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Genie and other inventions

The bottle with the genie stood on the window sill and made the girl feel uncomfortable. Genie didn't look malicious. Just an ordinary slim brunet with a curled mustache. He was sitting cross-legged and looking straight ahead. He seemed unhappy. Perhaps he was. He had every right after years of staying in one place.

Jadwiga rose from the armchair from which she watched the genie. She shrugged to her own thoughts, put the bottle in the plastic bag and headed for the exit. Master always said that in such a vessel an entire palace may fit, which the owner never shows to his master, because he would not take pity on it and would not let him out. He was probably right.

There were many strange things and beings in the Master's storage room. From bottles with genies, such as the one that Jadwiga has just brought, and aquariums with goldfish to the old horseshoes and a special four-leaf clover. He even had a mermaid in a small pool. Jadwiga was watching one of fish when the Master entered the room. She never learnt his name, only the nickname. He was a short, corpulent man in his fifties, and in no way resembled a mage. If not for such trifles as lighting candles with a snap of his fingers. Yes, he looked rather like an antiquarian with that bald spot of his and thick horn-rimmed glasses. He looked around absent-mindedly and summoned the girl.

"Sit down," he said in a slightly hoarse voice.

Jadwiga obediently took the only armchair in the room. It was old and stunk musty, but had to do. The Master wandered amongst the exhibits. When he spoke, his voice sounded pathetic.

"Today I will tell you the reasons", he made a gesture indicating the surrounding beings and things, "for which we collected all of this."

He made a break for effect and the girl already knew that the speech would not be the shortest one. She feigned a curious expression. Apparently pleased, the man returned to his walking and in a monotonous voice began to narrate.

"Long long ago, good but stupid mages, and there were several of them and they were really powerful, decided to help people. There were not many people back then, and they were not as vicious as they are now. So the mages took pity on the people and filled some creatures and objects with the power of fulfilling wishes. This power slowly faded away in inanimate objects and so now they only bring good luck in general, but they do not fulfill specific wishes. That's different with living beings. These are not many, but they make the wishes come true. People rejoiced and enjoyed the goods left to them. Unfortunately, the mages went

extinct and people bred. They began to fight among themselves and became increasingly inferior. They used the wishes and luck in the worst possible ways. And that's what we have to curb! It should not be that the services of goldfish are used by the mighty of this world to destroy others and reach for yet greater fortunes or power! I will revolutionize the balance of power on this regrettable planet. I discovered a spell responsible for the operation of all these magical goods and transformed it. From this evening on, everyone will be able to get only what serves the greater good. Isn't that beautiful?

Jadwiga blinked her eyes.

"Yes, yes," she stammered, "but how can a fish tell a difference?"

The master scratched his head.

"At first, I had a problem with it, but in the end it is magic and not the laws of physics and everything can be done. I gave all of them" - he waved his hand around - "the ability to sense vile and selfish whims. So they only fulfill wishes free from it."

The girl nodded. It could work. It might not, but it could.

The ritual was complicated. The Master was walking round and round muttering unintelligible words and performing strange gestures. Jadwiga was sitting on the floor, handing him various items and lighting the candles in specific order. Finally, the man stopped and said:

"Let's try. Catch that fish and ask for something only for yourself, preferably something from which someone else will suffer."

The girl hesitantly approached the aquarium, took out the poor creature and asked for a high-speed machine gun to shoot a grumpy neighbour. Nothing happened.

She looked at the Master.

"Something less drastic now," he suggested.

Maybe ... A lot of money for a sumptuous life, car and clothes. Something flashed. Some cash appeared on the table. The girl made a face. Just enough to survive a month, but nothing special. The Master seemed pleased.

"Something good now", he ordered, "only quickly, because the fish is suffocating."

Quickly is quickly. "For all the beings in the warehouse to be free." A flash and the fish disappeared, followed by bottled genies, a mermaid and magical creatures which names Jadwiga didn't even know. Master's face went purple. The girl did not wait for the man to react. She picked up the money from the table and ran away. She was followed by curses.

A few months later, she learned that the Master had had a breakdown, because he wanted to fulfill just a few of his dreams (in his own self-confidence he thought he was the one person to organise the world), he drowned while trying to catch a goldfish, intoxicated. Every week Jadwiga got her pile of cash from grateful fish and she could live peacefully staying away from magic.

And the world? The world went on. Foundations, nursing homes, shelters, eateries for the homeless and other charities were established, and their owners made huge money off of them. As always, people will work around restrictions.

Łódź, 20-21.09.2005