
For the Classroom

Soleil and the Mermaid

— Mindy Wecker

Once upon a time there was a little girl who loved the ocean. She walked every day from her house down to the shore, sometimes early enough to see the great Sun rise like a ball of orange-yellow above the vast ocean. The water shimmered and glimmered while the warmth of the Sun and his fairy dancers would light upon the water and sand. This little girl, whose name was Soleil—meaning “sun”—walked without shoes to feel the soft, warm sand beneath her feet and toes, dancing and singing in her happiness.

Sometimes the sea was wild, with great waves crashing upon the shore. But most days it was quiet and still, sometimes with seaweed lapping along the water’s edge along with jellyfish, clear and blue, that she stepped by carefully. She loved shells and collected those she liked best to bring home. If the shells had holes in them, these she strung together to make a necklace or bracelet.

On one particular day she saw something so wonderful that she could not believe her eyes. Not far from the water’s edge a mermaid was lying near a large shell. “Help me,” she cried. “I’ve hurt my tail and cannot get back into the water.” Soleil went to the poor creature and tried without success to pull her toward the water.

“Wait here,” said Soleil. “My friend has a sailboat. I will get him to help lift you so the breezes can blow you out to sea where the water is deep.”

“Oh, do hurry. I cannot stay much longer on land,” said the mermaid.

Soleil ran to find her friend and quickly returned with him only to find the mermaid weak from being stranded on land so long. Together they pulled her aboard the sailboat, and the soft winds blew them out to sea. As the mermaid said her thanks to these two new friends before they helped her from the boat back into the sea, she asked Soleil to make a wish. This sea-loving child asked to be able to breathe like a mermaid and swim deep down in the ocean. The

mermaid touched her cheek to grant her wish and whispered that a treasure from the sea would come to her for her kind help. Then she was gone over the side of the boat. Without a sound she dove into the deepness of the waters.

That night, Soleil dreamt of a beautiful time swimming deep in the sea, seeing the most amazing sights. There were beautiful, rainbow-colored fish with coral and plants swaying and dancing in the deep, blue sea.

The next day Soleil excitedly skipped the whole way to the ocean. When her feet touched the water, a great sea turtle crawled out and spoke to her. “I am friend and helper to the mermaid and know your wish. Step onto my shell. I will carry you below the waves.” Once her feet were well planted on the turtle’s back, they moved from the shore and slowly descended beneath the waves. Soleil knew her wish had been granted when she could breathe in the ocean depths. With eyes wide open, she lived what she had dreamed the night before. Beautiful coral, fish of rainbow colors, shells of every size and shape, and sea creatures greeted her eyes. She swam like a mermaid the whole day until the turtle came to bring her back to the shore.

When she returned home that night, she looked at the shell treasures she had collected that day. As one caught her eye, she was astonished to see what looked like the form of an angel, carved from a shell. “This must be the promised gift of which the mermaid whispered,” thought the Soleil. Her kind and loving heart swelled to receive this gift of love and protection sent to her in thanks from the mermaid of the sea. ♦

Mindy Wecker is an artist, dancer, educator and Waldorf Early Childhood teacher. She has taught parent /child classes, nursery and kindergarten to children for over twenty years. She is a lead kindergarten at the Waldorf School of Palm Beach in Boca, Raton, FL.

Author’s Note: “Soleil and the Mermaid” is a story that is easily translated into a puppet play. What I love about this story at this critical time in our history is the universal theme of helping another in need. Descriptions in the story pose no limits upon how the characters can be portrayed. Diverse representation is possible and invited.