

“Hold Hold Hold!” Mike shouted into the microphone. Six seconds later the tow cable stopped pulling. “What is that thing?” Sanjay whispered over the intercom. “I have no idea,” Mike said. He steered over to the hole to get a closer look.

**Comments from readers about the Mike Danford series:**



“We used this book as a read-aloud each night for our 7 & 10 year old. Winner!!! Lots of action and adventure. Not preachy, but enough of a conversation about faith and how a 17 year old wrestles with sharing his beliefs without being hypocritical.” (Amazon review)



“As I read to my class of 5th graders, my own children, ages 18, 14, and 9, are always in the background eagerly listening!” (Website review)

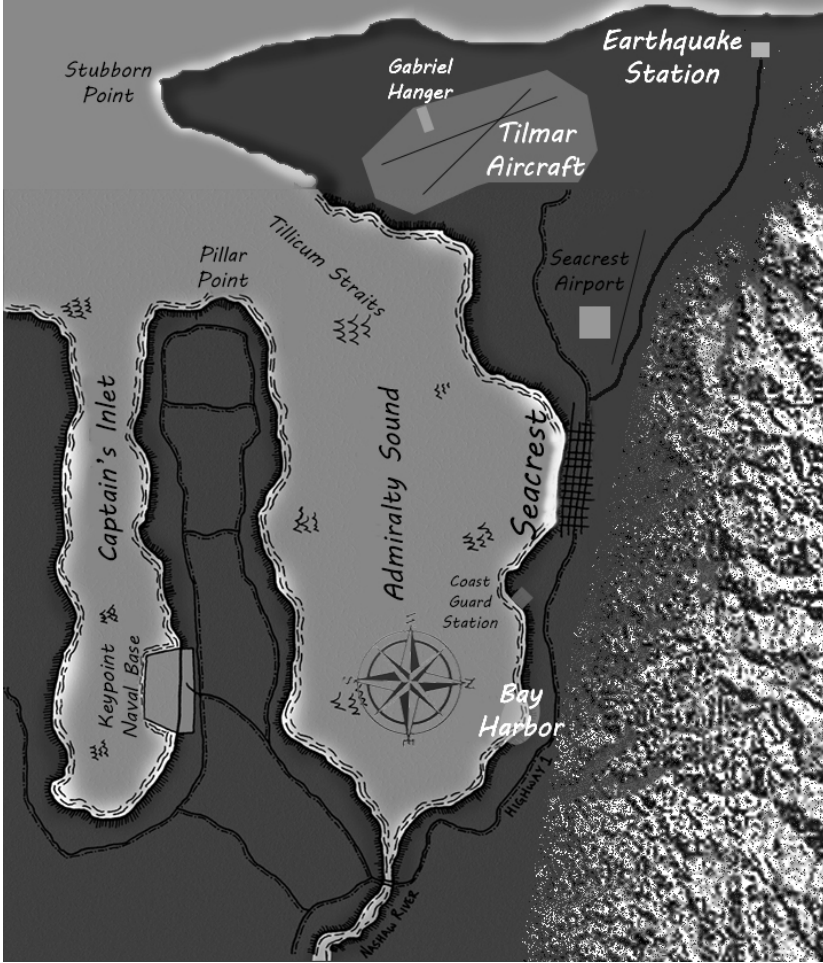


“I have read all the Mike Danford books aloud and lately my kids have been reading them....till all hours of the night. Thank you for sharing your amazing gift of storytelling!” (Website review)



Volcano

OCEAN



**Mike Danford Adventure Series #5**

**DEEP SEA  
DEMONS**

**ARNOLD YTREEIDE**

with

**GEMMA SANDROS**

**Jericho Quill Press**

# **DEEP SEA DEMONS**

by Arnold Ytreeide  
and  
Gemma Sandros

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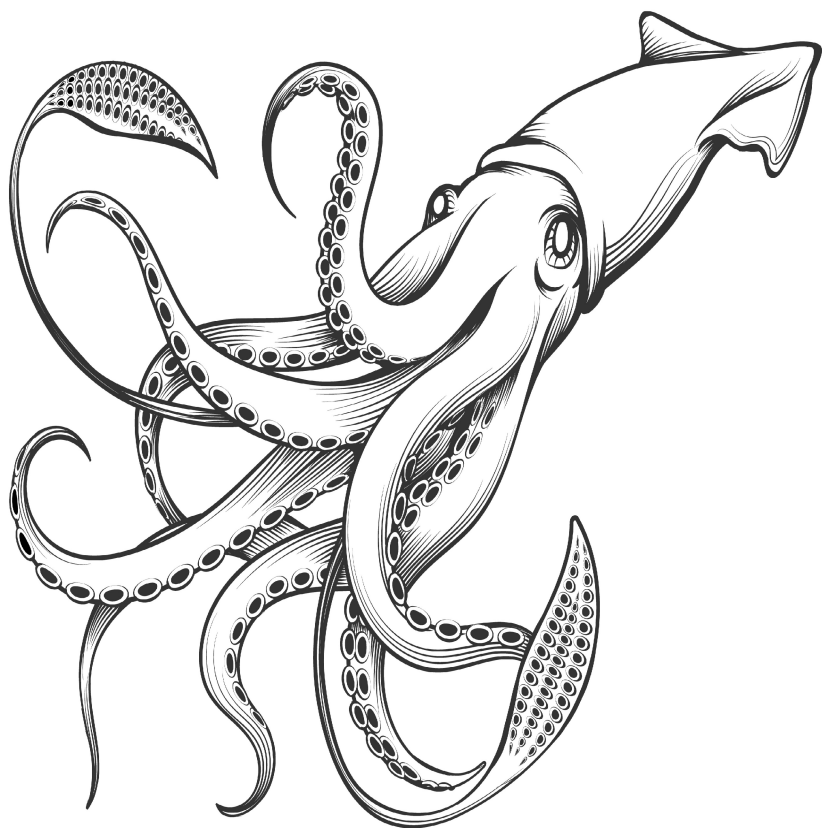
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For  
Uncle Leslie



## Chapter One

# Deep Secret

*“Look at those tentacles!”* seventeen-year-old Mike Danford gasped. “They’ve gotta be twenty feet long.”

“More like thirty,” his best friend Josh Roberts said from the second seat. “And those eyes are the size of car tires.”

They were twelve hundred feet below the surface of the ocean in the four-person submarine named *Jonah* they had built. It was a Friday afternoon, and Mike was piloting from the front seat, facing the giant plastic dome that was the “windshield” for the sub. Josh sat in the second seat directly behind him, with the empty third and fourth seats behind Josh.

Outside the clear plastic front, bathed in Jonah’s lights, the boys were following a colossal squid, fifty feet long, trailing two tentacles and eight shorter arms.

“I know ‘colossal’ means huge, but . . . You’re getting photos, right?” Mike asked as he steered to stay close to the animal.

“Two cameras snapping one-per-second, plus the video camera.”

The boys were collecting data for a report they were writing in their biology class at school. While most the students were writing reports on cats or dogs or horses, Mike and Josh were taking advantage of their submarine to do something more interesting. One of the safety protocols their parents had set for the submarine was that they could never take it into water more than a thousand feet deep. But for this project, Mike’s parents had agreed to let them venture farther out into the ocean where the bottom was almost two miles down.

“We’re passing thirteen hundred feet,” Mike said calmly as the squid continued downward. “We’ll have to break off in a couple seconds.”

“A shame,” Josh answered. “No one has ever seen a colossal squid like this before. I wonder why she’s so shallow?”

“Thirteen hundred feet under the ocean is shallow?”

“To a grown colossal, yeah. They like it way down deep, around –”

Before Josh could finish his sentence the Jonah shook violently and shot up a hundred feet in a second, then dropped again, headed for the submarine’s crush-depth of fifteen hundred feet. It twisted and rolled in every direction and end-over-end. Mike’s head bashed against the steel instrument panels on either side even as he gripped the steering wheel trying to regain control.

“Emergency blow!” he yelled, and Josh struggled to reach the levers that would send compressed air into the ballast tanks, replacing water with air and taking them to the surface. “Pop the buoy!” he screamed, and Josh pushed a button to release an emergency locator beacon.

A moment later the sea around them was filled with boiling water that knocked the sub from every side as they rushed to the surface. The temperature inside climbed to a hundred-thirty-two degrees. Gasping for air in the heat, the boys screamed as the Jonah cork-screwed through the boiling water.

The last thing Mike saw was an eerie red glow coming from deep below them. Then his head was bashed against the instrument panel on his right and everything went black.

Mike’s first thought was that they had safely reached the surface and were rocking slowly in the calm water. He pictured in his mind the quiet blue ocean around them, and the Jonah – perfectly safe and intact – bobbing gently on the rolling waves. He couldn’t yet open his eyes, and wasn’t even fully conscious, but enjoyed the peace and comfort of his submarine.

Then he heard, “Captain to the bridge. Captain to the bridge.”



*Wait a minute, we don't have a captain, Mike thought. If anything, I'm the captain. And we don't have a bridge!*

“Now hear this, all personnel clear the fantail for recovery operations,” Josh said, and Mike couldn't figure out why he would say that. “Commence station-keeping. Ship's crew report any anomalies.”

*Josh, what are you saying? You call a submarine a boat, not a ship.*

Finally, Mike decided he should probably open his eyes and see what Josh was doing. At first the light was too bright and he squinted against the sun flooding in through the front bubble. As his eyes adjusted, he began to see a square pattern a foot in front of his face and he blinked rapidly, trying to make out what it was. When his pupils had closed enough to control the light, he realized he was looking at the springs on the bottom of one of the bunkbeds.

*Wait a minute. We don't HAVE bunkbeds on the Jonah.*

Mike's eyes shot open. The light wasn't the sun – it came from fixtures on the ceiling of the room.

He was in a room, not the Jonah.

He was lying on a bed, with another bunk above.

And the room was slowly rocking.

*What am I doing on a ship?*

Fully awake now, Mike looked around. There were metal boxes and lockers and chairs all painted a light green and all bearing a large red cross on them. A rescue backboard hung on the wall with the same medical symbol. *I'm in the sick bay of a ship,* Mike realized. *What happened to the Jonah?*

His first thought was to call his parents, but his phone wasn't in his pocket.

Groaning noises filtered down from above, and the top bunk began to move. “Josh, is that you?” Mike croaked.

It was a few moments before a croak returned. “Yeah. Where are we?”

“On some kind of ship,” Mike answered. “That's all I know.”

Mike tried to sit up but just then the door to the sick bay opened. A woman wearing a stethoscope over her crisp, white,

navy uniform entered. The short-sleeved shirt had black rectangles with gold stripes on the shoulders, many colorful ribbons over the left pocket, and the name “Drake” over the right.

“Down, sailor,” the doctor barked, and Mike complied. “You’re not going anywhere until I get some X-rays.”

Mike laid back down. “Sorry, Commander. I’m just a little confused.”

The doctor smiled. “So, you know ranks do you? But surely you’re not old enough to be in the military?”

Mike shook his head. “No, I’ve just been around it a lot.”

“Surface! Surface!” Josh screamed as the bunk above Mike rattled.

“Josh! It’s okay. I’m right below you, and we’re on some kind of Navy ship.”

The bunk stopped rattling and Josh’s face appeared slowly over the edge of the top mattress. “Oh,” he said. “How’d we get *here?*”

Mike looked at the naval officer. “Commander Drake, can you answer that?”

“We were headed this way when we picked up your emergency signal. I happened to be on the bridge at the time, and we saw your little sub pop to the surface in the middle of a geyser.”

“What do you mean by our ‘little’ sub? How big is this ship?”

Doctor Drake smiled again. “It’s an aircraft carrier, Mike.”

Mike’s eyes shot wide open in surprise. “Oh. Wait a minute, how do you know my name?”

She held up two wallets. “Now, two orders for you both,” she continued. “First, you’re not to move out of those bunks until my medics get here to take a complete set of X-rays. And second,” she smiled for the third time and Mike decided he liked her already, “You will *not* call me Commander until and unless you someday join the Navy. My name is Rebecca, so you can call me ‘Becka’ or ‘Doc,’ your choice. Any questions?”

Two medics entered and the doctor turned to them. “Get me

films of the head, chest, and all extremities. I'll be back in twenty."

They both snapped to attention and saluted. "Yes Ma'am!"

The doctor turned toward the bunks. "I'll see you boys when they're through."

"Yes Ma'am," Mike barked. Then off her look said, "Oh, uh, sorry – Becka. Oh, and can we call our parents?"

"I'll see what I can do," she said, then left.

The two sailors visibly relaxed, and one said, "Okay, who's first?"

Forty minutes later the doctor had pronounced them both "Alive and kicking" and was leading them through narrow steel corridors to the bridge. Somewhere above the steel ceiling, Mike heard what sounded like a large helicopter. The doctor looked up at the ceiling. "Ah, that will be Admiral Norton."

"Buck's here?" Mike said. The commander looked at him in surprise, and with a little disapproval. "Oh, uh, sorry." Then he smiled and added, "He used to tuck me in with bedtime stories about torpedoes and cruise missiles. He threatened me to call him by his first name long before you did."

"Okay," Becka laughed, "I'll remember that."

They approached a large hatch and the doctor handed the boys each a helmet. A sailor opened the hatch and daylight from the setting sun poured in. Once through, Mike saw they were on the huge, flat deck where the aircraft carrier launched planes and other flying machines. Walking toward them from a helicopter with still-spinning blades was Admiral James "Buck" Norton, an old friend of Mike's family, and the reason Mike's middle name was "James."

But the admiral did not look happy. The moment he saw the boys he growled, "Michael James Danford, what in the name of Davey Jones were you doing in your submarine in the middle of an underwater volcano!"

He stopped directly in front of Mike and glared, looking back and forth between the two boys.

Mike gulped, then squeaked, “A volcano? Is that what that was? Well, sir, uh, we didn’t actually *know* there was a – I mean, if we had *known* there was a –”

The admiral burst out laughing. “I’m just joking with you Mike. And don’t call me ‘sir.’”

Mike relaxed. “Sorry, sir. I mean Buck. We were just – what are you doing here anyway?”

“Checking in on sea trials. This is our newest ship. It was just launched two weeks ago. Now back to *my* question: what were you doing out here in the Jonah in twelve thousand feet of water? I thought we set a limit of one thousand.”

Mike looked at Josh again, and this time Josh answered. “Fishing, sir. Buck. Sir Buck.”

“Fishing?”

“Yes sir . . . Buck. Fishing for colossal squid. Not to catch them, just to observe them. For a report. Biology. In school.”

The admiral laughed again and shook his head. “Can’t you guys ever just write a normal report?”

Mike and Josh looked at each other, shrugged, and Mike said, “No, not really.”

An hour later the boys had been taken to see the Jonah on the hanger deck where planes would eventually be housed. The submarine looked like a tiny yellow tin can in the massive open space of the deck. Then they were brought up to the Admiral’s Stateroom for dinner with him, the captain, and the doctor. The stateroom looked like a fancy three-room suite in a hotel, except that it had a low ceiling, portholes for windows, and the walls were made of steel. The commanding officer of the ship, Captain Hernandez, was explaining about the boys’ rescue over a dinner of pasta linguini served by two sailors.

“Our sonar officer knew you were out there,” he told the boys between bites, “and then heard the eruption. He informed me, and I ordered the ship turned in your direction. We were only twenty miles away.”

Mike swallowed a drink of pop. “How did you find us?”

The Captain shrugged. "You were a little dot on the big ocean, but we saw the yellow hull easily. We sent divers in to secure lines, then craned you up onto the flight elevator. Once we figured out how to pop the hatch, it was just a routine rescue."

"Well, thank you for that," Josh said. "Now what, Admiral?"

Admiral Norton swallowed a bite of broccoli. "I called your parents and they know you're okay. We'll take you and Jonah back to Seacrest, but we won't arrive until tomorrow morning. The XO will fix you up with a stateroom for the night."

A seaman gave the boys a tour of the ship, including the bridge where the Captain commanded operations from high above the flight deck. They were assigned to a junior officer's stateroom which had two bunks, a small fold-down writing desk, a steel sink, and big pipes running overhead. This time Mike took the top bunk.

"What a weird life we live," Mike said in the dark, popping a Jolly Rancher in his mouth.

"You got that right," Josh answered from the lower bunk. He held out his hand out for one of the candies. "But now I wanna know just how weird."

"Whad'ya mean?" Mike asked, dropping a Rancher in Josh's hand.

"I mean, best bud, that you're about to tell me the strange thing you saw before we were bonked on the head."

"Other than a fifty-foot squid and an underwater volcanic eruption?"

"Yeah," Josh slurped around the candy. "Every time something like this happens you see something strange just before you get knocked out, and it always gets us in trouble."

Mike was silent for a few moments. "Nothing. I saw absolutely nothing different than you did."

"Really?" Josh was amazed.

"Really," Mike answered. Moments later he added, "But I did *hear* something strange."

"Oh no," Josh groaned. "Here we go again."