

## The Golden Fish

Once there was an old man who loved to fish. Every day he would take his boat out to the centre of the lake, throw in his line and wait for the fish to bite. Some days he caught something. Some days he didn't.

Late one afternoon, just as the light was fading and he was thinking about going home, he felt the familiar tug on his line and he began to reel it in. He pulled and he pulled. Never before had he had such a struggle to pull in a fish. Finally with a great splash the fish rose out of the water and as he hauled it into the boat the old man was astonished to see that it was golden. Even more astonishing, as the golden fish flapped in the bottom of the boat it began to talk.

'Let me go!' pleaded the fish.

'Certainly not,' said the old man. 'You'll make a fine meal.'

'No!' cried the fish. 'Spare my life and let me go, and I will give you a rope of pure gold.'

'How?' demanded the man.

'Put your line back into the water and you'll see,' said the fish.

So the man threw his line back into the lake and, sure enough, as he reeled it in attached to the hook was a rope of pure gold. The man pulled and pulled but still he could not see the other end of the rope. How rich he would be, he thought.

'Throw me back now!' said the fish, as the man continued to pull on the rope.

'Certainly not,' said the man. 'You are clearly very valuable. I could sell you and get a good price.'

The fisherman continued to reel the rope in but as he pulled the boat began slowly to sink. The fisherman pulled faster. He would not stop until all of the rope was safely in his boat. The boat sank lower. Still the greedy man pulled on the golden rope, until finally the boat sank beneath the water.