

# THE MERMAID OF GRAND RIVIERE

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Everyone in the sleepy, little village of Grande Riviere was waiting for the annual Fisherman's Fete. The elders who spoke French patois described it as a "grande z'affaire". Everyone in the village came out in their finest "dan dans" and it was great fun.

Samantha, Crystal, Keisha, Boi Boi and Kyle were great friends and were all in Standard Four at the Grande Riviere Anglican School. They met every year at Mr Walrond's Fish Broth stall and spent the day together.

Boi Boi arrived first, and he was scowling.

"Early as usual, eh?" Mr Waldron peered at Boi Boi over his spectacles.

"Why are they always late? Look! Is eleven o' clock already and we were supposed to meet at ten! Shucks!"

"Maybe you should cool off with some hot fish broth, Boi Boi. Ha! ha!"

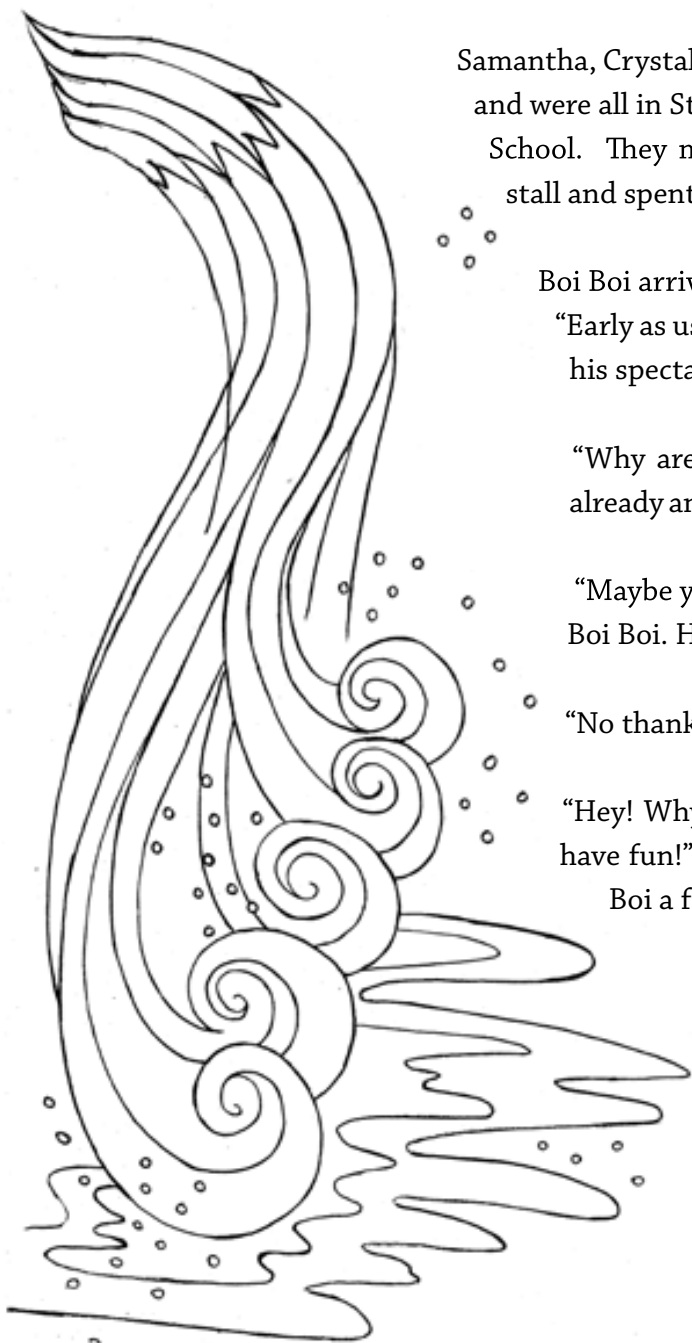
"No thanks, Mr Waldron. Not yet," Boi Boi replied.

"Hey! Why you grumbling Boi Boi? Today is a day to have fun!" A voice behind him shouted. Kyle gave Boi Boi a friendly slap on the shoulder.

"I just hate waitin'. That's all! So, where those girls?"

Five minutes later Samantha and Crystal appeared.

"No manners. You should apologize for being late!" muttered Boi Boi.





“Why you so grumpy?” asked Samantha, “Today is a day to have fun! Good morning, Mr Waldron.” Boi Boi didn’t answer and just shrugged. The five friends drank Mr Waldron’s delicious fish broth and then went off to check out the many different rides and games. Two hours later, they returned as Mr Waldron was cleaning down his stall.

“You guys ready to go for a boat ride?” he asked, “Give me a minute and we’ll be off.”

When Mr Waldron was ready, they set out in his powerboat. After about fifteen minutes they heard a sudden rumble of thunder.

“Hmmm! Weather changin’. See those heavy dark clouds in the south? That’s strange, because the weatherman expected sunny weather. Besides, it’s dry season,” said Mr Waldron.

The skies quickly grew darker, lightning flashed and the thunder rolled louder. The sea became rough with huge waves lashing the boat. The children were afraid but Mr Waldron told them not to worry. The boat bobbed up and down like a tiny cork on the water as he tried to turn it around.

Suddenly a sharp flash of lightening made them scream. A loud thunderclap pitched the boat into the air and they all landed on an island, which seemed to appear from nowhere. The boat was smashed but they were unharmed.

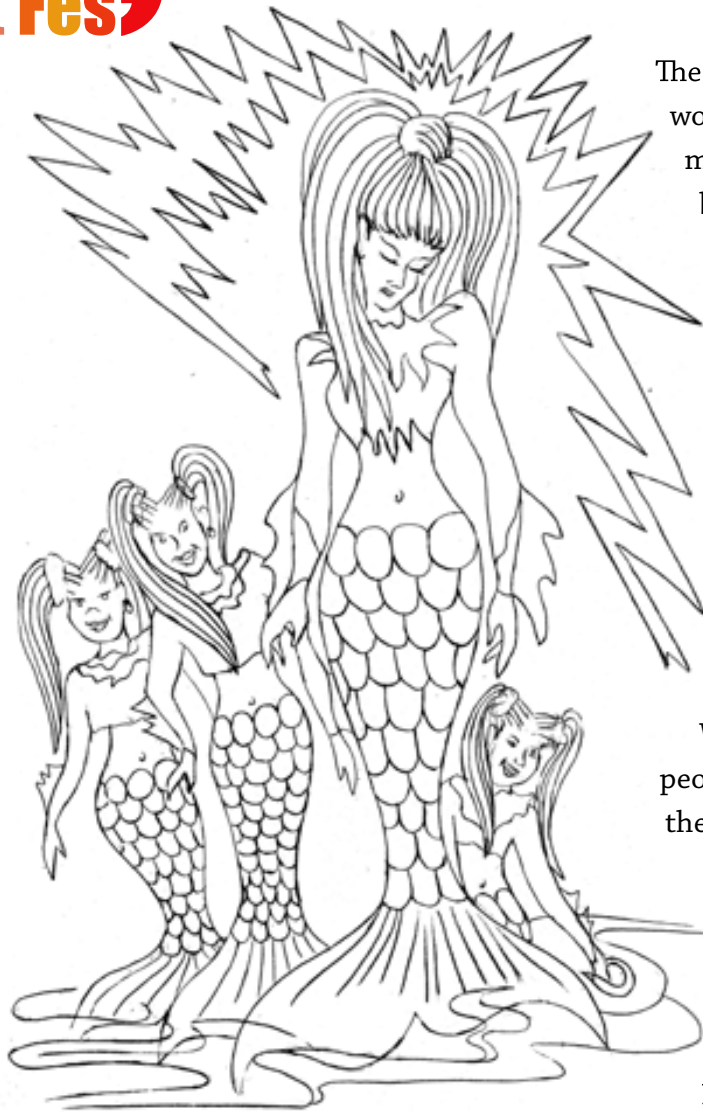
“Let’s see if we can find a place where we can be dry,” suggested Kyle.

“Look, over there. It’s a cave!” shouted Samantha.

“Let’s go in,” said Boi Boi.

On entering the cave they were amazed. There was a hand with a golden pen writing in letters of fire. They saw a huge bird.

“I am the mystical, magical Pawi!” it said, with a voice like thunder. “Awwwk! You have come here to receive a message, to know and go tell it to all. The Sacred Mermaid only appears at the end of every hundred years, at the eleventh hour for eleven minutes. Tonight she will give you a message for the people. The magic mapepire will yawn for five minutes and a scroll will fall from his mouth. Only she can read the scroll. Awwwwk! Awwwk!”



The bird flew away. At eleven, a beautiful woman, surrounded by bright light and little mermaids, appeared on the water. Her lower body was a shining multi-coloured fish. Then a giant mapepire snake rose out of the water, opened his huge jaws and out came the scroll. The Sacred Mermaid took it and began to read.

“Humans!” she said, “Never hurt animals, birds or other living things. Protect the leatherback turtle. Be kind to one another. Treat the earth with respect. Trees are sacred. Restore the forest. Return the earth to its beautiful state of vegetation.

When you return to your realm, let your people know that they must heal Earth from the sickness they have brought upon her.”

She told them to drink from the rainbow waterfall at the foot of the mountain.

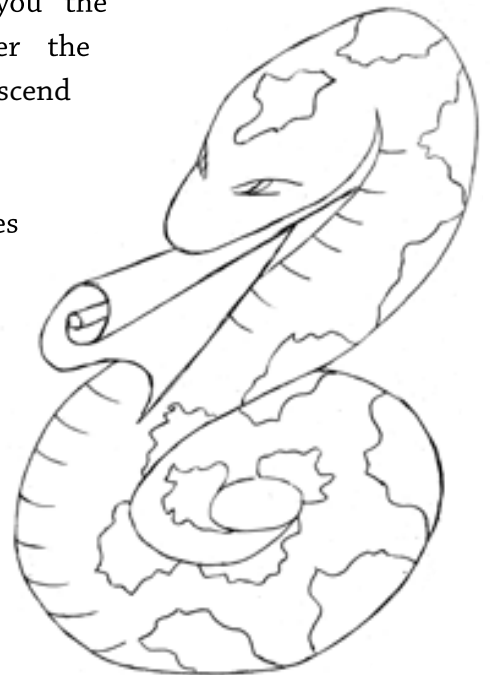
“This will give you the power to fly over the mountain and descend

into the portal. Go! Tell everyone what you saw and heard!”

With a brilliant flash of light the mermaid, all the little creatures and the snake disappeared.

Mr Waldron and the children followed the mermaid’s instructions and returned safely to Grande Riviere. They told everyone the story.

Very few people believed them but those who did followed the instructions, and the hills of Grande Riviere have remained lush and green to this day.



THE END