

Fisherman and the Genie

The story of the fisherman and the genie from *The Arabian Nights* is the tale of a poor old man who happens to catch a sealed copper jar in his fisherman's net. Opening the container, he releases a very angry genie who, having been imprisoned in the jar for four hundred years, vowed to kill whoever released him. The story ends with the fisherman outwitting the genie and tricking him back into the jar, which the fisherman quickly seals again and throws back into the sea.



Elihu Vedder, *Fisherman and the Genie*, about 1863, oil on panel, 7 ⁵/₈ x 13 ⁷/₈ in., Bequest of Mrs. Martin Brimmer. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission, 2019. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved

Stories of evil spirits appearing out of the dark and threatening a human is a common theme in art. Below are examples that you will find in other galleries.



Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Manhood*, 1840, oil on canvas, 65 x 91 x 6 ½ in., Museum Purchase, 55.107

In Thomas Cole's painting *The Voyage of Life: Manhood*, three evil spirits haunt the man as he tries to steer his boat through the dangerous rapids (this painting is on the top floor of the Museum).

Support provided by Art Bridges



Narcisse Virgilio Diaz de la Peña, *The Sorceress (Le Maléfice)*, 1851, oil on canvas, 12 ¾ x 9 ¾ in., Proctor Collection, PC.37

In *The Sorceress* by Narcisse Virgilio Diaz de la Peña, a shadowy figure seems to cast a spell on a young woman while grasping her arm and whispering into her ear (find this painting in the *Astonishing Brilliance* exhibition in the next gallery).