

The Mermaid's Dream



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At the bottom of the deepest ocean there lived a mother-shell with a precious stone in her mouth. When the time came for the mother-shell to open her mouth, a wonder was revealed.

The baby-stone inside was half-green, like an emerald, and half-white, like a pearl.

The shells from the kingdom of pearls assembled and made a decision: "This baby is not one of us!"

The biggest shell in the kingdom remarked that the baby's body was half-green, as though it belonged to the kingdom of emeralds.

The mother-shell explained that her husband lived in the neighbouring kingdom, where the emeralds were. A huge sea-storm had seized her and carried her far away.

The waves had swirled and swooshed around her every day, for three hundred years, until she found herself in the kingdom of pearls.

Now, when the baby was born, it was half like mother and half like father. Half-pearl, half-emerald.



The Mermaid's Dream © M.F.Sullivan

The shells with pure white pearls didn't like that.

Why don't you go to the neighbouring country? Surely, you will be happy to see your husband, especially now that your baby is born?" they suggested.

"It will take me hundreds of years to get there. I'm not sure if I could survive that," she replied.

But after a few days, the mother-shell decided to go. She couldn't stand the hostility of the pearl-shells any more. For, they asked the mother-shell to give away her baby to the sea. When she refused, nobody spoke to her.

"Better to die on a long journey than to watch dear friends turn against my baby," said the mother-shell, and went off.

She took a few grains of sand with her, so as not to forget the many nice years she had lived in the kingdom of pearls.

On her way, some fish were attracted by the shiny stone in her open mouth. The mother-shell could only pray that they would not take her baby away.

She tried to stay close to the bottom of the sea, encircled by sandy veils, and to be as unnoticeable as possible.



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The waves carried her too slowly in the sea. The mother-shell thought she would never arrive at the neighbouring kingdom.

Then, one morning, she woke up realizing that she was travelling very fast, almost like a shark. It was a dolphin that took her and her baby-stone with it. Only five days passed and they arrived in the neighbouring kingdom of emeralds.

Oh, how happy her husband was. After three hundred lonely years, he was again with his wife, who had brought their child too.

Mother-shell was cheerful as never before. She presented her husband with the rare, colourful grains of sand she had carried from the bottom of the deepest sea, from the kingdom of pearls.

The parents enjoyed swimming together in the little waves so much with their baby, whom they named Lucky Stone.

Alas, the inhabitants of the kingdom of emeralds noticed that Lucky Stone was not only half-green, but also half white.

“This baby is not like the others,” they grumbled. “Take him back where you came from, and then you can live with us,” the inhabitants of the kingdom of emeralds told mother-shell.



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The mother did not want to listen. She could never travel back to the kingdom of pearls. And her husband supported her well. But Lucky Stone found it impossible to stay there any longer.

One night, when his parents were happily asleep, Lucky Stone loosened the tie which connected him to mother-shell. He jumped out onto the sea-grass and soon he was lost in the dense greenery.

At that moment, a mermaid was passing by. She stopped to take in her palm a beautiful star-fish. The sea-grass was also moved by her hand and she immediately spotted Lucky Stone.

She picked him up in disbelief. “Is it really half-pearl, half-emerald?” she wondered. What a wonderful game of nature! She imagined Lucky Stone on her necklace.

**I am a mermaid,
half-woman, half-fish,
I am a mermaid,
I can do what I wish.**



The Mermaid's Dream, ©.M.F.Sullivan

When she sang so, the underwater grass swayed with pleasure. Fishes danced with their fins and sailors on the sea above fell in love with her voice.

The mermaid was really happy. Now that she had found Lucky Stone, her greatest worry would disappear. She knew it. For she had dreamed long ago that a precious gem, called Lucky Stone, would help her out.

All her life the mermaid had only one big worry. She couldn't decide where to settle, in the sea or on land.

She felt like a guest everywhere she went, and she couldn't point out anywhere and say: "This is my real home!"

When she thought about that, the mermaid sang:

**I am a mermaid,
half of my heart
set on the sea
and half on the land.**

**I am a mermaid
I wish my wandering would end.**

**Two homes belong to me
And I to neither of them.**



The Mermaid's Dream © M.F.Sullivan

The whale cried huge tears as she sang so. The sea rose up in horrendous waves and sailors died as they looked for the mermaid, hoping to save her.

Now, everything will be alright, the mermaid thought. "Lucky Stone will help me choose which home to stay in. It's easy, really!"

The mermaid decided to throw Lucky Stone down to the bottom of the sea. If the green half landed upward, she would stay in the sea forever. If the white half turned up, she would choose the air and land for her final destination.

To her surprise, the mermaid noticed that Lucky Stone was squirming around in her hand. His squirming and twisting made small balloons of air in the water, and the balloons formed words. The mermaid read his words:

**Don't throw me away
like everybody else!
I may be good for your necklace
But not for your gambling dice.**



The Mermaid's Dream
© M.F.Sullivan

The mermaid felt a little ashamed.

“I didn’t want to throw you away.
I only wanted you to help me,” she said.

The small balloons above Lucky Stone
again formed the words:

**I may be good for your necklace
but not for your gambling dice.**

The mermaid looked thoughtful for a
while. Her pet, a sea-dragon, which had
been passing by, seemed puzzled by her
sad expression. But he sailed on silently.

Suddenly, the mermaid gently held
Lucky Stone to her chest. Her blue eyes
looked helpful, vibrating from happiness.
Her long, orange hair stroked the waves
when she swam up and down in the water
and she sang:

**I don’t want to leave the sea
I don’t want to miss the land.
Richer I am
than men and fish together
for I am a mermaid.**



The Mermaid’s Dream, © M.F.Sullivan

The mermaid's song filled the sea with peace and gave nice weather to the sailors on the ships.

The mermaid made a necklace from the corals and put Lucky Stone on it. She was the lady of two halves. And Lucky Stone – half emerald, half-pearl – suited her perfectly.

The mermaid realized that she didn't belong to just one home. Two homes she could call her own. So, she was twice as lucky as others. She was richer, not poorer, for having two destinations.

Once a year, they visited the parents of Lucky Stone and all the inhabitants there greeted Lucky Stone with awe and honour.

The mermaid's dream came true. Lucky Stone helped her to enjoy living in both homes. The mermaid wore Lucky Stone on all her travels in the sea and on land. They never parted. And the song can still be heard from the sea when the waves are calm:

**I am a mermaid,
half-woman, half-fish,
I am a mermaid,
I can do what I wish.**



The Mermaid's Dream © M.F.Sullivan

A Word from the Author



I was born in Sarajevo in 1965, and I now live there with my husband Kevin and daughter Kati, after spending almost a decade in Singapore and Spain.

The Mermaid's Dream is from a collection of ten children's stories with the same title, published first in Singapore and then in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The illustrations for this picture-book are a unique set of dolls that I made myself.

I have placed all the mermaid-dolls on one side of the paper so that young readers can choose their favourite ones, and maybe keep them as **bookmarks**, or give them away as **party invitations**.

How to make mermaid-bookmarks?

- 1) cut out the mermaid illustration
- 2) glue onto cardboard of the same size
- 3) make a hole at the top
- 4) place a ribbon or thread through the hole

How to make party invitations?

- 1) cut out the mermaid illustration
- 2) draw three horizontal lines on the back
- 3) write INVITATION TO on the top line... and name your friends



How do you like this mermaid, painted by my daughter Kati?



Lucky Stone

Your paintings are welcome, too. The best will be included in one of the future editions of this picture-book.

Email to: marijafs@yahoo.com

Important

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