

TIBOTIs

A TIBOTI (**T**hing that **I**s **B**igger **O**n **T**he **I**nside—an acronym we made up for this article) is a seemingly normal object that can be viewed in its entirety, but on the inside, it is impossibly vast. It's time to leave logic behind and explore some spacious settings from the bottomless depths of pop culture. Physics be damned!

THE TARDIS

On the Outside: The Doctor's space-time ship on *Doctor Who*, which premiered on the BBC in 1963, looks like a typical British blue police box (a telephone booth used for calling police, common in the UK in the 20th century).

On the Inside: There's a cavernous control room with blinking lights, knobs, and a doohickey that goes up and down—all of which perform, as the Tenth Doctor (David Tennant) explains, "wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey stuff." Astonished first-time passengers are further amazed to find that the ship's control room doors lead to a library, a costume shop, gardens, swimming pools, squash courts, a cricket pavilion, and many other things mentioned but rarely seen.

Details: The TARDIS (short for *Time And Relative Dimension In Space*) once had the ability to change into any shape by use of a "chameleon circuit," which the Doctor lost long ago (and doesn't seem very eager to find). In real life, the reason the Doctor travels in a blue police box is because the BBC didn't have the budget to build him a spaceship in 1963. The original TARDIS prop was borrowed from the set of a police show called *Dixon of Dock Green*.

THE WEASLEYS' TENT

On the Outside: It looks like a "shabby, two-man tent" that Ron Weasley's family borrows to take to the Quidditch World Cup in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, by J. K. Rowling. But once activated via the Extension Charm spell—"Capacious *extremis!*"—the tent makes a magical transformation.

On the Inside: There are multiple levels, a small kitchen, living room, a wood-burning stove, bunk beds, and a bathroom.

Details: The Extension Charm shows up often in the Potterverse. It's been used to add more seating to Mr. Weasley's flying Ford Anglia, to hide a large professor inside a small trunk, and to hide Harry and his friends inside a handbag. And in Rowling's Potter spinoff *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, those beasts can be found inside Newt Scamander's suitcase...until they get out.

SNOOPY'S DOGHOUSE

On the Outside: A red doghouse, only seen from the side, in Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* comic strip that ran from 1950 to 2000

On the Inside: Snoopy's got a lot going on in there. His most prized possession was his Van Gogh painting, tragically lost when the doghouse burned down in a 1966 strip. (He replaced it with an Andrew Wyeth painting.) Over the years, the doghouse also contained a Ping-Pong table, a grandfather clock, a library, a science lab, an exercise room, a servant's entrance, bunk beds, a picture of Tiny Tim, and a ceiling mural painted by Linus—none of which we've ever seen.

Details: Why can't we see the inside of Snoopy's doghouse? "It's too fantastic," Schulz explained. "No one could draw what we've said is down there." Instead, he used the contents to reveal more about the beagle's personality. In the beginning, the doghouse was shown at an angle, making it possible to see a bit inside. But a year into the strip, Schulz drew it from the side for the first time. Charlie Brown walks past, sees an antenna mounted on top, and observes, "Everyone is buying television sets these days." That was the first hint that there's more in Snoopy's doghouse than meets the eye.

OSCAR THE GROUCH'S GARBAGE CAN

On the Outside: It's a metal garbage can on top of a crate, located right next to the front stoop at 123 Sesame Street, on the PBS children's show that premiered in 1969.

On the Inside: One of most memorable sight gags on *Sesame Street* is when Oscar's herd of pet elephants stick their trunks out of his garbage can. All the viewer can see is the trunks; what's going on inside is left to the imagination. Also mentioned but never seen in the garbage can: an Olympic-sized swimming pool, an ice-skating rink, a pastry kitchen, a piano, an art gallery, goats, a horse, and a dolphin.

Details: Originally, Oscar was going to live in a manhole, but co-creators Jim Henson and Jon Stone didn't have a trapdoor under the stage. Solution: They put Oscar's garbage can on top of a crate large enough to fit puppeteer Caroll Spinney, who performed both Oscar and Big Bird from 1969 until 2018. There's a fan theory that Oscar actually lives in an underground lair beneath his garbage can, but that's disproven every time Oscar and his can are carried around by Bruno the Trashman (also played by Spinney, who operated Oscar through a hole in the back of the can). Even more mind-blowing: Oscar sometimes walks around with his feet sticking out of the bottom of the can. So where are the elephants?

MAGRATHEA

On the Outside: It's an Earthlike planet.

On the Inside: It's a planet-making *factory*, more vast than a solar system.



Who is Joseph Fourestier Simpson? He invented the carnival game Skee-Ball in 1908.

Details: The entry for Magrathea in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* says it was created long ago when “hyperspatial engineers sucked matter through white holes in space to form it into dream planets—gold planets, platinum planets, soft rubber planets with lots of earthquakes.” The planet-making factory features heavily in Douglas Adams’s *Hitchhiker’s* books, TV show, and movie. Adams never quite explained how Magrathea can be so vast inside, but in the book, a planet factory worker named Slartibartfast notes that it gives “the impression of infinity far better than infinity itself.”

MARY POPPINS’S MAGIC CARPETBAG

On the Outside: Just what it sounds like—a top-opening handbag made of carpet

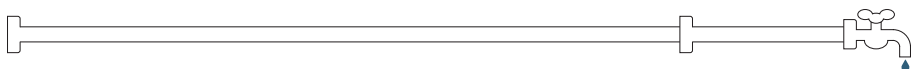
On the Inside: It contains everything that a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious nanny might need, including “an apron, a packet of hairpins, a bottle of scent, a small folding armchair, a packet of throat lozenges, a large bottle of dark red medicine, seven flannel nightgowns, one pair of boots, a set of dominoes, two bathing caps, one postcard album, one folding camp bedstead, blankets and an eiderdown.”

Details: Author Helen Lyndon “Ginty” Goff (whose pen name was P. L. Travers) grew up in Australia in the early 1900s. She and her sisters were raised by their great aunt Ellie (after their alcoholic father died of tuberculosis), and Ellie was the inspiration for Mary Poppins. Like Mary Poppins, she had a carpetbag that seemed to young Ginty to hold far more than it should have been able to. As Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews) advises in the 1964 Disney movie, “Never judge things by their appearance. Even carpetbags. I never do.”

AND FINALLY: A REAL TIBOTI?

Can something like a TARDIS exist in real life? Possibly. Some astrophysicists suggest that it would have to be connected to a wormhole, or maybe multiple wormholes, each one leading to another room in the TARDIS. Scientists know that wormholes exist, even though no human has ever seen one. Another theory was proposed by an astrophysicist named Erin MacDonald in the blog *Technically Fiction*. She says the TARDIS could be a *tesseract*, a special kind of cube that contains a fourth dimension inside. What is that dimension? The fourth dimension is usually assumed to be time. But MacDonald says *this* fourth dimension would be a space dimension. Partial explanation (sort of): If you were to look at a three-dimensional cube straight-on, it would appear as a two-dimensional square until you moved to the side and could see the third dimension. With a tesseract, you wouldn’t experience the fourth dimension until you entered...and encountered a world many times bigger than what it appeared to be on the outside.

We’d love to fit in a few more, but this is the real world, and we’re out of space.



Hello there! Herring communicate with each other by farting.