

La verità, tutta la verità e nient'altro che la verità
sulla 40° Edizione della regata Garda Meeting, il

KRAKEN DELLAGO DI GARDA

... e gli atleti che salparono
sui loro "Optimist"

TAMBIÉN EN ESPAÑOL
ALSO IN ENGLISH

Williams Osipovs

The story, all names, characters,
and incidents portrayed in this book
are fictitious. No identification with
actual persons (living or deceased),
places, buildings, and products is
intended or should be inferred.

This book is dedicated to all those
optimist sailors who turned 16 and had
to leave optimist class behind.

*This book is dedicated to all
of the athletes that did not get
scared by the Kraken and fought
for victory at the Garda Meeting,
the largest regatta in the world.*

*Many of them have since retired
from sailing Optimist dinghies,
so may Garda Meeting Edition 40
remain in their memories forever!*

*And as far as the others are
concerned, we will see you soon
at Garda Meeting Edition 41.*

Ciao, everyone!



The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing
but the Truth about the 40th Edition of
the Garda Meeting Regatta, The

KRAKEN OF LAGO DI GARDA

... Stories from the athletes sailing “Optimist”

Williams Osipovs

No one had been practising for the second day in a row. The entire surface of Lake Garda was covered in rescue boats. It got dark but the lifeguards kept aiming their flashlights into the depths of the water; the scuba divers kept diving—all to no avail. Gilliam was sitting at home, dejected, staring out of the window. What should he do next? That was the question. The next Garda Meeting was in a week, and now this accident, good Lord! Two athletes who had been practising on Optimist class dinghies were unaccounted for. The largest wave ever seen rose on Lake Garda, and the two sailors remained unaccounted for. The worst thing about this story was that they were his friends, from his team, from his club - Fraglia Vela Riva. Gilliam was nearby when it happened—and he had witnessed the whole thing. But how could he tell the others? They were never going to believe him. Gilliam was a nine-year old athlete who was practising on an Optimist dinghy. He was jovial and loved a good laugh. Coaches liked and trusted him, but Gilliam doubted anyone would ever believe him. The thing he had seen was, after all, just too otherworldly. So, Gilliam was just sitting there, staring at the lake. He was waiting for the lifeguards to come back to him, —and he would repeat that he had not seen anything as he was too busy trying to deal with the wave.

“Hello there, Gilliam!” shouted Massimo from the street as he and Daniele came over to invite him for a game of football. Gilliam was 100% not in the mood for that but he still went along with it, as he wanted to tell his mates everything—even with the risk of them thinking he was crazy.

They dropped by the “Long Island” restaurant and ordered a pizza there. There wasn’t a breath of wind and so they set up their picnic on the shore of Lake Garda.

At that time of the day, it was all but deserted, so they could speak freely, without fear of being overheard.

“Don’t get upset, Gilliam,” said Massimo. “They will eventually find your friends; they are good athletes. I can’t believe they would just drown like that. Of course, it’s a bit odd that they’ve been missing for two days now...”

“Well, I’d actually love to tell you exactly what happened, but I don’t think you would believe me” said Gilliam.

“You’re wrong!” said Daniele. “I’m certain you must’ve seen something. After all, you were nearer to them than anyone at the moment of their disappearance.”

“Well, get on with it, do tell!” said Massimo.

“So, there was a training session at my club,” Gilliam said. “Everything was normal; there was no hint of the upcoming disaster. It wasn’t very windy but suddenly, a fifteen-foot wave appeared from the North, heading towards us. We were actually rounding the mark. Veronica—who was sailing right ahead of me—started behaving weirdly: bending right over in her boat and waving her arms at me. I shouted out to her: «Watch out! There’s a wave coming!» And then I saw Edgar. He was sailing at full tilt towards Veronica, yelling something at her. I couldn’t catch what it was due to the noise of the approaching wave and the howling of the wind. Right at that moment, the gigantic head of a Kraken emerged from deep, and a giant tentacle grabbed Veronica and her boat, then hauled her up into the air. The next moment, a second tentacle grabbed Edgar, and then the monster pulled them both under the water.”

“Gilliam, you must be having a laugh.” said Massimo.

“No, Massimo, I am not in the mood for jokes. I knew no one would believe me!” Gilliam said.

“Gilliam, you should tell your coach, right now!” said Daniele.

“No, I shan’t. What would it change, after all? Two of his athletes are missing, including his daughter. I can’t imagine the degree to which he must be shaken at

the moment. And then there's the Garda Meeting coming up in a week. Tomorrow, the Americans are going to come—Stephen with his team, The Atlantis Academy, and many other teams from all over the world.”

“I heard that the Kraken was spotted someplace near the Canary Islands. Are you acquainted with anyone from that region?” Massimo asked.

“Yes, I know Jack quite well; he's been here since yesterday. He's staying in Malcesine.”

“So, let's go. We can ask him some questions,” Daniele said. “It will only take an hour to get there by car, or a quarter of an hour if we windsurf.”

They found Jack in a bar where he was having a great time chatting with other coaches. Jack was Spanish, a very cheerful and friendly bloke. The gossip was that he used to be a pirate.

“Hi, Gilliam. I'm so sorry to hear the guys have gone missing. I'm sure that they'll be found any day now though. The rescue team are working around the clock,” Jack said.

“Have you heard anything about the Kraken that was seen off the shores of Lanzarote?” asked Gilliam.

“I have indeed but, come on! These are only fairytales for little kids!” Jack laughed out loud. This is a legend spread by those who lag behind the fleet too much during practice. All joking aside, I know all of the athletes and coaches, and none of them has ever seen a Kraken off the shore of Lanzarote.

“How about elsewhere? Is there a Kraken anywhere else in the world? Does it even exist?” asked Gilliam.

“Well, sailors and pirates are fond of telling tales about it, but I think they need to cut back on the rum a bit.” Jack laughed.

The guys got home and none of them were in the mood for a chat.

“What shall we do then?” Massimo asked. “As far as we’re concerned, we believe you... Imagine what might happen next. When the regatta begins, and there are twelve hundred athletes on the water, plus their coaches and the judges. Then the Kraken is really going to have a field day, that’ll be a feast for him.”

“We mustn’t allow that to happen!” Daniele cried out. “We would never forgive ourselves!”

“And there’s another thing: your friends might not be dead after all,” Massimo said. “The Kraken might have just dragged them into his lair. What do you reckon, where might he be hiding?”

“There is only one place here, at Lake Garda, where he could have been holing up.” Gilliam said. “There is an abandoned hotel next to the waterfall. You can only get there on an Optimist dinghy.”

“We should check it out.” said Massimo

“Very well, then.” Gilliam said. “I have been practising with the Americans in Stephen’s team. I’m going to ask him to organize a meal next to the waterfall. I don’t think he will say no. He’s got a large team and, while they are preparing pizza, I’m going to slip into the cave and get to the abandoned hotel unnoticed.”

“What, pizza on the water?” Daniele couldn’t believe his ears.

“Yep, they’re going to have a hot pizza delivered by boat.”

“That’s super cool!” the lads shouted as a sign of approval.

“If I see anything there, next to the hotel, I’m going to tell Matteo everything. He’s my coach and he’ll sort out all our problems.”

“Great!” the boys replied.

The next day, as had been agreed, he went to a practice with Stephen and his team. Literally no one was surprised to see his worried, agitated expression. After all, two athletes from his club had gone missing. Gilliam was really, really worried.



He didn't know what the day would bring. It was highly unlikely that he would see his friends alive—and as for a real Kraken?—in an abandoned hotel. But if that Kraken actually turned out to be there, would he be able to fend for himself? He had no idea. But he decided to sail anyway. Even if there was only a tiny chance, he could help his teammates, he had to try.

Sailing practice was pretty routine. When lunch time was over, Stephen agreed to camp out next to the abandoned hotel. It was already nearing one o'clock in the afternoon and the wind was starting to change. Time was of the essence, and Gilliam quickly sailed towards the hotel. He didn't notice anything out of place. But as he headed back to his team, the Optimist suddenly came to a halt and appeared to have run aground—which shouldn't have been possible at that location. Gilliam leaned over to check out what the Optimist was stranded on, and it turned out he was... perched on the head of the Kraken. Gilliam gasped for breath but luckily the Kraken was asleep. Gilliam disembarked from the boat very carefully, tiptoed across the head of the Kraken and pushed the Optimist off its' head and into the water. He could barely walk. He had imagined this scene before but in reality, it was more terrifying than he could have possibly imagined! Gilliam got into the boat and sailed towards the exit of the building, not daring to look back. And then, all of a sudden, he heard a stone plunge into the water right behind him. He turned his head, fearing the worst. But it was only a stone—and then there was one splash after another. Gilliam's heart was beating like a drum. But it was all over now... He looked up to check where the stones were falling from—and he glimpsed someone hiding their face behind their hands. There must be someone up there, in that abandoned hotel, he thought. But whoever it was, had failed to spot him, and that was a good thing. Gilliam sailed up, as close as he could to the hotel, and looked through the window. And there he saw Veronica, sitting on a chair, her hands tied, guarded by several people, dressed in black. As for Edgar, he could not spot him anywhere. Gilliam tapped very quietly on the glass. Veronica lifted her head and spotted him. She wanted to scream with joy but managed to control herself. Gilliam tried to use some hand signals to explain to her that he was going to come back with reinforcements, and she seemed to understand. At the same moment, Gilliam heard someone call out his name, somewhere far away. It was Stephen. Gilliam, then, inconspicuously got back to his group, or so he thought, at least. He was dying to tell Stephen and the members of his team everything. But what could they do there and then, without any preparation? And so, for the moment, Gilliam decided to keep quiet.

“Stephen, I need to get back to the club. This is an urgent matter. I’ll explain everything later.” Gilliam said.

“No worries, Gilliam. Come back later if you feel like it.”

“Right then, see you around!” Gilliam said.

He then sailed speedily back to the club. There was a tail wind blowing towards the town of Riva.

Halfway back, Gilliam saw Antuan, the coach of the Greek team. He was in a really good mood, as always, chatting with his assistant.

“Hey there, Antuan, what’s up? Could you tow me back to the club, please? It’s urgent.”

“No probs at all! That’ll be three Euros, please.” Antuan replied jokingly.

When Gilliam got back to his club, his own coach was nowhere to be found. He then enquired with the secretary, and it turned out that Matteo was out on a boat with the rescue team. Of course, he could have phoned him but was this indeed a matter for a phone call? Gilliam got very upset.

“Hello, Gilliam!” Silvester addressed him. “How are you?”

“I’m fine, thanks.” Gilliam replied. – But would you be so kind as to get me to Matteo please? I really, really need to see him.

“Has something happened? – Silvester asked.

“Yes, I need to deliver some information to him, and he needs to receive it as soon as possible!”

“Very well, Gilliam.” Silvester said. “Hop into the rib, let’s go. As far as I know, Matteo, Ricardo - Edgar’s father and Beatrice are on the boat with the rescue team next to Torbole, right where your guys disappeared.”

Gilliam was noticeably worried. Silvester smiled at him, but he could see that Silvester himself was also out of sorts.

As they reached their destination, everyone was staring at Gilliam. They all suspected that Gilliam had really seen something, and that he was not ready to tell everyone. You could see in the faces of the parents that they were getting ready to hear the worst. Gilliam was so stunned that he thought he would not be able to speak. However, from the moment that he uttered the first word, the story just came out like a torrent. He told them everything about the Kraken, the people in the abandoned hotel, and that he had seen Veronica.

His story was followed by a deathly hush. The first to speak was Edgar's father.

"Well, we can get there on a Laser dinghy," he said.

"I'll sail!" Edgar's father cried out.

"No, you won't." said Matteo. "There's no chance you can do this alone, and there is no way you can help. I'll be the one to sail—me and my team. We need to catch the Kraken while he's asleep, then cast a net over him and tie him up. And after that, we'll deal with the people, free Veronica and Edgar. We'll embark upon our mission late at night, when they are least expecting us."

"The plan is clear," one of the lifeguards said, "I'll get some tranquiliser guns to make sure that the Kraken doesn't wake up when we least expect it."

"I'll ask Mirko, the Slovak coach, to get us some nets. He's got everything we need for a fishing trip," Beatrice said.

"Beatrice," Matteo said, "Get Reimond, the Danish coach, and prepare to approach the hotel from the road. There's a door there, it is hammered in. We need to surround the scoundrels."

"Very well, Matteo" Beatrice replied.

"We start at seven in the evening," Matteo announced.

“Your team needs help! We’re not going to let you face the kraken alone,” Silvester said. “I’m going to provide my best athletes from the Atlantis Academy to help you.”

“Thank you, Silvester!” Matteo replied.

“What’s up, guys?” Mario, the Italian head coach, yelled as he was sailing past their boat. “I can tell from your faces that you’ve got some news.”

“Quite right you are, Mario!” – Matteo said, and brought Matteo into the loop with the story and the plan they had devised.

“The Italian team’s going to support you, Matteo.” Mario said.

“So, it’s been decided, we will meet at the club at seven p.m.” Matteo said.

He was speaking in a loud, firm voice, as was usually the case with him. But they could feel that he was really worried. After all, what if they failed to save Edgar and Veronica, nay even lose other athletes? This was a really complicated decision for him to make. He could have rung the cops, yes, but what would they do without knowledge of the local area? This was what Matteo was thinking as they were on their way back to the club. Gilliam decided to wait at the club until seven. At six in the evening, they started to get together.

“Hi there, Leonardo, how are you?” Gilliam asked as he saw the athlete from his team, carrying a sail.

“How d’you think I am, Gilliam? We’re all risking our lives here. But I’m glad that I’ll be able to help my teammates.”

“We’re going to get them beyond the reach of this Kraken! The entire team is here! We’re not going to let them down!” added Stefania, Veronica’s sister.

She, as well as the other guys, was rigging the sails, getting the dinghies ready to sail off. Then, athletes from the Atlantis Academy started coming over. There was Valko from Bulgaria, Lenard from Germany, Wasi from Thailand and Josef

from Denmark. The entire Italian team was already there. All this looked like a nightmare for Gilliam. A mere week earlier he wouldn't have believed it if he had been told that he, along with his own team and the Atlantis team, would be fighting for the lives of his teammates against an improbable villain: a gigantic Kraken inhabiting Lake Garda. That would have been perceived as utter nonsense. Alas, it had turned out to be reality, indeed; they had to hope for the best but prepare for the worst. He had to believe that they would succeed. There were twenty-four Optimist dinghies moored at their club, ready to sail off, and also a Laser dinghy.

It had grown dark. The North wind was starting to blow. Everyone remained silent. They were all aware that they might not come back alive. The first one to set off, on the Laser dinghy, was Matteo; he was followed by the rest of his team, and then by everyone else. Silvester and Mario brought up the rear. The lake was bleak, the wind blowing, and it was obvious that a storm was about to blow up by night time. The first to reach the hotel was Leonardo; he was the one responsible for conducting a reconnaissance. The Kraken seemed to be asleep; there were lights glimmering in the windows of the abandoned hotel. Veronica was still tied to a chair. And Edgar was still nowhere to be seen. "Did the Kraken really devour him?" a thought crossed Leonardo's mind. "I don't need to worry about it right now", he decided. As Leonardo was giving a report on the current situation to the coaches, the storm began to ravage the lake. So, they decided not to linger. It was terrifying to go into action in weather as horrible as this but they had no choice. The first one to sail off was Matteo, his gun loaded with tranquilizer darts. He was followed by the remaining twenty-four dinghies. Everyone had nets. As Gilliam sailed into the windy cave, he could hear the athletes whispering. The Kraken was asleep. The water was ice-cold. All the athletes on their Optimists were moving cautiously, bit by bit trying to surround the Kraken. Gilliam was sick at heart, shivers running all over his body. He could not fathom what would happen next. Matteo turned off his flashlight, raised his hand and then dropped it rapidly. Thus, he signalled to everyone that they should drop their nets on the Kraken. So, they did. At the same moment, the ear-piercing howl of a siren rang out. The bandits had apparently been using a Kraken alarm system, for fear he would wake up unbeknownst to them. And wake up he did, actually—as a result of the deafening siren! Without hesitation, Matteo shot the Kraken right in the eye. The arrows pierced the Kraken's flesh and made him bellow in pain and rage. It seemed to Gilliam that the sky has fallen into the lake and made it boil. In the foaming water, he saw athletes capsizing in their boats, some of them already in the water. The Kraken



was grabbing them with his tentacles, holding them in the air and then hurling them back into the water. Some of the guys were screaming. Gilliam saw Matteo as he swam towards the hotel. What had happened? Everyone had managed to throw their nets on the Kraken, after all! He was raging nonetheless! It seemed as if he was getting stronger, not weaker. His red eyes were glowing angrily in the darkness. The Kraken was devilishly frightening! But Gilliam and the other guys were no longer scared. They were all valiantly braving the elements, tying up the nets, working as a single team. Matteo swam up to the hotel and climbed through the window. Only to be immediately attacked by the bandits. There were nine of them, and had Silvester and Mario not caught up to back him up, things might have got worse. That same second, Reimond forced one of the hotel doors in—the one on the side of the road. Aided by Beatrice, they burst into the hotel where she knocked a couple of bandits senseless, hitting them on the head with a mast from an Optimist. Reimond tied the largest bandit up and throttled him, forcing him to reveal Edgar's location. The bandit finally gave up. Edgar was tied up in the hotel's dungeon. Meanwhile, the athletes continued to tighten their nets over the Kraken. Gilliam swam up to the hotel. Through the window, he saw Veronica who was observing the fighting through another window. Gilliam climbed up and into the window, unnoticed, and untied the girl. As he was climbing through the window, he saw the tranquilizer gun which Matteo had dropped, when the bandits attacked him. Along with Veronica, he fired upon the bandits who had continued to fight their coaches, and then ran into the dungeon to free Edgar. He was still tied up, fighting for his life with a bandit who was dragging him out of the dungeon. Gilliam aimed his gun at the villain, who took out a knife and held it against Edgar's throat. That same second, the bandit dropped dead to the floor, dead. It turned out that Beatrice had arrived just in time and stunned him from behind with the mast. She was very resourceful, to use a mast as a weapon! Everything suggested that she used to be a ninja before she became a coach! Then, the other coaches came running up to them. For a brief second, everyone forgot about the Kraken, as they started hugging each other, rejoicing in the fact that they had managed to snatch Edgar and Veronica from the hands of the bandits. But they all got a grip of themselves promptly, and rushed upstairs. There, they saw that there were no longer twenty-four dinghies next to the hotel but sixty—nay, even more. Reinforcements had arrived in the form of Stephen and his team. He had realised that there was something wrong, and the guys back at the club had apparently told him what was going on. The Americans were fighting the Kraken as fearlessly as everyone else.

By the look of it, the Kraken was getting weaker. He was being squeezed by the nets, tighter and tighter. The tranquilizer Matteo had used was actually starting to kick in. Victory was nigh! Mario rang the cops so that they could take the tied-up bandits away.

The following day, they arranged a party at the club for everyone who had participated in the mission to rescue Veronica and Edgar. The tables groaned under the weight of food and wine. The atmosphere was loud and merry. The president of the club rewarded the team for their courage with club badges, and also gave out marks of distinction to other athletes that had participated in the rescue mission. The police came over, too. They told everyone who the bandits were, and how it was that the Kraken had turned up at Lake Garda in the first place. As it turned out, the villains had been hired by a computer gaming corporation.

“Their main objective was to destroy everything that could have distracted kids and teenagers from their bestselling game” the policeman began.

“They stole genetic samples of the Kraken from a Chinese laboratory, then bred and raised him in the northern part of a Maltese island. During the COVID pandemic—when no practice drills were taking place on Lake Garda, and the Kraken was just a baby—they surreptitiously shipped him over here. The corporation wanted him to cause a bloodbath during the largest regatta in the world—the Garda Meeting—and they wanted the lake to be closed for years, pending investigation, so that the athletes would not be able to train there. He was drugged with tranquilizers ahead of the regatta. But then, an accident took place. On that very day when the Kraken grabbed Veronica and Edgar, the bandits on the corporation’s payroll forgot to administer his tranquilizer injection. They were just too drunk on that day to think about it” the policeman went on.

“So, when are you going to take him away?” asked the president of the club. “We’re having a regatta in five days...”

“Alas, we can’t remove him at such short notice. We need to construct a gigantic cage—which is going to take time. Right now, there are police officers keeping vigil on the Kraken. He is permanently sedated. There’s no need to be concerned though. Everything’s going to be completely fine now.” – said the policeman trying to calm them down.

“Let’s just keep him for ourselves!” the cook said, “We have twelve hundred athletes here, plus their relatives and friends... I can serve you all delicious Kraken pasta!”

Everyone at the club cheered up at the prospect.

“Regrettably, ladies and gentlemen, that’s not going to be the case!” the policeman answered. “The Kraken’s going to be preserved for scientific research!”

At that same moment, explosions as loud as thunder came from outside! All of the attendees exchanged glances and then ran out onto the terrace. It turned out to be a firework display, organised by the city to honour the Fraglia Vela Riva club, which had prevented the lake from being locked down and the athletes killed. The fireworks were really beautiful; Gilliam had never seen anything like it before. The fun went on all through the night! The Garda Meeting began as planned, on April the 14th. Of course, rumours of a gigantic Kraken ostensibly inhabiting the Garda Lake went around, however much effort was put into suppressing this information.

A storm broke out on the last day of the regatta. Over half the cadette athletes refused to sail off, terribly afraid of the Kraken that might gobble them up at any moment! However, by and large, the Regatta was a huge success. The strongest team won. All of the athletes proved their courage and they gained invaluable sailing experience. On the last day of the regatta, the club restaurant served squid pasta to its patrons. That was not, however, the Kraken of the Lago di Garda—as many might have reasonably assumed. The Kraken of Lake Garda was actually enjoying a snooze in the dungeon of the abandoned hotel, waited on by police officers!

gardakraken.com



1. Scansionami

**2. Punta la
fotocamera
verso il QR code**

1. Scan me

**2. Point your
camera towards
the QR code**

1. Escanéame

**2. Apunta con
tu cámara al
código QR**