

The Breath Of The Past

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FADE IN:

EXT. DIG SITE - MORNING

An archeological camp close to a large lake. The sun already beats down hard on pegged off sections, tents, a couple of trailers and various vehicles. The area is bounded by thick forest.

SUPER - NEWMAN LAKE SPOKANE COUNTY WASHINGTON JULY 2013

PROFESSOR DAVID HOLT(43) glances up as a trailer door opens. He's at a table set up as a work station, under a temporary gazebo. His daughter ELLY(10) yawns as she gets closer.

DAVID

Well, look who's finally woken.
Day's nearly over, princess.

Elly frowns, rubs her eyes.

ELLY

Aw, come on, Dad. Jet lag, you know?

DAVID

You flew from Seattle to Spokane.
It's barely an hour in the air.

ELLY

Yeah, but it's school holidays,
right? Hey, this is a big lake.

David grins, ruffles her hair.

DAVID

Stop changing the subject.

Elly LAUGHS, checks out the site, the people already digging.

ELLY

I still think the Scablands
would've been better.

She surveys the setup with an air of authority, watching her father out of the corner of her eye.

DAVID

Is that right? And you've been
there?

ELLY

I...well, no. But I've read all about it on the 'Net. The Glacial Lake Missoula Flood, you know.

DAVID

That's right. Thirteen thousand years ago, wasn't it? Perhaps we can go there next summer. And bring your mom and Dean too.

ELLY

That would be cool! But the Missoula Flood wasn't just a one-off event.

DAVID

No?

ELLY

Nope. It happened quite a few times over a period of several thousand years. The giant ice dam would melt, sending millions of tons of water across...

David holds up his hand to stop her. He checks his watch.

DAVID

Awesome research, Ell. But I've got a big surprise for you.

ELLY

What? Oh, daddy, tell me, please...

DAVID

No, after breakfast. You'll need all your energy. Now go down to the kitchen tent and get some food off Smithy.

Elly hugs him, then bounds off.

LATER

EXT. SECOND DIG SITE - DAY

David and Elly stand in a shallow natural trench, one side of which edges the treeline. It's about a hundred and fifty yards from the main site, with a few trees in between.

Elly holds digging tools. David places a metal tray on the ground. It contains water bottles and some wrapped food.

DAVID

Right, here we go. Your very own section.

ELLY

Wow, this is neat, dad.

DAVID

I know you love being independent. So I'm entrusting you with this area. Our research indicates a very good chance of artifacts here.

He points along the trench.

DAVID

Would've been good shelter here.

Elly takes up a trowel, crouches in the bottom of the defile. She prods at the dirt.

DAVID

Keep your hat on, it'll get warm pretty quick. Drink heaps of water. I'll come back and check on you in about an hour, ok?

ELLY

Sure, dad.

She doesn't even look up from her excavations.

DAVID

Any fragments you find, put in the tray. Anything you think is major, don't touch it and come get me. And keep an eye out for...animals. You never know what might be in the woods.

Elly pauses, grins up at him.

ELLY

Maybe I can find a mastodon for you, dad.

DAVID

That would be nice. But I'd be happy with a couple of Paleo-Indians.

ELLY

Done!

She returns to her digging, a determined frown on her face. The dirt moves steadily under her trowel. David claps her shoulder, heads off.

LATER

Elly's work has seen a good deal of dirt scraped away. A few tiny bones sit in the tray. She sits nearby, drinking water, eating a sandwich. Sweat runs from under her hat. She wipes it with a dirty sleeve.

ELLY

Bones, yes. But probably from a squirrel that died last week! I want something old!

She stands up, hoping to catch a breeze from somewhere but it's very still in the forest. As she takes another drink from the bottle, a movement at the edge of the trees catches her eye. She steps forward.

The very air ripples, forming a rectangle shaped portal, almost like a door. Its about seven feet high by four feet wide, rising from the grass. The trees are visible through it, though it's blurred. Like a rain spattered window.

Then the view changes abruptly. Elly finds herself looking into an immense valley of green grass. Ice-capped mountains loom in the distance.

Elly GASPS.

EXT. DIG SITE - DAY

David checks the readings on a geo-sensor under the gazebo. Next to him, a team member, CURTIS(22) works on a laptop attached to the sensor. On the screen, a rolling graph shows large pulsing spikes.

CURTIS

The magnetic signal is getting stronger, Professor.

DAVID

Strange. Its like the whole damn area has gone crazy.

CURTIS

Could be iron ore deposits. Basalt, quartz, that sort of thing.

DAVID

True. But our initial passes with the geo found nothing like this last week.

(beat)

Ok, monitor it. Let me know if it affects our other gear. The last thing we want is malfunctions.

EXT. SECOND DIG SITE - DAY

Elly stands transfixed, staring into the portal. She rubs her eyes, moves to one side. She even walks slowly behind the treeline, peers around the shimmering window. Nothing...no sign of the view from within.

ELLY

Wow, this is really...weird. I better see what Dad thinks.

She picks up the water bottle, tidies up the food scraps. She looks back into the portal, her eyes widen.

ELLY

What is...? Oh!

She flings herself backwards, to one side of the portal. Whimpering, her feet drive into the dirt, pushing her further away.

A large cat-like animal emerges at high speed from the rippling air. It's powerful leg muscles drive it across the trench. Two huge canines jut from it's upper jaw. It heads off...in the direction of the main dig.

ELLY

Oh, lordy. Was that a...a sabre-toothed cat?

She shivers in fear, both shocked and amazed. And then...humans race from the window, bronze-skinned men wearing animal hides. They carry weapons with stone points - knives, axes, spears. They follow the cat-creature.

ELLY

Indians? But...primitive ones. Paleo-Indians? I don't know what is going on here.

(beat)

Maybe I'm dreaming this? Maybe I'll wake up soon and be sitting over there having my rest.

She pinches herself on the arm. Hard. She winces, tears form in her eyes.

ELLY

Daddy. I have to warn him. The cat is dangerous, maybe the Indians too.

She gets to her feet, hurries off towards the dig.

EXT. DIG SITE - DAY

David and Curtis examine more readouts.

CURTIS
The magnetic field is more pronounced to the north. Isn't Elly there?

DAVID
Yep.

He grins.

DAVID
Poor thing might be hitting hard rock about now.

CURTIS
She's a tough one. Stubborn like her old man.

DAVID
Thanks for reminding me.

They both LAUGH. A blur of movement makes them look to the dig.

CURTIS
I...jesus christ, is that a fucking lion?

DAVID
Oh, god, it looks like a...but it's impossible.

CURTIS
Fuck, its gonna attack our crew.

He stands up, YELLING.

CURTIS
Hey, look out.

David is already out of the shelter, running. Curtis follows.

EXT. DIGGING AREA - DAY

The sabre-tooth barrels into a number of people, just as they look up from their work. SCREAMS and ROARS shatter the quiet camp. A young man tries to fend off the animal as it lunges for his throat.

The great jaws clamp down, the over-sized incisors puncturing flesh. A spray of blood shoots into the air. It looks shockingly bright red against the tan of the dirt.

A woman grabs a shovel, manages to hit the beast on the back. It shakes the man's body, almost ripping his head off. Turning with frightening speed, the cat lashes out with a paw, catching the woman's arm.

She SCREAMS. David and Curtis race up to the scene.

CURTIS

A gun. We need a gun.

DAVID

No, it's too...jesus, who are these guys?

The Paleo-Indians arrive, charging straight at the sabre-tooth. They YELL in a harsh tongue, and surround the big cat. The woman manages to rip free from the claws, deep wounds on her arm. Another worker helps her move away.

DAVID

Elly? Where's Elly?

He looks around frantically. Sees her running towards him.

ELLY

Daddy! I just...what's happening?
They came from nowhere.

He rushes to her, hugs her tightly. They turn to watch the Indians. There's five of them, and it's evident they've done this before.

Two feint at the cat, inciting it to attack. As it ROARS and launches itself, the other three stab at its back and legs. The creature swings back and forth, becoming more enraged.

One of the Indians loses his balance for a moment, gets too close, but it's enough to be fatal. The sabre-tooth pounces, knocking him over, then leaping onto his chest. The jaws close over his face, an incisor stabbing into one eye. The Indian WAILS, but the sound is smothered by the beast's body.

His companions close in, attacking with their crude weapons. The cat rears up, numerous wounds on it. It rakes the doomed Indian across the throat, tearing it open, before turning to its new tormentors.

A stone pointed spear drives down into the cat's head. The Indian steps onto the animal's back to hold it down, grinding the weapon in further.

The beast struggles, ROARING in pain and anger. A stone axe bites deep into its spine. The hindlegs quiver, having become useless. More and more wounds are opened by stone knives. At last, the cat is still.

A eerie silence comes over the camp. David holds Elly, covering her eyes from the gore. Curtis tends to the wounded woman.

The four remaining Paleo-Indians watch the strangers around them. One approaches David, examines his white skin, his hair. There's no aggression on the primitive man's face, only...curiosity.

At last, the man speaks to his companions in the same language. Two head to the nearest trees, start cutting off branches. Soon, all four are fashioning a crude travois. They drag the dead cat onto it, tie it on with strips of hide. They also lay the dead Indian next to the cat.

Then, without even looking at the people around them, the four head off towards the portal, hauling the travois.

The dig workers come to life. People gather around their dead fiend, cover him with blankets.

DAVID

Is Tanya alright? How's her arm?

CURTIS

A few deep wounds. Smithy has taken her to the first aid tent.

(beat)

Professor, what the hell just happened here?

DAVID

I don't know. Elly? Did you see them at your dig?

Elly's eyes are like saucers. She stares at the Indians who have now disappeared into the trees to the north.

ELLY

Yes. They came out of...

DAVID

Out of the forest?

CURTIS

God, are we talking some kind of 'lost world' scenario here?

That's not even w_

ELLY

No, they came from nothing. From a door in the air.

Curtis shakes his head. David is kneeling, looking at something on the ground. He holds it up. A piece of stone from a spear, covered in blood.

CURTIS

Elly, they can't have come from nowhere.

ELLY

There was a valley. Really big. And mountains with snow and ice.

DAVID

Curtis, run this through the carbon spectrum analyzer. We can link up to the main data base in Seattle, right?

CURTIS

I...yeah, sure.

DAVID

I'll talk to the workers, see they are ok.

LATER

EXT. DIG SITE - DAY

Curtis works the laptop again. The stone fragment sits in a metallic box attached to the analyzer. David hovers at his shoulder. Elly watches, drinking water.

CURTIS

Ok, got it...let's see...definitely Pleistocene.

DAVID

Ok. And the age?

CURTIS

Age is...ballpark figure...roughly...thirteen thousand years.

He sits back and WHISTLES.

CURTIS

Only question is...how did those...Indians and that animal get here?

DAVID

Elly, show us where you saw them.

ELLY

Wow, that is so cool, like 'Stargate'! Hey, I have some chocolate left, cool.

DAVID

Yeah, well, anyway, I was worried that there would be a chance of the Missoula flood occurring, you know, now. The damage would be catastrophic here in modern day.

ELLY

Oh, yeah, I see. Well, we might just be lucky, huh? But I guess we should try and turn this - what did you call it? A portal? Yeah, turn it off if we can.

David smiles at her. Elly walks over next to him. She looks into the valley. A frown creases her brow.

ELLY

That's odd.

DAVID

What is, honey?

She turns to him. David feels a chill of fear, instinct striking.

ELLY

That lake wasn't there before.

They both look back into the portal. Sure enough, there's a huge body of water at the far end of the valley. Even as they watch, it starts to rise.

Then an immense wall of water appears from the right side of the valley. Sixty feet high and moving unbelievable force.

David takes Elly's hand, spins and takes off.

ELLY

Oh...

DAVID

Run, Elly. Faster than you've ever ran before.

FADE OUT.

THE END.