

There was once a captain who loved money so much that he cheated his sailors at the end of every voyage and took their wages.

On the last day of one voyage, the ship was in a small port. It was wintertime, and the sea was very cold, so the captain said to his sailors, 'If one of you stays in the water during the whole night, I will give him my ship. But if he comes out before the sun appears, I shall get his wages.'

The sailors had heard about the captain's cheating, so they did not trust him. But then one of them, who thought that he was cleverer than the captain, said that he would do it. He got into the water, and though it was very cold, stayed in it. When it was nearly morning, some fishermen lit a fire on the shore about half a mile away.

'You are cheating,' the captain said to the sailor. 'That fire's warming you.'

'But it's half a mile away!' said the sailor.

'A fire's a fire,' answered the captain. 'I have won.'

The sailor came out of the water, and said, 'Perhaps you think that you are clever because you have won my wages, but you can't cook a chicken.'

'I can,' answered the captain.

'If you can cook this chicken,' said the sailor, 'I shall work for you without wages for seven years, but if you cannot, you will give me your ship.'

The captain agreed, took the chicken and said, 'Where's the fire?'

'There it is,' answered the sailor, 'On the shore.'

'But it's half a mile away,' said the captain angrily.

'A fire's a fire, you said,' answered the sailor.

'If it was enough to warm me in the water, it is enough to cook your chicken.'