

## An Underwater Adventure

Once upon a time, there was a fisherman who lived in a small village by the sea. One day, when he was walking along the beach, he saw a group of children teasing a turtle by the seashore. The fisherman took pity on the turtle and rescued her from the children.

The turtle was grateful, and she said to the fisherman, "I want to thank you for your good deed. Please climb upon my back, and I will show you to a wonderful place." Intrigued, the fisherman accepted the turtle's offer. He was swiftly whisked under the sea, and they soon arrived at their destination: A magnificent underwater palace.

At the palace, the fisherman was greeted by a beautiful princess, and he himself was treated like a prince. A feast began, and the princess served many exotic dishes that the fisherman had never seen before, while fishes performed dances in celebration all around. The fisherman spent several happy days in the palace, enjoying the beauty and wonders of the underwater world.

After a time, the fisherman realized that he had been away from his village for much longer than he had intended. Worried about the world above, he asked the princess, "When may I go home?"

The princess was disappointed that he wanted to leave, but she said that he could return home any time he liked. In fact, she also offered him a parting gift – an ornate treasure box. However, she also gave him a warning, "This box will bring you many blessings, but you must never open it, for whatever reason!"

With the box in hand, the fisherman set off for his village. When he returned to the surface, he was shocked to find that many years had passed since he had left. The villagers he had known were all old or had passed away, and his village had changed beyond recognition. The fisherman was heartbroken.

Wondering if the treasure box might help him to understand what had happened, he decided to open it. As soon as he cracked the lid of the box, a cloud of smoke enveloped him, and he was instantly transformed into an old man with long white hair and a beard.

### Questions, Answers and Hints:

**1. What is the name of the fisherman?**

**Answer:** Urashima Taro.

**Hints/Clues:** The passage itself is the story of Urashima Taro. Students familiar with the story should be able to answer most of the questions once they realize what they are listening to (it may take two or more readings before they notice).

**2. What is the name of the Princess?**

**Answer:** Otohime.

**Hints/Clues:** If the students recognize the story, they will likely know the character's names. If not, they may look them up using smartphones etc.

**3. What did the Princess give to the fisherman?**

**Answer:** Tamatebako.

**Hints/Clues:** As above.

**4. What happened to the fisherman's family?**

**Answer:** They all passed away many years ago (several hundred years passed in the outside world while Urashima Taro was in the underwater palace).

**5. Why did the box turn him into an old man?**

**Answer:** Closed, the box granted Urashima Taro immortality, but when he opened it, he aged

for all the years that had passed.

**6. What does the story teach us?**

**Answer:** Answers will vary, points should be given for well written or well-reasoned answers.