

## FANCY'S FRIEND

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

It was a wagon, shaped like a great square basket, on low wheels, and drawn by a stout donkey. There was one seat, on which Miss Fairbairn the governess sat; and all round her, leaning over the edge of the basket, were children, with little wooden shovels and baskets in their hands, going down to play on the beach. Away they went, over the common, through the stony lane, out upon the wide, smooth sands. All the children but one immediately fell to digging holes, and making ponds, castles, or forts. They did this every day, and were never tired of it; but little Fancy made new games for herself, and seldom dug in the sand. She had a garden of sea-weed, which the waves watered every day: she had a palace of pretty shells, where she kept all sorts of little water-creatures as fairy tenants; she had friends and playmates among the gulls and peeps, and learned curious things by watching crabs, horse-shoes, and jelly-fishes; and every day she looked for a mermaid.

It was of no use to tell her that there were no mermaids: Fancy firmly believed in them, and was sure she would see one some day. The other children called the seals mermaids; and were contented with the queer, shiny creatures who played in the water, lay on the rocks, and peeped at them with soft, bright eyes as they sailed by. Fancy was not satisfied with seals,--they were not pretty and graceful enough for her,--and she waited and watched for a real mermaid. On this day she took a breezy run with the beach-birds along the shore; she planted a pretty red weed in her garden; and let out the water-beetles and snails who had passed the night in her palace. Then she went to a rock that stood near the quiet nook where she played alone, and sat there looking for a mermaid as the tide came in; for it brought her many curious things, and it might perhaps bring a mermaid.

As she looked across the waves that came tumbling one over the other, she saw something that was neither boat nor buoy nor seal. It was a queer-looking thing, with a wild head, a long waving tail, and something like arms that seemed to paddle it along. The waves tumbled it about, so Fancy could not see very well: but, the longer she looked, the surer she was that this curious thing was a mermaid; and she waited eagerly for it to reach the shore. Nearer and nearer it came, till a great wave threw it upon the sand; and Fancy saw that it was only a long piece of kelp, torn up by the roots. She was very much disappointed; but, all of a sudden, her face cleared up, she clapped her hands, and began to dance round the kelp, saying:

**"I'll make a mermaid myself, since none will come to me."**

**Away she ran, higher up the beach, and, after thinking a minute, began her work. Choosing a smooth, hard place, she drew with a stick the outline of her mermaid; then she made the hair of the brown marsh-grass growing near by, arranging it in long locks on either side the face, which was made of her prettiest pink and white shells,--for she pulled down her palace to get them. The eyes were two gray pebbles; the neck and arms of larger, white shells; and the dress of sea-weed,--red, green, purple, and yellow; very splendid, for Fancy emptied her garden to dress her mermaid.**

**"People say that mermaids always have tails; and I might make one out of this great leaf of kelp. But it isn't pretty, and I don't like it; for I want mine to be beautiful: so I won't have any tail," said Fancy, and put two slender white shells for feet, at the lower edge of the fringed skirt. She laid a wreath of little star-fish across the brown hair, a belt of small orange-crabs round the waist, buttoned the dress with violet snail-shells, and hung a tiny white pebble, like a pearl, in either ear.**

**"Now she must have a glass and a comb in her hand, as the song says, and then she will be done," said Fancy, looking about her, well pleased.**

**Presently she found the skeleton of a little fish, and his backbone made an excellent comb; while a transparent jelly-fish served for a glass, with a frame of cockle-shells round it. Placing these in the hands of her mermaid, and some red coral bracelets on her wrists, Fancy pronounced her done; and danced about her, singing:**

**"My pretty little mermaid,**

**Oh! come, and play with me:**

**I'll love you, I'll welcome you;**

**And happy we shall be."**

Now, while she had been working, the tide had crept higher and higher; and, as she sung, one wave ran up and wet her feet.

"Oh, what a pity I didn't put her farther up!" cried Fancy; "the tide will wash her all away; and I meant to keep her fresh, and show her to Aunt Fiction. My poor mermaid!--I shall lose her; but perhaps she will be happier in the sea: so I will let her go."

Mounting her rock, Fancy waited to see her work destroyed. But the sea seemed to pity her; and wave after wave came up, without doing any harm. At last one broke quite over the mermaid, and Fancy thought that would be the end of her. But, no: instead of scattering shells, stones, and weeds, the waves lifted the whole figure, without displacing any thing, and gently bore it back into the sea.

"Good by! good by!" cried Fancy, as the little figure floated away; then, as it disappeared, she put her hands before her face,--for she loved her mermaid, and had given all her treasures to adorn her; and now to lose her so soon seemed hard,--and Fancy's eyes were full of tears. Another great wave came rolling in; but she did not look up to see it break, and, a minute after, she heard steps tripping toward her over the sand. Still she did not stir; for, just then, none of her playmates could take the place of her new friend, and she didn't want to see them.

"Fancy! Fancy!" called a breezy voice, sweeter than any she had ever heard. But she did not raise her head, nor care to know who called. The steps came quite close; and the touch of a cold, wet hand fell on her own. Then she looked up, and saw a strange little girl standing by her, who smiled, showing teeth like little pearls, and said, in the breezy voice:

"You wanted me to play with you, so I came."

"Who are you?" asked Fancy, wondering where she had seen the child before.

"I'm your mermaid," said the child.

**"But the water carried her away," cried Fancy.**

**"The waves only carried me out for the sea to give me life, and then brought me back to you," answered the new comer.**

**"But are you really a mermaid?" asked Fancy, beginning to smile and believe.**

**"I am really the one you made: look, and see if I'm not;" and the little creature turned slowly round, that Fancy might be sure it was her own work.**

**She certainly was very like the figure that once lay on the sand,--only she was not now made of stones and shells. There was the long brown hair blowing about her face, with a wreath of starry shells in it. Her eyes were gray, her cheeks and lips rosy, her neck and arms white; and from under her striped dress peeped little bare feet. She had pearls in her ears, coral bracelets, a golden belt, and a glass and comb in her hands.**

**"Yes," said Fancy, drawing near, "you are my little mermaid; but how does it happen that you come to me at last?"**

**"Dear friend," answered the water-child, "you believed in me, watched and waited long for me, shaped the image of the thing you wanted out of your dearest treasures, and promised to love and welcome me. I could not help coming; and the sea, that is as fond of you as you are of it, helped me to grant your wish."**

**"Oh, I'm glad, I'm glad! Dear little mermaid, what is your name?" cried Fancy, kissing the cool cheek of her new friend, and putting her arms about her neck.**

**"Call me by my German cousin's pretty name,--Lorelei," answered the mermaid, kissing back as warmly as she could.**

**"Will you come home and live with me, dear Lorelei?" asked Fancy, still holding her fast.**

**"If you will promise to tell no one who and what I am, I will stay with you as long as you love and believe in me. As soon as you betray me, or lose your faith and fondness, I shall vanish, never to come back again," answered Lorelei.**

**"I promise: but won't people wonder who you are? and, if they ask me, what shall I say?" said Fancy.**

**"Tell them you found me on the shore; and leave the rest to me. But you must not expect other people to like and believe in me as you do. They will say hard things of me; will blame you for loving me; and try to part us. Can you bear this, and keep your promise faithfully?"**

**"I think I can. But why won't they like you?" said Fancy, looking troubled.**

**"Because they are not like you, dear," answered the mermaid, with salt tears in her soft eyes. "They have not your power of seeing beauty in all things, of enjoying invisible delights, and living in a world of your own. Your Aunt Fiction will like me; but your Uncle Fact won't. He will want to know all about me; will think I'm a little vagabond; and want me to be sent away somewhere, to be made like other children. I shall keep out of his way as much as I can; for I'm afraid of him."**

**"I'll take care of you, Lorelei dear; and no one shall trouble you. I hear Miss Fairbairn calling; so I must go. Give me your hand, and don't be afraid."**

**Hand in hand the two went toward the other children, who stopped digging, and stared at the new child. Miss Fairbairn, who was very wise and good, but rather prim, stared too, and said, with surprise:**

**"Why, my dear, where did you find that queer child?"**

**"Down on the beach. Isn't she pretty?" answered Fancy, feeling very proud of her new friend.**

**"She hasn't got any shoes on; so she's a beggar, and we mustn't play with her," said one boy, who had been taught that to be poor was a very dreadful thing.**

**"What pretty earrings and bracelets she's got!" said a little girl, who thought a great deal of her dress.**

**"She doesn't look as if she knew much," said another child, who was kept studying so hard that she never had time to dig and run, and make dirt-pies, till she fell ill, and had to be sent to the sea-side.**

**"What's your name? and who are your parents?" asked Miss Fairbairn.**

**"I've got no parents; and my name is Lorelei," answered the mermaid.**

**"You mean Luly; mind your pronunciation, child," said Miss Fairbairn, who corrected every one she met in something or other. "Where do you live?"**

**"I haven't got any home now," said Lorelei, smiling at the lady's tone.**

**"Yes, you have: my home is yours; and you are going to stay with me always," cried Fancy, heartily. "She is my little sister, Miss Fairbairn: I found her; and I'm going to keep her, and make her happy."**

**"Your uncle won't like it, my dear." And Miss Fairbairn shook her head gravely.**

**"Aunt will; and Uncle won't mind, if I learn my lessons well, and remember the multiplication table all right. He was going to give me some money, so I might learn to keep accounts; but I'll tell him to keep the money, and let me have Lorelei instead."**

**"Oh, how silly!" cried the boy who didn't like bare feet.**

**"No, she isn't; for, if she's kind to the girl, maybe she'll get some of her pretty things," said the vain little girl.**

**"Keeping accounts is a very useful and important thing. I keep mine; and mamma says I have great arth-met-i-cal talent," added the pale child, who studied too much.**

**"Come, children; it's time for dinner. Fancy, you can take the girl to the house; and your uncle will do what he thinks best about letting you keep her," said Miss Fairbairn, piling them into the basket-wagon.**

**Fancy kept Lorelei close beside her; and as soon as they reached the great hotel, where they all were staying with mothers and fathers, uncles or aunts, she took her to kind Aunt Fiction, who was interested at once in the friendless child so mysteriously found. She was satisfied with the little she could discover, and promised to keep her,--for a time, at least.**

**"We can imagine all kinds of romantic things about her; and, by and by, some interesting story may be found out concerning her. I can make her useful in many ways; and she shall stay."**

**As Aunt Fiction laid her hand on the mermaid's head, as if claiming her for her own, Uncle Fact came stalking in, with his note-book in his hand, and his spectacles on his nose. Now,**

though they were married, these two persons were very unlike. Aunt Fiction was a graceful, picturesque woman; who told stories charmingly, wrote poetry and novels, was very much beloved by young folks, and was the friend of some of the most famous people in the world. Uncle Fact was a grim, grave, decided man; whom it was impossible to bend or change. He was very useful to every one; knew an immense deal; and was always taking notes of things he saw and heard, to be put in a great encyclopaedia he was making. He didn't like romance, loved the truth, and wanted to get to the bottom of every thing. He was always trying to make little Fancy more sober, well-behaved, and learned; for she was a freakish, dreamy, yet very lovable and charming child. Aunt Fiction petted her to her heart's content, and might have done her harm, if Uncle Fact had not had a hand in her education; for the lessons of both were necessary to her, as to all of us.

"Well, well, well! who is this?" he said briskly, as he turned his keen eyes and powerful glasses on the new comer.

Aunt Fiction told him all the children had said; but he answered impatiently:

"Tut, tut! my dear: I want the facts of the case. You are apt to exaggerate; and Fancy is not to be relied on. If the child isn't a fool, she must know more about herself than she pretends. Now, answer truly, Luly, where did you come from?"

But the little mermaid only shook her head, and answered as before, "Fancy found me on the beach, and wants me to stay with her. I'll do her no harm: please, let me stay."

"She has evidently been washed ashore from some wreck, and has forgotten all about herself. Her wonderful beauty, her accent, and these ornaments show that she is some foreign child," said Aunt Fiction, pointing to the earrings.

"Nonsense! my dear: those are white pebbles, not pearls; and, if you examine them, you will find that those bracelets are the ones you gave Fancy as a reward for so well remembering the facts I told her about coral," said the uncle, who had turned Lorelei round and round, pinched her cheek, felt her hair, and examined her frock through the glasses which nothing escaped.



**"She may stay, and be my little playmate, mayn't she? I'll take care of her; and we shall be very happy together," cried Fancy eagerly.**

**"One can't be sure of that till one has tried. You say you will take care of her: have you got any money to pay her board, and buy her clothes?" asked her uncle.**

**"No; but I thought you'd help me," answered Fancy wistfully.**

**"Never say you'll do a thing till you are sure you can," said Uncle Fact, as he took notes of the affair, thinking they might be useful by and by. "I've no objection to your keeping the girl, if, after making inquiries about her, she proves to be a clever child. She can stay awhile; and, when we go back to town, I'll put her in one of our charity schools, where she can be taught to earn her living. Can you read, Luly?"**

**"No," said the mermaid, opening her eyes.**

**"Can you write and cipher?"**

**"What is that?" asked Lorelei innocently.**

**"Dear me! what ignorance!" cried Uncle Fact.**

**"Can you sew, or tend babies?" asked Aunt Fiction gently.**

**"I can do nothing but play and sing, and comb my hair."**

"I see! I see!--some hand-organ man's girl. Well, I'm glad you keep your hair smooth,--that's more than Fancy does," said Uncle Fact.

"Let us hear you sing," whispered his little niece; and, in a voice as musical as the sound of ripples breaking on the shore, Lorelei sung a little song that made Fancy dance with delight, charmed Aunt Fiction, and softened Uncle Fact's hard face in spite of himself.

"Very well, very well, indeed: you have a good voice. I'll see that you have proper teaching; and, by and by, you can get your living by giving singing-lessons," he said, turning over the leaves of his book, to look for the name of a skilful teacher; for he had lists of every useful person, place, and thing under the sun.

Lorelei laughed at the idea; and Fancy thought singing for gold, not love, a hard way to get one's living.

Inquiries were made; but nothing more was discovered, and neither of the children would speak: so the strange child lived with Fancy, and made her very happy. The other children didn't care much about her; for with them she was shy and cold, because she knew, if the truth was told, they would not believe in her. Fancy had always played a good deal by herself, because she never found a mate to suit her; now she had one, and they enjoyed each other very much. Lorelei taught her many things besides new games; and Aunt Fiction was charmed with the pretty stories Fancy repeated to her, while Uncle Fact was astonished at the knowledge of marine plants and animals which she gained without any books. Lorelei taught her to swim, like a fish; and the two played such wonderful pranks in the water that people used to come down to the beach when they bathed. In return, Fancy tried to teach her friend to read and write and sew; but Lorelei couldn't learn much, though she loved her little teacher dearly, and every evening sung her to sleep with beautiful lullabies.

There was a great deal of talk about the curious stranger; for her ways were odd, and no one knew what to make of her. She would eat nothing but fruit and shell-fish, and drink nothing but salt water. She didn't like tight clothes; but would have run about in a loose, green robe, with bare feet and flying hair, if Uncle Fact would have allowed it. Morning, noon, and night, she plunged into the sea,--no matter what the weather might be; and she

would sleep on no bed but one stuffed with dried sea-weed. She made lovely chains of shells; found splendid bits of coral; and dived where no one else dared, to bring up wonderful plants and mosses. People offered money for these things; but she gave them all to Fancy and Aunt Fiction, of whom she was very fond. It was curious to see the sort of people who liked both Fancy and her friend,--poets, artists; delicate, thoughtful children; and a few old people, who had kept their hearts young in spite of care and time and trouble. Dashing young gentlemen, fine young ladies, worldly-minded and money-loving men and women, and artificial, unchildlike children, the two friends avoided carefully; and these persons either made fun of them, neglected them entirely, or seemed to be unconscious that they were alive. The others they knew at a glance; for their faces warmed and brightened when the children came, they listened to their songs and stories, joined in their plays, and found rest and refreshment in their sweet society.

"This will do for a time; as Fancy is getting strong, and not entirely wasting her days, thanks to me! But our holiday is nearly over; and, as soon as I get back to town, I'll take that child to the Ragged Refuge, and see what they can make of her," said Uncle Fact, who was never quite satisfied about Lorelei; because he could find out so little concerning her. He was walking over the beach as he said this, after a hard day's work on his encyclopaedia. He sat down on a rock in a quiet place; and, instead of enjoying the lovely sunset, he fell to studying the course of the clouds, the state of the tide, and the temperature of the air, till the sound of voices made him peep over the rock. Fancy and her friend were playing there, and the old gentleman waited to see what they were about. Both were sitting with their little bare feet in the water; Lorelei was stringing pearls, and Fancy plaiting a crown of pretty green rushes.

"I wish I could go home, and get you a string of finer pearls than these," said Lorelei; "but it is too far away, and I cannot swim now as I used to do."

"I must look into this. The girl evidently knows all about herself, and can tell, if she chooses," muttered Uncle Fact, getting rather excited over this discovery.

"Never mind the pearls: I'd rather have you, dear," said Fancy lovingly. "Tell me a story while we work, or sing me a song; and I'll give you my crown."

"I'll sing you a little song that has got what your uncle calls a moral to it," said Lorelei, laughing mischievously. Then, in her breezy little voice, she sang the story of--

### **THE ROCK AND THE BUBBLE.**

**Oh! a bare, brown rock**

**Stood up in the sea,**

**The waves at its feet**

**Dancing merrily.**

**A little bubble**

**Came sailing by,**

**And thus to the rock**

**Did it gayly cry,--**

**"Ho! clumsy brown stone,**

**Quick, make way for me:**

**I'm the fairest thing**

**That floats on the sea.**

**"See my rainbow-robe,**

**See my crown of light,**

**My glittering form,**

**So airy and bright.**

"O'er the waters blue,  
I'm floating away,  
To dance by the shore  
With the foam and spray.

"Now, make way, make way;  
For the waves are strong,  
And their rippling feet  
Bear me fast along."

But the great rock stood  
Straight up in the sea:  
It looked gravely down,  
And said pleasantly,--

"Little friend, you must  
Go some other way;  
For I have not stirred  
This many a long day.

"Great billows have dashed,  
And angry winds blown;  
But my sturdy form  
Is not overthrown.

**"Nothing can stir me  
In the air or sea;  
Then, how can I move,  
Little friend, for thee?"**

**Then the waves all laughed,  
In their voices sweet;  
And the sea-birds looked,  
From their rocky seat,**

**At the bubble gay,  
Who angrily cried,  
While its round cheek glowed  
With a foolish pride,--**

**"You shall move for me;  
And you shall not mock  
At the words I say,  
You ugly, rough rock!**

**"Be silent, wild birds!  
Why stare you so?  
Stop laughing, rude waves,  
And help me to go!**

**"For I am the queen  
Of the ocean here,  
And this cruel stone  
Cannot make me fear."**

**Dashing fiercely up,  
With a scornful word,  
Foolish bubble broke;  
But rock never stirred.**

**Then said the sea-birds,  
Sitting in their nests,  
To the little ones  
Leaning on their breasts,--**

**"Be not like Bubble,  
Headstrong, rude, and vain,  
Seeking by violence  
Your object to gain;**

**"But be like the rock,  
Steadfast, true, and strong,  
Yet cheerful and kind,  
And firm against wrong.**

**"Heed, little birdlings,  
And wiser you'll be  
For the lesson learned  
To-day by the sea."**

**"Well, to be sure the song \_has\_ got a moral, if that silly Fancy only sees it," said Uncle Fact, popping up his bald head again as the song ended.**

**"I thank you: that's a good little song for me. But, Lorelei, are you sorry you came to be my friend?" cried Fancy; for, as she bent to lay the crown on the other's head, she saw that she was looking wistfully down into the water that kissed her feet.**

**"Not yet: while you love me, I am happy, and never regret that I ceased to be a mermaid for your sake," answered Lorelei, laying her soft cheek against her friend's.**

**"How happy I was the day my play-mermaid changed to a real one!" said Fancy. "I often want to tell people all about that wonderful thing, and let them know who you really are: then they'd love you as I do, instead of calling you a little vagabond."**

**"Few would believe our story; and those that did would wonder at me,--not love me as you do. They would put me in a cage, and make a show of me; and I should be so miserable I should die. So don't tell who I am, will you?" said Lorelei earnestly.**

**"Never," cried Fancy, clinging to her. "But, my deary, what will you do when uncle sends you away from me, as he means to do as soon as we go home? I can see you sometimes; but we cannot be always together, and there is no ocean for you to enjoy in the city."**

**"I shall bear it, if I can, for your sake; if I cannot, I shall come back here, and wait till you come again next year."**



**"No, no! I will not be parted from you; and, if uncle takes you away, I'll come here, and be a mermaid with you," cried Fancy.**

**The little friends threw their arms about each other, and were so full of their own feelings that they never saw Uncle Fact's tall shadow flit across them, as he stole away over the soft sand. Poor old gentleman! he was in a sad state of mind, and didn't know what to do; for in all his long life he had never been so puzzled before.**

**"A mermaid indeed!" he muttered. "I always thought that child was a fool, and now I'm sure of it. She thinks she is a mermaid, and has made Fancy believe it. I've told my wife a dozen times that she let Fancy read too many fairy tales and wonder-books. Her head is full of nonsense, and she is just ready to believe any ridiculous story that is told her. Now, what on earth shall I do? If I put Luly in an asylum, Fancy will break her heart, and very likely they will both run away. If I leave them together, Luly will soon make Fancy as crazy as she is herself, and I shall be mortified by having a niece who insists that her playmate is a mermaid. Bless my soul! how absurd it all is!"**

**Aunt Fiction had gone to town to see her publishers about a novel she had written, and he didn't like to tell the queer story to any one else; so Uncle Fact thought it over, and decided to settle the matter at once. When the children came in, he sent Fancy to wait for him in the library, while he talked alone with Lorelei. He did his best; but he could do nothing with her,--she danced and laughed, and told the same tale as before, till the old gentleman confessed that he had heard their talk on the rocks: then she grew very sad, and owned that she was a mermaid. This made him angry, and he wouldn't believe it for an instant; but told her it was impossible, and she must say something else.**

**Lorelei could say nothing else, and wept bitterly when he would not listen; so he locked her up and went to Fancy, who felt as if something dreadful was going to happen when she saw his face. He told her all he knew, and insisted that Lorelei was foolish or naughty to persist in such a ridiculous story.**

**"But, uncle, I really did make a mermaid; and she really did come alive, for I saw the figure float away, and then Lorelei appeared," said Fancy, very earnestly.**

**"It's very likely you made a figure, and called it a mermaid: it would be just the sort of thing you'd do," said her uncle. "But it is impossible that any coming alive took place, and I won't hear any such nonsense. You didn't see this girl come out of the water; for she says you never looked up, till she touched you. She was a real child, who came over the beach from somewhere; and you fancied she looked like your figure, and believed the silly tale she told you. It is my belief that she is a sly, bad child; and the sooner she is sent away the better for you."**

**Uncle Fact was so angry and talked so loud, that Fancy felt frightened and bewildered; and began to think he might be right about the mermaid part, though she hated to give up the little romance.**

**"If I agree that she is a real child, won't you let her stay, uncle?" she said, forgetting that, if she lost her faith, her friend was lost also.**

**"Ah! then you have begun to come to your senses, have you? and are ready to own that you don't believe in mermaids and such rubbish?" cried Uncle Fact, stopping in his tramp up and down the room.**

**"Why, if you say there never were and never can be any, I suppose I must give up my fancy; but I'm sorry," sighed the child.**

**"That's my sensible girl! Now, think a minute, my dear, and you will also own that it is best to give up the child as well as the mermaid," said her uncle briskly.**

**"Oh! no: we love one another; and she is good, and I can't give her up," cried Fancy.**

**"Answer me a few questions; and I'll prove that she isn't good, that you don't love her, and that you can give her up," said Uncle Fact, and numbered off the questions on his fingers as he spoke.**

**"Didn't Luly want you to deceive us, and every one else, about who she was?"**

**"Yes, sir."**

**"Don't you like to be with her better than with your aunt or myself?"**

**"Yes, sir."**

**"Hadn't you rather hear her songs and stories than learn your lessons?"**

**"Yes, sir."**

**"Isn't it wrong to deceive people, to love strangers more than those who are a father and mother to you, and to like silly tales better than useful lessons?"**

**"Yes, sir."**

**"Very well. Then, don't you see, that, if Luly makes you do these wrong and ungrateful things, she is not a good child, nor a fit playmate for you?"**

**Fancy didn't answer; for she couldn't feel that it was so, though he made it seem so. When Uncle Fact talked in that way, she always got confused and gave up; for she didn't know how to argue. He was right in a certain way; but she felt as if she was right also in another way, though she could not prove it: so she hung her head, and let her tears drop on the carpet one by one.**

Uncle Fact didn't mean to be unkind, but he did mean to have his own way; and, when he saw the little girl's sad face, he took her on his knee, and said, more mildly:

"Do you remember the story about the German Lorelei, who sung so sweetly, and lured people to death in the Rhine?"

"Yes, uncle; and I like it," answered Fancy, looking up.

"Well, my dear, your Lorelei will lead you into trouble, if you follow her. Suppose she is what you think her,--a mermaid: it is her delight to draw people into the water, where, of course, they drown. If she is what I think her,--a sly, bad child, who sees that you are very simple, and who means to get taken care of without doing any thing useful,--she will spoil you in a worse way than if you followed her into the sea. I've got no little daughter of my own, and I want to keep you as safe and happy as if you were mine. I don't like this girl, and I want you to give her up for my sake. Will you, Fancy?"

While her uncle said these things, all the beauty seemed to fall away from her friend, all the sweetness from their love, and all her faith in the little dream which had made her so happy. Mermaids became treacherous, unlovely, unreal creatures; and Lorelei seemed like a naughty, selfish child, who deceived her, and made her do wrong things. Her uncle had been very kind to her all her life; and she loved him, was grateful, and wanted to show that she was, by pleasing him. But her heart clung to the friend she had made, trusted, and loved; and it seemed impossible to give up the shadow, even though the substance was gone. She put her hands before her face for a moment; then laid her arms about the old man's neck, and whispered, with a little sob:

"I'll give her up; but you'll be kind to her, because I was fond of her once."

As the last word left Fancy's lips, a long, sad cry sounded through the room; Lorelei sprung in, gave her one kiss, and was seen to run swiftly toward the beach, wringing her hands. Fancy flew after; but, when she reached the shore, there was nothing to be seen but the scattered pebbles, shells, and weeds that made the mock mermaid, floating away on a receding wave.

**"Do you believe now?" cried Fancy, weeping bitterly, as she pointed to the wreck of her friend, and turned reproachfully toward Uncle Fact, who had followed in great astonishment.**

**The old gentleman looked well about him; then shook his head, and answered decidedly:**

**"No, my dear, I \_don't\_. It's an odd affair; but, I've no doubt, it will be cleared up in a natural way sometime or other."**

**But there he was mistaken; for this mystery never \_was\_ cleared up. Other people soon forgot it, and Fancy never spoke of it; yet she made very few friends, and, though she learned to love and value Uncle Fact as well as Aunt Fiction, she could not forget her dearest playmate. Year after year she came back to the sea-side; and the first thing she always did was to visit the place where she used to play, and stretch her arms toward the sea, crying tenderly:**

**"O my little friend! come back to me!"**

**But Lorelei never came again.**

See more ideas about ashley brooke designs, fancy, ashley brooke.Â Fancy Friends: Violet Clover - Ashley Brooke Designs. If you need us, we're moving into Violet Clover in Winter Park, Florida! Ashley Brooke Designs Wardrobe Rack Fancy Friends Clothes Home Decor Amigos Outfits Clothing. Fancy Friends: Violet Clover - Ashley Brooke Designs. How cute is Jane at Violet Clover?! Ashley Brooke Designs Jumpsuit Dress Jumpsuits Fancy Friends Summer Shopping Dresses Fashion. Popular fancy friends of Good Quality and at Affordable Prices You can Buy on AliExpress. We believe in helping you find the product that is right for you. AliExpress carries wide variety of products, so you can find just what youâ€™re looking for â€” and maybe something you never even imagined along the way. If you are interested in fancy friends, AliExpress has found 141 related results, so you can compare and shop! 'Fancy Friends' (Vincent Christopherson, R. 2000). Seedling# LP5-100A. TB, 32" (81 cm), Midseason bloom.Â From AIS Bulletin #321 April 2001 Introducing FANCY FRIENDS TB 32" M. Standards peach pink. White ground falls with orohid wash and dotted edges. This luminata plicata has white beards tipped gold. Check out our fancy friend selection for the very best in unique or custom, handmade pieces from our shops.Â Did you scroll all this way to get facts about fancy friend? Well you're in luck, because here they come. There are 2347 fancy friend for sale on Etsy, and they cost \$13.57 on average. The most common fancy friend material is metal. The most popular color? You guessed it: white.