



The Girl Fish

Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes

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CHARACTERS

NARRATOR or NARRATORS (one person or more than one person)

CASSANDRA

JOANNE (Cassandra's friend)

PHIL (Cassandra's friend)

BEAUTIFUL FISH

MOM

FISH 1

FISH 2

FISH 3

FISH-QUEEN

GIANT

KING

PRINCE

**Performance notes can be found on the pages following the script*

Scene 1 – Cottage

[Stage Set: If you have a backdrop, paint rolling hills from one edge to the other. Divide the stage into two sections – (1) a cottage; and (2) a riverbank. There will be additional temporary settings; more later on those.]

[The play opens at the cottage. There's a table and three chairs onstage. On the table are three plates, three forks, a large pot, a large spoon, and an oversized "knife" made of plastic or cardboard.]

[The riverbank is arranged with a few free-standing bushes scattered about. A large sheet of blue fabric is laid on the floor near the front of the stage to simulate a river. The fabric should be long enough to fit across the entire stage, or nearly, as it will be used later to represent the ocean. For now, it can be bunched up into a pile on one side of the stage.]

[See Performance Notes for further details on the two areas.]

[NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

Hello, everyone. This play is called "The Girl Fish," a tale from Spain. It is brought to you by *Stories to Grow by*.

[NARRATOR steps forward a couple of steps.]

NARRATOR:

Once there was a fisherman and his wife who lived in a town by a river. The town was called Valencia. Each morning at dawn, the fisherman left and every night he came back with his catch. He and his wife would pick out the best fish for their dinner. The rest, he'd sell at market.

[MOTHER enters and walks to the table.]

[FATHER enters. In one hand he carries a fish and in the other hand, he carries a fishing net.]

FATHER:

Will you look at the size of this trout?

[FATHER holds up the fish admiringly.]

MOTHER:

What a beauty! We'll feast tonight!

FATHER:

I'll clean it for you, my dear. *(brings fish to the table, sets down the net, and pretends to clean the fish).*

MOTHER:

Thank you, love. I'll set the table. Where's Cassandra?

NARRATOR:

Cassandra - that's their daughter. When chores show up, that girl is nowhere to be found.

[CASANDRA enters.]

MOTHER:

(noticing her daughter) Oh, Cassandra! How about giving me a hand with dinner?

CASSANDRA:

Can't, Madre (pronounce: MAH-dreh). I'm busy.

FATHER:

What makes you so busy?

CASSANDRA:

(snaps) I'm just busy, okay? *(starts to leave, then turns around)* Don't worry, Padre. I'll be back in time for dinner.

[CASSANDRA crosses to the riverbank and sits down.]

FATHER:

THAT'S not what I'm worried about.

MOTHER:

Where did we go wrong with her?

FATHER:

Who knows?

[MOTHER and FATHER silently pretend to talk as the action shifts to the riverbank, where Cassandra sits. After a few moments, MOTHER and FATHER quietly exit.]

NARRATOR:

And what was Cassandra up to? *(gestures to riverbank)*

CASSANDRA:

(stretches & yawns then turns to audience) Ah, this is the life!!

[As NARRATOR says the next lines, Cassandra's friends REGINA and LUCAS. The friends pretend to talk and laugh.]

[CASSANDRA and her friends get up and wave goodbye. REGINA and LUCAS exist opposite the side of the cottage.]

NARRATOR:
Must be time for dinner.

[CASSANDRA returns to the cottage, and exits out the opposite stage wing.]

NARRATOR:
The next morning...

[MOTHER enters the cottage, staggering.]

MOTHER:
Whoa! I feel dizzy all of a sudden. (*collapses into the chair*)

[CASSANDRA enters.]

CASSANDRA:
(*notices Mother slouched in a chair*) Madre, what's wrong?

MOTHER:
I don't know! (*puts hand to forehead & moans*) Oh, my! Today I was going to mend your father's fishing net, but... (*groans*) Cassandra, I need you to mend it for me.

CASSANDRA:
What?! Do I have to?

MOTHER:
(*sternly*) Cas-SAN-dra!

CASSANDRA:
Oh, VERY well!

[CASSANDRA picks up net and storms offstage.]

HER:
(*to audience*) If that net really comes back mended, I'll be a fisherman's uncle.

[MOTHER exits, staggering a bit, still feeling dizzy.]

Scene 2- Riverbank

[Stage Set: See prior notes on the set for the riverbank.]

[CASSANDRA enters. She sits down by the riverbank and starts mending.]

NARRATOR:

It's not so easy, when you're not used to this sort of work.

CASSANDRA:

(pricks herself) Ouch!

[REGINA enters. CASSANDRA looks up.]

CASSANDRA:

Regina, hi!

REGINA:

Whatcha doing?

CASSANDRA:

Mending this net.

REGINA:

Drop that! Come with me to market. Cute musicians in town.

CASSANDRA:

Can't! This stupid net.

REGINA:

Too bad. Well, see ya later.

[REGINA exits.]

CASSANDRA:

(sighs) This is the WORST.

[LUCAS enters. CASSANDRA looks up.]

CASSANDRA:

Hey.

LUCAS:

Hey, Cassandra. Coming to market?

CASSANDRA:

I'm suppose to finish sewing this NET. (*puts down net in frustration*)

LUCAS:

(*shrugs*) Suit yourself.

CASSANDRA:

Augh!!

[LUCAS exits.]

CASSANDRA:

(*turns net in her hands, looking over it*) Oh NO, another hole! (*turns net around, looking at other side*) That's it – I've had it. I'm done here.

NARRATOR:

Cassandra hardly noticed the change in the river.

[STAGE HANDS enter. They hold up the blue sheet of fabric and pull it up, about waist high.]

CASSANDRA:

(*stands up*) Hmm, that river looks darker than usual.

NARRATOR:

Well, maybe she noticed it. Anyway, all of a sudden the head of a beautiful fish appeared from the water.

[STAGEHANDS hold out a beautiful fish from behind the blue sheet so only its head is visible, wiggling it as if it were swimming. (See Performance Notes on how to create the fish & the effect.)]

CASSANDRA:

Oh my gosh – I'm going to give this a try!

[CASSANDRA throws the fishing net over the beautiful fish, catches it, and retrieves the net with the fish in it.]

[STAGE HAND covers her/his mouth, or dips below the blue sheet so she/he is completely hidden, and says the next line.]

STAGE HAND:

(*covers mouth to muzzle voice*) You'll be sorry! If you cook that fish for dinner, you'll become a fish yourself!

CASSANDRA:

What? Who said that? That's ridiculous! (*to audience*) My parents will be so impressed with this fish they won't notice the net's not finished.

[CASSANDRA exits with the fish.]

[STAGE HANDS lower blue fabric back to floor.]

Scene 3 - Cottage

[Stage Set: Same as Scene 1.]

NARRATOR:

And they were! They had a delicious dinner that night. Everything was perfect–

[CASSANDRA enters, clutching her stomach.]

NARRATOR:

Not so perfect?

CASSANDRA:

(frantically) I need water, water!

[MOTHER and FATHER enter, following CASSANDRA.]

MOTHER:

Cassandra, what's wrong?

CASSANDRA:

I feel so strange...

FATHER:

What's going on?

CASSANDRA:

I don't know, but I think... I have... to jump in the river now.

[CASSANDRA "flops" across the stage, past the riverbank, and at the edge of the stage pretends to jump, as if diving into the water. There is a splash heard offstage (See Performance Notes for ideas on making the sound).]

FATHER:

Is that some kind of new slang the young people are using?

MOTHER:

(airquotes) "Jump in the river" – whatever could it mean?

FATHER:

Who knows? Maybe she just ate too fast. That's what she gets for bolting up right after eating.

MOTHER:
We've told him a million times.

[MOTHER and FATHER exit.]

Scene 4 – Underwater- the river and the ocean

[Stage Set: STAGE HANDS enter and gather up the two ends of the blue fabric. One STAGE HAND remains on the side of the stage where the riverbank was, while the other STAGE HAND crosses with the fabric, stretching it across the stage. They hold the fabric about shoulder height. (See Performance Notes for ideas on making the fabric easy to hold up for a long while). The action will take place in front of the fabric.]

[Table and chairs are removed from the stage.]

[NARRATOR enters.]

NARRATOR:

Cassandra jumped in the river, all right, - the very same river in which she had caught the fish earlier that day. Only now...

[CASSANDRA enters, swimming. She wears a fish costume. (See Performance Notes on the quick-change nature of her costume switch.) CASSANDRA stops in the middle of the stage, “swimming” in place, and looks at herself.]

CASSANDRA:

I can't believe it – I'm a FISH! I guess I should have listened to that voice when I caught that dumb fish!

[FISH #1, FISH #2 and FISH #3 enter, swimming in a line. They swim past CASSANDRA, in front of her, then turn around, and swim back behind her, stopping at her side. Now all three are swimming in place while they talk.]

FISH #1:

Haven't seen you before. Who are you?

CASSANDRA:

I don't know anymore.

FISH #2:

Is this where we starting guessing?

CASSANDRA:

No. I mean, my name's Cassandra. Or was. I was a human just this morning. But then I ate a fish, and now I AM a fish!

FISH #1:

Welcome to the club. You'll like being a fish. There are lots of fish in the sea. Hmm, seems like I've heard that before..

CASSANDRA:

Wait – I’m not staying a fish, right?

FISH #2:

Why not? “Fish” is the new “human”!

FISH #3:

It’s always nice and cool in here.

CASSANDRA:

It is kind of nice. But wait, I can’t stay this way. I have to get back to my old self!

FISH #1:

Can’t help you there. Maybe the Fish-Queen could.

CASSANDRA:

Who?

FISH #3:

The Fish-Queen! You know, the queen who rules over us.

CASSANDRA:

How could I know? I just got here! But please, where does she live?

FISH #1:

In her palace, of course. Look, we’ll take you. Let’s go!

[FISH #1, FISH #2 and FISH #3 exit, swimming quickly offstage.]

CASSANDRA:

(calling after them) Wait up! I’m still new at this fish thing, and I don’t know how fast I can swim. Hello?!

[CASSANDRA “swims” fast to catch up.]

CASSANDRA:

Well, look at that! I CAN swim very fast! *(calls offstage)* I’m coming!

[CASSANDRA exits.]

Scene 5- Underwater palace

[Stage Set: Same as in Scene 4, however STAGE HAND brings on a shiny throne (See Performance Notes for how to make the throne look shiny and how to make it easily manageable).]

[NARRATOR enters.]

[FISH-QUEEN enters and sits in the throne.]

[As NARRATOR speaks, CASSANDRA and the three FISH enter. CASSANDRA is swimming a little more slowly and is obviously tired.]

NARRATOR:

Cassandra followed the three fish for miles. By the time they reached the Fish-Queen's palace, the girl was exhausted. But there's nothing like being in a real castle to perk up one's spirits, right?

CASSANDRA:

(looking around in awe, getting excited) Wow! A real undersea palace! This must be the most beautiful place under the sea!

FISH-QUEEN:

That may be, my dear. But there was a day when I lived in a palace even more beautiful, on land ... Well, it doesn't help to remember THAT. So, tell me - who are you?

[Before CASSANDRA can answer, FISH #1-#3 answer for her.]

NARRATOR:

And so Cassandra told of how she came to be a fish.

CASSANDRA:

...And that's where I met them. *(gestures to the Fish #1-#3, who excitedly wave)*

FISH-QUEEN:

Ah, Cassandra! We both ended up here, didn't we? I was a queen in those days, my husband was king, and we had a young son.

CASSANDRA:

And what happened, if you don't mind my asking, Your Majesty?

FISH QUEEN:

I'll tell you. One day I was in my royal garden when a giant appeared out of nowhere. He grabbed the crown right off my head. He said he was going to give it to his own daughter and

she'd be queen in my place. He'd make it so my husband and son couldn't tell the difference.

CASSANDRA:

Oh, my!

FISH-QUEEN:

I was filled with despair! I ran to the sea to fling myself in, but before I hit the water a friendly wizard transformed me into a fish. That's when I became the Fish-Queen. And so I must stay. As long as the giant holds my crown.

CASSANDRA:

Didn't you say his daughter had your crown, Your Highness?

FISH-QUEEN:

She did, until recently. She passed away and the Giant has it back again. Same difference anyway, to me. Whatever. It's gone.

CASSANDRA:

Maybe not! Oh good queen, let me help get your crown back.

FISH-QUEEN:

What!? No. This giant is powerful, he's mean. And he's clever, too, more dangerous than most. It's out of the question.

CASSANDRA:

Still, let me try!

FISH-QUEEN:

Why would you do such a thing?

CASSANDRA:

Please?!?

FISH-QUEEN:

You are determined. Well then, all right.

[CASSANDRA gives a silent "victory" expression.]

FISH-QUEEN:

But I will help you. In your journey, you will have the power to wish yourself into any creature you like of the forest, field or stream. You cannot wish to turn human, but you can become any other animal, just by wishing it so.

FISH #2

Cool!

FISH-QUEEN:

But Cassandra, this giant can knock you out in one stroke. Whatever you do, you must be very careful!

CASSANDRA:

I will! Can I start now?

FISH QUEEN:

Well, what can I say? I'll tell you where the giant's castle is, and wish you good luck!

FISH #1:

Yeah, break a fin!

[CASSANDRA exits, pretending to swim.]

[FISH QUEEN and FISH #1-#3 swim off the other way.]

Scene 6- Shoreline, near the mountains

[Stage Set: STAGE HANDS exit with blue fabric. Free-standing bushes are still onstage.]

NARRATOR:

Cassandra swam as fast as she could- which, as she found out, was pretty fast. As she swam, she wondered, "What animal should I turn into once I cross out of the water?"

[CASSANDRA enters, as a deer. (See Performance Notes for ideas on the quick costume change.)]

CASSANDRA:

All I did was think, "I want to be a deer," and now – look at me! (*wobbles her knees*) Oh, I have to get used to these long legs before I try to tackle climbing that mountain!

[CASSANDRA "practices," prancing around a bit awkwardly.]

CASSANDRA:

(*becomes more sure-footed*) That's better!

[PRINCE enters with hunting gear. CASSANDRA and PRINCE both stop and stare at each other. PRINCE begins to raise his rifle.]

CASSANDRA:

(*draws back*) Oh!

PRINCE:

(*lowers rifle and looks more closely*) Your eyes...

CASSANDRA:

Please don't shoot! (*to audience*) I haven't even started yet!

PRINCE:

It's like you're talking to me...

CASSANDRA:

There's something about this hunter–

[They stare at each other for a few seconds. PRINCE lowers his rifle all the way.]

[CASSANDRA, as a deer, begins to walk slowly towards PRINCE, then jumps around him and runs offstage.]

PRINCE:

I swear. Those eyes! That deer seemed like it was trying to speak to me. But that's ridiculous, of course. (*turns to audience*) Right?

[PRINCE exits.]

Scene 7- Various places near the giant's castle/Inside the giant's room

[Stage Set: Same as Scene 6, but a small bed is added on one side of the stage. (See Performance Notes for how to create the bed and make it easily manageable).]

NARRATOR:

Still a deer, Cassandra headed ran very quickly up the mountain to find the giant's castle. She looked everywhere.

[Offstage, CASSANDRA changes from a deer to a parrot (See Performance Notes for costume ideas and quick change suggestions).]

CASSANDRA:

(from offstage) There it is, the giant's castle. But the only opening is through that balcony on the turret. How will I get up there? Oh, I know!

NARRATOR:

What animal will she turn into next?

[CASSANDRA enters as a parrot.]

CASSANDRA:

Wow, I just thought, "I want to be a parrot, and..." Look at me! *("flies" around in circles around the stage, arms flapping up and down)* Wheeeee! *(to audience)* This is the BEST!

[GIANT enters and lies down in bed.]

[CASSANDRA flies across the stage to where the giant sleeps. She is now in the giant's bedroom.]

CASSANDRA:

He's wearing the crown. I could just take it. But what if he wakes up? No, it's better if we work something out. *(loudly)* Ahem! I am here to retrieve the Queen's rightful crown –

[GIANT jumps up.]

GIANT:

What?! Who are you, to talk to me that way? You're a parrot! You ruined my nap!

CASSANDRA:

Sor-REE! I'd appreciate it if you'd just hand over to me that crown and I'll be on my way...

GIANT:

Like I would just give you the crown for nothing!

CASSANDRA:

(to audience) A-HA! Maybe he would give me the crown for SOMETHING. *(to Giant)* So what do you want for it?

GIANT:

Since you asked ... ah, yes! You shall have the crown IF you bring me a collar of blue stones from the Great Arch.

CASSANDRA:

Blue stones from the Great Arch, eh? *(to audience)* I have absolutely no idea what he's talking about. But how hard could it be? *(to Giant)* All right, that's a deal.

GIANT:

Good luck with THAT. *(yawns and lies back down)*

NARRATOR:

Cassandra – er, the parrot – flew out of the Giant's castle. She found out the Great Arch was a mile above the clouds.

[CASSANDRA "flies" across the stage to the arch, which is brought on by STAGE HANDS (See Performance Notes for ideas on the arch).]

CASSANDRA:

This arch must be the tallest thing on the planet. And those must be the blue stones. There's so pretty! Makes me feel kind of sleepy *(starts to sway)* What am I supposed to be doing?

NARRATOR:

Uh-oh. Looks like the blue stones have some sort of enchantment.

CASSANDRA:

(still mesmerized) Those stones are really pretty...

NARRATOR:

(claps loudly) Snap out of it!

CASSANDRA:

Wait, what?! Oh! *(shakes head to snap back)* What was I thinking? I have a job to do.

[CASSANDRA uses her beak to pull a few blue stones from the arch (See Performance Notes for how to accomplish this effect).]

CASSANDRA:

Now I just need a string to slip these stones into a collar...

[STAGE HAND enters and holds out a piece of string.]

CASSANDRA:

Much obliged, thank you.

[CASSANDRA strings the stones together (See Performance Notes on how to do this quickly and easily, or replace the loose stones with a ready-made necklace and hide the stones). She holds up the necklace.]

CASSANDRA:

It's kind of like mending a fishing net. I bet this would look pretty around my neck. (*puts necklace around neck*) But wait. I need to help the Fish-Queen.

[CASSANDRA flies back across the stage to the GIANT'S bedroom. GIANT is sleeping.]

CASSANDRA:

(*to audience*) Sleeping again? (*to Giant, clears throat*) Ahem. (*loudly*) A-HEM!

[GIANT jumps out of bed.]

GIANT:

You still here? Didn't even leave, did you? Don't have what it takes.

CASSANDRA:

As a matter of fact, I did leave. Guess what? I have your collar of blue stones from the Great Arch.

GIANT:

What?!

CASSANDRA:

I kept my part of the bargain. (*holds out the necklace*) Now give me the crown!

GIANT:

(*grabs the necklace and inspects it*) Not so fast! You call these stones blue? I can barely SEE the blue!

CASSANDRA:

What are you talking about? They are totally blue!

GIANT:

Bah! (*throws down the collar of stones*) This will not do at all!

CASSANDRA:
That is SO unfair!

GIANT:
Silence! To make up for this, you must bring me a bag of stars from the sky.

CASSANDRA:
Stars from the sky? That's impossible!

GIANT:
Do you want the lousy crown or not?

CASSANDRA:
Ugggh! FINE! I'll see what I can do.

[CASSANDRA exits.]

GIANT:
(to audience) Now I have the collar of blue stones, and she's NEVER coming back! Who said giants don't have anything up here? *(points to his head)* And now... *(yawns)* ... naptime. *(lies back down and starts to loudly snore)*

[Offstage, CASSANDRA changes into a toad costume for her next entrance. (See Performance Notes for costume and quick change ideas).]

NARRATOR:
What could she be thinking of? There's no animal alive she can change into that can get the stars out of the sky!

CASSANDRA:
(from offstage) I want to be a toad!

NARRATOR:
Good luck with THAT.

[CASSANDRA enters as a toad. (Again, see Performance Notes for costume and quick-change suggestion.)]

CASSANDRA:
And it's off to the nearest pond for me!

[STAGE HANDS bring on a sheet of blue fabric with stars (See Performance Notes) and hold it up about waist-high.]

[CASSANDRA hops to the pond.]

CASSANDRA:

All the stars are reflected in the pond. Now, I just need something to scoop up this water with, like a bucket–

[STAGE HAND enters and holds out a bucket. It should be a wooden (not plastic) bucket, or one that looks like wood.]

CASSANDRA:

Perfect! Everyone around here is so helpful.

[CASSANDRA uses the bucket to “scoop up” the water.]

CASSANDRA:

There! *(looks in bucket)* Stars a-plenty. I hope this pulls off.

[CASSANDRA hops offstage and changes back into a parrot.]

NARRATOR:

Clever girl – stars in the bucket. Of course, she has to get it back to the Giant’s bedroom.

[GIANT is sleeping. CASSANDRA enters. She sets the bucket down by the edge of the stage, then approaches GIANT.]

CASSANDRA:

(to audience) Does he do nothing else? *(clears throat loudly, to Giant)* Ahem!

[GIANT jumps out of bed.]

GIANT:

Can I get a minute’s peace?!

CASSANDRA:

Here are the stars you asked for. But you have to come outside on the turret balcony to see them.

[GIANT goes with CASSANDRA to the bucket.]

GIANT:

(looks in the bucket and is amazed) Stars...! Well, I have to hand it to you.

CASSANDRA:

Speaking of which. How ‘bout that crown?

GIANT:

Who needs this stupid crown, anyway? *(gives Cassandra the crown)* Too pointy to sleep in, anyway.

CASSANDRA:

Well, it was a PLEASURE doing business with you. I'll let you get back to ... whatever it is you do. Good day.

[CASSANDRA exits.]

GIANT:

(mesmerized by the stars in the bucket) Stars... who knew?

[GIANT takes bucket and goes back to his bed.]

GIANT:

Hey! What happened to my stars?!?

Scene 8-Underwater palace

[Stage Set: Same as Scene 5. STAGE HANDS remove the bed (See Performance Notes for transition and staging ideas).]

NARRATOR:

Meanwhile, back in the Fish-Queen's palace...

[FISH-QUEEN enters, this time behind the fabric, to hide the fact that she has already changed out of her fish costume (See Performance Notes). FISH #1-#3 enter, also behind the fabric, and swim/pace nervously around QUEEN.]

FISH-QUEEN:

I should have known! I NEVER should have let her go off on that fool's mission!

[FISH-QUEEN sadly bows her head. FISH #1-#3 also bow their heads.]

[CASSANDRA enters as a fish, with the crown tucked under her fin.]

FISH #1-#3

(crying, dramatically) CAAAAAASSANDRA!

CASSANDRA:

Group hug!

[Group hug.]

FISH-QUEEN:

Cassandra! Is that...? *(points to crown that is tucked under one arm)*

CASSANDRA:

Yes – look!

[CASSANDRA swims up to QUEEN and hands her the crown.]

FISH-QUEEN:

My crown!

FISH #1-#3:

Her crown!!!

FISH-QUEEN:

How did you do it?

CASSANDRA:

I became a deer, then a parrot. And oh Your Majesty, here it is!

[QUEEN puts on her crown. Magical sound is heard (See Performance Notes).]

CASSANDRA:

Your Majesty, you're a human again!

FISH-QUEEN:

And so are you!

[STAGE HANDS can lower the blue fabric to reveal that they are now human.]

FISH #1-#3:

Wooo-wooo!

[FISH high-five each other.]

FISH-QUEEN:

Take a deep breath, Cassandra. We need to get out of here, and fast!

CASSANDRA:

Let's do it! (*holds nose*)

FISH #1:

Best be off.

FISH #2:

It was real!

FISH #3:

Bye!

[FISH-QUEEN and CASSANDRA swim offstage. STAGE HANDS exit with blue fabric and bushes. FISH #1-#3 exit.]

Scene 9- Queen's Palace

[Stage Set: On one side of the stage there are two large thrones and one smaller one. On the other side of the stage is a table with three chairs.]

NARRATOR:

The Queen and Cassandra swam to the riverbank. When they came out of the water, the Queen could see her former palace on land in the distance. Let's pop inside for a moment, shall we?

[KING and PRINCE enter and sit at the table.]

NARRATOR:

That's the King, her husband. And that's the Fish-Queen's son, all grown up. Looks like all's well with them.

KING:

Something bothering you, son?

NARRATOR:

Or not.

PRINCE:

Well, it's the strangest thing.

KING:

Oh?

PRINCE:

I was out hunting the other day, when I saw... Father, it was the strangest thing. Those eyes. I felt a special connection.

KING:

(thinks for a minute) Ah, yes. I remember the first time I looked into your mother's eyes. I knew she was the one.

PRINCE:

But these were the eye of a DEER, Father, not a maiden!

KING:

Oh. Well then, that IS odd!

PRINCE:

But I felt a connection, just the same.

KING:

Well, you'll feel better in the morning.

PRINCE:

I know it sounds strange.

KING:

Speaking of which (*yawns*) I'm ready to have my tea on my throne before I go to bed.

PRINCE:

Very well, father. Good night, I'll be going to bed soon, too.

[KING goes to the throne and sits.]

PRINCE:

(*calls offstage*) Servant!

[SERVANT enters and starts clearing the dishes.]

PRINCE:

Tea for the King, would you?

[SERVANT nods and exits with dishes.]

[KING, sitting on the throne, rests his head on his hand and closes his eyes, dozing off. He starts to snore.]

[QUEEN (no longer the FISH-QUEEN), and CASSANDRA enter. QUEEN is wearing the crown.]

QUEEN:

Shhhh! (*points to King*)

[KING opens his eyes and looks up, unfazed by seeing QUEEN.]

KING:

I'm dreaming again. There's my dear Queen. Along with several random strangers? (*gets up, realizing*) Wait a minute. Can it really be YOU?

QUEEN:

I'm home, at last!

KING:

(*stands up*) A dream come true! (*to audience*) Literally! (*to Queen*) How I've missed you, my darling!

[They hug.]

KING:

Where were you all this time?

QUEEN:

I had to live as a Fish-Queen. It was this young lady who returned my crown and broke the spell! *(gestures for Cassandra to step forward and be introduced to the King)* Cassandra, the King.

[CASSANDRA bows.]

KING:

Well, then. Cassandra, friends, come with me! You will all spend the night here. I will show you to the royal guest room.

CASSANDRA:

I haven't slept in a real bed in ages! I don't know if I even remember how.

[KING and CASSANDRA exit. QUEEN takes a moment to look around, fondly. She sits in the King's throne. The throne is positioned so that when PRINCE enters, he doesn't see who's sitting there.]

[PRINCE enters.]

PRINCE:

(notices someone is sitting in the throne) This is not my father on the throne. *(sternly)* Present yourself! Say, who are you?

QUEEN:

(turns around) Son? Is that you?

PRINCE:

Wait – Mother?! You're alive?

QUEEN:

A spell took me away from you, but now I'm back. And look at you! You've grown into such a fine young man!

[PRINCE smiles, then looks sad.]

QUEEN:

But, if I may say - you look a bit sad. What is it?

PRINCE:

It's nothing. Don't mind me, mother. You just came home. We should all celebrate!

QUEEN:

Hold on - I'm still your mother! I can tell when something's on your mind.

PRINCE:

Ah, how can I put it? The other day I saw a beautiful female deer. And Mother, I can't explain it, but I can't stop thinking about her!

QUEEN:

A deer, you say? *(laughs)* How funny!

PRINCE:

(pulls back) Now you're laughing at me, too, just like Father!

QUEEN:

No, son, I'm laughing because everything is going to work out! The deer you saw was – in fact – a maiden. She must be the very same young woman who broke my curse!

PRINCE:

You know this?

QUEEN:

And there's something else I know.

[CASSANDRA enters.]

QUEEN:

Cassandra, come over here, my dear. Ah! My "dear!" Get it?

PRINCE:

I'm not sure I do...

QUEEN:

Never mind. Cassandra, I would like you to meet my son, the Prince.

CASSANDRA:

Oh. *(shyly)* Hello.

PRINCE:

(steps closely enough to look into Cassandra's eyes) You! I can tell - it's you!

CASSANDRA:

I remember ... You were the young man in the woods who let me go.

PRINCE:

You were the deer with those kind eyes.

QUEEN:

I'll leave you two to (airquotes) "chat."

[QUEEN begins to exit.]

CASSANDRA:

Your Majesty. Tomorrow is it all right if I go see my parents? They live in a cottage by the river.

QUEEN:

Of course. We'll have to find you an escort.

PRINCE:

That would be me.

QUEEN:

But of course. Now, good night.

[QUEEN exits.]

PRINCE:

Would you like to see the garden?

CASSANDRA:

I would love to.

[PRINCE and CASSANDRA exit.]

Scene 10- The house by the riverbank

[Stage Set: Same as Scene 1.]

[MOTHER and FATHER enter and sit at the table. They are very glum.]

MOTHER:
I keep thinking she'll just walk through that door.

FATHER:
Every time I hear voices outside, I think it's her.

PRINCE:
(from offstage) Is this it?

CASSANDRA:
(from offstage) Yep, right here.

FATHER:
Like right now.

[CASSANDRA and PRINCE enter.]

MOTHER:
And now I'm imagining that she is standing right there in front of us... with some fellow? *(realizes)* Cassandra? Is it you?

CASSANDRA:
Yes!

MOTHER:
Cassandra!

[CASSANDRA, MOTHER and FATHER hug.]

CASSANDRA:
This is my friend. The, uh, Prince.

[PRINCE produces a bouquet.]

PRINCE:
For you, from the royal garden!

MOTHER:
He IS a prince!

FATHER:
Wait, what? The royal garden? Cassandra, what's all this about?

CASSANDRA:
We just came from a palace this morning! It's a long story...

FATHER:
You two must be hungry.

MOTHER:
I'll whip something up!

CASSANDRA:
No, Madre. I'LL whip up something. You just relax. Get to know my, uh, special friend.

[MOTHER and FATHER look at each other in shock.]

FATHER:
(*to Mother*) I don't know what's more of a shock.

MOTHER:
(*to Father*) That she brought home a prince, or...

FATHER:
...or that she offered to fix something for us all to eat!

[MOTHER and FATHER laugh.]

MOTHER:
(*to Prince*) What a dear she's become!

PRINCE:
Yes. And now she's back to being a human again.

MOTHER:
Say what?

NARRATOR:
Despite some natural confusion, the Prince and Cassandra's family got along famously. Before long, Cassandra and the Prince were married. Every week her parents would come to the palace for dinner.

CASSANDRA:
Which I cook!

NARRATOR:
Indeed! And so our tale has come to an end.



Performance Notes for The Girl-Fish

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

- 1.** *Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom.*
Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
- 2.** *Students can perform the play in the classroom.* Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
- 3.** *Students can perform the play on stage.* Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- NARRATOR— Simple, nice clothes.
- MOTHER— Long flowy skirt, white button-up blouse tucked in, an apron, and flats or sandals.
- FATHER— White button-up shirt, un-tucked, loose khaki pants, sandals.
- CASSANDRA— Black leggings and a tank top or leotard. CASSANDRA has a lot of costume changes, so a base costume is a good idea.
For Scene 1, a long flowy skirt and a sweater. These clothes will cover up her fish costume, which is revealed in Scene 3. Another option is to have her change quickly into the fish costume after Scene 2.



See below for details and images on the fish costume.

For Scene 6, she will quickly change offstage into a deer. To do this she can take off the fish costume, and add antlers, knee-high brown socks, and brown arm warmers (these can be made from cutting the feet off another pair of socks). Antlers can be made by attaching brown paper to a headband with hot glue.

For Scene 7, she will quickly change offstage into a parrot. To do this she will remove the antlers, the socks, and the leg warmers, and add a colorful hat, wings, and tail.

The tail can be made by attaching strips of blue, yellow, and red fabric to a sash or belt.

To make the wings, measure the actress' arm. Cut a piece of fabric that length at the top, and with an arch underneath- like a semi-circle.

Cut a small hole in the fabric near the wrist-end, another one near the elbow, and one more near the shoulder-end. Through each hole, stick a piece of yarn or fabric, and tie loops, which allow the actress' arm to fit through and be held fairly securely.

Feathers can be cut from felt or other fabric and hot-glued on.

Examples of different fabric wings



For Scene 8, she will quickly change offstage back into a fish. She removes the hat, wings, and tail and puts on the fish costume. When the “change” happens on stage, she takes off fish costume, and wears her base costume.

For Scene 9, she changes offstage into her skirt and sweater, or whatever she wore for Scene 1.

For Scene 10, an option would be to have her put on something “nicer”, such as a dress, for the visit to her parents' house.

- REGINA— Flowy skirt or loose slacks and a bright button-up blouse.



- LUCAS— Button-up shirt, loose black pants, and sandals.
- MIA— Flowy skirt or loose slacks and a bright button-up blouse.
- FISH #1-#3— Fish costumes. They can all be a different color fish, or all the same. See below for details and images.
- FISH QUEEN/QUEEN— Black leggings and a tank top for a base costume. Two-piece fish costume over that. See below for details and images.
When the “change” happens on stage in Scene 8, she will take off the fish costume and wears her base costume.
For Scene 9, she quickly changes offstage into a dress/gown and wears the crown.
- PRINCE— White button-up shirt, black vest, red cape if possible, black pants, boots.
- GIANT— Brown pants, white button-up shirt with a brown vest, and boots.
- KING— White button-up shirt, red robe if possible, black pants, black shoes, crown.

FISH COSTUME notes:

Fish costumes can be made out of long hooded sweatshirt (zip-up would be the easiest to take on and off for costume changes) on which you can paint, hot glue, or sew scales.

You can decide on a color scheme, for each fish. One example of this would be: CASSANDRA is blue, FISH QUEEN is aqua and purple, and FISH #1-#3 are orange/yellow.

If painting scales on, you can draw them first in sharpie and paint various shades within the color scheme, also using glitter.

If gluing or sewing, cut out scales (half circles) in various shades of the color scheme, and sew them overlapping to create a look of scales.

Note: Scales do not have to cover the entire surface of the shirt, but should cover the shoulder, stomach, and back. (See images below)

Another options is to cut the sleeved off of the sweatshirt and wear a long sleeve shirt underneath.

On either side of the hood, you can paint or sew large eyes.

Optional: you can attach a fin to the top of the hood.

See next page for images:



Examples of possible fish costumes:





PROPS

Scene 1

- A fish for FATHER to carry. This can be a plastic fish or cut from cardboard and painted.
- A fishing net for FATHER to carry and for CASSANDRA to grab. This can be an actual fishing net or any type of netting, such as mesh or a netted laundry bag.

Scene 2

- Fishing net for CASSANDRA to “mend”, same as in Scene 1.
Note: CASSANDRA can pretend to mend the net, or she can use a needle made from cardboard to pretend to sew it.
- A beautiful fish. This can be made from cardboard and painted with lots of bright colors, glitter, etc.

Scene 3

- N/A

Scene 4

- N/A

Scene 5

- N/A

Scene 6

- A rifle for PRINCE. This can be plastic or cardboard.

Scene 7

- Blue stone necklace. The blue stones can be round pieces of cardboard with holes punched into them. The cardboard can be painted a blue with blue glitter. When CASSANDRA makes the necklace, she can put a thin rope through the holes and either tie it or hook it together.
- A wooden bucket for the stars. This can be a plastic bucket painted light brown with dark brown vertical stripes to give the impression of wood.



- A crown for GIANT to give to CASSANDRA.

Scene 8

- A crown for CASSANDRA to give to FISH QUEEN. Same as in Scene 7.

Scene 9

- N/A

Scene 10

- N/A



SETS

Divide the stage into two sections – A cottage, on one side of the stage, and a riverbank on the other. There will be a few additional locations later. More on all sets below.

- Scene 1— Cottage. A sturdy table (will double as a bed in Scene 4) and three chairs are on one side of the stage.
- Scene 2— Riverbank. A long piece of blue fabric lays along the front of the stage, representing the river. This will later be held up by STAGE HANDS to be the ocean, so it should be the length of the stage and about 4 feet wide.
- Scene 3— Cottage, same as in Scene 1.
- Scene 4— Underwater – the river and the ocean. Two STAGE HANDS each grab one end of the blue fabric and stretch it along the stage holding it up as high as possible. The action will take place in front of the fabric.
Behind the fabric, other STAGE HANDS can add pieces to the cottage scene, to turn it into the GIANT'S room.
To do this, bring on a pillow and a blanket and set the table to look like a bed. The chairs can all be moved behind the bed or off stage for the scene.



- Scene 5— Underwater palace. Same as Scene 4, except that a throne is brought on for the FISH QUEEN. The throne can be a chair decorated in shiny fabric, the colors of “underwater”- blues, greens, and purples.
- Scene 6— Shoreline, near the mountains. STAGE HANDS drop the fabric to create a shoreline, off to one side of the stage, opposite the GIANT’S castle.
- Scene 7— Various places near the giant’s castle/Inside the giant’s room. There is a bed on stage, which is represented by the table. See Scene 4 for ideas on setting this up.
- Scene 8— Underwater palace, same as Scene 5. This time STAGE HANDS hold the fabric a bit lower, and the action happens behind the fabric. The idea is to keep the actors’ costumes hidden, so to keep the reveal a surprise. When it’s time for CASSANDRA and FISH QUEEN to turn into humans, STAGE HANDS will raise the fabric as high as they can, so that the two actors’ can remove their fish costumes without the audience seeing. Once they change, STAGE HANDS lower the fabric when it’s time for the reveal, to show that CASSANDRA and QUEEN are now human.
During this scene, another STAGE HAND removes the pillow and blanket from the table, and re-set the chairs around the table. The table can be covered in a nice tablecloth. It will act as the palace dinner table in Scene 9.
- Scene 9— Queen’s palace. STAGE HANDS remove the fabric. They bring another throne, for the King and place it next to the one already on stage. Both can be covered in a nice red or purple fabric.
There is also a table, with a nice tablecloth, and three chairs on stage. See Scene 8 description for transition ideas.
- Scene 10—Cottage, same as Scene 1 and 3.

