

## MY LITTLE ARIEL

A Play by Hanaan Louis

### CHARACTERS

ARIEL

She is a mermaid and is also Eric's sister (unbeknownst to either of them). She is innocent and curious, but not stupid. She is duplicitous as well. She loves Eric and is fascinated by him.

ERIC

A prince in hiding. He is currently poor and lives in a hovel with Albert. He loves Ariel. He is unknowingly Ariel's brother.

(In scene 6, ERIC was arguing with ALBERT in their hovel about ERIC not doing chores. ERIC reminds ALBERT that he is still a prince that he should be treated with respect. ALBERT, who was a former personal guard of ERIC's royal family is now a drunk and takes charge. ERIC storms out and does work around the hovel.

#### SCENE 7

(ARIEL and ERIC are still getting to know each other. This is their second meeting.)

(ERIC's hovel is about a 4-5 hour walk from The Calmest Hill which is where Ariel and Eric like to meet, and where Ariel was dropped as a baby. After his argument with ALBERT, ERIC takes care to finish his chores early each day, so that he can be at the Calmest Hill by midday, but Ariel does not come back. Still he goes.)

ARIEL

(Rising to the surface beneath the mountain)

You are here!

ERIC

(Wading into the shallows to sit near her)

I have been here every day since last we met. Where were you?

ARIEL

My father forbade me coming here again. He feels humans are evil.

ERIC

Did you tell him of me?

ARIEL

No. I wanted to. But I feared he would find some way to stop me. Are you evil?

ERIC

Most certainly not! Are you?

ARIEL

I do not think so. I do not believe in evil in any case.

ERIC

But you *are* magical.

ARIEL

I do not know. My father found me as I am.

ERIC

Oh.

(Looking at her face and hair and her bare arms)

I am very glad you returned. I thought of you every day.

ARIEL

And I you. Eric I must ask you something. Are there ones like me in your world?

ERIC

Like you? No. Fish live in the sea. Just as I imagined that there are no humans living where you are.

ARIEL

No. There is just me and Father and Mother.

ERIC

So you see no one? No one like me? No male fish your age? What is your age?

ARIEL

I like these questions. No one ever asks me things. I see no one but Mother and Father. No one my age. No one at all. I am sixteen.

ERIC

(Satisfied)

I am eighteen. I see no one either, save Albert, my guardian. Tell me of your life?

ARIEL

I do not believe there is much to tell. I sit with my father sometimes, and my mother sometimes, but I get so bored and lonely. They are content to sit their thrones and do nothing. I like to explore the sea. But now there is you. And you are very interesting. Can I explore you?

ERIC

How do you mean? That sounds improper.

ARIEL

(Frowning)

I do not know what improper is to you, but I wish to ask you questions. All sorts of questions. I want to touch your legs. You look so dry. How do you breathe being so dry? I think I would die without the water.

ERIC

(Lifting a handful of water)

I would die if I lived in this. Ask me anything.

ARIEL

Is Albert your father?

ERIC

No, and thank the gods. He is a bitter old man. My father was a King, my mother the Queen. They ruled the kingdom beyond this hill. They are dead now.

ARIEL

Oh. That is sad. Is Albert evil?

ERIC

Alas, no. Would that he were. It would make hating him so much easier. He is just a man. A flawed man who wishes things could be the way they were.

ARIEL

Oh, I see.

(Thinking)

What do you do? Do you explore your world?

ERIC

Do? Why, nothing. I live worse than a peasant. I grow vegetables for food, or trade them for more food if ALBERT has not already traded them for wine. I make repairs to our hovel, or else mend the wagon when it needs mending. That is my life. And no life for a prince.

ARIEL

Is that why you wished to die?

ERIC

(Looking down)

Yes. I hate my life. Or I used to. Before I met you. Say you will come every day. You promised to come every day.

ARIEL

I will. This time I will. I should like to see a wagon. And vegetables. And everything in your life. Your life sounds far more interesting than mine. May I touch your legs?

ERIC

(Coloring in embarrassment)

All right. But they are just legs.

(Straightens his legs out before her)

ARIEL

(Sits up from her prone position)

ERIC

(Gasping)

You are topless!

ARIEL

(Looking down at herself)

I suppose I am. Is that wrong in some way?

ERIC

It is the height of indecent!

ARIEL

(Sad)

Do you want me to go?

ERIC

(Controlling himself with an effort)

No. No. I am sorry. You do not live as I do. So I cannot expect you to understand clothing. But...perhaps you can arrange your hair to cover your...your...to cover that part of yourself.

ARIEL

What, these?

ERIC

(Turning away)

Yes. Those. Please be quick.

ARIEL

(Arranging her hair)

You may look now. I am covered.

ERIC

(Moving one leg near her hand)

Touch then.

ARIEL

(Runs one hand up and down his leg)

It is so hard. Does it hurt?

ERIC

(Face now scarlet)

Not at all. Though the feel of your hand is more than pleasant. May I touch you in turn?

ARIEL

(Smiling)

Is it not improper?

ERIC

It is...

ARIEL

(Puts her tail in Eric's lap)

ERIC

Oh. It is slimy...yet scaly.

ARIEL

Your hand is very hot.

ERIC

And your tail is very cold.

(They spend some minutes stroking each other)

ARIEL

(Feeling odd)

I like you, Eric. I like you very much.

ERIC

I like you too. More than like. I wish you were human. So that you could be with me on land. I would show you wagons and vegetables and even my ass.

ARIEL

I would like that very much.

(Takes her tail off his lap)

But I must go. The sun is setting.

ERIC

(Regretful)

So must I. The longer Albert sits alone, the longer he has to drink. Say you will come every day.  
Say you will come tomorrow.

ARIEL

I will come tomorrow and everyday afterward. Goodbye Eric!

ERIC

(Watches her disappear into the waves)

Goodbye...

(End scene)