

Once there was a king who never ate a meal unless there was a dish of fish with it, but one day there was a big storm and the fishermen were not able to go out to catch fish, so the king had no breakfast and no lunch. Then he ordered his servants to tell everybody in his capital that if anyone brought him a fish, he would give him anything that he asked for.

At last, a fisherman who was fishing from the shore with a hook and line caught a big fish and hurried to the king's castle with it. But the king's prime minister met him on his arrival and would not give him permission to go in until he promised to give him half of whatever the king gave him for the fish.

The king was very happy when he saw the fish, and after his cooks had cooked it and he had eaten it, he said to the fisherman, 'Now, what do you want for your fish?'

'I want you to beat me two dozen times with a rod,' said the fisherman.

The king was very surprised, and argued with the fisherman, but in the end he said, 'I promised faithfully to give you whatever you wanted, and I suppose that I must keep my promise,' so he began to hit the fisherman softly with the rod.

'No,' said the fisherman, 'hit me as hard as you can!'

After the king had hit him a dozen times, the fisherman jumped away and said, 'That is enough for me. I promised the other dozen to your prime minister.'

Again the king was very surprised, but the prime minister had to admit that the fisherman was right. The king not only gave him the dozen hits with the rod, but also said, 'Because you have been dishonest, you will not be my prime minister any more. The fisherman will take your place.'