

WAR WITH THE NEWTS

"PILOT"

Written by

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Based on: "Válka s mloky" by Karel Čapek

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EXT. DEVIL'S BAY - DAY

The year is 2050. A sleek, silver hovercraft floats beside the shoreline of a pristine, exotic beach. Nearby, two people lounge.

ABBY (*early 20's, slightly out of shape, wears designer tech swimwear that changes color in the sun*) is fidgeting with a wrist device that monitors her vitals, while she absently looks towards the sea.

LILY (*23, her golden hair shimmering in the bright sunlight*) is sprawled out in the sand in her custom-made, glowing bioluminescent bikini.

Abby's device beeps softly, but she is more focused on Lily, who's lazily tapping on her sunglasses that display social media notifications.

LILY

You know what I'm thinking?

ABBY

What, babe?

LILY

That this place would make the most epic short holo-film.

ABBY

Yeah? What kind of film?

LILY

Picture this: me, stranded, but like... hot.

ABBY

How'd you end up stranded?

LILY

Our yacht - totally wrecked in a storm. Everyone gone. Only I survive.

ABBY

What about me?

LILY

Oh, you'd get eaten by sharks, babe.

ABBY

Great.

Lily pulls up her leg, causing her bikini's glow to intensify.

LILY

I'd swim in these clear waters and sing on the cliffs, you know? Just... being. Until someone... Or something finds me.

She winks as she gets up and sashays into the water, her bikini dimming as she goes. A yacht looms in the background, a sleek metallic vessel.

As soon as she dives in, she lets out a scream and frantically flails in the water.

LILY (CONT'D)

Abby! Babe!

Abby rushes toward the water, nearly dropping her wrist device. They meet halfway in the shallows.

ABBY

What happened? What is it?

LILY

There's something down there.

ABBY

You mean, like a fish?

LILY

No, Abby, not like a fish.

A shadow looms in the water behind them. **A black, slimy head with warts and weird eyes** breaks the surface.

LILY (CONT'D)

There! Do you see that?

Abby grips Lily's arm, pulling her back, but her gaze locks onto the figure approaching.

The creature hisses. Abby and Lily freeze.

LILY (CONT'D)

Babe?

ABBY

It's... some kind of a weird seal.

The creature moves closer.

NEWT

Cl-a-am.

A chorus of raspy voices echoes from the water. EIGHT OTHER NEWTS emerge, their eyes blinking slowly.

NEWTS

Cl-a-am. Cl-a-am.

LILY

I don't think those are seals,
babe.

Abby splashes water toward the Newts, panicking.

ABBY

What do you want?!

The first Newt raises a slimy hand and drops a few shiny, metallic objects into the water.

NEWT

Cl-a-am.

Abby and Lily crouch, inspecting the strange objects in the water. The newts continue chanting.

NEWTS

Cl-a-am. Cl-a-am.

ABBY

Let's get to the hovercraft. Now.

They make a dash for the hovercraft. They jump into the hovercraft, and Abby starts the engine. The Newts hobble toward them, their slimy feet leaving faint prints in the sand.

NEWTS

Cl-a-am. Ab-by. Ba-be.

Abby hits the throttle, sending the craft zipping away from shore.

INT. YACHT - DINING ROOM - DAY

A lavish spread of seafood fills the table, surrounded by Abby and Lily. Their friends FRED (25, athletic and sun-kissed), and JUDY (early 20's, a fashion-forward tech influencer) laugh at their story.

THE YACHT CAPTAIN (a no-nonsense figure in his 50's with an eye implant) listens in disbelief.

YACHT CAPTAIN

I've been in these waters for decades. No such creatures exist.

FRED

Come on, Captain. Don't kill the fun.

Judy playfully slaps Fred's arm.

LILY

I have an even better idea. What if we made a short holo-film of this?

JUDY

Wait... That's actually not a bad idea. Why didn't you take a video?

ABBY

There was no time, we panicked.

JUDY

We should film them.

YACHT CAPTAIN

(under his breath)

Film what? Some delusion?

Fred points to the red light on the wi-fi router.

FRED

We won't be able to live stream it though.

JUDY

Doesn't matter. We'll upload it back on mainland.

They all look at each other, ready for action.

EXT. DEVIL'S BAY - NIGHT

The group stands at the water's edge, bathed in moonlight. The Yacht Captain grips a rifle, scanning the horizon. His crew crouches nearby, ready with a net launcher. They are bored, yawning.

In the distance, black heads start to bob in the water. The Yacht Captain can't believe his eyes.

LILY

Is everyone set?

Nods of affirmation all around.

LILY (CONT'D)

Lights.

Fred adjusts the drone spotlight.

LILY (CONT'D)

Camera.

Judy taps a button on her camera, which hums to life.

LILY (CONT'D)

Action

THROUGH JUDY'S CAMERA: The Newts emerge, their eyes reflecting the light. The moment they step onshore, Lily's dress flutters dramatically in the wind. The Yacht Captain's crew stands tense, waiting for the moment to capture one of the strange creatures.

NEWTs

Cl-a-am.

The Newts edge closer, their slimy bodies slapping against the wet sand. Lily, now bathed in the light of Fred's drone spotlight, raises her arms theatrically.

She steps back as the first Newt lunges toward her. Judy, holding the camera steady, zooms in, capturing the creatures up close.

JUDY (O.S.)

Keep them coming.

Abby is holding her breath, barely able to keep her eyes on the creatures.

NEWT

Cl-a-am.

The Yacht Captain nods to his men. They aim the net at the nearest Newt, waiting for the right moment.

YACHT CAPTAIN

Now.

The net shoots forward, unfolding in midair. It lands perfectly over one of the creatures, trapping it. The Newt thrashes wildly, its guttural hissing echoing across the beach.

YACHT CAPTAIN'S MAN #1

We got one!

But before they can celebrate, the other newts react. Hundreds of black heads emerge from the water, swarming toward them.

LILY

What the--

Panic spreads across the group as the newts close in. The Captain fires warning shots into the air, but it does little to deter the swarm.

YACHT CAPTAIN

Pull it in. Now!

His men struggle to drag the captured Newt to shore, its slimy body twisting beneath the net. Lily screams as one of the Newts lunges toward her, but the Yacht Captain's shot takes it down.

JUDY (O.S.)

Oh my god! There's so many of them!

Fred shines the spotlight around frantically, illuminating hundreds of glowing mineral rocks littering the ocean floor beneath the Newts. Their eyes seem to blink faster, as if communicating in some unspoken language.

NEWTs

Cl-a-am. Ab-by. Li-ly. Cl-a-am.

Fred shines the light on the captured Newt. Its mouth opens, screeching.

The Captain's crew finally drag the thrashing newt onto the sand. It lets out a final, piercing cry before going limp under the net. The other Newts stop in their tracks, as if in mourning.

LILY

Did we... kill it?

A heavy silence falls over the beach. The Newts, now eerily quiet, begin to retreat back into the water, leaving behind the glinting minerals scattered in the shallows.

YACHT CAPTAIN

Don't touch it, keep it in the net
and get the thing onboard. We'll
study it later.

As the crew hauls the lifeless Newt towards the yacht, Lily bends down to pick up one of the shimmering rocks. She holds it up to the moonlight, it sparkles in her hand.

INT. YACHT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Back aboard the yacht, the captured Newt lies lifeless in a bath. The Yacht Captain, Abby, Lily, Fred, and Judy are gathered around it, staring at it, still processing the events.

YACHT CAPTAIN

We need to report this. Whatever these things are, it's not normal.

LILY

Report it? Are you crazy? This is our Komodo dragon, our T-Rex! The greatest discovery of the new millennium.

Fred and Judy exchange glances.

FRED

Lily's right. This could be huge. They could name them after us. Think of the fame, the money.

The Captain stares at the motionless Newt, his face hardening.

YACHT CAPTAIN

Or it could be a disaster waiting to happen.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The yacht sails across the wide ocean.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #1 (COCKPIT) - NIGHT

The Yacht Captain sits at the helm, illuminated by a dim red light from the control panel. His eyes are focused on the horizon, scanning the darkness ahead.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #2 (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

A long hallway, lined with polished walls, stretches ahead, leading to the sleeping quarters. Lily, Judy, Fred, and Abby are asleep in their rooms, their outlines barely visible through half-open doors.

Suddenly, a **shadow** passes through the frame, quick and low. A second later, another shadow darts across. Then another.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #1 (COCKPIT) - NIGHT

The Captain tenses, hearing something behind him. He turns his head slightly, his eyes narrowing. For a moment, everything is still. Then, from the corner of the screen, something moves rapidly - **a dark, slimy figure** lunges at him.

The Captain is knocked sideways. The security camera, positioned above, captures his body being dragged out of frame. His arm reaches for the console, but he's gone before he can press any buttons.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #3 (SLEEPING QUARTERS) - NIGHT

Lily is the first to stir in her cabin. She slowly rises from the bed, her eyes squinting in the dim light.

Suddenly, dark creatures appear behind her, and she's pulled violently out of the room.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #2 (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

In the hallway, chaos ensues. Abby, Fred, and Judy are also pulled out of their rooms. One by one, they disappear off-screen as they are dragged towards the upper deck.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #4 (MAIN DECK) - NIGHT

From the camera's distant vantage point, we see the shadowy creatures dragging the crew and passengers toward the edge of the yacht. They jump with them, one by one, into the dark water below.

INT. YACHT - SECURITY CAM FEED #5 (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

The bathroom door creaks open, and the camera captures a black hand reaching inside. Something is being carefully removed from the bathtub. The camera, positioned at an angle, cannot capture the dead Newt in the tub, but we see several shadowy figures carefully pulling it out of the frame.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The yacht continues to aimlessly sail across the wide ocean.

OPENING TITLES: "WAR WITH THE NEWTS"

EXT. BONDY'S HOUSE - DAY

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (*60's, large, rugged, cleanly shaven, wearing a worn-down white sailor's cap*) stands in front of a magnificent wooden door. A simple black glass plate with a golden inscription reads **BONDY**.

Wiping the sweat from his brow with a dirty, blue handkerchief, he takes a moment to steady himself.

POVONDRA (*50's, tall and as white as a freshly painted wall*), opens the door and examines the Captain from head to toe.

POVONDRA

Yes?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Does some Mr. Bondy live here?

POVONDRA

What do you need?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Tell him Captain van Toch wants to talk to him, here's my card.

The Captain hands Povondra a card with just his name and an anchor on it.

Povondra looks at him, back at the card and back at him... and back at the card. Evidently, the Captain does not fit into the usual class of unannounced visitors.

POVONDRA

Come in.

INT. BONDY'S HOUSE - LOBBY - DAY

The Captain wipes his forehead with his handkerchief and looks around the hall. It feels like a luxurious salon on a cruise ship.

Suddenly, BONDY (*50's, elegant, thin glasses, wearing only the most exquisite materials*) walks in. Povondra by his side, whispering into his ear.

BONDY

Very glad to meet you, Captain.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Hello, hello, Mr. Bondy.

BONDY
Please, come in. Follow me.

INT. BONDY'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

In Bondy's elegant study, a harmonious blend of leather and wood elements sets the tone for the space. Meticulously chosen furnishings exude timeless sophistication.

BONDY
Sit down.

Captain van Toch sits down in a leather chair and places his cap in his lap. Bondy stands over him.

BONDY (CONT'D)
What can I do for you?

The Captain looks around the room restlessly.

BONDY (CONT'D)
Are you looking for something,
Captain?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
I... You don't drink beer, Bondy?
Do you? I suddenly got so thirsty.

Van Toch digs into his large trouser pocket and pulls out a canvas bag with something in it - a bag of tobacco, a knife, a pipe-like vape, a holo-compass, and a wad of bills.

BONDY
Cash. Cute. Haven't seen it in
years.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
I'd send someone for a beer. Maybe
your concierge?

BONDY
Keep your money, Captain.

Bondy presses the trigger on his desk. He takes a cigar from the cigar box on the table, inhales the essence of it and offers it to the Captain.

BONDY (CONT'D)
For now, light a cigar.

To Bondy's dismay, van Toch crushes the precious cigar in his massive palm and dumps it into his vape.

Povondra appears in the door.

BONDY (CONT'D)
Could you bring some beer?

Povondra raises one of his thick eyebrows.

POVONDRA
Beer? How many?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
A gallon.

The Captain throws the rest of the cigar on the floor and stomps it into the red carpet. He enjoys his vape.

Povondra leaves.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
I have a business proposal.

Bondy sighs, expecting another one of many boring proposals.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
I have these friends, they are lizards.

BONDY
Lizards?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
Yes, lizards.

The Captain smacks the table.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
It's a lie that they're devils!
We're more devils than they are...
Anyway, there's thousands of them,
but the damn sharks keep eating
them. They are very nice, smart
animals. They walk like this...

Van Toch crouches and begins to wobble. His massive body undulates while holding his hands in front of him like a begging dog. All the while, he fixes his blue eyes on Mr. Bondy.

Suddenly, Povondra enters the room with several bottles of beer.

BONDY
Leave the beer and go.

Povondra places the beers next to van Toch and leaves, The Captain opens one and drinks the whole thing.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
I really like these animals, man,
they are very kind and wise, these
tapa boys. Such nice lizards.

BONDY
I'm sorry, but I don't quite
follow. Why are you telling me
about these lizards?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
Okay, one more time then...

EXT. PACIFIC ISLAND - OFFSHORE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Large, rusty anchors are dropped into the clear blue ocean with a big splash.

EXT. KANDONG BANDOENG SHIP - DAY (FLASHBACK)

On board of the ship KANDONG BANDOENG stands Captain J. van Toch, dressed in a worn-down thick navy sailor's shirt, red-tanned with a large white beard, frowning into the distance.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
This is the biggest shithole in the
whole of Sunda Islands, worse than
Tanah Bala and at least as horrible
as Pini or Banjak.

SAILOR (O.S.)
So why did we drop the damn anchors
here?

The Captain turns his head slightly to see who dare talks to him like that.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH
Kandong Bandoeng wouldn't sail here
just for some damn palm oil, that
is certain, and besides, you don't
have anything to do with it. I have
my damn orders and you be so kind
and do as you're told.

He turns his gaze back to the island and we can hear the sailor walk away obediently.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
 Minerals, minerals, man. Look
 around for that shimmering stuff.
 The assholes in charge are crazy
 about it now.

The Captain spits to his side indignantly.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
 Storing value in minerals, how
 stupid! It's because they always
 want to fight some kind of war or
 something. Fear of scarcity, that's
 all.

He waves his hand and mumbles on.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
 They want this mineral. Well,
 that's easy to say. In the Pacific,
 most of the easy deposits are gone.
 They banned deep-sea mining off
 Formosa. And so, they say, go
 Captain van Toch, go and find new
 sources!

The Captain disdainfully blows his nose into his azure blue
 handkerchief.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH (CONT'D)
 Those rats in New York probably
 think that there is something else
 to be found here that no one knows
 about! Jesus Christ, those morons.

The Captain turns around and sees the entire ship's CREW OF
 FIVE - JENNA THE SWEDE (30's, rough around the edges),
 GUDMUNDSON THE ICELANDER (30's, a modern viking), ZAPATIS THE
 GREEK (60's, one eye blind and the other squinting) AND TWO
 SINHALESE DIVERS YAPA AND DINUK (20's, both skinny and quiet)
 - staring at him in silence, trying not to move a single
 muscle on the rocking ship.

A big boat and a small boat are ready at the side of the
 ship, the Captain makes his way towards them.

Amid the sounds of his own sighs and cursing, The Captain
 descends into the small boat.

INT. PACIFIC ISLAND - BAMBOO HUT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

BAGUS (40's, a half-Indonesian, half-Portuguese sales agent
 with a taste for whisky) sits at a simple wooden table.

A half-empty bottle of whisky and two glasses rest between him and Captain J. Van Toch as he rambles drunkenly.

BAGUS

Sorry, Captain, but there are no such minerals here on Tanah Masa. Those damn Bataks, they'll eat even the rocks here. They spend more time in the water than on land. The women here smell like fish, you can't imagine... wait, what was I trying to say?

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

And isn't there a bit of shore somewhere where these Bataks don't go into the water?

BAGUS

There is not, sir. Except for Devil's Bay, but that's nothing for you.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Why?

Bagus grabs the bottle of whisky.

BAGUS

Because... No one is allowed there, sir. Shall I pour you one, Captain?

The Captain nods. Bagus pours him a drink.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Thanks. Are there sharks?

BAGUS

Sharks and all... Bad place, sir. The Bataks wouldn't want to see anyone going there.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Why?

Bagus tries to hide his face behind the glass, as he pours the whisky down his throat.

BAGUS

There are devils, sir. Sea devils.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

What is a sea devil? Some kind of fish?

BAGUS

No fish...

Bagus tries to hide behind his glass once more, but it's empty. The Captain's gaze cuts right through the clear glass, locking onto his face.

BAGUS (CONT'D)

A devil, sir. An underwater devil. The Bataks call him Tapa. They say they have their own city there, the devils. Shall I pour you some more?

The Captain nods. Bagus fills the glasses again.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

And what does this... devil... look like?

Bagus shrugs.

BAGUS

Like a devil, sir. I saw one once.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

And you weren't drunk, were you? Weren't you just drunk?

BAGUS

I was, sir, otherwise I wouldn't have rowed there. The Bataks don't like it when someone disturbs the devils.

The Captain shakes his head in disbelief.

CAPTAIN J. VAN TOCH

Man, there are no devils. And if there were, they would have to look like Americans, or the French. It was probably just a fish or something.

BAGUS

(stammering)

Fish don't have hands sir. An educated person like me can tell the difference between a devil and a fish.

The Captain slams his fist on the table.

Thank you for reading the preview of my screenplay.

If you're interested in reading more or discussing potential collaboration, please feel free to reach out to me.

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