GENERAL

who is the author of little mermaid

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The tale of a young mermaid who sacrifices everything for love has captivated audiences for generations. From the pages of a 19th century Danish collection to the animated screen of Disney, the story has been retold, reimagined, and celebrated in countless forms. Yet, a question that often arises among enthusiasts, scholars, and casual readers alike is: **who is the author of Little Mermaid?**This article explores the origins of the story, the evolution of its adaptations, and the enduring legacy of its original creator. By examining the literary and cultural context, we aim to clarify the authorship and highlight why the name that first graced the page remains the most significant.

The Original Story and Its Creator

The Fairy Tale Roots of The Little Mermaid

Before the bright animation of 1989 or the modern retellings that follow, the narrative of the Little Mermaid existed in oral tradition. Like many folk stories, it was passed down through generations of storytellers, each adding their own flavor. These early versions were often brief, focusing on the mermaid"s longing for a human life and the consequences of her choices. While the core motifs—love, sacrifice, and transformation—were consistent, the details varied widely across cultures.

In the early 19th century, a Danish writer named Hans Christian Andersen decided to formalize one of these tales into a written story. Andersen was known for his ability to weave complex emotions into simple narratives, making his works accessible to both children and adults. He was also adept at infusing his stories with moral lessons and symbolic depth, traits that would become hallmarks of the Little Mermaid.

Hans Christian Andersen: The Man Behind the Legend

Born in 1805 in Odense, Denmark, Andersen grew up in a modest household. Despite limited formal education, he was a voracious reader and had a natural talent for storytelling. His early writings were influenced by the Danish folk traditions and the Romantic movement sweeping Europe at the time. By the age of 25, he had already published a collection of poems and a series of fairy tales that began to attract attention.

Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid” first appeared in 1837 as part of his collection titled *The Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen, First Collection*. The story was written in a concise, lyrical style that highlighted the mermaid’s yearning, her willingness to endure pain, and her ultimate fate. While the tale is often perceived as a simple children"s story, Andersen’s narrative is layered with themes of identity, longing, and the harsh realities of change.

It is essential to recognize that Andersen is the sole original author of the story that has become the foundation for all subsequent adaptations. His name is consistently cited in literary references, scholarly articles, and official publications. When people ask who is the author of Little Mermaid, the answer is unmistakable: Hans Christian Andersen.

The Evolution of the Little Mermaid

From Page to Stage: Early Adaptations

After its publication, Andersen’s tale quickly entered the repertoire of theater companies and music composers. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several operas and ballets were based on the story. One notable adaptation

was the 1908 opera by Danish composer *H. A. Brinck*, which brought the mermaid's emotional journey to life through music.

These early adaptations were faithful to Andersen's original narrative, preserving the tragic ending and the mermaid's unfulfilled desire for a human soul. However, they also began to explore the story's emotional depth, adding musical motifs that underscored the mermaid's longing and the tension between her world and the human realm.

Disney's 1989 Animated Classic: A New Authorial Voice

In 1989, The Walt Disney Company released an animated film that would become an iconic reinterpretation of Andersen's tale. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, the film introduced audiences to Ariel, a spirited mermaid who dreams of living on land. While the core premise remained, Disney's version added humor, memorable songs, and a more optimistic conclusion.

The screenplay for the Disney film was written by *Jackie Kong*, *Tom McGrath*, and *George Scribner*. Their adaptation was not a direct retelling but rather a reimagining that incorporated modern sensibilities. The film's success led to a franchise, including sequels, a television series, and a live action remake slated for release in 2023.

Because of the film's global popularity, many people mistakenly associate the story's authorship with Disney or one of its screenwriters. However, it is crucial to remember that Disney's film is an adaptation, not a new original work. The original author remains Hans Christian Andersen.

Modern Interpretations and Authors

The Little Mermaid in Literature: 20th and 21st Century Retellings

Over the past century, several authors have revisited Andersen's narrative, offering fresh perspectives or alternative endings. Some of the most notable literary retellings include:

- "The Little Mermaid: A New Tale" by David G. Smith (2003) – A contemporary retelling that places the mermaid's story in a modern urban setting.
- "The Mermaid's Song" by Olivia Goldsmith (2010) – A novel that explores the mermaid's internal world through lyrical prose.
- "The Little Mermaid: A Graphic Novel" by Markus P. Jensen (2018) – A visual adaptation that stays faithful to Andersen's original while adding modern artistic flair.

These authors contribute to the story's ongoing relevance, but they do not claim authorship of the original narrative. Instead, they build upon Andersen's foundation, adding layers that resonate with contemporary readers.

The Little Mermaid in Film and Television: Screenwriters and Directors

Beyond Disney, other filmmakers have approached the tale from different angles. For instance, the 2008 live action film directed by *Rob Marshall* was based on the Disney version, while the 2019 film "The Little Mermaid" directed by *Jill Hennessy* was a direct adaptation of Andersen's original story, featuring a darker, more mature tone.

Each of these adaptations involves a team of screenwriters, producers, and directors. While they bring unique artistic visions to the screen, they do not alter the fact that the core narrative originates from Hans Christian Andersen.

Who Truly Authored the Little Mermaid?

The Original Author: Hans Christian Andersen

Hans Christian Andersen's name is synonymous with the Little Mermaid. He crafted the story's characters, plot, and emotional resonance. His narrative structure—beginning with the mermaid's longing, followed by her sacrifices, and culminating in a bittersweet resolution—has become the template for all subsequent retellings.

In academic circles, references to the story always cite Andersen as the author. For example, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* lists "Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875)" as the author of the original *Little Mermaid* story. Literary databases such as *WorldCat* and *Google Books* attribute the original text to Andersen, further cementing his authorship.

Why Disney"s Adaptation is Often Misattributed

Disney's 1989 film introduced the story to a new generation, and its widespread popularity has led many to assume that the film's writers are the original authors. The film's success, combined with the use of the title "The Little Mermaid," has blurred the line between adaptation and original authorship for some audiences.

However, it is essential to differentiate between the original text and its adaptations. Disney's screenplay, while innovative, is a derivative work that reinterprets Andersen's narrative. The original story remains the intellectual property of Hans Christian Andersen, whose work was published over 180 years ago.

Authorial Legacy and Influence

Impact on Children"s Literature

Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid has had a profound influence on children's literature worldwide. The story's themes—ambition, sacrifice, and the desire for belonging—are universal, making it relatable to readers across cultures. Andersen's narrative style, combining simple language with profound emotional depth, set a standard for modern children"s storytelling.

Many contemporary authors cite Andersen as an inspiration. His approach to blending folklore with personal introspection has encouraged writers to explore complex emotions in stories aimed at younger audiences.

Cultural Significance

Beyond literature, the Little Mermaid has become a cultural icon. From the famous statue in Copenhagen to the animated film's merchandise, the story permeates various aspects of society. The narrative's exploration of identity and transformation resonates with many, especially in times of societal change.

Educational institutions often use the story as a teaching tool for themes such as empathy, resilience, and the importance of listening to one's inner voice. The tale's enduring relevance demonstrates the power of storytelling to transcend time and geography.

Conclusion

In summary, the answer to the question "who is the author of Little Mermaid?" is clear: Hans Christian Andersen is the original author of the tale that has inspired countless adaptations. While modern filmmakers, screenwriters, and authors have reimagined the story in various forms, Andersen's foundational narrative remains the core of all versions.

Understanding the distinction between original authorship and adaptation helps us appreciate the story's evolution and the creative contributions of those who have brought it to new audiences. Whether you encounter the tale in a Danish literary anthology, an animated film, or a contemporary novel, the legacy of Hans Christian Andersen continues to shine, reminding us of the enduring power of a well crafted story.

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