



The Water -Babies (Oxford World's Classics)

Charles Kingsley

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'this is all a fairy tale...and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true'

The Water-Babies (1863) is one of the strangest and most powerful children's stories ever written.

In describing the underwater adventures of Tom, a chimney-sweeper's boy who is transformed into a water-baby after he drowns, Charles Kingsley combined comic fantasy and moral fable to extraordinary effect. Tom's encounters with friendly fish, curious lobsters, and characters such as Mrs Doasyouwouldbedoneby are both an exciting fairy tale and a crash course in evolutionary theory. They also reflect the quirky imagination of one of the great Victorian eccentrics. Tom's adventures are constantly interrupted by Kingsley's sideswipes at contemporary issues such as child labour and the British education system, and they offer a rich satiric take on the great scientific debates of the day.

This edition reprints the original complete version of the story, and includes a lively introduction, detailed explanatory notes, and an appendix that reprints Kingsley's first attempt to describe the mysterious creatures that live under the sea.

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