

AL LITERATION, PRIVATE EYE

By Forrest Musselman

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CAST OF CHARACTERS: (5 M, 2F)

AI Literation	Private Detective
Sally	Sells seashells by the seashore
Bob	Bartender
Lenny	Sells Liniments
Tim	A Tinsmith
Taffy	Tends a café
Peter Piper	Peddles peppers

PRODUCTION NOTES

While this was designed as a monologue, it certainly could be modified as a duet with one person playing the detective and the other person playing the other characters.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

This idea was originally created by Kollin Holtz, who graciously allowed me to steal it. Thanks Kollin!

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(Optional Introduction) Say this sharply, say this sweetly,
Say this shortly, say this softly.
Say this sixteen times in succession.

(As AL) My name is Al. Al Literation, Private-Eye. It was one of those dreary days when she danced into my dark den. One of those dames that deems you look twice or maybe even three times, depending on the angle. She was the epitome of femininity. What can I do for you, sweetheart?

(As SALLY) For starters, you can stop calling me sweetheart. My name's Sally.

(As AL) Sure, sure, Sally. Say your situation, sweetheart.

(As SALLY) I detect by your dreary dialogue, you don't deal well with women. You want to work or what?

(As AL) Why?

(As SALLY) People proclaim you're the best private eye in town. Maybe even the state.

(As AL) The state statement is over-stated, but still strong. What's your story, sweet Sally?

(As SALLY) I want to know yours first. Is it true you figured out how much wood a woodchuck could chuck?

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(As AL) With luck, yes.

(As SALLY) So. How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

(As AL) He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood.

(As SALLY) And I heard you helped Betty Botter make better batter.

(As AL) Yeah, her butter was bitter. So I told her that a bit of better butter would make her batter better. So she bought a bit of butter, better than her bitter butter, and she baked it in her batter, and the batter was not bitter.

(As SALLY) And on the news, it acknowledged that you knew who shot Ned Knot?

(As AL) Some say Ned Knot was not shot. But Shy Shott said he shot Knot. So, either the shot Shott shot at Knot was not shot, or Knot was shot.

(As SALLY) So, if the shot Shott shot shot Knot, then Knot was shot?

(As AL) Yes, but if the shot Shott shot shot Shott, then Shott was shot, not Knot.

(As SALLY) But he didn't, Shott shot Knot.

(As AL) Exactly. Let's quit the inquiry. What's your story, Sally?

(As SALLY) I sell seashells by the sea shore.

(As AL) Are you sure you sell seashells?

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(As SALLY) Certainly. That's why I drove daringly to your destination. Someone stole my seashells.

(As AL) How many did you have?

(As SALLY) A slew.

(As AL) A slew of seashells?

(As SALLY) Yes. Can you candidly take the case?

(As AL) I'll see what I can do. And with that, I wistfully watched her walk her way out. I found my cap and craftily cruised to my crude and rude, shiny Chevy. On shiny days, I like to sit and shift, shift and sit, but today I had work to do. Thievery wasn't my thing, I thought, but I'd thettle for this caseth. This dame was making me lisp. Plus, I so needed the cash. But before I bustled to the beach, I drove to Bob's Bar for a beer and bratwurst. Hey, Bob.

(As BOB) What will you wet your whistle with?

(As AL) I believe I'll buy a big beer, Bob.

(As BOB) How about a box of biscuits?

(As AL) No thanks, Bob.

(As BOB) A batch of mixed biscuits? The crisp crusts crackle crunchily.

(As AL) Just a brief beer, Bob.

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(As BOB) My buddy, Bud, brought back blue balloons from a big bazaar.

(As AL) Beer, Bob, beer.

(As BOB) You chasing a case?

(As AL) Of beer?

(As BOB) A crime case, you crazy coot.

(As AL) Oh, yeah, I'm gonna see about some slippery seashells down by the sea.

(As BOB) There's been a lot of thievery this past Thursday.

(As AL) You hear anything?

(As BOB) Not lately. Louie let loose some lines over libations last night. It seems there's a new crafty crook cruising the causeway called Piper.

(As AL) Peter Piper?

(As BOB) Probably.

(As AL) I'd love to listen to the local yokel yodel, but I couldn't contain my cool any longer, so I sped speedily through down town, making my miles past the mechanic, old, oily Ollie who oils old oily autos, and then past Mrs. Smith's Fish Sauce Shop, and Sam's shop which stocks short spotted socks and knapsack straps. I busied by a breakfast bar where friendly Frank flips fine flapjacks, Lily ladles little Letty's lentil soup, and they give papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee cup.

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I finally reached the seashore and parked next to six sick slick slim sycamore saplings.

There were plenty of proprietary people peddling their packs of produce by the pounding Pacific. There was lounging Lenny.

(As *LENNY*) Lemon liniment? I'll loan you a lovely lemon liniment.

(As *AL*) There was Tim, the thin twin tinsmith.

(As *TIM*) Suckers anyone? Who wants to slurp on six sticky sucker sticks?

(As *AL*) I passed the Bread Bordeaux where Betty buttered Brad's bread. Chop shops that stocked chops. And then there was Taffy's Café.

(As *TAFFY*) It's Friday. Friday's fare consists of freshly fried, flying fish flesh with shredded Swiss cheese.

(As *AL*) It was so exhausting I stopped to rest at a shelter with six sick scenic sightseers. I watched three gray geese in the gray gravel grazing, some selfish shellfish soaking, six slippery snails, sliding slowly seaward, and suddenly, seven small swans swam silently southward, along with six swift sailboats sailing sedately seaward. A noisy noise annoys an oyster as six sharp smart sharks swam smugly, sneering but not nearing the shore. It was then that I saw him. It was Peter Piper peddling his produce.

(As *PIPER*) Purchase a peck of picked peppers here. Get your peck of pickled peppers.

(As *AL*) You Piper? Peter Piper?

(As *PIPER*) Possibly.

(As *AL*) Were you peddling your pickled peppers yesterday?

(As *PIPER*) Perhaps.

(As *AL*) Near Sally's seashell establishment?

(As *PIPER*) Preposterous!

(As *AL*) So you say.

(As *PIPER*) I don't perceive what you're proposing, but I suggest you possibly proceed elsewhere.

(As *AL*) I'm saying you swiped Sally's seashells Thursday, you shamster.

(As *PIPER*) Thou needs to think through your thoughts.

(As *AL*) I thought a thought. But the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought.

(As *PIPER*) Repeat, please?

(As *AL*) Never mind. I'd like to purchase a peck of pickled peppers, please.

(As *PIPER*) I'm primed to peddle my peppers proficiently. Here you are. Please pay promptly.

(As AL) Ah-ha!

(As PIPER) Ah-ha what?

(As AL) Your plural peppers are reposing perfectly on a pretty... seashell.

(As PIPER) Impossible!

(As AL) I'm a proficient professional. It's time to pay the piper, Piper.

(As PIPER) Impressively strange strategy.

(As AL) And for you it's turned into a tragedy strategy. Let's go. You've got a lease with the police.

(As PIPER) You'll never nab me.

(As AL) Piper promptly back peddled and ran rushing away. He sashayed into the sea, swimming south. Suddenly, six shimmering smart sharks I saw previously sharply struck his shins. Poor Peter Piper perished. That's the price you pay, I suppose. It was just then that Sally skipped to my side.

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