Name: _____ Date: _____

The Little Fish

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 265 words

A fisherman rowed out to sea at sunrise. He let down his net and waited patiently.

At last he pulled it up. He hoped for a heavy catch. But there was only one tiny silver fish.

"Is that all?" said the fisherman. "What a very small fish. It is hardly worth the trouble."

The little fish looked up at him. "Please let me go," it said. "I am too small to make a meal."

"If you put me back, I will grow big. Then you can catch me again. I will be worth your trouble."

The fisherman scratched his chin. "A fish in my net is certain," he said. "A fish in the sea is only a hope."

He held up the little fish and studied it carefully. It shone in the sun like a new coin.

Its tail drooped. Its eyes were round and shiny and very sad.

The fisherman sighed. "Oh, all right," he said. "Off you go, little one."

He dipped his hand in the sea. The little fish slipped away with a flash.

He let down his net again, and he waited. He waited patiently all morning long.

The sun climbed high. The net came up with some seaweed. Then it came up with an empty shell.

At noon it came up with nothing at all. In the afternoon it was empty again.

The boat bobbed home at dusk. The bucket was empty, and his stomach rumbled.

"That fish would have made a supper," he said. Far off, a small silver fish leaped from the waves. It splashed and was gone.

Questions

1. What did the fisherman find in his net?

A. A big fish
B. One tiny fish
C. Nothing at all

2. What did the fisherman do with the little fish in the end?

A. He let it go
B. He took it home
C. He sold it

3. Why was the fisherman sorry by the end of the day?

A. He had given up the one fish he had

B. His boat was broken

C. The sun was too hot

4. What does "drooped" mean in this story?

A. Jumped

B. Hung down

C. Shone

5. What does this fable show?

A. Fish like to talk

B. A small sure thing can be worth more than a big hope

C. Nets are strong

Words to know

net: fishing mesh

tiny: very small

drooped: hung down

catch: fish caught

bobbed: moved up and down

Answer key: The Little Fish

1. B. One tiny fish
2. A. He let it go
3. A. He had given up the one fish he had
4. B. Hung down
5. B. A small sure thing can be worth more than a big hope