



## Parent/Teacher Study Guide



### Storybook Musical Theatre

P.O. Box 473, Abington, PA 19001, (215)-659-8550

**Book By**  
**Patricia Goldberg**

**Music & Lyrics by**  
**Jeff Reim**



Storybook Musical Theatre is a non-profit, professional children's theatre company operating under a Theatre for Young Audiences Contract with Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the U.S.A.

This project was supported by the PA. Council on the Arts, a state agency, through its regional partnership, PA Partners in the Arts (PPA). State government funding comes through an annual appropriation by the PA General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. PPA is administered in this region by the Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.

## The Little Mermaid Play Synopsis

### Act I

The story begins with the fish singing about the wonders of living under the sea. Then Ariella tells to her friend, Starsky the Starfish, about her adventure at the sea's surface. Starsky reminds her she is forbidden to go to the surface by her father, King Neptune. Ariella makes Starsky promise not to tell anyone. At that moment King Neptune enters with the other fish to announce the party for Ariella's birthday is about to begin. It is time for her rising ceremony where she goes to the surface for a short time. King Neptune gives Ariella a gift of her grandmother's pearl necklace and reminds her not to be seen by any humans while at the surface. Ariella excitedly leaves and King Neptune has Starsky follow her. At the surface, Ariella sees a ship she's seen before. Prince Jason and his crew are sailing. They sing about what might be out there at sea. Prince Jason thinks he sees something in the distance, but can't find his telescope. The crew notices a storm is nearing and try to steer the ship back to port. A large wave hits the ship and Prince Jason falls overboard. Unable to save him, the crew head back to port to get help. Ariella, realizing the Prince is in danger saves him from drowning. On shore Ariella holds his hand and sings to him, but leaves as the Prince's Valet and a sailor approach. They take the Prince back home. Meanwhile, King Neptune is asking Ariella why she is so moody after her time on the surface. She wants a little more time at the surface because of the shortened visit. He reluctantly agrees. At the surface, Ariella sees the Prince and Valet on the shore. Prince Jason is confused and upset. He sends his Valet away. He stares over the sea as Ariella sings about meeting the Prince. Starsky appears and questions Ariella about loving a human. Prince Jason leaves knowing he will return tomorrow and Ariella vows to return too. Under the sea Ariella is trying to figure out how to meet the Prince. Jelly Roll slinks in and tells her she could walk on feet if she comes with him to the Sea Hag. King Neptune interrupts them and tells Jelly Roll to leave. He returns when King Neptune leaves. Ariella agrees to go to the Sea Hag, but Ariella leaves her father a note that he finds later. At the Sea Hag's grotto, the Sea Hag sings about how she can help Ariella get feet. She offers Ariella a potion, but she must pay for it with her pearl necklace and her voice. Ariella agrees and gives the Sea Hag the necklace. Then the Sea Hag chants and takes Ariella's voice. Only then does she tell Ariella she has three days to get the Prince to kiss her or she will turn into sea foam. Upset, Ariella rushes out to get to the surface. King Neptune and Starsky enter to challenge the Sea Hag. They are too late. King Neptune makes a deal with the Sea Hag. Either he saves his daughter and the Sea Hag reverses the potion or the Sea Hag takes all his power and Ariella

will be sea foam! The Sea Hag and Jelly Roll depart as King Neptune sends Starsky to find Ariella. He sings about his problem as Act I ends.

### **Act II**

Starsky finds the voiceless Ariella, with feet, on shore and tells her what happened between King Neptune and the Sea Hag. Ariella is upset. Prince Jason enters looking for Ariella. He starts talking to her and Starsky speaks for her. Surprised, he takes Ariella by the hand and realizes that this was the hand he was holding while lying on the shore. He takes Ariella, who is holding Starsky, back to the palace. In the palace, Ariella and Starsky are talking in her room. In another room, Prince Jason is telling his Valet. In song, the Valet convinces him to take Ariella on a picnic by the sea. At the picnic, Starsky carefully talks as Ariella to the Prince. Wondering how he can hear Ariella when she doesn't speak, he sings about the mysterious Ariella. Jelly Roll has been hiding off shore and realizes Starsky is talking for Ariella. He kidnaps Starsky. Ariella notices Starsky is missing and becomes upset. Thinking that Ariella is angry at him, Prince Jason leaves and Ariella is left alone crying. Jelly Roll brings Starsky to the Sea Hag. With only one day left, the Sea Hag chants a sleep spell over Starsky to keep him out of the way. She sends Jelly Roll to King Neptune to tell him there is one day left. Jelly Roll and the Sea Hag are hiding on shore with a spell to stop the kiss. King Neptune also has come to the shore and is surprised by Starsky, who has freed himself from the spell. Prince Jason enters looking for a starfish for Ariella. Ariella surprises him. Starsky then comes out of hiding and Ariella is thrilled. Prince Jason goes to kiss Ariella and the Sea Hag starts her chant to cast the spell. He is bewitched. Seeing this Ariella goes after the Sea Hag as Starsky goes after Jelly Roll. There is a scuffle and Ariella grabs her pearl necklace from the Sea Hag. King Neptune steps in to hold off the Sea Hag as Ariella puts on her necklace. Mysteriously, her voice returns to her. King Neptune banishes the Sea Hag and Jelly Roll from the kingdom. Prince Jason comes out of his spell. King Neptune gives Prince Jason and Ariella his blessing and they kiss. They all sing the happy finale! The End

### **FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND COUNSELORS**

The following common core aligned\* activity ideas and questions may be beneficial to share with your student(s) before and after the play.

#### **BEFORE THE PLAY:**

1. Talk with your child(ren) about attending a live performance and how it differs from watching television or going to movies. Try to help them understand what it means when there are others who want to see, hear, and enjoy the play. Let the children know that they will be able to meet the actors after the show. (CC.16.2.2.C)

#### **BEFORE THE PLAY**

2. The Little Mermaid is a fairy tale first published in 1837. Children are now familiar with the animated movie. Read the original tale and talk with the children about the different settings and characters. Is the original different than the movie? How might the play differ from both? Why do you think the tale has lasted almost 200 years? (CC.1.3.2.H)
3. Have you ever wanted something very badly? What would you be willing to give up in order to have it? Discuss. (CC.1.5.2.A)
4. What sea animals are you familiar with? Think about whales, dolphins, sharks, clownfish, and seahorses. Which might be a king of the ocean? Which one might be a mean character or a faithful friend? If you were creating a story about sea animals what character trait might you give to each type of animal? Why? (CC.1.5.2.A)
5. Draw a picture of what you visualize when you think of the ocean setting of this play. (CC.1.5.2.G)

#### **AFTER THE PLAY**

1. Make a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting Ariella's underwater world and Prince Jason's world on land. Draw pictures of both to help. Write sentences or paragraphs to describe each setting. (CC.1.3.2.G)
2. Teach the idiom - a fish out of water. Sometimes we can feel like this when we're ready for a new challenge. Do you think Arielle felt like a fish out of water? Use evidence from the story or play to support your answer. Have you ever felt like a fish out of water when you were ready for a change in your life? (CC.1.3.2.I)
3. Review the characteristics of a fairy tale - kind character, evil character, setting, royalty, talking animals, problem, magic, reward. Identify each of those elements in the play you just saw. (CC.1.3.2.B)
4. Describe one of the actor's performances and discuss how that performance added to your enjoyment of the show. Describe the costumes and sets. How did they help to create the world of the story? (CC.1.3.2.G)
5. Adjectives are words that describe nouns - persons, places, and things. Think of the characters in The Little Mermaid. What adjectives might you use to describe each (caring, determined, deceptive, loyal)? Write a letter to one of those characters. Let them know what you noticed about them and why. Feel free to send us your letter. We love receiving them! (CC.1.4.2.A, CC.1.4.2.E)