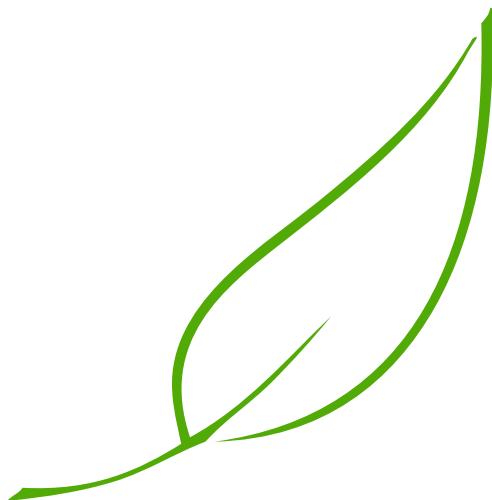


THREE BY THE SEA

by Donna Latham



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SYNOPSIS: Desperately seeking his lost treasure, Buccaneer Bocephus Q. Fizziwater summons three sea yarns: Paddy and the Mermaid, Coyote's Moon, and Foghorn Franny. Paddy and the Mermaid: In a traditional Irish tale, when lovelorn Paddy captures Mina the mermaid and marries her, she truly becomes a fish out of water. Will Paddy's misguided attempts to help miserable Mina adjust to life in his small village prove successful? Coyote's Moon: In this trickster tale, ravenous Coyote sets his ornery sights on devouring Little Rabbit. Can she bamboozle his ol' hide but good to escape becoming dinner? Foghorn Franny: Shipwrecked Franny is shunned and bullied because of her bellowing voice and old-timey clothes. Can a tumultuous storm whoosh in a change of fortune?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7-13 males, 9-17 females, extras; doubling possible)

OPENING

BOCEPHUS Q.

FIZZIWATER THE THIRD (m) A rough-and-tumble, parrot-toting buccaneer. *(7 lines)*

BABY BEAR (m) Speaks baby talk. *(2 lines)*

MAMA BEAR (f) Very dainty and proper. *(4 lines)*

PAPA BEAR (m) A jolly good ol' boy. *(3 lines)*

GOLDILOCKS (f) Curious and energetic. *(2 lines)*

FIRST LITTLE PIG (f) Speaks in a high-pitched voice. *(1 line)*

SECOND LITTLE PIG (f) Speaks in a medium-pitched voice *(1 line)*

THIRD LITTLE PIG (f) Speaks in a low, booming voice *(1 line)*

BIG BAD WOLF (f) A big bag of wind *(1 line)*

FIRST BILLY GOAT GRUFF (f) Speaks in a high-pitched voice *(1 line)*

- SECOND BILLY GOAT GRUFF (f) Speaks in a medium-pitched voice *(1 line)*
- THIRD BILL GOAT GRUFF (m) Speaks in a low, booming voice *(2 line)*
- TROLL (f) A loud-mouth crabby pants *(1 line)*
- MOE (m) A pugilistic curmudgeon with a bowl haircut. *(2 lines)*
- LARRY (m) A wild-haired man. *(1 line)*
- CURLY (m) A bald wacky funster. *(4 lines)*

PADDY AND THE MERMAID

- STORYTELLER (f) An elderly Irish sea wife. *(43 lines)*
- PADDY FITZPATRICK (m) A lonely, tenderhearted, and misguided laborer. *(48 lines)*
- MINA (f) A sensitive soul, who loses her memory of the sea. *(34 lines)*
- JUDGE FITZGIBBONS (m) Outraged yet greedy. *(5 lines)*
- MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY (f) Paddy's nosy, antagonistic neighbor, who makes Mina miserable. *(12 lines)*
- MISTRESS O'DOOLEY (f) Mistress Shaunessay's equally unpleasant cohort. *(5 lines)*
- VILLAGERS (m/f) Easily expanded number; generally welcoming to Mina; both

COYOTE'S MOON

- STORYTELLER (f) An indigenous woman. *(20 lines)*
- LITTLE RABBIT (f) A clever critter. *(15 lines)*
- COYOTE (m) A swaggering blowhard. *(17 lines)*

FOGHORN FRANNY

- STORYTELLER (m) A young chowder seller. *(22 lines)*

FOGHORN FRANNY (f).....	A hale-and-hardy outcast whose voice bellows like a foghorn when she belts “Wee-ohh!” (37 lines)
TAJ (m).....	A friendly and laid back surfer dude. (37 lines)
SYDNEY (f)	A bully. (28 lines)
MINIONS (m/f)	Easily expanded number; horrified by Franny’s voice, they shun her. (7 lines)
RESCUED SAILORS (m/f).....	Easily expanded number; storm-tossed and grateful
BOCEPHUS Q.	
FIZZIWATER THE THIRD (m)	A rough-and-tumble, parrot-toting buccaneer (13 lines)

PRODUCTION NOTES AND STAGING SUGGESTIONS

Three by the Sea features three tales, *Paddy and the Mermaid*, *Coyote’s Moon*, and *Foghorn Franny*. Each is performed as story theatre and uses an individual Storyteller as its central narrator. In story theatre, characters may refer to themselves in the third person. For example, Paddy says, “Quickly, Paddy spun around.”

Casting is flexible and ideal for ensemble actors, who may take on a variety of roles, or for large casts.

Story theatre, a creative and inventive style, is ideal for letting the imagination run wild! For example, puppetry might be used in some scenes. In *Three by the Sea*’s original New York production at the Looking Glass Theatre in 2011, a puppet portrayed Bocephus’ parrot. In *Paddy and the Mermaid* puppets were used for the fish that carries money to Mina and for the flounder Paddy brings home to his wife. Shadow puppets behind a screen depicted life under the seas. The actress playing Little Rabbit in *Coyote’s Moon* was costumed as a puppet.

No unusual tech requirements are needed. The Opening uses a splashing water sound effect. *Paddy and the Mermaid* calls for brief, mysterious music, which actors might compose and play, and murmuring voices, which can be performed by actors offstage. *Foghorn Franny* uses sound effects for a foghorn, splashing water, and storms, as well as flashing lights for the nor'easter scene.

The Opening might use a bare stage. Suggestive, imaginative scenery may then be employed. For example, in the original New York production of *Paddy and the Mermaid*, Mistress Shaunessay and Mistress O'Dooley held window frames around their faces to represent their cottages. In the wedding scene, Paddy and Mina stood behind a screen painted with the outline of a simple chapel. In *Coyote's Moon*, actors swirled blue umbrellas to represent river waves. A blue sheet hung stage right served as the huge nor'easter that clobbers the coast in *Foghorn Franny*. With their heads protruding from the sides of the sheet actors bounced up and down beneath the sheet to bob in the waves. In all three, balloons were delightful additions as huge bubbles!

PROPS AND SET PIECES

OPENING

- ☐ Parrot (BOCEPHUS)
- ☐ smashed chair (BABY BEAR)
- ☐ megaphone to bellow with (THIRD LITTLE PIG)

PADDY AND THE MERMAID

SCENE 1

- ☐ primitive fishing pole, rock (PADDY)
- ☐ little red cap, abalone shell for comb (MINA)

SCENE 2

- ☐ tree stump (PADDY and MINA)

SCENE 3

- ☐ small gifts for Mina, such as loaves of bread, cakes, daffodils, etc. (VILLAGERS)
- ☐ matching teacups, saucers, and teapot; perhaps a table and two chairs (MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY and MISTRESS O'DOOLEY)
- ☐ rock, mismatched teacups, chunks of driftwood for cottage decorations; perhaps a table and two crates as chairs (MINA)

SCENE 4

- ☐ bunch of withered carrots (MINA)
- ☐ flounder and table with two crates as chairs (PADDY)
- ☐ mismatched dinner plates and silverware, cabbage (PADDY and MINA)

SCENE 5

- ☐ a trunk or crate can stand in as the closet if the closet isn't mimed; fishing line and tackle, yellow rain slicker and hat, fishing boots, other fishing gear, little red cap (MINA)
- ☐ rock, treasure chest with jewels, strands of pearls, gold, coins (PADDY)

COYOTE'S MOON

- ☐ canoe, primitive fishing pole (STORYTELLER)
- ☐ clodhopper boots (COYOTE)

FOGHORN FRANNY**SCENE 1**

- ☐ pot of chowder, ladle, bowls, lantern (STORYTELLER)
- ☐ surfboard (TAJ)
- ☐ telescope (SYDNEY)

SCENE 2

- ☐ rickety raft, hammer, driftwood, chunk of coral, Jolly Roger pirate flag (FRANNY)
- ☐ beach pails and buckets, shovels, shells, driftwood (SYDNEY and MINIONS)
- ☐ pot of chowder, ladle, bowls, lantern (STORYTELLER)
- ☐ telescope (SYDNEY)
- ☐ Storyteller's lantern (FRANNY)
- ☐ surfboard, Storyteller's lantern (TAJ)
- ☐ parrot, eye patch, Sydney's telescope (BOCEPHUS)

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP**OPENING**

BOCEPHUS Q. FIZZIWATER THE THIRD - classic pirate, boots with buckles, red suit with sash and black belt, 3-cornered hat; eye patch, long hair, and grizzly beard

BABY BEAR - knickers, shirt, and bow tie; little snout and whiskers

MAMA BEAR - dress, hat, purse, high heels, gloves, pearl necklace; medium-sized snout and whiskers

PAPA BEAR - shirt and string tie, cowboy hat and boots; large snout and whiskers

GOLDILOCKS - girlish dress, frilly anklets, Mary Jane shoes; pigtails and freckles

FIRST LITTLE PIG - pink onesie jammies with a curly tail; snout, pointy ears

SECOND LITTLE PIG - pink onesie jammies with a curly tail; snout, pointy ears

THIRD LITTLE PIG - pink onesie jammies with a curly tail; snout, pointy ears

BIG BAD WOLF - overalls with plaid patches, plaid shirt, high tops, long snout, whiskers, long ears

FIRST BILLY GOAT GRUFF - gray sweats, tap shoes; little beard and ears, snout, whiskers

SECOND BILLY GOAT GRUFF - gray sweats, tap shoes; medium-sized beard and ears, snout, whiskers

THIRD BILL GOAT GRUFF - gray sweats, tap shoes; long beard and ears, snout, whiskers

TROLL - tattered shirt, ripped pants held up with rope belt, crazy-colored fright wig, scary make-up

MOE - shirt and pants; black bowl haircut with bangs

LARRY - shirt and pants; wild, frizzy hair with bald top

CURLY - shirt and pants; bald head

PADDY AND THE MERMAID

STORYTELLER - long dress, long apron, bonnet; gray wig and wrinkles

PADDY FITZPATRICK - faded light shirt, dark pants, cap

MINA - mermaid costume with tail attached with Velcro or another method of attachment so it can be quickly removed, long skirt beneath tail, shell and pearl necklaces; long green wig with shells and seahorses attached

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS - judge's robe and cap; flowing gray whiskers and wrinkles

VILLAGERS - simple shirts and pants for M and simple long skirts and tops or long dresses for F

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY - neat and tidy dress, hat, purse

MISTRESS O'DOOLEY - long skirt and blouse with ribbon tied at neck, hat

COYOTE'S MOON

STORYTELLER - Native American deerskin dress, moccasins

LITTLE RABBIT - brown sweats or jammies; long, floppy ears, cute nose, whiskers

COYOTE - cowboy hat, fringed vest, clodhopper boots; long snout, whiskers

FOGHORN FRANNY

STORYTELLER - baggy pants, plaid shirt, vest, long scarf, cap; oversized eyeglasses

FOGHORN FRANNY - old-fashioned sailor dress with long skirt and long ruffled petticoat, lace-up boots

TAJ - Hawaiian shirt, madras or plaid knee-length shorts, baseball cap, flip flops, sunglasses, shell necklaces

SYDNEY - sundress, headband, sandals

MINIONS - shorts or cut-offs and tee-shirts for M; shorts, short overalls, or cut-offs with tees, or sundresses or skirts with tees for F; sandals, sneakers, or flip flops for all; nose plugs and sunglasses for some

RESCUED SAILORS - a ragtag assembly of tattered sailor shirts, pants, and caps; beards and mustaches

BOCEPHUS Q. FIZZI WATER THE THIRD - same as Opening

OPENING

AT RISE: *BOCEPHUS hobbles onstage, with parrot perched on his arm or shoulder; searches for treasure.*

BOCEPHUS: By Davy Jones' locker, where's me precious treasure? Arrr! Where can it be? No rest for me weary bones until I finds me treasure. I be conjurin' wicked storms across the Seven Seas until— (*Gradually notices audience. Peers out for closer look. Is not amused.*) Arrr! Shiver me timbers! Ye's ain't spied me treasure now, have ye's? Who let all ye googly-eyed landlubbers in here? Ahoy and avast! Where do ye lily-livered sea pups think ye be? In a the-a-ter? (*Chuckles.*) Yo-ho-ho, I be yankin' yer chains. Ah, me hearties, I looks like a rough 'n' tumble, grizzled ole sea dog. But me bark be worse than me bite. I be bearin' a grand-gargantuan soft spot in me old ticker for wee-young sprogs like the lotta ye's. (*Bows.*) I dubs meself Bocephus Q. Fizziwater the Third. Swashbucklin'est buccaneer of the Seven Seas. Marvelous manatees, Bocephus Q. Fizziwater be a mouthful, a grand-gargantuan mouthful. Aye, powerful vast as Paddy Fitzpatrick's heart. As Little Rabbit's smarts. As Foghorn Franny's voice. Now, who be them fine folks, ye wonders? Why, the grandest mates a buccaneer be wishin' fer. Meet 'em fer yerself! Ladies and gents, girls and boys, scalawags and scurvy dogs, 'tis time fer Three by the Sea. A trio of tales 'bout wondrous watery worlds. Why three, ye wonders? Three be a grand-gargantuan number. By the Powers! Fantastical three be just the trick I needs to finds me precious treasure.

PAPA BEAR, MAMA BEAR, BABY BEAR, and GOLDBLOCKS enter. BABY BEAR drags a chair smashed to smithereens.

BABY BEAR: You got dat wight, Mr. Bocephus, sir.

MAMA BEAR: Aw, that's my baby. So polite.

PAPA BEAR: Chip off the old block, Mama.

BABY BEAR: Thwee's not too huge and not too teensy. It's juuuust wight.

GOLDILOCKS: True that, Baby Bear. Sorry about your chair, buddy. Squashed it to smithereens, didn't I? My bad.

BOCEPHUS: Yo-ho-ho, wee-little Baby Bear! Like I be tellin' ye. Three be magical.

PAPA BEAR and MAMA BEAR: Fantastical.

FIRST LITTLE PIG, SECOND LITTLE PIG, and THIRD LITTLE PIG enter with BIG BAD WOLF in hot pursuit.

FIRST LITTLE PIG, SECOND LITTLE PIG, THIRD LITTLE PIG:

Like us, the Three Little Pigs. *(Turn in unison and wriggle tails.)*

BIG BAD WOLF: I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down! *(Huffs and puffs.)*

MAMA BEAR: Mind your tongue, Wolfie! Huff and puff—well, I never!

WOLF sulks. Huffs and puffs behind MAMA BEAR's back. FIRST BILLY GOAT GRUFF, SECOND BILLY GOAT GRUFF, and THIRD BILLY GOAT GRUFF enter. TROLL enters, stomping after GOATS.

FIRST BILLY GOAT, SECOND BILLY GOAT, THIRD BILLY GOAT:

Trip, trap, trip, trap, trippedity trap!

TROLL: Who dares to tromp across my bridge?

THIRD BILLY GOAT GRUFF: Aw, give it a rest, Mrs. Crabby Pants! Sheesh! Three rocks. Like us, the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

MOE, LARRY, and CURLY enter in a flurry of highjinks.

CURLY: *(Pats BOCEPHUS' parrot.)* Nice boidy. Why, coitenly. Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk!

LARRY: Pick three.

MOE: Three? It's pick two, you knucklehead! Can't you count?

CURLY: Naw, we're yammering about three. Three, I tell youse.

MOE: Oh, a wise guy, eh? Drop and gimme ten.

CURLY flops down and spins in infamous Curly Circle. MAMA BEAR covers BABY BEAR's eyes with her paws.

MAMA BEAR: Oh, my stars! Rude, crude, and socially unacceptable. Gracious!

CURLY: Woo, woo, woo!

BOCEPHUS: Blimey! Ye be makin' me green about me gills. Avast, ye squiffy scalawags. Ye scurvy dogs.

PAPA BEAR: Get a move on, now, you three rowdy ruffians. Whoever you are. Quit your infernal a-whooping and a-jabbering.

BOCEPHUS: Afore I be swabbing the deck with the lotta ye's!

PAPA BEAR: Go on, you three stoogy fellers. You heard Bocephus. Scat! Scoot! Skedaddle! Scee-ram!

CURLY: That wacky lug in the bear suit's getting on my noives. Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk!

PAPA BEAR roars. MOE, LARRY, and CURLY exit in flurry of hijinks.

BOCEPHUS: Arrr, they be's not for the faint of heart, them three biscuit eaters! Now, what I be jawbonin' about? Ah, yes. The number three. 'Tis perfect fer sea tales. Ye see?

FIRST LITTLE PIG, SECOND LITTLE PIG, THIRD LITTLE PIG:
(*Turn in unison and wriggle tails.*) See? Tails? Get it?

GOLDILOCKS: Not pig tails, you precious little pork chops. *Tales.* Stories. Sagas. Adventures.

BOCEPHUS: Aye, Locks of Gold. Three stories of the briny deep. With three storytellers to be guidin' ye's all through yarns of love, courage, and gold doubloons. So, me buccos, without further ado, we be presentin'—

ALL: Three by the Sea.

Beat.

BOCEPHUS: Well? Be divin' in, ye leapin' landlubbers! Yo-ho-ho!

BOCEPHUS sucks in enormous gulp of air. Pinches nose and leaps offstage. SFX of splashing water. ALL follow.

ALL: Dive in!

SFX of splashing water. Blackout.

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PADDY AND THE MERMAID*A Retelling of T. Crofton Croker's Traditional Tale***SETTING:** *A sleepy village on the coast of Ireland.***TIME:** *The early 1800's.*

SCENE 1	The sea.	A summer morning.
SCENE 2	The judge's cottage.	Later that morning.
SCENE 3	Paddy's cottage/ Mrs. Shaunessay's kitchen.	Several months later.
SCENE 4	Paddy's cottage.	That evening.
SCENE 5	Paddy's cottage.	The following day.

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *PADDY holds fishing pole and stands on rock near water's edge. Low, flat rock rests short distance away. PADDY baits hook and looks wistfully out to sea.*

STORYTELLER: One bright summer morning Paddy Fitzpatrick stood on the shoreline and watched the sun rise.

PADDY: *(Surveys surroundings.)* Ah, 'tis the very picture of a flawless mornin'!

ECHO: Mornin'... mornin'... mornin'...

PADDY: Such a pity 'tis, on this glorious day, to be chatting only to myself by the way of company. Not a single, solitary soul to answer me, except for the wee small child of my very own voice—the lonesome echo.

ECHO: Echo... echo... echo...

PADDY: *(Cups mouth and calls.)* Helloooo!

ECHO: Helloooo!... Helloooo!... Helloooo!...

PADDY: If only I had a wife to share life's journey with me. Why, a man without a wife is just as useless as a pair of trousers with only one leg. Or a fishing line sans hook. *(Casts line out and sits placidly for a beat.)*

STORYTELLER: All of a moment, Paddy heard behind him a strange commotion. A tremendous splash, followed by the slap of a tail fin against the surface of the tranquil sea.

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Splashing SFX as MINA climbs onto rock. Places small red cap beside her and sprawls in sun with long hair spread out. MINA dozes.

PADDY: Quickly, Paddy spun around and spied to his amazement a lovely young mermaid. She'd climbed onto a low, flat rock. She had flowing sea-green hair, which she spread to cradle her head. The reflection of that hair danced in the salt water and looked just like, in the early sun, melted butter on cabbage. Paddy's favorite.

STORYTELLER: Scaly tale extended, the mermaid sprawled out and sunned herself. Resting right beside her was her little red cap—an enchanted cap, to be sure!

PADDY: Now, surely as he knew leprechauns frolic around pots of gold, Paddy knew if he snatched away the red cap, the mermaid would sprout land legs. And once married, she could not return to her life at sea.

STORYTELLER: In fact, she would entirely lose her memory of the past. So our own Paddy Fitzpatrick crept silently forward—inch by inch by stealthy inch—and seized the mermaid's enchanted cap.

PADDY creeps toward cap, snatches it, and stuffs in pocket. MINA stirs.

STORYTELLER: *(Continued.)* Sensing trouble, the mermaid threw open her aqua eyes. Dismayed, she began to weep salt tears. Salty indeed, spilling from a mermaid's eyes as they were. She wailed as though her poor heart would break.

MINA weeps.

PADDY: *(Genuinely sorry for making her cry—but not sorry enough to give up cap.)* Oh, there, there, Dearheart, don't you cry.

STORYTELLER: Paddy was most certainly a tenderhearted man, tender as any in Gollerus. He took her wee hand and patted it to comfort her.

PADDY: Why, dear one, your little hand is just as chilly as the deep blue sea. There, let's allow the sun's warmth—Gah! Why, I mean no criticism, but I must report to my utter astonishment you've a wee small web linked between each finger. Like a duck's foot 'tis. Don't you cry, Ducky, please.

MINA: Well, now, Man. Are you going to boil me, then, and gobble me up for your supper?

PADDY: What?! I'd sooner cook and eat myself, Dearheart! No, no, no, I'd not do such a thing. 'Twas some vile class of sea serpent, surely, that put such a despicable thought in your sweet head with the nice green hair upon it.

MINA: Well, now, Man, if you're not going to boil me up for your supper, what are you going to do with me, then?

PADDY: Hmmm. Funny you should ask, Dearie! Why, I was just pondering marriage not a moment ago....

STORYTELLER: Perhaps our own Paddy should marry the mermaid.

PADDY: Why, Dearie, you speak just as nicely as any person from Dingle to Tralee, and you are certainly quite lovely to look at, what with your gleaming green hair and your flashing eyes.

STORYTELLER: Lonesome soul that he was, Paddy fell in love with the mermaid straightaway.

PADDY: To be sure, 'twas the fetching way she called him "Man" that settled the subject altogether. Well, now, Fish.

STORYTELLER: Said he, for he wished to converse with her in her own way.

MINA: My name's Mina, Man.

PADDY: Well, Mina, I was thinking of marrying you. Yes, I'll marry you straightaway. Make you Mistress Fitzpartrick before the whole world, I will. I'll give you my word, fresh and fasting!

STORYTELLER: Mina hesitated.

MINA: Weeeeell... all right.

STORYTELLER: She finally agreed.

MINA: But please wait just a mo'—got to bid farewell to my kin.

STORYTELLER: Mina leaned out over the surface of the water and murmured strange words.

Soft, mysterious music rises. ACTORS might compose and perform this music. MINA waves arms gracefully and murmurs incomprehensively.

PADDY: Words that Paddy could not understand.

STORYTELLER: Paddy's eyes popped in astonishment. He witnessed her expressions skip atop the waves, swirl out to sea, and disappear in the frothy distance.

PADDY looks out to sea and traces path of swirling words. Mysterious music rises and falls.

PADDY: Ahem! What are you saying there, Mina? Is it speaking you are to the salt sea?

MINA: Simply called good-bye to Mam and Da—I warned them not to wait breakfast for me, since I'm getting married to a fine young man. Mam and Da, they're king and queen of all the sea, you know.

PADDY: Oh, Mother of God! A man's house is his castle, to be sure, but I don't believe I've a home appropriate for the daughter of a king and queen. It's just a wee, small cottage, you see. Ummmm, why don't you call down to your Da there? Ask him to send you up some money.

MINA: Money? What's that?

PADDY: (*Rubs fingers against thumb.*) You know, money—coins and such. Surely the king and queen of the sea have riches....

MINA: Oh, that! I've plenty of that. I've all the treasures of the sea. The fish will tote it up to me, whenever I ask.

PADDY: Well, isn't that grand news? With all those treasures, I'm a rich man at last, I am! Come, Dearie, let's be off!

MINA: I'm willing to be yours, Man, but won't you wait a wee bit longer, whilst I tidy my hair?

STORYTELLER: She seemed to understand that she soon would be amongst strangers, who would most certainly gaze upon her in great curiosity.

PADDY: Ah, sure!

STORYTELLER: The mermaid fussed with her sea-green hair, combing it out with an abalone shell, and arranging it just so across her shoulders.

PADDY: It's lovely!

STORYTELLER: Declared Paddy. And he ushered Mina off to the judge's home.

SCENE 2

AT START: MINA has difficulty walking and waddles like penguin, so PADDY sits her on tree stump. The JUDGE's door in this scene is mimed.

PADDY: Indeed, it was bit difficult for the mermaid to maneuver, dragging a fishy tail behind her as she did. So Paddy asked her to wait along the path. He hurried up the judge's walk and rapped upon the door. *(Mimes knocking.)*

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: Paddy, my lad, always a pleasure to see you, 'tis! How are you, and what brings you here this bright and glorious morning?

PADDY: I'm grand altogether, Judge. I've got someone here. I'd like you to marry me to her straightaway, if you wouldn't mind.

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: Oh, Paddy, isn't that a lovely bit of news! Now, where've you hidden your sweet blushing bride?

PADDY gestures to MINA. JUDGE smiles broadly in anticipation as he follows path of PADDY's gesture.

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: *(Continued.)* Sweet saints, Paddy! My own weary eyes must deceive me. I— I— I am utterly appalled!

STORYTELLER: He grabbed the front of Paddy's shirt, yanked him in the cottage, and slammed shut the door.

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: What k-k-kind of a fish-woman are you bringing me here, Paddy? That's a *fish*, man! Throw her back! Throw her back at once, I say!

PADDY: Now, don't you be judgin', Judge. You wait just a minute there. Why, she's just as mild as she can be. As mild as a wee small lamb, she is.

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: Don't care! Don't care a'tall if she's as mild as a wee small babe. She's a FISH! You can't marry a fish, Paddy. Throw her back, throw that scaly creature back! And tell her to stick to her own kind. You stick to your own kind, too, Paddy Fitzpatrick. (*Mimes opening door; indicates PADDY is to depart.*)

PADDY: Ah, Judge, Judge, 'tis such a pity.

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: Away with you, rogue!

PADDY: (*Exiting slowly; off-handedly.*) Ah, she's rich, she is! Enjoys all the treasures of the sea, she does. Fishies'll bring it up to her whenever she asks. A rich man I am now, and I can surely make it worth someone's while to help me....

JUDGE FITZGIBBONS: I don't ca— Well— now— Paddy Fitzpatrick! That certainly changes things entirely, doesn't it, lad? Why didn't you say so in the first place? One must never, ever turn away money in our troublesome times, I always say. (*Mimes opening door wide.*) Show her in, lad. Show your fish-woman in!

SCENE 3

STORYTELLER: And so the two were wed. Almost as soon as Judge Fitzgibbons pronounced them husband and wife, the mermaid felt a strange tingling in her tail. In a flash, it was replaced by a pair of sturdy legs. At that exact moment, Mina lost all memory of her life at sea.

PADDY: Paddy escorted her home to his wee, small cottage.

STORYTELLER: Curious friends, relatives, and villagers came to call.

VILLAGERS enter and exit PADDY's modest cottage, which is very primitive and suggestive, perhaps with a few crates as chairs and an old table. VILLAGERS carry small gifts of bread, cakes, tea, and daffodils. Each greets MINA with warmth. PADDY puffs up with pride.

STORYTELLER: (*Continued.*) Almost everyone was charmed entirely by the new Mistress Fitzpatrick. Everyone except Mistress Shaunessay, Paddy's neighbor, that is.

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MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: *(Speaking to MISTRESS O'DOOLEY as the two drink tea in MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY's kitchen, which is very suggestive. ACTORS might hold window frames around their faces to represent the kitchen.)* Well, well, now! Hasn't our fine, fancy friend Paddy Fitzpatrick trotted off and found himself a fine, fancy wife?

MISTRESS O'DOOLEY: A fine, fancy wife!

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: Gollerus girls aren't good enough for our fine, fancy friend, Paddy. Oh, no.

MISTRESS O'DOOLEY: Oh, no!

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: And, mercy me, did you get a good *look* at that wife?

MISTRESS O'DOOLEY: Ah, yes, I did! I got a good look. Hair green as the pea soup you're making for your own supper!

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: My own supper!

MISTRESS O'DOOLEY: Oh, there's something peculiar about her, there is.

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: Mercy me! There's a certain way of doing things here in Gollerus. And that new Mistress Fitzpatrick is not doing them accordingly.

MISTRESS O'DOOLEY: Not in the least! She's an odd goose. A square egg, she is.

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: I can't quite put my finger on it. But there's something— fishy about that new Mistress Fitzpatrick! I intend to find out more about her, I do!

STORYTELLER: Paddy and his wife soon settled into a comfortable routine. Every day, when he left for work, Mina walked him down the path.

MINA and PADDY exit cottage. PADDY breaks away and begins to walk along path.

MINA: Good-bye, Paddy!

PADDY: Good-bye there, Dearie!

PADDY walks backward along path, waving to smiling MINA until he's out of sight.

STORYTELLER: Paddy trotted backward, waving all the while. Every morning, his wife dashed directly to the sea and dove in. She spent most days swimming, and when she grew tired, she climbed onto that rock where Paddy first found her. She sang, and all the fish rose to the surface of the water to hear her sweet voice.

MINA sits on rock by sea and sings. Peeking out from her own cottage, MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY glares.

MINA: The sea, the sea! / It calls to me! / So always to / The sea I flee!

STORYTELLER: Their lives passed quite happily— for a while. (*Beat.*) But one day, as Mina returned home from her day's swim, she found Mistress Shaunessay at her doorstep. The mermaid invited Mistress Shaunessay in for a cup of tea.

MINA: (*Serving tea in cottage, now decorated with chunks of driftwood.*) Sugar, Mistress Shaunessay?

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: (*Studying cottage with vast disapproval.*) Yes, please, Mistress Fitzpatrick.

MINA squirms during uncomfortable beat. MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY reacts with distaste to tea.

MINA: Lovely day, 'tis.

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: 'Tis. (*Puts down cup deliberately and stares MINA full in face.*) Now, do tell me, Mistress Fitzpatrick. Where is it your people are from?

MINA: My people?

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: Your family, girl.

MINA: Well, I— I— I don't know.

MISTRESS SHAUNESSAY: You don't know! Mercy me! Well, then, girl, can you tell me where you lived before you met Paddy Fitzpatrick?

MINA: Oh, I— ah— I can't recall.



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