

War With The Deep Ones  
1: Honolulu

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# War With The Deep Ones

## *An Introduction*

H.P. Lovecraft introduced the world to the “Deep Ones” in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* written in 1930-31. An ancient race of amphibious, sea-dwelling humanoids, the Deep Ones have the unfortunate habit of worshipping Cthulhu and being, well, monsters. And while they have a deep-seated dislike of humanity, they also, disturbingly, breed with humans. This results in “hybrids” which start off for the first few decades looking and behaving like humans and then slowly transition into full-fledged Deep Ones.

At the end of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, the Federal government has raided the town of Innsmouth and captured hundreds of residents, hustling them off to concentration camps. The eventual fate of these people, mostly hybrids, is left unwritten. But it is pointed out that the United States Navy sent a submarine to the nearest Deep One city, not far offshore from Innsmouth, and torpedoed the place. Given that the Deep Ones are described as being capable of rising up and wiping out mankind, launching a few torpedoes into one of their cities can be seen as perhaps not being the wisest course of action.

*War With The Deep Ones* picks up the action a bit more than a century after the raid on Innsmouth. Since the raid, there is now a secret department of the United States government that deals with the sort of threats that most people know nothing about and simply would not believe. The Office of Insight works to keep these dangers unknown to the public, and to study and prepare.

*War With The Deep Ones* is written as a series of separate short stories set in the same world, the world of the Deep Ones war against the surface world. The stories span the globe and include characters who are just regular folks, oblivious to the Lovecraftian threats, and experts in the field, knowledgeable in things man dare not meddle with. Three books specifically about the Deep One War are planned...the first covers the first few days, the second covers the first few months, and the final volume goes to the end of the war. Right now I’m planning on releasing at least the first volume one chapter at a time, available in PDF and EPUB formats. Feel free to tell anyone and everyone you know about *War With The Deep Ones* if you like these tales. Feel free to share “Honolulu” with anyone you think might like it.

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## *Honolulu*

By Scott Lowther  
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Reggie Murch and his wife had been saving up for this vacation for three years. Every spare penny had gone into a special account to pay for the airline tickets, the hotel, the car rentals, the various tours. Every minute of the past two weeks had been carefully planned out in advance so that the Murches and their three kids would have the time of their lives in Hawaii... beaches, surfing, snorkeling, volcanoes, boat rides, the works. The trip was everything he could have wanted and more. And now that they were leaving the hotel to catch the flight back home, only one thought kept repeating in his mind:  
“Thank God it’s over.”

He kept telling himself that in years to come, when he looked back on the experience it would be through selective memories. The food poisoning on their second day, the extraordinary expenses, the pickpockets would be edited out. The kids... well. Billy’s incessant moping, Sally’s constant whining, Meryl’s illnesses and, in these last few days, nightmares that had kept her and everybody else awake. These would be replaced – somehow – with brighter memories of everyone having fun on the beach.

And certainly he wouldn’t remember the evil look his wife was giving him just then as they struggled to get their kids and their luggage into the shuttlebus to the airport. Could he really be blamed for having maybe a few too many Mai Tais at the hotel bar last night? OK, maybe he shouldn’t have slapped the waitresses ass. But really, Emily, get over it. It was no big deal. Certainly not when compared with the complete disaster the trip had been.

Take the deep-sea fishing trip on the fourth day. The kids had complained the whole time that they were bored; Emily had glared at him, saying nothing as she turned various unhappy shades of green as the small boat tossed on the waves. And what did he get for it? Nothing. Not a damned thing. Not a nibble the whole trip. But then, neither did anybody else on that boat, nor on any of the other boats that went out that day. After they got back to port – after, of course, not before – the boat’s pilot made mention of the fact that it had been two weeks since he’d heard of anyone catching a fish. All of a sudden, it seemed, the fish just... left.

The following day they’d gone snorkeling, hoping to see some of the colorful fish that were supposed to populate the waters off Oahu’s North Shore. And when they got there? Nothing. Not so much as a sardine. Again they were told afterwards that some weeks earlier the fish had simply vanished overnight.

That’s not to say that they never encountered sea life. Oh, no. The girls had wanted to see dolphins; Emily wanted to see whales. They were scheduled to take a whale watching boat trip on their tenth day, but they cancelled it on day seven. They had seen enough dolphins and whales when they went to Waikiki Beach and, just about noon, several pods of dolphins and a half dozen humpback whales beached themselves, virtually throwing themselves ashore. People had worked together to drag a few of the dolphins back out into the water; they simply swam out a bit, turned around and sprinted back onto the beach.

Last Reggie had heard, the humpbacks were still on the beach. Turns out that just about every beach on all the islands now had a collection of dead and rotting cetaceans, from dolphins on up to a trio of Blue Whales on Molokai. Every back hoe and tractor in Hawaii was being used to drag giant carcasses off beaches where boats could tow them out to sea. Everyone expected sharks to come and make a heck of a meal out of the free food... but there were no sharks.

And the crowds. Uck.

Reggie could remember his grandfather complaining about how crowded Hawaii was when he’d gone there long ago, sometime in the 1970s. “Damned Japanese tourists,” Reggie remembered his granddad grumbling. But the place must have seemed deserted compared to what it was now. Not just Japanese

tourists, but Korean, Chinese, Indian, Arab and more Germans than you could shake a U-Boat at. Everywhere they went, there was already a crowd.

So could Reggie really be blamed for being relieved that it was almost over? A few more hours and they'd be on their plane, winging them back home to Plainview, Illinois, and blessed boredom.

Of course, even the seemingly straightforward task of getting to the airport was turning into a nightmare. The two older kids were being combative with each other and with their parents; Meryl was standing next to the shuttlebus screaming. It would be bad enough at the best of times, but during a hangover, in the dark, at half past three in the morning? Reggie wanted to scream. But he didn't. Instead, he tamped down his instincts and just robotically worked to stuff the luggage into the short bus. The driver, as per usual for the trip, was being no help whatsoever, just leaning against the front fender and staring off into the night sky.

Finally, all the luggage was on board. The kids, at least, could seat themselves and at last did so. Meryl finally shut up, stepping down from screeching to altogether more tolerable sobbing. She was still going off about her nightmares, something about fish monsters.

Gah. Kids.

Bob Forest from work had a trio of daughters and spoke about them all the time. They were all grown and out of the house, but he often talked about how when they were just entering puberty, like Meryl was now, weird stuff would happen in the house. One suddenly took to speaking to ghosts only she could hear; another was plagued with – or so she claimed – a poltergeist that threw things around her room; the third seemed to know things before they happened. Fortunately, the “crazy phase,” as Bob called it, only lasted a few years, and soon enough the girls were worrying their parents with boy-craziness. Sally, now sixteen, hadn't gone through that; she'd just been a sullen pre-teen who'd turned into a sullen teen. Meryl, though, only just eleven and still quite small for her age, had turned from a cheerful child a month or two ago into a psychological wreck. Just in time for vacation!

The ride to the airport was done in darkened silence, most everyone looking at their handheld screens or specs. Reggie was alone in simply listening to the radio on his phone, leaning back in his seat, eyes closed. He'd found a radio station broadcasting out of Hilo early in the trip; it played nice, calming 80's music and had an actual live human DJ between the songs. Reggie'd gotten to recognize three or four of the DJ's over the last two weeks, but this guy was new... then Reggie remembered the time and realized that he'd simply never been up this early.

Even at this early hour the roads were clogged, and the short drive took longer than expected. As they finally pulled up to the airport, Reggie checked the time: 4:03 AM. Just under two hours till their flight. If they got lucky, they'd be able to check in and get through security in time to catch their flight.

For the first time this trip, they got supremely lucky. Not only did they get through the check-in rituals in time to board their flight, they did so in record time... meaning they got through fast enough to get to look forward to spending an hour and a half sitting in the boarding area on hard plastic seats. Bonus: only one of the dreary chain fast-food places was open serving over-priced under-qualified breakfast food; everything else would open up at the same moment their plane would be taxiing away from the gate. Wonderful.

Reggie got his family seated, then sat opposite them. He tried to give them all a pleasant smile; they all just glared at him. He sighed, closed his eyes and put his earbuds in to listen to the radio. A moment later, as his older kids started to squabble and his youngest fell asleep leaning against her mother, Reggie began to lightly snore.

Reggie woke with a start. He looked around in momentary post-nap befuddlement, taking in the scene of the boarding area filled with people. For a second he was surprised that the noise hadn't wakened him earlier, then he remembered that he still had his earbuds in and they were still playing 80's music at him.

He looked over at his family; the group was still somber, but was starting to stir. The song on the radio ended, the DJ came on. "That was 'Goodnight, Saigon,' by Billy Joel from 1982," the DJ said, without the usual joviality. "Even though that war was more than sixty years ago, it's still a powerful song. Anyway, moving on to more light-hearted fare, next up is 'How soon Is Now' by The Smiths. The news is coming up at the top of the hour in a few minutes; the time is 5:51 in the AM and the sun is just starting to rise, so welcome to another beautiful day in paradise!"

Reggie gave a little start at that and looked at his phone to confirm that that was indeed the time. The plane should have boarded some time ago, but it looked like they hadn't started yet. Typical.

The flight attendant at the podium turned on the PA system and began announcing boarding instructions. "We will be seating by sections," she started, giving the codes on the boarding passes for the sections. Reggie looked down at his pass... of course, his section was the very last. He asked his wife what hers was; she was in the section ahead of him, as were Billy and Sally. Meryl was in his section. "You'll be boarding with me, kiddo," he said to her with a smile.

She looked up at him, eyes wide with an ill defined and barely restrained alarm. "OK," she said quietly. "I just want to go."

"You and me both," Reggie muttered. He sat back and returned his attention to the song; it would be several minutes before he could even hope to board the plane.

Halfway through the song, it suddenly cut off. "Ummm, something weird going on out here," the DJ announced, sounding suddenly very worried. "As you all know, we can see the shore from our third story studio here in downtown Hilo. And a minute or two ago... something started happening out in the bay. From here it looked like a dark wave was spilling over the breakwater, but when it got to shore we could see that it was people. Thousands of people! It looks like they're wearing wetsuits of some kind.... Wait a minute, I think there's a pair of binoculars in here. Just a sec..."

Reggie frowned. It was too early for a radio station to be doing some kind of schtick. Shouldn't they wait until rush hour?

"Uhhhh..." continued the DJ. "Not really sure what to say, folks. The people coming out of the water are... dressed in costumes. Sorta "fishman" getups... you know, green scales, webbed hands, big bugged-out fish eyes, all that. Whoever it is went all out on this; maybe it's a movie being shot, I don't – wait! They just killed a guy! Holy crap! Someone was just standing there taking pictures of the fishmen and one ran up to him and ripped his guts out! If this is a movie, the special effects are really intense. But... the more I look around, the more I see these guys, these things... they're attacking people all over! There's a cop! Just pulled up in a car, got out, pointing a gun at them... he's shooting! He's being swarmed by them! A dozen, maybe more. They've got him! They've piled on top of him!"

Reggie looked at his boarding pass again. Yep, right there, "May 1." Not "April 1." Not "October 31." Either they were a month late, or a number of months early. Or maybe the DJ wanted to quit in style, cause a ruckus that would get the radio stations license pulled. He turned his attention back to the boarding area. His wife and kids were starting to stand; pointless, in Reggie's view, as the line of people to board the plane was more of a "mob," and was it quite some time from boarding being anywhere near their section. They might as well sit for a few more minutes, was Reggie's view... but they wanted to get in line, so what the hell. He took Meryl's hand. It was cold and clammy.

"You doing ok, kiddo?" he asked his daughter.

"Yeah, I guess so," she said, quietly. "I just have a feeling."

"About what?" he asked.

Meryl looked all around, taking in the chaotic but basically non-threatening scene around her. She shrugged. "I dunno," she said. "Something's coming."

"Hmmm," Reggie said thoughtfully, looking around himself. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary; lots of people in the concourse, but nobody was behaving anomalously; out the large window he could see their airliner, gleaming white and bare metal in the morning sun, the concrete apron spread out below and beyond. As he looked, a jetliner launched itself down the runway off in the distance. Beyond that, the general aviation hangars with their small single and twin engine planes. Everything looked fine, far as he could see. He gave his daughter what he hoped was a comforting smile.

Just as he turned away from the window, a flash caught his eye. A fireball erupted from one of the small general aviation hangars, better part of a mile away. He gave it his full attention: the hangar was soon engulfed in flames, black smoke pouring into the sky. "The hell?" he muttered quietly to himself. He turned back: his daughter hadn't seen it. Neither had the rest of his family, who had moved off to get a spot in the mob to board the plane.

Something took his attention back to the radio DJ. He was no longer calmly describing what he claimed to be seeing; he was in outright hysterics. "They're all over the place, man!" he screamed. "They're breaking into all the buildings, taking people out of cars! They're killing everyone!"

Reggie looked around again. Apart from the people lined up at the window watching the distant fire, nobody seemed the least bit disturbed beyond the basic level of frustration and anxiety that comes from air travel. But even the gawkers at the window easily pulled themselves away when the boarding announcements progressed.

The DJ continued to scream, though Reggie was losing patience with the gag. "They're in the building, I can hear them downstairs tearing everything up! People are running past the studio door, probably heading for the stairs to the roof."

The crowd to board the plane was getting visibly much smaller, the boarding process being the most efficient thing Reggie'd seen since arriving in the islands. Soon, his family was nearing the jetway. "See you onboard," he said to his wife from the other side of the red velvet barrier rope. She gave him a tired nod and a slight smile, handed the flight attendant her and her kids boarding passes and walked off.

Only a few dozen more passengers were left, about half of them milling about waiting for the final section to be called. Reggie felt a tug on his hand. He looked down to Meryl, who was pointing with her free hand out the window. "They're coming," she said.

He frowned and looked out the window. Just visible across the field was a mass of what looked like people wearing wetsuits... perhaps even "fishman" costumes. They were coming this way, he noted. There were a *lot* of them. He turned his attention back to the radio. But now it was silent. He checked his phone... it was still on, the volume where it should be. He frowned again, but before he could fiddle with the phone, a loud banging came through the earbuds. The banging continued for several seconds, finally turning into a crashing sound. "No!" the DJ yelled. "Get out! No! Stay away! Stay - " and here he screamed, as convincing a scream of agony as Reggie'd ever heard. Award-winning, really, quite convincing. It was followed by a tearing sound, a crashing sound and a gurgling sound, as if someone had been eviscerated and fallen to the floor. After that came speaking, but speech of a kind Reggie'd never heard before, a slobbery gobbling sound, like speech made with unreasonably large, wet floppy lips, speaking an unknown tongue.

Really, quite a performance.

"Daddy," Meryl said, her voice a pained whine. "You're hurting me."

He looked down. He was holding her hand far, far too tightly. He instantly let go, squatted down and picked her up. "I'm sorry, kiddo," he said, taking her from the window. The last thing he'd seen though it

was a swarm of people in very convincing fishmen costumes running around the landing gear of his jetliner. There had been an empty baggage cart train driving away from the plane; now it was slowly idling off into the distance, unmanned, only an indistinct shredded red form where the driver should have been. The flight attendant listened to something in her own earbuds. Whatever she was told, Reggie could see that she wasn't happy about it, and seemed rather confused. In any event, she called for the last section to board the plane.

Reggie found himself to be the very last in line. Carrying Meryl and looking out the window had not helped him in the generally pointless rush to get on board the aircraft. There were still around twenty people ahead of him when the screaming began.

His head, along with those of everyone else still in line, snapped around to look down the concourse. Off in the distance a crowd of people was dashing this way, screaming in terror as they came. They were running as if they were being chased, but there were too many people to see what might be behind them. *Panicked mob*, he immediately thought. Somebody probably dropped a book and people freaked out, thinking it was a gun or a bomb.

But there sure were a lot of them, and they were coming in a hurry.

The people in line ahead of them were torn between watching the oncoming rush, and panicking themselves to get onboard the plane. As the crowd got closer, the mood in the line quickly turned universally to a need to board the plane and NOW. The shoving began and the flight attendant simply backed away, letting everyone shove past to dash down the jetway. Reggie was still last, with only the flight attendant still near the door when he got to it. He half heartedly handed the young lady his and Meryl's boarding passes, but she paid no attention: her eyes were incredibly wide as she looked to the oncoming crowd. Reggie turned and looked, and suddenly wished he hadn't. Holding Meryl tight, he dashed down the jetway. As they passed the flight attendant, Meryl reached out and grabbed her shirt, trying to drag her along. Her father's rush pulled her grip loose, but it was enough of a jolt to break the flight attendant out of her shock. She turned to follow and began screaming into her throat mike to the crew onboard the plane. Reggie didn't register what she was saying.

As he ran down the jetway, the brief glimpse he'd had from up the concourse kept flashing through his head. It didn't make sense...the crowd was now only a hundred feet away, but they were much thinned out. Instead of the mass of people it had first seemed, in his quick flash of memory all Reggie saw was a line of people only one or two deep, being pursued by... well, creatures. He thought back to the fishmen costume he'd see out on the tarmac, and thought to the joke radio broadcast. But these were clearly not any costume he'd ever seen. The people wearing them would have to have been not only athletes of amazing talent, they would have to have been misshapen mutants. Arms too long, feet much too long, legs otherwise too short and greatly abnormal. The great fish-like head could be animatronic, but where would the actors heads have been? If the mouths had been closed the fish-heads could have been masks. But he'd see the mouths open and close, great gaping cavities filled with teeth. No human head would have fit within. Well... that's not quite true; he'd seen one mouth close over the head of a screaming woman; with a quick jerk the mouth closed and pulled back and the woman, now missing her head, her neck fountaining blood, ran a few more stumbling steps and collapsed. The fish-man had stepped on her back to continue the dash.

That couldn't be.

As he approached the end of the jetway, he felt a jolt. The jetway was breaking loose, beginning to pull away from the plane. There was still a small crowd of people at the end, pushing and shoving to get on board. He skidded to a stop, nearly slamming into another passenger. Only four or five between him and the plane. The gap between the jetway and the plane was slowly increasing... one foot, now two. The last of the passengers ahead of him leaped across, misjudging badly, bouncing off the passenger just inside the airplane's doorway; with a baffled yelp he simply fell through the gap. Reggie quickly looked down, just in time to see the falling passenger caught by fishmen on the ground below. They quickly dismembered the screaming man, leaving his head for last.

Without thinking, he tossed Meryl. He tossed well; the passenger ahead of him had turned when he felt the other bounce off him, and caught the little girl. Reggie gave the tiniest nods of thanks and, waiting half a second for a bit of room to clear, launched himself across the gap. It was now about four feet; he landed just on the edge. He balanced... he began to fall backwards. Hands reached out and grabbed the front of his shirt, pulling him back in. He was in. He was safe.

He turned back to look down the jetway. The flight attendant was just behind him, another person a few yards behind her. She leaped; he caught her. They stood frozen in place for a split second. He let her go, she turned to look back at the man following her. He did not make it to the end of the jetway. Just a few feet shot a great webbed and taloned hand grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him back and down; he stumbled and collapsed and was trampled under the long, flopping feet of a pair of fishmen. They did not slacken their pace, but instead took flying leaps out of the end of the jetway. One banged into the side of the aircraft, bounced off and fell to the ground; the other, better aimed, slammed into the flight attendant. It, too, bounced, but not as decisively as its comrade had. Instead, its clawed paws became a blur as they tried to find purchase; one claw raked across Reggie's face, another pair across his arm. But mostly the claws hooked into the flight attendant. Within a split second, though, the fishman was falling backwards out of the doorway. But the flight attendant was unrecognizable.

She died before the other flight attendants could get the door closed. She never said a word; impossible because her throat and most of her face were gone. The other two flight attendants screamed even as they closed the door; the nearest passengers, still standing in the entryway shoving to get back into the passenger compartment, added their screams to the mix.

Reggie did not notice his own wounds. He held Meryl so that she couldn't see the flight attendant's body; he didn't notice that this resulted in smearing his own blood all over his daughter. At least he didn't scream. Or if he did, he didn't notice it over the sounds of the others.

Some minutes later, Reggie found himself in his seat, Meryl sitting next to him, his wife sitting in the seat directly ahead of him. She was turned around, reaching over the back of her seat, trying to stanch the flood of blood from the wound on his face; for the first time he finally noticed that apparently he was injured. While he could feel it now, it was not as intense pain but more as the simple abstract fact that he was wounded. His wife was yelling something, but he couldn't hear it; all he could hear was something like the sound of the ocean, waves crashing on a beach. He realized that he was hearing his own heartbeat, blood rushing through his ears.

He looked down at Meryl, for the first time noticing that she had his blood on her face and down the front of her shirt. The colorful cartoon unicorn on the front of her shirt was now swamped in a shower of blood, changing the tone of the illustration in amazing ways. She looked up at him. She wasn't crying or screaming; she just looked tired. "I told you," she said simply. He nodded and tried to smile, but was reasonably certain that he failed. He finally took out his earbuds after realizing that he hadn't heard anything over the radio in some minutes.

Without the earbuds, he realized that the whole airplane was in an uproar. Nearby passengers, including the stranger to his left in the window seat, were bombarding him with questions and demands. He paid them no attention. He was in his own world, trying to process what he'd just experienced. He couldn't, so, ignoring the protests of his seat-mate, he leaned left and looked out the window.

The airport was swarming with the fish men, still running across the field. He noticed that they ran oddly, a sort of hopping gait. He laughed. "Ha! Frogs!" he said, chuckling crazily. He noticed the rumble and whine of the turbojets powering up, and he briefly wondered how the plane was going to back away from the terminal without one of the little tractors to push it.

Up in the cockpit, the pilot and copilot had that much at least worked out. The engines were equipped with effective thrust reversers; the trailing end of the nacelles slid aft and vents opened up, angling the jet exhaust forwards. It was enough to shove the aircraft back away from the terminal; the jet thrust throwing random objects – including more than a few of the nearby fish men – into the air. Windows in the terminal



were blown out, the side of the jetway was caved in; normally this would be exactly the sort of thing a professional pilot would avoid but under the circumstances they hardly cared.

The flight crew had just lost contact with the tower; communications ended when the tower had been invaded and the air traffic controllers killed. The larger aircraft at the airport were being left alone by the invaders, so the pilots were talking among themselves, working out what to do. Most pilots who could were all for leaving Hawaii and heading for Japan or Australia or the US. But not all planes were so lucky... not all of them had the fuel to make it.

Reggie's plane was fully fueled and ready for a flight back to the United States. The flight crew could see into the terminal, and around the airfield; there was an apparently unceasing swarm of the fish men. They were running around under the plane, but apart from avoiding the engines and the landing gear, they seemed to take no notice of it whatsoever.

That was just fine by the pilots.

They backed away from the terminal far enough to close down the thrust reversers and head out onto the taxiway, following a half dozen other large jetliners. The co-pilot radioed to the plane ahead of them that their luggage compartment doors were still open. "We know," came the response. "But I don't think anyone is going to want to get out and close them." Several jetliners were in the same predicament. The doors would likely get ripped off by the jetstream; hopefully they wouldn't cause damage as they were blown away. And hopefully the added drag of the open doors wouldn't stop the planes from getting to their destinations.

Many of them were wrong, of course. In one case a cargo door would tear off early in flight and strike a horizontal stabilizer, critically damaging it. The plane would lose control and tumble into the sea. In another case, as the door tore off it would peel a ten-meter strip of the outer fuselage with it; the passenger compartment would lose pressurization in a split second. The plane would actually make it to the destination, landing under autopilot as it was filled with nothing but frozen corpses.

Two other jetliners would burn so much extra fuel to counter the drag imposed by the open cargo compartments that they would end up making water landings. They were expertly done, with no loss of life or even serious injuries; all of the passengers would survive to board the inflatable emergency rafts. None of them would ever see land or, indeed, the following day.

Reggie's plane, though, was buttoned up tight. The luggage handlers had finished their job moments before they noticed the oncoming wave of invaders. So the pilots thought themselves fortunate to at least that extent. And as they taxied towards the runway, they felt their luck improve further: the wave of fish-men coming from the sea was visibly slackening. The runways were clearing off, and the jetliners ahead of them were turning on to them and taking off just as fast as they could. Soon it was their turn. The pilot stood on the brakes, throttled up the engines to full and waited for the fish-men to be thin on the runway. When the moment arrived, he let go of the brakes and the great aircraft launched forward, accelerating down the concrete strip. The fish-men clearly had the sense to avoid the racing metal monsters.

Most of them, anyway. Just as the plane lifted off there was an almighty thump from beneath the fuselage. But after that the plane climbed smoothly into the sky, turning north-east towards the newly risen sun and the continental United States. Its path took it past the eastern side of Oahu island. Passengers on the left side of the plane were glued to their windows, looking down on the eastern end of the island. Honolulu was in flames, fires spouting up in innumerable places. They were too high up to see details, but it was clear that the invasion was everywhere. Within a few minutes they had left the island behind.

The passengers were still in chaos. Most had turned on the monitors in the seatbacks in front of them and were scanning the satellite news channels. Most channels were reporting on the news out of Hawaii, but so far they had little to say other than no news was coming out of Hawaii. And what little they had to say, they said over and over.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the pilots voice burst from the PA system. “We have no more information than you do about what happened back there. We can’t raise any ground stations anywhere in Hawaii, though we are in contact with San Francisco International over the satellite phone. They are aware of our situation, and have told us that this... incident seems to be restricted solely to the Hawaiian islands. So if you will all remain calm, we’ll have you on the ground in San Francisco in about five hours, around 2:30 PM local time. So, again, remain calm and listen to your flight attendants. We’re in good shape and it looks like it will be a normal flight from here. Thank you.”

The pilot failed to mention to the passengers that the indicators showed that on takeoff the starboard main landing gear had struck something substantial and had apparently blow out all the tires. The flight would be perfectly fine. The landing, however, promised to be anything but.

Still being fussed over by his wife, with medical assistance from a harried flight attendant, Reggie looked down at Meryl and gave her a tired smile. “See, honey?” he said. “The pilot says everything is ok. We’re safe now.”

Meryl looked up at her father with a sad expression, a look of wisdom and weariness well beyond her years. “No, daddy,” she whispered. “No we’re not.”

Reggie nodded once and closed his eyes. As soon as he did the sight of the horrible fish-man slashing at the flight attendant came before his minds eye sharper and brighter than when it actually happened. *Not a fish-MAN*, he thought to himself. It was clearly a fish, but the only man-like thing about it was the general outline. The body, from the too-long arms to the webbed and clawed hands to the bowed legs with the long flappy feet, from the dark green crocodile-like back to the maggot-white soft belly, from the wide, shark-tooth filled mouth to the protruding giant fish-eyes, there was nothing of man actually in the structure of the beast.

Reggie had seen some of the worst of humans in his day, on the news if nothing else, and there was nothing of even the worst of Man in the behavior of the fish-beasts. No humans would act like that; no human *could* act like that. This was a threat unlike any mankind had faced before. And if it spread beyond Hawaii, who knew how much death and damage could be done. Mankind had best wake up to the threat and wake up fast.

He reached up and turned on the monitor, found a news channel. They were repeating the same non-news about the Hawaiian communications blackout that they had been for the last quarter hour. Nothing new was coming in to them, so at last they broke for a commercial. Reggie’s eyebrows started to raise when the commercial for the fast food franchise kicked in, the animated cartoon fish mascot extolling the virtues of their new fish sandwich.

Reggie had to chuckle at that. The chuckles grew, soon growing to frenzied, shrieking hilarity. He did not stop when the commercial ended; he did not stop when the news returned with actual footage showing a brief shot of the fish-beasts swarming a news van. He did not stop when his wife shushed him, or when she begged him to stop, or even when she screamed at him and slapped him. Being dragged out of his seat and restrained and gagged did not make him stop. He was still going, although dehydrated and exhausted, as the pilots approached San Francisco and wondered if they even could safely land their plane.

His mind was soon quite gone. He laughed maniacally for the rest of his life, right up to its very sudden end.

The End

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War With The Deep Ones: Honolulu  
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