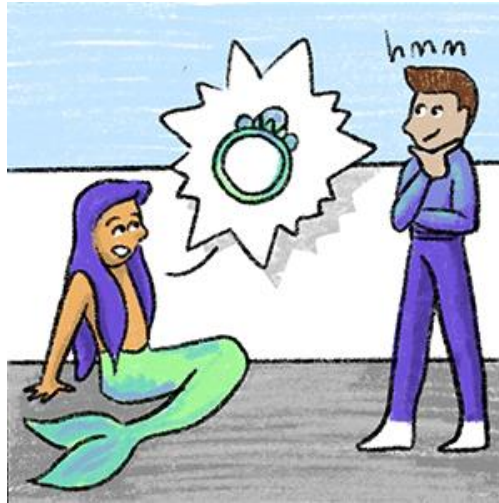




The Fisherlad and the Mermaid's Ring

Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes

AUTHORS: Elaine Lindy & Benjamin Knight, COUNTRY: Scotland, GENRE: Fairytales



CHARACTERS

NARRATOR
HAMISH
HARBORFOLK (x4)
BONNIE
FIONA
HEATHER
SORCHA
MORAG

If there are performance notes, they can be found on the pages following the script

Scene 1 – Harbor

[Stage set: The stage is divided into two sections. On one side is the HARBOR and on the other side is an Island. (More detail on the Island in Scene 2.)]

[The play opens at the HARBOR. A set of dilapidated wooden piers are surrounded by green waves (See Performance Notes for ideas on how to achieve this effect.)]

NARRATOR:

Hello, everyone. This is a play from Scotland called “The Fisherlad and the Mermaid’s Ring.” It’s brought to you by *Stories to Grow By*.

[NARRATOR steps forward.]

[BONNIE, FIONA, and HEATHER enter and gather together in pretend conversation.]

NARRATOR:

G’mornin’, lads and lassies, and welcome to the chilly harbors of bonnie Scotland! These piers find themselves filled to their damp edges with sea-hardened harbour men and women making their livings catching fish out on the waves.

[HARBORMAN #1, HARBORMAN #2, HARBORMAN #3, and HAMISH enter with fishing nets. BONNIE, FIONA and HEATHER watch them and giggle.]

HARBORMAN #1:

I can hear the sea lions.

HARBORMAN #2:

Aye, they’re out there catching our fish!

HARBORMAN #3:

Well we better be gettin’ on with it, then.

[HARBORMAN #1-#3 exit. HAMISH lingers behind.]

FIONA:

Och! Heather! Are ye seein’ the way that young man’s looking at Bonnie?

HEATHER:

Aye, Fiona! He’s really giving her the eye. Not that she notices.

BONNIE:

What are you two talking about?

HEATHER:

The young men follow you like a Shetland pony, that they do.

BONNIE:

(tosses head) I know it. It's such a nuisance!

[FIONA, HEATHER and BONNIE giggle.]

NARRATOR:

They got it right, though. Over there is Hamish, poor soul. Head over heels for that bonnie lass. What's her name, laddie?

HAMISH:

Bonnie!

NARRATOR:

No, I mean the bonnie lass.

HAMISH:

Bonnie!

NARRATOR:

What, the bonnie lass is called Bonnie? That's a bit repetitive, isn't it?

HAMISH:

You be quiet! Bonnie's the fairest and loveliest girl in the harbor, anyone can see that!

NARRATOR:

Hmm, which one is she, again?

HAMISH:

Bah! Shoo yourself, this has nothing to do with you.

NARRATOR:

Ehhr...right. I was just moving on.

[NARRATOR exits.]

HAMISH:

You know what? I've spent too long thinking about her and not doing anything about it. Today's the day I turn everything around!

[HAMISH marches up two steps toward BONNIE, then suddenly stops and faces the audience, alarmed.]

HAMISH:

What am I doing? There's no way I can actually TALK to her! (*turns to another part of audience, then shakes arm upward in resolve*) No, I will do it! I WILL!

[HAMISH marches up to BONNIE and her friends.]

HAMISH:

Bonnie!

[FIONA and HEATHER giggle.]

BONNIE:

Ah, hi there... Um, what's your name again?

HAMISH:

Hamish. (*awkward silence*) Umm, could I talk to you... alone? Just for a second?

[FIONA and HEATHER giggle and exit.]

BONNIE:

What's up? Umm... Your name again?

HAMISH:

Hamish. Well, I... uh... I... uh...

BONNIE:

What?

HAMISH:

I was wonderin' ... if, y'know...

BONNIE:

I don't know, what is it? (*awkward silence*) Ah, yer aff yer heid!

HAMISH:

What I'm trying to say is...

[HAMISH gets down on one knee.]

BONNIE:

Oh, dear. You fell down. Here. (*extends hand to Hamish*)

HAMISH:

No, the only thing I've fallen for ... is you!

[NARRATOR enters and sees HAMISH.]

NARRATOR:

Oh, no! He didn't! Not that!

BONNIE:

Hamish, you can't think I-

HAMISH:

Let me finish! *(pulls out a simple ring)* Bonnie, marry me and make me the happiest man alive!

BONNIE:

What? Hamish- I don't really know you.

HAMISH:

And I don't really know you. But I DO know we're meant to be together! Marry me, and you'll see-

BONNIE:

Hamish, no.

HAMISH:

You don't mean "No" as in *(airquotes)* "No"?

BONNIE:

Yeah, I mean *(airquotes)* "NO" as in "No!"

HAMISH:

Oh! Well, okay. Maybe today wasn't the best day to ask you. *(stands up and wipes his face off)*

BONNIE:

Listen. I'm not going to up and marry a lad who shows up all of a sudden and asks.

HAMISH:

Well then... I mean.... *(looks around)* At least no one was around to see this.

[HARBORMAN #1-#3, FIONA and HEATHER enter suddenly and burst into laughter at HAMISH. BONNIE awkwardly smiles and shrugs.]

HAMISH:

Ach! I can never show my face here again! *(sees Narrator)* You! Help me! Quick, where can I go?

NARRATOR:

So NOW you're interested in what I have to say.

HAMISH:

HELP ME!

NARRATOR:

Well, I know of one island off the coast from here with fresh water, that-a-way (*points*), but it's pretty remote, empty really...

HAMISH:

Perfect! The emptier, the better! All I need is my raincoat, a few things and my boat, and I'll be on my way. Can't stay here another moment!

[HAMISH runs offstage. Everyone else, still chuckling, follows him offstage.]

NARRATOR:

That could have gone better. Poor Hamish. He has a long journey to the Island. Hopefully the lad will find some peace there. And something to eat. Speaking of which, it's lunchtime for me! Neeps and tatties, my turnips and potatoes, here I come!

[NARRATOR exits.]

Scene 2 – Island

[Stage set: The edge of an island with a cliff dropping into some light waves. (See Performance Notes for suggestions on how to achieve this effect.)]

[NARRATOR enters, looking full, hand on stomach.]

NARRATOR:

(speaking to self) Oh, I am stuffed! *(notices audience and straightens up)* You know, being a traveling narrator isn't all it's cracked up to be. Well anyway, here's the island, just as dull and lifeless as I remember it. This is where our lovesick young laddie is headed *(to self)* Hmm, he should have been here by now...

[HAMISH enters, "sailing" in on a boat from opposite side. (See Performance Notes for how to construct boat and create the effect of sailing.)]

HAMISH:

Well, this must be it. *(looks about)* Gosh, this place is quiet. *(listens a moment to the silence)* Nothing's going on at all.

NARRATOR:

I tried to warn him-

HAMISH:

It's PERFECT!

NARRATOR:

Right- I knew he'd love it!

HAMISH:

Nobody knows me here, and I can live out the rest of my days in peace! *(climbs out of the boat onto the land and stretches)* I will certainly sleep well tonight. *(stretches)*

NARRATOR:

That will have to be under the stars, given the lack of accommodations around here.

HAMISH:

(looks around) But WHERE will I sleep? I'll guess I'd better build myself a home. A little island shack, if you will.

[HAMISH starts "building" the house. He does this by lifting a cardboard cut-out of a house off of the ground and propping it up. (See Performance Notes on how to construct the house and how to prop it up.)]

NARRATOR:

Wow- He's a lot better at building with logs and sticks than he was with a certain bonnie lass.

HAMISH:

(looks around) Did I hear something?

NARRATOR:

He can't hear me here. *(admires house)* Hmm. Not bad.

HAMISH:

Not bad, if I say so myself. Well! I've worked up an appetite. Now, what's for dinner?

[HAMISH takes a fishing net out of his "boat", sits on the edge of left side of the set and throws the bulk of the net offstage, while holding onto a long piece of rope or string (See Performance Notes for how to make the net). After a few seconds, SORCHA, a mermaid, screams from off stage.]

HAMISH:

Caught one! Wait a moment, fish don't scream... do they? Maybe it's the air escaping.

[When he pulls the net in, SORCHA is trapped inside. (HAMISH pretends to "pull" her in, but SORCHA has put a net over herself and waddles onstage as if caught.)]

SORCHA:

Ach! What's going on? Help me!

HAMISH:

Och! It's some kind of... sea woman? Fish lady? Scale girl?

SORCHA:

I'm Sorcha, the Mermaid Princess of the sea, ye bawheid (*bore-hide*) dafty! And you've trapped me in yer glaikit (*glay-kit*) net!

HAMISH:

A mermaid, caught in my net! *(to audience)* You know what this means, don't you? I've heard the tales. This is my chance for a wish! *(to Sorcha)* Since you're a mermaid and all, what will you give me if I set you free?!

SORCHA:

Jings, fine – my dad's the King of the Sea. I can give ye a chest of gold coins –

HAMISH:

No, no, not interested. Of what good are a few coins here?

SORCHA:

Fine, ye greedy bampot! Riches, beyond ye wildest dreams!

HAMISH:

Of what good are riches here? Naw, I know what I want. I know it right clear as day.

SORCHA:

Ah, fer goodness sake, surely not that bonnie lass!

HAMISH:

Wha-? How did you know?

SORCHA:

You think we don't talk about you land folks out in the sea?

HAMISH:

What do you know about the bonnie lass?

SORCHA:

About how ya asked her to marry ya and she said Naw!

HAMISH:

Och, great! Now they're laughing at me under the sea, too!

SORCHA:

But this lass – what makes her so special? Why her?

HAMISH:

I have my reasons!

SORCHA:

Do ye even know her, laddy?

HAMISH:

I know we're meant to be together!

SORCHA:

If you say so. (*groans*) All right, cut me loose from this twisted net and here's what I'll do. I'll give you a ring that will be SURE to make your bonnie Bonnie... (*to audience*) I can't get used to that. (*back to Hamish*) ...your own. Here 'tis - a ring and a bell.

HAMISH:

A ring and a bell? What good will they do me?

SORCHA:

The ring is for proposin', ye dafty. And one ding of this magic bell when the time is right will make your bonnie lass say yes to marrying ya. Just like that. They're magic, and that.

HAMISH:

Now you're talking! Stay still, mermaid, and I'll cut you out.

[HAMISH mimes cutting the net and SORCHA climbs out.]

SORCHA:

(stretches) Feels grand ta' stretch me tail!

HAMISH:

Ahem. The ring and the bell?

SORCHA:

A'right, fair's fair. *(she produces a dull ring and a bell and hands them to Hamish)* One year from today, when the time is right, ring the bell and offer her the ring. She'll marry you straight away!

HAMISH:

A YEAR?! You didn't say it would take a YEAR!

SORCHA:

You didn't bother to ask!

HAMISH:

Ach! Oh, very well! *(takes the ring)* How do I know she'll still be, y'know, available in a year!?

SORCHA:

She will be – trust me, I'm a mermaid. One year - not a day earlier! *(turns to leave)*

HAMISH:

Where are you going?

SORCHA:

Back home, da's cooking salmon. I'd invite ye to join but, y'know, you would drown.

[SORCHA exits. HAMISH inspects the ring and bell.]

HAMISH:

One year is a long time. But this magic combo is worth it! *(holds up ring and bell, smiling, then puts hand on stomach)* Oh, I'm still hungry. *(examines net)* All torn up from cutting that mermaid free. All this one's good for is fishing for bait fish. Hmm. If I get enough barrels of bait fish I bet trade it for a proper net at that town clear on the other side of the harbor Maybe get candles and some tools, too!

[HAMISH throws net, offstage, then pulls it in. He can do this two or three times, to give the impression he is fishing.]

NARRATOR:

And so Hamish fished till he filled all the barrels of bait fish that could fit in his boat. He sailed off to that harbour town where no one would recognize him.

[HAMISH gets in his boat and "sails" away, excitedly.]

NARRATOR:

One good thing about being the only person on an island is- when you leave, you know your home will be safe and no one will come to your place while you're away.

[MORAG enters, moving her arms in a swimming motion. She then "falls" onto the island, panting heavily.]

MORAG:

At last! Land! I'll be safe here. *(looks around)* Safe and alone. And look! How convenient- a shack!

[MORAG looks around the shack.]

MORAG:

What luck - it's empty! How perfect is that? My new home!

[MORAG "enters" the shack, by walking behind it. HAMISH enters, rowing in his boat.]

HAMISH:

Bah! I had to trade all my bait fish and just got the fishing net! No other supplies. I need to get to sleep – I'll be up at dawn to fish tomorrow.

[HAMISH goes over to his shack, only for MORAG to pop out of it.]

HAMISH:

Jings! A feral (pronounce: FERR-all) wild woman!

MORAG:

Jings! An ugly sea monster!

HAMISH:

Wait a second, you're just a lass!

MORAG:

And you're just a laddie!

HAMISH:

What are you doing on MY island! In MY shack!

MORAG:

And what makes you think this is your island? And maybe it's MY shack!

HAMISH:

(sternly) I built it, it's mine!

MORAG:

Oh! I guess it IS yours, then...

HAMISH:

Wherever you came from, you need to go right back. Now!

MORAG:

I'm not going back. It's awful there! And besides, I've as much right to stay here as you do.

HAMISH:

Where's your boat?

MORAG:

It sank on the way here. It's in pieces! I had to swim to shore.

HAMISH:

Auuugh! This is the last thing I need. But if you're not going back and your boat's broke, I suppose you can stay.

MORAG:

Fine! Not that I need your permission.

HAMISH:

Whatever. Just keep yerself scarce.

MORAG:

You'll barely see me, trust me.

HAMISH:

Suits me just fine. I need space to think. You're not the only one who's had to leave yer home village to be alone, you know.

MORAG:

What? Did something happen back home to you, too?

HAMISH:

That's all I'll be saying about that!

MORAG:

Keep it to yourself then, um... what's your name?

HAMISH:

Hamish.

MORAG:

Suit yourself Hamish. I'm going to lie down for a bit. It's been a long day.

[MORAG begins to exit.]

HAMISH:

Wait- what's, um, your name, then?

MORAG:

Morag.

[MORAG disappears into shack (See Performance Notes for staging ideas).]

HAMISH:

(to self) Morag. Hmm. *(remembers the ring and bell)* Oh! *(produces the ring and bell, looks at them)* I'd better keep these two treasures safe.

[HAMISH puts the ring and bell in a jar and places the jar by the hut. He sits down to examine his new net.]

HAMISH:

Grrr – I can't even fish with this lousy net. That's it! I'm taking it back!

[HAMISH gets up and sails away, exiting the same way he entered.]

[MORAG emerges and stretches.]

MORAG:

Ah, that was a great nap! (*inspects the hut*) Hrmm, this place could do with a little sprucing up. I know-

[MORAG picks up some colorful bunting and streamers, hidden behind the shack, and drapes them over the shack (See Performance Notes for how to accomplish this).]

MORAG:

There! We'll see what he thinks about THAT.

[HAMISH enters, "sailing" back in.]

HAMISH:

I can't believe they wouldn't take back the net. What rotten customer service!

[HAMISH lands on the island and sees MORAG.]

MORAG:

Hamish!

HAMISH:

(*not really paying attention*) Morag.

MORAG:

How was your trip?

HAMISH:

Don't ask! Those people know nothing. I'm so tired, I can't wait to lay my head down – (*sees the shack*) Whoa! What have you done with the shack?

MORAG:

Aye! While you were gone I thought it needed a bit of – I don't know, pep? Okay by you that I spruced it up some?

HAMISH:

Hmm.

MORAG:

Well, think about it. I'll turn in now. Goodnight, Hamish.

[MORAG disappears behind the shack.]

HAMISH:

Harumph! When did I say I wanted “pep”? *(looks at shack)* Though I have to admit, it’s an improvement.

[HAMISH enters the shack.]

NARRATOR:

That night, Hamish slept more comfortably than he had since he arrived. He slept so well every night from then on, in fact, that he almost forgot why he had left his home in the first place. He had no idea where Morag went each night to sleep, only that she woke before him each morning.

[MORAG emerges, stretching and humming.]

MORAG:

Another beautiful morning!

NARRATOR:

Did I mention she mended the fishing net in short order? After that, Hamish reeled in bigger and better fish than ever. He’d skin and prepare the day’s catch for their dinner that night. What’s that busy young lady up to now?

MORAG:

(looks at shack) I know just the right touch! I’ll plant bluebells at the front of the house. First, I’ll have to dig some spots for them...

[MORAG crouches down and pretends to dig with her hands, until she works her way to the side of the shack and sees the jar with the ring and bell in it.]

MORAG:

What’s this – a ring? And what’s this – a bell? *(looks around, picks out the ring, and tries it on)* Oh, what a lovely ring! Simply magical! I wonder what happens when I ring the bell?

[HAMISH comes out of the shack, yawning and stretching.]

HAMISH:

Good morning, Mor- *(he sees Morag trying on the ring)* WHAT are you doing?

MORAG:

N-nothing! I mean...!

HAMISH:

(storms over) Take it off!

MORAG:

Okay, okay! Gosh! *(takes it off and hands it to Hamish)*

HAMISH:

(snatches the ring) And don't you dare touch it again! Do you understand me?!

MORAG:

Don't worry, I won't! You probably want this bell, too.

HAMISH:

You got that right. *(takes bell)*

MORAG:

What's so special about that ring and bell, anyway?

HAMISH:

I don't have to explain myself to you!

MORAG:

Just asking, was all.

HAMISH:

Hmph!

MORAG:

It's for a girl, isn't it?

HAMISH:

I'm not saying!

MORAG:

So it IS for a girl!

HAMISH:

Weren't you supposed to barely be seen at all?

MORAG:

Fine, have it your way! Sorry for helping with the chores and making this forsaken place look bearable. Don't worry – I'm going to the other side of the island. I'll be so out of the way, you won't see me again!

[MORAG storms offstage.]

HAMISH:

Augh! Be off with her, then! I should have kept my treasures safer. Maybe I should hide the jar **BEHIND** the shack...

[HAMISH picks up the jar and moves around to look behind the cut out of the shack (an area unseen by the audience), but only looking behind it – not going behind the shack itself. He stops and looks shocked.]

HAMISH:

Wha - what's this dent in the ground? The grass is all pressed down here. Wait a minute... could it be... is this where Morag's been sleeping? On the ground each night, out in the open?

[HAMISH looks around and put his face in his hands. He then steps back out front.]

HAMISH:

Now I get it! Every night she's been sleeping outside while I've been sleeping like a baby in the shack that she fixed up for me! Ah, I shouldn't have yelled at her. I have to make this right. (*thinks for a moment*) I know! I'll build Morag her very own shack to sleep in. She'll have a proper place to lay her head.

[He moves around to the front of the shack and pretends to hammer away at the side of the stage.]

NARRATOR:

Hamish worked day and night and built Morag a shack of her very own, next to his. Soon enough, it all came together.

[HAMISH raises another cardboard cut-out of a house (See Performance Notes for how to achieve this effect) next to his own shack.]

HAMISH:

There!

NARRATOR:

He is quick, I'll say that!

HAMISH:

Now I just need to go find her...

[MORAG enters.]

MORAG:

Hamish!

HAMISH:

Morag, you came back!

MORAG:

Not back. Just... checking. I just heard all this banging and wanted to make sure you were all right.

HAMISH:

You came back to check on me?

MORAG:

What if I did? So, are you all right?

HAMISH:

Aye. I'm more than all right. And Morag, I have a surprise for you.

MORAG:

A boat to get me out of here faster?

HAMISH:

No! Morag, look. Come see. (*ushers Morag over to the new hut he built*) It's a proper hut for you. About time you had a roof over your head.

MORAG:

(*pleased*) Oh, my! It's brilliant. But, you don't mind I'll be so close to your shack?

HAMISH:

I built it here, didn't I? So what do you think?

MORAG:

I think- sure. (*walks up to shack and examines it more closely*) I say, YES! (*examines room a bit more*) Though I could spruce it up some.

HAMISH:

Figured you'd do that "pep" thing you do.

[MORAG decorates her own hut, as she did the first one. (See Performance Notes for ideas on how to quickly decorate).]

NARRATOR:

Morag went to work brightening up her new room. She painted a coat of whitewash on the walls, inside and out. Not to mention curtains on the windows. Pretty soon those bluebells were blooming.

[STAGE HANDS, who could be the same actors who are HARBORFOLK, run onstage and replace empty pots in front of the shack with potted bluebells (could be cardboard cut-outs), and then quickly run back offstage. See Performance Notes for further suggestions.]

NARRATOR:

As you can see, life on the island became cozy and comfortable. And not as lonely as either of them thought it would be.

[MORAG and HAMISH come to the front of the stage and sit, pretend to eat, talk, and laugh. Each has a wooden bowl and wooden cup in front of them.]

NARRATOR:

Most evenings the two of them would enjoy their fish and potatoes dinner, and wild berries for dessert. While they ate, they talked and laughed. Hamish learned why it was that Morag had to flee from her home.

MORAG:

So my da married this new lady. I'm glad he's happy with her, but he didn't know how she was acting to me. She was cruel and awful, refused to feed me at all, most days. I had to run away, but I'm glad, y'know. I eat so much better here!

HAMISH:

Who knew this island would be such a step up!

MORAG:

(lifts her wooden cup) To fine living!

HAMISH:

(lifts his wooden cup too, and they clink their cups) To fine living!

NARRATOR:

Morag learned about Hamish's bonnie lass, and the mermaid's ring and bell he kept for the special day, once one year was up.

HAMISH:

I've been hankering to marry 'er for as long as I can remember.

MORAG:

What is it you love about her? What's she like?

HAMISH:

Um. Well. I'm not really sure. I can't explain it. I just know we are meant to be together.

MORAG:
So what happened?

HAMISH:
I tried proposing and she turned me down flat. Made me look like a fool in front of everyone.

MORAG:
Ouch! Why do you think she turned you down?

HAMISH:
Who can figure? But with the mermaid's ring and bell, she'll be sure to say "Yes" this time.

MORAG:
Because that's what you really want, right?

HAMISH:
Sure. It's what I've wanted all along. *(pauses)* Say, what is it you want, Morag?

MORAG:
To set up me own shop someday. I like to knit, that I do. Sweaters and hats, and the like.

HAMISH:
I could see you doing that. Well *(raises cup again)*, to each of us getting our heart's desire!

MORAG:
(raises cup) Our heart's desire! *(takes a sip)* Well, it's getting late.

HAMISH:
That it is. Good night, then.

MORAG:
Good night.

[MORAG and HAMISH exit, each climbing into to their own shack.]

NARRATOR:
Days and nights came and went. Before they knew it, the year had gone by.

[HAMISH emerges from his hut. MORAG emerges from hers.]

HAMISH:
Good morning, Morag!

MORAG:

Morning, Hamish. You're awfully chipper today!

HAMISH:

Um, yeah. Well, today's the day *(takes the ring out, and speaks in a deadpan voice)* The day I've been waiting for. Today, I'll be off...

MORAG:

Ah, yes, to the bonnie lass. The beautiful one.

HAMISH:

Aye, she is that! – *(looks wistfully into the distance)* Her hair like spun gold, her eyes – like pools of emerald water, her ears...

MORAG:

You're really going to go on about her ears?

HAMISH:

(snaps back from his fog) Aye, no, of course not!

MORAG:

I just can't believe the year came up so quick.

HAMISH:

Aye. But here we are. So, I expect I'll be moving on now. *(doesn't move)*

MORAG:

Well, go on then. Be on your way.

HAMISH:

Right. *(turns to exit, then turns around to Morag)* Will you be okay? Will you stay here, by yourself?

MORAG:

Not for long. Soon I'm leaving the island, too.

HAMISH:

But your boat...

MORAG:

Aye, I've been working on a new raft for a while now, and it floats just fine. Well enough, anyway, to get me back to the village.

HAMISH:

What about your father's new wife?

MORAG:

I'm going to have to deal with her.

HAMISH:

And if she's mean to you?

MORAG:

Being on this island, I know I can take care of myself. Besides, Hamish, it's not your problem. Just go to your bonnie lass and live out the rest of your days with her. And like that.

HAMISH:

Right. I guess this means good-bye.

[An awkward hug. HAMISH exits on his boat with MORAG waving after him.]

MORAG:

Goodbye, Hamish. *(to audience)* I don't know why I feel so sad. It's not like I didn't know this day was coming. Well, no use standing out here. I'd better go finish the raft.

[MORAG ducks inside her shack.]

NARRATOR:

And so Morag prepared herself for the journey home, and Hamish went, to the harbor where his bonnie lass waited. For the first time in a year, the island was completely quiet.

Scene 3 – HARBOR

[Stage set: Same as Scene 1.]

[HARBORMEN enter.]

HARBORMAN #1:

Another workweek behind us. (*sniffs himself*) I can never get used to me own fishy smell.

HARBORMAN #2:

After all these years? Drink it in, folks! Cod and the sea! (*stands with feet astride and arms wide outward*)

[HARBORMAN #1 and HARBORMAN #3 step WAY back, holding their noses.]

HARBORMAN #3:

You fellers should talk! We's one and the same, we are, the lot of us. Mermaid's perfume. That's us - men of the sea!

HARBORMAN #2:

And men of the land!

HARBORMAN #1:

Men of the sea AND land!

[HARBORMAN #1, #2, and #3 pound their chests in glee and stomp about.]

[BONNIE, FIONA and HEATHER enter.]

FIONA:

(*gestures to the Harbormen*) What IS their problem?

HEATHER:

Will they never grow up?

FIONA:

(*sighs*) It's such slim pickins' on this island. No wonder none of us has gotten married yet.

BONNIE:

(*tosses head*) Not that we haven't had TONS of chances.

[HAMISH enters.]

HEATHER:

Hey Bonnie, speaking of which. Isn't that one of your old boyfriends?

BONNIE:

Right! What was his name, again?

HAMISH:

(looks around) Here I am, home at last! *(sniffs the air)* Ah, the fishy air. Home, sweet home.

NARRATOR:

(holds nose) I wouldn't say "sweet"!

HAMISH:

So. *(looks around)* Where's Bonnie?

NARRATOR:

(points) She's over there, can't you see her?

[HAMISH scans the crowd for a second before actually seeing BONNIE.]

HAMISH:

Hmm, are you sure that's her?

NARRATOR:

Yes, of course I'm sure! I only had to listen to you prattle on about her all the time.

HAMISH:

It's just that I remember her looking special, and now... Has she changed?

NARRATOR:

Not really.

HAMISH:

Bonnie!

[BONNIE'S friends giggle.]

NARRATOR:

I'll make myself scarce. *(steps back)*

HAMISH:

Bonnie, it's me. Hamish!

BONNIE:

(approaches Hamish) Goodness, you've changed. Such a tan! There's something... different about you.

HAMISH:

Ah, I've been... living far away for the past year. Outdoors.

BONNIE:

Is that right? What brings you back after all this time?

HAMISH:

Well, you see uh, there's something important I need to talk to you about – and I need to ask you...

NARRATOR:

Come on, you can do it!

HAMISH:

I need to ask... if you would...

BONNIE:

Aye?

NARRATOR:

Take out the bell! Ring the bell! Keep yer head, Hamish!

HAMISH:

If you would ... tell me what's been going on since I've been away? I mean, with you?

NARRATOR:

Oh, for goodness sake!

BONNIE:

Nothing, really. Hanging around the harbor with my friends.

HAMISH:

For the whole year?

BONNIE:

What else is there to do?

HAMISH:

I don't know, lots of stuff. Where I was, I was up at dawn each day for fishing. Then you know, chores. Tending to things that need doing.

BONNIE:
Sounds awful.

HAMISH:
Not so bad. At the end of the day it was fun because I'd have a heaping fish dinner with... I mean, with...

BONNIE:
With what – the local birds? Hamish, what is it you needed so bad to tell me?

HAMISH:
Umm... you know what? I just realized something. I left something important back home!

BONNIE:
But you just got here. What could be so important? Why not stick around? We could hang out.

HAMISH:
Sorry. It was nice catching up with you, really it was. But I have to go.

BONNIE:
(*shrugs*) Suit yourself.

HAMISH:
Bye, Bonnie! Good luck with everything!

BONNIE:
Whatever.

[HAMISH exits, hurriedly.]

[BONNIE re-joins her FRIENDS. They shrug, look confused, and start gossiping again.]

NARRATOR:
What was THAT all about? After all that, he missed his chance to use the bell. Well, we might as well follow him.

[NARRATOR exits.]

Scene 4 – The Island

[Stage set: Same as Scene 2.]

[HAMISH enters, rowing hurriedly to the shore. He gets onto the island.]

HAMISH:

(shouts) Morag! Morag! Are you still here?!

[MORAG climbs out of the shack.]

MORAG:

(sees Hamish) Hamish?! What are you doing back?

HAMISH:

I wanted to talk with you about something.

MORAG:

Well, make it quick. I'm leaving with the morning tide.

HAMISH:

Morag, I went to claim the bonnie lass. With the ring and the bell, and all.

MORAG:

I know, I know.

HAMISH:

But something was not right. And when I saw her, well she's ok and everything, but I knew what was wrong.

MORAG:

What was it?

HAMISH:

She's not my own true love.

MORAG:

Now I'm just confused.

HAMISH:

Morag, it's you. You're the one.

MORAG:

What?

HAMISH:

I know this isn't what the plan was, but I was thinking I have some money saved up from fishing. I could lend it to you to open your shop. I could live near you and fish out on the sea. And I could build us two huts close by, as they are now. What do you think?

MORAG:

A shop of my own? My goodness, Hamish. What can I say?

HAMISH:

And you might as well know what else is on my mind.

MORAG:

What?

HAMISH:

Morag (*gets on one knee*), you're the one I want to offer this ring to. Maybe not right away, but some day. To marry me.

MORAG:

Marry you! Wait a minute! Don't you dare ring that bell!

HAMISH:

No way. I just want to know if it's something that would suit you.

[SORCHA enters, in waves. (See Performance Notes for how to accomplish this.)]

SORCHA:

Och! Today's the day but I didn't hear the sound of me magic ring bein' used yet! Hamish, Hamish lad! The day's nearly done. You need to get together with yer own true love.

HAMISH:

I know it. And here she is! (*presenting Morag to Sorcha*)

SORCHA:

What?! But this lass doesn't have bonnie blonde hair!

HAMISH:

Aye, true!

SORCHA:

And she does'nae have blue eyes!

HAMISH:

Those eyes are about as deep a brown as eyes can be.

SORCHA:
Nor is she tall n' slim!

HAMISH:
Not exactly! And this one's on the shorter side.

MORAG:
(playfully punches Hamish on the shoulder- softly, just pretend) Oi!

SORCHA:
Yet she is yer true love?

HAMISH:
No doubt about it!

SORCHA:
Tsk, I'll never understand humans. But th' bargain is kept, ye got what ye asked for. I'll wish ye the best and be on me way.

HAMISH:
Wait! *(hands Sorcha the bell)* I don't think I'll be needing this here bell. But I will keep the ring, if it's all right by you.

SORCHA:
(takes the bell) Good fer you, laddie. Oh, I'm takin' this gossip back to the sea!

[SORCHA nods at both of them and disappears back into the sea.]

[MORAG and HAMISH clasp hands.]

NARRATOR:
(takes out an index card and starts to read) Ahem! So the Fisherlad and the bonnie lass who he waited for the whole year planned to be wed... *(looks at Hamish and Morag, then throws the index card on the floor)* This one won't do me a bit of good. Ahem. So the Fisherlad and the young lady he got to know-

HAMISH:
-and love.

NARRATOR:
-and love.

MORAG:
And appreciate, remember.

HAMISH:

Aye, that too.

NARRATOR:

...and appreciate, were brought together by the mermaid's – (*Hamish shakes his head "no"*) Um, were brought together without magic. Just good old fashioned fate and a regular old ring. (*takes out a second index card*) Oh, I can use this one. . (*reads, loudly*) And they all lived happily ever after!

HAMISH and MORAG:

The end!

NARRATOR:

Or as they say in Scotland, "Lang may yer lum reek," which means, "May you live long and stay well."



Performance Notes for The Fisherlad and the Mermaid's Ring

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- NARRATOR – Simple, plain clothes.
- HAMISH – A long-sleeved button-up white t-shirt, a large brown coat and a red kilt, if possible. The kilt can be made with a red or tartan blanket. If opting other than the kilt, some simple colored trousers will suffice.



- HARBOURFOLK – Black or brown trousers, long-sleeved button-up shirt. They should look a bit dishevelled. They can have suspenders.
- BONNIE – A white blouse and a long blue skirt.
- SORCHA – Blues and greens draped. A red wig and mermaid tail if possible. Tail can be made from colorful cardboard or fabric.
To make the tail: Start with long pencil skirt, or a long skirt that tapers in towards the feet, made from a stretchy material, such as spandex. It should be a bright color, and preferably shiny. Near the knees to the bottom of the skirt, add some extra bright and shiny fabric. It can be sewn onto the skirt or hot glued, and should be arranged to fan outward a bit. The actress should wear sock or slip on that match the fabric, so that her feet blend in with the tail.
See images for examples:



- MORAG – A simple blouse, and a dark colored raggedy skirt.



PROPS

Scene 1

- Fishing nets for HARBORMAN #1, HARBORMAN #2, HARBORMAN #3, and HAMISH. If an actual net can't be obtained, one can be made with mesh netting, or by weaving paper together, or by using a sheet and lots of holes cut into it. You can also just use any square or rectangle of mesh fabric or a netted laundry bag.

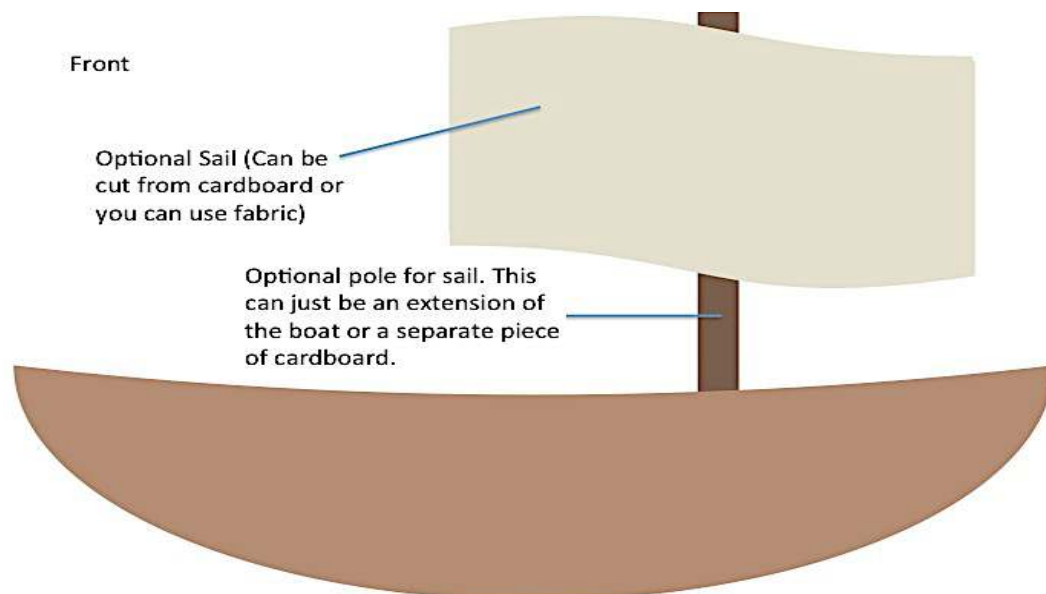
For more ideas and detailed instructions, see these pages:

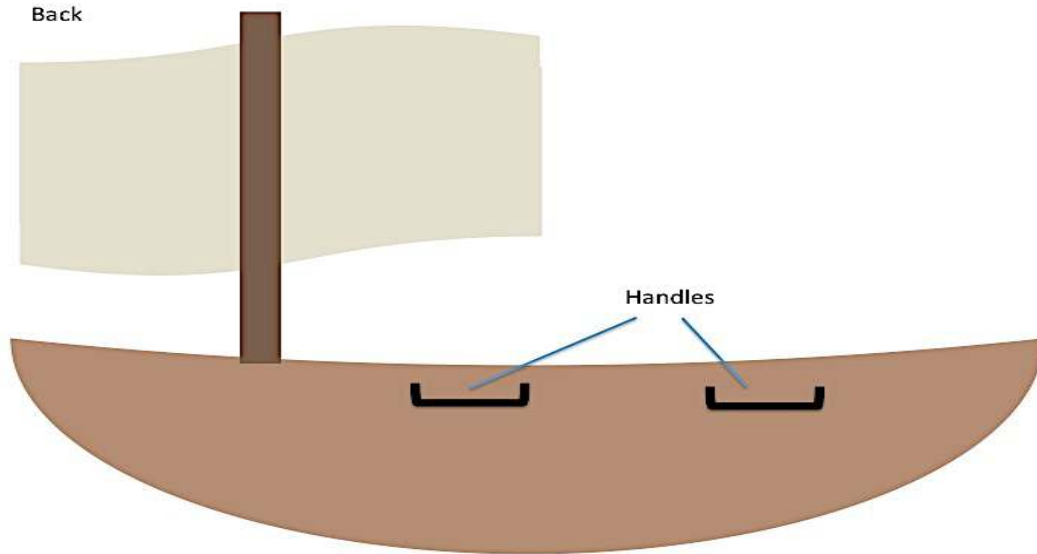
<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Handmade-Fishing-Net>

http://duo.irational.org/red_net/a_guide_to_net_making.pdf

Scene 2

- Boat for HAMISH. This can be made from a long flat piece of cardboard. Cut out the shape of a boat and attach handles to the back. HAMISH picks it up and walks with it, to simulate sailing. See images for examples:





- Net for HAMISH, same as in Scene 1.
- Ring for SORCHA to give to HAMISH.
- Transparent jar for HIAMISH to put the ring in. This should be plastic, to avoid possible breakage.
- Shack for MORAG to “build”. This can be made from three sides of a refrigerator box. Cut the fourth panel off of the box, and paint the shack to look like old wood.

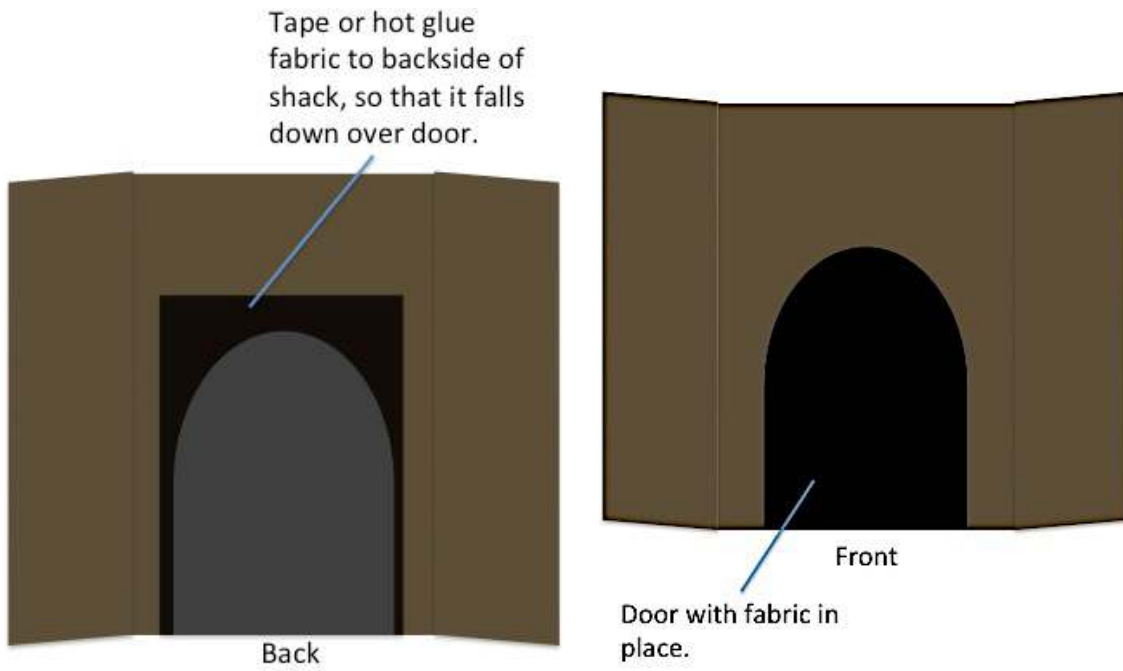
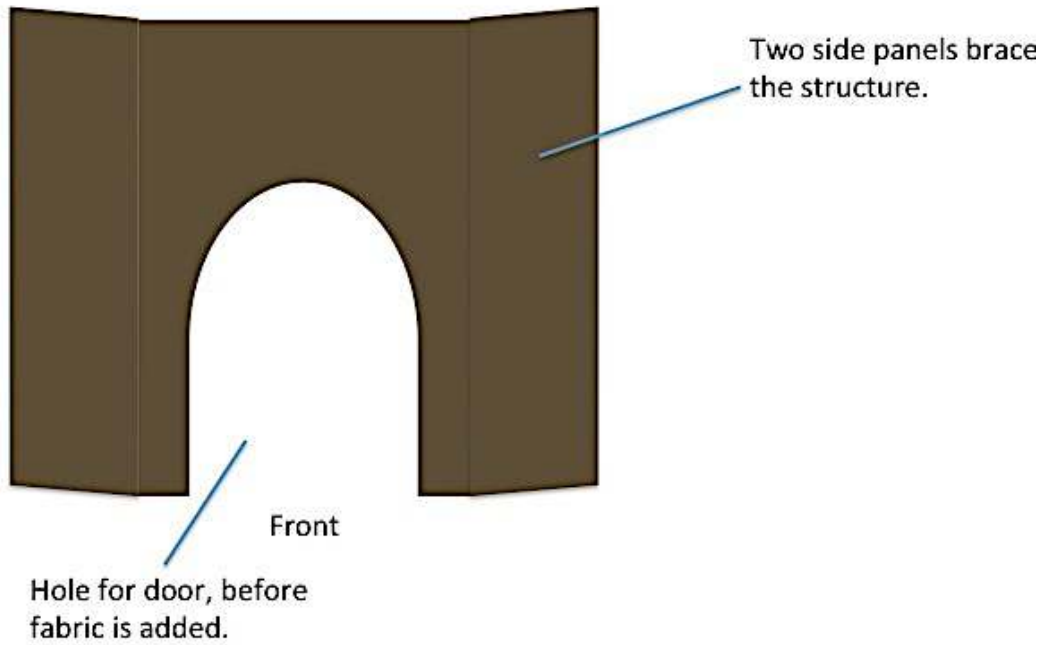
Cut a hole in the middle section to act as the doorway. Tape or hot glue a piece of lightweight black fabric on the back of the flat, so that it hangs down over the hole, ensuring that audience can not see through the door when shack is upright.

Use this same technique for the extension.

From the beginning of the scene, the cardboard lies flat on the ground, unseen by the audience. You can also cover them with sand-colored sheets, to obscure them further. When MORAG “builds” the shack, she simply lifts up the cardboard, and sets it up, so that it stands freely, the two sides bracing the structure. When HAMISH “builds” the extension, he does the same thing.

You might also want to prop the shack and extension up against something, perhaps stools that were being hidden behind other set pieces. See images on next page for examples:

Note: When a character ENTERS the shack (usually HAMISH) they enter through the small door in the front. When a character goes BEHIND it, (usually MORAG) they walk literally behind the cut out.





- Bunting and streamers (can be purchased in party supply sections of stores or can easily be made from colorful paper). Examples of what it could look like are below:



1 Maybe use Saint Andrew's flag to make it more Scottish!

Scene 3

- Boat for HAMISH, same as Scene 2.

Scene 4

- Boat for HAMISH, same as Scene 2.
- Ring for HAMISH to give to MORAG, same as Scene 2.



SETS

The entire stage is set like the Island, since that is where the majority of the play takes place. If you have a backdrop you can paint it to show green hills, cliffs, and trees, with water in the distance. There is also another location in the play, the Harbour, which will be a pop-up location for Scenes 1 and 4. More on sets below:



Scene 1— The Harbour. A pop-up scene. This scene can happen at the front of the stage, off to the side, in front of where the water is (see below for details on water). It isn't necessary to bring anything on for this scene, as long as the actors are far enough in front of the other set. However, if you'd like to add some more set dressing or further separate the scene, you can either have STAGE HANDS bring on a smaller, separate backdrop and hold it up for the Scene. It can show a pier. Another option would be to bring on a flat piece of cardboard, painted like planks, and place it on the floor. Actors can stand on the cardboard "pier" for the scene.

Scene 2— The Island. You can make large cardboard free standing cut-out rocks, hills, and trees, and place them towards the back of the stage. To make these, cut the shapes out of large pieces of cardboard, paint them, and brace them with stools, milk crates, or other objects that will give enough weight and sturdiness to hold them up.

You can use a tan sheet(s) to represent sand, spreading it/them over the stage. You can use a blue/green sheet or piece of fabric to represent the water. This can be spread out on one side of the stage, in about 1/3 of the space. This is where HAMISH will "sail" on and off from".

Note: From the start of the play, a cut out of both the shack and its extension lie face-down unseen by the audience to be later picked up by Hamish (See prop notes). These can be hidden under the tan sheets.

Scene 3 — The Harbour, same as Scene 1.

Scene 4 — The Island, same as Scene 2.

