

The Little Sapphire Lobster

A fairy tale in the spirit of H.C. Andersen by Henrik Frederiksen, ©ElephantTribe.org

Far down at the bottom of the Øresund Strait, where the water is freezing cold and clear as a mirror, and where the kelp forests sway in the current like green silk ribbons, live many wondrous creatures. Here, among sunken ships and forgotten treasures, lived a little lobster named Fryd.

She was not at all brown and speckled like the other lobsters; no, Fryd was born with a shell so shining sapphire blue that it looked like a piece of the fallen sky that had sunk all the way to the bottom of the sea. She was the pride of the kelp forest, and all the other sea creatures admired her brilliant armor.

But alas! Time passed, and Fryd grew, exactly as all living creatures do. The problem was simply that her beautiful, hard shell did not grow with her. Slowly, a terrible, suffocating pressure began to build up across her chest and out in her claws. The very armor that made her so special and admired was now crushing her.

The Good Advice of the Sea

In her pain, Fryd sought advice from the other inhabitants of the strait. First, she asked the Oysters, who lay close together in their muddy beds.

"When we feel a sharp pain," they whispered, "we simply cover it in calcium and keep quiet until it becomes a beautiful pearl. Shut your shell tightly, endure the darkness, and do not complain."

Then she swam to the Pufferfish. It looked at her with large, bulging eyes.

"When you feel squeezed, just puff yourself up!" it said proudly. "Pretend you are much bigger than your pain, make yourself intimidating, and it will surely disappear on its own."

Finally, she asked the slow Sea Snails, who offered her a numbing drop of fermented kelp-wine.

"Drink this," they said sleepily, "and you will completely forget how narrow your house has become."

Fryd tried with all her heart to keep quiet, to pretend nothing was wrong, and to numb the freezing ache in her body. But it was of no use. The suffocating pressure only grew worse. She realized with sorrow that if she stayed in her beautiful, admired blue shell, she would most certainly die.

The Wisdom of the Old Moray Eel

Desperate, she crept down into the deepest and darkest crevice, where the water stood almost entirely still. Here

lived an ancient, scarred Moray Eel, who had swum in the sea for a thousand years.

Fryd told of her pain, and the Moray Eel listened with a wise, yellow eye.

"The pain is not an illness, little friend," hissed the old eel gently. "It is a calling. The ocean is calling for you to become more than you are now."

"But what should I do?" cried Fryd. "You must shatter your sapphire blue shell – the very thing everyone admires you for. You must leave it behind and step out into the ocean, completely naked, soft, and defenseless."

The Dark Crevice

It was a terrible thought, but Fryd knew that she had no choice. She found a small, lonely crevice under a sharp piece of flint. With an agony and an exertion of strength she had never known before, she began to twist herself.

Crack! it went. The beautiful sapphire shell splintered.

With a final jerk, Fryd pulled herself free and left her unique armor lying empty and lifeless behind on the sandy bottom. Now she stood there – completely pink, soft as a jellyfish, and shivering with cold. She had never felt so small, so ugly, or so helpless. Just the shadow of a passing cod made her cower in terror.

The Quiet Waiting and the Emergence

The days passed in the dark. The other fish swam by and saw the empty, blue shell.

"Look," they said, shedding a small tear, "the beautiful Fryd is dead. How pretty she was."

They didn't even notice the soft, pink creature hiding in the stones, and when they finally did, they merely laughed at the pitiful sight.

But Fryd endured the loneliness and the cold. And very slowly, the deep magic of the ocean began to work. The minerals in the cold water gently wove themselves over her soft skin. The great vulnerability had not been the end; it had been the forge for her new life.

Weeks later, Fryd finally stepped out of the shadows. She was no longer a small, tightly-packed sapphire lobster. She had become enormous, powerful, and magnificent, clad in a new armor that was deep as the midnight sky and glittered with a thousand tiny stars. She was stronger than ever before, but her heart had remained gentle and understanding, for she never forgot how it felt to be completely soft and afraid in the great ocean.

And that is how it is in the world, one must understand. We all wear a shell, created by the things and habits we once needed to survive. But when the soul grows too heavy, and the heart aches with a quiet dread of being imprisoned, then one must not weep over having to leave the old behind. One must have the courage to walk out into the darkness, soft

and afraid, so that the great ocean can build them an even larger heart.