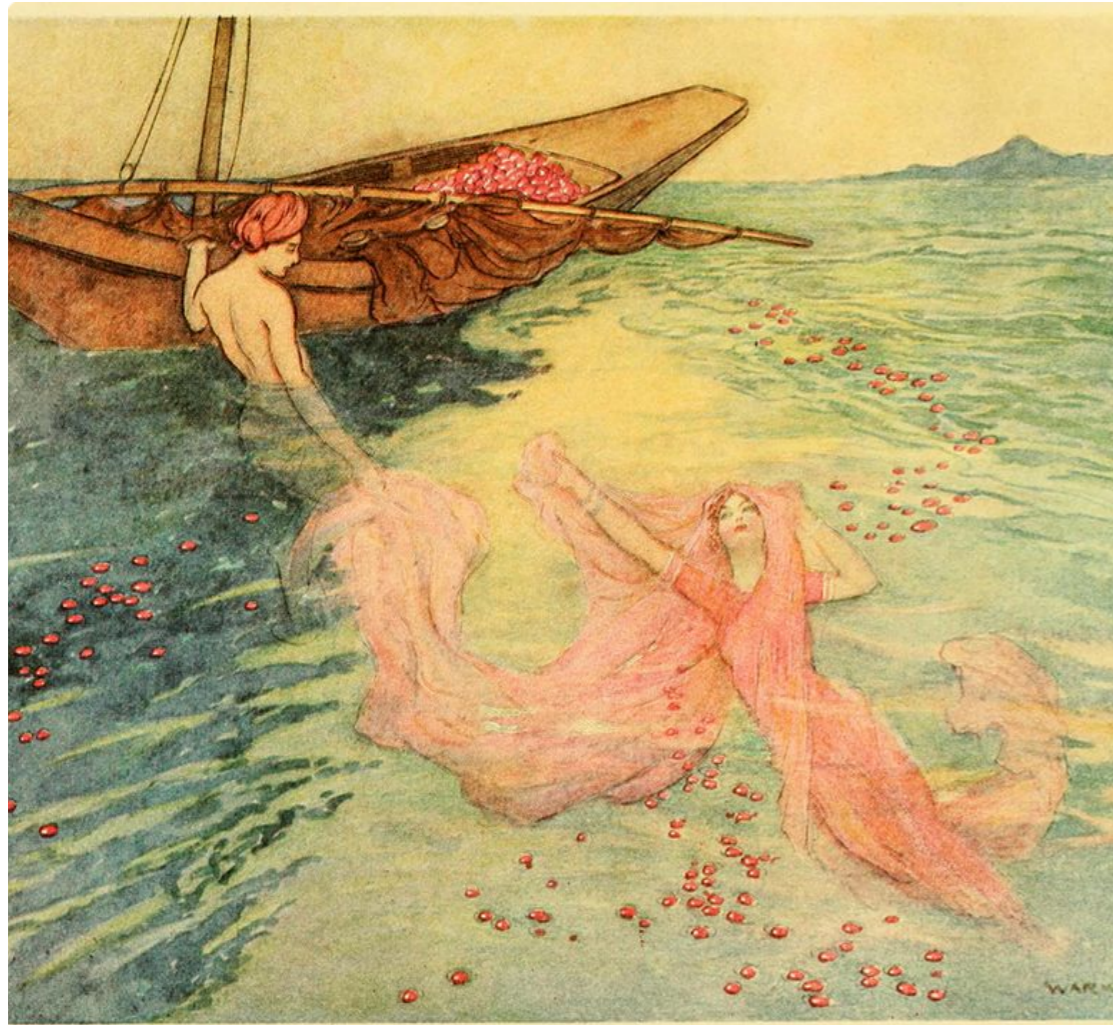


Ririro

The Origin of Rubies



One day a queen left to a house by the sea to holiday there with her youngest son. The youngest prince was spoiled rotten by his mother. And you could notice it by his behaviour. He only did what he wanted to and listened to nobody. Not even his mother.

When he wanted to go swimming with his mother they saw a big ship moored in the sea. The ship was abandoned. 'Mother let's go on board and sail away on an adventure', said the prince. 'No we can't. The ship isn't ours', answered the mother. 'I shall go,' said the prince and climbed on board the ship, 'you can come with me or I'll go alone!'

The queen begged the prince to leave the ship, but the prince was already raising the anchor. His mother quickly climbed on the ship. The journey lasted several days until the ship came close to a vortex. The prince saw rubies floating in the water. Nobody had ever seen rubies of that size. They would be worth a fortune!

The prince grabbed a couple of rubies from the sea and took them on board. The queen said: 'Darling, don't take the gems. They must belong to someone whose ship has perished. They are not ours. People will think we are thieves. The prince threw the rubies back in the sea after several pleas from his mother, but he kept one in secret. Shortly after the ship arrived at the harbour of the capital city of a king.

Not far from the palace the queen and her son rented a house. One day the prince was playing with the children of the king. They played with marbles. The prince used the ruby as a marble. The daughter of the king was watching from the balcony. The ruby drew her attention and she asked her father to buy the gem from the boy.

That same day the king asked the boy to come to him with the precious gem. When the boy arrived, the king was struck by the size of the ruby. He asked him where he got it. The boy answered that he found it in the sea. The king offered a thousand rupees for the gem. The prince, who didn't know the worth, thought it was a good price.

When the king's daughter got the ruby, she put it in her hair and said to her parrot: 'Oh, don't I look beautiful with this ruby in my hair?' The parrot answered: 'Well...no! You look ridiculous. You should have two in your hair.'

The daughter felt bad about what the parrot had said and told her father: 'If you don't buy more rubies for me, my life has no use and I will stop eating and drinking.' That made the king very sad and he asked the boy to come see him. 'Do you have more rubies?' asked

the king. 'No,' answered the boy, 'there are more in the sea, far, far away. I can get them for you.'



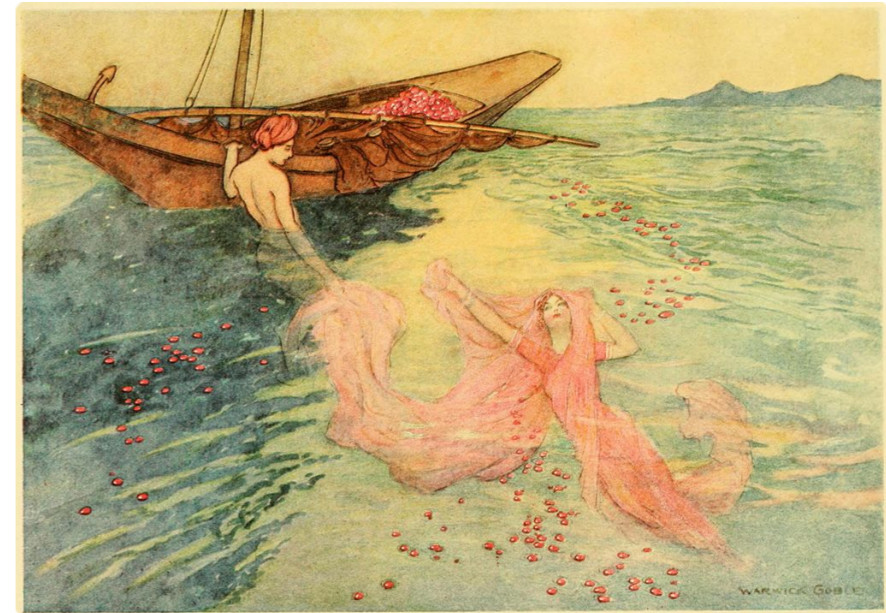
Surprised by the answer of the boy, the king offered big rewards to get another ruby. The boy went home and told his mother that he was going to get rubies for the king. The queen begged her son not to go. But the boy was determined. Nothing could stop him and so he boarded the same ship that he had arrived on.

Once at sea he again came across the vortex. This time he wanted to know exactly where the rubies came from. So he sailed to the middle of the vortex. There he saw an opening. He jumped in and let his ship spin around the vortex.

On the bottom of the ocean he saw a beautiful palace. In a big hall he saw the God Shiva. His eyes were closed. Above the head of God Shiva was a space where an exceptional, beautiful, young woman was lying. When the prince came closer, he saw that her head was separated from her body. From the head the red rubies spilled that were floating in the ocean. Next to the head of the beautiful woman the prince saw two little rods. One was silver and one was gold. The prince couldn't help but pick them up, but he accidentally dropped the gold one on the head. The head rejoined the body and the lady stood up.

The young woman was surprised to see a human and asked him how he got to her. The prince told her the whole story. After that she said: 'You must leave immediately, when Shiva wakes up, he will kill you.' But the prince fell in love with her and didn't want to leave her. So they ran away together. They climbed on the ship and loaded it with rubies.

The queen was very relieved to see her son again! Of course she agreed that her son



would marry the gorgeous woman. The next day the prince sent a bathtub full of rubies to the king. The king was happily surprised and gave them to his daughter. She was so happy that she wanted to marry the strange boy. Although the prince was already married to the woman from the ocean, he agreed to marry her as well. Everybody agreed and was happy and they lived happily ever after and had many children.