

"Hutch & Bev"

by

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*Lights up on a small fishing boat. HUTCH is fishing over the side, sipping a beer and whistling a tune--enjoying the weather and ocean breeze. Suddenly, their rod nearly bends over on itself. HUTCH leaps to their feet and tries to reel the catch in. An epic fishing battle ensues, during which they holler and curse and leap about the boat. Finally, they bring their catch over the side and onto the deck: a pissed-off mermaid named BEV.*

HUTCH

Wow.

BEV

*(Struggling.)* Geyourhoooumyfuhmouuu.

HUTCH

I'm sorry?

BEV

*(Still struggling, angrier.)* GeyourHOOKoumyfuckinmouuuth!

HUTCH

Oh! Oh my God...

*HUTCH leans in and extracts the hook.*

BEV

Thanks.

HUTCH

I am so, *so* sorry. This has never happened to me before.

BEV

No shit.

HUTCH

Are you all right?

*BEV gives HUTCH a look. HUTCH nods an apology. A pause.*

HUTCH

Are you a-

BEV

Yep.

HUTCH

Like an actual-

BEV

Yes.

HUTCH

No, but like a *genuine*, real-life-

BEV

*Yes: a genuine, real-life mermaid.* Do I not look "real life" or something?

HUTCH

I'm sorry! This is a lot to take in.

BEV

Well it's kind of offensive. Treating me like some "fantasy creature".

HUTCH

Sorry.

BEV

Be cool.

HUTCH

I didn't hurt you too bad with the hook, did I?

BEV

Not really. It'll heal.

*Silence.*

HUTCH

A friend of mine has his lip pierced. Not really the same, but...

BEV

What's your name?

HUTCH

Hutch.

BEV

Don't beat yourself up about this, Hutch. This is a unusual situation, sure. But ... it does happen. Give me a few minutes and I'll be on my way.

HUTCH

Sure, totally. Take as long as you need. *(Pause.)* Do you have a name?

BEV

Of course I do. Bev.

HUTCH

"Bev." That's nice, where does that come from?

BEV

My parents.

HUTCH

Fair. Nice to meet you, Bev. Can I- Can I get you anything?

BEV

No, that's all right. I just need to catch my bubbles...

HUTCH

...I can't tell if you're messing with me or not.

*Bev looks around the boat, looking for a topic of conversation.*

BEV

So... fishing. Catch anything good? Besides m'self, that is.

HUTCH

Yeah, I've had a pretty good morning. It's really nice, out here.

BEV

I love fishing.

HUTCH

Yeah?

BEV

Most mermaids just do it to survive, but I actually love it. It's a real rush: the hunt...

HUTCH

Any tips for a hobbyist?

BEV

Um, well, I use my hands and my tail.

HUTCH

You're a purist, then.

BEV

Exactly. I do this thing when I see a big school of fish: I swim really deep down into the water, down where the light from the sun falls away. The fish get all shimmery above me, they look like little stars in the night sky. And once I'm certain they don't know I'm there, I race up towards the surface as fast as I can: take them totally by surprise.

HUTCH

Is that what you were doing when I caught you?

BEV

Yep. I was distracted.

HUTCH

I get that. I have the same thing when I fish. I call it my "fish focus".

BEV

That's fucking dumb.

HUTCH

I know. How are you feeling?

BEV

Better. Thanks.

HUTCH

Does this really happen a lot? People catching mermaids?

BEV

You'd be surprised.

HUTCH

Why don't more people talk about it?

BEV

Do you think anyone's going to believe *you* about today? I should get going.

HUTCH

Need a hand?

BEV

Nah, I'm good...

*BEV makes towards the edge of the boat.*

HUTCH

Hey.

BEV

Yep?

HUTCH

Wanna stay up here for a bit? Try fishing with a rod?

*Bev hesitates.*

BEV

I've never fished with a rod before.

HUTCH

See how you like it.

*HUTCH holds out the rod. BEV takes it and settles down next to them.*

BEV

It's weird. *(Pause.)* You got any more of those beers?

HUTCH

Sure.

*HUTCH grabs them both a beer. They sit in silence, enjoying the moment. HUTCH begins to whistle again.*

BEV

Stop whistling.