

Short Stories with Peter: The Fisherman and the Jinni — A Tale from The Arabian Nights (Abridged B1–B2 Level)

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

73 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Welcome to Short Stories with Peter from Your English Toolbox.

I am Peter.

Today, a poor fisherman will pull something impossible from the sea.

What comes out of it is powerful enough to destroy him.

This is an abridged B1–B2 adaptation of The Fisherman and the Jinni, a traditional tale from The Thousand and One Nights.

Long ago, an old fisherman lived with his wife and three children beside the sea.

He worked hard, but he could barely make a living.

Every morning, he cast his net exactly four times.

On one unlucky morning, his first three casts brought him nothing but rubbish.

One last cast, and then I must go home with empty hands.

The fourth cast felt so heavy that he had to pull with all his strength.

But when the net reached the shore, there were no fish inside it.

There was only a large brass jar, sealed shut with a thick metal lid.

At least I can sell the brass and buy some bread.

But first, let me see what is inside.

He forced the lid open, but the jar appeared to be empty.

Then a thin line of smoke rose from it and spread across the beach.

The smoke grew into a dark cloud that covered the sky.

Slowly, the cloud became a gigantic jinni with his head among the clouds and his feet in the sand.

At last, I am free.

Who are you, and how did you fit inside that jar?

I am a spirit who once refused to obey the great King Solomon.



He imprisoned me in that jar and threw me into the sea.

The fisherman expected gratitude, but the jinni looked down at him without kindness.

Prepare to die, fisherman.

Die?

I am the man who set you free.

During my first hundred years in the sea, I promised riches to anyone who released me.

During the next hundred years, I promised hidden treasures.

During the third, I promised to grant three wishes.

But nobody came.

I lost my temper and swore that whoever freed me would die.

I will only allow that person to choose the manner of death.

The fisherman was terrified, but he knew that fear would not save him.

He took a slow breath and studied the jar.

Before I choose, answer one question truthfully.

Ask your question.

Were you really inside this tiny jar?

Of course I was.

I cannot believe it.

Your foot could not fit inside it, let alone your entire body.

You doubt my power?

Then watch carefully.

The jinni changed into smoke and poured back through the narrow opening.

When every trace of smoke was inside, a voice came from the jar.

Now do you believe me?

The fisherman immediately slammed the lid into place and sealed the jar shut.

Yes, and now you can choose how you would like to return to the bottom of the sea.

The jinni shouted, threatened and begged, but the fisherman did not open the jar.

Let me out, and I swear that I will never harm you.

I will also show you a place that will change your fortune.



Give me your word, and remember that I have defeated you once already.

The jinni gave his solemn word, so the fisherman opened the jar once more.

This time, the jinni kept his promise.

He led the fisherman to a hidden lake filled with extraordinary fish.

The fisherman sold one of them for a generous reward, and his family never went hungry again.

The jinni had enormous power, but the fisherman had something stronger: a calm and clever mind.

End of the story.

Now, let's dive into the language and break down some of the key vocabulary from the story.

First, to barely make a living means to earn only just enough money for your basic needs.

The fisherman worked every day, but he could barely make a living.

Next, to seal something shut means to close it so firmly that nothing can enter or escape.

The fisherman sealed the jar shut before the jinni could escape again.

To lose your temper means to become suddenly angry and stop controlling your emotions.

The jinni lost his temper after waiting in the sea for centuries.

Finally, to outsmart someone means to defeat them by using better judgement rather than greater strength.

The fisherman could not overpower the jinni, so he outsmarted him.

Here is a question for you.

Would you have trusted the jinni and opened the jar a second time?

You can find the full transcript, translations into several languages and a vocabulary guide on our website, youenglishtoolbox.com.

There is a direct link to all the episode resources in the description.

Thank you for listening to Short Stories with Peter.

Until next time.

