

MACK'S DEEP DIVE

"The Snarflpuss"

Written by

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EXT. DEEP DIVER. 30 FEET UNDERWATER.

On the bow of her family's steampunk submarine, the DEEP DIVER, MACK (10) a humanoid mackerel - basks in the remaining rays of sunlight that seep down to this depth. Like the rest of her family, she's stuck here. Unlike them, however, Mack believes in going with the current, instead of against it. She blows air bubbles and watches as they float up into the sun.

A small, fluffy, pink SNARFLPUSS, bounces around her in the currents. She reaches up and allows it to gently land on her arm. She brings it in towards her face and watches as it's fur-like tentacles billow in the currents. They blink at each other. She raises up a green, webbed finger and pokes it. It glows, brightly. She watches in awe as it changes colors with a shimmering shine. She's completely fascinated. Then, with the other hand, she pulls out a small yellow tape recorder and presses it on.

MACK

Captain's log, entry number 582, we here on the Deep Diver prepare for yet another deep dive into Heronia's Abyss as we continue my parents psychotic quest for the quill of a dragonfish. Should we succeed in extracting, said firey quill from the beast of the depths, the creatures of Leftopolisis will have no choice, but to officially name me as the most popular, most awesome, most absolutely magnificent -

Suddenly a large periscope swivels around towards the bow. A giant eye is pressed into the center of the scope. It belongs to TIBURON, Mack's father, who, quite literally, always has at least one eye on her.

TIBURON (V.O.)

Mack! What are you doing out there? We're preparing to dive in T-minus 5 minutes!

MACK

(overly dramatic)
But dad, I deserve these last moments of sunlight before you drag me back down to the dark depths of the abyss of despair -

TIBURON (V.O.)
Get inside now! ...before your
mother sees!

Mack now swims up towards the periscope, with her Snarflpuss dragging behind in her current.

MACK
Maybe you should come outside
instead. It's wonderful out here
the Snarflpusses-

TIBURON
Snarflpi...

MACK
The snarflpi, don't even bite at
this depth, see! I even made it
glow, and nothing -

Mack extends her hand. The giant eyeball blinks horizontally. Tiburon stares at her, then at the snarflpuss, as if he is actually observing her discovery.

Suddenly the snarflpuss bares it's large fangs and chomps down on her fin.

MACK (CONT'D)
Ow! What was that? Way to crumble
under pressure!

Mack flicks it off of her and it bounces along in the current, blinking brightly in different colors. As it drifts away, it collides with another snarflpuss, and that one angrily blinks away also. Mack nurses her hurt fin.

TIBURON
(chuckling)
Serves you right for picking on the
poor thing! Now get inside before
your mother -

Too late. A large steel door creaks open. Mack's mother, CALA(mari) half-squid, half-humaid, slithers out on deck. Her suction cups pop, pop, popping as she moves.

CALA
Mackerel Orca Poseidon. Get inside
now!

CALA/MACK
Or you'll jeopardize...

Cala's surprised by the mimicry, she stops mid-speech.

MACK

The quest for the dragonfish, I know, I know.

CALA

Well, that, but also, if we don't leave now we'll miss the aquabat migration. Your father and I have tracked them to a small cave just beneath the Saratoga reef!

MACK

Aquabats? Really? Let me guess their poop has some magic chemical that can help seaweed photosynthesize.

The eye swivels in on her.

CALA

Perhaps. We'll have to collect some fecal samples while we're there! Now march!

MACK

UGH! Are you serious right now? That's so, ughhh!

Mack huffs and puffs dramatically off deck. Tiburon's eye delightfully watches her performance.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. CONTROL ROOM.

There's a large window at the helm surrounded by screens. Two steering wheels mark the front of the room and in the back is a large desk with thousands of switches. Sitting in control of said switches is HALLIE B (13), a halibut-humanoid and Mack's goodie-good older sister.

As Mack approaches the desk, one of Hallie B's eyes rolls over to that side of her face.

MACK

What are you looking at?

HALLIE B

Were you like trying to make us miss the aquabat migration or what?

MACK

Why is everyone in this family so excited about these stupid aquabats? And what is it about poo that excites all of you so much?

HALLIE B

What? Poo? Are we doing a fecal sample collection? There's no fecal sample collection listed on the itinerary. I'm going to need to get the test tubes prepped and sterile. Wait, are you messing with me?

MACK

No, that's how I got us in to this in the first place! I made one, itty bitty comment about photosynthesis and poof! Elbow deep in aquabat poop.

HALLIE B

Well, I mean, come on Mack. You should know better than to joke with mom about feces. She wrote her dissertation on it...

MACK

Our mom is a literal poop doctor and I'm somehow not supposed to joke about it?

WIRR! Tiburon's periscope pedestal is lowered down into the control room. He looks very much like a leopard shark in a lab coat, because, essentially, he is.

TIBURON

You're only allowed to joke about your mother's doctorate when you have one of your own that we can make fun of.

MACK

So in like a bazillion years.

TIBURON

Oh honey, if it takes you a bazillion years to get your doctorate we won't have to make fun of your subject, we'll just make fun of you for being dumb.

Hallie B laughs, hard. Mack's stung.

The metallic doors to the control room WOOSH open and in walks Cala.

CALA
Battle stations family, the
aquabats wait for no one!

Cala takes her place at the helm. Tiburon slides over behind the other wheel, while Mack slumps into her seat at the control panel. Hallie B rolls her eye back to the other side of her face then flicks a hundred switches on. Mack turns one knob a half a click.

MACK
Do we have to go see the aquabats?

CALA
Enough Mack! You're the only one
giving us attitude. Now, Tiburon,
port rudder set to -.15 Degrees?

Tiburon yanks his wheel down with brute force.

TIBURON
Copy. Rudder set.

CALA
Hallie B, coordinates in place?

HALLIE B
Copy! Our course should be
streaming now.

Hallie B presses a sequence of buttons. On the window, a chart appears with a blinking orb. Hallie B looks at Mack, smug, like a typical teacher's pet.

MACK
Show off.

CALA
Mack, pressurization system
manually calibrated to match
computer?

Mack twists her one knob another half of a click.

MACK
Yes, even though the computer does
my job automatically the knob has
turned. Rest assured.

CALA
What was that?

MACK

Copy.

CALA

Computer, analyze current patterns.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

The currents are moving in your favor, doctor.

CALA

Excellent, onward.

The submarine creaks to a start, and DIVES. Bubbles flood over the windshield. Eventually, they clear, revealing a school of swarming, brightly colored butterfly fish.

CALA (CONT'D)

Adjusting course for butterfly fish. Computer, close exhaust hatch.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP DIVER. EXHAUST PIPE.

Shutters against the exhaust pipe angle downward.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Exhaust slat lowered to a 36 degree output.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. CONTROL ROOM.

Tiburón yanks the wheel to the left. Hallie B flips a sequence of switches, Mack does nothing.

They dive deeper and deeper, and outside the window, the water gets darker and darker. As they continue, Cala keeps shouting commands to her crew, who all follow them diligently, except for Mack. Mack blows bubble rings in her seat as she stares off to space.

CALA

Hallie B, our course -

HALLIE B

Already reverted.

CALA
And our rudder depth.

TIBURON
Holding steady.

CALA
Pressurization system -

MACK
Handled by the computer.

CALA
Mack!

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Pressurized. Do not worry, Doctor.

Eventually, the blinking orb on the course nears its destination.

TIBURON
Look Mack! Snarflpi!

Mack excitedly looks back out the window.

CALA
Let's proceed with caution as we approach the opening to the cave, don't want a school of snarflpi getting accidentally dragged in with our backwash, there's no telling how the aquabats would react to that. Computer, keep exhaust shutters angled.

HALLIE B
Ugh, drifters, they're just always in the way.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Copy doctor, however, exhaust output angle seems larg-

MACK
Come on Hal, stop being such a butt!

Tiburon laughs.

HALLIE B
MOM!

CALA
Language Mack!

MACK
That's her name isn't it? HalibUTT.

CALA
Stop it! You know your sister
prefers Hallie B. On this ship, we
respect each other.

MACK
No one seems to respect me.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Doctor -

CALA
Maybe you need to give a little
more to get a little more, Mack.

MACK
Maybe you all need to start acting
more like the snarflpi, at least
they know how to go with the flow,
they're not rushing off for some
stupid aquabat migration.

HALLIE B
Why would you ever float, when you
can swim?

MACK
And that there's your problem
butt-

Cala turns back and looks at Mack, she holds the syllable.

MACK (CONT'D)
But, tonight I will try to see
things your way, Hallie B.

It's a good save, well good enough.

TIBURON
Look! There it is! The Saratoga
reef!

The USS Saratoga has sunk to the bottom of the sea. It's overgrown with corals and grasses and has been transformed into a fish haven. The Deep Diver inches closer, and closer, searching for the cave's mouth.

CALA

Can you believe the garbage humans put in the sea? I mean it's hard to believe that a clunker like that ever even floated.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP DIVER. CONTINUOUS.

We see the DEEP DIVER clunk along towards the reef, and we're not sure Cala's ship illustrates her point.

Yet despite the cumbersome shape, the Deep Diver pulls in to the cave with ease. A large spotlight automatically powers on and its beam guides them forward.

The school of snarflpi spill in just behind it, stuck in its wake.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. CONTROL ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

CALA

Steady now, steady. Let's slow the engines by three clicks.

Tiburon adjusts the throttle.

HALLIE B

Look mom! There they are!

Aquabats hang above them, tucked into the corral crevasses.

CALA

Oh, aren't they magnificent?

One aquabat flutters out from it's crack, it passes by the windshield and the entire family, even Mack gawks at it.

MACK

Ok, ok, aquabats are pretty awesome.

TIBURON

Are you saying that you're happy we came?

MACK

I'll see how I feel after the poo pick up.

CALA

Speaking of, let's put 'er in neutral and prepare for a water walk. Hallie B, ready your dive suit.

Hallie B, pulls out the dive suit, complete with a bubble helmet. She begins pulling it on.

MACK

You know that suit makes you look chunky.

HALLIE B

That's because it's pressurized.

MACK

Are you sure it's not just cause you're wide, Halibut?

HALLIE B

MOM!

CALA

Can it you two! This is serious. We need utter concentration. On my mark, and neutral.

The ship is clicked in to neutral.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP DIVER. CONTINUOUS.

The ship stops in the cave beneath the aquabats, it's bright headlight acts more like a floodlight, illuminating the entire area. It's calm for a moment, until their wake catches up to them. Then, hundreds of snarflpi tumble into the ship. They change colors as they bounce off of it and they float nearby the snarling aquabats, angrily rearing their fangs.

One snarflpuss, however, is sucked up through the exhaust.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. EXHAUST.

It tumbles through the pipes, feverishly glowing in different colors, until, eventually it's clanked and banged and shot out the other end.

INT. ENGINE ROOM.

The snarflpuss is coughed out of the pipe into the engine room. It looks around, then, takes out all it's rage on the glowing, nuclear-esc power source.

CHOMP! Chomp. Chomp. Chomp.

It bites the power source over and over again until -
Everything goes dark.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. CONTROL ROOM.

The ship's sinking, dropping in depth like a rock.

CALA
Everyone, emergency positions.

The family snaps in to action. Tiburon yanks up on the wheel.

TIBURON
Our depth's dropping. I can't
maintain our position.

CALA
Computer, stabilize.

But it's too late, they crash against a stalagmite. Suddenly the cave goes dark. Cala flips switches vigorously.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Stabilized.

MACK
A little late for that.

CALA
Computer, assess damage.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Severe damage to headlight, main
power grid, not responding.
Operating on critical power mode
with reserve battery banks.

Emergency lights quickly flicker on in the cockpit, but outside the window it's still completely black.

TIBURON
How did that happen?

EH. EHHH. EHHH.

An alarm sounds.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Pressurization system failing,
attempting to transfer to critical
power system.

CALA
Computer revert to manual
pressurization setting.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Manual pressurization system below
recommended -

CALA
That must be an error. Computer -

COMPUTER (V.O.)
I am a super computer designed by
you, yourself doctor. I do not make
errors.

CALA
Then that must mean -

Cala, Tiburon and Hallie B all turn to face Mack.

CALA (CONT'D)
Mack. Please tell me you were
actually adjusting the
pressurization system each time I
asked.

MACK
Well, since the computer was just
automatically doing it, I didn't
think my job really mattered -

CALA
Of course it mattered! Just because
you can't see -

TIBURON
Now, snookems, let's keep our heads
and focus on getting out of this
cave before we're crushed by the
fathoms of water that are all
currently pushing down on us.

CALA

Without our headlights functioning, it's too dangerous to try to move! We could hit another stalagmite or get sucked in to a subterranean current.

HALLIE B

So what you're saying is, we're going to crash, or we're all going to be crushed to death?

MACK

Oh what do you have to worry about, you're the flattest one here!

TIBURON

Mack! Now is no time to pick on your sister! If you keep it up, eventually she's going to poke back, and you're not going to like it very much.

Mack sulks.

CALA

Maybe if we adjust -

TIBURON

Without our power grid it's no use.

MACK

Wait, dad, what did you say?

TIBURON

I said, without our power grid -

MACK

Eventually she's going to poke back. Computer, what's the angle on exhaust pipe enclosure?

COMPUTER (V.O.)

36 down.

MACK

36, that's big enough for a snarflpuss!

Everyone stares at her.

MACK (CONT'D)

Don't you see what this means! The snarflpi followed us into the cave!

Mack runs over to the periscope.

MACK (CONT'D)
Computer raise periscope!

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Sorry Mack, in critical danger
mode, I only obey your mother.

TIBURON
(to Cala)
You are a lot smarter than we all
give you credit for.

EHH. EHH. EHH. The alarm keeps sounding.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Pressurization system set to burst
in approximately 2 minutes.

MACK
Mom. Please! You have to trust me.
If there are enough snarflpi in
this cave, then I can move the
periscope and poke at least a
handful of them. And they'll drift
off and poke the rest of the
school...

HALLIE B
And they could light up the cave!
Mack! You're a genius!

Mack's stunned by her compliment.

HALLIE B (CONT'D)
You know, at annoying, things!

MACK
Come on, mom. It's worth a try.

CALA
Don't look at me, you're the
annoying things expert. Get up
there.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Pressurization system set to burst
in 1 minute 45 seconds.

Mack beams and climbs up on the pedestal.

CALA
Computer, raise periscope.

The pedestal moves upward.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP DIVER. CONTINUOUS.

Mack's eye pokes through the periscope. It's completely dark around the ship. She begins swiveling it in different directions.

MACK (V.O.)
I can't see anything.

HALLIE B (V.O.)
Haven't you been listening, the powers out which means no headlights, hence why we're stuck about to be crushed to death.

MACK (V.O.)
Well I'm just saying it would help if I could see something.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
1 minute and 25 seconds until crushing!

CALA (V.O.)
Whenever you're ready Mack.

Mack begins vigorously moving the periscope until - she's hit one. The snarflpuss glows brightly in the sea of black.

MACK (V.O.)
I got one!

She keeps turning the scope until, she's hit another, and another. Suddenly brightly colored snarflpi begin appearing at all corners of the cave.

CALA (V.O.)
Well done! Just a few more and the cave will be bright enough to risk movement -

Mack whacks another clump of snarflpi and the cave glows brightly with colorful creatures floating in all directions, like stars. It's almost peaceful, until, the snarflpi begin to awaken the aquabats.

Tens of winged creatures flutter out from the corral crevasses, furiously smacking snarflpi with their wings.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
36 seconds 'til crushing!!

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. CONTROL ROOM.

TIBURON
Sweetie, I know you're the captain
and everything, but let's get out
of here before this becomes a full
blown melee!

CALA
You all know what to do! Computer
lower periscope!

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP DIVER. CONTINUOUS.

The periscope shrinks in, just as the Deep Diver, shoots out
of the cave.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Systems stabilizing!

Behind it, the school of glowing snarflpi are shoved out of
the cave's mouth by panicked aquabats who scatter in open
sea. The Deep Diver keeps rising away from them.

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Optimal depth acquired! We did it!

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. CONTROL ROOM.

MACK
Oh look! The aquabats are
migrating!

TIBURON
(to Cala)
It may not be our best low-impact
ecology study, but at least we now
definitively know that aquabats do
not agree with snarflpi.

Cala laughs. The Deep Diver hovers as the aquabats swim off in
all different directions.

MACK

Fewf. That was a close one. Right?

TIBURON

Don't think you're off the hook yet Mack.

CALA

For tomorrow's lesson, you're going to learn how to fix a power system, manually.

MACK

Beats collecting fecal samples.

CALA

What was that?

MACK

I said that I would be lucky to learn from you mother who I so love and respect, like you.

TIBURON

Smooth one.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP DIVER. DINNER TABLE.

There's a large seaweed salad sitting in a bowl. Cala scoops some on to her plate then passes it round the table.

CALA

So, what did everyone learn today?

TIBURON

Never underestimate the power of something small.

The silverware clanks on the plates.

HALLIE B

I learnt that pressurization suits should be incorporated into our emergency response plan.

CALA

Excellent note Safety Officer Hal. We'll be sure to bring that up at our next briefing. Mack? What about you?

Mack answers with her mouth stuffed full.

MACK

That knowing how to annoy things
really pays off...

The whole family glares at her.

MACK (CONT'D)

And that no matter what job I do, I
have to do the best that I can?

TIBURON

There you go.

They all continue eating. Tiburon squirts some squid ink onto
his salad.

MACK

May I be excused? I've got a big
day tomorrow, fixing a power system
and all.

TIBURON

That depends are you going out on
deck to look for more snarflpi?

MACK

Maybe. Maybe I'll get lucky and see
a few late aquabats.

Tiburon shrugs at Cala, impressed.

CALA

Go on. Enjoy your time at this
depth.

HALLIE B

Me too?

Cala nods. The two scoot out their chairs and rush away.
Tiburon smiles at Cala.

TIBURON

What about you? What was your
lesson of the day?

CALA

That maybe I'm not the only one
who's smarter than she's given
credited for.

Tiburon smirks at her. Cala chomps into her salad and we
- FADE TO BLACK.

