of traitor to join Madelaine's war on humanity, I knew now that I was a real traitor. I'd betrayed people who trusted me.

"I don't expect you to believe me. I've forfeited your confidence. I'll have to try to earn it back. But I *am* on your side."

Pettrus made a blowing noise. I don't know how it would have sounded to a Split, but a dolphin would have translated it as the acoustical equivalent of, "Well, well! You don't say!"

"How did you get away from the navy?" I asked the doctor. "You said you thought you had covered your tracks."

Lawrence looked at his watch. "It's time to give Madelaine more penicillin," he said. "I'll tell you about my escape —evasion is a better word—after I take care of her."

He went back to where she was lying. After he had made the injection, he took her temperature and then gave her another drink. He turned the flask upside down to get the last few drops.

"How is she?" I asked when he came back to the water.

"A little better. Not as much better as I would have liked. Even finding out how much fever she has is difficult, she's in such an awkward place."

"You were going to tell us about how you got away," I prompted him.

"Yes. It was easy, actually. They kept me on the flag ship until dark, asking me questions and making me go through my story several times. I gathered my admiral had

got into a certain amount of trouble with his superiors for having sent out bombers before he consulted them.

"Then they took me back to my office in the DRAT station and left me there, with a marine on guard in front of the door. I'd already decided that I wanted to get away.

"My private lavatory had a door that communicated with the main corridor. The door was always kept bolted, so I suppose they forgot it was there. All I did was go in the lavatory, unbolt the door, and walk out. It was simple. I left a note on my desk."

"What did you say in the note?" I asked.

"I told them that I'd been feeling disturbed for a long time, and that I was going to consult a professional colleague and have him examine me. Do you understand? I wanted them to think I was doubtful about my own sanity.

"I underlined everything, and ended all my sentences with exclamation marks. I finished by saying that I hated to leave in such a sneaky way, but that my voices had told me to. It was a very disturbed-sounding note."

"You were trying to convince them that everything you'd said about the earthquake was imagination?"

"Yes. I wanted them to think my whole story was delusional. It might work. The idea of dolphins causing an earthquake is pretty wild."

"What about Sven?" Pettrus asked. "The fact that they've picked him up would tend to bear out your story."

"Yes," Lawrence agreed, rather uncomfortably, "but Sven's intelligent. He won't admit anything if he can help it."

He stood up. "Where are you going?" I asked.

"I'm going to fill my flask and give Madelaine more water. Then I'm going to hunt a decent place to sleep tonight."

"You're not staying here?" Ivry asked. He was becoming agitated.

"No; why should I? It won't do Maddy any good to have me sleep on damp sand. I can't give her another shot until morning anyhow."

He clambered up on the dock. We waited. In about five minutes he came back and gave the girl more water.

"What if she gets thirsty during the night?" Ivry asked. "We can't give her a drink."

Lawrence may have shrugged. "I'll be able to do more for

her tomorrow if I get some sleep tonight. You ought to let me take her out from under the dock. I promise—"

"No."

Lawrence sighed. "I'll be back tomorrow about seven," he said. "Good night."

"Good night."

He was gone, taking his little black satchel with him. But oddly enough, his refusal to stay with Sosa had increased our confidence in him. We felt that if he were planning to betray us again, he would make a greater show of devotion to her.

We were hungry; we had had nothing to eat all day. One at a time we went out to get food for ourselves, leaving two of us always on guard near Sosa. We thought that if a Split tried to molest her, we might be able to scare him off.

There are plenty of fish in San Francisco Bay, though not all of them are considered fit to eat by Splits. None of us had any difficulty getting a good meal. When I came back from my fishing, Ivry and Pettrus told me that Madelaine had asked for water once, but not urgently.

"After she asked for water, she laughed," Pettrus said. "And then she said, 'It's lovely here.' "

"Lovely?" I was puzzled. "What do you think she meant by that? Is she delirious?"

"I don't think so. She sounded as if she were having pleasant dreams."

Though we were no longer really hungry, we did a good deal of fishing during the night. This was partly for exercise and diversion, and partly because the dirty water around the dock was a constant vexation to us. It was wonderfully refreshing to swim in clean water again.

The two men came down to the boat quite early, while it was still dark, and cast off. About two hours later Dr. Lawrence appeared.

He was wearing inconspicuous informal clothing—slacks, beach shirt and sandals—and he carried a large paper bag with his doctor's satchel and street clothing inside. He said, "Good morning" to us curtly, and then went to where Sosa was.

He gave her water from his flask and then, taking advantage of the improved light, examined her with some thoroughness. He finished by giving her another injection of penicillin.

"How is she?" I asked when he came to where we were waiting.

"Some better. Her fever's down. She's not as much better as she should be—I've given her a lot of penicillin. What I don't understand is why she's so comatose. I don't find anything to account for it. Did she get a blow on the head?"

"Not as far as we know," I answered.

He was silent. "You've *got* to let me get her out from under there," he said finally. "It's not only that I can't take proper care of her—if I keep going under the dock, I'm sure to be noticed eventually, and then the fat will be in the fire. They'll put Madelaine in the hospital, and the navy will pick me up again. You don't want that to happen, do you?"

"We don't care much about what happens to you," I told him frankly, "but we don't want to be separated from her."

"Fair enough," he replied. "I've been thinking about it, and I've come up with an idea I think is pretty good." He began to clamber up on the dock.

"Where are you going?" Ivry quacked anxiously.

Dr. Lawrence grinned, and for the first time since I had seen him, I felt a liking for him. "I'm going to buy a boat," he said.

He came back about noon, at the helm of an odd flat-bottomed craft. He made his purchase fast to the dock and then came down in the water where we were.

"What do you think of the boat?" he asked. He sounded pleased with himself. "It's called the *Akbar*. I can take care of Madelaine on board, and you won't be separated from her."

"Fine," Pettrus said. "What kind of a boat is it? I've never seen anything like that."

"You could call it a scaled-down houseboat. A doll's houseboat. I've rented mooring space for it about a mile from here. You won't object to my putting Maddy on board?"

"No," I said. "But you're going to have trouble getting her on it."

This proved to be correct. It was obviously impossible for Lawrence, standing in the water, to lift Moonlight at arm's length above his head and lower her over the side of the *Akbar;* and carrying her up on the dock and then putting her down on the *Akbar's* deck was going to be almost

as difficult. Madelaine was neither a tall nor heavy woman, but she was only semiconscious, and Lawrence was a smallish man.

After some thought he dragged her down to the edge of the water, where he could stand upright, and picked her up in his arms. When he got around to the side of the dock, he shifted her so that she was lying across his shoulders, and he was holding her in place by her ankles and wrists.

He wriggled her about until he could hold her opposite wrist and ankle in one hand, and then started up. He wobbled alarmingly. He was almost at the top when Madelaine began to stir, and he had to use both hands to keep her from falling off his back.

That left him badly unbalanced, with no point of contact with the dock timbers except his feet. We were sure he was going over backward into the water. But he took a long step upward with his right foot, into the next crotch in the dock timbering, and at the same time threw himself forward onto the surface of the dock. He landed on the planking on both knees, with two bruised shins.

"Made it," he said, looking down at us. He got to his feet, moved Moonlight around in front of him, and carried her over, limping, to the *Akbar*. It was easy enough to put her down on the boat's small deck.

We waited. He carried her into the deckhouse. About an hour later he came out. "I undressed her, gave her a bath, and put her to bed," he told us. "She ought to do better, now she's comfortable and dry. Her fever's down."

"How is her shoulder?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Healing. Not much use in sewing it up now. But it's going to leave a scar. What I don't understand is that she's unconscious so much.

"Well, I'd better be moving the *Akbar* to her new location. I hope nobody saw me climbing about with Madelaine. If they did, I'll get a visit from the police."

He cast off the *Akbar's* moorings, started up her engine, and was soon putt-putting over the turbid water to the new anchorage. We followed discreetly. We were all relieved that Madelaine was better. Her unconsciousness did not seem so odd to us as it did to Lawrence, since we were not familiar with the physiology of Splits.

The *Akbar's* new location was a pleasant place. Trees were growing in a sort of park behind the little jetty that

ran out into the water, and the only sign of damage from the quake was some floating planks from what might have been a rowboat. Another craft, also a houseboat, but at least twice as big as the *Akbar*, was tied up at the jetty. Except for that, no other boats were anchored there.

The girl on the deck of the bigger craft looked up and waved as Lawrence brought the *Akbar* in. Lawrence nodded unsmilingly. It was plain he did not want to encourage a potentially inquisitive friendliness.

He tied the *Akbar* up at the landward end of the jetty, as far away from the other houseboat as he could get. Then he went ashore. He couldn't, of course, tell us where he was going, while the woman on the other craft was watching, but we supposed he was going after food.

Floating side by side in the shadow of the *Akbar*, under the jetty, we held a consultation. I think I have said before that we sea people ordinarily communicate with each other in frequencies that are outside the range of human hearing. It seemed to us both unnecessary and undesirable that all three of us should remain near the houseboat during the day. One dolphin can usually escape notice, especially in turbid water, but three is a different matter. We decided that one of us should stay near the *Akbar* during the daylight hours, while the other two tried to pick up some trace of Djuna.

Djuna might, of course, have been so severely wounded as to be dead, but we thought not. Our "telepathic" communication with each other (this is not Udra, though somewhat related to it) is somewhat more reliable than the ESP of Splits and, even though it is far from perfect, we thought we would have been aware of such a serious psychic event as her death.

Ivry and Pettrus then went off on their scouting trip and I was left behind, on watch near the *Akbar*. I was restless and bored. It seemed to me that Dr. Lawrence might have chosen a better anchorage for the *Akbar* than this one, where we were constantly under scrutiny from another boat and it would be difficult for him to communicate with us. He obviously couldn't sit on the railing of the *Akbar* during the daytime, talking to a dolphin; and at night, even if he waited until the people on the bigger houseboat were in bed, we would all have to speak softly, since sound carries so well over water. I wondered whether he had done

it on purpose, with the ultimate aim of detaching us from Madelaine.

I may say here that our anger for the attack on Noonday Rock was directed not so much toward the navy as toward Lawrence. If one declares war on the human race, one may expect the human race to retaliate. But we had trusted Dr. Lawrence, despite my doubts about him—he had instigated us to try to trigger an earthquake—and this lent a particular bitterness to our feelings toward him.

Lawrence came back after a while, carrying a bag of groceries, a bag from a department store, and another, smaller parcel that I couldn't identify. He went into the *Akbar's* deckhouse, and in a little while I smelled food cooking.

I listened, but couldn't tell whether or not he was feeding Madelaine. Neither of them said anything. Once or twice I heard her moving in her bunk.

He washed a few dishes. Then I heard a click, and the squawk of a radio. A radio—that must have been what was in the smaller parcel he had brought back.

He seemed to be listening to the news. After a while he shut the radio off, and seemed to be doing something near Madelaine. Then he came on deck with a bag of scraps and trash, which he took on shore and dropped in a big trash can.

I noticed all these details so sharply because I really had not much else to notice. I did not want to start thinking about Blitta again. Once or twice, as the afternoon drew on, I tried to use Udra, but I was too restless to have any success with it.

Darkness fell. The doctor cooked some sort of meal. It sounded as if he took something to Madelaine. At last, about three hours after dark, Ivry and Pettrus came back.

They had been a long way, down the coast to Point Sur and back, but they had found no sign of Djuna. They had talked to two or three other sea people, too. But when they were near Benthis Canyon, the spot off Monterey where I dropped Sven's stolen mine, they had seen a number of navy ships at anchor.

"They had men out in boats," Ivry said agitatedly. "They seemed to be taking samples of the water. They had two men in diving suits, too."

None of us said anything. It was perfectly plain that the

navy was trying to get some objective corroboration of Dr. Lawrence's story. The water over Benthis Canyon was probably still abnormally radioactive, but they might not draw the proper conclusion from this. Dr. Lawrence couldn't have told them about Sven's mine breaking the drums of radioactive wastes, since he hadn't known about it. He had left Noonday Rock before we returned from our mission.

People began to walk along the jetty and get aboard the bigger houseboat. We heard the sound of laughter and talking. Somebody started to play the guitar and sing, and other voices joined in the music.

About ten-thirty Dr. Lawrence came out on deck and whistled softly.

"Are you there?" he said in a low voice. "I think it's all right for us to talk now. They're having a party on board the *Diamond Lil*, and won't notice anything.

"The *Diamond Lil?*" I asked. "Is that the name of the other houseboat?"

"Yes. Can't you read?"

"Only a little," I answered, feeling rather ashamed. "Books go to pieces in the water, you see, and we haven't any way of turning the pages."

"You needn't apologize." Dr. Lawrence answered. "That a dolphin can read at all is so extraordinary that—well, never mind. I came out to tell you the news.

"In the first place, Madelaine is better. Her shoulder is healing nicely, and her temperature is almost normal. But she is still comatose most of the time. She rouses a little when I feed and bathe her and so on, but she goes back again into her coma, if that's what it is.

"If she isn't better soon, I'm going to call another doctor. I'm a psychiatrist, not a general practitioner.

"The other piece of news is that, though I listened a good deal to the radio today, I didn't hear anything about the navy making a disclosure about the cause of the earthquake. There was still plenty about the quake, of course, but it was the ordinary stuff one would expect—statistics about losses and damages."

"That's good," Ivry said.

"Yes-s-s. Actually, I'm not so sure. This feels like the lull before the storm. I don't think my rear admiral would give up so easily."

"We went down to Point Sur today," Ivry said. He went on to tell Lawrence what he and Pettrus had seen.

"H'um," the doctor said when he had finished. "Let's hope they don't find anything. A piece of the casing of the mine that was dropped would be pretty good evidence, but they're not very likely to find such a piece."

We dolphins were silent. We saw no point in telling Lawrence about the radioactivity the explosion of the mine had released into the water. It was always possible Lawrence might defect from us again, and he knew too much already.

"By the way, Doctor," I said, "what happened after you got past the marine who was stationed in front of your office? You didn't tell us about that."

Lawrence laughed a little wryly. "You still don't trust me, do you?" he said. "Well, I have no objection to telling you.

"After I left my office, I drove to the house of a friend of mine, an astrologer, and spent the night with him. Next morning I went to the bank and drew out all the money that was in my account. I was afraid the navy might be watching for a withdrawal, but I don't think they were.

"Then I drove my car to a used-car dealer and sold it. I telephoned the clairvoyant I told you about, made an appointment with her, and took the bus to her house. After she and I made contact with you dolphins, I used public transportation to get to Sausalito. Is that all clear? I hope you're satisfied."

Before we could answer, there were footsteps coming along the jetty from the *Diamond Lil.* We swam under the planking of the jetty and floated quietly.

"Good evening," a male voice said. "Nice weather for this time of year."

"Yes, it is," Lawrence agreed. He stood up, yawning. "Makes me sleepy. I think I'll turn in."

"Oh. Good night."

"Good night."

Next morning Lawrence went ashore again for food. While he was gone, a man walked out on the jetty to the *Akbar,* jumped down on her deck, and knocked on the door of the deckhouse.

Neither Pettrus nor I was on guard. We had gone north

together, still trying to pick up a trace of Djuna, and Ivry had been left behind to watch over Madelaine. When Ivry tried to tell us what happened, he got excited and was difficult to understand.

The man knocked again on the deckhouse. Ivry, who was listening intently, thought he heard somebody (it could only have been Madelaine) moving about inside the cabin. The visitor waited for a while, and then knocked for the third time.

There was another wait, and Ivry wondered if the man was going away. But the door opened, and Ivry, though he could not hear very well, heard the man introduce himself, say he was from (mumble) intelligence agency, and that he was making inquiries in regard to a Dr. Edward Lawrence (Ivry got the name clearly enough).

Madelaine answered something. She seemed to be asking the visitor inside. At any rate, they both went into the deck house. Here, for some reason, Ivry could hear them rather more plainly.

"No, I don't know any Dr. Lawrence," Madelaine was saying. "We've only just bought this boat and come here. We don't know many people in Sausalito anyway."

"We?" the visitor asked.

"My brother and I. I've had the flu, and he's been taking care of me."

"I see. Do you mind telling me your brother's name, Miss—?"

"Oh, no, not at all. It's Gordon. My brother's first name is Bill."

"Thank you. Is he employed locally?"

"Not exactly. He's an artist—I mean, he wants to be an artist. He does odd jobs, and I work as a part-time secretary. You know, I fill in when somebody's sick or they need extra help. I haven't been working lately. We get by."

"I see. Well, thank you very much, Miss Gordon. I'm sorry to have bothered you."

"Oh, that's all right."

The visitor left the *Akbar*. Ivry heard him walking on down the jetty and going aboard the *Diamond Lil*, where he presumably asked the same questions. A few minutes later he left the jetty, and didn't come back. He missed

encountering Lawrence, returning from his shopping, by about half an hour.

Ivry had plenty of time to think about the meaning of what he had heard. Obviously the navy was still looking for Lawrence, but whether they had actually traced him to Sausalito or were merely checking through all the coastal communities was impossible to say. When Pettrus and I got back from our trip up north—we had been as far as Point Arena, but had not learned anything of Djuna—Ivry gave us an excited account of what had occurred.

We didn't like it. The intelligence man hadn't seemed suspicious, but that didn't mean he was satisfied with what Madelaine had said. One thing was certain, that it had been exceedingly fortunate Madelaine had answered his knock. Otherwise he would have waited until Lawrence came back, and the ambiguous doctor would by now be in naval custody again.

The *Diamond Lil's* owners went to bed early that night. As soon as the bigger houseboat's lights were out, Lawrence came out on the *Akbar's* deck and whistled to us.

"What's been happening?" he asked without preamble. "Has Madelaine been out of bed? I found my medical bag under her bunk, and the dressing gown I bought her has been worn."

"Yes," Ivry said. He related the incident.

"Madelaine did all that?" Lawrence said when he had finished. "She couldn't have. She's not only comatose most of the time, she's far too weak to stand up for more than a minute."

"She did, though," Ivry answered. "But I don't know whether or not the man believed her."

"Um. The navy may have traced me here, or they may just have been making a routine check, as you said. In either case, there's no use worrying about it."

"You're taking it very calmly," Ivry said.

Lawrence shrugged. "What else can I do? The *Akbar's* no ocean-going craft. I can't sail her away from Sausalito. We'll have to stay here and see what happens. Incidentally, Gordon is the name I used when I was buying her."

"How is Moonlight now?" I asked.

"Semiconscious. She spoke to me when I was changing the dressing on her arm just now."

"What did she say?" I wanted to know.

"She said, 'Something has happened about Sven,' " Lawrence answered slowly. "She didn't even open her eyes when she said it.

"There is something very peculiar about this semiconsciousness of hers."

CHAPTER 9

"Who was Sosa?" Dr. Lawrence asked.

"She was a heroine of the sea people who lived a very long time ago," I answered. "We call Madelaine by her name because Madelaine came to give us help."

It was a little after midnight; the *Diamond Lil* had left her mooring during the day, and the *Akbar* was currently the only craft tied up at the little jetty. We could talk more freely than we usually could.

"You've mentioned the covenant several times," Lawrence said. "Did the first Sosa have something to do with it?"

"With which covenant?"

Lawrence ran his hand over his hair. "I didn't know there was more than one covenant. Tell me about the covenants, then, and what Sosa had to do with them."

Ivry wriggled impatiently. He and I had gone looking for Djuna during the day, with the usual negative result, and he was in an impatient, irritable mood. "Why are you asking us so many questions, Dr. Lawrence? If you don't remember the covenant yourself, there is not much use in trying to tell you about it. Why do you want to know?"

"I'm asking because I'm not satisfied with our position or our prospects," Lawrence replied. "We're unarmed, Sven's gone, and if the navy decides I was telling the truth, they'll try to hunt down every dolphin in the ocean. I'm trying to get a line on what we should do next."

It sounded reasonable enough to me, and, I suppose, to Pettrus, but Ivry was not convinced. "How do we know what use you'll make of what we tell you? You say our position's bad. Yes, it is, but it could be worse."

"Um. Madelaine—"

"Madelaine! Why is she unconscious so much of the time, Dr. Lawrence?"

"I wish I knew," Lawrence answered ruefully.

"I think you *do* know," Ivry honked excitedly. "I think you're drugging her."

Lawrence sighed. "I don't blame you for being suspicious of me. But why the devil should I be drugging Madelaine? This is silly. What would my motive be?"

"To make a—a cat's-paw out of her. When you finally let her come back to consciousness, you'll have weakened her so she'll do whatever you say. Then you can use her—our poor Moonlight—to lead us all into a trap."

There was a slight pause. "Well, I'm not drugging her," Lawrence answered finally. "You don't know much about drugs. You were here yourself yesterday when she was talking to the naval intelligence man. There isn't a drug in the pharmacopoeia that would affect a woman like that."

If we had not been so intent on what Lawrence was saying, I think we would have heard the noises within the cabin. As it was, we were all taken by surprise when the deckhouse door opened and Madelaine came out on deck.

She was indefinably changed. For a moment I did not recognize her at all, and then I wondered whether Ivry were right in his suspicions that Lawrence was drugging her.

She came over to the boat's railing and looked down at us. "You waited for me," she said smilingly, "Dear Amtor, dear Ivry and Pettrus. There were dreams I had to have; it took time. But I think I'm done dreaming now."

"What were you dreaming of?" Ivry asked, still suspicious. "Did *he* make you dream?"

"No. My dreams were like your dreams, Ivry, very strange for a Split.

"But never mind about my dreams. The doctor is right to want to know about the covenant. Tell him what he wants to know. It might help."

I was still not ready to trust Lawrence completely. "You mean about how the covenant was drawn up and signed?" I asked. This was a trap; I thought that if Madelaine had been drugged, she would fall into it.

"Drawn up and signed!" She laughed. "You know as well as I do that the covenant was something *lived.*"

"It will be hard to make him understand," I answered.

"Why?" Lawrence asked practically.

"The minds of Splits are very different from ours."

"I don't doubt that," replied the doctor. "But a basic communication should be possible. After all, both species are mammals."

"Yes. But by now the gulf between us is exceedingly wide and deep."

"Try anyhow," Lawrence said.

"Very well," I answered. "What do you want to know?"

He sighed with exasperation. "Tell me what the covenant is."

"It is a poem," I said.

"What!"

"Yes, a poem. Do you not understand, Dr. Lawrence? We are the people of the word. We have enormous verbal memories. Our culture is based on speech. I can recite the genealogies straight back to the beginning, almost a million years."

"You mean that you can recite the pedigrees of—of dolphins, I suppose—going back a million years?" Lawrence still sounded jarred. "That's impossible."

"No, it is not. I can do it. Of course, it takes a very long time for me to say them all."

"Well, go on. You say the covenant is a poem. Maddy said it was something lived. The ideas seem a little incompatible, to me."

"No, not really," Madelaine answered. "In a sense there were three covenants, Dr. Lawrence. All of them could be said to be lived. The first one, the one Amtor called a poem, was made nearly a million years ago."

"Between dolphins and human beings?" the doctor said keenly. "There weren't any human beings—*Homo sapiens*—on earth a million years ago."

"No, not between Splits and the sea people. Mankind is older than Splits think. But it did not originate on earth."

Before the doctor could comment on what I had said, we heard the sound of a boat's engine. It was coming nearer.

"We can't talk any more tonight," Sosa said softly. "It's the *Diamond Lil*. Good night, my sea darlings."

"Good night, Sosa, good night."

Next day Ivry and Pettrus went looking for Djuna, and I stayed behind. I could hear the sound of voices in the deckhouse now and then, and the noise of the radio playing. About noon Lawrence went ashore and came back with a

newspaper and groceries. Madelaine—I could tell from her lighter footsteps—cooked the lunch.

In the afternoon she came out on deck and sat in the sunlight for a little while. Her tan had faded, and she was as fair as she had been when we first nicknamed her Moonlight. Yet there was a change in her, and I couldn't define it. I was glad when, before she went back into the deckhouse, she leaned over the railing and dabbled her hands in the water. I nuzzled her fingers and knew that she was still Madelaine.

Ivry and Pettrus came back from their search with the news that they had found a faint faint trace of Djuna's smell in the water near Pescadero. They had tried to follow the trace but failed; the water had been too turbulent. But that they had found a trace at all meant that Djuna was still alive, and the news heartened us.

When it got dark and the people on the *Diamond Lil* had gone to bed, the doctor and Madelaine came out of the cabin and we prepared to resume our attempt to make him understand the nature of the covenant.

"What did you mean when you said, 'Mankind did not originate on earth'?" Lawrence asked without preamble. "I thought you meant that terrestrial life had originated in, say, spores that came from outside the solar system. But Maddy says that's not it."

"No," I answered, "most terrestrial life is native to this planet. But men and dolphins have a common ancestor—"

"Go on."

"—and this ancestor—these ancestors—were not natives on earth.

"Splits and the sea people are the descendants of colonists who came to earth almost a million years ago from a planet of the star you call Altair. The colonists—we call them the Old Ones—were mammals, and they were humanoid. They looked quite a bit more like you and Sosa than like us sea people today. But they were amphibious."

Dr. Lawrence made a strangled noise. "I—go on."

"When I say they were amphibious, I don't mean they were like frogs or toads or salamanders. But they were accustomed to living half in and half out of the water, on the littoral, and their culture had grown up in an aquatic environment. Their cities were always built where they would be bathed by the tides.

"When they came to earth, they found conditions very different from those on their home planet. It was plain they couldn't reestablish the life they had been accustomed to. They could see that climatic changes—changes they couldn't control—were coming to earth that would make it even more different from the world they knew. They knew they would have to decide whether they were to have an aquatic or a terrestrial mode of life from then on.

"There was a great deal of debate. It was clear that, if they opted for an aquatic life, they would have to surrender most of their material culture and become what we dolphins now are, the people of the word. On the other hand, dry-land conditions on earth at that time were very rough indeed, and the Old Ones thought it unlikely they would be able to keep their material culture intact.

"The debate lasted for years. Two parties sprang up, one that supported the claims of the dry land and one that favored life in the water. Neither could convince the other one."

"Politics one million years ago," Lawrence said wryly. "Well, what happened?"

"They decided to separate. The first Sosa suggested this. Each faction should do as it wished. But before they parted, they made the covenant.

"The water was to belong to those who chose the sea, the dry land to those who chose the earth. Each was to respect the other's domain, each was to help the other if he needed assistance. And each was to remember the covenant.

"This did not happen all at once, of course. It took five or six generations for the separation between the land and water dwellers to be complete. Deliberate changes were made in the germ plasm, a little more with each generation, to fit each of the two groups for its new life.

"These generations were not an easy time for the Old Ones. The poem is full of the pain of separation, of seeing a gulf created between beings that had originally been alike. But at last the time came, the poem was completed, and we parted. But we parted as brothers, and in love."

Lawrence drew a deep breath. "Well! I've a lot of questions to ask. But the first one I want to ask is this: are you really saying that, a million years ago, more or less, the earth was populated by intelligent, civilized mammals that looked a good deal the way human beings do now?"

" 'Populated' isn't the right word," I replied. "There were only a few of the Old Ones after the separation had been made. But the rest of what you said is substantially correct."

Lawrence shook his head. "It's impossible. All the evidence shows that *Homo sapiens* originated from a tailless ground ape about, oh, 400,000 years ago."

"He *re*originated," I said. "Pettrus, you talk for a while. My throat is getting tired."

"All right," Pettrus said. "Do you think it's impossible, Dr. Lawrence, that there should have been intelligent, civilized mammals on earth about a million years ago?"

"Maybe not impossible," the doctor said. "But look at the palaeological record. We can trace *Homo sapiens'* ancestors back, getting more simian all the time, for about 400,000 years. I don't see how these brilliant humanoids from Altair fit into it. For one thing, where are their bones?"

Madelaine said, "I know the answer to that. There were not many of them, and they practiced cremation of their dead. Then they threw the ashes into the sea. Isn't that right, Pettrus?"

"Yes, that's right. How did you know?"

"Oh, my dreams! I don't know why they didn't leave other traces—buildings and so on—though."

"They did leave traces, I think," Pettrus answered. "One might still be able to find them, if one knew what to look for and where to look. But the Old Ones' favorite building material was metal, and in a million years even a corrosion-resistant metal corrodes away. It's not like baked brick."

Lawrence shook his head. "I'm still not convinced. If their civilization lasted for even a thousand years, it ought to have left some traces."

"There were never very many of the Old Ones," Pettrus said patiently. "And their civilization began to go down hill almost immediately after the covenant was finally made. It lasted a lot less than a thousand years."

"How do you know what happened after your forebears took to the water?" Lawrence asked.

"Because we were in telepathic communication with the first generations of dry-land colonists. But after only a few generations the communication began to fail, and with every new generation it grew feebler. We knew that not only their culture but they themselves, as rational beings, had begun to deteriorate.

"The original stock had been slow-breeding and long-lived. When they began to decline, they bred faster and their numbers increased. But by then we could hardly talk to them any more."

"What made them go downhill so rapidly?" Lawrence asked.

"We don't really know," I answered. "Conditions were rough for them, climatically speaking, and it must have been hard for them to maintain their material culture. But probably the real reason for their decline was that the genetic changes they had made in themselves to make them fit for dry-land life were unstable. The adaptation had been too fast. The original Altairan stock had really been more suited to aquatic life."

"They didn't die out, though?" Lawrence asked.

"No. Their biological deterioration was the prelude to a slow adaptation to permanent dry-land life on earth."

"How do you know they didn't die out? You weren't in touch with them any more."

"We have two reasons for thinking they didn't die out," I said. "One is that, about 500,000 years ago, we began to be aware that something like intelligent life was arising on earth. We couldn't read their thoughts—they were not really thoughts. But the new life was a little more than merely animal."

"Couldn't this new life, new intelligent life, have been native to earth?" the doctor asked.

"Yes, it could. And we do think that there is a possibility that you Splits are the result of breeding between the deteriorated Altairan stock and native proto-simians. But we are sure that the stock of the Old Ones persisted because, about 200,000 years ago, we renewed the covenant with their descendants, the hominids, the proto-men."

"Wait a minute," the doctor protested. "All through this you've been talking as if you dolphins were always the same. Didn't you change any in 800,000 years?"

"Of course we did," I answered. "We have changed very much since we first went into the water. We are larger and heavier, and very much faster swimmers. Our brains are larger, our verbal ability is greater, and our eyes far better. We have evolved senses unlike any the Old Ones had. But through all the changes, we never lost the memory of the covenant."

Dr. Lawrence sighed. "The past is opening up," he said, "and—it's difficult to believe. How do you know the hominids were the descendants of the Old Ones?"

"Because they remembered the covenant."

There was a silence. Madelaine said, "Tell him, Amtor, how the memory was passed on."

"It wasn't transmitted verbally," I said. "The memory was an impression made on the germ cells, and it was handed on genetically."

"I am not much enlightened," said Lawrence. "But this was the second covenant?"

"Yes."

"Was any means of enforcing it provided?"

"No. The covenants never depended on force. The Old Ones had hoped we would be bound by the love we had for each other."

"What about the third covenant?"

"It was made about twenty thousand years ago, between us, the sea people, and the first true men. Like the other covenants, it was something *lived.*"

"Did the sea people make a poem about it?" Lawrence asked.

"No. By then we and the dry-landers had grown too far apart from each other for making a poem to be worthwhile. The new men thought they were making the covenant for the first time.

"I will tell you one thing more about the covenant, Dr. Lawrence, though I don't think you will understand it. The covenant looks forward. Part of it—is yet to be made."

"No, I don't understand that," he said. "Is this all you are going to tell me about the covenant?"

"It is as much as there is any point in telling you. Now that you know, do you think you can use it to help us? Have you learned anything that would add to our armory?"

"I'm not sure," he answered heavily. "It's possible that after I—what was that?"

The *Akbar* had rocked sharply and then been slammed against the piling of the jetty with such force that Madelaine, who was standing, was almost knocked from her feet.

"It's a quake!" Ivry honked excitedly. "There's been another earthquake!"

"Be quiet," Madelaine said softly. She had caught at the boat's railing to steady herself. "Yes, that was another earth-

quake. But it wasn't an accident, any more than the first one was."

"What do you mean?" Lawrence demanded.

"The navy has dropped another mine into Benthis Canyon. They wanted to test what Dr. Lawrence had told them. Now they know he was telling the truth."

CHAPTER 10

"We must separate," Dr. Lawrence said. Madelaine had only just finished speaking; the water around the *Akbar* was still arush with motion from the quake. "As long as we Splits are with you sea people," he went on, "the danger is much greater for both parties than it would be separately. We can make arrangements to meet later. There are sure to be attacks on us, now the government knows I was telling the truth. We must separate."

"*No,*" Ivry said flatly. "Attacks or no attacks. We stay together. You're trying to get Moonlight away from us."

Lawrence bit his lip. "No, I'm not. How could I get Maddy away from you unless she was willing to go? Amtor, see if you can't reason with him. You're a sensible person."

"It's not my place to try to reason with Ivry," I answered. "Why don't you ask Madelaine what she thinks of your idea?"

"All right. Maddy, wouldn't it be wise for us to separate, at least for a while?"

A pale, strange rain had begun to fall from the charcoal sky. It faintly stung. Madelaine answered flatly. "It doesn't matter whether or not it would be wise. It's already too late."

"What makes you say that?" Lawrence replied keenly. "Is this more ESP?" He was always markedly and, it seemed, disproportionately interested when Sosa displayed any evidence of paranormal powers; sometimes I thought he was jealous of her, and that his life was motivated by desire for an ability he had good reason to believe existed and yet had never been able to attain.

"I don't know," Madelaine answered. Her voice was high and strained. "More like Udra, I guess. I've changed since I was unconscious so much.—Oh, I wish I knew what to do! I can't think what would help."

"What are you talking about?" Lawrence demanded. His

voice had risen a little, too, in response to the alarm in hers.

"Look in the water," she answered. "The attack has already begun."

Lawrence obeyed, looking over the *Akbar's* side. "There's a froth—a thick whitish scum—floating on the water," he said after a minute. "I don't know what's causing it—the latest quake, I suppose. But I don't see what it has to do with an attack. Froth can't do any harm."

"Can't it?" Madelaine replied with a strange look at him. "The foam is getting deeper every minute. You can see it grow."

"But it's still just froth—"

"The dolphins are air-breathers," Madelaine explained. "They breathe at the surface of the water. What will they do for air when the foam is two or three feet thick?"

"But—it may not get that thick," the doctor answered a little stupidly. "Besides, they can always swim out beyond the foam to where the water is clear. They're fast swimmers. I don't understand why you're so alarmed."

"Where can they swim to?" Madelaine answered. She was twisting her fingers together. "The navy planes have broadcast the foam-producing chemical all over the bay. The dolphins would choke long before they could get to the open sea.—Oh, if I could only think of something that would help!"

The foam, which had begun as a mere scum on the water, was puffing up fantastically. It felt warm and rubbery, with a faint oily smell, and even when we arched our bodies in the water, we could not get our heads above it. We were not yet much frightened; it had happened suddenly, and we sea people can hold our breath for quite a time. But we could not breathe foam, any more than a man could. We would have to have air.

Through the muffling, constantly thickening blanket of the foam, I heard Madelaine say, "Untie the *Akbar* and take her out from the jetty, Doctor. Hurry! We may be able to use her to clear a swath in the foam."

He made no answer, but an instant later we heard the *Akbar's* motor begin a dull putt putt putt, and a moment later she swung out from the jetty and started to push the lofty foam aside with her prow.

It was high time. Already we were having to make short leaps up into the air for breath. What frightened us as much

as anything was that our leaps were so short. The layer of foam was like a hand holding us back, and with our best efforts we couldn't get more than six or seven feet into the air. Ordinarily, we sea people can leap right over the spars of a ship.

The *Akbar* was flat-bottomed and broad in the beam. She did a better job of clearing the foam than a smarter craft would have done. All the same, the swath she made was only about two feet wide, and it closed behind her rapidly. We swam in a narrow wake, with the tall, choking foam constantly threatening to cave in on us.

Even now, I am not quite certain why the government did not announce our responsibility for the quake to the general public, and proceed to launch a Jihad against us. There must have been a great deal of debate in high places. Long afterwards, when I discussed the matter with a top-ranking naval officer, he told me that they had been affected by a number of things—the wish to avoid a public panic, the feeling that unarmed sea creatures could not be really dangerous, and the fear that the dolphins' attack might be a communist feint, designed to distract attention from more serious attempts—but that the final consideration had been the fact that it was an election year. They decided to eliminate us quietly. It never occurred to them that they would have any real difficulty in doing it.

The *Akbar* had passed the *Diamond Lil* and was moving out into slightly broader waters. We leaped up several times, but the foam was a solid sheet as far as we could see. It reached right up on the shore and was clinging close around the hulls of the boats we passed.

We heard Madelaine say to Lawrence, who was at the helm of the *Akbar,* "How much gas have we got?"

"Not—very much," he answered. "Enough for about half an hour more cruising."

Half an hour—it wasn't nearly enough. The *Akbar* was a slow craft. She couldn't get through to clear water in three times the time.

"I know what this stuff on the water is," Lawrence said after a brief silence. "It's called pyrtrol and was invented for dealing with fires at sea. It's a chemical that reacts with moisture—the moisture from a fire hose, or in sea water, or even the moisture in the air—to form a thick blanket of foam. Somebody was smart to think of using it against the

dolphins. I wonder what the dockside workers in the bay ports think of it."

Moonlight made no answer. "It evaporates in four or five hours," he went on. "That's too long, of course. There's a simple way of dealing with it—one of the crewmen told me about it once—if I could only think what it is."

Madelaine was still silent. I think she was looking at him steadily. After a moment he put his right hand up to his head. "*Don't,*" he said sharply. "That hurts."

"I'm sorry, Dr. Lawrence. You'll have to stand it. I do not like it either. But it is important that you remember how to get rid of the foam."

He made an inarticulate sound. He had left the helm and was standing with both hands pressed to his head. Madelaine had taken the wheel. "Well?" she said after a moment or two.

We were listening avidly; after all, our lives depended on whether Lawrence could remember what the crewman had told him. "Not yet," Lawrence answered. "Christ, how it hurts!"

"I'm sorry. Try to relax. That's causing part of your distress."

It occurred to me that Sosa's new abilities were, as she had said, something like our Udra, and that the trouble was coming from her trying to use them with an unsuitable subject. If she had been trying with Sven, for example, it would have caused him no distress.

The broad sheet of foam, whitish, like dirty snow, reflected the light from the sky and greatly increased the visibility of the objects around us; but it muffled and deadened sound. For us dolphins, swimming slowly in the *Akbar's* narrow wake, it was as if we swam inside a small box, barely large enough for the three of us. It made us feel claustrophobic.

We heard Lawrence grunt again. "I *am* trying to relax, but it hurts so much that—wait now. I think I'm getting it. Can't you ease up a bit, Maddy?"

"All right."

"That's better," he said. "Thanks for stopping. I couldn't have stood it much longer. But I've remembered how to deal with the foam."

We heard him go into the deckhouse. He came out after a minute with a plastic squeeze bottle of detergent in his

hand. "This is going to look funny," he told her. "But unless the crewman was mistaken, it will work."

He went to the *Akbar's* rail, leaned over, and began to squirt the detergent out of the bottle in long spurts, so that it landed on the sheet of foam. He walked slowly around the *Akbar's* deck, squeezing the bottle, and when it was empty he tossed it into the froth ahead of the little houseboat.

Nothing happened. The *Akbar* continued to move slowly through the water, and we followed behind her. "It will take a little while," the doctor said, "ten or fifteen minutes, and when the foam goes, it will go all at once, all over the bay. It's a one-piece sheet of foam, you see, even though it's so large, and will respond all in one piece. At least, that's what the crewman said. —I hope we don't run out of gas."

He took the helm from Madelaine. She went aft, where the foam was piled up almost as high as her shoulders, and stood looking down at us. "Don't be frightened," she told us softly. "I think it's going to be all right. I don't mean that our troubles are over, of course. But perhaps this one is."

It would be dramatic to report that the foam lifted just as the *Akbar's* motor gave its last cough and stopped from lack of gas. That is not what happened. Quite suddenly, as she was still moving forward and had still a few minutes' fuel left, the whole sheet of froth lifted up from the water and hung suspended two or three feet above it. Then it disappeared. There was nothing gradual about the disappearance—one moment the thick froth was there, inexplicably floating, and the next it had gone. It left an oily, unpleasant smell in the air.

Madelaine drew a deep breath. "If navy planes have been monitoring this—and I think they have, very high up —they will have seen the foam lift and disappear. They won't be sure what caused it, of course. Anybody who happened to spill enough detergent on the foam could have done it. The navy can't have been watching everything that took place on San Francisco Bay.

"But tomorrow the planes will fly over, looking for the dead bodies of dolphins. When they don't find any, and nobody reports finding any, they'll be pretty certain we got away. We can expect more attacks to be made."

The *Akbar* tied up almost at her old anchorage, the dock where Sosa had taken refuge when she was wounded and delirious. There was no other craft tied up there now.

The rest of the night I spent in the Udra-state, trying, with Madelaine's help, to contact Sven. Ivry and Pettrus had gone fishing; Lawrence sat on the deck smoking and seeming to think.

Madelaine was not really in Udra, of course; her mind, though it had changed since her long semiconsciousness, was still essentially the mind of a Split. But she did what she could do to help. We both thought a Split working with a dolphin would be more apt to contact the mind of a Split.

I never made a contact with a mind that was clearly Sven's, though over and over I had impressions of stress and helplessness. It was about four o'clock in the morning according to Madelaine, when I gave a loud, gurgling cry.

What had happened was that, deep in the Udra-state as I was, I had received an exceedingly unpleasant shock. It was dangerous, too—I have known of sea people to be knocked unconscious, or even to have a heart attack, from such a shock. Ivry and Pettrus, off fishing, felt it too, but not nearly so severely. The Udra-state makes one vulnerable.

"What's the matter?" Sosa cried. "Something has happened. What was it?"

"A lot of the sea people have been killed."

"How many? Oh, Amtor! Where was it! How?"

"I don't know how many," I said miserably. I was still badly shaken. "Quite a few. It was out at sea, near Hawaii. They were leaping up in the air because they were happy. A navy bomber saw them and dropped bombs on them."

"I knew trouble was coming," Madelaine said desolately. She looked briefly at Lawrence, and I knew she was thinking that it was he who was responsible for so much pain. And yet, if it had not been for him, the sea people would still have been confined in the navy's training stations. Dr. Lawrence was always ambiguous.

Lawrence got to his feet and came toward Madelaine. He flipped his cigarette over the side of the *Akbar*. "A direct attack," he said, "and there're going to be more of them. The only reason we've survived so far is that the navy isn't sure where to look for us. There'd have been no nonsense about a sheet of pyrtrol foam if they had.

"It'll get worse. They can't afford to let us go on living. Maddy's 'war against the human race' is enough to make *Homo sapiens*, with his guilty conscience, acutely nervous. Before things get really desperate, we'd better find a way of getting the heat off ourselves."

Ivry and Pettrus swam up and listened.

I noticed he said nothing more about dolphins and Splits separating. "Getting the heat off is a good idea," Madelaine said, a little dryly. "Do you have any idea how it can be done?"

"Yes." He hesitated. "I've been thinking about it a lot. It would take the heat off the sea people and their human allies—if the polar ice caps were to melt."

CHAPTER 11

I think we would have laughed at him, except that, after all, he had already engineered an earthquake. As it was, the idea of melting the polar ice caps reduced us to a flabbergasted silence. Finally Madelaine said, "Well, if the level of the oceans were to rise even a few feet, it would certainly give human beings something more immediate to worry about than the existence of the dolphins. And more water in the oceans would dilute the radioactivity of the water that's already there. The radioactivity must be reduced if the dolphins are to survive.

"But what makes you think we can do it, Ted?" (This was one of the very few times Madelaine called Dr. Lawrence by his first name.) "Melting the polar ice caps—it's a grandiose idea."

"Grandiose?" he repeated thoughtfully. He laughed. "I suppose it does sound a little like the CIA. But when I'm with the dolphins, I have a feeling of limitlessness, of space and freedom and power."

"They don't feel like that about themselves," Sosa answered.

"Perhaps they have more powers than they know," Lawrence replied. "Human beings have more psychic abilities than those they usually exercise. It could be the same with the sea people."

"Maybe so. But you still haven't told me how you think two human beings and a varying number of dolphins are going to be able to melt the polar ice."

"When Amtor told us about the covenant," Lawrence said, "he implied that the Old Ones had an advanced scientific technology. Those of the colonists who stayed on land went downhill rapidly, and lost their scientific culture; and those that adapted to life in the water had to give up material culture entirely. But Amtor says he knows dolphin genealo-

gies reaching back for a million years. Does he know anything—has he heard of any dolphin tradition—about a technique, a device, I don't know exactly what it would be —but something that would help us melt the polar ice?"

I said, "It's an interesting idea. Before I try to do anything with it, I want to go fishing. I'm hungry. It's been a lot longer than I usually go without food."

"Very well." Lawrence was obviously annoyed, but he tried to be polite. "Get back as quick as you can, though—it will be getting light in a little while."

I got three large, nourishing fish in a little more than twenty minutes. When I got back to the *Akbar*, the radio had been turned on and the four were listening to it.

"Another quake shook the San Francisco Bay area at 1:17 this morning," the radio was saying. "Property damage was negligible, but a welder, making repairs on the damaged Gate Bridge, was shaken from his perch on the span and fell 370 feet to the water below. Death was instantaneous.

"A mysterious foam that blanketed Bay waters for several hours very early this morning disappeared as abruptly as it came. It is thought that several drums of concentrated detergent, stored in a waterfront warehouse, may have been responsible.

"The U.S. Department of Commerce weather bureau predicts . . ."

Dr. Lawrence switched off the radio. "That's that," he said. "The foam is neatly, if not convincingly, accounted for.—Amtor, Pettrus says you once told him about a thermal device the Old Ones had—something called ahln."

I puffed a few fish scales from my lips. "Oh, the ahln. Yes, there is said to have been such a thing. I'd forgotten about it."

"How much do you know about it?" the doctor asked. "How do you know that such a thing ever existed?"

"I don't know much about it," I said. "It's a tradition among the sea people that the Old Ones had the ahln. A dolphin called Kendry told me the little I know."

"Kendry?"

"Kendry is a female, a sort of great-great-great aunt of mine. She's the oldest dolphin I've ever known. All her ancestors lived to be very old. I learned a lot of the genealogies from her."

"Does Kendry know how to make this ahln thing?" The doctor was getting excited. He lit a cigarette, drew on it twice, and then tossed it over the *Akbar's* side.

I considered. "I suppose it's possible. Knowing how to make the ahln wouldn't be of any use to the sea people; you can't make a mechanism unless you have hands. But it's possible that a bit of useless information like that might have been handed down, if only as a curiosity. Kendry knows a lot of things."

"Can you contact her telepathically and find out what she knows?" Lawrence asked.

"No. I mean, yes, we probably could contact her telepathically if she was open to being contacted. But as far as finding out anything precise goes, it would be a waste of time. Telepathic impressions are more emotional than accurate. If we really want to find out what she knows about the ahln, we'll have to go to see her. There is no real substitute for articulate speech."

"But wouldn't Udra—"

"No. Udra is more motor. If we were trying to get her to come to see *us* it might work. But she's old. It would take her a long time to come here."

The doctor sighed. "Well, where does she live?—I don't know whether a dolphin can be said to 'live' anywhere. But where would we have to go to have a meeting with her?"

"She used to spend most of her time in the Indian Ocean, near the—I think you call them—the Maldive Islands." I heard Lawrence give a grunt of dismay.

"She's not there any more, Amtor," Pettrus put in. "I talked to one of her great-great nephews while we were in the DRAT pens. He said she was staying near some rocks off the Baja California coast. The water near the Maldives got too hot—radioactive—after the U.S. Navy lost an H-bomb off the Seychelles. Kendry had to move."

"Could you find the rocks?" Lawrence asked.

"Yes, I think so," Pettrus answered.

"And she's still there?"

"I think so," Pettrus said. "We'd have heard if she'd been killed or captured. And since she's old, she doesn't go far from where the fish are."

"Some rocks off Baja California," the doctor repeated thoughtfully. "Well, it could be worse." He yawned and stretched.

"I'll get some gas into the *Akbar,*" he said, "and then take her into the Marina Boat Exchange and see if I can turn her in on something a little more seaworthy. We can't make it down to Baja California in a houseboat.

"It's too bad I'm not more of a sailor, but I imagine I can set a course that will get us near where we want to go, particularly with the dolphins to help if I make any bad mistakes. —Maddy, what do you think of all this? You haven't said anything."

"What? Oh, I think we'd better go. I was thinking about Sven."

In the next few hours, the doctor traded the *Akbar* in on a small electric-powered cruiser, stocked the *Naomi* (the new boat) with canned goods and water, and bought charts, a marine compass and so many power packs that the dealer asked him whether he was planning a trip around the world. He also got life jackets for himself and Madelaine. By ten o'clock, we were ready to leave Sausalito.

We dolphins were relieved to be getting out of the bay. The restricted waters had always made us feel as if we were in a trap, and the dirtiness and atomic pollution of the bay water was a constant irritation to us. Also, though our trip to find Kendry might be a fool's errand, it was action. We were no longer waiting passively for the navy to make the next move. We swam sedately beside the *Naomi,* however, trying to keep within the boat's small shadow.

The bay was alive with small and medium-sized craft, and as we passed under the Gate Bridge we saw the reason: the big bridge was still closed to traffic. Then we were through the gate and out into the open sea.

It had been arranged that Moonlight and the doctor should stand four-hour tricks at the *Naomi's* helm, with Lawrence taking the first trick. But as we emerged into the turbulent off-coast water, the *Naomi* bobbed about like a cork. Lawrence turned pale green. He had to relinquish the helm to Madelaine, and he hurried into the tiny cabin to dose himself with neo-dramamine from his medical bag.

This was fortunate, for when a navy 'copter flew low over the *Naomi,* the pilot saw a laughing girl at the helm of a smart cruiser, who smiled and waved at him. If Lawrence had been steering, it might have been different. Even swimming in the *Naomi's* shadow, we dolphins were visible

enough from the air. But human females can distract human males.

It took us about three days to get down to Baja California. The days were getting longer, and at night the half-full moon lit up the sky. We knew when we passed Los Angeles: even out at sea, the haze of bluish smog marked the city's site. There were occasional flurries of rain.

We were getting near to the place where we could start looking for Kendry when a strange dolphin joined us. He was a half-grown male, rather lighter than we usually are, and we soon found out that, though he could hear what we said to him, he couldn't talk.

"Who's that?" Sosa (she was steering) asked.

"He can't tell us his name," I answered. "I think he's a mutant. There's something wrong with his tongue."

We swam along companionably with the new dolphin for a while. We were glad to have him; we sea people are always glad to be with our kind. Then Madelaine said, "What are those scars on his head?"

"Scars? I don't see any." We were swimming somewhat ahead of the *Naomi.*

"Where his head bulges, above his eyes," she called to us.

"Oh. I expect he had a run-in with a shark," I answered.

"Um. Ask him whether he was ever in one of the DRAT pens," she said. "He must be able to grunt, or something, when he means yes."

I didn't see any particular point in the question; a lot of us had been kept at the Naval Research Stations. But I did as she asked, telling the new dolphin to make a noise in his throat if he'd ever been in the pens.

His eyes flickered. His lips writhed. He seemed to be struggling to speak, but no noise came out of his throat. I don't know, even now, whether he would have come out with a grunt if he'd had time to make one. The next moment Sosa shouted at us, in that vibrant, imperative voice we had heard her use twice before, "Jump! Out of the water, all of you! High! Jump!"

The strange dolphin may or may not have understood her; at any rate, he didn't obey. But Ivry and Pettrus and I acted instantly, making our best and highest jumps. When we were at the top of our springs, we saw the space under us suddenly full of flying red gobbets and churned-up spray. The strange dolphin had disappeared.

When we came down, Madelaine was clinging to the wheel for support. She looked ready to faint. Her white dress was stained with blood, and bits of flesh and bone had been spattered all over her. Dr. Lawrence had come running out of the cabin and was shaking her arm.

"What's the matter?" he cried. "What's happened? Are you hurt?"

"No, not hurt. The dolphin—he exploded. The navy must have . . ." Her voice was faint.

Lawrence couldn't make much sense of this, but he got his medical bag and broke an ampule from it under her nose.

"There, that's better," he said. "What happened? I thought we'd struck a rock, at first. I was almost thrown off the settee."

She drew a deep breath. "The navy sent out a dolphin," she said. "There were electrodes in his brain, so he couldn't disobey, and a charge of explosive somewhere in his body cavity. He was supposed to seek out his own kind, and then the explosive would detonate."

"You mean—the navy knows where we are?" Lawrence asked.

She shook her head. "I don't think so." Her color was coming back. "I think it was a time bomb, set to go off after a certain length of time.

"Poor thing, he couldn't help himself. They cut out his tongue, so he couldn't give a warning, even if he'd dared."

She started to cover her eyes with her hands, but the touch of her skin, sticky with blood, made her lower them again. "I'm covered with his blood and flesh," she said. "Oh, poor thing, poor thing!"

She was trembling violently. Lawrence said nothing, but he brought her some medicine in a glass and made her drink it.

"How about you?" he asked, looking over the side at where we were floating. "Are you all right?"

"Yes. Sosa saved us again. She warned us in time."

"Good. The *Naomi* seems to be all right. She's no lower in the water than she was." He went to the helm. He turned the wheel, but, though the ship still had some weight on, she did not respond. The explosion seemed to have damaged her steering gear.

Lawrence leaned over the bow. "The link's broken," he

said. "I can probably fix it up, but—Amtor, how far are we from where you think Kendry is?"

"Not so very far," I answered. "About two hours, if we take you in on our backs. We'd have to take you in part of the way, anyhow. The water around the rocks is too shallow for a boat."

"In that case, I think we might leave the repairs to the *Naomi* until later. We can anchor her here as well as anywhere else. And I'm anxious to try to see Kendry before anything else happens. Maddy, what do you think?"

She had taken off her dress and slip and was dipping them up and down in the water over the stern of the ship, trying to clean the blood and flesh from the cloth. "It's no use," she said, straightening. "The blood won't come out." She let the garments float away in the water. "Go to see Kendry? All right. We'd better hurry, though. All that blood in the water may draw sharks."

While Madelaine was putting on another dress, Lawrence let down the *Naomi's* anchor and got canteens and food parcels for himself and the girl. I dove to check the security of the anchoring. When I came back up, Lawrence had put on a life jacket and was slipping a hunting knife on his belt.

"Maddy, you'd better put on a life jacket," he told her.

"It isn't necessary now. Later, it may be. Let's get into the water. Kendry will be expecting us."

She stepped over the *Naomi's* rail and let herself down into the water. She did this with aplomb, though she was still trembling a little from the recent danger—she always liked riding with us. But the doctor hesitated an instant before following her, and I perceived that he not only did not trust us completely, but also that he was afraid of the water.

We began to swim away from the ship. Madelaine was silent. I knew she was thinking of the other time she had ridden with us on a dubious project of Lawrence's. Sven had been with her then. Now the doctor was her companion, and Sven—

"What makes you think Kendry will be expecting us?" Lawrence asked her. "ESP?"

"No, she'll have smelled the traces the sea people leave in the water. Perhaps the blood, too. The currents around her rock will take the smell to her.—You've brought something to write with, haven't you, Doctor?"

"Yes, in my breast pocket. I didn't want to trust what we might learn about the ahln to memory."

Madelaine nodded agreement. I noticed that Lawrence did not treat her knowledge of the currents around Kendry's rock as if it came from ESP, and I don't think it did. That she knew about the currents meant that she was perceiving the surface of the water in the way that a dolphin would.

We swam on in silence. Moonlight had stopped trembling and seemed to be enjoying herself, but Lawrence kept looking around the horizon rather anxiously, I suppose from fear of sharks. Pettrus, who was carrying him, said that he gripped unpleasantly tightly with his knees.

In a little more than an hour, Kendry came out to meet us. She was one of the biggest dolphins I have ever known, and I think she had grown a little since I had last seen her. Her skin color had lightened, probably because she was living among light-colored rocks, and there was a pale film over her eyes that hadn't been there when I had last seen her, four or five years ago. She was a very old dolphin, indeed.

"I'm glad to see you," she said in our language. She nuzzled us three sea people affectionately. "And Sosa, too—it's good to see her again."

"Again?" I asked.

"Yes, again. Sosa—some Sosa—always comes when there's need of her."

Madelaine laughed. Kendry said, "Does she understand our speech?"

"Tell her," Madelaine said, "that I can understand a good deal of it, since I slept for so long. My hearing has greater range, for one thing. But I can't speak it, of course."

I relayed this message to Kendry. Lawrence was growing restless during this, to him, silent interchange. "Does Kendry—I suppose this dolphin is Kendry—speak English?" he asked.

"No," I said. "It takes a good deal of training for a dolphin to do that."

Madelaine said, "She knows we came to get help. Does she know what kind of help we want?"

The four of us talked for quite a long time, Madelaine listening intently. Kendry found the idea of melting the polar ice as astonishing as we had when Lawrence had first

proposed it, and in order to make it seem plausible to her I had to tell her what had already happened.

"I knew that the sea people were under attack," she said when I had finished. "I have seen more than one wounded dolphin lately. But I didn't know why. I was puzzled to know why the Splits had suddenly begun to hate us.

"But you came to get me to help you. I don't understand, Amtor, how I can help you with a project like that."

"Don't you remember telling me once about the ahln, a thermal device the Old Ones had?" I answered.

"The ahln. Yes, there was such a thing."

"Do you know how it was made?"

"There is a tradition. It seems to me that I was once told . . ." The film over Kendry's eyes looked thicker, but that was only because she was thinking hard. "I have forgotten how it is made. But I may be able to remember. I will try."

We had been swimming slowly eastward all the time we were talking. Now we saw Kendry's rocks ahead of us.

The cluster, not more than ten feet across, could have been called an islet only by courtesy. It must have been almost submerged at high tide. Patches of sea growth clung to it, and it was white with the droppings of birds.

Madelaine looked at it, shielding her eyes against the light. "I have seen—" she said, and then stopped.

"Seen what?" the doctor asked her.

"Seen these rocks before. Do you remember the dream I told you that last morning, just before I went to Drake's Bay? About standing on some rocks in a wild sea during a wild storm? These are the rocks in my dream."

"Yes, I remember," Lawrence answered. His face did not change. "Does Kendry know how to make the ahln? That's the important thing."

"She thinks she knew once. She is trying to remember. Let's get up on the rocks, Doctor, and eat our lunch. She will do better being by herself."

They did as she suggested. Kendry had swum apart and was floating motionless. We others did a little fishing, but mainly we stayed near the rock cluster, since we knew Lawrence was somewhat mistrustful.

The two Splits ate in silence. The gulls swooped around them. Sosa dabbled her fingers in the water to clean them; Lawrence lit a cigarette, smoked furiously for a moment

or two, and then squashed the cigarette out against the rock. He shifted his legs impatiently. "Madelaine, do you think—oh, here she comes."

Kendry stopped in front of Madelaine. We were all listening. "Sosa—I cannot remember," she said.

CHAPTER 12

Dr. Lawrence looked around the horizon. Kendry's rocks were so little elevated above the surface of the sea that he was almost as low as if he sat in a rowboat. He seemed to find no help in the wide, flat prospect, and his gaze returned to Madelaine.

"Kendry says she can't remember?" he repeated. "She *must* remember. Getting the ahln is too important to dismiss like this. Can't you enter her mind, Madelaine, the way you did with me when I couldn't remember how to get rid of the pyrtrol foam?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because she's a dolphin, and her brain is much more complex than yours. Besides, she is very old. If I tried to enter her mind, in any but the most superficial way, I would probably kill her."

"Well, for Christ's sake, there must be some way of reminding her."

"Perhaps there is, but it can't be forced."

Kendry, though she had not understood Lawrence's words, had understood his tone and was looking at him intently. To me she said, "This is the Split who betrayed us?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Is he really our friend now?" she asked.

"I think so. We have had no reason to mistrust him since he came back. And Sosa seems to think he is reliable."

Madelaine, who was following our conversation, nodded her head, though not very enthusiastically. "Tell Kendry he is worried because she can't remember," she said.

I relayed this message, adding, "Is there any reference to the ahln in the poem of the covenant, Kendry?"

"There may be," my great-great-great aunt answered

slowly. I seemed to have started her on a new train of thought. "There is that passage about the parting and wasting of the waters that might refer to it. I never thought of it in that light before."

We were all quiet—even the doctor, though he did not understand what had been said—while Kendry softly recited the verses. At the end, she said, "Yes, I think it does mean the ahln. But I still cannot remember how I was told it is made."

Moonlight let out her breath in disappointment. She shook her head in response to Lawrence's look of inquiry. A gull swooped low over her head, and she put up her arm to protect herself. The motion made the loose cap sleeve of her dress fall away from her shoulder.

"How did Sosa get that scar on her arm?" Kendry asked.

"That's where she was wounded during the attack on Noonday Rock," I answered. "Don't you remember our telling you she was hurt in the arm?"

"Yes, I remember. I have seen such a scar before—it was—I—no, it's gone."

Madelaine had turned to the doctor. "Give me your hunting knife," she said in a low voice.

He drew it from the sheath and handed it to her. I thought she seemed a little paler than usual. "Tell Kendry this—this will help her remember," she told me. She drew the hunting knife forcefully across the barely healed scar.

Blood gushed out. Lawrence jumped to his feet and snatched the knife away from her. "Maddy! What are you doing? What's the big idea?"

Moonlight was clutching her arm underneath the freely bleeding gash. "I think Kendry can tell us now," she said.

We were all making noises of distress. "Sosa!" Kendry cried. "I don't understand! Why did you wound yourself?"

"Amtor, tell her to remember the other time she saw a scar, and it was gashed by a knife."

Ivry was dashing about wildly; as usual when something went wrong, he was inclined to blame Lawrence. Pettrus and I were relatively calm, and Kendry, though she couldn't help making the distress signal, was trying to do as Madelaine had bidden her.

"I remember," she said after a minute. "It happened when I was young, a long, long time ago.

"We were swimming along beside a canoe of the Splits,

the brown Splits who live on islands in the big calm ocean. It was a big canoe, filled with people, and we were guiding them to a new island, where they had never been before.

"We sea people talked as we swam along, of course; a very old cousin of mine was telling us about something the Old Ones had had, called the ahln.

"The Split in the prow of the canoe had a scar on his shoulder, very like the one Sosa has. One of the oarsmen began to quarrel with him, and suddenly he jumped up from his oar and slashed at the other Split's shoulder with his knife.

"Blood ran out over the scar, a lot of blood. The other men in the canoe took sides, and in a minute they were all fighting.

"The canoe upset and they all went in the water, even the women. That would not have been serious; they could all swim, and they could have righted the canoe. But the blood in the water drew sharks, more sharks than I had ever seen at one time, and we sea people had to leave the Splits struggling in the water and swim for our lives.

"I suppose they were all killed. I am not surprised I couldn't remember about the ahln. Seeing a Split hurt is very shocking to one of the sea people."

"But she remembers now?" Moonlight asked. She was still clutching her arm underneath the wound, to check the bleeding. The blood ran out over her fingers and down her arm.

Kendry blew a long jet of air after I relayed the question. "Yes, I think so. I am not sure of the names of the metal, but perhaps Amtor can help with them.—It is at least a hundred years since I had thought of it."

Lawrence had taken off his life jacket and was tearing a strip from the bottom of his shirt to serve as a bandage. He began tying the cloth around Madelaine's arm. "Did your self-mutilation succeed in jogging Kendry's memory?" he asked.

"She believes so."

"Good," Lawrence answered. "When we get back to the *Naomi*, you must tell me how you knew it would have that effect. Meantime, see if you can get her to dictate the details of the ahln's construction to you." He tied the ends of his bandage in a neat knot.

"All right."

Lawrence got a writing pad and pencil from his pocket and handed them to her. Madelaine seated herself on the rocky surface, the writing pad on her knee and Kendry in the water close to her feet. The tide was rising, and there was less of the rock above water than there had been.

"I can't *tell* you how to draw the ahln, Sosa," Kendry said, faintly distressed. "I shall have to use Udra to make you draw the ahln as it is in my mind. Then you can ask me questions about what you have drawn. Will you object to this?"

"Tell her, not at all," Madelaine said to me. "She is welcome to use my arm, or my whole body, as she pleases. I don't find Udra frightening."

There was a silence. Madelaine sat relaxed, her shoulders drooping, while blood seeped through the bandage on her arm. Her eyes did not seem to be focused on anything. Lawrence lit cigarette after cigarette. The rock area above water diminished steadily.

Slowly Moonlight's hand began to move. She drew on the writing pad for about fifteen minutes, slowly and steadily, going back occasionally over what she had already drawn.

Her hand stopped moving. She gave a deep sigh. "That's the ahln," she said. "Take the pad, Doctor, and take good care of it. I can't see to hand it to you."

Lawrence's hand had gone out to the note pad, but now he stopped, divided between curiosity over the drawing and solicitude for the girl.

"Can't see to hand it to me?" he said. "What do you mean by that? Is something wrong with your eyes?"

"No. I mean, yes, there is, but I think it will pass. Translating Kendry's multidimensional picture into human, two-dimensional terms has affected my vision. But I think it will pass. Take the pad, Doctor. Take good care of it."

He obeyed. Madelaine was rubbing the back of her neck and sighing. He looked at the drawing thoughtfully.

"What are the wires in the upper left corner made of?" he asked after an instant.

"Cy—copper, I think."

"And what's that prism-thing in the middle? It doesn't seem to be glass."

"No, it's not," the girl answered. "Amtor, ask Kendry what the prism it."

"She says it's a heavy dull metal that's quite soft," I reported. "She says Splits use it on fishing lines. I think she means lead."

"What's the purpose of the prism, though?" Lawrence asked.

"Kendry says it regulates the amount of heat that is produced," I reported.

"Um. And the little helix down on the right? Is it the same as the copper wire?"

"No, it's not," Madelaine said after I had put the question to Kendry. "It's a silvery metal, very heavy, that's resistant to almost everything. It's hard to work. Kendry has never seen a specimen of it."

"She must mean platinum," Dr. Lawrence said. He was still studying the drawing. "Well, I guess we could make this thing without too much trouble. Even the platinum wire wouldn't be impossible.

"But I don't see what it would do after we made it. For one thing, there's no indication of a power source on the drawing. It isn't self-powered, is it? Where does the power come from?" He gave the drawing a final dissatisfied glance and put it in his breast pocket, under his life jacket.

"Ask Kendry, Amtor," Madelaine said. She was rubbing her eyes.

"She says it is not self-powered. It has to have an external source of power."

"Well, what is it? A battery? Electric current? What?"

"She says it is none of these," I reported after I had relayed Lawrence's question. "She says she cannot tell us how it is powered, though she knows it is something Splits do not have. But what it is exactly, she has never known. She was never told."

Dr. Lawrence grew rigid. "Why didn't the old lady tell us this before?" he demanded angrily. "It would have saved us all trouble, and Madelaine needn't have that nasty cut on her arm. I don't see how this contraption could do anything anyhow. But it's perfectly useless if it can't be powered." He gave an exasperated snort.

"Maybe not useless," Madelaine answered. She reached out her hand gropingly and laid it on the doctor's arm. "Be patient a little.—Amtor, ask Kendry about this."

Kendry and I talked for several minutes. Madelaine listened carefully, but Lawrence, of course, could only wait.

At last I said, "She says Madelaine and I must unite our minds to try to find out how to power it. We must unite our minds and reach out."

"Reach out? To where?" Lawrence was still fuming with exasperation.

"She says it will not be easy, but Madelaine has become enough like one of the sea people to make it possible. We must unite our minds and reach out with all our strength to the sun from which the Old Ones came. We must reach out to Altair."

CHAPTER 13

"A storm is coming up," Kendry continued. "Sosa must have a place where she can be quiet and warm before she and Amtor try what they have to do. Sail your boat south, down the coast, and try to find a quiet anchorage."

Dr. Lawrence, though the water was lapping around his knees when this message was relayed to him, sat motionless. "Before we go off on another wild-goose chase," he said, "find out from Kendry why she thinks the ahln is powered by something Splits don't currently have. I don't want Madelaine to knock herself out only to discover that the ahln is powered by something on the order of a flashlight battery. Ask her, Amtor."

It occurred to me that Lawrence's appetite for marvels was temporarily satiated; the idea of trying to make psychic contact with Altair seemed to annoy him.

"She says that 'powered' is not exactly the right word," I reported. "She says that what the ahln needs to be effective *might* be something Splits do have; she isn't sure. But the secret lies in how it is used. And she is sure Splits have no knowledge of the principle of the ahln, or they would have made great changes in their environment.

"She thinks we had better start south, before the storm comes up." I did not repeat the last part of Kendry's reply, which Sosa had heard as well as I had: that we must use all care to prevent the knowledge of the ahln from coming into the hands of other Splits. There was too much power represented in it to be trusted to the good intentions of humanity.

"Very well," Lawrence said. "I suppose we'd better try it, anyhow. Ivry, may I ride on your back till we get to the *Naomi?*"

"All right," Ivry agreed without enthusiasm. Sosa was

already astride me. She leaned forward and caressed Kendry's head delicately.

"Tell her good-bye, and that we will hope to see her again," she said.

Kendry answered, "Yes, we can hope. But I am getting old. Sosa, if I never see you again, remember how happy I am that you came to help us in our need. Good-bye, dear Sosa."

We began to swim away. Moonlight waved her hand in farewell. As we looked back at Kendry's rocks from a distance, we saw that the water had almost closed over them.

By the time we got back to the *Naomi,* the first drops of rain had begun to fall. The doctor had Madelaine lie down on the settee in the cabin. Then he sent me down to bring up the anchor, while he laid a course to the south.

"Can you dolphins swim ahead and warn me of any rocks?" he asked. "I want to sail close to the coast, so I can see if we get near a suitable anchorage."

This was agreed, and Lawrence had Sosa take the wheel briefly while he put a better bandage on her arm and gave her an injection of penicillin. Then he took the helm again.

We soon left the storm behind us, except for brief squalls and bursts of rain. A little before dusk, the doctor saw a small circular bay ahead of us. It seemed to be the site of a village: small craft were drawn up on the beach, and there was a tiny jetty where a larger boat was moored. It was obviously the place he had been looking for.

He took the *Naomi* in neatly and tied her up beside the other boat. "You dolphins had better go out to sea," he told us softly. "Strangers in a place this size are sure to attract a lot of attention. Come back tonight, when the lights are out and it's quiet, and we'll try this reaching-out-to-Altair bit."

"All right," I answered. "Are you sure you can keep Madelaine warm enough, Doctor? Kendry said it was important."

"I think so. It's warm in the cabin, and I can cover her with my jacket. You'd better go now."

We swam unobtrusively. The doctor had been right; by the time Madelaine came out on the deck, everybody in the little town had come down to the jetty to look at the strange boat. They jostled each other, stared with bright dark eyes, and tried to sell the two North Americans baskets, serapes and fruit. Fortunately it was getting dark, and in an hour

or so the visitors went home to supper. The *Naomi* was left alone.

"I wish I'd worked harder at Spanish when I was in high school," Lawrence said. "As it is, *'buenas días'* and *'quánto vale'* are about my limit. Don't touch that fruit, Maddy, until I've dipped it in a sterilizing solution. Lie down on the settee, and I'll open something for us to eat."

"All right. Did you find out what the name of this place is?"

"Bahía something or other." He was busy with the can opener. "You know, Maddy, there are lots of things in what Kendry told us that I don't understand. For instance, how can knowledge of the ahln's power source be communicated telepathically—I suppose that's what's involved in 'reaching out to Altair'—when the knowledge of how to construct the ahln itself couldn't be communicated that way."

"I don't know either," Madelaine answered. "I think it must be something quite simple, so simple that telepathic communication will do for it. Of course, it may need telepathy of a special kind."

"Perhaps." He plainly wasn't satisfied. He dumped cold canned chow mein onto paper plates. "And then, about the ahln itself. We talk about a power source for it, but is the ahln a device for releasing heat from a fuel it destroys in the way that a furnace releases heat from coal, or is the ahln a machine that acts to create heat from a power source that activates it, like an electric heater? Is what we're going to try to get from Altair knowledge of a fuel, or of a power that can be transformed into great heat? I think these are quite different ideas."

"It might be neither," Madelaine answered thoughtfully. "The ahln might be like a pipe that conducts heat from a power source, like a pipe that carries hot water away from a geyser or an underground hot spring. It is possible there are sources of heat in the universe that human beings are not aware of," she said. "I don't mean atomic energy, I mean—the energy that creates atoms. Perhaps the ahln taps that. Perhaps it goes back in time, to the beginning of the universe, and brings heat back from there. Perhaps—well, I suppose we will have to wait to find out."

She hesitated. "Something else is bothering me," she said. "How are we to reach out to *Altair?* I mean, to Altair specifically. There are billions and billions of suns in the uni-

verse, there are thousands of stars visible in the sky. How are Amtor and I to aim for Altair? Surely the name alone isn't enough!"

"I can show you Altair in the sky, if you don't know where it is," the doctor offered. "It's sure to be visible later in the night. Would that help?"

"It might. I'll ask Amtor when he comes back. Kendry wouldn't have told us to do it unless she thought it was possible. Let's eat, and then try the fruit. It looks good."

Meantime, we sea people were enjoying good fishing in the warmer waters. Once or twice we had shark scares, but, since we weren't carrying passengers, we outdistanced the predators easily. We went back to the *Naomi* a little before ten.

There were no lights in the village and, except for a dog barking somewhere, no sounds either. Lawrence and Madelaine were out on deck.

"Madelaine!" I called softly.

"Amtor! The doctor has been showing me the star he says is Altair. I've been wondering . . ." She explained her difficulty to me.

"I don't think reaching out for Altair will be difficult," I answered. "It's one of the stars we sea people navigate by, and we are always aware of where it is. Let me do the reaching out, Sosa. Abandon your mind to me."

"All right. The doctor thinks I should lie down on the settee in the cabin. Will the reaching out be like Udra?"

I saw she was a little nervous. "It will be like Udra at first," I told her. "Later—I don't know. We can't tell until we try."

The Splits went into the cabin. I floated in the water near the jetty, Ivry on one side of me and Pettrus on the other, and tried to get into the Udra-state. Moonlight and I had been in psychic contact a number of times before, of course, and she was not unused to Udra, either; but we both felt that this time was going to be different in its nature from anything before. For one thing, we must try for a more intimate psychic union than any we had had earlier; and then, we had never tried to reach such a target together. Splits say that light from Altair must travel for almost sixteen years to reach our earth.

My mind touched Madelaine's. Men and dolphins are of

one stock, but by now the gulf between us is enormous. It is a constant miracle that we can communicate at all. Our sensory equipment is not identical: we sea people have a pressure sense and a navigational sense that seems to have no human analogue; and human color vision is so much better than ours as to be almost a separate sense, though we can see farther into the ultraviolet and infrared regions than Splits can. And there is a constant, basic difference caused by the human possession of hands.

This gulf between Madelaine and me, this sensory and mental difference, meant that in our knowledge of each other there would be places where we could only be conscious of a terrifying, incomprehensible void. And yet our minds must join, and join very closely, if we were to reach out for Altair.

Time passed. The edges of Sosa's mind and mine, despite our mutual fear, began to overlap. We were getting closer and closer. And then, like a diamond blade cutting into my brain, I got a violent psychic shock.

It was different from, and worse than, the shock I had had in Sausalito when I was in the Udra-state and the dolphins near Hawaii were killed. Ivry and Pettrus say I gave a scream, so high-pitched that they could hardly hear it. They were thoroughly alarmed.

My first thought was that Dr. Lawrence had taken advantage of Sosa's being in a trance state to attack her with his hunting knife. It was the kind of idea Ivry would have had, but I had it.

What had really happened was something different. Madelaine, in the *Naomi's* cabin, was breathing quietly, her eyes closed, when Lawrence saw, or thought he saw, two fine greyish threads rising into the air from her breasts. The threads joined together about a foot above her chest and curled away in a thicker strand into the darkness of the ceiling.

This was not very different from the kind of thing Lawrence had often encountered in his study of the literature of spiritualism, but he was startled to see it actually happen. He took the girl's pulse—it was very slow and weak—and then put a thermometer in her arm pit. She had felt cold to his touch, and when he read the thermometer, the mercury was so low that he decided he had better try to get

her back to normal consciousness at once. It was this abrupt withdrawal of Sosa from her psychic contact with me that had shocked me so.

I soon realized that Moonlight was alive and conscious, but I wanted to know what had happened. I called softly until Dr. Lawrence came out on deck. He explained what had happened, and added, "Tomorrow I'll get some sort of heater from the village—a charcoal brazier, if they don't have any better means of warming themselves—and we'll try again. Madelaine has to be kept warmer during the reaching-out ramp than I realized."

Ivry said, "We want to see Moonlight."

"She's still weak—"

"You can carry her, can't you?" Ivry was getting excited. "Bring her out on the deck!"

Lawrence shrugged. In a minute he came back carrying Madelaine in his arms. She was a small light girl, but he was a small man; he was panting when he put her down.

"I'm all right," she told us. "The doctor was right to rouse me when he did, but it must have been horrid for you, Amtor."

She had answered my not quite conscious fear that Lawrence had roused her when he did to damage us both. "We'll try again tomorrow," I said, not much liking the idea.

She was silent for a perceptible length of time before she said, "Yes."

Early next morning Lawrence went shopping in the village and came back with a brazier, a basket of charcoal, and a machine-made serape. "Half the population was following me," he told Madelaine as he put his purchases away. "They watched every move I made. I never was more stared at in my life."

"Why do you think that was?" the girl asked from the settee. She was still lying down; Lawrence insisted on her getting as much rest as she could.

"I don't know enough Spanish to be sure, but I gather they're puzzled why anybody should stay in Bahía what's-its-name any longer than he has to. They think something funny is going on, and they're curious. I hope their curiosity gets satisfied before tonight."

Madelaine was twisting her fingers together nervously. "Doctor," she said, "I'm—I'm afraid."

"Afraid? You mean, of this reaching-out-to-Altair stuff?"

"Yes."

He sat down on the cabin floor facing her, in a languid pose. It was odd, Madelaine said later, to observe how this avowal of fear on her part had returned him to his role of psychotherapist, and herself to the place of his patient.

"Afraid," he said thoughtfully. "What does it seem to you that you're afraid of?"

"I don't know. Of nothing. I mean, of nothingness."

"Can you pinpoint your fear a little more exactly?"

"I'll try. I'm afraid of getting so far away from my body. It's such a long way to Altair!" She tried to laugh.

"It sounds as if you were afraid of dying," Lawrence offered.

"I don't think it's that. I mean, you're a doctor. You'd keep me from dying, wouldn't you?"

"I'd certainly try to. I doubt there's really much danger of your dying."

She sighed. Before she could say anything more, they both heard footsteps on the jetty. Somebody peeked in at the cabin window and then, when they looked up, quickly withdrew.

"Peeping Tom," Lawrence said. "—If you don't think you're afraid of dying, what do you think it is?"

"It frightens me to think of what I'm afraid of."

"We get this sort of thing in therapy all the time," he observed. "If we had plenty of time to put in on it, I could probably get you over being frightened to think of the cause of your fear. As it is, I recommend that you endure being frightened, and try to tell me what frightens you."

"All right. I'm afraid of being all alone in the abyss of space."

"Um. Will you be all alone? I thought Amtor would be with you."

"Amtor!" Her face relaxed a little. "Yes, but that's not enough. Perhaps the abyss in him is what I'm afraid of. I'm not sure. It seemed like that, last night.

"After all, Doctor, nobody has ever done anything like this before. It's natural I should be afraid."

"I suppose you mean that your fear is something there's no use in trying to deal with by psychotherapy," Lawrence said. "You may be right. Are you too afraid to try the reaching-out-to-Altair stunt, though?"

"Ye—*No.* Kendry wouldn't have told us to try it unless it were possible. I'm frightened. But I'll try."

At ten o'clock that night the *Naomi* was still under surveillance by the villagers. Ivry and Pettrus and I, back from our fishing, could see the dark shapes of men along the beach and hear the low murmur of talk. Now and then somebody would run up on the jetty, peer in the *Naomi's* window, and then run away again.

We were all getting restless. Lawrence had made a fire in the brazier, and the cabin was suitably warm. But Madelaine was keyed-up and tense, a bad mood in which to attempt telepathic contacts or Udra; and we sea people wanted to consult with our Split friend before making a second attempt at what Lawrence called "the Altair bit." We waited impatiently.

"Let's put out the light in the cabin," the doctor suggested to Madelaine. "If they think we've gone to bed, they may go away."

"All right. I wonder why they're so suspicious of us? Our behavior hasn't been peculiar enough to account for all this. Something unpleasant must have happened here recently. I can almost pick up what it was."

Lawrence switched off the light and sat down on the cabin floor. Time passed. Madelaine coughed nervously. At last the doctor rose and softly went to the cabin window. He peered out just as one of the villagers, who had tiptoed along the jetty, peered in.

For a moment the two shadowy faces stared at each other, locked in mutual consternation. Then the villager broke away. His running feet pounded along the jetty and out on the sand.

" 'Das ist der Teufel, sicherlich,' " said Lawrence, sitting down again on the floor. "Now I know what Papageno felt when he encountered the villainous Monostatos unexpectedly. But the worst of it is, our watchers now are sure we aren't asleep. Who will outwait whom?"

"I wish we could get started," Sosa said. "Amtor's getting impatient, too. But I want to talk to him before we try it. It's going to be hard enough anyhow."

"Yes. Maddy, had it occurred to you to wonder what the nature of the force is that you're going to use in the reaching-out process?"

"No, I don't think so. I'm not sure what you mean."

"Well, I suppose it will be basically telepathic. Amtor said it would be something like Udra at first—"

"Yes."

"But what is Udra. Or, for that matter, telepathy? It's always assumed that telepathy operates instantaneously. But on a terrestrial scale, that could mean it operates at the speed of light. Nobody has timed telepathic experiments to be sure there's not that much of a time lag.

"But when it comes to contacting Altair, the force *must* be instantaneous. Otherwise, it would take Amtor and you fifteen and a half years to get there with your question, and fifteen and a half years to get back with the answer. Now, what is it that, over a space which light takes almost sixteen years to span, can be instantaneous? What is the nature of the force?"

"I don't know," Madelaine answered. "I wish you'd stop, Doctor."

"Why? Am I making you nervous?"

"Yes. Uncomfortable. It's like a surgeon discussing the technique of an operation with the patient he's going to operate on. I—what was that?"

Something had struck the *Naomi's* hull a sharp blow. "I think somebody threw a rock at us," Lawrence answered. "I'm going outside."

There was nobody on the jetty, but he could see, dimly outlined against the sky, the shapes of men. "Hey!" he shouted in English into the darkness, "Who threw that rock?"

There was no answer, but, after a moment, another rock whizzed past his head.

Lawrence could see no point in staying longer at such a hostile anchorage; with what dignity he could muster, he untied the *Naomi* and started her motor. *"Buenas noches!"* He shouted ironically to the faceless men in the dark. The *Naomi* moved away from the jetty, to the accompaniment of a muttering from the men on the shore. She turned in the little bay and headed straight out to sea.

We sea people followed, of course. It was a very dark night. When we were out of earshot of the village, Lawrence cut the little craft's speed. "Amtor! Could one of you dolphins find out what the bottom's like here? I'll anchor if it's suitable."

"I'll go," Pettrus said from the water in his loud, gab-

bling voice. Pettrus had an acute pressure sense and was the best of us three when it came to gauging depth.

When he came back with the news that the bottom was quite suitable, Moonlight was standing by the rail, talking to me.

"Are you afraid, Amtor?" she asked.

"Yes, Sosa."

"What of? Or do you know?"

"Of—of the terrible gulf of space. Of bottomless space."

"The inner space, or outer space?"

"Both," I replied.

"But we'll be together in outer space, won't we?" she asked.

"Yes, of course. And we may not even perceive it *as* outer space."

"So all we have to worry about is the inner space!" She laughed though she did not sound particularly amused. "Amtor, I've been thinking that perhaps you ought to be kept warm, too, when we try to reach out."

"I expect I should. But the water here is warm, much warmer than I'm used to, and Ivry and Pettrus will be beside me in case my body loses buoyancy. Don't worry about it, Moonlight. As to the inner gulf that frightens us both—"

"Well?"

"I think there is a way to bridge it."

"What?"

"Don't you know, Sosa?"

"Yes, I think I do. Love is the bridge over the gulf." She leaned far over the rail, so that her fingertips were in the water, and I nuzzled them. "You and I were in close contact that time before, when Dr. Lawrence thought he had to rouse me. What comes after that stage?"

"I expect we must lose all sense of our separate identity. *Don't* be frightened, Sosa. Trust yourself to me. I'll do the reaching-out toward our home star."

"All right." She went into the cabin. Lawrence had put more charcoal in the brazier, and the cabin, though he had left the door ajar for ventilation, was very warm. He had her lie down and covered her with the serape he had bought. He took her pulse, listened to her heart, and read her temperature. "All OK," he said. "You and Amtor can begin. He sat down beside her on the floor.

The first stages of contact were easier than they had been

last time. The *Naomi* slewed about occasionally; she was more in motion than she would have been at the jetty in Bahía what-have-you. It did not disturb Madelaine unduly, though once or twice she sighed. I think Lawrence found the loose motion more disturbing than she did.

Abruptly, her mind and mine were coterminous. Lawrence said a gray wisp came out of her mouth. And then she and I both felt, not a sense of gulfs and emptiness, but a dreadful sense of pressure.

For me, it was like making a very deep dive much too fast. That is a translation into physical terms, of course. Moonlight said she felt as if her mind, her personality, had become an exquisitely sensitive bladder, and the bladder were being insupportably compressed on all sides.

It was not only psychologically painful, but it frightened us besides. We both realized it was because, though our minds were coterminous, they were not really united yet. We exerted pressure on each other because we were still separate. There was an embrace yet to be made that we both shrank from; and only our affection for each other could make us brave enough to dare the gulf.

The pressure increased. Painful as it was, we hesitated an instant longer. But we were committed, and the love between the woman and the dolphin was perfectly real. The union could, and must, be made.

We dared it. It gave immediate relief from the pressure, but we had barely enough time to realize that our minds were truly joined before the whirling began. We went whirling over and over like a patchwork pinwheel, a handstanding harlequin, a gaudy double tumbler. There was something joyous in our intoxicated mental motion, and if I was a tumbler doing cartwheels, Madelaine was a dolphin leaping in the sun. Actually, we both were each other.

The giddy whirling stopped. No time to waste. The duad of Sosa and Amtor must reach out. It knew its goal.

It must have been about this time that Lawrence, in the well-heated little cabin, took Madelaine's body temperature. It was below normal, but not dangerously so, and he felt that the "reaching-out-to-Altair bit" could be allowed to go on. Ivry and Pettrus, who floated beside me during the whole experiment, said that my breathing had become noticeably slow.

To "reach out" meant that the Sosa-Amtor duad had to

extricate itself from the grip, of which people are ordinarily quite unconscious, of all the billions of minds on our one earth. Usually dolphins and men are stuck in a sort of psychic glue. That is what the duad now experienced.

We churned helplessly in the grip of this mental adhesive until we—the duad—realized it must draw in on itself, become hard and smooth and small. It must encapsulate itself, like a seed. Then it would be out, and free.

I don't know why this was easy, but it was. As soon as we thought of it, it happened. The duad was on its way.

It takes light almost sixteen years to reach the earth from Altair. The duad would have been there instantly, without regard for the distance—space is nothing—but there were interstellar magnetic fields in the way. I do not mean to give the impression that there was any visual awareness of this. That was not how the duad knew of the existence of the fields. But our progress was slowed.

Slowed and stopped. This was the isolation Sosa and I had feared, the terrible gulf of outer space. We were mere points, the duad was *one* point. But its duality comforted itself.

The fields must be overleaped somehow. Here, I think, the duad drew without knowing it on the same force that powers the ahln. But here it was volitional and personal.

Other stars clutched at us. The duad might, even now, have been deflected. But our old home star was reaching out its hands to help; there are billions of minds on that sun's planet. They are different from the minds of dolphins or men, of course. The million years between have made much difference. But the Sosa-Amtor duad could not only communicate with the minds of Altair's planet, it was also expected there and welcome. Those minds had had something to do with Madelaine before, when she slept so long.

Now those minds impressed our single consciousness as a wavering, patterned brightness. It seemed to advance and withdraw continually. When Madelaine and I discussed this later, we agreed that the minds of Altair's planet had been afraid of distressing their duad visitor, and that they had hidden from it something of what they were, under this image of fire.

What were the people of that planet like physically? (They weren't, of course, disembodied intelligences.) Here Madelaine and I disagree, she thinking them to be like

Splits, and I like the sea people. Perhaps some day we shall really find out.

At any rate, the duad could communicate with them. They knew why it had come. There was no need to argue or beg. Someone—they—many people—the wavering brightness—told the duad what it wanted to know: the secret of powering the ahln.

It was simple, a thing to be learned instantly and remembered easily. And now that it was learned, the Sosa-Amtor duad wanted to get back. Bodies cannot last long without their psychic tenants; our bodies, back on earth, drew us powerfully. And earth herself, with all the kindred minds, called like a familiar voice.

Once more the duad had to overleap the magnetic fields. It must make haste. But the way back was easier. Earth pulled her exiles as the planet of Altair had not.

Sosa's mind and mine fell away from each other suddenly. The duad was two separate beings now. The strange identity was over. We were back on earth.

Madelaine stirred on the little couch in the *Naoml's* cabin, and then sat up. She was shivering violently. Lawrence, who was hovering over her, was rubbing her arms and hands. "Did you do it?" he asked eagerly. "Your heart was so slow I was afraid you weren't all right."

She yawned and smoothed her hair. "Yes, we've been there," she answered soberly. "We got what we went for. It's easy to use. It frightens me that they trusted us with it.

"We learned other things too, I think. There may be at least one useful side product. But the chief thing is, we know how to power the ahln."

CHAPTER 14

DR. SOUTHGATE'S NARRATIVE

The contractions of the synthi-womb had begun. My patient, Sven Erickson, was dimly visible through its clouded plastic walls, lying curled up naked in the fetal position. His respiration, somewhat depressed by drugs, was cared for by an oxygen-poor mixture of oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide, and an array of tubes and pumps handled the excretory and nutritive phases of his metabolism. He had been in the synthi-womb for almost two weeks now. It was time for him to be born.

I didn't know too much about Erickson's history. I had heard that he had been picked up on one of the Farallons, in the company of a group of spies and saboteurs, and had been brought to headquarters for questioning. They had interrogated him for several days under the influence of sodium pentathol, but his answers had been so contradictory and confused that it had been decided to attempt a more fundamental treatment. At this point he had been handed over to me, and I was now at my usual job of monitoring the process of artificial birth.

It had been found that a preliminary processing by drugs, followed by a simulation of human fetal growth and birth, was extraordinarily effective in making possible a radical change of personality in patients subjected to it. People who had been through it were like young babies, but young babies who were exceptionally apt and teachable. They learned to walk in ten days, they learned to talk in two weeks. And they could be made into whatever the processers wanted, broadly speaking. I suppose, though I don't know for certain, that my superiors were going to condition Erickson to act as a spy, a perfectly docile and committed spy, on the faction with which he had been connected formerly.

I looked at the gauges. Erickson's pulse, respiration and temperature were normal for the stage of intrauterine development he was currently at. The contractions were coming about every twenty minutes. It was time to step them up a bit.

My hand went out to the dial that controlled the frequency of the synthi-womb's contractions. And somehow—I don't understand what happened, even now—my fingers turned the valve that determined the oxygen-content of the air my patient was breathing as he floated in the simulated amniotic fluid. It was as if some other will than my own had taken charge of my hand.

Oh, dear. This would never do. Too much oxygen at this stage would make Erickson restless and promote premature cerebral activity. He wasn't supposed to have any real consciousness of his surroundings until after he had been born.

Hastily I turned the valve back to normal, but I felt shaken. Slowly and carefully I reached out to the contraction dial and moved it forward. The frequency of the contractions increased.

I drew a deep breath. Perhaps it was going to be all right. After all, the events of a simulated labor, like those of a real one, cannot be perfectly standardized.

I have heard physicians argue that simulated gestation and delivery are effective with patients subjected to them, for purely symbolic reasons. I don't think this is true. The patient actually relives, though in a much shorter space of time, the original events of intrauterine life, and when he is born, he is literally reborn.

I looked critically at Erickson. His head was beginning to come down forcefully against the big dilatable plastic cervix. The impact was carefully cushioned, of course—his was not the relatively compressible skull of an infant, and I had no desire to cause damage to Erickson's brain.

Suddenly he began to move his arms strongly and kick out with his legs. The plastic womb rocked from side to side with the violence of his struggles. The extra oxygen must have made him restless. But if he kept on like this, he'd either rupture the tough material of the synthi-womb, or break an arm or leg.

Hurriedly I touched the jet that would let a little nitrous oxide into my patient's air supply. The anesthetic was al-

most immediately effective. Erickson's threshing ceased, his limbs relaxed, and he lay quietly in the fetal position again.

The simulated labor continued. The contractions of the synthi-womb were much more frequent and forcible now. Dr. Aidans, my superior, came in to check Erickson's condition, and left the laboratory again. It was time for the second stage of labor to begin.

Carefully I removed the complex of tubes and pumps that had handled my patient's nutrition and excretion. I put out my hand to touch the lever that would release the amniotic fluid from the plastic womb, thus simulating the traditional "breaking of the waters," and then drew it back. I'd better check Erickson's pulse, blood pressure and body temperature first. Yes, it was all in order. Once more I extended my hand.

My hand went to the contraction dial and turned it to maximum. I hadn't touched the lever I meant to touch.

How had it happened? What had made me do that? I had no time to speculate on causation. The synthi-womb, activated to maximum, gave a tremendous grinding contraction, and Erickson was propelled rapidly through it onto the receiving area. He was born.

I was trembling. But it might still be all right. The last part of a genuine labor is sometimes very abrupt. I moved shakily toward where he was lying, like a new-born child, to give him the symbolic slap on the buttocks that should start his extrauterine respiration.

I was never more dismayed and disconcerted in my life than when my patient sat up in the receiving area and spoke to me.

"Where am I?" he demanded in a normal adult voice. "What's been happening?"

I had no answer to make. Obviously the simulated gestation and labor had been completely ineffective with him; it seemed incredible. The days of preprocessing, the weeks in the synthi-womb—all entirely without result? Where had he got the strength to remain so perfectly his former self?

Erickson swung his legs off the receiving area and stood up. I was still staring at him, immobilized with dismay. He drew his fist back, and I saw he was going to hit me between the eyes. Only at the last moment did I have sense enough to try to dodge.

When I came to, I was lying on the lab floor, naked as a jay bird, and tied up with yards and yards of gauze bandages. Obviously, Erickson had taken my clothes and departed. But it was not until long afterward that I learned what finally happened to him.

CHAPTER 15

There was not much light in the cavern where we had taken refuge. Madelaine and Lawrence had to talk in whispers, for the navy sub was still snuffling industriously around the underwater entrance to the cavern, and there was always the chance that the sub might have sensitive sound detection devices. There was not much room for the two Splits to sit down either; they were perched precariously on a shallow rock ledge above the water. We sea people were more comfortable than they, for the cavern was large enough to let us swim comfortably.

"We've got to get out of here," Lawrence said softly.

Madelaine made no reply. He had said this several times before, and I suppose she thought there was really no answer to be made.

"Fortunately," he went on, "we've still got the ahln." He pulled it out of the front of his jacket and set it down on the rock between himself and Moonlight. It was a gadgety-looking device about a foot square, with the copper wire, the lead prism, and the platinum helix that Moonlight had indicated in her original drawing. A crystal of smoky amethyst quartz had been added. The crystal was the power source—or, more accurately, the power conduit—that she and I had learned about when our joined minds had made contact with Altair. The components were mounted in a sort of aluminum cradle, so that the ahln would float.

"Yes, you saved that," Madelaine answered.

"That, and my medical bag. And you slung the flask around your neck before you went over the side. That was quick thinking, Maddy. Otherwise, we'd be considerably thirstier than we are."

"Thank you," the girl answered a little wryly.

The navy plane, appearing abruptly out of the night sky, had first machine-gunned the *Naomi,* and then come back

to drop a bomb on the little craft. Luckily, the plane hadn't been equipped with infrared sensing devices, and we sea people had been able to rescue the two Splits from the sinking ship. Even so, we would all have been dead before morning, except that we had met a fleeing dolphin who had told us of the cavern with its underwater entrance. He told us that many, many more of the sea people had been killed.

"It's hard to get used to," the girl continued. "One minute we were on the deck of the *Naomi,* with our only real problem deciding whether we should use the ahln at full power, or try for a gradual melting of the polar ice.

"We'd overcome the difficulties of making and powering the ahln. We'd thought we might have trouble finding platinum wire for it, but the jeweler in Ensenada sold us a piece without any fuss, and we'd found the quartz crystals at a curio dealer's. Lead for the prism and aluminum for the float had been easy to locate. We had the pilot model assembled, and we'd found that it worked. There seemed to be nothing but green lights ahead.

"The next minute the bullets were coming down and the ship was sinking under us. It all happened so quick! I haven't got used to it yet."

"Yes, it's difficult to adjust to change sometimes," Lawrence replied absently. "But we do have the ahln, and I think we could use it to get out of here. Maddy, would you have your usual high-minded objections to our trying to make things hot, literally speaking, for that sub that we know is outside!"

"Make things hot? How could you do that?"

"Would the ahln work under water?" he retorted. "I don't understand how it works above water, for that matter. You said it taps the nucleon-producing potential of space, but I've never been able to believe in the continuous creation of hydrogen anyhow. And that a thing like this, two coils of wire and an amethyst quartz crystal"—he tapped the platinum helix lightly with one finger—"should produce enormous quantities of heat is as unreasonable as hitching up two bread sticks and a sugar bowl, and calling it an H-bomb."

"It does work, though," Madelaine answered. "You mustn't be misled by its looking so simple. The quartz crystal acts as a conduit for the energy of empty space that would otherwise be used in giving birth to a nucleon. The

platinum helix converts the energy into heat."

"Then why isn't the helix melted?" Lawrence asked. "And *how* can the crystal act as a conduit for the nucleon-producing potential of empty space? How does the crystal make contact with it?"

"The helix isn't melted because its atoms aren't excited. I don't know how the crystal makes its contact. Perhaps the lead prism—I'm not sure. It may be that the ahln device warps space. You remember the mirages that formed around the prism when we were testing the ahln."

"Yes, I remember. Oh, I concede that it works, though I don't understand why. But as I was saying, will it still work under water?"

"I think so, yes."

"Would you dolphins be able to swim up close to the sub with the ahln?" Lawrence asked, turning his attention to us in the water.

"I suppose so," I answered in a laborious whisper. Whispering is difficult for a dolphin, and besides, I felt no enthusiasm for Lawrence's idea. I was afraid we'd be seen as we swam up with the ahln—the sub must have some sort of underwater sensing device—and almost more afraid that we'd be boiled alive before we could get out of range of the heat. The ahln, even at low power, makes an almost unbelievable amount of heat.

"Good," Lawrence said. "Then I can set the ahln to low, have Amtor swim in with it, drop it under the sub, and get back here before the water heats up. Perhaps I can adjust it for a time lag in starting. It takes a little time for the ahln to get working, anyhow. We know that."

"We know how hard it is to shut off once it's started," Madelaine answered. "The first time we tried it, we blistered the paint on the *Naomi* before we could manage to jar the prism out of alignment and reduce the output of heat.

"But leaving that aside, do you think the submarine will just stay there quietly while the water gets hot around it?" Madelaine wanted to know.

"There's a fair chance of it," the doctor answered. "They wouldn't realize at first what was happening."

Moonlight shook her head. "You'll accuse me again of being soft-hearted," she said. "But even if your plan worked, what would happen when the sub stopped making radio

contact with headquarters? They'd send out a whole flotilla, and when they found the sub with the men dead inside, they'd plaster all this part of the coast with bombs. Don't forget, we're awfully conspicuous riding on the backs of the sea people."

"We could separate and meet later."

Once more Madelaine shook her head. I could hear water dripping somewhere from the shadowy roof of the cavern. "It's too risky," she said. "Besides, they'd probably find the ahln. Do you want it to fall into the hands of our enemies?"

"We could try to retrieve it. I think that platinum helix can be used as a way of making the ahln shut off after a while."

"It's too much to risk."

"Well, what do you suggest?" Lawrence demanded. His underlying irritability, which was in such contrast to what Madelaine called his "therapeutic impassivity," was coming to the top.

There was a short silence. I heard the slow drip of water from the roof. Then Madelaine said, "Do you remember that I told you Amtor and I had learned something, as a sort of side product, while we were in contact with the minds of the inhabitants of the planet of Altair? It's a new way of using Udra. We might be able to make the sub commander give orders for the sub to look for us somewhere else. It's worth trying, anyhow."

"It sounds like the old way of using Udra to me," Lawrence said.

"No, it's not," Moonlight said, smiling a little. "Only dolphins could use that, and only certain Splits—a very few, really—would respond to it. This new way is more general. A Split could use it toward a Split, and quite a few Splits are capable of responding to it."

"Go ahead and try it, then," the doctor said. He still sounded annoyed.

"Amtor," Sosa called very softly, "do you want to see what we can do?"

"Of course," I whispered back. "You know that."

There was no place for her to lie down—she was still perched insecurely on the ledge, with the tide lapping at her ankles—but I was floating in the water and could get into the first part of the Udra-state easily. We were no long-

er as afraid of the gulfs in each other as we had been, and I thought I could help Sosa with her necessary withdrawal and concentration.

We were all silent. The sound of water dripping seemed to get more and more remote. Madelaine's mind and mine were beginning to grow coterminous. Something in her mind seemed a little unusual to me, but I did not find it really disturbing.

Ivry was watching me, but Pettrus' attention was fixed on the two Splits sitting on the rock. He said that Madelaine's eyes closed gradually and then, without any warning, her head dropped forward on her breast and she started to slide off the rock. If Dr. Lawrence hadn't caught her, she would have fallen into the water.

It wasn't the usual Udra-state, nor even an ordinary fainting fit, but a deeper unconsciousness. Dr. Lawrence, even with the help of his medical bag, had to work over her for almost half an hour before she came to herself.

"What happened?" she whispered when she could talk again.

"You know better than I do," he answered. "What did it feel like?"

"Like being hit on the back of my skull. That didn't really happen, did it?"

"No."

"I guess I'm just tired. Trying the new way to use Udra was too much. I've been tired ever since Amtor and I found out how to power the ahln. Or—Ted, you weren't trying to use Udra, too, were you?"

"Not that I know of."

"Somebody might have been using it. It might have been another human mind that touched me. Anyhow, I'd better not try it again for a while. I expect I'd only pass out once more."

"Very likely. You know better how you feel than I do. Do you have any ideas about what we should do now?"

"About all we can do just now is wait. The sub may get tired of hunting us and decide we went on up the coast."

"Um. When we get out of here, Maddy, are you still going to insist that the ahln be used at low power? We could make two or three more of the things, encase them in lightweight metal for protection, and float them to the poles.

"There'd be no difficulty about that—the dolphins have

told us they know where to release the devices so the ocean currents would take them straight to the poles. Amtor even located the best places on the map when I showed him a hydrographic chart of the Pacific coast. But if we set the ahln at low power, it will take fifty years to melt the ice. I'm in favor of doing it overnight."

"What's the use in discussing that now?" the girl whispered wearily. "We're prisoners. Wait until we get out."

"We ought to look ahead," the doctor insisted. "When we get out, we may not have much time for discussion. Would you still insist on using the ahln at low power?"

"I—yes, I probably would."

"Are you really serious?" Lawrence asked in an angry whisper. "If we get out of here, you'll still refuse to use our one weapon for all it's worth? Or are you putting up your usual high-minded resistance, so I can look like a villain when I finally persuade you to do what has to be done?

"I suppose you're hesitating because of the loss of human life. Well, in my forty years or so, millions of human beings have died agonizing deaths through the agency of other human beings. They've died in concentration camps, in fire raids, of napalm burns or from the direct or delayed effects of nuclear explosives. Drowning's a relatively painless form of death. It's a more humane extinction than people usually inflict on each other."

"Yes, but—"

"And what about the dolphins? At least half of those that were at the first meeting on the Rock have been killed. Don't they have any right to survive, compared with human beings? For somebody who was willing to declare war upon the human race, Madelaine, you have too damned many scruples. Or aren't you really serious?"

Before she could answer, I said, "Why don't you ask us what *we* think, Dr. Lawrence? We have a more vital interest in how the ahln is used than you do, or even Madelaine."

"You think I haven't a vital interest?" he said. "I've given up my profession, my future, all the things human beings live for, in order to help you. But it's true, you dolphins do have the strongest immediate interest of any of us. Well, then, what do you say about how the ahln should be used?"

"Even a gradual melting of the ice at the poles ought to provide the Splits with plenty to keep them busy," I said. "A quick melting has some advantages, but one disadvantage

is that it would change the salt content of ocean water overnight. We could adjust to it, but it would be annoying. On the whole, then—what was that noise?"

"I didn't hear anything," Lawrence said.

"It's coming nearer, a kind of splashing. Don't you hear it, really?"

We all listened. The splashing stopped; we felt a ripple in the water. And now we saw a darker outline against the dimly illuminated walls of the cavern, the silhouette of a man. Somebody had got past the watchful submarine, and he did not need to speak for us to know who he was.

Madelaine had jumped to her feet. "Sven!" she cried. Even in her excitement she remembered to speak softly. "Is it really you? And Djuna with you? Oh, how glad I am! What all's been happening? How did you get past the submarine?"

There was a note in her voice that was always absent when she spoke to the doctor, and I realized how ill at ease she had been with him. Moonlight and Sven were two of the same kind. Lawrence was somebody on the outside.

"Yes, it's me," the man in the water answered. His voice was a little deeper than it had been. "And Djuna's with me, though she can't swim quite as well as she used to. About the sub, Djuna and I sent it away. It's a new way of using Udra we learned when I was in the synthi-womb.

"But we haven't time now for talking. We've got to get out of here quick. The sub is sure to be back."

CHAPTER 16

Madelaine had fallen asleep beside the worktable, worn out. They had been living in the beach cottage in Descanso for three days now, working on the construction and regulation of the new ahln devices, and in all that time Madelaine had been unable to sleep. The sleeping pills Dr. Lawrence had dosed her with had only increased her fatigue, without giving her rest; but now that the three ahln devices were finished and lay ready in their aluminum casings for their journey to the poles, sleep had come over her irresistibly. Her arms were on the table and her head was pillowed on them. She had only meant to sit down for an instant.

She was alone in the room. Sven had gone out for groceries, and the doctor was bathing and shaving in the little bath. At first she slept dreamlessly, but later—perhaps as the sound of the bath water running partly roused her—she began to relive, in confused and temporally anarchic fashion, the events of the last few days.

Once again she struggled through the cavern's underwater entrance, walked across the sand to the rented Mexican beach cottage, changed the color of her hair with the dye Sven had bought at Descanso's one *farmacia*. Once more she wondered why the navy's attacks had ceased. Sometimes she shared Sven's adventures, too—she lay in the synthiwomb, or found Djuna, wounded but healed, faithfully waiting. But usually it was of what she had really experienced that she dreamed.

The sub exploded behind her eyelids, the sun shone. She drank water thirstily. Water and guilt. The men in the sub had died. She saw their limbs floating slowly up through the turbulent green water, as if they still swam or tried to swim. But they were dead. The sub had killed itself.

Neither she nor Sven had meant it to happen. They had been emerging from the cavern's underwater entrance, al-

most at the surface, when the returning sub had poked its nose around the edge of the rock shelf. She and Sven had tried to project a phantom at a distance, a phantom of a man with dolphins, but the gunner in the sub had not been deceived. The muzzles of the sub's antipersonnel guns had turned inexorably toward where the Splits and dolphins actually were.

There had been no time for consideration. Madelaine and Sven had had to take control of the gunner's body and make him turn his fire elsewhere. The heavy shells, designed to fragment powerfully even underwater, had exploded against the rocky shelf.

This first strain the sub would have survived. The compressive force of the shock waves, though so close to it, would not have broken it. But the helmsman, amazed at the gunner's incomprehensible action, had sent the sub into a wild turn just as the gunner had released his heaviest antipersonnel missile straight at the rock. The abrupt extra strain on the already maltreated hull had been as final as a hit by a depth bomb. Safe on the surface, at a good distance, Madelaine and the others had seen the signs of the submarine's death.

But the guilt for this was less than another guilt, the crushing guilt Lawrence had tried to persuade them to assume. Madelaine heard his arguments endlessly, and over and over she tried to answer him. Her mind, even in sleep, drew back from his rightness, and she clung desperately to the decision that had actually been made.

The dream changed. She still heard Lawrence's voice, but it receded to a distressing murmur. She knew that she had a problem to solve.

It was important; it concerned the doctor. But she couldn't remember what it was. And how could she solve it unless she knew what it was? It wasn't fair to make her responsible for solving an unknown problem in her sleep.

She told me later that her sleeping mind entangled itself here with an old problem in geometry, and she spent what seemed a long time trying to prove Euclid's famous Pythagorean theorem. But the words, "the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle equals the sum of the squares on the other sides," seemed to provide a clue, and at last she decided that the square metal casings of the ahln devices held her problem. It was for her to contrive a means by which the

devices, slowly turning the ice of the polar caps to water, might go undiscovered for a long, long time.

(In fact, the liability of the devices to discovery during a protracted melting period had been one of Lawrence's strongest arguments for trying to melt the caps with maximum speed. He had pointed out over and over again that the Splits would not remain quiet while the waters rose and their seaports were drowned. They would try to find out what was causing it. And it was all too probable that they would find and destroy the devices that were melting the polar ice.)

Now that she knew what her problem was, Madelaine's sleeping mind felt a certain relief. For a little while, she said, she dreamed of riding with us sea people to a green tropic island. The water was a deep royal blue, the soft air bathed her limbs deliciously.

It must have been about this time that Dr. Lawrence came in the room. I think he was surprised to find her asleep. He had not counted on it, and I think he took it as an omen. At any rate, he picked her up, with some difficulty, and carried her over to the day bed. He laid her down on it gently and drew a blanket over her. I don't know whether he moved her because she was in his way, or because he wanted to test the depth of her sleep, or merely because he was sorry for her to be sleeping so uncomfortably.

She says she thinks she murmured something, but she didn't really wake. He turned out the light.

I am not quite sure what he did next. I think he stood looking down at Moonlight for an instant. He may have gone back to the table, where the finished ahln devices were lying. It is almost certain he went back to the bedroom he and Sven shared.

Madelaine, on the couch in the darkened workroom, slept more quietly now. The trip to the tropic island gave place to a brief interval of dreamlessness. Then, as if the new darkness had suggested to her sleeping mind the obscurity which ought to hide the ahln devices, Madelaine began to concern herself with her problem again.

They—Splits generally—mustn't find the floating mechanisms until the polar caps were gone. The rising waters would certainly be noticed, but the cause of the rising must remain unknown. Years must pass, and the ahln devices must go on quietly melting the ice.

Within her eyelids, the girl saw an enormous scheme of

camouflage. The ice fields were dappled with faded yellows, dull browns, dead green. The brown-flecked polar bear hunted a spattered prey, and the blobbed waves broke in yellow dots on a green-striped shore. No one would suspect . . .

The dappled ice gave place to a speckled hen, soft-feathered, covering her nestlings with dark, secure wings, and the darkness of the nest became a huge vase that poured out darkness over the melting ice.

In vain, in vain. Light glittered from the polar world in ten thousand heartless sparkles. Steam rose to the sky in three towering columns. It was sure to be seen.

Madelaine began to search through a toppling pile of documents for the single sheet of paper that held the answer. The pile leaned, and then broke over her in a cascade of slipping sheets.

It rose around her like a flood, to her waist, her armpits, her chin. But before it could close over her head, she rescued from it the unique sheet of paper that held the solution, the solution at which we had already arrived in our actual discussions when the ahln devices were being built: that Udra could be used to keep the navies of the world from finding and destroying what was melting the ice.

(I suppose Madelaine would never have been so concerned with this problem, in sleep, if her waking mind had been quite satisfied with the waking solution to it; we knew that Udra, by itself and at a distance, would not be enough to ensure the safety of the thermal devices. We had had to accept the unwelcome corollary that some of us sea people would have to live permanently with Splits in the role of pets.

(Close to them, accepted by them as amiable, hyperintelligent domesticated animals, we might be able to influence them subtly but constantly to make the decisions we wished. We did not think it would be too difficult to start a fashion, among wealthy and influential Splits, of keeping dolphins as pets. But we knew this meant a lifetime of semi-slavery for some of us.)

In Madelaine's dream, the very word "Udra" was imbued with vast powers. The magical syllables alone could keep the ahln devices undiscovered for a hundred years. She was still dreaming that she had solved all our problems when Dr. Lawrence came into the room once more.

He must have come in very softly. Certainly he did not want to disturb or waken her. But his entrance started the girl to dreaming of a huge dim figure, veiled in gray sheets of water, from whose mountainous head torrents plunged to the ground. She could not see its features. It seemed the embodiment of raging water.

She heard a roaring. The figure was speaking to her, in a voice as large as a continent. "Flood control?" it said. "Flood control? Of the Mississippi?"

The words rang in her ears portentously. They filled her with mysterious dread. She must wake up, some irrevocable event was happening, she must wake up.

She struggled toward consciousness, but succeeded only in dreaming that she was awake. Half a dozen times she rose from the couch and stood beside the worktable, only to realize, a moment later, that she was still asleep. She made heroic efforts; sleep held her leadenly. She was still struggling to waken when Sven came in.

He turned on the light. Madelaine was tossing on the couch, moaning and grinding her teeth. He went over to her and touched her gently on the forehead. "What's the matter, Maddy? Poor girl, are you having a bad dream?"

She sat up after a moment. Her face was dewed with sweat. "No—yes, I guess so. I was dreaming something about water. I'm still confused. Where's Dr. Lawrence, Sven?"

"In the bathroom or the kitchen, I suppose."

"Is he? Let's go look for him."

They went through the little cottage together. Lawrence was in none of the rooms. They came back to the living room, and their eyes, by a common impulse, went to the worktable. It was empty. The ahln devices were gone.

A moment later Sosa came running out on the beach, calling us dolphins. It took only a few words to make us understand what had happened: Dr. Lawrence had betrayed us again.

CHAPTER 17

"He must have taken the ahln devices in his medical bag," Sven said. He was speaking partly to us and partly to Madelaine, who was standing beside him on the beach. "The drawing Kendry had Madelaine make is gone too. I noticed that. Maddy, how long ago do you think he left?"

"I'm not sure. It seems to me that I spent four or five hours dreaming that I was awake, and then realizing I was still asleep on the couch. What time is it now?"

"A little after eight. I was gone a lot longer than I meant to be. The clerk at the grocery store and I got into a conversation about North Americans."

"Then—I think he left about six-thirty. It may have been earlier."

"Um. I don't think there's much use trying to catch up with him if he has an hour and a half head start. He's probably well on his way to his rendezvous with the navy by now. But we might be able to contact his mind and use Udra in the new way to make him come back. We can try it, anyhow."

"All right. Amtor, you and Djuna will help us, won't you?"

"Of course."

Sven and Madelaine sat down on the beach, and after a moment Madelaine put her head in Sven's lap. Djuna was used to working with Sven, and I with Madelaine; in no time at all we had reached a close enough psychic union with each other to start our search for Dr. Lawrence's mind.

We couldn't pick him up at all. The four of us working together should have had considerable "resolving power," but, as far as finding him went, he might never have existed.

I may say here that Dr. Lawrence had as little psychic endowment as any Split I have ever encountered. He was subnormal. Perhaps this lack in his makeup accounts for the fascination psychic phenomena had for him.

At any rate, we failed. About nine-thirty it became plain there was no use in trying any more. Sven got up, dusting sand from his trouser legs. "That's that," he said. "About all we can do now is wait for the navy to attack us." He put his hands under Madelaine's armpits and swung her to her feet.

"You think they will attack?" the girl said.

"Yes. Probably within the next few hours. It was odd they let us alone before. Of course, we can separate. You and I can go on down the Mexican coast, or inland, and the dolphins can head for deep water. We don't have to stay here in Descanso, waiting, like targets in a shooting gallery."

"I'd rather stay here with the dolphins," she answered slowly. "I'm tired of running and trying to save myself. Amtor, what do you and the others say?"

I consulted with them briefly, in our high-pitched speech. "We feel the way you do, Sosa," I said. "We'd rather stay with our Split friends. So many of the sea people have already been killed that it doesn't seem worthwhile for us to try to save our own lives."

So the decision was made. If our passivity in the face of coming attack seems strange, it should be considered that we were all in a state of emotional shock. We had overcome so many difficulties, we had succeeded, incredibly, in actually building thermal devices to melt the ice at the earth's poles, that to be thrown back into a state of helplessness, a position worse than when Madelaine had first come to Noonday Rock, numbed us. If the danger had been immediate, we might have roused ourselves to meet it. But we did not know when the attack would come.

Sven and Moonlight slept on the beach that night, to be near us. When morning came and we were all still safe, an intoxicating light-heartedness took possession of us. Madelaine and Sven spent the day in the water with us, playing with us or riding on our backs; and if every noise in the sky made us start with alarm, the fear was soon gone. When I look back on that time, an interval of forty hours or so, it seems to have a magical quality. It was an enchanted space of happiness in the midst of struggle and distress.

By noon on the second day, Sven had begun to grow thoughtful. "It's almost two days now since Lawrence went off with the ahln things," he said, wiping his fingers on a

paper napkin (he and Madelaine were eating a picnic lunch on the beach, about a mile from the cottage). "Nothing has happened. It looks as if he hadn't gone to the navy with his prize, after all."

"Yes. I can't explain their leaving us in peace otherwise."

"If he hasn't gone to the navy, he must be holed up somewhere, trying to decide what to do." (This was partly correct.) "He might even be considering coming back to us."

"Not that," Madelaine said dryly.

"I suppose not," Sven said laughing. "But if he hasn't gone to them yet, it might be possible for us to find him and make him give what he stole back to us."

"Find him?" Madelaine repeated. "We're not detectives. And I don't suppose he wants to be found. There are so many places where he could have gone!"

"Well, if the navy didn't pick him up, say with a plane or a sub, he must have got out of Descanso somehow. Let's go check at the bus station."

"That's a good idea," Madelaine answered. She was packing the remains of the lunch back in the box. "The dolphins can take us back to the cottage, and we can walk into town from there."

Sven did not speak much Spanish, and the clerk at the ticket window did not speak much English. Nevertheless, after ten minutes or so, the clerk assured Sven positively that no such "North American gentlemen" had taken the bus out of Descanso in the last two days. He hadn't, he said, had any North American passengers at all.

"No dice," Sven reported to Madelaine, who was standing beside the pinball machine. "Let's try the taxi company."

Here they had better luck. The manager, an elderly man with gallant manners, said he had himself driven just such a gentleman as Sven described over the border and up to San Diego two nights before. The gentleman had been carrying a black medical bag.

"Do you know where he went after you left him in San Diego?" Sven asked.

"No, *señor*. He said nothing about his plans. I let him out downtown."

"So we know he's back in the United States," Sven said as they walked along the rutted road in the direction of the cottage. "That's something."

"It's a large area," Madelaine answered. "He could be anywhere in it."

A plane passed overhead and Sven, who was holding her hand, felt her fingers tremble within his. He glanced at her quickly, but she was smiling. "We were talking about Lawrence, Sven," she said.

"Yes. Well, actually, his range of action is pretty limited. For one thing, he hasn't much money, and for another, he'll want to be near his contacts in the navy, the people he already knows. He's probably somewhere along the California coast."

Before she could answer, the postman turned out of the yard of the beach cottage and spoke to them. *"Buenas días, señor, señorita.* Postal card for you. In box."

The card was a picture postcard, with a view of the Gate Bridge, and in the message space "Take care of yourselves," had been neatly printed. The message was signed "E.L."

" 'Take care of yourselves,' " Madelaine repeated slowly. "I wonder what he means by that."

"It's not what he means that's important," Sven said. "Look at the postmark, Maddy. The card was mailed from San Francisco."

"You think that's where he's gone?"

"Yes. He's probably staying in some cheap hotel there."

"There are a lot of cheap hotels just in San Francisco," the girl said thoughtfully. "And he may not have gone there. He might be in Oakland, or Emeryville, or even someplace down the peninsula."

"I know. But we've got to try to find him. Perhaps he wants us to find him. There's really no reason why he should have sent the card otherwise."

She sighed heavily. "Oh, you're right. But I hate being separated from you again. I couldn't go with you, could I?"

He was counting the money in his wallet. "Two hundred and thirty bucks. I stole the doctor's wallet when I knocked him out. He was carrying a lot of the stuff. And I got his credit cards. —Come with me? It would cost twice as much, and you couldn't really help."

He handed her five twenty-dollar bills. "The rent on the cottage is paid for a week. I'll write or telegraph as soon as I find anything, or even if I don't."

While he was packing a few things in a cloth bag, she

came down to the beach to tell us what they had decided to do.

"We don't much like it, Maddy," I said when she had finished.

"Neither do I, but I think he's right. We might be able to get back what Lawrence stole."

"I could take Sven on my back," Djuna said. "Pettrus could go along to spell me. I could take him on my back."

"It's quicker this way," Moonlight answered. "Sven will fly up from San Diego. Be patient, darlings. It's only for a little while."

We were silent. We knew that we would probably be able to keep in mental contact with Sven, and that reassured us. Sven called, "Good-bye, friends!" from the porch of the cottage and waved his hand to us. Then he and Madelaine set out at a fast walk for town again.

The bus station was crowded now; Sven had to stand in line for his ticket to San Diego. While she was waiting, Madelaine went to the newstand and bought a San Francisco paper. What she saw in the news summary on page one made her turn quickly to page two.

Her mouth came open. She ran to where Sven was standing, and thrust the paper at him. "Look, Sven, look!"

"Quake 'Guilt' Drives Navy Psychiatrist to Death Jump," read the headline. "Claiming responsibility for the disastrous March earthquake and predicting worldwide catastrophe to come, Dr. Edward Lawrence, a former navy psychiatrist, committed suicide today by jumping from the window ledge of a Market Street hotel. Dr. Lawrence apparently stayed on the ledge outside his fifth-floor room until he attracted a crowd. To those who attempted to dissuade him from his death jump he insisted that he had been 'solely responsible' for the earthquake that shook the California coast last March, and that 'millions would die' in a coming catastrophe. When he was asked if he considered himself responsible for the predicted disaster, he answered, 'I certainly do.'

"Police cleared the street below the ledge, and the fire department spread safety nets, while two psychiatrists and a minister attempted to persuade Dr. Lawrence to reenter his rooms. All persuasion failed, and Dr. Lawrence jumped from the ledge at 3:20 P.M. He missed the safety nets and was instantly killed.

"Dr. Lawrence, a graduate of the Stanford University Medical School, was formerly employed . . ."

Sven's eyes met Madelaine's. She was deathly pale. "He's done it," she said. "Sven, Sven! How long will it take for the ahln devices to get to the poles?"

CHAPTER 18

Sven stared at her. "You mean—you think Lawrence has started the things on their trip to the poles?"

"Yes, of course. What else could it be?"

"But—he didn't know where to start them from. Only the dolphins know that. Lawrence is no expert on ocean currents."

"He did know, though. While we were still on the *Naomi,* before you came, the dolphins showed him on the chart. All he had to do was to remember two sets of coordinates."

"But how would he get the things to the launching spots? He hasn't got a boat.—Where were the spots, anyhow?"

"He could hire a plane. One place was a little south of here, about a hundred miles out, and the other was north of Fort Bragg. How long would it take for the ahln devices to reach the poles?"

Sven considered. Madelaine's alarm still seemed to him excessive, but he was beginning to be convinced. "Two or three days to reach the edge of the Arctic ice, I guess. Quite a bit longer to get to Antarctica. We're some distance from the equator here."

"Then—we've got to warn people!" She started away from him, toward the telephone booth in the corner.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, leaving his place in the line before the ticket window. (Since Lawrence was a suicide, there was obviously no point in trying to find him.) "Who are you going to call?"

"Radio station." She was fumbling with a San Diego telephone directory. "I'm going to try to—yes, here it is." She went into the telephone booth.

She was in the booth a long time. Buses came and went. Sven, looking down on her head, saw that her hair had

grown out beyond the dark dye, and was blonde again at the roots. At last she came out, even paler than when she had gone in.

"What's the matter?" he asked. He put his hand under her arm. "Are you OK, kid?"

"Yes. I called the station. I kept getting a busy signal, but I stayed on the line. Finally somebody answered. I told him I wanted to speak to the station manager, that it was important. He said, 'Lady, call back some other time. All our lines are jammed with people asking about the Alaska hurricane and flood.'

"I said, 'Flood?' He said, 'Yeah, half Anchorage is under water, and it's still rising. Nobody knows why.' Then he hung up."

Sven blinked. "It—must have got there," he said.

"Oh, yes. I suppose it's causing the hurricane, too. I've got to try something else. I—I know, I'll call the President." She started toward the booth once more.

Sven held her back. "It's a waste of time," he said. "You'd never get through to the President. They'd just think you were some kind of crank."

"But—we can't just let it go at this! Millions of people will be killed if they aren't warned to get to high ground. Everybody in this room will be killed. Descanso is flat as a board. We have to—to keep trying."

"Take it easy," he said. "The flood won't get here for a good many hours."

"What's that got to do with it? Every city on the California coast will be flooded. And after the South Polar ice starts to melt, every coastal city in the world. We—I know, Sven. You and I will fly to Washington and insist on seeing the President. We'll tell him what's happening." She started toward the ticket window.

Once more he held her back. "They'd think we were cranks, Maddy. By the time we managed to see anybody important, the flood would already have arrived."

She shook her head desperately. "We've got to do something! Millions of people will die!"

It seemed to Sven that everybody in the bus station was looking at them. "Let's get out of here," he said. "We'll try to do something. But there's nothing we can do by telephoning that will help."

He started toward the station door and, after a moment, she followed him. When they were walking along the rutted road once more, she said, "We must try the new way of using Udra. We can try to make the President issue a general warning. Or even send the navy out to destroy the three ahln devices."

He said, "I thought of that. The trouble is, we haven't a spatial fix on the President. I was able to make the commander of the sub do what I wanted because I knew where he was, visually speaking, and could sort out his mind from those of the crew members. The same thing was true when we had the gunner direct his cannon at the underwater shelf. But I doubt we can pick up the President, out of all the millions of minds on the Eastern seaboard. You remember, when we tried to pick up Lawrence with Udra, we couldn't get anything at all."

"That was because he had the kind of mind that doesn't leave any traces."

"Maybe. I think we could have picked him up, though, if we'd known where he was."

They had got back to the beach cottage. Moonlight went running down over the sand to the water, calling us. When we swam up, she told us what had happened.

The news silenced us for a moment. Then I said, "Yes, he's done it. The floods are going to be terrible, especially after the Antarctic ice starts to melt. We're willing to work with you, Sosa, if you want to try to contact the President's mind and have him issue a warning. Or even have the navy try to find and destroy the three ahln machines. Which do you want to try to do?"

Sven said, "The simpler the action we are trying to make him perform, the greater our chances of success. Issuing a general warning is a good deal simpler than sending the navy out to hunt for the machines. We'd have to make him understand what the machines were, where they would be apt to be found, and what they looked like. Also, I doubt whether the navy could possibly find anything as small as the ahln devices in the midst of the Pacific waters. They're too small a target. I move we try to make the President issue a general warning and give orders to evacuate all coastal areas."

Madelaine said, "What about the rest of the world? The

flood won't be confined to the United States."

"No, but I think this is the best we can do. If the President of the United States says a worldwide flood is coming, the rest of the world will listen. There's no use trying to get the U.N. Secretary-General to warn people. They wouldn't listen. And he can't order an evacuation. He has no real power."

"Good," I said after a moment. I do not mind saying that we sea people were relieved. We had no ill-will toward Splits generally. I think we have proved this many times. We regarded them as brothers, albeit brothers with an unfortunate tendency to fratricide.

But the ahln devices were our one real weapon, and if they were destroyed, we should be returned to our former status of experimental animals. Worse, if our part in having caused the Alaskan flood became known, all Splits everywhere would regard us as legitimate prey, and killing us as a virtuous act. It was the same situation, in short, that we had been in when we thought Dr. Lawrence had defected to the navy with the stolen ahln devices in his medical bag; and to be returned to it after an interval of hope was almost more than we could bear.

"The first thing to do," Sven said, "is to try to get a spatial fix on Washington, where the President probably is. It's a medium-sized city straight across the continent, and north of here, oh, about three hundred and fifty miles. It's in somewhat from the coast, and it's situated on a river. There are a lot of monuments."

"Good," I repeated. We all knew that we couldn't really "see" Washington; but we hoped we would be able to "see" the city, monuments,, rivers and all, in the minds of the people who lived in it. The river would be visible as thoughts about a river, and so on.

"After we get a fix on the city, we'll try to pick out the mind of the President," Sven said. "We may be able to identify him from his thoughts. And then we'll try to give him a simple message, and a simple command: 'A worldwide flood is coming. Order all coastal areas evacuated.'

"We can't make him think what we want him to think—the new way of using Udra is basically motor control. But we may be able to make him do what we want him to do, if only for a short while."

The two Splits sat down on the sand, rather high up on the beach. The afternoon sun was warm, but Madelaine was shivering with nervousness. Sven piled the sand up around her legs to make her more comfortable. Then he stretched out on his back, with his arm over his eyes.

It was difficult for us to get into the Udra-state. We were all anxious and upset, apprehensive for the future, and we had been through sharp emotional reversals in the last few days. On the other hand, we were learning how to help each other. So, after the first resistance, we made good progress. We were deeply into the state in three-quarters of an hour.

It was when we began looking for the city in the District of Columbia that we understood what Sven had meant about the importance of getting a spatial fix. We had no difficulty discerning the clustering of minds that marks a city. But there were so many clusterings! How were we to know which was the one we were hunting? People almost never think of the name of the place where they are; and it seemed that the inhabitants of every urban nucleus on the Eastern seaboard were thinking of rivers—or at any rate of water—and monuments. I suppose the Alaskan floods were responsible for all the watery thoughts we got.

At last we found a smallish conurbation that seemed to be the right one. We couldn't be sure it was located on a river, but we got constant impressions of movement and traffic around monuments, and a large proportion of the minds we sampled seemed to be concerned with the making of decisions and with administration. We could tick off minds almost as fast as a computer eliminates possibilities, and we began to move in from the periphery of the city, hunting the mind of the President of the United States.

We settled on three men as probables. They seemed to be in physical proximity to each other, perhaps in adjoining rooms, and from their thoughts they all had power and were concerned about using it wisely.

Which one? It was hard to tell, from their thoughts, which of the three was the most powerful, and the field of their thinking appeared almost identical. But one of them was more serious and impersonal than the others. We all four thought he must be the man. We stretched out toward him and began to send Sven's message to him.

I don't want to give the impression that this use of Udra is merely telepathy. The "message" was only the first part of it. We were trying to take over our man's nervous system and make him issue an order, not merely to put an idea into his mind. That meant we should have to have him in a tight grip, and keep that grip up for some time.

We had less trouble with him than we had anticipated. This was because the man we thought was the President was already deeply concerned about the Alaskan floods. The Eastern coast was beginning to get violent wind storms, and Canada, east and west, was suffering from floods almost as severe as those in Alaska. The scale of the disasters was unique, and our man was already disposed to act as we wanted him to.

We closed our four minds over him. With us urging him, he got up (we could sense his movements and be aware of what his muscles did), walked a few steps, and picked up something. I think it was a telephone. But we didn't learn until later whether or not we had succeeded in making him give the order we wanted, because at that moment the unity of our psychic quartet was abruptly disturbed. This is always a shocking experience, and it must have been somewhat shocking to the man we thought was the President.

What had happened was that Sven, lying on the beach, had sat up suddenly, sputtering water and gasping for breath. The water had risen while he was in the Udra-state and had been almost over his face. His last breath had taken in more water than air.

As soon as he could breathe normally again, he ran to Madelaine. The girl, lying a little higher on the beach than he, was having no trouble breathing; but her legs and waist were submerged, and her hair floated loose over the sand.

He put his arm under her shoulders and pulled her into a sitting position. "We've got to get out of here," he said. "The water's rising. The flood's begun."

"The flood?" she said dazedly. She was still partly in the Udra-state. "No, it's the tide. The tide always comes in. And what about the warning we were trying to get that man in Washington to issue?"

"Never mind him. We've done all we can. It's not the tide. We've got to get out ourselves, the dolphins and us, while we still can.

"Help me get food and water from the cottage. There's no time to go inland to high ground. We'll have to try to ride out the floods at sea, on the dolphins' backs."

CHAPTER 19

Our great fear was that our passengers would be swept off our backs. The water was already rough, with a stiff wind, and big pattering drops of rain were falling from the threatening sky. The weather was bound to get worse; we did not know how bad it would get. In really angry water, retrieving Sven or Madelaine would be almost impossible.

Madelaine was riding Ivry, and Sven was on Pettrus' back. This was not as we would have preferred it—Sven by choice rode Djuna, and Moonlight and I were always happiest together. There was a particular bond between the four of us because of our common Udra experience. But Djuna and I—she because of the ways in which her wounds had healed, I because of my rudimentary hand—were weaker swimmers than the others. We were in for an ordeal, and we all knew it. It seemed best to let the stronger two carry our friends' weight.

We had been swimming straight out to sea. Now Sven said, "I think we should head northwest." He had to speak loudly, for the wind carried his words away. "We may be at sea for days and above all things we don't want to be caught between the flood water from the two polar melts. That *would* be turbulent. But if we can get over the hump of the advancing water from the north, we should be all right. What do you think, Amtor?"

"Yes," I said after a moment. I was thinking that the traditional knowledge we sea people had of the ocean currents would be of no use to us now. Nothing would flow as it had flowed before. The avalanches of unlocked water had put everything awry. "Yes, once we are really out to sea, we shouldn't even notice the rise in the water. The weather is something else, but there's nothing we can do

about it. We'll head northwest."

The change of course was made. We dolphins were beginning to notice a slight lack of buoyancy in our swimming as the fresh water began to dilute the salt; and this, plus the fact that the waves were getting bigger, increased our anxiety for our passengers.

That this fear was not groundless was shown about half an hour later. The waves had been getting bigger, and when an extraordinarily large one came, Ivry made the mistake of taking it broadside, instead of meeting it obliquely. Moonlight, who had perhaps not had her hands as tightly under his flukes as she might have, was swept straight off his back, clutching desperately at his sleek sides.

Ivry was after her like a flash, and I followed him. We bore her up strongly, my back under her legs, and got her to the surface quickly. All the same, she was gasping and weak when she clambered on Ivry's back again, and vomited salt water for a while. If the sea had been rougher, we knew we could never have saved her.

"This won't do," Sven said, looking at the girl. "Night's coming on, and we're bound to doze occasionally. We'd better try to tie our legs together under the dolphins' bellies."

"What can we use for ropes?" Moonlight answered faintly.

"The straps from the canteens," Sven replied. "They're fairly strong, and if it keeps raining we're not going to have any lack of fresh water. We'll empty one canteen and throw it away, and I'll take the strap off the other and stash the canteen away in my jacket with the food. That will give us two straps."

Moonlight nodded. She drank from the canteen she was carrying, and then passed it over to Sven. He finished the water in it, took the strap off, and tossed the empty canteen into the sea. Then he took the strap from the second canteen, and put the canteen in his jacket.

Now began a complicated maneuver. For a Split to tie his feet together under the belly of a full-grown dolphin, and with a rather short strap, is no simple thing. Once Madelaine dropped her strap, and I had to dive for it. But they managed it at last, with a good deal of bending and twisting, and I went under to check the soundness of their knots and pull them as tight as I could with my rudimentary hand. Whether Sven and Madelaine would be safe through the night depended

on how strong the leather of the straps was.

The sun sank. The moon was already up in the eastern sky. It gave a certain lurid glow, but it was only occasionally visible through the wind-driven clouds. We kept swimming northwest steadily.

The night wore on. It was a long night. Ivry said that Madelaine was shivering with cold, but when the clouds would part for a moment, we saw that she was smiling. Once she bent over and caressed his cheek. "Dear Ivry—and Amtor, of course, and the others—I'm glad you called me to you at Drake's Bay," she said. "I've been happy with you sea people. However much longer my life may be, it's something I'll never regret."

Her words had been muffled by the driving rain, but Ivry got their sense clearly enough. "We're glad too, Sosa," he said.

Two or three hours after that, when the moon had begun to sink in the west, The Wave came at us unexpectedly. Even now I dislike thinking about it. I had been having a dolphin nap as I swam, and I woke only an instant before the wave slammed into me. It turned me end over end for I don't know how many times, and for the first time in my life, I was afraid of drowning. It was a behemoth of a wave.

The others were more fortunate. They saw the wave moving on them like a mountain, and they dived under it—though not, as Pettrus said, without "worrying a little" about the safety of the two Splits. But the leather straps held, and when they surfaced, everybody was still there, except me. I was about a quarter of a mile behind, still being whirled about by that abominable wave. It was full of wreckage. It must have represented half the volume of the water in the North Polar ice cap.

Eventually I got some of my wits back, and dived through it. The others had missed me and were beginning to be anxious. When I came swimming up, battered and breathing hard, they were so glad to see me it almost made the wave seem worthwhile. Not quite, though. It had been too big a wave for that.

From then on, the sea slowly improved. It kept on raining, but the wind was less strong. The sun rose, pale in the clouds that scudded across it. We were still swimming northwest.

As the air grew warmer, Sven and Madelaine roused themselves to eat and drink. They were sagging with fatigue. Djuna and I went fishing and had very good luck. The change in the salinity of the water and the disturbance of the ocean currents apparently had thoroughly confused the salmon. Djuna and I satisfied our first sharp hunger, took ample fish back to Pettrus and Ivry, and then caught more for ourselves. We felt much better after our meal.

"Maddy," Sven said about midday, "do you think the water is getting warmer?" He sounded a little hoarse.

Moonlight had been bent over, rubbing her legs with her hands to help circulation. "Yes, I'd noticed it," she said, straightening.

"Will it keep on—" he said, and stopped. There was no need to complete the sentence. The prospect was a disconcerting one.

"I don't think so," the girl answered. "The quartz crystals in the ahln devices are conduits for the power, of course. But they are eroded and finally used up by conducting it. When the crystals are consumed, the production of heat will stop. The water won't keep heating up indefinitely."

So at least we didn't have that to worry about. The day passed. In late afternoon Djuna called my attention to something odd in the sea a mile or so to the east. We leaped up out of the water, for a better view, and saw a surface current, thirty or forty feet broad, running in great loops like a river and sharply marked out by the freight it bore.

We swam closer. The ocean river—it must once have been the California current, but it was running very differently now—was alive with sharks, and no wonder. Among the floating timbers, sides of houses, sheets of plastic and uprooted trees were many bodies of Splits. The sharks slashed and tore at the fresh dead, greedily delighted, and when one body was stripped as clean of flesh as its clothing would allow, there was always another body to take its place at the sharks' feast. There was no danger for us or our passengers—the sharks were too absorbed in their gluttonous enjoyment.

We swam back to the others. We did not tell Sven or Sosa what we had seen. There was no use in distressing them. But Ivry and Pettrus knew, of course.

In late afternoon we all saw a ship, a dot on the horizon,

with lifeboats around it. Nobody said anything. There was nothing we could do.

We dolphins had begun to swim more slowly—we were far enough out at sea so that additional distance from shore would do us no good, and we weren't swimming with any definite goal. But we had to keep swimming, of course. To have stopped would have left us with no way with which to meet the force of the waves.

It kept on raining. It was still raining at sunset and it rained most of the night. The sea was somewhat calmer than it had been, and there were no more big waves, but we were all much more tired than we had been on the night before. Our relative lack of buoyancy in the fresher water weighed on us constantly. It was strange for us sea people, in our own element, to be so heavy and slow.

Morning came at last. It was still raining. The two Splits had not said anything for hours. Now Sven addressed me. "Amtor, do you know where we are?" He was so hoarse that I could hardly understand him. His voice was almost a croak.

"More or less," I said after a minute. "I saw the navigational stars once during the night. Why?"

"Because we've got to rest. We're all exhausted. Maddy and I have been sitting in the same position for thirty-six hours now, and you sea people are worn out, too. I can tell from the way Pettrus swims.

"Is there any place you can put us ashore for a while? We've got to rest."

"We're a long way from a real shore," I said. "But there used to be a rock not too far from here. It goes straight up from deep water, so the currents around it oughtn't to be dangerous even now. We might be able to put you ashore there."

"Good. Let's try it," he croaked. "How far is it?"

"I'm not sure. About a couple of hours."

Now that we had a definite goal, we swam faster. We got to the rock—a tiny thing, only a few yards across—by midmorning.

I was astonished at how deeply the rock was submerged. The triangular vertical face, streaked with bird droppings, which had always been a good twenty feet above sea level, was almost under the water. It occurred to me that if the

water rose much more our Split friends might be drowned while they slept. But Sven was right, they must rest. It had to be risked.

Ivry and Pettrus swam beside each other, and Sven managed to undo the knots at Sosa's ankles. The leather had swelled from the water, and it took him some time. Then he released his own feet.

Pettrus swam in close to the rock with him. Sven, as he said afterwards, was paralyzed from the waist down, but he caught a protrusion with his fingers and dragged himself up on a small horizontal shelf.

He sat there for some minutes, rubbing his legs and trying to get command of his body again. while Sosa waited below on Ivry's back, her head sunk on her breast. At last he was strong enough to put his hand out to the girl and pull her up beside him on the narrow shelf.

They both rested here a while. Then they turned and crawled painfully up to the top of the rock. Their legs were still quite unreliable, and we dolphins watched their progress anxiously.

At last they reached the crest. Here, Sven said, they found a little sea grass growing in a hollow at the very peak. They lay down on the coarse stuff, clasped in each other's arms for warmth, and were immediately asleep.

They slept for nearly twenty hours. During the rest of the day, the water rose slightly, and we watched its movement up the triangular rock face nervously. We were afraid we would have to call our Split friends and have them get on our backs again. But about sunset the level began to fall slightly, and by the next morning the water was four or five feet below the triangular face.

While Sven and Moonlight slept, we dozed, caught fish and talked to each other. We felt we were beginning to make some bodily adjustments to our lessened buoyancy, though it was still irksome to us, and would be so for a long time. Once we smelled a shark, but it was a long way off and seemed to be in distress. It did not bother us.

Toward dawn the skies cleared and the rain died away. By the time our friends woke up, it was a reasonably good day, with the sun visible from time to time.

"I've been thinking," Sven said after we had exchanged greetings with our friends. "The water's fallen a good deal.

That means that the flood from the North Polar ice melt has begun to equalize itself, and the South Polar flood hasn't yet begun."

"Or hasn't got here yet," I said.

"Yes. Well, when it does come, this rock is probably going to be submerged. Maddy and I can't ride out another flood, a longer-lasting flood than the one we just went through, on your backs at sea. Amtor, is there any place where you dolphins could put us down on the mainland? Some place with mountains behind it? If we have time, we can try to get to high ground."

I blew water. "I don't know. I mean, I know about how far we are from where the coast used to be, but I can't possibly tell what it's like now. There will be a lot of new currents, for one thing. But we can try it. There's not much else we can do."

"Where are we now?" Madelaine asked.

"We're opposite a place about a hundred miles below that big river that doesn't have any bay."

"The Klamath River?"

"I guess so. We don't always know the names you Splits have for things."

"Never mind that," Sven said. "Let's get going. If he means the Klamath River, there's high ground not too far from it. We've eaten all our food."

He began helping Moonlight down toward the water. They both moved stiffly and awkwardly. Rain and salt spray had washed most of the dye from the girl's hair. I was glad to see it its usual color again.

With a good deal of difficulty, the Splits got on Pettrus' and Ivry's backs. "Northeast, I think," Sven said. "The farther we can get from the South Polar flood, the better. And east, of course, because we want to get back to the American coast."

"All right," Ivry said.

As the day grew brighter, all our spirits rose. The sea was smooth, and we made very good time, particularly since there was a current flowing east. It hadn't been there before.

Late in the afternoon, Djuna and I went fishing. We fed Ivry and Pettrus, and then, since we knew the two Splits hadn't had anything to eat, offered part of our catch to them.

"It's not alive, you know," I said as Djuna held the salmon out to Sven in her mouth. "She bit it in the head."

"I—thank you. Madelaine, are you hungry enough to try raw fish?"

"Not yet. But put it in your jacket, Sven, and keep it. We may be short of food after we get ashore."

At sunset, the Splits tied their legs together under the two dolphins' bellies. The sea continued calm. The moon rose. It was hardly well up in the sky when we saw land ahead.

It was very different from how I had remembered it. Buildings rose straight out of the surface of the water, and the mass of land lay far behind them. There were no lights anywhere.

"Be careful," Madelaine said as we swam in slowly. "We don't know how deep the water is, or what's under it."

"Of course," I answered. "Djuna and I will go ahead and act as pilots, since we can dive to see if there's danger."

Cautiously we swam in beside the drowned city. The water was quite deep, thirty or forty feet, and it occurred to me that we were following the streets of the submerged city. There were many bodies of Splits floating among the buildings. We avoided them as much as we could. The moonlight robbed them of color and made them look unreal.

Madelaine stirred uneasily on Pettrus' back. "I wonder what city this was," she said. I noticed how softly she and Sven were speaking. "Amtor, are we near the river you spoke of?"

"We're somewhat north of it."

"Then this is probably Crescent City," Sven replied.

Neither of them said anything more as we left the city behind and approached a range of low hills. The water grew shallower. I dived and found land, still covered with grass, only two or three feet below me.

"We'll have to let you off here," I said.

"Yes." Sven undid the straps from his ankles, and slid into the water. He helped Madelaine untie herself. Then they both waded toward the hills.

"Good-bye," Madelaine said. She turned toward us, holding out her hands. "When the waters start to go down," she said quickly, "call us to you. Use Udra. We'll come. We will meet again, my darlings! I know it. I am sure of it."

"So are we, Sosa," I answered. This was true. And yet,

our good-byes made, we were all heavy-hearted as we started back to deeper water. It was the first time since Sosa had come to us at Drake's Bay, months before, that we had been parted from her.

CHAPTER 20

The old man held up the lamp and peered at them doubtfully. The scattering of white hairs on his scalp glistened in the light. "You're refugees?" he asked.

"Yes," Sven answered. "All we want is to get in out of the rain for a while and a place to cook. Here." He produced the salmon Djuna had caught—it was still fresh enough to be desirable—and showed it to the old man. "We'd be glad to share with you. I can't get a fire started outside. Everything's so wet."

The old man did not move away from the door. "I don't need your food," he said. "I've got a whole freezer full of stuff that's spoiling since the power went off . . . sorry, but I can't take you in. You'll have to be on your way."

Madelaine stepped forward, so that the light of the lamp fell on her face. "Are you afraid of us?" she asked directly.

"Afraid?"

"Yes. You might be. You don't know anything about us, or what we might do."

The old man laughed. "I'm still strong enough to take care of myself," he said. "I'm not afraid of you as people. But I heard on the radio that diseases are breaking out. They're giving everybody in the refugee camps shots."

"We haven't been near anybody since before the flood started," Madelaine said. "We were at sea all during it. That's how we got the fish. But we did have to swim through water where bodies were floating. That was when we were coming ashore."

"At sea? I guess that's why none of the 'copters or planes picked you up. They've been trying to evacuate people. My neighbors wanted me to leave, but I told them I'd stay. I've been growing fruit on this land all my life. Well, I don't suppose you'd have caught anything just from swimming

through water where there were bodies." The old man seemed to be weakening.

"I could cook," Madelaine said. "I could get a nice meal for the three of us from the things you have in the freezer."

The old man looked at them a little longer. They could hear his shallow breathing. "All right," he said at last. "You'll have to cook on a wood stove, since the power is off. And you're to go away after you eat, do you understand? I don't want you staying here."

"All right."

Once Sven and Madelaine were over the threshold, they realized how wet they were. Puddles formed around them on the floor immediately. The fruit grower brought them towels, and they dried themselves as well as they could. Madelaine squeezed most of the water from her hair, and Sven took off his shirt and jacket, wrung them out in the sink, and hung them to dry on the back of a chair. The girl and the young man were both still wet enough to leave splotches on the linoleum floor when they walked.

Tired as she was, Madelaine found she was glad to be cooking again. Sven gutted the fish and cut it up for her, and she found fat in a cupboard. Since the food in the freezer, as their host had said, was on the edge of spoiling, she saw no reason to be economical with it. They sat down to a meal of fried salmon, six vegetables, and biscuits baked, scone fashion, on top of the wood stove.

"Maddy," Sven said after they had eaten enough to take the first sharp edge off their hunger, "Mr. Fletcher was telling me he saw the flood sweep over New York."

"Yes," said the old man. He was growing more expansive. "I saw it on television. The waves were fifty feet high, coming up from the harbor, and they were full of bodies and pieces of wrecks. Nobody on the East Coast believed the warning, you see, and so nobody got out ahead of time."

"There was a warning?" Sven asked.

"Yes, so I heard. The Secretary of Welfare went on the air and told everybody to get out of low-lying areas. But in the middle of a sentence he was cut off, and the announcer said a mistake had been made. It would have been better if people had believed him. I've heard that two-thirds of the people who lived in New York City are believed to be dead."

"I don't understand why so many died," Sven said thoughtfully. "Even if the water was fifty feet deep in the streets, weren't people safe in the upper stories of buildings? For a while, I mean."

"I guess they would have been. But all the power was off, and none of the elevators was working. People clustered just above the water, on cornices and looking out of windows. When the earthquake came—"

"Earthquake?" Madelaine said. "In New York?"

"Yes. There've been earthquakes all over the world, not to mention cyclones and hurricanes. But as I was saying, when the earthquake came, the tall buildings shook like—like straws. Like the tines on a tuning fork. People began to fall out of the buildings. I saw them falling like 'cots off the trees in a high wind. Then the picture went off. Now the only news I can get is fifteen minutes a day, just at noon, over my battery-powered radio.

"New York City is still under fifty feet of water. I guess it always will be. Mauna Loa, in Hawaii, is in eruption, and the whole state of Florida is submerged. So is a lot of Texas, and all the California coast. It's like the end of the world."

"It's the end of something, certainly," Sven said. "What about foreign countries? The United States wasn't the only one to suffer, was it?"

"No, of course not. Well, they said the Netherlands was completely under—worse than Florida—and all the south part of England up to Scotland. Denmark is flooded, and parts of Germany and France—parts of Italy—Scandinavia—I don't know what all. Southern India—the Chinese coast—most of Japan. They've had hurricanes everywhere, and terrible windstorms as well as the flood.

"It's the biggest disaster in human history. It's so big it's paralyzed people. The survivors don't know where to begin. There's no power, no gasoline, no safe water. There isn't even any way to bury the dead."

"What caused the floods in the first place, do you know?" Sven asked.

"They said the ice at the North Pole melted, almost overnight. But what caused that—my own idea is that a bunch of H-bombs got lost, maybe on one of these atomic subs under the ice, and started melting it. No country would admit to having caused all this."

"No, I suppose not," Sven said. He looked at Madelaine,

who, fed and warm for the first time in days, was dozing in her chair. "Come on, Maddy," he said, starting to rise. "We'll wash the dishes. And then we'll be on our way, as Mr. Fletcher says."

Drowsy but obedient, Madelaine struggled to get to her feet. Fletcher frowned. "Wait," he said, though not very graciously. "You and your girl can stay here tonight. She can have my bed, and you can sleep on the floor. I'll sleep in my chair. But you must leave tomorrow. I insist on it."

Sven nodded. He half-carried Madelaine into the tiny bedroom, and covered her up in the bed. Then he lay down on the floor with a blanket, near the stove, and was immediately asleep.

Once or twice during the night his eyes were jerked open by the raw brilliance of lightning; the flashes were very close, and the deafening roar of thunder was only a second behind the flash. But even a thunderstorm could not keep him awake for long. With his arm over his eyes, he plunged back into sleep.

Toward morning the storm retreated. Sven thought that once Fletcher rose from his chair and went to look out of the window. Then it was really daylight. The smell of coffee was in the air. Sven yawned and sat up. "Good morning," he said to the old man.

"Good morning. I've made coffee. Your girl's still asleep. There was a plane wreck during the night. Come and see."

He led Sven over to the window and pointed. Seemingly four or five miles off, a column of heavy black smoke was still rising in the air. "I think it must have been caught in the storm," Fletcher said. "I heard it going over, and went to the window to look. It was already on fire, burning all over, when it hit the ground."

Sven nodded. There was obviously nothing to be done for the people in the plane, and hadn't been before Fletcher had seen it crash.

Madelaine came out of the bedroom. She said, "Good morning," washed her face at the sink, and then baked more biscuits on top of the stove.

"Good-bye, sir," Sven said when they had eaten and washed the dishes. "Which way is it to the refugee camp?"

"It's about fifteen miles from here, at a town called O'Brien. If you cut across the hills, toward the plane wreck, you can save yourself a good deal of walking. You should

pick up the road about a quarter of a mile beyond the plane. Go northeast."

He went with them to the door of the cabin. "Some of the biscuits your girl cooked," he said, handing them a parcel. "And I put in a box of matches, in a plastic bag. You might want to make a fire."

"Thank you," Sven said. And then, on impulse, "Wouldn't you like to come with us? If there's another flood—"

The old man laughed. "I'll take the chance. It would have to be considerably worse than the first one to bother me on such high ground. No, I'll stay here."

This was true, and Sven did not press him. "Good-bye, sir."

"Good-bye. Good luck."

As they walked along over the hills, orienting themselves by the smoke of the wrecked plane, Madelaine said, "Sven, do you notice a certain lack of—of buoyancy?"

"I'm still tired, if that's what you mean," he answered. "A night of sleeping on the floor isn't very restful."

"No, I don't mean that. But when we were with the dolphins, I felt—more than myself. Lighter. There was a sort of inner buoyancy."

"Um. Yes, I think I know what you mean. I miss them surprisingly. I feel as if I'd lost part of myself."

"Yes. And then, while we were with them, anything could happen. We moved in a world of wonders. We talked to dolphins, triggered earthquakes, and communicated with distant stars. Now we're back in the ordinary world, the world where, if remarkable things happen, they are usually unfortunate."

Sven laughed. "But Maddy, I've been thinking, we've accomplished what we set out to do. The radioactivity of the world's oceans is greatly diluted, and the sea people ought to be safe for, oh, the next fifty years. It ought to take that long, at least, for people to get back to where they were before the floods. They'll be too busy for a long time to bother the dolphins, and if they become dangerous again, the sea people can use Udra in the new way to defend themselves."

"The only danger now would be if somebody connected the dolphins with the melting of the ice," Madelaine said thoughtfully. "If Splits get the idea the dolphins are respon-

sible, they'll start to hunt them down as soon as the worst part of the floods is over."

"Why should anybody suspect a connection?" Sven asked. He slapped at a hovering insect. "Damn, that was a mosquito. There never used to be mosquitos here."

"It's warmer than it used to be, I think."

"Yes. But as I was saying, nobody will connect them with the floods. Lawrence is dead, and you heard what Fletcher said. He thinks the ice cap was melted by some sort of atomic foul-up. It's what most people will think. There's nothing to worry about. The sea people are safe for the next fifty years."

They passed the wreckage of the plane. It was still burning fiercely, and the air was full of ugly smells. Beyond it, their way led downhill. They could see the two-lane highway ahead.

They had almost reached the road when they heard the sound of a 'copter in the sky. They both looked up. The pilot leaned out and waved at them.

He came lower. "Hi!" he yelled through a megaphone. "Are you refugees?"

"Yes!" Sven shouted back through cupped hands.

"Good! I'll come down for you."

He set the 'copter down beside the road. "Get in," he told them. "I was making a last search of the hills, to be sure we hadn't missed anybody. I'll take you to the camp."

The 'copter had had the letters "U.S.N." on the underside; Sven looked at the pilot thoughtfully. But he was sure he had never seen him before, and Madelaine, from her silence, didn't know him either. (Dr. Lawrence would have recognized him, I think, but Lawrence was dead.)

Sven and Madelaine got in. The 'copter rose up and then began to fly above the road. "How come I missed you before?" the pilot asked. "I thought I had everybody."

"We were at sea in a small boat during the flood," Sven replied. "We didn't know anything was wrong until we tried to land."

"At sea? You must have been through some terrible weather. It's a wonder you're alive. By the way, what did you say your names were?"

There seemed to be no reason for concealment. "My name is Erickson," Sven answered, "and she's Madelaine

Paxton. It's good of you to take us in. It would have been a long walk."

"Think nothing of it," the pilot answered. His tone was remote and preoccupied. After a moment the 'copter, which had been following the road, changed course and began to fly due east.

"Where are we going?" Sven asked after a moment. He was not so much suspicious as merely inquiring. "I heard the camp was at O'Brien."

"That one's—full," the pilot said. "I'm taking you to another one." He sent the 'copter higher. The speed increased.

Sven felt a thrill of alarm. He glanced at Madelaine and saw that her eyes had narrowed and her lips were tight. Still, he wanted to be sure. "What's the name of this other camp?" he asked.

"Uhn, it's at Agness."

At Agness? But Agness, if Sven remembered his Oregon geography, was almost straight north. Why should the 'copter be flying east?

Madelaine nudged him. Carefully, turning her head slowly so the pilot would not notice the movement, she put her lips against Sven's ear. "We must make him land the plane," she breathed.

Sven gave a tiny nod. They would have to use Udra, new style, to get motor control of the pilot, and it wasn't going to be easy. One of the drawbacks of Udra has always been that it is difficult to get into the Udra-state when one is excited or upset. But it had to be done. He and Maddy couldn't risk having the pilot take them to some unknown destination, to be confronted with unknown inquisitors.

Madelaine's mind was already reaching out to him. They could help each other get into Udra. The first thing to do was be calm and open his mind to hers.

This time, rather oddly, their minds merged before either of them was well into the Udra-state. It was a shock to both of them, I think, because always before in their closer psychic contacts with each other, a dolphin intelligence had been present. The dolphin mind, with all its strangeness, had acted as a mediator. But this immediate Split-to-Split contact had the advantage that there were no depths in each other that frightened them. It made possible a closer unity.

The pilot coughed. "Why are you so quiet back there?" he asked, half turning round.

Sven couldn't have answered if his life had depended on it. His mind was bent on one thing only, focused on a single point: getting the pilot's motor activity under his and Madelaine's control.

"What—" the pilot said, and stopped. A look of amazement spread over his face as he found himself unable to speak. Madelaine and Sven had taken command of his conscious bodily acts.

So far, so good. The next thing was to get him to land the 'copter. Neither Sven nor the girl knew, of course, what motions the pilot should make to land; but he did. The command went out.

Slowly and reluctantly the pilot's hands moved on the controls. The 'copter began to descend.

It was not a good landing, but it was a landing. The pilot shut the motor off. He sat motionless for an instant. Then, stiffly, he rose from his seat and jumped to the ground.

It was hard for the two to keep control of the pilot and yet be able to move freely themselves. To engage in bodily activity while one is in the Udra-state is self-contradictory. So it took Sven and Madelaine almost ten minutes to get out of the 'copter and walk to where the pilot stood.

The pilot's hands kept twitching. Sven did not dare to relax his psychic grip on him. But there was a gun in the holster on the pilot's hip. Slowly, with many hesitations and much watchfulness, Sven drew the gun from its place and covered the pilot with it.

"All right," he said. "Put up your hands."

The man's arms went up. "What are you—" he said.

"Shut up," Sven told him. "Now, Maddy, search him. Find his papers and look at them. I want to know who he is. Be careful, don't put yourself in the way of the gun."

The girl obeyed. In the breast pocket of the pilot's whipcord jacket she found a wallet, a notebook, a pen, and a flat leather folder.

"His name is Nicholl Trott," she said, looking in the wallet. "He's thirty-four years old, and he lives in San Francisco. It's an interstate driver's license."

"Look in the leather folder," Sven said, still covering the pilot with the gun.

"Oh. These are his credentials, Sven. They identify him as a naval intelligence agent."

"So that's it," Sven said. "No wonder he recognized our names."

The pilot found his tongue. "Why do you assume I'm hostile to you?" he asked. "Yes, I recognized your names. Yes, I was taking you to Agness. But—"

"But what?" Sven asked.

"You wouldn't have been hurt. Or your dolphin friends, for that matter." Trott's hands were still raised. "I'm one of the Splits, as you call them, who remember what you talked about so much when they had you under the influence of the truth serum."

"What do you know about that?" Sven asked. "You weren't there when they were questioning me."

"No, but I've studied the case. Don't you see, Erickson? I'm sympathetic to you. I—remember the covenant."

It is painful to feel one's self always surrounded by enemies. Even Splits, with their chronic hostility toward each other, find hostility ultimately painful. Trott's story was not absolutely unbelievable; but Sven tended to believe him because he *wanted* to believe.

"I helped you get away," Trott went on. "Why do you think there weren't any guards where the dolphin was waiting for you?"

"But if—"

"Watch out!" Madelaine yelled. "He's got another gun!"

It was too late. The gun from the shoulder holster, small but wicked, was trained on Madelaine.

"It's a stand-off," Trott said with grinning satisfaction. "If you shoot me, she goes, too. I won't hesitate. Drop your gun."

Slowly and reluctantly, Sven obeyed. The chance that Trott meant what he said was too great to risk Madelaine's life on it.

"Now," said Trott, "get back in the 'copter. No, wait. I'm not going to have you repeat what you did to me before, whatever it was. I'd better tie you up and knock you out."

Trott backed toward the 'copter, still keeping the gun on Madelaine. She was standing quite still, her hands, with Trott's wallet in them, clasped in front of her, but her lips were moving. "Help me, Amtor! Djuna, help me!" she said under her breath. It must have been about this time that

Djuna and I, swimming with our friends in the now cool South Pacific, had the sensation of being desperately drawn upon.

Still keeping the gun on Madelaine, Trott groped behind him on the floor of the 'copter and came out with a length of rope. He seemed uncertain what to do. Then his face cleared. He tossed the rope along the grass to Madelaine.

"Tie him up," he ordered. "Make good knots—I'll be watching. Don't try anything. I've no real objection to killing both of you. I consider you traitors to the human race."

Slowly Madelaine bent to pick up the rope. Her mind was clamoring to us. "Hurry up," Trott said impatiently. "Can't you move faster than that? You, Erickson, turn your back and put your hands behind you. Yes. Now, Paxton, tie his hands together."

Reluctantly, Madelaine did as she was told. As the knots were made, Trott seemed to relax. "You know, this is going to change a lot of people's minds," he said conversationally. "After that fink Lawrence killed himself, everybody thought I was a nut and that we'd killed a lot of dolphins for nothing. The most they'd admit was that some human beings had been riding around with dolphins, and they thought the sub had killed the people, and the dolphins with them, before it sank.

"Even the floods didn't convince them. They said it was just coincidence that Lawrence had predicted trouble before he died. Yes, they thought I was a sort of nut to blame a bunch of fish for the floods. A nut! I was the one sane man."

Sven's hands were tied. Trott had Madelaine bring the ends of the rope around his ankles and tie them, too. "And now," he said, "I guess the best thing would be to shoot you and Erickson in the shoulder. That ought to keep you from any more tricks."

He raised the gun to sight accurately. The gun moved to eye level, and then on up. "What—" he said, and then was silent. An amazed and exasperated look came over his face. The struggle for control of his nervous system had begun.

Madelaine turned to face him, dropping the ends of the rope. The gun moved toward Trott's head inch by inch, in a series of jerks. His mouth was open, and he was breathing hard.

The muzzle of the gun came to rest against his right temple. Trott's eyes were wild. Twice his finger jerked on

the trigger, and he managed to pull it away. Madelaine had her doubts about what the four of us were trying to make him do, and this helped him to resist for a while. But the third time his finger drew the trigger all the way back. The bullet went into his head.

He stood upright for a moment, swaying on his feet, and then fell forward. He was dead, I think, before he hit the ground.

The girl put her hands over her face. Sven hopped around so he faced her. "Don't fold up," he said. "There isn't time. Help me get untied."

Together they loosed the knots. It was raining again, with thunder not too far off. "We've got to do something with the body," Sven said.

"Have we?" Madelaine answered. Her tone was calm, but she was panting for breath. "The gun's in his hand, and there must be powder stains on his hand and his head. For all anybody could tell, he committed suicide."

Sven considered. "Why would he suddenly bring the 'copter down and kill himself?"

"Why do people kill themselves? There's not going to be an inquest at a time like this."

There was a silence. The rain had stopped momentarily, and lightning leaped in the sky. At last Sven said, "We don't dare risk it. It might just make somebody suspicious. Help me put his body back in the 'copter, Maddy—I'm going to set it on fire."

"You mean, they'll think the 'copter had engine trouble and caught fire?"

"Or was struck by lightning, like the bigger plane. We'll be destroying the evidence."

Sven put the guns Trott had carried back in their holsters, and they dragged the body over to the 'copter and put it in the pilot's seat. Sven found the gas tank, uncapped it, and got out the matches Fletcher had given him. He split a stick, stuck a match in the cleft, and lit it. Then at arm's length, standing as far back as he could get, he poked the stick at the gas tank.

It caught. There was a low roar. Sven had run back the instant he knew the gas had caught. He grabbed Madelaine by the wrist and pulled her back with him.

From a safe distance, they watched the tank explode. The 'copter was burning furiously. Through the haze of smoke,

they saw its metal frame buckle and warp.

"That's that," Sven said at last. "Even if they tried to do an autopsy on him, there wouldn't be anything left to inspect. We're safe."

"Are we? Sven! There's blood on my skirt, from where we carried him."

"The rain will wash it away. But Maddy, you don't seem to realize, the sea people are safe, too. The only man who suspected that they might have any connection with the floods is gone. They're really safe now. Aren't you glad?"

She drew a long breath. "Yes, I'm glad. And now, let's get started on our way to the refuge camp."

They were accepted at O'Brien without question. They gave false names, but it probably wasn't necessary. Madelaine, who was a good typist, was put to work in the office immediately, and Sven became a mechanic in the camp garage.

Life at the camp was chiefly remarkable for the poor quality of the food, and the very high death rate. Everyone who came in was given shots by the harried doctors; but diseases were epidemic for which no shots had ever been devised. Disposing of the bodies of the dead was a more serious problem than getting food for those who remained alive.

And yet, O'Brien was one of the more successful camps. On the East Coast there were camps in which, week after week, two-thirds of the current refugee population died. This was partly because the eastern camps were more crowded, but also because several strains of viruses from the biological-warfare people got loose. Microorganisms do not distinguish between friend and foe.

(I may say here that Split demographers think that, of the one and a half or two billion Splits who died as a result of the floods, at least sixty percent died of hunger, exposure or disease. Simple drowning played a lesser part in the toll. Some demographers have called the floods a blessing in disguise, since they brought the world population down to a point where it was more compatible with world resources. Myself, I find it difficult to think of anything that kills so many as a blessing, though it certainly has been one for us people of the sea.)

Sven and Madelaine had been at O'Brien only a few hours

when news came that new floods were sweeping up from the south. This meant that new areas were inundated, more people were drowned, and new epidemics and earthquakes occurred. For the people in the camp, it was more of the same thing. The increase in the scale of the catastrophe had not changed its quality.

Sven and Madelaine were kept too busy to see much of each other. They were not precisely unhappy, despite the distress around them, and they managed to keep in good health while so many others, older and younger, died. When they could, they sat beside each other in the dining hall. They both say they dreamed of us sea people almost every night.

The camp came under U.N. auspices (there were at that time two men who claimed to be president of the United States, one with army support, the other favored by the air force), and conditions improved somewhat.

Time passed. One night, about six weeks after she and Sven had arrived at the camp, Madelaine woke on her sagging cot with a message ringing in her ears. She got up and dressed quietly, not wanting to wake the other women in the tent. Moonlight coming through the canvas walls made objects within palely visible. When she got to the muddy walk that marked the division between the men's and women's quarters, she found Sven waiting for her.

"They want us," she said.

"Yes. Which way do we go? You're better at things like that than I am, Madelaine."

"Straight over the hills and toward the coast. I know exactly where they are."

They began to walk. As soon as they were out of the camp, which was kept constantly sprayed with insecticide, mosquitoes began to buzz around them. Frog voices boomed and croaked on every side. The flooding moonlight made the grassy hills look flat. But the man and the girl climbed and descended, descended and climbed. It was not until they were going through a long level valley that Madelaine had breath enough to say, "I've been thinking about Dr. Lawrence lately. I've been wondering if he was right."

"Right? What about?"

"He used to say that I was too high-minded to do what

had to be done, and that he always had to take the onus of necessary action on himself."

"Well?"

"Did I—when he dispatched the ahln devices to the poles, wasn't he, after all, doing what I really wanted him to do? Doing what you and I both wanted him to do?"

"I don't think it matters," Sven said. "You might have wanted it to happen—in a way, we both wanted it to happen. But we'd never have acted on our wishes. One doesn't have to take guilt for wishes one would never carry out."

The moon had set. The sun was beginning to come up in the east when they got to the ocean. And there, waiting for them as close as we could get, were the four of us.

"I've missed you so!" Sosa said when the first joy of reunion was over. "Tell me, what's been happening with you? How has the flood affected the sea people?"

"Some of us have been sick," I told her. "The water's so much less salty most places than it used to be that we get infections. I think a good many sea people have died.

"But we have lots more water to swim in. And if it's less salty, it's also less radioactive. We're sure of being able to survive. We're much better off than we used to be, Moonlight."

"What's the world like now?" Sven asked curiously. "I mean, the seas of the world. We don't get much news at the camp."

"The water's about a hundred feet deeper everywhere than it used to be," I said. "There's a lot less land than there used to be. There are places where we can swim in for fifty miles beyond the old coastline. I think there will be more changes in the shape of the land masses. There are more earthquakes coming, for one thing."

Moonlight sighed. Then she said, "Could you take us for one last ride on your backs?"

"Of course. I was going to suggest it."

She got on my back, and Sven on Djuna's. We did not take them far. The air was too heavy with the sorrow of parting for any of us to enjoy it very much.

"We'd better be getting back to the camp," Sven said when they were standing on the shore again.

"Yes," Madelaine agreed sadly. "Good-bye Amtor and Djuna, good-bye, Ivry and Pettrus. Oh, I'll miss you so! Will we see each other again?"

"Of course, dear Sosa. Don't doubt it. The days will come when you will be with us again."

We began to swim away. The two Splits stood watching us, Sven's arm around the girl's waist. As we moved through the water, I heard him say to her, "There they go, Maddy. The new lords of the earth. The gentle new lords of the earth."

But I knew then, and I know now, that there is a task yet unaccomplished. The final fusion of the human and dolphin natures is yet to come. Then we sea people will walk on land, and you Splits will be free of the sweet depths of the ocean. The covenant looks *forward*. The best is yet to come.

Over Four Months on
The New York Times Bestseller List.

FUNERAL IN BERLIN

LEN DEIGHTON

A crackling tale of espionage which takes the reader from London to Prague, from a beach in Spain to the streets of Berlin. The author brings vividly to life the nightmare world of faceless men caught in the power struggles of the countries they represent.

". . . a highly readable and engaging tale . . ." —Los Angeles Times

A DELL BOOK **75c**

Before the dawn of man...

. . . there was a covenant between the land and the sea people—a covenant long forgotten by those who stayed on shore, but indelibly etched in the minds of the others—the dolphins of Altair.

Now the covenant had been broken. Dolphins were being wantonly sacrificed in the name of scientific research, their waters increasingly polluted, their number dangerously diminished. They had to find allies and strike back. Allies willing to sever their own earthly bonds for the sake of their sea brothers—willing, if necessary, to execute the destruction of the whole human race. . . .

COVER ILLUSTRATION: LEHR PRINTED IN USA