

# Merrellissa

*The Golden Mermaid*



**Janaki Sooriyarachchi**

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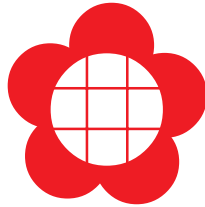


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# Mermellissa

Mermellissa was a beautiful girl. She lost her mother and father when she was very small. After that she grew up in the kitchen of a big house and had to do all the hard work. She had to cook, clean, sweep, wash and bring water all by herself.

She had to work from early morning till late at night. She didn't have a moment's rest. All she received in return was harsh words. She was scolded for the slightest delay and got punished for the smallest mistake.

No one loved her. No one cared for her.

Everybody in the household was unkind to her.

But she was never angry with any of them.

No matter how unkind they were to her, she was always kind and obedient to them.

She worked as hard as she could, quietly.



It was her birthday. No one remembered it. She received no gifts, no cakes, no candles, and above all no hugs. Who would want to hug a dirty ragged girl like her?

She longed for love and affection, which she never received. Little Mermellissa was very sad. She longed for a hug on her birthday, but instead she was scolded for not washing all the clothes.





Mermellissa took the load of clothes and went to the river to wash them. The heap of dirty clothes was bigger than she was.

She worked on the washing until evening.

After washing them she felt very tired and sad.

Her little hands were hurting.

She sat on the river bank and cried.

She cried and cried.

The tears rolled down her cheeks.

The wind blew gently, drying them up.

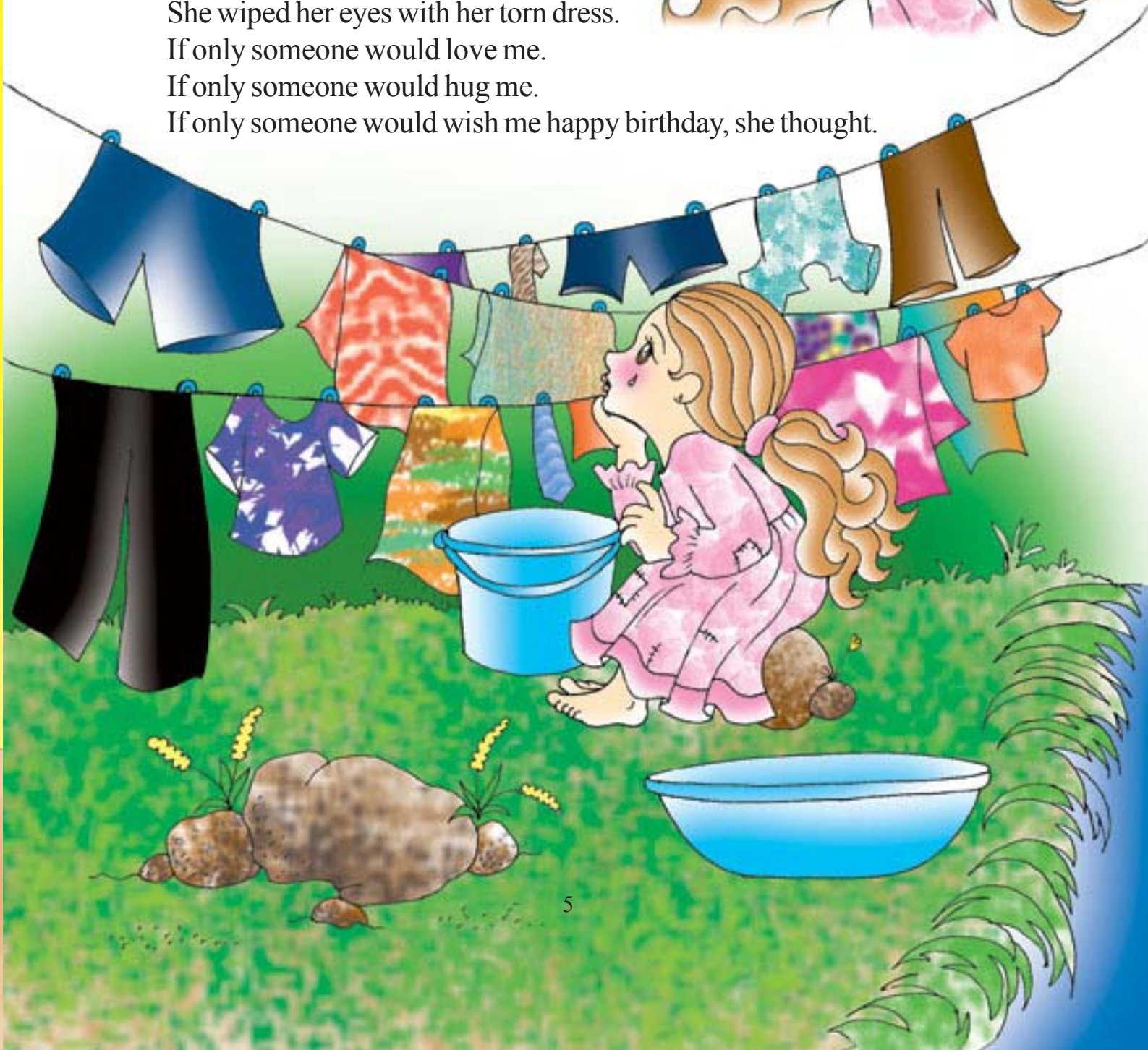
She sobbed and sobbed but only the wind could hear her crying.

She wiped her eyes with her torn dress.

If only someone would love me.

If only someone would hug me.

If only someone would wish me happy birthday, she thought.





The wind became stronger and stronger. Then suddenly the wind took one of the handkerchiefs she had washed, and blew it away.

“Oh, no! Please, don’t blow it away,” she cried.

She ran to catch it. She ran and ran behind it.  
She ran all the way down to the sea.  
But she couldn’t catch it.  
She chased after the handkerchief right up to the sea.  
It disappeared into the water.



After running so far she was tired, and frightened, too.  
How could she go back without the handkerchief?  
She would surely be punished for losing it.  
She sat on a rock and cried.  
She cried and cried.  
Only the sea could hear her crying.  
She cried until nightfall.  
She cried until the stars twinkled on.  
She cried until the moon shone bright.





After a while, she heard a faint voice.

“Mermellissa, Mermellissa...”

Someone was calling her name. She looked around to see who it was.

But no one was around. Only the voice could be heard.

She felt very lonely. No one was there other than the moon.

“Mermellissa, Mermellissa....”

The voice sounded very kind.

She was fascinated by it.

She had never heard anyone calling her so kindly.

She looked around, anxiously.





“Mermellissa, Mermellissa....”

The voice came from the sea.

But she couldn't see anyone.

She felt sad. She cried again.

Her eyes brimmed with tears and they rolled down her cheeks.

The sound of her sobbing mixed with the sound of the sea.

Her tears mixed with the water in the sea.

Her sadness mixed with the breeze that blew.

After a while, she heard a tinkling sound. It was very soft.

She looked about.

“Oh !!” A shoal of golden fish were swimming around her.

Under the moonlight, the golden fish glittered beautifully.

They swam around, fluttering their golden fins.

The fish popped up and disappeared, popped up and disappeared again.



“Mermellissa, Mermellissa....”  
Someone was calling her name.  
But only the golden fish were around.  
The tinkling sound came from all directions.  
Little by little, the sea became fierce.  
The waves rose up to the sky and the sea  
became loud and fearful.  
Little Mermellissa was frightened.

Suddenly, a big wave rolled up, covering Mermellissa.  
She was knocked over by the wave and pulled along.





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