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OUR RAINIE

AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE OCEAN



ELIZABETH GORDON



THE ELIZABETH GORDON
CHILDREN'S SERIES

THE BUTTERFLY BABIES' BOOK

WATERMELON PETE AND OTHERS

GRANDAD COCO NUT'S PARTY

DOLLY AND MOLLY AT THE SEASHORE

DOLLY AND MOLLY AT THE CIRCUS

DOLLY AND MOLLY AND THE FARMER MAN

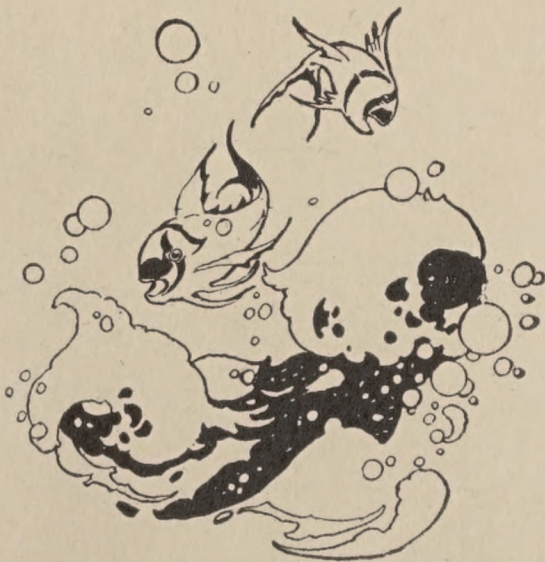
DOLLY AND MOLLY ON CHRISTMAS DAY

I WONDER WHY?

LORAINÉ AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE

LORAINÉ AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF SPRING

LORAINÉ AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF SUMMER



LORAINÉ
AND
THE LITTLE PEOPLE
OF THE OCEAN



"I'll be dressed in a jiffy," said Loraine

✓

LORAINÉ

AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE OCEAN

By
ELIZABETH GORDON ✓

*Author of "Lorraine and the Little People" and "Lorraine
and the Little People of Spring"*

Illustrated by
JAMES McCRACKEN ✓



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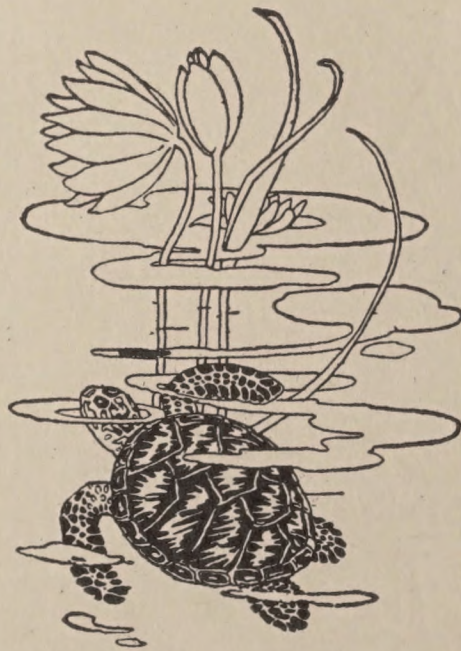
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"Why, Sunbeam!" said Loraine, sitting up

LORAINÉ

AND

THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE OCEAN

LORAINÉ AND THE FOG PEOPLE

“How sweet the air smells,” murmured Loraine sleepily to herself. It was the next morning after she had arrived with Daddy and Mother and Big Sister at the seashore. “This is just like the air at the ocean used to be. That roaring sound is for all the world like the breakers in front of our seaside cottage.”

“Good morning!” called a gay but rather tired little voice. “And may I ask what you would expect to see and smell at the seashore *but* the sea?”

“Why, Sunbeam!” said Loraine, sitting up to rub the sleep out of her eyes. “Is that you? For a moment I thought I was back on the farm at Grandfather’s, and had

forgotten that we had come to the seashore. But whatever is the matter with you, Sunbeam? You look just like a funny little ghost of yourself, you are so pale."

"Had rather a fight to get here at all," said Sunbeam. "But I just couldn't have you wake up on your first morning here, and not be here to welcome you."

"You're the kindest thing in the world always," said Loraine gratefully. "But what made it so hard for you to come? You are always able to go wherever you want to."

"Oh, now, stop and think a bit, Loraine," said Sunbeam. "You know there are many places where I cannot go. And you know what worlds of good I could do if I only could get in some places, like the north windows of city houses, and damp basements where little children sometimes have to live."

"I know, Sunbeam," said Loraine. "It always makes you sad when you think of

those things. But what hindered you this morning?"

"Those tricky little Fog Sprites are all out," said Sunbeam, "and they were just bound and determined that I should not get through."

"I don't seem to remember the Fog People," said Loraine. "Anyway, I don't see why they should have objected to your coming to see me."

"That's just it," said Sunbeam. "You see, they did not understand about that. A little later in the morning, you know, my brothers and I always have a glorious fight with the Fog Folks. When I tried to slip through their ranks all by myself, they thought I was not playing the game fairly and tried to drive me back. They would have done it, too, if I had not thought to explain that I wanted to come and welcome you."

"But hop out of bed and get dressed and come out," he went on, "because at

exactly nine o'clock there will be one grand frolic. Then we shall drive those saucy Fog Sprites back to Cloudland where they belong. It will be fun, and you mustn't miss it."

"I'll be dressed in a jiffy," said Loraine as Sunbeam slipped palely back through the Fog Sprites. If a jiffy is, as we may suppose, a very short time indeed, that is what she did.

And just as she finished dressing, Mother dear came in to kiss her little daughter good morning.

"Let's have breakfast all by our two lone selves on the porch overlooking the ocean," said Mother dear.

"Oh, yes, let's!" said Loraine. "And I can have you all to myself and look at you all the time. It seems forever 'n' ever since I've seen you."

"You were with Grandmother a long time," said Mother, "but see how well it has paid. You are perfectly well and strong now."

“And happy, too, Mother dear,” said Loraine. “I think I’m just about the happiest little girl in the whole wide world.”



They were cozily seated at the breakfast table

“Too bad it’s so foggy this morning,” said Mother when they were cozily seated at the pretty breakfast table.

“It won't last long,” said Loraine. “It will lift at nine o'clock.”

Mother dear laughed. “You're just as quaint and funny as ever,” she said. “But if you are a good weather prophet the fog must begin to lift right away, because the clock is just striking nine.”

She had hardly finished speaking when millions of little Sunbeams broke through the leaden banks of fog. They flashed their tiny golden spears, darting now this way and now that, but always driving the Fog People before them.

A group of them drifted right across the porch, and Loraine was sure she heard them singing,

“We are little Fog Sprites,
Sisters to the rain,
Glad as glad can be are we
To welcome you, Loraine.”

Loraine watched the little group out of sight, while the Sunbeam Army drove the

others far out to the horizon, separating them into groups, darting back of them, and making rainbow colors of every shade under the sun, until at last not a Fog Sprite was to be seen anywhere.

“I think I have never seen the fog lift more beautifully,” said Mother dear.

“Sunbeam is wonderful,” thought Loraine to herself, smiling.

But aloud she said, “We shall have a wonderful day.”



LORAINIE AND CREST O' THE WAVE HAVE A SWIMMING LESSON

“Mother dear,” said Loraine one bright afternoon soon after they had come to the seashore, “may I put on my bathing suit and go down to the beach and wade?”

“Indeed you may, Loraine,” said her mother, “but you won’t try to swim until Father comes down to help you, will you?”

“Oh, no, Mother,” answered the little girl. “I need a great many lessons before I can swim by myself. But Father says I am learning fast, and I’ll soon master it, I’m sure.”

Loraine ran lightly down over the sands, looking so much like a little green frog in her new green bathing suit that the Fiddler Crabs didn’t even dig in when she sat down beside them to wait a moment before wading. The little waves were lapping gently at her



Lorraine ran lightly down over the sands

feet, and it all seemed very peaceful and familiar.

“Same old lovely sand, same old lovely blue ocean, same old gray gulls flying around after nothing at all, and the same old lovely Sky Person trailing the same lovely scarf through the sky,” said the little girl.

“But not the same old wheel chair, nor the same patient, pale little girl in it,” said a musical voice, with a laugh. “But the same old friends who have never forgotten her, and are glad to be here to welcome her back.”

“Why, Crest o’ the Wave!” said Loraine in delight. “I am so glad to see you! I thought you had forgotten me, you’ve been so long in coming. How are you and how are all your dear little Water People?”

“They’re just as well as can be,” said Crest o’ the Wave, “and eager to see you. We’ve been very busy lately. There have been so many people at the big beaches all

summer that there wasn't a shell left, and the sand was all mussed up. It has kept us hard at work, but we don't mind that, bless you. Just so everyone had a good time is all we care about.

"I need not ask how you are, Loraine," she went on, "because you are as plump as a berry, and we'll soon have you as brown. Been swimming yet?"

"Father has been trying to teach me," laughed Loraine, "but I'm not a very apt pupil. I don't seem able to grasp it. I can swim doggie fashion, but I want to learn the crawl."

"Oh, you will easily," said Crest o' the Wave. "Shall I give you a lesson right now?"

"I promised Mother that I would not try to swim until Father comes, so I can't take the lesson now, thank you," said Loraine.

"In that case, of course, you can't come in," said Crest o' the Wave. "But I'll call

my Little People to give you a demonstration. If you will watch them carefully, I am sure you will soon learn the strokes."



Crest o' the Wave clapped her tiny hands

"Oh, will you, please?" said Loraine. "I'm sure I can get the idea that way."

Crest o' the Wave clapped her tiny hands, and immediately the water was full

of laughing, chattering Little People in pretty pale green bathing dresses. They waved their hands and called, "Hoo-oo, Loraine! You're back again."

"Now, Little People," said Crest o' the Wave, "Loraine wants to learn to swim. So take the crawl very slowly out to the edge of the biggest breaker and then come in on it. One, two, three, go!" And down went each tiny head and up went each tiny arm in perfect rhythm until they met the big breaker and all came tumbling back with it.

Over and over they repeated the lesson until Loraine was sure she could do it. "Only," she said, "I am sure I never could keep from getting my mouth full of salt water."

"Nobody expects to," said Crest o' the Wave, "but you must blow it out again, like this, and it won't trouble you at all. Now when you go in swimming with Father, do exactly as we have shown you and see

what he will say. Good-by till tomorrow morning."

The voices of the Little People had hardly died away when Father and Mother came down to the beach in their bathing suits.

"Want to come for a swim?" asked Father.

"Indeed I do," said Loraine, eager to find out if she could follow the instructions of the Little People.

After they had hopped over the breakers until they were out to where the water was up to Loraine's chin, her father said, "Now, doggie, see if you can paddle back to shore."

"I think I'll try it this way," said Loraine, straightening out her slim little body and putting her head down in the water as she began swimming the crawl stroke which Crest o' the Wave had been teaching her.

"Why, you little mermaid!" said Daddy admiringly, as she swam to shore and back

again to him. “You’ve been spoofing me, saying you couldn’t swim! Why, your crawl stroke is almost perfect. Who taught you that?”

“I just watched somebody swim who knew how,” said Loraine, smiling.



LORAINIE AND CAPTAIN JOE

It was Loraine's birthday. Big Sister had tossed Grandmother Elsie's amber beads into her lap with a cheery, "Here, Youngling, it's your turn to wear these now."

"People are all so wonderful to me," said Loraine. Then she snuggled cozily down in her favorite spot on the beach with one of the new books Grandmother had sent for her birthday. "I've always loved these old beads, and now Sister has given them to me. I wonder what amber is made of, and where it comes from. I must ask Daddy."

"Ask me, Loraine," said a cheery little voice. "I know more about amber than any other man in the world."

"You do!" said Loraine, laughing in spite of herself at the funny little man in a suit of shiny yellow and silver sequins.



A funny little man was leaning against a pebble

He was leaning against a pebble, smiling at her in the friendliest manner possible, with his little yellow pointed cap in his hand.

“Who are you, you funny little man,” said she, “and how do you happen to know so much about amber? And where did you get those adorable clothes you are wearing?”

“My name is Captain Joe, and since you would like to know, my suit is made of scales from the kindly Codfish’s tails. My mother made it for me,” he added with much pride. “Pretty, isn’t it?”

“Very,” said Loraine, “and it fits you wonderfully. But you were going to tell me about amber.”

“Tra la lee, and tra la lil, so I was and so I will,” said the little fellow, with a hop, a skip, and a jump. “Where shall I begin? At the beginning, or in the middle?”

“Why, at the beginning of course,” said Loraine. “Where else would one begin a story?”

“Well, you see,” said Captain Joe, “this isn’t a story. This is the truth, and there’s



He seated himself on the corner of the serape

no beginning and no ending to the truth. But—once upon a time,” he said, seating himself on one corner of the rose and blue

serape, "there grew on the shores of the Baltic Sea great forests of giant pine trees. They had been there for centuries.

"But one day some great glaciers who lived away beyond the forest made up their minds that they would go down and take a dip in the ocean. Now if you know much about glaciers, you know that whatever stands in their path must get out of the way or be destroyed. As the poor pine trees could not move, the glaciers ground them to bits and carried the bits all into the sea."

"My, what a fascinating story!" said Loraine. "But what has that to do with amber?"

"Why, you see," said Captain Joe, "when the pine trees were crushed by the glaciers, the sap, or resin, was all pressed out and was carried to the bottom of the ocean. There it was claimed by our Little People of the Water, who changed it into

the clear beautiful amber of your old beads."

"The name just fits it," said Loraine. "Amber! I wonder who thought to call it that."

"When King Neptune first sent it to the People of the Earth," said Captain Joe, "they supposed it to be ambergris, and so called it amber."

"*What* is ambergris?" asked the little girl.

"That," said Captain Joe with some dignity, "is Madame Whale's story."

"I beg your pardon for interrupting," said Loraine. "And tell me, please, how we get amber from the bottom of the sea."

"Our undersea Amber Workers," said Captain Joe, "wrap the precious material in layers of sand and seaweed, so that it will float. When a large enough raft has been made ready, King Neptune sends a trusted captain and crew to take it up to

the surface of the water. From there men who are waiting for the amber pull it to land with long forks and prepare it for use."

"Did you come on a raft of amber?" asked Loraine.

"Certainly," said Captain Joe, "and I'm going back on it, too."

"How did you ever get it here?" asked Loraine.

"Oh, we seafaring men have secrets, Loraine," said Captain Joe mysteriously.

Loraine laughed. "You must also have sailors," said she, "and I'd like to see them."

"The amber raft is just abaft," said Captain Joe. "Ill pipe them. Yoo-oo-hoo, mates!" he called.

"Coming, Captain Joe, the quickest way we know!" called back the crew.

Then around the point of the big rock came a funny-looking little raft. It was about

twice the size of the doormat, with seaweed all over it and funny-looking trees like scrub



Around the point came a funny-looking raft

pinetrees growing on it. In the shade of the pines were dozens of tiny sailors, who smiled broadly and saluted.

“The tide serves, Captain, if you please, sir,” said one whom Loraine supposed to be the mate. Captain Joe sprang to his feet in one jump and onto the raft with another, and before you could even think about it the raft and the crew were out of sight.

“Daddy,” said Loraine later at dinner, “what else besides beads is made from amber?”

“Oh,” said Daddy, “many small articles, like cigar holders and buttons and stems for vases. Fine varnish is made from the poorer pieces, also.”

“Amber,” said Big Sister, “is now used in the making of airplanes. As it is very scarce, and becoming more so, we may be asked to give up our old beads some day, Sisterling.”

Loraine smiled. She thought perhaps Captain Joe had a few more pieces in his stronghold under the sea.

LORAIN MEETS THE OYSTER BABIES' NURSE

As the day was a bit cool for swimming, Loraine was curled up on the sand reading "Through the Looking Glass." She had come to the place where Tweedledee and Tweedledum were reading poetry to Alice.

"The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand."

Loraine read on to the end of the poem, and then closed the book to think over what she had read.

"I'm glad the *old* oysters had the good sense not to go walking with two such greedy persons, even if the young ones had not," said she.

"Oysters aren't supposed to have any

sense," laughed a merry little voice. "They're just supposed to be plump and sweet and stay where they are put. Of course when they do otherwise, they get into trouble."

Lorraine laughed. "Some interesting person is always coming to this beach," she said. "I wonder who this one is.

"Do tell me who you are and how you know so much about oysters," she added to the dear little person wearing a Nurse's costume of oyster white with a tiny shell pink cap who was perched on Crest o' the Wave's rock.

"Why, bless your heart," said the happy-looking Nurse Person, "I *should* know about oysters. I tuck them in bed every night. Because the Earth People like them so well, Father Neptune expects us to take wonderful care of them. But with all our care, just because they have no sense, they *will* open their shells too wide at mealtimes, and a grain of sand or a bug or something slips

under the shell and hurts. Then they have to grow a pearl, and that is a serious matter."



A dear little person was perched on Crest o' the Wave's rock

"Why is it so serious?" asked Loraine.
"Pearls are lovely."

"How would you like to have some one slip a pebble under your skin?" asked the Nurse Person rather severely.

“I shouldn’t like it at all,” said Loraine.

“Well, neither does the baby oyster,” said the Nurse. “But once he has it under his shell there is no way to get it out. Then he just has to grow a covering around it so it won’t be quite so uncomfortable.”

“And so that’s how pearls happen,” said Loraine. “He must have *some* sense. That seems a very clever thing to do.”

“He has a sense of comfort or discomfort,” said the Nurse Person. “Anyway, I’m very fond of him and do not like to have him hurt, even if it is his own fault.

“I wonder,” she went on, “if you would like to see my nurseries.”

“Oh, yes!” said Loraine. “Where are they?”

“Halfway between here and the bottom of the ocean,” said the Nurse Person, blowing upon a tiny mother-of-pearl whistle which she wore at her belt.

Immediately there appeared at the edge of the water a wonderful little boat.



A wonderful little boat appeared

Windows of mother-of-pearl inclosed it all around, just like a little motor car.

“Step right in and do not be afraid, Loraine,” said the Nurse Person. “The Pilot Fish guides us, and he knows every inch of these waters.”

Loraine was far from being afraid. But she was rather wondering how she happened to fit the little boat so well.

“I s’pose it’s Little People magic,” she thought happily to herself as the boat glided along through the smooth green water. They passed big forests of sea mosses, with marvelous Sea People swimming all around them.

She was almost sorry when the Nurse Person said, “Here we are,” and the boat stopped at an overhanging ledge, upon which were many little beds. Each bed held a plump, smiling baby oyster.

“This is the finest Oyster Nursery in the whole ocean,” said the Nurse Person, “if I do

say it myself. Listen! The Water Nymphs are singing the oyster babies to sleep."



Each bed held a plump, smiling baby oyster

"Sleep well, little baby oyster,
Sleep well, in your rock-bound cloister,
Cradled 'neath the billow,
Seaweed for your pillow,
Close your little pearly shell,
And know that everything is well."

“That is surely a very pretty song,” said Loraine, “and I hope that I can remember it. But Nurse,” said the little girl, as they were in the pretty pearl-windowed boat on the way home, “tell me, how do the people get the pearls that the oyster grows under his shell?”

“It is a long story, and very tragic,” said the Nurse rather sadly. “When the oyster is about four years old, the Pearl Fishers come to the oyster beds in the queerest of queer clothes. They tear the oysters from their beds, carry them to the land, and take the pearls from those who have them, and feed their flesh to the pigs. The shells are used to make buttons, and in the south are crushed to make roads.”

“So he is very useful, our little friend oyster, even if he hasn’t much sense,” said Loraine. “Thank you so much, dear Nurse Person, for the pleasure you have given me.”

“I’ve had just as much fun as you have,” said the little Nurse Person as she

jumped aboard her little boat. "Good-by Loraine." She waved her hand and was off



She waved her hand and was off like a flash

like a flash, just like that. It seemed almost as though she had never been there.

"Mother dear," said Loraine that afternoon, "where did you get your pearl pin?"

"It was your great-grandmother's," said Mother. "I will give it to you when you are eighteen if you'd like to have it."

"I'd love to have it, thank you, Mother dear," said Loraine, smiling.

LORAINNE AND THE KELPIES

Lorraine was sitting on the sands one morning thinking about the lovely time she was having with Sunbeam and all the Little People of the Sea, when across the waves she heard a great chattering of voices.

“I’m going to have company,” said Lorraine, “and there are boats and boats full of them. I wonder who they are.”

As they pulled their tiny boats up on the sand and came trotting over to her, Lorraine decided that they were surely the oddest Little People that she had ever seen. They were every one as brown as berries, with perfectly white curly hair, and long curly eyelashes. They were all smiling and showing perfectly white teeth. They had the oddest manners, too. No one moved or spoke. They all just stood perfectly still and smiled.

“Dear me,” said Loraine to herself, “I wonder what I’m supposed to do. Perhaps I’d better speak first.” So she said, very cordially, “I’m very glad to see you, Little People. Come over here and say, ‘Hello, Loraine.’”

“Hello, Loraine, hello, Loraine, hello, Loraine,” echoed all the little fellows. Loraine wondered how in the world she would ever be able to make them stop it.

But just then a larger boat, flying a pennant of fresh seaweed, arrived. Loraine thought it must be the flagship.

So it proved to be. And, immediately it had beached, a very dignified little brown gentleman in an admiral’s uniform stepped out and, removing his cap, said, “I hope, Loraine, that you will excuse these excitable Little People of mine. They are Spanish and know very little English, and when they hear anything they say it over and over so they will not forget it.”

“Run away, Kelpies,” said he. “It’s my turn to visit with Loraine now.”

“Kelpies!” said Loraine. “I do not seem to have heard of you before.”

“We are the Seaweed People,” said the Admiral. “We’re supposed to keep the seaweeds straightened out and in order. If you’ve ever tried to do that, you’ll appreciate what a dreadful task it is.”

“I never have,” said Loraine, “but I pulled the weeds out of my garden one morning and the next morning they were all back again.”

“What a comfort to know where to find them,” said the Admiral. “Now I never know where my seaweeds will take it into their empty little heads to go next. Why, only last week it took the entire fleet to keep them from heading straight for the Sargasso Sea. You know what that would have meant.”

“Why, no, I don’t know,” said Loraine,



"We are the Seaweed People," said the Admiral

“but from your tone I should think that it must be rather a bad place to go to.”



The Admiral stroked his long whiskers

“Well, rather,” said the Admiral, stroking his long white whiskers. “The Sargasso Sea, my dear, is a big ocean desert. It lies out in the middle of the ocean and does nothing at all except to

reach out for everything that comes along. It is especially fond of seaweed and takes every bit that comes within reach, and it never, never, never lets a bit come back."

"It could come back if it wanted to, could it not?" asked Loraine.

"No, it could not," said the Admiral. "The sea is surrounded by strong currents, and there is no way of getting through them. And the lazy old sea never grows anything of her own. She pulls in all the foolish seaweeds that drift along and drapes herself in them, so she looks just like a green island. And it's dreadfully unfair. She should grow her own seaweeds."

"Yes, of course," said Loraine. "But there's so much seaweed in the ocean, I shouldn't suppose you'd care."

"But it all *belongs* somewhere," said the Admiral, "and I'm supposed to keep it where it belongs. Well, I do my best."

"He does his best, he does his best,"

solemnly chanted the Kelpie crew, who up to this time had been absolutely quiet.

Lorraine laughed.

“Yes,” said the Admiral, “aren’t they funny? But good as gold, as good as gold.”

“We’re good as gold, we’re good as gold,” sang the Kelpies.

“I shall have to start along with them,” said the Admiral. “When they begin to think they’re a chorus, no further conversation is possible. They’ll sing all day.”

“We’ll sing all day, we’ll sing all day,” chorused the Kelpies.

“I guess they are hopeless,” said Lorraine, laughing. “But I’m so glad you could come and I hope you will come again.”

“We’ll come again, we’ll come again,” sang each Kelpie as they all jumped into the little brown boats and one by one disappeared beyond the breakers.

“Daddy,” said Lorraine at dinner, “where is the Sargasso Sea?”

“Well, what next?” said Daddy. “Do you think I am a walking encyclopedia?”



They all jumped into the little brown boats

But Big Sister said, “Why, you know, Daddy. It’s that funny, tremendously big island of floating seaweed away out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. It used to

be thought that ships could not cross it on account of the seaweed, but the Norwegians have disproved that.”

“Where did you hear about it, Loraine?” asked Daddy.

Lorraine smiled and said, “Oh, a seafaring friend of mine was speaking about it.”



LORAINIE AND THE SPONGE PEOPLE

Loraine had been racing up and down the beach with Sunbeam and old Shep, the collie, all morning. She was as out of breath as Alice was after dancing with Tweedledee and Tweedledum around the mulberry bush that was not there. So she sent Shep home and went down on the sands to finish a story she had been reading.

She became very much interested in her story and did not, at first, notice that somebody was sobbing—actually sobbing—and that a rather worried little voice was saying, “Now see what you’ve done, Grandfather! You’re high, and, what is worse, you’re almost dry, and there doesn’t seem to be a thing we can do to help you. You should look before you leap.”

“But I didn’t leap,” answered a queer, quavery little old voice. “Those tricky

little Water Sprites threw me up here for a joke. And don't scold me, Oceana. Scolding only makes me shed tears, and I can't spare the moisture."

"I wonder what *can* be the matter," said Loraine. "Some dear little person must be in trouble. I'll go and see."

So she ran down to the water's edge, where she found a whole flock of queer-looking Little People bobbing around on the surface of the water. They were peering anxiously about for some way of helping the little old grandfather, who sat very forlornly on the sand. Great salty tears were running down his furrowed cheeks and dripping off the ends of his long white beard.

"What Little People *are* you?" asked Loraine. "And what is wrong with your little grandfather?"

"We are Sponge People," said the one called Oceana. "Our work is to look after the baby Sponges and give them enough to



She found a whole flock of queer-looking Little People bobbing around on the water

eat. Bobbing in and out among the rocks all day, as we have to, we have no use for feet, and we have never been given any, so our little grandfather is just as helpless as a fish out of water would be.

“And the worst of it is,” she went on, “he is evaporating. That is not so serious as it seems, as he will revive again if ever he gets back in the water. Still it can’t be very pleasant to feel one’s self all shrinking up, especially at *his* age.”

“How old is he, poor dear?” asked Loraine, who had a very tender spot in her heart for her own grandfather. “He doesn’t look so very old.”

“Well,” said Oceana, “we’ve lost track of his age. But he must be at least ten or twelve centuries.”

“Can I help him?” asked Loraine. “Will he let me put him back in the water?”

“Loraine wants to put you back in the water, Grandfather,” said Oceana.

All the other little Sponge People bobbed around as though they were bowing to one another and said, "Yes, Grandfather, Loraine wants to put you back in the water."

"She can't do it any too soon, then," said the little old grandfather, "because I feel as though I shouldn't last a minute longer."

"You won't last much wider, anyway," said Oceana gaily, to keep the little old gentleman's spirits up. "You're getting narrower all the time."

"I don't like to pick him up in my fingers," said Loraine. "I'm afraid I'll hurt him. Wait a minute. I have an idea."

She ran swiftly up the shore for her little sand pail and shovel. She didn't use them much now, since she had so many other things to do. Filling the pail with water, she put the paddle gently under the sand upon which the little old man sat, and lifting him, sand cushion and all, put him into the pail, which she took down to

the water. There she carefully set him afloat, when he immediately began to swell



She carefully set the little old grandfather afloat

again and paddled gratefully back to his relatives.

“Thank you so much for rescuing our grandfather,” said Oceana. “And now we must hurry home to feed our Sponge Babies.”

“What do you feed them, and what are their names?” asked Loraine.

“I wish we had time to tell you,” said Oceana, “but we haven’t, Grandfather has used up so much time. They have *excruciatingly* long names anyway, which we never even try to pronounce.”

“I’ll ask Daddy,” said Loraine. But when she did, he said, “I don’t know *anything* about sponges. But I can see plainly, Chicken Little, that it’s high time you were back in school.”

“All right, Daddy,” said Loraine, “I’d just as soon.”



LORAINÉ AND THE CORAL COLOR SPRITE

It was Loraine's last day at the seashore. She had gathered enough of the gray-green bayberries to make Loving Thought Christmas candles for her nearest and dearest ones. Then she gathered some lovely crimson wild-rose haws, which she was now stringing into necklaces for her schoolmates at home.

It was very pleasant there by the sea that she loved so well, with Sunbeam darting after the little shadows that he could drive into corners but never could seem to catch. Her thoughts were all of the dear Little People who had done so much to make her summer a pleasant one. All at once a voice at her elbow said, "Loraine, dear, would you mind letting me look a little more closely at those lovely beads

you are stringing? I want to remember the shade.”

“Why, surely,” said Loraine, turning to look at her visitor. “And you will tell me who you are, won’t you? It is good of you to come on my very last afternoon. Your gown is so very pretty. Where did you get all those shades of coral?”

“Why, I’m the Sprite who colors the coral,” said the little person. “I like to wear my colors myself, to make sure they will not fade. They must stand the test of the sun and rain and air and sea water for all time. It would embarrass me greatly if a color should ever streak or run. The Coral Workers depend upon me, and it wouldn’t be honest, you know.”

“No, of course not,” said Loraine. “But how can you be sure that a color will last for all time?”

“That’s why I test them,” said the Color Sprite. “These I’m wearing have not



"Did you inherit your gown?" asked Loraine

faded in a good many centuries of hard wear.”

“Did you inherit your gown,” asked Loraine, “as we did our old amber beads?”

“Oh, no,” laughed the Color Sprite. “I’ve always worn it myself. I’m a good deal older than I look. I’m one of Mother Nature’s very oldest children.”

“How do you go about coloring a stone like coral, if you wouldn’t mind telling me?” said Loraine.

“Why, bless your heart, dear, coral isn’t a stone,” said the Color Sprite. “Coral, we may say, is the family tree of a little creature called a Polyp. Polyps live in families of millions and millions all huddled together. The coral formation is the bones of the Polyp, over which his flesh grows. When he has lived just as long as Mother Nature intended he should, he just loses his outside and leaves his bones for the next family to build upon.”

“Of all the interesting things I’ve ever heard,” said Loraine, “this is the most so. What else does he do?”

“He helps to build the earth,” said the Color Sprite. “The Great Barrier Reef of Australia, which is a thousand miles long and three miles wide, as you mortals measure distances, was built by him. And so were the Everglades and Keys of Florida.”

“I should suppose everybody could have coral beads,” said Loraine, “if there’s as much as that of it in the world.”

“The common kinds are not pretty, and nobody would want them,” said the Color Sprite. “But my kind, the precious kind, is built by a family of Polyps that live in the Mediterranean Sea, and is called *Corallium Rubrum*. The Chinese mandarins wear buttons made from it for their lovely embroidered robes of state.

“But I’m a very busy person,” said the Color Sprite, “and a long way from

home. I'm anxious to try that lovely rose haw color before it fades from my memory.



"I'm a very busy person," said the Color Sprite

So good-by, Loraine." Spreading a pair of gorgeous pink wings, which until then Loraine had not suspected she had, the little creature flew away like a great rose-colored bumble bee and was soon lost to sight.

Lorraine gathered up her work and her serape, took one long last look at the dear and peaceful blue of the ocean, and waved a farewell to the Sky Person, who waved back. "It's been wonderful," she said, "simply wonderful. But Mother dear and Daddy and Big Sister are going with me, and so is Sunbeam. They are the ones who make everything so wonderful, anyway."

"What have you tied that bit of rose-colored silk around your little finger for?" asked Daddy, as Lorraine was snuggled in his lap after dinner.

"Oh, yes, Daddy," said Lorraine. "That is to remind me to ask you to tell me all you know about coral."

"Which wouldn't be much," said Daddy. "But I'll tell you what, little Seeker after Knowledge, we will read up on that the minute we get home."

"Let's do!" said Lorraine.

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