

## **The Starfish and the Strawberry**

©Deborah Strod 2003-2010

Once upon a time, there was a starfish that lived in a tide pool that ebbed and flowed with the waves on Cape Cod. The starfish would swim in the water, wash up on the sand, and then a big wave would come and pull her back. She liked riding the waves, and flapping her 5 starfish limbs in the water. She loved to look out on the land, and always tried to get just a little further up land to see what was out there beyond the water. One day a GIANT wave threw her way up on to the sand, so far up that the next wave didn't reach high enough to pull her back, nor did the wave after that or the wave after that. But she wasn't worried; she knew that somehow she would get back in the deeper water.

Suddenly she felt herself pulled out of the sand and flying through the air! She thought maybe a wave had caught her without her knowing, but hadn't heard anything and she wasn't dripping. Then she felt a pinch on her limb and realized that a girl had picked her up, and was carrying her away from the ocean. She was being carried further up the beach - onto where the dry sand was. She had never been on the dry white sand. Suddenly she was dropping through the air, and thought she would land on the dry spots when suddenly PLOP she landed in a bucket of water.

There were other sea creatures in the bucket: an oyster, a clam, a sand dollar, a mussle. Only the starfish could climb up the bucket, though. And climb she did. She peered over the top of the bucket and saw creatures on two legs, and creatures on 4 legs, She saw umbrellas in many bright colors, and smelled new smells. She had never been able to get her whole body into the air before and liked the feeling of a breeze over her body. She was so happy. All of a sudden she saw the girl again. She was sitting, and eating. She was eating something red, and drippy - and smiling! The starfish stared and stared, trying to imagine what that red drippy thing might taste like. The girl looked over, and stared back. She looked down at her hand which held the red food, and then jumped up and walked straight toward the bucket. She broke off a piece of the red thing and put it into the starfish's mouth.

"There you go," she said, as the starfish started chewing. The starfish liked the burst of flavor.

"That's called a strawberry. I don't know if you have them where you live, but I hope it makes

you happy you came to visit!" She dropped little pieces in for the other sea creatures. The oyster chewed on it, and right away started to make a pearl around the little seed - it was just the size of a grain of sand, exactly what an oyster usually makes pearls out of. The clam and the mussle mashed it up inside their shells and made happy noises, too.

After a little while, the girl came back. "I hope you liked your visit! Now it's time to go home." And she took them down to the water's edge, swung the bucket back, and WHOOSH, everything and everyone in the bucket slid right out and into the air and arched through the air till they landed SPLOOSH in the water. The starfish happily started swimming around. "I hope you come back to visit again!" the girl called from the beach. She waved, turned around and walked back to her family.

And every year the starfish came back to visit, and the girl brought strawberries.