

# Crab Island

by  
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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