

High-Intermediate 2
Unit 2 Reading
Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur



The Fisherman and His Wife

This passage is a fairy tale from Germany which was published in 1812 by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.

fairy tale = a story about magic or fairies, usually for children

Once upon a time there was a poor fisherman and his wife who lived in a pigsty near the sea. Every day the man went to fish. One day, after waiting a very long time, he caught a very big fish. To his surprise, the fish spoke and said, "Please let me live. I'm not a regular fish. If you knew my real identity, you wouldn't kill me. I'm an enchanted prince.

once upon a time = long ago; in the (good) old days; in days/times gone by

pigsty = a place where pigs are kept

pigsty = a very dirty and untidy place

- *Your room looks like a pigsty. Aren't you going to clean it?*

fish _(verb) = catch fish

to his surprise = surprisingly

To his surprise, the fish spoke. = He was surprised to see that the fish spoke.

If you knew my real identity, you wouldn't kill me. ⇒ **Conditional Sentence: Type II**

- You don't know my real identity.
- As you don't know me, you may kill me.

identity = who we are

enchant _(verb) = place somebody under a magic spell; put/cast a spell on somebody; bewitch

- Spell = spoken words that are thought to have magical power, or (the condition of being under) the influence or control of such words

enchanted prince = a prince under a spell

"Don't worry. I won't kill you," said the kind-hearted fisherman. With these words, he threw the fish back into the clear water, and went home to his wife.

"Husband," said the wife, "didn't you catch anything today?"

"I caught a fish, but it said it was an enchanted prince, so I let it go."

"You mean you didn't wish for anything?" asked the wife.

"No," said the fisherman. "What do I need to wish for?"

"Just look around you," said the wife. "We live in a pigsty. I wish we had a nice little cottage. If we had a cottage, I would be a lot happier. You saved the prince's life. Go back and ask him for it."

"I'm not going to ask for a cottage! If I asked for a cottage, the fish would be angry." But in the end, the fisherman was more afraid of his wife's anger.

cottage = a small house especially in the country

If we had a cottage, I would be a lot happier. ⇒ Conditional Sentence: Type II

- We don't have a cottage.
- I don't feel happy enough because of that.

If I asked for a cottage, the fish would be angry. ⇒ Conditional Sentence: Type II

- I don't intend to ask for a cottage.
- Asking for a cottage will make the fish angry.

The fisherman of our story was a **henpecked** man. A Henpecked man always obeys his wife and never disagrees with him.



a beautiful cottage in the countryside

When he got to the sea, it was all green and yellow. "My wife wishes we had a cottage." said the fisherman. "Just go on back," said the fish. "She already has it."

When he returned home, the fisherman found his wife sitting outside a lovely little cottage. The kitchen was filled with food and all types of cooking utensils. Outside was a little garden with vegetables, fruit trees, hens, and ducks. Things were fine for a week or two. Then the wife said, "This cottage is much too crowded. I wish we lived in a bigger house. If we lived in a big stone castle, I would be much happier. Go and ask the fish for it."

utensil = a tool used in the kitchen like a pot and a pan
castle = fort; fortress; stronghold

If we lived in a big stone castle, I would be much happier. ⇒ **Conditional Sentence: Type II**

- We don't live in a big stone castle.
- I don't feel happy enough because of that.



a stone castle

The fisherman didn't want to go, but he did. When he got to the sea, it was dark blue and gray.
"My wife wishes we lived in a big stone castle," he said to the fish.
"Just go on back. She's standing in front of the door," said the fish.
When he returned home, the fisherman found his wife on the steps of a great big stone castle.
The inside was filled with beautiful gold furniture, chandeliers, and carpets, and there were servants everywhere. The next morning the wife woke up and said, "I wish I were King of all this land."

"What would you do if you were King?" asked her husband.

"If I were King, I would own all this land. Go on back and ask the fish for it."



chandelier = decorative lights

own = possess, have

If I were King, I would own all this land. ⇒ Conditional Sentence: Type II

- I'm not King.
- Therefore it is not possible for me to own all this land.

This time, the sea was all blackish gray, and the water was rough and smelled terrible. "What does she want now?" asked the fish.

"She wants to be King," said the embarrassed fisherman.

"Just go on back. She already is."

When the fisherman returned home, he found an enormous palace. Everything inside was made of marble and pure gold, and it was surrounded by soldiers with drums and trumpets. His wife was seated on a throne, and he said to her, "How nice for you that you are King. Now we won't need to wish for anything else."

rough = having large and dangerous waves

embarrassed = red-faced; ashamed; uncomfortable

enormous = very big; immense



palace = a luxurious house where a king or a queen lives



throne = the royal seat

marble = a precious white stone



drums



trumpet

But his wife was not satisfied. "If I were Emperor, I would be much happier," she said. "I am King and I command you to go back and ask the fish to make me Emperor."

Reluctantly, the fisherman went back to the fish, and again the wish was granted. Next, his wife wanted to be Pope, and that wish, too, was granted. "Wife, now be satisfied," said the fisherman. "You're Pope. You can't be anything more."

emperor = the king of kings

empress = a female emperor

empire = the lands owned by an emperor or an empress

If I were Emperor, I would be much happier. ⇒ **Conditional Sentence: Type II**

- I'm not Emperor.
- I don't feel happy enough because of that.

command = order

reluctantly = unwillingly

grant = satisfy, give

Pope = the religious leader of the Roman Catholic Church

Proverb:

(Be) more Catholic than the Pope.

The wife, however, wasn't convinced. She kept thinking and thinking about what more she could be. "I wish I were like the Lord of the universe," she finally said. "If I were like the Lord, I could make the sun rise and set. Then I would be much happier. Go right now and tell the fish that I want to be like the Lord."

"Oh, no," said the fisherman. "The fish can't do that. If I were you, I wouldn't ask for anything else."

But his wife got so furious that the poor fisherman ran back to the fish. There was a terrible storm, and the sea was pitch black with waves as high as mountains.

"Well, what does she want now?" asked the fish.

"She wishes she were like the Lord of the universe," said the fisherman.

"Just go on back. She's sitting in the pigsty again!"

And they are still sitting there today.

the Lord (of the universe) = God

like = such as

If I were like the Lord, I could make the sun rise and set. ⇒ **Conditional Sentence: Type II**

- I'm not like the Lord.
- I can't make the sun rise and set.

furious = angry

pitch black = completely black

The Moral of the Story:

All covet, all lose. = If you become greedy, you will lose whatever you have.

moral (noun) = the lesson that we learn from a story

Full Text:

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The wife, however, wasn't convinced. She kept thinking and thinking about what more she could be. "I wish I were like the Lord of the universe," she finally said. "If I were like the Lord, I could make the sun rise and set. Then I would be much happier. Go right now and tell the fish that I want to be like the Lord."

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Sample Summary:

A poor fisherman once caught a magical fish who was really an enchanted prince. The fish begged to be freed, and the kind fisherman let it go. When his wife heard about it, she made him go back and ask the fish for a cottage, then a castle, then to be a king, an emperor, and even the pope. Each time, the fish granted her wishes, but she was never satisfied. Finally, she wanted to be like the Lord of the universe. When the fisherman asked for this last wish, the fish became angry and took everything away. The fisherman and his greedy wife ended up back in their old pigsty, just as poor as before.

Source:

[High Intermediate 2 \(anglophone.ir\)](http://High Intermediate 2 (anglophone.ir))