

CryptoZoology

EPISODE ONE
"Sewer Gators"

by

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TEASER

EXT. ULYSSES' BOAT - NOVA SCOTIA - DAY

ULYSSES HAWKINS (50s) pulls a lobster TRAP onto his small boat. Inside is only a tiny CRUSTACEAN, too small to eat. Ulysses tosses it overboard when he hears a low RUMBLING from the depths below. A stirring whirlpool of foaming white water spreads next to his boat. A GREEN light flashes under the surface.

Leaping from the bubbles is a brown-shaded HARBOR SEAL PUP that lands on the deck. It's confused and scared, and Ulysses approaches it with caution. His soft Nova Scotian accent puts it at ease.

ULYSSES

Hey, little guy. Are you OK?
Where'd you come from?

Ulysses looks into the eyes of the seal pup and instantly falls in love. Below them, the RUMBLING amplifies and penetrates the hull. The seal squirms to Ulysses' side. CRASHING through the surface is a hungry 20 foot *Physeter-trunkoviathan* or TRUNKO, a kind of six-finned sperm whale covered in glittering WHITE FUR (like the real life yeti-crab).

The impact rocks the small boat, but Ulysses holds onto the pup tight. Once the leviathan is gone, Ulysses looks into the pup's eyes again. She's weak and drifting off to sleep.

INT. HAWKINS HOUSE - ISLAND - NOVA SCOTIA - NIGHT

MIRANDA HAWKINS (50s) stirs a pot of seafood gumbo as she hears Ulysses enter.

MIRANDA

I hope you didn't throw *everything*
back today.

ULYSSES

Not quite.

Miranda sees the baby seal swaddled in a blanket in his arms.

MIRANDA

Ulysses Hawkins! What is that?

ULYSSES

I'm sorry, Mir, I just couldn't.

Miranda looks at the seal and her heart melts.

MIRANDA
I'll open a can of tuna.

Ulysses gives her a kiss and carries the seal to the couch.

INT. KITCHEN - HAWKINS HOUSE - NIGHT

Miranda opens up a can of tuna under the watchful eye of PROSPERO, a CAT.

MIRANDA
No Prospero. Not for you.

Prospero is just one of a DOZEN CATS vying for attention, but he's the most audacious.

INT. DEN - HAWKINS HOUSE - NIGHT

Miranda and Ulysses cozy up on the couch facing a blazing FIREPLACE as the baby seal eats out of open tuna cans.

MIRANDA
Such a hungry girl..

ULYSSES
I'll call the mainland tomorrow,
get animal rescue.

Miranda gently pats the seal pup on its head. The seal licks her.

MIRANDA
There's no rush.

As the fireplace glows hot, Ulysses and Miranda fall asleep. The baby seal continues eating the tuna, but as its body dries, its fur retracts. The tuna can drops to the floor and makes a noise, waking Miranda. She looks at the seal in shock!

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Uley! Uley! Wake up!

ULYSSES
What is it?

Ulysses sees the baby seal has morphed into a three year old HUMAN GIRL, eagerly licking the tuna out of the can.

MAIN TITLES:

CryptoZoology

ACT ONE

14 YEARS LATER...

INT. KITCHEN - HAWKINS HOUSE - DAY

CORAL HAWKINS (17) the baby seal/person (or *homopinnepedia-sapien*) is grown up, but eating tuna out of the can exactly the same way she did when she was younger.

MIRANDA

Coral, stop that. You'll cut your tongue.

CORAL

It's fine, Mom. I've had practice.

Miranda goes about packing a suitcase with raincoats.

MIRANDA

Uley, where are Coral's other raincoats? I only have five here.

CORAL

Mom, it's San Diego, not the Amazon.

MIRANDA

You never know with global warming. A cyclone could wipe out the southwest at any moment. Uley!

CORAL

How many bags are you packing?

MIRANDA

Just four.

CORAL

Mom, I can't carry that many.

MIRANDA

Trust me. You'll need these things.

Coral looks through one of the suitcases.

CORAL

A toaster? If it *does* rain I'll have to balance these on my nose.

Miranda shudders at the thought.

MIRANDA

I'll consolidate. One suitcase. And
a raincoat in your carry-on!

Coral kisses Miranda on the cheek.

CORAL

Thanks, Mom. I love you.

Coral spots Ulysses painting the boat outside alone.

EXT. DOCK AND PIER - HAWKINS HOUSE - DAY

Coral walks up to Ulysses and picks up a paintbrush.

CORAL

How you doing, dad?

ULYSSES

Oh, you know. Painting the boat.

CORAL

Again.

ULYSSES

Keeps the barnacles at bay.

They paint in silence for awhile before Ulysses breaks.

ULYSSES (CONT'D)

It feels like I just found you.

CORAL

I thought *I* found you.

Ulysses nods, fighting back tears.

CORAL (CONT'D)

Dad? What's the matter?

Coral fights back tears of her own. A few roll down her cheek. The dampness makes her sprout fur. Ulysses looks at her and sees the seal pup he saved long ago. Coral wipes her cheeks dry, and the fur disappears.

ULYSSES

There's something I have to show
you.

INT. STUDY - HAWKINS HOUSE - DAY.

Ulysses pulls out a detailed SKETCH of the TRUNKO from a desk drawer.

ULYSSES

The day you came to us, this... thing was what was chasing you. Looked like a whale but it had... six fins and white fur.

Coral examines the sketch carefully.

CORAL

I've seen this before in my nightmares. Ever since I was a kid, I thought I imagined it. Why didn't you tell me earlier?

ULYSSES

I didn't want to scare you.

Coral examines the sketch carefully.

ULYSSES (CONT'D)

But you're leaving us now. It's only natural you'd want to know where you come from. This is the only clue I have.

CORAL

This is a clue? Not much of a clue.

ULYSSES

Maybe not. But it is a reminder that the world out there is big and it's cruel and there are monsters.

CORAL

In San Diego, Dad?

ULYSSES

Everywhere.

CORAL

I can take care of myself.

Coral gives Ulysses a hug. He hugs her back.

EXT. AIRPORT - NOVA SCOTIA - DAY

Coral and Ulysses hug, then Coral and Miranda.

CORAL

I love you, guys! I promise, I'll
be back soon to visit!

MIRANDA

Just stay dry when you're in public
and always wear your wetsuit.

CORAL

I know, Mom. I'll be fine! San
Diego's practically a desert.

Through tears, Miranda and Ulysses watch Coral walk up to the
departures gate with her two suitcases and Prospero II in a
pet-carrier.

EXT. AIRPORT - SAN DIEGO - DAY

POURING RAIN. Coral, wearing LAYERS of rain gear, makes her
way to the bus stop. A BUS arrives and Coral steps aboard
clumsily with her luggage and Prospero II.

INT. BUS - SAN DIEGO - DAY

Coral has never been on a bus before. She's doing her best to
blend in, except she's the only passenger head-to-toe in rain
gear.

Coral sneezes and absentmindedly wipes her mouth with her wet
gloves, causing her face to sprout seal fur and whiskers. She
panics, covers up her face, and looks around to see if anyone
has noticed. No one has, except for a little BOY looking up
from a comic book about Werewolves. She gestures for him to
shh and he tosses the comic book away like bad absinthe.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DORM - DAY

A KNOCK on the door. ALICE AUDUBON (18) answers. Coral is
standing on the welcome mat hiding her face under her hood.
Unbeknownst to everyone, she's half-transformed into a seal.

CORAL

Hi, I need to use the bathroom.

She pushes herself inside. Alice obliges, but tries to see
Coral's face under the layers of clothing.

ALICE

Coral, right? It's so great to meet
you, new roomie! I'm Alice and this
is Liz--

LIZ FRANK (18) waves from the couch, looking up from her tablet. Coral bumps around still hiding her face.

LIZ
Hi.

CORAL
--Is that the bathroom?

ALICE
Um, yeah.

Coral rushes in and closes the door. She has left a wet path of destruction behind her.

LIZ
(sarcastically)
She seems cool.

INT. BATHROOM - DORM - DAY

Half-transformed Coral dries herself every way she knows how. Shaking like a dog, using a blow-dryer, jumping up and down... slowly but surely, her fur recedes. Prospero II stands by, eating tuna.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DORM - DAY

Liz doesn't look up from her tablet as Alice mops up.

LIZ
It's been 30 minutes.

ALICE
Give her a break. She's Canadian.

Coral emerges from the bathroom, a new woman. Prospero II follows after her.

CORAL
Sorry about that! I had a minor hair-mergency.

Liz rolls her eyes.

ALICE
Oh, it's fine! This must be Prospero.

Alice bends down to pet him. He hisses.

CORAL

Actually, Prospero was his dad's name. This is Prospero II.

ALICE

Oh, well I beg your pardon, Prospero II.

CORAL

Anyway, I should get unpacked. It was great meeting you guys!

Coral enters her bedroom.

ALICE

Oh? Yeah. We'll talk later.

Coral closes the door behind her abruptly, forgetting Prospero II in the living room. Annoyed, he rubs himself against the door. Coral's hands reach out from behind the door and pull Prospero II in with her.

LIZ

Is it me or did she get taller?

INT. CORAL'S ROOM - DORM - DAY

Coral unpacks and hangs pictures of her parents and home, then tapes up Ulysses' sketch of the Trunkoleviathan. She looks at the sketch and pets Prospero II.

INT. BIOLOGY LECTURE HALL - DAY

An old PICTOGRAPH of a SPERM WHALE is on display behind Professor PENELOPE CRICHTON (40s) as she delivers her opening lecture to her SPECULATIVE BIOLOGY class.

PROF. CRICHTON

"It was Moby-Dick that dismantled me... left me with this dead stump I stand on. For forever and a day I shall chase that white whale."

The STUDENTS, Coral included, look at Crichton confused.

PROF. CRICHTON (CONT'D)

That's a line from Moby Dick.

She calls on one CONFUSED PUPIL with his hand raised.

CONFUSED PUPIL

I thought this was a science class?

PROF. CRICHTON
But why do we study science?

She calls on a KNOWITALL.

KNOWITALL
To further our understanding of the
natural world.

Crichton makes a raspberry fart noise and gives a thumbs
down.

PROF. CRICHTON
Anyone else?

A NAIVE STUDENT beside Coral tries her luck. Crichton calls
on her.

NAIVE STUDENT
To... better serve humanity?

PROF. CRICHTON
Don't make me barf.

The class giggles. Coral offers comfort to the naive student.

CORAL
(whispers)
It was a good answer.

PROF. CRICHTON (CONT'D)
I contend the reason we study
science is that it's
personal.

The entire class starts typing on their keyboards. Coral
pulls out a leather-bound notebook, already replete with her
own naturalist sketches, observations, and data. She finds a
mostly blank page and writes on it.

PROF. CRICHTON (CONT'D)
As scientists, we go where our
curiosity takes us.

Coral writes *Personal, curiosity...*

PROF. CRICHTON (CONT'D)
Our *vendetta* is truth. But
sometimes there are those who allow
their biases, to get the better of
them.

As Coral writes *vendetta*, Crichton switches the display to
the infamous Robert Wilson photo of the LOCH NESS MONSTER.

PROF. CRICHTON (CONT'D)
Can anyone tell me what this is?

She calls on a gullible student.

GULLIBLE STUDENT
The Loch Ness Monster?

PROF. CRICHTON
Wrong. It's a toy submarine with a plastic head attached. How about this one?

Crichton switches to the Patterson-Gimlin BIGFOOT VIDEO. The class raises their hands. A TRYHARD blurts out before she calls on him.

TRYHARD
A guy in a costume?

PROF. CRICHTON
People usually wait till I call on them, but sure. What about her?

The next slide is of a FIJI MERMAID-- a primate mummy stitched together with a fish. Crichton calls on a SMART ALEC.

SMART ALEC
"The Little Mermaid?"

The class laughs except Coral, who finds the photo unsettling.

PROF. CRICHTON
You think it's funny? What about *this* one?

Crichton changes the slide to the skull of Piltdown Man. Only Coral and a few others raise their hands. Crichton calls on Coral.

CORAL
That's the Piltdown Man, a missing link hoax, composed from a human cranium and an orangutan jaw.

Crichton is quietly impressed.

PROF. CRICHTON
Correct. *Fabricated* in 1912, exposed *forty* years later, and persistently cited to this day by anti-intellectuals to undermine legitimate science.

Coral writes down *to undermine legitimate science...*

PROF. CRICHTON (CONT'D)
 Let this be a lesson to all of you
 would-be scientists. There are no
 short cuts. Otherwise Captain Ahab
 would have used a thousand gallons
 of white paint and called it a day.

Crichton laughs at her own joke. She calls on the confused
 pupil again.

CONFUSED PUPIL
 Who is Captain Ahab?

Crichton looks at the class and sees a lot of students
 waiting for her to answer. She sighs and turns to the
 whiteboard.

PROF. CRICHTON
 I hope you're all good at math.

INT. LECTURE HALL - LATER

As the rest of the class files out, Coral approaches
 Professor Crichton.

CORAL
 Professor Crichton, can I talk to
 you for a second?

PROF. CRICHTON
 Ah, you're an alien.

Coral is a deer in headlights. Crichton gestures to a
 CANADIAN FLAG PATCH on Coral's backpack.

CORAL
 I'm from Nova Scotia.

PROF. CRICHTON
 That's what I meant. How can I
 help?

CORAL
 It's just, you know. You were
 talking about mermaids and... other
 sea monsters. I just... we can't
really know they don't exist. Can
 we? I mean we can't prove it.

PROF. CRICHTON
 You're talking about proving a
 negative?

CORAL

Right.

PROF. CRICHTON

Well, have you ever seen a mermaid?

CORAL

No, but... my *friend* has.

PROF. CRICHTON

Well you can tell your friend that if something doesn't have a scientific explanation, it doesn't exist. Something smells fishy.

CORAL

Oh, it's tuna. I had it for... breakfast.

An awkward silence.

PROF. CRICHTON

I have to pick up my daughter from swim class.

CORAL

Oh, of course. I'll see you--

Crichton is out the door.

CORAL (CONT'D)

--In class.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Coral starts walking home. THUNDER RUMBLES.

CORAL

Are you kidding me?!

She starts running to avoid the rain.