**The Fishing Trip**

Ali and Ahmed were students at JIC, in Jubail, Saudi Arabia. Ahmed was very shy. One week, he had to give a talk for his English 104 class, and he was very nervous. So his friend Ali had an idea. He would take him on a camping trip over the weekend to help him to relax.

The two friends set out on their bicycles in the early morning. Already, the exercise made Ahmed feel a bit better. Soon they came to a lake, and Ali suggested they stop and try their luck at fishing. In just over an hour, Ahmed caught three fish, and Ali caught one—enough for a good supper. Best of all, sitting still gave Ahmed more time to think, and made him calmer. It felt so good, they kept fishing all through the afternoon, talking about things that made them happy. By then, they had too many fish to eat; Ahmed packed up most of them for their friends back at the college.

Then Ahmed went swimming while Ali cooked supper. As he swam, Ahmed remembered a time when he was little, and did not know how to swim. Back then, the water frightened him. Now, it was just fun to be there. Maybe speaking before his class would be like that.

After supper, Ali pulled out his oud. He was very good at playing the oud. He asked Ahmed if he knew any songs.

“I know the words,” said Ahmed. “But I can’t sing. I’ve never done it before. I’d probably sound terrible.”

“Who cares?” said Ali. “It’s just the two of us here, isn’t it? Do you think the stars will complain?”

Ali played Ahmed’s favourite tune, and Ahmed began to sing. At first he thought his voice sounded strange, but he was so calm after the swim and the quiet day that he really didn’t care. As he relaxed, his voice seemed to get stronger.

“Whoa,” said Ali as the song finished. “You know, you have a really good voice. I think you could almost be a professional singer. And you never knew that?”

“No, I didn’t.” said Ahmed.

“It just goes to show you,” said Ali. “You shouldn’t be afraid of trying something new. Maybe you’re really good at public speaking too. And if you aren’t, who really cares?”

It was after dark when the two friends arrived back at their dormitory. But Ahmed was full of energy, and actually a little excited about getting up in front of his class this week and telling them all about his wonderful fishing trip.