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# Stories 4 empowerment

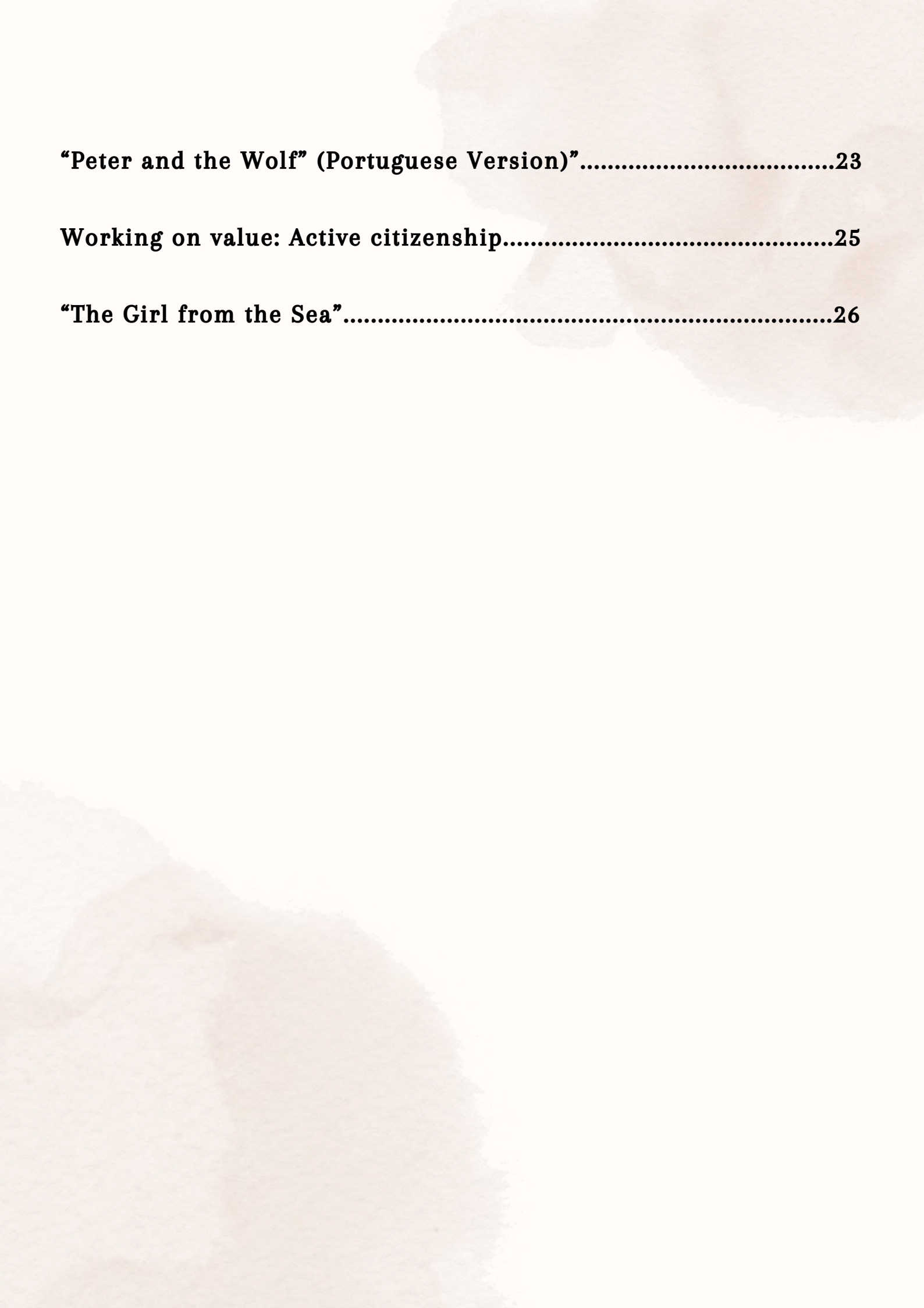
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Working on **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**



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## **Working on value: Active citizenship**

The story helps to reflect and discuss on the theme of active citizenship as the characters choose to collude with power in order not to risk personal repercussions, even if this means supporting a lie against the public interest. What can a citizen do for the good of his city? In the case of the story, it is revealing the lie behind the emperor's new clothes. By choosing not to support the lie, the protagonists of the story put the good of their city and their ruler before risking their positions.

# **“The emperor's new clothes”**

Once upon a time there was an emperor who loved fashion so much that he spent all his money just on dressing elegantly. He had no care for his soldiers nor for the theatre, unless it was to show off his new clothes: he owned a suit of clothes for every hour of the day. In the great city that was the capital of his kingdom, everyday strangers came, and once two swindlers also came: they said they were two weavers and that they knew how to weave the most incredible cloth ever seen. Not only were the designs and colours of the clothes marvelous, but the clothes made from that cloth had a curious power: they became invisible to the eyes of men who were very stupid. ‘Those would be wonderful clothes,’ thought the emperor. ‘With them on, I would be able to recognise the fools working in my empire, and I would be able to distinguish the stupid from the clever! I must have that cloth immediately!’ And he paid the two swindlers, so that they would get to work. Those two set up two looms and pretended to start their work. They asked for the finest silk and the brightest gold, put them in their bags, and continued like this, with empty looms, until late at night. The emperor was impatient to see how the work was progressing so he thought ‘I will send to the weavers my old and trusted minister. No one can see what that cloth looks like better than he can, since he is intelligent and no one is more up to the task’. So that old and trusted minister went to the room where the two weavers were weaving on the looms empty looms. ‘Good heavens!’ he thought, opening his eyes wide, ‘I see absolutely nothing!’ But he did not say this out loud.

The two weavers asked him to come closer, and asked him if the design and colours were to his liking, always pointing to the empty loom: the poor minister kept making a lot of eye contact, but without being able to see anything, also because there was nothing at all. 'Dear me,' he thought in the meantime, 'but then am I a fool? I would never have said that! But it's better that no one else knows! Or perhaps I am not worthy of my position as minister? No, in all cases I cannot let it be known that I cannot see the fabric!' 'So, what do you say,' asked one of the weavers. 'Beautiful, beautiful!' said the old minister. 'What patterns! What colours! I like them very much, and I will tell the emperor.' The two swindlers asked for more money, and silk, and gold, which they would need for weaving. Once again they stuffed everything into their bag and they continued weaving on the empty loom. After a while the emperor sent another official to see how the work was progressing. But the same thing happened to him as to the old minister: he stood looking, looking, but as there was nothing but empty looms, he could see nothing. 'Look at the fabric, isn't it magnificent?' said the two swindlers, and meanwhile they explained to him the wonderful design that did not exist at all. 'I am not a fool!' thought the talented official. 'Perhaps that I am not up to my office! How strange! Better that no one should notice!' And so also began to speak of how much he liked those colours, and such pretty patterns. 'Yes, it is indeed the most beautiful cloth in the world,' he then said to the emperor. Finally even the emperor wanted to go and see it while it was still on the loom. He was accompanied by the two ministers who had already come. 'Is it not 'magnifique'?' said the two officials in chorus; 'What designs, your majesty! What colours!' and meanwhile they pointed to the empty loom, because they were sure the others would see the cloth on it. 'But what is happening?' thought the Emperor, 'I can't see anything at all! Terrible! That I am stupid? Or maybe I am not worthy to be emperor? This is the worst that could happen to me!

‘But it is beautiful,’ he said in the meantime. ‘You have all my admiration!’ and he nodded in satisfaction as he stared at the empty frame: he couldn’t say he couldn’t see anything! All those who accompanied him looked, looked, but no matter how much they looked, the substance did not change: yet they too repeated the emperor’s words: ‘Beautiful!’, and suggested that he have a new suit of clothes for the forthcoming court parade.

The night before the court parade, swindlers stayed up all night long so that everyone could see how difficult it was to make the emperor’s new clothes. Then they pretended to take the cloth off the loom, and said: ‘Here are the clothes, they are ready!’ Then the emperor himself came, with his most illustrious knights, and the two swindlers, holding up their arms as if to hold something, said to him: ‘Here are the trousers, here is the jacket, here is the cape...’ and so on. ‘What a fabric! It is so light that it is almost like wearing nothing at all, but that is its advantage!’ ‘Yeah,’ said all the knights, even though they could see nothing, because there was nothing to see. ‘And now,’ said the two tricksters, ‘if His Imperial Majesty will deign to undress, we will help him put on these new clothes right here in front of the mirror!’ The emperor undressed, and the two swindlers pretended to hand him, one by one, all the clothes which, according to them, were to be completed. So the emperor marched at the head of the procession and the people in the streets and at the windows only said: ‘My God, how beautiful are the emperor’s new clothes! They suit him so well!’ Nobody wanted to confess that they could not see anything, for fear of being made to look stupid or incompetent.

‘But the emperor has nothing on!’ a child said at one point. ‘Good heavens,’ said the father, ‘That is the voice of innocence!’ So everyone started whispering what the child had said. ‘He has nothing on him! There is a child who says he has nothing on!’ ‘He has nothing on at all!’ They all started shouting at last. And the emperor shuddered, for he knew they were right; but meanwhile thought, ‘I must now lead this parade to the end!’ and so he stood up even more proudly, while the chamberlains followed him holding a tail that was not there at all.



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## **Working on value: Active citizenship**

Rewriting the story to implement value like active citizenship is relevant and important because it aligns the story with today's social realities, teaching critical lessons to different target group, that promote a more just, compassionate, and equitable world.

Active citizenship encourages individuals to take responsibility for their communities, making a difference through involvement and action. In a world where participation in civic life is crucial, teaching young readers, through the rewritten story, the importance of collective action and social responsibility is key to shaping future leaders and active citizens.

Implementing this valuee helps readers learn empathy, cooperation, and respect for diversity—crucial skills for navigating today's interconnected world. It also empowers them to take part in creating inclusive spaces where everyone can thrive. A story that reflects this value is not just a story, it becomes a tool for social change and a guide for shaping a future where active citizenship is at the core of how we live together.

**Jeanne-Marie Leprince de  
Beaumont**

# **“Beauty and the beast”**

Once upon a time there was a merchant who had lost his huge fortune. One day, he had to travel far away and asked his daughters what they wanted on his return. His two eldest daughters asked for jewelry and clothes, without considering their father's situation. But the youngest daughter, whom everyone called Bella, said, "Father, I only ask for one thing:

-Father, I only ask for a rose with red petals.

The merchant, on his way back, had to pass through a very thick forest. It was a dark night and he looked for a place to sleep. After a while, he spotted a huge castle in the distance and made his way towards it. As he approached the door, it opened of its own accord and hearing no answer, the merchant entered, went to the dining room, sat down at the table and ate the food served there. Then he found a room and lay down on a soft, fluffy bed. Before falling asleep, he said to himself:

"The owner of this house and his servants, they will not be long in letting themselves be seen. I hope they will forgive me for the liberty I have taken".

The next day, as she left the castle, she stopped to admire a beautiful rose bush and plucked one of its roses, intending to take it to Bella.

Suddenly, a fierce-looking beast wearing a fine silk garment leapt out of a bush:

-“I gave you food and a bed to sleep in, and now you are stealing my roses! -it roared.

The merchant was ashamed and frightened, with a trembling voice he offered apologies. The beast decided to let him go only if he promised to send one of his daughters to the castle. The merchant agreed and ran home. Heartbroken, he told his daughters about the encounter with the beast.

The two sisters blamed Bella for their father's fate:

-This would not have happened if you had asked for clothes or jewellery," they said.

Feeling responsible, Bella agreed to stay with the beast.

The beast treated Bella with great kindness; he offered her the largest room and allowed her to roam his beautiful garden. In the evenings, Bella would sit by the fireplace and sew while the beast kept her company. At first, she was afraid of the beast, but little by little she began to like it.

The beast, unable to contain his feelings, asked Belle to marry him, but she refused. She could not forget his horrifying appearance. Still, the beast continued to treat her with generosity and much love.

As Belle missed her father very much, the beast gave her a magic mirror and said:

-Look in the mirror and you can see your family. You will never be lonely.

One day, Bella looked in the mirror and saw that her father was very ill. So she went to the beast, begging and crying:

-Please let me go home, I just want to see my father!

The beast roared in anger:

- No! You will never leave this castle.

Saying so, it left the room. But after a while, it approached Bella and said:

-You may go and stay with your father for seven days. But you must promise me that you will come back. Bella, very happy, agreed. Then she went to stay with her father, who soon recovered from her presence.

Bella stayed with her family for more than the seven days, she had forgotten about the Beast and his castle. But one night, she had a terrible nightmare in which she saw the beast seriously ill.

Bella returned to the castle at once, and when she saw the beast weak and ill, she sobbed and said to him,

"I will live with you forever." With these words, the beast turned into a handsome prince and said, "I have lived under a curse all my life:

-I have lived under a curse all these years and only true love could break the spell. Beauty and the beast married and lived happily ever after.



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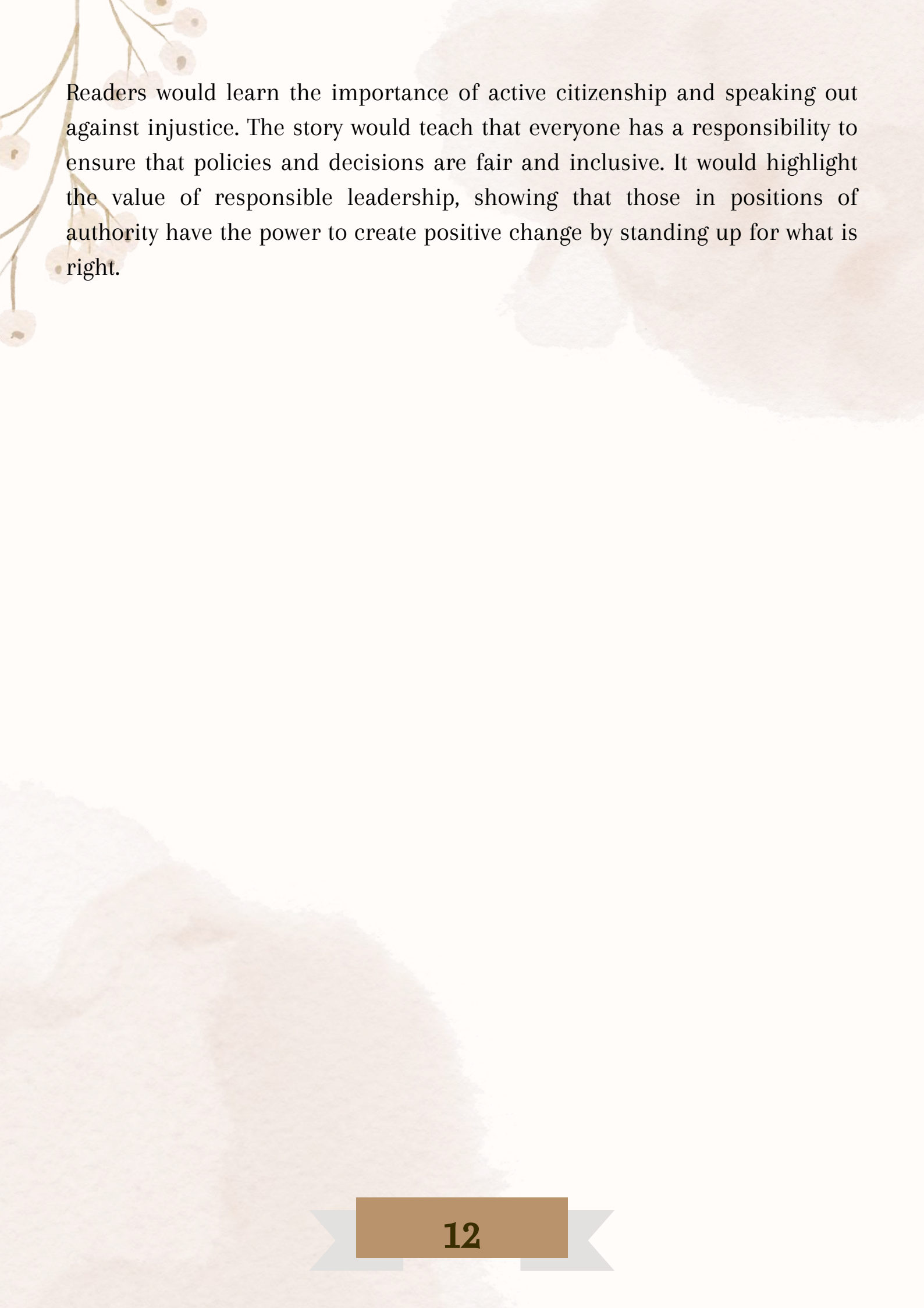
## **Working on value: Active citizenship**

The story should be rewritten to emphasize active citizenship because it addresses a critical social issue—discrimination in education—and highlights the importance of standing up for fairness and equality. In situations where policies or decisions limit or discriminate against a group of people, such as the 30% ceiling for foreigners in a classroom, it is crucial to address these issues actively.

The main important questions of the story: how could the intervention of a third person e.g. the teacher or the headmaster change and influence the teacher's decision (only 30% foreigners in the class)? How important is it not to remain passive in the face of situations involving the fundamental values of our Constitution?

Rewriting the story would also teach readers that silence in the face of injustice can perpetuate harm, while active participation in creating fairer policies can lead to positive social change.

By advocating for the elimination of discriminatory practices, the story would reinforce the core values of Constitution—such as equality, non-discrimination, and the right to education for all—and inspire readers to take action when they encounter similar issues in their own lives.



Readers would learn the importance of active citizenship and speaking out against injustice. The story would teach that everyone has a responsibility to ensure that policies and decisions are fair and inclusive. It would highlight the value of responsible leadership, showing that those in positions of authority have the power to create positive change by standing up for what is right.

# **“30% ceiling for foreigners and love...”**

Once upon a time there was a ship. On the ship there were many people traveling. Almost all of them could not stop gazing worriedly at the sea and especially at the horizon. Yet there was someone among them who could smile and play. They were Hassan and Said. The two were both six years old and had known each other since birth. They were called the lovebirds and never had that nickname been more apt. They liked each other and enjoyed playing together, that was all. The day came when the sea ended and they set foot on dry land, in Italy. The months that followed were very hard and the obstacles that the two children and their fathers faced were unspeakable. Yet even in those difficult moments, Hassan and Said managed to find a way to smile and play. It is nature's gift to children. It is called lightness and should be protected at all costs. The two fathers finally found a home. They were not the only ones to have found it. The fortune, like the flat, was to be shared with ten other travelers for life. That's what Grandma Karima called the men who left for Europe and Hassan and Said liked it. Despite the small space in the house, the children did not disappoint and were almost always cheerful. Then came the time for school. On the first day the fathers were very nervous, as were the sons. Going to school was something extraordinary for their life on the road. Hassan and Said had realized that even school, despite being a place built especially for them, might not be easy for either of them. They were travelers for life but since arriving in our country, they had realized that there were many other ways for the inhabitants to call them and none of them was as rewarding as the first. However, I think it is now established how invincible the presence of the other was for each of them.

Fate, however, can be mocking. "I'm sorry," said the teacher, letting only Hassan in, "I can only have thirty per cent foreigners in my class" Then she closed the classroom door. Said's father called Said's name, to lead him to his classroom, but he did not move and stood there, motionless, with the memory of Hassan's frightened eyes locked in his own, as the teacher closed the door. The father repeated his name again but by then it was too late. Said opened the classroom door and ran towards Hassan, who in turn had done the same, uselessly called out by the teacher. The two embraced on the threshold, exactly on that line between the inside of the classroom and the corridor. Here you cannot divide us, they seemed to say with their tightly clasped bodies, here we are again in the middle between your land and that of our fathers, still traveling. Here your laws do not apply, nor theirs. Here only love counts.



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## **Working on value: Active citizenship**

The two brothers did not remain passive. They wanted to make friends and they found out ways to achieve and make a change in their lives. Active citizenship refers to the engagement of individuals in their community to improve social conditions. It emphasizes participation, responsibility, and collaboration to create a more functional society by problem solving. Active citizenship involves individuals taking action—to contribute to the public good and influence decision-making processes. Active citizenship strengthens democracy, promotes social cohesion, and addresses societal challenges. It empowers individuals to have a voice in shaping their communities and ensures accountability.

# **“A friend”**

Once upon a time, there lived two brothers. Garifalia and Dimitris. These two brothers seemed at a glance to be twins. Unfortunately, they had no friends at all because everyone thought they were crazy because of their imagination. They were 8 years old and I don't know any other kids who weren't so, so adventurous. Well, they liked space very much and decided one day to go on a daring trip. They took the rocket of their uncle who was an astronaut, and started by leaving a letter to their parents. The letter read:

Dear parents,

Don't worry at all if you can't find us. We cannot tell you now where we have been but as soon as we return we will describe everything in detail. See you in a few months.

With love, your children,

Garifalia and Dimitris

As soon as their parents read this letter, they were very sad and very anxious. But they knew that their children would survive because of their imagination and their love of adventure. How could they imagine that their own children were moving away from the vast (for them) land. After a while, the children almost reached space. They were so happy that their uncle showed them how it works.

In fact, they were proud that he trusted them and left them alone to deal with a spaceship! Once they made a very smooth landing, they were surprised to see a huge stone with a rather large hole. They stepped forward and were left speechless at what they saw. Purple, tiny and full of cute little creatures poked their little heads out full of curiosity and a little fear.

Garifalia and Dimitris got even closer. Then, much to their surprise the purple strange creatures spoke! And that's not all, they also spoke Greek!

The language of the two children! So they said to them:

- You are very good children, we feel it!
- Thank you very much! They answer those with one mouth.

Then, deep in the thicket, they see another green alien this time, alone. They go discreetly and approach him.

- You little, funny alien! What are you doing here alone? Let's play outside together!
- The other aliens don't want me to play and talk with them. I better stay here.
- But why wouldn't they want you? You are very good.
- I'm green...
- And so?
- I'm different...
- Even better because you will stand out!
- They don't see it that way.
- We are very sorry. Do you want to be our friend?
- Do you really say that?
- Of course, we don't have any friends either.
- Perfect! What is your name?
- Garifalia and Dimitris. You?
- I don't have a name...
- It's okay. From today, you will be called Bobbi!
- Perfect name, thanks!
- Nice Bobbi alien!

So with those words, they explored the planet, took pictures and set off for their home on Earth.

After months, the children had gone to their parents, introduced them to Bobbi, and described everything to them in every detail, as they had been promised in the letter.

But one day, as soon as they woke up, they didn't find Bobbi in his well-made, green bed. They worried. Then they saw a letter. It was from Bobbi and said the following:

My dear friends, I'm sorry I didn't say goodbye to you. Don't worry, I'll be back in a few days. I have gone into space to see if the rest of the aliens have survived. If you want to meet me I have a machine on your uncle's spaceship. You must press the green button to appear in front of me and the red button to go back home. I have one too.

Your only friend, Bobbi

Once they read it, they were relieved. After telling their parents, they went and found him. Finally, the rest of the aliens had disappeared and Bobbi was very lucky that his friends had taken him from there. They returned to earth and lived forever alone.



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## **Working on value:** Active citizenship

The important value of this story is active citizenship. The animals find a solution to their problems independently and democratically and stand together.

**Author: Orally transmitted**

# **“The Town Musicians of Bremen”**

Once upon a time, a miller had a donkey that tirelessly carried the sacks. When the donkey grew old and could no longer do the work, the miller wanted to take him away. So the donkey ran away and decided to go to Bremen to earn his living as a town musician. After a short time, he saw a hunting dog on the side of the road, gasping for breath. The donkey asked what was wrong. The dog said that he had become too old for hunting, so his master wanted to beat him to death. He had run away, but didn't know what to do now. The donkey said: "I'm going to Bremen to become a town musician. Come with me, I'll play the lute and you beat the timpani." The dog agreed and went with him.

Soon afterwards, they saw a cat sitting sadly by the road. The cat said she was too old to catch mice, so her wife wanted to drown her. Then she ran away, but didn't know what to do. "Go with us to Bremen," said the donkey, "you know how to play night music, you can become a town musician there." The cat went with them and then they passed a farmyard gate, where a cockerel was sitting and shouting at the top of his voice. When asked what was wrong with him, the rooster said that he should get into the soup, so he was screaming as long as he could. "Better move away with us to Bremen. You'll find something better than death anywhere. You have a good voice, let's make music together," said the donkey. It was still a long way to Bremen, so they decided to spend the night in the forest. As the cockerel flew up a tree, he spotted a light in the distance. The four journeymen went to look and came across a lit house. The donkey looked through the window and saw a lavishly laid table with a gang of robbers sitting round it.

The animals decided to chase the robbers out of the house. To do this, the donkey stood with his front feet on the windowsill, the dog climbed on the donkey's back, the cat on the dog and the rooster on the cat. They all started their music at once: the donkey brayed, the dog barked, the cat meowed and the cockerel crowed. Then they burst through the window into the parlour so that the panes rattled. The robbers jumped at the terrible screaming, thought a ghost was coming in and fled into the forest. Now the four musicians could eat their fill to their hearts' content. Then they switched off the light and went to sleep. The donkey lay down on the dung heap, the dog by the door, the cat by the warm stove and the cockerel on the rooster's beam.

When the robbers saw from a distance that the house was dark, the captain sent one of them to check. The robber found everything quiet and went to the stove to light the fire. He thought the cat's glowing eyes were coals, so he put a match to them. The cat hissed and struck his face with its claws. The robber was frightened and ran out. At the door, the dog bit his leg, and as he ran across the yard past the dung heap, the donkey gave him a kick. The robber ran as fast as he could to his captain and said, "There's a witch in the house, she hissed at me and scratched my face. There's a man at the door with a knife who stabbed me in the leg. In the courtyard, a black monster beat me with a wooden club. And the judge shouted from the roof: 'Bring me the rascal! So I got away.'" From then on, the robbers never dared to come to the house again. But the four musicians liked it so much that they stayed there.





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## **Working on value: Active citizenship**

This story is a classic and speaks of value of active citizenship community and the importance of honesty and trust. It talks about the values of society and the importance of everyone's actions in their communities and the impact that individual attitudes have on the collective. The rewriting of the story usually has similar versions, but with the personal stamp of each participant.

# **“Peter and the Wolf”**

## **(Portuguese Version)**

Once upon a time, there was a young boy named Peter who lived in a small village near a forest. Peter's job was to look after the village's sheep, taking them out to graze in the fields nearby. It wasn't a hard job, but Peter found it quite boring. He spent the whole day by himself, and sometimes he thought it would be fun to play a trick on the villagers.

One day, while the sheep were grazing quietly, Peter decided to shout, “Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf coming!”

The villagers, worried about their sheep and Peter's safety, dropped everything and ran to the field to help. But when they arrived, there was no wolf to be seen. Peter laughed and said, “There's no wolf! I was just joking!”

The villagers weren't happy. They told Peter not to cry wolf again unless there was really danger. But Peter, amused by how easily they had believed him, thought it was a funny trick. A few days later, feeling bored again, Peter shouted once more, “Wolf! Wolf!”

Again, the villagers came running, worried that a wolf was about to attack the sheep. And again, they found nothing but Peter laughing at them. This time, they were even more upset. “Don't cry wolf unless it's true!” they warned him. But Peter just grinned and went back to watching the sheep.

Not long after that, a real wolf did appear at the edge of the forest. It began creeping towards the sheep, ready to attack. Peter panicked and shouted, “Wolf! Wolf! Help, there's really a wolf this time!”

But this time, when the villagers heard him, they didn't believe him. “He's just playing another trick,” they said to each other. No one came to help.

Not long after that, a real wolf did appear at the edge of the forest. It began creeping towards the sheep, ready to attack. Peter panicked and shouted, “Wolf! Wolf! Help, there’s really a wolf this time!”

But this time, when the villagers heard him, they didn’t believe him. “He’s just playing another trick,” they said to each other. No one came to help.

The wolf chased away the sheep, and Peter couldn’t do anything to stop it. When the villagers finally came out to check on him later, they saw that the wolf had taken some of the sheep. Peter, upset and embarrassed, said, “I’m sorry. There really was a wolf this time.”

One of the villagers shook his head and said, “Nobody believes a liar, even when they’re telling the truth.”

From that day on, Peter learned his lesson. He never cried wolf again unless there really was a wolf.



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## **Working on value: Active citizenship**

The story of The Girl from the Sea embodies key values of active citizenship, such as empathy, respect for differences, and building bridges between diverse worlds. Despite living in separate and incompatible realities, the boy and the Girl from the Sea form a bond based on mutual understanding and the sharing of experiences. This openness and acceptance highlight the importance of listening, learning from others, and working together to create a more inclusive and harmonious society.

**Sophia de Mello Breyner  
Andressen**

# **“The Girl from the Sea”**

One sunny summer day, a boy was walking alone along the beach. He loved being there, with the sound of the waves and the salty smell of the sea all around him. The sea was calm, and the sky was blue, with seagulls gliding quietly above. As he wandered near some rocks, he heard a strange and beautiful song. It sounded magical, almost as if the sea itself was singing.

Curious, he crept closer and hid behind a rock. That’s when he saw her. A tiny girl with golden hair that shone in the sunlight and bright blue eyes that sparkled like the waves. She was dancing on a smooth rock, singing her song, while three little creatures moved around her. A fish leapt back and forth, a crab scuttled clumsily, and an octopus clapped gently with its soft tentacles. It looked like something out of a fairytale.

The boy stayed still, watching in awe. But the girl noticed him and stopped. For a moment, they just stared at each other, the only sound being the waves gently splashing against the rocks. At first, the girl and her friends seemed unsure about him, but she couldn’t hold back her curiosity. She stepped forward a little and asked, “Who are you? Why are you here?”

The boy smiled shyly and said he was just a boy who liked walking on the beach. He told her he lived nearby but often felt lonely because he didn’t have anyone to play with. The girl listened, her bright eyes softening. She realised he wasn’t dangerous, and soon, they started talking. She told him she was the Girl from the Sea and lived in the ocean with her three friends.

From that day on, the boy came back to the beach every day to meet her. They became close friends, even though their worlds were so different. The boy told her about life on land—the tall trees that reached for the sky, the flowers that filled the air with lovely scents, and the birds that flew high and free. He talked about the warm sun and the cool grass, where he loved to lie and dream.

The girl was amazed. She had never imagined what the world outside the sea was like. She told the boy about her home under the water, where coral reefs glowed with colours, plants swayed with the currents, and fish sparkled like jewels. She spoke of underwater caves where the sunlight made everything look magical. Both of them wished they could see each other's worlds.

One day, the girl asked the boy to take her onto the land so she could see it for herself. The boy hesitated, knowing she wasn't meant to leave the water. But her wish was so strong that he agreed. Carefully, he picked her up and placed her on the soft sand. The girl looked around in wonder. She felt the sun warming her skin, smelled the plants he had brought her, and ran her fingers through the sand.

But something wasn't right. Slowly, the girl began to feel weaker. Her skin lost its glow, and she struggled to stay awake. Without the water, she was fading. Her sea friends, who had been watching from the waves, shouted for the boy to take her back to the sea. Panicking, the boy carried her as fast as he could and placed her gently into the water. As soon as the waves touched her, she came back to life. Her colour returned, and her energy sparkled once more.

The boy stood there, sad but understanding. They both realised they belonged to different worlds and couldn't be together the way they had dreamed. Even so, the girl thanked him for showing her a glimpse of life on land, even if just for a short while. The boy promised he would never forget her and would keep coming to the beach, where he could feel her presence in the waves and hear her song in the wind.

The girl swam back into the ocean with her friends, but the boy knew she would always be there in some way. Whenever he looked out at the sea, he could picture her dancing and singing, just like on the day he first saw her.

And so, their friendship lived on, a beautiful memory that tied together two worlds that could never fully meet.



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