

The Fisherman Libretto

The Setting: A Small Fishing Village near Breton

One morning, Guillame and his friend go to the sea to catch the daily fish. As they reach the shore, Guillame wanders away to the edge of the cliff, where he looks longingly at the beautiful creatures of the sea.

A turtle appears, and Guillame tells him how he longs to go underwater. The turtle gives his new friend a sash that will allow him to breathe underwater, and leads him into the murky depths.

The sea nymphs come to meet the turtle's guest, and welcome him to the sea. Guillame is enchanted with these creatures, and tries to make their acquaintance. At first, they shy away but soon realize he does not mean to harm them. To show his friendship, he gives her a pearl from an oyster to the sea nymph Ondine.

The little crabs and scallops, see the visitor, and come to play with Guillame. Then, tired, all of the sea creatures settle down to sleep.

The Sea Witch has seen the visitor too, and she falls in love with Guillame. She is very angry at seeing her *love* bestow gifts upon another and decides to kidnap Ondine. She steals her away while Guillame sleeps.

Guillame is awakened by the fish who tell him that Ondine has been kidnapped. The brave little crabs and urchins prepare to go and rescue her, but Guillame stops them. He tells them they are too small, and he will go and fight for his love himself. He rouses the sea horses and readies them for battle.

Guillame finds Ondine in the clutches of the Sea Witch. A fight ensues, and he rescues her, but in doing so, he loses his magic sash and drowns. The sea nymphs mourn the loss of their friend.

The turtle returns and takes Guillame's body back to the shore.

The other fishermen had returned to the village hours before, and now, the village ladies are searching the beach for Guillame. They carry torches to light their way. They find his body on the beach, and they leave the torches, and run back to the village for help.