

## [“Review: “The Little Mermaid” splashes into families’ must-watch list.](#)

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On September 6th, *The Little Mermaid* became available for streaming on Disney+. The film received tons of [backlash](#) when the teaser trailer was released in September of last year. Disney live actions don't exactly have the best reputation with the general public.

In the past couple of years, we've seen classic Disney stories like “Beauty and the Beast,” “Aladdin,” and “Alice and Wonderland” receive mixed reviews. Some fans argue that recreating the animated movies takes away from the “magic” the original movies have.

Even more people were upset when Ariel's casting was announced to be Halle Bailey, a black woman. This choice sparked tons of hate toward the film and Bailey. I was able to experience going to see the movie in theaters opening weekend. To tell the truth, I had my own doubts about the film, but for the most part it exceeded my expectations.

Now that it's streaming on Disney+ on the second viewing I received the film in a different light. I do believe there were some things that the movie did well and some things that could've been done better.

### **Plot.**

*The Little Mermaid* live action follows the same general plot of the 1989 *The Little Mermaid*. Free spirited teenage mermaid Ariel, daughter of King Triton, is interested in all things human world and wants to explore the above world, which is off limits. When she rescues a drowning prince from a shipwreck, her love for the above world only grows. So, she makes a deal with a sea witch to trade her beautiful siren voice for human legs.

### **Music.**

Disney's original *Little Mermaid* is known for its amazing original soundtrack. Several tracks from the soundtrack have become legendary like “Under the Sea,” “Kiss the Girl,” “Poor Unfortunate Souls,” and “Part of Your World.” The music in this movie stands firm ground with the original. If not better, Halle Bailey's wonderful voice is perfect for the character Ariel. She brings so much soul to each note that she sings. I would be lying if I said that her rendition of “Part of Your World” didn't bring me to tears in the movie theater.

The whole entire cast did a fair job of paying homage to the primary movie. Melissa McCarthy's edition of "Poor Unfortunate Souls" is quite enjoyable. I love how she added her own changes to the song's execution, like certain inflections of the lyrics. *"But on the whole I've been a saint/The boss is on a roll"* these two lines show just how different McCarthy's delivery is compared to Pat Carroll's.

Honestly, on my first watch I didn't even notice that McCarthy's song is almost cut in half, as the bit about women who aren't talkative is no longer included. Reflecting on the lyrics from Carroll's version, *"They think a girl who gossips is a bore! / It's she who holds her tongue who gets a man."* They don't exactly send the right message to young girls out there who are now being taught to use their voice.

Daveed Diggs, Grammy Award Winner for Best Musical Theater Album, did an amazing job of voice acting to bring the funny, red crustacean we know as Sebastian the Crab to life. Even though his take on "Under the Sea" was enjoyable, I have to say Samuel E. Wright's edition takes the cake. Diggs just lacked a certain flair in emotion and joy that an emotional and joyous musical number is supposed to have.

This, however, isn't the case for Jacob Tremblay, Diggs and Awkwafina's "Kiss the Girl." It surpasses the original. It can be difficult for animated animals to sing and have it look and sound great, but that's exactly what happened. It had the life, and energy of the animated version. There was another lyric change to this number *"It don't take a word, not one single word, go on and kiss the girl"* has been changed to the more tasteful lyric *"use your words boy and ask her/go on and kiss the girl."* A lot of people were upset with this change initially, but personally, I think it teaches the importance of consent in a subtle way.

I love the new songs. Wild Uncharted Waters was my absolute favorite new song. The song gradually builds somewhat quietly, until Hauer-King breaks out with emotional belting and then settles down again. Hauer-King's voice gives this a Broadway-esque sound. I expect a lot of male audition musical pieces will be this song.

### **Performances.**

Bailey and Hauer-King gave the highlight performances. Their chemistry as Ariel and Eric is amazing to watch on screen. They have this interesting dynamic that makes me invested in their romance. There's Ariel who wants nothing more to explore the human world and Eric who wants the same in a way, just with a love for adventure. For much of the movie in the scenes they have

together Ariel is mute. I for one, find it extremely impressive for there to be so much romantic tension when one of the characters isn't even speaking!

Hauer-King gave Eric a ton of depth. He's the same prince Ariel falls in love with, but there is just so much more to his character now. Eric has a love for the ocean and adventure to save his island. He's an avid leader who wants to do more for his people. He sees adventure as an escape from a life he wasn't born into. On that note, Eric being adopted by royalty is absolute genius. He's like Ariel in this way, they both feel unfit for the life they were born in.

### **Visual Effects.**

A lot of CGI and visual effects are used to simulate being underneath the ocean. Animators were given the task of bringing the magical kingdom of Atlantica to life. Unfortunately, I think some of the effects lacked pizzazz. I wasn't exactly blown away by the scenes that took place "underwater". If the ocean wasn't abysmally dark, it was extremely empty or both. The background of these scenes had little to no other marine life, or color. I would expect for there to be a glimpse of coral or maybe a school of fish swimming.

In the first minute or so in the movie when we first see the live action Atlantica, I was confused on what I was looking at. Now, I understand the point of a live action remake is to make everyone realistic, but I felt that making the palace a bunch of moss and sea statues was boring.. compared to the sparkling, majestic palace in the 1989 edition where the audience can obviously tell they're looking at the palace.

For the most part when the ocean was shown it looked very dark, and empty. With the exception of the "Under the Sea" musical sequence, which was very visually pleasing and colorful. Showing the sea animals dancing as opposed to singing was a smart choice.

The designs of the merpeople's tails also gave me that "wow" factor that I feel the rest of the visual effects lacked. Each tail was unique to each merperson, with gorgeous colorful scales and fins. Ariels was my personal favorite instead of a solid green tail that we're familiar with, Bailey's Ariel sports a shiny, pearlescent tail with shades of pink and light blue that hardly peek through.

### **Conclusion.**

Overall, Disney's live-action The Little Mermaid is a must watch for all audiences. The amazing performances and wonderful songs would win anyone over, and I highly recommend it.