

Fishy Business

“I hereby pronounce this extraordinary general meeting open!”, boomed the Chair, her broad benign smile putting everyone at their ease, apart from the krill who trilled a hasty retreat sinking out of sight on a cold descending current.

“Can I take a roll call to ensure that all the communities affected by recent events are represented? Cuttlefish? Puffer fish? Seals? Turtles? Manatee? Hermit crabs? Yes, stop chattering at the back you dolphins, I can see you. I’ll represent the whales if that’s OK.

Now as I understand it, the Sargasso Neighbourhood Watch has reported a number of disturbing events which fall into three broad categories: child protection issues; damage to property; and what I can only describe as acts of voyeurism and public indecency.

I’d like to start with child protection, potentially the most serious, but I believe no actual harm came to the youngsters involved? In my own case I had left my little Willy at the surface while I sank to feed and when I came back he had made friends with some half-witted calf.

Mrs Grey-Seal, I believe something similar happened to Sammy?”

.....“Yes – he made friends with a stray seal - dreadfully common sort - no manners on him. To be fair, he kept Sammy company while I was out at sea, but my Sammy is not the sharpest tool in the box and could easily have been led astray.”

“Can we move on now to Mr Puffer-Fish? Tell us what happened to you.”

.....“Yes, well you know how much pride I take in my sculptures. I’d spent ages grading the pebbles and arranging the sand, and blow me, if a rather ungainly chap kept swimming over and dropping shells all over the place. Took me hours to get it right and I missed several chances to impress the ladies, if you know what I mean.”

.....“I get you!”, piped up one of the turtles. “Me and the missus were just getting it on if you catch my drift. Now my missus is a bit of a flight risk at the best of times and there I was clinging on for dear life when her eye was caught by this big fella. He didn’t look the full shilling to me, but you know how size always impresses the ladies.”

“Mrs Cuttlefish? You had a similar experience? No need to blush, we are all adults here.”

“I was at the Jamaica Inn Coral Reef the other night and I spotted a handsome young cuttlefish. His skin was flashing and I was getting all the right signals. I was very attracted. There was a challenge from another male but instead of flexing his tentacles he changed colour and transitioned to a female! I feel confused and betrayed.”

Other creatures clamoured to tell their stories...the imposter that surfed with the bottlenose dolphins, the manatee tricked into a kiss, the hermit crab embezzled of its shell.....

At the bottom of the seabed, Rock Cam whirred into life.