



The Poor Fisherman and His Wife

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Philippine

Intermediate
3 min read

Many, many years ago a poor fisherman and his wife lived with their three sons in a village by the sea. One day the old man set his snare in the water not far from his house, and at night when he went to look at it, he found that he had caught a great white fish. This startled the old man very much, for he had never seen a fish like this before, and it occurred to him that it was the priest of the town.

He ran to his wife as fast as he could and cried:

“My wife, I have caught the priest.”

“What?” said the old woman, terrified at the sight of her frightened husband.

“I have caught the priest,” said the old man again.

They hurried together to the river where the snare was set, and when the old woman saw the fish, she cried:

“Oh, it is not the priest but the governor.”

“No, it is the priest,” insisted the old man, and they went home trembling with fear.

That night neither of them was able to sleep for thought of the terrible thing that had happened and wondering what they should do. Now the next day was a great holiday in the town. At four o'clock in the morning cannons were fired and bells rang loudly. The old man and woman, hearing all the noise and not knowing the reason for it, thought that their crime had been discovered, and the people were searching for them to punish them, so they set out as fast as they could to hide in the woods. On and on they went, stopping only to rest so as to enable them to resume their flight.

The next morning they reached the woods near Pilar, where there also was a great holiday, and the sexton was ringing the bells to call the people to mass. As soon as the old man and woman heard the bells they thought the people there had been notified of their escape, and that they, too, were trying to catch them. So they turned and started home again.

As they reached their house, the three sons came home with their one horse and tied it to the trunk of the caramay tree. Presently the bells began to ring again, for it was twelve o'clock at noon. Not thinking what time of day it was, the old man and woman ran out of doors in terror, and seeing the horse jumped on its back with the intention of riding to the next town before anyone could catch them. When they had mounted they began to whip the horse. In their haste, they had forgotten to untie the rope which was around the trunk of the caramay tree. As the horse pulled at the rope fruit fell from the tree upon the old man and woman. Believing they were shot, they were so frightened that they died.

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