



Meg: Hell's Aquarium

By Steve Alten

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The most fearsome predators in history...are no longer history.

The Philippine Sea Plate: The most unexplored realm on the planet. Hidden beneath its primordial crust lies the remains of the *Panthalassa*, an ocean that dates back 220 million years. Vast and isolated, the *Panthalassa* is inhabited by nightmarish sea creatures long believed extinct.

Tanaka Institute, Monterey, CA: Four years have passed since Angel, the 76-foot, 100,000 pound Megalodon, birthed a litter of pups far too numerous and aggressive to keep in one pen. Fortunately, a Dubai royal prince who is building the largest aquarium in the world seeks to purchase two of the "runts"?if Jonas Taylor's twenty-one year-old son, David, will be their handler. Jonas reluctantly agrees, and David is off to Dubai for the summer of his life, not realizing that he is being set up to lead an expedition that will hunt down and capture the most dangerous creatures ever to inhabit the Earth!

This edition of the book is the deluxe, tall rack mass market paperback.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Steve Alten is the best-selling author of the Meg series. A native of Philadelphia, he earned a Bachelor's degree from Penn State, a Masters from the University of Delaware, and a Doctorate from Temple University. He is the founder and director of Adopt-An-Author, a free nationwide teen reading program used in thousands of secondary school classrooms across the country to excite reluctant readers.

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1.

Monterey Peninsula Airport
Monterey, California

Saturday

The black Lexus JX sedan is double-parked outside Gate B, the vehicle's driver, Jonas Taylor, eyeballing the airport cop who has sent him circling the airport four times already. The sixty-six-year-old paleobiologist glances at his twenty-four-year-old daughter, Danielle, curled up in the passenger seat next to him. The model-pretty blonde, who works part-time for a local NBC-TV affiliate as a news reporter and weekends emceeing shows at the Tanaka Institute, is staring at the digital clock on the dashboard, growing impatient. "Almost four thirty. If his plane doesn't get here soon, I'll miss the evening show."

"His plane just landed. Relax." Jonas taps the steering wheel to an old Neil Diamond tune on the radio. "Anyway, Olivia can always emcee the show in a pinch."

"Olivia?" Dani looks at her father as if she just swallowed turpentine. "Dad, the Saturday night show is my gig. Period. Now would you please turn off that annoying song?"

"I like Neil Diamond."

"Who?"

"Come on, I'm not that old."

"Yeah, you are. Seriously, Dad, I will pay you to let me change the station."

"Fine, only no gangster rap."

"It's gangsta, and get with the times. Ghetto is in. It's what we relate to."

"My mistake. I forgot your mother and I raised you as a poor black child in a gang-infested neighborhood."

The airport cop approaches the Lexus. Before he can signal Jonas to move the car, twenty-year-old David Taylor steps out of the baggage claim exit, an orange and blue University of Florida duffle bag slung over

one broad shoulder. Jonas's son is wearing a gray Gator's Football tee-shirt, faded jeans, and sneakers. He is fit and tan, his brown hair long, speckled with golden highlights from being in the sun, his almond-brown eyes hidden behind dark sunglasses.

David tosses his duffle in the back seat of the Lexus and climbs in. "Sorry. Plane was an hour late."

"No worries. We just got here. Right, Dani?"

"Wrong. You know dad, he had to leave an hour early." She allows David to kiss her cheek. "You look good... Jesus, Dad, drive!"

Jonas pulls into traffic, following the signs leading to Highway 68 West.

"You look like you gained a few pounds. Lifting weights again?"

"Yes... and no, for the last time, I am not trying out for football."

"Sure, I know. I just saw the shirt and thought..."

"It's just a shirt."

"...because the coach called our house twice last week. He lost two wide-outs to injuries in spring training. With your speed..."

"Dad, enough! My playing days ended in high school."

"Okay, okay. I just remember my playing days at Penn State... those were the best of times."

"Please, that was half a century ago." Dani ruffles her father's thick mane of snowy-white hair. "David, what do you think of Dad's new look?"

David smiles. "It's as white as Angel's ass. It was still gray last time I saw you."

"Comes from working too closely with monsters."

"I thought you enjoyed working with Angel's pups?"

Jonas smiles at his daughter. "I was talking about you."

Dani smacks him playfully across his head. "I told him he should use that hair stuff that gets rid of the gray."

"Don't listen to her, Dad. It makes you look more intelligent. Sort of like Anderson Cooper, only a lot older."

"Good. I can use all the help I can get. David... about this internship..."

"Dad, we talked about this."

"There are other specialties in marine biology. We just completed the Manta Ray sale with the Naval Warfare Center, thanks, in part, to your piloting demo. The Navy knows you're the best pilot we have, and the Vice Admiral mentioned they could use a good trainer."

“You know I love piloting the subs. I just like working with the Megs more. There’s something about big predators”

“You want big predators? San Diego needs a new trainer for their female orca. I could make a call”

“Pass.”

“What’s wrong with orcas?”

“Nothing, if you enjoy teaching dog tricks to a whale. Angel’s pups have special needs.”

“Pups? Christ, you make them sound like a litter of cocker spaniels. The three runts are already larger than an adult great white, and the two sisters... you tell him, Dani.”

Dani nods, text messaging on her cell phone. “The sisters are evil. They’ll be as big and nasty as their mother.”

“Why do you call them the sisters? Technically, all five are sisters.”

“When you see them every day like Dani and I do, you’ll understand. They may have shared the same womb, but the three runts look and act nothing like Bela and Lizzy.” Jonas exits Highway 68, heading south on Highway 1. “How’s Corrine?”

“We broke up.”

Dani looks up. “Seriously? I never liked her.”

“Wait,” Jonas jumps in, “what was wrong with Corrine?”

“She was getting too serious.”

“What’s wrong with serious? Is serious so bad?”

“How’s mom?”

“She’s good. And don’t change the subject.”

“Mom’s stressed out,” Dani says.

“Not PETA again?”

“Worse. A thug off-shoot. They call themselves R.A.W. Stands for Return Animals to the Wild. Dad had to hire a security outfit; they were puncturing the staff’s tires. I’m trying to convince my producer to let me do an exposé. These assholes don’t give a damn about the Megs. They’re just after the free publicity.”

David says nothing, preferring to gaze out his passenger window at the Pacific Ocean peeking through the rolling hillsides.

Jonas weighs the sudden silence. “Go ahead and say it, David. The pen’s too small. The pups are getting too big.”

David looks at his father. “What did the State Assembly say?”

“Same as they’ve always said. No more expansion, at least not along the coast. They offered us six hundred acres in Bakersfield.”

“Bakersfield? Why not Death Valley?”

“There may be another option. Mac and I have a meeting on Monday with Emaar Properties out of the United Arab Emirates. Rumor has it they’re constructing some kind of new state-of-the-art aquarium and hotel in Dubai.”

“I heard about that. The place is supposed to be incredible, ten times the size of the Georgia Aquarium. You think they want one of the pups?”

Jonas nods. “I’d bet the house on it.”

The Lexus heads south on Cabrillo Highway, exiting onto Sand Dunes Drive. David stares at the ocean, mesmerized by its crashing surf, marveling at the differences between Monterey’s rough Pacific and Florida’s calmer Atlantic. He has spent the last three summers interning at the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in Fort Pierce, completing field work in order to earn his bachelor’s degree in marine biology. Up ahead he sees the familiar concrete and steel bowl, the arena’s ocean-access canal running out to meet the deeper ocean waters like a submerged pier.

The Tanaka Institute and Lagoon: home to the most dangerous creatures in the planet’s history.

Built by David’s maternal grandfather, Masao Tanaka, more than thirty-five years ago, the lagoon had originally been designed to function as a field laboratory to study cetacean behavior. Each year, tens of thousands of whales migrated south from the Bering Sea along California’s coast, searching for shallow, protected harbors in which to birth their calves. The Tanaka Lagoon, essentially a man-made lake with an ocean-access canal, was thought to be the perfect birthing place for pregnant females who were struggling to make it down to Baja.

Masao had mortgaged his family’s future to build the facility, but when rising costs had depleted those funds, he had been forced to seek help from the Japanese Marine Science Technology Center. JAMSTEC was more interested in creating an early-warning, earthquake detection system off the Japanese coast, and Masao held the patents on UNIS—a new Unmanned Nautical Information Submersible. In exchange for funding his whale lagoon, Masao accepted a high-risk contract with JAMSTEC to deploy twenty-five UNIS robots seven miles below the Western Pacific along the seismically active sea floor of the Mariana Trench.

To complete the mission, Masao’s son, D.J., had to escort each UNIS to the bottom using an Abyss Glider, a one-man, deep-sea submersible resembling an acrylic torpedo with wings. It would take months to deploy the robots, but once the system was up and running the network worked like a charm. And then, one after another, the drones stopped transmitting data. JAMSTEC froze funding on the whale lagoon, insisting Masao fix the problem. To do that required retrieving one of the damaged UNIS robots—a two-submersible job—but Masao refused to allow his other pilot—his daughter, Terry—to make the dive with her younger brother. Instead, he turned to an old friend for help.

Before he became a paleobiologist, Jonas Taylor had been the best deep-sea submersible pilot ever to wear the N...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Galen Dent:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or even read a book titled Meg: Hell's Aquarium? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have some other opinion?

Richard Williams:

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Eugene Meunier:

The particular book Meg: Hell's Aquarium has a lot details on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was written by the very famous author. The writer makes some research previous to write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can get the point easily after reading this book.

Violet Murray:

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