

## One Lucky Fish

When I was nine years old, I had a pet fish that I named Fin. After months of saving and not buying myself any treats, I had finally set aside enough money to purchase Fin from the pet store. I also splurged on a really cool tank and decorations for Fin's home. I carpeted the floor of the tank in colorful pebbles and stuck a "No Fishing" statue in the corner. Fin also had a castle with windows and a door he could swim through. I was so happy when my dad said I could keep Fin's tank in my room. Sometimes, I would draw pictures of other fish and ocean scenes and tape them to the side of the tank so my aquatic roommate wouldn't get lonely while I was at school.

It was so much fun to share a room with Fin. However, after I'd had Fin for about a month, I noticed that the tank was collecting a greenish film of scum around the glass and it was starting to smell. My dad asked me to bring the unit into the kitchen so he could teach me how to clean it. He wanted to make sure I knew what to do so that Fin wouldn't get hurt.

First, my dad had me reach carefully into the tank and remove the castle and statue. When I took my hand out of the water, I noticed that the water was a lot dirtier than I had previously realized. Wow, that water sure smelled like rotting garbage!

"That's disgusting!" I said. "Let's hurry up and get rid of this stinky water, Dad!"

"Not so fast, Greg," Dad said. "We need to save a little of the old water, because Fin needs a place to stay while we clean the tank."

"Why can't we just put him straight into some fresh water?" I asked.

"Regular water from the sink can be harmful to fish," Dad explained. "That means that we can't put Fin into fresh water right away. Instead, we need to put him in a cup with some of the dirty water for a little while. While he's waiting, we'll scrub and rinse the whole tank and fill it up with new water."

Then dad showed me a bottle of some special drops that we would add to the new water in the tank to make it safe for Fin. Once the drops were in the new water, Fin would be able to go home to a clean tank.

All of that seemed easy enough. In fact, I was starting to consider myself to be a fish expert. I figured that the next time, I'd be able to clean the tank all by myself.

When it was time to take Fin out of the dirty water, I held a cup over the sink while Dad coaxed Fin out of his tank. Fin made his way toward the edge of the cup. But in the blink of an eye, he suddenly jumped out of the stream of water. He missed the cup completely and went straight down the drain!

I was horrified. "Fin!" I yelled. "Dad, we have to help him!"

- 12 Dad gasped and quickly stuck his hand down the drain. It seemed like hours, but it was probably only seconds until Dad pulled his hand back out. Thankfully, Fin was safe within Dad's grasp. He flopped about wildly as Dad placed him back inside the cup.

"Wow," Dad said as he let out a sigh of relief. "That was a close one, Greg. Next time, we'll be sure to plug the drain, okay?"

I was still in shock but managed a slow nod of agreement.

Fin was one lucky fish. He'd been through a terrible experience, but he had survived! He's had a peaceful life ever since and is still swimming happily around his tank today. Plus, Dad and I learned an important lesson from what happened to Fin. Even when we think we have taken all the right precautions, it can't hurt to be extra careful!

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### Passage Based Writing (PBW) PROMPT:

The theme of "One Lucky Fish" is the importance of Greg's relationship with his fish, Fin. **Write an essay analyzing how key details in the story support this theme.** Use evidence from the story to support your essay.