In a small Spanish sea-coast town in South America, every year toward the end of January the sea grew harsh and emitted a foul odor, also dumping its garbage on the town. This contaminated the town with an unbearable mood until the next December. But, one year a man of strange origin, a "gringo" came to town and with his presence the sea became smooth, an emitted an odor of roses. Tobias was one of the first to smell the sweet odor. Later Jacob's wife, Petra smelled it and attributed it to a message from God that she was soon to die. She requests that she be buried alive because it is the custom of the townspeople to throw their dead into the sea, and she wants to make sure that she is buried in the earth. Mr. Herbert's presence with two barrelfuls of money and the odor of roses from the sea caused the townspeople and people from nearby towns to rejoice in a festival. Mr. Herbert decides to give his money away but he makes the people perform for the money. He becomes hungry and then takes Tobias to the sea to look for food, because there is no more food left in the town. They swim to the depth of the sea passing various levels in time. They see the bodies of their dead floating
past them. At the bottom of the sea, they see turtles lining the bottom, they take one turtle up with them. Mr. Herbert tells Tobias that the turtles are not dead. They are only sleeping. He asks Tobias never to reveal to anyone the dreamlike quality of the reality under the sea. He agrees to it. But later Clotilde, his wife insists on finding out what he is thinking about. He tells her, and she passes it off as foolishness.


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