

## A Fishing Family

Tomoko lived with her family in a small fishing village in Japan. Every night, her mother and father would get on their small boat and go out fishing. Tomoko stayed with her big sister, Midori. They would eat dinner and do homework together. Then, Tomoko would draw pictures and take her bath while Midori studied some more. Midori studied a lot because she wanted to do well in school.

Bright and early every morning, the girls' mother and father would come in just as they woke up, smelling strongly of fish. Tomoko loved the smell of fresh fish because it meant her parents were home and they could spend the morning together before school. They had fun mornings together eating breakfast and hearing stories about their night on the ocean.

Tomoko's mother and father always brought fresh fish for breakfast. They would grill the fish and eat it with rice and soup. It was Tomoko's favorite breakfast! She also loved the stories her parents told about catching each fish. Big waves, rainy weather, pulling in tons of fish and finding the best ones to keep. It sounded so exciting.

One Monday, Tomoko asked her mother when she could go with them. Her father laughed, "Oh, Tomoko, you should come with us every night!"

Her mother didn't laugh. "He's not being serious, Tomoko. But both of you girls may want to come with us some day."

Midori looked up from the notebook she was working on. "Not me, it sounds too cold! I'd much rather be in my futon bed under the covers all night. Besides, I have too much studying to do."

"That's right, Midori," said their mother. "It's important for you to study and get some rest. Midori has always been more interested in books about fish than in catching the fish." They all laughed. Then her father spoke. He looked at their mother, smiling, but spoke to Tomoko.

"Well, I suppose you're just about big enough to come with us some day... but not on a weeknight. Only on a night with no school the next day."

"This Friday there's no school!" Tomoko blurted out.

Her mother looked back at her father, smiling, "Well, what do you know? There is a holiday this Friday, isn't there? I don't know of a better time than this Thursday night to go."

Her father agreed. "Just get your homework done right after school, and we'll leave after an early dinner."

"Wowee!" yelled Tomoko. She was so excited! She jumped up and down and hugged her parents tight. They smiled and held on to her. Midori smiled too, laughed with her, and went back to her notebook.

Thursday night felt like it would never arrive, but finally it did! Tomoko had managed to work ahead a little bit each day so that she easily finished her homework after school on Thursday before it was time to eat and go.

Her parents had gotten the smallest clothes they could find, which were still too baggy on little Tomoko. They helped her get into heavy pants, a warm sweater, a slick rain suit and a tight life jacket. "Ouch, that's really tight," said Tomoko.

"Never too tight to save your life," her mother said. "But it's time to get going!" They all gulped their tea and rushed out the door.

At the boat dock all the other fishers thought Tomoko was quite a sight. "Hey there, little one!" they called, "Hold on tight tonight!" and "Catch us the biggest tuna out there!" Their neighbor, Mr. Ito, a big man who always made Tomoko smile, yelled out, "And don't come back without it!" as he laughed his big, loud laugh.

Tomoko was too happy and proud to pay them any mind. She hopped on the boat with her parents and found her seat in the middle, smiling big and waiting impatiently for them to set out to sea. Soon enough they did, and her parents told her the rules she needed to follow. She had to stay in her seat until her parents told her she could move. She should never, ever, let go of the seat or the handrails around the boat. She shouldn't touch any of the fish, because some could be dangerous. If she followed all the rules, she could pick out which fish they would bring home for breakfast. Tomoko was absolutely brimming with glee.

It was dark when they got out to sea, and the waves were big. They dropped the net, kept moving, and soon brought in the first catch. Tomoko had never seen anything like it! The net opened to spill out fish of all shapes and sizes, all colors and names she didn't even know. They flopped around all at once and shimmered under the bright boat lights. "Wow!" yelled Tomoko, jumping out of her seat.

"Sit back down, Tomoko," her mother called, smiling at her but sounding a little worried. "Remember the rules."

"OK!" yelled Tomoko back to her, "Sorry!" She stayed in her seat but still smiled and cheered as her parents cast the net out again. Now the waves were even bigger, and it had started raining pretty hard.

"Good thing we got you the rain gear," her father said. "You'd be as wet as these fish without it!"

"Thank you!" yelled Tomoko. She was thrilled with every part of her big night out to

sea, and she loved her parents so much. She swore she would follow the rules and be good. But suddenly, she found it hard to stay in her seat. The waves were so big they made the boat jump all around. It was hard to hold on. The rain had gotten even heavier, and the wind was gusting on all sides.

Her mother and father started to look worried. "It's getting pretty rough out here!" her mother said. "What do you think about calling it an early night?" Her father agreed,

"Let's do, it could get a lot worse out here, and that first catch was all we need." Just as Tomoko's mother went to turn the boat around, her father slipped and fell down on the deck. "Woops!" he yelled. He had just begun to get up when a wave crashed right down over the boat, and Tomoko watched her father disappear underneath it. When the deck cleared, her father was gone!

"Daddy!" Tomoko screamed as she stood up and let go of her seat. Just then, another wave slammed the boat, and Tomoko found herself sliding right over to the side. Then as the boat leaned over from another wave, Tomoko plunged right into the freezing water!

"Tomoko!" her mother screamed. She grabbed the radio and called for help, then rushed to the boat's edge to watch for her daughter and husband.

Tomoko felt cold wind rush to her face as she popped to the surface of the dark, freezing water in her lifejacket. She hardly had time to take a breath before a wave crashed over her, and she went under again. When she popped to the surface, she saw a white head bobbing not too far away. Her father's white rain hat!

"Daddy!" she screamed again. Another wave, then another smothered her, but she made it within arms' reach. She took hold and gripped her father with all her might.

"Daddy!" she cried again and saw his usual big smile.

"We're going to be OK, little Tomoko, just hold on tight!" By then, she heard a boat horn and saw a bright light shining right in their faces. Her father reached up and grabbed something she couldn't even see, and the next thing she knew they were on their way up, out of the water. She squinted in the light, and when she opened her eyes she was flat on a boat deck looking up at... Mr. Ito!

"I knew you'd catch the biggest one!" he said with his usual laugh, and Tomoko really knew they were going to be OK.

Back at the boat dock, Mr. Ito tied up his boat and spoke with her father as Tomoko ran over to meet her mother, who was just coming in. She had pulled two more fishers out of the water, Mr. Fuji and Mrs. Yamazaki. What a wild, stormy night!

"Mr. Ito radioed to me that he found you right away. Come here and give your mother a big hug!" she yelled as Tomoko ran over. Her father followed close behind.

"Well, you didn't follow the first or the second rule, but I suppose you still deserve

your reward for what you've been through," her mother said. "Take a look at the catch and tell us what you want to bring home."

"I don't need to look," Tomoko said. She turned and hugged her father, saying, "I'll take this one." They all laughed, and that's all the fish they took home that day. They walked home by the early morning light, to find Midori studying with hot rice and soup prepared.

"What did you bring us today, little fisher Tomoko?" asked Midori.

"The biggest one of them all!" she said as she grabbed her father, and everyone laughed. They didn't have fish that morning, but every day after that, the fish tasted even better to Tomoko. And she never asked to go fishing again.

**1. When did Tomoko's parents go fishing?**

- A. At night.
- B. In the morning.
- C. Before sundown.

**2. What did Tomoko's mother make sure Tomoko had before going out to sea?**

- A. Tight fitting clothes.
- B. Her unfinished homework.
- C. A tight fitting life jacket.

**3. What did Tomoko like most about smelling fish in the morning?**

- A. It meant that her parents were home.
- B. It meant that she would hear fishing stories.
- C. It meant that there would be fish for breakfast.

**4. What was probably the main reason Tomoko wanted to go fishing?**

- A. She wanted to be with her parents and eat fish every morning for breakfast.
- B. She wanted to experience the exciting fishing stories her parents told.
- C. She wanted to be part of the family business and bring home fish to eat.

**5. How did the story end?**

- A. Tomoko and her parents got home safely, but they didn't have any fish.
- B. Midori called Tomoko a little fisher girl, and everyone laughed.
- C. Tomoko decided that she would never ask to go fishing again.

**6. What was this story mostly about?**

- A. What can happen on a fishing boat when a storm comes up and the men keep fishing.
- B. The adventures of a young girl who got to go fishing with her parents for the first time.
- C. How fishermen in Japan stay up all night fishing so they can have fish for breakfast.

**7. What was Midori like?**

- A. She liked to stay at home and study and didn't want to go fishing.
- B. She would only go fishing if she could bring her books and study.
- C. The only thing she liked about fishing was staying up all night.

**8. Why did Tomoko's parents decide to let her go fishing with them?**

- A. She had wanted to go for a long time and begged and begged.
- B. She was finally big enough, and there was no school on Friday.
- C. She was old enough and big enough to help with the family business.

**9. What made Tomoko feel sure she was okay?**

- A. She saw her father's usual big smile.
- B. Her father told her she was okay.
- C. Mr. Ito made a joke and laughed.



**10. How did Tomoko's mother feel about her breaking the rules?**

- A. She let Tomoko know that she should have followed the rules even if everything did turn out all right.
- B. She hadn't forgotten that Tomoko did break the rules but also understood why and was okay with it.
- C. She forgot all about how important it was to follow the rules because everyone got home safe and sound.

**11. What caused the problem in this story?**

- A. The fishing boats weren't prepared for a storm.
- B. Tomoko didn't know what to do in a storm.
- C. A huge storm came up very quickly.

**12. What did Tomoko mean when she told Midori that she had caught the biggest fish of all?**

- A. She and her father had found each other in the water.
- B. The only thing she wanted to bring home was her father.
- C. She was thinking of Mr. Ito calling her the biggest catch.

**13. What was the biggest problem during the storm?**

- A. Huge waves washed people off the boats.
- B. There were no other boats near by to help.
- C. It was too dark to see who was in the water.

**14. How did Tomoko find her father when they were in the water?**

- A. She popped up right next to him.
- B. She saw his white rain hat.
- C. She heard him calling to her.

**15. What happened just before Tomoko found that she and her father were being pulled out of the water?**

- A. A light was shining in her face.
- B. She saw Mr. Ito's fishing boat.
- C. Her father grabbed something.

**16. What was Mr. Ito like?**

- A. He was a big man with a good sense of humor who could make Tomoko smile.
- B. He was an experienced fisherman who didn't think young girls should go fishing.
- C. He was big and strong and made jokes about Tomoko that she didn't like.

**17. How many rules did Tomoko's parents give her to follow?**

- A. Two.
- B. Three.
- C. Four.

**18. How was Tomoko feeling about being out at sea watching her parents fish before the storm came?**

- A. She loved her parents for taking her and was thrilled at seeing all the beautiful fish but didn't like getting wet or bouncing around.
- B. She thought it was the most exciting thing she had ever done and decided that she would become a fisher woman.
- C. She was having a wonderful time because she was experiencing what her father talked about in his fishing stories.

**19. What happened right after Tomoko's mother started to turn the boat around to go home?**

- A. Her father got washed overboard by a wave.
- B. Tomoko got washed overboard by a wave.
- C. Her father slipped and fell on the deck.

**20. What was Tomoko's mother probably thinking when she saw Tomoko go overboard?**

- A. She was hoping that the life jacket she put on Tomoko was still tightly on her.
- B. She was thinking about jumping in the water to save her husband and Tomoko.
- C. She was wondering if it was such a good idea after all to take Tomoko fishing.