The Golden Fish

Once, there was a poor fisherman. The fisherman lived in a small hut by the sea with his wife, his son and his daughter. Their hut was only made of wood, and they didn't have expensive food or furniture, but they lived happily.

One day, when the weather was calm, the fisherman was fishing in the sea, and he caught a golden fish. The fisherman had never seen a golden fish before, and he thought, *Is it really alright to eat such a beautiful animal?*

And then the fish talked!

'Oh, fisherman!' said the fish. 'Please do not kill me. If you let me go, I will grant you any wish.'

The fisherman was afraid. He had never liked magic, and he didn't want to start now.

So he said, 'That's quite alright! I have everything I need!' And he threw the fish back into the sea.

Now, when the fisherman got home and told the story to his wife, she nagged him for hours.

'You might not like magic, but I do!' she said. 'It's not every day that you catch a golden fish that can grant wishes. I'm tired of living in this old hut. Tomorrow I want you to find that fish again and ask it for a nicer house! Yes, a big house with a garden and five bedrooms is what we need!'

'Yes, dear…'

The next day, the weather was not so calm. A strong wind blew. But the fisherman could still easily fish, and he did so for several hours until he caught the golden fish again.

'Oh, it is you!' said the golden fish. 'Funny seeing you here. If you let me go again, I will grant you another wish.'

'My wife wishes for a nicer house,' said the fisherman, 'with a garden and five bedrooms.'

'Your wish is granted,' said the fish.

The fisherman let the fish go, and sure enough, when he came home there was not a sad little hut, but a big house with a garden and five bedrooms. The fisherman's wife was happy, but that night at dinner, his son was the one who nagged him.

'You always do what Mother wants, but not what we want!' said the son. 'This house is nice, but what about my education? There are no schools around here. I want a teacher who will live here and teach me politics so that I don't have to be a fisherman when I grow up.'

'Yes, son,' said the fisherman sadly.

The next day, the weather was not calm at all. Fat clouds sat in the sky, and after a few hours it rained. Just when the fisherman was worrying that it was going to get stormy, he caught the golden fish.

'Oh, it's you again,' said the golden fish. 'I suppose you'd like me to grant another wish?

'I'm so sorry, Mr Fish,' said the fisherman. 'But you see, my son wants an education. He'd like a teacher to live in our house and teach him politics.'

'Your wish is granted,' said the fish. 'Now please let me go.'

That evening, the fisherman returned to find another man in the house. It was a teacher who came from the capital city. In fact, he was quite a famous teacher.

'I just couldn't live in that city anymore,' he said. 'I decided to come and live by the sea, but I wanted to keep working. So here I am!'

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The teacher was so happy that he didn't even want to be paid. And the fisherman's son was very happy to receive a good education in politics. The fisherman lay down happily in bed that night, thinking that all his family's problems had been solved. That was, until his daughter came in to nag him.

'Daaaaad!' she said. 'Why do Mum and Brother get their wishes granted but I don't? You never asked what *I* wanted!'

The fisherman sighed. 'And what do you want, dear?'

'I'm glad you asked,' she said. 'I would like to be queen.'

'OK, dear,' said the fisherman.

The fisherman thought that this wish was too much. Surely the fish's magic wouldn't be able to do it? When he went to fish the next day, it was very stormy, and it was hard to see or hear. It was going to be very difficult to catch fish in such stormy weather.

But the fisherman did his best, and after many hours of fishing, he finally caught the golden fish.

'More wishes?' said the fish.

'I am so sorry,' said the fisherman. 'But this will be my last wish.'

He had to shout to be heard through the stormy weather.

'My daughter wishes to become queen.'

'Your wish is granted,' said the fish. 'But she may find that being queen is not so great.'

The fisherman wasn't sure what the fish meant, but he let it go and went home.

In the house, everything was very quiet. He couldn't find his daughter, but he supposed that she lived in the capital city now, if she was queen. But then he found his wife crying alone in the kitchen.

'What happened?' said the fisherman.

'Oh, don't you know anything?' nagged his wife. 'There was a revolution! All the people in the capital ran into the castle and killed the queen. Our poor daughter! That is why the house is so empty. Our son has already left. The revolution will come here next – they will surely want to kill the family of the queen as well. Oh, it's too much!'

The fisherman had never been very interested in politics, so he hadn't known that for a year now, things had been stormy in the capital. People had been talking about a revolution for months, but the fisherman didn't know this. When his daughter suddenly became queen, it was too much for the people, and the revolution started.

'I wish I had listened to the news more…' he said.

But then the fisherman thought more, and he realised that he didn't think that. Really, he wished he had never listened to his wife, or his son or daughter. If he had let that fish go and never wished for anything, he would still have a hut made of wood and a happy family.

The next day, the sea was stormier than before. But the fisherman did not fish. He jumped in the water and swam, and he didn't stop until the storm ate him up.

THE END

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