

Sandcastles

Once I built a beautiful sandcastle. It had turrets and towers, thick walls and a moat, and even a drawbridge made of driftwood.

But the tide came in and broke it down.

I wept.

Then the sea said, "Come and play with me."

"No." I said. "You are too big and powerful. You destroyed my beautiful sandcastle."

"Come and play with me." said the sea. "Trust me, and I will show you my wonders. Meet me at the rock pool."

So I went to the rock pool, and as I paddled and dabbled I found a wondrous world of crabs and barnacles, seaweed and tiny fish, colourful shells and smooth stones.

I took some shells and seaweed and stones back to the beach to decorate my next sandcastle, which was even better than the first.

But the tide came in and washed over it.

Again I wept.

Again the sea said, "Come and play with me."

"No." I said. "I built this castle with beautiful things you showed me, and you destroyed it."

"Come and play with me." said the sea. "Trust me, and I will show you even more wonderful things. Meet me out just beyond the reef."

So I swam out to where the waves grew large, and found myself being tumbled and turned, until I learned to flow with the swell and be carried back to shore. I discovered the exhilaration of surfing.

My next sandcastle had a very large moat, big enough, I thought, to contain my playmate.

But when the tide came in it overflowed the moat and undermined its foundations so that it crumbled and fell.

"Come and play with me." said the sea.

"No." I replied. "I built a big moat for you, but you wouldn't stay there. You washed away my castle again."

"Come and play with me." urged the sea. "Trust me, meet me in the deep places, and I will show you the treasures of my heart."

So I swam out way beyond the reef, out to where I could no longer see the shoreline, and dived deep. There I found all kinds of fish and coral caves, seals and whales, sharks with terrifying teeth, and sea serpents, and much, much more.

When I returned to the shore, I built my next sandcastle in the shape of a whale. It was the most creative thing I had ever attempted, and I was proud of its smooth roundness and flowing lines - just like the real thing.

But then the tide came in and washed it away.

"Come and play with me." said the sea.

"No." I said. "I wanted to show you how impressed I was with your treasures, but you destroyed it again."

But the sea simply said, "Come and play with me. Trust me; let me take you places you could never imagine."

So I swam out from the shore, and floated on my back, watching clouds and sea birds. I was taken to exotic countries, where I met new and interesting people, learned different languages

and ways of seeing the world, and explored different cultures. And then the sea carried me home again.

Yesterday I built a new sandcastle, decorated with souvenirs I had collected on my travels.

And the tide came in and swept it all away.

But this time I laughed and said, "Hello sea, you've come to play with me again. What wonders will you show me today?"

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2/1/16