

DIRECTING TIP:

If you need to involve more than 7 students in this script, you might consider creating set pieces (front of cottage and front of palace) which can be placed behind the stools on a raised platform and changed when called for in the script by backstage helpers or stage manager. You might also costume two female characters, one in simple dress and another in queen attire who will enter and pose in front of the sets at the appropriate times. The addition of music (live or recorded) during these "magical" elements and as an introduction and conclusion would also enhance the performance and involve more students.

All narrators enter at once, go to assigned positions where script binders have been pre-set on music stands. The reading begins:

READER 1/Narrator

There was once a fisherman who lived in a very poor cottage near the sea.

Fisherman enters with script in hand, stands in front of assigned stool and speaks:

READER 5/Fisherman

I am a happy man, but my wife nags and complains from morning till night because we are poor.

READER 6/Wife's voice

(offstage)

Why shouldn't I complain!

He shakes his head at the audience and sighs at the sound of her voice. The wife enters with script in hand, and moves to stand in front of her assigned stool while speaking.

READER 6/Wife

I hate being poor! I hate this miserable cottage and the ragged clothes I must wear!

READER 5/Fisherman

This was a pretty cottage once.

READER 6/Wife

It was never more than a poor hut and I detest it.

READER 5/Fisherman

Oh, *why are* you so discontented? True, we are poor but we're seldom hungry.

READER 6/Wife

Fish! All we eat it fish - when you catch it. And that's not every day.

READER 5/Fisherman

Well, perhaps this will be a lucky day, my dear. Fetch me my net and I will do my best.

READER 6/Wife

Catch a big one we can, *sell*. And don't come home without the money!

(wife sits on stool and turns back to audience)

READER 5/Fisherman

If only she would be content...

READER 2/Narrator

And so, the Fisherman's wife brought the Fisherman his net and threw it at him! Such an unhappy woman was she.

READER 3/Narrator

The fisherman walked along the shore looking for a good spot to drop his net. He thought to himself:

READER 5/Fisherman

"If I can make a good catch today my wife will be happy."

READER 4/Narrator

Suddenly he saw something out of the corner of his eye. The Fisherman began to slowly lower his net into the water.

READER 5/Fisherman

What is that? A spot of color under the water! If it's a fish it's a most unusual one! I'll drop the net here and see if... OH! I've got it!

(fisherman mimes the above action)

READER 1/Narrator

Suddenly something tugged at the net from below. The Fisherman pulled as hard as he could and...

READER 5/Fisherman

What a tussle it's giving me! Oh, this will be a fine catch! I mustn't lose it! Now it's coming up...There!

READER 1/Narrator

he landed the fish!

Fish enters, miming a struggle, from offstage or from behind one set of narrators. Fish struggles into position on floor, DSR from the stools, sits up, faces audience, and reads:

READER 7/Fish

(shrill voice)

Fisherman, let me go!

READER 5/Fisherman

(looking amazed)

Who spoke?

READER 7/Fish

I! The fish!

(the fisherman stares in wonder)

READER 5/Fisherman

A talking fish?

READER 7/Fish

Let me go! Let me go!

READER 5/Fisherman

Let you go? Never! Why, you're the luckiest catch I've ever had! A talking fish can be sold for a high price and my wife will be --

READER 7/Fish

Your wife is a discontented woman who hates being poor!

READER 5/Fisherman

(astounded)

How do you know this?

READER 7/Fish

I know because I am a magic fish! If you will let me go I'll grant you any wish you name. I will grant you *three* wishes!

(fisherman ponders)

READER 2/Narrator

The fisherman didn't know what to do. He thought he must be dreaming, but then he remembered his poor cottage and how his wife hated it.

READER 3/Narrator

And he decided to take the chance!

READER 5/Fisherman

Very well, here is my first wish: when I return home, instead of finding my poor cottage, I want to find a castle.

READER 7/Fish

A castle? It shall be done! Now let me go - that was the bargain.

READER 4/Narrator

Now the Fisherman was an honest man and he knew how to keep a bargain. He untangled the Fish from his net and gently threw the Fish back into the sea.

READER 5/Fisherman

(in a sudden panic)

No, no - wait - came back! I've changed my mind! Come back!

READER 1/Narrator

But the Fish was gone.

READER 5/Fisherman

An empty net! Did I dream the whole thing? Well, I'll go home and my wife will say:

Wife twirls around on stool to face audience, remains sitting, shouts the line below, then immediately twirls again so that her back is to the audience

READER 6/Wife

"No catch again today, you fool!"

READER 5/Fisherman

And she'll be right. I'll not dare tell her what I *think* happened to me today.

READER 2/Narrator

The poor unhappy and bewildered Fisherman slowly made his way home.

READER5/Fisherman

But where is my cottage? This is where it has always stood. I cannot have mistaken the spot. Where...

READER 3/Narrator

The Fisherman could not believe his eyes! As he looked at the spot where his cottage had been, a castle appeared in the mist. He stared at it in disbelief.

READER 5/Fisherman

This . . . this cannot be where I live!

Wife again twirls around to face audience, jumps to her feet and screams:

READER 6/Wife

What happened?

READER 5/Fisherman

(hearing her voice)

Oh, yes, this is where I live.