

SIBÉAL POUNDER

BAD
Mermaids

On Thin
Ice

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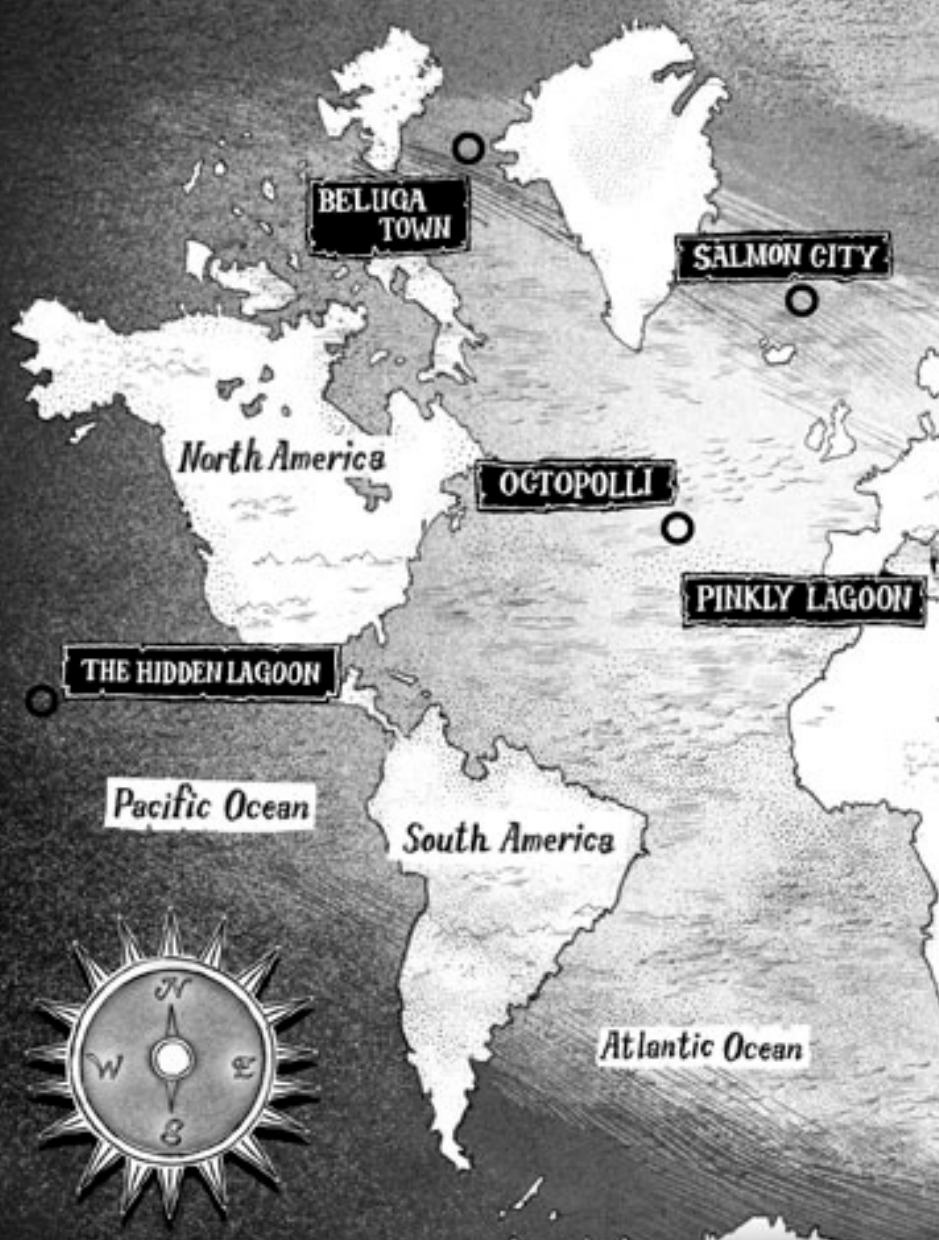
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**BELUGA
TOWN**

SALMON CITY

North America

OCTOPOLLI

PINKLY LAGOON

THE HIDDEN LAGOON

Pacific Ocean

South America

Atlantic Ocean



Arctic Ocean

The
MERMAID
WORLD
MAP

AMBERBERG

Europe

Asia

HERMIT GROVE

THE KINGDOM OF MUME

Africa

JEWELPORT

FORTRESS BAY

RAINBOW LANDING

THE CROCODILE
KINGDOM

Australia

Indian Ocean

FROSTOPIA

Antarctica

Last Time in Mermaid World ...

The gang grew bigger! At first it was just Beattie and her twin best friends, Mimi and Zelda – and, of course, Steve, the talking seahorse. But now they have Paris too. She's a human who, with the help of a magic necklace, can morph into a mermaid and various other sea creatures. And in the Crocodile Kingdom, they befriended Gronnyupple, the Seahorse Surprise-guzzling water witch, who told Beattie she's a water witch too! And they also figured out Mimi is a fishtalker. So that's the gang – two water witches, one fishtalker, a human who can morph into a mermaid, a talking seahorse and a ... Zelda.

When we left them, they were on their way to Frostopia in a clam car. Gronnyupple is convinced Maritza Mist is in trouble. Maritza is also a water witch and she owns the *Maritza Mist's Water Witch Catalogue*, where

all water witches order their magic. Gronnyupple didn't receive her latest catalogue order, which made her suspect something had happened to Maritza - and when they heard that two immortal mermaids who had used Maritza's magic potions had escaped from Viperview Prison, they started to worry. So they set off to find her.

But getting into Frostopia is a challenge because the kingdom is closed to mermaids from other realms. Beattie is hoping they'll be able to glide in undetected, which is wishful thinking because nothing ever seems to go to plan...

First, though, it's time to check in on a mermaid called Meri, in the far-off - and much warmer - underwater city of Fortress Bay. Because that's where this story *really* begins...

1

Meri Pebble, the Spy Mermaid

Meri Pebble had been a Fortress Bay spy for as long as she could swish her tail, and her morning routine was *always* the same.

She swam out of bed, a fish brushed her teeth, and she pulled her long black hair into a slick ponytail. Then she ate some of her favourite Sandcrackle cereal.

After breakfast, Meri collected her jellyfish assistant, Lady Wiggles, and together they swam to the northerly tower of Fortress Bay headquarters to do their morning rounds.

Only on this particular morning, she was running very late.

‘Excuse me, coming through,’ Meri said as she wriggled her way past all the spy mermaids crowding

the corridors. Meri was Fortress Bay's most promising young spy, so she had some special extra duties that none of the other mermaids knew about.

As she swam along, she swished her tail from side to side, making images flash across it. Her spy-mermaid tail looked plain and ordinary, but she could see pictures from all around the world on it. Spy mermaids kept an eye on former criminal mermaids, human divers who needed distracting and whales assisting with spy missions. Meri loved watching the mermaids of the underwater kingdoms, all free and having fun. They had no idea what dangers she was protecting them from.

Sometimes she wished she could be like them, but she couldn't leave Fortress Bay until her training was complete. And spy training took *years*.

In a quiet corridor she pressed her tail against a metal panel. Lady Wiggles did the same, only with her little jellyfish face. The panel glowed and clicked back to reveal a room beyond – a room filled with frost and freezing water.



‘Do you want to see who can create the biggest nose icicles today?’ Meri asked Lady Wriggles.

Lady Wriggles rearranged her tentacles into a NO. She never wanted to play that game.

‘Suit yourself,’ Meri said with a smile as the door closed behind them. Frost formed on her jet-black hair as she swam deeper inside.

‘Spy MP 241 reporting from Tower Five, secret lock four,’ she said, slotting her tail into a gap in the floor.

There was another click and Meri rose out of the ground on a platform. In front of her, another piece of the floor rose too – a thick tube, dark and frozen.

Lady Wiggles began punching buttons on a control panel.

Meri gave her a nod. ‘Spy MP 241 illuminating the ice narwhal.’

A light burst from the tube.

‘Spy MP 241 speaking. I can confirm that the ice narwhal is—’

Her eyes grew wide.

‘Gone!’

Lady Wiggles looked like she’d been electrified.

‘And the list?’ Meri said, her eyes darting to the back of the door, where a very important list was kept.

The list had vanished.

‘Whoever took the ice narwhal also took the list,’ Meri said. ‘Oh this is bad. Quick, Lady Wiggles. *The telephone.*’

Meri paused.

‘We can’t mention this to anyone, Lady Wriggles. We’ll be in so much trouble. We’ve got to get it back before anyone finds out.’

Lady Wriggles rearranged her tentacles into an Mmmmm.

‘Please,’ Meri begged.

‘*Swim Together, Sink Together*’ was the mermaid spy and sea-creature assistant pledge – Lady Wriggles had very little choice in the matter.

‘Oh, and one more thing,’ Meri went on. ‘Please could you make a fake replacement ice narwhal? Just until I find the real one.’

Lady Wriggles reluctantly scooped up some ice from the floor and squished it into shape.

Meri placed it in the tube. ‘Good narwhal sculpting! Now, the telephone.’

The jellyfish swam off and returned with a human phone.

A fish popped out of the receiver to take the message, because that’s how mermaids make phone calls.

'CODE BLUE, CODE BLUE. Urgent message to be delivered to Maritza Mist of Realm Nine, Frostopia. The ice narwhal is GONE.'



2

Zelda on Thick Ice

Beneath the freezing waters of Antarctica, Frostopia's perfect ice walls rose from the depths. It was a mermaid kingdom that didn't let outsiders in. A familiar clam car floated nearby, but only Beattie was in it.

'Oh I do like to be in Frostopiaaaaa! Oh I do like to be stuck to a waaaaalllll!' Zelda sang – from where she was frozen, upside down on the city's outer wall.

Zelda was impulsive. She liked taking risks, playing hockey – which she was excellent at – and annoying Steve, Beattie's talking seahorse.

'MY EARS ARE SCREAMING – you're *so* out of tune!' Steve said as Paris and Mimi tried to pull Zelda free.

'Only because I'm upside down,' Zelda shot back.

'Stop wriggling,' Mimi and Paris said at once, as they tried in vain to peel Zelda off the wall.

Mimi, Zelda's twin, was acquainted with her antics. Paris, on the other hand, was still getting used to her.

'Why is Zelda's tail making such a squeaking noise?' Beattie whispered. 'We'll be heard for miles around!'

'Oh calm down,' Zelda said. 'Look, there's no one here.'

Beattie didn't know why she bothered trying to keep them all out of trouble. She was almost always unsuccessful.

'What if we slide her down the wall by yanking her hair?' Paris suggested.

Zelda scowled. 'No one touches my hair.'

'I know!' Gronnyupple said as she rifled around in her backpack and pulled out a tiny potion bottle.

She lobbed the bottle at Zelda. It exploded, spreading a strange green gloop everywhere. Zelda's perfectly flicked green hair began flashing.

'Hmm ...' Gronnyupple said. 'That was meant to free you, but instead it's turned your hair ... into a shining beacon.'

‘Great,’ Beattie groaned, hitting her head repeatedly off the clam-car steering wheel.

‘Beattie ...’ Gronnyupple said. ‘I see Frostopia mermaids ...’

Zelda tried to turn. ‘I can’t see them! I can just see... bright-green light.’

Steve dived into his false teeth, making them snap shut.

Gronnyupple was right. In the distance, Beattie could make out two mermaids, their tails decorated with icicles and their hair an electric shade of blue. They rode on the backs of killer whales with SECURITY written in thick frost across their noses.

‘Hurry!’ Beattie hissed at the others, pointing madly at the mermaids.

‘Uh-oh,’ Mimi said.

Gronnyupple shook her head in disbelief. ‘How did they see us?’

Beattie stared at Zelda’s flashing hair. ‘I suppose it will always be a mystery.’

‘I hope we don’t get eaten,’ Gronnyupple said quietly

as she shoved some Seahorse Surprise sweets in her mouth.

‘Eaten?’ Beattie gulped.

Gronnyupple shrugged and pointed at the whale on the left. ‘I know a hungry face when I see one.’

Beattie gave the Frostopia mermaids a shy wave, but they glided straight past her and halted next to Zelda.

‘It’s not what you think,’ Zelda said quickly. Her face had gone purple from being upside down for too long, and her hair was still flashing.

They floated in awkward silence until one of the mermaids steered his whale towards the clam car and leaned inside.

‘I’ve never seen a clam car like this before,’ he said.

The other mermaid swam down and peered in the passenger window. ‘Aha!’

Beattie froze.

‘I KNOW WHO YOU ARE,’ the mermaid said.

Beattie’s tail began to shake. The false teeth next to her started to chatter – which meant Steve was scared too.



‘You’re Gillica and the team!’ the mermaid said, flashing her a smile. ‘We’ve been expecting you.’

‘I’m not Gill—’ Beattie began, but Zelda cut her off.

‘That’s right ... I’m Gillica! Can Gillica get unstuck from the wall now, please?’

‘Excellent,’ the one on the left said, swivelling her whale around and shouting ‘RELEASE!’ Zelda slipped from the wall and dived into the clam car.

Steve tutted at her.

They watched as the security mermaids swam off and began rearranging icicles on the wall.

‘Cool,’ Paris said. ‘It must be a secret pattern code to get in!’

‘Zelda,’ Beattie hissed. ‘How are we supposed to get out of this one?’

‘I think what you meant to say, Beattie, is thank you *so much*, Zelda, for saving us from being eaten by a security whale.’

The whale looked offended.

‘He says that’s a really offensive stereotype,’ Mimi

said. Mimi was a fishtalker and she could understand sea creatures.

‘The sea must be so loud for you,’ Paris said, but Mimi was concentrating on the whale.

‘And anyway,’ she continued, ‘he had a big breakfast, so at most he’d only be eating two of us.’

The whale shifted its gaze to Steve.

‘And probably Steve,’ Mimi added.

‘Eat me?’ Steve scoffed. ‘But I’m wearing *COUTURE*.’

Mimi stared at the whale for a second and nodded.

‘The whale says he doesn’t know what that is.’

‘Get ready, great and honourable guests!’ the security mermaid shouted, turning her whale to face the wall. ‘Frostopia awaits!’

The icicles began to glow and the wall started to crack, revealing an icy tunnel that dipped down into the darkness below.

‘WOAH,’ everyone said at once (apart from Steve, who said ‘CRIPES!’ – which was a word he was trying to bring back).

‘Line up your clam car and keep the engine turned

And hopefully a shop that sold warm stuff.

‘ARE WE NEARLY THERE?’ Paris shouted, her hair and eyelashes frosting over.

There was a little click and they slipped out of the tunnel. Icicles exploded around them like fireworks, and curtains of ice fish parted as their speed reduced. And that’s when Beattie saw it – the icy realm of Frostopia, frozen beneath them. It was bigger than the Hidden Lagoon and the Crocodile Kingdom combined!

‘Maritza Mist is down there somewhere,’ Gronnyupple said as she peeled a bag of Seahorse Surprise off her face. ‘And we’re going to find her!’

It wasn’t going to be easy, and Frostopia’s magic meant the realm stretched further than anyone could see ...

3

Blubble the Ice-skating Seal

Frostopia was unlike anything Beattie could have imagined. Huge frozen towers rose up from the depths, connected by icicle-covered archways. Killer whales gathered in clumps, and thousands of mermaids swam the streets as loud clangs and beeps and voices flooded the water around them.

‘IT’S LOUD, ISN’T IT?!’ Gronnyupple yelled into a killer whale’s face.

Over near the parked clam car, there was a problem.

‘So ... it turns out,’ Zelda said slowly, ‘Gillica is a world-famous ice-skating mermaid who dresses as a seal called Blubble.’

The guards edged forward for her autograph.

‘Here’s your costume!’ a security mermaid said, placing a rubbery fake-seal costume in Zelda’s arms.

‘Thank you for sending it ahead of your arrival. It’s all security checked and ready to go.’

Zelda squeezed it and it began to play a little jingle.

She skates, she glides, she moves from side to side.

She’s big and she’s trouble,

Yeah ... she’s Blubble.

Zelda forced a smile.

Beattie couldn’t help but laugh. But it came out in slow motion, because her lips were almost frozen shut.

‘Now,’ the other guard said, ‘you’ll want to see the stage we’ve set up for the Blubble show.’

Zelda sneakily pulled a map from the guard’s pocket and handed it to Beattie.

‘We’ll have to escort you to the stage, of course,’ the guard went on. ‘You aren’t allowed out of the Glisten Quarter.’

‘We need to lose them,’ Zelda whispered to Beattie.

‘I beg your pardon?’ the guards said at the same time.

‘Your beg is pardoned,’ Mimi answered, bowing.

The guards exchanged confused looks. ‘Out-of-towners,’ one mumbled to the other. ‘Stay there, and we’ll load up the whales with the extra kit we need for the stage. I hear you’re going to be jump-skating through hoops.’ The guard pointed over to a shark wearing a wig. ‘And what is the wigged shark going to do?’

Zelda stared blankly at the shark.

‘That would be ... telling,’ she said.

As soon as the guards swam off, everyone huddled around the map.

‘Where to?’ Zelda said. ‘We need to decide quickly.’

Frostopia was laid out like a lopsided snowflake split into four uneven quarters – Slushville, Flurry Falls, Floe and the Glisten Quarter. But Beattie saw there was something strange about the map – Slushville and Flurry Falls were separated from Floe and the Glisten Quarter by a huge underwater waterfall. One side said South Pole, the other said North Pole.

‘Woah,’ Beattie whispered. ‘Half of it is on the other

FROSTOPIA



side of the world! The waterfall must be a magical portal!

‘We expanded to the North Pole thousands of years ago,’ a mermaid said as she swam past. ‘You can only get into Frostopia from the South Pole waters, but once inside, you can use the underwater waterfall to take you to the north.’

They stared eagerly at the map.

‘I like the look of Flurry Falls,’ Paris whispered.

‘Slushville,’ Zelda said with an approving nod. ‘Then we’d get to go through the waterfall.’

‘*Floe!*’ Mimi sang as she swam around their heads and slapped the top left of the map.

‘Slushville is a paradise,’ Steve read aloud, moving his snout along the text descriptions on the map. ‘Full of shops and fun. Floe is a little village, but it’s got the funniest mermaids in town. Flurry Falls is a bit mysterious – it just says “Strange things happen in Flurry Falls.”’

Steve spun round. ‘Slushville. We’re going shopping in Slushville.’

‘But we have to stay inside the Glisten Quarter,’ Beattie whispered back.

‘Only if you’re Gillica,’ Steve pointed out. ‘But we’re not Gillica. We’re not even meant to be here at all.’

‘There’s no time for shopping,’ Gronnyupple said. ‘We need to find Maritza Mist before we do anything. She’s in danger, I just know it. She didn’t deliver my catalogue order, and those water witches who escaped from Viperview Prison have probably got her by now!’

‘We don’t know that the two are even linked yet,’ Beattie said, trying to comfort her.

‘And how do you know Maritza Mist isn’t in Slushville? In a shop?’ Steve said.

Gronnyupple stopped chewing her Seahorse Surprise. ‘I don’t, actually. Let’s go to a shop in Slushville!’

‘Can we go quickly?’ Zelda groaned, her teeth chattering. Frost had spread across her tail and was mushrooming from her hair.

Beattie snapped an icicle off her nose. ‘Steve’s right – we can’t save Maritza Mist if we’re frozen. A quick stop

to pick up something warm to wear – and then we go and find her.’

‘Where will we get the money to pay for new clothes?’ Paris asked as the guard returned for another of Gillica’s trunks.

‘Oh, and here’s your fee,’ the guard said. He handed Zelda a frozen box full of Frosties, Frostopian money.

‘Well, that was easy,’ Beattie mumbled as Zelda filled her waistcoat pockets.

They waved as the guard swam off again.

‘WE’LL BE WAITING RIGHT HERE,’ Zelda lied. ‘WE’RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.’