



**F. Scott Regan**

Adapted from the Scottish folktale "The Meester Stoorworm"

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## ASHIPATTLE AND THE GIANT SEA SERPENT

**CHILDREN'S.** 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.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 45 minutes.



King Oswald,  
portrait from a 13<sup>th</sup>-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.

## 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.

## 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

“CHILDREN ARE NICE...  
FOR A MID-MORNING SNACK,  
BUT GROWNUPS MAKE  
A REAL MEAL COMPLETE.  
THE IRISH ARE BONY,  
AND THE FRENCH ARE TOO SWEET.  
OH, GIVE ME A SCOTSMAN TO EAT.  
OH, GIVE ME A SCOTSMAN TO EAT!”

—SEA SERPENT

## SCENE 1

(AT RISE: 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.)*  
Me brother always picks on me and makes me tend the fire. Someday, they'll call on me, "Help, help, Ashipattle!" I'll draw me sword, charge the monster, and chop him into little pieces. *(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, laughing.)* Me

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sister and brother always laugh at me. I never win their games, but someday I'll make them see. 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.)

MESSSENGER: (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?

MESSSENGER: Aye, that he did, Your Highness.

KING: And did he draw his mighty sword?

MESSSENGER: 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 tries to lift the heavy sword.*) I've battled with many a terrible foe with Sicker Snapper, me wonderful friend. (*Kisses sword.*) Ah, Sicker Snapper, remember when we slayed that dragon? (*Swings his sword with some trouble controlling it.*) Oops, oops, oops. And when they came from Ireland thinkin' they could take me crown, you an' me Sicker Snapper, we sent them a-runnin' back home, didn't we? And now this sea serpent comes across the sea. It won't take but a moment to send him back to the

depths. Our battles are always vic-to-oh-roooooooooooh...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.*) Despite whate'er I wish, I fear I'm gettin' old.

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.)*

MCSNYDE: Comfy and cozy. Such a nice fit. Plenty of padding. My bottom could get accustomed to such a nice fit! The King is old and fragile and weak. Too bad he must

face that evil sea monster. After he sinks into the sea with his lovely daughter, Princess Megan will need a husband to be the new king. A new king to sit on this throne...ahhh...such a nice fit! (*Evil laugh.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*Blackout.*)

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**