

Cetacean Observations

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Summary

"Sorry about us land-lubbers being the dominating operators of starships in general." — Trek BBS: March/April 2024 Challenge: Briggs and Veker become trapped in Cetacean Ops after a software conflict locks its doors and submerges them in water.

Notes

Author's notes: This was written as part of the Trek BBS March/April 2024 Challenge and takes place in the late 24th century. Cetacean Ops was last seen in "Missed the Mishap". A Delphine appeared in the TNG novel "Dark Mirror".

March/April 2024 Challenge: Wet and Wild.

Trek BBS: March/April 2024 Challenge

"Wet and Wild: Cetacean Observations"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* trekked blissfully through the vacuous, suck-filled realm of non-pushy-air space. Commander Seifer took the command chair where the cyber-implant-infested Ferengi BOB stood next to.

"So, can I go back to my own time in the future yet? I'm getting a temporal displacement rash," BOB carped. "Even the Borg self-produced analgesic cream."

Seifer waved it off. "Not until you tell me all the lottery numbers from every money-based planet within a ten-lightyear radius. I'm really into money this week. Everyone, you are to expect a paycheck on Friday. Bonuses pending."

"Commander, my self-configuring door experiment is ready to begin practical testing," reported Lieutenant Briggs as he switched to a nearby console. "By this time tomorrow, we should all have automated French door entranceways."

But Lieutenant Commander Armond entered the Bridge with his own PADD and business splayed across it. "Belay that. I've returned to the *Phoenix-X*, per rotation, to run an extra system diagnostic on top of the one that's already running. Can't have too many, is what I always say."

"What? But redundancy always leads to self-awareness? It's the computational absolution of too-much-AI!" Briggs protested to a halting palm.

Seifer reassured, "Armond's installed anti-sentience subroutines, so we never have a *Discovery* situation. Why don't you check on the underwater watering experiment in Cetacean Ops for now? The fact we discovered different consistencies of pure, unmixed water in the future is just so fascinating."

Briggs approached the non-French windowed door of Cetacean Ops to find the usually fully submerged room draining and reconfiguring into a pool/deck set up.

"This room has an air variant? Seems oppressive to me," the man said as he entered to find Lieutenant Commander Veker working at a console and the Delphine officer, Lieutenant Whui, poking his head out of the pool. "Also, sorry about us land-lubbers being the dominating operators

of starships in general."

Whui swam around before acknowledging him. "No apologies required! I receive an excess allocation of ship's resources as compensation for the inherent social disparities and strifes therein."

"It's why I come here to run my science simulations," Veker admitted as he worked. "This latest one will model how many multiverses there are, and if those multiverses are contained within even more multiverses. So, like a Russian doll thing."

The Operations officer approached with an alert coming off his PADD. "Actually, it looks like Armond's double system diagnostic is triggering my self-configuring door program. In fact, it's enabling front-door access to several *Phoenix-X* systems!"

"Ugh. That old crew always gets preferential treatment," Veker complained as he let Briggs join him and they both switched the interface. "Did you know that Ensign Dan once bud in front of me at the replicator? Luckily any one of us can relieve him of duty for any length of time we see fit."

Suddenly, the door to Cetacean Ops clicked locked and the pool water began to overflow and rise. "Oh, dear. The room is reconfiguring without cause," Whui observed. "Can any of you breathe underwater?"

"It's a malfunction. It's not shutting down!" Veker reported as they worked and the water was at their ankles. "Yes, us Kelpiens are adept at land and water, but it normally takes our kind hours to change clothes. A wet Starfleet uniform is a prolonged form of torture."

Briggs tried disengaging the system to no avail as the pool reached their waists. "Yeah, and I'm a Silver Blood. If I'm in water for too long, I'll involuntarily become water. It's why I stopped drinking prune juice."

"Is it wrong that I want to see those two things happen? Also, do you become the prune juice?" Whui inquired after coming up from his submerged console. "Oh, and transporters and communications are down."

The Silver Blood shook his head as the water was now at their chests. "This is my fault for having an obsession with the French. Like, why do almost all of them now have British accents? I cut far too many corners thinking their type of doors would gain me architectural-linguistic insight."

"Your curiosity is not a failure, but a strength," Veker assured as everyone was now wading underwater. "It is because of this, we have come to appreciate Cetacean Ops for its reclusive, but advantageous wet station."

Briggs looked around. "Oh! We can talk underwater. That's great. Probably the random consistency thing mentioned earlier. Of course! We can shift the hard water into the locking mechanism and twist it open."

"It's true. We dolphin-like species still require mechanically 19th century-type entrance ways for ease of minds-sakes," Whui admitted. "You never know when a large copper-diving helmeted Jacques Cousteau will come clanging on our thick, brass doors, expecting an old school explorative visit."

Nodding to that, all three then went over to the door and used their appendages to relocate and form the water in a way that would begin rotating the physical locking mechanism. Suddenly, the door opened and all the water spilled out into the corridors!

"So, is everything going to be okay?" Whui asked as he lept into his pool and Briggs checked his PADD.

Tapping it, he discovered, "Yeah. My software decompiled and all systems are back to normal. Maybe the lesson here is: When in doubt, just go for a swim."

"Speak for yourself!" Veker complained while surveying his soaked Starfleet uniform. "I need to call my two handmaidens off their social-insurrection planning to help me out of this thing. Also, Starfleet employs handmaidens for Kelpiens in the 24th century."

Suddenly, Seifer stopped in his walk-by tracks when he noticed the soaking hallway he was stepping in. "Ugh. Did you guys have a side-thing while I was on the Bridge? Did I not order everyone into suspended, uneventful states when I am not in the room? It's to cut down on episodic situational dramas."

He looked at their blinking, blank stares.

"Oh, never mind. It's fine. I just wish I hadn't banned towels from the ship after that fencing craze had everyone wearing them around their necks for fashion," Seifer admitted. "Sooo pretentious. Anyway, carry on."

After he left, Briggs snapped his fingers. "That's right. We dry ourselves with de-poisoned retlaw plants now." He opened a nearby hatch, pulled out a purple, fuzzy ball and began dabbing it against his uniform. "Be careful, though. Too much water re-enables their toxicity."

"Very well," Veker replied as he got his own and followed suit. "This swimming thing may not be so bad after all, from a scientific study point of view. The containment is not unlike being contained in a multiverse. I will schedule pool time from now on. Pool time for everyone!"

Briggs nodded as they continued. "Also, door stuff." This was to be the start of a beautiful aquatic course of study.

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