



Why Fish Have Scales

A Folktale from the Philippines

Long ago, a farmer and his wife had a beautiful baby girl who grew into a beautiful maiden. She was very spoiled. She got everything she wanted and never helped with any work on the farm.

Her parents always told her how beautiful she was. She spent a lot of time looking at herself in a mirror and would sometimes go to a clear stream to admire her own reflection.

One day, a crab saw her looking in the stream. The crab crawled over to her and started to talk.

The girl was shocked and said, "Don't come near me. You are ugly! I can't talk to such a horrible-looking creature."

The crab was insulted and embarrassed. The crab jumped on the girl and made scratches all over her.

"Oh no, my beautiful face!" screamed the girl as she splashed water on the scratches. The water only made the scratches look more like fish scales.

The crab then pushed the girl into the water and cast a spell that turned her forever into a fish covered in scales.

The legend says that whenever you look into a stream and see a scaly fish quickly dart away, it's because your face reminds them of the beauty they lost long ago.

Answer the following questions.

1. What was the girl doing when the crab saw her by the stream?
2. From which country is this folktale?
3. What lesson does this story teach?
4. Why did the girl not want to go near the crab?
5. What is a sign that the girl was spoiled?
6. What does this legend explain?
8. Where did the beautiful girl live?

