

STORM SCHOOL

“They enter as impoverished children
and emerge bathed in Olympic gold.”



*Storms have raged through their entire lives, from sailing misadventures to personal
adversity, while crossing between continents and breaching new frontiers.
Pity the storm that gets in the way of their dreams.*



THE FILM

Storms have raged through their entire lives, from sailing misadventures to personal adversity, while crossing between continents and breaching new frontiers. Pity the storm that gets in the way of their dreams.

VICTOR KOVALENKO is a sailing champion from the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. In 1984 the Soviet Union decides to boycott the Los Angeles Olympic Games. When Victor is prevented from competing for a gold, he accepts to become a sailing coach.

LIJIA XU, almost deaf in one ear and with eyesight impaired, becomes Asian Sailing Champion at the age of 14. She dreams of winning Olympic gold for her country, but her sailing future is cast into doubt when a bone tumor is discovered in her leg. Lijia fears she doesn't have the strength to succeed in the upcoming Beijing Olympics.

MAT BELCHER was born in 1982 in comfortable circumstances on the Gold Coast of south-east Queensland in Australia. As a child, he struggled to be even near the water. Over time, he discovers a connection with sailing and deep natural ability. Is this enough to succeed at the highest level?

As the Soviet Union collapses, Victor coaches the emerging Ukrainian Women's Sailing Team, but despite his remarkable success he falls foul of the governing body and loses his job. He is called on by the Australians to coach their 470 class Olympic sailing teams. When his teams win two gold medals at the Sydney Olympics, he earns the moniker, "The Medal Maker".

Despite her setbacks, Lijia wins Bronze at the Beijing Olympics. Because she is still battling serious ailments of bone and muscle, most people think that Lijia must retire. But they don't know Lijia. London 2012 is calling and Lijia finds Jon Emmett, a British coach who has a different approach to life and health. It really resonates with her. As The Games approach, Lijia knows from experience that anything can happen... and it does.

Mat Belcher, now under the coaching of Victor, has also set a course for the London Olympics.



Victor trains his Ukrainian sailing team at the formidable Sevastopol Navy Base.

*The Soviet Union collapses.
Victor emerges from behind
the Iron Curtain.*



All their lives they had survived storms. Only to rebuild themselves each time. Now, truly evolved, they embark on a quest to capture the most sought after prizes in all of sailing.

THE HEROS OUR CHARACTERS ARE BASED ON

Victor Kovalenko



Known as The Medal Maker, Victor coached his Ukrainian home team and then the Australian team to a staggering ten Olympic medals, six of them gold.

Lijia Xu



Despite being born with serious vision and hearing impediments and having a bone replacement, Lijia was Asian Champion at age 14 and winner of Olympic gold at London 2012.

Mat Belcher



Mat has won Olympic gold and silver medals and was crowned world dinghy champion an amazing 8 times.

VICTOR



Up until the age of nine his toys were a hand grenade and a rusty Schmeisser machine gun.

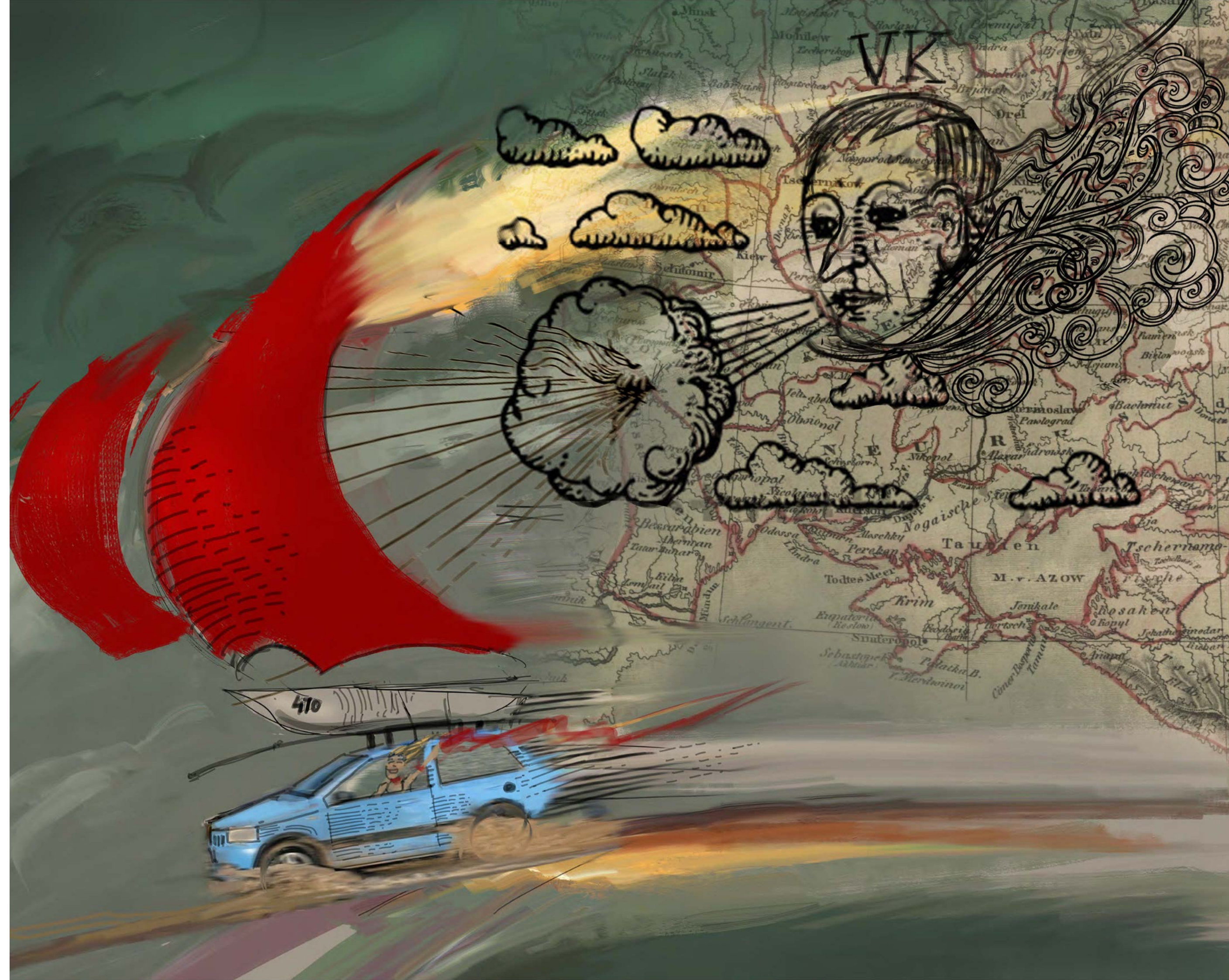


Then one day using an old towel as a mainsail and a paddle for a mast, he discovered his passion for sailing.

Tailed by the KGB, Victor and his girls head west.

They cross Europe from Norway to Italy and Portugal with their boat tied to the roof of a Fiat Panda.

When all their boat parts are stolen, they have to beg and borrow from competitors.



**LIJIA HAS ALWAYS DIVED IN
AT THE DEEP END**





*Lijia did not see the storm coming.
Not that it would matter if she had.*



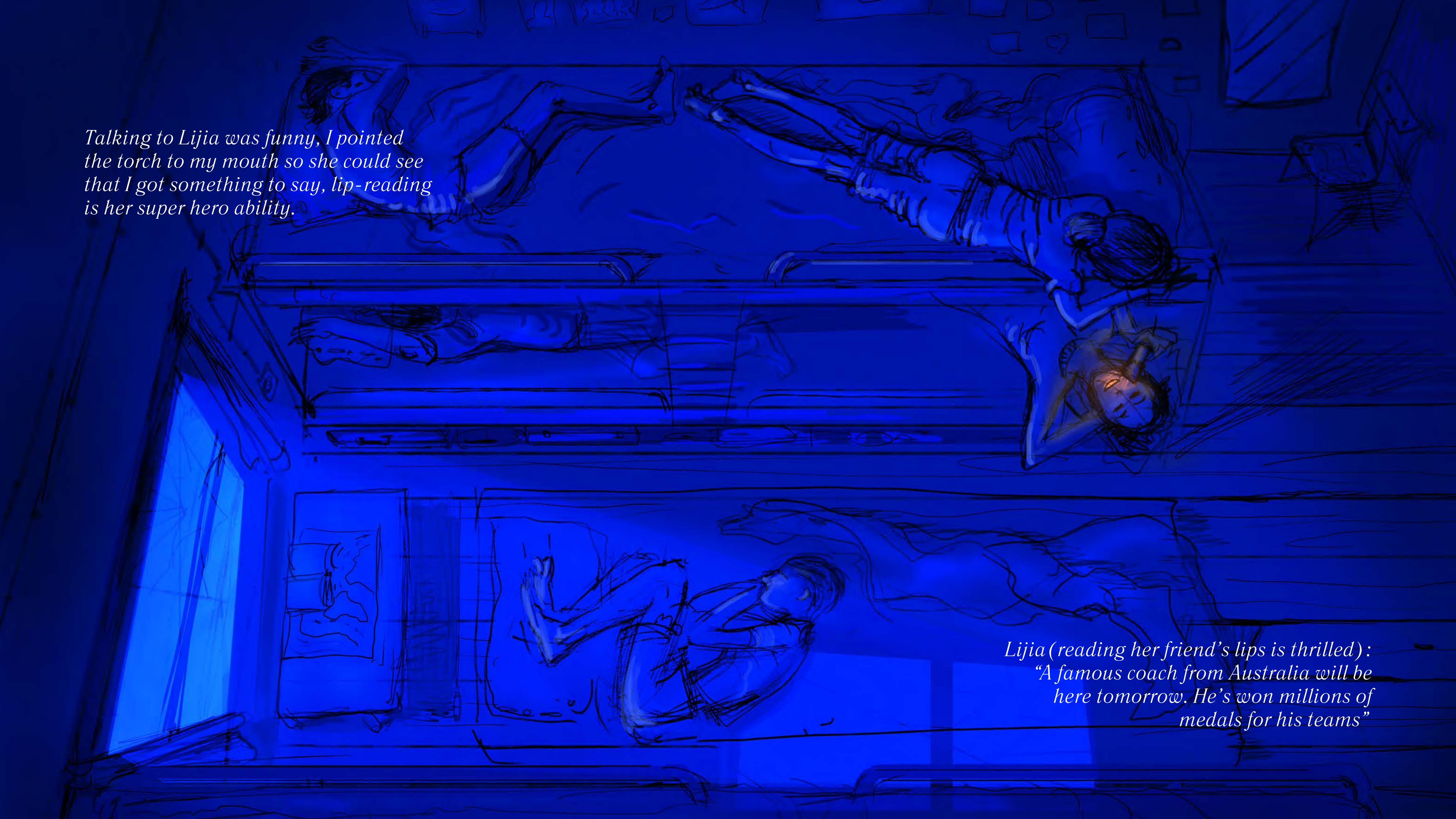
The storm rages down on the little childrens' sailing lesson in the harbour and sweeps them out to sea. In no time the coach's boat breaks up and sinks.

This for Lijia, was storm lesson one.



LIJIA WAS BORN READY FOR STORMS.





Talking to Lijia was funny, I pointed the torch to my mouth so she could see that I got something to say, lip-reading is her super hero ability.

*Lijia (reading her friend's lips is thrilled):
"A famous coach from Australia will be here tomorrow. He's won millions of medals for his teams"*

STORM SCHOOL is made with the support of Victor Kovalenko, Mat Belcher, Lijia Xu and Jon Emmett, whose lives the story is based on.



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They will be part of the extraordinary team of Olympic sailors and coaches who will serve as advisors to the director and in some cases, even act as stunt performers during the action sequences.





STORM SCHOOL is a large-scale international film that will be shot in many powerful locations around the world, among them Ukraine, China, Australia and the United Kingdom. It will be visually spectacular, and psychologically and historically intriguing. With its international cast of characters and exotic locations, it will have significant worldwide audience appeal.

After completion of the Ukrainian shoot principal photography will continue throughout 2021 with production for the other countries to be scheduled when travel and entry permissions will become available. The film is due for a 2022 release.

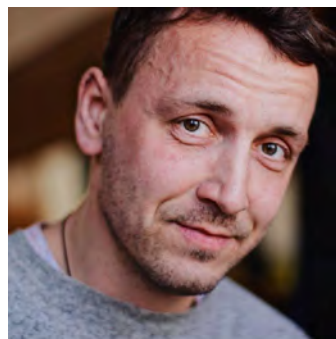
STORM SCHOOL'S BUDGET will be US\$12,500,000.

THE FILM GENRE The film has all the excitement of epic sports movies like Chariots Of Fire, Fields Of Dreams, Bull Durham or Million Dollar Baby. But this film has something bigger. It crosses the east west cultural divide and, through the eyes of its protagonists, will let us witness major historical and political changes from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the expansion of China on the world stage.

CASTING

So far we have only cast the Ukrainian parts of the film. Oleh Shulga will play the mature Victor. Oleh's successful theatre career and his film and television appearances are known for their rugged authenticity and graphic realism. Casting an actor from Ukraine we lend Victor's character authenticity: Oleh even comes from the city of Dnipro where Victor grew up. Oleh has starred in Call Sign Banderas, Nyukhach and Blindfold, amongst other films.

Casting is in progress in the other countries but because of the vague schedule only few final decisions have been made. We are in the process to cast a number of Chinese and Australian name actors but also some unknowns to achieve authenticity.



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DIRECTOR'S VISION STATEMENT



I love the wildness of the sea, which I grew up with close to the raging Cook Strait, one of the most tempestuous waterways in the world. is where I used to work as a sailor on the Cook Strait Ferries during the roughest of storms.

People facing down the elements and trying determinedly to find a way through are staple to how I see the life of an athlete and indeed the life of a film maker – surviving and challenged by arduous conditions but also seduced by the music and harmony of the waves.

I have grown up with tales of people changing countries, crossing oceans and dealing with cultural complexity. My mother was a refugee to New Zealand having survived in the Middle East as a soldier in World War II. So Victor's post war narrative and his and Lijia's resettling in other countries has a lot of resonance for me. Perhaps this is why I have

developed related projects such as The Last Samurai and Map of the Human Heart - trying to find the intimacy in the epic.

In delving back into their respective countries and in their most unusual beginnings, we have taken what could be a predictable sports film and made it more about dramatic transformational change—we see worlds collide, cultures clash, egos in a tug of war, which ultimately are played out on the massive stage of the 2012 Olympic Games.

STORM SCHOOL'S writer-director Vincent Ward is often engaged in cross cultural projects and sees a connection between this and an earlier film he spent four years nurturing into being and executive produced – The Last Samurai.

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and emerge bathed in gold.”



STORM SCHOOL is an Anna Maria Gregorini, Wieland Schulz-Keil and Jonathan Shteinman presentation of an Australian-Swiss-German-Chinese-Ukrainian co-production.

DIRECTOR
VINCENT WARD

SCREENPLAY
LOUIS NOWRA and VINCENT WARD

Based on an idea by
ROLF DE HEER

Vincent Ward

Filmmaker Vincent Ward is best known for his ability to evoke visually striking and magical worlds. What Dreams May Come (1998) won an Academy Award for its visual effects and was nominated for best production design.

Three of his early feature films, Vigil (1984), The Navigator (1988), and Map of the Human Heart (1993) were officially selected for Cannes. Between them they garnered over 30 national and international awards.

The Boston Globe called him “one of film’s great image-makers”, while Roger Ebert, one of America’s foremost film critics, hailed him as “a true visionary.”

During his time in LA, Vincent was storywriter for Alien 3, and executive producer on The Last Samurai, a project he nurtured through the development process.

Louis Nowra

One of Australia’s premier screenwriters, Louis has also written many acclaimed plays and books, which have received accolades all over the world. His characters have been portrayed by Harrison Ford, Judy Davis and Toni Collette.

His script for the 1996 movie Cosi won the Australian Film Institute Award that year for Best Adapted Screenplay. Nowra’s work as a screenwriter also includes a credit on the comedy The Matchmaker and several collaborations with Vincent Ward beginning with Map of the Human Heart (1992), which was invited to the Cannes Film Festival, and including Rain of the Children (2008) a film which received more awards than can be listed here.

Rolf de Heer

Australian film-maker Rolf de Heer won four Premier’s Literary Awards and a multitude of other prizes around the world. Notable works include Bad Boy Bubby (Venice Film Festival 1993), The Quiet Room (Cannes 1996), Dance Me To My Song (Cannes 1998), The Tracker (Venice 2002), Alexandra’s Project (Berlin 2003), Ten Canoes (Cannes 2006) and Charlie’s Country (Cannes FF 2014).

MARKETING

STORM SCHOOL has many powerful elements, with outstanding international audience and marketing potential. Much admired filmmaker, Vincent Ward, and internationally acclaimed writer, Louis Nowra have crafted a potent screenplay using an initial draft by award winning writer-director Rolf de Heer.

STORM SCHOOL will capture a clear target audience: sports and sailing fans. However, the film's crossover potential is far greater. Early Gen X'ers, millennials, Gen Y's and Baby Boomers hunger to see the less traveled places in the world. There is also a lot for the older audience, who are proud of their countries and fascinated by strong national heroes letting nothing get in the way of their dreams. The younger audience will be inspired by the action and the sporting tension.

STORM SCHOOL is avidly endorsed by the international sailing community, whose global network of members will proudly serve as multipliers and help promote the film.



PRODUCERS:

Anna Maria Gregorini

Switzerland, Producer

Anna Maria founded this project and serves as its general manager. A former international sailor, participating in World, European and Junior Championships, ISAF Junior World Championships, she is past Head of Swiss Elite Sport & Race Commission. She is currently a Consultant in International Media, PR and Event Management for major sailing events, including fourteen consecutive Rolex Sydney-Hobart yacht races. An author and translator fluent in five languages, Anna Maria is based in Zurich, Switzerland.

Jonathan Shteinman

Australia, Producer

Jonathan is one of Australia's most prolific producers having produced or executive produced over twenty features in the last three decades including films like Rabbit-Proof Fence, Oyster Farmer, and the award-winning Angel Baby. Throughout his producing career, Jonathan has worked with some of Australia's best actors including Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, Toni Collette and Russell Crowe. Jonathan produced the first Australia China co-production, Children of the Silk Road, starring Chow Yun Fat, and has been a board member of the Screen Producers Association of Australia and the South Australian Film Corporation.

Haiyi Wang 王海懿

China, Co-Producer

Haiyi holds a Ph.D. in Media Economics and is co-founder of Hishow Entertainment 海秀娱乐, is a leading distributor of international films in China. Haiyi has produced, co-financed and distributed a series of Chinese hits, including All's Well, Ends Well, The Bullet Vanishes, Switch and Night Peacock - the winner of Best Chinese Film at the 40th Montreal World Film Festival 2016. His upcoming production is a highly anticipated TV drama, Game Changer. Haiyi has always been interested in the international market and co-produced Hollywood blockbusters such as the Oscar-nominated All the Money in the World and the action thriller Hunter Killer

Wieland Schulz-Keil

Germany, Co-Producer

Wieland has been active as a producer in the United States, France, Italy and Germany for over 30 years. Amongst his better known productions are Under The Volcano and The Dead, both directed by John Huston; The King's Whore, directed by Axel Corti; The Innocent, directed by John Schlesinger; The Cat's Meow, directed by Peter Bogdanovich; Mesmer and The Children Of Huang Shi, both directed by Roger Spottiswoode. Since the late 1970s Wieland arranged the financing, or served as executive producer, for many films such as Enemy At The Gates, directed by Jean- Jacques Annaud; The Score, directed by Frank Oz; Servicing Sara, directed by Reginald Hudlin; Beyond Borders, directed by Martin Campbell, etc. etc.

Maxim Asadchiy and Anna Kalashnyk

Ukraine, Co-Producers

Maxim is the head of Pronto Film, the Ukrainian co-producer. During almost 20 years in the film industry he produced or Ep'd over 30 films and TV series. Internationally Maxim is perhaps best known for Import/Export, an Austrian-Ukrainian co-production directed by Ulrich Seidl which was nominated for the Palme d'Or and for The Guide directed by Oles Sanin, the Ukrainian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 87th Academy Awards. Anna has been with Pronto Film since the beginning and was involved as a producer in Pronto Film's feature projects, including Import/Export and Russian Triangle.

Julie Baines

UK, Service Production

Launched in 1994 by Producer Julie Baines, Dan Films has established a strong track record in European co-production and British independent films.

By collaborating with consistently high quality and original talent the company has cemented its reputation as one of the UK's leading independents.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:

Daniel Forster

US/Switzerland, Yachting photographer

Daniel has covered 13 America's Cups and 12 Olympic Games. Official photographer for many AC campaigns, Rolex Sailing Events and Volvo Ocean Races

Flavio Marazzi

Switzerland, professional sailor

Flavio dedicated most of his professional sailing in the Olympic Starboat Class, taking part in four Olympic Games and winning two Olympic Diplomas (4th & 5th).

Giles Pearman

UK/Switzerland, Communication expert

Giles is the founder of Quinag Sàrl, an international communication agency based in UK and Switzerland, undertaking projects within sport, exploration and the corporate world.

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