

Story 1675 (Dictated)

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The Fisherman and the Jinn<sup>1</sup>

Once a fisherman had been fishing all day long but not caught a single fish. As the sun was setting, Hamdolsun!,<sup>2</sup> he felt something heavy in his net. Little by little, carefully, carefully, he pulled his net up. Perhaps there would be something that he could take home dinner, after all.

But there was no fish in the net. Instead, there was nothing but an old clay jug with a long, long neck. "What's this!" he said. "We have no jugs like this one in our village."

He took the jug out of the net and looked it over closely. There was a plug, a stopper, in the top of the neck, so the fisherman shook the jug to see if there was

<sup>1</sup>The word jinn suggests two very different kinds of supernatural creatures. The first is the huge supernatural being who comes forth from a bottle or appears in response to some signal, such as the rubbing of a magic lamp or ring. This creature then proceeds to give the caller supernatural or magic aid to achieve what he wishes. The other kind of jinn is never seen. It is a spiritual force referred to in some Sufi belief and in other mystical systems.

<sup>2</sup>Turkish for "Allah be praised!"

## Story 1675

anything inside. He could hear nothing at all. Curious, he pulled the plug out of the jug. Aman, aman, Allah!<sup>3</sup> Out came a stream of smoke that made a great cloud above jug. That cloud became a huge jinn! The fisherman shook with fear.

"Now that you have let me out of that jug, I must eat you," said the jinn. "I have been shut inside that horrible jug for more years than I can count."

"Please don't eat me," the fisherman begged. "I have done nothing to hurt you. Indeed, I set you free."

"The one who sealed me inside that jug said that I must eat whoever set me free. You set me free, and I must eat you."

"Very well," said the fisherman. "I accept my fate. But please answer one question for me before you eat me. You have been hungry for a very long time already. Surely you can wait long enough to answer my one question."

"You are right," said the jinn. "What is your question?"

"It is a simple one," said the fisherman, "but I am curious. Tell me. How can you, such a huge creature, fit inside that small jug?"

<sup>3</sup>Turkish for "Alas, alas, Allah!"

Story 1675

"Oh, very easily," said the jinn. "Just watch, and you will see." As he spoke, the jinn again became a great cloud of smoke, and little by little he squeezed himself through that narrow neck and on down into the jug.

As soon as the jinn had squeezed himself entirely inside the jug, the fisherman pushed the plug firmly into the neck of that jug. "Ah, now I see," he said. "You do fit very nicely into the jug, just as you said. And now that you are there, may you stay there until some other poor fisherman has the bad luck to pull you ashore."

With all his strength, the fisherman threw the jug far out into the sea. Then he thankfully picked up his net and walked to his village. "Better that I have no fish at all for dinner than that I become that jinn's dinner myself!"

And so it was.