

The *Sub*-Antarctic Sun

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“Baby Jessica” Saved in Miraculous 3 Day Surgery

Surgeons worked round the clock for three days to reconstruct 18 ft. Otter Trawl nicknamed “Baby Jessica.” The heroic net captured the hearts of all personnel onboard the RVIB Nathaniel B. Palmer during the week she clung to life sitting in the makeshift net hospital, singing Winnie the Pooh songs to keep her spirits up while she endured unspeakable pain, waiting for repairs. She had sustained massive injuries the previous week in a work related accident. “If we’d had DNR orders, she wouldn’t be with us today,” supervisor Herb Baker said. Emergency Rescuers T.J. Hurlburt, Eric Hutt, and Brent Evers recovered her from frigid subantarctic waters about 3:00 Monday afternoon. She had fought perilously in the line of duty, wrestling up 2 “one-man” boulders, and 1 “two-man” boulder from the depths. “When we recovered her, it looked like she’d been ripped limb for limb, and totally disemboweled,” recalled Evers.



The plucky little net inspired a massive ship wide effort to save her. Falkland Islands resident Paul quickly started an organ donation program on the nearby islands. “We needed bits and bobs for the girl, and we needed them fast. I just couldn’t let her die, or her spirits would haunt the catwalks of the ship forever. I just thank god that all the good blokes back home

would rally around our girl, too,” Brickle stated. Meanwhile, across the globe, unsung office hero Dave Moorhouse, nearly moved to tears by the plight of Baby Jessica, offered replacement nets, so Jessica could recuperate. Captain Robert Verret diverted the ship to meet the planes bearing replacements. When complimented for his swift, lifesaving actions, he growled, “Awww...I guess sometimes even I can be a softie.”

After successfully recruiting organs, Chief Surgeon Jamee Johnson, assisted by intern Toby Koffman began the marathon operation. Chief Scientist Bill Detrich quickly began the task of trying to find a DNA match for Jessica’s new organs. “Although the wait for surgery and the gruesome acts Jessica witnessed in the net hospital must have been tremendously horrifying, I’m half sure the most vital organs will be genetically a good match.”

Jessica, orphaned by parent Otter Trawls, 30 ft. “Frankinet,” and “Bride of Frankinet” had to lie in a heap, helplessly watching as other nets were cannibalized to patch up her family. Eventually, she saw both parents sink into the deep blue, never to return bearing fish. Her most essential replacement organ, the cod end, was salvaged from a distant cousin, arriving on the deck DOA. “It was touch and go there for a while,” Chief surgeon Johnson said. “We’re not out of the woods yet. We can only wait and pray that she doesn’t reject her new organs. She has proved that she has the fortitude and stamina that she needs to pull through.”

Jessica is expected to recover in the net hospital for the next week or so, unless pressed into service early by shortages caused by the massive casualties that just keep piling up.