

THE
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PROJECT

OGOPPOGO



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Ogopogo

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Space

"I've lost 100% of navigational control, Lord."

"Halt engines," ordered Lord Rintan.

"Computer not responding, Lord."

"Emergency brakes," shouted Rintan, running towards the right side of the bridge and pulling down a massive metal lever, while Navigator Kuval simultaneously pulled down a matching lever on the left side of the bridge.

The spring-loaded mechanism triggered by pulling the levers forced a series of large spoilers to flap out over the surface of the interplanetary scout ship.

The spoilers alone had little effect in the nearly empty vacuum of space, but the surface was designed to absorb heat and light, and convert it into a counteracting force to try to decelerate the massive ship. Rintan looked at the large view screen at the front of the bridge. The unexpected object that had sped past them, travelling at nearly 10% of the speed of light, was nowhere to be seen.

"It was most likely an asteroid," said Kuval, dictating into her flight log. "I don't think it hit us, but it was probably pulling a trail of sand in its wake, and I'll bet that's what took out our engines. We're headed straight for the target planet, but we're going in very quickly. We may not survive the crash. We won't know if our inertial dampeners are working until we hit the atmosphere."

"I'll let the princess know," said Lord Rintan.

"Of course, My Lord," said Kuval.

"You have the bridge."

Kuval saluted and took her place in the Captain's chair.

* * * * *

Lord Rintan knocked on Princess Vola's quarters and waited for her to invite him in. There was no response, so he knocked again. After the third knock, the door was flung open.

"Her majesty's asleep," hissed Grevla, the Princess's nurse, a short squat woman with a hint of a tail sticking out from the back of her tunic. The lower castes all had some kind of deformity, thought Rintan. He had researched his own family quite thoroughly, and had been pleased to be unable to find any photos of his ancestors that indicated that they had tails. Maybe going back a hundred-thousand years, before the records began, but then again, society had changed drastically since the dawn of civilization.

"My apologies to her majesty," said Lord Rintan, "but we may be experiencing some turbulence in the near future."

"Well maybe she'll sleep right through it if you keep your voice down," Grevla stated.

"I think it's best if you secure the Princess," said Lord Rintan in a whisper. "And the eggs." He looked towards the large heap of sand piled in one corner of the well-heated cabin, in which the Princess had laid a clutch of eggs some months earlier, at the start of their journey to the third planet.

Perhaps the nurse caught some of the urgency in his voice. She suddenly looked concerned. "Is it bad," she asked, her green-black tail twitching with agitation.

"We might not survive," said Lord Rintan, matter-of-factly. He turned and headed back to the bridge. There, he completed his log entries and made sure that all of the computer's information had been transferred to the emergency data recorder. They may not survive

this, but hopefully the recordings they made would help others to map the course of the rogue asteroid and prevent another such disaster.

“Ten, nine, eight,” Kuval began the countdown to contact with Earth’s atmosphere.

“What’s that?” asked Rintan, looking at the view on the screen of an orange and blue distortion ahead of them.

“Optical illusion caused by the heat?” offered Kuval.

The ship sped straight into the distortion as it entered the Earth’s atmosphere. Rintan swore that he heard a wrenching sound, as if the ship were being torn out of existence. Then all was quiet, except for the roaring sound of the hull burning and the similar sound of the blood rushing through Rintan’s ears.

The inertial dampeners had worked upon impact with the atmosphere. He just hoped that they would continue to work until after impact with the Blue Planet.

Dusk

Dan Hinton's light was almost gone. He just wanted to get the last couple of hay bales stacked into the shed so he could lock it up for the season. The skies that had spent a cloudless day being a perfect shade of blue, now turned a very specific shade of orange. The same shade that Farmer Dan had painted his guest room to remind him of his favourite time of day. There was so little light, that all he saw was the shapes of the hay bales stacked carefully into the shed that had been built sixty years earlier by his grandfather. Climbing the steps made of stacked hay bales, he carried the last bale up to the top and slid it into place, just managing to wedge it in between the previous bale and the kindling-dry ceiling.

A flash of light brighter than a camera's flash bulb illuminated the shed in a white, white light. Dan let go of the bale and turned to look out over the lake. The sky above Lake Okanagan wibbled and wobbled with a blue/orange light, and a white ball of blazing flame sped down through the sky and splashed into the lake, sending a mushroom cloud of water into the air. Seconds later, the shockwave hit Dan, slamming him against the wall of hay bales and sending him tumbling down the bale steps. The deafening noise that accompanied the blast disoriented Dan for a few seconds, and when he finally pulled himself back up to his feet, he realized that the sound had deafened him. He stumbled back and sat down on a bale of hay, waiting for his head to stop tingling.

As the object sank, the lake was lit up with a white light that got slowly dimmer over the course of the next few minutes, until the valley was suddenly dark, the sun having by this time gone down completely.

Morning

The Doctor and Silver both woke up at the same time. Both were lying on the dusty yellow carpet where they had fallen when their world was inverted.

“Ow,” said Silver, holding her head as she sat up against the foot of the bed. “What happened?”

“Not sure,” answered the Doctor. “Something hit us, or we hit something, or something hit something else and we were in the middle.”

The two of them looked around at the tiny room in which they found themselves. The floor was covered by a largely yellow carpet, with a fading orange and blue pattern woven into it. The bed they were propped up against was twin-sized, with a cheap footboard painted dark brown.

A bright white light illuminated the space.

There was nothing else in the room.

There were two other noteworthy things about the room.

One of the things was, that the space they were in was very small. Perhaps a metre and a half along each wall, and a couple of metres tall.

The other thing was that the walls and ceiling of the room were orange. And they each had two sets of six small glass windows set in them, arranged in two rows of three.

One of the walls had a door handle near the centre, to the left of which was an orange panel with black lettering on it. POLICE TELEPHONE. FREE FOR USE OF PUBLIC.

“It looks like the TARDIS,” said Silver, “Only orange.”

“It is the TARDIS,” replied the Doctor. “The TARDIS has landed inside out.”

“Weird,” said Silver, pulling herself up on the footboard. “Looks like we’ve landed around a bedroom.”

“Correction,” said the Doctor. “We’ve landed outside of a bedroom.”

“What do you mean,” asked Silver.

“These are the exterior walls of the TARDIS,” said the Doctor, indicating the four walls surrounding them. “We are outside the TARDIS.”

“Uh, okay,” said Silver. “Where’s the light coming from?”

The Doctor looked up to see the roof of the TARDIS staring down at him, the light bulb that occasionally flashed was black and didn’t emit any light.

“Well,” said the Doctor. “The light’s coming in from a window or something. Since we’re outside the TARDIS, it’s not actually blocking the light from reaching us.”

“And yet, we can’t see the walls of this room. So THAT light’s not getting past the sides of the TARDIS.”

“Yeah, that is peculiar,” said the Doctor. “It’s like a two-way mirror. Only backwards.”

“So we’re trapped like a bug under a mirrored drinking glass,” summarized Silver. “Can we get out through the door?”

“You mean, can we get in through the door,” the Doctor corrected her. He began walking toward the TARDIS door and it began to move away from him.

“Trippy,” said Silver, taking a step forward. She and the Doctor walked towards the door and the four orange walls and ceiling moved along with them, the only thing changing was the pattern on the carpet they were walking on. Silver turned around to look at the bed just in time to see it disappearing into the opposite wall of the TARDIS. When she turned around again, she nearly tripped over a chair that had appeared through the TARDIS door.

“We’re like a bug under a glass all right,” said the Doctor. “And we’re walking around in a doll-house. And someone’s moving the drinking glass along with us. It’s the Chameleon

Circuit and the Dimensional Stabilizers. They're still doing their job, but in a situation that doesn't make sense."

"How do we get out, I mean in, then," asked Silver. "I mean, how far can we walk before we can reach the TARDIS?"

"That is a very scary question," said the Doctor. "Because, what's outside the TARDIS?"

"Everything," said Silver. "The whole universe."

"Exactly," said the Doctor dejectedly.

"But there must be some point in the universe that the TARDIS thinks it's sitting. Once we get there, we should be able to touch it, right?"

"Good thinking. It's probably oriented itself based on the bedroom. So all we have to find out is where exactly in the bedroom the TARDIS thinks it is, and then we should be able to open the door, get in, and see if we can get the TARDIS to re-invert itself."

"Great. Another headache to look forward to," grinned Silver.

They took a couple of steps forward and the door of the bedroom flowed through the TARDIS wall.

"Hmm," said the Doctor. "Well, here goes..."

He pulled open the bedroom door to find the TARDIS wall behind it. He and Silver took a step through the door and the TARDIS wall moved with them.

"Crab-apples," said the Doctor. "Let's go back."

They turned around and went back into the bedroom.

"Okay," said the Doctor. "If I can kick-start the TARDIS' mapping overlay sequence, maybe I can get it to fuse the TARDIS door with the bedroom door. I'm looking for a lamp."

The Doctor and Silver walked slowly around the room, being careful not to bump into anything that appeared suddenly in front of their shins.

They found a standing lamp in one corner, unplugged it and brought it back to the bedroom door. The Doctor pulled out the wiring and unravelled the cord to give him two wires and then attached them to two of the door's hinges. He borrowed a necklace from Silver and used it to connect the two hinges to one another. The Doctor crawled towards the nearest power outlet and inserted the plug. With a flash and a popping sound, the TARDIS walls shimmered slightly.

"Crab-apples," suggested Silver.

"Here goes nothing," said the Doctor. He pulled on the bedroom door and closed his eyes, blinded by the bright sunlight shining through the open front door of the small ranch-house in which they found themselves. The Doctor removed the electric wire from the door, and handed a melted pile of metal back to Silver.

Exploring the house, he soon found the circuit breaker that he had tripped and reset it.

"Okay," he said. "We can figure out how to get into the TARDIS later. Time to explore."

"I don't have any of my stuff," said Silver.

"You won't need it. We're on Earth. You can get all the stuff you want here."

Theodolite

“So I was sitting here,” Farmer Dan, sitting in his hay shed, explained to the man from the University with the surveying equipment. “And I watched the white light coming from under the water getting dimmer and dimmer. I made a point to note its location. The centre of the light was directly below the white house across the lake.”

The man peering through the eyepiece of his theodolite made some adjustments to the angle and then stepped back. “Is that the house,” he asked, motioning for Farmer Dan to peer through the eyepiece.

“That’s the one,” answered Dan.

“That’s perfect,” said the man, making note of the angles in his book. “We had a guy on the other side who filmed the thing, and between that and your information, we can triangulate the exact location of where the meteor went down.”

“Are they going to send down divers,” asked Farmer Dan.

“No,” answered the man from the University. “We’re bringing in a submarine.”

“Excellent,” said the Doctor. “I’ll just need to get a pair of swimming trunks somewhere and I’ll be ready to go.”

“Who are you,” asked the man from the university.

“I’m the Doctor,” said the Doctor, extending his hand.

The man took it. “Mark Chalmers.”

“He’s the Professor of Meteorology at the University of British Columbia,” said the hay farmer, taking the Doctor’s hand as well. “Dan Hinton.”

“Meteor Studies,” corrected Chalmers.

“I’d love to get onto that sub if you can make room for me.” said the Doctor.

“What’s your interest in all this,” asked Chalmers.

“General curiosity,” answered the Doctor.

“Then perhaps it would be best if you entered the contest like everyone else.”

“Contest?” asked the Doctor.

“One of the radio stations is giving away a seat on the sub. It’s a very coveted spot.”

“I see,” said the Doctor. “I’ve got a lot of technical knowledge as well.”

“We’ve got a full complement,” answered Chalmers. “We’ve got pressure from all kinds of groups who want representatives on board: the Department of Fisheries, Native leaders, politicians, and of course, the Ogopogo experts.”

“Ogopogo?”

“Lake Okanagan’s answer to the Loch Ness Monster.”

“Well I’ll volunteer as a standby in case someone takes ill.”

“Do you know anything about meteors?”

“Meteors, submarines, geology, physics, biology, history, and I’m headed right for the library to study up on Ogopogo.”

“I doubt we’ll need you.”

“It’s good to have options,” said the Doctor as he turned and headed back to Dan’s house. “I’ll be seeing you.”

“That’s my house,” said Dan.

Chalmers began packing up his theodolite while Hinton ran after the Doctor.

“Sorry to intrude,” said the Doctor. “I’ve got a little problem with your house. My spaceship’s landed inside it.”

Breakfast

“Pass the marmalade, please,” said Silver.

Dan handed her the jar. Silver removed the lid and added a dollop of marmalade to the seas of butter that already covered her slice of whole wheat toast.

“More eggs, Doctor,” asked Dan.

“No thank you, Mr. Hinton,” said the Doctor. “You’ve been more than kind. I would like to ask another favour, however.”

“What’s that,” asked Hinton.

“Well if I’m ever going to get my space ship separated from your guest room,” answered the Doctor. “I’m going to need some equipment. I’d like to borrow your yellow pages, and a map of Kelowna, if you’ve got one, and, well, your truck.”

“Sure,” said Dan. He opened a drawer next to his telephone and pulled out the phone book.

“White and Yellow still in the same book,” said Dan. “We’re not as big as Vancouver yet.”

He rummaged around in the drawer and pulled out a map as well.

“Map,” he said, handing it to the Doctor. “Keys are on the hook next to the door.”

“Thanks,” said the Doctor.

* * * * *

Twenty minutes later, the Doctor and Silver were driving along the road in the warm Okanagan sun.

“We’ve got to cross the lake,” said the Doctor. “So if you see a bridge, we need to cross it.”

“Okay.”

“And then if you drop me off just after the bridge, you can take the rest of the day to check out the book stores. I’ve marked a couple for you on the map.”

“Thanks, Doctor,” said Silver. “I don’t have any Canadian money, though.”

“I’ve also marked a currency exchange place for you.”

“You think of everything.”

“Hey, this is a resort town. Why don’t you go to the beach and have a good time while you’ve got the opportunity.”

“I will” answered Silver. “Did you find out when they’re going to be taking the sub down?”

“One week from today,” said the Doctor.

“You’d better get a mobile,” said Silver.

“Why,” asked the Doctor.

“So you can win the radio contest and get a seat on the sub.”

“I prefer to take my chances with Chalmers.”

Five Days Later

“All right,” began Arun Wilson, addressing the small crew of the sub. “Hand up who’s been diving before?”

A couple of hands went up.

“Okay,” said Wilson. “This will be a crash course. We won’t worry about having you calculate your nitrogen levels etc. because we’re only going down once. Now we’ve got two divers here who will exit the sub when we arrive at the meteor. Hopefully you will be remaining aboard the submarine during the entire trip as you are observers only! However, if there is an emergency, you will need to know how to get to the surface safely.

“Today, I will be showing you how to use your equipment, but due to time constraints, I will be assembling your gear for you. You will have only one job to focus on. Not running out of air. Now on the day of the dive, should we need to abandon the sub, you will head directly for the surface, so running out of air is not likely. However, in case there is a problem you will need to monitor your own air and be able to signal that you need help. Running out of air underwater is not a problem. There are ten other people with air down there who can share it with you until we get to the top. You just need to monitor your air, and not panic. Understood?”

The group murmured in the affirmative.

“First, I will demonstrate the equipment. Will someone hand me that tank?”

A man picked the tank up and carried it over to Wilson. “What’s your name,” asked Wilson.

“I’m the Doctor,” said the Doctor.

“Doctor,” said Chalmers. “How did you get in here?”

“Just thought you could do with another expert hand,” said the Doctor. He looked at Wilson. “I’m the backup.”

“Fine,” said Wilson. “Now does anyone know what’s in this tank?”

“Oxygen,” said a woman who could only be the radio contest winner.

“WRONG,” said Wilson. “This is air. Today we will be breathing air. On the day of the dive, due to the depths involved, we will be breathing a Nitrogen/Oxygen mixture.”

* * * * *

The next two hours passed fairly quickly with Wilson getting all of the team members fitted for diving equipment, taking them into the pool and racing through the standard diving instruction. He passed out laminated cards with hand signals on them. “On the day of the dive, you can attach these to your belt along with a flashlight. You don’t have to memorize these, but it’s best to be familiar with them. The last thing you want to do if you’re out of air is look up the hand-signal for it. It’s this, by the way,” he made a back and forth slicing motion in front of his neck with his outstretched right hand.

* * * * *

Finally the group took a break, and Chalmers had a chance to talk to the Doctor.

“I see you’ve weaseled your way in here.”

“Yet another of my specialties.”

Wilson came up and gave the Doctor a hearty pat on the back. “This one’s a keeper,” he said to Chalmers. “I’ll be a lot less worried come dive day with the Doctor on board.”

The Doctor grinned at Chalmers.

“The Doctor is just a backup,” said Chalmers. “In case someone else takes ill.”

The Doctor grinned again. “So, isn’t it time you introduced me to the others?”

Chalmers sighed.

“Everyone,” Chalmers called. The group were sitting at two picnic tables eating their lunches.

“This is the Doctor. He’s going to be a back up in case one of us can’t make it on dive day.”

Various members of the group nodded, while others continued to eat.

Chalmers began to work his way around the table, introducing the others to the Doctor.

“The city council wanted a representative on board, so we’ve got a Kelowna City Councillor, Lydia Krieger.” She waved.

“Next is Liz McDonald, she’s a geologist,” another waver.

“Sylvia Wheeler, winner of the CKIQ radio call-in competition.”

“Hi,” she said. “Do you think they’ll let me bring my cat?”

Chalmers sighed again. “Leonard Reid, an ecologist from environment Canada.

Patrick Thom from the Westbank Indian band. Steven Ross...”

“Hallo, Doctor,” said Ross with an Australian accent.

“Steven’s our meteor analyst.”

“I’m just in town on holiday. Ran into the Mayor at a night club, and before I knew it I was in on this project. Great guy. We’re going out drinking again tonight if you wanna join us.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” said Chalmers.

“Whatever,” said Ross. He picked up his plate and moved it to the empty seat across from Sylvia Wheeler. “What’re you doing tonight?”

“Moving on,” said Chalmers. “Our two dive experts you already know, Kevin and Keith.”

“And this is Misty Fleischer. She’s our Ogotogo expert.”

“I’ve written one or two books about Ogie,” said Misty.

“I read them last night. Very interesting. Have you talked with Mister Thom yet? I’d be interested to hear his thoughts on the creature. The Salish called it N’ha·a·itk, if I’m not mistaken.”

“That’s right,” said Thom. “And the place the meteor came down, near Squally Point, is where my ancestors believed the creature’s cave was located. One of the elders told me that the meteor has probably disturbed the monster, and he told me to stay away from the water. He’s worried that the creature will take revenge on us, thinking we’re the cause of the disturbance.”

“Do you think we’ll be safe in the sub?” asked Sylvia Wheeler, the radio call-in winner.

“If it’s anything like the Loch Ness Monster,” said the Doctor, “then the monster will gobble us up like a tin of sardines.”

“Doctor,” scolded Chalmers. “Don’t listen to him. He’s just hoping one of you will drop out so he can take your place.”

The Doctor smiled. “Oh, I’ll be on that sub, Chalmers. I can guarantee it.”

“All right, let’s get back to it,” said Wilson. “I want to wrap it up early enough so you can call get enough sleep before the Mayor’s press conference tomorrow.”

Press Conference

The Mayor had started the event with an excessively long speech. He had summoned media from all over the world to cover the voyage to the Kelowna Meteor as he had taken to calling it. Finally, one by one, he introduced the crew of the sub, taking the time out to pander to whichever segment of the populace each one represented. He introduced the Doctor last with the phrase, “and as a backup, we’ve got a Doctor who’s knowledgeable in a number of subjects, I’m told.”

“Thank you,” said the Doctor, getting up in front of the microphone to the consternation of the Mayor. “There is one area of expertise, however, that I am not familiar with. And that is Media Analysis. Luckily, we have someone on the team who is an expert in that field. Mister Ross?”

“No, he’s a Meteor Analyst,” said the Mayor.

“That’s right,” said Ross. “Media Analyst.”

“Hang on,” said the Mayor. “Are you saying Media or Meteor.”

“Media,” said Ross. “Media Analyst.”

The Mayor shook his head. “With your accent, I thought you were saying Meteor Analyst.” He looked up at the assembled crowd of journalists with their sea of microphones and cameras. “I thought he was saying Meteor Analyst. You all heard it. With his accent it sounded like Meteor.”

“You’re off the team,” Chalmers said to Ross under his breath.

“I’ve just heard,” said the Doctor into the microphone, “that Mister Ross will be unable to join us on our expedition. I look forward to analyzing the Meteor in his place. Wish us luck, everyone!”

The crowd spontaneously applauded.

The Doctor turned away from the microphone and smiled at Chalmers, who just shook his head in disbelief.

The Doctor once again took his place with the rest of the group so that the media could get photographs. The mayor had set the scene to resemble that of a group of astronauts about to go into space.

“So,” the Doctor whispered into his Silver’s ear. “What have you done with the real Sylvia Wheeler.”

Going Down

“There it is,” said Professor Chalmers.

The pilot, Wilson, reversed the submarine’s engines, and expertly manoeuvred it so that it hovered just in front of the large metal object that lay on the bottom of Lake Okanagan.

“It’s not a rock,” said Chalmers.

“No,” came a voice from the rear of the nine-person sub. “It’s a space ship.”

“And there it is,” said Professor Chalmers. He’d wondered when the Doctor would reveal himself to be a loonie.

The Doctor stood up, bonking his head on the low curved ceiling of the mini-sub. “And from the look of it, this is a Martian vessel!”

“How do you know that,” asked Chalmers.

“I’ve been tracking this ship for eighteen months, since it was launched from the surface of Mars.”

“Really,” asked Chalmers, with no sense of belief. “Are you an astronomer?”

“Of course,” said the Doctor.

“Then there might be aliens aboard,” said Chalmers.

“Oh, there will definitely be aliens aboard,” said the Doctor. “But they’re probably dead.”

* * * * *

Thirty minutes later, the two divers, Keith and Kevin, had exited the craft, wearing cold-water scuba gear. Before they knew it, the Doctor had joined them and raced ahead to the craft. Swimming down, he discovered an opening at the bottom of a twenty-metre shaft that extended from the side of the ship. It looked like it had come loose during the crash. He swam up the shaft and quickly located the ship’s outer hatch. It was not sealed. The Doctor pulled on it, and the hatch swung easily open.

“Watch out,” shouted the Doctor as the door came loose and drifted down the sloped ramp of the shaft. “The door’s come off. Keep out from under the ramp.”

When the danger had passed, the sub made its way up the shaft.

“Look at the shape of this hatchway,” said the Doctor into his microphone. “It’s completely rusted, and the rubber seals are gone.”

“It almost looks as if the ship’s been here for hundreds of years.”

“Maybe it has,” said the Doctor.

“Then this isn’t the object that crashed last month?”

“It is,” said the Doctor, “but the blue and orange lights that accompanied the crash led me to theorize that the craft was travelling backwards in time when it hit the water. It may have been 2008 when it entered the Earth’s atmosphere, but by the time it hit the lake bed, it had travelled back several thousand years.”

“So the crew are all dead,” said Leonard Reid, the ecologist. He spent his days counting fish eggs on reeds in rivers. Alien life forms were not what he had expected to encounter on this trip. And yet, he was able to put his knowledge to good use.

“And with the hatch open,” he continued, “the bodies will have been eaten by marine life long ago. We might not even find any alien DNA at all.”

“Right you are,” said the Doctor. “Let’s go in.”

The trio swam into the opening of the ship, their bright flashlights illuminating the large interior of the ship.

“I’m going to bring the sub in,” said Wilson. The trio were illuminated by the sub’s bright lights as it entered the hatch.

The men swam through the cargo area while Wilson followed them with the sub.

They swam past some living quarters, and then, eventually, onto the bridge itself.

“I don’t think I can get onto that bridge,” said Wilson as he hovered in the corridor just outside.

“It’s not very big for a space ship,” said Misty Fleischer.

“This is just a small scout ship,” said the Doctor.

Suddenly, the Doctor’s flashlight was knocked out of his hand and it drifted down to the floor. The team realized that a swarm of marine life had darted onto the bridge, and were bashing into their bodies. Chalmers caught a glimpse of one of them in the light of the Doctor’s dropped flashlight.

“That’s not a fish,” said Leonard Reid.

“No,” said The Doctor, holding up the remains of a football-sized egg shell. “These are the descendants of the alien intelligence that crashed here millennia ago. If there were eggs, though, they might have survived the impact. With their elders dead, the hatchlings would have simply become wild creatures, never learning to read or speak or whatever else these aliens could do. Simply swimming around, eating fish and staying close to the ship that they were drawn to for reasons they couldn’t know. For hundreds of generations.”

“Perhaps these creatures are the source of the Ogopogo legend,” surmised Patrick Thom.

“They’re too small,” said Misty.

“Well these are just babies,” said The Doctor. “Newly hatched! Who knows how big the mother is.”

“The mother,” said Keith, just as a dark shape swam past the front window of the bridge.

The Doctor had retrieved his flashlight, and joined Keith and Kevin in aiming it out the window.

The group marvelled at the whale-sized creature that was moving around the side of the ship.

“I don’t think it’s seen us,” said The Doctor. “But if that’s the mother, then she’s not going to be too happy that we’re in here with her babies.”

“Okay, guys,” said Wilson, “I think we should get out of here.”

“I’m with you,” said Kevin. “Doctor, Keith, grab hold of the sub. There should be enough room for it to turn around in here, and it’ll be faster if we just turn it by hand.”

“Okay,” said the Doctor, grabbing hold of one of the handles that ran like a ring around the middle of the sub.

“Clockwise,” said Kevin.

The three men turned the sub within a few seconds and then helped to guide it back to the cargo entrance.

“Uh, oh,” said Keith when they got to the top of the ramp. The unmistakable shape was poking its head into the cargo hold.

“Momma’s coming in,” said Kevin.

“Maybe I can close the inner hatch,” said the Doctor, swimming over to the algae-encrusted controls next to the opening.

“You’d better hurry,” said Kevin.

“Try to keep her back,” said the Doctor. “Try shining your flashlights into her eyes.”

Kevin and Keith shone their lights directly at the creature’s head. They both got the shivers from seeing the eerie alien-looking head with large black football-shaped eyes blinking at them. The creature backed down the ramp and then swam around in a circle, as if trying to decide what to do about the bright lights that blocked its path back to its nest.

Suddenly it came racing up the ramp. The startled men scattered.

“My leg,” shouted Keith, as Kevin turned his light back on the creature. He saw that it had Keith’s leg in its jaws. Kevin swam straight at the creature, beaming his flashlight into its eyes, and barrelling with as much force as he could muster into the creature’s head. It let go of Keith and swam rapidly back down the ramp.

“Are you alright,” asked Kevin.

“I think so,” asked Keith. “It didn’t break through the dry suit. My leg is sore, but I don’t think anything’s broken.”

“Here’s something,” said the Doctor. “Kevin and Keith. Get back into the sub. Wilson, once they’re inside, I want you to manoeuvre into a corner and set the sub down onto the floor, alright?”

“Sure,” said Wilson as Keith and Kevin slipped through the airlock in the bottom of the sub. “Did you find a way to close the inner door?”

“I think I found a switch that’s designed to re-pressurize the ship in the event of a hull breach. If I can turn it on for a few seconds, I’m hoping that the air rushing in will force the water out. Ogie won’t be able to come up the shaft if it’s full of air instead of water.”

Wilson had manoeuvred the sub into the corner and set it down as the Doctor had instructed.

The Doctor looked down the ramp and noticed that the sea monster was once again swimming near the entrance.

“Hold onto your hats,” said the Doctor. He flicked a rusty switch. Nothing.

“No power,” said the Doctor. “The lines must be corroded...” Before the Doctor could continue, an agonizingly loud whooshing sound filled the craft, and for a few seconds it was as if the water had turned into champagne. The Doctor felt bubbles all around his skin, and then he fell to the floor. All the water had been forced out of the cargo door.

“Don’t open the sub,” said the Doctor. “We don’t know what kind of air these aliens breathed. You’re safe in the sub and I’ll be alright as long as I’ve got my tank.”

“What’s the plan now, Doctor?”

“Well, I might have to figure out a way to drag the sub to the edge of the cargo ramp and push it down. Then I’ll slide down after and get back on board.”

“What about Ogie?” asked Misty.

“I’m hoping Ogie will have been stunned by the blast of air. We may have a few minutes to get past her.”

The Doctor spotted what he thought might be a light switch and flicked it. A few seconds later, light flooded the cargo hold. The Doctor then grabbed one of the handles on the sub and began to drag it towards the ramp. At one point, he stepped on the end of his fin and he tripped himself, landing on his rump.

As the Doctor struggled to get up without standing in his own fins, Chalmers asked, “Where’s Sylvia?”

“What?” said the Doctor.

“She’s gone! She must have left the sub at some point.”

“Before or after we entered the ship,” asked the Doctor.

“Well, if it was before,” began Wilson.

“Then she’s out there with that creature,” said Kevin.

“And if she’s on this ship, she’ll have been knocked unconscious by the blast of air,” said the Doctor. “That’s why I wanted you all in the sub when I released the air.”

“Silver,” he said. “Can you hear us?”

“Sylvia,” the rest of the crew called in unison. There was nothing on the headsets but silence.

“She must be inside,” said Thom.

The Doctor abandoned his attempts to drag the ship, took off his fins, and walked back to the panel he had operated in order to flood the ship with air. He rubbed some algae of a display panel. He could just make out a dim light on the panel. He tried some of the knobs until one of them increased the brightness of the display. "I'm pretty sure that this is a reading of the levels of various gases," said the Doctor. "Let me try something." He took off his face mask and slowly let a bit of air into his mouth, then exhaled it again and put his helmet back on.

"Ammonia," he said. "I think I can make out some lettering."

After a few moments, he said, "It's very familiar. There. That's the ammonia level. I'm sure of it." He twisted one of the knobs and one of the bars of light got smaller and smaller until it disappeared, while simultaneously he could feel the rush of wind currents as the ship worked to rebalance the composition of the air.

He took off his face mask and tried again.

"Still a bit of ammonia in the air, but it's getting less and less by the second," said the Doctor into his mask so that the microphone would pick up his voice. "I'm going to look for Silver. After five minutes, it should be safe to open the sub. You'll still smell ammonia but it won't harm you. And keep your dry-suits on. It's freezing out here."

With that, he set off back up the passage towards the bridge, keeping an eye out for side corridors down which Silver may have been swept by the whoosh of air.

Wilson waited a couple of minutes and then opened the inner latches and flipped open the top of the sub.

"Who's coming to help," he asked.

"We might as well stick together," said Chalmers.

"I'm just going to stay here and watch Ogie swim around down there," said Misty, sitting down on the deck next to the open hatch.

"Fine," said Chalmers. "Let's hurry up and find the girl. My eyes are already stinging from this ammonia."

Alien Bridge

The Doctor had searched the bridge of the ship and had found no sign of Silver. He was about to backtrack down the corridor and try some of the side-routes he had spotted when something caught his eye. It was lying amongst the thousands of cracked egg-shells that littered the floor of the bridge. It had a similar shape to the eggs, but this was dark black. He picked it up and wiped the algae from it with his hands. It was a helmet. The helmet of an Ice Warrior.

“So it was from Mars,” said the Doctor absently. “These are Ice Warrior eggs. And those things we thought were fish were a school of Ice Warrior Pollywogs. Hang on. If this is an Ice Warrior ship... I wonder if they have a...”

The Doctor started pulling open cabinets. Water poured out as he opened each one and rummaged through the contents.

“Aha!” exclaimed the Doctor, pulling out an electronic device the size of an iPod. “I knew they’d have one in case of emergencies. Now as long as it still has power...”

The Doctor shook the water from the device and dried it on his shirt. He pressed the sides of the device and was delighted when it emitted a strong pinging noise. He switched off the device and slid it into the waterproof pocket of his dry-suit.

* * * * *

“Doctor,” called Chalmers as the group trudged up the corridor towards the bridge.

“Hey,” said Kevin, stopping abruptly. “I think I heard something behind this door.”

Kevin pushed on the door and it swung open. “I can’t feel a light switch,” he said, taking another step into the darkened room. Suddenly Kevin’s body came flying out of the room, followed by a fat, black shape. It looked like a giant leech, about a metre in length and it slithered quickly down the wet corridor and out of sight. Kevin had slammed into the opposite wall of the corridor and fallen to the floor.

Chalmers kneeled beside Kevin’s unconscious body and took his pulse.

“He’s alive,” said Chalmers. “I think he’s just been knocked cold. I don’t think we should move him. Let’s wait until he regains consciousness.”

He looked up at the group. “I’ll stay with him. You go on and find the Doctor.”

* * * * *

“Mrowwl,” said Mortimer.

“Is that who I think it is,” asked the Doctor, getting down on his hands and knees and looking under a metal console. “Mortimer! How did you get down here? Did Silver bring you? Oh, you’re all wet. Are you taking me to Silver? Okay. I’m coming.”

Corridor

“There you are, Doctor,” said Keith, as the Doctor approached the group.

“Nothing on the bridge,” said the Doctor. “Although I might be able to get the ship to rise to the surface of the lake. That’ll save us having to deal with the Sea Monster.

And look,” he said, holding up Mortimer. “It’s my cat! I think Silver might have brought him.”

“Why do you keep calling Sylvia ‘Silver’” asked Leonard.

“Oh,” said the Doctor. “I got to know the young lady quite well the other night. She told me she prefers to be called Silver.”

“Oh,” said Leonard. “And then you gave her your cat?”

“Well I guess she just took it.”

“And you didn’t notice?” said Leonard accusingly.

“I’ve had other things on my mind,” said the Doctor. “He’s a very independent cat. He doesn’t need me babysitting him seven days a week.”

Mortimer hissed at a cabinet set into the wall of the ship.

“Let’s see what’s in here,” said the Doctor. He pulled on the door but it wouldn’t budge. Keith grabbed hold of the handle and added his strength to the Doctor’s. The door squealed as it tore open, releasing a flood of water and two of the black Tadpoles. Keith shouted in agony as one of them bit his arm before joining its brother as it raced away along the slippery floor.

The Doctor took a look at the tear in Keith’s dry-suit. Blood was pouring out from between the flaps of rubber. The Doctor took a knife out of his belt and cut off the sleeve of the suit just above the bite wound. Then he used the rubber to make a tourniquet. Keith made a make-shift sling for his arm by pulling the zipper that ran up the length of his suit down to his stomach and sliding his arm in between his ribs and the suit.

“I know what these creatures are,” said the Doctor. “They’re Ice Warriors from the planet Mars.”

“Never heard of them,” said Leonard.

“Well I have,” said the Doctor sternly. “These black Tadpoles are newly hatched Ice Warriors.”

“We know that,” said Leonard. “We saw the mother outside.”

“The only problem is,” replied the Doctor. “Your Ogotogo is not an Ice Warrior. An Ice Warrior is only slightly taller than a man. They walk on two legs and hiss quite a lot.”

“So what is the Ogotogo? Some kind of pet they brought along with them?”

“Like a Skarasen,” said the Doctor. “Perhaps.”

“Then where are the grown up Ice Warriors then?” asked Leonard.

“I don’t know,” said the Doctor. “If all of the adults were killed in the crash, then this species has been breeding here for thousands of years with no guidance. They’re just wild animals. Even the adults won’t be able to communicate with us. They might just as soon eat us if we try to talk with them.”

“Then I suggest we pick up some weapons along the way,” said Keith. “Because when we find Sylvia, she just might be fending off some of your Ice Warriors.”

“Good idea. Look around in these cabinets,” said the Doctor. “But be careful. And if we do encounter any Ice Warriors, please don’t try to kill them.”

“This might come in useful,” said Keith, passing out some metre-long rods they could use as truncheons.

“Better than nothing,” said the Patrick.

“Better than a gun,” said the Doctor.

“Aargh,” shouted Leonard. The group turned just in time to see his feet disappearing around the corner as he was dragged away by something large.

“Come on,” shouted the Doctor,

The three men gave chase, turning on the lights in the corridors whenever they entered a new one.

“It’s definitely an Ice Warrior,” said the Doctor as he got a good view of the creature in the light. Unlike the armour and helmet wearing warriors the Doctor had encountered in the past, this one was completely nude, revealing its dark green scaly skin.

The Warrior had Leonard’s arms clamped in his claw-like hands, and was carrying him with no more effort than a person carries a bag of groceries.

Eventually, the Ice Warrior entered a room and the trio followed it in. The Doctor turned on the light.

“Doctor,” shouted Silver.

She was lying shivering on a bed of seaweed in a corner of the room, surrounded by a mix of hatched and un-hatched Ice Warrior eggs.

“I think I’m supposed to be food for the babies when they hatch,” she stammered.

In addition to the Ice Warrior that was clutching Leonard, there were three others lying in the room with Silver. All of them were hugely bloated, soon expecting to lay a clutch of eggs. They didn’t move much, and they appeared to be distressed by the unfamiliar light.

“Use your weapons defensively,” the Doctor told the group. “Or to keep them at bay while we try to get Silver out.”

“This one’s hatching, Doctor,” shouted Silver as she pulled herself up to stand. She inched away from the egg that was rocking back and forth in front of her.

“Try to get behind that one,” said the Doctor. “I think they’ve been temporarily blinded.”

The Ice Warrior holding Leonard was not sure what to do. He could tell that the other food was escaping, but he had Leonard, and so he decided to try to chase the others away and keep Leonard. Leonard was squirming in the pincer-like hands, so he began to shake Leonard to try to subdue him. He lifted Leonard above his head, and the Doctor realized that he was going to try to bash Leonard against the floor to knock him unconscious.

“Like a fisher bashing a fish in the head,” thought the Doctor as he leaped at the Ice Warrior, crashing into the monster’s chest with his shoulder. The Doctor’s attack caught the Ice Warrior off guard, and he dropped Leonard as he tried to regain his footing.

While Silver scooped up Mortimer and ran out the door, Leonard scrambled towards the door, wincing in pain, as both of his shoulders had been dislocated by the Ice Warrior as it carried him through the corridors.

“Let’s go,” shouted Keith, pushing the others out the door. He waved his stick menacingly at the Ice Warrior a few times and bellowed as loudly as he could to try to make it think he was threatening. Then he took off after the others, checking over his shoulder constantly to see if they were being pursued.

When the group got to where they had left Kevin and Chalmers, the two men were nowhere to be seen.

“Perhaps they went back to Misty,” said Patrick.

“Maybe,” agreed the Doctor. “Let’s head back there as well. If we don’t run into them, we’ll send another team back to find them.”

“Are you okay,” he asked Silver.

“My arms hurt where the big one grabbed me,” she said. “And I’m so cold.”

“I imagine you are.”

“It was a lot better in that hatching room,” said Silver. “At least the floor was warm.”

“What,” asked the Doctor, stopping dead in his tracks.

“The floor where I was sitting. Under the seaweed,” said Silver. “It was warm, and humming a little bit.”

“Oh, no,” said the Doctor. “That’s the radioactive core of the engines. It’s not supposed to get warm. Or vibrate. Something’s broken open. We’ve all been exposed to a dangerous amount of radiation.”

Misty

“Misty,” shouted Chalmers.

Misty was still, lying on her stomach near the edge of the ramp.

“Misty,” shouted Silver.

Misty didn’t respond.

“Those tadpole-things,” said the now recovered Kevin, running to her and slipping on the wet deck.

“Ow,” he said as he landed on his elbow. “Ow, ow, ow.”

The group reached Misty and Chalmers kneeled down beside her. He lifted her head. Her eyes were unblinking.

“Is she dead,” asked Thom.

“It’s so beautiful,” said Misty, tears pouring from her eyes.

“Are you all right,” asked Silver.

“Yeah,” said Misty.

“Did you see those giant tadpole things,” asked Keith.

“They just slithered right by me and down into the water,” said Misty, still transfixed by her time spent watching the Ogotogo.

“Right. Let’s get this ship to the surface,” said Chalmers.

“I don’t think so,” said Leonard, whose shoulders had been relocated painfully by Wilson along the way. “If this thing’s leaking radiation, it’s better off down here than up there.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” said Silver.

“He’s right,” said Patrick Thom.

“No problem,” said the Doctor. “We’ll just use the submarine.”

“And what about Ogotogo,” asked Patrick.

“She’s harmless,” said Misty.

“I think our best bet is to try to use light and sound to disorient the creature,” said the Doctor. “Wilson, can you connect some music or something to the outside speakers of the sub?”

“Sure,” said Wilson. “I’ve done it before to give divers a scare on their first night dive.”

“Good,” said the Doctor. “And we’ll try to keep the sub’s lights aimed at the creature’s head.”

“How are we going to do this,” asked Keith.

“Well,” said Wilson. “We could shove the sub down the ramp into the water and jump in after it.”

“I think with all these injuries,” began the Doctor, “our best bet is to get everyone back on board the sub and simply re-flood the ship.”

“Fine by me,” said Wilson.

* * * * *

Five minutes later, the crew were back aboard the sub, with the exception of the Doctor, who was trying to work out the alien control panel once again.

First he managed to close the doors leading into the rest of the ship. This would speed things up greatly, as they wouldn’t have to wait for the whole ship to flood. Then he set to work looking for the ramp controls.

“That’s got it,” he said finally. The entire loading ramp began very slowly to move upwards. It seemed like forever before the ramp got high enough to start letting water in. Suddenly, a great flood of water began to enter the ship.

Once the sub was under water, the Doctor swam underneath and entered the hatch.

Going Up

Wilson turned on the exterior speakers of the submarine and began to play a Green Day CD. The passengers were happy to note that the Ogotogo started to swim back a little. Wilson turned the control of the outside lights over to Kevin. He was getting the hang of keeping the beam on the creature's face, which seem to annoy it.

Slowly the sub rose towards the surface, with the Ogotogo rising with them, but keeping its distance from the noise and light. After a few hundred metres, the creature appeared to lost interest and stopped following.

* * * * *

"Professor Chalmers tells me that you're not so sure that Ogie's an alien after all," said Misty.

"That's what I thought," answered the Doctor. "But now I'm not so sure."

"If it were just Ice Warriors living down here for ten thousand years, I would say that they wouldn't have had time to evolve into something like that. But with that radiation leak. Well, that just changes all the odds. It could be a mutation. Or years of mutations. Or it could be an entirely distinct species., your Ogotogo. It would be easy enough to test, though. If I could just get a sample of that Ogotogo's DNA."

"Maybe on the next trip, Doctor," said Chalmers.

The Doctor laughed.

* * * * *

"What's that," asked Silver. "It looks like an iPod."

"A little something I picked up on the bridge of that ship."

"Will it help us get into the TARDIS? I mean out of the TARDIS? Or whatever it is we're trying to do?"

"I hope so," answered the Doctor."

"Goodbye Kelowna," said Silver.

"Goodbye N'ha·a·itk," said the Doctor.

THE DOCTOR WHO PROJECT



Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

The Doctor and Silver find themselves in the resort town of Kelowna, British Columbia where the locals talk of a mythical lake-dwelling creature known as Ogopogo.

What does that have to do with the mysterious meteor that crashed into the lake the night before their arrival?

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