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# Mr. Peabody and the Mermaid

By Nunnally Johnson

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- Doctor.

- Now, just be easy, now.

Take your time.

Let's not worry too quickly.

- My husband...

- Yes?

- My husband's in love.

- Of course.

With a mermaid.

- I beg your pardon.

- Mermaid, M-e-r...

I can spell, thank you.

A mermaid, eh?

A blonde, I believe.

And when you say mermaid,

you mean, I take it, a sort of fish?

Only half, the other half,

I understand, is quite human.

Oh, yes, of course.

He caught her off the Island of St. Hilda's

in the British West Indies

shortly after we arrived there in November.

And since then... a whole woman

I could understand, I suppose, but...

Did you ever see this creature yourself?

- Only her tail.

- You saw her tail?

In the bathtub once.

- The mermaid was taking a bath?

- A bubble bath.

If you'll pardon me, Mrs. Peabody, which of

you is the subject of this consultation,

your husband or yourself?

Why, Mr. Peabody, of course!

Ah, yes, of course, I just wanted

to make sure, that's all.

- Which one is he?

- Directly opposite...

the tall, gloomy one.

What's the matter with him, Mommy,

is he crazy?

Sh, Darling!

How did he say he got

mixed up with this... thing?

He caught her in the bay.

Oh, really! Casting or trolling?

- Trolling, he says, with light tackle.

- How light?

- A twelve thread line.

- What did she weigh?

I'm sorry, I never weighed her.

Well, if she ran over a hundred pounds,  
that sounds like very good fishing to me.

- May I?

- The one in the blue Cheviot.

- Did she give him much of a fight?

- Neither then nor since, apparently.

But, look at his eyes,

I bet he IS crazy.

Madam, unless that child is

a qualified psychiatrist

I'll thank him to keep

his opinions to himself.

Mr. Peabody.

Darling, this is Dr. Harvey.

- How do you do?

- How do you...

- Oh... how do you do?

- Well...

Well, what does he want to do? Operate?

Oh! He just wants to

talk to you, Dear, about Lee.

- Her name was Lenore.

- Lenore.

Lenore.

- Well, I'll wait outside.

- No, not out there, that's a human zoo.

Ya know, I think it'd be better if you

went back to the hotel and waited.

All right, goodbye, Doctor, and thank you.

Goodbye.

- Goodbye, Dear.

- Goodbye.

Will you sit down?

Thank you.

Well, now, let's get this  
straight at once, Doctor,

I'm quite willing to tell you everything that happened, because Mrs. Peabody wishes me to. But I'm not a Looney, and I'm not interested in any opinion you may form on that subject. I understand.

If you want to hear the story on that condition, very well, if not...

Is it right, you caught her on a 12 thread line?

- You fish?

- Some.

Well, to tell the truth, I didn't actually hook her, I snagged her in the tail.

Did it hurt her?

No thank heaven, I don't think she even felt it, never gave any sign of it, anyway.

- And her name was Lenore?

- It was to me!

Would you care to tell me about it?

Well...

We're Bostonians,

as Mrs. Peabody probably told you.

Born, bred and married there.

Well, last fall I had rather a bad case of flu, kept me in bed for nearly a month.

Even then I was still weak and shaky.

And that's why we decided, both of us, to put in the whole winter as a holiday... for me to convalesce.

So we turned our youngster, Priscilla, over to her grandmother and we went to St. Hilda's.

That's a small British Island in the Caribbean.

Very tropical, very beautiful, and no tourists... yet.

The house we rented on the beach,

The Villa Marina,

was more than we could afford, really...

it was all so wonderful...

like heaven to both of us.

And if you can find a little piece of heaven, who cares what it costs.

Well, that's where it all began,

the very first morning we were there.

Polly...

- It's the surf, isn't it?

- Wonderful.

You ever see anything  
that reminds you less of Boston?

Look at that blue.

Aren't you cold?

Huh? Oh, no! I feel great.

Say, wouldn't Priscilla  
have loved this though?

I'm sorry now we didn't bring her along.

- I'll get you a robe.

- No, no, no, I don't need it, really.

Good morning, Sir.

- Oh, good morning, Basil, is it?

- Yes, Sir.

- Do you have many mornings like this?

- Lots of them, Sir.

- Good morning, Madam.

- Morning, Basil.

The air is damp and you've been sick.

Hey, look! Is that a flamingo?

A man doesn't get his strength back  
so quickly at your age, remember?

Watch him go.

My age?

At 50, I mean, it takes  
a little longer to recover.

These are by P

which is Greek to me.

And who, if I may ask, is 50?

You, if I may answer.

It just happens that I'm 48, if you  
really want to be accurate about it.

Or if you really want to be  
accurate about it, you're 49.

Until next Thursday, anyway.

- No.

- Yes.

- You sure?

- Confident.

- Why, does it hurt, Darling?

- Huh? Oh! No, of course not.

Ah... just a little surprised,

that's all, that's...

I just wasn't expecting it...

this year.

- Sneaked-up on ya, huh?

- Hm?

Well, you're taking it very bravely, I see.

You bet!

A wife doesn't really begin to feel safe, you know, until her husband turns that 50 corner.

Fifty...

- Feeding the fish?

- Yes, Sir.

- Basil, how old are you?

- Thirty-two, Sir.

How disgusting.

Fifty...

The old age of youth.

The youth of old age.

You all right, Sir?

No.

But I don't know that there's anything that anybody but GOD can do about it.

No, Sir.

- Who is that?

- Who's what, Sir?

- That singing.

- I didn't hear it, Sir.

Well, it's somebody...

Listen, there it is again.

- You heard it then, didn't you?

- No, Sir!

Like a woman singing.

Hey, could it come from that little island out there?

No, Sir, that's not an island, not rightly, it's a key... Kiura.

Couldn't somebody swim out there?

No, Sir, that's black water out there, full of sharks and barracudas.

But, by George, I see somebody there now, look!

Couldn't be, Sir.

Seems to be gone now,

but... but I saw it all right.

And once more, it looked to ME like a girl.

The still, sweet fall of music far away.

Shut up!

At the Cabaa Club's

beach party that Saturday night

I looked about for someone who might be able  
to shed a little light on this marine concert.

- Good evening, Sir.

- Good evening.

- I'll have a Rum Collins, please.

- Yes, Sir.

Will you join me, Sir?

I say, you join me in a drink, Sir?

- Are you American?

- Why, yes.

Then listen.

About a week ago

I had a very severe headache,  
so my girlfriend makes me go  
to this doctor, so, all right.

Well, this first thing he does, he...

he takes my blood pressure, it's too low.

Then he plugs me in on a  
basal metabolism, it's too high.

Then he checks my heart, it's too weak.

When he x-rays me, I'm... I'm out of focus.

When I'm fluoroscoped, the  
liver has disappeared.

So what do you think he says?

- What?

- Give up cigarettes.

- I'll have a beer.

- Yes, Sir.

- Well, what did he say was the matter with you?

- He don't know, he's baffled.

**All he knows is:**

- For how long?

- Just 'til I go crazy.

Is he a first rate man?

He's a quack, a notorious quack, other  
people wouldn't even send their dog to him.

Well, then, why do you go to him?

He's my girlfriend's brother.

Happy days.

But I must warn you, my Dearest,  
Major Hadley is responsible for  
MORE grey hairs among the married men  
than ANY other bachelor in St. Hilda's.

- I'm so unscrupulous.
- An Englishman and NOT a gentleman?
- Oh! Good heavens, no!
- I must remember that.

Not that it'll do you any good,  
he's completely taken now, body and soul.

- Aren't you, Dear?
- Well, just on approval.
- By who?
- By Cathy... Cathy Livingston.

Cathy Livingston, huh?

Yeah, she could swim out to that key,  
she's a great swimmer.

- Why, you want to swim with her?
- Who me? Good heavens, no!

With a good, stiff tail wind I might do  
20 or 30 feet, but not much more.

Is she here tonight, do you think?

Oh, I'm terribly sorry.

Oh, I think it'll be all right if we go out  
here where the wind'll blow it away.

It's not necessary at all.

She's out there now, slapping  
away at all that wet stuff.

- You've seen her?
- No, but that's what she's always doing  
at these seaside sociables,  
swimming or singing.

She sings, too?

Stoddard Omby, he's out of  
musical comedy, you know.

You married?

- Yes, but...
- Then you wouldn't be interested in...

Oh, well, not right now, I'm afraid.

Look, would you be willing to  
introduce me to this Miss Livingston?

- It just happens...
- You don't have to explain, that's my business,



good will and public relations.  
See, I'm the press agent  
for this jungle paradise.  
Oh, well, I... I'd appreciate it very much.  
- Just as soon as soon as she comes out.  
- Uh-huh.  
I've... uh... it happens I've had a...  
an experience.  
It's a rather... uh... curious thing...  
as a matter of fact... uh...  
- Been married some time I see, huh?  
- Huh?  
Oh, yes, nearly 15 years.  
These are by P  
which is Greek to me.  
- Who is she, you know?  
- Not from this angle.  
Rather a neat little number, though.  
Not that I pay a good deal of  
attention to that sort of thing anymore.  
Well, if we're going to start  
lying to each other, why...  
Here comes Miss Barracuda now.  
C'mon.  
- Hey! You know that girl?  
- Yeah.  
- That's not a girl, that's my wife.  
- No kid!  
Holy smokes, I never saw her in  
a suit like that before in my life.  
How are you, Fitz, Darling?  
Miss Livingston, Mr. Peabody.  
- How do you do, Miss Livingston.  
- How are you?  
Mr. Peabody's an American freak,  
he's just been leering at his own wife.  
How charming, you must  
be a dream of a husband.  
I am, but who's that with her?  
- Who's got a cigarette?  
- Oh, here you are.  
Thanks! That's Major Robert Hadley.  
- He's on the Governor General's staff.  
- Well, shall we join him?

Do you wish to very much?

- My word! What a gruesome looking fellow.

- That's my husband.

Yes, I know.

But you DO sing, don't you?

Yes, but I can't sing  
without accompaniment.

Listen, do you know that?

The Caribbees, the Caribbees

When nothing goes by  
but clouds in the sky above.

The tiny key,  
the roaring sea.

Their soft serenade just  
seems to be made for love.

I dream how heavenly  
the night would be  
with you with me within your arms.

- How old is he really?

- Forty-six.

The rains disguise the full moon's rise  
come under a net of  
sleepy palmetto trees.

This dream come true, if only you  
and the islands they  
call the Caribbees.

The circumstances were  
entirely different.

Polly had made a public  
spectacle of herself.

And in that suit! Holy Moses!

I was simply making a few  
serious inquiries into a matter.

It was gone.

I gave up.

As a matter of fact,

Polly was never wronger in her life.

I don't go for those all-around women like  
Cathy Livingston, they make me nervous.

What I like is a woman who  
can't do anything very much...

You take one of those  
Esquire Magazine Englishmen  
with that little moustache

and that accent,  
it's murder what they do to married women.  
Polly's got a darned  
good head on her shoulders.  
But along comes one of those  
Old School Tie boys and...  
Not that I haven't got  
complete faith in Polly.  
Oh, Brother!  
Who'd've known about that...  
hooked her tail.  
Holy Jumping Moses  
Polly!  
Polly!  
Polly!  
Polly!  
Oh! Darn it!  
Take it easy, Miss, will you?  
Where's Mrs. Peabody?  
Madam's gone to town, Sir,  
she'll be right back, though.  
You don't generally take  
fish upstairs, Sir.  
Just... just take it easy, my Dear.  
There we are... there.  
Nobody's gonna hurt you, nobody's gon...  
Oh!  
Yes.  
Up, up, all right, come on dear.  
Now... here we go... there we go.  
That's it, now you just trust your Uncle  
Arthur and everything will be ALL right.  
Just a moment.  
Now...  
Oh, yes.  
Well, all right now, just...  
just open your mouth.  
C'mon now, it... it'll do you good.  
Just... just open up...  
like that.  
Yeah, go on, that... that's a good girl.  
That's what we call...  
Mr. Peabody back yet?  
Yes, Madam, he's waiting

for you in the living room.

Oh, well, I'm going to take  
a bath first if he asks.

- What's the matter? Is something wrong?

- No, Madam, there's nothing wrong.

What ails you, you silly animal?

Who's that?

- Arthur!

- Polly.

Would you mind telling me  
who that woman is in my bathroom?

- Woman? Oh, oh, oh, that's no woman.

- Well, it must be a pretty fancy fellow.

The place reeks of my  
best Forbidden Madness.

- Oh, but that's impossible.

- Why is it?

Because, a... a piscatorial phenomenon simply  
wouldn't use Forbidden Madness, that's why.

- Are you tight?

- Not at all.

I have had a rather odd experience.

You must be! Who is that up there?

My Dear, that happens to be  
nothing less than a mermaid.

An authentic, flesh and blood mermaid.

Have you got that... that Livingston woman  
up there taking a bath in my tub?

No, of course not, why should I give  
Cathy Livingston a bath?

- You better come upstairs with me for a moment.

- Oh, but you better listen first.

Let's go up first, we may  
have more to talk about then.

Polly.

Polly.

Polly.

Now, Polly, this is a  
situation that calls for  
a couple of words of  
explanation, believe me.

Now, will you speak to  
your friend or shall I?

- It's no use, she can't talk.

- No?

Hello!

- Will you come out, or should I come in?

- She can't walk, either.

- Drunk?

- No legs.

- I'm coming in.

- Tally-ho.

- You're not tight.

- I told you.

You're plastered!

Well, as a matter of fact, I'm NOT, but I'm  
GOING to be, I can promise you that.

Just get that FISH out of my TUB  
and get it out at once.

Son of a gun, how do you like that?

All right, Honey, party's over.

Now... here.

Upsy-daisy.

I'm sorry, but I'm afraid we won't be able  
to make it for dinner tonight,  
something just came up and I don't  
think Arthur's going to feel like it.

- Lunch? When?

- What's the matter with tomorrow? Just you and I.

You mean alone?

Just a minute.

Arthur!

May I have your further  
wishes in the matter?

Just get rid of it, that's all.

Give it to the cook,  
maybe she can get a steak  
out of it for dinner.

I'm not exactly a cannibal, you know?

Oh, Arthur, stop that,  
just get rid of it.

Throw it back in the ocean.

What time?

I'm sorry my Dear, but I...

I don't know what else to do.

I'd hate to give you up,  
but, well, you saw how it was.

And if you don't mind my saying so, my Pet,

you're no guppy, either.  
So with your kind permission...  
Dear friends, the fish in this aquarium  
are rare and valuable.  
Enjoy them to your heart's content,  
but do not, please,  
feed or annoy them.  
The decision made at this point,  
was, I see now, a mistake.  
The truth is that no  
decision involving mermaids  
should ever be made with even a  
suggestion of alcohol under the belt.  
You don't want to go back  
in that ocean, do you? No.  
It's SO big, and you're so pretty.  
What's your name?  
It must be something lovely, like...  
Lenore. Lenore.  
That's what we call a kiss.  
It's a nice idea, what do you think?  
And... and so simple, you know,  
all you have to do, actually, is...  
It's a symbol, it's the way of saying...  
I think you're very pretty,  
and I like you very much.  
Do you understand at all? No?  
Well, you just wait, Lenore,  
it may take a little time,  
but sooner or later you'll get the idea.  
Holy Moses!  
Thank you so much,  
do come in again.  
- Good morning, Sir.  
- Good morning, I'd like to look at some sweaters, please.  
- Certainly, Sir, about what size?  
- Oh... small.  
Six? Eight? Ten?  
Twelve? Fourteen? Sixteen?  
- A six, I imagine.  
- Long sleeves or short?  
- Short.  
- Slip-on or Cardigan?  
- Slip-on.

- Turtle-neck or crew?

- Crew.

- Thank you.

Here we are.

- Oh! But... but that's a child's, isn't it?

- You said six, I believe, Sir.

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand, it... it...

it's for an adult, but a rather small adult.

Thirty-two? Thirty-four?

Thirty-six? Thirty-eight?

- Forty?

- Well, let's... let's try thirty-two.

Quite!

Here we are.

Light as a whisper. Gay as a sunbeam.

Wearing it will be an emotional adventure spangled with the moon glow of twilight.

- Really?

- It also comes in a gay spectrum of springtime hues.

Pistachio, Purple Almond, Banana,

Marshmallow, Peach Dream, and Licorice.

- Licorice?

- It's sort of a light black.

- Would you be good enough to tell me something?

- Enchanted.

- Whatever became of blue?

- Would you care for it... or not?

Yes, yes, I suppose so...

there's something,

well, there's... there's

just one other thing.

- Yes?

- Can you swim in it?

Yeah, I know it's a rather

an odd question, but

in this case it's... it's

necessary, I'm afraid.

One COULD, I fancy, if one

had no objection to shrinking.

Oh, yes, of course.

May I ask, is the young

lady's prejudice against

swimming in a swim suit

quite deep seated?

No, no, not at all.

That's an excellent idea!

- I'll have HALF a bathing suit.

- Half a bathing suit?

That's it! The top half

of a two piece suit.

Oh, but I'm very sorry, Sir, but I'm afraid

we're not permitted to split our suits.

Oh, I... I'd pay for the whole thing, I mean that...

I... that I'd... I'd have no need...

Rather... she'd have no need...

I mean that...

Well, well, you, you

could keep the rest of it.

Oh, I see.

- Oh, hello.

- Did I hear right? Half a bathing suit?

If you'll pardon me.

- Well, as a matter of fact...

- No, no, no! Don't tell me, I don't want to hear.

I THINK I'd just rather wonder about it.

Why, it's... it's quite simple,

I mean the truth is...

I see... I'm beginning to suspect there

are hidden depths in you, Mr. Peabody.

Oh, no! No, no, no, no, no, no, no!

Nothing like that.

I mean the... look, the simple fact is...

I know... you're shopping for that fish.

- Who told you?

- Several people.

Voil!

The Halter-Neck, toast of  
fashionable Hollywood society.

The diaper model.

Not un-provocative, n'est-ce pas?

The Handkerchief Ensemble, blithe

as a breeze, vital as youth,

pretty as a picture, cool as a cucumber,

slick as a whistle, smart as a tack...

Darling, I don't want to offend you, but...

you know, you're really



not dressed for company,  
and we're bound to have  
some sooner or later.  
Now, these... these little articles,  
are... are what we call "modesty".  
Now, modesty means... well... if you  
haven't got it, some people are shocked,  
some are embarrassed and some,  
I regret say, are quite pleased.  
Now, you see, in... in your case,  
well, you get the idea don't you?  
Oh, oh, oh, no, look, Darling, here...  
Ya see, the idea is... that...  
Now, Darling, please.  
No, no, no, not yet, look, I...  
I've got to get you  
straightened-out on one or  
two other points first.  
For instance, you've got to  
stop eating the fish in the pond.  
Do you realize that's about a thousand dollars  
worth of rare fish you've put away today?  
Look, if you like fish so much,  
why don't you dig into some of that?  
Oh, now, Darling, I... look, I... I didn't...  
I didn't mean to hurt you, really I didn't.  
No... now...  
You DO love me, don't you?  
Take it easy, Dear, you don't  
want to break my neck, do you?  
No, of course not, so... so you've...  
you've got to  
learn the difference between  
a hug and a... a strangle.  
You understand?  
Well, all right now, but... easy this time.  
Now, isn't that nicer?  
My age means nothing to you, does it?  
You don't think that 50  
is so conclusive, do you?  
No, of course not, why should you?  
What's so dreadful, really,  
about a few gray hairs?  
Well, suppose a man doesn't

care to make a public  
spectacle of himself  
by running up stairs.  
Is that such an accomplishment,  
running running up stairs like a fool?  
Suppose he DOES get a  
little sleepy in night clubs.  
The truth of the matter is that a man  
at 50 is at the very peak of his faculties.  
Why, any doctor'll tell you that.  
You know, at 50... oh, no, no,  
don't go, Darling, don't go, not yet.  
Because, at 50, a man has developed  
understanding, sympathy, tenderness.  
As no younger man could,  
he appreciates beauty like yours.  
In your eyes is a beauty richer  
than any human eye could hold.  
The beauty of eternal wisdom,  
and it's the beauty of a child, too.  
Simple, direct, uncomplicated,  
like your love for me.  
With such a love, what man  
could be anything but younger...  
Wait!  
No, I'll come back some other time...  
when you're all right.  
Wait!  
- Aren't you glad I'm here?  
- Oh, you can bet your life.  
They're talking about you.  
- Who?  
- "They" Does that bother you?  
Oh, no, no, on the contrary,  
I'm flattered.  
Although, I must say,  
you don't give them much to go on.  
A sly fellow, huh? I'm not sure that you'll  
be able to see anything this late,  
she's... she's not much on late hours,  
the minute the sun goes down she's...  
It doesn't matter, I've seen fish before.  
Right now it's YOU I'm interested in.  
Come on! What are you trying

to get away with really?

- I don't know, I...

- Oh, come now! Who is she?

- Is she pretty?

- Oh, very.

Oh... pretty as me?

A mystery is good for a man,  
it makes him doubly attractive.

It makes a woman want to find out more.

- Did you see it?

- Polly, Darling I didn't know you were home.

Aren't you going to bring-out  
your little friend for Mrs. Livingston?

- MISS Livingston, Darling.

- Oh, yes, of course, so sorry.

They all seem to be hiding, I don't  
even see any of the little goldfish.

You're NOT having a bit of

FUN with me, are you?

I'm not, at any rate.

Well, I'm quite an angler myself you know,  
and I'd like VERY much to see it.

- Arthur, be an angel and get me that drink.

- Oh, absolutely.

Well, so long as it's not a barracuda.

Miss Livingston!

Miss Livingston!

That woman's either drunk or crazy,  
she's in the pond.

Go upstairs and get her a towel and a robe.

Nice people you pick up.

- You stay here.

- Huh?

But, what happened?

Bring that drink!

Here.

Something seems to have  
chased her, for a change.

It was like a hideous nightmare,  
something with arms, like an  
octopus, pulling me down and down.

Now, now, now, now, now,  
you're... you're all right now.

And then it bit me.

- Bit you?

- In the leg.

Why, it looks like a human bite.

Well, are you... are you sure  
you didn't bite yourself?

Well, I'll go now, I'm terribly  
sorry about all this.

So stupid of me.

I'll get my dress.

- May I...

- No, thank you, I'll slip into it out there.

I'll be back in a minute.

Just a peach, isn't she?

Well, what does it matter... at my age.

Did you bring it in?

No, it was on the Rattan  
chair, right where you threw it.

Well, it's not there  
now, I've looked all over.

Oh, it must be, it couldn't've walked away.

Could you have left it in  
the pond when you climbed-out?

No, I GOT out at the other end.

- It's not here.

- THAT'S funny.

Well, don't bother about it anymore,  
I've been too much of a nuisance, as it is.

If you don't need this robe  
tonight it'll do to drive home in.

Good night.

- Good night.

- Good night.

Now, if you'll be good enough  
to listen for a moment...

Cliff! Shut up!

Come down there and kick your teeth in.

If I believed for a minute  
that a man's best friend's  
his dog, I'd cut my throat  
without further delay.

- Arthur.

- Huh?

Sit here, Dear.

If that woman really matters to you...

Listen, Polly...

I could understand a little  
flirtation with her...

I know that men, well, go  
a little peculiar at 50.

But when I saw that look  
of horror on your face  
tonight, over that little  
bite, I was shocked.

For the first time, I realized  
how deeply you must feel.

Polly, will you listen a minute... I've  
seen the woman three times in my life.

At the beach party the other night,  
on the street this afternoon, and tonight.

Now, is it your understanding that that  
constitutes a historic love affair?

But that look.

Polly, that look would have been  
the same if it had been anybody else.

Lady Potts, Lord Potts, King Potts,  
Major Ronald Hadley himself.

As a reasonably humane host, I  
probably always shall be more or less  
disturbed by the spectacle of a  
guest being chewed-up underwater.

So that's it.

- What?

- Ronald Hadley.

- I picked the name out of the air.

- There's been some gossip, I suppose.

I don't know what you're talking about.

I've had lunch with him a couple of times.

- Well, is there any reason you shouldn't have.

- No, no, but...

I think I see it all now.

Well, if you see me tangled-up  
with Cathy Livingston,

I wish you'd be good enough  
to take another look.

Perhaps... perhaps we've  
both been a bit to blame.

I'm not.

Perhaps we've both forgotten

ourselves for a moment.

Not me.

So, now there's only one  
thing left for us to do:

Pull ourselves together and  
remember who and what we are.

There's nothing for me to pull-together  
because I've never been apart.

Arthur, if i promise  
never to see or speak to  
Ronald Hadley again, will  
you give-up this woman?

Give her up?! Polly, How can you  
give-up a woman you've only said hello to?  
Please, Arthur, this is serious.

Won't you?

- Polly, I told you...

- I'll never so much as look at him again.  
If he speaks, I won't answer.

If he comes in the room, I'll leave.

If only you'll do as much for me.

- All right.

- Will you really, Darling?

- Yes, I will.

- Do you... do you think you'll be able to?

I believe so, I.. I can only  
try, of course, but with  
your strength and faith and  
help, I believe I can.

Oh, Darling, Darling.

Darling, you shouldn't, four o'clock  
in the morning is no hour for singing.

People'll think you're drunk...

or that I am.

Ah! You look beautiful,  
perfectly beautiful.

You know, it's... it's much more becoming  
on you, that it was on Cathy Livingston?

Now wait. I've had just  
about as much of that as  
I can stand in one night,  
so don't YOU start.

As a matter of fact, I don't know when I've  
ever gotten so sick of a woman so quickly.

All I want now is just  
a little peace and quiet.  
There's only one way out it that I can see:  
Polly's GOT to meet you.  
Polly, Darling, this is Lenore, the young  
mermaid I was telling you about, remember?  
She lives in a little castle  
at the bottom of the fish pond.  
"Quite pleasant!", she says, "But a  
trifle damp, like California, I imagine."  
What the matter, Darling?  
Oh, no, no, stop it, Lee, stop it,  
I want you to meet her.  
"The sins that you do by two and two,  
you must pay for one and one."  
Polly, let me In.  
Polly! Come on now, let me in and let's  
get this thing straightened-out.  
Do you hear me? Polly!  
Oh, come on, now, just  
give me just one min...  
rather, give me... give me ten minutes  
and I can explain the whole business.  
Alcoholics Anonymous, here I come.  
Now, Polly...  
Now, now, Polly, Polly, now, Polly,  
where do you think you're going?  
Will you be good enough  
to stand aside, please.  
Polly, don't be ridiculous, if you'll listen  
to me for ten, for fifteen minutes...  
Did you hear me ask you  
to stand-away from that door?  
Polly, be reasonable, where will  
you go at this hour of the night?  
- Now, come on back upstairs.  
- Don't you DARE touch me, you barefaced liar!  
What do you mean?  
What have I lied to you about?  
Not one hour after swearing,  
in my arms,  
knowing all the time she was  
down there waiting for you.  
Holy Moses, are you on that...

Bound to slip.

Polly! Listen.

Now, Polly, Polly, now, wait a minute,  
wait a minute, you're... Polly!

You're simply making a  
molehill out of nothing.

- That wasn't Cathy Livingston out there.

- No? Then, who pray, was it?

It was... it... nobody,  
that's exactly what I'm  
trying to tell you, it  
wasn't a woman at all.

Now, Polly... Polly, now, wait...  
that was the mermaid.

- That... that fish?

- Partly fish, yes.

Oh! A fish wearing a  
gold Lam evening dress?

I know it sounds peculiar, but...

but that's precisely what it was.

That fish, as you call her, pinched  
Cathy's dress and she was trying it on.

Like a kid! It was the first time  
in her life she'd ever had clothes on.

And we were just sitting there talking  
about this and I was telling her... that...

- Go on.

- Well, I know it sounds peculiar...

And what was Miss Mermaid  
WEARING when you left her?

What was he wearing?

Oh, oh, no.

Now! Now! Wait! Wait! Wait!

Cathy! Cathy! Polly, I mean.

Polly!

Happy birthday to you,

Happy birthday to you,

Happy birthday, Dear Arthur,

you're fifty today.

Congratulations.

- Now, you're a friend of Peabody's, aren't you?

- Somewhat.

How's that?

"Somewhat", it's... it's an American



vulgarism meaning "yes".

- Can't he speak English?

- Quite!

That's it... much better.

Well, the car's been identified as Mrs. Peabody's, all very well and good... except it now turns out that nobody's seen Mrs. Peabody for at least a week.

'af a fortni't, egad.

You know, on second thought, old man, I think I find you even more revolting as an Englishman than I do as an American.

So, would you be good enough to revert to your more normal loathsomeness?

Well, I...

- To resume...

- You only do that because you know it hurts me.

- Peabody himself is still at the Villa.

- Fellow won't answer his telephone.

- If I'd gone to Oxford,

you wouldn't do it.

- Won't answer the telephone,

won't answer the door.

No deliveries and no sign whatever of Mrs. Peabody anywhere.

If I were the queen, you'd swallow that thing, fire and all.

She's not staying at either of the hotels, nor has left the Island by boat or plane.

Why should the fellow have a telephone if he's not going to answer it?

In other words, it is all very peculiar, even for an American couple.

And while there may be a perfectly simple explanation for the whole affair, I, for one, shouldn't be at all surprised if the wretched woman were dead somewhere, murdered, of course,

by that odious husband of hers.

He wouldn't like you either.

So, His Excellency suggests that you make an unofficial call first on the blighter and see what you can find out,

before we turn the case over to the Police.

- Who? Me?

- Yes, you, right away.

Very well.

But, don't be surprised if this leads to another Bunker Hill.

Might as well rip the ruddy thing out if he isn't going to answer it.

The servants had all departed, even before Polly.

But after the first shock and distress,

I must say the situation was not without its pleasanter aspects.

There's much to be said for a woman, even an imperfect one...

who lives, breathes and exists only for the man she loves.

You don't seem to have as many goldfish as you used to.

- How did you get in here?

- Over the wall... I used to be a cat burglar.

Oh, well, you... would you join me in a cup of coffee?

- No thanks.

- Anything else? Highball?

Highball? Huh!

You know that quack I told you about?

- Yes.

- I went back to him.

Well, isn't that a little silly after your last experience?

Naw, I guess so, but you ought to see that jerk's sister.

- So, what happened this time?

- Well, so, this time he figures maybe I'm allergic.

- To what?

- He don't know, naturally.

He's got to find out, being a very thorough fellow, he begins at the top of the list with the "A" s.

So at five bucks a copy,

he's already inoculated me for...

alfalfa, alligators, aspirin,  
Arabs, apes, Angle Worms,  
anteaters, asparagus,  
salted almonds and guess what?

- What?

- Alcohol.

Well, what can I do for you?

Well, they're whispering behind fans these  
evenings that you're in something of a jam.

- Would you like a banana?

- Oh, oh, thanks.

In fact I hear there's already  
a movement afoot to hang you.

- May I have the cream, please?

- Hum? Oh, sorry.

- Any particular reason?

- Just murder... Blue Beard stuff.

- Over a sea cow, one hears.

- Sea cow?

That's the rumor around Faye's Beauty Shop.  
Some kind of a hobgoblin.

Oh! What the...

- Oh... I'm terribly sorry.

- What was it?

It was that creature I caught.

Oh, you cannot see  
her, she hides, she's...  
she's rather timid.

Timid? Gee! That stuff  
hit me like a blowtorch!

If I may ask,  
who told you about all this?

It was in the paper, the Miami paper.

In Miami they have gossip  
columns about fish.

"A charter boat captain out of St. Hilda's  
reports a Bostonian, named Peabody,"  
"claims to have hooked a manatee that looks  
enough like a human being to be one."

"Boy, what that square-faced  
rum will do to a man."

- Where is Mrs. Peabody?

- None of your business, of course.

- Well, it's a cop's idea.

- Cops?

They found her station wagon on the side of the Shore Road this morning, and if she's not here to receive them in person this afternoon, they're liable to start digging-up your cellar.

This is ridiculous.

All right then, give them a ridiculous answer.

I never heard of anything so outrageous.

Is she here?

- No, but...

- Look, Arthur, whatever it is, it's okay with me.

I mean, if it's another dame you're mixed up with, just try and remember, you're talking to a man who has been shoved through the meat grinder backward.

And you'll find this a very sympathetic organ.

Well, it's NOT another woman... exactly.

All right, a misunderstanding.

Where lives a man who hasn't been misunderstood by a woman?

I wonder if I could trust you?

My dear boy, is this a time for character study?

We're two Americans surrounded by the Redcoats, what choice have you?

Well, she's not here, I don't know where she is, she left the house, last night, a week ago...

after a discussion involving my mermaid.

Now we're getting some...

Involving your what?

I caught a mermaid.

A charming, sweet, lovely little mermaid.

- You mean with a tail?

- I suppose I should have followed Polly, or at least gone after her

the next day, but what could I say?  
She was RIGHT, i did love someone else.  
Not the girl she thought, not her at all.  
But this enchanting, young creature,  
i did and do love.  
Perhaps I better tell you how it happened.  
Well... it's a very unusual story,  
I'll say that for it.  
Now, of course, i can't give her up.  
Because even in this short time she's  
come to mean so much to me that...  
- Well, it's not an easy thing to explain.  
- That I can see.  
- You wouldn't understand.  
- No, I... I guess not, but brother, what a story.  
- What do you mean, "A story."?  
- When the Mrs. sues.  
Oh, that's ridiculous, Polly  
wouldn't dream of doing such a thing.  
I can see already see the head:  
"Wife names fish."  
Why, you're not going to tell them are you?  
What else?  
But I told you that in confidence,  
I thought you understood that.  
Isn't it dreadful, you know, when I was  
addicted to alcohol and tobacco  
I guess I was just about one of the  
nicest guys you'd ever want to meet.  
But ever since I've been taken off  
the stuff, I'm just plain, low-down mean.  
A heel from Heeltown, and worse than that,  
I just don't seem to care.  
Well, of all the...  
But...  
- Will the police really come?  
- Oh, sure, what else have they got to do?  
- And... Lenore?  
- Claim her for the crown, I imagine.  
Ship her to London, stick her in a Zoo  
and charge admission.  
Ought to do plenty of business  
with a good, healthy mermaid.  
They'll never get her... never.

Unless, of course, you can  
dig up your wife.

Just a figure of speech, you understand,  
no offense intended.

Darling, Darling, get ready, Honey,  
we've got to get out of here, right away.

- What rot, what pure, utter rot.

- Yes, Master.

Heard of mermaids, of course,  
can't remember ever having seen one though.

- No sign whatever of Mrs. Peabody?

- No, Master.

Colonel, this is a matter now for Police.

Get your men down there at once and go  
through the whole place from cellar to roof.

I'll take the Flying Squad,  
see if I can find the blighters.

Drag the pond and scour  
every inch of the grounds.

Better throw a cordon  
around the block, too.

- How's that?

- Don't pay any attention to him.

Get going, if there's murder here,  
I want to know about it.

Very good.

- Charlie.

- Yes, Sir.

While under the influence  
of homogenized milk,

- I've just done a very, very shameful thing.

- I was afraid of that, Sir.

- I ratted on a fellow creature.

- You didn't, Sir?

I did. We don't want that  
to happen again, do we?

- No, indeed, Sir.

- No.

So, can you mix a triple martini?

I believe so, Sir...

in a beer glass.

- Well, all right, bring me five of 'em.

- Five?

- Six.

- Yes, Sir.

- A lovely day.

- Beautiful.

I can't remember when I've seen exactly  
that particular purple light on the sea.

Please, Darling, please

come on, will you?

They're coming for

us, don't you understand?

I mean, you don't want

to be stuck in a zoo in London?

I'm not playing, believe me, this is no  
time for play, I'm... I'm very serious.

I'm not angry, I'm hurt,

very deeply hurt.

Obviously, you don't trust me.

Though what I've done to deserve this,

I don't know, I'm sure.

I thought I'd done everything possible to  
convince you that... that whatever I did was...

ultimately, for your own good.

But... apparently you...

Stone crypts.

Oh, my Darling.

Won't answer his phone, neither.

Now, now, Darling, don't cry.

I won't let you go, I won't leave you,  
never in the world, never when I'm alive.

Shall we break it down, Sir?

Certainly not! Why, this is a man's home.

We'll simply have to return

for further instructions.

I'm all right now.

Just not used to submarine life.

Not my element... water, I'm afraid.

Darling, if...

- What's that?

- A bunch of silly rocks, isn't it?

That's Kiura, Sir.

Kiura, where have I heard about that place.

Come around it.

It could be worse, I suppose...

not much.

Wonderful, Darling, exactly what we needed.

Nothing like keeping a cool head  
about you when packing.

What's all that muck?

- Picnic.

- All right, all right, drop it.

The man asked.

Is there any island around  
here he could've got to?

Well, unless he went overboard  
he's bound to be somewhere around.

- All right, all right, put it back.

- Pardon, Sir.

- The bottle, it's evidence, put it back.

- But who's got any bot...

As soon as it's dark, I'm going to take the  
boat around the Cape to that fishing village.

I'm going to write a letter to a man I know  
who lives down in the Florida Keys.

As far away from any other  
human beings as he can get.

And I'm going to pay one of  
the fishermen to mail it for me.

If that man will send  
me a map and a compass,  
I'm positive we can make  
his place in a few days.

And then we'll find us a place down there.  
There're hundreds of little islands in the  
Keys where I can build a shack on the Gulf.

I mean, just think, away from  
the world completely.

No radio, no newspapers, no silly  
news from Washington, no politics,  
no rent trouble, no food shortages.

Nothing but peace,  
quiet, and sunshine... wind...

Mr. Peabody?

Lee! Please!

Are you there, Sir?

Yes.

Will you come up, Sir,  
or shall we come down?

I'll come up.

- Your wife's back in Boston with the kid.



- Yeah, I imagined she would be.

One of those daffy Army guys  
flew her back in a bomber.

- She's a wonder, all right.

- And the...

He don't feel so good.

- Do you hear anything... anything odd?

- Like what?

- I hear it, by Jove.

- Yes, like some kind of singing?

Of course, it's like something I heard  
off Capri once... a good 20 years ago.

It's exactly the same  
sort of singing, by Jove.

- Lenore... Lee... where are you, Lee?

- Easy there! Peabody!

Bloody quick and come around.

Please, Lee.

Lee!

We're coming, Arthur!

Stick with it, Boy.

Lee! Where you are, Lee?

Arthur!

Lee!

Lee!

Lee!

Peeea-body!

I think I hear him.

Lee!

Where are you, Arrrrr-thur?

And Mrs. Peabody questions this story?

- Don't you?

- What about you, Miss Martin?

Well... I'm afraid I didn't  
all together follow it, Doctor.

- Who else have you told it to?

- Just Mrs. Peabody.

Well, let me make a suggestion.

Don't tell it again to anybody  
who hasn't hit that air pocket.

- What air pocket?

- The 50th birthday, of course.

Oh, it's all right to talk about it  
to an old Purple Heart like me.

But you're wasting your  
time trying to explain  
it to children like Mrs. Peabody...  
Miss Martin.

Just wait... let them find  
it out for themselves.

- Fitzgerald pulled you out, I take it?

- Yes.

- How long were you in the hospital?

- Three days, I was pretty done in.

- You can go, Miss Martin.

- Yes, Sir.

In the first place,  
try to remember this:

You're not the first man nor will you be  
the last to have a tough time rounding 50.

It happens to everybody, male and female.

Why, it took me 5 years to make it.

I was 49 for so long, I don't know  
to this day, how old I am.

- Really?

- Sit down.

As a matter of fact, your case was a breeze  
compared to what I went through.

My trouble, you see, was an ice skater.

The most radiant, beautiful, bewitching  
little creature you could imagine.

And the amazing part of it was  
she could also skate through the air.

Right through my window and into my room.

Well, Sir, one night...

He explained the whole thing, quite simply,  
and clearly, what hallucinations are,  
and what a shock like nearly drowning  
can do to a man of... well... fifty.

Oh, for heaven's sake, what's 50  
got to do with it? He's crazy.

Oh, yeah, crazy as a coot.

You should've heard the nutty  
story he told me about himself.

All about some beautiful ice skater  
that came sailing through the air...

And what's nutty about that?

- I'm sorry, Darling.

- It's all right, Dear.

I gave you a pretty bad time of it,

I guess, but it's all over now.

- Lenore, too?

- After trying to drown me?

- It's a fine thing, a mermaid for a rival.

- Yeah, pretty silly at that, wasn't it?

Well, at least I hope the next time you feel  
yourself slipping, it'll be for someone real.

Something flesh and blood,

people can see and tell me about.

What's that?

- A little present.

- Oh, how sweet of you, Arthur.

Darling, it's beautiful, it's so different.

You didn't have to, Dear... really.

- I know... i wanted to.

- Well, let's see.

Shall I wear it out tonight?

- Well, if you want to GO out.

- Don't you?

Well, I don't know.

Seems somehow such a pleasant occasion.

I thought it might be nice

if we just had dinner

up here, and spent the

rest of the evening in...

together.

Oh, Darling, a very nice idea.

Very nice.