

The daughter of the sea

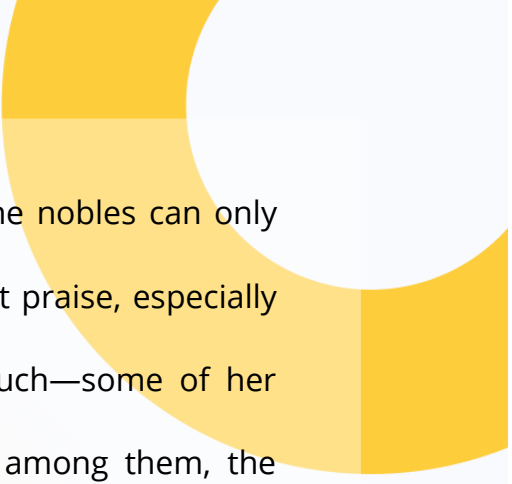
In the distance of the sea, the water is so blue, like the most beautiful cornflower petals, and at the same time so clear, like the brightest glass.

However, it is very deep, so deep that no anchor chain can reach the end.

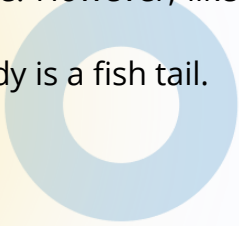
In order to reach the surface from the bottom of the sea, many church steeples must be connected one after another. People on the bottom of the sea live here.

But people must not think that there is just a seabed covered with white sand. No, the strangest trees and plants grow there. Their branches and leaves are so soft that as long as the water flows slightly, they will shake as if they were living things. All the big and small fish swim around among these branches, like birds in the sky. The deepest place in the sea is where the Neptune Palace is located. Its walls are made of coral, and its high pointed windows are made of the brightest amber; but the roof is covered with black clam shells, which open and close automatically with the flow of water. This is strange and beautiful, because every clam shell contains shiny pearls. Any pearl can be the main decoration on the queen's hat.

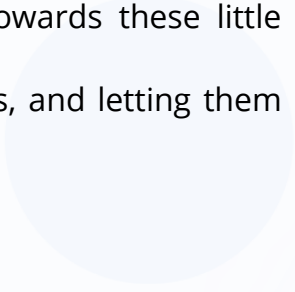
The Sea King who lives there has been a widower for many years, but he has an old mother to manage the housework for him. She is a clever woman, but she always feels incomparable to her noble origin, so she



always wears a dozen oysters on her tail—the rest of the nobles can only wear half a dozen each. In addition, she deserves great praise, especially because she loves those little sea princesses very much—some of her granddaughters. They are six beautiful children, and among them, the youngest is the most beautiful. Her skin was light and tender, like rose petals, and her eyes were blue, like the deepest lake. However, like other princesses, she has no legs: the lower part of her body is a fish tail.

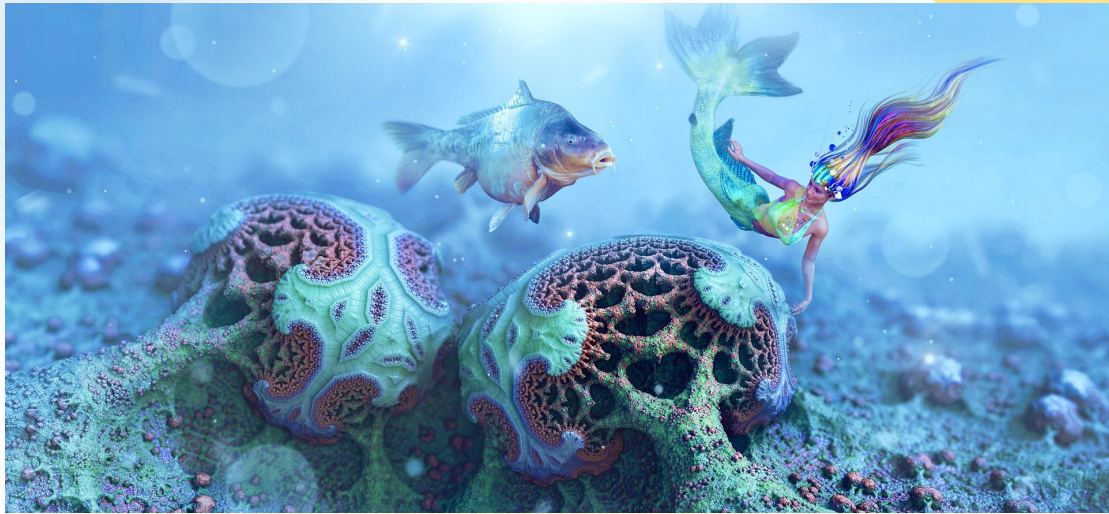


They can spend the entire long day in the palace, in the hall with flowers growing on the wall. Those big windows with amber inlays were open, and fishes were swimming towards them, just as swallows would fly in when we opened the windows. But Yuer kept swimming towards these little princesses, looking for something to eat in their hands, and letting them touch themselves.

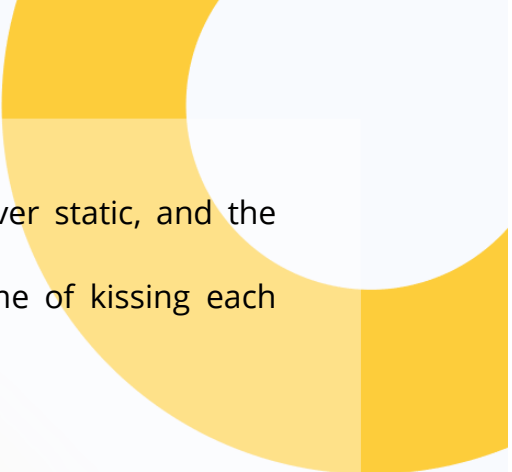


There is a large garden outside the palace, with many fiery red and dark blue trees growing inside; the fruits on the trees are as bright as gold, the flowers bloom like a burning fire, and the branches and leaves are constantly shaking. The ground is full of the finest sand, but it is as blue as the flame of sulfur. There, there was a strange, blue light shining everywhere. You can easily think that you are high in the air instead of on the bottom of the sea, and there is a blue sky above your head and feet.

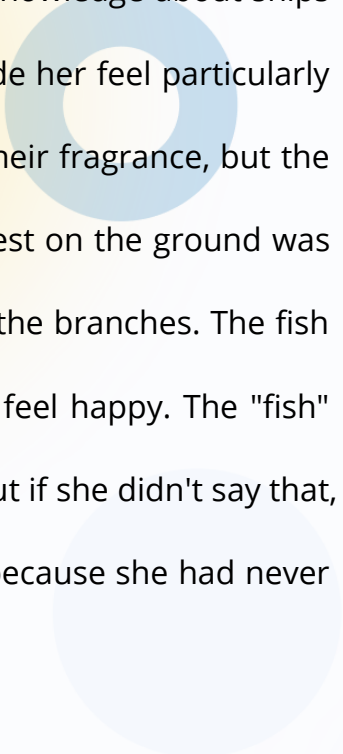
When the sea is very quiet, you can catch a glimpse of the sun: it is like a purple flower, emitting various colors of light from its calyx.



In the garden, every little princess has her own little place where she can plant as she pleases. Some set up their flower beds like a whale, and some feel that it is best to set up their flower beds like a little mermaid. But the youngest one arranged her flowerbed round, like a round of the sun, and at the same time she only planted flowers that were as red as the sun. She is a weird child who doesn't like to talk very much and always thinks about something quietly. When other sisters decorate their gardens with the strangest things they got from the sunken ship, she only wanted a beautiful marble statue except for the bright red flowers like the sun in the sky. This stone statue represents a beautiful man. It was carved out of a white stone and sank to the bottom of the sea with a distressed ship. She planted a weeping willow as red as a rose next to the stone statue. The tree grows very lush. Its fresh branches and leaves hang down to the stone statue, all the way to the blue sandy bottom. Its reflection has a



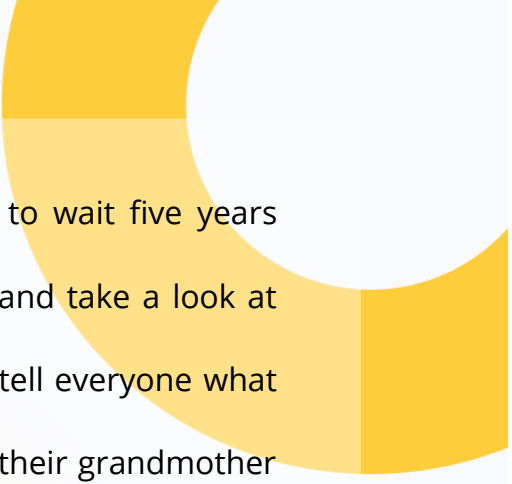
purple-blue hue. Like its branches, this shadow is never static, and the roots and tops of the tree seem to be playing a game of kissing each other.




Her greatest pleasure is to hear some stories about the human world above. Her old grandmother had to tell her all her knowledge about ships and cities, humans and animals. One thing that made her feel particularly good was that the flowers on the ground gave off their fragrance, but the flowers on the bottom of the sea could not; the forest on the ground was green, and what people saw was swimming among the branches. The fish can sing so clearly and nicely, which makes people feel happy. The "fish" that the old grandmother said was actually a bird, but if she didn't say that, the little princess would not understand her story, because she had never seen a bird before.

"When you turn fifteen years old," the old grandmother said, "I will allow you to float to the surface. Then you can sit on the rocks under the moonlight and watch the huge ships sail by your side. You too. You can see the woods and the city."

In the year that is about to come, one of these sisters has reached the age of fifteen; but what about the others—meet, they are one year younger



than the other. Therefore, the youngest princess had to wait five years before she could float up from the bottom of the sea and take a look at our world. But each promised the next that she would tell everyone what she saw and discovered on the first day, because what their grandmother said was really not enough-they really didn't know what they wanted to know. how many!



None of them was as desperate as the younger sister, and she just had to wait the longest, and at the same time she was so silent and thoughtful. I don't know how many nights she stood by the open window, staring upward through the deep blue water, watching the fish waving their tails and wings. She also saw the moon and stars-of course, the light they emitted was a little faint, but through a layer of water, they looked much larger than in our eyes. If something resembling a dark cloud floats under them, she knows that this is not a whale swimming over her, or a boat carrying many passengers. But these travelers never imagined that there was a beautiful little mermaid below them, stretching out her pair of white hands toward the keel of their ship.

The oldest princess is now fifteen years old and can rise to the surface of the water.