

ACT ONE

SCENE TEN

EXT. LOCATION 9, ANIMATED STORMY SEA -- DAY

The children and Mr. Merlin suddenly find themselves as animated characters holding onto the wreckage of a tiny rowboat being tossed amidst a raging cartoon sea. The wind howls and waves batter them; all the children are afraid.

T.J.

What happened? Where are we?

MR. MERLIN

Don't worry kids, we'll be okay.
Just hold on tight. T.J., you
help Tony.

T.J. latches onto Tony and Mr. Merlin holds Margaret while both clutch Rachel tightly.

MARGARET

Did you plan this, Mr. Merlin?
It's not very funny.

MR. MERLIN

Jiminy Crickets, kids, I don't
like it any more than you.

T.J.

(angry)
Well it's all your idea. You're
the one who had to teach us about
animals.
You're the one who thinks animals
are so great and you had to make
us stop playing just so we could
see a bunch of dumb animals. Well
I don't want to see any more
animals. I don't like animals. I

MARGARET

Look!

T.J.

Oh, no. Now look what's after us!
The passengers turn to see eight Newfoundlands swimming for
them.

MR. MERLIN

T.J.they're here to help us.

They're Newfoundlands.

They're going to help us to shore.

All the children cheer, perhaps T.J. the loudest.

Mr. Merlin hoists Rachel onto his back as the Labs pair off, two to a person, and slip under each person's arms like floats. Together, the dogs and our group swim safely back to shore.

Panting and soaked, the children are happy as they crawl upon the shore. Mr. Merlin helps them to their feet and they follow the dogs who race ahead to a small thatch hut on the barren coastline.

The animated Labs remain outside while our friends go inside.

CUT TO:

29.

ACT ONE

SCENE ELEVEN

INT. LOCATION 10, ANIMAL FRIENDS' WORKSHOP -- CONTINUOUS

The bright, cheery workshop looks freshly painted and well organized, with tools and equipment lined neatly along the walls.

A SPRITE WOMAN sits humming, happily and diligently repairing a birdcage.

She doesn't notice as the children and Mr. Merlin enter.

For some reason no one's been able to figure out, only Mr. Merlin is soaked to the bone; the children are dry as can be.

Mr. Merlin winks at the children and gestures for them to hush as he sneaks up behind the woman.

The children are a little confused and watch closely as Mr. Merlin gives her a happy little kiss on the cheek.

Margaret covers her mouth and giggles, causing Rachel to do the same. Tony smiles, and so does the woman, first at Mr. Merlin, then at the children.

MR. MERLIN

Kids, allow me to introduce my dear wife. Mrs. Maggie Merlin.

MAGGIE

Hello children.

CHILDREN

(ad lib)

Hello Mrs. Merlin, hi Mrs. Merlin,
etc.

MAGGIE

Nonsense, call me Maggie (seeing
Mr. Merlin) My goodness, how is it
that you're the only one soaked?
Just can't get it right, can you.
Maggie stands and gets a blanket from a cabinet. She gives
it to Mr. Merlin who wraps it around himself.

MR. MERLIN

You should have been there, Maggie.
We just learned a little lesson
about how valuable animals are.
Didn't we, T.J.?

T.J.

(sheepishly)
We sure did. We sure did.

MAGGIE

Well, I'm just happy you're all
safe. So, what are your names?

MR. MERLIN

Oh, sorry. Maggie, let me introduce...

MAGGIE

(to Mr. Merlin)
I know your name. I think they
can manage.

MARGARET

(curtsying)
I'm Margaret.

TONY

(looking around the
room)
I'm Tony. Boy, this place is neat,
too.

RACHEL

(curtsying, kind of)
I'm Rachel.

T.J. pretends to look around the room, oblivious to the introductions.

MAGGIE
(to T.J.)
And you're T.J.?

T.J.
(casually, turning
around)
Yes, ma'am.

MAGGIE
Well, hello T.J. Why don't all of
you come right over here and let
me tell you about why I love to
care for animals.
The children gather round her.
MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You see, caring for animals requires
a lot more than food and
veterinarians and walks in the
park. You know what it takes,
Rachel?

RACHEL
Animals?
Mr. Merlin snickers, but catches himself as Maggie turns
around, tongue mostly in cheek.

MAGGIE
Animals. But what else? Anybody?

TONY
Homes.

MAGGIE
Excellent. They all need a place
to live. Birds need cages, fish
need aquariums, hamsters and guinea
pigs and their cousins need cages,
too, and some dogs need houses,
and on and on.

MARGARET
Is that what you do, build animal
houses?

MAGGIE

Yes, I do. I build them and I also repair the ones that need fixing.

MR. MERLIN

For Pete's sake, Maggie, you do a lot more than that. Kids, Maggie decides what kind of food we sell and what kind of toys and leashes and just about everything we sell Maggie decides.

MAGGIE

You're too kind, but you did forget something.

MR. MERLIN

No... What?

MAGGIE

I also groom and take care of all the animals that come to Animal Friends.

MR. MERLIN

Well, of course, how could I

DR. WARNER (O.S.)

Darn kids.

Startled, the children and the Merlins turn to see DR. WARNER WARNER, the tall, brooding veterinarian who practices next door. The good, but gruff, doctor is holding Freddie, the dog the children had chased.

DR. WARNER (CONT'D)

Old Freddie here was scared to death, a bunch of darn kids were chasing him.

MAGGIE

Is he okay?

The children bow their heads and hope Dr. Warner goes away.

DR. WARNER

Of course he's okay, but that still

doesn't make it okay for kids to chase him, if that's what you're getting at.

MR. MERLIN

They probably didn't mean any harm. In fact, they really didn't know what they were doing.

MAGGIE

It wasn't these children?

MR. MERLIN

(winking at children)

Them? No, they know better, don't you?

CHILDREN

(ad lib)

Yes, Of course, We do, etc.

MAGGIE

Oh, I'm sorry. Doctor, have you met the children?

DR. WARNER

How could I ? Your husband here'll wait till kingdom come to introduce them, and I don't have that long.

MR. MERLIN

(disbelieving)

But you just got here!

How could

MAGGIE

Now, dear, you are a little slow sometimes. Allow me. Dr. Werner Warner, let me introduce

DOCTOR

(to Maggie)

I know who your are. I think they can manage.

Mr. Merlin chuckles, but again stops short as Maggie catches him.

MARGARET
(curtsying)
I'm Margaret.

RACHEL
(curtsying)
I'm Rachel.

TONY
I'm Tony.

T.J.
(hushed)
I'm T.J.

RACHEL
Are you an animal doctor?

DOCTOR
Do I look like an animal?
Rachel giggles.

MARGARET
I think she meant are you a doctor
for animals.

DR. WARNER
I know what she meant. Yes, I'm
an animal doctor.

Margaret, Rachel and Tony giggle. T.J. watches the Doctor
with a wary eye.

DR. WARNER
So, son, you afraid of animal
doctors?

T.J. shies away from Dr. Warner and the dog.

MARGARET
Sir, I think he's afraid of Freddie.

DR. WARNER
Of Freddie? Don't be silly.
Dr. Warner puts Freddie down, and the dog immediately goes
to T.J. T.J. is still nervous, but Freddie is so gentle and
easygoing that the boy's fears mostly dissipate.

DR. WARNER

Freddie never hurt anybody in his whole life. He loves kids especially, that's why it's so sad to see kids chase him. He's so old.

Freddie starts to lick T.J.'s face. The other children laugh and laugh, and soon T.J. is laughing hardest of all.

DR. WARNER

There, what did I tell you. Now I ask, why would anyone ever want to hurt a beautiful dog like that?

The children's giggles grow a little forced, for they know they've learned their lesson.

Mr. Merlin looks at them and winks with a warm smile.

Dr. Warner lifts Freddie and carries him towards the door.

DR. WARNER (CONT'D)

Gotta go. Gotta million things to do. Nice meeting you all now stay out of trouble and visit me sometime. You never visit.

Dr. Warner shakes his head as he and Freddie leave.

MR. MERLIN

Okay kids, time for us to leave, too.

The children follow Mr. Merlin and Maggie to the other door.

MR. MERLIN

(to Maggie)

I'll see you later.

Mr. Merlin gives Maggie a kiss on the cheek.

CHILDREN

(ad lib)

Bye, Maggie. So long, Maggie, etc.

MAGGIE

Goodbye, kids. See you next time, promise?

CHILDREN

(ad lib)

Promise, sure, etc.

MAGGIE

And you, T.J.?

T.J.

I'll be here; I've got a lot to
learn.

Mr. Merlin winks at his wife as he and the children leave
the shop.