

The Fisherman and His Wife

by the Brothers Grimm (retold by Stephanie Austwick)

Part 1

Once upon a time, there was a poor fisherman and his wife who lived in a tumbledown shack on the edge of the village. The shack had a leaky roof, broken windows and holes in the floor. The fisherman was honest and hardworking. Every morning, he left to earn a living on the ocean, whilst his wife sat on the porch, dreaming of finer things.

Part 2

One day, as the fisherman sat in his boat on the clear, tranquil sea, he caught an enormous, shimmering flounder. He was delighted. 'This will earn me a pretty penny,' he chuckled.

'Don't kill me,' begged the flounder, looking up with jewelled eyes. 'I am really a prince but a wicked witch has placed a spell on me and I am forced to live out my days in the ocean.'

The fisherman, who was a kind man, could not bear the thought of killing an enchanted prince, so he smiled and slipped the fish back into the water. He rushed home to tell his wife.

Part 3

'You stupid fool!' she snapped. 'I'm tired of living with a leaky roof, broken windows and holes in the floor. If he was an enchanted prince, you should have asked him for a fine house in return for his life. Go back and ask him for a mansion.'

Nervously, the fishermen walked back to the frothing ocean and called the flounder. 'My wife thinks you should repay us for sparing your life. She is tired of living in our leaky shack. She wants to live in a mansion.'

'Go back to your wife. She already has what she desires,' he answered, as he swam thoughtfully away.

The fisherman returned to find his leaky shack had been replaced by a grand mansion, with glistening windows, a red-tiled roof and gardens full of fruit trees and flowers. He whispered a silent thank to you the generous prince.

Part 4

However, after a while, the wife called her husband. 'I'm tired of living in this mansion with its boring windows, red-tiled roof and gardens full of fruit trees and flowers,' she moaned. 'If he was an enchanted prince, he should be able to give us anything we want – and I want to live in a castle. Go back and demand a castle.'

Wearily, the fishermen plodded back to the swirling ocean and called the flounder. 'My wife thinks you should repay us for sparing your life,' he said, 'She is tired of living in a mansion. She wants to live in a castle'.

'Go back to your wife. She already has what she desires,' he answered, as he swam sadly away.

The fisherman returned to find the mansion had been replaced by a castle, with towering turrets, golden furniture and armies of servants. His wife looked happy as she sat on her throne and ordered everyone around, so he whispered a silent thank you to the generous prince.

Part 5

However, after a while, the wife ordered her husband to come to her. 'I'm tired of living in this castle, with its towering turrets, golden furniture and armies of servants,' she moaned. 'If he was an enchanted prince, he should be able to give us anything we want – and I want to rule the world. I want everyone and everything to obey me. Go and tell the prince that.'

'But ... ' began the fisherman.

'NOW!' screamed the wife.

Reluctantly, the fishermen trudged back to the frothing ocean and called the flounder. 'My wife thinks you should repay us for sparing your life,' he said, 'She is tired of living in a castle, she wants to rule the world'.

'Go back to your wife. She already has what she *deserves*,' he answered, as he swam angrily away.

The fisherman walked sadly back in the direction of the castle, but instead of towering turrets, golden furniture and armies of servants he saw an old shack with a leaky roof, broken windows and holes in the floor. And there on the porch sat his wife, dreaming of finer things.

