

“‘Guess again,’ she said ‘guess again, for I will not tell you.’

“At last the little fairy who had found the first jewel said: ‘Once, long ago, after you had ridden wildly over the sea with your armies, as I sat in a cave by the seashore I saw many people come down to the sands, and they wept bitterly. But a beautiful fairy moved about among them, and gathered up their tears, and as she touched them, they turned to drops of gold. Then she carried them to a king who dwells in a far off land, and there they were woven into robes and crowns of gold. I do not know what became of the robes and crowns, I only know that the tears turned into drops of gold like these, my Queen.’

“‘You are right,’ said the Queen. ‘These are tears that have been touched by the Angel of Sorrow. But whence come they?’

“‘The river bore them down in her arms,’ replied the little fairy. ‘They are the tears wept by the little Princess when you carried off the Rata Prince.’

“‘You have guessed aright,’ said the West Wind. ‘Now we can awaken the Prince, for, robed in a golden garment of sorrow, the little maiden may leave her home and cross the sea. You must weave a robe of tears, my maidens!’

“So all night long they sat, and wove a dress of a wonderful pattern. Some of the fairies searched among the deep green and purple shadows of the mighty caves, and brought bright heaps of jewels to weave in the robe. But the little fairy said:

“‘We must put no jewels on it; for see, they lose their lustre and grow dim when put near the robe. No jewel is as beautiful as a tear of sorrow.’

“So they put no jewels on it, only fastened it at the shoulders with flowers made from the white sea-foam. All the next day they wove the robe, and finished it just before the sun set.

“‘Now,’ said the Queen, rising from her throne, ‘some of you must go and ask the river to bring down the little maiden to the sea. Then you must dress her in the robe, and bring her out to the edge of the ocean,

to where its waters kiss the sky. I will carry up the Prince in my arms through the cool green waters to the top of the ocean; for, though the little maiden has on the robe of tears, she can only cross the sea, and rest on the crests of the waves. She cannot live down in the coral palaces. When she has kissed the Prince awake she may go back to her home by the river. I love her not, but I will keep the Prince with me for ever. He will forget her, and learn to love me.’

“So the sea fairies swam to the shore. When I carried the maiden down I sang all the way.

“‘Why,’ said they, ‘are you singing such a sweet song, old river?’

“But I only laughed; I would not tell them. I was glad that they wanted the little Princess. I knew that only she could keep the Prince awake, and I thought that when the Sea Queen found that he slept again, when she took him a second time to the bottom of the sea, that she would tire of trying to wake him, and let him come back to the bush. I missed his merry ways and scarlet plumes.

“So the sea-fairies took the Princess in their arms, throwing the golden robe over her own green one, and they put a wreath of white foam-flowers in her golden hair, and carried her out to the edge of the sea where its waters kiss the sky.

“The robe trailed over the waves, making a golden pathway across them to the shore.

“Then the West Wind carried up the Prince, and, as they rose to the surface, the red colour of his clothes was reflected on the sky, becoming brighter and brighter as they drew near the top, until, when they gained it, his scarlet dress looked like a soft, red cloud against the sky. When the little Princess saw him, she laughed joyously, and, throwing her arms round him, kissed him, and he awoke.

“They lingered together out at the edge of the sea, and the West Wind and her fairies rested on the waves and watched them.

“Then night, the dark sister of the Queen of the West Wind, came up from the back of