



There was an uncanny quality in this little creature, a spirit of unrest and provocation that ran through her slim body like a flame. She was the embodiment of the music and color about her.

# Maid of the Storm

*A Cinderella who took adventure into her own hands*

By Dale Carroll

**A**RIEL crouched in the sand at the mouth of her cave and watched the gulls as they wheeled out against the stormy November sky. Familiar as the scene was, it never lost its charm for her. All the world about her seemed to share her joy in the approaching storm—the little white-caps in the choppy, slate-colored sea, the long reeds bent by the wind, and even the birds as they circled over the horizon line. One of the gulls especially fascinated Ariel. It seemed larger than the others and gyrated peculiarly high above the others. Its spasmodic movements brought it nearer and nearer to earth—and then Ariel saw that it was no bird at all, but some giant-winged monster struggling to keep its balance. Her face turned skyward, Ariel watched the thing flopping about in the wind. Suddenly it swooped toward her and fell the long distance to the beach, with a great crash.

Ariel rushed to the spot, but not before a group of fishermen had gathered about the mass. Pinned under the wreckage was the long slim figure of a young man. One leg was bent under him and blood was beginning to trickle from his forehead, shadowed by an aviator's cap. Ariel felt a poignant thrill of pity as if one of her beloved pines in the nearby forest had fallen blasted at her feet.

Solemnly she trotted after the little procession that bore the bird-man to the cottage where Andy MacTavish, Ariel's foster-father, had grudgingly offered a shelter. Before the doctor came, Andy's clumsy fingers had cut the aviator's high boot from the broken leg and no one noticed that Ariel had gathered it in her arms and hidden it among her other childish treasures.

"He'll need a rare bit of nursing," the doctor had told them.

Ariel silenced Andy's sour complaints by her faithful promise to give up her long walks and her romps with the fisher-boys and even her games in the cave if they would allow her to nurse the stranger. Andy grunted his consent and the invalid stayed.

Patiently Ariel slaved about the cottage, changing the bandages, preparing his food and soothing him as he tossed and muttered of the strange world in the city beyond the cliffs. Her first reward was the look of recognition and gratitude which he gave her one morning as she brought in the tray with his breakfast.

"Did you fall out of the sky too?" he asked her whimsically.

She smiled rapturously at this first indication that her labors had not been in vain.

"I was here already," she told him. "I'm taking care of you. I'm Ariel."

"Ariel, of course you're Ariel," he answered and then murmured something about "come unto these yellow sands" which she didn't understand. But from that moment, he began to improve and soon he was able to limp from the cottage to her cave where she delightedly shared with him all her treasures.

This was a secret cave which she had named the "Witches' Cauldron" and had told the fisher-boys such blood-curdling tales of its origin that none of them could be bribed to approach it. There, with the birdman seated on a rock and she at his feet on the moss, they spent long lazy afternoons through which he learned her simple history.

She was called Ariel, she told him, because that was the name of the ship which had cast her up on the sands of the Kentish coast where Andy had found her. He had taken her back to his wife because he believed it to be his duty and not from any love of her, as the lonely child soon learned.

"That was when I was a baby," she told him. "I stayed here and played in the cave and grew up. And then you came," she added quaintly.

The stranger was not equally confidential. His name was

They had met at the cave as usual and he had been in an unusually tender mood. He had brought her a gorgeous blue ribbon and a tiny sapphire brooch. "So that you won't forget me when I am gone," he said.

Franklin Shirley, she learned, and he lived in that city of splendor and mystery known to Ariel as London. But as to his past and his plans for the future he remained uncommunicative and preferred to sit on the throne Ariel had made for him and listen to her chatter and watch her dance to the music of the waves.

She loved to invent strange dances for him. She had caught the rhythm of the waves and the wind until she seemed no longer a human child but some elfin incarnation of the storm. Once, after one of these wild dances, Franklin had caught her to him and buried his face in her wind-blown hair.

"Ariel!" he had cried, repeating her name again and again, "you are the loveliest thing I have ever seen."

After this, life had but one meaning for Ariel. They loved each other and she was content. Some day there would be another cottage, just above the Witches' Cauldron, where they would live only for each other. It was joy enough only to wait.

So that, when he casually announced that he must soon be back in London, it was a bolt from the blue. They had met at the cave as usual and he had been in an unusually tender mood. He had brought her a gorgeous blue ribbon which matched her eyes and a tiny sapphire brooch which he pinned on over her gingham frock.

"So that you won't forget me when I am gone," he said lightly.

"Gone!" Ariel's eyes were so blinded with bitter tears that she could hardly see the hand he held out for goodbye. She watched him as he walked away into the sunset and then she stumbled back to the cottage, the forgotten coil of blue ribbon trailing behind her in the sand.

Then followed days of incredible desolation. It was some time before she could go back to the cave, now haunted with bitter sweet memories. One day she forced herself to enter, and in a spirit of defiance, tried the old

### Maid of the Storm

**N**ARRATED by permission, from the Paralta photoplay based upon the story by J. Grubb Alexander and Fred Myton, produced with the following cast:

Ariel.....Bessie Barriscale  
Franklin Shirley.....George Fisher  
Abe Strohm.....Herschel Mayall  
Andy McTavish.....Joseph Dowling  
Jules Picarde.....Howard Hickman  
Ludwig Strauss.....Nick Cogley  
Elaine Shackelford.....Lois Wilson



Franklin raised his head and in that one glance, a lifetime of suffering bitterness was lost in perfect understanding.

dance, but her steps faltered and she fell sobbing to the sand.

Suddenly she raised herself on one arm and gazed into her reflection in the pool beneath her. In spite of her tear-stained face, the beauty that Franklin had found was clearly there. "You are the loveliest thing," he had said, "that I have ever seen." Why then had he never spoken of the love which was surging within her? If what he said was true, she was lovelier than the women he met at the dinners in London, which she had seen illustrated in the society papers. What had they that she lacked? Even though they were less lovely to look at, they could talk to him in his own language of his own interests. This was called education and she had none of it. She would go to London and break this barrier that separated them, and then be wholly his. A sudden gust of wind answered her cry of resolution and she sprang out of the cave with her arms outstretched to the storm, defying the elements as she defied all the powers allied against her.

That night, a quaintly bundled little figure stole out of the cottage while Andy and his wife slept. Her only burden was the boot which she had hidden since the day when it had been cut from Franklin's wounded leg. Inside was an address, "Josiah Dobbs, 17 Shaftesbury Way," and by this she could trace her lover. For surely, Ariel thought, no boot-maker could forget Franklin if once he had entered the shop.

A kind-hearted peddler gave her a lift in his cart and she reached London in the late afternoon of the next day. She made her way through the tumult of the city avenues to a tiny side-street where she found a shop with "DOBBS" painted in red letters above the door. She knocked timidly and, receiving no answer, opened the door and stood hesitating in the threshold.

Three old men, seated about a work table, looked up simultaneously. The cobbler had been surreptitiously entertaining Ludwig Strauss and Jules Picarde, his two cronies, at a game of cards, without the knowledge or consent of Jean his spouse, who disapproved of both cards and cronies. Their astonished gaze met Ariel standing in



the door, clutching desperately the boot which now seemed her only friend. The sight brought an amazed grunt from the three, which gave the warning to Jean in the other room. As the torrent of her abuse grew nearer and nearer, Ludwig hurried Ariel out of the shop and into his own little garret above the stairs.

"It is better so," he explained. "She is a good cook, that woman, but she has a fiend's tongue. Jules and I have neither cook nor scoldings. You will stay with us and perhaps give us both."

So Ariel stayed. She kept the tiny rooms tidy and amused the two old men with her chatter of her life by the sea. They were both members of an orchestra in an East End theater, and they would go over their music, with Ariel sitting in rapt attention at their feet. Once they broke into a wild strain that was full of the spirit of the storm and the sea. Ariel sprang to her feet and into the steps of the dance that had thrilled Franklin in the cave of the witches. As the last note died and Ariel dropped exhausted to her chair, Jules turned impressively to his old friend.

"It is genius the child has," he said solemnly. "The genius that Strohman is looking for but has not found. He must see her dance. Tomorrow she goes."

The next day, a badly frightened little girl was literally pushed into the office of Strohman, who made and unmade stars by a nod of his head. As Ariel looked up at his courteous greeting, she saw a powerfully built man with a somewhat heavy face, which seemed oddly expressionless, like a mask. After a few perfunctory questions, he signaled for music and she danced for him, the dance of the winds. When it was over, he dismissed the pianist and beckoned to her to come nearer.

"Sit down," he said, abruptly. "Do you know that you have the spirit of a great artiste?"

Ariel shrugged her slim shoulders. She was beginning to feel that all this clamor about her dancing was a meaningless farce with no bearing on her real purpose in the city.

"You can be a great artiste," the manager repeated. "But you are not interested in your art. You did not come here for that. What are you here for?"

It was the first intelligent interest that Ariel had found in her purpose and she met it with a rush of confidence. She told Strohman of her love for Franklin and of her burning desire to make herself of his own kind.

"When I am like his own people, then he will know that he loves me," she insisted gravely. "Then we will be married," she finished as a child reciting a well-known lesson.

"I can make you anything you want to be," said Strohman. "I will present you in one of my own productions and you will be a great dancer, much greater than any woman your lover knows. Perhaps then he will marry you as you expect. In return, I am asking only one thing from you,—a promise. You are the sort of girl who keeps promises."

Ariel could only nod.

"I want you to promise," said Strohman, "that if he—

In the little garret in Soho Ludwig and Jules greeted her with rapture. It was her farewell to the little girl who had once danced in the cave.

this man—your lover—does not marry you after all I have done, that you will then come to me."

At the last words, he leaned over his desk and fixed his gaze on her puzzled face. Ariel was not frightened but still bewildered.

"It is a very foolish promise," she said with child-like contempt. "And it means nothing, for of course we will be married. But if you ask it, I can promise." She held out her hand almost gayly as if it were part of a game.

The opening night of the "Ballet Egyptienne" had packed the huge opera house to its doors. Strohman's productions were always sure of an enthusiastic reception but "The Scarlet Lotus," it was rumored, represented the very height of the great manager's efforts. Furthermore, it was to introduce a new discovery known to the theatrical world only as Mlle. Ariel. So there was more than the usual stir of expectation as the lights died down and the quivering of the violins opened the first bars of the ballet.

Far up in the gallery were Jules and Ludwig, too excited for speech even with each other. Their minds each held the same memories of a frightened little girl in gingham, clutching a huge boot as she stood at the door of the cobbler's shop.

In a box, further down, a much bored young man formed part of the theater party which had come to investigate the new "discovery." It was Franklin Shirley whose fiancée, Elaine Shakleford, had dragged him to the affair mainly because the man she really loved would also be in the party. So they both played their weary role of devoted couple until the little farce was ended by the rise of the curtain.

As the vivid figure of the little dancer whirled out from the wings, Franklin forgot his boredom. He had endured new varieties of aesthetic dancers until he loathed the species but this was really something new and refreshingly lovely. There was an uncanny quality in this little

creature, a spirit of unrest and pro-  
vocation that ran through her  
slim body like a flame.

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Maid of the Storm

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She was the embodiment of the music and color about her. The dance mounted to feverish intensity until, in a sudden burst of sound, it ended and the curtain fell only to part again and again to the clamor of an excited audience surprised out of its usual first night tolerance.

After the tumult had died, Franklin sought out the party which had gathered in Strohmman's luxurious apartments for a triumphant dinner to the new star. He was seated next to the young guest of honor and he could not help but notice that he held her attention almost to the neglect of the other members of the party. Something in the curve of her cheek, in a wistful look in her eyes, recalled fleeting memories, a sudden recollection of "old unhappy far-off things," which piqued his imagination without giving it any definite form. There was nothing vague about the attraction the young dancer had for him, however, and before he left he had exacted an invitation from Ariel for tea the next day.

Ariel's triumph had turned to ashes at Franklin's failure to recognize her. She spent a sleepless night torn by the memories that his presence had aroused in her. In the morning Strohmman insisted upon a drive, and as soon as they were seated in the limousine, he handed her a paper folded at the society notes. It was a flattering reference to the engagement between Elaine Shackleford and Franklin Shirley, "both well known in the younger set." Ariel handed back the paper without a word.

When Franklin arrived for tea, she had no doubt about her power over him. However blank his recollection of the past might be, the present held him beyond all power of resistance. Ariel knew that the situation swung on an intonation of her voice or the pressure of her hand at parting. Because of the conflict of desires, she kept the poise of a mere acquaintance and let him go with no token that she too felt the affinity between them.

With the morning came sanity and renewed courage. To her surprise, the maid brought her a card bearing the name of Mrs. Whitney Shackleford, and admitted a gentle old lady in black with a fragrance of lavender about her. She had heard of Ariel through Mr. Franklin Shirley, she said, and had seen her dance that night. For a while they spoke only of Ariel's work and of the great dancers of the past. But on leaving, the little old lady drew Ariel's face down to hers.

"Your face is so sweet, my dear," she said softly. "You never could wantonly hurt anything. I am glad I have seen you. My little girl's happiness is safe in your hands."

After she had gone, Ariel threw herself at full length on the *chaise longue* and gave herself up to bitter memories. She was trapped. Her only chance for sanity was to recognize this and cease struggling for happiness. Franklin had forgotten the past and his present belonged to another woman.

In a delirium of pain, she staggered to the telephone. By the time she had given Strohmman's number, however, her nerves

were under control. His voice came over the wire, eager, answering. To his frantic questions she had only one answer.

"You win," she told him laconically, and dropped the telephone even before she could hear his response.

On her way to Strohmman's apartment she ordered her chauffeur to drive into the little garret in Soho where Ludwig and Jules greeted her with rapture. Franklin had been there that very morning, she learned, and they had told him the story of her first arrival, and shown him the boot by which she had hoped to trace him. He knew the truth now, but it hardly mattered, she thought. She kissed the two old musicians, her eyes wet. It was her farewell also to the little girl who had once danced to the winds in the cave.

Meanwhile, Franklin Shirley had been dashing aimlessly about the City, half stunned by the memories that now came rushing back in an overwhelming flood. He now knew that she was the Ariel of the cave and of the most elusive and exquisite experience that had ever become part of his life.

After insistent attempts to see her at her apartment he finally managed to seek out Ariel's personal maid whom he found in tears. He persuaded the half-hysterical girl to tell him that her mistress had left after midnight for Strohmman's rooms. He pacified the girl with plausible assurances, but inwardly he was seething with suppressed fury. Outside he hurled himself into a passing taxi and gave Strohmman's address. An outraged man-servant tried to stop him at the door, but he pushed the man aside and stalked into the living room where Ariel stood silently beside her manager who looked suddenly very old and weary.

Franklin stood for a moment with his back against the door. Then he slowly raised his right hand and as Strohmman looked up he faced the muzzle of a revolver. Ariel gave one startled movement and then the three stood motionless. It was Strohmman who broke the silence with a short laugh.

"Put up your gun my friend," he said dryly. "We are three fools, but you two are lovers and that is your prerogative. As for me, I have no such excuse, so I will proceed to be sensible. And the sensible thing as I see it, is to leave you together." He went out still smiling.

Ariel's eyes had never left Franklin's face. The defiance in her expression had faded to tenderness at the sight of his evident agony.

She went over to him and gently took the pistol from his hand. Clenched in his other hand was a crumpled bit of paper which she smoothed out and read. It was a telegram announcing the elopement of Elaine with the man she had always loved. She added that she was very happy.

Franklin raised his head and met Ariel's rapturous eyes. In that one glance a lifetime of suffering bitterness was lost in perfect understanding. Outside, the storm broke in heavy gusts against the windows, but the two lovers stood locked in each other's arms oblivious of the storm-world far beneath them.