



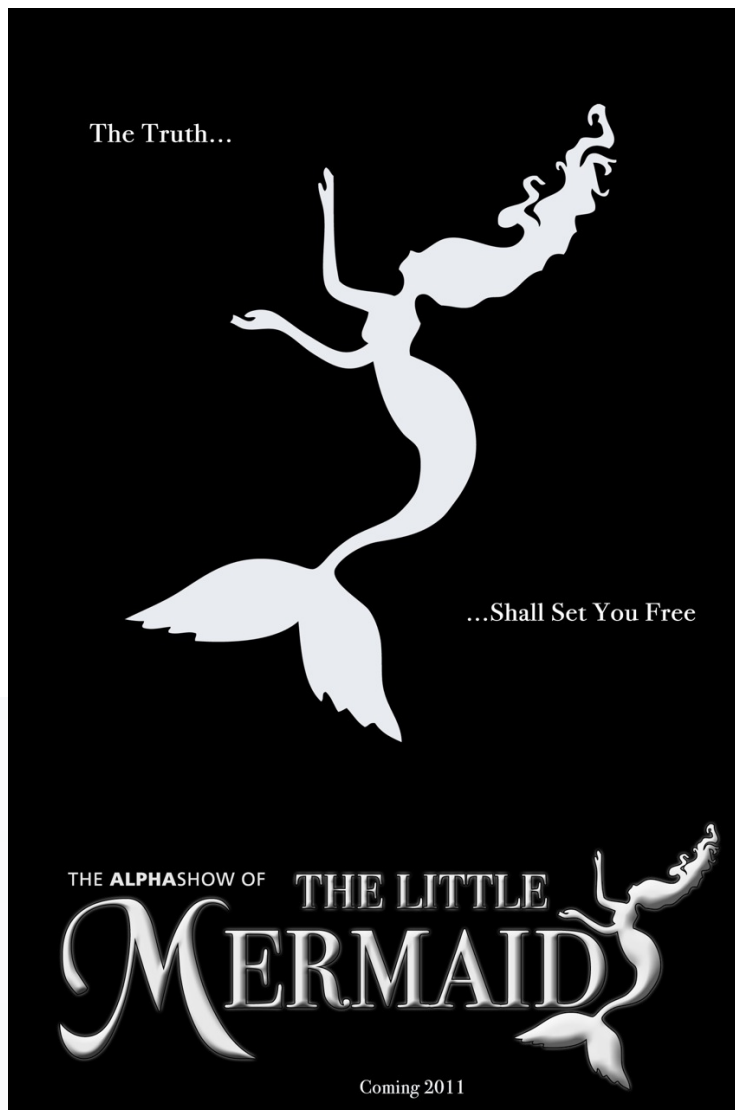
THE ALPHASHOW OF THE LITTLE  
**MERMAID**

## ALPHASHOWS Pre-Show Activities

[ Photocopy / print / email this document  
and give to all teachers BEFORE the show day ]

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## ABOUT THE PRE SHOW ACTIVITIES



Alpha honours and highly respects the work that teachers do with children and we can only hope that our brief visit at your school will help to brighten your day, and help to make learning

and the classroom fun. Teachers have a phenomenal capacity and we look forward to meeting you and your children and being at your school. We believe in peak states, emotional

truthfulness, high energy and enthusiasm in general being the most effective ways of learning, we sincerely hope that the show is useful to you in that and many other ways.

# THE OUTCOME

## ALPHASHOWS' outcome for our performances in schools are:

To provide an intense, memorable, high quality and high impact musical, that engages children the entire time. We hope to give them an experience of what 'theatre' is that encourages further participation in arts and theatre in the future.

To make specific spiritual and physical truths about our world and ourselves available in a metaphorical format to encourage learning at the soul level.

To give performers an opportunity to work in a full time performance based job, and have them give a real experience of 'being a performer' to children by answering questions and generally being happy, accessible, fun and cooperative with children and teachers.

To provide the most outstanding role models of truthful and humble human beings within the stories and in real life.

To provide a launching pad for creativity, writing, drama, music, and fun in the classroom. To create enthusiasm and encourage children to be in the peak state for learning.

To have an artistic theatrical performance that expands a student's soul to enable greater capacity in all learning areas (including learning areas not specifically covered by the shows).

To have an artistic theatrical experience that is of the highest quality possible, as close to a show at a big theatre in a capital city as we can.

To make available our shows to anybody who wishes to invite us for as low a cost as we can.



# ABOUT THE SHOW 'THE LITTLE MERMAID'

## OVER ARCHING VALUES THEME:

# TRUTH

The newest Alpha Show presents the classic fairytale in a larger than life and spectacular production, with our largest set and most engaging adaptation from a fairytale, that takes this well known story and enhances the meaning for modern audiences. The theme of truth is brought forth as a clear message throughout the show. The entire script subtly and powerfully brings forth the importance of truth in both our spoken word but also with ourselves and our true emotional condition. This means the story can continue to move on and keeps the audience engaged, whilst still allowing the learnings to occur at a deeper level.

Fears from childhood of being truthful are a part of almost everyone's soul. There are powerful emotional reasons that stop us from being in truth, not only with others, but also with ourselves. This show looks at the consequences of being out of harmony with truth, and how to emotionally process the causes behind this desire.

Truth is one of the most important lessons to learn on the path to a more loving soul. This show beautifully and lovingly deals with the issue without preaching.

The show also has a lot of fun characters and a lot of modern songs selected for their popularity and their appropriateness for the moment in the storyline. Everyone should be enjoying the show at different levels.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY & CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

The story follows Ariel (pronounced like Aaron, not Aeriell, in our story), the youngest of the mermaid daughters of King Neptune, and her desire for freedom to follow her own desires. We meet the Prince, whom she falls in love with (or so she thinks), and many other entertaining characters who eventually realise that Ariel must be supported. The story ends happily, unlike the original fairytale, as we believe if people face the truth about their own true condition and issues, it is possible to create what you want and get your own happy ending.

Without receiving love in her soul, a mermaid will never be immortal. In order to become immortal they must receive love from a human, so they will live forever. Ariel longs for this, but doesn't believe it's possible, and lies to try to protect herself from the pain she carries from her father's treatment of her. So as a result, Ariel is a compulsive liar. Her father, King Neptune is angered by this; he is a widower who is very sad that his wife has died, and he feels betrayed and abandoned - mummy issues. Nanny, Ariel's grandmother, and King Neptune's mother, actually has raised and cared for his daughters, so he relies on his mummy to continue caring for him and his daughters. She is one of those snobby women, who has no faith in men to get the job done; over-nurtures and doesn't respect men. She sees it as her job to ready the women and doesn't trust her son to do a good job. Ariel is reflecting these repressed emotions of her father by running off and lying about it. She however, is growing up now, and has her own free will, and has to face the consequences of her choices to not be truthful. As a result, the Sea Witch makes a deal to take her voice, thus proving the creation that would occur when not being in truth (losing your voice). This is the law of compensation for this choice. The Sea Witch is a jealous woman who feels underneath quite angry with men, lots of sadness about being put down by men, and wants revenge, and also wants to take away the beauty and gifts of other females, so that she can try to get her Daddy's approval; take over the sea as ruler over men etc.... Ezekiel her servant serves her because he feels totally defeated within himself to any other reality, and has given up, but desperately wants love from a female, so will settle for the anger of the sea witch and playing around with her so at least the energy flows. Geeves also desperately seeks his father's approval and thus seeks it from the Prince.

The Prince longs for his soulmate but is blocked from seeing the truth of who she is because of his issues with being setup as a 'special' male, put on a pedestal by his mother, and has issues of fantasy, like many men do, desiring fantasy women etc. Only once he recognises and processes the unloving treatment from his mother that he was better, and grieve about the loss of the fantasies he expects, and grieve how his mother also treated him badly when he wasn't the perfect little boy she expected him to be (her anger projections), will he be able to be open to his soulmate and recognise her. He therefore attracts angry women manipulating him (Sea Witch) and tricking him into believing she is the one.

Sterky has issues of competitiveness and inferiority to work through, and Yabbi rebellion to authority, whilst Heidi is completely eccentric as a method of maintaining control

## How the show addresses our outcomes:

The show is loud, entertaining and lots happening. It also has different parts that will appeal differently to various age groups and genders – allowing 'down time' for some as well. Children seeing this show will want to see more.

Alpha's Little Mermaid addresses the causes behind the desire to not be in truth in your words and deeds. Fear controls many of our behaviours, and this fear is not something we are born with. If we can catch this fear early on in a child's education, we can help them release it and not grow up with it. Fear that lives in us for years becomes like a comfortable friend that we will fight (often with anger) to never let go of. By teaching children about how to let go of these fears that get projected on to us by others in the world (such as what happens to Ariel in the show), we can help them clear out the root causes of not being truthful. Once the fear goes, all that remains is truth.

The cast contains a diverse cast of each gender, who play characters that are energetic, and appeal to both genders through humour and strength, and a bit of silliness.

The actors chosen represent people who are talented and professional in their field. They play characters that illustrate great ways to learn and live, who play full out and make the most of the events that happen to them.

The fairytale nature of the show will give some great lead in to the study of stories and fairytales, literacy, the theatre experience etc. Because the shows always contain great anchors for positive emotional states, these can be used back in the classroom to encourage full participation, humility, love and truth, which will always foster higher levels of learning.

As the students implement the ideas in the show (specifically about releasing negative emotions to begin to truly, in your heart, believe in yourself), it will have a run on effect on other learning areas which will have a positive impact on every area of their schooling life. Imagine children who now have the skill of how to make all the wishes actually come true.

The lights and sound in our shows are the top of the range, and we spend months creating and painting the sets, and the full costumes etc. With 6 cast, it makes what we can set up in your school quite remarkable in a short time – the final result will be as close as you can get to a theatre, right in your school – especially if you have a dark hall!

After the show you will have an opportunity to book one of our other shows. Please consider doing so as 'stacking' the shows every year has a cumulative effect on the soul condition of students that is hard to measure. By having it only once or every second year, this positive effect on your students (and entire school community) is very much lessened. We work hard to ensure our shows all tour every year, at different times, so there's always a show for you to book for the following year. We suggest not booking more than 1 show a year, as the stacking effect seems to be maximised when it is an annual visit.

The content is delivered through a wide range of engaging and accessible dramatic techniques: including, of course, pantomime-styled sequences, physical comedy, audience interaction in the form of questions, witty dialogue with humour that appeals to children (including the occasional bit of toilet humour!), stylised movement, choreography, modern music interweaved in the story, dramatic lighting and effects, high quality sound and sound effects, magnificent costumes and big realistic sets.

# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

## Fairy Tales, Folk Tales and other Stories

**Learning Area:** Literacy

**Outcome:** To create an understanding of the origins of fairytales and classic stories, and to dispel myths about the common held beliefs about where these stories originated from. To connect children in with the archetypal nature of these stories to ensure they have a strong connection to the show in advance. To explore stories from different cultures

**Materials:** Discussion in classroom and the internet

### **Information:**

Fairy tale, or wonder tale, is a kind of folktale or fable. In these stories we meet witches and queens, giants and elves, princes, dragons, talking animals, ogres, princesses, and sometimes even fairies. Marvellous and magical things happen to characters in fairy tales. A boy may become a bird. A princess may sleep for a hundred years. Objects too can be enchanted — mirrors talk, pumpkins become carriages, and a lamp may be home to a genie.

The oldest fairy tales were told and retold for generations before they were written down. French fairy tales, like Sleeping Beauty were the first to be collected and written down, but now we can read fairy tales from almost any culture. When these stories were studied together, something amazing was discovered. From countries as distant and different as Egypt and Iceland similar fairy tales are told. Both Egypt and Iceland have "Cinderella" stories, as do China, England, Korea, Siberia, France, and Vietnam; and the list doesn't stop there. There may be a thousand versions of the Cinderella story, each with a unique telling which carries cultural information about the time and place the story was told. One thing is for sure; people everywhere like stories in which truth prevails over deception, generosity is ultimately rewarded, hard work overcomes obstacles, and love, mercy and kindness are the greatest powers of all.

**Activity:** Read old folk stories or fairy tales and then ask children to retell them in a modern setting.

### **Interesting Web Addresses Relating to Fairy Tales, Folk Tales and other Stories:**

Alpha Shows Website

<http://www.alphashows.com.au>

Interactive Grimm Brothers Website

<http://www.grimmfairytales.com/en/main>

Aesop's Fables

<http://www.umass.edu/aesop>

Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories

<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/storylist.htm>

Native American stories

<http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/loreindx.html>



## Discuss the fairytale 'The Little Mermaid'

**Learning Area:** Literacy

**Outcome:** To provide an expanding awareness of fairytales and their origins and purpose

**Materials:** Discussion in classroom and writing

**Information:**

"The Little Mermaid" (Danish: Den lille havfrue) is a fairy tale by the Danish poet and author Hans Christian Andersen about a young mermaid willing to give up her life in the sea and her identity as a mermaid to gain a human soul and the love of a human prince.

Written originally as a ballet, the tale was first published in 1837 and has been adapted to various media including musical theatre and animated film.

The transformation of the little mermaid from sea creature to mermaid in human form to a creature of the air, may reflect Andersen's constant engagement with mutability and changes in identity.

The tale itself is considered by some feminists to contain a message about love and self-sacrifice, and the dangers of accepting abuse or inconsiderate treatment in the name of love.

There are interpretations that suggest the little mermaid did not give up everything for love alone. The tale presents a rare heroine with investigative curiosity because she is fascinated by the unknown, the forbidden, and is intent on broadening her horizons from the beginning. She wants, above all, to explore the world and discover things that are beyond what she already knows. The world above, for her, holds a greater range of possibilities to exercise her adventurous spirit. This is demonstrated, in some versions, when the prince has a page boy's costume made for the little mermaid so that she may ride on horseback and explore the land with him. This willingness to cross-dress shows signs of her willingness to transgress gender boundaries and take risks to be able to see the world. This also comments on Andersen's interests in changes in identity.

**Activity:**

Discuss the elements of the fairytale, the characters etc, to familiarise your children with the various elements. Read them the story of the original fairytale (in this guide). Discuss expectations about the show because of the fairytale.

Further on in this guide is the entire Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale written in 1836 which we based our show on which you can read to your class to familiarise them with the original story (albeit the Alpha show is quite different in some aspects).





## Hans Christian Andersen in depth

**Outcome:** To familiarise with a well known writer from the 19th century and analyse his life to become aware of how life experience can influence art and every facet of a person's creations.

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- ◆ know Andersen's nationality, language, and time period
- ◆ summarise the plots of two of Andersen's stories
- ◆ identify the main characters of four of Andersen's stories
- ◆ explain the theme of at least one of Andersen's stories
- ◆ express their reactions to a story by Hans Christian Andersen

**Materials:** Discussion in classroom and writing

### Learning Area:

Literature and Language Arts > Genre > Fables, Fairy tales and Folklore

Art and Culture > Subject Matter > Folklore

Literature and Language Arts > Place > Modern World

### Guiding Questions:

Who was Hans Christian Andersen? What are some of his most well known stories?

What are some typical characteristics and themes of Andersen's stories? How do we feel about Andersen's stories?

Have older children (Year 5+) prepare a research essay or project on Hans Christian Andersen, answering the following question along the way:

“How did Hans Christian Andersen’s life influence and reflect in his work as a writer of fairytales, most notably The Little Mermaid? Contrast and consider how people’s repressed sadness, hurt and anger can influence what they consider to be ‘truth’.”

The project should also focus on facts about his life that they have researched etc.

### Information:

Like many of his beloved fictional characters, Hans Christian Andersen came from humble origins. Born in a one-room house to a shoemaker and a washerwoman, Andersen lost his father when he was 11 and left home at age 14 determined to become famous. Teased by school mates for his awkward appearance and bullied by a teacher who told him his writings were fit only for the trash can, Andersen persevered with almost desperate devotion to his art and ultimately became known throughout the world as a genius of the literary fairy tale genre.

Andersen's stories are steeped in melancholy and longing, often featuring humble characters who long for love and acceptance into a higher realm of society or more glorious existence. A mermaid pines for a human prince; an ugly toad travels from the bottom of a well to seek something "higher"; a starving child imagines ever more beautiful tableaux of prosperity as she freezes to death. Many of Andersen's stories feature personified objects such as darning needles or candles that have thoughts, intentions, and feelings.

The Fir Tree, (in the story of that name) for example, looks forward to being decorated as part of the Christmas celebration and feels sad when her trimmings are stripped away. Andersen has a keen eye for social pretensions and vanity, and many of his stories satirize these human failings. A pea, for example, smugly considers itself the "most remarkable" of its pod because it is about to burst after festering in gutter water in Five Peas from the Same Pod. The emperor of The Emperor's New Clothes is so fearful of being thought stupid that he allows himself to be fooled into ludicrous behavior by a pair of charlatans. Thus, Andersen infused the stock figures of traditional fairy tale with human weaknesses and strong personal emotions.

Andersen's story endings are frequently unhappy. A starving child dies alone in a freezing ally; a toy soldier is reduced to a lump of melted metal; a little fir tree is thrown in a fire. Rather than redeem his characters' sufferings by an ultimate acquisition of love and riches, Andersen shows how goodness and integrity can ennoble the last moments of a lonely and poverty-stricken life. The starving child does not truly die alone, nor does the toy soldier's love remain eternally a secret, for we, the readers, know the stories and feel pity for the child's privations and sympathy for the soldier's love. The traditional fairy tale shows how bad luck can change into dazzling successes. Andersen, in contrast, portrays the luminous spiritual dignity of even the most relentless ill fortune.

Andersen was born in 1805 in Denmark. His stories have been translated into more than 80 languages and are known throughout the world. The well-known aphorisms "ugly duckling" and "emperor's new clothes" come from his stories of the same titles. The Little Mermaid has been made into one of Walt Disney's most popular movies. Andersen's stories, either singly or in collections, have been published in thousands of editions, many with lavish illustrations.

### **The Activity after reading little mermaid to a class:**

Read aloud, or have the class read, The Little Mermaid (further below in this guide). Ask students to recall the main characters and some of their important actions. Many of the students will have seen the Walt Disney movie, The Little Mermaid (1989). Ask them to describe some of the key differences between the movie version and the original text, and then after the Alpha show, you can also contrast the differences in our version.

Print out the key sections of the story, for example:

- The birthdays of the mermaid sisters
- The shipwreck and the Little Mermaid's saving of the prince
- The Little Mermaid's transaction with the Sea witch
- The Little Mermaid's life in the palace
- The Prince's engagement
- The Little Mermaid's conversation with her sisters and refusal to kill the Prince
- The Little Mermaid's transformation into a Daughter of the Air

Divide class into small groups and have each group create a skit based on their section of the story. Encourage students to elaborate a bit on their section. For example, the students acting out the Little Mermaid's transformation to a Daughter of the Air might want to show students doing good deeds and making the Daughters of the Air happy. Have each group present their skit to the whole class.

Discuss the ending of the story with the students, in which the Little Mermaid sacrifices her own life in order to let the Prince go on living. Ask the students to guess why Andersen might have created this ending rather than the happier ending that the movie has. What was Andersen trying to teach or show with this ending? Ask students to suggest other possible endings, for example, what might have happened if the Prince had sacrificed his life for the Little Mermaid?

Distribute storyboards to students with spaces for each main section of the story, and ask them to work in pairs to sketch a picture and write 2–3 sentences summarising what happens in each section of the story. For grades 4 and 5, have students write a book review based on their summaries and their reactions to the story.

**Skills acquired whilst performing these tasks:**

Compare and contrast

Critical analysis

Critical thinking

Discussion

Fairy tale analysis

Gathering, classifying and interpreting written, oral and visual information

Interpretation

Logical reasoning

Making inferences and drawing conclusions

Representing ideas and information orally, graphically and in writing

Vocabulary

More details on his life over the page:

## ABOUT HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN:

The Danish writer, famous for his fairy tales, which were not meant merely for children but for adults as well. Andersen used frequently colloquial style that disguises the sophisticated moral teachings of his tales. Before achieving success as a playwright and novelist, Andersen was trained as singer and actor. Many of Andersen's fairy tales depict characters who gain happiness in life after suffering and conflicts. 'The Ugly Duckling' and 'The Little Mermaid' are Andersen's most intimate works.

**"He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the new-comer, and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome." (from 'The Ugly Duckling')**

Hans Christian Andersen was born in the slums of Odense. His father, Hans Andersen, was a poor shoemaker and literate, who believed he was of aristocratic origin. Andersen's mother, Anne Marie Andersdatter, worked as washerwoman. Although she was uneducated and superstitious, she opened for his son the world of folklore. Later Andersen depicted her in his novels and in the story 'Hun duede ikke'. Anne Marie declined into alcoholism and died in 1833 in a charitable old people's home. Andersen's half-sister Karen Marie may have worked as a prostitute for a time; she contacted her famous brother only a few times before dying in 1846.

Andersen received little education. As a child he was highly emotional, suffering all kinds of fears and humiliations because of his tallness and effeminate interests. Andersen's hysterical attacks of cramps were falsely diagnosed as epileptic fits. Encouraged by his parents he composed his own fairy tales and arrange puppet theatre shows. His father loved literature and took Andersen often to the playhouse. "My father gratified me in all my wishes," wrote Andersen in *The True Story of My Life* (1846). "I

possessed his whole heart; he lived for me. On Sundays, he made me perspective glasses, theatres, and pictures which could be changed; he read to me from Holberg's plays and the Arabian Tales; it was only in such moments as these that I can remember to have seen him really cheerful, for he never felt himself happy in his life and as a handicrafts-man."

In 1816 his father died and Andersen was forced to go to work. He was for a short time apprenticed to a weaver and tailor, and he also worked at a tobacco factory. Once his trousers were pulled down when other workers suspected that he was a girl. At the age of 14 Andersen moved to Copenhagen to start a career as a singer, dancer or an actor – he had a beautiful soprano voice. The following three years were full of hardships although he found supporters who paved his way to the theatre. Andersen succeeded in becoming associated with the Royal Theater, but he had to leave it when his voice began to change. When he was casually referred as a poet it changed his plans: "It went through me, body and soul, and tears filled my eyes. I knew that, from this very moment, my mind was awake to writing and poetry." He then began to write plays, all of which were rejected.

In 1822 Jonas Collin, one of the directors of the Royal Theatre and an influential government official, gave Andersen a grant to enter the grammar school at Slagelse. He lived in the home of the school headmaster Meisling, who was annoyed at the oversensitive student and tried to harden his character. Other pupils were much younger, 11-year-olds, among whom six years older Andersen was definitely overgrown. His appearance drew also unwanted attention – he had a long nose and close-set eyes. Collin arranged in 1827 a private tuition for Andersen. He gained admission to Copenhagen University, where he completed his education. In 1828 Andersen wrote a travel sketch, *Fodreise fra Holmens Kanal Til Østpynten af Amager*, a fantastic tale in the style of the German Romantic writer E.T.A. Hoffmann. [Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's](#) *Children's and Household Tales* had appeared between 1812 and 1815, but they were based on original folktales. Andersen's poem 'The Dying Child', was published in a Copenhagen journal and the Royal Theatre produced in 1829 his musical drama. *PHANTASIER OG SKISSER*, a collection of poems, was born when Andersen fell in love with Riborg Voigt, who was secretly engaged to the local chemist's son. "She has a lovely, pious face, quite child-like, but her eyes looker clever and thoughtful, they were brown and very vivid," Andersen remembered in *The Book of My Life*. Riborg married the chemist's son, Poul Bøving, in 1831. A leather pouch containing a letter from Riborg was found round Andersen's neck when he died. Also Edvard, Jonas Collin's son, and Henrik Stempe in the 1840s were for Andersen other objects of unfulfilled dreams.

"I do wish that I were dead," Andersen said to one of his friends in 1831, expressing not his feelings about his failed love for Riborg but also echoing the melancholy of Goethe's Werther from *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Andersen never met Goethe, who was still alive when Andersen made his first journey to Germany. The visit inspired the first of his many travel sketches. From 1831 onwards he travelled widely in Europe, and remained a passionate traveller all his life. Andersen wrote sketches about Sweden, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and the Middle East. During his journeys Andersen met in Paris among others Victor Hugo, Heinrich Heine, Balzac, and Alexandre Dumas. A Poet's Day Dreams (1853) Andersen dedicated to Charles Dickens, whom he met in London in 1847. And in Rome he met the young Norwegian writer Bjørnson.

As a novelist Andersen made his breakthrough with *The Improvisatore* (1835), using Italy as the setting. The story was autobiographical and depicted a poor boy's integration into society, an Ugly Duckling theme of self-discovery in which Andersen returned in several of his works. The book gained international success and during his life it remained the most widely read of all his works. [E.B. Browning](#) wrote warmly to her future husband of the novel and her last poem was written for Andersen in 1861, shortly before her death. Only a *Fiddler* (1837), Andersen's novel, was attacked by the philosopher [Søren Kierkegaard](#) in his book *Af En endnu Levendes Papirer* (1838, *From the Papers of a Person Still Alive, Published Against his Will*). "The joyless struggle that is Andersen's in real life now repeats itself in his writing," he wrote. Kierkegaard, the 'Ugly Duckling' of Danish philosophy, used a number of pseudonyms, none of whom 'agreed' with one another.

A little later, Andersen took his revenge with the play *En Comedie i det Grønne* (1840), which included an unpractical philosopher.

Andersen's fame rests on his *Fairy Tales and Stories*, written between 1835 and 1872. *Tales, Told for Children*, appeared in a small, cheap booklet in 1835. In this and following early collections, which were published in every Christmas, Andersen returned to the stories which he had heard as a child, but gradually he started to create his own tales. The third volume, published in 1837, contained 'The Little Mermaid' and 'The Emperor's New Clothes.' Among Andersen's other best known tales are 'Little Ugly Duckling,' 'The Tinderbox,' 'Little Claus and Big Claus,' 'Princess and the Pea,' 'The Snow Queen,' 'The Nightingale,' and 'The Steadfast Tin Soldier.' With these collections, inspired by the great tradition of the *Arabian Nights* on the other hand, and *Household Tales*, collected by the brothers Grimm, Andersen became known as the father of the modern fairytale. Moreover, Andersen's works were original. Only 12 of his 156 know fairy stories drew on folktales.

Andersen broke new ground in both style and content, and employed the idioms and constructions of spoken language in a way that was new in Danish writing. When fairy tales at his time were didactic, he brought into them ambiguity. Children and misfits often speak truth; they serve as Andersen's mouthpiece in moral questions: ""But he has nothing on at all," said a little child at last. "Good heavens! listen to the voice of an innocent child," said the father, and one whispered to the other what the child had said. "But he has nothing on at all," cried at last the whole people. That made a deep impression upon the emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought to himself, "Now I must bear up to the end." And the chamberlains walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried train which did not exist." (from 'The Emperor's New Suit,' 1837) Ugliness of the hero or heroine often conceals great beauty, which is revealed after misfortunes. In psychoanalysis this kind of figure is sometimes interpreted as a symbol of the inner self of soul, which has to be released from its prison.

Andersen's identification with the unfortunate and outcast made his tales very compelling. Some of Andersen's tales revealed an optimistic belief in the triumph of the good, among them 'The Snow Queen' and 'Little Ugly Duckling', and some ended unhappily, like 'The Little Match Girl.' In 'The Little Mermaid' the author expressed a longing for ordinary life – he never had such. In the story the youngest of six mermaid precesses longs after the land above the sea, but the fulfillment of the dream causes her much pain. "She knew this was the last evening she would ever see him for whom she had forsaken her kindred and her home, given up her lovely voice, and daily suffered unending torment – and he had no idea of it. This was the last night she would breathe the same air as he, or look upon the deep sea and the starry blue sky; an everlasting night without thoughts or dreams waited her, for she had no soul and could not gain one." (trans. L.W. Kingsland) Andersen's tales were translated throughout Europe, with



four editions appearing in the UK in 1846 alone. His works influenced among others [Charles Dickens](#) ('Christmas Carol in Prose,' 'The Chimes,' 'The Cricket on the Hearth,' 'The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain'), Willam Thackeray and [Oscar Wilde](#) ('The Happy Prince,' 'The Nightingale and the Rose,' 'The Fisherman and His Soul'), C.S. Lewis, Isak Dinesen, P.O. Enquist, whose play, Rainsnakes, was about Andersen, Cees Noteboom, and a number of other writers. Elias Bredsdorff has complained in his book Hans Christian Andersen: The Story of His Life and Work(1975), that Andersen's tales have been bowdlerized and sweetened by Victorian British translators.

Andersen's last unfilled love was the Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind, whom he met first time in 1840. Jenny was the illegitimate daughter of a schoolmistress. According to her own words, she was at the age of nine "a small, ugly, broad-nosed, shy, gauche, altogether undergrown girl". At eighteen, she had made her breakthrough as a singer with her powerful soprano. 'The Ugly Duckling' become Jenny's favorite among Andersen's stories. However, 'Andersen's 'The Nightingale' is considered a tribute to Jenny, or "the Swedish Nightingale" as she was called. "Farewell," she wrote him in 1844, "God bless and protect my brother is the sincere wish of his affectionate sister, Jenny." Andersen never married. Between the years 1840 and 1857 Andersen made journeys throughout Europa, Asia Minor, and Africa, recording his impressions and adventures in a number of travel books.

He wrote and rewrote his memoirs, The Fairy Tale of My Life, but the standard edition is generally considered the 1855 edition. During his travels abroad, Andersen was able to be more relaxed and take more liberties than in Copenhagen, where everybody knew him. At the age of sixty-two Andersen went to Paris, where he visited a brothel – it was not his first visit or last. "Then went suddenly up into a meat market – one of them was covered with powder; a second, common; a third, quite the lady. I talked with her, paid twelve francs and left, without having sinned in deed, though I dare say I did in my thoughts. She asked me to come back, said I was indeed very innocent for a man." (from Hans Christian Andersen: The Life of a Storyteller by Jackie Wullschlager, 2001) Andersen died in his home in Rolighed on August 4, 1875. Edvard Collin and his wife were later buried with Andersen. However, their family members moved the Collins' bodies after some years to the family plot in another cemetery.

# The Little Mermaid

by

**Hans Christian Andersen**

(1836)



**F**AR out in the ocean, where the water is as blue as the prettiest cornflower, and as clear as crystal, it is very, very deep; so deep, indeed, that no cable could fathom it: many church steeples, piled one upon another, would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwell the Sea King and his subjects. We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed; the most singular flowers and plants grow there; the leaves and stems of which are so pliant, that the slightest agitation of the water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches, as birds fly among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of all, stands the castle of the Sea King. Its walls are built of coral, and the long, gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of shells, that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very beautiful, for in each lies a glittering pearl, which would be fit for the diadem of a queen.

The Sea King had been a widower for many years, and his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman, and exceedingly proud of her high birth; on that account she wore twelve oysters on her tail; while others, also of high rank, were only allowed to wear six. She was, however, deserving of very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, her grand-daughters. They were six beautiful children; but the youngest was the prettiest of them all; her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea; but, like all the others, she had no feet, and her body ended in a fish's tail. All day long they played in the great halls of the castle, or among the living flowers that grew out of the walls.



The large amber windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows, excepting that the fishes swam up to the princesses, ate out of their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked. Outside the castle there was a beautiful garden, in which grew bright red and dark blue flowers, and blossoms like flames of fire; the fruit glittered like gold, and the leaves and stems waved to and fro continually. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of burning sulphur. Over everything lay a peculiar blue radiance, as if it were surrounded by the air from above, through which the blue sky shone, instead of the dark depths of the sea. In calm weather the sun could be seen, looking like a purple flower, with the light streaming from the calyx. Each of the young princesses had a little plot of ground in the garden, where she might dig and plant as she pleased. One arranged her flower-bed into the form of a whale; another thought it better to make hers like the figure of a little mermaid; but that of the youngest was round like the sun, and contained flowers as red as his rays at sunset. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful; and while her sisters would be delighted with the wonderful things which they obtained from the wrecks of vessels, she cared for nothing but her pretty red flowers, like the sun, excepting a beautiful marble statue. It was the representation of a handsome boy, carved out of pure white stone, which had fallen to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted by the statue a rose-colored weeping willow. It grew splendidly, and very soon hung its fresh branches over the statue, almost down to the blue sands. The shadow had a violet tint, and waved to and fro like the branches; it seemed as if the crown of the tree and the root were at play, and trying to kiss each other. Nothing gave her so much pleasure as to hear about the world above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her all she knew of the ships and of the towns, the people and the animals. To her it seemed most wonderful and beautiful to hear that the flowers of the land should have fragrance, and not those below the sea; that the trees of the forest should be green; and that the fishes among the trees could sing so sweetly, that it was quite a pleasure to hear them. Her grandmother called the little birds fishes, or she would not have understood her; for she had never seen birds.

“When you have reached your fifteenth year,” said the grand-mother, “you will have permission to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while the great ships are sailing by; and then you will see both forests and towns.”

In the following year, one of the sisters would be fifteen: but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean, and see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit, and what she thought the most beautiful; for their grandmother could not tell them enough; there were so many things on which they wanted information. None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest, she who had the longest time to wait, and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many nights she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water, and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly; but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings, who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship.

As soon as the eldest was fifteen, she was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean. When she came back, she had hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town nearby, where the lights were twinkling like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of carriages, and the voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not go near to all those wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever. Oh, did not the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions? and afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells, down in the depths of the sea.



In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the water, and to swim about where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, while violet and rose-colored clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her; and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large flock of wild swans towards the setting sun, looking like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea.



The third sister's turn followed; she was the boldest of them all, and she swam up a broad river that emptied itself into the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful that she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a narrow creek she found a whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal came to the water; it was a dog, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This animal barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty little children who could swim in the water, although they had not fish's tails.

The fourth sister was more timid; she remained in the midst of the sea, but she said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see for so many miles around her, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen the ships, but at such a great distance that they looked like sea-gulls. The dolphins sported in the waves, and the great whales spouted water from their nostrils till it seemed as if a hundred fountains were playing in every direction.

The fifth sister's birthday occurred in the winter; so when her turn came, she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs were floating about, each like a pearl, she said, but larger and loftier than the churches built by men. They were of the most singular shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the largest, and let the wind play with her long hair, and she remarked that all the ships sailed by rapidly, and steered as far away as they could from the iceberg, as if they were afraid of it. Towards evening, as the sun went down, dark clouds covered the sky, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, and the red light glowed on the icebergs as they rocked and tossed on the heaving sea. On all the ships the sails were reefed with fear and trembling, while she sat calmly on the floating iceberg, watching the blue lightning, as it darted its forked flashes into the sea.

When first the sisters had permission to rise to the surface, they were each delighted with the new and beautiful sights they saw; but now, as grown-up girls, they could go when they pleased, and they had become indifferent about it. They wished themselves back again in the water, and after a month had passed they said it was much more beautiful down below, and pleasanter to be at home. Yet often, in the evening hours, the five sisters would twine their arms round each other, and rise to the surface, in a row.

They had more beautiful voices than any human being could have; and before the approach of a storm, and when they expected a ship would be lost, they swam before the vessel, and sang sweetly of the delights to be found in the depths of the sea, and begging the sailors not to fear if they sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not understand the song, they took it for the howling of the storm. And these things were never to be beautiful for them; for if the ship sank, the men were drowned, and their dead bodies alone reached the palace of the Sea King.

When the sisters rose, arm-in-arm, through the water in this way, their youngest sister would stand quite alone, looking after them, ready to cry, only that the mermaids have no tears, and therefore they suffer more. "Oh, were I but fifteen years old," said she: "I know that I shall love the world up there, and all the people who live in it." At last she reached her fifteenth year. "Well, now, you are grown up," said the old dowager, her grandmother; "so you must let me adorn you like your other sisters;" and she placed a wreath of white lilies in her hair, and every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady ordered eight great oysters to attach themselves to the tail of the princess to show her high rank.

"But they hurt me so," said the little mermaid.

"Pride must suffer pain," replied the old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers in her own garden would have suited her much better, but she could not help herself: so she said, "Farewell," and rose as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water. The sun had just set as she raised her head above the waves; but the clouds were tinted with crimson and gold, and through the glimmering twilight beamed the evening star in all its beauty. The sea was calm, and the air mild and fresh. A large ship, with three masts, lay becalmed on the water, with only one sail set; for not a breeze stirred, and the sailors sat idle on deck or amongst the rigging. There was music and song on board; and, as darkness came on, a hundred colored lanterns were lighted, as if the flags of all nations waved in the air. The little mermaid swam close to the cabin windows; and now and then, as the waves lifted her up, she could look in through clear glass window-panes, and see a number of well-dressed people within. Among them was a young prince, the most beautiful of all, with large black eyes; he was sixteen years of age, and his birthday was being kept with much rejoicing. The sailors were dancing on deck, but when the prince came out of the cabin, more than a hundred rockets rose in the air, making it as bright as day. The little mermaid was so startled that she dived under water; and when she again stretched out her head, it appeared as if all the stars of heaven were falling around her, she had never seen such fireworks before. Great suns spurted fire about, splendid fireflies flew into the blue air, and everything was reflected in the clear, calm sea beneath. The ship itself was so brightly illuminated that all the people, and even the smallest rope, could be distinctly and plainly seen. And how handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the hands of all present and smiled at them, while the music resounded through the clear night air.

It was very late; yet the little mermaid could not take her eyes from the ship, or from the beautiful prince. The colored lanterns had been extinguished, no more rockets rose in the air, and the cannon had ceased firing; but the sea became restless, and a moaning, grumbling sound could be heard beneath the waves: still the little mermaid remained by the cabin window, rocking up and down on the water, which enabled her to look in. After a while, the sails were quickly unfurled, and the noble ship continued her passage; but soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightning appeared in the distance. A dreadful storm was approaching; once more the sails were reefed, and the great ship pursued her flying course over the raging sea. The waves rose mountains high, as if they would have overtopped the mast; but the ship dived like a swan between them, and then rose again on their lofty, foaming crests. To the little mermaid this appeared pleasant sport; not so to the sailors. At length the ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks gave way under the lashing of the sea as it broke over the deck; the mainmast snapped asunder like a reed; the ship lay over on her side; and the water rushed in. The little mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger; even she herself was obliged to be careful to avoid the beams and planks of the wreck which lay scattered on the water.

At one moment it was so pitch dark that she could not see a single object, but a flash of lightning revealed the whole scene; she could see every one who had been on board excepting the prince; when the ship parted, she had seen him sink into the deep waves, and she was glad, for she thought he would now be with her; and then she remembered that human beings could not live in the water, so that when he got down to her father's palace he would be quite dead. But he must not die. So she swam about among the beams and planks which strewed the surface of the sea, forgetting that they could crush her to pieces. Then she dived deeply under the dark waters, rising and falling with the waves, till at length she managed to reach the young prince, who was fast losing the power of swimming in that stormy sea. His limbs were failing him, his beautiful eyes were closed, and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his assistance. She held his head above the water, and let the waves drift them where they would. In the morning the storm had ceased; but of the ship not a single fragment could be seen. The sun rose up red and glowing from the water, and its beams brought back the hue of health to the prince's cheeks; but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, smooth forehead, and stroked back his wet hair; he seemed to her like the marble statue in her little garden, and she kissed him again, and wished that he might live. Presently they came in sight of land; she saw lofty blue mountains, on which the white snow rested as if a flock of swans were lying upon them. Near the coast were beautiful green forests, and close by stood a large building, whether a church or a convent she could not tell. Orange and citron trees grew in the garden, and before the door stood lofty palms. The sea here formed a little bay, in which the water was quite still, but very deep; so she swam with the handsome prince to the beach, which was covered with fine, white sand, and there she laid him in the warm sunshine, taking care to raise his head higher than his body. Then bells sounded in the large white building, and a number of young girls came into the garden. The little mermaid swam out farther from the shore and placed herself between some high rocks that rose out of the water; then she covered her head and neck with the foam of the sea so that her little face might not be seen, and watched to see what would become of the poor prince. She did not wait long before she saw a young girl approach the spot where he lay. She seemed frightened at first, but only for a moment; then she fetched a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life again, and smiled upon those who stood round him. But to her he sent no smile; he knew not that she had saved him. This made her very unhappy, and when he was led away into the great building, she dived down sorrowfully into the water, and returned to her father's castle. She had always been silent and thoughtful, and now she was more so than ever. Her sisters asked her what she had seen during her first visit to the surface of the water; but she would tell them nothing. Many an evening and morning did she rise to the place where she had left the prince. She saw the fruits in the garden ripen till they were gathered, the snow on the tops of the mountains melt away; but she never saw the prince, and therefore she returned home, always more sorrowful than before. It was her only comfort to sit in her own little garden, and fling her arm round the beautiful marble statue which was like the prince; but she gave up tending her flowers, and they grew in wild confusion over the paths, twining their long leaves and stems round the branches of the trees, so that the whole place became dark and gloomy. At length she could bear it no longer, and told one of her sisters all about it. Then the others heard the secret, and very soon it became known to two mermaids whose intimate friend happened to know who the prince was. She had also seen the festival on board ship, and she told them where the prince came from, and where his palace stood.

“Come, little sister,” said the other princesses; then they entwined their arms and rose up in a long row to the surface of the water, close by the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood. It was built of bright yellow shining stone, with long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea. Splendid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and between the pillars that surrounded the whole building stood life-like statues of marble. Through the clear crystal of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings of tapestry; while the walls were covered with beautiful paintings which were a pleasure to look at. In the centre of the largest saloon a fountain threw its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the beautiful plants growing round the basin of the fountain. Now that she knew where he lived, she spent many an evening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than any of the others ventured to do; indeed once she went quite up the narrow channel under the marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on the water. Here she would sit and watch the

young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight. She saw him many times of an evening sailing in a pleasant boat, with music playing and flags waving. She peeped out from among the green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery-white veil, those who saw it believed it to be a swan, spreading out its wings. On many a night, too, when the fishermen, with their torches, were out at sea, she heard them relate so many good things about the doings of the young prince, that she was glad she had saved his life when he had been tossed about half-dead on the waves. And she remembered that his head had rested on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of all this, and could not even dream of her. She grew more and more fond of human beings, and wished more and more to be able to wander about with those whose world seemed to be so much larger than her own. They could fly over the sea in ships, and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possessed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight. There was so much that she wished to know, and her sisters were unable to answer all her questions. Then she applied to her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she very rightly called the lands above the sea.



“If human beings are not drowned,” asked the little mermaid, “can they live forever? do they never die as we do here in the sea?”

“Yes,” replied the old lady, “they must also die, and their term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live to three hundred years, but when we cease to exist here we only become the foam on the surface of the water, and we have not even a grave down here of those we love. We have not immortal souls, we shall never live again; but, like the green sea-weed, when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul which lives forever, lives after the body has been turned to dust. It rises up through the clear, pure air beyond the glittering stars. As we rise out of the water, and behold all the land of the earth, so do they rise to unknown and glorious regions which we shall never see.”

“Why have not we an immortal soul?” asked the little mermaid mournfully; “I would give gladly all the hundreds of years that I have to live, to be a human being only for one day, and to have the hope of knowing the happiness of that glorious world above the stars.”

“You must not think of that,” said the old woman; “we feel ourselves to be much happier and much better off than human beings.”

“So I shall die,” said the little mermaid, “and as the foam of the sea I shall be driven about never again to hear the music of the waves, or to see the pretty flowers nor the red sun. Is there anything I can do to win an immortal soul?”

“No,” said the old woman, “unless a man were to love you so much that you were more to him than his father or mother; and if all his thoughts and all his love were fixed upon you, and the priest placed his right hand in yours, and he promised to be true to you here and hereafter, then his soul would glide into your body and you would obtain a share in the future happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and retain his own as well; but this can never happen. Your fish’s tail, which amongst us is considered so beautiful, is thought on earth to be quite ugly; they do not know any better, and they think it necessary to have two stout props, which they call legs, in order to be handsome.”

Then the little mermaid sighed, and looked sorrowfully at her fish’s tail. “Let us be happy,” said the old lady, “and dart and spring about during the three hundred years that we have to live, which is really quite long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening we are going to have a court ball.”

It is one of those splendid sights which we can never see on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the large ball-room were of thick, but transparent crystal. May hundreds of colossal shells, some of a deep red, others of a grass green, stood on each side in rows, with blue fire in them, which lighted up the whole saloon, and shone through the walls, so that the sea was also illuminated. Innumerable fishes, great and small, swam past the crystal walls; on some of them the scales glowed with a purple brilliancy, and on others they shone like silver and gold. Through the halls flowed a broad stream, and in it danced the mermen and the mermaids to the music of their own sweet singing. No one on earth has such a lovely voice as theirs. The little mermaid sang more sweetly than them all. The whole court applauded her with hands and tails; and for a moment her heart felt quite gay, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of any on earth or in the sea. But she soon thought again of the world above her, for she could not forget the charming prince, nor her sorrow that she had not an immortal soul like his; therefore she crept away silently out of her father’s palace, and while everything within was gladness and song, she sat in her own little garden sorrowful and alone. Then she heard the bugle sounding through the water, and thought—“He is certainly sailing above, he on whom my wishes depend, and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I will venture all for him, and to win an immortal soul, while my sisters are dancing in my father’s palace, I will go to the sea witch, of whom I have always been so much afraid, but she can give me counsel and help.”

And then the little mermaid went out from her garden, and took the road to the foaming whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before: neither flowers nor grass grew there; nothing but bare, gray, sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill-wheels, whirled round everything that it seized, and cast it into the fathomless deep. Through the midst of these crushing whirlpools the little mermaid was obliged to pass, to reach the dominions of the sea witch; and also for a long distance the only road lay right across a quantity of warm, bubbling mire, called by the witch her turfmoor. Beyond this stood her house, in the centre of a strange forest, in which all the trees and flowers were polypi, half animals and half plants; they looked like serpents with a hundred heads growing out of the ground. The branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like flexible worms, moving limb after limb from the root to the top. All that could be reached in the sea they seized upon, and held fast, so that it never escaped from their clutches.

The little mermaid was so alarmed at what she saw, that she stood still, and her heart beat with fear, and she was very nearly turning back; but she thought of the prince, and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long flowing hair round her head, so that the polypi might not seize hold of it.



She laid her hands together across her bosom, and then she darted forward as a fish shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched out on each side of her. She saw that each held in its grasp something it had seized with its numerous little arms, as if they were iron bands. The white skeletons of human beings who had perished at sea, and had sunk down into the deep waters, skeletons of land animals, oars, rudders, and chests of ships were lying tightly grasped by their clinging arms; even a little mermaid, whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess. She now came to a space of marshy ground in the wood, where large, fat water-snakes were rolling in the mire, and showing their ugly, drab-colored bodies. In the midst of this spot stood a house, built with the bones of shipwrecked human beings. There sat the sea witch, allowing a toad to eat from her mouth, just as people sometimes feed a canary with a piece of sugar. She called the ugly water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom.

“I know what you want,” said the sea witch; “it is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish’s tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like human beings on earth, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may have an immortal soul.” And then the witch laughed so loud and disgustingly, that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, and lay there wriggling about. “You are but just in time,” said the witch; “for after sunrise to-morrow I should not be able to help you till the end of another year. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land tomorrow before sunrise, and sit down on the shore and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind calls legs, and you will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever saw. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly; but at every step you take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I will help you.”

“Yes, I will,” said the little princess in a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and the immortal soul. “But think again,” said the witch; “for when once your shape has become like a human being, you can no more be a mermaid. You will never return through the water to your sisters, or to your father’s palace again; and if you do not win the love of the prince, so that he is willing to forget his father and mother for your sake, and to love you with his whole soul, and allow the priest to join your hands that you may be man and wife, then you will never have an immortal soul. The first morning after he marries another your heart will break, and you will become foam on the crest of the waves.”

“I will do it,” said the little mermaid, and she became pale as death.

“But I must be paid also,” said the witch, “and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the sweetest voice of any who dwell here in the depths of the sea, and you believe that you will be able to charm the prince with it also, but this voice you must give to me; the best thing you possess will I have for the price of my draught. My own blood must be mixed with it, that it may be as sharp as a two-edged sword.”

“But if you take away my voice,” said the little mermaid, “what is left for me?”

“Your beautiful form, your graceful walk, and your expressive eyes; surely with these you can enchain a man’s heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue that I may cut it off as my payment; then you shall have the powerful draught.”

“It shall be,” said the little mermaid.

Then the witch placed her cauldron on the fire, to prepare the magic draught.

“Cleanliness is a good thing,” said she, scouring the vessel with snakes, which she had tied together in a large knot; then she pricked herself in the breast, and let the black blood drop into it. The steam that rose formed itself into such horrible shapes that no one could look at them without fear. Every moment the witch threw something else into the vessel, and when it began to boil, the sound was like the weeping of a crocodile. When at last the magic draught was ready, it looked like the clearest water.

“There it is for you,” said the witch. Then she cut off the mermaid’s tongue, so that she became dumb, and would never again speak or sing. “If the polypi should seize hold of you as you return through the wood,” said the witch, “throw over them a few drops of the potion, and their fingers will be torn into a thousand pieces.” But the little mermaid had no occasion to do this, for the polypi sprang back in terror when they caught sight of the glittering draught, which shone in her hand like a twinkling star.

So she passed quickly through the wood and the marsh, and between the rushing whirlpools. She saw that in her father’s palace the torches in the ballroom were extinguished, and all within asleep; but she did not venture to go in to them, for now she was dumb and going to leave them forever, she felt as if her heart would break. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the flower-beds of each of her sisters, kissed her hand a thousand times towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue waters. The sun had not risen when she came in sight of the prince’s palace, and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright. Then the little mermaid drank the magic draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body: she fell into a swoon, and lay like one dead. When the sun arose and shone over the sea, she recovered, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her so earnestly that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her fish’s tail was gone, and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny feet as any little maiden could have; but she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair. The prince asked her who she was, and where she came from, and she looked at him mildly and sorrowfully with her deep blue eyes; but she could not speak. Every step she took was as the witch had said it would be, she felt as if treading upon the points of needles or sharp knives; but she bore it willingly, and stepped as lightly by the prince’s side as a soap-bubble, so that he and all who saw her wondered at her graceful-swaying movements. She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful creature in the palace; but she was dumb, and could neither speak nor sing.

Beautiful female slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents: one sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. This was great sorrow to the little mermaid; she knew how much more sweetly she herself could sing once, and she thought, “Oh if he could only know that! I have given away my voice forever, to be with him.”

The slaves next performed some pretty fairy-like dances, to the sound of beautiful music. Then the little mermaid raised her lovely white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided over the floor, and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment her beauty became more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves. Every one was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again quite readily, to please him, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives.

The prince said she should remain with him always, and she received permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page’s dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince to the tops of high mountains; and although her tender feet bled so that even her steps were marked, she only laughed, and followed him till they could see the clouds beneath them looking

like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands. While at the prince's palace, and when all the household were asleep, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps; for it eased her burning feet to bathe them in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of all those below in the deep.

Once during the night her sisters came up arm-in-arm, singing sorrowfully, as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and then they recognized her, and told her how she had grieved them.

After that, they came to the same place every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father, with his crown on his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but they did not venture so near the land as her sisters did.

As the days passed, she loved the prince more fondly, and he loved her as he would love a little child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; yet, unless he married her, she could not receive an immortal soul; and, on the morning after his marriage with another, she would dissolve into the foam of the sea.

"Do you not love me the best of them all?" the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms, and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, you are dear to me," said the prince; "for you have the best heart, and you are the most devoted to me; you are like a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom I shall never meet again. I was in a ship that was wrecked, and the waves cast me ashore near a holy temple, where several young maidens performed the service. The youngest of them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her but twice, and she is the only one in the world whom I could love; but you are like her, and you have almost driven her image out of my mind. She belongs to the holy temple, and my good fortune has sent you to me instead of her; and we will never part."

"Ah, he knows not that it was I who saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands: I sat beneath the foam, and watched till the human beings came to help him. I saw the pretty maiden that he loves better than he loves me;" and the mermaid sighed deeply, but she could not shed tears. "He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, therefore she will never return to the world. They will meet no more: while I am by his side, and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and give up my life for his sake."

Very soon it was said that the prince must marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring king would be his wife, for a fine ship was being fitted out. Although the prince gave out that he merely intended to pay a visit to the king, it was generally supposed that he really went to see his daughter. A great company were to go with him. The little mermaid smiled, and shook her head. She knew the prince's thoughts better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see this beautiful princess; my parents desire it; but they will not oblige me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her; she is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were forced to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dumb foundling, with those expressive eyes." And then he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long waving hair, and laid his head on her heart, while she dreamed of human happiness and an immortal soul. "You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child," said he, as they stood on the deck of the noble ship which was to carry them to the country of the neighboring king. And then he told her of storm and of calm, of strange fishes in the deep beneath them, and of what the divers had seen there; and she smiled at his descriptions, for she knew better than any one what wonders were at the bottom of the sea. In the moonlight, when all on board were asleep, excepting the man at the helm, who was steering, she sat on the deck, gazing down through the clear water. She thought she could distinguish her father's castle, and upon it her aged grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, looking through the rushing tide at the keel of the vessel.



Then her sisters came up on the waves, and gazed at her mournfully, wringing their white hands. She beckoned to them, and smiled, and wanted to tell them how happy and well off she was; but the cabin-boy approached, and when her sisters dived down he thought it was only the foam of the sea which he saw.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbor of a beautiful town belonging to the king whom the prince was going to visit. The church bells were ringing, and from the high towers sounded a flourish of trumpets; and soldiers, with flying colors and glittering bayonets, lined the rocks through which they passed. Every day was a festival; balls and entertainments followed one another.

But the princess had not yet appeared. People said that she was being brought up and educated in a religious house, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she came. Then the little mermaid, who was very anxious to see whether she was really beautiful, was obliged to acknowledge that she had never seen a more perfect vision of beauty. Her skin was delicately fair, and beneath her long dark eye-lashes her laughing blue eyes shone with truth and purity.

“It was you,” said the prince, “who saved my life when I lay dead on the beach,” and he folded his blushing bride in his arms. “Oh, I am too happy,” said he to the little mermaid; “my fondest hopes are all fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness; for your devotion to me is great and sincere.”

The little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt as if her heart were already broken. His wedding morning would bring death to her, and she would change into the foam of the sea. All the church bells rung, and the heralds rode about the town proclaiming the betrothal. Perfumed oil was burning in costly silver lamps on every altar. The priests waved the censers, while the bride and bridegroom joined their hands and received the blessing of the bishop. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, held up the bride’s train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, and her eyes saw not the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of death which was coming to her, and of all she had lost in the world. On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board ship; cannons were roaring, flags waving, and in the centre of the ship a costly tent of purple and gold had been erected. It contained elegant couches, for the reception of the bridal pair during the night. The ship, with swelling sails and a favorable wind, glided away smoothly and lightly over the calm sea. When it grew dark a number of colored lamps were lit, and the sailors danced merrily on the deck. The little mermaid could not help thinking of her first rising out of the sea, when she had seen similar festivities and joys; and she joined in the dance, poised herself in the air as a swallow when he pursues his prey, and all present cheered her with wonder. She had never danced so elegantly before. Her tender feet felt as if cut with sharp knives, but she cared not for it; a sharper pang had pierced through her heart. She knew this was the last evening she should ever see the prince, for whom she had forsaken her kindred and her home; she had given up her beautiful voice, and suffered unheard-of pain daily for him, while he knew nothing of it. This was the last evening that she would breathe the same air with him, or gaze on the starry sky and the deep sea; an eternal night, without a thought or a dream, awaited her: she had no soul and now she could never win one. All was joy and gayety on board ship till long after midnight; she laughed and danced with the rest, while the thoughts of death were

in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride, while she played with his raven hair, till they went arm-in-arm to rest in the splendid tent. Then all became still on board the ship; the helmsman, alone awake, stood at the helm. The little mermaid leaned her white arms on the edge of the vessel, and looked towards the east for the first blush of morning, for that first ray of dawn that would bring her death. She saw her sisters rising out of the flood: they were as pale as herself; but their long beautiful hair waved no more in the wind, and had been cut off.

“We have given our hair to the witch,” said they, “to obtain help for you, that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife: here it is, see it is very sharp. Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the prince; when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again, and form into a fish’s tail, and you will be once more a mermaid, and return to us to live out your three hundred years before you die and change into the salt sea foam. Haste, then; he or you must die before sunrise. Our old grandmother moans so for you, that her white hair is falling off from sorrow, as ours fell under the witch’s scissors. Kill the prince and come back; hasten: do you not see the first red streaks in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die.” And then they sighed deeply and mournfully, and sank down beneath the waves.

The little mermaid drew back the crimson curtain of the tent, and beheld the fair bride with her head resting on the prince’s breast. She bent down and kissed his fair brow, then looked at the sky on which the rosy dawn grew brighter and brighter; then she glanced at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes on the prince, who whispered the name of his bride in his dreams. She was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the hand of the little mermaid: then she flung it far away from her into the waves; the water turned red where it fell, and the drops that spurted up looked like blood. She cast one more lingering, half-fainting glance at the prince, and then threw herself from the ship into the sea, and thought her body was dissolving into foam. The sun rose above the waves, and his warm rays fell on the cold foam of the little mermaid, who did not feel as if she were dying. She saw the bright sun, and all around her floated hundreds of transparent beautiful beings; she could see through them the white sails of the ship, and the red clouds in the sky; their speech was melodious, but too ethereal to be heard by mortal ears, as they were also unseen by mortal eyes. The little mermaid perceived that she had a body like theirs, and that she continued to rise higher and higher out of the foam. “Where am I?” asked she, and her voice sounded ethereal, as the voice of those who were with her; no earthly music could imitate it.

“Among the daughters of the air,” answered one of them. “A mermaid has not an immortal soul, nor can she obtain one unless she wins the love of a human being. On the power of another hangs her eternal destiny. But the daughters of the air, although they do not possess an immortal soul, can, by their good deeds, procure one for themselves. We fly to warm countries, and cool the sultry air that destroys mankind with the pestilence. We carry the perfume of the flowers to spread health and restoration. After we have striven for three hundred years to all the good in our power, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the happiness of mankind. You, poor little mermaid, have tried with your whole heart to do as we are doing; you have suffered and endured and raised yourself to the spirit-world by your good deeds; and now, by striving for three hundred years in the same way, you may obtain an immortal soul.” The little mermaid lifted her glorified eyes towards the sun, and felt them, for the first time, filling with tears. On the ship, in which she had left the prince, there were life and noise; she saw him and his beautiful bride searching for her; sorrowfully they gazed at the pearly foam, as if they knew she had thrown herself into the waves. Unseen she kissed the forehead of her bride, and fanned the prince, and then mounted with the other children of the air to a rosy cloud that floated through the aether.

“After three hundred years, thus shall we float into the kingdom of heaven,” said she. “And we may even get there sooner,” whispered one of her companions. “Unseen we can enter the houses of men, where there are children, and for every day on which we find a good child, who is the joy of his parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened. The child does not know, when we fly through the room, that we smile with joy at his good conduct, for we can count one year less of our three hundred years. But when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of sorrow, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial!”

## Question Time

### Learning Area:

Literacy / Theatre / Music / Performing Arts / Science & Technology / Art / Values Education

**Outcome:** To prepare the students for asking quality questions after the show and in life.

**Materials:** Discussion in classroom and writing

### Information:

At the end of each show, when time permits, Alpha's performers come back on stage to give the children an opportunity to ask questions.

If you have specific children who did not get their questions answered, you are more than welcome to bring them to us whilst we are packing up, to talk to us. We welcome and encourage the performers to have the maximum possible contact time with students. We are also very happy to provide autographs and personal messages to each child.

You may have had actors in your school before who answer questions after their performance.

Here is how we do it differently:

- ★ It is almost 'part of the show'.
- ★ We have a voiceover introduction and 'pump-up' music before the actors come back out on stage. It is always important that children are in a 'peak state' to ask and answer questions
- ★ The actors will come out in costume, but as 'themselves' (not in character). They will remain energised and enthusiastic, rather than showing fatigue (even if the Actors themselves are fatigued at all)



**Activity:**

Get the students to brainstorm various question 'areas'. There are multiple types of questions to ask, that coincide with the possible Learning Areas above. Then brainstorm 1 or 2 great questions in each area.

You may want to also run the 'sensory acuity' activity below.

It's important to reinforce the purpose of the question time. Ask them what they think their focus should be during the time. If they ask a question that is silly, the purpose of that would be to make people laugh. If they ask a question where the whole audience finds out some really great valuable information, the purpose is to provide a worthwhile and beneficial experience for the whole audience. We reward 'clever questions' so the more preparation, the more reward!

You can then follow up with a discussion about how a great truth in life is the importance of questions and how they effect our lives.

## **The quality of life is in direct proportion to the quality of the questions we ask, especially those we ask on a consistent basis**

So mastering this area of our life is imperative. If we're always asking a question like 'why do I always get it wrong', our brain comes up with an answer ('cause you're an idiot!'). If we ask quality questions like, 'How can I do my best and have fun at the same time?' you'll always come up with a better answer!

### EXAMPLES of QUESTION AREAS POSSIBLE TO ASK US ABOUT:

- ★ So **Literacy questions** are about the story, how we told it, the script, the humour, our version of the story and our choices we made.
- ★ **Theatre questions** are about the show, bringing theatre into a school etc.
- ★ **Music questions** are about our song selections, the live singing, how we learnt to sing etc.
- ★ **Performing Arts questions** are about acting, role playing, creating a character, character choices, how we got cast, auditions, the experience of being an actor.
- ★ **Science & technology questions** are about the set, how we built them, the construction methods we used, how long it took, how we planned to do it, what skills were needed etc.
- ★ **Art questions** are about the costumes and the set painting.
- ★ **Values Education questions** are about the embedded messages in the show, the role models of the performers and what we hoped the children learnt during the show about how to live life with passion, enthusiasm and success.



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### Rehearsals and Preparation

- \*How long does it take to rehearse?
- Where do you rehearse the show?
- \*Who makes up the dances?
- \*Who writes the shows?
- Was it hard to learn your lines?

### The Set-up

- \*How long does it take to set the set up?
- \*Who made/painted the sets?
- What's behind the set?
- Where did you get the costumes?
- How do you get changed so quickly?
- \*Where does the smoke come from?
- \*How do the lights/music/sound work?
- Were the swords real?

### Little Mermaid Specific

- \*\*\*Why was the Sea Witch so mean?
- How did the magic work?
- \*\*\*Why was the King so angry?
- \*\*\*Why did Ariel lie so much?
- \*\*\*Why did Ariel lose her voice?
- \*\*\*Why is it important to tell the truth? Surely it's not that big a deal?

### The Company

- \*\*What other shows does Alpha do?
- How many shows have you done?
- \*Which show are you doing next year?
- \*\*\*Why do you do shows like this in schools?
- Whose idea was it to perform in schools?
- \*Do you perform anywhere in the school holidays?

### The Performers

- \*How did you all get to be in the show?
- \*What acting training have you done?
- \*Where/How did you learn to dance/sing?
- How old are you?
- \*How does it feel to be an actor?
- \*Do you get scared/nervous?
- Have you ever been on TV?
- \*What other shows have you been in?
- \*What is your favourite thing about performing?
- What is your favourite colour?
- What is your hair like?

Please note: "Question Time" sessions are an extra value in addition to the show your school has purchased from Alpha, provided free of charge – as a result, we cannot guarantee that we will have time – especially if we have another school to go to afterwards, or if it is already too close to the end of your school day. If this is the case, please feel free to allow children to speak to the performers as they pack up.

## Alpha-Writing



**Learning Area:** Literacy

**Outcome:** To engage children in passionate creative writing in response to the Alpha Show.

**Materials:** Writing materials

**Information:** Alpha shows can inspire much enthusiasm and creativity. Harness this energy to create amazing creative writing!

**Activity:**

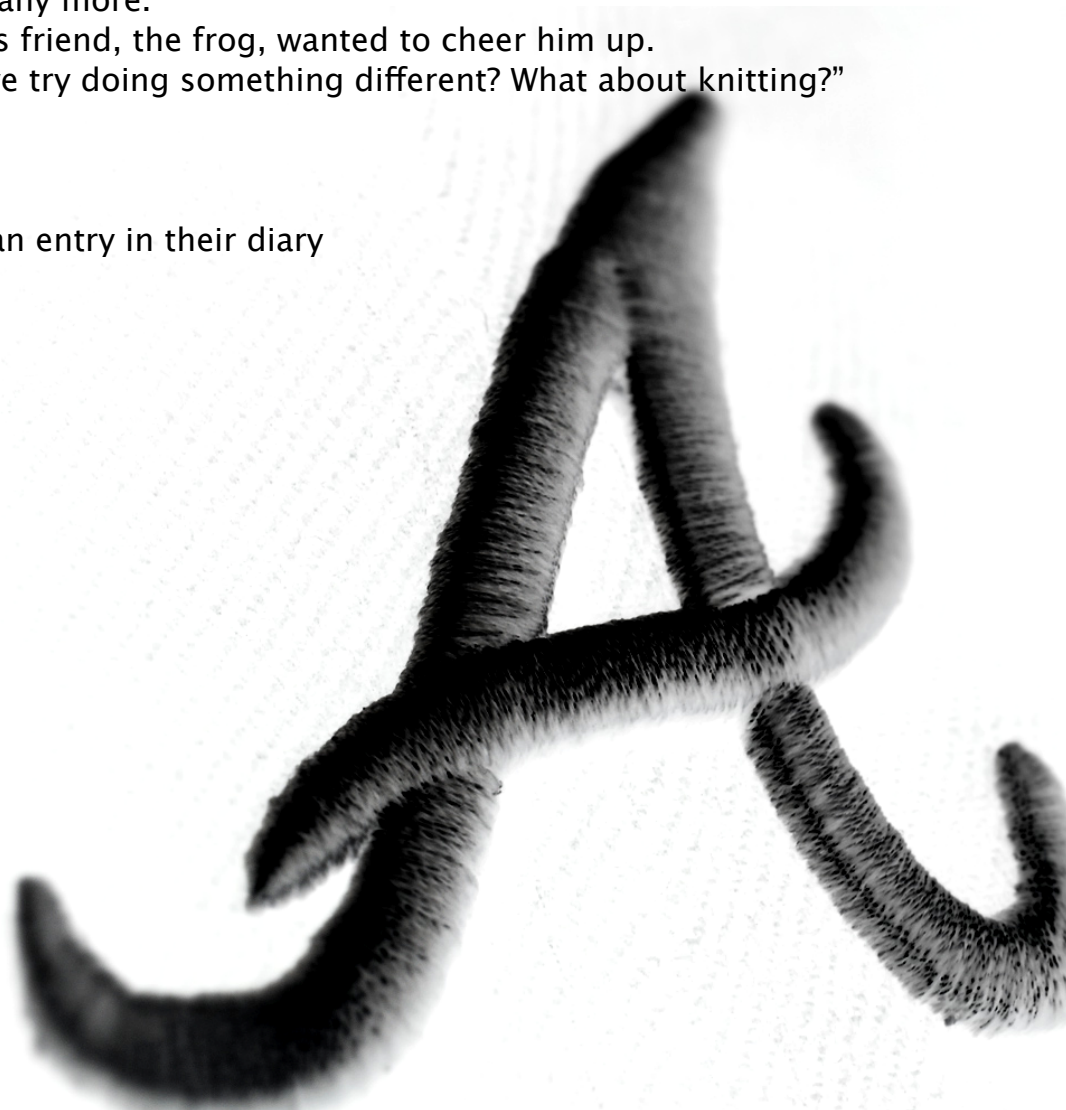
**For K-2:**

Storytelling. Seat them in a circle and using one of our story starters below, begin the story. One by one in the circle, the children can contribute a line to the story, each taking the story in their own crazy direction.

- ie.
- 1) Once there was a rabbit who loved to dance.
  - 2) He would dance all around his little house.
  - 3) Then he fell and broke his leg!
  - 4) So he couldn't dance any more.
  - 5) He was so sad that his friend, the frog, wanted to cheer him up.
  - 6) He said, "Why don't we try doing something different? What about knitting?" and so on and so on.)

**For Gr 3-4:**

Choose a character and write an entry in their diary



## Alpha-Writing (continued...)

For Gr 5-6



1. Write a newspaper article about the events of the story, 'Extra Extra, princess falls asleep for 100 years!' "Australia's most wanted - Evil Witch Maleficent"
2. Write your own Fairytale, play or pantomime, brainstorm the elements of these stories ie  
Characters: an evil magical person, a good magical person, a mother, a wolf, a prince, a princess, a cow, a king, a narrator, a grandmother, a boy/girl, a fairy, a goblin, a bossy person  
Place: a castle, a dark wood, a cottage, a cloud in the sky, up a tree, in the city,  
Events: falling asleep, getting married, running away, meeting a magical creature, finding treasure  
Then put it all together! Remember the happy ending!
3. Choose from one of our 'Story Starters' to create their own fairy tale.

### Story Starters:

- ★ Once upon a time, in a deep dark wood, in a teeny tiny cottage with a straw roof, lived a big rat. His name was Claude.
- ★ Deep, deep down in the ocean as I was minding my own business...
- ★ Way back in the back hills where even the ants didn't go, I remember...
- ★ In old grandmother's trunk there was a ...
- ★ There once was a rabbit who loved to dance
- ★ My grandmother used to tell me home is where the heart is. I did not understand what she meant by that until one stormy night when ...
- ★ Long ago, in a faraway place, there was a land filled with wonder. In this fantastic place there was a little girl. She was very special, for she had magic...
- ★ It started out just like any other school day. I finished the last soggy pieces of cereal from my bowl full of milk. (I always pour too much!) But as I grabbed my coat and ran out the door, I couldn't believe my eyes!





## Alpha Shows Performance Style

Learning Area: Literacy / Performing Arts / Theatre



**Outcome:** To develop an understanding of Alpha's traditions, our conventions and how to be an ideal audience to enrich the experience of an Alpha Show. **This section is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for all teachers to use with all students to ensure maximum value.**

**Information:** Alpha Shows allow the students to be free and to yell out and talk to the characters.

Alpha's versions of stories are usually significantly different than anything they have seen before. Explore the value of doing this with your children, and how using theatre and our special format of theatre helps bring new life to classic stories.

### Energy and Pace

You may like to look at how the energy and pace of the show varied considerably, to parts with only dialogue, to lots of songs, to slow bits, to parts where a LOT was happening all at once... this is all part of the theatre experience and also necessary for children to have parts where they can tune out for a moment and chat to each other, and to let it integrate into their subconscious, and take a break! The structure of the shows is all done on purpose. Generally Alpha shows are high energy and pace, to ensure children don't get bored. They are far more impatient than an adult audience, as they pick up on the crux of a scene immediately and don't always need all the details.

**Therefore, we always speak fast, move each scene along quickly etc (which can sometimes be too fast for adults!).**

HOWEVER, you could prep your children in advance to ensure they are listening at the right times, and not taking advantage of the style of the show which allows them essentially to do what they like. You can use the following activity for this purpose or your own way of teaching awareness of when to listen and when to actively participate. **This is up to you – as the actors will not 'punish' children for being loud and having fun during the show.** If you think they should listen, prepare them to do so in advance (not at the show by shooshing as this is too distracting)

### Activity: Screaming & Listening

To get an idea of what an Alpha show is like

Ask a simple question, like, 'do you think Arthur can do it?'. Prepare them in advance, to yell yes at the tops of their voices, scream, do 'wohoo's' or whatever else. And then visibly and physically 'cut' them, and see how fast they can stop and listen again. As soon as you 'cut' them, tell them some hard to remember information, and test to see who remembered it. This is a great game for preparing them for what an Alpha show is like and how they'll be yelling out at some points, and listening at others.

### Activity: Sensory Acuity Game

You should also promote the skill of 'sensory acuity' so they know when it is NOT time to 'yell out'! Sensory acuity is a useful skill in all areas of life!

You could play a game where children pair up and one tells a story and the other, without speaking, gives the storyteller cues about what they're feeling, whether they like the story or hate it, or other things. You, as the teacher/facilitator, can come round holding up cards behind the storyteller like "You need to go to the toilet" to tell the non-talker what to 'act out'. After it's over you can see how much the storyteller picked up about the other person, by using their skills of 'Sensory Acuity'.



## Alpha's audience participation elements

Learning Area: Literacy / Performing Arts / Theatre



**Outcome:** To become very familiar with the specific chances to participate in the show

### **Information:**

Alpha Shows borrow from the pantomime genre many traditions which increase the level of audience participation eg. "He's behind you" and "Ohhh no you're not" etc. as well as 'booing the villain'. The cliché's and most traditions of pantomime are always honoured by Alpha shows – and we also have created new ways for an audience to interact with us, most specifically, with the 'closed eye processes' in the show as well as other fun creations we've had over the years.



Discuss how we use this as a tool to create fun in stories in ways not possible with other formats, especially non-live formats (you wouldn't bother booing a villain in a TV show, as they can't hear you! How boring is that!). Vocal participation by children is important in our shows, and whilst our stories will structure it and educate how it works during the show in the best way possible, initially children may not realise they can yell out – especially if your group is very well behaved, it may be a new experience for them!

You can encourage and let them know it is part of the experience to join in with the singing, dancing, the booing and being a part of the story by answering questions – we'll remind them during the show as well.

On the other hand, some children will take the opportunity too far, and whilst our shows are structured in the best way possible to control over-the-top participation, you may like to also discuss how your children should recognise when to yell-out and when not to. As mentioned, it's a great skill to learn for life in general! The activity above will help with this.

If you want to know more about the history of pantomime, visit this website. Note however, that Alpha shows are not really a pantomime, we just borrow a few techniques from the genre. We discourage the use of the word 'pantomime' in conjunction with the show.

**Visit the following website for more info on pantomime genre:**

<http://www.its-behind-you.com/history.html>



## ACTIVITY: Alpha's audience participation elements



You can practice all the different Alpha traditions in class. It makes the show extra fun if children have a few clichés that they can look for and really get excited about doing. Try these out:

1. **“Oh no you’re not”**. At some stage during the show, the villain will ask a question like “I am the most gorgeous beauty in the entire world, aren’t I boys and girls?”. The audience’s response should be “Oh no you’re not!”. The villain then responds with “Oh yes I am”, audience with “Oh no you’re not”, etc. It repeats 3 times at which point the story moves on. **Not every show uses this as it can drag on a bit.**
2. **“He’s Behind You”**. This is where a character is looking for another character and can’t find them, but the audience CAN see the other character. At one point, the other character will be behind them, and will ask “Where is he boys and girls?” At this point, the audience should respond with “He’s behind you!”
3. **“BOOING THE VILLAIN”**. Whilst we agree that ‘booing’ isn’t something that should be encouraged in normal day to day life, it is a time honoured tradition and we believe we should keep it. It is also a brilliant way for the audience to band together in opposition to what the villain represents – ie. nastiness, selfishness and being mean! Remember to remind the children to be aware of when to stop ‘booing’ so that the story can continue. In King Arthur, there is NO villain to begin with. So booing will not be necessary for most of it, until they start acting like a villain (which will be obvious). Talk to your students about this.
4. **Answering Questions**. In addition, the audience will help the characters along the way with anything from simple ‘yes’s’ to sometimes more involved answers or repeating things. It will usually seem like the audience is actually affecting the action (sometimes they really are!). It’s great when an audience altogether really believes this so try to explain how they are part of the story and can involve themselves.
5. **“Say Yes!”**. During all of our shows, we have the audience repeating phrases or otherwise engaging in helping one of the characters ‘grow’ and expand on the lesson of the story. Whilst doing this, the audience learns new things about themselves and the world. It will usually involve ‘standing up’ as an audience. Encourage them to play full out during these sequences, as these sequences are the chance to have the most beneficial experience from our show, the chance to become ‘stronger’ or ‘more awesome’ in every way – surely something all children are interested in deep down. It will often involve STANDING TALL, strong and focussed (ie. Not talking, and not fooling around with their friends), Saying “YES” in a really powerful and strong way, squeezing their fist or putting their hand on their heart, and repeating a certain personal development phrase like “I feel good” (different for every show). It’s important for teachers to participate in these sequences too, and encourage all students to stand up and do it too. If you know of certain students who are unlikely to participate, have them seated at the sides near you, and ensure they are not distracting or discouraging other students to get the value out of the process.



## Important notes on participation



WE LOVE THE AUDIENCE TO PARTICIPATE AS SPECIFIED ABOVE, AND USUALLY HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH FULL PARTICIPATION FROM KINDER STUDENTS RIGHT THROUGH TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. WE ALSO ENCOURAGE FULL PARTICIPATION AT ALL TIMES DURING THE SHOW. WE LOVE THE RANDOM CALL OUTS FROM THE AUDIENCE. IT KEEPS US ON OUR TOES AND HELPS US GROW AS PERFORMERS AS WELL!

IF IT'S ACTUALLY UNDERSTANDABLE AND FEASIBLE, THE ACTORS WILL ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS WHAT WAS SAID AND GO WITH IT, MUCH TO EVERYONE'S AMUSEMENT! SO AGAIN, AN IMPORTANT POINT – AS LONG AS A CHILD ISN'T BEING OBSCENE, IF THEY YELL OUT RANDOM STUFF, YOU CAN USUALLY ENJOY THE ACTORS RESPONDING WITH THAT AND HAVING SOME FUN.

PLEASE DON'T TELL THEM TO SHOOSH AS IT SPOILS IT FOR THEM AND WE DON'T GET A CHANCE TO PLAY WITH THEM IN A UNIQUE WAY FOR YOU! IT ALSO GENERATES A NEGATIVE ANCHOR TO PARTICIPATING IN 'THEATRE'.

ALTHOUGH REMEMBER TO WATCH FOR CHILDREN TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY TOO FAR AND SPOILING THE PLOT AND NON-PARTICIPATIVE MOMENTS. THIS MAY REQUIRE THAT YOU MOVE CHILDREN OR YES, EVEN SHOOSH THEM SURREPTITIOUSLY.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE CAST BY ENSURING CHILDREN ARE GENERALLY BEING WELL BEHAVED & POLITE**



## 'Fly Away' final  song



**Learning Area:** Music

**Outcome:** To increase skills in performance, singing and music. To enhance the show by teaching and learning Alpha's final  song so that everyone can join in at the end with every Alpha Show.

**Information:**

The final song in the show is just great to join in with, so it's up to you how much you decide to take advantage of this special event visiting your school. The song is our original song first used in 2009, so once we've performed it for a while you'll start to know it. You can speed this process up by practicing in class.

**Activity:**

Learn or listen to the song "Fly Away" by Alpha Shows - it's Alpha's finale for all our shows. You could even choreograph a dance to the song and join in at the end. We punch our fists in the air for the 'Say Yes' parts. You can download off our website the song in the Downloads section, and/or it may be included in your Touring Pack. <http://www.alphashows.com.au/downloads/>

The lyrics are on the next page.

For an advanced activity, have your children go to:

<http://www.alphashows.com.au/curriculum/> or <http://www.alphashows.com.au/theatre-in-education/>

And analyse the curriculum content of the shows as shown on the curriculum page above. Then look at the lyrics, and ask the following questions:

1. What do you notice about all the lyrics?
2. This was Alpha's first song we wrote entirely fresh (without using inspiration of another song and backing track etc). In the past we have not done this, as we wanted the audience to always recognise and automatically be able to sing along with every song in the show. Do you think having an original song as our finale will work? Why?
3. Go through the lyrics and match up each one to one of the values messages listed on the curriculum web page on our website. Each core value relates to 1 particular show, but they also cross over. Some lyrics are just simply lyrical and musical or related to fun as well, or just a general positive message.
4. Now that you've matched up the lyrics with each value, do you think the song is successful in covering all of the shows core messages and wrapping them up nicely?
5. Why do you think we used the words "SAY YES" repeatedly throughout the song in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choruses? What is the relevance of getting an audience to say YES? This was very similar to the old song we used, do you remember what word we used there (based on the S Club 7 song we borrowed for our finale). Do you think SAY YES is a better message? Why?
6. Learn the chorus and choreograph a dance, and perform it for your class. If you have access to the real song, download it and learn it properly. We look forward to seeing you join in with us at the end of the show!

# FLY AWAY – ALPHA SHOWS

Lyrics by Toby Wilkins, Ben Jackson & Katja Glieson

Music by Toby Wilkins

Arranged & Produced by Ben Jackson

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When you're feeling blue  
I'll be there to see you through  
You've got a friend in me  
Because I've got a friend in you  
And if you think you've lost your way  
Don't worry cause I'm here to stay  
And we will laugh our cares away

Tomorrow is a brand new day  
If you look inside you'll see  
The way to let yourself be free  
With life before us,  
All part of one great chorus

If you look inside your heart  
You'll see that you and me  
Are destined for the start of  
something wonderful

And so we'll fly  
Fly Away Now  
Yes we'll fly  
It's a brand new day now  
We'll fly where our hearts take us  
Nobody's gonna make us  
Come back down  
We'll Fly away now  
To the ground  
I can say now  
That if you be you and I'll be me  
There's nothing that we can't be

You have got the strength  
To make a brand new day  
When you leave the past behind  
you  
There'll be nothing in your way

There's something out there just  
for you  
That's where you'll find your  
hopes come true

There's so much more that we  
can do  
But we will get each other  
through

If you feel that you may fall  
Then I'll help you, you'll help us  
all

Follow all your hopes and  
dreams

Have the courage to believe

And say YES!  
Fly away now

SAY YES!

To a brand new day now  
You create your path  
Choose to follow your own heart

And say YES!  
Fly away now  
SAY YES!

To all that comes your way now  
Find the light so you can see  
Let your heart shine bright and  
free

Together we are one  
On our journey to what we'll  
become

We'll all play our part

You'll be my hero and I'll be your  
heart

And we'll find

When it's time  
Say YES!  
Be all you can be  
Say YES!  
And stand tall with me  
Say YES!  
Look inside of you  
Say YES!  
Then see what you can do

And say YES!  
Fly away now  
SAY YES!  
To a brand new day  
now

You create your path  
Choose to follow  
your own heart

And say YES!

Fly away now

SAY YES!

To all that comes  
your way now

Find the light so you  
can see

Let your heart shine  
bright and free  
AND SAY YES!  
(repeat chorus)