



F. Scott Regan

Music and lyrics by Tom Gorman

Adapted from the Scottish folktale "The Meester Stoorworm"

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ASHIPOTTLE AND THE GIANT SEA SERPENT was commissioned by the Cultural Arts Department of the Minneapolis Park Board with dialogue contributed by actors Vicki McIntyre, Cecil Allen, Jane Ryan, and Harley Vinton. It was revised and produced by the Treehouse Troupe, a program at the Bowling Green State University Department of Theatre and Film.

ASHIPATTLE AND THE GIANT SEA SERPENT: A MUSICAL!

CHILDREN'S MUSICAL. Adapted from the Scottish folktale, "The Meester Stoorworm." When a giant sea serpent threatens Scotland, King Oswald offers half of his kingdom to anyone brave enough to slay the horrible monster. Determined to defeat the beast, Ashipattle, a clever lass, bravely heads to the seaside, where she boards a small boat and meets up with the monster. The sea serpent, who has an insatiable appetite for Scots, immediately swallows Ashipattle with one big gulp. To free herself, Ashipattle thinks quickly and uses her bucket of peat coals to start a fire in the monster's stomach! This hilarious musical is suitable for elementary school students or for touring groups and includes five original songs.

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.



King Oswald,
portrait from a 13th-century manuscript

ABOUT THE STORY

King Oswald (604-642) was the son of King Æthelfrith, who fought against the English and was killed in battle. After King Æthelfrith's death, Oswald fled to Scotland, where he lived in exile and converted to Christianity. King Oswald later became the most powerful ruler in Britain and reigned over Northumbria for eight years from 634 until he died in the battle of Maserfield in 642. King Oswald had a reputation for being generous to the poor and is credited with bringing together two Northumbrian kingdoms and promoting the spread of Christianity. King Oswald was later named a saint.

CHARACTERS

(3 M, 2 F, 4 flexible)

ASHIPATTLE: Clever girl with a sooty face who is picked on by her siblings; carries a wooden bucket filled with peat coals; flexible. Note: If male, please change script accordingly.

ROBERT: Ashipattle's older brother.

BONNIE JEAN: Ashipattle's older sister.

KING OSWALD: Elderly, kindly King of Scotland.

PRINCESS MEGAN: King Oswald's young daughter.

MCSNYDE: Greedy sorcerer intent on marrying Princess Megan and ruling Scotland; male.

SEA SERPENT: Sea serpent who likes to eat Scots; wears a sea serpent costume; flexible.

MESSSENGER: King's messenger; flexible.

SAILOR: Old sailor; flexible.

SONGS

- 1.) Overture
- 2.) "Ashipattle's Song" (Ashipattle)
- 3.) "Sicker Snapper" (King Oswald, Megan, Messenger)
- 4.) "Comfy and Cozy" (McSnyde)
- 5.) "Sea Serpent's Song" (Sea Serpent)
- 6.) "Ashipattle's Song" reprise (Ashipattle)

SETTING

Scotland, 640 A.D.

SET

The play is designed to use minimal set pieces or can be played on a bare stage. However, the set can be as elaborate as your budget allows.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: The woods.

Scene 2: A hilltop.

Scene 3: Throne room.

Scene 4: Ashipattle's home.

Scene 5: Rocky shore of the North Sea.

Scene 6: Inside the Sea Serpent's stomach.

Scene 7: Rocky shore of the North Sea.

ASHPOTTLE

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PROPS

Bucket
Throne
Broadsword
Magic book
Scroll

Goose pipe
Feather
Rope
Bag of potions

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Lively Scottish tune
Royal fanfare
Horse whinny
Horse galloping
Roar
Gulping

Licking chops
Smoke
Red glow
Coughing
Sinking or gurgling
Croaking

"ENGLISHMEN TASTE LIKE COD LIVER OIL,
A SWEDE IS TASTY AFTER A FIVE-MINUTE BOIL,
THE IRISH ARE BONY,
AND THE FRENCH ARE TOO SWEET,
OH, GIVE ME A SCOTSMAN TO EAT, TO EAT,
OH, GIVE ME A SCOTSMAN TO EAT!"

—SEA SERPENT

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Overture, a lively Scottish tune. The woods. Ashipattle, Robert, and Bonnie Jean enter playing Follow the Leader. In turn, they jump an imaginary stream, but Ashipattle falls backward into the stream.)

ROBERT/BONNIE JEAN: (*Jeering.*) Oh, Ashipattle! (*They change to a game of leapfrog but Ashipattle fails to make her leap and crashes.*) Oh, Ashipattle!

(*They play hide-and-seek with Ashipattle as the seeker. Ashipattle closes her eyes and counts to ten, Robert and Bonnie Jean exit, and Ashipattle looks all over for them. Ashipattle asks an audience member for a clue, follows his/her advice, but has no luck and gives up. Robert and Bonnie Jean sneak up on Ashipattle and scare her.*)

BONNIE JEAN: Where ya been, Ashipattle?

ROBERT: (*To Ashipattle.*) Aye, we've been here for hours awaitin' for ya.

ASHIPATTLE: I don't care. I don't wanna play your dumb ol' games anyway.

BONNIE JEAN: Aw.

ASHIPATTLE: I can find people when I've a mind to.

ROBERT: Ya couldn't find your way out of a peat bog.

ASHIPATTLE: I could too. I could find me way into caves and all sorts of places.

BONNIE JEAN: Aw! If ya was ever in a cave, it was because ya got lost in there.

(*Bonnie Jean and Robert laugh.*)

ASHIPATTLE: Nay. I once went into a cave and fought a great hairy monster!

ROBERT: (*Doubtful.*) Oh, ya did, did ya?

BONNIE JEAN: *(To Ashipattle, doubtful.)* Sure ya did.

ASHIPATTLE: A great hairy one-eyed Cyclops it was.

ROBERT: *(To Ashipattle, with a wink to Bonnie Jean.)* Tell us all about it.

ASHIPATTLE: Well...he lived in a great cave by the sea and was eatin' people all the time, and so I...I just went up to that cave and stomped on his ugly toes and...and I punched his fiery nose, and I wrestled with his scaly tail, and he gave a sickly kinda roar... *(Demonstrates roar.)* ...and went runnin' away with his great tail between his puny little legs.

BONNIE JEAN: Ha! That's a great tale, that is.

ROBERT: *(To Ashipattle.)* We do not believe ya.

BONNIE JEAN: *(To Ashipattle.)* You're telling stories again. You're always tellin' stories about beasties and things.

ROBERT: *(To Ashipattle.)* We're sick of your dreamin'. Now take your bucket and get some coals for the fire.

ASHIPATTLE: But...

ROBERT: You know your job and you should know your place. Now go on with ya!

(Robert picks up Ashipattle's bucket. Ashipattle goes to retrieve the bucket from Robert.)

ASHIPATTLE: All right. *(Robert tosses the bucket to Bonnie.)*
Give it to me!

BONNIE JEAN: *(Teasing.)* Say "please"...

ASHIPATTLE: Please. *(Bonnie Jean offers the bucket to Ashipattle but pulls it away as soon as Ashipattle comes for it. Bonnie Jean then tosses the bucket to Robert, who puts it on Ashipattle's head. Robert and Bonnie Jean laugh and run off. Ashipattle removes the bucket from her head and slumps down. Song: "Ashipattle's Song." Sings.)*

"Me brothers always pick on me and make me tend the fire,
But someday I know I'll be free to do what I desire.

Someday. Someday, they'll call on Ashipattle.

I'll fly. I'll fly, into the thick of battle.

(Ashipattle imagines herself fighting a monster. Bonnie Jean enters, sneaks up on Ashipattle, and roars into her ear, which takes Ashipattle's courage away. Bonnie Jean exits. Sings.)

Me sisters always laugh at me, I never win their games.
But someday I will make them see, when I earn me fame.
Someday. Someday, they'll call on Ashipattle.
I'll charge. I'll charge, into the thick of battle.
I'll fight. I'll fight, until me foe has run away,
I'll win. I'll win, me prize will be the sun,
Someday."

(Exits. Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: A hilltop. Ashipattle is onstage holding her wooden bucket of peat coals. Megan enters.)

MEGAN: Good mornin' to ya.

ASHIPATTLE: Good mornin' to ya.

MEGAN: Was that ya singin' that song?

ASHIPATTLE: Aye.

MEGAN: It was a lovely song.

ASHIPATTLE: Nay.

MEGAN: What's yer name?

ASHIPATTLE: Ashipattle.

MEGAN: That's a very unusual name.

ASHIPATTLE: Well, ya see, me job is to tend the peat fire. I try to keep the soot from gettin' all over me but... *(Indicates sooty face.)*

MEGAN: That's why your face is so dirty?

ASHIPATTLE: Aye. What's yer name?

MEGAN: Me name is Pri— *(Catches herself.)* Megan's me name.

ASHIPATTLE: I think that's a rather ordinary name.

MEGAN: Ordinary?

ASHIPATTLE: Aye. How many folks do ya know who's called Ashipattle?

MEGAN: You're the only one. What are ya doin' hangin' about here in the middle o' the day?

ASHIPATTLE: Never ya mind about me. You seem to be strollin' about here with no eye toward doin' yer chores.

MEGAN: I like to take strolls through the heather, but I spend most of me time takin' care of me father.

ASHIPATTLE: Why? Is he old?

MEGAN: Aye. He's old and very stubborn...and very worried.

ASHIPATTLE: Worried?

MEGAN: Did ya not hear about the giant sea serpent?

ASHIPATTLE: Sea serpent?

MEGAN: Aye. He's terrorizing the countryside.

ASHIPATTLE: Why doesn't someone stop him?

MEGAN: Because he's a very terrible sea serpent. It'll take the bravest knight in all of Scotland to defeat him.

ASHIPATTLE: What about the bravest lass in all Scotland? I'd not be afraid of any sea serpent, no matter how large he is.

MEGAN: And are ya brave, Ashipattle?

ASHIPATTLE: Aye. I am, indeed. Once I fought a giant cy—

MESENTER: (*Offstage, calls.*) Megan! Megan!

ASHIPATTLE: (*Looks off.*) Oh! There's a great bunch of men on horseback a-wavin' to us from down there.

MESENTER: (*Offstage, calls.*) Your Highness! Megan! The king wants to speak to ya right away!

MEGAN: (*To Ashipattle.*) I must be a-goin'. It's been fine talkin' to ya, Ashipattle. I'm sorry ya think me name is so ordinary.

(*Megan exits. Ashipattle waves to her.*)

ASHIPATTLE: Ah, she's a nice lass. (*Realizes.*) Oh! Did he say *Princess* Megan? Oh! And to think I said her name was ordinary. She'll ne'er speak to me again.

(*Megan enters.*)

MEGAN: Goodbye to ya, Ashipattle. (*Waves.*)

ASHIPATTLE: Goodbye to ya, Megan. (*Waves. Megan exits. Excited.*) Wait till I tell me brother and sister about this! They've ne'er talked to a princess before in their whole lifetime. (*Calls.*) Brother! Sister! You'll ne'er believe what happened to me! (*Exits. Blackout.*)

SCENE 3

(AT RISE: Throne room. Royal fanfare. There is a throne. King Oswald enters and paces back and forth.)

KING: (Mumbles.) Sea Serpent...McReedy...Sea serpent...McSnyde...Megan...Sea serpent...Noooo.

MEGAN: Father, Father. Why are ye callin' me back from me ride so soon? News of the sea serpent?

KING: Not yet, child. I'm expecting a messenger any minute now. Sit down, dear. (Megan helps King Oswald sit on his throne with some difficulty.) I do not want ya to worry about the sea serpent, child. I've sent McReedy, the bravest warrior in all of Scotland, to defeat him.

MEGAN: McReedy?

KING: Aye.

MEGAN: He'll defeat him, I'm sure.

KING: McReedy will bravely face the monster.

MEGAN: Aye, that he will, Father.

KING: And then McReedy will draw his mighty sword.

MEGAN: Aye, that he will, Father.

KING: Then McReedy will cut off his head with one mighty stroke.

MEGAN: Aye, that he will, Father.

(Fanfare. Messenger enters.)

MESSENGER: (To King Oswald.) Your Highness, good King Oswald, the great. I bring ya news of McReedy's battle with the giant sea serpent.

KING: Did McReedy bravely face the monster?

MESSENGER: Aye, that he did, Your Highness.

KING: And did he draw his mighty sword?

MESSENGER: Aye, that he did, Your Highness.

KING: And did he cut off his head with one mighty stroke?

MESSENGER: (*Hesitant.*) Ah...

KING: (*Louder.*) I say, did he cut off his head with one mighty stroke?

MESSENGER: Ah, that he did not, Your Highness. (*King sighs.*) Oh, he fought bravely, Your Highness, but the serpent covered half the ocean. His tongue was long enough to lick the stars, and when he inhaled, he inhaled half the sea and McReedy went down, down, down, down...and he was ne'er seen again, Your Highness.

KING: 'Tis a sorrowful day.

MESSENGER: I'm sorry to be the bearer of such terrible news, Your Highness. (*Exits.*)

MEGAN: What's to be done now?

KING: There is still one warrior in Scotland brave enough to fight the serpent.

MEGAN: Who is that?

KING: Meself. King Oswald of Scotland.

MEGAN: Now, Father, you're too old to be fightin' battles with serpents.

KING: By meself I would not have a chance but with me magic sword, Sicker Snapper, why, I can defeat any foe!

MEGAN: Now, Father...

KING: Bring Sicker Snapper! Bring me sword!

MEGAN: Very well, Father. (*Exits.*)

KING: (*To himself.*) When I was a lad, I defeated many a foe worse than this monster. I defeated dragons and rescued damsels in distress. (*Megan and Messenger enter, dragging a heavy broadsword. King Oswald tries to lift the heavy sword. Song: "Sicker Snapper." Sings.*)

"I've battled and tussled with many a terrible foe,
With giants and ogres huge from head to toe,
With me sword, me Sicker Snapper, truest of friends,
I have always come out on top in the end.

MEGAN/MESSENGER: (*Sing.*) He has always come out on the top in the end.

KING: (*Sings.*)

From Ireland to England, and every place around,
Armies attempted to take me lovely crown.
But by me side, me Sicker Snapper, truest of friends,
The rascals had to run and hide or meet a nasty end.
MEGAN/MESSENGER: *(Sing.)* The rascals had to run and
hide or meet a nasty end.

KING: *(Sings.)*

With Sicker Snapper, me wonderful sword,
Me life has been quite glorious!
With Snicker Snapper, me magical sword,
Me battles are always victorious!

MEGAN/MESSENGER: *(Sing.)* His battles are always
victorious.

KING: *(Sings.)* Me battles are always vic-to-oh-
riooooooooooh...Oh! *(Lifts his sword over his head but loses
his balance. Megan runs to help him but he starts to fall in the
opposite direction. King then loses his balance holding the sword
and spins in a circle, barely missing Megan's head. The sword
finally leads him to collapse on the throne. Sings.)*

It's time I learn for good and believe what I've been told,
Despite my objections, I fear I'm getting old.
Now I find I'm past me prime, me energy is spent.
I fear I can't defeat a measely sea serpent!"

MEGAN: *(Spoken.)* Aye, Father, you're gettin' old, but you're
still the bravest heart in all of Scotland. There must be
someone who can defeat this monster.

KING: No, lassie, there is only one way to deal with a thing
that laughs at our strength and that is to take counsel with
the Sorcerer.

MEGAN: Oh, Father, not...McSnyde.

KING: Aye, McSnyde!

MEGAN: There is something I do not trust about that man.

KING: Ne'ertheless, child, we will not be able to defeat the
monster with sword or spear. We must take counsel
with...magic.

MEGAN: Very well, Father, I shall fetch him.

(Megan starts to exit but bumps into McSnyde as he enters.)

MCSNYDE: *(Oily.)* Ah, Princess, it is always such a pleasure.
(Kisses Megan's hand and she pulls away. To King.) Your Highness, ya called?

KING: Ya've heard about the demise of McReedy?

MCSNYDE: *(Elated.)* Aye, that I have! *(Mock sorrow.)* Aye, that I have.

KING: Do ya know some magical charm ya could put on the monster?

MCSNYDE: Magical charm? Well, let me consult me book.
(Pulls out a magic book.) Let me look under "magical charm."
(Pages through book.) "Sea serpent." *(Pages through book.)* I'm afraid not, Your Majesty.

KING: Do ya have some sort of potion to shrink the serpent down to size?

MCSNYDE: *(Consults book again.)* Let me look under "potion." *(Pages through book.)* I'm afraid not, Your Highness. *(Points to a page in book.)* Oh, I do have a potion to turn a man into a frog. Would ya care to have—

KING: No! No! I do not need a potion to turn a man into a frog! Isn't there anything ya can do?

MCSNYDE: Let me look under "anything." *(Pages through book.)* There is a remedy, Your Highness, but it is so hideous that I hesitate to even mention it.

KING: If there is any way to rid the country of this blight, ya must tell it. I order ya to tell it.

MCSNYDE: Very well. But, remember, ya forced me to tell it to ya. The only thing that will drive this monster from our shores is...if before sundown on the full moon—

KING: Let's see, the full moon is... *(Thinks.)*

MEGAN: Tomorrow.

KING: Tomorrow.

MCSNYDE: *(Laughs.)* Tomorrow.

KING: Yes, what must be done by sunset tomorrow?

MCSNYDE: The serpent will be satisfied only with the spilling of royal blood.

MEGAN: Royal blood?!

KING: Royal blood?!

MCSNYDE: Royal blood.

KING: I am a very old king. If I must sacrifice meself for the good of Scotland, then so be it.

MEGAN: No, Father!

MCSNYDE: Ah, Your Highness, the book specifically states that it must be *young* royal blood. (*Laughs wickedly.*)

MEGAN: (*Realizes.*) Ya mean...

MCSNYDE: (*To King.*) The Princess!

KING: No, I'll not have it!

MCSNYDE: Very well, Your Highness. When ya want to drive the monster from our shores just call on me. (*To Princess.*) Good day, Princess. (*Pretends to exit but unknown to the King and Megan, he listens in on their conversation.*)

KING: (*To Megan.*) Do not worry, child. I won't send ya out to that monster.

MEGAN: It's the only way. I must sacrifice meself for the kingdom.

KING: There must be another way.

MEGAN: Father, while I was a-walkin' the hills, I met a young lass who said she would fight the monster.

KING: A lass?! You're joking!

MEGAN: No, Father.

KING: (*Sighs.*) Alas, a lass.

MEGAN: But why couldn't she—

KING: Just a lass showin' off for a princess.

MEGAN: She did not know who I was.

KING: Well, perhaps. (*Hopeful.*) Was she a strappin' big lass?

MEGAN: Nay, she was a wee one...but she appeared ta be quite clever.

KING: How can we get a hold of her?

MEGAN: I do not know where she lives.

KING: I'll send a messenger out to all the villages in Scotland to see if there is a brave young peasant lad or lass willin' to fight the monster, and if anyone succeeds, I'll give 'em half of me kingdom.

MEGAN: That's a bonny good idea.

KING: And if no one comes forward, why, then, I'll fight the monster meself. (*Picks up his sword as best he can.*) I'll slay him, by Saint George, or I'll die tryin'!

(Fanfare as King and Megan exit. Megan has to help the King carry the heavy sword off. McSnyde emerges and sits on the King's throne. Song: "Comfy and Cozy.")

MCSNYDE: (*Sings.*)

"Comfy and cozy,
Such a nice fit.
Plenty of padding,
A nice place to sit.
My bottom could get
Accustomed to this,
Accustomed to such a nice fit!

The King is old and fragile and weak,
And now must do battle out on the sea.
I don't suppose I'm wrong when I think,
The monster will quickly cause him to sink.
Sink into the sea.
Sink into the sea.

Comfy and cozy,
Such a nice fit.
Plenty of padding,
A nice place to sit.
My bottom could get
Accustomed to this,
Accustomed to such a nice fit!

I'll sit here all night; I'll sit here all day.
The servants will do whatever I say.
This throne is my home for the rest of my life.
And soon I'll make Megan me beautiful wife.
Megan will be mine.
Megan will be mine.

Comfy and cozy,
Such a nice fit.
Plenty of padding,
A nice place to sit.
My bottom could get
Accustomed to this,
Accustomed to such a nice fit!

The crown will belong to his lovely daughter,
And I'll see that she marry the one that she oughta.
Then I will sit here where I belong,
Where *I've* belonged all along.
Ha! Ha! That's it. Ho, ho, it fits. This seat is where I need
to sit.
Here where I belong,
Here where I belong.

Comfy and cozy,
Such a nice fit.
Plenty of padding,
A nice place to sit.
My bottom could get
Accustomed to this,
Accustomed to such a nice fit!
Accustomed to such a nice fit!"

[END OF FREEVIEW]