

The wishing fish

Many, many years ago, in a small village by the sea, there lived an old fisherman and his wife. They were very poor, possessing only an old wooden hut and a small boat, which the fisherman took out to sea every day to earn his living.

One morning, just like any other, the fisherman took his net and headed out to sea. He cast the net once, but caught nothing. He cast it a second time—still nothing. On the third attempt, he felt the net grow very heavy. He was thrilled! But when he pulled it in, instead of ordinary fish, he found a fish with scales that shone like gold.

To the fisherman’s astonishment, the fish spoke!
“Please, old fisherman, let me return to the sea! If you do, I will grant you a wish.”

Though taken aback, the kind-hearted fisherman thought for a moment. He needed very little to get by, so he let the fish go back into the sea.
“Swim away, little friend. I don’t need anything. I only want you to be free.”

Grateful, the fish vanished into the waves, leaving a trail of light in the water.

When the fisherman returned home and told his wife what had happened, she became very angry.
“How could you let a magical fish go without asking for anything in return?” she exclaimed indignantly. “You should have asked for a new house! This hut is falling to pieces!” Although the fisherman was not convinced, he decided to return to the sea. He approached the water’s edge and called out:
“Oh, magic fish! If you are still there, please come back!”

The water stirred, and the magic fish appeared.
“What do you need, old fisherman?” the fish asked in its gentle voice.

“My wife would like a new house…”

“Very well,” said the fish. “Go back home. It is already done.”

When the fisherman returned, he found a beautiful stone house. His wife, however, was not entirely content. As time went on, she began to ask for more.

First, she wanted riches. Then, she wanted to be a queen. And finally, she wanted to be the empress of all the lands. Each time, the fisherman would return to the sea and call for the magic fish, which always granted her wishes.

But the fisherman’s wife was never satisfied. One day, she decided she wanted to be the mistress of the sun and the moon. When the fisherman conveyed this final wish to the magic fish, the sky darkened, the waves rose up, and the fish replied sadly:
“Go back home, fisherman. Everything will return to the way it was

before.”

When the fisherman returned, he found his old hut, just as it had always been. He and his wife had lost everything they had wished for, all because of greed.