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Dramatic Publishing

SEAGIRL

BY
FRANCIS ELITZIG



SEAGIRL

This charming play has received ovations and long runs at the Honolulu Youth Theatre, the California Theatre Center and the Rhode Island International Children's Theatre Festival.

Seagirl has been toured since 1987 by
The Merry-Go-Round Theatre
in over 15 different seasons.

Fantasy. By Francis Elitzig (aka David Eliet). Based on a Chinese folk tale. Cast: 1w., 3 either gender (one to be the musician) with doubling, or up to 12 (1w., 11 either gender). A dragon lands on Horse Ear Mountain, and the river in the valley dries up. Seagirl goes up the mountain to discover what has happened. At the top, she finds a great lake blocked by an enchanted gate. A wild goose tells her to find the golden key. Parrots tell her she must first find the dragon king's third daughter. And the peacock tells her where the third daughter lives. The third daughter takes Seagirl underwater to a palace where the golden key is kept. Seagirl risks her life to obtain the key. Together the two girls open the gate. Unit set. The set is a playing space defined by carpet. All props and costumes surround the edges. Roles are gender-neutral with the exception of Seagirl. Approximate running time: 50 minutes. Code: ST7.

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Seagirl



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Based on a Chinese folk tale.

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FRANCIS ELITZIG IS THE PEN NAME USED BY DAVID F. ELIET FOR
HIS SCRIPTS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES.
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PRODUCTION HISTORY

SEAGIRL played 80 performances in an 8 week period in May and July of 1986. Included in this schedule were 5 performances at the International Children's Theatre Festival in Rhode Island, and 2 performances at the Great Woods Performing Arts Center (one of these was for the Educational Forum). The Perishable Theatre revived the show for its 1989 - 1990 winter season.

In 1988 the show was toured by The Honolulu Theatre for Youth, playing over 100 performances.

From 1987 - 1991, SEAGIRL was toured by The Merry-Go-Round Theatre in New York State.

In 1989 the show was toured by the California Theatre Center.

CHARACTERS

SEAGIRL was created for three actors and one musician/prop master.
The original cast was as follows:

SEAGIRLSharon O'Neil

ACTOR #1, CHIAO, CHAN, RED PARROT,
PEACOCK, DRAGON John Thayer

ACTOR #2, YINGT'AI, WILD GOOSE, PARROT,
REFLECTION, THIRD DAUGHTER,
DRAGON Catherine Gabriele

MUSICIAN, STAGE MANAGER. Giuliano Hazan

The show can be performed with more actors and a version of the parrot scene in the appendix is for three actors.

SEAGIRL

The set consists of a playing space defined by a carpet. All the props and costumes are around the edges of the rug.

*The musician begins.
The three actors come to the center of the playing space.*

ACTOR #1: Once, a long time ago, before there were automobiles, airplanes, televisions, and Chicken McNuggets, when the Dragon Kings still lived in a country far, far away called China, there was a child named Seagirl, who lived with her father at the foot of Horse Ear Mountain.

ACTRESS PLAYING SEAGIRL: For as long as anyone could remember, Seagirl's family had lived in the valley at the foot of the mountain, farming the rich land.

ACTOR #2: Seagirl was very happy and she had many friends.

ACTOR #1: Until one day -
(Wind sounds and other dragon noises begin)

YINGT'AI: Seagirl, Seagirl, what is that sound?

SEAGIRL: I don't know. But it frightens me.
(Sound begins to peak)

YINGT'AI: Seagirl, Seagirl, why is the sun growing dark? And what is that wind?

SEAGIRL: I don't know, but now I am very scared. Quickly, we must hide.
(The Dragon King appears)

YINGT'AI: Seagirl. Seagirl. Look! Look there!

SEAGIRL: It is a great Dragon Lord.

(The dragon disappears)

YINGT'AI: He is landing on the mountain.

SEAGIRL: Quickly, we must run to the village and warn the people.

(Entrance of Chiao)

CHIAO: A Dragon King and all his followers? What tales you tell, my child.

SEAGIRL: But it's true, Father. We saw it Yingt'ai, didn't we?

YINGT'AI: Yes. Yes. We did.

SEAGIRL: First there was this strange sound, it was very frightening, and then the sun grew all black, and finally there was this terrible wind. I looked up and I saw him. He landed on the mountain.

CHIAO: There are no such things as dragons. What you saw was a cloud passing in front of the sun, and what you heard was thunder.

SEAGIRL: No, Father. We promise. Don't we?

YINGT'AI: *(No reply)*

SEAGIRL: Yingt'ai? !

YINGT'AI: Maybe your father is right. Maybe it was just a cloud. Maybe we just thought it was a Dragon Lord. *(To audience)* I would rather it was a cloud than a dragon.

SEAGIRL: But it wasn't just a cloud. It wasn't.

CHIAO: Sssh. Calm down, child, and think. What would a Dragon King be doing on Horse Ear Mountain? It is just a little mountain. A great Dragon Lord wouldn't want to live there, would he?

SEAGIRL: I guess not.

CHIAO: See. Now come and help me in the fields.

(Seagirl and Chiao exit)

ACTOR #2: A few weeks later, a strange thing began to happen in the valley. The river began to dry up. And all the crops began to die.

(Seagirl and Chan enter)

CHAN: My father says that something has happened to the river, that maybe it has changed course, and soon this whole valley will become a desert.

YINGT'AI: Well, my mother says something evil is going on. What do you think, Seagirl?

SEAGIRL: I think it's the Dragon King.

(Chan and Yingt'ai react derisively)

I do. I think he has done something to the water.

CHAN: Like what?

SEAGIRL: Well . . .

YINGT'AI: Maybe he drank it all.

CHAN: Or used it to put out his fire.

(Chan and Yingt'ai laugh)

SEAGIRL: What if he did?

YINGT'AI: But there is no dragon.

SEAGIRL: But we saw it.

YINGT'AI: It was a cloud.

SEAGIRL: No.

YINGT'AI: What does your father say?

(Actor playing Chan Transforms into Chiao . Yingt'ai leaves the playing area)

CHIAO: You are a silly little girl who should know better.

SEAGIRL: Father . . .

CHIAO: Ssssh. I have something to tell you.

SEAGIRL: What?

CHIAO: We have to get ready to leave.

SEAGIRL: Leave? Where are we going?

CHIAO: Over the mountain to the city.

SEAGIRL: The city! ?

CHIAO: There is no longer any hope in staying here, my child. Every day more and more of the crops die. Soon there will be nothing left to harvest, and when the winter comes we will starve. Already families have started to go away.

SEAGIRL: How will we live?

CHIAO: We will cut bamboo for brooms along the way, and when we get to the city, we will sell them to buy our food and pay for shelter.

SEAGIRL: Will we never come back?

CHIAO: I don't know. Now, go say good-bye to your friends.

(Yingt'ai enters. Actor playing Chiao transforms into Chan)

YINGT'AI: Good-bye Seagirl.

SEAGIRL: Good-bye.

YINGT'AI: I'll miss you.

CHAN: I won't. One less girl around, always ruining the fun.

YINGT'AI: That's not true. Take it back.

CHAN: No. I won't.

YINGT'AI: I said, take it back.

(She moves threateningly towards him)

CHAN: No.

(She twists his arm behind his back until he yells)

All right. All right. I take it back. *(He whimpers)*

SEAGIRL: It's okay Chan, but even if you don't miss me, I'll miss you.

CHAN: Don't say that.

YINGT'AI: Such a baby.

CHAN: I am not.

SEAGIRL: Don't fight, my friends, not when I am about to leave.

YINGT'AI: We'll all be leaving soon.

SEAGIRL: And all because of that Dragon.

YINGT'AI: Don't start that again.

SEAGIRL: Come with me. The three of us will go up the mountain, and find him.

CHAN: And then what?

SEAGIRL: I don't know.

YINGT'AI: Seagirl, we don't even know if there is a Dragon, and even if there was one, who knows if he's to blame for what happened?

SEAGIRL: It won't hurt to try. Will you come with me?

CHAN: Up the mountain?

YINGT'AI: He won't go. He's afraid.

CHAN: I am not.

SEAGIRL: Then you'll go?

CHAN: I would, even if I knew there was a Dragon. But I can't right now. I think I hear my mother calling. I have to help her get wood for the fire. Coming, Mother. Good-bye, Seagirl. *(Chan exits)*

YINGT'AI: *(Calling after him)* Coward!

SEAGIRL: And what about you?

YINGT'AI: No, Seagirl, I won't go.

SEAGIRL: Why not?

YINGT'AI: Because maybe there are such things as Dragons, but I like thinking they're only make-believe.

CHIAO: *(Calling from off the rug)* Seagirl. It's time to go.

SEAGIRL: That's my father.

CHIAO: Seagirl! Where are you?

SEAGIRL: *(To audience)* I have to go up the mountain. I have to because if there's anything I can do to save the valley, then I must try and do it.

- CHIAO: Seagirl. Answer me.
- YINGT'AI: What about your father?
- SEAGIRL: Tell him I've gone up the mountain, and if I don't return in a few days, he should leave without me.
- (Seagirl exits.)*
- CHIAO: Seagirl. Seagirl. Seagirl.
- ACTOR #2: And so Seagirl climbed up the mountain by an old trail.
- ACTOR #1: Her journey took many hours.
- SEAGIRL: And then it was dark and she could travel no further, so she lay down and fell fast asleep.
- (Strange noises begin)*
- ACTOR #1: Early the next morning she was awakened by a strange sound.
- SEAGIRL: It seemed to be calling her and she followed it deep into the mountain forest. *(Seagirl travels through the woods)*
- ACTOR #1: All at once, the woods ended and Seagirl found herself standing by a great mountain lake.
- SEAGIRL: Seagirl. Seagirl. Look what you have found. Here there is more than enough water for the valley.
- ACTOR #2: And she followed the shore of the lake until she came to the end.
- ACTOR #1: There she found a stone gate holding the water back so that only a trickle passed over it and into the valley below.

SEAGIRL: So this is why the river has run dry. I was right. The Dragon King, or someone, has built a gate here to hold the water back. I will break the gate open and then everything will be all right. It won't be hard. It's only a bunch of old stones. *(She grabs a stick)* One blow that's all it will take. *(She hits the rocks/nothing happens)* All right two blows, then. *(She hits a second time/nothing happens)* A third one will do it for sure. *(She hits a third time/nothing)* Not even a dent or a scratch. Surely this is a magic gate.

WILD GOOSE: *(Entering with a squawk)* Of course, it's magic. What d'ya think, any old stone gate could hold back all this water?

SEAGIRL: Who are you?

WILD GOOSE: Who do you think I am?

SEAGIRL: I don't have any idea. You look like a wild goose.

WILD GOOSE: Well aren't you the smart one. Got it on the first try. Wild Goose, that's me.

SEAGIRL: But who are you?

WILD GOOSE: This here lake is called Wild Goose Lake, and I have been appointed its custodian. By the way, did you notice how clean it is?

SEAGIRL: I certainly did.

WILD GOOSE: Not a twig or a leaf messing it up.

SEAGIRL: Not one.

WILD GOOSE: No dead fish floating on the surface. No green scum around the edges.

SEAGIRL: It's almost perfect.

WILD GOOSE: *(Squawking)* Almost?!

SEAGIRL: I mean it is. It is perfect. Absolutely perfect.

WILD GOOSE: Well, I guess we know who's been doing his job.

SEAGIRL: And I guess we both know who knows how to open the magic gate.

WILD GOOSE: That we do. That we do.

SEAGIRL: Oh, please, help me. Help me break the spell.

WILD GOOSE: *(Squawking)* Break the spell! Break the spell! *(The Wild Goose starts to fly away)*

SEAGIRL: Don't go. Help me. You must help me.

WILD GOOSE: Break the spell. If you want to break the spell, you'll have to find the golden key. *(The Wild Goose flies off)*

SEAGIRL: The golden key? What golden key? Wait. Come back. Gone. *(Sitting down and talking to her reflection in the water)* This water is so clear I can see myself in it.

(Entrance of the Reflection)

All right, Seagirl, you're just going to have to figure this out.

REFLECTION: *(Rising out of the water)* Okay. Let's go.

SEAGIRL/REFLECTION: *(Mirroring each other)* Wait a minute. Who are you?

REFLECTION/SEAGIRL: I'm you. I'm your reflection.

SEAGIRL/REFLECTION: Then get back in the water -

REFLECTION: *(Breaking out of the mirror)* Where you belong. Don't worry, I will. But first we have to figure this out. Now. If I was a golden key, where would I be?

SEAGIRL: On a key ring or in a box.

REFLECTION: And where would that box be?

SEAGIRL: In a room.

REFLECTION: A room that is where?

SEAGIRL: In a house.

REFLECTION: Do you see any houses around here?

SEAGIRL: No.

REFLECTION: Then think, where else could that golden key be?

SEAGIRL: I know, in a palace. The treasure room of a palace.

REFLECTION: What palace?

SEAGIRL: The Dragon King's palace.

REFLECTION: And do you see a palace around here?

SEAGIRL: No.

REFLECTION: So where else might that palace with that room with that box with the golden key be?

SEAGIRL: In a cave.

REFLECTION: Like where the she-wolf or the tiger lord lives?

SEAGIRL: Yes.

REFLECTION: Well?

SEAGIRL: Well?

REFLECTION: Hadn't you better get going?

SEAGIRL: It could be somewhere else.

REFLECTION: Like where?