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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# The Story of the Fisherman and His Wife

Once upon a time, there was a fisherman and his wife. They were so poor that they could only live in a shack by the sea. The fisherman went fishing every day. He would fish all day long.

One day, he was sitting by his fishing rod and looking into the clear water. Suddenly, the float sank deep. When he pulled it up, there was a flatfish on the line. The flatfish said, "Listen, fisherman, let me live because I'm not really a flatfish. I'm an enchanted prince. You won't gain anything by killing me. I don't taste good at all. Just throw me back into the water, and I can swim again."

"Well," said the man, "I won't waste any more words. A fish that can talk, I'd better let it swim again."



Immediately, he threw the flatfish back into the clear water. The fish dived under and left a long trail of blood behind it. This was because of the wound caused by the hook. The

fisherman went back to his wife in the shack. "Did you catch anything?" asked the wife.

"No," said the man. "I caught a flatfish, but it said it was an enchanted prince. So, I let it go."

"Did you make a wish then?" said the wife. "What should I wish for?"

"Well," said the wife, "living in a shack all the time isn't all that great. You could have wished for a fisherman's cottage. Come on, go there and call the fish. Then tell him that we'd really like a fisherman's cottage. You caught him and let him go, so he'll be happy to arrange this for you. Go ahead, go now."

The man didn't really want to go, but he didn't want to oppose his wife either. He went back to the sea.

When he arrived at the sea, he saw that the water was green and yellow. It wasn't as clear as before. He stood by the water and said:

"Fish, fish, swim to me! My wife, Ilsebill, wishes something."

The flatfish soon swam over and asked, "What does she want?"

"Well, my wife said that I should have made a wish when I caught you. She doesn't want to live in a shack anymore, but in a real fisherman's cottage."

"Go," said the flatfish, "she already has it."

The man hurried back. And look now, his wife was no longer in the shack. She was sitting on a bench in front of the door of a real fisherman's cottage. "Come on in, this is so much better," she said.

They went inside through a small hallway. There was a small, beautiful room and a large room with two beds.

There was also a kitchen and a cellar. Everything was there, and everything was equally beautiful, from the tin and copper to the tools.

Behind the hut was a small courtyard with chickens and ducks. There was also a garden with vegetables and fruit trees. "Now, isn't it beautiful?" said the wife.

"Yes, it's wonderful," said the man. "If it stays this way, we can live happily."

"Definitely," said the wife. They ate and went to bed. And so, fourteen days passed.

Then the woman said, "Listen man, this hut is a bit cramped. The garden is also very small. The fish could have given us a bigger house. I would like to live in a beautiful stone castle. Come, go to the fish and tell him to give us a castle."

"Oh woman," said the man, "this hut is big enough. What would we do in a castle?"

"Just go, the fish can certainly give us a castle," she said.

"No woman," said the man, "the fish has already given us a hut. I won't go knocking on his door again for a castle. He might get angry with us."

"Just go," said the woman. "The fish can do it and he would surely like to."

The man's heart felt heavy. He didn't want to go. "This is not right," he thought to himself. But in the end, he went.



When he arrived at the sea, the water was completely violet and dark blue. The waves were now grey and thick. He stood by the water and said:

"Fish, fish, swim to me! My wife, Ilsebill, wishes something."

"Well, what does she want?" said the fish.

"Oh," said the man sadly, "she wants to live in a big stone castle."

"Go and look, she's already standing at the door," said the fish.

When he came home, his wife was standing in front of a large stone castle. She took him by the hand and said, "Come on in."

Inside, there was magnificent marble on the floor. Servants held the doors open and walked back and forth. The walls were covered with beautiful carpets. The tables and chairs were made of gold. Delicious food and the best wine were on the tables.

Behind the castle was a large courtyard with a cowshed and a stable with carriages. In the beautiful, large garden grew the most beautiful flowers and fruits. The castle also had a very large park where deer, roe deer, and hares lived. There was everything you could wish for.

"Well," said the woman, "isn't that beautiful?"

"Oh yes," said the man. "Now that we live in this beautiful castle, we will be happy and content."

"We'll think about it overnight," said the woman. "And so they went to bed."

The next morning, the woman was the first to wake up. The sun had just risen and she saw the wonderful

country before her from her bed. The man was stretching when she nudged him with her elbow. She said, "Man, get up and look out the window. Can't we become king of this wonderful land? Go to the fish and tell him we want to be king."

"Oh woman," said the man. "Why should we be king? I don't want that at all."

"Well," said the woman, "don't you want to be king? Go to the fish and tell him that I want to be king."

The man went, but he didn't really want to. "It's not right and it doesn't make sense," he thought to himself. When he got to the sea, it was now grey, dull, black, and thick. He also smelled a foul odor. He stood by the water and said:

"Fish, fish, swim to me! My wife, Ilsebill, wishes something."

"Well, what does she want?" said the fish.

"Oh," said the man, "she wants to be king."

"Go and see, she's already king," said the fish.

The man went back home and saw that the castle had become much bigger, with a high tower adorned with decorations. There was a guard standing at the door, and soldiers were playing drums and trumpets. Inside, everything was made of pure marble and gold. His wife was sitting on a golden throne, studded with diamonds. She had a large crown on her head and held a scepter of gold. A row of court ladies stood on either side of her.

"Oh woman, are you now a Queen?" he asked.

"Yes," said the woman. "Now I am a Queen."

He stood there for a while and looked at her. Then he said, "You look magnificent. Now we really have nothing more to wish for." But the woman became restless again and said, "The time passes so slowly for me. I can't stand it anymore. Go to the fish and tell him that I want to become an Empress."

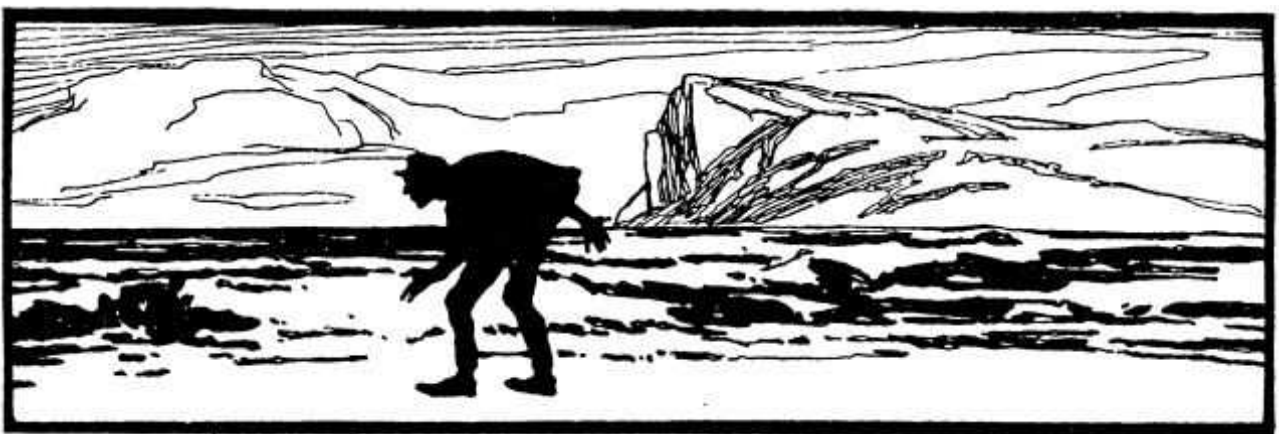
"Why do you want to become an Empress now?" he asked.

"Just go to the fish. I want to be an Empress," she said.

"Oh woman," said the man, "the fish cannot make you an Empress. I cannot ask him such a bold request. There is only one Emperor in the empire."

"I am the Queen, so I am in charge. You are my husband, so you have to go immediately. If he can make me a Queen, he can make me an Empress. I must and will be an Empress. Go there, right now."

The man had to go. On the way, he was afraid and ashamed. It was too bold a request to ask if his wife could become an Empress. The fish would not appreciate it.



As soon as he reached the sea, the water became even blacker and thicker than before. It began to boil with large bubbles. A strong wind rose, churning the sea. He stood by the water and said:

"Fish, fish, swim to me! My wife, Ilsebill, wishes something."

"Well, what does she want then?" said the fish.

"Oh fish," he said, "my wife wants to become an Empress."

"Go back, she already is," said the fish.

When the man returned to the castle, he saw a castle made of polished marble with alabaster statues and golden decorations. Soldiers marched in front of the door, blowing trumpets and beating drums. Inside, barons, counts, and duchesses walked around as servants. They held doors open for him, which were made of pure gold.

Inside, his wife was sitting on a high golden throne. She had a golden crown on her head, studded with sparkling diamonds. In one hand, she held a golden scepter, and in the other, a golden globe. A row of attendants stood on either side of her, ranging in size from dwarfs to giants. In front of her stood a row of princes and dukes.

The man stood among them and said, "Woman, are you now an Empress?"

"Yes, I am an Empress," she said. The man looked at her closely, and after a while, he said, "Oh woman, how beautiful you are now that you are an Empress."

"Man," she said, "why are you still standing there? I am now an Empress, but I want to become a Pope. Go to the fish."



"Oh woman," said the man, "what do you want now? Becoming a Pope is impossible. There is only one Pope in all of Christendom."

"Do not complain," said the woman. "Whoever can make me Emperor can also make me Pope. I am the Emperor and you are my man. You must listen to me, so hurry up now."

The man became afraid and went there with trembling knees.

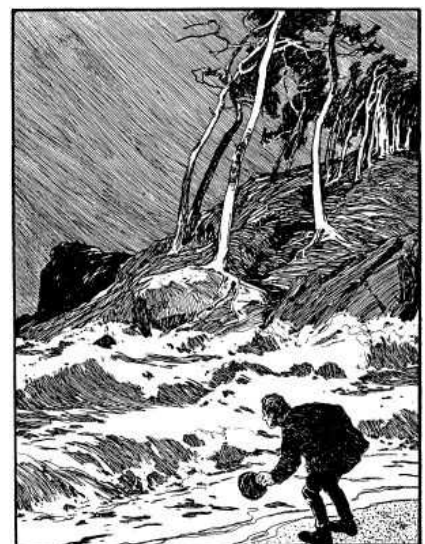
A strong storm blew over the land. The clouds raced through the sky. When dusk came, the leaves fell from the trees. The water churned and roared, the waves crashed onto the beach. In the distance, he saw the ships dancing aimlessly on the waves. Yet, the sky was still a bit blue in the middle. The heavy weather seemed to be drifting southward.

He went to stand by the water, huddled in fear, and said:

"Fish, fish, swim to me! My wife, Ilsebill, wishes something."

"What does she want then?" said the fish. "Ah," said the man, "she wants to become Pope." "Go home, she's already Pope," said the fish.

When he came home, he saw a magnificent church surrounded by palaces. A large crowd stood at the door. Inside, everything was lit up with thousands of lights. His wife was dressed in pure gold. She sat on an even higher throne, surrounded



by clerics. On either side of her stood two rows of candles as thick as the tallest tower that exists. All the Emperors and Kings knelt before her and kissed her Imperial slipper.

"Woman, are you now Pope?" asked the man. "Yes, I am," she said. He looked at her directly and it was as if he were looking at the bright sun. "Ah, woman, how beautiful that you are now Pope." The woman did not move and looked down from her high throne.

"Woman, be satisfied now, you are now Pope. You can't become anything else," said the man. "I'll have to think about that," said the woman. Then they went to bed. But actually, the woman was still not satisfied. She kept thinking about what else she could become. She tossed and turned but could think of nothing. The man slept well and deeply. He had walked a lot that day.

Then the sun rose. She saw the dawn, looked at the beautiful light and said:

"Wait, can't I also make the sun and the moon rise?" She poked her sleeping husband in the ribs. He was so startled that he fell out of bed. He thought he was dreaming. "Ah, woman, what did you say?" "Man, if I can't make the sun and the moon rise myself, I won't have a peaceful moment. I want to be like Our Lord." She looked at him with such a cold gaze that he got goosebumps.

"Go to the fish immediately and tell it that I want to be like Our Lord."

The man fell to his knees and said, "Woman, that's impossible. The fish was able to make you Emperor and

Pope. I beg and plead with you, come to your senses and stay Pope."

The woman shook her head so furiously that her hair flew wildly around her head. She kicked her husband hard and shouted, "I can't stand it, I can't stand it anymore, do you hear me? Go there." The man ran away, very scared.

Outside, the storm was so strong that he could barely stand on his feet. Houses and trees were falling over. The mountains trembled, boulders fell into the sea. The sky was black and there was thunder and lightning. In the sea, the black waves, with a white crest of foam, were as high as church towers.

He went to stand by the water, but due to the hard storm, he couldn't hear his own words. He shouted: "Fish, fish, swim to me! My wife, Ilsebill, wishes something."

"Well, what does she want then," said the fish. "Ah," he said, "she wants to become like Our Lord." "Go back, she's already back in your old shack," said the fish. And? They're still there to this day...

