

## Pearly Pete

The parable of the precious pearl.

Once there was a man who loved pearls. He earned his living from buying and selling pearls to be made into necklaces or bracelets or ear rings, and lots of other things as well. He loved looking at shiny white pearls. He loved feeling them between his fingers. He just loved pearls. In fact because his name was Pete, everyone called him Pearly Pete.

Now buying and selling pearls had made Pearly Pete a lot of money. He had a very nice, very big house, he had horses and camels and servants and everything else he could possibly want. But Pete was not a happy man; he knew that somewhere in the world was the largest, shiniest most perfect pearl there could be and he was never going to be really happy until he had found it and bought it for himself.

One day Pearly Pete decided to set off on a journey to find some more pearls. He had heard of a place a long way off where it was said you could find the biggest pearls in the world. So he took his horses and camels and set off.

He travelled over mountains, across deserts, through valleys and across plains. It was a long long long way, but eventually he got there.

When he looked around though he was very disappointed. There were lots of shops selling pearls, but they were quite ordinary pearls. There was nothing really special at all. He was beginning to think that this had been a wasted journey when he came across the last shop. It was small and dusty and hidden away. But when he went in, Pearly Pete just stopped and stared. Right in front of him was the biggest, shiniest, roundest, most beautiful pearl he had ever seen. It was a pearl that he just must must have.

Pete asked how much it was, and then he gulped. It was expensive, very expensive, very very very expensive.

"Keep it for me," said Pete, "I'll be back."

He jumped back on his horse and got all his camels together and then, as fast as he could, he set off.

He travelled back across the plains, through the valleys, across the deserts and over the mountains until he came to his home. And then in no time at all he sold everything he had. His house, his possessions, his furniture, his camels. Everything, nothing was left. All his neighbours said: "Pearly Pete has gone mad, completely mad."

And then on his one remaining horse he set out again. Over the mountains, across the deserts, through the valleys, across the plains, until he reached the town and the little shop once again.

Pete counted out his money. But to his dismay it was still not enough, he needed just a little more. "I'll be back," he shouted as he ran out of the shop.

Pearly Pete ran to the market and in no time at all had sold his horse. He ran back to the shop, and the money he had made was just enough.

He picked up the pearl, and as he did so he felt something inside he had never felt before. Suddenly he knew he was happy, really happy. Although it was the only thing he had, no house, no bed, no camels, no horse, nothing, just the pearl, he was the happiest he could ever be.

Pearly Pete walked all the way back home. Across the plains, through the valleys, across the deserts and over the mountains until he came to his home village. And with every step his smile grew bigger and bigger and bigger.

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