The Three Fishes

Ellen C. Babbitt

Once upon a time three Fishes lived in a far-away river. They were named Thoughtful, Very-Thoughtful, and Thoughtless.

One day they left the wild country where no men lived, and came down the river to live near a town.

Very-Thoughtful said to the other two: "There is danger all about us here. Fishermen come to the river here to catch fish with all sorts of nets and lines. Let us go back again to the wild country where we used to live."

But the other two Fishes were so lazy and so greedy that they kept putting off their going from day to day.

But one day Thoughtful and Thoughtless went swimming on ahead of Very-Thoughtful and they did not see the fisherman's net and rushed into it. Very-Thoughtful saw them rush into the net.

"I must save them," said Very-Thoughtful.

So swimming around the net, he splashed in the water in front of it, like a Fish that had broken through the net and gone up the river. Then he swam back of the net and splashed about there like a Fish that had broken through and gone down the river.

The fisherman saw the splashing water and thought the Fishes had broken through the net and that one had gone up the river, the other down, so he pulled in the net by one corner. That let the two Fishes out of the net and away they went to find Very-Thoughtful.

"You saved our lives, Very-Thoughtful," they said, "and now we are willing to go back to the wild country."

So back they all went to their old home where they lived safely ever after.

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