

Albert (*under his breath*) Don't do that.

Bargewoman Nice morning, ma'am.

Toad Is it? Not for a poor washerwoman who this very morning got a letter from her married daughter telling her to drop everything and come at once. Are you a mother, ma'am?

Bargewoman I was once. Where was this married daughter of yours living, ma'am?

Toad Near the river, ma'am, not far from an elegant, self-contained gentleman's residence called Toad Hall. Perhaps you've heard of it?

Bargewoman Toad Hall? I certainly have. And it just so happens I'm headed that way myself. Hop on the barge. One more don't make no difference to Albert.

Albert Oh no. And why draw the line at one? One washerwoman doesn't make no difference . . . why not offer a lift to the entire staff of the Snow White Laundry? Plus their dependent relatives. Albert doesn't mind. The more the merrier.

Bargewoman He's cheered up. He was very depressed earlier on. So, you're in the washing line, ma'am?

Toad Yes. One is a career woman, for one's sins.

Bargewoman Are you *very* fond of washing?

Toad I love it. Love it. It's my vocation. Laundry is my life!

Bargewoman Well, what a blessing it is that I met you. We can both do each other a good turn.

Toad (*nervously*) In what way, precisely?

Bargewoman Why, my washing, silly, a whole heap of my scanties and whatnot.

Toad Scanties?

She gets him his tub, washboard and a packet of Rinso soapflakes.

Bargewoman There you are . . . the tools of your trade. The raw materials of your art.

Toad Well, I suppose any fool can wash.

Bargewoman I bet you can't wait. Look at these . . . it's a laundress's banquet.

Toad I don't feel very well. (*Toad starts to rinse and scrub with no great enthusiasm and a great deal of slopping the water about and general mess, while at the same time getting tied up in the stuff that he's washing and gradually getting furiouser and furiouser.*)

Bargewoman (*singing*)

Happy to float
In a lazy old boat
On a lovely sunny day.
Drifting along,
Singing a song
Wash all your troubles away
Completely. Happy to glide
As you go with the tide,
As you wend your weary way,
Drifting along
As you're singing a song
On this lovely sunny day

This traditional ballad from the pen of Mr Jeremy Sams comes to an abrupt end when Toad hangs the washboard on the line rather than the washing, a departure from established laundry procedures that