

SO WARM THE WATER

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PAGE ONE (2 PANELS)

**Panel 1.**

A cavernous space lit by the soft glow of footlights. A figure - seen from behind - sits hunched on a bench seat before the blue watery gloom of a vast exhibition tank.

ATTENDANT (OFF)  
Aquarium closes in fifteen minutes.

**Panel 2.**

Reveal the figure as HOYT, early 90s, craggy and spare. A threadbare suit hangs loose about his bony frame. Dark eyes strained of emotion. Liver-spotted hands folded over the crook of a walking stick rested between his knees. Beyond him, an exhibition ATTENDANT stands silhouetted in a doorway. Hoyt does not remove his gaze from the tank.

HOYT  
You'll let me sit till then?

ATTENDANT  
Yes, Mister Hoyt. Of course.

**PAGE TWO (3 PANELS)**

**Panel 1.**

Closer on Hoyt - he tilts slightly, listening for sign that the Attendant has left. Behind him, the door closes.

SFX:

Door SWISHES shut.

**Panel 2.**

Hoyt presses his fingers to the thick glass.

HOYT

They wrote to tell me I'm the last one.

**Panel 3.**

Hoyt closes his eyes - remembering.

HOYT

Four days and nights...

**PAGE THREE (4 PANELS)**

**Panel 1.**

CAPTION:

PACIFIC OCEAN, JULY 30TH, 1945

Night. The stern of a battleship tilts skyward - like a dagger plunged into an ocean of flame. A name on the hull: USS INDIANAPOLIS. An oil coated HOYT, 18, dressed in tattered underclothes, swims frantically from the sinking vessel. Note: Hoyt remains 18 until return to present on page 9.

CAPTION (HOYT)

I survived the torpedoes...

...Found myself in the fires of hell...

...Survived them too.

**Panel 2.**

Daylight. Dozens of ragged, oil blackened SAILORS cling to one another amid the waves. Hoyt and those without life vests supported by those few with.

CAPTION (HOYT)

Never knew a sea so warm...

...Guess I had a lot to learn.

**Panel 3.**

A SAILOR among their number gestures off, panicked.

SAILOR

Ya'll see that?

I seen somethin' - out near the Lieutenant's group.

**Panel 4.**

A look of panic cuts through Hoyt's fatigue as he sees it.

CAPTION (HOYT)

At first they took the wounded.

**PAGE FOUR (3 PANELS)**

**Panel 1.**

A wave of panic sweeps through a second clump of SURVIVORS. Water churns, men thrashing and fighting one another in a desperate bid to escape an unseen threat.

CAPTION (HOYT)  
Nothing to do but wait...

**Panel 2.**

Hoyt, eyes cast to the heavens, palms pressed to his ears in a bid to block out the horror unfolding around him.

SFX:  
BLOOD CURDLING SCREAMS OF TERROR

**Panel 3.**

Night. Hoyt watches numbly as a MARINER beside him is dragged beneath the surface.

CAPTION (HOYT)  
...And pray we weren't the next.

**PAGE FIVE (5 PANELS)****Panel 1.**

Two dozen sun-blistered and exhausted survivors packed together beneath a relentless sun. Hoyt treads water among them. Several of the group support an ailing WILY, 18, badly burned, a bandage wrapping his eyes.

SKINNY MARINER  
He ain't gonna make it.

**Panel 2.**

BURLY MARINER, 30s, removes his own life vest.

BURLY MARINER  
Take mine, Wily.

**Panel 3.**

Hoyt watches on as Burly Mariner slips the life vest over Wily's head.

BURLY MARINER  
We'll be your eyes kid, we'll see you through.

**Panel 4.**

The water explodes. Burly Mariner's eyes widen in terror.

**Panel 5.**

The group splinters as a massive SHARK forges a path through the huddled survivors, tail thrashing, Burly Mariner locked in its jaws, his fists pounding the beast in a futile rage.

**PAGE SIX (3 PANELS)**

**Panel 1.**

Hoyt and Wily find themselves separated. Hoyt paddles toward Wily who flails blindly.

WILY  
Don't leave me!

HOYT  
I'm right here, Wily. I'm right here.

**Panel 2.**

Hoyt frees the buckle of Wily's life vest.

SFX:  
Buckle CLICKS free.

**Panel 3.**

Hoyt drifts alone, the life vest holding him afloat. He stares skyward, fear replaced with guilt as a frenzy of sharks mob Wily's sinking corpse below.

CAPTION (HOYT)  
But the more I prayed for salvation...

**PAGE SEVEN (4 PANELS)****Panel 1.**

The setting sun casts a blood red glow across a calm ocean. The bloodshot eyes of LIEUTENANT ASHMORE, 40s, peer over the rim of a makeshift raft at Hoyt treading water below.

HOYT  
Sir, you gotta let me up!

LIEUTENANT ASHMORE  
It won't take us both!

HOYT  
Just take my hand, please!

**Panel 2.**

Lieutenant Ashmore stretches a blistered hand over the side, grasping Hoyt's.

CAPTION (HOYT)  
...The more I come to understand it.

**Panel 3.**

From a distance, Hoyt grips the tiny raft, bracing himself as he pulls Lieutenant Ashmore overboard into the blood red ocean.

**Panel 4.**

Hoyt lies curled atop the raft, listening to the Lieutenant's desperate cries for help.

LIEUTENANT ASHMORE (OFF)  
Help me, please!

...No no please-



**PAGE EIGHT (2 PANELS)**

**Panel 1.**

Day. Hoyt lies on his back atop the raft, staring into the blue sky. Clusters of survivors dot the water, clinging to life. Sharks cruise in their dozens, taking men at will.

CAPTION (HOYT)  
He was showing me the way.

**Panel 2.**

Climbing higher still: pockets of survivors scattered like flotsam across a sparkling ocean. Sharks in their hundreds.

A military twin-prop banks into view. The USAAF insignia on the fuselage.

CAPTION (HOYT)  
Four days and nights...

**PAGE NINE (3 PANELS)****Panel 1.**

Back in the aquarium's viewing gallery. Old man Hoyt gazes into the tank, eyes misting with emotion.

HOYT

There's some say I'm blessed...

...Cause they don't know no better.

**Panel 2.**

Looking into the tank's watery void. A shadow emerges from the outer reaches. The unmistakable outline of a shark.

HOYT (OFF)

I know the Lord created you...

**Panel 3.**

Hoyt leans his head against the glass - all that separates him from the cold black eye staring back. Hoyt's reflection melds with the shark's features. A faint smile - maybe cruel, maybe crazed - curls the edges of Hoyt's mouth.

HOYT

...Same way he made me...