

Episode 1

The sun beat down on Marcus's tanned shoulders as he snagged the buoy and hauled in the trap, then gazed at it with a frown. Still nothing. He'd been trying to trap lobster for almost a month now and hadn't caught a single thing. They say there are plenty of fish in the sea, but that apparently didn't apply to lobsters. Oh well, on to the next trap.

As he pulled up the next trap, he considered that the "plenty of fish" statement didn't really apply to women in his experience either, even though it was often used in that context. In all his 23 years, he hadn't dated a single one. Women and lobsters — both elusive.

It wasn't that he'd never been interested in dating; it's just that he wasn't really sure how to. These days, just looking at a woman wrong could get you pegged for sexual harassment, it seemed. So he just kept himself to himself and concentrated on his hobbies most of the time.

Right in the middle of his reflections, his eyes widened in surprise as he opened the next trap. A lobster! And it was frying size! He was just pulling it gleefully from the still-dripping cage when a voice said, "Please, sir, let me go."

Marcus looked around slowly, fear clutching his heart. He was quite certain he was alone on the boat, and the voice had sounded uncomfortably close to the hand that held the lobster. Then he laughed at himself. "I must be losing it," he muttered, examining the creature more closely. "Lobsters don't talk."

"But I'm not a lobster at all!" the lobster exclaimed.

Marcus almost dropped the creature in surprise. Then he took hold of it more firmly, determined not to lose the only lobster he'd ever actually caught on his own. "Well, you certainly look like a lobster," he said, shaking his head in disbelief.

"I know," the lobster replied – if a lobster can sound morose, this one certainly did – "and I can't explain that right now, but I promise you that if you throw me back in the water, I'll tell you everything tomorrow. Please, you've just *got* to believe me!" Its front legs came together in a fervent prayer.

The boat rocked back and forth, creaking softly as Marcus considered the lobster's plea. *Man*, he thought, *this is crazy. I finally catch a lobster and it has to be a talking one.* He thought about his options.

On the one hand, he could accept that he had lost his mind, ignore the lobster's words, cook it, and eat it. If he did that, he'd either feel guilty for murdering and consuming a sentient creature, or he'd feel like he should be thrown into a looney bin for believing in talking lobsters.

On the other hand, he could simply throw it back in the water. This wouldn't cause him to question his sanity any less, but if he simply refused to think about it for long enough, he would probably chalk it all up as a crazy dream by the next morning. And it would completely absolve him of any feelings of guilt. The worst he might feel would be a slight annoyance at himself for throwing away a perfectly good meal.

"Alright," he said, with a shrug, "I guess I didn't really think I'd catch anything anyway." He sighed and threw the lobster over the railing. As it flew through the air, it yelled, "Wait!" Too late, of course. Just before it hit the water, Marcus saw it shimmer and seem to . . . change. Then it disappeared beneath the waves and was gone.