



FROGMAN – synopsis - 01/11/16

Older Meera 1: Audience take their numbered seats. The actor is already in the space, sitting on a child's bed. She explains to the audience how to put their headsets on and what to do if they have any difficulty. She then tells us that she is Meera, an Australian children's author. She is about to read the first draft of her story 'Frogman' to her son, who we hear but don't see. He interrupts constantly, comedically. He is 6. She begins reading from a manuscript.

The story is about an orphan girl raised by starfish who has to fetch a coral from the depths of a reef and fight a terrible sea monster in the process.

Sleepover 1: Meera aged 11, and her best friends Lily and Shaun sit in a triangle on a rug in Medea's bedroom. It is 1995 in a small coastal town somewhere near Cairns, Australia. We, in VR, are in the centre of the group, so the conversation happens all around us. Older Meera, through live feed mixing is always there in the background, watching over and occasionally commenting, or reading another line of her story.

The kids are coral reef-building geeks. The first minute of this conversation is a montage of arguments about plugs, trading, jokes, facts, kids' games and school-chat. The time is displayed, as on an old, red digital clock in each moment. The kids are excited about the annual coral bloom, which they are all you g to try to experience next week.

When the scene settles, all three are lying on their stomachs in sleeping bags. Lily says, "Do you think they'll find Steve Mackenzie?" Shaun says, "I hope not." It emerges that the school bully, who they all hate, has gone missing. This is why the three friends' parents have decided that they will stay together for safety, at least until they find out what happened to Steve. Last month, a diver also disappeared in the nearby Cloud Bay Reef.

Lily tells a story about the bunyip, a mythical water monster which she says has the head of a dog, the body of a crocodile, flippers and tusks. She describes in vivid detail how the bunyip dragged Steve from the harbour wall and the fragments of fingernail and tooth they will find in the rocks. It's a horror story. Meera is scared and cuts her off. Some indication that they had a relationship, e.g. "He wasn't that bad".

Cut to later that night. Shaun and Lily are asleep. Meera hears her parents downstairs arguing. She presses her hands to her ears and squeezes her eyes shut.

The bunyip comes for Meera. A frightening sequence which begins will begin with the same warning signs each time. We see only glimpses of the terrifying figure, but just at the climax we snap to daylight.

Diving 1: A man's face in a diving mask, close up sitting on the edge of small boat in the ocean. He falls backward into the water. The camera follows. This is Meera's father Finn, a water police officer. We hear through the buddy system a conversation about the job, the circumstances of the disappearance, and reference to Finn's impending divorce. We learn that he hasn't told Meera yet; he's worried about how she'll take it. The divers find a shiny tin box, but no body.

Older Meera 2: Meera has fallen asleep on the bed. Her son wakes her up, wanting her to continue the story. She does. Her character meets a monster.

Sleepover 2: The next night. Steve has still not been found. There's more coral reef chat and more geeking about algae etc. They're playing Echo the Dolphin on Mega Drive and tearing the marine biology apart.

It's Shaun's turn to tell a story. It's another version of the bunyip. Once again Meera is haunted in the night by its presence, but this time we see glimpses of human hands and feet.

Diving 2: The search continues. The history of the reef. Other disappearances. It's protected - he can't dive where he wants to. More / different creatures. We hear reiterated that it's about to bloom, which will make searching for the body impossible.

Older Meera 3: The story continues. A confrontation between her character and this awful beast. Her son recognises something very truthful about the beast. But he's critical. His monsters are different. He has his own demons.



Sleepover 3: The night of the bloom. They're not allowed out, but they're ready to climb out of the window and go on their own. In classic Home Alone style, they've piled up clothes in sleeping bags and will leave a film running to convince Meera's parents they're still there.

But they're caught. Meera's dad stops them and explains the gravity of the situation. Meera is awkward and guilty.

It's Meera's turn to tell a bunyip story, but she can't, she fails. She says she rather go to sleep. They reluctantly do.

Bunyip sequence 3. Monster finally revealed. It's clearly Steve Mackenzie in a wetsuit.

She wakes Lily and Shaun up. She tells them she had been hanging out with Steve Mackenzie. He told her he had seen a rare coral and could get her cutting. They're endangered and it's illegal but she wants it. She goes with him and watches him dive at night. He didn't come back. She has said anything because she thinks she'll get in trouble. She knows where his body is.

Truth / repercussions

Older Meera 4: She hasn't finished it. How should it end?