

A Somewhat Unusual Frog episode 1 “Discovery” Transcript

INTRO

A Somewhat Peculiar Frog, episode 1: Discovery.

MATTHEW

(SFX. Click of recorder, Sounds of outdoors) Hello! This is Matthew Ingeri, surveying intern with the state parks service of Pennsylvania. Hello, future self and maybe Dr. Revelmire if you listen to these! It is Wednesday, August 14th, 11:48 A.M., and I am here at the Lordview Estate. I have decided to name this section “beaver town” because – there are beavers! I’ve noticed two adults, they appear healthy and lively, and I suspect there are a few kits here somewhere. Their lodge is on the far north side of the lake, would not recommend a trail anywhere within eyesight of the beaver lodge for protection of habitat. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click back on.) There are walnut trees here! Oh uh – M. Intergi, here at sector NE3 of the Lordview Estate. There is a grove of black walnut trees nestled up a bit away from the lake. I need to come back in November to collect! The walnuts, that is. Not the trees. For uh, research. Not because they are a very healthy and tasty snack which goes very well crunched up in oatmeal. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click back on.) M. Ingeri, sector E2 of the Lordview Estate, I have stumbled across a small pile of coyote droppings. Impossible to tell what the big fella has been eating from these, but worth noting coyotes are in the area. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click back on. Frogs, crickets.) Wow. This is breathtaking. M. Ingeri, sector C of the Lordview Estate, at the old manor, standing at the edge of the lake. The view is incredible. The sun is setting, and it's casting this purple/red glow over the surface of water. It's just incredible. There's a sense of stillness here. *(beat. Sounds of crickets, frogs)* Awe. There's a frog just absolutely lounging on a little rock about two feet off the edge of the lake, I think he's sleeping. Geez that's a big freakin' frog, gotta be about the size of a baseball. Hmmp. Ya'know, I'm not sure what species it is. Blue streaks on his back, and his skin isn't green, it's a yellowish-grayish sort of stony color. I really don't know what species it is. Y'know what. I *(clears throat. Official again)* have been authorized by the PA State Park Service to take samples of wildlife back to the field station. So. I'm gonna pop on these gloves *(SFX. SNAP)* and grab 'em. *(SFX. MOVING SLOWLY INTO WATER, THEN SPLASHING)* Gotcha you little bugger! It's okay little fella I'm not gonna hurt you. *CROAK*. What are you? I've never seen a frog like you. *CROAK* You are weird looking, do you know that? *CROAK*. What the heck are you? *CROAAAK*. You have a lovely voice. *CROAK*. You're coming with me. *Smaller CROAK*. I only have one specimen + carrying case, let's hope I don't also find an endangered green newt. *CROOOOOOOOAK*. Okay – you're okay, here I'll put some dirt and rocks in there with you – okay? *Croak*. Okay. Good lord it gets dark out here fast. I'd better get back before I get lost. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click of recorder.) Matt Ingeri, back at the field station at Lordview Estate. Man, I am stumped right now. I can't figure out what the heck this frog is. First off, it is definitely a frog not a toad because of the long jumping legs and smooth slimy skin. The coloring is certainly strange – there are no documented frogs in Pennsylvania with yellow gray skin and blue streaks, but that

could be just some sort of skin deformity, which isn't unheard of. I am just puzzled by it's body. The front feet only have three toes, the back feet have six. The feet don't have sticky toe pads or climbing claws so I don't think you're a tree frog, your eyes aren't gold so you're not a bullfrog, you don't have the face markings of a woodland frog, and your ear drums aren't the right shape to be a green frog. That's another thing – I can't tell if it's a male or female. The bright colors and vocal sac make me think male, but there's no nuptial growth on the arms, and the large size makes me think female, but – Jeez. I'm really, I'm stumped here. I don't know the species, I don't know the gender. I will consult google. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click of recorder.) Okay, so, I'm not sure how relevant it is, but I found this really fascinating article about toads. There are a variety of toads in the world who use hallucinogenic drugs as a defense mechanism including the Sonoran desert toad and the Bufo Alvarius toad. Ancient cultures across Northern America harvested the poison from the toads and refined it into a salve which could be smoked or ingested, using the drug for medicinal and spiritual rituals. It is still used across the United States, and is currently the subject of fourteen pharmaceutical research trials. Woah. *CROAK*. I wonder how that first got discovered, hundreds of thousands of years ago. Some brave soul must have seen a colorful toad they'd never seen before and thought - I'm gonna lick you and see what happens. And here I sit, a frog in front of me I have never seen before. How would the course of humanity have been altered had that person never taken that lick those thousands of years ago? Am I morally obligated to lick this frog? *CROAK*. Yeah probably not. I should probably just figure out what exactly you are. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click of recorder.) Okay this is actually really really promising! I found a photograph of a newspaper clipping from 1983 about a researcher in Pennsylvania, about fifty miles North of here, who found a turtle with strange colors and mutations. It's from a "Dr. Crowne" - "I found a turtle, whom I have named Gerald, on a subsection of the Appalachian trail in Bushkill, Pennsylvania. He was stuck on his back, motionless, leading me to assume he had been in this position for some considerable time. As I approached Gerald, I noticed his skin was black-red, a shiny obsidian color with undertones of a maroon. I was puzzled. What was this turtle? I brought him to the Bushkill Wildlife and Game rehabilitation facility to try to get him identified, and none of the staff there were able to help. The turtle's legs, shell, and snout were measured, and the information only further confounded us. He was not a painted turtle, not snapping turtle, nor a mud turtle. It seemed that whatever box we tried to put this turtle in, he did not fit. We considered turtles not native to Pennsylvania, the red-headed Amazon river turtle, the red-crowned roof turtle, the Indian flapshell turtle, nothing was a match. The turtle was clearly exhausted and dehydrated, and so, once he was stable, I took him back with me to —" and then it's illegible in this scan — "for a few days to nurse him back to health. On my second day with Gerald, he spoke to me."

Wait. What. "Gerald requested that I bring him worms for him to eat". WHAT? Okay. This guy is nuts. Nevermind. *(SFX. Click of recorder off.)*

(SFX. Click of recorder.) I really can't find anything on this frog. I think it might be a new species. I think it actually might be a new species. Okay. Deep breaths. Oh my god. This is so huge. This is like – end up on a morning talk show level of huge. We're not talking about some

new kind of ant in the corner of the Amazon rainforest or something - we're talking about a brand spanking new species of frog right here in Pennsylvania. This is gonna change everything. This is gonna get me a scholarship for grad school - maybe even a full ride. Okay, just breathe, Matt. In – and out. In – and out. Okay. Let's feed the frog. What do you like, my wonderful special frog? Worms? Crickets? Moths? *(SFX. Tupperware popping open.)* Let's try some crickets. *(SFX. Cricket chirping)* There ya go lil bud. All yours. *(SFX frog eats cricket - gulp or something?)* Okay duly noted - you like crickets. How about a couple more? *(SFX frog eating more)* There ya go lil fella. I hope you're feeling nice and full. Okay. Tomorrow morning - I call Dr. Revelmire. I tell him about the frog. He comes, takes a look, if it really is a new species, we call the National Science Foundation. They come, confirm the findings - I get published - The Herpetological Conservation and Biology journal, Save the Frogs magazine, Herpetologica, post about it on blogs. I could probably get the director of the National Science Foundation to write me a letter of recommendation for grad school. Or at least the director of the Pennsylvania branch. Okay stop stop stop! Don't count your frogs before they've been confirmed to be a new species. I'm gonna have a coke, and the other half of my sandwich, and I'm gonna relax and try not to lose my mind thinking about it. *(SFX. CAN CLICKS OPEN)* I can put on futurama and just relax. *(CROAK CROAK CROAK)* I already fed you little fella, this is for me.

FROG

Food smelling good, I get some?

MATTHEW

What the fu–

OUTRO

This episode was written, created, and produced by Anna Stein and James Brandes. It starred James Brandes as Matthew Ingeri and Anna Stein as the Frog. Music and sound effect credits as well as social media and transcript links can be found in the show notes. Stick around after the credits for a trailer for another great audio drama.

Fun fact about frogs: Some species of frog can freeze over half their body in the winter and thaw unharmed come spring.

(SFX. Theme music fades out into an eerier music as the trailer begins)

TRAILER - BEFORE THE TONE

(SFX - The theme music begins to enter, and plays throughout. Mack is walking during the calls. Sometimes, the sounds of cars or passersby can be heard in the background on her end.)

(SFX - Sounds of a phone ringing (from the caller's end). It rings twice before getting the answering machine.)

DARIA

(in a recorded message)

Hey. You've reached Daria. I'm not at the phone right now, so leave a message after the tone, and I'll get back to you when I can.

(SFX - Answering machine beeps.)

MACK

Hey, Daria. It's Mack, your loving and long-suffering sister. Tell me, oh answering machine, when will your human counterpart answer my call?

Call me back.

(SFX - Beep.)

MACK

(sighs) Ok. Fine. I guess you won't be calling me back then. I really want to tell you about my day because I just had the most — bizarre isn't the right word. *Unsettling.* — job interview. The building itself was just ... Man, something about it was deeply - not - right.

(SFX - Beep.)

MACK

You know, Daria, being a CCTV operator is a lot more than watching cameras all - night. It is also feeling weird talking to your coworkers who you were watching all night for pay.

Heh, but I'd rather be doing the watching than being watched, right?

(SFX - Beep.)

MACK

(afraid)

There's someone following me. I - I don't know. He's been showing up places, my - my class, my glass studio. I don't - I'm not sure what to do.

(SFX - Beep.)

MACK

(slurry)

I don't ... something ... is wrong. Something's off. I — *(SFX - Glitch.)* I don't know— *(SFX - Glitch.)*

(SFX - Beep, synching with the bong of the music.)

(SFX - Music pauses before resuming with the credits.)

NARRATOR

Disclaimer: Nothing is what it seems. Not even the sound— *(SFX - Glitch.)*

Before The Tone is a psychological horror, science fiction podcast, produced by Knave Of Hearts. We follow Mack as she begins to work at the increasingly-suspicious Atlas Consulting.

But be warned, we may not be the only ones following.

(Beat.)

This trailer has featured the voices of Anna Stein as Mack, Emma Johanna Puranen as Daria, and Rebecca Hansson in the credits. The music was made by Duck Edwards. The sound design and dialogue editing were done by Katharine Seaton. It was written and directed by Anna Stein.

Thank you for listening.

For updates and ominous messaging, find us on twitter and tumblr at KnaveOfHeartsAD (*Knave of hearts A. D.*).

(SFX - A final bong closes out the music.)