

## Gopal and the Hilsa Fish



The Season of Hilsa Fish. It was the season for Hilsa fish and it was Hilsa that everyone was talking about. In the market fishmongers were selling only Hilsa fish luring customers to buy it. Even in the royal court, courtiers were talking about Hilsa.

This made the king lose his temper. He believed that no one could stop the people from talking about Hilsa fish not even Gopal who was the wisest man in his court. The king challenged Gopal to buy a huge Hilsa fish and bring it to the palace without anyone asking him about it. Gopal accepted the challenge.

After a few days, Gopal shaved beard from half of his face and smeared ash on himself. He wore rags and looked disgraceful. His wife was shocked and asked him not to leave home like this, but Gopal kept on telling her that he was going to buy a huge Hilsa fish. She thought Gopal had gone mad.

At the market Gopal bought a huge Hilsa fish and started walking towards the palace. No one noticed the fish, but everyone was looking at Gopal walking

strangely with his shabby clothes. People called him mystic and mad. He went to meet the king but was stopped by the guards. He started dancing and singing loudly in front of the royal palace. The king ordered his guards to produce the man before him. Everyone in the court was shocked seeing Gopal dressed up like a mad.

The king questioned Gopal about the reason for his weird attire. Gopal reminded the king about the challenge and told him that from the market to the royal palace, no one had asked him a single word about the Hilsa fish. The king burst into laughter and accepted that Gopal had done the impossible once more.

### **New words:-**

- 1) Fishmonger: A person that store sells fish for food
- 2) Courtiers: A person who attends a royal court as a companion or advisor to the king or queen.
- 3) Downcast: Looking downward
- 4) To lose temper: Getting angry
- 5) Smear: Coat or mark carelessly with grease or oil
- 6) Rags: A piece of old cloth
- 7) Half shaven: Having beard on half of face
- 8) Comical: Funny, silly, entertaining
- 9) Madman: A man who is mentally ill
- 10) Mystic: Strange, spiritual
- 11) Hush: To keep quiet
- 12) Lost his mind: To become mad
- 13) Ridiculous: Absurd, deserving or inviting mockery
- 14) Mongers: Vendors
- 15) Guilty : Shamed
- 16) Disgraceful: Shameful/shocking

### **Moral of the story:-**

Nothing is impossible in the world. Smart people can achieve anything in the world with his or her intelligence. People talk about whatever new there is to talk about.

### **Worksheets**

**Answer the following questions:-**

1. Why did the king want no more talk about the hilsa-fish?

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2. What did the king ask Gopal to do to prove that he was clever?

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3. What three things did Gopal do before he went to buy his hilsa-fish?

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4. How did Gopal get inside the palace to see the king after he had bought the fish?

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5. Explain why no one seemed to be interested in talking about the hilsa-fish which Gopal had bought.

## Working with Language-:

1. Notice how in a comic book, there are no speech marks when characters talk. Instead what they say is put in a speech 'bubble'. However, if we wish to repeat or 'report' what they say, we must put it into *reported speech*.

Change the following sentences in the story to reported speech. The first one has been done for you.

(i) How much did you pay for that hilsa?  
The woman asked the man how much he had paid for that hilsa.

(ii) Why is your face half-shaven?  
Gopal's wife asked him

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(iii) I accept the challenge, Your Majesty.  
Gopal told the king

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(iv) I want to see the king.  
Gopal told the guards

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(v) Bring the man to me at once.  
The king ordered the guard

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2. Find out the meaning of the following words by looking them up in the dictionary. Then use them in sentences of your own.

challenge	mystic	comical
courtier	smearing	

## Picture Reading

1. Look at the pictures and read the text aloud.



Stag by the side of a



How beautiful my



But my legs are so thin and



Hunters! Run for your



Let me hide



These branches... Oh,



They are too close. Get out of



I was proud of my horns.  
They could have caused  
my death. I was ashamed  
of my legs. They saved me.