



## GOPAL AND THE HILSA-FISH

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### SUMMARY

The following chapter "Gopal and the Hilsa-Fish" has been written in the form of comic strips. The story follows the main character Gopal, who is known to be a clever man. He is given what seems to be an impossible challenge by the King. Is he able to win the challenge?

#### The Season of Hilsa Fish

It was the season for Hilsa-fish and it was the only thing that everyone was talking about. In the market, fishmongers (people who sell fish) were selling only Hilsa-fish and attracting customers to buy it. Householders also couldn't stop themselves from talking about Hilsa. Even in the royal court, Hilsa was the only thing that the courtiers were talking about. A courtier showed the King a big fish that he had caught. This constant talk of Hilsa made the King angry. He shouted that they were courtiers, not fishermen. When the courtiers fell silent, they felt guilty and apologized.

#### A Challenge to Gopal

The King believed that no one could stop the people from talking about Hilsa-fish, not even Gopal, who was the cleverest man in the court. Gopal said that he could stop people from talking about the Hilsa-fish. The King then challenged Gopal to buy a huge Hilsa-fish and bring it to the palace without anyone asking about it. Gopal accepted the challenge.

#### Preparations for the Challenge

After a few days, Gopal shaved the beard from half of his face and covered himself in ashes. He wore torn clothes and looked disgraceful. His wife was shocked and asked him not to leave home while dressed like that. But Gopal kept telling her that he was going to buy a huge Hilsa-fish. She thought that Gopal had gone mad.

At the market, Gopal bought a huge Hilsa-fish and started walking towards the palace. No one noticed him because everyone was looking at Gopal strangely with his weird appearance and shabby clothes. People called him mad. When he reached the palace, he was stopped by the guards. Then, he started dancing and singing loudly in front of the palace.

### **Gopal Won the Challenge**

The King heard the noise and ordered the guards to bring the man before him. Everyone in the court was shocked at seeing Gopal dressed up like a madman. The King questioned Gopal about the reason for his strange appearance. At that point, Gopal reminded the King about the challenge. He further said that no one had mentioned the Hilsa-fish from the market to the palace. The King remembered the challenge he had thrown and burst into laughter. He accepted that Gopal had done the impossible once more.

## **WORD – MEANING**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Hilsa-fish	a special type of fish
Fishmonger	a person that sells fish for food.
Courtiers	a person who attends a royal court as a companion or advisor to the king or queen.
Downcast	looking downward
To lose temper	getting angry
Smear	coat or mark carelessly with grease or oil
Disgraceful	shameful
Rags	a piece of old cloth
Comical	amusing, funny
Mystic	strange, spiritual
Hush	to keep quiet
Lost his mind	to become mad
Ridiculous	absurd, deserving or inviting mockery