

3 HAIL MARYS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

An aircraft carrier, surrounded by a full task force, sails along under the bright light of a full moon.

The deck is full and active.

An F-18 Super Hornet fighter jet launches, streaks into the night sky.

EXT. AIRCRAFT CARRIER - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Rows of Super Hornets wait their turn for launch.

Second in line, that of: LT. RYAN AMES, 31. In the cockpit behind him: Radar Intercept Officer PETEY McDOUGAL, 28.

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

Petey sets a checklist aside, sits back, draws a deep breath, mumbles to himself...

PETEY

Hail Mary, full of grace --

LT. AMES

-- Shit, Petey. Why do you always have to do that? Makes me nervous, you being superstitious.

PETEY

It's not superstition. It's religion.

Lt. Ames chuckles.

LT. AMES

A distinction without a difference.

The plane in front of them rolls forward, onto the catapult.

Lt. Ames flips a switch, checks his mask.

He holds up three fingers, counts down... two, one. He points backward, as if expecting...

... A POP behind him, a lid opening.

Petey shakes hand sanitizer onto his hands.

LT. AMES

Always with the hand san, right
after I check the oxygen. But,
you're not superstitious.

Petey stops mid-shake.

PETEY

This -- is a routine. Not a
superstition.

Petey finishes applying the hand sanitizer.

LT. AMES

What are you afraid of, anyway?
Is there any better way to die than
balls to the walls in a fighter
jet?

PETEY

Blow me up. Smash me into the
ground. Fine. But, drop me into the
ocean...

LT. AMES

Afraid of water, but you joined the
Navy. Smart.

The cockpit lights up with the glow of afterburners -- the
launch of the plane in front of them.

Petey squirts one last bit of hand san into his palm,
splashes it against the controls, like holy water from a
priest. He slips the bottle into his pocket.

LT. AMES

Three quick night landings. Easy
peasy. I'll keep you dry and have
you back in bed in time to dream
about that daughter back home.

Petey looks at a photo taped to his control panel: Him,
hugging a LITTLE GIRL, 6. All smiles.

He kisses his fingers, holds them to the little girl's face.

A loud GROAN interrupts the moment. The sound of metal
twisting, failing.

The beam of a large spotlight cuts across the nose of the
plane, from the carrier's superstructure. The two men look to
see what it highlights.

Peering through the cockpit glass, they see: a destroyer, next to the carrier.

It's swarmed with a million tiny black creatures, surrounding it like a living oil slick. Only, this oil slick extends up the sides of the ship -- covering everything in sight.

The bridge of the destroyer collapses and they watch as the ship rolls on its side and quickly disappears into the sea.

LT. AMES
What the fuck!?

PETEY
Lieutenant!

A large radar dish crashes onto the plane next to them. The dish and plane are quickly overtaken by the swarm, as is the entire carrier superstructure behind them.

LT. AMES
Hang on.

The afterburners fire on their plane as hundreds of black creatures swarm around them.

PETEY
We won't make it without the catapult.

LT. AMES
We have to.

Petey slams back into his seat as the jet rockets down the flight deck, shedding creatures along the way.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The jet clears the bow, immediately dips toward the water.

It noses back up.

PETEY
We're gonna stall!

LT. AMES
I got this.

He doesn't. The left wing dips.

The plane rolls and noses into the water with a hard splash.

It settles upside-down.

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

Petey and Lt. Ames hang from their harnesses.

PETEY

Lieutenant? You alright? Ryan?

Blood pools on the glass below them, dripping from the dangling pilot.

Also below Petey, among various loose items: his prized photo. He stretches for it, pulls it from amongst the debris.

The plane GROANS as it settles deeper into the water.

Finally, it sinks completely.

Slowly, the plane rolls, stabilizing upright as it settles into a gentle glide toward the ocean's bottom.

Lt. Ames' blood drips from the cockpit glass. His head bobs lifelessly as Petey fights to control his own breathing.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

A few of the creatures clutch the edges of the cockpit glass.

One-by-one they slip away as the plane continues its silent descent into oblivion.

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

Water splashes at Petey's feet. Not much, but, enough for him to notice.

PETEY

Oh, God.

The lights of the control panel flicker, extinguish. Petey sits in total darkness.

He flips the switch on a flashlight, sweeps the cockpit with the light, settles on the photo in his hand.

PETEY

Daddy loves you.

He sits back, closes his eyes, resigned to his fate.

His eyes snap open.

He pulls the bottle of hand sanitizer from his pocket, opens it, pours the contents from the bottle and sets the empty bottle aside.

He searches the cockpit. Finds a pen.

He grabs the photo, writes something on the back, then stuffs the photo into the empty bottle.

He looks up, makes the sign of the cross...

PETEY

Please...

Petey grips the bottle.

He takes a couple of deep breaths and reaches for the ejection handle.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The jet continues its "flight" to the bottom.

Suddenly, the cockpit glass explodes upward, followed quickly by Petey, still harnessed to his seat. The entire event is blunted by the opposing force of the surrounding water.

Petey drifts calmly away as the plane continues on its path, taking Lt. Ames with it.

Petey releases the bottle. It floats slowly upward.

EXT. OCEAN - SURFACE - NIGHT

The moon shines bright across the ocean waves.

In the distance, the task force carnage continues: Ships blaze. Others list. The carrier slips into the sea.

In the foreground, a bottle breaks the surface.

Inside, a handwritten note: "If found, please send to" followed by an address. Underneath the address -- "always love you."

The bottle flips as it bobs in the waves.

Behind the hand sanitizer label, the photo peeks through: a smiling Petey and his little girl.

FADE OUT.