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Integrative Seminar: Memory

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12/17/15  
Modern-day Fairytale Final Draft

A Mermaid’s Revenge

“Far out in the ocean, where the water [*was*] as blue as the prettiest cornflower, and [*was*] as clear as crystal,”[[1]](#footnote-1) it is very, very deep; so deep, indeed, that nothing foreign could ever reach it – except trash. Plastic bottles, aluminum cans, shoes, packaging material, pile one upon another. There dwell the Sea King Merman and his favorite, youngest of the seven mermaid daughters, Ariel. Together they live not so in harmony with the filth that always pours down from above.

“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 grew there;”[[2]](#footnote-2) now dead and forever extinct because of the Algal blooms that took over, caused by eutrophication created from fertilizer runoff, that depleted the flowers and plants of oxygen.[[3]](#footnote-3) Schools of fish swim down into the MerKingdom ever so often to lesson their chances of becoming dinner to evil human beings. The MerKingdom is very hilly, with a merHouse, made of large, strong seashells, on the highest point of every hill. They glisten like pink glitter amidst the deep blue waters. However the waters are becoming more and more brown, and fishes of all colors of the rainbow are becoming sick from accidentally eating plastic bits. Ariel and her royal family live at the highest point of the tallest hill, of course, so that they could rule and constantly watch over the MerKingdom. Ariel had large, round blue eyes, like the clearest of all waters, a tiny button nose, and lips as red as the prettiest lobster. Her long, wavy red hair always floats along with her every movement.

Ariel’s kingdom used to be incredible scenery of purple sand, pink seashell-houses, and deep blue roads that created a beautiful swirl of curves. Now the purples, blues, and pinks are hardly visible through the murky brown water. Everything in the kingdom is covered with some sort of trash (broken human chairs, plastic bags, and anything you can think of – it’s there). But still, all the mermaids and mermen do their best and work in harmony to clean the trash and deliver it to their wasteland, far out south from the Merkingdom, to preserve the beauty of their home, even if just a little bit. They take pride in their homeland and never leave their beloved kingdom except when there are suffocating oil spills, caused by those humans, which make it too difficult to breathe. Ariel and her lobster best friend, Sebastian, would swim all the way up to the surface of the ocean for enough oxygen. There, they would examine the human world and laugh over how stupid they were. The nearest man-made structure that always comes into their view is a beach-house mansion.

“I would love to live in a merHouse like that with you! So many…lights” said Sebastian, pointing his claw at the mansion. What he does not know is that the mansion belongs the CEO of Red Lobster (the chain restaurant).

“How nice of you to say that, Sebastian. But our castle is way better. One hundred percent made with natural ingredients – the best coral, seashells, and pearls. No concrete, no harmful toxins” says Ariel proudly as she flips her long, wavy red hair. Her large round blue eyes are always filled with confidence.

Just then, a few servants dressed in white come out of the beach house mansion onto the beach. They seem to be looking for something.

“Quick, hide!” Ariel exclaims as she grabs Sebastian in her arms and hides behind a sea rock.

“But they seem to be nice! They’re wearing white which means innocent in human, right?” Sebastian whined as he struggled out of Ariel’s tight arms.

“Sebastian! You lobster, come back here right now!” Ariel panics. But it is too late. The servants approach too quickly, and it is too dark to see the nets in their hands. Sebastian tries to make small talk with them, but without even given a chance, he is scooped out of the seawater. Sebastian cries and struggles to break the net. No use. It is lobster-proof. “Ariel, I’m sorry. Don’t worry about me. I’ll miss you. Goodbye,” Sebastian whimpers.

Behind the rock, Ariel covers her mouth and silently cries, so much that the sea level begins rising from her tears. All she could do is resent herself for not being able to do anything, for if her identity is discovered, the entire mermaid population would be even more endangered. The humans would surely capture more and more mermaids, conduct cruel experiments on their bodies, and put them in zoos and auctions, selfishly treating mermaids as exotics.

Ariel’s days and months of sorrow eventually turns into rage and hatred. She wants revenge. Revenge on the humans, who destroy the beauty of MerKingdom (the deep blue waters, glistening of the pink corals and seashells, and the beautiful curving pathways) with their trash and who ate her lobster best friend. Even just hurting one human being will do. Then the idea came to her. She would take revenge on the very people who ate her friend. She would make the CEO of Red Lobster, Darden, fall in love with her and then kill him. Actually, no. The CEO is too old for her taste. She decides to aim for his son, David. Having David die would make the CEO suffer more. He will then also experience what it feels like to have the most precious things taken away.

Ariel swims to Ursula’s cave, at the bottom of the Castle’s hill. Ursula is a nice wise old mermaid with seven tails whom everyone consults in times of trouble. She tells Ursula her plan and begs the wise mermaid to make her human. Ursula warns Ariel that humans have unpredictable tastes in seafood (raw fish, shark fin, tuna), and that if her identity is discovered, they would cut her up and might even eat her tongue. Ariel reassures Ursula that she will be extremely cautious. Ursula nods, handing over the human potion to Ariel and says, “Remember, be cautious of water – when your legs touch water, they will turn back into your tail. But dry them fast and they will turn back into legs. Now, go make those humans have a taste of their own medicine.”

Ariel opens her eyes to bright daylight and the sound of ocean waves. Her body lies on the warm sand and her tail feels split, so she looks down. Legs. Fascinated, she counts her toes one by one and wiggles them. Giggling, she runs around the beach with her long wavy hair and a flowy dress that came with the potion.

“Who are you and why are you on my beach?” a boy’s voice suddenly interrupts. He has green eyes, a tan complexion, and wavy, dark brown hair.

Ariel stops. It’s him. It’s David, the one who ate Sebastian probably.

*Ok ok, I’ll strangle him and cut him up. No, Ariel, that’s stupid. I’ll smile and be nice and seduce him. No, that’s not enough. I’ll cry and then beg for shelter. Yes. Genius, Ariel. Ok. How do I cry? I’ll think of Sebastian.*

Ariel falls onto her knees and starts sobbing. She tries to look pretty in doing so for seduction purposes. “I don’t know…I can’t remember,” she finally answers.

David’s expression becomes gentler. Surprisingly, like a good guy, he comforts, “Poor girl, don’t worry, I will do my best to help you! As you can see…I am very rich,” he jokes and points to his mansion, attempting to make Ariel laugh.

Ariel slightly smiles.

“Do you have a phone with you?”

Ariel shakes her head. Even though she has played with a few of the waterproof phones that sink down into the Merkingdom, they would always die and she could never recharge them.

David assumes that Ariel had drowned in the Ocean, lost her memory because of the water that got into her head, and had been washed off to his beach house, alive for whatever reason. He brings Ariel into the beach house mansion for his personal family doctor to check for any injuries.

“Please make sure to double check her head for possible brain injuries, Dr. G,” David demands.

Ariel, shocked by David’s kindness, and by how he voluntarily just offers her shelter, becomes genuinely confused. Humans are supposed to be evil. All they produce is trash and all they eat is lobster.

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David and Ariel sit down in the spacious dining room to eat that night. The servant offers David some lobster, to which David rejects.

“Where is the rest of your family?” asks Ariel, trying her hide her disgust at the cooked lobster.

Silence fills the emptiness of the luxurious red dining room as David’s green eyes narrow with pain and sadness. “Oh, my dad is working, as always… and I’ve never seen my mom.”

Ariel immediately regrets her questioning. “Oh, I’m so sorry…well, at least I’m here!” she laughs, attempting to comfort David.

David smiles slightly at Ariel’s attempt. “Thank you – what’s your name?”

“Ariel”

“Ariel – what a pretty name for a pretty girl,” David compliments.

“Oh, stop it.”

The two talk nonstop for the entire night, laughing, crying, and being silly.

As days and months pass, David’s actions and care earns Ariel’s trust. Ariel finds out that David never eats Red Lobster food. His father, the CEO, is rarely home because he is always too busy working on killing more lobster. The father and son never talk, so killing David wouldn’t affect the CEO in any way. Ariel dismisses her revenge plan and decides that David is a friend, and that it is not right to kill a friend. She concludes that she would stay with David for a little longer because it would be cruel of her to leave David alone again so soon.

David owns a horse named Sunny, and the two ride Sunny and strut along the beach every day to watch the sunset, which is why their happiest memories are filled with oranges, reds, and pinks, hints of yellows. Like little children, they build sandcastles and even snowmen out of sand and seashells. One night, David and Ariel agree to lie down on the sand and observe stars under the clear skies. They lay side-by-side, hands interlocked and shoulders touching.

“Ariel, when you get your memory back, will you leave me?” David asks.

“I think I will have to” Ariel replies. She has not decided the time yet. Her heart does not want to leave, but her mind knows that it is absolutely forbidden to stay with a human forever.

David turns his face towards Ariel with the same sad, green eyes that appeared on the first night they had dinner. “I will be sad,” he responded after a moment of silence.

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Throughout this time, Ariel successfully hides her identity and avoids swimming in pools and walking in the rain to avoid her legs getting wet (with the excuse that she has water trauma from her accident). Extremely careful, she locks the bathroom door every time she bathes – until one day, when David purposely, with not-so-good intentions, unlocks the bathroom door with his spare key and walks in on Ariel bathing. He finds Ariel flopping her mermaid tail in the bathtub. David, shocked, astonished, and amazed, says, “Wow, I am so lucky. How much money can I sell you for?”

Ariel, filled with rage and betrayed, screams. Turns out, David was the one who successfully fooled her. He never ate Red Lobster because he grew sick of the family restaurant’s food. He only ate fresh out-of-the-ocean lobsters like Sebastian once in a while. He was kind because *he* wanted to seduce *her.*

And so, David, thirsting for his father’s recognition, locks Ariel up in the bathroom and goes to the Red Lobster headquarters to tell his father of his discovery. Ariel, aware of this, knows that she must make a decision: to live and allow the mermaid identity to be revealed to the whole human race, or to kill herself and protect her kingdom. Ariel, strong and proud until the end, dries her tail one last time until they transform back into legs. She closes her eyes, and bites her tongue.

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     "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.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

     “ ‘Among the daughters of the air,’ answered one of them. ‘A mermaid has not an immortal soul, nor can she obtain one… but the daughters of the air, although they do not possess an immortal soul, [can fly to warm countries, and control the sultry air that destroys mankind] with the pestilence. After we have striven for three hundred years, we receive an immortal soul and [take part in the destruction of the evil mankind.] You, poor little mermaid, you have suffered and endured and raised yourself to the spirit-world by your good deeds [to protect the ocean from being further exploited by man;] and now, by striving for three hundred years in the same way, you may obtain an immortal soul."[[5]](#footnote-5)

“The little mermaid lifted her glorified eyes towards the sun, and felt them filling with tears,”[[6]](#footnote-6) which caused a massive hurricane that destroyed Red Lobster headquarters, the CEO’s beach house mansion, and all the men inside.

1. Zvi Har’El. "The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen (1836)” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Zvi Har’El. "The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen (1836)” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Conserve Energy Future. "20 Facts about Ocean Pollution." Conserve Energy Future. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Zvi Har’El. "The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen (1836)” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Zvi Har’El. "The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen (1836)” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Zvi Har’El. "The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen (1836)” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)