

# The Wish Fish

by Elizabeth Trach

Today was the day of the school festival. When the bell rang at the end of class, Laurel and her friends went outside to the playground. It was decorated with colorful balloons and tents. Inside each tent was a table with a special activity. There was weaving, painting and jewelry making. Other tables had snacks, and still other tables had puzzles to solve for a prize.

Laurel knew what she wanted to do most at the festival. She headed straight for the tent with the goldfish games.

Inside the white tent were many small, glass bowls lined up on a table. Each bowl was filled with water and had a pretty orange goldfish inside.

Laurel handed her dollar to the teacher in charge. In return, the teacher handed her three white ping pong balls. If Laurel could drop a ball into a bowl without it bouncing out, she would win the goldfish to keep as a pet.

Laurel dropped the first ball straight down. It off the edge of the bowl and rolled across the ground. She tried again, but this time the ball missed the bowls and bounced into the grass.

Laurel had only one ball left. Laurel closed one eye and looked at the fish bowls very carefully. She crossed her fingers and tossed the ball.

Splash! The ball landed in a bowl, but this time it did not bounce out.

The teacher pulled the ball out of the water and handed Laurel the bowl. She had won her own fish!

Laurel held the fish bowl very carefully as she walked home. "I think I'll name you Lucky," she said.

"Well, I don't feel so lucky. I'm trapped in this bowl," the fish replied.

Laurel jumped. Her fish could talk! "How are you doing that?" she asked.

"All wish fish can talk," Lucky said. "But we're stuck in our bowls until someone sets us free. We have to work hard granting wishes instead of getting to do what we want."

"You're a wish fish?" Laurel asked. "So you have to grant me a wish?"

"Yes," said Lucky, "but only one. Don't waste it."

Laurel thought. She had already won the fish, so she felt like she had already been granted her biggest wish. She looked at Lucky. The bowl was very small, and Lucky looked sad.

"I wish to set you free," Laurel said. "But please come back and visit me."

"Your wish is my command," said Lucky. In a flash, the wish fish jumped out of the bowl and flew into the air. Its fins grew into wings, and its scales turned into feathers. The small orange bird flew into a nearby tree.

Laurel could hardly believe her eyes.

"Thank you," chirped the little bird. "I will come back to visit you every spring." And with that, the magical creature flew off to the west, where Laurel could no longer tell the difference between his orange feathers and the setting sun.

