

Crab Island

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FADE IN:

CRAB ISLAND - Opening Credits

1 EXT. ISLAND - MORNING 1

A small island in a large sea.

A single small sail is visible.

CAPTION: An Abandoned Shore 1695AD

2 EXT. SEA - MORNING 2

The sail flutters in the wind

A brooding fisherman HEMLOCK CRAB (circa 55) sits
forlornly

in a small boat in an empty sea.

3 INT. BOAT - MORNING 3

Hemlock is talking to himself -

nothing intelligible or loud enough to make out
what he is saying.

He is not a happy man.

He stands up - rages at the sea with a loud wail.

4 EXT. SEA SHORE - MORNING 4

NETTLE (26), blind, hand cupped to her ear, listens
out across the sea.

The camera searches the horizon that is empty.

DAISY (28), is crouched over a wood fire keeping
warm.

DAISY
You hear him, Nettle?

NETTLE
No. Do you see him?

DAISY
Not an inch of canvas.

NETTLE
He's been out all morning.

DAISY
He's useless. We're going to
starve this winter.

5 EXT. CLIFF - DAY

5

CLOVER (22) is collecting birds eggs from the cliff.

She is singing -

She clings to a rock -

Looks seaward -

A look of disappointment settles on her.

6 EXT. SEA SHORE - MORNING

6

Nettle is now huddled over the fire with Daisy.

DAISY
Father's getting old.

NETTLE
And still no husbands.

DAISY
I'm getting on, Nettle. I've
got wrinkles. If a husband
saw that he wouldn't want me.

NETTLE
What about my hair, Daisy?
What if it falls out before I
get a husband?

DAISY
Chicks fall out of nests,
coals fall out of fires, but
your hair will never fall
out.

Clover drops her empty basket by the fire.

CLOVER
No eggs this morning,
sisters.
(looks at them)
Talking about husbands again?

DAISY
We are in our prime, Clover.
Its not right that our looks
are wasting away.

CLOVER
Why do we have to bother with
husbands? We are perfectly
happy here.

DAISY
You might be perfectly happy.
We're not.

CLOVER
What do you think, Nettle?

Nettle turns away in a sulk.

CLOVER
This island is the most
beautiful place in the world.

NETTLE
How do we know? We've never
been anywhere else.

DAISY
Perhaps Clover is right,
Nettle. We've managed without
husbands. If Hemlock dies
we'll continue to manage.

7 EXT. SHORE - MORNING

7

Hemlock is beaching his boat on the shore.

He is struggling -

He is not as strong as he once was -

He falls over.

He is exhausted from his labours.

8 EXT. TOTEM POLE - MORNING 8

A crudely erected totem pole stands in a clearing.

Clover runs into the clearing -

Throws herself at the base of the pole.

She picks herself up, kneels, prays.

CLOVER

O wonderful sea! I love you.
I love the big wide arms you
embrace us with. Do not send
husbands ... I repeat ...
Do not send husbands!

9 EXT. BEACH - MORNING 9

Daisy and Nettle are making their way along the beach.

10 EXT. HUT - MORNING 10

A small rudimentary dwelling for four.

Nettle is lagging behind Daisy who is carrying the egg basket.

Daisy turns angrily -

Nettle is sulking -

DAISY

(softly) Clover is still a
child, Nettle. Don't be too
harsh. In time she'll see
that we need husbands.

NETTLE

I too love it here, Daisy.
Every night I dream wonderful
dreams about our beautiful
sands. I am happy here ... I
wish for nothing to change.

DAISY
(unconvincing) Nor I, Nettle.

Nettle settles herself to sunbathe.

She cocks her ear - listens

A look of alarm fills her face.

DAISY
What's up?

Nettle points towards the woods.

11 EXT. TOTEM POLE - MORNING

11

Clover is skipping around the pole.

CLOVER
(SINGS)
We are small creatures,
The sea is our love,
The sky and the ocean,
The waves and the rocks.
We are small creatures
And we are just young.

Daisy appears in the clearing.

DAISY
Not too much, Clover. You'll
lure some distant ship on to
the rocks with your singing.

CLOVER
O heavens no, Daisy. I don't
want to do that!

Daisy puts her arm around her - kisses her.

DAISY
I love you, Clover Crab.

CLOVER
I love you, Daisy Crab.

Daisy kicks the totem pole.

DAISY
Silly old pole. Come on,
Daisy, I'll race you home.

Daisy runs, leads Clover from the clearing.

12

EXT. HUT - MORNING

12

Nettle is sorting through a pile of shells.

Daisy and Clover arrive neck and neck - exhausted.

NETTLE
I'm going to make a necklace
today.

CLOVER
For who, Nettle?

NETTLE
I don't know. I feel we are
soon going to be visited by a
stranger.

DAISY
Why do you think that?

NETTLE
Something in the earth. I
don't know. Do you remember
the last time we were
visited?

CLOVER
When was that?

DAISY
You were very young, Cloe. I
wasn't very old myself.

NETTLE
Hasn't Hemlock told you?

DAISY
Where is the old man? He
should have been back by now.

Daisy goes into the hut.

Clover pulls in close to Nettle who continues to string her necklace.

CLOVER
(curious) Told me what?

DAISY
About mother ...

CLOVER
Mother?

NETTLE
(shouts) Daisy! I thought
Clover knew?

CLOVER
Knew what?

DAISY O.S
About ship-wrecked men ...

CLOVER
Men?

NETTLE
They took her away.

CLOVER
Away where?

Daisy re-emerges carrying some bowls.

NETTLE
Tell her, Daisy.

DAISY
There's a lot to tell.

CLOVER
Tell me please.

NETTLE
They were horrible!

Daisy looks up at the sky.

POV - brooding sky.

DAISY
Why don't we go inside?

13 INT. HUT - MORNING

13

Daisy, Nettle and Clover are seated at a rough hewn table. The hut is illuminated by candles. The atmosphere is magical.

Daisy is staring at a crystal in her hand.

DAISY
(dramatic) They were
shipwrecked men ... from
beyond the sea where it meets
the ocean.

NETTLE
They had the scent of dead
whales about them.

DAISY
They were in a very bad
state.

NETTLE
Father should have told them
to go away.

Clover breaks from gazing at the crystal.

CLOVER
I don't want to know anymore!

DAISY
Father and mother took them
in. One of them died. They
buried him under the totem
pole in the clearing.

CLOVER
Our totem pole????

Nettle comforts Clover.

DAISY
The other three stayed for
weeks until they were better.
Nettle gave them names.

NETTLE

Dolphin was very nice. He would let me ride on his back and play guessing games with him.

Walrus was gruff. We left him alone. He had a big enormous beard like Neptune. Shark was the bad one.

DAISY

His eyes were white. Everywhere he went he had one hand on his knife.

Daisy imitates him.

DAISY

Father helped him fix their boat. There was only room for three places.

NETTLE

One day Shark and Dolphin fought over the boat.

DAISY

Shark killed Dolphin.

CLOVER

You saw him do it?

DAISY

No, I was asleep, but I heard it.

NETTLE

I was asleep, but I felt it.

Clover shrugs Nettle off. Leaves the hut.

14

EXT. HUT - DAY

14

Clover emerges followed by Daisy and Nettle.

CLOVER

You're both playing with me. You're making this up!

DAISY
Why would we make it up?

NETTLE
Yes, Clover, not everything
in the world has to be make-
belief.

DAISY
When Dolphin was killed,
Mother was very upset.

NETTLE
She cried.

DAISY
I cried too.

NETTLE
So did I. Mother hid us in
the woods.

DAISY
Father ordered Shark and
Walrus to leave the island.

NETTLE
We heard them argue. It was
frightening.

DAISY
Father fought with Shark and
Walrus.

NETTLE
Mother screamed and ran out
of the woods.

DAISY
She thought that father had
been killed.

NETTLE
We were left all alone.

DAISY
We never saw Mother again.

Daisy and Nettle are spent.

CLOVER

Never?

NETTLE

Never.

CLOVER

And father?

DAISY

We found him alive. I nursed
him back to health.

NETTLE

Daisy left me holding you
while she searched all over
the island for Mother.

DAISY

I didn't find a thing.

NETTLE

What about the boat?

DAISY

Yes, the boat had gone.

CLOVER

What did father do?

DAISY

Nothing. He was ill for
weeks. When he was better, it
was too late to do anything.

CLOVER

My, this is sad.

NETTLE

We cried for months.

DAISY

We still cry for Mother.

CLOVER

I think I'm going to cry.

DAISY
Don't, Clover. You'll make us
all cry.

NETTLE
And why shouldn't we? We've
lost our mother haven't we?

CLOVER
Yes, I want to cry!

Nettle and Clover cry.

DAISY
Come, come. We must be
strong. If Hemlock discovers
us crying, then he'll want to
know why.

15

EXT. SHORE - MORNING

15

The SOUND of a gull.

CU Hemlock's face - bird-shit splatters his
forehead.

CU - Hemlock's eyes open. He's angry.

HEMLOCK
I hate you shitters!

He throws a handful of stones at the gulls.

He wipes his face.

He reaches into his boat, pulls out -
a single large crab.

HEMLOCK
They're going to be mad at
me. To the deep with them!

He throws the crab back into the sea.

He laughs at his own mischief.

He stomps off up the beach -

Disappears into the woods.

16

EXT. MEADOW - MORNING

16

Daisy, Nettle and Clover are collecting berries.

CLOVER

I'll have to tell him I know
about mother.

DAISY

You'll make him cry.

NETTLE

He'll cry for weeks.

CLOVER

Will he really?

NETTLE

You don't know our father
Hemlock, Cloe. Does she,
Daisy?

DAISY

I don't think any of us do,
Nettle. He's a cantankerous
old sod. Come on, we'll help
you collect shells before
lunch.

NETTLE

Yes! I want to make my best
necklace ever.

CLOVER

Who are you making it for
...?

NETTLE

I don't know, but maybe we'll
find something really
interesting washed ashore.

17

EXT. TOTEM POLE - DAY

17

WAVE MUSIC.

Hemlock is crossed legged, asleep.

The music plays with him.

He rocks backward and forward.

18

EXT. SHORE - DAY

18

Nettle and Clover are picking up sea-spoils.

Daisy is by the beached boat.

She looks inside -

She looks up angrily.

POV - The woods.

She walks towards the woods.

Nettle watches her.

19

EXT. TOTEM POLE - DAY

19

THE MUSIC CRESCENDOS.

Hemlock awakes with a start. He looks up at the sky.

HEMLOCK

O crabs! It's past midday!

DAISY O.S

Fa .. TH .. er!

Hemlock puts his hand over his mouth.

DAISY O.S

Father!

HEMLOCK

If I answer the game is up.

20

EXT. WOODS - DAY

20

Daisy is caught up by Nettle.

DAISY

He's asleep somewhere.

NETTLE

He might be contemplating.

DAISY

He's too old to start that sort of thing.

NETTLE

He'll be at the pole praying?

DAISY

Praying to whom?

NETTLE

The gods?

DAISY

What are you on about?

NETTLE

I'm sure he must have heard you.

DAISY

He's fairly deaf these days, Nettle. He only hears what he wants to listen to. He doesn't hear a thing I say.

NETTLE

You nag him, Daisy.

DAISY

He doesn't do anything!

NETTLE

I think that is why he sleeps so much.

DAISY

He's certainly not as sharp as he used to be. In fact, I think he's quite blunt.

NETTLE

Could he be senile?

DAISY
Lazy, Nettle. There's nothing
the matter with him.

NETTLE
None of us are perfect,
Daisy.

21 EXT. TOTEM POLE - DAY

21

Daisy and Nettle are peering from the trees into
the clearing.

Hemlock is still sitting cross-legged.

DAISY
The old sod is napping again.

NETTLE
Let's leave him alone.

DAISY
Where's the crab he promised
to catch. He has to earn his
keep, you know.

NETTLE
Be kind, Daisy. He needs his
sleep or he wakes up very ill-
tempered.

DAISY
Alright. But I'm not saving
him any lunch.

The girls go off.

Hemlock opens one of his eyes.

HEMLOCK
Like fussy old housewives. A
man has to be wise to be old.

He gets up, addresses the pole.

You hear me, pole? Too many
cooks, not enough soup, and a
man might go hungry. I'll
have none of their lunch!

He wanders into the trees ...

22

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

22

... Hemlock settles himself on a grassy knoll by a small stream. It is idyllic.

He stretches out, enjoys the quiet.

Clover appears carrying a water pitcher.

She bends to fill it from the stream -

She sees Hemlock stretched out.

CLOVER

Daddy!

HEMLOCK

(quietly) Clover.

He closes his eyes.

Clover approaches her father, sits by him.

He continues to feign sleep.

She plucks a stalk of grass, tickles him under the nose.

HEMLOCK

Darnation! I'm trying to speak to the gods. Take yourself away!

CLOVER

Sorry father

Clover moves a little way off. Sits.

Hemlock feels guilty for his ill-humoured outburst.

HEMLOCK

Obedient child! You understand me not when I'm communicating with the abstract.

CLOVER

I want to understand you,
daddy.

HEMLOCK

As a result you know me
least. Daisy knows me too
well. As for Nettle .. in
spite of all her visions, she
hasn't a clue.

Pause. Hemlock closes his eyes again.

CLOVER

Are you still speaking to the
gods, Daddy?

HEMLOCK

Of course, dear. Our
conversations go on for
hours.

CLOVER

What do you talk about?

HEMLOCK

The secrets of the universe,
Clover.

CLOVER

Can I speak with the gods
too?

HEMLOCK

No, Clover. They have no
respect for youth. They have
made me swear an oath of
confidentiality. I am the
island's representative. Our
conversations are councils of
secrecy.

CLOVER

I'll leave you alone then.

23

EXT. HUT - DAY

23

Daisy, Nettle and Clover are eating their lunch
from bowls. Its is meagre portions.

DAISY
I'm sick of shellfish.

The other two mumble in agreement.

DAISY
We have to confront him.

CLOVER
Can't we go fishing?

NETTLE
No.

DAISY
He thinks we are a nuisance.
He doesn't see us as an
asset. We are a headache to
him? We feed him!

CLOVER
He fed us for years?

DAISY
Like pigs at a trough. He
thinks we are three sow's
ears. Do we deserve to be
treated like sheep ... He
goes ba and we do his
bidding? He should be out
fishing for crab!

CLOVER
He did go fishing.

NETTLE
He did try, Daisy.

DAISY
What kind of provider comes
back empty-handed? He just
doesn't give a fig for us.

NETTLE
He has a hump on.

DAISY
Well, I'm going to have it
off his back! He has to pull
his weigh.

Daisy goes off.

NETTLE
Its an ill wind that blows
ahead of a storm.

24

EXT. BEACH - DAY

24

Hemlock is smoking a pipe and contemplating the
view.

DAISY comes down the beach.

DAISY
Hemlock! You have to go
fishing again today. There's
nothing to eat but shellfish.
(shouts in his ear)
Father!

HEMLOCK
What's that? You're selfish?

DAISY
Shellfish!

HEMLOCK
Life is hellish, daughter.
There are so many dark clouds
in life, don't you think? I'm
just the son of a sea-cook
brought here by a siren's
singing.

DAISY
O, what a silly old man you
are! (turns from him in
disgust) How are we to manage
if you do nothing!

Daisy raises her hands to the heavens.

Hemlock opens his eyes and gleefully watches her.

DAISY

O clouds! There's not a thing
wrong with him. Each day he
sits and broods about his
youth. Paradise makes men sit
on their backsides.

She turns in an attempt to catch him looking at
her.

He is too quick for her. His eyes are closed.

Daisy continues to stare at him while she speaks.

DAISY

The underworld is full of men
yearning to be free while
Paradise is inhabited by
individuals imprisoned in
themselves. Look at him!
Once, he used to fish. Do you
remember, clouds?

Hemlock opens his eyes.

DAISY

You old faker! There's not a
thing wrong with you!

Hemlock cups his hand to his ear.

HEMLOCK

Nil Admirari! Talking to
herself again She's
always upon the gad. Fresh
air passes through every part
of her.

DAISY

What do you want, father?

HEMLOCK

I don't want to play games,
Nettle.

DAISY

Are you blind as well as
deaf? I'm Daisy.

HEMLOCK
What was that?

DAISY
I'm Daisy!

HEMLOCK
Dizzy! Well follow me, girl.
Come! I've something to say
to you.

Daisy exasperated, does as she is told, follows him
off.

25

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

25

Hemlock and Daisy are sitting looking out.

HEMLOCK
Do you know why I sit here
every day, child?

DAISY
To waste our time ...?

HEMLOCK
To throw old water on an
enterprise.

DAISY
What enterprise?

HEMLOCK
The waste years of our life
are in our youth.

DAISY
Not this again ...

HEMLOCK
The young are too young to
make use of their youth.

DAISY
What about the old who are
too old to make anything of
old age?

HEMLOCK

Yes .. but the old are not
too old to make use of
young's youth.

DAISY

Yes .. but the young are
never too young not to be
used by the old.

HEMLOCK

Yet the young are not too old
to be useless to the old.

DAISY

But .. the old are not too
old to be like the young.

HEMLOCK

The young are too young to
let the old be like the
young.

DAISY

The young are too old to let
old age spend young's youth.

HEMLOCK

Spent youth is youth's gift
to old age.

Daisy is stumped.

HEMLOCK

Run along now, there's a good
girl. Ask Nettle to bring me
lunch.

DAISY

Would you like to see the
menu?

HEMLOCK

That's very kind. What's on
offer?

DAISY

Shellfish and seaweed.

HEMLOCK
What kind?

DAISY
(frustrated) Mussel and
wrack.

HEMLOCK
What was that?

Hemlock stands upright - looks at his feet.

HEMLOCK
The ground moved.

DAISY
I felt nothing.

HEMLOCK
Your head's in the clouds,
Daisy. Come. Nettle can tell
me what it was. She's the
earthy one of you three
tartars.

Hemlock starts along the cliff. Daisy follows
behind.

26 INT. HUT - DAY

26

Clover is clinging to Nettle.

There is the sound of MUSIC.

The music stops.

The two girls are tense ... waiting for something
to happen.

NETTLE
Do you hear the music?

CLOVER
Yes

The MUSIC starts again, this time lower in volume.

NETTLE
There it is again.

CLOVER

Yes

NETTLE

Someone's singing

CLOVER

Whom?

The singing is benevolent -

Slowly the two girls relax, separate.

27

EXT. HUT - DAY

27

Nettle emerges from the hut.

Daisy is now ahead of Hemlock

NETTLE

Did you feel it?

DAISY

Hemlock felt something.

NETTLE

Pater?

HEMLOCK

There are strange happenings
going on. My insides are
starting to burn. I know it
neither as fish, flesh, or
good red herring.

DAISY

Well, it's no ulcer. Your
life is strain free.

Daisy goes into the hut.

HEMLOCK

She'd not help a lame dog
over a stile.

NETTLE

What was it, pater?

HEMLOCK

You know what one is about,
Nettle. You are our oracler.
I'm relying on you to
interpret the signs. Lets
find a quiet spot away from
the mayhem.

28

EXT. SMALL COVE - DAY

28

Nettle is guided by Hemlock into a small cove.

NETTLE

As soon as I felt the tremor,
I sat tense like I usually do
for the aftershock.
(demonstrates)
I waited for something to
happen. And then something
did happen.

HEMLOCK

You heard music?

NETTLE

I heard music twice. It was
very faint the second time.
If you listen you can still
hear it.

They listen intently.

HEMLOCK

Yes, I can hear it just above
the waves.

NETTLE

Can you hear the singing?

HEMLOCK

What kind of singing?

NETTLE

Like Clover's.

HEMLOCK

Our Clover?

NETTLE

Yes.

HEMLOCK

Was it not she singing? She often sings by fits and starts.

NETTLE

No, pater, it wasn't she.

HEMLOCK

Then we are to be visited.

NETTLE

By whom?

HEMLOCK

Someone unknown. It is but once in a way we are warned by the voice Clover inherited.

NETTLE

Mother's ...?

Hemlock takes Nettle in his arms.

HEMLOCK

Your mother was the fruitful vine that was foretold. I am a mere shipwreck. Your mother's power was incalculable. At last the final humiliation. My olive branches are to be stripped from me.

NETTLE

What do you mean?

HEMLOCK

To tell tales out of school is not my nature.

Hemlock picks Nettle up, puts her on her feet.

HEMLOCK
Away with you, girl. Idleness
is the virtue of the bored.

NETTLE
But I helped to collect your
lunch.

HEMLOCK
Better than dining with Duke
Humphrey.

NETTLE
What's got into you?

Hemlock pushes Nettle off in the direction of the
hut.

HEMLOCK
Be home with you.

He goes in the opposite direction.

EXT. HUT - DAY

Daisy is sweeping out the hut.

Clover is down on the shore washing bowls.

Nettle feels her way about.

NETTLE
He's balmy.

DAISY
He's a sorry tale alright.

NETTLE
Who's Duke Humphrey?

DAISY
He's a figure of speech,
Nettle. It is better to dine
with Duke Humphrey than with
cross-legged knights.

Nettle is frustrated by her own ignorance.

NETTLE

I don't understand.

She looks up -

Grey clouds pour in from the sea.

NETTLE

The day is turning grey.
There are ill-favourable
signs. I heard the sound of
sharks hunting today.

Hemlock appears from behind the hut.

HEMLOCK

Shark?

Hemlock clutches his heart, staggers into the hut.

DAISY

Now look at the excuse you
have given him to malingering.

29

INT. HUT - DAY

29

Hemlock is sobbing on a makeshift bed.

Nettle sits on the bed with a bowl in her hand.

NETTLE

Have some wrack, pater.

HEMLOCK

That man dined with Mohammed
before he came to the island.
He has made all of us eat the
air. I eat my heart out for
your mother.

Hemlock munches on the seaweed.

HEMLOCK

Mention of Shark sets my
teeth on edge. I want revenge
for taking your mother away
from us.

NETTLE

Don't chew such hard
feelings, pater.

Hemlock is struggling with the seaweed.

HEMLOCK

Chew! I eat my words. I feast
upon my inner banquet. I have
found no easy way to shake
the pagoda tree. Shark robbed
me of my wealth ... my
willing palm that no longer
wished to be mine.

NETTLE

(calms him) Pater Hemlock ...
do not rake the straw.

HEMLOCK

I traded your mother to Shark
for a place in his boat. In
return, Pandora's box was
opened on the island.

NETTLE

But you loved mother?

HEMLOCK

Fine words butter no
parsnips, Nettle. Shark was a
pap with a hatchet.

NETTLE

I don't understand. Mother
wouldn't have gone with him.
He was horrible.

HEMLOCK

She went. When you understand
that, things will come to a
pretty pass. Only then might
you take me to task for my
selfishness.

The MUSIC is heard again.

Hemlock covers his ears and rolls over.

Nettle emerges from the hut.

Daisy has Clover in a headlock.

DAISY
Be off, Nettle. I'm having a
word with your sister.

Nettle lingers within earshot.

DAISY
Have you been singing for
your supper?

CLOVER
No, not I. Let me go.

DAISY
Why is your voice so raspy?

CLOVER
Your strangling me. I am
already hoarse from this
morning. Am I not, Nettle?

NETTLE
Yes, you were singing all
morning.

DAISY
I hope there were no ships
about.

Daisy lets go of Clover.

CLOVER
Ships?

DAISY
Clover, my dear. You are
unaware of the seductiveness
of your own voice. It's like
a hungry wind.

NETTLE
I'm as hungry as the wind.

They are all hungry. Clover flops to the sand.

CLOVER

I'm as hungry as a fire in
the wind.

Daisy joins Clover.

DAISY

Fires are popular with
carpenters.
(sighs)
I'm delirious with hunger.

NETTLE

Ill blows the wind that
profits nobody.

DAISY

Sickness benefits physicians.

CLOVER

What does that mean? There
are no physicians on the
island?

DAISY

Death puts money in the
pockets of undertakers.

NETTLE

There are none here. You are
being effected by hunger,
Daisy.

HEMLOCK O.S.

Nettle! Bring me some chai.

Nettle takes the order as a slight.

DAISY

We need proper food. We have
to speak to him.

NETTLE

Get Clover to do it. She is
his favourite.

Clover shuffles her feet in the sand.

DAISY

Clover?

CLOVER

Alright. I'll speak with him
when we go to pray.

Nettle goes into the hut.

31 EXT. BEACH - EVENING

31

Hemlock and Clover are walking back along the
beach.

CLOVER

In medias res, daddy?

HEMLOCK

In toto. The irony of fate
brings about the most
unlikely events.

CLOVER

Such as

HEMLOCK

Being able to see the islands
of the blest or blessed.

CLOVER

(Quotes) Soon your footsteps
I shall follow to the islands
of the Blessed.

HEMLOCK

I've taught you well, Clover.

CLOVER

I've also taught myself,
daddy.

32 EXT. TOTEM POLE - EVENING

32

Hemlock and Clover are praying before the pole.

CLOVER

What other ironies has fate
shown you, daddy?

HEMLOCK

Jacks of all trades ... Jack
Tar, Jack Spratt, Jack
Robinson, Jack Ketch, Jack
Horner

CLOVER

Jack Frost?

HEMLOCK

Jack o'Lantern.

CLOVER

Then you have seen the Ignis
Fatuus?

HEMLOCK

Deceived by it. It's
everywhere. It hangs around
like marsh gas. Other times
it's barely visible as it
flits about casting mirages.
It produces apparitions.
(Beat)
Concentrate on the Ignis
Fatuus and it will appear.

Hemlock and Clover concentrate.

Everything darkens.

Music penetrates the dim light.

A GHOST appears.

The Ghost carries a lantern.

It circles the totem pole -

Once -

Twice -

Three times -

Vanishes.

Clover is awe struck.

HEMLOCK
(matter-of-fact) Jack
o'Lantern has often brought
Jack Tars and cheap-Jacks to
destruction on the sand bars
of this island.

CLOVER
Husbands?

HEMLOCK
Expect no husbands' boat,
Clover. Jack o'Lantern's
shipwrecks all perish. No
survivors, not a hundred
miles off or from.

CLOVER
None?

33 EXT. SHORE - EVENING

33

Hemlock and Clover are arm in arm.

HEMLOCK
Your dreams are too often
full of the idols of the
cave. You only see the
shadows of realities.

CLOVER
It is not my fault. We live
apart from the rest of the
world.

HEMLOCK
This is the root of your
error. It is your notion of
how you think the world is
... a misconception.

CLOVER
Being on the island is like
being in a cave. The four of
us are hardly a tribe.

HEMLOCK

As a result we do not fall into believing shadowy preconceived notions. Why, if we were part of a tribe, we would dismiss Jack o'Lantern as a ghost.

CLOVER

Ghost?

34

EXT. CLIFF - EVENING

34

Hemlock and Clover are looking out to sea.

HEMLOCK

Ghosts have a certain look, certain conventional tones of voice, a ghostly gait, a professional uniform, and habits of mind as professional as their externals. They are scary spirits, and carry lanterns, and know well enough what the tribe thinks of them.

CLOVER

Can they speak?

HEMLOCK

Well, they are hardly the idols of the gossip-shops. You see, ghosts don't talk. Language doesn't tyrannize over them and mould their thoughts. However, this is not true of all meetings between people. The idol of talk derives its influence from shop-talk.

CLOVER

Then my misconception of husbands is not from talking about them?

HEMLOCK

Nor from having seen any.

CLOVER

It's from not knowing what a husband is?

HEMLOCK

Correct. Your deception is not a product of the theatre, nor one that has arisen from the dogmas of different schools.

CLOVER

I will hush up then.

35

EXT. FIRE - EVENING

35

Hemlock and Clover are sitting by a beach fire.

HEMLOCK

You must learn the ins and outs of the whole working, the details of everything. You must have imperium in imperio.

CLOVER

It's too much to comprehend. Daisy is wiser than I could ever be. Teach her.

HEMLOCK

I've taught Daisy all that she wishes to know from me. She has the inside track of many things. She lives in the clouds ... she doesn't have real existence.

CLOVER

What about Nettle?

HEMLOCK

Nettle. My sweet Nettle is flotsam and jetsam ... goods lost at sea ... either floating in the water or cast on shore.

CLOVER
That's not very nice.

HEMLOCK
Come, Clover. You can swim
against any tide.

CLOVER
I never seem to gain or get
ground like Nettle.

HEMLOCK
You have no ground to have
cut from under your feet. You
are of the first water.

CLOVER
Living in a backwater.

HEMLOCK
What would life be worth if
we were to wax fat and kick.
Would we cherish our
knowledge so greatly if we
were to make our quid out of
it. Needs must when the dark
gods drive.

CLOVER
You think it strange that I
want a husband?

HEMLOCK
It's little more than a nine-
day wonder.

CLOVER
I've prayed for husbands not
to come, but this feeling
will not go away.

HEMLOCK
And meanwhile husbands will
not come. It is impossible to
pursue your quest to the
nines. There are no husbands
here.

CLOVER

I've heard that nine tailors
make a husband.

HEMLOCK

Aye, and the Nightmare is
attended by her nine foals.
When the stars shoot and the
meteors glare above this
island, frightful apparitions
will appear in the night.

CLOVER

If I put nine grains of sand
on a flat-fish's back, the
sea-nymphs will protect me.

HEMLOCK

To go that far is to go to
the noggin staves for the
nonce.

CLOVER

If it's only temporary, then
its worth it!

Clover runs off in a huff.

36

EXT. SHORE - EVENING

36

Clover is running.

She is met by Daisy and Nettle.

DAISY

Did you speak of our hunger?

CLOVER

He tied me up in riddles.

NETTLE

What are we to do?

DAISY

We will give it to daybreak.
Thereafter if he has not gone
fishing we will act.

CLOVER
What will we do?

DAISY
We will speak back to him in
the same gibberish he speaks
to us.

NETTLE
What effect will that have.

DAISY
It will drive him so insane,
we will rush back to sea to
be away from us. He will
bring back crab.

CLOVER
It is a plan of sorts.

DAISY
Then we are agreed. All
sensible dialogue with our
dear father ceases with the
dawn.

The three girls join hands -
Walk slowly back towards the hut.

37 INT. HUT - NIGHT 37

The wind howls outside.
Hemlock is in a fitful state.
Daisy, Nettle and Clover huddle together.
Their eyes are fixed on Hemlock.
The hut shakes from the violence of the wind.
The storm rages on.

38 EXT. SEA SHORE - DAWN 38

The sun rises from the sea -
Rises in all its glory.

Hemlock emerges from the hut irritated and angry followed by Clover

HEMLOCK

(loudly) If there were a child nine times fairer than you Clover, then I'd have her if it meant that I could look nine ways at the truth. Possession of knowledge is nine points of any argument. Success in an argument requires nine things; a good deal of shouting; a good deal of impatience; a good self-interest; a good stinging tongue; a good wagging finger; a good ulcer; a good bit of gossip; a good put-down; and a good bit of luck.

CLOVER

Father. The sun is up but my sisters are not. Please quieten down.

HEMLOCK

Quieten down! Unfortunately, Clover you are as nimble as ninepence and as nice as ninepence when you argue. It's get me my breakfast, or I'll teach you no more!

Nettle emerges from the hut.

CLOVER

Your mother-wit is painful, daddy. I feel inclined to suck the monkey ...

HEMLOCK

What?

CLOVER

Shoot a moon

NETTLE
Husband's tea?

Nettle hands him a mug.

HEMLOCK
You know I don't like weak
chai, Nettle.

NETTLE
We're running out of herbs.
There's miching mallecho
going on.

HEMLOCK
Its those thieving jackdaws.

CLOVER
There's milk in the coconut.

HEMLOCK
[tastes tea] Ugh! Someone's
drowned the miller.

CLOVER
Draw it mild, daddy.

HEMLOCK
Daisy make this?

NETTLE
Yes ...

HEMLOCK
Its a conspiracy!

Daisy emerges from the hut.

HEMLOCK
You should take the measure
of a man's foot. You know
there's small purpose to
this.

DAISY
There's great purpose.

HEMLOCK
Oh aye? Its a mutiny is it?

Clover makes to slink off.

DAISY
Stay, Clover.

CLOVER
Don't put me to the blush,
Daisy.

DAISY
You've had to put up with it
as well as us. Wasn't that
what we were talking about
last night?

NETTLE
I think Cloe should go.

DAISY
Stay put, Clover.

CLOVER
I feel put upon.

HEMLOCK
This is a put-up affair!

DAISY
Father, I'm hard put to bring
this matter up ...

HEMLOCK
Perhaps you should put it
off, Daisy.

CLOVER
Can I put in a word.

HEMLOCK
That's our Clover. Hates to
be put out of court. Tell
your daddy everything.

CLOVER
They've come to put you out
of the house, daddy.

DAISY
They ...?

NETTLE
O Cloe, you turncoat.

DAISY
Clover ... take Nettle for a
walk.

CLOVER
Why?

NETTLE
Please, Cloe. We're in this
together.

Nettle and Clover head off down the shore.

DAISY
Inside, father!

HEMLOCK
So I am being put to the push
now?

DAISY
Inside

Daisy jostles her father ...

40

INT. HUT - DAWN

40

... Into a makeshift chair.

DAISY
You are not pulling your
weight.

HEMLOCK
There comes a time in every
man's life when he is ready
to retire.

DAISY
You're not even three score
and four!

HEMLOCK
That is old in my profession.

DAISY

What profession do you have?

HEMLOCK

I am a father. Yet I should be wary of broken reeds. Once or twice removed, a relative may have neither rhyme nor reason for abandoning an elder. But his daughters? When the rift in the lute widens bye and bye to make the music mute, it silences us all. It breaks an old man's heart to bow down in his own home. I am now not worth a rush to my own daughters. I am between wind and water.

Hemlock rises to his feet, totters out.

41

EXT. HUT - DAY

41

Daisy emerges from the hut.

Clover and Nettle are returning. Hemlock pushes past them.

DAISY

That was a short walk?

CLOVER

Look at him. I'll not have it, Daisy!

DAISY

He's a dog in a manger.

NETTLE

(shocked) Daisy!!

DAISY

Give a dog an ill-name, then hang him!

NETTLE

Daisy!!!

CLOVER
How cruel!

DAISY
He's no ewe's lamb.

CLOVER
He's our daddy!

DAISY
He's your father!

NETTLE
What do you mean?

DAISY
He's no father of mine.

NETTLE
I don't understand.

DAISY
Here's more cheese for our
cause. He's no father of
yours either, Nettle.

NETTLE
Not my pater?

DAISY
Don't cast your sheep's eyes,
Nettle.

CLOVER
Why not! What a shock!

DAISY
Face it out, Nettle.

CLOVER
Your plan has fallen flat,
Daisy.

DAISY
Nettle. Stay!

NETTLE
I can't.

CLOVER
Leave her alone, you bully.

Nettle runs into the hut.

CLOVER
You know how to make a fish
of one and flesh of another.

DAISY
I know when the kettle boils.
I know that much.

Daisy picks up a pitcher- walks away.

Clover picks up another pitcher - follows.

42 EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

42

Daisy is in the stream filling her pitcher.

CLOVER
What's the matter, Daisy?

DAISY
I'm sick of this island. I
can't live here another day.

CLOVER
Why ...?

DAISY
I'm getting old ... older. I
tire of hearing the same old
wind whisper in the trees. I
tire of watching the same
small clouds going round and
round upon themselves in the
sky.

CLOVER
In nubibus

DAISY
And the sea ... the same
sodden sea ... to and fro ...
lash and crash ... ebb and
flow ... coming then going
... while we stay here.

(MORE)

DAISY (cont'd)

There must be more to the world than this island. There must be more than this same perfect existence. I'm too happy. I want to be unhappy. I want to know what it is like being miserable.

CLOVER

Gosh, you certainly know how to make others miserable. Poor Nettle!

Daisy starts back towards the hut. Clover follows.

43

EXT. SHORE - DAY

43

Daisy and Clover are struggling with the pitchers.

DAISY

The truth can often hurt.

CLOVER

You are miserable!

DAISY

Of course I am!

CLOVER

Daisy, what's happening to you?

DAISY

It's father. He's driving me lunar. There is no sense in his talk, and even less in his inactivity. Look at him!

A little way off, Hemlock is standing on his head.

CLOVER

Where did he learn that?

DAISY

Here! By having nothing else to do!

CLOVER

Daddy's been right round the world.

DAISY

There must have been a lot of bends.

CLOVER

O Daisy! Why are you so off-colour. You're like a mango. Green as envy on the outside; yellow like a sick-man on the inside. Why are you such a bitter lemon?

DAISY

I'm ill. I'm wasting away. I love crab. I hate salty shellfish.

CLOVER

Is that all?

DAISY

All? I can't live on shellfish!

CLOVER

It's better than eating sand.

DAISY

They're full of sand! Limpet, mussel, cockle, winkle, scallop, oyster, clam, and chiton. Give me crab! It all seems quite simple. Give me crabs, and I won't simper

CLOVER

My Daisy ... you're just a big baby.

DAISY

Am I? What would you rather have. Limpet or lobster?

CLOVER
Limpet I can take or leave.
But I can long for lobster.

DAISY
Do you want some?

CLOVER
Of course. But how?

DAISY
Get father to go fishing
again.

CLOVER
Your last attempt wasn't very
successful.

DAISY
Will you ask him?

CLOVER
I can't ask him!

DAISY
He listens when you cry.

CLOVER
I'm not going to cry so that
you can eat crab.

DAISY
Then I'll have to call for
some help.

44 EXT. TOTEM POLE - DAY

44

Daisy is circling the pole.

DAISY
(spell-singing) Nimbus,
cirrus, circulating, come
together bring us rain ...

Clover comes running into the clearing.

CLOVER
No, Daisy. Stop it!

DAISY
Will you ask him?

CLOVER
No!

DAISY
Strato rising, cumulating
gale, storm, and hurricane
...

CLOVER
Stop it!

DAISY
Will you ask him?

CLOVER
No!

45 EXT. COVE - DAY

45

Hemlock is still sulking.

He looks up -

Daisy is legging it towards him. Clover is trying
to keep up with her.

HEMLOCK
Oops ... trouble.

Hemlock closes his eyes.

Daisy stops in front of Hemlock.

DAISY
Father! You will go back to
sea or else ...

HEMLOCK
Or else what ...?

DAISY
I leave here for good!

HEMLOCK
O crabs! Leave me alone.

DAISY
You old waster!

CLOVER
Daisy!

DAISY
That's it, Clover, I'm off! I
get no cooperation around
here. I'm no woman Friday.

CLOVER
Daisy! Daisy!

Exit Daisy followed by Clover.

46 EXT. SEA - DAY 46

Storm clouds gather on the horizon.

Dark. Brooding. Foreboding.

47 INT. HUT - DAY 47

Daisy is throwing her few personal possessions into
the egg basket.

NETTLE
Where are you going to go?

DAISY
Far from here!

NETTLE
How?

DAISY
I don't care. I'm leaving!

48 EXT. HUT - DAY 48

Daisy emerges with her belongings.

Nettle and Clover hotly follow her.

DAISY
If you decide to leave all
you have to do is meet me at
the old totem pole by sunset.

NETTLE

Daisy!

Daisy sets off at a run.

NETTLE

Oh Clover, why did you not
stick by us?

Clover breaks into tears.

EXT. ROCKS - DAY

Hemlock is fishing with a pole and line.

HEMLOCK

(sings) In Misty's sand I
take my stand I'll live and
die for Misty.

He recasts his line.

HEMLOCK

(talking to himself) I've
always given my own fish-guts
to my own three sea-maws.
I'll not hang out the white
flag to one of my own
daughters. We've hardly
arrived at our fingers' end.

The line gets caught in some seaweed.

He struggles to free it.

HEMLOCK

Daisy is such a flea in my
ear. It's not the first time
she has flung from me like a
hooked fish.

He gives up - throws the pole into the sea.

HEMLOCK

I'll draw her in. To fly in
the face of a fisherman is an
imprudent thing.

He is back on the shingle beachcombing.

HEMLOCK

Yet I'll not see my Daisy
become food for fishes. I
have guts in the brain.

49 EXT. CAVE - EVENING

49

Hemlock is sitting playing with a small crab.
Nettle appears.

NETTLE

Pater ...

HEMLOCK

My struck all of a heap
second-born! Yes, sweetness
and light?

NETTLE

Everything has gone dark.

HEMLOCK

It's getting towards evening.

NETTLE

No, the island is turning
black.

HEMLOCK

Is it, child?

NETTLE

There are so many things
being kept dark.

HEMLOCK

Is there?

NETTLE

Something has come to our
home.

HEMLOCK

Perhaps we are entertaining
an angel unawares?

NETTLE

It is between Scylla and
Charybdis.

HEMLOCK

That's a long way away.

NETTLE

I see how the land lies.

HEMLOCK

By jingo! And how does it
look?

NETTLE

I see the sky falling and us
catching larks.

HEMLOCK

Do you see the lamp of
Phoebus?

NETTLE

I see the sun all mango green
in a cream of cloud.

HEMLOCK

A standing dish ...

NETTLE

I see hills melt and rivers
freeze.

HEMLOCK

Summer and winter in one ...

NETTLE

I see a rider switching
horses in mid-stream.

HEMLOCK

Now there's a sight.

NETTLE

I see a molehole higher than
a mountain.

HEMLOCK
Its the moving of earth
towards heaven!

NETTLE
... My vision's going.

HEMLOCK
You can see nothing more?

NETTLE
I can smell ...

HEMLOCK
What?

NETTLE
... a rat.

HEMLOCK
Pardon!

NETTLE
It's gone. That was my
Parthian shaft.

HEMLOCK
Well, Nettle dear, that is
quite a vision. It's like
taking pepper in the nose.

NETTLE
It's salt on wounds already
open.

HEMLOCK
What do you mean?

NETTLE
I'm unhappy. Family life is
disintegrating. I've decided
to leave with Daisy.

HEMLOCK
Another moment against the
grain.

He puts his head in his hands.

NETTLE

I must find my own way in the
world. The grass wills me go.
The sand bids my toes to run.

HEMLOCK

Good gods, Nettle. To keep in
with you women is to kick
against the tide.

NETTLE

(sings)
Carry me wind, carry me sea
tarry me not, dally me none.
Wing me away, bear me away
high over lands and far
empires.
Harry me, marry me, true.
Call up cloud, call up wave,
float me aloft, soak me soft.
Blow me wild, wash me wide,
far before storm and wet
cyclone.
Harry me, marry me, true.

Nettle is spent.

HEMLOCK

Gads, Nettle, who will marry
you? You're no blue stocking.
You are blind. You'll never
see how the cat jumps. You
know nothing of the Browns,
Jones's, and Robinsons beyond
this island. Fullchisel
you're going off half-cocked
in search of castles in the
air.

NETTLE

Better half-cocked than half-
horrible!

Nettle scuttles off.

Hemlock rises, shouts after her.

HEMLOCK

They say that a man who
cannot say boo to a goose has
no spirit! (angry) I'll not
be one to dust a daughter's
coat for her when she returns
to exchange rye-grass for
clover!

50

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

50

Clover is descending the cliff with her basket.

Hemlock appears below.

CLOVER

Daddy!

HEMLOCK

My little chicken.

He embraces her, tries to kiss her on the forehead.
Clover shies away.

Hemlock looks in the basket. It is still empty.

HEMLOCK

My, you're like a hen on a
hot griddle.

CLOVER

There's not a lot to be cock-
a-hoop about.

HEMLOCK

Someone has to be cock of the
walk.

CLOVER

A cock is always bold on its
own dunghill.

HEMLOCK

It cuts a man's comb when his
children go against him.
You've thrown in your lot
with Daisy and Nettle.

CLOVER
I have. You've sold your hens
on a rainy day.

HEMLOCK
Nonsense. You'll all play
hide and seek for a while,
then turn up for supper.

CLOVER
You've raised a hornet's
nest, daddy.

HEMLOCK
Hoity-toity! Care killed a
cat!

CLOVER
Lack of care made the monkey
use the cat's paw to get the
roast chestnuts.

HEMLOCK
Daisy always wants two bites
at the cherry. I'll not be
caught with chaff, Clover.
They'll both return by
weeping cross.

CLOVER
They're leaving by the old
totem pole.

HEMLOCK
Then they are between wind
and water.

51 EXT. OLD TOTEM POLE - DAY

51

The old totem pole is barely more than a large
piece of ship's timber lodged in the sand.

Daisy arrives and throws herself down in abject
misery.

A small cross is to her left.

Daisy sees the cross and shuffles away from it.

She pulls out a piece of seaweed from her small bundle and starts chewing on it.

52

EXT. HUT - DAY

52

Hemlock and Daisy arrive at the hut.

HEMLOCK

All is quiet. No nagging
tongues to spoil the silence.

CLOVER

There is a great gulf between
you and them.

HEMLOCK

And you think I cannot bridge
it. I'm wide awake, Clover.
My withers are unwrung. I'll
not have the worst half of
all the world and his wife.
I'll not be wool gathering
when I'm worn and wasted.

CLOVER

And I'll not be old mutton
while others are orange
blossom.

Hemlock studies Clover - sees her for the first time as a sensual woman.

He shakes the thought from his head.

HEMLOCK

Take my three piglets to the
market? Never! Turn my
paddock to haddock? Never!
I'd rather be buried up to my
neck in sand.

CLOVER

There's a reasonable
solution!

HEMLOCK

I'll be no sponge for human
nature. Crabs!

CLOVER
What was that, daddy?

HEMLOCK
I said .. CRABS!

CLOVER
We haven't had crab for
weeks.

HEMLOCK
And you shall have no more
unless you fish it yourself.

53 EXT. OLD TOTEM POLE - DAY

53

Daisy looks up.

Nettle is struggling along the sand, lost.

She is turning in circles, seeking direction.

DAISY
Nettle!

CU - Nettle's face brightens.

She hurries on towards Daisy.

54 INT. HUT - DAY

54

Hemlock is lying on his makeshift bed. Clover is
preparing tea.

CLOVER
So you refuse to return to
sea?

HEMLOCK
It is my prerogative. Why
aren't you pushing off like
the other two?

CLOVER
Why should I?

HEMLOCK
Because you're unhappy. It's
in your shoulders.

CLOVER
I thought it was in my head?

HEMLOCK
It's all of you. You're
miserable.

CLOVER
You're making me feel much
worse.

HEMLOCK
What nonsense. I'm always
here to make you feel better.
I'm your father.

CLOVER
I've never noticed what a
silly old man you can be.

HEMLOCK
Silly, eh? I know a thing or
two. Women who throw
themselves at a man deserve
all that they get.

CLOVER
Who mentioned women?

HEMLOCK
You're one, aren't you?

CLOVER
I thought I was still a girl.
Girls don't leave home.

HEMLOCK
You look like a woman to me.
You've got everything haven't
you?

CLOVER
I haven't got a thing ..
that's another reason for not
leaving. I've nowhere to go
and nothing to get me where
the tide might wash me.

HEMLOCK
Hasn't stopped your sisters
from pushing off?

CLOVER
No.

HEMLOCK
So?

CLOVER
So what? They're women.

HEMLOCK
Gods above, Clover. You know
nothing. I've taught you all
about philosophy and language
and not a thing about men.

CLOVER
I thought one learned that
oneself.

HEMLOCK
Oneself? Now there's a pretty
picture. Women without men.
What a docile world it would
be.

CLOVER
Docile?

HEMLOCK
Peaceful, calm ... No wars,
no hostility, no hiding of
emotions, no sexism.

CLOVER
No sex?

HEMLOCK
You don't know much about
that anyway.

CLOVER
I've watched the jackdaws.

HEMLOCK
We've all watched the
jackdaws, Clover, but it's
hardly the same thing.

CLOVER
Why?

HEMLOCK
Because, my dear

CLOVER
Because what?

HEMLOCK
Look, I think you're right.
Perhaps you're not a woman at
all.

CLOVER
Not a woman ...?

HEMLOCK
No. You're still a girl.

CLOVER
No, I'm not!

HEMLOCK
Why don't you run along and
make me a nice cup of tea.

CLOVER
Go boil yourself. I'm not
hanging around to be your
slave!

HEMLOCK
Don't be a silly girl. We're
playing grown-ups.

CLOVER
Silly girl! I'm leaving!

HEMLOCK
Rubbish. You've nowhere to
go. Make me some tea.

CLOVER
Sod off, you lazy crabber.
I'm off!

HEMLOCK
Well, go then, you miserable
child.

Clover picks up some seaweed -

Throws it at Hemlock -

Departs.

Hemlock, exhausted by events, slumps.

MUSIC

55 EXT. OLD TOTEM POLE - DAY

55

Daisy is sitting playing with the sand.

Nettle is finishing her shell necklace.

NETTLE
I'm miserable.

DAISY
At least you can't see what a
miserable day it's turned
out.

NETTLE
I can feel it though.
(PAUSE)
I still don't see why you
said he wasn't our father?

DAISY
I disowned him for you.

NETTLE
Is that all. He's our real
father?

DAISY
Of course he is!

Clover comes running up carrying a small bundle.

CLOVER O.S
Daisy! Nettle!

NETTLE
It's Cloe!

DAISY
I've never seen her look so
ruffled.

CLOVER
You waited for me!

DAISY
We're not going anywhere.

CLOVER
What?

NETTLE
We've nowhere to go.

CLOVER
But ...

DAISY
O Clover, sit down, girl.

CLOVER
I'm not a girl!

NETTLE
Be peaceful, sis.

CLOVER
I've run two miles to catch
you.

DAISY
Well you've got plenty of
time to walk the two miles
back.

CLOVER
I'm not going back.

NETTLE
Nor I.

DAISY

Let's be realistic. When a coconut falls off a tree it does one of three things.

CLOVER

Three things?

DAISY

I'm getting to that.

NETTLE

Talk sense, Daisy. No-one makes sense anymore. It's riddles or metaphors. If it continues, I'll throw myself off the Point.

DAISY

You're missing my point, Nettle. When a coconut is shed by its parent tree, it falls, and either cracks open or lies rotting. Either way, the ants eat it. Correct?

CLOVER

How does Nettle know that. She can't see.

NETTLE

I've spent enough time under the palm trees to know what happens to the cocos.

DAISY

Please. Let me continue. If the coconut is torn from the tree in a storm, it's washed away by the sea.

CLOVER

It can live for years in the sea.

DAISY

Yes, but eventually it drifts to some place where it takes root in the sands.

CLOVER
Is this a fairy tale?

NETTLE
Yes, what's the point of all
this, Daisy.

DAISY
We've fallen from the parent
tree?

NETTLE
Yes ...

CLOVER
Yes ...

DAISY
We don't fancy floating the
sea for years?

NETTLE
No ...

CLOVER
No ... We don't want to rot?

NETTLE
No ...

CLOVER
No ...

DAISY
But we've already been split
open?

NETTLE
Yes ...

CLOVER
Yes ...

DAISY
So ... why don't we take root
here?

CLOVER
On the island?

NETTLE
With pater?

DAISY
No, here.

CLOVER
Where?

DAISY
Here!

NETTLE
You mean here, this place!

DAISY
Yes ...

Nettle points to the cross.

NETTLE
This is a cemetery.

Clover rises in alarm. Looks at the cross.

CLOVER
Who is down there?

DAISY
Our grandmother.

Another cross is nearby.

CLOVER
Who is that one.

DAISY
Her mother. Only women are
buried here.

CLOVER
What! We can't live here.
It's horrible!

DAISY
We will end up here. Its our
fate.

CLOVER
I know that. But not just
yet! Lets go on.

Daisy resigns herself to the idea.

DAISY
On we go then.

The three girls leave the Old Totem pole behind
them.

56 EXT. ROCKY SHORE - DAY

56

Daisy, Nettle and Clover are making their way over
rocks.

NETTLE
What are we going to eat,
Daisy?

DAISY
Octopus.

CLOVER
No, Daisy!

NETTLE
I think it's a bad idea too.

CLOVER
Why can't we eat crab?

DAISY
Don't be a spoiled child. Why
do you think we left
father's.

CLOVER
What! You were the one that
was unhappy about eating
limpet, mussel, cockle, and
winkle.

DAISY
Was I? Who was the one who
wouldn't get father to go
fishing.

NETTLE

Stop it! How are we going to
live together if we argue.
Clover is right, Daisy.

DAISY

Right about what?

CLOVER

Everything!

NETTLE

About octopii. We can't eat
them, it's not right.

DAISY

Why isn't it right?

CLOVER

They're one of us.

DAISY

What do you mean.. one of us!

CLOVER

They're intelligent.

DAISY

They've only got one eye!

CLOVER

Rubbish! They're just like
us.

DAISY

They live under water.
They're all slimey and
useless on land. I've seen
fish do better on land and
they don't even have any
legs.

CLOVER

So what. Coconuts have no
brains, but they can still
swim better than we can!

NETTLE

This is silly. I think we should live on fruit.

DAISY

And not have sea-food ..?

CLOVER

No sea-food .. except crab.

NETTLE

Well who's going to do the fishing then?

DAISY

We need husbands.

CLOVER

Not back to this again. Why can't we do it ourselves?

NETTLE

We can build our own hut.

CLOVER

Do our own fishing.

NETTLE

We don't need husbands.

DAISY

What about children?

NETTLE

The Island is no place for children to grow up.

CLOVER

There are no other children to play with.

NETTLE

Yes, it is very lonely.

DAISY

But if we all had children, they could play with each other.

NETTLE

Why can't we keep the Island
for ourselves.

DAISY

And share it with father?

CLOVER

We could ask daddy to leave.

NETTLE

What a silly idea.

DAISY

He wouldn't go.

CLOVER

Why?

NETTLE

He was here first.

CLOVER

But who was here before him?
Who made the old totem pole?

DAISY

Mother's father made that.

NETTLE

Where did he come from?

DAISY

A shipwreck.

CLOVER

Where did mother's mother
come from then?

DAISY

She was already here. It is
strange, but only girls are
born on the island. Mother
left because she was going
mad here.

CLOVER

How do you know?

NETTLE
People go mad if they are
left on their own.

CLOVER
But father was here.

DAISY
He was always fishing.

NETTLE
Leaving father on his own is
not such a good idea.

DAISY
But we can't go back on the
same terms.

CLOVER
I refuse to make tea. Look
... what's that over there!

DAISY
Where?

A bundle is washed up on the shore.

NETTLE
What ... what is it?

Clover is up - starts to run.

DAISY
Well, Nettle, whatever it is,
it's half buried in the sand.

CLOVER
Daisy! I need your help.

DAISY
Come on, Nettle. This looks
very interesting.

57 INT. HUT - DAY

57

Hemlock is rummaging about looking for food. There
is none.

HEMLOCK

It is not that difficult to paddle your own canoe. If they think that I am a string of dry bones, then they're in for a shock. I'm no dumb dog.

58 EXT. HUT - DAY

58

Hemlock is still searching for food. There is none.

HEMLOCK

This island is as dull as ditch water. If they think that my dolce far niente is a sweet do nothing, then they're due a lesson. If I'm going to die, it'll be in the last ditch. I'll not be done in the eyes.

59 EXT. BAT - DAY

59

Hemlock has his hands in the gunnels searching for morsels of crab. There is none.

HEMLOCK

These girls are lazy. Their tongues are dipped in gall. Dawn to sunset I used to fish. For what? For three lazy daughters who spent all their time playing hide-and-seek or some other senseless leisure game. And then what? At dusk the complaint would go up that they had to take turns cooking supper, making tea.

60 EXT. BEACH - DAY

60

He is beachcombing, looking for something eat.

HEMLOCK

There's little housework in a switch of a bunch of seaweed over the sand. Swish, and all is done.

Hemlock freezes. It is an epiphany moment.

HEMLOCK

Crabs. My whole life has been crabs. Shrimp, prawn, crayfish, lobster. Where are my bosom friends? When I bring to book all my born days and make no bones about the winds that have bruised my body, then, I have been scene and act of my own unhappiness.

He is poking a stick around in a pool of water.

HEMLOCK

Let the soldier be abroad if he will; he can do nothing in his age but destroy it.

He throws the stick away -

Marches off in a new direction.

61 EXT. TOTEM POLE - DAY

61

Hemlock bumbles into the clearing. Searches for berries.

HEMLOCK

As a shipwrecked schoolmaster, abroad, armed with my primer, I can give good account of my life. I have been a man of peace, and I have been at rest on this island. Tranquility is all in all in the air. If there is an apple of discord, then, it is at arm's length.

62 EXT. HUT - DAY

62

Hemlock returns to the hut hungrier than before.

HEMLOCK

Perhaps I have become captain
stiff over my daughters,
perhaps I've capped the
climax, but I've carried
through my hope for change
with a cat-o-nine-tails. I
want my girls to share the
fishing with me, and in turn,
I'll do my quarter share of
chop and chore.

Hemlock goes into the hut

63 INT. HUT - DAY

63

... Throws himself on the bed. He is exhausted.

64 EXT. BEACH - DAY

64

Daisy, Nettle and Clover come up the beach carrying
a SHIPWRECKED SAILOR.

DAISY

Right! Once we've got him
home, he's mine.

CLOVER

No he's not! I saw him first.

NETTLE

Is he handsome?

DAISY

Who cares. He's a husband.

NETTLE

I'd like a husband.

CLOVER

I've got one.

DAISY

Let go, Clover! Let go! He's
not for you.

NETTLE

Will you share him with me?

DAISY
Why should we?

NETTLE
Why shouldn't you?

CLOVER
Yes, why not, Daisy?
Afterall, he is only a
husband.

DAISY
I'm not getting any younger.

CLOVER
He might not even want you,
Daisy.

DAISY
I don't think he has any
choice.

NETTLE
You're not going to keep him
prisoner are you?

DAISY
If I have to.

NETTLE
But this is an island.
There's nowhere else for him
to go.

CLOVER
Yes, we don't have to keep
him captive.

DAISY
We've got to curb his free
will.

NETTLE
Why? He might like us and
want to stay.

DAISY
What? Stay here?

CLOVER

Yes .. what's wrong with that?

NETTLE

The island is beautiful. It's the nicest place in the whole world.

DAISY

You don't have to tell me. I know all that.

65 EXT. HUT - DAY

65

The girls carry the Sailor up to the hut.

They drop the sailor in the sand.

DAISY

Right, lets get his wet clothes off.

CLOVER

Should we?

DAISY

You want to see what he looks like don't you?

NETTLE

I'd like to know what he feels like.

The three girls giggle and bend over the Sailor.

Hemlock emerges from the hut.

HEMLOCK

What's going on here?

Nettle and Clover hide the Sailor from Hemlock by sitting on him.

DAISY

Hello father.

NETTLE

.... pater.

CLOVER
.... daddy.

66 INT. HUT - DAY

66

Daisy and Hemlock enter the hut.

HEMLOCK
So you've decided to come
back for supper like you
always do?

DAISY
Not exactly.

HEMLOCK
Well ...?

CLOVER
Well what?

HEMLOCK
There's a queer smell of
wrack in the air.

DAISY
Is there?

HEMLOCK
There's something awash here.
This is no way to scrape an
acquaintance with a parent.

DAISY
What are you on about?

HEMLOCK
The hut's mine. I built it
years ago. You're not turning
me out in my dotage.

Hemlock takes Daisy - pushes her out of the hut

67 EXT. HUT - DAY

67

... stands guarding the door.

DAISY

We don't want to live in your hut.

NETTLE

We're going to build our own.

CLOVER

And live in it.

HEMLOCK

Well, that's a relief. It's time you all had your own place. So, running away from home has done you some good? Are you going to do your own fishing now?

DAISY

O no ..

HEMLOCK

I'm not doing it for you!

NETTLE

We don't want you to.

HEMLOCK

Ha, that's a good one.

CLOVER

Be like that.

HEMLOCK

Look .. there's not enough fruit or seaweed to live on the island without eating crab.

DAISY

We know. We live here, remember?

HEMLOCK

I've been thinking. I've hauled around from being head to the wind.

DAISY

Oh yeah? You've come to your senses?

HEMLOCK

I don't mind going fishing if you take it in turns to go with me.

CLOVER

We don't have to.

HEMLOCK

I've ridden my high horse, and now, you three are riding it to death. I've let the embers cool, and now, you rake up the fire. I'm like a ship cut adrift. There's rocks ahead.

Hemlock turns from them in despair, goes back into the hut.

HEMLOCK

Someone has to help me with the fishing!!

NETTLE

We've got to tell him, Daisy.

CLOVER

We can't hide it much longer. The husband's coming to.

NETTLE

Pater's all at sea. His inner tempest might swamp him.

CLOVER

Then he'd be all but mad in name.

NETTLE

And we'd have to feed him
....

CLOVER

And bathe him ...

NETTLE
And amuse him ..

CLOVER
And humour him.

Daisy buckles to the logic.

DAISY
Father! We've a surprise for
you.

INTERCUT:

68 INT. HUT - DAY

68

Hemlock has his back to the door.

HEMLOCK
I have the trade winds in my
ears.

DAISY
We have found something.

HEMLOCK
There's a typhoon rising.

DAISY
It's not what we usually find
when we beachcomb.

HEMLOCK
We'll be lashed and dashed
against the reefs.

DAISY
Father!

69 EXT. HUT - DAY

69

Hemlock emerges muttering.

HEMLOCK
Yes, child?

DAISY
We've found a husband.

HEMLOCK
A husband?

DAISY
Yes. Look!

The girls step back to reveal the Sailor.

HEMLOCK
That's not a husband, that's
a man.

CLOVER
Same thing isn't it?

HEMLOCK
What does he have to say
about it?

DAISY
He's deaf and dumb to our
language.

HEMLOCK
Poor fellow!

NETTLE
He's going to go fishing for
us.

HEMLOCK
Is he by-gads! What a
wonderful find!

CLOVER
We're going to be his she-
husbands.

HEMLOCK
O, I don't like that idea.

DAISY
Why not. We've decided we
only need one husband and he
needs three wives. What's
wrong with that?

HEMLOCK
What does he think?

CLOVER

I think he's very lucky to get the only three women on the island.

NETTLE

That's perfectly reasonable.

DAISY

It's settled then?

HEMLOCK

I suppose so. What if he runs away?

CLOVER

We'll make him happy.
(Kisses him)
He looks as though he's had a miserable life.

HEMLOCK

Welcome to Crab Island.

Hemlock shakes the Sailor's hand.

CLOVER

I'm hungry.

NETTLE

What's for supper?

DAISY

What do you think he'd like?

CLOVER

I know what I'd like.

NETTLE

Me too.

DAISY

Father ...?

HEMLOCK

It just so happens there's still enough light for catching crab.

Hemlock picks up his fishing gear.

The three girls run and hug their father.

Hemlock is proud of his three fine girls.

70

EXT. SHORE - DAY

70

Hemlock is in the boat.

The three girls are on shore.

HEMLOCK
Push the boat out!

The girls push the boat into the water.

Hemlock rigs the sail.

The three girls turn, look longingly -

The waiting Sailor -

They start to run, discarding their clothes as they go.

THE END

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71