

An underwater scene with a mermaid swimming in the upper right, surrounded by various fish and coral. The background is a gradient of blue and green.

ROBIN & CLARK'S

# THE LITTLE MERMAID

## A Study Guide

Sensory-Friendly Performance: July 16, 2026  
22 Elm Street Brunswick

Mainstage Performance: July 20, 2026  
The Pickard Theatre, 1 Bath Road, Brunswick

Book, Lyrics, and Music  
by Marc Robin & Curt Dale Clark

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## SYNOPSIS OF THE LITTLE MERMAID

by Hans Christian Andersen

The Little Mermaid lives in an underwater kingdom with her widowed father (the sea king or Mer-King), her dowager grandmother, and her five older sisters, each of whom had been born one year apart. When a mermaid turns fifteen, she is permitted to swim to the surface for the first time to glimpse the world above, and when the sisters become old enough, each of them visits the upper world one at a time every year. As each returns, the Little Mermaid listens longingly to their various descriptions of the world inhabited by human beings.

When the Little Mermaid's turn comes, she rises up to the surface, watches a birthday celebration being held on a ship in honor of a handsome prince, and falls in love with him from a safe distance. A violent storm hits, sinking the ship, and the Little Mermaid saves the prince from drowning. She delivers him unconscious to the shore near a temple. Here, she waits until a young woman from the temple and her ladies-in-waiting find him. To her dismay, the prince never sees the Little Mermaid or even realizes that it was she who had originally saved his life.

The Little Mermaid becomes depressed and asks her grandmother if human beings can live forever. The grandmother explains that humans have a much shorter lifespan than a mermaid's 300 years, but that when mermaids die, they turn to sea foam and cease to exist, while humans have an eternal soul that lives on in heaven. The Little Mermaid, longing for the prince and an eternal soul, visits the Sea Witch in a dangerous part of the ocean. The witch willingly helps her by selling her a potion that gives her legs in exchange for her beautiful voice, as the Little Mermaid has the most enchanting voice in the world. The witch warns the Little Mermaid that once she becomes human, she will never be able to return to the sea. Consuming the potion will make her feel as if a sword is being passed through her body, yet when she recovers, she will have two human legs and will be able to dance as no human being has ever danced before. However, she will constantly feel as if she were walking on sharp knives, and her feet will bleed terribly. In addition, she will obtain a soul only if she wins the love of the prince and marries him, for then a part of his soul will flow into her. Otherwise, at dawn on the first day after he marries someone else, the Little Mermaid will die of a broken heart and dissolve into sea foam upon the waves.

After she agrees to the arrangement, the Little Mermaid swims to the surface near the prince's palace and drinks the potion. She is found by the prince, who is mesmerized by her beauty and grace, even though she is mute. Most of all, he likes to see her dance, and she dances for him despite suffering excruciating pain with every step. Soon, the

Little Mermaid becomes the prince's favorite companion and accompanies him on many of his outings. When the prince's parents encourage their son to marry the neighboring princess in an arranged marriage, the prince tells the Little Mermaid he will not because he does not love the princess. He goes on to say he can only love the young woman from the temple, who, he believes, rescued him. It turns out that the princess from the neighboring kingdom is the temple girl, having been sent to the temple for her education. The prince declares his love for her, and the royal wedding is announced at once.

The prince and princess celebrate their new marriage on a wedding ship, and the Little Mermaid's heart breaks. She thinks of all that she has sacrificed and of all the pain she has endured for the prince. She despairs, thinking of the death that awaits her, but before dawn, her sisters rise out of the water and bring her a knife that the Sea Witch has given them in exchange for their long, beautiful hair. If the Little Mermaid kills the prince and lets his blood drip on her feet, she will become a mermaid once more. All of her suffering will end, and she will live out her full life in the ocean with her family.

However, the Little Mermaid cannot bring herself to kill the sleeping prince lying with his new bride, and she throws the knife and herself off the ship into the water just as dawn breaks. Her body dissolves into foam, but instead of ceasing to exist, she feels the warm sun and discovers that she has turned into a luminous earthbound spirit, a daughter of the air. As the Little Mermaid ascends into the atmosphere, she is greeted by other daughters who tell her she has become like them because she strove with all her heart to obtain an immortal soul. Because of her selflessness, she is given the chance to earn her own soul by doing good deeds to mankind for 300 years after which she will rise up into the Kingdom of God.







## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

1805-1875

Hans Christian Andersen was a beloved Danish writer of fairy tales, plays, travelogues, novels, and poems. Born in Odense to a poor family, at fourteen he left his apprenticeship to a weaver to go to Copenhagen where he was accepted at the Royal Danish Theatre. The director, Jonas Collin, served as a mentor, sending Andersen to grammar school, enlisting King Frederick VI to help pay for the boy's education, and ultimately enrolling him at Elsinore.

He enjoyed his first success as a writer in 1829 and with a grant from the king undertook the first of many European journeys. He published his first collection of fairy tales in 1835, and this collection contained the *Little Mermaid* and other notable stories such as *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *Thumbelina*. A second collection followed in 1838, and he

enjoyed a breakthrough year in 1845 when four of his fairy tales, including *The Little Mermaid*, were translated into English. Andersen's literary reputation continued to grow, and he associated with other notable authors of the period, among them Charles Dickens and Søren Kierkegaard.

He died in 1872 in a house near Copenhagen. He was internationally revered for his work and recognized by the Danish government as "a national treasure."

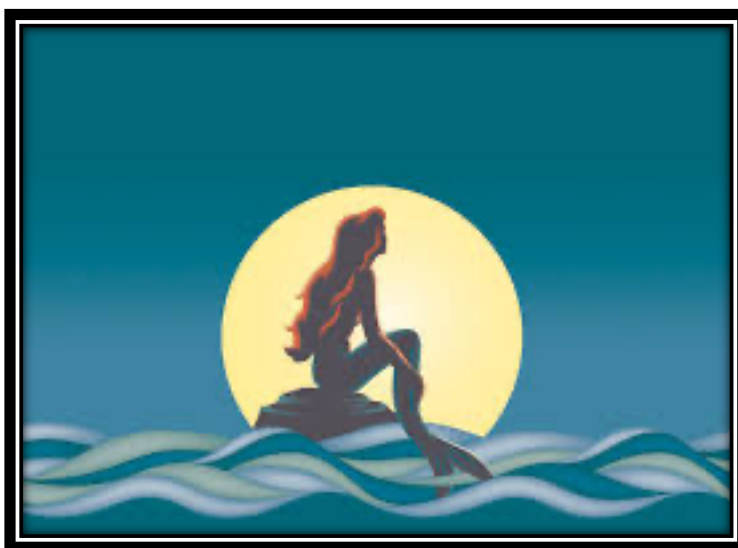
## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT



1. What do you think of the bargain the Little Mermaid makes with the Sea Witch?
2. Why are mermaids allowed to go to the surface to observe human beings only once a year and why does the Little Mermaid find human life more appealing?
3. How does her self-sacrifice in not killing the Prince contribute to her transformation into a spirit of the air?

## THE ROBIN & CLARK MUSICAL VERSION OF THE LITTLE MERMAID

Marc Robin and Curt Dale Clark have written the book (play), music, and lyrics for their own version of *The Little Mermaid*. They retell the story for a present-day audience, combining song, dance, costumes, and scenery with the story to make an hour-long magical live theatre experience. Here's what they do with the original tale by Hans Christian Andersen:



### THE LITTLE MERMAID

Scene One Deep down in the enchanted sea in the kingdom of the widowed Poseidon, the sea creatures are preparing a birthday celebration for one of his daughters, Melody, The Little Mermaid. Turtell, a giant tortoise, and Bobell, a frog, are arranging the festivities. Bobell confesses he took Melody to the surface at her request, though he knows Poseidon has forbidden it. The pair invite the other fantastical sea creatures and the audience to join them in a lively calypso dance (*Birthday in the Sea*). Melody arrives with her father and is surprised by all the well-wishers. Poseidon gives her a tiara, and Melody thanks him, but says she wants more than anything else to live in the world and gain an immortal soul. (*Up There*) She decides to make the journey herself to find her way out of the sea.

Scene Two As she arrives at the surface she finds a royal ship with the sailors all engaged in a celebration of Prince Alexander's twenty-third birthday. The sailors, joined by the Prince's affable dog Collier, engage in a humorous limerick contest and dance competition (*Sailor Limericks*) Though Bobell has hurried to find her, Melody eludes him, determining to get closer to see the Prince, with whom she is already falling in love. A fierce storm comes up quickly, and the Prince is washed overboard. With Bobell's help Melody rushes into the water and pulls Alexander to the safety of the shore.

Scene Three Melody helps the Prince up onto a fishing pier and revives Bobell. She kneels beside the Prince and wonders how someone so beautiful could ever hurt her. (*Illusions*) She wants to stay by his side until help arrives, but as Collier approaches leading the way to his master, Melody and Bobell retire to a small distant rock and watch

the scene unfold from there. Princess Victoria arrives and wakens the Prince. He believes it is she who has saved him, and he sings a reprise of *Illusions*, which soon becomes a duet as Melody sings from the rock. Victoria goes off in search of help and the Prince faints again. When he comes to, his men and Collier are there, but not the mysterious woman who, he believes, has saved him. Melody rapidly grasps the danger of this mistaken identity scenario. She resolves to find a permanent way out of the sea so she can come back to the Prince and have him fall in love with her. Her wish is overheard by Flutter, a beautiful butterfly (who is really Melody's mother under an enchantment). Flutter dances and then tells Melody if she wishes to become human that badly, she must go to the Sea Witch. Bobell warns Melody about the evil witch (*I Hear*), but Melody insists.

Scene Four Melody and Bobell find the Sea Witch's cave. Looking fearsome and ugly, Seaweed rises from a cauldron and ascertains what Melody wishes. She sings *Finest Creature*, telling the mermaid she can give her legs in exchange for her beautiful voice, but that she does not have the power to give Melody a soul. Only if the Prince falls in love with her and marries her, will the mermaid receive a soul through him and recover her voice. If he marries another, she will die at that very moment. The Sea Witch casts the spell and the mermaid is transformed.



Scene Five The scene shifts back to shore. Melody and Bobell are resting on a small rock when Turtell finally catches up with them. The Prince enters accompanied by Collier, and Melody pretends to be shipwrecked and unconscious. The Prince revives her, and she pretends to faint again in his arms. He carries her offstage as Flutter arrives, and she uses her magic to give Collier a human voice. The happy dog sings *Bow, Wow, Wow* and does a delighted dance. Bobell, Turtell, and Flutter discuss the uncertainty of Melody's situation and enlist Collier to take them to the castle.

Scene 6 In a brief transition back to Poseidon's chambers under the sea, the unhappy father expresses his worry about the Little Mermaid.

Scene 7 At the palace three months later, Melody has become the Prince's devoted companion. They are clearly in love, and the Prince declares that though he had promised to marry the lady who, he believes, had rescued him, Victoria has disappeared, and he now decides that he will announce his marriage to Melody that night at the festival. Elated by this turn of events, Bobell, Turtell, Flutter, and Collier sing *Happy Ending*.

Scene 8 The festival is in full swing. There is dancing (*Tambourine Duet*), vocal competitions by courtiers (*With My Voice, Thou Takest My Flower*) and finally a beautiful dance performed by Melody herself. (*Waltz of the Enchanted Sea*). The Prince declares Melody the winner of the festival and introduces her as his bride-to-be just as the elusive Princess Victoria enters the hall. Stricken but faithful to his word, Alexander reaffirms his promise to Victoria. Overcome, Melody rushes from the room, leaving behind her robe, which the Prince picks up as the lights fade.

Scene 9 The sea creatures have gone to get Poseidon's help. He comes to his daughter's aid without his crown and scepter. He has traded them to the Sea Witch in exchange for



a second chance for Melody. Seaweed has given him a dagger with which Melody must kill the Prince before he kisses his new bride. At the wedding the entire company sings of the tangled situation (*Montage*). Reluctantly, the marriage is solemnized, and Victoria demands Alexander kiss her. Poseidon and Melody, dagger in hand, draw near to the couple. Melody raises the dagger, but cannot strike; she hands it to her father just as Victoria grabs the Prince and kisses him. With a cry Melody falls dead in her father's arms. With a chillingly evil laugh, Victoria reveals herself to be Seaweed. An angry verbal confrontation ensues, as Flutter reveals that she is the victim of Seaweed's enchantment, but that she actually sent Melody to the surface so that Seaweed would be lured into this battle. The Prince enters with a mirror, commands Seaweed to drop the dagger and when she does not, forces her to look at her own evil reflection. The sight destroys her, and with a clap of thunder she vanishes. Poseidon and Flutter are joyously reunited as husband and wife. Poseidon laments that he does not have the power to bring Melody back to life, but the sailor Fogarty suggests that if one person cannot do it, the collective magic of everyone present may be able to. Appealing to the audience they chant "I give you life," and Melody comes back to life. The Prince sings rapturously to his beloved (*Melody*) and asks Poseidon for her hand in marriage. Poseidon, declaring that the sea and land are no longer to be separate worlds, abolishes hatred, prejudice, and declares them all one enchanted universe.

Scene 10 The second royal wedding ensues. Bobell, Turtell, and company sing, followed by the entire company singing *My Little Girl*. As Melody and Alexander are pronounced man and wife and kiss, everyone sings a reprise of *Happy Ending*.



## THE CHARACTERS

**Melody** – The Little Mermaid, daughter of Poseidon, who falls in love with a human prince and seeks to join him in the world.

**Prince Alexander** – A handsome, twenty-three-year-old prince, who is rescued from drowning by Melody and who falls in love with her, but feels duty compels him to marry another.

**Poseidon** – Ruler of the oceans, ostensibly widowed, father to mermaid daughters whom he wishes to protect from the world above the surface.

**Seaweed** – An ugly witch who once loved Poseidon and is seeking revenge on him for having married Elizabeth, whom she turns into a butterfly. Seaweed makes a dangerous bargain with Melody that permits the mermaid to go into the world, but she is ultimately defeated by the collective power of love.

**Flutter** – A beautiful butterfly who is really Poseidon's wife, Elizabeth, under a spell.

**Bobell** – A talking frog who accompanies Melody on her adventures.

**Turtell** – A talking giant tortoise who also joins in Melody's adventures.

**Collier** – A large, shaggy dog who is the Prince's companion and who is given a voice by Flutter's magic.

**Sailors (Fogarty, Joe, Stu)** - Companions to the Prince.

**Princess Victoria** – A young noblewoman who comes upon the Prince after Melody has rescued him from drowning. He believes it was she who saved him and promises to marry her.

**Mary Elizabeth, Lady Boxington** – Courtiers who participate in the royal festival contest.



## THE SONGS



***Birthday in the Sea*** is a calypso number sung and danced by Bobell and the other Sea Creatures, anticipating Melody's celebration.

***Up There*** is sung by Melody, Bobell, and Turtell, as Melody muses about her longing to live in the world.

***Sailor Limericks*** is a comic song/dance number performed by the Prince's companions on the royal ship as they celebrate his twenty-third birthday.

***Storm/Rescue*** is an instrumental sequence that underscores the wreck of Prince Alexander's ship and his rescue by The Little Mermaid.

***Illusions*** is sung by Melody and Prince Alexander as they seek to understand the magic of their meeting.

***Flutter Waltz*** is the butterfly's dance on the water as she joins Melody, Bobell, and Turtell on the surface.

***I Hear*** is sung by Melody and Bobell, who resolve to visit the Sea Witch in order to find a way for Melody to live on land.

***Finest Creature*** is Seaweed's power ballad in which she gloats about how she will transform Melody into a beautiful woman and use her ill-fated love for the Prince to regain her own power over Poseidon and the deep.

***Bow, Wow, Wow*** is an amusing song and dance number for the dog, Collier, who has been given a voice by Flutter.

***Happy Ending*** is a joyful song sung by Bobell, Turtell, Flutter, and Collier, who are thrilled to learn the Prince wishes to marry Melody.



***Tambourine Duet*** is a lively song and dance number performed by Stu and Joe at the royal festival.

***With My Voice*** is performed at the festival by a courtier, Mary Elizabeth, who has a lovely voice.

***Thou Takest My Flower*** is an over-the-top performance in a mock-operatic vein, sung by Lady Boxington at the festival.

***Waltz of the Enchanted Sea*** is Melody's dance which wins her first prize at the festival.

***Montage*** is sung by the entire company as they each express their thoughts and fears as the Prince prepares to wed Victoria.

***Melody*** is the Prince's love song to the mermaid, after the Witch has been defeated and Melody has come back to life.

***Everybody Now Is Dancin'*** is performed by the entire company at the lively wedding celebration for Melody and Prince Alexander.

***My Little Girl*** is sung by the entire company to Melody and the Prince.

***Happy Ending (Reprise)*** brings the wedding festivities and the message of love and co-existence to a happy close.



## THE CREATORS



Marc Robin and Curt Dale Clark are the creators of the musical version of *The Little Mermaid*. Together they have written the book (or story and dialogue), the music, and the lyrics of the songs for fifteen musicals, including the full-length epic *Treasure Island A Musical Adventure*, which received its world premiere in September 2018 and was seen at MSMT in summer 2019. Marc Robin is also a well-known theatre director and choreographer, actor, dancer, and singer and now heads up the Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, PA. Curt Dale Clark is an actor, singer, dancer, and director, and with his managing partner, Stephanie Dupal, he is in charge of Maine State Music Theatre right here in Brunswick. Marc and Curt believe that it is very important to introduce Young Audiences like yourselves to live theatre because these shows open a whole world of imagination and creativity. They hope you will enjoy this little taste of the longer production and come to Maine State Music Theatre next summer to see all the Theatre for Young Audiences shows with all the costumes, lights, beautiful sets, dancing and music, performed by fantastic actors and musicians.



## LINKS

If you want to learn more about *The Little Mermaid*, here is a list of reading and internet resources you can check out.



## FILMS

Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989)

*Hans Christian Andersen's The Little Mermaid* (1975) An anime feature film by Japanese director Tomaharu Katsumata

## ON THE WEB

<http://www.fairytalescollection.com/HansChristianAndersen/TheLittleMermaid.aspx> The complete text of the story

<https://www.notablebiographies.com/A-An/Andersen-Hans-Christian.html> Hans Christian Andersen's biography

<http://hca.gilead.org.il> Links to all of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytales online

[http://www.coloring-book.info/coloring/coloring\\_page.php?id=68](http://www.coloring-book.info/coloring/coloring_page.php?id=68) Downloadable coloring book illustrations for *The Little Mermaid*

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1782501185/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_taft\\_p1\\_i1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1782501185/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_i1) A website for children dedicated to the works of Hans Christian Andersen with downloadable worksheets and games

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Little\\_Mermaid\\_\(statue\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Little_Mermaid_(statue)) An article on the famous statue of The Little Mermaid in Copenhagen's harbor

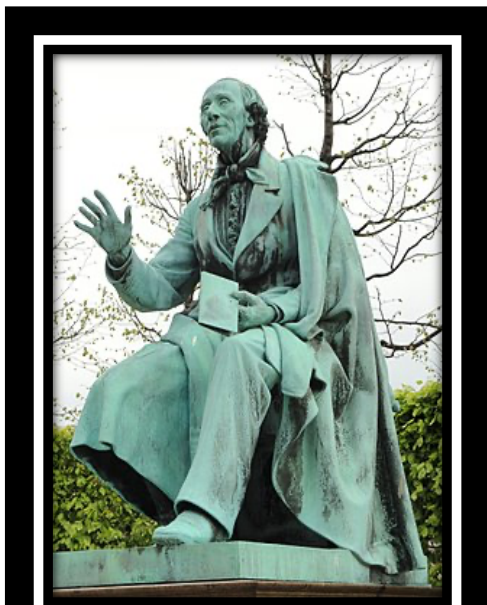
## FOR YOU TO READ

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1782501185/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_taft\\_p1\\_i1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1782501185/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_i1) The complete illustrated fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen on amazon.com



## ACTIVITIES

### TELL THE PERFORMERS WHAT YOU THINK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AFTER THE PERFORMANCE



1. How is the experience of watching the musical version of this story different from the experience of reading it?
2. Which is your favorite character and why?
3. Do you like the ending of this musical version and, if so, why? Or why not?
4. Why is it truly a “very happy ending” not only for the Prince and Melody but for the kingdoms of the sea and the earth?
5. Why does the Prince feel obligated to marry Victoria?
6. What lessons is the musical version of *The Little Mermaid* teaching us?
7. What do you think about Seaweed’s fate? Does she deserve to disappear? How is this different from the Disney movie (where she is impaled on a ship’s bow and dies) or the original fairytale (where she continues to live in the sea)?
8. What songs did you like best?



## LET'S PLAY MAD LIBS!

The leader asks the group to call out specific kinds of words – **nouns** (names of people, places, things), **adjectives** (descriptive words), **verbs** (action words), **adverbs** (words that tell us how, when, or why), **exclamation** (short emotional expression). The leader fills in the blanks with these new words and reads it back to the group. The results are usually very funny! Enjoy the game with this selection from *The Little Mermaid*.

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Far out in the \_\_\_\_\_ [noun], where the water is as \_\_\_\_\_ [adjective] as the prettiest \_\_\_\_\_ [noun], and as clear as crystal, it is very, very deep; so \_\_\_\_\_ [adjective], indeed, that no cable could fathom it: many church \_\_\_\_\_ [noun], piled one upon another, would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water \_\_\_\_\_ [adverb]. There dwell the Sea King and his \_\_\_\_\_ [noun]. We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare \_\_\_\_\_ [adjective] sand. No, indeed; the most singular flowers and \_\_\_\_\_ [noun] \_\_\_\_\_ [action verb] there; the leaves and stems of which are so pliant, that the slightest agitation of the \_\_\_\_\_ [noun] causes them to stir as if they had \_\_\_\_\_ [noun]. Fishes, both large and \_\_\_\_\_ [adjective], glide between the branches, as birds \_\_\_\_\_ [action verb] among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of all, stands the \_\_\_\_\_ [noun] of the Sea King. Its walls are built of \_\_\_\_\_ [noun], and the long, gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of \_\_\_\_\_ [noun], that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very \_\_\_\_\_ [adjective], for in each lies a glittering pearl, which would be fit for the \_\_\_\_\_ [noun] of a queen.

## LET'S DRAW AND WRITE

1. On a separate sheet of paper, **write your own fairy tale**. Try to include as many of these elements as you can: a prince and princess, an evil character, spells and curses, good and wicked deeds, and a little moral at the end of the tale. You can use traditional lines like "Once upon a time" and "They lived happily ever after" or you can change these the way Marc and Curt do in their musical version.
2. Fairy tales often take place in strange and wonderful places. **Draw a picture** of the way you imagine one of these people or places:
  - Seaweed, the Sea Witch
  - Poseidon's palace under the sea
  - The Prince's dog, Collier
  - Flutter as the Butterfly and in her human form as Poseidon's wife
3. Color the drawing which you find at the back of this booklet. You can make it as fantastical as you like.





