

Hans Christian Andersen's

# The Little Mermaid

Adapted by  
Wade Bradford

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**STORY OF THE PLAY**

Kira, the little mermaid, longs to see life on the surface. When she realizes her overprotective father will only show her a deserted island and has promised her hand in marriage to nerdy Duke Dorsal, she takes matters into her own hands. She sings for the Sea Witch who takes her voice, with the knowledge that she must win the heart of a human or be turned into sea foam. While on land, she saves the prince who falls for her cousin, and finds true love in the end. Jellyfish telling knock-knock jokes, a kingdom with a yoga instructor, a magical triton can detect the truth, and an abundance of hats for switching roles quickly add color and hilarity to this well-known Hans Christian Andersen adaptation.

**ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

The Canyon Theatre Guild, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Cast: Kirsten Rast, Laurie Morgan, Samantha Bailey, Wyland Kirkland, Spencer Pierson, Innana Antley, Marcus Langston, Mike Smith, Jane Arnett, Mike Davies, and Randy Aronson.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(With doubling 4 m, 5 w, 2 flexible.)*

**KIRA:** The Little Mermaid who wishes to explore land.

**AUNT LOTTIE/ SEA WITCH:** Irish washerwoman who is the Great Aunt to Kid. Also plays the Sea Witch.

**KID:** A girl between the ages 9 -13 who is visiting her Great-Aunt Lottie.

**LATCHKEY:** Young, good-natured servant to the prince.

**PRINCE:** Self-absorbed prince who wishes to study the sea.

**KEIKO:** Kira's slightly older cousin.

**MERMAID SISTER #1 / QUEEN GERTRUDE:** One of Kira's older sisters / Mother to the prince.

**MER-KING:** Kira's protective father.

**SAILOR / BARON VON FISHHEAD:** Sailor / Father to Duke Dorsal.

**FLEXIBLE ROLE #1:** First Mate Fitzwilliam, the Navigator, the Meteorologist, the Cook (Italian accent), Flop the Fish, Duke Dorsal, Jellyfish #2, the Dressmaker, the Manicurist, the Hatmaker, the Yoga Instructor, and Musician #1.

**FLEXIBLE ROLE #2:** Captain, Flip the Fish, Mermaid Sister #2, Jellyfish #1, the Royal Stylist, Musician #2, and the Minister.

**FRIENDLY VILLAGERS:** Optional, nonspeaking.

***Casting note:*** *You may choose to cast the flexible roles individually, but it does add humor to have two actors enter and exit with different hats.*

***Sound effects and Props:*** *Please see end of script for lists.*

## **COSTUMES and SET DESIGN**

Kira's mermaid tail can be as elaborate or as simple as desired. Flip, Flop, and the Jellyfish can be puppet-like head pieces and black attire. The two mermaid sisters should look quite ridiculous. We put colorful wigs on our actors and made puppet bodies of the mermaids from the neck down. The Kid can wear a fish headpiece, a crab headpiece and claws, and doggie ears to convey her various roles. The Sea Witch can wear dark, raggedy clothes and a crooked crown. In the original production, the Minister wore a squid hat, representing the underwater world.

For our set, we had two laundry lines strung across the stage. Sheets were hung on the lines. During the underwater sequences, we removed the white sheets from the downstage line to reveal light blue sheets decorated with coral reef designs. A lighting effect can help convey the watery setting. Some of the characters entrances come from behind the sheets. Things such as mermaid tails can emerge out from behind the sheets at appropriate moments during the play. The laundry lines were on pulleys so that we could raise and lower the sheets for various purposes: entrances, scene changes, ocean waves.

In Act II, Scene 2 in the middle of the stage there is a wall of coral and kelp. This could be conveyed simply by another sheet hung in the middle like a makeshift barrier. We also used green scarves to create the impression of dangling seaweed which helped to create the barrier effect. Basically, for this scene you need something that will serve as a wall between the good guys and the bad guys.

In Act II, Scene 4, the set is a romantic lagoon. This can be established with a lightning change, a two dimensional cut-out of a rowboat, and some lily pads strewn about the stage. Actors can enter and exit using the lily pads when not otherwise noted. Latchkey is paddling a gondola or some kind of small boat, probably on wheels.

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: The backyard of an Irish washerwoman, not too far from the seashore. Modern day. Celtic MUSIC plays as AUNT LOTTIE hangs laundry on a taut line that stretches across the stage. In the background, we see an enchanted isle of tall emerald cliffs and an expanse of ocean stretching into the distance. Optional: FRIENDLY VILLAGERS might carry baskets of laundry, setting them in places according to Aunt Lottie. KID plays with an i-phone or some other gadget and not mindful of her surroundings as she follows Aunt Lottie. Kid sits down and sighs, very bored.)*

**LOTTIE:** You have not been talkative of late. Homesick, I suppose? Thinking about your mother and father? Thinking you haven't seen them forever when you've only been away three days? I can gather from that busy little brain of yours, that you're worried you'll be trapped on this island for all eternity, when in truth, you know as well as I that in five days' time, your mum will be running through that gate, swooping you up in her arms, and your da' will likely do the same but swooping up the both of you, and throwing out his back in the exchange. He's not so young anymore, you know. And your mum isn't the wee spritely lass she used to be. Yet, I can close my eyes and it seems as though a mere moment ago she was standing beside me, helping with the laundry, not a bit taller than you are now.

**KID:** You knew my mom when she was a kid?

**LOTTIE:** Of course I did. I am your great-aunt to you, which means to your mother I was her...not-so-great aunt. She visited my cottage one summer, just as you are visiting me now.

**KID:** Was my mom as bored as I am now?

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**LOTTIE:** I should say not! Your mother was up each dawn, helping me fix breakfast for your great uncle, then she was out skipping in the field, pulling up the potatoes from the garden, playing fetch with the sheepdogs, and skipping stones across the waves.

**KID:** *(Bored, sarcastic.)* Wow, that sounds like fun.

**LOTTIE:** My ears aren't so old that I can't hear the sarcasm in your tone. But I would guess even a bothersome, boredom-stricken, homesick lass such as yourself can't resist the call of the ocean. Shall we go down to the seashore when we're finished with the laundry? We could go for a swim.

**KID:** Is the water cold?

**LOTTIE:** It's freezing! But doesn't it sound like a grand adventure?

**KID:** It sounds like hypothermia. Besides, I don't like to swim.

**LOTTIE:** Ah, you sound like someone I know from an old story, one so old I had almost forgotten it. So long ago it was... and yet it isn't too much struggle to stare off into the distance, and imagine it now...

*(As SHE begins to tell her story, CAPTAIN and FITZWILLIAM enter the stage.)*

**LOTTIE:** *(Cont'd.)* The white sails of a schooner, riding the west wind gales across the North Sea. A stern captain at the helm.

*(SAILOR enters and hoists up the upstage laundry line and sways it back and forth to create the illusion of a sailing ship.)*

**CAPTAIN:** Scan the clouds and report, Mr. Fitzwilliam!

**LOTTIE:** A crew worried about the dark skies ahead.

**FITZWILLIAM:** Dark skies ahead, Cap'n. Maybe four, maybe five hours away if we stay put.

**CAPTAIN:** Then we best not stay put, Mr. Fitzwilliam.

**LOTTIE:** And let's not forget, a handsome prince who longed for more than just an idle life on the throne.

## **End of Freeview**

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