Explanation

The following story was published by C. F. Voegelin in 1945. It was told by Willie Longbone in 1939.

The first line (in *italics*) is the story as published. (in Lenape)
The second line (in **bold**) is the same, but written according to the spelling conventions used today. (in Lenape)
The third line separates the various morphemes of the words. (in Lenape)
The fourth line provides morpheme-by-morpheme glosses of each word. (in English)
The fifth line provides a more general translation of each word. (in English)
The final line provides the English sentence translation directly as provided in the original.

In a couple cases, it was not possible to determine the exact translation of a particular word. In these cases, the fifth line (general translation) was given if possible, and the unknown parts were left blank (or have question marks).

In the original Lenape text (first line), the • symbol means that the preceding vowel is long. A capital letter consonant means that that consonant is long (geminate). The accent mark shows the primary stress in a word. MP stands for “a morphophonemic insertion required grammatically but having no meaning.” (http://www.talklenape.org/grammar.php)

1 = 1st person
2 = 2nd person
3 = 3rd person
1+2 = 1st person plural (inclusive)
AN = animate
CONJ = conjunct form
DIM = diminutive
DIR = direct
EMPH = emphatic
INV = inverse
LOC = locative
OBV = obviative
PAT = local paradigm
pl = plural
PSV = passive
QUES = question word
SUB = subordinative form
Note: This story is copyrighted by C.F. Voegelin (citation below), not me.


**Purpose**

The goal of this project is to make a Lenape story more accessible and useful for language learners. The original text is written in “linguistics-ese,” which is not always easy to read and may be a barrier for those without linguistic training. By rewriting the text according to the current spelling conventions, it will be more easily readable. The original text also only gave a general sentence translation, which is useful for understanding the overall meaning, but does not help to learn individual words or constructions. My word-by-word glossing will hopefully be helpful for learning to how structure words and sentences.
wewtonúwe’s “The Mermaid”

1. mi•mens entá•hpi•t xkwé•čč entawélahala•t nélé
   mimens entahpit xkwechech entawelahalat nele
   child when-be-3CONJ woman-DIM who-gives.birth-3CONJ nele
   child child he.is.born girl who.gave.birth that
mi•mensa
mimens-a
child-OBV
child

The one who is born [is] a child [and] the one who gave birth to that child [is] a girl.

2. keku- lahawi•n pahsi• namé•s wsúKwnenk tali- namé•s
   keku lahawani pahsi names wsukwenenk tali names
   thing half fish
   thing half fish (this.place) fish
talina•kwsi•n nani- mi•mens
   (we)t-elinakw-bin nani mimens
3-looks.like-?? that child
the.way.she.looks that child

Behold something, a half of fish, fish-like on her tail, – indeed, that’s the way that child looks.

3. nani- skí•xwke moipahkí•lana•n ikalili manöPé•Kunk
   nani skixkwe (moipahkilan) ikalili mepepekunk
   nani skixkwe w-mai-pahkilan ikalili mepepekwnk
   that young.woman 3-go.to.throw.her.out thither lake-LOC
   that young.woman she.went.and.threw.her.out thither in.the.lake

That young woman [the mother] went and threw her out yonder in the lake.
Where there is [deep] water in the [expanse of] water, that one threw her [and] there this one began to grow.

When she had become big, this one began to kill the children.

That [Delaware woman] says, ‘what should we do about her?’ –

Two young men said, “We two, we will kill that person.”
One young man told his friend, “My friend, I am going after the fire in that sun.”

When he went there where he lives, he told that sun, “I want the fire.”

That sun told him, “That would not be possible, -- you would burn all of that [which exists] where you all live.”
11. nanətako•k   skiNu   tələ•o   ni•tanču   ne•petane•-
    nanetakok   skinu   telao   nitanchu   nepetane
    nane-takok   skinu   w-tel-a-w-a   nitanchu   nepe-ta-(ne)
that-other   young.man   3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV   my.friend   I.too-EMPH
that.other   young.man   he.tells.him   my.friend   I.too
    nu•wi•Tì•si   waš•e-   pi•skewenikishux   mai-   ntuxtəo
    nuwitisi   washe   piskewenikishux   mai   ntuxtəo
    n-itiši   wa•she   piskeweni-kishux   mai   n-natuxt-a-w
1-friend   this.EMPH   night.sun   1-go-to   1-ask-DIR-3
my.friend   this.here   night.sun   1-go-to   1-ask.him
    kti•a•wi•čəməKú•ne•n
    kteliawichemekunen
    k-t-eli-a-wichem-ek-w-nan
1+2-so-shoul帮助-inv-3-pl
    he.should.help.us

He told that other young man, “my friend, I also have a friend here, the night sun, -- I will go ask him [and] he, indeed, ought to help us.”

12. entaikapá•t   pi•skewenikishux   tələ•o
    entaikapat   piskewenikishuxunk   telao
    enta-iwa-pa-t   piskeweni-kishux-nk   w-tel-a-w-a
    when-there-3-come-3CONJ   night-sun-LOC   3-MP-tell-DIR-3-OBV
    when.he.arrived.there   by.the.night.sun   he.tells.him
    nkəTá•Tam   təntay
    nkatatam   tentay
    nkatatam(-ne)   tentay
    I-want.it(-IN)   fire
    I.want.it   fire

When he arrived there by the night sun, he told him, “I want the fire.”

13. tələ•o   na-   pi•skewenikishux   ku•káska
    telao   na   piskewenikishux   kukaski
    w-tel-a-w-a   na   piskeweni-kishux   ku-kaski
    3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV   that   night-sun   not-can/able
    he.tells.him   that   night.sun   not.possible

That night sun told him, “Impossible.”
He told him, “Go get the ashes where I throw them away.”

“You take out the ashes from there [and] you take a little away.”

“As you arrive there, you take it there to the lake [and] there you throw it in that water.”

After he had thrown it in, that water began to boil.
[The mermaid] came out [and the young men] were told, “finally you fellows have killed me.”

“However, my many children, indeed, remain all over here-about where there is water, where there are rivers.”