



TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

Thetis Lake, British Columbia

Thetis Lake Park is a nature lover's haven about twelve kilometres west of downtown Victoria on Vancouver Island. Within minutes, anyone wanting a break from fast-paced city life can retreat there to enjoy more leisurely activities such as camping, canoeing, fishing, hiking, swimming and birdwatching. But outrunning nasty monsters? That's not usually high on anyone's list of things-to-do at the beach.

It certainly wasn't what two teenaged boys, Gordon Pike and Robin Flewellyn, had in mind when they headed out to Thetis Lake on August 19, 1972. They were just hanging out on the sandy beach when the water near the shore started to bubble and churn. Then, to their horror, a gurgling, scale-covered, four-legged, web-footed, man-

sized creature shot out of the water and headed straight for them. Terrified, the two young men turned and ran to their car, the monster following close behind. For a brief second it actually caught up with them and jabbed one boy's hand with its hideous, spiked head.

Gordon and Robin made it safely to the car and sped off toward the local RCMP station. Once the police officers calmed them down, they listened patiently to the boys. They sounded sincere, and one of them did have a cut on his hand, so the Mounties thought they might be telling the truth. But it wasn't until four days later, when two more people reported seeing a silver-scaled creature with bulging eyes and a spiked, fin-like crown on the top of its head rise up out of Thetis Lake, that they began to seriously investigate Gordon's and Robin's tale of terror. However, after weeks of police work, and with no further reports of sightings that might have provided them with hard evidence of the monster's existence, the Mounties had no choice but to abandon their investigation.

The case of the Thetis Lake monster may be filed away somewhere with other cold cases that most likely will never be solved. The monster doesn't keep popping up the way Ogoopogo and some other lake monsters do, so nobody is too interested in figuring out what it is, or was. After all, it hasn't made a reported appearance since its dramatic surfacing back in the early 1970s.

But that's probably just as well. Unlike Ogoopogo and the other lake monsters, the creature from Thetis Lake could walk — and even run — on land, and it actually attacked somebody. Who'd want a creature like that hanging out in a park just a few minutes' drive from the heart of a major city? Unlike Ogoopogo, its possible presence isn't something to promote as a tourist attraction.