

**DOWN THE DRAIN • DOWN THE HATCH**  
By Carole L. Cooney

In some places, water is more precious than oil or gold. Without water, crops can't grow and people can't live. Once water goes down the drain, it's gone and cannot be retrieved. Today we say that anything precious that's been wasted or lost has gone "down the drain."

The second expression probably comes from the 1500s. On a ship, people and cargo passed through the opening in the deck called the hatch. One day, a person giving a toast on board the ship decided that a drink going down a person's throat was like things going down the ship's hatch. So when he lifted his glass to make the toast, he said, "Down the hatch." Today this expression means swallowing a drink in one gulp.

Setting: A Wedding celebration

Characters:

Narrator

Aidan, the groom

Ethan, a worker

Riley, A worker

Madison, the Manager

Isabella, the bride

**Narrator**        It was the wedding day for Isabella and Aidan. The ceremony was set beside a beautiful, small pond with weeping willow trees gracefully blowing in the warm breeze. When Aidan arrived early, he was shocked. Workers were frantically dumping water into the nearly dried-up pond from large trucks.

**Aidan:**        I can't believe this. What's going on?

**Ethan:**        Sir, the pond is down the drain, for sure. It happened last night when the dam at the far end broke.

**Aidan:**        We have a wedding here in three hours. Do you think you'll be finished by that time?

**Ethan:**        It all depends on how much of this water is absorbed by the soil. No one knows for sure. Hey, Riley, how's it going? How much longer are we dumping?

**Riley:**        At least another four to five hours.

**Aidan:**        Do you think you could stop in three hours?

**Riley:**        You'll have to talk with the Manager.

**Narrator:**    Madison, the Manager of *Weddings Magnifique*, walked from the office to the workers. Aidan rushed to speak with her.

**Aidan:**        Madison, I can't believe this is happening.

**Madison:**    Neither can I. Riley, do you think the pond will fill enough so that you can stop dumping in three hours?

**Riley:**        I suppose so, but it'll be only half full. I guess it will look all right.

**Aidan:**        What can we do with the guests that arrive early? They can't just sit here and watch the water being dumped.

**Madison:** No. Let's bring them into the patio and serve them some cool drinks. Then when everything is ready, we'll escort them outside to the chairs by the pond.

**Aidan:** Thanks, Madison. That's a great idea.

**Narrator:** The guests enjoy their drinks in the patio. Time passes quickly and the workers stop dumping water at 2:45. Then guests begin to drift onto the outside lawn to be seated. Isabella and her bridesmaids line up in the patio and wait for the music to begin.

**Isabella :** What a perfect afternoon! Look how lovely the pond looks – the water is so crystal clear.

**Narrator:** When the ceremony is completed, everyone moves to the Dining Room, where many toasts are said. Then Aidan rises.

**Aidan:** I lift my glass to the workers who saved this day. Before you came, the pond's water was down the drain – literally! These good men have been working for the past three hours to fill the pond. So let's lift our glasses to salute them for making our day so special: Ready? Down the hatch!

**Narrator:** The guest drank with gusto and sent up a rousing cheer for the men who saved the day!