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## Neptune

*Emilie Poulsson*

Far down under the green water, where the sea-sand lies smooth and white, and fishes dart about like flashes of silver among the seaweeds, there lived the old ocean god, Neptune (Poseidon). "Father Neptune," people used to call him. There he had his palace, and there he kept the wild sea horses which he had trained and taught to draw his chariot over the water.

One morning, as Neptune came from his palace, he was surprised to find everything in great disorder. The water, usually still and dear as crystal, with the green light shining through it, was dim and disturbed; it beat against the walls of the palace and was full of bits of broken shell and of seaweeds torn from their stems. As Neptune stood looking about him, the big, good-natured dolphins came rolling uneasily about his feet, as if to ask what could be the matter.

The dolphins were wise creatures, and were often sent about as messengers by Neptune. So he chose one now to go and find out the cause of all this confusion. The dolphin soon came back, saying that a terrible storm was raging above; that the winds were rolling great waves to the shore and tossing the spray high in the air; that he had seen ships, too, driven upon the rocks by these wild winds, or on dangerous shoals and shallows.



Neptune straightway harnessed his horses, mounted the chariot, and with firm rein guided his steeds upward to the scene of the storm. Calm and majestic the ocean god sat in his chariot, holding his trident like a magic wand, and the rough waters smoothed themselves out before him as he went. His son Triton swam alongside, a twisted seashell in his hand, on which he sometimes blew a bugle call.

The dolphins, too, followed, swimming hither and thither and tumbling over each other in their eagerness to help. At last they reached the top of the water. No sooner did Neptune's calm head rise above the surface than, like magic, the tossing waves were still and the sea became smooth as glass; the winds subsided, and all was peaceful as a summer's day.

Neptune called the winds to him, and reproofing them severely for their rough play, sent them home again to King Aeolus. Then he looked for the unfortunate ships that were in danger. Those that were on the rocks Triton pried off, Neptune helping with his trident, and those that had been driven among the shallows they led back to deep water.

At last all was in order — and it was a grand sight to see calm old Father Neptune in his chariot, gliding over the sea he had made quiet again, while the dolphins played about him, their smooth backs glistening in the sun.

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