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# Return to the Blue Lagoon

By Leslie Stevens

Small boat adrift! Starboard bow!  
Look! Off starboard!  
Up into the wind!  
Get out the small boat!  
- Pull away!  
- Pull away!  
Easy!  
Get that genny out!  
- Anyone aboard?  
- I can't tell!  
Get that painter!  
Pull that line, Kearney!  
Come on, get that boat in!  
Watch the sides!  
There's a man and a woman, sir!  
- Dead or alive?  
- Dead, sir!  
- A child, sir!  
- A what?  
Alive!  
- I'll take him.  
- Thank you, ma'am.  
There. There, now.  
"We commit their bodies to the waters  
to be turned into corruption...  
...looking for resurrection,  
when the sea shall give up her dead...  
...and the life of the world to come,  
through our lord, Jesus Christ. Amen."  
Captain.  
The surgeon would like  
to speak with you, sir.  
There's sickness in the crew.  
Five more were taken down  
since mid-watch.  
Fever. Canker sores.  
Your cabinet has bromide.  
Leech it out.  
It's beyond bleeding.  
Mr. Penfield,  
I look to your medical knowledge.  
After we left Moorea,  
you thought it was scurvy.  
Then you said it was breakbone fever.

The symptoms weren't for certain.

Now, I know.

Fever. Withered skin.

Black bile.

Cholera.

- Can't we turn back?

- There's no port for a plague ship.

- Drop anchor at the first island.

- This is all open sea.

With due respect, captain, that small  
boat put off from somewhere.

This is a French naval chart.

There's nothing but warnings.

There's reefs. Atolls.

This is a cruel turn for Mrs. Hargraves.

Left widowed with an infant.

Cast them adrift.

- A woman alone with two children?

- Put a man with them.

Kearney's strong and able.

At least that'll give them a chance.

Kearney?

Best of a poor lot.

But keep it from the rest of the crew.

- Wait till mid-watch.

- Aye, sir.

Putting us off into the peril  
of the sea because some men are ill?

- This is madness!

- It's for your own good.

I've spent the last three years

in a climate of awful heat...

...with insects as big as rats,

rats as big as cats!

I can certainly deal with some

deck hands down with fever!

We're carrying cholera.

If you stay aboard, you'll die.

You can't take your sea chest, missus.

Only things you really need.

But everything we have

will be in this chest.

Mrs. Hargraves will be taking

her belongings.

Aye, sir.

Cholera?

Mr. Kearney?

Mr. Kearney, a cup of water, please.

- There's only so much, missus.

- They're in sore need, Mr. Kearney.

Look, the boy ain't yours,

so he don't matter too much.

Your infant knows what to do.

I'd say you're fresh. Let her suckle.

I tell you, I'm sick and tired

of them two squalling.

Then give them water.

I'm a practical man, missus.

If I was alone, by myself,

this could last a good while.

Sharing four ways makes no sense.

It's best to put them out

of their misery.

You won't touch them.

You either shut them up,

or they're going overboard!

Hush, Lilli!

That's it. Look the other way

if you don't want to see.

Richard, come quickly. Jump up.

You can help Mama.

Yeah, that's my girl.

Yes.

Come on. Come on, Lilli.

Richard, you stay here.

It's fresh.

Look! Bananas!

And pompons! And roots!

Roots are good eating!

This is taro root!

We ate it at the mission.

And bananas.

Richard, here's some bananas!

Yes, lots of bananas!

Boat.

Here, do you want some?

The boat is coming.

Boat!

Look! How pretty.  
There.  
Oh, Lilli.  
We can't stay here.  
We're too exposed on this side.  
We've got to find a safe haven out  
of the weather. Come on.  
Come, Richard.  
Let's go for a little walk.  
Here we go.  
Look! How beautiful!  
House.  
Good heavens! Richard!  
Mama!  
Mama! Mama!  
She's gone.  
I know she's gone. Your mama's gone.  
It's all right. It's all right.  
Come here, I've got you.  
- Mommy gone!  
- I know. It's all right.  
Your mama's not here, but I am.  
I'll be your mama from now on.  
Any passing ship will see this  
when it's ablaze.  
It won't be long before one finds us.  
Go to sleep now. Close your eyes.  
I'll be right back.  
I know this is your favourite dessert,  
but eat slower.  
And hold the spoon this way,  
as I've showed you.  
Someday, you'll find yourself seated  
at a fancy table in San Francisco...  
...and be expected  
to show proper table manners.  
Richard! Don't do that!  
We may be away from civilization,  
but we won't behave uncivilized!  
Full moon!  
They come every three months  
when the moon is full.  
Off to bed, children. Quickly!  
Richard, come!

Lt'll be all right. Tonight  
you'll get your lullaby in the dark.

The mother!

Put it down!

- Why do you wear clothes when bathing?

- It's proper.

- Why don't Richard and I wear clothes?

- I gave up on you long ago.

I put your clothes on  
and you'd just take them off.

- I wish I looked like him down there.

- Why?

- He can aim when he goes:

- I can hit a mango leaf dead centre.

Why does he have one he can aim  
and we don't?

God, in his infinite wisdom,  
decided...

Well, nature gave us different parts.

- You see, a female has a...

- A cowrie shell.

- What?

- Lilli looks like a cowrie shell there.

So that's what you call mine,  
a cowrie shell.

- And we call Richard's a...

- No, no, no! Never mind.

I should have explained certain  
of life's facts to you years ago.

- Explain certain of life's facts now.

- No, I need to think about it first.

I'll explain it after your  
spelling lesson tonight.

- Let's rinse off.

- Tonight?

All right? Everybody.

Why do people get married?

God commanded that when a man  
and woman love each other...

...they take vows.

Vows are like promises.

They make promises to each other  
in the eyes of God.

And that's called

the marriage ceremony.

Here's the ceremony

your father used to say...

...when he performed marriages  
at the mission.

What about the life facts?

When a girl becomes a woman,  
and a boy becomes a man...

- When's that?

- Well, it's different for everyone...  
...but you'll know when it happens.

- How?

Lilli, your body will become rounder.  
You'll grow breasts like mine.

And you'll bleed a bit  
from between your legs.

I don't wanna bleed.

It only lasts a few days.

And it's a great blessing  
because it means you can have a baby.

- Do I have to bleed?

- No. But your body will change too.  
Your voice gets deeper.

Hair will grow on your face.

You'd look handsome with a beard.

Unless you want to scrape it off.

- I want the baby now.

- You can't. You're not ready yet.

Also, you need the man  
to make the baby inside you.

Inside me?

Yes. There's a special place  
inside a woman...

...where the baby stays nice  
and warm and safe...

...until it's ready  
to be born into the world.

How does the baby get in there?

Well...

...after they're married,  
the man and woman lie very...

...very close together and... -

- I know. It's like the iguanas, Lilli.

You know, when they get so close

you can't tell them apart.

- That's it.

- That's it?

Yes. Iguanas have  
their babies soon after.

- That's it, Mother?

- Well, that's most of it.

That's what I've been waiting  
to hear all day?

- That's not gonna help.

- Look what you did to my spear. Go away.

That was my fish.

Go back out where you belong.

Richard, look.

Now what are we gonna do?

What are we gonna do now, Richard?

- What are we gonna do?

- Will you be quiet and let me think?

Lilli!

Richard!

We're out past sunset.

Mother's gonna be angry.

- What are you doing?

- I've got an idea.

He's coming. Come on!

Where have you been?

Do you realize how late it is?

But there was this old shark in the  
channel. He took Richard's spear.

I told you to keep away from sharks.

- Boat drifted loose.

- What are the rules?

- Be home by sunset always.

- And?

- Never to the north side of the island.

- Do you see that? A full moon!

We are going straight home and this is  
never happening again. Do you hear me?

Oh! Lilli, Richard.

Go get some thatch.

Get back inside.

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,



on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our trespasses as we...  
...forgive those who trespass against  
us. Lead us not into temptation...  
...but deliver us from evil. For thine is  
the kingdom, power and glory forever.  
I can feel that the sickness has moved  
into my lungs now.  
And that means I might not get well.  
What's going to happen?  
You may have to be here without me.  
If God wants...  
...I'll be with your father and we'll  
be guardian angels watching over you.  
This is my special place.  
It's quiet here,  
and I can see the house.  
Hollow out this ground about so deep.  
And line it with thatch and moss.  
Then fill it in...  
...and smooth it over with earth.  
I'll write out a prayer for you to say.  
We'll carve a marker and it will say:  
"Here lies Sarah Hargraves.  
Wife of William, mother of Lillian..."  
And I know I'm not your  
real mother, Richard.  
But I would like to have it said:  
"And mother of Richard."  
We pray the Lord to grant  
this last abiding wish.  
That Lilli and Richard love each other,  
take care of each other...  
...and keep up with their lessons...  
...and be prepared for the  
ship when it comes. Amen.  
- Breakfast looks extra good today.  
- Thank you.  
- Don't forget, you cook tomorrow.  
- You're the one who always forgets.  
- What? What do I forget?  
- To colour your eggs for the hunt.  
I didn't forget. I don't think

we should do it this year.  
But we do it every Easter.  
The calendar marks say tomorrow's  
Easter, so we must have the hunt.  
Why?  
How else do we know who finds  
the most eggs and wins?  
- Wins what, Richard?  
- I don't know.  
Nothing. Just wins.  
It seems silly to me. I don't  
understand why we have to do it.  
Because Mother would want us to.  
I've got an idea. Whoever finds  
the most eggs this year wins a prize.  
What kind of a prize?  
If you win,  
I've gotta give you something.  
And if I win,  
you've gotta give me something.  
It's a wonderful idea.  
I hid ten eggs between  
the beach and the berry patch.  
I hid ten between the rocks  
and the fern glade.  
- Ready?  
- Ready. Get set. Go!  
I found nine. Beat that.  
- I only found eight.  
- The winner's me. Where's my prize?  
You were down so long.  
What were you doing?  
You'll see.  
Your prize!  
I'm gonna keep this forever.  
My prize. The white bead.  
I think it looks nice in my hair.  
Do you?  
I don't care what you do with it...  
...or how you wear it.  
You can hang it from your nose  
for all I care.  
Back and forth.  
Round and round.

You think this whole reef is yours.  
You think you can swallow  
anything that swims.  
You'd like to catch me, wouldn't you?  
But I was too fast, stupid sea slug.  
I can beat you every time.  
And if you don't believe me,  
I'll prove it!  
Master of the reef!  
The first time, he almost got me.  
But I was too fast for him.  
This time, he was lying in wait.  
So I dive in,  
and I can see down his mouth.  
There's about 500 teeth.  
There's fish around his gills.  
And he comes at me.  
He misses me. Stupid sea slug!  
- It seems silly to me.  
- Silly? It's not silly. It's dangerous.  
Exactly. That's why it's silly.  
I don't understand why you do it.  
- I like the way it makes me feel  
- What?  
Inside here. It feels all alive when  
I know I'm the master of the reef.  
"The master of the reef.  
The master of the reef."  
Hey, don't you ever make fun of me.  
I'm sorry.  
Besides, you're the silly one. Always  
touching and looking at yourself.  
- I don't touch myself.  
- Yes, you do.  
You're always touching those  
when you look in the mirror.  
I'm just measuring  
how much they've grown.  
- You shouldn't look when I'm naked.  
- Why not?  
- I always used to see you naked.  
- It's different now.  
- Why?  
- I don't know.

I don't know why it's different,  
but it is.

Lilli?

I wish things could be  
the way they used to be.

When we had fun.

Remember the seesaw she made us?

The games we used to play?

Ring around the rosy?

Richard?

Yes?

You wouldn't mind if I moved my bed  
to another part of the house?

No.

If you weren't gonna do it, I was.

How long have you been there?

I saw the blood on the quilt.

Are you all right?

Do you remember?

What Mother said would happen  
when I became a woman?

Yes.

Well...

...I've become one.

Richard, wake up!

Richard?

Richard! Richard, wake up.

I can't sleep with my bed  
facing the wrong way.

- Soon as I'm awake.

- You are. Come...

No, I'm not. Stop it.

Let go, I'm not dressed.

Wrap the quilt around you.

Come on!

- What's wrong? You're humped over.

- Just give me a minute.

- What happened to it?

- It gets that way all the time now.

- Well, does it hurt?

- No.

Well, can you walk?

I can walk just fine.

I can make it go away if I want to.

- How?  
- None of your business.  
If we keep secrets,  
nothing will be the...  
Nothing's the same around here anyway.  
Nothing's the way it used to be!  
Come on, let's move your stupid bed.  
Mother.  
I don't know what to do.  
He's changed, I've changed.  
Everything's so confusing.  
- I'm tired of you snooping. Go!  
- I'm sick of you telling me to go away.  
Go away! I mean it.  
I'll go where I've always wanted to go,  
to the north side.  
No! We're in a full moon.  
- I can do what I want.  
- You can't. It's a rule!  
It's not my rule! It was her rule!  
She wasn't even my real mother!  
- She loved you like a real mother.  
- I don't care.  
I'm sick of the rules. From now on,  
I can do whatever I want to do.  
I'm old enough. I can go  
wherever I wanna go...  
...and come home when I want to.  
Richard? Richard?  
What happened? What have you done?  
I had to hide.  
These heathens danced around me.  
They didn't see me.  
If they had, I would've been dead.  
There was this one heathen...  
...and at first, I wanted to kill him.  
And then, I didn't want to kill him.  
And then, I couldn't kill him.  
- Then he saw you. He'll tell the others!  
- No.  
I let him go. Peace.  
I hope you're right.  
I'm glad you're okay.  
I thought I'd never see you again.

I never want us to fight again, ever.

Me neither.

- Lilli?

- Yes?

- Friends?

- Oh, yes. Always.

I feel like crying.

So do I.

- I want us to be husband and wife.

- Yes.

With this ring...

...I thee wed.

With this ring,

I thee wed you, Richard.

- Amen.

- Amen.

- And now we're...

- One.

Forever.

Look.

Lilli, hurry! The signal fire!

What if they're heathens?

I'm frightened.

Maybe we shouldn't light the fire.

Let's see who they are first.

Eight people.

The one in the light covering  
may be a woman.

Woman?

Watch them.

They may not be civilized.

Civilized.

C-1-V-1-L-1-Z-1-D.

Remember what Mother said  
about a firm handshake.

My name is Richard.

We've been waiting for you  
for a long time.

I'm Lilli, and I'm ready  
to go back to civilization.

What?

I am Captain Jacob Hilliard,  
master of the Tradewind.

And we...

Is this your land?  
Yes. My house is there.  
We're in need of fresh water.  
Our casks are fouled.  
Will you grant us permission  
to come ashore?  
Yes. You are welcome here.  
Cover yourself,  
and I'll get my daughter.  
- Does that binding choke you?  
- No, certainly not.  
Well, yes, sometimes.  
I'd appreciate it if you'd...  
How do you catch fish with that spear?  
It's not a spear, mate.  
- What is it?  
- It's a rifle.  
Blow a man's head right off.  
Castaways! How exciting!  
They're an odd mixture of  
knowledge and ignorance.  
Oh, and their attire  
is a little bit...  
Well, it's quite sparse.  
Is anything wrong?  
The colour. It's the same as the sky.  
Pure silk.  
With my compliments.  
And for your brother.  
Oh, he's not my brother.  
He's my husband.  
Your husband?  
Mother died six years ago.  
- How do you follow the years?  
- She taught us.  
We know that 12 full moons  
are one year.  
We have Christmas, Thanksgiving  
and Easter.  
We're not sure they're  
on the right days.  
It's amazing, the two of you...  
...in this remote, godforsaken place.  
Not godforsaken, Captain Hilliard.

Not godforsaken at all.  
You do set an excellent table.  
My compliments to the chef.  
They've made their own dinnerware.  
Cups, soup spoons. Ingenious.  
- Won't Mr. Quinlan be joining us?  
- He's a seafarer...  
...and prefers to be by himself.  
I see why you've been lost  
for so long.  
- The charts don't show this island.  
- It's a wonder we found you.  
Heathens come to the north side  
at certain times.  
There's a burial ground there.  
This is ever so tasty. A great treat  
from the slop we eat on the ship.  
What is it?  
Eel broth.  
Eel?  
Well, only the broth is eel.  
The little white chunks  
are sea urchin.  
We appreciate your hospitality  
and hope we can repay you.  
You can.  
You can take us back to civilization.  
I should think.  
It must be awfully boring here.  
What is the meaning of "boring"?  
Well, boring is when you have  
nothing whatever to do.  
So you're bored.  
Like you must be here.  
No. We're never bored.  
Boots and a shirt...  
...and a coat and trousers.  
I'll let Sylvia explain  
the female garments.  
Well, carry on.  
Buttons!  
I remember buttons on Mother's dress.  
It's Irish lace.  
Richard, turn your head.



I'm showing her a foundation garment.  
Although there isn't much  
you haven't seen.  
- What does it do?  
- It goes around the waist, like this.  
And then cinch the drawstring.  
Don't look yet, Richard.  
I'm showing Lillian my secrets.  
Look.  
This is velvet plush.  
And these are silver.  
So smooth.  
Hairbrush and combs. Powder puff.  
Rouge and powder.  
Lavender water.  
Musk-rose perfume.  
And a hand mirror.  
You're pretty,  
except for the hue of your skin.  
But we can fix that.  
What's wrong with my skin?  
It's tainted brown.  
We'll lighten it with lemon juice.  
Why?  
You don't want people to think  
you're a field hand, do you?  
No.  
- Worse than fish fat.  
- It's quite costly.  
Well, look at you.  
You do look handsome  
in your boulevard suit.  
So handsome.  
Do you think I've applied  
too much rouge?  
No. I think it's beautiful.  
Well, thank you, kind sir.  
Well...  
All powder and paint  
with nothing to do.  
- We could go outside and count stars.  
- Is that what you do here at night?  
Sometimes we count stars.  
Sometimes we sing.

- Sometimes we mate, sometimes we sleep.  
- Mate?!  
- Yes.  
- Do you mate often?  
Whenever we want to.  
- Just like that?  
- Well, yes. Yes.  
Sometimes we dance.  
I love to dance.  
Let's show Sylvia how we dance.  
Come on, you try it.  
I don't call that a dance.  
It's childish and simple-minded.  
- What do you mean?  
- Grown people don't dance like that.  
Maybe we should learn  
a grown-up dance.  
- I shall teach you.  
- Oh, will you?  
It's like this.  
It's naughty.  
It's the Spanish polka.  
Spirit's willing, flesh is weak  
Kiss me, darling, on the cheek  
Now do it slow.  
One, two, three.  
One, two, three.  
You're a beautiful dancer, Richard.  
She must mind her manners.  
It's not polite to leave a guest  
during a lesson.  
Well, we're sorry, but she'll just  
have to wait her turn.  
She's gonna teach me how to mazurka.  
As soon as I get it right,  
I'll show you.  
You lied to me.  
When did I lie to you?  
You told me once  
that you'd never hurt me.  
How did I hurt you?  
When you always stare at her,  
it hurts me.  
I'm sorry.

It's just that she's so different.  
In what way?  
Well, just look at her.  
The way she's all covered up.  
You said you found her clothes  
stupid and unnecessary.  
I do.  
It's just...  
I wonder what she looks like  
underneath all of them.  
You mean you want to look at her...  
...because you can't see her?  
Yes.  
You remember when I wanted to go to the  
north side, just because I couldn't.  
Yes, I do.  
I also remember what almost happened  
to you when you did go.  
Good night, Richard.  
- What have you done to yourself?  
- Don't you like it?  
No. Wash it off.  
You don't like it on me,  
but you love it on Sylvia.  
Please, Lilli, let's not fight.  
We promised we'd never fight.  
You never eat breakfast anymore.  
Are you sick?  
Richard, I'm ready for my lesson now!  
I promised to teach her how to fish.  
Here we are together.  
Out in the middle of  
a beautiful fishpond.  
In plain view of everyone.  
So respectable.  
But look at this, kind sir.  
All we have to do  
is lower our heads...  
...and we're completely hidden  
from prying eyes.  
So we can do whatever we want.  
- Lovely.  
- Get out of here!  
Come on, don't be like that.

- Richard?

- Richard!

He'll never hear you.

He'll be out playing games  
with Miss Sylvia for hours.

- You're missing something. The pearl.

- What do you mean?

- The little bead in your hair.

- It's at the house.

Lilli.

It's no time to be thinking  
about Lilli.

I told her I'd never hurt her.

Don't feel sorry for her.

She's had you all to herself.

- You're not hers. You're not married.

- We are.

But not really.

Made-up words in the middle of a  
jungle doesn't count.

It does to me.

Why don't you just follow your heart?

She is my heart.

Where is it?

You can't just leave me here!

Very rude behaviour!

You'll never fit in civilized society!

Richard?

Get away from her!

- Came from the house.

- Get the other rifle.

No!

Get him!

Look out!

No!

Help us!

- Quinlan, hold off! You'll kill him!

- All right, that's enough.

You heard me. I said, enough.

Break it up.

Quinlan!

- Get off him.

- I'll take his bloody head off!

- Get off him!

- Put that down.
- Bugger off!
- Drop it, or you'll answer to mutiny!
- I said, put it down.
- No, Richard!
- Quinlan!
- Run!

Richard!

Are you all right?

I'm fine.

I always weather a storm well.

I get that from Mother.

Yes, you do.

Captain Hilliard wants  
to set sail at dawn.

I guess that means his daughter  
wants to set sail at dawn.

I don't care what she wants.

I don't care about her at all.

You're the most important thing  
in the world.

Well, you can set sail at dawn...

...but we're not going.

You're not making sense.

Do you remember...

...that lullaby she used to sing to us?

Yes.

Will you teach me to play it on this?

Why?

I'm going to have use for it.

There's a baby growing inside of me.

How do you know?

A woman knows these  
kind of things, that's how.

Lilli!

But I won't let it  
be born in civilization.

I want it to be born right here.

Where there's no evil,  
and no lies, and no guns.

You're right.

We'll stay here.

Just the three of us.

I love you, Lilli.