

OUR LAND



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When the sun began sparkling on the water, FISHO gently opened her eyes and yawned. She heard her mother's voice, talking to her dad. FISHO who belonged to a family of fish with yellow and black stripes on their bodies lived in a stone cavity at the depth of 4 meters in a lake with her father and mother, and her brother and sister named FISHAL and FISHANT.



FISHO and her sister and brother were getting ready to go to school. After they finished their breakfast, their mum gave each of them a lunch box and an umbrella and warned them to be very cautious.

“I am tired of this umbrella. How long should I hold it over my head?”, said FISHAL.

“I am tired too. I can't see my surroundings properly”, said FISHANT while swimming and spinning around herself.

“Sometimes, when I'm playing with the algae, my umbrella

falls out of my hand and I forget it,” said FISHO while chewing the rest of the green algae left from their breakfast and quickly getting the bubbles out of her mouth.

Laughing loudly, FISHAL said, “Yeah, a fish nearly hit her head yesterday because she couldn't see”.

Daddy Fish and Mummy Fish were sad and anxious. Piles of garbage had been dumped in the lake in the area where they were living. Locals used small umbrellas when they went out of their homes, holding them over their heads to stay safe from the dangers of wastes including plastics, bottles, and cans.



“Do we always have to carry an umbrella when going out?”, FISHO asked Mummy Fish.

Suddenly, before she could answer, someone started shouting and screaming.

Rubbing his claws on his head in desperation, the crab father screamed that his youngest son has been stuck under a plastic bag and was not able to free himself.



All went to the aid of Mr.Crab's son. All of them had taken their umbrellas with them before leaving the house and after going down a path where exotic garbage and objects were falling on them reached Mr. Crab's house with difficulty.

Mr.Crab's son was crying and struggling to free himself. He was shouting “Help me! I Can't Breathe!”.

The plastic bag was so big, heavy, and strong.

“I think I know someone who can save him,” Daddy Fish reacted very quickly, explaining that Swordfish can tear off the plastic bag with its sword.



They went to the Swordfish's house together. He was sitting on a little rock hill, quickly making bubbles with his mouth.

“Swordy,” (by that he meant my very dear Swordfish)

“please save my son,” said Mr Crab to Swordfish. But as

soon as Swordfish heard about the incident, he told them

flatly "This does not concern me". Everyone could feel a

sneer in his voice. All were shocked by Swordfish's answer

and asked together “Why does it not concern you?”.

“I will never forget how Mr. Crab always acted like he

thought he was superior to me when we were young. He

always thought his claws were sharper than my sword. And

now that he is old, he has come to me for help! So this does

not concern me!”, replied Swordfish while dancing around

with his sword.

Nobody knew what they should do. FISHO, FISHAL, and

FISHANT looked at each other and very quickly moved

their fins and started swimming toward Mr. Crab's son.

“If each of us takes a corner of the plastic bag and pulls it apart,” suggested FISHO while standing beside the plastic bag “he might be able to get free!”.

Lady Oyster who had just become aware of what was happening, said “I cannot help you because I may break my shell but I will applaud for you”.

All helped pull on the four corners of the bag, and with difficulty, removed the plastic bag from the head of Mr. Crab's son. Mr. Crab's son came out breathless. All cheered up and started dancing and rejoicing.

Mr. Crab was dancing happily moving his claws in the air. Mummy Fish bursts out laughing. “What is funny?”, asked Lady Oyster. “A drink bottle cap is in your mouth! Here, let me take it out for you,” said Mummy Fish. “Hah? How I did not understand?”, sighed Lady Oyster in relief.



Suddenly a scream was heard from afar.

It was Swordfish. All went to him. The entrance of Swordfish's house had been blocked by pieces of clothes, plastic bags, water and drink bottles in such a way that he was not able to come out and just his voice, screaming for help, could be heard.

FISHO joined the group and said, "Oh My God! I went up to the surface and can you guess what I saw? A new group of people have come and are throwing their garbage into the lake one after another."



“I had told you not to go to the water surface. You are not even safe beneath the surface and many disasters can still happen to you here. Why did you go to the surface without my permission?”, said Daddy Fish with anger.

“It is not the time for talk,” said Mr.Crab, he added “Swordfish is stuck in his house, so hurry up.”

All went to the garbage and started removing pieces one by one from the entrance of Swordfish's house. Lady Oyster was rapidly clapping her shell to encourage them but with each clap pieces of drink cap, plastic, and iron were entering her mouth.

“I am sorry dear Mr. Crab. I shouldn't have behaved the way I did,” Swordfish told Mr. Crab as soon as he was free.

“I think we're no longer safe here, even with an umbrella, we cannot continue living in this location. It is better to move to another lake,” said Mummy Fish as she was taking little pieces of rubbish out of Lady Oyster's mouth.



The next day all the neighbours began packing and preparing migrate to another lake. Somewhere on the way, FISHO stopped and looked behind her. She gazed at the

stone cavity which once was their family home. She felt sad.

“Don't worry darling...maybe a day will come when nobody throws garbage into the lake and you can come back home,” whispered Lady Oyster into FISHO's ear.

FISHO smiled, saying “Lady Oyster! A button is in your mouth! Let me take it out for you!”



- THE END -

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