```
h from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwell the Sea King and his subjects. We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed; the most singular flowers and plants grow there; the leaves and stems of w
In from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwelf the Sea King and his subjects. We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed; the most singular flowers and plants grow there; the leaves and stems of who lick are so pliant, that the slightest agitation of the water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches, as birds fly among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of the Sea King had been a wido wer for many years, and his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman, and exceedingly proud of her high birth; on that account she wore twelve oysters on her tail; while others, also of high rank, were only like all the others, a lear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as it is equivalent. She was, however, it is earlied the castle, or among the living flowers that grew out of the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the fish swam in, just a blue grow and the fish swam in, just a blue flowers was a beautiful garden, in which grew bring flowers that grew out of the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our hou
                                                                                                                                                                                  ve reached your fifteenth year," said the grand-mother, "you will have permission to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while year, one of the sisters would be fifteen: but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit, and what she thought the most beautiful; for their grandmother could not tell the
 e little birds fishes, or she would not have understood her; for she had never seen birds. "When 💨 you ha
 e great ships are sailing by; and then you will see both forests and towns." In the following
 came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean, and see the earth as we do. However, each
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 much for her turn to come as the youngest, she who had the longest time to wait, and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly; but through the water they
m enough; there were so many things on which they wanted information. None of them lo
  ghts she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water, and watchi
oked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed betwe
                                                                                                                                                                                           ng the fish
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    hem, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings, who never imagined that a
                                                                                                                                                                                             en her and t
  retty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     f their ship. As soon as the eldest was fifteen, she was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean. When she came back, sh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town nearby, where the lights were twinklid the voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not
  ad hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the
 like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of carriages, an
                                                                                                                                                                                                         the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions? and afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up the deven fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells, down in the depths of the sea. In another year the second sister receives
 o near to all those wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever. Oh, did not
 igh the dark blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, an
  permission to rise to the surface of the water, and to swim about where she pleas
                                                                                                                                                                                                             ed. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, w
   violet and rose-colored clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her;
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large flock of wild swans towards the setting sun, looking like a long whi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    nd the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea. The third sister's turn followed; she was the boldest of t
 e veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, a
 em all, and she swam up a broad river that emptied itself into the sea. On the bank
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       s she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         at she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a narrow creek she found a
 the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ed to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal came to the water; it was a d bly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the b
 whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; s
og, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This animal barked
 autiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty little children who could swim in the water, a thou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        not fish's tails. The fourth sister was more timid; she remained in the midst of the sea, but she said it was qui
 as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see for so many miles around her, and the sky a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         like a bell of glass. She had seen the ships, but at such a great distance that they looked like sea-gulls. The dolphins spe
ted in the waves, and the great whales spouted water from their nostrils till it seemed as if a hund
hat the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and large ice
                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ns were playing in every direction. The fifth sister's birthday occurred in the winter; so when her turn came, s
                                                                                                                                                       red fountai
                                                                                                                                                          bergs
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  were floating about, each like a pearl, she said, but larger and loftier than the churches built by men. They were of
 e most singular shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   gest, and let the wind play with her long hair, and she remarked that all the ships sailed by rapidly, and steered a
ar away as they could from the iceberg, as if they were afraid of it. Towards evening, as the so the icebergs as they rocked and tossed on the heaving sea. On all the ships the sails were
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      went down, dark clouds covered the sky, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, and the red light glowed
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     fed with fear and trembling, while she sat calmly on the floating iceberg, watching the blue lightning, as it darted
each delighted with the new and beautiful sights they saw; but now, as grown-up girls, they could go when they
onth had passed they said it was much more beautiful down below, and pleasanter to be at home. Yet often, in
ts forked flashes into the sea. When first the sisters had permission to rise to the surface, th
 leased, and they had become indifferent about it. They wished themselves back again in th
                                                                                                                                                                             e water, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                         after a m
 e evening hours, the five sisters would twine their arms round each other, and rise to the s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               e beautiful voices than any human being could have; and before the approach of a storm, and when the
                                                                                                                                                                               urface, in a row
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               f the sea, and begging the sailors not to fear if they sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not under e ship sank, the men were drowned, and their dead bodies alone reached the palace of the Sea King. W
expected a ship would be lost, they swam before the vessel, and sang sweetly of the deligh
                                                                                                                                                                                 ts to be found i
and the song, they took it for the howling of the storm. And these things were never to be b
                                                                                                                                                                                   eautiful for
                                                                                                                                                                                                             em; for
en the sisters rose, arm-in-arm, through the water in this way, heir youngest sister would s
h, were I but fifteen years old," said she: "I know that I shall love the world up there, and a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ooking after them, ready to cry, only that the mermaids have no tears, and therefore they suffer more. "(
" At last she reached her fifteenth year. "Well, now, you are grown up," said the old dowager, her grandm
                                                                                                                                                                                    tand quit
                                                                                                                                                                                                           ple who live in
 ner; "so you must let me adorn you like your other sisters;" and she placed a wreath of rincess to show her high rank. "But they hurt me so," said the little mermaid. "Pride m
                                                                                                                                                                                           white lilies in her hair, and every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady ordered eight great oysters to attach themselves to the tail of the
                                                                                                                                                                                           t suffer pain," replied the old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers he said, "Farewell," and rose as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water. The sun had just set as she raised her head above the waves; he evening star in all its beauty. The sea was calm, and the air mild and fresh. A large ship, with three masts, lay becalmed on the water, wit
in her own garden would have suited her much better, but she could not help herself
                                                                                                                                                                        SO S
ut the clouds were tinted with crimson and gold, and through the glimmering twilight b
                                                                                                                                                                       amed t
h only one sail set; for not a breeze stiffed, and the sailors sat idle on deck or amongst th
                                                                                                                                                                                                           was music and song on board; and, as darkness came on, a hundred colored lanterns were lighted, as if the flags of all nations was
                                                                                                                                                                       e rigging
                                                                                                                                                                                                    aves lifted her up, she could look in through clear glass window-panes, and see a number of well-dressed people within. Among them we ge, and his birthday was being kept with much rejoicing. The sailors were dancing on deck, but when the prince came out of the cabin startled that she dived under water; and when she again stretched out her head, it appeared as if all the stars of heaven were falling
                                                                                                                                                                      en, as the
                                                                                                                                                                      teen years of a
                                                                             all, with large black eyes; he was six
more than a hundred rockets rose in the
                                                                                aking it as bright as day. The little
                                                                                                                                                                                                         lies flew into the blue air, and everything was reflected in the clear, calm sea beneath. The ship itself was so brightly illuminated that plainly seen. And how handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the hands of all present and smiled at them, while the must maid could not take her eyes from the ship, or from the beautiful prince. The colored lanterns had been extinguished, no more rocket
                                                                                                                                                                     bout, splendid firef
all the people, and even the smallest rope, cou
s rose in the air, and the cannon had ceased firing; but the sea becam
                                                                                                                                                                    estless, and a moani
                                                                                                                                                                                                          ng, grumbling sound could be heard beneath the waves: still the little mermaid remained by the cabin window, rocking up and down
                                                                                                                                                                                                          continued her passage; but soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightning appeared in the distance. A continued her passage; but soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightning appeared in the distance. A continued her passage; but soon the waves rose mountains high, as if they would have overtopped the mast; but the ship dived like a swan between them, an another the ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks gave way under the lashing of the sea as it broke over the deck; the mainmast rew were in danger; even she herself was obliged to be careful to avoid the beams and planks of the wreck which lay scattered on
on the water, which enabled her to look in. After a while, the sails were quickly un
                                                                                                                                                                      course over the ragin
d then rose again on their lofty, foaming crests. To the little mermaid this appeared pleasant sport, not s
  napped asunder like a reed; the ship lay over on her side; and the water rushed in. The little mermaid no
                                                                                                                                                                      w perceived that the c
                                                                                                                                                                                                            scene; she could see every one who had been on board excepting the prince; when the ship parted, she had seen him sink into the ld not live in the water, so that when he got down to her father's palace he would be quite dead. But he must not die. So she swamen she dived deeply under the dark waters, rising and falling with the waves, till at length she managed to reach the young prince
  e water. At one moment it was so pitch dark that she could not see a single object, but a flash of lightnin
                                                                                                                                                                       g revealed the whole
deep waves, and she was glad, for she thought he would now be with her; and then she remembered tha
                                                                                                                                                                         t human beings cou
about among the beams and planks which strewed the surface of the sea, forgetting that they could crus
                                                                                                                                                                            h her to pieces. Th
vho was fast losing the power of swimming in that stormy sea. His limbs were failing him, his beautiful
                                                                                                                                                                                                               and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his assistance. She held his head above the water, and let the waves
                                                                                                                                                                                                              The sun rose up red and glowing from the water, and its beams brought back the hue of health to the prince's cheeks; but his ey e the marble statue in her little garden, and she kissed him again, and wished that he might live. Presently they came in sight of
drift them where they would. In the morning the storm had ceased; but of the ship not a single fragment
   remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, smooth forehead, and stroked back his wet hair; he s
                                                                                                                                                                                  eemed to her
nd; she saw lofty blue mountains, on which the white snow rested as if a flock of swans were lying upo
                                                                                                                                                                                                               e coast were beautiful green forests, and close by stood a large building, whether a church or a convent she could not tell. Orange
                                                                                                                                                                                    n them. Near
 and citron trees grew in the garden, and before the door stood lofty palms. The sea here formed a litt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                ch the water was quite still, but very deep; so she swam with the handsome prince to the beach, which was covered with fine,
                                                                                                                                                                                      le bay, in whi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   Is sounded in the large white building, and a number of young girls came into the garden. The little mermaid swam out farther and neck with the foam of the sea so that her little face might not be seen, and watched to see what would become of the po
 ite sand, and there she laid him in the warm sunshine, taking care to raise his head higher than his bo
                                                                                                                                                                                       dy. Then bel
 om the shore and placed herself between some high rocks that rose out of the water; then she covere
or prince. She did not wait long before she saw a young girl approach the spot where he lay. She seem
                                                                                                                                                                                          ed frighten
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ed at first, but only for a moment; then she fetched a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life
   in, and smiled upon those who stood round him. But to her he sent no smile; he knew not that she h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         im. This made her very unhappy, and when he was led away into the great building, she dived down sorrowfully into the
                                                                                                                                                                                           ad saved h
  ater, and returned to her father's castle. She had always been silent and thoughtful, and now she was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         n ever. Her sisters asked her what she had seen during her first visit to the surface of the water; but she would tell them
                                                                                                                                                                                            more so t
  othing. Many an evening and morning did she rise to the place where she had left the prince. She saw
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          he garden ripen till they were gathered, the snow on the tops of the mountains melt away; but she never saw the prince
                                                                                                                                                                                             the fruits
and therefore she returned home, always more sorrowful than before. It was her only comfort to sit in h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          den, and fling her arm round the beautiful marble statue which was like the prince; but she gave up tending her flowers
                                                                                                                                                                                            er own littl e gai
 nd they grew in wild confusion over the paths, twining their long leaves and stems round the branche
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          that the whole place became dark and gloomy. At length she could bear it no longer, and told one of her sisters all abou
   Then the others heard the secret, and very soon it became known to two mermaids whose intimate
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          know who the prince was. She had also seen the festival on board ship, and she told them where the prince came from
and where his palace stood. "Come, little sister," said the other princesses; then they entwined their a
llow shining stone, with long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea. Sple
                                                                                                                                                                                           ms and rose up in a long row to the surface of the water, close by the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood. It was built of bright ndid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and between the pillars that surrounded the whole building stood life-like statues of marble. Through
  clear crystal of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings
                                                                                                                                                                                           of tapestry; while the walls were covered with beautiful paintings which were a pleasure to look at. In the centre of the largest saloon a fountain
threw its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone down
                                                                                                                                                                                            upon the water and upon the beautiful plants growing round the basin of the fountain. Now that she knew where he lived, she spent many an e
                                                                                                                                                                                         y of the others ventured to do; indeed once she went quite up the narrow channel under the marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on th oonlight. She saw him many times of an evening sailing in a pleasant boat, with music playing and flags waving. She peeped out from among the an, spreading out its wings. On many a night, too, when the fishermen, with their torches, were out at sea, she heard them relate so many good to tossed about half-dead on the waves. And she remembered that his head had rested on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he
 rening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than an
  water. Here she would sit and watch the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright m
 green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery-white veil, those who saw it believed it to be a sw
  ngs about the doings of the young prince, that she was glad she had saved his life when he had been
lew nothing of all this, and could not even dream of her. She grew more and more fond of human bein
                                                                                                                                                                                      gs, and wished more and more to be able to wander about with those whose world seemed to be so much larger than her own. They could fly ove ed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight. There was so much that she wished to know, and her sisters we upper world, which she very rightly called the lands above the sea. "If human beings are not drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live fore
 he sea in ships, and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possess
e unable to answer all her questions. Then she applied to her old grandmother, who knew all about the ver? do they never die as we do here in the sea?" "Yes," replied the old lady, "they must also die, and the surface of the water, and we have not even a grave down here of those we love. We have not immor
                                                                                                                                                                                       heir term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live to three hundred years, but when we cease to exist here we only become the foam on
                                                                                                                                                                                          souls, we shall never live again; but, like the green sea-weed, when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on the
ontrary, have a soul which lives forever, lives after the body has been turned to dust. It rises up through
us regions which we shall never see." "Why have not we an immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid m
                                                                                                                                                                                      the clear, pure air beyond the glittering stars. As we rise out of the water, and behold all the land of the earth, so do they rise to unknown and glor
                                                                                                                                                                                                  'I would give gladly all the hundreds of years that I have to live, to be a human being only for one day, and to have the hope of knowing th
 happiness of that glorious world above the stars." "You must not think of that," said the old woman; "w
                                                                                                                                                                                   e feel ourselves to be much happier and much better off than human beings." "So I shall die," said the little mermaid, "and as the foam of the sea I sh
all be driven about never again to hear the music of the waves, or to see the pretty flowers nor the red s
                                                                                                                                                                                  un. Is there anything I can do to win an immortal soul?" "No," said the old woman, "unless a man were to love you so much that you were more to him
                                                                                                                                                                                 ced his right hand in yours, and he promised to be true to you here and hereafter, then his soul would glide into your body and you would obtain a sha an never happen. Your fish's tail, which amongst us is considered so beautiful, is thought on earth to be quite ugly; they do not know any better, and the
than his father or mother; and if all his thoughts and all his love were fixed upon you, and the priest pla
re in the future happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and retain his own as well; but this c
   think it necessary to have two stout props, which they call legs, in order to be handsome.
                                                                                                                                                                                                   sighed, and looked sorrowfully at her fish's tail. "Let us be happy," said the old lady, "and dart and spring about during the f
years that we have to live, which is really quite long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the bett
                                                                                                                                                                               er. This evening we are going to have a court ball." It is one of those splendid sights which we can never see on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the la
rge ball-room were of thick, but transparent crystal. May hundreds of colossal shells, some of a deep red
                                                                                                                                                                                others of a grass green, stood on each side in rows, with blue fire in them, which lighted up the whole saloon, and shone through the walls, so that the
                                                                                                                                                                               hem the scales glowed with a purple brilliancy, and on others they shone like silver and gold. Through the halls flowed a broad stream, and in it danced
sea was also illuminated. Innumerable fishes, great and small, swam past the crystal walls; on some of t
                                                                                                                                                                                voice as theirs. The little mermaid sang more sweetly than them all. The whole court applianced her with hands and tails; and for a moment her heart felt
he mermen and the mermaids to the music of their own sweet singing. No one on earth has such a lovely
                                                                                                                                                                                in of the world above her, for she could not forget the charming prince, nor her sorrow that she had not an immortal soul like his; therefore she crept aw
quite gay, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of any on earth or in the sea. But she soon thought ag
ay silently out of her father's palace, and while everything within was gladness and song, she sat in her o
                                                                                                                                                                              wn little garden sorrowful and alone. Then she heard the bugle sounding through the water, and thought--"He is certainly sailing above, he on whom my
wishes dépend, and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I will venture all for him
                                                                                                                                                                                , and to win an immortal soul, while my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch, of whom I have always been so much afraid
but she can give me counsel and help." And then the little mermaid went out from her garden, and took the
                                                                                                                                                                                road to the foaming whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before: neither flowers nor grass grew there; nothing
ut bare, gray, sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill-wheels, whirle
                                                                                                                                                                                d round everything that it seized, and cast it into the fathomless deep. Through the midst of these crushing whirlpools the little mermaid was obliged to
pass, to reach the dominions of the sea witch; and also for a long distance the only road lay right across a g
                                                                                                                                                                                 uantity of warm, bubbling mire, called by the witch her turfmoor. Beyond this stood her house, in the centre of a strange forest, in which all the trees a
nd flowers were polypi, half animals and half plants; they looked like serpents with a hundred heads growing
                                                                                                                                                                                   out of the ground. The branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like flexible worms, moving limb after limb from the root to the top. All that could
be reached in the sea they seized upon, and held fast, so that it never escaped from their clutches. The little m
                                                                                                                                                                                     ermaid was so alarmed at what she saw, that she stood still, and her heart beat with fear, and she was very nearly turning back; but she thought of
ne prince, and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long flowin
                                                                                                                                                                                        g hair round her head, so that the polypi might not seize hold of it. She laid her hands together across her bosom, and then she darted forward as
a fish shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched o white skeletons of human beings who had perished at sea, and had sunk down into the deep waters, skeletons of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           teach held in its grasp something it had seized with its numerous little arms, as if they were iron bands. Th
                                                                                                                                                                                                 and animals, oars, rudders, and chests of ships were lying tightly grasped by their clinging arms; even a little mermaid, whom they had cau
                                                                                                                                                                                                 hy ground in the wood, where large, fat water-snakes were rolling in the mire, and showing their ugly, drab-colored bodies. In the midst of o eat from her mouth, just as people sometimes feed a canary with a piece of sugar. She called the ugly water-snakes her little chickens,
int and strangled; and this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess. She now came to a space of mars
his spot stood a house, built with the bones of shipwrecked human beings. There sat the sea witch, allowing a toad t
and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom. "I know what you want," said the sea witch; "it is very stupid of you, but
                                                                                                                                                                                                       you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish's tail, and to have two su
an immortal soul." And then the witch laughed so loud and disgustingly, that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, and lay the
ports instead of it, like human beings on earth, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may have
e wriggling about. "You are but just in time," said the witch; "for after sunrise to-morrow I should not be able to help you t
                                                                                                                                                                                                          ill the end of another year. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land tomorrow before sunrise, and sit dow pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever sa
n on the shore and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind calls legs, and you will feel great
w. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly; but at every step yo
                                                                                                                                                                                                              u take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I will help you.
/es, I will," said the little princess in a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and the immortal soul. "But think again," sa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                id the witch; "for when once your shape has become like a human being, you can no more be a mermaid. You will never return
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 to forget his father and mother for your sake, and to love you with his whole soul, and allow the priest to join your hands that y and you will become foam on the crest of the waves." I will do it," said the little me rmaid, and she became pale as death. "
 rrough the water to your sisters, or to your father's palace again; and if you do not win the love of the prince, so that he is willing
ou may be man and wife, then you will never have an immortal soul. The first morning after he marries another your heart will break
But I must be paid also," said the witch, "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the sweetest voice of any who dwell here in the depth
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   s of the sea, and you believe that you will be able to charm the prince with it also,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        but this voice you must give to me; the
best thing you possess will I have for the price of my draught. My own blood must be mixed with it, that it may be as sharp as a two-edge
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     d sword." "But if you take away my voice," said the little mermaid, "what is lef
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      t for me?" "Your beautiful form, your gra
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     erful draught." "It shall be," said the little
ceful walk, and your expressive eyes; surely with these you can enchain a man's heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        tongue that I may cut it off as my payment; then you shall have the pow
nermaid. Then the witch placed her cauldron on the fire, to prepare the magic draught. "Cleanliness is a good thing," said she, scouring the v
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         essel with snakes, which she
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    had tied together in a large knot; then she
pricked herself in the breast, and let the black blood drop into it. The steam that rose formed itself into such horrible shapes that no one could lo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ok at them without fea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   r. Every moment the witch threw somethin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  st water. "There it is for you," said the witch
  else into the vessel, and when it began to boil, the sound was like the weeping of a crocodile. When at last the magic draught was ready, it looke
                                                                                                                                                                                                                           d like the cleare
Then she cut off the mermaid's tongue, so that she became dumb, and would never again speak or sing. "If the polypi should seize hold of you as yo
nem a few drops of the potion, and their fingers will be torn into a thousand pieces." But the little mermaid had no occasion to do this, for the polypi spr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              u return thr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ough the wood," said the witch, "throw over
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ck in terror when they caught sight of the glitt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ang ba
ering draught, which shone in her hand like a twinkling star. So she passed quickly through the wood and the marsh, and between the rushing whirlpools
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              e saw that in her father's palace the torches in
he ballroom were extinguished, and all within asleep; but she did not venture to go in to them, for now she was dumb and going to leave them forever, she fe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            It as if her heart would break. She stole into the
 parden, took a flower from the flower-beds of each of her sisters, kissed her hand a thousand times towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           waters. The sun had not risen when she came in s
 ght of the prince's palace, and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright. Then the little mermaid drank the magic draught, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her
 delicate body: she fell into a swoon, and lay like one dead. When the sun arose and shone over the sea, she recovered, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her sto
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    od the handsome young prince. He fixed his coal-blac
k eyes upon her so earnestly that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her fish's tail was gone, and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    et as any little maiden could have; but she had no clot
  es, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair. The prince asked her who she was, and where she came from, and she looked at him mildly and sorrowfully with h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             er deep blue eyes; but she could not speak. Every step she
 ook was as the witch had said it would be, she felt as if treading upon the points of needles or sharp knives; but she bore it willingly, and stepped as lightly by the pr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ince's side as a soap-bubble, so that he and all who saw her w
ondered at her graceful-swaying movements. She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful creature in the palace; but sh aves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents: one sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his han w much more sweetly she herself could sing once, and she thought, "Oh if he could only know that! I have given away my voice forever, to be with him." The slaves mermaid raised her lovely white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided over the floor, and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    e was dumb, and could neither speak nor sing. Beautiful female s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              smiled at her. This was great sorrow to the little mermaid; she knew ho
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  next performed some pretty fairy-like dances, to the sound of beautiful music. Then the litt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    r beauty became more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the he
art than the songs of the slaves. Every one was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again quite readily, to please hi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     m, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives.
The prince said she should remain with him always, and she received permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page's dress made for her, that s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        he might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented
woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince to the tops of high mountains hed, and followed him till they could see the clouds beneath them looking like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands. While at the prince's palace, and when all the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ; and although her tender feet bled so that even her steps were marked, she only laug
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          household were asleep, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps; for it eased
her burning feet to bathe them in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of all those below in the deep. Once during the night her sisters came up arm-in-arm, singing
ognized her, and told her how she had grieved them. After that, they came to the same place every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             sorrowfully, as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and then they rec
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father
with his crown on his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but they did not venture so near the land as her sisters did. As the days passed, she loved the prin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ce more fondly, and he loved her as he would love a little child, but it never came i
to his head to make her his wife; yet, unless he married her, she could not receive an immortal soul; and, on the morning after his marriage with another, she would dissolve
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               into the foam of the sea. "Do you not love me the best of them all?" the eyes of the
little mermaid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms, and kissed her fair forehead. "Yes, you are dear to me," said the prince; "for you have the best heart, and you are t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              he most devoted to me; you are like a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom
shall never meet again. I was in a ship that was wrecked, and the waves cast me ashore near a holy temple, where several young maidens performed the service. The youngest o e only one in the world whom I could love; but you are like her, and you have almost driven her image out of my mind. She belongs to the holy temple, and my good fortune has sen who saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands: I sat beneath the foam, and watched till the human beings came to he maid sighed deeply, but she could not shed tears. "He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, therefore she will never return to the world. They will meet no more: while I am by h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               f them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her but twice, and she is th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               t you to me instead of her; and we will never part." "Ah, he knows not that it was I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               Ip him. I saw the pretty maiden that he loves better than he loves me;" and the mer
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               is side, and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and give up m
                          Very soon it was said that the prince must marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring king would be his wife, for a fine ship was being fitted out. Althoug
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             h the prince gave out that he merely intended to pay a visit to the king, it was gene
rally supposed that he really went to see his daughter. A great company were to go with him. The little mermaid smiled, and shook her head. She knew the prince's thoughts better than a ss; my parents desire it; but they will not oblige me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her; she is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were forced
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ny of the others. "I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see this beautiful princ
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dumb foundling, with those expre
sive eyes." And then he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long waving hair, and laid his head on her heart, while she dreamed of human happiness and an immortal soul. "You are no
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           t afraid of the sea, my dumb child," said he, as they stood on the deck of the noble s
hip which was to carry them to the country of the neighboring king. And then he told her of storm and of calm, of strange fishes in the deep beneath them, and of what the divers had seen th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ere; and she smiled at his descriptions, for she knew better than any one what wonde
rs were at the bottom of the sea. In the moonlight, when all on board were asleep, excepting the man at the helm, who was steering, she sat on the deck, gazing down through the clear water.

She thought she could distinguish her father's castle, and upon it her aged grandmotler, with the silver crown on her head, looking through the rushing tide at the keel of the vessel. Then her sisters came up on the waves, and gazed at her mournfully, wringing their white hands. She beckoned to them, and smiled, and wanted to tell them how happy and well off sleep was; but the cabin-boy approached, and when her sisters dived down he thought it was only the harbor of a beautiful town belonging to the king whom the prince was going to visit. The church bells were ring.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        She thought she could distinguish her father's castle, and upon it her aged grandmoth
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        She beckoned to them, and smiled, and wanted to tell them how happy and well off sh
 ng, and from the high towers sounded a flourish of trumpets; and soldiers, with flying colors and glittering bayonets, lined the rocks through which they passed. Every day was a festival; balls and entertainments followed one another. But the princess had not yet appeared. Peop
 aid that she was being brought up and educated in a religious house, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she came. Then the little mermaid, who was very anxious to see whether she was really beautiful, was obliged to acknowledge that she had never seen a more refect vision of beauty. Her skin was delicately fair, and beneath her long dark eye-lashes her laughing blue eyes shone with truth and purity. "It was you," said the prince, "who saved my life when I lay dead on the beach," and he folded his blushing bride in his arms. "Oh, I am too
happy," said he to the little mermaid; "my fondest hopes are all fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness; for your devotion to me is great and sincere." The little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt as if her heart were already broken. His wedding morning would bring death to her, and she would change into the foam of the sea. All the church bells rung, and the heralds rode about the town proclaiming the betrothal. Perfumed oil was burning in costly silver lamps on every altar. The priests waved the censers, while the bride and bridegroom joined their hands a
nd received the blessing of the bishop. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, and her ears heard nothing of the festive music, and bride on the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of death which was coming to her, and of all she had lost in the world. On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board ship; cannons were roaring, flags waving, and in the centre of the ship a costly tent of purple and gold had been erected. It contained elegant couches, for the reception of the bridal pair during the night. The
or it; a sharper pang had pierced through her heart. She knew this was the last evening she should ever see the prince, for whom she had given up her beautiful voice, and suffered unheard-of pain daily for him, while he knew nothing of
t. This was the last evening that she would breathe the same air with him, or gaze on the starry sky and the deep sea; an eternal night, without a thought or a dream, awaited her: she had no soul and now she could never win one. All was joy and gayety on board ship till long after m
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