

# ***The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter.*** V4.0 10/08/17 20:25:48

**Set:** A single small table and three chairs. One entrance.

## **Characters:-**

Ebenezer - The Lighthouse Keeper

Kate - His Wife

Grace - Their Daughter

Flo - The Housekeeper

Mawdor - The Villan

Bill - The Hero

Kate (Enters to set table & Eb follows) Ah Ebenezer, have you finished in the lamproom, my beloved?

Eb Yes my sweet Kate. All is trimmed and ready. I shall light the lamp as soon as dusk falls, that no ship may flounder upon the rocks below.

Kate My Hero! Flo has prepared our evening repast so we may eat early that you shall be ready for the lighting before sunset.

Eb You are so thoughtful, my angel. What will our supper be this eve?

Kate Fish pie.

Eb (Sarcastic) Oh let the joy be unconfined! When will we be able to have some red meat to tempt us once more.(Sits)

Kate I'm sorry my dearest heart, but fish was all there was to be had again in the village this morning, so we have added some of our own potatoes and onions.

Flo (Entering) And I've grated that last bit of mouldy cheddar on top to give it a bit of extra flavour. The mould gives it a bit of extra colour too.

Kate Where is Grace?

Flo She has been in her room all afternoon ..... reading. Can't see the point of that myself. It only seems to ever put her in a mopey mood.

Eb I'll call her. (without moving) Grace!

Flo (To the audience) I'm sure she heard that. No need for a fog horn in this lighthouse.

Grace I am here Papa. (Kisses him and mother on cheek).

Kate Have you been reading again, my darling sweetest child.

Grace Mother I am your only child so I am naturally your sweetest and sourest daughter.

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Eb Here, that is not like you to cheek your mother like that girl.

Grace (Rushing to father and kissing him again) Oh I am sorry Papa, my book has put me in an unsteady state of mind.

Flo What rubbish have you been filling your head with that you should talk to your mother that way.

Grace It is a new work by a lady called Luoisia May Alcott.

Flo Never heard of her. What's it called.

Grace Little Women. It is about a mother and her daughters who live in New England.

Kate Oh dear! A book from the breakaway colonies. I'm not sure I like that. They turned against our good King George. Our own Queen Victoria's grandpapa.

Eb Is it subversive daughter?

Grace Oh no father. It is about the life they lead, beset by adversity but soldiering on and doing good works for the poor.

Eb Well that doesn't sound too bad.

Kate Perhaps not but why then did it put you in an unsettled state.

Flo (To audience) It'll be the men in it.

Grace Oh mother, the girls have admirers and I have none.

Flo (To audience) Told you.

Kate Don't you worry my sweet. The right man will come along one day for you.

Grace (Front of stage) Oh Papa, I sound so ungrateful and I'm not honestly. I lie on my little bed, these summer evenings, listening to the sounds of nature outside my window. The call of the owls, the gab of the gulls, the cries of the drunks as they fall over the cliff edge. I worry that no man will find his way along the cliff path to know I even exist.

Flo She has a point. There are too many single girls around and too few men.

Eb Well if the men left the strong ale at the Sailor's Arms alone, they wouldn't go falling off the cliffs so much. There are no men left in the village Grace's age. They have all gone in search of work.

Flo Or over the cliffs.

Grace Now must it be that all adventure will surely pass me by and I am doomed to live in solitude, cast to a life without excitement, to die alone and unfulfilled. Even the fisherfolk get to ride upon the sea, casting their nets and checking their pots. Father, am I cursed to only watch them from this beacon across the lonely sea.

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Flo Could be worse, young maid. There is talk of war with the Boers in South Africa again. You could marry only to be deserted, when your husband was called up to serve his Queen and country. You could be left a widow at the blink of an eye with bairns to feed and no money coming in to feed them or you. What's more, if your husband didn't have the good grace to get himself killed properly and came home with bits blown off, disabled like, you'd have him on your hands too. Nobody would give him a job and you would be wishing him of the cliff edge.

Kate A war would decimate the menfolk of the village.

Grace Oh woe is me.

Eb Don't be daft woman, the Sailor's Arms and the clifftop path have already done that. Mark my words, daughter of mine, set your cap at a man with ambition and brains, not some young foll-de-roll. Beauty fades but brains are forever.

Flo Well all this won't get your pie on the table.

Kate Let us all repair to the kitchen and bring it forth.

Flo Grace you can come too, if you have a mind. You can cut off all the black bits. (The women exit)

Eb (Takes out his money and counts it) Alas, our savings dwindle and I will struggle to provide a dowry for dearest Grace.

Mawdor ( Enters, sees money twiddles moustache and knocks out Eb) Ah ha! Not a princely sum, but enough to beggar the lighthouse keeper and make him more amenable to my advances on his comely daughter. (Exits)

Eb (Groans) Oh my aching head. What happened .... And where is my money. (Looks under table)

Alas we have been robbed.

Kate (Enters) Beloved. What is all this noise about?

Eb I was struck from behind and our meagre savings have been taken. It was all we had in the world and was meant as our Grace's dowry. ( A lot of head holding from now on).

Kate Oh Beloved we are undone. Cast off with no hope of salvation.

Grace (Entering with Flo) Mama, Papa whatever can be amiss?

Kate Some scoundrel has entered our humble abode, struck your father and taken our savings which were to be your dowry.

Grace Oh alas! All hope is gone.

(Knocking)

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Flo Come up whoever knocks. You cannot add to our burden of sorrow at this time.

Mawdor Beg pardon good folks, I was taking the air along the cliffs and happened upon this merry light and thought I would call in the hope of a thirst quenching draft of cool water. May I presume on your kindness.

Kate Of course good sir. We can refuse no man such a request.

Flo Leave it to me while you attend to Ebenezer, mistress. Kate will aid me. (To audience) I will remove her from this man with a guiled tongue and evil looks, for I distrust him.

Mawdor I beg your pardon ma'am. Is this your husband and is he in some pain or difficulty?

Kate Yes kind sir. He has just been cudgelled and our savings have been taken

Mawdor Oh how cruel is fate.

Eb Indeed sir.

Mawdor It is indeed painful for me to see you both so cast down, especially when I have recently had some good fortune myself.

Kate Pray tell is sir of that. It may serve to cheer us both in some small way, to know that not all is ill fortune in this world today.

Mawdor (Sitting) An elderly aunt of mine has recently passed away. A saintly lady who did all she could to help others when troubles beset their lives. I discovered only yesterday that she left me a few coins in her will.

Eb Fortune has indeed smiled upon you. (Flo and Grace re-enter)

Mawdor It has indeed and I have resolved to follow my good aunts example, to settle down and lead a good life devoted to helping others. (Grace gives water).

Flo (To audience) And himself at the same time, if I know his sort.

Mawdor Thank you miss. You bring me great comfort in my hour of dire thirst.

Grace You are welcome sir.

Mawdor Have you no admirers, young lady? I find it odd that a girl your age is still with her parents, when there is such adventure and excitement to be had elsewhere.

Grace I have no admirers sir, but must confess I do have a yearning to discover some adventure.

Kate Hush now child. Do not trouble our visitor with your nonsense.

Mawdor Oh trouble away. The maid is giving me an idea that may help us all.

Eb Pray tell sir. I have no notion of to what you allude.

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Mawdor You sir have lost all your savings. I on the other hand, I have acquired a little money. Your daughter yearns for some excitement and I have resolved to take a wife and live a moral and upright life. Would it not be to our mutual advantage for me to give you some modest sum in exchange for your daughter's hand.

Flo I knew it

Mawdor Your savings would be restored, your daughter would have her admirer and I would have my bride. All would be resolved and happiness would abound.

Eb We had best let our Grace have her say.

Kate How does the prospect appeal to you dear heart.

Grace I am not sure Mama. I have yearned for an admirer and some excitement and adventure to enter my life, but this is most unexpected.

Mawdor Is it the age difference my dear?

Grace No, no, it is not that. It is just that I do not know you. You are a stranger.

Flo (To audience) And they do not come any stranger. He proposes marriage without even acquainting himself with the girl. (To All) Begging you pardon, master and mistress, but should there not be some time for the two turtle doves to get to know each other?

Mawdor Alack and alas, I am travelling on and must have a speedy answer.

Kate Oh goodness. I have no wish to scotch my baby's chances but this is all very sudden.

Grace Dear father, what shall I do? (Knocking)

Flo Loathe as I am to miss anything, I will see who it is. (Exits)

Mawdor Well child, I must press you for an answer for you will need to pack your belongings and we must be on our way.

Kate Can you not stay the night and depart on the morrow, so that we can have one last night with our only child?

Mawdor I am afraid not. I am making haste to reach London and catch a ship to Italy. I have business there that I must attend to.

Eb Italy eh! Do you hear that Grace, a cruise? Would that be excitement and adventure enough for you?

Grace Oh Father I am not sure. At the cost of not seeing you or Mama again, I do not know if I want such adventure after all.

Mawdor (Taking Grace's hand) Do you not think you could learn to love me my dear. Just a little tiny, weeny bit, to keep me happy.

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Grace (Taking hand away, to mother) What do you think Mama. I have only just met ... I'm sorry you have not introduced yourself... I don't even know your name.

Mawdor Mawdor Ma'am. Absalom Mawdor, at your service.

Bill (Entering) But better known as Bertram Fincklebottom, eh Bertie.

Mawdor I'm sorry do I know you sir? (Bolts for door stopped by Bill)

Bill Yes you do you weasel of a little thieving rogue. What's he been up to here then?

Eb Well actually he's done nothing.

Flo Except propose a marriage to Miss Grace.

Grace I haven't accepted him !

Kate Bill, I don't understand, why are you back in the village and what are you doing here?

Eb You went into the army.

Bill I did and I was invalided out , when I took a bullet in my leg. I met this scoundrel in the hospital when I was recovering.

Grace Was he helping nurse you back to health.

Bill No he was a gardener, who did very little work but was always hanging around the patients listening to stories of their homes and loved ones. I talked a lot to him at first but something didn't ring true so I avoided him after a while.

Kate Is he here because you told him about us?

Bill Yes, I talked about you all and the day I was discharged, he had disappeared. I feared he might have set off here with some evil dead in mind.

Eb Strange you should say that. I was robbed of our savings earlier. I didn't see the blaggard, just took a blow to the head and woke up to find the money gone.

Bill Been up to your old tricks have you Bertie? (Shakes him and purse falls out)

Eb That's my purse.

Flo You thief.

Kate The money you had inherited was our stolen savings!

Eb And you were going to give me my own money as a dowry for our Grace. You villain.

Grace You, you, you swine!

Kate (Shocked) Grace!

Flo It's those books she's been reading.

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Eb We can lock him in the cellar overnight and take him to the law in the village tomorrow.

Bill Leave that to me. (Bill and Mawdor exit).

Kate Well I think we had better have supper after the lamp has been lit.

Eb I'm just glad we have our savings back..... and our daughter is safe from his evil clutches too, of course.

Flo Well has there been enough excitement in your life today to last about a week young lady.

Grace I think so, though I'm no better off than when the day started.

Kate Thank the Lord, you're no worse off either. That fellow may not have taken you to London, let alone to Italy. Oh to think of the shame if he had cast you aside along the road in a strange place. Flo, get me my salts I can't take any more (Faints)

(All gather round flapping and bringing her to)

Bill Well that's him safely locked up. Shame about that step. He slipped and bumped his head quite badly.

Eb What a shame! (Pats Bill on back) Well I'd best light the light. (Exits)

Kate Oh Flo, help me up. We must prepare the supper. Please stay Bill and share our hospitality. You have deserved it

Flo Yes. Thank goodness you came. (Kate and Flo exit)

Grace (Sits) Bill, why were you telling Absallom or Betie or whatever his name is, about us when you were convalescing?

Bill Because you are all very special to me. When I fished these waters it was your fathers light that guided me home and your mother would always come to me first, to buy my catch.

Grace She knew you were an honest man. Your fish was fresh and you never overcharged. Will you go back to fishing now you're back.

Bill No, I went into the army because these waters are fished out. I did alright, earned my commission and now have a small monthly payment from the regiment for my injury.

Grace They must have held you in very high regard.

Bill Yes, they must. Do you?

Grace Do I what?

Bill Hold me in high regard?

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Grace Oh Bill, I have never thought about it.

Bill (On one knee) Well Grace darling, can you think of it now or am I too old for you.

Grace It appears I have 'a thing' about older men, so no. But father tells me I should look for a man with ambition. What is yours?

Bill Well I have used my army pay to buy land along the coast here and I want to set up a sheep farm. I have nowhere to live yet but will you consider me.

Eb (Entering) What do I hear about a sheep farm?

(Kate and Flo enter)

Grace Bill has bought land along the cliff tops and wants to start sheep farming. He has nowhere to live yet but he has asked me to consider his hand.

Flo Well he's an improvement on the last one.

Kate We can do up the outbuildings for you both if that is what you would both like.

Eb And we can have mutton stew for supper at a discounted price.

Bill You can have it free if Grace says Yes.

Flo The sequel of this story  
is evident and clear  
Bill and Grace were married  
And remain-ed living near.  
The keeper gave his blessing  
His wife, she gave hers too  
I saw no point in stressing  
I had enough to do.  
We planted more potatoes  
We grew fresh mint and peas  
Naughty Bert was punished  
Transported overseas  
The cliff top path was fenced off  
And Bill and Grace are true,  
So together every evening

We dine on mutton stew.