

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE NEW MOVIE

IGOR

BY C.M. TOMLIN

Igor is a lowly, hunchbacked lab assistant who aspires to win the Evil Science Fair. He's sure that the monster he creates will take first prize—until he learns that his creature may not be evil enough. NG KIDS asked scientists to weigh in on how well the crazy science in *Igor* fits into real life.

LASER TAG

To steal Igor's monster, mad scientist Dr. Schadenfreude pursues Igor during a wild carriage chase while firing his shrink-ray gun. Shrinking your annoying little brother may never happen, but scientists are mastering laser beams for other impressive uses. Highly advanced laser beams power telescopes that focus on galaxies millions of miles into space and surgical tools that leave no scars. Some lasers can even shoot down missiles. "We don't have handheld ray guns yet," says physicist Robert Byer of Stanford University in California. "But they might not be far off!"

IGOR PREPARES HIS NOT-SO-EVIL MONSTER, EVA, FOR A MUSICAL.



VANISHING ACT

During a TV interview, journalist Carl Cristall interviews King Malbert...and the reporter isn't wearing pants! That's OK, because Carl is invisible. In reality, the reason you see objects is because light bounces off the surface of the object and back to your eyes. But one chemist has invented a greasy goo that makes small objects appear invisible. The goo, says Michael Bockstaller of Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania, changes the way objects interact and deflect light, which helps them appear see-through. Scientists are hopeful the invention will make military camouflage and some consumer products better than ever.

Water is one of the toughest things to animate. That's why when Dr. Schadenfreude pours water over rocks, you'll only hear it happening.

FOREVER YOUNG

After drinking an immortality potion, Scamper the rabbit discovers that living forever might just bore him to death. He tries everything to "cure" his immortality—from electrocution to explosions—but nothing works. Of course, no such potion exists in real life, but that doesn't mean people won't live a very long time. In fact, a few of today's 10-year-olds may live to be 130 years old, according to aging expert Valter Longo of the University of Southern California. Researchers are studying ways to wipe out diseases such as cancer, and other scientists are experimenting with regrowing human organs to replace unhealthy ones. "We'll never be truly immortal," Longo says, "but a very long time from now we might see people living for thousands of years."

LIGHTS OUT

Igor's homeland has been thrust into constant cloud cover that blocks the sun. Earth's sun won't burn out for billions of years, but because life can't exist without sunlight, scientists are already thinking about the future of the human race. One idea is to live in biodomes, which are sort of like huge aboveground submarines the size of small cities with powerful lamps providing fake sunlight. "We can draw from the technology we use on the International Space Station," says scientist Tom Beatty of the University of British Columbia in Canada. "Or else learn how to see in the dark." (Uh, that part's a joke.)

SPACE SHUTTLING

Igor's cruel boss, Dr. Glickenstein, is vaporized when his malfunctioning one-man rocket explodes. You won't be jumping into your own personal spaceship anytime soon, but real rockets are getting smaller and lighter. About the size of a semi-truck (in spaceship terms, that's small), the unmanned Pegasus XL is so light it can carry only 1,000 pounds, usually satellites that are launched into space.

Looks aren't everything, but they're meaningful in *Igor*. Igor's boss, Dr. Glickenstein, looks like a crocodile because he's cold-blooded and snaps at people. The scientist's sidekick, Jaclyn, appears snakelike as she silently slinks around.

SCAMPER, IGOR, AND BRAIN AWAIT GIFTS FROM EVA (NOT SHOWN HERE).

KING MALBERT THREATENS TO SEND IGOR DOWN THE RECYCLING CHUTE.

