

How Did Bob, the Mullet Fish Find Home?

By Arzalyn Zayra Auingan

Far below the waves at the bottom of Cagayan River lived a mullet fish called Bob. Bob lived with his father and his mother and four brothers and three sisters and nine uncles and eight aunts and twenty-six cousins. Happy as a splash, Bob would swim off to join his cousins play hide and seek.

One time, he wandered off the wide and long river. He swam back and forth along the slow current until something caught his eye above.

There were plastics of different colors in the water surface!

Bob rushed near the surface and he noticed the big change in the river. Soil erosion has also clogged its waterways. *Oh, no!* Bob panicked at what he saw. It was not the same river where he and his twenty-six cousins used to play.

Bob swam back to his cousins, but they're no longer there. He swam back and forth, but he was just swimming in circles not until he saw a glowing light from a distance. He glided past some weeds until he reached it, but his family was still nowhere to be found.

"Are you lost, little fish?"

Bob jumped from surprise when a fairy in fiery red dress appeared in front of him.

"Oh, fairy of the river, please help me go back to my family. I got lost because the river didn't look the same anymore," Bob pleaded.

"Hmm," the fairy in fiery red dress thought for a second. "Aha! I will help you go back to your family if you can do your mission."

"What mission?" Bob bubbled excitedly.

"You will help me in restoring the river back to the way it used to be!"

"But fairy of the river, how can I do that?" Bob asked.

"You will soon find out," the fairy in fiery red dress replied before she vanished.

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Bob had no choice, but to continue wandering off in the river to find a solution for his mission.

Meanwhile, somewhere in the riverbank, Lucy was getting ready to go fishing with her father.

“Lucy, come aboard in the riverboat!” her father called.

Lucy climbed in the riverboat and she could not contain her excitement. “I hope we could catch a lot of fish today, father.”

Father handed her fishing pole. They tossed them into the river and wait for the fishes to approach their bait, but noon came and yet they only caught five fishes.

“What happened, father? Where are the fishes?”

Her father smiled at her. “Looks like the fishes are good at hiding, Lucy.”

Lucy got off the riverboat because it’s too hot already while her father stayed. She sat down on the muddy bank with her fishing pole still in the water just in case fishes would pass by.

Not long after, Lucy felt a tug on her fishing pole. She was about to pull it out when she heard someone speak.

“Oh, dear please don’t catch me. My father and my mother and four brothers and three sisters and nine uncles and eight aunts and twenty-six cousins are waiting for me to return.”

Lucy was shocked to hear a speaking fish!

“You can speak?” she asked the fish.

Bob was equally shocked at what he heard. “Wow, you can hear me, little kid?”

Lucy nodded and her eyes were wide in amazement. The two introduced themselves to each other and Bob began telling his mission to Lucy.

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Bob was right. It's not the same river where Lucy and her father used to catch fishes. This may be the reason why they caught few fishes today.

"Poor, little Bob. Don't fret anymore. I will help you go back to your family," Lucy promised.

The next day, Lucy and a band of kids went to the river. One by one, they pick litters in the riverbank and the garbage floating on the water. The river was filled with laughter after they picked all the wastes.

Bob bubbled happily as he could now see his way. He approached Lucy near the riverbank and thanked her.

"No problem, Bob. You can always count on us," Lucy beamed.

News spread about what Lucy and the other kids did in the long and wide Cagayan River. People began to help restore the river. They planted bamboo seedlings and other trees in the surrounding soil. Slowly, Cagayan River was back to its usual glow and fishermen could now catch more fishes.

"Congratulations, Bob for completing your mission," the fairy in a fiery red dress said.

Bob felt so happy to hear this.

The fairy of the river smiled. "Now, my dear, you can go home."

Then at last, Bob swam happily in Cagayan River with his father and his mother and four brothers and three sisters and nine uncles and eight aunts and twenty-six cousins.