Taking the Bait

Written by Bjorn

My temper erupted like a volcano! That was the fifth time the colorful tropical fish snatched my bait. I was sitting at the edge of Lahaina, Maui on my old lawn chair. My red fishing pole and tackle box rested on the rock retaining wall. Just twenty feet from the dock, a seagull swooped down and grabbed something small and silvery out of the water.

"Great", I thought. Even a seagull can catch something, but I can't. I picked up my fishing pole and reeled in the line. I folded my lawn chair and put it into its bag with my fishing pole. Picking up my tackle box, I started toward the banyan tree. As soon as I stepped off the wharf, a seagull dived toward me something shiny glinting in its beak. It landed on my tackle box and gently set down the silvery fish. "That's no fish." I realized "That's a pearl fishhook!"

I had an urge to try fishing with it on my line. I recalled an ancient Hawaiian legend about a pearl fishhook that caught loads of fish. Carefully, I unstrung my plain steel fishing hook and tied on the pearl hook. The seagull surveyed this from the nearest dock post. As soon as the gull saw that I had secured the fishhook, he contentedly flew off. Maybe the seagull was a fraidy-cat -er fraidy-gull. I cast the fishhook into the foamy surf.

Almost immediately, there was a strong pull on the line! I started to reel it in, but it pulled back and I splashed into the salty water. A shark was directly beneath me pulling on my line. Suddenly a colorful whirlpool swirled, yanking the hook out of the shark's mouth and wrapping the fishing line around me, tying me up. I struggled urgently. A school of yellow tang darted into the depths. The water under the dock shouldn't have been this deep. I tried to swim up, but I didn't stand a chance while I was still tied.

The hook floated into my hand. I was running out of breath. The fishhook should be sharp enough to cut the line. I sliced, cutting the line at the top of my fishing pole. The line floated away from me. The whirlpool was pulling me down. I was out of air. Just then a large bubble formed around my head, like the helmet of an astronaut. Gasping for air, I realized that the whirlpool had millions and millions of brilliant multi-colored fish swirling around me. An enormous kaleidoscope was sucking me to the bottom of the ocean.

A gigantic shark dove through the churning fish after me, just before I was chomped in half, a vortex of pink light sucked me onto a pristine beach of black sand and large shady palm trees bordering big ebony rocks. The waves crashed against the black sand beach, spraying water in my face. Suddenly a teal portal opened and through it stepped a buff man with gray skin and a shark fin between his shoulder blades, a medium length spear with barbed edges in his hand. He saw me and threw his spear. Just as he threw his spear I was sucked into another pink portal.

I emerged on the other side. I was at Waimoku Falls in Haliakala National Park. In front of me was another buff man, except he wasn't carrying any weapons, or so it seemed. He wore a skirt and was barefoot. His skin was a dark color like a roasted marshmallow. He had a handsome face and kind eyes. He smiled at me, like I was supposed to know him, and we were old friends.

The man's voice was deep and rough. "Hello, Son. I am Kuula the Hawaiian god of fishing." Normally this would have sounded ridiculous, but after my day, it was perfectly believable.

"Did you send me the pearl hook?" I asked. Kuula shook his head.

"The last owner misused it, so a law was decreed that no mortal could have the hook. I claimed it and Kamohoali'I, the shark god wants it. You are a demigod, half mortal and half god. As soon as the gull stole it and dropped it off with a land dwelling person, he tried to steal it." He thought for a moment.

My heart sank. I thought, I must have dropped it in the ocean.

As if he read my mind, Kuula shook his head again. "It is now in your pocket." I checked and it was, as he said, in my pocket with a length of fishing line still tied to the end.

"I will let you keep it," he concluded "but you will need someone to guard it against the shark god."

Kuula whistled, as if for a taxi cab. From just beneath the waterfall scuttled a fifteen foot long Komodo dragon with black scales.

"They're called *Moho*" Kuula said, "a shape shifting reptile that controls water and weather."

"Is it carnivorous?" I wondered.

Kuula nodded grimly. "Most times *Moho* are monsters, but some are good. His name is Arnold."

Suddenly, a teal vortex swirled in front of him.

"Quick, get away." Kuula instructed. The *Moho*, Arnold, morphed into a tiny gecko and we charged through the portal. The shark god ran after us, waving his spear. Suddenly, Arnold jumped out onto the path in front of me. Just when I was above his shoulders he transformed into a twenty foot long winged black and red dragon. Arnold flew west towards Lahaina. Kamohoali'i wouldn't follow us in the air. I flew off into the breathtaking sunset toward who knows what.

THE END