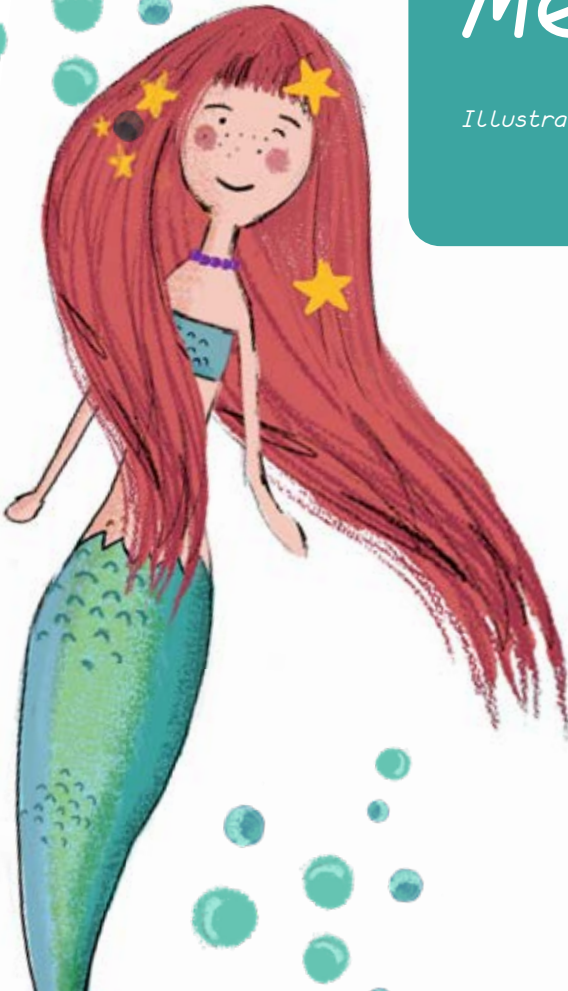


The Little Mermaid

Illustration: Aspasia Xydea



Texts: <https://www.paidika-paramythia.gr/>

Illustration - Editing: Aspasia Xydea (Fairy Tale Museum)
Translation: Elena Aristodemou & Andreas Andreou (RISC)

©AR4Youth, 2022



This content is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) licence. This means that reuse is allowed, provided appropriate credit is given and changes are indicated.

About AR4Youth

Training Young People on Augmented Reality Authoring Showcasing Intangible Cultural Assets as Use Cases ([AR4Youth](#)) is a project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union coordinated by the Research & Innovation Center for Social and Educational Sciences ([RISC](#)) and in partnership with organisations from the Netherlands ([ATERMON](#)), Cyprus ([Fairy Tale Museum](#)), Lithuania ([Active Youth](#)), Greece ([AKNOW](#)) and Estonia ([Eesti People to People](#)).

AR4Youth centralises at training young people in conceiving, designing and implementing an Augmented Reality (AR) project for digitising and augmenting books, guides or manuals. Acknowledging, in addition, the necessity of preserving our cultural heritage which constitutes the basis of our values, beliefs and aspirations, and responding to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11.4 to “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”, the project will use as case studies Greek, Lithuanian and Estonian fairy tales, myths and legends which will be transformed into digitally AR texts and preserved in the project’s Cultural Digital Library.

To address the abovementioned scope, the project will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To enhance advanced digital skills (i.e., use of AR technologies) of young people with special emphasis on NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training);
- To equip young people with competitive qualifications for either entering the labour market or for conceiving their own entrepreneurial future;
- To raise the awareness of young people on the cultural heritage aspects of partner countries;
- To sensitise them into the importance of preserving cultural heritage and more specifically the traditional fairy tales, myths and legends through digitisation;
- To increase the quality and innovation of youth work through the creation of advanced digital training.

More information about the project and its activities is available at the project’s website <https://www.ar4youth.eu/>, and Facebook account (@AR4Youth).

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Once upon a time, deep in the ocean, where the water is blue and clear as crystal and no sound reaches the surface, there lived the Sea King with his subjects and the mermaids. His kingdom was full of the strangest flowers and plants, and among them swam all kinds of fish, small and large, like the birds that fly among the trees of the earth. At the deepest point of the seabed, the king's castle dominated. It was a beautiful palace, with walls of coral, gems and shells with pearls. There lived the king with his six daughters, who were also mermaids. Their mother died years ago and the little princesses were raised by their grandmother who was very proud of her ancestry. That's why she had put twelve oysters on her tail to make her stand out.

All the king's daughters were beautiful and good, but the youngest was enchanting. She had a sweet face with blue eyes and soft skin that was pink like rose petals. Like all mermaids of the seabed, she had no legs, but her body ended in a fish tail.

Outside the castle there was a beautiful sandy garden, filled with gorgeous red and blue flowers, fruit that glittered like gold, and leaves that never stopped moving. The sand was also blue, and so you thought that the blue sky was everywhere, both above and below, even though you were in the depths of the sea. There the six little mermaids were playing, each with her toys. The youngest princess was a curious child, quiet and careful. While her sisters were enjoying what they found in the wrecks, the little mermaid was concerned with the red flowers she had planted in the garden and a marble statue her father had found. The statue showed a handsome boy and the little mermaid loved him.

The little mermaid loved nothing more than listening to stories about the world beyond the sea. She kept asking her grandmother to tell her what she knew about ships and cities, people and animals. One day the little mermaid asked her grandmother:



- When will we go out to the surface of the sea to admire the land?

- When you become 15 years old, she answered.

That is how it was done. Each princess who reached the age of 15 rose freely to the surface of the sea. And when she returned to the bottom, she had hundreds of things to tell the other sisters. The mermaids heard about the sun-dried sand, the lights of the cities, the stars twinkling in the sky and the sounds of the bells.

The years passed quickly and five of the six sisters, who were now free to go wherever they wanted, had no interest in the human world. They said that the bottom was more beautiful and they felt more at home.

But the smaller mermaid was impatient and couldn't wait any longer for her turn.

One day, the little mermaid crept up to the surface of the water. The sea was stormy from the strong wind. The little mermaid saw big waves hitting an unruly ship. The huge waves crashed with force against the ship and threw the men into the sea. Suddenly, the mermaid heard a young man calling for help and getting lost at the bottom of the sea. Without thinking, she swam to him and pulled him from the bottom to the surface of the sea.

- The man passed out. I'll take him out on shore, thought the little mermaid.

When he brought the man to shore, the little mermaid stayed with him all night until he came to his senses. When the sun rose high in the sky, the little mermaid saw a girl walking on the shore and hid behind the rocks. The girl found the man on the shore and called for help. The man opened his eyes shortly and smiled at the girl who was very beautiful.

- Our prince is saved! the people who had gathered shouted. They helped him get up and led him into the palace.



The little mermaid watched, for a long time, the people being happy to have found the prince. But she was very sad because she could not tell the prince that she had saved him. So, she went back to the bottom and found her sisters.

- What did you see on the surface of the sea? the sisters asked. But she didn't answer. She was so sad that she didn't want to eat or talk to anyone. She stopped taking care of the flowers in the garden with her sisters. She would sit for many hours and look at the statue that her father had found at the bottom. The statue reminded her of the man she had saved and she couldn't forget. The little mermaid went out on the surface of the sea many times on moonlit nights but never saw the prince again. One day she decided to tell her sisters what had happened.

- If I had legs, I would look for the prince and stay with him forever, said the little mermaid.

An octopus heard what the little mermaid was saying and spoke to her.

- Maybe your wish will come true if you go to the witch who lives in the cave at the bottom, said the octopus.

The little mermaid passed through dark and dangerous paths of the seabed and reached the witch.

- If you want to have legs like the princesses of the land you must give me something precious, the witch told her.

- I'll give you whatever you want. Gold, a necklace of pearls and coral, said the little mermaid determinedly.

- I don't want such gifts. I want your voice! said the witch.

- But how will I be able to speak to the prince without a voice? asked the little mermaid.

- No need for words. The prince will fall in love with you for your beauty and your enchanting dance, answered the witch.

The little mermaid accepted and gave her voice to the witch. So, she couldn't speak anymore.

- Drink this potion, the witch said, who now had the mermaid's voice.



- But I warn you:

You will get legs but with every step you take you will feel unbearable pain. And if the prince doesn't fall in love with you and marries someone else, you won't be able to become a mermaid again. After the wedding, the very next morning, your body will become seafoam forever.

The little mermaid drank the magic potion and her tail transformed into legs. Then she swam to the prince's palace. But when she started walking on land she was in a lot of pain and fainted. Fortunately, the prince saw her, took her into the palace where she was clothed and cared for. In the palace they were having a feast and the little mermaid was now invited.

- What's your name; the prince asked her.

But the little mermaid could not answer because she no longer had a voice! She smiled at him and got up to dance. With every step, the little mermaid was in great pain, but she danced so beautifully that everyone in the palace admired her.

- You remind me of the girl who saved me at sea. She is beautiful just like you, the prince told her. If I could find her, I would marry her.

The little mermaid wanted to shout to him that she loved him and that she saved him in the sea. But she didn't have a voice so she couldn't say anything.

After a few days the prince's father announced that he wanted to marry his son to a friend's daughter. When the prince met the princess, he remembered what he had seen when he woke up on land. He thought that she had saved him and decided to marry her.

On the day of the wedding, the prince with the bride and guests boarded a ship to feast. Everyone was happy except the little mermaid who realised she lost her love.



At midnight the feast was over and everyone went to bed, except for the little mermaid who was waiting for dawn and the witch's curse to be fulfilled. Suddenly, she saw her sisters in the sea with their hair cut.

-Don't cry anymore little sister, they told her. We gave our hair to the sea witch to turn you back into a mermaid. What you have to do is to take this knife and kill the prince before the sun rises. There is no other solution.

The little mermaid went to the room where the prince slept with the bride. She kissed him tenderly holding the knife over his heart. But she could not kill him. She loved him so much. So, she threw the knife away and dived into the sea.

She began to feel her body turning into a white glistening foam. Suddenly she heard voices singing. Aerial figures appeared above. The little mermaid felt like she was floating.

- What happens; Who are you? she asked anxiously.
- We are the daughters of the air; the figures answered her. You loved a person and did everything to live near him. But what you desire is very difficult to do.
- What should I do to live with him? the little mermaid asked softly.
- The only solution is to get an immortal soul like humans, the airwomen answered her. People's souls ascend to the heavens when their bodies cease to live on earth. Mermaids live for many years but do not have an immortal soul. When the day comes that they cease to live, their bodies turn into sea foam, just as it happened to you.
- How can I get an immortal soul? the little mermaid asked again.
- Mermaids can gain an immortal soul when a human truly loves them. We know that the prince loved you even though he thought the woman he married saved him. If he had known that you had saved him, he would have married you. But in the human world, not everything happens the way we expect it to happen or the way we want it to happen, said the daughters of the air.



-So, I can't get an immortal soul? the little mermaid asked sadly.

- Now you become a daughter of the air like us because you did a very good act of love, they answered her. You did not kill the prince and sacrificed your own life so that he could live.

- So, I have an immortal soul? asked the little mermaid.

- Not yet our good sister, they answered her. Not even the daughters of the air have an immortal soul. But they can obtain it by doing good deeds for three hundred years. We will help you get an immortal soul.

The little mermaid ascended into the clouds and became a daughter of the air. She faced the sun and tears flowed from her eyes.

- I am truly a daughter of the wind! she said excitedly.

How beautiful it is to see the world from above!

On the boat the people had woken up. The little mermaid saw the prince and his wife looking for her. They looked sadly at the foam of the sea as if they knew that the little mermaid dived into the water.

Without being seen, she approached them and gave them a goodbye kiss. Beginning her journey to heaven, she looked one last time at the prince and whispered:

- We will meet again after three hundred years in Heaven.

- And maybe sooner, whispered a daughter of the wind. We enter people's houses without being seen. And whenever we find a good child who makes his parents happy, we too smile with pleasure. With every smile, we take a whole year out of the three hundred years we have to wait. But when we see a naughty child, tears roll down our cheeks and for every tear we have to wait one more day...





Co-funded by
the European Union