

The Greedy Chief

Hala'ea was a greedy chief. Every day he visited the fleet of fishing canoes and took all the fish for himself and his officials. Then he would hold a feast, partying and often wasting much of the food. As for the fishermen, they were expected to catch the fish and were never given any to take home to their families.

The conduct of the chief made the people angry. They were tired of hearing the voice of their chief crying, "The fish are mine! Give me all of the fish!"

At last came the season of the 'ahi tuna and the head fishermen were asked to go with the chief to the fishing grounds. So the fishermen gathered together and prepared their canoes, looking after the nets, the bait, and everything else required for the trip.

On the chosen day, the canoes came from all around the Big Island. When the first canoe full of fish was brought to the chief's canoe, the voice of the chief could be heard shouting, "Bring me all of the fish! Bring me all of the fish!" The second, third, fourth, fifth, and all the rest of the canoes deposited their loads of fish into the chief's canoe. "Here is all the fish the chief desires!" cried the men.

Finally the last canoe piled their load of fish into the chief's canoe. But now the chief saw that his canoe was too heavy and was being swamped. He called out, "The chief has fish enough!" But it was too late. The chief's canoe had already begun to sink rapidly. The chief looked about for help, but all the canoes had gone back to land. The canoe sank with the chief, surrounded by all the fish he had desired.

What do you think this story teaches? What are some reasons it might be important to not take too many fish?