

MR. MCGREGOR

Hmf.

MRS. MCGREGOR

Warm and toasty fingers all winter, there's nothing so nice as a rabbit fur muffatee.

MR. MCGREGOR

There's nothing so nice as a pipe of tobacco after a hearty breakfast of left-over rabbit pie.

MRS. MCGREGOR

And who baked it for your enjoyment?

MR. MCGREGOR

I'll buy you a lemonade, if we get a good price.

MRS. MCGREGOR

And a piece of cherry pie too.

MR. MCGREGOR

Hmf.

Music and horses hooves recede...

BENJAMIN

Well, what do you know? That market's a fair trip away. McGregors be gone all afternoon. Gotta go tell my cousin...

BENJAMIN comes round the back of the fir tree and nearly tumbles upon the top of PETER who sits huddled and sneezing, wearing only pocket handkerchief.

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BENJAMIN

Peter!!

PETER speaks with a terribly stuffy nose.

PETER

Hello, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN

You sound awful. Who has got your clothes?

PETER

Kertychoo! The scarecrow in Mr. McGregor's garden. New ones too.

BENJAMIN

I see.

PETER

Not from here you cannot. Come on, I'll show you.

PETER and BENJAMIN proceed to the garden wall and begin to climb up.

PETER

It was quite a chase. First I lost my shoes...then my jacket...

BENJAMIN

Oh dear.

PETER

I barely made it out alive.

BENJAMIN

Heavens!

PETER

Mostly I feel bad for my Mother. She took quite a bit of time and effort to sew them for me.

BENJAMIN

Nobody wants to burden a widow.

PETER

Especially if the widow's your mother.

BENJAMIN

Especially.

MRS. RABBIT

Cottontail. Cottontail! Fetch some more chamomile!

COTTONTAIL sighs. Closes her book. And goes out. She stops dead in her tracks. BENJAMIN and PETER are standing hand and hand on top of the garden wall.

PETER  
(pointing)

There they are.

BENJAMIN

Oh, I like the cut of the jacket. Is that your tam o' shanter too?

PETER

No.

BENJAMIN

I'll say it's a jaunty one. Rather improves the outfit.

PETER gives his cousin an annoyed look.

BENJAMIN

Well, tam-o-shanter or no tam-o-shanter, a man cannot be himself without proper attire. No offense, but that pocket handkerchief is not even your color. Not to mention the rather disappointing way it hangs. What do you say the two of us go and recover your clothes?

PETER

You mean -- g- g- go back into the garden?

BENJAMIN

Let me assure you that Mr. McGregor has gone out in a gig. Mrs. McGregor too; and certainly for the day, because she was wearing her best bonnet, which flaunts a hideousness all its own.

PETER

I hope it rains on 'em hard.

BENJAMIN

Don't bank on it. Not a cloud in the sky.

PETER

My mother would be so angry if she found out I went back.

BENJAMIN

Not if you extricated your clothes.

PETER

I don't know...

BENJAMIN

What's to know? This is about apparel, Peter, style. You need to think about making a statement. Come on! It'll spoil my coat to squeeze under the gate; the proper way to get in is to climb down a pear tree. Follow me.

BENJAMIN climbs down a pear tree over the wall. PETER hesitates and follows.

COTTONTAIL

Tattletale? Hmf!

COTTONTAIL goes back inside.

**Scene VI**

PETER pauses half way down.