



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The City Under the Sea

Henry Beston

Once upon a time, there was a merchant who had three sons. The youngest son loved the sea very much. One day, he packed his things to become a sailor.

In the land of the merchant, there lived a king who had a hidden treasure chamber in his palace. The king was so fond of his gems that he locked himself up in the treasure chamber at night, staring at his shiny stones for hours. One night, he showed his rare gems to the Emperor of the Seven Islands.

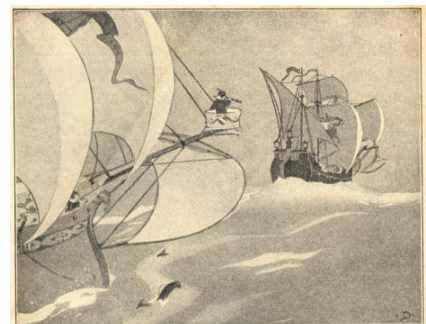
"Aren't these the most beautiful jewels in the world?" said the king proudly.

The emperor nodded and said, "These are certainly magnificent specimens. But why isn't the Emerald of the Sea among them? It's the most mysterious and glorious jewel in the whole world."

The king became curious. "Where can this emerald be found?" he asked. The emperor replied, "Probably in the Land of the Dawn."

The king felt a tremendous need to acquire the emerald. He summoned the merchant to the castle and said to him, "Merchant, you are the most successful merchant in my kingdom. I command you to go to the Land of the Dawn to search for the Emerald of the Sea and buy it for me. Make sure you come back with it. If you fail me, my wrath will cost you dearly."

The merchant departed the same day with his fastest ship to the Land of the Dawn. Once there, he met a nobleman who had just sold the Emerald of the Sea. The nobleman said, "I sold the emerald an hour ago to the captain of a strange ship. Look, there is the ship." And he pointed to a black ship with fiery red sails.



The merchant immediately set sail after the black ship. After three days, a violent storm broke out. When the sky cleared, the black ship had disappeared. The merchant gave up the search and returned to the king to bring him the bad news.

The king was beside himself with anger and disappointment and cried, "Merchant, because of you, I have lost the best jewel in the world! If you don't find it within a year, you will have to compensate for the loss with your life."

The merchant turned pale, for he truly had no idea where the Emerald of the Sea could be. His two sons asked him not to despair. The eldest son would set sail that same night to continue the search.

A year passed, but the eldest son did not return.

"Well, have you found the Emerald of the Sea?" asked the king of the merchant.

"No," replied the merchant, but he managed to convince the king to send his second son to search for the emerald.

And so the second son set sail. After a year, this son did not return either.

One evening, the youngest son came home. He had heard of the disasters that had befallen his family. As he greeted his father, they were arrested by soldiers of the king and taken to the palace.

The loss of the Emerald of the Sea had driven the king to madness.

"Do you have the Emerald of the Sea?" roared the king.

"No," replied the merchant.

The king ordered that the merchant pay for the loss with his life. But the youngest son was able to persuade the king to give him a chance to obtain the jewel.

A waterspout hit the son's boat against a rocky coast, where he was saved by a fisherman and his wife. When he told them about his quest, the fisherman said, "I can tell you something, but it won't be much help. Two years ago, the Prince of the Henry Bestone Islands sent his black ship to the Land of the Dawn to buy the jewel. I was one of the crew members. We were caught in a storm, and the ship sank. I'm the only survivor. The jewel is on the bottom of the sea so deep, no mortal can reach it."

"But I have to find it and bring it to the king," the boy cried desperately, "only then can I save my father."

The fisherman's wife suggested consulting the Witch of the Sand. This witch knew everything about the underwater world. The sailor thanked the fisherman and set out for the witch.

"You're the third person to come here," said the Witch of the Sand. "Your two brothers came to me as well. I helped them, but they never returned because



they didn't listen to my advice. To find the jewel, you must go to the underwater world. I'll give you an enchanted ring to get there. I gave your brothers one too, but they didn't return the rings. Bring back the ring I give you. It's the last one I have."

The sailor solemnly promised to return the ring. The witch continued, "Now listen carefully to what I say. I'll tell you the way, and when you reach the water, wear the ring. Whatever you do, don't eat or drink anything offered to you underwater. If you do, you'll forget everything about your past life, your father, and your quest for the emerald."

The son thanked the witch and followed the path to the underwater world. When he reached the water, he put on the ring and walked into the water on his way to the City under the Sea. Suddenly he was seized by two underwater creatures who took him to the King of the Underwater World.

"Welcome, bearer of the enchanted ring," said the king. "You've come at a fortunate time. Tonight we're celebrating the wedding of my second of three daughters. She's marrying the mortal bearer of the second ring."

Great doors opened, and there the boy saw the bride. She walked hand in hand with a young man who the youngest merchant son recognized as his second oldest brother. The king whispered in the sailor's ear, "My eldest daughter married the bearer of the first of the enchanted rings a year ago."

The sailor recognized the husband of the oldest daughter as his older brother. But none of them recognized him. He thought of the witch's warning. They had eaten the bread of the underworld. This had erased their memory of the world above and their father's fate.

"Come to the wedding feast," the king cried.

The sailor took his place at the royal table next to the beautiful youngest daughter. When she noticed he wasn't eating, she said to him, "Why aren't you eating anything?"

The sailor replied, "I came here to find the Emerald of the Sea and save my father's life."

"But you will never find the Emerald of the Sea!" cried the princess. "The emerald was stolen years ago by the Prince of the Underwaters. My father pursued him and defeated him, but in the battle, the emerald was lost. It washed up on the coast of the Land of the Dawn. There it remained until the Prince of the Henry Bestone Islands bought it and took it in his black ship. The ship sank in a storm. We do not know where it is. Whoever finds it will rule over the land under the sea because the emerald rules over us all. If my father knows you are looking for it, he will force you to eat the bread of the underwater world."

When the feast was over, the eldest daughter said to the bride, "We must get rid of the newcomer. Can't you see that he is a brother of our husbands? He will want to take our husbands away from us. Let's ask our servants to drive him away."

That same evening, servants tied the seaman to a large dolphin. For half an hour, the fish fled, afraid of its burden, lightning-fast over the roofs of the city and rushed further into the lonely plain. By morning, the young man managed to free himself. The seaman tumbled to the bottom of the sea.

There, at the foot of a submerged mountain slope, lay the black ship. The young seaman found the Emerald of the Sea and climbed the mountain with it until he reached the surface. With the emerald in his hands, he called out, "With the power of the Emerald of the Sea, I summon my brothers and their wives to appear here."

A moment later, the brothers and princesses walked through the shallow water to the sailor. The princesses begged him not to take their loved ones away.

"Be merciful and forgive," said the youngest sister. "If we had not driven you away, you would never have found the emerald."

"Yes, that's true," said the sailor. "My brothers will decide for themselves. Break the spell and restore their memories of the past. If they choose to stay, I will respect that."

"Let them eat or drink something from the upper world, and their memory will return," said the older sister.

The brothers took a sip of water from a flowing stream. Immediately after, they recognized their youngest brother and embraced each other. To the princesses, they said that their love for them had not disappeared. And so you see that love is stronger than the most powerful spell.

Meanwhile, the old merchant remained in the king's prison. A year passed.

"Did you find the Emerald of the Sea?" said the king sternly.

"No," the merchant replied calmly.

After this, the king ordered the merchant to be tied hand and foot and thrown into a boat without food or drink. The merchant lay motionless in his small boat and fell into a deep sleep. While he slept, a wind picked up, carrying the boat away.

In the distance, the three brothers saw a small boat floating towards them. The sailor grabbed the boat and saw his father lying in it. He was alive!

The young seaman asked the emerald for a ship with which they returned to the

merchant's house. The king heard of the escape and sent guards to arrest the merchant. The youngest son took the emerald and cried, "Water of the sea, release us from the king!"

The palace was located on a narrow strip of land that jutted out into the sea. The water rose until the castle was completely underwater in a short time. A moment later, the entire castle collapsed.

The people of the land had much respect for the merchant and offered him the throne. But the merchant gave the throne to his two oldest sons. Each brother ruled for six months of the year, taking turns, and the other brother spent these six months under the sea with the sea people.

The young sailor sailed with his ship for many years and eventually married a beautiful niece of the Sand Witch.

And everyone lived happily ever after.

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