Sea Princess

A Workplace Story for my Workplace Anthology

By Maryanne Peters

Ariel Simpson was always willing. If there was one thing that could be said of him, it was that. He was always willing to help his mother or his sister, and perhaps for that reason his father never sought help from him. His father believed in getting things done himself.

Ariel was always willing to play with his sister. Her favorite game was “The Princess and her Maidservant” or occasionally “Princesses” when they would both dress up as that. “Princesses” was Ariel’s preferred game.

Ariel was an easy learner. He picked up skills seemingly without difficulty. He could chop onions to a fine dice or braid his sister’s hair, but perhaps not immediately in that order. He was useful. That was his key skill. He was not necessarily that intelligent, but he was competent and organized.

He was not destined to go to college, but nor as he suited to a trade. He did not like dirt. Dirt upset him, and so did untidiness. That seemed to him to promote dirt.

So straight out of high school he went to work in an office. He was not fussy about what kind of office it was so long as it was clean. Bathurst Marine seemed like just the employer he was looking for. They arranged for the procurement and management of luxury boats, from motor cruisers to ocean going sailboats and the occasional superyacht. Their products were white paint or vinyl, shiny glass or steel or polished brass or wood - always clean. Expensive too – bought by clean people.

Mark Bathurst owned the company and while he was not obsessed with cleanliness, he valued it. A tidy and polished boat is worth more than a dirty one. He liked things to be organized too. He liked all questions to be answered before they were asked. If I buyer hears the words – “I don’t know. Let me check”, they may well be lost forever. Tidy paperwork. Clean boat. All the answers.

Ariel was just working with paper. He had quickly picked up boat types, lengths, tonnages, power – the categories. There were boats to be sold, boats that people were looking for, boats people wanted to have built and boat builders. There were specifications, drawings, surveys, maintenance records, photo libraries – there was paper and data. Others seemed to take charge of current transactions but Ariel was given the job of tidying the records. He could organize and index everything at his own time and pace. Clean and tidy.

It was the way he looked after things that drew the attention of Mark Bathurst to Ariel Simpson. He had a commission to find a very large boat (close to a superyacht) for a wealthy client and he asked for any boats of that size that they had handled before, Ariel was told to find the files and take them to Mark - “The Boss”.

It was the first time Ariel had walked into Mark’s office. It was large and included several “deal doing areas” for visitors to choose from. – the table, the relaxed suite, the upright suite or the terrace with a view of the marina. Then there was Mark’s desk, where Ariel put the fours folders down in a perfect line.”

“Wait there while I check there is everything I need,” said Mark. But the only seconds later he added – “Actually, I see that there is a checklist on the inside cover. Is that your work? Very tidy.”

He looked up and saw Ariel properly for the first time – a smallish slim young man with a mass of blond hair, big green eyes and a slightly satisfied smile.

“Thank you, Mr. Bathurst”, said Ariel. “I came up with the checklist to help with indexing and to make sure all the documents that should be there are in the folder or onboard in a location stated.”

“Nice. So, what is this ‘SSB lic. WH R S 3’?”. It was well written but unclear.

“That would be the licence for the SSB radio can be found on the right hand side of the wheelhouse shelf 3”. Ariel was pleased with himself.

“You mean starboard side, I think. Looking forward the starboard side is to your right. But I like this. I need to view seven boats and I want files like this on each of them. Are you committed here right now, or can you come with me?” asked Mark.

“I have only been here for a month, Mr. Bathurst, but I have pretty much finished the archives, so I guess I am available this afternoon, Sir,” said Ariel.

“Not this afternoon,” said Mark. “It could be all of next week. There are 7 boats in Florida to be looked at. What was your name again?”

“Ariel. Ariel Simpson, Mr. Bathurst.”

“Ariel? Like the Little Mermaid?”

“It’s an ancient Hebrew name,” said Ariel defensively. “It means “Lion of God”. It is not supposed to be a girl’s name.”

“It suits you,” said Mark. “Why don’t you call me Skipper now that you are joining the maritime side of the business. We leave tomorrow so be here early.” There was something about this young man that he found curiously appealing, but he was yet to discover what that was.

But for Ariel the prospect of travel outside the Carolinas was entirely new and rather exciting. He was so thrilled that barely slept that night.

Mark Bathurst did not sleep either, and it was not excitement that was the problem, or rather not the same time of excitement. He had a dream about a beautiful woman. He often did, especially since his wife had left him. She complained that Mark had no time for her and the kids, and she was right. The business was all he had now, except for weekend access when he could give some quality time if he was ready to switch his phone.

In this dream he was chasing a woman along a beach. Her long blonde hair flew behind her like a masthead pennant, and her bubble butt jiggled in a bikini that rode up her butt crack. It was not clear if she was wearing a top, so he could imagine bare breasts bouncing in front of her. He called out. She seemed to be getting away as his feet seemed to be stuck in soft sand that she just skimmed over.

She must have heard him. She stopped, and she turned as he drew close enough for her hair to blow in his face – the scent of frangipani. She turned. She was beautiful. He knew her. She was … Ariel, the boy at the office, with those big green eyes that cried out for him to take her body.

Mark woke up with a start. It was a nightmare. Was he turning gay?

Perhaps it was just that one of the last faces he had seen that day? There was no cause for alarm. All he needed was to go back to sleep and think of somebody else – an actress or a model from a magazine cover. He laid back down drifted off to sleep.

He was slow dancing, with a beautiful woman in his arms. She was wearing a backless dress and his hands were feeling the plain of her back, right down to the valley of her butt cleavage. A tendril of her hair hung in his face as his nose and lips explored her neck. It was a perfect moment. He pulled back to look into her eyes and kiss her perfect lips.

It was Ariel again, but hardly the boy at the office, with those big green eyes made up perfectly, and lips painted red and quivering with expectation. This was a woman. He had to kiss her.

Again, Mark woke up with a start. This was sick! Why could he not get that pretty face out of his head?

Could Ariel be a girl? Perhaps a tomboy pretending to be a girl to get a job? How could he go away with this person? How could they even stay and employee? He decided that he was being irrational. He needed sleep. He decided to dream of boats, and he did, but she was in that dream too!

In that dream “she” – the beautiful woman named Ariel, was with him selling a boat. It was like he was just an observer watching her talk to a buyer and his wife.

“My name is Ariel and I am Mike’s assistant,” she purred in a feminine voice. “I have all the facts and figures, but right now I am going to demonstrate the sun loungers. I will just have to slip off this robe. I am wearing a bikini underneath. Your wife should lie next to me … please slip that off and lie down here. Men buy boats for status but women like you and me are those who can truly enjoy them. There is something about the sea that is romantic but also feminine. So beautiful, so mysterious, so changeable … don’t you think? It is alright for him to buy it. Just make sure it has all the luxuries that a woman needs down below.”

When Mark finally awoke to his alarm, he had a plan. It was strange, but it seemed to him that his dreams were either the beginning of a perversion or a message from a higher power. The latter was preferable.

He went into the spare bedroom where his wife kept some of her belongings when they lived together. There were some clothes that she looked good in before she had their first child, and some underwear that she had tried to use after that, to help her back into those clothes.

He packed a bag, and then a second one.

Ariel also had a bag. He was wearing cream slacks and espadrilles, and the “Bathurst Marine” polo shirt with the name and logo on the left breast, and the words “The Ocean is Calling” across the back. There were changes of clothing in his bag, but he was never to see those again. Mike took the bag to put in the trunk of his car but discarded it in a dumpster by the gate to the marina.

“We need to get going,” he called out to Ariel who was collecting items from his desk. “We have a lot of ground to cover.”

Ariel positively skipped around the car, a large late model BMW, and fell into the comfortable passenger seat with the playful words – “Aye aye Skipper.”

Mark smiled. Somehow the very presence of his passenger made him feel good. He was still unsure of what was happening, but he would let it happen.

“I have a buyer in New York City,” said Mark, commencing an explanation of where they were headed and why. Ariel had not asked. It did not seem important. “This couple could be the biggest buyer I have ever had, certainly as far as resources go. He would like something big, and he can afford it. She is less ambitious. I have made a shortlist, but we never arrange a deal unless I have inspected the boat and all the paperwork is in place. Call us a team.”

“That sounds great,” said Ariel. It did. He had realized that his life had been so limited, and as the scenery sped by his window he started to dream of a life of luxury like the people enjoyed on the boats bought and sold through Bathurst Marine.

They stopped for lunch on the way, but in this car and the way that Mark drove, they arrived in Jacksonville early, and went straight to the Lakeshore Marina. Mark called and then met the owner, and Ariel – described as “my assistant” - sat in the saloon looking at the documents.

Ariel had not intended to go down to the engine room, but Mark suggested that the engine log should be included and so Ariel went down with his boss.

A small accident occurred, the signifance of which was not apparent at the time. It was the kind of thing that could happen anytime, and nobody needed to have caused it. The engine rooms was clean, as it should be for a boat of this value being inspected with a view to sale, but oils and greases are common, and spillages can happen. Ariels clean shirt and pants ended up filthy.

“We’ll fix it when we get to the motel,” said Mark. Ariel did not like being dirty, but the work could be finished and he could endure for the hour that took. Mark had booked a 2 bedroom unit and they arrived just before dark.

“Where is my bag?” said Ariel. There were two bags in the trunk, but his bag was not there.

“I don’t know,” said Mark, feigning innocence. “But actually, I asked my wife to pack some stuff for you in this bag, so get in the shower and have a look in there when you are clean.”

The seemed like a good idea. Mark brought in both bags and gave Ariel first access to the single bathroom.

Mark found himself struggling with a moment of uncertainty, but now it seemed that it was too late to unwind his actions. In a way he was glad of that. It might turn very bad – only time would tell. If things turned out the way he wanted, then what did that make him? He decided not to dwell on that. There were so many questions, but it seemed that some might never need to be asked.

He looked at the material on the boat he had viewed and Ariel’s carefully written notes. Even that handwriting appeared feminine.

“What is this?” He heard Ariel’s voice in a high pitch – like that of a teenage girl in a state of disgruntlement. He turned to see the boy wrapped in a motel towel holding up a floral print dress.

“Oh my God,” he said in mock shock. “I had my wife pack a few things for you, just t make sure you had the right stuff, but I suppose that she might have thought that Ariel was a girl. I am so sorry, but is this all we have?”

“This and women’s underwear and makeup and stuff.” The bag was open on the bed in Ariel’s room.

But as he watched Ariel pull out some of the clothes, he suddenly saw a change of expression that prompted his to think that his suspicions about his employee were confirmed.

“What a beautiful sundress,” said Ariel, holding it up. “You are going to this that I am weird if I tell you this, but when I used to play with my sister as a child, I used to dream of wearing a dress like this.”

“Really? I don’t think that’s weird,” said Mark. “Why don’t you put it on? It doesn’t look like you have anything else right at the moment.” He was starting to feel comfortable with all that he had done. Was either of them wrong? I didn’t seem so.

“I would have to wear some other stuff underneath,” said Ariel. “But it’s all here. Except something to stuff in these cups.”

“I have some socks, until we can find something better.”

Ariel looked at his Boss. He was tidy and methodical rather than smart, but he could sense that he was caught up in something. Still, by this point the overwhelming feeling was the desire to turn back time, even for a moment. “Princesses” was Ariel’s favorite game, and this dress looked just like what a modern princess might wear. “OK” he said.

He slipped back into his bedroom and took a look inside the bag, then slipped on the shaping garment. Why would Mark’s wife think that he needed this? Probably because she could not know his size and this would ensure a fit. He vaguely remembered that somebody had said that Mark and his wife were separated, so perhaps they were together again?

The body shape looked great, although the socks in the upper part were not perfect. What did Mark mean about “until we can find something better”? But the legs were so wrong. There was a toilet bag included in the bag. Inside was a toothbrush, makeup, hair accessories, and a ladies’ razor.

“Sorry Skipper, I need to use the bathroom again,” Ariel called out, his voice sounded a little shriller than usual, like he was slipping into “Princess mode” even after all these years.

Ariel had never shaved his body before, and barely needed to shave his chin, but he set to work at it as if he knew exactly what he was doing. As he rinsed off and applied some body lotion from the dispenser in the shower stall he felt cleaner than he ever had before. He liked cleanliness.

In the mirror he thought that his hair was not entirely out of place. It was a mass of blonde curls – the only untidy thing he ever allowed. There was something missing – a little color in the face.

But it was time to show Mark how he looked. His Boss would laugh, for sure, but this was his doing. They would order in a pizza, perhaps, and rest up for the morning.

Ariel slipped on the shoes which were tight but wearable. He stepped out into the living room area. Mark was at the table looking at papers from the boat. He had already decided that it was too small. He looked up. There she stood – Ariel – the sea princess.

For a moment he was just gob smacked. This was the girl on the beach he had dreamt about. She had become real. Things like that don’t happen every day – in fact, they never happen. You dream … and your dream comes true.

“It is actually a good fit,” said Ariel “If you ignore the tight thing I am wearing underneath.”

“You look fantastic,” said Mark. “Let’s go out to dinner. Me and my lady assistant.”

Ariel laughed, but then cut it short as he realized that Mark was not laughing. He was serious. Ariel said – “You can’t be serious?”

“Let’s do it,” said Mark. “I saw a place down the road. Nobody knows you. You look good. You just need a little makeup. Come on. It will be a bit of fun.”

“I don’t know anything about makeup,” said Ariel, but even that meant that he was considering it.

We passed a small beauty shop too,” said Mark. “It was still open a half hour ago. Ou said that you used to dream of wearing a dress like this, so wear it well. I will pay. I am paying for everything on this trip.

It was true that the trip had only just started, and Ariel did not want it to end prematurely. He was new and lucky to be here. “OK” he said.

The beauty shop was open. It seemed to be a late night gossip joint for a number of overly beautified African American women, but they seemed overjoyed to receive a small white boy into their special place, especially when Mark waved his credit card.

“My young friend here has dreamed of something like this, so I am guessing you ladies can help? he said.

He did his best to run through messages on his phone of the resulting excited cackle, and less than 20 minutes later Ariel emerged with the face of the other woman in his dreams – the one he had danced with cheek to cheek.

“You look perfect,” he said, as he paid the bill.

“We had so much fun that the work tonight was free,” said the lady in charge. “But you are paying for some supplies and advice for the look tomorrow – something business-like as we understand?”

As they headed into the restaurant, Mark had to ask the lady of his dreams – “Are you serious about dressing this way tomorrow?”

“This was your idea,” said Ariel. “I guess that it really doesn’t matter whether your assistant is male or female. But if you want we can go to Walmart tomorrow and get some men’s clothing.”

“No,” said Mark, perhaps a little too quickly. “No, we are going to be pushed for time. We need to get to St. Petersburg tomorrow and we have 4 boats to look at. Honestly, I am very happy to have dressed this way, but perhaps if you do any talking you might see if you can put on a woman’s voice?”

Ariel cleared his throat. “Aye aye Skipper.”

Mark nodded. That was pretty good. By the end of the evening, talking mainly the business of boats, the new voice of Ariel Simpson seemed perfect.

They had drank a little, and with Ariel being unfamiliar the new woman for the time being, woke a little the worse for wear. Still, she looked in the mirror in her room and thought first about what she needed to look pretty for the day ahead. She needed time in the bathroom, so she suggested that Mark go there first.

The ladies in the beauty shop had spoken about “less can be more” when it came to daytime looks. That meant good foundation to cover blemishes, natural color, eye makeup that made her green glow bright, and lipstick to accentuate the mouth as a woman’s sexual organ on the face. Ariel was still the same person, only female. She was still competent and organized, and willing and able to learn. That first day took a little time, but she needed to get it right.

“We are running very late. We really need to get moving,” Mark shouted through the bathroom door.

“You wanted a woman and that is what you’re going to get,” came the female voice back. “I just need to get this right.”

But when she emerged to simply ask – “Happy?” – he was. It was hard to imagine how any woman could look better.

Still, he had bought donuts and she had to eat hers in the car as they sped South on Interstate 75 trying to do the trip in 3 hours flat. Mark outlined the marinas that they would need to visit in order, and Ariel found them all on the navigation system.

The first stop proved uninteresting, but they completed their work quickly having arrived late, and headed across to the sea to get to the next appointment on time.

“This is my assistant, Ariel,” said Mark, to the owner.

“How fortunate to have brought a lady along,” said the owner. “Welome aboard “Sea Princess”. I have brought my wife with me. The boat is half hers after all. You know, she never wanted me to buy it, but once I had she fell in love with it and everything about owning and using a vessel of this size. She is heartbroken that we have to sell it, but with my health not being that good, we simply have to. She is in the saloon.”

Mark nodded to Ariel to head in that direction.

The lady of the vessel was arranging flowers on the table. The vase was flat and held in place with a custom-made fiddleboard. The whole room struck Ariel as being perfect – just how she liked it – clean and very tidy and organized.

“I’m Marion,” said the lady. “I am the co-owner with my husband, although in my heart this boat is all mine.”

“I think I understand why. It is beautiful,” said Ariel. “I am Ariel.”

“Ariel? Such a pretty name for such a pretty girl. Like the Little Mermaid,” mused Marion attending to her flowers.

“It’s an ancient Hebrew name,” said Ariel, but that was as far as she went with that. “I heard that you have to sell, so I am sure that you want it to go to the right owner. But I am here to look at the paperwork.

“I keep that, and I have it ready,” said Marion. “I am a bit fussy when it comes to records.”

“So, and I,” said Ariel, bonding immediately with the older woman. “I heard that you were reluctant to buy the boat – is that true. I only ask because the buyer that Mark has lined up has a wife who doesn’t want her husband to buy.”

“I know all about why,” said Marion. “If you want to find her phone number and give it to me, I will happily talk to her. Just so you know my purpose would be to find out whether she is the right person to share my joy in this wonderful thing, and if she is, to talk her into it.”

“How nice of you to offer,” said Ariel. “But first I need to go through this stuff. Would you be able to sit with me for a while as I tick off my list?”

Outside, Mark was inspecting the visible hull and superstructure and talking to Marion’s husband. He had the look of once being athletic and powerful, in every sense of that word, but having been overtaken by time, and ravaged by an illness that had wasted his still tanned limbs. Mark found himself liking him, but liking his boat as well.

By the time that he met up with Ariel back on the wharf, he had decided to call the buyer in New York to talk to him about it.

“Perhaps you should include the buyer’s wife in this conversation too,” said Ariel. “Perhaps get her cell phone number for future reference, Skipper.”

There was something about the way that she said the last word that made it sound suggestive, but perhaps Mark was just imagining that. He had spent the previous night again wracked by improper dreams – having sex with a woman with the face of his cross-dressed assistant. But he had let those dreams run, and woken up embarrassed at the state he would leave that motel’s master bed in.

Whatever idea he had of terminating his perversion was thrashed out his head by her first appearance in the morning, in a robe suggestive of everything that was beneath that he knew was not there, and offering him first use of the bathroom, which he definitely needed for all the wrong reasons.

He shook himself back to reality as she collated her folder. He walked to the end of the pier and made his call.

She made a call too.

“We have another two boats to visit down at Sarasota,” said Mark. “And we are booked to stay there before we drive across to Miami. And perhaps you might let me buy you something to wear to dinner when we get there, because tonight we will be working on three boat profiles.”

“That something van be nothing too revealing, Skipper,” said Ariel. “I have nothing to reveal … or nothing nice anyway.”

It was not until they arrived in Miami that Mark got the call that he shouldn’t bother looking for another boat – the buyer had the e-dossier on “Sea Princess” that Mark had sent the day before, and they wanted that.

“I think you have your young assistant to thank for this,” the Buyer said. “Her name is Ariel I understand. She must be a princess of the sirens because she and the present owner’s wife seem to have bewitched my wife to support the purchase. We want to close this deal immediately, so please send me the contract.”

Ariel was busy with papers in relation to the 6th vessel, so Mark had time to leave the marina and make some purchases before he met her back on the boat.

He could not help but wonder what might have been said to the buyer’s wife. Perhaps she wanted him kept busy and somewhere else? But it seemed that the seller’s wife was genuinely attached to the boat. He dismissed further thoughts on the nature of women, as he a deal to close.

“You can file your dossier on this boat and we won’t be bothering about Boat 7. The buyer who has financed this trip wants to buy “Sea Princess”, so we will be heading home tomorrow, with a hefty commission for Bathurst Marine.”

“That’s good news,” said Ariel. “So, what will we do this afternoon?”

“Well, the sale is down to you, so I owe you my gratitude,” said Mark. “Call this little gift a down-payment on that.” He presented her with a box – he had added a small pink bow.

She opened it, but she was not sure what she was looking at. She asked – “What are these?”

“Those are estradiol slow release patches,” he said. “The beginning of a program of female hormone therapy which will see you able to transition to being a woman fulltime and forever. I am hoping it is what you want. It is what I want.”

She looked around the plush saloon of the 6th boat. It was nice but not great, but the big couch looked soft and inviting.

“If I take my clothes off, will you stick them on my body?” she asked.

Her dream of being a princess had come true, and now it was his dream come true as well.

The End

© Maryanne Peters 2023

5080

Erin’s seed: “A young man gets a good job working in an office. He's been there awhile and has an older boss who seems to be very nice to him and even takes him to lunch a time or two, just business. But young Ariel is a secret crossdresser and has a bit of a crush on his boss. There’s a meeting planned in another city … so Boss asks Ariel if he want to go to be kind of secretary and general factotum – “it will be pleasant” so Clark agrees, but when they get to the hotel or the boat or wherever he discovers his clothes he packed have been replaced with very sexy women's casual clothes. The boss admits that he has planned this, this isn’t a business trip but a Pleasure one. Clark can back out and boss has arranged that he will get a job at a rival company, an equivalent job, but Boss is sure that what Clark wants is the new suitcase full of lingerie and party clothes, oh, and a ticket to a spa. Clara emerges”